

# METHODIST HEROES

IN THE

## GREAT HAWORTH ROUND

1734 to 1784

MEMORIALS COMPILED BY

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## METHODIST HEROES IN THE GREAT HAWORTH ROUND.

A.D. 1734 TO 1777.

### CHAPTER I.

CAREFUL students of the great revival of religion in England in the eighteenth century must be impressed by the evidence that it was a supernatural movement, a work of God. Such divine action upon the souls of men is constantly needed, and exceedingly to be desired in every age, and in dealing with the early history of the Haworth Round and Keighley Circuit, I shall call special attention to this feature in the rise of Methodism, in the hope that we of this day may be led to go direct to God for power and providential openings, and again see answers to our prayers, in a revival, bearing as direct signs of the Holy Spirit's operation, as that great spiritual movement exhibited.

No review of the revival of religion in the eighteenth century would be fair that did not recognise as far as possible all the agencies made use of by God. Clergymen of the Establishment scattered over the country were awakened, converted, and preached the truth. Dissenting churches felt the breath of the new life, not a few being supplied with ministers out of the ranks of the Methodist Itinerancy and societies.

Lady Huntingdon's preachers and the clergy she employed played a considerable part, and by their labours churches were formed. Ingham and his preachers were apostles to a wide area of Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cumberland. Whitefield, like a flame of fire, was the awakener of thousands. All this host contained men, who though differing profoundly on matters of doctrine, preached the essential truths of the Christian religion, and were signally owned of God. They and their works have passed to a great extent out of sight, because their organization was not equal to that of Methodism under the Wesleys. Also because the leaven of Calvinism was too largely present in their doctrinal systems, and entire sanctification not recognised and enjoyed as in the ranks of the Wesleyan section. Yet we cannot study the history without seeing that

both the doctrines and organization were no preconceived system of Wesley and his preachers, but sprang most simply and naturally out of experience of the divine life in the soul; and the organization out of expedients devised to meet emergencies of the societies as they arose.

Without any disparagement, therefore, of other workers and their work—nay, with a disposition to fully acknowledge the hand of God with them,—His constant wise guidance of our Church is seen, and we give to Him all the glory for the marvellous developments springing out of its beliefs and economic arrangements.

Speaking of the religious condition of England in the early part of the eighteenth century, Southey says, "The greater part of the nation were totally uneducated, —Christians no farther than the mere ceremony of baptism could make them, being for the most part in a state of heathen, or worse than heathen, ignorance." In his "Colloquies" he also declares his conviction, "That there never was less religious feeling, either within the Establishment or without, than at the time of the Wesleys' appearance; and that he and Mr. Whitefield were the chosen instruments of Providence for giving a great impulse to religious feeling when it was needed most"\*

As to the clergy of the eighteenth century, I give the opinion of the late Bishop Ryle, of Liverpool. "The vast majority of them were sunk in worldliness, and neither knew nor cared anything about the profession. They neither did good themselves, nor liked any one else to do it for them. They hunted, they shot, they farmed, they swore, they drank, they gambled. They seemed determined to know everything except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. When they assembled it was generally to toast 'Church and King,' and to build one another up in earthly-mindedness, prejudice, ignorance, and formality. When they retired to their own homes, it was to do as little and preach as seldom as possible. And when they did preach, their sermons were so unspeakably and indescribably bad, that it is comforting to reflect they were generally preached to empty benches."†

"The blight of ease and freedom from persecution seemed to rest upon the Dissenters. Natural theology, without a single distinctive doctrine of Christianity, cold morality, or barren orthodoxy, formed the staple teaching both in church and chapel. Both parties seemed at last agreed on one point, and that was to let the devil alone, and to do nothing for hearts

\*Life of Wesley, p. 206.

†Christian Leaders, p. 17.

and souls. And as for the weighty truths for which Hooper and Latimer had gone to the stake, and Baxter and scores of Puritans had gone to jail, they seemed clean forgotten and laid on the shelf."\*

John Wesley and George Whitefield have attained such world-wide fame as to be popularly credited almost everywhere with the origination of the Methodist movement throughout the land. Their striking personalities overshadow the minor agents, as Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, and Calvin obscure the less known workers in the Reformation on the Continent. Wesley was undoubtedly called of God to be the leader; but about the same time—quite independently—the voice of God was heard by humbler men, and the power of God is seen in and through them also. It is to make these men more than mere names in old records which have come down to us; to see them live and hear them speak, that this history in part is written. I make no apology for introducing into it scenes and incidents, in some instances remote from the Haworth Round. It is the men of the Revival and their mission that I wish to present to view, and without such references to persons and events, their character and work could not be apprehended as it presents itself to the historian who reads the full narrative.

For the same reason their difficulties and opinions in periods of crisis, doctrinal and organic, will be dealt with somewhat fully. To do this I shall freely use the narratives already extant, some of which are little known to Methodist readers who are not collectors, interweaving unpublished letters, &c., to which, through the great kindness of friends, I have had access.

In Yorkshire, pioneer evangelistic work had been done so early as 1734, when Benjamin Ingham, one of the Oxford Methodists, although unordained at that time, taught 42 children at Ossett how to read, and held Sunday meetings among the poor. Numbers of persons were convinced of their lost condition as sinners in these meetings. In 1735 Ingham was ordained, and in addition to performing the office of reader of public prayers at Christ Church and St. Sepulchre's, London, he preached in some of the surrounding villages with such singular success that many people were powerfully impressed by his fervid ministry.

Ingham shortly after went out with the Wesleys to Georgia, and made considerable progress in acquiring the language of the Indians, but God in His providence had other work for him to do. On February 24th, 1737, Wesley says, "It was agreed Mr. Ingham should go to England and endeavour to bring over, if it should please God, some of our friends to strengthen

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\*Ryle Christian Leaders, p. 14.



our hands in this work." In this he did not succeed, and eventually all the party of Methodists were recalled from Georgia, and found their true sphere in England. How often diverse to the purposes of men are those of God. Thus Mr. Ingham writes on October 22nd, 1737, "I have no other thought but of returning to America. When the time comes I trust the Lord will show me. My heart's desire is that the Indians may hear the gospel. For this I pray both night and day."

Of the preparatory spiritual work in Yorkshire we have an important account in a letter addressed to Dr. Gillies, of Kelso, by the Rev. W. Grimshaw, of Haworth, July 19th, 1754: "In the year 1738 our gracious Redeemer was pleased to revive His work in the West Riding, as we call it, of this county of York. Now were poor souls amongst us brought to know Jesus alone, for their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. The first instrument sent hither by our dear Immanuel was one Mr. Benjamin Ingham, a clergyman, and one of the Oxford Methodists. He was born at Ossett, in this Riding. The clergy at first received him into their pulpits, the churches were soon crowded, and a great stirring up of the people to seek salvation by faith alone, in the merits of a crucified Saviour, quickly appeared. But Satan perceiving his kingdom to be in danger, began to roar, and the clergy (as I have been informed) were forbid to receive Mr. Ingham any more. Wakefield, Ossett, Leeds, Halifax, and many other churches and chapels he preached in, until he was prohibited. And greatly were the people blessed. He then betook himself (as did Messrs. Wesleys and Whitefield, and others at the same time) to our Saviour's manner, field preaching. As eminently did our Lord soon testify that this was His good pleasure. Multitudes assembled everywhere, and it soon appeared that conscience rather than curiosity was the main motive thereto. Man's fall and degeneracy, his redemption through Christ Jesus alone, the nature and necessity of the new birth, justification by faith only, sanctification by the indwelling of the Spirit of our Redeemer, &c., these were (and still are) the main doctrines and subjects of all discourse. Many people not only heard, but were convinced, converted, and brought to a saving experimental knowledge of these truths. The Kingdom of God soon appeared to be a kingdom within by righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Like Wesley, Ingham had been most favourably impressed by the piety of the Moravians, and in 1838 he accompanied Wesley on a visit to Herrnhuth and Marienborn, the residence of Count Zinzendorf, and on their return to England they attended the Moravian meetings in Fetter Lane, London.



One of these meetings has been too little noticed by biographers of the great evangelists. Important as was the call and conversion of the Apostles, their Pentecostal baptism was even more so. Ere the leaders of the great revival could go forth fully equipped on their noble but trying mission, they also must have a Pentecostal baptism. Hence we find that the holy fire descended on the morning of January 1st, 1739, in the old Moravian Chapel, Neville's Court, Fetter Lane, a sacred shrine still standing. Wesley says, "Messrs. Hall, Kinchin, Ingham, Whitefield, Hutchins, and my brother Charles, were present at our love feast, with about 60 of our brethren. About three in the morning as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we recovered a little from our awe and amazement at the presence of the Divine Majesty, we broke out with one voice, 'We praise Thee, O God, we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord!'"

Those present at the meeting in Fetter Lane, conscious that a new era in their lives had commenced, immediately prepared to work for God. Whitefield was engaged from seven in the morning until three in the afternoon with people who came crying out "What shall we do to be saved?" or telling him of what God had done for their souls.

Three days afterwards, the seven just mentioned held a conference at Islington on matters of importance, concerning which Whitefield says, "What we were in doubt about, after prayer, we determined by lot, and anything else was carried on with great love, meekness and devotion. We continued in fasting and prayer till three o'clock, and then parted with a full conviction that God was going to do great things among us."

After this divine baptism, such was the power which attended Ingham's ministry, that not fewer than forty religious societies were formed in Yorkshire. At this time Ingham was in closest fellowship of heart with Wesley. In a letter of September 14th, 1739, he thus writes, "All your opposition will work together for good. The more the clergy oppose the truth the more it will prevail. I say very little about the clergy in public. I preach the truth of the gospel according to the light the Lord has given me into it, and leave it to the Lord to bless it as He pleases. I take no notice of lies and calumnies, unless I am asked whether or no they are true. It is endless to answer all that is said. Let us love our enemies and pray for them; and let us love one another, and thereby shall all men know that we are His true disciples."\*

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\*Arminian Magazine, 1778, p. 181.

In November, 1739, Ingham became more closely connected with the Moravians, but still laboured earnestly, and drew around him a company of lay preachers, eminent among whom were three sons of Mr. Giles Batty, a man of property residing at Newby Cote, near Settle. They were the instruments of many conversions, and their societies increased to sixty in different places, and were visited every month.

Ledstone Hall, near Castleford, was at that time the residence of Lady Elizabeth Hastings, a daughter of the 7th Earl of Huntingdon, a woman of singular excellence, whose memory is yet fragrant for noble deeds in a wide circle of the adjacent country. Five sisters were on a visit to her, and the six noble ladies went to hear Mr. Ingham preach in a neighbouring parish.\*

This led to an invitation to preach in Ledstone Church, and from that period Ingham became a constant visitor at the Hall, and eventually married Lady Margaret Hastings who was one of the converts of his ministry. All the sisters were led to devote themselves to Christ and his service. They were patterns to all in meekness and humility, especially to those of their own rank and station, for they would enter the meanest cottage with pleasure to converse and join in religious exercises with the people of God.†

It appears very probable that the first visit of Charles Wesley to Yorkshire took place in the year 1742, as at that time he was preaching in the neighbourhood of Leeds.‡

During this tour he and Mr. Graves, one of his clerical friends, were invited to Ledstone Hall, where there was preaching twice a day for several successive days. The congregation usually consisted of many thousands, so that a succession of sermons, with some intervals, was preached in the course of the day to the people in the open air.§

For a few years during Lord Huntingdon's life, Ledstone Hall was visited every summer, and on these occasions there was always frequent preaching in the church. Ingham's societies increased rapidly, and spread not only in Yorkshire, but also into Lancashire, Lincolnshire, and Cheshire. General meetings of the preachers and exhorters in his connexion were held frequently, and plans were formed for the better regulation of the societies, and a more general diffusion of divine truth in places which had not been visited before. Lady Huntingdon and Lady Margaret Ingham attended several of these

\*Memoir of Countess of Huntingdon, i, p. 247.

†Memoir of Lady Huntingdon, i, p. 258.

‡Jackson's Life, i, p. 305. Charles Wesley.

§Memoir of Countess of Huntingdon, i, p. 254.

meetings. The assemblies were exceedingly numerous, and there was preaching in the open air. In later years Grimshaw attended these meetings and always preached, never troubling himself to ask the consent of the minister of the parish or caring whether he liked it or not. It is most probable his superiors in the Church imagined him so determined and undaunted that it would be a vain task to attempt to restrain him.

The Countess of Huntingdon was such an eminent personage in the revival of the eighteenth century as to deserve more extended notice.

We can have no higher or more reliable testimony respecting Lady Huntingdon than that of Dr. Doddridge, of Northampton, who long enjoyed her friendship and was too true a man to flatter. In a letter to Rev. Benjamin Fawcett, of Kidderminster, dated June 26th, 1750, he says: "Lady Huntingdon, for whom I desired your prayers, is wonderfully recovered. She walked with me in the garden and park, and almost wearied me, such is her recruit of strength: but the strength of her soul is amazing. I think I never saw so much of the image of God in any woman upon earth. Were I to write what I know of her, it would fill your heart with wonder, joy and praise. I must tell you one observation of hers which struck me much. 'None,' said she, 'know how to prize Christ but those who are zealous in good works. Men know not till they try what imperfect things our best works are, and how deficient we are in them; and the experience of that sweetness which attends their performance makes me more sensible of those obligations to Him, whose grace is the principle of them in our hearts.' She has God dwelling in her, and she is ever bearing testimony to the present salvation He has given us, and to the fountain of living waters which she feels springing up in her soul, so that she knows the divine original of the promises before the performance of them to her, as she knows God to be her Creator by the life He has given her."

## CHAPTER II.

THE pioneer of Methodism in Yorkshire, as distinct from Moravianism, was unquestionably the brave stone mason of Birstall, John Nelson. It is therefore necessary to mark the Holy Spirit's work in him and the steps in his career which led him first to Keighley and then to Haworth.

He was amongst the greatest of God's instruments in awakening the North of England, and the work of preparation in himself is therefore a study of highest importance to all who desire to know the methods of the Almighty.

The Divine Spirit wrought so directly and strongly upon Nelson's soul in childhood, through the reading of the 20th chapter of Revelation by his father, that for twenty years he lived under conviction of sin, and most earnestly sought light and deliverance.

He had a strong impression that he ought to go to London to work. He went, but after a while returned to Birstall. But he could not rest night or day, and said, "I must go to London again. Several asked me why I would go again, since I might live at home as well as anywhere in the world. My answer was: I have something to learn that I have not yet learned: but I did not know that it was the great lesson of love to God and man."

Moorfields, where Whitefield and Wesley first preached in the open air, was originally a marsh, passable during the greater part of the year only by a causeway. In Wesley's time part of the area was laid out in gravel walks and planted with elms. But from the situation of the ground and the laxity of the police it had become a place for the rabble;—for wrestlers and boxers, mountebanks and merry-andrews, where fairs were held during holidays,—and where at all times the idle, the dissolute and the reprobate resorted.

Preaching in Moorfields was what Whitefield called attacking Satan in one of his strongholds, and many persons told him that if he attempted it he would never come away from the place alive.

On June 17th, 1739, Wesley preached his first open-air sermon in Moorfields, and there Nelson, who had previously listened to twenty sermons from Whitefield, was brought into contact with Wesley and by him led to the Saviour, Christ. Ex-

ulting in the recollection, Nelson exclaims, "Oh that was a blessed morning to my soul! As soon as Mr. Wesley got upon the stand he stroked back his hair and turned his face toward where I stood, and I thought fixed his eyes upon me. When he spoke I thought his whole discourse was aimed at me. When he had done I said, this man can tell the secrets of my heart; he hath fully described the disease of my heart; but he hath not left me there, for he hath shewed the remedy, even the blood of Jesus. Then was my soul filled with consolation through hope that God for Christ's sake would save me; neither did I doubt in such a manner any more, till within 24 hours of the time, when the Lord wrote a pardon on my heart." That supreme hour is thus described: "I went into my chamber, shut the door, and fell down on my knees, crying, '*Lord, save or I perish.*' When I had prayed till I could pray no more I got up and walked to and fro, being resolved I would neither eat nor drink till I had found the Kingdom of God. I fell down to prayer again, but found no relief, got up and walked again, then tears began to flow from my eyes like great drops of rain and I fell on my knees a third time, but now I was as dumb as a beast, and could not put up one petition if it would have saved my soul. I kneeled before the Lord some time and saw myself a criminal before the judge; then I said, 'Lord, Thy will be done, damn or save.' That moment Jesus Christ was as evidently set before the eye of my mind, as crucified for my sins, as if I had seen him with my bodily eyes; and in that instant my heart was set at liberty from guilt and tormenting fear and filled with a calm and serene peace."

Having recorded the clear conversion of Nelson we must now take note of the call and spiritual preparation of this instrument of God for the great work he had to do in Yorkshire. He says: "About ten days before Christmas I went to St. Paul's, and while I was at the Communion Table I felt such an awful sense of God rest upon me that my heart was like melting wax before Him; the love of God was so great in my heart that I thought I should have fallen to the ground, and all my prayer was, 'Thy will be done, Thy will be done.' I was so dissolved into tears of love that I could scarce take the bread, and after I had received, it was impressed upon my mind, 'I must go into Yorkshire immediately.' But I said to myself, 'If I do it will be ten pounds out of my way.' I had determined to go at May day, but I thought to stay for the sake of money would be wrong, when I believed it was the will of God I should go. From that time I have had a settled confidence and a lasting peace, and no other doctrine than that I heard from the beginning hath any place in my mind unto this day. Thereupon I

set out and found much of the Lord's presence all the way I went, but I had no more thought of preaching when I got there than I had of eating fire."\*

Led thus by the Spirit, Nelson on his return to Yorkshire at once made known to his astonished family and friends that God for Christ's sake had forgiven his sins. Night after night enquirers concerning the strange experience crowded his house. His brother, six neighbours, then his wife, were clearly converted. Within three weeks the eight increased to seventeen,—the Wesleyan Methodist first-fruits of Yorkshire for God.

In a letter undated, written before Nelson had received a visit from Wesley, he describes his position and feelings: "At my coming into this country no man stood with me, but my name was cast out by professors and profane, so that I was like an owl of the desert; but a few who were bruised by the hand of God soon heard of, and received, the doctrine of *Conscious Pardon*, and in a little time seven of them found it verified in themselves.

"The people of the neighbouring towns have frequently sent for me to hear of this new doctrine, for they were quite sure no man could know of his sins being forgiven in this world. But I proved it from the written word of God, and from the doctrine of the Church of England. In a little time many cried out, 'Lord grant this thing unto me!' At the people's request I now preach every night in the week in general, and the work increases much, and yet I am (in a sense) alone. I want to have some correspondence with Mr. Wesley. My heart is knit to him as the heart of one man, and so are many of the children whom God hath called by my mouth. Some of them indeed fall into *stillness*, and they say I have the spirit of conviction, but not the gift of building up souls; however, those who stand fast, as they received Christ, are more holy and happy, and so, I think, as well built up.

"I desire that you, and all brethren, would pray that I may stand fast unto the end. The Lord works very visibly and powerfully among us: we have fresh tokens of His grace every week; yea, in some weeks six or seven are brought to the knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins; and many who have been despisers are now thanking God who hath opened their eyes."†

From an ancient manuscript we cull the following description of this first Yorkshire Methodist preacher: "Paul Smith, a leader now residing at Dewsbury, states that he has often

\*This incident is taken in part from Nelson's Journal, p. 41-42, and in part from a letter of Nelson's in the *Methodist Magazine* for 1823, p. 130.

†*Methodist Magazine*, 1823, p. 130.



heard an old man of the name of Hirst, of Hanging Heaton, with whom he was apprenticed, talk of going to Joseph Bennett's, of Batley Carr, to hear John Nelson preach on the week nights, after he had done his work. He usually had his hammer stuck within the string of his leather apron on one side and his trowel on the other; and after giving out his text he would pull up his small clothes and begin, 'My dear brethren.'

This indicates that Nelson went direct from his work to the town or village where service was to be held, whether near or far from the place where at the time he might be labouring. By this method he would save time, and neither he nor the people cared about the question of dress. He was the first to preach in Dewsbury, Tingley, Kirkheaton, Glasshill Hall, Staincliffe, Briestfield, and, as we shall see, in many other places.\*

At this period, therefore, in the history of Nelson, we have a man as distinctly and independently called of God as Wesley himself, fitted for his life mission and successfully entering upon it. He says: "All this time I had no one to converse with, except such as wanted to turn me out of the narrow path; neither had I any correspondence with Mr. Wesley; I was as one set to labour in a field alone."

Thus was Yorkshire Methodism in its birth, a striking work of God.

In 1740 Ingham heard of the success of John Nelson. Sending for him to one of his meetings he said, "John, I believe God has called you to speak His word, for I have spoken with several since I came back from London, who, I believe, have received grace since I went; and I see God is working in a shorter manner than he did with us at the beginning, and I should be sorry to hinder any one from doing good." Then, turning to the assembled brethren and sisters, Ingham continued, "Before you all I give John leave to exhort in all my societies"; and taking the rough hand of the Yorkshire stonemason, he added, "John, God hath given you great honour, in that He hath made use of you to call sinners to the blood of our Saviour, and I desire you to exhort in all my societies as often as you can."

Lady Huntingdon also having heard much of John Nelson and the surprising success attending his exhortations, expressed a desire to see and converse with him. Accompanied by Mr. Ingham and Mr. Graves, her ladyship went to Birstal.

As Ingham was expected to preach, they found a congregation of some thousands assembled, impatiently awaiting their

\*Contributed to Methodist Historical Society by Mr. C. D. Hardcastle, Leeds.

arrival. Ingham addressed the multitude from the passage, "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near." When he had concluded, John Nelson spoke for about half an hour. The Countess was delighted, and at parting told him, with her characteristic energy, that God had called him to put his hand to the plough, and great would be his punishment if he dared to look back for a moment; adding with much emphasis, "He that called you is mighty to save, fear not, press forward; He will bless your testimony."

This shows that Lady Huntingdon discerned the divine intention in the call of lay preachers almost as early as Wesley, and had no scruple about encouraging that mighty agency for the salvation of souls.\*

The Countess of Huntingdon had much to do with the preaching of Thomas Maxfield. She was a member of the Society at Fetter Lane when he took charge of it in Wesley's absence. Near the end of the year 1839 she thus wrote to Wesley: "I never mentioned to you that I have seen Maxfield; he is one of the greatest instances of God's peculiar favour that I know. . . . *The first time I made him expound*, expecting little from him, I sat over against him, and thought what a power of God must be with him to make *me* give attention to him. But before he had gone over one fifth part, any one that had seen me would have thought I had been made of wood or stone, so quite immovable I both felt and looked. His power in prayer is extraordinary. To deal plainly I could either talk or write for an hour about him."†

John Cennick, in 1739, was reluctantly induced to preach at Kingswood, through the non-appearance of a sermon reader. Wesley was urged to forbid his preaching, but did not interfere.

Another lay preacher in 1740, Thomas Westall, would have been silenced by Wesley had not Mrs. Canning, a pious lady of Evesham, said: "stop him at your peril! He preaches the truth, and the Lord owns him as truly as He does you or your brother."

The story of John Wesley and Maxfield is so widely known as to need no repetition.

Charles Wesley manifested strong aversion to lay preaching. In his Journal we have the record of an early innovation of this kind, which seems to have disturbed him as much as Maxfield's preaching did John Wesley. It occurred in Islington Church-yard on April 28th, 1739. Whitefield had finished a sermon when a Mr. Bowers got up to address the people. Charles Wesley entreated him to desist, but his entreaties were

\*Life of Lady Huntingdon, 1, p. 254.

†Life of Countess of Huntingdon, 1, p. 33.



disregarded. On Thursday, July 3rd, 1739, Charles Wesley says, "Poor wild Bowers had been laid hold on for preaching in Oxford. To-day the beadle brough him to me. I spoke to him very homely. He had nothing to reply, but promised to do so no more and thereby obtained his liberty."\*

Lady Huntingdon not only encouraged Nelson and Maxfield to preach, but herself sent forth David Taylor, a servant of Lord Huntingdon, on a similar mission about the year 1740. He was a man of ability and tolerable education who was brought to God by the preaching of the first Methodists. Taylor was anxiously concerned for the state of his fellow-servants and neighbours. This induced the Countess to send him to the villages and hamlets in the immediate vicinity of Donnington Park to preach the Gospel. His word was with power and her ladyship was encouraged to extend the sphere of his usefulness. In one of these itinerant excursions in 1741, he visited Glenfield and Ratby, two villages near Leicester, and among those who heard him was Mr. Samuel Deacon, of Ratby, who being informed while at work in the field that a person had been preaching in the streets of Glenfield, and that he was going to preach again at Ratby, immediately laid down his scythe and went to hear him. The sermon made a lasting impression upon his mind and induced him to search the Scriptures. The dissoluteness and ignorance of the clergyman of his parish now struck him in a new light, and he began to reflect on his own danger, as one of the flock of so careless a shepherd. After much reading, reasoning, and perplexity, he was enabled to rely on Christ for salvation, and immediately found peace and joy in believing. Eventually Mr. Deacon became the pastor of a little church at Barton-Fabis, in Leicestershire, over which he presided fifty-two years. From this conversion, and the Church of Barton-Fabis, grew the New Connexion of Baptist Churches in the Midland Counties, formed in 1770.

David Taylor's success led Lady Huntingdon still further to extend his sphere of labour into Cheshire and Derbyshire. He commenced field preaching near Chinley, where Dr. Clegg, a Dissenting Minister, opposed the innovation in sermons and private conversation. The effect, however, was to cause several of his thoughtful hearers to espouse the cause of Methodism. Everett says that David Taylor was the instrument used in the conversion of John Bennett, a great pioneer of Methodism in Cheshire, Derbyshire and Lancashire. Bennett was introduced to Lady Huntingdon, and by her induced to declare the things he had felt and seen; and his work was re-

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\*C. Wesley's Journal.

markably owned of God. Through her Ladyship he became acquainted with Messrs. Wesley and Whitefield, and was recognised as one of Wesley's helpers. Bennett's preaching was attended with great blessing, and he was instrumental in raising up many societies, which were called by his name. From a letter written by him in 1750 we may judge of the extent of his labours. "Many doors," says he, "are opened for preaching in these parts, but cannot be supplied for want of preachers. My circuit is 150 miles in two weeks, during which time I preach publicly thirty-four times, besides meeting the societies, and visiting the sick, &c."

In the early years of the Connexion, Bennett laboured in conjunction with Wesley, and attended some of the earlier conferences, but in the year 1752 he embraced doctrinal opinions opposed to those of Wesley, and separating from him had a chapel erected for his use at Warburton in Cheshire. He also itinerated in various parts of the country preaching the Gospel until the year 1759, when he finished his course with joy.

Howell Harris, to whom Wales owes very largely its evangelical revival, was another instrument directly raised by God in this time of divine quickening. He went to Oxford in 1735 to study for the church, but left in disgust at the immorality and infidelity which prevailed there. Returning to Wales, he exhorted in cottages and formed several societies. He lived and died a Churchman, but though he repeatedly sought ordination, the bishops refused it on account of his irregular labours. He was therefore perforce a great lay preacher, as though God would confound the opponents of his plans by their own weapons. He did not deliver set sermons, but poured out his thoughts and feelings, warning and exhorting the people in a manner that was most soul-stirring. In 1742, after seven years' work, he found himself supported by seven clergymen and forty lay preachers. For twelve years he and his converts did not build a single chapel. They worshipped in private houses, school rooms, barns, and in the open air. The first chapel was built at Builth in Brecknockshire in 1747. Harris's labours were apostolic. He ranged the country, preaching four or five times a day. In one round of nine weeks he visited thirteen counties, travelled a hundred and fifty miles a week, and preached two and four times a day. For seven nights he was not able to put off his clothes, as he had to meet the people and preach at midnight or very early in the morning to avoid persecution. He lived to see Wales transformed by Christian faith, and died at Trevecca on July 21st, 1773, in his seventieth year. Though divided in opinion on the question of Calvinism, Harris was owned by Wesley as a notable servant of God, and welcomed by him to his Conference as a visitor.

