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A FIFTH MONARCHIST APPEAL AND THE RESPONSE OF AN INDEPENDENT CHURCH AT CANTERBURY, 1653

With the keen interest in radical Puritanism in recent years, much has been learned about Fifth Monarchists, their activities, and their relationships with other churches and sects during the turbulent 1650s.¹ These zealous Christians who sought to put an end to tyranny and idolatry in English life, banded together with a religious and political programme preparing for the imminent return of King Jesus. Finding their focus in a well-established tradition of English millenarianism, they hoped to bring about the kingdom of Christ on earth, a theocratic regime in which they as saints would bear rule. Fifth Monarchists were energetic in pressing their views and, some, potentially violent in their means, and the support they won from Independent and Baptist gathered churches was significant in many places.

A good example of the manner in which Fifth Monarchists endeavoured to persuade people and even enlist entire congregations in their cause is to be found in what appears to be a circular letter to churches written in March 1653. Fortunately, the contents of the letter were copied into the church book of a gathered church in Canterbury, which also includes a copy of the church's generally favourable response just four days later, indicating a sense of urgency in the reply. Both letters have gone unnoticed by historians and seem to represent the only example of a Fifth Monarchist circular letter (with a congregation's detailed reply) recorded in the few surviving Baptist and Independent church books from this period.

It is not surprising to learn that such a letter to gathered churches circulated in the early period of the movement's activity. Rather than an identifiable party or denomination, the men and women who longed for the fulfilment of their millenarian hopes comprised a pressure group which received support from Baptist, Independent, and other gathered congregations. The letter demonstrates the degree to which Fifth Monarchist leaders relied upon the broad-based co-operation of churches, especially since the leadership of the new regime would, in theory, be drawn from them.² It was also written during a time of great expectation; within a month, on 20th April, the first aim of the Fifth Monarchists was realized when Cromwell dissolved the Rump and began to lay plans for the Barebone's Parliament, thus raising the hopes of millenarians throughout England.

Following two unsatisfactory meetings with Cromwell to press for more complete reforms shortly after the victory at Worcester, Fifth Monarchist leaders appear first to have organised their common concerns at a meeting during the end of December 1651 at All Hallows the Great, a parish church in Thames Street, London. Christopher Feake, the source of this information, did not mention the names of those present but he, John Simpson and Henry Jessey were weekday lecturers at All Hallows. The result of this meeting was 'Six General Heads of Prayer' which outlined their programme.³ Independent leaders were initially interested in these efforts but soon 'fell off' because of the more belligerent attitudes of men like Feake, Simpson and some Army officers. According to Feake, a new start was needed and during the summer and autumn of 1652 the group met several times at London House and Blackfriars.⁴ It was probably at these meetings that the plan for inter-congregational co-operation outlined in the letter below was conceived, an unfolding plan which would evidently require additional communication with churches.

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The signatories of the Fifth Monarchist letter include several of the early prominent leaders. Christopher Feake (1612-c.1683) was the most important leader in London from 1651 to 1660. An outspoken millenarian, arrested on several occasions, he was vicar of Christ Church, Newgate, and lecturer at St Anne's, Blackfriars, from 1649; he also ministered to a gathered church in Swan Alley and Warwick Lane.⁵ Next to Feake, John Simpson (fl.1642-d.1662) was the second most influential Fifth Monarchist leader until he moderated his views and withdrew his congregation from the hardliners (like Feake) during the summer of 1656. He was rector of St Botolph's, Aldgate (where he maintained an open communion congregation of Independents and Baptists), and lecturer at All Hallows the Great.⁶ Simpson had become a Baptist in the early 1640s, and perhaps his closest friend during these years was Henry Jessey (1601-1663), an open-communion Calvinistic Baptist and pastor of the Jacob-Lathrop congregation in Southwark since 1637. Though an active Fifth Monarchist, Jessey (like Simpson) withdrew from the hardliners in 1657.⁷ Vavasor Powell (1617-1670) was the leading protagonist of Fifth Monarchy views in Wales and, though quietist in his beliefs, was vigorous in his criticism of the Cromwellian establishment.⁸ Captain John Spencer (fl.1639-1682), a Baptist 'tub preacher' as early as 1639, was also involved in 1652 but remained loyal to the Protectorate and was identified with the moderate, non-violent leadership of the Fifth-Monarchy movement.⁹ George Cokayn (1620-1691), a prominent Independent minister at St Pancras, Soper Lane, was deeply involved with London Fifth Monarchists prior to the Protectorate but then withdrew following the political turmoil concerning the movement in December 1653.¹⁰ Captain Edward Cary (fl.1652-1683), a 'notorious plotter', was a brewer in Southwark and among the most active and militant Fifth Monarchists.¹¹ And Loach Bankes was probably the 'Bankes' present in 1655 when Cromwell examined Feake, Thomas Harrison and John Rogers.¹² Thus far, Thomas Hubbert, Jonathan Pickes, Richard Pemble, Joseph Strange, John Draper, Thomas Barret, John Proud, Edward Middleton, and Robert Davie have not been identified but their names can now be included among known Fifth Monarchists.

