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NOTES AND NEWS

THE Library has recently acquired a collection of fifty-three letters written by Maria Jane Jewsbury (1800-1833) to her sister Geraldine. They cover the years 1827 to 1833, although the greater part date from between 1827 and 1829, the time when Geraldine was a pupil at a boarding school near Tamworth. Today, the younger sister's work is better remembered, but in the late 1820s it was Maria Jane who had achieved popularity with her writing. Her verses and prose first appeared in newspapers and periodicals, later she contributed regularly to the *Athenaeum* and to the annuals of the period, as well as publishing four books. The earliest of these, *Phantasmagoria* (1825), was dedicated to Wordsworth and introduced her to the poet and his family. Invited to visit them at Rydal, she became a close friend of Dora Wordsworth. An exchange of letters with Mrs. Hemans led to Maria Jane spending several weeks in Wales at Rhyllon during the summer of 1828, and to a second important friendship. She dedicated *Lays of Leisure Hours* (1829) to Mrs. Hemans "in remembrance of the summer passed in her society," when many of the poems had been written. Her fourth book, *The Three Histories* (1830), is regarded as containing an idealized portrait of Mrs. Hemans, under the name Egeria.

LETTERS OF  
MARIA JANE  
JEWSBURY

The death of Mrs. Jewsbury in 1819, a year after the family had moved to Manchester, left Maria Jane, the eldest, to take

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charge of the household and care for her sister and four brothers. The letters to Geraldine reflect her sense of responsibility. They contain much advice, stressing the importance of education and self-discipline and the need to think of a future occupation, yet always showing kindness and concern for the younger girl's progress and well-being. Even so, they in no way echo the earnest style of *Letters to the Young*, published in 1828, which has been described as originally written for Geraldine's guidance. Writing from home, or from lodgings in Leamington or in the country, to which she had gone in the hope of restoring her health, Maria Jane never fails to give a lively account of her own activities, her writings and their publication, and news of friends and of their visits, including those from the Wordsworths and Mrs. Hemans. After a meeting with De Quincey on her way to the Lakes, she writes, "I do not think I ever enjoyed conversation so much, he is little, odd looking, perfectly calm, and unites more simplicity and urbanity than I ever saw."

In August 1832, she married William Kew Fletcher, a chaplain of the East India Company, and the following month sailed for India. She wrote sixteen letters to Geraldine between July 1832 and August of the following year, detailing her preparations for the voyage and residence in India, describing life on board ship and giving her impressions of Ceylon and of their arrival at Bombay. There are a further six letters from this period to other members of the family, several written jointly with her husband. Her last letter, written from Sholapur, describes the drought and famine there, efforts made by her husband to relieve the people's suffering, and her own many occupations, for "lying in bed or on a sofa increases heat and languor". She claimed to "have borne the seasoning of climate very well" and, except in the hot season, by no means objected particularly to the climate. A letter from her husband in early September states that the following month they were to return to the station at Harnai on the coast, in the interests of his health. It was, however, Maria Jane who failed to complete the journey. She died of cholera at Poona and was buried there,

Jabez Bunting, the formidable leader of the Wesleyan Methodists for the first half of the nineteenth century, was born in Manchester on 13 May 1779, and a bicentenary exhibition was held in the Deansgate Building of the Library this summer. A born disciplinarian, and with some justice called the second founder of Methodism, Bunting established for the connexion the organization for self-government, thus permanently securing a great constitutional advance upon Wesley's autocracy: but while he lived he guided this organization with a hand that never relaxed its firmness.

JABEZ  
BUNTING,  
1779-1858:  
AN  
ACQUISITION  
AND AN  
EXHIBITION

Bunting was first stationed at Oldham in 1799, and the Manchester circuit plan for July-October 1799 which was displayed is probably the earliest extant plan on which his name appears. Although he travelled to Macclesfield, Manchester, Sheffield, Liverpool, Halifax and Leeds, he spent an unusually large part of his life at the centre of power, being stationed in London from 1803 to 1805, from 1815 to 1824 and from 1833 to his death in 1858.

As Connexional Editor from 1821 to 1824, Bunting was responsible for producing the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* and other regular commercial publications. He wrote for the 1822 volume of the *Magazine* a preface (in itself a new departure for the Editor) in which he outlined the principles which guided him in this work, laying great stress on the value of a detailed index; and, indeed, in this year he replaced the usual four-page list of contents with a two-column twelve-page index. The seriousness with which he took his editorial duties is illustrated by a letter he wrote to George Marsden of Leeds on 17 September 1823 in which he explains that because of his work he cannot leave London for more than a few days.

