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Smith, John Quincy

THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE KEIGHLEY METHODIST CIRCUIT: A STUDY OF METHODISM IN A YORKSHIRE TEXTILE COMMUNITY, 1748-1850

The Ohio State University

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THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT
OF THE KEIGHLEY METHODIST CIRCUIT:
A STUDY OF METHODISM IN A YORKSHIRE
TEXTILE COMMUNITY, 1748-1850

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By

John Q. Smith, B.A., M.A.

*****

The Ohio State University
1985

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In Memory Of My Father, Ralph Smith,  
And My Father-in-law, Curtis Justice
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION ......................................... ii  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .................................. iii  
VITA ................................................ v  
LIST OF TABLES .................................... ix  
LIST OF FIGURES .................................. x  
PREFACE ........................................... xi  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.  ORIGINS OF THE CIRCUIT</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. STRUCTURE AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE KEIGHLEY CIRCUIT</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. GROWTH OF THE CIRCUIT: 1791 TO 1850</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. FINANCES AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: 1791 TO 1850</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finances</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Schools</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.  PRIMITIVE METHODISM IN KEIGHLEY TO 1850</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

vii
Notes ............................................. 294
CONCLUSION ......................................... 297
APPENDIX
    Map of portions of the early Haworth Round ................. 309
BIBLIOGRAPHY ....................................... 310
LIST OF TABLES

TABLE                                          PAGE

1. Occupations in the Keighley circuit in 1763 106
LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURES</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Circuit membership: 1763-1792</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Circuit income: 1755-1792</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Circuit finances--income and expenditure: 1755-1792</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Parish expenditures on the poor: 1745-1791</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Circuit membership: 1792-1837</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Membership of the Wesleyan Connexion: 1792-1851</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Parish expenditures on the poor: 1792-1837</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Circuit income: 1792-1851</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Circuit finances--income and expenditures: 1792-1851</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Worship patterns in the Keighley circuit: 1814-1849</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Map of portions of the early Haworth Round</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The origins of Methodism and its role in British society have long been the objects of historical research and speculation, as the ever-growing bibliography of British Methodism reveals. Historians of religion, as well as scholars interested in politics and society, have felt compelled to consider the role of Methodism in modern English history. Their explanations of its appeal and their conclusions regarding its impact on British society have sometimes differed sharply.

It would appear that the most fruitful method of resolving these differences would be to carry out research at the local level—or, to use the Methodist nomenclature, at the circuit level. The Keighley circuit offers such a fruitful study. This circuit included the town of Keighley and the surrounding vicinity, a vicinity that was originally rather large geographically but decreased in area as the number of adherents to Methodism increased, the circuit subdividing and forming several smaller circuits. What
makes it especially intriguing is the fact that by 1851, the religious census shows a larger percentage of Methodist worshippers in Keighley than Anglicans.¹

An examination of the origins and subsequent growth and development of the circuit poses a number of questions. First of all, what process characterized the formation of the circuit? How did the itinerant preaching of the Scottish evangelist William Darney and others, the pastoral oversight of the Reverend William Grimshaw of Haworth, and the organizational supervision of John Wesley and his assistants all work together to form a unified, structured circuit? A more difficult yet more significant question also emerges: why did the Methodists succeed? What attracted so many people in the Keighley circuit to what many considered during this period to be a fringe movement, both religiously and socially disruptive? And from what classes of Englishmen were these coverts to Methodism drawn?

As the circuit grew numerically and as its organizational structure consolidated, a trend towards institutionalization occurred. Methodism progressed from a fringe movement owing much to the charismatic appeal of Wesley and many of his colorful co-workers to a respectable, increasingly sedate community of worshippers. What caused this evolution? Why did the
organizational structure of the circuit, including the basic institutions of Methodism, work so well, surviving the ebb of the earlier evangelistic fervor? As Methodism became more respectable, was it meeting different needs than those it had addressed earlier? Did any particular local social or economic conditions especially stimulate growth after the formative period?

During the period after John Wesley's death, there occurred a number of divisions within Methodism, resulting in the formation of various Methodist sects, in addition to the main body of Wesleyans. Concerning only one of these non-Wesleyan sects, the Primitive Methodists, does any local archival evidence exist. How can we account for the significant religious impact of Primitive Methodism in the first half of the nineteenth century, at a time when Wesleyanism was becoming firmly established institutionally and still thriving? Was the character of Primitive Methodism substantially different from that of conventional Wesleyanism, despite the fact that the Primitives borrowed wholesale most of the structure and usages of Wesleyanism?

It is the purpose of this dissertation to answer these questions for the Keighley circuit in Yorkshire. The most important sources for this study are the circuit records themselves: financial accounts, minutes
of meetings, and membership registers. The latter were updated on a regular basis, and despite gaps in the surviving data, they give a significant picture of the numerical strength of the circuit and its changes: sometimes declining, sometimes remaining fairly stable, but usually growing. Though, as A. D. Gilbert has pointed out, there are some inaccuracies in Methodist statistics at the national level, yet, because of the connectional structure of Methodism, there is a fairly high degree of accuracy in its statistics. Furthermore, since individual memberships were constantly evaluated, distortion due to nominal religious ties would be minimal. 2 Given the supervision by class leaders and the fact that the entire circuit consisted of a population fairly easily counted, it is unlikely that statistics at the circuit level would contain significant inaccuracies or deliberate distortion. The generalizations and conclusions of this study, therefore, will be based on reliable evidence.
NOTES


CHAPTER I

ORIGINS OF THE CIRCUIT

Documentation for the beginnings of Methodism in Yorkshire is sparse. While official records from portions of what came to be known as the Haworth Round exist from as early as 1748, to get behind such records—to see how Methodism in this area first came into being—the historian must rely primarily on sporadic references to the individuals who were the primary evangelists and leaders of the movement.

The earliest evangelistic activity in Yorkshire that can be directly connected to Methodism was that of Benjamin Ingham, described by Bernard Semmel as the "evangelist of Yorkshire."¹ Ingham's relationship with John Wesley went back to their time at Oxford University. One of the original Oxford Methodists, Ingham evidenced a religious zeal which ultimately led him to accompany Wesley on the ill-fated missionary trek to Georgia from which Ingham returned to England in 1737. A significant turning point in Ingham's life occurred in June, 1738,
when he accompanied Wesley to Herrnhut, sealing his ties to the Moravians. Late in 1737 Ingham, in connection with the Moravians, began to evangelize parts of Yorkshire and to set up religious societies that undoubtedly helped pave the way for Wesley's societies there.  

Elie Halevy also refers to Ingham in his study of the origins of Methodism. According to Halevy, portions of the West Riding had the appearance of "the outskirts of an immense city." Economic disaster in the woolen industry had created widespread poverty in the area, a poverty which made many receptive to Ingham's evangelistic message—so receptive, in fact, that what resulted amounted to a religious revival of considerable proportion.  

It seems remarkable, considering subsequent developments, that Ingham initially worked hand in hand with John Nelson, who was to become one of Wesley's most stalwart supporters, in setting up societies directly connected to the Moravians in England. Wesley himself remarked on Ingham's early cooperation with Nelson, but he went on to note that Ingham eventually opposed Nelson, presumably because Nelson counselled all to attend both "church and sacrament." Ingham's opposition to Nelson purportedly went so far that he forbade those in his societies to hear Nelson.
It was Ingham's continuing ties with the Moravians that undoubtedly contributed most to the disaffection between him and Wesley. The story of Wesley's break with Moravianism, because of what he perceived to be its tendency towards quietism and even antinomianism, is well known. In June of 1742, Welsey was at Dewsbury Moor and Mirfield in the West Riding, Ingham having recently preceded him there. Wesley's Journal for that month contains a complaint concerning the dissension sown by Ingham. According to Wesley, Ingham was wreaking havoc among Methodist converts, attempting to convince them that they were deluded and without faith. If he found himself unable to convince them that their conversion was an illusion, he then instructed them that they should at least "keep it to themselves" and stay away from the church and the sacrament. This was in keeping with the "quietist" notions that one should keep silent about one's inner life and that the ordinances were of no value to those who were not certain of their regeneration. For Wesley, one of the most destructive results of all this was Ingham's attempts to keep those people from faith in the ordinances of God.

Wesley's Journal includes a transcription of a letter dated September 8, 1746, which he sent to Ingham, responding to a number of statements previously made by
Ingham. The contents of the letter serve to underline the extent of the separation between the two men. Apparently Ingham, aware of Wesley's dismay with Moravian quietism, had sought to downplay those aspects of the movement. Both blamed the other for the disruption in fellowship. Wesley closed the letter with a reminder that his enemies in the Moravian Fetter Lane society in London, who had bitterly maligned him, had made no serious attempts at reconciliation, despite Ingham's assertions to the contrary. Wesley's letter implied that Ingham had not seemed overly concerned with making scrupulously truthful statements.

By 1765, Welsey emphatically considered Ingham's ideas to be antinomian. Wesleyan Methodists found it easy to believe that the destructive tendency of antinomian teachings inevitably resulted in the breakup of the majority of Ingham's societies. Was there perhaps a hint of delight in Wesley's somber observation that Ingham had once had a large society in Tadcaster, but it had now dwindled to "nothing," while the Methodists were growing in numbers?

Thus one can glimpse, through this quarrel, the remote origins of Methodism in Yorkshire itself. Benjamin Ingham, with the help of John Nelson, had laid the groundwork for Wesley's later evangelistic work there.
This groundwork undoubtedly affected religious developments in the large area of western Yorkshire and the eastern part of Lancashire which formed the Haworth Round. But other, initially independent, forces were also at work in this region, one of the first being a Scottish evangelist named William Darney.11

Darney's personal history is obscure; Curnock believes that Darney was converted in the Scottish Revival under the Rev. James Robe of Kilsyth. At any rate, it seems that he began his preaching activity in England at Rossendale in 1742.12 In 1744 one of the fruits of his preaching was a religious society he formed near Todmorden.13 What probably proved to be his most enduring influence was that over William Grimshaw, the Anglican curate of Haworth, whom he was meeting secretly in the quarries (undoubtedly because of Grimshaw's initial concern for his reputation as an Anglican minister). Soon, however, the two men began holding open evangelistic services together, with Grimshaw leading in the hymns and offering prayers while Darney preached.14

By 1747 Darney had apparently established a network of religious societies in the area and believed that they were in need of some closer supervision and, perhaps, screening. In May of 1747, Wesley noted that Darney had requested him to "examine" his societies.15 While the
request is somewhat vague, perhaps Darney saw the advantage of a closer connection between his work and the network of societies that were already directly under the auspices of Wesley. It seems that Wesley's initial response to the request was supportive. On January 9, 1749, Wesley wrote to John Bennet requesting that he not only visit the itinerant preacher then stationed in Yorkshire (apparently Wesley's "circuit" assistant) as often as possible but also visit Darney's societies at least quarterly.\(^{16}\)

Despite Wesley's immediate willingness to oversee Darney's societies, he seems to have had some misgivings about Darney himself. In 1750, John Bennet urgently requested Wesley's advice regarding the continual supervision of Darney's societies. On February 9, 1750, Wesley wrote to Bennet, stating that he was not going to take the initiative in regulating the Yorkshire societies set up by Darney unless the societies themselves (and not just Darney) wished it. The contents of the letter clearly indicate that Wesley did not have a high opinion of Darney. Charles Wesley's refusal to admit Darney to the Leeds Conference in 1751 offered yet another sign of official Methodist disapproval of Darney.\(^{17}\)

Unquestionably, the primary reason for Wesley's uncertainty regarding Darney was doctrinal, Darney being a
Scottish Calvinist. In a letter to Nicholas Norton, dated September 3, 1756, Wesley explained that he did not want Darney preaching in the Methodist societies if he were going to preach Calvinism. It should be noted here that Wesley was well able to work with those who differed from him on doctrinal issues; that was not the problem. Wesley's concern here was the protection of his societies against the infiltration of Calvinist teaching. This point is clearly made in a letter to Matthew Lowes, dated September 8, 1761, in which Wesley said that William Darney could be part of the Connexion (Wesley's network of preachers) provided he kept his Calvinist opinions to himself. For the time being, Wesley seemed satisfied. The next month he wrote to Lowes and informed him that he had specifically assigned Darney, along with Thomas Hanby, to the Allendale circuit, in Northumberland.

Darney's relationship with Wesley and the Connexion was a stormy one. In 1764 Thomas Rankin complained to Wesley that, although Darney had been docile for a while, he had started preaching things contrary to Methodist beliefs. Consequently, Rankin had felt obliged to dismiss Darney and replace him with another preacher. Seldom one to mince words, Wesley, in his reply to Rankin on November 6, curtly remarked that he would "either mend William Darney or end him." meaning, of course that he would drop
him permanently from the Connexion. On January 13, 1765, Wesley again wrote to Rankin, instructing him to observe Darney for a month, to determine "whether he will walk according to our Rules or no." If Darney failed to live up to their expectation during the probationary period, Wesley would have to part company with him. Wesley hoped, though, to be able to keep Darney in the Connexion so that he could use him to fill a vacancy in "the Wiltshire Round." To make it clear that he was not singling Darney out and that the same restrictions applied to anyone in a position of leadership, Wesley ended the letter by saying that he would sanction the removal of any stewards or leaders who would not follow the Methodist rules and doctrines. The following September, Wesley assigned Darney to the London circuit. An interesting, though brief, reference to Darney in a letter to James Oddie, dated January 12, 1768, is much friendlier in tone. In the letter, Wesley describes Darney as "an old tried Scot" and requests that he go to preach in the Dunbar circuit; Wesley even personally assured Oddie that he would provide a suitable preacher to take Darney's place in his current assignment. The letter would seem to indicate a respect for Darney's talent and a satisfaction with his work.

Much less distinguished (and probably less worthy of mention) is Darney's hymn-writing endeavors. Even Charles
Wesley's most inferior hymns are in a different class altogether from the doggerel composed by Darney; it was obviously not fear of competition that elicited Wesley's scorn. One "hymn" composed by Darney in 1751 is, however, of some interest, though not for any literary or aesthetic qualities. Consisting of 104 verses, it was virtually a lyrical saga of the spread of evangelical religion in the region. Darney not only mentioned by name many towns and villages of the region, but also gave his editorial comment on the spiritual climate of each location, amidst a mass of pious expressions and aspirations. Of Keighley, Darney wrote:

In Keighley, by thine own right hand,
A church is planted there;
O help them, Saviour! all to stand,
Thy goodness to declare.

Five verses dedicated to Haworth reveal not only Darney's respect for the effectiveness of Grimshaw's ministry there, but also an awareness that many of Grimshaw's own flock were not always as sincerely responsive to his efforts as those of surrounding parishes:

Haworth's a Place that God doth own,
With many a sweet Smile;
With Power the Gospel's preach'd therein,
Which many a one doth feel.

Both far and near they hither come,
Their hungry Soul's to feed;
And God from Heaven sendeth down
To them the living Bread.
There's many go rejoicing home,
In praising of their God;
And want their Neighbours for to come,
And taste the heav'nly Food.

But while the Strangers do receive,
The Blessing from Above;
There's many near the Church that starve,
For want of Jesu's love.

They do content themselves, like Swine
To feed on Husks and Dirt;
For all their Pleasure is 2%o Sin,
And live in carnal Sport.

One can only wonder how edifying the worshippers in Darney's societies found these and similar stanzas.

Despite the fact that, as one of Wesley's itinerant preachers, Darney travelled considerably over various parts of the country, his close ties with the region of Haworth and Keighley are evident in the early circuit records of the Haworth Round. Entries for 1749 indicate that regular payments of £1.10s. to Mrs. Darney came out of official funds. In January, 1749, the financial accounts note a charge of 14 shillings for boots for William Darney and a payment of 1s.7d. to him. 24 By January, 1760 when the "round" had assumed the geographic form it would retain for some time and its records were much more complete, circuit monies amounting to £1/1/0 were paid to William Darney. In October, 1762 Darney was responsible for collecting contributions from the following societies (or perhaps, in some cases, classes):
Colne, Roughlee, Bent Wood Green, Padiham, Walton, Owlerton, Top o' the Coalpits, Haslingden, Tall Barn, Boothfold, and Bacup. For the two subsequent quarters, the circuit paid out money to cover expenses for Darney's horse, and for the first three quarters in 1763 Darney received regular payments of £3/5/0 per quarter. The last entry in the circuit accounts mentioning Darney records a payment of £1/15/4 to him for his journey to "Ln." (presumably London). 25

Undoubtedly the most colorful, as well as the most directly influential, of all those who paved the way for Methodism in the vicinity of Keighley and Haworth was the Reverend William Grimshaw. In fact, not only did he lay the foundation for the work of the Methodists there but served as its immediate supervisor once it began. Grimshaw was one of Wesley's few close associates among the Anglican clergy, some others being John Fletcher and Vincent Perronet, the vicar of Shoreham. In considering Grimshaw's place among Wesley's chief clerical co-workers, Curnock writes: "In activity, ardour, and intrepidity Grimshaw was chief." 26 He perhaps should have added 'in administrative service' as well, since Grimshaw essentially served as the circuit superintendent of the extensive "Haworth Round" until his death.
Wesley includes in his *Journal*, in commemoration of Grimshaw's passing, an account of his life. The content of it is typical Methodist hagiographical fare; however, there is no reason to assume any inaccuracy in what facts are presented, many of which Wesley undoubtedly originally received from Grimshaw himself. A native of the region, Grimshaw was born at Brendle, not far from Preston in Lancashire county on September 3, 1708. He went to school at Blackburn and Heskin and when he was 18 attended Christ's College, Cambridge.

The thrust of Wesley's account obviously emphasizes the spiritual development of Grimshaw, so the facts selected about his adult life are those related to this development. Grimshaw allegedly lost all serious interest in religion from the time he began as a student at Cambridge until his ordination as a deacon in 1731 when his religious zeal briefly revived. At that time he started meeting weekly with a group of persons from Rochdale for prayer, singing, and reading. Grimshaw was subsequently transferred to Todmorden where his zeal again experienced a temporary cooling; although he was conscientious in his ministerial duties, he also enjoyed "worldly" diversions. The portrait presented hardly seems the stereotype of a corrupt, immoral village priest. The diversions were undoubtedly innocent pastimes which
would have seemed sinfully frivolous only to the sensitive conscience of the later intensely disciplined Grimshaw (and his hagiographer Wesley as well).

The period around 1734 proved to be another turning point for Grimshaw. As evidence of a renewed religious fervor, he began to catechize the young persons of his church, to preach the necessity of a vital piety, and to visit his congregation in order to urge them to seek their own salvation, in contrast to the purely social visits he had previously paid to his parishioners. He also at that time gave up the "diversions" which he had permitted himself previously. There was a parallel intensification of his own personal devotional exercises. Grimshaw began to engage in private prayer four times a day, under a heavy sense of sin and guilt. According to Wesley's account, for a period of three years, he had no relief from this feeling of guilt, but he did not reveal it to anyone at the time. Again in 1742 Grimshaw experienced another crisis in his inner development, when he received the "assurance" that he had been pardoned for his sins. 30

This liberating experience, and the accompanying emotional stimulus, seems to have released inner energy, energy which showed itself in the considerable expansion of his personal ministry throughout the rest of his life. Since many of the poor excused themselves from church
attendance because of their lack of appropriate attire, he set up Sunday evening lectures for them, after having already preached twice the same day. He also began to preach periodically in surrounding areas, especially for the benefit of those whose age and health kept them away from church. When people of neighboring parishes urged him to come to their homes to speak, he did so despite the obvious irregularity of the practice. It seems that a robust, healthy physical body was an important aid to his enormous output of energy. According to Wesley, during a sixteen-year period of ministry, he was only incapacitated by illness once.31

Grimshaw apparently had not become familiar with the Methodists until after he had assumed the curacy of Haworth in May, 1742, the year which, according to Frank Baker, marked the starting date of the religious awakening around Haworth.32 Wesley's brief account neglects to mention the fact that Grimshaw's initial reaction to the Methodist preachers was not at all positive, despite his similar evangelical orientation. John Wilkinson and Thomas Colbeck, a Keighley grocer, were responsible for beginning the first Methodist class at Haworth, and Grimshaw opposed their work. His attitude changed from one of antagonism to one of tolerance and acceptance and then to one of active participation. One of Methodism's
earliest historians, William Myles, gives 1745 as the year when Grimshaw first identified with the Methodists. Methodism provided Grimshaw with yet another outlet for his seemingly indefatigable energy. From 1746 until he died, he engaged in a supervisory capacity over the Methodist classes as well as the local societies.

Grimshaw not only drove himself but sought to motivate others to exert themselves with the same intensity. As minister of the Haworth church, charged with the care of souls, Grimshaw took his responsibility for the spiritual well-being of his parishioners seriously. As he was harsh with himself, so he strictly supervised the characters of his spiritual charges, some of whom undoubtedly did not share his spiritual intensity and did not welcome his overzealous concern for their moral and religious welfare. His expectations of his lay co-workers were high. On July 31, 1757 he wrote to Thomas Lee, one of the Methodist lay preachers in the area. Addressing him with friendly familiarity as "Tommy," Grimshaw first says that he hopes Lee can preach twenty times a week or more. Then later in the letter, almost as an afterthought, he enthusiastically exhorts Lee to preach four times a day or even thirty times a week.

A letter written by Grimshaw to the Methodists in London on January 9, 1760 reveals the essentials of
Grimshaw's practical theology. As an example of his spiritual counsel, it undoubtedly paralleled the kind of advice and exhortation he often must have given to his hearers in the Haworth Round. In the letter he delineated four categories of people who are in advantageous circumstances: those who have gone on (i.e. died) in Christ, those who are alive now in Christ, those who want to be in Christ, and, surprisingly, those who do not want to be in Christ. In fact, he says, the only folk who are truly unfortunate are those who have already died out of Christ. Concerning this category, exercising a degree of restraint, he curtly writes: "These it is best to let alone, and say no more about them." What follows is a perfect opening for an evangelistic sermon.

The blessedness of his first two categories would have been somewhat obvious to his readers and needs no further comment. Concerning those who, though yet unconverted, long to be "in Christ," he says that God already possesses them; their desires are from Him, and they are sure to have peace one day. His advice to them is precisely that of John Wesley: he urges them to attend diligently and persistently to "every means of grace" as they wait for God to work faith in them. It was a typically tender Methodist appeal. No matter how serious the sins they have committed--or how numerous--God would
lovingly forgive them.

In contrast to this, Grimshaw states that the advantage of those who do not desire to be converted lies in the fact that they still have the opportunity. His tone now becomes more severe, and he indulges in language that is likewise typical preaching fare: "As death leaves you, judgement will find you. And if you die as you are, out of Christ, void of true faith, unregenerate, unsanctified, snares, fire and brimstone, storm and tempest, God will rain upon you (Ps. xl.6) as your eternal, intolerable portion to drink." Of this rhetorical mixture of comfort and dread, Wesley would have heartily approved.

The notion that each bears personal responsibility for his or her eternal destiny is clearly evident, as are the ideas that salvation is offered to all and that those who would be recipients of it must meet certain conditions. What emerges is that, for Grimshaw, theological propositions are subservient to the practical goal of converting sinners, and this fits in well with Methodist theory and practice. Although he was a bit more open to certain Calvinist propositions than were the Wesleys, Grimshaw's basic theological views tended to parallel those of Methodism. Grimshaw did, however, have some misgivings about the Methodist doctrine of
perfection. Certainly some of his hesitancy could have been due to some of the misguided, exaggerated notions conveyed by some of the lay preachers, but one cannot help but believe that Wesley himself too abruptly glossed over the difficulty. In July, 1761 Wesley preached a sermon at Haworth on the theme of perfection, a sermon which appeared to satisfy Grimshaw. After hearing the sermon, Grimshaw told Wesley that the love of God and the grace to live up to the Sermon on the Mount was the perfection he believed in and prayed to receive. While this, in general, parallels Wesley's own definition of Christian perfection, it leaves out much that became standard Methodist belief, as Wesley hammered out the specific implications of the doctrine of perfection and sought to express it in increasingly more theologically precise and systematic terms.

Grimshaw's increasingly active participation in Methodist evangelistic activity inevitably led him to adopt some irregular methods. He preached in the homes of people in neighboring parishes, and he often held preaching services on Sunday evenings in Keighley. Wesley, when defending such irregular practices as setting up local religious societies for fellowship and using lay assistants, cited Grimshaw as an example. Writing on October 31, 1755, Wesley remarked that, although Grimshaw
had been a true gospel minister for some time, his work had borne no fruit until he adopted extraordinary methods, such as would not have been officially countenanced by Anglican authorities.41

This should not obscure the fact that Grimshaw was, first and foremost, a minister of the Church of England, undoubtedly one of the qualities that tied him so closely to the Wesleys. Frank Baker explains that even though Grimshaw could cordially work with Dissenters, it was even easier for him to associate closely with Methodism, since he viewed most of its adherents as loyal Anglicans. The other side of the coin, however, was that he decided that if the Methodists left the Church he would leave the Methodists (at least in an "official connexion"). Matters came dangerously close to this resolution in 1760, when Grimshaw became alarmed because some lay preachers had taken it upon themselves to administer the sacraments, which he saw as a nearly inevitable result of the growing practice of licensing Methodist preachers and preaching houses. His concern made him determined to drop his association with the Methodists. What actually happened, though, is that Grimshaw served as a catalyst to the cause of continued association between the Methodists and the Church of England. Despite a somewhat fatalistic approach at the outset of the controversy, Grimshaw combined forces
with Wesley to turn the tide against formal separation from the Church, and as a result Grimshaw was able to continue his work as a Methodist leader.\textsuperscript{42}

Grimshaw's official and very genuine loyalty to the Anglican Church did not spare him from the vigorous persecution experienced by the early Methodists, some of which was even incited by Anglican officials. Wesley records one such incident. He and Grimshaw were riding to Roughlee where they were to rendezvous with Thomas Colbeck, one of the local Methodist leaders from Keighley. They commenced a preaching service, which a local mob soon interrupted. The leader of the mob forced Wesley, along with Grimshaw, Colbeck, and some others, to accompany the angry crowd to Barrowford, where the mob viciously attacked the Methodists, almost drowning one of them. Wesley initially felt some concern about Grimshaw, but he was soon impressed at the fearlessness with which the Anglican curate withstood the flying debris hurled by the attackers.\textsuperscript{43} Undoubtedly it was such intrepidity, along with similar character traits of this energetic priest, that caused Wesley to write to Ebenezer Blackwell in July, 1761, concerning Grimshaw: "He carries fire wherever he goes."\textsuperscript{44}

Not surprisingly, Grimshaw seemed to go wherever Wesley did when the latter was visiting the Haworth Round,
often accompanying him on his preaching journeys in the area.\textsuperscript{45} Grimshaw exercised various duties in the circuit, both in official and unofficial capacities. For example, he served as an intermediary in one of the disagreements between Wesley and John Bennet (the husband of Grace Murray, whom Wesley at one time had hoped to marry).\textsuperscript{46} This particular quarrel involved a preaching house, which Bennet thought Wesley was trying to own, though in fact Wesley only sought a deed which would ensure that John and Charles Wesley, as well as Grimshaw, possessed the authority to appoint those who would preach therein. While the difficulty clearly seemed to be the result of Bennet's own misinterpretation of the situation, it is unlikely that Wesley himself could have reassured him, given their stormy relationship in the past. In this case it was Grimshaw who worked out the problem.

The financial records of the early Haworth Round reveal at least some of Grimshaw's financial responsibilities within the circuit. After July, 1754, Grimshaw was usually the person responsible for collecting the contributions from the Haworth society. Following October, 1755, the accounts mention Grimshaw as holding the circuit funds. For a period between January, 1756 and July, 1757, Grimshaw temporarily replaced Thomas Colbeck as the person collecting the Keighley society
contributions. (The reason for this is not clear, but it seems certain that it was not due to any misconduct on the part of Colbeck, whose reputation appears to have been above reproach.) On January 18, 1759, Alexander Coates, James Oddie, Thomas Colbeck, William Greenwood, Parson Greenwood, and Samuel Fielden—all either preachers or stewards in the Haworth Round—signed a document depositing the sum of £2/16/8 1/2 into the custody of Grimshaw to help pay the costs of building a preaching house at Haworth for the use of the Methodists. From time to time Grimshaw collected contributions from other societies in the circuit, such as those at Mixenden, Haslingden, Colne, and other places. The final entry in the circuit account book concerning Grimshaw is somewhat puzzling. Dated July, 1763, it noted a receipt of £1/10/0 "from Mr. Grimshaw." The last previous quarter day had been April 14, just seven days after Grimshaw's death. The most likely explanation for the July entry is that the "contribution" was part of the settlement of Grimshaw's estate.

Grimshaw's role in the formation and early development of what came to be the Keighley Circuit was crucial. Wesley himself was quick to acknowledge Grimshaw's contribution; his account of Grimshaw in his published Journal is evidence of that. The early
Methodists paid him tribute, as well. For example, Coke and Moore's *Life* of Wesley contains a short account of Grimshaw, as does the *Arminian Magazine* for January, 1795. There would seem to be more conventional piety than truth in what were purported to be the last words of Grimshaw: "Here goes an unprofitable servant."48

But however important was the groundwork laid by these and others, the development of Methodism in this region, as elsewhere, owes the most to the founder of Methodism himself. Taking what he found that others had begun, as well as laying foundations himself, he organized, supervised, controlled, and forged institutions that would survive long after he had gone. An administrator *par excellence*, it was Wesley who channeled the energies which had sometimes been awakened by his own evangelistic work but often by that of others.

The first known visit by the Wesleys to Keighley was in 1746. John Wesley makes only a passing reference to his first visit there on February 25. It is not until his *Journal* entry for May 30, 1747 that he informs his readers that he had admitted 10 persons to a small society the previous year. By 1747 their numbers had grown to over 100. Typically not content with numbers alone, Wesley went on to remark that "above a third of them can rejoice in God, and walk as becomes the gospel."49 He did not
seem displeased with that percentage.

On October 22, 1746, Charles Wesley and Edward Perronet stayed at an inn in Keighley, probably the White Bear. John Booth, innkeeper of the White Bear, was subsequently one of the trustees of the first Methodist preaching house in Keighley, and he is listed in the circuit records as a host for John Wesley. Some of the local people urged Charles Wesley to visit Grimshaw at Haworth while he was there, which he did—the first meeting of Grimshaw with the official Methodist leadership. 50

From that time, Wesley's Journal records frequent visits to Keighley and Haworth in order to visit the members of the societies and to preach. Often the record is a mere passing reference to the fact that he had been there—just another stop on a busy itinerary. But occasionally he throws in a quaint expression of appreciation for the beauty of the terrain (the "wonderful mountains") or a quote such as this: "we rode to Keighley, where there is a loving earnest, well-established people. Here many of our preachers met me and many of our brethren; and God was with us in all our assemblies." 51

Because of the close ties with Grimshaw, Wesley was welcome to preach in the pulpit of the Haworth church, even at a time when he would not have been welcome in many
other Anglican pulpits. Mass preaching services and, through the combined efforts of Wesley and Grimshaw, mass communion services would take place there, often attracting more people than the church could possibly accommodate. For example, when Wesley preached a sermon on Christian perfection at Haworth (primarily for the benefit of settling Grimshaw's doubts on the subject) Grimshaw, observing that the church building could not hold all of the congregation, erected a makeshift scaffolding pulpit, and the people went outside to listen. Those facilities proved so useful that they were used more than once.

It was Wesley's good fortune that even after Grimshaw's death, the church at Haworth was still opened to him. John Richardson, the successor to Grimshaw's curacy, was friendly toward the Methodists and opened the premises to them for mass "preaching and communion services." Wesley seemed to take a special interest in the spiritual welfare of the congregation there after the death of his friend, Grimshaw. On July 1, 1770 he preached a strong, "cutting" sermon at Haworth church. His Journal entry expresses concern for those he considers to be cold and indifferent. On August 3, 1776 Wesley preached to a very large crowd at Haworth. Despite the number of his hearers, he notes that many Methodists at
Haworth had been "perverted" because of the Baptists there. Wesley's musings on the situation led him to the predictable conclusion that the Methodists needed to retain strong ties with the Church of England. In contrast to the "old, upright, loving brethren at Keighley" to whom Wesley preached on April 22, 1774, he considered his hearers at Haworth on April 28, 1776 to be largely unawakened (i.e. not overly concerned with inward religion), despite the size of his congregation there. By 1779 Wesley's fame was, of course, well established, particularly at Haworth. On April 18 he again attracted a large crowd, forcing him to preach in the churchyard rather than inside the building. Never one to be overly concerned with accurate statistics, Wesley naively estimated that "thousands upon thousands were gathered" there to listen. Wesley's Journal records visits to Keighley and Haworth until a year before his death.

Just as the circuit funds paid for many incidental expenses of the traveling preachers stationed there, so they also paid for some of Wesley's expenses while he was visiting the circuit. On the quarter day accounts for April, 1782, the sum of 5s 6d was paid out for shoes for Wesley, and the following quarter showed an expenditure from the circuit funds of £2/19/5 1/2 for his expenses, in addition to what had been paid out by Pateley, one of the
societies in the circuit. Other entries show expenditures for Wesley's turnpike expenses, for the care of his horses, and for his own bill at the White Bear Inn. As Wesley grew older, his traveling habits had to change a bit; he rode in a chaise, rather than on horseback as before, which would have increased his traveling expenses somewhat. 58

While it is not necessary here to go into the details of Wesley's practical theology, which is largely contained in his sermons, it should be noted that Wesley intended that the religion he preached would make a noticeable change in the lives of those who responded to the message. Both the content of his preaching and the discipline of his organization reinforced this in such a way that none of his listeners would miss this point. Basically, Wesley taught that God is a just and loving Father who has granted men and women a great deal of free will, which, because they may abuse it, can cause social ills. Thus evil in society stems primarily from spiritual problems. For the Christian, one of the foremost consequences of obedience is stewardship; thus the true Christian will readily help those in need and part with excessive possessions that would only serve to hinder his or her own spiritual growth. Thus both faith and external response to ethical mandates are essential, and God must discipline
those who will not follow His plan.\textsuperscript{59} According to George Croft Cell, this emphasis on righteous living, on Christian activism, on a holiness ethic, and on the value of work shows that Wesley's teachings are closer to Calvinism than Lutheranism. Wesley himself felt alienated from Luther's teachings when he saw how often the Moravians, whose quietism and mysticism he rigidly opposed, appealed to Luther's writings.\textsuperscript{60} Where Wesley deviated most from the standard Arminianism of his day was his notion that that a person could be assured of being accepted by God.\textsuperscript{61} Assurance of salvation and the hope of Christian perfection were drives to impel service to God and others in early Methodism. Methodist apologists sometimes recognize a marked tendency, when a person stops struggling to win salvation and accepts it by faith, to turn away from selfish concerns to outward concerns, becoming more occupied with giving to others.\textsuperscript{62}

If John Wesley's preaching sought to motivate his hearers to ethical activism, the structure of his organization was designed to reinforce (and enforce) this response. Wesley himself made the one general requirement to join the Methodists a fervent desire to be saved—a desire which would show itself when a person left behind all "known sin," did as much good as he was able, and diligently kept all the ordinances of God. Members had to
go through a probationary period of one quarter to demonstrate their sincerity. For mutual encouragement, but undoubtedly primarily for supervision and discipline, all Methodists were part of a class. Individual societies, generally a body of Methodists in one locality, were then subdivided into classes which provided fellowship, small-group worship and study, and the mechanism for close scrutiny of an individual member's spiritual progress. Later the classes also facilitated the collection of very modest financial subscriptions from the members. The Methodist society in Keighley was organized in 1746, and the first class actually had begun before that date.

In addition to the classes were the band-societies, which Wesley instructed to meet weekly. Reflecting Wesley's concern for higher levels of spiritual attainment, the band societies were an elite group designed to spur members on to greater growth in grace. Some of the early Keighley circuit records list band members. For example, in 1777 there were nine bands in Keighley, six consisting of men and three of women members. Among the band members was Thomas Colbeck, probably the most prominent Methodist in Keighley and a local grocer. One of the bands contained four members and one had only two members, but most consisted of three
persons. In 1780 there were still nine bands with a total of 25 members, one member having been recently removed. A notation recorded with the list remarked that band meetings were "very irregular. They live so far from each other, they can hardly be expected to meet well." Still more elite, at least according to Leslie F. Church, were the "select Societies," whose members were supposed to have attained greater spiritual growth than band members. Neither the Select Societies nor the bands provided close-knit ties of fellowship for most Methodists, which probably is why they did not survive long. At least initially it seems then that Wesley wanted both to drive the members from below, through normal discipline and the fear of expulsion, and to draw them from above, through the existence of elite groups, that they might seek greater maturity.

The designation "society" for a local body of Methodists undoubtedly served to emphasize the fact that Wesley did not want to break with the established church (though the name is still used to designate many local Methodist congregations today). Wesley had numerous precedents for the idea of religious societies. In fact, Halevy points out that one important qualification to the widespread view that eighteenth century England was totally irreligious was precisely the proliferation of
organizations such as the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, and various other religious societies. Wesley's early Oxford Methodists had been simply one of these groups. According to Halevy, these societies and Wesley's early experiments in religious fellowship at Oxford failed in part because they were all composed of members who were mostly High-Churchmen, while the populace at large was more Protestant-oriented. While that particular argument is obviously an oversimplification, there can be no doubt that the transformation of Wesley's own religious views in 1738, and the resultant mass evangelism that followed that change, paved the way for the formation of religious societies quite different from the Oxford Methodists.

