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Abstract

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Title : The doctrines of hell and judgment and the need for personal conversion as an index to the development of liberal theology within the theological colleges of the Methodist Church in England from 1907 to 1932.

Degree: M.A. in Theology - 1990.

The first chapter of the thesis shows how the study was born in a local church where the preached message represented a difference from the beliefs of John Wesley. The second chapter shows how the doctrinal standards of Methodism are defined in terms of the Notes and Sermons of John Wesley. These works are examined, and detailed doctrines expounded of Jesus as judge, and the grounds for and nature and experience of his judgment as applied to the lives of men. The third chapter considers the Primitive Methodist Church and shows how a liberal influence was felt at Hartley College, Manchester, through the dominant personality of A. S. Peake. Peake's doctrine is expounded and the securing of his position by the philanthropist, W. Hartley, is described. The fourth chapter considers Ranmoor College, Sheffield and Victoria Park College, Manchester, of the United Methodist Church and highlights the major influence of A. S. Peake in that denomination also. Chapters five and six treat the colleges of Wesleyan Methodism, namely Didsbury, Richmond, Headingley, Handsworth and Cambridge. For these the period is divided into pre- and post- 1918. The doctrinal stance is shown to be more complex than for the other denominations and for each college the doctrinal position of each senior member of staff is expounded and the changing tenor of each college traced. The final chapter shows how by 1932 the theological education of Methodist ministers was heavily biased to a liberal attitude, and relates the findings of the thesis to the state of Methodism generally.

The Doctrines of Hell and Judgment and the need for Personal Conversion as an Index to the Development of Liberal Theology within the Theological Colleges of the Methodist Church in England from 1907 to 1932

by

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submitted for the degree of

M.A. in Theology

University of Durham : Department of Theology

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Declaration

None of the material contained in this thesis has been submitted previously for a degree in Durham or any other university.

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Abbreviations

- Sermons = John Wesley A.M., Forty-four Sermons: Sermons on Several Occasions by the Rev. John Wesley, A.M. (consisting of forty-four discourses, published in four volumes, in the years 1746, 1748, 1750, and 1760 [fourth edition, 1787]; to which reference is made in the trust deeds of the Methodist Chapels, as constituting with Mr. Wesley's Notes on the New Testament, the standard doctrines of the Methodist Connexion.) (London, Epworth Press, 1944).
- Notes = John Wesley M.A., Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament (London, Epworth Press, 1976 [originally published 1754]).

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Objective

The objective of this thesis is to trace the development of liberal theology within the theological colleges of the Methodist Church in England from 1907 to 1932, using as an index the doctrines of hell and judgment in relation to the perceived need for personal conversion as a mark of Christian discipleship.

General Background

In 1986 the author became the minister of an Anglican/Methodist Local Ecumenical Project situated on a new housing estate in commuter-belt Surrey. The congregation had at that time been established for less than ten years and did not enjoy a dedicated building (meeting in the local Community Centre instead). The housing estate itself had been established only a little longer than the congregation. Anglicans and Methodists worshipped together as one body, bringing with them traditions and understandings largely formed elsewhere.

In addition to Anglicans and Methodists forming one congregation, those who led services, whether ministers or lay/local preachers came from both denominations, and thus Anglicans were exposed to Methodist-style services and vice-versa. The author became aware that much of the Methodist preaching encountered was based on a theology much more 'liberal' in understanding than that of either his own Anglican Evangelical background, or that of the founder of the Methodist Church, John Wesley. It was his desire to trace and quantify the developments within the Methodist Church which have led to this contemporary understanding that inspired this study.



Parameters of Study

It has been decided to limit the study to a more clearly defined area. Firstly, it was resolved to restrict the study to the English theological colleges of the Methodist Church on the basis that much taught by ministers both to congregations and in the course of supervising local preachers will have been, in turn, learnt or developed during the time of intensive theological instruction experienced during their ministerial training.

Secondly, it was deemed necessary to limit the timescales under consideration. It was decided to commence the study in the year 1907 in order to combine simplicity of approach (this being the year when three of the smaller Methodist denominations united to form the United Methodist Church) with a date not too far removed from the upsurge in liberal theological understanding which took place in the closing years of the nineteenth century¹. The termination date of 1932, the year of Methodist Union, was chosen as being a date of great significance within the history of the Methodist Church, and this also gave a period of study for which the quantity of detailed research was feasible within the scope of the project. In choosing this cut-off point, it is recognised that it would be desirable to continue the study at a later stage to as near as possible to the present day.

Thirdly, it was necessary to limit the scope of doctrinal detail under consideration in order to enable more quantifiable results to be gained within the volume of research feasible for an M.A.. David Bebbington, discussing the loss of incisiveness of Evangelical theology towards the end of the nineteenth century in his recent book on Evangelicalism states: 'No specific doctrinal change was more marked than the decline of hell.'² As this doctrinal area had been significant in the practical experience of the author which led to this

study, it was decided to use doctrines of hell and judgment as the main index to the liberalising tendencies overall (other doctrinal areas being discussed where these are directly related). This is justifiable not only because it is a doctrinal area which is likely to yield a high degree of change, but also because of the close correlation between the understanding of the fate of the individual at death and so much preaching, teaching and pastoral care. J. Cyril Downes discusses in detail the relationship between John Wesley's understanding of hell and his approach to preaching. He makes the point that whilst only a small proportion of Wesley's published sermons are centred around the topic of hell, nevertheless it was his understanding of the fact of a coming judgment which gave him his sense of urgency in proclaiming the Gospel whenever and wherever he could. Today, as in Wesley's day, any preacher who does not believe in hell as the destiny of those who have not accepted Christ will have both a message and an approach to pastoral care which differ greatly from those of the founder of the Methodist Church. This is true whether or not the doctrine itself is explicitly discussed. In his Rules for Methodists, Wesley states that the only necessary condition for becoming a Methodist is a desire to flee from the wrath to come. Many preachers of the Methodist Church today believe that there is no wrath to come.

Methods of Research

The general approach to the work has been to examine the published literature of the tutors at the various theological colleges for evidence of their own positions with respect to the doctrines of hell, judgment and the need for conversion. In general each college was staffed by a Governor or Principal together with tutors for each

of the major areas of the curriculum taught and also a number of assistant tutors. As the assistant tutors were short term appointments (typically of three years'), their influence on students was judged to be less important than that of the longer-term and more senior members of staff, and they have not been included in this study. In several cases even the tutors have left no published material. Where they have it has been possible in some cases to relate this material to the secondary authors who have written on the development of theology in the present century. In other cases the evidence gathered represents, so far as the author is aware, completely new data.

The first task was to tabulate the colleges within the field of study. This information was obtained from Garlick's Methodist Registry, and a table showing the colleges with dates and notes is included on page 15. Next a list was compiled of the tutors who had served at each college for the period 1907-32. Once again Garlick was invaluable as the basic source material, but this time the information was validated by reference to the Minutes of Conference of the Wesleyan, Primitive and United Methodist Churches. Checks were made for all the colleges for sample years and for the years preceding and/or succeeding each college's opening, closure or change of premises.

A list of published material was then drawn up for each of the tutors. Exhaustive information was obtained from the British Library Catalogue on all books published, whilst a search was made of the Methodist Periodicals to trace published articles. No attempt was made to search other periodicals for published material except when cross-referenced from one of the secondary sources.

Presentation

It is appreciated that the development of theology is very much the result of a continuous process of thought and reflection on the part of those who set out to become or perhaps become unintentionally involved in the definition of the Christian faith. Nevertheless major events do have an important bearing on the direction of thought and the findings for Wesleyan Methodism are therefore presented under two broad periods, namely up to and including, and after, the Great War. The doctrinal developments overall are set against an exposition of the definitive doctrine of the Methodist Church.

It is hoped that the conclusions reached will not only assist an understanding of modern Methodism, but will also provide useful information for those whose task it is to assist in steering the course of Methodism for years to come.

Methodism in 1907

By 1900, Methodism had developed significantly from its beginnings under John Wesley as a Society within the Anglican Church. Following separation from the latter shortly after Wesley's death in 1791, there followed over a century of both numerical growth and denominational division. In general terms such secessions as occurred from the parent (Wesleyan) Methodist Church caused only temporary setbacks in the membership levels and overall the divisions probably fostered rather than hindered numerical growth. Hence by the beginning of the twentieth century the churches of Wesleyan Methodism were full and the self-understanding of the denomination was one of prosperity and self-confidence. New churches were being built in many parts of the country and there was a steady flow of men ^{to} the ministry.
A

People continued to be brought into the Methodist fold by means of evangelistic campaigns, and there was a sense of satisfaction that the Central Halls were ministering effectively to the social needs in the big cities⁴.

The zeal of the Methodist Churches was felt at national level, and no politician at the turn of the century would dare to neglect the 'Nonconformist Conscience' which, according to the Methodist historian, Rupert Davies, was chiefly expounded by the Methodists. The 'Social Gospel' propounded was pressing for major improvements in the social welfare of the nation and in education. In the century since their independence, the Methodists had grown to see themselves no longer as a small society of religious enthusiasts, but increasingly as a great National Church. Thus the ideas, organisation and methods of Wesley became deployed over a large area of British life, with considerable success⁵.

The closing years of the eighteenth century had seen the establishment of the Methodist Church as an independent body and the formation of a pattern of life and worship for its members which meant that they no longer needed to maintain attendance at their parish churches. Ministers came to be ordained wholly within the new Church, and finally it was decided to make the sacrament of Holy Communion available within Methodist worship.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the heart of Methodism had remained equally in the sacrament of Holy Communion, the 'Class' meeting and the preaching service. But as the century progressed there was a reaction against the Oxford movement, coupled with an absorption of more of the ethos of historical Nonconformity, resulting in a reduction on the emphasis on the Sacraments. It was also found that the Class meetings, which had been Wesley's special means for

nurturing his new converts, were becoming generally more formalised and artificial. The result was that by 1907 the preaching service had become pre-eminently the worshipping expression of the spirit of Methodism. New chapels, when built, were equipped with vast central pulpits and the main devotional emphasis was on the exposition of the Word of God.

The experience of Wesleyan Methodism was mirrored in that of the smaller Methodist denominations, which by the turn of the century were also generally flourishing. Primitive Methodism was the largest of these and had been born out of a series of enthusiastic 'camp' meetings called together in 1807 by Hugh Bourne at Mow Cop, near Stoke on Trent. Bourne was an ordinary Methodist member who became a revivalist preacher. The new denomination which he founded grew rapidly, reaching 110,000 members by his death in 1852. Growth was sustained until the early twentieth century, by which time, as with the Wesleyans, the label 'National Church' was thought more appropriate than 'enthusiastic movement'. Whilst the Methodist New Connexion, the Bible Christians and the United Methodist Free Churches could not claim to be national churches, they could each certainly claim periods of successful growth in numbers and geographical expansion from their founding in 1797, 1815 and 1857.

Each of the Methodist denominations had been established under different circumstances, but all were originally movements of either zeal or protest and stood as alternatives to the Established Church. Whilst growth brought about a stronger Nonconformist body of religious opinion and practice, at the same time there was a growing desire for increased 'respectability' in the eyes of the nation. Even by the middle of the nineteenth century there had been a growing desire among the Methodists to preserve the place in the social order which they

were then progressively winning . Groups founded out of religious protest and zeal were becoming middle-class and conservative.

Whilst Methodism retained a high profile in the area of social concern, this general desire to be seen as churches of the 'Establishment', rather than as churches of protest, paved the way for a radical change of theological understanding on the part of many Methodists towards the end of the nineteenth century. At a time which saw the advent of Biblical Criticism and the debates over 'Science and Religion', there was an increasing desire to follow popular doctrinal trends rather than to cleave to the conservative and zealous theology of Wesley. As old disputes were forgotten and more attention was paid to the new wave of theological understanding, one positive result was that there was an increasing desire for unity between the denominations of Methodism, resulting in the formal Unions of 1907 and 1932. However at the same time as Methodism was thus becoming a more coherent body and retaining its outlook of social concern, it was also moving away from its doctrinal understanding in the period of its origin.

In A New History Of Methodism, published in 1909, Sir Percy Bunting described Methodism as undergoing the same process of theological development as the whole spirit of English theology. That is to say, there was a growing acceptance of the doctrine of F. D. Maurice with his emphasis on the Fatherhood of God. With this went an acceptance of a doctrine of evolution and a progressive disregard for the seriousness of sin and the Atonement conceived in terms of propitiatory sacrifice. Changes in the curriculum of the Methodist theological colleges formed an integral part of this change in the theological understanding of Methodism and what was learnt by ministers-in-training in the lecture room was inevitably soon passed on from the

pulpit.

Table 1 - The Methodist Theological Colleges 1907 - 32

Denomination	College	Date of Founding	Notes : 1907 - 32	Subsequent History
Wesleyan Methodist Church	Didsbury, Manchester	1842	Closed 1915 - 1919	Transferred to Bristol, 1945 Renamed Wesley College, 1967
	Richmond	1843	Closed 1915 - 1920	Closed 1972
	Headingley, Leeds	1868	Closed 1915 - not reopened until 1930	Amalgamated with Didsbury College, Bristol, 1967
	Handsworth, Birmingham	1881	Closed 1915 - 1919	Amalgamated with Queen's College Birmingham (C. of E.) 1970
	Wesley House, Cambridge	1921	Main site opened 1926	Open
Primitive Methodist Church	Hartley, Manchester	1881	Closed 1917 - 1919	Renamed Hartley Victoria College 1934 after Victoria Park College's amalgamation. Amalgamated with Manchester Baptist College 1973.
United Methodist Church	Victoria Park, Manchester (ex:Methodist New Connexion)	1877 (Following 5 years on another site)	Closed 1914 - 1919	Amalgamated with Hartley College 1934
	Ranmoor, Sheffield (ex:United Methodist Free Churches)	1864	Amalgamated with Victoria Park 1913 - 1915	-----

Chapter 2 - Baseline: the Doctrine of the Methodist Church.

The attitude among certain contemporary Methodist preachers which precipitated this study is that personal conversion is not necessary for salvation as in the end virtually all people, whoever they are, will be 'all right' with God anyway. The reason for this belief is a doctrinal stance which denies the reality of judgment after the death of an individual, preferring instead to believe that everyone, when he or she has died, is granted a place in heaven with the Lord.

There is much debate among scholars as to the correct interpretation of the scriptural teaching about hell and judgment¹. However it is not the place of this thesis to argue a general case for the rightness or wrongness of the doctrines of hell and judgment; rather it is to define the liberalising tendencies within Methodism in this doctrinal area.

There can be no doubt that a lack of belief in the probability or even possibility of unfavourable judgment after death is the greatest cause of the lack of urgency in evangelism among members of the Methodist Church today. This lack of belief in judgment is directly contrary to the belief of John Wesley and the basic doctrinal standard of the Methodist Church. That doctrinal standard will be defined in the remainder of this chapter, and deviations among the tutors of the theological colleges for the years 1907 to 1932 plotted in the remainder of the thesis.

The Methodist Church was not founded as a totally new and distinct organisation. Rather its origins lie as a zealous Evangelical movement within the Church of England. When John Wesley defined Methodist doctrine in the Model Deed for his preaching houses of 1763, he provided that persons appointed by the Conference should 'have and

enjoy the premises' only on condition 'that the said persons preach no other doctrine than is contained in Mr. Wesley's Notes upon the New Testament and four volumes of Sermons' . His concern was not so much to define the whole of Christian doctrine as held by a Methodist, but rather to safeguard the distinctive Methodist doctrinal stance. The early Methodists were basically those who had responded to the preaching and teaching of John Wesley either first-hand or via the ranks of travelling preachers, and hence it was to his own corpus of preaching and teaching that Wesley referred when establishing the Methodist doctrinal standard. Reference to the traditional creeds and Anglican formularies was not made, except in passing .

The doctrinal standard of Methodism as first set out by John Wesley has been adhered to subsequently, and modern Methodism states:

The Doctrines of the Evangelical Faith which Methodism has held from the beginning and still holds are based upon the Divine revelation recorded in the Holy Scriptures. The Methodist Church acknowledges this revelation as the supreme rule of faith and practice. These Evangelical Doctrines to which the Preachers of the Methodist Church both Ministers and Laymen are pledged are contained in Wesley's Notes on the New Testament and the first four volumes of his sermons.

Furthermore:

...the managing trustees (of any Model Trust) shall not permit any person, at any service or meeting for religious worship held at or in any part of any premises comprised in the property, so to preach or expound God's Holy word or perform any act as to deny or repudiate the [above] doctrinal standards.

Whilst many scholars seek to criticise Wesley's approach as being typically over-literalist in his exposition of biblical material, in

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common with the understanding of his age , it is undeniable that what he preached and taught, and nothing else, has constantly defined the official doctrine of Methodism (with the sole exception of the United Methodist Church, as will be seen later).

John Wesley referred often in his standard sermons to hell and judgment. He did this not usually as his main theme, nor with an unhealthy preoccupation with the wrath of God, but simply to point out to his hearers that their action and belief in this life would have a conclusive effect on the manner of their life after death.

As in all aspects of Methodist doctrine, the set standard in the area of hell and judgment in relation to the need for personal conversion is built up piecemeal from various parts of Wesley's Notes on the New Testament and standard Sermons. The overall picture nevertheless forms a cohesive and persuasive incentive to the enquirer to 'flee from the wrath to come' .⁸ Indeed in his Rules of the Society of the People called Methodists Wesley said in Rule 4, 'There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission to these Societies, - a desire "to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins".'

Wesley framed his doctrine of hell and judgment and the need to be converted, as all his doctrines, 'by plain proof of scripture' .⁹ It was his personal practice to read the Bible 'for this end, to find the way to heaven'¹⁰ and hence 'I have accordingly set down in the following sermons what I find in the Bible concerning the way to heaven; with a view to distinguish this way of God from all those which are the inventions of men'.¹¹ Wesley saw great danger in being 'driven to and fro, and tossed about with every wind of doctrine'¹² and was concerned to present the plain meaning of scripture without 'cauponizing, mixing, adulterating or softening' it to make it suit

the taste of his hearers.

One of the aspects of God's character to which further reference will be made in ensuing chapters is that of His love and Fatherhood. Wesley was quite clear that love, by itself, was an inadequate description of the character of God. His writings describe the process of awakening of someone coming to faith as involving the realisation that the loving and merciful God is also a 'consuming fire'; that 'He is a just God and a terrible, rendering to every man according to his works, entering into judgment with the ungodly for every idle word, yea, and for the imaginations of the heart'.¹⁴ God is able to be 'a judge without mercy'¹⁵ to those who have themselves been merciless. God's judgment, as well as his love, is mediated through the risen Lord Jesus who will be the judge of all men, whose happiness depends entirely on 'a timely and humble subjection to Him who was to be their final Judge'.¹⁶ Jesus' judgment as judge will be concluded with his coming again, at the end of the present gospel dispensation, as avenger and judge.¹⁷

Wesley stated that this judgment which is of God and mediated through the Lord Jesus would be enacted on the Last Day¹⁸, but because he was very clear that the results of that judgment were dependent on an individual's life here in earth, he was careful to emphasise that 'at the moment of death every man's final state is determined',¹⁹ thus limiting the 'time' for response to the Gospel clearly to within this present earthly life. This was as opposed to any notions of a 'second chance' of salvation occurring after death, such as were later to be propounded by H. Watkin-Jones at Headingley and both Maldwyn Hughes and R. N. Flew at Wesley House, Cambridge (see chapter 6).

A description of God's judgment is given in Notes and Sermons both as to what it is ontologically and as to what it will be like

experientially.

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Ontologically, God's judgment is spoken of not only as judgment
but as punishment²¹ for the ungodly.²² The capital nature of this
punishment may be seen from comments on Matthew 5:22 contained in
²³
Sermon XVII:

It should be observed, that our Lord describes all these as
obnoxious to capital punishment. The first, to strangling,
usually inflicted on those who were condemned in one of the
inferior courts; the second, to stoning, which was frequently
inflicted on those who were condemned by the great council at
Jerusalem; the third, to burning alive, inflicted only on the
highest offenders, in the 'valley of the sons of Hinnom'; Γεένν
'Εννόμ , from which the word is evidently taken which we
translate 'hell'.

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This punishment is also described as a sentence.

The judgment thus enacted is the product of the wrath of God,
though wrath is to be understood not as a human passion but only in an
analogical sense.²⁵ It is also righteous²⁶ and deserved: 'We deserve
not the air we breathe, the earth that bears, or the sun that shines
upon us. All our desert, we own, is hell'.²⁷ Should the foregoing
seem unfair, Wesley asks the following rhetorical question: 'Those who
had moved His wrath by still rejecting His mercy..... by their own
wilful and final impenitence. Is there any injustice in this?'²⁸

The experience of this judgment is described principally in terms
of separation from God and again a quotation illustrates the
emphasis:
²⁹

They must of necessity, therefore, be cut off from all good, and
all possibility of it. From the presence of the Lord - wherein
chiefly consists the salvation of the righteous. What unspeaka-

ble punishment is implied even in falling short of this, supposing that nothing more were implied in His taking vengeance!

The person under judgment ³⁰ feels the wrath of God as a continuous experience, i.e. without intermission. ³¹ The judgment pierces the very being of the person, revealing the most secret springs of action, ³² the principles and intentions of every heart. It is inescapable ³³ when due ³⁴ and irreversible, the effects of it remaining for ever, ³⁵ for as long as the reward of the righteous. In other words the judgment is death everlasting. ³⁶ 'As there can be no end of their sins (the same enmity against God continuing), so neither of their punishment; sin and its punishment running parallel throughout eternity ³⁷ itself'.

Not only is the judgment in experience eternal in duration, it is terrible in feeling throughout. Wesley supports the biblical metaphor ³⁸ of fire, describing it as 'flaming light and consuming heat' , and is ³⁹ happy to talk of hell-fire in a straightforward way. No wonder the ⁴⁰ aspect of torment ⁴¹ is not neglected, nor that of unknown misery. The utter dreadfulness of the experience is neatly encapsulated in the ⁴² comment on Hell-fire:

In the valley of Hinnom (whence the word in the original is taken) the children were used to be burned alive to Moloch. It was afterwards made a receptacle for the filth of the city, where continual fires were kept to consume it. And it is probable, if any criminals were burned alive, it was in this accursed and horrible place. Therefore, both as to its former and latter state, it was a fit emblem of hell. It must here signify a degree of future punishment, as much more dreadful than those incurred in the two former cases, as burning alive is more dreadful than either strangling or stoning.

So far we have examined Wesley's doctrinal understanding of God as Judge and of the nature of the judgment as it is and as experienced. We now turn to a consideration of who it is who will experience this judgment, and why.

First and foremost, it must be pointed out that considerable emphasis is placed on the fact that the inheritance of a place in hell is the normal and natural state of man. This is stated many times⁴³ in both Notes and Sermons, and so crucial is this aspect in contrast with much contemporary preaching that a number of references must be given in full. Hence:

...every man born into the world was [is] by nature in a state of sin, condemnation and misery.⁴⁴

All sinned - In Adam. These words assign the reason why death came upon all men; infants themselves not excepted, in that all sinned.⁴⁵

Take heed thou destroy not thy own soul by pleading thy righteousness, more or less. Go as altogether ungodly, guilty, lost, destroyed, deserving and dropping into hell; and thou shalt then find favour in His sight, and know that He justifieth the ungodly. As such thou shalt be brought into the blood of sprinkling: as an undone, helpless, damned sinner.⁴⁶

And many there are who go in at that gate; many who walk in that way; almost as many as go in at the gate of death, as sink into the chambers of the grave. For it cannot be denied (though neither can we acknowledge it but with shame and sorrow of heart), that even in this, which is called a Christian country, the generality of every age and sex, of every profession and employment, of every rank and degree, high and low, rich and poor, are walking in the way of destruction. The far greater

part of the inhabitants of this city, to this day, live in sin; in some palpable, habitual, known transgression of the law they profess to observe; yea, in some outward transgression, some gross visible sign of ungodliness or unrighteousness, some open violation of their duty, either to God or man. These then, none can deny, are all in the way that leadeth to destruction. Add to these, those who have a name indeed that they live, but were never yet alive to God; those that outwardly appear fair to men, but are inwardly full of all uncleanness, full of pride or vanity, of anger or revenge, of ambition or covetousness; lovers of themselves, lovers of the world, lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God. These, indeed, may be highly esteemed of men; but they are an abomination to the Lord. And how greatly will these saints of the world swell the number of the children of hell! Yea, add all, whatever they be in other respects, whether they have more or less of the form of godliness, who, 'being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness' as the ground of their reconciliation to God and acceptance with Him, of consequence have not 'submitted themselves into the righteousness which is of God' by faith. Now, all these things joined together in one, how terribly true is our Lord's assertion, 'Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat!'⁴⁷

[the example of others] continually peoples the region of death, and drowns numberless souls in everlasting perdition.⁴⁸

Wesley took pains to emphasise that this would-be widespread population of hell included, 'the polite, the well-bred, the genteel, the wise, the men who understood the world, the men of knowledge, of deep and various learning, the rational, the eloquent'.⁴⁹ Men of

eminence are likewise not excused; indeed 'the higher they are raised
50
in fortune and power, the deeper do they sink into wickedness'

Having established that God's judgment is the natural inheritance
of mankind, we may now go on to define why that should be. Again,
51
Wesley noted in many places that the general cause is sin, but he
also listed examples of particular sins which, one by one, give rise
to condemnation.

For the general cause of condemnation as being sin, we may note
such quotations as: 'every one (sin) is a step towards hell' ; 'all
52
are dead, dead to God, dead in sin' 53 and 'Wide indeed is the gate,
and broad the way, that leadeth to destruction! For sin is the gate
of hell, and wickedness the way to destruction. And how wide a gate
is that of sin! How broad is the way of wickedness! ... any breach of
the commandment is sin ... there are a thousand ways of breaking every
54
commandment; so that this gate is wide indeed' .

Particular sins, or areas of sinfulness which Wesley cited are
several. The area cited most often is that of riches which are said
to be: 'deceitful indeed! for they smile, and betray; kiss and smite
into hell. They put out the eyes, harden the heart, steal away the
life of God; fill the soul with pride, anger, love of the world; make
men enemies to the whole cross of Christ; and all the while are eager-
ly desired, and vehemently pursued, even by those who believe there is
55
a God!' . 'None can be gained by swallowing up his neighbours' sub-
56
stance without gaining the damnation of hell!' . Drink likewise is
singled out as a 'concrete' sin, with common purveyors of spiritous
57
liquors being labelled as poisoners general, driving people to hell .
58
Inner attitudes are also mentioned, including unforgiveness , anger
59 60
and belittling , lack of self-renunciation , the despising of God's
61 62 63 64
love , gratification of sensual appetites , idolatry , unbelief .

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Condemnation can also be occasioned by a person's words , non-effect-
ed good intentions ⁶⁶ , and 'mere harmlessness, on which many build
their hope of salvation' ⁶⁷ .

Wesley is also clear to make the point that a person who has sup-
posedly professed the Christian faith can also be susceptible to back-
sliding, and hence condemnation. Wavering or doubting can be the
problem here ⁶⁸ as can abuse of the means of grace ⁶⁹ , baptism without
new birth ⁷⁰ , making a shipwreck of faith ⁷¹ , and finding out ones
neighbours' faults, instead of amending ones own ⁷² . A minister who
lives in some wilful, habitual sin is denounced with particular harsh-
ness ⁷³ , whilst an effective minister may not have a true basis of
personal faith himself ⁷⁴ . Of false teachers it is said 'hell shall be
moved from beneath to meet them at their coming' ⁷⁵ .

