

# An evangelical clergyman and missionary advocate: The career of the Reverend Melvill Horne, Minister of Christ Church, Macclesfield

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The evangelical revival in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain was characterised by efforts to revitalise the national church and to forge a society based on real rather than nominal Christianity.<sup>1</sup> The rapid expansion of domestic missionary activity reflected attempts to proselytise those excluded from the gospel of Christ. The distribution of bibles by the Society for the Promotion of the Gospel and the British and Foreign Bible Society highlights contemporary concern that ignorance of the gospel was widespread. The success of itinerant Methodist preachers in reclaiming many individuals to Christianity through their practice of field preaching and the use of local class organisation is evident in a wide range of communities in late eighteenth-century Britain.<sup>2</sup>

This missionary zeal was not constrained by parish or national

<sup>1</sup> Andrew F. Walls, 'The evangelical revival, the missionary movement, and Africa', in Andrew F. Walls, ed., *The missionary movement in Christian history: Studies in the transmission of faith* (New York/Edinburgh, 1996), pp. 82–83; John Lawson, 'The people called Methodists. 2. "Our discipline"', in Rupert Davies & Gordon Rupp, eds, *A history of the Methodist Church in Great Britain, volume 1* (London, 1965), pp. 208–9.

<sup>2</sup> John Walsh, '“Methodism” and the origins of English-speaking evangelicalism', in Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington & George A. Rawlyk, eds, *Evangelicalism:*

boundaries. By the end of the eighteenth century there was renewed effort by Protestant evangelicals to conduct missions overseas as a means of reclaiming heathen nations to God.<sup>3</sup> This missionary movement, characterised by Andrew Walls as an ‘autumnal child of the Evangelical Revival’, was based on the assumption that large swathes of the world population could be redeemed to Christ through preaching the gospel.<sup>4</sup> In 1792 William Carey urged fellow Christians to take up the apostolic commission to proselytise the ‘vast proportion of the sons of Adam . . . who yet remain in the most deplorable state of heathen darkness, without any means of knowing the true God’.<sup>5</sup> The formation of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792, the Missionary Society in 1795 and the Society for Missions to Africa and the East in 1799 (later known as the Church Missionary Society) reflected contemporary efforts to redeem the perishing heathen. The widening geographical scope of domestic and foreign missions by the early nineteenth century emphasises the conviction of evangelical Protestants that the spiritual condition of unregenerate Christians in England, Wales and Scotland was no different from that of pagan Africans or South Sea islanders.<sup>6</sup> A poem published in the *Evangelical Magazine* in September 1795 illustrates this new expansive and outward looking vision of Christianity as it looked forward to a time when

. . . from Britain now might shine  
This heavenly light, this truth divine!  
Till the whole universe shall be  
But one great temple, Lord for Thee!<sup>7</sup>

The career of the Reverend Melvill Horne embraced both domestic missionary endeavour and the development of overseas missions. Horne, minister of Christ Church Macclesfield between 1799 and

*Comparative studies of popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and beyond, 1700–1990* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 27–30; E. A. Rose, ‘Methodism in Cheshire to 1800’, *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, 78 (1975), pp. 22–23, 34.

<sup>3</sup> Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the flag: Protestant missions and British imperialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (Leicester, 1990), pp. 55–61.

<sup>4</sup> Walls, ‘Evangelical revival’, p. 79.

<sup>5</sup> William Carey, *An enquiry into the obligations of Christians to use means for the conversion of the heathens* (Leicester, 1792), p. 62.

<sup>6</sup> Walls, ‘Evangelical revival’, p. 79; Roger H. Martin, *Evangelicals united: Ecumenical stirrings in pre-Victorian Britain, 1795–1830* (London, 1983), p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Evangelical Magazine* (Sept. 1795), p. 392.



Christ Church, Macclesfield, published 1783. Reproduced courtesy of Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies.

1811, was born approximately twenty-three years after John Wesley's religious awakening.<sup>8</sup> By the time of Horne's death at Ashbourne in Derbyshire in 1841 evangelical religion in Britain had assumed a dominant position in the spiritual life of the nation, and overseas missions were an integral part of the fabric of the Christian Church.<sup>9</sup> Horne's spirituality, denominational identity and career

<sup>8</sup> Horne was baptised at St John's parish in Antigua on 10 July 1762: Vera Langford Oliver, *The history of the island of Antigua, one of the leeward Caribees in the West Indies, from the earliest settlement in 1653 to the present time*, vol. II (London, 1894–99), p. 84; Bishop's Act Book 1791–1808, Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies (CCALS), EDA 1/10, f. 16v; Sydney J. Sharples, *The story of Christ Church, Macclesfield* (Macclesfield, 1925), p. 18; C. J. Podmore, 'The bishops and the brethren: Anglican attitudes to the Moravians in the mid-eighteenth century', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 41 (1990), p. 623.

<sup>9</sup> William Carey, *An enquiry into the obligations of Christians to use means for the conversion of the heathens*, new edn, ed. E. A. Payne (London, 1961), p. ii; David Hempton, *Methodism and politics in British society 1750–1850* (London, 1984), p. 12;

structure were forged in a period of revival but, through his missionary advocacy, he exerted a formative influence on the evangelical priorities of his age.

In common with John Wesley, Horne had an Arminian rather than a Calvinist theology.<sup>10</sup> His acceptance of the central evangelical precept that salvation was universally available is reflected in the periods he spent as an itinerant preacher in England and as a missionary to Sierra Leone on the west coast of Africa. Prior to his appointment at Macclesfield, Horne's missionary advocacy had prompted extensive debate at a national and international level on the importance of overseas missions. Horne's *Letters on missions; addressed to the Protestant ministers of the British churches* (1794) inspired one of the most important pan-evangelical initiatives of the period. The founders of the Missionary Society (later renamed the London Missionary Society) had been motivated by Horne's appeal for ecumenism in missions.<sup>11</sup> During his ministry at Christ Church in Macclesfield Horne played an active part in the newly formed Society for Missions to Africa and the East, and he used his pulpit to preach in support of overseas missions. Horne's career in Macclesfield also sheds light on the tensions that developed between Methodism and Anglicanism in the early nineteenth century. Horne's position as an ordained minister of the established church sympathetic to Methodism was placed under increasing pressure during his incumbency at Macclesfield.

Despite his importance at a national and international level, Horne has received little attention in the historical literature. At a local level, there is very little reference to him in secondary literature on either Methodism or Macclesfield. In a pamphlet written to commemorate the sesquicentenary of Christ Church's foundation, the Reverend Sydney J. Sharples emphasised the insignificance of Horne's ministry. In contrast to over nine pages of text devoted to

Stuart Piggin, *Making evangelical missionaries 1789–1858: The social background, motives and training of British protestant missionaries to India* (1984), pp. 115–16.

<sup>10</sup> Melvill Horne, *An investigation of the definition of justifying faith, the damnatory clause under which it is enforced and the doctrine of a direct witness of the Spirit, held by Dr. Coke, and other Methodist preachers, in a series of letters* (London, 1809), p. 5; Hempton, *Methodism and politics*, pp. 22, 31; Davies & Rupp, *History of the Methodist Church*, p. xxvii.

<sup>11</sup> Roger H. Martin, 'The place of the London Missionary Society in the ecumenical movement', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 31 (1980), pp. 286–87, 291–92; Martin, *Evangelicals united*, pp. 41–47.

the Reverend David Simpson, the first incumbent of the church, Sharples wrote less than twelve lines on Horne. Sharples, vicar of Christ Church, concluded in 1925 that there 'is little known concerning his ministry, and the period during which he held the incumbency was marked by no noteworthy events in the history of the Church'.<sup>12</sup> This paper aims to correct this lacuna through an analysis of Horne's career as minister of Christ Church, and his contribution to wider developments in missionary endeavour and Methodism in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain.

## I

The sudden death from fever of the Reverend David Simpson on 24 March 1799, aged 54, created a vacancy at Christ Church.<sup>13</sup> The sense of loss experienced by his congregation was reflected in the memorial erected on the south wall of the church. The memorial noted that Simpson had devoted twenty-four years 'laborious and unremitted service' as the first minister of Christ Church, and that an 'affectionate people' had erected the monument as 'a grateful acknowledgement of the benefits they had derived from his ministry'. The patron of the benefice, William Roe of Liverpool, nominated Horne for the position of curate in June 1799 and on 16 August Horne was granted licence by the Bishop of Chester to fulfil this role.<sup>14</sup> It is probable that this selection was informed by knowledge of Horne's evangelical sympathies and his close connections with Methodism. Horne had worked with leading figures in Wesleyan Methodism and, early in his career, had served as one of Wesley's domestic itinerant ministers. After a period on trial in the Liverpool circuit in 1784, he was appointed to the Chester circuit the following year.<sup>15</sup> This

<sup>12</sup> Sharples, *Christ Church*, p. 18.