The tendency for some persons to form somewhat tenuous links with, for example, the Fifth Monarchists can be illustrated in another way, symptomatic of the spiritual and political mobility of the age. Jessey, Simpson, Powell and Spencer (signatories of the letter) were all rebaptised as adults but remained on the edge of Baptist life otherwise, forming no intimate ties with organised Calvinistic Baptists. The letter may reflect the open-communion sympathies of some of these leaders, as well.

The Independent congregation at Canterbury was gathered in February 1646. Its first pastor, John Durant (1620-1689), was ordained on 27th May 1646 in the presence of messengers from congregations at Dover and Sandwich, also first gathered in 1646. Durant remained the church's minister until his death in February 1689; he was buried at St George's where he had been rector from 1649 until his ejection in 1660.¹³ The congregation was instrumental in the formation of a second church in Canterbury in February 1647, one at Staplehurst in 1648, and one at Adisham in 1649 - all Independent congregations. The other signatories of Canterbury's letter of response were officers and prominent members of the congregation.

It is not clear to what extent Fifth Monarchist ideas had affected each gathered church in Kent. The county was, however, one of the areas where Fifth Monarchists had established a strong foothold. Evidence later than that of these letters bears this out. In August 1653 several J.P.s from Kent presented a millenarian address to the new Barebone's Parliament.¹⁴ A declaration of 1654,

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to which 142 Fifth Monarchists put their signatures, stated: 'And for subscriptions out of the Countries (not withstanding the hundreds out of Kent) they are also omitted, on purpose, to leave it to the Churches in their several Counties to bear their own testimony'.¹⁵

The evidence presented in these two letters is significant in what it tells us about Fifth Monarchist activities, the attitude of gathered churches to the new movement, and the practice of congregational theories of consociation. First, the London letter sheds additional information about Fifth Monarchist attempts to organise meetings of messengers sent by gathered churches. When compared with other Fifth Monarchist manifestoes, the language in the letter is mild, seeking common ground in the advancement of Christ's kingdom. In March 1653, however, the Rump was still sitting and the movement had yet to encounter the severe disillusionment that would come with the speedy compromises (and ultimate failure) of the Barebone's Parliament and the establishment of the Protectorate. Secondly, the response from Canterbury is also of interest in its mild, conciliatory tone. This probably reflects the early date of the letter as well as the fact that Jessey and Cokayn had signed the document, two men of moderate views with cordial relationships with Independent leaders. It stands in striking contrast, for example, to the circular letter issued on 9th January 1654 (little more than nine months later when the national scene had changed significantly) by John Owen, Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye and Sidrach Simpson to warn against Fifth Monarchist schemes and 'to clere our selves before the Churches & the world from any participation in that judgement & endeavor'.¹⁶ They acknowledged their several discussions with Fifth Monarchists in London and feared the potentially disruptive consequences for churches throughout the country.

Before the church at Canterbury would assent to sending messengers to London, however, it put forward certain conditions - despite the mutual recognition as saints. While the response contained millenarian language similar to the Fifth Monarchists and consistent with much Puritan rhetoric (this is notable in that nowhere else in the church book is such language present), the church was willing to support the efforts of the London group only if its programme would be confined to gospel rather than political matters, in full co-operation with the government. In addition, the church wanted further clarification of Fifth Monarchist activities, and some sort of preliminary meeting of churches where four proposed heads of agreement might be reached concerning inter-congregational relationships - particularly 'how farr both churches & saints (differing in some things) both may & ought to agree'. This cautious attitude, anticipating the Savoy Conference (1658), was entirely consistent with Independent theories of consociation, intended to promote mutual encouragement and edification while still preserving the autonomous authority of the gathered church. There is no additional evidence in the church book to indicate a Fifth Monarchist reply or that such a meeting of churches took place.