Given Wesley's doctrine of the natural state of man and of the
reasons for his condemnation, it is appropriate to pass on to the
question of the choice which faces mankind over the appropriation of
salvation. Here the Notes and Sermons speak on the one hand of the
reality of the choice and on the other hand of the fear of God's wrath
on the part of those facing it.

We are told quite clearly that no-one can be holy unless he or
she is born again ⁷⁶ . This is of paramount importance and no amount of
churchgoing or reception of Holy Communion will suffice in the absence
of this fact ⁷⁷ . The wrath of God will come ⁷⁸ and deliverance has been
offered ⁷⁹ . Wesley's exhortation in the light of this is: 'to flee
from the wrath to come.... The night is far spent, the morning is at
hand, when thou art to be brought forth to execution. And in these
dreadful circumstances, thou art fast asleep; thou art fast asleep in
the devil's arms, on the brink of the pit, in the jaws of everlasting
destruction' ⁸⁰ . Salvation or perishing are described as the two alter-

native fates - an 'either...or' situation with no mid-way. 'Save or
81
we perish' is Wesley's cry. The eternal house of God in the heavens
82
is contrasted with hell and destruction without a covering. The
83
reality of an eternity after death is emphasised, characterised by
84
everlasting glory or everlasting burnings. The choice is plain:
'either we must take up our cross, or we must turn aside from the way
85
of God'. Furthermore the choice is real even for those who do not
know, or refuse to accept that there is any choice to be made at
86
all.

Those who realise the choice to be made and are perhaps on the
brink of making it, experience the fear of the wrath of God. Wesley
encouraged this fear, seeing it to be for many the state immediately
preceding conversion and salvation. In one place he advised his audi-
ence that they would die in their sins and drop together into the pit,
the nethermost hell, where they would lie together in the lake of fire
87
burning with brimstone. His words point out the virtue of poverty
of spirit, meaning a just sense of our inward and outward sins, and of
88
our guilt and helplessness, in other words a sober self-knowledge.
This realisation about the situation leads to a feeling of being in it
and 'when men feel in themselves the heavy burden of sin, see damna-
tion to be the reward of it, and behold, with the eye of their mind,
the horror of hell, they tremble, they quake, and are inwardly touched
with sorrowfulness of heart, and cannot but accuse themselves, and
89
open their grief unto Almighty God, and call unto Him for mercy'.
The alternative to calling upon God for mercy in these circumstances
would be to continue in a state without pleasure, peace, security,
joy, delight or happiness, in which rest is sought but none is
90
found. Such a state would also embrace a tormenting fear of God's
91
wrath, of hell, of the devil and in particular of death.

Wesley was thus very clear doctrinally that all people must make a clear and positive choice if they are to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. He emphasised the emotions which normally are felt by the non-committed before making the choice, and his strength of belief in the necessity and importance of this choice, which if made in the positive way means conversion and the enjoyment of salvation, can be seen in those passages in which he warns of man's duty to warn his fellow men about these things. Wesley, in his standard sermons, not only challenges those who are perishing to become saved; he also challenges the saved to warn others of the fate of the perishing, and of their need to turn to Christ. 'An Eternity of happiness, or an eternity of misery! In what state is thy soul?', ⁹² was Wesley's challenge. It was also, said he, the concern of the early Church, whose members were yearning over those for whom the Lord died. In Sermon IV, 'Scriptural ⁹³ Christianity', Wesley shows the biblical precedent for the sense of urgency which is required of believers towards the lost:

So the Christians of old did. They laboured, having opportunity, 'to do good unto all men' (Gal.vi.10), warning them to flee from the wrath to come; now, now to escape the damnation of hell. They declared, 'The times of ignorance God winked at; but now He calleth all men everywhere to repent' (Acts xvii.30). They cried aloud, Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways: 'so iniquity shall not be your ruin' (Ezek.xviii.30). They 'reasoned' with them of 'temperance, and righteousness', or justice - of the virtues opposite to their reigning sins; 'and of judgment to come' - of the wrath of God which would surely be executed on evil-doers in that day when He should judge the world (Acts xxiv.25).

The doctrines of hell and judgment were not for Wesley text-book doctrines of academic interest only. Rather, they were doctrines which

demanding action of the most basic sort from the Christian believer - to warn the lost and perishing. Certainly this was his own practice. His plea to his hearers was couched in earnest and straightforward terms. To inform people of the gospel was not enough; people had to be convinced of sin and awakened to the fact that they were on the brink of hell. ⁹⁴ And so, 'if there be a Christian upon earth, if there be a man who hath overcome the world, who desires nothing but God, and fears none but Him that is able to destroy both body and soul in hell; thou, O man of God, speak, and spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet! Cry aloud, and show these honourable sinners the desperate condition wherein they stand! It may be, one in a thousand may have ears to hear; may arise and shake himself from the dust, may break loose from those chains which bind him to the earth, and at length lay up treasures in heaven.' ⁹⁵

To those who would object to this tone or subject-matter of preaching and teaching, Wesley insisted that to preach Christ was to preach what He revealed, so that someone was just as really preaching Christ when he said, 'The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God,' as when saying, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!' ⁹⁶ Furthermore, should someone object that to warn someone in the stark terms outlined would be uncharitable, and that infant baptism is enough for salvation, the person holding that opinion is condemning the person he is considering not to be saved. 'Therefore in saying, "He cannot be born again," you in effect deliver him over to damnation. And where lies the uncharitableness now? on my side? or on yours? I say, he may be born again, and so become an heir of salvation. You say, "He cannot be born again": and if so, he must inevitably perish! So you utterly block up his way to salvation, and send him to hell, out of mere charity!' ⁹⁷

If all the above seems to be a sober, ever sombre account of the need for mankind to realise its plight and to turn to Christ, that is exactly how Wesley intended it to be, so seriously did he desire people at large to realise the folly of their ways and turn to Christ as Lord and Saviour. At the same time, it cannot be said that the doctrines of hell and judgment are given undue prominence in Wesley's Sermons and Notes overall. In four places in his Sermons, in the context of talking about aspects of hell, he stresses the need for prior considerations. In the preface he spells out the need for love in relationships - 'for, how far is love, even with many wrong opinions, to be preferred before truth itself without love!' In Sermon XXIX, speaking about everyday priorities, he enjoins: 'Abhor sin far more than death or hell; abhor sin itself, far more than the punishment of it'. Elsewhere he states that the fear of displeasing God should be far greater than the fear of death or hell and emphasises a similar priority with regard to the area of personal weaknesses .

Greater in force of argument than these comparative statements, however, is the space which Wesley devotes to describing the benefits received when a person turns to Christ and receives his new inheritance, leaving behind the old. Sermon VIII, entitled The First Fruits of the Spirit is entirely devoted to this theme and by noting its argument we can see how, in preaching the need for conversion, Wesley placed considerable stress on its benefits as well as warning what would follow if the event did not take place.

After establishing who those people are who are truly believing in Christ, the latter sermon proceeds to expound the meaning of Romans viii.1: 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them'. The 'no condemnation' is experienced in respect of past sins and also of the believer's present attitude to God towards them - there is no guilt

sensed, or dread of the wrath of God. There is similarly no condemnation with regard to present outward sins, which will not be committed by the believer who walks after the Spirit, or with regard to any remaining inward sin or corruption of nature even if clearly felt (provided there is no outward yielding). There comes after conversion a personal clinging to Christ in order to remain free of outward sin. Finally there is no condemnation of either sins of infirmity or deeds which one has no power to help. Thus the believer experiences a great sense of rightness and freedom in his relationship with God which was either simply non-existent before his conversion or not systematically understood. Even if sinning because of 'surprise circumstances' for which he could not prepare, the believer is not condemned. The practical effects of this lack of condemnation overall are several. Firstly, there is no sense of living in fear of God because of what one has done. Secondly, there is no bondage to sin, evil desires, evil tempers, words or works (for this comes from the devil). Thirdly, there is no need to worry because of inner ungodliness (provided this does not lead to external sin). Fourthly, one's weakness and folly need not shake one's faith, and lastly one need not fear condemnation when genuinely surprised into sin.

Wesley's other sermons reinforce the message of the above, stating among other facts; that the true believer has no fear of punishment and regards God not as a severe master, but as an indulgent father¹⁰³; that he has confidence in his salvation¹⁰⁴; that he will 'laugh at destruction when it cometh'¹⁰⁵ and that he has no fear of death and hell¹⁰⁶.

To study further the continuing beneficial effects of becoming a true believer would lead necessarily to an examination of Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification, which it is not the place of this

thesis to do. What may be concluded, however, is that in his teaching about the need for conversion there is plenty of positive emphasis to complement the aspect of sober warning.

The detailed statements made above for each aspect of the doctrinal area considered do constitute and have constituted the doctrine of the Methodist Church today and from its beginnings. The official doctrine of the Methodist Church is thus both scriptural and conservative in the areas of hell, judgment and the need for personal conversion. It is to this doctrine that Ministers of the Methodist Church are pledged¹⁰⁷. Furthermore any Methodist Minister is open to "doctrinal charge" if he or she fails either to preach or believe this doctrine.¹⁰⁸ In this light it would be reasonable to assume that this doctrine should form the basis of the relevant part of all Ministerial theological training. The rest of this thesis analyses the published material of those who were theological tutors during the period 1907-32 in an attempt to plot their doctrinal attitudes which in practice ensured that the above assumption was often very far from true.

Chapter 3 - Primitive Methodism 1907 - 1932

The theological college serving the Primitive Methodist church for our whole period was at Alexandra Park, Manchester and called Hartley College. The story of Hartley College is virtually the history of ministerial education in the Primitive Methodist Church¹. Originally the college was intended to work alongside an Institute in Sunderland, having been opened in Manchester in 1881 due to the benefits foreseen from being near Owens College, later the Victoria University of Manchester². Within a short time, however, the Institute at Sunderland was closed, because of shortage of money and a temporary oversupply of trained ministers for Connexional requirements³.

Initially, in its modest origins at Alexandra Park, the college was conservative in its general outlook and course content. The number of students was small, between ten and thirty in all⁴, and there was but one member of staff, the Principal⁵. It was with the enlargement of both buildings and staff in the closing years of the nineteenth century that a liberal outlook was established, a development due to the influence of two powerful Primitive Methodist personalities. One was the philanthropist (Sir) William Hartley, a jam manufacturer who endowed college extensions and held the purse and policy strings. The other was the young Oxford don, Arthur Samuel Peake, who was the first Primitive Methodist to rise to eminence in Oxford and who moved to Manchester at Hartley's request in 1892, enjoying thereafter full free rein to determine the content and style of the whole curriculum until his death some thirty-seven years later.

The definitive story of Sir William Hartley was written by Peake and published in 1926⁶. Hartley was born in Colne, Lancashire in

1846, into a family that had been loyal to the Primitive Methodist denomination from its inception. At the age of sixteen he had opened his own grocer's shop in the centre of Colne and was already showing signs of acute business acumen. He determined to attempt the manufacture of jam on his own account after a supplier failed, and his new product soon became locally well-recognised. With increasing demand, Hartley decided to change to full-time jam manufacturing, and he in turn opened factories in Bootle, Liverpool and London, producing over a thousand tons a week in season. He rose to affluence and then vast wealth.

In 1877, Hartley and his wife made a decision which was to determine their future philanthropy. In his Presidential address to the Primitive Methodist Conference of 1909,⁸ he recounted how they made a written vow that they would give first priority to devoting a definite and well-considered share of their income to religious and humanitarian work. The proportion in question was initially 10% but this was raised in stages to one-third of their total income. The Primitive Methodist Church was to benefit vastly from Hartley's benefactions. When it is remembered that the denomination mainly drew its members from the poorer classes of society, it can be understood how in one sense Hartley became its leader, as his personal benefactions determined large new areas of ministry.⁹

Hartley remained a convinced Christian throughout his life of increasing wealth. 'At the centre of all his manifold activities there burnt the pure flame of devotion to Jesus Christ. He believed with all his heart in Jesus Christ and endeavoured in all things to serve Him.'¹⁰ Hartley was deeply conscious of the vast amount of human misery experienced in a nation where the gap in wealth between the rich and the poor was vast. Many of his benefactions were for the

general relief of this misery. He endowed hospitals, sanatoria and medical research. To his own workers he paid a wage which was always higher than the going rate and for them he introduced profit-sharing and pension schemes¹¹. His aim was always to use in the best possible way that portion of his income which was set aside for giving away.

The side of Hartley's generosity which concerns the present study most is that portion of his benefactions which he used to fund improvements in the Primitive Methodist scheme of ministerial training. But one important point regarding his theological ability needs to be forcibly made. Given that the manufacture of jam was the great absorber of his time, 'It is not surprising that he had rather little time for reading. He kept in touch with the papers, both secular and religious, and found time to read some new books, though he lamented that his opportunities were so slender. His opportunities did not lead him in the direction of scholarship.'¹² The man of personal industry, sincere spiritual devotion and open-hearted generosity was simply not theologically equipped to evaluate the developments in ministerial education which he was to enable and control financially.

Hartley paid for both new buildings and new staff for the college at Alexandra Park. In 1891 it was resolved by Conference to extend the period of ministerial training from one year to two. Extra building work was necessary in order to double the existing accommodation which was for a maximum of thirty students. At first Hartley offered to pay one-third of the projected costs of £5,000. In fact, however, the work was delayed due to opposition within the church, and when the extension was finally completed in 1897, he assumed full responsibility for the inflated costs of £12,500. Within a few years, increasing student numbers and course length created the need for still more accommodation and in 1906 a further extension was opened, for which

Hartley had paid the full cost of £20,000. From that date the college
13
was known as Hartley College .

Impressive though the above endowments seem, Hartley did not provide college buildings and then seek to staff it: rather he was only providing the facilities whereby as many students as possible could spend as much time as possible being taught by the staff who were his first concern, A. S. Peake being the principal appointment. It was through initial contact with Peake that Hartley took up the cause of ministerial education, and it was to a large extent due to their continuing personal relationship that his interest continued.

Before 1891, Hartley had little personal interest in the training of ministers. In that year he and Mrs Hartley were making a driving tour which took them to Oxford where they called on an acquaintance, Mr. J. Harryman Taylor. The latter took his guests to meet Arthur Peake who was eminent as one of the first Nonconformist scholars and then dons at the university. Peake had recently been giving consideration to ministerial training in his own denomination and saw many inadequacies within it. He took the opportunity to speak freely to Mr. and Mrs. Hartley about this, and it seems that Hartley was immediately stimulated to plan the developments which followed. Using the influence which he had already gained in the Primitive Methodist
14
Church through the alleviation of Chapel debts, he suggested to the committee of the Alexandra Park College and to the Conference that Peake should be invited to leave Oxford and join the staff at Manchester. He urged that a free hand should be given to this prospective new member of staff, and promised himself to provide the salary for a
15
period of five years .

The offer of a rich man to a poor church was not refused, and the formal invitation was subsequently extended to Peake, which the latter

accepted. Hartley continued to support the college which was to bear his name for the rest of his life, both financially and through his growing friendship with Peake. The fact that a man with little theological judgement largely held the purse strings, established Peake as principal tutor, and ensured that Peake was given free rein in what he taught, paved the way for a liberal doctrinal approach at the college in subsequent years. Hartley never lost his influence whilst he lived. 'During the first thirty years of Peake's work at Hartley College he was his loyal friend and constant helper'¹⁶. Hartley presented Peake's first book, A Guide to Biblical Study, to all Primitive Methodist ministers, and offered at half-price several of his other books¹⁷. Even in death, Sir William continued to influence his Church, through the use of his name in Methodist Union proposals¹⁸.

Peake for his part was from the beginning glad to maintain and develop a personal friendship with Hartley. In the beginning, he was grateful that Hartley for the first time brought the official training of the ministry in the Primitive Methodist Church into contact with the (then) modern spirit and outlook. He was conscious that the medium for this contact was his own appointment and his own free rein in planning course content¹⁹. An extract from Peake's writings²⁰ perhaps indicates best how the personal friendship developed: 'He (Hartley) was very hospitable, and so far as the extra-ordinary pressure of his work and engagements permitted, would give up time to his guests. He was solicitous for their comfort and anxious to consult their convenience. And he had both sides of the virtue mentioned in the well-known couplet; he would not only welcome the coming, he would also speed the parting guest. Many times during my residence at Freshfield he would remind me on a Sunday evening that I must go if I

was to catch the last train home. Similarly on a Sunday morning it was our custom to walk away from Church together, and he was careful to see that I did not go so far with him as to risk missing my train, and he would not infrequently, especially if we had much to talk about, walk back part or the whole of the way to the station with me.'

The dedication of the beginning of Peake's most widely-read
21
book (apart from his Commentary) was as follows:

T O

S I R W I L L I A M P. H A R T L E Y

LARGE-HEARTED IN PHILANTHROPY

FERTILE AND SAGACIOUS IN COUNSEL

FAITHFUL IN THE STEWARDSHIP OF WEALTH

I DEDICATE THIS VOLUME

IN GRATITUDE FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF HIS FRIENDSHIP

IN ADMIRATION OF HIS CONSPICUOUS SERVICES

TO THE CAUSE OF MINISTERIAL TRAINING

and in a letter of personal reply, Hartley included the following words: 'What a wonderful change for the better has come over the ministerial education in our church since we first met at Oxford. Neither of us at that time could foresee the wonderful events that would happen.'
22
23
Peake judged in Hartley's obituary that his greatest services to the Church were rendered in connection with the education of its ministers.

Thus a very close relationship grew up between Sir William Hartley and Arthur S. Peake. The former by his influence employed the latter and gave him complete freedom in his teaching. This partnership lasted for many years and determined the tone of all the theological content of the future ministerial training within the Primitive Methodist Church. The decisive role of these two influential men

is summed up by Professor A. L. Humphries in Peake's obituary:

Sir William Hartley did many great things for our Church, but I agree with those who hold that in the light of all the wonderful issues which have flowed out of it, the greatest thing he ever did was when he induced Dr. Peake, then a lecturer at Mansfield College to come to Manchester..... Directly or indirectly he (Peake) has been the moving cause of all the developments which have followed.

The roots of Peake's liberal theological teaching can be traced from his background. Peake was born in a Primitive Methodist manse in 1865, and his whole life was to be spent within the bounds of the Primitive Methodist fellowship²⁴. From his father he received his lasting great love for that Church and its principles of justice, fair play and the fact that, while the root and essence of Christianity are to be found in fellowship with God, religion itself must always find²⁵ outlet and expression in the practical conduct of everyday life. In his mother in his early years he had the witness of someone who had had a specific conversion experience into Primitive Methodism. Educated at the Grammar Schools at Ludlow, Stratford-on-Avon and King Henry VIII school at Coventry, Peake went up to St John's College, Oxford as a scholar in 1883 to read Classics. However after taking Moderations he changed to Theology. Shortly after this change, Peake became profoundly concerned with the plight of the poor of London after reading²⁶ The Bitter Cry of Outcast London, published in 1883 and probably written by a Congregationalist, which gave special publicity to the spiritual and social destitution in London and awoke some of the city's churches to their responsibilities in these areas. After reading it, he thought of entering the Anglican ministry to work in the London slums. Progressively, however the reading of

theology seems to have answered to a large extent his personal spiritual burden, and later he was to write, before taking finals, ' It was for Theology that I was born, and I am learning to walk and feel my feet. There are few things which give more perfect pleasure than the consciousness of increasing power'²⁷ . Peake took a first and remained in Oxford. In 1890 he was appointed tutor at Mansfield College and later in the same year he was awarded a highly competitive Fellowship at Merton, thereby receiving the exceptional honour of being the first Nonconformist layman to be elected to a Theological Fellowship at Oxford.

While continuing to feel fully a part of the Primitive Methodist Church, at Oxford Peake became dissatisfied with what he saw as some²⁸ of the 'slick' or 'easy' conservative ways of expounding the Bible . His first introduction to textual Criticism came when he was still reading Classics, under T. C. Snow, tutor in Classics at St. John's College²⁹ . With the lectures by Archdeacon Farrar in 1885 there was the start for Peake of, 'a gentle sloping away from the more rigid³⁰ orthodoxy under which he had been brought up', (i.e. from a traditional, pre-critical understanding of the nature of scripture). Subsequently five scholars particularly influenced Peake with their historical critical method, Cheyne, Driver, Sanday, Fairbairn and Hatch³¹ . Of these he found Cheyne the most original, whilst Driver's view of the Old Testament had a great influence on him. He admired Sanday for his critical balance, but found Fairbairn's emphasis on the historical method especially convincing. Peake admired Hatch for the example of a large and liberal mind.

By the time Peake's Oxford years were over he had become a critical biblical scholar while remaining a convinced member of the Primitive Methodist Church. Whilst never leaving the denomination of

his birth, his theological attitudes became more and more coloured by those of his mentors at Oxford, and correspondingly more and more distant from the simple and conservative attitudes inculcated during his boyhood. Yet there is no sense in which that movement was complete. In the area for specific study, that of doctrines of hell and judgment in relation to the need for personal conversion, his writings display a number of conservative aspects. Peake was a Local Preacher and early in this role he wrote in a letter,³² 'I think I might sum up all my creed in that one word Christ and all that is good in my own religious experience... Our preaching in the future will have to be the preaching of Christ, and not the preaching of pet doctrines... We must not enter into fine-spun arguments about this or that point of belief; but we must show Christ to the people, or they will go to Hell. What is known as doctrinal preaching is intolerable while the Church is worldly and selfish and sinners are perishing.' In his famous lecture The Quintessence of Paulinism, he emphasised that it is a matter of human choice as to whether to endorse the act of Christ on the cross and so make it one's own.³³ In his commentary on the Book of Revelation he was content to expound without adverse comment some of the promises to Christians contained in it. One of these is that 'him that overcometh ... shall not be hurt of the second death'; another is that 'He who is faithful unto death will receive a crown of life, and those who have kept their garments unsullied will walk with Christ in white', whilst a third is that 'To the martyrs it is granted to take part in the first resurrection. Blessed indeed are they who participate in it, over them the second death has no power, they are priests of God and of Christ.'³⁴ In the same volume he similarly expounds the vision of the Last Judgement as incorporating the lake of fire or second death.³⁵ In a work written for popular distribution,³⁶

Peake was happy to affirm that Christ's atoning act 'secures to the individual, apart from the cancelling of physical death by the resurrection, only the possibility of salvation. The question whether he will stand with the first Adam or with the second is a matter for his own individual choice.' In the same work he asserted that after death, justice would be vindicated and wrong destroyed³⁷. Finally in his lecture The Methodist Churches, delivered in 1911 at his former college in Oxford (Mansfield)³⁸, Peake stated that the Methodist Church was 'a Church which denies baptismal regeneration, and asserts that conversion is indispensable to salvation'. Furthermore, Methodism 'offers the Gospel call to every man, and urges him to accept it without delay. It puts the responsibility of decision upon the individual, assures him that his will is free and that his choice is fettered by no irreversible decree which has determined his fate irrespective of his own resolve or action..... It assures him that sin is no hateful necessity of his earthly condition, that his complete sanctification is obtainable in this life. But it also utters the stern note of warning in that it makes this life a probation charged with infinite issues and fixing his eternal destiny.'

If there were certain conservative aspects to Peake's writings, it would, however, be very far from the truth to say that these writings overall were typically conservative. While he called himself an 'orthodox evangelical Christian', he firmly declared himself in public debate as on the side of critical scholarship as against a 'traditionalist' position³⁹. Indeed he was happy to draw upon works by writers of the most extreme schools of criticism.

In Peake's obituary, his colleague Professor A. L. Humphries notes that 'It is true that, because of the new facts which Christian scholarship has discovered, he was not able to hold the traditional or

Fundamentalist view of the Bible' . Peake saw traditional attitudes to the Bible as being like 'the cramping clutch of a dead hand' and believed that Christians should be 'jealous of creeds, constitutions, and all that would fetter the Spirit of God in the free exercise of his energy through us'. He saw himself called to 'preach the timeless Gospel in the form which our own time demands', leaving behind the 'eccentricities' and 'narrowness' of 'our fathers'⁴¹ . Thus Peake adopted a view of Scripture which he felt recognised a large range of difference as to spiritual value and historical accuracy. He agreed with other scholars in repudiating on a large scale traditional beliefs in the authorship, unity and date of individual writings. He saw⁴² the Bible as the record of revelation, not revelation itself . Criticism was for him the medium whereby the 'attuned heart and listening ear'⁴³ could 'catch the divine word breaking through the ancient record' . The divine Word itself developed as God's thought changed⁴⁴ through the progress of history .

Peake's attitude was the result of a sincere desire to apply the Word of God in a relevant way to the people and situations of his day. However his studies led him not only to question the verbal inspiration of scripture, that is the notion that the Bible was inspired word for word by God, but also the substitutionary theory of the Atonement, the unalterable determination of future destiny at death, and eternal⁴⁵ punishment consisting of physical torment in fire .

In making his decision to move to Manchester, Peake was determined from the first to introduce the new critical methods into the college curriculum. In a private letter to his father dated June 24 1891 he wrote: 'I feel that the Connexion should have the advantage of what prestige and position I may have, and also of my educational⁴⁶ privileges'. He was harsh towards theories of Biblical teaching:

'The first thing to be done, if our young people are to be taught the critical view of scripture, is to destroy their illusions,'⁴⁷ was his maxim. To the raw student, his lectures were 'like a sudden plunge into deep water. We looked for a raft; he insisted that we should swim'.⁴⁸ Whilst this is a valid academic approach, it was never likely to assist the students to own confidently the official doctrinal standards of the Primitive Methodist Church. Peake rarely revealed to his students his own personal views on a given topic,⁴⁹ for he believed that in critical works the actual conclusions reached were often of less importance than the discussion which lead up to them.⁵⁰ His great aim was to foster that discussion by the dissemination to his students of what he saw as all the relevant knowledge in the field.⁵¹ This was in marked contrast to the conservative values of the Primitive Methodist Connexion up to that time.

When Peake went to Manchester he found that the Bible was not used as a text for study but only as a normative work of reference.⁵² He was concerned to make courses in Introduction and Theology, both of the Old and New Testament, the most prominent elements in his teaching.⁵³ His introductory courses dealt with matters of date, authorship and literary structure. Those in Old and New Testament Theology sought to exhibit the growth of the religion of Israel and primitive Christianity, whilst courses in Biblical Exegesis concentrated on a minute and special study of the text. Whilst the Principal, Dr. Wood retained responsibility for Systematic Theology, Peake's influence was brought to bear strongly with a course on the History of Doctrine, designed to ensure that students did not simply formulate their doctrines on the sole basis of the plain meaning of the various biblical texts. The changes which Peake thus initiated amounted to a revolution in the curriculum of the college.⁵⁴

It has been said that Peake's teaching was never merely negative and destructive, for in the end as all his students would testify, it made for a surer and richer faith, preserving as it did everything which mattered in the traditional faith and even confirming and enriching it. This was the retrospective opinion of W. Bardsley Brash,⁵⁵ a Methodist theological college tutor, and in such teaching Peake was at all times supported by Sir William Hartley. However there were many who held a very different view, believing that Peake was very far from preserving their traditional faith. The published opinion of one periodical that he was 'doing Satan's work' was apparently one of the milder criticisms.⁵⁶ It would be fairer to point out that the content of Peake's curriculum inevitably compromised the denominational doctrinal standards to which his trainee ministers, when trained, were bound to subscribe.