<sup>13</sup> He was described as 'a true disciple of his much lov'd Lord': see 'An elegy on the death of the Reverend David Simpson, A. M. Macclesfield who departed this life March 24, 1799. Aged 54', CCALS, P84/3349/16/2.

<sup>14</sup> J. R. Earwaker, *East Cheshire: Past and present* (London, 1880), vol. II, p. 510; Bishop's Act Book 1791-1808, CCALS, EDA 1/9 f. 87.

<sup>15</sup> I am grateful to John Lenton for providing details of Horne's career; *Minutes of the Methodist Conference*, vol. I, pp. 166-67, 171-73; *Arminian Magazine*, 7 (Nov. 1784), p. 619, 8 (Oct. 1785), p. 547.

brought him into contact with John Fletcher, vicar of Madeley, who was superintendent of the circuit. After Fletcher's death, John Wesley recommended Horne's appointment as curate at Madeley. The appointment required that Horne was ordained a minister of the Anglican Church.<sup>16</sup> This took place in 1786. The *Arminian Magazine* indicates that Horne served in the Wolverhampton circuit between 1787 and 1791, after which his name disappeared from the annual listing of appointments.<sup>17</sup> This reflected his decision to undertake a mission to Sierra Leone in 1792, a logical extension of the Wesleyan view of a world parish accessible through the itinerancy of the minister.<sup>18</sup>

Horne had impeccable evangelical credentials, as well as close contacts with leading members of the Clapham Sect. His missionary advocacy in the 1790s brought him national recognition, and led to correspondence and collaboration with leading figures in evangelical circles. Simpson may well have disseminated knowledge of Horne's missionary advocacy in Macclesfield in the five-year period before his death. As Simpson was involved with the Missionary Society in its early formative period from 1795, he would have been aware of Horne's reputation and the high regard in which his work was held. In order to take up this new role in Cheshire, Horne left his position as curate at Olney in Buckinghamshire. His association with this renowned evangelical stronghold where John Newton preached may have persuaded William Roe that he was a suitable successor to Simpson.<sup>19</sup> Horne also enjoyed a reputation as an engaging and influential preacher. Zachary Macaulay, one of the leading administrators of the Sierra Leone Company, commented on Horne's

<sup>16</sup> Donald M. Lewis, ed, *The Blackwell dictionary of evangelical biography 1730–1860* (Oxford, 1995), vol. 1, pp. 572–73; Samuel J. Rogal, *A biographical dictionary of 18th century Methodism* (Lampeter, 1997), vol. 2, p. 468; John Randall, *History of Madeley*, ed. Barrie Trinder (1880, repr. Shrewsbury, 1975), pp. 164, 169.

<sup>17</sup> *Minutes of the Methodist Conference*, vol. I, pp. 196, 206, 219, 229, 246, 260; *Arminian Magazine*, 10 (Nov. 1787), p. 606, 11 (Nov. 1788), p. 607, 12 (Nov. 1789), p. 606, 13 (Sept. 1790), p. 494, 14 (1791), p. 490; William Myles, *A list of all the Methodist preachers who have laboured in connexion with the late Rev. John Wesley, and with the Methodist Conference* (Bristol, 1801), p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> Noll, *Evangelicalism*, p. 27; Norman W. Taggart, 'Methodist foreign missions, the first half-century', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 44 (1985), pp. 160–61; Piggin, *Making evangelical missionaries*, p. 100.

<sup>19</sup> James King & Charles Ryskamp, eds, *The letters and prose writings of William Cowper*, volume I (Oxford, 1979), pp. xi, 197.



Portrait of the Reverend Melvill Horne by Samuel William Reynolds, after Henry Wyatt, published 1823. Reproduced courtesy of Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies.

preaching in the colony at Freetown noting his 'richness of thought and his copiousness of expression, as well as his fire'.<sup>20</sup>

The evangelical character of Simpson's ministry and his popularity undoubtedly exerted a powerful influence on the qualities expected of his successor.<sup>21</sup> Horne's reputation as a preacher, missionary advocate and minister of the Church of England sympathetic to Methodism, held out the promise of a suitable successor to Simpson. Most significantly, Horne's early career suggested that he was an 'irregular' evangelical clergyman capable of maintaining the close relationship that Simpson had built up

<sup>20</sup> Suzanne Schwarz, ed., *Zachary Macaulay and the development of the Sierra Leone Company, 1793-4. Part 2: Journal, October-December 1793* (Leipzig, 2002), p. 11.

<sup>21</sup> Simpson was referred to as 'well known, and justly esteemed by thousands, who have profited by his labours from the pulpit and the press', *Methodist Magazine*, 23 (Mar. 1800), p. 101.

between the established church and the expanding Methodist congregation in Macclesfield.<sup>22</sup> Christ Church's congregation included prominent Methodist sympathisers, notably John Ryle who was chosen as the first Methodist mayor of the town in 1774.<sup>23</sup> When Horne preached a funeral sermon for George Pearson Sr, acknowledged as the founder of Methodism in Macclesfield, he commented on how Pearson had been a regular churchgoer.<sup>24</sup> Simpson's close affinity with Methodism is reflected in the frequent invitations to John Wesley to preach in the pulpit of Christ Church. Furthermore, after conducting services in Christ Church, Simpson attended Methodist services at the chapel in Sunderland Street. In the wider Cheshire context this amicable working relationship between Methodism and Anglicanism was distinctive. John Wesley is not known to have preached at any Anglican church in the county other than Christ Church.<sup>25</sup> Rose comments that in general 'the Cheshire clergy were indifferent to the Methodists while the Methodists in turn disapproved of the clergy as "carnal and worldly"'.<sup>26</sup>

Horne inherited a thriving congregation at Christ Church and a distinctive type of ecclesiastical organisation. Christ Church, a private benefice without parish jurisdiction, was opened for public worship on Christmas Day 1775. In 1804 Horne commented that 'I have no parish; Mr Heapy being the parochial minister of Macclesfield, and my chapel of Christ Church has no parochial jurisdiction whatever'.<sup>27</sup> Charles Roe, an industrial entrepreneur with interests in silk manufacture and copper smelting in Macclesfield and Liverpool, may have funded the construction of Christ Church to provide a living for Simpson following his suspension as second curate of St

<sup>22</sup> Rose, 'Methodism in Cheshire', pp. 30–31; Benjamin Smith, *Methodism in Macclesfield* (London, 1875), p. 236; Martin, *Evangelicals united*, p. 12.

<sup>23</sup> John Corry, *The history of Macclesfield* (London, 1817), p. 76; Smith, *Methodism*, pp. 224–25; Rose, 'Methodism in Cheshire', p. 29.

<sup>24</sup> Melvill Horne, *A sermon on the death of Mr George Pearson Senr of Macclesfield* (Macclesfield, 1807), pp. 22–27; C. Stella Davies, ed., *A history of Macclesfield* (Manchester, 1961), pp. 313, 328.

<sup>25</sup> Smith, *Methodism*, pp. 224–25, 236; Rose, 'Methodism in Cheshire', p. 31; Gail Malmgreen, *Silk town: Industry and culture in Macclesfield 1750–1835* (Hull, 1985), pp. 18–19, 147–49.

<sup>26</sup> Rose, 'Methodism in Cheshire', pp. 25–31.

<sup>27</sup> 'Articles of enquiry preparatory to the visitation of 1804', CCALS, EDV 7/3/322; Davies, *Macclesfield*, p. 313.



Michael's parochial chapelry.<sup>28</sup> Roe's industrial interests, reflected in the memorial on the south wall of Christ Church, generated considerable wealth and enabled him to exert an influence upon the civic and ecclesiastical life of Macclesfield.<sup>29</sup> In founding Christ Church Roe exhibited a desire to maintain a secure link with the Church of England and to provide new opportunities for Anglican worship in the context of rapid urban growth. Notwithstanding his evangelical sympathies, a private Act of Parliament of November 1779 stipulated that services conducted in the church should be based on Anglican forms of worship.<sup>30</sup>

Horne enjoyed some initial success in his new role. Sharples noted that Horne 'is known to have been an able preacher, and to have attracted large congregations. Persons used to walk, Sunday by Sunday, from beyond Rainow, a distance of six or seven miles, to hear him, taking their dinner with them, so that they might stay for the afternoon service'.<sup>31</sup> The first four years of his incumbency witnessed a significant decline in the number of Methodists recorded for the Macclesfield circuit from 1,669 in 1799 to 1,410 in 1803. Horne's popularity and success as a preacher may have contributed to the decline in Methodist membership in Macclesfield circuit. However, as the figures relate to the whole circuit and take in the surrounding hinterland of Macclesfield it is difficult to gauge the Methodist membership in the town alone. The formation of the Congleton circuit out of the Macclesfield circuit in 1803 contributed to the decline to 1,000 members in 1804.<sup>32</sup> By 1808 the membership of the Macclesfield circuit had grown to 1,550, remaining fairly steady in the following year.<sup>33</sup> Smith cites the example of William

<sup>28</sup> Various motives have been suggested to explain Roe's construction of Christ Church: Corry, *Macclesfield*, p. 128; W. H. Chaloner, 'Charles Roe of Macclesfield (1715-81): An eighteenth-century industrialist', *Palatinate studies*, Chetham Society, 3rd series, 36 (1992), pp. 95-97; B. E. Harris, ed., *A history of the county of Chester*, vol. III (Oxford, 1980), p. 60.

