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Moore, Robert Samuel

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## SUMMARY

Religious beliefs are shaped and sustained by the day-to-day social relations of the believer, whose actions they also constrain and direct. Conversion to Methodism entailed a radical ethical transformation of the believer's life and produced personal qualities suited to working class political leadership.

The beliefs of Methodism and ethical individualism have an affinity with liberalism and predisposed the Methodists to reject notions of class conflict. Nonconformist coal-owners and their managers shared religious beliefs with the Methodists and patronised chapel and village activities. Paternalism was underpinned by relative prosperity at the end of the nineteenth century. The Methodist trade union leadership also shared economic (liberal) views and political (Liberal) loyalties with the ownership and management.

The Methodist leadership was compliant - but not submissive - but it became less acceptable to working men as reciprocal relations broke down between ownership and union leaders in the early twentieth century.

A radical tradition was found. Its representatives owed none of their beliefs to Methodism. Nonetheless within the chapel they rediscovered a radical working class tradition with Biblical roots. They were rejected by the majority of Methodists when they were seen to be pacifists and socialists.

We found that Methodism was important to the villagers not as a formal association alone but as a feature of family life and shared culture. It was ethically discontinuous with much of the mainstream of miners' leisure activities.

The Methodists' collective interests were communal rather than associational, so they were unable to adopt a decisive position on any potentially divisive issue. Thus during the industrial conflicts of 1900-26 the Methodists were unable to take sides as this would have threatened their communal stability. The material interests of their universalistically based membership also differed. They were ideologically unequipped to cope with social conflict. Thus whilst individually they observed the solidaristic loyalties of a threatened working class community, collectively they adopted ambiguous attitudes which attracted criticisms from both sides of the conflicts.



Esh Winning Colliery, looking South, 1970. This aerial photograph was taken a few days before East Terrace was demolished, in the last days of the pit. The company Manager's house is at the end of the lane to the South.

THE UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM

The Influence of Methodism in Inhibiting  
the Development of Class Consciousness and  
Reducing Class Conflict, with particular  
reference to four West Durham mining villages  
in the period 1870-1926.

Thesis presented for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in the  
University of Durham

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An aerial View of Esh Winning	Frontispiece
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The people and events described in this thesis are real persons and real events, except where tact had dictated that names of people or places should be concealed.

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Robert Moore  
Aberdeen 1972

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The main thesis of this work is that the effect of Methodism on a working class community was to inhibit the development of class consciousness and reduce class conflict. Plainly these assertions do not exhaust the possible effects of religion. Our discussion will, therefore, try to show the particular social and economic circumstances in which Methodism has these effects.

Three lines of argument will be developed. Firstly: the beliefs of Methodists did not specifically entail a social outlook which included notions of class interest and conflict. We will sustain Pickering's contention that "churches do not as a rule accept the validity of the struggle between employer and employee"<sup>1</sup>. Methodist beliefs were more congruent with a view of society divided into the saved and the unsaved, in which ethical issues were more important than economic or political issues. Furthermore we will discover that not only does the saved/unsaved dichotomy cut across social classes based on economic definitions but that groups in different class positions shared common views of the world, rooted in shared religious beliefs.

Secondly: as a corollary of the first point we will argue that whilst Methodism did produce political leaders amongst working men it did not produce leaders who would articulate and pursue class interests as such. We will also show that the characteristic working class leader was sustained, and his political stance validated, by relatively favourable economic circumstances. Thus as his actions seemed to be gaining the ends projected, his working assumptions gained legitimation.

The third theme originally played a theoretically minor part in our analysis, but at the end seemed rather important: Methodism is institutionalised as part of a community rather than in wholly formal religious

associations. The constraints on a member of a communal organisation are rather different from the constraints of an associational type of organisation.<sup>2</sup> We discover that Methodism in the community becomes more communal and less associational as a result of, for example, inter-marriage. An understanding of this gives us a deeper insight into the orientations of Methodists in situations of political conflict. At the end of our historical account we see the Methodists so emphasising traditional and communal values and activities that they become increasingly disconnected not only from current political issues but even from official Methodist policy discussions and liturgical changes.

It should be clear from this final point that we will not be advancing a wholly "religious" explanation of courses of events. We assent to Liston Pope's view that:

"Religious forces have not been the crucial dynamic factor in culture; neither have they been an opiate of the people or an unmitigated sanction of the status quo. Sweeping assertions of this sort are too uncritical and indiscriminating to represent accurately the diverse ways in which religious agencies function. Several of these general theories illumine particular aspects of inter-relationship but are false when applied to other areas; each fails adequately to allow for the multiplicity and reciprocity of relationships".<sup>3</sup>

Our aim will be, therefore, to explore inter-relationships between religious, political, economic and ideological factors.

## II

Methodism has posed a problem for historians ever since historians have attempted to give an account of the development of the social and political institutions of modern Britain. Lecky and Buckle, for example, were amongst the first who tried to take stock of the radical transformation of British society and construct an account of what had actually happened. What kind of society had been created, and by what processes? Both believed that modern

society was marked by the advance of reason and the decline of religion, that the ancient superstition was being replaced by science and the culture of democracy and would continue to be so replaced.

Buckle argued that the progress of mankind depended on the development of the spirit of free enquiry and the dissemination of knowledge. "Intellectual" truth had to take precedence over "moral" truth. The main hindrance to these processes was the protective attitude of church and state which did not allow men to think for themselves and develop intellectually.<sup>4</sup>

Lecky in his Rationalism in Europe selected beliefs in witchcraft, miracles and future punishment as particular examples of the whole range of religious beliefs that had been a brake upon the development of civilisation. The power of such beliefs had been very great, but it was being overcome by the rational spirit of modern, scientific man. Lecky finishes his work on rationalism with a curious note of regret at the passing of the spirit of self-sacrifice for the sake of absolute beliefs and its replacement by the idea of utility.<sup>5</sup>

Thus for both Buckle and Lecky religion was a feature of a past age and it embodied a spirit that was antipathetic to the spirit of modern times. Yet both had to face the awkward fact that religion had made some kind of positive contribution to the development of modern society. Lecky saw this contribution in the religious revival at the beginning of the eighteenth century, as we shall see.

In France Elie Halevy, naturally perhaps, asked slightly different questions about the rise of modern Britain. For him the question was not merely one of describing the institutions and processes but of explaining how Britain became a modern, bourgeois society without a bloody revolution. By a process of elimination he arrived at the conclusion that religion, religious institutions and traditions played a significant part in preventing revolution. Halevy, we should note, needed (as a Frenchman) to understand

why the bourgeoisie had not revolted in Britain, as much as to explain why the proletariat failed to rebel. As we shall see these were closely related questions for Halevy.

In Germany Max Weber also applied himself to the question of how rational capitalism, and a rational secular culture had developed out of pre-existing structures and traditions. He believed the modern proletariat to be relatively indifferent to religion but nonetheless recognised the importance of religion, at the wide, cultural and motivational level, in the rise of capitalist society and the bourgeois entrepreneur. Weber's The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism alone amongst his extensive works on religion provides a clear indication of the importance he attached to religion in the development of the modern world.

These four scholars were, in their own ways, liberals. None of them were full-time historians and only Weber was - from time to time - a full-time academic. A later generation of professional historians, of left-wing persuasions, adopted a rather different perspective on the problem of Methodism. The Webbs, the Hammonds, Eric Hobsbawm and Edward Thompson started from the knowledge that we had become an industrial society, and that something was known about the social reorganisation that made up that process of becoming. They showed not a little nostalgia for a (possibly mythical) golden age of pre-industrial proletarian community life, they underlined the violence and the exploitation of the transition from traditional to modern, they seemed to be asking questions relating to the problem of how to change capitalist society.

We would be mistaken if we assumed that there was unanimity amongst historians on the left in their attitude to the past and to one another. The Webbs, for example, were not concerned (like Marx) with the withering away of the state but with the creation of a state which embodied "the nobler aspect of the medieval manor".<sup>6</sup> This implied paternalism seen in the context of the

social background of the Fabians earned the contempt of Eric Hobsbawm. Hobsbawm was interested in industrial proletarian groups such as gas-workers, and in his Primitive Rebels turned to consider the peasants and the lumpen proletariat. Edward Thompson, however, found his labour heroes amongst the skilled craftsmen of an earlier pre-industrial, industrial order. He seems to mourn the passing of the community of the stockinger and weaver, the traditional artisan and craftsmen. The mystery of the craft was swept away by capitalism and it is this rather than the creation of an urban industrial proletariat and their associations that interests Thompson.

None of these authors is personally very sympathetic to religion, yet all had to face the incontrovertible fact that Protestant sects were training grounds for working class leaders. Beyond recognising this they sought to emphasise the social control functions of religion and to use its persistence to explain the lack of class consciousness and sustained revolutionary fervour amongst the workers in the industrial revolution. Like the early historians they seem to have the rationalist's hope of the withering away of religion. Our main criticism of all the historians is that there has been more debate than research on the problem of religion.<sup>7</sup>

Originally Methodist historians of Methodism seem to have relied upon the conclusions of the early historians. Indeed the "Halevy thesis" seems to be more cited than consulted and Lecky is seldom given a footnote when named in defence of the anti-revolutionary thesis on Methodism.<sup>8</sup> Modern Methodist historians seem to have been writing a defence of Methodism against the modern labour historians; they have attempted to show that Methodism had a positive and "good" role in the development of modern working class movements.

Arnold Toynbee seems to provide a link between the rationalist, socialist and Methodist historians. In his Lectures on the Industrial Revolution Toynbee, like Lecky, stressed the importance of the historical method.<sup>9</sup> The

study of history was necessary in order to understand the present. Toynbee noted the decline of traditional society and the emergence of the cash nexus: "Political Economy, it was said, destroyed the moral and political relations of men, and dissolved the social union".<sup>10</sup> But, according to Toynbee, the use of the historical method would enable one to show that the so-called laws of Political Economy were not immutable, but relevant to a certain stage of civilisation only. In relativising the "laws" of Political Economy Toynbee also tried to show that intervention in the "struggle for existence" was a major element of the whole of human history.<sup>11</sup>

Thus Toynbee was able to reject the necessity of "free competition of unequal industrial units" and advocate state intervention in the economy - for the good of all - in, for example, housing programmes.<sup>12</sup> This modest Fabianism, derived from historical study, provides us with a direct connection with the work of the Webbs, and through them the Fabians.

Toynbee, a disciple of T.H. Green, was not a socialist. He defined socialism, very explicitly, in the same way that Wearmouth was to define it, implicitly, later: Socialism is an extension of Liberalism.<sup>13</sup> In this context trade unions can be viewed favourably by Liberals as well as by Fabians;

"Employers are beginning to recognise the necessity of them, and the advantages of being able to treat with a whole body of workmen through their most intelligent members".<sup>14</sup>

This view of the trade unions is one that will be echoed by Liberal entrepreneurs and trade unions leaders, in our earlier chapters.

If traditional social relations had broken down in the industrial revolution then they were to be replaced by voluntary associations (including the trade unions) and the development of self-help. These efforts to restore the "social union" for the common good could be aided by the state which was to ensure steady and adequate wages and regulate the conditions of labour. Here in Toynbee we see a variety of themes including those typical of diverse traditions including Samuel Smiles, the Utilitarians and the Fabians.

Toynbee's themes have set the tone of modern historical discussion; the problem of the disruption caused by the industrial revolution (a term given currency in the English language by Toynbee<sup>15</sup>) and the nature of the new social order that was to emerge. Such themes were also central to the origins of sociology.

Methodism has been a stubborn fact for historians, a problem for the left and something to be defended by Methodists. It has been largely ignored by sociologists. Sociologists of religion have, of course, written on aspects of Methodism; but sociologists interested in the problems that taxed the historians mentioned above, problems of development and modernisation in Britain, problems of stratification, class consciousness and political sociology have just not paid attention to religion.\* Sociologists have perhaps accepted the views of historians too readily in this field. If sociologists see religion as marginal and a declining influence in history they might at least have asked questions about the role of religion in shaping existing institutions and beliefs, and the implications of this for their current and future development.

First of all we will turn to the historians.

### Historians

In the second volume of his History of England in the 18th Century Lecky discussed the dissolution of traditional social ties brought about by industrialisation and urbanisation. Ties were dissolved until only the cash nexus held men together. This was especially the case in the relationships between employers and employed. The beginning of the eighteenth century was, for Lecky, a time at which class differences were obvious and widening and when class warfare was immanent. But instead there was a religious revival which

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\* Martin and Crouch are a recent exception to this<sup>16</sup>

"... opened a new spring of moral and religious energy among the poor, and at the same time gave a powerful impulse to the philanthropy of the rich"<sup>17</sup>

On the basis of "testimonies as to the healthful and becalming tendencies"<sup>18</sup> of Methodism from Lecky and others Townsend was able to assert in his 1909 New History of Methodism that Methodism had "saved the country from such a cataclysm as happened in France"<sup>19</sup>

Halevy, like other French historians (including his teacher Taine, named by Townsend in New History) asked "why did England not have a revolution?" He concluded that one could not find the answer in economic or political institutions alone. The religious revival of the early eighteenth century was a vital factor.<sup>20</sup> The "Halevy thesis" has been central to subsequent discussion of the political effects of Methodism.

Two sets of sociological assumptions underlying the Halevy thesis have remained relatively unexamined.<sup>21</sup> Firstly Halevy believed that the English nation was (and still is) a nation of puritans and that the English character was serious, reserved and melancholic as compared to the gay, extroverted and irreligious French. Thus the revival of 1739 was a revival, a reawakening, of aspects of traditional English culture:

"la vieille inspiration puritaine, qui avait triomphe un siècle plus tôt, aux temps de la République de Cromwell"<sup>22</sup>

Thus Halevy has a theory of English national character which seems to beg many of the questions he set out to answer by suggesting that the English already had characteristics which the revival is otherwise thought to have produced.

The more substantial assumption made by Halevy concerns the way in which Methodism operated upon the English population, for in this part of the argument Halevy advances a theory about the working class and its relations to other classes. According to Halevy;

"Le prolétariat des manufactures et des usines, aggloméré autour des centres industriels, est accessible à la contagion rapide de

tout les emotions violentes. Mais c'est une foule ignorante, incapable de prevoir et de diviser elle-même en quel sens se portera sons enthusiasmes"<sup>23</sup>

The working class thus failed to revolt because it lacked the necessary middle class leadership. This pattern was to be repeated when the working class was deprived of leaders at the time of Chartism a century later, and "the populace fell back into a state of incoherence, demoralisation and at last apathy".<sup>24</sup>

Halevy assumes that the working class is a bovine mass without its own leadership and ideas. Secondly he assumes that the working class are dependent on the middle classes for ideological leadership. These are assumptions that we can not accept without more adequate evidence to support them.

In his History of the English People in 1815, published in 1924, Halevy's position is slightly different, for he distinguishes between the bourgeoisie and a working class elite:

"... a system of economic production that was in fact totally without organisation of any kind would have plunged the kingdom into violent revolution had the working classes found in the middle class leaders to provide it with a definite ideal, a creed, a practical programme. But the elite of the working class, the hard-working and capable bourgeois,\* had been imbued by the Evangelical movement with a spirit from which the established order had nothing to fear."<sup>25\*</sup>

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\* This translation reads ambiguously, the original suggests that a more accurate rendering would be "the elite of the working class and the hard-working and capable bourgeoisie". Footnote 25 includes the whole quotation in the original.

\* A comment to be echoed by Wearmouth in his discussion of the nineteenth century: "These leaders were not revolutionaries. By their integrity and uprightness they demonstrated to the rulers of the land that the country had nothing to fear from the leaders of working men"<sup>26</sup>

It is not altogether clear who now leads the working class, the middle class or a working class elite. There can be no objection to the suggestion that both were influenced in the way suggested. But if Halevy still means that, the working class elite notwithstanding, the working class were a bovine mob led by the bourgeoisie, then there is still considerable objection to his thesis on these grounds. If Methodism influenced the working class through the elite of the working class then we might proceed to test a reasonable, unobjectionable theory.

Halevy's thesis is more complex than his critics have suggested precisely because he was saying that the 1739 revival was a revival of something already existing in the English character:

"Le reveil evangelique de 1739 ne fut donc pas un commencement absolu, une creation ex nihilo: il consist dans une combinaison nouvelle d'elements preexistants et parfaitement definis"<sup>27</sup>

These elements were the reserve and melancholy mentioned above. But what this analysis means is that Methodism heightened and refocused features of English culture rather than creating new ones. Thus for the upper classes the revival was "la reaction religieuse et morale" against venality and scepticism in church and state. The old puritanism was reformulated, and religious certainty was reasserted. Hannah More and William Wilberforce amongst others sought to reform not only the working classes but the outlook and behaviour of the upper and middle classes, and not without effect, for according to Gillispie the revival "restrained the plutocrats who had newly arisen from the masses from vulgar ostentation and debauchery".<sup>28</sup>

According to Charles Gillispie, "For Halevy the main thing about evangelicalism was not that it was true religion but that it led to individual self-restraint".<sup>29</sup> This self-restraint was born (or reborn) of the dissenting tradition. This tradition was typified, for Halevy, in the rights of free association. Dissenting groups could only survive if they disciplined their own members in order to avoid confrontations with the state. Thus free

associations voluntarily restricted the liberty of their individual members in order to survive, and this, according to Halevy, was as important in the eighteenth century as in the earlier part of the seventeenth century. The spirit of self-discipline and mutual restraint was thus revived with the revival of religion and morality in the eighteenth (and nineteenth) century.

In reforming the morals of both the masses and their superiors the revived puritanism provided a new basis for the lower and upper classes to collaborate. Thus even though in the nineteenth century men may have pursued goals antipathetic to one another they pursued them on the basis of a set of shared assumptions.

Restraint, tolerance, a "live and let live" attitude were available as a basis for relationships between the classes when other ties had been dissolved. "A pragmatic approach to problems, co-operativeness, tolerance, a gift for compromise...", these are what Alasdair MacIntyre calls the secondary virtues.<sup>30</sup> They are secondary because they relate not to the ends that men pursue but to how they pursue them, and to the manner in which they handle conflicts of goals. If the "Halevy thesis" is that religion provided a basis for co-operation in a situation of potential or actual conflict through the development of these secondary virtues then his thesis forms part of our thesis.

We have dwelt upon Halevy because he is usually represented in an over simple version and defended or attacked by assertion rather than detailed argument. Himmelfarb has put the situation well:

"A distinguished sociologist, [Lipset] aware of the dissatisfaction with the Halevy thesis, has described it as an "area of considerable scholarly controversy" - on the assumption, presumably, that he had been afforded a glimpse of only the tip of the iceberg. Unfortunately there is little beneath the tip. The whole of this "area of considerable scholarly controversy" consists of a ten-page essay, several pages of a large volume, some paragraphs in a biographical article, portions of book reviews, and isolated, undocumented, but increasingly common statements to the effect that the thesis is no longer tenable".<sup>31</sup>

### III

The most damaging criticisms that can be made of Halevy is that he does not ask seriously whether religion can have any meaning for the individual proletarian believer, or indeed for a working class elite. John and Barbara Hammond and Edward Thompson suggested that religion might have a personal meaning for the believer of whatever social position. The Hammonds believed that the worker needed beliefs which placed him in a significant world of meanings which transcended everyday life. The miner and the weaver wanted "a religion that recognised that the world did not explain itself".<sup>32</sup> Religion in fact gave the oppressed "an assurance that their obscure lives had some significance and moment". Also "The Methodist taught that men were not so helpless as they seemed for religion could make them independent of the condition of their lives".<sup>33</sup> Such notions might have been the basis for a radical political response to social conditions. But this radical potential was reduced by Methodists accepting deprivation as a trial of faith rather than a political challenge.

The Hammonds also underlined the paradoxes of Methodism, for as long as religion was part of the civil constitution of society religious questioning was a questioning of that constitution. Thus Methodism was associated with sedition. It could be, we should note in passing, that the Wesleyan propaganda designed to dispel this suggestion of sedition, may have been at the root of the anti-revolutionary thesis.

Edward Thompson noted the paradoxes also; Methodism was a religion of despair and rebellion, producing submission and political leadership amongst working men who lived earnest and disciplined lives whilst engaging in spiritual orgies.

Before moving to a more detailed discussion of Thompson we should take note of Eric Hobsbawm's "ten page essay" in Labouring Men<sup>34</sup>. Hobsbawm remarked that Methodism and radicalism advanced together and that in modern

times pious men of various faiths have led, or been active in revolutionary movements. Thus Methodism as such can not have been very important. Had "other factors" been ripe, Hobsbawm concludes, Methodism could not have averted revolution. The fact was that down to 1840 there was a good deal of revolutionary feeling around in England, but the upper classes never lost control of the situation. What Hobsbawm does not examine are the reasons for the other factors not being ripe; it may have been that there were cultural factors, to some degree derived from religious sources, which enabled the upper classes to keep control. This could have been deduced from Halevy's argument, yet Hobsbawm rejects Halevy.<sup>35</sup>

Thompson<sup>36</sup> in common with the Hammonds, saw two sides to Methodism. Firstly it served the interests of the bourgeoisie because it

"weakened the poor from within, by adding to them the active ingredient of submission; and they [the leaders of Methodism] fostered within the Methodist church those elements most suited to make up the psychic component of the work-discipline of which the manufacturers stood in most need"<sup>37</sup>

Thus Methodism helped provide the motivations for the new work-discipline needed for industrial society. It did this in a negative sense by overcoming "the older, half-pagan popular culture, with its fairs, its sports, its drink and its picaresque hedonism".<sup>38</sup> In the positive sense noted by Thompson above it contributed to the rationalisation of work through self-discipline whereby, ideally, "the labourer must be turned 'into his own slave-driver'".<sup>39</sup>

Methodism did not become a vehicle for a radical political response to the destruction of the old order and the rigours of the new because it "brought to a point of hysterical intensity the desire for personal salvation".<sup>40</sup> The Methodist sought self-mastery and self-perfection rather than striving to change the world.

Thompson makes the Weberian point that discipline was maintained

mutually by sect members, backsliding meant expulsion from the only community men knew in the industrial wilderness. The dedication required to maintain personal membership and to sustain the activities of the chapel carried over into the organisation of trade unions. Thus Methodism also served the working class by producing working class leaders with a "capacity for sustained organisational dedication and (at its best) a high degree of personal responsibility".<sup>41</sup> The Methodist was able to carry into political activity (given that Methodism may not have actually encouraged that activity) a sense of earnestness, of dedication and of a "calling" that was to be important for the organisations so led.

Thompson's analysis is somewhat unbalanced by his transparent dislike of Methodism. Because of this he stresses those features of Methodism which he believes inhibited the rise of working class consciousness, in doing this he can make easy psychological targets of selected Methodist hymns and revivalist practices. But one obvious question arising from this kind of analysis is why were "so many working people ..... willing to submit to this form of psychic exploitation?"<sup>42</sup>

Thompson's answers to this question create difficulties for the rest of the argument. He suggests that the evidence of Sunday School primers and the dogmas of such men as Bunting do not necessarily tell us what happened in the local community:

"What the orthodox Methodist minister intended is one thing; what actually happened in many communities may be another".<sup>43</sup>

But almost the whole of Thompson's argument rests upon the evidence of orthodox writers and especially upon the words of Methodist hymns. Either this is valid evidence which tells us about local Methodism, or it is not. In the former case the question, "Why submit?" remains; if the latter is the case then Thompson's thesis must fall because he has not produced the relevant evidence to support it. This latter situation introduces a circularity into

the argument that is quite unacceptable, for Thompson would be arguing as follows: Official Methodism was a form of religious terrorism, why did men endure it? Because they believed something else and not the terrorist formulation.

This problem in Thompson's argument arises from the lack of material on local Methodism and our real uncertainty about the form in which orthodox (or "official") Methodism was expressed at the local level. In his 1968 Postscript to The Making of the English Working Class Thompson answers Himmelfarb's contention that he and Hobsbawm have avoided a confrontation by saying that the evidence is inconclusive. What he does not say is that we need not more evidence, but evidence of a different kind to validate his thesis. Nevertheless for a scholar who recognises the inconclusiveness of the evidence Thompson seems to argue with a remarkable degree of confidence.

A second problem arises from Thompson's idea that dogma was modified in the local community. He argues, for example, that:

"As a dogma Methodism appears as a pitiless ideology of work. In practice this dogma was in varying degrees softened, humanized, or modified by the needs, values, and patterns of social relationship of the community within which it was placed"<sup>44</sup>

He develops this later to say that the more closely knit the community in which Methodism took root, the more the local people made Methodism "their own".<sup>45</sup>

Earlier however Thompson suggested that the Methodist brotherhood was the only community-group which members knew in the industrial wilderness. The confusion here needs to be sorted out; it seems that Methodism can be found in two situations: firstly in the situation of social dislocation Methodism provides a primary community to replace the institutions and relations lost in the process of change. Secondly Methodism may be the religion of established working class communities, which already have an elaborate work and leisure culture pre-dating the arrival of Methodism. It seems that Thompson confuses these two

situations and makes it especially difficult to understand what he means by "Methodism" and by "community".

The two lines of criticism point to the need for a careful reformulation of Thompson's argument. Until this is done the defects of the argument do much to vitiate even its tentative conclusions.

Some of the detailed data that the work of Hobsbawm and Thompson demand are provided in the histories of Methodism written by Robert Wearmouth. Here we wish to concentrate more on the later period of Methodism, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, as this brings us into the period of our study. In doing this we widen the scope of the argument from a consideration of the effects of Methodism in the eighteenth century to a consideration of the effects of Methodism in general.

Wearmouth believed that Methodism was essentially a revivalist religion and that its progress depended on the degree of evangelical fervour with which it was preached.<sup>46</sup> The apolitical nature of Methodism as a system of beliefs stands out from Wearmouth's studies. Niebuhr's comment that the leaders of the Methodist movement were "impressed not so much by the social evils from which the poor suffered as by the vices to which they had succumbed"<sup>47</sup> seems to be largely born out by Wearmouth's work. For example:

In 1883 "Believing that religion needed to be more widely applied if radical changes were to be made, the Wesleyans redoubled their efforts to preach the gospel to the poor".<sup>48</sup>

The main fear of Methodists was of open conflict threatening social order. When they did recognise social evils they preached personal regeneration to the sufferers and advocated reform by the state. They did not advocate independent struggle by the workers. Thus in the 1892 coal dispute it was social cohesion rather than class interests that were supported by the Methodists:

"... the fierce struggle between capital and labour gives us much concern. The collision of these great industrial forces in the lockout and the strike is a peril to the social fabric. On every

movement and on every man that helps to bind them into harmonious action we implore the blessing of the God of peace"<sup>49</sup>

By the 1890's the Primitive Methodists were emphasising the importance of workers' organising against capitalists, but:

"It is not victory that should be sought by either party, but a basis upon which both parties could work harmoniously. Conditions imposed by sheer force on either side can not contain a settlement."<sup>50</sup>

The assumptions underlying such a statement are as important as the statement itself. They include the notion of the inherent harmony of interests between labour and capital. Labour is "a party" in the language of contractual rather than class relationships.

Wearmouth develops a thesis on Methodism and the reforming spirit of Liberalism in the nineteenth century without difficulty. In his discussion of the twentieth century there is a loss of confidence apparent in the argument. Much of the discussion of the political influence of Methodism refers back to the nineteenth century or to working class leaders who survived from the nineteenth century into the twentieth century.<sup>51</sup> Wearmouth lists overlapping members of Methodism and political movements but gives no details of the relation between politics and Methodist ideas. The latter part of the final volume of his history thus becomes diffuse and unconvincing.

Part of Wearmouth's problem arises from the fact that there is little connection between socialism and Methodism, according to his own data. He obscures this by assuming that there is a strong connection. He adjusts his definition of socialism to mean social reform of a kind approved by Methodists. Socialism is based in the perceived need for fundamental social structural change in which class conflict plays an important and positive role. Twentieth century Methodist reformism might have been more far-reaching than the nineteenth century kind, but by this definition it was not socialism. Methodists did not, for example, question the institution of private property,

only the irresponsible use of private property.

Wearmouth changes the name of Methodist Liberalism to Socialism in the twentieth century - just as many Liberal Methodists changed their name to Labour. He does not enquire into the extent to which the change of name represented a change of substance. In this sense Wearmouth is himself part of the Liberal-Methodist tradition.

Methodism is not located within a systematic analytical framework in Wearmouth's work. Wearmouth seems to want to show that Methodism was influential in the rise of the Labour party and that this was a good thing.

All authors seem to agree that Methodism produced working class leaders. The merit of Wearmouth's work is that he presents copious biographical data which can be used to develop an answer to the question, "What sort of leaders did Methodism produce?"

We have already noted in passing Wearmouth's comment on the acceptability of these working class leaders to established authority.\* Andrew Carnegie said of John Wilson, a Methodist M.P. and a leader of the Durham Miners' Association, in 1915, "We should run a man with a record like his for the Presidency".<sup>52\*\*</sup> Of William Crawford, another Durham Methodist miners' leader it was said:

"Since he has been at the head of the Union, trade disputes have been rare, and, on the whole, short-lived, and probably Mr. Crawford himself would ask for no higher reward".<sup>53</sup>

We can see that there is an agreement in the analyses of Thompson and Wearmouth. Both suggest that Methodism was apolitical and anti-radical.

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\* p. 9n

\*\* A correspondent in the Durham County Advertiser had previously asked why it was that the Esh Winning Methodists accepted Carnegie's money, in the form of a grant for an organ, when it was stained with the blood of Carnegie's workers.

But both indicate that Methodism produced working class leaders nonetheless. Neither spell out the connection between the beliefs and the actions of these leaders. Wearmouth says less than Thompson about the wider cultural impact of Methodism.

One point is agreed by all commentators on Methodism and the working class, however else they may have interpreted its effects they all assert that Methodism provided a training in democracy. Whatever orthodox Methodists may have preached, the chapel was a school for democrats and a source of popular leaders.

From their very different orientations Thompson and Wearmouth imply that service in a trade union might be carried out as a "calling" and both indicate the qualities of discipline and dedication that can be carried over from religious to trade union activities. This leaves us with the question of the way in which Methodist trade unionists pursue the conflicts in which they were engaged. "How far would they go in the pursuit of trade union interests?" is a valid question to which neither Thompson nor Wearmouth provide adequate answers. From Wearmouth's data we might construct the following answer; "The Methodist trade unionist believed in negotiated settlements rather than conflicts, he preferred not to strike and would certainly not threaten established order with violence". This answer would be entirely consistent with Weber's contention that the "political apparatus of force could not possibly provide a place for religious virtue"<sup>54</sup> in the life of the Protestant.

We will see in the next chapter the extent to which the miners' leaders were Liberals and opponents of socialism and ideas of class conflict. The union leadership developed trade union consciousness but not class consciousness. They could never see themselves as miners with a class interest in a market-based society as distinct from contracting parties to a legitimate market relationship. The socialist trade unionist experiences something of a

conflict of interests: as a trade unionist he seeks the best immediate terms and the least hardship for his men, and this usually entails getting them back to work as soon as possible, or avoiding a strike altogether. As a socialist he seeks the confrontations that will lead to the conflict which will change the basic economic and social arrangements of the whole society. This kind of tension is not described by any of the authors so far discussed, and we will see that it rarely occurs amongst the Methodists that we studied.

If we were to summarise the state of the argument about Methodism amongst historians we would say that there is a lack of definitional clarity combined with a failure to study Methodism situationally (for example Thompson's elision of different kind of working class "communities"). Nonetheless Halevy, Thompson, Hobsbawm and Wearmouth all tell "plausible stories" from their various perspectives. The main problem is that the debate is grounded on very little solidly researched data.\* Where there is data (Wearmouth) it is not organised around clear theoretical formulations, but in accordance with an implicit and normative theory. Whilst Himmelfarb may have misjudged the quality of the argument about the Halevy thesis, she was correct in suggesting that there is less beneath the tip of the iceberg than Lipset might have assumed.

#### IV

##### Sociologists

English sociologists have been deeply interested in questions of social class and class consciousness. The problems of class consciousness and "false consciousness" are derived from the continuing debate with Marx and Marxists. Religion seems to have been peripheral to these debates, bracketed as either false consciousness or a residual phenomenon that will eventually disappear with the development of science and human rationality.

One of the most influential contemporary writers on stratification is

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\* It is easy to criticise the historians, but the methodological and technical problems of the present study point to the enormous difficulty of carrying out historical research on the scale needed to <sup>meet</sup> the criticism.

David Lockwood. Lockwood's article on "Sources of Variation in Working Class Images of Society" provided a model for explaining different working class views of the class structure.<sup>55</sup> Two of his three images of society are relevant in our historical context, the traditional proletarian and the traditional deferential. The traditional proletarian sees society divided into "Us" and "Them"; it is a dichotomous, conflict image of society. The traditional deferential sees society as graded, every man having his place in a status order. Plainly we should expect trade union consciousness and class consciousness to emerge more readily amongst those who adhere to a proletarian image of society than amongst the traditional deferential.

The origins of working class images of society are to be found in the work and community situation of the worker, according to Lockwood. "The work and community relationships of traditional workers involve them in mutually reinforcing systems of interpersonal influence".<sup>56</sup>

The deferential worker comes into contact with middle class people at work and in the community. He works in a smaller enterprise, run on a relatively personal and particularistic basis. The proletarian worker typically works in a larger enterprise, mixing only with his work-mates, he may live in a relatively isolated working class community. Work-mates develop their own leisure patterns and community institutions independent of the employing class - who in the community of the deferential would occupy positions of leadership in local associations.

Lockwood quotes the miners as typical of the traditional proletarian worker. This is consistent with certain traditional middle class images of the miner, and has a prima facie validity given a long history of industrial disputes in the coal industry. Miners live in homogenous communities which have articulated a very distinctive culture. They work, today, in relatively large industrial units and show marked solidarity in the bargaining and ritual activities of the trade union such as Galas, and miners' picnics.

Lockwood's specific model of the miner seems to be based almost entirely on the study by Henriques, Dennis and Slaughter, Coal Is Our Life. This study emphasises the proletarian solidarity of the mining community. Nonetheless there are hints in the text that not all miners are beer-drinking gamblers, men pursuing short-term pleasures, innocent of long-term planning in their lives. For example:

"The pursuit of leisure in Ashton has two principle characteristics. It is vigorous and it is predominantly frivolous. Without wishing to enter into the question of which are 'better' or 'worse' ways of spending leisure time, it should be explained that the word frivolous is used in the sense of "giving no thought for the morrow". It is used in this way as a contrast to those forms of recreation which pursue a definite aim such as intellectual improvement by means of study in adult classes or discussion groups, or spiritual improvement through membership of a church".<sup>57</sup>

"Serious" leisure activities will be discussed, say the authors, "when the place of the churches in the life of the Ashton miner is discussed".<sup>58</sup>

Unfortunately only one and one third pages are devoted to this discussion which consists of stating the memberships and listing the ancillary organisations of the churches.<sup>59</sup>

We need to explain two discrepancies between Coal Is Our Life and the present study. Firstly the historical evidence suggests that the serious minded and, or, religious miners may have been disproportionately important in the life of the community. Why do Dennis et al devote so little attention to them? It may have been that in Ashton the religious miners were not or never had been significant in the community, or it could have been that the researchers were either not interested in the religious miners, or assumed them to be of marginal importance. Either way, we have no evidence from Ashton which helps us to answer this question.

Secondly the Ashton account suggests that the miners were to a great

extent traditional proletarian workers. Why are they so different from the miners studied, and the miners referred to in the earlier studies to be cited in Chapter II? Two reasons for this may be advanced:

(1) The economic and political history of the Ashton area may be rooted in social relations quite different from those studied elsewhere and in Durham. We can point to a number of ways in which Yorkshire differed from Durham. The Yorkshire coalfield, for example, produced for a domestic market and therefore did not experience the wide fluctuations in the price of coal that were common in exporting coalfields like Durham. In this situation the minimum wage and the eight hour day were reasonable objectives and the Yorkshire miners were united in their pursuit of these objectives from 1889 onwards.

Unfortunately only the first volume of Machin's The Yorkshire Miners was ever published. This volume takes us up to 1881 only. In 1881 the defeated remnants of the three Yorkshire unions amalgamated with Ben Pickard as their Secretary. The three unions had been weak and dis-united throughout the 1870's and they were actively weakened by the activities of the coal-owners. The Yorkshire management were aggressive in the 1870's, they had not, like the Durham owners, learnt the value of arbitration. They used their power instead to attack wages and the position of the checkweighman. Thus in this very early period when the Durham union was emerging as a recognised and respectable body for negotiating with ownership the Yorkshire miners were experiencing defeat.

The Yorkshire owners also seem to have been more prone to use a greater degree of violence against their men than the Durham owners. Thus in 1893 troops were called to Pontefract, finding no riots they returned to barracks, but were recalled by the owners. This provoked resentments among the miners which led to the shooting of eighteen men in

Featherstone (two fatally). Actions such as these pass into legends which keep alive a tradition of bitterness. Thus in the earliest days of the unions Durham and Yorkshire do seem to have had very different histories. These differences may go some way towards explaining later differences, but it is difficult to judge how influential the early period of the 1870's and 1890's was on events occurring forty or even sixty years later.

Yorkshire had its Methodists too. Ben Pickard, the "iron man" who led the miners in 1893 (as Chairman of the M.F.G.B.) was a strict Wesleyan and a teetotaler. Pickard was also a Liberal and an opponent of socialism. This, however, may be slightly misleading as the Yorkshire Liberals had adopted the eight hour day and the minimum wage as policy objectives, thus they had stolen the fire of the socialists who used the failure to adopt these policies as the basis for their attack on the Durham leadership.

We can point to differences between the early histories of Ashton and Durham, we can also find a similarity in the union leadership. No single factor seems to differentiate the area save for the difference in the market for their coal. We have little to tell us about later differences.

(2) The Ashton study was undertaken after the second world war and some twenty years therefore after the end of our study. Thus the Ashton study may be different from ours only because it is a later scene in much the same story as we are telling.

The Ashton miners had experienced the General Strike and the depression. The immediate post second world war period was one of high political activity by the Labour government and this activity included the nationalisation of the coal mines. We would expect these

experiences to be conducive to the development of a class-conscious proletarian view of the social world. The views formed in such experiences might, irrespective of the coalfield, contrast sharply with the views of men whose prime years had been spent in the relative prosperity and paternalism of the late nineteenth century. Our study stops short of the second world war, and the worst years of the depression. The Ashton study itself is relatively ahistorical, so we are unable to resolve the question of the extent to which our study and the Ashton study are telling different parts of the same story, or reveal more general differences between the two districts.

As the next chapter will show the miners were traditionally conservative and resisted traditional proletarian social imagery. Class-consciousness and socialism are forms of deviance in our period. Lockwood seems to have oversimplified the question of the relation between work, community and social beliefs. The miners had a strong sense of occupational community, but class-consciousness did not develop from this in any mechanical way. It is perfectly possible for miners to have developed a consciousness of market interest and that in defending this interest to have confirmed the social order rather than challenging it.

Lockwood does not consider that men need to be converted to a traditional proletarian image of society. According to his argument the proletarian view flows directly from the social relations of work and community. This entails a double fault in his analysis. Firstly it leads him away from a consideration of those social situations in which traditionally proletarian workers might in fact have been differentials. Secondly his analysis neglects the importance of ideas as such in the formulation of images of society. Religious

and economic ideas may shape men's interpretations of the social relations they experience, as was recognised by all the authors we have so far considered. Because of this Lockwood misses the important question of the role of movements and parties in actually changing men's understanding of the social world in which they live.

In the case we are to consider we will show the coherence of religious, economic and political beliefs and the way in which these beliefs were institutionally supported by non-conformity, the Co-operative movement, the Union leadership and ownership and management. In this situation a proletarian view of society and socialist voting becomes highly deviant and something which has to be explained, rather than assumed.<sup>60</sup>

## V

### Methodology

The initial impetus for this study came partially from a general interest in the sociology of English labour history, but more specifically from an interest in the sociology of religion of Max Weber.

In an earlier publication we explored the complexity of the Protestant ethic argument.<sup>61</sup> We were concerned to dispel simplistic interpretations of Weber's work on the Protestant ethic by setting it in the context of his sociology of religion and historical sociology. Weber did not say that behaviour was directly and only explicable in terms of the actor's beliefs. In his discussion of the Protestant ethic Weber showed that Protestantism was historically effective not only because belief created new motivations (though it did this) but because it helped develop a new, rationalistic and secular culture which was conducive to the development of science, commerce and new work routines. Furthermore Protestantism was institutionalised in sects which served to maintain the discipline of the believers and provided economic opportunities for their members. The pariah status of these sects

had the consequence of forcing them to locations where they were able to take advantage of new resources and prevented them from investing their capital in land, politics or dilettante education.

It is intrinsically difficult to show that a specific action followed from a particular belief and we will seldom attempt to do so. Our research tries to show not only how beliefs make certain courses of action more likely than others, but how the spread of beliefs affects the life of the whole community and how the creation of religious institutions have important unintended consequences for the community. For example though both the Hammonds and Thompson point to the way in which Methodist chapels equipped men to lead trade unions, this was not the intention in establishing the chapels, but an unintended consequence of creating a particular kind of chapel organisation.

The original essays The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism deal with the role of Protestantism in the emergence of an entrepreneurial bourgeoisie in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Weber makes no more than passing comment on the role of Protestantism for the working class, for example:

"The power of religious asceticism provided [the bourgeois business man] in addition with sober, conscientious, and unusually industrious workmen, who clung to their work as to a life purpose willed by God"<sup>62</sup>

But by and large Weber was not concerned with the working classes in these essays. Nonetheless there seemed to be much in these essays that lends itself to an analysis of the effects of religion on the working class. Most notable in this respect is the concept of "inner worldly asceticism". This and other related ideas are developed most fully in Weber's Economy and Society. It is around the ideas derived from these sources that most of our analysis is organised.

In salvation religions the believer may see himself either as the

instrument of God, doing His work, or as a vessel of God through whom His spirit is expressed. The first Weber calls the ascetic, the second the mystic.<sup>63</sup> In addition the believer's asceticism or mysticism may be oriented primarily to the next world, or to activities in this world. In Weber's terms the believer may be an other-worldly or an inner-worldly ascetic or mystic.

The ascetic may reject the world or may participate in activities within the world's institutions - whilst opposing them. He is "in" the world but not "of" the world. The world becomes, as it were, a test-bed for the ascetic temper. The world is God's world, only its present fallen state is rejected:

"... the order of the world in which the ascetic is situated becomes for him a vocation which he must fulfill rationally ... although the enjoyment of wealth is forbidden to the ascetic it becomes his vocation to engage in economic activity which is faithful to rationalised ethical requirements and which conforms to strict legality. If success supervenes upon such acquisitive activity, it is regarded as the manifestation of God's blessing upon the labour of the pious man and of God's pleasure with his economic pattern of life"<sup>64</sup>

The ascetic thus attempts to bring about a patterning of his whole life towards the goal of salvation and towards the fulfilment of his vocation in the world.

Weber's discussion is mainly in the field of economic activity; he thought that the inner-worldly ascetic could engage in business activities without too great a compromise with "the world". Weber is mainly concerned with artisans and small traders, not the modern corporation boss, for we could argue that the latter is oriented to "average human qualities, to compromises, to craft, and to the employment of other ethically suspect devices and people".<sup>65</sup> This orientation, according to Weber, is typical of political activity and thus it is easier to be an ethically correct and successful businessman than a politician.

In his analysis of the relation between religion and politics Weber suggested that whilst the "Christian religion of love" might lead to a loss of secular concern, the inner-worldly ascetic can nonetheless compromise with political power structures. This is done "by interpreting them as instruments for the rationalised ethical transformation of the world and for the control of sin".<sup>66</sup> But the compromise is limited and conditional. Political parties and the state remain ethically suspect and may act only for the "control of sin". Radical changes in social structure may not be sought through politics, but only through the ethical transformation of the world - by changing men rather than changing society. Thus in Halevy's words Methodists "would never be weary of insisting that national regeneration could be achieved only by the regeneration of individuals".

The historical material that we have so far considered suggests that working men were able to work in a dedicated way in trade union and political organisations. It was possible for men to have a calling or vocation in this kind of activity. Nonetheless we should not expect, from Weber's analysis, to find these men interested in revolutionary politics; their political activities, for example, would consist of attempts to influence the state to adopt laws which would curb sin and facilitate morally good behaviour. We will be especially concerned with testing the validity of this contention in situations where Methodists do actually engage in revolutionary politics.

In his discussion of the religion of disprivileged strata Weber suggests that ethically rational congregational religion is characteristic of artisan and craftsman strata. The proletariat in modern industrial society is largely indifferent to religion, although sometimes through the activities of religious missionaries they might give expression to their distress in an emotional way.

By artisans and craftsmen Weber seems to mean independent, skilled workers, not wage labourers. To work under a contract at negotiated piece-rates is,

subjectively at least, to be in a different situation from a wage labourer. Thus the face workers, who technically were craftsmen and who worked relatively free of immediate supervision, are for our purposes artisans rather than proletarians. Weber said that;

"Wherever the attachment to purely magical or ritualistic views has been broken by prophets or reformers, there has...been a tendency for artisans, craftsmen and petty bourgeois to incline towards a (often primitively) rationalistic ethical and religious view of life"<sup>67</sup>

It is the rationalistic ethic that creates the self-discipline amongst the artisans and craftsmen.

Thus in organising the material for this present research we have concentrated on those data concerned with religious calling and self-disciplined, rational activity. This in turn has been focused around the notion of inner-worldly asceticism so that we have been able to see the ways in which religion and religious activity constrained men to act in and on the world of social and economic affairs. Crucially we are concerned with expressions of the idea of calling or vocation and the ways in which these notions are expressed in activity in the mundane affairs of the mining community. The expressions we in fact find focus around the idea of "stewardship" and the desire to cultivate God-given "talents", but these words are more or less alternative formulations of the idea of calling. This means that we have under-emphasised the more mystical aspects of Methodism. We have not dwelt upon those aspects of Methodism which are purely "an expression of some distress"<sup>68</sup> or "soteriological orgies".<sup>69</sup> Thus we set out the highly ethical nature of Methodism, perhaps underplaying the more purely spiritual or mystical aspects of the believer's life.

This is a significant omission, for the miner's work situation has features congruent both with the artisan's situation and the situation of the more oppressed sections of the proletariat. We would expect to find there-

fore that the miner's religion had features typical of the religion of artisans and the religion of the "lowest classes". This is seen most clearly in the question of conversion. Attempts to gain converts were often conducted in what seem to have been evangelical orgies, with great emotional outbursts, confession of sin, self-abnegation before God, with expressions of a desire for a new life. Some sort of personal experience of salvation was, at the beginning of our period, almost an essential requirement for becoming a Methodist. Having been converted the convert lived a new, ethically rational life, but he might engage nonetheless in further "orgies" in renewing his own conversional experience, and in seeking new converts. Thus there were important ecstatic and mystical elements in working class Methodism, but they are not at the centre of our interest.

There is no necessarily simple connection between believing and acting and we are not in any case attempting simple religious explanations of the courses of events that we observe. The language of causal analysis is ill-suited to our enterprise. We suggest, for example, that adopting Methodism has effects upon certain individuals not only because they believed certain things but because certain patterns of behaviour were expected of them by other Methodists. We can not simply say that Methodist belief caused the pattern of behaviour.

We are especially concerned with the "elective affinity" between religious and other ideas, for these are especially important if we are to avoid "religious" explanations. Two examples may be used to illustrate what we mean by this.

1) What qualities in Liberalism or Liberal beliefs make Methodists so responsive to Liberalism? Why do Liberalism and Methodism, in other words, seem to cling together? The belief in the minimal intervention of the state for the "rationalised ethical transformation of the world and the control of sin" is entirely compatible, Weber said, with the "laissez-faire doctrine of

the 'Manchester School'".<sup>70</sup> This economic doctrine was at the heart of the Liberal party's thinking at the end of the nineteenth century. Laissez-faire beliefs were also very generally held; it was an intellectual orthodoxy. It also embodied the individualism of which Protestantism was the foundation. The individual stood alone not only before the majesty of God but before the forces of the market. Liberal ideas of the market and especially the implied functional harmony of society fit readily with the view derived from Paul's teaching that all Christians are members of one body, with their functions (which are also callings) to perform.

2) Why did Methodists not think of the clash of class interests as explaining certain kinds of conflict? Why did the Methodist-Liberal trade union leaders find it impossible to define the conflicts in which they were engaged, as class conflicts - even as late as 1926? The answer probably lies in the universalism of Methodism. Salvation is not for an elect only, all stand in need of salvation. Christ died for all men, we are all of the same estate; "All have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God".<sup>71</sup> The message of Methodism is not sectional but universal. If the world is viewed as being peopled by sinners all in equal need of salvation, all standing under God's judgement, it is difficult, if not irrelevant, to think in terms of sectional interests. Equality on this basis is entirely in accord with individualism nonetheless, for it is each individual who will be judged. This fits also with laissez-faire liberalism and Pauline functionalism.\* These various views

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\* It is important to note that Pauline functionalism might lend itself to the development of rigid social stratification. A caste system, for example, could be based on the notion of all having immutable functions to perform. An extremely hierarchical structure could develop either from this or from any organismic theory where some talents were thought to be nobler or more sacred than others. We can only note, as an empirical observation, that this is not the case in general in western Protestantism.

are formidably coherent with one another. We are able to discuss this coherence and to understand how one view reinforces another, but it is extremely difficult - and perhaps quite unnecessary - to attach causal primacy to one set of beliefs, or to part of the whole coherent set of beliefs. Thus in our analysis we stress the coherence, congruence, consistency and reinforcement of beliefs and activities, rather than attributing causes.

In the course of our analysis of the effects of religion in a small population of miners we also find a gratuitous illustration, or elaboration, of another Weberian observation. In chapter VI of Economy and Society, in the discussion of the functions of religion for privileged and disprivileged strata Weber suggests that religion tends to have compensatory functions for the disprivileged. Religion provides the disprivileged with the assurance that whilst they may be insignificant by human evaluation, they will become something in the future - perhaps in the afterlife. The privileged however need some assurance that they have a right to enjoy their privileges, comfort and happiness. Religion assures them that they have a right to their position, that they have earned it or are otherwise entitled to it.<sup>72</sup>

It seems logical to infer from this that if a disprivileged stratum becomes upwardly mobile that religion will change its function in their lives. Elements of this change appear in our research; in the early "wild west" days of the villages evangelical religion and conversion experiences seem to compensate for the wretched social conditions and low esteem of the miner. But later, with a Methodist leadership firmly established in the community, amongst both miners and tradesmen, Methodism becomes a mark of respectability. There is a sense in which the relative success of the Methodist can be seen as the fruit of piety, a faithful and upright life, and that to this extent religion legitimates the position of prominent Methodists.

It will be seen also from the foregoing discussion that the effects of religion may be indirect. The saliency of specific religious belief may vary

from society to society and situation to situation. Religious beliefs may constitute part of a shared universe of meaning - evaluations and significances - amongst the members of a society. They are taken-for-granted beliefs, thoughts prefaced by "Of course..." statements. Religion is expressed in social relations, attitudes and ways of doing things, not in theological formulations. They may be partially articulated in proverbs or aphorisms or embodied in elaborate myths. Perhaps it is only rarely that religious beliefs are systematised and articulated by specialists in religious belief or religious virtuosi. The relationship between the beliefs of theologians, religious functionaries, priests and popular beliefs is always problematic. The "church" is always more or less in a state of tension with both popular religiosity of an explicit kind and the taken-for-granted assumptions of the populace. The formally religious too may hold unorthodox beliefs and adhere to "subterranean theologies".<sup>73</sup> It is for this reason that we have criticised the way in which Thompson has analysed Methodism and for this reason too that we have concentrated our study on one small population rather than adopting a more eclectic approach.\*

Another implication of the indirect effect of religion is that religion may be influential beyond its immediate membership. People who were not members of the chapels we studied held some "religious" beliefs in common with those who were members. Many were related or married to Methodists, they shared meanings and evaluation - some of which were derived from Methodism - with their kin. Others may from time to time have participated, albeit marginally, in the life of the chapels. Thus religion has a cultural influence which extends beyond formal membership, but which it is difficult to evaluate.

In summary: the debate about the Halevy thesis has not reached any

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\* See Appendix I

satisfactory resolution. Commentators have been unable to grapple with the problems raised by Halevy because they have interpreted "Methodism" in a very general sense, and based their understanding of it on orthodox statements by religious functionaries. Historians have also dealt with Methodism and its effects in different social and economic circumstances and not asked precise questions about its effects in particular, specified circumstances. Thus both Hobsbawm and Thompson are thus able to suggest that their apparently contrary theses are not mutually exclusive - but we have no guide as to the contextual relevance of either thesis.

One of the major sociological attempts to discuss the relation between social relationships and social consciousness has produced a relatively mechanistic theory which ignores the possibility of ideas and beliefs independently effecting men's understanding of their social experience.

The material of the present study is organised around two key concepts derived from Max Weber. The notion of inner-worldly asceticism is used to illustrate the connections between beliefs and activity in economic and political affairs. Religious beliefs are not seen as being exclusively influential and the Weberian notion of elective affinity is used implicitly in the way in which we try to understand the manner in which beliefs from different sources relate to one another.

It is unrealistic to reduce the objects of our study to a list of simple questions as the questions are closely related to one another, and the answer to one depends on the answer to another. But in very general terms we might summarise the objectives of our enquiry as follows: We wish to find out what effect, if any, religion had on the political views and activities of miners - specifically did Methodism encourage or inhibit the development of class politics? Secondly we want to know the mechanisms by which these beliefs were sustained in changing economic and political circumstances. Thirdly we want to know what kind of men emerged as political leaders amongst the miners, what was their

political modus operandi and how did they respond to crises? Can the answers to these questions be found not only in the nature of their beliefs, but in the constraints and expectations of membership of a particular kind of religious organisation? Finally we want to know the extent to which men developed new political outlooks and broke with traditional ways either within the Methodist tradition or in the act of breaking with it.

We are concerned with the effects of religion amongst people who can be located both in time and geographically. We are not concerned with the prime origins of Methodism, and any light that we may throw upon this is entirely incidental. By 1870 Methodism was a group of established national movements\*, the influence of which had been felt nationally as well as locally. In concentrating upon one small valley, which has perhaps not been very significant in the whole development of human civilisation, we hope to clarify and

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\* One rather curious fact emerged from our study. In treating Methodism we were aware of the major traditions of the denomination; Primitive Methodist, Wesleyan Methodist and Methodist New Connexion. A major pre-supposition of this research was that there would be significant differences between these traditions as represented in the villages, in terms of membership, chapel polity, style of preaching, social and political outlook. This has not proved to be the case; whilst in one village it was said that the Wesleyans were a bit staid and snobbish, exactly the same was said of the Primitives in the next village. It is quite possible also that the reported homogeneity of Methodism is a part of the mythology of the villages. The villagers have a myth of a "golden past" in the villages, in which community spirit, homogeneity and mutual support are very important elements. These ideal characteristics are contrasted with the present state of the villages, and the state of the world.

These tentative assertions are not the stuff of which history is made, but until evidence is produced to the contrary we have to assume that the traditional differences are insufficiently represented to be significant. We are therefore deprived of what might have been an important comparative insight in our work.

elaborate the issues raised by the historians, using the conceptual tools developed by Max Weber. In doing this we hope to gain a greater understanding of English labour history and, more importantly, to show the theoretical importance of sociology in the understanding of history.

Footnotes to Chapter I

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7. See, Himmelfarb, G., Victorian Minds, pp. 292-299
8. See for example, Townsend, W.J., (ed) A New History of Methodism, p. 371
9. Toynbee, A., Lectures on the Industrial Revolution of the 18th Century in England, see, for example, the discussion of the growth of pauperism, pp. 93-105
10. Ibid., p. 24
11. Ibid., p. 86
12. Ibid., pp. 218-219
13. Ibid., pp. 203-221
14. Ibid., pp. 148-149
15. Gould, J. and Kolb, W.L., A Dictionary of the Social Sciences, "Industrial Revolution"
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18. Townsend, loc. cit.
19. Ibid., p. 370
20. "La Naissance du Methodisme en Angleterre", Revue de Paris 1906, pp. 519-539 and 841-867 and A History of the English People in the 19th Century, Vol. I, "England in 1815"

21. See my article "The Political Effects of Village Methodism" in the forthcoming volume edited by K. Clements (Lutherworth Press)
22. Halevy, "La Naissance..." p. 524
23. Ibid., p. 864
24. Halevy, History, Vol. IV "Victorian Years, 1841-1895", p. 395
25. Halevy, "England in 1815", p. 371. "Un regime de production effectivement anarchique pourrait mettre le royaume en etat d'insurrection, si seulement la classe ouvriere trouvait dans la class moyenne des hommes pour lui donner un ideal, une doctrine, un programme d'action definie. Mais l'elite de la class ouvriere, la bourgeoisie laborieuse, sont, part l'effet du reveil evangelique, animees d'un esprit qui n'a rien de dangereux pour l'ordre etabli."  
Histoire du Peuple Anglais au XIX<sup>e</sup> Siecle, I, "L'Angleterre en 1815", Paris 1912.
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## CHAPTER II

### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### 1. General Considerations

##### (i) Economic Developments

The four villages in which this study is based were, and still are, to some extent, small and relatively isolated villages, but they were part of a national economy and their unions and political parties were variously related to national movements.

Coal-mining, that ".... highly contentious and most political industry"<sup>1</sup> is an industry marked by regional variations in problems of extraction and marketing. Within a coalfield there are strong local variations based not only in geology but in the relations of the specific product to its specific market. Thus, when the Durham Chronicle reports closures in times of prosperity and the opening of new seams in times of slump it is because of the specific need for a particular coal. The opening or closing of a blast furnace, the rise or fall of a Midland iron company etc. explain these local (and usually minor) events against the trends. Co. Durham produced gas and coking coal of high quality and supplied the Northern Iron and Steel Industry\* and London and south-east Gas Companies. It also exported coal overseas, notably to the Baltic.

The early part of our period is one of profound economic change. Profits, rents and interest were depressed by falling prices at the end of the nineteenth century. But wages and the standard of living were rising

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\* In 1879 the adoption of the Gilchrist-Thomas steelmaking process led to the development of new centres of steelmaking in the Middlesborough area, this expansion was accelerated by the rapid growth of ship-building on the Tees, Tyne and Wear.

from 1850 to 1870 and then even more markedly from 1876 to 1886. In Court's opinion "this great turn for the better freed the mid-victorian age from social quarrels to a degree rare in history; it also bred an unguarded mood of optimism."<sup>2</sup> The production of coal and the employment of miners rose steadily in the county; production rose from 28.1 million tons to 37.4 million tons from 1880 to 1905, employment rose from 71,800 to 85,900 in the same period. But by the end of the nineteenth century the proportion of the employed national population in Co. Durham had fallen. After 1900 real national income stopped growing and, "wage-earners felt the check severely as prices rose and the cost of living with it."<sup>3</sup> From 1896 to 1913 retail prices rose by nearly one third, whilst from 1899 to 1913 the real value of wages fell by about 13%. During the war the cost of living doubled (from July 1914 to July 1918) and by the end of 1920 shop prices were 125% of 1914 prices.

The structure of industry itself was changing, although this may not have been immediately apparent from the villages. According to Court

"joint stock finance...the amalgamation and trade association movements - these were creating between 1880 and the First World War an industrial society very different from that which classical economists had known. The direct personal relations.....between master and servant .....remains strong in many firms and in many industries, particularly in some parts of the country..... But over a large part of the field they were beginning to be replaced by corporate and associate life in many forms, not only among the businessmen but also among the industrial workers as trade unions grew.....collective and sectional loyalty to shareholders or directors or the trade association or the union tended to replace personal loyalty."<sup>4</sup>

Court's judgement is that at the end of the nineteenth century, "the specifically nineteenth century conditions of **British** industry and social life were at an end."<sup>5</sup>

During the First World War there was a high demand for coal and the

government took a large measure of control over the coal industry. With world coal prices falling coal was hurriedly decontrolled in 1921. The Sankey Commission recommended the nationalisation of unworked coal but was divided on the question of public ownership of the mines. The government did not act on the Report of the Commission.

In the early 1920's industrial disputes overseas raised the demand for British coal and wages were kept high by subsidy. But new fuels were replacing coal, the extraction of coal was becoming more expensive as easy seams were worked out and world demand was falling. The solution to these problems and falling profits "took the form of an attack upon labour costs, by the most simple and direct way, the alteration of wages and hours".<sup>6</sup> In other words wages were to go down and the working day was to be lengthened. The national wage agreements were not renewed in 1925 and it was proposed to reduce wages competitively between coalfields. "Every miner, and especially every worker in the export fields, knew what his fate was to be".<sup>7</sup> In Durham and Northumberland, after the lock-out of 1926;

"cash wages per shift had been reduced to a far lower level than elsewhere, while the extension of hours combined with the reduction in wages per shift has resulted in a more substantial reduction in wage costs than in any other part of the country... ..By these means they had been able not only to maintain a greater proportion of overseas trade than other districts, but also to capture a considerable proportion of the coastwise trade of this country".<sup>8</sup>

The figures cited by Garside in his recent book The Durham Miners 1919-1960 provide us with an outline of the extent of the miners' relative deprivation after the first World War. In July 1921 22,000 men were out of work (or almost one fifth of the membership of the D.M.A.) and by mid-August 60,000 were unemployed, at the end of the month 160 pits lay idle in the County.<sup>9</sup> The miners' wages not only failed to keep abreast of the cost of living, but the Durham miners fell behind the rest of the miners: taking the

1914 wage as 100, in 1922 the Durham miners wages were 146.3 compared with 154.0 for the remainder of the country, in 1929 the indices were 128.2 and 142.4 and in 1938, 156.0 and 173.7.<sup>10</sup>

So desperate was the plight of the Durham, Northumberland and Welsh miners that the Lord Mayor of London launched a national appeal for relief in 1928.<sup>11</sup> In 1931 the institution of the Means Test added administrative insult to economic injury in the coalfield.<sup>12</sup>

The Second World War renewed the demand for coal and for mining labour. The government again took extensive powers to control the industry and the post-war Labour Government nationalised the coal industry. The output of coal was raised to meet heavy demand until 1951. But from then on the demand for coal declined as it was replaced by other fuels. The history of the Durham miners is from then on a history of the planned rundown of the coal industry.<sup>13</sup> In this situation the function of the Union was transformed from that of defending traditional economic interests to facilitating a smooth rundown of the industry.<sup>14</sup>

Nationalisation achieved what the private owners failed to achieve; the economies of scale, heavy capital investment in mechanisation, and the planned, systematic reduction of the labour force.

The changes in the economics and structure of the coal industry have been reflected in Co. Durham. The earliest pits were close to the surface, seeking easily won coal in the drift mines in the west of the county. The late nineteenth century boom created the pits of mid-Durham, deeper pits with shafts and more extensive haulage equipment. Pits such as these were the economic core of the villages in our study. In the 1960's the coal industry in the county was being concentrated in the very deep and highly mechanised pits of the east coast. The coking coal of the east coast is inferior to that of the Victoria seam in mid-Durham - but it can be cut by machine in six foot seams and larger, rather than being won by hand in a fourteen inch seam.

Thus the period of our study is one of continuous economic change. The structure of industry which had made Britain a world power, and "the workshop of the world" was rapidly changing its techniques, its scale and its economic structure. We are studying the period of the change from the classic "nineteenth century" of the textbooks to the twentieth century of the large scale corporation and of highly rationalised production based on modern fuels, methods and materials.

The effects of these wide-ranging changes, that we will observe at the very local level, entailed considerable industrial and political conflict. Thus we need to locate our villages in the development of the trade unions and political parties.

(ii) The Miners' Unions

The beginning of our period was an important time for the unions. In 1872 the checkweighman's position was secured and in that year also the hated bond was abolished. The bond was a system similar to indentured labour which tied a miner to an employer for a year but which entailed few legally enforceable obligations for the owner towards his employees.