Bunting was himself President of Conference four times, in 1820, 1828, 1836 and 1844, and it has been stated that it was essential for other Presidents to have his support when he did not hold this office. In a letter to Joseph Entwisle dated 25 February 1826 he discusses the qualities of Richard Watson who was to succeed Entwisle as President. Also displayed was another letter to Entwisle, 22 December 1827, which is concerned

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with the first of the three great crises in the Methodist movement during Bunting's ministry. The proposed introduction of an organ at Leeds Brunswick Chapel led in 1828 to the formation of a secession connexion, the Leeds Protestant Methodists. At all stages in the crisis Bunting was closely involved, and his apparently autocratic decisions established him in the eyes of the Protestant Methodists as the "Methodist Pope". Typical of the pamphlets attacking him at this time is a poem entitled *Modern episcopacy, or the three Methodist bishops, Jabez, Richard [Watson], and Robert [Newton], in lawn sleeves*, which was published in Leeds by John Barr in 1827. Bunting himself seems to have thrived on this controversy, as a long twelve-page letter to his mother dated 18 October 1834 illustrates.

The Theological Institution at Hoxton, the first college for Methodist ministerial training, was established during the period 1834 to 1836 and again Bunting was at the centre of the associated crisis and also of the related case in the Court of Chancery of Dr. Samuel Warren who bitterly opposed the very idea of formal training. It is fortunate that there is in the Methodist Archives a most valuable collection of pamphlets and letters relating to these events.

One of the most consistent opponents of Bunting throughout his life was James Everett, and in view of this it is interesting to note the great consideration shown by Bunting in a letter to Everett dated 14 July 1813 concerning the latter's stationing—the kind of house Mrs. Everett would prefer is particularly stressed—and also Everett's equally courteous reply. In the first two editions of the satirical portraits *Wesleyan takings*, ascribed to Everett, only the names of deceased ministers are given at the head of each chapter, for the living anonymity being preserved with asterisks. However, in the preface to the third edition, 1841, it is admitted that the first sketch is that of Bunting. The five *Fly sheets* were anonymous pamphlets circulated in the eighteen forties in an attempt to break Bunting's grip on Wesleyan Methodism. Authorship of these attacks was one of the grounds on which Samuel Dunn, William Griffith and Everett were arraigned before Conference in 1849 and expelled, but such evidence as exists suggests that Everett was the principal author.

That many sympathized with Bunting over these personal attacks made on him is shown by the correspondence in June 1850 of William Brodie Gurney, the shorthand writer and philanthropist.

In this bicentenary year it is pleasing to report that in January the Methodist Archives and History Committee authorized the purchase of a collection, originally sold at Sotheby's in October 1978, of letters and other papers mainly relating to Bunting. There are seventy four letters addressed to him from fifty-two correspondents; although they range in date from 1807 to 1850 the majority were written in the eighteen thirties. With five long letters written between 1836 and 1838, Edmund Grindrod is the most strongly represented minister in the collection, and his subject matter includes a proposal for a preparatory school in Sheffield, the formation of the 1839 centenary committee and the disappointment of his hopes for a second marriage.

One of the most interesting letters in this collection is that from Dr. Thomas Coke, dated "On the South Pacific Ocean not a great way from the Island of Madagascar April 13th 1814". Coke states that he has seized an opportunity of sending a few lines by a British Frigate going to the Isle of France, and urgently requests Bunting to send him in 1815 two missionaries to help him in his work at Travancore, Madras and Calcutta. As Coke was to die on 3 May 1814 this is generally considered to be his last extant letter. The text was published in 1900, without any indication of provenance, by G. Stringer Rowe.<sup>1</sup>

The young William Arthur is represented by a letter of some exasperation dated 13 September 1837 written to Bunting as President of the Theological Institution, Hoxton, asking in no uncertain terms "whether I am to go to the Institution this year and if so when". There is a hurried note from Bunting's son, Thomas Percival Bunting, dated 26 September 1835, giving details of the latest position in the Warren crisis, and Samuel Warren himself is represented by a letter accompanying the gift of his most recent publication.

There are comparatively few of Bunting's letters extant:

<sup>1</sup> Proc. Wesley Historical Society, ii. 91-92.

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Professor W. R. Ward has estimated that while there are well over four thousand letters to him available, only some seven hundred from him are known. Therefore, it is not surprising that in this recently acquired collection there should be only two letters from him. One of these, however, is a reply to a letter from William Horton (also in the collection) dated 22 September 1836. Horton asked Bunting whether the wife of one of his colleagues should preach and also whether temperance meetings should be held in chapels. Bunting's uncompromising reply was Pauline—women must be restricted to prayer and “the private teaching of their own sex”—and on no account must temperance meetings be held in chapels “the advocates of that cause are *intolerably intemperate* in their views and language”.