<sup>29</sup> Chaloner, 'Charles Roe', pp. 53, 57-58, 96; George Ormerod, *The history of the County Palatine and City of Chester*, vol. 3 (London, 1882), p. 756; Sharples, *Christ Church*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>30</sup> Davies, *Macclesfield*, p. 313; Earwaker, *East Cheshire*, p. 509.

<sup>31</sup> Sharples, *Christ Church*, p. 18.

<sup>32</sup> Harris, *County of Chester*, p. 111; *Minutes of the Methodist Conferences*, vol. II (London, 1863), p. 234.

<sup>33</sup> I am grateful to Robert Glen for his helpful correspondence on this issue; *Minutes of the Methodist Conferences*, vol. II, pp. 14, 52, 134, 181, 234, 284, 398, vol. III, pp. 22, 84, 152, 216.

Hadfield, an apprentice druggist, who 'for some time heard Mr Horne with pleasure, but at length became dissatisfied with some of the doctrines taught by the preacher'. It is difficult to gauge whether the disillusionment exhibited by Hadfield, reflected in his attendance at the Methodist chapel, was widespread. Sharples comments that towards the end of his ministry Horne was 'led into some regrettable mistakes which alienated the affections of his flock'.<sup>34</sup>

During the early years of his ministry at Macclesfield Horne maintained a close working relationship with Methodism, and members of the local Methodist society continued to attend Christ Church to receive communion.<sup>35</sup> This rapprochement is reflected in his amicable relationship with Jabez Bunting, appointed as an itinerant preacher in the Macclesfield circuit in 1801.<sup>36</sup> Thomas Percival Bunting observed that his father made frequent visits to Christ Church to hear Horne preach, and sometimes took communion at the church.<sup>37</sup> Bunting, who later became President of the Methodist Conference in 1820 and 'the most powerful man in the connexion in the nineteenth century', expressed his admiration for Horne in correspondence with James Wood.<sup>38</sup> Bunting explained on 30 January 1802 how

I have lately had much of Mr Horne's company; and as my knowledge of him becomes more intimate, my esteem and affection for him proportionably increase. He has various eccentricities; but he is after all, in my opinion, a man of ten thousand.

In their conversations it appears that they had considered the nature of the relationship between Methodism and Anglicanism. Bunting explained that 'I wish he were a Methodist preacher; and he in return wishes me (would you believe it!) a Church parson. See how we differ!'.<sup>39</sup> During the ensuing eighteen months their relationship

<sup>34</sup> Smith, *Methodism*, p. 250; Sharples, *Christ Church*, p. 18.

<sup>35</sup> This was not an uncommon practice, particularly in parishes with an evangelical clergyman: Hempton, *Methodism and politics*, p. 66.

<sup>36</sup> W. R. Ward, ed., *The early correspondence of Jabez Bunting, 1820-1829*, Camden 4th series, 11 (1972), pp. 9, 11-13; Smith, *Methodism*, p. 238.

<sup>37</sup> Thomas Percival Bunting, *The life of Jabez Bunting, DD with notices of contemporary persons and events* (London, 1887), pp. 107, 127.

<sup>38</sup> David Hempton, *The religion of the people: Methodism and popular religion c. 1750-1900* (London, 1996), pp. i, 91-93.

<sup>39</sup> Jabez Bunting to James Wood, 30 Jan. 1802, John Rylands University Library of Manchester (JRULM), MAM PLP 18/2/4.

became distant and fraught. Bunting commented frequently on Horne's prevarication and indecisiveness and by 10 June 1803 expressed frustration that he was 'becoming more and more *high-churchified*'.<sup>40</sup> As Bunting was not on the radical or Ranter fringes of Methodism, his comment is revealing as it points to Horne's increasing conformity with orthodox Anglican practice.<sup>41</sup>

As early as December 1802 Bunting expressed concern that Horne's attitude to the Methodists was degenerating, as he was 'too apt to conceive and to express foolish and unfounded jealousies of us, and our intentions towards him'. Bunting considered that Horne's problems stemmed from his status as a minister of the established church and that he would have avoided theological confusion if he had become a preacher in the Methodist chapel.<sup>42</sup> In June 1803 Bunting explained to his correspondent that Horne had made up his mind to leave Macclesfield and had even preached a farewell sermon. Bunting attributed Horne's desire to leave the town to his 'amazing jealousy of the Methodists, and above all, his feeling himself out of his providential place'.<sup>43</sup> In a letter written the following day to Mr Reece of the Methodist chapel in Leeds, Bunting re-stated his opinion that Horne's determination to leave Macclesfield was linked to his jealousy of the Methodists and the 'natural restlessness of his temper'.<sup>44</sup>

Horne's response to questions in the 'Articles of enquiry preparatory to the visitation of 1804' reveal the fissures opening up between Methodism and Anglicanism in Macclesfield. His reference to the Methodists as Dissenters is significant, as it reflects his view that the developing Methodist organisation in Macclesfield represented a separate body outside the formal control of the established church. Horne was frustrated by the way Methodists attended both Christ Church and their own chapel in Sunderland Street. He objected vigorously to attempts by Methodists to appropriate members from his congregation. He expressed dismay that

they proselyte every young person that has any serious sense of religion. I have *few* religious characters in my church, who are not Methodists.

<sup>40</sup> Jabez Bunting to Mr Marsden, 10 June 1803, JRULM, MAM PLP 18/3/4.

<sup>41</sup> Hempton, *Methodism and politics*, p. 226.

<sup>42</sup> Jabez Bunting to Mr Marsden, 30 Dec. 1802, JRULM, MAM PLP 18/2/8.

<sup>43</sup> Jabez Bunting to Mr Marsden, 10 June 1803, JRULM, MAM PLP 18/3/4.

<sup>44</sup> Jabez Bunting to Mr Reece, 11 June 1803, JRULM, MAM PLP 18/3/5.

I consider this as a serious evil, and sincerely wish I knew how to apply an effective remedy; for though I cherish no animosity against Dissenters of any description, I am truly grieved to see my church robbed of its most valuable members.<sup>45</sup>

He reiterated a similar view in a pamphlet published in 1809 where he acknowledged that many Methodists viewed him as an enemy for refusing to preach in their pulpits for seventeen years. He questioned how the Methodists, who were Christians but not Churchmen, could ‘dare to think he will or ought to advise and encourage his converts to become Methodists, and thus to rob the Church, of which he is minister, of her most valuable members?’<sup>46</sup> This reflected a problem common to other evangelical churchmen who recognised that their revivalist preaching was contributing to the expansion of Nonconformity to the detriment of the established church.<sup>47</sup> This threat to church polity and discipline made it difficult for Horne to maintain his support for Methodism. It is clear that Horne, schooled in the early tradition of Wesleyan Methodism, wished to see religious revival within the framework of the established church.<sup>48</sup>

Horne’s alienation from Methodism is further reflected in a theological dispute concerning the doctrine of assurance. Horne criticised Methodists for preaching ideas which were ‘unscriptural and absurd’. He expressed concern that Methodists maintained that those who did not enjoy the assurance of salvation through a direct witness of God’s Spirit were condemned to damnation. Horne claimed that the views he expressed in the pamphlet were consistent with traditional Methodist practice and that the error of the damnatory clause was confirmed in a conversation with John Wesley three years before his death.<sup>49</sup>

Horne stated that he was compelled to write his 1809 pamphlet as a result of an ‘indirect, skirmishing warfare’ with the Methodists in

<sup>45</sup> ‘Articles of enquiry . . . 1804’.

<sup>46</sup> Horne, *An investigation*, p. x.

<sup>47</sup> Martin, *Evangelicals united*, pp. 6–7.

<sup>48</sup> Hempton, *Methodism and politics*, p. 63; Gareth Lloyd, ‘“Croakers and busybodies”’: The extent and influence of Church Methodism in the late 18th and early 19th centuries’, *Methodist History*, 42 (2003), pp. 21, 26.