The providence of God is most conspicuous in this development of lay agency in connection with the great revival. The clergy of the establishment had miserably failed in the evangelization and spiritual up-building of the people. Such a result was inevitable in a church system possessing no efficient discipline, or spiritual tests. The Wesleys and their early clerical friends were too few in number to supply the spiritual wants of the nation, earnestly as they strove, and deeply as they felt the need. Foreseeing that in the nineteenth century, the dead Protestant Church of England of the eighteenth, would become largely converted into an active Romanising society, God set in operation the great lay ministry which laid the foundation of the largest Protestant communion the world has ever seen.

He made John Wesley, rather than Charles, the head of the movement; and we see why, when we notice how he could exercise self-restraint and yet advance as his brother never would have done, until his host of lay preachers had on both sides of the Atlantic demonstrated that no ecclesiastical orders are necessary for the building up of the spiritual Church of God. In this, God provided the greatest possible confutation and antidote to every form of sacerdotalism. The devil and the clergy were allowed to rage to their hearts' content that the infant societies might not be amalgamated with the organised Church, thus did God make "the wrath of men to praise Him," but the remainder He restrained, that they might live and take vigorous root. In some places the movement was not even initiated by converted clergy of the Church of England. It was the direct work of God, often in spite of them, and strikingly apart from any existing ecclesiastical organization.

### CHAPTER III.

THE London Moravians, who at first were so helpful to the Wesleys and their Oxford friends, about 1739 developed Antinomian doctrines, most pernicious in their influence. Wesley clearly discerned the ultimate tendency of this teaching, and withstood it so firmly as to render himself obnoxious to all their leaders. Peter Böhler and Ingham yielded to the London teachers, and brought down into Yorkshire their new views, which they propagated with such zeal as to cause the fall of so many of Nelson's converts, that he almost despaired of the permanency of the work, and was tempted to discontinue it.

Ingham sought a private interview with Nelson, and said, "You ought not to tell people that they may know their sins forgiven; for the world cannot bear it, and if such a thing was preached, it would mean persecution." Nelson replied, "Let them quake that fear. By the grace of God, I love every man, but fear no man; and I will tell all I can, that there is such a prize to run for: if I hide it mischief will come upon me. There is a famine in the land, and I see myself in the case of one of the lepers that were at the gates of Samaria, who found provision in the enemies' camp. I believe it would be a sin not to declare to the children of men, what God hath done for my soul that they may seek for the same mercy."

Toward the end of January, 1742, Nelson had a remarkable dream. He saw John and Charles Wesley sitting by his fire-side. From the time of leaving London he had had no connection or correspondence with them and therefore said, "I can no more expect them, than I expect the King to come." Four months later on the 26th of May, John Wesley, however, came to Birstall and sent for Nelson to the inn. "Thence," he says, "I conducted him to my house and he sat down by my fire-side, in the very posture I had dreamed about four months before, and spoke the same words I dreamed he spoke." Wesley tells us that Nelson "gave him an account of the strange manner wherein he had been led on, from the time of their parting in London." Wesley remained one day in Birstall on his way to Newcastle, and three days on the return journey. All were crowded with religious services, and conversation with Nelson's converts. One incident indicates that the forma-

tion of classes under Wesley's pastoral care must have been brought to the knowledge of Nelson. He says "His (Wesley's) coming was a great blessing to my soul." I said to him, 'Sir, you may make use of Jacob's words, 'The children thou begat in Egypt before are mine.'; for I freely deliver them to your care.'" It was only in February of 1742 that the appointment of leaders began in Bristol, and on the 25th of March that Wesley introduced the same plan in London. Doubtless also Wesley and his brother Charles who visited Birstall in the same year, encouraged the zealous evangelist to enter all open doors, for we find him preaching at Armley in connection with Charles Graves, a clergyman who accompanied Charles Wesley.

The strong Methodist church in Leeds owes no little to the brave stone mason of Birstall. He was certainly the first preacher who ventured to proclaim the glorious gospel in the streets of that town. He says, "About this time (1742) William Shent, a barber, in Leeds, was converted, and there began to be an uproar there about his saying that he knew his sins forgiven. Some, however, believed his report, and had a desire to hear for themselves; neither could he be content to eat his morsel alone, for his heart panted for the salvation of all his neighbours. The Christmas following, he desired me to go and preach at Leeds."

Among the persons who heard Nelson at Shent's house was Alice Calverley, a daughter of Abraham Kershaw, who had in past days been a speaker amongst the Quakers, and who resided in Skircoat Green, near Halitax. Alice Calverley was much impressed by the truth from Nelson's lips, and on visiting her relatives at Skircoat Green, her constant theme was the new and strange doctrine she had heard at Leeds. Her statements awakened the curiosity of Blakey Spencer, who listened with wonder at the artless recital. At length he determined upon hearing this strange doctrine himself, and being informed that John Nelson would preach at Birstall on a certain day, he went to that place, and the word coming with power to his heart he partook of the glorious liberty of the children of God. Feeling deeply interested for his friends and neighbours, he again visited Birstall, and invited the preacher to come to Skircoat Green, who freely consented.

In accordance with his promise John Nelson came to Skircoat Green. The news of his coming had spread so widely that the house of Blakey Spencer was found too strait to contain the people, they therefore adjourned to Abraham Kershaw's, but before the service commenced the people had increased so much as to render an out-door service necess-

ary; accordingly the congregation stood in front of the house. A washing tub, mouth downwards, served for a pulpit, and here among huge rocks, with which the house was surrounded, far from din and tumult, Nelson preached the first sermon in the present Halifax circuit. The people were much affected; the grey headed man near eighty years of age, the owner of the house, listened with deep concern, while the big tears trickled down his furrowed cheeks. He became the first-fruits of Methodist effort in that place, and thus Nelson's visit was amply rewarded. Blakey Spencer, Kershaw, and a few others formed the first society at Skircoat Green. One of Kershaw's daughters, Elizabeth, joined the Society, and through her pressing invitation John Bennett was induced to visit that part of Yorkshire.\*

Blakey Spencer, who by his invitation of Nelson introduced Methodism into the vicinity of Halifax, became a zealous local preacher, employing his talents not only to the edification of those in his immediate neighbourhood, but impelled by love to souls, he penetrated also into nooks and corners where lived people as uncultured as the soil they trod. This zealous champion preached Jesus with undaunted fortitude, amid hot persecution. In the neighbourhood of Ripponden and Stirk Bridge, he was more than once mobbed and pelted with stones. On a later occasion, about 1766, the people showed by their hostile movement, a determination to execute a threat they had before uttered. Spencer endeavoured to evade their grasp, and succeeded for a while in outstripping his pursuers; but strength failing him, they pounced like vultures on their prey. Rough treatment ensued, and it will give a glimpse of the depravity and semi-barbarism of the neighbourhood, when it is stated that this mob was composed alike of women and men. Not content with the cruel treatment of which he was the subject, Spencer was thrown upon the ground and dragged to the banks of the stream a little above Sowerby Bridge. Being at the time much swollen, the waters dashed furiously along their channel, and just opposite the spot where the mob stood was an eddy in the stream where the rushing waters formed a whirlpool. Pointing to the spot, a woman who lived hard by, and had been one of the worst of the crew, shouted with mad fury, "In with him! drown him, drown him!" The mob would have seized Spencer, to put in force this hellish mandate; but such had already been their brutal usage, that he lay senseless on the ground; they saw his state, and left him for dead. The poor sufferer lay for a considerable

\*Walker, Halifax, p. 26, etc.



time insensible, but recovering, with great difficulty, and enduring intense pain, he at last crawled home. The sequel must be told. Within a few days of this occurrence, the woman above named was standing on the edge of the stream washing her mop. Holding it by the extremity of the handle, she was cleansing it in the eddy, when by the force of the stream it was sucked in, and the woman herself was drawn after. For a few moments she was whirled in the pool, and when taken out of the water her spirit had fled to appear before that God who has declared "He will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries."\*

We have seen that Nelson was the first Methodist preacher who proclaimed the gospel in Leeds. Probably he had the honour to be one of the first to do the same in Sheffield, though certainly not alone in his visits. His companion was David Taylor, who had been sent forth by Lady Huntingdon. They preached in the vicinity of Sheffield in 1741 in the house of a Mr. Birks, at Thorpe. Some incidents and conversions at this time were so remarkable as to deserve record, if space permitted. They will be found in Everett's *Methodism in Sheffield*.

Having taken a wide view of the Divine origin of the Methodist revival in its various sections, and introduced the leaders of it to the readers of this history, we now turn to the movement as it affected Keighley and Haworth.

Fortunately a manuscript is in existence, which was probably read when the funeral sermon of the first Methodist in Keighley was preached. It is in the handwriting of his son-in-law, and passed from a lineal descendant, into the valuable collection of Methodist documents made by Mr. George Stampe, of Grimsby. This first Methodist in the upper part of the Aire valley, was John Wilkinson, a journeyman shoemaker who had served his apprenticeship in Birstall. He resided in a cottage at the west end of an old farm house in Low Street, Keighley, occupied at the time by a Mr. Thomas Scott.

About 1738 Wilkinson married a relation or intimate acquaintance of John Nelson, sister of John Booth, of Adwalton, near Bradford, in whose house Nelson was accustomed to preach. On one of these occasions, in the year 1742, Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson were visiting the Booths, and heard the new doctrine (to them) of the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins.

After the service they earnestly requested Nelson to visit Keighley, and having invited a few of their neighbours to hear the stranger preach, he declared to them the novel doctrine

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\*Walker, Halifax.

that men might know their sins forgiven before they die. Before Nelson went away, he desired a few of them to hold a meeting weekly, which four or five consented to do. Thus undoubtedly one of the earliest classes in Yorkshire was formed. The narrative from which these early incidents are derived relates how this first class in Keighley was conducted. "When they had sung a psalm or a hymn, they conversed together as they could, (but in a very dark and blundering manner, as you may see afterwards) then my father took up a book and read a prayer, and then concluded."

John Wilkinson "being ignorant of God's righteousness, went about to establish a righteousness of his own, and to complete this work he went to church forenoon and afternoon, and read in his Bible in the intervals; and when night came he would count the chapters which he had read, and when he found he had read several he was highly pleased with himself, but much more when he thought that God was highly pleased with him." Wilkinson proceeded thus until a letter from a friend in Birstall caused him to see that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. "He knew that he had not this faith, and without it he was convinced that he could not be saved. And now he had no rest, day or night, for about twelve weeks, and then the Lord spoke peace to his soul."

Until the year 1746, John Wilkinson's class did not exceed ten members. Nearly half a century afterwards their leader said at a lovefeast that "At this period though very few in number and much persecuted, they were as happy as kings and queens." They devoted themselves to God, and He blessed and prospered them to such a degree that on Wesley's second visit to Keighley they had increased tenfold.

John Wilkinson was not only the first Methodist and the first class leader in Keighley, but also the first local preacher, and in that capacity was the instrument in God's hands of leading to the Saviour one who became a most valuable helper of the Wesleys in Yorkshire, Thomas Colbeck, a grocer and draper who had succeeded his father in one of the principal shops in the town. His parents, Thomas and Mary Colbeck, dedicated him to God by baptism at the parish church on Oct. 7th, 1723. Soon after the introduction of Methodism into Keighley, Colbeck was informed that his neighbour John Wilkinson had begun to preach, a very startling fact in those days; and more remarkable still, that he preached without a book. He was surprised and inclined to dispute the fact, knowing that Wilkinson was an uneducated man.

Hearing that he was to preach in a neighbour's house on a certain night, he obtained permission to sit in an adjoining room



during the service, unknown to the preacher. The word came with power to his heart and resulted in his conversion to God.

Colbeck would then be twenty or twenty-one years of age and in conjunction with John Wilkinson was instrumental in forming the first Methodist society in Haworth in 1744 or 1745.

Probably at their invitation, John Nelson preached in the Old Hall still standing opposite Hall Green Chapel. The incumbent of Haworth, the Rev W. Grimshaw, knew nothing of Methodism at that time, and a tradition of the village is that Nelson's intended visit having been announced, Grimshaw charged his people not to go near him, as he understood that wherever the Methodists went they turned everything upside down. A poor woman resolved, however, that she would go to the service, whatever might be the consequence. Many were present, and to her great surprise, Nelson gave out as his text, "Those that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." She listened attentively, and rested not until she became a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Thomas Colbeck became the second class leader and local preacher in Keighley, and was made widely useful. Grimshaw, in a letter to Dr. Gillies, of Glasgow, July 19th, 1784, says: "About the year 1744 God was pleased to visit Keighley (a market town three miles (4) from Haworth), Silsden, Sutton, Addingham, Menston, Bingley, Baildon, and many other places. The Lord has done wonderful things in all these places. One Thomas Colbeck has been one main instrument, with some others, Jonathan Maskew, Paul Greenwood, &c., in His gracious hands here."

We shall hear much of the two latter in due course. Grimshaw's date doubtless refers to the establishment of regular public preaching in Keighley and the surrounding places. Colbeck preached to large congregations.

Mr. Peter Wright, an old local preacher well known to me, remembered when a youth hearing an old woman, named Mary Hall, say that she once listened to a very impressive sermon delivered by him to an immense crowd in the Market Place of Keighley, from the text Numb. xxxii., 23, "Be sure your sin will find you out." It resulted in bringing many to the chapel and meetings.

So great was the esteem of Mr. Grimshaw for him that he could not repress an indication of it once when administering the Sacrament. Colbeck was accustomed to go to Haworth Church on such occasions, and as the minister handed the cup to him he was just finishing the declaration "that was shed for thee," when he gently touched Colbeck's ear and said, "And for thee too, Tommy."

Colbeck and Wilkinson preached in Wilkinson's house, and were occasionally visited by Nelson and other preachers from the neighbourhood, and by several of Wesley's earliest itinerant ministers and helpers.

Tradition says that on one occasion when Nelson was preaching in Scott's Yard, near Wilkinson's cottage, a number of men agreed to pull the preacher from the chair and drive him out of the town. Scott being a powerful man and owner of the premises, they requested him to lead them to the assault. He placed himself at their head and stationed himself and company in the vicinity of the chair. Being urged to proceed, he advised that they should first hear what the preacher had to say, and if it did not suit them, then would be the time to punish him. One of the party, however, impatient of delay, began to cause a disturbance, when Scott knocked him down and threatened to do the same to any man who molested Nelson until the sermon was over. At the conclusion of the service the people—many of whom were much affected by the word—walked quietly away, and Scott invited Nelson into his house, and was ever after a friend to the Methodists, his wife and daughter becoming members of the society.

On another occasion Jonathan Reeves was the preacher and was apprehended while preaching at Keighley and conducted to York Castle by the Keighley Constable. Wesley, in his powerful "Appeal to men of reason and religion" on behalf of the persecuted Methodists, is our informant as to this incident. He tells us that on the 4th of December, 1745, the Rev. Henry Wickham, one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the West Riding of Yorkshire, wrote an order to the Constable of Keighley, commanding him "to convey the body of Jonathan Reeves (whose real crime is the calling of sinners to repentance), to His Majesty's gaol and Castle of York, suspected," said the precept, "of being a spy among us, and a dangerous man to the person and government of His Majesty King George."\*

This was the year of the Scottish Rebellion under the young Pretender, and the enemies of Methodism made many attempts in different parts of the country to identify the preachers with the rebels, in order to get them imprisoned or banished from the kingdom. But the King had few more loyal subjects than the Methodists, for in that very year, 1745, the Rev. C. Wesley published a volume of hymns containing among others two special prayers "For His Majesty King George."

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\*The Rev. H. Wickham was Vicar of Guiseley from 1724 to 1772. On another occasion he signed a warrant for the apprehension of Mr. Wesley as a vagabond. See also Mitchell's life, p. 71.

Jonathan Reeves was held for some years in high esteem by Wesley and was remarkably blessed to the people of Ireland where he laboured in 1749 and 1750. He relates his experiences in a letter to Mr. Wesley dated July 24th, 1749. From sentences in this letter it appears that it was customary in those days to act as in times of more recent revival, and Reeves gives good reason for the usage. "What a blessing it is," says he, "when any one finds that peace (the peace of God), he declares it openly before all the people, that we may break off and praise God. If this was always done, it would be good for many souls. The first that found it on Sunday evening spoke before all, and we praised God. The moment she spoke, another, and then another found peace, and each of them spoke aloud and made the fire run through the whole congregation."\*

Reeves continued to preach in Wesley's connexion until he was ordained a clergyman of the Church of England in the year 1760.†

The members of the little society at Keighley were not without their troubles. John Wilkinson was threatened with the loss of his employment if he did not give up his new religion, as it was called. He mentioned the circumstance to his friends at Birstall, and they immediately advanced him a small sum of money that he might commence business on his own account; he did so and prospered in it.

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\*Wesley's Journals, ii, 153.

†Reeves was probably a native of Birstall. See Nelson's Journal, p. 8r.

## CHAPTER IV.

WHEN the Stuart rebellion was expected in 1744, commissioners were appointed with authority to impress as soldiers all who were brought before them whose lives were disorderly, or who had no apparent means of obtaining an honest livelihood. One of these commissioners was the Rev. Mr. Coleby, Vicar of Birstall, who appears to have been Nelson's bitterest enemy. To rid the parish and West Riding of him, he had Nelson arrested while preaching at Adwalton in the house of John Booth on May 4th, 1744.

Unquestionable evidence was produced to prove that Nelson was not the character over whom the commissioners had jurisdiction, but all to no purpose. The vicar persisted and secured his condemnation. This was at Halifax, from whence Nelson was taken to Bradford. Nelson says: "When we were about half way between Halifax and Bradford one of the soldiers said to me, Sir, I am sorry for you, for the captain is ordered by the commissioners to put you in the dungeon; but I will speak to him; and if he will let me have the care of you, you shall lie with me, for the dungeon is as loathsome a place as ever I saw. I thanked him for his offer, and when we got to Bradford, we were drawn up in the street where the cross stood." This was the triangular opening at the top of Kirkgate. Two sides of the opening were occupied by butchers' shambles, having slaughter houses in the immediate neighbourhood. I well remember the dungeon and the old shops over it. It is said to have been divided into two compartments, for male and female prisoners, each about three yards square. "The captain went and fetched the people of the dungeon, and said, 'Take this man, and put him in the dungeon, and take this other along with you' (a poor, harmless man, all the clothes on whose back were not worth a shilling: neither did they lay anything to his charge, when he was ordered for a soldier). But when we came to the dungeon door, the soldier who spoke to me by the way, went to the captain, and said, 'Sir, if you will give me charge over Mr. Nelson, my life for his, he shall be forthcoming in the morning.' But the captain threatened to break his head if he spoke about me any more. A little water which I asked was refused me by the captain, although I had had nothing all the day, except a little tea in the morning. But my

Master never sends His servants a warfare at their own charge : He gives strength according to the day, for when I came into the dungeon, that stunk worse than a hog sty by reason of the blood and filth which sink from the butchers who kill over it, my soul was so filled with the love of God, that it was a paradise to me.

"About ten, several of the people came to the dungeon door, and brought me some candles, and put me some meat and water in through the hole of the door. When I had eaten and drunk, I gave God thanks; and we sang hymns almost all night, they without, I within.

"The same night, a man that lives in Bradford, came to the dungeon, and though he was an enemy to the Methodists, when he smelt the ill savour of the place, said, 'Humanity moves me.' He went away directly, and about eleven came again, and said, 'I will assure you that I am not in your way of thinking; but for all that, I have been with your captain, and offered him ten pounds bail for you, and myself as prisoner, if he will let you lie in a bed; but all in vain for I can get nothing from him but bad words. If the justice were in town, I would have gone to him, and would soon have fetched you out. But since it is as it is, I pray God plead your cause.'"

The name of this man, James Eastwood, an innkeeper in Ivegate, deserves to be remembered. Among those who took part in the prayer meeting held at the door of the dungeon were Nelson's brother Joseph, Hannah Scholefield, and Martha Cowling, of Birstall, John Murgatroyd, of Gildersome, and Betty Firth, of Great Horton. The prisoners had not even a stone to sit upon, but only a little foul straw to lie down on. "At four in the morning," Nelson says, "My wife and several more came to the dungeon, and spoke to me through the hole of the door, and I said, 'Jeremiah's lot is fallen upon me!' My wife said, 'Fear not, the cause is God's, for which you are here, and He will plead it himself: therefore be not concerned for me and the children; He that feeds the young ravens will be merciful to us: He will give you strength for your day; and after we have suffered awhile, He will perfect that which is lacking in our souls, and then bring us where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest.' So they all said that were with her at the door." Several of these Christian friends had walked from five to seven miles, in the dead of the night, to sympathise with their imprisoned preacher.\*

"About five in the morning," says Nelson, they took me out and we were guarded to Leeds, and stood in the street till ten. Hundreds flocked to see me. Some said, 'It is a shame

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\*Stamp, Bradford, 15.

to send a man for a soldier for speaking the truth; for many of our neighbours that follow the Methodists, and were as wicked before as any people in the town, are now like new creatures; we don't hear an ill word come out of their mouths.' Others cried, 'I wish they were all hanged out of the way, for they make people go mad. One cannot get drunk or swear, but every fool must correct us, as if we were to be taught by them. But I hope they will now be brought to nought, for this man is one of the worst of them.' "

Mark the providence of God in the arrest and the prolonged detention and suffering of His servant.

He was undoubtedly the very opposite of the characters the law intended to be taken for the army. His detention was a great injustice and appeared to be the stoppage of a glorious work. How was it that God did not crown the efforts of Nelson's friends for his release, or better treatment, with more success? A Mr. Charlesworth offered £500 bail for Nelson on the day of his arrest. A Mr. Brooke appeared for him before the commissioners. In Leeds several would have given bail for him, but here again £100 was refused even for a night's release from prison. Why was this permitted?

Subsequent events show us that only by a man brave as Daniel; only by a suffering witness could God awaken Bradford, York, and other towns right on to Newcastle, and He found His man in Nelson, and therefore let him undergo these great trials, supporting him marvellously all the while.

On his way to York, as he was standing in Leeds among the soldiers, he says, "A jolly, well dressed woman came up to me, and put her face almost to mine, and said, 'Now, Nelson, where is thy God? Thou said'st at Shent's door, as thou wast preaching, thou wast no more afraid of His promise failing, than thou wast of dropping through the heart of the earth.' I replied, 'Look in the 7th Chapter of Micah, 8th and 10th verses.' *'Rejoice not against me O mine enemy: when I fall I shall arise; when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me. . . . Then mine enemy shall see it; and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the Lord thy God? Mine eyes shall behold her; now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets.'* "

Wherever Nelson went, among officers, soldiers, citizens, or in prison, he reproved sin, defended truth, and preached the gospel as only a man under divine influence can preach. His knowledge and use of scripture, and his strong common sense was that of a man taught of God, and its effects were manifest and lasting. The few and feeble societies in Birstall, Keighley, &c., doubtless felt as sheep without a shepherd, and to them at



the time God's providence would be inscrutable, but we now see that at the King's cost, and practically guarded from mob violence by his position as a conscript, Nelson was being conducted from town to town to sow seed which even to day is producing fruit. On the journey of the conscripts North, Nelson came to York, and appears to have been the first to introduce Methodism into that city. Hear the account of the reception of this notable confessor by the bad and good of York. "We were guarded through the city; but it was as if hell were moved beneath to meet me at my coming. The streets and windows were filled with people, who shouted, and huzzaed, as if I had been one that had laid waste the nation. But the Lord made my brow like brass, so that I could look on them as grasshoppers, and pass through the city as if there had been none in it but God and myself."

"I found that the people at York looked upon one that is called a Methodist as one who had the plague, and infects all he comes near, and they blessed God that none had come to preach there."

"On Sunday, the 13th, at night, Hannah Scholefield and I, with our brother Houghton from Manchester, and two or three more, went into the fields thinking to retire; but some had seen us and told others that we were going to sing hymns. In a few minutes we had over a hundred to keep us company. We sang two hymns and I gave them an exhortation. They received my word with meekness and wished to hear me again. We went a mile another way, but there were people walking there also, who, knowing me, flocked to us, and desired to hear what sort of doctrine it was which caused all men to hate us. By this time a good company were come together, desiring to hear me, and God gave me to speak plainly, and to their hearts. When I had done, several of them said they would go ten miles to hear such another discourse. The prejudice seemed taken out of their minds at a stroke, and they cried, 'This is the doctrine which ought to be preached, let men say what they will against it.'

"I had some every day to dispute with me, and every night some to converse with me, who wanted to know the way to Zion. The people now cried out, 'When will Mr. Wesley come, for here are thousands in this town that would gladly hear him?' Indeed I found a great desire in them to know the way of salvation; yea, and they seemed willing to be saved in God's own way, that is *from* their sins, not *in* them. Surely the Lord will be mindful of them, and give them teachers after his own heart."

John Wesley saw the purpose of God in these trials appoint-

ed for His servant, and wrote to him while at York: "Who knows how many souls God may by this means deliver into your hands? Shall not all these things be for the furtherance of the gospel?"

To encourage the captive brother the great evangelist travelled to Durham and thus exhorted him: "Brother Nelson, lose no time; speak and spare not, for God hath work for you to do in every place where your lot is cast, and when you have fulfilled His good pleasure, He will break your bonds in sunder, and we shall rejoice together."

Lady Huntingdon did not forget the Yorkshire mason thus unlawfully impressed into the army, but exerted all her influence to obtain his discharge. She obtained an interview with the Earl of Sunderland, Brigadier General of the King's forces. On a faithful representation of the case, his lordship promised that the captive preachers, Nelson and Beard, should be set at liberty in a few days. This intelligence was communicated to Nelson by Charles Wesley, while her ladyship wrote to inform Mr. Ingham, who also had taken an active part in seeking Nelson's release, of the success of her application.\*

Charles Wesley, then in London, says, under date Monday, May 14th, 1744, "We prayed mightily for our dear brother Nelson, pressed for a soldier, and a prisoner at York."

On Wednesday, June 6th, he says, "Toward the end of my discourse at the Chapel, Mr. Erskine was sent to receive a soldier brought by Mr. Shent, to redeem John Nelson. He immediately took him to Lord Stair's, and got a discharge for John Nelson. Our brother Downes also was received out of the mouth of the lion. Our prayers return thick upon us."

As Nelson returned home after his release, he says concerning Leeds, "I preached in an open yard, to a large company of rich and poor, that did not attend our preaching before I was sent as a soldier. Thus we see that which the enemies of the Lord Jesus do to hinder His gospel, helps to enlarge His kingdom. Not one in Leeds opened his mouth against me, but hundreds said they were glad to see me at liberty again."

"After some time," he says, "I went to York, and found the seed sown in my captivity had sprung up, for nineteen had found peace with God, and twice as many were under conviction, though they had no one to instruct them in my absence; but the little books I had left them, viz., the sermon on 'Awake thou that sleepest, etc.,' had been of great use to them."