At this date the qualification for membership of the Church was primarily, as Peake admits,⁵⁷ 'a desire to flee from the wrath to come.' The Church's doctrinal standards were set out in a document called the Deed Poll which stated that the religious tenets or doctrines which Primitive Methodists were required to believe and teach were: 'The innocency of man in his first state, the fall of man, general redemption by Jesus Christ, repentance, justification of the ungodly by faith, the witness of the Spirit, sanctification by the Holy Spirit producing inward and outward holiness, the doctrine of the Trinity, the proper divinity of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the general judgement, and eternal rewards and punishments; these being the same doctrines as were believed and taught as aforesaid, by the said John Wesley, deceased, and which are set forth in the said notes on the New Testament and the first four volumes of his sermons.'⁵⁸

Wesley's traditional teaching about hell, judgment and the need for personal conversion, thus formed the denominational norm for standards of belief and teaching in this, as in all, subject areas. At one stage Peake tried to go as far as the Primitive Methodist who declared: 'The Deed Poll declares that our doctrines are interpreted in certain sermons of John Wesley. What he said long ago settles it. That is simply intolerable, so intolerable that everybody ignores it'.⁵⁹ He was involved in the committee considering doctrinal revision of the Primitive Methodist Deed Poll and Model Deed, together with his then colleague at Hartley College, Professor A. L. Humphries.⁶⁰ In the proposals which were tabled at Conference in 1916, Peake did not merely attempt to tone down any reference to Wesley's Notes and Sermons - he removed any reference whatsoever. The proposals proved highly controversial within the Districts of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, and they were never pursued. Later Peake's attitude tempered somewhat but when supporting the scheme for Methodist Union of 1924 and its proposed doctrinal standards he still made his attitude to those currently in force very clear:⁶¹ 'I would point out to (apprehensive) Primitive Methodists In the first place they will have something far less rigid than the formularies by which we are at present fettered. For we have not only the reference to Wesley's Notes and Sermons, but we have eleven articles of faith. The United Church will be entirely free, to its great advantage, from this explicit definition of its creed, as Wesleyan Methodism has been all along. And the reference to the "Notes and Sermons" is put in such a form that they cease to be the rigid standards, which have become entirely unsuitable to an age like our own.'

The work of Peake which is most often remembered today is his one-volume commentary on the whole bible.⁶² This commentary was a

milestone in the popularising of critical scholarship . Peake exercised a very comprehensive and painstaking editorship over the work. He went over every single word of every contributor and where he thought some remark was needed he inserted it . Whilst some would say that he did not personally agree with some of the views expressed by the contributors, it cannot be denied that he wished every single word to be imbibed by his readers, including his students at Hartley College.

Comparing the commentary with Wesley's Notes on the New Testament reveals that a number of passages in the bible referring to judgement are expounded in a straightforward way. These instances are however accompanied by an almost complete lack of the personal applications of which Wesley was so fond. In some passages, such as Matthew 25:30, the Parable of the Talents, he allows the biblical message about outer darkness to be toned-down thus: 'the extra punishment of (verse) 30 seems needless.' Usually it is just a case that observations by Wesley are not thought worthy of comment, as for Matthew 25:46, the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats; here Wesley comments in detail about the everlasting nature of the punishment and that the damned shall see nothing of the everlasting life, but the just shall see the punishment of the ungodly. A radical toning-down of Wesley's message occurs in Luke 12:5 where Wesley entreates: 'Therefore the fear of God as having power to be cast into hell is to be pressed even on true believers'; Peake's commentary merely states: '.... there is a trace here of the belief in judgement after death.' Wesley believed 2 Peter 3:7 to mean that a day of judgment accompanied by fire was still to come. Peake's commentary directly contradicts Wesley's exegesis and explains the verse away in the terms: 'The belief that the universe would be destroyed by fire was widely prevalent in the second

century'. Three further excerpts from the commentary may be quoted as undermining the scriptural evidence upon which Wesley based his theology of hell and judgment. In the introductory article 'The Bible: its Meaning and Aim', page 5, hell is described in the following way: 'below the earth was the great dark dungeon called hell, the home of the devil and his angels, who competed with the angels for the soul of man, and where the various types of departed sinners worked out their eternal destiny in varying depths of woe.'. This is denounced as 'a crude cosmology, authoritative and futile, associated with the mass of superstitious nonsense asserted by the Church in connection with the Last Judgement'. This illustrates how the critical method endorsed by Peake could by its tone deny not only Wesley's point of view with respect to the words he used, but also with respect to his interpretation of the underlying spiritual truth. In the comment on Mark 9:41-end it is stated that the reference to Gehenna in connection with judgment implies eternal loss rather than everlasting torture. Finally, in the introductory comments to the Book of Revelation, the evidence of that book concerning both future judgment and future bliss is thrown out wholesale with the comment that the book refers solely to the age of the writer, that the drama belongs entirely to the past and that the vision of the author never extends beyond the first century. Whilst Peake's commentary could not be said to contradict the whole doctrinal basis of the Primitive Methodist Church, as expounded by Wesley, it certainly undermines it.

Peake's personal preference for the rejection of Wesley's Notes and Sermons as the doctrinal basis for the Primitive Methodist Church can be seen in his other writings both in general terms and by specific examples. In an article in the Primitive Methodist Leader⁶⁷ he stated that 'It is obvious that Wesley's exegesis of the New Testa-

ment, which was confessedly derived from Bengel, has frequently to be rejected. His whole exposition of the Book of Revelation, also derived from Bengel, is radically unsound'. Once it became clear that the wider Primitive Methodist Church wished there to be clear reference to Wesley's Notes and Sermons, in formulating doctrinal statements in connection with the process of Methodist Union, Peake attempted to assert that this standard need not be held in precisely the same form in which Wesley had stated doctrine in the eighteenth century, wishing the words 'generally contained' to be inserted in the doctrinal statement before the reference to Wesley's works. As for the idea that Methodist doctrine is based on 'the Divine revelation recorded in Holy Scriptures', Peake commented: 'The preacher is not committed to everything in Scripture, but only to the Divine revelation contained in it.' .

The following specific doctrinal comments illustrate the softening of Peake's attitude to the future life by comparison with the straightforward teaching he still believed on going up to Oxford⁶⁹. In his 1911 lecture at Mansfield College he stated that 'for a long while past the course literalism, which characterised the older representation of hell, has been tacitly or explicitly abandoned'⁷⁰, thus refuting Wesley's exposition of the nature and of the experience of hell. With regard to Wesley's clear teaching about the distinction between the saved and the unsaved and the condemned state of most of mankind, he said: 'while Methodism has been jealous of any deviation from strict orthodoxy, it has been nervously alert to any coquetting with universalism or conditional immortality. The situation is altering even here

The best evidence for Peake's views on the afterlife is contained not in one of his books but in his concluding article⁷¹ in a series

entitled 'Plain Thoughts on Great Subjects ' which appeared in the Sunday Strand magazine during the years 1907-08. He declared himself unwilling to express his personally-held beliefs, but enough can be gleaned from his comments. Whereas Wesley was clear in his message about heaven and hell and the real choice facing men in this life, Peake says how it is realised more clearly now than formerly how very difficult the problem is and how very unwise it would be to be unduly dogmatic in conclusions. He points out three main possibilities : firstly, the doctrine generally accepted by the Church, namely of endless conscious misery; secondly, annihilationism or conditional immortality, that the wicked will not be kept in existence forever, but after receiving their meed of punishment will be extinguished; and thirdly, universalism, that ultimately all spirits will be saved, sin and pain will vanish from God's universe, which will exist in perfect harmony with itself and with God. Peake notes that the motive of fear to which the first theory appeals is not the highest in man. He points out a criticism of the first two theories in singularly emotive terms in describing the feeling that 'the prospect of an ultimate moral dualism in the universe is intolerable. It means, they urge, the failure and defeat of God. Not the defeat of His power, for He crushes all his enemies into abject submission. But to cow his creatures into submission while it is the triumph of force is the defeat of love, and God being what He is, defeat here is the worst of all defeats.'

Wesley defines a hell which he sees as the inheritance of the majority. In inaccurately describing the attitude of all those who still support the first theory, Peake indicates his own unwillingness to accept this definition: 'Under pressure of criticism, modifications of the description of the perpetuity of punishment have been

made. The idea of physical torture has been very largely surrendered. The wholesale condemnation of the heathen, once accepted without demur, is now universally abandoned. Many find relief in the thought that probation will not be terminated with this life, that while the doom will be irrevocable once it is fixed, it will not be fixed by death, and, though the fate of some will be to endure endless punishment, those who will be finally impenitent will be an infinitesimal minority.'

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In his comment on Colossians 2:13 , Wesley emphasises that the death spoken of by Paul refers to a wallowing in both outward sins and original sin⁷³ ; Peake denies that the death is in any sense the consequence of sin. This illustrates his denial of the traditional penal substitutionary theory of the Atonement. Elsewhere⁷⁴ , talking about the fate of the heathen he states that 'It is indeed not so long since the appeal used to ring out on missionary platforms that the heathen were dropping into hell at the rate of sixty a minute because the Church had not sent the gospel to them. Now, people have come to understand that such a belief is like dynamite in the heart of Christianity itself, contradicting in the blood-curdling brutality the very basis on which Christianity reposes, the love of God and His universal Fatherhood'. Peake may have believed in the existence of hell, but he saw hardly anyone as being bad enough to go there.

There can thus be traced a progression in Peake's deviation from the doctrinal standards of the Primitive Methodist Church. In the first place his Critical Biblical Scholarship led him to accept that there was divine revelation in scripture, but to deny that all scripture was so given. This led him to differ in his exegesis from Wesley. He rejected all coarse literalism in the interpretation of all passages concerning judgment and was sympathetic to the view that many

of these passages were based on the crude cosmological understanding of the ancient world which was no longer relevant in his day. He often failed to apply personally those passages he still felt to be relevant and felt that a lack of dogmatism concerning judgment was the correct doctrinal stance to adopt. This attitude to the biblical witness led him to reject hell as a state of endless conscious misery on the grounds that this would entail a morally dualistic view of the universe, a view which he rejected in favour of a doctrine of a universal and beneficent Fatherhood of God. He also rejected the doctrines found in scripture concerning the consequent relationship between sin and death and the penal substitutionary nature of the Atonement. He did not believe that lack of faith was grounds for adverse judgment and was open to the possibility of universal salvation.

If the starting point for Wesley's theology was the perceived crisis of human sinfulness causing separation from God and His condemnation of the sinner, Peake's starting point was a vision of God as beneficent Father warmly disposed to all of His creation and gently making all of creation more aware of Himself. In more detail it can be seen that this basic position, coupled with a parallel rejection of the traditional penal substitutionary doctrine of the Atonement in favour of his own model, was the root cause of Peake's liberal views on judgment.

In seeking to understand this rejection of the doctrine of Penal Substitution, it may be noted firstly that Peake was very wary of what he saw as putting too much emphasis on the death of Christ in comparison with a consideration of the value of his whole life and ministry .⁷⁵ One of the important bases of the doctrine is a clear connection between the work of Christ on the cross and the prophetic

words contained in the Servant Song of Isaiah 53. Peake saw here no such simple connection. He believed that an application would be justified from the point of view that Jesus was the supreme revealer of God and sufferer from the world's sin⁷⁶, but was reluctant to base doctrine on that application. In addition he saw no reason to believe that this insight was demanded by the Pauline corpus of New Testament literature⁷⁷. Peake clearly set out his reasons for objecting to the substitutionary theory⁷⁸. Firstly he believed that Scripture witnessed to the fact that Christ died for our benefit, but not in our stead. Secondly he believed that punishment cannot be properly transferred, for if it is inflicted on the innocent while the guilty go free, it ceases to be punishment and justice receives a double wound. Thirdly he believed that as a matter of fact the penalties of sin were not endured by Christ, nor do people escape them in virtue of His death. Christ could not endure sin's own punishment in the alienation and hatred of God which it produces, nor could he endure such penalties in the after-life as are usually associated with sin. Neither in quantity nor in duration were the sufferings He endured co-extensive with the effects which sin brings upon the human race, and people still feel these effects even after Christ's act of suffering. Fourthly Peake believed that if Christ endured the whole penalty of sin, then it can no longer be inflicted on the sinful - a position which logically implies either as the Calvinists believe that the Atonement is limited, that Christ died for the elect, or that if, in deference to the plain statements of scripture, we assert the universality of the Atonement, then we must infer the salvation of all, independently of behaviour and belief. Peake's writings unpack the latter reason by asserting that if Christ has exhausted all the penalty in His own Person, then none remains to be inflicted on those for

whom He died, and it violates the elementary instincts of justice that the full punishment should be exacted twice for the same sin.

Peake formulated his own doctrine of the Atonement based upon the theory that the central and fundamental Christian doctrine should be that of the Fatherhood of God. The latter view drew much of its inspiration from F D Maurice, the radical critic of established theology, and was also prevalent among a number of Wesleyan Methodists, under the inspiration of the noted John Scott Lidgett⁷⁹. There was no intention to assert any doctrine which did not have its basis firmly in Jesus⁸⁰, for Peake believed that this insight was fundamental to the consciousness of the Jesus, as recorded in the gospels, who knew God as no-one else has known Him.⁸¹ He saw Jesus as giving prominence to the idea of the Fatherhood of God in contrast to other conceptions then prevalent. For him the Atonement was therefore pre-eminently the outcome of God's grace and love, and he dismissed as pagan the New Testament idea of propitiation or expiation. The death of Christ was the outworking of God's attitude of yearning love to mankind. God's anger and holiness and righteousness were elements in the consuming fire of His love. The Father saw mankind as His children, the victims of sin, and his chief concern was for their good, that their sin might become a thing of the past⁸². Sin, however, as Peake saw it, was a very bland thing compared with the doctrine of Wesley. Wesley saw sin as provoking the wrath of God, whilst Peake saw it as no more in essence than a human character fault which made God sad.

Peake's own doctrine of the Atonement very clearly takes up and incorporates this idea that human sin is a character defect which is to be got over, rather than a factor creating a crisis in the relationship between God and man which has to be radically confronted. He

believed that the principle of justification was very much secondary to what he saw as the main principle of the Atonement, man's Union with Christ. Whilst Peake made a number of references to his doctrine in his works ⁸³ the most comprehensive exposition of his position is to be found in Christianity, Its Nature and Its Truth ⁸⁴ which was written in 1908 and can fairly be said to represent the views which Peake would have transmitted to his students at that time. Indeed, as the ⁸⁵ book consists virtually of a reprint of his series of articles printed in the Sunday Strand magazine during the years 1907-08, the views were being presented freely to a very wide readership.

Peake asserted that it was necessary to explain the work of Christ upon similar lines to the effect of Adam, and to say that His death was no individual act, but the act of the whole human race. In his experience on the Cross Jesus made Himself one with us and us one with Himself. Christ incarnate shared our infirmities and temptations but because He was sinless He could not know by experience the stain of evil on His own spirit. In His trial He experienced the concrete hideous reality of the sin of the men around Him and became knowledgeable of sin not in a general, but a specific way. He also had to come as close as possible in His experiences to the consequences of sin. Before He yielded His spirit into the Father's hands, Jesus died a death of separation from God as the Father withdrew Himself that the Son might fully experience oneness with humanity. The Son's experience was a racial act, however, meaning that because He willingly accepted the consequence of sin, so too the human race in Him confesses its guilt and accepts the consequences. 'And so God passes a new judgment upon the race, no longer the judgment of condemnation, but the judgment of approval.' In this act, Peake sees Christ not as 'representative' of the race, but as in 'union' with it. Into His own

redeeming pain are worked the sufferings endured by the human race through all time, and the Father seeing in the race the sufferings of the Son, reverses His judgment. Christ's death, by this theory is seen as not only a death for sin, but a death to sin. This happened as he experienced the nailing of the flesh to the Cross, and with it the Law which gave sin its power. Thus the slavery of sin was brought to an end. The process of justification has its most important element in the fact of resurrection which opens the new way of holiness and life unto God, for the whole race.

Peake distinguished between the racial act described above and the appropriation of it by the individual. He believed that the blessings consequent upon the act were potentially available to every member of the race, but could only be experienced by the individual members by appropriation. This appropriation is effected by a union with Christ which is more than a moral union; it is a mystical union, whereby it is no longer the believer who lives, but Christ who lives in him. Through faith the believer's human spirit is blended with and experiences Christ so intimately that he and Christ are one. So through faith the believer experiences sin and its penalty, death to sin, and then Christ's Ascension and life in the heavenly places. Automatically therefore he is a new creation enjoying a life of holiness, moral energy and victory, or 'justification' before God. This Peake says is the way in which the Christian can talk of being justified by faith. Justification is a result of the mystical union and holds a secondary and not a primary place in Paul's doctrine of salvation. Faith is the remote cause of justification; union with Christ the immediate. The faith which results in union with Christ is said to be a temper and attitude of the soul which turns with a glad sense of confidence to 'Him that is mighty to save, with the deep gratitude

of one who has been saved from despair'. This is a turning which affects the emotions, intellect and will and the resulting surrender gives peace with God and ensures a life which is allowed to be controlled by Christ.

Thus Peake presents his doctrine of the Atonement. The crisis of sin giving rise to the wrath of God is ignored and justification comes about not through an act of propitiation or expiation, but through a sense of solidarity with an obedient Christ who experiences as closely as possible the consequences of sin but then treads a path which leads away from that experience to the experience of heaven.

From Wesley's viewpoint, Peake's doctrine is open to criticism. Firstly, his theory of the Father's change of attitude towards mankind by seeing men in union with Christ does not do justice to the biblical stance that men, through sin, stand under the wrath and condemnation of God. Wesley's fundamental call was that his hearers should 'flee from the wrath to come'. The desire to do this formed the basis for membership of the Primitive Methodist Church, yet to Peake God the Father, seeing global human nature intimately bound up in the suffering Christ on the Cross, thereupon changes his mind about human nature and starts to see it differently. Human sin is not a lasting affront to God. Secondly Peake's view of mystical union does not do justice to the continuing state of sinfulness observed in those who trust in Christ, and furthermore his proposed solution to the problem, that ideally sanctification should precede justification, but that in practice it does not, is contrary to Wesley. The view of resurrection to holiness by virtue of faith also neglects the essential sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Thirdly, Peake says that the death of Christ was a racial act - He died for sin, and to sin, thus opening up a new way for mankind to follow, provided they appropriate it. But if a

racial act is dependent on appropriation, then the effectiveness of the act is dependent not on the one involved in the act, but on the follower. Hence the death of Christ has no inherent effectiveness by itself and is relegated to the status of an example to be followed. Fourthly Peake's doctrine leaves an ambiguity with respect to those who have not trusted in Christ, for on the one hand they do not end up saved, but on the other they are no longer condemned by God. Hence the notions of racial act and individual appropriation are inadequately defined. (It is the author's opinion that it was this ambiguity which paved the way for Peake's thought progression in later life away from the notion of hell as the destiny of non-believers).

Perhaps the most telling criticism of Peake's doctrine generally is that of the modern-day Methodist theologian, William Strawson, that Peake's 'enthusiasm for critical and historical study seems to have left too little energy for the more important task of understanding the meaning of the Bible. By the time all the interesting critical questions have been asked, there seems no time left for theology proper' .

These may be valid criticisms of Peake's stance from the viewpoint of John Wesley's theology and the associated formal doctrinal standpoint of the Primitive Methodist Church, and yet the predominant reaction among those who were in close contact with him was one not of rejection but of overwhelming goodwill towards his point of view. Perhaps the major reason for this was that Peake the man was held in very high regard and those around him were ready to accept his beliefs for who he was rather than for what they were. As W. B. Brash comments, 'Men recognised in his speech the authentic evangelical note. They felt that he was not only a great scholar, but a devout and convinced Christian. The charm of his personality and his simple good-

ness allayed fears and disarmed suspicion. Men came to believe in his work because they were led to believe him' .

In reading personal reminiscences about and tributes to Peake the words which stand out in describing the effect of his personal character are 'the spell' . Peake's personal faith in Christ was the central impressive factor. In a commemoration service address at Hartley Victoria College in 1934 it was said that his greatness as a theologian and ability to interpret scripture soundly came from the fact that he was a great Christian. 'Peake's insight into what was for him the central doctrine of Paulinism, the mystical union of the believer with Christ, was the reflex of his own rich experience of fellowship with his Lord.' . 'Suspicion dissolved before his passionate devotion to Christ.' . He was seen as a man whose faith resulted in real personal goodness. His secretary, Elsie Cann, relates how Mrs Peake and their sons were never well in Manchester in the wintertime and so Peake was willing to relocate the family in Freshfield, near Southport, for a few years at a personal cost of much time and effort spent in travelling, but gladly for the sake of his family . Profound was the effect on lay people who came into contact with him. For example A. B. Hillis says, 'No appreciation can omit a reference to his saintliness. He was not only a great scholar, but a devout Christian, whose charm and persuasiveness of personality and simple goodness, allayed fears, disarmed suspicion and won affection a casual remark of the servant-maid at his home (was): "Well of course Dr Peake is a real Christian."' . A fellow member of the church in Great Western Street, Manchester, where Peake was a member for thirty-seven years, witnessed: 'His attitude during worship was an object lesson to many of us in reverential devotion, and the preacher, whoever he may have been, received his concentrated atten-

tion When he himself was the preacher a devotional atmosphere was created from the first moment of the service, and the mood of worship secured.'⁹³ Peake's son, Leslie, tells us that his father was a man of straightforward simplicity of heart: 'To the very roots of his being he was a lover of simple things. His tastes in food, in dress and in worship were all simple'⁹⁴ .

The above personal tributes from family and personal acquaintances are mirrored in those of academic colleagues. Hence Professor A. L. Humphries refers to his 'simple goodness'⁹⁵ , which had the effect of disarming his critics, whilst Professor T. H. Robinson of the Society of Old Testament Study says: 'Peake was a charming companion, and his colleagues in Old Testament studies valued especially his presence in the informal gatherings after the official business of the Society was over, when he opened to those about him his rich stores of wisdom and humour his friends, young and old, loved to hear him'⁹⁶ . Perhaps Peake's positive influence was most significant in its effect on his students. 'Hundreds of the latter came under the effect of his personality, and to a man were proud to call him their master Everybody agrees that his greatness lay not in the work he did - great and valuable as it was - but in the man he was - a living interpretation of the truths his Master taught and of the spirit that was His. We watched the wonderful simplicity of his life, his supreme humility and modesty, his exquisite humour and love of fun, and his unswerving loyalty to truth.'⁹⁷ . To quote further examples of student tribute may seem to be to eulogise, yet the sincerity of the comments show his profound effect on those who were in day-to-day contact with him. Hence : 'Dr. Peake enabled me to discern as never before the difference between having a theology and having a personal spiritual experience of truth' (Rev. F. Holmes);⁹⁸

' it was a revelation to see our Doctor worshipping in church, and a benediction to hear him pray in a prayer meeting He was the quiet teacher who made it possible for a host of men to preach, and led the way to the life that must be lived.' (Rev. A. Hird); 'Dr. Peake was more than a professor to the students; he was the true friend of every man who came under his tuition.' (Anon); '(After leaving college) If we had been in his class he remembered the year, the very place in which we sat, and some of the questions we had asked and the comments we had made only our own men can understand why Peake meant what he did to them.' (Anon). It can be seen that generations of students at Hartley College were so moved by the man that they were willing to accept wholeheartedly his message, even if, as has been shown, the latter was at variance with their Church's official doctrinal standards.

Whilst Peake was the tutor at Hartley College who had the most influence over the students in the period under consideration, he was certainly not the only member of staff and it is appropriate to consider the evidence for the likely influence of his colleagues. Between the years 1907 - 1932 the following names appear on the staff lists:

Principals:	1903 - 1908	William Johnson
	1908 - 1913	W. Jones Davies
	1913 - 1916	Henry J. Pickett
	1918 - 1923	James Lockhart
	1923 - 1928	Henry J. Pickett
	1928 - 1932	W. Lansdell Wardle
Tutors:	1902 - 1932	A. Lewis Humphries
	1903 - 1928	W. Lansdell Wardle
	1908 - 1932	Atkinson Lee

At Hartley College the Principals were circuit appointments, this being a matter of deliberate policy in order to contain their potential influence¹⁰⁰. Of the principals, Johnson, Davies and Lockhart have left no published material in book form. Pickett wrote one book which does not contain any relevant evidence to this thesis, save to say that the author accepted the results of modern criticism¹⁰¹. Wardle contributed to four books but likewise with little information relevant here. Of the other tutors, Meecham wrote mainly on the Oxyrhynchus papyri and New Testament Greek. One small devotional book represents a biblical survey of faith, but without any reference to the Last Things¹⁰². Lee's taught philosophy, and the evidence from his two published books suggests that his doctrine could have been radically non-conservative. In one he asserts that deity is known through the values of truth, virtue and beauty (omitting any reference to Jesus Christ)¹⁰³ and that the object of faith is ultimate world harmony¹⁰⁴. In the other, on the subject of eternal life, he shows a marked lack of certainty about Christian doctrine in declaring: 'How this unity of time and eternity, finitude and infinity is to be achieved, Theism does not fully declare. It remains a problem largely unsolved, but Theism, unlike its chief rivals, neither minimises the problem nor gives it up in despair. If it does not know the answer to the riddle of the universe, it firmly believes there is one. And hence its atmosphere of hope.'¹⁰⁵

Humphries is the tutor, apart from Peake, who published the most relevant material to this theme. Talking about the eschatology of the New Testament he declares that 'where the outlook upon the future is concerned, a human and time element qualifies the product of inspiration, so that, whilst the declaration concerning issues, spiritually

understood, is abidingly true, the mode in which it is imagined that they will be brought to pass, coloured, as it is, by the imperfection of human thought, may need in course of time to be supplemented and even superseded.' ¹⁰⁶ . If this would seem to leave the door open to the liberal interpretation of scripture, confirmation may be found in an important article of his called Creed Revision ¹⁰⁷ . Here, in discussing the then proposed revision of the Primitive Methodist Deed Poll, he stated clearly that John Wesley, whose Notes and Sermons were treated as infallible in the official doctrinal standards, did not have a monopoly of truth. He believed that 'The living Christ is more to us than a dead Wesley. Not only has He precedence in rank, but, whereas His prophets pass, the Master abides'. In the preceding fifty years a new world had been entered with respect to the interpretation of the Christian faith. This new world included a scholarship which had transformed the view of the Bible and evolutionary science which had modified the ideas about man's origins, first innocence and fall. Humphries agreed with Peake that 'There has been a rediscovery of the historic Jesus and His message, with the result that God's Fatherhood, rightly understood, has become the normative element in Christian thought, and theology has turned aside from the juridic language of Paul.'. Humphries wanted no reference in the doctrinal standards of the revised Deed Poll to the works of John Wesley.