<sup>49</sup> For a discussion of Wesley’s theological views on the doctrine of assurance see Rodney L. Reed, ‘Calvin, Calvinism, and Wesley: The doctrine of assurance in historical perspective’, *Methodist History*, 32 (1993), pp. 39–43.

Macclesfield. He claimed that a number of Methodists had cast aspersions on the fundamental features of his faith and preaching, and that he felt his 'own ministry degraded'. The views in the pamphlet were addressed to Dr Coke as he had preached a sermon at Macclesfield in which he laid emphasis on the points of doctrine which Horne found objectionable. Horne acknowledged that these doctrinal differences had led to his increasing detachment from Methodism, and admitted that 'I was aware that my increased and their decreased attachment to the Church of England was daily tending to dissolve the ties of amity between my church and their chapel'.<sup>50</sup>

Horne's pamphlet elicited a quick and vigorous response from Edward Hare, a friend of Jabez Bunting at Leeds.<sup>51</sup> He rejected Horne's arguments on the grounds that they represented 'unjust imputations' against his Methodist brethren, and criticised his ranting and profane language.<sup>52</sup> A further response from anonymous authors, who styled themselves as 'Two of the family of the Gray Headed Definition men to which the author alludes in that work', expressed their disappointment with Horne given his positive associations with Methodism in the past.<sup>53</sup> A review of Horne's pamphlet in the *Methodist Magazine* of 1810 rejected the arguments presented on the basis that 'the Methodists neither believe nor preach any such doctrine'. The reviewer expressed regret that 'our former fellow-labourer and eulogist had become our censor'.<sup>54</sup>

The main factor that confirmed Horne's separation from Methodism was the decision by the Sunderland Street chapel to hold its services at the same time as those at Christ Church. Horne explained in his 1809 pamphlet that 'the preachers and 300 of the people have avowed their intention to preach in church hours, and to administer the Sacraments'.<sup>55</sup> The strength of the relationship that existed

<sup>50</sup> Horne, *An investigation*, pp. vi-xii, 1-5, 12, 18.

<sup>51</sup> W. R. Ward, *Religion and society in England 1790-1850* (London, 1972), p. 147.

<sup>52</sup> Edward Hare, *A letter to the Rev. Melville Horne; occasioned by his investigation of the doctrines imputed by him to certain Methodist preachers* (Sheffield, 1809); Edward Hare, *A defence of the Scriptural doctrine of assurance, as taught by the Methodists: addressed to the Rev. Melville Horne, in answer to the objections stated by him in a letter to the author* (Sheffield, 1809).

<sup>53</sup> *Investigation on investigation or the minister of Christ Church, Macclesfield, inconsistent with himself* (Market-Drayton, 1810).

<sup>54</sup> *Methodist Magazine*, 33 (Jan. 1810), pp. 11-18.

<sup>55</sup> Horne, *An investigation*, p. 5.

between Christ Church and the Methodist society in Macclesfield during Simpson's ministry and the early years of Horne's incumbency is reflected in the fact that this separation was so long delayed. Under the terms of the 'Plan of Pacification' agreed by the Methodist Conference in 1795, local societies could exercise the option to hold communion in their own chapels provided that they had the agreement of Conference and a majority of the trustees, stewards and leaders.<sup>56</sup> This compromise arrangement emphasised the discipline of Conference over local Methodist societies, and was not universally popular. Local responses varied, but many societies petitioned Conference for the right to adopt the terms of the 'Articles of Agreement for General Pacification'.<sup>57</sup> In Oldham, for example, the adoption of the new terms was divisive and encouraged Anglican loyalists to secede from the Methodist chapel.<sup>58</sup> Horne was aware of the move to separation implicit in the decision taken by the Methodist society, and commented that the 'evil day . . . is now fully come'.<sup>59</sup>

By 1810 the strength of Horne's opposition to Methodism is evident in a pamphlet entitled '*Medicine for malice, or 'a word in season' to a gospel minister*'. Styling himself 'Vindex', Horne attacked the ignorance of Methodist preachers in Macclesfield. He stated that 'Methodism is a religion of the passions; her votaries are enthusiasts . . . and hence it is, that she has for so long a period fallen into contempt with the moral and enlightened, while her growths have been rapid among the vulgar and illiterate'. He expressed alarm that 'we have far more reason to dread that her accumulated strength will eventually break down the pillars of Church and State, than to hope for a diminution of her influence'.<sup>60</sup> John Braithwaite, a local Methodist preacher who wrote under the pseudonym 'Praedicator', rejected Horne's arguments as the product of a 'perturbed imagina-

<sup>56</sup> John Walsh, 'Methodism at the end of the eighteenth century', in Davies & Rupp, *History of the Methodist Church*, pp. 288, 290–91; Ward, *Religion and society*, p. 33.

<sup>57</sup> Hempton, *Methodism and politics*, pp. 66–69; Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the people called Methodists* (Nashville, 1995), pp. 315–17.

<sup>58</sup> Mark Smith, *Religion in industrial society: Oldham and Saddleworth 1740–1865* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 169–70; Gareth Lloyd, 'Charles Wesley: A new evaluation of his life and ministry' (PhD, University of Liverpool, 2002), pp. 304–5.

<sup>59</sup> Horne, *An investigation*, p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> Vindex [Melvill Horne], '*Medicine for malice, or 'a word in season' to a gospel minister* (Macclesfield, 1810), p. 4.

tion'.<sup>61</sup> In this acrimonious atmosphere, Horne resigned his curacy and his successor William Cruttenden Cruttenden was licensed to the role on 24 March 1811.<sup>62</sup>

## II

In other respects Horne's ministry demonstrated areas of continuity with his celebrated predecessor. Horne made various attempts to bring about a reformation of manners among the town's population, an approach characteristic of the moralistic concerns and social activism of evangelicalism in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain.<sup>63</sup> In common with other towns in England and Wales, the rapid urban expansion and industrialisation of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Macclesfield fuelled contemporary concerns about the moral and spiritual health of the population.<sup>64</sup> The expansion of silk manufacturing offered new opportunities for factory employment and encouraged inward migration which contributed to a growth in population from an estimated 7,000 in 1786 to over 12,000 inhabitants by 1811.<sup>65</sup> John Aikin recorded in 1795 that Macclesfield had 'between twenty and thirty silk mills, and many cotton factories'. He described how 'the houses in Macclesfield are now more than doubled within these twenty-five years. The town is now a mile and a quarter in length'.<sup>66</sup> The industrial character of Macclesfield's population is reflected in the registers of baptisms and burials for Christ Church between 1775 and 1779. Malmgreen's analysis of this evidence indicates the prevalence of skilled artisans and silk-workers among the congregation.<sup>67</sup>

Simpson had preached against theatres as inconsistent with the

<sup>61</sup> John Braithwaite, *Praedicator's reply to Vindex: shewing the immoral tendency of stage entertainments* (Macclesfield, 1810), p. 3.

<sup>62</sup> Bishop's Act Book 1809–1825, CCALS, EDA 1/10, f.16v; Sharples, *Christ Church*, p. 18.

<sup>63</sup> Hempton, 'Evangelicalism in English and Irish society, 1780–1840', in Noll, *Evangelicalism*, p. 156; John A. Newton, 'Methodism and the articulation of faith: No holiness but social', *Methodist History*, 42 (2003), pp. 49, 51–53.

<sup>64</sup> Corry, *Macclesfield*, pp. 69–70; John Walsh, Colin Haydon & Stephen Taylor eds, *The Church of England c. 1689-c.1833* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 17–19.

<sup>65</sup> Malmgreen, *Silk town*, pp. 1, 3, 5–7; Davies, *Macclesfield*, pp. 144–45.

<sup>66</sup> John Aikin, *A description of the country from thirty to forty miles round Manchester* (London, 1795, repr. New York, 1968), pp. 438–39.