Miscellaneous items purchased with the collection include James Jones' statement of his views respecting the divine foreknowledge, the nature of the atonement and original sin (a manuscript written probably about 1828), and some private manuscript minutes of the Methodist Conference in Manchester in 1803.

Bunting was undoubtedly one of the most influential religious leaders in the nineteenth century, and it is particularly fortunate that it has proved possible to celebrate the bicentenary of this great Mancunian not only by the acquisition of an important collection of letters but also by the first exhibition of primary interest to Methodists to be held in the Library since the transfer of the Methodist Archives to Manchester.

The following is a list of recent Library publications, consisting of reprints of articles which appeared in the latest BULLETIN (Spring 1979) and a double article, by Dr. J. J. N. Palmer, which appeared in the BULLETINS for Autumn 1978 and Spring 1979 :

“Scripture, Tradition and the Canon of the New Testament.” By the Rev. Ernest Best, M.A., B.D., Ph.D., Professor of Divinity and Biblical Criticism in the University of Glasgow. 8vo, pp. 32. Price £1.20.

“Some Additional Greek Papyri in the John Rylands University Library.” By Alan K. Bowman, M.A., Ph.D.,

RECENT  
LIBRARY  
PUBLICATIONS

Student and Tutor of Christ Church, Oxford, and J. D. Thomas, M.A., Ph.D., Reader in Papyrology in the University of Durham. 8vo, pp. 24. 90p.

“1666 : The Year of the Beast.” By David Brady, B.A., Ph.D., Assistant Librarian, The John Rylands University Library. 8vo, pp. 23. Price 90p.

“St. Paul in Macedonia.” By F. F. Bruce, M.A., D.D., F.B.A., Emeritus Professor in the University of Manchester. 8vo, pp. 18. Price 75p.

“The Poor on Earth and the Son of Man in Heaven. A Re-Appraisal of Matthew xxv. 31-46.” By David R. Catchpole, M.A., Ph.D., Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies in the University of Lancaster. 8vo, pp. 43. Price £1.30.

“The Paris Districts and Direct Democracy, 1789-1790.” By R. B. Rose, M.A., F.A.H.A., Professor of History in the University of Tasmania. 8vo, pp. 22. Price 80p.

“The Scriptorium of San Pedro de Cardeña.” By Barbara A. Shailor, M.A., Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Classics, Bucknell University. 8vo, pp. 30. Price £1.10.

“Upton Sinclair : The Centenary Of An American Writer.” By Dennis Welland, M.A., Ph.D., Professor of American Literature in the University of Manchester. 8vo, pp. 21. Price 80p.

“The Authorship, Date and Historical Value of the French Chronicles on the Lancastrian Revolution.” By J. J. N. Palmer, B.Litt., Ph.D., Senior Lecturer in History in the University of Hull. 8vo, pp. 61. Price £2.

The following is a list of the public lectures (the seventy-eighth series) which have been arranged for delivery in the lecture hall of the University Library Building in Deansgate during the current session at 5.15 p.m. :

THE SEVENTY-  
EIGHTH  
SERIES OF  
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LECTURES

17 October 1979. “Jesus as Advocate : A Contribution to the Christology Debate.” By the Rev. Barnabas Lindars, Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis in the University of Manchester.

14 November 1979. “ ‘The Chief Engineer of the Stage’ :

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Thomas Betterton and Restoration Stage Spectacle." By K. R. Richards, Professor of Drama in the University of Manchester and Director of the University Theatre.

12 December 1979. "St. Paul in Macedonia: 2. The Thessalonian Correspondence." By F. F. Bruce, Emeritus Professor in the University of Manchester.

16 January 1980. "The Meaning of Adult Education." By J. D. Turner, Professor of Adult and Higher Education in the University of Manchester.

13 February 1980. "The Question of a Just, Participatory and Sustainable Society." By the Rev. Canon R. H. Preston, Samuel Ferguson Professor of Social and Pastoral Theology in the University of Manchester.

12 March 1980. "Lexical Borrowing in a Medieval Context." By William Rothwell, Professor of French Language and Medieval French Literature in the University of Manchester.

7 May 1980. "Power and Piety: The Origins of Religious Revival in the Early 18th Century." By W. R. Ward, Professor of Modern History in the University of Durham.

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