The Durham Miners' Association (the D.M.A.) was formed in 1869 under the leadership of William Crawford. The leadership of the D.M.A. and their beliefs will be discussed later, but it should be noted that the kind of leadership we find in Durham at this time was not unique to the County. In a number of coalfields the established union leaders were attempting to grapple with economic and political changes. The experiences of these leaderships did not equip them to cope readily with the new situations they were to face in the twentieth century. The history of the miners' unions in the first half of the nineteenth century was a history of defeat.<sup>15</sup> The Durham miners had fought the owners with the strike weapon and had been beaten. In 1832, 1844 and 1863-64 they had been forced back to work with their unions broken and with depleted funds. The leadership of the new union was committed to advancing the men's cause by negotiation rather than industrial

action. The situation in Durham was exactly paralleled by that in South Wales. Evans in his The Miners of South Wales says of the period after 1875;

".... the employers would probably have been able to crush any unions which appeared, as they had, in fact, destroyed those of an earlier period. The inoffensive policy of the local [miners'] associations led the coal owners to tolerate, and even to assist, their continuance, and their existence at least prepared the men for more effective organisation"<sup>16</sup>

It was this "inoffensive", compromise position that the Durham, South Wales and Derbyshire leadership represented. It may also be true that many of their views, about liberal economics, the homogeneity and harmony of society and the local community, were ideas that developed as a means of coming to terms with relative powerlessness.

The moderate men of South Wales (Isaac Evans, David Morgan, William Brace and William Abraham - Mabon), of Derbyshire (Haslam and Harvey) and County Durham (Crawford and Wilson) were all associated with religious non-conformity and political Liberalism. They opposed industrial militancy and - eventually - the affiliation of the miners' unions to the Labour party.<sup>17</sup>

What then were the policies of this leadership? The leaders advocated moral force rather than strikes as means to promote the miners' cause.<sup>18</sup> Moral force could be exerted through reason, at the table, in the conciliation process. The Durham, Northumberland and South Wales miners carried this to another stage by instituting the sliding scale, whereby miners' wages were tied to the selling price of coal. With such an automatic arrangement there was virtually no need for trade unions. According to Page Arnot sliding scale associations took the place of unions and "suffocated trade unionism in South Wales".<sup>19</sup> Evans also suggests that the sliding scale (which lasted until 1902 in South Wales) kept interest in trade unions low.<sup>20</sup> The Welsh leaders, especially Mabon, always advised against abandoning the sliding scale. This advocacy of the sliding scale

entailed more than making wage levels automatic. It entailed propagating an assumption about the harmony of interest of labour and capital. The leaders accepted this assumption and believed that industrial conflict arose from misunderstanding.

In periods of relative prosperity the sliding scale provided a wage on which the miner could maintain a family. This was not the case when coal prices were low. Towards the end of the century the demand for a living wage emerged amongst miners, as coal prices fell. Page Arnot has said that by 1893 the men believed in a living wage rather than the laws of supply and demand.<sup>21</sup> It was certainly the case that the Derbyshire miners were arguing for a minimum wage in that year.<sup>22</sup> The miners' leaders in Durham and South Wales resisted the demand, which they saw as a breach of economic principle that could not be supported by the operation of the market. Instead they supported restriction of output, in order to raise the price of coal. The Welsh miners rejected this because, according to Evans, they wanted immediately visible improvements in their wages.<sup>23</sup> The restriction of output strategy is based upon the same economic assumptions as the sliding scale and could thus be used without any concession on matters of economic principle. In these differences we see just some of the regional differences between miners, which made federation and common policy formulation so difficult.

The Northumberland and Durham miners also opposed the eight hour day, which had been an object of Welsh policy since 1888.<sup>24</sup> The objection was rooted in local practice, not economic principle. The Northumberland and Durham miners already worked a six hour day. The men worked two six hour shifts and the boys one shift of twelve hours. The eight hour day would have reduced the boys' working day and forced the men into a three shift system. The men were not accustomed to three shifts, much domestic and social reorganisation would have had to follow such a change, and the men's hours would probably had to have been increased to eight. The rejection of the eight hour day was to be crucial in the relation of the Durham miners

to the miners of Britain until the early years of the twentieth century, and to the achievement of the eight hour day as such.

Divisions on the eight hour day influenced the development of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain (M.F.G.B.) Scotland and Wales were in the van of the movement for the restriction of hours, but Durham and Northumberland were sufficiently opposed for them to refuse to join the Federation at its foundation in 1888. The opposition of the Durham and Northumberland miners was effective in the 1902 attempt to secure legislation by the M.F.G.B. They effectively prevented the passage of eight hour legislation until 1908. After then, according to Page Arnot, John Wilson's influence began to wane.<sup>25</sup>

The sliding scale itself also divided the Durham miners from the Federation. The M.F.G.B. was striving to end "the system by which wages were settled by the course of coal prices... and to replace it by a legal minimum wage...independent of the coal market".<sup>26</sup> This was an affront to the beliefs of the Durham leadership; they not only believed in their sliding scale but had actually agreed a negotiating procedure with the masters in 1892, thus creating one of the earliest such arrangements in the industry. There seemed to be no need to depart from this arrangement or from market principles, in fixing wages. The South Wales miners left the M.F.G.B. in 1889 because they too favoured the sliding scale.

Sidney Webb believed that the lack of unity amongst the miners weakened the position of the Durham Miners' Association and of the miners nationally.<sup>27</sup> For example the Durham miners fought and lost their 1892 dispute alone. They thus avoided the national dispute of the following year, but only by accepting a reduction of 10%.<sup>28</sup> The Rosebery settlement of the national dispute in November 1893 enabled the men to return to work without a reduction of wages. This was a victory for the principle of federation; together the miners had resisted the owners, the unfederated miners had paid for their lack of unity. John Wilson of Durham appreciated this sort of lesson, but

drew contrary conclusions from it. He believed that concerted action by the miners would have a bad effect on class harmony,. "Therefore he stood .....for a kindly [local] agreement with the coal owners."<sup>29</sup>

The Liberal leadership of the miners' unions resisted socialist ideas and regarded socialists as trouble-makers. We will see below how strongly Wilson resisted socialism and the socialists in Durham. Williams describes how in Derbyshire Haslam blamed the I.L.P. and the socialists for the Taff Vale decision and how as late as 1912 Harvey and other moderates were condemning Hardie and Lansbury.<sup>30</sup> The M.F.G.B. too preferred the infirm Woods as their Vice President in 1904 to the socialist Smillie. Page Arnot argues that by 1904 the M.F.G.B. itself was a conservative body.<sup>31</sup> New departures in policy had to be effected by pressure from below. In 1906 for example, the M.F.G.B. voted against affiliation to the L.R.C., but the decision was reversed the following year.

The younger and more radical miners represented the "new unionism" which was epitomised in the 1889 dockers' strike. This strike, according to Court, opened "a new era in industrial relations."<sup>32</sup> The new unionism included unskilled workers, its policies were class conscious and at times consciously socialistic.

We will argue that both kinds of unionism were congruent with the day to day experiences of their exponents. The old unionism was rooted in relative prosperity, industrial weakness and the paternalism of the owners. The new unionists experienced declining living standards, increasing intransigence from the owners and increasing working class solidarity. The growing strength of organised labour expressed itself most clearly in the 1912-14 period when Britain was probably saved from a Syndicalist style General Strike by the First World War.<sup>33</sup>

The old and the new unionism confronted one another at the beginning of this century. The "leaders of Durham and Northumberland, many of them

widely respected as men of outstanding capacity, really stood for a different conception of trade unionism, one that had grown up in the 60's and 70's".<sup>34</sup> We will see how slowly this leadership passed in our villages. The old leadership was discredited in South Wales in the Cambrian Combine Strike of 1911.<sup>35</sup> But the old leadership in County Durham lasted until the first World War, when it changed very rapidly. Thus in 1918 only two Agents of the D.M.A. had been full time employees of the Association before 1911.<sup>36</sup> One of these leaders, Thomas Cann, (who had worked under Wilson's leadership since 1896) was less hostile to the government's failure to nationalise the coal industry than any other member of the executive.<sup>37</sup> The death of Cann in 1924 perhaps marks the passing of the phase of the history of the N.U.M. which was, after 1880, according to the Webbs;

"Little more than the long drawn out resistance of the able and respected leaders of the Northumberland and Durham miners to the new ideas of Labour policy which were.... becoming dominant in the Trades Union Congress, and which were from the first adopted, if not by all the leaders, at least by successive delegate conferences of the Miners' Federation"<sup>38</sup>

The resistance noted by the Webbs was to persist into the late 1920's, however, in some of the villages in our study because of the lasting influence of John Wilson.

Socialists attempting to penetrate the north east of England found few allies amongst the union leadership in the first decades of this century. They found some amongst the rank and file of younger men. But I.L.P. branches grew up separately from the union lodges, and many were short lived through lack of sustained support.<sup>39</sup> Not least among the reasons for suspicion of socialism in the region was the association of socialism with the eight hour day and the minimum wage. It was after these issues were settled that the Labour movement grew in Durham, though not because these issues were settled.

(iii) The Liberal Party

Socialism arrived in Durham as a new movement gaining power at local level, hoping one day to achieve power; we will study it at this level. The Liberal Party however was an established national party, accustomed to holding power. Changes at the national level could take place independently of the local organisations of the party, as was to be the case for the Labour Party when it took power. For a national party, and especially a party in power, has quite a different life from that of the struggling political minority.

"The Liberal Party" of Asquith and Lloyd George before the First World War was quite different from that of Gladstone. Gladstonian Liberalism is usually summed up in the slogan, "Peace, Retrenchment and Reform". The elements that made up this slogan have a number of peculiarly ethical aspects which appealed to non-conformists. The pursuit of peace was based on a

"....critical, conscience-searching attitude to foreign and imperial affairs, the willingness to see right triumph over national sentiment.... idealism, the belief that war was wrong and that in the new world of great inventions and world wide trade civilised nations should not require to settle differences by war".<sup>40</sup>

These attitudes were epitomised in the acceptance of an arbitrated settlement to the "Alabama" incident, avoidance of engagement in the Franco-Prussian War and, later, conciliation of white South Africans - making friends of enemies - in 1909. In the Anglo-Boer War the Gladstonian spirit was represented by Lloyd George who was a pacifist and by Campbell-Bannerman who courted unpopularity in his denunciation of the British concentration camps.

Retrenchment was based on the notion that private spending was more beneficial than public spending and that men should as far as possible be saved from taxation. Reform was essentially political reform. The Liberals sought to provide better government and to remove disabilities to

office-holding. They pursued Irish disestablishment - it being contrary to the liberal temper for a church to be established in a nation that was mainly of another religion. Of considerable importance to the miners was the Reform Bill of 1884 which gave them the vote. On social reform however the Liberals "were restrained by their laissez-faire doctrines and by their deep aversion to public expenditure."<sup>41</sup>

This unique mixture of "ethics and prudence"<sup>42</sup> was embodied in the person of Gladstone of whom McCallum says "no one could compare with Gladstone in his moral and personal ascendancy".<sup>43</sup> The Durham miners, through their leader, John Wilson, had a peculiarly close relation with Gladstone. In 1893 Gladstone had received deputations from the miners in support of the Eight Hour Bill then before Parliament. Wilson was part of another deputation which included not only syokesmen from the Northumberland and Durham miners, but coal owners also. This deputation spoke against the Bill to Gladstone and according to Page Arnot Gladstone "was fairly obviously on the side of Durham and Northumberland."

"I ought", Gladstone said, "perhaps to say that belonging as I do to an old school in politics, my prepossessions...are with you, because undoubtedly for the first half or two thirds of my Parliamentary life the disinclination of the most enlightened statesman to interfere with labour...was very great indeed, therefore that must be allowed for in anything I say".

Wilson expressed the good wishes of the miners at the end of this meeting.

10. The 1905 election returned a Liberal administration, which after many vicissitudes was to remain in power until the First World War - facing the increasing venom of a continually frustrated Conservative Party. The issues that returned them in 1905 speak to the very nature of traditional Liberalism; the Education Bill, temperance, and the employment of Chinese labour in South Africa\*. The Taff Vale decision was also taken up by the

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\* Dangerfield neatly summed up the ethical contents of Liberalism; "For Liberalism, after all, implies rather more than a political creed or an economic philosophy; it is a profoundly conscience-stricken state of mind. It is the final expression of everything which is respectable, God fearing, and frightened." <sup>45</sup>

Liberals and assured them of their working class votes.

During the early years of the century senior Liberals from the days of Gladstone **were** retiring from the political scene. The Liberal-imperialists were more dominating. But radicals remained: Morley and Burns were against going to war over Belgium, Lloyd George would have resigned if we had fought over the invasion of France alone.

A new kind of Reformism emerged, seen in Lloyd George's "People's Budget" of 1909, which represented a sharp break with the policy of retrenchment and which embodied motions of social equity. This "radicalism" entailed extensive public expenditure contrary to all ideas of retrenchment.

Peace was decreasingly a major feature of liberal policy: the Hague Conference of 1907 failed and by 1909 the public was blaming the Liberals for not preparing for war in that they reduced the Dreadnought programme whilst Tirpitz went ahead with his. Subsequent heavy expenditure on the navy was yet another blow to the idea of retrenchment.

The Liberals were relatively unable to cope with the changes in the economy and in industry that we have already discussed. The period 1911-14 was one of serious industrial unrest (1910 north-east Railway Strike, 1911 Port of London, 1911 Railways, 1912 Miners) and the Liberals were blamed for endangering national prosperity.

The Liberal Government also made itself look absurd and then distinctly odious by its treatment of the suffragettes; forcible feeding and cat-and-mouse procedures standing in remarkable contrast to the traditional liberal belief in the right of the individual to protest against the system that gives him (or her) no legitimate representation.

Above all else perhaps, the Liberals failed to solve the Irish question. Gladstone had regarded the conciliation of the Irish as a prime task for the Liberal Party. Asquith only attempted to solve the problem when he had to rely on Irish nationalist votes at Westminster and in so doing he was accused by the Conservatives of siding with British enemies. The Conservatives

for their part were united, for the first time since 1903, in their support for the Ulster Unionists. The shootings in Bachelor's Walk in 1914 were, in Dangerfield's opinion, an "obscene little spatter of blood on the Dublin quays [in which] the word Finis was written to the great Liberal battles of the nineteenth century.."46

The First World War also helped destroy the Liberal Party. It was difficult to wage total war and maintain liberal principles. The Defence of the Realm Act, press censorship, conscription, were all against liberal principles. Wholehearted supporters of the War were virtually Conservatives. The Liberal Party split and never again emerged as a governing party in the U.K. It may have been that the Liberal party was by 1914 an uneasy coalition of interests which found occasion to divide in the events of that period. As will be shown below there was very little to hold the party together.

The fortunes of non-conformity were closely allied to those of the Liberal Party. Many non-conformists in the Party were pacifists and anti-war. But "a war mania gradually gripped the people"47 and in 1914 the editor of the British Weekly came out for conscription, the restriction of enemy aliens and Lloyd George for Prime Minister. This marked the break between non-conformist principles and Liberalism.

Another change had also come about in Liberalism. Its high ethical tone had distinctly changed, not just in matter of policy but in the conduct of its leaders. At least it could be said of Campbell Bannerman that he was "a man of humanity, principle and courage".48 Lloyd George was almost a negation of Gladstonian qualities. Lloyd George's sexual exploits were a public scandal (or joke), and he severely damaged the administration through his involvement in the Marconi scandal. The odour of scandal was hardly dispelled when one beneficiary of the Marconi transaction, Isaacs,

shortly afterwards became Lord Chief Justice. Lloyd George roused radical enthusiasm, according to McCallum, by "sheer class demagogy"<sup>49</sup> a judgement that might well have been shared by contemporary non-conformists.

After the war the Liberal party declined in power. According to A.J.P. Taylor "the historic Liberal party committed suicide"<sup>50</sup> on 9th May 1918 when Lloyd George and Asquith came into open Parliamentary conflict, dividing the Liberal party against itself in the Maurice debate. The Asquith-Lloyd George conflict within the party seems to have reduced the effectiveness of the party in general.<sup>51</sup>

Changes were overtaking the party also. Business men and commercial interests were clearly aligned with the Conservative party, the landlord-capitalist distinction had disappeared to the point where Liberals could make little or no progress on the basis of the distinction and differences of interests.\* Liberalism had little to offer at local government level because the local authorities were becoming increasingly the agents of central government policy. There were no more opportunities for the municipal "socialism" of a Joseph Chamberlain. Who would vote Liberal? It was thought that the "flappers" would vote Labour as would the young and the working class. The Liberal party, according to Taylor, and as we shall see in our detailed discussion, was ill-suited to becoming a mass party.<sup>53</sup> The Liberals wanted working class votes, but not working class participation or control; the party was linked to the working class by patronage, not participation.

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\* In Durham, for example, colliery owners farmed land in order to avoid the cost of compensating tenants for mining subsidence. The main farmers (with farms of over 10,000 acres) were the Duke of Cleveland, the Marquis of Londonderry, Viscount Boyne and the Church Commissioners and the first three owned mines and the latter received substantial royalties. Viscount Boyne<sup>52</sup> was an "inactive Conservative".

By 1923 a vote for the Liberals would have had the effect of helping the Labour party to power.<sup>54</sup> The Liberals offered fewer candidates and were short of money.<sup>55</sup> Lloyd George's fund for the party (raised through the sale of honours) was, hypothetically a source of finance but Lloyd George would only use the money when the party supported free trade, which it did not in 1924. In 1924 the Liberals lost many seats to the Conservatives and they have never since seemed likely to win power.

The loss of Liberal power and cohesion before the war was, according to Dangerfield, due to the Tories (over House of Lords reform and Ulster), women and the workers. According to Taylor Liberalism fell because it lacked a strong party organisation in the country, lacked funds, and above all else because of "their own disunion".<sup>56</sup> Internal disunity seems, almost beyond doubt, to have been the main single cause of the decline of the Liberal party, although it may only have been a symptom of the decline of Liberalism.

An elaboration of Dangerfield's contention that the workers helped bring down the Liberals connects us closely with our main themes. The Minimum Wage Bill of 1912 epitomised Liberal difficulties in developing policies to meet new situations. Dangerfield's prose can not be bettered in describing the events;

[In 1911] "the cautious spirit of the South Wales Miners' Federation had been shamed away, and from now onwards the gospel of the minimum wage was openly preached, not only in Wales, but in every coalfield in Great Britain."<sup>57</sup>

On February 20th 1912 in the midst of a prolonged industrial crisis, "The cry for action came swelling up out of South Wales. A general strike was just six days off".<sup>58</sup> In meeting this crisis the government introduced a Minimum Wage Bill for the miners, as he spoke in the Commons, Asquith wept; <sup>59</sup>

".... in the person of Mr. Smillie [Asquith] came face to face with a side of the national life which was altogether beyond his comprehension. Those tears which he shed in the Commons seem

more and more like a tragic confession, not merely of personal failure, but of the failure of Liberalism itself."<sup>60</sup>

Asquith's tears did not win the miners. The miners had campaigned for a national minimum wage, "Five and Two", five shillings per day for men and two shillings for boys.<sup>61</sup> The Act provided for district agreements, with boards to settle the levels of wages, and allowed men to contract out of the terms of the Act. The Labour members in Parliament voted against the Bill. The miners felt that the Act betrayed them.<sup>62</sup>

Few low paid wage-workers were receiving five shillings, chairmen of boards were not regarding the average wages of piece-workers in fixing the minimum wage, and some awards entailed 100% work-attendance for the miner to qualify.<sup>63</sup> The principle of district settlement was always seen as an affront to the miners, as it prevented them from negotiating from strength at the national level, and left weak districts without protection. Thus the Liberals did not win the miners, but alienated them from the Liberal party. At the same time they broke with economic principles which were dear to their supporters, for they had taken the unequivocal step of removing one set of wages from the simple operation of the market.

The identity between Liberalism and non-conformity can no longer be seen to be so obvious or so strong by 1920 as it had been between 1870 and 1900. Of the latter years of the nineteenth century Pelling has said "Many non-conformist churches .... bore an unfortunate resemblance to the Liberal Associations with which they were often closely connected."<sup>64</sup>

There was by 1920 no prima facie case for a Methodist to be a Liberal; if he was a radical or reformer he could just as well be a Labour supporter. For reasons that will become obvious we have little record of local Liberal Parties in Durhan. When we refer to Liberalism it is essentially to Gladstonian Liberalism however; a Liberalism of high ethical quality and laissez-faire economics. This style of Liberalism survived until the First

World War and we will see it expressed locally in attitudes towards education and temperance, and, en passant towards housing policy, in which public expenditure by local government is rejected, in spite of legislation permitting such expenditure. It was against this Liberalism that socialists and then the Labour Party struggled; it was a tenacious Liberalism, as the following table shows.

FIGURE 1:

DURHAM CONSTITUENCIES 1885-1910

% mining  
vote 1910

		1885	1886	1892	1895	1900	1906	1910	1910
N.W. Durham	60+	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib
Mid-Durham	60+	Lib-Lab	Lib-Lab	Lib-Lab	Lib-Lab	Lib-Lab	Lib-Lab	Lib-Lab	Lib-Lab*
Houghton-le-spring	50+	Lib-Lab	C	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib
Clester-le-street	50+	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib
Bishop Auckland	30+	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib**	Lib***
S.E. Durham	30+	Lib	L.U.	Lib	L.U.	L.U.	L.U.	Lib	Lib
Barnard Castle	30+	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib
Jarrow	-	-	-	-	-	-	Lib	Lib	Lib****
Durham City	10+	C	C	Lib	Lib	L.U.	C	U	U
Sunderland $\frac{1}{2}$	10+	Lib Lib	Lib Lib	Lib Lib	C Lib	C C	Lib Lib	U U	Lib Lib
South Shields	10+	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib
Gateshead	10+	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib	Lib-Lab	Lib	Lib

(Source: R. Gregory, Tables: Appendix B and Appendix to Chapter V).

- \* 1. John Wilson's seat
- \*\* 2. Lab. bottom of three cornered contest
- \*\*\* 3. Lab. second of three cornered contest
- \*\*\*\* 4. Lab. bottom of three cornered contest

In the 1918 Election two out of seven miners' candidates were returned in Parliament. Galbraith, a miners' leader and the Lib-Lab candidate for Spennymoor was returned also. His constituency did not fall to Labour until 1922. The Barnard Castle constituency went Labour in 1918, was lost to Labour in 1922, regained in the first 1923 Election and lost again in October. Garside noted the surprisingly high Liberal vote in the Durham division as late as 1929.<sup>65</sup> Parts of these three constituencies included parts of our research area.

The Durham division Labour party was formed in 1918 and in 1919 Durham County Council became the first Labour County Council under the Chairmanship of Peter Lee. The County Council has remained Labour ever since, but without a majority from 1922 to 1925.

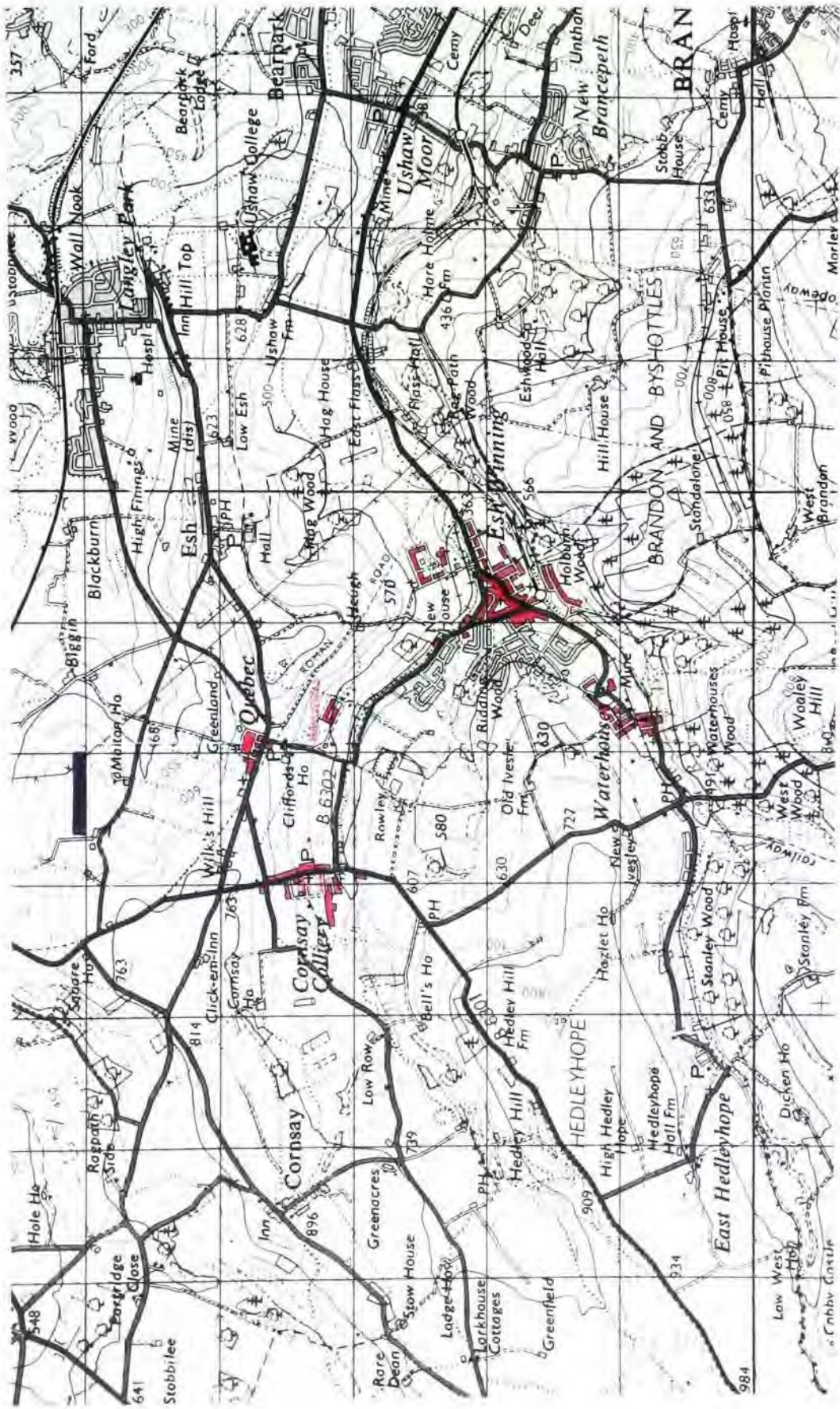
(iv) Methodism

We have looked at industry and politics at the end of the nineteenth century. What was the national state of Methodism as such? At the mid-century Wesleyan Methodism suffered its greatest disruption, losing over 100,000 members, only about 40,000 of whom eventually joined other Methodist denominations. This disruption was a climax to the growth of opposition to the power of Jabez Bunting. Bunting represented a conservative ecclesiastical position and he was a Tory by politics, an opponent of reform in both Church and State. The break with Bunting was, according to Maldwyn Edwards, a break with Toryism.<sup>66</sup> It was from about 1850 onwards that Methodism was clearly aligned with non-conformity and Liberalism.

These events took place within Wesleyanism; we do not know how our local Methodists, most of whom were Primitives, responded. They may have responded with glee at the discomfort of the Wesleys, they may have regarded the issue with indifference or sympathy, we do not know. The least they might have learnt from these events was the danger of internal conflict within a denomination.

The collectivism of the working classes, expressed in trade union and co-operative society was not a marked feature of Methodist teaching, for perhaps the desire to evangelise inhibited the rise of collectivist sentiments because of its stress on individual salvation. The Methodists tried to observe a "no politics" rule; this did not mean that men should not have political views but that the expression of those views should not create strife in the denomination or local society. Throughout the century Methodist conferences of all denominations seem to have been taxed by the problem of political involvement. Not only might a Methodist have to mix in impure company to pursue political goals; he might become a full time political worker, or at the least be otherwise seriously distracted from spiritual discipline and evangelistic activities.<sup>67</sup>

The main focus of Methodist political attention was on issues that had a clear ethical aspect; it was this ethical concern which we have seen as linking Methodism and Liberalism so closely. A popular Methodist slogan was that that which was morally wrong could not be politically right. This is obviously a sentiment open to widely differing interpretations. On the one hand it could be a basis for opposing political compromises with the brewers, but on the other it could provide a basis for driving Parnell from public office. It is the burden of much of our discussion that in order to understand the political effects of Methodism one needs to understand the Methodist-non-conformist-Liberal linkage in individualism and ethical issues. To this extent our study is a microcosmic study of a national phenomenon. Nevertheless there were radicals within Methodism, the most famous of these being S. E. Keeble and Hugh Price Hughes. They represented a minority within Methodism. Their main achievement was in spreading the "social gospel" and thereby drawing attention to issues arising from economic, industrial and political developments, rather than issues arising from the shortcomings of individual personalities only. In doing this they



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tried to make the extension of state intervention in social and economic affairs more acceptable. The Primitive Methodist church became more sympathetic to the Labour cause in the early years of the twentieth century, but there was a tendency to stress industrial reconciliation and compromise, as we shall see, and to avoid the promotion of conflict.<sup>68</sup>

Pickering has suggested that;

When a church officially, or by implication, indentifies itself with a political party which is also supported by the vast majority of its members the inner cohesion of the church becomes all the more strong. This is to be welcomed from the church's point of view just so long as the politico-economic situation remains fairly static. When, however, it is open to rapid change the pursuance of such a policy may mean the extinction of the religious group.<sup>69</sup>

There is, historically, no doubt that Methodism, in all forms, was closely associated with Liberalism. Shared political outlooks helped to unite Methodists. But the growth of Labour politics and the adherence of working class Methodists to the Labour cause might be seen, if Pickering is correct, as a contributory factor in the decline of Methodist influence from the first World War onwards.

This then is the background against which we have to understand the life, work and religion of some 10,000 souls in four small and obscure villages in Co. Durham.

## 2. The Deerness Valley

The Deerness Valley lies a little south of west of Durham City; it extends from two miles to nine miles from the city. Open rolling hills rise 850 feet above sea level from the valley bottom which itself rises from 300 feet at the east to 600 feet in the west. Most of the valley is used for cattle and sheep grazing. Three villages lie on the road along the valley; Ushaw Moor, Esh Winning and Waterhouses. Westward from Esh Winning

runs the Cornsay Valley, a mile and a quarter up which is Cornsay Colliery. Between these two villages is the hamlet of Hamsteels and above Hamsteels, on a bleak fell top, is Quebec.\* Above Esh Winning, in the main valley, are the villages of Waterhouses, Hamilton Row and East Hedley Hope (see map).

The railway from Durham to Waterhouses opened in 1857 and closed in 1963, although passenger services were only provided from the late nineteenth century until 1947. A metalled road from Esh Winning to Waterhouses was built as a local public works project in the 1920's at which time the valley received its first motor-bus service. Durham city was of minor importance until the building of the road from the villages to the city. Crook, to the south west, was the source of services and supplies to the villages.

Drift mining commenced in Esh Winning and Waterhouses in the 1850's but there was little house-building in the area until the 1860's. Until then sufficient miners had been able to walk to work from a few local hamlets. The coming of the railway led to the expansion of the pits. The main village pits in the valley bottom were developed by Pease and Partners, Cornsay Colliery by Ferens and Love, Quebec-Hamsteels by Johnson and Reay.\*\*

At Waterhouses the company had built 151 houses by 1874, having built a schoolroom ten years previously. A few rows of private houses were built south of the railway. The village took on its final physical shape, with school, miners' Institute, etc., between 1870 and 1890. The coal winnings were in drifts running into the hillside to the north and south of the village.

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\* So named because the land upon which the village was built was enclosed in the year of Wolfe's victory at Quebec.

\*\* These were "model villages" offering housing of a high standard for the period. Similar developments occurred in the Derbyshire Coalfield.<sup>70</sup>

A shaft was sunk in Esh Winning in 1859 and the company built houses during the 1860's in a square around the pit head. A further 80 houses and a school were built with the colliery's expansion in the 1890's. In the last three decades of the nineteenth century and the first of the twentieth there were a series of red-brick private housing developments radiating from the market square and to the south of the village.

Hamsteels Colliery was opened in 1867 and Cornsay in 1869. Hamsteels had a shaft but both collieries were groups of drift mines. The colliery companies provided housing in both villages. These two collieries used three-quarters and two-thirds of their coal output respectively for coking. Bricks were produced at Cornsay and Lymington Terrace (Esh Winning).

The population of the valley grew with the coal and coke trade from the 1860's onwards and by 1901 over three-quarters of all employed men were working in the industry. The main source of population increase was immigration; from Weardale, Lincolnshire (where Pease and Partners had a recruiting office) and indirectly from Ireland.

The scope of the migration can be shown by the fact that in June 1860 the Witton Park Primitive Methodist Anniversary celebration included an afternoon sermon in Welsh.<sup>71</sup> In 1871 unemployed workers were being encouraged to move from Deptford, in South East London, to the Willington pit and in June 1871 Pease and Partners opened a recruiting office in the East End of London.<sup>72</sup>

Durham County gained 130,000 persons between 1851 and 1871. From 1875 to 1887 the labour force remained stable. From 1881 to 1911 there was a net emigration of about 70,000.<sup>73</sup> These population movements in and out of the County take no account of internal migration. The decline of the lead industry in Weardale, in the West of the County, provided a labour supply for the coal mines. Many Weardale names (Nattress, Vipond, Hewitson etc.) are to be found in the Deerness Valley. In fact Durham seems to have experienced a continuous eastward migration; the miners of mid-west Durham have recently

been migrating to the East coast pits. Some of the Deerness Valley Methodists were interviewed on the East coast. Mining villages also had a high rate of natural increase of population. Irish Catholics seem to have been especially attracted to Ushaw Moor with its nearby seminary and catholic estates belonging to both Ushaw College and an old catholic land-owning family. Local workers may have been drawn from agricultural work; most old local families can trace themselves back to rural occupation. Many women to-day report being "in service" or "helping out" on farms. Brinley Thomas has suggested that the 1870's saw a rapid increase in migration from the land in South Wales. The Education Act prevented children from working on the land meanwhile non-rural occupations offered adults better wages and shorter hours.<sup>74</sup> The Victoria County History of Durham records a drop in agricultural labour from 10,004 in 1851 to 5,049 in 1901.<sup>75</sup>

Populations for the four\* villages are not readily calculable. The Registrar-General's Reports of the Census of England and Wales 1871-1961 give data based on administrative areas which include the villages. Quebec-Hamsteels is in the civil parish of Esh; Waterhouses and Esh Winning are in Brandon and Byshottles which also includes the three major villages of Brandon, Sleetburn (New Brancepeth) and Ushaw Moor. Population changes take place within those areas as pits are laid in or opened out, but this may not be distinguishable in a large population or may be compensated for elsewhere in the area. Thus some known pit closures do not affect the Census populations. Compounding this problem is the fact of the administration boundaries cutting

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\* Quebec and Hamsteels, although  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile apart are treated as one village by local residents. The names are used interchangeably and this practice is followed in the present work.

through the villages - Cornsay and Esh Winning both having boundaries running along their respective main streets.

The most reliable and for us the most relevant indications of village populations can be based on the colliery employment figures. In the first half of this century about three-quarters of all employed men were in the coal trade; latterly the proportion has been falling from one half.\* The age structure of the earliest population is of some interest but it can not be ascertained from published sources. We might sensibly expect to find a high proportion of unmarried migrant men.<sup>76</sup> This expectation is supported by the continual reference to lodgers made by older people recalling the earlier days. Pease and Partners also required their tenants to accept single men as lodgers, as a condition of tenancy.

The Census Reports give us the proportion of the population employed in mining and the Home Office reports the numbers actually employed in each pit. Populations estimated in this way are as follows:-

TABLE 1: Population of the Villages 1895-1951 (Totals to nearest 100)						
	1895	1901	1911	1921	1931	1951
Esh Winning	2090	2400	3100	2500	+	3400
Waterhouses	1520	1900	1800	1800	2200	1900
Cornsay	x	2100	2200	2000?	+	+
Quebec-Hamsteels	x	2700	2600	1500	+	+
Total	x	9100	11700	7800	(6100)*	(6100)*
x not known      + pit closed      * estimate						

(Taylor has estimated the 1965 population as: Esh Winning 2979; Waterhouses 1500).<sup>77</sup>

\* The percentages based on records and births and deaths for 1910 and 1930 are higher than the Census percentages. The effect of this would be to reduce our population totals. See Tables.

Thus the population of the whole district was a little over 9000 at the turn of the century and in the 1920's it declined to about 7000. The decline accelerated in the 1930's. During the war, with Cornsay no longer drawing coal and Esh Winning re-opened, the population probably rose a little to around 6000. By the late 1960's all pits were closed, only Esh Winning remained as a going concern until 1969, with a population of around 3000 of whom only a handful were employed in mining. The other villages had probably less than 1000 inhabitants each.

The dramatic changes that came about in the Valley do not seem to have created any conflicts between the original inhabitants and the incomers (but the former were completely outnumbered anyhow). Landowners like Lord Boyne and Ushaw College received royalties for the coal mined under their land and wayleaves for the coal carried across their land. The Smythes of Flass House built terraced houses in Esh Winning which they were able to rent to shopkeepers and minor professionals in the expanding village. Meanwhile farming continued in the Valley, and continues until the present.

If the landowners had experienced any major clash of interest with the coal-owners they would have been relatively unable to express them, or to organise to pursue their interests as the coal-owners - as we saw above - spoke for the landowners, being themselves amongst the largest landowners in the County. The dominance of the mines is shown by the local elections of 1877 when the nominations were as follows; two farmers, three mining engineers, one colliery manager, a colliery owner, a tradesman and a gentleman.<sup>78</sup> The result was the election of the owner, the manager, three engineers and the gentleman.

(ii) Religious Affiliations of the Population\*

The data on religious affiliation in the Deerness Valley are incomplete and difficult to interpret. The Primitive Methodists have left the most comprehensive and useful records. None of our argument depends on statistical calculations. It can be argued, furthermore, that membership itself is a problematic concept, there being sociologically significantly different ways of "belonging" to a religious group, that do not co-incide with the categories used in record-keeping. Pickering has suggested that beyond the usual categories of membership there are "irregular" members, those who attend perhaps once a year for festivals. Beyond these again there are men and women who were members or active participants who have lapsed but remain sympathetic and attend the chapels for the community's rites de passage.<sup>79</sup> We would also suggest that there are sympathisers who never were active, but whose parents or children were Methodists. Thus whilst we can say that a local preacher was certainly a Methodist, and a Roman Catholic not a Methodist, there is an indeterminate area of membership and adherence. There is a penumbra of membership which is, as we shall see, drawn into activity at certain times and whose sympathy can be drawn on. It may be that in many subtle ways the Methodist culture is upheld in the penumbral areas as much as in the active centre of chapel life.

Nevertheless it is important to have an overall picture of "membership" to indicate the order of adherence to religious institutions which we will claim were influential in the history and biographies of the Deerness Valley.

Various runs of figures for membership, adherence and Sunday School attendance are available. These figures raise problems of interpretation which we are not able to solve. For example, the difference between a member

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\* See Appendix III

and an adherent is only partially recognised by local Methodists and we have no way of telling what (if any) distinction was in use at any time in the records. We do not know how the figures for adherence were arrived at anyhow (a list, a count of chapel attenders, and if the latter, was there any double counting?), there also seems to be a tendency to record the same total as for the previous year, for years on end.

One point emerges clearly. There are fluctuations in Methodist numbers which coincide with local economic circumstances.\*<sup>80</sup> For example in 1905 the Minister enters in the Chapel Schedule of the Waterhouses Station under "Reasons for Decline" the single phrase "Industrial depression in the valley." In 1921 in addition to declining numbers the Minister reports "heavy financial loss due to strike" and in 1923 conditions are reported as difficult. In 1928 the Minister reports:

"Not prosperous due to unemployment. This reacts acutely on Finances of Circuit. This also makes for spiritual depression. Spiritual inspirations are difficult to generate under these conditions (sic). People are leaving for employment elsewhere. We can not encourage them to remain in these circumstances"

Economic depression does not necessarily stop people being Methodists but it does make them move away in search of work.

In the 1860's there were a handful of Methodists in the villages, meeting in private houses and colliery lofts. By 1900 there were over 1,000 Primitive Methodists in the villages. The Primitives, according to the records and to interviews, always seemed to have outnumbered the Wesleyans by two to one. By 1911 there seem to have been over 1800 Methodists

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\* Similar features can be seen in the expansion of the Mechanics' Institutes which grew from 1860 onwards.<sup>81</sup>

(P.M.'s and W.M.'s) in the villages. This total was maintained until the early 1920's. By 1932 the total was a little below 800 and by 1946 two hundred. The Sunday Schools suffered a more gradual decline, having about 500 regular attenders in the 1890's, falling to about 200 in 1921.

An alternative way of find how many villagers were Methodists was adopted. It will be seen in Chapter V that this is perhaps a more relevant way of estimating communal membership. With the aid of Electoral Registers discussions were held with some of the older women on the families who lived in the colliery rows. Some of the women were able to remember all of the inhabitants in whole streets. But not the names of lodgers. From this an estimate could be made of the people who were regarded as Methodists, and the number of households in which at least one member was so regarded. 1919 was chosen as "the year the men came home from the war" was clearly remembered and fell near the centre of our period. About 65% of all households had at least one member who was regarded as belonging to a church.\* About 40% of all households were regarded as "Methodist" households. There was some variation between villages, Waterhouses appeared to be the most Methodist, Quebec the least.†

Chapel building and closure, like membership figures, seem to follow the coal trade. Twenty-four chapels have been built in the whole valley since 1870. Nine were built 1870-1880 (seven between 1870 and 1875); five from 1881-1890; four from 1896 to 1900. Eleven chapels were still open in 1968 (three out of nine in the area of this study). Seven closures occurred between 1920 and 1940 and the remainder from 1955 to 1968. In 1932

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\* Roman Catholic and Church of England, about 10% each, Baptists 4% and no religion 35%

† Waterhouses 43% of households, Esh Winning 33%, Quebec 32%. No reason for these variations can be found unless Pease and Partners deliberately favoured Methodists in their recruiting of workers. It is alleged in the district that this was the company's policy.

the Esh Winning P.M.'s and W.M.'s united to form one society and in 1935 the present Brandon and Deerness Valley Circuit was formed. The Esh Winning Society gained from the Quebec closures.

(iii) Roman Catholics and the Church of England

The meaning of "membership" in the Roman Catholic church and the Church of England is even more difficult to put in simple terms than for Methodism. A baptised person may formally be a member, but not actively so. No Catholic is removed from church membership unless he formally and publicly renounces his faith. There is a local factor complicating the Catholic figures for the Deerness Valley also. Published figures include the population of Ushaw College seminary and its servants, thus increasing the total Catholic population in a way that makes it almost impossible to discover the proportion of Catholics in the mining population alone. The valley from East Hedley Hope to Ushaw College had a population of about 1800 Catholics in 1892, rising to 2600 at the turn of the century and falling to below 1500 in the 1930's.

The Church of England was the latecomer to the Valley. The Waterhouses end of the valley was in Brancepeth parish, the parish church thus being some six miles away, over the hills to the south of the valley. In January 1860 there had been a meeting in Newcastle to discuss the spiritual poverty of the mining districts. This meeting was attended by the Bishop of Durham and a number of aristocrats. The meeting, presided over by the Earl Grey expressed concern at the lack of clergy and the fact that Durham had a new population untouched by the existing clergy and parochial system. In Durham there were 9,000 persons per parish, compared with 5,400 in Manchester. The meeting noted that the existing parishes, which were suitable for agricultural communities, were not suitable to collieries. They too noted that the colliery districts were neglected even in comparison with manufacturing areas. The colliers they asserted, received no ministration, save that of the police.<sup>82</sup> The coal-owners felt that as they paid tithes and

royalties to the Church Commissioners they should not be expected to make large additional donations to meet the needs of the Church in the County.

But no immediate plan of action emerged from this expression of concern save for the establishment of The Durham Diocesan Society for the Employment of Additional Clergy. There was some division in the meeting on whether the Church Commissioners, who took a lot of money from Durham in the form of coal royalties, (about £50,000 a year in 1854) were failing in their duty to promote and finance the Anglican cause in the diocese. An amendment to the Acts relating to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in August 1860 enabled the diocese to go ahead with a programme of church building and the creation of new parishes. Fifty parishes were created between 1871 and 1881. All were agreed, at the 1860 meeting that the Church Commissioners, the employers, clergy and the laity needed to bring the "restraints and consolations" of religion to "those masses earning large wages, (and thus) enabled to indulge their sensualities to any excess."<sup>83</sup> Perhaps in part due to the delays caused by the debates with the Church Commissioners, Anglican churches were another fourteen years coming to the valley. St. John the Baptist was consecrated in Hamsteels in 1874 and St. Paul's Waterhouses in 1879. By these dates the Methodists were firmly established in the valley.

The coal-owners and businessmen of the diocese seemed to have remained reluctant to contribute to the funds of the Church, a factor that will be seen to contrast sharply with the behaviour of the non-conformist owners towards the chapels. In 1884 Archdeacon Watkins of Durham had to admonish the laity:

"How can Churchmen read their Bibles, and say their prayers, and then spend in luxury, or even save, money won by the brow-sweat and life risk of men who in God's sight are equal to themselves, while these brothers for whom Christ died are practically left without Sacrament, or Minister, or Church?"<sup>84</sup>

The only Anglican figures to survive are to be found in ten editions of

the Hamsteels Parish Magazine which were found for various dates between 1913 and 1926. The number of communicants at St. John's only exceeded 100 in 1915. If we allow for multiple counting of members who communicated more than once a month we would expect the active membership to be less than 100 in that year. Throughout the 1913-26 period communicants averaged about 50. We know, however, that the vicar after the war of 1914-18 (the Revd. E. C. Rust) was not likely to encourage the participation of the miners in the life of his church (see chapter VIII). Thus our figures may under-represent those miners who felt themselves to be Anglicans, but who nonetheless did not attend St. John's. But by any method of accounting the Church of England was not numerically strong.

(iv) The Occupational Structure of the Population

The villages were built so that coal could be mined. It is not surprising, therefore, that mining dominated the occupation structure of the villages. The villages of the Deerness Valley were one industry villages throughout their history. The decennial censuses and the registration of births and deaths suggest that nearly 80% of the working population was engaged in mining until the 1920's. 70% of these men were face workers. By 1930 probably only about 65% were in coal mining, by 1960, 30% (and many of these were not working in their home pits).<sup>85</sup>

A complete list of shops and shopkeepers in Esh Winning circa 1908 was obtained. This showed that 41 shops between them employed eight workers in addition to the owners and their immediate families. Five of these eight workers were accounted for by two businesses, another three by three businesses. In addition to the 41 shops there was a Co-operative store which employed nineteen workers. In Waterhouses the Store employed about 50 workers. The Co-ops thus provided a relatively important (because it was the second largest) alternative source of employment - but it was an absolutely small source.

(v) The Occupation of Methodists

Given the very high proportion of miners in the villages it would be reasonable to assume that miners would have been well represented amongst the Methodists. Nevertheless one can not assume a priori that the Methodists exactly reflect the general occupational structure.

We have no exact record of the occupations of Methodists. Marriage registers do not include all the Methodists in the villages,\* nor are all those married in the chapels Methodists. Records which include occupations are limited to legal documents and only record those directly involved in the transaction. Thus our records are of local preachers, Trustees, Sunday School teachers and official representations to such bodies as Quarterly Meeting and Synod - the group usually referred to, sometimes quite loosely, as the leaders.\*\* It is possible to gain no more than an impression by reading the available printed and M.S. sources, this impression is supported by interviews. It appears that in Primitive Methodism miners were under-represented in the leadership. That is to say, the proportion of miners in the Methodist leadership was smaller than their proportion in the whole population. Shopkeepers and Co-op workers, white collar workers and officials seem over-represented.\*\*\* The same is true of the Wesleyans, save at Quebec where miners seem to have held all the key positions.

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\* i.e. It excludes those not marrying and those marrying either in other churches or other villages.

\*\* "The leaders", members of the Leaders Meeting are, in fact, a defined group. See Glossary of Methodist terms.

\*\*\* Tests of statistical significance are not appropriate given the likely inaccuracies in our estimates of the occupational structure of the population and the small total numbers involved in Methodist leadership. Appendix IV gives a clear indication of the extent of the non-miner domination of the leadership.

In the late nineteenth century the Waterhouses Primitive Methodist Sunday School teachers seem to have been the most "proletarian" of all the chapel leaders and it was from amongst this group of teachers that a number of important political figures emerged.

One occupational group very much under-represented at all periods is that of the labourers. Whilst railwaymen and craftsmen associated with mining (joiners, bricklayers, etc.) do occasionally appear amongst the leaders of Methodism, unskilled labourers do not. Also until recently women have not been prominent in leadership positions although they were very active amongst the membership. It has been suggested that Methodism was a shopkeepers religion. Pickering certainly found shopkeepers prominent amongst the non-conformist leadership in his two Yorkshire towns. Probert made similar findings in Cornwall, showing that Methodism failed to draw members from the extremes; namely landed gentry and labourers.<sup>86</sup> The shopkeepers as a whole were not Methodists\* but one or two leading Methodists were shopkeepers. The leading Esh Winning Primitive, who died in about 1910, was a draper. In Waterhouses the Co-op manager was a leading Wesleyan and many of his employees were activists in the chapel also.

Does the impression make sense? The disproportionate representation of non-miners in the Methodist leadership (if this was actually the case) might be explained, in part, by reference to the following considerations:

- (i) men who were independent in the work situation carried this independence into their religious life and became leaders;
- (ii) officials and white collar workers were chosen as leaders by the chapels;
- (iii) men who held positions of trust in the chapels were also trusted

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\* Amongst the 41 shopkeepers Baptists were the most highly represented: Methodist 6; Baptists 11; Roman Catholics 6; nothing 15; not known 3.

with official responsibility and capital.

There appears to be a connection between occupational role and leadership positions in Methodism, and it is fairly clear that the miners who were leaders in Methodism were a "working class elite" of piece-rate workers. Since the 1920's there have been striking changes in the occupations of the villagers due both to industrial change and social mobility. This is neatly shown by a consideration of 102 Methodists of whom we had sufficient personal details; seventy-five of their fathers were miners, of their thirty-five sons, two were miners.

We are not considering a community against a settled background of relatively unchanging social, economic and political circumstances. To this extent it has not been possible to carry out a study like the traditional anthropological studies of small societies. Nationally and locally changes were taking place that impinged on the day to day life of the Methodists and of organised Methodism. Any attempt to establish a "typical" period or a golden age of the villages must founder on the simple evidence of continuous social change.

(vi) Religious Conflicts in the villages

The presence of diverse regional and religious groups in the population of the coal boom villages provided ample opportunity for communal strife. We know from the press, for example, that there was much anti-Irish feeling in the region at the beginning of our period. Fenian arms caches were from time to time discovered and occasional explosions were thought to be "Fenian outrages". In 1871 we find evidence of Fenianism in Newcastle and in Whitton Park, but the nearest such activities appear to come to the valley is Bishop Auckland, although in the following year there was an Orange demonstration in Crook.<sup>87</sup>

The institutionalisation of Anglo-Irish conflict, represented by Orange demonstrations and Catholic counter demonstrations does not seem to have developed in the valley. Nonetheless some of the antagonisms, expressed

so clearly elsewhere in the County, may have been an element in the drunken brawls that were so common in the valley.\*

Two clear cases of institutional conflict between the Methodists and the Catholic Church can be recounted. The first comes to us as part of the

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\* The lack of any research on the history of the Irish in County Durham constitutes an important gap in the history of the County which urgently needs filling. Other aspects of the County unresearched are; the rise of the Labour Party, the social, economic and political effects of the Co-operative movement and the history of adult education. Each of these gaps will probably be filled in the future, but meanwhile research workers must work in relative darkness, using inferences from work done outside the County, or the patchy local sources within the County.

The history of the Irish in the County may prove to be extremely interesting; on the basis of reading newspapers - without intending to construct a history of the Irish - the following impressions emerge: Irish labour was used in the 1840's to build the railways in the County, there followed a period of unemployment during which a number of Irish turned to highway robbery, some forming bands of footpads. Irish robbers seem to have been the terror of the good citizens of Durham City who had to walk the roads to Shincliffe, Gilesgate and Neville's Cross. With the sinking of the shafts in mid-Durham (as, for example, in Esh Winning) new jobs were found for Irishmen, again they took on the heavy labouring involved in shaft-sinking. When the shafts were sunk the Irish were employed in labouring and on the coke-ovens in the Valley (according to some aged informants). Only slowly were the Irish able to gain skilled, piece-rate jobs at the face.

Another unsubstantiated datum from the villages is that the Irish were segregated in housing "over the beck" in Esh Winning. As it was also said that rough elements were "over the beck" too, we might here be encountering some confusion between the rough and the Irish - who might have been equated. No case of anti-Irish activity has been passed down to the researcher by Methodists or Catholics. The known cases of conflict, described above, are between the Methodists and the Catholic Church, not Methodists and Catholics.

folk history of the local Methodists and can not be checked in any documentary source: Joseph Love wished to build a chapel in Cornsay Colliery, but the land was held by Ushaw College Estates, who would not allow a chapel to be built on their land - even within the colliery yard. After much fruitless negotiation Love ceased arguing. One Friday all the Catholics employed in his pit received notice with their pay. The priest went to see Love (or his manager). Love asserted that if the Methodists could not have a chapel, the Catholics could not have jobs. The priest went to Ushaw College to explain the situation and the Methodists received permission to build a chapel and the Catholics were taken on again.

The second account is contained in Patterson's history of Primitive Methodism and is not recalled locally: Joseph Harrison tried to get land for a chapel in Esh Winning in about 1894 but, "many vain attempts were made to get a site for a chapel, but in vain, as the ground belonged to Roman Catholics".<sup>88</sup> With the Minister (G. W. Moorose) Harrison finally managed to obtain a site. We do not know what persuasions were used in this case, for the land seems to be part of Mr. Leadbetter-Smythe's land, and the Smythes are most probably the Catholics referred to. The Smythes had been in the Valley since before the Reformation and their house (Flass Hall) had been a refuge for priests in times of persecution. But they clearly made their peace with the Methodists.

Conflict between Methodist and Anglicans does not seem to have been significant at all. The only source of friction in the early part of our period (according to local anecdotes) was over the question of burials, namely whether non-conformist ministers could bury the dead in churchyards. But in 1879 the Vicar of Esh gave a lecture in support of the Wesleyan Methodists' harmonium fund. Methodist Anglican conflict was not local, but it certainly had broader dimensions that found expression in the valley. We will see something of this later in the discussion of the campaign against the Education Act of 1902. The Anglican Church as a national

organisation, associated in Methodist minds with the brewers and the Tory party was something against which the Methodists fought with great vigour when it came to the issue.

Why were there so few conflicts apparent in the valley? In the early days of the villages, when Fenianism was an issue the villages had hardly established themselves in the valley, they were villages of migrants and lodgers brought together in the search for work. It looks as if the various sections of the population were too mixed up in terms of housing and shared associations (pubs and clubs etc.) to form the kinds of association that are necessary to fight other sections of the population. By the time churches and chapels were built, and separate clubs for Catholics formed, the issue was less salient nationally and regionally. Perhaps also violent active conflict is a luxury that can not be enjoyed by men and women who are struggling to establish a life in new territory.

That there was no local conflict between Anglicans and non-conformists is hardly surprising. The Church of England arrived very much as a dissenting church to evangelise in districts where Methodism was firmly established. Open conflict would have been more likely where Methodism had been attempting to encroach upon established prerogatives of the Church of England. As it was, the Methodists could afford to be tolerant of the Church of England locally, as the Church of England was likely to make little headway amongst the miners. But as a national organisation with potential control of the education system the Church of England did threaten the Methodists.

In the main body of this work we will be concerned primarily to describe the religious and political life of the villages, by doing this we will accentuate some aspects of life in the village and ignore others. The life of the villages was culturally rich, groups of men came together for a very wide range of leisure activities. These included, bands, orchestras, gardening, dog racing, knur and spell<sup>\*</sup>, pitch and toss, popular lectures, the Mechanics Institutes (which seemed to grow rapidly in the County around 1860),

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\* A game played with a stick and wooden ball

football, rowing, running and other competitive sports, dinners, picnics and outings of various kinds. The columns of the local papers give an impression throughout the last third of the century of continuous and enthusiastic activity in the villages. Plainly not all activities were well organised and some activities (like the popular "spelling bee") were only fashionable for short periods. But villages were not just drab and insanitary settlements of working men who moved only between home, the pit and pub or chapel; the population was able to articulate a whole range of activities of a kind that are perhaps rarely understood by outsiders. Something of the gaiety of life in the villages is captured in literary forms in the account of the carnival in Part 3, chapter 2 of Emile Zola's Germinal. The "picaresque hedonism"<sup>89</sup> of the carnival can still be found on Bank Holidays in the Clubs in the valley, although the more serious activities of the Mechanics' Institute are no longer to be found.

Footnotes to Chapter II

1. Court, W.H.B., Coal, p. 5
2. Court, W.H.B., A Concise Economic History of Britain, p. 254
3. Ibid., pp. 195-6
4. Ibid., p. 215
5. Ibid., pp. 231-2
6. Court, Coal, p. 13
7. Ibid., p. 12
8. Jones, J.H. et al, The Coal Mining Industry, pp. 46-7
9. Garside, W.R., The Durham Miners 1919-1960, p. 155
10. Ibid., pp. 267 ff
11. Ibid., p. 276
12. Ibid., pp. 279-280
13. Ibid., p. 391
14. Ibid., Epilogue, pp. 500-509
15. Welbourne, The Miners' Unions of Northumberland and Durham, chapters IV and VI; Fynes, The Miners of Northumberland and Durham, chapters IV-VIII, XI-XXIII and XXXIX-XLII; Evans, The Miners of South Wales, chapters 3 and 4; Williams, The Derbyshire Miners, chapter III
16. Evans, Ibid., p. 216
17. Williams, Ibid., pp. 303, 376, 416 and chapter XII; Evans, Ibid., pp. 45, 137-139, 188-189
18. Williams, Ibid., p. 276
19. Arnot, The Miners, 1389-1910, p. 61
20. Evans, Ibid., pp. 147-148
21. Arnot, Ibid., p. 223
22. Williams, Ibid., p. 338
23. Chapter XI
24. Evans, Ibid., p. 191
25. Arnot, Ibid., p. 370

26. Court, *Ibid.*, p. 286
27. Webb, The Story of the Durham Miners 1662-1921, p. 83-84. Webb also remarked on the fact that the Durham miners shared the owners' economic outlook (p. 82)
28. Arnot, *Ibid.*, p. 253
29. *Ibid.*, p. 189
30. Williams, *Ibid.*, p. 389
31. Arnot, *Ibid.*, p. 323
32. Court, *Ibid.*, p. 289
33. Dangerfield, The Strange Death of Liberal England, p. 279
34. Arnot, *Ibid.*, p. 190
35. Evans, *Ibid.*, p. 201
36. Garside, *Ibid.*, p. 72
37. *Ibid.*, p. 118
38. *Ibid.*, p. 25
39. Personal communication from R. Gregory
40. McCallum, R.B., The Liberal Party from Earl Grey to Asquith, p. 69
41. *Ibid.*, p. 70
42. *Ibid.*, p. 79
43. *Ibid.*, p. 122
44. Arnot, R. Page, The Miners (1889-1910), p. 193
45. Dangerfield, *Ibid.*, p. 207
46. Dangerfield, *Ibid.*, p. 91
47. Cross, C., The Liberals in Power 1905-14, p. 185
48. McCallum, *op. cit.*, p. 134
49. *Ibid.*, p. 167. See also Taylor, pp. 105-106
50. Taylor, English History 1914-1942, p. 105
51. *Ibid.*, p. 226
52. Victoria County History, Durham Vol. II, p. 362; Durham Chronicle,

53. Taylor, *Ibid.*, chapter VIII
54. *Ibid.*, p. 220
55. *Ibid.*, pp. 324-325
56. *Ibid.*, p. 334
57. Dangerfield, *Ibid.*, p. 237
58. *Ibid.*, p. 279
59. *Ibid.*, p. 283
60. *Ibid.*, p. 287
61. Arnot, The Miners, 1910-, chapter IV
62. *Ibid.*, chapter IV.4 and IV.7
63. *Ibid.*, p. 121
64. Pelling, *op. cit.*, p. 136
65. Garside, *Ibid.*, p. 338
66. Edwards, M., Methodism in England, pp. 32-35
67. See Kent, J., The Age of Disunity, p. 130 and chapter 5
68. Edwards, *op. cit.*, pp. 176 ff.
69. Pickering, W.S.F., The Place of Religion, p. XIII.22
70. Williams, *Ibid.*, chapter XI
71. D.C. 15.6.60
72. *Ibid.*, 13.5.71, 30.6.71
73. Thomas, B., "The Migration of Labour in the Glamorganshire Coalfield (1861-1911)" in Minchinton, W.E. (ed), Industrial South Wales 1750-1914  
p. 55, n.46
74. *Ibid.*, p. 45
75. p. 367
76. Thomas, *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50
77. Taylor, R., Implications of Migration for the Durham Coalfield, pp. 42,  
46
78. D.C. 2.11.77

79. Pickering, op. cit., pp. 11.15-11.21. (For the similar problem of political party membership see Hindess, R., The Decline of Working Class Politics, pp. 57-62)
80. For earlier examples of this fluctuation see D.C. 10.5.72
81. Kelly, T., George Birkbeck, p. 259
82. D.C. 6.1.60, 13.1.60
83. Ibid., 13.1.60
84. Durham Diocesan Magazine, 1884, p. 116. The whole of Archdeacon Watkin's Charge (pp. 109-120) gives a neat summary of the 19th century history of the Church and Church education in the diocese.
85. See Taylor, op. cit., Tables 7 and 9, pp. 43 and 47
86. Probert, J.C., The Sociology of Cornish Methodism, p. 34
87. D.C. 28.4.71, 6.5.71, 16.8.72
88. Patterson, W.M., Northern Primitive Methodism, p. 92
89. Thompson, E.P., The Making of the English Working Class, p. 918

### CHAPTER III

#### THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BASIS OF PATERNALISM

##### THE COLLIERY OWNERS IN THE DEERNES VALLEY

The collieries of Waterhouses, Esh Winning and Ushaw Moor were part of the industrial empire of the Pease family.<sup>1</sup> Peases' interests were mainly centred in Teesside in iron-stone mining, iron and steel, and the North Eastern railway. The village of Peases West at Crook was a local centre for coal and coke, most of which was supplied to Peases' own ironworks. Thus the Deerness Valley collieries were part of a closely integrated and economically inter-dependent set of industries.

The Cornsay Colliery was owned by Ferens and Love. Love had started his working life as a pit boy at eight years old; he became a colliery manager then he started a grocery and drapery business, he then became a millowner, a ship-builder and a shipowner and finally the part or whole owner of six collieries.\*

Hamsteels Colliery originally belonged to Johnson and Reay, then to J. B. Johnson, a local Durham City man. Johnson was a small businessman compared with Pease; his enterprises being Hamsteels Colliery and the City Brewery. Johnson died in 1919 and the Colliery was purchased by the Saddler brothers in 1921.\*\*

Pease and Partners was a family company until 1898 when it became a limited liability company. During the early period, especially under Joseph Whitwell Pease, a tradition of paternalism developed. The Peases were members of the Society of Friends (Quakers). For the Quakers the callous cash nexus was not the sum of industrial relations. Old Joseph Pease (d.1872) and his sons believed firstly that the owners and the men worked in partnership in pursuit of common goals, and secondly that the owners had

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\* He was probably the last coal entrepreneur to rise from the ranks of hewers.

\*\* See Chapter VIII

definite responsibilities for their workpeople. The men, in turn, they believed, had a responsibility to the owners in allowing the market to operate freely, thus accepting reductions in wages when the price of coal fell, just as they enjoyed increases when the price rose.