<sup>67</sup> Malmgreen, *Silk town*, pp. 31–34.

gospel, founded clubs and attempted to cultivate habits of frugality and 'virtuous demeanour' among the young women of Macclesfield.<sup>68</sup> Corry noted that Horne's predecessor had improved the manners of the town and that he had broken 'the fetters of Satan, and liberated the young, the giddy, and the thoughtless captives of pleasure from the insnarement of vice'.<sup>69</sup> Although Horne did not share Simpson's views on the immorality of the theatre, he was concerned with the moral rectitude of youth. Shortly after his appointment at Macclesfield the *Methodist Magazine* published Horne's 'sermon to young people on New Year's Day'. He exhorted them to honour their parents, as the consequences of poor behaviour would be 'abominable in every relation' and would weaken the family and society.<sup>70</sup>

In a manner reminiscent of Wesley's Sabbatarian concerns of the 1750s, Horne preached a sermon on Easter Sunday 1802 in which he chastised the people of Macclesfield for their neglect of worship on Good Friday and their pursuit of secular pleasures.<sup>71</sup> He expressed disappointment with their behaviour reminding them that 'ye are his redeemed people, the congregation of Christ Church, Macclesfield, who have erected sepulchral marble to perpetuate the Christian doctrine and faithful labours of the late Mr. Simpson'. While he acknowledged that the people of Manchester, Stockport and Bolton were 'equally, or more criminally negligent', he condemned those who had 'adjoined to the alehouse, or spent the day in listless indolence'.<sup>72</sup> Horne used the occasion of a sermon to the Loyal Macclesfield Foresters on 27 November 1803 to remind his congregation that the strength and defence of a nation depended to a large extent on the moral condition of its population. Although the core theme of the sermon was the defence of the nation against an invasion from France, he pointed out that moral laxity was evident in

<sup>68</sup> David Simpson, *A discourse on stage entertainments* (Birmingham, 1788); Corry, *Macclesfield*, p. 276; *Methodist Magazine*, vii (1824), p. 52; Smith, *Methodism*, p. 226; Malmgreen, *Silk town*, p. 102; Davies, *Macclesfield*, p. 368.

<sup>69</sup> Corry, *Macclesfield*, p. 71.

<sup>70</sup> *Methodist Magazine*, 23 (Sept. 1800), p. 392; reprinted and distributed as *A Christmas gift to the children who attend the Methodist Sunday school, Stockport* (Stockport, 1800): I am grateful to Robert Glen for drawing this source to my attention.

<sup>71</sup> Martin, *Evangelicals united*, p. 24.

<sup>72</sup> Melvill Horne, *A sermon enforcing the observation on Good Friday preached at Christ Church, Macclesfield* (Macclesfield, 1802), pp. iv, 7–8, 17, 22–26.



the common and flagrant appearance of 'swearing, cursing, fornication, adultery, drunkenness, and contempt of the ordinances and day of the Lord'.<sup>73</sup>

In 1786 the Bishop of Chester in his *Letter to clergy of Chester concerning Sunday schools* argued that religious teaching on the Sabbath was an effective means to stem the spread of immorality, vice and popery.<sup>74</sup> Sunday school teaching was seen as a way of exerting a civilising influence on the labouring population, and was well established in Macclesfield by the time Horne took up his appointment at Christ Church.<sup>75</sup> In his response to queries made in advance of the Bishop's Visitation of 1804, Horne noted that he instructed 600 children at Sunday school.<sup>76</sup> In 1796 John Whitaker founded a Sunday school, based on a non-denominational model, which contributed to the education of over one thousand pupils by the turn of the century.<sup>77</sup> In common with his predecessor, Horne contributed to the religious instruction of pupils through the delivery of extempore prayers, sermons and addresses.<sup>78</sup>

Horne argued in 1805 that members of the clergy had a unique responsibility for the education of youth. However, his decision to open a boarding school for girls in July 1805 was determined more by pecuniary and family considerations than by a vocation to teach. He admitted that it was a novelty for a clergyman to undertake the education of females, and was aware that for some it might 'excite disgust and censure'. Consequently, he felt it necessary to explain that he was motivated by the necessity of building up a fund for the liberal education of his own children. The idea for the formation of the school was based on the difficulties he had encountered in finding a suitable place of education for his daughters. He explained that 'young, unportioned females, daughters of the clergy, struggle with peculiar difficulties. Their parentage, early associations, and even their education, have all an unfriendly aspect on their establishment

<sup>73</sup> Melvill Horne, *A sermon, preached to the Loyal Macclesfield Foresters, on Sunday, November 27, 1803* (Macclesfield, 1803), pp. iii–iv, 1–2, 6, 8, 13, 16–18, 30.

<sup>74</sup> Harris, *County of Chester*, p. 53.

<sup>75</sup> Piggin, *Making evangelical missionaries*, p. 101.

<sup>76</sup> 'Articles of enquiry . . . 1804'.

<sup>77</sup> Robert F. Mellor, *A short history of the Macclesfield Sunday school: 150 years, 1796–1946* (Macclesfield, n.d.); Ward, *Religion and society*, p. 13.

<sup>78</sup> *Report of the proceedings in the matter of the Macclesfield Sunday school: Heard in the Court of Exchequer on Thursday November 19th 1818 and several subsequent days* (Manchester, 1819), pp. 20–21; *Methodist Magazine*, vii (1824), pp. 52–53.

in life'. Consequently, he felt that he was the person most qualified to undertake the care of their moral and spiritual education.

On 14 May 1805, Horne issued an invitation to his 'religious friends and acquaintances' who had daughters not yet placed in schools, to take advantage of the plan of schooling which he had devised. In setting out his priorities for female education, Horne explained that he would place emphasis on developing 'that culture of the mind, which arises from a regular course of reading in civil and natural history, and other branches of *belles lettres*'. His scheme of education would encourage the women to think and to read in a discerning manner, but above all develop their sense of religion and morality. He was anxious that the females under his charge should reject a life of 'insipid indolence' and form themselves as 'rational and pleasing companions'. Although his wife Nelly was in poor health, he emphasised that pupils would be under her supervision and have the opportunity to develop their accomplishments in needlework. He emphasised that his scheme of education excluded the dancing master, as this was an accomplishment 'incompatible with the gravity, modesty, and purity of the Christian's character'. The advertised charges included 10s. 6d. for writing and arithmetic and 10s. 6d. for geography globes and maps. Although the curriculum included needlework, there is some indication that Horne proposed a more liberal form of education than was usually deemed appropriate for women of the lower and middling ranks of society.<sup>79</sup> However, it is not possible to gauge either the success or the longevity of the school.

Horne's interest in schemes of female education and reformation may explain why he was invited to preach to the governors of the London Female Penitentiary. Horne's sermon on 7 May 1811, shortly after he left Macclesfield, marked the fourth anniversary of the institution and was intended to raise funds. The stated aim of this institution was to 'afford an asylum to females who, having deviated from the paths of virtue, are desirous of being restored by religious instruction, and the formation of moral and religious habits to a respectable station in society'.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Melvill Horne, 'A boarding school for young ladies', 14 May 1805, JRULM, MAM Fl 3/13/8, MAM Fl 3/13/8a.

<sup>80</sup> Melvill Horne, *A sermon preached before the governors of the London Female Penitentiary, at the parish church of St. Lawrence Jewry, London, on Tuesday, May 7th, 1811* (2nd edn, London, 1811), p. 32.

III

The breadth of Horne's reforming interests was a characteristic trait of philanthropic activity in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain. His main interest, however, was the promotion of overseas missions. Horne's reputation as an advocate of overseas missions was well established by the time he took up his post in Macclesfield. *Letters on missions*, published in 1794, had excited considerable debate on the importance of overseas missions and his ideas were publicised widely in the evangelical press. In common with William Carey, Horne expressed concern at the 'deep spiritual poverty' of a large proportion of the world's population. In his attempt to rouse the church from its 'slumbers', Horne argued that it was the duty of the converted to take up the apostolic commission and spread the gospel. Failure to do so meant that Christians would share some responsibility for the perdition of the heathen.<sup>81</sup>

Horne's ideas on the expansion and promotion of missionary work overseas had been formed during a period he spent as chaplain to the Sierra Leone Company on the west coast of Africa between September 1792 and October 1793. Prior to his departure for Africa he told his former parishioners at Madeley that his mission was divinely sanctioned, and he anticipated that the remainder of his days would be spent 'devoted to the heathen, either at Sierra Leone or elsewhere'. Although Horne stated his intention to build himself a hut and live among the 'natives', his plan to use Freetown as a base from which to convert indigenous African groups in the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone failed for a number of reasons.<sup>82</sup> Horne's position in the colony was undermined, as he became embroiled in the complex political relationships between the European administrators and the main body of settlers comprised of over one thousand self-liberated slaves from Nova Scotia.<sup>83</sup>

Horne found that the demands of the colonial chaplainship

<sup>81</sup> Melvill Horne, *Letters on missions; addressed to the Protestant ministers of the British churches* (Bristol, 1794), pp. 4-6, 8, 11, 12, 14-16, 19.

<sup>82</sup> Melvill Horne, *Letters from the Rev. Melvill Horne late curate of Madeley, Salop; now missionary at Sierra Leone, Africa, to his friends at Madeley, previous to his departure from England* (Madeley, 1792), pp. 4-5, 17, 24, 28, 30.

