

**HISTORY OF THE
PRIMITIVE
METHODIST CHURCH**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649752539

History of the Primitive Methodist Church by H. B. Kendall

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H. B. KENDALL

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PRIMITIVE
METHODIST CHURCH**

History
of the
Primitive Methodist
Church.

By
REV. H. B. KENDALL, B.A.

(Revised and Enlarged Edition.)

1919.

LONDON :
JOSEPH JOHNSON,
PRIMITIVE METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE,
HOLBORN HALL, CLERKENWELL ROAD, E.C.1.

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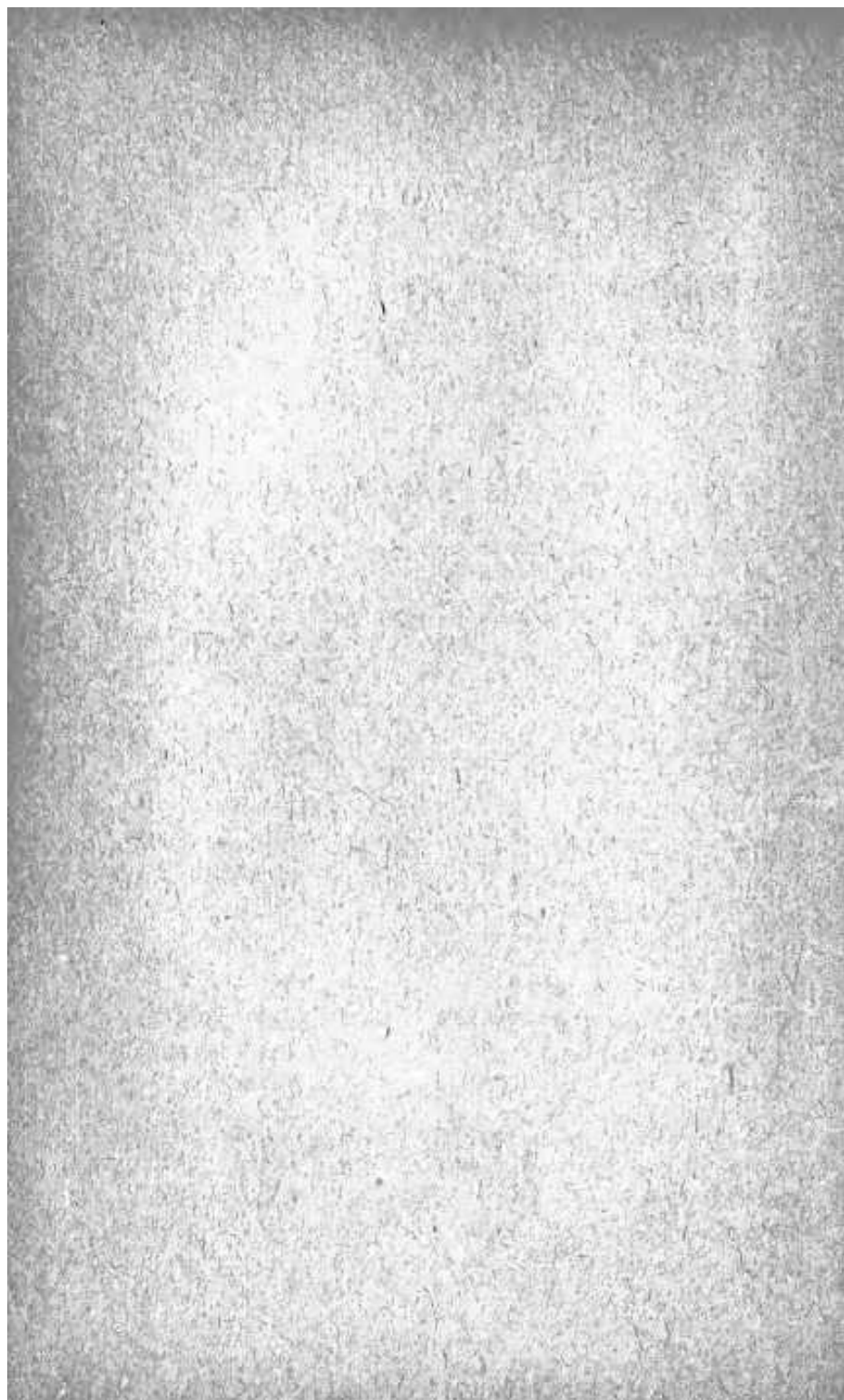
FOREWORD.