The Peases believed that industrial conflict arose from an imperfect understanding of the workings of a market. J. W. Pease\* advocated education for the working class, so that, inter alia, they might better understand the economy and their own interests in it. Like the founders of the Mechanics' Institutes the Peases had mixed motives in promoting education. The entrepreneurial class appreciated the dependence of industry on scientific knowledge. They also wished the newly literate to appreciate improving literature.<sup>2</sup> But for education had a social control function also, it would lay its recipients "under the restraints which are imposed by enlightened opinion, and which operate so powerfully on the higher and more cultivated classes".<sup>3</sup> Peel put the issue more bluntly, "when knowledge was extensively diffused throughout the population of a county, a mob could never acquire any permanent ascendancy".<sup>4</sup>

Trade Unions according to J. W. Pease were to act as information networks, to enable men to play the labour market effectively - but they interfered with the operation of the market at great peril. When he visited Esh Winning to see new workings and open the temporary school, Pease said of the Trade Unions that he

"... thought them good in that they pointed out which market gave the best pay for certain work. But when they began to meddle with prices, that were best regulated by the laws of supply and demand, then there was great objection to them. The Master was obliged to give the highest price for labour, according to supply. Men ought to think about this and consider whether Trade Unions were doing them any good at all meddling in the market for labour."

He goes on in the same speech to develop a theme in favour of popular education;

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\* J. W. Pease, M.P., later Sir Joseph Whitwell Pease, Bart., M.P. (1828-1903)

"It was a great advantage to employers when they had educated steady, settled workpeople. It was the comfort of the latter and the prosperity of the former. There was nothing so bad .. as when a master neglects his duty ... and afterwards sees there is a feeling of discontent amongst his workmen, which he feels he ought to have prevented years before. Therefore they [Pease and Partners] were constrained to take an immediate interest in these matters."<sup>5</sup>

In other words the masters' neglect led to discontent, education was one measure that would prevent discontent.\* The coal masters seem to have believed this from early on, for after the strike of 1844, Welbourne states, the "coal-owners became possessed of a new zeal for educational and social improvement".<sup>6</sup>

Pease again stresses partnership when opening a school at Stanley (Crook).

"... he had never admitted, and he hoped he never would admit, that there ~~was~~ any opposing interest between the employer and the employed, at any rate in the coal fields of South Durham (applause). He might say:

'We have lived and loved together

Through many a changing year'

They had had their times of prosperity in which they had rejoiced, and they had had times lately when the workmen's remuneration had been reduced very considerably and when the profits of the coal owners have also been reduced, if not to nothing, to a very low figure." [Pease and Partners] "had thrown open their rooms to the Trade Unions, believing and hoping that while the men were looking out for themselves they would look at the position of the employers and the employers also would try while working for themselves to look at the position of the men, so that employer and employed might go hand in hand, not only for the benefit of each other but for the benefit of the community at large."<sup>7</sup>

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\* Sir Basic Samuelsson, owner of East Hedley Hope Colliery, was also an advocate of education and worked for its extension throughout his career. He was a friend of Mundella and was the first to give evidence to the Royal Commission on Education in 1871.<sup>8</sup>

Arthur Pease spoke at the opening of the Miners' Institute at New Marske, his brother John Whitwell Pease with him. The owners, he said,

"felt that to have a body of intelligent, sober and well-conducted men must ever tend to the prosperity of the works".

In saying that the Unions could meet in the Institute he pointed out that,

"all recent reductions had been accomplished without a single strike, that was something very remarkable in the progress of the feeling between labour and capital."<sup>9</sup>

During a strike in 1879 J. W. Pease publicly stated that a complete victory for the owners would be as fatal as complete victory for the men. He believed in arbitration.<sup>10</sup> Partnership, mutual understanding, reasonable settlement, in the context of an unalterable market situation are the main themes of the Peases' view of industrial relations. It could be argued that this was only a gloss on exploitation. The market for coal was interfered with by the owners, both by the formation of cartels and by selling coke to their own subsidiary iron companies at a price below the market price. A cut in profits bore less heavily on an owner than a cut in the fortnightly wage bore on the pitman and his family. This would be an oversimplification. Whilst it is true a perfect market was not operating and that pitmen suffered greater hardships than the colliery owners, it is also true that the views quoted above are entirely consistent with the economic orthodoxy that had prevailed for many years, and that notions of partnership and mutual responsibility are entirely consistent with Quaker views. Whatever underlay the Peases' attitude, they presented to the public and the pitmen the attitudes outlined above, and this is important for our analysis.

Economic orthodoxy was embodied in the Sliding Scale for the miners' wages. But because the price of coal dictated the miners' wage, the owners were able to underbid competitors. The owners were, in fact, in an economically dominant position and they directly controlled both "the market" and the men's wages.<sup>11</sup> The Sliding Scale operated from 1871-1878, 1879-1881, 1882-1883 and 1884-1889.

Locally the owners showed concern for their people. In 1871, for example, Pease and Partners distributed coal to the poor of Peases West during a cold winter. In 1879 Ferens gave 5 ton of coal to the poor of Cornsay. Miners' widows were allowed to live in Peases' colliery houses. The term "their" people is used advisedly. Not only were the villagers Peases' employees, they were their tenants. The colliery houses of Waterhouses and Esh Winning were all provided by Pease and Partners who stopped rent out of the men's pay. The Institutes and the schools were built by the owners also; not only were all these buildings paid for and formally opened by the owners, but built with bricks made from seggar from the local mines. Every brick in the house in which a miner lived was stamped either "Pease" or "F & L".<sup>12</sup> The workers and their families were entirely dependent on the coal owners and the villages were, in effect, "company towns".

The chapels were not company chapels but there was a strong element of company patronage in the foundation and maintenance of chapels. Whilst the coal owners were believers, they would also have approved of Ure's contention that "Godliness is great gain" and that, "animated with a moral population, our factories will flourish in expanding fruitfulness".<sup>13\*</sup>

Ferens and Love were both prominent figures in the Methodist New Connexion. Love was a local preacher; he had founded the Durham Circuit<sup>15</sup>; by 1871 he had given over £12,000 for chapels (not all Methodist New Connexion) throughout the country.<sup>16</sup> In 1874 he gave the Methodist New

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\* We would misrepresent Pease if we presented him as only under the influence of Ure. Ure scorned the idea of the independent and self-reliant workman and opposed combination. Pease did all he could to encourage independence and self-reliance and he advocated trade unionism, as we have seen. It might be more accurate to characterise Pease as adhering to the beliefs of Samuel Smiles, who according to Bendix modified Ure's beliefs in the way we have indicated.<sup>14</sup>

Connexion £10,000.<sup>17</sup> He was a generous contributor to the funds of local chapels also.<sup>18</sup> Love allowed the Cornsay Methodist New Connexion to use the colliery school, later he gave them the building; he charged no ground rent, provided fuel and lighting and the colliery trap for visiting preachers.\*

Welbourne, however, describes a disjunction between Love's religious and business lives.

"There is no doubt that Mr. Love, active Methodist as he was, laid the foundations of the fortune which allowed him to be so lavish in charity by a system of management so callously commercial that it passed unnoticed into absolute robbery."<sup>19</sup>

Love had not only dismissed men for discussing the possibility of forming a Union; he had been the prime actor in the breaking of the early miners' Union in the dispute over the "rocking" of tubs in 1863-64.<sup>20\*\*</sup>

"Mr. Love's business actions were in sharp contrast to the piety of his private life ... He belonged to a school which had well learned the lesson, to hide from the right hand what its left hand did."<sup>21</sup>

Nevertheless Love's classical "rags to riches" career was presented by Methodists as a vindication of his piety. Furthermore, he was held up as a model to those with social and economic aspirations;

"From whence did his wealth arise?...It was the result of industry - industry combined with frugality, self-denial, economy; sanctified and regulated by the highest principles of genuine religion."<sup>22</sup>

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\* But he gave the chapel no Deed. This caused the Methodists considerable trouble when the colliery was sold, and the new owner (a Catholic) claimed the chapel also.

\*\* No references can be found locally to this phase of Love's career; it seems unlikely that his past was unknown and had no effect on the miners' attitude towards him. Whatever the miners knew or thought they probably felt it wiser not to express their opinions too publicly, perhaps hostility towards Love was in part directed against Curry his manager (see below). The Methodists, in their official statements at least, seem to have forgiven Love.

Pease and Partners were generous locally. They gave two houses to the Esh Winning Primitive Methodists for conversion to a chapel in 1875, also helping with labour and materials for the conversion.<sup>23</sup> They allowed the Wesleyan Methodists to meet in a colliery building. They loaned the Baptists the Esh Winning British School.<sup>24</sup> They later donated £25 to the Baptists chapel fund, J. W. Pease also making a personal gift of £22.<sup>25</sup> Arthur Pease laid the foundation stone for the Waterhouses Wesleyan Methodists chapel and Lord Boyne (Brancepeth) gave the land, as he did for the Primitive Methodists also.<sup>26</sup> J. W. Pease contributed to the Crook Methodist New Connexion chapel debt fund in 1871.<sup>27</sup> In 1900 Pease and Partners gave the site and the bricks for building the Ushaw Moor Wesleyan Methodist chapel.<sup>28</sup> Only J. B. Johnson seems to have withheld full support from the non-conformists. Johnson and Reay had given £100 and a plot for the Quebec Primitive Methodist chapel in 1876 and Reay and his son made personal gifts of £52.<sup>29</sup> Johnson does not appear to have given much money, and he insisted on his domestic servants (including the Methodists) attending the Church of England.<sup>30\*</sup>

Pease and Partners actively encouraged religious and temperance work in the villages. Religion, with education, was seen as a remedy to social disorder as well as being good in itself. In his Stanley speech already cited,<sup>31</sup> J. W. Pease mentioned the prevalence of crime and drink, that there were also more chapels and attenders, more schools and better houses.<sup>32</sup> To encourage religion and temperance, Pease and Partners appointed missionaries and temperance workers to their villages, Thomas Binns and James Dack serving the Dearness group of collieries in succession from the 1870's to Dack's death in 1924. An early letter<sup>33</sup> shows that, in the 1850's at least, the Peases were concerned with the actual doctrines taught by their missionaries as well as the mundane effects of religion.\*\*

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\* Ironically J. B. Johnson's house at Saltburn is now a Christian Endeavour conference centre.

\*\* The writer had a glimpse of a Pease and Partners colliery report in which the manager said that the local labour force was "religious and industrious."

Temperance was an active interest of both Pease and Love (clearly Johnson's attitude would be ambiguous). Pease and Partners opposed the licensing of any additional public houses in their colliery villages in the Deerness Valley until 1903. In 1903 they said that the Trust Houses were a responsible enterprise, likely to encourage temperance and "might mitigate the evils of the club", and so they offered no opposition to the licence application.<sup>34</sup> It is also said by respondents, that the managers warned and then sacked habitual drunkards.

Probably the most famous temperance activity of the coal-owners (including Lord Londonderry, the Earl of Durham, the Bearpark Coal Co., Love and Pease) was the attempt to start the British Workmen's Public Houses. These would offer "all the advantages of drink taverns without the drink."<sup>35</sup> The Shakespeare British Workman was inaugurated in Durham North Road (near Joseph Love's Bethel Chapel) in March 1874.<sup>36</sup> J. W. Pease also gave his support to the campaigning for more stringent licensing laws for which the Liberals campaigned in a "positive mania" after 1872.<sup>37</sup> In 1873 he attempted also to bring certain kinds of gambling under the Vagrancy Act by introducing a Bill to this effect in Parliament.<sup>38</sup>

The Peases' other social concerns need only be listed to fill in the picture of reforming Quaker liberalism: suppression of slavery, suppression of the opium trade, the abolition of capital punishment (J. W. Pease the leader of the Parliamentary campaign), penal reform (The Howard League), the Peace Society (J. W. Pease a Vice-President), support for state education and the extension of Sunday Schools.<sup>39</sup>

Local causes also received support from Pease and Partners. For the Esh Winning Flower Show (a County event) Pease and Partners supplied the field, stands, labour and money.<sup>40</sup> The Aged Miners' Homes were opened by Miss Pease. The Esh Winning Miners' Institute (opened 1902 by Pease and Partners) was served by a circulating library run by Pease and Partners.<sup>41</sup> The Waterhouses Show, the Crook Agricultural Show, cricket grounds for

Waterhouses and Esh Winning, the Esh Winning Colliery Band, all received donations from both the company and individual Peases.<sup>42</sup> J. B. Johnson encouraged sport and while he was owner of the colliery Hamsteels fielded a highly successful rugby football team. It was said that good footballers could always find employment at Hamsteels. The village produced a number of professional footballers.

The owners did not exercise a day to day control of the mines or the villages, though both Love and Ferens were to a degree integrated into local society, the former being a local preacher, the latter a Methodist New Connexion Circuit Steward. To what extent did the managers exercise the same paternalism as the owners? At the personal level it seems impossible that they would have been appointed unless they had some sympathy for the owners' ethos. The fact that the managers all served for quite lengthy periods in the villages indicates that they probably shared much of their outlook, or came to share it. Thomas James retired as Undermanager at Waterhouses in 1928, having started in management there in 1876 and having been Undermanager in 1899. Crofton, the Manager at Esh Winning, came in 1876 and left about 1920. Ryle (who became Pease and Partners' Agent at Crook) lived in Esh Winning probably from at least the 1890's to the 1920's. Curry was Manager at Cornsay from 1899 to 1937.

Crofton kept aloof from day to day matters in the village; he rode Esh Winning on a horse, inspected the gardens and insisted on them being properly kept. He was the main supporter of the Flower Show. Once a year Pease and Partners gave a "Conversazione" in the Ballroom flat at Esh Colliery. This large flat at the bottom of the North Drift was made into a "room" with wall covering and pictures, furniture, carpets and a cradle. A concert or dance was then given for the colliery families.<sup>\*43</sup> Crofton was also an ardent supporter of the Church of England (St. Stephen's Mission, Esh Winning).<sup>44</sup>

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\* This event was powerfully symbolic of the total dependence of all present on coal.

He is alleged to have known all the older pitmen by name. Parents taught their children to touch their forelock to Mr. Crofton. He was described by one old miner as "a tough old guy - he believed in keeping miners in their place".<sup>45</sup>

Ryle was not so remote as Crofton and he played for the Esh Winning cricket team. Bone and Matthews, Undermanagers at Waterhouses and Esh Winning respectively were both active in their local Wesleyan Methodist chapels before the first world war.<sup>46</sup>

Knox, Curry's predecessor, had given tea to the Cornsay Chapel Choir and the chapel officers. This suggests that he favoured the chapel in some way, but little can be found out about this man, who was no longer manager by 1900.<sup>47</sup> Michael Curry was a member of the Methodist New Connexion and had a reserved pew in the chapel. He was also a J.P. and a Councillor on Lanchester Rural District Council.<sup>48</sup> Curry was thought to be a tyrant, being described by an 82 year old informant as "the uncrowned king of the area". He was said to have been a "bad" manager and a vindictive man. He evicted tenants if one of their sons was seeking work other than at Cornsay Colliery. An 80 year old retired miner from Cornsay Colliery recalled Curry sending a man into the pit to tell him to "be careful" what he said on colliery premises; the miner had been speaking about the Labour party to a friend while they waited to descend the pit. Few today speak well of Curry, and those who do are Methodists. The non-Methodist octogenarian informant praised the Methodists, Barren and Richardson (see Chapter VI) very highly, so religious prejudice cannot entirely explain his views. He said also that Curry never won a case against Barren on appeal to Newcastle (to the Joint Committee). Browell, Curry's Undermanager, was also a member of the Methodist New Connexion and an active Leader in the Cornsay Society.

Lowden, the Manager at Hamsteels, and his son, used to provide musical entertainment for the Methodists in the late 1870's. His predecessor,

G. Fletcher, spoke at various Wesleyan Methodist meetings in June 1875 and throughout the late 1870's, and during the 1879 Strike was said to be "much respected by the men".<sup>49</sup> The manager from about 1900, Lowden, was Chairman of Lanchester Rural District Council and a J.P. (sworn in by John Wilson). He was also Hamsteels Churchwarden.

The newspapers show that the managers exercised the owners' patronage and themselves patronised many village activities with their active participation or financial donations. They also visited the schools and Sunday Schools, sometimes addressing the children.<sup>50</sup> (Andrew Ure the "leading spokesman"<sup>51</sup> of the entrepreneurs expressed high approval of the Sunday School.<sup>52</sup>) The surviving Minute books from the various chapels show that the Methodists frequently sent deputations to the managers; for help with repairs, material, labour, donations, etc.

None of this is to say that the managers did not behave as managers. Some of the respondents already cited commented how the managers penalised men who came out-by early and blacklisted men throughout the county for either drunkenness or their political views. We have been told also that disputes arose through alleged breaches of verbal agreements in the pit and that managers tried to "blind the men with science".

Love had set various men on at Cornsay without reference to Curry. These were faithful servants who had worked elsewhere for Love. "... in Mr. Love's pits there was small chance of promotion. All the smaller official positions were filled with friends and relations of the owner".<sup>53</sup> In any dispute with the management (for example, over the allocation of colliery tenancies) these people could appeal directly to the owners, by-passing the Manager. Pease and Partners had made similar appointments at Esh Winning. These men, whilst in one sense undermining the authority of the managers were also useful to management. They tended to be bosses' men during industrial disputes. At Esh Winning in 1926 these men were amongst the leading blacklegs and were members of the Non-Political Union (see

Chapter VIII). Saddler also had a number of men whom he had engaged personally, sometimes taking their families into domestic service. He used such men, and others specially chosen as "rate-busters" when opening out new workings, so as to be able to fix a low price for the men. Informants suggest that the "rate-busters" were stupid rather than calculating. They were thought to be unreliable men and were amongst the first sacked after the 1926 dispute.<sup>54</sup>

The practice of quite generous patronage by colliery management must not, therefore, lead the observer to view the villages and industrial relations only in terms of cohesive and conflict free social relations. The managers' attitudes to the Union leaders in the nineteenth century, show that the miners did not pursue "peace at any price", and that the managers were prepared to use a variety of overt and covert tactics to resist the demands of the men. In 1891, for example, Pease and Partners locked the Esh pitmen out rather than give way to an attempted restriction of output by the Union Lodge.<sup>55\*</sup> They also, like the owners, believed in the efficacy of the market to regulate prices and discipline the men:

"The improved state of the trade, and the consequent increase of wages to the workmen have made them very independent and bad to deal with. They are worse to deal with now than they have ever been during my course of 30 years experience."<sup>57</sup>

"The men have been worse to deal with than ever this year, getting big wages makes them very independent\*\* and Pearson the Checkweighman and Miners' Secretary is a very presumptuous man and always trying to interfere with what he has no business .. I hope we have now seen the maximum of costs, and that we

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\* Given the acceptance of market beliefs by the miners, their best mode of raising wages was by restricting output and raising the price of coal. "For fifteen years by 1893 the miners' leaders had pinned their faith to this supposed solution".<sup>56</sup>

\*\* The expected response to patronage is gratitude and dependence.

may be able to effect reductions ... The hewers do not work nearly as hard as they did when wages were lower ... An effort should also be made to get rid of the old inferior men who keep down the average earnings of the hewers, and which cause the owners to have to give higher wages than they would have to do if the inferior men were got rid of."<sup>58\*</sup>

After the County strike of 1892 the men returned at a 10% reduction; at Esh Winning the men's conduct was reported as "... satisfactory ... since the strike" in December, and at Waterhouses Crofton could report,

"We have had no trouble with the workmen during the year, they all conducted themselves very well during the twelve weeks of the County strike."<sup>59</sup>

The 1892 strike was conducted with remarkably goodwill in the villages.

In the beginning in March the Durham Chronicle reports:

"The cessation of work has been in a quiet and orderly fashion. There were no outbursts, the interchange of a few friendly words between officials and men being all that was noticeable".<sup>60</sup>

The Durham County Advertiser noted that "The officials continue unmolested in looking after the plant."<sup>61</sup> The following week, Greener the Agent and Crofton the Manager gave permission for the men to take coal from the old coal tips, "which is deemed a privilege" by the men.<sup>62</sup> In April they offered to lead in coal from Stanley Drifts at a nominal price.<sup>63</sup> J. W. Pease spoke out for arbitration - which the other masters were again refusing; the Reverend McPhail gave a "sermonised address" on "Capital and Labour" and George McLane and Jonathan Stephenson (all Methodists) set about organising a Relief Committee.

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\* Men were paid relative to average drawings at the pit, a few very poor workers lowered the average substantially and thus the good workers had to be paid for being well above average. Without poor workers the average would go up and the men's wages down.

This situation in the valley had to be contrasted with what the owners expected of the Durham miners in general. Troops were moved from York to Newcastle and 25 extra policemen were sent to Durham City "to render assistance in case of need during the strike".<sup>64</sup>

The distress appears to have been quite serious in the villages of the valley.<sup>65</sup> The colliery owners contributed to its relief by helping to pay for children's breakfasts.<sup>66</sup>

The Waterhouses leadership may, in fact, have been less enthusiastically for the strike than others in the County. The Waterhouses District Executive gave a guarded statement to the Durham Chronicle on 18th March which included the statement that: "There is certainly this fact to consider, that should these collieries feel disposed toward a settlement they will be far outnumbered by their brethren in the east".<sup>67</sup> In April the Durham Chronicle reported from the Waterhouses area "The strike continues in a very orderly and quiet manner".<sup>68</sup>

In 1895 there was "... very little trouble" at Esh Winning but at Waterhouses the men were trying to push up the price by restriction of output, they were "... very strictly watched that they do not cease work before the proper time each day". In the following year the men "are always trying to get advance of hewing price". This is all normal and expected market behaviour; advances of wages in good times, reductions and unrest in poor trade, each side trying to gain maximum advantage from the market. The manager expects to wait for the market to change before he can "effect reductions" and presumably resents Pearson interfering with the market. Crofton probably epitomised what he saw as proper management attitudes when in 1895 he reported, on Ushaw Moor Colliery,

"We have not had any trouble during the year with the workmen. They have found out that we are strict and at the same time are prepared to treat the workmen honestly and fairly at all times."<sup>69</sup>

The fortunes of the coal industry in County Durham were closely related

to the iron industry.\* 1873 was a year of maximum wages, rates rising to 50% above the 1871 level. But by 1879 wages were down 10% on 1871, and emigration from Durham to the colonies increased, as it increased in all periods of economic recession. 1880 was another boom year as a result of the introduction of the Bessemer process in the iron and steel industry. The second sliding scale gave high wages at this time, and was the basis, according to Welbourne, of the leaders' faith in the sliding scale. Wages fell again in 1881, but remained steady until another peak in the early 1890's. Wages again fell and remained at about 10% above the 1879 level until the boom created by the Boer War in 1900. Wages rose to 6% above the 1872 level, declined in 1902, and advanced, but slowly from 1903 onwards. The advance was so slow as to constitute a decline in the living standards of the miners, as we suggested in Chapter II.

The cost of mining coal in South Durham was rising at the end of the nineteenth century. The easy seams were worked out; in 1907 Pease and Partners reckoned it took 911 men to raise 1,000 tons of coal in a working day, whereas in the previous decade it took only 858.\*\*<sup>71</sup> Easier seams were being opened in South Yorkshire, offering severe competition to Durham at a time when the whole coal industry was faced with diminishing profit margins. This situation became especially acute after 1921 and is reflected in the dividends paid by Pease and Partners, which fell to zero in 1927. In the coal industry as a whole labour costs were 71% of production,<sup>72</sup> therefore cutting labour costs would be the most effective way of reducing the cost of coal. In times of relative trade depression capital was not available for investment in

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\* 70% of Pease and Partners total output was used for iron-making in 1908.<sup>70</sup>

\*\* This section relies heavily on J. Grant's unpublished paper "The Relation between Labour and Capital [in Pease and Partners] 1828-1947".

machinery to raise the productivity of labour. Thus wages had to be cut, according to the owners.

Give and take in the face of the vicissitudes of the market may have been acceptable in the relatively prosperous year at the end of the nineteenth century. The 1870's indicate this clearly; in 1871-72 the owners readily concede increase in prices to the men, as the price of coal rises in the market. The men, in turn, in 1879 onwards agree to reductions in the wages as the coal price falls (they do not concede that this should be done unilaterally, only by negotiation). It was the continued insistence that the miners should take a cut in their living standards that led to the erosion of paternalism from the beginning of the twentieth century. Paternalism may bring its own rewards, but it was not cheap in itself; with the decline of profit-margins the owners could no longer afford the previous patronage. Yet the owners continued to apply the principle of the 1870's to the 1900's in spite of the greater intensity of trade depression, and insisted that it was only reasonable for the men to take wage cuts. Clearly there was going to be an absolute limit below which the men would not and could not accept cuts.

We are going to argue that paternalism and its complementary attitudes amongst the working men persisted in the valley until the 1920's. The old community leadership, young men in the 1870's, established leaders in the 1890's, had their adult social, economic and political consciousness formed by the social relations of 1870-1900. But the leadership that was to replace them was young in the 1900's and it replaced them in the 1920's, having fought first the Trade Union leaders and then the owners on the basis of an understanding of economics based on the experiences of the 1900's onwards.

Pease and Partners also underwent structural changes. They became a limited liability company, answerable to shareholders in 1898.\* They ran

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\* Ferens and Love remained a private company until it closed.

into very severe economic difficulties five years later.<sup>73</sup> Within the coal trade more militant attitudes amongst the men were replacing the older more conciliatory attitudes. A. F. Pease, Chairman of Pease and Partners, noted this in 1907 referring to "... some of the younger and keener spirits who think ... that they have only to take up a bolder position to substantially raise the relationship between wages and prices".<sup>74</sup> By 1908 he could comment, however, that "We have so far arranged amicably with our men to reduce wages practically in proportion to the scale at which they were put up as prices went up ...".<sup>75</sup>

The attitude of the Peases may also have lost some of its religious and ethical rigour. Joseph Whitwell Pease lived as a country gentleman and adopted a baronetcy. His son Joseph Albert was created first Lord Gainford in 1917 and held important government posts (unlike his grandfather Joseph Pease who had an "inconspicuous career"<sup>76</sup> in the Commons). Joseph Albert's son, the present Lord Gainford was educated at Eton and served in both World Wars, having ceased to be a Quaker. Faith, the first Baron's daughter married into the Beaumont family. The Beaumonts of Allendale made their fortune through the London Lead Company which mined lead in Weardale. Faith's son is the present Lord Beaumont of Whitley who was Chairman of the Liberal party from 1967 to 1968. The grandsons of old Joseph Pease (1799-1872) held between them, in the male line alone, three baronetcies and a peerage.\*

Various Peases may appear in our story as the managers and directors of a public company, but they were becoming part of what we know as the establishment. The four titles, Eton and the Lovats Scouts are a far cry from the life of the first Quaker M.P. who affirmed rather than swear an oath on taking his seat (wearing a brown suit) in Parliament.

The hardening managerial attitudes at the beginning of this century can be seen in 1907 and 1909 when Pease gave warnings of conflicts to come and

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\* The baronetcies of Hummersknott, Daryngton, and Hutton, Lowcross and Pinchinthorpe

showed signs of a hardening of attitude to the Unions, as the Unions in turn resisted wage reduction. Pease insisted on arbitration, he would "firmly resist" attempts

"to enforce an advance by ... unconstitutional methods" [the strike] "... looking not only at our mere selfish interests as colliery and mine owners, but having regard to the general interests of the country, we must put our foot down if there is an organised attempt on the part of the miners of the country to place themselves in a privileged position ... and that cost what it may we must see the matter through".<sup>77</sup>

In other words, at all costs, the miners must accept wage reductions. The Durham coal owners were reluctant to effect the amalgamations through which they could have increased efficiency and reduced costs.<sup>78</sup>

The nineteenth century attitude persisted however. As late as 1917

A. F. Pease said to the shareholders,

"... every worker should become a capitalist and every capitalist a worker ... there must be co-operation between employer and employed ... the employer must take trouble to look after the general interests of his workmen and the workman must make it part of his duties to look after the interests of the employer."<sup>79</sup>

These are almost the same words as used by the ex-preacher Pyle, when addressing a strike rally in the valley in 1879, and J. W. Pease in his Stanley speech.<sup>80</sup>

Nonetheless we are observing at the turn of the century a change in managerial ideology. Bendix<sup>81</sup> developed the idea that at the turn of the eighteenth/nineteenth centuries entrepreneurs moved away from personalistic and paternal control of their workers towards more impersonal and calculative control. In this latter circumstance they "tended to regard the workers as factors of production, whose cost could be calculated."<sup>82</sup> The Peases and Love seem to have carried paternalistic beliefs into the late nineteenth century, and the change in ideology comes a century later than the change discussed by Bendix. Certainly our quotations indicate that the Pease

ownership was passing through a transitional stage of managerial ideology.

From 1921 onwards the company's annual general meeting is repeatedly reminded of the men's responsibility in maintaining profitability.

Sir A. F. Pease commented on the unreasonableness of the men in 1923,

"I can not understand the great reluctance of the men to work slightly longer hours which would inevitably increase the rate of wages ... I can not see why they object so much to working an extra half-hour when they have nothing particular to do with the time."<sup>83</sup>

The men were developing a different view. The new outlook, promoted by the growing Independent Labour Party, was that men were entitled to a living wage. There seemed to be no end to the sacrifices they were asked to make. They could not accept that their standard of living had to be cut to such an absolutely low level in order to maintain profitability. They were prepared to resist the operation of the market to keep their standard of living up. A political dimension was added to industrial relations that was alien to both owners and traditional unionists in the Deerness Valley. But the course of events in the Valley was increasingly out of the local control of both owners and men as the century progressed.

The coal industry was becoming increasingly a matter for government interest, as evidenced by the reports of the Sankey and Samuel Commissions of 1919 and 1925 respectively. The government, as we shall see below, was also willing to align itself with the coal owners against the miners. To meet this the miners needed to adopt a national policy and achieve national unity. Furthermore to overcome the owners and the government, they needed the support of other trade unions. The outcome of such conflicts depended on considerations of interest, power and political beliefs that transcended the interests and beliefs of most Durham villagers. We will argue below nevertheless that the sudden change in relations between labour and capital in the Valley in 1921 and 1926 had profound consequences for the miners' leaders, most of whom were products of the paternalistic era.

Just as the men attempted to use their political power to resist wage reductions, so the owners were prepared to intervene politically to assert their interests. The outcome of the 1926 dispute was the reaffirmation of the principle that miners were to have their wages reduced during periods of poor trade. The violence with which this principle was re-established, with police on the streets and poverty in every mining home, destroyed the credibility of the spirit of paternalism of which the principle was very much a part.

The owners were behaving quite logically given the existence of private enterprise in coal and a market economy. Developments through the century, culminating in 1926, thus occurred with a certain inevitability. The only option open to the miners in this situation was to challenge the adequacy of private enterprise and the market.

We are arguing that Pease and Partners pursued paternalist policies throughout. They maintained also a consistent political and economic outlook and attitude to trade unionism. It was possible to put these attitudes into practice in a period of relative prosperity, or when there were prospects of trade improvement. Compromise and arbitration, the processes of bargaining, could operate in this situation. The reciprocity implicit in such procedures could be reinforced by patronage in the villages. When trade declined severely and continuously with no prospect of improvement, the burden of maintaining the relationship became unbearable to the men. They reacted with collective, political power; this not only breached the reciprocal relationship but spelt economic suicide to the owners (and liberal economists) - who in turn responded politically and with greater force. Punitive measures after the owners' victory were almost inevitable, and as J. W. Pease had predicted, a complete victory for the masters was a disaster. The management offered no semblance of paternalism in their relations with the villagers after the events of 1926.

Footnotes to Chapter III

Throughout the footnotes the abbreviation DC is used for the Durham Chronicle and DCA for the Durham County Advertizer.

1. Garside, W.R., The Durham Miners, 1919-1960, pp. 55 and 58
2. Tylecote, M., The Mechanics Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire before 1851, Chapter II
3. J. Austin, quoted in Ibid., p. 45
4. Loc. cit., see also Kelly, T., George Birkbeck, pp. 212-216 and 236
5. DC 24.11.71
6. Welbourne, E., The Miners' Unions of Northumberland and Durham, pp. 79-80
7. DC 15.1.75
8. See also DC 29.6.77
9. DC 10.11.76
10. DC 2.6.79
11. Welbourne, Chapter XIII
12. Bendix, op. cit., pp. 112-113, n210
13. Ure, A., The Philosophy of Manufactures, pp. 416 ff and 428  
Bendix, R., Work and Authority in Industry, p. 93
14. Ibid., pp. 109-116
15. DC 27.10.71
16. DC 3.11.71
17. DC 26.6.74
18. See, for examples: DC 3.2.71, 21.7.71, 22.9.71, 15.12.71, 7.6.72,  
27.9.72, 27.12.72
19. Welbourne, op. cit., p. 116. See also Fynes, The Miners of Northumberland and Durham, Chapter XL
20. Welbourne, Ibid., pp. 118, 121
21. Loc. cit.
22. DC 5.3.75

23. DC 2.4.75
24. DC 21.12.77
25. DC 10.5.1901
26. DC 3.11.71
27. DC 22.9.71
28. DC 7.9.1900
29. DC 24.3.76
30. DC 1.6.68
31. DC 15.1.75
32. Ure, Ibid., pp. 354-355, 408-410
33. Durham County Record Office: D/40/c52/89
34. DC 20.2.03
35. DC 24.2.74
36. DC 13.3.74
37. Longmate, N., The Waterdrinkers, p. 232
38. DC 11.4.73
39. DC 15.4.70, 19.3.75, 7.6.78, 26.6.03
40. For similar examples from Derbyshire, see Williams, J.E., The Derbyshire Miners, pp. 464 et seq
41. Post Office Directory, 1902
42. DC 3.6.70, 1.12.71, 17.11.11
43. DC 5.4.04
44. DC 14.2.02
45. Interviews: 6.7.1966, 15.10.66, 21.7.67, 8.11.68
46. Interviews: 2.8.68, 5.8.68
47. DC 10.12.75
48. DC 18.3.04
49. DC 20.10.76, 15.6.77, 21.3.79, 11.4.79
50. For example, DC 5.9.12
51. Peel, J.D.Y., Herbert Spencer, p. 203

52. Ure, op. cit., pp. 408-410
53. Welbourne, op. cit., p. 119
54. Interviews: 2.3.69, 25.7.69, 26.7.69
55. Welbourne, op. cit., p. 265
56. Page Arnot, The Miners, 1880-1910, p. 223
57. Manager's Report from the Deerness Valley to Pease and Partners for the year ending 31st December 1890 (Manager: J.G. Crofton)
58. Report, 1891
59. Report, 1892
60. DC 18.3.92
61. DCA 25.3.92
62. DCA 25.3.92
63. DCA 25.3.92, 8.4.92
64. DCA 1.4.92
65. DCA 22.4.92, 6.5.92, 13.5.92
66. DCA 20.5.92
67. DC 18.3.92
68. DC 1.4.92, 15.4.92, 22.4.92
69. Reports, 1895, 1896
70. Report of Proceedings at the Ordinary General Meeting of Shareholders, 1908
71. Report of Proceedings ..., 1907
72. Court, Coal, p. 12
73. DC 26.12.02, 29.5.03
74. Reports of Proceedings..., 1907
75. Ibid., 1908
76. Isichei, E., Victorian Quakers, p. 196
77. Report of Proceedings..., 1907
78. Garside, op. cit., pp. 52-54
79. Report of Proceedings..., 1917. See also Bendix, op. cit., p. 109

80. See Chapter V and above
81. Bendix, op. cit., p. 57
82. Loc. cit.
83. Report of Proceedings..., 1923

CHAPTER IV

VILLAGE METHODISM I

BELIEFS

"Religion" can not be defined adequately in terms of a single factor of belief, there are also, for example, ritual, theology and subjective experiences. These are all religious phenomena, but none of them alone is religion as a whole. They may be parts of the whole life of the religious man, integrated more or less coherently in his mind or in his actions. Yet such religious phenomena are clearly separable for analytic purposes. Different elements of religion (doctrine, worship, ritual etc.) are differentially related to what Nadel has called the "competances" of religion.<sup>1</sup> Doctrines may provide us with explanations of the cosmos, moral values or economic ethics. Worship may function to unite and sustain a congregation as a part or the whole of a wider social order. Ritual may recreate or symbolise the deepest subjective experiences of religion. In attempting to discover the competances, or more accurately, the effects of Methodism in our villages we will adopt the relatively elementary procedure of Glock and Stark, who designated "dimensions" of religious commitment.<sup>2</sup>

According to Glock and Stark religion has an experiential aspect; the believer may have had a sense of the presence of God, and/or he may have had an experience of conversion. At a certain time, in a particular place, like John Wesley he "felt his heart strangely warmed". Secondly a believer may have more or less knowledge of theology, of the history and doctrine of his church; this we will call the intellectual aspect of belief. Thirdly the believer may accept (or derive from his theology) certain ideological notions, concerning work, money, sex, the sabbath, etc. Believers may individually or collectively express their faith through ritual; prayer, singing, recurrent festivals, etc., this is the ritualistic aspect of religion. Finally all of these have effects on the believer's life in

general and on some aspects more effect than on others. Some will be intended and others unintended, but we will categorise these together as consequential aspects of religion.

In studying a concrete historical manifestation of Methodism we face a number of immediate problems. Firstly we can not directly examine the minds of the Methodist-in-the-pew by question and answer, nor can we know his subjective religious interpretations of everyday life. It is doubtful whether anyone would in fact have such interpretations in the form of a theological commentary on every event around him. Religious interpretations of the world are likely to be partial, not necessarily coherent and, to some extent inaccessible to the researcher. For the early period (1870-1930) we have to rely almost entirely on written sources; these sources may not be typical (typically written sources do not even survive in working class communities). It may be that no sermon, address, or comment is typical in the sense of average, so too much concern with this problem may be misplaced. For the later period we can augment written sources with material gathered in interviews with preachers and members of congregations. Contemporary preaching can be reported at first hand although discussion of this is largely omitted from this chapter.

Secondly traditional Christian belief is not unmixed with what Martin's "subterranean theology".<sup>3</sup> The prevalence of (conventionally) "superstitious" beliefs about baptisms is well established for the mining villages of County Durham. Belief in luck, fortune, is common amongst men in hazardous occupations and even those who "don't really believe in it" might keep the observances "just in case". Thus we might find a Methodist holding beliefs incompatible with conventional Christian theology. Such beliefs are unlikely to be recorded as they will not feature in sermons, nor will they be recounted by respondents talking about "religion".

Thirdly, we can not assume a priori that the beliefs of Methodists are related to specifically Methodist theological formulations of belief.

Methodism had an early beginning in County Durham and the north east. John Wesley preached at Durham to "a quiet, stupid congregation"<sup>4</sup> in April 1752 and three years later had a fire hose turned on him in Barnard Castle. Wesley's strongest criticisms are directed against the people of Newcastle, "...so much drunkenness, cursing and swearing (even from the mouths of little children) do I never remember to have seen and heard before, in so small a compass of time".<sup>5</sup> He discovered the appalling conditions of the collieries around Newcastle, and faced some turbulent crowds there.<sup>6</sup> Such occasions were not without their humorous side, as when in 1743 the seats and stage collapsed during the performance of a play against Methodism.<sup>7</sup> Wesley's reception was uneven however; he developed a special affection for the colliers of Gateshead Fell. These colliers, "shame the colliers of Kingswood.... here the house will scarce contain the weekday congregation of a local preacher".<sup>8</sup>

Many of the Wesleyan Methodists in Waterhouses and Esh Winning came from Weardale, bringing their Methodism with them. The chapels in Waterhouses seem to have been sponsored by the officials of both main branches of Methodism in Crook.\* Wesley had preached in Weardale. Wesleyans in the Deerness Valley sometimes know all the spots at which he was alleged to have spoken in the dale. Wesley found conditions in Weardale much as we found them in Waterhouses in the early days of the Societies. He reports in his Journal in 1774 that the Weardale activists are young and unmarried (we might assume that they were workers migrating to the lead mines) and that, "several of these in a little time contracted an inordinate affection for each other, whereby they so grieved the Holy Spirit of God that he in great measure departed from them".<sup>10</sup>

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\* William Burnip, for example, took two years off from his leadership in Crook, whilst residing in Waterhouses. He was a key sponsor of the Wesleyan chapel.<sup>9</sup>

The descendants of these early Weardale Wesleyans came to the Deerness Valley one hundred years later as young men and women and again they contracted inordinate affections for one another. The Methodist Society provided an opportunity for young people to meet, and to find marriage partners. Nonetheless this also created a situation in which jealousy could thrive and in which opportunities were available for conduct deemed "immoral" by the Methodists. In chapter V we shall see that these were the cause of some conflict.

The Methodists brought problems with them but what beliefs did they bring? This is the subject of the present chapter but we should note those aspects of belief that are directly inherited from the traditional beliefs of Methodism. It is our contention that beliefs and practice have peculiarly local characteristics, but it is also true that what is localised is Methodism. Methodism stresses personal religious experience - it is a "felt" religion. The doctrine of perfection is uniquely Methodist, it appears as a muted theme amongst our Methodists, it is not articulated as a doctrine, but expressed in the strivings of the Methodists for a good life. Assurance is an aspect of the felt nature of Methodism, and it is an important theme today in discussing religion with Methodists in the Valley. Assurance also expresses itself in the self-assurance and self-confidence of the Methodists in the villages. The nature of this assurance will be illustrated especially clearly in our discussion of the "respectable Methodists" in chapter VI. Methodist beliefs have not remained static, we have already suggested that early Methodism was mixed with unorthodox and magical views. Such views would be largely rejected by contemporary valley Methodists. They have been exposed less to the vicissitudes of immigration, social disruption and the onslaught of evangelistic preachers than their predecessors. They have been brought up in the Sunday School and Bible Class, perhaps without a clear point of conversion. They have been exposed to years of preaching from the pulpits of sober chapels. This kind of progression from

"visionary and magical aspects of Methodism" to "restrained Biblicalism and a middle class ethic of individual attainment" has been noted as a feature of an earlier phase of Methodism by Peel.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps the most important aspect of Methodism found in the villages, belonging to the main stream of Methodist belief and practice, was its fellowship and sense of community. This is the subject of the next chapter. Our study of the villages will underline Peel's judgement that, "The crucial feature of Methodism was not the politics of its leaders or members but, jointly, its fellowship and its promise of assurance, which had such an appeal, and such an effect on the personality, for men who were undergoing the great anxieties of the Industrial Revolution."<sup>12</sup> The anxieties with which we will be concerned, however, arise from the foundation of new industrial communities by immigrants and subsequent disruptive changes in the nature of the industry which brought them together.

A "felt" religion, a main feature of which is a strong sense of community will not be articulated in clear theological formulae. Simple questioning of Methodists supplies misleading answers; thus "What are the distinctive features of Methodism?" produces answers like, "we don't drink", "we don't believe in gambling". When pressed, "but do Methodists have the same religious beliefs as other Christians?" many answered simply "Yes". When further pressed "- even the same as Roman Catholics?" many answer, "We're all the same". This is not to say that real differences were not perceived, only that they were not perceived as theological or intellectual differences.

Thus the theology of the average Methodist and adherent is intellectually unsophisticated, confused, unclear, and at times totally unformulated.\* This will perhaps have to be seen in contrast to the more carefully

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\* This may be an illustration of Probert's contention that theology did not develop in Methodism because Methodists hoped to advance by revival (rather than rational persuasion)<sup>13</sup>

articulated beliefs and ideas (intellectual and ideological) of the local preacher, Sunday School teacher and Bible Class leader. It is the ideas of these latter members that have survived to the present day.

The written sources are of three main kinds. Firstly sermon notes used by local preachers. Secondly, addresses given by speakers at special meetings such as Rallies or Sunday School teachers' meetings. Thirdly, lectures and papers written and, or, circulated for the Bible and Self-Improvement classes. Each of these types of material will have been produced for different purposes and different audiences; for example, the Self-Improvement class would contain non-Methodists whilst the Sunday School teachers would be committed Methodists.

There are two other sources. Firstly, diaries and sermon registers which give us various combinations of text, title and main points of a sermon. These have the advantage of being dated but do not contain developed arguments. Diaries give the writer's own interpretation of what was said. Secondly, we have the private letters and notes of a few individuals and the College essays of a schoolteacher who played a crucial role in one village. This latter source will be discussed in its special context.

What we have described is material likely to provide information on both intellectual and ideological aspects of Methodism, according to our use of Glock and Stark's terminology.

### Sermons

The sermon registers, diaries and sermons notes together give a general indication of the parts of the Bible used in preaching, and the themes of sermons.

An examination of the texts of 435 sermons preached between 1874 and 1923 shows that 290, or two-thirds, were taken from the New Testament. The Gospels of Matthew, Luke and John accounting for over a half of these New

Testament texts.\* Eight books of the Old Testament accounted for over three-quarters of all the Old Testament texts; Psalms and Isaiah constituting a little under half (43%) of all of them. The popular Psalms were 23 (The Lord is My Shepherd) and 84 (How lovely is thy dwelling place, Oh Lord of Hosts).

In the Gospels, John Chapter 3 is by far the most popular chapter; its theme is Regeneration, conveyed through the story of Nicodemus' visit to Jesus. It is mentioned eleven times as a sermon text.\*\* Cited five times or more are the following: Matthew Chapters 6, 11, 25; Mark Chapter 10; Luke Chapters 2, 10, 15. These chapters deal with Judgement and salvation, the parables of the talents and the good Samaritan, and the nature of Jesus. Matthew 6 includes the Lord's Prayer and the words of comfort in the Sermon on the Mount. Sermons based on these topics would thus cover the core Christian teachings on Jesus, on salvation and conduct in the world. From the stories alone, however, we can not tell how the topics were covered.

Of 30 sermons preached in 1968-69, 10 were from the Old Testament, 20 from the New Testament, of which 14 were from the Gospels. None of the 14 broke new ground in as much as they were all based on texts taken from Chapters appearing in the 1874-1923 analysis. In terms of simple statistical distribution there seems to have been little shift in the location of texts.

Perhaps this type of analysis tells us very little beyond the stories in the preachers' favourite chapters of the Bible. It may indicate that the

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\* It has been suggested in a personal communication that the (obviously) neglected Mark deals with problems of disbelief and is thus a "difficult" Gospel, unlikely to feature in lay preaching of the period.

\*\*Any one sermon would be preached at least once in every chapel in the circuit - and repeated in the circuit or elsewhere, by request.

main corpus of Christian teaching can be derived from a few chapters of the Bible. Any regular attender at Methodist services or study groups will appreciate the breadth of topics which can be discussed under any text. Nevertheless certain themes are usually developed on particular texts. Not all the subjects preached have survived with their texts, but examples include:

John 3	:	Regeneration; The Incarnation; The Cross (necessary for Salvation)
Matthew 6	:	The Kingdom of God; Success in Life
Matthew 25	:	Man's Moral Probation, Judgement and Punishment
Mark 10	:	The Cross; Eternal Life; Opportunity
Luke 15	:	The Prodigal Son; Salvation, Forgiveness, The New Life, The Christina's Salvation

These are all sermons based on "well-known" chapters of the Bible which contain either striking stories or parables.

The sermon topics represent a concentration on straight forward Biblical exposition. At a glance, it is very "religious". We must therefore attempt to reconstruct the substance of the sermons. This we do from incomplete sources; the attempt will be made both chronologically and by themes. It is important to notice and explain any change of substance over time. Four themes present themselves quite plainly. They are; salvation, the sacred-secular dichotomy, asceticism (in Weber's sense) and its inner and other worldliness, and finally, direct discussions of social and political issues.

One diary records some forty sermons, thirty-one of which are preached in 1878, nine of them in January during a mission at Waterhouses. Another seven are reported for December, and then after a long gap in the diary, five sermons are reported for 1895. On 13th January, 1878, the Revd. J. D. Thompson preaching from Matthew 25: 14-30, stressed the necessity of the active use of the talents given to men by God. The faithful servants are "diligent" and "active men".<sup>14</sup> This Biblical passage might be seen as the

most explicit source of the inner-worldly ascetic spirit. Man is a steward and is required to give an account of his stewardship on the Last Day.

This theme is submerged in the evangelistic preaching of the mission beginning on 21st January. Revd. R. Hind\* begins with four sermons on John 3. His stress is on seeking a change of heart, not an outward change only but a change in inner principles which leads to a new life.<sup>15</sup> A student from the Sunderland Bible Institute preaching on Psalm 19: 40 draws attention to the need for divine mercy.<sup>16</sup> He is followed on subsequent days by Hind who says that whoever believes in Christ's death shall have eternal life through faith; that death, the last enemy of man, is conquered; that salvation delivers us from Hell and that eternal death is the result of unbelief.<sup>17</sup> Two weeks later he preaches on Exodus 24: 18 saying that Revelation will not deliver us from "the present difficulties", something more is required.<sup>18</sup> Next he preaches on Doubting Thomas. The lessons of the mission are underlined by Revd. J. Fenwick who in March reminds the congregation that Christ is their hope for the Glory of Heaven and that those whose names are not in the Book of Life shall be cast into the lake of fire.<sup>19</sup>

Very little analysis is needed to explicate this virtually self-explanatory preaching. It offers simple alternatives of life and death, belief and unbelief, a way of salvation through Jesus. It is a type of preaching common to all "conversionist" sects in their period of evangelical activity.<sup>20</sup> The diary indicates that this sort of preaching continued at least until the end of the year, when the record ceases. Other records indicate that evangelism of this kind continues into the opening years of this century.<sup>21</sup>

Evangelical preaching stresses the difference between the saved and the unsaved. The related and wider theme of the sacred-secular dichotomy is

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\* J. Ritson's history, The Romance of Primitive Methodism is dedicated to Robert Hind. Hind served in Waterhouses from 1875 to 1878.

rather muted. But a sermon in April, 1878, points out that Christians, like sheep, are in a small flock; they are defenceless, harmless, clean and useful, they know the voice of the shepherd. In the evening the same preacher preaches of those who are prisoners of sin (preaching to the saved - not the prisoners - in this context).<sup>22</sup> The following week they are told that Heaven is a secure, beautiful and permanent place<sup>23</sup> - by implication more secure, beautiful and permanent than "the world". This world is only a stage in human existence; clearly world-acceptance on these terms might be thought to be conditional only.

Seventeen years later Revd. Peter MacPhail draws the sacred-secular distinction very sharply in a sermon on Leviticus 20: 7. The church and the theatre are built of the same bricks and mortar he says, but one is dedicated to God, the other to profanity. He notes the decline of "personal holiness", that there are not so many holy men as fifty years ago - nor, he says, was there any Higher Criticism.\* He goes on to argue that intellectuality and holiness are antithetical. In the evening he accuses Carlyle of setting the fashion in criticism,<sup>24</sup> - a lecturer visiting the district in January had spoken on Carlyle.<sup>25</sup> An undated sermon of 1895, on Galatians 4: 18, also stressed the sacred-secular dichotomy and the diarist's notes finish with the comment that the preacher said Christians should feed the hungry, clothe the naked and "other secular things".<sup>26</sup>

This last comment hints at man's call to service in the world, however profane and temporary the world may be. This is the theme of the first sermon cited above, on the talents. In December, 1878, the Revd. J. Ritson is telling the Waterhouses Primitive Methodists that man is sent into the world for a limited time for definite work.<sup>27</sup> The diarist himself has

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\* The discussion of the Higher Criticism makes an early entry in public discussion. The full force was to be felt in 1907 with the publication of J. R. Campbell's The New Theology

comments to make on this theme, but in another context which we will see below.

Westgarth Adamson was well-known as a local preacher and many of his sermons have survived. None are dated, although a few can be dated by references to contemporary events. He began preaching at the end of the nineteenth century. Being a political militant, as a result of mentioning "political" topics from the pulpit during or after the first World War, he was not invited to preach in certain chapels.<sup>28</sup> Adamson died in the 1960's.\*

Adamson had no doubts as to the distinction between the sacred and the secular, nor concerning the temporary nature of this life. In a sermon entitled "Strangers and Pilgrims" he says that we are all strangers away from our true home, but pilgrims, with a purpose.<sup>30</sup> According to Adamson, example and action are both required of a Christian. In a sermon on "The Shadows we Cast" he discusses good and evil influences and the example we set the young. He notes parenthetically that pornographers will have much to answer for on Judgment Day. In another sermon, a paean to motherhood, he attacks neglectful mothers, citing nightclubs, dancing, Sabbath-breaking and divorce as activities causing neglect. In "Serving our Generation" he says that displaying certain qualities of character is in itself a form of service and in a sermon on "The Value of Ordinary Lives" he points to "... the ministry of your daily toil". In pursuing their service or their daily toil Christians turn up in unexpected places and are often put in difficult environments, but they can always rise above it - according to the argument of Adamson's sermon on the text "the Saints (of Caesar's household) Salute You". The meaning of this is most sharply pointed in another sermon in which Adamson cites the heroism of those who make a sacrificial stand against

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\* Harvey, the Derbyshire miners' leader seems to have adopted an approach to preaching that was very similar to Adamson's.<sup>29</sup>

public opinion or the majority. Religion, he says, has become fashionable, but not Christianity. Jesus says break with the religious traditions.<sup>31</sup>

The stress on Christian activism within the conditionally accepted world is epitomised in an Adamson sermon which is a general plea for practical rather than theoretical Christianity: "A drop of blood is worth more than a vat of ink", "Let us not waste our lives in opinions, discussions, etc.... We must grasp the sword and fight; handle the trowel, etc."<sup>32</sup>

For Adamson "handling the trowel" must be taken almost literally. "If we are to share the mind of Christ we must have a divine discontent with things as they are. We must be unhappy until all the slums are abolished and all back to back hovels removed".<sup>33</sup> In this sermon (on Jesus weeping over Jerusalem) whilst speaking of creating a better physical environment Adamson also adds "Think of the Drinking and Gambling, etc., Sorrow" and "The church must lead in social reform".<sup>34</sup> These latter comments leave us unsure whether it is individual reform that should be sought, ultimately.

This ambiguity has been cited as historically central to Methodism by H. Richard Niebuhr (see Chapter I). Adamson, having made a "political" point, may have felt it necessary to "balance" this with a comment about individual sin. Adamson cast himself, in part, as the Christian heroes cited above, or like Micaiah "A man not afraid to speak out, even against the king's religious officials. We need such men today in Parliament and the press, etc."<sup>35</sup>

Adamson's preaching is especially interesting as he was a man who developed his arguments to the limits of acceptability in a Methodist pulpit. Adamson's son said of his father and friends;

"... they worked to improve the local area. They suffered for their belief in a God who loved all men. They battled against a capitalist system where the main object was profit irrespective of who died and suffered. I hated capitalism from the day I first went down the pit."<sup>36</sup>

Whilst social matters were mentioned from the pulpit it would seem from the sermon titles and the few notes we have that the sort of "political" comments quoted from Adamson, were fairly rare. Adamson made himself unpopular among Methodists without saying much more than we have quoted here. More typical of social comment would be the Temperance sermon preached by John Harrison (a radical Liberal of the previous generation). Harrison actually only mentions drink once; his text in Proverbs 4: 23, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (sic).<sup>37</sup> He says; "The keeping of the heart, a moral duty enjoined on all by God. 1. It is the greatest of all duties because it appertains to the concerns of man's highest nature. 2. It is a constant duty dimonding perpetual attention theretoo". (sic) Drink, he says, destroys: "it is one of the powers and influences that the heart must be kept from".<sup>38</sup>

The figure of Jesus is very prominent in sermons. He is the specific subject of sermons preached by the Revd. R. Hind, Taylor and Harrison. Jesus is taken as an example to which man may aspire. In Taylor's words, we may, nourished by the word "attain to the perfect stature of man in Jesus Christ".<sup>39</sup> To Harrison, Jesus is an example of, among other things, the perfect man, what humanity can be like.<sup>40</sup> Two points should be noted about this Christological preaching. Firstly it ignores any doctrine of the depravity of man. Secondly, it is the nearest we find to any specific articulation of a doctrine of Perfection. Man is not utterly depraved, nor predestined to salvation or damnation, rather he could and should strive after Christ-like perfection.

A reading of sermon titles only, from registers, suggests that preachers kept themselves very much to the themes of sin and salvation, personal regeneration, problems of the individual and church relating themselves to "the world", man's call to active service through example and stewardship during his time on earth. But preaching was not totally

unaffected by world events: a very sharp illustration of this can be given by comparing the first page of William Foster's sermon register (October-November 1897) with the fourteenth (August 1918 - May 1919); the 1897 pages mention five sermons:-

- (1) St. Matthew 6:33 ("... seek first his kingdom ..."); subject "Success in Life".
- (2) 1 Chronicles 29:5 subject "Consecration".
- (3) John 13:13-14 "Washing ... feet".
- (4) Acts 5:4 (Ananias' sin) "The Enormity of Sin".
- (5) Mark 10:17-31 (the rich young man, etc.) "Opportunity".

The 1918 page has seven sermons:-

- (1) Matthew 13:7 "The World's Woes".
- (2) Mark 8:36 ("... what does it profit a man ...") "Profit and Loss".
- (3) No text: Decision Day
- (4) No text: Reconstruction of the Church
- (5) No text: A League of Nations
- (6) Hebrews 11:4 (discourse on faith in Jewish History) "Faith a Soul Force".
- (7) John 8:32 ("and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free") "Freedom through the Truth".<sup>41</sup>

The war was plainly influencing the thinking behind Foster's preaching.

We can not know how effective sermons were in imparting doctrine or ethics. Some preachers were uninspiring, "putting their nose down" and reading their sermons straight from notes. Even William Foster who seems to have interesting titles is reported to have been one of the most boring preachers in the Circuit - this being a comment on style, not content. Recent interviews with older Methodists suggest that to them at least, the most memorable results were conversions through the preaching of a few charismatic preachers (none of whose sermons have survived). Converts gave

up drinking and became "good living men".<sup>42</sup> Harrison in "An Account of his Life"<sup>43</sup> writes how after receiving his first class ticket he went with a group of boys to the woods, some lit their pipes with their tickets. Harrison heard a voice say "Separate". He ceased to associate with this group, "the majority went back into the world". "I thank God that I obeyed the heavenly voice", he added. Conversion meant not only new personal ethics but some degree of separation from "the world". Sermons offered a very this-worldly form of salvation and enjoined hearers to active service in the world. These sermons clearly belong to believers in a type of salvation religion typified by Weber as "inner-worldly ascetism".

#### Other Addresses

John Harrison (above) was an active Methodist from 1867 to about 1912. In 1880 when addressing the Primitive Methodist Local Breachers' Association on "Christian Conversation", he extended conversation to mean the whole of life. He stressed the exemplary nature of the Christian life, "A life correctly lived leads the outsiders to have a better regard and estimate of God. The roads from the manifestos,\* not merely what a man professes, but from what he has said and done, not merely in his own life and circle but in the reformation of the lives and family circles of others".<sup>44</sup>

By request Harrison addresses a public meeting in connection with the Sabbath School anniversary on 8th June 1885. He quotes Robert Raikes, with approval, on the functions of the Sunday School; "The gather(ing) in (of) the young from the world's fair on our Lord's day - to teach them cleanliness, sobriety and virtues: together to read the word of God", as a result of this "... young minds are tender, docile and pure, such as good may operate thereon". Then he discusses the example set by the Sunday School teachers.<sup>45</sup>

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\* This phrase is in the original and makes no sense to a reader. Harrison seems to mean that what is important in a man's life is, "not merely what a man professes etc."

Hayson (who recorded the 1878 mission) himself addressed the Sunday School teachers, probably in the late 1880's. He advocated not only virtue, but application: "some men fail because they do not enter upon their work or business with a determined spirit" ... "this class of people will never make headway or be successful in anything". In the face of failure, Hayson said, we must press on "we do not labour in vain in the Lord". Through failure God may be testing our mettle or aiding our spiritual development. Hayson declared that "(that) ... which ought to characterise all good men ... (is) ... determined perseverance".<sup>46</sup>

Early in 1886 Harrison addresses the Bible Class on what is, for us, a vital question: "The Relation of the Church to the World". This paper stresses the church-world dichotomy, but also the church's mission to the world. He writes of the church as the light of the world, the yeast in the lump, and of the need to spread godliness.<sup>47</sup> In 1895 Harrison again addresses the Bible Class, he reads a paper on "Man's Power and Influence on Earth", in this paper he criticises "Voltare, "Tom Pain" and "Charles Bradlaw" (sic) as being "wrong at the core" and for having led thousands to "soul ruin". In 1897 he addresses the same group on "National Villages". He cites various authorities on the state of housing, employment and wages, and his main plea is for a better environment and a more just economy.<sup>48</sup>

We can see from the papers of this one man alone that topics discussed at meetings are not entirely "religious" and certainly did not stress theological matters. This is not surprising as Bible Classes and Sunday School teachers meetings are not evangelistic events. One is, if not preaching, at least speaking, to the converted. What we see in the papers relating to these meetings is a clear development of the ideological aspects of Methodism. But the discussions develop still wider. The diaries of Joe Taylor for 1895 and 1896 demonstrate a great catholicity of discussion at the Methodist Bible Class: Garibaldi; Biblical Exposition; Hygiene;

Influence of the Bible on the Nation; Womanhood Suffrage; The Independent Labour Party; Capital Punishment - to cite the topics for the first six months of 1895 only.<sup>49</sup>

But Harrison was writing specifically as a Methodist also; his papers include very conventional, and what may have been very unilluminating discourses on Biblical topics. Remarkable throughout his work is the range of sources cited; Raikes, Samuel Smiles, Emerson, Newman and others. Nevertheless his work stresses, throughout, the church-world dichotomy and the Christian's duty of service and example.

#### Improvement Classes

The exact status of the Improvement Classes is unclear; according to Taylor they are simply improvement classes, for Harrison they are Bible Improvement Classes.<sup>50</sup> What is clear is that much general educational activity was going on in Methodist chapels and homes, at the Baptists and in the Temperance organisations. There were regular lectures, discussions, and papers were read by members. There were also socials and outings.

Harrison<sup>51</sup> said that "... an endeavour to train or cultivate the mind must be made". In concluding his paper on "The Mutual Improvement Class" he makes a statement epitomising the self-image of the inner-worldly ascetic. We are getting wisdom and understanding, he says, "for the sole purpose that we might be a blessing to our fellow men, and an instrument of good in the hands of God".<sup>52</sup>

Tom Turnbull exhorts his hearers to read good books; behind every book, work of art and tune there is a thinker. Thought is "... the ultimate secret of life, it is its fundamental factor, it lies behind speech, it governs conduct, it creates personal ty".<sup>53</sup>

Taylor's diaries can be used to expand the list of topics discussed in

the Bible Class as such.\* But the lectures he attended included: "Evolution and Creation", "A man's a man for a' that" (Chaired by John Wilson, M.P.), "Women's Work", "Phrenology" (in the Baptist Chapel), "Custom Slaves", "Christian Socialism", "Coal Dust", "Jonathan Ireland and the street preacher", "Sunshine and Shade", "Poets and Poetry" and "Monopolists or the Multitude, Which?". This list does not include the political and temperance meetings attended by Taylor; nor the weekly Bible Class at which he was a regular attender.

The wide variety of practical and theoretical, useful and ephemeral topics discussed is not perhaps, in itself, of the greatest interest. Most striking is that men subjected themselves to what constitutes a rigorous intellectual discipline; that they did "endeavour to train or cultivate the mind". This alone might be sufficient demonstration of the practical outworking of a disciplined, rational, systematic spirit in the daily lives of the Methodists. Harrison's spelling indicates that these men were not great scholars in any formal sense. They had no major public library to hand, a few would have had a rudimentary education at the colliery school, and a few books would have been available in the miners' Institute and chapels. But their "distinctive goal always remains the alert, methodical control of one's own pattern of life and behaviour".<sup>54</sup> They are Weber's inner-worldly ascetics adopting "planned procedures" for their salvation, deepening their understanding as active instruments of God in the world. This, in the terminology of Glock and Stark is a consequential dimension of believing.

### Sunday Schools

The Sunday School lessons are of the very greatest interest. Firstly because they represent the quite deliberate attempt on the part of the older

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\* We are not treating the Bible Class and Self-Improvement Class as entirely distinct from one another in content and purpose.

Methodists to impart the main aspects of their faith to the young. Secondly because a higher proportion of the children attended Sunday School than adults attended services. It is said that virtually all non-Catholic children attended Sunday School some time during their childhood, if only for a few weeks. Thus the content of the lessons will consist of the central beliefs and values of Methodism, and this particular mode of transmitting them had a potentially wider scope and greater effect than any other method.