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\* Lady Huntingdon's Memoir, 1, p. 258.



A letter also reached Nelson from Sunderland, which induced him ere long to visit that town. "Two men that had conversed with me, when I was a captive there, had found the Lord; and they said that their souls panted for the salvation of their neighbours. So I see that God leads the blind by a way that they know not, for I thought that all I had said there was as water spilt on the ground. Soon after I went to Newcastle, and laboured there about three months, and had an opportunity to visit them at Sunderland. I preached upon the cross to the greatest part of the town, who behaved well, and stood all the time, though the snow was eight or nine inches deep, I went there as often as I could, and God visited many with His salvation then, as also at Painshee and Biddick, who blessed God that I had been sent among them. They said that they would pray for our minister (the vicar of Birstall) who was the cause of my coming; for they were more beholden to him than to me; and let him intend what he would, they had reason to bless God on his behalf."

Even at Birstall the brave endurance and forgiving spirit of this bold confessor bore fruit. In a letter to Mr. Wesley dated February 1st, 1747, Nelson says, "We have a great awakening in this place also, occasioned by the death of an old gentleman that was concerned in sending me for a soldier. About two months before he died, he sent for me, and I spake plain to him; he trembled and wept bitterly, and desired me to come again; and I found him under as great convictions as ever I saw a man. After my third visit he told me God had visited him with great love; so that all pain both of body and soul departed from him for some time. His pain of body returned, but he found God had got a deal of work to do in his soul. I was with him the day before he died, and he said, 'Last night at twelve o'clock God changed me, and I have as great encouragement to die as ever man had.' He desired me to preach over him, and continued to praise God, and to tell every one that came near him what God had done for his soul. He never complained of either pain or sickness, but seemed to be sanctified body, soul, and spirit. I preached over him and God laid his hand upon many that had been enemies before. Now they flock to hear the word, and the Lord works amongst us."<sup>\*</sup>

In those days the preacher stood in the street,—the coffin of the deceased in front of him, and literally preached over the dead. What a truly Christian scene! The fearless confessor declaring the gospel of salvation over the body of his former foe, subdued, saved, and glorified,—in the presence of the dead man's confederates, and overcoming them also by the word of truth and love.

<sup>\*</sup>Arminian Magazine, 1778, p. 530.

The penitent persecutor found mercy. Judgment equally striking fell upon the presumptuous. Gibson, the deputy constable, who seized this man of God at Adwalton, after having repeatedly declared that if his arm rotted from his shoulder, he himself would "press Nelson," realised but too soon, the consequences of his daring. Paralysis succeeded inflammation, and the use of his arm never returned. What the personal history of the vicar of Birstall was, after the transaction which alone has made him notorious, is shrouded in oblivion. "It is however, a fact well known, that his only child must have sought an asylum in the parish workhouse, but for the united contributions of some Church friends and Methodists."\*

Reverting to the proceedings of Nelson, we find in the year 1746, Betty Firth of Great Horton, one of the little company who held the prayer meeting at the dungeon door in Ivegate, Bradford, became the housekeeper of her uncle, Matthew Sugden of Low Moor, then called Wibsey Moor. Though not a Methodist, Sugden so far acceded to the wishes of his niece, as to allow John Nelson to preach every other week beneath his roof. Edward R. Leeds, Esq., one of the Magistrates of the West Riding, was at that period the owner of the property, and hearing of Nelson preaching in the house of one of his tenants, threatened Sugden with summary ejection, should he venture to transgress a second time. Sugden, in defending himself, threw all the blame upon his niece, but respectfully requested that the landlord, ere carrying his threat into execution, would hear Nelson for himself. He did so, and although in no respect whatever a religious man, was so pleased with what he saw and heard, as to befriend the mason-preacher ever after. Squire Leeds, like many others, was deeply impressed by the godliness, shrewdness, and noble courage of this brave English workman, and invited him on one occasion to dine with him at Milford Hall, near Tadcaster, which was also one of his houses. If the following incident refers to Squire Leeds, as it probably does, the magistrate and the Methodist must have taken a great liking to each other, for Nelson without giving the name, says that on a journey "I called at a gentleman's house, where was much company, and he insisted I should stay and dine with him." To this invitation Nelson replied, "Sir, I don't care to affront you in your own house." "What do you mean?" he said. I answered, 'If I affront the gentlemen at your table, it will affront you; and I do not expect to sit at the table to-day, but I shall hear the name of the Lord blasphemed: though there are two clergymen in the company; and if I do I must reprove them, or carry a guilty conscience home, which I will not do for all you have.' He said,

\*Stamp, Bradford, p. 14.

' I insist of you to dine with me; and you are welcome to reprove sin; and if I be guilty, reprove me first.' I said, ' You sir, as soon as anyone, or I should not love your soul as well as another's.' " Then follows a graphic account of the conversation at table, showing how faithful to his God, and how true to his vocation as a winner of souls this man of God could be.

Milford Hall is well-known to me. It has been tenanted since the days of Squire Leeds by more than one Methodist. The village of Ulleskelf, near Milford Hall, appears to have been the first place in what was afterwards called the York Circuit, which could boast of a Methodist Society. John Nelson was the first preacher who visited it, probably on the occasion to which I have already referred. So far from being offended by the outspokenness of his guest, Mr. Leeds of his own accord accompanied the preacher to the village, in order to protect him from the brutality of a people awfully sunk in ignorance and sin. Nelson took his stand in the open air, and proclaimed to a large congregation the unsearchable riches of Christ. Some of these Christian savages came with a full determination to fight for the church, which appeared to them to be in danger. One of the most zealous and active was George Tricket, a farmer in Ulleskelf; he had filled his pockets with stones to throw at the preacher; but on observing Mr. Leeds, who was a magistrate, standing near Nelson, he did not dare to commence hostilities immediately, but waited for a favourable opportunity. While thus waiting, the light of divine truth penetrated the darkness of his mind, and the word reached his heart. He felt himself to be a sinner, and stood like a condemned criminal before his judge. He dropped the stones behind him, one after another, unobserved; but he could not so easily shake off his guilt; for when he had divested himself of his carnal weapons, he fell to the ground, and gave vent to his feelings by crying aloud for mercy. He was the first fruits of Methodism in this part of Yorkshire, and became an eminently holy man. He was a worthy class leader in Ulleskelf for more than forty years, and died as he had lived, triumphing in redeeming love. Though Mr. Leeds never became a member of the Methodist Society, he was always friendly; and through his influence persecution was never permitted to rear its head, so that Ulleskelf was to some of the first Methodist Preachers what Zoar was to Lot. When persecution raged at York, and many other places, here they were always protected. I must leave Nelson for the present, referring the reader to his journal for many other incidents of thrilling interest, recorded in the same vigorous style as those now given, and invaluable as landmarks of Methodist history.

## CHAPTER V.

FOR any special work God has always made choice of instruments peculiarly fitted for the task, and adapted to lay hold of the people to be dealt with. This was peculiarly the case with the Rev. William Grimshaw, one of the greatest evangelists of the North of England, a man to whom justice has never been fully done for the extent of his labour, and the great influence of his piety and character in Yorkshire and Lancashire. We shall see that his awakening, as in the case of Nelson, was a direct act of God, apart from human instrumentality. Fortunately we have the narrative from one to whom Grimshaw directly communicated his experiences.

Through the kindness of my friend, Mr. G. Stampe, of Grimsby, I am enabled to insert a letter without signature written from Wellington, July 21st, 1746. It is evidently copied from a letter written by Mr. Joseph Williams, of Kidderminster, being in all essential matters the same as one he wrote to the Rev. Malachi Blake, of Blandford, on March 5th, 1745. It however contains additional information, and is therefore inserted instead of the letter of Williams, which may be seen in Myles' Life of Grimshaw, p. 12.

“ Wellington, July 21st, 1746.

Dear Sir,

I am now, according to promise, set down to transcribe the remarkable relation both as to the conversion and success of the Rev. Mr. Grimshaw, a curate of Haworth, near Halifax, in Yorkshire, which an ingenuous and pious correspondent of mine lately transmitted to me in a letter as what he heard from himself in February last when he visited him. The substance, says my friend, of what I learned from him, as touching his conversion and success, is as follows, viz: Mr. Grimshaw is now 38 years of age, was bred at Cambridge, where for two years he was sober and diligent. Then, falling into bad company, he learned to drink and swear, and became as vile as the worst. However, when he had finished his studies he took orders and had a good curateship at Todmorden quickly provided for him. Imagining, not without reason, that his friends if he appeared in his proper shape, would think their money not well laid out in his education, he rather artfully concealed his wickedness than reformed. He refrained as much as possible from gross

swearing, unless in suitable company, and when he got drunk would take care to sleep it out before he came home. Thus he continued about nine years a blind leader of the blind. But about six years ago it pleased God to bring him under awakening and terrifying convictions, without any remarkable means, by the immediate influences of His Holy Spirit. Thereupon, being ignorant of God's righteousness, he went about to establish his own, reformed in every branch and every relation, abstained from every immorality, said many prayers, spent much time in reading and meditation, and that he might leave nothing undone that he could possibly do, he kept two diaries, in one of which, after daily close examination of his heart and ways, he recorded every particular sin he could recollect, then confessed, begged of God pardon, repented, resolved, and prayed for more strength and grace. All this while he was beset sorely with horrid temptations; was tempted to disbelieve his Bible, to think God a hard Master, to despise and undervalue the works of God, to believe Christ to be no more than a mere man, to blaspheme and curse God, and that with the elements of the Lord's Supper on his tongue, &c. Meeting with 'Brooke's Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices,' and finding the cases there described to tally with his own exactly, he was convinced he was Satan's easy prey, and led about captive by him as he pleased, which brought him to the brink of despair. About this time two of his parishioners attempted to make away with themselves, one by hanging himself, the other by cutting his throat, but the life of each was remarkably preserved. Being sent for to him who had cut his throat, his first thought was, he did not know how soon he might do so too. Fifteen months he lay under a spirit of bondage, wrestling not only against flesh and blood, but against angels, &c., and in his own strength, therefore he gained no advantage over his spiritual enemies. The reformation in his deportment and manner of life was conspicuous. He was cried up for a saint, and even the wife of his bosom could bear him witness, that never was any man more changed for the better. But still his heart knew its own bitterness. At last the time for his deliverance came. He being at a friend's house, laid his hand on a book which lay in his way: the moment he opened it, with his face towards a shelf of pewter dishes, an uncommon heat flushed in his face, which surprised him; and turning about he could (not) imagine how the pewter could reflect the heat of the fire at such a distance. Turning to the title page he saw it was *Dr. Owen on Satisfaction*, and immediately his face was saluted with such another flash which renewed his surprise. Dipping here and there in the book, he saw something he wanted to be better instructed

in, and therefore studies it well, is illuminated, hath a new heart given him, and now, Behold he prayeth. He had for a good while been accustomed to intermingle some extempore petitions with his forms, and now he is taught to pour out his soul in prayer before God in the Name of Christ. He saw his need of a Saviour and the freeness, fulness, and suitableness of His grace and merits, and embraces Him in both his arms. After this he did not long continue in that curateship of Todmorden. Nor do I remember any remarkable success he had there. About four years ago he removed to Haworth, which is a curateship belonging to Bradforth. He presently began to preach Christ and the necessity of conversion, and brought forth early fruits of his ministry amongst people as ignorant and brutish as the country is wild and savage. And now, dear Sir, expect a strange relation. . . . One Lord's Day as he was reading the Common Prayer he was seized with a giddiness, or swimming, which prevailed so far that he found himself incapable of proceeding, and thereupon beckoning to a man that was near, desired he might be helped out of the church, for he was very ill. Imagining it a death seizure, he all the way through the churchyard to the clerk's house, most earnestly exhorted all about him to prepare for death, to be always ready to fly to Christ and to abide in Him, etc. As soon as he sat down in the parlour, where he gave one this relation, he found that his arms for an hand-breadth above the elbows, and his legs for a hand-breadth above his knees, were cold as death, and thereupon those about him rubbed and chafed his limbs with a supply of hot cloths, for an hour or more, but he got no heat. While this was doing, he sitting in an erect posture, with eyes open and lifted up to the ceiling, fell into a trance. He thought he saw a dark foul passage, into which he thought he must go, and being entered, saw as it were a very great high wall on the right hand which was Heaven, and another on the left which was Hell. He thought he overheard God the Father holding a conference with the Lord Jesus Christ concerning him, and for a long time it seemed to go very hard against him; for God the Father would not save him because he had not wholly relinquished his own righteousness, to trust solely and entirely in the merits and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, but the Lord Jesus pleaded for him. A long time he was held in suspense, hoping and fearing, for still it seemed to go hard against him. At last he thought he evidently saw the Lord Jesus put down His hands and feet as it were below the ceiling, and he had time enough to see the nail holes in them, which he observed to be ragged and blueish, and fresh blood streaming from each of them. Instantly he was filled with a joyful sense



of his interest in Christ. His legs and arms grew comfortably warm on a sudden, and the vision disappearing, he rose up and found himself perfectly well, and cheerfully performed the evening service."

Those who believe in Divine baptism for special work, will no more treat with lightness the incident now narrated, than they would the narrative of Pentecost. From a reference to it in a solemn covenant made with God in 1752, it is evident that Grimshaw regarded it as a wonderful manifestation of the Deity. To him it was a visitation too solemn and sacred to be made the subject of conversation with even his most intimate friends. The Rev. John Newton says,—“I have had several long and interesting conversations with Mr. Grimshaw, but never heard him mention it; and I do not find that such of his intimate friends as are yet living, were acquainted with many of the particulars related in a letter written by Mr. Joseph Williams, of Kidderminster, a man of unquestionable veracity.” Newton also tells us that “In the afternoon of that memorable Sabbath Grimshaw performed service in the Church, which began at two o’clock, and preached and spoke so long to the people, that it was seven in the evening before he returned home.”

The writer of the letter from Wellington goes on to say: “Since that trance he has never lost sight of his evidence, his heart is kept warm with the blood and love of Christ, and his ministration in the Gospel hath been so remarkably owned of God, that he reckons six score souls savingly renewed, whom as fast as he can discover God evidences a thorough work in their hearts, he forms into classes of ten or twelve each, and takes care to set over every class one man who hath the gift of prayer, who also watches over his class, marks the increase or decay of the work, the individuals of which these heads of classes give an account to the pastor at meetings he now and then holds with them. He observes there in such a diversity in the Spirit’s operations, that scarce any two of them have been wrought upon in the same way. Some have sunk down in the Church under a terrifying sense of Divine wrath, whilst others have been drawn with the cords of love. Some have received a sealed pardon in a few weeks or days, while others have been held many months under a spirit of bondage. In all this work, he acknowledges he has had a great deal of assistance from two laymen in his parish, who, with his approbation, expounded the Scriptures, and gave exhortations to great numbers, who almost every day attend on them in private houses; and more than once he told me, with an air of pleasure, that he verily believed God had converted as many by their services as by his



own. Of these exhorters one holds particular election, the other universal redemption; his business is to hold the balance as even as he can. "He hath about 400 families in his parish, of which he visits 8, 10, or 12 every week, not individually, but several meet together in one house. He hath commonly 1000 hearers, 1100 to 1200 sometimes, one hundred of which in the summer time resort to his ministry from neighbouring parishes. Many wait for him on the Lord's Day and open their cares to him freely before whomsoever. Our hearts were so knit together in love, tho' I told him I was a Presbyterian, that he almost conjured me to make his house my home, house and all, as oft as I go that way in my business; and at parting, once and again, on bended knees, gave me his benediction. Would to God such a spirit prevailed more universally. N.B.—It's very remarkable this Clergyman never has seen or heard any of the Methodists."

From this letter we find that entirely independent of all conference with others, Grimshaw was led, like Lady Huntingdon, Ingham, and the Wesleys, to employ lay preachers. The two alluded to by Williams, we are told by Myles in his *Life of Grimshaw*, were Jonathan Maskew and Paul Greenwood. They were known in Rossendale, in Lancashire, by the appellation of "Mr. Grimshaw's Men." Myles gathered much information in Rochdale (where he was stationed in 1798) which was in Grimshaw's Circuit, and he is likely to be correct as these men would be remembered then. Hardy thinks Darney was one of them, because Williams in his journal says, "Mr. Grimshaw told me that in the good work carried on in his parish he hath had much assistance from two laymen—the one a Scotchman, and an old disciple; the other a parishioner, converted, as he supposeth, under his own ministry." Grimshaw probably named Darney along with the two preachers who figure in the earlier letter as "laymen in his parish," and as his wide labours would be spoken of, it is quite possible that in writing recollections of the interview in his diary, Williams made Darney one of the two designated *Grimshaw's Men*. There is abundant evidence that Darney previous to that time was living in Lancashire, forming societies of his own, and not at all likely to act under Mr. Grimshaw's strict supervision, as these men did. Also in the letter to Blake, Williams expressly says they "were both (he thinks) converted by his (Grimshaw's) ministry"; whereas Darney was converted and a preacher before Grimshaw knew him. How the work of God arose and was carried on locally cannot be better related than in Grimshaw's words in his letter to Gillies: "In this year (1742) our dear Lord was pleased to visit my parish (Haworth). A few souls were

affected under the word, brought to see their lost estate by nature and to experience peace through faith in the blood of Jesus. My church began to be crowded, insomuch that many were obliged to stand out of doors. Here, as in other places, it was amazing to hear and see what weeping, roaring, and agonies many people were seized with at the apprehension of their sinful estate, and the wrath of God." This statement clearly proves that not only Grimshaw's conversion, but also the awakening produced by his preaching was independent of human direction or origin from without; it was a part of that work of the Holy Spirit which at that time was breaking out in different parts of England by so many and such varied agents. Substantially the same doctrines, though quite independently, were preached by the Wesleys, Ingham, Grimshaw, Berridge, and others; and like spiritual experiences followed. Very peculiar convulsions of body also attended the awakening of some persons, to which both the Wesleys and Grimshaw make reference.

When Satan's dominion is seriously attacked he may be expected to oppose the work of God with fierce determination, and in every possible way to discredit it. In this revival accordingly we find that really awakened souls were in many cases only delivered, as in the case of the possessed in Christ's time after violent physical convulsions. These cases of excessive distress were mixed up with others of weak emotional temperament, and the leaders of the work saw that Satan was thus endeavouring to bring it into disrepute by the charge of wild enthusiasm, and hence at an early date, they did all they could to discourage fanaticism. Charles Wesley especially took active steps against what he called "*fits*." June 4, 1743, he says, when at Newcastle: "I went on at five expounding the Acts. Some stumbling blocks, with the help of God, I have removed, particularly the fits. Many, no doubt, were, at our first preaching, struck down, both soul and body, into the depth of distress. Their *outward affections* were easy to be imitated. Many counterfeits I have already detected. To-day, one who came from the alehouse, drunk, was pleased to fall into a fit for my entertainment, and beat himself heartily. I thought it a pity to hinder him; so, instead of singing over him, as had been often done, we left him to recover at his leisure." On June 15th, 1743, Charles Wesley says: "I observed at Newcastle that many more of the gentry come now the stumbling block of the *fits* is taken out of their way; and I am more and more convinced it was a device of Satan to stop the course of the Gospel. Since I have preached it, if I can discern anything, it never had greater success than at this time. Yet we have no fits

among us, and I have done nothing to prevent them, only declared that I do not think the better of anyone for crying out or interrupting my work."\*

That Grimshaw held similar opinions is evident from his letter to Gillies, July 19th, 1754: "Soon after the devil observing such crying and distress of soul, and agitation of body affecting people under the word, he also began to seize people under the word with strange unnatural distortions, convulsions, hideous roarings; to bring, as we plainly saw, contempt and disgrace on the true work of God; for it is remarkable that the generality of such persons, whatsoever pretence of repentance they might then make, dwindled away to nothing. For seven years past, the cryings and agitations in sincere penitents are in a manner ceased and are rarely seen or heard of. The Lord Jesus now carries on His work in the heart in a still, serious, affecting way, and I trust with as great success as ever since it began."

Charles Wesley seems to rejoice in the countenance of the gentry as one of the results of the suppression of fits. Grimshaw was doubtful as to the ultimate good of such accessions. He says, "Whereas this work took place at first mainly among the illiterate, poor and vulgar, it of late has gained the credit and esteem of the more wealthy, wise and learned sort of people. Many such, in most places, are come to experience the life, peace and power of Christ Jesus in their souls. That so it is, is well for them indeed; but whether it presages well for the future prosperity of this work I will not say."† What Grimshaw hesitated to say John Wesley said with the greatest plainness. On Wednesday, July 11th, 1764, he says, "I gave all our brethren a solemn warning not to love the world, or the things of the world. This is one way whereby Satan will surely endeavour to overthrow the present work of God. Riches swiftly increase on many Methodists, so called; what but the mighty power of God can hinder their setting their hearts upon them? And if so the life of God vanishes away."‡

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\* C. W. Journal.

† Gillies, 508.

‡ See also vol. 6, 265; 7, 268 to 289.

## CHAPTER VI.

WE must now present to the reader all we have been able to gather respecting another remarkable man, whose biography has never previously been written. William Darney was, like Nelson, a pioneer in the work of God, which arose in what afterward formed the Haworth Round. He was a shoemaker and a pedlar, respecting whose birthplace, early life and conversion we have no certain knowledge. He was a Scotchman, and might be one of the fruits of a revival which took place in Scotland from 1733 to 1740. Numbers of persons were then awakened to a sense of sin and obtained mercy of the Lord. The Rev. James Robe, minister at Kylsyth, preached at that time with great unction and success on the necessity of the new birth, a change the reality of which Darney undoubtedly experienced in his own soul. Before Wesley or Grimshaw knew anything of him, Darney became, under the leading of the Holy Spirit, the first herald of the gospel in Rossendale, in Lancashire, and in the extreme western border of the West Riding of Yorkshire. We know the exact time of his entrance upon the public ministration of the truth, for in the preface to hymn 162 in the collection published by him in 1752 he says: "In the year of our Lord 1742, after I had begun preaching (sometime when I was under great affliction both of body and mind), I began to question my call to the ministry, although I had a clear calling in October before." Darney is described as a man of prodigious size, speaking a broad Scottish dialect, and when dwelling on the terrors of the Lord, terrible to behold; but a man of deep piety and burning zeal, with a courage that fearlessly defied all opposition. He must have been a very diligent and successful preacher of the word, for in the collection of hymns before alluded to there is one of 104 verses describing the progress of the gospel in divers places in Great Britain, which indicates that he itinerated widely in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Darney also travelled in East Lancashire, selling his wares and preaching for some five years before he became acquainted with Wesley. There was a rich vein of evangelical truth in his preaching, often delivered with the quaintness of some of the old Puritans, which pleased and profited many. Perhaps, too, his popularity was not lessened

by his frequently, at the close of his sermon, giving out an extemporary hymn, adapted to the subject on which he had been discoursing. The poetry was mere doggerel, but it interested the people, and his preaching was made the power of God to the salvation of many. Grimshaw tells us, "In the year 1745, William Darney, a Scotchman, who had been stirred up to preach the gospel with much blessing, about Bradford, Manningham, and divers other places a few miles east of my parish, came and preached in it. The Lord was with him indeed. I have cause to bless God for it." Darney's first sermon in Haworth is said to have been preached in a house in the Ginnel, near the Church gates.

Grimshaw's impressions of this lay preacher were decidedly unfavourable. He had heard that he preached the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, which he then strangely supposed to be an error of Popery. It being reported that Darney was to preach near Haworth, the incumbent resolved to appear at the place appointed, and, by publicly confuting his arguments, prevent his parishioners from being thereby led astray. It was upon the very doctrine which Grimshaw questioned that Darney was preaching when his reverend opponent entered the house. Numerous arguments were brought forward by him to prove that "a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law"; and an appeal was made as to the truth of each proposition, to the Scriptures, the Liturgy, and the Articles of the Church of England. These were authorities to which Grimshaw was accustomed to bow with entire submissiveness; and the thought soon arose, that perhaps he himself was wrong, and the Methodists were right. To learn the truth more certainly, he conversed with Darney in private; but for a time timidly, and with many misgivings. Very near the old parsonage on the moor were quarries which I have often passed, and in them the conversations with Darney were carried on. When the bark of a distant dog, or some other noise was heard, Grimshaw would say, "Hush! there is somebody coming." No doubt the frequenters of the Black Bull, when they heard rumours, would talk of the matter sneeringly; but the few who had countenanced the wandering preacher would rejoice that the parson was becoming interested in the great themes which concerned them so deeply. The effect of these interviews was soon apparent. No further attempt at concealment was made. The confession of the change that had taken place in the views of Grimshaw was at once proclaimed. On an early occasion he gave out the hymns when Darney preached, and soon afterwards took a more decided part by praying in public at one of the services held by the northern

evangelist. The shout of the foe was soon heard, and it was said, "Mad Grimshaw is turned Scotch Will's clerk."

The parsonage was not near the Church as at present, but at Sowden's on the edge of the moor. The following is a curious memorandum respecting it. "May 15th, 1739, at six o'clock in the evening, the houses in Haworth called the parsonage were solemnly dedicated, and so named with *Prayers, Aspersions, Acclamations, and Crossings* by I.S."—that is Isaac Smith, the predecessor of Mr. Grimshaw. My first visit to this house was paid when very young. The Rev. James Everett was preaching at Haworth, and I accompanied my father and uncle, the late Mr. Jonas Sugden, of Oakworth, to hear him. Between the afternoon and evening services we all went to inspect the old parsonage. It is a large farm house commanding a prospect of quiet fields, and the valley of the Worth. In the rear are farm buildings of later date than the house itself. Portions of the structure indicate that it was built in the Stuart period. Probably to give more light, the windows of the front have been modernised. On the west a grove of stunted trees shield the house from the wild winds which very frequently sweep across the moorland immediately behind it. I remember how we stood in the kitchen, or house, as the principle room would be called, where the Wesleys, Whitefield, and many of the bravest of the first race of Methodist preachers sat at the hospitable board of the warm-hearted Vicar of Haworth. We also saw the bed-rooms, and the study in which he poured out fervent prayers to God, and wrote burning words for his people. Mr. Everett tried to buy the strong oaken door studded with nails guarding the porch. The attempt to transfer it to York did not succeed, and it still creaks upon the hinges on which it was hung some 250 years ago.

