

Pardoning Love of God: The Life of Rev. Samuel Gates (1765-1821)



John Wesley (1703-1791)

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, had a profound effect on many people. Whilst researching the genealogy of my partner's maternal family I discovered her five times great grandfather, Samuel Gates, was one of these people. Not only that but, as an itinerant preacher, he was 'stationed' in Todmorden for the year 1805, and preached in Heptonstall Chapel, more of which later.

After preaching on new year's eve, 1781, at City Road Chapel (now Wesley's Chapel) which opened in 1778, John Wesley recorded in his diary,ⁱ

Sunday 31, We renewed our covenant with God: we had the largest company that I ever remember, perhaps two hundred more than we had last year: and we had the greatest blessing. Several received either a sense of the pardoning love of God, or power to love him with all their hearts.



Engraving of John Wesley preaching in the City Chapel, 1822, by T. BL Welcomeⁱⁱ



Inside Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London

It is highly likely Samuel Gates was present that new year's eve as this recording of his death implies:^{iii iv}

(3.) SAMUEL GATES; who obtained a clear manifestation of the pardoning love of GOD about the sixteenth year of his age. He entered upon the labours of a Travelling Preacher in the year 1787, and continued in that work, with zeal and diligence, till 1817, when he was obliged to desist from want of health. He settled in Thirsk, where he preached occasionally till near the time of his death. After suffering much affliction for about six weeks, he died in peace, Feb. 1st, 1821. Before his departure, he said to a friend, "I resign myself, and all my affairs, into the hands of the LORD."

Samuel Gates was born on 23rd October 1765 and baptised on 24th November that year at St Paul's Shadwell. Here is a picture of the old St Paul's, Shadwell, which was pulled down in about 1817 and rebuilt in the 1820's.



His father Richard, was a Line Spinner (attends to rope coiling machine) as Samuel, Richard and his mother, Ann, lived in New Gravel Lane, Shadwell (this is now called Garnett Street) it is just round

the corner from St Paul's as the following old map shows; John Wesley is known to have preached several times at St Paul's Shadwell. It also shows it is in the dock area (near Wapping) of East London. An 1832 street directory has eight beer makers or public houses in New Gravel Lane as well as a surgeon, butchers, hat makers, eating house, bottle porter, steam boiler makers, soap maker and bone merchant, grocer, rag dealer, etc.



Shadwell 1850

There would have been little prospects (apart from a life at sea) for a young boy from an uneducated background living in the dockland area of East London in the 18th century; it is unlikely he would have received any education. We know that many of the early Methodist itinerate preachers were uneducated and according to Elmer L. Towns,

Wesley wanted them to have a broad general knowledge and insisted they spend five hours each day in hard study. In 1745 he drew up a list of books covering practical and doctrinal divinity, philosophy, astronomy, poetry, history, etc. He went so far as to state the success of his preachers was in relation to their use of mental appeal in preaching.

We know that shortly after his conversion Samuel, along with some other young men “***who acted as exhorters***” visited the workhouses in London, “***with the laudable view of promoting, by prayer-meetings and other means of grace, the instruction and salvation of the poor inhabitants.***” In 1777 there were over forty workhouses across London, some housing around 50 mainly men but also women and children whilst other, larger ones, such as St George, Hanover Square housed 700; St Paul's Shadwell housed 350.

Samuel started preaching the gospel and it looks like he passed his probationary period because, “***...after due trial, [he] was put upon the Local Plan, in the London Circuit; on which he remained till the year 1787 when Mr WESLEY requested him to devote himself wholly to the work of the ministry, and appointed him as a Travelling Preacher to the Colchester Circuit.***”

John Wesley travelled around the country preaching and establishing local worshipping communities usually led by a lay person. These were sub-divided into classes which met weekly and supported members spiritually and pastorally. It quickly became necessary to build preaching houses where the revivalist Methodist meetings could be held (often later replaced with Methodist chapels).

The communities came together in Circuits and were connected to the national centralised body through the annual conference. Each Circuit was under the care of one or more minister. Ministers were appointed first to the Circuit and then to the pastoral care of the local churches. Preaching

appointments for ministers and lay preachers were organised by the Circuit and publicised in a three-monthly Preaching Plan. Appointments were usually for two years.

So we know Samuel 'learnt his trade' in London. We also know the different places he served with approximate dates. His first appointment was to the Colchester Circuit in 1787. From here he went to St Ives, 1788; then Macclesfield, 1789; Stockport, 1791; Thirsk, 1792; Wakefield, 1793; Leicester, 1794; and Ripon, 1795-96.