I

The undated letter from the 'Messengers of many churches in & about London' is as follows. It was read to a meeting of the congregation at Canterbury on 27th March 1653 and copied into the church book.¹⁷

Deare Bretheren beloved in the Lord Jesus.
The glorious manifestations of the power & goodnes of our god in these latter dayes, hath sounded loud in our eares, that not only the trouble of Babylon but

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Syons glory is at hand. Which occasioned the meeting of many said members of churches in & about the City, which thought it their duty not to bee idle while the Lord was this gloriously werking. In which meeting (was above an year since) 6 things weer agreed upon to bee solemnly sought for of the Lord: which in our apprehensions might much conduce to the carrying on of this great worke.

- 1: That our Lord Jesus his Kingdome & interest may bee advanced every way, & that whatsoever opposeth may bee cast downe.
- 2: That the Lord would thrust forth Labourers into his harvest for the gathering in all his elect Jewes & Gentiles. And that all wolfes, false prophets, & loyterours may be outed.
- 3: That the Magistrates from the highest to the lowest, may be men fearing god, hating [MS wormhole], men of courage, & men of truth, both heer & through out the world.
- 4: That the Lord would poure forth his spirit of grace & truth upon all that feare & love him; soe as that they all may bee united, & worship him with our consent according to truth.
- 5: That all the good & lawfull vowes & promises that weer made before the Lord, by the Parliament or the Army, or our selves, in the day of trouble may bee duely & really performed.
- 6: That the Lord would soe direct & dispose of the proceedings of the Parliament with the Embassadors from Holland & other Countryes. And the proceedings in England, Scotland & Ireland as may bee most for his owne glory & the generall good of all men.

And heerin wee purposed (the Lord assisting) not to bee silent or give him rest. In the pursuit of which the Lord carryed us on almost for the space of one whole yeare (though through many difficultyes yet) with the precious manifestations of his presence in the midst of us. Which gave us encouragement to enquire what was our further worke. Heer upon severall of the churches, who had cordially joyned thus farr in seeking of the Lord, have unanimously chosen out from each of them messengers, & impowred them to meet together to consult with the Lord & each other, in order to the propagation of the Gospell of Jesus christ, & for the increasing of love among the churches & all the Saints: & that they might know the mind of the Lord therein.

Now the churches (who soe sent their messengers) have of late solemnly sought the Lord; & therupon have sent in by way of proposall what they judged to bee the answer of the Lord upon their hearts in order to the propagation of the Gospell. Some of which proposalls wherin wee all agreed with one accord are heer presented, namely.

1. That wee all with one accord pray without ceasing, & wayt for the pouring out of the spirit.
2. That the gift of prophesye bee coveted, encouraged, & constantly exercised in every church & in any meeting of the churches.
3. That these prophets, and teachers whom the Lord shall call unto his worke, be set a part by those respective churches wherof they are members by fasting & prayer commending them to the grace of God, & soe to bee sent forth in the name of the Lord Jesus christ.
4. That those who shall bee soe sent forth applye themselves to preach such truths of Christ as tend unto the conversion of soules, rather then points less necessarye: And that care bee taken for their maintenance.
5. That the teachers in severall churches doe provoke parents, & Governors of families to educate those under their charge & care, in the nurture & admonition of the Lord. And that especiall care bee taken that ther may bee godly Schoolmasters who

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may diligently teach & instruct children in the holy scriptures, & other good learning, not teaching any prophane Authors.

The rest (now under consideration) when concluded on, shall bee (the Lord willing) communicated to you. Wee have given you this account of our whole proceedings, being desirous, to invite with all Love, the severall churches of christ, that are sound in the faith, & fellowship of the Gospell, to a conjunction, & concurrence with us in this Heavenly designe (suitable to the primitive practise) of which number it is meet for us to judge you to be.