Rossendale, in Lancashire, owed to Darney the introduction of Methodist preaching and Class meetings. The place in which this rough Scotch evangelist first preached was Heap Barn, connected with a small farm of 25 acres in the occupation of Abe and Elizabeth Earnshaw. It stood on high ground about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Bacup on the left hand side of the road to Todmorden. In the same year he also visited Gawkscholme, a small hamlet at the foot of Langfield Moor, about a mile from Todmorden, where he also preached in a barn. It was rumoured in Rossendale that "a new kind of preacher"—the name of Methodist being then unknown—had come into the neighbourhood, and a young man, John Madin, whose name appears four years later in the Keighley Circuit book as a Steward, was one of his hearers. The sermon made a deep impression



on his soul, and when the meeting concluded, he returned to the barn to give expression to his sorrow for sin, and seek the favour of God. He returned home, however, without obtaining pardon, but after sore temptations, was at length made a partaker of the gospel salvation. Darney, to prevent the fruit of his labours being scattered to the winds, determined to form the new converts into a class. In May, 1744, ten persons were united in fellowship at Gawksholme, of whom J. Madin was one. Although residing five or six miles away, he attended the services every night during the fortnight of the preacher's mission in the neighbourhood, and having joined the class at Walsden, a mile from Gawksholme, and five miles from his own home, he was not once absent during twelve months. Like the primitive disciples, the new convert from Rossendale invited his neighbours; many of whom accompanied him down the wild mountain paths to the place of meeting. Some of these through listening to the rough evangelist were made partakers of the peace of God. John Madin was present at the first service held in Rossendale, in Heap Barn. After service, Darney embraced him, saying, "You are the first fruits of my labour in this place." The congregation must have been as rough as the bleak moor on which they were assembled, consisting of peasants and the drivers of pack horses attracted by the novelty of a religious service. Darney, as we have seen, was equal to dealing with uncouth material. On one occasion, when a fierce looking and gigantic woman, with uplifted dung-fork threatened to knock him down unless he desisted, he continued his discourse, and showed that perfect self-control, blended with true kindness, may overcome the most violent opponents.\*

At the left hand of the road leading from Newchurch to Waterburn, and adjoining Booth Fold, stood a small hamlet called Miller Bain, consisting of four or five houses. Here Darney preached shortly after his first visit to Heap Barn, and having commenced a society, appointed John Madin the leader. These newly formed societies were seldom favoured by a visit from preachers more than once in three weeks. It was difficult with such scanty means of worship to keep the heavenly fire alive, and the little band of believers were glad to travel across the rugged mountains between Heap Barn and Haworth, that they might attend the ministry of Grimshaw. Nothing but ardent devotedness could have induced them, Sabbath after Sabbath, to undertake this rough journey of twenty miles over lone and desolate hills, and unite in worship at Haworth. Their route was by Flower Scarr, Heptonstall, Crimsworth

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\*Jesops Rossendale, p. 40-42.



Dean, and Lower Town, over hills some of which were 1500 ft. above sea level, across deep and rugged valleys; but their new-born zeal surmounted all difficulties. For several years Darney fixed his abode at Miller Barn. Here he carried on the business of a clogger, returning from his rounds of gospel toil,—in which he may also have sold smallwares as a pedlar—to work at his trade, to eke out the means of subsistence.

At an early period of the great revival of the eighteenth century, small societies were raised in different parts of Rossendale. There was a small class at Dean Head, also at Oakenhead Wood, and in the neighbourhood of Goodshaw. It must have been a difficult task to establish societies in a neighbourhood then greatly influenced by the teachings of two ultra-calvinistic preachers, Messrs. Lord and Pickup, whose zeal would probably be intensified if not embittered by their personal animosity. We are not surprised to find the plain, uncultured evangelist, who stood almost alone in the valley, as the promoter of this new gospel enterprise, alluding, sometimes in loud complaint in his halting rhymes, to the antagonism of his antimonian opponents. For some time these little bands of believers were of one heart. The preaching services were held in rotation from house to house, each family being concerned to obtain the benefit of receiving the ark of God to consecrate their dwelling place. J. Madin used to say, "It is impossible to describe the happy moments we had with one another: there was not a jarring string among us." But at length the class in the care of John Madin, numbering about twelve persons, was scattered, and the leader was left to stand alone. The evil done to new converts, by diverting their attention from the essence of the gospel, and showing more concern to make them sectarians than saints, cannot easily be over-rated. How many in the process of being made warm partisans of a sect, have lost "the simplicity that is in Christ."

About 1744, Darney, having been invited by Mr. Leach, of Wardale, near Rochdale, to preach at his house, finding the crowd too great to be accommodated therein, went into the barn. Mr. Leach's little son, a boy about eight years of age, having been set to rock the cradle, was so anxious to hear the new preacher, that he tied a long cord to the cradle, and was thus able at the same time to rock and listen to the sermon. He was strangely impressed with what he heard; and when the evangelist returned to the house, this child paid such close attention to what Darney said, that in his riper years he used to affirm that Darney's preaching and conversation that day gave him a religious bias for life. This boy afterward became

one of Wesley's preachers, and travelled in the Keighley Circuit in the year 1796.

Darney is said to have preached at Padiham as early as 1742, but there is some reason to doubt the accuracy of this statement. It is more likely that his first appearance there was two years later. Padiham was then a place of some thousand or twelve hundred inhabitants. He took his stand on the riding steps, which were then at the corner of the churchyard wall, opposite to the old Black Bull Inn. The first time he came, he was driven away by a mob led on by the clergyman of the parish, who just before had been drinking in a neighbouring inn. But Darney came again, and again, preaching repentance, faith, and the witness of the Spirit. On one occasion when a mob was attempting to pull him down from his stand, with the evident intention of doing him serious bodily injury, a tall, well-built man, who had been listening to what he said, and was greatly affected, stepped up to his side and declared he would knock down the first that touched him. His name was John Wood. This John Wood was one of the first Methodists at Padiham, and one of the firmest friends of Mr. Wm. Sagar, of Colne, of whom we shall hear much that is admirable later. He and Mr. Sagar were frequent co-workers in schemes of Christian service, and Mr. Sagar one day observed to him at Southfield, "You and I, John, have built many a chapel in this parlour." John Wood went to the Sessions at Preston to obtain a licence to preach, the magistrate who was a clergyman, having granted it, and seeing a number of disorderly persons outside the Sessions House, said sarcastically, "There, go and reform that crowd." John bowed, thanked his worship for the licence, availed himself of the opportunity, and preached what was perhaps the first Methodist sermon those men of Preston had ever heard.\*

The first preaching house in Padiham was built in a manner which illustrates how the wisdom of the serpent was necessary in those days of violent persecution. The builder was a member of society named Whitehead. He began as if he intended to build some cottages, as possibly he did; but the other members arranged with him to throw two cottages into one, and so make the building into a preaching house. Accordingly he built the outside walls or shell of the house first; and when anyone noticing that there were no *interior* walls, asked him what he was doing, he said he wanted to get the outside walls up and the slates on while the fine weather lasted, as he could build the inside in the winter. When finished, the house was licensed as a place of worship before it was known in the neighbourhood for what purpose it was intended.†

\* Moore's, Burnley, 20.

† Moore's, Burnley, 20.

## CHAPTER VII.

WE must now leave Darney for a while and trace the growth of Wesley's influence over the societies formed so variously in Yorkshire and Lancashire. Having faithfully done the work of a pioneer in Yorkshire for five years, Nelson doubtless sought the aid of Wesley, by inducing him to include in his northern visitation that portion of the West Riding which was afterward to become the Haworth round. We have already heard how Methodism was brought to Halifax by way of Skircoat Green, and now on Monday, February 24th, 1746, we find Wesley there. He says, "I preached at Skircoat Green, near Halifax, to a whole company of Quakers. The good man of the house, about four score years old, had formerly been a speaker among them. But from fear of man, he desisted, and so quenched the Spirit, that he was in darkness for near forty years, till hearing John Nelson declare the love of God in Christ, light again sprung up in his soul." In all probability Nelson had directed Wesley's attention to Keighley, which he visited for the first time in the same tour. He was on his way to Newcastle, and his notice of this call is extremely brief. "Tuesday February 25th, about nine, I began at Keighley." I presume he refers to preaching a sermon. We learn later that he formally recognised the class of John Wilkinson as one of his societies. The whole visit must have been very short, and refreshment after it hasty, for Wesley reached Newcastle the following day, which meant hard riding. He says, "Thence (from Keighley) finding the snow was so deep I could not go through the vales, I went the straight way, and came to Newcastle, Wednesday the 26th. The most direct route to Newcastle would mean a ride of between ninety and a hundred miles, possibly spending the night at Ripon. The Journal of Wesley makes mention of many such rides. In the same year, 1746, the town had a visit from Charles Wesley, the great poet of Methodism. He says, "On Wednesday, Oct. 22nd, I preached in a yard at Keighley, on 'God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.' Here also is the promise of a plentiful harvest." The yard behind John Wilkinson's house, in Low Street, would probably be that in which John and Charles Wesley preached. The Wesleys and Grimshaw do

not appear to have met before the year 1746. Through Wilkinson and Colbeck, Charles Wesley would hear the story of Grimshaw's conversion and great usefulness. Such a minister of Christ in that benighted age he would naturally yearn to see, hence he takes the opportunity of going to Haworth, where he found both Mr. and Mrs. Grimshaw ill of a fever. He says, "His (Grimshaw's) soul was full of triumphant love. I wished mine in its place. We prayed believingly that the Lord would raise him up again for the service of his church. I read prayers and expounded Isaiah xxxv. All listened; many wept; some received comfort. I returned and exhorted the steady society at Keighley." It is evident that at this time neither Wilkinson nor Colbeck was in a position to offer the Wesleys hospitality, for Charles tells us that he and his companion, Edward Perronet, "lay at a public house, and slept in spite of the serenaders, who entertained my fellow-travellers till the morning." Thus the author of the world-famed hymn, "Crown Him Lord of all," visited Keighley when the sweet singer of our Israel first trod its crooked Low Street, and slept in all probability at the White Bear, as John Booth, the keeper of that inn, afterward became a trustee of the first chapel, and his name appears in the circuit book as the host of John Wesley.

In 1746 we find the first indication of a regular system of providing ministerial oversight for the scattered societies, by the formation of large rounds, hereafter to develop by subdivision into circuits. The appointments at this early stage were for the short period of two months. The word circuit is first used in the minutes of that year; and a list of seven given. The Yorkshire Circuit is No. 5 in that list, and includes Cheshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland, and Lincolnshire. In 1748 the word circuit is not used, but nine *Divisions* are named, of which Yorkshire is the eighth, including what may be taken as nine circuits, viz: 1, Leeds; 2, Birstal; 3, Keighley; 4, Acomb; 5, Syke House; 6, Epworth; 7, Hainton; 8, Grimsby; 9, The Fens. In 1753, we have a list of circuits given in notes taken at the Conference by Jacob Rowell, in which Haworth is united with Leeds, under the designation of Yorkshire and Haworth, and the names of the preachers appointed appear. The next list after that occurs in 1765, when the circuits have grown to 39 in Great Britain and Ireland, of which Haworth is the twenty-first, and that name continues until 1776 when Keighley supersedes it.

In this Conference of 1746 the question was asked—"Ought we not diligently to observe in what places God is pleased to

pour out His Spirit more abundantly? Answer, We ought, and at that time to send more labourers than usual into that part of the harvest, as at this time into Yorkshire and the country round about Coleford." We find the following preachers appointed at the Conference of 1747 to the Yorkshire Circuit.

July and August.	September and October.	November and December.
Thos. Westall.	John Nelson.	J. Bennett.
John Bennett.	Thos. Meyrick.	
	James Jones.	

As Nelson and Reeves preached in Keighley, so would these men probably do. Let us endeavour to obtain a glimpse of them. Thomas Westall was one of the first lay preachers who assisted Wesley and was a faithful labourer in the vineyard for about forty years. Wesley speaks of him\* as the third who offered to help him as a son in the gospel. As a brave soldier of Jesus Christ he had to endure fierce persecution. In the summer of 1744 he was stationed in Cornwall. While preaching at the house of a Mr. Harris, in Camborne, a tall man came in and pulled him down. Mr. Harris demanded his warrant; but he swore, warrant or no warrant, Westall should go with him. So he carried him out to the mob, who took him away to the Church Town. This was on Sunday, and they kept him there till Tuesday morning, and then carried him to Penzance; where in the afternoon, he was brought before three Justices, and asked abundance of questions, to which they required him to answer upon oath. Then Dr. Borlase wrote his *Mittimus*, by virtue of which he was to be committed to the house of correction at Bodmin as a vagrant. So they took him next day to Bodmin. The Justices who met at the next Quarter Sessions at Bodmin, knowing a little more of the laws of God and man, declared Westall's commitment to be contrary to all law, and set him at liberty without delay. He had another very narrow escape at Gwennap, in Cornwall. He mob rushed into the preaching house, put out the candles and then went up to the desk; but it being dark, they could not find the door. At last, when they had broken it down, they found a little boy in it instead of the preacher, whom they beat and sent away. Westall stood by them for some time in the dark, till at last he was taken out of the window by some friends. He went over a hedge but the mob soon overtook him, and brought him back crying out, "We have got the preacher." Two men hearing them, ran to them and desired they would let Westall go, and, as but two had hold of him they did so. While these went to call more of the mob to their assistance. Westall got

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\*Vol. 8-311.

over two hedges into a field of standing corn, where he lay concealed while the mob were busy breaking to pieces the seats etc., in the preaching house. As this took up some time, when they at length followed Mr. Westall, he was gone. Westall died at Bristol in the 76th year of his age, and on his tombstone is the inscription: "He was a pattern of Christian simplicity and humble love for near half a century."

To the Countess of Huntingdon all sections of early Methodism were greatly indebted for deliverance from the hands of unfaithful magistrates and brutal mobs. In her conversion and attachment to the cause we see the providence of God preparing one who could speak to Court or Cabinet on His people's behalf, as did Esther and Nehemiah. Not only were the followers of Wesley illtreated, but so also were several of the itinerants whom Lady Huntingdon sent out. Under these circumstances she addressed a remonstrance to Lord Cartaret, one of the principal Secretaries of State, to which she received, on November 19th, 1745, the following reply:—

“ Madam,

I laid your remonstrance before His Majesty the King; my Royal Master commands me to assure your ladyship that, as the father and protector of his people, he will suffer no persecution on account of religion; and I am desired to inform all magistrates to afford protection and countenance to such persons as may require to be protected in the conscientious discharge of their religious observances. His Majesty is fully sensible of your ladyship's attachment to the House of Hanover, and has directed me to assure your ladyship of his most gracious favour and kindest wishes. I have the honour to be, Madam, your Ladyship's most obedient humble servant, Cartaret.”

The following incident, related by John Wesley to Henry Moore, shows how Divine Providence prepared the heart of George II. to feel kindly towards, and extend protection to his Methodist subjects:—“One of the original Society of Methodists at Oxford joined the Society of Friends, and settled at Kew. Being a man of considerable property, and of exemplary behaviour, he was much respected, and was favoured with free permission to walk in the royal garden. Here he frequently met the King, who conversed freely with him, and with much apparent satisfaction. Upon one of these occasions, his Majesty, knowing that he had been at Oxford, inquired if he knew the Wesleys, adding, “They have made a great noise in the nation.” The gentleman replied, “I know them well, King George; and thou mayest be assured that thou hast not



two better men in thy dominions, nor men that love thee better than John and Charles Wesley." He then proceeded to give some account of their principles and conduct, with which the King seemed much pleased. When Wesley had finished relating this, he said, "We see, sir, the Lord can bring a tale to the ear of the King"; and with deep emotion added, "O, I have always found the blessedness of a single eye, of leaving all to him."\* Possibly in consequence of this circumstance that which Wesley describes in Sermon 107 came to pass, "God stirred up the heart of our late gracious Sovereign to give such orders to his magistrates as, being put in execution, effectually quelled the madness of the people. It was about the same time that a great man applied personally to His Majesty, begging that he would please to "take a course to stop these run-about preachers." His Majesty, looking sternly upon him, answered without ceremony like a King, "I tell you, while I sit on the throne no man shall be persecuted for conscience' sake."

George II. continued to the last the decided friend of civil and religious liberty. It is well known that some evil-minded persons commenced a prosecution against the amiable Doddridge for keeping an academy, which being represented to the King, he instantly put a stop to it, declaring he would suffer no persecution to take place during his reign.† The Prince of Wales also had religious convictions which made him tolerant to Dissenters. "It is certain," says Lady Huntingdon, "that he was in the habit of reading Dr. Doddridge's works, which had been presented to the Princess, and has been heard to express his approbation of them in the highest terms. He had frequent arguments with my Lord Bolingbroke, who thought his Royal Highness fast verging toward Methodism, the doctrines of which he was very curious to ascertain. His Lordship told me that the Prince went more than once privately to hear Mr. Whitefield, with whom he said he was much pleased."

Of John Bennett we have already spoken. At this time he was highly esteemed by Wesley, and had in the earlier months of the year been busily engaged in Derbyshire, Cheshire and Lancashire, introducing Methodism, among other places, into Chester. In a very interesting letter dated March 7th, 1747, he gives us information respecting the formation of societies both in Manchester and Rochdale. "Some young men in Manchester (that spoke with Mr. Charles when he was with us last) have begun a society, and took a room, and have

\*Wesley Anecdotes, 191.

†Lady Huntingdon, 1-67.



subscribed their names in a letter to Mr. Charles, desiring you will own them as brethren, and visit them in your return. They also desire any of us helpers in the gospel may call on them. I have sent their letter to London. Dear sir, do not forget us. I have been at Rochdale some few times since Mr. Charles was there, and begun a little society. The town is alarmed, and in prospect of much opposition, notwithstanding the word is gladly received, and multitudes flock to hear. The town is eight miles from Manchester, directly in your way from Yorkshire. On Monday the 2nd of this instant, as I was expounding in John Heywood's house at Holme, five miles from Manchester, a band of wicked, drunken men with clubs and staves, having a petty steward of a neighbouring gentleman at their head as captain, and gathered together by the blowing of a horn, came and assaulted the house, breaking the windows, and pulling the thatch off some parts of the house. I was obliged to leave off expounding, and we fell on our knees and prayed. The shouts and acclamations for some time abated, and I spoke to the people again. No sooner had I began, but the bells at Eccles and Flixton began to ring, and then they broke into the house. I was directed to go away to a friend's house, which I did, and so escaped their malice. I found such solid peace as I never had done before in trouble. It is not in the power of men or devils to interrupt a man's peace a moment, that looks with a single eye to God."\*

Thomas Meyrick, appointed to labour in the Yorkshire Circuit in the months of September and October 1747, was a native of Cornwall. He was educated for the law, but after he was made a partaker of the grace of God, he gave himself up to the work of the ministry. For several years he was remarkably zealous in propagating divine truth, and endured great persecution in various parts of the kingdom, especially in his own county. In 1742, Meyrick was the subject of one of those remarkable answers to prayer which Wesley frequently records. He was so seriously ill in Newcastle that the physician did not expect him to live till the morning. Wesley was at that time in Newcastle. He says, Saturday December 25th, "The physician told me he could do no more; Mr. Meyrick could not live over the night. I went up, and found them all crying about him; his legs being cold, and (as it seemed) dead already. We all kneeled down and called upon God with strong cries and tears. He opened his eyes and called for me; and from that hour, he continued to recover his strength, till he was restored to perfect health. I wait to hear who will

\* This letter taken from the Arminian Magazine of 1778, p. 471, is dated March 7th, 1747.

either disprove the fact, or philosophically account for it." About two years after Mr. Meyrick left the round, he retired from the Methodist ministry, procured episcopal ordination, and became a curate in the parish of Halifax. He resided for several years in Halifax parish, and, in addition to his parochial duties, taught a school, but he lost the life and power of religion, and became addicted to intemperance, thus affording to us a solemn warning that early zeal and usefulness will not keep a man, unless accompanied by strict watchfulness, which Wesley so strenuously enjoined, and the power of the Divine Spirit.

James Jones who was also the colleague of Nelson and Meyrick in the circuit in September and October, was one of the first fruits of Wesley's labours in Staffordshire. He was a person of considerable property, but became a travelling preacher for some time, and endured great persecutions for the truth's sake, in the defence of which he was as bold as a lion.

Of Francis Walker, the remaining preacher on the round, we know little. He was a native of Tewkesbury, in Gloucestershire; a pious, upright man, with but small ministerial abilities; yet remarkably lively, zealous, and useful. In his Journal of July 15th, 1745, Wesley says, "Mr. Bennet met us at Trewint, and told us Francis Walker had been driven thence, and had since been an instrument of great good, wherever he had been. Indeed, I never remember so great an awakening in Cornwall, wrought in so short a time, among young and old, rich and poor, from Trewint quite to the sea side. Walker appears to have left the Itinerancy in 1753, and settled in Gloucester, where he departed this life in peace.

Wesley gave advice to his early preachers which might well be followed by both orders of the Methodist ministry to-day. "1. Be sure to begin and end precisely at the time appointed. 2. Sing no hymns of your own composing. 3. Endeavour to be serious, weighty, and solemn in your whole deportment before the congregation. 4. Choose the plainest text you can. 5. Take care not to ramble from your text, but keep close to it, and make out what you undertake. 6. Always suit the subject to the audience. 7. Beware of allegorizing or spiritualizing too much. 8. Take care of anything awkward or affected, either in your gesture or pronunciation. 9. Tell each other if you observe anything of this kind. Spend the mornings (from six to twelve) in reading, writing, and prayer; from twelve to five, visit the sick and well; and from five to six use private prayer." This rule supposes that they would conduct a morning preaching service from five to six, and probably an evening service, or meet classes etc., after six p.m. "You have nothing to do but save souls.

Therefore, spend and be spent in this work. And go always not only to those who want you, but to those who want you most." On the 22nd of January, 1747, three months after his first visit to Haworth, Charles Wesley was again in that village. Meanwhile, protests must have been made to Grimshaw from some influential quarter, for he was not allowed to preach in the church, though hospitably entertained at the parsonage. The large house where he preached, probably the old Hall, was not large enough to hold the congregation wishful to listen to him, hence Wesley tells us that he faithfully "remonstrated with his host, telling him that he had feared where no fear was needed, there being no law either of God or man against his use of the pulpit." Grimshaw was heartily ashamed of the over cautious course he had taken, and soon showed in the most open and practical manner that he had espoused the cause of the Methodists at all cost.

To meet the necessities of the growing Keighley society Charles Wesley must have appointed leaders, there being as yet no travelling preacher on the round, and it is consequently almost certain that Thos. Colbeck and others of the first leaders would be his nominees. On April 30th, 1747, John Wesley, after preaching at Hightown and Birstall on Wednesday the 29th, says, "I rode to Keighley. The ten persons I joined (to the society) here are increased to above a hundred. And above a third of them can rejoice in God, and walk as becomes the gospel." This was a very rapid increase in a town containing at that time not more than 2000 inhabitants. Wesley does not seem hitherto to have met the Vicar of Haworth. We have seen that Charles Wesley, in the autumn of 1746, and again in January, 1747, had not only preached in Haworth Church but had so explained the proceedings of the Methodists as to remove all Grimshaw's scruples against them. On May 1st, 1747, we have the first record of a visit to Haworth by John Wesley. There is every reason to suppose that after preaching to, and examining, the society in Keighley, he had gone to Haworth, for a letter of Grimshaw's, written on the 30th, exhibits such unity and warmth of feeling between these devoted men as to imply previous intercourse between them on spiritual matters, and the conduct of the work of God. The afternoon and evening of April 30th would furnish such an occasion. Wesley says, "Friday, May 1st, I read prayers and preached in Haworth Church to a numerous congregation. In the evening I preached near Skircoat Green and baptized Eliz. K. (Kershaw), late a Quaker. Saturday, 2nd., I preached at Halifax to a civil, senseless congregation, at noon at Gildersome, and in the evening at Armley."

In tracing the development of Methodism in the Haworth Round it is again necessary to refer to Darney. Until 1747 the societies he formed were called Wm. Darney's societies, and the ground he covered, his round or circuit. They were under the care of himself and other lay preachers. On Monday, May 4th, we have the first notice of any connection between these societies and Wesley. He had returned to the Haworth Round from Leeds and Birstall, he says, "At his earnest request, I began examining those that are called W.D.'s (Wm. Darney's) societies." Darney had probably asked Wesley to take the pastoral oversight of these societies, and receive himself into the ranks of the itinerant preachers, for we shall see that he expected to be sent into Scotland, and at the Conference of 1748 was accepted as one of Wesley's helpers. John Nelson, Thomas Lee and Thomas Mitchell did the same with the infant churches they formed, and Grimshaw, in 1748, as will be shown, recognised Wesley as the minister holding oversight of the whole area then evangelised. Wesley goes on to say, "At three I preached at Great Harding; in the evening at Roughlee (near Nelson) where there was a large society. But since the men of smooth tongue broke in upon them, they are every man afraid of his brother, half of them ringing continually into the ears of the rest, 'No work, no law, no bondage.' However, we gathered about forty of the scattered sheep, who are still minded to stand in the old paths." "Tuesday, 5th, I preached at Roughlee at five, about eleven at Hinden, and about three at Widdop, a little village in the midst of huge, barren mountains, where also there was a society. Mr. B. had effectually dispersed them, so that I found but three members left." We have seen that Darney had to contend with Calvinists in East Lancashire, and here we find the antinomianism, which some of Ingham's preachers embraced, troubling the infant societies at Roughlee and Widdop. The Mr. B. may have been one of the Batty's of Newby Cote, and if Darney felt unequal to the task of grappling with dissension within the church, he might gladly surrender his flock to the abler shepherding of men like Wesley and Grimshaw. Wesley says further, "We rode thence about five miles to Stonsey Gate, which lies in a far more fruitful country. Here was a larger congregation at six o'clock than I had seen since my leaving Birstall. They filled both the yard and the road to a considerable distance, and many were seated on a long wall adjoining, which, being built of loose stones, in the middle of the sermon, all fell down at once. I never saw, heard, or read of such a thing before. The whole wall, and the persons sitting upon it, sunk down together, none of them screaming out, and very few altering their

posture. And not one was hurt at all, but they appeared sitting at the bottom just as they sat at the top. Nor was there any interruption either of my speaking, or of the attention of the hearers. Wednesday, 6th, I rode to Shore, four miles south from Stonesey, lying about half way down a huge steep mountain. Here I preached at twelve to a loving, simple-hearted people. We then climbed up to Todniorden Edge, the brow of a long chain of mountains, where I called a serious people to repent and believe the gospel. Thursday, 7th. We left the mountains and came down to the fruitful valley of Rosendale. Here I preached to a large congregation of wild men; but it pleased God to hold them in chains. So that even when I had done, none offered any rudeness, but all went quietly away." The places named by Wesley were all first evangelised and the societies gathered by Darney and other lay preachers. They broke up the fallow ground and sowed the seed, and the Wesleys and Grimshaw watered it, taking the oversight of the infant churches, as the following letters of the Vicar of Haworth clearly prove. Nothing is clearer in the history of this great movement than the sovereign choice of instruments by the great Head of the Church, these men did not receive their call from any ecclesiastical organisation but directly from God Himself.

In the first letter from Grimshaw to John Wesley, dated May 30th, 1747, we find the Vicar of Haworth entering into closer relations with the societies of Darney, and thus widening the sphere of his labours. He says, "The societies you formed in Wm. Darney's circuit, I hear are in good state. I went amongst them about Todmorden, the week after you were there, and, to my great comfort, found it so. I likewise observed a general disposition in all sorts to hear the gospel. I exhorted twice that day; for I will not have it called preaching. I afterwards gave a short exhortation to a few, who happened to come too late to hear either of the former. The next morning, about half a mile from thence, in the parish of Heptonstall, in which you also were; and, in my way home, at a friend's house (to whom I had signified my intention two or three days before), I was met, praised be God, by a great multitude. The house was so full that one third part, if not more, I think, stood out of doors. I stood just within the door threshold for the convenience of all. I exhorted near an hour and a half. The Lord gave me great freedom and power. They were as attentive, serious, and civil, as those of the day before. At my coming home I met with a letter from a clergyman, about fourteen or fifteen miles from hence, and not above two or three from that place where you preached in Rossendale before you

set off to Manchester. He desired me to come and preach at his chapel on the morrow. I embraced the request, finding freedom in my heart, perceiving that a door is hereby opened, and that the Lord seems to make my way plain before me. I purpose to set out to-day at noon, and to walk it, having an agreeable friend to bear me company. I know the Lord is with me. You will not fail to present my tender respects to your brother: the same I desire to all the sincere servants and seekers of the blessed Jesus, your Redeemer and mine. O may we be kept faithful to Him to the end: may we ever go forth in His strength, incessantly making mention, yea, loudly proclaiming His righteousness only, indefatigably labouring to glorify Him in our hearts, lips, and lives, which are His, and continually endeavouring to bring innumerable sons and daughters to glory by Him. This week two members of our society, a married man and woman, are gone to rest with the precious Lord. Blessed be His Name! To Him I heartily commend you and yours. Lord Jesus, sweet Jesus, be with you."