Samuel married Rachel Lapidge on 13th August 1794 at Ripon parish church (now Ripon Cathedral), suggesting he may already have been in Ripon in 1794.



Ripon Cathedral

Rachel was born in Leeds and baptised at Call Lane Arian Chapel but we know little about the Lapidge family: Rachel's father, William, was born at Bridge End, Leeds, which is just around the corner from Call Lane where the family went to church.



Old Leeds Bridge c. 1867

After Ripon Samuel and his new wife, and eventually nine children (although we do not know if they all lived), continued to move around the country: Keighley, 1797-98; Gainsborough, 1800; Lincoln,

1801; Otley, 1802-03; Todmorden, 1805; Burton upon Trent 1806; Howden ,1808-09; Doncaster, 1810; Easingwold, 1812-13; Pocklington, 1814-15; and Skipton, 1816.^v

The births of Samuel and Rachel’s children tie in with the places he preached: Samuel and his twin brother, William Lepage, were born in 1795 in Ripon; Benjamin, 1797, was probably born in Keighley; John Francis, 1800, York; Mary Ann 1802, Lincoln; James, 1804, Otley; Henry, 1806, Burton upon Trent; and Rachel Eliza, 1809 and George, 1810 were both born in Howden.

We shall take Todmorden as an example of one of his Circuits. The Circuit consisted of Todmorden, Heptonstall, Stocks, Sowerby and Luddenden. Samuel was one of nine preachers for the Circuit; as can be seen from the following plan which we accessed at West Yorkshire Archives in Halifax, Samuel preached most Sundays:

THE LORD'S DAY PLAN
Of the PREACHERS
In TODMORDEN CIRCUIT.

TIME		LORD'S DAY.		1805.—		Jan.		February		March		April		May		June											
F	A	E	PLACES.	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30		
10	1	7	Todmorden	2	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	
1	6		Heptonstall	1	2	5	12	19	26	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26	3	10	17	24	
9			Stocks	1	2	5	12	19	26	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26	3	10	17	24	
11	6		Sowerby	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26	3	10	17
9	1		Luddenden	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26	3	10	17	24	31	7	

PREACHERS

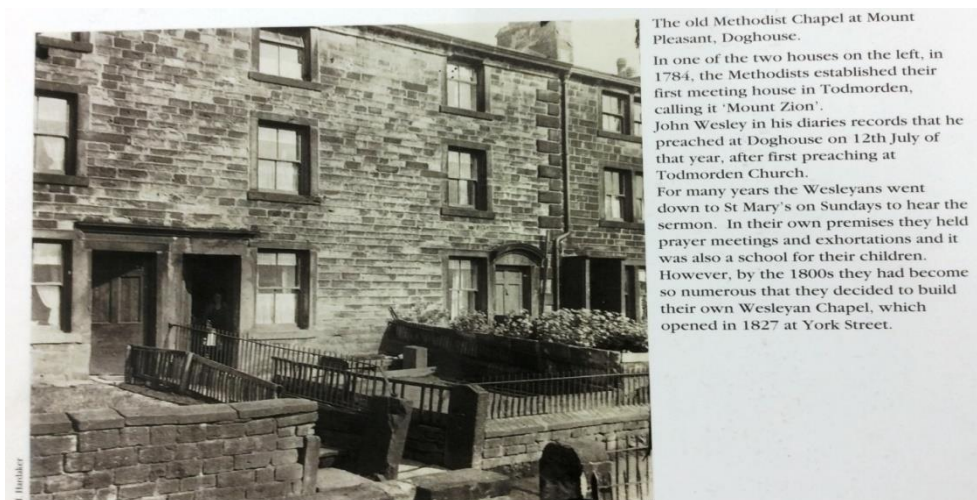
1 Samuel Gates	5 John Bates
2 Isaac Muff	6 John Firth
3 John Heap	7 William Whitaker
4 John Pickles	8 From Halifax

F, Forenoon—A, Afternoon—E, Evening—C, Quarterly Collection—L, Lovefeast—S, Sacrament—P, Preaching at two o'clock and none at ten—Meeting, June 27th, at Todmorden.—The time of letting the Seats in the Methodist Chapel at Todmorden, will be March 6th and May 6th—in Heptonstall Chapel, April 8th and June 10th—in Sowerby Chapel, at Midsummer.