An organization designed for the supervision and discipline of its adherents required a hierarchical system of leadership. Wesley developed such a system: at the top was, of course, Wesley himself; then there were the assistants, the preachers, stewards, class leaders, and members. Stewards initially were few in number and directly under Wesley's control. The first Methodist steward was appointed after several people offered to contribute for the lease and maintenance of the Foundry,
and one person volunteered to collect and account for the money. This would indicate that at least some of the organizational structure evolved in response to practical need. As a further indication of Wesley's direct supervision, on June 4, 1747 the number of stewards throughout the nation was reduced from 16 to 7. The qualifications for them were vague and spiritual—typical of Wesley. Stewards were to be diligent, efficient, pious, and show a good spirit. But if a steward broke any of the rules, after three warnings he would be dismissed.68

Wesley's influence extended over those stewards whose responsibilities were largely on the circuit level. At a meeting at Todmorden Edge on October 18, 1748—the first such in the Haworth Round—four stewards of the societies were chosen: James Greenwood, John Parker, John Maden, and James Dyson. Although the brief account of the meeting mentions the election of stewards by majority vote, it also notes that "our Minister Mr. John Wesley or his Successor...shall end any dispute."69 These same societies which were under the direct supervision of Grimshaw and were still under Darney's personal influence clearly acknowledged the ultimate leadership of John Wesley.
Class leaders and stewards were at the lower end of the leadership scale; at the higher end were the assistants and preachers. The assistants, the elite among the traveling preachers, eventually became designated as circuit superintendents, when the organizational structure crystallized. Recognizing the irregularity of using unordained laymen as preachers, Wesley appealed, as he often did, to the fact that his work was an extraordinary dispensation of God's grace and could not be confined to traditional methods, especially since the traditional methods were apparently not working. Myles pointed out that Wesley recognized that these assistants were also extraordinary in the fact that they were usually not educated for clerical duties but had been trained for a trade.  

Though there were some local preachers who kept up a very active preaching ministry while still practicing their secular occupations, both the assistants and the other traveling preachers were full-time employees of the Connexion. Perhaps in order to detach them from "worldly" ties, but almost certainly as a means of strengthening his personal control, Wesley used the itinerancy system. He considered it a useful discipline to make sure that no preacher stayed within a particular circuit for more than two years. In a letter dated September 22, 1771 he
further clarified his wishes. Saying that although he sometimes permitted preachers to stay in a circuit for two years when circumstances and his discretion warranted it, the rule was to be that preachers were to move every year. He elsewhere declared that one of the distinctions between assistants and preachers was that assistants could stay in a circuit two years, while a preacher could only remain for one.72

Another institutional development that occurred in Wesley's lifetime was that of trusteeship. As the Methodists built preaching houses (Wesley did not wish them called chapels), trustees were appointed over them. While the need for this is obvious, it proved to be a considerable threat to the centralized authority Wesley hoped to maintain. In fact, in some areas in England, trustees had caused Wesley considerable difficulty. Wesley had criticized the trust deed for one preaching house in Liverpool because it presumed to provide for the congregational election of a preacher if the Conference did not appoint one.73 When the leaders of the society in Leeds decided to expel persons from the society, independently of Wesley's wishes, he vehemently asserted his authority in the matter.74 But far more serious was the incident when the trustees at Dewsbury assumed the power to reject any preachers they did not want in their
preaching house. Considering the problem, the 1789 Conference finally decided that the only course open would be to build a new preaching house. One of the matters of discipline Wesley insisted on above all else was that preachers were to be judged, not by trustees, but by the other preachers in Conference (and, of course, above all by Wesley himself). He felt strongly that trustees should not have the power to appoint and dismiss preachers. Preachers must be free to declare the Word of God without having to please someone for their livelihood. In addition, independence of preachers was necessary to preserve the system of itinerancy. Throughout Wesley's lifetime, he seems to have had no real trouble with the trustees in the Haworth Round (and the Keighley circuit after it changed its name).

The governing body of the Methodists in general, and the itinerant preachers in particular, was the Conference, which decided where the preachers and assistants would be assigned for the following year and made pronouncements on Methodist doctrine and practice. In such matters, the final action of Conference was to put its stamp of approval on Wesley's wishes. Conference was far from being a democratic body; the very idea of democracy was anathema to Wesley. In 1785 he wrote that while he was alive, at least, Conference would consist of those
"preachers whom I invite to confer with me [emphasis Wesley's]."76 Although he adamantly maintained that he was not assuming papal powers, basing his argument on the fact that he did not presume to rule all Christians "under pain of damnation," he firmly asserted that while he was alive there would be no general Conference of all the preachers which would decide matters by vote. To his critics he responded that any were free to leave the Connexion whenever they wanted, but if they stayed in it, it would be on his terms.77

Wesley defined his personal authority over all of the individual societies as consisting of the prerogative "to appoint when and where, and how they should meet," to expel for misconduct and to admit members, and to select and remove stewards. He saw this authority as a "burden" to be borne, given to him by God and not chosen by himself.78 The potential hazards inherent in such an opinion are obvious, but Wesley's rule was largely a benevolent one. Maldwyn Edwards, comparing Wesley's notion of secular political authority to Wesley's own power over the Methodists, concludes that "John Wesley was too good a Tory in the government of his own Society not to be so in the government of his country."79 Perhaps it would be even more accurate to assume that Wesley modeled the government of Methodism after the political system he
A couple of Wesley's letters reveal his specific concerns with the administrative affairs of the Keighley Methodists. One is a letter sent directly to the Methodist society at Keighley urging their support and aid for William Shent, a former Methodist from Leeds. Shent was a barber who had played an active and important role in the beginnings of Methodism in Leeds. The letter recounts how Shent had been initially responsible for Methodist preachers coming to Leeds, how he had welcomed John Nelson and Wesley himself into his home, and how he had bravely stood with Wesley while an angry mob hurled stones at them. After falling into some sin (what it actually had been was not specified in the letter), the leaders publicly expelled Shent. Now he was about to be evicted and turned out into the streets. Wesley was primarily appealing for financial aid for Shent, but he also hoped that he might yet be reclaimed spiritually. Not only is the letter indicative of Wesley's compassion for one who had fallen, but it also shows his willingness to appeal to a society (the tone of the letter almost seeks to shame them) to involve itself in what was ostensibly the affairs of another society. Wesley elsewhere mentions the recalcitrance of the leaders at Leeds, and perhaps that is why we find him turning to the
important yet far more docile society at Keighley.

Wesley always expressed concern over the well-being and (within the limits of his own austere character) the comfort of his preachers. On October 12, 1780 Wesley wrote to Mrs. Thomas Colbeck of Keighley what was to serve as a letter of introduction for Mr. Bradburn, the newly appointed assistant to the circuit, and his wife, whom Wesley described as "one of the most amiable couples in our Connexion." The letter went on to mention that he hoped the Keighley folk would take care to provide the necessary conveniences for the new couple. Apparently the "conveniences" in Keighley were not what they might have been elsewhere. Wesley pointed out that since Bradburn was the Assistant, he and his wife were to occupy "the upper rooms in the Preaching-house." Elsewhere, Wesley explicitly instructed that wherever a Methodist preaching house was erected, the people were to build a residence for the preacher as well.

The efforts of a few elite leaders, including Wesley himself, must not overshadow the growth of the circuit as the result of other forces, including the efforts of innumerable other men and women, some of whom are virtually anonymous. Of one fact there can be no doubt: during the early years of the Haworth Round, the Methodist organization there experienced phenomenal growth. John
Ward, a nineteenth-century Methodist historian, quotes Christopher Hopper, one of the early preachers in the area, who made this recollection of some of the earliest days: "I had to ride sixteen miles before I met with another Methodist, and he was in a cell at Rochdale; then I rode eleven miles before I met with another, and he was in a garret at Manchester." Detailed and complete statistics are not available for the decade of the 1740's, but between February, 1746 and May, 1747 the Keighley society alone grew in number from 10 to over 100 members.

As numbers increased, organizational complexity also developed. Financial records from portions of the Haworth Round date back to 1748. By the 1750's these records become far more complete and present a glimpse of the finances of the entire circuit. Each quarter, the account shows income from each society and expenditures from the circuit funds. Important and recurring names in the account book are William Grimshaw, of course, and Thomas Colbeck. Just as Grimshaw assumed the major responsibility for collecting the contributions of the Haworth society and sometimes those of other societies, Colbeck usually was responsible for the collection of the Keighley society contributions. Initially, after July, 1754 Thomas Colbeck was in charge of the funds of the entire circuit. Since he was a grocer and a mercer and
presumably somewhat knowledgeable in basic financial matters, this is not too surprising. In addition, Wesley had a high regard for Colbeck's character, an important qualification for Methodist service in those days. Beginning in October, 1755, however, almost certainly through no fault of Colbeck, Grimshaw assumed the responsibility for the circuit funds. Since he was functionally the superintendent of the Round, it would not have been inappropriate for Grimshaw to take charge of the circuit's financial duties; this type of broad responsibility was not untypical. In addition, no matter how much confidence Wesley had in Colbeck, he doubtless would have preferred to see as much of the real authority and responsibility as possible held by his trusted fellow Anglican minister. Despite Wesley's practice of using unordained preachers, Wesley welcomed the aid of legitimate ecclesiastical figures whenever he could get it.

The most regular expenditures were those for the support of the itinerant preachers and, if they were married, their families. Because these preachers were responsible for traveling almost constantly throughout the circuit (and occasionally elsewhere), expenditures for road tolls and for expenses of the horses were common. It is not surprising that there were sometimes inaccuracies
in the accounts, but because funds were not always easy to procure, the accounts reflect considerable caution and thrift in their expenditure. The quarterly entry for October, 1780 reveals a circuit straining itself to justify the expense involved when one of the preachers had to travel to Bristol to Conference in a carriage.

As the number of Methodists increased and as they began to develop a sense of identity, some saw the need for special buildings for meeting. One of the phenomena of Methodist growth throughout England in general was the urge to build places of worship. Building such places not only created challenges to Wesley's authority from the trustees, but it also ultimately undermined Wesley's overriding desire to remain within the Church of England. Surrendering not only to the desire of the Methodists but also to a very genuine need for such accommodations, Wesley gave his approval to the practice but insisted that Methodist buildings never be called chapels or meeting houses, in order to distinguish them from Dissenters' houses of worship. He always referred to them as preaching houses because that is what he saw their function as being. He had hoped that the Methodists would always participate in other acts of worship within their parish churches.
The growing number of Methodists in the Haworth Round inevitably led to the building of preaching houses. In 1753 Thomas Colbeck purchased some land and buildings on Temple Row in Keighley for £147. He built a room for preaching in 1754 and held it in his possession until 1763 when he conveyed it in trust to the Methodist society in Keighley for five shillings. Besides Colbeck, the trustees numbered nine other men, including another grocer, an innkeeper (John Booth of the White Bear, mentioned earlier), a farmer, three yeomen, a clock maker, a shoemaker, and a stuff maker.  

In 1758, the Methodists at Haworth, with the aid of Grimshaw, built a preaching house. The dimensions of the building were 12 yards by 9 yards, and a three-storied house accompanied it nearby in order to accommodate the preachers. According to Frank Baker, Grimshaw aided in the building of the preaching house, despite the fact that the Methodists had adequate accommodations while he held the curacy at Haworth. Grimshaw did so because of his concern that the Methodists might face opposition from his successors after his death. In 1759 the stewards and preachers of the circuit contributed £2/16/8 1/2 to Grimshaw to help pay for the cost of the building. The money had been the surplus funds from that quarter's accounts.
In 1777, the society at Keighley enlarged the preaching room at Temple Row. The circuit account book shows that the Methodists borrowed money at interest to rebuild. Some time later, they purchased an organ for the preaching house. In March, 1780 the society paid 14s 4d for repairs to the organ and for a tune book and paid out £3/1/6 on the organ itself, leaving a £20 debt remaining just for the organ. What is unusual about this is that Wesley strongly opposed having organs in Methodist preaching houses. In fact, organs in Methodist chapels remained so controversial that a serious dispute arose in 1827 concerning the question of whether to install an organ in a Methodist chapel at Leeds. The dispute resulted in a serious division in the church.

Perhaps even more surprising is the fact that the financial accounts clearly record the receipt of seat money for the galleries in the Temple Row preaching house. Wesley seriously opposed the letting of seats in a Methodist preaching house. Yet in spite of these deviations from Wesley's express wish (and Wesley was not one to take contradiction lightly), he wrote quite favorably on October 15, 1785 about the preaching house at Keighley, even suggesting it to Charles Atmore as a model for a proposed building at Blackburn. His stated desire that Atmore "not build a scarecrow of a house" says
something not only about the building at Keighley, but also about Wesley's concern for quality. In addition, there does not seem to be any indication that Wesley felt he was having problems with the society at Keighley; there are few references to it in his writings, and those he includes are positive. Perhaps the example of the Keighley society shows that if a society presented no major challenge to Wesley's authority in spiritual matters, he might overlook deviations of a mere external nature (though the question of seat rents did in fact involve an important principle). Wesley's desire for keeping all seats free and open was doomed, and seat rents would soon enough become the rule in Methodist chapels.

That the early Methodists faced considerable persecution is a well-known fact. Reference has already been made to the violent mob faced by Wesley, Grimshaw, Colbeck and others at Barrowford. Thomas Taylor, superintendent at Keighley, told how a crowd had gathered to listen to the preaching service in Padiham. Since the preaching house was too small to accommodate the listeners, the preacher commenced preaching outdoors, but the opposition of the parish priest forced him to adjourn to the preaching house again. Both these incidents occurred within the boundaries of the early Haworth Round, though there seems to be no record of any
widespread or violent persecution in the immediate vicinity of Keighley. On December 4, 1745, about two months before Wesley had established a formal Methodist society at Keighley, the Rev. Henry Wickham, J.P. of the West Riding, ordered the Constable of Keighley "to convey...Jonathan Reeves...[a preacher] to His Majesty's gaol and castle of York." The order further stated that Reeves was thought to be a spy "and a dangerous man to the person of His Majesty King George." The charge is typical of that brought against early Methodist preachers. This was the period of the fiercest opposition to the Methodists, especially the preachers, not excluding Wesley himself. As time went on, Wesley quickly overcame his scruples about the use of legal action, not only to prevent violence but even to gain redress from injury already sustained. This was certainly part of the reason for the decline of persecution, though another important factor would be the increasing respectability of Methodism.

Throughout this chapter the terms "Round" and "circuit" have been used somewhat interchangeably. In the early periods both terms are rather amorphous. The first use of the term "circuit" was in 1746, when seven were listed in England and Wales: London, Bristol, Cornwall, Evesham, Wales, Newcastle, and Yorkshire. In his
popular history of the early Haworth Round and Keighley circuit, J.W. Laycock states that the large "Rounds" were later subdivided into smaller circuits. While that statement is true, it is also misleading since the early records seem to use the two words interchangeably and without much precision. What is obvious is that smaller, more efficiently organized, and more clearly recognizable circuits came into being as the larger circuits/Rounds divided.

This dissertation will later examine in some detail boundary changes of the circuit during the period under investigation. Some important changes, however, occurred fairly early which merit some mention. The most noticeable, but not necessarily the most crucial, was the change in name from the Haworth to the Keighley Round. While Grimshaw was living and overseeing the work, it is natural that Haworth became the "administrative headquarters," despite its insignificant size. But after Grimshaw's death, Wesley sensed a spiritual decline among the Haworth Methodists, many of whom left the Methodist fold to join the Baptist chapel. In 1763 the Haworth society had only 15 members, while there were 161 Methodists in Keighley. It would then seem logical for the headquarters of the circuit to move to Keighley, though it was some time before anything seems to have been
official. Frank Baker indicates that the shift was gradual. The Haworth society dwindled so drastically that in 1788 it did not even appear on the circuit plan, but the Methodists immediately turned their efforts toward rebuilding the Haworth society.

Far more significant was the first major division of the original Haworth Round. The Round had covered a large area between Otley and remote Whitehaven, spanning western Yorkshire and part of Lancashire. Despite the fact that Wesley did not care to see circuits divided unnecessarily (his reason being that if the preachers' work became too easy they might "degenerate into milksops"), the distance included within this Round warranted division of the circuit. In 1769 the societies in the vicinity of Whitehaven formed a separate circuit. In 1776, all the locations in Lancashire became part of a new circuit, the Colne circuit. That same year the Conference officially designated Keighley, rather than Haworth, as the head of the circuit. Other important divisions would yet occur, but the circuit was beginning to assume manageable boundaries.

Thus we see the origins of the circuit extending as far back as the early 1740's, and perhaps even earlier, if consideration is made of the evangelistic work of Benjamin Ingham. Yet it is difficult to ascertain his direct
influence on the development of Methodism in the Haworth Round itself. Through the preaching of William Darney and John Nelson and the organizational and evangelistic efforts of William Grimshaw, the birth of the circuit becomes evident. Nor can any study dismiss the contributions of committed persons who were not engaged in full-time preaching work, such as Thomas Colbeck in particular. Building on these foundations, John Wesley consolidated and organized the circuit, ensuring that Methodism in the Haworth Round adhered to his pattern, and it would seem that he had less difficulty there than he did with Methodists in many other locations. Though the early evidence is spotty, often incomplete, what is available presents at least a partial picture of what happened. The next chapter of this dissertation will examine in detail what kind of people joined with the Methodists and will seek to explain why Methodism was so successful in this region and why it assumed the form it did.
NOTES


6 In Birth of Methodism, p. 74, Halevy makes the interesting point that these ties also affected his thinking about egalitarian, communal wealth, seen very clearly in the Moravian community set up at Lamb's Hill in Yorkshire.


10 Wesley, Journal, vol. V, p. 177. Wesley's last published reference to Ingham, recorded in a letter written in 1786, is a puzzling one, assuming that it
refers to the same individual. The letter made reference to the Leeds Conference of 1758 in which the topic of remaining as part of the Church of England came up. Predictably, the Conference affirmed its loyalty to the Church. The letter goes on: "Mr. Ingham, being present, commended our determination in very strong terms; concluding whenever the Methodists leave the Church God will leave them."

Frank Baker, in William Grimshaw: 1708-1763 (London, 1963), gives some detail about Darney, particularly about his connection with Grimshaw, the evangelical curate of Haworth church, who superintended the Haworth Round.


Ibid, pp. 275 and editor's note and p. 288 and editor's note.


Quoted in William Wood Stamp, Historical Notices of Wesleyan Methodism in Bradford and Its Vicinity (Bradford, [1841?]), p. 33. Excerpts from the hymn may also be found in John Ward, Historical Sketches of the Rise and Progress of Methodism in Bingley (Bingley, 1863), p. 12.

Account Book of the Haworth Round, 1748-1749, 1754-1793, Keighley Methodist Circuit Archives, Keighley Central Library, 105D77/1/3/1a. These earliest records (mainly the ones for the years 1748-49) are not, strictly speaking, circuit records, since the only societies named were Todmorden, Heptonstall, Roughlee, Rossindale, and Rochdale.

Ibid.


See ibid, p. 496, editor's note, where Curnock points out that Wesley's account of Grimshaw's death is inserted under April, 1762, when in fact Grimshaw did not die until 1763 at age 55. This would seem to substantiate W. R. Ward's thesis that the Journal did not begin as a personal journal written in daily but as a document compiled long after the fact specifically for publication. The Haworth Round account book deposited in the circuit archives includes a note appended to the list of stewards for the year 1757 which says: "Mr. Wm. Grimshaw dide age 55 aprile 7. 1767 [sic]." This was partially scratched out and changed to 1761, which in turn was changed to 1763. The part reading "age 55" is blotted and beneath someone wrote in the additions "55" and "1763," these last additions obviously added in a much more modern handwriting. The confusion of the entry is undoubtedly more indicative of the carelessness of some of their earlier records than of any real uncertainty as to when Grimshaw in fact died.


Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.


William Myles, A Chronological History of the People Called Methodists (Liverpool, n.d.), p. 28.

"Centenary of the Methodist Cause at Wesley Place, Keighley, 1840-1940" (Keighley, 1946), p. 5, a pamphlet.
included in the Keighley Local Collection, 25/1, in the Keighley Central Library.


37 The letter is attached to Wesley's commemorative account of Grimshaw's life and is found in the *Journal*, vol. IV, pp. 496-498.


40 MS "History of Methodism in Keighley," by Edward Sunderland (d. 1892), Keighley Methodist Circuit Archives, Keighley Central Library, 105D77/1/3/13b.


45 For example, see Wesley, *Journal*, vol. IV, pp. 212,332, and elsewhere in the volume.

46 The circumstances relating to Bennet's marriage are well known to students of Wesleyan history and reveal a side of Wesley's character that his biographers have often quickly glossed over. Wesley willingly forgave his brother Charles for his role in breaking up his own relationship with Grace Murray, despite the ugly breach that temporarily had occurred between the two brothers. Wesley's working relationship with John Bennet, however, was so often strained by misunderstandings that it seems he, at least unconsciously, must have continued to blame Bennet.
According to William Stamp, Methodism in Bradford, p. 29, Methodists from Bradford and Horton would come to Haworth to worship.


Haworth Round Account Book.

J. Wesley Bready, *England: Before and After Wesley* (London, 1938), pp. 251-252. *Wesley's Standard Sermons* were long regarded as the doctrinal standard for Methodism. While Wesley does not develop a systematic theology per se, his sermons tend to be propositional in nature.


I would maintain that one of the major theological contributions of Wesley to religion was to transform the conception of Arminianism from a formalistic and legalistic religious code, whose adherents were primarily High-Church Anglicans, to the dynamic evangelistic movement it became in nineteenth-century England and the United States.
For example, Richard M. Cameron, Methodism and Society in Historical Perspective, edited by the Board of Social and Economic Relations of the Methodist Church (New York, 1961), pp. 32-33.


Leslie F. Church, The Early Methodist People (New York, 1949), pp. 151,153. Gail Malmgreen's description of the bands as subdivisions of classes is imprecise, since all members belonged to a class, but all did not necessarily belong to one of the bands. See Gail Kathi Malmgreen, "Economy and Culture in an Industrial Town: Macclesfield, Cheshire, 1750-1835" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1981), p. 306. It is true, of course, that the bands were smaller than the classes.

Halevy, Birth of Methodism, pp. 33ff, 44.


Haworth Round Account Book.

Myles, Chronological History, p. 73.


78 Ibid, pp. 311-312.
81 Ibid, vol. VII, p. 36. The editor's note on page 37 refers to Bradburn's memoirs, where the preacher noted that he had found the living accommodations at Keighley better than anticipated.
84 This information is from the Haworth Round Account Book. Colbeck also occasionally collected from other societies. One rather surprising entry in the accounts is for April, 1760 when John Nelson, by then an almost legendary Methodist preacher, collected the contributions of the Keighley society.
86 Church, *Early Methodist People*, p. 71 and p. 93, note.
88 Haworth Round Account Book.
90 The famous Leeds organ controversy which led to the formation of the Protestant Methodist Church. In this case it was the conference who was trying to force the society to accept the installation of the organ. See Robert Currie, *Methodism Divided* (London, 1968), pp. 52, 60.
92 Sunderland, "History of Methodism in Keighley."


94 Laycock, Methodist Heroes, p. 46.

95 Account of the Keighley Round, 1763, Keighley Methodist Circuit Archives, Keighley Central Library, 105D77/1/3/1b.

96 Baker, William Grimshaw, p. 110.

97 Laycock, Methodist Heroes, pp. 194-195.


101 For evidence of Colbeck's importance and Wesley's estimation of it, see Wesley, Journal, vol. III, p. 293, editor's note; p. 369, editor's note; and vol. IV, p. 68.
CHAPTER II

STRUCTURE AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT

OF THE KEIGHLEY CIRCUIT

The story of the growth of Methodism in the Keighley circuit, as well as in the West Riding and in neighboring areas in general, was one of rapid growth. Social and religious historians, from Elie Halevy, E. P. Thompson, and E. J. Hobsbawm to Wellman J. Warner, Robert Wearmouth, and Bernard Semmel have proposed a number of explanations of the success of early Wesleyanism in England, explanations often intended either to cast praise or blame on the Methodists. Many of these arguments and the accompanying subjective judgements go back to the early days of the movement itself. Critics such as E. P. Thompson, E. J. Hobsbawm, John Baxter, and E. P. Stigert are quick to see social and economic forces as the vital energy behind the movement, and many variations of this argument exist, both friendly and hostile to Methodism. 1 Accusations and justifications go back to the time of Wesley himself.
The early decades of the revival were years of economic change and unrest. As the Poor Rates throughout the nation increased, some were quick to accuse the Methodists, charging that many of the recipients of public aid were caught in the spell of the Methodist preachers and turned their money over to them. Critics such as contributors to the Gentleman's Magazine in 1739 and to the Norwich Mercury in 1751 and 1752 saw Methodist services as keeping men and women from their work, with disastrous effects on the economy. There was perhaps understandable concern that the plethora of meetings provided by the Methodists tended only to encourage "all Manner of Sloth and Idleness" and that making hearers "wild and frantick" also made them useless.\(^2\)

While much of this criticism was directed against Wesley's unordained itinerant preachers, easily viewed as "idlers" and "vagrants" who had left common occupations to devote themselves to full-time preaching, John Wesley himself did not escape attack. Even Wesley's well-intentioned attempt to set up a spinning wheel for those out of work was condemned as a profit-making scheme. In April, 1741 the editor of the Weekly Miscellany claimed that Wesley's annual income from his books, preaching, and charitable work schemes amounted to about £1,000.\(^3\) Wesley responded by pointing out that his own modest needs were
supplied out of the funds, the same as any other "poor man," and he believed that he handled Methodist revenues in much the same fashion as the early Church had handled its funds. Wesley's personal asceticism is so well known that the falseness of his critics' attacks is obvious.

A related contemporary accusation, strange as it may sound to those familiar with E. P. Thompson's thesis, was that Methodism contributed to the forces of unrest and dissension. Methodism's early, precarious (and somewhat dubious) position as an evangelistic extension of the Church of England was a highly vulnerable one, and such criticisms could have sounded the death knell for the movement. Consequently, early Methodist leaders were quick to ally themselves with the forces of order, a fact which has provided adherents to the Halevy thesis with considerable evidence. Charles Wesley's futile attempts to halt the protest of the Kingswood miners is one obvious example. Local Methodists in the vicinity of Keighley were quick to follow the example of their leaders on this point. Methodist listeners on February 4, 1780, a day of general fasting and humiliation, heard a sermon preached "by his Majesty's Special Command" on I Peter 3:12. While the spiritual theme of the sermon, that the Lord hears the prayers of the righteous, sounds like typical Methodist sermon fare, the patriotic element was deliberate and
strong.6

The argument that Methodism was the force of order is probably even more evident on an individual level than on a national one. Methodist propagandists have been eager to point out the social benefits of religious conversion, leading the individual to break away from a former life of degradation, drunkenness, and dissipation and to turn to a life of abstinence and concern for the well-being of others.7 This was obviously true for some, despite the fact that the religious life as seen through Methodist eyes was a tortuous path, filled with ever-present temptations, temptations which a good number did not survive. Even those whose conversions were confirmed would not always have reached the depths of self-sacrifice inherent in the Methodist ideal. Asceticism can often lead to a narrow, narcissistic way of life. Writing in June, 1791, Joseph Priestly, however, recognized the social benefits that accrued when individuals adopted habits of initiative, thrift, industry, and sobriety and praised the Methodists for their efforts.8 It is in fact possible to view anti-Methodist violence in part as the action of unruly mobs reacting to those who were preaching, and living out "such qualities as inner discipline, self-restraint, and obedience to unenforceable obligations."9 It is not difficult to see why such
virtues would not be popular with everyone.

Bernard Semmel, a scholar sympathetic to Methodism, has emphasized the dual character of Methodism "as a counter to revolutionary violence" and at the same time as "a spiritual Revolution of a progressive and liberal character" arising from its ideals, its structure, and the political, social, and economic milieu, often with a special emphasis on its ideology. But the fact that the resulting social reforms stemmed primarily from the Wesleyan emphasis on the moral initiative of an individual Christian would seem to indicate that Wesleyanism was best suited to the laissez-faire ideal. The fruits of reform were thus dependent upon moral initiative. Even those scholars friendly to Wesleyanism might lament that the early Methodists did not give concrete form and lasting organization to efforts at social reform. Largely because of the social level of his clientele, and consequently the economic and geographic environment in which his movement thrived, Wesley and his revival, according to Semmel, "from the beginning, had a vested interest--albeit philanthropical and divinely sanctioned--in the new industrial system."

Contributing to the view that the Wesleyan revival was a reaction to social and economic tensions was the "quietist" element in much Wesleyan thought. On
theological grounds, Wesley would have strenuously objected to the label of quietist, but his emphasis on the transcendent, sovereign providence gave many of his sermons and writings a predominantly otherworldly perspective, though expressed largely in soteriological rather than eschatological terms. On October 27, 1772 Wesley preached before a crowd during a time of mass unemployment and deprivation on this text: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." While noticeably sympathetic toward the physical needs of his congregation, he chose to underline a more "spiritual" view of their plight, writing in his Journal that "thousands of people who, when they had fullness of bread, never considered whether they had any souls or not, now they are in want begin to think of God." This otherworldly emphasis is seen perhaps most vividly in a rather grim aspect of Wesley's early ministry: his counselling of condemned criminals. Here his sole objective was the salvation of the individual before he or she met death. In one instance he seemed assured of the salvation of a man accused of stealing. Oddly enough, when the man's sentence was reduced to transportation, Wesley did not know "whether to rejoice or grieve" because he feared that prolonged life brought with it the chance (perhaps even
the probability) of backsliding. By an indirect route, belief in a benevolent providence, belief that one was personally loved by God, and a belief in the "rightness" of one's circumstances could lead to individual betterment. It would be unreasonable to deny that this occurred in some, perhaps many instances. Indirect evidence of this can be seen in the numerous examples cited by Warner, showing that many employers highly valued their Methodist employees (even if they did not agree with their religious ideas) because of their integrity and industry, which ultimately contributed to the reputation of Methodism.

Instances of economic unrest and dislocation during the eighteenth century would not be difficult to find. Halevy saw one such crucial point at the outset of the Wesleyan revival. As industries became more centralized (a long process which certainly did not even culminate in the eighteenth century), masses who had been domestic workers faced uncertain futures. A crisis caused by overproduction led to both Walpole's demise and the onset of the Methodist revival, as commercial Whigs, ever since the peace in 1713, had proved unable to adjust to peacetime markets. Halevy was convinced that in terms of both chronology and geography, "the evidence demonstrates that the two crises [religious and economic] are tied
together."\textsuperscript{17}

It was not that Halevy saw Methodism as at the mercy of blind, external forces; in fact his view is just the opposite: "The despair of the working class was the raw material to which Methodist doctrine and discipline gave a shape."\textsuperscript{18} Halevy noted that, in a broad sense, the Wesleyan organization resembled an industrial one. The itinerant preacher (later termed the minister) stationed in the circuit was analogous to a merchant employer centered in the town, while the local preachers in the villages were like manufacturers in the countryside who oversaw the work of the laborers.\textsuperscript{19} The comparison—certainly an imaginative one—seems a bit strained. Needless to say, Halevy is not the only scholar to see economic and religious developments as being so intimately intertwined "that the vitality of one [i.e. the religious] injected itself into the other."\textsuperscript{20}

In many ways Halevy's explanation does not explain, and this is to some degree inherent in his view. Though he gives proper credit to the initiative of Wesley and other preachers, he understandably rejects any "Great Man" interpretation, and concludes that the Wesleyan revival was an "historical accident." In essence the "great accident" of Wesley's personal transformation, the result of Welsh revivalism and Moravian doctrine, intervened at a
time when economic crisis made the masses susceptible to forces of "collective emotion" rather than to rationalist philosophy. While Halevy seeks to explain revival in general, his arguments apply in part to the Keighley circuit. Specific local factors, however, differ from those which characterized the revival in some other places.

John H. Chamberlayne's attempt to explain the success of Wesleyanism stresses the inherent advantages of the organizational structure of the movement. He refers to the years 1740-1750 as the "decade of organization" for British Methodism, a decade when Methodism was largely a sect-type movement, as reflected in its emphasis on individual conversion, strict moral life, and separation from much of society's amusements. However, certain church-type characteristics are evident as well, such as the early emphasis on the sacraments and the attempt on the part of the leadership to keep the movement within the boundaries of the national Church. Halevy himself sees the success of Wesleyanism as the result of "a combination of the ecclesiastical zeal of certain of the clergy [notably the Wesleys, Grimshaw, and John Fletcher], and the Protestant piety of the mass of the faithful." The organizational structure, and also the fact that the Moravians taught Wesley a message that would "capture
hearts," played an important role in the early growth of Methodism.  

Brian Greaves, who has done intensive study of the geographic factors in the spread of Methodism in Yorkshire, has discerned definite geographic patterns. While the Methodists were most numerous in industrial regions, they still had a significant number of adherents among rural folk. Availability and improvement in roads was an immense help in enabling preachers, both full-time itinerants and part-time (but hard-working) local preachers, to expand their efforts. Obviously there was a relationship between Methodist growth and population density. One of the most significant relationships discerned by Greaves, however, was that between the number of Methodists and the number of people without church oversight. In other words, the Methodists made the largest gains where the parish system was least effective.  

The Wesleys themselves would have liked to have seen their work in those terms: filling a religious gap that the established Church was not bridging, in part because it could not. But Alan Gilbert maintains that whatever their original intentions were, and despite the Wesley's personal loyalty to the Church, the structure of the Wesleyan societies inevitably competed with, rather than
supplemented, the parochial system. Methodism was able to fill the gap often left by the Church of England because its organizational structure was even tighter than than of Anglican episcopalisn. The result of this conflict would be that what made the Church of England strong in 1740 would also make it totally inadequate to provide spiritual nurture in the society and culture that emerged with industrialization. Even the traditional hierarchy of the Anglican Church was not as tightly knit and centralized as the Wesleyan structure. The machinery of diocese and parish was no match for the efficiency and control of the district and circuit organization of Methodism. Charles Wallace, in his study of dissent in the West Riding, maintains that the success of Methodism in that region was because the connectional system contributed to an efficient organization.

Other, less objective and precise factors have been suggested as causing the growth of Methodism. Wallace maintains that, though economic, demographic, and other factors contributed to the success of the revival, the additional variable of individual personalities was essential for ”actualizing the potential” created by these other factors. In chapter one I have already examined some of the most important individuals connected with the growth of the Keighley circuit. According to Wallace, the
strength of the organizational system was its ability to organize and use such individuals, individuals possessing talent and energy.  

It is also possible to view that same organization as the basis for personal and communal security. In an age of change, dislocation, uncertainty, and unrest, the societies, classes, and bands provided support groups to those who needed to belong somewhere. A "sense of community" in a changing environment could help people adjust to new relationships and responsibilities.

Semmel expresses it in this way: "Wesley's followers would attempt to overcome feelings of uprootedness by bringing the newly converted into a broader family, whose membership would address each other as 'brother' and 'sister', and would watch over each other's morals in a fraternal fashion."

It is obvious that the standard explanations for the success of early Methodism present a variety of interpretations. No responsible scholar, of course, would attempt to isolate any single factor to the exclusion of all others; what separates the "radicals," such as Thompson, Hobsbawm, Baxter, Stigent, and others, from those more sympathetic, such as Semmel, Church, Wearmouth, and Warner, is which factors each school chooses to emphasize. What this particular study attempts to do is
to examine the situation in the Keighley circuit in as much detail as the evidence permits, and to offer some generalizations on the basis of that evidence which attempt to explain the success of Methodism in that particular circuit. How far these explanations might hold true for other areas—even within other textile centers in the West Riding—is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

In order to assess the reasons for the growth of Methodism in the Keighley circuit, I shall map out the growth of the circuit, using membership and financial data from the earliest existing circuit records. It must be admitted that accurate statistics for the early period are far from complete, but growth can be charted for the years for which data have survived. In addition, valuable records exist that give the occupational status for about 70% of the circuit's 1,717 adherents in 1763. The various occupations will be classified to give an idea of the social status of those who found Methodism attractive within the Keighley circuit. Parish records and other sources cast valuable light on the economic situation in Keighley during this time; specifically, Poor Relief expenditures give a rough index of the changing economic situation in the parish of Keighley.

In the early period of the circuit, until just after the death of Wesley, complete membership statistics in the
circuit archives have survived for the following years: 1763, 1777, 1779-1781, 1787-1790, and 1792. Though the gaps are numerous, the evidence extant shows a notable trend toward growth, despite a significant decline in 1781 (see figure 1 at the end of the chapter). The difference between the figures for 1763 and 1777 is easy to account for, since it was during this period that two major divisions of the original circuit took place, reducing the size considerably. In 1769 the societies in the vicinity of Whitehaven formed their own circuit, and in 1776 the Colne circuit became a separate entity, detaching from Keighley the societies in Lancashire. This is undoubtedly why the membership registers for the Keighley circuit only go back to 1777 (the figure for 1763 is taken from a separate list which also included the occupations of approximately 70% of the adherents). The large decline between 1790 and 1792 is the result of the formation of the Otley circuit from portions of the Keighley circuit. What is significant, though, is that even after three major divisions of the original Round, in the 1790's the Keighley circuit was still the fifth largest Methodist circuit (in terms of number of adherents) in all of Yorkshire.

