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incorporating the Transactions of the  
BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EDITORIAL

*(The index to Volume XIX will be distributed with the next issue.)*

WITH this first issue of a new volume the editorship of the *Quarterly* changes hands and it is therefore an appropriate moment to record our gratitude to Dr. Morris West for the services which he has rendered to this publication. His varied abilities result in the fact that ever-increasing calls are made upon his time and indeed for our own society he has carried a double responsibility, having been secretary as well as editor. The secretaryship he will continue to hold and communications or enquiries other than those connected with the *Quarterly* should still be addressed to him. We value the work he has done and that which he will continue to do for the society.

This is a good opportunity to express our thanks to others who help with the *Quarterly*. Rev. A. Gilmore, whom we congratulate on his recent appointment as editor of The Carey Kingsgate Press, is our Review Editor. Revs. E. Clipsham and D. Sparkes give willing help with the compilation of the indices. This last is a chore the importance of which is readily acknowledged by anyone who wants to check a reference. What a boon it would be if we could issue comprehensive index volumes covering, first, the *Transactions* and then the *Quarterly* to date. A great deal of work would be involved and such an undertaking would also require special financial backing. Nevertheless it is something we must hope one day to accomplish. As learned journals multiply and the years of their

issue lengthen the task of searching back numbers for specific materials becomes heavier. Ideally perhaps every decade should see the publication of an overall index but while that Utopian suggestion awaits fulfilment we shall make it our endeavour to see that each single volume index is as complete and accurate as possible.

A feature of earlier issues of the *Quarterly* and also of the *Transactions* was the insertion of brief notes on matters germane to the work of the society. It is hoped to revive this idea. Information sometimes turns up which may not call for treatment in a full-length article but which may yet be of value to the study of Baptist history. Such items can easily be lost to view again, perhaps permanently, unless they find a place in a journal such as ours. We would ask our readers, if in doubt, to err on the safe side and send us an appropriate note, together with clear details as to the source of the information. All such submissions will be carefully considered for publication.

It is a pleasure to note the appearance of a short history of British Baptists\* from the pen of D. M. Himbury, formerly tutor in Church history at the South Wales Baptist College, Cardiff, and now principal of the Baptist College, Melbourne, Australia. This book meets the need which has long existed for something on this subject of modest size and price, more than a pamphlet yet not a full-scale treatment. As such it will do good service among us. The cause of Christian education is being urged in the denomination today and in that general context there is a growing and needful concern for self-knowledge, both in regard to doctrine and history. Mr. Himbury's book is particularly good on the first two centuries and manifests his familiarity with not a little of the source material. It is to be hoped that the demands of his present appointment, especially with the possibilities of extension which would seem to follow from the news of a magnificent legacy in 1962, will not deprive us of further contributions in the field of Baptist history which is so strong an interest with him. His book is not of course intended as a major re-writing of the subject and that need still remains since W. T. Whitley's book, in its revised edition, was published thirty years ago, and A. C. Underwood's, rapidly approaching its twentieth year, was restricted to the English scene. Dr. R. Tudur Jones wrote a big new account of English Congregationalism for the 1662-1962 commemoration but it is not easy to visualize a comparable work on our own history until more has been done on individual associations and other aspects of our life.

Indeed so much detailed research awaits attention and there are so few to do it that our society ought surely to consider ways and

\* D. M. Himbury, *British Baptists: A Short History*. Carey Kingsgate Press. 8s. 6d.

means of organizing work of this kind. At the very least some clearing house of information is needed concerning research projected and in progress. This would obviate the risk of duplication or overlapping and would assist university supervisors in different parts of the country.