And therefore wee the Messengers of those churches, & in that capacity with ther consent, & in their name salute you most affectionately in the Lord. Earnestly desiring you to take this matter into your most serious consideration, and to spread this our Epistle before the Lord, & the whole church; And if the Lord hath or heerupon shall make the like impressions upon your spirits That then you would (with what convenient speed you can) owne the Lord, & [go] soe farr as to let us hear from you either by writing or (which if our God & yours should bring to passe wee should moore rejoyce in) by sending some of your Number as the messengers of the church, & the glory of christ to contribute what wisdome & experience the Lord hath furnished you withall, for the further promoting with us this Honourable service, soe acceptable to christ & soe conducing to the lifting up his name in the world. Thus testifying our readines to receive you (either messengers or letters) in the Lord: wee recommend you and all the churches of the saints to himself & the word of his grace, which is able to build you up further, & to give you an inheritance, amongst those who are sanctified, among whom wee alsoe are through grace

Your Brethren & Companions in the
the faith & worke of the Gospell

Tho. Hubbert	H. Jessey	Christ. Feake	John Sympson
Jonathan Pickes	Georg Cockayn	Vavator Powell	Loach Bankes
Rich. Pemble	Edward Carey	John Spencer	Jos. Strange
John Draper	Tho. Barret	John Proud	
Edward Middlton	Rob. Davie		

II

The response of the church at Canterbury, probably penned by Durant, was read to a meeting of the congregation on 31st March 1653 and copied into the church book.

Dearly beloved, & our much esteemed Brethren in Christ Jesus.

Amidst those sad thoughts of heart, which wee have had by reason of the aboundance of the iniquitye of palpable sinnes; & the waxing cold of the love of professing saints; in this last houre of this world: It hath been noe small refreshing to us, to consider that yet the Lord hath a remnant of faithfull ones, who as vergins keep themselves pure; & follow him with a full spirit even through the wildernes in which wee yet are. In the number of which it is meet for us to judge you to bee. And over all the Land, but likewise by your godly & loving epistle lately sent unto us: upon perusall & consideration of which wee are drawn forth to returne unto you thus.

1. That wee doe fully close & consent with you in these pious petitions. (an account of which you have given us.) And wee rejoyce to see the identity & samnes of impressions upon your hearts & ours: with reference unto those

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- great & glorious things which wee are confident are in the heart & designe of our Father to performe: and which therefore ought to bee in yours & ours (yea & all his children) hearts to pant after, & to pray for.
2. That it is [a] matter of much rejoycing unto us that god hath soe far kept you from that unchristian & unbrotherly spirit of distance (which is both the sin & shame of this age) as that you can & doe sweetly assemble, & agree together in the great (& now necessarye) thing, of the Gospell in order to the right & pure propagation therof. Albeit is some things at least comparatively [some] of you neither see nor thinke the same. Verily heerin you obey that councill & command of walking by the same rule, of the uniting the same thing, in that whereunto yee have already attained.
 3. That heerupon our hearts are drawn forth, & bee made free in our spirit to lay before you what is likewise after then impressed upon us to add as things wee conceive of [mainly?] (& at this tyme absolute consernment) to bee prayed for & earnestly pressed after by all the saints, namely.
 - 1: That all who fear god in the 3 Nations may have their eyes opened to see, & consider. And their hearts bowed & drawn forth to owne the Lord in all his many & marvelous providences, & appearances in the midst of us: least that sad complaint bee too justly taken up against us which Moses sometymes laid upon Israel Deut. 29.2.3.4.
 - 2) That all those great & blessed priviledges & rights (both spirituall and civill) which wee have now for many yeares prayed unto Almighty god for, And bought with soe vast an expence of treasure, sweat & blood may bee firmly settled & established amongst us.
 - 3: That all the saints may with power bee sweetly & syncerly wrought up to the expectation of, hastening unto, longing after, & preparing for the day of the appearing of the Lord Jesus, whom now shall come againe the second tyme unto salvation: in whose day the whole creation shall be restored; & delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious libertye of the children of God.
 - 4: That all our governors & rulers; that our Armyes & soldiers; that our churches (yea & all saints) may have that other pretious publeke spirit of Caleb & Joshua to follow god fully in all his designes & providences. And not to aime only at, nor to thinke of resting contentedly in the enjoyment of any reformation or establishment amongst our selves. But to mind, & pray for, & set themselves to promote the universall accomplishment of prophecyes unto the utmost end of the earth.

These things at present are upon our hearts, & wee are encouraged to hint them unto you & being confident of that spirit of charity & candor in which they shall bee received & adjudged of by you. As to your motion (in which you seem earnest) of sending some Messengers unto you. Tho it bee a thing agreeing

with our desires, yet at present wee cannot satisfye ourselves nor [consent] therin. Not withstanding wee doe humbly conceive a generall meeting of all the churches (by their Messengers) would bee a thing of grand import & advantage to the designe of the glory of christ & the gospell (if our good god shall bee pleased to bring it to passe). In relation unto which wee humbly offer to your very serous consideration our thoughts on this matter viz. If you are free & judge it meet, that

- 1: Your selves (the messengers of many churches now together) draw up & publish in print a short & clear account of your present councills & meetings by which you shall much right yourselves in taking of surmise & slanders unjustly taken up & scattered consarning you.