Circuit financial records go back considerably earlier, though they still contain noticeable gaps and are
incomplete for certain periods. The accounts for 1748 and 1749 are of no real value to this study, since they include only the area around Todmorden, Heptonstall, and Rossindale and do not mention any of the places that eventually made up the Keighley circuit proper. Between October 31, 1749 and July 25, 1754 there were no Quarter Day meetings (circuit-level business meetings instituted in the Haworth Round by Grimshaw, which became standard Methodist operating procedure). Data from the Quarter Day meeting held on July 25, 1754 have also been omitted from this study, since the only societies listed are Haworth, Todmorden, Mixenden, and Heptonstall.

Circuit financial statistics in this chapter, then, are based on data from the Quarter Day meetings held October, 1754 and after. Certain problems with these data deserve attention. For the periods April, 1756 to April, 1757 and January to October in 1758, as well as January and October in 1762, contributions from the Keighley society are not specifically included in the circuit income. Why this is so cannot be stated with confidence. Though this is the period when the circuit was referred to as the Haworth Round, there can be no doubt that Keighley was an important society in the Round. It would also appear, upon examining the condition of the account book and comparing income totals with expenditure totals that
the total income listed is probably complete, or at least nearly so. It is possible that on some occasions during the formative years of the Round, the Keighley society may have defaulted on its financial obligations to the circuit, as did other societies from time to time, especially since Keighley's leadership position in the Round was not firmly established then.

Because of the fact that the number of societies contributing to the Round is not very consistent in the period through 1763, conclusions based on these data must be highly tentative. Furthermore, there is no information for the spring, summer, and autumn of 1765 and no record of the income for spring, 1775, the only major gaps in the data after July, 1754. Although the account-book entries were recorded quarterly, the statistics are presented in this chapter on an annual basis, in order to make presentation more manageable. Finally, all monetary figures in graphs have been converted to the decimal system in order to facilitate computation and graphing, and numbers are rounded off to the nearest new pence (see figure 2 at the end of the chapter). Figures cited in the text are given in pounds, shillings, and old pence.

While the very early figures are considerably lower than later ones, there is not a clearly discernible pattern for the majority of the period shown. While the
sudden, drastic drop in income in 1791 is almost certainly
due at least in part to the formation of the Otley
circuit, the two previous divisions of the circuit
(forming the Whitehaven and Colne circuits) do not seem to
have had any noticeable effect on the income. Some of the
peaks in the chart are obviously the results of special
collections to reduce or eliminate debt. (The accounts
themselves state this.)

The records indicate numerous periods when the
expenditures surpassed the income, and over a period of
consecutive quarterly meetings, a considerable debt could
accumulate (see figure 3 at the end of the chapter). On
occasion the circuit would resort to a special collection
to attempt to remedy the situation. One such collection
was recorded in the account for January 8, 1773. Even
with the extra income the circuit was still £21/0/4 1/2 in
debt. The entry for April 1, 1774 shows another special
collection of £14/14/0, which reduced the current circuit
debt to £6/18/4 1/2. At the end of 1783 the circuit
raised a special collection of £33/1/10 to reduce the
debt, a figure which clearly effected the results of the
income graph. In contrast to the size of the debt,
especially between 1769 and 1775, in March, 1776, the
circuit showed a "considerable" surplus of income over
expenditure amounting to £4/14s.

The peak period of debt in the early 1770's is so marked that it deserves attention. While there are drops in the income level during this period, the problem was obviously caused by increased expenditure. An examination of the accounts reveals one significant change during this period: the amount of money paid out to Thomas Colbeck, who was a circuit steward. It should be pointed out that the payments were not a salary but payments on a bill owed by the circuit to Colbeck. Remembering that Colbeck was one of the wealthier members of the circuit, that he was in charge of circuit finances, and that he had a reputation (especially in the eyes of Grimshaw and Wesley) for strong commitment to the Methodist cause, it is not difficult to see how the circuit could become significantly indebted to him. In fact, Colbeck had generously provided the Keighley society with its first Methodist preaching house. In order to see how these payments affected the circuit debt, here are the payments to Colbeck from 1763 to 1776:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1763</td>
<td>15/17/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1764</td>
<td>13/19/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1766</td>
<td>31/11/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1767</td>
<td>11/19/4 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1768</td>
<td>32/08/6 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1769</td>
<td>57/17/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1770</td>
<td>47/12/0 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1771</td>
<td>71/04/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1772</td>
<td>93/07/4 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1773</td>
<td>99/12/5 1/4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3 reveals that the circuit reduced its debt, not primarily by increasing its income, but by reducing expenditures, and the above data would seem to indicate that reductions in the amounts paid to Colbeck were the most significant single factor, especially since many of the other expenses were fairly consistent. Why the payments to Colbeck reached such high levels in 1771-1773 and why they dropped so quickly is not known.

On some occasions, the accounts mention losses due to "bad money" or "bad brass," and some have thought that these entries reflected on the honesty of some of the individual Methodists. In discussing this problem, Church points out that this need not be the conclusion. Rather, the problem was more likely due to the wide circulation of debased coinage, making good coins sometimes difficult to obtain.35

Numbers alone cannot tell the entire story of the growth of Methodism, of course. There exists also qualitative evidence of growth, both in concrete terms and in the consciousness of the people as well. In the early, formative days of the circuit, preaching was nearly spontaneous and accommodations were primitive and makeshift. Early Methodists in Bingley (part of the
Keighley circuit until 1808) worshipped in a blacksmith's shop, and the preaching house originally held in trust by Colbeck in Keighley had been a barn. As mentioned earlier, improvements were made on the Keighley preaching house, and the Methodists there acquired an organ, which can certainly be considered a symbol of prestige. The fact that the preaching house had galleries, for which the trustees collected seat money, in spite of Wesley's disapproval of pew rents, is another sign of a degree of prosperity. Early Methodists sometimes referred to their preaching houses as chapels, despite the fact that Wesley considered the designation "chapel" to be indicative of Dissent and thus inappropriate for Methodist edifices of worship. In spite of this, the label "chapel" subsequently replaced that of "preaching house," as Methodists began to view their own gatherings as their chief expression of worship. This perhaps indicates that some of the early Methodists were beginning to see an improvement in their status.

Thus the origins and early period of the circuit were marked by growth and stabilization, with indications of further growth in the latter part of this early period. Knowing what kind of people chose to join the Methodists there might help to account for the success of the Keighley circuit. There have been many generalizations
about the social structure of the early Methodists; many have been impressionistic, and some have even been naive. Recent scholars, however, have been working with increasing precision and are overturning some previously held misconceptions.

Leslie F. Church correctly recognized that even in its early years, Methodism included those from a wide span of occupational groups, ranging from the wealthy, educated, and cultured to ordinary laborers. He notes that "amongst them were doctors and blacksmiths, philosophers and farm-labourers, soldiers and squires, the cultured and the illiterate." Furthermore, he recognizes that those of substance and education were more heavily represented among the Methodists than some writers had realized. Church's conclusions, however, turn in a different direction. Evoking the old stereotypes, he writes, "These humble men and women...rose from the gutters and byways of the cities, and from the lonely places--to stand upon their feet and prophesy." In one verbose stroke, he appears to contradict his earlier recognition that Methodists came from many levels of society. The statement is pure rhetoric, to be sure, but taken out of context it only serves to perpetuate for his readers the erroneous idea that the Methodists came from
the dregs of English society.

Recent, more responsible historians are quick to recognize that the very lowest elements in eighteenth-century England, such as "paupers and vagrants," were not typically receptive to Methodist evangelism. The fact that most of the Methodist meetings were held at night was because the worshippers tended to come from "the laboring ranks" or what Semmel refers to as "the nascent proletariat of England's growing factory towns." Of course, this group contrasts sharply with the rich and cultured, as well as the down and out. The basic, most important difference between Methodism and other Evangelicals (especially Anglicans) was not primarily theological, despite the existence of certain doctrinal differences, but the status in society of its converts. Anglican evangelicalism purportedly appealed to the clergy and the wealthy merchant families, while Methodist adherents tended to come from "the working and lower middle classes."40

Professor Gilbert has pointed out that rural, agrarian groups seemed least receptive to the message of Evangelical Nonconformity, in which he includes the Methodists, though he does recognize exceptions to this in certain regions.42 One of these exceptions would most likely be portions of the textile-manufacturing region of
the West Riding where the clothiers, in contrast to those of the West Country, did not begin their careers with wealth, but were persons of rising opportunity who had interests both in textile making and in farming.\textsuperscript{43}

Using data largely gathered by other researchers, C.D. Field attempts to test the reliability of certain commonly held assumptions about Methodist social history, one of which is that early Methodist converts were almost all laborers or "destitute."\textsuperscript{44} On the basis of the data at his disposal, which included a variety of geographic areas, he concludes that "the proletarian influence of the eighteenth century movement has been grossly exaggerated. Although three-quarters of the early members were manual workers, unskilled toilers were heavily outnumbered by artisans."\textsuperscript{45}

Even when information about the occupational status of eighteenth-century Methodists and others exists, a serious problem for the researcher is the need to determine a suitable classification system in order to best use the statistical data. Charles Wallace, in his study of West Riding dissent, and Field have both used an adaptation of an eighteenth-century system developed by the early economist Joseph Massie. The subheadings for the occupational groups developed by Massie are quoted here:
A. Spiritual and temporal lords, baronets, knights, esquires, gentlemen
B. Clergy, lawyers, persons in the liberal arts, civil, naval and military officers
C. Freeholders, farmers
D. Merchants, tradesmen, innkeepers
E. Manufacturers
F. Labourers, husbandmen, cottagers, seamen, fishermen, common soldiers

While admitting certain weaknesses of the system, Wallace emphasizes that, when categorizing, a modern researcher must be careful not to impose modern distinctions on the eighteenth-century data. Significant differences would even exist between the cloth workers of 1763, who were domestic workers, and textile factory workers in the early nineteenth century. One of the weaknesses of systems based on Massie's study is that they give very little indication of the hierarchical levels within a broad type of occupation, which is certainly noticeable in the textile industry. Yet Wallace argues that categories which blur the distinction between those occupational groups distinguished by Massie are even more inadequate.

While Wallace's study is a significant contribution, particularly to our understanding of the West Riding as a whole, it has some weaknesses. Wallace probably stretches his definition of Methodism a bit too far when he includes in it an Inghamite group. Although he uses occupational data from the Keighley circuit, both his classification and his selectivity tend to blur the results. For reasons
unmentioned, Wallace chooses to use only the occupational data for males. Since spinning was done largely by women and women often worked as weavers, and since spinners were the largest single occupational group represented and weavers the second largest, Wallace's omission of women biases his results significantly. Wallace's adaptation of Massie's system also fails to give any indication of the relative strength of the cloth industry and of the most numerous occupations within that industry.

Use of the terms "clothier" and "manufacturer" as occupational titles can be somewhat confusing unless the specific context of the West Riding domestic cloth industry in the eighteenth century is understood. The Yorkshire cloth industry differed from that of the West Country in that Yorkshire merchants and clothiers had separate functions. Yorkshire clothiers were men of less capital than elsewhere in England and usually produced no more than a couple of cloths in a week. For instance, the clothiers in the vicinity of Leeds—who would probably have been more prosperous than those around Keighley—might own "their own premises, a few cottages, a close or two of land and after several generations accumulat[e] savings of a few hundred pounds by 1780." Journeymen weavers in the West Country seldom became full-fledged clothiers, and Yorkshire cloth workers viewed
the system as "a monopoly erected and supported by great capitals." West Riding workers who had completed their apprenticeship had better options, because of credit extended by better-off woolstaplers and because they could use public fulling mills rather cheaply. Since a person could break into the market with less capital, Yorkshire had a reputation of being "the land of opportunity in the eighteenth century."53

In the period when the merchanting aspect of the cloth industry was separate, for the most part, from the manufacturing side, small, independent clothiers in Yorkshire held a relatively high status in the communities in which they lived, particularly in villages, though their status was, of course, below that of the cloth merchants. Clothiers in the West Country were essentially merchants for whom journeymen and others did the actual production work, while a Yorkshire clothier operated on a considerably smaller scale, working with his hands, owning his own production materials, and bringing his cloth each week to a cloth hall such as the one at Wakefield or Leeds to sell. Here the distinction "between small merchant, shopkeeper, clothier and cloth-dresser" was not always easy to discern. But it should be mentioned that more substantial Yorkshire cloth merchants, such as those centered in Leeds, viewed cloth manufacturing as being
beneath the dignity of a true merchant. Rather than set up their sons in manufacturing, they would attempt to establish them in one of the professions. Perhaps one of the causes of the slower growth of the woolen industry, as opposed to the worsted and cotton industries, was that rather than investing money into manufacturing, the wealthier merchants purchased landed estates.54

One consequence of all this is that occupational descriptions using the term "manufacturer" for an individual do not reveal the precise status of that person. Certain mid-nineteenth century officials and Methodist trustees classified as "worsted manufacturers" are clearly identifiable as entrepreneurs, but in 1763, when cloth manufacturing was largely domestic, this does not hold true, of course. In fact, a cloth manufacturer was literally one who worked with his or her hands and could be a weaver, cloth-finisher, or involved in any other aspect of the cloth-making process.55

Apparently dyers were on about the same level as cloth-dressers and were often persons of means. A master cloth-dresser worked for the merchant on commission, and his skills brought him a higher income than any other artisan involved in woolen manufacturing.56 On the other hand, weaving was an attractive trade because it was relatively easy to learn. Weavers made up an unusually
large proportion of Methodists (second only to spinners), undoubtedly because there were so many weavers. Their numbers also tended to put them at a disadvantage, leaving them little or no bargaining power. According to Wallace, stuffmakers and worsted weavers were probably synonymous, but the same could possibly be said for many who are simply described as "manufacturers." Therefore, it seems preferable to distinguish between those clearly designated as weavers and those who are not. Along with the high proportion of weavers in the Keighley circuit (see table 1 at the end of the chapter), it is interesting that a sermon register contained in the circuit archives mentions that a Mr. Taylor preached at an anniversary gathering of a weaver's society in June of 1780.

Some explanation of the categories used in table 1 is in order. While Massie's classification is a useful one and has the advantage of being developed by an eighteenth-century observer, in some ways it is too general to give an accurate description of the people in the Keighley circuit. While Wallace does make use of the occupational data, using Massie's classification, he has no way to indicate the relative strength of the textile industry, including the two most common single occupations within that industry. As mentioned earlier, his decision to omit women from his study alters the results.
significantly. It means that he excludes most of the very large category of spinners, as well as many of the weavers, and even members of other categories (including two schoolmistresses).

The classification used here is a variation of Massie's system, with the most significant difference being that it is more specific where the local data seems to dictate that approach. The category of gentlemen needs no explanation. The professional category includes civil officers, schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, and a bookkeeper. The agricultural group differs somewhat from Massie's usage. While Massie classified husbandmen as laborers, this study includes them under the general category of agriculture. The reason for this deviation is that while 28 of those in the category are listed as yeoman and are clearly freeholders, 97 others are simply designated as farmers. While some of these latter are probably freeholders as well, it is by no means certain that all are. Thus the precise status of 97 out of 125 possible freeholders is uncertain; therefore, it was decided to include under the general rubric of "agriculture" anyone who made his or her living by farming.

The commercial category is fairly broad, including grocers, shopkeepers, dealers, publicans, and brokers.\textsuperscript{59}
This group, however, also includes one individual who "sells pots" and another listed as a "huckster." It is clear that these two are merely peddlers, with a significantly different social status than the other members of the category. The tradesmen and craftsmen are by far the most varied group, including skilled or semiskilled workers from crafts or trades other than textile manufacturing. Examples are tailors, bakers, seamstresses, dressmakers, blacksmiths, carpenters, joiners, and butchers, to name a few.

Because of the specific occupational makeup of the members of the Keighley circuit, it seemed desirable to show the unusual preponderance of spinners and weavers by making each of them a separate category. "Other textile workers" again forms a quite varied group of occupations, including cloth-dressers and dyers, said to be the most profitable of all textile manufacturing-related occupations. Four were designated as clothiers, who, as mentioned earlier, were fairly independent and often employed others, though they did not have the status of the West Country merchant-clothiers. Those designated under the general category of "laborers" include servants, gardeners, housekeepers, washers, stewards, miners, and colliers. Finally, it seemed desirable to identify those who seemed clearly dependent upon the support of someone
else, either because of age or handicap.

One fact that becomes obvious from the statistical evidence is the strong influence of the textile industry. When all of the cloth-making occupations (including spinners and weavers) are combined, they account for an impressive sum of 62.4% of the total Methodists in the circuit whose occupations are identifiable in 1763. While one would suspect a large sample of cloth workers, the figures, especially those for weavers and spinners, present a fairly specific picture of the type of persons who were most attracted to Methodism in the Keighley circuit in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The 13.7% who worked in trades other than cloth making are also significant in that they form a substantial proportion of the rest of the Methodists, and, contrary to a previously held stereotype, were certainly not members of the lowest elements of that society. Some of them, in fact--such as tailors, millers, carpenters, a clockmaker, and others--may have been persons of some substance. At the very least, their families may well have been economically on the rise.

All of this should not detract from the significance of the 11.3% in the category of agriculture. For a single category this is a significant minority, especially when compared with the other nontextile categories.
Statistical evidence such as this helps to modify the preconceived notion that Methodism did not appeal to farmers. Here, of course, the local nature of the evidence is a major factor. The Keighley circuit was largely rural, and it is not surprising that its social makeup might differ considerably from that of Methodist circuits in such centers as London or Bristol where Wesley spent more of his time and consequently which tended to mold his own expectations.

A note of caution concerning these data is in order. Of the members of the circuit in 1763, there are 515 whose occupations are not known. (This is not mentioned by Wallace in his study.) This fact certainly does not negate the value of the evidence, but it should be remembered when evaluating conclusions drawn from it.

The entire circuit in 1763, it should be remembered, covered an extensive area, this being before the formation of the Whitehaven and Colne circuits. For societies in Keighley, Haworth, and Holme House—all fairly close together and all remaining part of the circuit throughout the period of this study—occupations are known for 96 Methodists. The breakdown looks like this:

1. Gentlemen 0
2. Professions 0
3. Agricultural 9
4. Commercial 1
5. Tradesmen and craftsmen 13
6. Weavers 22
7. Spinners 28
8. Other textile workers 12
9. Laborers 8
10. Dependent 3

Total 96

The similarity between the results for these societies and for the circuit as a whole is noteworthy, the most noticeable difference being that for the smaller sample the percentage of "other textile workers" is more than double that of the entire circuit. The drawback of the smaller sample, however, is that for these same societies the occupational status of 104 individuals is not given. All that can be said with certainty is that the proportions evident in the Keighley circuit in 1763, while it was still known as the Haworth Round and covered a comparatively large geographic area, are remarkably similar to those of a surviving sample of a much smaller area forming part of the subsequent Keighley circuit.

To supplement the statistical data, here are some individual examples. Haworth curate William Grimshaw paid £65 so that his son John could become an apprentice weaver. The outcome is interesting, despite the fact that John seems to have had no subsequent direct relationship to Methodism. He did not do well at his apprenticeship, possibly because he knew he would have a comfortable living when he would come of age. Later he even assumed the title of gentleman. One of the pioneers of
Methodism in Keighley, Edward Sunderland, was a barber and cut hair for the preachers in the area. Two men connected with the circuit, T. Hanby and James Oddie, were shareholders in a ship. John Ward, a nineteenth-century Methodist historian, wrote that some of the people of his own day recalled those living in 1763. A woman who was 88 years old when Ward was writing remembered Benjamin Wilkinson, who had saved her from drowning in the river Aire when she was a girl. She told Ward that Wilkinson had spent his last days in a workhouse. He probably was not a very typical Methodist.

One of Methodism's most important positions of leadership at the local level was that of trustee, an officer who usually would have been the elite of the Methodist society, either financially or spiritually or both. In 1763 the trustees for the preaching house in Keighley were made up of two grocers, an innkeeper, a clock maker, a shoemaker, a stuffmaker, farmer, and three yeomen. Trustees for land in Morton Banks in 1790 included a manufacturer, a weaver, a cordwainer, a farmer, and three yeomen. The samples are admittedly quite small, but the relative importance of the agricultural group is noteworthy, especially when compared to their proportionate strength in the statistics for the circuit members as a whole. A likely assumption is that the two
individuals simply designated farmers were freeholders.

Attempting to explain the early growth of Methodism necessitates examining local social and economic developments as far as the evidence admits. The second half of the eighteenth century shows the growth and development of what had been an insignificant, small town. In 1755, Keighley had an estimated population of over 3,000 persons and by 1780 one of around 4,100. A central part of the local economy was cottage industries: the production of woollens and worsteds. Important local developments were the enclosures of common lands by Acts of Parliament in 1771, 1780, and 1788 and road and turnpike building and improvement, in part due to the efforts of the Keighley and Kendal Turnpike Trust begun in 1753. Improved roads undoubtedly aided the evangelistic endeavors of the Methodist preachers.

Growth and development in the town brought the consciousness of need, as well—or at least the willingness or ability to do something about the need. At a vestry meeting held on May 12, 1763, it was decided to build a poor house, and the vestry accounts for the year 1766 make the first recorded mention of receipts from the workhouse. By 1778 there is evidence that Keighley was outgrowing its workhouse; one of the overseers was appointed to request that Keighley be permitted to send
some of its poor to the workhouse at Rossindale. Evidence from parish records of the subsequent fate of the workhouse is sketchy at best. On November 16, 1785 it was recorded that the Lord of the Manor had granted a site for a new workhouse, which was to be enclosed by a wall at least 2 1/2 yards high at its lowest point. Yet on January 27, 1790, parish officials were considering a schoolhouse as a possible site for a workhouse. 68

Records of the vestry meetings reveal that numerous local officials, such as surveyors, constables, overseers, churchwardens, and members of the vestry were illiterate. This was certainly a period when illiteracy was widespread, and it is apparent that the pool of literate persons from which to select local leaders was too small in the parish of Keighley.

Interestingly, the name of one of the Overseers of the Poor in 1765 and after was Thomas Colbeck. One indication that he was the same Thomas Colbeck who was the early Methodist leader in Keighley is the fact that the Overseers accounts for 1781 list the name of Mrs. Colbeck. 69 Thomas Colbeck the Methodist had died on November 5, 1779. 70 That Colbeck would have held this local responsibility is not surprising. As a grocer—and donor of the first Methodist preaching house—he was a relatively substantial person. Since Methodism at that
time saw itself as a body within the Church of England, it
is not impossible that a local Methodist leader might be
active in parish affairs. A prominent Methodist in such
an influential local position at that time, however, is
noteworthy.

The importance of the cloth-making industry for
Keighley's economic development is obvious. While woolen
and worsted cloth manufacturing was providing people with
work in the eighteenth century—as the occupational data
from 1763 reveal—June 30, 1780 was to prove a critical
date for Keighley local history. On that day the new
cotton mill, the Low Mill—the first to open in
Yorkshire—commenced operation, using child labor.
Economic progress accentuated social blight, but about the
same time one sees the beginning of workers' self-help
organizations (hardly unions in any real sense of the
word). The New Union Friendly Society of Haworth began in
1781, its function being that of "aiding and assisting the
Members thereof, in Sickness, and Infirmitics." Keighley
had a similar organization, an "Affectionate Society," in
1787.71

Details concerning Keighley's social and economic
life in the eighteenth century are far from abundant. To
supplement scattered and impressionistic information, such
as that given above, some quantifiable indicator is
desirable. Data concerning Poor Relief expenditure for the years which witnessed the origins and early development of Methodism, data taken from the Vestry and Churchwardens' account book, may give some information about the changing economic situation in the parish of Keighley (see figure 4). This information should obviously be treated with caution, however, since the accuracy of their records is questionable at times. Furthermore, not all of the money disbursed by the Overseers actually went to Poor Relief. For example, the figure of £899.05 (£899/1/1) apparently does not include £105/2/6 which the Overseers paid toward the building of a workhouse. But the figures used often did include expenditures other than those monies meted out to the needy.

Despite these drawbacks, the data appear to reveal at least two insights into Keighley's economic situation. First of all, the discernible peaks in the graph often coincide with known periods of hunger. For example, while statistics are not available for the years 1757 and 1758, trends previous to that suggest an upward climb, coinciding with a period of hunger from March, 1757 to June, 1758. High expenditures on the graph clearly parallel such depressed periods as January, 1772-August, 1775; December, 1780-September, 1781; June, 1782-July,
1783; most of 1784; and January, 1789 to September, 1790. The parallel is not quite so evident in the period from August, 1766 to early 1768, but that is probably because the figures for this early section of the graph are still low anyway. The rise in expenditures from 1763 to 1765 does not parallel any noticeable period of scarcity, but it is almost certainly related to the construction of the Poor House. Secondly, the drastic increase in expenditures throughout the course of the latter part of the century suggests that the town was beginning to develop its resources for aiding the needy. Doubtless as the population increased, so did need, but it can also be assumed that Keighley in 1790 was probably doing a better job of helping its poor than it was in 1747.

While correlating the Poor Relief data with the data from Methodist circuit records from this period is desirable, conclusions can be only suggestive at best, since a variety of factors was at work to influence Methodist membership and finances. For example, there is a remarkable correspondence between the depressed economy in 1790 and the drastic drop in circuit income at almost the same time, but that is also the year when the Otley circuit was formed, depriving the Keighley circuit of a number of its societies and, consequently, part of its previous income. This becomes clearer when the financial
data is compared to the parallel drop in membership. Nevertheless, a noticeable decline in income is evident beginning in 1781 (at the same time as a decline in membership) which parallels a period of economic dearth. The sharp rise in circuit income in 1763-65 is difficult to account for, though that was a period of relative stability for the local economy. Thus while there are occasional similarities between the economic situation and trends of growth (or decline) in Methodist finances and membership, there are also some exceptions. Furthermore, the data is not sufficient to elicit conclusions with a high degree of certainty. While local economic factors no doubt played a significant role in the lives of Keighley-area Methodists—a role which would have probably affected their religious behavior—many other determining factors also were involved in the process.

It must be remembered that, apart from the leadership of the Wesleys and Grimshaw and the efforts of Wesley's travelling preachers (who formed an emerging professional Methodist ministerial class, though still very much laymen at the time), Methodism was largely a lay-activated movement. One should not underestimate the contribution of the "half-itinerants" such as Thomas Colbeck, a relatively prosperous local businessman who held leadership roles in the circuit, in addition to
occasionally travelling with Wesley. And if Colbeck's occupational status was not exactly typical, the rank and file of the members often came from what Gilbert calls the "the upper echelons of the 'lower orders' and the lower income groups within the 'middle ranks'." While the high percentage of weavers and especially the spinners were far from being well off, they played an integral role in the local economy. It is true that dark days lay ahead for these particular occupational groups, but at the time they were not the most destitute members of society. A significant number of the other occupational groups (clothiers, dyers, finishers, persons in certain trades) were very possibly on the rise financially. The fact that evangelical religion, and Methodism in particular, was not espoused by the lowest and most desperate elements of society, but rather by those whose situations were optimistic, suggests that Thompson's descriptive phrase "chiliasm of despair" is wrong, especially for the early years of Methodism.

One factor that complicates the process is the occasional (or perhaps even more frequent) instability of conversion. This is especially applicable to Methodism with its Arminian theology, where there is an emphasis on the dreaded possibility of "falling away." Gail Malmgreen, in her study of Macclesfield, notes the
readiness of adolescents and young adults to respond positively to evangelistic appeals. Prolonged periods of struggle, despair, and the quest for an inner catharsis climax in a moment of intense emotional release. Conversions often took place when a person was from sixteen to twenty-one years of age, perhaps after completing an apprenticeship or in some way breaking free from family influences. It must not be forgotten that for eighteenth-century Methodists, conversion was always an intensely emotional affair. The practical result is that many individuals (Malmgreen says most individuals) did not remain under the same denominational label throughout their lives. Robert Currie, Alan Gilbert, and Lee Horsley maintain that the growth of a religious institution depends on an "external" as well as an "internal constituency." They hold that the readiness of the external constituency for religious participation, determined by a variety of external factors, strongly shapes the growth of religious institutions to meet that need.

Yet the extant evidence fails to clearly indicate that any one external factor (such as the local economy) can be singled out as the determining cause for the growth or decline of Methodism during its formative period in the Keighley circuit. A variety of environmental factors, as
well as the evangelistic fervor of the early preachers, must not be ignored as expansionist forces. It would not be judicious to even attempt to rank any of the numerous factors to form a hierarchy of causation. Perhaps the most constructive explanation is that environmental factors facilitated Methodist expansion but did not cause it.  

Brian Greaves' discovery of a religious gap in Yorkshire, unfilled by the Church of England, is, of course, significant for the region as a whole. Halevy points out that traditional Dissenting groups would have been unlikely candidates to fill the religious gap caused by these forces, since their ministers (and some Anglican priests, as well) were becoming increasingly rationalistic—some leaning towards Socinianism. He further argues that the laity were remaining true to traditional Protestant beliefs and therefore looking for ways to nourish those beliefs.  

Methodism would certainly have been one source of spiritual nourishment for those who found dry, rationalistic preaching unsuited to their tastes.

From a modern perspective, Methodist preachers may appear to be "purveyors of a theology which preyed on fear and capitalized on disaster and exploitation." Since evangelism and theology are the materials with which evangelical religion works, and since these played a
crucial role in either attracting or repelling potential converts, contemporary sermon registers may add an additional dimension to the available evidence. Typical Methodist sermon fare included God's forgiveness of sins, the Second Advent, God's providence during times of affliction, God's care shown in the avoidance of famine, and justification by faith. Listeners were instructed as to what was meant by believing in Christ and why they needed to attend to good works. Preaching tended toward a straightforward use of selected biblical texts, but there were examples of dubious exegesis, such as a sermon based on the incident of David's gathering around him those in debt, in distress, and discontented, as recorded in I Samuel 22:2. The speaker's clever though circuitous analogy led him to assert that David was a "type" (i.e. prophetic example) of Christ, who called the same type of people to salvation.\(^2\) While no doubt Methodist preachers set forth their share of hellfire-and-brimstone messages, the tone of the sermons as a whole is noticeably affirmative and optimistic, seemingly aimed to comfort as much as to challenge.\(^3\)

The conclusions suggested in this chapter, then, are that a variety of occupational groups, but mostly skilled or semiskilled workers, and predominantly from the cloth-making industry, were attracted to the Keighley
circuit in its formative years. Even the weavers and spinners were probably not in desperate straits at the time, although they would later find their economic situation severely threatened. Many other individuals were quite possibly rising in circumstance. In addition, although there is some evidence that the fate of the circuit depended in part on the economic circumstances of the time, it does not give a clear-cut picture of single-factor determination. Rather, a variety of forces were at work, not the least of which were the tone and theme of Methodist evangelism, the tight-knit organization set up by Wesley, and the reinforcement of frequent class meetings providing personal spiritual direction. The latter factor would help explain the appeal of Methodism to textile workers and artisans, who often lived close enough together to be able to meet frequently. It would be tempting to turn to other, far less tangible factors, such as the attraction of Methodist integrity and cordiality, but these are beyond the reach of historical research.

The year 1791 was a crucial year for the history of Methodism. Wesley's death was to launch a period of further growth and development, with the hardening of those institutions that made up the Methodist superstructure. It was a period which also saw
dissatisfaction, secession, and—some would argue—the fading of Methodism's original creative vitality. The following chapter will examine how some of these changes—as well as others—affected the further growth and development of the Keighley circuit to the year 1850.
FIGURE 1

CIRCUIT MEMBERSHIP: 1763-1792
FIGURE 2
CIRCUIT INCOME: 1755-1792

FIGURE 3
CIRCUIT FINANCES: 1755-1792
FIGURE 4

EXPENDITURES ON THE POOR

1792-1837
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<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gentlemen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professions</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
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<td>Agricultural</td>
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<td>Weavers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spinners</td>
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<td>33.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other textile workers</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laborers</td>
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</table>
NOTES

1 Among the hostile critics are E.J. Hobsbawm, especially in "Methodism and the Threat of Revolution in Britain," in Labouring Men: Studies in the History of Labour (New York, 1964), pp. 23-33 and E.P. Thompson, whose famous variation of the Halevy thesis has occasioned considerable debate. They are joined by others, such as John Baxter, "The Great Yorkshire Revival 1792-6: a Study of Mass Revival among the Methodists," A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain, VII (1974): 47-76 and E.P. Stigent, "Wesleyan Methodism and Working-Class Radicalism in the North, 1792-1821," Northern History, VI (1971): 98-116. Historians much friendlier to Methodism include Bernard Semmel, whose constructive variation of the Halevy thesis is found in The Methodist Revolution; Wellman J. Warner, The Wesleyan Movement in the Industrial Revolution (New York, 1967); and Robert Wearmouth, Methodism and the Common People of the Eighteenth Century (London, 1945), the latter being one of many Methodist apologists of the first half of the twentieth century who seek to show in Methodism the catalyst of the working-class movement. It is obvious that the famous Halevy thesis that Methodism helped to ward off violent revolution in Great Britain can be used either to attack Methodism as a repressive, counterrevolutionary force, toadying to the powers of reaction, or to herald it as the savior of British culture and morals, conservative enough to hold the fabric of society together, yet liberal enough to aid in the improvement of the condition of the masses. Needless to say, neither of these extremes gives an adequate interpretation. Bernard Semmel has traced the development of Halevy's thesis, showing that Halevy himself based it in part on the views of Lecky, Taine, Guizot, and others. See Semmel, "Halevy, Methodism, and Revolution," the introduction to Halevy, Birth of Methodism, pp. 12-18.

3 Wearmouth, *Methodism and the Common People*, p. 139.


5 Wearmouth, *Methodism and the Common People*, p. 172 and Francis McConnell, *John Wesley* (New York, 1939), p. 242, who is quick to argue that although Wesley was no revolutionary, he was not blind to the fact that social ills need a suitable remedy.

6 From a sermon register dated 1779-1783, an uncatalogued manuscript volume kept in a metal trunk in the Keighley Methodist Circuit Archives, Keighley Central Library. The contemporary importance of this sermon is evident in the fact that the entry is noticeably longer and more detailed than that for any other sermon in the entire register.

7 Wearmouth, *Methodism and the Common People*, p. 166.


13 See the writer's "The Influence of the Religious Thought of John Wesley on his Political and Social Views" (M.A. thesis, the Ohio State University, 1980).


18 Ibid, p. 70.

19 Ibid, p. 72.


29 Gail Malmgreen sees this in operation in her local study of Macclesfield, "Economy and Culture," p. 338.

30 Semmel, *Methodist Revolution*, p. 73.

31 Keighley Circuit Register, 1777-1782, cat. no. 105D77/1/3/4/a and 1787-1798, cat. no. 105D77/1/3/4/b and Account of the Keighley Round, 1763, cat. no. 105D77/1/3/1/b, Keighley Methodist Circuit Archives, Keighley Central Library. Although the circuit registers sometimes give the names of persons who were not actually members, these persons were not included in the figures sent to Conference. In the register for 1781, however, S. Bradburn specifically denies any attempt to inflate the numbers, observing that he had omitted the names of those in certain classes that had not been properly supervised. He explains: "I might have squeezed many into the different societies, if I only wanted to make a show of names: this I durst not do."
32 "History of Wesleyan Methodism in Keighley," Keighley Visitor, March, 1862, in Methodist Archives, local collection, John Rylands Library at the University of Manchester.

33 From a table by John Baxter, "Great Yorkshire Revival," p. 69.

34 All financial data for the period through 1792 is taken from the Haworth Round Account Book.


37 Sermon register, October 19, 1783 and elsewhere.

38 Church, More About Early Methodist People, pp. viii, 1-5, 7ff.

39 Ibid, p. 299. Elsewhere, in The Early Methodist People (New York, 1949), p. 68, he categorizes "the first Methodists" as "for the most part...poor," while admitting the fact of an occasional "man of substance" who facilitated the building of preaching houses.


42 Gilbert, Religion and Society, p. 67.

43 Wilson, Gentlemen Merchants, p. 53.


48 See J. L. and Barbara Hammond, The Skilled Labourer, revised edition (London, 1927; reprint, London and New York, 1979). While the Hammonds, of course, would not portray the lives of domestic workers as especially glamorous, they did argue that these people kept a degree of control over their lives which factory laborers later lost.


50 Ibid, pp. 319-320.


52 Wilson, Gentlemen Merchants, p. 28.


55 Lipson, Woolen and Worsted Industries, pp. 41, 68.

56 Wilson, Gentlemen Merchants, pp. 30-31.

57 Lipson, Woolen and Worsted Industries, p. 201.


59 The lists used the spelling "brooker" for this group. One of these was part of the Haworth society, mentioned by Frank Baker, William Grimshaw, pp. 56-57, who identifies the person as a broker or an agent who made sure that spinners had their wool and subsequently turned over their yarn to the worsted master. The Oxford English Dictionary confirms Baker's description.

60 Lipson, Woolen and Worsted Industries, pp. 72ff.

61 See Gilbert, Religion and Society, p. 67. Even Wesley believed this.

61a See Wallace, "Religion and Society," p. 244.