<sup>83</sup> Melvill Horne to Mary Fletcher, 10 June [1793] JRULM, MAM Fl 3/13/7; Christopher Fyfe, *A history of Sierra Leone* (London, 1962), pp. 31-58.

prevented him from developing an itinerant preaching role and fulfilling his missionary objectives. He was disappointed that few 'natives' resided at Freetown and realised that 'there can be no possibility of my acting as a missionary, except by being almost always absent from my family as an itinerant, or settling with my family in one of their villages'.<sup>84</sup> Horne's original expectations of missionary success were naïve and reflected his ignorance of Africa and Africans. The single sermon which he preached at Signor Domingo's town at Royema was delivered through an interpreter. In this sermon entitled 'we preach Christ crucified' Horne attempted to convey basic gospel truths to his African audience, informing them that God had sent him to preach and teach so that they could enjoy eternal salvation.<sup>85</sup> Anna Maria Falconbridge, whose husband was an employee of the Sierra Leone Company, dismissed Horne's efforts as 'preposterous', and questioned whether he thought he could 'imprint notions of Christianity, or any sort of instruction, upon the minds of people, through the bare medium of a language they do not understand?'. She concluded that 'he might as well expect holding a candle to the eyes of a blind man, or exposing him to the sun, would reclaim his sight!'.<sup>86</sup>

Returning to England after just fourteen months in Africa, Horne attempted to mitigate his guilt and sense of failure by setting out his recommendations for the conduct of overseas missions. Through his missionary advocacy Horne anticipated that 'my unsuccessful attempt may give rise to the more successful labours of men wiser and better than myself'.<sup>87</sup> His proposals were groundbreaking, as he was the first person to make a public plea for an interdenominational response to extend the influence of Christianity across the globe.<sup>88</sup> He urged 'liberal Churchmen and conscientious Dissenters, pious Calvinists and pious Arminians' to 'embrace with fraternal arms'.<sup>89</sup> This was in contrast to Carey's suggestion in 1792 that in a

<sup>84</sup> Melvill Horne to Mary Fletcher, 12 Feb. 1793, JRULM, MAM Fl 3/13/2.

<sup>85</sup> 'A sermon by the Rev. Mr. Melvill Horne', *Baptist Annual Register* (Sept. 1795), pp. 249–55.

<sup>86</sup> Christopher Fyfe, ed., *Anna Maria Falconbridge: Narrative of two voyages to the River Sierra Leone during the years 1791–1792–1793 and the journal of Isaac DuBois with Alexander Falconbridge An account of the slave trade on the coast of Africa* (Liverpool, 2000), pp. 110, 178.

<sup>87</sup> Melvill Horne to Mary Fletcher, 12 Feb. 1793, JRULM, MAM Fl 3/13/2.

<sup>88</sup> Martin, 'London Missionary Society', p. 286; Martin, *Evangelicals united*, p. 41.

<sup>89</sup> Horne, *Letters on missions*, p. 21.

context of sectarian division a denominational society was the most appropriate way to promote missionary endeavour.<sup>90</sup> In this climate of religious opinion Horne's pan-evangelical proposals for missionary endeavour were both ambitious and controversial. He received a mixed response to his ideas. In correspondence with Mary Fletcher in 1795 he explained that his book had been reviewed in 'most of the periodical publications' and that it 'goes through honour and dishonour'.<sup>91</sup>

*Letters on missions* won little practical support from members of the Anglican hierarchy and had little impact on the 'feebleness . . . of an Anglican missionary culture' in late eighteenth-century Britain.<sup>92</sup> In contrast, his ideas were greeted enthusiastically by evangelical Anglicans and Dissenting ministers. The Reverend Thomas Haweis, rector of Aldwincle and founder member of the Missionary Society, first drew Horne's ideas to public attention through a favourable review of his work in the *Evangelical Magazine* of November 1794.<sup>93</sup> Horne's book was one of the most important factors which led to the birth of the Missionary Society in September 1795, as it provided the inspiration for a number of evangelical clergy to meet in London to discuss the formation of an interdenominational society to promote overseas work. The Missionary Society was an ecumenical initiative and was originally formed with the intention of co-ordinating the overseas missionary endeavour of Protestant evangelicals.<sup>94</sup> It was partly at least, a product of the growing enthusiasm for overseas missions generated by the 'atmosphere of millennial prophecy and expectation' of the 1790s. Roger Martin has emphasised how Horne's ideas exerted a powerful influence on all the founders of this interdenominational Society.<sup>95</sup> The records of the Missionary Society noted how Horne's book had 'contributed greatly to the Society by animating those whose hearts were before

<sup>90</sup> *Periodical accounts relative to the Baptist Missionary Society*, vol. i (Clipstone, 1800), pp. 1, 3.

<sup>91</sup> Melvill Horne to Mary Fletcher, 6 Nov. 1795, JRULM, MAM Fl 3/13/4.

<sup>92</sup> Elizabeth Elbourne, 'The foundation of the Church Missionary Society: The Anglican missionary impulse', in Walsh, Haydon & Taylor, *The Church of England*, p. 248.

<sup>93</sup> *Evangelical Magazine* (Nov. 1794), pp. 476–78.

<sup>94</sup> *Evangelical Magazine* (April 1795), pp. 161–63 (July 1795), p. 291 (Oct. 1795), pp. 421–25.

<sup>95</sup> Martin, 'London Missionary Society', pp. 283–88, 291; Martin, *Evangelicals united*, pp. 42, 46; Piggin, *Making evangelical missionaries*, p. 108.

awake to the important subject, and provoking the zeal of many others'.<sup>96</sup>

Horne was impressed by the success of the Missionary Society in attracting support from a wide range of denominations, and concluded that this was evidence that 'the Lord has blessed my poor attempt to promote his cause'.<sup>97</sup> He informed Mary Fletcher in November 1795 that he would rather give his money to support Methodist missions but noted that

while the Methodists have on the one hand abused my book and treated me and it with contempt, this Society have treated me and my poor sentiments with so much respect that I cannot avoid cooperating with them. Above all as they tell me this Society would never have been formed but for my book, after setting them to work, I cannot avoid giving them all the support I can.<sup>98</sup>

The respect accorded to Horne's ideas is reflected in the invitation to become a director of the Society, and an invitation to preach on their second anniversary. Horne's sermon on 'The unsearchable riches of Christ' emphasised the importance of prayer in supporting the work of missions. He reiterated one of the central themes of *Letters on missions* that the potential harvest of souls was great 'but the labourers are few'.<sup>99</sup>

The sustained interest in Horne's ideas is reflected in the republication of *Letters on missions* in Britain and America. During Horne's ministry at Macclesfield, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions issued *A collection of letters relative to foreign missions; containing several of Melvill Horne's "Letters on missions", and interesting communications from foreign missionaries*. This work published in 1810 by Galen and Ware of Andover, Massachusetts, points to Horne's influence on the founders of missions. An edition of his book was distributed in America

<sup>96</sup> *Four sermons, preached in London, at the third general meeting of the Missionary Society* (London, 1797), p. 135, Council for World Mission/London Missionary Society archives, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

<sup>97</sup> Martin identifies how the Missionary Society did not, in fact, succeed in attracting support from a number of groups including Wesleyan Methodists and Particular Baptists: Martin, 'London Missionary Society', pp. 288–89, 293.

<sup>98</sup> Melvill Horne to Mary Fletcher, 6 Nov. 1795, JRULM, MAM Fl 3/13/4.

<sup>99</sup> *Four sermons, preached in London, at the third general meeting of the Missionary Society*, pp. 134, 141, Council for World Mission/London Missionary Society archives.

over a decade earlier, as Cornelius P. Wyckoff of Schenectady, New York, republished *Letters on missions* in 1797. Flagg and Gould of Andover, Massachusetts, republished *Letters on missions* again in 1815. Readers were informed that

these letters have proved too acceptable to the Christian public to require any further recommendation. They have passed through many editions in England, and two in America. They are now out of print. The publishers are happy to gratify the friends of missions by presenting them with a new edition.<sup>100</sup>

In 1824, thirty years after the original publication of *Letters on missions*, L. B. Seeley of Thames Ditton published a new edition. Light and Horton of Boston published a further American edition in 1834. In 1823, during the final year of his ministry at St Stephen's in Salford, Horne's work was distributed in an appendix to a pamphlet by the Scottish Missionary Society. The directors explained that the material had been extracted from Horne's *Letters on missions*, and his influence is reflected in their observation that his work dealt with missionary topics in 'so powerful and impressive a light . . . that we cannot but recommend it to the particular attention of those to whom it is addressed'.<sup>101</sup>

During his ministry at Christ Church, Horne promoted the missionary cause in a number of ways. His publication in 1808 of a study of *The lives of the apostles and evangelists* was consistent with his missionary advocacy as one of the central themes of *Letters on missions* was the need for British clergy to take up the apostolic commission.<sup>102</sup> In December 1801 the *Evangelical Magazine* recorded that a £10 donation for the Missionary Society had been received from the Reverend Melvill Horne.<sup>103</sup> This was not the first collection by the congregation at Christ Church, however, as during Simpson's ministry £6 6s. was donated in 1798.<sup>104</sup> More significantly Simpson contributed to a number of the early planning meetings held by the Society. He chaired a meeting in London on 31 July 1795

<sup>100</sup> Horne, *Letters on missions* (Andover, Mass., 1815), p. 3.