Humphries taught Systematic Theology at Hartley College from 1903 onwards, and it may thus be seen that students were receiving both biblical and doctrinal teaching which had a background in a similar theological understanding. In a comprehensive article in the Holborn Review, ¹⁰⁸ Humphries goes much further than Peake ¹⁰⁹ in rejecting the traditional penal substitutionary theory of the Atonement and expounds a revised doctrine in which the Cross saves by creating a strong

impression on the potential believer's mind. As this article represents the personal view of the lecturer on Systematic Theology at Hartley for the whole of the period 1907 -32, a synopsis forms valuable evidence. The following key excerpts demonstrate the flow of the argument:-

'In any attempt at a constructive statement of Christ's saving work the starting-point is of prime importance. Hence we begin not with Jesus but with God ¹¹⁰. We cannot get nearer to God than Jesus takes us and Jesus reveals God as Father, which however is not a relational but an ethical term denoting the gracious and pitying love of God, and which also implies his holiness ¹¹¹. Salvation is thus grounded in the Fatherly love of God acting against the sin which is contrary to His holiness but which is in man whom He loves. This starting point condemns both any view of the Cross which includes the notion of transaction between Father and Son, and any view that implies that the Son bears the wrath of God. The latter is wrong because it implies that retributive righteousness has priority in Him over love. Jesus condemned sin by his very presence, as He was fully God, and forgave sin, but His saving act is effective because He presents it as a man. It was not the Cross which made Christ a Saviour but His preceding earthly ministry whereby He encouraged men to follow Him. To restore men to God meant first making them feel the need of reconciliation by exposing sin and then saving them by the total contact of His amazing personality. Jesus' death was on the one hand only an historical inevitability given the content of His ministry in a people who were expecting a very different sort of Messiah. Yet in its ultimate self-giving it was also the culmination of His ministry of self-giving.

There was no sense in which the necessity for the cross lay in

the fact that there was some difficulty in God to be removed - sin did not first become forgivable when Christ died. The satisfaction theory of the Atonement is too unethical and commercial whilst the penal substitution theory is wrong; firstly, because vicarious suffering is intolerable to the modern mind; secondly, because punishment is still inflicted on sinners who do not repent; thirdly, because the suffering of Christ was too brief; and fourthly and conclusively, because sin and the guilt attracting to it are not transferable. God can forgive without the need to first punish and God's displeasure towards the sinner can be removed, but His judgment upon sin continues to be felt even after forgiveness has been experienced. Christ did not, even to a limited extent, bear the penalty of sin, His forsakenness on the Cross being a subjective impression due to His humanity. There can have been no moment when God was so united with Christ as on the Cross, and any theory which proposes that Christ had the equivalent of punishment exacted on Him is make-believe. Contemporary theories of ethical and representative satisfaction are also in error. Christ's taking our sins upon Him was not factual, but rather by way of empathy, for our sins could not become His. On the Cross He realised the true and awful character of human nature at its worst and felt the shame of its condition, and at the same time His love triumphed over His pain. The climax of His redeeming work was "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do", and Christ on the Cross is thus the assurance beyond all doubt or question that forgiveness is with God. God's holiness is satisfied by the fact that sin is not forgiven unconditionally, but only after repentance on the part of the believer. The saving value of the Cross is that it opens the eyes of the sinner to the shame of his sin and brings about penitence which leads to atonement. Thenceforth the believer is united with Christ

(Paul's doctrine of union with Christ being his most important contribution to soteriology) and through faith He is made the pattern and power for our lives.'

Humphries' theory is different in detail from Peake's. It is free from the ambiguity with regard to the destiny of the impenitent, for Christ's work on the Cross is not emphasised as a racial act, but in relegating the work of the Cross to that of a morally arresting act which profoundly impresses the potential believer, Humphries goes much further than Peake in diminishing the emphasis on the crisis of God's wrath and judgment. We are not told in his writings about his personal views on hell, but it would be fair to conclude from his interpretation of the Cross and primary emphasis on the Fatherhood of God that any emphasis such as Wesley's on the penalty of sin would have suffered the same fate as Wesley's doctrine of penal substitution.

In assessing the overall influence of the staff of Hartley College, it is therefore fair to conclude that the principals, by virtue of their being circuit appointments of limited duration and on the evidence of their lack of published material, had little formative influence on the college's doctrinal position during our period. Of the tutors Peake had by far the most influence, whilst Humphries, in charge of Systematic Theology, also had an extremely liberal attitude to Wesley's doctrines and those of the Primitive Methodist Church. Lee would seem also to have been liberal, even radical in his theology, while there is no evidence to suggest that the other tutors might have propounded a conservative defence of traditional doctrinal standards.

If the above effectively surveys the doctrinal stance of the college staff overall, the question as to how this situation arose is still outstanding, and an important factor here is how the introduc-

tion of extra staff was made, bearing in mind that when Peake was appointed the staff consisted of himself and the principal only. The influence of Sir William Hartley, who by the relevant times was close friends with Peake, is once again critical. Peake tells us that Hartley himself nominated Humphries and paid the salaries of Lee and Wardle for a period of years following their initial appointment¹¹². Thus he either nominated or made possible the appointment of each one of the three staff who have been shown to have taken a distinctively liberal theological approach¹¹³. In addition it has been established that the appointment of Lee was at the initiative of Peake before Hartley's financial commitment¹¹⁴. Liberal doctrine at Hartley college overall can be traced back clearly to the influences of Hartley and Peake.

In the light of the above it is not surprising that the College staff were in turn highly supportive of Peake following their appointments, both in relation to their manner of appointment and to their appreciation of the character of their most influential colleague. Pickett refers to Peake's unflinching kindness and to the debt owed to him by all his students¹¹⁵. Meecham referred to the curriculum of the college, which Peake built up, as 'second to none', and on a personal note remembered that 'He inspired us with something of his own reverence and love for the Scriptures. He set our feet upon ground on which we felt we could firmly stand - the progressive revelation of God to man, the uniqueness of Jesus as Lord and Saviour, the power and wonder of the Gospel. In the light and strength of all this he sent us forth to preach'¹¹⁶. Wardle shows his acceptance of both man and teaching when he writes '..... the chief element of power in the character of Dr. Peake is his intense religious experience. A deep mystic religion has made him "very sure of God". As far as criticism

is concerned, he may be modern, but it would be hard to find one who more fully realises Wesley's best conception of Methodism.' ¹¹⁷ It is quite clear that Peake was always the ruling mind on the college staff ¹¹⁸ and the College Committee acknowledged that he was the inspiring leader of the College during its whole period of enlargement and curriculum transformation ¹¹⁹.

In summary the liberal doctrinal approach which was clearly in existence at Hartley Primitive Methodist College from 1907 - 1932 was due primarily to the enabling generosity of Sir William Hartley and the academic and personal influence of Arthur S. Peake. Peake was tutor of the college during virtually the whole period and although Hartley died before Peake, the college staffing which determined the theological approach had been then already determined. Although the times under consideration were ones of significant change and upheaval for the Church both in terms of general social patterns and the specific upheaval and catastrophe of the Great War, these national considerations had little if any determining effect on the doctrine of Hartley College. The pattern for the latter was already established in 1907 and maintained throughout the period under the influence of the twin powerful personalities of Hartley and Peake.

Peake for his part was rooted in the life of Primitive Methodism but became convinced of the rightness of the new critical approach to biblical scholarship during his time at Oxford. He was perceived by others as being a devout Christian and loyal to the general inheritance of the evangelical faith of the Methodists ¹²⁰ but, due to his fidelity to the then results of critical scholarship and his lack of time to produce a coherent systematic theology to complement the results of his biblical studies, he took a liberal attitude to the official denominational doctrinal standard which was rooted in the

theology of Wesley's Notes and Sermons. Hartley, for his part, was not theologically equipped to evaluate this. Peake's liberal approach to hell and judgment can be traced back through his view of the Atonement to his doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. These doctrinal views were not only disseminated through his own teaching agency but also via the colleagues who held him in such profound respect. These colleagues did not necessarily agree with Peake on every point of doctrine, but the evidence suggests a solidarity with Peake in the general liberal tenor of the College's teaching. So great was Peake's influence that his passing was said to mark 'the end of an era in Primitive Methodism - an era created by himself'¹²¹. He was thought to have been 'one of the greatest gifts God ever gave to Primitive Methodism'¹²² and the 'scholarship reached by many Primitive Methodist ministers was almost entirely due to his inspiration.'¹²³ Thus Peake's collegiate position, in conjunction with Hartley's financial backing was decisive in the movement of the Primitive Methodist Church to theological liberalism in the era preceding the Methodist Union of 1932.

The United Methodist Church came into being in 1907 as a result of the union of three smaller Methodist denominations, the Methodist New Connexion, the United Methodist Free Churches, and the Bible Christians. The history of the theological colleges of United Methodism between 1907 and 1932 is very much one of rationalisation of the resources inherited from the constituent bodies.

The Methodist New Connexion was the first secession from mainstream Methodism and the denomination was founded in 1797. After early starts in the area of ministerial training in the 1830's when one of the leading ministers of the Connexion received some accepted candidates into his family and supervised their studies¹, a formal theological college was built at Ranmoor, Sheffield and opened in 1864, catering for sixteen students². The college was received in this form into the United Methodist Church under the Principalship of the Rev. John S. Clemens.

The United Methodist Free Churches were a union of three groups who had seceded from the (Wesleyan) Methodist Church in 1826, 36 and 49³. Formal theological training of ministers commenced in 1872 when the Principal and six students came into residence in a house which had been purchased in Stockport Road, Manchester. More room was soon seen to be necessary and three adjoining houses were purchased in Victoria Park Manchester, the college transferring there in 1876. Accommodation was now for the Principal and twenty students which was the situation at union in 1907, the Rev'd T. Sherwood holding the former post.

The Bible Christians had no formal theological college⁴. Their practice was to send some of their accepted candidates to Shebbear

College, a boarding school for boys in North Devon, where they received a course of instruction adapted to their special needs. This arrangement did not continue in the United church.

The best way of rationalising the United Methodist theological training was the subject of frequent debate in the early years after Union, a fact witnessed to by the correspondence columns of the United Methodist magazine. Initially students were sent to either Ranmoor or Victoria Park as the Conference determined⁵. It was thought uneconomical to maintain two small institutions. Manchester was thought to offer the best facilities for students owing to its university connections, but the college site was unsuitable for expansion. It was decided to sell both sites and build again. As a temporary expedient the two colleges were joined together organisation-wise in 1913, first year students being taught at Ranmoor from where they were to proceed to Victoria Park for their second and third years⁶. The Great War intervened however and both colleges were closed temporarily. By 1919 the United Methodist Church had decided not to re-open Ranmoor, but to house all the students at Victoria Park.

From 1919 onwards a close connection was pursued with Hartley Primitive Methodist College. Victoria Park maintained its own college government, finance and discipline but the staffs of the two colleges combined in teaching a common curriculum⁷. Initially the arrangement was out of necessity as far as Victoria Park was concerned as the one Principal/Tutor, the Rev. J. T. Brewis could not cope single-handed with the requirements for teaching sixteen students of three different years. Later the arrival of two further United Methodist staff in 1920 was used to enhance rather than enable the withdrawal from the above arrangement. When numbers of students increased beyond the capacity of Victoria Park, residence too was undertaken at Hartley⁸.

It is important to note that during this period the venue for virtually all the actual teaching was in fact Hartley College and thus no distinctive United Methodist theological viewpoint was available, as distinct from that emphasis which United students were in fact receiving.

The United Methodist Church was very much a grouping of those Methodists who had sought to work out a genuine democracy in church affairs in contrast to what was perceived as the ministerial autocracy in the parent (Wesleyan) church. This basic attitude found its expression both in the official doctrinal standard of the Church and in the facility which was available to change that standard. In The General Rules of the United Methodist Church the following statements are made:

The Doctrines held and taught by the United Methodist Church are as follows:

- i) The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, through Divine inspiration, contain a revelation of the will of God to man, and furnish a sufficient rule of faith and practice.
- ii) There is one God, the Creator, Preserver and Ruler of all things, Who is above all and through all and in all. And, in the mystery of His being, there are Three Persons in One, the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- iii) The Lord Jesus Christ is the incarnate Son of God, in the unity of His being at once human and Divine, truly God and truly man.
- iv) Man as a moral being is free and responsible, and in the exercise of his freedom has fallen into sin and condemnation.
- v) The Lord Jesus Christ in His life and death perfectly manifested the righteousness and love of God, and becoming obedient

unto death, even the death of the Cross, He made atonement for the sins of the whole world. He was raised from the dead, and received up into glory, and now He reigns Lord over all.

vi) God wills not the death of any sinner, but requires repentance towards Himself and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as necessary to salvation.

vii) Believers are justified by faith through the grace of God, are born again from above, and by the life of obedient faith, perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord.

viii) The Holy Spirit of God illuminates the minds of men, convicts of sin, leads into all truth, gives assurance of salvation and sonship and dwells in every believer to strengthen and sanctify.

ix) The Holy Catholic Church is the innumerable company of saints of every age and nation who, being united to Christ their Head, are one Body in Him, and have communion with their Lord and with one another.

x) It is the will of Christ that His Church on earth should exist as a visible brotherhood, for the worship of God, for the manifestation of His Spirit and teaching in the service of men, and for the extension of His Kingdom throughout the world.

xi) The sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are of Divine appointment and of perpetual obligation.

xii) There will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the righteous and the wicked; the Lord Jesus Christ will be the Judge of all men; and they who have done good shall come forth unto the resurrection of life and they who have done evil unto the resurrection of condemnation.

The conference may in the year 1915 and periodically in every

succeeding tenth year reckoned from the year 1915 consider the propriety of altering, amending or repeating any of the provisions of the several clauses of these presents the respective marginal notes whereof are:

'Doctrinal tenets' _ _ _ _ etc.

The Doctrinal Statement is comprehensive but it is notable more for what it does not say than what it does. There is deliberately no inclusion of any reference to the Sermons and Notes of John Wesley. It was stated in The Story of the United Methodist Church¹¹ that this did not represent the presence of a doctrine which differed from that of the Wesleyan Methodists¹², but merely a different choice of preaching standard whereby the basic doctrine could be tested. However the same standard work states in virtually the same breath that the freedom to change the doctrinal statement was greatly prized by the United Methodist Church - indeed the Union negotiations leading up to 1932 were at one stage threatened because of United Methodist insistence upon this point. Taking into account the 'democratic' nature of United Methodism already mentioned, it is clear that the basis for definition of doctrine was the contemporary rational mind rather than an historical unchanging norm.

Although the United Methodist statement of doctrine was much longer than the equivalent Wesleyan and Primitive statements, both of which simply referred back to Wesley's Sermons and Notes, when the latter are expanded and compared (as with the chapter on Wesley's doctrine in this thesis) it can be seen that the United statement assumes rather the form of a brief summary. Such a summary can allow considerable flexibility of detail interpretation. It will be shown that A. S. Peake was a major influence on United Methodism as on Primitive Methodism and one example of the way in which liberalised

doctrinal interpretation can be allowed by the statement can be seen in the matter of the question of the destiny of mankind. It has already been shown that the doctrine of the Notes and Sermons is that the far greater part of humanity is condemned to hell, not exhibiting a clear Christian faith. In contrast Peake's interpretation that at the most only a few can be so condemned is both contradictory to Wesley and perfectly allowable as an interpretation of paragraph xii of the statement.

The effect of the above can be evaluated as meaning that liberalised doctrinal tendencies soon to be described are valid since they do not go against the defined denominational doctrinal norm. An alternative evaluation is that not only the colleges but also a wide cross-section of the United Methodist Church had become broadly sympathetic to a liberal doctrinal point of view by the time of the Union of 1907.

Ranmoor College was staffed in 1907 by the Principal, Rev. John S. Clemens and a tutor, Rev. E. Wales Hirst. These were the only members of staff to serve there before the college was closed. Clemens published no books but the following extract from The Story of our Colleges by G. G. Hornby, himself a tutor at Victoria Park College, makes it clear that he was specifically chosen for his positive attitude to the new critical theological climate, in contrast to the more conservative approach of previous staff:

'The three successive Principals had been worthy exponents of traditional Methodism, but it was felt by the younger leaders of the Church that the time had come for the training of the ministry to be in the hands of one who possessed, in addition to a glowing Methodist experience, a sympathetic knowledge of recent developments in Biblical

criticism and theology in general. After a close vote such a one was
elected in the person of the Rev. J. S. Clemens.¹³ Clemens' atti-
tude thus described is confirmed in his approach to two book reviews
printed in the United Methodist magazine¹⁴. In considering G. G.
Findlay's Fellowship In the Life Eternal he complains that the
author's reference to critical matters is disproportionately brief,
whilst in respect of Rev. W. A. Grist's The Historic Christ in the
Faith of Today he mentions Schweitzer's The Quest of the Historical
Jesus and describes the latter in a positive way as a 'remarkable
work'.

A positive attitude to the critical approach does not necessarily
by itself indicate a liberal doctrinal position, but a stronger case
can be made for the person of the tutor at Ranmoor, E. W. Hirst, whose
appointment was described as the next step in the development of the
new policy with regard to the college¹⁵. Hirst's area of published
writing was ethics but from his work sufficient evidence can be
gained to show that his doctrinal position was similar to A. S. Peake,
the Primitive Methodist, in that he held the doctrine of the Father-
hood of God as the starting point for all other doctrinal statements.
Hence, 'Strictly speaking Jesus was not a moralist; his primary mis-
sion was to reveal God as the Father and Redeemer of mankind'¹⁶, and
'however interconnected by various ties of secular interest human
lives may be, not until man realises by an active faith that God is
the universal Father, - not until then does he also realise with
vividness and power that his neighbour is his brother.'¹⁷ It has
already been seen in the Primitive Methodist context that a doctrinal
basis of the Fatherhood of God was accompanied by a neglect of the
wrath of God in favour of a virtually sole emphasis on His love in
drawing all men to Himself. This was a position also held by Hirst.

He did not believe in a coming judgment affecting the whole world . He criticised the New Testament use of the word 'Kingdom' of God because of the implication of theocratic rule, preferring the word 'Household' instead. He saw the ministry of Jesus as primarily revealing the love, rather than the judgment, of God, and the 'Household' of God as being the place where 'the humble, the pure hearted, the merciful, the gentle, the devout', dwelt willingly without any sense of the external imposition of God's kingly rule. 'The relationship of created and Creator is in the nature of things unchangeable; but the relationship of Father and child can become so harmonious as to be adequately expressed by the idea of life in a Home rather than in a Kingdom'¹⁹ . From the point of view of human action, Hirst believed that the primary energy of Christians should be directed towards the practical establishment of God's 'Home' life on earth. Wesley, by contrast, would point out that Jesus called God 'Father' but then go on to say that human action should take account of the personal crisis in the relationship between the individual and his God - a crisis which can only be overcome by personal faith through Christ in the light of His saving work on the Cross. Hirst's position that the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God should be regulative of all other Christian doctrine and also all Christian activity led him to need to reinterpret Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom in what was clearly a liberalising tendency.

From the above it can be seen that Ranmoor college, as inherited by the United Methodist Church in 1907, had been purposefully staffed in a way deliberately sympathetic to the then new critical and liberal theological positions. Clemens was not involved in further teaching activity after Ranmoor closed but Hirst moved to Victoria Park in 1920, where he stayed throughout the rest of our period in support of

the positions outlined above.

Victoria Park college's Principal in 1907, the Rev'd. T. Sherwood left no published books by which his theological position may be judged. He was succeeded in 1913 by the Rev'd. D. Brook who was fiercely Protestant in outlook²⁰ but who espoused also a clear emphasis on the primacy of the Fatherhood of God²¹. He was in turn replaced by the Rev'd. John T. Brewis in 1919 who had also served as tutor since 1912, but who has left no substantial published material. The other tutor so far not mentioned is G. G. Hornby, but again he left no published books containing insights into his doctrinal position. There is indeed a surprising dearth of published material overall from the United Methodist staff at Victoria Park.

Undoubtedly the tutor who had most influence over the theological students of the United Methodist Church was not a United Methodist at all, but the Primitive Methodist A. S. Peake. Peake's theological position has been examined in detail already. His influence over the United Methodist college came about in two distinct ways. Firstly he was appointed as visiting lecturer in Old Testament, New Testament and Theology from 1904 until 1912²² when increased duties at the University forced the relinquishing of the appointment. At this time there were no resident tutors at the college, apart from the Principal, and the famous visiting lecturer's presence must have been clearly felt. Secondly, from 1919 all students at Victoria Park received all their teaching, with the exception of certain sermon classes, at Hartley College²³, where it has already been established that Peake was the most influential tutor, both in terms of personality and theology. The sharing of teaching was described thus by United Methodist historians: 'Amongst other benefits this co-operation brought all the United Methodist students of the period 1919-29 under the stimulating

influence of that great scholar and teacher, Professor A. S. Peake. ²⁴ The warmth of feeling which was felt towards Peake at Victoria Park can be judged from the appreciation printed in the 1929-30 session United Methodist College Magazine: '.....he was like a jewel of many facets, each of which shines with no uncertain lustre his scholarship blended with a "sweet humanity" We consider it no small thing that a man who was himself a distinguished scholar and who had moved among the great scholars of his day, was not above raising his hat and speaking a kindly, happy word to any student wherever he met him. Moreover, he had an unsurpassed spiritual zeal which from time to time blazed out and revealed to us a man whose soul was as rich and sensitive as that of his Old Testament hero, Jeremiah what a happy combination of moral and spiritual qualities'. Peake's death was described by the 1930 United Methodist Conference as 'a grievous and irreparable loss' and the man himself was acknowledged as having 'scholarship so distinguished and comprehensive' and 'teaching gifts so unique'. 'We can but express a deep thankfulness that so many of our students were permitted to feel his ²⁵ influence and receive his impress', was their conclusion .

Thus it can be seen that during the life of the United Methodist Church, their theological students both at Ranmoor and Victoria Park Colleges were under the influence of staff who favoured both the critical and liberal approach to theology as seen in their view of the primacy of the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God as conditioning other doctrine and contemporary action. This can be seen initially in the overall policy at Ranmoor and especially in the work of E. W. Hirst. A. S. Peake's influence began to be felt at Victoria Park from 1904 - 1912 and with the amalgamation of theological training at the latter site in 1919 all students came under his direct influence. Before

this date Victoria Park was under a Principalship which was sympathetic to the position and there is no evidence of other staff's adopting a contrasting conservative approach. From the published weight of evidence from United Methodist authors it would be unfair to say that the United Methodist Church in its theological training positively championed the Fatherhood of God and resulting doctrinal liberalism, but clearly there was a desire and sympathy to fit in with what was a trend and position emanating from other areas.

Chapter 5 - Wesleyan Methodism 1907 - 18

The ministers of the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion were trained at four separate branches of a single Theological Institution. These branches were situated at Didsbury, Richmond, Headingley, and Handsworth. (see table, page 15). The Theological Institution had had its beginnings in 1834 at Hoxton¹ and with the need to house more students a second branch was opened at Abney House, Stoke Newington, in 1839.² At this date a total of sixty-nine students were in residence, forty at Hoxton and twenty-nine at Abney. It was realised that long-term plans for the future of theological training for candidates for the ministry were required and this resulted in new, more permanent branches of the Institution being planned for London and Manchester to serve the South and North respectively.³ In the event the college at Didsbury was opened first, in 1842 and this was soon followed by that at Richmond, in 1843. The new branches of the Institution were built to replace those at Hoxton and Abney House and these latter closed in the same years.⁴ Didsbury opened with thirty-six students in residence⁵, whilst Richmond had forty-one.⁶

In 1868 it was decided by the Conference that Richmond College should be devoted to the growing number of students who were training to be foreign missionaries. It was largely due to this specific expansion and reorganisation that Headingley came into being in 1868,⁷ with forty students in residence, mostly transferred from Richmond. Handsworth was added as the fourth branch of the Institution in 1881, with the intention of serving the Midlands, but also to relieve the overcrowding which by then had occurred at both Didsbury and Headingley.⁸ With the opening of Handsworth it was possible for all candidates for the ministry, both for Home and Foreign work to undergo a

period of theological training. In 1885 some further reorganisation took place and from that date both Home and Foreign candidates were mixed at all the colleges. By this date therefore the Wesleyan Theological Institution was organisationally established in the state pertaining at the beginning of our study period i.e. 1907.

Each of the Wesleyan colleges had several staff, and whereas the assessment of liberalising tendencies within Primitive and United Methodism is very much centred around one single personality, that of Dr. A. S. Peake, the similar study for Wesleyan Methodism involves a much broader assessment of the relative influence of many more personalities. Dr. E. Dale Dunlap has studied the liberalising tendencies in nineteenth century British Methodism and concludes that by the end of the century there was already a significant liberalising ferment which forms a highly relevant background to the Wesleyan situation. He sees the issues then presented by Biblical higher criticism as favourable to liberal scholarship. This was having the effect of weakening previous constraints of doctrinal authority and opening the way to new, independent, thinking. This tendency was further strengthened by the reconciliation of the debate over science and religion and overall more prominence was given to the capacity of human reason at the expense of revelational authority and traditional doctrinal standards. Doctrine was being affected by a growing emphasis on the humanity of Jesus. Also the Atonement was seen much more in terms of the love of God than as propitiation of His wrath, and there was an increasing acceptance of the position of universalism. None of these positions was yet typical for the whole of Methodism, but rather represented points of view which were fast becoming respectable possible attitudes within Methodism.

The broadening theological spectrum was developing in the face of

decidedly fixed Wesleyan doctrinal standards. In 1897 the Rev'd. John S. Simon issued A Summary of Methodist Law and Discipline; being a new edition of "The Large Minutes". On page 43., relating to the doctrinal qualifications of officers of the Society, it is stated: 'No person shall, on any account, be permitted to retain any official situation in our Societies who holds opinions contrary to the total depravity of human nature, the Divinity and Atonement of Christ, the influence and witness of the Holy Spirit, and Christian holiness, as believed by the Methodists'. On page 226, the Proviso regarding Doctrines states: 'Provided always that no person or persons whomsoever, shall, at any time hereafter, be permitted to preach or expound God's Holy Word, or to perform any of the usual acts of Religious Worship, upon the said piece of ground and hereditaments, nor in the said Chapel or Place of Religious Worship and premises, or any of them, or any part or parts thereof, nor in the appurtenances thereto belonging, or any of them, or any part or parts thereof, who shall maintain, promulgate, or teach, any Doctrines or Practice, contrary to what is contained in certain notes on the New Testament commonly reputed to be the Notes of the said John Wesley, and in the First Four volumes of Sermons, commonly reputed to be written and published by him. (The Chapel Model Deed).' John Simon was shortly after this to become Governor at Didsbury and a staunch supporter of a conservative approach to doctrine.

The liberalising ferment in Wesleyan Methodism was reflected to differing degrees within the four branches of the Theological Institution from 1907 onwards. Didsbury College retained six different main tutors during the period until 1915 when, in common with the other colleges, it closed for the remaining duration of the First World War. John S. Simon was Governor from 1901-12; R. Waddy Moss was Theological

Tutor from 1902-15 and also Principal from 1913 onwards. James Hope Moulton was Classical Tutor from 1902-15, teaching Classics, Mathematics, and New Testament language and literature. Frederic Platt taught Old Testament language and literature, and philosophy from 1905-9 and Charles L. Bedale took over from him in 1910. George Jackson became Resident Tutor in 1913, responsible initially for Pastoral Theology ¹¹.