Printed at Jacobs Office, Halifax.

Thanks to West Yorkshire Archives, Halifax

He would have walked from Todmorden to Heptonstall and onto Stocks. We are not sure where Stocks is but it would be near Heptonstall;^{vi} on another Sunday he would walk from Todmorden to Bolton Brow, Sowerby, where the original meeting house was and then onto Luddenden: there is now a children’s playground in Luddenden where the original Methodist meeting house was.



The old Methodist Chapel at Mount Pleasant, Doghouse Lane, Todmorden. In one of the two houses on the left, in 1784, the Methodists established their first meeting house in Todmorden, calling it 'Mount Zion'. John Wesley in his diaries records that he preached at Doghouse on 12th July of that year, after first preaching at Todmorden Church. For many years the Wesleyans went down to St Mary's on Sundays to hear the sermon. In their own premises they held prayer meetings and exhortations and it was also a school for their children. However, by the 1800s they had become so numerous that they decided to build their own Wesleyan Chapel, which opened in 1827 at York Street.

Methodist Chapel, Dog House Lane, Todmorden, Todmorden Album, People, Places and Events, Volume 3, Roger Birch

Here is a photograph of the Methodist preaching house where Samuel would have preached and lived with his family, in Todmorden, it was on the corner of Dog House Lane and Pleasant View (it was pulled down and now there are a couple of semi-detached houses – interestingly we looked at one of them several years ago!)

The notes by the side of the photo tell us Samuel’s children would have gone to school here, it was probably a similar set up at the other places Samuel was stationed.

We are lucky in that the wonderful octagonal Methodist chapel in Heptonstall is still in use:



Heptonstall Methodist Chapel



Inside Heptonstall Chapel

Here is the old Methodist Chapel in Skipton where my partner was born and where Samuel would have preached, it is now flats:



Skipton Chapel, Chapel Hill

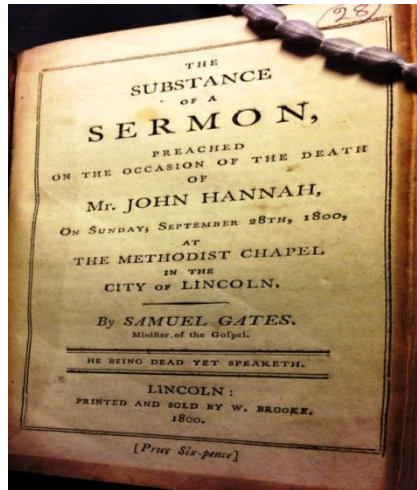
It seems highly likely Embsay, where my partner's family live, would have been included in the Skipton circuit.

Samuel clearly did not consider himself to be as learned as some of his colleagues as he states in the introduction to a sermon he preached on 28th September 1800 at the Methodist Chapel in Lincoln:

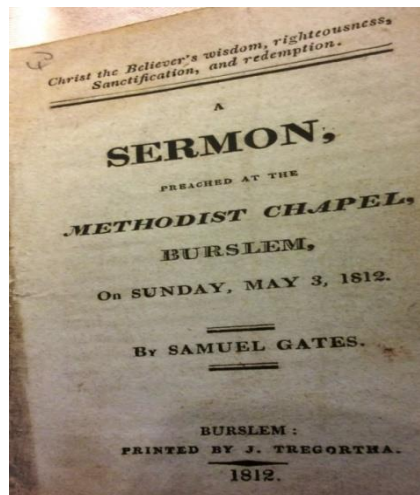
TO THE READER

When I preached the following sermon, it was without the least intention of its ever appearing before the public; being conscious of my inability to write discourses to bear the inspection of the learned, and the wise; but through the earnest desire of my friends, I venture to send it forth; in hopes of its being made useful to some who may think it worth their reading. Perhaps some persons, into whose hands this discourse may come, will think I have said too much respecting the deceased. It is too common, at the present day, for some who call themselves Christians, to deny the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; with the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sin: and to give the name of fanatic, to those who vindicate that important doctrine of the gospel. Some on the other hand, who have experienced a real change of heart and life, and were intimately acquainted with our worthy friend; may think I have not said enough. I am sensible much more might be said in his praise, but to multiply words respecting that which was so evident and plain to the public at large, to me appears needless. But thus much I can say, he was a man of good report, and much esteemed both by the pious and prophane. In all the places where we preach, his name is mentioned with love and respect. But when all is said he was only a man, not an angel, he had his infirmities as well as other men. Let us who are left behind strive to follow him, so far as he followed Christ, but no further; then we shall meet him in heaven. May God give unto me, and all into whose hands this sermon may come, grace to live to him, and for him and crown us all with glory in the end, for Christ's sake. Amen.