I count it an honour to write this brief foreword to this, the latest history of our Church. There must be few Primitive Methodists who are not acquainted with Mr. Kendall's smaller history published upwards of a quarter of a century ago, and with his "Principles and Polity of the Primitive Methodist Church." These little volumes, for many years, have been text-books for Local Preachers and for Ministerial Candidates. On one of my visits to the late Bishop of Durham I found these two books on the study table, and afterwards discovered that Dr. Westcott had read them with intentness and interest. The Standard History of our Church was written too by Mr. Kendall, and will immortalise his name. He was for nine years Connexional Editor, and in 1901 the President of Conference. The Book Committee felt that a smaller history was needed, bringing the story up to date. The present is practically a new volume. The historic imagination, the spiritual insight, the literary grace, which we all associate with the author, are all in evidence in these pages. The book has been written through love of the subject, with gratitude for the past, and with confidence for the future.

The mention of Mr. Kendall brings his devoted and capable wife into mind. She it is who has been at his side during long years of physical weakness, and only her wonderful care has made possible the continuance and success of his literary labours.

We greet them in this foreword, and commend the volume to all our people, and to the readers of other Churches.

JOHN G. BOWRAN,
Connexional Editor.



History of the Primitive Methodist Church.

CHAPTER I.

England in 1800-32.

"That the power-loom, spinning-jenny, steam engine and the Primitive Methodist Revival are in time closely related is not a mere coincidence. At a grave crisis in the industrial and domestic life of the nation Primitive Methodism was instituted."

REV. T. SCRIMSHAW.

1800.—*A Convenient Starting-point.*—The year 1800 has been called "the darkest year of the century." It furnishes us with a useful and significant date-mark. At this point of time we may look round preparatory to moving on. Walter Besant, in his "London in the Eighteenth Century," makes his eighteenth century begin with 1715, and end in 1832. He is serious, and not alone, in doing this. He does not go by the almanac. Measuring a century not as a mechanical sum of years, 1801 to 1832 rather marks the close of an old order. It was a new England that was emerging after the Reform Bill and the opening years of Victoria's reign. Look where we will, it is no bright picture that meets the eye what time Primitive Methodism struggled into existence and passed through its first probationary period.

Philanthropy Discouraged and Exhausted.—It was on the 31st December—the last day of the eighteenth century—that the Royal Assent was given to the Act authorising the first Census of the English people. By this Act the State assumed the responsibility of knowing in “detail the vital, cultural and economic condition of the whole nation.” It was high time ; for philanthropists were exhausted by past efforts and discouraged by the apparent hopelessness of the immense task before them. The masses were deplorably illiterate and the rival systems of Bell and Lancaster were unequal to the task of coping with it. Yet the State was shy and dilatory in shouldering the responsibilities it had assumed. Not till 1833 was a trivial school grant made of £20,000, and a timid experiment begun in public inspection.*

Hugh Bourne's Conversion.—It was in the mid-summer of 1799 Hugh Bourne joined the Methodist Church. Books, rather than human voice or Church ordinances, had brought about the decisive change. He was first enlightened as to the nature of true religion by Wesley's sermon on the Trinity, and afterwards found peace by reading Fletcher's “Letters on the Spiritual Manifestation of the Son of God.” In the year 1800, and for some time after, he tells us, he was much employed at and near Harriseahead, about three miles from Bemersley. “Harriseahead had no means of grace, and the

* See the concluding chapter in B. Kirkman Gray's “A History of English Philanthropy.”