John Simon, who was in overall charge of the college during most of the period, was a Church Historian first and foremost who was personally fully in sympathy with the doctrinal basis of Methodism at its inception. In writing his Manual of Instruction and Advice for Class Leaders he reprinted Wesley's Rules of the Society of the People Called Methodists ¹² with the following personal comments (extracted from various Minutes of Conference): 'All our Rules are equally binding on both the Preachers and the people; and therefore any Superintendent who permits a vote to be taken on the execution or rejection of them shall, on proof at the ensuing Conference, be deprived of the office of Superintendent', and 'Do not mend our Rules, but keep them, and that for conscience sake'. For the purposes of this study the most informative of Wesley's Rules is rule 4, namely: 'There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these Societies, - a desire "to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins".' Simon was convinced that it was this real desire to flee from the wrath of God which had been a pre-eminent factor in the birth of Methodism. He saw this desire as being the result of the work of the Holy Spirit as the latter had convicted people of the horrible nature of sin and the ensuing condemnation of God. 'They were conscious of a wrath that had come as well as a wrath that would overwhelm them in the future. In the darkness they faced the problem of sin, they searched its abysmal deeps, and they learned

lessons which lie at the heart of evangelical teaching - lessons which
must be learned if that teaching is not to be weak and mischievous'.¹³

According to Simon, the secret of Wesley's gathering such great audiences at the Moorfields, and holding them, was his willingness not to preach popular beliefs concerning immortality, but to reveal instead the unrepentant sinner's doom¹⁴. Simon harshly criticised all preachers who did not preach a doctrine of the cross which was easily recognisable as such, saying that the doctrine had been committed to the Methodist Church as a sacred trust, and was neglected at peril.¹⁵ He held that conversion in the light of the above factors formed the basis for the common experience of Christian fellowship and stated that the Methodist Class Meeting could never answer its purpose of fellowship if the need for conversion was overlooked. Furthermore he saw, 'a danger lest, in our anxiety to "bulk large" among the churches, we should hastily sweep into our Societies well-intentioned people, who were never converted, and who know nothing of the Christian experience. By this ... we make fellowship impossible. It is no wonder that, when a Class is largely made up of such persons, the leader has to stretch his mind upon the rack in order to entertain them by straining after exciting novelties.'¹⁶

After John Simon ceased to be Governor of Didsbury in 1912, the post was replaced by that of Principal which was then held by R. Waddy Moss. The latter had been Tutor at the college since 1902 and supported Simon in his conservative view of doctrine. He believed that the destiny of those who did not in penitence choose to follow God was one of impending doom. He based his belief on the evidence of both the Old and New Testaments and saw it as in accordance with the teaching of reason and the fundamental conception of justice. Man's free will choice for or against God was for him the basis of his final

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destiny. He saw the beginning of the process leading to salvation,
from man's point of view, in the consciousness of 'the horribleness of
his own sins' and the longing to be rid of them. Sin could then be
18
removed by the uniqueness of the Cross and not by any other agency
such as personal discipline, well-articulated theology, faultless
19
ceremonial or sentiments of rapture and awe.

Throughout the period 1907-15, J. Hope Moulton was also tutor at
Didsbury. Some aspects of his doctrine were in support of the conser-
vative viewpoint of Simon and Moss, but others were more liberal.
20
Moulton was 'the quintessential Cambridge scholar'. His main areas
of interest were in Greek scholarship and Zoroastrianism - the latter
because of his personal belief that the wise men who came to Christ's
cradle were Zoroastrians and he longed that their descendants would
21
follow them there. He utilised the findings of Biblical higher
22
criticism without apprehension and labelled his general stance thus:
'I need hardly remind you that "Liberal" is a term that covers a very
wide range; and that there are a great many of us who claim our place
in the army of progress who are very far from accepting the Christolo-
23
gy of the school of Harnack and Bousset.'

Moulton believed that, 'every great faith which had obtained a
substantial hold on the hearts of men had done so by virtue of some
contribution entrusted to them on behalf of the religious inheritance
of the world.' He saw this truth in other faiths as being, 'in no
sense derogatory to Christianity', whose unique claim was that 'all
24
things were summed up in Christ'. Through consideration of other
faiths he came to the conclusion, based on his exegesis of Matthew
25:32 (Parable of the Sheep and the Goats), that the clear law was
laid down that 'men are judged by God according to their behaviour to
25
their fellow men'. This clearly mitigates against the uniqueness of

Christ's atoning work on the Cross as held by Wesley, and the whole area of the uniqueness of the Cross in the light of other faiths seems to have represented an area of confusion in his writings .

26

Moulton was willing to talk about hell as the destiny of those who had consciously and finally rejected the light of God, but was only willing to describe it as 'the Absence of God', and would not be drawn into any further attempts at the description thereof, seeing this as a speculative and unscriptural exercise merely to satisfy

27

curiosity. The state of hell, or the absence of God, began for him here and now in the closing of the heart of the individual to God. Following on from this, he believed it to be 'an almost inevitable deduction that if conscious existence continues after death this fixity of character will be permanent ... Such is the plain teaching of the verse from the closing chapter of the Bible, which stands at the head of this paper (Rev. 22:11 - He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still; and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still). Continued activity in evil-doing for those who have rejoiced in evil-doing here, continued and increasing foulness for those who have been filthy here - that is the Future Death as portrayed by the seer ... Are not those sinners consigned, by their own

28

choice, to the Absence of God?'. Against Wesley, Moulton refused to speculate on the destiny of the vast mass of mankind, whom he saw as not belonging decisively either to the good or the evil.

Moulton did not see Biblical revelation of the nature of Christianity as being fixed and final. Rather Christ was for him the highest revelation of God but man could only come to appreciate Christ fully by an evolutionary process. Just as Christianity itself represented an improved revelation of God compared with other faiths, Christianity itself is constantly progressing, the beliefs of one

generation being set aside for the beliefs of another. He saw life after death for the believer as representing a continuation of the same evolutionary principle in that 'mind, the most marvellous thing we know among all the marvels of the universe in which we live, has a future before it still when death has claimed the body'²⁹. Thus he denied the truth of a bodily resurrection.

Moulton was conservative in his belief in the simple existence of hell and judgment, but when it came to the meaning and application of these and to the need for Christian conversion his datum was not the standard doctrines of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, but rather a moderately liberal and rationalist view of doctrine, coupled with a Critical approach to scripture. Any student following Moulton's example would not have thrown out the standard doctrines en bloc, but neither would he have looked to them as the necessary appropriate basis of right believing.

Frederic Platt was Tutor from 1905. He did not comment in his published works on the destiny of man, but did write about the relationship of human sin to the presence of God in the lives of men. He saw sin as conditioning God's immanence, resisting, restraining and impairing it. Mediation in some form was essential, as reconciliation with God must precede union with God.³⁰ However, for the unforgiven sinner God did not need to be sought from afar as a Divine Absentee.³¹ He is still immanent in human nature as the Antagonist of sin. Platt thus upheld the need for conversion in some sense but Wesley saw the permanent Divine immanence as belonging to Christian believers only.³² Whilst Platt wrote little relevant material from which to form a judgment, it does seem as if he was less than faithful to the standard doctrines in his beliefs. We know through an article in the London Quarterly Review³³ that he supported Maldwyn Hughes (referred

to in the next chapter, under Wesley House, Cambridge) who had a clear liberal theological stance, and this may well indicate his own sympathies.

Charles Bedale replaced Frederic Platt in 1910, but did not leave any written indication as to his views on hell and judgment. The same cannot be said of George Jackson, who in 1913 was the last tutor to join the college before its temporary closure for most of the duration of the war. Like his colleague Moulton, his doctrine was partly 'standard', partly liberal. Unlike his colleague he was the subject of an official investigation over an accusation of heresy by certain Wesleyan members. The heresy accusation was not about his doctrines in the area of hell and judgment and the need for conversion, but about what was perceived to be the more basic area of his acceptance of biblical criticism. Considerable opposition from Wesleyan Methodists arose in 1913 at his appointment on the evidence of the content of his Fernley lecture of the preceding year³⁴. The label applied to Jackson by his opponents was that of 'Modernist'.³⁵ 'A few well-meaning (what disasters have found cover under that adjective) ministers and laymen wrote to the Methodist Press, warning the Church of the danger of appointing such a man on the staff of a college for the training of candidates for the ministry. Feeling ran high and though the ultimate result was an overwhelming vote of confidence in the "heretic", the experience had much to do with his oft-quoted statement in later years that Didsbury was the least happy chapter in his life ... I doubt if a year passed without his being assailed by the faithful few, who felt that the ark of the Lord was in jeopardy in his hands'³⁶.

Jackson's 'Modernism' is illustrated in his The Preacher and the Modern Mind: 'perhaps the word', he writes, 'which best describes the

Church's duty in the present crisis is neither resistance nor acceptance, but rather readjustment. We are called to minister to a distressed faith, to the perplexity which is created by new knowledge'³⁷ .

He fully agreed with P. T. Forsyth's opinion that 'The old orthodoxy laid on men's believing power more than it could carry; we must "reduce the burden"³⁸ . Furthermore he believed that all then present doctrinal tenets should be replaced by the simple statement, 'I believe in God through Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord and Saviour'³⁹ .

His agnosticism derived from the uncertainty he claimed for our knowledge. Whereas Wesley was happy to rely on biblical revelation for evidence as to the doctrine and destiny of man, Jackson was uncertain how man came to be a sinner saying that this was the realm of science, not of the Book of Genesis. He was also uncertain as to what would happen at death and judgment, who would be saved and who lost, saying, 'when they speak as if a chart of the unseen world were unrolled before their eyes, we listen, if we listen at all, with a growing conviction that these are among the things which the Father hath set within His own authority'⁴⁰ .

While the standard doctrines were based on Wesley's conviction that the whole Bible consists of God's reliable revelation, Jackson's attitude to the book was as follows:- 'what sort of infallibility do you want - a little peddling infallibility that dots all its i's and crosses all its t's, and makes up its figures correctly, the infallibility of the gazetteer and the ready reckoner - is that what you want? Then you need not come to the Bible for it.' He pointed out that Scripture's only claim for itself is that it is 'profitable for teaching, for reproofs, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness.' About any more advanced action of infallibility, he said it was silent⁴¹ . In short, the modern point of view implied for Jackson the abandonment of the older

views of both biblical inspiration and infallibility, and biblical authority where this was understood to derive from traditional author-

⁴²ship . He saw himself as espousing 'a spirit of cautious liberalism, neither recklessly abandoning the old because it is old, nor yet fearfully rejecting the new because it is new; keeping always an open mind ...' .

⁴³Hence for himself the standard doctrines were believed and preached, but with a difference of place, a difference of proportion, a difference of emphasis. ⁴⁴

He saw the danger in too much change in the liberal direction and at one point asked the question, 'Are we not, in a single word, coming perilously near making the experiment of how much religion is possible, and how much Christianity ⁴⁵ is possible without God?' .

In the area of hell and judgment, Jackson was relatively orthodox in asserting the existence of both, but he disagreed with Wesley about their character. He criticised modernism in so far as it typically involved the removal of fear of the judgment of God and warned against the view that was becoming prevalent, that sin was hurtful to man rather than hateful to God. He believed that the common view of God as having an indulgent and infinite good nature was wrong, and warned that 'To Christ and to all His Apostles the wrath of God is as real, as certain as the love of God'. He felt that this message had been largely ignored because of previous crude associated imagery, but ⁴⁶should now be very definitely reinstated. He taught that it was impossible that a man should believe in Christ as the Revealer of God and yet believe that there is nothing in God to fear, showing that, 'It was He who bade His disciples, "Be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell." It was He who declared concerning one of the Twelve that it were better for him that

he had never been born ...'.

Jackson maintained that Jesus was the judge of all men and that
 the judgment was inescapable.⁴⁸ For the rejecter of Christ there was
 no 'second chance' in the life to come, for God could only win men by
 His love, and if the latter failed on earth there was no reason to
 suppose it could be successful thereafter.⁴⁹ Some people would defi-
 nitely be lost at the judgment, for Christ spoke of an eternal sin for
 which there could never be forgiveness.⁵⁰ (this sin being that of fail-
 ing to ask Christ for pardon). For those who were to be lost he re-
 fused to say whether or not the future retribution was to consist of
 everlasting punishment, and he found conflicting aspects to Christ's
 teaching about this. He also refused to speculate over the fate of
 those who have not heard the Gospel saying that, 'When Paul thinks
 about the judgment-seat of Christ, it is not to remind himself that
 all men will one day stand there, and to wonder what shall befall
 them, but to remember that he himself will be there, and to pray that
 at the last he may be found faithful. And if we ask him, "What will
 God do with the heathen that die in the darkness?", I think he will
 bid us rather ask each man himself this question, "What will God do
 with me, if, when my lamp is lit, I leave my brother man to wander
 friendless in the night."⁵¹ But while remaining agnostic over par-
 ticular theories of future punishment, Jackson desired to 'claim for
 the solemn fact of retribution a place in our minds akin to that which
 it held in the teaching of our Lord'.⁵² He warned that in the eyes of
 God there was no vast middle class of people in whose lives sometimes
 good and sometimes evil seems to rule and summed up the destiny of
 those suffering retribution as separation from God, whilst 'our desti-
 ny is in our own hands. God damns no man. If we are lost we are
 suicides'.⁵³

Jackson was unorthodox in his views of the Atonement, about the way in which the believer escapes the wrath of God. He denied the Wesleyan doctrinal standards, saying that the once-familiar explanations of the Atonement contained crude analogies drawn from the police court, and even from the pawnshop. It was not simply that they had been banned by better exegesis, but also that a keener moral sense had declared them inadequate and worse. 'Conscience is wholly within its rights in maintaining that no explanation of Christ's saving works is tenable which is unworthy of the Father whom He has revealed ... as our manners and morals have become more humane, it has become impossible to enthrone tyranny in heaven ... They (these former explanations) were not driven off the field by a battery of proof texts, they were simply killed off by a change of moral climate.'⁵⁴ Thus Jackson condemned Wesley's view of the Atonement as immoral and wrong in the light of then modern insight.

Although Jackson was unorthodox in his view of the Atonement and refused to go into detail about retributory punishment, because he believed that the latter was a reality for some, he also believed in the need for conversion. He maintained that salvation was God's gift,⁵⁵ but that it had to be taken by men and made their own. For those who took the gift, the future life would consist of a state in which the whole human nature would spring into a new vividness of activity. 'We carry with us into the next world capacity as well as character, and we may trust the great Overseer to see that it does not go unused. The training in school, the university, or in commerce - it was not wasted; it was all part of the preparation for the larger and nobler service of eternity. If it were not so He would have told us.'⁵⁶

In George Jackson we see thus a general framework concerning the destiny of man which is in line with the teaching of Wesley, but a

liberal view about how and to whom retributive punishment is due. His view of the Atonement was at variance with the doctrinal standards as well. Jackson's was the last appointment at Didsbury before World War I, and in many ways it was a crucial one in the doctrinal teaching to which the students there were exposed. Before the date of his appointment the main teaching staff was generally in broad agreement with the Wesleyan doctrinal standards; with his appointment there was much more of a balance between conservative and liberal positions. After the War, as will be shown, not only did Jackson remain, but was to be accompanied by other staff of an even more advanced liberal point of view. Thus even in the few years 1907 -1915 at Didsbury a clear shift in the doctrinal viewpoint can be plotted with the changes in staff, and whereas it could reasonably be assumed that a student entering the college in 1907 would have been encouraged in a conservative doctrinal position, by 1915 this was no longer necessarily the case.

Richmond College had four main tutors in residence in 1907. Of these one, J. A. Vanes, who was responsible for New Testament language and literature, and philosophy from 1904 - 1910, published no books or articles in the Methodist theological journals and his theological position cannot therefore be discerned. Two of the others published little evidence, but from what there is available it seems that they had conflicting points of view.

George Fletcher was College Governor from 1891 - 1909. He was thus well established in his overall pastoral charge by 1907. It seems remarkable that in eighteen years of Governorship he should publish only one book, a manual on preaching. This work does, however, indicate a practical approach to evangelistic preaching which is very much in tune with the mind of Wesley. Fletcher saw very clearly the need that people should be converted. He thought the purpose of

evangelistic preaching was three-fold. Firstly, it was to awaken interest in the message of the Gospel and a sense of its importance; to produce conviction of sin and of the need of salvation from it; and the assurance of the reality and completeness of the salvation offered in Christ. Secondly, it was to lead awakened and convinced persons to decision; the decision to repent and to receive Christ. Thirdly, it was to bring them on to an intelligent faith in Christ, with the sure result of conscious peace with God.

In considering some of the ways in which men might be persuaded to see the importance of these teachings in their lives, Fletcher showed his own doctrinal emphases. He wrote that some people, especially the young, would be attracted by the love of God as revealed in Christ and would quickly feel and respond to the power of His gracious pleading. Some would respond because they feel the need of regeneration, and are ready for the Gospel message that this latter is not only necessary but immediately possible by the power of the Holy Spirit. Fletcher gave much more emphasis, however, to those preaching the seriousness of sin, both in its present wrongness and future penalty. In terms of the present wrongness he asserted that some persons would be impressed by the unreasonableness and wrong of sin as disloyalty to God and to the law of righteousness, through the awakened witness of their consciences, and consequent perception of the reasonableness and obligation of loving God, and the excellence and beauty and obligation of righteousness. He placed his greatest emphasis on the fact that 'Some persons need to be alarmed by a view of the sure results of sin; results which are sure because of the righteous government of God.' Whilst he believed that fear by itself would lead no-one to Christ, Fletcher stressed that fear was sometimes necessary to secure consideration of Christ's claims on our thought and trust.

In this he fitted in well with Wesley's already-cited rule that the only condition required of a Methodist was a desire to flee from the wrath to come.

In outlining the approach necessary to inculcate an appreciation of the wrath to come, Fletcher outlines a number of doctrinal tenets which are reflections of the biblical witness as expounded by Wesley. Thus 'we must show what sin is, viz., alienation of heart from God, to whom our love and loyalty are due; and the conscious refusal or ignoring of His will, or disobedience to His law. We must aim at bringing the fact of sin home to the conscience of each individual, so that each man shall realise, "I then am a sinner."'. Furthermore, 'we must show, too, what the consequences of sin are, as declared in the Bible, confirmed and illustrated in Nature and in History. As in Gal. vi. 7-9: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked", etc. The penalty of sin in its final working out is shrouded in impenetrable gloom; but here and now we see that "the wages of sin is death"; spiritual death in separation from God; physical and moral and social death also in the case of particular kinds of sin. One of the great lessons of modern scientific teaching is the inseparable connection of transgression and penalty'. Whilst Fletcher does not comment explicitly on issues surrounding the doctrine of hell, all that he does assert in connection with judgment and the need for conversion is in line with the doctrinal standards of the Wesleyan Methodist Church by which he was bound.

These attitudes are not reflected in the work of Alfred S. Geden who was tutor at Richmond from 1891 - 1915. From 1904 onwards he was responsible for teaching Old Testament Language and Literature, and Classics. It is Geden's obituary in the college magazine that, 'on
58
great issues he never found it easy to speak with decision'. Howev-

er it appears from his works as if he did decide to hold views which were out of line with Wesley's standards. At the root of his convictions seems to have been his view of the inspiration of scripture, which was different from the traditional doctrine of verbal inspiration whereby it had been asserted that every word was present in the Bible under the direct guidance of the Holy Ghost. Geden did not accept the Bible as the basis for a revealed faith as Wesley had, and he believed that although it was possible to describe the scriptures as in some way 'inspired', this did not imply immunity from error in form, language, statement, or even belief (on the basis that language was but the expression of belief).⁵⁹ He held that those who were 'moved by the Holy Ghost' were not so moved as to have at their disposal accurate and complete knowledge of every subject, to be incapable of misunderstanding or mistake, or to have their natural faculties of reason and observation superseded by a power not their own. He asserted that any description of the biblical authors as 'inspired' did not imply ability to convey that truth or their conception of it in language or a form immune from accident, imperfection, or the natural infirmities of human speech and thought. His positive assertion that the essence of real inspiration was a form cast by human hand but 'wedded to' Divine thought was very different from Wesley's basis for the doctrinal standards.

Geden denied explicitly the existence of the wrath of God, and this led him to underrate the seriousness of sin, by comparison with both Fletcher and the doctrinal standards. It also led him to deny the standards' teaching on the Atonement. His attitude was that 'the fundamental, "basal" fact is ... that it is not because God is "angry", that reconciliation must be accomplished, if the world is to be at peace'.⁶⁰ God did not need to be urgently entreated, or propi-

tiated by gift or sacrifice, before He would put away His wrath and regard his creature man with complacency. He dismissed doctrines concerning and deriving from the positive idea of the wrath of God as, 'admittedly part of an earlier phase of religious thought or fancy ... (now) passed away with a clearer, more fruitful understanding of the nature both of God and man.'⁶² In saying this he also dismissed the basic essential of Wesley's thought as to what it was to be a Methodist.

As for the Atonement, Geden's doctrine was that each sin was followed by a penalty, but that that penalty was simply the experience (presumably bad) of the sin. The penalty of sin was inescapable as cause and effect, and no deliverance from the penalty was effected by the Atonement. When Christ 'bore our sin in his own body on the cross', it was 'not that we should have nothing to bear, but that we might be able to bear and overcome it.' This was a triumphal possibility because the sin-bearing was shared by Christ on the Cross.⁶³ Geden did not speculate as to whether this was due to the power of Christ's deed by itself or to the inspiration felt by those observing or comprehending his act. In any case none of his doctrine was in any way a constituent part of the doctrinal standards. He believed Christianity to be a superior faith to all others, but stopped short of labelling it 'unique'.⁶⁴

Alongside Vanes, Fletcher and Geden worked W. T. Davison, who was a comparative theological heavyweight in terms of the volume of his publications. Davison had been tutor for Classics and Biblical Literature from 1883-91, and he had returned in 1905 to be tutor in theology, being promoted to the new post of Principal in 1910. Davison was the subject of a heresy hunt, in common with Jackson of Didsbury. He was investigated officially, after complaints had been made that he

was not sufficiently critical of the findings of the then modern biblical scholarship, by a special committee of the Theological Institution.⁶⁵ Davison was willing to use the findings of higher criticism without apprehension,⁶⁶ and accepted the Darwinian theory of evolution⁶⁷, but he was by no means as liberal in his doctrinal conclusions about hell and the Atonement as, say, his colleague Geden. The investigating committee found that Davison had discriminated wisely between truth and error in current theories, and that he had thereby provided an antidote against such criticism as undermined the authority of the Old Testament as Divine revelation⁶⁸.

Unlike Geden, Davison was very far from denying the affront of sin to God. An excellent summary of his view on the doctrines of hell and judgment is contained in his essay on Dante⁶⁹: 'The doctrine of hell has fallen altogether out of many modern creeds. It will always disappear when the doctrine of sin is feebly held and faintly taught. Belief in hell will not fall out - rather it will be, and ought to be vehemently cast out when it is handled, as, alas! it has been in Christian history, so as to make Him who sits on the great white throne appear more like a fiend than a Father. The hell-fire preacher of a hundred years ago would not be listened to today. But that which lay at the heart of his extravagant and sometimes revolting denunciations can never be made to disappear from the world of realities so long as God is light and man loves darkness rather than light because his deeds are evil. Retribution is inevitable. It is not the result of arbitrary decree on the part of a capricious Deity; it is not a dogma of Councils or a fiction of fanatical visionaries. It is the other side of sin, haunting its footsteps always, unescapable as a shadow in the sunlight.' Davison rejected some of what he saw as over-literalist details concerning hell and judgment, but as to their

basic reality he was firmly in agreement with the doctrinal standards.

Davison saw the attempts of his generation to avoid belief in hell and judgment as springing from an insufficient sense of the evil of sin and the significance of retribution. He rejected the alternative belief in universalism as not doing justice to the free will of man, and he rejected annihilationism as giving up immortality. He was, however, careful to emphasise that those who had not heard the Gospel could be fairly judged by God according to their hearts, rather than consigned 'en-bloc' to hell: only the wilfully and finally impenitent would be condemned. He was careful to point out the dichotomy contained in the New Testament witness between eternal punishment on the one hand and the complete triumph of Christ and righteousness on the other.

⁷⁰ 'Man desires that all should be saved', he said, 'and is disposed to quarrel with any revelation which does not promise this consummation, so devoutly to be wished. He has from time to time, and especially in our own generation, endeavoured to wrest the language of Scripture to make it mean what he thinks it ought to mean ...'

⁷¹ .

Although Davison accepted biblical criticism, he was by no means extreme in his view of its results. In an advertisement for his book, The Praises of Israel,⁷² Professor J. S. Banks says, 'The critical school, so-called, mutilates the Book of Psalms beyond recognition. Dr. Davison's Introduction, the result of wide reading and much independent research, provides us with ample means of defence.' Perhaps this firm belief in scripture is his reason for fidelity to the scriptural doctrines of the Wesleyan Standards. Davison was happy to label the theological method of R. J. Campbell as 'fundamentally vicious, since the basis of his whole doctrine is not religious but philosophical'⁷³ and as well as this specific attitude to the 'New

Theology', he was convinced that similar attempts to 'modernize' Christianity placed in jeopardy the very existence of Christianity as a religion.⁷⁴ He posed this question to those he saw as 'liberals': 'Is Christianity regarded as a final faith, itself the absolute religion, or is it resolved into one remarkable, but not ultimate stage in the long history of religions, so that those who do in a real sense believe in Jesus the Christ may also without inconsistency "look for another"?'⁷⁵ .

Davison clearly supported the penal substitutionary theory of the atonement: 'That punishment which law and conscience declare that man deserved, need no longer be inflicted, where God Himself, in our nature, has born the suffering, vindicated law and rendered in a sacrifice of love that homage to righteousness which man could never render for himself.'⁷⁶ Thus in the matter of the doctrines of hell and judgment and in the closely related areas of doctrines of biblical inspiration and the atonement, Davison was substantially in agreement with the doctrinal standards of Wesleyan Methodism. If it was true that influence on college life was in some sense proportionate to the volume of his writings, his conservative theological influence must have been strongly felt at Richmond, notwithstanding the accusations against him of 'heresy'.

In 1909 Thomas H. Barratt replaced George Fletcher as House Governor at Richmond. He has left no theological writings relevant to this thesis. In 1910 Harry Bisseker replaced J. A. Vanes for teaching New Testament Language and Literature and Philosophy. He wrote mainly about the social implications of the Christian Gospel,⁷⁷ and upheld the teaching of the parable of the sheep and the goats in declaring that, 'Those who are welcomed by Him at the judgment are the people who have fed the hungry, given drink to the thirsty, taken in the

stranger, clothed the naked, and visited the sick and imprisoned. Those who are condemned are the people who have neglected these duties.'⁷⁸ However this truth was not expressed in terms of a theological framework as was the case with Davison, and it is difficult to assess his thoughts in detail on the relevant doctrines. Bisseker⁷⁹ wholeheartedly supported the work of the Student Christian Movement, and this may indicate a much more liberal stance generally than might be suggested by the single example quoted above.

As with Didsbury College, Richmond therefore underwent a change in theological climate during the years 1907-15; the principal staff changes were the loss of George Fletcher and the coming of Harry Bisseker. A liberal doctrinal approach to hell, judgment and the need for conversion would have been more likely to have been fostered within the college towards the end of the period than at the beginning.

Headingley College at Leeds enjoyed the services of only four different main tutors during the years 1907 to 1918. T. Hardwick Mawson, who was Governor from 1904-16 published no book or articles that have been traced. George G. Findlay was tutor for Biblical Literature and Classics from 1881 - 1916 and John Shaw Banks was Theological Tutor from 1880 - 1910, being replaced in that year by W. J. Moulton. The theological teaching of Biblical Studies was thus stable during the period, any change at the college resulting from the staff change which took place in 1910 in the area of Theology.