We may examine the Sunday School activities under five headings, these are:-

1. The content of the lessons.
  2. The practical implications of the lessons as stated by the writer of the lessons.
  3. The ethical content of the lessons.
  4. The habits and attitudes inculcated in the scholars.
  5. The aptitudes learnt in Sunday School.
1. The major part of every week's lesson in the Primitive Methodist Sunday School Journal and Teachers' Magazine\* is Biblical exposition. The lessons work systematically through various sections of the Bible. Historical and archaeological background material is provided for the teachers as well as glossaries of difficult words and expressions. The intention seems to be, mainly, to explain the stories as history and then only secondarily to draw conclusions from the stories. When we examine other aspects of the lessons, below, we must always bear in mind that this historical exposition is quantitatively the single most important item in any lesson book. The

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\* This was used from time to time in the district and was read by teachers. It fairly represents typical local teaching even when not actually used. Teachers tended to use local examples drawn from their own experiences to illustrate their lessons. (referred to as S.S.J.)

object of these lessons is, nonetheless, to bring the child to salvation;

"Saved or unsaved is the question which should be uppermost in the mind of every teacher in looking round his class, whilst he resolves, in the strength of God's grace, to do what he can to bring to Christ those entrusted to his care".<sup>55</sup>

"... It is the teacher's business to introduce his scholars to Jesus, to direct them in their experiences, testimony and service, as he himself is led by the Holy Spirit. He has of course to deal with heads and habits but his first and highest work is with hearts".<sup>56</sup>

"Appeal to the scholars that the love of the suffering Saviour win their hearts as it won the penitent thief".<sup>57</sup>

2. Christian service is a topic frequently drawn from the Bible story.

In commenting on Jesus washing the disciples' feet at the Last Supper the

S.S.J. says of service: "What scope there is in human life today for the

exercise of this virtue, and what incalculable benefits would its practical observance confer on mankind".<sup>58</sup>

Later in the same lesson the writer refers to "The dignity of service to others". In reviewing the work of the second quarter of 1896 the S.S.J. notes;

"The parable of the talents reiterates this lesson of personal accountability to God for the use of the talents we possess .. ..The parable of the vine-yard gives increased emphasis to the same fact. The proprietor has a right to expect some adequate return for his outlay ... On every man there rests a responsibility, irremovable for the use of his privilege and opportunity."<sup>59</sup>

"Our talents vary ... We can not always command success, but we can deserve it by our zeal and fidelity."<sup>60</sup>

In discussing the death of David, the S.S.J. in 1896 draws the teachers' attention to David's life of service. Later in the same volume it gives a note on "Christian Service" which entails seeking the lost, "... in the back alleys and slums as well as the broad avenues and in mansions".

Service can not be fulfilled merely by going to church.

"Nothing but Christian service of the kind which has self-denial for its cornerstone, and activity for its superstructure, will save the world".<sup>61</sup>

To illustrate the notion of service, stories of Queen Margaret of Scotland were (and still are) often told in the Sunday School.

The theme of service is found in almost every lesson book. On 13th June 1926 there is one reference amongst many to rescue work. Christian service wherever it is carried out even "in the back alleys and slums", does not involve a call to political action, but a call to rescue individual sinners.

3. One field in which the Sunday School teachers were urged to advocate state action was in matters of Temperance. This is the second most important theme, after the direct exposition of Bible stories.

In March 1906 the Sunday School General Secretary comments on the General Election, "After the wilderness the Promised Land. And we have entered Canaan at last ...". Education and Temperance reform were expected. Whilst Prohibition was the ultimate aim, Sunday closing was an interim objective;

"Many a victim is asking to be protected against himself, and, what has so abundantly proved to be good for more than a quarter of a century in Scotland, Ireland, Wales and our self-governing colonies, must surely also be good for England, the loving mother of them all."\*<sup>62</sup>

The results of 1905 were partly the outcome of a sustained temperance campaign. In 1896 for example the S.S.J. called for more Temperance meetings and a pledge-signing campaign,<sup>63</sup> and sermons on 26th April and 29th November referred to drink, gambling, vice, bad temper and temperance, respectively. For 27th December there is a Temperance Address "Does Drinking bring Happiness?" In the 1916 Volume of the Journal the editor notes that Drink and Gambling are especially prevalent amongst men called into the army.

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\* Attitudes towards the Empire (and overt racialism) expressed in the Sunday School Journal would provide sufficient material for a separate study.

The Temperance Notes for May observe that lighting restrictions are severely inhibiting Band of Hope work and that Clubs will win boys to drink if the boys are not firmly grounded in temperance principles. Secondly, they also remark of Betting and Gambling "... the evil is widespread and persistent. Amongst our soldiers in camp it is dreadfully prevalent."<sup>64</sup> In fact one might conclude from the S.S.J. that the main effect of the war was on temperance work, the threat of Zeppelin raids, for example, being seen as a difficulty in Band of Hope work. The fact that wounded soldiers were not, by regulation, to be served drinks, ought to be used as an example in lessons, said the Notes in the Sunday School Journal of June 1916.

The theme survives all the political turmoil of 1912-14, 1914-18 and 1921-26 and is still alive in 1926; February, May, June bring items on heavy penalties for drunken driving, prohibition, betting and gambling and the Local Option bill. In May both Hugh Price Hughes and Bishop Westcott are quoted with approval;

"... gambling stands in precisely the same relation to stealing that duelling stands to murder ... consent of the victim and chance of being a successful criminal does not in the least degree alter the moral character of the act."<sup>65</sup>

Westcott also typifies gambling as one making a gain from another, with his consent, "adding nothing to the sum of their commonwealth".

Comment on Temperance, which exercises the S.S.J. throughout, becomes remarkably politicised. To return to 1896;

"... the traffice in strong drink is a source of wealth to many, and to be engaged in efforts the success of which is intended to diminish that wealth is only likely to stir up strife and hence an active Reformer is often a "marked man" and made the subject of much persecution ... Jesus said "I come not to send peace on earth, but a sword" and to be one of his warriors to fight His battles is surely the highest distinction conferrable on mortal man - be it ours to fight with courage and success!"<sup>66</sup>

In June 1906 the following occurs in three pages on Temperance:

"No Christian patriot can, on reflection, afford to stand idly by in supine indifference or pharisaic cynicism while the Drink Scourge, which combines in itself the evils of war, famine and pestilence put together, rolls its fiery tide of destruction o'er the land ... We are menaced by a colossal and corrupt monopoly calling itself 'the trade' whose capitalised value is estimated at £250m., in direct and daily conflict with the reform and welfare of the people."<sup>67</sup>

In discussing Paul's missionary journeys the writer of the June 25th Lesson avers that the authorities' response to the healing of the divining girl was similar to that of the brewers today. Both had vested interests.

Straight economic and political comment is rare outside the Temperance context. In 1906 the editor comments:

"There are many Christians who think the minister exceeds his duty in preaching a social gospel; that it does not come within his sphere, for example, to denounce unjust laws or the sweating of labour, or the bad housing of the people or the underfeeding of the children ... The pulpit should be concerned with the betterment of the conditions of life in this world as well as concerned with the fitting of human spirits for Heaven ..."<sup>68</sup>

But the author then goes on to discuss the two great evils of drink and Romanism, burning issues relating to the promise of reform of the Licensing Laws and to the 1902 Education Act, both consequent upon the return of the Liberal government of 1905.

Overtly "political" comment appears in 1916 and in 1926. In June 1916 an exposition on the Syrian wars includes;

"With wealth and luxury came also selfishness and cruelty, and the rich got too far away from the poor to feel their woes and sympathise with their lot. Social conditions in Israel and Judah became much what they are with us and from similar causes."<sup>69</sup>

Most striking of all is the comment on the parable of the labourers in the vineyard; "The parable may be regarded as teaching Payment according to needs rather than results" (original italics).<sup>\*70</sup>

The ethical message put across in the Sunday School was thus essentially one of personal reform, especially with respect to drinking and gambling. There are only undeveloped hints that social conditions in general might need changing. Nonetheless there is a clear call to political activity in attempting to use the state in advancing the cause of individual reform in the one area of drink.

4. Habits and attitudes to be inculcated include meekness, punctuality, exactness and thrift. Jeanie E. Walton in discussing the transformation of a four year old convert notes that:

"He became gentle and yielding and full of love, all his old sullen tempers seeming to disappear almost entirely; formerly he was one of the most obstinate and difficult of children."<sup>71</sup>

Patience is stressed in various lessons, for example, October 25th 1896 and June 1896 (à propos David waiting before he could take up his Kingship).<sup>72</sup>

Punctuality is insisted on, perhaps as much for convenience as for any moral consideration. Rules for the Internal Government of the Wesleyan Sunday Schools (n.d.) suggest a system of rewards, for good behaviour, repeating the lesson correctly, and for early attendance. In June 1906 the Primitive Methodist Sunday School General Secretary's remarks in **the S.S.J.** include praise for and description of a mechanical device to ensure accuracy in recording who was early and late at Sunday School. Diligence and exactness might be said to be clearly associated with punctuality. In the Lesson for Little Ones teachers are advised by the S.S.J. to "Illustrate

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\* This lesson also comments that vines were cultivated for "grape-juice for drinking".

from school-life, and apprenticeship, showing the value of exactness and honest effort".\*<sup>73</sup> There is also discussion of cleanliness, good habits, pure thinking, speaking the truth and not yielding to temptation.<sup>74</sup> In 1916 it is noted in a lesson on Paul's missionary journeys that whatever the mind is fed on, so will the character be. Children should avoid books, songs and jests that do harm.<sup>75</sup>

The whole structure of the lessons, thorough and systematic, suggests an expectation of exact, careful, systematic work. This is an expectation of both teachers and scholars, for both of whom examinations are a test of their progress.

Another aspect of this set of attitudes, and one closely associated with the Protestant ethic, is thrift. One good example of this is here quoted at length from the 1896 S.S.J.<sup>76</sup> in an article entitled A Sermon for Children, "How to Make a Penny Grow". After some discussion of the development of seeds planted in the ground, the sermon proceeds:

"Suppose, now, instead of spending all your pennies, you save some of them and take them to the post office and put them in the bank, you will find at the end of the year, when you come to count up your saving, a magic word written at the bottom: it is the word "Interest" ... Don't spend all your money on toys and nuts and sweets, but save some part of it. Perhaps you can not put many pennies to grow by multiplication in this way, but the great thing is not the amount you may acquire, but the formation of habits of thrift and foresight." (*italics original*)

But:

"Wesley said 'Get all you can, save all you can, give all you can'. We ought not to spend our pennies on selfish gratification, nor even to hoard all for our future use, but we ought

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\* The need for exactness at work could be well illustrated from mining experience. Doing an honest day's work is reported as a central value to many of the leading Methodists.

to use some of them for the benefit of others ... One way of doing so is to send for an African Missionary Box from the General Missionary Secretary (The Reverend J. Smith) and putting your pennies in it to grow into Bibles and Hymn books, and pay for preachers for the little black boys and girls of that dark continent." (*italics original*)

5. The Sunday School Journal saw the need to inculcate certain abilities in both teachers and pupils "... it must be taken into account that our teachers are drawn almost entirely from the working classes; that their education has been limited; their present opportunities are few, and the greater part of them are young and inexperienced".<sup>77</sup> The teachers were encouraged to use a variety of techniques in their work; for the very young there were acrostics for blackboard work at the end of the nineteenth century; by the 1920's work with sand-trays, plants and animals was being recommended. For the older children the bioscope was suggested for "bringing places to life"; by the second world war the film strip and films had replaced this. Thus the teachers were expected to be proficient in the use of technical aids to teaching.\* The preparation of lessons and for examinations was seen as enriching the mind and giving "a sound basis to character".<sup>78</sup>

Teachers were encouraged to take stock of their work from time to time so that:

"Nothing is left undone that ingenuity can devise, or enterprise accomplish. These are working principles that are always commended by men of the world, and the lessons are salutary to Sunday School teachers ..."<sup>79</sup>

Perhaps most obviously, and a factor easily overlooked, teachers were required to prepare lessons and stand in front of classes to give the lessons.

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\* In the 1960's local Sunday School teachers have commented how they can not meet all the requirements of the suggested lessons, due to the lack of modern equipment.

Public speaking, the ability to stand up to present an argument, and competence to take charge of a class, were all skills to be cultivated by Sunday School teachers.

The children also were required to speak in public. Every year at the Anniversary each child had to "say his piece" in front of a large congregation of adults. Many of the "pieces" were meaningless doggerel, some were children's religious poetry but all had to be learnt, practised and spoken in public. The children also performed plays, presented pageants and group verse-speaking at the Anniversaries. These are also activities needing careful preparation by the teachers and rehearsal by the children.

Between meetings of the Sunday School the children were expected to study the lesson and learn a text. They were gradually introduced to the Bible through simple expositions of Bible stories. The aim was to know and understand the Bible; this entailed developing a critical attitude towards it. At no point in the lessons does one find a suggestion that the Bible is literally true, word for word.

The need for some subtlety in reading the Bible is underlined in 1906 in a discussion of the Unforgiving Servant. The exposition does not stress hell-fire as one might expect, but the fact that "by his own act he [the servant] shut and bolted mercy's door against himself ...".<sup>30</sup> Another example, in 1926, is in an exposition on King David: the S.S.J. points out that one has to understand stories against a background of developing Biblical scholarship. Thus the scholars should understand that the story they were studying was written by someone who was hostile to Saul - who thus appeared in a bad light.

Teachers and scholars were also expected to have a wide vocabulary, words such as "correlative" and "plethoric" appearing in the lesson notes. In discussing two Biblical accounts of one event the lesson notes "The discrepancy is only apparent" and another says that "vicarious sacrifice is

the law of all being".

The aims of the Sunday School may be summarised in the words of an article entitled "The Teacher's Work: What Is It?".

"The instruction given in the class, like that given from the pulpit, whilst in the first instance it is presented to the mind, is intended to bear practically upon the character and the life ... The Sunday School, of all places, is one for developing noble character, forming good habits, and its value in this respect can not be overestimated. There are worse things than learning a catechism and repeating a creed, but a good life is better than either."<sup>81</sup>

The main mode of achieving this good life was through learning spiritual and ethical lessons from systematic study of the Bible.

Very little material has survived from the Deerness Valley Sunday Schools. Accounts given suggest that the Anniversaries and "demonstrations" were the highlights of the year. The lessons were based in the kind of material outlined above.

In addition to Harrison's Sunday School address already cited three undated addresses given by the Esh Winning Primitive Methodist Sunday School Superintendent have survived. One is an address on "The Lure of Strong Drink". Another is a Christian Endeavour address on "Review of the Divine Power". The speaker tells his hearers that God is all powerful, He is a God who has acted in the history of men and who will act in the future. God brings down the mighty. Whatever befalls us in life we must remember that God knows our needs and "stoops down to help us in our daily toil and care".

The third address is entitled "In the School of Christ". The theme is the analogy between school and life. Life is Christ's school. He is the teacher:

"The School of Christ is a very practical establishment. It's very nice to have the theory but theory without the practical is not of much value especially in Christ Service. We know as Miners there are Men who are well up in the theory of the

Mine but are very little use in the practical ... But Christ's teaching is to be applied in conduct and attitude from the earliest lessons ... The opportunities of the every day life are all the sphere we need for the practice of His lessons." (sic)

This is a very striking example of Methodist teaching. The stress is upon the practical aspects of faith; every day life in the world of the mine and village is the sphere in which Christianity is practised and Christ is the model of the ideal Christian.

### Discussion

Part of our problem is now more clearly stated. The Methodist regards "the world" as "other" - he is in it but not of it. He is a stranger and pilgrim, his true home is elsewhere and he is a different sort of man from the unsaved around him. The Methodist does not then seek mystical illumination, he is an active man. For some this entails no more than diligently pursuing his daily work, subjecting it and his whole life to rational norms, minimising contact with the chaotic and unsaved world. This could be the limit of the development of the notion of "service".

But we have seen a stronger development of the idea of service, of men being active instruments of the divine, here and now, in the world. In other words there is an interpretation of service entailing actual work on and in the fallen institutions of society rather than the diligent and private pursuit of an individual calling alone. Three main lines of activity would seem to be relevant to such a view, and they are not mutually exclusive lines: (1) a continuation of evangelistic activity; (2) doing "the other secular things", "feeding the hungry", saving the drunkard, helping the gambler's family and in general pursuing individual reform; (3) serving the community as a whole, which could be anything from the practice of good neighbourliness to serving as a party official or local Councillor. These two latter activities in themselves involve very different levels of

compromise with worldly political institutions; one can be a "good neighbour" without admitting the legitimacy or usefulness of political institutions; to accept political office is to accept political institutions as legitimate means for the fulfilment of God's purposes.<sup>82</sup> We might also posit a logical connection between the three lines of activity. Concern with the sins of the individual lead to a discussion of the effects of social and physical environment when individual regeneration appears insufficient for the individual's reform. Environmental and social matters lead to economics and politics and a discussion of the possibility of social reform on a wide scale. This is not to say that this is a necessary connection, nor the only possible development. But if Harrison's themes are typical, then this would appear to be one observable drift of thought and discussion, which has implications for action.

Political radicalism and then revolutionary politics might be the next logical stages, but it is important to note that this last stage would be an activity without the benefit of any of the ideas outlined above to underpin it. The world may be fallen and alien to the Methodist, one way or another it should be changed, but its order should not be overthrown.

A Methodist may logically progress from neighbour to "social worker", to social reformer, to reforming politician, to revolutionary. Where he stops is a matter for empirical investigation and sociological explanation.

The very first response listed; piety and diligence, will be the most relevant in terms of explaining the greatest number of Methodist biographies. But some Methodists, deeply imbued with the "respectability" of this position, were forced by events to grapple nonetheless with dilemmas of political action, of both a reforming and revolutionary nature.

The crux of the individual reform - social reform dilemma is epitomised in a question and answer session at the Waterhouses Primitive Methodist Young People's Institute in 1926. The young people asked "Was Christ a socialist,

and if so, in what way or ways does his socialism differ or coincide with that of Karl Marx?" The Minister opens his reply, "The direct answer to the former part of this question is Yes! Christ was a socialist, but not in the way in which the term is generally employed today". Christ was a socialist, he continues, because he sought the transformation of the social order. Christians have seen Jesus "as assuming that to whatever extent the life of society is affected by this life and teacher, it must be by influences emanating from personal centres of activity He Himself has touched".

"Christ regarded his approach to the mass to be via the individual." "He contemplated a transformed order of society, but that transformed society is to be affected by personal centres of renewal. The outward is to be transformed by the inward." In response to collectivist ideas the Minister asserts the traditional Methodist belief in personal regeneration.

He makes this point another way "... it is not my business to criticise the Marxian doctrine. It is rather to point out that it is just this materialistic interpretation of life and history that represents the great point of difference between Marx and Christ".<sup>83</sup> Man's destiny is not determined by his economic environment, he can rise above it, he can be changed within it; if he has Christian ideals and is a "centre of renewal" he can change the environment. But individual regeneration must come first.

We will analyse the consequences of this particular Methodist belief. But beliefs and action themselves change society, or the actor's perception of it, which then has further consequences for the actor and society. We will be observing the dialectical process outlined by Berger in his "Sacred Canopy".<sup>84</sup>

#### Collective Expressions

Three further points only need to be developed briefly at this stage. Firstly, we need to consider the collective expression of beliefs amongst Methodists; secondly, to underline the practical importance of the stress

on personal experiences as an integral part of the Methodist religious life; thirdly, to assess the thinking of the average Methodist if and insofar as it is different from that of the preachers and leaders we have so far considered.

The two main forms of collective expression of belief within Methodism are the singing of hymns and the offering of prayers at the prayer meeting. These are, in Glock and Stark's terms, ritualistic dimensions of religiosity; we are concerned with the content of that which is expressed ritually and collectively. Singing (and the various anniversaries of which singing formed an important part) has quite important cultural functions. It is mentioned by almost every respondent, Methodist and non-Methodist alike, as an outstanding feature of chapel activity. Every chapel had a choir, some competed successfully in choir competitions at a regional and national level. Thus the Deerness Valley earned the name "The Singing Valley".<sup>85</sup>

On Sunday the whole congregation sang, in harmony, with suitable descants by the choir. An attempt was made by the author to establish the most popular hymns at various dates; this proved abortive. The Methodists knew and sang from the whole hymn book. If a preacher chose a hymn used the previous week, the choir master would change the tune.

Whilst some hymns are rich in theology and others may be personally significant to individual Methodists, others are theologically meaningless.\* The importance of hymn-singing is not in the ideas expressed, but in the act of singing. Singing in harmony entails practice under a choir master, it required collective discipline, the cultivation of an "ear" for music and the development of accurate voice control. The Club sing-song, for example, is not marked by disciplined singing or a wide repertoire.

Paradoxically, disciplined singing may at times fulfil some of the functions of alcohol, enabling the miner "to escape temporarily from the

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\* For example Newman's "Lead Kindly Light" (M.H.B. 612) and Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar" (M.H.B. 640).

consciousness of the limitations of his way of life".<sup>86</sup> For the highly self-controlled Methodist it may be the only form of expressive activity available. The tensions and frustrations of daily life can be replaced by a sense of the sublime, a feeling that one is immersed in a collectivity which has a higher destiny. This may include the belief that "... men's circumstances in time may be reversed in eternity";<sup>87</sup> thus the Methodist miner has a foretaste of singing "with the saints in glory". But even the expressive behaviour of Methodists is disciplined.

Sacred song, cantatas and solos were popular. These entail even greater skill and training than congregational singing. Such singing enabled individuals to give virtuoso performances, as did the sermon. The entertainment value of such non-congregational singing was high in a community with few leisure facilities. But entertainment does not exhaust the social functions of singing. In Coal Is Our Life Ashton Rovers represented Ashton to other villages and the world at large. In our villages the village choirs similarly represented the villages to one another (providing occasions for exchanges of visits, especially at the competitive choir festivals and eisteddfodau) and to the outside world. Respondents also refer to the joy of singing and to the manner in which it helped to generate religious experience. The look of bliss reported on the choir-master's face as he sat down with eyes closed after the hymn arose from a mixture of spiritual fulfilment and satisfaction in a hymn well sung.

This brief discussion of singing and the suggestion that the singing is at least as important as the song underlines the importance of understanding, or attempting to understand, the form of activities and the mode of expression of beliefs.

Preaching and listening is a very rationalistic activity demanding a knowledge of the Bible, a willingness to learn, the ability to synthesise or contrast concepts and a critical attitude. Preaching and listening to

sermons is a highly disciplined activity.

Without any consideration of the content of sermons and hymns and sacred songs we could conclude that the Methodist tended to be a highly disciplined, self-controlled person, willing to train his mind in critical thinking and his voice in harmony singing. He engaged and engages in forms of intellectual activity and collective expressions which set him in very sharp contrast to the non-Methodists, who, for example, sings only in the club or pub sing-song.\*

What else may a congregation be doing when it sings hymns? It is more nearly creating the Durkheimian experience of religion than at any other time. The collective singing of hymns, especially with swelling choruses, creates a religious euphoria, induces a sense of external and constraining forces upon the individual. The more the participant observer becomes participant the more he feels that almost anything might happen when the singing is euphoric. The shared euphoria produces even more fervent singing. An evangelistic service is "softened up" early on for the evangelical appeal, which may itself be accompanied by "Last verse again", or "one more chorus".\*\* At the end of an ordinary service the congregation collectively assert their solidarity (the little flock) in song, as they prepare to disperse (into "the world"). Therefore it may matter less what hymns say than what they do to the group and the individual.

Prayer meetings followed the Sunday evening services. These died out

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\* We should, perhaps, be careful not to exaggerate this distinction. Members of other religious groups also had a collective and intellectual life. One group of non-religious miners met on non-pay Fridays in a public house to discuss what a member described as "philosophical" issues - which included the work of Max Muller. But such would not be the activities of the majority of "non-religious" miners.

\*\* This was successful enough for there to be reports of converts leaping over the pews to "come to the front".

after the second World War and it has not been possible to observe or participate in such meetings. Written records do not exist. From accounts given it seems that the prayer meetings of the 1870's and 1880's matched the evangelical services in their fervour. In the atmosphere of revival and conversion, the singing, preaching and calls to be saved, enormous psychological tensions must have built up within the participants. For some, release would be found in coming forward to be saved. For others, including those known to be saved already, the prayer meeting would have provided an outlet for the tensions. There are no accounts of speaking with tongues as such, but some men are reported to have prayed incomprehensibly or in near-gibberish. This respondents refer to as the "old ranting style" of prayer meeting. This style can be remembered and respondents say that from the streets you could hear them "hammering on the pews". We find little evidence<sup>of</sup> conversionist meetings of any kind after the earliest years of this century, a finding replicating Pickering's Yorkshire findings.<sup>38</sup> Ranting prayer meetings are recalled from the 1920's, but they were invariably led by men in their seventies. It would seem that the same men led from the early days virtually until the prayer meetings died out. The meetings of the 1920-1940 period took a stereotyped form with stylised prayers led by the same people every week. Certain men were expected, and themselves expected to lead, others were expected to pray at some stage of the meeting, everyone knew what they were going to say, and prompted them if necessary.<sup>39</sup> The congregation were expected to stay for the meeting but it is uncertain how many did stay. The prayer meeting as a vital expression of religion was probably a phenomenon confined to the early days of the movement in the villages. The meetings could have become a collective expression of the identity of the chapel élite. Without further evidence it is not possible to draw such a conclusion. Parenthetically we may note that the prayer meeting was used as an evangelistic technique; Methodists

would ask non-members if additional week-night meetings could be held in their homes.<sup>90</sup>

The Class Meeting connects collective expressions with personal experience. The Class was an "experience meeting" at which members were expected to be able to give account of their conversion and growth in the Christian life, and to recount experiences. The important point for us is not that the Class stressed experience, but giving an account of it.<sup>91</sup> The young class member would prepare for his first testimony before a small group of acquaintances. Subsequently he (and the other members) would live from day to day in the consciousness of the need to account for their daily lives, the use of their talents, etc., not only to God on the Last Day, but to the Class every week. The Class is thus potentially the lynchpin of a disciplined and planned life, lived in a rational accounting spirit. It is precisely at this crucial point of the analysis that our data is most sparse. In fact we have no records of prayer meetings at all, save a few very subjective accounts of later meetings in the 1920's.

### Conclusions

However well-argued, the theological content of sermons does not seem to have engraved itself deeply in the minds of the hearers, certainly not at an intellectual level. Irrespective of the precise content, the simple evangelical preaching with converts coming forward at the end of the service seems to have offered most satisfaction to the Methodist.

"They used to preach the Gospel - but not now, anything that comes into their heads. They used to stick to scriptures, expounding Bible passages, very evangelical. But now you get politics and so on, never hear of any converts."<sup>92</sup>

"Preaching used to be blood and thunder. The pure Gospel; there have been vast changes in the post-war (1939-45) years. We didn't have much Wesleyan theology; too much now, since Union it's been John Wesley at every verse end."<sup>93</sup>

The main significances of being converted, of being a Christian, was for

the Methodist what Glock and Stark would call the consequential aspects. It was the pattern of ethical behaviour which defined a man's religion to his neighbours. A pattern of life in which the pivotal ethical issues were drink, gambling, thrift and sabbatarianism. These will be considered in Chapter VI.

We may summarise the discussion so far by saying;

- 1) Methodism was an evangelistic religion offering the simple alternatives of eternal life or eternal death. These were plainly represented in this life in the distinction between the upright man and the indebted drunkard.
- 2) According to Methodists no man was so depraved as to be beyond salvation. All could, and should, strive for Christlike perfection.
- 3) For the average Methodist the faith was simple. He was relatively un-theological in his thinking. Religion was something seen essentially in terms of the effects on individual lives.
- 4) Thus religion was practical, this-worldly, calling for self-discipline and service, by men and women imbued with a sense of duty and a calling from God.
- 5) Orderliness and discipline were maintained and reinforced by the Class meeting, and were expressed in the very activities of hearing sermons and singing hymns.
- 6) Thus village Methodism conforms to Weber's ideal type, inner-worldly asceticism.
- 7) Methodists saw the main social issues as the evils of gambling, drink and debt - personal failings. Therefore they sought individual regeneration and beyond this, social reform. Their social analysis was, ultimately, individualistic.
- 8) For some Methodists at least a greater understanding of the world was necessary. They subjected themselves to a more rigorous and more

intellectual discipline in the Bible and Self-Improvement Class.

For these men simple theology was augmented by economics, philosophy, politics, etc., in order to widen their understanding of man, God and society.

These eight conclusions also indicate the expectations we might reasonably have of Methodist life and behaviour in the villages. In Chapter VI we will begin to test these expectations against Methodist biographies and then against Methodist history in subsequent chapters.

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## CHAPTER V

### VILLAGE METHODISM II

#### THE STRUCTURE OF THE METHODIST SOCIETIES IN THE DEERNESS VALLEY

##### Introduction

The church-sect dichotomy is probably overworked by sociologists, and the discussion of the dichotomy has generated a literature of its own. It is intended to stand aside from this discussion except insofar as some aspects of it impinge upon our particular analysis.

The differences between a church and a sect involve: differences in beliefs concerning grace and nature, a different theology, Christology and eschatology as well as different ideas concerning the nature of the church itself and different understandings of and responses to "the world".<sup>1</sup> No one of these considerations is definitive of a church or a sect. Clusters of ideas have a logical coherence and consistency and they show an "elective affinity" for one another and particular social structures. It is to the whole group of phenomena that Weber and Troeltsch refer, not to any one aspect of them. Beliefs, especially those shaping attitudes towards the state and towards church membership have implications for the internal structures of churches and sects.

H. Richard Niebuhr has suggested that there is a dynamic relation between church and sect.<sup>2</sup> According to Niebuhr the sect begins as a movement among the disinherited; the ascetic discipline of the sectarian life leads to prosperity, thus creating economic interests which involve the sect member more deeply in the economic life of the society. Furthermore, and crucially, the sect has to cope with the problem of the second generation. In taking on

"the character of an educational and disciplinary institution,  
with the purpose of bringing the new generation into conformity  
with ideals and customs which have come traditional"<sup>3</sup>

the sect gives up its demands for religious enthusiasm and the experience of

conversion. Routinised admission to the sect often entails the development of a professional ministry, theological colleges and a doctrinal orthodoxy. The sect moves towards a church structure. Thus "by its very nature the sectarian organisation is valid only for one generation".<sup>4</sup> The development of an interest in private and corporate material and ideal property leads the sect to compromise with the world. Compromise, Antoni has argued, is the main theme of Troeltsch's Social Teaching of the Christian Churches.<sup>5</sup> This "compromise" also touches fundamentally sociological themes; the relation between beliefs and social structure, the unintended consequences of both adherence to particular beliefs and the creation of certain social institutions.

Wilson contends that Niebuhr was concerned with only one amongst a number of possible sect types; namely the "conversionist" sects which seek, through active evangelism, to bring converts into their membership.<sup>6</sup> Whilst readily agreeing that the relation between the sect and "the world" is the crucial factor for the sect's continuation or change, Wilson demonstrates how beliefs determine the church-world relationship in the first place. The conversionist sect needs an organisation adequate to a campaign in "the world", it needs to make continuous contact with the world, especially when it seeks to absorb newly converted but unsocialised members of worldly society into itself. This is because these sects are "world conquering": they believe they should try to win the world for God. This raises a set of problems peculiar to conversionist sects. The attempts to solve these problems entail consequences for the sect which may result in a more church-like structure. But the gnostic, adventist and introversionist sects have a quite different "natural history" from the conversionist sects selected by Niebuhr. Wilson shows that the change towards church structure is by no means universal or inevitable.

The discussion of churches and sects by Troeltsch, Weber, Niebuhr, Wilson

and others has been mainly confined to whole religious organisations; churches or sects as national, regional, class or ethnic organisations or movements. Some studies of particular religious groups have attempted to spell out the implications of the particular structure, assuming (but not concentrating on) their position in a church-sect typology, in their particular social contexts. The studies of Amish society and the Moravians by Hostetler and Gillian Gollin in Europe and America are penetrating studies of this kind.<sup>7</sup> On the whole it has nevertheless been assumed that churches and sects are relatively consistent organisations which can be located as a whole within a taxonomic and analytical framework of the church-sect dichotomy type.

This assumption is valid if one wishes to study a communitarian religion, or a religious organisation for its own sake. Whilst Lenski's statement that "... sociologists have regarded [religious groups] as merely one more type of specialised, formal association"<sup>8</sup> is an over-simplification, he does propose a new application of a familiar dimension to socio-religious groups, that helps us overcome this problem of isolating religious groups from a wider social content. Lenski shows that religious groups may be either communal or associational. He demonstrates empirically that communal bonds are strong amongst Jews and Negro Protestants, whilst associational links are weak for the former and medium for the latter. In The Religious Factor Lenski shows that one may belong to a religious group as one belongs to any other formal association, engaging in a "... limited number of highly specialised and relatively impersonal relationships to which the associations give rise ..."<sup>9</sup> Conversely one's religious group might be co-terminous with a communal group bonded by marriage, kinship, common upbringing, nationality, language, etc. A communal religious group may be either a sub-community of a wider communal grouping or a small community within a wide association.

There is a probability that religious groups will in fact experience

some tension between communal and associational structures and beliefs and display elements of both in their actual structures and beliefs. The two types of bond or social relations can exist simultaneously in one group, i.e. for some the religious group is primarily an association and perhaps secondarily a communal group, whilst for others the reverse is the case, in respect of the same religious group. Lenski is concerned mainly with community and association as objective factors in social structure and their consequences for attitudes, but we note that they could constitute subjective factors also. Communal and associational attitudes might be alternative orientations for a religious group, or a religious movement.

These considerations may now be put alongside those of Niebuhr and Wilson. Firstly, in considering the development of a particular sect towards a church-type or in maintaining its sectarian nature, we ought also to consider the implications of its local groups being mainly associations or communities - or in the process of changing between the two. Secondly, we should note the way in which the sect's beliefs affect not only its relations to "the world" and hence its own social structure (pace Wilson) but also how these beliefs directly affect internal social relations and hence the sect's relations with the world.

For an example of the first consideration we should note the explanation given for attitudes towards ecumenism: the common professional interests of the clergy and the economies of scale achieved by mergers. Thus, it is argued one can explain why positive ecumenical orientations increase as one moves up a hierarchy. But the converse is also true: the lower down (or further from) a hierarchy one is, the more likely is one's religion to be synonymous with membership of a relatively closed communal group. The "business-like" mergers seem less relevant from this position. Both these considerations would seem to be important in, for example, explaining the 1969 Methodist voting (at Quarterly Meetings, Synods and Conference) on

Methodist-Anglican union. The proportion supporting union increased as the voting moved from local to Conference level. Thus on a straw vote in the Deerness Valley Circuit only two out of a hundred voting voted in favour of union whilst 77% of the assembled Ministers and laity voted for union at the Methodist Conference.\*

It will be argued below that institutional changes, church-sect and community-association developments, can be independent at different institutional levels. Thus we will argue that Methodism has progressed from a sectarian to church-like structure whilst village Methodism has become more communal and possibly less associational, only formally and lightly linked to the wider association through a few officials. But the two processes do from time to time impinge on one another. For example, the rationalisation of fund-raising expected by the national church conflicts with the pursuit of local activities with a high communal significance; bazaars, jumble sales, concerts and "special efforts".

We are not at this stage suggesting a general theory; we can only observe one concrete historical development. Methodism started in the villages as a conversionist sect (vis-à-vis local society).\*\* Evangelical activities required the generation of a religious experience, which was generated and renewed collectively. The collective experience became more important to the participants than the evangelism. Endogamy, socialisation, a sharp church-world dichotomy and ethical restraints on crossing the boundary, patterns of cultural activity and the constant stress on collective religious experience were bound to create at least a feeling of isolation from certain major as-

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\* The national percentage were as follows: voting in favour of union, at Circuit level 55%; at District level 67%; at Conference 77%.

\*\* Nationally the various forms of Methodism by then constituted established and "respectable" denominations.

pects of village life. This was accentuated by the demands made on the time of Methodists who had little time spare for non-chapel activities. The notion of the Methodist being amongst "the saved" further reinforced the sense of being a small religious community. The second generation was brought in through the Sunday School. Some of this second generation were lost through social mobility (itself the result of parental ascetic discipline and aspirations). Some, lacking the experience of revivalism, found the chapel a congenial club, consisting of family friends, others found it religiously or socially irrelevant. The village Methodists resisted, or at least resented, efforts by the Methodist church nationally to rationalise church organisation and participate in ecumenical mergers. Village Methodism remained throughout, in theory, a revivalist (conversionist) sect, but with prayer for revival becoming a substitute for revival itself. It still remains apart from the developments in national religious organisations; the ecumenical movement and the discussions of secularisation and "the death of God" remain the activities of metropolitan Methodists.

### Community

The chapels had, in 1969, the formal structure of any (average) Methodist Society. The small numbers of members available for office necessitated plural office-holding and vacant offices. At Esh Winning 22 offices were held by 18 individuals and in the two Waterhouses Societies 12 by 6 and 6 by 4 respectively. Other members had been approached and asked to take office, but (the women particularly) seemed to be unwilling to accept formal responsibility. Many said they were eager to "help out" with flowers, suppers, cleaning or "special efforts" but they did not feel competent to hold office. The administrative duties which connected the local Society, District and Connexion were carried out almost entirely by the Senior Society Steward and the Trust Secretary, but in these affairs they were usually assisted by the Minister and Circuit Steward. The office-holders themselves commented on

the unwillingness of other members to assume responsibility.

The relative separation of the ordinary Methodist from the administration of his church is matched by ignorance of the general structure of Methodism. In 1968 a decision was taken to close Bourne ex-Primitive Methodist chapel (Waterhouses) and to amalgamate the Waterhouses Societies. This decision had not been acted upon by mid-1969\*. Discussion in 1968 showed that some Trustees and many members believed that they owned the chapel rather than holding it in trust for the Connexion. Their parents had raised the money for the building and all had contributed to its upkeep; it seemed only logical to them that the local members should have the right to dispose of the property and the proceeds of any sale. In the course of the meeting to discuss this business some members also asked questions about the Leaders' Meeting, what it did and who could attend. The names of the leader are always printed in the Plan.

Ignorance of Methodist structures was ~~revealed~~ in the discussion prior to the Quarterly Meeting which was to vote on Anglican-Methodist union. The meeting at Esh Winning in Spring 1969 expressed surprise and dismay when members were told that the decision would not be based on one-Methodist-one-vote. There was an implicit assumption that Methodism as a whole was as democratic as the local Society meeting. The system of indirect representation also

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\* Mainly through ignorance of procedures. One Trustee, without authority, sought planning permission for change of use of the chapel building. He was told that this would be granted for two years only. The chapel thus became unsaleable. The usual procedure is to sell and leave planning problems to the purchaser. In this case all three prospective buyers would have offered small scale employment for local people; a circumstance almost certain to attract a more favourable planning decision. The chapel was finally closed in 1971.

alarmed many members as they felt that their representatives might not express the wishes of the membership.\* The belief that the "high ups" in Methodism were going to betray the rank and file at Conference by voting for union was expressed explicitly. Therefore there was a wish for the strongest possible vote against union at the Quarterly Meeting as an attempt to constrain Conference. When an attempt was made to clarify the situation at the meeting there was some verbal conflict over who the representatives at Quarterly Meeting were. Details of this had been printed in the Plan since the formation of the Society in 1932.

Two notable points arise from a consideration of these two situations. Firstly the ignorance about the formal machinery of Methodist administration was general, as was, secondly, ignorance of the system of indirect representation which is the very basis of the Methodist polity, and a major factor in historical conflicts.\*\*

In the course of the public discussion of Anglican-Methodist union a number of Methodists said, in private conversation, that if union came they would "go to the Baptists". This was said without any sense of changing an historical tradition or altering any beliefs. In the course of unstructured interviews and three years of regular participant observation no member ever expressed an awareness of any differences of belief between the Methodists and other churches. About five respondents mentioned the Methodist stress on personal experience as a feature of the religious life. Many noted ethical and ritualistic differences, but some respondents said that these were the only characteristics differentiating Methodists, Baptists, Anglicans and Roman Catholics. Perhaps given the fact that most of the Methodists were old and had only elementary education it is not surprising that they have little

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\* A relatively unfounded fear as the figures for the straw vote suggest.

\*\* See R. Currie, Methodism Divided

intellectual grasp of their religion. It is surprising, however, in the light of their exposure to Sunday School teaching and to preaching. It is remarkable that none showed the slightest knowledge of historical differences of belief and structure. But theology is not a criterion defining religion for Methodists; behaviour more normally is. Thus Methodists tend to define as Christians, or good men, all who meet up to Methodist ethical requirements, irrespective of their formal religious affiliation.

Only 6 out of 77 Methodists, specifically asked, did not come into Methodism through the Sunday School. The Sunday School is one of the methods used by a religious group to socialise the younger generation. A sect often substitutes this socialisation for the requirement of conversion.\* The Deerness Valley Methodists were thus overwhelmingly second generation Methodists (or "transfers" from other religions). The Sunday Schools, in fact, were more like junior churches than "schools" in the accepted sense of the word. We find that they formed the main mode of entry to the contemporary chapel.

The language used by Methodists was highly suggestive of their communal orientation to religion. When speaking of the chapel they described how they were "brought up in it", through the Sunday School,\*\* with its Anniversaries ("saying my first piece at ..."), Christian Endeavour, Band of Hope, etc. The older members said how they felt "at home" in their chapel. Others mentioned ornaments, furnishings and windows, memorials of their family's long connection with and faithful service to the chapel. One middle-aged

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\* Only four Methodists claimed to have been converted from a non-religious state.

\*\* (Sister of Ernest Raper - Sunday School Teacher): "10 of my family all went away from Sunday School [i.e. left the district ... it was Uncle Ernie's Sunday School ...]" (emphasis added).<sup>10</sup>

woman commenting on possible chapel closures said,

"Why close a chapel if it's not in debt and people are happy there? It's a home to some people, they were brought up in it. Closing a chapel is like taking someone's home away. They wouldn't be happy."<sup>11</sup>

Any visiting preacher could win the approval of the congregation by alluding to his "warm welcome" and how he enjoyed being back amongst "the folk" in the village. "Methodist folk", "chapel folk" were highly approved diminutives, indicating a Methodist self-image as one of simple, down-to-earth, unassuming and friendly people. The Lord's Prayer was frequently introduced as "the family prayer" and most of the prayer in the Sunday services was devoted to the village, the old and the sick, and members who could not attend on that day. The preacher used the language of "community", not the language of "association", he referred to folk rather than members. He was expected to stand at the door after the service, to shake the hand of all leaving, to exchange greetings with old friends and welcome newcomers.

The Sunday service, and especially its prayers, are first and foremost directed to the community's spiritual and moral needs. Unpleasant and divisive matters like personal sin are not raised in any individually challenging way. Intercession for the rest of the world is brief and quite lengthy prayers finish with a hasty, "... and forgive us all our sins". This apparent decline of interest in sin may be a result of the loss of the prayer meeting in which sin and forgiveness were major themes, but it is also a mark of the way in which individual and divisive problems have replaced family or local issues.

The sense of being a small family or community entails a degree of parochialism. A minister's wife reported extreme difficulty in persuading women to attend meetings in the next village (or even meetings they had not habitually attended previously in their own chapel). An important women's

FIGURE 2:

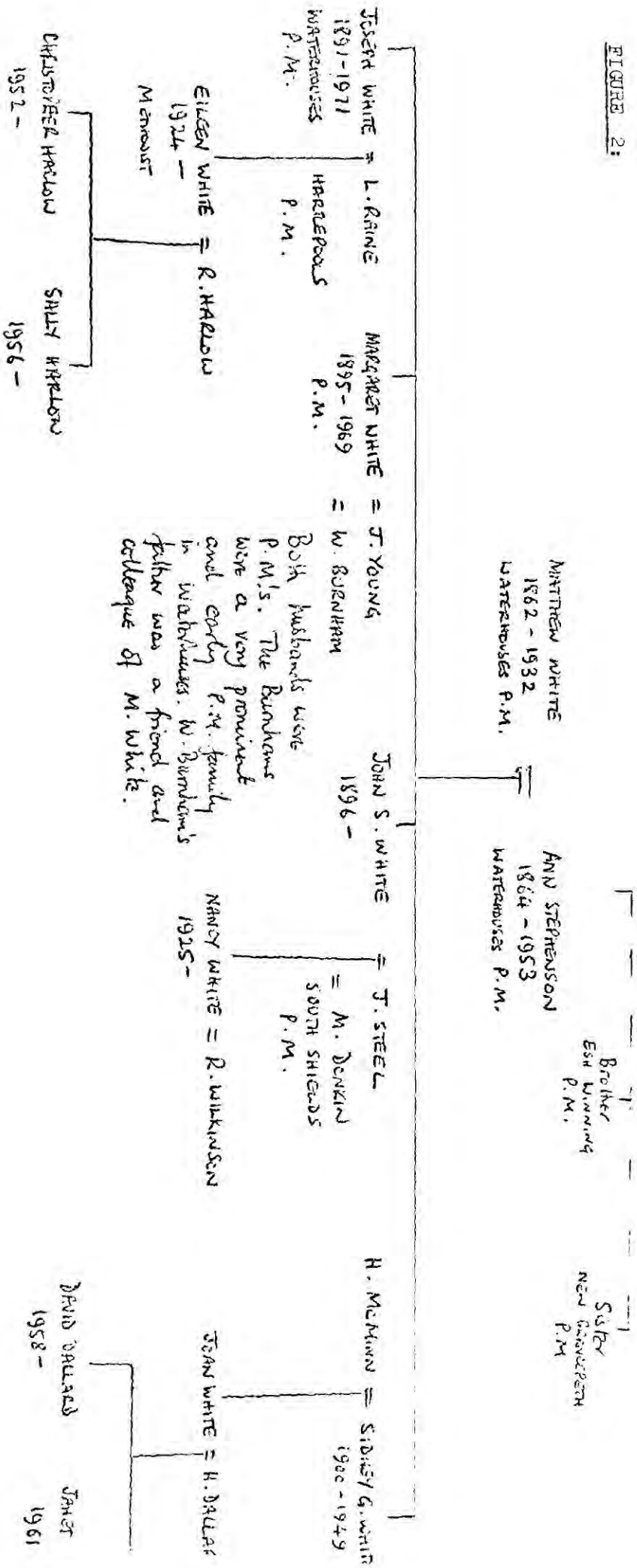
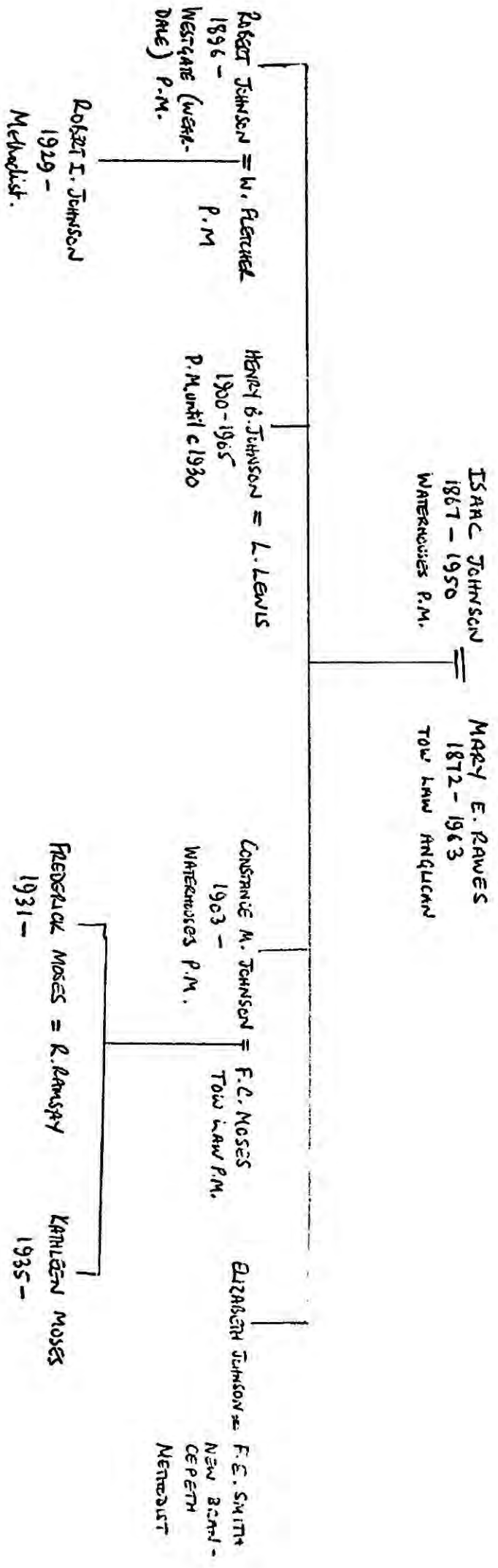


FIGURE 3:



meeting was held in Bearpark when the minister's wife was on holiday. Only two Esh Winning members attended, they were a mother and daughter resident in Quebec. The researcher also learns not to ask a Society official who is his opposite number in another village. The answer is, "Oh, that's Waterhouses, I wouldn't know". This narrowness of orientation was not perceived by the Methodists themselves, for they believed that they maintained not only friendly and warm but open relationships. This was clearly illustrated in attitudes to Methodist-Anglican union. The objections to the union scheme most consistently voiced were: firstly, the service of reconciliation suggested that Methodist ministers were not as good as Anglican ministers; secondly, ten\* criticised the Church of England for its closed communion. In Methodism all "Who love the Lord" were invited to the communion table, in the Anglican church only confirmed members. Thus the Church of England was seen by Methodists as being a closed group and a group denying the authenticity of the Methodist ministry. These are not theological objections to union, but objections expressed in terms of non-reciprocity.

These orientations described above are more to "community" than "association". In an objective sense the Methodist Society was a community in that it was almost a large extended family. Figures 2 and 3 show the family trees of Matthew White and Isaac Johnson. We can see from these that they and their children married other Methodists, by and large. White and Johnson lived next door to one another in Waterhouses and their children played together and were later acquainted with one another's spouses. What these family trees do not show (save in the case of Ann Stephenson) is that White and Johnson had brothers and nephews who were Methodists and their sons had Methodist uncles on both sides of their family. Plainly the families named in these Figures were not connected by common membership of a formal organisation alone, nor were they only connected by kinship. More than one

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\* Mainly in Waterhouses where there is an Anglican church. See p.330 also.

half, probably three quarters, of all the Methodists are related to other Methodists (often Methodists in the same village), many are related to more than one other, and are sometimes related to one person in more than one way. Much anecdotal evidence shows that, for example, choirs tended to be endogamous. (From an account given whilst looking at a 1919 choir photograph it would seem that most of the men in the choir married women from the choir). Methodist parents preferred their children to marry Methodists, failure to do so was cited as one reason for a falling off in individual church attendance. Parents were not surprised if one spouse attends the other's church; hence changes between Societies, between Primitive Methodists and Wesleyan Methodists or Methodist and Church of England were accepted. Equally acceptable was the idea of one spouse occasionally returning to his or her own chapel. Intermarriage with Roman Catholics was resisted, sometimes with threats of non-attendance at the wedding. No cases of such a sanction actually being used were recorded. The marriages seemed to be accepted after the event. Resistance was based on rather inchoate dislike of Catholic ethics (as perceived by the Methodists), the alienness of Catholic religious expressions, the power of the priest, and the exclusiveness of the Catholic community, which demands the total commitment of the children of the marriage. These are communally based objections, not objections based on an explicit understanding of Catholic church structure and teaching. The objections were rooted in general notions of the sort of people Catholics are and the sort of demands Catholicism makes. The least articulate informants said they have a feeling that such marriages "won't work" but they would give no reasons - a view often expressed on the proposed marriage of the Methodist and Anglican churches.

So far we have seen the relatively narrow horizons and communal orientations of the Methodists. They were also detached from the formal structure, business and doctrinal discussions of national Methodism. We have observed

also that the Methodists are actually communal groups, strongly linked by kinship ties.

The first response of a Methodist to any general enquiry concerning local Methodism was an enthusiastic account of how there used to be activities in the chapel every night. An interview for 25th August 1966 records the following activities for the two Waterhouses chapels in the first half of this century: Sundays were spent almost entirely in the chapel; services, Sunday School and prayer meetings, and during the week:-

	<u>Bourne</u> (Primitive Methodist)	<u>Russell Street</u> (Wesleyan Methodist)
Monday	Preaching service	Class meeting
Tuesday	Class meeting	Preaching service (every other week)
Wednesday	Christian Endeavour	Free
Thursday	Choir Practice	Choir Practice and Friends' Own
Friday	Free	Free
Saturday	Special Efforts	Special Meetings

The Quebec Primitive Methodists had a similar programme:

Monday	Class Meeting
Tuesday	Christian Endeavour
Wednesday	Preaching Service
Thursday	Band of Hope and Choir Practice
Friday	Independent Order of Good Templars (Temperance)
Saturday	Special efforts

Members of both Waterhouses chapels would attend one anothers' Special Efforts. Fridays were free evenings as the Store (Co-op) stayed open until 8.00 p.m. on that evening. Today Methodists continually express regret at the passing of "good times" and say how "it's a shame" that these social activities no longer take place. The decline - which does not concern us as such here - is ascribed to many causes: materialism, the motor 'bus, the

Darham ice-rink, T.V., etc. No chapels have more than an average of one week-night meeting now.

The chapels were cultural centres in the village, at least they were non-drinking, non-gambling social centres and almost the only legitimate source of entertainment for the women. The Special Efforts were usually associated with fund-raising activities. Oriental bazaars, eastern markets, pink suppers (with the hall, food and attendants dressed in pink), concerts, choir recitals were popular with the villagers and drew good attendances. These activities involved the Methodists in days or weeks of preparation and rehearsal, bringing them together again and again in purposeful and pleasurable activities. Many would be engaged in more than one event, all would attend Sunday services. Thus throughout the week Methodists were continually meeting one another in chapel activities to an extent which precluded non-chapel activities. We observe from the Press and individual respondents that very high standards of musical performance were achieved in these chapels indicating not only much rehearsal, but also that musical performances were not only social occasions but a source of non-religious aesthetic pleasure.

Throughout this discussion we have excluded any consideration of work; it is at the place of work and in the associations arising from the work situation that Methodists interact with non-Methodists and take an active part in non-religious organisations. The Methodists had, nevertheless, created a pattern of sociable activities which tended to be exclusive. Methodist activities were, formally, open to all, but few Methodists were themselves active outside their religious community.

Methodist society is discontinuous with the wider community. This is to say that Methodists and non-Methodists tended not to interact in non-work situations except in circumstances where elementary mutual aid was required. Leisure activities were the most sharply segregated. Dennis et al in their study of Ashton concluded that "The pursuit of leisure ... has two principal

characteristics. It is vigorous and it is predominantly frivolous".<sup>12</sup>

Leisure pursuits in Ashton embody the principle that,

"... life must be lived from day to day and whatever surplus income there is over every day needs should be spent in securing whatever pleasures are possible. In Ashton these pleasures are mainly drinking and gambling."<sup>13</sup>

Taylor in his work on Durham villages<sup>14</sup> confirmed the short-term hedonistic pattern of gregarious leisure activity and his account of an evening at the Club in Craghead exactly describes an evening in the Big Club in Esh Winning. The miners' leisure pattern seems to be similar in Yorkshire and Durham.\*

For the Methodist drinking and gambling are anathema and Methodists were never to be found in the Club.

The social segregation of the Methodists in the non-work situation was reinforced by Methodist beliefs. Abhorrence of drink and gambling, their sense of being a saved band of pilgrims in a fallen world, mentally separated them from a wider society; as did the general notions of church and world, sacred and profane, serious and frivolous. The segregation was, in part, mutually acknowledged. Some thought the Methodist standoffish or snobbish, although we judge this not to have been a very widespread view. It was accepted that one did not swear in front of Methodists (except to provoke or antagonise them) nor expect them to drink or gamble. Malicious gossip against Methodists often alleged back-door deliveries and secret drinking by Methodists.

The shared religious experiences of the Methodists underlined their separation from the population at large and linked all the Methodists in a village irrespective of the specialised week-night activities in which they engaged. The Sunday and week-night activities were presided over by a few men

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\* For a fine literary evocation of the spirit of pleasure-seeking in a mining village see the account of the Carnival in Emile Zola's Germinal.<sup>15</sup>

who became patriarchs. Large sections of six volumes of interviews are filled with comments on these men; they are remembered as great men, good men to whom one looked up and whom one respected. The lives of these allegedly saintly men, especially anecdotes telling how they commanded the respect of the most profane, constitute the folk history of Methodism.\* It is an oral tradition; the memories of these men crowd out more mundane recollections of life in the chapels. These men held unquestioned authority until the 1930's. The consequences of this long period of authority (some 50 years) is discussed elsewhere. Two points are relevant to this discussion. Firstly, long deprivation of authority and lack of experience virtually disqualified the next generation from leadership. Furthermore the rank and file also were not accustomed to the idea that they might hold responsible positions in the Society. Secondly, the type of authority exercised by these men and the response of the ordinary Methodist-in-the-pew to it further under-pinned the familiness of the Methodist community. Matthew White, Isaac Johnson, Aron Richardson, Isaac Hewitson and Jack Henery were fathers of the chapel, who ruled by personal, moral power, not on the basis of any legal-rational authority conferred upon them by an organisation.

Contemporary conflicts within the Societies underline further the communal nature of local Methodism. In bureaucratic organisations one might expect to find conflicts over the allocation of capital and other resources and conflict between various officials concerning the status of their office in the organisation.<sup>16</sup> We do not find this in the chapels today. In one village an Assistant Organist and a Society Steward fall out every six months and are reconciled by the Minister. The cause of this and other conflicts

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\* e.g. Isaac Hewitson by his very commanding presence broke up the Sunday pitch-and-toss school. Matthew White stopping the swearing at his place of work.

seems to be, in essence, the feeling of individuals or groups that their efforts are not appreciated by others. The deepest split within one Society was threatened when the Minister paid the cleaner for opening the chapel for a wedding, instead of the caretaker (who was away at the time). The caretaker's family were incensed and threatened to leave the chapel; the grievance was partly mollified by the payment of a second fee, other members pressured the caretaker's family against precipitate action - pointing to the imminent departure of the Minister. The basis of conflict seems to be failure to appreciate work done and perceived slights and insults. "Family squabbles" more appropriately describe these disputes than terms taken from theories of organisational conflict.

We have a cluster of mutually reinforcing factors which make analysis of the Methodist Societies in terms of formal organisations, or associations (in the community-association dichotomy) inappropriate. The Societies are relatively small, family-like groups, united by common beliefs, kinship, a shared upbringing, religious, cultural and recreational life, lived under the eye of patriarchal leaders and divided only by personal disputes. The core of this religious community is both objectively and subjectively separated from the wider community by beliefs and the ethical consequences of beliefs. We will show elsewhere how this isolation deepened and had significant but unintended consequences.

### Association

The local Society is part of a nationally organised denomination. Local administration should be conducted in a business-like way. This was especially necessary as the three Methodist Connexions made specific demands of the local Societies: the appointment of a full board of Trustees, the effective care and maintenance of property, the reduction of debt, contributions to Connexional funds, the provision of returns in respect of finance,

numbers and progress of the Society as a whole and of Sunday School and Temperance work. The Connexions provided loans and insurance facilities, a trained ministry, a central supply of Sunday School material and various journals and magazines, and many other services. Central arrangements in large part relieved the local Societies of such responsibilities as providing pensions, producing instructional literature, entering the market for loans and insurance, creating committees or negotiating machinery to treat with government, the civil administration and other religious bodies. It is in making these provisions for a sect at a national level, Wilson and others have argued, which in part sets off a denominationalising process. But another consequence we should note is that denominationalising processes are not strongly developed at the local level.

Surviving minute books carefully record decisions, dates are entered and the Minutes properly approved and signed. The writing is most usually copperplate, written not only with clarity but in an elegant style. Accounts were kept with meticulous care on a simple double-entry system. It is possible to reconstruct the finances of the local Societies in great detail, for every penny of income and expenditure is recorded.\* Here we do see the methodical, rational spirit of Methodism; but a spirit expressed, it would seem, by a few men. The Trustees and Leaders were a relatively small group within the Society (some, shopkeepers, for example, recruited to the Trustees because of their experience with money). The opportunities for the ordinary Methodist to develop these skills and express them in this way was limited. Nevertheless each group within the chapel (choir, Christian Endeavour, Wesley Guild, etc.) had its committee, and although there was not

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\* A school teacher reported that as a student in the 1920's he was asked to audit some chapel accounts. He found them to be models of good book-keeping.

the same formal obligation to keep records and make returns, some opportunity would be available for a wider group of Methodists to develop basic administrative and clerical skills. Recently a higher proportion of whole Societies have had to be involved as Trustees and society officers and more women have been drawn into these roles, albeit reluctantly.

What is suggested here is that the attitudes necessary for the maintenance of the economic and administrative structure need not be and are not reflected in orientations to the local religious community itself - beyond perhaps a certain sobriety and orderliness of conduct, a sense of knowing when things are done "the right way". The formal requirements of the Connexion are met by the efforts of perhaps only two or three officials and the Minister, and official meetings take up little time compared with other activities. Bryan Wilson comments that the minimal administrative requirements of a sect "may be handled by very rudimentary organisation, or each or any item may entail the establishment in the sect of more elaborate and formalised procedures".<sup>17</sup> The Methodists in the Deerness Valley seem to have developed an effective but minimal organisation necessary to meet the requirements of the Connexion and the proper conduct of chapel life.

Rational accounting and the ordered conduct of business are demands arising both from the perceived goals of the organisation and its normative demands - we have already seen that Methodism would encourage the diligent pursuit of duties within the Society. But

"The sect can not adopt policies and methods with reference to rational or economic criteria alone: its goals are in large part super-terrestrial, and the criteria of success and efficiency employed in the world are inappropriate to it".<sup>18</sup>

We might add that the mundane goals of the sect might also, in large part, be the promotion of communal activities and warm sociability amongst the members. Compartmentalisation of activities and the accompanying attitudes is simple - everyone knows how (or thinks they know how) the chapel finances

should be run, but it would not be relevant to apply business-like or calculating attitudes to the warm fellowship of a week-night meeting. The warm, gregarious activities predominated over business activities. Communal and associational features, both structural and attitudinal, co-existed, but the communal were subjectively more important for the ordinary member.

According to Wilson it is crucially the need to organise to evangelise and bring in new members which leads to the elaboration of formal structures within a sect.<sup>19</sup> To what extent was this the case in the valley?

The origins of Methodism in the Valley are known only through the official histories, it is not at all clear whether the oral history is in fact derived from the written histories or not.<sup>20</sup> Primitive Methodism came to the valley in about 1860 when James Wilson started holding meetings in his house. The next year Crook Circuit listed the membership as one. First the colliery hay loft was borrowed for larger meetings and then the P.M.'s alternated with the W.M.'s in using the British School for Sunday services. In 1872 the P.M.'s built their own chapel. One Primitive arrived in Cornsay in 1869, he found three others already there, they met first in a house, then an empty cottage, then a machine shed and finally the membership, which had by then grown, built the Quebec chapel in 1875.

Joseph Harrison moved from Quebec to Esh Winning in 1894 and found twenty members. Through his efforts in overcoming the problem of buying land from the Roman Catholics (Ushaw College) a chapel was built in 1899.

Many of the leaders who are the main subject of the next chapter were products of this heroic age of valley Methodism. In 1880 Matthew White, John Stephenson and George McLane were converted and joined John Henery who had been in the society for two or three years. Ralph Hayson, the diarist of the previous chapter had been a trustee at Waterhouses since 1871, but he eventually moved to Quebec.

By 1906 the following, amongst others, had become trustees at Waterhouses: William Burnham (senior), James Fitzpatrick, Isaac Raine and Matthew White.

We do not know the exact circumstances of the conversion of many of these men. It is said by some of Matthew White that he was converted while drunk, but surviving relatives deny the story. The Durham Chronicle of 22nd October 1880 reported the end of a P.M. mission led by "Mr. Winter" in which thirty converts had been made. It may be that Matt. White was one of these thirty.