In the next letter we have from Grimshaw very graphic descriptions of his ministerial life, and the fervent spirit of the man breathes through every line. Writing from Ewood, August 20th, 1747, to J. Wesley, Grimshaw says: "Wherever these lines find you, may they find you full of the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind, fighting in the strength of our Lord the good fight of faith, pulling down the strongholds of Satan, and industriously labouring to deliver multitudes of poor sin-stained souls out of the kingdom of darkness into the glorious light and liberty of the sons of God! Such success let us daily and heartily beseech our dear Redeemer to bless all His faithful ministers with, wherever He sends them. You will desire to know how I do. O, dear sir, hearty and happy in the Lord; and how my ministry, or rather, the present state of my parish. Blessed be God, flourishing still more and more. Our societies are in general very lively in the Lord; and several others, though not as yet joined in society, are nevertheless come to a sense of the pardoning love of God, others are under deep concern, or eagerly hungering and thirsting after our Redeemer. Two under my own roof are just now under true conviction, one a girl about eighteen years old, and the other a boy about fourteen; and I hope my own little girl, between ten and eleven years old. It is near six months since she first began to show a serious concern for her sinful state. The method which I, the least and most unworthy of my Lord's ministers, take in my parish, is this: I preach the gospel, glad tidings of salvation



to penitent sinners, through faith in Christ's blood only, twice every Lord's day the year round (save when I expound the Church Catechism, and thirty-nine Articles, or read the Homilies, which, in substance, I think my duty to do in some part of the year annually on the Lord's Day mornings). I have found this practice, I bless God, of inexpressible benefit to my congregation, which consists, especially in the summer season, of perhaps ten or twelve hundred; or, as some think, many more souls. We have also prayers, and a chapter expounded, every Lord's Day evening. I visit my parish in twelve several places monthly, convening six, eight, or ten families in each place, allowing any people of the neighbouring parishes that please to attend that exhortation. This I call my monthly visitation. I am now entering into the fifth year of it, and wonderfully, dear sir, has the Lord blessed it. The only thing more are our funeral expositions, or exhortations, and visiting our societies in one or other of the three last days of every month. This, I purpose, through the grace of God, to make my constant business in my parish so long as I live. O, dear sir, I know not what to say, I know not what to do. Sometimes I have made more excursions into neighbouring parishes to exhort, but always with a Nicodemical fear, and to the great offence of the clergy, which, until lately, almost made me resolve to sally out no more, but content myself in my own bounds: till lately, I say; for on Wednesday was six weeks, from about five o'clock in the afternoon to about twelve at night, and again for some hours together, I may say, the day following, my mind was deeply affected with strong impressions to preach the gospel abroad; the event I left to the Lord, fearing to be disobedient to what, I trust, was the heavenly call. The first thing suggested to me was to visit Wm. Darney's societies; I accordingly met one of them about a month ago. Last week I struck out into Lancashire and Cheshire, Mr. Bennet bearing me company. We visited the societies in Rochdale, Manchester and Hulme, in Lancashire, and Booth Bank in Cheshire. From thence we came back by Booth Bank to Manchester, visited the society a second time, and there we parted. I called and spent a part of two days with William Darney's societies, particularly those in Todmorden, Shore, Miller-barn, Rossendale, Bacup, Croston, Stoneshawfate and Crimsworth Dean; everywhere the Lord was manifestly with us: great blessings were scattered, and much zeal and love, with great humility and simplicity, appeared in most people everywhere."

They must have let no grass grow under their feet, for Grimshaw says: "The whole visit found me employment for near five days. O, it was a blessed journey to my soul! I now,



in some measure, begin to see the import of our Lord's design, by that deep impression upon my mind above mentioned. I am determined, therefore, to add, by the Divine assistance, to the care of my own parish, that of so frequent a visitation of Mr. Bennet's, Wm. Darney's, and the Leeds and Birstall societies, as my convenience will permit, and their circumstances may respectively seem to require, all along eyeing the Lord's will and purposes for me. If I find the Lord's pleasure be that I must still launch out further, I will obey; for He daily convinces me more and more what He has graciously done, and will do, for my soul. O! I can never do enough in gratitude and in love to Him, for the least mite, if I may reverently so speak, of what His blessings are to me. O, dear sir, that I may prove faithful and indefatigable in His vineyard! That I may persevere to the last gasp, steadfast, immoveable, and always abounding in His work, do you pray.—The same shall be mine for you, your dear brother, and all our fellow-labourers. My pulpit, I hope, shall be always at your's, and your brother's service; and my house, as long as I have one, your welcome home. The same I'll make it to all our fellow-labourers, through the grace of God."

In another letter of Grimshaw to J. Wesley, written from Ewood, November 27th, 1747, we get further and most interesting information respecting the spread of Methodism, and the connection of the Vicar of Haworth and Thomas Colbeck with it. "Rev. and very dear Brother, your's bearing date the 20th of this month, I yesterday received. I answer again, and by the length of my letter it will appear, I answer not in haste, though I must assure you I have as little leisure for writing as anything I do. The want of preachers here at present is very great. That the harvest, in these parts, is really large, and the labourers but very few, is very manifest; why it is so perhaps the Lord of it only knows. Indeed, you, in some sort, assign a reason for it. But, dear sir, are there such plenty of helpers in Cornwall? Send us one or two of them, without further entreaty. You desire a particular account of the progress of the Lord's work here. Indeed, I have the pleasure of assuring you, that I think it never went better, from its first appearance amongst us, than it has done within these two months. I may say, at Leeds, Birstall, Keighley, Todmorden, Rossendale, Heptonstall, Pendleforest, and in my own parish, the societies are very hearty; souls are daily added to the church; and, I may say, multitudes, on all sides (many of whom have been enemies to us and our Master's cause), are convinced of the truth, run eagerly to hear the gospel, and (as I told you in my last) are continually crying out for more preachers. New and numerous

classes have been lately joined. Were not matters thus with us, you may easily suppose I should not be so urgent with you for assistance. I think my public exhortations (alias what I call my monthly visitations) in my parish, were never so visibly blessed, I praise God, for these four years past, as they have been within these two last months. Such a mighty presence of God has been in those visitations, and also in many of our weekly class meetings, as I have rarely seen before. This evening I am venturing, by the Divine assistance, upon a public exhortation, in a wild, unchristian place, called Midgley, four miles west from Halifax, where, of late, I have a great part of my residence; and I hope my attempt will have the Lord on my side. I hope brother Bennet fails not to inform you how well the work of God flourishes in Derbyshire, Cheshire, and in the South of Lancashire, particularly about Bolton, Chowbent, &c. Mr. Lunell, whose wife has lately experienced the pardoning love of God, wrote me a delightful account of the state of the church at Leeds. This much of my incoherent relation of our Lord's works in these parts. Brother Bennet, Nelson, and I, not only I hope love as brothers, but are cordially united in carrying on the Lord's work. I hope we believe, and profess, and preach, one thing—*Jesus and Him* crucified. If you know them, you know me. About three weeks since brothers Nelson and Colbeck were all night with me. Before then I accidentally met with brother Bennet at Bank, near Heptonstall, when I went to meet all the Heptonstall parish classes. Last week I met brother Colbeck, and all the Keighley parish classes; and about six weeks ago I visited those of Leeds and Birstall; about a month since those of Todmorden, and some of Rossendale."

At this time not only does Darney appear to have sought Wesley's supervision for his societies, but also to have placed himself under the direction of the founder of Methodism, for in the letter of Grimshaw, May 30th, 1747, from which I have already quoted, he says, "William Darney desires a particular letter from you respecting his going into Scotland. He will go soon after Whitsuntide. I shall see him, I hope, to-morrow." Darney probably went to Scotland, for in Steele's Methodism in Barnard Castle, it is stated that Darney preached the gospel there about the year 1747. This was probably on his way to or from Scotland. If Darney went to Scotland he could not have remained long there, for we find in the Minutes of Conference, held in London, 1748, the question, "What assistants do we agree to receive into the work." The answer shows that T. Colbeck, W. Darney, and C. E. Webster, of Yorkshire, were three of the six whose names are given.

Darney's first appointment after being received as a

travelling preacher was to the Haworth Round, and the old circuit book contains the following entries respecting payments to him:—

Oct. 14, 1748,	Gave Wm. Darney ...	...	0	1	7
July 11, ,,	Wm. Darney's Wife...	...	1	10	0
Jan. 10, 1749,	To Wm. Darney's Wife ...	...	1	10	0
Jan. 10, ,,	A pair of Boots for W.D. ...	...	0	14	0
Apr. 8, ,,	To W. Darney's Wife ...	...	2	2	0

It would be while in this round that Darney had to face a furious mob. He was preaching at Yeadon, where a little society had just been formed, when Reynolds, the curate of Guiseley, came at the head of a large mob, who threw eggs in his face, pulled him down, dragged him out of the house on the ground, and stamped upon him. The curate himself then thought it was enough, and bade them let him alone and go their way. He was also thrown into a pond at Accrington, had his wig filled with filth, and suffered various indignities from an infuriated mob who hated his gospel message. At length he attained the usual distinction conferred on zealous evangelists by unprincipled magistrates and bigoted clergy, and was cast into prison. He was a man of brave spirit, but could also act with policy when occasion served. Once, after preaching at Roughlee, he had to pass through Colne to Wycollar. He saw the Colne mob, led on by a man named Bradshaw, coming to meet him. Remembering that a bone will sometimes allay the fury of a savage dog, he offered Bradshaw all he had—a shilling, and the paltry bribe induced the doughty chieftain and his followers to conduct the preacher safely through the town.

## CHAPTER VIII.

IN the year 1748 we have some of the most dramatic experiences of Wesley in the Round whose history is being written. On Sunday, August 21st, Wesley says: "I preached, as usual, at Leeds and Birstall. Monday, 22nd—After preaching at Heaton, I rode to Skircoat Green. Our brethren here were much divided in their judgment. Many thought I ought to preach at Halifax Cross; others judged it to be impracticable, the very mention of it as a possible thing having set all the town in an uproar. However to the Cross I went. There was an immense number of people, roaring like the waves of the sea. But the far greater part of them were still as soon as I began to speak. They seemed more and more attentive and composed, till a gentleman got some of the rabble together, and began to throw money among them, which occasioned much hurry and confusion. Finding my voice could not be heard, I made signs to the people that I would remove to another place. I believe nine in ten followed me to a meadow, about half a mile from the town, where we spent so solemn an hour as I have seldom known, rejoicing and praising God."

Wesley was too modest to relate in full all he endured. We are told that he boldly stood by the Market Cross, covered with mire thrown by the rabble. Someone threw a stone which struck him on the cheek, causing blood to trickle down his face. Then it was that he made signs to the people that he would move. His blood-stained face awed the crowd, and he passed through the mob untouched. On the 24th August, 1748, Wesley preached at Keighley in the afternoon, and then rode on to Haworth, when Grimshaw at five o'clock read prayers, and Wesley preached to more than the Church could contain. He slept at the old parsonage, and had the Church nearly filled again the following morning at five. These two noble men and the young disciple, T. Colbeck, were that day to endure the test of fiery trial. It was probably Grimshaw's first experience of contact with riotous mobs. Colbeck had already shared the sufferings of the little flock in Keighley. Wesley was becoming inured to such experiences.

The Rev. George White who had been educated at Douay, in France, for the Romish priesthood, upon his recantation was

recommended for preferment to the Vicar of Whalley, by Archbishop Potter, and became curate of Colne and Marsden, on the border of Lancashire. He was a choice specimen of the worst class of clergy in his day. He frequently abandoned his parish for weeks together, and on one occasion is said to have read the burial service more than twenty times in a single night, over the dead bodies that had been interred in his absence. After one of these seasons of gross neglect he brought home an Italian lady whom he married at Marsden. But soon afterwards he was torn away from his bride by being imprisoned for debt.

This worthy felt called upon to preach a sermon against the Methodists at Colne, on July 24th, 1748, and at Marsden on August 7th. This sermon was published with an epistle dedicatory to the Archbishop of Canterbury, on Nov. 7th, 1748, and a rare copy of it is now in the Allan Library. His text was 1 Cor. xiv., 33, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." Mr. White charged the Methodist preachers with being "authors of confusion, open destroyers of the public peace," and endeavoured to excite prejudice against them on trade grounds also. Although magistrate as well as parson, he set the law at defiance and issued the following proclamation: "Notice is hereby given, if any man be mindful to enlist into His Majesty's Service, under the command of the Rev. Mr. George White, Comander in Chief, John Bannister, Lieut. General of His Majesty's forces, for the defence of the Church of England, and the support of the manufactory in and about Colne, both which are now in danger, etc., etc.; let them now repair to the Drum-head at the Cross, when each man shall have a pint of ale for advance, and other proper encouragements."

Wesley, accompanied by Grimshaw and T. Colbeck, of Keighley, confronted the Colne mob at Roughlee and Barrowford. He says, "I was a little afraid for Mr. Grimshaw, but it needed not; for he was ready to go to prison or death for Christ's sake." Writing, it is supposed to White, Wesley says of Grimshaw and Colbeck, "'The mob closed them in, tossed them too and fro with the utmost violence, threw Mr. Grimshaw down, and loaded them both with dirt and mire of every kind, not one of your friends offering to call off your bloodhounds from the pursuit. The other quiet, harmless people, who followed me at a distance, to see what the end would be, they treated still worse; not only by the connivance, but by the express order of your deputy. They made them run for their lives, amidst showers of dirt and

stones, without any regard to age or sex. Some of them they trampled in the mire, and dragged by the hair, particularly Mr. Mackford, who came with me from Newcastle. Many they beat with their clubs without mercy. One they forced to leap down (or they would have thrown him headlong) from a rock ten or twelve feet high, into the river. And when he crawled out wet and bruised, they swore they would throw him in again, which they were hardly persuaded not to do. All this time you sat well pleased close to the place, not attempting in the least to hinder them. And all this time you were talking of justice and law! Alas, sir, suppose we were dissenters (which I deny), suppose we were Jews or Turks, are we not to have the benefit of the laws of our country? Proceed against us by the law, if you can or dare; but not by lawless violence, not by making a drunken, cursing, swearing, riotous mob, both judge, jury, and executioner. This is flat rebellion against God and the King; as you may possibly find to your cost."

Between four and five we set out from Roughlee. Before seven we reached Widdop. The news of what had passed at Barrowford made us all friends. The person in whose house Mr. B. preached, sent and begged I would preach there, which I did at eight, to such a congregation as none could have expected on so short a warning. He invited us also to lodge at his house, and all jealousies vanished away." In his journal Wesley gives a full account of the brutal treatment to which they were subjected and his remonstrance to the instigator and witness of it.

Edward Sunderland, one of the first leaders in Keighley, and also the barber of the early preachers, handed down to his family an incident connected with this riot, which no doubt came from one of the persons assaulted. It reveals Grimshaw as a fearless, lion-hearted, but loving friend to the refined and gentle Colbeck. The latter was assailed by a set of rough fellows who kicked and abused him shamefully, until Grimshaw, thrusting them aside, said, "Get out of the way, Tommy, with thy spindle-shanks, and let them kick me!"

The fearless John Nelson also at that time visited Colne, and preached in a part of the town called Nineveh. He is described by one of his hearers, John Dean, "as a powerful man with broad shoulders, and as having contracted a habit of winking when he was about to advance anything pithy." I presume Grimshaw thought that these people greatly needed evangelising, for he soon entered the parish of Colne again, in company with Ingham and one of his preachers named Batty. The Inghamites had formed a small society, which



White was evidently as determined to suppress as he was that formed at Roughlee by Wesley's preachers. On the occasion in question, after the service had begun, White rushed furiously into the house, staff in hand, attended by his constable and the mob they commanded. He would have struck Batty had not the blow been warded off by Ingham. The preachers retired into an adjoining room; but White threatened the master of the house with the stocks, and drove the congregation away. He also insisted that Ingham and Grimshaw should sign a paper, promising, under the penalty of £50, not to preach in the parish for a year. As they refused compliance with this unauthorised request, they were taken by the rioters towards Colne. The mob now seeing that their first demand would be sternly refused, offered six months, then two, and at last would have been satisfied by a bare promise without penalty. But the servants of the Lord were as firm as Wesley in the first riot, though dragged violently along the road, with clubs brandished above their heads, and their persons pelted with mud. Ingham's coat was torn and trailed on the ground. They were thus conducted to the Swan Inn, and kept there until it was White's pleasure they should be dismissed.

Wesley had severely but briefly reproved the curate of Colne. Grimshaw also felt it his duty publicly and at greater length to chastise that inconsistent persecutor in a sermon which he published in 1749. White unconsciously did great service to the historian, for in calling forth this reply he was the means of procuring for us the only pamphlet, or sermon, which Grimshaw is known to have written. It shows that he was a man of culture, and a clear reasoner and powerful exponent of Scripture. But it is most valuable in exhibiting the thorough Methodist, and enabling us to judge of his manner of preaching; for he does not merely reply to White, but he takes the opportunity ere closing of addressing both saints and sinners, as he was doubtless wont to do from his pulpit at Haworth, or the more homely pulpit of a chair in village street or farm house, throughout his wide circuit. Hear how he castigates White. " ' Believe me, ' say you, " in the next words, (but who can believe you after so many palpable untruths?) but, ' believe me, the pretence of religion has perhaps occasioned the greatest calamities, and served as a cloak, even to the most inhuman murders and plunderings, the most insatiable avarice and lust.' But which way, and by whom? This I have already shewn. I shall only add, that in this, not only I, but any one, may believe you. You pretend to religion, and so do all the banditti you lately headed, and at the same

time have thoroughly convinced the world what mischief and confusion pretences to religion can make.

The very tinkers and colliers of your parish have of late acted the parson as well as you have done, and with as much regard to truth and the honour of God. . . . I believe if we will but speak the truth, as we hope to answer for it at the day of judgment, we must own that they (the Methodists) have, through the Divine assistance, Who sends by whom He will send, wrought a greater reformation in our parishes than we have done. Ah! sir, you little know, but I pray God make you sensible, and thankful for it too, before you die, how these dear servants of the Lord laboured night and day for you, without a penny from your purse, whilst you boarded at Chester Castle, and for three years together since, whilst you have been raking about in London, and up and down the country. And now at your return to your flock, do you find that any amongst them that follow these good men, who deserve so well at our hands, behave disorderly at church? Do they live dishonestly or unpeaceably among their neighbours? Or, do they wrong or defraud you, or any man of their dues? Surely men of their principles will do no such things, nor occasion any such confusion, as your merciless spirit would brand them with! On the contrary, your own late riotous conduct, heading a lawless rabble of irreligious dissolute wretches under the name and title of Commander in Chief, spiriting them up to the perpetration of many grievous outrages, and inhumanly treating and abusing numbers of poor inoffensive people, I must say, is a shameful violation of order in both Church and State."

On a quiet day, in the spring of 1894, I visited the scene of these outrages. It is but a short walk from Nelson to Barrowford, whence, by a country lane with high banks and hedgerows, you ascend to the summit of a ridge. Roughlee lies on the banks of a stream in a secluded valley under the shadow of Pendle Hill. With the exception of a mill—almost idle—all the surroundings are beautiful. About a dozen farm houses—some of them very old, and scattered widely apart—are all the buildings that can be seen. Near the mill a few groups of cottages cluster; all the rest is as Wesley, Grimshaw, and Colbeck saw it. A woman at whose cottage I called, knew the story of the past, and told me where Wesley stood and preached. Proceeding thither, I overtook an old man who offered to take me to a row of ancient cottages, in two upper rooms of which the founder of Methodism and the early preachers long conducted worship. I found from con-

versation with my guide, that the throwing of Methodists into the stream took place not at Roughlee, but at Barrowford. He named the exact place, having heard an aged local preacher,—Wm. England, of Colne—tell how as a boy he had seen the people thrust into the beck, and in the ignorance of childhood joined in the stoning. I took photographs at Roughlee, and then returned to Barrowford, and secured several pictures of the scene of suffering, and of ancient houses whose inmates probably joined in the fray. One of them, now the White Bear Inn, bears the date of 1615, and was formerly the home of a family named Hargreaves, who owned considerable landed property in the neighbourhood. My Roughlee informant said that the people were thrown into the river nearly opposite the Dragon Inn. There is certainly a place of the depth named by Mr. Wesley, 12ft., and as the river would then be unwallled save by natural rocks, I undoubtedly saw the identical spot: with a house sufficiently old, and quite near to it, where the magistrate might possibly have been, when the ministers of Christ was dragged into his presence.

Undaunted by mob-violence, John Wesley calmly proceeded with the visitation of Grimshaw's great Round. He says, "Friday, August 26th, I preached at five, to much the same congregation. At twelve we came to Heptonstall Bank. The house stands on the side of a steep mountain, and commands all the vale below. The place in which I preached was an oval spot of ground, surrounded by spreading trees, scooped out, as it were, in the side of the hill, which rose round like a theatre. The congregation was equal to that of Leeds; but such serious and earnest attention! It lifted up my hands, so that I preached as I scarce ever did in my life. About four I preached again to nearly the same congregation, and God again caused the power of His love to be known. Thence we rode to Midgley. Many flocked from all parts, to whom I preached till near an hour after sun-set. The calmness of the evening agreed well with the seriousness of the people; everyone of whom seemed to drink in the word of God, as a thirsty land the refreshing showers. Saturday 27th, I preached once more at seven to the earnest people at the Bank, and then rode to Todmorden Edge. Here several prisoners were set at liberty, as was Mr. Mackford the day before. At five I preached at Millar Barn, in Rossendale. There were a few rude people, but they kept at a distance; and it was well they did, or the unawakened hearers would have been apt to handle them roughly. I observed here what I had not then seen but at one place in England; when I had finished my discourse, and even pronounced the blessing, not one person offered to

go away; but every man, woman, and child, stayed just where they were, till I myself went away first. Sunday, 28th, I was invited by Mr. U., the minister of Goodshaw, to preach in his church. I began reading prayers at seven; but perceiving the church would scarce contain half of the congregation, after prayers I went out, and standing on the church yard wall, in a place shaded from the sun, explained and enforced those words in the second lesson, 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.'

I wonder at those who still talk so loud of the indecency of field-preaching. The highest indecency is in St. Paul's Church, when a considerable part of the congregation are asleep, or talking, or looking about, not minding a word the preacher says. On the other hand, there is the highest decency in a church-yard or field, when the whole congregation behave and look as if they saw the judge of all, and heard Him speaking from heaven. At one I went to the Cross in Bolton. There was a vast number of people, but many of them utterly wild. As soon as I began speaking, they began thrusting to and fro, endeavouring to throw me down from the steps on which I stood. They did so once or twice; but I went up again and continued my discourse. They then began to throw stones; at the same time some got upon the Cross behind me to push me down; on which I could not but observe, how God over-rules even the minutest circumstances. One man was bawling just at my ear, when a stone struck him on the cheek, and he was still. A second was forcing his way down to me, till another stone hit him on the forehead; it bounded back, the blood ran down, and he came no further. The third, being got close to me, stretched out his hand, and in the instant a sharp stone came upon the joints of his fingers. He shook his hand and was very quiet till I concluded my discourse and went away."

The year 1748 brings us to authentic records of unimpeachable authority respecting the Haworth Round. These records are in a vellum bound folio discoloured by the passage of one hundred and sixty years. It is probably the oldest circuit book in existence, as the first entry is dated October 18th, 1748. This venerable and most precious book gives us the framework on which the history of organised Methodism must be built in all the circuits from Birstall in the South, to Whitehaven, Workington, and Cocker-mouth in the North, and from Bacup and Preston in the West, to Pateley Bridge in the East. This great Round, the field of the labours of Grimshaw and Wesley's earliest preachers, is now covered by at least thirty circuits. The first mention of quarterly meetings in Conference was in the year 1749, when a plan for their establish-

ment, formed by John Bennet, was recommended to the nine divisions of England then recognised. Bennet, who was the first to form Societies in Cheshire and parts of Lancashire, was, as we have seen, in intimate communion with John Nelson, Grimshaw, and the other founders of Yorkshire Methodism, and had probably communicated his plan to them; for Grimshaw had evidently anticipated the decision of the Conference of 1749 in the institution of Quarterly Meetings for his Round. Smith and Tyerman refer to the Haworth book in a way that indicates their knowledge of no record earlier than this. The first entry in the book, in the beautiful handwriting of Grimshaw, is as follows:

" October 18th, 1748.

At a meeting then held at Major Marshall's at Todmorden Edge, in the parish of Rochdale, and County of Lancaster, by the leaders of several classes in several religious societies (to wit) Rossendale, Roughlee, Heptonstall, Todmorden, etc. The following persons were chosen stewards of the said societies, and entrusted to transact the temporal affairs: James Greenwood, John Parker, John Madin, James Dyson."

(A similar entry to the above is found in an old society account book at Todmorden, in the handwriting of David Lacy, of Longfield).

"Memorandum, It was then agreed that if there be any just cause to exchange any of the above stewards, it shall be done at the next Quarterly Meeting held for the said societies by the approbation of the Leaders then present.

Note. If any dispute arise touching the choosing of a Steward, or Stewards, the greater number of voices shall have the choice to elect a fresh steward. This shall be mentioned to our Minister, Mr. John Wesley, or his successor who shall end any dispute of this kind."

From this note, appended to the appointment of Stewards, it is evident that John Wesley was already recognised as having authority over the societies existing in this Round, and that Grimshaw regarded himself as assistant to Wesley, and therefore a thorough Methodist. After his reference to this first record of Quarterly Meetings, Smith, in his "History of Wesleyan Methodism," says, "At this time, we are informed of that important feature of Methodist organisation, a class paper. John Nelson, on the appointment of Mr. R. Cawley to be leader at Alpraham, ruled a sheet of paper, inserted the names, and gave them to Mr. R. Cawley, whose name stood at the head of the list as leaders."\* Thus we have in this year the organisation of the two meetings of members and leaders in the

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Methodist Societies which have held together its spiritual people, rendered stable its finance, and maintained its discipline through all subsequent periods.

Todmorden Edge is a breezy upland tract of land contiguous to the town of Todmorden. It is dotted with a number of farmsteads, many of them older than Wesley's day, and the whole region is much as it must have been when the first Quarterly Meeting was held. The house where the memorable first Quarterly Meeting of the Haworth Round was held, is still in existence, and is called the Chapel House. At one time the Quakers worshipped there, and traces of their burial ground are still to be seen. Major Marshall, whose name occurs in the minutes, was born in 1713, and lived to be eighty-two years of age. He was intimately associated with the early history of the Society. For some years previous to his death, he resided at Lower Barn, Stansfield.

As the entries in the old circuit book are of wide interest in determining the time when various places began to contribute to its funds, I shall name them on the dates when they first appear, giving the sums paid and the leaders or preachers by whom they were sent.