G. G. Findlay was a constant conservative influence on the Headingley students from 1907 until the college closed during the First World War. His influence was exercised not only through his teaching but through the warmth and genuineness of his personality and actions. W. B. Brash said, 'He was not only a great scholar, but also a pains-



taking and inspiring teacher. The counsels he gave to the committee in times of discussion and difficulty were exceedingly valuable. Above all, saintliness of character gave an indefinable force to his personal influence. Unobtrusive, yet most affectionate, he lived with a fine sense of the presence of spiritual and eternal realities, and reverence for them marked every utterance and action of his life' .⁸⁰

Findlay had the same view as Wesley of the nature and revelatory purpose of Scripture. He believed that it was the inspired word of God and therefore that it was the standard of faith and duty for His Church. He assumed that the Bible should be the chief work of study and daily companion for every preacher and exhorted that it should be read with constant prayer and reverence, 'making our study of it a communion with the Spirit of truth and of Christ, who dwells in it'. He warned that without the profession of such regard for the word of God men should not be preachers at all, and maintained that no man should continue to be a preacher if he could not continue in this practice of devout obedience to the Bible's teaching.⁸¹

With Wesley and the Wesleyan doctrinal standards, Findlay placed a strong emphasis on the seriousness of sin and the consequent wrath of God. For him, the man who walked the earth a sinner against God became by the act and fact of his transgression a dead man. Whilst he lived in the body he was dead in the spirit. He understood God to be unceasingly at war with the sins of men and, describing the wrath of God towards sin, he said, 'God is love ... but then He is also a consuming fire. There is no anger so crushing as the anger of love, for there is none so just; no wrath to be feared like "the wrath of the Lamb." ... Within that infinite nature there is room for an absolute loathing and resentment towards sin.'⁸²

An essential aspect of the Christian faith, following from the

emphasis on the wrath of God, was for Findlay the future judgment of Christ, achieving a complete vindication of justice in the affairs of men. He maintained that every sin impinging in some way on the rest of mankind would be followed in due course by strict retribution at the hands of God. He mourned the passing of the widespread acceptance of the retributive justice of God, believing that in the past the fearless proclamation of this doctrine by Christ's ministers had had an incalculable effect for good in checking wrong personal behaviour and in setting standards for the judicial systems of Christian coun-

⁸³tries. For Findlay, the attitude of much of mankind was one of presumption in the face of the goodness of God. He saw many looking on God as a weak, easy-going Father, with whose laws they could trifle and on whose indulgence they could count indefinitely. 'They are making a frightful mistake,' he said, 'God is the Judge on whose sentence hangs our eternal destiny; the Judge in whose favour or displeasure we live every day. ... His wrath is hell; His smile is ⁸⁴heaven.'

Findlay believed the need for conversion to be crucial; for him the issues of personal salvation or perdition were real and serious ⁸⁵beyond expression. 'An unending future - heaven or hell - is wrapped up for each in the fateful choices of our ordinary days and commonplace occasions.' ⁸⁶He emphasised the horror of eternal punishment as completely unending and denied utterly any doctrine that ⁸⁷reprobate persons might be annihilated after judgment. He described the wrath of God as 'on the way, like a tide that rises till it reaches its full height' ⁸⁸. In contrast he was glad to be able to describe the future state of the righteous: 'The house of the Father of Jesus! the world where He is at home, where He sits on the throne, where everything is to His mind ... It is enough to know that heaven is the

world where God's will is done, and where Jesus Christ is perfectly beloved and honoured. Everything that is exalted, beautiful, enchanting to the Christian heart is implied in this. The promise leaves us nothing to desire.'⁸⁹ The believer was to enjoy this destiny through bodily resurrection.

The atoning work of Christ, the basis on which a man might choose a future of blessing rather than perdition, was also described by Findlay in terms which were in accord with the Wesleyan doctrinal standards. He approved of the ideas of penal substitution⁹⁰ and vicarious sacrifice⁹¹ and would not accept the views of critics who said 'in the name of an earnest and scrupulous virtue, that vicarious atonement is unjust, that it destroys personal responsibility and is radically immoral and indeed impossible, that in fact the just must not and cannot suffer for the unjust'.

This conservative view of the doctrine surrounding hell and judgment and the need for conversion dominated Biblical Studies at Headingley, and until 1910 it was closely mirrored in the area of Theology. John Shaw Banks is introduced in The Story of Our Colleges as 'a man of massive learning, one who wrestled not merely with a few books, but with libraries'⁹². He left a large amount of published theological literature which supported doctrinally the views of Wesley. His Manual of Theology was a significant influence upon two generations of students.

Banks held Scripture to be God's inspired revelation. He did not agree with the older doctrines of verbal inspiration, but nor did he accept the then current more modernistic theories. He wrote that the inspiration of Scripture must not be confounded with that of ordinary Christians, still less with 'inspiration' of writers in general. He denied that it was possible to distinguish between an inspired writer

and inspired writings, as the former can only be known through the latter. He felt that the modern doctrinal understanding of the nature of Scripture dwelled far too exclusively on the human factors in their production, to the exclusion of the divine. .⁹³

With his colleague Findlay, Banks maintained the gravity of human sin, based on the revelation of Scripture: 'In nothing is the superiority of Scripture teaching .. better seen than in its doctrine of sin. Sin is viewed as a moral offence against God. The law of which it is a violation is God's law, and that law is the expression of His nature and will. ... Every transgression of that law is a sin against God'.⁹⁴ He emphasised that the penalty which follows guilt is death,⁹⁵ both physical and spiritual, citing Romans 5:12 as his authority. Man was designed originally for physical immortality. As physical death is the separation of soul from body, so spiritual death is the separation of the soul from God. This separation is the opposite of the state of divine fellowship for which man was made, and which constitutes eternal life. The perpetration of this state of separation is eternal death.⁹⁶

For those who at physical death were to face God's penalty for sin, Banks rejected both any doctrine that they might be saved anyhow through God's love and any doctrine that they might have a second chance of response during a period of probation after death. He believed that these attitudes were either contrary to, or not taught in, Scripture. In his essay Words on Immortality, he also argued extensively against the annihilationist position. He supported clearly the doctrine of eternal punishment: 'Hell (gehenna), hell fire, eternal fire, the undying worm, the unquenchable fire,' are equivalent and explain one another. They must also be equivalent to and explain "eternal punishment" in Matt.25. The "worm and fire" are figurative,

but they must point to dreadful realities. It is remarkable that these sayings are Christ's, and are found in the synoptic Gospels, one of them in the Sermon on the Mount'.⁹⁷ In one area only Findlay denied Wesley's position: 'It is often alleged that the ordinary doctrine implies that the majority of mankind will be lost, but it is not so. ... The descriptions of judgment in the full sense in the New Testament apply only to those possessed of the full light of revelation. The degrees of responsibility and guilt must be very great and such as divine knowledge alone can discriminate'.⁹⁸ Wesley had clearly taught that by far the greater part of the population even of England was then destined for hell.

Banks explicitly expounded the Biblical doctrine of the destiny of the believer after death.⁹⁹ He supported the both traditional doctrines of vicarious sacrifice and penal substitution, and opposed decisively more modern, liberal theories including those of such writers as F. D. Maurice.¹⁰⁰ He placed great emphasis on the place of the Cross in propitiating the wrath of God, and to those who favoured Aberlardian theories whilst specifically rejecting propitiation, he answered, 'No one could die for another merely to prove his love. He must render some great service, confer some great benefit, effect some great deliverance, and so show love ... Forgiveness through atonement is a far greater expression of love than forgiveness without atonement.'¹⁰¹ By and large Banks could be described as a custodian of the Wesleyan doctrinal standards.

This could in no sense be said of W. J. Moulton, who in 1910 took up the chair of Theology on the retirement of Banks. Moulton's general view of Christianity was not that it was the faith which provided the only way to reconciliation with God; rather he believed that it had evolved from other religions whose imperfect teachings it

combined into an harmonious whole, thereby becoming the highest and final form of religion. Again, he did not see the challenge of Christianity as opposed to the world, but rather saw it as providing for life an extra ingredient, on top of education, learning from the experience of society, and inherited beliefs. ¹⁰² The Bible was, for him, 'in connexion' with God's historical revelation which culminated in Christ. It showed the growth of the life of Christ and the interpretation thereof, though only in a broad sense due to the fallibility ¹⁰³ of the apostles in passing on what Christ spoke .

Moulton admitted that Christ taught that some people may finally shut themselves out of His Kingdom, but he denied that it was possible empirically to determine who those might be by enquiries about their ¹⁰⁴ faith . He denied that any man could be culpable in respect of his ¹⁰⁵ sinful nature . The Spirit of God, he believed, indwelt every man from the beginning, working through natural methods of thought and action. Conversion was, if it occurred in an individual, the process by which a man decided to accept from God the gracious gift of reconciliation with Himself. ¹⁰⁶ Moulton saw the distinctive work of Christ not in Atonement, but in the fact that He had, as God, visited ¹⁰⁷ mankind. Moulton was repelled by any theory of the Atonement based on penal substitution, saying that punishment could never be transferred, and even if it could it would be morally wrong to do so. He believed that the way in which Christ bore the consequences of human sin was by way of sympathy, because with his purer moral insight he felt more keenly the degradation of his friends as they experienced the consequences of sin in earthly life. Whilst others might ostracise the wrong-doer, Christ cleaved to him and hence fully identified with him, by sharing human life to the bitter end. The only special place of the Cross was that it marked the bitter end of a life fully identified

with that of mankind.

The result of Moulton's doctrine was that he did not believe it was necessary for an individual consciously to 'accept' Christ as a condition of favourable Divine consideration after death. He cited the parable of the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew xxv. as showing that it is possible to serve Christ whilst being unconscious of the fact. He also believed it plain that there were many different possible grades of acceptance of Christ. 'When it is done consciously and fully there follows the personal joy and peace and sense of fellowship which He wants us all to have. But short of that He seems to me to teach that the all-important thing is whether the set of the life is towards goodness or not.'

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Wesley would have simply denounced this as a doctrine of works - righteousness outside the scope of the Christian faith. Again Moulton's view that men could be God's sons unwittingly, simply because 'through His grace these have been born within them qualities which are like His'

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was completely against Wesley, and hence the Wesleyan doctrinal standards which held that salvation comes by grace, through faith. His liberal viewpoint was completed with the doctrine that there would be progress in the life to come for all those who in the earthly life display any sign of real goodness at all.

It can be seen that Moulton's beliefs concerning scripture, sin, atonement and the future life were as a complete package contrary to the Wesleyan doctrinal standards. This was in complete contrast with his predecessor at Headingley, J. S. Banks, and his appointment in 1910 meant that the college was transformed from a place in which conservative doctrinal standards were the norm to one in which the growing liberalism was equally accepted. Moulton did not write nearly as extensively as Banks had done, but his presence and the result of

overall change of emphasis in the life of the college must have been felt very clearly.

The newest of the four branches of the Wesleyan Methodist Theological Institution, at Handsworth, was staffed by four main tutors, three of whom were present for the whole of the period up until the First World War; there being one staff change in 1910. Silvester Whitehead was Governor from 1905-10. Whitehead was a former missionary to China, and his single published work shows his view of the uniqueness of Christianity and of the destiny of the unsaved and the saved. He described the need to establish Christianity over against the 'palpable darkness' of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. The condition of the Chinese adherents to these religions was that of being 'without God and therefore without hope' and was in contrast to the state of a particular convert to Christianity who died with a firm belief and trust in Christ and therefore went to be with Him. Whitehead's position of overall responsibility at Handsworth was taken on his retirement in 1910, by J. G. Tasker, who had been tutor in Theology from 1904. Neither of his published books determines his understanding of hell and the Atonement. In an article in the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, however, he asserts that R. J. Campbell, in his definition of the 'New Theology', 'depreciates the Scriptures to an extent which may be measured by the advice deliberately given, "Never mind what the Bible says about this or that if you are in search for truth, but trust the voice of God within you". The practical effect of this sweeping and reckless negation ...'. Although the evidence is not comprehensive, it seems reasonable to assert that throughout the period those in overall charge at Handsworth were sympathetic with a conservative doctrinal viewpoint.

With the promotion of Tasker to Principal in 1910, he was re-

placed as Theological tutor by Frederic Platt who transferred from Didsbury College. As already noted, Platt did not leave many publications but seems to have been less than faithful to the standard Wesleyan doctrines.

W. West Holdsworth was responsible for teaching New Testament Language and Literature. He did not believe that the Christian faith was the unique medium of committed response to Christ, but rather that Christ's mediatorial worth was effective for men of all faiths living at all times both before and after His ministry. In general he saw these people as 'winning their way to God' rather than being justified by faith¹¹⁴ although he was prepared to use the latter term in connection with those he saw as members of the Christian faith.¹¹⁵ Holdsworth did not believe in any adverse judgment by God, and in commenting on John 3:18 he stated, 'There is no need for the Lord of love to pronounce sentence; man's failure is itself his sentence'. He saw the Christian experience of forgiveness and deliverance as starting with an act of surrender of the individual will, resulting in union with God through Christ. He did not mention the work of Christ on the Cross as relevant to this salvation. Whilst he was not a prolific writer, it is obvious that Whitehead was a clear influence at Handsworth mitigating against the acceptance of the Wesleyan doctrinal standards.

Of all the staff at Handsworth the last to be mentioned, W. F. Lofthouse, who taught Old Testament Language and Literature, published by far the most material, and was a liberal. A later Methodist theologian has labelled him 'perhaps the greatest Methodist scholar of his time'.¹¹⁶ Lofthouse's acceptance of Bible Criticism meant that he could not accept the traditional doctrine of verbal inspiration of Scripture - errors in the text meant that this could not be so.¹¹⁷

His assertion that the Bible was inspired was based not upon a theory of the working of the Holy Spirit in the process of its production, but upon the evidence in the finished result of the presence of the five qualities of sincerity, directness, morality, purity and piety. Not more than three of these qualities were said to be present in most literatures and in nowhere but the Bible were all five to be found together ¹¹⁸. Lofthouse believed that the Bible contained the revelation of God, but would not go so far as to say that it was itself ¹¹⁹ revelation.

The theory of Evolution constituted for Lofthouse a fatal complication for the doctrine of original sin which was based on the beginning chapters of Genesis. ¹²⁰ He was, however, clearly concerned not to make light of present sin, emphasising the seriousness of the fact that all people are offenders. 'On this profounder view, sin is something from which we all need redemption; the judge on the bench may be as liable to the dread sentence "depart ye" as the criminal in the dock; ... Sin has its seat, as Paul says, in the "flesh"; in the egoistic part of ourselves; and those who are "in the flesh" cannot please God'. ¹²¹ Lofthouse thought that the deliberately and finally impenitent ¹²² deserve the wrath of God but he did not leave any indication of his beliefs as to the possible nature of the future life. That there was a future judgment he was clear. 'He is, as we all know, the Judge, before whose judgment-seat we must all appear, to be judged for the deeds done in the body - to be judged according to our works; even for our lightest words. And when sinners appear ¹²³ before the Eternal Judge, what can He do but punish them?' He saw no suggestion in the New Testament that God's forgiveness and salvation were for all; 'The New Testament knows nothing of "le bon Dieu", who must let us off the punishment of our sins when we ask Him, be-

cause it is His nature, His *métier* so to do. A change in man is always necessary before there can be a change ... There must be repentance and faith; forgiveness is for those who ask for it in the name of Christ. If fatherhood means forgiveness, God is only the Father of those who ask to be forgiven'.¹²⁴

Although Lofthouse asserted the need for repentance and faith, in line with Wesley, he did not agree with Wesley's doctrine of the Atonement. He shrank from any theory which pictured the justice of God, in its demand for the punishment of the sinner, appeased only by the sufferings and blood-shedding and death of Jesus.¹²⁵ He believed that Biblical verses relating to the effectiveness of the blood of Jesus referred not to the death of Jesus as a propitiatory sacrifice, but to the general, effective, ministry of Jesus in contrast to that of John the Baptist whose ministry was typified by water (as against blood).¹²⁶ Again, in the area of punishment, he believed that 'to say that God spares our punishment because Jesus pleads for us is to find in God, not mercy, but its opposite. If punishment would make us no better, (and we know that God would not inflict it otherwise), to withhold it would make us worse. And how could Divine mercy contemplate that?'¹²⁷

Lofthouse's own theory of the Atonement was based on an ethical rather than a traditional substitutionary theory. He saw the vital element in the self-surrender of Christ crucified as the demonstration of love which led Him to that great act.¹²⁸ The connection of the Cross with God's justice was that 'justice consists in carrying out a course of conduct which will have a certain effect on the mind of those who witness or experience it. That effect may be described as threefold - loathing or horror for sin; gratitude to the person who has delivered the sinner from his load and its consequences; and the

resolution to avoid evil course in the future.' Lofthouse believed the effectiveness of the Cross to be by the power of its influence on the mind of the person considering it. 'The appeal of the spectacle of another bearing the suffering which I have deserved or caused has always been powerful.'

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Whilst Lofthouse maintained a belief in judgment and the fact that not all would be saved, those beliefs were in the context of a view of Scripture and a view of the Atonement which were outside the scope of the doctrinal standards of his denomination. He was challenged on his view of the Atonement by the Wesley Bible Union, who criticised him for using orthodox language in an unorthodox way. When he said 'when they saw how His life ended, they said: "Christ has died for our sins upon the Cross"'. The official comment of the Union was that 'This is the orthodox language of Christendom when we say with awe and gratitude that "we are redeemed ... not with corruptible things, as silver and gold ... but with precious blood, even the blood of Christ". But Mr. Lofthouse does not mean this. He gives his own meaning a little lower down when he says:- "His agony in the garden, and His Death upon the Cross were the culmination of all the long life of obedience and love by which He made us see what God is like."'

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The verdict of the recent History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain is one of surprise that Lofthouse was able to get away with his theory so soon after another Wesleyan theologian, Dr. S. Lidgett, had been threatened with a doctrinal charge for his much less revolutionary but still liberal theory.

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The danger of teaching any theory of the Atonement which does not encompass penal or sacrificial aspects is that it can lead to a minimisation of the affront of sin to God in the mind of the recipient, even if this is not the case in the mind of the originator.

Thus by the time Handsworth College closed for the war in 1915, the theological influence of the main teaching staff had changed from the balance between conservative and liberal in 1907 to liberal domination. This can be summarized as consisting of the Universalism of Holdsworth, the Abelardian Atonement doctrine of Lofthouse, and the probable general liberal sympathies of Platt. Tasker as Principal was the only conservative influence, although no detailed published analysis of this is available. In this situation Handsworth may well, on the weight and quality of published evidence, have been that branch of the Wesleyan Methodist Theological Institution most likely to enjoin liberal doctrinal principles to its students at least in the general areas of hell and judgment and the need for conversion. As has been pointed out, however, each of the colleges underwent some swing in this direction with staff changes during the period, and at Headingley, Richmond and Didsbury conservative and liberal influences were both equally present by 1918.

All four branches of the Wesleyan Methodist Theological Institution closed during the First World War, either from 1915 or 1916. After the cessation of hostilities the three branches at Didsbury, Richmond and Handsworth re-opened as soon as possible, but that at Headingley did not do so until much later in 1930. In the meantime a new branch was inaugurated in Cambridge which admitted its first students in 1921.

Just as the period up to the war had been one of change in the colleges, so too was the period afterwards. A general comment on the effect of the war on the theological outlook of Methodism will be offered later under concluding remarks. Meanwhile the trends within the colleges continue to be assessed in terms of staff present, staff changes and an analysis of the published works of each one.

Didsbury college re-opened in September 1919. The Principal and Theological Tutor was W. J. Moulton who had been tutor in Theology at Headingley. The Resident Tutor was T. H. Barratt, who had held a similar post at Richmond. They were joined by G. Jackson who was to teach English and English Bible and who represented the only staff continuity at the college from the time before the war. J. Alexander Findlay was appointed as Classics tutor, not having previously held a main tutorial position.

The theological positions of Moulton, Barratt and Jackson have already been described under their respective previous posts. The Principalship and theological tutorship were now in the hands of a man whose beliefs concerning scripture, sin, atonement and the future life were as a complete package contrary to the Wesleyan doctrinal stand-

ards. This was in contrast to the previous Principal and Theological tutor, R. W. Moss, who had held a conservative position. Of Barratt's theological viewpoint, there is no published record.

Jackson was conservative in those aspects of his theology concerning the destiny of man, but liberal about how and to whom retributive punishment is carried out. His view of Atonement was also at variance with the doctrinal standards. Following the heresy accusations against him at the time of his initial appointment in 1913, a steady flow of public criticism of him was maintained after 1919 and witnessed primarily by published material in the Journal of the Wesley Bible Union. Typical of this was the article in June - July 1920 by The Rev'd. G. A. Bennetts which heavily criticised Jackson for an article which had appeared in the Manchester Guardian of February 2nd that year. Bennetts asserted that the Church had given up belief in the miracles of the Old Testament, such as contained in Exodus, 'because, to put it in a word, there is no sufficient evidence to guarantee them'. It stated that this part of the Bible was 'legendary' in character, and claimed for the author of the article 'a sane and moderate orthodoxy'. A quote from Bennetts' article illustrates the mood of opposition to Jackson among those Wesleyan members who thought that their doctrinal standards should continue to be adhered to in a straightforward way:-

I maintain that our Standards manifestly and everywhere affirm what Wesley stated in his Thoughts on Methodism, dated August 4th, 1786:- 'I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist in Europe or America. But I am afraid, lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power; and this undoubtedly will be the case, unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit, and

discipline with which they first set out.'

And what was their fundamental doctrine? THAT THE BIBLE IS THE WHOLE AND SOLE RULE BOTH OF CHRISTIAN FAITH AND PRACTICE'

In his lamentable article, Dr. Jackson says concerning the Miracles in the Old Testament, that 'in the Bible there are statements for which the evidence is good, or not so good, or not good at all'. Is the witness of Christ and His Apostles to the Old Testament to be set down as 'not good at all'? Yet their testimony to the Old Testament is such that, if Dr. Jackson is correct, it has deluded the Church throughout the centuries"

There was further criticism of Jackson in the Union in 1922, following his articles in the Manchester Guardian entitled, Old Testament Fiction, and Fact and Fiction in the Bible.¹ Further articles appeared in the same year criticising his view of the Atonement,² especially his liberal view of how and on whom retributive punishment would be exacted. The Wesley Bible Union considered the appointment of Jackson as not only pivotal in the history of Didsbury College, but for the whole of Wesleyan Methodism. Writing in their Journal in the same year the Rev'd. G. A. Bennetts connected the case of Jackson with a wholesale repudiation by Conference of the doctrinal standards. 'Since 1913 the sluice-gates have been opened, and a large amount of Modernist error has been promulgated from our pulpits and our literature. ... The tendency has been to substitute for our Standards the Conference interpretation of the Standards as the basis of our doctrines, taking the Resolutions on Unity of Doctrine passed in 1920 as the touchstone of orthodoxy, and referring to them as the test to doctrinal integrity. The Conference has no power to supersede the Standards by any interpretation of its own; for the Conference itself

is bound by the Standards, and any decision of the Conference which sanctions doctrines in manifest antagonism to the teachings of the Standards is a violation of our Deeds. The Conference is bound by law to administer our Trust Property in harmony with our Deeds. Further, it is an utterly absurd misuse of terms to call repudiation - interpretation.³ Whilst these and other statements of the Wesley Bible Union were in line with the Wesleyan doctrinal standards, the virulence of their attack on Jackson was in the end counter-productive, and their chief effect was to ensure that those who supported the conservative doctrinal position within Wesleyan Methodism were branded⁴ as fanatics.

In broad terms the new Classics tutor, J. A. Findlay, resembled Jackson in his doctrinal viewpoint, accepting the fact of some sense of adverse judgment for some, but being liberal in his interpretation of all the surrounding areas of doctrine. Being tutor at the college from 1918 to 1932, he would have had a steady influence upon the ethos of the institution. Findlay denied that the doctrine of the universal⁵ Fatherhood of God was true to the teaching of Jesus, meaning that some, by their behaviour or belief put themselves outside God's kingdom. He believed that the Cross involved judgment for those not responding to Christ⁶ and that the latter had taught that the soul in a man might die, that both soul and body might be destroyed in hell.⁷ He wrote that, 'we must steadily refuse to minimise the threatening character of some of the best attested words of Jesus' (i.e. those which were of a stern character).⁸ Gehenna, he taught, was a place for spiritual punishment, where existence would be characterised by the torment of belated remorse, like the 'wailing and gnashing of teeth'.⁹

Findlay did not, however, then proceed to apply this teaching

according to the doctrinal standards. Even in the passage in which he described the nature of hell, Findlay was in doubt as to whether anyone would ever go there. Whilst on the one hand he was happy to repeat Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount that not everyone who called Him Lord, Lord, would have a place in the Kingdom of Heaven,¹⁰ on the other he denied man's right to define the way in which Jesus brings salvation, stating boldly that 'God ... can save us in any way He chooses'.¹¹ In one work Findlay taught that through the Cross,¹² all men are reunited to God. 'By His Resurrection and Ascension He carried our lost humanity into the presence of God; He is now the Man in the Holy Trinity. ... the Resurrection is the first act of a drama which, once begun, must go on to its inevitable consummation [i. e. that all men rise to union with God]. What is complete in eternity is being worked out in time'.¹³ Elsewhere he described hell, in a way consistent with the latter tenet, as being not a removed place of punishment, but rather the inevitable reproduction in his environment of the darkness in a man's own soul.¹⁴ In discussing the teaching of St. Paul, Findlay agreed that before the Cross, a righteous God had not yet redeemed the sinfulness of mankind. In the Cross, however, salvation was made available for Jew and Gentile alike. Findlay acknowledged that no man could benefit from that salvation unless he made a response by a conscious act of his will; thus the consequences were very serious for those of his fellow-countrymen who failed to make that response.¹⁵ But, as has been pointed out above, he also maintained that God can save in whatever way He wants. Findlay denied that the reference in I Peter to redemption by the blood of Christ had any reference to propitiatory sacrifice. The idea, he said, was not that anything was offered to God, but that God offered Jesus to us.¹⁶ Hence he preferred to use the term 'expiation'

to describe the death of Christ, with the general meaning of that term being 'the removal of barriers ... which hinder communication with Him.'¹⁷

Findlay's personal doctrine of the Atonement was a unique psychological one which mirrored neither the Wesleyan doctrinal standards, nor the insights of his colleagues, judged from published evidence. It is hard to paraphrase it, so unique are some of the ideas. Findlay's own summary is as follows. To the man who wants to follow Jesus but cannot do so fully because of sin he says: 'We can listen to His words, and His words contain His Spirit; they have the life of God in them, and therefore are life-giving. They cleanse the soul of the man who treasures them in his memory. They are "the Truth", and the truth in process of time makes the man who receives it free, even though he cannot by his own efforts understand it. What more is needed? That the Spirit which possessed Jesus should enter into and possess His disciples, that they should be "born from above". This Spirit is released by the death of Jesus, but, before it can become theirs, they too must die and be born again. This death and rebirth come to the disciple through the death of Jesus. He loses his Lord, and the bottom drops out of his life, but in the darkness he begins at the same time to realise his own helplessness and to discover how closely all that makes life worth living has come to be bound up not only with Jesus, but with his fellow disciples. On Easter Sunday he rises again, and is ready for the impartation of the Spirit, by whom he is¹⁸ to live until Jesus comes again to take him to Himself' .

Overall, in his writing Findlay said less than Jackson about future retribution, which agreed with the Wesleyan standards, and more than Jackson about positive theories of Atonement, which disagreed with them. His viewpoint overall was thus at least as liberal as his

colleague who had suffered accusations of heresy, and his presence at Didsbury completed a staff team among whom, so far as can be ascertained, there was no-one who supported a conservative view of doctrine in the area of hell and judgment as expressed in the Wesleyan doctrinal standards.