Wearmouth, in *Methodism and the Common People*, p. 226, admits the occasional practice of appointing artisans and sometimes even common laborers as trustees.


Transcript of trust deed located in Keighley Methodist Circuit Archives, Keighley Central Library.


Vestry Account Book and Churchwarden Account Book, 1722-1787, cat. no. 001-1 16589, reference library, Keighley Central Library.

Vestry account book.

Manuscript sermon register in Keighley Methodist Circuit Archives.

Dewhirst, *History of Keighley*, pp. 9, 15.


80 Halevy, *Birth of Methodism*, pp. 45-46. There may very well be twentieth-century parallels to this among members of mainstream Protestant churches who frequently turn to "fringe" charismatic movements to supplement their religious diet.

81 Malmgreen, "Economy and Culture," pp. 331-332. She immediately goes on to modify this description, however.

82 This information was found in a manuscript sermon register in the Keighley Methodist Circuit Archives, Keighley Central Library.

83 Indications are that the tone and content were not unlike what many conservative evangelicals in the twentieth century are accustomed to. That certain people find such sermon fare attractive, then or now, should not be surprising.
CHAPTER III
GROWTH OF THE CIRCUIT
1791 TO 1850

It is no arbitrary decision to examine the growth and development of Methodism (even at the circuit level) after 1791 as a period distinct from that prior to Wesley's death. To attach such importance to Wesley's passing may seem myopic, but in fact this event was the beginning of a number of changes in the Methodist societies. Any growth before 1791 cannot be totally independent of the personal influence and appeal of Wesley the leader and the man. His letters and *Journal* are filled with examples of his actual or attempted interference at the circuit or even the local level. Even during his lifetime a Wesley legend existed that undoubtedly piqued the interest of the curious. Even where his real influence was resisted by his followers (for example, in the issue of ties with the Church of England), the legend did not fail to leave its mark.
It is not simply that a body of men at Conference began to assume the responsibility that one man had attempted to retain for a number of decades. The decades following Wesley's death also witnessed real changes in Wesleyan Methodism. A movement that had been largely charismatic and spontaneous began to make concrete its policies and institutions. This period saw the consolidation of a church out of a group of religious societies. Discipline, policies, modes of evangelism, and worship all assumed forms increasingly different from those envisioned by the founder.

Before examining the patterns of growth (and occasional apparent decline) in the membership and finances of the Keighley circuit during this period and investigating the structural changes and developments in the circuit organization, it would be useful to review briefly some of the basic conclusions concerning Methodism in general during this period. In particular, how have historians tended to view the interaction between Methodism in the early nineteenth century and the social and political milieu in which it found itself? With that beginning it might be possible to see if the developments in the Keighley circuit fit any of the patterns discerned by scholars looking at Methodism in this larger context.
Reference was made in the previous chapter to the historiographical controversies surrounding the relationship between Methodism and politics. In an examination of the period beginning with the decade of the 1790's this controversy becomes particularly relevant with the attention of Englishmen focused on the French Revolution. It was the heightened fear of violent revolution which helped to stimulate pronouncements from Methodist apologists that lend considerable weight to Halevy's famous thesis that Methodism helped ward off violent revolution in England. Official spokesmen and Connexional leaders repeatedly insisted that Wesleyanism had been a force to prevent a popular revolution such as came to France.¹

Most of such expressed attitudes of the Wesleyan leaders merely followed the lead of their Tory founder. In 1782, after nearly all of the anti-Methodist violence characteristic of Wesley's early ministry had ceased, Wesley wrote of the reciprocal responsibility of the Christian minister and the king. The king's responsibility was to defend a minister of the Church against unjust slander (and Wesley had not hesitated to appeal to this in the face of local mob violence), while the minister was likewise to protect the good name of the monarch. Apart from this concern, Wesley asserted that
ministers were to stay out of politics, with the confidence that those who had been ordained to rule were most qualified to do so without interference. This, of course, is the famous "no politics" rule, which Methodist leaders, including Wesley himself, repeatedly ignored. In theory at least, Wesley pronounced this dictum to keep his preachers from becoming diverted from their "main business," which was to proclaim to their hearers the message of "repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."²

If Wesley thought it unbecoming for a minister of the gospel to interfere in the business of government, he was scandalized that "common tradesmen" might think themselves competent to pass judgment on kings, ministers, and Parliament. He genuinely thought that the final, dreaded result of outspoken dissent against rulers would be "mutiny and rebellion." For the most part, Wesley's principle of "no criticism" extended to the king's appointed officials as well, since "exposing the King's Ministers [to criticism] was one way of exposing the King himself." Apparently unconcerned about the principle of free speech, Wesley wrote that the law should punish those whose slanderous lies bred unrest against the monarchy. Believing that the monarch was the real protector of liberty, he ominously prayed that God would not punish the
people for their dissent by taking away their king.³

In true Tory fashion, Wesley insisted on linking churchmanship and loyalty to the crown. A true son or daughter of the Church must love not only God but the king as well.⁴ To the Methodists he gave an especially strong warning: he would not have fellowship with any who blasphemed the king. With more than just a hint of non sequitur reasoning, he identified those who hated the king with those who opposed Arminianism.⁵ As Wesley's career reached maturity, his High-Church leanings lessened considerably in practice, if not totally in theory, because they would have interfered with his evangelistic efforts. His Tory stance, however, did not need to yield to practical considerations, so it remained as strong as ever. As a critical reader and thinker, Wesley was not at his best, and he repeatedly changed opinions on a number of issues based on his reading, although his basic Toryism was unshakable.⁶

The strength of Wesley's personal leadership made the absorption of this stance by the main body of leaders of the Methodists likely. However, even in Wesley's lifetime, modifications of this position were evident, even in the thought of Wesley's close and trusted associate John Fletcher. According to Fletcher, just as one may divorce a spouse in case of adultery, a person may
justifiably renounce a government if it is "undeniably and capitally tyrannical." This would seem to contradict the more usual teaching of submission, even when the adherents of submission would concede the right of the individual to "lament" and to "bear testimony against" an unjust or immoral government. At any rate, there is no record that Wesley objected to Fletcher's opinion on this point.⁷

At least one expression of Wesley's basic views on authority is evident among the leadership of the Keighley circuit. The minute book of the local preachers contains an obituary of Brother Walbank, a veteran local preacher on the circuit. The obituary praised Walbank's example in avoiding even potentially inflammatory messages in his preaching. One way he did this was to gear his text and his message to the specific circumstances. The one example cited is revealing: if he were preaching at the workhouse, he would not have selected a text which criticized the wealthy.⁸

These facts play readily into the hand of E. P. Thompson, who has formulated what is undoubtedly the best-known modern interpretation of Halevy's thesis. Thompson's "oscillation thesis" sees revival activity in general (with special emphasis on Methodism) as a nonproductive sublimation of the energies of the working class, a sublimation that occurred when the workers'
economic and political goals had been thwarted. Scholars such as E. P. Stigent and John Baxter have championed Thompson's theory in their studies of more limited geographical regions. Baxter, in particular, examines the great revival occurring in Yorkshire during the 1790's in order to discover what factors were at work at its beginning and at its close. He proposes that Wesley's death led to a crisis, and argues that many Methodists sincerely feared the breakup of the Connexion (and with good reason). As a result, many desired revival and showed their desire in prayer and other expressions of concern. Baxter even suggests the possibility of deliberate psychological manipulation, while admitting that the evidence does not extend so far as to substantiate that view.\(^9\)

To demonstrate the connection between revivals and social and economic conditions, Baxter notes that in areas where revivals occurred there was considerable unemployment, with accompanying economic disruption and social unrest. Although the beginning of the revival preceded the worst of the economic crisis, the worsening situation undoubtedly intensified the religious awakening, 1795 being a particularly bad year. During times of scarcity, people proved susceptible to promises of new birth and the reassurance of heavenly rewards in the face
of earthly tragedy and suffering. Unemployed men often enlisted, and women turned to religious revival to fill the emotional void. Those whose political convictions were not firmly radical were especially "vulnerable," then, "to the tender mercies of the Wesleyan priesthood which was increasingly becoming the tool of counter-revolution." Baxter sees the beginning of a conservative reaction to manifestations of radicalism in 1791 and early 1792 as paralleling the onset of the Yorkshire revival. Alternatively, in 1795 when the religious revival was beginning to lose force, radicalism re-emerged in response to economic despair. Baxter concludes that despite the apparent psychological forces at work, the evidence from this period tends to verify Thompson's oscillation thesis, and he presents tabular data to substantiate this view. Baxter's tabular data, however, reveal that while the statistics for Sheffield reflect an oscillating pattern, the results for many other localities are ambiguous and do not imply oscillation.

Stigent investigates the relationship between political activism and Wesleyanism at a somewhat later period. He concludes that people whose lives had been touched by Wesleyan Methodism eventually had to make a choice between the Wesleyan chapel and the Radical club. After 1821, the Wesleyan Connexion was not at all
primarily working class and did not attract workers. Consequently it was no longer a significant political force. The implication is, of course, that as long as Methodism had the ability to attract the working class, even during periods of oscillation, it was a political force to be reckoned with, regardless of the "no politics" claims of the leaders.

The Thompsonist view of Methodism as the stronghold of Toryism has not been unchallenged. David Hempton has noted that political diversity was typical of Wesleyan Methodist leaders in the 1790's, as well as after 1820. For the first two decades of the nineteenth century, however, he sees the stance of the official leadership as largely Tory and passive. During this period, with the aid of various secessions from the Connexion, the main body of Methodism "largely purged itself of popular radicalism and unrestrained revivalism, but in so doing it lost contact with the working classes."  

Most Wesleyan laymen, however, were probably not Tory-oriented. The evidence available to Hempton leads him to the conclusion that by around 1841 the majority of Wesleyan Methodists were voting Liberal, although certain Liberal policies--Hempton cites Ireland and the Church--might provoke a conservative reaction among
Wesleyans, depending on local circumstances. While non-Wesleyan Methodists, such as the Primitive Methodists, the New Connexion, and the Protestant Methodists, were predictably and consistently Liberal, Wesleyans were, though usually Liberal, more complex and were even ready to vote Conservative against certain Liberal candidates whom they saw as extremists. Stir over Reform made many of them anxious to exercise political muscle, which alarmed some of the preachers. Hempton's assessment was that "most Wesleyans paid little attention to official Conference policies, unless an orchestrated denominational campaign thrust petitions under their noses." When the issue was explained to them from the pulpit, they signed willingly enough, but this was not the same thing as exercising effective control over their political opinions. Overall, Hempton observes that the relationship between Methodism and politics was a complex one, and varied according to the play of local factors. To get at the real situation will take more than general studies based on pronouncements of Conferences and references to the letters of Jabez Bunting. Hempton notes that "behind the constitutional questions of Conference authority, ministerial power and local rights, there was an important social and political context which requires a
town-by-town analysis."¹⁶

The relative independence of thought of the Methodist laity reveals itself perhaps most clearly when viewing specific issues. While the Wesleyan leaders were hostile to Chartism, Wesleyan members in general were not necessarily so. Commitment to Chartist goals sometimes came from the rank and file, especially the unemployed workers--and sometimes even the local preachers. These chose to disregard the rules passed by the Connexional authorities against involvement in politics.¹⁷ Of course, political issues such as those revolving around Roman Catholicism could elicit a unified Methodist response, the laity sharing the anti-Catholicism of the leaders.¹⁸

The response to the controversy ignited by Thompson and his disciples has come from more than one front. Thompson's fellow-radical, Eric J. Hobsbawm, is one of those not entirely satisfied with Thompson's thesis. Examining the years of maximum Methodist growth, he finds that growth coincided with times of strain in society and the economy. He observes that all nonconformist groups experienced a setback in numbers during the half-decade before 1855, the only time in the 1800's when they experienced a net decline. This trend also coincided with a decline in Radical and Chartist activity. All of this leads to the conclusion "that there was a marked
parallelism between the movements of religious, social and political consciousness." Elsewhere he expresses the opinion that it is unlikely that Wesleyan Methodism prevented revolution or was a strong deterrent to revolutionary sentiment, rhetorically asking how strong Methodists were in relation to the rest of the population. In many places where radical sentiment was strongest, Methodism was not a significant force anyway, but in the strongholds of Methodism, notably the West Riding (Keighley is one of the examples he cites), radicalism was a strong force. It is possible that labor activists included members of the Wesleyan Connexion. Hobsbawm has conceded that while some differences between his views and those of Thompson were due to the fact that Thompson was looking at "revivalism" in general, Thompson's treatment is more complete and "satisfactory than [his] on the points where the two are in disagreement." Even earlier, Hobsbawm had stood firmly against Methodist historians such as Robert Wearmouth, whose concern was to show the positive impact of Methodism on the labor movement. According to Hobsbawm, "the slogan 'British Labour owes more to Wesley than to Marx' has spread obscurity rather than light." Yet Harold Perkin, who uses arguments such as those put forth by Wearmouth, also appeals to Hobsbawm for support. In attempting to
add perspective to the debate, Perkin claims that Halevy was correct to the extent that Methodists who remained in the Wesleyan Connexion tended to be a conservative, stabilizing force. But he also maintains that Hobsbawm is correct in that many Radicals moved from Wesleyanism by way of the more radical Methodist sects to heterodox religious views or religious apathy, and also that Hobsbawm is correct to say that Wesleyans were probably not numerous enough among the nineteenth-century working class to be an effective deterrent to radicalism. Both Perkin and Hobsbawm underestimate the strength of Methodism, especially in places such as Keighley.

Perkin reproduces some of the arguments advanced by conservative scholars (who are often Methodist apologists). For example, Methodists, or more often those who had been Methodists, sometimes provided local leadership for working-class radical activity, and undoubtedly their activities help to explain the organizational structures patterned after those of Methodism. Owenites and Chartists used a "class meeting" system of local organization. Perkin points out that despite some exceptions, the influence derived from Methodism was nonviolent.

Of course, some of the conservative perspective takes the form of naive anti-Marxist rhetoric, contrasting the
religious motivation of love for God and man with the "class hatred" of radical labor movements. Wellman J. Warner, a more responsible and restrained apologist, recognizes that Methodism failed to make any real contribution to radical thought, though describing Wesleyan Methodism as "liberal in its tendencies." The unswerving opposition of Wesleyanism to early radicalism is obvious. Yet Warner's characterization of Wesleyan "liberalism" as "unlabelled," a fact which gave it its power and influence, is too general and vague to be substantiated.

Wearmouth's arguments stand on firmer ground when he counters the charge that Methodism and Radicalism were antithetical by showing the organizational parallels between Radical groups and Methodism. (He even mentions that some Chartist camp meetings actually used the Wesleyan hymnal.) Of course, it would be easy to take issue with his specific statement that "Methodism was a kind of Radicalism in the religious world, while Radicalism was a sort of Methodism in the political sphere." Wearmouth's conclusion was that the Tory stance of the Conference was not indicative of the democratic elements within Wesleyanism and that "the democratic elements were always more potent than the autocratic" despite the fact that "the Methodist leaders
A recent group of "conservative" critics of Thompson and Hobsbawm has arisen, armed with an impressive array of Methodist growth statistics, objecting that solid evidence for "oscillation" has not been produced and that the supposition that evangelical religion was the equivalent of "anti-radicalism" is "untenable." Alan Gilbert criticizes Thompson's reliance on selected biographies of individual "oscillators" and argues that it is premature to assume that these were typical. Gilbert's suggestion is that those with an established commitment to Methodism—full members, leaders, etc.—were not likely to oscillate. Yet Gilbert's conclusion is not entirely enlightening: "religious deviance was a form of a political 'safety valve' in early industrial politics," which was not "essentially conservative" but was "moderately radical."²⁹

Robert Currie, Gilbert, and Lee Horsley specifically attack Thompson's views concerning the relative timing of Methodist growth and political activism. For example, though Thompson's thesis accurately coincides with a high growth rate in 1793-1794 and 1832-1833, if the oscillation theory were completely true, that growth should have persisted, but in reality it quickly fell back. The historical realities, as suggested by Currie, Gilbert, and
Horsley, are more fluid than Thompson's model. Sometimes political and religious affiliation increased together; at other times political factors diverted attention from religious activity. Going still further, Currie points out that, contrary to the Thompsonist view that Methodist ministers saw in revivalism a way of sublimating radical tendencies, Wesleyan ministers more often condemned revivalism as fanatical. Revivalism's appeal was largely to the laity.

Gail Malmgreen seems to object to the philosophical presuppositions which Thompson and Hobsbawm bring to the controversy. She charges that they have a distorted view of Methodism and wrongly see it as foreign to the culture in which the early nineteenth-century working class lived. They also wrongly argue that Methodism served as a "brake on a self-generating and self-propelling engine labelled 'working-class consciousness.'" Instead she sees a different relationship between evangelicalism and working-class activism. "The former, a psychological/cultural response to a transitional period in social and economic relations, was increasingly superceded by the latter from the 1830's onward." It is apparent, then, that though each side of the controversy may present statistical data, various interpretations still abound. Disagreements over
precisely when a revival breaks out or when radical activity dies down help to cloud the issue. As a revival spreads, it may begin or end sooner in one area than in another. Furthermore, it is hard to be always precise about a concept as amorphous as "revival." Likewise, outbreaks of political radicalism are sporadic enough that they do not always fit neatly into an historian's interpretation. An examination of the statistics used by Baxter also seems to show that local trends varied (a point which Baxter neglects to mention). Much of Baxter's tabular data do not support Thompson's oscillation thesis. General studies have not reached an agreement over the important issues surrounding growth and change within British Methodism. To establish a context in which to examine the continued development and growth of the Keighley circuit between 1791 and 1850, a brief examination of the political and social situation in the vicinity of Keighley may prove informative.

Some of the inhabitants of Keighley readily voiced their opinions on national policies that effected the local situation. In 1814 2,441 individuals from the parish signed a petition to Parliament to resist the new Corn Law. In November, 1826 the parish agreed to pay the cost of petitioning Parliament to repeal the Corn Laws and remove trade restrictions. As a town where the
manufacturing influence was strong and growing, this position is hardly surprising. Despite the fact that farmers in the area were also numerous, industrial interests clearly dominated over agricultural ones. Concern over the Corn Laws seems to have been largely the result of economic hardship and, of course, high grain prices.

Not unusual for the time was the local concern for issues that were properly religious in nature. For example, on April 8, 1822 a committee was appointed "to take measures to cause the Sabbath to be more decently observed than heretofore in this Town and Parish." It would be tempting to see here the influence of evangelicalism (of which Methodism was certainly a part), and there is no doubt that evangelical concern over proper respect for the Sabbath and other such issues undoubtedly caused a heightened awareness of such matters. But this sort of concern was common then, and it seems doubtful that many real and lasting changes resulted from the committee's efforts.

In the previous chapter there was a brief discussion of poor relief in the parish of Keighley through 1791. Increasing poor relief expenditures reflected increased need and probably increased resources to help meet that need. The early nineteenth century reveals a parish
jealousy attempting to retain control over the administration of poor relief, despite inefficiencies of the system and even abuses. Locally selected commissions regulated assessments, and local authorities controlled expenditures. Local tax assessors and collectors received their payment out of the poor rates, and when the vestry instructed the constables to investigate possible sites for a prison in October, 1814, funds for the proposed prison were to have come from the Poor Rates. Even money for church expenses sometimes came out of the Poor Rates, as well as money to pay tax collectors and to work on roads.

The records offer evidence of actual abuses which further lowered the efficiency of local poor relief. Records of the vestry meeting of December 30, 1815 suggest that something was possibly awry with the accounts of the workhouse, with the result that the vestry relieved Joshua North of his duties there. In 1822, discrepancies in the Surveyors' accounts reflected a drain on the Poor Rates. In March, 1832 the Guardians' accounts were in such a state of disarray that the parish officials considered bringing in an accountant at the parish's expense to set them straight. A committee was authorized to raise whatever money was essential for relief of the poor, since the accounts could not be passed in the current condition.
The emphatic demand of the vestry for an itemized account of all monies expended for poor relief suggests the possibility of numerous instances of carelessness.

Finally, in September of 1837, even while Keighley was adamantly resisting the implementation of the new Poor Law Amendment, abuse was evident. Something was apparently wrong with the accounts of Thomas Dawson, an Assistant Overseer of the Poor, who did not show up at the Vestry meeting and did not provide the account books. He was suspended from his office and ordered to surrender all records or face legal proceedings.

While Keighley did have its own workhouse, much of the routine poor relief involved incidental payments to individuals. The system was informal and perhaps even somewhat haphazard, though a possible merit might have been the individualized concern rather than the "efficiency" of an impersonal bureaucratic treadmill. Many of the vestry minutes beginning in November, 1821 enumerated payments made out of the Poor Rates to those needing relief. Payments included money for rent, support for children, materials for clothing (for example, cotton for a shirt or a shift), and similar items. Sometimes orders provided for more or less permanent payments to individuals; others gave temporary aid to meet emergency circumstances. An interesting entry is the authorization
of a wooden leg for James Bradley on May 23, 1831. One can only wonder what happened when the following year the vestry minutes record the provision of a new wooden leg for Bradley. Also noticeable is the occasional order that an outsider be removed from the parish. The vestry empowered the constable to give relief to those vagrants in real need but instructed him to send them on their way immediately and to prosecute those who refused to leave. Signs were to be posted to warn off wandering vagrants.

This is not to say that there were no attempts to be systematic. In response to widespread unemployment in 1826, the vestry attempted to spell out a more organized policy for the relief of those who were out of work. They were to report on Friday morning at 9:00. A single man was to receive 1s. 6d. a week; married men without children would get 3 shillings, and married men were to receive 6 shillings for each child. Those seeking relief were to bring a ticket from their last employer, presumably to weed out those with known radical tendencies. In what appears to be a gesture of genuine compassion, the vestry urged the Overseers also to seek relief for those unemployed who lived in Keighley but did not belong to the parish. Later, in January, 1830 efforts were made to provide work for unemployed men by having them break rocks for the building of roads.
Despite the inefficiencies, and perhaps because of the relatively informal administration of relief, the community consistently and firmly resisted any changes in the Poor Laws. As early as April, 1817, the vestry was considering joining forces with a committee from Leeds to oppose resolutions from a House of Commons committee to change the Poor Laws. However, the resistance seems to have been largely aimed at attempts to usurp the local prerogative in this matter. The community did not seem to be hesitant in appealing to Parliament for help in exacting funds. In 1820 and 1821, the vestry expressed its desire to petition Parliament for an act that would force owners or landlords of cottages with annual rents of less than six pounds to pay poor rates. By March, 1821 the vestry had determined to join with other parishes that had already appealed to Parliament for an act concerning this.35

Not surprisingly, the passing of the Poor Law Amendment in 1834 brought strengthened resistance, and implementation of the law was bitterly opposed. On February 7, 1837 the rate payers met to attempt to obtain a suspension of implementation while they petitioned for a change in the law. The petition was sent and was presented by John Fielden, Esq., M.P. Interestingly, the expenses of the petition came out of the poor rates. The
basis of the opposition was that the control over relief should remain in the hands of local rate payers. In addition, Keighley townspeople petitioned against the repeal of the bastardy laws. Though the resistance was ultimately futile, it was at times fierce and uncontrolled. The Commissioner who was to enforce the Act faced mob violence. Finally, almost as a final token of their continued opposition, the vestry gave a unanimous vote of thanks on March 29, 1838 to the Overseers and especially to D. W. Weatherhead "above all to his consistant [sic] and unwearied exertion in opposing the introduction of the New Poor Law amendment Act in this Town and Parish." Even in May, 1842, long after the Keighley Union had been established, the Keighley Board of Guardians approved a petition for the alteration of the Poor Law Amendment Act. In addition, both in 1841 and 1843, the Board ordered the drawing up of a petition for the altering of the Bastardy law, which would better indemnify parishes for the expenditures for bastard children. The silence of the Wesleyan circuit leaders (at least in circuit documents) concerning these controversies may indicate agreement with the position of the town populace in general.

In 1836 when the Union was formed, it included the following places: Keighley, Haworth, Steeton, Eastburn,
East and West Morton, Sutton, Bingley, and Micklethwaite.
The first meeting of the Board of Guardians took place in
the courthouse on February 15, 1837.\textsuperscript{37} Implementation of
the Act did not correct all of the problems. While the
Guardians continued to implement some incidental relief to
those who were not inmates at the workhouse,\textsuperscript{38} there was a
new and unfortunate emphasis on the workhouse as a vehicle
for aid. The Board made proposals to use the labor of
inmates to work on roads and bridges, to break rocks and
plant potatoes, and for such "useful" projects as making
fish ponds. Children in the workhouse were apprenticed.\textsuperscript{39}

The Guardians' records abound with references to
enquiries, investigations, and complaints regarding the
condition of the workhouse. One Poor Law Commissioner in
1842 demanded an explanation from the master of the
workhouse as to why he had neglected to show the room
containing an insane inmate during a visit.\textsuperscript{40} In 1846 the
Board had to exact a promise from Edward Whitely, master
of the workhouse at Bingley, that "in future...Paupers
dying in the Workhouse should be laid out in a separate
Room." In 1847 the condition of the lumber and the roof
of the workhouse at Keighley was described as "delapidated
and dangerous," and repairs were ordered. With sufficient
space at the workhouse being a problem, the workhouse
master was ordered to vacate his family from the room they
occupied there or lower the maximum limit of inmates. In 1846, the limits set by the Poor Law Commissioners were 45 inmates for the workhouse at Bingley and 56 for the one at Keighley. Both houses had only one inmate less than the maximum. An enquiry in 1848 to determine how many inmates could be housed at the workhouse probably suggests plans to fill that facility to its maximum capacity.41

Although on May 6, 1837 the vestry ordered the assessors and collectors to use no more money from the Poor Rates for the expenses of collecting taxes, the new system was not free of abuses. A collector, Barnard MacVay, caused a local scandal when the Board of Guardians discovered that he had falsified a list of names on which his nomination had been based. He had also summoned several ratepayers before the magistrates for nonpayment, when in fact they had paid their rates to him already. On April 13, 1842 the Board found him unfit to hold compensated office.42 In September, 1848 the Poor Law Board had to reject a nominee for the charge of the workhouse at Bingley—because he was under the age of 21. One can only wonder why the young man was ever nominated at all. There were also cases of fraudulent collection of relief payments. The following year, the Board of Guardians decided to meet each month to investigate all individual cases and requested information from "the
Overseers and a few of the principal rate payers...as a check to all fraud upon the rate payers." The investigation was obviously needed. In November, 1850 the Board discovered that relief had been given to Mary Greenwood of Haworth—who had been dead for about a year. Interestingly, Jonas Sugden, a prominent local Methodist, served as an Overseer during the 1840's. Sugden had a reputation as a devout man and was a prosperous worsted manufacturer, a partner in the Vale Mill. His activities in local affairs are noteworthy, although he does not seem to have been a reformer.

The impact of Corn Laws and Poor Laws and the official reactions of local officials are only small portions of the entire picture, of course. As the importance of manufacturing concerns increased, so did the importance of the influence and reactions of those who toiled in them. While the working class of Keighley in the nineteenth century was not powerful, neither could it be described as complacent. They joined in the popular unrest concerning the new Poor Law Amendment Act, and in the 1840's two important issues in Keighley were local working-class support for the Plug Riots and Chartism.

Despite the existence of the Combination Acts, Keighley workers early sought to organize cooperatively. For example, some workers formed a "friendly society" in
1811 known as the Royal Union Benefit Society. Members had to pay 10s. 6d. per quarter for mutual aid. When ill, provided the illness was not the result of "immoral conduct," members received six shillings weekly, and when a member died, the nearest living relative received two guineas to help pay for funeral expenses. Luddite activity in the West Riding aroused the concern of manufacturers—or perhaps afforded them an excuse to act—and in November of 1812 about 30 worsted manufacturers in Keighley resolved not to "employ, or suffer to be employed, any Workman" connected with any such society as the Society of Woolcombers. This hardly put a stop to worker organizations in Keighley. There were three Combers' Clubs with connections elsewhere in Yorkshire and Lancashire. ⁴⁵

The decade of the 1820's saw worker activity in the vicinity. On February, 1822, the reelers at Vale Mill went out on strike for higher wages. ⁴⁶ In 1825, the opening of the wool market to foreign competition brought hardship to many—and prolonged striking in the Bradford area. That year the Bradford Union Association of Woolcombers and Stuff Weavers went on strike for 23 weeks. In response, most of the manufacturers in Keighley resolved to get rid of any who belonged to the Union of Combers and Weavers and anyone who supported them in any
way. In 1826 economic depression, locally called the Butterfield Panic, occurred due to overspeculation, the rising prices of domestic goods, and increasing importation.

August, 1842 saw riots and time lost at local factories due to strikes in the vicinity of Keighley and Oakworth. According to the correspondent of the Leeds Mercury, factories around Keighley had been closed from Tuesday to Friday at noon, and most owners deducted two days' pay from the wages of the workers. The reporter admitted that Keighley had adherents to the Chartist cause but that they composed less than 1% of the Keighley workers, a figure that probably reflected his own wishful thinking more than the facts. The food and other items given to the strikers, according to the article, had been given not as the result of sympathy but out of fear. The article expressed the sentiment that the course of events had had a good outcome, since many who had sympathized with the Chartists now saw the futility of the cause. Another outcome was that two persons were sent to Wakefield "for misdemeanours" and three men, two blacksmiths and a woolcomber, were sent to York Castle for pulling the plugs from a steam engine. The author said that it would be difficult to find the ringleaders who exploited "poor deluded wretches, who appear to have
starved to death." The article was typically quick to place the ultimate blame on outside influences, unscrupulously manipulating the local rabble.

Factory masters in Keighley required their workers to sign a declaration dated August 19 if they wanted to return to work. Nearly all signed. The declaration read:

We the undersigned, peaceable and industrious inhabitants of this town and neighbourhood, do hereby declare (our employers having, after the recent lawless proceedings of a body of strangers, come to the determination of recommending the working of their mills), that we will individually protect and defend their lives and property to the utmost of our power; and also that we will not join any riotous assembly for any purpose, but will steadily mind our work, and eject any intruders who may attempt to stop our employment.

The wording of the document was specifically designed to convey the idea that the instigators were not locals, that the employers were responsible for the return to work (thus preventing any suggestion that the workers might have coerced the owners through a strike), and that the workers had a subsequent, ongoing responsibility to "eject any intruders." Nevertheless, an aura of fear still lingered from the disturbances that had occurred throughout a larger area in Yorkshire--fear which the Mercury attributed to the "lawless bands" who had intimidated people into giving them supplies. Regardless, too, of the implication of the above-quoted declaration that the workers gratefully returned to work at their
employers' invitation, it was the presence of troops which forced many back to work. Sent to Keighley were troops from Leeds and foot soldiers from the 73rd regiment, who were using a vacant warehouse for barracks.53

Although in 1843 the Keighley Commissioners were emphasizing the calm atmosphere in contrast to the previous year,54 the Keighley workers were far from pacified. The woolcombers posted a notice informing their readers that during times of steady work, a woolcomber could earn only about 8 or 9 shillings per week. They protested that they needed an increase in wages, since overall trade was better, to cushion themselves against times when work was slack. One local firm, Marriner's, had agreed. The woolcombers had declared their intention to support the employees of Lund, Whitehead, and Williamson while they struck to get higher wages. But most manufacturers quickly acted to thwart the intention by threatening to stop production unless all striking ended.55

In an attempt to look after their own interests, Keighley weavers formed a Protective Society in 1846 which cost one penny a week for weavers and a half-penny per week for spinners and winders to join. The members declared that they wanted no trouble "with honourable employers who are disposed to act with justice and reason
toward us," but they would obtain funds to enable them to fight for wage increases or protect against reductions, if necessary. The economic outlook at the time was not good. One observer, a nurseryman of Keighley, said that in October of 1846 1,500 woolcombers were out of work. While some managed to find jobs somewhere else, many were supported out of the poor rates. By midcentury the plight of the woolcombers was serious.56

Between 1791 and the middle of the nineteenth century, Keighley, though a relatively small town, was experiencing the increased influence of manufacturing interests. Though in many ways the town leaders staunchly resisted change, yet the change from a more agrarian-based culture (at least more than the early nineteenth century) to one chiefly industrial occurred almost automatically, as evident in the town's opposition to the Corn Laws. Also despite the conservatism of the town leaders, Keighley experienced occasional periods of working-class activism, though the workers were hardly powerful, and the scope of the activity was naturally less than in areas of greater population. This, then, was the social and political context of the Keighley Methodist circuit in the early nineteenth century and will be the point of reference for the subsequent discussion of several different aspects of Methodist development.
The division of circuits accompanied, and probably facilitated, the numerical growth of Wesleyan Methodism. As the number of adherents in a given circuit increased, the circuit would form two circuits. This process occurred frequently. In addition to simplifying circuit administration, it almost certainly provided a stimulus for the newly formed circuits to add to their numbers. How rapidly this process occurred is evident by looking at the increase in the number of circuits in England between 1770 and 1826:

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Circuits</th>
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<tr>
<td>1770</td>
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<td>1826</td>
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The previous chapter mentioned divisions of the Keighley circuit which occurred during the earlier period. During the years presently being discussed, two additional divisions took place. In 1801 Skipton became the head of a separate circuit, and in 1808 the Bingley circuit was formed. Following the latter division, the Keighley circuit included Keighley, Denholme, Cullingworth, Haworth, Steeton, Morton Banks, and other locations in the
area which did not have chapels and where preaching was held during the week. Cullingworth and Denholme subsequently became part of the Bingley circuit in 1826.58

The use of larger administrative units, called districts, began following Wesley's death in 1791. At that time, the Conference divided England into 19 districts. The Keighley circuit (which at that time included Skipton and Bingley) was part of the district including Halifax, Huddersfield, Bradford, and Colne, with Halifax serving as the headquarters of the district. In 1828 Conference made Bradford the head of a district including the Grassington, Addingham, Skipton, Woodhouse-Grove, Bingley, Shipley, and Keighley circuits. And in 1835 it decided to combine the Bradford and Halifax districts, calling the area simply "the Halifax and Bradford District."59

Figure 5 presents a graph showing the membership growth of the Keighley circuit from the statistics available in the circuit archives, which unfortunately only extend to the year 1836 and contain a number of gaps. Despite the missing data for certain years within the period covered, certain trends are discernible. For purposes of comparison, figure 6 presents a graph of the membership statistics for all of England from 1792 to 1851.60 The most noticeable difference is that the graph
for the Keighley circuit is profoundly more erratic. Obviously the divisions of the circuit have affected the graph. The dip following 1801 reflects the formation of the Skipton circuit. It scarcely compares, however, with the sharp drop that resulted from the formation of the Bingley circuit, Bingley being an important center for Methodism. In 1808, after the division had occurred, the Keighley circuit was left with only 780 members, while the Bingley circuit had 1,289, most (or perhaps all) of whom had of course been part of the Keighley circuit the previous year. The combined total for the two circuits, then, is 2,069, which still shows a slight decline from the previous year's figure of 2,083. Finally, the difference between the number of members in 1825 and that of 1828 would seem to reflect the detachment of Denholm and Cullingworth from the Keighley circuit. It is significant that the divisions of the circuit usually took place immediately following periods considered by Hobsbawm to be times of evangelical revival (though not merely within Methodism). Having more people, they could afford to divide the circuit.

The first half of the decade of the 1790's witnessed a rapid growth that was the result of a widespread revival, especially strong in Yorkshire. The occasional dips in the graph during the period of stabilization
following the revival reveal that some of the gains were short-lived, even though the net gain for the circuit was still significant, surviving even the division of the circuit in 1801. Following the formation of the Bingley circuit, gaps in the data tend to obscure matters, but the continuing trend appears to be a clear though erratic growth. The graph is here marked by peaks and valleys, with an apparently rapid increase in the mid-1820's, followed by the removal of Denholme and Cullingworth to the Bingley circuit. The final years also show clear but somewhat erratic growth. The overall pattern, after taking circuit divisions into account, is one of usually steady growth, with a few periods when growth is quite rapid, as well as occasional periods when there is a slight loss. The losses, however, do not come close to balancing the gains, and the net increase is obvious.

The fact that some conversions during revivals were short-lived tends to complicate the statistical approach. Some of the losses immediately following these growth peaks may be due to the fact that some who became caught up in the excitement of the revival simply were not inclined to remain. In addition, there were religious nomads who roamed from sect to sect, further complicating the use of these figures. Periods of rapid growth and revival were frequent throughout this entire period.
Hobsbawm identifies the peak periods of religious revival up to 1850 as occurring in 1797-1800, 1805-1807, 1815-1818, 1823-1824, 1831-1834, and 1849, with a significant revival occurring every decade. Midcentury (perhaps even the decade of the 1840's) seems to mark a crisis, however. The only other peak periods he gives after 1849 are 1859 and 1904-1905. It is clear that around the middle of the nineteenth century, evangelical religion was beginning to lose its ability to appeal to the masses. Alan Gilbert surmises that before 1840, the number of Methodists was growing faster than that of the total number of adults, and in 1840 Methodist strength, in comparison with the total population, was at its height.

Methodists in Keighley remembered the period from 1816 to 1826 as being one of almost ten years of continuous revival. Services were crowded, and the circuit officials provided Sunday evening preaching both at Eden chapel and at the Sunday School facilities which had taken the place of the original chapel at Temple Row. This seems to coincide clearly with the existing statistical data. Despite relatively small declines in 1818 and 1820, the net growth during the period was phenomenal. Probably even more important than mere numbers was the heightened religious awareness recalled later. People later considered it a time of revival, and
they were probably right. What other, external factors may have been present will be examined shortly.