It seems as if the small bands of early Methodists were active in increasing their numbers. Some of the increase may have come from the immigration of Methodists from other areas, as was clearly the case with the Weardale Wesleyans who migrated to the valley. The newspapers suggest that many outside missionaries were invited to evangelise the valley, Miss Lee and Miss Peart were two very popular missionaries and the Revd. James Flanagan of St. George's Hall was another - he gave popular talks on his work in the East End slums of London.<sup>21</sup> Such missions could be organised by small, ad hoc committees, although they needed much supporting activity to provide hospitality, teas and music. The population to be evangelised was not large, and as it was concentrated in small villages, there would have been no need to elaborate extensive administrative machinery to mount missions. The situation in the valley was such that, unlike a national church, Methodism needed no permanent machinery for church extension or "home missions".

The Connexion provided services but did not have any day to day control of how the local Methodists use them. Suggestions and ideas may be selected, rejected or interpreted locally, providing there is no actual teaching contrary to Methodist doctrines. The greatest central demands on local Methodism probably came at the time of the 1907 and 1932 Methodist Unions. Although Union was intended, among other purposes, to reduce duplication of effort in the country part of the price paid for the formal Union at the national level was the tacit agreement not to press ahead with closures at the local level.<sup>22</sup> The response to the possibility of local closure would have threatened the

whole Union scheme. Thus, in the event, the actual demands made on local churches by Methodism nationally were relatively slight. It could be said that non-closure was a price exacted from the Connexion from the grass-roots of Methodism. Local conditions made the building of a new Methodist chapel in Esh Winning a necessity in 1932; but it was a new chapel, not one Society having to close its chapel and move in with the other Society. The formation of this Society is discussed in Chapter IX.

The two Waterhouses chapels stood until 1971, each with less than 30 members, despite the formal decision in 1968 to close one and amalgamate the Societies. In a declining village formal rationality would demand that one chapel should close, thus reducing expense and pooling resources, but formal rationality did not prevail in this instance.

One rationalisation has prevailed. Fund-raising used to depend on special efforts, usually organised by the women, or the choir. The Christian churches in Britain began to appreciate the need, in the 1950's, of a regular, assured and predictable income. Thus stewardship schemes were introduced in many churches. In the early 1960's a young Minister in the Deerness Valley Circuit banned bazaars, sales of work and other similar activities mounted for fund-raising purposes. He thus removed the manifest purpose for a whole range of social events from the annual life of the chapels. Respondents said that they missed the old fund-raising activities which provided much enjoyment in anticipation, preparation and execution. It is alleged that non-Methodist villagers also missed these occasions and often asked why they were no longer held. The need for the Methodist Church as a national organisation to rationalise its finances has had the unintended and probably unforeseen consequence of destroying a socially significant part of local chapel life. This is probably the clearest illustration we have of the tension between communal and associational tendencies within the religious group.

We have in these villages examples of the "sect that perpetuates in the present a pattern of social organisation from the past, display(ing) relatively low articulation of distinctively religious organisation".<sup>23</sup> Since such sects, Wilson continues,

"tend to have arisen in rural communities the life patterns of which were not formally organised, they tend to subsume religious organisation in community structure, employing religious sanctions merely as boundary maintaining devices ... the sect boundaries are the community's boundaries, and embrace a congeries of associated families ... which manifest varying degrees of communal - and thus religious - association ... communal identity are the real determinants of sectarian allegiance and religious solidarity: no formal religious organisation has become necessary".<sup>24</sup>

Wilson was discussing the Amish; we would want to modify his statement by noting that whilst Methodists did not live in segregated settlements, Methodism was the "established religion"<sup>25</sup> of the area. Communal identity is the determinant of sectarian allegiance within a religiously mixed society, so boundary maintenance becomes an important function of religion (hence the resistance to inter-marriage). Methodism is not coterminous with the whole community, but it is sufficiently dominant not to need to develop elaborate machinery to defend its interests as it would need to do in a society in which it is a minority with deviant beliefs or practices.<sup>26</sup> Methodism is only deviant insofar as it rejects local dominant patterns of leisure behaviour. Methodists adhered to local ideals of mutuality, they joined unions and helped non-Methodists in time of need. In some respects we might argue that they upheld some of the ideal values of the community, for as we shall see later some of the community's most sacred moments are clothed in the rites of the chapel, and many children of non-Methodists were and are sent to Sunday School.

In sum, local Methodism was not a dissenting or minority religion of the kind Troeltsch or Niebuhr had in mind in their discussion of sect development. Nor was it a religious community as comprehensive as the Amish. It is between

these two extremes; the communal aspects of Methodism are expressed in a wide variety of activities, the associational are developed to meet a relatively few outside requirements. As it is a somewhat closed community (a closure under-pinned ethically, intellectually and culturally), Methodism can, in the main, only replace its membership from within. The implications of this situation will be discussed in Chapter IX.

Finally we can illustrate the effects of the progression of the Methodist Societies from associations to communities in one very striking way. The early membership would have included many young men who came to the villages to find work in the new pits. One of the few places in which these young men could meet young women suitable for marriage would be in the Methodist societies. These girls were the daughters of the married miners who had migrated with their families. The possibility of meeting girls may have attracted some young men into the chapels - with the kind of results that grieved John Wesley in Weardale.<sup>27</sup> Just such a case seems to have occurred early in the life of the Waterhouses P.M.'s. One young person engaged in behaviour that the Society regarded as immoral. The Society responded unequivocally by resolving "That J. Bessford be dismissed from the choir for immorality".<sup>28\*</sup> This is a case of an organisation having rules and applying them without fear or favour. If there were any repercussions amongst the families involved in this affair, the Methodists did not seem to be influenced by them. They were a group of people who had come together, as relative strangers, to create a new organisation in the village.

In the 1920's a major scandal occurred amongst the Methodists. A senior and respected local preacher had a sexual liaison with the young daughter of a

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\* The same meeting resolved to dismiss four other members of the choir, for unstated reasons.

Methodist family.\* What action did the Society take when this was discovered? For quite some time nothing happened, everyone seemed embarrassed and no one knew quite what to do. Eventually the preacher left the district. The inaction of the Methodists in something that they felt - even in 1970 - needed explaining. The common explanation was that the Society lacked the kind of old leaders (men like Isaac Hewitson were cited in this context) who had the authority and the courage to face up to the preacher involved. Without these men no one would grasp the nettle.

An alternative explanation of the inaction is that the two principles in the scandal were both members of families which had extensive connections within Methodism and the community at large. Any attempt to confront or reproach either of them would have entailed conflict with their families, members of whom might be friendly with or married into members of one's own family. Similarly any attempt to use the formal procedures for disciplining an offending Methodist would have entailed similar embarrassment, exacerbated by the need to debate and pass resolutions in committees and meetings where friends and relatives of the accused would be present. The simplest way to avoid the issue was to classify it as a "family matter" and not appropriate for action or discussion within the Society. But plainly it was not defined in that way, and the Methodists - even today - think that something should have been done. The very acute nature of the embarrassment caused was brought home by respondents proving extremely unwilling to discuss the affair. Some would only discuss it in very oblique terms and all insisted that the researcher said nothing to anyone else, in order to prevent accusations of gossip-mongering being laid by the members of the families concerned. In fact it became too embarrassing to approach the matter directly in the course of research even though this research was conducted fifty years after the event.

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\* The details of this case have been abbreviated and altered a little in order to conceal identities.

An association of relative strangers is able to operate according to formal rules. Once the impersonal relations of the association are cross-cut and interlinked it is no longer possible to operate such rules because the actors are acting towards one another on the basis of informal, familial relationships.

The importance of communal over associational ties in the Societies helps us explain another feature of village Methodism that we have repeatedly stressed, and which will emerge as a very important feature in subsequent chapters. The old leaders from the late nineteenth century dominated Methodism until the 1920's, or until their deaths. The basis of their power in Methodism was not the formal holding of office alone, but in their position as founders and heads of families in the villages. Positions at the head of large and inter-related families are not positions that their occupants can be voted out of. As in the case of the scandal mentioned above, the formal rules of the association are inappropriate in all situations once a community has emerged from the association. Thus there were no ways of removing aged officials from office, and to have attempted to do so would have been to create family conflict. Headship of a family "naturally" fitted the leaders in the chapels to their positions of leadership, and in a sense the older they became (and the more extensive their kinship ties became) the more suited to office they appeared (and felt perhaps). Only hints could be used to persuade men to relinquish their hold on office. Thus one group of Sunday School teachers presented their Superintendent with a rocking chair in the hope that he would see that the teachers were hoping he would retire.

The next chapter looks in detail at the men who dominated local Methodism for the whole of their lifetime, from the establishment of Methodism in the 1870's to the acceleration of its decline in the 1920's and 1930's.

Footnotes to Chapter V

1. Troeltsch, E., The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, Vol. II, pp. 461-463.
2. Niebuhr, H.R., The Social Sources of Denominationalism.
3. Ibid., p. 19
4. Loc. cit.
5. See Antoni, C., From History to Sociology, p. 65
6. Wilson, B.R., Patterns of Sectarianism.
7. Hostetler, J.A., Amish Society; Collin, G.L., Moravians in Two Worlds.
8. Lenski, G., The Religious Factor, p. 18
9. Ibid., p. 19
10. Interview, 22.7.68
11. Interview, July 1969
12. Dennis, et. al., Coal Is Our Life, p. 130
13. Ibid., p. 137
14. Taylor, R., The Implications of Migration for the Durham Coalfield. Ch. 1
15. Zola, E., Germinal, Part 3, Chapter 2
16. See, for example, Burns and Stalker, The Management of Innovation, for a discussion of the political and status systems of formal organisations.
17. Wilson, op. cit., p. 15
18. Ibid., p. 9
19. Ibid., chapter I
20. For example, W.M. Patterson's Northern Primitive Methodism and the various local Jubilee commemorative brochures.
21. DC 3.8.1900, 31.8.00
22. Currie, Methodism Divided, pp. 286-289
23. Wilson, op. cit., p. 12
24. Loc. cit.
25. An observation attributed to Bishop Hensley-Henson, bishop of Durham 1920-1939.

26. See Wilson, Sects and Society
27. Journal, June 12th 1774
28. Waterhouses P.M. Church, Leaders' and Society Meetings, Minutes,  
1863-1885, minutes of Leaders' Meeting 18th July 1867.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE RESPECTABLE METHODISTS AND THE OLD LIBERALS

#### 1. The Respectable Methodist

We saw in Chapter II that the Deerness Valley grew with the coal trade. In 1851 the valley was a rural area with a population of 500-600 people. By 1901 the population was 9,100 in our four villages alone. Emigration from and immigration to the villages followed fluctuations in the coal trade. Rapid growth and changes in a population drawn from a wide area, hard working conditions, an initial lack of housing and cultural facilities, suggest that this early period was likely to have been a period of some social dislocation. We might expect to find conditions similar to those traditionally associated with frontier towns; the relative prosperity and lack of facilities encouraging the rise of drinking and gambling, these in turn being a cause of violence amongst a population with many different regional and religious loyalties.

This was the case in the Valley in the late nineteenth century. "Verité sans peur" writing to the Durham Chronicle on 22nd March, 1872, said that Quebec was a blackguard's drunken village, mainly populated by Roman Catholics. A reply on the 29th pointed out that whilst there was poor housing and no sanitation\* there were two Sunday Schools, an Evening School and proposals to establish a reading room and cricket club. Furthermore only 32 out of 125 homes were occupied by Catholics.<sup>1</sup> Fining the Quebec innkeeper for allowing drunkenness, the magistrate said in 1873 that "Quebec was the most demoralising village in the neighbourhood"<sup>2</sup> (sic). From September 1873 to September 1874 the Lanchester Division Police had proceeded against 3,512 offenders as compared with 2,547 and 1,755 in the

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\* A condition to last until the First World War and beyond. For a description of crowding in village housing, see the Durham Chronicle 7.6.01.

previous years.\* There were 1,578 cases of drunkenness, 440 common assaults, 49 assaults on police officers and 101 poaching cases.<sup>3</sup> This apparent rise in disorder was not confined to the area containing Quebec. A Durham Chronicle Editorial of 31st March, 1875, expresses concern with the rise of drunkenness; it notes the association between this and high wages. The Editor also comments on the problem of pit-men's wives drinking and opposes the idea of granting licenses to grocers, as being a policy likely to increase female drunkenness.<sup>4</sup> On 24th June the paper reports a Temperance speech by Archdeacon Prest. The archdeacon said that the Durham diocese accounted for one eighth of all the drunkenness in the country; the County headed the list for crime and intemperance (Northumberland was third for intemperance and fifth for crime). There were, he said, 5,000 prisoners in Durham jail last year - of whom 1,954 were women - whose downfall could nearly always be traced to indulgence in intoxicating drink.<sup>5</sup> According to a Diocesan Report on social conditions in 1909 intemperance, gambling, early marriage and poor housing were serious problems, although the "Church worked for some improvements through colliery managers and owners".<sup>6</sup>

Esh Winning was a centre of gambling, as one respondent said "Roughs used to come in brakes from Gateshead and Newcastle" to play pitch and toss in the woods behind Lymington Terrace.<sup>7</sup> According to an older respondent the villages of East Hedley Hope and "Hedley Hill-over-the-hill" were known locally as Sodom and Gomorrah. He said that East Hedley Hope (his own village) was a quiet village really but there was drinking and fighting at the week-end.

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\* This absolute rise tells us nothing about the rate of change of crime per head of the population.

\*\* A village which had vanished many years before the research began.

Drunkenness and fighting on the streets is within living memory.

For example,

"The village was very rough. They used to fight with stones in the corner of a handkerchief - swing them. There was gambling and heavy drinking, especially when the pubs were open from 6.00 a.m. to 11.00 p.m."<sup>8</sup>

A retired village doctor said,

"There was more drunkenness in those days [1920's and 1930's]. A high percentage of income was spent on drink. Drunken injuries were more common... There wasn't much wife beating, but [it was] mainly by drinkers."<sup>9</sup>

Because of drunkenness and violence,

"Our father used to keep us in the house. One family used to come regularly to our house to sleep when the father was on the rampage. There was a lot of drinking."<sup>10</sup> (retired miner's wife)

Whatever the actual level of drinking and violence was amongst the miners\* it loomed large in public discussion at least in the late nineteenth century, and in the Methodist social consciousness throughout our period. Temperance activities were pursued by special organisations, but in the villages Temperance work was an integral part of chapel activities. It is not our purpose to discuss this work here. The very rough social and environmental conditions in which the villagers lived is an important factor in our analysis, for it is against the background of this rough life that we have to understand the Methodist's knowledge of himself as a "saved" man.

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\* The Durham Chronicle on the Miners' Gala in June 1872 says that "the miners (whom we seldom see)" behaved themselves very well. "The bulk of our mining population is not composed of the ignorant and unruly class of men they [the citizens of Durham] have been wont to regard them." Nevertheless, drunkenness, fighting and deaths while drunk appear in the press for the county, and the Deerness Valley, until the early part of this century.

Methodists were, and are, very conscious of the evils of drink

"... pubs were open from the morning until 11.00 p.m. and beer was 3d. a pint, no limitations ... Some men drank all their pay and remained idle from Friday to Tuesday, these men used to get their notice and were blacklisted."<sup>11\*</sup>

"Homes were wrecked through men being drunkards but their lives and homes were brightened by their conversion. Other people could see that this was true ... Another deadly influence was the Working Men's Club."<sup>13</sup>

The effects of being converted and giving up drinking were plain for all to see in terms of the improved economic status of the convert's family. The mundane consequences of conversion formed the basis of testimony and the proof of the efficacy of religion. Thus a recent convert, harassed by his workmates, was questioned on miracles; did he really believe that Jesus turned water into wine? After floundering in attempted biblical and theological argument the convert asked the men if they remembered his family and the state of his home six months ago; and did they know what it was like now? Well if Jesus could turn beer into clothes for his children, and furniture for his house, would he not be able to turn water into wine?\*\*\*

An evil associated with drink and having similar economic effects was gambling. One respondent recounted how his father at the end of the First World War owed money-lenders a total of £140, debts incurred through gambling. The sons supported the family while the father paid off the debt. During the three years it took to pay the debts the father attended chapel. When the debts were paid he ceased to attend and returned to gambling.<sup>14</sup>

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\* Pease and Partners were alleged to have sacked habitual drunkards, a practice of which Andrew Ure would have approved.<sup>12</sup>

\*\* It is not possible to say whether this is an authentic story, a composite story or a sermon illustration. It is frequently told by the Methodists.

George MacLane, a prominent Waterhouses Methodist, in common with many others, allowed no playing cards in his house. A retired coke worker said he had to leave the Leek Club because members were required to sell a book of raffle tickets every year. He offered money instead, but this was unacceptable. The fact that the Church of England countenances gambling ("believe in lotteries") and that members play Bingo is frequently quoted in connection with Anglican-Methodist union.<sup>15</sup> One respondent recounted with horror, how the vicar had won money whilst gambling in the Roman Catholic Club. The Methodists did not participate in activities associated with drinking and gambling - both were regarded as irrational, wasteful and degrading.

The Methodist was thrifty. This thrift took a number of forms. Firstly, many are reported as having "a few pounds in the Store"<sup>16</sup> as a safeguard against unemployment, illness and other hardships. Secondly, some Methodists saved to set themselves up in business; both James Hammell and Isaac Raine started as labourers, selling from a "pack" in their spare time. The former eventually owned a hardware and furniture store, the latter purchased a newsagent's shop. Joseph Harrison also built up a very successful drapery and general store. Thirdly, Methodists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century took an interest in the running of the Co-operative Society. The Co-ops were seen quite specifically not only as suppliers of unadulterated goods, but as a means to thrift.

"It induced [the working class] to think - taught them to be frugal and careful - encouraged them to be temperate - tended to make them better and wiser men - and enabled them to rise to any position in society they chose."<sup>17</sup>

Fourthly, Methodist mining families by making considerable economic sacrifices were able to keep their children at school or College, even at times of unemployment. One railway signalman had three sons, two of whom went to Training College and one to University.<sup>18</sup> This obviously required good domestic management. "A struggle for us, but you get by somehow, don't

you?", commented a Methodist whose son had gone to University.<sup>19</sup>

Collectively the Methodists were men of property. The leading Methodists, as Trustees, managed chapels, schoolrooms and manses, paid off debts and raised considerable sums of money for these purposes. This also involved ordinary Methodists in "sacrificial giving". So successful were Methodists in handling money that they were sought as advisers on money matters or to act as bankers.<sup>20</sup>

When their savings were exhausted after a period of long unemployment Methodists were reluctant to accept relief. The evidence for this is almost entirely anecdotal,

"We were never allowed to go to the soup kitchen 'on principle'.

Father never took Permanent Relief, though he probably paid for it",<sup>21</sup>

was a typical comment from a miner's son. It will be argued below that the Methodists developed a spirit of independence entirely consistent with the refusal of any kind of financial assistance in times of hardship.

Besides being a temperate and thrifty man, the Methodist was a Sabbatarian.<sup>22</sup> Matthew White, the most prominent Primitive Methodist, would not allow his sons to buy newspapers on a Sunday.<sup>23</sup> A respondent remarked how his grandmother had refused to accept a cauliflower from one of her sons, because it had been cut on Sunday. The extent of Sabbatarianism is shown by an expression said to be common amongst the old Methodists in the 1920's: "Better never born, than Sunday shorn". The Methodist did not consider it proper to shave on Sunday. Methodists spent most of their Sunday in religious activities, chapel in morning and evening; some devoted the afternoon to teaching in the Sunday School, others travelled the Circuit, or further afield, as preachers. The non-Methodist Sunday was a day of rest from heavy labour, when one ate the biggest and best meal of the week, and slept in the afternoon.\* The non-Methodist Sunday makes more sense in

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\* A good reason for sending the children to Sunday School.

terms of the purely physical needs of a working man; but the Methodist subjected himself to a discipline of activity and service because he believed there was more to life than meeting its physical needs.

Thus far we have a picture of the Methodist living a temperate, frugal and disciplined life in contrast to the relatively intemperate, thriftless and violent habits of at least a significant section of the remainder of the population. According to one retired Methodist miner, the distinguishing feature of a Methodist was that he would "never use bad language or go in a pub".<sup>24</sup> The Methodist ethos was based on a series of "Thou shalt not" notions. It was nevertheless a way of life, with practical consequences; more orderly and better furnished homes, adequate clothing for the family, relative economic independence, the collective acquisition of property and, for a few, individual economic advancement.

Photographs of these Methodists show them wearing dark suits, stiff white collars, pocket watches with chains, bowler hats and bearing themselves with a dignity born of self-assurance and acknowledged respectability.\*

The leading Methodists (Preachers, Trustees, Circuit Officials) were required to exercise their own judgement on matters of finance, property and Circuit administration. They also had to select Ministers and approve Preachers. Matthew White, Isaac Johnson and others travelled throughout the region to hear Ministers preaching so that an invitation might be given to a man thought suitable for the Circuit. We have seen that the chapels received patronage from the coal owners, but the owners and managers had no

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\* "Respectable" is a word in common use today. No sharp distinction can be drawn between the "rough elements" and others, but a respectability scale is applied. The word is especially used by Methodists of non-Methodists who meet up to Methodist-approved standards of behaviour. It is, for the Methodists, very much a boundary-defining word.

say in the choice of Ministers. In no sense did the Methodists have "Company parsons" or Ministers chosen for their likely compliance with managerial views, as was the case in Gastonia, described by Liston Pope.<sup>25</sup>

Local preachers appeared before an examining board of the Circuit, for an oral examination and the "trial sermon" (a written examination was introduced in the later 1910's). If prospective preachers were not up to the standards of knowledge and preaching ability required, they were failed.<sup>26</sup> We see that within the broad requirements of the Methodist Connexions the local Methodists imposed their own standards on themselves; there was no imposition from outside. These judgments were different from the fairly routinised election of an official to an association in which the requirements of the office are relatively obvious and the candidates chosen on simple communal or pragmatic grounds. An example of the exercise of a quite independent initiative is provided by the death of a Minister in 1919. Immediately a Committee of the Quarterly Meeting was called; it expressed its sorrow at the Minister's death and then proceeded to ask the District to allow the Circuit to continue without a Minister for the remainder of the quarter so that the widow could enjoy the use of the house and receive the salary, due to her late husband.<sup>27</sup> The example may be trivial, but it shows how quick and practical action could be taken by the local leadership, which was accustomed to taking independent decisions.

The sense of being men of independent judgment, under obligation to no man, was something which the Methodists attempted to carry across into their relations with the owners and management of the pits. While the Methodist in his role as Trade Union leader may have felt that he could speak to the managers as man to man, it was also true that as a self-made man his views on economic and social matters were unlikely to be revolutionary. From his own experience the Methodist trade unionist believed that it was possible for the lot of the working man to be improved within the given social and

economic situations.

The belief in the peaceful advancement of the men's interests by the trade unionists representing the men's interests in discussion with the owners was reciprocated by the owners themselves. Since industrial and political relations are mainly the subject of Chapters VII and VIII, here we only observe that both the union leaders and the owners (in three villages) were Liberals.\* They believed that differences could be settled amicably on the basis of a "gentleman's agreement". A "gentleman's agreement" implied mutual trust between masters and men, give and take in negotiation and compromise in striking a bargain. A local preacher said he once preached a sermon in the early 1930's on the need always to find a middle way between two extremes; he was later told that Matthew White, sitting behind him in the choir, was nodding in agreement throughout the sermon. The same preacher, when younger, had been looking at the picture of John Wilson on the Waterhouses' Lodge banner; White put his hand on the lad's shoulder and said, "... try to be like that man, he was a great man".<sup>28</sup> John Wilson, the miners' leader, had been the local Liberal M.P., a preacher and friend of many of the leading Methodists.<sup>29</sup> He was also a Justice of the Peace and an Honorary Doctor of Civil Law at Durham University. He was latterly referred to as "Dr. Wilson" and was a model of reasonableness, respectability and integrity to Methodist miners. Conversations with Methodists and non-Methodists frequently elicit the comment that the pre-1920 local leadership consciously modelled itself on Wilson. Wilson was not a man to follow what he regarded as "extremist" policies. Lecturing on "Christianity and Social and Political Problems" in 1912, Wilson said that problems should be solved man to man, reason to reason, he was against strikes as they damaged trade, conciliation always brought

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\* Pearson, Dove, MacDonald, checkweighman. White and D. Cheek, Lodge Chairman and Delegate, both Councillors, were all active Liberals before 1920. Only D. Cheek was not a Methodist.

better conditions than strikes.<sup>30</sup> These are views with which the Methodists in our villages would have readily concurred.

Respectability also affected home life. Whilst the Methodists may not have had a monopoly of "good homes" it is said that Methodists almost invariably had well kept homes and well-run households. Some of the Valley Methodists would have been amongst the large congregation which heard the President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference in Old Elvet (Durham City) in 1900. "The strength of a nation is its family life, and woman the cornerstone of the whole ... she was regarded no longer as man's tool and plaything. She was learning to combine two things", he said, "strength and modesty".<sup>31</sup> Young women took very active parts in the life of the chapels; the married women were more confined to the home by the need to feed, bath and wash clothes for one or more working men, and by caring for children. Some married women seem to have been able to attend Sunday evening services only. The women had an immediate interest in the behaviour of their menfolk. A drunken, gambling father meant an ill-clad family, no new furniture and growing debt at the Store. It is reported that women had been seen running down the street, still wearing aprons, crying with joy, when hearing of their husband's conversion. Others attended chapel "to keep their husbands up to the mark".<sup>32</sup>

We can list the most obvious - and obviously "respectable" - features of the Methodist home.<sup>33</sup> The house was well furnished, many homes had (and still have) small pipe-organs in the parlour. The family would have "Sunday best" clothes for chapel and the children would have new clothes for the Sunday School anniversary. The question of the children not attending Sunday School never arose, nor did the question of playing games on Sunday. Sunday entertainment consisted of singing hymns around the organ after the evening service and prayer meeting, people used to gather in the homes of the Whites, Cheeks and Greeners and others for this.

A discussion of the role of women, and family structure in County Durham

would be a digression. Nevertheless, it is important to note a factor probably unique to the Company villages of Durham. Rent and coal were taken care of by the Colliery Company, therefore the household budget hinged on food and clothing, traditionally the mother's responsibility. The women therefore tended to look after the financial side of family affairs. If the father was a heavy drinker, however, the mother was always short of money, and this was plain for all to see: "If the children came to school in rags you could be pretty sure that the father drank".<sup>34</sup> The Methodist miner came straight home and "tipped up" his pay packet to his wife (i.e. they opened it together), she would give him his pocket money and keep the remainder. The working children also handed over their pay; their father might not even know what they earned.<sup>35</sup> Even in periods of relative prosperity money was never plentiful, so the women had to be good managers and as such they invariably had to struggle. "My mother used to sit up to two in the morning sewing dresses. We children were always well turned out."<sup>36</sup> In the course of interviewing all the Methodists it was noticed that great stress was placed on economic hardship by respondents. One woman recounted (with tears in her eyes) how her husband brought home £5. 2s. 6d. and that she gave him the half-crown as a fortnight's spending money. Yet these are the same people who could mount Anniversaries with the children clad in new clothes, could organise concerts and sales to raise money for a chapel, could build and maintain chapel property and meet the expenses of a Circuit.

Methodist domesticity is summarised in a rather glowing account given by a Headmaster who came from a Quebec Methodist family. He spoke at length about the cleanliness, thrift and good management of the Methodists:

"The chapel schoolroom floor was kept scrubbed white. [at home] Monday, washing day; Tuesday, tidying up; Thursday, baking day; Friday, cleaning and polishing day - house almost stripped, cleaned from upstairs through to the yard where the quorrels practically shone with brushing (usually brushed

Saturday morning). Toilets whitewashed and sanded.  
Saturday, brasses and clean household gear put down.  
Sunday, no sewing or darning, some didn't even buy a newspaper. They had tremendous pride and independence."<sup>37</sup>

Finally, at home the Methodist rarely gave outward signs of affection to, or in front of their children. The children of three prominent Methodists specifically said how their fathers were deeply interested in them and were concerned for their futures, and how they felt loved as children. Yet these fathers never made overtly affectionate gestures to them,<sup>38</sup> this might be compared with the practice of other fathers who behaved alternately strictly and indulgently. Reserve or restraint is true to the spirit of inner-worldly asceticism.

The spirit of Methodism as outlined can be interpreted, or can actually develop, in concrete ways that fundamentally alter its nature. The temperate man can become self-righteous; the thrifty man can accumulate money for accumulation's sake. The search for compromise can lead to soft settlements in Union affairs. The men on good terms with the managers can become the bosses' men. Domestic frugality can be competitive and the desire to be well turned out can lead to an invidious "hat and coat" respectability. One way in which we can gauge the temper of Methodist respectability is by taking the opinions of non-Methodists or outsiders to the villages. No non-Methodists deny that Methodists were "somebody" in the village and that they commanded respect. "Anybody who was anybody was a Methodist."<sup>39</sup>

"People who went to chapel were thought to be "somebody" looked up to and respected. They - especially the local preachers - took a very active part in local affairs - but when they did lead no-one was allowed to challenge their position."

But,

"... one thing that the Methodists were not liked for was that they were down on anyone who had a pint of beer; people were very bitter about this".<sup>40</sup>

This bitterness is not, in fact, very evident from other accounts. More typical of comments made in the village was that:

"The Methodists' strict ideas on temperance are a bit far fetched, and some Methodists drink now. This idea was very strong at one time among Methodists in the village, though most of the non-Methodists thought that it was a bit daft. The strong Methodists were real good. A lot of the villagers admired them for sticking to their beliefs. Never any friction between Methodists and non-Methodists over this type of thing."<sup>41</sup>

Club officials confirm this; there was never any trouble over temperance or temperance campaigns (presumably the campaigns of the late nineteenth century were ignored and did not impinge upon the clubs).

A sharper comment was made on attitudes to gambling, "I was going around selling tickets for a raffle; H. told me off for wasting money".<sup>42</sup> On thrift and money-raising; "If he (union leader) looked after No. 2 he had No. 1 in his pocket", "If he (another Methodist) saw a few lads with 1d. or 2d. he'd run a tea party to get it off them".<sup>43</sup> But a Catholic observed, more generously, "The chapel saved some wasters. Gambling and drinking their pay away - went into chapel, turned around and never drink again".<sup>44</sup> This last comment was clearly made without any theological approval of Methodism.

Whilst financial matters increasingly occupied the attention of the Methodists from 1920 onwards they may have been overcareful of funds before this. When, for example, in 1906 it was proposed to build a new Minister's house, this proposal (at first agreed to and then rescinded) split the Quarterly Meeting. Subsequently extensive and expensive repairs, decorating and alterations had to be carried out in the terraced house which served as a Manse. The architect also had to be paid for his unused plan for a new house. We can not know the full circumstances but it does appear that a good case might have been made for a new building, and that frugality produced at

least one case of false economy.

A Minister who had lived in Waterhouses as a boy in the 1880's and returned as a Minister from 1952-56 stated that "social climbing was the curse of Methodism". He pointed out that none of the leading Methodists, and few other Methodists, had sons who went down the pit.<sup>45</sup> This has proved to be so, for none of the Methodists who can be named as leaders or public figures in any of the villages had sons who worked below ground in the mines. In some cases their daughters married miners. Interviews with all\* the contemporary Methodists has shown that over 80% of the men over 60 worked in the pits, and/or spent long periods in unemployment. Not one of the younger Methodists has ever worked in the pits.

The Minister dilated on this theme:

"The children were unconsciously treacherous to the pitmen (but treachery can be very close to noble loyalty\*\*). X's sons (X is a terrible snob); one is in administration, another in insurance ... affected, regard themselves as a cut above the others ... Getting out of mining was regarded as 'Fruits of the spirit' - this was said from the pulpit ... The boy who stayed in the pit - even though he may have had to do it to support a widowed mother and family - was a spiritual failure ... Scholarships, visits to Durham, association with 'better class' people through chapel and its patrons and the Trade Union may have given these people middle-class aspirations."<sup>46</sup>

This is the most extremely critical statement on Methodist ambitions.

Another Minister put the point less critically:

"... miners' families sought something better for their sons than a job down the mine. Wanted to show that they were

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\* i.e. not only the sons of the Methodists we have designated "leading Methodists".

\*\* By which he meant the betrayal of miners as a class may have been an unintended result of doing what parents wanted.

intelligent. They had a pride of craft, they knew their job to be skilled. But they were declassified by working below - in the eyes of critics. They resented ignorant criticism".<sup>47</sup>

This comment suggests that Methodist miners were concerned with their esteem in the eyes of people outside the mining community itself. This may be connected with stories told by villagers of national Methodist gatherings or local government conferences, where they have been angered by others' surprise that they are clean, wear collars and ties, can read and write and do not keep whippets.

It is true that none of White's three sons entered pit work, nor the sons of his three brothers. Aron Richardson's son left and became a Minister. We could list all the families that were socially mobile, but a simple statement of such facts does not tell us why Methodists were mobile. Among the possible reasons are:-

1. Methodists' children excelled at school, especially in Scholarship examinations. Learning was encouraged at home and examinations were part of Sunday School life, as well as day school.
2. New opportunities were arising throughout this century for qualified persons in teaching, local government, social services, etc.
3. Parents wanted their sons out of mining because -
  - a) the industry was likely to decline
  - b) it was an inherently disagreeable job
  - c) they wished to enhance their son's and their own social status.
4. Status aspirations in the children (derived from school, chapel, Sunday School or home).

Any one or all of these factors could be relevant. The notion of "calling" and "service", the idea of stewardship of talents and dedication to selfless work in improving "the world" enabled Methodists to be upwardly mobile by pursuing useful forms of service. "Pure" status-seeking may not be compatible with Methodists ethics, but enhanced status is a bonus for service.

Moreover the experience of the 1920's and 1930's reduced confidence in the security of employment in coal-mining; whenever opportunities presented themselves it made sense to move out of mining. We suggest that Methodists were especially well motivated and equipped to take advantage of such opportunities. To our picture of the respectable Methodist we add therefore the fact that he probably had sons in "better" occupations, perhaps a son away at College or University training to be a teacher or doctor.

The political views and industrial activities of the leading Methodists are discussed below. We have already seen that the owners were patrons of the chapels and were certainly sought out by the leaders for small favours (but, we would suggest favours based on gentlemanly understanding - not on condescension).

"The owners used to patronise Union leaders; giving them time to go to Durham, etc., and paying them for the shift ... in return leaders were meant to take things easy ... They did use to go soft, 'sorry boys, couldn't get any more'. Y, for example, was in the Lodge and working with the management."<sup>48</sup>

"Y was very thick with the Viewer at Crook. He was one of the very few not to get notice at 65. Immediately after the '26 strike he was put on night shift, only did one shift and he was on day work again."<sup>49</sup>

"Z, a leading Methodist and local Councillor, played along with the colliery officials, too much. He would put forward their measures at Council, he became their tool, he was being used and didn't realise it."<sup>50</sup>

"Z and Y were allowed to catch the 'bus - this may have been because they were friendly with the Viewer"<sup>51</sup> (respondent's emphasis).

The criticism of Z is repeated by all who mention him, and it appears to be a view with some substance.\* Other Methodists - not Union leaders - also

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\* Nevertheless Z's most forthright critics admit that personally he was the kindest man in the village.

appear to be "bosses' men". R. Hayson's relatives recounted how when the Labour Council prevented Colonel Sprott giving Quebec a playing field Hayson wrote to Sprott (a Tory coalowner) saying that he (Sprott) was not being treated properly by the men.<sup>52</sup> An elderly preacher said,

"the manager was Church of England, stern, but a nice gentleman, he was reasonable ... Peases and Joseph Love - social and kind, interested in the affairs of the village. They sought to help any good cause put forward ... An honour to have Pease visit the village ... We kept the village in good order with our Christian work".<sup>53</sup>

These two Methodists' attitudes to the owners and managers, respect and helpfulness, are expressed with different degrees of dignity - but they are attitudes likely to attract criticism in due course. As long as the coal trade remained relatively prosperous, these attitudes could be reciprocated by the management. When reciprocity breaks down we might expect to see the Methodist unable to cope with the situation. A 70 year old respondent who claimed to have attended as many Lodge meetings as he could, but who never took a more active part in Union affairs, is more representative of the men's attitude to the leaders (and the leaders to the management). "There was a good understanding between the management and the Union. It helped keep the colliery Waterhouses going."<sup>54</sup> Such comments are common from the older Methodists when they discuss the Union leadership.

In summary: the Methodist was a temperate and thrifty man, owning some personal property or sharing in the management of corporate property. He had a "good home" and a well-turned out family. He was to be found with his family in chapel on Sundays. He had aspirations for his children, especially his sons, which were more or less realised. In a relatively prosperous industry he was on good terms with the management, who also respected him. Nevertheless, he maintained independence of thought, judgment and action.

Changes came to the district which made this ideal less relevant, less

tenable. A substantial fall in drunkenness and crime made the strictly teetotal position less obviously necessary (the Temperance Movement had also discredited itself by the 1920's and 30's<sup>55</sup> by campaigning for prohibition). "Social drinking" was becoming more publicly acceptable. Official attitudes towards the working men's clubs underwent some changes: from "Resolved:"

"That we see with regret the establishment of workmen's clubs in our district, believing that they are a prolific source of physical, moral, mental and spiritual degeneracy. Further we call upon all our Members to have no connection with them either as shareholders, members or employees and that they seek by all legitimate means to counteract the evils of which they are the source",

(Minute 12 of December Quarterly Meeting of Primitive Methodist Circuit 1899 subsequently printed in the Plan)

to:

"We recognise that "Clubs" should have a social and educational value. Since DRINK is made a prominent feature they are a prolific source of evil. OUR MEMBERS are urged to discourage the trade in every way".

(Primitive Methodist Preachers' Plan July-September 1930)

The decline in crimes of violence, on the streets and in the houses made the distinction between rough and respectable less obvious. By the 1920's the villages as a whole were more "respectable".

With a levelling off and then decline in employment in the pits crowding declined in the colliery houses. Middens were replaced by flush toilets. The last smallpox epidemic struck the district in 1926 but it was the only serious epidemic in the twentieth century, whereas there were four outbreaks in the villages between 1871 and 1874 alone.\* The environment improved physically and socially. Thus it became less clear what it was a man was "saved" from when he was converted. In fact an increasing number entered

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\* There is no evidence to suggest that these epidemics were followed by religious revivals, as seems to have been the case in South Wales.<sup>56</sup>

Methodism through the Sunday School and could neither give an account of the moment of their salvation nor understand the full meaning of the testimony of the older men and women. The vicious circle of drink, gambling, debt, domestic disorder and poor health, broken by the power of religion, was not something that could be easily comprehended by the younger Methodist.\*

The older men remained in authority virtually until they died, but they upheld an ethic increasingly subjected to outside cultural pressures, as we shall see in Chapter IX.

In the 1920's, and especially after the 1926 lock-out, the thrift-and-independence basis of the old Methodist self-image was subject to the greatest strain. Unemployment and poverty drained what savings the miners had.\*\* All of the present Methodists who had been miners experienced unemployment for a year or more. One respondent said that her husband had worked only for the first eighteen months of their married life. The Waterhouses pit closed for nine months after the 1926. Esh Winning was closed from 1930 to 1942. When savings were gone, only the dole remained. To receive the dole one had to be "genuinely seeking work". Men who would gladly have taken any job, but who knew that the search would be fruitless, had to give this assurance. A normal practice was for one man to travel the area collecting names of foremen and managers for the other men to report at the Labour Exchange, thus saving hours of pointless, tiring walking. Men were reduced to telling untruths in order to receive a bare subsistence. The blow to the Methodist's

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\* Perhaps the best literary (and the most moving) account of the self-respecting miner is to be found in the character of Gwilym in Richard Llewellyn's How Green Was My Valley. This novel also illustrates the nature and extent of intergenerational conflict in a situation somewhat similar to the one we are describing.

\*\* Savings in the Pease and Partners Deposit Scheme fell from £275,000 in 1921 to £10,000 in 1934.

integrity was severe; no longer able to support his family in the style to which he thought they were entitled; no longer doing "a fair day's work for a fair day's pay"; no longer a practising craftsman respected for the skills he exercised daily. For a man whose word had been his bond, who could be trusted and to whom integrity was everything, the deceits at the Labour Exchange were damaging lies. Ralph Hayson junior tried to resign his membership because he had to be untruthful in order to receive his dole.<sup>57</sup> Whatever outward appearances they might have maintained, there could be no self-deception as to the independence of any mining family in the 1920's and 1930's.

Some resisted receiving the dole; for them savings had to be eked out longer and any odd job taken. Mrs. Headlam (wife of the Tory M.P.) acted as agent for people in London wishing to employ domestic servants.\* One miner thus was sent a letter offering him a job as an under-gardener in the south; his mother intercepted and burnt the letter, as she did not wish him to take a job which she felt was degrading for a miner.<sup>58</sup> Some who received the dole tried to pay it back, how and if they did this is obscure, but the fact that some contemplated this indicates the pride and independence that were hurt by such circumstances.

A further blow to the Methodists' self-image came with the breakdown of relations with the owners. The owners cut the men's wages without negotiation. Leaders who had preached moderation and condemned the socialist "hotheads" found the police on the streets against the men. Men talking, men to men, might have agreed that the inexorable forces of the market made cuts in wages inevitable. But victimisation and imprisonment of miners' leaders and violent verbal attacks on the miners cut right across the traditional Methodist leaders' expectations of the management.

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\* The Bishop of Durham had suggested that unemployed miners should emigrate. Lord Dunglass (later Sir Alec Douglas Home) said that many could be shipped south, as domestic servants.

"Matt White and Tom Pearson always assumed that management spoke in good faith; they were more sympathetic to management's position ... Cheek see Chapter VII and the others never believed a word management said."<sup>59</sup>

The profit margins which for the first twenty years of the century had enabled masters and men to reach a series of "gentlemen's agreements", were cut to zero.\* There was to be no compromise by the coal-owners, so there was no basis for discussion between master and men locally. Thus the relational basis of the men's trust in their leaders' traditional style of operation disappeared. The basis of the modus operandi of the leadership itself, a little economic "slack" in the system and some give and take between both sides, was gone.

The new attitudes of the owners is perhaps best illustrated by two stories from field notes:

"Ask my sister-in-law recently bereaved, she gave her husband for 52 years and six sons to the pit, and the week he stopped working, they stopped his free coal."<sup>60</sup>

"My grandfather ... deputy overman [an official at Waterhouses and worked for the colliery there for 50 years. He felt that he had standing with Pease and Partners. He felt that when he retired they would give him time to look around for a new house to live in. The week he retired, he received his notice to quit. I shall never forget the stunned look on his face - he just sat there, he couldn't believe it, after all those years."<sup>61</sup>

The days of easy coal winning were over and so were concessions to the men; the family firms were being replaced by public companies, coal itself was failing. The social relations out of which arose the Methodists' image of himself and the basis of his standing in the community, was crumbling.

## 2. Political Leadership

The Methodist miner was in many ways an independent man; he worked as a

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\* Pease and Partners Ordinary Shares Dividend: 1920 - 18%; 1922 - 5%;  
1926 - 0%.

skilled and adaptable craftsman at the coal face, doing a difficult and at times dangerous job in frequently changing conditions. He purchased his tools at the Store, where his wife also purchased food and household goods. The Store was the men's own store, the miner could voice an opinion at a meeting or directly participate in its running. He helped to choose the local Minister, to examine the local preachers, himself perhaps either teaching at Sunday School or preaching in the Circuit. As we have seen above he was also a man of some standing, commanding respect in local society.

The Methodists were especially well represented in the leadership of the Durham miners at County level and locally. Between 1890 and 1920 out of the 26 leading local Methodists whose careers we have been able to reconstruct in detail: 21 hold between them 43 Trade Union offices; another 21 hold 28 posts in political parties, also as Councillors and as J.P.'s, approximately 13 hold Co-operative Society offices. The overlap and interlocking of roles is obviously considerable. These estimates are based entirely on named persons who have been positively identified as Methodists. The names of office-holders can not always be found for any given time, for some persons named have not been positively identified as Methodists, although it is thought that they were - these are not included in this estimate. For example, probably all of the 26 (except the shopkeepers) served at some time on the Co-op committee. For considerable periods between 1900 and 1926 all four named officials of the Waterhouses Lodge were Primitive Methodists.

Methodists were active in the Liberal and Labour Parties, becoming Councillors and J.P.'s. We would not therefore expect to find attitudes of deferences or total dependence towards the owners and managers of the collieries. There is a sharp contrast between our expectations of the coal miner and what we know of the Carolinian cotton operatives.<sup>62</sup> We do not need any "religious" explanation of the differences. In cotton competition was fierce, between many small companies, so the workers content with the lowest wages were

recruited. The cotton workers were largely machine-minders, there being no demand for skills which would put workers in a strong bargaining position. Nor does spinning allow for the use of initiative or the development of team work. For much of the earlier part of our period (i.e. up to 1920) coal was a booming industry, so the owners needed labour and could afford to pay relatively high wages. The owners collectively agreed prices and found it useful to have a union through which they could communicate with the men. The contrast can thus be explained by economic and technical factors at the place of work. Nevertheless Pope showed that in Gastonia religious factors were important in preventing the rise of trade unions. We therefore will ask the question, what effect did religion have on the industrial relations between masters and men in the coal villages of our district?

The division between management and workers was sharp. The managers lived in big houses apart from the colliery rows. Crofton required the tenants to keep their gardens tidy, on penalty of being moved to a house without a garden. He and other managers sat on the local councils and became magistrates. Love was a national figure in Methodist and free church circles. Ferens was a prominent local Methodist. Joseph Pease was an M.P. and an industrial figure of national importance. Love's son probably "continued to subscribe on a generous scale to projects at Cornsay" after his father's death,<sup>63</sup> but he did not take much part in local life.

For the Methodists the worker-boss division may not have been the most relevant social division. We have already seen above that a very important distinction for the Methodist was based on the notion of respectability. In Waterhouses, Esh Winning and Cornsay Colliery there were owners with whom the Methodist miners could have identified in terms of respectability:

1. The owners were professing Christians.
2. The owners and managers were advocates of temperance, and patrons of temperance activities.
3. They were Liberals.
4. They were patrons of "good causes" both locally and nationally.

Lockwood notes that in an "occupational community", which is something apart from the management and their way of life, "work-mates are normally leisure-time companions, often neighbours and not infrequently kinsmen".<sup>64</sup> But the Methodists did not share leisure-time activities with their non-Methodist work-mates. Thus for Methodists in these villages any image of society they might have had would include ambiguous continuities and discontinuities derived from working with men but not sharing their non-work culture, and being divided from the bosses as workers, but united with them as respectable men.

It would be easy to overstress this "religious" factor in the social and political relations of the mining community. For example, the owners and workers in some measure shared a set of assumptions about "the market" and laissez-faire.\* But plainly, if the religious factor is of any importance at all it will be found in the consequences of the Methodists being amongst the early trade union and political leaders.

The early leaders displayed an implicit organismic, functional view of society. The trade unions were seen as legitimate and necessary, but not for the pursuit of class interests. Unions were seen as representing the interests of the workers who were winning coal in partnership with the masters. Thus at a local strike meeting in 1879, it was said that,

"... the men had no interest in damaging the interests of their

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\* W. H. Patterson, Durham Miners' Association (and a Methodist), before the Royal Commission on Labour of 1891: Q.281. Are you an advocate in any way of the Government being called in to adjust as between capital and labour; and is there any method which you would suggest? - So far as I am concerned, I know of no adjustment that would give satisfaction, but of course a question like that I would have to have correct instructions in order to answer.<sup>65</sup> Another illustration of conventional economic thinking is the relative slowness with which the idea of Aged Miners' Homes was accepted. At one time "why should we pay for those who haven't saved?" was a common attitude.<sup>66</sup>

employers, because the interests of the employers was the interest of the employed, and the men regarded it as their bounden duty to study their employers' interest ..."<sup>67</sup>

What had angered the speakers in 1879 was not the reduction in wages as such, but that it had been done unilaterally. The Durham Chronicle of 16th May hails as a victory for the men the fact that they went back to work at negotiated reductions of between 7% and 9% when 15% had been demanded by the owners, after a previous series of substantial reductions. Although the owners were cutting wages they maintained some degree of reciprocity with the men. In 1879 the manager at East Hedley Hope provided the soup kitchen with a boiler and fuel.<sup>68</sup> The manager at Quebec presided at a Wesleyan lecture (a month before the pit was laid in).<sup>69</sup> It was immediately prior to the 1879 strike that Ferens gave five tons of coal for the poor at Cornsay.<sup>70</sup> The meeting from which the quotation above is taken was held in a field provided by management.

Pease himself favoured arbitration, saying that he agreed with "his friend Mr. Burt, M.P." and William Crawford on the need for arbitration based on a joint committee of masters and men. But he was voted down by the other masters.<sup>71</sup> A letter in the Durham Chronicle suggested that elsewhere the masters were feeding and paying the police, there had been baton charges at Silksworth Colliery and evictions in other villages. No such aggressive action from the owners had been seen in the Valley since Love's attack on the union in Ushaw Moor in 1864.

This situation led the speaker, cited above, in the same speech to say:

"Pease wished to submit the matter so far as he was concerned to the principle for which they were contending, but he was prevented from carrying out these wishes by the inexorable law of the masters' association. They won't allow him to 'blackleg', except it be at the enormous cost of £50 a day for six months."<sup>72</sup>

According to two editorial comments in the Durham Chronicle\* of April 1879 the men accepted the need for reductions in order to reduce labour costs in producing coal; but they wanted the matter settled by arbitration. Better still, according to the men of the Deerness Valley, was a sliding scale, as against "the old and almost barbarous system of strikes".<sup>73</sup> In other words the question of wages should, and therefore presumably could, be a purely technical problem, mechanically solved. William Crawford at the Miners' Gala in 1876 said that the Union has spent £8,000 on strikes to force arbitration on the owners. Other speakers spoke in favour of moderation and arbitration, "bad arbitration is better than a good strike".\*\*<sup>74</sup> This type of view persisted as late as the period of unrest in 1912. John Wilson, in one of his monthly circulars stated, "We shall be none the weaker if we recognise that we can attain our ideals sooner, with less hatred and antagonism, and more reason and compromise". The strike depends not only on the Union's funds, but on public sympathy. "There are two essentials to make our unions effective for good - discretion and love of conciliation on our part."\*\*\*<sup>75</sup>

The extent of belief in "the free market" economy and its effects on

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\* Throughout this early period the Durham Chronicle is strongly pro-miner; or at least pro-Crawford-style miners.

\*\* W. H. Paterson before the Royal Commission, Q.90 "... in fact, a sliding scale is a desirable mode of adjusting wages? - I think that it is not only desirable but the best" and in answer to questions on the Union's role in reducing strikes (Q.'s 347 and 348) "... We commenced in 1869, and I prevented, during that year, at least 30 or 40 strikes".

\*\*\* John Wilson, questioned (Q.614) by Tom Mann on the problem of the owners depressing the price of coal on the sliding scale by selling cheaply to their own iron works, answers "I am watchful as most can be mind - I like to look around the corner but I like to go with trust". The miners really only recognised from 1925 onwards the way in which the owners exploited the sliding scale.<sup>76</sup>

working class industrial and political thought and action is in itself, a proper subject for a monograph. Market thinking was prevalent throughout the nineteenth century and it was the basis of the Liberal party's economic policies. Especially in the absence of any other economic theory or political analysis the laws of supply and demand make sense. It is a neat and coherent body of theory implying that society is an organism based on reciprocal relations. There is no reason to suppose that, insofar as miners thought about this at all, that they did not accept this sort of thinking. The view is certainly consistent with the Methodists' image of society. (The market enabled men to develop their talents and measure their diligence in economic and social advancement.) "Depression of trade" is the reason given by owners for putting men out of work, the trade cycle is something objective and external which we can not control. The depression can not be controlled, but the owners do the best they can to relieve local suffering. The owners thus act "reasonably" and there are no grounds for conflict. It seems also that Pease and Partners individually were more reasonable than the owners collectively.<sup>77</sup> Severe violence broke out during the 1879 strike at Esh Winning, Quebec and Waterhouses, but it was directed against other miners who accepted the new, un-negotiated and "unreasonable" agreement that the owners' federation was trying to impose.\*<sup>78</sup>

It is out of the typical social relations of patronage and paternalism, with liberal economics and Liberal politics ideologically in the forefront,

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\* We would be naive to assume that the owners thought the market was completely free, when they themselves formed cartels and kept the price of coal up. They also sold coal to themselves; Pease and Samuelsson supplied their Middlesbrough and Newport iron works with coke from the Valley (at a favourably low price). It is difficult to assess the effect of the prevailing economic orthodoxy; the owners may have believed the market was free and yet still restricted it. This was the way in which they exercised the freedom they enjoyed.

against a background of relative industrial prosperity, that our Methodist leadership emerged.

Before moving to a consideration of the early leadership (1870-1920) we should note that the Methodist churches seldom expressed any collective political opinion. Between 1892 and 1932 the Primitive Methodist Quarterly Meeting passed sixteen resolutions for forwarding to the Prime Minister and local M.P's. Eight were on temperance, three on gambling, two on the Education Bill and Act (1902-1906). Two were on wages and the standard of living (in the 1920's) and one on peace in 1919. They did not feel a responsibility constantly to comment on public affairs, but on nearly three quarters of the occasions when they did, it was on the questions of drink and gambling. The District Meeting observed in May 1911 that the Eight Hours Bill had upset weeknight services. This District Meeting also commented that the Primitive Methodists belonged too much to one political party, but that they were social reformers, not politicians.\*<sup>79</sup> In Waterhouses the Methodists clearly were very much of one party. In 1911 a Waterhouses and District Branch of Young Liberals was formed. The Hon. President was John Wilson. The officers of Young Liberals and committee numbered twenty two; of whom eighteen were Primitive Methodists (and two Wesleyan Methodists). The list included not only the names given below but also the School Attendance Office, the Headmaster and a clerk (who was to become Manager of the Waterhouses Co-op), all Methodists.<sup>80</sup> The Young Liberals met in the Primitive Methodist Schoolroom. The earlier Quebec Liberal Association had Primitive Methodists as President and Secretary (only four officers are recorded).<sup>81</sup>

At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century there were only two major political parties. The reasons for the Methodists being

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\* i.e. Being of the Liberal party did not count as "politics", as Liberalism was not regarded as political.

Liberal are well-known, but are underlined by a letter from a Sunderland Wesleyan Methodist Minister in the Durham Chronicle of 24th December 1909. He believed that politics should be kept out of the pulpit, but draws readers' attention to four points:

1. The Tories are a drink supported party.\*
2. The Tories were enemies of religious liberty (the writer was presumably thinking of the 1902 Education Act).
3. "Tariff Reform" meant making the rich richer and poor poorer.
4. The Tories were against government by and for the people.<sup>84</sup>

In the unopposed bye-election of 1915, on the death of John Wilson, S. Galbraith was Liberal candidate. His nomination papers were signed by 24 Methodists out of 38 nominators. "Hammel, Harrison, Dack and Matt White were all friends and Liberals and known by John Wilson. Matt was a great follower of John Wilson (who preached at Bourne)."<sup>85</sup> In the 1890's and 1900's the Primitive Methodist Ministers were active Liberals. The Minister at the time of the 1902 Education Act had been a "passive resister" to the Act and such an active Liberal that he had chaired a Liberal meeting before preaching his first sermon.

The brief biographical notes which follow (Figure 3) are based on newspaper files, interviews, and Minutes of Societies and Quarterly Meetings. Accurate dating is not always possible; two or three "spot dates" are often all we have to guide us. The notes are not exhaustive, other Methodists are

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\* "By the end of the century it [the drink trade] probably was contributing heavily to Conservative Party funds and nearly every public house had become an unofficial Conservative committee room for after 1872 a positive mania for licensing reform seized all sections of the Liberal Party."<sup>82</sup> or "In the public houses, therefore, the Conservatives had a nice little chain of political fortresses, where their cause was loyally upheld by poor men in their cups."<sup>83</sup>

occasionally mentioned in the press, as for example when Pease and Partners Temperance Missionary (Dack) chairs a Liberal Meeting; G. McLane is Lodge Treasurer and Sunday School Superintendent, but these men are not mentioned as often as those listed. The rule of positive identification is always used; some community leaders are thought to be Methodists, but there is no documentary evidence. Other Methodists are thought to have had important roles in the community and again there may be no written evidence; in neither case is the person cited. This table will thus under-represent the influence of Methodists.

FIGURE 4: The Old Liberals

NAME	OCCUPATION	SOCIETY	O F F I C E S   H E L D				OTHER
			LODGE	PARTY	LOCAL GOVT.	CO-OP	
J. HALLELL d. 1931	Shopkeeper	PM Esh Winning		Committee of Esh Winning Young Liberals 1911	Liberal Coun- cillor (1910) Guardian		Chairman of Corcn- nation Cttee 1911. Ratepayer's Deput- ation 1911. Military service Tribunal 1916.
JOSEPH HARRISON d. 1910	Shopkeeper	PM Esh Winning Trustee. Circuit Steward			Liberal Coun- cillor (1910) Guardian		President of Flower Show 1901, 1903, etc. Active against Education Bill 1902-1905.
ISAAC JOHNSON d. 1952	Coal hewer	PM Waterhouses. Sunday School teacher. Society and Circuit Steward Sec. & Treasurer of Trustees.	President & Secretary	Liberal		Waterhouses Co-op Cttee	
TOM PEARSON d. 1920	Checkweigh- man	PM Waterhouses Choirmaster	Permanent Official - checkweigh- man secret- ary - sec. MPRF (1902)	Vice- President Waterhouses Young Lib- erals 1911.	Councillor 1904 Chair- man of UDC Durham Guardian	Co-op Cttee until 1903. Chairman of Waterhouses Co-op 1894	Director of Water- houses Popular Building Society. Sec. Flower Show 1903
DAVID CHEEK d. 1923	Coal hewer	Uncertain. Did not attend Sons all PM's Quebec.	Treasurer 43 years. Delegate	Quebec Li- berals (committee and speaker)	Quebec Council 1901		Citizen's League (anti-Education Bill)

ROBERT BARTEN d. 1923 left Cornsay for Durham 1909	Miners' official	MNC Cornsay & Durham. Sunday School Supt. Preacher	Checkweighman Secretary Sec. Aged Miners Homes DMA Executive MPRF Executive	Liberal	Chairman Cornsay Parish Council County Cttee. for Esh.	Member Esh Co-op Cttee.	Grad President of Oddfellows. Active Temperance worker. Education Cttee. of DCC.
SAM DOVE killed in Cornsay Colliery 1933 or 1934	Hewer Checkweighman	PM Esh Winning probably left or expelled c. 1915. Preacher; Trustee. Christian Endeavour National Delegate 1902.	Lodge Secretary			Waterhouses Co-op Cttee. 1903	Club Cttee. (This was probably the occasion of his withdrawal from Methodism)
JOHN HENRY <i>(d. 1930's or 1940's)</i>	Deputy	PM Waterhouses Trustee		V-President Spennymoor Lib-Lab Assoc.	Liberal Councillor 1905. Guardian for 23 yrs. J.P., Chairman UDC 1912-14.	Co-op Cttee.	Military Service Tribunal 1916.
ROBERT MACDONALD (last heard of 1926)	Hewer	PM Quebec. Evangelist Preacher Temperance IOGT	Sec. MPRF 1903 Checkweighman	Liberal - Sec. Quebec Libs. 1903 and then ILP			Sec. Aged Miners Homes. Active Good Templar
MATTHEW WHITE <i>d. 1932</i>	Hewer	PM Waterhouses Trustee Circuit Steward. Delegate to Conference 1932	Lodge Chairman President 1915 MPRF Cttee 1902. Aged Miners Homes Cttee. Lodge Sec. for 32 yrs	V-President Waterhouses Young Libs. V-President Spennymoor Lib-Labs 1919. 1926 Labour	Councillor, Guardian, J.P.	Waterhouses Committee	Committee work, especially interested in hospital care.
ARON RICHARDSON d. Oct. 1936	Hewer	PM Quebec Preacher (S. S. teacher at Waterhouses until 1904)	Lodge Chairman	Liberal, then Labour			

WILLIAM FOSTER left 1920's	Colic-Burner (official position)	FM Esh "inning Preacher				Waterhouses delegate to CPS	Sec. Citizens' League. Active temperance worker. Tried to start League of Nations work in villages. Pacifist
J. JOHNSON	Hewer?	IM	Treasurer	Young Liberals Committee	Parish Council 1901		
J. FITZPATRICK	Small runner	PM Waterhouses Preacher			Parish Council 1901	Co-op Cttee. 1902-(1915)	
JOSEPH STEPHENSON	Hewer?	FM Waterhouses Preacher		Liberal	U.D. Coun- cillor County Magis- trate, Guardian		

Abbreviations: MPRF Miners' Permanent Relief Fund  
IOGT Independent Order of Good Templars (a temperance organisation)  
S.S. Sunday School

### 3. Industrial Leadership

The respectable Methodist leadership was in a position to exercise a substantial influence on industrial relations in the villages. We have already seen that leading Methodists held key posts in the union and the local politics. They were likely to exercise a collective influence also; for example, from 1913 the President, Secretary, Treasurer and Delegate of the Waterhouses Lodge of the Durham Miners' Association were all Primitive Methodists. In 1917 at Esh Winning the Financial Secretary, Treasurer, the pit inspectors and at least one committee member were Methodists. We know, therefore, from the positions that they occupied that the Methodists were influential.<sup>86</sup> We may project from their general social, economic and political views their likely day to day dealing with work-mates and management. Only participant observation or detailed written records would have given us the material we require for a positive analysis.

We have to rely therefore on the accounts of those who claim to remember what happened. Memories tend to be general; they do not recall specific details of actual transactions at the place of work (even if they were observed in the first instance). The more politically active respondents characterise the old leadership as "peace at any price" men, who believed that half a loaf was better than no bread at all. This is an interpretation of conciliatory attitudes as much as an account of actions.<sup>87</sup>

Whilst it remains virtually impossible to reconstruct day to day relations at the place of work it is possible from direct accounts, comments passed and impressions gained in the course of research, to build up a picture of the Methodist leaders' behaviour. The interpretations that respondents put upon this behaviour is also indicative of the expectations raised in the minds of observers by the Methodists' actions.

Politically the leadership was anti-socialist. At the meeting at which Matt White and John Henery were elected Vice-Presidents of the

Spennymoor Lib-Labs,<sup>88</sup> Sammy Galbraith (Durham Miners' Association Secretary) spoke against nationalisation. Galbraith spoke thus at a time immediately prior to national discussions within the Union of the possibility of extra-parliamentary direct action by the men in favour of nationalisation. Galbraith was "the last survivor of the old official regime in the Durham Miners' Association". A disciple of John Wilson, and William Crawford, "his allegiance brought him into conflict with the new school of Socialist ideas ...". In 1926 Robert Barren, a life-long Methodist and Liberal who had been checkweighman at Cornsay from 1890-1910 before moving into full-time County politics, often expressed strong disapproval of the General Strike. Furthermore Barren "... was a strong critic of the advanced theories in the Labour movement" (socialism.)<sup>89</sup>

Under the Liberal leadership in Esh Winning and Waterhouses there does appear to have been a more than average reluctance on the part of the men to use the strike weapon in the pursuit of industrial disputes. For example:

TABLE 2: 1909 National Strike against Reduction of Scottish Miners' Wages

	For the Strike	Against	% for Strike
National	518,361	62,980	89%
Durham County	25,103	2,786	90%
Esh Winning	211	88	70.5%*
Waterhouses	140	69	67%*
Hansteels	365	41	90%
* Significantly different from County vote at $P > 0.001$			
Source: Durham Chronicle 30.7.09			

TABLE 3: 1912 Minimum Wage Strike Ballot

	For Strike Action	Against	% for Strike
National	445,801	95,919	82.5%
Durham	57,490	28,504	66.5%
Esh Winning	124	153*	44.5%
Cornsay	154	68	69%
* Esh Winning was one lodge out of six voting against in a total of 62 lodges.			
Source: Durham Chronicle 29.1.12. Figures for Waterhouses and Hamsteels not given.			