The first staff change in the period came in 1924/5 when W. J. Moulton left. He was replaced as Principal by T. H. Barratt the Resident Tutor, but his post as Theological tutor was filled by J. Arundel Chapman. Chapman's doctrine was not the same as Moulton's, but neither was it a reflection of the Wesleyan doctrinal standards. In some aspects it could be said that he was somewhat more conservative than his predecessor. Whereas Moulton had believed that it was possible to be acceptable to God unwittingly, provided one's general tenor of life was towards the good, Chapman believed that it was necessary for everyone to be raised in their natures from a lower natural level to the higher, supernatural, one which marked the surrender of the individual to Christ. He believed that at the lower level there might be some element of good in human nature, that there might even be a sense of personal surrender through a genuine moral earnestness and leading to reform in habits and character, but that in the end such a surrender would bring no lasting peace to the individual. He described the lower level as 'the outer darkness', and held that this was in contrast to the Kingdom of God. Between the two there was indeed a deep gulf set, 'and it is God who delivers us from one and translates us into the other' .

Whereas Moulton had held that man was not culpable for his sin, Chapman viewed sin as 'immeasurably deeper' than was understood by other faiths. He saw the basic meaning of sin as being outside the Christian faith through the failure to accept the offer of all that

Christ is and has. Sin was therefore for him a crucial factor as to man's standing before God. Whereas Moulton had held that the essential aspect of Christ's work was not in Atonement but in the fact that God had visited and shown solidarity with mankind, Chapman believed in the Atonement as a necessary cure for sin. His view of the Atonement was not in line with Wesley's. He made it clear that as well as rejecting the traditional ransom theory of the Atonement, he also rejected any notion that the Cross was a vicarious sacrifice made effective through either the suffering of Jesus or through the shedding of His blood. These ideas were of the level of the Old Testament, which was 'short of the highest', and were 'distant, alien and

²¹ repelling'. As to the Reformation doctrine of penal substitution, he said, 'There is little need to criticise this theory. For most of us (even though we were brought up on it) it has become impossible. No one can bear the punishment of another. One may enter into the consequences of another's sins, help him in bearing them, but one cannot bear his punishment. Punishment is a necessary relationship between something that comes to a man in the way of suffering and the sin he has committed. That relationship can exist for no other person. So far as another person suffers, it is not punishment. Further, Luther's theory seems to show that man escapes from the ²² punishment of sin rather than the guilt and power of sin.'

Chapman had a basically Abelardian view of the Atonement, believing that the essential work of the Cross was in demonstrating the love of God. He was also clear, however, that any doctrine of how man is redeemed through the Cross must not only describe the power of the Cross to demonstrate, but also to effect what it seeks to do. Hence he believed that there were four important aspects to the doctrine. Firstly there was the dreadful reality of human sin and sec-

only on the Cross there was demonstrated the amazing offer of the love of God. Thirdly the Cross was effective because on it, 'something is made available to which man can turn. This is, perhaps the best way of expressing the truth which a former age expressed in the phrase, "Christ's finished work".' Fourthly there is the costliness²³ of the Cross to God and the fact that redemption is no easy thing.

Chapman saw conversion as the logical consequence of his doctrine of Atonement. Whereas Moulton had believed that conscious conversion was not necessary to salvation, Chapman saw it as an integral part of the process, consisting of a 'rich, fruitful surrender', which comes as the acceptance of the forgiveness of one's sins as the gateway into a full Christian life.²⁴ However, whilst Moulton, in spite of not seeing the necessity of a conscious conversion experience, believed that some individuals could end up in hell, Chapman believed that all would in the end be saved. Thus although some of Chapman's ideas were nearer the Wesleyan standards than Moulton's, Chapman was a clear Universalist. He believed that the love of God, powerfully and effectively demonstrated on the Cross, would not admit failure with respect²⁵ to any man, but would find within every soul some anchor for faith.

Chapman wrote about life beyond death, saying that the future life would be one of knowledge - of delightful and exalted studies and re-union with former friends and loved ones. Individuals would be engaged in acts of loving service based in small communities of differing characteristics, and all would join together, in holy rapture,²⁶ in the worship of God. He did not write about hell, presumably because he did not believe that anyone would go there, so that Chapman's appointment at Didsbury marked a further movement for the college in the direction of liberalism in the doctrinal areas of hell, judgment and the need for conversion.

Chapman was in turn replaced as Theology tutor at Didsbury in 1930 by Charles J. Wright, who then held the post beyond 1932. He resembled his predecessor in theological outlook. In one aspect only was he marginally nearer to the Wesleyan standards, but this was not reflected elsewhere. Wright accepted the possibility that all might not conceivably be saved. In one place he refused to speculate as to whether any would be lost in the end ²⁷, but in another he allowed for the annihilationist position. 'I do not believe that what has been called the "justice" of God has to be "satisfied" before He will forgive sinners', he wrote, 'The justice of God is intrinsic to life as God Himself has appointed it, and His love is intrinsic to His justice. No-one can escape the justice of God - except, perhaps, in complete extinction, which may be His final "judgment".' ²⁸

Wright was with Chapman in denying any theory of Atonement involving the ideas of vicarious sacrifice ²⁹ and penal substitution ³⁰. He emphasised too the serious nature of sin ³¹ and an Abelardian theory as the true basis of the Atonement. ³² Although he was nearer to the Wesleyan standards with his view of the possibility of annihilationism, in fact he did not reflect the standards in their teaching on hell, the Atonement and conversion. This arose from a very different view of Scripture to Wesley's. Whilst Wesley's direct comments on Scripture constituted an integral part of Wesleyan doctrine, Wright asserted, against this approach, that 'We do not now approach the Bible with the belief that coherent and systematic doctrines can be deducted from Biblical texts ... The Bible reflects a long history of developing religious experience. In seeking to reach our own theories we must frankly face this fact. We must be concerned primarily to understand what the several writers themselves meant, and not primarily make what they wrote concordant with theories which commend them-

selves to our minds.'

The final staff change to be considered was the coming to Didsbury of W. Bardsley Brash to teach English and English Bible in the place of G. Jackson. Brash wrote books mostly on the history of Methodism, and nowhere expounds his viewpoint on the doctrines of hell and judgment and the need for conversion. He makes some mention of the term 'hell'; talking about brutal selfishness, he speaks about the 'ethics of the bloodhound' and about the need to chain the hound in hell. The primary reference is, however, to the German nation at the outset of World War I rather than to an aspect of Christian doctrine.³⁴ Brash described Chapman as committed to the 'evangelical message' as 'life's noblest song',³⁵ and to G. G. Findlay as 'a great scholar, but also a painstaking and inspiring teacher' who 'lived with a fine sense of the presence of spiritual and eternal realities, and reverence for them marked every utterance and action of his life'.³⁶ It may fairly be inferred from this that Brash was at the very least reasonably sympathetic to the liberal theological viewpoint.

The analysis of the published material of the staff at Didsbury from 1918-32 indicates that there was no teacher willing to uphold the conservative view of doctrine as supported by certain members of the staff before the war. Whereas conservative and liberal viewpoints were equally represented at the closure of the college in 1915, at the re-opening in 1919 and throughout the period the liberal viewpoint was the only one represented. It may safely be asserted that no student, entering the college during the latter period and agreeing with the then current Wesleyan doctrinal standards as to hell, judgment and the need for conversion, would have found encouragement from his tutors to adhere to his beliefs as the right ones.

Richmond College was not fully re-opened until 1920. W. T. Davison remained as Principal until the full re-opening when he retired. He was replaced by W. T. A. Barber who unfortunately published nothing about hell or the Atonement.

Barber was himself replaced as Principal in 1929 and the post was awarded to C. Ryder Smith, who had been Tutor in Theology since 1920 and thus was present at the college throughout the period. The bulk of Smith's published works comprise a series of books expounding different aspects of 'Bible doctrine'. Each book was a painstaking and meticulous record of the biblical input to the relevant area of doctrine. Although the verdict of the recent History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain ³⁷ on these works of Smith is phrased in such terms as 'exceedingly tedious', 'over-emphasis on biblical study', and 'not asking our questions', his method of expounding doctrine on the basis of the witness of scripture was Wesley's. From this point of view he was an even more conservative influence on the college than his predecessor, Davison, had been before the First World War.

Whereas most of the tutors already mentioned have been seen to place their major emphasis on the love of God, Smith was equally sure of the fact that God acts as Judge. 'It will be seen that the doctrine of Judgment, not often preached today, runs right through the New Testament as well as the Old ... The New Testament doctrine of Judgment may be summarised as follows - There is a continual Judgment going on all the time in the sense that men are being divided into "good" and "bad"; for those who die before the Parousia there is a final judgment at the moment of death, both for good men and bad, in the sense that all are then sentenced, the first to bliss and the second to woe; for those who are alive at the Parousia the final sentence falls when Christ comes.' ³⁸ For Smith, the wrath of God was

a real aspect of His character which would be experienced in judgment. He pointed out that this wrath was not something undeserved, unjust or capricious, but rather was the outcome and sequel of His justice. He accepted that the concept of wrath, even when regarded in this way, tends to revolt the modern mind, but stated that it could not be ignored. He reflected the view of New Testament writers in portraying 'the wrath to come' as even more terrible than any present experience
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of God's judgment.

Smith fully accepted the plain statements of the Scriptures as to the seriousness of sin, and declared that 'after God Himself, sin is
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still the most serious thing in the world'. Indeed he believed the New Testament to show that sin was fatal; 'the text in John (3:16) which is rightly taken as the synopsis of Christianity, teaches, not only that God sent His Son to save man from sin, but that without Him men would "perish". God's "love" shows itself, not in the assurance
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that sin "does not matter", but in the offer of salvation from it.' Smith was happy to assert that God's punishment was retributive as the
42
consequence of sin (but not vindictive).

Smith described in detail the fate of those who finally find themselves subject to God's adverse judgment. He discussed each clear reference to hell, reflecting the overtly unpleasant nature of the Scriptural witness, and in this he was very much in tune with Wesley, except that he went much further than the latter in also expounding the contemporary context of the language used. He affirmed that the New Testament writers, with the Old Testament behind them, took it for
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granted that sinners would be punished. 'To the present writer it seems impossible, if the evidence is considered objectively, to deny that there is a doctrine of "everlasting punishment" in the New Testament.' Smith analysed scriptural evidence for the doctrine of univer-

salism and concluded that there was no New Testament warrant for approaching this doctrine from an individual, humanitarian point of view (such as some of his Wesleyan colleagues were doing), but did allow that there were passages which pointed to all men being saved, from the point of view of the condition of the future universe.⁴⁴ Bearing this question of context in mind, he maintained firmly that the preached message to the non-believer should include clearly the aspect of doom.⁴⁵

Smith did not just use the Bible as the basis for his theological teaching. In The Christian Experience he brings many psychological insights to bear. But in the content and approach of his doctrine he was, with Henry Bett at Handsworth and to a fair extent H. Watkin-Jones at Headingley, one of the few among the main teaching staff at any of the branches of the Wesleyan Methodist Theological Institution who were happy to endorse the denominational doctrinal standards in a plain and straightforward way.

The remaining three staff to be considered at Richmond all stand in contrast to Smith. F. Bartram Clogg was tutor throughout the period in New Testament Language and Literature and Classics. He published no material indicating his stance as to the doctrines under consideration, but some insight as to his outlook may be gleaned from the Journal of the Wesley Bible Union for 1921⁴⁶ which quotes Clogg as charging the Gospels with 'obvious discrepancies concerning the life and work of Jesus', the New Testament miracles with 'not proving the claims of Jesus', and St. Paul as being 'mistaken about the historicity of original sin through not having a knowledge of the theory of evolution'. Clogg was also said to have moved 'far from the positions which our fathers held' with regard to the Atonement. Although there is no first-hand evidence now, at the time the Wesley Bible Union

believed that he was not in accord with the doctrinal standards.

Eric S. Waterhouse was Tutor in Philosophy, again throughout the period. He believed that because man had an intrinsic value in the universe rather than just an instrumental value, this pointed to a belief in immortality for all, since man must be destined for something more than the few brief years he spends on this earth in the flesh. For Waterhouse, life after death was a spiritual existence rather than a bodily one, and he was happy to admit that it might for some include an element of retributive justice. 'The very incompleteness of life seems strong evidence that its issues continue beyond its span, and that justice seems to demand some retribution hereafter is not likely to be disputed'.⁴⁷ This was an approach to doctrine based on reason, and indeed Waterhouse believed that the human mind was the right basic source for ideas from which to construct some conception of the spiritual realm, rather than Biblical revelation.⁴⁸ He denied that the New Testament writers had a better understanding of the issues involved in Salvation, than the modern mind⁴⁹ and thus his system of doctrine was essentially different to Wesley's on the one hand and his colleague Smith's on the other.

At death, Waterhouse believed there to be no separation into categories of men. He saw life thereafter primarily as progress in the broadest sense from the point reached in this earth. On the one hand he believed that the natural consequence of punishment as a result of sin would continue; on the other hand he believed that the positive side of the future existence would consist of striving for progress in the permanent values of beauty, truth and goodness, but without the continued presence of their opposites, ugliness, falsehood and evil. All men would survive death and all men would be subjected to punishment if necessary and have the opportunity also to

progress. He rejected emphatically previous 'crude' notions of heaven and hell.

Waterhouse thought that the primary work of Christ, culminating in His death on the Cross was to open men's eyes to the character of sin. He rejected all traditional theories of the Atonement as unsatisfactory and especially those which involved the idea of punishment, since, 'Punishment deals with a symptom, not with the cause of wrong. It puts nothing right and therefore cannot have been the reason for the Cross'. The Cross brought men out of the power of sin, enabling them to see its true character. Furthermore, the condition of salvation was proved by consequent changes in behaviour, and a new outlook on life involving Christ.

Because there was no separation at death, irrespective of behaviour or belief, Waterhouse thought of salvation as a process rather than an ontological fact. He therefore spoke of degrees of salvation and salvation which is indirect and unwitting. He also talked of the possibility of being unsaved and the danger of coming into contact with the purity of Jesus which is a consuming fire to burn those whom it does not cleanse. This seems inconsistent in the light of his comments on immortality outlined above, but it seems that he was somewhat flexible in his discussion of these matters. Indeed elsewhere he expounds a third option which probably constitutes the most gross deviation from Wesley's doctrine of any tutor within this study: '...the belief of the East in reincarnation is foreign to our thought and we accordingly assume there is something un-Christian or anti-religious in it, and teach our converts to abandon it. Why? ...if these views raise philosophical difficulties, they also explain some things, and have distinctly a moral significance. One cannot see why we should not allow the East to work out its own conception of Chris-

tianity even to mingling with it of certain of its own characteristic strains of thought ... we shall see a new and composite conception of Christianity growing up, to which all nations will contribute.'

Leslie F. Church joined the staff at Richmond in 1929, at the time when C. R. Smith was promoted to Principal, to teach Pastoral Theology and Church History. He published extensively, but mostly in the spheres of Church History and devotional addresses. Church was very clear that mankind was separated into two by a great divide into on the one hand those who live for the things Jesus loved and on the other those who live for the things He hated and fought. The divide he described was one that no one could pretend to cross - what was necessary was to say with all one's being 'I will serve under this beloved Captain always' . Church described heaven in encouraging terms to the bereaved, emphasising the ease of entry for those to whom Jesus opens the door, the warmth of welcome to be felt on entry, the presence of friends known on earth and the possibilities of continuing Christian service. He emphasised that the unselfish shut themselves out of this future, but he did not mention what their fate was to be.

Although Church did not leave published evidence of his views on hell and judgment, in certain basic aspects he was thus in agreement with Wesley and the Wesleyan doctrinal standards. It is probable that he shared a conservative viewpoint, therefore, with his colleague C. R. Smith. Although Waterhouse and Clogg were demonstrably liberal in their outlook, Smith was a clear conservative influence. In contrast to Didsbury College, with the appointment of Church the two viewpoints were evenly represented at Richmond in 1932. Thus the stance of the college tutors as a body had not changed significantly from the evenly balanced position which had pertained in 1915.

Headingley College was not re-opened until 1930, due to its continued occupation by the Leeds Education Authorities who had taken over the building during hostilities. ⁶¹ There were four main tutors, John W. Lightley, Vincent Taylor, J. Arundel Chapman and H. Watkin-Jones. John W. Lightley was Principal, but he only published one book which contains no evidence about his doctrinal position.

Vincent Taylor was Tutor in Biblical Literature and Classics. He wrote extensively on the New Testament and also on doctrine, but the latter field was confined mainly to the Atonement. Taylor believed that man in his basic condition needed deliverance from sin and reconciliation with God. God in his turn was in process of reconciling the world to Himself through Christ. ⁶² Taylor accepted that after death men would be judged by God and believed that the question about destiny at that judgment should be thought about for the believer, the immature person, the ignorant person and the impenitent. For the believer, he held that his inheritance was a life of service, clothed in a resurrection body and blessed with the vision of God. That same inheritance should also condition the present life to be conformed to a more Christ-like pattern. Taylor would not comment on the immature person, the ignorant and the impenitent, simply saying that those questions must be left to the mercy and love of God in the knowledge that He would do right. ⁶³ Thus Taylor accepted a doctrine of judgment but refused to reflect the Wesleyan doctrinal standards in expounding damnation.

Taylor valued the various theories of the Atonement as each bringing an insight to bear upon the work of Christ upon the cross. He did not claim the absolute rightness of his own theory, but claimed that it was most profitable to think of the death of Christ as an act in which men can participate by union through faith. ⁶⁴ The Cross

reveals the love of God and kindles, in those who respond, the flame of love. This Abelardian view was not complete in itself, however, because Christ also on the Cross bore our sins by entering fully with mankind into the divine judgment which rests upon sin. To this extent the crucifixion was a sacrificial act and by an act of faith the individual can be united with the crucified Christ. ⁶⁵ The act of Christ on the Cross was one of self-offering made in perfect obedience to the Father's will. Because Christ was perfectly man as well as perfectly God, His obedience also represents the type of obedience that men ought to offer to God to fulfil the conditions of sonship. Furthermore, that obedience consists of the perfect submission to the judgment of God upon sin, a submission which gives man new hope because it is presented by his Representative before God. Finally the self-offering of Jesus is the expression of His perfect penitence for the sins of men. Jesus was sinless but can do this: just as a mother can make the shame of a child her own, so Jesus can fully feel human sin and confess it in their stead. ⁶⁶

Whilst Taylor said that all doctrines of the Atonement were valuable, he rejected as wrong any doctrine of penal substitution, since he thought this incompatible with his notion of human justice. ⁶⁷ He also rejected any doctrine of propitiatory sacrifice. ⁶⁸ While Taylor accepted that God would act as judge, he minimised the affront of sin to God and God's ensuing wrath. His liberalism can also be seen in his refusal to describe the fate of the impenitent. Whilst Taylor touched the Wesleyan doctrinal standards in some aspects of judgment and the need for conversion, for a large part, and wholly in the area of hell, he was far away from them.

Taylor's colleague J. Arundel Chapman was Tutor in Theology. His viewpoint has already been described under Didsbury College, where he

was also Tutor in Theology and whence he moved to take up the post at Headingley. In brief it may be reiterated that while he understood the serious nature of sin, he was basically Abelardian in his doctrine of Atonement and Universalist in his doctrine of judgment. He did not see any place for hell. His appointment at Didsbury had been one which took the college further along the road of a liberal theological outlook and he also upheld this position at Headingley. He did not support Taylor's scheme of doctrine in detail, but like him did not agree with the Wesleyan doctrinal standards to which he was meant to subscribe.

The final tutor to be considered at Headingley for the period is H. Watkin-Jones who taught Church History and the History of Doctrine. Among the main tutors he was the sole conservative influence. He believed that the Methodist Church should 'loyally accept the fundamental principles of the historic creeds', whilst 'liberty of interpretation is allowed to the modern mind, which cannot be tied to antique philosophical ideas; but this refers in no sense to the facts of faith but only to their presentation.'⁶⁹ He saw the Deed of Union (Union then imminent between the Wesleyan, Primitive and United Methodists) as giving encouragement to forward-looking spiritual enterprise in the area of doctrine when it said: 'Wesley's Notes on the New Testament and the first four volumes of his sermons ... are not intended to impose a system of formal or speculative theology on Methodist Preachers but to set up standards of preaching and belief which should secure loyalty to the fundamental truths of the Gospel of Redemption and ensure the continued witness of the Church to the realities of the Christian experience of salvation.'⁷⁰ Whilst seeing the importance of progress in the interpretation of the basic Christian doctrines, he himself was relatively faithful to the Wesleyan

standards then still in force.

Watkin-Jones acknowledged that a belief in life after death was nearly universal for mankind, but that as a general belief was inadequate to meet human need, a specific Christian insight was required. Man was, for him, created and redeemed by God in order to enjoy Him for ever.⁷¹ It was, therefore, important to spell out the fate of those who chose not to fulfil their created purpose. God for them would act as judge, and Watkin-Jones pointed out the dreadful state, hinted at by Jesus, awaiting those who had hardened themselves against the appeal of Divine Love. He believed that his contemporaries had been too willing to banish hell from the sphere of spiritual reality. Referring to an argument of natural justice, he appealed to the fact that hell after death must exist for such men as were responsible for the atrocities of war. The reason that some Christians denied the existence of hell, he said, was because their idea of Divine love was so sentimental that it had no room for righteous judgment. This was effectively a direct polemic against the several tutors within the Theological Institution overall who believed that Abelardian doctrine was the right basis for an understanding of the Atonement, to the exclusion of other conservative beliefs.

As for the nature of hell, Watkin-Jones denied annihilationism, stating that the whole trend of Scripture was to regard men as immortal souls whatever their moral tendencies might be. He defended the older descriptions of hell as a place of fiery torment, saying clearly that this insight should not be banished from the spiritual realm, since 'there is no fire in this world to be compared with the remorse in the next'. He clearly diverged from Wesley in that he believed there was the possibility of being corrected by the punishment experienced in hell and that therefore there was a chance of winning salva-

tion after death. He did not, however, believe that by any means all would be so saved, since repentance was always necessary for salvation and would not be forced out of any man by God.

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Watkin-Jones emphasised the 'demonic' nature of sin and that men could not be saved from sin except through the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. He denied the penal substitutionary theory of the Atonement, believing that this notion of punishment overlooked the love of God, and that the theory denied the Godhead of Christ since it implied that the Son suffered whilst the Father did not. He was clear however that God condemned every sin and each sinner. His doctrine of the Atonement was virtually the same as that of his colleague Taylor. He accepted that many emphasised the Abelardian view in reaction to the idea of penal substitution, but himself believed that on its own it was not enough. He favoured the title of 'ransom' to describe the effective as against the demonstrative aspect of the Cross and meant by this a view much like Taylor's representative theory. Thus, for Watkin-Jones, the crucifixion was both a divine and human act, in relationship to both the Natures of Christ. In this act Christ did perfectly what sinful men could only do imperfectly. Furthermore He did it representing those men if by their faith they make His act their own.

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Although Watkin-Jones was not in agreement with the Wesleyan doctrinal standards in his view of the Atonement, he was much closer to them than his colleagues in his doctrines of hell and judgment. Indeed had he not held a view of hell as for some more akin to the Roman Catholic understanding of purgatory, it could have been said that he fully supported Wesley in these areas. As it was, he was the most conservative influence on the staff at the re-opened Headingley College in his teaching of the doctrines of hell and judgment, but

he did not place special emphasis on the wrath of God as did Wesley, with the result that he thought that punishment after death must be probationary rather than a straightforward vindication of God's righteousness in the light of the affront caused to that righteous nature by sin. A student at Handsworth could have come under some conservative influence in the area of doctrine being considered, but not in accordance either with Wesley or his denomination's doctrinal standards.

Handsworth College re-opened after the First World War, in 1919. The Principal continued to be J. G. Tasker, a post which he had held since 1910 (having previously been tutor at the college from 1904). As has been already said, the only evidence of his doctrinal viewpoint indicates his probable general sympathy with a more conservative point of view.

F. Platt was Tutor in Theology, having also held this position since 1910. His doctrinal viewpoint has been deduced to have been mixed, for in the small amount of his published work which is relevant, he asserts that the condition of human sin requires some form of reconciliation with God, whilst he clearly supports Maldwyn Hughes (to be discussed in the next section of this chapter) who was a liberal. Perhaps his sympathies lay therefore more in the latter direction. When Tasker retired in 1929, Platt took over as Principal until he himself left the college in 1925.

From 1925 onwards the Principal at Handsworth was W. F. Lofthouse who had earlier served since 1904 as tutor in Old Testament Language and Literature, with the addition of Philosophy to his area of responsibility in 1919. When he became Principal he changed his tutorial responsibilities to those of Theology and Philosophy. It has already

been seen that Lofthouse was liberal in his view of scripture, but did believe in the seriousness of sin, the wrath of God and the possibility of adverse judgment. He denied the Atonement doctrines of penal substitution and propitiatory sacrifice, favouring instead an Abelardian view, for which he was publicly criticised by the Wesley Bible Union for not adhering to the relevant doctrinal standards.

Thus the Principalship at Handsworth passed into the hands of men with increasing liberal sympathies, the contrast between the conservative Tasker and Lofthouse being particularly significant.

The fourth tutor at the college at the re-opening in 1919 was W. F. Howard who taught New Testament Language and Literature. Like Lofthouse, he was to remain at the college throughout the period, but unlike him he was not liberal in his views. Howard saw sin as having its basis in the refusal of men to walk in the light of Christ which was already shining in the world. He underlined the message of John's Gospel: that in Jesus 'the age to come' was already here, with judgment already at work and separation taking place between those who are destined to life and those who are headed for destruction. Howard emphasised that, while John taught that eternal life is a present state, one of the 'undeniable' features of the Gospel was an appeal to the future judgment when there would be separation of those approved from those condemned. The judgment at the last day was a final manifestation of the judgment already taking place according to the human response to Jesus Christ's divine call and demand⁷⁴. Howard emphasised Jesus' own words such as, 'For judgment did I come into the world', and John's belief that Christ's mission was to cleanse from sin and to save men from perdition into fulness of life.⁷⁵ Howard's approach was to derive his doctrinal comments from the plain message of Scripture, with special reference to the Gospel of John. Perhaps⁷⁶

it was his method which ensured that the points he made were in agreement with Wesley. Certainly he was a conservative influence at Hands-worth.

When the Principalship passed from J. G. Tasker in 1923, Henry Bett was appointed as Resident Tutor since the two succeeding Principals both had major other areas of teaching responsibility. The role of the Resident Tutor was in the main one of pastoral oversight and Pastoral Theology. In this role Bett was to prove a major influence on behalf of the conservative doctrinal standpoint in the college. Bett was a firm believer that the 'spirit of Methodism' was properly based on the teaching and preaching of John Wesley. The following passage succinctly indicates the basis of his doctrinal viewpoint :-

It should be remembered, however, that Wesley's Sermons and Notes on the New Testament have admirably served the purpose of doctrinal standards in Methodism for six generations past. The Sermons are distinguished by a real and remarkable insight into theological issues in their relation to religious experience, and the Notes on the New Testament ... present as sound an exposition as is to be found in the eighteenth century, as well as an amended text which is really a very remarkable anticipation of the Revised Version of a hundred and thirty years later .