A decision of the Baptist Union Council at its meeting in November last is likely to further the cause of Baptist history. It was agreed, subject to the completion of the Ter-Jubilee Fund, to offer the income from £15,000 to the Council of Regent's Park College, Oxford, towards the support of a Baptist Union Tutor, Lecturer or Fellow in Reformation, Free Church and Baptist history, provided it be agreed by the Council of the College that part of the duties of the person appointed shall be study in these fields for the benefit of the whole denomination and that freedom for this be provided. Regent's Park College at its meeting in September last appointed the Rev. Dr. B. R. White as tutor with responsibility for Church history, with special attention to Reformation, Baptist and Free Church history. Should the hopes regarding the Ter-Jubilee offer eventuate Dr. White would become the first Baptist Union tutor. It will be recalled that he addressed our last Annual General Meeting and he can be sure of the good wishes of the society as he embarks upon his new duties in Oxford.

JANUARY, 1963

### ADVANCE NOTICE

The Annual General Meeting of the Historical Society will be held on Monday, 29th April. It is expected to take place at 4.30 p.m. in the Institute Hall of Westminster Chapel and that tea will precede the meeting.

# The Reverend John Ash, LL.D.

## 1724 - 1779

“**H**is name rescued from that oblivion into which it has sunk.” So writes S. A. Swaine of John Ash in *Faithful Men* (1884), a volume of biographical notes of ministers trained at Bristol Baptist College. Swaine gives less information than Ivimey, but the sentiment he expresses is identical with the purpose of the present writer.

### 1. Early Life

John Ash was born in 1724 in Dorset. One late source<sup>1</sup> names his birthplace as Stockland. His parents were “pious persons” but “of an inferior station in life” and it is clear that he had little schooling for he was soon apprenticed to a blacksmith.<sup>2</sup> “When very young he was baptized and joined the church at Loughwood, near Lyme, then under the pastoral care of that singular and eminent minister, Mr. Isaac Hann, to whom he was related.”<sup>3</sup> (I can find no other reference to Hann or the church although both appear in Wilson’s list for Dorset.) Both the church and its minister recognised the potential abilities of the young blacksmith’s apprentice, since they encouraged him<sup>4</sup> “to devote himself to the ministry” and sent him to study at Bristol under Bernard Foskett and Hugh Evans in 1740,<sup>5</sup> when he was only sixteen.

Partly on account of his youth, no doubt, Ash seems to have spent rather longer than usual as a student, proving himself to be an able scholar—“There he continued several years, and made such proficiency in the several branches of learning to which he attended, as did great credit to himself and his worthy tutor.”<sup>6</sup> Something of the scope of education for the Baptist ministry in those days may be gleaned from the fact that “In his younger years he was particularly attached to the mathematics.”<sup>7</sup> He appears to have finished his course at Bristol in 1746 or 1747 (see below) but what he did then is far from clear. *The Dictionary of National Biography* entry, which is not entirely accurate in some respects, states that before 1746 Ash was minister at Loughwood; Dr. Tongue also says<sup>8</sup> that he was at Loughwood, but gives no date or authority; evidence will be given below which links Ash with Pershore at this time; finally, Isaac James, in his potted biography of Ash in the *Hymn Book*,<sup>9</sup> says that he was at Broadmead, Bristol, presumably as an assistant. There may well be some justification for all three

assertions as students who had completed their course seem quite frequently to have served in churches for some years before being ordained, e.g., Caleb Evans assisted his father at Broadmead, Bristol, for eight years before he was ordained co-pastor,<sup>10</sup> and Benjamin Beddome<sup>11</sup> spent three years at Bourton-on-the-Water before he was ordained there. Ash could quite easily have served for a period as an assistant "student-pastor" at his home church of Loughwood, and in the same capacity with Hugh Evans at Broadmead a little later, whilst at the same time beginning his visits to Pershore. It seems an obvious way for an impecunious theological student—who in this respect at least has not changed much in succeeding generations—to support himself. He also put his mathematical interests to good use.