TABLE 4: 1912 Minimum Wage Strike; Ballot to continue strike

	For Continuation	Against	% Continue
Durham	48,828	24,511*	66.6%
Esh Winning	219	325	40%
Waterhouses	141	137	50.5% <sup>1</sup>
Hamsteels	282	103	73%
Cornsay	191	82	70%
* There was only a 61.5% poll in the County			
<sup>1</sup> Significantly different from County vote at $P > 0.001$			
Source: Durham Chronicle 5.4.12			

The percentage of lodge members voting for strike action is considerably lower than the national and county average for Esh winning and Waterhouses

whilst Hamsteels is on the average in 1909 and exceeds it in 1912. It is also interesting to note that Esh Winning almost doubles its turn-out to vote on end to the 1912 strike as compared with voting for the strike in January.\*

At Esh Winning the checkweighman and Lodge Secretary from the first World War until after the 1926 dispute, Sam Dove, was addressed by his Christian name by the manager. It is said that he tended to accept what was said by the management when bargaining and that he "never did his homework". The union official who made this latter comment took up a case which the Secretary had not pressed and won it for the men. In praising the work of Barren and Richardson at Cornsay one (non-Methodist) ex-miner commented that they "knew their facts" and "could talk Curry off his feet". The ability to stand one's ground in an argument is a highly prized quality that does not seem to have been lacking amongst leading Methodists. Interestingly enough Dove was not a leading Methodist, he ceased to be very active in the chapel and eventually became a "club man".

In Waterhouses the Primitive Methodist leadership was dominant in the lodge and the village from the 1880's. In 1891 and 1892 Tom Pearson was Checkweighman during the strikes. In spite of Crofton's allegations of presumptuousness (p.97) Pearson seems to have been a very moderate leader who brought his men out on strike in a quiet and undramatic manner.

After a brief stoppage at Esh and Waterhouses in 1891 the men agreed to keep the colliery open; "This may be a certain extent to be attributed largely (sic) to the tact and business qualities of the gentlemen who met, amongst whom we may mention the local Secretary, Mr. Thomas Pearson, in whom

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\* Few figures such as these quoted can be obtained as it was not, and still is not practice to publish separate colliery voting figures. The figures quoted were improperly released to the press.

the men have an able representative."<sup>90</sup> We have already seen that the 1892 strike was quiet and orderly under Pearson's leadership in Waterhouses (p.98 ).<sup>91</sup>

Matthew White was Pearson's successor. He was allowed what the men saw as favours by the management (being allowed to leave the pit early to catch the Durham 'bus for example). The greatest favour received by White was that of not having to retire at the age of 65.

When Ryle took over at Pease and Partners as local manager the management committee said that Waterhouses would "be alright", "We've always got on well with Matt White" (reported by manager's confidential clerk to a Union official). Even after a period of industrial conflict the Methodist leaders still tried to maintain friendly personal relations with the managers, they seemed to feel that personal relations transcended economic conflict. Also the local colliery managers were of long standing in the locality like the Methodist leadership. When Mr. Palmer retired, a collection of over £150 was made, and at the presentation three Methodists made speeches. First Matt White on behalf of the Waterhouses workmen; "Mr. Palmer was a gentleman, ever courteous when they had met him, and he hoped his successor would follow in his footsteps".<sup>92</sup> Sam Dove spoke on behalf of the Esh Winning miners, and Isaac Findlay (a Methodist) for the Ushaw Moor men. Events such as these, perhaps based on genuine affection for a good manager, could not fail to compromise the leaders in the eyes of the men after later events.

In 1926 the police felt that their job was relatively easy in Waterhouses.<sup>93</sup> Matt White discouraged the harassing of blacklegs and maintained the very strictest good order within the Lodge. In fulfilling a peace-keeping rôle Matthew White was acting out the rôle prescribed for the local leadership by the D.M.A., but he was also acting according to his own definition of his rôle.<sup>94</sup> Few police were stationed in Waterhouses

during the dispute (see Chapter VIII).

Mutual respect, friendship, or even the exchange of favours does not necessarily mean that either side is failing fully to represent its own interests. The personal reciprocity built up might nonetheless from time to time make it difficult to pursue interests. Friendly personal relations between managers and union leaders are more easily maintained in relatively prosperous economic circumstances. The various comments on Pearson indicate that the main area of conflict was over the scope of union intervention, each side having a slightly different idea of where negotiation became interference with the operation of the market.

We have found no evidence to suggest that good personal relations prevented the driving of a hard bargain by either side. The ability to drive such a bargain may have been a part of the basis for mutual respect. But it is quite clear that the good relations were likely to be re-interpreted when the men seemed to be losing their claims. The compromise settlements of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth brought some benefits to the men; when they ceased to do so the men were suspicious of the leaders' relations with the management. However, there seems to be little justification for calling Methodism a "blackleg religion".

We conclude therefore that in the economic circumstances of the last quarter of the nineteenth century and in the first few years of this, the Methodist union leadership showed the following characteristics. Firstly it was deferential in its attitude to the management. Secondly in this situation the congruence between Methodist individualism and current economic thinking reinforced faith in the operation of the market. Industrial relations were seen as a series of compromises within the market context, involving degrees of reciprocity which were reinforced by the paternalistic outlook and actions of the owners and managers. The union leaders' outlook was essentially personalistic and traditional; the union

leaders, for example, were never able to see themselves as representing one class interest against another in a wholly impersonal economic system - all their traditional relations with the owners and managers militated against this. We will see in Chapters VIII and IX the extent to which the outlook of this leadership became irrelevant to the changed economic conditions of the twentieth century.

Before the first World War the old leadership was beginning to clash with the politically conscious younger men. By 1907 the Durham miners were asking for a living wage and were rejecting the market thinking of the Liberals.

The local Liberals clashed with the politically conscious younger men:

"Matt White's sons and the Bailey boys used to ask questions at political meetings (all parties). Matt called them hot-heads and agitators. He was often distressed by the attitude of the young people in the Union. The older Liberals kept the younger element in check at Waterhouses."<sup>95</sup>

One of the "younger element", whom we will consider presently, experienced this opposition;

"Matt White was a big Liberal and so was Sam Dove. We started selling The Herald; there was much opposition to it, but this was toughest in Esh Winning and Waterhouses ... Bill Harrison was Liberal, and his friends. They insisted that religion and politics did not mix. But it was their politics that was under attack."<sup>96</sup>

This conflict had consequences for intra-chapel affairs; "Ben Bailey was left off the (Primitive Methodist) Trustees for being left wing"<sup>97</sup> (an opinion confirmed as fact by one of the then Trustees).

At Quebec the conflict was more open;

"The time of the service was changed to the morning [this finished the ILP group meeting in chapel ... the opposition probably thought that religion and politics were separate. Ralph Hayson was in opposition and William Harrison - but not Aron Richardson; he made up his own mind."<sup>98</sup>

We will see that some of the leading Methodists, especially those in the union became Labour supporters in the 1920's nonetheless, but as late as 1927 all the officials of the Esh Winning Liberal party were Methodists.

A retired Minister perceptively stated the ethical basis of Methodist Liberalism and typifies the Methodist Liberal for us:

"Liberals in the chapels thought individual life more important than social life ... they tended to stop at the individual level. Drink was the greatest social evil, so they tackled it ... But they didn't always look at the social conditions which drove men to drink ... individualism was a stage in their history - that's why they were free churches."<sup>99</sup>

Footnotes to Chapter VI

1. DC 29.3.72 for a description of crowding in village housing see DC 7.6.01
2. DC 6.6.73
3. DC 16.10.64
4. DC 31.3.76
5. Ibid., 23.6.76
6. Ibid., 2.4.09
7. Interview 27.8.66
8. Ibid., 14.8.68
9. Ibid., 14.9.67
10. Ibid., 17.3.67
11. Ibid., 1.9.66, 16.6.67
12. Ure, The Philosophy of Manufacture, pp. 354-5
13. Ibid., 14.11.66
14. See, for example, Interviews 5.8.68 and 8.4.67
15. Comments made to the author in the course of conducting a small survey by questionnaire in 1969.
16. Interview 25.7.67
17. DC 25.8.71. See also Lloyd, The Story of Fifty Years of Crook Co-operative Society, Chapter XV. Prominent Waterhouses Methodists appear in this account of the leadership of the Crook Co-op.
18. Interview with the late J. Patterson Barton 28.1.67
19. Interview 5.8.68
20. Ibid., 16.8.66
21. Ibid., 25.7.67
22. See note 15 above
23. Interview, 14.8.68
24. Ibid., 1.6.68
25. Pope, Millhands and Preachers

26. Minutes of various Preachers' Meetings record examination failures.  
See for example Minutes of Waterhouses Primitive Methodist Circuit,  
Quarterly Meeting, 1892 - entry for 29.8.11.
27. Ibid., 11.3.19
28. Interview 28.7.69
29. Interview 21.7.67, DC 13.1.03. Also a letter in the possession of  
Mr. Stan Harrison, from John Wilson to Mrs. Harrison on her husband's  
death, refers to Harrison as "my dear friend".
30. DC 27.9.12
31. Ibid., 30.11.1900
32. Interview 16.4.67
33. Drawing on interviews, conversations, observations, etc.
34. Interview 6.7.66
35. Interviews 29.10.66, 21.7.67, 14.9.67. It has been suggested by  
some respondents that this kept the children economically incompetent,  
and was a disadvantage when they married, and when they became chapel  
officials.
36. Interview 25.8.66
37. Ibid., 25.7.67
38. Ibid., 14.9.67 (retired village doctor)
39. Ibid., n.d.
40. Ibid., 7.7.66
41. Ibid., 2.1.69
42. Ibid., 1.9.66
43. Loc. cit.
44. Ibid., 22.7.69
45. Ibid., n.d. July 1969
46. Loc. cit.
47. Ibid., 19.12.67
48. Ibid., 7.7.66

49. Ibid., 1.9.66
50. Ibid., 15.10.66
51. Ibid., 1.9.66
52. Ibid., 16.4.67
53. Ibid., 14.11.66
54. See note 15 above
55. Longmate, The Waterdrinkers, Chapters 23-24
56. Davies, E.T., Religion in the Industrial Revolution in South Wales, pp. 56-58
57. Interview 19.8.68
58. Ibid., 26.7.69
59. Ibid., 25.7.67
60. Ibid., 9.8.68
61. Ibid., 14.8.68
62. Pope, op. cit.
63. Personal communication from a friend of J. H. Love
64. Lockwood, Sources of Variation in Working Class Images of Society
65. Minutes of Evidence: Group A, Volume 1
66. Interview 19.12.67
67. DC 9.5.79
68. Ibid., 18.5.79
69. Ibid., 21.3.79
70. Ibid., 10.1.79
71. Ibid., 2.5.79
72. Ibid., 9.5.69
73. Ibid., 21.5.80
74. Ibid., 7.7.76
75. Ibid., 4.10.12
76. Garside, W.R., The Durham Miners 1919-1960, p. 176
77. Ibid., 2.5.79, 9.5.79

78. Ibid.
79. Ibid., 5.5.11
80. Ibid., 7.4.11
81. Ibid., 3.4.03
82. Longmate, The Waterdrinkers, p. 232 (Longmate's emphasis)
83. Dangerfield, The Strange Death of Liberal England, p. 15
84. Ibid., 23.11.09
85. Interview with White's son 21.7.67
86. Interviews 24.7.69, 25.7.69, 26.7.69
87. DC 27.6.19
88. Wearmouth, The Social and Political Influence..., p. 128
89. Ibid., 7.7.27
90. Ibid., 30.1.91
91. DCA 18.3.92 and Chapter III
92. DC 14.11.19
93. See note 15 above
94. Garside, op. cit., p. 200
95. Interview 21.7.67
96. Ibid., 19.8.68
97. Ibid., 15.10.66
98. Ibid., 27.7.67
99. Ibid., 19.12.67

CHAPTER VII

THE RADICALS AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

1900-1926

The Durham miners were, in Gregory's terms, amongst the "front-runners" in the development of the Labour vote in British mining. Given that Methodism was such a strong integrating force in the Liberal establishment at local and regional level, the important question is; in what ways could Methodism be other than an inhibiting factor in the mobilisation of the Labour vote, and, or, the development of class consciousness?

We can put these questions into a more concrete form by asking firstly what alternative responses to social and economic conditions were found amongst Methodists. If some Methodists were more radical than the old Liberals: which Methodists were they and in what circumstances did they develop radical outlooks? Also we might ask whether Methodism was influential in the activities of these radicals as a source of ideas, or as an organisation. In other words we need to distinguish between Methodist beliefs as a source of radicalism and Methodists as the carriers of radicalism.

Secondly we might ask how radical a change in popular opinions was needed in order to mobilise a vote for the Labour party. Did the Labour movement convert thousands of miners and their wives to a class-consciously proletarian view of the world, or did it make an attempt to capitalise on other, perhaps more traditional, sentiments? Was the Labour movement thus a continuation or a modification of Liberalism, or was it something entirely new?

The order of these two questions would be reversed if our main interest was in political sociology. We would ask the political question first and then within a discussion of this explore the contribution of Methodism. But as our focus is on religion we turn firstly to the question of the alternatives to Liberal-Methodism that might be found within Methodism. In one of our villages

we find an early tradition of radicalism (of which few records have survived) and then at the beginning of this century there is an organised challenge to the Liberal-Methodists. Fortunately some of the documents generated by this local movement have survived. They enable us to tell a story about men and ideas that stand in sharp contrast to those discussed in the previous chapter and they show us something of at least one set of politically radical responses to social and economic affairs amongst Methodists, although not held amongst Methodists alone.

### 1. The Radicals

The earliest record of radical non-Liberal political activity is found in Joseph Taylor's diaries for 1895 and 1896. In May 1895 Ed. Cooke read a paper to the Hamsteels Bible Class, entitled The Independent Labour Party. In August he read another The Defeat of the Liberal Party. A year later Richard Burleigh, School Attendance Officer and Primitive Methodist local preacher, read a paper on Christian Socialism. In November 1896 a visiting preacher speaks on a week-night to the subject Monopolists or the Multitudes, Which? The full membership of this Bible Class is unrecorded but amongst its active members were: John Harrison, Ed. Cooke, and T. Gott. John Harrison was a miner and Primitive Methodist local preacher. Cooke, a smallholder, was not a Methodist; people who knew him have variously described him as a Fabian, a non-Christian, a materialist. This latter term was used by an aged informant who attended an Improvement Class with Cooke. Gott was an active trade unionist and a founder of the Waterhouses Labour party, but he had no apparent religious affiliation. It seems that Cooke and Gott attended the Bible Class for the sake of the discussion.

The main Labour activist at the beginning of this century was a Roman Catholic, Johnny Holmes; he was also active in the Irish League and trade union affairs. Holmes spoke in Durham in 1901 of the need for Labour to make small beginnings in local affairs,<sup>1</sup> in May of 1901 Holmes was Labour

candidate for the Esh Guardians, but he was defeated by the Primitive Methodist draper, Joseph Harrison.\* In the Parish Council election he was defeated by the Liberal miner, David Cheek. Holmes was eventually elected and was active on the Council into the 1920's.

Radicalism was thus not the monopoly of Methodists in the Valley. Holmes plainly was a representative of another religion with a strong associational basis and he belonged to an ethnic group with a radical tradition. Non-religious people too were drawn into the activities of radical groups. Nonetheless when we turn to Cornsay Colliery we find a rather remarkable situation. The Cornsay Independent Labour Party\*\* was formed in 1913. Its core membership was as follows:

FIGURE 5 : The Quebec Radicals.			
Name	Occupation	Religious Affiliation	Other
John George Harrison	School teacher	PM preacher	son of John Harrison
Robert & Cuthbert McDonald	miners	PM evangelists	Bob became Checkweighman
Alf, Charlie, Jack & Joe Cheek	miners	PM's	sons of Cheek (above)
George E. Pritchard	miner	PM preacher	After Lakin, Lodge Secretary
Joe Taylor	Master's weighman	PM preacher	diarist above
Jimmy Lakin	miner	PM organist	Lodge Secretary
Jack Lowden	miner	PM	
George Craddock	miner	PM	
George Gibbon	miner	Spiritualist	
T. Clough	miner	WM preacher	Esh Winning Lodge Secretary

The near monopoly of the ILP by the Methodists is confirmed by all informants.

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\* Not related to John Harrison.

\*\* Its main activity and membership was in Quebec; we refer to members as the Quebec radicals.

The most plausible explanation for this state of affairs would seem to be that the Methodists had a ready-made organisational basis (in this case the Bible Class) for forming a political group. The Methodists were prominent amongst the early ILP members because it was in the course of their religious activities that they discussed political matters, "converted" one another to new political ideas and then sought out potential converts. We might not have found such an apparent dominance of Methodists in this kind of group if we had studied more of such groups in a wider range of villages.

This group's early activities were mainly the organisation of meetings and distributing leaflets and newspapers, they are also alleged to have stopped people on the streets to discuss politics. Mrs. Pankhurst, Ben Tillet, Tom Mann and Jim Larkin ("the Irish agitator") were all brought up to the village by the group. The group sold the Clarion, The Labour Leader and later the Daily Herald, around the villages.

J. G. Harrison and George Craddock were first politically active and continued to be so in the women's suffrage movement. Esther, J.G.'s\* sister, a school teacher; Connie Ellis, school teacher; and Bella Faulkner, later Mrs. J. G. Harrison, were the leading suffragettes. A fourth woman in the group, Emma Lowes, a school teacher, married George Craddock. Esther and Bella were Methodists and (initially) non-militants. Connie was a militant, often a victim of physical violence. All three were under police surveillance at the beginning of the 1914-18 war.

Thus J.G. gained his early experience of political activity, not in a socialist movement but with the suffragettes. J.G. was the intellectual

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\* We will refer to J. G. Harrison by his familiar name, used by himself (Jay Gee) and friends. The following section draws on the very extensive collection of letters, essays, speeches and notes left by J.G. when he died in 1921 at the age of 31. I am most grateful to J.G.'s daughter for allowing me access to all these papers. I hope she will write her father's biography.

of the group. Whilst training at Bede College, he read Tolstoy and developed an interest in pacifism and socialism. His reading widened in the next few years (1910-c1915) to include among other authors: Thoreau, Emerson, Henry James, F. D. Maurice, Edward Carpenter and Robert Blatchford. During a period of further study he became apparently almost obsessed by George Fox's life and writing. At Woodbrooke College he also became interested in the late eighteenth century radical rationalists: William Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft, Tom Paine and Shelley. He was also interested in the Diggers and utopian movements. The Quebec Independent Labour Party, many of whom were brought up on evangelical Methodism and respectable Liberalism, must have found the mixture of free-thinking, rationalism, transcendentalism, anti-authoritarianism, pacifist Christianity and Christian socialism bewildering but intellectually challenging. J.G. himself left Methodism in 1911 after being almost convinced of the truth of Christian Science, he drifted back into Methodism and then first became a Quaker as a result of the churches' attitude to the 1914-18 war, and then a member of the Brotherhood Church - an anarcho-Christian pacifist group of Utopians.\*

The fact that he and others were not so firmly integrated into Methodism as the established members is significant. We would expect some of the young Methodists to feel themselves marginal to Methodism given the dominance of the older men who blocked opportunities within the chapels for the younger men. But more importantly we expect political and religious radicals to belong to more sectarian kinds of groups and to be more likely to change affiliation in their pursuit of ethical, political or doctrinal purity.

It is not surprising to find the names of Marx and Engels missing from amongst the influences upon the Quebec radicals. Maurice, Carpenter and

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\* He died whilst helping to establish a rural community with the Brotherhood Church.

Tolstoy can be seen as representing a peculiarly ethical kind of socialism. The radicals, coming from a Methodist background would have been especially receptive to this ethical socialism. The ideas of Thoreau may also have been in harmony with the individualism and libertarianism that was part of Methodism\*. To this extent we see that socialism owed something to Methodism, in that Methodism prepared the ground for the acceptance of one kind of socialism rather than another.

In Quebec J.G. circulated papers on political topics, including his College essays. Respondents agree that although he was a young man among mature miners he impressed and inspired the Independent Labour Party group with his enthusiasm and his new ideas.

A survivor of the group said that they were influenced by both religious and political writers. The group read Blatchford's works, he could remember them discussing Merrie England, and reading and discussing the Clarion newspaper.

J.G. is worth quoting in extenso to illustrate the divergence of his ideas from "respectable" Methodist Liberalism. In a sermon in 1913 he notes that the converted drunkard may be less generous than in his drinking days. Later in the same sermon he says:

"Christians seem to be certain of their own fitness for heaven and their own superiority to the poor people who are supposed to be in poverty because of their wickedness."

He goes on to say that Blatchford's Not Guilty had stirred him for the first time,

" to deep pity and sympathy for the tramp, the wastrel or

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\* If we compare, for example, Thoreau's Civil Disobedience with Sorel on the General Strike in Reflections on Violence we see the qualitative contrast between a strongly ethical and individualistic political outlook and a radical and violent class consciousness.

the slum dweller ... My early Christian training led me to believe that such people suffered through their own faults"

In some notes of the same period, he writes,

"The historian Myers referring to the early prophets of Israel says: These prophets were the first socialists. Theirs was the first passionate plea for the poor, the wretched and the heavy burdened'."

"How much do business methods conform to Christ-likeness?"  
... "The unfoldment of good is the true business of man and in this pursuit none can lack God's outstretched arm."  
"The finger posts of duty and expediency seldom point in the same direction. Compromise can never lead to the attainment of the highest ideals."

Citing Mary Wollstonecraft's reply to Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France J.G. sums up his own attitude to property;

"Security of Property! Behold in a few words, the definition of English Liberty ... But softly - it is only the property of the Rich that is secure; the man who lives by the sweat of his brow has no asylum from oppression."

J.G. said in a letter to "The Brethren and ILP'ers" in 1916,

"to transform (or transmute) the trade union and labour movement. That is probably my life's work - that and teaching men that Good, Truth and Love are all powerful - I want to be convinced, like Keir Hardie of the reality of spiritual things and the unreality of material things."

Even political success would have its problem for J.G. whose concern remained deeply religious; he feared that socialist beliefs would make men too materialistic. How will men believe in Christian Science as long as they are physically, materially and spiritually oppressed by the system - "a nation of Mammon-worshippers?" he asks in 1912. In a fragmentary note J.G. typifies the contemporary political situation, "big headed dwarfs as M.P's, ruling hollow-headed animals".

We are not suggesting that all the miners in the Independent Labour

Party group were convinced by - or indeed fully comprehended - the full range of J.G.'s ideas. He was a mercurial character with an eclectic mind and an almost manic dedication to a set of widely based and changing ideas. He was also very dogmatic ("Christian theology can only be understood by those who are Christians. The opinion of the non-Christian is worthless for he has no first hand experience"). Nevertheless for his friends, who valued education and learning, he spoke with authority, and the range and originality of his ideas must have appealed to them. Given that they were nearly all Methodists they would probably have left the group if J.G.'s ideas had given them offence. But they remained in the group. They could not remain uninfluenced by continuous exposure to such radical ideas.

The ideas put forward by J.G. are eclectic but not haphazard.

1. They contained a systematic and coherent critique of capitalist society. This critique explained both local economic hardships and international conflict.
2. He offered a new and optimistic view of man and a vision of a new social order. This vision was in part put in programmatic terms by the Independent Labour Party nationally.
3. J.G. questioned the social and economic order in religious and moral terms. This discussion was largely rooted in the Bible and biblical allusion. He provided an intellectual and intelligible bridge from traditional Methodist thinking to a more secular political ideology. Religious supporters would be enabled thereby to adopt more radical political views without a loss of faith. In fact they were enabled to express their religious and political views in one language.

The significance of these ideas for the traditional Methodists and for our thesis should be noted:

1. They were a conscious identification of the Gospel with the unredeemed poor and directly challenged Methodist respectability.
2. J.G. offered a direct criticism of the business man, on Christian ethical grounds.
3. Compromise is rejected as the best way forward in social, economic and

political affairs. In that language of class conflict J.G. said, "The interests of a coal owner ... are opposed to those of colliers".

4. J.G.'s free and unorthodox biblical exegesis connected him with the New Theology of J. R. Campbell and the Higher Criticism. He cites Peake as one of the authors who had influenced him. These new religious ideas had already caused considerable friction within the local chapels. This connection re-affirmed for the traditionalists the dangers of abandoning a more fundamentalist position and of adopting a "social gospel". It indicated the possibility of further and more dangerous links between religious and political dissent.
5. Furthermore, the radical ideas contained thinly-veiled promises of social disorder and threats to private property.

In terms of our thesis J.G. is presenting a set of ideas and representing an outlook which is the negation of the principles underlying the social and political gospel of the traditional Methodists. If we had not actually discovered J.G. as a real, historical actor in the Valley we would have devised an hypothetical actor to replace him. We would have done this in order to answer our first question about radical alternatives to traditional, established Methodism. J.G. is plainly making the authentic appeal of the Christian revolutionary to the disinherited. Paradoxically, he also quite explicitly preached Perfectionism. Conventional local preachers do not specifically mention this; but when J.G. does he quotes not John Wesley but George Fox.

This last point underlines a pivotal issue in the whole discussion of Methodism and the working class in the Dearness Valley. The account of J.G.'s ideas and his intellectual antecedents are crucial because in themselves they make a central point in our argument. The socialists in Quebec owed nothing intellectually to Methodism. They communicated in part in the language of the Bible, they discussed their ideas in the Bible Class. They certainly preached the Gospel of socialism with a zeal equal to any Methodist preacher or evangelist (which some of them were). They may have

been saved from a life of degradation and been sensitised to social issues by Methodism. Nevertheless, it remains true that the core of their ideas, the political goals they pursued, as socialists, did not come from Methodism, and were antipathetic to Methodist orthodoxy.

The implications of this for social history and the sociology of religion are of some importance. We note that Wearmouth in commenting on twentieth century Methodism, assumes that the ideals of Methodist radicals came from Methodism, or were at least of a piece with Methodism. Wearmouth's main thesis is however that "Methodism perhaps made its greatest contribution to the advance of the Labour movement in politics by the provision of suitable and outstanding leadership."<sup>2</sup> He lists some of the earlier Liberal leaders in his chapter "Methodism and the Labour Party" and says of them as we saw in Chapter I,

"These men were not revolutionaries, but God-fearing representatives of the working-class interests. By their integrity and uprightness they demonstrated to the rulers of the land that the country had nothing to fear from the leaders of the working-men."\*

We suggest that the Quebec radicals are not the type of Methodists central to Wearmouth's analysis, but men belonging to a tradition of Christian radicalism of which the rulers of the land had much to fear. For it is a tradition which includes insurrection as well as pacifism, and a tradition in which the doctrine of the brotherhood of man might be translated into active levelling.

J.G. appears to overshadow the others in the group because he has left copious records of his spiritual and intellectual career. Jack Cheek read Keir Hardie, Ramsay MacDonald, and his father's law book.\*\* The MacDonalds

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\* Compare Lecky "The History of England in the 18th Century", Vol. III, pp. 145-146.

\*\* A law book would obviously be of great value to a father and son active in Union affairs.

were able public speakers and were much concerned with the miners' cause, but they were not "great readers".\* Nor were the Quebec Independent Labour Party the first radicals in the district. Pyle, an ex-preacher, after an early anti-trade union career<sup>3</sup> became a leader in the valley during the industrial dispute of 1879.<sup>4</sup> Holmes took a leading part in the Durham Miners' Reform Association at the turn of the century\*\* and then entered local politics.<sup>6</sup> The Durham Miners' Reform Association was the successor to the Durham Miners' Progressive Federation, formed in 1898. Both organisations fought Wilsonism and pressed for the democratisation of the D.M.A. They sought a minimum wage for miners, the eight hour day and a more militant attitude towards the coal owners on the part of the union. They were responsible for bringing socialist speakers to the Durham Miners' annual Big Meeting (Gala).<sup>7</sup> J.G.'s father had read a paper on Garibaldi in the Bible Class in 1895,<sup>8</sup> and seconded a resolution at the 1879 strike rally.<sup>9</sup> J.G. said of his father, "Oh that all fathers were as unorthodox as Bella's and mine, who value reason more than the authority of an inspired book or a clerical coat or a tall hat".<sup>10</sup> His mother supported the suffragettes and held radical views if we are to accept the evidence of J.G. in a letter from Burton in 1916; "The good lady here is very much like my mother ... She talks sedition wherever she goes". David Cheek, 43 years Treasurer of the Hamsteels Lodge, was no "respectable" Liberal; he gave his notice ten times at the colliery and William House threatened to bring the whole Durham Miners' Association out on strike when Cheek was threatened with eviction.<sup>11</sup> Cooke,

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\* This informant inherited all Bob's possessions - they included only three or four books.

\*\* Of which Wearmouth says, "... the rank and file rebelled against their officials and threatened to remove them from office, but wiser counsel prevailed..."<sup>5</sup>

the MacDonalds\* and Joe Taylor may actually have constituted an earlier Independent Labour Party group.<sup>12</sup>

With a worsening trade situation, local hardship and the threat of war the socially and politically aware miners gathered around a man who had ideas and enthusiasm, who was able to articulate their fears and hopes. Nevertheless, accounts given by members of the group, its friends and critics, all suggest that it was not a one-man enterprise. The Cheeks and the MacDonalds were to a great extent the most active in organising, and in arguing with miners.

The Independent Labour Party group met at 11.00 a.m. on Sundays in the Primitive Methodist Chapel. The P.M.'s therefore altered the time of a Sunday meeting in order to exclude the Independent Labour Party from the use of the chapel. The group then seems to have met in a bell tent in George Craddock's garden. This tent was also used for an Independent Labour Party summer camp in the Cornsay Valley. The fact that men and women were camping together was another source of offence to the respectable. But the main criticisms voiced were that the group were bringing politics into religion and were splitting the church; more personal comment included accusations of hot-headedness.

The group never actually achieved a big following in Cornsay and Quebec, although individual members of the group held office in the Lodges. The ethical and rather spiritual nature of their socialism probably gave it a limited appeal, even to those miners who were interested in socialism as such.<sup>13</sup> Some others were attached to the fringe of the group. One was J. G. Winter, a talented footballer, a miner, Primitive Methodist, a friend of J. G. Harrison, another was William Cairns,\*\* a Methodist local preacher

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\* The MacDonalds were middle aged by 1914-18.

\*\* Solicitor's Clerk

interested in F. D. Maurice and the Christian Commonwealth Movement.

George Galley, a rather retiring young local preacher joined in with the group, mainly to listen but was seldom very active in the group.

Cairns had been partially alienated from the Methodists. He was a follower of R. J. Campbell's theology, and whilst making a point in a sermon on the offering of Abram's son he was interrupted by James Hammell and told, "Aye hiney if you don't [believe it] you shouldn't be standing there".<sup>14\*</sup> J. G. Winter died in Wormwood Scrubs (from pneumonia) as a Conscientious Objector in the First World War.

It was probably the association of the Independent Labour Party in general and the Quebec group in particular with Conscientious Objection which contributed to their lack of support. Independent Labour Party meetings in other parts of the county were broken up during 1917.<sup>16</sup> It had been suggested by miners that conscientious objectors and sympathisers should be sacked and men refuse to work with them.<sup>17</sup> Connie Ellis's husband suffered this treatment at the end of the war, and like J.G., he became a gardener for a while.<sup>18</sup>

The Cornsay Independent Labour Party represents the most extremely radical response to social and economic conditions in the Valley. There was no communist presence in the district; this would have been an entirely non-religious response. The Independent Labour Party probably carried the "religious" response to its limit. Its programme appeared wholly political but was nevertheless based in a religio-political, moral analysis of society. The step beyond this is a purely political analysis based on ideas of class interest alone.

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\* Campbell's name was specifically associated with socialism as well as the New Theology.<sup>15</sup> Older Methodists report that the New Theology debate severely disrupted the chapels and cost the Methodists a number of preachers.

Two approaches to "the world" are implicit in the division within the Quebec Primitive Methodist chapel:

- "(i) One section very evangelical, drawing a sharp distinction between secular and sacred. Was suspicious of politics, but unconsciously disclosed Liberal sympathies ...
- (ii) Another section saw the relevance of Christianity to all aspects of life and implied involvement in politics [i.e. radical politics] to which allegiance was given."
- (from a letter to the author from a local preacher born in Quebec)

We will suggest reasons for the second response being so powerful in Quebec, below. We have already shown that it was the first response that typified the leaders in the other villages.

We are not saying that the Independent Labour Party alone were caught up with new political and theological ideas. Aron Richardson and Westgarth Adamson, for example, were radical Methodists who did not join the group.

Richardson had been a preacher from the early 1890's at the latest. He has been described by a number of respondents as an intellectual man and he had an extensive library. He was a coal hewer and became Chairman of the Cornsay Lodge. He was a stalwart of the Labour movement and had a "rebel temperament".<sup>19</sup> Richardson believed the Independent Labour Party group to be agitators and he did not join them, but nevertheless never opposed them. It seems that whilst he did not approve of the particular expression of radical views he agreed with many of the basic ideas. Since he was a man of considerable authority, his tacit agreement with the Independent Labour Party probably carried weight locally.

Westgarth Adamson was a miner and preacher all his life. We have discussed his preaching in Chapter IV. His son gave an account of how Westgarth's religious views engaged with politics:

"We wanted to bring in the Kingdom of God industrially and

socially in five minutes - we were extreme. My father walked the street for two years - standing up for righteousness ... some members of the chapel could not understand. The wouldn't speak to Dad - their husbands were officials and the like ... We couldn't reconcile the Gospel and the social situation. The church didn't rise up. There were external forces on the churches and chapels - they enjoyed the owners' patronage. In the 1920's the Chairman of [a] Methodist Rally was Secretary of the Consett Iron Company. I told them, 'It's only because he gives you a two guinea contribution'.

He [Westgarth] was preaching at Sacriston once. The colliery owner was called Brass.\* Dad preached on Balam and the Ass. 'It takes a lot to stop some asses talking today', he said - Brass was there, and very angry.

He hit out at bad housing in his sermons. There was tremendous opposition to 'politics from the pulpit'. He always preached with urgency - now is the day to get it done ... He was a close friend of Peter Lee.\*\*<sup>20</sup>

Adamson expressed his radicalism within the chapel, and later the local Labour party; his comments were directed towards concrete areas of reform. He offended the respectable Methodists who thought he should not preach politics from the pulpit.

In Cornsay Labour activity centred around Aron Richardson. In Quebec we have not been able to elicit the formal structure of the Labour party; J.G. and Bob MacDonald died in the early 1920's; Lakin seems to have died or moved away also. Holmes and Cud MacDonald remain active in the village into the 1920's. They both appeared in a delegation to Lanchester Guardians to ask for men to be given work. Holmes said that "if the government could

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\* Pronounced with short, northern 'a'.

\*\* Peter Lee was a local preacher and Union leader. He was a member of the national executive of the M.F.G.B. and first Chairman of a Labour County Council (Durham 1920). Peterlee New Town is named after him.

spend millions in killing people they might spend some money in keeping them alive." MacDonald hinted at possible disturbances in the area.<sup>21</sup> Their political vigour seemed unabated. The Cheeks and George Pritchard were active in the Lodge and Labour politics. After 1926 Pritchard moved to Blackhall where he became Checkweighman, County Councillor and Alderman. He became Chairman of the Fire Brigade and Education Committees. He was nominally a Methodist until he died, but only appeared at chapel for special events. Alf Cheek became a deputy at Cornsay (respondents allege that he "changed sides"), one brother was killed in the war, another became interested in Spiritualism, another became (and still is) a Mormon, the fifth ceased to be active in chapel and Lodge.

Prior to 1914-18 the Independent Labour Party had been a non-respectable body and the Labour cause weak. The activists had been committed socialists, hostile to the established local leadership, which was Liberal and largely Methodist. After 1918 the Labour party was sufficiently respectable for non-socialists to join. Furthermore the rank and file of miners had been swung to the Labour party. This had been by no means a local Methodist effort, but an effort organised by the Labour party nationally, by the Durham Miners' Association, and many local activists who were not Methodist (not even nominal Methodists). If the established local leaders wished to maintain their positions they would have to become Labour.\* Joining a party to keep in power does not necessitate a change of political ideas. Thus Matt White, for example, was ideologically a Liberal to the end of his days.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, the men who supported Labour in the early 1920's had, as late as 1916, returned a Lib-Lab M.P. although not without dispute, Galbraith being more Liberal than Labour.

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\* The dates of the deaths of the Methodist leaders indicates that generational factors are also important. The older men were being replaced on their death by men with new ideas. For some of these older men the problem of an ideological change did not arise.

There was a brief upsurge of radicalism amongst the young people of the Waterhouses Primitive Methodists in the mid 1920's. These were the members of the Young People's Institute whose question on the socialism of Christ and Marx was cited in Chapter V.\* Of the five young men who were known to be very active participants, all left the village, four as school teachers, one as a Co-op employee.

How has this discussion of the Methodist radicals advanced our thesis? Although the overall economic situation was much the same in all the villages there were factors which made Quebec different from the others and which have thereby enabled us to make an important comparison. In Quebec the identification between owners and Methodists was not so complete. J. B. Johnson was acknowledged to be a good employer but he was a brewer, a Tory and an Anglican. Prima facie there is reason to suppose that he would not command such Methodist respect as Pease, Ferens and Love. It would be more acceptable to take up a critical attitude towards Johnson in a discussion of local affairs. Here then we see the power of religion to reduce class antagonism itself reduced when religious and ethical beliefs are not shared between potentially conflicting parties.

Social conditions, especially housing, were worse in Quebec than in any of the other villages in the Valley, and officially recognised as such.<sup>23</sup> When Esh Parish Council and Hamsteels Lodge sent a deputation to Lanchester Rural District Council asking for adoption of Part III of the Housing of the Working Classes Act their plea was rejected on the grounds that rate-payers should not have to meet the mine owners' responsibility and that the future of Hamsteels pit was uncertain. The mine owners and shopkeepers were the main ratepayers. Joseph Harrison and the Esh representative voted against the

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\* This group submitted questionnaires to COPEC on social and economic conditions in the villages, and possible remedies. Unfortunately the questionnaires have been lost.

suggestion.<sup>24</sup> The Durham Chronicle also suggests that Quebec was an especially bad area for drunkenness and fighting; quite often fighting was between miners with Irish and English names. Thus paternalistic ownership and co-operative union leadership had not authenticated themselves in the relative improvement of social conditions.

The Vicar of Hamsteels, said to be an eccentric (and a teetotaler), was very contemptuous of the working class and poured scorn and abuse upon them at the time of the General Strike. He also used his parish magazine earlier to attack the miners. For example:

"The saddest event during the past month has been the Welsh Miners' Strike. These men have been enjoying higher wages than almost any other class of workmen. Their average wage has been from £3 to £4 a week and many are earning as much as £5 and £6 a week.

Yet the Welsh miners wanted more, and took advantage of their country's peril to demand higher wages and to go on strike to compel the country to grant their demands.\*

The Socialists in Wales have shown that they care nothing for their country, that they are ready to endanger the whole of England and the liberties of Europe, in order to enrich one already highly paid class of workmen at the expense of the rest of the community."<sup>26</sup>

"It is a matter of regret, that inspite of every effort on the part of the management, Hamsteels Colliery is laid off ... It is a direct result of the class warfare which has been so assiduously preached to the working men of late. If by continually demanding more wages and doing less work the men succeed in ruining the masters, they can only succeed in ruining themselves, and the whole of the country."<sup>27</sup>

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\* The question of miners' wages, raised by Revd. E. C. Rust became a matter of controversy in the national press. The ILP group invited a speaker to Quebec to reply to Rust. Rust made much of the fact that the speaker came on a Sunday, thus proving that Socialists were also Sabbath-breakers.<sup>25</sup>

Rust's activities made a positive contribution to the polarisation of the village and to the development of conflict. One may need a psychological explanation of his apparently very personal hostility to the miners, nonetheless he was associated with the owners, and Anglicanism was associated with owners in general. So, psychological factors aside, we have a very clear illustration of the way in which religious differences can reinforce economic and political conflict.

It is to be expected that Quebec would be a place where radical views - already spreading throughout the country and the nation - would find ready acceptance. We are suggesting that poor environmental conditions and relational factors (relative social disorganisation, less sympathy between owner and men, more open hostility from the Church, differences with the established Liberal-Methodist leadership) produced a leadership more radical than elsewhere in the Valley, and this from early on. Interestingly enough Pyle, and twenty years later, Holmes and David Cheek were not Methodists. Whilst Holmes, for example, represents Hamsteels in the Durham Miners' Reform Association, Esh Winning and Waterhouses are not reported in the press as being amongst the villages represented at all the Durham Miners' Reform Association rallies.

All these factors together make the political situation in Quebec more "open" than in the other villages. Given this fairly open situation, with no Liberal-Methodist hegemony in 1920, the situation was more suitable for a spontaneous and radical response to the worsening economic situation. There had been an attempt to awaken the Methodist social conscience at the turn of the century (Hugh Price-Hughes and the Forward Movement). The New Theology and the Higher Criticism were opening up Scriptures afresh to Methodists. The local chapels which had leaders like Harrison and Hammel either remained passive or actively and successfully resisted the intrusion of new ideas (as in the case of Cairns). Into the Quebec situation comes an intellectual, a man with ideas which pulled together all the themes; economic distress, a

passive church, new trends in theology. This man was John George Harrison. We are not here advancing a "great man" theory, nor suggesting that J.G. was a charismatic leader; only that he was a catalytic actor, on whom discussion centred and around whom action precipitated in a situation that was ripe for action given the factors outlined above.

All these factors taken together would seem to go some way towards explaining the difference between the villages on the Valley bottom and Quebec. This analysis appears to be a post facto (and rather ad hoc) explanation, this is intentionally so. The group is politically deviant from the pre-1914 norm of Liberalism and therefore needs a special explanation.\* In a sense there is nothing at all post facto about the explanation: having studied the other three villages we might have asked the question, "What would be the necessary pre-conditions for radicalism in a Deerness Valley village?" Our list of factors, inferred from an analysis of the other three villages, would have included all the factors listed above for Quebec.

It is difficult to carry out mental experiments with the course of European history as the main variable; but without the first World War and the rise of the Labour party as a viable national working class party, what would have happened to the Quebec radicals?<sup>28</sup> Given continuing economic decline, two possibilities are plausible:

1. It would have continued as one of a possibly increasing number of socialist cells, perhaps contributing to the rise of a nationwide socialist movement. The interesting problem is then whether it would have become less overtly religious as it attracted wider support and grappled with more wholly secular issues?
2. It could have become a wholly religious movement of a sectarian kind, possibly a millenaral movement. We have indicated that the Cheeks and J.G.

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\* After 1920, it might have been more accurate to refer to Waterhouses as deviant, and needing explanation.

were very susceptible to the claims of "fringe" sects, and thus the group was open to millenarian inspiration.

Two historical events make this an idle historical speculation, the rise of the Labour party and the economic death of Quebec in 1926. Also socialism was discredited by its association with the Conscientious Objectors and the Russian Revolution.\* Sociologically the speculation is not idle as the Quebec radicals are a classical example of a religio-political protest amongst the disinherited, the progress of which raises important questions both for the sociology of religion and political sociology.

## 2. The Rise of the Labour Party

The Reverend E. T. Davies in his Religion in the Industrial Revolution in South Wales provides us with an interesting and highly relevant comparison.

"The political wing of Welsh Nonconformity became more and more clamant during and **after** the 1880's, and their programme became less and less relevant to the problems of an industrial society ...

The year 1898 may be accepted as a dividing line. For twenty years before that time the miners' Unions were weak. This was the period which, politically, can be called the 'Lib-Lab' period in politics and the 'sliding scale' period in industrial relationships. 'The Rhondda and Aberdare (Miners') Association were specifically devoted to encouraging mutual understanding between employer and workman, and the other district organisation pursued the same policy'. It was the period in which most miners' leaders came from the ranks of Welsh Nonconformity.

... 'Political nonconformity and industrial paternalism was still

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\* Horror stories were common in the post-1921, as was preaching against the "Bolshevik Menace" (e.g. the Cheeks and George Pritchard). Atrocity stories became part of the stock in trade of Conservative party speakers, officers returning from service with the White Russians, and the Vicar of Hamsteels.

the most important factor in the political structure of the valleys' [But] ... new voices were heard in the coalfield. Keir Hardie, and not Mabon, became the new symbol ... The new local leaders ... were originally chapel men ... These men were the product of the chapels, their early training left an indelible impression upon them. Socialism and class warfare were the key-notes of the new industrial gospel.

As the Welsh miners developed their own organisation the politics of Welsh nonconformity became more and more irrelevant to them."<sup>29</sup>

The Methodists in Durham were concerned not with disestablishment, as in Wales, but with temperance. Industrially, they were concerned with cordial relations between masters and men. Economically they believed in laissez-faire liberalism. These became increasingly irrelevant to the Durham miner.

The rise of the Labour party in County Durham is a story which will not be told here. We will only examine the Methodist contribution to the party's local development. Gregory in The Miners and British Politics 1906-1914 remarks that whilst the Lib-Labs of 1910 may have been regarded as well to the left in their younger days, as an entrenched leadership they 'rejected Socialist doctrine and fiercely resented and resisted the concomitant idea of a new and independent working-class party'.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, according to Gregory many associated socialism with the 'eight hour day' - which the Durham hewers rejected. In accordance with Liberal laissez-faire economic thinking they also rejected the notion of the minimum wage when coal was competing in a foreign market (as in Durham).<sup>31</sup> The leaders were anti-socialist, John Wilson was described by Gregory as 'pugnacious and sharp tongued ... a staunch Liberal and a determined opponent of socialism.'<sup>32</sup> Wilson, the Member of Parliament for most of our district,

"Once remarked that he would never vote for a working man who represented working-class interests alone, and, with a touch of unconscious humour added that he did not believe that 'a man should go to Parliament for that and put himself on a level with the landowner and aristocrat'."<sup>33</sup>

The M.F.G.B. was the last big Union to join the Labour Party but John Wilson and other miners' leaders refused to sign the party's constitution and the officials remained 'steeped in Liberalism'.<sup>34\*</sup>

By 1914 Wilson was standing as Lib-Lab candidate for mid-Durham, without Union sponsorship. Arthur Henderson held the Barnard Castle seat for Labour, unsponsored. He had agreed to support the Lib-Labs in 1903.<sup>36</sup>

But socialism and the Labour movement were growing from the 1890's onwards.

"By 1910 the Durham and Northumberland coalfields had become hotbeds of socialist activity ... By 1895 there were a number of ILP branches in existence in Durham and within a year or two they were beginning to plague the DMA with resolutions calling for independent representation for Labour in Parliament and an eight hour day in the pits."<sup>37</sup>

Some of these Independent Labour Party groups were ephemeral. There were few in the Deerness Valley area but Taylor's diaries suggest that there might have been local groups. The Quebec Independent Labour Party started by J.G. in 1913 was probably a renewal of a defunct group. The activities of John Holmes, and the local agitation of the Durham Miners' Reform Association may both be indications of earlier Independent Labour Party activity in the district.

By 1905 Socialists were being invited to speak at the miners' Big Meeting and Wilson was using his monthly circular to counterattack ideas put across in this way. The Independent Labour Party Annual report for 1906 notes that 'the county of Durham especially is in the very van of the movement for Labour and Socialism'.<sup>38</sup> 1908-1909 marked the break of the Durham miners with the Liberals.

In the 1910's the Liberals had to start forming election committees and a party machine as when "officials went over to Labour the Liberals suddenly

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\* A similar situation was to be found in Derbyshire.<sup>35</sup>

found themselves without any electoral machinery at all".<sup>39</sup> This explains the formation of Liberal Associations in the Deerness Valley in 1910; it is a mark not of the strength of Liberalism but its weakness. As we have seen, the officers of the Liberal Association were overwhelmingly Methodist. We therefore conclude that leading Methodists rallied to the Liberal cause when large numbers of miners were moving towards Labour.

The foundation dates of the local Labour parties are not known, but are thought to be soon after the first World War. In Waterhouses, of the eight earliest founders remembered, four were certainly Methodists, another may have been. Of the ten in Esh Winning, three were certainly Methodists, two more may have been. None of these Methodists was a leading figure in Methodism, although one was a Wesleyan Methodist local preacher. Gott, one of the founder members, was not a Methodist, but as we saw above he had attended the Bible Class. The party started with meetings in members' houses, as had the chapels 65 years before. They eventually acquired Labour Halls, two being ex-Methodist chapels.

The main organiser was Towers, a local school teacher, who was not a Methodist. A Wesleyan Methodist local preacher was an important activist, becoming a full-time party organiser after he was 'sacrificed' in 1926.

The influence of Methodism on the rise of the Labour Party was mainly negative. Clough, the Wesleyan Methodist local preacher, Labour Party Secretary and election Agent, said how he used Biblical texts in political speeches and that he advised speakers to exercise care in addressing "Methodistically inclined" audiences.\* Will Lawther, when a Labour candidate, according to Clough, was a heavy drinker; knowing the area "as Methodist and devotional, in my opinion as Secretary of the Party, something had to change". According to Clough, Lawther gave up drinking during the campaign. Towers,

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\* Based on a series of conversations with Clough in 1966.

the schoolmaster, once made a very violent pro-Labour speech, saying that "what we need are sten-guns" to change society. Clough followed with a speech based on the Sermon on the Mount in a deliberate attempt to win back Methodists who he felt would have been offended by the violence of the first speech.

In speaking for Turner Samuels, an early Labour candidate and a Jew, Clough pointed out that Christ was a 30 year old Jew and that he left his mark on the world. Again, he was making a deliberate appeal to Methodist sensibilities.

In Clough's opinion the major factor in the growth of Labour was the winning over of Liberals, especially Lodge officials. This would seem to be an accurate judgment, supported by Gregory's work. Labour would have grown faster and been more influential if the Waterhouses officials had "come across" sooner. One of the key officials to whom Clough referred was Matt White.

Instead the Labour party won the rank and file of the Durham Miners' Association to the party and it was this which in Waterhouses brought Matt White into the party. Rough handling by the police may have helped the process but Matt was faced with the possibility of losing his local positions if he did not "take the Labour ticket". The situation in Esh Winning is not quite so clear as the Lodge leadership was weak and vacillating and no point of change from Liberal to Labour can be ascertained. With the defeat of Liberalism at the County level it was inevitable that such men as Aron Richardson should let their support go to Labour whilst perhaps resisting the claim of socialism. It has not been possible to unravel developments in Quebec. The Independent Labour Party group "finished when the Labour party came into the scene; voluntarily disbanded - it joined in the larger movement rather than keeping on as a single handed group".<sup>40</sup>

Thus after the war the Independent Labour Party members joined the Labour Party, as it was clearly going to be the working class's party. The Party's

appeal, as a mass appeal, did not need to be to the Quebec radicals, nor to early supporters and sympathisers like Adamson and Richardson but to the men at the valley bottom. The reforming, pro-working class aspects of the Party made it possible that it would gain power. The Party readily gained support in the Valley. Financial support came from the Durham Miners' Association. Formal membership on an individual basis was low. There were no street meetings. If the Quebec Independent Labour Party acted like a Labour sect, the Labour Party acted as the church. It was a merging of unequal forces. The Quebec socialists and Adamson and Richardson, who joined the Labour Party, were the sort of men who traditionally man the activist wing of the Labour Party, without achieving positions of power or influencing policy.

We are not concerned with the history or sociology of the Labour Party but these latter points raise two issues of some importance for any study of the Labour Movement.\* Firstly what was the effect on the Labour movement of an influx of local Liberal leaders into the party machine? The Independent Labour Party was a small band of devoted volunteers, committed to socialism, study and debate, inviting distinguished speakers from all over the country to Quebec. They were replaced by a party machine controlled by the Miners' Union and by "converted" Liberals, a machine concerned with gaining and keeping power, not with political education and controversy.

Secondly, what was the effect of the Labour movement seeking mass support amongst Methodists? Current Labour Party opinion in the Valley is that all the Methodists vote Labour. This is probably true and the researcher hears many expressions of loyalty to the party from the Methodists. Nonetheless, a number of Methodists say they would vote Liberal, if there was a candidate. A leading Methodist contested a local election in 1970 (the first election in 30 years),\*\* he stood as an Independent and polled over

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\* There is no good history of the Labour Party in County Durham.

\*\* Brandon, No. 2 Division

1,000 of the 3,000 votes in a contest with Labour. Furthermore Methodist support for Labour is not support for socialism. Many express deep misgivings about the Welfare State: they allude generally to people who will not work, and to specific persons who live completely without working, and to the fact that they themselves surmounted the problems of economic hardship by their own efforts. Men and women steeped in a religion based on the notion of individual salvation, personal responsibility and self-help do not seem to accept even mildly collectivist ideas very readily.

The Labour-Methodist has a real problem for he needs to reconcile two sorts of ideas. Firstly his religious ideas, rooted in "faith" and the notion of individual salvation. Secondly, political ideas based on rational conviction and grounded in the collective solidarity of working men. These ideas are not easily reconciled within Methodism. They are more easily reconciled in a more radical, millenarian tradition, as we have seen with the Quebec Independent Labour Party. The Methodist can possibly compartmentalise his religious and political views under the relatively unexamined assumption that the two sets of ideas are mutually supportive. Some contemporary Methodists adopt this attitude, which is quite tenable in practice as there is no political discussion or activity in the district which raises any difficult questions which might test this stance.

An alternative is to integrate politics and religion. We have seen that there is no easy fit between Methodist ethical individualism and Labour collectivism. The best example of this attempt at reconciling politics and "respectable" religion is Westgarth Adamson who was both politically and theologically radical. He remained an active preacher and Party worker throughout his life and was a parish Councillor. He is our limiting case of the possibility of a radical reconciliation, but he plainly found it an uneasy reconciliation.

Adamson, and men like him, rejected the evangelists who looked for heaven

in the skies. This was "as bad as going to the pub - escapism", according to his son.<sup>41</sup> But this points to a third possibility; that is to drop politics altogether and concentrate on religion. Tom Turnbull and others seemed to have arrived at a wholly pietistic non-political position, which exemplifies this possibility.

Finally, a religious person could drop, or stop thinking about religion (whilst maintaining some associational contacts perhaps). The three County Alderman from the district were all ex-chapel men,\* though one continued to attend anniversaries and special events. They became "communal" rather than "associational" adherents. They needed to be seen at the communities' important rituals (funerals, Remembrance Day etc.) in order to be seen as part of the community. But they did not need to think too deeply about religion as such.

Institutionally, Methodism and the Labour movement were segregated from the beginning. It is in the nature of a mass party that it should be engaged in activities which Methodists will find objectionable. Firstly, the party must have its base in a mass following; and the masses in the twentieth century are to be found in the Club, not the chapel. Secondly, it must raise funds. Thirdly, it must provide a social life for its members. The second and third functions can both be performed through the activities traditional to mining communities, drinking and gambling. Fourthly, the party claims a universal base for membership which transcends religious divisions. The party also provides its own pastoral service through Councillors and the M.P.'s "surgeries". Many immediate problems can be solved by party officials; housing, social services and questions about education are all within the scope of the local Councillor.

Thus the political party takes on a life of its own. Today the Labour

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\* Reddens, Clough, Pritchard

party is very small (perhaps eight paid-up individual members) with an active women's section. Bingo and raffles are both social events and means of raising funds, dances and collections are another means of raising funds for the Old People. Old People's outings and treats seem to be the main focus of Labour party activity. We might note in passing that these activities are very much an extension of the solidarities of the old mining community; the Party does not, for example, organise a youth club or any youth activities. Only the one local election mentioned above has been fought in 30 years.

Drinking and gambling are major deterrents to Methodist participation in the life of the Party. The Party is largely a social club and the Methodists have their own social life.\* Methodists could be party officials and one of the local M.P's is a Methodist local preacher, but they are served by the Party, they are not active participants in its daily life. In fact no active Methodist is active in local Labour politics.

What we are describing is the differentiation of political and religious institutions. Each institution now has a separate life of its own; both have social and pastoral functions. Both pursue goals, but on the basis of different belief systems. The process of differentiation began with the rise of socialism and accelerated with the development of a mass Labour party. The Labour party is now theoretically free to organise the people of the Valley on a class basis, if it wishes. The chapels meanwhile are free to get on with the task of converting the Valley to Christianity untroubled by problems arising from the political responsibilities of its leaders.

We remarked earlier that the chapels were virtually indistinguishable from organised Liberalism. This is only partially true in so far as the Union

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\* One fund-raising activity which the Labour Party copied from the chapels was the provision of a beer-tent at the Miners' Gala. (Although the Methodists provided tea.)

Lodge was the key organisation for choosing a Parliamentary candidate and bringing out the Liberal vote. It was the overlapping of Lodge and chapel leadership which reinforced the position of the Liberals. We have also noted that with the capturing of the Union Lodges by the Labour party a Liberal party machine had to be established.

The Labour party never seems to have had a large number of individual members. The Union Lodge was the party administration, the officers of the Lodge were often the officers of the party also\*. Most miners were members or regarded themselves as members because of the Union's affiliation to the party.

Thus we see the Labour party as a political extension of trade union activities, and it is not unreasonable to assume that the political consciousness of Labour supporters was an extension of trade union consciousness. This does not necessarily represent a marked difference from the days of Liberal domination; under both Liberal and Labour leadership trade union and political activities were bargaining activities conducted according to the rules of the market.

The Party pursues this-worldly goals in a realistic manner and it develops a machinery for achieving them. Religious goals can be pursued as a matter of choice, in other institutions. Political radicalism (socialism, for example) does not engage with the patrimonial structure of the party; like religion it becomes an alternative to party politics or an additional interest.

The Liberal party did not want to be a party of working class members it only wanted working class votes. Therefore the problems of a mass organisation did not arise for the Methodist Liberals as chapel leaders could act as

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\* The radicals thus entirely lacked an institutional base on which to build political power in the valley.

'brokers' for the Liberal Party. The Methodist leaders willingly played the twin roles of religious and political leaders and in doing this they adopted a position without inconsistencies and arousing no individual conflicts at the level of belief. What we are saying therefore is that empirically, in the historical situation we have described, the only fully consistent positions were those of the traditional Methodist-Liberals. Liberalism and respectability "fit" together. They are congruent with the social expectations we have described as typically existing between owners and the men's leaders in the late nineteenth century. This political outlook based in mutual trust (and a belief in the efficacy of the market) became decreasingly credible in the face of the owners' demands in the twentieth century, as we will see in the next chapter. The rise of a mass party entailed the ambiguities and personal conflicts described. New leaders emerged from wholly independent working class organisations. Methodists had to choose the extent of their political involvement. The direct influence of Methodism in politics declined and after the first World War declined further insofar as Methodism was identified with Liberalism.

Nonetheless, any party seeking mass support in a Liberal stronghold such as the Deerness Valley would have to win over men who still largely believed in arbitration rather than power politics, and others who thought that both private property and the market were good, and the means to general prosperity. Some compromise with Liberalism was necessary. (Such a compromise would have been unacceptable to the Quebec Independent Labour Party if they alone had made the choice.) The mass movement would also have to be "respectable" in terms of the social status of its leaders, their acceptability to those in authority and the reasonableness of their policies. After 1918 the Labour party had sufficiently met these requirements to be able to win a majority of the votes in the Valley. It is significant nevertheless that it mattered to Labour men that Matt White "took the ticket". As a Liberal he might have

split the vote. As a Labour man he enhanced Labour's chance of winning and increasing their respectability. Even if as a Liberal he was sure of crushing defeat, he was still worth winning over to Labour's side.

The Labour movement had to exist in a culture influenced by Methodist social thought.\* It is our contention that the cultural influence and the leadership of the Labour movement has been more Liberal than socialist due to its Methodist origin. About a third of the men in the population, or their families, were directly involved with Methodism. Men may have resisted Methodist teaching on drink, they may have believed the Methodist leaders to be politically "soft". The men who came into the Labour party were, nonetheless, men who had been to Sunday School and who believed more in fair play than in revolution. They still probably believed that labour and capital could work for the common good, even if government intervention was necessary to curb the power of capital. After 1926 they were convinced of the power of the market and the impossibility of a socialist response to it. The prevalent compromised and non-socialist attitude was epitomised by the present Labour Party Agent, who attended the Sunday School and chapel in his youth, when he said, "I'm an Englishman first and Labour Party second, because I believe in the royal family". His religious observances are now confined to the annual Remembrance Service and the miners' service on Gala day.<sup>43</sup> But these are speculative propositions supported only by the common-sense observation of the peculiarly Liberal, non-socialist nature of the Labour party in County Durham, and supported by the observations of David Martin and Henry Pelling on the "striking continuity" between the Labour party and nineteenth century liberalism.<sup>44</sup>

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\* In Derbyshire the Labour party had to modify its attitude, "in the face of a large accession of Lib-Lab M.P's and their supporters".<sup>42</sup>

Footnotes to Chapter VII

1. DC 19.4.01
2. Wearmouth, The Social and Political Influence ..., p. 245
3. DC 18.4.73, 9.5.73, 9.5.79
4. Ibid., 25.4.79, 2.5.79, 9.5.79
5. Wearmouth, The Social and Political Influence ..., pp. 112-118
6. Ibid., 16.8.00, 15.3.01, 24.5.01
7. Welbourne, p. 304, and Allen, The D.M.A. 1869-1969, p. 17
8. Taylor, Diary entry 29.1.95
9. DC 2.5.79
10. Letter from Wormwood Scrubs, 21st October 1917
11. Interview 19.8.68
12. Ibid., 1.9.67
13. Pelling, H., The Origins of the Labour Party, p. 151
14. <sup>In Deben</sup> Ibid., 29.10.66, 2.8.68
15. See, for example, J. Robinson Gregory, The New Preachers' Magazine 1907, pp. 104-115 and 193-199
16. DC 5.10.17
17. Ibid., 22.6.17
18. Interview 18.9.67
19. Ibid., 29.10.66
20. Ibid., 9.8.68
21. DC 15.9.21
22. Interview 4.10.66
23. DC 7.6.01, 27.12.01. See also Report of County M.O.H. to Lanchester R.D.C., Minutes of Lanchester Rural District Council, 4.3.96
24. DC 5.7.01 and Minutes, 2.5.01, 30.5.01
25. St. John the Baptist's Church, Hamsteels, Parish Magazine, August 1924
26. Ibid., August 1915
27. Ibid., August 1924

28. For a history of the radicals within national Methodism, see Edwards, M., Methodism in England, Chapters X and XI
29. Davies, Religion in the Industrial Revolution in South Wales, pp. 160-161
30. Gregory, The Miners and British Politics, 1906-1914, p. 7
31. Ibid., pp. 64-65
32. Ibid., p. 69
33. Ibid., p. 66
34. Ibid., p. 79
35. Williams, The Derbyshire Miners, Chapter XII
36. Gregory, Ibid., p. 72
37. Ibid., pp. 67-68
38. Ibid., p. 69
39. Ibid., p. 80
40. Interview 29.7.67
41. Ibid., 19.8.68
42. Williams, op. cit., p. 513
43. Ibid., 26.7.69
44. David Martin, Pacifism, pp. 88-89. Pelling, op. cit., p. 150

## CHAPTER VIII

### METHODISTS IN ACTION

#### THREE POLITICAL CASE STUDIES

So far we have examined the social characteristics of three groups of actors, the coal owners, the old Liberal union leadership, and a younger group of radicals. We have also provided a brief economic background to the situation in which they found themselves. We thus have our dramatis personae, and expectations of the parts they will play in any action. This chapter is a discussion of three series of events, in which Methodists found themselves faced by situations in which they were required to have a policy for action in "the world". The Deerness Valley Methodists were not much involved in day to day matters of national politics, but they were directly involved in three issues - or groups of issues. Firstly the question of the activity of the state and religious liberty; secondly war and the freedom of the individual conscience; and thirdly industrial and class conflict.

We have shown that Methodism is a form of inner-worldly asceticism. So we now discuss the relations of inner-worldly asceticism to the actions of the Methodists by giving an account of their response to three situations.

1. The 1902 Education Act and the 1904 Licensing Bill.
2. The 1914-18 War - specifically the issue of conscientious objection.
3. The events of 1926.

#### 1. 1902 to 1905 The Education Act and the Licensing Bill

1902-05 was a period of unprecedented political agitation amongst Methodists. Two issues dominated the period: Temperance and the Education Act of 1902.