From October 18th, 1748, to October 31st, 1749, all the entries are in Mr. Grimshaw's handwriting; afterward, to October 4th, 1762, in a hand resembling his, but in some points differing. I am inclined, however, to think the entries are Mr. Grimshaw's, but written hastily, the result of habit formed through stress of his excessive labours. An entry under date July 15th, 1762, goes far to confirm the supposition, as comparison of signatures to a series of letters, clearly shows that in the later years of Mr. Grimshaw's life, he signed his name as on that page.

Of the stewards appointed we know nothing in detail, save respecting John Madin, who represents Rossendale, and has been referred to as Darney's first convert. His name will appear again in the course of this history. James Greenwood heads the list of six leaders given for Todmorden. A list of ten for Heptonstall contains the name of John Parker. Roughlee has six leaders, one of them a woman, Alice Dyson; and James Dyson afterward appears as a representative of that part of the Round. Rochdale is the only other place named, with one leader, Richard Whitaker. The stewards were appointed to receive the class money and collections from the Societies, and pay the expenses incurred in carrying on the work; particularly furnishing the preachers with horses, when possible, paying turnpike bars, and purchasing for them suitable apparel when they were not able to provide these things for themselves.



The following entry from the *Methodist Manual*, by J. Crowther, 1810, describes the conditions of life in plain terms. "A preacher gets his victuals at the different places in his circuit where he may be labouring. And if a married man, he messes at home with his family, when he has no where to go." The places mentioned in the first entry, on October 18th, 1748, are:—Todmorden, with six leaders: James Greenwood, Elias Crowther, John Eastwood, Robert Ridman, John Marshall, William Marshall. Their joint classes contributed £1 1s. 11d. The "charges as per bill of Todmorden amounted to £1 4s. 8d., and 3s. was also paid for 'a book' " That book is in existence still. Some of the entries copied from it will enable us to discover the nature of the charges made by the different societies. Thus June 9th, 1752, "Received of Mr. Grimshaw towards the maintenance of Mr. Wesley and others, in all, 6s." Such were the moderate charges of this great evangelist. An entry April 20th, 1752, is "For William Darney foreshide of his waistcoat, 7s." "For trimming for his coat, 9/11½." "To him for his wife 20s."

These pioneer preachers got nothing from men for their labour save what fell to the seventy sent forth by their Lord—food, lodging, and some clothing occasionally, but not always these things. It is not at all improbable that such entries as the above represent repairs to clothing damaged by mobs, which the little societies felt bound to make good, and compensation to the poor wife for loss of labour while the battered husband was recovering strength from some brutal assault. The societies were too poor to bear the costs of entertainment on special occasions, hence we find these entries, "May 5th, 1752, For friends at Quarterly Meeting, 1/3." "June 9th, Paid to James Hallworth for Mr. Wesley and others, in all, 12/2." There are occasional entries which indicate that the funds were disbursed for the relief of special distress. Thus we have, August 14th, 1752, "Paid to William Marshall when in a strait, 5/-." The scrupulous exactness of record as to expenditure is shown by the last extract given. "Dec. 14th, 1752, For writing paper ½d." The Todmorden society book is carefully preserved along with other old records in the circuit safe at Todmorden. From the Todmorden book we return to that of Keighley. Heptonstall appears in 1748 with nine leaders:—John Fielding, John Webster, John Parker, John Dearden, Richard Shuttleworth, Wm. Farrar, John Cotes, John Crosley, and Wm. Parker. The society contributes £2 3s. 9½d. and receives in charges £2 1s. 1½d.

Roughlee had six leaders:—Alice Dyson, Bernard Dyson, James Varley, Ed. Holt, Thos. Laycock, and James Hunter,

It sent £1 4s. 7d. and received on account of expenditure 15s. 2½d.

Rossendale had five leaders:—John Hayle, John Madin, Robert Holt, Geo. Taylor, and Josh. Holliwell. It sent £1 11s. 4½d. and received on account of expenditure £1 10s. 1½d.

Rochdale had one leader, Richard Whitaker. It sent 3/6 and received on account of expenditure 2/-. A total of £6 5s. 2½d.

There is another payment, "Charges when we met, 5/-," which I presume would be the cost of the dinner for the twenty-eight, including Grimshaw. The balance of 1s. 7d. was given to John Dearden and William Darney. Possibly Dearden, like Darney, was one of the preachers in the Round.

Nothing gave Grimshaw higher pleasure than the visits to Haworth of the Wesleys and Whitefield. At those times prayers were read in the church, and then from a scaffold in the church-yard, the preachers addressed thousands upon thousands in the name of the Lord. Whitefield in his Journal says, "September, 1848, I visited Mr. Grimshaw of Haworth. In the parish church, where this venerable apostle constantly laboured, I administered the Lord's Supper to upwards of a thousand communicants, and preached in the church yard to six thousand hearers."

On one of these occasions, when Whitefield was preaching, he saw a man on the top of the tower, to whom he cried, with his voice of thunder, "Man, I have a word for thee." This sudden address led to the man's conversion. At another visit, after earnest supplication that the Holy Spirit might descend in richest influence, he announced with solemnity the text, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." There was then a pause; but the silence was broken by a wild shriek of terror. This was the cause of some commotion, but Whitefield exhorted the people to remain still; and Grimshaw, hastening towards him, was heard to say, "Brother Whitefield, you stand among the dying and the dead—an immortal soul has been called into eternity; the destroying angel is passing over the congregation; cry aloud, and spare not!" The text was again announced, and all listened with awe-stricken countenances. The Countess of Huntingdon and Lady Margaret Ingham were present; and from the spot near which they stood, a loud cry was again heard, and it was announced that another soul had fallen by the hand of the destroyer. The eloquent Whitefield rose to the appalling nature of the occasion; there was a solemnity like that which pervades the darkened chamber when the struggle of the dying has commenced; and all hearts thrilled

with intense emotion as the impenitent sinner was warned of the terribleness of his position. On these great occasions after Whitefield, or Wesley, had finished his open-air sermon, he returned into the church, and, assisted by Grimshaw, administered the Lord's Supper to as many as the church would contain. Whitefield says, in June, 1750, "At Haworth, on Whit-Sunday, the church was almost thrice filled with communicants."

The Haworth Round was always called Grimshaw's circuit, and the preachers stationed there were called Grimshaw's preachers; because he officiated as Mr. Wesley's assistant in the Round. He visited the classes quarterly and renewed their tickets; he attended and preached at the quarterly meetings, and held love-feasts in the societies. Grimshaw likewise attended the Conference when held in Leeds, and always preached on such occasions. In the year 1749, Wesley gave the most conclusive proof possible of his high esteem for Grimshaw, and the opinion he held of his judgment and capacity as a leader of men. For the first time he had a deed drawn up by three eminent Counsel for settling the trusts of Methodist preaching houses throughout the connexion. In it the appointment of preachers was vested, first in John Wesley, after his death in Charles Wesley, and then, should he survive them, in William Grimshaw, and lastly, after the decease of the three, in Conference.\* Three years later this appointment was again made in the deed of a chapel at Bolton, in Lancashire, showing that Wesley considered Grimshaw so thorough a Methodist as to purpose making him the head of the connexion.

One of the earliest lay preachers in Yorkshire, most intimately connected with the Haworth Round, was Jonathan Maskew. He was one of the two named in the letter of Williams of Kidderminster. One of his grandsons, living in 1862, searched the registers of Haworth, Keighley, Bingley, and Otley, and found the name at Otley. Also an old man in the neighbourhood of Burley told him that the parents of Jonathan Maskew lived at a corn mill near Burley, and that he was born there. In another letter it is said that his parents were Friends, and came from Scotland, and that his father was a corn-dealer.

The Rev. J. Gautler, his biographer in the *Magazine* of 1798, says, "Jonathan Maskew was born in the year 1713. His parents were comparatively poor, and in his childhood his acquirements were little beyond reading and writing." In very early life he knew conviction of sin, but had no one to guide him into truth. As he approached man-

\* Myles 22.

hood these convictions deepened, and he sought, by reform and amendment of life, for peace of conscience, but only found deeper wretchedness, and a sense of helplessness under his burden of sorrow. By degrees light dawned upon his mind, and at last he fully saw the divine method of salvation. "It should be remembered that this was not effected by any known human means, nor by the Methodists with whom he was afterwards connected, for their persons and doctrines were at that time unknown to him, but by the good providence of God, and the influence of the Holy Spirit."

From information communicated in 1863 to Mr. C. D. Hardcastle, of Leeds, by descendants of Maskew, we learn that he was disinherited by his father for joining the Methodists. This caused him to seek a home under the roof of Grimshaw, with whom he lived as one of the family for some years, travelling with him on his preaching tours, and when at home superintending his glebe. The Rev. J. Gaultier writing from Rochdale, in 1789, says, that "To this day in Rossendale, Maskew is best known by the name of 'Mr. Grimshaw's man.'" Preaching with Grimshaw's warm approval, he would be in closest sympathy with the Methodists when they appeared in Haworth, and it is not surprising to find that he was one of the first members of society in that parish. As his heart was now filled with the love of God, and zeal for His cause, we find him extending his preaching tours to various parts of Yorkshire and Lancashire. The unction of his word, and the warmth of his address, were well remembered fifty years after this period. When in the vigour of life, fearless of danger or the inclemency of seasons, and in the midst of violent and barbarous persecutors, he preached the Gospel of Christ.

He had painful experience of persecution in connection with the exercise of his ministry at Yeadon. The Rev. C. Radcliffe tells us that Methodism found its way into Yeadon about the year 1747. A man of the name of James Rhodes was the first Methodist who visited the village and held prayer meetings there. This man's brother Joseph, who was a local preacher, preached the first sermon at the house of Judith Jackson. He was followed by Samuel Mortimer, who for some time visited Yeadon fortnightly and preached at the house of John Dawson, senior. He formed a class which met at Christopher Long's; the leader's name was John Hudson. Nearly three years elapsed before any of the members professed to have found peace with God. Betty Dixon was the first who felt the pardoning love of God. Soon after this Isaac Brown, a native of Hawksworth, who travelled in the Haworth Round in 1760, embraced

the truth, and greatly helped those who believed through grace.

The following anecdote is a striking instance of the general ignorance which prevailed in the middle of the eighteenth century. Joseph Rhodes was preaching on one occasion at Yeadon, in the open air, near the cottage of a man of the name of Penitent. In the course of his sermon, he frequently made use of the word "penitent." Some of the congregation, after he had finished his discourse, expressed great surprise that the preacher should have talked so much about "Old Penitent, and never said anything about Joan (John) and Jose (Joseph), his two sons." It was about twelve months after the introduction of Methodism into Yeadon that the demon of persecution became active there.

Whatever might be the date of the introduction of Methodism into Yeadon, it is evident from various circumstances that Methodist preachers had visited the neighbourhood, if not the village itself, between the years 1742 and 1747. Grimshaw, in his letter to Gillies on the progress of the Gospel through the instrumentality of Methodism, tells us that "About the year 1744 God was pleased to visit Keighley (a market town three miles from Haworth), Silsden, Sutton, Addingham, Menston, Bingley, Baildon, and many other places. Thos. Colbeck has been one main instrument, with some others,—Jonathan Maskew, Paul Greenwood, &c.,—in His gracious hands here."

Exasperated by the intrusion of Methodist preachers into his parish, the Rev. H. Wickham, Rector of Guiseley, and his curate, Rev. Mr. Reynolds, took violent steps to prevent their preaching. We have already seen that the former, who was a Justice of the Peace, issued a warrant in 1745 for the committal of Jonathan Reeves to York Castle, and for the apprehension of Wesley as a vagabond. They, or their comrades, must have given occasion for this action; hence the assignment of an earlier date than 1747 for at least some attempts at preaching in Guiseley parish. Over the door of the rectory, on the outskirts of Guiseley, there is a tablet bearing a Latin inscription which ought to have reproved this bitter ecclesiastic. It runs thus:—"Anno Domini, 1601. The house of the faithful Pastor, not of the blind leader; not of the robber; the house of Robert Moore, Rector of the Church, founder of the house. Woe to the sacrilegious man—woe to the enemies of Levi. Robert Moore." The beautiful old church also still stands on a knoll near this ancient parsonage. In it there is a tablet lauding the virtues of this rector.

Despite the dangers to be faced, Jonathan Maskew entered this seat of Satan probably in 1747 or 1748, and shared the fate of his predecessors. He had been

preaching at a small village near Leeds, and at the close of the service sat down in a house with a gentleman, one of his friends. While they were conversing, a mob, armed with sticks, stones, and a pistol, surrounded the house. The gentleman, who wore a black coat and white wig, was seen through the window, and the mob cried, 'Here he is! here is the parson! we will soon do for him!' The evening, which had been remarkably fine, in a few moments became gloomy, and thick clouds announced an approaching storm. A torrent of rain descended, attended with tremendous claps of thunder and vivid flashes of lightning. The gentleman as soon as the storm came on, opened one of the windows and addressed the rioters on the impiety of their conduct. They left the house and sought shelter under the neighbouring hedges.

Maskew and his friends seized the opportunity of escape, and attempted to reach a place of security. Notice of their flight was communicated to the mob, who pursued them with shouts, fired the pistol, and strained every nerve to overtake them, but in vain. From the character of the men, their threats and number, it is more than probable, that had not the good providence of God interposed, Maskew and his friend would that night have become the victims of lawless rage and hatred of the gospel.

Undaunted by this violent usage Maskew still persevered in proclaiming the gospel. While preaching one evening, the mob came and pulled him down, tore his clothes, and dragged him on the pavement on his naked back, which was very much lacerated. One of the mob got hold of his neckerchief, intending to strangle him; but another, named Holmes, moved with pity, when he saw that Maskew was likely to be murdered, rescued him out of the hands of his barbarous associates, and led him to the house of Mr. John Brown, the father of Mr. Isaac Brown. But the confusion was great indeed; the fury of the mob was like the roaring sea, and Brown feared the consequences if he afforded the preacher an asylum; and before the door could be opened for his admission a man named William Russell came with fiend-like fury, seized Maskew, and took him forcibly out of the hands of Holmes. A courageous female standing by, seeing this, seized Maskew by the coat, already torn from top to bottom, and held him fast; and his friends got him out of the hands of the mob once more.

Darney also suffered much abuse from the Yeadon and Guiseley mobs. Preaching one evening at Yeadon, as he was giving out his text, "When the strong man armed keepeth his house in peace, etc.," the curate of Guiseley, at the head of the mob, rushed into the house, and asked the preacher, who the



strong man armed was. "The devil," replied Darney. "Give me your name, give me your name!" vociferated the curate; "Is your name Grimshaw?" One of the mob, who knew Darney, cried out, "It is Scotch Will." Then there was a general shout of, "Pull him down, pull him down." His enemies tried to get hold of him, but could not, the surrounding crowd was so very dense. Then they endeavoured to extort from him a promise that he would never come to Yeadon again. Darney, who was a man of great courage, cried out, "Never while I breathe." He meant that he never would make such a promise; but the mob construed his words differently, in consequence of which, their fury somewhat abated; and when they became divided among themselves, William Hall, a high churchman, said to the curate, "O! Mr. Reynold's, I am surprised that you should come hither to disturb people, when in the church you pray for your persecutors, that God would turn their hearts." This pointed reproof made a deep impression on his mind; and for some time afterwards he appeared as if inclined to melancholy. It is reported that it produced a change for the better in his conduct. Soon after this Mr. Reynolds was summoned to appear before the Judge of all the earth.

In the year 1750 there were one hundred and five families in Yeadon, and John Nelson visited them without molestation, as did also Titus Knight and Abraham Butterfield, and many became happy partakers of the glorious liberty of the children of God. The rector did not succeed by these means in stamping out Methodism. The people called Methodists continued to assemble in a small room at Guiseley Green bottom, in which Wesley preached. In 1753 Grimshaw opened a preaching room at the same place, and Wesley again preached there. Whitefield also preached at Guiseley Green, and there won many souls for his Master. Though Yeadon is one and a half miles from the spot,—when Whitefield preached in the open air, so clear and powerful was his voice, that it was heard at the bottom of that village.

## CHAPTER IX.

In endeavouring to trace the growth of the great Haworth Round we find early mention of Brimicroft, a village about six miles from Preston, and a short distance from Brindle, where Grimshaw was born; and we can easily imagine that the warm-hearted evangelist, when he began to itinerate, would feel a deep concern for the people of his native place, and desire to make some atonement for former evil example by preaching himself, or sending his helpers to preach the gospel to them. Anyhow, Brimicroft became the mother society of the Preston and Blackburn portion of the Round. Darney, in his notice of this region, showed that regular visits were paid by the preachers.

At Sherfinside and Brimicroft

The work it is begun;

And Satan's soldiers they do fight,

For fear we take Blackburn.

Darney, Maskew, and Paul Greenwood, we gather from the circuit book, were widening the field of their labours in North-east Lancashire, and in a letter to Maskew, to be quoted later, the Rev. John Milner, vicar of Chipping, speaks of him in such terms of esteem and affection as may well lead us to think he might have been brought to a knowledge of the truth by that lay preachers instrumentality.

In a letter to Dr. Gillies, written by Grimshaw, July 10th, 1754, Darney is specifically named as the chief pioneer in the work of evangelizing that part of Lancashire; and we know from another letter of Grimshaw to Gillies, that the dates given were not mere guesses, but careful statements of facts, after consultation with his lay helpers. Grimshaw says, "In the year 1746, by this man (Darney) the Lord pushed the work westward. Great numbers in the next parish (Heptonstall) were awakened and brought to the knowledge of Jesus. Lancashire now received the first revival. Pendle Forest (contiguous to Chipping), Colne parish, Todmorden, Rossendale, and soon after Haslingden. Rochdale and its parish were visited by the Lord, and many brought to acknowledge His free redeeming and saving power."

Later in the same letter he says, "For some years past, the Lord, I trust, has been pleased to open the hearts of a great many people by the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Ingham before-

mentioned, Mr. Wm. Batty, and some others in Pendle Forest, Paythorn, Sladeburn, Clapham parish, Dent, Winchley Dale (Wensley Dale), Russendale, Kerbay Steven, Burtree (or Burton), all of these, I think, except the first in the North-west of Yorkshire from hence. By these men the Lord hath visited Kendale, Roundthwaite, and other places in Westmoreland. There are, I believe, many lively members of the Lord Jesus in these places."

These quotations and dates show when Darney published his poem on the spread of the Gospel in 1751, the Round in this direction was organised, for he says,

To Chipping and to Wycoler  
We go each fortnight day;  
I wish we could see fruit appear;  
For that we still do pray.

On January 11th, 1750, Milner writes to Wesley, from Chipping, in a strain of familiarity which indicates a friendship of some standing. The letter is valuable as revealing efforts to effect union between Wesley and Ingham. It also brings to our notice the Rev. John Graves, vicar of Clapham, who, in that parish, was preparing the ground for the spread of the gospel.

It is evident that Milner had a very favourable opinion of Ingham, and I am glad to add his testimony to my earlier notices of this evangelist, in order to show how much he and his preachers did to spread the knowledge of Christ, despite their lapses into antinomian error. The Battys, who were Ingham's most powerful preachers, sprang from Newby Cote, near Clapham. Mr. Milner says, "My most dear and reverend Brother, whom I love in the Truth. Great was my astonishment at my first reading of those wonderful things that God, by your instrumentality, has wrought; and scarcely was my surprise less, when I received the kind notice of your Christian Library. A work that will be a blessing to all future ages, as well as the present, and promote the glory of God and the good of souls to the end of time. Most cheerfully do I subscribe to it."

Some portion of the letter appears to have been withheld, for somewhat abruptly Mr. Milner goes on to say,—“My friend is blest with a large and beautiful race of children, still increasing. His eldest son he is very desirous of having under your care, if possible, for some time. His face will be more than a letter of recommendation. Some time ago he was under convictions; I do not spare both to exhort and pray for him. His father is fully persuaded that your presence, your exhortations, and prayers, will be a blessing to him. We indeed ourselves look for no little spiritual edification and comfort from one whom God

has so highly favoured, and blest above others. Nothing but my confinement to the care of a parish (not at present well disposed to hear the glad tidings of the gospel) would have hindered me, long since, doing myself the pleasure of seeing you, and hearing the word of peace and reconciliation from your lips.

Most of my friends of the clergy have forsaken me. Not one of them cares to look me in the face. Almost all manner of evil is spoken of me. But I bless God none of these things terrify or discourage me. Rather I begin to hope, for being evil spoken of for the truth, I shall have more success than I have hitherto had, when I had the good word of all.

I was at Clapham, in Yorkshire, when my friend did himself the honour of writing to you. And I acknowledge myself greatly obliged by your last kind favour. The vicar there, Mr. Graves, still continues my friend. He is one whom I brought acquainted with your writings. He is convinced of the truth, and preaches it with power, not only in the pulpit, but from house to house. But he has had much opposition from the Moravians on one side, and the profane scoffers on the other (no small party, I fear, in most parishes). Through his uncommon diligence, there are a great many in his parish awakened, and gladly hear the gospel from him.

I have had twice the pleasure of seeing Mr. Ingham; and must say there is a great deal amiable sweetness in his whole behaviour; and I have often and earnestly wished that he was disentangled from the Moravians, and cordially *one* with you in promoting the interests of the gospel. The last time I saw him, he was employed in reconciling two of the brethren who had run great hazards, and suffered much hardship in the service of the gospel. He allows you incomparably the preference for prudence. But says, you have not done the *Count* justice. That he endeavoured to prevail with you not to publish the difference; and thought he had prevailed, till he heard it was published;—that he would gladly have been reconciled, and got Mr. W—d to go from his house to N—e, to bring about a reconciliation; but that you were not inclined to it, 'The time not being yet come.'

At first I looked upon the difference, as that between Paul and Barnabas, which was a furtherance to the gospel of Christ. But since I knew more of the doctrine of *still brethren*, I have not had the same favourable opinion of them. Yet I cannot help thinking Mr. Ingham happy: may some good providence bring you speedily together, for surely such souls must glow with love at meeting, and ail unkindness fly at first sight!

I endeavoured when at Clapham, to engage my friend to

write to you, and beg your advice how to proceed with the Moravians, some of whom have behaved with great disrespect, and endeavoured to weaken his hands. Notwithstanding which, he is greatly followed; he has six or seven places of assembling for religious worship in his parish, in private houses; at some of which the Moravians are present, but not always as friends, but spies rather. If you think proper to give him a word of encouragement and advice—for he has a high veneration for your judgment,—and send him the proposals for the Christian Library, I hope he will engage in promoting so good a design. For my part, I will not fail to press him to it, and some others of my acquaintance.

My dear Brother, I beg to be remembered in your addresses to the Throne of Grace; that I may not only be faithful in the work of our blessed Lord, but may see some fruit of my labours; that I may not fail, nor be discouraged, but rather encouraged, with the difficulties I meet with in the glorious warfare. If my poor petitions may come up with acceptance through the Beloved,—still may you be carried as on angels wings,—may the tottering kingdom of Satan fall before you wherever you come; may you go on in the strength of the Lord God, conquering and to conquer, till His Kingdom ruleth over all. I shall long to hear of the time fixed for our seeing your face.

O! may all your undertakings for the glorious gospel succeed to the utmost wish. May you prosper and be in health, as your soul also prospers; and may the Giver of all grace still preserve you the same lowly follower of the Lamb. . . . that you may with the great Apostle of the Gentiles say, 'Not I, but the grace of God.' I am, dear sir, your affectionate brother and humble servant, J. MILNER."

From the last paragraph of Mr. Milner's letter I gather that Wesley had arranged that they should meet. Probably before April, 1741, they had not seen each other. In his journey northward in that year, Wesley was met at Bolton by Milner, who rode back with him to Ribchester, where several clergymen had appointed to meet him; "With whom," says Wesley, "we spent one or two hours in serious and useful conversation. Between five and six we reached the vicarage at Chipping, where a few serious people soon assembled. Next day (Friday, April 12th), we rode to Ambleside."

There is a tradition that Wesley preached in Keasden, a moorland district near Clapham station, and that the reading desk from which he preached was put into the Methodist preaching-room at Clapham, a building now demolished. We know that Milner was anxious that Wesley

and his friend, the vicar of Clapham, should be closely acquainted with each other, and the latter might be one of the clergymen that met Wesley at Ribchester. If Mr. Graves was a guest for the night at Chipping, they might by rising at Wesley's usual hour, 4-0 a.m., easily reach Keasden, and find time for a sermon from Wesley in one of Mr. Graves' preaching places, and then proceed to Clapham, thus resting the horses for the long ride thence to Ambleside. To preach the gospel on new ground, and encourage workers freshly raised up by God, Wesley spared neither physical labour, nor shrank from discomfort; and from maps of the time, we think he would, in traversing roads over the hilly region between Slaiddburn and Clapham, reach the main road to Kendal and Ambleside almost as well as if he had gone by way of Garstang and Lancaster.

On September 11th of that year, Mr. Milner attended a conference of preachers held in Leeds, by Charles Wesley, where he met not only that kindred spirit the vicar of Haworth, but also the following well-known preachers:—John Nelson Wm. Shent, Christopher Hopper, Thomas Colbeck, Jonathan Reeves, John Bennet, Paul Greenwood, Michael Fenwick, Titus Knight, Robert Swindells, and Matthew Watson. Under date September 12th Charles Wesley says, "I took a delightful leave of them at five (a.m.). We all agreed to postpone opinions till the next general Conference; settled the affairs of the church the best we could, and parted friends. At three I took horse with Mr. Grimshaw, Milner, Shent, Bennet, for Birstall. I expounded Isa. 35. with great enlargement and assistance. I rejoiced with the steadfast society, and concluded the happy day with John Bennet in prayer."

We hear no more of Milner, and as Charles Wesley went from Birstall to Bradford and Halifax, it is very probable that he would accompany Grimshaw to Keighley and Haworth, as these places would lie on the most direct route from Birstall to Chipping. The following year, 1752, Wesley was again at Chipping. The churchwardens, and three or four others, determined to prevent his preaching; but after a calm and friendly debate with them, on the Saturday evening, they went away much cooler than when they came. On Sunday, June 7th, there was such a congregation present as was never seen there before, and a solemn awe rested on them from the beginning of the service to the end. Wesley both read prayers and preached, and in the afternoon he preached again, from the words, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." The people were all attention.

Maskew was labouring in Newcastle in the year 1752, and a letter written to him by Milner, reveals that servant of God



facing opposition, and heartily labouring in a wide field to spread Christ's Kingdom.

"Chipping, November 2nd, 1752.

My Dear Brother,

Whom I love in the truth. Your kind and loving epistle I received the last Lord's Day, and was not a little glad to find that you remember me in your prayers before the throne of grace. I doubt not but the work of God prospers in your hand, and rejoice to hear that as your day so your strength is; that the more you labour the more you prosper both in soul and body. Verily we may say we serve a good Master.

You have probably heard of my being called before the Bishop, for the high offence of letting Mr. Wesley preach in my pulpit. I came off triumphantly, and my adversaries have just cause to be ashamed. The Bishop heard me with so much mildness and candour, and I told him so plainly and fully the happy efficacy and success of the preaching, even of the lay preachers, that I have great hopes he will not be an enemy, but a friend. Do you, my brother, remember him in your prayers; that he may do the work of an evangelist; that he may so discharge the office of a Bishop as to receive an immortal crown of glory, when the chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls shall appear. Amen!