## 2. Settlement at Pershore

The Baptist church at Pershore, like many of its neighbours in that part of the Midlands, drew many of its ministers from Bristol, to which city the rivers Severn and Avon make useful natural routes. Bernard Foskett himself had assisted John Beddome in a pastorate embracing Alcester, Henley-in-Arden and Bengeworth (Evesham) from 1711 to 1720,<sup>12</sup> so his advice may have influenced his promising student to consider Pershore, but as will shortly appear, there was another reason for young John Ash's interest in Pershore!

As we have seen there exists some confusion about the date of Ash's settlement at Pershore, but Walter Wilson gives an interesting account of it: "His (Ash's) settlement in Pershore was in the following manner. Mr. Ryland and Mr. Haynes both preached as candidates and the members were divided in their choice. But at length the friends of both united and agreed on Dr. Ash. This was in 1746. Mr. Ryland afterwards went to Warwick and Mr. Haynes to Bradford."<sup>13</sup> It is clear that the Ryland referred to is John Collett Ryland, who was a year older than Ash but a year behind him at Bristol, and who settled at Warwick in 1750.<sup>14</sup> Ash was to have some stern words to say about him a few years later.

The previous minister at Pershore had been Edward Cook (sic), who died in office. He was certainly alive as late as November 18th., 1746, for he signed a receipt on that date,<sup>15</sup> but the next receipt in the collection, dated October 26th, 1747, is signed by "Eliz. Cook" for "forty-five shillings being Due to my late husband Mr. Edwd. Cook, Deceased." This sum represented an endowment yielding 15s. per quarter for the Pershore minister so Mrs. Cook was signing for nine months' allowance in October although the money was due on July 14th. It appears, therefore, that Edward Cook died no earlier than the end of 1746 and no later than the middle of 1747. On the whole it is improbable that the church could

have started looking for a new minister before 1747. The next entry in the receipt book is made by Joseph Young, a member of the church, who explains that the sum of £6 15s. "has been by me applied to & for the benefit of the Occasional Ministry at Pershore Meeting since the Death of Mr. Cook & is in full for the said Interest of the said Money from 14th July, 1747 to 14th October, 1749." The subsequent entries are for 14th October, 1749, to 14th April, 1750, signed by John Ash; April to October, 1750, in the handwriting of John Sitch, another member of the church; and the last two, covering the period October, 1750, to 9th December, 1752, are written and signed by John Ash.

Most of the sources give 1751 as the date of Ash's settlement but this is the date of his *ordination* which, says Ivimey, took place in June, 1751.<sup>16</sup> As the receipt book<sup>17</sup> shows, Ash was receiving the Pershore minister's endowment by the end of 1749, and if we take into account Wilson's evidence,<sup>18</sup> the existing links between the Bristol Academy and the church (Edward Cook had also been trained under Foskett<sup>19</sup>), the relatively easy communications between Bristol and Pershore, and the fact that Ash would have been a student for seven years in 1747, there is some justification for suggesting that he, together with other Bristol students like Ryland, was acquainted with Pershore as a visiting preacher soon after Edward Cook's death, and that for two years before his ordination he was resident there. There is some support for this in the inscription on his tombstone of 1779 that he was "pastor for more than twenty-eight years." which makes 1751 the official starting-point but implies an association of earlier date.

### 3. Marriage

An important feature of Ash's settlement at Pershore was his marriage, which introduces us to a key source for the story of John Ash and the history of the Baptist church at Pershore—the Rickards family papers. For our immediate purpose it is sufficient to note that at the end of the 17th century Samuel Rickards, Snr. had settled in Pershore as a mercer and joined the Baptist church. He was a shrewd businessman and soon became a leading and respected figure in the church and town, helping to secure the present Broad Street site for the church in 1700.<sup>20</sup> He died in 1729, leaving a small legacy for the benefit of the Pershore minister, and his property and mercer's business to his son, Samuel Rickards, Jnr.<sup>21</sup> Like his father, Samuel Rickards, Jnr. was a prominent citizen and Baptist, prospering greatly both as a mercer and land-owner. He administered his father's estate and his own affairs with great competence, keeping his records carefully in a "Money Book," in which are found the receipt signatures mentioned above. He died in 1752.