<sup>101</sup> Scottish Missionary Society, *Address to the friends of missions, particularly to ministers, preachers, and students in divinity* (Edinburgh, 1823), p. 42.

<sup>102</sup> T. Stackhouse, *The life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to which is added, the lives of the apostles and evangelists by the Rev. Melvill Horne, minister of Christ-Church, Macclesfield* (Macclesfield, 1808).

<sup>103</sup> *Evangelical Magazine* (Dec. 1801), p. 491.

<sup>104</sup> *Four sermons, preached in London*, p. 170.

and submitted letters for consideration to a meeting on 14 March 1796.<sup>105</sup> Simpson's formal participation in this interdenominational society meant that his Cheshire congregation had probably been apprised of the plans of the Missionary Society at an early stage in its development. In his appeal for funds it is probable that Simpson had informed the congregation of the mission to the South Seas in 1796 and to Sierra Leone in 1797.<sup>106</sup>

The lack of any further collections for the Missionary Society during the remainder of Horne's period at Macclesfield reflects his decision to support the work of the newly formed Society for Missions to Africa and the East. He wrote to the Secretary, the Reverend T. Scott, on 22 April 1800 and accepted his appointment as a country member.<sup>107</sup> His decision to support this new society founded on the Church principle is not surprising. The interdenominational Missionary Society roused the suspicions of Churchmen as it drew its main support from Calvinist dissenters.<sup>108</sup> Although he lent his support to the Missionary Society for a short period, the formation of the Anglican society provided a more respectable outlet for his work.<sup>109</sup>

His congregation at Macclesfield donated a total of about £14 to the Society for Missions to Africa and the East when Horne preached a sermon on 7 January 1805. A second collection produced a total of £18 6s.<sup>110</sup> The sermons and collections appear to have taken place at irregular intervals. Horne explained to the Society that his ability to hold an annual sermon to ask for donations was constrained by a number of factors. He explained that the people in his congregation disposed to support 'liberal things' were Methodists who were required to contribute to both church and chapel funds. Consequently, they had limited resources to contribute to the support

<sup>105</sup> Home Board Minutes, FBN<sub>1</sub> (1795–1821), Council for World Mission/London Missionary Society.

<sup>106</sup> *Evangelical Magazine* (Dec. 1796), pp. 493–503 (Oct. 1797), pp. 422–24 (Nov. 1797), pp. 462–71.

<sup>107</sup> M. Horne to T. Scott, 22 April 1800, Church Mission Society (CMS), University of Birmingham, G/AC 3/1/20.

<sup>108</sup> Martin, *Evangelicals united*, pp. 52–53; Martin, 'London Missionary Society', p. 288; Piggan, *Making evangelical missionaries*, p. 109.

<sup>109</sup> Elbourne, 'The foundation of the Church Missionary Society', pp. 251–52.

<sup>110</sup> *Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East. Volume the first* (1801–5), p. 454.



of overseas missions.<sup>111</sup> Shortly after his appointment in 1800 Horne explained that he was unable to collect funds for the Society due to the high prices of goods and the need to preach charity to 'hundreds of starving people'. He noted competition for missionary funds from Dr Coke, organiser of overseas Methodist missions, who 'regularly every year calls on all my people who can give for the Methodist missions'.<sup>112</sup> Consequently, when he made a collection in January 1805 it had been necessary to take his congregation 'unawares' as Coke was planning to visit Macclesfield the following Sunday to make a collection for Methodist missions.<sup>113</sup>

In 1811 Horne preached an anniversary sermon for the Society for Missions to Africa and the East, and urged immediate consideration of the needs of millions of heathen whose souls were 'prized by their redeemer'. He attacked the apathy of the English clergy and expressed dismay that the missionary cause was retarded by the failure of a single minister to volunteer for service overseas. He reminded the clergy of the duties which the apostolic commission placed upon them. His sermon marked a new departure as he encouraged women to promote the missionary cause at home through their education of the family.<sup>114</sup> Eugene Stock, historian of the Church Missionary Society, characterised Horne's sermon as 'indisputably the most eloquent and moving of all those preached in the earlier years'.<sup>115</sup>

Horne's rallying call for practical action in the field was presented with renewed urgency as Horne, displaying a postmillennial eschatology, argued that the time was ripe for missionary endeavour. The air of millennial expectation in Horne's sermon may have been created by the events of the French Revolution.<sup>116</sup> He explained that

<sup>111</sup> M. Horne to the Secretary, 7 Jan. 1805, CMS, G/AC/3/2/51.

<sup>112</sup> M. Horne to T. Scott, 30 Dec. 1800, CMS, G/AC 3/1/45.

<sup>113</sup> M. Horne to the Secretary, 7 Jan. 1805, CMS, G/AC/3/2/51.

<sup>114</sup> Melvill Horne, *A sermon preached at the parish church of St Andrew by the Wardrobe and St. Anne, Blackfriars on Tuesday in Whitsun week, June 4, 1811, before the Society for Missions to Africa and the East* (London, 1811), pp. 27–29, 30, 39–42.

<sup>115</sup> Eugene Stock, *The history of the Church Missionary Society: Its environments, its men and its work* (London, 1899), pp. 107–8.

<sup>116</sup> Taggart, 'Methodist foreign missions', p. 166; Walsh, 'Methodism at the end of the eighteenth century', pp. 300–2; Piggin, *Making evangelical missionaries*, pp. 143–45.

the redemption of the Church draweth nigh . . . They see the fulness of the Gentiles flowing to her, and the kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ, until righteousness cover the earth, as the waters cover the great deep.<sup>117</sup>

In *Letters on missions* Horne rejected the argument that domestic missionary endeavour should take precedence over foreign missions. He claimed the two were interdependent and that an expansion in overseas work would strengthen Christian commitment at home.<sup>118</sup> Horne's dual concern for the redemption of the heathen at home and abroad was typical of the enthusiasm for global conversion which shaped missionary endeavour in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.<sup>119</sup> This concern to facilitate the global spread of the gospel is evident in the sermon preached before the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews in 1812. Horne argued that the conversion of 'the strange and friendless Jew' should be considered as a priority together with the redemption of the heathen.<sup>120</sup> In this atmosphere of millennial excitement the conversion of the Jews was regarded as an essential condition to fulfil the prophecies in Scripture.<sup>121</sup>

In 1820 Horne returned to Macclesfield to preach a sermon in support of the work of the Macclesfield Auxiliary Bible Society. His appointment as curate of St Stephen's in Salford in October 1817 meant that he was in reasonably close geographical proximity to Macclesfield.<sup>122</sup> Horne's interest in the work of this local branch of

<sup>117</sup> Horne, *Sermon preached at the parish church of St Andrew by the Wardrobe*, pp. 5, 8–9.

<sup>118</sup> The Reverend Thomas Scott, the first General Secretary of the CMS, made this point in a sermon preached on the first anniversary of the society: Piggin, *Making evangelical missionaries*, p. 114; *Missionary Magazine* featured an article which emphasised how work in foreign missions was beneficial to 'sinners at home', ii (1797), p. 74.

<sup>119</sup> Noll, *Evangelicalism*, p. 7; Walsh, "'Methodism" and the origins of English-speaking evangelicalism', pp. 19–20; Hempton, *Religion and society*, pp. 229–30; Taggart, 'Methodist foreign missions', p. 167; Ernest Payne, *Before the start: Steps towards the founding of the L. M. S.* (London, 1942), p. 15.

<sup>120</sup> Melvill Horne, *The great commandment of Moses and Christ. Recommended to Jews and Christians. A sermon preached January 22, 1812 at the parish church of St Andrew Wardrobe and St Ann, Blackfriars* (London, 1812).

<sup>121</sup> Piggin, *Making evangelical missionaries*, p. 145; Walsh, 'Methodism at the end of the eighteenth century', pp. 301–2.