The Conservative government introduced a Licensing Bill in 1902 which tightened the laws against drunkenness. Attempts to reform the licensing laws had been made since 1871; the 1893 attempt had, according to Longmate,

helped bring down the Liberal government.<sup>1</sup> The central issue in 1902-4 was whether publicans, who through no fault of their own lost their licenses as the laws were tightened, should be compensated from public funds. In 1904 a bill was introduced by Balfour which acknowledged the renewal of licences as a right and which made provision for compensation for non-renewal. "It was the hangman's whip of the publicans' vote that brought them [the Tories] to the brewers' heel."<sup>2</sup>

The 1902 legislation was welcomed in Durham where, the Durham Chronicle noted "... cases of persistent drunkenness are very numerous".<sup>3</sup> A Deerness Valley Temperance and Prohibition Association was active in the Valley in the period and it held rallies at which prominent speakers like John Wilson were engaged.<sup>4</sup> The Good Templars and Bands of Hope also maintained a high level of activity.\*<sup>5</sup> In 1903 the Methodists were amongst those opposing a licence for a new public house in Esh Winning.<sup>6</sup> Pressure seems to have been so effective that at the end of 1903 the Working Men's Clubs conference at Waterhouses discussed, amongst other things, whether they should run candidates for Parish and County Councils.<sup>7</sup> The 1904 Bill was not welcomed by the Methodists.

On 30th May 1902, a public meeting was held to protest at the new Education Act. In July the Waterhouses and District Free Church Council met in Hamsteels to protest. Joseph Harrison was on the platform and James Fitzpatrick took the chair in the absence of Revd. R. W. Huddleston. Various resolutions were passed calling for the complete withdrawal of the bill.<sup>8</sup>

There seems to have been little action until the levying of the rates began (just as in the mid-1960's there was little discussion of the issue until the Anglican Union vote was actually due). Detestation of drink

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\* The Durham Chronicle being Liberal probably also maintained a high level of reporting of temperance activities.

seems to have been overcome temporarily when a meeting was held in the Stag's Head; the meeting was chaired by the Wesleyan Methodist station master and was addressed by the Wesleyan Methodist minister. Objections were raised against the Education Act on the grounds that religious tests might be held for entering Training Colleges. Also that non-conformists would be barred from many posts unless they were prepared to be religious hypocrites. Ratepayers were to be taxed without representation, it was said, for it was not democratic to have four out of six school managers appointed in accordance with schools' "Trusts".<sup>9</sup> A similar meeting in the following week included an attack on the Church of England as intolerant, against reform and advocating dear bread during the Corn Law Debates.<sup>10</sup> Anti-Anglican rhetoric reached heights of hyperbole "... in catechisms taught in Church schools a question is asked: 'What is sin?' and the answer given is 'Attending a Dissenting chapel'."<sup>11</sup>

In August a Citizens' League was formed to oppose the Act; the President, Vice-President and Secretary were all Methodists, (Wesleyan Methodist, Methodist New Connexion, Primitive Methodist respectively). The league issued a manifesto and the Primitive Methodist minister (Mr. Huddleston) spoke saying that he "could not voluntarily pay for the dissemination of that which was the direct opposite to what he believed".\* He went on to defend passive resistance to the Act;

"passive resistance to encroachments on conscience was a religious duty, and they would resist these unjust claims upon them in as lawful, constitutional and Christian manner as they possibly could".

It was a bill "to strengthen and uphold the bulwarks for the Church of England and to obliterate non-conformity". Browell, the Undermanager of Cornsay and a New Connexion Methodist, moved a resolution for passive resistance to paying

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\* Not elaborated in the press report.

rates. Aron Richardson seconded this resolution.<sup>12</sup> In October the League organised a meeting at which various M.P's and County Councillors failed to appear to argue their position on the Act.\* Local Councillors did appear. At the end of the meeting D. Cheek seconded the motion "that we agree to carry out the objects of the League".<sup>13</sup>

In June 1904 Ralph Hayson wrote to the Durham Chronicle from Quebec, "I am deeply surprised at the inactivity, the want of agitation, and the want of public meetings in the district of Waterhouses, Esh Winning and Quebec, in relation to the Education Act and the Government's Licensing Bill ..."<sup>14</sup>

Three weeks later the League meets again and the last note of the year's campaign comes in October with the auctioning of Huddleston's watch which had been seized in lieu of a rates payment.<sup>15</sup> He alone of the ratepayers (miners were not ratepayers) carried out "the objective of the League". The last sign of the campaign is a letter saying that passive resisters were not given a fair hearing at Lanchester Police Court.<sup>16</sup>

We have no means of telling how far the rank and file Methodists were involved in the League, although Methodist leaders were obviously amongst the leaders of the League. Chapel activities went on much as usual, camp meetings, evangelism, chapel renovations.<sup>17</sup> Some informants, mature men at the time, do not remember anything of the League and its purpose at all.

The turn of 1904-05 was marked by a bitter and public dissension amongst the Primitive Methodists. The conflict was mainly conducted through the readers' letters columns of the Durham Chronicle. A group of Primitive Methodists had proposed to start a Temperance Hall in Esh Winning. Huddleston publicly criticised this. He said there was no guarantee that the hall would not be used for dancing or theatrical companies. He pointed

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\* Joseph Pease opposed the Act but died on his 75th birthday in 1903. Beamont, his successor as M.P., was also against the Act.

out the danger of trying to rival the Working Men's Clubs and said that the gospel alone was reducing the evils of drink. From this point the dispute developed into a fury of vituperation, personal abuse, accusations of lack of charity, malicious misrepresentation, resignations and disclaimers.\*<sup>18</sup>

Amongst these letters are two which epitomise Methodist ethical and political thinking respectively. Both are written by Huddleston:

1. "I stated that amusements which impaired the mental powers, blunted the moral sensibilities, and injured bodily health came under condemnation. Amusements that swallow up the hours sacred to sleep are to be censured.

The midnight dance comes under condemnation ... Amusements that arouse and stimulate the lower passions are always to be shunned ... The family relation as the ordinance of God lies at the foundation of all human society. Prof.

Fairbairn says: 'We must get back to the old staid simplicity of the home. Increased domesticity means the increase of all finer affections'. To help people to value the beauty of the home, to perceive its possibilities of happiness, and to achieve both its discipline and its truest pleasure is of immensely more importance to me than seeking to subordinate God's idea of the family to the social club."<sup>19</sup>

2. (Quoting Westcott, Bishop of Durham and a temperance advocate) "The supremacy of Christianity as the only true remedy goes to the core of all social evils, no less than to all doctrines of God and the single soul.' It approaches the reformation of society through the reformation of the individual."<sup>20</sup>

One striking aspect of this series of events is that the Methodists were so individually committed to a position on the Temperance issue that they could let differences of opinion become public disputes. In this way they severely

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\* The Durham Chronicle sensing the entertainment value of these letters allowed them to run on for nearly ten weeks - with occasional promises of "more next week", etc.

reduced their effectiveness in campaigning against the 1904 Act.

The 1906 Liberal government was eventually to remove the offending parts of the Acts. Nationally Methodist moderation in response to the Liberal victory seems to have gone to the wind:

"After the elections were fairly on the way, and since they have closed, many of my correspondents have jubilantly referred to them. 'Hallelujah', says one, 'Righteousness once more on the throne. Rascals on the gibbet'. 'What a splendid General Election!' exclaims another. 'Prayer and work have done great things for the party of progress'; and so they go on. It is a time to be merry. After the wilderness the Promised Land. And we have entered Canaan at last, in such a goodly majestic fashion; The Amorites, the Jebusites and all the allied forces of Reaction have been scattered and slain. Few of the enemy have escaped the edge of the sword, the wrath of the people. We will rejoice and be glad."<sup>21</sup>

It should be noted that political conflict is described in terms of rascals and the forces of righteousness - not an analysis of the structure of social and economic relations. Furthermore the Methodists, in the moment of triumph, reasserted their belief in the need for social harmony. This harmony should be maintained, if necessary, by the government restraining the rich in the use of their riches:

"The new government and the new Parliament have before them enormous arrears of social reform to make up ... Nothing worse could happen to our country than the outbreak of class wars between the "have nots" and the "haves". Such wars can only be prevented by the government and Parliament seeing to it that the "haves" shall not use the power of their millions to grind down the "have nots" to starvation level ... and by seeing to it that the "have nots" who are honest, thrifty and willing to work should have the chance to earn enough ..."<sup>22</sup>

Our data on this period are sparse but three points emerge:

1. Whatever the rank and file of Methodism may have thought and done (from Ralph Hayson's comments, and others, they seem to have done very

little), the Methodist leaders became directly and publicly involved in "agitation" over political issues. Furthermore they stated the duty of the Christian to be to resist oppressive laws.

2. Methodist social principles were reasserted; namely that social reform came through individual reform (and that the family is the basis of society) even in discussing temperance, where much pressure was exerted for legislative action.
3. Religious liberty and temperance were both of direct interest to the chapels - they were not "political" issues in the sense of being wholly worldly.

The Methodists and the non-conformist coal owners were united in their opposition to the brewers and to the 1902 Education Act. There was unanimity of ideological interest amongst the Methodists and neither of the issues touched upon the material interests of the average village Methodist. In respect of the Education Act the Methodists believed they were fighting for survival. They saw it as a Christian duty to resist the state when the state so encroached upon religious liberty. They therefore took action through legitimate channels to bring pressure on the government. In fact they helped change the government. The non-conformist response to the Act nationally seems to have been a major factor in the defeat of the Conservative government;

"Non-conformists in every part of the country came forward as Liberal candidates, some confessedly induced to so do by their blazing indignation against the Education Act, but these candidates soon showed themselves to be ardent all-round reformers ... The Free Churches had not been dozing but drilling, and they were now an army fit and eager for the fray ...<sup>23</sup>

The principle of direct action against the state seems also to have been accepted when the survival of the Methodists was at stake. The main form of action was refusal to pay rates, but this was a form of action open to property owners only, so we cannot know how popular such action would

have been.

On the question of licensing the Methodists believed a great moral issue to be at stake. The brewers, in league with the ruling party (the authors of the Education Act), were using the authority of the state for immoral purposes. The Methodists thus felt themselves to be in opposition to a conspiracy against the public welfare, a conspiracy which would also undo years of work by the Methodists.

Again political action was confined to legitimate political processes. The re-election of the local Liberal M.P. was a foregone conclusion. The only direct action therefore could have been either symbolic protests, or meetings and rallies organised in support of the Liberal candidate. The Methodists were already active in the Liberal party, the symbolic protests came in passing resolutions on Temperance and asking individual members to renew their efforts to extend the membership of local Temperance organisations.

There was no need, in either case, to organise direct action (civil disobedience, etc.) until such times as the legitimate means of influencing the state had been tried. There were realistic hopes that the return of the Liberal party would settle both issues to the satisfaction of the Methodists. This was the case, although there was a long delay in fully reforming the Education Act.

The Methodist attitude to the state is made very clear by these events. The state may and should intervene to protect people from their moral defects, and from the activities of the "corrupt monopoly". But when the state actually threatens the religious group, it may be resisted, but this should take a legitimate form in the first instance.

It should be noted that the Methodists do not imply very wide functions for the state. For example although they advocate Prohibition, which would strike at a major capitalist interest, they do not advocate any alteration of

the existing property relations. The positive role of the state is confined entirely to the ethical sphere. The Methodists were only concerned with such issues, not politics as such or economics.

## 2. The First World War

The Methodist attitude to the war was decided at a national level; it was one of support of a war in a righteous cause.<sup>24</sup> Respondents differ in their manner of reporting local attitudes; one, not a radical, said, "The public were gulled, people swept up in the idea of the rightness of the war - God's war. The lead to war came from the tops of the churches".<sup>25</sup> Another put it differently, "Everyone had to do their bit".<sup>26</sup>

What response might we have expected from the Liberal Methodists?

Martin has argued that;

"Liberalism is rooted in two major assumptions. The first is that truth and goodness only require correct exposition in order to be accepted. Thus the primary initiative is assigned to ideas and the central problem located in knowledge and education. The second assumption is that the interests of individuals, classes and nations are fundamentally complementary"<sup>27</sup>

Faced with the reality of a war the Liberal found himself in a dilemma which the advocacy of reason and free trade could not solve. One way in which the Liberal Methodists could reconcile themselves to the war was "by misrepresenting it as a crusade for international righteousness". More succinctly, given that "Liberal idealism either crusades for peace or treats war as a crusade"<sup>27a</sup> the Liberal had to make the bold shift from the advocacy of peace to advocacy of war - no doubt with all the defensive zeal of the convert. Nationally the war was represented as a crusade by Methodism, and by non-conformity in general. The certainty of the crusade was perhaps a little clearer at the beginning of the war than at the end.

Local enthusiasm for the war as the "war mania" spread may be gauged by the high rate of voluntary enlistment. "Some went off thinking, life would

be better in the Army, but soon wished they were back down the pit."<sup>28</sup>

There was a high rate of employment in the mines and employers could claim an exemption from military service for their men. Men who had "signed on" but were not called up could wear special armbands to indicate this. Thus the mustering to the colours of Durham men was enforced neither by law nor economic circumstances. In 1915 the Waterhouses Primitive Methodist picnic was addressed by Galbraith and other speakers. Aneurin Williams, M.P., said to the gathering that,

"Every citizen should make it a bond of honour to contribute to the War loan ... We should not win if we shirked our part. We should win when every Englishman and Englishwoman realised the absolute necessity for sacrifice. If there was no money, there would be no munitions, and greater sacrifice of life would follow".<sup>29</sup>

Other Methodists were actually on recruiting committees; three out of the five members of the Brandon and Byshottles committee were Methodists, including John Henery and Joseph Stephenson.

In accounting for the exclusion of the Quebec radicals from the use of the chapel a respondent commented, "some of the older men didn't agree with the group, quite a few of whom were opposed to the war. Older members favoured the war - they thought it was righteous".<sup>30</sup>

The opposition to the war was, at the time, almost solely confined to the Quebec radicals and their associates. One colleague of the Quebec radicals, who was himself imprisoned, said "all the Independent Labour Party members were anti-war; John George Harrison probably died from his ill-treatment in prison ... Lakin, Pritchard, McDonalds also; Pritchard's brother, J. Pritchard, went to prison as a C.O."<sup>31</sup> Cairns and J. G. Winter were also among the conscientious objectors.

J. G. Harrison is the only member of the Quebec radicals to leave a written testimony of his pacifism. From the sources already cited it is clear that his grounds would be largely religious. Given the nature of the

Quebec group we can assume that some of the others were conscientious objectors on at least a mixture of political and religious grounds. Purely political objections (insofar as motivation can be "purely" anything in such a situation) seem unlikely given that they were all closely associated with Primitive Methodism. They were also, as we have seen, influenced by J.G. J.G. has left copious notes and essays on George Fox, and pacifism; at his tribunal he attributes his pacifism to Tolstoy. In an undated sermon of c1916, he attacks militarism and jingoism; the enemy, he says, is within - injustice, oppression and fear. He stresses that the message of the Old Testament prophets were not jingoistic, but directed against rulers and established religion. He quotes Tolstoy and Edward Carpenter; "the road to peace and the road to righteousness is still the same",<sup>32</sup> he says.

Pacifism was preached from the pulpit and this was a source of further criticism of the radicals.<sup>33</sup> The radicals in turn accused the established Methodists of turning the pulpits into recruiting platforms. J.G. said that being in prison "... is better than the pits, it is better than listening to friend Rust or for that matter William Harrison, uttering blasphemies to young children ..."<sup>34</sup> Respondents have suggested however that there were few overt attempts to preach war from the pulpits and such attempts were censured and stopped. One attempt to preach war was perhaps regarded as legitimate: in 1916 a memorial service was held at the Baptist chapel, for some local men killed in action, and this sermon dealt with the righteousness of the war, and how men were following the Master's teaching by fighting.<sup>35</sup> The President of the Primitive Methodist Conference, speaking in Durham, said that he believed men must fight but he admired men who were prepared to suffer and die for conscience's sake. He thought some Tribunals bullied

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\* Rust summarily dismissed J.G. from his teaching job because of his pacifist views. J.G. refused to take the matter to court, as a matter of religious principle.

applicants for exemption.

J.G.'s tribunal and appeal dramatically exemplifies our thesis. A Methodist with unorthodox views, a socialist, appears before a tribunal. The tribunal meeting at Lanchester consisting of three members of the Methodist establishment; a national miners' leader, a local shopkeeper and a colliery manager, John Wilson, James Hammel and Michael Curry respectively. J.G. said,

"I can not take the military oath, or surrender my right to judge whether any action would be inconsistent with my desire to serve God. I can best serve my country in its desire for a just and lasting peace by holding out the hand of fellowship to comrade Liebknecht and his friends".

Major Wilkinson commented that,

"the applicant's observations were most disloyal. The claimant denied this, and in answer to questions stated that he applied to be placed on the P.M. preachers' plan, but on account of the Church's attitude to this was as being contrary to Christian teaching, he reluctantly withdrew from the Connexion ... this opinion had changed since reading Tolstoy, Ralph Waldo Emerson and others ... Whatever the decision of that tribunal he should adhere to his convictions.

The Chairman said he was sorry the applicant was still acting as a teacher. A member [identified as Hammel. RSM]: he is not a suitable person to have charge of children."<sup>36</sup>

At Durham County Appeals J.G.

"applied for exemption on the ground of conscientious objection, which he said were brought about by reading of Tolstoy. Judge Greenwell: It is a pity you read him ... Applicant ... was of the opinion that the nation which took up the principles of Jesus Christ need never be in fear of invasion".<sup>37</sup>

J.G. was in prison three times, J. G. Winter was imprisoned once (and died almost immediately on admission); the other objector to whom he was handcuffed alleged that he died as a result of being beaten. Jack Pritchard and others whom it has not been possible to identify were also imprisoned.

Ironically, J.G.'s physical condition was such that he would almost certainly have been rejected for military service.

The response to conscientious objection was unequivocally hostile. This hostility seems to have moderated subsequently, for informants made comments varying between, "The average Methodist was not altogether sympathetic, they felt objectors were letting down the nation. It was a feeling of disappointment rather than animosity",<sup>38</sup> to "There was a lot of unnecessary punishment of C.O.'s, they believed in peace and they were right (though I disagreed with them then). They were not peace at any price men, but the crowd thought they were dodgers".<sup>39</sup>

Punitive hostility seems to have prevailed at the time. The miners of East Hetton, Hebburn and Edmondsley called upon the Durham Miners' Association to expel conscientious objectors, for all officials who sympathised to be thrown out, and asked miners not to work with conscientious objectors. The Harrisons had their windows smashed by stones thrown by villagers. J. G. Winter's body was brought back from London for burial in Quebec; only the Independent Labour Party members attended the funeral.\* People booed the cortege and stones were thrown at the coffin. Winter was lowered into his grave to the accompaniment of catcalls from a crowd at the cemetery gate and the repeated singing of "The Red Flag" by his comrades. One of the Quebec radicals understated the case when he said, "The C.O.'s had a very rough time."<sup>40</sup>

The war had a disruptive effect on the villages: 125 officials and men in Pease and Partners' employment at Waterhouses joined the army, of whom 22 were killed; at Esh Winning 220 joined and 17 were killed; of the 35 members of Waterhouses Primitive Methodists who went away to fight, only one

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\* Village funerals were normally massive demonstrations of solidarity with the deceased and their family. See Chapter IX.

returned to full chapel activities after the war.\* The issue of Conscientious Objection and military service further disrupted the community. Men like Hammel were on Tribunals, hearing the cases of local men.<sup>41</sup> Thus, for example, John Henery on Brandon Tribunal heard the cases of two Water-houses and one Esh Winning Methodist early in 1916; the applications were made on non-conscientious grounds and were refused. One such refusal by Henery led to the conscription of a Methodist's son; the son was killed and his father never again attended chapel.<sup>42</sup> We see in this an indication of the possibility of serious and open division even amongst the more traditional Methodists. The conflict between J.G., his friends and relatives and the majority on the other hand was already apparent from before the war, but was heightened by the issues raised by the war. J.G. has, in fact, been partially held responsible for the loss of numbers at Quebec; "he was a C.O. and a member of the Independent Labour Party. Ruined our chapel; created a lot of disturbances".<sup>43</sup>

If one consequence of the war and the response to it was dissension and loss of numbers for Methodists, another was the loss of credibility of the socialists. We have already commented on the breaking up of Independent Labour Party meetings in the county.<sup>44</sup> Connie Ellis also reported the use of physical violence against anyone speaking for peace - or even a negotiated settlement to the war (such speakers were accused of receiving German gold to save the Kaiser). The peace movement was associated in people's minds with the socialists, and the Independent Labour Party members had in fact been predominantly against the war.

"The Wesleyans were anti-socialist right through. Clough and others were not wanted ... the anti-socialists always held conscientious objection

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\* A plaque in the chapel lists those who served in the war.

against these 'bolsheviks' too."<sup>45\*</sup> "In building up support for the Labour party the ILP was not much success because of the stigma of objection."<sup>47</sup> These are two very explicit statements of the fact, there seems also to be general agreement amongst respondents that this was the case, though the point is more often made obliquely.

The First World War raised the issue not of the survival of Methodism but of individual freedom of conscience. The inner-worldly ascetic conditionally accepts the use of war for just ends. Nonetheless, if the non-conformist tradition is assumed to be a tradition which defends the rights of individual conscience; why did the Methodists not give support to men, who, as a matter of Christian conviction, refused to fight? Martin suggests that:

"the denomination will take note of a divergence and actively acknowledge the right of different members to come to varying conclusions, even though as a body it lends support to the war"<sup>48</sup>

But this does not seem to have been the case in our villages. Why was this? Four reasons may be adduced.

Firstly, the Methodists believed the war to be a just war. Secondly, the attempt to avoid military service caused personal dissension within the village and within Methodism. Two factors exacerbated this dissension.

(a) Some men sought exemption for reasons other than conscience, and some of these were thought to be shirkers or cowards. This hostility easily extended to anyone who sought to avoid military service, for whatever reason.

(b) The Derby scheme involved an invidious system of exemptions and a form

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\* Atrocity stories (see note p.245) from the civil war following the Russian revolution of 1917 were also used to discredit socialism.

"Bolshevik" was a commonly used term of political abuse. Of the Russian revolution, J.G. had said "it is of far more importance than military victory or defeat on the western front"<sup>46</sup>

of "creeping conscription". This was probably intended to create resentments which would make avoidance of military service socially unpleasant. Many Methodists had gone to the war, many families had men away from home fighting. By the time of the Tribunal hearings many had lost husband, fathers and relatives, especially in the bloody battles of 1915. For all those with men serving or dead the simple question was why a few should avoid their share of fighting the war? Underlying this question also was moral resentment, that a small group of religious men claimed a higher morality and thus implicitly passed judgment on the others.

A third factor also arose from the Derby scheme. At least two of the leading village Methodists were on Tribunals; the social conflicts arising from Tribunal decisions have been indicated above. The Methodists on the Tribunals were representing the state's interest in matters of exemption - a case had to be made for a man not to serve. The right of the state to demand military service was not questioned. The presence of Methodists on the Tribunals represents a compromise between Methodism and the state. This was threatened by other Methodists in the name of Christianity, questioning the right of the state to require them to kill.

Fourthly, within Methodism the objectors were, or were associated with, the followers of J. R. Campbell, and his New Theology. They were also associated with Keir Hardie and Socialism. They had thus forfeited any sympathetic consideration in advance of their case being heard.

Martin's contention that the denomination acknowledges the rights of conscientious objectors does not seem to apply at the local level. That local expressions of Methodism are not the same phenomenon as the national statements of the denomination has been a major contention of our whole discussion; it seems to be further supported by this finding about the response to conscientious objection. Martin's proposition is not directly applicable to the kind of community context that we are describing.

Thus the Methodists whilst apparently not completely denying the freedom of conscience of objectors to the war were not forthright supporters of that freedom. They did not accept the objectors' arguments, the objectors were known "trouble-makers" and "hotheads" and their actions threatened the solidarity of chapel and community. The simplest way to avoid conflict and maintain good relations within the community was to ignore, or/and, oppose the demands of the objectors.\*

### 3. 1926

The events of 1902-1905 do not appear to have deeply disturbed the relative stability of either Methodism or village society. 1914-1918 involved the whole population in a collective effort, in shared sorrows and hardships. Families were broken by war and death, but many men came back. Some of the local solidarities were broken by the attitudes taken by the chapels and the conscientious objectors or by the role of Methodist leaders on Tribunals. Compared with both these periods 1926 was a catastrophic year for the Valley. There was violent and open conflict on the streets, political passions were aroused and in the conflicts the old paternal order and its concomitant attitudes were finally destroyed; there were large scale emigrations from the area, and many of the families departing were never to return. The 1920's seem to be the most important social reality for today's Methodists. For many, who were then in the prime of their

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\* We do not propose to discuss the progress of pacifism in the district. Plainly J.G. adopted the absolutist position but we do not know how he would have faced the dilemma of preaching "the good tidings of peace and setting the captives at liberty"<sup>49</sup> His enthusiasm for the Russian revolution would have raised this issue for him early in the 1920's, had he lived. The pacifism of the ILP was proto-revolutionary and the group was politically very radical as well as pacifist. But Connie Ellis and her husband, for example, at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War sat up talking all night and in the morning "We knew we were no longer pacifists". We can not say how J.G. would have resolved such an issue.

lives, it was a period of almost hopeless unemployment, or under-employment at low wages, or the humiliation of the dole. In a society which values work highly, and with a religion which advocates the full use of human talents, it is not surprising that those experiences should be so memorable to the Methodists.

It is not our purpose to give a full history of the miners' strike in the Valley, only to explain the Methodist response to aspects of the strike and the consequences of these responses.

In 1926 the coal owners were determined to reduce the cost of coal production.\* In April a meeting was held at Quebec drill hall; Colonel Headlam, Hereward Sadler and Mr. and Mrs. Hanbury were on the platform. (Headlam and Hanbury were Tory M.P.'s). The purpose of the meeting was, apparently, to provide an opportunity for Mrs. Hanbury to tell horror stories from her visit to Russia. A miner asked Colonel Headlam what he was going to do for the unemployed in the district. Headlam replied that more benefits to the unemployed meant a great tax on labour; the subsidy on coal must go and many pits would close. Nevertheless, said Headlam, he would also try to do what he could and he was investigating particular cases of hardship.<sup>51</sup> Thus were the owners' objectives re-stated in Quebec; the miners must bear the cost of cheapening the production of coal. Four weeks later the general strike began. Our main concern is with the much longer miners' lockout which was to last until the first week of December.

The owners' tactics were clear: they had the support of the government, and locally the police acting under the Emergency Regulations. In County Durham they also had the support at the ideological level, of the Established Church. To break the miners' resistance they could:

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\* The dispute, precipitated by the owners, clearly had a purely political dimension also. For the owners' and Government's preparation for the strike see Page Arnot, Chapters XII and XIII.<sup>50</sup>

1. Encourage men to work, promising favours, promotion, and security in the future.
2. Employ officials to produce coal.
3. Wait until the men were forced back to work by economic necessity.\*

To underpin and assist these three tactics they also needed to reduce the effectiveness of the unions; this could be done by removing the leaders or using legal sanctions against, for example, picketing.

The dispute was not to be won or lost in the Valley, but in London. Nonetheless, the Union Leaders negotiating with the owners and the government needed the backing that could only be provided by a show of resolution, strength and solidarity in the villages.

The men's tactics were therefore:

1. To maintain union solidarity and keep the pits idle; to do this they needed
2. to picket the pits and persuade potential workers to stay away from work.

In pursuing these policies the miners were peculiarly vulnerable: a picket could be defined as a riotous assembly under the Emergency Regulations, the Courts manned by owners and managers would not be sympathetic. Attempts to persuade men not to work could be interpreted as intimidation, and were so interpreted by the Bishop of Durham, who in sermons and addresses kept up a continuous verbal attack on the unions.<sup>52</sup> In both picketing and persuading, the leaders of the unions were especially at risk; they could be singled out to face the charges and bear the sentences for riotous assembly and intimidation, and the men would then be deprived of their more experienced leaders.

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\* The Co-ops were vital for the Union's success. They granted unlimited credit during strikes, which was then paid off by withholding dividend money. The Co-op was, in effect, the strikers' larder.

After the 1914-18 war Pease and Partners had employed an official for personnel and welfare duties in the valley. His main task during the strike was to persuade men to return to work. Pease and Partners assured men working that they would receive favourable consideration after the strike.<sup>53</sup> The Vicar of Waterhouses asked his congregation to give every assistance to men who were working.<sup>54</sup>

Pease and Partners seem to have been relatively unaggressive in Waterhouses, their main anti-union effort was at Esh Winning where they thought the leadership was weak. Few police were billeted in Waterhouses, the village remained quiet throughout the strike. The men stood firm under the Liberal and unmilitant leadership of Matt White, and there were only a few blacklegs.

Some fifty policemen were billeted in Esh Winning, which became the cockpit of the Valley during the strike. Some men worked throughout the strike, but they were escorted to work by the police, and occasionally, preceded by the colliery band playing ribald tunes. The villagers lined the streets cat-calling, and meetings were held at the pit as the shift came up at 11.00 a.m. Occasion arose from these activities to prosecute the leaders. Clough, with S. Garr and nineteen others, were charged under the Emergency Regulations with "an act likely to cause civil disaffection amongst the civilian population at Esh Winning".\* Clough maintains that he prevented men from attacking blacklegs, and that the Inspector of Police gave evidence to the effect that but for Clough's action there would have been bloodshed in the village. The nineteen received £2 fines, Clough and the Lodge Secretary, and Garr the Chairman each received a sentence of one month's hard labour. The bench included Basil Sadler (of Sadler Bros., who owned Quebec) as Chairman, Curry the manager at Cornsay, and three others,

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\* Emergency Regulation 21<sup>55</sup>

one of whom may have been a colliery manager.<sup>56</sup>

In general the union leadership at Esh Winning seems to have been weak. They were not fully in favour of picketing or bringing sanctions against the blacklegs. Thus up to 150 men worked during the strike. The manager left a rough notebook covering the last part of the strike, listing the workers and the days they worked. The total varies from 58 on 23rd October to 72 on 20th November.\* Between 26th and 27th October the work force was cut from 41 to 10, firm evidence of the success of the activities for which Clough was really imprisoned. Many more worked at the end of the strike: from 17th November at Esh Winning the numbers rose to 70 as men realised they were beaten and would have to return to work at a substantial reduction.<sup>57</sup>

Eighteen of the men working were deputies and not therefore blacklegs in any strict sense of the word. It is clear that men worked by families, as the same surnames appear twice or more often in the lists. This tends to confirm the suggestion that some men worked because they were under pressure from their family and would have been thrown out of their home if they had not worked. Blacklegs seem to have been connected by marriage or patronage - or both - to the management in many cases. Others seem to have been genuinely lumpen-proletarian, including the rate-busters mentioned in Chapter III. Of others it was said that "petticoat government" drove them to work earlier. One Methodist mother with a son at Grammar School put sufficient pressure on her husband for him to work (at Waterhouses). Comments tend to be abusive, but informative nonetheless (most informants tried to change the subject when blacklegging was discussed):

"They were nearly all members of the NPU.\*\* P.L. had been a groom at a big house and was recommended to Pease and Partners.

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\* In September there were only 250 blacklegs in the whole of County Durham.

\*\* Non-Political Union: see pp. 284-286

He became bosses' groom and odd job man, always looking for a job to ingratiate himself with management, 'Shall I sweep your yard, sir' ... The S's, ale-drinkers from Staffordshire, Tories and bosses men. Related by marriage to the H's who all had official positions after the lock-out. Showed weakness to doff their caps to the bosses. Wives no better ... B's related to S's, became NPU. E (a Methodist) became Secretary of NPU. A.P. related to management ... G.W. driven out of his home to work by his wife wielding a carving knife. She was an official's daughter ... T.F. (hewer) became a deputy. G.C. - son of an undermanager, a Wesleyan ... J.H. had to drink with the bosses to keep his job. A. and C.G. part-officials\* ... A.C., assistant master's weighman ... E.D. a WM Society Steward, Assistant Secretary of the NPU."<sup>58</sup>

The whole of this discussion excludes consideration of the last few days of the dispute when union resistance was obviously collapsing nationally and men scrambled for jobs. With this reservation we can say that the Methodists maintained solidary relations with other miners, whatever their personal views may have been on the strike. Amongst the sixteen hewers and putters regularly working in Esh Winning, only one was a Methodist.

At Quebec there were a few blacklegs throughout the strike, but never more than a lorry load. They were subjected systematically to the same treatment as the Esh Winning blacklegs. Alf Cheek was charged, like Clough, with causing disaffection; it was said that he threatened a blackleg. Secondly he was charged with "an act calculated to prevent the proper working of a coal mine".\*\* This arose from a demonstration and stone-throwing at Old Cornsay landsale pit where men were working. George Pritchard gave evidence on the first charge saying that Cheek used no threats but only attempted to persuade the blacklegs not to work. Aron Richardson (now

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\* "McGinty" deputies; they had the responsibilities but not the qualifications of a deputy.

\*\* i.e. the miners' objective was illegal.

retired) spoke in Cheek's defence on the second charge. Neither spoke to any avail; Cheek received a month's hard labour from the same bench that had sentenced Clough. The evidence as reported in the press (for all the cases mentioned) seems confused and inconclusive.

Jack and Joe Cheek and others were also charged with throwing stones at blacklegs, and with one exception they received twenty one days' imprisonment. Respondents speak of a degree of arbitrariness in the arrests and sentences. It could have been any of the men's leaders who were picked up by the police. A Labour Councillor explained in 1970, "The smallest gathering was an excuse for a baton charge". A propos Clough's arrest Westgarth Adamson's daughter said, "... it might have been my father, it just depends who was on the streets to be caught. Mother used to keep father in. He was very upset".<sup>59</sup>

Quebec thus had a very militant leadership. There was "Great union solidarity throughout the village. Union meetings of 300-400 men were held at the Hamsteels Colliery Inn".<sup>60</sup> There were disputes between blacklegs and the union, and their representatives were in constant conflict, with argument, abuse and threats of violence on the streets.

The degree to which solidaristic relations were threatened by the strike can be exemplified by two incidents from Quebec: a blackleg slipped when leaving the lorry and fell under the rear wheels. Not one of the men standing around would fetch a stretcher, when a table-top was brought, none would help lift it. This should be contrasted with the normally selfless solidarity of miners in an accident situation.\*<sup>61</sup> The second incident is re-

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\* The blackleg died and the inquest recorded accidental death.<sup>62</sup> His widow was one of those at the cemetery gates for Winter's funeral. She claimed compensation for her husband's death from the union. The committee did not want to pay her, but Cud McDonald took up her case, arguing that blackleg or not, her husband had paid in like the rest of them. McDonald won and the wife received £600.<sup>63</sup>

counted in the words of an informant:

"He [Sadler] put barbed wire around the village during the '26. And offered incentives to blacklegs. Police used to bring blacklegs home. My nephew blacklegged; policemen saw my wife on the doorstep and said "one of your relatives?" "He was, but he's not now" said my wife."<sup>64</sup>

It is clear that strike-breaking broke the two closest solidarities of the village, those of work and kinship.

Some of the men who blacklegged in Quebec are typified in terms similar to those used of the Esh Winning blacklegs:

"J.L., his wife threw a bottle at us and hit a policeman; J.G. and F.T. ... used to carry crates at the pub to get free beer. People willing to crawl for favours ... the bosses' men, lacking in personality."<sup>65</sup>

The Vicar of Hamsteels heaped abuse and scorn upon the miners through his parish magazine:

"The TUC, in joining with the miners last May to make their great attack upon England, said that they did so in order to prevent the coal owners from degrading the standard of living among the miners.

The Trades Union leaders have inflicted a far greater degradation in the standards of living upon the miners than ever the masters dreamt of. It is pitiful to see the miners and their children, sometimes even their wives grovelling amongst the pit heaps, working as hard or harder to pick up a hundredweight of almost worthless cinders, as they would do to get a ton of good coal if they were working for the masters."<sup>66\*</sup>

At the Hamsteels end of the village there was alleged to have been a substantial group of "owners' children", who were "red hot Tories", men who, according to a number of informants, "never thought for themselves". Thus at the Taylor pit (Hamsteels) coal was drawn throughout the dispute, probably

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\* The Bishop and the Dean of Durham were firmly on the side of the owners.<sup>67</sup>

by the lorry load of blacklegs previously mentioned.

The activism in Quebec is not only explained in terms of a radical union leadership. The leadership was responding to a radical management. Sadler on buying the colliery said he would break the union and have a model colliery.<sup>68</sup> (J. B. Johnson, his predecessor, was thought to be a "nice man" and a good employer<sup>69</sup>) Sadlers were not only anti-union, but interfered in day to day management and thus created difficulties for the managers on the spot. They were also very active in Tory politics. The use of barbed wire in 1926 was also a direct provocation to the men. This was exacerbated in the village by the attitude of the vicar.

Little information has been forthcoming about Cornsay in this period, except that coal was drawn throughout - but we do not know to what extent. Interestingly enough the management in all collieries seemed to share the miners' contempt for some of the blacklegs, a few of whom were sacked after the strike according to the manager's note book at Esh Winning. It seems that a small group of men were used by management, but were not thought to be worthy of normal employment. Clough and another militant (one of the nineteen fined) were not taken on again, Clough was evicted from his house and faced eighteen and a half years unemployment, which he devoted to organising the local Labour party. Eventually re-elected to the Rural District Council, he with McDonald, created public works to give men work for the six days when their dole was suspended.\* The other militant, McKenna, became checkweighman at Waterhouses.

During the strike the Methodist union leadership and the rank and file Methodist union members were faced with a quite new situation; the old paternalism was replaced by power politics. The political power was in the very tangible form of the police, backed by emergency legislation. This was one of those relatively rare occasions on which the state realises its ultimate power in the form of violence. There was very little that could

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\* The 1922 Unemployment Insurance Act stipulated that uncovenanted benefit should be paid only in five weekly intervals from April to October 1922, thus a week's benefit was lost every five weeks over a period of thirty weeks.

be done through ad hoc local initiatives. Lacking any class-conflict models of social relations, such as would be available to the radicals, the Methodists nevertheless remained passively loyal to the unions. The more militant trade unionists saw this as being "soft".

"Some Lodge officials were found to be hesitant in 1926; not politically minded, cap-in-hand with colliery management."

"Blacklegs names (were) not taken in Waterhouses; nor were they sent to Coventry in Esh Winning."<sup>70</sup>

"... The Methodists couldn't face the music at the end of the General Strike. I\* had made appeals for the men to stick together."<sup>71</sup>

"(The) great weakness at Esh Winning was X and others. They were slack on pressing claims at the best of times - but during the lock-out of 1926 they never stood their ground on the streets. They were meant to be the men's leaders - but weren't to be seen on the streets. So no wonder the men didn't stand firm."<sup>72</sup>

Nonetheless there was one other form of radical response open to the miners. This was seen in the right-radicalism of the non-Political Union.\*\* It is difficult to obtain unbiased information on the Non-Political Union; its local centre was Esh Winning, and this was the only village to have a substantial Non-Political Union of some 20-30 men. According to Garside<sup>74</sup> the Durham NPU had its origin in Esh Winning. It was formed by a group of men who had begun work before the end of the strike and who thus faced deprivation of union benefits from the DMA. The characteristics of its membership were usually given in terms of individual lineage - or character-defects. It consisted of a small group of men, most of whom blacklegged and many of whom were, like the blacklegs in some way connected to the management.

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\* "I" being the man handcuffed to J. G. Winter on the way to prison.

\*\* The Miners' Industrial (non-political) Union. This union was most active in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.<sup>73</sup>

A few were Tory voters, most were ex-Liberals. We have been unable to identify the religious affiliation of the blacklegs who were known not to be Methodists. If they really were the lumpen group that their critics say they were, they probably had few associational ties in the villages. A few of them had been active in the Union pressing for an "opting in" rule for the political levy and themselves trying to opt out and persuade others to do so. Once the Lodge had "gone over to Labour" and started levying its members for party funds there would plainly be a number of ex-Liberals who might resent the automatic levy, and whose resentment might be played upon. The Secretary of the Non-Political Union, a Methodist, forced the Lodge formally to close the Union meetings before going to Labour Party business. The group that was to form a branch of "Spencer's Union" developed amongst the blacklegs during the general strike, and the branch died out about two years later.<sup>75</sup> It is possible to sift its policies from vituperative accounts of its activities and membership. It seems to have stood for individual liberty rather than group solidarity, for individual rather than class politics, and against the political involvement of the Trade Unions. In fact the Non-Political Union view of the Trade Unions seems to have been very similar to that of J. W. Pease. In effect the Non-Political Union was a highly political organisation, alleged to have been encouraged by the coal owner in the area although they could not recognise it formally as the rules of the Owners' Association bound them to recognise only the D.M.A. The NPU by its very existence caused dissension amongst miners and their families.

The only other Methodist known for certain to have joined the Non-Political Union is said to have joined because he was against the political levy; he is still a Liberal - although if there is no Liberal candidate he says he votes Labour.

It is very significant that Methodists maintained the collective

solidarity of men engaged in industrial and class conflict. In a sense, the principles of the Non-Political Union were more consistent with the traditional Liberal-Methodist view. "The Society [Esh Winning Miners' (Non-Political) Society] aimed to establish a means of settling disputes amicably or by independent arbitration without recourse to political activity"<sup>76</sup> Group solidarity, however, took precedence over theoretical considerations. To have defended Liberal individualistic principles, in the face of the attack by the coal owners, would have destroyed the miners' resistance and would have divided miner against miner and family against family. The issue was really very simple - an issue of group survival - and the Methodist miners behaved as did all the other men in the same situation.

The pattern of union leadership varied from village to village. The degree of radicalism, measured by industrial militancy (in terms of organising demonstrations and harassing blacklegs), seems to have been in inverse proportion to the number of Methodists in the village population. In Waterhouses there was the quiet and passive solidarity of the old Liberal leadership, and hardly any blacklegging. In Quebec, the very active and militant leadership of the radicals, and some blacklegging, leading to violence. In Esh Winning there was a weak Liberal leadership unwilling to take decisive steps to maintain solidarity, and itself challenged by a more radical element. Esh Winning probably experienced more blacklegging than any village in the valley.

It was quite plain that the traditional relations between owners and men were broken. There were evictions after the lock-out and prosecutions during the dispute; instead of men taking coal from the tips by permission of the management, they stole it and were prosecuted. The reciprocal attitudes were also broken; thus when Percy Ryle, the Esh Winning manager, left in 1926, it was the Pease and Partners personnel man, not the union leaders who made the presentation.<sup>77</sup>

Yet the old Liberals faced a dilemma. It was only at this point that men like Matt White and Isaac Johnson joined the Labour party. The Minister cited in Chapter VI maintained that "individualism was the conditioning factor in the Methodist response to 1926".<sup>78</sup> The Minister who was in Waterhouses during the strike reported:

"Some Methodists thought the General Strike was inopportune. They were not against what lay behind it, but the wrong way of going about it. They thought that constitutional methods preferable, not strikes and so on. Some Methodists thought that not all the possibilities were exhausted".<sup>79</sup>

This comment, from a man highly sympathetic to the miners, is consistent with and confirmatory of the more strident criticism made of the Methodist leadership.

Some Methodists responded more extremely. The respondent who said, "The Wesleyans were anti-socialist right through",<sup>80</sup> was suggesting that an accumulation of irritations from about 1910 onwards culminated in 1926 when Methodists had to decide which side they were on. This is a view with which we concur. We suggested in Chapter VI that the Methodists viewed stratification in terms of a graduation of respectability, they were now faced with class conflict in a very concrete form. Methodist views of the social world thus no longer "fitted" the real world.

The response within Methodism is not altogether clear. Certainly, at one extreme, the Superintendent at Crook struck Clough off the preachers' plan, and at the other Methodists just separated "religion" and "politics", maintained solidarity with their workmates and went to chapel on Sunday.

Collectively, the Methodists virtually avoided taking sides at all. They gave themselves to work in soup kitchens and other forms of relief work. This was quite unambiguously consistent with ideas of social service.<sup>81</sup> The most common comment on 1926 is that it made little or no difference to the chapels.<sup>82</sup>

"We often wondered which side people took in 1926. But we tried to be Christians and we agreed to differ. 1926 didn't make much difference in the chapel. 'Things said' didn't lead to any falling off. At times, chapel cemented things together."<sup>83</sup>

This only underlines the fact that there was sufficient ambiguity in Methodist attitudes for there to be scope to doubt about 'sides'. In fact it is not true to say events made "no difference"; 1926 put the chapels in a very difficult financial position at a time when after 50 years or so the buildings were in need of substantial repairs and maintenance. Only one of the minute books of Leaders and Trustees meetings or quarterly meetings in 1926 would give any indication of industrial disputes in progress. 1926 is absolutely the same as any other year as far as these books show. Ironically, so many men were on the dole that local offices were set up to pay out: the use of Quebec Clowes and Esh Winning Brandon Road Chapels (both Primitive Methodists) brought in a rent from the government which was the major source of income.

The whole situation threatened the Methodists' view of economic and industrial relations; open warfare had replaced arbitration. The coal owners and managers appeared hostile instead of paternal. All the Methodists, save those who were beginning to accept the Labour party or socialist analysis of the situation, would have been disturbed and bewildered by developments in the coal industry. Methodists were divided over the strike, some officials, shopkeepers and conservatives sided with management, and others supported the miners' cause but not their methods.

The under-representation of miners in the leadership is significant in this context. Shopkeepers, officials, railway workers, etc., were threatened by loss of trade and loss of work. The shopkeepers were especially threatened in that strikers received unlimited credit from the Co-op during the strike. These debts could only be paid off by trading with the Co-op and

accumulating dividend on the resumption of work, thus depriving private shops of trade.

Such divisions of loyalty and opinion also represented potential splits within the chapel, members were likely to take sides in what proved to be a very bitter struggle.

Thus we can see that the industrial dispute of 1926 threatened the Methodists ideologically, communally and materially. The only local alternative for action by the Methodists, as Methodists, was to offer verbal support for the miners or to do nothing. Outright opposition to the other miners would have been unthinkable and would have assured the demise of Methodism.

This was a problem facing a group claiming universalistic values and with a universalistic membership basis. The potential conflicts were avoided by Methodism remaining officially "non-political". Methodists participated in social work efforts, the relief of individual distress, but did not take sides. There is no evidence that any Methodist changed his economic views during this period. Many, furthermore, disapproved of the strike, feeling that negotiation was the correct solution even when the owners and government were patently unwilling to settle peacefully.

The Methodists were all either dependent on the coal trade indirectly or directly employed by the mines. The solidary values of work and community were the prime values operative at the time of the strike. Individually Methodists stood by one another and their fellow miners. Methodist Union leaders led their local Lodges throughout the strike. Methodists were a tiny minority amongst the blacklegs and only two were active, one in the leadership, of the right-wing Non-Political Union.

A religious explanation of events is largely irrelevant. The miners faced the owners and the government as miners, not as Catholics, Methodists or Anglicans. The solidarities of the work-place over-rode all other loyalties. The "effects" of Methodism on the community in this crises can

only be judged indirectly by the actions of particular Methodists. For whilst no religious values were specifically at issue in the strike, religion was relevant insofar as the style of leadership was an issue. This can clearly be seen by comparing the villages as we have done.

Perhaps the most interesting observation is the quietness of the response at Waterhouses coupled with strong solidarity amongst the miners. It would seem that the attempts to unite the men under a socialist leadership and by appealing to more overtly socialist principles were divisive. Traditional appeals to community values, as embodied in the leadership of Matt White, united the men. This more than any other factor underlines the all-pervasive influence of the sort of social and political outlook epitomised in the Methodist view of the world.

The most salient feature of institutional Methodism was its unwillingness to take sides in the dispute, (unlike the Church of England which unequivocally sided with the owners). It sought a compromise solution. This compromise was written into the history of Methodism, in the development of its official view of the world and stress on individual ethics, and locally in its history of good relations with the coal owners. The compromise is epitomised in a resolution of the Crook Wesleyan Methodists:

Crook Circuit Quarterly Meeting: Resolution on Industrial Situation 2nd June 1926:

"This Quarterly Meeting of the Crook Circuit expresses its deep sympathy with the large numbers of our people throughout the Circuit who are being vitally affected by the stoppage in the coal industry ... the stoppage cannot do other than cause immeasurable suffering and anxiety. We heartily commend all worthy efforts that are being put forward to allay distress.

We would earnestly pray that a speedy and equitable settlement may be secured. We would confirm our conviction that the solution of the problem of the Coal Industry awaits the coming of a new spirit of goodwill, the predominance of the motive of service over the motive of gain; and the recognition of the

Christian principle that all members of society, of whatever grade, should justify their comforts and possessions by their service.

In our judgement the way back to prosperity in the Coal Industry was not in longer hours of toil, nor inequitable reductions of wages, but in work better planned and executed, and in more friendly co-operation in controlling the conditions for working and living. It is as the Coal Industry becomes more firmly based upon the principles of the Gospel, and has breathing through it the spirit of Christ that it will function as it ought."

Such a compromise was bound to be interpreted as hostility by some miners and may in part have contributed to the loss of support for Methodism amongst the miners. The fact that the potential conflicts within the chapels did not become actual conflicts may be attributed to the community solidarity of Methodism, its universalistic values and its compromise political position. If in the 1926 situation the prime problem of Methodism was to survive in the face of potential internal conflict, then it succeeded. But the method, compromise, lost the chapels support amongst miners.

Footnotes to Chapter VIII

1. Longmate, The Waterdrinkers, p. 242
2. T. P. Whittaker, cited, *ibid.*, p. 247
3. DC 22.8.02
4. *Ibid.*, 22.8.02
5. *Ibid.*, 2.5.02, 4.3.04
6. *Ibid.*, 13.3.03, 20.2.03
7. *Ibid.*, 13.11.03
8. *Ibid.*, 11.7.02
9. *Ibid.*, 3.7.03
10. *Ibid.*, 17.7.03
11. *Ibid.*, 17.3.05
12. *Ibid.*, 28.8.03
13. *Ibid.*, 23.10.03
14. *Ibid.*, 3.6.04
15. *Ibid.*, 1.7.04, 21.10.04
16. *Ibid.*, 17.3.05
17. *Ibid.*, 8.8.02, 12.6.03, 11.9.03, 4.3.04, 5.8.04, 2.9.04
18. *Ibid.*, 2.12.04, 9.12.04, 23.12.04, 30.12.04, 6.1.05, 13.1.05, 20.1.05, 3.2.05
19. *Ibid.*, 3.2.05
20. *Ibid.*, 30.12.04
21. Sunday School Journal, March 1906, Editorial
22. The Primitive Methodist Quarterly Review, April 1906, p. 325
23. S.S.J., p. 231
24. See Edwards, M., Methodism and England, pp. 195-196
25. Interview 29.10.66
26. *Ibid.*, 15.10.66
27. Martin, Pacifism, p. 205
- 27a. *Ibid.*, pp. 77 and 96

28. Interview 15.10.66
29. DC 27.8.15
30. Interview 27.7.67
31. Ibid (mid-November 1966)
32. J. G. Harrison, Papers. Quotation unattributed, but probably Carpenter.
33. Interview 19.12.67
34. J. G. Harrison, Letters, 21.10.17
35. DC 7.12.16
36. Ibid., 16.3.16
37. Ibid., 31.3.16
38. Interview 19.12.67
39. Ibid., 14.11.66
40. Ibid., 9.10.66
41. Ibid., 19.8.68
42. Ibid., 15.10.66
43. Ibid., 19.3.67
44. See also DC 1.11.17 for Mrs. Phillip Snowden at Stanley, Consett and Gateshead
45. Interview 17.10.66
46. Letter to his wife dated 14.1.18
47. Interview (mid-November 1966)
48. Martin, Ibid., p. 185
49. Ibid., p. 75
50. Page Arnot, The Miners 1910-
51. DC 2.4.26
52. See, for example, Ibid., 13.8.26, 29.10.26, 11.11.26, 7.1.27
53. Ibid., 26.11.26
54. Ibid., 29.11.26

55. Page Arnot, *ibid.*, p. 422
56. DC 24.10.26
57. *Ibid.*, 6.7.67
58. Interview 30.7.67
59. Interview 5.8.66
60. *Ibid.*, 8.4.67
61. Interview 1.9.67
62. DC 31.12.26
63. Interview 1.9.67
64. Interview 1.9.67
65. *Ibid.*, 19.8.68
66. St. John the Baptist's Church, Hamsteels, Parish Magazine,  
September 1926
67. Garside, The Durham Miners, p. 212
68. Interviews 1.9.67, 8.4.67
69. Loc. cit. and 19.8.68
70. *Ibid.*, 9.10.66
71. *Ibid.*, (mid-November 1966)
72. *Ibid.*, 30.7.67
73. Williams, The Derbyshire Miners, Chapter XIX Sections III and VII
74. Garside, op. cit., p. 232
75. See Page Arnot, op. cit., pp. 494-495 and 537
76. Garside, loc. cit.
77. DC 6.7.26
78. *Ibid.*, 19.12.67
79. *Ibid.*, 28.1.67
80. *Ibid.*, 17.10.67
81. *Ibid.*, 18.11.66
82. loc. cit.
83. *Ibid.*, 5.8.68

CHAPTER IX

1970 A POSTSCRIPT

Methodism in the valley seems no longer to be a force with which men have to reckon. From 1930 onwards the numbers of Methodists declined.\* A "good" period for Methodism was one in which membership was maintained. Economic and demographic changes, social and geographical mobility have eroded Methodist members until by 1970 there were only 85 households in the four villages that could be called Methodist households. The penumbra of membership was very small.

There are subjective factors also which explain why Methodism and the Methodist influence declined. It is possible to detect a vague and inchoate rejection of the Methodist stand on the first World War. Methodism took a stance similar to all other churches, but it was the local Methodists who actively recruited and served on Tribunals. This was an after-the-event response which we assume arose largely as a result of the disillusion of the post-war period. Great sacrifices were called for and made, the reward for the villagers was continuous hardship and political conflict. Part of the blame for this seems to have fallen on those organisations which gave active support to the war.

The loss of authority by the Methodist leaders after the events of 1926 has been discussed. The issues at stake in that dispute were decided at a national level, but the villagers also responded to the attitudes of the local leaders. The Methodist union leadership adopted attitudes which were open to conflicting interpretations and were sufficiently ambiguous in the eyes of some for blame to be attached. The conciliatory attitudes of the Methodists were at best seen as irrelevant to the industrial conflicts of the 1920's.

Thus:

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\* For an indication of the size of this decline see Table 10, Appendix III

"By 1930 the Methodist leadership of the trade unions was finished; the R.C.'s took over ... for example the Esh Winning Lodge is now (1966) hundred percent R.C. (twelve elected posts) yet R.C.'s are outnumbered three to one"\*

"A lot of the pitmen thought they had been sold - leaders went smooth with the owners. So eventually they chose men with plenty of shout"<sup>1</sup>

We are not describing unique events, we are recording a rejection of the old Liberal union leadership and the rejection of Wilsonism. A rejection of Wilsonism included a rejection of his Methodism and Methodist institutional base also. This development had been under way since before the war, and was part of a national trend in the labour movement. Conciliatory attitudes were being replaced by a political outlook derived from a wider trade union, as distinct from occupational, consciousness. The disparity in attitudes can be seen dramatically in the circumstances of Clough's return from prison. He

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\* The rise to power of the Catholics is a fact that needs explaining. This could be done with a comparative study of Catholicism in the valley. We might suggest a number of possible reasons for the fact: (1) The Catholics were not part of the traditional local establishment and therefore did not lose credibility with that establishment. (2) Irish Catholics were outsiders in the society that grew up in the Durham villages in the late nineteenth century, they were, to some extent a pariah group of workers who first built the railways and then sank the pits but only latterly came to occupy skilled jobs. This is a situation likely to produce radicals like Johnny Holmes. (3) Catholicism is a more collectivist religion than Methodism, expressing much less individualism than the Methodists and stressing instead the corporate nature of life. (4) With the ending of the Liberal party the Catholic miners did not lose their political connections with their fellow workers, as they met them in the Clubs. Thus Catholic candidates for office could build up their constituency through the clubs in much the same way as the Methodists had done so through the chapels. (5) Less plausibly; the Bishop of Hexham (according to the Methodists) came to the villages and told the Catholics that they had to take over the trade unions.

returned to the village in triumph, he was led in by the colliery band, holding aloft a piece of prison bread and his mail bag needle. Meanwhile, the Superintendent of the Crook Wesleyan Circuit had struck him off the preachers' Plan.

A quite different factor also led to the decline of Methodist influence in the unions. This was the reduction of the numbers of young Methodists going down the pits; so that even had Methodists been acceptable as unions leaders they were not available for recruitment to leadership positions. The villages offered very little other than mining occupations, so many young men and women taking white collar and professional jobs had to move away. It is this which the Methodists themselves see as the most important factor in the decline of numbers and influence, and the removal of a young person is accompanied by regretful but sympathetic discussion amongst the Methodists.

Perhaps the single most important factor in the decline of Methodist influence was the closure of the pits. The main locus of purposive contact and solidary relations between Methodists and non-Methodists was the place of work. With the closures, the Methodists were increasingly living in their own social world.

We have stressed throughout the significant discontinuities between Methodism and the cultural life of the villages. We have also shown that the chapels provided a wide range of activities which engaged the time and attention of members to the virtual exclusion of all other activities. Why should we argue that these activities contributed to the decline of Methodism at this late, post-first World War I stage? The reason for introducing this consideration at this point in the argument is that in the inter-war period the village communities were becoming much more socially differentiated than before. By this we mean that specialised agencies were beginning to perform particular social functions rather than a few institutions (like the chapels) performing many. Commercial entertainment was developing in the villages and the nearby

towns, access to this was made available through the provision of a 'bus service, as well as the trains. Professional entertainers could come to the villages and villagers could travel to Newcastle for concerts. Adult education was available through the W.E.A. and the National Council of Labour Colleges, it was no longer necessary to attend the Bible class for "a good argument".<sup>2</sup> But, most importantly, a specialised political party had developed. The Labour party was a party of the working man, it had a branch in some of the villages but mainly organised its vote through the Lodge. Prominent Methodists were no longer needed to bring out the vote on election day and the chapels themselves had fewer voters than the clubs. It seems that once the crucial coincidence of chapel, Lodge and Liberal Party was broken, the chapels were isolated from an important network of power and influence. Thus the entertainment and educational activities of the chapels ceased to service and sustain the network of institutions but rather operated only to sustain the chapels themselves.

In 1926, for example, Esh Winning Primitive Methodist choir was described as "the foremost in local circles" and the columns of the Durham County Advertiser suggest a general expansion of traditional musical interests amongst the Methodists. But chapel activities were increasingly for chapel folk only. In the 1920's also Methodists were to a degree forced in upon their own affairs by the very great need to raise money to pay off accumulated debts and either to rebuild or repair chapels which had been in continuous use for fifty years. Concerts and similar activities were time-consuming activities which did not require the members to engage with the wider public except in quasi-commercial relations.

We will examine what are now the three main areas of public activity in the Methodist chapels, the Sunday School Anniversary, the Sunday Service and funerals. Each of these activities entails expressions of communal solidarity in situations where expressions of conflict or contentious issues are

not found. The only conflicts in the adult world that can be expressed through the Anniversary are status conflicts in which parents vie with one another to have the best-dressed or most prominent child. As the Methodists are a small group struggling to survive we would not expect to find expressions of potentially disruptive interest or belief in the Sunday service. Only the best about men is remembered at funerals and village conflicts are lost in common expressions of grief. Thus our brief description of the contemporary life of the chapels underlines the politically neutralising effect of Methodism on the life of its members, and its particular cohesive influence in the wider community, in the celebration of childhood and in the face of death.

We have suggested that Methodism is an institution in which the members are aging. Half of the Methodists are over the age of sixty-one, over three quarters are above the age of fifty.

TABLE 5: Age and Sex of Methodists 1970 Esh Winning and Waterhouses residents only		
Age	Male %	Female %
Under 31	5	6
32-40	3	4
41-50	3	10
51-60	1	16
61-70	10	21
71 and over	8	13
	30 (N = 31)	70 (N = 74)
TOTAL	100%	

Nonetheless one of the largest organisations within the chapel structure is the Sunday School. This shows that Methodism is still able to draw into its activities members of families who are formally "outside" Methodism.

The Sunday School operates under great difficulties due to lack of

teaching personnel and equipment. For many of the older members the Sunday School Anniversary was a highlight of the chapel year. Not only was the Anniversary as entertainment\*, but a celebration of the traditional values of the Methodist family and community. The ritual, celebratory, aspects of the Anniversary interfered in the proper conduct of the Sunday School as seen by the teacher.

The Anniversary, in its traditional form, is not universally observed in Methodism today, being regarded as old-fashioned and unsuitable to the needs of the scholars. But when the Sunday School was re-established in Esh Winning in the late 1960's the Society members and the parents insisted on holding an Anniversary - against the wishes of the teachers.

The congregation for the 1970 Sunday School Anniversary included a number of non-chapel going families and totalled about 130 adults. In addition there were about 120 children, seventy seated on staging facing the congregation and the remainder in the body of the chapel. The Anniversary began with the singing of special hymns and a Bible reading. Then the children began to give recitations, which were alternated with songs sung in small groups or as solos. The congregation responded to the recitations by laughing at the comic verses and at the more self-conscious performers. Tolerance and a sense of fair play expressed in indulgence for each performer seemed to underlie the congregation's response. If a child forgot a line or made a mistake there was indulgent laughter or smiles. The recitations were delivered in a mechanical way, suggesting learning by rote, and performances were accompanied by various degrees of finger-twisting, blushing and shuffling by the performers. One possibly political consequence of the extensive pre-

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\* Pickering has argued that worship and other activities in the non-conformist chapels have a strong element of "entertainment".<sup>3</sup> Our observations throughout the research confirm this suggestion.

parations for the Anniversary was that little boys and girls, at a very early age, had been taught to stand up to address a large audience.

It is the entertainment aspect of the Anniversary which troubles the teachers. They did not wish to revive the Anniversary, especially as it interferes with any set course of lessons. A senior official of the Sunday School observed that the teachers tried to compromise with the demand for the Anniversary by putting on a play:

"But people said, "That wasn't an Anniversary". They expect the children to twiddle their thumbs and say their pieces. And it knocks holes in the Syllabus.

They [the parents] watch the kiddies clothing rather than what they are doing, and the message ... the girls like the Anniversary, but the boys do not, they take part reluctantly. Children do not like being laughed at. If a child forgets half way through [his piece] people think it is funny - that is the bull-ring side of it."<sup>4</sup>

The villagers' expectations of the Anniversary are therefore rooted in tradition and not in the demand for good educational techniques and sound theological learning. The Anniversary is meant to be a joyful occasion, it is intended to have the atmosphere of a family party as well as an act of worship. But this has to be expressed in a traditional form. Thus whatever the goals of the chapel officials may be they are constrained by the orientations of the parents and congregation towards seeing that the children do their pieces in a traditional Anniversary not towards the formal goals of Methodism or Christian education. The Anniversary is a communal occasion related to traditional expectations and is, in fact, typical of the contemporary orientation of Methodists in the valley.\*

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\* The underlying communal orientation of Methodists is shown quite sharply in their objection to Anglican-Methodist union. These objections are framed largely in terms of the exclusiveness of Anglican claims, the lack of an open communion and the "unfriendliness" of Anglican services. See Appendix II

The Sunday service is the main event of the week and is at the centre of the chapel's life. Here also one can observe the chapels' relative lack of impact on the wider community. In our observations throughout four years very little of the old evangelical fervour was seen. The services were restrained in their religious expressions and could be little else if vigorous singing is the necessary precondition of generating religious enthusiasm. The prayers concentrate on the chapel and the people in the village, with briefer but regular reference to world events. From time to time prayers included a plea for the spirit of revival to return to the village and the nation. The plea was made in an unspecific way, with no intimation of how revival might be achieved. Given the age and numbers of the personnel available for mounting a revival campaign it was perhaps to be expected that the approach was one of leaving the task entirely to the Almighty.

The main criterion of a "good service" was still the quality of the sermon. As the Minister is the preacher heard most regularly, he tends to be judged in terms of whether he is a good preacher or not. The importance of anecdotal and amusing illustrations in giving a good sermon was shown by the case of a recent Minister who preached with great simplicity and economy, coming clearly and directly to his point. He was said to be a "difficult" and "dry" preacher; but whilst informants said that he was not very inspiring they admitted that what he said was nonetheless very good.