That great and tremendous day will make awful discoveries. Then, I am persuaded, you, and such as you, will lift up your heads with joy, when many that now make a scoff of your labour would be glad to hide themselves, though it were under rocks and mountains. Indeed, my dear brother, I do heartily rejoice in your good success, and wish the pleasure of the Lord may daily prosper in your hands yet more and more. Well may the society flourish under your care, through the blessing of God upon your labours; if you knew what Mr. Wesley said of you, that 'ten such would carry the world before them.'

I go on but heavily, yet hope, through grace, that I shall be found faithful. The last week I was with Mr. Grimshaw, who is full of love and life. We were both at Bolton with Mr. Whitefield, who endeavoured to be a healer of the breach. He spoke much to prevent the spreading of a party spirit, and I hope not without effect. We must allow him the praise of a popular preacher; and all glory be ascribed to God, who has given such gifts to men for the edification of His church.

When the good providence of God brings you this way again, there are many that will be glad to see you. We have some that have found the precious pearl, and I hope many that are seeking earnestly for it. My last letter from my brother

Nathaniel makes me full of hope for him. He has often spoken of the serious, weighty words you spoke to him. O remember me and him in your prayers! who am your affectionate, but unworthy brother. J. MILNER."

Having failed, through the instrumentality of the Bishop, to hinder the introduction of Methodism into Chipping, its foes determined to try other means. On Saturday, April 7th, 1753, Wesley was again there; and on the Sunday morning, as Mr. Milner and he came into the aisle of the church from the vestry, a man thrust himself between them, and said to Wesley, 'You shall not go into the pulpit.' 'I am only going into the desk,' said Wesley. 'But you shall not go there, either,' said the man, pushing him back by main strength. Eight or ten noisy men joined him quickly, and set themselves in battle array. Mr. Milner, at Wesley's request, began the service and read prayers. Having no sermon with him, Mr. Milner could not preach; but, at the conclusion of the prayers, a great part of the congregation followed the ministers to the vicarage, where, it would seem, Wesley addressed them, as he did after the evening service; "and God made them large amends for their little disappointment in the morning."

There is a very brief record of the Conference of 1752 to which Charles Wesley said certain opinions were referred for discussion. On May 22nd, 1753, the Conference met in Leeds, and the three clerical members present were Wesley, Grimshaw, and Milner. The question of union with Mr. Ingham is likely to have been raised by Mr. Milner. He was doubtless made aware of the objectionable beliefs and practices of the Moravians by Wesley, and had found that Ingham desired to leave them and join himself and his societies to Wesley. The conduct of Count Zinzendorf, and publications to which Wesley refers in his journal, justify the censure passed upon them by the Conference of 1753, and the hesitation to unite with Ingham. The second question asked in the session of May 22nd is, "What can be done in order to bear a sufficient testimony against the corruptions of the Germans?" "It may not be improper to reprint the 'Letter to the Church at Herrnhuth,' with some additions, and a Dedication to the Count.

Q. 3. Can we unite, if it be desired, with Mr. Ingham?

We may now behave to him with all tenderness and love, and unite with him when he returns to the old Methodist doctrine."

I do not find Mr. Milner attending any Conference after 1753, of which we have a detailed record. From that date to 1764 the entries in Wesley's Journal concerning Conferences

are very brief. Of 1755 and 1758 we have the names of those attending. When Wesley visited Haworth on July 22nd, 1759, Milner accompanied him and read prayers. He retained the vicarage of Chipping until his death in 1777, at the age of 67.

If the whole history of Methodism, especially *Myles' Chronological List* of the preachers is consulted, it will be found that such was the *excessive labour* required from the small number of itinerants employed, and such the hardships endured, that with only a few exceptions, human nature absolutely sunk under the fatigue and pressure, and the preachers were either obliged to desist from want of strength for the work, or dropped prematurely into the grave, after labouring only a few years. Very few were able to support it any length of time. These were chiefly men of cool spirit and iron constitution.

Maskew, after preaching in the Haworth Round and as one of Wesley's itinerants for several years, became a resident of Dean Head, a farm between Rochdale and Todmorden. Grimshaw had introduced the preaching of the gospel into this place in a manner characteristic of him. He had observed a respectable man of that part of the country frequently present in his congregation. This person was only known to him by name. One day, without invitation, after he had done preaching, he said, "I shall preach at Mr. Clegg's on Tuesday next." He went, preached; Mr. Clegg and his wife were awakened, and soon after converted to God; a little society was formed, and the preaching in that neighbourhood continues to this day.

Mr. Clegg's death soon followed his reception of the gospel, but not without his experience of the blessedness of it in the struggle of expiring life. Some years after the death of Mr. Clegg, Maskew returned, by Wesley's appointment, to his old field of labour, the Haworth Round. In visiting Dean Head, an intimacy sprang up between him and Mrs. Clegg, which, ripening into affection, ended in their union.

After some time the concerns of his family obliged him to settle on a farm at Dean Head, from which he never removed, until under the weight of years he sunk into the grave. Dean Head is an old farm house at Temple, better known as the Summit Tunnel about a mile from Littleborough. It is close to Blackstone Edge, on the Lancashire side. I have visited the place, and found the old house incorporated with a more modern structure. The scenery is picturesque, but wild and bleak.

Maskew's retirement from the old itinerancy did not mean inaction. The farm which he occupied was surrounded by lofty hills. Over these dreary heights, by roads at that time almost impracticable, he continued to carry the gospel of his Master into Yorkshire, Rossendale, and Rochdale. He formed for himself

a circuit, which he ministered to for several years, with the promptitude and regularity of his itinerant life; and God continued to bless his soul and labour. The apostolic man, with primitive simplicity, collected his family for the purpose of prayer and praise, and according to the testimony of one of his children, for thirty years this had seldom been omitted. The united voice of the people among whom he lived was, that in piety, temper, seriousness, and every excellency of the Christian character, it was no exaggeration to say, Equalled he may have been, but not often excelled.

In the *Memoir* written by the Rev. J. Gaulter, it is said that after Maskew settled at Dean Head he began to lean toward Calvinistic doctrines; and ultimately accepted for a time the position of pastor to a Dissenting congregation not many miles from Dean Head. But as his mind was still in suspense, he cried to God for direction. He searched the Scriptures, not to press them into the service of a creed already formed, but that his views might be determinate on the subjects of his enquiry. One night, sleepless upon his bed, and weighing the arguments for and against the points in dispute, a passage of Scripture recurred to his mind with such light and conviction, that from that hour he reverted to his original principles, which he continued to maintain to the last moment of his life. He gave up his charge and returned to his first friends.

His grandchildren, living in 1863, strenuously maintained that Maskew never became the minister of any Dissenting congregation. Mr. Gaulter, however, wrote nearer the time, and had communication with persons who, being contemporary with Maskew, must have known the facts of the case. We know that he laboured in the midst of ardent Calvinists; that Darney, with whom he probably came often into contact, did not always see eye to eye with the heads of Methodism on doctrinal questions; and we have the testimony of Williams that one of Grimshaw's men was Calvinistically inclined; and that Grimshaw himself was not severe on the doctrine of election. Williams says in his letter of July 21st, 1746, "Of these exhorters one holds particular election, the other universal redemption, his (Grimshaw's) business is to hold the balance as even as he can betwixt both, and by all means keep them back from disputing, which he thinks would not only be unprofitable, but hurtful. 'My business', says he, 'is to offer Christ freely to all, and assure every coming soul of a hearty welcome.' 'As to the doctrine of election,' added he, 'I think it only concerns the assured, to whom it must be without doubt a joyful reflection to think God has chosen them in Christ. But I

cannot see what tendency it can have to bring souls to Christ for me to insist on that doctrine in ordinary preaching; accordingly I observe the apostles Peter and Paul, mention and apply is to none but saints.' "Maskew might well therefore be drawn aside for a short time; but once settled in Arminian doctrine, he continued to preach in the circuit he had formed, until increasing years and infirmities compelled him to give up country appointments.

He did not however cease preaching, but held services in his own house, and when he could stand no longer, sat, and while tears ran down his venerable face, called the people to partake of this divine mercy, and wash their guilty spirits in the blood of the Son of God.

In 1789, Jonathan Maskew, who was the last surviving trustee of Grimshaw's chapel at Haworth, conveyed it to a new trust. His signature to the deed is probably the only scrap of his handwriting in existence. He was then seventy-six years of age.

During the last months of Maskew's life, the members of his class, and other serious persons, were his constant visitors. They came to receive instruction from a father in the Lord, and to see a dying saint, cheered with the glorious prospects of immortality, having a confidence unshaken as the promises of God. On one occasion he said, "It is a blessing for Christ to be with us in life, but it is the top of blessings for us to be with Christ in Heaven." "O, that name, Jesus! how sweet it is!" This was frequently his pulpit language, and is remembered, not for its singularity, but for the animated fervour which an old disciple displayed, when he pronounced the name of the Friend of sinners.

In his last hours speech nearly failed, but signs, looks, and broken accents expressed the happiness of his soul. The last time he spoke, he raised one of his hands, and, with a smiling countenance said, "Look, James, look!" Surely there is some truth in the opinion that saints, in their approach to glory, have on earth a glimpse of heaven. He departed to the Father's house on August 3rd, 1793, in the 82nd year of his age.

Having made acquaintance with one of Grimshaw's men, Jonathan Maskew, we shall find it profitable to glean what fragments we can of the history of the other, Paul Greenwood. In the valley beyond Haworth, where it narrows and becomes wildly beautiful as it approaches the confines of Lancashire, stands Ponden, an ancient house embosomed in trees; for many generations the abode of the Heaton family. It was built in the year 1634. Adjacent to this fine old house there is a farm house, also of the Stuart period, which must have been the abode of

the Greenwood family. When the writer visited it, the farm house was going to ruin; and since that time, the Heaton family, long attached to Methodism at Scartop, have ceased to occupy their ancestral home at Ponden.

Paul Greenwood was awakened to a sense of his sin and danger by reading a religious tract,—supposed to be Mr. Seagrave's sermon on Gal. 3-24,—which was afterwards borrowed of the Greenwood family by Mr. Grimshaw, on his becoming resident at Haworth.

One day, young Paul, under deep conviction of sin, went into the barn to pray, where he continued an unusual length of time. His father, under some unpleasant apprehensions, went to see what had become of him, and found him in earnest prayer. After standing a few moments, he himself was powerfully affected, kneeled upon the ground, and began also to raise the voice of supplication. It was not long before the mother went in search of both; she stood still in like manner for a short time, then bowed the knee, and prayed earnestly for mercy. Soon afterwards they were joined by a brother, and then by a sister, who were no less earnest for salvation; and they all obtained peace with God before they left the place. This event occurred before Mr. Grimshaw obtained the living at Haworth, probably in 1740 or 1741, and before the name of *Methodist* was known by any of the family.

When Grimshaw, therefore, went to Haworth, he found at least one pious family in the neighbourhood, composed of the excellent of the earth; instead of having been the instrumental cause of young Paul's conversion, which Mr. Williams of Kidderminster was inclined to believe, (but still seemed to hesitate about reposing full confidence in the accuracy of his memory). It would rather appear that the Greenwood family, and Paul among others, had been of service to Grimshaw himself, by the loan of Mr. Seagrave's sermon.

Paul Greenwood is spoken of as commencing to itinerate under Wesley in the year 1747 by both Myles and Atmore. This presupposes acquaintance, and probably correspondence between Wesley and Grimshaw before Wesley's first visit to Haworth. The familiar style of the first letter of Grimshaw, dated May 30th, 1747, confirms that impression; and his observations on the progress of the work of God, in his letter to Gillies, strengthens the conviction that he was well informed about Wesley and in warm sympathy with him at an early date.

In 1747, Paul Greenwood was stationed in Dublin, at the very commencement of Methodism in Ireland. Charles Wesley had secured a room at Dolphin's Barn, and writing on October 11th, says, "I spent the evening with Mrs.



M——, a true mourner in Zion, till the Lord on Wednesday put the new song in her mouth. She set us all on fire with the warmth of her first love." This lady was a widow, a sister-in-law of Mr. Samuel Handy of Coolalough, in the parish of Ardnurcher, Westmeath. She went to hear Mr. C. Wesley preach, and thus was led to give her heart to God and become a member of the Society.

Mr. Handy, subsequently, on paying her a visit, was so impressed with the seriousness of her spirit, and the plainness of her attire, that he feared she had fallen into some pecuniary embarrassment, and therefore offered to do anything in his power to assist her. But she assured him that nothing adverse had happened to her, and that on the contrary she was more contented and happy than ever before.

In the course of the afternoon she intimated her intention to go in the evening to hear a Methodist preacher, and requested her brother-in-law to accompany her. At this he expressed great surprise. "What," said he, "do you go to hear these men? Are they not the false prophets, the wolves in sheep's clothing, of whom we are commanded to beware?" "I entreat you," she replied, "not to be led by false and unfounded reports, but to hear and judge for yourself"; and to oblige her, he reluctantly consented.

On entering the room at Dolphin's Barn he was not a little amazed to find his sister-in-law and himself surrounded by poor mean-looking people, so different from his wonted fellow-worshippers in the parish church; and proceeded to secure his pockets lest they should be picked. Soon a tall, thin man, in plain black clothes, with dark hair, entered, and took possession of the pulpit. He was Paul Greenwood. Mr. Handy regarded him with surprise, he being minus wig, gown, and bands, which, according to his idea, were essential to a minister of the gospel. He was still more astonished when the preacher, having given out a hymn, the congregation united in singing it with one heart and voice. "Wonderful," thought he, "that so despicable a people should be able to sing so delightfully!" The extemporaneous prayer that followed, so full of sacred unction, filled his heart, and prepared him to follow with no ordinary interest the preacher's discourse. This was accompanied with such light and power as produced a complete change in his views and feelings, and led him to resolve, "This people shall be my people, and their God shall be my God"—a solemn determination which he was enabled to keep through life.

At the close of the service, he requested his sister-in-law to

invite the preacher to breakfast, which she gladly did. At this interview Mr. Handy obtained such information as to the nature, design, and teaching of Methodism, as led him to give the servant of God a hearty invitation to his house, and to express his conviction that if he would come and preach, much spiritual good would follow. The request was promptly and thankfully complied with, and Coolalough became at once an established preaching place, and a centre from which divine light radiated for many miles round."\*

In 1748, Paul Greenwood introduced Methodism into Facit by preaching in the house of Edmund Hill. His text was: "This day is salvation come unto this house." Truly prophetic was the passage; for much more than half a century the Methodist preachers were there entertained by Edward Hill and his descendants. Paul Greenwood was in the Haworth Round again during 1751, as there are entries concerning him in the Todmorden book, viz, "December 4th, 1750, Paul Greenwood for washing 1/-. January 7th, 1751, one night (probably for man and horse) 1/-. January 30th, 1751, Britches dyeing, 4d. September 3rd, 1751, noon (probably dinner) 6d.

Charles Wesley says of him, "Monday, July 29th, 1751, I had some discourse with Paul Greenwood, an Israelite indeed; glad to work with his hands as well as preach."

Until 1757 there does not appear to have been any regularly formed circuit between Leeds and Newcastle, therefore the Leeds preachers more or less itinerated in the vast district extending from Leeds to Hexham.

In 1757 the Dales circuit was formed (of which Barnard Castle was the circuit town), including Silverdale, Arkengarthdale, Wensleydale, Teesdale, Weardale, Allendale, Alston, and Hexamshire. The circuit involved a vast amount of labour, and required the travelling of about four hundred miles to complete the round. The horse was scarcely less important than his master in days when the Round sometimes extended over two or three counties. For a quarter of a century Thos. Oliver rode the horse that a friend purchased for five pounds and gave to him when he went to his first circuit. He travelled comfortably upon it not less than 100,000 miles. This however was a model horse, "such another as, in many respects, none of my brethren could ever boast of." John Pritchard was less fortunate. His horse became sick, and the poor preacher had to travel on foot during one winter and spring about twelve hundred miles. Over the immense Leeds or Yorkshire circuit Paul Greenwood travelled; and we have now to record an incident which occurred during an attempt he made to preach at Middleton, in Teesdale.

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\* Crookshank 1-22 and 24.

On a Whit-Sunday, supposed to be in the year 1752, Greenwood had come from Leeds and intended to deliver his message from God in the street at Middleton, in Teesdale; but the mob being apprised of it, gathered together and sounded a beast's horn, threatening terrible things against the preacher. Matthew Rowell, from Allendale, being present, chose rather to endure the brunt of the attack himself than that Paul Greenwood, who was a stranger, should be exposed to it. He accordingly stood up in the forenoon and commenced the service in the open-air. The mob drew up, and one of them, a stout able-bodied man, attempting to seize hold of Rowell, suddenly became powerless and began to tremble in every limb. Another, more resolute and determined, then approached, cursing and swearing at them for not having accomplished their purpose. He seized the preacher and threw him into the street over a battlement near the house in front of which he was preaching. They then dragged him down the hill (or as it is termed, the Hood), threatening to throw him into the river. A man named Peter Bainbridge, looking on, and being seriously apprehensive of disastrous consequences, though not himself connected with the society, hastily ran into his house, took down an old rusty sword, and sallied forth to smite with it. But the Methodists restrained him from making use of it, and advised him to put it up again into its place and not attempt to defend the cause of God with such unhallowed weapons.

Just at this juncture, when the storm was at its height, Joshua Hammond, Joshua Addison, and a few other friends from Barnard Castle, unexpectedly made their appearance, having been induced to come to Middleton in consequence of a powerful impression made on the mind of one of them by a dream the preceding night. They cheerfully offered themselves to the violence of the mob, that the preacher might be rescued. Joshua Addison especially, who was a man of little stature, lest he should be lost sight of in the crowd, several times leaped up, exclaiming, "I am one of them, I am one of them." The mob, relinquishing their hold of the preacher, commenced an attack upon them, and after using them very ill, at length drove them out of the place without their sustaining any serious injury, though Joshua Addison had to lament the loss of a new hat. The principal persecutors, probably supposing they had been doing God service, after finishing their work repaired to the church and received the Sacrament; whether or not they were living in charity with all men they evidently thought it unnecessary to examine. Paul Greenwood preached in peace in Newbiggin in the evening.\*

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\* Steele's "Barnard Castle."

We have occasional descriptions by Wesley of remarkable scenery, and one of them conveys the impression made upon him by the High Force waterfall, near Middleton. May 12th, 1779 (after preaching at Cotherstone and in Teesdale), Wesley says, "I went a little out of my way to see one of the wonders of nature. The Tees rushes down between two rocks, and falls sixty feet perpendicular into a basin of water sixty feet deep. In the evening I preached to the lovely congregation in Weardale."

The High Force above referred to is a truly noble spectacle. The descent is greater than Wesley states, being eighty-two feet perpendicular into the basin, tossing up a prodigious spray, and filling the valley with the thunder of its fall. To this spot of wild beauty tourists continually resort. Wesley had been in the habit of visiting the neighbourhood for upwards of twenty years, and was frequently within three or four miles of the place. How is it, then, that this was his first visit to the remarkable fall? No man had a keener appreciation of beautiful or sublime scenery, but he put all this in subjection to the one work of his life—the salvation of souls and care of the churches.

In that business his labour was unparalleled. We find from his journals, when in this quarter, that he would preach at 9 o'clock in the morning in Weardale, cross the Pike Law, where no carriage could travel, and where every now and then he was in danger of sticking in a quagmire, and be at Newbiggin at one. Then, taking his horse again, and crossing another chain of moors and mountains, would preach in Swaledale at seven in the evening; an amount of labour from which many, not deficient in energy, would shrink.

Payments are made to Paul Greenwood in the Haworth round in 1754-5, and he appears to have been located in the Burnley section, as he brings contributions to the board from that town, and also from Haslingden and Simonstone. Paul Greenwood is named in the conveyance of ground for a chapel at Haworth, dated May 1st, 1758, as one of the trustees, and is called a gentleman. He seems to have remained in the round during part of 1759, for we find him bringing to the quarterly meeting, January 18th, from New Mill 5/6 and receiving 5/-. He was also stationed here in the year 1763 and 1764.

In 1760 Paul Greenwood was sent to Norwich, where John Oliver was bearing an intolerable burden of responsibility. Oliver says: "At the sight of him my spirit revived, I think as much as Jacob's did when he saw Joseph's waggons. We laboured together in much love, and not without success. He was a man

of a truly excellent temper and exemplary behaviour. He was constantly serious, but not sad: he was always cheerful, but not light. And the people drank into the same spirit, so that the year passed very agreeably."

In 1765 Paul Greenwood and Peter Jaco were stationed in Sheffield, where they laboured in love with each other and with the people, but not without much opposition from several young men, from sixteen to twenty years of age. Through the whole of the winter. Mulberry Street Chapel was beset, within and without, by these disorderly ruffians. The cloaks and gowns of females were frequently cut in pieces with knives and scissors. At other times the chief of the gang entered the chapel in harlequin attire, with a cat or a fowl concealed under his clothes: this he tortured so as to cause it to produce continuous mews, or cackles, to the great annoyance of both preacher and people. By every species of grimace and buffoonery he at the same time kept up the laughter of his companions. When expelled from the interior of the building, he contrived to scale the roof, where, in front of a large skylight, nearly over the pulpit, he attempted to mimic the preacher. Unable to practise this as often as he wished, and irritated with the repeated checks which he received, he and his associates assailed the windows; and such was the violence employed, that the friends were driven to the necessity of having shutters for the windows, both above and below. This being done, they were still annoyed with the noise of bricks, stones, sticks, and other instruments striking the wood.

The tempest of persecution raged with but few intervals of repose until the middle of summer, when an awful providence terminated it for a period. During Sheffield races, the riot leader, who was an expert swimmer, and had acquired considerable celebrity as a diver, went with several of his associates to the Don, in order to bathe. After diving a number of times, he climbed on to a large post which stood by the edge of the water, and with an air of mirthful triumph exclaimed, "Another dip, and then for a bit more sport with the Methodists!" He threw himself off his point of elevation; but it was his last dip! It is supposed that going head foremost, he sank into the mud at the bottom of the river, and was unable to free himself. However that might be, it was some time before he was found, and when brought out, all attempts at resuscitation were in vain.

At the Conference of 1766 Paul Greenwood was appointed to the Manchester circuit along with Messrs. Pawson, Jaco and Allen. Pawson says, "We were

as the heart of one man. I am inclined to think there never were four men more closely united than we were. Our circuit was very extensive, as it took in Stockport, Macclesfield, Congleton, Newcastle, Warrington, Liverpool, Bolton, and many other towns. This was a very happy and prosperous year; but in March, the Lord was pleased to call home his faithful servant Paul Greenwood, who died of a fever at Warrington. This was a distressing trial to me. He was a truly apostolical man, and exceedingly beloved by the people. He was one of the most sincere and upright men I ever was acquainted with. He had travelled about twenty years, and had been a blessing wherever he laboured. I never saw a man more universally lamented by the people than he was. I preached his funeral sermon in deep sorrow, yet with uncommon liberty, from 1 Cor. 15-57. 'Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, &c.' Mr. Greenwood was delirious most of the time of his sickness, yet all his conversation was spiritual and heavenly. The last night of his life, he preached and prayed the whole time till daybreak appeared in the morning. He then said, 'Another sun shall arise; Christ the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in His wings,' and immediately fell asleep in the Lord. It is remarkable, that his aged mother, a most excellent Christian, died happy in the love of God, at Keighley, the same morning. What a joyful surprise, when those two kindred spirits met together at the gates of Heaven! Wesley in a letter to Christopher Hopper of June 18th, 1767, says, "I suppose it was the death of honest Paul Greenwood which occasioned the report of yours. He could ill be spared; but he was ready for the Bridegroom; so it was fit he should go to him."



## CHAPTER X.

HAVING followed the career of Paul Greenwood so far as traces of him could be found, we must return to records of the circuit book in 1749. At the quarterly meeting, January 10th, 1749, Goodshaw Chapel appears on the books: a place about four miles from Burnley, with two leaders, John Butterworth and Josiah Helliwell. It sends to the quarterly meeting 10/3, and receives 8/2. At this meeting £1 10s. od. is paid to Darney's wife, and 14/- for a pair of boots for Darney. On April 18th, 1749, Higham, near Burnley appears, Thos. Lowcock, Leader. It sends 3/- and receives 3/9. Padiham, leader James Hunter, sends 6/2 and receives 3/9. Midgley, near Hebden Bridge, leaders Richard Taylor and Abraham Stansfield, sends 3/7½. Darney's wife receives £2 2s. od. Mr. Greenwood of Heptonstall, 5/-, and Mr. Utley, for first volume of sermons, 3/1. July 11th, 1749, Lodge, near Burnley, leader, James Hunter, sends 4/11. Pinned to this page of the Circuit Book is a memorandum, "April 19th, 1749, Lent the brethren at Halifax £1 10s. 6d." On July 11th of that year, we have the entry, "Given to Halifax Society towards defraying the law charge £1 10s. 6d."

This law charge was probably connected with some indictment for riotous proceedings, as Halifax was a place bitterly opposed to Methodism, and the charge might possibly be connected with what occurred there during a visit of Wesley on August 12th, 1748, to which reference has been made.

October 31st, 1749, Miller Barn, leaders, John Hoyle, James Pilling, James Nuttal, John Kipper, John Madin, George Ramsbottom. Lent £1 11s. 1d. Received £1 1s. 11d. Major Marshall receives for dinners, &c., 6/-, which indicates that the quarterly meeting had again been held at his house. At the close of the accounts for this quarter is the following entry: "Whereas it appears from the book that no accounts are therein inserted from October 31st, 1749, to this present day, July 25th, 1754, be it known that the reason of it is the discontinuing quarter meetings from that day to this."

Unassisted by the circuit book I must endeavour to trace the history of the round, or more correctly the men who laboured in it, from such notices of them and their

proceedings as are to be found in the miscellaneous records of the period. Grimshaw was working like a giant to spread the gospel; ever enlarging his circuit, and building up the infant churches raised, instrumentally, by himself and the early lay preachers. It is quite natural, because of the peculiarities of Grimshaw's procedure, that the general impression respecting him should be, that he was merely an eccentric clergyman, useful as a revivalist during his lifetime, but one who may now with advantage be left to the oblivion of the past. Fuller information however shows that he was emphatically a practical saint of the highest order, and that Yorkshire, Lancashire, and the northern counties, owe to him an immense debt of gratitude for the unwearied diligence with which he pursued his evangelistic labours, and watched over the multiplying churches.

The Rev. John Newton says, "As his hearers were chiefly of the poorer and unlettered class, he chose to deliver his sentiments in what he used to term *market language*; and though the warmth of his heart, and the rapidity of his imagination, might sometimes lead him to clothe his thoughts in words, which even a candid critic could not wholly justify, yet the general effect of his plain manner was striking and impressive, suited to make the dullest understand, and to fix for the time the attention of the most careless. Frequently a sentence, which a critical hearer might judge quaint or vulgar, conveyed an important truth to the ear, and fixed it in the memory for years after the rest of the sermon, and the general subject were forgotten. Though he had a singular felicity in bringing down the great truths of the gospel to a level with the meanest capacity, he did not degrade them. The solemnity of his manner; the energy with which he spoke; the spirit of love which beamed in his eyes, and breathed through his addresses, were convincing proofs that he did not trifle with his people. I may give my judgment upon this point, something in his own way, by quoting a plain and homely proverb,

It is the best cat which catches the most mice.' His improprieties, if he was justly chargeable with any, are easily avoided; but very few ministers have had equal success."