Bett was convinced that during the then preceding generation or two there had been a marked 'decay' in the sense of sin on the part of Christians generally. The contemporary estimate of sin was too often for him 'slight' or 'superficial'. This made repentance almost a lost experience, caused laziness and diminished the seriousness of the religious life. Nor did it promote an understanding of the Atonement as 'so tremendous and tragic and unique as the sacrificial death of Christ upon the Cross'. Bett firmly believed that the result of sin

was man's separation from God. In him is to be found the only reflection, on the part of all the tutors studied, of Wesley's doctrine that the destiny of most people is hell. Hence, 'The line of evil is always the line of least resistance ... No effort is necessary to go to the Devil; you have merely to lounge around with the crowd. But nobody ever sauntered to heaven; you have to make up your mind, and gird up your loins, and set out, and keep on, in spite of difficulty and discouragement, if you take that path'. Bett clearly understood that the sins now experienced in men's lives had their origins not in God, but in the Devil and his fallen angels.

In the light of the above, Bett believed that everyone irrespective of the outward appearance of his or her life needed to be saved, and he affirmed Wesley's Arminian position that there is salvation for all in Christ. He urged the understanding of the urgency of the Gospel: 'I believe that if every Methodist preacher continually proclaimed these central truths of salvation, and proclaimed this great message urgently, passionately, and believingly, in dependence upon the Spirit of God, we should see a revival of the work of God among us.' He also severely criticised the same Methodist preachers, asserting that there had been far too much preaching which had only touched the fringe of the Gospel. Bett pointed out that salvation was possible only through Jesus and through His death on the Cross and resurrection from the dead. He affirmed a new life of bodily resurrection for the believer after death. Bett did not publish his detailed views on the Atonement, but the considerable weight of evidence cited points to the fact that he supported the Wesleyan doctrinal standards over hell, judgment and the necessity for conversion.

The remaining tutor, C. R. North, joined the college in 1925 to replace F. Platt but to teach Old Testament Language and Literature.

His published material was confined to Old Testament studies, with one book on Islam, and he did not indicate his views on doctrine in this area of study.

The particular point to be noted about Handsworth College, is that between 1918 and 1932 there was actually a movement in a more conservative direction among the main teaching staff. Three of the staff were the same in 1919 as they had been in 1915, but Howard was very significantly more in line with the Wesleyan doctrinal standards than Holdsworth had been. It is not possible to judge to what extent North differed from the probably liberal Platt, but again when Bett replaced Tasker there was a distinct move in a conservative direction. While Tasker indicated probable conservatism in a general way in the small amount of his published work, Bett showed in a very high degree of detail that he was both in description and conviction wholeheartedly behind the Wesleyan doctrinal standards. Whereas in 1915 the liberal point of view had been dominant at Handsworth, by 1932 the balance had changed in the other direction.

The fifth branch of the Wesleyan Methodist Theological Institution came into being with the founding of Wesley House, Cambridge, in 1921. At first the college started in a small way with six students sharing downstairs rooms at their Principal's house. It was founded with the intention of providing Theological training principally for post-graduate students. A new purpose-built college building was opened in 1926 and the number of students somewhat increased, although the college in its early days remained relatively small, with the Principal, H. Maldwyn Hughes, as the sole main member of staff until 1928, when he was joined by R. Newton Flew . (There was one assistant tutor also present from 1924-27.) Hughes' main area of teaching was Theology, whilst Flew was appointed as Tutor in Biblical Language

and Literature.

Maldwyn Hughes was the proponent not of a straightforward acceptance of Wesley's standards, but rather of a reinterpretation. He was sympathetic to a liberal point of view and this may well have had its basis in his view of scripture. He was not in favour of the Reformers' doctrine of verbal inspiration in its assertion that the writers of scripture were dependent on the Spirit for their very words⁸⁷. Instead he believed that the essence of Biblical inspiration consisted in the peculiar energy and intensity of the God-consciousness apparent in the writers.⁸⁸ He did not believe that the Bible was inerrant in science and history and accepted that particular passages were not necessarily inerrant even in matters of faith and morals. Each passage, he said, had to be interpreted in the light of the age in which it was written.⁸⁹

Hughes therefore arrived at different understandings of doctrine from Wesley. Doctrine was debated in connection with the proposed union of the Wesleyan, Primitive and United Methodist Churches, and Hughes was involved in the debate. In an article in the Methodist Recorder⁹⁰ he confessed that he found Wesley's Notes and Sermons to be difficult to harmonise with growing knowledge, and doubted whether any Wesleyan minister held himself pledged to every exposition and interpretation contained in them. In specifically commenting on Wesley's Standards in the Light of Today, he showed that whilst he was generally in favour of reference to the Notes and Sermons in any statement of doctrine for the Methodist Church, he firmly believed that subscription to the Standards did not imply acceptance of all the opinions and interpretations expressed in them, but only of the doctrines and practices inculcated. He suggested that when Wesley and the Conference had adopted a Model Deed containing a Doctrinal Standard clause, their

purpose had not been to impose on the preachers a fixed and rigid system of theology, but to take the steps that seemed to them necessary to protect their property from the abuse of erroneous teaching. Furthermore he protested his right to reinterpret Wesley in the light of his modern understanding of Scripture by stating that the Wesleyan Standards were not Articles of Religion but expositions of the Scriptures. This indicated to him that the primary standards of the Wesleyan Church were the Scriptures, whilst the Notes and Sermons were but secondary.⁹¹ He thought that the preacher should not be fettered in any matters which were speculative,⁹² and also that 'The truth is that Wesley was not a great constructive theologian'⁹³.

In practice, this attitude to Wesley's Standards generally meant that Hughes did not agree with them about eschatology. 'The Standards, narrowly interpreted', he wrote, 'offer no single gleam of hope for the finally impenitent. There is no probation after death ... The impenitent are doomed to endure everlasting punishment, which Wesley held to be penal in character. Few, if any, Wesleyan ministers would today speak with the same unqualified certainty as Wesley on this theme. ... Are they then outside the Standards. Most emphatically not. This is one of the cases where we must respond to Wesley's appeal to be corrected by the Scriptures.'⁹⁴

Hughes believed that the human race was basically sinful and in need of redemption, and that this had not been disproved by modern science.⁹⁵ He defined sin as being every disposition and action and habit which was out of harmony with the holy will of our heavenly Father.⁹⁶ He also believed in a personal devil who was the embodiment of wickedness and the organiser of all evil.⁹⁷ The Judgment-seat of God lay immediately beyond death⁹⁸, but the active aspect of judgment occurred not on Christ's part, but on the part of men, who judge them-

selves by their actions . The final Judgment will merely record the judgment which men pass on themselves here and now by their attitude to Christ as revealed in their character and conduct. Hughes accepted that the note of exclusion from heaven was a most solemn thought in the mind of Jesus: the latter believed in an immeasurable danger which threatened the souls of men, a horror of a great darkness from which they had to be delivered.¹⁰⁰

Although Hughes accepted the reality of adverse judgment for some after death, he did not agree that death was the result of man's sin in the context of the wrath of God. Rather he saw physical death as a logical necessity in order to avoid over population, the present dominating influence of great men of the past and also the survival of bad men.¹⁰¹ For Hughes, therefore, death was principally a physical rather than a spiritual event in an individual's life. He did not accept Wesley's doctrine of eternal punishment, which he admitted might be called the 'orthodox' theory of the Church. Some individuals could be so hardened to divine love as never to receive salvation, but God never ceased to seek and to save and could therefore redeem people even from the deepest part of hell.¹⁰² For Wesley, this doctrine would have mitigated seriously against the sense of urgency with which men should be exhorted to turn to Christ.

Hughes' lack of sense of the wrath of God in antagonism to sin caused him to reject the penal substitutionary model of the Atonement, which he agreed was the common model.¹⁰³ Whilst he was happy for the word 'sacrifice' to be used in connection with the Cross, he rejected any idea of propitiatory sacrifice on the grounds that it was a pagan idea which could not have applied to an act set forth by God Himself.¹⁰⁴ His own theory was Abelardian in basis, based upon the assertion that, 'the two things which would most discredit sin and

move men to repentance would be (1) A life of complete and unfaltering obedience to the divine will lived by One sharing our human nature. (2) A supreme manifestation on the field of history of God's hostility to sin and love for the sinner.¹⁰⁵ Hughes therefore saw the act of Christ on the Cross as exemplary in so far as the love and sacrifice of Christ were the love and sacrifice of God, going out to move men to repentance. The act was effective in so far as when men were thus moved to repentance, the sin of the world was actually being taken away. For Hughes the work of Atonement was not to remove the affront to God of present sin but rather to seek to reduce the quantity of sin for the future, which was causing the present lack of harmony between man and God.¹⁰⁶

Hughes was severely criticised by the Wesley Bible Union for his stance in these matters. He was criticised for his general doctrinal stance on openly attempting to redefine the adherence required by Wesleyan Methodists to their doctrinal standards in order to safeguard a number of ministers who might otherwise be charged with false teaching against a conservative view of the standards.¹⁰⁷ He was also criticised for teaching that the death of Christ should not be regarded as sin-bearing.¹⁰⁸

Hughes's colleague from 1928 onwards, R. N. Flew, was also criticised at the same time for holding a similar doctrine of the Atonement, although a little less harshly.¹⁰⁹ As early as 1918, Flew had been commenting adversely on the narrowness of the early Methodist preachers who, he claimed, had not seen the right vision of God affirming the world as good.¹¹⁰ There were some conservative aspects to his belief: he held that the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels emerged unscathed from the severest critical scrutiny.¹¹¹ Unusually for the liberal mind he would also refer to the wrath of God as a reality:

'If we refuse to accept the pagan idea that God "doesn't care", because it is irreconcilable with our experience of ourselves and of Him, there seems no reason at all why we should insist on attributing only love and suffering to the God of a creation in which evil is present against His will. ... He will hate sin and love the good. The phrase, therefore, the "wrath of the Lamb" is no paradox, but expresses one great aspect of the Cross.'¹¹² However, he was careful to qualify this by maintaining that the wrath of God was always against the sin, never against the sinner, and not the motive for Atonement since this would indicate vindictiveness towards men whereas God's attitude is always love.¹¹³ To regard the death of Christ as a sacrifice to propitiate an angry God was a totally erroneous view.¹¹⁴

Flew believed that the experience of the judgment of God might be as fire for the sinner, but God's judgment did not separate men into two groups. Instead that adverse judgment was probationary: 'God will have purity. It is not that the fire will burn us if we do not worship thus, but that the fire will burn us until we worship thus.'¹¹⁵ This was clearly contrary to the Wesleyan doctrinal standards, but was based on his understanding of the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, which convinced him of the fatherly love of God and led to a passionate assertion that all men had the capacity to be saved.¹¹⁶ Wesley would have emphasised that whilst God certainly desired the salvation of all men, by no means would all men be saved. Flew believed that conversion or 'new birth' was the true test of membership of the Christian Church on earth¹¹⁷, but he held that others could join after death. Both he and Hughes were clearly liberal in their interpretation of the Wesleyan standards for the doctrines of hell, judgment and the need for conversion.

Before leaving Wesleyan Methodism, mention must be made of one

additional personality who was unusual in his influence in that he never taught in any of the Wesleyan colleges, yet it appears that he was respected throughout his denomination for both his personality and his theological point of view. John Scott Lidgett has been described as the greatest Methodist of his day and his importance to this study is that he occupied a similar position of influence within Wesleyan Methodism to that of Peake within the Primitive Methodist denomination. Although in his case he was not a college tutor, he was seen as giving a theological lead to all Wesleyan ministers, including those serving in the colleges.

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Rupert Davies summarises the life of Lidgett as follows :-

The many-sidedness of modern Methodism was embodied in the character and career of John Scott Lidgett (1854 - 1953), who stepped into the place of leadership left vacant by the death of Hugh Price Hughes. He was prevented from going to one of the older universities by the death of his father, but made his way from a firm of insurance and shipping brokers to University College, London, and from there into the Wesleyan Methodist Ministry. After a number of ordinary circuit appointments, he went to Bermondsey, by the permission of the Conference, to found a Settlement on the lines laid down by Arnold Toynbee and Samuel Barnett. He stayed at Bermondsey almost throughout the rest of his very long life, but his work branched out of it in many directions. He wrote several major works of theology, of which most notable was The Fatherhood of God (1902), in which he develops the thought of his mentor, Frederick Denison Maurice, and shows that the conception of God's Fatherhood embraces all the divine attributes. He took a leading part in all the 'politics' of Methodism, especially in the manifold discussions which pre-

ceded Methodist Union in 1932, and was deservedly elected President of the Uniting Conference in that year. He was the constant representative of Wesleyan Methodism

Lidgett's objectives in being Warden of the Bermondsey Settlement were to create a force of educational workers to give help to all the higher interests - religious, educational, administrative and social - of the neighbourhood. However, his influence was felt not only in Bermondsey but on a very broad front, including within the theological colleges of Wesleyan Methodism. Indeed Lidgett was the means by which the theology of F. D. Maurice became the new norm for many Methodists. He saw the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God as being primary with all other doctrines flowing from it in a consequential sense. Thus in preparing his work on The Spiritual Principle of the Atonement (1897),
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Lidgett saw his task as five-fold, namely :

It was to show:

1. That fatherhood and sovereignty are not mutually exclusive relationships, but that perfect fatherhood implies sovereign authority; authority exercised to secure the ideal ends which fatherhood seeks to realise in its children. This is true of the family life of men, because this reflects, truly though imperfectly, the sovereign fatherhood of God from which it is derived.
2. That our Lord's life, from the manger to the Cross is a consistent whole of spiritual self-realisation in and through filial obedience, His death being the consummation of this perfect obedience.
3. That just by reason of this, our Lord's death was atoning because satisfying God, as Father, in the realisation of filial perfection, by the 'putting away of sins'.
4. That the 'costingness' of this sacrifice, to use Von Hugel's

term, was due, not to the arbitrary exaction of God, but to the sinful imperfection of the world and to its results, as conditioned by the constitution and discipline of human life.

5. That this view is in accordance with the teaching of both the Old Testament and the New, which emphasises the spiritual meaning of sacrifice, as expressing self-giving to God, and this, above all, in respect of the sacrifice and sufferings of Christ.

Lidgett was threatened with heresy charges over his work on the Atonement because it flew in the face of so much of Wesley's theology. His underlying errors from the viewpoint of Wesley were in seeing the Fatherhood of God as the pre-eminent Christian doctrine, in ascribing to the word 'Fatherhood' an incorrect moral definition and in trying to redefine other doctrinal areas in terms of it. Nevertheless, by 1936 he could report ¹²⁰ that The Spiritual Principle of the Atonement had been used as a text-book in many theological colleges of all denominations throughout the English-speaking world. The beliefs quoted above can be seen to be the basis for virtually all the departures from conservative doctrine identified within the Wesleyan colleges.

Chapter 7 - Concluding Remarks.

John Wesley said, 'it cannot be denied ... that even in this, which is called a Christian country, the generality of every age and sex, of every profession and employment, of every rank and degree, high and low, rich and poor, are walking in the way of destruction.'¹ Furthermore, 'There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these Societies, - a desire "to flee from the wrath to come..."'² Today a large proportion of Methodist Preachers believe that all men will be saved, and that there is no wrath to come. Methodist Ministers do not usually hold to the doctrines of hell and judgment as contained in the Notes and Sermons, and indeed it is not unknown for the holding of such belief to form a caveat in the selection of ministerial candidates. The secret of the initial growth of Methodism in the evangelistic zeal which resulted from its Evangelical theology. Inevitably any failure to accept a theology including the wrath of God and hell will tend to diminish the sense of urgency for seeking out the lost. So often today, the framework of belief is that whilst it is of priceless worth to come to a personal faith in Christ in this life, all men will end up with God hereafter, whether or not this personal faith has been their experience. If the possibility of damnation is admitted, it is usually only for those whose lives are grossly evil.

Table 2 shows the growth of the Methodist denominations. With increasing growth in the latter half of the nineteenth century came a subtle change in the self-understanding of Methodism which can best be described by the formula 'Society to Church'. The manifestations of this change are recorded in A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain. Whilst early Methodism was a Society seeking out the lost

and thereafter promoting Christian holiness on a particular doctrinal basis, with structures to promote this end, the belief grew up that the Methodist denominations should cater for all manner of people, not just those who were willing, when converted, to submit to the rigour of the class meeting system. This involved a broader understanding of what a church should be and a provision for a wider spectrum of religious and social needs. In this period the pressure for conformity to Methodist standards of doctrine and practice was weakened by pressure to conform to the world's standards, particularly with respect to social activity, and by making the groupings more 'social' and 'outward looking' instead of primarily promoting the 'religious' experience of concentration on God. This was also the period which saw the advent of Biblical Higher Criticism and the debate over science versus religion. Perhaps by 1907 it could be said that these various pressures were building up in Methodism. As Dunlap has pointed out, by about this time Methodist scholars were experiencing a time of theological ferment, and over the next generation there were to be many changes made in the theological stance and practical front of Methodism. The beginning of the period 1907 - 1932 also coincided with the peak membership of the three major Methodist denominations.

Methodism today is a declining denomination. The pattern of membership within the period 1907 - 1932 is quite complicated. Generally the decline which started about 1910 continued until about 1920, and then there was a period of recovery until about 1925/30, with the rates of decline and growth varying between the Methodist denominations. What can be clearly seen, however, is that the period before 1907 was marked by steady growth in each of the denominations, whilst the period after 1932 was marked by steady decline in the now single, united Church. The generation between these dates was indeed a deci-

sive one in the history of Methodism and the changes in doctrinal viewpoint which then took place should be considered in any comprehensive study of the root cause of the decline of Methodism.

When there is a more general trend to liberal doctrine it is difficult to assess precise cause and effect. 'A church will usually have the Theology it deserves to have', wrote C. J. Wright, 'for its Theology is no defensive speculation, but the expression of its whole spiritual energies'³. The broad views of the Church may have had some general effect on those responsible for teaching theology within the Methodist denominations, but the clearest line of communication passed from college tutors to ministers and thence to local preachers and ordinary church members.

The pattern of doctrinal attitude on the part of the college tutors varied in the period 1907-32 between the denominations. In the Primitive and United Methodist colleges liberalism in the area of hell, judgment and the need for conversion was centred consistently throughout the period around the strong influence of the single personality, A. S. Peake, whose appointment and terms of reference had been arranged by the benefactor W. Hartley. Table 4 shows the numbers of candidates entering the ministry from the denominations and overall the proportion entering from Primitive and United Methodism together comprised about one-third of the total. Within the Wesleyan denomination with its several branches of its Theological Institution the situation was by no means dominated by any single tutor, and the doctrinal position varied from college to college with time.

Of the two-thirds overall proportion of candidates entering the Wesleyan ministry in 1907, one quarter attended Headingley College which had no direct liberal influence; a quarter attended Richmond which was basically conservative but with some liberal presence, and a

half attended either Didsbury or Handsworth where there was an even balance. Overall there was still a bias to doctrinal conservatism within the Wesleyan Methodist Theological Institution. By 1915, however this situation had changed significantly due to staff moves. Headingley was now equally conservative/liberal in outlook, Richmond and Didsbury had both taken a step in the liberal direction whilst Handsworth which had previously been evenly balanced had now become pre-eminently a centre of liberal theological influence. Overall the bias of the Institution had moved as much in the liberal direction as it had previously been conservative.

With the re-opening of the colleges after the First World War, further changes in the Wesleyan Theological Institution took place. Didsbury was now mainly liberal with no senior member of staff adopting a basically conservative stance. In the writings of the Principal, W. J. Moulton, there is some evidence of the influence of the war issues on his pastoral writings, with his reluctance to ascribe any destiny other than heaven to the ordinary, non-religious British troops that had died⁴. This influence is difficult to detect elsewhere, but may be a general reason for the developing trend to see the Atonement in terms of revelation of the love of God rather than propitiation of the wrath of God. Richmond College re-opened with roughly the same doctrinal basis as before the War, whilst at Handsworth the liberal leaning had in fact been corrected, with a balance of doctrinal standards in the staff. Overall the outlook of the Theological Institution remained much as it had been prior to the war. During the period up to 1932 further changes took place. Handsworth actually became the most conservative centre whilst Richmond also took a slight turn in that direction, with liberal and conservative theological opinion being evenly represented. Headingley became more predominant-

ly liberal when it re-opened in 1930, having been evenly-balanced before the war. Didsbury remained virtually all-liberal and this was the case too with the newly-founded Wesley House at Cambridge.

By the time of Methodist Union in 1932, the Wesleyan Methodist Theological Institution was set in a liberal doctrinal stance against the index of hell, judgment and the need for conversion. Around one-third of the ministerial candidates were receiving their theological education at colleges where tutor-influence was virtually entirely liberal whilst only those at Handsworth were in an environment where a conservative attitude represented the predominant bias. Taking the Wesleyan, Primitive and United denominations overall, one-half of the candidates were in colleges where liberal doctrine was the norm and only one-seventh were in a place where conservative influence was more than evenly represented. Even amongst the conservative tutors, there was often a marked reluctance to mirror the full extent of Wesley's doctrine, such as the assertion that the majority of mankind stands condemned before God.

This thesis has been mainly concerned with presenting the results of research into what was happening in the Methodist theological colleges from a doctrinal point of view. Much further work needs to be done, especially for Wesleyan Methodism, to plot the personal backgrounds of the tutors in order to show how the new, liberal, viewpoint came to be absorbed into their own understanding and hence into the curriculum of the colleges. From the evidence that has been gathered, however, it is clear that one overriding reason for the development of liberal theology in Methodism was the absence in the period of any great leader to champion its traditional doctrines. Nor was there any major external conservative Protestant influence upon British theological circles generally, since Barth's theological

writings only became widely influential at the end of our period. However, it is debatable how relevant that is, with the continuing broad church nature of Methodism after 1932 when Barth's works had become widely known. Although Methodism had changed in theological understanding, the 'family' atmosphere of chapel life had been retained and Methodist scholars were likely to take far more notice of other Methodists if any lead was to be had there.

Perhaps one of the most telling remarks about the influence of the foremost Methodist scholars is given by William Strawson⁵. 'It has to be admitted that', wrote Strawson 'with one or two notable exceptions, Methodist theology is mainly of interest within the family of Methodism. Methodism has not in fact produced many outstanding scholars, and has depended upon other Churches for leadership in theological matters. One reason for this is that Methodists are never professional theologians. Methodist ministers certainly are all basically circuit men, and even those who are set aside to teach theology in colleges remain in this sense biased towards a circuit ministry, which is as it should be'.

Given this general lack of high-profile theological influence in Methodism it is not surprising that there was a general movement away from the thought of Wesley towards a pattern of thought more fully representing the breadth of opinion then becoming increasingly popular in England. The conservative biblical theology of the Methodist doctrinal standards was the inheritance from the one man John Wesley with his strong personality and powers of leadership as well as his clearly conservative biblical thought. Once more than a century had passed since his death, Methodists were feeling much more free to amend his doctrine rather than treat it as an inviolable norm. This was just one strand in the overall change in Methodism from a person-

ality-centred movement to broad national church.

That there was no overriding personality of theological influence within the Wesleyan colleges in our period is shown by the various expositions of doctrine in the preceding chapters. Even within the relatively narrow doctrinal area of hell, judgment and the need for personal conversion, there is a wide variety in detail, and this points to the freedom felt by the writers to describe their own beliefs rather than to follow any standard recommendation or code once Wesley's standards had been departed from.

Yet it was not true that the theological tutors felt no guidance other than that of their conscience as to what they should believe or teach if Wesley's standards were to be ignored. It is already shown how A. S. Peake was a formative influence on Primitive and United Methodism during the period. The general stance of the liberal Wesleyan theologians can be explained by their respect for that great man of their own denomination, John Scott Lidgett. According to Rupert⁶ Davies, Lidgett 'was, in fact, the William Temple of Methodism and, according to many, the greatest Methodist since Wesley.' Although Lidgett fits somewhat awkwardly into this study, not having been a collage tutor himself, he was undoubtedly a personality of the greatest influence within Methodism, and it was the umbrella of respectability that he gave to liberal doctrine which enabled and encouraged the growth of that doctrine within the Wesleyan colleges. What Peake did for Primitive and United Methodism through their colleges at first-hand, Lidgett did for Wesleyan Methodism at a stage removed, less directly but ultimately with a far wider influence.

In 1932 the newly united Methodist Church was poised on the brink of a long period of decline which to date has continued for nearly sixty years. From 1918 onwards the energies of the constituent denom-

inations were at policy level centred around the issues of union. By 1932 British society was very different from that of a generation earlier. There had been many changes in the mid-week activities of Methodism, with the wider growth of leisure pursuits generally, but by 1932 even the changes which had been implemented were no longer effective to keep an active church membership. The nineteenth-century internal disagreements which had caused the Methodists to split into separate denominations had been long forgotten and healed by the date of Union by those joining the new united Church. Also largely absent was the once distinctive cry of Methodist Preachers, 'flee from the wrath to come'. In the social environment of the mid-1930's onwards, which tended to draw people away from church membership, those doctrines which fuelled the sense of urgency in evangelistic zeal were largely no longer present in the Methodist Church and the Church failed to maintain its membership. Today the social warmth and family atmosphere to be experienced in most local Methodist churches is second to none, but the fire of John Wesley is usually conspicuously absent. The Methodist church today still believes evangelism to be one of its hallmarks, but evangelistic effort is largely redefined in terms of a strong social Gospel.

'I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist in Europe or America. But I am afraid, lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power; and this undoubtedly will be the case, unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit and discipline with which they first set out.' -
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John Wesley.

Table 2 - Membership of the Denominations

Membership (including members "on trial")

<u>Year</u>	<u>Wesleyan</u>	<u>Primitive</u>	<u>United</u>	<u>Total</u>
1890	451,639	181,340	133,477	765,568
1900	495,687	186,704	141,459	823,850
1907	528,448	206,655	159,076	894,179
1913	510,780	204,133	149,408	864,321
1915	502,809	203,119	149,329	855,257
1920	483,763	200,175	144,386	828,324
1925	515,139	201,902	147,388	864,429
1932	517,551	199,549	142,562	859,662
1933				856,680
1939				820,793
1950				753,294
1960				734,146
1968				651,139

Notes

- a) All figures are for Great Britain only.
- b) "United" Methodist figures for 1890 and 1900 represent the totals for the three then separate constituent denominations i.e. Methodist New Connexion; United Methodist Free Churches; Bible Christians.

Source of statistics - Various Agendas and Minutes of Conference.

Table 3 - Total Numbers of Ministers serving in Great Britain

in selected years

<u>Year</u>	<u>Wesleyan</u>	<u>Primitive</u>	<u>United</u>	<u>Total</u>
1907	2445	1115	848	4408
1915	2576	1149	848	4573
1920	2520	1095	736	4351
1932	2510	1131	729	4370

Notes

- a) statistics compiled from information in Primitive Methodist Minutes of Conference.
- b) all figures include approximately 20% supernumerary (retired) ministers.

Table 4 - Candidates entering the Ministry

<u>Year</u>	<u>Wesleyan</u>	<u>Primitive</u>	<u>United</u>	<u>Total</u>
1907	72	29	19	120
1915	82	26	7	115
1920	58	25	2	85
1932	74	19	12	105

Notes

- a) statistics compiled from 1933 ministerial lists of those still living in that year.
- b) figures include ministers serving in foreign missions under the jurisdiction of the British Conference.

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Note: Full publication details are to be found in the Bibliography.

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An example of this devotion to Hartley can be consulted in a motion of the Primitive Methodist Conference of 1916 delivered to Sir William and Lady Hartley. This amounts to an emotive eulogy, ending with the words "In unabated affection and confidence we commend each of you to the care and blessing of our Father in Heaven." (quoted in A. S. Peake, Hartley, p.99)
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