The Methodists continue to show their faith in reason. The sermon must have an argument and it must assert certain truths for the Methodists. Sermons dealing with ethical matters are well-received. The preacher may assert in general terms that the hearers are sinners but his specific criticisms of peoples' ethical behaviour may only be directed against outsiders. In other words nothing internally divisive is said. The preachers usually present their sermons in the form of a reasoned argument, usually making three connected points on the basis of a Biblical text. It was

difficult to tell the extent to which the hearers appreciated the intellectual force of a sermon because it has never been possible to find anyone who could discuss the sermons in detail after the lapse of a few days. At the most people remembered whether it was a good sermon or not, they may remember the text and one or two of the illustrative stories, but not the details of the argument. Sometimes attenders reported that the preacher "lost me" at a point in the sermon. This indicates that sermons were listened to and hearers attempted to follow the argument.

The task of preaching is mainly undertaken by a dwindling group of local preachers. A preacher visiting from outside the village will always say how happy he is to be amongst the folk at Esh Winning or Waterhouses, or with the folk, or friends, again. In his introductory remarks he will refer to the warm welcome he always receives from the folk and that he looks forward to preaching to them. Thus the preacher upholds the view of the Methodists as a small group of warm-hearted and friendly people. Again, standing at the chapel door after the service the preacher, if he is a local man, or from a nearby village, will ask after sick relatives of members, or express pleasure at hearing of a marriage.

The family nature of the service is heightened by the congregation's own behaviour. Conversations are carried on in the chapel before and after the service, minor items of business are conducted or information passed. But family matters are the main subject of conversation; old age, sickness and death provide staple topics, but also news of returning sons and daughters, or the birth of a grandchild and the exploits of these grandchildren are passed on. Much news seems to be transmitted in the chapel; people find out about other people on Sunday. Plainly this kind of chapel gossip has boundaries which are limited to people with Methodist connections.

What function does the service perform in the life of the Methodists? Attending a service is one of the most important ways of being a Methodist:

a Methodist is known by his ethical conduct - being an upright man etc. - but he is most clearly seen to be a Methodist when he goes to and from chapel in his best suit on Sundays. Chapel attendance is thus a simple rite of solidarity, the Methodists collectively asserting to themselves and to the rest of the village who they are. In so doing they give a Christian witness; the Methodists believe that Sunday is widely misused, but that they show the right use of Sunday.

The service helps define the boundary between Methodists and the "world", especially where matters of conduct are discussed in the sermon. There is an element of self-assurance in the assertion of the differences between the Methodist and the worldly man. The Methodists do not assert that they are amongst the elect, nor that the world is damned; but there is a muted suggestion that this could be the case to a greater or lesser extent. The boundary between the Methodists and the "world" becomes increasingly important as the bridges between them break down. In other words the assertion of separateness is accompanied by a very real lack of opportunities for action in the world on the part of the available Methodist personnel.

The service may also satisfy individual psychological needs; one of these may be to provide a link with the past. There seem to be minor elements of phantasy in the services which reinforces the lack of this-worldly engagement. The service brings memories crowding in, of families and friends and "characters" departed, the seats in which they sat, their favourite hymns, the crowds and the "good times". This must make the older members sad. Yet they are united in their sadness and their shared memories, the old times seem very close, the communion of saints is expressed in the feeling that the faithful departed are still part of today's life in the chapel.\* In the face of adversity and sadness the Methodists assert that God's Will will be done and that He will provide the means to religious revival in His own time. This is an important element in maintaining

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\* Various memorials to deceased members surround the worshippers as tangible reminders of the past.

morale in a situation of relatively rapid social change.

But if this function of the service is correctly interpreted in this way then certain other consequences follow. This form of religious expression only enables the Methodists to survive in the world whilst not being altogether of the world. It is an expression not only of the essentially communal nature of Methodism (a communality transcending time, we have suggested) but an expression of traditional values which are relevant to a past society. It does not provide the Methodists, and especially the small group of young Methodists, with any intellectual equipment, with any programme of action in the community beyond conventional social work. We might say that Methodism survives apart from the wider community and begins to show what we might simply call pietism. Methodists' religious behaviour is directed not to the world of the 1970's, but to Methodism and its traditional values as expressed in a traditional community.

There is one situation in which Methodism still unites the whole society in a collective religious expression, drawing in the penumbral members and supporters, drawing on the subterranean religious and ethical culture of the valley people. This is the situation in which they come together for the last of a man's rites de passage. The chapel comes nearest to being completely filled when there is a funeral. Funerals are very important events in the villages, although many of the traditional rites are no longer observed. Many beyond the immediate family attend a funeral; there are representatives of trade unions, Clubs, Societies, Temperance organisations (depending on the memberships of the deceased.) In the case of a small village, virtually the whole village attends - some taking time off work and attending in their working clothes. A man who died in the mine used to be preceded by the colliery band and the black-draped Lodge banner. The funeral is thus a great rite of solidarity and is accompanied by the most potent symbols of working class solidarity. Many hundreds may still follow a coffin

to chapel and graveyard or crematorium.

Such rites mark the death of the "religious" and the "non-religious" alike. In death and in the face of death, all become religious. MacIntyre has suggested that even in the modern world we cannot do entirely without the vocabulary of Christianity, because we have no other vocabulary in which to raise certain kinds of questions.<sup>5</sup> Death, and our response to it, is just such a question.

Thus the chapel and Christian beliefs still have meaning for the whole community. The "meaning" is a mixture of communal response to death and communal support for the bereaved, plus a Christian interpretation of the facts of death and its cosmic meaning. To this extent the villages of the Valley are by no means "secular" inspite of the empty chapels on Sunday. Nor is Methodism without influence; but it is not an influence that we can call political.

Footnotes to Chapter IX

1. Interview 7.7.67
2. Garside, The Durham Miners, p. 298
3. The Place of Religion, XV 27
4. Interview with Sunday School Superintendent 1.7.69
5. Secularisation and Moral Change, p. 69

## CHAPTER X

### CONCLUSIONS

The intention of our study was to raise questions in the sociology of religion and to illuminate the problems surrounding a few of them. To attempt to go beyond these limited objectives would do violence to the intentions and scope of the research. It would be a mistake, therefore, to pretend that decisive conclusions in major areas of sociological theory can be drawn from the study. Our concluding discussion centres around issues arising firstly from the Protestant Ethic thesis and secondly from Lenski's distinction between communal and associational types of religious belonging. These two sets of issues have been more clearly focused (and focused together) than any other issues arising in the course of this attempt to understand the political effects of Methodism.

#### 1. The Protestant Ethic Thesis

(i) Max Weber suggested that Protestantism was important both for the rise of an entrepreneurial bourgeoisie and the rationalisation of social and economic relations. The Protestant ethic provided individual motivation and legitimation for capitalistic enterprise. The Protestant sect provided a group in which the member learnt and practised a rationalistic priest-free ethical discipline. Membership of the sect also assured the Protestant's social and economic credit-worthiness. If these factors are considered and Protestant theology itself, Protestantism can be seen to have constituted a radical cultural breakthrough leading to a devaluation of traditional social structures and a systematisation and rationalisation of economic affairs.

The present study has examined Protestantism amongst a small section of the working class. It has been shown that it is especially important for emerging political and economic leadership in the working class. In the form of Methodism, Protestantism provided individual motivation and legitimation for political and economic enterprise. The Methodist "Class"

was a group within which men learnt, and gave account of their practice of a rationalistic, ethical discipline. Membership of the Society assured creditworthiness, but economic credit was less relevant to miners than political trustworthiness, and in fact Methodists were advanced to positions of leadership in working class political organisations, as the labour historians have observed.

We might say that Methodism performed a liberating function for the late nineteenth and early twentieth century working class in our villages which was similar to that performed by Calvinism and Puritanism for the emerging entrepreneurial class in the seventeenth/eighteenth century. This is especially true at the personal, motivational level, because there was no "new society" within Methodism, to the image of which the whole society could be brought to conform by the striving of the disciplined Methodist. Methodism was concerned with a new man, not a new society, and offered personal ethics not a political programme. In this particular form Protestantism is more congruent with individualism than with collectivism and class action. Thompson, in drawing our attention to the importance of the desire for personal salvation seems to have made a point that is valid for Methodism irrespective of the historical period.

Weber also suggested that Protestantism provided a compliant labour force.\* Weber's suggestion has been shown to be true, especially for as long as economic conditions appeared to favour the workers' compliance with the employers' demands. The conclusion would be rash if stated in an unconditional form. The wider economic situation must be taken into account in considering the formulation of the social and economic views of a religious group. These views can not be attributed to theology alone. Economic circumstances may largely determine the plausibility of one formulation rather than another. Thus we have seen that the particular articulation of views in one

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\* Andrew Ure believed this to be the case<sup>1</sup>. We might argue, therefore, that the entrepreneurs, amongst whom Ure was very influential, acted on this belief. Thus to some extent Protestantism was promoted because it was believed to provide a compliant labour force.

particular period were obviously less relevant in a later period of more overt economic conflict. Thus alternative interpretations of social and economic reality had to be found. In the later period there was no longer a fit between Methodist ideas and the actual social and economic situation.

The miners may have been rendered relatively compliant by Methodist views and Methodist leaders, but Thompson makes the case much too simply. We concur with MacIntyre when he says that Trade Union morality rests on tenets which include:

"... that a worker is essentially equal with those with whom he works, that he is also essentially equal with those who claim superiority over him, and that in knowing that he is equal to them he has his chief weapon against them"<sup>2</sup>

This view of equality is intrinsic to the Christian gospel as presented by the Methodists and was plainly an assumption made by the Union leaders studied, however deferentially they may have behaved. The Union leadership up until the early 1920's consisted largely of "respectable" Liberal Methodists who felt that they commanded the respect of the owners. The Union leaders had an organismic view of society, they believed in reason and reconciliation as a means of settling disputes caused, as they saw it, by temporary imbalances in the market or misunderstanding. They shared this view with owners and managers, and with regional Union leaders who had staked their careers on such a view. It remains a problem whether they could have worked on the basis of any other ideas given the relative powerlessness of the miners. The local leaders' outlook was nonetheless coherent with their experience of day to day relations at the place of work; hard bargaining and "gentleman's agreements". They adhered to MacIntyre's "secondary virtues" of, "a pragmatic approach to problems, co-operativeness, fair-play, tolerance, a gift for compromise, and fairness".<sup>3</sup> This outlook was decreasingly supportable as economic circumstances changed from 1900 onwards; it was, in fact, the consistent pursuit of traditional economic

theories which culminated in the dispute of 1926. Methodist views in general were still sufficiently in accord with traditional economic thinking for them to be ambivalent towards the strike which they felt to be an unwise means of achieving a just end.

The evidence on the actions of the Methodist union leaders is ambiguous. Their "submission" was not complete and it was perhaps more submission to the logic of a market than directly to a superior class of owners. Furthermore Hobsbawn has shown quite clearly that the views of the leaders and members of a trade union may differ.<sup>4</sup> We found that this was increasingly true of the miners' unions in the villages in the early twentieth century.

(ii) The relation between religious and non-religious ideas and institutions was a factor in social history highlighted by our findings. For example Methodist social and ethical teaching motivated Methodists to compliance with and reform of a society understood in terms of liberal laissez-faire economic theories. We need to understand how particular economic theories gain currency and the ways in which they relate to other ideological factors, including religion. In other words, we could develop a fuller understanding of (in this case) the nineteenth century by exploring the sociology of economic knowledge.

(iii) We have also seen the effect of religion in reducing class consciousness and class conflict through the sharing of religious beliefs and institutions by potentially conflicting groups. Our Methodists were ideologically and ethically able to identify themselves with the coal-owners, who were themselves part-legatees of the Protestant Ethic of the seventeenth/eighteenth centuries. This was to some extent paralleled at the national level in the identification of union leadership with Gladstone and Gladstonian Liberalism. In the local situation also the chapels were peculiarly dependent on the owners economically. The working men's Clubs constituted totally independent working class organisations, but do not seem to have produced early leadership in the unions. We probably know less about the role

of working men's Clubs in the history of the working class than we know about Methodism. A sociological study of this, and the importance of temperance in the founding of the labour movement would open up relatively unexplored areas of social and political history.

(iv) Weber in dismissing the relevance of religion for the modern proletariat probably underestimated the importance of the more radical Protestant tradition in the generation of radical working class politics. This is because he was concerned with the emergence of a capitalist society and an entrepreneurial class, and believed the Reformation to be a spent force in Germany at the turn of the century.<sup>5</sup> One of the historically and sociologically more interesting discoveries in the course of this study was existence of a group of socialist radicals in one chapel. The intellectual roots of this group lay not in Methodist thought but in seventeenth century Christian radicalism, eighteenth century rationalism, Christian Socialism, and Thoreau, Emerson and Tolstoy. The group also showed anarchist tendencies amongst some of its members who had indirect contacts - through the Brotherhood Church - with the Dukhobors. By revealing the specific roots of radicalism amongst Methodists we have provided an indirect confirmation of our earlier proposition, namely that Methodist ideas as such were not a source of political radicalism in our village in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Nonetheless the radicals began their political careers within Methodism. Their political language was often the language of the Bible. Thus at a relatively simple level we may say that Methodism "produced" radicalism by;

- (i) providing a language for political protest,
- (ii) giving the religious basis for social and political activity - for those who wished to pursue such activities,
- (iii) heightening social consciousness through study and
- (iv) by providing oratorical and organisational skills.

At a more fundamental level however we can see that Methodism made the radicals receptive to an especially ethical kind of socialism, the socialism of F. D. Maurice and Edward Carpenter, and not so receptive - it would seem - to Marxism. The Methodist outlook appears to lead men to single out or accentuate the ethical qualities of political beliefs. Thus Methodists adhered to especially ethical kinds of Liberalism and socialism in both of which they believed that "what is morally wrong can not be politically right" (a phrase open to both conservative and radical interpretations).

Another striking feature of the radical outlook was that it was an outlook with wide horizons, entailing an analysis of the national and international economy, rather than of the Durham miners' market interest alone; it provided the basis for developing a class rather than a trade union consciousness. Had the radical tradition become dominant in the Labour and trade union movements, their histories would have been very different. But we have argued that it was in the nature of the pursuit of political power that such a tradition should not become dominant.

(v) In summary we find it very difficult to make simple statements of the causal effectiveness of beliefs as such. The monolinear theses of Lecky and Halevy emerge from valid attempts to organise the data of social change in the most rapid period of industrial development in Britain. The labour historians were trying to explain broad historical movements, and the Methodist historians were trying to defend Methodism. In arguing their cases all over-simplified their respective cases and made sweeping assertions of the kind which Pope, who we quoted on the second page of this work, characterised as: "Too uncritical and indiscriminating to represent the diverse ways in which religious agencies function" and which fail, "adequately to allow for the multiplicity and reciprocity of relationships". The main stream of Methodists thought may have been anti-radical, but introducing men to the Bible and other religious literature, even in a non-radical context, can lead

(unintentionally) to introducing these men to radical ideas. Given suitable political situations the radical ideas would find a ready affinity with the radical tradition of the Durham miners which had been suppressed, and passed into legend, by the mid-1860's. It is not enough to look at beliefs and ideas in the abstract. The structures within which religion is institutionalised call forth certain organisational skills in men, which can be turned to other uses. If we ask the question "Where would early working class movements have found their leaders without Methodism?" we can see the importance of Methodism in "causing" a leadership to emerge amongst the workers. We then, of course, have to ask further questions about the nature of that leadership, which we have done.

## 2. Community and Association

(i) Lenski in The Religious Factor outlined the differences between communal and associational adherence to religious groups. The importance of this distinction has been elaborated in the present study. We have shown that the Methodist Society was a community, in which the ties of kinship and friendly interaction were as important as the demands of membership of a religious organisation. The ancillary activities of the chapels provided the basis for an intense and warm social life which extended beyond the formal boundaries of the organisation. Involvement in the ancillary activities did not entail a high theological or ideological commitment. Theology was thus relatively unimportant for the average Methodist unless his views received a radical and general challenge, as, for example, in the case of The New Theology and the ensuing debate.

The high evaluation of ancillary activities by the participants is a major factor in explaining the chapels' "official" response to "the world". This factor may have been underestimated in previous studies which have concentrated on belief rather than institutionally generated constraints. Wherever there were differences of interest amongst chapel members, or

whenever potentially divisive issues arose it was necessary to avoid taking sides so as to preserve the communal life of the chapel.

The importance of this consideration has been elaborated in our accounts of three series of political events. In the early years of the century the Methodists were all united in opposition to the 1902 Education Act and the drink trade. Their views were also shared by the coal owners. There was no sense in which these issues, directly bearing upon Methodist ethics, could have divided local Methodism. Thus the Methodists had a policy.

The 1914-18 war created conflicts over conscientious objection and military exemption. Methodists found themselves judging one another's claims to exemption. The outcome of the judgments and the gossip accompanying the claims alienated a number of families.

In 1926 the Methodist supported the miners passively, but to a degree they were divided. It was possible for the Methodists partially to avoid the conflicts amongst their membership and in the community by engaging in mutual aid activities on a communal basis rather than acting as a politically active association. Through social work and mutual aid they were also finding an outlet which enabled them to express social concern in a traditional Methodist form.

The ability of a group to formulate a clear policy or attitude on any matter on which they think they ought to have a position will come to depend on the degree to which the policy issue is potentially divisive of the group internally. Thus the interests of the group vis-à-vis the interests of the wider community become a crucial factor. The greater the diversity of economic and status interests there are within a group, the less able will the group be to formulate a policy on economic, social and political issues. At least this is true for as long as it values its communal life highly. The intention to prevent divisive "political" issues intruding into the life of the church is also entirely consistent with a view of the church as an

organisation reconciling all interests, in other words, having a universalistic outlook.

One consequence of the avoidance of division has probably been to reinforce the local decline of Methodism (economic and demographic change was certain to lead to the decline of Methodism and this was likely to be exacerbated by any social mobility that occurred amongst the Methodists.) The Methodists were faced with two possible courses of action, both of which would probably have reduced membership either by alienating members through taking a stand on an issue, or by ceasing to be relevant to more progressive thinkers. What the Methodists were doing, in fact, by choosing the second course was to resist new ideas in the twentieth century.

The theology of R. J. Campbell divided preacher against preacher and apparently caused the loss of both members and preachers (although there is no statistical evidence for this). Therefore an attempt was made to assert the prevailing orthodoxy; this seemed to have been successful in that older men, more traditional thinkers, held power in the chapels. Similarly socialist ideas challenged the whole basis of the established Methodists' world view - and especially the basis of his view of authority and property. The ensuing attempt to keep politics out of the pulpit actually entailed the assertion of one group's traditional beliefs against those of another. This resistance to new ideas by the older men had already been causing conflicts with the younger men from the beginning of the century; the alienation worsened as the century progressed. Thus it would seem that, in Kent's words,

"Methodism was both producing men who revolted against the established order and also disowning them, if their activities seemed to imperil the religious society's existence."<sup>6</sup>

(ii) The unintended consequence of the dominance of communal factors has been to make the chapels wholly communal bodies, with communal values taking

precedence over other considerations. Thus the chapels have become unable to respond to changing social, economic and religious circumstances. That social changes and the ecumenical movement (for example) are all irrelevant to the warm social life of the contemporary Methodists was amply borne out by our direct observations of the life of the chapels.

The apparently simple objectives of our study proved, in the event, to be much more difficult to achieve than we had at first believed. The main reason for this was that it was difficult to separate out Methodism as a discrete social phenomenon. Methodism is not theology, nor an organisation, but a way of life, a code of ethics which are often unstated and only implicit in people's behaviour. This is peculiarly problematic when one is trying to study the effects of something called Methodism - which is clearly "there" in the form of chapels and hymn-singing in the valley. The problem is compounded by Methodism co-existing with social and economic philosophies which are highly ethical, and known to have been penetrated by non-conformist thought in their development.

It is an elementary factor in social research to be able to say what is and what is not the object of one's study. Yet, whatever the behaviour of the people called Methodists, Methodism was so much part of a local culture that it almost seems as if Methodism effected everything, at least indirectly, and is the part-explanation of every course of events. But if no social phenomenon is "not-Methodist" then one can only discuss the effects of Methodism in a series of tautologies. We can separate out and observe Methodism, or Methodist ethics, most clearly, when we see what persists in religious life when the social background changes. Men and organisations change, as did the Liberal party from 1870 to 1920. Men and their associations change their labels, as did the villagers in becoming Labour party supporters. But many of the beliefs held by individuals and expressed by their organisations did not change, or changed very little. This continuity between, for example, the Liberal

and Labour parties is expressed in an ethical tone, in individualism, and this would seem to be one of the important contributions of Methodism to political life.

We have argued throughout and wish to reassert that in understanding the political effects of Methodism one should take into account not only beliefs but the social relations of which those beliefs are a part. It has been necessary to study the relations between miners and coal owners and the internal relations of the Methodist chapels in order to understand the effects of Methodism.

We have not been concerned with all aspects of religious life; some aspects have been ignored or mentioned only en passant. We were only concerned with "those features in the total picture of a religion which have been decisive for the fashioning of a practical way of life."<sup>7</sup> Most of our attention has been devoted to the political way of life of our villagers.

Until its last appearance at the Miners' Gala in July 1969 the Esh Winning Lodge Banner bore on its reverse side the assertion that "All Men are Brethren". Below these words there was a picture of a miner shaking the hand of a tail-coated owner. Above and behind the pair there floats an angel bearing a pink ribbon which bears the legend "Let Us Work Together". This legend, which was part of the basis of the miners' "practical way of life", cannot be understood without knowing the meaning of Methodism in the lives of the men and women of the Deerness Valley.

Footnotes to Chapter X

1. The Philosophy of Manufactures, Book the Third, Chapter III
2. Secularisation and Moral Change, p. 42
3. Ibid., p. 24
4. Labouring Men, p. 26
5. Weber, Economy and Society, pp. 515-517
6. The Age of Disunity, p. 137
7. Weber, "The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism" in Gerth and Mills, From Max Weber, p. 294

APPENDIX I

RESEARCH STRATEGY AND TECHNIQUES

A. Strategy

This work has been based on a field study of a fairly intensive kind. By this we mean it has been a detailed study of a small population in a limited geographical area. The decisive factor in favour of this kind of research was the wish to produce a sociological enquiry which explored the meanings of religion and social and economic relations for social actors. For this we needed interactional and highly situational data.

A price has to be paid for the adoption of this strategy. The life of mining villages is not oriented to the production of data for sociologists. Thus the data actually collected may raise issues that are not dealt with in any of the literature and it is not possible therefore to gain a ready perspective on its relevance - especially if the issues are not central to the theme researched. Thus, for example, the Irish clearly played an important role in the villages, but there is no study of the Irish in County Durham to which our data can be referred. Conversely data that we regard as central to our main themes may not be forthcoming; the obvious example in our case was the lack of hard data on relations at the place of work.

A more eclectic approach would enable us to "complete" our sociological picture by taking a sermon from one village, an action from another, the social composition of a chapel in a third village and so on. All these could be brought together to construct a coherent picture. This approach might not only produce a spurious coherence, it would vitiate the prime purposes of the research because we are trying to show the situational relations between beliefs and actions.

Our chosen approach also deprives us of important comparative perspectives. Obviously we have not been able to compare events in our villages

with events in villages that contained fewer Methodist (or non-conformist) miners. It is an historical fact of some significance that one might have to look beyond the County, or beyond Great Britain to find a "non-religious" mining community at the end of the nineteenth century. But only twenty miles away from our villages there were deep and gassy pits, employing larger numbers of men. These were pits with a long, bitter history of violence and ill-will between ownership and men. We clearly could not use data from this area to fill gaps in our Deerness Valley data. Nonetheless it would have been valid to do quite the opposite of this and test our thesis on the effects of religion in these very different circumstances. The importance of this consideration emerged too late for it to affect research in any material way.

If wide variations are found in the course of the history of just a few villages within County Durham, then how typical of "mining villages" are our villages? We can meet this question in two ways, without providing a definite answer. Firstly we can point to the fact that the newspapers for the County in the period concerned give no indication of major variations between villages. Certainly Methodist activities seem to be very much the same from village to village. Secondly we have tried (in Chapter II) to set our study in a broad historical framework, to show how the chapels, unions and pits tied in with national religious, political and economic developments. By and large our villages - or their inhabitants; miners, managers and owners - seem to "fit" with national developments in economic and political beliefs and activities.

Having listed the problems raised by our research strategy we should also state its advantages. Restricting the location of the research require the search for data which might have been overlooked had more accessible data from a wider location been admissable. Whilst it is true that many of our sermons could have been preached in any Methodist chapel at any time we

have shown that the sermons were preached by a particular preacher to a certain group. We have gone on from here to show that the ideas in the sermons were congruent with certain other beliefs and that men acted in ways that we can better understand in the light of these beliefs.

Ultimately religion is experienced by men and women in particular concrete situations. At whatever level one may discuss religion, or religion and politics, it is important to know how religion was experienced. We have to validate our explanations at the level of meaning for the actors. The use of the locality study, inspite of its intrinsic shortcomings has enabled us to see social actors in a sociologically rounded way and to understand the meaning that religion had for them in their situation.

#### B. Techniques

The methods used in the research fall under four broad headings:

- (a) the study of private and official manuscript and printed sources,
- (b) the searching of newspapers,
- (c) interviewing (mainly unstructured),
- (d) participant observation.

The data needed could not be obtained by the use of any one method, for example; whilst newspaper accounts gave an adequate chronology of events, interviews were needed to elicit local details of the events, and the actors. Local interpretations of the events could only be gained from interviews, or, in the case of the late nineteenth century from patchy sources - letters and diaries.

Historical data survives in a non-random manner. Legal documents are more likely to be preserved than Minute Books. Only a few members of the working class keep diaries, and only some of their descendants preserve them. Such considerations have made it doubly necessary to cross-check all data wherever possible.

Where complete runs of material were available, ie. newspapers and Methodist Sunday School books, sampling techniques were used. In searching the newspapers (local weeklies) the first edition of each month was used in order to build up a picture of the routine life of the chapels and villages. If by this method, or from other sources, it was known that important events had taken place (e.g. strikes, elections, etc.) the search was extended to cover every week in all relevant newspapers until the topic was dropped by the press.

Printed Methodist sources were investigated for every ten years, a whole year's material being examined. This reduced the task to manageable proportions and highlighted changes in content and presentation of material by the Methodists.

Using these methods the following investigations have been carried out:

- (1) The numbers of Methodist and adherents have been roughly established for the Primitive and Wesleyan Methodists. Chapel attendances have been estimated. The occupations of the leading Methodists have been ascertained. Some estimate has been made of communal and associational membership. Among sources for these data are; official Methodist returns, documents relating to Trustees, Sunday School registers, Minute Books, Electoral Registers and interviews.
- (2) The occupational structure of the locality at various dates has been reconstructed through the use of colliery employment records, Census material and registration of births and deaths.
- (3) Given the problematic question of the nature of beliefs, it has been necessary to study the historical and present beliefs of the Methodists:-

- (i) By reading sermons and notes for sermons, diaries, speeches, etc.

- (ii) Through informal discussions and structured interviews

with Methodists.

(iii) By searching published sources; guides to Sunday School teachers, Methodist magazines, etc.

(iv) By participating in the life of the chapels, especially to hear sermons and Anniversary addresses.

It has really only become possible to understand Methodist beliefs and undertake the task outlined in (3) by becoming immersed in the culture and history of the villagers. The investigator spent many hours not only in the chapels, but in the homes of Methodists, discussing their beliefs directly, their biographies, the past and contemporary life of the villages. In the light of these discussions the material in (3) had to be re-worked a number of times. Ideally the investigator should keep a field diary recording the developments of his understanding as he learns the nuances of Methodist language - but there is a problem insofar as recording can interfere with understanding. Furthermore changes of understanding develop by a slow accretion of experiences and interpretations of them, not in a way that can be noted at the time.

Important questions of phenomenological method and hermeneutics were raised by these aspects of the study. For example, to what extent was it possible for the investigator adequately to understand and take as given the whole cultural, economic and political life of the villages in the late nineteenth century in order to understand the meaning of, say, becoming a convert to temperance? This problem is not discussed, but for the purposes of the present work it is assumed that one may "understand" another actor through the spoken or written word. The problem of intersubjectivity is assumed to be surmountable.

(4) One very useful technique used towards the end of the research was to discuss findings with the Methodists, both individually and collectively. This was avoided during the time in which the investigator

wished to establish initial rapport.

By talking in homes and giving talks to meetings it was possible to present to the Methodists sociological analyses of the development of Methodism, and its relation to local society. They responded in a thoughtful and lively way to quite abstract discussion. They were willing to confirm certain notions - even those which might be interpreted as personally critical of them. When they understood a point being made they often offered evidence in support of it which was better than that offered in the opening talk. They gained new insights and then said they were sure the investigator was right, only they had not seen things in "that way" before. For example: the Methodists always complain that the leadership in the Trade Unions is "not what it used to be" (i.e. Methodist); when presented with evidence on the aspirations and social mobility of the Methodists, they saw, and agreed, that the Trade Unions were bound to lose their Methodist leadership. We were then able to discuss the "unintended consequences" of actions and beliefs fairly objectively. The meeting at which this was discussed consisted of about 40 people, all of whom tried to think of leading Methodists whose sons had gone into pit work - they were unable to do so, confirming the investigator's hypotheses in a very striking way.

Once the Methodists felt they knew what the research was about, they volunteered information which they regarded as useful; no one seemed offended by comments which the investigator thought might be seen as critical. This seems a legitimate research technique - it points to the desirability of maximum openness between the investigator and his subjects. With such openness (which may not be possible in all research situations) it seems possible to develop techniques of enquiry on the basis of a direct and "honest" interchange between the sociologist and his subjects - or more strictly, between actors in a discussion situation. It does not mean that

the investigator accepts the story told by his subjects; their response to the presentation of his data is data in itself. A very important datum on Methodists is that they can engage in "intellectual" discussion in a formal lecture-discussion situation. Another significant fact is that they saw the intellectual enterprise of research as valid and worthwhile. The investigator was never told by a Methodist that he ought to do something more useful than digging up the past of Methodism.

A point of some technical importance arose in asking respondents about historical events. In some cases reports seemed to confirm one another, so the researcher became convinced that he was obtaining valid data. Then it appeared that the form of the reporting was also very similar, as well as the content; eventually a common source, in a newspaper or local history was discovered. The key to this was given when a respondent provided great detail on an event which she could not possibly have remembered. People discuss their history and an agreed version emerges, which is so real, so deeply imbedded in the culture, that people may describe events as if they were themselves actors or eye-witnesses to the history. Investigators concerned with historical data should be prepared for this, it should not be assumed that there is a Truth, something "which really happened" that respondents can recall. It is the interpretations of events that are data; the interpretations may all be similar, or systematically vary between classes of actors. (For example; biographical data on a Union leader may vary widely - or actually be contradictory - between two groups of "radical" and "conservative" workers).

#### The Dramaturgical Method

It might be argued that the methods used produced a "false" picture of Methodism. Three dramatic series of events were chosen to illustrate an argument, but the life of the villages and chapels was not all drama. A

closer study of the "normal" life of the villages would have been more relevant to the theme developed. Whilst this criticism is not without substance, the following points need to be set against it:

(1) Data on the normal life of the chapels is not easily recovered.

Furthermore how does the researcher decide which of his respondents' memories are memories of the normal and which of the special? Nonetheless the account of the communal nature of village Methodism, for example, includes some discussion of the routine life of the chapels, and this is very much part of the explanatory framework.

(2) From the beginning there appears to have been quite rapid change in the social and political life of the villages. It is thus very difficult if not impossible to say what was normal or average, change was in fact the most normal thing. Normality is most likely to be defined by the actors in terms of some sort of golden past, this in itself can be highly misleading. History is a social fact, or a social artifact, with functions in the present, it is not necessarily a scientific account of events.

(3) Economic conflict, bargaining and trying to gain an advantage in the market was normal to the mining villages. The events of 1926 were a special case of this, by virtue of a very marked change in the degree of conflict and the sanctions used.

(4) The events that we have described, are relevant to the main themes of our work, they are used to make sociological points, not to convey the authentic feeling of domestic or pit life in the villages. If we had been studying the family, then other "events" could have been used to make other points, such data were collected incidentally but not used, because they were not relevant to the thesis.

(5) The "dramatic" events are especially useful in that they expose the key actors; trade union and political leaders could not avoid action in 1926; men on Tribunals could not avoid making decisions in 1916;

Methodist leaders could not stand idly by in 1902. What these men did is, furthermore, public knowledge, and it is public knowledge of men defending some of their most precious ideal and material interests. On this basis alone the dramaturgical method could be justified.

(6) It was not the intention to produce a conventional history of the villages in the sense that we wanted to tell the sequential story of the events in the villages from 1870 to 1970. We have selected events in accordance with their relevance to our main themes (see 4 above) and have missed out much. We have not dwelt on the influence of Catholicism, or the functions of the Clubs, nor have we looked at non-religious self-improvement and self-education activities. To some extent this distorts our picture of the villages, we have looked out at them through the chapels because we were asking questions about religion. Had we looked out, like Dennis et al, through the pubs and Clubs we might have observed somewhat different villages. But one can not write from all perspectives at once, and our work is about religion and its effects. There is everything to be gained from juxtaposing this work with research from other perspectives, but nothing to be gained by merely pointing to the obvious gaps in our knowledge of the villages that this research has done nothing to fill, and which it did not intend to fill.

APPENDIX II

THE METHODIST COMMUNITY AND OBJECTIONS TO ANGLICAN UNION

Towards the end of the research period in the Deerness Valley a short questionnaire was administered to 77 Methodists. The total Methodist membership list was of 130 people in 91 households. Twenty-five of these people were very well known to the researcher because he had repeatedly visited them and used them as informants on many matters. They had also become his friends. The survey was used to compare the Methodists with whom we were less familiar with the well-known Methodists, in terms of social characteristics and opinions. It is important to note that the 125 Methodists were not unknown to the researcher, but only less well known. Twenty-eight were not surveyed because of old age, illness or refusal (12 in all) or because they lived outside the four main villages and could not easily be visited in the two weeks set aside for this phase of the research.

Most of the data collected are not relevant to the present work and will not be discussed. One question, however, elicited answers which seem to confirm the contention that Methodist orientations are highly ethical and communal. The question was "Are you for or against Union with the Church of England? Why/Why not?" In answering for or against union respondents gave reasons that can be listed under the following eight headings:

- (1) Ethical: Methodists do not drink or gamble, etc., Anglicans do.
- (2) Communal: You feel at home in Methodism, we are free and easy, you can talk before the service etc.
- (3) "Liturgical" (but closely related to (2)): Freedom and simplicity of worship in Methodism\*, no elaborate buildings or vestments
- (4) Closed table: Methodists can not attend Church of England Communion,

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\* In fact Methodist services follow a rigidly conventional form.

but they can come to ours.

- (5) Theological: Methodists hold certain beliefs that are different from the Church of England.
- (6) Organisational: It is a take-over, we will be swallowed up, we are more democratic than the Church of England.
- (7) Common sense: Silly to duplicate organisations when we both have falling numbers.
- (8) There is no difference of any importance between Methodism and other Christian religions.

We divided the respondents into three groups; regular attenders (attend at least once a week), irregular attenders (less than once a week) and non-attenders. The range of views expressed by the regular attenders was similar to views expressed by the members who were not questioned because they and their views were already well-known.

TABLE 6: Methodist views of Union		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	D.K.	Other	No Reason
<u>Regular attenders</u>	(58)											
For Union	(10)		3	2	1	1		2			1	2
Against	(38)	6	10	15	7	14	8		1		2	3
Don't Know	(10)			1						2	1	2
<u>Irregular Attenders</u>	(3)											
Against Union	(1)											1
Don't Know	(2)	1								1		
<u>Non-Attenders</u>	(16)*											
For Union	(1)						1					
Against Union	(10)	4		4		2	1		1	1		1
Don't Know	(4)			1					2	1		
<u>Totals</u> ‡	(76)*											
For	(11)		3	2	1	1	1	2			1	2
Against	(49)	10	10	19	7	16	9		2	1	2	5
Don't Know	(16)	1							2	4	1	2

\* One no response. ‡ The number of reasons given exceeds the number of respondents because some respondents gave more than one reason.

Thus out of 76 reasons for not supporting union with the Church of England, Ethical and Communal Reasons account for twenty. The question of the closed table may also be counted as a communal reason as it entails resentment at lack of reciprocity on the part of the Church of England membership. We might also add the Liturgical reasons to our Communal grouping, as this seems to represent a preference for the familiar and homely as compared with remote and awesome ritual. By this count, 46 of the 76 responses are accounted for by Ethical and Communal reasons.

Two other interesting factors are shown up by this table: firstly regular attenders are, when questioned in private, more favourably disposed to Union than they indicate in public meetings. Secondly, there is no complete coherence of opinion amongst the Methodists; some are against Union, but are unable to say why, different Methodists give the same kinds of reasons for and against the idea of Union.

APPENDIX III

THE RELIGIOUS STATISTICS

1. Methodists

The figures for Methodist membership and adherence are reported here with very little comment. In introducing these figures we need only make two points: firstly to reiterate the difficulty of interpreting membership and adherence; some of the most active Methodists were never formally members of the local Society. We do not know how the totals for adherents were arrived at, nor whether an element of multiple counting arises from the method used to arrive at the total for adherence. Secondly: these figures are presented to show the general and long term trends of support for Methodism and to put on record such statistical data as were collected in the course of research. No detailed interpretation of these figures is possible.

A. Waterhouses P.M. Circuit: Members and Adherents

TABLE 7:

Year	Members	Adherents	Total
1892	148	500	648
1896	154	500	654
1901	340	1000	1340
1906	310	1140	1450
1911	305	1410	1715
1916	280	1450	1730
1921	276	1450	1726
1926	263	810	1073
1931	197	440	637

Waterhouses P.M. Circuit: Sunday Schools

The Returns report the number of children registered, a careful study of the Waterhouses Sunday School register from 1890-1930 suggests that registrations were increasingly in excess of attendance. On the assumption that this was so for all the villages in the Circuit, we apply the "Waterhouses Ratio" to the registrations:

TABLE 8:

Year	Registration	Ratio	Adjusted Total
1892	594	0.82	487
1896	703	0.59	415
1901	667	0.55	366
1911	669	0.31	192
1921	652	0.27	176

B. Wesleyan Methodists

No early records survive.

Members

TABLE 9:

Year	Water-houses	Esh Winning*	Quebec	Total
1911	40	90	25	155
1916	39	81	41	160
1920	40	80	34	174
1932	22	136	15	173

\* In 1921 there were also 150 "hearers" and in 1931 59 hearers in the mornings and 72 in the evenings

C. Methodism: amalgamation and after

Memberships

TABLE 10:

	1935	1936	1941	1946	1951	1956	1961	1968
Esh Winning (voluntary amalgamation)	131	131	103	116	84	112	133	100
Lymington Tce (ex-P.M.)	10	10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Waterhouses (ex-P.M.)	72	71	52	42	44	41	41	} 52
Waterhouses (ex-W.M.)	22	19	24	25	28	32	30	
Quebec (amalgamated by closures)	46	36	14	13	21	25	27	-
Cornsay Colliery (exMNC)	34	29	30	37	37	-	-	-
Total	313	301	222	226	214	247	231	152

D. Other Non-conformists

The Baptists membership was drawn from the whole of the Valley and membership is given as the number of adults baptized as adults.

The earliest indication of attendances is given at the end of 1901 when it was thought that the chapel, seating 200, should be enlarged.

In 1918 there were 291 members, in 1932, 187 and in 1961, 298.

The Salvation Army was active in the Valley in the 1920's, but no records survive. The building used by the Army was accidentally burnt down.

E. Roman Catholics

From 1880-1900 The Catholics recommend, on the basis of the 1881 Census, multiplying the number of infant baptisms by 28.5 to arrive at the adult Catholic population. From 1912-1914 they make estimates on a different but unstated basis. We have, nevertheless used the Catholics' own estimates. This means that we include a substantial number of the young and very young for whom "membership"



APPENDIX IV

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS, SOCIAL MOBILITY AND  
THE STRUCTURE OF METHODIST LEADERSHIP

1. The Occupational Structure of the Population

The villages have been one-industry villages throughout their history, the extent of this is indicated by the Registrar General's decennial census figures:-

TABLE 12:

BRANDON & BYSHOTTLES U.D. PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL OCCUPIED MEN ENGAGED IN COAL MINES 1901-1951				
1901	1911	1921	1931	1951
76.1	78.2	74.9	63.4	47.6

The category "Engaged in Coal Mines" includes many actual occupations and does not distinguish between "miners" and other workers in the coal industry. An approximate breakdown of the occupational structure is shown by an analysis of the registration of births and deaths carried out for 1910 and 1930.

TABLE 13:

ESH WINNING, CORNSAY COLLIERY, QUEBEC PERCENTAGE BIRTHS & DEATHS BY OCCUPATION *		
Occupation	1910	1930
Miner	72.2 )	55.4 )
Mining Official	1.7 )	1.1 )
T.U. Official	0.7 )	- )
Other in	90.8 )	77.4 )
Mining (incl. coke)	13.7 )	18.9 )
Mining Craftsmen	2.5 )	2.0 )
Shopworker	1.0 )	1.9 )
Shopkeeper & Services	3.3 )	2.0 )
White Collar	5.6 )	5.9 )
Minor Professional	1.3 )	2.0 )
Manual Unskilled	1.9 )	6.6 )
" Semi-skilled	0.1 )	3.4 )
" Skilled	1.3 )	2.8 )
Self Employed Crafts	0.1 )	0.3 )
Other	-	1.8

\* Totals 1908-1912 and 1928-1931, Averaged Births and Deaths by occupation of father or husband for children and women.

These may be compared with colliery household occupancy for 1889 in Esh

Winning and Waterhouses:

TABLE 14:

	No.	%
Miner	270	71
Mining Official	32	8
Others in Mining (incl. Coke Workers)	55	14
Mechanics, Enginemen, etc.	21	5
Minor Professional	5	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>100</b>
Source: Manager's Report to Owners 1889.		

The results of this analysis suggest that the villages studied had a higher proportion of mineworkers than the Urban District. This is a sensible finding, the eastern end of the district including larger villages closer to Durham City. By 1961 mining was a rapidly declining local industry.

Taylor on the basis of his ten percent sample gives the following occupational structure for Esh Winning and Waterhouses:-

TABLE 15:

OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE ESH WINNING & WATERHOUSES 1961		
Occupation	Waterhouses	E.W.
Miner	22.5%	31.0%
Mining Official	3.7	0.9
Driver - Conductor	7.5	3.2
Building Workers	6.5	3.2
Other	21.5	25.1
Redundant	11.1	3.3
Widows/Spinsters	7.3	5.6
O.A.P.'s	19.9	27.7
Source: TAYLOR TABLES 7, p.43 & 9, p. 47		

Of the 88 miners in both villages in Taylor's sample 53 worked in their home Colliery. Even if we assumed that all the O.A.P.'s had been miners, the drop in mining occupations since 1930 would still be very marked. Taylor noted that whilst 50% of the active persons in Esh Winning were miners a great variety of occupations (20 in all) are found in the village.

In summary we may say that up until the second world war at least seventy percent of the male population were in mining\*. Fifty to seventy percent were miners as such. About one percent were mining officials and a further one percent Union officials. Between 10 and 20 percent worked at the pit head or in the coke yards. An unknown number worked in the large brick and pipeworks at Cornsay Colliery and the smaller Lymington brick flat (which closed early in the century). About 4 percent of the population were involved in keeping or working in shops.

## 2. Individual Mobility

### Occupational Status

According to accounts given, the miner occupied an elite status in the village. Ambiguities are concealed by such accounts. Being "a miner" entails passing through a particular occupational cycle. Starting as a pit lad, perhaps driving the ponies, a young man might graduate to putting after a few years below ground. As a putter he would hope to become a hewer. As a putter or hewer a man would work on piece-work, being paid for his output of coal either a member of a hewing team or individually as a putter. When too old to hew a man might return to the surface, there he would work on the spoil heap, in the lamp cabin, or around the yard as a labourer, until he retired.

The high status ascribed to the hewer is based on the notion that he is doing "a man's job", his strength, skill and independence is recognised by managers and "marrers" alike. His high status is also due to high earning power and high wages. Nonetheless the term "miner" is used rather indiscriminately of any man who has moved beyond being a pit lad. The term

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\* Albeit unemployed in mining for periods Esh Winning closed from 1932 until 1941, Waterhouses worked at reduced output. Quebec-Hamsteels closed in 1926.

is also used, especially by women, of any man working in the coal trade.

The status of a man in the pit yard is more difficult to ascertain, as is the status of a retired miner. A man who never became or who never tried to become a hewer might occupy a relatively low status. An old or disabled hewer might retain his past reputation as a worker or high wage-earner. Age itself confers some status. A few might enjoy high status through holding an important office in the Union Lodge. But the ex-hewer would have the same comparatively low earnings as other surface workers.

Within mining status is not based on any one single factor. In such close-knit communities as mining villages it might be more accurate to say that status depends on many factors, including those extrinsic to work. Traditional factors operate insofar as a man's family has been known in the village for more than one generation. The "whole man" is known and rated accordingly. Relevant factors include: position at work, office-holding in Union, recreational or religious organisation, "respectability", occupation of positions of power or authority in local government, political parties or the judiciary. One can have more or less status and power from any one of these sources and they are probably additive.

Mining villagers are themselves very unclear as to the status hierarchy, probably because it exists not absolutely, only in various contexts. Differences of status are frequently denied although used implicitly. When asked about the status structure respondents tend to express solidaristic sentiments. They say "we're all the same" or "there are no class differences", "We stick together". In the face of external threat (or the interview situation) considerations of solidarity are more relevant than status-ascription. The ascription of status is context-relevant, not something-in-itself.

Nevertheless it probably remains true to say that the most salient status-conferring factors are class factors, in that they relate to "specific

causal components of life chances, insofar as this component is represented exclusively by economic interest in the possession of ... opportunities for income"\* in a labour market. This seems to be the case in a double sense; (1) the hewer possesses skills which give him opportunities in the labour market, and (2) he has a position in the productive process which gives him a strong bargaining position vis-à-vis the management. Thus class position derived from mining is the basic factor in status, but to this factor can be added the others listed above.

Status and class considerations raise difficulties enough in considering mining alone. There are further ambiguities in locating mining occupations in the whole status spectrum. These arise in part from the miner's own ambivalence towards his work. Whilst mining is a man's job, bringing in good wages, it is also dirty, dangerous and relatively insecure. The shopkeeper is relatively independent, his independence is assured by capital rather than skills, his job is clean and he may receive a high income. The shopkeeper may feel that the miner occupies a lower status than himself, nevertheless he is himself directly dependent on the miners for his income and thus indirectly dependent on the colliery employers also.

According to miners, clerks do easy work. But in the 1930's especially and since the second world war white collar jobs offered greater security than mining. Miners value the education which gives access to such occupation but the social mobility entailed threatens the tight-knit community by removing sons and daughters geographically and perhaps making them feel superior.

It is very difficult to proceed from a statement of the occupational structure to a statement about a status system. The idea of a status

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\* H. H. Gerth & C. Wright Mills, From Max Weber, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1961, p. 181

"system" with its implication of coherence either for actors or the sociologist is unhelpful. A villager's view of status depends on his point of view; it was and is complicated by the ambiguities in rating occupations themselves and occupations vis-à-vis others. The sociologist can not impose a simple scheme upon this.

In our estimation\* the status hierarchies are as follows:-

FIGURE 6:

Methodists' View of Occupational Status
1. White collar and minor professional
2. Shopkeeper
3. Personal services ( <u>not</u> domestic service) shopworkers
4. Manual skilled: mining official, miners' official
5. Miner* - semi-skilled manual
6. Unskilled manual, including unskilled in mining.*
7. Unemployed
* Respondents' highest occupation in mining considered.

FIGURE 7:

Non-Methodists' View of Occupational Status
1. White collar, minor professional
2. Shopkeeper
3. All workers involved in mining, including officials
4. Skilled manual
5. Semi-skilled manual
6. Unskilled manual
7. Shopworker, personal services
8. Unemployed

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\* These are not actual rankings given by respondents, the Methodist ranking has been inferred. The non-Methodist ranking, whilst in the correct direction from the Methodist ranking, deliberately exaggerates the high status of all mining workers and thus probably does less than justice to ambiguities.

We now compare the inter-generational mobility of Methodists and non-Methodists on these two scales:

TABLE 16: Social Mobility, Methodist Scale: Respondent, Father & Son*										
		Up	Down	Static	NA/DK		Up	Down	Static	NA/DK
Methodist	F - R	21	19	19	3	R - S	23	5	2	-
Non-Methodist	F - R	22	13	10	9	R - S	12	9	7	-
No significant differences						Significant at P = 5 (Almost at P = 2.5)				

TABLE 17: Social Mobility, Non-Methodist: Respondent, Father & Son									
		Up	Down	Static	NA/DK		Up	Down	Static
Methodist	F - R	18	13	28	3	R - S	13	15	1
Non-Methodist	F - R	13	15	17	9	R - S	13	11	4
No significant differences						No significant differences			

These tables were constructed by working through a list of the Methodists and entering the occupations of fathers and sons. The non-Methodists were 54 persons drawn at random from the Electoral Register, from which known Methodists were excluded. Undergraduates as part of their research technique training collected various data from this sample. Only the occupational data were embodied in this research. Like every other attempt to collect statistical data (most of these attempts are not even reported here) we have produced little that is either unambiguous or interesting.

The only significant finding is that Methodists' sons have been upwardly mobile according to Methodists' evaluations of social status. This suggests that the evaluation of status by Methodists may in part be based on the experience of the Methodists' sons. This degree of ambiguity is unacceptable and can not be resolved.

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\* Abbreviations: F; respondent's Father, R; Respondent,  
S; Respondent's Son

### 3. Methodist Leadership

#### The Leaders and Activists: (i) Primitive Methodists

(a) Local Preachers Of the 1894 list of 19 preachers, 14 have been assigned an occupation by their surviving contemporaries. Four were coal hewers.\* Three were mining officials. Two worked in the coke yard. One was a shopkeeper, another the School Attendance Officer. One other has been identified as certainly not a miner. Two of these preachers (including one of the hewers) later became Ministers.

In 1910, 24 out of 26 have been assigned to their occupations (one of the two remaining is a women, probably a housewife). Eight were miners and two miner's wife and daughter respectively. Two were officials. Four shopkeepers and shop-workers, a farmer, the stationmaster, schoolmaster, Attendance Officer, a missionary and clerk make up the remainder of the list. One of the miners became Checkweighman and another an insurance agent.

Of the 1930 list six out of eight have been identified; one each of the following; miner, checkweighman, official, greengrocer, shopkeeper, insurance agent.

Depending on the occupation to which one assigns the unknown we have the following percentage distribution of miners and officials; 1894, 21-50% miners, 26-63% officials. In 1910, 38-46% miners, about 8% officials. In 1930 the very small list suggests a fairly evenly mixed group, excluding non-mining manual occupations.

(b) Sunday School Teachers The only data available are those relating to Waterhouses from 1890 and 1909 and Cornsay Colliery Methodist New Connexion

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\* Here the researcher tends to be at the mercy of an informant: in reporting miners they seem to mention the subject's prime, e.g. a hewer. For non-miners or the socially mobile, they mention the terminal occupation. Comments on social mobility as such, were common in the course of interviews.

from 1931 to 1951. Waterhouses lists 18 teachers in 1890; 15 have been identified, of whom 14 are in the coal trade (12 miners). The other is a railway signalman. In 1900 there are 19 names. 14 are of men in the coal trade (12 hewers), three officials and two remain unidentified. In 1909 out of 15 men listed, seven are miners, two officials. Also in this list are the stationmaster, missionary, Attendance Officer, a shopkeeper and insurance agent. Some names appear on two lists, and some on all three, including the Superintendent who was a coal hewer (and Lodge Chairman latterly).

(c) The Trustees Trustees are responsible for church property. It has been suggested that they were often chosen from amongst businessmen and would thus not be representative of Methodism as a whole. Furthermore, being a Trustee does not necessarily entail any active participation in the life of the chapels. Nevertheless many trustees were active participants and the lists certainly show who the local Methodists regarded as suitable for the responsibility of being a Trustee.\*

Quebec 1874: Colliery Manager, Overman, Surveyor, Engineer, Brickmaker (all officials). 1905: 8 miners, banksman, salesman, clerk and a farmer. 1908: 13 miners, deputy, checkweighman, 3 shopkeepers. 1929: 9 miners, checkweighman, signalman, clerk, salesman, 3 shopkeepers, 2 housewives and an "agent". 1937: 4 miners, 3 shopkeepers, haulier, commercial traveller, 2 retired men, 2 housewives, two widows. The fractions of miners are roughly as follows - 1874: nil, 1905:  $3/5$ , 1908:  $1/2$ , 1937:  $1/4$ .

Waterhouses 1897: 10 miners, small runner, cokeburner, surveyor (i.e. two officials), shopkeeper ( $3/4$  miners). 1906: 9 miners, 2 officials, 2 other workers in coal trade, street trader, insurance agent, 1 retired man, 2 occupations unknown ( $1/2$  miners). 1934: 5 miners, 1 labourer, signalman, 2 teachers, Store Manager and 2 salesmen, 3 not known ( $1/3$  miners).

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\* Trustees are not democratically elected, they chose their own membership and replacements.

Leaders and Activists: (ii) Methodist New Connexion

- (a) Local Preachers The New Connexion was part of the Durham Circuit with whom it therefore shared preachers. Primitive and Wesleyan Methodist local preachers also preached regularly at the New Connexion Chapel in Cornsay Colliery. There do not appear to have been more than one or two local New Connexion preachers.
- (b) Sunday School Teachers One register survives only, the 1931-51 volume. Two teachers appear throughout the period (one married the other's daughter). Two appear from 1931 to 1941 and 1941 to 1951 respectively. In 1931: 5 teachers were miners, 2 were officials, 1 a brickyard worker, the 3 remaining on the list were a clerk, a butcher and a student respectively (one miner was Lodge Secretary for a while, the student became the Archivist of the Methodist church). 1941: 3 miners, 1 retired official and a clerk. 1951: 2 retired officials, a school caretaker, a miner, colliery electrician, a travelling shop owner and an autobagger operator.
- (c) Trustees No information is available. During the early life of the chapel the building was probably the property of Ferens & Love, on whose colliery ground the building stood. One important factor in the Methodist New Connexion was the prominence of both Ferens and Love in the Connexion. Both held office locally and Love was a national benefactor of the Methodist New Connexion and other non-conformist churches. No other chapel in the Deerness Valley had such a direct connection with management - a connection reinforced by the Manager and an under-Manager being locally very active in the life of the chapel.

Leaders and Activists: (iii) The Wesleyan Methodists

- (a) Local Preachers The Crook Circuit was geographically very extensive, we will consider only those preachers resident in the four villages studied. In 1901 there were 10 local preachers; 4 were miners, 1 a coke worker, 1 was

an official, another a blacksmith. The remaining 3 were a signalman, Store clerk, and Store departmental manager respectively. The clerk became a Manager, the blacksmith a Senior Union Official, and one miner became a Methodist Minister. In 1911 out of 12 preachers; 3 were miners, 1 a coke worker. Two officials and a blacksmith complete the list of mining occupations. The remainder were; railway clerk, an insurance agent, a Store grocer (became a manager). Two occupations are unknown. One preacher whose occupation is not known became a Minister.

In 1920 the list was as follows (total of 12): 4 miners, 2 officials, 1 coke worker, a council workman, Union official, a cashier and a grocer from the Store, 1 unknown. One official became a self-employed baker. In 1934 (the year of effective union with the Primitive Methodists) the list was as follows (total of 11); 1 miner, 6 shopkeepers, a Store cashier, school-teacher, signalman and housewife.

(b) Sunday School Teachers No records available.

(c) Trustees The names of all the Trustees have been found; these indicate the wide extent of multiple membership. A Methodist might be a Trustee of three or four chapels. Some non-Wesleyan Methodists were also Trustees of Wesleyan Methodist chapels.

Fortunately more interesting lists of the Leaders' Meetings for all the chapels are available; the Leaders are the day-to-day organisers and initiators of chapel activities.

(d) Leaders' Meetings

Waterhouses 1911: 1 miner, small runner, blacksmith, 5 Store workers and a railway clerk. 1920: 1 miner, small runner, electrician, horsekeeper, haulier, 2 Store workers, one not known.

Esh Winning 1911: 6 miners, 1 Store worker. 1920: 8 miners, 2 miners' wives, a roadmender, one not known.

No simple conclusions can be drawn from these Wesleyan data. The Management

and workers at the Waterhouses Store were prominent both as preachers and chapel leaders. Quebec was throughout dominated by miners. Waterhouses and Quebec are quite sharply contrasted in their Leaders, but Esh Winning seem to change over time, although the "not known" categories are of crucial significance in deciding whether this is a real or apparent change.

Leaders and Activists: (iv) Amalgamated Methodists

(a) Local Preachers After a series of administrative rearrangements leading to the formation of the Brandon and Deerness Valley Circuit in 1936 the Primitive Methodist, Wesleyan Methodist and Methodist New Connexion Plans were amalgamated and membership confined mainly to the Valley. The effect of this was to widen the catchment area for the Primitive Methodists, reduce it for the Wesleyan Methodists and the Methodist New Connexion; at the same time local preachers became a small part of the total preachers available for the villages.

In 1968 the Plan was made up as follows: 3 retired miners and one self-employed baker.

(b) Sunday School Teachers By the 1960's the number of schoolteachers had fallen dramatically. There were none at Quebec or Cornsay, the Sunday Schools finished in Waterhouses where a semi-skilled worker had attempted to keep a small school going at the ex-Primitive Methodist chapel until 1968. At Esh Winning the Superintendent was the local newsagent, assisted by a retired school teacher, a hairdresser and two or three housewives, plus teenage helpers.

(c) Trustees Twelve of the Russell Street (ex-Wesleyan Methodist) Trustees lived locally in 1968. Nine were old age pensioners. One a housewife, one a small proprietor and another a headmistress. With one exception the pensioners were miners or miners' wives. This pattern of elderly, retired Trustees was repeated in Esh Winning.

(d) Leaders' Meeting

Waterhouses: 2 clerks, 1 music teacher, 1 semi-skilled worker, 2 housewives (ex-Primitive Methodists), 1 school teacher, 1 retired miner, 2 housewives (ex-Wesleyan Methodists).

Esh Winning: Brickworks manager, 5 retired miners, 1 hairdresser, 1 semi-skilled worker, 4 housewives, retired school teacher, newsagent.

(v) Other Activists

(a) The Primitive Methodist Circuit Executive in 1916 consisted of the full-time missionary, a shopkeeper and a coke worker. This executive body seems to have been short-lived.

(b) Quebec was not well covered by the records thus an attempt was made to discover the "leading lights" of these chapels (to use the respondents' term). The occupations were then obtained independently. The period in question is 1908-1912, or "just before the War". Out of twelve Primitive Methodist names given ten were miners, one a cokeworker and the other a shopkeeper. Out of eleven Wesleyan Methodists listed four were miners, five officials, two Co-op workers.

(c) The suggestion that shopkeepers tended to be Methodists is not borne out by the evidence. In 1908 the Esh Winning shopkeepers had the following religious affiliations:-

TABLE 18: Esh Winning Shopkeepers 1908 Religious Affiliation		
Religion	No.	%
Methodist*	6	15
Baptist	11	27
Roman Catholic	6	15
Nothing	15	37
Not Known	3	7
Total	41	101
* Includes: 4 PM's, 1 WM, 1 Methodist D.K.		

In the late 1960's there were only two active Methodist shopkeepers also one Methodist was married to the director of a small chain of shops.

APPENDIX V

A GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED

1. Methodist

- Adherent:** A person who attends services, or a person who participates in the life of the chapel. Members (q.v.) and adherents do not always observe the difference in their respective statuses.
- Circuit:** A Circuit consists of a group of Societies (q.v.) in a geographical area. Ministers are appointed to a Circuit and the senior Minister is known as the Superintendent. A group of Circuits constitutes the District, which is presided over by the Chairman of the District.<sup>1</sup>
- Class:** The Methodist Class is the smallest cell of Methodism. The Class Ticket was a sign of membership of the Society. Classes met weekly under a Class Leader. Today largely nominal only, none meet in the Valley.
- Connexion:** The Methodist Connexion is the whole Methodist church; it is governed by the annual Conference through the officials of the Conference. There are various Connexion Departments providing central services for the whole Connexion.
- Leaders:** The Leaders are the members of the Leaders' Meeting. The constitution of the Leaders' Meeting varies according to whether it is functioning as a Court of Discipline, or for other purposes. The widest constitution includes Ministers, Class Leaders, Society and Poor Stewards, Sunday School Superintendent Secretaries of various ancillary organisations, local preachers, any Circuit officials in the Society, and elected representative

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<sup>1</sup> See H. Spencer and E. Finch, The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church, pp. 129-135 and 182-188.

In other words, the Leaders are the leaders of the local Society, and it is in this sense that the term is used in the present work.<sup>1</sup>

**Local Preacher:** A local preacher is a layman qualified to preach by virtue of serving a probationary period ("on trial") and having passed exams based on a prescribed course of study. In the past, and to a certain extent in Northern Methodism today, the local preachers are the main preachers, any one chapel having a local preacher take a service more often than a Minister.

**Member:** A member is a person who has been received into membership of the local Society, after a period of instruction and a public service of admission. (Today older persons are admitted without the service.) Membership is of the Society, not of Methodism in general, it is one of the functions of the Circuit to ensure that members are passed from one Society to another if they move their home.

**Plan:** The Circuit Plan lists the preaching stations and preachers for the Quarter. Each member is expected to possess a Plan. It will probably also contain details of Society and Circuit numbers and officers, etc. When a preacher commences his preaching career he is said to "come on the Plan".

**Quarterly Meeting:** This meeting governs the Circuit (The Circuit Quarterly Meeting). It consists of Circuit officials, many of the Leaders of the Societies and elected representatives. It is responsible for the spiritual and financial oversight of the Circuit and appoints the Minister. It sends representatives to Synod (The District Meeting)<sup>2</sup> There

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, pp. 136 ff

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp. 121 ff

is also a Society Quarterly Meeting: this is another name for the Leaders' Meeting.

**The Society:** Methodism is made up of Societies organised into Circuits. The Society usually, but not always, has a chapel of its own, it governs its own affairs through the Leaders' Meeting. All lay Methodists are members of a Society and have a right to speak at the Society Meeting. In the present work Society is used interchangeably with chapel (except when referring to the building); chapel is the more common term locally, it is said that one "belong t' chapel".

**Sunday School Superintendent:** The Superintendent is the officer with the oversight of the Sunday School. He is responsible to the Leaders' Meeting for the conduct of the Sunday School, keeping records and training the teachers. He is usually a teacher himself, a teacher of some seniority. He is a member of the Leaders' Meeting.

**Trust, Trustees:** The Trustees are responsible for the upkeep of the physical fabric of chapel, schoolrooms and Manse. They have no "religious" authority but control the use to which their premises are put.

## 2. Mining

**Cavil:** Lots are drawn once a quarter to ensure fair allocation of hard and easy workings. A man's working is his cavil.

**Keeker:** The keeker is the official in charge at the pit head.

**Marrer:** A miner's mate: two marrers are paid as one person for their output, they work as a team in their cavil but on different shifts. Marrers are usually men of roughly equal skill and output. Marrers are chosen by miners

themselves, not by the management.

Master burner: The official in charge of coke ovens.

Officials: In ascending order of authority: Deputy Overman (referred to as Deputy), Overman, Undermanager, Manager, Agent (the Agent will be in charge of a group of pits, or an area, for the owners).

Out-bye, In-bye: A man is said to be "going in-bye" when he is travelling away from the surface towards the face. Conversely he is going out-bye when moving towards the shaft bottom or the surface. (Drift mines do not have a shaft, so to travel out-bye is to move towards the surface)

Seggar: This is a clay found in the coal. It is used to make refractory bricks. Cornsay Colliery still produces bricks for a Teesside foundry.

Small runner: The man who charges coke ovens.

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