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- 2: That to this you add a motion to all the churches of saints who walke in under (tho of some different apprehensions) that all (or as many as God shall make bee) would declare their willingness to meet together in some convenient tyme to consult together about the things of the faith, & Kingdome of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3: That it bee particularly declared that (as to the maine of the Councell) 4 heads shall be distinctly treated of viz.
 - 1: What truths of the common salvation all the churches mutually agree in, & hold forth as their confession.
 - 2: What errors we cannot allow of, or bear in any of our churches for as much as wee find both commendation, & reproofe from christ to churches of Asia upon this account. [Revelation?].2
 - 3: How farr for the peace of the churches & saints (who have noe custome, nor allowance to bee contentious) the rule of having faith in our self is to bee pressed & practised both in saints & churches.
 - 4: Where & how farr both churches & saints (differing in some things) both may & ought to agree, & walk together in mutuall fellowship in ordinances & order.

Wee conceive if our deare & wise Lord, would incline & bow the spirits of all congregations to have a councell upon these particulars, that the effect of it would bee (as of that Act.15) the establishment of the churches in the faith, & their increase in number dayly.

And wee perswade ourselves that the present Parliament, would neither hinder, nor take amisse, the motion of [yours?], or meeting of such a councell. Especially when they weer acquainted wth the same before hand, & desired (in case they would please) to bee any of them present in such a meeting at any debates (as wee desire they may bee)

Wee further add that a councell or meeting of this nature set on foot by & from churches firstly & mostly to bee more Gospell like, & lesse state-like, then formerly have been, & upon that account wee have hopes of better successe. But wee leave the whole to you to judge of, & proceed in as christ shall lead you forth. In the interim wee commend you to the grace, & protection of that god whom you serve in your spirits, prayers, & councells. And wee assure you that wee are ready, & shall bee, to entertaine, & hold fellowship with you in all spirituall things, wherin christ shall act [through] you & satisfye us, who are

Your friends & Brethren & fellow servants
in & for christ our Lord & yours.

subscribed in the name of the
church

John Durant Will. Reynolds Zach. Lee Will Jones Hen. Knight

NOTES

1. See especially B. S. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men: A Study in Seventeenth-Century English Millenarianism*, 1972; and Capp, 'The Fifth Monarchists and Popular Millenarianism', in J. F. McGregor and B. Reay, eds. *Radical Religion in the English Revolution*, Oxford 1984, pp.165-189.
2. Capp, 'Fifth Monarchists', p.173.
3. Christopher Feake, *A Beam of Light, Shining in the midst of much Darkness and Confusion*, 1659, pp.41f. This is the meeting and the '6 things' referred to in the text of the letter. The two lists are essentially the same in content, except that while the letter prays for godfearing magistrates and faithful labourers to bring in the harvest (nos. 2 and 3), *A Beam of Light* is more pointed in that it prays that 'all Corrupt, Wicked, and ungodly Magistrates might be removed' and that 'the Idle, Ignorant and Scandalous Ministry might be laid aside, and put out of their respective Parishes'.
4. *Ibid.* p.45; Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, p.59. For a first-hand glimpse of what these meetings were like, see William Erbery, *The Bishop of London*, 1652. Erbery attended a pair of meetings at London House in November 1652 and, while impressed with Vavasor Powell, he was very distressed by what Simpson and others had to say about prayer - Erbery finding it too prelatical and presbyterial, relying on confession and set forms, rather than the freedom of the spirit.
5. Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, pp.248f.; R. L. Greaves and R. Zaller, eds. *Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals in the Seventeenth Century*, 3 vols., Brighton 1982-4, hereafter BDBR.
6. Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, p.262; BDBR; A. G. Matthews, ed., *Calamy Revised*, Oxford 1934, 1988, p.443; *The Old Leaven Purged Out*, 1658.
7. *Calamy Revised*, pp.298f.; BDBR; *The Life and Death of Mr Henry Jessey*, n.p., 1671; B. R. White, 'Henry Jessey and the Great Rebellion' in R. Buick Knox, ed. *Reformation, Conformity and Dissent: Essays in honour of Geoffrey Nuttall*, 1977, pp.132-53; and P. J. Anderson, 'Letters of Henry Jessey and John Tombes to the Churches of New England, 1645', BQ 28, 1979, pp.30-40.
8. Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, p.259; BDBR; G. F. Nuttall, *The Welsh Saints, 1640-1660*, Cardiff 1957.
9. Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, p.262ff.; BDBR.
10. Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, p.246; BDBR; *Calamy Revised*, p.124.
11. Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, p.246; BDBR. Cary's involvement with the movement prior to 1663 was, however, unknown to Dr Capp.
12. Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, p.107.
13. For Durant, see BDBR; *Calamy Revised*, p.173; G. F. Nuttall, 'Dissenting Churches in Kent before 1700', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 14, 1963, p.180. Durant's millenarian sympathies were evident in a book written the same year as the exchange of letters, *The Salvation of the Saints*, 1653, esp. pp.184ff. For the history of the Canterbury church in relation to other gathered churches during these years, see P. J. Anderson, 'Presbyterianism and the Gathered Churches in Old and New England, 1640-1662: The Struggle for Church Government in Theory and Practice', University of Oxford D.Phil. thesis 1979, pp.198-240.
14. *Mercurius Politicus*, no.165 (4-11 August 1653), p.2636, as cited by Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, p.273.
15. *A Declaration of several of the Churches of Christ and Godly People in and about the Citie of London: Concerning the kingly Interest of Christ, and the present Sufferings of His Cause and Saints in England*, 1654, sig.D, verso. This treatise was printed in *Transactions of the Baptist*