As membership statistics rose, so did the number of chapels. At the close of the eighteenth century, and even after, however, chapels certainly did not provide all of the worship opportunities for Methodists. Preachers might deliver sermons at the workhouse, and Methodists would also meet in people's homes. In 1826 the circuit had eight chapels, while there were 545 Wesleyan Methodist chapels in all of Yorkshire, with 52,961 members out of a total population of 1,175,251.

According to one historian of religion, C. M. Elliott, one way in which Methodists differed from other major denominations was that its chapels were the results of evangelistic activity. There was a congregation (a local society) first—then a chapel as the society grew.

This process was already evident in the Keighley circuit in the earlier period. As Methodists within the town of Keighley increased their numbers, they outgrew the facilities at Temple Row, even after the chapel had been expanded. The trustees purchased land to build a new chapel, Eden chapel, in 1810. In 1811 Eden chapel was opened. At a special meeting held on December 1, 1843, the trustees proposed to purchase the land adjoining the cottages, the school, and the chapel; the purchase cost
them £243/1/1 1/2. On March 11, 1845 the trustees decided to get estimates for both enlarging Eden chapel and building a new chapel. Ultimately, the society decided to build a new chapel at Temple Row to replace the old building. On July 28, 1845 they laid the foundation, and the series of opening services began on November 27, 1846. In 1847 the society decided to convert the old Eden chapel into school rooms and facilities for meetings.70

Another good case study of growth within the Keighley circuit is at Oakworth, a small community not far from Keighley and Haworth. The village itself developed largely in the nineteenth century. In the eighteenth century it was just a group of hamlets: Cackleshaw, Lane Ends, Dockroyd, and Oakworth Hall. A Methodist class met in Dockroyd which subsequently became a society. In 1793 it began to be known as the New School society, probably because of the Sykes Head School which had been recently built there. At first the circuit apparently did not consider the society too important. During the years when there were no Sunday services there, the members of the society might go to Keighley on Sunday morning and evening, besides attending afternoon preaching at Bingley!71 Oakworth began having its own Sunday preaching about 1816, almost by accident. According to the account of the Rev. William Sugden in 1856, based on his father's
recollections, one evening the circuit superintendent was scheduled to preach at Sykes Head School. He decided to cancel the service since the famous Dr. Adam Clarke was preaching at Bingley, and he assumed that all the Methodists in the area would be there. Some had apparently been expecting to hear the superintendent preach, so he decided to hold a preaching service the following Sunday to make up for the missed appointment. The response was so impressive that he decided shortly after to establish regular Sunday preaching there.  

The society began to move forward, and by January, 1823 was holding services in its own chapel—a chapel which housed its first missionary meeting on June 10 of that year. There followed a rapid increase in membership, and in 1838 the chapel was enlarged and a gallery was added. The reopening services reflected the increased importance of the society: five ordained ministers participated, one of whom was the Rev. Thomas Jackson, President of the Conference. The ceremonies purportedly yielded "several hundred pounds" in contributions.  

The growth of the Methodist society at Oakworth demonstrates that circuit growth was not simply the result of developments in the circuit center. It is true that the circuit divisions during this period pared down the geographic size of the circuit considerably and that the
area comprising the circuit was fairly homogeneous. Nevertheless, outlying areas, often small villages in the neighboring vicinity of the circuit center, were focal points of considerable membership growth.

It would be a serious error to attempt to consider the growth of Methodism apart from the growth of the community as a whole. Methodist attendance was increasing, and the social and political developments outlined earlier were occurring in a town which, though scarcely large when compared to Leeds or Bradford, was not at all stagnant. Population growth is a fundamental change— one which both reflects social changes and causes them as well. Keighley's population was steadily growing during this period. The following breakdown, using census figures, shows the population increase during most of this period:74

1801......5,745
1811......6,864
1821......9,223
1831......11,176
1841......13,378
1851......18,258

Of course, numbers alone leave much unsaid. Fortunately, some of the census material helps to provide a larger profile of the town, though of course still in very general terms. In 1811, 188 out of 1,395 families were employed primarily by agriculture. The number of families who earned their livelihood by means of industry,
trade, etc. was 1,188, while 19 families were in the remaining category of "all other families." In 1821 there were 1,850 families, 170 of which were employed by agriculture and 1,643 of which were engaged in trade, manufacturing, and handicrafts. In 1850, factories in Keighley employed 4,460 people. Therefore, between 1811 and 1821 the number of agricultural families had decreased from 13.5% of the total number of families to 9.2%, while the percentage of families in trade or industry had increased from 85.2% to 88.8%. While conclusions drawn from such vague categories cannot be specific, the percentages clearly indicate the increasing importance of manufacturing in Keighley. Of course, the trade and industry category encompasses a broad range of occupational levels, from the factory hands up to the owners of the vicinity's manufacturing concerns.

The only meaningful comparison between the growth rate of the population of Keighley and that of the Wesleyan circuit occurs between 1811 and 1821, since all other decades for which statistics have survived in the circuit archives are marked by divisions of the circuit. In that period the population of Keighley showed a 34.4% growth rate, while the growth rate of the Wesleyan circuit was a phenomenal 48.2%. From 1821 to 1831 the population of Keighley increased at a rate of 21.2%. The growth rate
of the Wesleyan circuit between 1821 and 1832 dropped to 18.3%, but this was also the decade in which the circuit lost the Denholme and Cullingworth societies. This would suggest, then, that the membership growth from 1811 to 1821 was in part due to the population increase, even though the circuit numbers still increased more rapidly than the population.

While the increase in the population statistics is noticeable, Christine Johnstone points out that the population growth in Keighley was not as dramatic as in other towns in the West Riding. Furthermore, the considerably larger increase between 1841 and 1851 is at least in part attributable to a major immigration of Irish folk in the 1840's. These migrated because of the failure of the potato crop. Their situation in Keighley was hardly ideal, and many suffered from typhus fever. The influx of immigrants was so great that by 1851, 5% of the population in Keighley was Irish.

The situation caused problems for the Guardians of the Keighley Union and reveals perhaps not so much their inhumanity as the inhumanity of the institutions of that time. The Board had sent letters to the Poor Unions of Rochdale and Huddersfield, inquiring how they were solving the problem of indigent Irish immigrants--and for them solving the problem meant removing the paupers. The
suggestions of the Huddersfield Union apparently met with the approval of the members of the Board. On February 9, 1848 the Board of Guardians "ordered that the Irish Paupers receiving relief from the Board be removed to Ireland forthwith." A list of those immigrants to be removed was drawn up, and the Board directed Joseph Heaton, the constable of Keighley, to see that the immigrants arrived at the Huddersfield depot, from where they would then be shipped to Ireland. This gesture, of course, could hardly expect to eliminate the problem, and the presence of impoverished Irish immigrants in Keighley became a permanent reality.

In the eighteenth century, the foundation for the subsequent economic and political developments in Keighley was laid. By 1790 Keighley was a market town, a "commercial" center of the surrounding area. Not only its size, but its importance as a commercial and a manufacturing town made it the logical choice as the head of a Poor Union under the Poor Law Amendment Act. Brian Greaves comments on the logic of Methodist administrative division, pointing out that most of the towns that became Poor Union heads were already the administrative centers of Methodist circuits.

Geographic factors played a considerable role in the development of industry in the Keighley area. Textile
mills relied primarily at first on water for their power, and in this regard Keighley was abundantly blessed. Factories took advantage, in particular, of the power provided by the Laycock Beck and the River Worth to run their machinery. The first half of the nineteenth century clearly established the dominance of the worsted industry in the area, despite the fact that cotton manufacturing had had an early start. In 1823, Baines' Directory of Yorkshire listed only four cotton manufacturers in Keighley, as compared with 44 worsted manufacturers. By 1837, according to the Directory of the West Riding by William White, the number of worsted concerns were further outstripping cotton, there being 60 worsted manufacturers as opposed to only 5 for cotton. A bad economy took its toll quite rapidly, though. By 1847 cotton spinning was almost a thing of the past, there being only two cotton mills remaining in use. The real indication of economic decline, however, was the fact that there were only 34 worsted mills, either for spinning or manufacturing cloth--considerably less than the sixty of the previous decade. This would indicate that while Methodism was experiencing fairly steady growth, the prosperity of the town was not. As far as the textile industry was concerned, the decade of the 1840's witnessed a significant economic decline.
Records of expenditures on the poor before the formation of the Keighley Union also survive in the local records. Again the limitations of this approach must be acknowledged, since an earlier part of this chapter has already indicated how often town officials used money from the poor rates for many expenses other than the relief of the poor. Figure 7 graphs the expenditures by the parish Overseers. The figures for the years 1796 through 1803 definitely do not include expenditures relating to the workhouse, those accounts being recorded separately for those years. The state of the records is such that it is not certain whether this is true for the other years or not.

There does not seem to be any explanation for the pronounced dips in the graph for 1797 and 1802, especially since the year 1797 immediately followed a poor harvest and a period of bread shortages and was considered to be an especially harsh year for textile workers.\(^82\) The comparatively high figure for 1798 may indicate that the height of the economic hardship was not felt in Keighley until that year—or that the Overseers had been unable to respond adequately the previous year, though that still leaves open the question of the sharp decline in expenditure. That the figures reflect an inaccuracy in the accounts is a definite possibility.
A similar inaccuracy would have made a sharp drop in the graph for the year 1815. In the year 1814 the Overseers had paid out £2330/17/0 1/2, and in 1818 the expenditures amounted to £2245/6/6. Yet the accounts for 1815 record that the Overseers had paid out only £658/17/1 from the poor rates. The fact that the data for 1816 and 1817 are missing adds to the difficulty, although it also suggests that the figure reported for 1815 must be incomplete. Such a large discrepancy from one year to the next hardly seems probable. Furthermore, the Vestry minutes indicate that there had apparently been some problem with the accounts for the workhouse that year. Although no specifics were given, Joshua North, who was in charge of the workhouse for that year, was abruptly relieved of his duties, followed by a close scrutiny of his accounts. The missing data for 1831 is also probably due to a problem with the bookkeeping. On March 23, 1832, which would have been the time to close out the accounts for 1831, a committee was ordered to examine the Guardians' accounts and even to call in an accountant to set them straight if necessary.

The year 1826 marks a noticeable peak in expenditures, and the Select Vestry minutes indicate that extra efforts were made that year to provide monetary relief for those workers who were not employed. It is
also the year that the Vestry decided to petition Parliament for the repeal of the Corn Laws (not the first such petition, though), obviously in response to the economic crisis. Many no doubt saw the inequity of recently permitting foreign competition in the wool industry, which of course brought hardship to the West Riding, while forbidding competition of foreign wheat in order to protect domestic agricultural interests. The previous year had seen the lengthy strikes in Bradford which had elicited a tough response on the part of Keighley manufacturers. Striking was not always the response to hardship, however. In 1822, during a period of relatively low expenditures on the poor, reelers at Vale Mill went out on strike for higher wages, perhaps motivated to do so because the times were not so bad.

Another dip in the graph is evident in 1828. While the specific reasons for it are not certain, it is interesting that during that year the Vestry approved a proposal to pay church expenses out of the poor rates. It is not likely that they would have considered this if the demands for poor relief would have been heavy, as they had been just two years earlier. The figures for the next two years are somewhat puzzling. While in 1829, £1,210/17/0 1/2 was spent on casual poor relief, the following year only £248/15/8 1/2 was paid out to casual relief. The
figures for regular poor relief for those two years remained fairly consistent.

The graph for the final three years, just before the formation of the Keighley Poor Law Union, is noticeably erratic. Not all of the apparent discrepancies can be explained, but there is evidence of concern over the state of the accounts during this period. In 1835, the Vestry voiced its desire for an itemized account of all poor relief expenditures, suggesting that they suspected problems. In 1837 there was an apparent problem with the accounts of an assistant Overseer, Thomas Dawson, whom the Vestry relieved of his duties and threatened with legal proceedings unless he turned over all of his records to them. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, it is evident that the formation of the Union, whatever its shortcomings, occurred at a time when reform was sorely needed.

Comparing the membership data in Figure 5 with Figure 7 and with what else is known about the economy of the period reveals some interesting insights. Periods of increase in membership for the circuit often coincided with times of economic hardship. Membership at the end of the 1790's was high as the result of an extended revival throughout Yorkshire. This was also a period of hardship, and 1798 shows a marked increase in expenditures on the
poor. The growth which culminated in 1807 and resulted in the formation of the Bingley circuit also occurred during a time of rising poor relief expenditures, though poor relief would increase even more subsequently. Perhaps even more significant is the rapid growth of the circuit up to 1826 (note the point on the graph for 1825), which later Methodists particularly remembered as a time of revival. Not only does Figure 7 reveal this to be a time of rising poor relief, but this was known to be a time of serious hardship, as well as labor unrest. While the above discussion has noted that there was fairly substantial, if erratic, growth in the circuit throughout the entire period, these were the years when the growth actually increased most significantly. It is unlikely that such a consistent pattern would be evident if the growth in membership were occurring merely in spite of the economic conditions, rather than because of them.

A comparison of the two graphs, with the purpose of determining in what kind of economic conditions membership losses occurred, leads to more ambiguous results. Since the apparent decline in members is almost certainly due to the formation of the Skipton circuit, it would probably bear no relationship to the sharp drop in poor relief expenditures for the same year, assuming that the figures for poor relief are accurate. At other periods of
apparent low poor relief expenditure, the growth trends for the Methodist circuit are not consistent.

Although conclusions based on these comparisons must be stated with considerable caution, it would seem that times of adversity were also times of religious revival. On the other hand, the occasional and comparatively small losses sustained by the circuit do not seem to be related to economic conditions. It must be remembered that even though Methodism here, as elsewhere, was beginning to assume a "worldly" appearance with regard to many outward trappings and institutions--increased chapel building, chapel and Sunday School anniversaries, and of course pew rents, to name just a few--its theology and sermons were still often otherworldly in tone. It seems likely, then, that many folk, during times of hardship, might very well be attracted not only to the many external opportunities for fellowship and community, but also to the promises of forgiveness and God's presence here and eternal life hereafter. For some, perhaps, once the novelty or the excitement wore off, the sense of community and fellowship fostered by group worship and anniversary teas was not enough to keep up their interest, and they dropped out without regard to external economic factors, some out of despair, others out of boredom. This is certainly not to deny the possibility, as well, that some of those lost to
Wesleyanism went to the more radical sects or even channeled their energies into radical politics. It is likely that all of these varied responses occurred during this period. And yet, even after the losses are considered, the Wesleyans were reaping a bountiful harvest.

The growth and subsequent decline in the 1840's of the textile industry has been already discussed. Obviously the closing of many mills during the ten years following 1837 meant hardship and loss for many persons, owners and overseers as well as the factory hands. Some, but certainly not all, may have found their way into the thriving engineering industry which textiles had stimulated in the early nineteenth century. But what of those workers in the factories that succeeded during this time? The Brigg collection of records of the Calversyke Mill, owned by John Brigg, gives some helpful information about the workers. The business of the Calversyke Mill was worsted spinning and power-loom weaving, and it received its power from a 14-horsepower steam engine. Because of the requirement to register young workers, the Calversyke Mill listed young persons hired from January, 1837. The youngest age was nine years, and there were a number of those. The tenure of many of the children hired was often quite short, some lasting only about a month,
though some remained with the mill until they were past the age for registration. Of course, the blight of child labor was typical of the period, but the short tenure of so many of the children hired suggests many possibilities. It is probable that many of these had underdeveloped skills—not to mention physical strength, as well—and their inferior abilities would have made them especially vulnerable to discharge when circumstances seemed to warrant it. Some probably left of their own accord. It also seems likely that some initially hired had to be discharged when it was discovered that they were in fact younger than had originally been assumed, the legal minimum age being nine.

The Brigg collection Time Register provides a record of time off for the workers at the Calversyke Mill, including both full holidays and half holidays. All of the workers were off on Christmas day and Good Friday. In addition, the following days provided potential holidays for the workers: Old Christmas (January 6), the Keighley Fair (which often lasted two days), the parish feast, Easter Monday, Shrove Tuesday, Whit Monday, and Bingley Feast, although workers did not necessarily receive the same days off every year. It was expected that they would get eight holidays per year, although the company recorded time off occurring for other reasons as well. For
example, the records note time off from August 16-19, 1842 with the notation, "Rioting." Another record for June 17-18, 1844 shows that the workers lost time due to repairs. The register yields the following data for the years 1837 to 1844:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Full days off</th>
<th>Half-days off</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of course, this information must be interpreted in the light of the length of the regular workday. Lost wages, too, may have lessened the desirability of time off throughout the year.

Mechanization of industry and the accompanying improvements effected not only the mills but the town as well, which was seeking to enjoy benefits that were beginning to be a part of English life in general. The desire to improve the town is attributable at least in part to a sense of community spirit on the part of the town leaders. By 1823 the members of the Select Vestry were actively seeking a local improvement bill in Parliament. The bill, which established the local Commissioners, was to provide "for Paving, Lighting, Cleansing, Watching, Regulating, and otherwise improving
the Town of Keighley." However, local historian and librarian, Ian Dewhirst, points out that, in fact, gas lighting was one of the few measures of the Keighley Improvement Act successfully implemented by the Improvement Commissioners.

On May 4, 1824, the Commissioners decided to advertise in the York Chronicle, the Leeds Intelligencer, and the Leeds Mercury for estimates on the cost of gas lighting. A contract for the construction of the gas works was reached in May, 1825. In November of 1825 the town was lit by gas for the first time, and by 1827 there were 105 street lamps in Keighley. They provided for private gas lighting at the cost of 10 shillings for every 1,000 cubic feet. Numerous regulations surrounded the use of gas lighting. On Wednesdays, the lights could continue to burn until 10:00, and on Saturdays until midnight. The flame for any private burner was to be no more than five inches high, and persons tampering with the burners—especially to enlarge the openings—would lose their gas supply until they had replaced the burners at their own expense. The gas works proved more expensive than the Commissioners had anticipated. The warnings against tampering with burners did not keep people from doing so, and the Commissioners decided that price increases would be necessary. Furthermore, in 1827 all
gas jets in shops had to be equipped with a meter, and the same year, the Commissioners reduced the flame in the public street lamps by one-third. Evidently, abuses continued, and in January, 1839 the Commissioners ordered that after September 1 of that year all gas consumption was to be metered. Keighley Methodists sought to share in the progress and modernize their worship facilities. In 1830 the trustees of the Keighley Wesleyan chapel had decided to install gas lighting in the chapel, a decision which ultimately put the society in debt, despite the initial resolve of the trustees to avoid further indebtedness.

The Commissioner's Minutes not only reveal the specifics concerning gas consumption (hardly significant in itself), but more importantly, they provide an indication of the worsening economic situation in the 1840's. On April 24, 1840 the Minutes commented on the depressed commerce and industry in general, which they attributed, at least in its origin, to the "derangement of the currency in the United States." The result was that the mills were running at a reduced number of hours, which meant there was a reduced consumption of gas. They also indicated that the depression was not as severe in Keighley as it was elsewhere. Despite the worsening financial situation of the gas works, the rate for street
lighting did not pass in early 1844, and thereafter the inhabitants enjoyed public street lighting free of charge. By September 15, 1846 the situation had become so desperate that the gas works advertised to sell shares in the company at £20 a share, to yield 4% semiannually. The initial advertisement had stipulated that applications had to be made within 14 days and that the money was due by November 2. It would seem that the initial response had not been enthusiastic, so on October 14 the Commissioners provided the additional incentive of 4 1/2% interest for those investors who applied by October 21.

The decade of the 1840's saw at least three reductions in the price of gas consumption. On July 14, 1848, at the same time as they were resolving to lower their rates, the Commissioners bleakly noted that factory shutdowns during the preceding winter "on account of the extreme badness of trade" and a decrease in the working hours of factories remaining open (from 12 hours to 11) had resulted in lower gas consumption.

Despite its social and economic problems—and because of the growth of industry and population—Keighley had fairly impressive religious and cultural opportunities for a community of its size and character. Nonconformist churches, besides the Methodists, included Swedenborgians, Baptists, Independents, and Friends. In 1835, the Rev.
Theodore Drury, the rector, and others formed a local Temperance society. It was originally based on the principle of moderation but later advocated abstinence. In 1825, the Keighley Mechanics Institute began; a Horticultural Society, organized in 1835, instituted yearly exhibitions; in 1843 an Agricultural Society was formed, and in 1848 a cricket club was established.92

It seems, then, that Methodism was thriving in a community where the textile industry, notably worsted-cloth manufacturing, was, until the 1840's, on the increase. Despite the fact that the circuit experienced its times of most rapid growth during hard economic conditions, its steady increase coincided with the general economic and industrial growth of the town. During the 1840's, during a period of increased economic demand on the town with the arrival of Irish immigrants, the town experienced considerable economic difficulties. Unfortunately, the Keighley circuit archives do not provide membership data for this decade. At a time when Keighley residents were finding cultural fellowship and spiritual comfort within Methodism and the town's other religious bodies, the community was also beginning to assert itself culturally, even though comparatively few probably participated in the newly developed educational and cultural institutions. Furthermore, Methodist growth
was also occurring in outlying villages within the circuit, although after the formation of the Bingley circuit in 1808, the preaching places within the circuit were fairly homogenous socially and economically. Developments in the circuit center tended to influence and often even determine developments in the outlying areas, both religiously and otherwise.

Some of the principal trends in Wesleyan Methodism in general were reflected in the situation in Keighley. Growth seems to be fairly steady through the first half of the century, but secessions and disruption in 1849 led to serious losses among the Wesleyans. Consequently, according to David Hempton, "the number of Wesleyan Methodists in 1849 was not surpassed until 1875." According to the Methodist historian Robert Wearmouth, Methodism was most successful in areas where industry flourished and the population increased most rapidly. This would help to account for the rapid growth of Methodism within the West Riding, where these conditions prevailed. At one point in the nineteenth century, over one-fourth of all of the Methodists in England were located in Yorkshire.

The evidence that the circuit's most rapid growth occurred during times of economic adversity does not necessarily reflect the findings of church historians for
evangelical religion in general. According to Professor Gilbert, nonconformists sometimes tended to suffer losses during times of general economic crises. He says that people were attracted to the chapels because of their evangelical ideal of providing help in times of need. Evangelical communities often were able to help out individuals in times of personal need, which raised the expectations of adherents, but they often found themselves unable to meet the needs of many in the face of severe economic crises. professors Currie, Gilbert, and Horsley go on to explain that, on the whole, economic adversity was detrimental to church membership because those who already were a part of the church might wish to find relief from the responsibilities of membership, particularly demands upon finances, schedules, and energy. Potential members likewise wished to avoid the entanglements of membership. R. B. Walker, however, does not agree with Currie and his colleagues and says that not only economic adversity but also periods of calamity of other types (notably epidemics) may have been a causal factor for periodic religious revivals. The assumption that hardship caused an increase in membership may not be a necessary conclusion, but at the very least the evidence shows that economic hardship did not necessarily hinder church growth.
One conclusion drawn by Brian Greaves in his geographical study of early Methodism in Yorkshire is that the urbanization noticeable in areas such as Leeds and Sheffield resulted in an alienation of the proletariat from cultural and social influences that would have prevailed in a rural village or a smaller town—an alienation which made working-class people especially unreceptive to any church. Conversely, market towns often were the strongholds of Methodism. Thus far, the description applies well to the town of Keighley. However, Greaves' major conclusion was that Yorkshire Methodism grew most rapidly in out-townships away from the parochial centers. Growth was strong in these areas especially because they were far removed from the spiritual direction of the parish church. That was certainly not the case with Keighley, nor was it the case for much of the Keighley circuit throughout its development. It is possible that the influence of Grimshaw may have been at work during the formative years of the circuit, but that would not totally account for the strength of Methodism in the town of Keighley, which had its own parish church.

It is Alan Gilbert's contention that from 1740 to 1914 English religious history was dominated by a conflict between the Anglican church and evangelical
nonconformity—a conflict which began in 1740 with the Wesleyan revival and which gradually resolved itself over the course of the nineteenth century. In the case of Keighley, the apparent state of this conflict at midcentury is interesting. At the time of the 1851 religious census, Wesleyan Methodists attracted a larger percentage of worshippers than Anglicans. The results were that 39.5% of all of the persons attending churches on March 30, 1851 were Wesleyans, while only 18.2% were Anglicans. Furthermore, 50% of all those attending churches in Keighley were attending Methodist chapels (though not merely Wesleyan Methodist). Greaves points out that some persons believed that the figures for Dissenters were inflated, while those for the Anglicans were understated. According to some witnesses, attendance was lower than usual that day, perhaps due to bad weather, but Greaves contends that for the most part the census results were reliable, especially for a comparison of denominations. R. B. Walker, examining the census data for the entire nation, estimates that if the data are correct, there were over "five attendances (including children) on census day for each member of the Wesleyan Connexion." This, of course, suggests the presence of many nonmembers; it is likely that many who attended Methodist chapels even at other times had not become
members. Nevertheless, the suggestion that there may have been an organized attempt to push for maximum attendance at every service on the day of the census is difficult to resist.

Another interesting outcome of the religious census was that for that day the town of Keighley had a higher percentage of church attendance (apparently for all denominations in aggregate) than was true for England and Wales as a whole. That suggests one reason why Methodism prospered in Keighley: the people there were, in general, more devout. In evaluating circuit towns, Greaves tends to look at other factors, his contention being that towns serving as heads of circuits, aside from having large Methodist societies, were also towns of at least some influence in other respects. Of the nine criteria he uses to assess communities, Keighley had three: a market, a grammar school, and it became the head of a Poor Law Union. During this period it did not have a bank, a newspaper, an infirmary or dispensary, a cloth hall, a theater, nor was it the seat for Assizes or Quarter Sessions. According to his criteria, Keighley was not even a "true town"; instead he classed it as a subtown, the equivalent of a major village. It is surprising that his list of criteria made no mention of industry. At any rate, his characterization of Keighley
as a subtown hardly seems to fit the information presented earlier in this chapter. Keighley was basically a small town in character and certainly showed aspects of a small-town mentality, but as a textile center it was an important location in the West Riding. As a circuit head, it was the home of a thriving and growing circuit; part of its importance lay in the circuits to which it gave birth during this period. According to Greaves, it was true of circuit heads in general that the life of the circuit had a significant influence on every aspect of town life. Even based on numbers alone, that would be true for Keighley. While numbers alone do not constitute the total life or the total influence of the Keighley circuit, its rapid growth could hardly have left the community as a whole unaffected. In turn, of course, the economic, social, and political conditions and developments in the town had their impact on the life of the circuit.
FIGURE 5
CIRCUIT MEMBERSHIP: 1792-1836

FIGURE 6
CONNEXIONAL MEMBERSHIP: 1792-1851
FIGURE 7
EXPENDITURES ON THE POOR
1792-1837
NOTES


7 Warner, Wesleyan Movement, pp. 111-114. It might even be possible that Wesley positively approved of Fletcher's view if he saw the Revolution of 1688 as an example of it. Wesley was firm in his support of the Revolutionary Settlement.

8 From the Keighley Circuit Local Preachers' Quarterly Meeting Minute Book, catalog number 105D77/1/3/7/a, Keighley Methodist Circuit Archives, Keighley Central Library.


10 Ibid, pp. 68, 60-61.


16 Ibid, pp. 199, 216.


21 Ibid, p. 33 in an addendum to the original article.


24 Ibid, pp. 357-360 and following pages.


31 Currie, Methodism Divided, p. 49.


34 This and most of the subsequent information of political and social concerns are from the Vestry Minutes, except where noted otherwise.


37 Keighley, Keighley Past and Present, p. 125 and Board of Guardians Minutes, vol I, fol.1.

38 Dewhirst, History of Keighley, p. 32.


Dewhirst, History of Keighley, pp. 14, 15.


Although the account is not clear, this deduction was probably a penalty in addition to the time lost due to the strike.


Leeds Mercury, vol. 79, no. 5673, Saturday, August 27, 1842.


Commissioners Minutes.

Dewhirst, History of Keighley, p. 47.


"History of Wesleyan Methodism in Keighley."

Stamp, Historical Notices, pp. 81-82, 105.

The statistics for this graph have been taken from tables in Currie et al, Churches and Churchgoers, pp. 139-141, based on Conference returns. Because there were no Conference returns for 1851, the figure cited by Currie, Gilbert, and Horsley for that year is an estimate. The drastic decline in that year reflects the result of the most significant secession movement from Wesleyanism.
that had occurred up to that time.

61 See Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels, p. 130.

62 See Baxter, "The Great Yorkshire Revival."


64 Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels, p. 130.

65 Gilbert, Religion and Society, p. 30.

66 "History of Wesleyan Methodism in Keighley."

67 Church, Early Methodist People, p. 85 and note, p. 94. Church relies on Myles, Chronological History for statistics, though noting the presence of "minor inaccuracies" in this "generally reliable" work.

68 Warren, Chronicles of Wesleyan Methodism.


70 "History of Wesleyan Methodism in Keighley," and Minutes of the Trustees.

71 Kenneth Tibbetts, The Story of Oakworth Methodism, (n.p., 1972), no pagination. The version I used, located in the reference department of the Keighley Central Library, included Tibbetts' own handwritten notes. The information about preaching is a bit of oral history passed on to Tibbetts from the great-granddaughter of William Newsholme, in whose family the story had been passed down.


73 Ibid.

74 Figures for 1801, 1811, and 1821 come from census reports inserted in the Churchwarden Account Book, located in the Keighley parish records in the Bradford Central Library. Other figures are from Keighley, Keighley Past and Present, p. 123.
Census reports inserted in the Keighley Churchwarden accounts.


Dewhirst, *History of Keighley*, p. 49.


Greaves, "Spread of Methodism in Yorkshire," pp. 61, 68.


Figures for Poor Relief Expenditures were taken from the Churchwarden Accounts located in the Keighley Parish Archives in the Bradford Central Library. Information on the harvest is from Ashton, *Economic Fluctuations*, pp. 22ff, 36.


Dewhirst, *History of Keighley*, p. 16.


Register of Workers, Brigg Collection.

Calversyke Mill, Time Register, Brigg Collection. Because the register ends on July 29, 1844, the figures for that year are probably incomplete. Presumably the workers would have been off at least on Christmas day and probably for the Keighley Fair as well. The latter festivity is still regularly enjoyed in Keighley in the month of August.

Select Vestry Minutes, August 23, 1823, and Keighley Commissioners' Minutes.

Dewhirst, *History of Keighley*, p. 29.

This and most of the following information on gas lighting of the town comes from the Commissioners' Minutes.

Dewhirst, *History of Keighley*, pp. 21, 23.
92 Keighley, Keighley Past and Present, pp. 204, 244, 246.


94 Wearmouth, Methodism and the Common People, pp. 182-183.

95 Gilbert, Religion and Society, p. 92.

96 Currie et al, Churches and Churchgoers, p. 105.


103 Ibid, pp. 257, 260, 262.

Circuit Finances

During this period, institutional development within the circuit inevitably changed the financial structure, making it far more complex than previously. While the most significant figures are still the circuit budgets, some surviving records give data from subsidiary budgets: trust funds, an auxiliary fund, poor funds, and smaller budgets at the society level. It is certainly not surprising to see budgets rising in view of the rising membership, but strictly parallel trends between membership growth and circuit finances must not necessarily be expected. In all probability, the influence of external factors—especially economic factors—will be more evident when examining the financial structure of the circuit.
The condition of the circuit financial records for the major circuit operational budget is cause for both some optimism on the part of the historian and a certain degree of frustration. On the positive side, the records give data for every year of the period presently under investigation (see Figures 8 and 9), the only exception being that the figures for 1793 and 1794 apparently cover only six months for each year, the first two quarters of 1793 and the last two quarters of 1794. However, the state of the accounts is often pathetic. For several years in the period, the figures are not at all clear, particularly those for 1799, 1800, 1802-1812, 1814, 1828, 1850, and 1851. Sometimes an error on the part of the record keeper (presumably the circuit steward) is obvious, ranging from a forgotten half-penny in 1828 to a more serious miscalculation that seems to have resulted from the fact that the bookkeeper was computing 12 shillings in a pound. Many of the problems, though, are far more serious than merely one or two identifiable errors; in such circumstances the figures used for the graphs are reconstructions that are probably very close to the mark. Two additional problems with the records occur in October, 1795 and October, 1796, when the balance of a sizable debt
simply disappears without any mention of what happened to it or how the circuit might have paid it off. The peak on the expenditure line of Figure 9 would probably have been somewhat higher without this occurrence.

Of course, there is also the obvious problem of using financial data from this large span of time without making adjustments for price changes. The general economic situation was considerably different in 1792 from what it was in 1850, and it is not likely that comparing the figures of those two years, for example, would be very meaningful. Any interpretations of the graph, especially concerning trends for the period as a whole, must be made with this in mind. Nevertheless, price fluctuations due to such conditions as famine, war, or peace can even affect short-term trends as well, so the advantage of a continuous line graph based on the actual figures given seemed to compensate for the problems.

A brief explanation of the income and expenditure figures is necessary to avoid confusion. The accounts were balanced every quarter, and any credit or debit balance (more often the latter) was carried over to the next quarter's accounts and entered either as income or expenditure (again, usually expenditure). Therefore the figures reflected in the graphs—sometimes the income but more often the expenditures—do not always reflect
precisely the amount of money either received or paid out during a year. The advantage of the procedure used, however, is that the graphs accurately reflect the accumulation of the debt (or occasionally the surplus funds on hand) and also reflect the way the circuit officials viewed their financial situation.\(^1\)

In an examination of the circuit income, some of the patterns are relatively easy to explain. Following 1801 there is a slight decrease in income, perhaps due to the formation of the Skipton circuit. The more noticeable decline following 1808 would seem clearly attributable to the separation of the Bingley circuit, when Keighley lost a rather large proportion of its members. It is noteworthy that the sharp dip in the graph after 1826 parallels the transfer of the societies at Denholme and Cullingworth to the jurisdiction of the Bingley circuit. While these were relatively numerous societies, it is also likely that the sharp drop in income is at least partly due to the worsening economic situation. This view is perhaps confirmed by the rather lengthy period of stagnation following the drop. These three declines are also preceded by comparatively sharp increases, perhaps the results of the revival evidenced in the parallel spurts of growth in membership. It must be remembered that these revivals seemed to occur almost spontaneously,
required little if any extra income, and should have been more likely to result in increased income, at least temporarily. The parallel between the income and the membership trends in the 1790's, the result of the revival that spread throughout the region, would further confirm this. Throughout the graphs there are close similarities between membership trends and income levels.

When comparing the circuit income with the poor relief expenditures in the Keighley parish, the similarities may not be obvious at first. There is a small peak in the income which occurs at the same time as a low point in poor relief expenditure. Likewise the sharp drop in income in 1827 and 1828 comes shortly after peaks in the poor relief expenditures during this period of extreme hardship. While the income peaks in 1797 and 1807 occur during times of relatively low expenditures on poor relief, other peaks and valleys are more ambiguous. For example, the high level of income in 1825 and 1826 is concurrent with rising poor relief, which peaks in 1826. Apparently the influence of the local economy—insofar as it is reflected in the figures for poor law expenditures—on circuit income levels is a complex one, though discernible at times.

Perhaps even more significant is the data of Figure 9, which shows the total financial situation of the
circuit budget. Even the modest peak of income in 1797 is far surpassed by the considerable debt throughout most of the 1790's. Surprisingly, this is the period of the Yorkshire revival. The peak of the circuit debt bears a close similarity to the apparent trend in the poor relief expenditures, although the gap in the poor relief data for 1795 makes it difficult to determine the complete pattern. If economic conditions were one of the stimuli for the revival, then it would also seem that the same conditions had a detrimental effect on the circuit finances in this instance. The pattern of the graph, however, seems to indicate that there were some extraordinary expenditures during this period that aggravated the circuit debt. Equally mysterious is the fact, mentioned above, that the accounts give no indication of how the debt was settled.

A large portion of the next noticeable period of debt between 1813 and 1823 was the time remembered by later Methodists in Keighley as a prolonged revival. The pattern of the expenditures during this period is quite similar to that of the income, so there does not seem to have been any unusual expenses. It would seem that the circuit was simply unable to bring down a debt persisting after 1813, despite special contributions for that purpose in 1820, until they gradually brought up the income to meet it.
On March 23, 1314, circuit leaders had created a committee to decide what proportion of the circuit budget each society was responsible for. Apparently some of the societies had not been paying their fair share. The results indicate the relative importance of each society at that time:

Keighley..............£33
Haworth.................£8
Lowertown..............£6/15s.
Denholme...............£6/10s.
Morton Banks...........£2/08s.
Cullingworth...........£2/02s.
Steeton.................£1/05s.
Dockroyd................16s/6d.
Field Head...............16s/6d.

By December, all of the societies were paying their allotted shares except for Field Head, which had only paid 12 shillings. Even a special collection was unable to eliminate the debt. On September 29, 1817 the circuit updated the quarterage due from each society. Most of the figures were raised.