<sup>122</sup> Lewis, *Blackwell dictionary*, pp. 572–73; Bishop's Act Book 1809–1825, CCALS, EDA 1/10 f. 109.

the British and Foreign Bible Society is entirely consistent with his promotion of missionary endeavour overseas. Formed in 1804, the Society was a pan-evangelical organisation dedicated to the distribution of bibles at home and abroad. To promote interdenominational co-operation and to avoid charges of sectarian interest, the Society agreed to distribute versions of the Bible that were publicly authorised without any comment added to the text. By 1825 Martin estimates that the Society had distributed over four million bibles translated into 140 languages, although its success engendered opposition from High Churchmen.<sup>123</sup>

This auxiliary society at Macclesfield was one of a large number of provincial societies formed after 1809.<sup>124</sup> Horne indicates in his address that he began work with the Society when it was in its infancy. He informed his audience that he had pledged a guinea to the Society, and expressed satisfaction that £80 had been raised from his congregation at Christ Church. At the Macclesfield Arms Hotel on 30 August 1820 Horne urged the members of the Bible Society to adopt a more robust approach in promoting its aims. As Horne's main objective was to revitalise this inert local organisation, he emphasised the importance of holding public annual meetings to raise money and to build up local and regional support. He emphasised the good work which could be accomplished through the distribution of the scriptures, and informed his audience of the rapid progress of missionary work overseas. Horne urged his audience to overcome their fears and to reject contemporary criticisms of the work of the Bible Society. He advised them that they had no reason to fear Episcopal or clerical opposition, and reassured them that the Society was non-denominational and apolitical.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Roger H. Martin, 'Anglicans and Baptists in conflict: The Bible Society, Bengal and the Baptizo controversy', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 49 (1998), p. 293; Martin, *Evangelicals united*, pp. 82–89, 92, 99–101; Piggin, *Making evangelical missionaries*, p. 18.

<sup>124</sup> Martin, *Evangelicals united*, p. 92.

<sup>125</sup> Melvill Horne, *An address delivered by the Rev. Melvill Horne at a public meeting of the Macclesfield Auxiliary Bible Society held in the assembly room of the Macclesfield Arms Hotel on Wednesday the 30th of August, 1820* (Macclesfield, 1820), pp. 3, 6, 9–12, 14–15, 21–26.

## IV

Horne's ministry at Christ Church coincided with the breakdown of the 'evangelical alliance' between Anglicans and Methodists in Macclesfield.<sup>126</sup> In local historiography Horne is often blamed for this breach.<sup>127</sup> Undoubtedly his abrasive, disputatious and hectoring style may have accelerated the split, but long-term structural weaknesses in the relationship between church and chapel were more significant than issues of personality.<sup>128</sup> A controversy concerning the doctrines preached in an upstairs room of the newly erected Sunday school in Macclesfield in 1818 highlights the polarised relations between Methodism and Anglicanism some seven years after Horne's departure.<sup>129</sup> Splits within Methodism in Macclesfield, linked to the activities of revivalist preachers, were also evident during Horne's ministry at Christ Church.<sup>130</sup> As Malmgreen recognises the split between Methodism and Anglicanism in Macclesfield should be seen as a long-term process over the period 1800 to 1830.<sup>131</sup>

The year of Horne's appointment to Christ Church coincided with a high Methodist growth rate nationally and, at a local level, the expansion of Wesley's Chapel in Sunderland Street was a reflection of the independence and self-confidence of the Methodist congregation.<sup>132</sup> Rose has demonstrated how Macclesfield had one of the highest concentrations of Methodists in Cheshire, a proportion significantly higher than the national average.<sup>133</sup> At a national level, demands for the right to administer the sacrament in Methodist chapels highlighted the changing dynamic between church and chapel in the period. After Wesley's death, calls for separation and questions of denominational identity were making it increasingly difficult to sustain the tradition of Church Methodism.<sup>134</sup> As Hempton recognises the Church of England in the period

<sup>126</sup> Rose, 'Methodism in Cheshire', p. 31.

<sup>127</sup> Smith, *Methodism*, p. 250; Sharples, *Christ Church*, p. 18.

<sup>128</sup> Piggin, *Making evangelical missionaries*, p. 105.

<sup>129</sup> *Report of the proceedings in the matter of the Macclesfield Sunday school*, pp. 5–9, 12, 14, 17–21, 41, 58.

<sup>130</sup> Hempton, *Religion of the people*, pp. 93–94; Malmgreen, *Silk town*, p. 153.

<sup>131</sup> Malmgreen, *Silk town*, p. 150.

<sup>132</sup> Hempton, *Methodism and politics*, p. 74; Malmgreen, *Silk town*, pp. 146–47.

<sup>133</sup> Rose, 'Methodism in Cheshire', p. 34.

<sup>134</sup> Ward, *Religion and society*, pp. 28–39; for a discussion of the influence of Church Methodism see Lloyd, "'Croakers and busybodies'".

between 1790 and 1830 was undermined by the rapid growth of Nonconformity, particularly Methodism which presented the most vigorous challenge.<sup>135</sup> These problems were particularly acute in a town such as Macclesfield. As an industrial community undergoing rapid change, Macclesfield typified the type of social and economic context in which Methodism made its most striking gains in the eighteenth century.<sup>136</sup>

Horne's missionary advocacy contributed to a growing contemporary acceptance of the Christian duty to proselytise heathen nations. As Horne preached in support of mission societies from his pulpit in Christ Church, members of the Macclesfield congregation may have shared his concern for the spiritual plight of heathen peoples. The frequent republication of *Letters on missions* indicates that Horne's work continued to have relevance for almost forty years after its original circulation. Horne's ideas on missions were disseminated at a local, national and international level and influenced the policy and practices of a number of early mission societies. Although Horne's work did not acquire the later reputation accorded to Carey's *Enquiry*, his views on missions were publicised and debated widely.

A consistent theme in Horne's varied career was his crusade against heathenism, idolatry and moral turpitude at home and abroad. Horne exemplified many of the defining traits of evangelical religion in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain. This is evident in his missionary activism, his belief in conversion and universal salvation, his reliance on the authority of the scriptures and his anti-Catholicism.<sup>137</sup> By the beginning of the nineteenth century Horne was one of a growing number of evangelical clergy within the Church of England.<sup>138</sup> However, Horne's Arminianism differentiated him from other evangelicals within the Anglican church who were typically Calvinistic in approach.<sup>139</sup> Many aspects of Horne's career correspond with

<sup>135</sup> Hempton, *Methodism and politics*, pp. 12, 55–58, 60; Hempton, 'Evangelicalism in English and Irish society', pp. 160, 162; Ward, *Religion and society*, p. 6.

<sup>136</sup> Hempton, 'Evangelicalism in English and Irish society', p. 158; Hempton, *Methodism and politics*, p. 15; Hempton, *Religion of the people*, pp. 7, 21, 51.

<sup>137</sup> Noll, *Evangelicalism*, pp. 6, 10; Hempton, *Methodism and politics*, p. 29.

<sup>138</sup> Noll, *Evangelicalism*, p. 122.

<sup>139</sup> Davies & Rupp, *History of the Methodist Church*, p. xxvi; Lloyd, 'Charles Wesley', p. 78.

Brian Stanley's assessment of the Evangelical Revival as 'a multi-faceted movement' which 'generated an absorbing passion for the spread of the gospel of the atoning death of Christ, a passion which found institutional embodiment in the welter of societies . . . dedicated to domestic evangelism and foreign mission'.<sup>140</sup>

Horne was alarmed by arithmetical calculations of the global number of heathen souls condemned to eternal perdition. In 1794, drawing on Carey's estimates, he pointed out that 'were the habitable world divided into thirty parts, nineteen would be claimed by the heathen, six would fall to the Mahometan, and five only would remain to be apportioned among the divided followers of the catholick Jesus'.<sup>141</sup> Horne was sensitive to the charge that he had relinquished his missionary pursuits in Africa, while urging others to take up this 'apostolick warfare'. In his defence Horne argued that it was better to have sustained wounds in the field of battle, than not to have participated at all.<sup>142</sup> Furthermore, Horne viewed his work in the home ministry as part of the global campaign against heathenism and vice. In his ministry in Macclesfield, and subsequently in Salford, Horne used the pulpit and the press to pursue his religious and moral priorities. His support for Auxiliary Bible societies bridged home and overseas missionary endeavour, and his preaching and publishing activities in Macclesfield highlight his efforts to promote religious revival and moral reformation. Horne's ministry in Macclesfield was eventful and influential, although this has been obscured by the attention given to his predecessor. His ministry at Christ Church provides a clear example of the evangelical dynamic in early nineteenth-century Britain, and sheds light on the issues which defined the relationship between church and chapel in a rapidly changing society.

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<sup>140</sup> Stanley, *The Bible and the flag*, p. 59.

<sup>141</sup> Horne, *Letters on missions*, p. 3.

<sup>142</sup> Horne, *Letters on missions*, pp. 91–93.

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