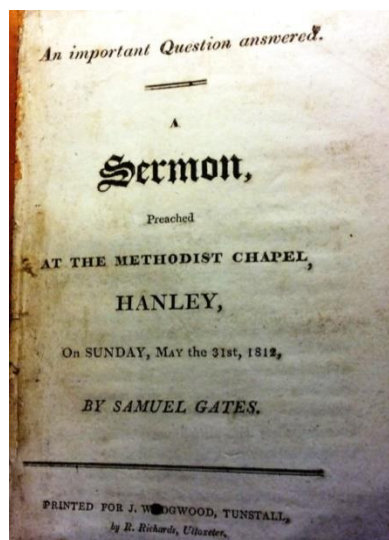
Here is the frontispiece for the sermon:



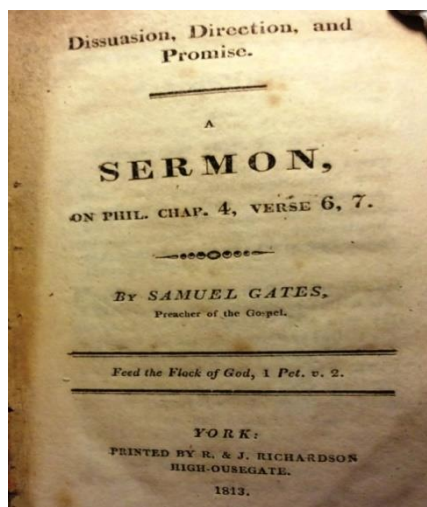
Samuel recorded three other sermons for posterity, they, along with the above, are held at The John Rylands Library in Manchester. Here are the frontispieces of the other three, the first, 3rd May 1812, was at Swan Bank Burslem Methodist Chapel, built in 1801:^{vii}



The next was at the Methodist Chapel in Hanley:^{viii}



The final one, delivered in 1813 was probably in Easingwold, North Yorkshire, midway between York and Thirst.



Swan Bank Wesleyan Chapel, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent, photograph c.1890

None of the original chapels are still standing but here is a photograph of the one at Burslem before it was taken down.

An interesting snippet: Between 1803 and 1807 Samuel made at least five annual donations of £12 (£12 in 1803 is worth over £1,000 now) to the Methodist school Kingswood which is near Bristol and was founded by John Wesley in 1748.^{ix} We do not know for certain whether any of Samuel and Rachel's children went there; but as they are not included in the register it seems unlikely.

According to his obituary, Samuel stopped travelling and settled in Thirsk in 1817:

During the last year of his itinerancy, his work was more than his strength could bear. Having to walk round his Circuit, his constitution was injured by excessive fatigues. He therefore desisted from travelling, and settled at Thirsk; where he continued to preach on the Sabbath-days generally, and on other days occasionally, nearly till the time of his departure.

Samuel died on 27th February 1821:

Towards the close of his life, he described himself, at his class-meeting, as happy in the enjoyment of fellowship with his God, and filled with resignation to the wise disposals of his providence.

Being seized with apoplexy, he was for a time relieved by the usual means; but a dropsical [oedema] affection followed, and in about six weeks apoplectic symptoms [stroke] again occurred. As he did not seem to be aware that his dissolution was near, a friend informed him that the doctor said he was near his end. He answered, "Well! I resign myself, and all my affairs into the LORD's hands;" and after speaking these words, he quietly fell asleep in JESUS. P. HARDCASTLE, Thirsk, Feb 27th 1821. ^x

Samuel, his wife Rachel and his son, Samuel, are buried at St Mary's Thirsk; it seems likely the writing on his stone has worn away but we know they are buried there thanks to The Revd. John Ward in his book "Methodism in the Thirsk Circuit," and also thanks to Simon Williamson of St James' Green Methodist Church, Thirsk.^{xi}

BURIALS in the Parish of <i>Thirsk</i> in the County of <i>York</i> in the Year 1821				
Name.	Abode.	When buried.	Age.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
<i>Samuel Gates</i> No. 401.	<i>Thirsk</i>	<i>February 4th</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>W. Robinson</i>

<i>Rachel Gates</i> No. 457.	<i>Thirsk</i>	<i>June 8th</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>J. Holmes</i>
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<i>Samuel Gates</i> No. 370.	<i>Thirsk</i>	<i>July 8th</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>J. Holmes</i>
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St Mary's Thirsk

It must have been hard for Samuel and Rachel to lose their son at age 25; it is also interesting that Rachel, his wife, died only a year after Samuel and they were both 55 years of age. I have not been able to find any information about most of their children with the exception of Samuel mentioned above, William Lapage Gates (1795-1877) and Henry Gates (1806-1885).