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Historical Society, 3, 1912-3, pp.129-53. In April 1657, Secretary Thurloe made note of two agents in Kent in relation to a recent Fifth Monarchist plot (*The State Papers of John Thurloe*, T. Birch, ed., 1742, vi, 187). 16. Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. Carte 81, fols.16 recto-17 verso. This letter is printed in Peter Toon, ed., *The Correspondence of John Owen (1616-1683): With an Account of his Life and Work*, Cambridge 1970, pp.66-8. The encroachment of Fifth Monarchists upon Independent churches is seen most clearly in East Anglia. For a protracted controversy there between late 1655 and the end of 1656, see *State Papers of John Thurloe*, iv, 329f., 472f., 581f., 687f.; v. 187f., 219f.; *Mercurius Politicus*, no.301 (13-20 March 1655[6]), pp.6029f.; 'The Church Book belonging to a Society of Christians who assemble for divine Worship at the Old Meeting Norwich', Dr Williams's Library, London, Harmer MS.76.1.pp.39ff.; 'The Entire Records of a Congregational Church

at Great Yarmouth', Dr Williams's Library, Harmer MS.76.2, pp.86f.; Anderson, 'Presbyterianism and the Gathered Churches', pp.225f. On the whole, Independent congregations were much more successful in resisting Fifth Monarchist overtures than were their Baptist contemporaries.

17. 'History of the church of Christ which was first gathered & settled in the citye of Canterbury) in the way and order of the Gospell Anno Domini chr.1645[6]', Cathedral Archives and Library, Canterbury, MS.U37, fols.17 recto-18 recto. I wish gratefully to acknowledge the permission of Miss Anne Oakley, Archivist and Director, on behalf of the depositor, to quote from the MS church book. Miss Oakley was also kind enough to check my transcription. Portions of the church book (excluding the letters) were published in *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, 7, 1917, 181-96.

PHILIP J. ANDERSON, *North Park Theological Seminary, Chicago*

REVIEW

Peter Read, *Preaching*, Theological Students' Fellowship, 1987. From TSF, 38 De Montfort Street, Leicester, LE1 7GP

This small (40pp) booklet by the minister of Monmouth Baptist Church is concerned to relate biblical models of preaching to the needs of today's church and world. Although too brief to stand comparison with recent book-length treatments of the same subject, it has wise things to say on the importance of specific practical application and the two-way nature of the relationship between preacher and congregation. The author criticises Western preaching as cerebral, over-conceptual and prone to divorce theology from the prophetic call to repentance and obedience. The point is valid enough, although one suspects that it may be aimed at certain tendencies within the Reformed Evangelical tradition to which the author belongs. Most Baptist sermons I listen to can scarcely be described as creaking with the weight of too much pure theology.

BRIAN STANLEY