The decline in prices after the end of the war in 1815 spelled financial hardship for Methodism in general. The Connexion had taken advantage of the wartime economy to expand the number of preachers and had accumulated debts at inflated rates that it subsequently had to pay off during the postwar period. The Connexional authorities set up chapel committees to review and forbid, if necessary, the building of new chapels. Because of
expenses, some circuits would leave off providing a horse for the preachers. Because they were less able to reach out-of-the-way places, many of these places actually became separate circuits which could often barely support themselves. The result was even more financial inefficiency and mismanagement. While the latter situation was not true for the Keighley circuit, it is hard to be certain how much the financial hardships of the Connexion impacted upon it. It is difficult to ignore the fact that this was taking place at the same time the circuit was sustaining a large debt. The circuit also carried a sizable debt throughout much of the period between 1828 and 1840, except that it was periodically narrowing the gap between income and expenditure, only to find it widening again. For example, in July, 1833, the circuit borrowed money to pay off its debt. It received special collections from the local societies in March, 1837 to pay off the debt; the effort succeeded and the circuit ended that year with a small surplus. They were back in debt again the next year.

Following 1848 the circuit incurred an increasing debt. Without membership statistics in the circuit archives it is difficult to get a complete picture of the situation, but it is known, of course, that the final year of the period was disastrous for the Wesleyan Connexion,
with a considerable drop in numbers due to secession from the Connexion. While the precise impact of secession in Keighley is not certain, given the existing data, it undoubtedly was a factor. It is also known that the economic situation in the late 1840's in Keighley was not good, a fact which may have had a considerable impact on the skyrocketing debt. In fact, a notation in the circuit Quarterly Account book in 1850 attributes the debt primarily to "extreme depression of Trade during the past 3 years." Although the circuit paid off £179/6/9 1/2 of the circuit debt in December, 1850 with money raised from subscriptions, this does not seem to have kept the debt from climbing. In fact, it was not until December, 1851 that the circuit reduced the debt for that quarter to the more reasonable sum of £11/11/7 1/2.

It is interesting that the two brief periods showing sizable surpluses in the circuit budget were also periods of economic adversity or social unrest or both. The first period is in 1825-1826, which was a period of particular difficulty for Keighley textile workers. It has already been noted that membership was growing rapidly at this time as well. The second period peaks at the year 1842, which was also the year of widespread Chartist activity and of strikes in August. The circuit was so confident of its situation then that leaders had proposed assigning a
third minister, the stipulation being that the circuit raise £77 for his support. The money was raised, and the decision was approved on April 10, 1841. Though the circuit records do not give membership figures, the fact that the budget showed a surplus would indicate that the Keighley circuit was thriving due to an increase in income. A noticeable increase in income almost certainly meant a parallel increase in membership, which would also justify the desire for an additional minister. Contrary to Thompson's oscillation thesis, therefore, two particularly important periods of prosperity in the Keighley circuit occurred concurrently with, not after, periods of discontent, unrest, and activism.

The circuit's operational budget was not the only circuit-level budget by any means. Circuits had numerous responsibilities, and not all of the data from the various subsidiary budgets have survived. One fund in addition to the basic operating budget was the circuit Auxiliary Fund, the purpose of which was to supplement the ministers' retirement system provided by the Connexion. The money from the circuit Auxiliary Fund came from collections in the classes and then was transferred from the societies to the circuit. The receipts of this fund for the decade of the 1840's has survived as part of the circuit archives:

1841.............£17/04/10
1842.............£28/08/04
Considered in isolation, these figures would be of little value. Because the amounts are not large, the variations may be less meaningful than for larger budgets. The decline in the figures occurs and reverses itself about a year in advance of a similar trend in the circuit income. In general, it further illustrates the existence of a crisis of sorts that adversely affected the circuit during part of the latter half of the decade.

At the circuit level, chapel trustees met together to monitor the financial state of the chapels. The following list compares the income and expenditure of the chapels in the circuit as reported in October, 1848:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapel</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keighley</td>
<td>£353/10/0</td>
<td>£322/10/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haworth</td>
<td>£75/15/8</td>
<td>£54/00/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowertown</td>
<td>£49/16/3</td>
<td>£65/04/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakworth</td>
<td>£66/19/8</td>
<td>£48/12/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morton Banks</td>
<td>£18/00/0</td>
<td>£6/05/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steeton</td>
<td>£11/13/6</td>
<td>£16/10/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laycock</td>
<td>£10/02/6</td>
<td>£6/04/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanbury</td>
<td>£23/16/0</td>
<td>£13/12/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesley Place</td>
<td>£13/08/0</td>
<td>£11/15/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hainworth</td>
<td>£7/10/6</td>
<td>£7/03/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pickles Hill</td>
<td>£8/17/8</td>
<td>£4/09/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thwaites</td>
<td>£5/14/3</td>
<td>£4/17/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scartop</td>
<td>n.g.</td>
<td>n.g.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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One obvious fact that emerges is the emphasis placed on financial solvency. While the circuit was not setting a particularly good example in this regard, its financial situation made all the more necessary efficiency from the chapel trustees. The total net surplus in the above list is £79/13/7, and all of the chapels except two showed a surplus. Surprisingly, the minutes expressed concern over the situation at Steeton, calling for closer scrutiny, but did not remark about the considerably larger deficit at Lowertown. In addition to the strictly financial data, the list also underlines the enormous amount of chapel building that had taken place during the period, another indication of a thriving and growing circuit.

The chapel finances were most important at the level of the local society, as the local trustees attempted to ensure the efficient maintenance of the building and sought to ensure that at least the interest of the chapel debt was kept current. Trustee accounts for the Keighley chapel from 1813 to 1832 show the determination of the trustees to avoid a deficit. Out of 32 meetings (held at irregular intervals ranging from over a year to almost three months) where the account books were balanced, 11 periods show a debit balance, while 22 show a surplus.
Income came from many sources. In 1826 the trustees received a bequest of £400 from the estate of William Hodgson, which they paid on the principal of the chapel debt. There were several instances of extraordinary income, often in the form of loans, used for such purposes as paying interest due or making needed improvements on the chapel. Since the term "income" so often included loans from members, the appearance of the finances as showing predominantly a surplus takes on a somewhat different perspective.

The minutes of the trustee meetings reveal some of the specific concerns. The Keighley trustees planned an anniversary service for April 28, 1822, the proceeds of which would be used to pay the interest on the chapel debt and for basic operating expenses. If any funds remained, the trustees were to use them to pay on the principal. Apparently the normal income was not enough to cover even the regular expenses. There is a curious entry for February 6, 1826, in which the trustees ruled to discontinue Sunday evening preaching in the old chapel (by then a Sunday School) at Temple Row, since "it is likely to be injurious rather than useful" and since Eden chapel could seat both congregations. What were the trustees suggesting by the phrase "injurious rather than useful"? The decision came around the end of a period of prolonged
revival and perhaps suggests that attendance, and hence "usefulness," was already declining. It is almost certain that the decision was based at least in part on financial motives.

With the advent of gas lighting to the town, the trustees faced another opportunity--and a decision. In October 11, 1830 the trustees decided to bring in gas lighting to the chapel, provided that the society could afford it without incurring any more debt on the chapel trust. They were to raise part of the money by the sale of the chandeliers. Their resolve failed, since on December 29, 1834 they were planning a special service to obtain a collection that would hopefully eliminate the debt caused by the installation of gas lights.

While the use of pew rents in the Keighley circuit had been a fairly early practice, during this later period, with increased chapel building and a multiplicity of financial obligations, they became an increasingly important part of a society's income. Of the chapels listed in the Trustees' Quarterly Minutes of October, 1848, here is the percentage of income for that period which came from seat rents:

- Keighley ............. 85.7%
- Haworth .............. 64.8%
- Lowertown .......... 63.4%
- Oakworth .......... 91.8%
- Morton Banks ....... 100%
- Steeton ............ 57.2%
Laycock .............. 60.5%
Stanbury ............. 53.4%
Wesley Place ........ 47.8%
Hainworth ............. 0
Pickles Hill .......... 20.6%
Thwaites .............. 0
Lees Chapel .......... 42.6%

Thus, the majority of the chapels received more than half of their total income from pew rents and some considerably more—a situation far removed from Wesley's original intention.

One of the documents contained in the circuit archives is an account book showing the pew rents for Steeton chapel for the period from the year ending in autumn 1806 to that ending in autumn, 1840, the autumn accounts being recorded in either September or October.

The yearly rents are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Rent</th>
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<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>£22/09/06</td>
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In October, 1840 the quarterly rents for seats ranged from 9 pence to 1s.6d. The sizable difference between
the figure for 1825 and that of 1827 is due to the fact that in 1826 the society began collecting rents quarterly rather than semiannually, as before, in effect raising the rents. This resulted in a considerable increase in income and perhaps more efficient collection, though this latter is uncertain. While the amounts due did not always remain constant, much of the fluctuation was because of individual unpaid accounts. For example, in October, 1840, there were accounts under 42 names. Eleven of those in arrears had paid nothing, while 12 paid less than what they owed. The trustees of the chapel in Keighley were determined to avoid a similar problem. On September 20, 1825 they ordered that if any pew holder did not pay the rent due for two consecutive periods (equalling a year), the pew could be rented to someone else. Although the evidence shows that some pewholders were lax in their payments, the very fact of the emphasis upon pew rents shows an increasing elitist element among the Methodists of the Keighley circuit.

The Methodists still had not abandoned all of Wesley's ideals. Concern for the poor, albeit in a paternalistic form, had consistently been a Wesleyan ideal, especially in theory. Between July, 1845 and July 1851 the Keighley society collected £84.7.8 for its
Poor Fund. The effort was really rather meager, though, considering that the Poor Fund income for October, 1848 amounted to only 2.6% of the chapel income reported then. There is no question but that operational expenses and the maintenance of the local machinery far overshadowed charitable concerns for the Keighley Methodists.

In many ways, then, the overall financial situation of the circuit reflected the growth trends seen for membership, except that the circuit was unable to avoid periods of debt that were sometimes severe and sometimes prolonged. The existing evidence also indicates that the local societies shared many of the financial difficulties of the circuit, which is hardly surprising since the circuit had become much smaller geographically. The most profitable times financially were usually the climax of the periods of most rapid growth, which occurred during times of adversity and discontent. The finances were also influenced by the erection of chapels during this period, as Methodism both grew in numbers and became more prestigious. Chapel finances, and indirectly the circuit finances, were relying heavily on rented pews, a system which probably both resulted from and contributed to a growing elitism.
Leadership

There were a number of levels of leadership within the circuit, ranging from the superintendent minister to local class leaders and prayer leaders. The most noticeable and most widely discussed were the itinerant ministers, who included the superintendents and whatever ordained assistants they might have stationed with them. The dominance attributed to the Wesleyan itinerant preachers (known as ministers only some time after the death of Wesley) had not been so noticeable during Wesley's lifetime because of his own widespread personal influence. At one point Wesley had hoped that a single leader would continue to guide the Methodists after his death. Likely candidates were relatively few; they included Grimshaw, John Fletcher, and Charles Wesley. Unfortunately, all of these men died before Wesley, forcing him to alter his plans. On August 4, 1769, Wesley had announced his intention to set up a small committee (ranging from 3 to 7 persons), but he gave up this plan as well, replacing it with the Deed of Declaration, which set up the legal Conference of 100 preachers.
As could be expected, there was considerable uproar against the Deed of Declaration, particularly from those preachers not part of the elite Legal Hundred. In an attempt to justify his decision, Wesley insisted that he had only done what he had thought necessary to ensure the continuation of the work after he died. In his view, the matter was entirely practical. He had chosen 100 in order to keep down the expenses of meeting together and to ensure that the circuits would still have preachers while Conference was meeting. His reasons seemed sensible enough, but they did not take into account the slighted, and perhaps jealous, feelings of those denied the reins of power.

Of course, even those preachers chosen as part of the Legal Hundred had a background which gave them little preparation for critical or independent thinking. They had often been artisans and had had no formal preparation for the ministry, and during Wesley's lifetime they had been subject to his oversight and domination. In the words of Professor Warner, the situation tended to make them "conducive to a ready absorption of the temper which Wesley and his colleagues established as the characteristic mood and program of the movement," which consequently limited the full development of Wesleyanism. This is still an
oversimplification, though, since many of the preachers soon learned to assert themselves quite forcefully, and the movement clearly took many steps that were quite removed from Wesley's intentions.

Studying the statistics for all of Great Britain for each decade from 1791, Alan Gilbert shows that, with the exception of 1811 and 1850, the number of members increased faster than the number of ministers. Numbers alone were not the only consideration. With ministers becoming increasingly professionalized, it was essential that the circuit be able to make adequate provisions for them. This is especially true in view of the increasing number of preachers with families. The problem of stationing married preachers and ensuring their employment came to the attention of Conference, and it decided in 1813 to assign married preachers according to the membership in the circuit, the ratio to be one married preacher for every 450 members. The ability to support more ministers, then, was hopefully a sign of a growing and prospering circuit. Because of the steady growth of the circuit throughout this period, the circuit officials decided in 1841 to approve a third minister for the circuit. Not surprisingly, they made this decision at a time when the circuit income actually surpassed the expenditures.
At this time the Connexion was still using the itinerant system for their ordained ministers, which meant that a minister would not be stationed in a circuit more than two years in succession. This practice had its origins with Wesley and, despite whatever problems it entailed, was a sacred cow of Methodist discipline. Yet even a contemporary supporter of itinerancy such as William Myles also was able to admit its shortcomings. There was the danger that neither the minister nor the members would be overly concerned about defects in the minister's theological knowledge and perhaps even competence, since he would only be around for a year or two at most. Theoretically, a preacher could get by with a set of sermons which he scarcely, if ever, needed to update. Itinerancy also made it easier to put up with a problem in personal relationships between the laity and the minister, rather than try to solve it. Each party could take comfort in the thought that the situation was temporary and that the preacher would inevitably move on.16

One example of such an altercation has survived in the circuit archives and was even incorporated into the official circuit register, despite the seemingly trivial nature of the situation. The trouble occurred between
the minister's family and the family of Thomas Smith when the latter was apparently hanging clothes on the chapel grounds. The circuit officials ruled that the garden on the chapel grounds was "solely & exclusively for the Use of the preachers Family [sic]" and that anyone wishing to hang out their clothes would need the permission of the minister's family. In this instance, one can easily sympathize with the position of the minister.

The remote origins of a professional ministry may extend as far back as Wesley's Kingswood school, which would possibly tend to create a tradition of preachers' sons entering the ministry. Gail Malmgreen sees change in the role of women resulting from the rise of a professional ministerial class among the Methodists. In spite of Wesley's predominantly narrow view of the place of women in the Church, he had accepted as providential the active and prophetic roles of certain key charismatic women, of whom Hester Ann Rogers is a good example. As Methodism moved into the nineteenth century, Malmgreen sees the function of Methodist women becoming limited to such activities as distributing literature, ministering to the needs of the poor and the sick, and instructing children. Their primary role as wives tended to create for them their own elitism,
"wherein fine gradations of social status, with appropriate niceties of dress and manner, counted for much." 19

According to Robert Currie, the ideal of the quest for Christian perfection, so important in the thought of Wesley, allied itself to and further strengthened the authoritarianism of the Wesleyan ministers. Drawing parallels between the structure of authority within Wesleyanism and that within Roman Catholicism, he points to harsh measures such as the mass expulsions carried out by Thomas Jackson, the Buntingite president of Conference in 1850 and in following years, expulsions that resulted in drastic cuts in membership. 20 But Currie's portrayal of the abuses and tyranny of the Wesleyan hierarchy, and especially of Bunting and company, do not form the total picture. Malmgreen indicates that even in early Methodism the position of the preacher with regard to the chapel community could be "precarious." 21

Debt was a perennial problem for the Keighley circuit. While Professor Ward acknowledges that sometimes Wesleyan ministers themselves were guilty of flagrant financial abuses, they could also be the victims of them. For example, pew rents were to cover the chapel debts, while society funds were to cover the
expenses of the preachers. Sometimes, however, pew rent income was not enough for the chapel debt, so society funds had to go toward that basic obligation. When the societies (and consequently the circuits) could not meet their expenses, they might turn to the districts, who in turn applied to the Conference for aid. Since Conference could not hope to meet all of the needs, sometimes preachers simply did not receive their allowance.  

A contemporary observer, William Myles, noted that occasionally misguided zeal led Methodists to build more chapels and request more preachers than they were able to support, especially when the preachers had families.

One problem faced by the ministers was the rivalry of the local preachers, whose purpose was to supplement the work of the itinerant preachers. Professor Ward maintains that the designation "minister" was an attempt by the travelling preachers to distinguish themselves from upstart and unruly local preachers. In keeping with his critical attitude toward the Wesleyan clerical hierarchy, Currie points out that circuit superintendents assigned local preachers without consulting them. Oddly enough, evening services were more important and attracted larger congregations than morning preaching. Consequently, the superintendent
would assign local preachers to the larger, more influential chapels in the morning and smaller, more remote chapels in the evening, causing many to view their contribution as relatively unimportant.\(^{25}\) One embodiment of the feud between ministers and local preachers was the opposition of the Connexion to the formation in 1849 of the Local Preachers Mutual Aid to provide financial relief for needy local preachers, an opposition perhaps somewhat justified when the LPMA continued to support local preachers who had been expelled.\(^{26}\) Perhaps the similarity between the LPMA and certain working-class mutual aid societies seemed a bit too obvious to the Connexion.

There is no direct evidence of this tension in the Keighley circuit records for this period. The minutes of the local preachers' meetings are concerned exclusively with the preachers' moral characters and competence, their adherence to Wesleyan discipline and doctrine, whether they were keeping their appointments, whether there were any new preachers, what the assignments were for the plan, and what changes in the preaching locations might be necessary.\(^{27}\) Most of the minutes deal with specific situations, though occasionally they cover general principles. For example, when someone wanted to become a local preacher,
there was a procedure to be followed (in theory but not always in practice) before he could even be admitted on probation. For one thing, he must recount his salvation experience and his call to preach, and then he must preach before the superintendent and others in the Keighley chapel. In addition, he would receive two or three appointments so that others might get a broader sample of his style and ability. If the preachers were satisfied, the new man was admitted to the plan on trial. In April, 1837 one "Br. Widdop was received into the plan on trial" with difficulty. Although the minutes include no particulars, there seems to have been some question about his ability. Later, there is a notation that he had been put on the plan on the condition that he only preach "in the less important places." In 1849, this limitation on his preaching was still in effect.

One of the major concerns was that the local preachers keep their appointments or, if unable to, obtain a fully qualified substitute. The minutes clearly indicate that infractions against this were a frequent problem for the circuit. In fact, the apparently flagrant irresponsibility of some of the preachers is surprising. The penalties imposed for this varied, including suspension and the threat of expulsion
or being put at a lower position on the plan (which was a mark of reduced status and might mean fewer and less important assignments), though a preacher might be pardoned for a first offense. One of the preachers, William Hanson, was a frequent offender in this regard, despite repeated warnings. What seems to stand out in his case is the apparent patience of the local preachers, particularly when he also neglected the quarterly meeting. If a preacher wanted less work, he was expected to request it, and the request would almost certainly be granted.

There were other types of infractions, as well, which sometimes were not specified. One preacher, Brother Broadhurst, was "given up for the present" because of a problem with his general conduct. Given the patience shown to Hanson's repeated irresponsibility, the seemingly abrupt dismissal of Broadhurst probably indicates a moral problem, as is also the implication with two other local preachers. Despite the use of the title "brother" when referring to each other, the mood was not always one of "brotherly love." At one meeting Paul Sugden, a local preacher, charged one of his colleagues, Brother Emmott, "with retailing and misrepresenting statements made by him at the previous Quarterly meeting." Emmott denied the
charge, and the minutes reveal nothing further about the altercation or its outcome, other than the almost humorous understatement that "a lengthened conversation ensued." Personal finances did not escape the scrutiny of the meeting. A Brother Baldwin had moved to the Colne circuit and apparently needed a recommendation from his previous circuit. Although the preachers expressed their confidence in his character, they recommended that the Colne circuit preachers not permit Baldwin to preach until he had satisfied his creditors.

There were relatively frequent changes in the preaching plan, including additions as well as deletions of certain locations. Accessibility to the preachers, especially in the winter months, was just one of the considerations. When in July, 1825, Oakworth requested a Sunday evening preaching service, the preachers denied the request because of its "close connection with Haworth and the circumstances of the Local Preachers." However, by December they consented, and Oakworth subsequently became one of the thriving societies on the circuit. Many of the entries suggest that expansion was not one of the top priorities of the preachers. In fact, in March, 1827, not long after a period of revival, the minutes actually proposed "that fewer places be adopted." Discipline and order were perhaps
the motives for limiting expansion. Thus the meeting expressed its disapproval of preaching (apparently not connected with any approved preaching location) in the vicinity of Haworth and Keighley chapels. According to the minutes, this preaching was "prejudicial to the Work of God generally," though they did not specify precisely why. Other entries indicate a readiness to terminate an approved preaching location when the preachers deemed it advisable.

Nevertheless, the preachers tried to respond to signs of success, even in an unlikely area. After a location called Pinfold gave evidence of conversions as the result of some evangelistic work on the part of the prayer leaders, the local preachers gave the activity their hearty approval and decided to send prayer leaders to other locations as well. Although the meeting pledged its cooperation, there was no firm promise to send local preachers to the areas. While the local preachers welcomed the aid of the prayer leaders, an earlier proposal to make use of "exhorters" had been rejected.

One of the best known and most influential local preachers on the circuit was Jonas Sugden, a worsted manufacturer from Oakworth. Undoubtedly because of his social status, as also because of his above-average
dedication to Wesleyanism, he earned a considerable reputation locally. Consequently, more is known about him than any other Methodist layperson in the circuit during this period. Though he could hardly be considered as typical, even for a leader at the circuit level, what is known of him is informative.

Searching for references to Sugden or his family in local records requires some caution, since Sugden was a common surname in that area. In early nineteenth century Keighley, 68 families were named Sugden. Jonas was born on February 3, 1800 at Dockroyd, about two miles from Keighley. He was named for his grandfather, also Jonas Sugden. His father, John, had been born in 1767 at Haworth, next to the Methodist chapel there. In 1790, he and his wife moved to Dockroyd where he had a six-acre farm, and that same year he joined with the Methodists. Before his death on January 22, 1839 he became a steward and then a Methodist class leader. John went into a business partnership with James Hey, but it was dissolved in 1824.

Jonas's mother was a loyal Methodist, having joined them at the age of 17 and continued in society until her death 56 years later on June 4, 1856, though in typical Methodist fashion she confessed with regret to some
"backsliding" (not total, though) due to the cares of daily affairs. Jonas was the oldest of eight children. Brothers John, James, and Robert were business partners with him in a worsted manufacturing firm, and William became a Wesleyan minister. Sister Martha married John Cockshott, "a respectable draper" who lived in Keighley. Elizabeth married Abraham Craven, Esq. but died in 1828, at the age of only 27. Sarah made perhaps the best match, marrying Isaac Holden, Esq., a successful Wesleyan textile manufacturer, who along with Samuel Lister developed new wool-combing machinery.  

Some of the Sugden-Holden correspondence has survived as part of Isaac Holden's papers, particularly that related to the marriage. Before marrying Holden, Sarah Sugden had firmly rejected a marriage proposal in 1848 from a Mr. Ackroyd, a minister. By the summer of the next year it was clear that Holden and Sarah Sugden were to wed, though there was some disagreement about the date, occasioned by the fact that Holden was living in France. In a letter dated July 30, in which Holden instructed Sarah to look for a woman or a married couple without children for servants, he wrote that he desired to marry the next month, though her family did not want her to leave before the winter. Brother Jonas wrote to Holden on August 3, but the letter was only a discussion
of the worsted trade in France and made no mention of the wedding. In October, he again wrote, mentioning his concern over the situation (presumably political) in France. It was his hope that the couple would postpone the wedding until spring. The Sugdens prevailed, and Holden wrote on March 14, 1850 that he was coming soon and hoped "to celebrate the marriage as soon as possible." By August 6, Sarah had become Mrs. Holden and had invited Jonas to visit them in France. Jonas's letter regarding the invitation also gives a brief description of a local religious revival in which even established members of the society had knelt at the communion-rail to seek salvation.31

Jonas Sugden's early education was of a practical nature, to prepare him for his place in the family business. He first went to a dame school taught by a Mrs. Coward. The Sugden family's Methodism dictated that he would then go to the school at Sykes Head and later to the one at Hare Hill. It was during this time that he learned the various aspects of his father's business, working long hours after his day at the Hare Hill school. Jonas apparently had a penchant for business; he pinpointed some serious financial problems in the business and suggested changes necessary to balance the books. In 1833 John Sugden established the
Mytholm Mill with 12 spinning frames. The family business continued to grow, and in 1839, upon the death of the father, the firm known as John Sugden and Sons became Jonas Sugden and Brothers.  

A momentous step for Sugden took place in 1844 when he acquired Vale Mill, which had formerly been a cotton mill run by John Greenwood, Esq. Sugden replaced the cotton machinery with machinery for the manufacture of worsted cloth. Sugden determined to manage his business on religious principles. As far as his relationship with his employees was concerned, his policy seems rather paternalistic, perhaps even meddlesome. Posted near the entrance of Vale Mill was a notice enumerating certain requirements for the employees: every employee was to attend the church of his choice on Sunday, and the children of employees were to attend a Sunday School and a day school after they reached the age of six. A modern observer should not overlook the comparatively enlightened attitude reflected in the latter requirement, despite its blatantly religious motivation. Even more obviously patronizing was Sugden's resolve not to hire gamblers or those who frequented the pubs. Young people "in trouble" had to either marry or lose their jobs. It was said that employees stifled any "loose" talk in the presence of their employer.
the other hand, Sugden required his employees to enroll in the Vale Mill Sick Club, though a worker did not receive any aid if a disabled condition was the result of "immoral conduct." It seems a bit surprising that the circuit local preachers, of whom Sugden was one, had instituted regular preaching at Vale Mill in 1830, only to discontinue it in 1845, shortly after Sugden had acquired the mill. Perhaps they were satisfied with Sugden's own influence and wanted to be careful not to infringe on his intention that employees be free to choose their own church or chapel, so long as they attended somewhere.

From an early age, Sugden was active in the affairs of the circuit. About the age of 20, he became a class leader at Bogthorn. This class divided into two, both still led by him, and in May, 1829 he became the leader of three classes, in addition to his responsibilities as a local preacher. He had been admitted to the preaching plan on probation in October, 1825, and in March of the next year he was received "into full connection" after examination. He also became a circuit steward, in view of his financial abilities. His financial as well as spiritual influence is evident in the fact that he was a trustee for a number of chapels and contributed heavily to their construction.
It would not be surprising for a man of his wealth, influence, and reputation for integrity to be involved in community affairs, even given (and perhaps partly because of) his active participation in the Wesleyan circuit. The Vestry minutes of the parish of Keighley record that Jonas Sugden of Oakworth served as an Overseer in 1840 and 1841 and was again nominated for that office in 1848. The fact that the records identify him as a worsted manufacturer make it almost certain that he was the same Jonas Sugden discussed here. Sugden's position undoubtedly both reflected and contributed to the status of Wesleyanism in the community at large.

Another important group of leaders within the circuit were the trustees of the chapels. Their influence and responsibilities were primarily financial, and they would most likely (but not necessarily always) come from the higher economic segment of the membership. In an earlier chapter, reference was made to Wesley's struggle to limit the spiritual prerogatives of the trustees, undoubtedly because he did not want to see religious policy shaped solely by an economic elite group. Nevertheless, trustees were not always reticent concerning spiritual and organizational concerns. According to David Hempton, the trustees of Methodist chapels, because they were usually
the wealthiest members, often wanted to retain closer ties to the Church of England than other Methodists—including the preachers—and were not comfortable with the increasing sentiment for separation. In fact, in Keighley the trustees of the Methodist chapel were on the subscription list for the organ for the parish church in 1811. While legal trustees of chapels of traditional dissenters groups tended to quarrel with other, less wealthy members over the retention of an unpopular minister, the Wesleyan system of itinerancy effectively prevented that particular problem among the Methodists.

The apparent existence of abuses of power by some Methodist trustees led Adam Clarke, a respected Wesleyan leader, to write an article attempting to clarify the nature of the office. However, the problems he addresses are strictly financial, and the bulk of the article merely spells out the boundaries of their personal financial liability, though his insistence that they were not proprietors may have been an indirect warning that they should not attempt to seize the spiritual reins of the local society. He then dictated that they should not be liable for debts of the chapel except those incurred from improvements they have made on their own initiative. Proposed physical changes required the approval of the circuit officials at the Quarterly meeting and perhaps
even the district or the Conference, though it would seem unwise to burden the Conference with the responsibility of approving every improvement on every Methodist chapel in the Connexion. Trustees were fully liable for unapproved alterations and were responsible to make good any damage and restore the property to its original state. One can easily envision the kinds of disputes that might have elicited Clarke's article, though what he says is hardly innovative.

The minutes of the meetings of the trustees of the Keighley chapel make prosaic reading. Routine business seems to have been the rule, and if there was any questionable struggle for power on the part of the trustees, it did not find its way into the record. Entries such as the annual appointment of two auditors from among the trustees and the order to inspect the chapel monthly and report concerning necessary repairs suggest a basic mood of practicality and desire for efficiency. In April, 1837 the trustees very unascetically ordered improvements to make the communion floor more comfortable. When a local party requested to rent the chapel to hold a musical festival, the trustees refused, justifying the financial sacrifice by citing a Conference rule. On the surprisingly late date of November 3, 1844 the trustees decided to have the chapel
licensed for weddings and proposed the appointment of a subcommittee to establish regulations for marriages and baptisms, although the circuit had held baptisms there for some time.

A close examination of the chapel trustees reveals their occupational status, since the trust conveyances always listed the occupations of the individual trustees, as well as their place of residence. The following shows a breakdown of the occupational status of 72 trustees between the years 1820 and 1851:

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<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile workers</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisans and tradesmen</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentlemen</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the fact that as late as 1815, local Vestry minutes use the term "manufacturers" in an apparently broad sense, it is almost always interpreted here as one who owns a factory, unless there is some additional information that might imply a different interpretation. The commercial category is admittedly broad, including shopkeepers as well as those who may have been merchants on a larger scale. Since it is not always easy to determine the scope of an individual's business, a broader
category was used. "Textile workers" is a fairly self-explanatory category; it also includes those merely designated as foremen or overseers, since they most likely worked in textile mills. The artisans and tradesmen tend to include the same type of occupations that were in the similar category used in chapter two. The occupation of the trustee in the category "laborer" is listed in the records as a gardener; farmers include those designated as either farmers or yeomen. The two listed as "gentlemen" held only that designation in the records. In addition, one trustee, John Whitaker, is listed as a gentleman in the transcript, while the records at the CRO in Wakefield show that he was a manufacturer. Furthermore, in 1821 the occupation of Lupton Wright is listed as yeoman, though in 1845 he is referred to as a gentleman. These two entries reflect a typical desire to gain the title and prestige of a gentleman. A case similar to that of Lupton Wright is that of Robert Sugden from Spring Head. In 1821, a Robert Sugden the Younger is listed as a worsted manufacturer, while in 1845, Robert Sugden from the same location is designated a farmer. While it is quite possible that the two names are the same individual and that Sugden moved from manufacturing to agriculture (either as the result of significant success or failure at manufacturing), an entry
was made into each of the two categories.

A further word of caution about these figures is in order. These are not the trustees of all of the chapels constructed or acquired during this period; these are merely all for which records have been kept in the circuit archives. Data about the trustees of two of the most important chapels in the circuit, Keighley and Haworth, are missing. However, many of the names would have been the same, though certainly not all, and the sample is large enough to have some significance.

The results indicate an overall increase in the status of the trustees from 1790 to 1820, and of course some of the nature of the occupations has changed as well. Yet despite the improvement, especially evident in the percentage of manufacturers, there is still a fairly wide distribution of trustees throughout all of the categories, except laborers and gentlemen. The percentage of trustees engaged in agriculture is still quite significant, though it is down considerably from the figure for the trustees in 1763 and 1790 but is higher than the percentage of the total membership in 1763. The improved status of the trustees in the nineteenth century suggests that there was a larger pool of Methodists in higher occupational levels from which to select trustees.
According to Charles Wallace, it was common to include substantial trustees from outside the local area to lend financial strength to the chapel. The only clear evidence of this is in the deed for Morton Banks chapel dated April, 1820, the earliest deed in the sample. John Whitaker, a manufacturer (also designated as a gentleman) and one of the earliest trustees, was from Burley in Wharfedale, which is quite close to the circuit. More obvious is the inclusion in 1820 of Thomas Lister, a corn dealer from Halifax. Apart from these, the circuit seems to have contained enough financial strength of its own to maintain the growing number of chapels.

As would be expected, the general status of these trustees is noticeably higher than that of a sample of general Wesleyan membership reported by Gilbert covering the period from 1800 to 1837. The sample included 4,385 members and was derived from the Non-Parochial Registers. Since trustees were an elite group, the difference in the overall status is not surprising. What is noteworthy is that his sample reports that only 5.5% of the total group were farmers, which suggests that the sample may have been taken (by necessity, perhaps) from predominantly urban congregations.

A comparison between the trustee figures and data showing the occupations of 244 nominees for public service
in Keighley is most informative. The table classifies the occupational status of individuals nominated for the positions of constable and tax assessor and collector, as well as some nominees for surveyor and overseer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturers</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile workers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisans and tradesmen</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentlemen</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>244</td>
<td>100.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The professionals were accountants and bookkeepers, not unlikely candidates for some of the offices. The category described as "other" includes occupations not clearly related to the other categories: a constable, an auctioneer, a carrier, and three men described as watermen (possibly boat operators). Eighteen of the 46 individuals in the commercial category were shopkeepers (including one innkeeper), the rest being dealers, grocers, and similar persons. While not all were actually chosen for office, the fact that the Vestry accepted their nominations indicates that they considered the nominees to be "solid" citizens in some respect.

It is surprising that the percentage of manufacturers was smaller for the nominees than for the trustees, and conversely the percentage of artisans was larger. On the
whole, the status of the nominees seems a bit lower than that of the trustees, though the categories tend to be broad and blur some of the fine distinctions. What seems even more significant is the relatively high percentage of farmers chosen as nominees in an area where textile manufacturing was of such importance. Obviously, agricultural interests were still important to the area, although the local petitions against the Corn Laws reflected more the manufacturing, commercial, and artisan segments of the community.

The Methodists of the Keighley circuit would seem to support David Hempton's characterization of Methodism as predominantly lower middle class, with little backing from or appeal to "the labouring poor." His statement that Methodism "drew little support from major entrepreneurs" may be less certain, however. The records reveal a significant number of trustees coming from the manufacturer class, and families such as the Sugdens, as well as that of Isaac Holden from Bradford, were quite substantial, especially from a local perspective. Bernard Semmel has noted that even in the 1790's there was already evidence of class distinctions within the Methodist movement, and some Methodists associated with the Keighley circuit were quick to seek the title of a gentleman.
It is the opinion of Charles M. Elliott that chapel building stimulated the appeal of Wesleyanism to a higher social strata than previously. He argues that the Wesleyan Connexion received little of its monetary support from the poorer classes and that shortly after Wesley's death, the Wesleyan Connexion lost its appeal to the poor. Methodists of less substantial means subsequently lost influence in the very chapels they had built, as the more well-to-do, who often were not actually financially responsible for chapel building until late in this period, gained prestige. Early and not-so-wealthy Methodists resented the wealthier, new elite; this led to their breaking away from the Wesleyan Connexion.47

The situation in Keighley, as remembered by a nineteenth-century local Methodist, seems to contradict Elliott's generalizations, perhaps because Keighley differed considerably from Leeds. When the Keighley society, which had been meeting at Temple Row, outgrew their facilities and decided to build a new chapel, Sunderland described it as "a great undertaking As the Society and Congregation was mostly of the Working Classes, & the Trade and Comerce was in An Embarrs'd State owing to the Wars [sic]."48 Of course, Elliott's use of the term "poor" is quite vague, as is Sunderland's use of the term "Working Classes."
Despite Sunderland's vague generalization, the fact of social improvement is distinctly possible. The status of the trustees suggests at least that there were more Wesleyans in the circuit of higher occupational levels from which to select trustees. Explaining their improved status is not easy and, in fact, not really possible with the existing data. Wesley claimed to have seen a rise in economic status occurring in the movement in general in his lifetime and attributed it to the fact that as Methodist converts adopted more temperate life styles, they tended to work harder and spend less and thus accumulate more. Ernst Troeltsch characterizes Wesley's economic ideal as quite close to the traditional Catholic ethic that one should not accumulate wealth. In fact Wesley noted that prospering Methodists diligently kept the first two of his well-known rules on the use of money (Earn all you can, and save all you can.) but fell short in their practice of the last (Give all you can.), which for him was the most important.

Although Alan Gilbert recognizes the existence of what he calls "Wesley's Law," which states "that ascetic Protestantism leads to economic and social improvement," he says that at the same time as earlier Methodists were rising socially and economically, there was still a steady stream of conversions from the original constituency.
In the case of Keighley this would be artisans and textile workers. Furthermore, he asserts that it was more than just "clean living" that improved the social status of these groups; changes in the economic life of the vicinity were also important. Wallace states succinctly concerning the phenomenon of "lift" that evangelical denominations (including Methodism, to an extent) tended to both foster and attract wealth. Although it is probable that as Wesleyans erected more chapels and increased in respectability, they attracted those with wealth, it is also likely that converts during periods of revival came from economic levels similar to those of Methodists in the eighteenth century.