In this year, 1749, the Haworth round was again visited by Whitefield. He writes to Grimshaw, March 17th, in a style which, from its familiarity, indicates that they kept each other informed respecting the work of God. "Thanks be to the Lord Jesus, that the work flourishes with you! I am glad your children grow so fast; they become fathers too soon; I wish some may not prove dwarfs at last. A word to the wise is sufficient. I have always found awakening times like spring times; many blossoms, but not always so much fruit.

But go on, my dear man, and, in the strength of the Lord, you shall do valiantly. I long to be your way, but I suppose it will be two months first." In one of his visits to Yorkshire this year, Ingham and Batty accompanied Whitefield throughout the county, and occasionally preached with him. Lady Huntingdon also formed one of the party. It must have been on the autumn visit, as Whitefield describes his earlier tour to the Countess in writing, which indicates that she was not then of the party.

On September 29th, Whitefield writes from Newcastle, giving an account of his visit to Haworth. "I have had many proofs that God's providence directed my way into Yorkshire. I preached four times at Aberford (the home of Mr. Ingham), four times at Leeds, and three at Haworth, where lives our Mr. Grimshaw. At his church I believe we had above a thousand communicants, and in the churchyard, about six thousand hearers. It was a great day of the Son of Man."

In another letter of October 1st to Lady Huntingdon, he says, "The sacramental occasion was most awful."

In October Whitefield again ministered within the boundaries of the Haworth circuit. At Halifax, Rochdale, and Ewood he preached to many thousands. A temporary booth was erected in a field at Ewood, for the accommodation of the ministers who attended. The meadow and the woodland above were crowded with people collected from all the country around, and when the doxology was sung at the close of the service, the effect of the voice of the multitude, echoing from hill to hill, was indescribably impressive.

Ewood Hall was the ancient home of the Farrars. From a house near this mansion Grimshaw married his first wife, and here he must frequently have resided, a number of his letters being dated from this place. The Hall still stands, overlooking what must have been a charming valley, through which a pure river would then flow. The old house, tenanted by the Grimshaws, has disappeared. The unwearied diligence of Grimshaw is evidenced in the fact that he was accustomed to go to a place near Hebden Bridge (probably Ewood) on the Saturday night, and preach, and again early on Sunday morning, returning to Haworth in time for service in his own church. At the place referred to lived a stone-mason, who attended preaching almost as regularly as Grimshaw himself, and being a good singer stood before him ready to raise the tune and conduct the singing. It happened that on one of these occasions the mason was absent, and the singing did not proceed as usual. After the service, Grimshaw was grieved to learn that the man in question had given way to a former sin, and was then

in bed, intoxicated. Next morning Grimshaw took his usual place and was about to begin the service. The mason was also there, ready to do as he was wont. Grimshaw gave out :

“Come ye that love the Lord,  
And let your joys be known ”;

at the same time extending his arm and shaking his clenched fist in the face of the man, said in broad Yorkshire, “Sing if ta dare!” It is needless to add, the poor fellow was nonplussed and silenced. What further effect the reproof had is not known.

In the Minutes of 1747 Wm. Shent is named as assisting the Wesleys “chiefly in one place.” Many in that list became travelling preachers, but Shent, probably because he was married and had a family and business, does not appear to have left Leeds. He is, however, an instance of a located preacher appointed to the charge of what was practically a district, covering Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. We find mention of him at Sykehouse, near Doncaster, and Barley Hall, near Sheffield, proving that he was actively engaged in the work of God over a wide area.

At home he had a large share in the creation of the first Methodist Chapel in Leeds, the celebrated Boggart House, toward which he gave, or begged, £200. We catch a glimpse of Shent in Haworth, which he had probably visited in the fulfilment of his duties as a preacher in the round. He had been preaching in Grimshaw’s kitchen. When he finished, the fervent vicar fell down before him and said, “I am not worthy to stand in your presence.” This act may prove more than the humility of Grimshaw. It may have been prompted by admiration for the ability and zeal of the preacher, in whom there must have been superior qualities rendering him fit, in Wesley’s estimation, to take the superintendence of so wide and important a district as Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. We have also Grimshaw’s testimony to the worth of Shent in a letter to Dr. Gillies, of Glasgow, July 19th, 1754. “Soon after John Nelson was admitted into connection with the Wesleys’, the Lord raised up a very useful labourer, one William Shent, in Leeds, whose labours He hath greatly, and still, I hope, greatly owns and blesses. By this man, and other assistants, the work has wonderfully flourished ever since, not only in Leeds, but in various other towns and villages around it,—Seacroft, Hunslet, Rodwell, Oulton, Ardsley, Ridsey, Bramley, Calverley, Yeadon, &c.”

From the journals of Charles Wesley we find that William Shent was sent by him in August, 1751, to Musselborough in Scotland, in fulfilment of a promise given by John Wesley.

This is evidence that Wesley considered him, at that time, a preacher of power and judgment. It is, however, sad to be compelled to state, that after being a member of society for thirty-six years, and a preacher for thirty-two years. Shent fell into intemperance and was expelled from the society. His business declined, and with a large family dependent upon him, his circumstances became very distressing. Wesley did not desert his fallen assistant. He wrote two powerful letters to the societies of Leeds and Keighley, which show how deep must have been the regard and sorrow which he felt. I give the Keighley letter which is dated:—

“ London, January 11th, 1779.

I have a few questions which I desire may be proposed to the society at Keighley.

Who was the occasion of the Methodist preachers first setting foot in Leeds? Wm. Shent.

Who received John Nelson into his house at his first coming thither? Wm. Shent.

Who was it that invited me and received me when I came? Wm. Shent.

Who was it that stood by me while I preached in the streets, with stones flying by on every side? Wm. Shent.

Who was it that bore the storm of persecution for the whole town, and stemmed it at the peril of his life? Wm. Shent.

Whose word did God bless for many years in an eminent manner? Wm. Shent's.

By whom were many children now in paradise begotten to the Lord, and many now alive? Wm. Shent.

Who is it that is ready now to be broken up and turned into the street? Wm. Shent.

And does nobody care for this? William Shent fell into sin, and was publicly expelled the society; but must he be starved? Must he with his grey hairs and all his children be without a place to lay his head? Can you suffer this? Oh! tell it not in Gath. Where is gratitude? Where is compassion? Where is Christianity? Where is humanity? Where is concern for the cause of God? Who is a wise man among you? Who is concerned for the Gospel? Who has put on bowels of mercy? Let him arise and assert himself in this matter. You here all arise as one man, and roll away the reproach. Let us set him on his feet once more; it may save both him and his family. But what we do let it be done quickly.

I am, dear brethren,

Your affectionate brother,

JOHN WESLEY.”

In the letter to the Leeds society Mr. Wesley proposed to share equally with any members of it in raising a sum of £150 for the re-establishment of Shent. The appeal was not sufficiently responded to, and Wesley, after visiting Leeds, and making enquiries on the spot, sent him to London, where he was employed in some capacity in the Book Room, until his health failed, when he returned to Leeds. It is grievous that there should have been something like an eclipse of this once burning and shining light. He died in November, 1787. His case is full of warning that eminent piety, bravery, and usefulness, must be accompanied by prayerful watchfulness, if sin in the flesh is to be slain.

John Bennet appears to have been labouring in at least part of the Keighley circuit in the year 1749, for at his request Wesley visited Rochdale. His home was at Bank House, near Rochdale, a place which several times appears in the circuit book, and was the residence of a Mr. Healey, the ancestor of a family distinguished in Liverpool Methodism. He says, "As soon as we entered the town, we found the streets lined on both sides with multitudes of people, shouting, cursing, blaspheming, and gnashing upon us with their teeth. Perceiving it would not be practicable to preach abroad, I went into a large room, open to the street, and called aloud, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts.' The word of God prevailed over the fierceness of man. None opposed or interrupted, and there was a very remarkable change in the behaviour of the people as we afterwards went through the town."

God was at that time raising up several lay preachers, who by their zeal and courage, and constancy through life, gave clear proof of their call to this ministry. His direct operation is conspicuous in each case, and we find them successively coming under, first, the influence of Grimshaw, and then of Wesley, and laying broad and deep the foundations of those societies in Yorkshire and Lancashire which have been an incalculable blessing to thousands of the people.

One of these was Thomas Lee, who was born in June — 1727, in a small village in the parish of Keighley. In the lives of the old Methodist preachers, 1717 is given as the date of Lee's birth. This however is an error of ten years, as the Keighley parish register proves. The correct date, 1727, harmonises all the chronological allusions in Lee's autobiography, and enables us to ascertain the period when Methodism was first introduced into various localities. His mother died when he was four years old, and an uncle in



Addingham took charge of the lad. During childhood he was carefully restrained from outward sin, and in the days of early youth felt the powerful operation of the Divine Spirit. He found much delight in prayer, and had many inward consolations, though he had never heard anyone speak of the comfort of the Holy Ghost. But having no one to speak to about these things, his impressions gradually died away.

He says that during this time he now and then heard Grimshaw, and afterwards some of the early Methodist preachers, probably Maskew, Greenwood, or Darney, and under them was gradually enlightened, and resolved to cast in his lot with them. I think from this and other circumstances, that the period of his apprenticeship to some form of woollen manufacture must have been elsewhere than Addingham, as we have no evidence that Grimshaw, or his preachers, went there so early as this. Before the light of God clearly shone upon his soul, he received the call to preach. He says, "As I was one night on my knees groaning before the Lord, those words were powerfully applied to my soul, 'Thou shalt bear my name before much people.' And this impression never after left my mind long together, which often constrained me to hope that the Lord would some time help me." He instituted family prayer in his master's house, and was desired to pray in another family which he did several times. God blessed these works meet for repentance, and Lee says, "I had now more hope; and one day being alone a great part of the day and much engaged in meditation and prayer, I found a persuasion that God was willing to receive me. I left my business immediately and went to prayer. In a moment God broke in upon my soul in so wonderful a manner that I could no longer doubt of His forgiving love. I cried, 'My Lord and my God!' And in the spirit I was then in, I could have praised, and loved, and waited to all eternity."

In the case of Lee we have one of the earliest notices of prayer meetings. He tells us that he attended, and soon after conducted them, and there began to exhort. This led to wider invitations which displeased his employer, who offered to the godly apprentice the use of his house. Then he spoke to still larger gatherings. He says, "I frequently consulted my dear friend, Mr. Grimshaw, who strongly exhorted me not to be faint or weary, but to go on valiantly in the work to which God had called me." Lee's apprenticeship must have terminated in the year 1748. Beginning to work for himself, —where at first we know not,—he also wrought for God. He tells us that he was invited to go to Harden Moor, Lingbob,

near Wilsden, and Thornton, above Bradford. He was determined to test his work by the result of it on virgin ground. He says, "As there were places where no one had preached yet, I thought if God would own me here, and raise up a people for himself, I shall know that He hath sent me. He did so; many found peace with God, and a society was raised at each place."

We now get definite information respecting Lee's place of residence. The inference is that his home had been somewhere between Harden and Thornton, for he tells us that he delivered the societies he had raised in Harden, Lingbob, and Thornton, to the care of the travelling preachers, and removed to Long Addingham, the abode of his childhood. There he preached, and "God was pleased to set to His seal and a society was quickly started. Many sinners were convinced, and several were truly converted to God. . . . During all this time," says Lee, "I wrought exceedingly hard at my own business when I was at home; but the going up and down to preach frequently took up more than half my time."

This earnest-spirited man, yearning for the unenlightened, carried the gospel across the valley of the Wharfe to the scattered population upon Greenhow Hill, now in the Pateley Bridge circuit. Hartwith, in Nidderdale, distant twelve miles at least from Addingham, and other places, were visited; and he says, "at each of which it pleased God to raise up a people for Himself." We may take it therefore that in 1748, or 1749, Methodism sprung up both in Wharfedale and Nidderdale, though the names of the places in those localities do not appear upon the circuit book until the year 1762. Lee goes on to say that after he had preached some time at Greenhow Hill, he was invited to Pateley Bridge, probably about 1751. "Here," he says, "I was called to an exercise of my faith which I had not hitherto known. The first time I was here, Mr. — had prepared and encouraged a numerous mob, who spared neither mud nor stones, with many strokes besides, so that they themselves owned, 'We have done enough to make an end of him.' I did, indeed reel to and fro, and my head was broken with a stone. But I never found my soul more happy, nor was ever more composed in my closet. It was a glorious time; and there are several who date their conversion from that day. After I was a little cleaned, I went to a neighbouring town, where, when my head was dressed, I preached abroad to abundance of people, many of whom had followed me from Pateley Bridge. Some of the mob also followed; but as the wretched minister was not present to head them, and as they were greatly out-

numbered, they behaved peaceably; and the Lord blessed us much."

"Having now laboured here four years," (which clearly proves that he began to evangelise immediately after he was loosed from his apprenticeship in 1748), "and travelled generally on foot, having been often thoroughly wet, and obliged to keep on my wet clothes all day, and having frequently, when at home, worked at night, that I might not be burdensome to any; I found I was not so strong as formerly. And the number of places still increasing, I was obliged, though much against my will, to give up business and buy a horse. Mr. Grimshaw now sent me into his circuit for a month, sending another preacher in my place. Then I returned and spent a considerable time together among the new societies."

Leaving Lee for the present, I direct attention to the preacher probably sent to take charge of his societies. Thomas Mitchell was born in the parish of Bingley, December 3rd, 1726. In childhood the Holy Spirit strove with him and caused him oftentimes to pray for mercy. Though he had no one to teach him, yet he had the fear of God in his heart. At fourteen he was bound apprentice to a mason. In the year 1745, he enlisted in the army during the Scottish Rebellion and served about a year, being under conviction frequently during that time. In 1746 he joined the Methodists, and heard John Nelson several times. Under Grimshaw and Charles Wesley he got further light. In reference to the preaching of the latter, he says, "When he told us we might know our sins forgiven in this life, yea, this very moment, it seemed to me new doctrine, and I could not believe it at all. But I continued in prayer, and in a few days I was convinced of it, to my great joy. The love of Christ broke into my soul and drove away all guilt and fear, and at the same time filled my heart with love both to God and man."

He must then have been living in or near Bradford, for he says that John Wesley joined several, himself among them, in a class which met about a mile from the town; "But," he says, "all of them fell back and left me alone; yet afterwards some of them returned." It is natural to infer from this statement that he was the leader, and if so, the first in the Bradford society.

Mitchell removed to Keighley, and afterwards, heard, and profited under, the ministrations of Grimshaw. After a season of special blessing he felt a strong desire to tell others what God had done for his soul, and at length ventured to give notice of a preaching service. He says, "When the time came my soul was bowed down within

me; I had many to hear me: some of them heard with pain, as my gifts were very small, and advised me to speak no more in public. But one young woman was convinced of her lost condition, and never rested till she found redemption. But this did not satisfy my friends. So, as they were not willing to receive me, I went to those that would, and God began to bless my weak endeavours. Being now employed at Sir Walter Coverley's, in the parish of Guiseley, I met a few serious people at Yeadon. They were just setting out in the ways of God and desired me to give a word of exhortation among them. I did so a few times, and God was pleased to bless it to these souls. The little society increased, and they all dearly loved one another. But Satan was not idle. Every time we met a riotous mob gathered round the house, and disturbed us much."

There appears to have been some plan of appointments in existence for the lay preachers, even in those early years of Methodist history; for after describing visits of Darney and Maskew to Yeadon, and attacks upon them by the mob, led by the curate of Guiseley, Mitchell says, "It was my turn to go next. No sooner was I at the town than the mob came like so many roaring lions. My friends advised me not to preach that night, and undertook to carry me out of the town. But the mob followed me in a great rage, and stoned me for nearly two miles, so that it was several weeks before I got well of the bruises I then received."

The clergyman who incited to these riots was probably the Rev. Hy. Wickham, who, in 1745, signed a warrant for the apprehension and committal to York Castle of Jonathan Reeves, in Keighley, as a spy and dangerous person. Mitchell goes on to say, "I stayed some time after in these parts and was fully employed. All the day I wrought diligently at my business; in the evenings I called sinners to repentance. And now the mobs were not so furious, so that we had no considerable interruption. In the meantime I waited to see whether the Lord had anything for me to do. I made it matter of continual prayer that He would make my way plain before me. And in a little while I had much more of the best work upon my hands. I was desired to give an exhortation at a village called Hartwith. I went thither several times. Several here were deeply convinced of sin, and two or three soon found redemption in the blood of Jesus, the forgiveness of sin." This was about the time that Lee was taken from his new societies to minister in Grimshaw's circuit, and Mitchell evidently now began to itinerate, with Grimshaw's sanction and encouragement, and several times preached in Hartwith, one of the places opened by Lee.

Some of his early itinerant experiences were very rough and peculiar. "In Heptonstall," he says, "I met with a lively people, who received me very kindly. I gave several exhortations among them, and the word went with power to many hearts. Among others, a very tall man, who was a butcher, was cut to the heart. But it had a very bad effect upon him for the present, for he went home and beat his wife in a most terrible manner, because he thought she had told me of all his sinful ways. But afterwards he was convinced and converted. I continued some time in these parts and went to several places in Lancashire. Here also I found many were awakened, and several found peace with God while I was among them. I endeavoured to form a regular circuit in these parts, and in a little time gained my point."

This is an important statement, and raises the enquiry whether Mitchell was not the pioneer Methodist preacher in Burnley, Laund, Higham, Simonstone, Padiham and Dunnockshaw, which all appear upon the circuit book soon after entries are resumed. Previous to this time the entries are all north or south of this imaginary circuit. Grimshaw and Wesley, Nelson and Jane, we know, had to do actively with the evangelisation of Colne and Roughlee, to which there was a good road from Haworth. Darney's circuit lay in Rossendale and the district from thence to Halifax so that this intermediate tract of country, at the time of Mitchell's visit, might be unbroken ground, and the sentence he pens be the first record of its Methodist history. It was accessible from Heptonstall by an old road crossing the hills at Stapleton Cross. A wide tract it appears to us, but to men like Darney, Lee, Mitchell, and especially Grimshaw, it would seem a comparatively small circuit. The conjecture is strengthened by the fact that in the letter of Grimshaw to Gillies, relating the progress of the work of God in the north, he does not name the places I have given, but others north and south, connecting Darney's name with them under the year 1746.

Mitchell goes on to say, "I continued here some time, and have reason to hope that I was useful among them. In one place I met with a mob of women, who put me into a pond of water, which took me nearly over my head. But by the blessing of God I got out safe and walked about three miles in my wet clothes, but I caught no cold."

In the Todmorden book there are the following entries, which determine the time of Mitchell's residence in the Haworth round:—

"Nov. 6, 1750, To Major Marshall for Thos.

Mitchell—Night ... .. 1/-

Jan. 30, 1751, Thos. Mitchell—Waistcoat ... 10/8

          "          "          "          " for his boots mending 2/6

Feb. 5, 1751, Thos. Mitchell, noon (dinner) ... 6d.

Grimshaw was the director and encourager of this circuit-former, for Mitchell says, "I continued some time in these parts, encouraged by the example and advice of good Mr. Grimshaw. One time Paul Greenwood and I called at his house together, and he gave us a very warm exhortation, which I shall not soon forget. He said, 'If you are sent of God to preach the gospel, all hell will be up in arms against you. Prepare for the battle and stand firm in the good ways of God. Indeed you must not expect to gain much of this world's goods by preaching the gospel. What you get must come through the devil's teeth, and he will hold it as fast as he can. I count every covetous man to be one of the devil's teeth. And he will let nothing go for God and His cause but what is forced from him.'" All these events took place between the years 1748 and 1751, for in that year Mitchell was stationed in Lincolnshire, and for a time his connection with the Keighley circuit ceased.

We must return to Thomas Lee, who was again in the circuit he had formed in the eastern part of the round. He tells us, "In the year 1752, and during the winter following, the work of God prospered exceedingly, but persecution raged on every side. The malice of the devil was chiefly levelled against me, and I was the first that disturbed his servants in these parts. So that wherever I went I was in much danger, carrying, as it were, my life in my hand.

One day, as I was going through Pateley, the captain of the mob, who was kept in constant pay, pursued me and pulled me off my horse. The mob then soon collected about me, and one or another struck up my heels (I believe more than twenty times) upon the stones. They then dragged me into the house by the hair of the head, then pushed me back, with one or two upon me, and threw me with the small of my back upon the edge of the stone steps. This nearly broke my back, and it was not well for many years after. Thence they dragged me to the common sewer. They rolled me in for some time; then dragged me to the bridge and threw me into the water. They had me mostly on the ground, my strength being quite spent."

These early Methodist heroes were indeed treated as "the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things," and thus veritably in the apostolic succession (I. Cor., iv. 9-13).

"My wife, with some friends, now came up. Seeing her busy about me, some asked, 'What, are you a



Methodist?' and gave her several blows, which made her bleed at the mouth, and swore they would put her into the river. All the time I lay upon the ground, the mob being undetermined what to do. Some cried out, 'Make an end of him!' Others were for sparing my life; but the dispute was cut short by their agreeing to put some others into the water. So they took them away, leaving me and my wife together. She endeavoured to raise me up, but having no strength, I dropped down to the ground again. She got me up again, and supported me about a hundred yards; then I was set on horseback and made a shift to ride softly as far as Michael Granger's house. Here I was stripped from head to foot and was washed. I left my wet clothes here and rode to Greenough Hill, where many were waiting for me, and though much bruised, and very weak, preached a short sermon from Psalm xxxiv., 19. 'Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.' The next morning I preached again. Afterwards several accompanied me a by-way to North Pasture. There were many serious hearers, but the captain of the mob came and made some disturbance, and then with a great stick broke every pane of glass in a large window. This made a little confusion at first, but afterwards the Lord poured down His blessing in an uncommon manner, Almost all were in tears, and the people took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. Thence we rode to Hartwith, where we had peace, and the power of the Lord was with us. But when the work of the day was over, I was so bruised and sore that I was obliged to be undressed by another.

"This summer, autumn, and winter, were times of hot persecution. Our friends frequently suffered when they went upon business to Pateley Bridge. Their clothes were spoiled, and their persons much abused. They applied for justice to the Dean of Ripon, but found none. But what made amends was, we loved each other dearly, and had exceedingly comfortable seasons together.

In January, 1753, I was invited to preach about a mile from Pateley. When I came the mob was gathered. However, in the name of the Lord, I began; and though they blasphemed horribly and broke the windows, I was not interrupted or discomposed, but prayed, preached, and concluded in peace. As soon as I had ended they became outrageous. I retired into a chamber and gave myself to prayer. While I was on my knees, one came and informed me the mob had forced into the house and would soon be in the chamber; but that I must get out at the window, and there were some friends below who would catch me as I fell. In a while, being

desired to preach there again, I fixed it in the day time, thinking the mob would not leave their work to disturb us. But they soon came and surrounded the house, so that I could not preach at all. After I had been kept prisoner for several hours, I was obliged to run for my life.

About the same time I was invited to Garthit Hall, where I preached in the open-air with little interruption; but when I went again, the Pateley Bridge mob came, though the floods were out. When I began to preach they were more and more violent, till I was forced to desist and retire. Being resolved I should not escape again, they surrounded the house till near sunset. Then they ran to beat one of the people. Our friends snatched the opportunity and brought me a horse, which I immediately mounted. The mob, seeing this, left him and pursued me. But again God delivered me out of their hands."

Riding to escape the mob, who had taken possession of the bridge, he says, "It being very dark we lost our way upon the moors. We wandered till we were thoroughly beat with snow and rain, but late at night found our way to Thomas Lupton's. The congregation had waited for several hours, being much troubled for fear I was killed. I changed my clothes, and though it was late, preached to them as the Lord enabled me. It seemed to us little less than heaven, and though it was a hard day it was a blessed day to my soul. I remember once during these seasons of trouble, wherein my life continually hung in suspense, a thought came into my mind, 'It is hard to have no respite, to be thus perpetually suffering.' Immediately it was impressed upon my mind, 'Did you not, when you was upon the borders of despair, promise the Lord that if He would give you an assurance of His favour, you would count no suffering, sorrow, or affliction, too great to be endured for His name's sake?' This at once silenced all murmuring, and thenceforth I bore whatever befel me with patience, and often with joy: finding a willingness to bear it, as long as He saw meet, if it were to the end of my life."

In the year 1756 Thomas Lee had thirteen or fourteen places where he preached regularly, and he quite intended to spend his life among them. Grimshaw, however, mentioned him to Wesley, who asked Lee to become a travelling preacher. In reply he said "Yes, if Mr. Grimshaw will supply my places." This Mr. Grimshaw promised to do.

Lee's first circuit was Leeds, extending beyond Sheffield into Derbyshire in the south, to Hull in the East, and far into the North Riding. His second circuit was the whole of Lincolnshire.

To encourage Lee in these wide and hard rounds, Grimshaw wrote him on July 21st, 1757, "I hope your love abides in full strength, and that you can preach twenty times a week. If you can preach oftener, do. Preaching, is health, food, and physic to me; and why not to thee, my brother? Besides, Tommy, there is very great need of preaching now. For iniquity aboundeth, the love of many grows cold, and God's judgments are out in the earth. Tommy, let us preach four times a day, or thirty times a week, whether you please, or can bear better. It will be all little enough. Our Master well deserves it; yea, and infinitely more. O that we may spend and be spent in preaching His everlasting gospel, in converting sinners and confirming believers."

In the same letter Grimshaw says, "It is about two years since I wrote to you. How fast does time slide away! My long silence, however, has not been owing to any disrespect that I have for you, God knoweth, but to neglect of writing, chiefly, for which I must beg your pardon. My heart is as cordially kind to you as ever, if not more so. I respect sincerely your soul, your body, your doctrine, your labour, your conduct, &c. What can I do more, Tommy? You will remember me kindly to Rebecca, but especially, kindly remember me at the footstool of grace. I have done so daily for you above two years. May the Lord bless you, yours, and your labours! Pray, therefore, for me, and I will pray for thee, being your affectionate  
W.G."

Lee's personal narrative was written in the year 1779, and the concluding sentences of it show that the same spirit of indomitable faith still breathed in the heart of the old soldier of Jesus Christ. "Thus have I given you a few imperfect hints of the manner wherein our Lord has dealt with me. My whole life, particularly since I have known something of the saving power of religion, has been attended all along with manifold trials, a thousand times more than I have related; yet has the Lord been exceedingly gracious to me, the most unworthy of all His people. If I this moment saw all the sufferings I have had for His name's sake; if they were now spread before me, I would say, 'Lord, if thou wilt give me strength, I will now begin again, and thou shalt add to them lions' dens and fiery furnaces, and by Thy grace I will go through them all.' My life, though attended with many crosses, has been a life of mercies."

He preached the gospel he had embraced to the close of his life, in 1786. The Sunday before he died he went to the preaching-house on crutches, and preached twice, sitting. His first text was, "All flesh is grass, and the glory thereof is as

the flower of the grass, &c." His last text was, "Surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear the Lord, &c." In the sermon he said, "Perhaps this will be my last sermon"; and as if he saw his end was near he gave out a funeral hymn. When he came to those words,

By faith we already behold  
That lovely Jerusalem here;  
Her walls are of jasper and gold,  
As crystal her buildings are clear,

he seemed to be quite transported at the thought of meeting Jesus. The evening before he died, he expressed great resignation to the will of the Lord, though, as he said, the pains drank up his spirits. He said, "I am the Lord's, and I feel that I am united to Him; and I know that I shall be with Him for ever!"

Wesley, recording the death of Thomas Lee, in 1787, justly calls him "A faithful brother, and a good old soldier of Jesus Christ."