William Lapage Gates (1795-1877) married Sarah Reynolds in 1821 at St Peter's, Leeds; Sarah was born in Oxford Street, London, but we know nothing else about her family. William began work as a hatter in Thirsk but in about 1841 the family moved to Gargrave where William took up the position of lock keeper at Higher Land Lock.



Higher Land Lock, Gargrave

It seems likely William may have got the idea of becoming a lock keeper when he lived with his parents and siblings in Skipton in 1816 as this is when the Skipton branch of the Leeds Liverpool canal opened.

William and his family later moved to Greenber Fields Locks at Barnoldswick.



Greenberfield Lock

William and Sarah had at least five children, his second son, Charles Henry, continued the tradition and became a lock keeper at Dowley Gap; both William and Charles Henry served 30 years each as lock keepers. William died in 1877 aged 81.



Woodhouse Grove School

Henry Gates (1806-1885) Henry attended Woodhouse Grove Methodist school in Aire Valley just north of Bradford.^{xii xiii} Woodhouse Grove opened in 1812. Given none of their other male children attended it suggests George and James and maybe John Francis did not live long enough to go to school? Henry's name is in the register and beside it it says chemist.

Henry married Elizabeth Bosomworth in 1833 at St Mary, Newington, Surrey. Elizabeth came from Wath Mill just north of Pateley Bridge North Yorkshire originally and clearly met Henry in London, probably when Henry was training as a chemist and druggist. They had at least four children: Mary Ann born 1838 in Southwark; Emma born 1839; Ellen, born 1841; and Samuel Henry, born 1843 – 1855, all were born in Kingston-upon-Hull. By 1851 the family had moved to Louth in Lincolnshire; but ten years later they were back in Hull where they stayed. It appears Henry went bankrupt in 1861 hence the move back to Hull but he continued to practice as a chemist and druggist as the 1871 census shows – he is living with his wife, grandson, (Emma's son) and lodger, John Ruff, shopman, and a servant, Fanny Parsons at 10 Coburg Terrace. It seems Coburg Terrace was a line of "elegant houses and mansions."^{xiv} It suffered a direct hit in 1941 and was demolished in 1946. There was still a chemist at 10 Coburg Terrace in 1892.^{xv} Henry died in Hull aged 78. It would seem only one of their children survived, Emma, who married a widower, John William Gould who was 16 years older than Emma and already had five children before having a further three with Emma.

To conclude, here is an extract from one of his sermons:

Jan Bridget, August 2019

ⁱ *The Works of John Wesley, Volume V.*

ⁱⁱ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wesley%27s_Chapel

ⁱⁱⁱ *Minutes of the Methodist Conferences from the First, held in London, The Late, Rev John Wesley, A.M. in the year 1744, Volume V. p.200*

^{iv} <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=7xoRAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&pg=GBS.PA200>

^v The John Rylands Library has an excellent collection of Methodist documents including *The Wesleyan Methodist Itinerary or an alphabetical arrangement of the circuit Great Britain with names of the ministers who have travelled in them, each year, from the commencement*, Rev Joseph Hall, 1873 which has been digitised.

^{vi} It could be Stocks farm, Midgely.

^{vii} <http://www.thepotteries.org/chapel/003.htm>

^{viii} http://www.thepotteries.org/church/hanley/high_st_meth.htm

^{ix} https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingswood_School

^x Wesleyan Methodist Magazine 1821.

^{xi} Email correspondence, 21st August 2019.

^{xii} <https://archive.org/details/historykingswoo00schogooog/page/n528>

^{xiii} https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woodhouse_Grove_School

^{xiv} <https://www.carnegiehull.co.uk/the-anlaby-road/history/anlaby-road-history-06.html>

^{xv} https://www.carnegiehull.co.uk/the-anlaby-road/Resources/directories/Bulmers_1892_Directory.pdf