Were the more prosperous trustees of the nineteenth century descendants of Methodists of the early period of the circuit, or did they convert to a movement that was already showing signs of increased prosperity and respectability? It is not likely that a definite answer will be forthcoming, but the evidence would indicate that changes in their status roughly reflect changes in the community, where textile manufacturing was increasing in importance and beginning to transform the social and economic life of the town and its vicinity.

The development of leadership in the Keighley circuit, then, matched developments within the Connexion
as a whole, not surprising given the rigid, hierarchical structure of Wesleyanism. If the records give very little indication of the rivalry between ministry and laity, and especially the ministers and the local preachers, experienced by the Connexion during this time, we dare not conclude that the Keighley circuit necessarily escaped it. The records largely indicate business as usual, with glimpses of unexplained or unelaborated problems, such as a few local preachers let go without explanation, possibly for gross moral offenses but possibly as well for "subversive" attitudes or activities. And finally, though the trustees still contained a broad social base, including some artisans and textile workers, they were a more prosperous group than previously, with concerns such as avoiding sore knees while kneeling at the communion rail. At least some of them were obviously chosen because of their financial status and backing, reflecting the ambitions of the growing circuit and its leadership.

Worship

Early Methodism is almost considered synonymous with revivalism, but then the term "revival" is broad enough to include a variety of implications. John Wesley disapproved of the more bizarre manifestations of
revivalistic fervor that plagued his ministry. Nineteenth-century ministers—especially those of the Buntingite persuasion—followed his lead and even surpassed it in frowning on spontaneous lay-initiated outbreaks of fervor, fervor that tended to interfere with orderly, regulated worship. But Methodists did not necessarily equate revival with outward manifestations of religious feeling. It could also be the steady but orderly progress of evangelism, although the element of spontaneity seemed to characterize it. In one instance, the funeral of the Rev. Jonathan Catlow, a Wesleyan minister, was said to have been the stimulus to a revival in Keighley.53

This period evidenced some change in the accompanying modes of evangelism from what had been the norm, especially during the years of Wesley's activity. In the 1820's and 1830's the American institution of the "altar call" (where individuals were invited to kneel at the communion rail to pray for salvation) began to appear in English Methodist services, despite some English hesitation about adopting it. A major stimulus in the change was the American revivalist James Caughey, who held campaigns in a number of the larger Yorkshire cities and incorporated the practice in his services. Since British revival had often been previously marked by spontaneous
praying breaking out in scattered groups throughout the chapel, the altar call could be interpreted as a more orderly practice. Evidently, at least some of the Methodists of the Keighley circuit accepted the practice. In August, 1850 Jonas Sugden wrote to his sister in France concerning the recent revival, mentioning that even established members had knelt at the communion rail seeking salvation.

Another apparent advantage of the altar call was that it pressed individuals for a public commitment. According to Richard Carwardine, while not all who were converted in revivals persevered in their new-found faith, the evidence shows net gains of people who maintained their commitment. The membership statistics for the Keighley circuit tend to support this as well. Nevertheless, a major criticism of the Caughey revivals was that the American evangelist "engineered" what was supposed to be an outpouring of divine grace; in effect, Caughey was a paid "revival technician." Carwardine maintains that the final result of Caughey's campaigns tended to be division within the ranks of British Wesleyanism.

Aside from the particular techniques of conversions and their emotional manifestations, revival stimulated and was stimulated by a variety of group expressions of the spirit of worship. In Oakworth, a revival in 1832 spurred
a period of growth. The high point of the revival was a Watch-Night service, which was a Methodist tradition going back to the days of Wesley. This service, lasting until midnight, included singing, prayer, preaching, and often short "exhortations." The spirit of renewal stimulated a number of cottage meetings; at ten different locations around Oakworth, prayer meetings were held during the week. A prayer-leaders' plan existed, much like the Quarterly Circuit Plan, which listed 30 prayer leaders and assistants. An early printed set of rules for conducting prayer meetings reveals the concern for orderly worship even in this setting; the very explicitness of the instruction implies an awareness of and a desire to avoid some of the disorder associated with early Methodist expressions of revival. The meeting was not to last more than an hour, and any single exhortation was not to exceed 5 to 10 minutes. No individual was to pray longer than about four minutes at any one time, though a person was permitted to pray more than once. The elaboration of this particular guideline is worth quoting: "Long praying is, in general, both a symptom, and a cause of spiritual deadness. If you cannot pray short, be silent."

Finally--and this is clearly a response to certain conditions which had prevailed in spontaneous outbreaks of revival--everyone was to remain silent while someone was
praying, except to say "Amen" at the end of the prayer. Some who had participated in earlier revivals may have found this formalization of prayer meetings a bit stifling.

Although the local class meetings undoubtedly expressed some of the spirit of the periods of renewal, they were an ongoing and important institution of Methodism throughout this period. In fact, one who did not participate regularly in class meeting could not continue to be a member of the society. The purpose of the classes was to provide close spiritual direction and supervision of individual members, to a degree that societies as a whole could not, as well as to foster a sense of community with a fairly small group of people. The rules and directions for class leaders clearly emphasized the former function. Members were encouraged to partake of the Lord's Supper once a month at least, if possible. The book of directions also chose to make special mention of the rule of not borrowing or purchasing on credit without the likelihood of being able to pay back. One wonders if this was not a problem with some, especially in view of periods of economic hardship for so many. Shorthand symbols used in the class book itself also reflected the theoretical function of spiritual oversight and even scrutiny. Those who met in bands,
groups for those with special spiritual zeal, were to be identified by the letter "b" by their names. Some of the keys were supposed to reflect the spiritual state of the member: o=justified, a=penitent, and Q=doubtful. These were not used in the class books examined, hopefully a sign of charity and humility on the part of the class leader. 61

It would be expected, then, that selection of the class leaders during this period required a certain degree of scrutiny and screening. Contemporary expectations of candidates for class leader were that they would be able to describe their conversion and their current spiritual experience—certainly important for those who were to guide the inner lives of others. In addition, they had to submit to an oral examination on the doctrines of Methodism. 62 Once chosen as class leader, an individual's conduct and commitment was even more crucial. A meeting of the leaders in 1845 ruled that any class leader who missed three consecutive leaders' meetings was to be notified. When one of the leaders, Robert Whitehead, resigned his class due to drunkenness, the leaders dropped his status so low that they even forbade him to meet in a class as a member and placed him under the personal spiritual direction of one of the leaders, John Naylor.
Throughout the circuit and at local levels, then, there was a variety of workers involved in evangelism, edification, spiritual supervision, and other tasks. Spiritual leadership ranged from the superintendent to the class or prayer leader. In June of 1849 the local preachers were again discussing the possibility of adding a new level to the hierarchy and wanted to designate certain persons on the plan as exhorters. Their function would be to exhort briefly at prayer meetings, "to break up new ground," and perhaps even to "exercise" at the less important preaching places. The proposal was actually a return to a previous suggestion which they had rejected in 1836.

Concern for discipline--doctrinal but especially moral--probably characterized Wesleyan institutions of worship more than the stereotyped scenes of unrestrained emotionalism thought to characterize revivalistic religion. This moral concern probably influenced, or at least paralleled, similar concerns by leaders in the town and parish. For example, rigid Sabbatarianism was an integral part of Methodist discipline at this time. Thus, on April 8, 1822 the Keighley Vestry appointed "a committee to take measures to cause the Sabbath to be more decently observed than heretofore in this Town and Parish." One of the members of the committee was L.
Calvert, very probably Lodge Calvert, a local manufacturer and a Methodist trustee.

John Wesley's High-Church proclivities had largely succumbed to the practical demands of mass evangelism, but one continuing vestige of them was his reverence for the sacraments of the Church. He especially emphasized frequent communion as an aid to spiritual growth. Yet in many ways the love feasts he instituted (where members partook of bread and water as a sign of unity) seemed similar enough to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to perhaps serve as a substitute. In fact, Leslie F. Church suggests that when the sacrament was not administered in the Methodist preaching-houses (and Wesley never intended that it should be) and when many Methodists could not or would not receive the sacrament from the parish priest, the love feast may have become an important part of fellowship.65

Horton Davies goes even farther in identifying the love feast as an almost deliberate substitute for the Lord's Supper, arguing that when the Methodists began to celebrate the sacrament in their own chapels with their own ministers officiating, they did not really need the love feasts. In fact, though he mistakenly asserts that the love feasts lapsed after Wesley's death, he appears to contradict himself by quoting a description of one written
in 1833.66

Did nineteenth century Methodists in the Keighley circuit see the love feast as a substitute for the Lord's Supper, and did the importance of the love feast diminish significantly when their own ministers began celebrating the sacrament? If so, one would expect the frequency of the celebration of the love feast to decline as the frequency of communion increased. Circuit plans for much of the first half of the century list the occasions of celebrating both the Lord's Supper and the love feast. In Figure 10 the results are presented in the form of a graph. Since the plans usually covered a six-month period and since some of the plans are missing, there was not always enough data to show the frequency in an entire year. In addition, the periods constituting the years occasionally vary in length, sometimes ending as late as January of the following year or as early as August, though the variation is gradual and any single period actually is the length of a year, or very nearly so. The plan for half of 1822 is partly illegible; that for half of 1825 has been partly torn, so the actual figures for these years may be slightly higher than the ones given. Finally, the surprisingly low figure for the frequency of the sacrament in 1834 may reflect some error in the plan. All of these problems, however, do not significantly
affect the overall trends reflected throughout the period.

The frequency of both institutions shows a net increase during this period, although there is frequent fluctuation. During most of the first fourteen years, the love feast was celebrated more frequently than the sacrament. This trend tends to reverse, especially from the year 1839 on. It was in 1839 that the Keighley society began holding communion services regularly on the first Sunday of every month. But not only was the circuit celebrating the sacrament more often; they were also celebrating it in more locations, as some of the outlying chapels began to hold communion services. Nevertheless, even if early Methodists who were not always in the good graces of the local clergy--and hence often without the benefit of the sacrament--viewed the love feast as a substitute, the evidence would indicate that their nineteenth-century successors did not. Rather, it seems to be a supplement to the regular sacrament and met different needs than did the communion service. While its importance may have diminished somewhat as the importance of the sacramental worship increased, it showed no signs of disappearing during the period before 1850.

Perhaps it would be helpful to consider the love feast as a manifestation of the "sect" tendency in Wesleyanism, since it was an exclusive ordinance and was
accompanied by testimonies and other charismatic manifestations. On the other hand, the communion service might be viewed as an expression of the "church" tendency within Methodism. To further reinforce this, even while the separation from the established church was becoming more formalized, the Conference continued to instruct their ministers to use—at the very least—a shortened version of the Anglican liturgy or the readings taken from it. Thus, while the Methodists were developing and increasing their celebration of church-type institutions, they had not lost sight of the "sect" aspect of their movement, with its charismatic, exclusive, and highly discipline-oriented elements such as those related to the practice of the love feast.

One further interesting element in the institutionalization of worship in the circuit is that the first mention of scheduled baptisms occurs in the plan for the period November, 1837-April, 1838. This is relatively late, especially considering that baptism is an important expression of the church—the initiatory rite into the Christian community. Since the Wesleyans practiced infant baptism, it is also a manifestation of the "church" tendency. It seems quite probable that before this time, the Keighley circuit minister baptized babies as there was occasion for it, although there is no surviving record of
it. But the inclusion of regularly scheduled baptismal services implies the formalization of another church-type institution.

Alan Gilbert argues that with its increasing institutionalization, Wesleyanism slowed its rate of growth. Given the missing membership data at the last portion of the period under investigation, this would be difficult to assess for the Keighley circuit, since the institutionalization—at least of worship—becomes most evident from the year 1839. Institutionalization certainly does not preclude isolated outbreaks of revival, since we find Jonas Sugden describing a local revival in 1850, but the periods of major and prolonged revival—and the rapid growth that accompanied it—took place somewhat earlier. What this period shows is the simultaneous existence of expressions of concern for order and dignity, even in the informal local prayer meetings, and the increase of sacramental worship, on the one hand, and the continuance of sect-type practices which had begun with Wesley and which stressed exclusivism, rigorous moral discipline, and an attempt (in some cases) to revive what the Wesleyans believed to be practices of primitive Christianity which the established church had ignored. These latter were all characteristics of a sect. Likewise they were open (to a degree, at least) to new, innovative
revivalistic techniques from across the Atlantic. These apparently conflicting tendencies show that Methodist worship was becoming more complex and adopting new dimensions, while retaining much of the old.

Sunday Schools

In many ways Methodist Sunday Schools differ considerably from every other institution of the movement. Initially, Sunday School had been a charitable, rather than a strictly religious, enterprise. In fact David Hempton asserts that working-class people were attracted to the Sunday Schools because of their practical value, even when they were not attracted to institutional religion. Consequently, they also sought more control over the institutions themselves and sought to forestall the encroachments of denominational leadership.\(^{69}\) Thomas Walter Laqueur goes even further in his attempt to show that Sunday Schools were more than just the patronizing expressions of the charity of the evangelicals. Although he had begun his study originally to confirm the Thompson thesis, he concludes from his findings that working-class revolt against middle-class values is only part of the picture.\(^{70}\)
While recognizing that because of the importance of the Bible for traditional values literacy was seen as an important aid to godliness, Laqueur goes on to show that the Sunday Schools were not just imposed on the working class by the mores of middle-class piety. Rather, working-class people themselves actively participated. His evidence shows that outside of London almost all working-class children had had contact with a Sunday School. Furthermore, most Sunday Schools were relatively democratic institutions. Not only were the scholars largely working class but the teachers were as well, and the finances largely came from working-class folk. Despite their limitations, Sunday Schools had a significant impact on the development of large-scale literacy in England in the nineteenth century. Even the virtues of honesty, thrift, and hard work were not imposed by the middle class. Because these were virtues that working-class parents sought to inculcate in their children, Laqueur does not hesitate to call them the virtues of the "respectable working class." Gail Malmgreen, with a somewhat different emphasis, notes how the existence of Methodist Sunday Schools contributed to the community life of the local Wesleyan society, with Sunday School anniversaries and teas, which not only
provided pleasant activity but boosted the pride of the Methodist community as well.  

How true Laqueur's conclusions are for Wesleyan Sunday Schools is open to debate. Gilbert points out that before the 1830's most Sunday Schools had not been intended as recruiting agencies of denominations and only became so in the 1830's, 1840's, and after. But he further argues that the process of attempting to assert denominational authority over the Sunday Schools began early in Wesleyanism, in the 1820's. By 1820 the Conference minutes expressed a desire for more control over their Sunday Schools; in practice, however, the control was not consolidated strongly in the 1820's. A local example of this occurred in Keighley, though considerably later. The local preachers notified the Sunday Schools in 1837 of their desire that the children hear preaching at least once every Sunday, either in chapel or the Sunday School. Though there had been preaching in the Sunday School at Temple Row previously, during the revival in the period between 1816 and 1826, the situation in 1837 was different. At the earlier time, the preachers were simply using the premises to accommodate the large crowds wishing to attend Sunday evening preaching. In the later period the preaching was aimed at the children themselves.
The issue that gained the spotlight during the move for denominational control concerned the very purpose of the institution. In 1823 the Wesleyan Conference unanimously voted its disapproval of the practice in Sunday Schools of teaching writing on the Lord's Day. In Ward's analysis of the motives behind the move, he notes that besides the Sabbatarian arguments, those who opposed teaching writing in the Sunday Schools argued that there was not much time available for the teachers, and it was best used in religious instruction. A further reason reveals a noxious class prejudice: this was the fear of putting the poor "above" their condition in life, as well as putting into their hands a power which could be employed to the injury of society—the art of forgery. In answer to the standard Sabbatarian reasons against the practice, those who favored teaching writing in the Sunday School asserted that it was actually a "work of mercy" and therefore lawful to do so on the Sabbath. In fact, even after the Conference had forbidden Sunday writing, it continued in some Wesleyan schools. Laqueur believes that Bunting's prejudices against secular education were "largely irrelevant" to the actual situation in the local Sunday Schools.

The controversy had an impact on the Wesleyan society in Keighley. In 1832, the Sunday School had requested a
£5 reduction in the rent on the school to enable them to teach writing on a weeknight. Although the trustees answered that they could not grant the reduction that year, they seemed committed to the idea. They expressed the hope that they would be able to grant the reduction the following year and would try to aid the Sunday School in meeting the cost of the use of the building on a weeknight to teach writing.\textsuperscript{79} It would seem, then, that the trustees' scruples concerning the sabbath were the decisive motive, and not fears resulting from class prejudice.

Not all shared these scruples, especially those outside the Wesleyan flock. In Keighley in 1838 an Owenite Sunday School carried a flag in a Whit Monday march inscribed with these words: "NO SIN TO WRITE," apparently an expression of impatience with Wesleyan meticulousness. Laqueur says that this "infidel" school may have originally been Chartist.\textsuperscript{80} Ideology aside, they undoubtedly had cause to protest. It would seem that the trustees' previous commitment to the teaching of writing either had not resulted in any action or, more likely, had only achieved inadequate results, since in 1840 and 1841 the trustees were discussing the possibility of setting up a day school in the Sunday School building.\textsuperscript{81}
Wesleyan authorities had a great deal to do in their drive to denominationalize their Sunday Schools, given the nondenominational character of the early Sunday Schools. According to Ward, this was especially true in Yorkshire, and he cites the example of the famous Sunday School at Bingley. This Sunday School had been the joint effort of Methodists and Anglicans until 1810 when their differences regarding extemporaneous prayer divided them. Similarly, early Sunday Schools, such as the one in Keighley, were "de facto Methodist" but took the children to the parish church for worship, reflecting the ambiguous nature of the Methodists' relationship to the Church of England.

Certain social problems were directly related to the Sunday Schools. As elsewhere, the blight of child labor was a problem in Keighley. John Greenwood, one of Keighley's chief industrialists, used the labor of orphan girls from London's Foundling Hospital. Testifying to the effects of local child labor, Abraham Wildman, a Sunday School teacher, gave a chilling description of those Keighley children in his Sunday School who also worked in the mills. Saying that they did not compare favorably with other children of the country, he affirmed that there were at least "150 rickety, crooked-legged children" whose condition was caused by overwork. Some had lost fingers;
some had even lost arms or legs. However, a doctor from Keighley, also a Sunday School teacher, claimed that he had never seen such children. In a first-hand account, Samuel Rhodes attested that the overseer at Mitchell's Mill, where he had begun work at the age of 6 1/2, had used "a strap with nails in it."  

Factory records give more matter-of-fact evidence concerning child labor in the area. A time register for the Brigg factory covering the years 1837 to 1844 reveals a system where children under 13 worked in shifts to enable them to attend school for two hours a day. Although the shifts were no longer than 6 1/2 hours (many being only 6 hours and some even 5 1/2), a child could work an additional part of another shift, totalling up to as many as 8 hours per day. During the 1840's the factory used printed forms which were to certify that a minor had attended a school somewhere "for Two Hours at least for Six out of the seven Days in the Week." In some cases the number of hours had increased, but usually the number of days was fewer than 6 (sometimes 3, 4, or 5). One form simply reported the total number of hours the child had been at school the previous week.  

Such lack of precision characterized the efforts to control the employment of children. In keeping with the law, certificates of age were used, completed by a
physician who affirmed that after examining the potential employee, he had found the individual to be "of the ordinary strength and appearance of a young person ABOVE THIRTEEN years of Age." A large number of the completed forms had been crossed out, with the notation "Discharged," often shortly after the date of the certificate. The reason for the discharge is sometimes easy to surmise. One of the forms had a note attached indicating what day the boy involved had been born: he was only twelve.

There was a high turnover rate among child and teen-age factory workers in the Brigg mill. Out of 411 young hirees aged 9 to 17 listed in the register of workers between 1837 and 1844, only 91 had not left during that period, though the figure is somewhat tentative due to the difficulty of interpreting the data. There was at least one case where the same child may have been hired at two different times, though identical names do not necessarily mean this. A Dinah Binns, age 13, was hired on October 16, 1839 and left January 30, 1841. Then on February 26, 1841, a Dinah Binns was hired (again listed as age 13); she left the employ of the factory on February 19, 1842.

The following shows the official schedule for workers between the ages of 13 and 17 inclusive. The date on the
left is the date the schedule was signed. The hours of work are given for the period of Monday through Friday and for Saturday. Finally, scheduled mealtimes are listed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M-F</th>
<th>Sat.</th>
<th>Mealtimes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/2/37</td>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>12-1 dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9/18/37 6-7:30 Same 7:30-8 break.
8-12 12-1 dinner
1-7

11/1/37 6-7:30 6-7:30 7:30-8 break.
8-12 8-12 12-1 dinner
1-7:30 1-4:30

1/1/38 6-8 6-8 8-8:15 break.
8:15-12:15 same 12:15-1 dinner
1-4 1-4 M-F 4-4:15 tea
4:15-7:15

3/1/38 6-8 6-8 8-8:30 break.
8:30-12 8:30-12 12-1 dinner
1-7:30 1-4:30

Of course, none of the schedules seem particularly attractive, especially considering the age of the workers. The decision to incorporate more than one break within a 12-hour shift was a permanent one, though the experiment with a fifteen-minute breakfast and tea time to provide the opportunity for three breaks instead of two apparently was not successful. Even at its most lenient, the schedule was a rigorous one, especially for those at the younger extremes of the group.

Despite the fact, then, that the younger employees were theoretically attending day school for at least two
hours a day, the Sunday School was still an important institution, though by the latter period, its religious character was predominant— at least in those run by the Wesleyans. In the earlier years, before any attempt to ensure even a minimal education of far younger child workers, its importance was undoubtedly even greater and its function more pragmatic, although the religious element was still the most noticeable.

Laqueur points out that the very early Sunday Schools were often somewhat spontaneous affairs, such as the one begun near Keighley in 1787 by Thomas Noble, a semiliterate blacksmith, who announced his intention to teach "the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the fear of God." The Wesleyan Sunday School, which began around 1811, was for a time the only one offered in Keighley, and children of all denominations attended. The premises for the Sunday School shifted periodically. After Eden chapel was opened, the old chapel at Temple Row housed the Sunday School until 1847 when a new Temple Street chapel was built, at which time Eden chapel was converted into a school and a vestry.

An undated pamphlet enumerating the rules of the Keighley Wesleyan Sunday School gives expression to the control exercised by the Wesleyan society. A committee governed the school, consisting of the circuit
superintendent, the itinerant preachers on the circuit, a
president, secretary, and treasurer. Seven other members
could also be appointed: three teachers and four
"respectable friends and supporters." Business required a
forum of seven members. All committee members and
officers of the school had to be Methodists, and all
teachers must have reached the age of 18. Teachers were
admitted on six months probation. Monitors, who had been
scholars there and were at least 14 years old, could teach
junior classes, and after two years of service, they were
granted the privileges and the rank of teacher. The
school's operating committee met semiannually (in January
and July) to audit the accounts and discuss finances.
They also held quarterly meetings for the carrying out of
routine business. In addition to the school president,
who supervised the overall program, there were four
superintendents, two for the boys and two for the girls. 91

The Sunday School sessions began at 9:00 and at 1:15.
The school president would open and close each session
with prayer and singing. Scholars must have reached the
age of six, although teachers' children were permitted to
attend at 5 1/2. Parental approval was required for a
child to attend the school. The emphasis on worship was
strong. The children were expected to learn the Wesleyan
catechism. All children were to attend the morning
service at the Methodist chapel, and older children were urged to attend the evening services as well. Mercifully, and with typical Wesleyan regard for orderliness, the rules dictated that the president should make his 9:00 devotional period "as brief as possible." The entire morning session lasted only until 9:45 since the children had to be in the chapel by 10:00 for worship. The classes (theoretically, at least) consisted of children with a similar "proficiency in learning." During the afternoon session, the main session of the day, the children were at their lessons between 1:15 and 2:40. Then they learned the catechism until 3:00. At 3:05 there was a lecture on scripture, and school dismissed at 3:45.92

The school maintained minimal health regulations. Scholars were expected to be "clean in person and dress." They could not attend if they had any contagious disease, and they could not bring infants with them to school. Naturally, the school also had moral regulations, which were more explicit. The school could dismiss a scholar for swearing, lying, stealing, or other misbehavior, after giving sufficient warning. The school also reserved the right to exclude anyone who was absent three Sundays in succession or missed six half-day sessions in any one quarter. Once dismissed, a scholar could not be reinstated for at least three months, and only then by the
express approval of the committee. 93

The school maintained a library, to which the president subscribed one shilling, superintendents six pence, and teachers three pence for the privilege of using it. Scholars with faithful attendance records who were recommended on the basis of their behavior and improvement by the superintendents and teachers could become members of the library, as could former scholars who had been "honourably discharged" from the Sunday School. Scholars had to pay one penny per quarter for the use of the library. Fines for overdue books were based on the value of the book. For example, the fine for a book valued at two shillings was one penny. 94 All in all, the system seemed to represent an honest, if meager, effort.

By the seventh year of its operation in 1818, the Sunday School was accommodating a total of 940 children, 481 boys and 459 girls. Out of the budget for that year, the costliest single item was rent for the premises, which was £30. Most encouraging is the fact that the second highest amount, £24/18/0, was spent on books. Most of the other budget expenditures were typical operating expenses, although an interesting item was £4/4/6 for rewards for scholars. Competition was apparently acceptable. That year the subscribers had pledged £44/7/6, and by the time of the annual report, the school had received £40/14/6 of
that sum. In addition, a collection at the Methodist chapel had yielded £38/14/6, while folk at the parish church had contributed £14. Part of the school was used as a day school for 9 1/2 months out of the year, for which the Sunday School received £3/16/0 in rent.95

By the 10th anniversary, the number of children attending the school had decreased to 815, made up of 405 boys and 410 girls. Perhaps significant, though, is the fact that while in 1818, 331 children were learning writing, by 1821 that number had increased to 404. The school had spent over £10 less for books that year than three years earlier, reflecting a tighter budget in general in 1821. The only sources of income listed were £39/6/5 1/2 from contributions collected at the Wesleyan chapel and a previous cash balance of £23/9/2 1/2. The report showed that the expenditures had surpassed the income by £1/18/11.96

Though writing had been part of the Sunday School curriculum in 1818 and 1821, by 1830 the Sunday School report stated that the express purpose of the school was "to instruct the Children in the doctrines and precepts of our holy Religion." The report boasted that the school used many strategies to attain that end. The teaching method most emphasized was to assign a chapter of the Bible and then to question the scholars on its content the
following week. The report no longer mentioned such subjects as writing, reading from easy-reading books, spelling, and learning the alphabet for the beginning scholars, all of which had been taught in 1818 and 1821. Despite a slender operating budget, the previous year's debt of £35/15/6 had increased to £39/0/6 1/2. In an attempt to raise funds for the school, special seats in the front and in the galleries for the anniversary sermon by the minister from Leeds were reserved for those who contributed silver as they entered. 97

In October, 1833 the trustees of the Eden chapel voted £40 to make improvements on the school, independently of its budget, but the record gives no specifics concerning the nature or the extent of the improvements. 98 By 1835, the number of scholars had dropped to about 600, perhaps the result of competing schools and the limited curriculum at the Wesleyan school. The report states that children were taught to read the Bible, with some emphasis on memorizing scripture and the catechism. It went on to boast that more than 213 children attended the library every Saturday evening to exchange books. The operating budget was even tighter, the rent having been lowered to £25, and the sum spent on books and printing was lower than that found in any previous report examined. The belt-tightening apparently
helped, since the debt was reduced. As a special inducement to potential contributors, the scholars sang hymns at the anniversary service.\textsuperscript{99} By the following year the debt was down to £13/17/10 1/4, still at least in part the result of continued austerity.\textsuperscript{100}

In the vicinity of Oakworth at a much earlier date, William Newshome, Jonas Sugden's maternal grandfather, was setting an example for the Methodists. An important stuff manufacturer and former head of Robert Raikes's Sunday School, Newsholme began a local school at a cottage, which was the beginning of the Sykes Head Sunday School. Around 1791 the number of scholars had reached the point that a new building was necessary to accommodate them. After a financial setback and an attempt to obtain unpaid volunteer teachers, the school closed briefly. When it reopened, Joseph Ramsden and John Sugden (father of Jonas) assumed the management of the school. Jonas Sugden attended there. During the first quarter of the century the school again outgrew its accommodations and so used another cottage, until in 1826 a new school was erected. The building cost £233 and took the name Sykes Head Wesleyan School. The building was again enlarged in 1845 to provide for a day school organized according to the Glasgow system. In 1850 the Wesleyan Education Committee gave the school an enthusiastic report.\textsuperscript{101}
Other schools existed around Oakworth. In 1829 the Wesleyans began a combined school and chapel at Pickles Hill. In the early nineteenth century at Vale Mill, the Methodists maintained preaching services and a Sunday School. When Jonas Sugden and his brothers acquired Vale Mill in 1844, they expanded the Sunday School at the same time as they were expanding the mill. Besides Sugden's interest in the school at Vale Mill, he also often visited the Sykes Head school and provided books as rewards for diligent scholars.

The minute book for the Hermit Hole Sunday School gives revealing glimpses of a small Sunday School on the Keighley circuit. In addition to some of the occasional misspellings in the minutes, four members of the committee had to sign by mark. Perhaps that is one reason they were so supportive of the school. The extent of the records indicate that the school was growing. In 1839 there were 173 scholars, 52 teachers, and the annual costs amounted to £13. Four years later there were 230 scholars, 69 teachers, 200 volumes in the library, and the annual cost of operation was £17. The minutes record frequent decisions to purchase books. Books considered acceptable included, among others, an account of the life of Adam Clarke, a biography of John Smith, the Penny Cyclopaedia, a Bible dictionary, and Aesop's Fables. The
committee also unanimously decided to replace copies of *The Spectator* and certain other "questionable" material with something more suitable.

The most explicit influence of Wesleyanism on the school was the decision to present each scholar with a medal commemorating the Wesleyan Centenary in 1839. Only in 1838 did the committee decide to discontinue the teaching of writing on Sunday. There is no indication of the Conference ruling, the only reason given being that "there is not sufficient room for writing in school hours." The committee decided to teach writing two nights a week. Here, then, is an example of the comparative independence of a local Wesleyan Sunday School. It seems likely, though, that denominational pressure influenced the final decision. Commonly accepted standards of discipline, not restricted to Methodists, were evident in the proposal to acquire rods for the school and the decision to start a "bad-boy" class.

There are hints of discontent, particularly in the 1840's. The minutes of September 11, 1843 show that 17 scholars had recently been expelled (the most ever expelled at one time) due to absenteeism. The committee blamed the problem on "a few political agitators," who had seduced several scholars to "a school in Keighley conducted on their own principles" (presumably the Owenite
school). According to the minutes, the majority of those who left wanted to be readmitted to the Wesleyan school after about six to seven weeks. Most of those were allowed to return. This and other instances of expulsions for absenteeism came after a curious decision to abrogate a previous rule which provided for fines for nonattendance. Such a rule certainly would have been difficult to enforce. While there were occasional references to teachers leaving the school, in 1846 the records indicate that several teachers were expelled in a fairly short period of time. One can only wonder if Wesleyan fear of radicalism may have been related to these seemingly untypical problems.

It would seem that the Wesleyan Sunday Schools in Keighley were following the trends for the nation. Having begun with less formal ties to Methodism, almost interdenominational in character, and initially charitable in purpose (though not without an explicitly religious function as well), they were becoming increasingly more denominational. Yet the increasing control was not without indications of a degree of independence, as was seen at Hermit Hole. Undoubtedly, the fact that the Keighley Sunday School was directly in the administrative center of the circuit made it more susceptible to ministerial authority than an outlying location such as
Hermit Hole. Of course, it would be a mistake to overemphasize Hermit Hole's independence, since indications of Wesleyan discipline are not absent. Throughout the circuit, Sunday Schools were increasing in number and sometimes growing as well, just as the circuit itself was growing during this period. However, discontent with Wesleyan conservatism and the growth of rival Sunday Schools (one, at least, based on more liberal principles) had begun to affect the Wesleyan schools, especially in the late 1830's and the 1840's. Also, as is evident in the Temple Row School in Keighley, Sunday Schools could be a drain on the society's finances.

Just as the Keighley circuit (from the earliest times when it was known as the Haworth Round) had experienced growth during the active ministry of Wesley, so it continued to grow after his death until 1850 and continued to be the source of new "daughter" circuits as well. Circuit finances became far more complex than previously, with numerous budgets in addition to the basic circuit operational budget, as societies grew and formalized their structure. The increase of chapel building in the nineteenth century contributed significantly to this trend. The pattern of circuit finances seems to have reflected the numerical increase of the circuit, not
surprisingly, except for certain periods where unusual expenditures result in considerable debt. In one case, during the 1790's, the debt coincides with a period of revival and rapid growth. In 1825 and 1826, and probably also during the early 1840's, a significant surplus balance in the circuit budget may be an indication of religious revival and an increase in membership. Significantly, periods of revival and rapid growth seem to coincide with times of economic hardship.

The crystallization of some institutions, combined with an openness to innovation, also characterizes this period of growth. Methodism was becoming more denominational, and, for the most part, the professional minister was assuming the role held earlier not only by the almost omnipresent Wesley, but also by other charismatic leaders of the earlier period. Even dedicated laypersons of the stature of Jonas Sugden, playing many, varied roles in the life of the circuit, seem to fit in best with the institutional Wesleyanism of the first half of the nineteenth century. Their wealth would have perhaps made them suspect in the eyes of Wesley.

Sugden was certainly not typical of the circuit members, either in his social status or his degree of commitment. But the improved status of the trustees in the nineteenth century suggests, at the very least, that
the circuit had a larger pool of persons of higher occupational status from which to choose its leaders. The status of the trustees, on the whole, equalled and often surpassed that of prominent people in the community who were nominated for public service. Definite signs of elitism existed, with rented pews and reserved seats at Sunday School anniversaries for those who contributed more. As elsewhere, the chapel communities in the Keighley circuit received social as well as spiritual nourishment from their affiliation with Methodism. The tendency to transform the charitable institution of the Sunday School into an institution to inculcate religion and virtue would be a natural outgrowth of other changes in the circuit. This tendency did not go unnoticed by some outside of Methodism.

What is noteworthy is that Wesleyanism maintained this fairly steady growth at the same time as various, competing non-Wesleyan Methodist sects were forming, draining some of the Methodists away from the original, larger Connexion. The most importance of these, especially in the Keighley area, was Primitive Methodism, which will form the central subject of the following chapter.
CIRCUIT FINANCE: 1972-1981

FIGURE 9

Income vs. Expenditure by Year

CIRCUIT INCOME: 1972-1981

FIGURE 8

Income vs. Year

266
FIGURE 10

WORSHIP PATTERNS: 1814-1849
NOTES

1 This procedure also avoided unnecessary, tedious calculations.

2 Ward, Religion and Society, pp. 97ff., 100.


4 From Accounts for Keighley, Lowertown, etc., 1841-1868, catalog number 105D77/1/3/5/1, Keighley Methodist Circuit Archives in the Keighley Central Library. The entries for the year 1842 are confusing, so the figure for that year is based on a probable reconstruction of the accounts.

5 From Keighley Circuit Trustees Quarterly Meeting Minutes, catalog number 105D77/2/21/15/b, Keighley Methodist Circuit Archives, Keighley Central Library.

6 Accounts for Steeton Seat Lets, catalog number 105D77/2/19/1/a, Keighley Methodist Circuit Archives, Keighley Central Library.

7 Keighley Chapel Accounts and Trust Minutes, catalog number 105D77/2/21/15/a, Keighley Methodist Circuit Archives, Keighley Central Library.


12 Gilbert, Religion and Society, p. 153. Myles, in his Chronological History, p. 199, gives some similar data for the end of the eighteenth century, with some
differences between his data and those of Gilbert. Myles' data are valuable in showing the increase in the number of preachers with families in the latter part of the eighteenth century.

13 Myles, Chronological History, p. 199.


15 Keighley Wesleyan Quarter Day Account Book, catalog number 105D77/1/3/1/d, Keighley Methodist Circuit Archives, Keighley Central Library.

16 Myles, Chronological History, pp. 202-203.


20 Currie, Methodism Divided, pp. 74-75, 80-82.


23 Myles, Chronological History, p. 200.


25 Currie, Methodism Divided, pp. 52-53.


27 This and subsequent information is from local preachers minutes.

28 Keighley, Keighley Past and Present, p. 128.


30 Hardy, Memorials, pp. 15-17 ff., 20 and Baines, Woolen Manufactures, p. 128.
31 Isaac Holden & Sons collection., Brotherton Library, University of Leeds, Box VI, bundles 9, 10 and Box VII, bundle 1, and Isaac Holden and Sons, Ltd. collection, Bradford University Library, envelope 52.

32 Hardy, Memorials, pp. 23-24, 26, 87, 88, 91, 92.


34 Dewhirst, History of Keighley, pp. 58-59. Dewhirst considers Sugden more enlightened and humane than most factory owners, whose rules were primarily related to discipline of time and work.

35 Local preachers minutes.

36 Hardy, Memorials, pp. 128-129, 133, 153, 164-165, and local preachers minutes.

37 Hempton, Methodism and Politics, pp. 60-61.

38 Keighley, Keighley Past and Present, pp. 139-140.

39 Halevy, Birth of Methodism, p. 46.


41 Keighley Chapel Trustees Accounts and Minutes.

42 From transcripts of trust deeds of Laycock, Morton Banks, and Hainworth chapels, catalog number 105D77/1/3/12/a, Keighley Methodist Circuit Archives, Keighley Central Library, confirmed where possible from records at the County Records Office at Wakefield. Information on trustees for the Oakworth chapel and burial grounds came from Tibbetts, Oakworth Methodism.


44 Gilbert, Religion and Society, p. 63.

45 Hempton, Methodism and Politics, p. 234.

46 Semmel, Methodist Revolution, p. 143.

Sunderland, MS History of Methodism in Keighley.


Gilbert, Religion and Society, p. 159.


Hardy, Memorials, p. 41


Holden Collection, Brotherton Library, University of Leeds, box VII, bundle 1.

Carwardine, Transatlantic Revivalism, pp. 120, 126.


Tibbetts, Oakworth Methodism, and Simpson, Cyclopedia of Methodism.

Rules for Prayer Meetings (Keighley, n.d.), catalog number 74 D83/9/2/14, local archives, Bradford Central Library.

It is probably difficult for most twentieth-century persons (even Methodists) to fully comprehend the character of the class meetings. The closest modern counterpart to them would most likely be the "cell groups" especially associated with certain charismatic sects.

Hermit Hole and Wesley Place Class book, 1846-1851, catalog number 105D77/2/9/1/b, Keighley Methodist Circuit Archives, Keighley Central Library, especially pp. 3ff. The front page bears the title, A Class-book; Containing Directions For Class-Leaders, Ruled


63 Local preachers minutes.

64 Select Vestry minutes.

65 Church, More About the Early Methodist People, p. 230. For a description of a love feast see Simpson, *Cyclopedia of Methodism*.

66 Horton Davies, Worship and Theology in England, vol. 1, From Watts and Wesley to Maurice, 1690-1850 (Princeton, 1961), pp. 197, 200-201. Church, in More About the Early Methodist People, p. 241 (published in 1949), writes that "until recent years the annual Conference love-feast was retained and was often the occasion of great blessing." Of course, the celebration is only annual, and he makes no mention of love feasts at the circuit level.

67 Keighley circuit preaching plans, catalog number 105D77/1/3/1/a, Keighley Methodist Circuit Archives, Keighley Central Library.


71 Ibid, pp. 19, 61, 94, 123, 239.

72 Malmgreen, "Economy and Culture," pp. 299-300.


74 Local preachers minutes.

75 "History of Wesleyan Methodism in Keighley."

77 Ward, Religion and Society, pp. 139-140.
78 Laqueur, Religion and Respectability, p. 146.
79 Trustees minutes.
80 Laqueur, Religion and Respectability, pp. 128, 181-182.
81 Trustees minutes.
83 Laqueur, Religion and Respectability, pp. 67, 72.
84 Dewhirst, History of Keighley, pp. 11-12, 17-19.
Especially in pp. 49-61, Dewhirst gives a graphic, blood-chilling account of crime, squalor, and other social evils in midcentury Keighley.
85 This and subsequent information is from the Time Register and the Register of Workers in the Brigg Collection.
86 If "date left" was not filled in, I interpret that to mean that the employee was still there at the time of the record. If it was completed with the note, "full-time," "above age," or "beyond age," I also interpret that to mean that the individual was still there. If under the date left there was no date given, but a number that appeared to be an age (eg. 16), I interpret that to mean that the person left the factory at age 16.
87 Laqueur, Religion and Respectability, p. 29. He cites Thomas Whitehead, History of the Dales Congregational Churches (Keighley, 1930).
88 Laycock, Methodist Heroes, p. 141.
89 Keighley, Keighley Past and Present, pp. 181-183, and "History of Wesleyan Methodism in Keighley."
90 Rules for the Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School, Keighley (Keighley, n.d.), catalog number 74 D83/9/2/15, local archives, Bradford Central Library.
91 Ibid, pp. 3-6.
92 Ibid, pp. 5, 8-10.
93 Ibid, p. 10.
94 Ibid, pp. 11-12.
95 The Seventh Annual Report of the Committee of the Sunday School, Temple=Row, Keighley for Children of All Denominations (Bradford, 1818), catalog number 74D83/9/2/1, local archives, Bradford Central Library, pp. 6, 8-10, 12.
96 The Tenth Annual Report...from March 1st, 1820, to March 1st, 1821 (Keighley, 1821), catalog number 25/1, local collection, Keighley Central Library, pp. 7, 9.
98 Trustees minutes.
100 Hymns to be Sung by the Children on Whit-Sunday, May 22nd, 1836, when Three Sermons Will be preached in the Wesleyan Chapel (Keighley, n.d.), catalog number 74D83/9/2/6, local archives, Bradford Central Library, p. 7.
101 Tibbetts, Oakworth Methodism.
102 Ibid.
103 Hardy, Memorials, pp.155-156.
104 Subsequent material is taken from the Hermit Hole Sunday School Minute Book, catalog number 105D77/2/9/1/b, Keighley Methodist Circuit Archives, Keighley Central Library.
The tendency of Methodists to divide after the death of Wesley is one of the most notable aspects of the entire movement. Considering that Wesley had never intended the Methodists to be an independent sect at all, this tendency is all the more remarkable. Certainly the strong emphasis during the early years on rigid discipline, with simplicity of life style being one aspect of that discipline, made disruption almost inevitable when the original body began to depart from its earlier ideals.

Robert Currie detects two conflicting forces pervading Methodism during its first 100 years: the ideal of Christian perfection, which was usually allied with the authoritarianism of either Wesley himself or the ministerial leadership after his death, and the ideal of religious democracy which motivated the formation of various reform Methodist sects. Actually, the situation was not a simple dichotomy, since the early "democratic" elements within the major Wesleyan body were not so much in opposition to the Conference and itinerant preachers as
they were opposed to any potential tyranny by the wealthier trustees. While Wesley himself loathed the term "democracy," religious or otherwise, he was quite anxious to limit the power of the trustees, even though he did so by consolidating governing power in the hands of the Conference. Moderate "democratic" leaders, such as Samuel Bradburn and Henry Moore, who were anxious to speak in behalf of the "people" against the trustees, had their place within the Connexion, while uncompromising exponents of a more radical egalitarianism within Methodism, such as Alexander Kilham, were forced out.²

Disputes over religious polity were only part of the motivation behind secession from the Wesleyan Connexion. As the social structure of Wesleyanism throughout the nation changed, or at least as the movement became more socially respectable than in its earliest years, modes of worship and evangelism became significantly more subdued. David Hempton believes that during the first two decades of the nineteenth century the Wesleyan Connexion was engaged in a purging process, eliminating elements associated with popular social radicalism and emotional, revivalistic evangelism and worship. By 1820 this process was largely completed, but one of the results was that the Wesleyan Connexion was largely out of touch with the working classes,³ a generalization which does not seem to
be entirely true for the Keighley circuit.

Examining national trends for various Methodist sects, Alan Gilbert notes a correlation between increasing institutionalization and slower membership growth. He notes that those groups that resisted institutionalization the longest experienced more rapid rates of growth than the parent Connexion, until the trend toward institutionalization inevitably set in. According to W. R. Ward, one manifestation of this institutionalization within the Wesleyan Connexion was the change in the ministry "from an old-style itinerancy to the sham church-based itinerancy they have [since] maintained." Ward does not elaborate on the phrase "sham... itinerancy," which may cause initial confusion, since the Wesleyans in theory did not change their policy of itineracy, even though, in practice, influence undoubtedly played a role when preachers were assigned. The phenomenon he is describing is undoubtedly the same cited by E. P. Stigent, for which radicals criticized the Wesleyan ministry: namely, that they jockeyed for more prosperous circuits, and those who remained in the good graces of Conference received more desirable appointments.

Of course, it would be a mistake simply to treat all of the various Methodist sects as if they were completely the same. Currie divides the non-Wesleyan Methodist
denominations into two categories: offshoots and secessions. The offshoots, including primarily the Primitive Methodists and the Bible Christians, were revivalistic and separated from the Wesleyans on very visible issues. While they were more evangelistic, they were also more concentrated in certain localities. Currie's category of "secessionists" included the New Connexion, the Protestant Methodists, the Wesleyan Methodist Association, and the "Wesleyan Reformers." These separated from the parent body largely on issues relating to ecclesiastical power politics, and they did not proselytize as much as the offshoots. Their separation had been mainly the result of the efforts of officials, rather than of lay persons interested in revivalism.7

References to the latter group in the immediate vicinity of Keighley are sparse. From 1797 there was a New Connexion group in Denholme.8 In 1815 "one or two members" of the Wesleyan society in Keighley seceded and joined the New Connexion, building Providence chapel under the auspices of that group. Halifax and Colne supplied preachers for the small society, and it lasted until 1842 when it broke up. The Protestant Methodists originally seceded from the Wesleyans over a dispute regarding the attempt of Conference to force an organ upon a
congregation at Leeds. In 1828 a Wesleyan local preacher left the Connexion and organized a society of Protestant Methodists at Keighley, and they built a chapel on Sun Street. In 1835 another group of people left the Wesleyans and combined with the Protestant Methodists to form the Wesleyan Association. During the first half of the nineteenth century, Currie's secessionist Methodists were scarcely a numerous or important group in Keighley, possibly a reflection of the relatively good relations between the Wesleyan ministers and the lay leadership of the circuit.

Of the offshoot category, the Primitive Methodists were the only group to enjoy any success in Keighley. A great deal has been written about this group, which Hobsbawm describes "as primarily a sect of trade union cadres." According to him, the Primitive Methodists were unable to thrive in substantial industrial towns (presumably such as Bradford) but tended to attract the "village labour" classes. Perhaps here, as with Greaves' geographical study, the term "village" does not quite seem to fit Keighley, which was developing in the first half of the nineteenth century and which, even when compared with such important textile manufacturing centers as Huddersfield and Halifax, was a significant manufacturing town.
In an attempt to modify the commonly held conception that the Primitives inherited the early Methodist's influence over the working class, C. D. Field points out that most nineteenth-century Primitives were manual laborers but were certainly not all poor, since significant financial support, such as for chapels, had to come from somewhere. It is likely that the connection between Primitive Methodism and labour activism has been exaggerated. In fact, even though Hobsbawm emphatically asserts an indirect connection, he admits that the organization and doctrines of the Primitives would provide no clue to any link, direct or otherwise.

Organizationally, the Primitive Methodists were influenced by the "radical" democratic element exhibited in earlier secessionist groups, such as the New Connexion, in their struggle against the authoritarianism of the Conference. In this regard, the Primitive Methodists protected lay rights by having two lay representatives for every minister at their Conference. But the distinguishing characteristic of Primitive Methodists was their camp meetings. Under the influence of an American revivalist preacher, Lorenzo Dow, Hugh Bourne began holding camp meetings. The result was his expulsion from the Wesleyan Connexion, so shortly thereafter he formed a group called the Camp-Meeting Methodists. In 1811 his
group united with others associated with William Clowes to form the Primitive Methodist Church. 14

The early Primitive Methodists associated with Bourne's first camp meetings were definitely not politically radical, according to W. R. Ward. To the question why the Wesleyan Conference expelled Bourne, Clowes, and others, Ward answers that the revivalists showed the weaknesses of Wesleyan formalism. Yet some of the eccentricities surrounding these and similar groups hardly compare favorably with most of the usages of established Wesleyanism. One of Bourne's preachers, James Crawford, headed a group known as the Magic Methodists, whose unique contribution to worship was their emphasis on trances. It is hardly surprising that mainstream Wesleyans sometimes accused Primitive Methodist exorcists of witchcraft. 15

The more bizarre manifestations of Ranter supernaturalism were comparatively peripheral to Primitive Methodism. Revivalism and camp meetings were central. Hobsbawm suggests that the insecure social and economic position of so many manual laborers made them receptive to the appeal of emotionally vigorous worship. Revivalistic religion was, then, as Marx has suggested, an "opiate." The ideas of hellfire as the destiny of the prosperous and worldly and the possibility of sudden, cathartic
conversions were comforting to hearers; fervent worship could also provide exciting diversion. Hobsbawm further asserts that this may well account for the fact that the Primitive Methodists experienced their most rapid growth during the socially and economically turbulent years of quick growth in industrial manufacturing during the first half of the century. It is interesting that he goes on to maintain that their penetration in the West Riding was limited because of the degree to which mainstream Wesleyanism had already pervaded the region. But this does not take fully into account the fact that Primitive Methodism was not merely a supplementary movement but was also, at least in part, challenging alleged weaknesses of the parent body.

Compared to those of the Wesleyan circuit, records for the Primitive Methodists in the Keighley area are scarce, in part because they were fewer in number and less important, partly because many records certainly have not survived, and also because the Keighley Primitive Methodist circuit only became an independent circuit in 1824. Just as the Keighley Wesleyan circuit had given birth to a number of others in the Wesleyan Connexion, so the Keighley Primitive Methodists were a daughter circuit of the originally larger Sunderland circuit, which had only been formed in 1819. After the second decade of
the century, the Keighley-vicinity Primitive Methodists made noticeable progress. Sometime between 1821 and 1831 they built a chapel on Sun Street, and in 1832 another society in the Oakworth area built a chapel at Lane Ends. On April 16, 1837 the Primitives in Keighley laid the foundation stone for a new chapel at Queen Street. A list of the preaching locations in the Keighley Primitive Methodist circuit on May 14, 1836 included Keighley, Morton Banks, Farnhill, Rycroft, Cullingworth, Oldfield, Haworth, East Morton, Lane Ends, Bingley, and Denholme Clough. Although the geographic area included was larger than that of the Keighley Wesleyan Circuit, the list is fairly impressive, considering the fact that the circuit was quite young.

The nature of the Primitive Methodist circuit records is such that no significant statistical evidence exists, although an impressionistic portrait of the character of Primitive Methodism in the Keighley circuit can be drawn. The finances of the circuit were precarious, subject to the fluctuating economic conditions of the area. In November, 1830 the circuit experienced severe economic difficulties, and the debt rose to £19/13/9. They appealed to fellow Primitives in the Bradford and Halifax circuits for financial aid, as well as for preachers. Records of quarterly circuit income survive for the
following periods: 21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December, 1835</td>
<td>£28/07/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March, 1836</td>
<td>£35/17/4 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June, 1836</td>
<td>£34/05/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September, 1836</td>
<td>£37/12/5 1/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December, 1836</td>
<td>£37/05/3 1/4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the scope of the data is insufficient for any systematic analysis, the small size of the budget, in contrast to that of the Wesleyans, is obvious. Interestingly, during this period, the financial situation of the circuit improved from what it had been earlier, each of those quarters showing a surplus balance. In December, 1835 the surplus balance was £6/2/7 1/2. The entry for March, 1836 noted "That the Circuit is in a prosperous state," the balance being £9/1/1 1/2 that quarter. The surplus balances for June, September, and December of 1836 were £11/4/7, £10/14/10 1/4, and £12/6/0 3/4 respectively.

The pattern of alternating debt and surplus characterizes the existing records. In the summer of 1838, circuit officials attributed the "sinking [financial] state" of the circuit to "the depression of Trade." There is an interesting notation in the board meeting minutes for September of that year, "That notwithstanding there is a Debt we Report none to the General Committee [sic]." The almost naive openness of the minutes regarding this subterfuge is remarkable. By
March, 1840 it was noted "that the Circuit is in a prosperous state," though no figures survive in the circuit records. While the previous financial difficulty had been attributed to the general economic situation, the board interpreted this brief prosperity as the result of prayer, "united effort," and "the blessing of God." It was short-lived, though, since the financial situation in September, 1840 was so dismal that the circuit decided not to file an official report and ordered that quarter day delegates for the next meeting were to take tea in private homes in the town in order to keep down expenses. A circuit committee meeting on February 12, 1842 ordered that a letter be sent to the Book Steward (apparently a Connexional official), explaining that the circuit was unable to pay its preachers' salaries, let alone its debt to the Book Steward, and that that was why it was not even sending in a statement of its accounts. In March, the societies at Sutton and Morton Banks were in a bad way financially, and the circuit recommended that preaching at Sutton be reduced. The society at Keighley was also not doing well, though a few of the societies in the circuit were "prosperous" and others were at least stable. Continued problems are evident in the order dated December, 1842, instructing the Steward to make up the deficiency in the preacher's salary. The situation
throughout this period reveals not only financial adversity but clear evidence of mismanagement, as seen in the unwillingness of the circuit to report its indebtedness to Connexional authorities.

Even though there are many examples of nonstandard spelling in the Wesleyan records during this period, the difference between those of the Wesleyans and those of the Primitives in this regard is so sharp as to clearly suggest a much lower degree of literacy for the leaders of the Keighley Primitive Methodist circuit. Examples from the Queen Street trustees minute book, such as "perfily satiesfied" and "the hole of the money" are fairly typical of the Primitive Methodist circuit records. Whenever a candidate for the circuit superintendency came under consideration, his "qualifications" for the office were discussed, most of which were so quaint as to be trivial. For example, in their mention of the fact that Brother Lee adhered to the rules (especially those regarding dress), the circuit board seemed to attach some significance to the fact that he "wears his hair in its natural form." Their observation about his indebtedness is less surprising. Although the minutes frequently observed whether a candidate smoked tobacco, that fact was not in itself determinative. The most complete--and seemingly applicable--list of qualifications given were those of
Brother Tillotson, who was attentive to discipline, who did not smoke, who visited families, and who was peaceble, active in converting sinners, preached "a full, present, and free Salvation"—and significantly, did not preach long sermons.22

Although some of the instruction and discipline of the local preachers was as trivial as the mandate that they wear single-breasted coats and white handkerchiefs, discipline often dealt with more serious matters of performance or morals. Just as in the meetings of the Wesleyan local preachers, the disciplining of those preachers who missed their appointments was an important part of the business of the meeting. Moving a preacher's name down on the plan (thus to a position of reduced status) was the most common form of discipline for infractions of this nature, though a preacher might be forgiven for a first offense or if there were mitigating circumstances. Theoretically, the penalty was to lower the preacher one number on the circuit plan for the first offense, to place him on probation for the second, and to exclude him from the plan for the third, but this policy was not consistently enforced. For example, one preacher was lowered two positions on the plan, though the minutes did not specify the precise nature of his offense. Provided a preacher kept all of his appointments
diligently for a year after being lowered in position, he could regain his previous status. The circuit committee of preachers even made provision for the use of a substitute preacher from another denomination, provided he be approved first.23

Just as Brother Tillotson, the superintendent, had been commended for not being long-winded, those who indulged in long preaching were censured, which may seem surprising for a revivalist sect. This perhaps reflects the concerns of the laity as opposed to those of the ministers, but it also bears some resemblance to the Wesleyan concern for orderly worship. The necessity of confidentiality of business meetings was so obvious to the preachers and leaders that anyone who violated it would lose his seat in any official meeting for a year. A candidate for preacher could of course be rejected if there was some question about his doctrinal position, and personal financial integrity was crucial; one member, James Fetherington, was not only suspended from office but even from membership until he satisfactorily settled his finances. A preacher, Thomas Lester, "not haveing [sic] paid for a watch," was officially charged with indolence, and his subsequent attitude to the official committee was shockingly insolent, Lester having made an uncomplimentary comparison of one of his colleagues to the devil. At
least two persons with the office of either preacher or leader (the reference is not specific) were excluded from the circuit for drunkenness, and Thomas Abbott, apparently a local preacher, was excluded for attempting suicide.  

The Primitive Methodists retained most of the worship institutions of the Wesleyan Methodists, including both the emphasis on the sacraments and the love feasts. Furthermore, the centralization of these institutions in the hands of the circuit officials was carried over from the Wesleyan Connexion. The minutes of the quarterly meeting insist that the planning of sacraments and love feasts be solely carried out by the plan makers. The plan organizers themselves, however, were not always efficient. The name of one local preacher had to be removed from the official plan when the circuit leaders realized that he was not even a member. Perhaps the financial difficulty of some of the members is reflected in the need to remind the class leaders to enforce the weekly contribution from the members of the classes, a practice which Wesley himself had instituted.

The construction of Primitive Methodist chapels in the Keighley circuit effected a complexity in the organization. The Primitive Methodists in Keighley did not hesitate to follow the Wesleyan example of charging pew rents. In 1839, the trustees hired singers for the
chapel, and the organist received a stipend. In fact, to help pay for the expenses of the organ, a representative of the Temperance Society was invited to speak at the chapel. The circuit leaders seem to have had some sympathy with the aims of the Temperance Society, since they would not let just anyone speak at a Primitive Methodist chapel. They flatly refused to let the "Antinomians" use the Primitive Methodist chapel at Mill Hey.

The Primitive Methodist circuit operated Sunday Schools, though not much information is available concerning them. The records specifically mention Primitive Methodist Sunday Schools at Sutton, Keighley, and Fell Lane. It would seem that the Primitive Methodists inherited the Wesleyan Sabbatarian scruples, since a board meeting arranged for the Keighley Sunday School to use the chapel building on Thursday evenings to teach writing.27

The institution unique to the Primitive Methodists was the camp meeting. While the connection with American revivalistic camp meetings was evident, Primitive Methodists could see the origins of the practice in the field preaching of John Wesley. In fact, the distinction between field preaching and regular camp meetings in the Primitive Methodist records is not always clear.28
Hobsbawm and Wearmouth, in particular, have noted the connection between Primitive Methodist camp meetings and those held by Chartists, but the connection was probably indirect.

That local contemporaries did not see any direct connection between Primitive Methodist camp meetings and radical activism is evident in an incident occurring near Keighley in August, 1842, at a time when local Chartist disturbances were in the news. Strikes and unrest had caused considerable consternation—even panic—among many of the people. On Sunday, August 21, local messengers brought a report that several thousand Chartists were meeting together at Lees Moor, about four miles away from the town. Someone rang the fire bell; the town magistrates met together and assembled the local cavalry, and people vacated churches and chapels to help out. Everyone seemed relieved to discover that the source of the "disturbance" was a group of Primitive Methodists holding a camp meeting.\(^29\) No one seemed to see any social or political threat in the religious gathering.

The idea that Primitive Methodism served as a training ground for Chartists, promulgated particularly by Hobsbawm, seems to rely primarily on accounts of individual Chartists who had been Primitive Methodists. M. S. Edwards notes that the Primitive Methodists and the
New Connexion contributed more Chartists than any other Methodist sect, although the Connexional leaders of all Methodist sects were as hostile to Chartism as were the Wesleyan leaders. He argues that unemployed workers—sometimes local preachers—might become involved in Chartist activism in disregard of the rules of the Connexional officials against involvement in politics. Primitive Methodist circuit officials in Keighley seemed sensitive to the implications of radicalism. In April, 1848 a circuit committee recommended to the Primitive Methodists in Rycroft that they convene their regular camp meeting in the chapel, "in consequence of the present excitement in the country." Perhaps the memory of the incident of August, 1842 lingered in their minds.

In many ways, Primitive Methodism in Keighley resembled its parent Connexion, not surprising given their common heritage. A much smaller group, and younger, the Primitive Methodist circuit was much less developed than the Keighley Wesleyan circuit. The records seem to indicate a less literate leadership than that of the Wesleyans, not surprising if the common assumptions about the occupational status of most Primitive Methodists are correct. While the camp meetings of the Primitive Methodists were an institutionalized manifestation of revivalistic fervor, the Wesleyan circuit was not immune
to outbreaks of revivalism throughout the first half of
the nineteenth century, as seen in the correspondence of
Jonas Sugden. Ultimately the construction of Primitive
Methodist chapels brought fund-raising lectures, paid
musicians, and the pew rents which Wesley had
deplored—all steps in the direction of increasing
respectability. The meager references to Primitive
Methodist Sunday Schools suggests a similar emphasis to
that of the Wesleyans. There was certainly no official
indication of political radicalism among the Primitive
Methodists, any more than there was among the Wesleyans,
nor did contemporaries view the Primitive Methodists as
politically oriented at all, let alone radical.

During most of the period considered here, the growth
of the Primitive Methodists in Keighley did not cause any
real decline in the numbers of the Wesleyans, although one
could certainly speculate that it may have slowed down the
growth rate of the Wesleyan circuit from what it might
have been. By the end of the period, the Wesleyans
throughout England were in a precarious position, as the
result of the cumulative effect of past and of new
secessions.32
NOTES

1 Currie, _Methodism Divided_, pp. 80-82.
2 Semmel, _Methodist Revolution_, pp. 113-114.
3 Hempton, _Methodism and Politics_, p. 227.
5 Ward, _Religion and Society_, p. 104.
7 Currie, _Methodism Divided_, pp. 54 ff.
8 Wallace, "Religion and Society," pp. 194-195. He uses birth records from this group between 1797 and 1801 in an occupational analysis, though the records gave only 33 occupations. At this time the Wesleyan society at Denholme was part of the Keighley Wesleyan circuit.
12 Hobsbawm, _Primitive Rebels_, p. 139.

16 Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels, pp. 131, 134, 136-137.


18 Keighley, Keighley Past and Present, p. 201; Tibbetts, Oakworth Methodism; and the minute book of the Queen Street Chapel trustees, catalog number 105D77/2/17/1/a, Keighley Methodist Circuit Archives, Keighley Central Library.

19 Primitive Methodist Minutes, 1835-1844, catalog number 105D77/1/1/1/c, Keighley Methodist Circuit Archives, Keighley Central Library.

20 Primitive Methodist Cash Book, 1829, catalog number 105D77/1/1/1/a, Keighley Methodist Circuit Archives, Keighley Central Library. In comparison to the figures for the Wesleyan circuit in chapter 4, the debt does not seem very serious. The total budget for the Primitive Methodist circuit was significantly small, making the debt a considerable problem.

21 This and subsequent financial data is from the Primitive Methodist Minutes, 1835-1844.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid and Quarterly Meeting and Committee Book, 1844-1855, catalog number 105D77/1/1/1/d, Keighley Methodist Circuit Archives, Keighley Central Library.


26 Primitive Methodist Minutes, Queen Street Trustees Minute Book, and Quarterly Meeting and Committee Book.

27 Quarterly Meeting and Committee Book. Another meeting resolved to send petitions to Parliament regarding drinking on Sunday.

28 Primitive Methodist Cash Book, 1829.


31 Quarterly Meeting and Committee Book.

32 For the impact of the 1849 disruptions, see Hempton, Methodism and Politics, p. 202.
CONCLUSION

The place of the Keighley Wesleyan circuit among those in Yorkshire is more important than the size of the town would indicate. The comparative wealth of the circuit archives, despite numerous gaps and some inaccuracies in the records, also make it an excellent case study for the origins and development of Methodism in a West Riding textile-manufacturing town. The statistical evidence is sufficient for a cautious analysis, and minutes of various circuit and local meetings, along with other local sources, present a portrait of the character of the circuit and some of its institutions.

Even prior to the advent of Methodism in Yorkshire, the spread of evangelical religion had begun there. Through the preaching of the Moravian-inspired Benjamin Ingham, evangelicalism had appeared as early as 1737. Although the cooperation between John Nelson, one of Wesley's most trusted assistants, and Ingham was short-lived, Ingham helped to lay the foundation upon which the Wesleyans subsequently built. Ingham's own
societies did not take root, but the more disciplined Wesleyans gained a secure foothold in the region.

The story of the origins of the Keighley Wesleyan circuit would hardly be complete without the Reverend William Grimshaw, the evangelical curate at Haworth. While Grimshaw's initial evangelistic efforts were independent of Methodism, as were those of the Scottish lay evangelist William Darney, both men eventually joined forces with Wesley. Wesley was quick to utilize the cooperation of a fellow Anglican minister, and Grimshaw had a degree of control over the extensive Haworth Round that very few others exercised over a circuit during Wesley's lifetime. Grimshaw served the Round as evangelist, pastor (under Wesley), and overseer of the Round's financial affairs.

Even during Grimshaw's lifetime, when Haworth was the administrative center of the Round, the growing society at Keighley was becoming an important element in the Round. Not only the size of the town, but also the size of the Wesleyan society there made the shift of power from Haworth to Keighley predictable after Grimshaw's death. Wesley's personal references to the Keighley Methodists reveal a good working relationship between Wesley and the society, at a time when some of the societies in the
region were resisting his authority to some degree. Wesley, the administrator par excellence, gave a solid and lasting organization to the foundation which others—notably Ingham, Nelson, Darney, and Grimshaw—had laid, and he was not hesitant to involve himself directly in local affairs when he deemed it advisable.

Substantial occupational data for the circuit in 1763 gives an informative view of the kind of people most receptive to Wesley's message. Persons engaged in the production of woolen cloth, especially spinners and weavers, made up the majority of those whose occupations are known. Other types of artisans were also comparatively numerous, as were (perhaps surprisingly) persons engaged in agriculture. While the total occupational spectrum of the Methodists in the circuit was quite broad, the percentage of those at either extreme was small—particularly at the upper extreme. The proportion of those who may be classified as common laborers was 7.2%. The persons composing the Keighley Methodist circuit were not the dregs of English society. A sample taken from the immediate vicinity of the town of Keighley—including Keighley, Holme House, and Haworth—reveals practically the same pattern as the circuit as a whole. The proportion of agricultural
occupations in the local sample was slightly smaller, not too surprising since the local area would have had a higher population density than the entire circuit, which included rural areas. The Methodist system of discipline—notably the class meeting—required that Methodists come together in groups quite frequently. This would have been best facilitated among the textile workers and artisans, rather than among farmers and agricultural laborers in the more remote rural settings. Surviving information about the trustees during the formative period (up to Wesley's death) reveals a much higher percentage of farmers among the trustees than that of the general membership. Eight out of a total of 17 trustees were farmers.

During the formative period of the circuit, the conditions in which Methodism thrived seems to have varied, though numerous gaps in the circuit data make generalizations inconclusive. The economic situation of the spinners and weavers was very much tied to the growth or decline of textile manufacturing, but the worst times for this group were yet to come. Many artisans, finishers, clothiers, and dyers in the circuit may well have been individuals in rising circumstances. On the whole, Thompson's characterization of Methodism as the
"chiliasm of despair" does not seem especially applicable to this early period.

Economic factors were evidently not the only influential factors during the formation and early growth of the Keighley circuit. In addition to Grimshaw, Wesley, and his itinerant preachers, committed local laymen, such as the fairly prosperous grocer Thomas Colbeck, carried on much of the work, often preaching when they were not engaged in their trades. Methodism's contradictory relationship with the Anglican Church is illustrated by the leadership of Anglican ministers such as the Wesley brothers and Grimshaw on the one hand, and the scorn, even persecution, at the hands of Anglican officials on the other. While the social and religious geographer, Brian Greaves, notes that Yorkshire Methodism often prospered in areas more remote from the parish church, physical distance from the church is not applicable in the vicinity of Keighley and Haworth. Alan Gilbert has noted that the growth of Methodism was also aided by lay concern over those Anglican clergy who were spiritually distant from a vibrant piety. A unique factor within the early Haworth Round, then, was the cooperation of Grimshaw and his immediate successor to the Haworth curacy. While it would be a serious error to overemphasize Grimshaw's
contribution, it would seem that the Anglican curate was an important catalyst in the growth of Wesleyanism in that region—an important exception to the findings of Greaves and Gilbert.

Another indication that conversion to Methodism was not necessarily the response of desperate men and women survives in sermon material, not only from Wesley's preaching but also that of other Methodist preachers in the area. References to judgment and damnation were obviously not absent. But instead of being solely or even primarily a theology of fear, Wesleyanism emphasized a tender appeal, often affirming, comforting, and optimistic—especially to those who responded. Methodist popular theology (including that of Wesley himself) gives evidence of a creative tension between the idea of a sovereign God and that of human responsibility, a tension which pervaded more than just Methodist soteriology. Following the lead of their founder, Methodists detected the judgment of a righteous God in periods of economic adversity, just as they did in natural disasters, but they did not ignore the role of the mismanagement of men.

From the death of Wesley to the middle of the nineteenth century, the Keighley Wesleyan circuit experienced almost constant growth, a growth which often
led to the formation of daughter circuits. As the geographic area of the surviving Keighley circuit dwindled, the number of members continued to increase. The most pronounced growth in membership occurred during the Yorkshire-wide revival in the 1790's and also in 1825-1826, which was the culmination of a period of local revival. In each of these periods, the growth coincided with economic adversity in the region, with the peak of growth in 1825-1826 occurring during a time of social unrest as well. An unusual financial prosperity for the circuit in 1842, similar to that of 1825-1826, coupled with the decision to station a third minister there, probably indicates significant membership growth, despite the lack of membership data in the circuit archives for that year. Significantly, that was also a year of considerable labor unrest, Chartist activity, and strikes. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, the circuit showed a significant net growth in its membership, although there were occasional, brief periods of decline, which do not seem to coincide with any particular set of economic conditions.

While historians such as John Baxter and E. P. Stigent have used regional studies to verify the oscillation thesis of E. P. Thompson, the evidence for the
Keighley circuit contradicts it. The periods of maximum growth in members in the first half of the nineteenth century occurred at the same time as periods of radical activity, rather than after radical activism had died down. Also, though historians Alan Gilbert, Lee Horsley, and Robert Currie maintain that economic adversity was detrimental to the growth of evangelical religion, it did not have that effect in the Keighley circuit. Neither did membership grow because there was no parish church. In fact, by midcentury the number of Methodists in Keighley had surpassed the number of Anglicans, according to the religious census of 1851.

The circuit was in debt more often than not. Although the leaders made constant efforts to keep the financial situation under control, on occasion the debt skyrocketed. In fact, the only periods when the circuit budget showed a significant surplus was in 1825-1826 and in 1842, an unusual pattern, considering the fact that those were periods of social and economic instability in the vicinity. The link between the comparative financial prosperity for the circuit then and increased membership seems certain. The financial situation of the circuit, however, was degenerating noticeably in the latter part of the 1840's, paralleling hard times in the community. This
was also the period immediately preceding a serious nationwide rupture in the Connexion, which brought with it irreparable losses to Wesleyan Methodism. The upshot is that while economic adversity and social discontent did not necessarily cause rapid growth in the circuit, they invariably were present during the most prominent periods of growth. On the other hand, economic hardship and even radical activity did not always result in spurts of growth in the circuit membership. They seem to have been necessary but not sufficient causal factors, thus indicating that many different forces were undoubtedly at work—not merely social and economic ones.

The rapid increase in the number of chapels in the circuit during this period reflects both numerical and institutional growth. Data concerning the trustees show them to be from a higher socioeconomic level than Wesleyan trustees in the eighteenth century and, on the whole, more prosperous than an extensive sample of nominees for town leadership during the late 1840's. The respectability and influence of the Wesleyan circuit is most prominent in the career of the dedicated local preacher, trustee, and class leader Jonas Sugden, who was a prosperous worsted manufacturer and active in community affairs. While Sugden was not a typical Keighley-area Methodist, his
career is noteworthy.

The worship practices of the Keighley Wesleyans underwent a change during this period, manifesting a remarkable diversity, a diversity which may well have contributed to Methodism's broad appeal and consequential growth. On the one hand, we find that the circuit was institutionalizing sacramental forms of worship and was emphasizing order in its worship and evangelism, all of which reflect the "church" aspect of Wesleyan Methodism. On the other hand, Keighley Wesleyans did not discard the sect-oriented ordinances which Wesley had instituted in the earliest Methodist societies. To supplement these, Methodist revivals in the circuit, as elsewhere in Yorkshire, saw the adoption of innovative evangelistic techniques brought to England by American revivalist preachers. What is surprising is that the circuit managed to retain all of these seemingly contradictory elements.

Along with these changes came changes in the status and function of Methodism's most important charitable institution: the Sunday school. Wesleyan Sunday schools in the Keighley circuit, as elsewhere, became more strictly under the control of the denomination, and their purpose became more specifically the inculcation of religion. While a remote school such as the one at Hermit
Hole may have resisted these trends a bit more than the Keighley school in the circuit administrative center, the transformation ultimately prevailed. As Wesleyan Sunday schools performed a less practical function than earlier, as the result of the Conference's opposition to the teaching of writing on Sunday, they faced more competition from other, sometimes more liberal, Sunday schools. The irony of the situation is that the Wesleyans' success in evangelism seems to have dimmed their charitable vision.

During and after the 1820's, Primitive Methodism provided competition for Wesleyanism in the Keighley area. Though the Primitive Methodist circuit was younger, less numerous, and less developed than the Wesleyan circuit--with a less literate leadership--the similarities between the two branches of Methodism are evident as well. While camp meetings were an institutional form of revivalistic fervor among the Primitive Methodists, the Wesleyans were not unfamiliar with spontaneous outbreaks of revival. As Primitive Methodists built chapels, they also adopted pew rents, organ benefits, temperance lectures, and other indications of growing respectability. Also like the Wesleyans, the official records of the Primitive Methodist circuit give no evidence of radicalism, and their contemporaries did not view them as
radical. Until 1850, Primitive Methodists and the few secessionist groups in the Keighley area—New Connexion Methodists and Protestant Methodists—were unable seriously to challenge the strong position of Wesleyanism; they merely supplemented it. The years immediately following 1850 proved to be a turning point for the Wesleyans, and the former growth gave way to decline.
APPENDIX: FIGURE 11

MAP OF PORTIONS OF THE EARLY HAWORTH ROUND
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