One of his sisters, Hannah, had married Mark Goddard, a merchant of Bristol, who went bankrupt and died shortly after in 1736, followed by his wife a year later, leaving three young children, two girls and a boy. Samuel Rickards, Snr., their grandfather, had settled £600 in trust for the Goddard children, with Samuel Rickards, Jr. as chief trustee. The latter took his responsibilities very seriously and brought his two orphan nieces to Pershore :<sup>22</sup> Elizabeth (always called Betsy by her uncle) as soon as her father died, when she was about eight years old, and her sister, Patty, the following year. Samuel lodged Betsy first with his mother, next-door to his own house in the High Street, and on old Mrs. Rickards' death in 1741, Betsy went to live with Samuel's sister, Mary, and her husband, Robert Sitch, near-by. Samuel Rickards remained the actual guardian of his nieces, however, and sent them both to Mrs. Linton's Boarding School in Worcester for five years where they appear to have received a better education than was usual for girls in those days.

On 24th June, 1749, when Elizabeth Goddard presumably came of age, her uncle Samuel paid her the balance of the trust money.<sup>23</sup> Meanwhile John Ash had been introduced to Pershore and must soon have noticed the Misses Goddard as attentive members of his congregation. No doubt his quick intelligence impressed Samuel Rickards, too, but certainly Elizabeth attracted more than strictly pastoral attention from the "student pastor." Courtship could easily have started before 1749 if Ash had been a frequent visitor, but in any case, like many a Baptist student since, as soon as he achieved full ministerial status, he married.

The Marriage Settlement,<sup>24</sup> dated 26th August, 1751, is a formidable parchment document, measuring 23½ inches long by 28½ inches wide and still in beautiful condition. It explains Ash's circumstances with great candour : ". . . the said John Ash not being provided with any Reall Estate in Possession Sufficient for the Jointure of the said Elizabeth Goddard." By the terms of the settlement £400, "part of the marriage portion of her the said Elizabeth Goddard," was to be invested in trust for the benefit of Elizabeth and her children, the trustees being her uncle, Samuel Rickards, and her cousin, John Sitch. Against the red wax seals at the bottom of the parchment appear the signatures of the parties to the settlement : John Ash, in a lean, vigorous hand; Elizabeth Goddard, in a careful, elegant "copper-plate" style which speaks well for Mrs. Linton's school; Samuel Rickards, rounded and with flourishes; John Sitch, plain and firm—all appearing as fresh today as when they were first penned; four interesting Baptist signatures over 200 years old. The marriage followed soon after for on 2nd January, 1752, John and Elizabeth signed an "Instrument"<sup>25</sup> proving that the trustees of the Marriage Settlement had invested



the £400 at 4%: Elizabeth signed in her married name—the slightly blurred “Eliz.” can still be seen immediately under her husband’s signature, showing that she began to write too high up, smudged it out and signed again lower down by the second seal.

John Ash was 27, his bride 23, when they began what was clearly a happy marriage. From various clues we may glean something of their personalities. In the first place the marriage could hardly have been possible unless Samuel Rickards had approved of John Ash both as the husband of his niece and as the minister of his church. This in itself is no small commendation. For his part, as we have seen, Ash had nothing to offer except his brains and the rather uncertain prospects of the Baptist ministry, although he had sufficient confidence to ask for Elizabeth’s hand before he was ordained, and to marry immediately afterwards. Elizabeth, on the other hand, was a comparatively wealthy young woman with good connections and could probably have married into a higher and more secure station, yet she was willing to accept a young, unknown Baptist minister of humble origin and settle down in the Pershore manse among the very people who had known her most of her life. It says much for their determination and mutual affection. Ash’s regard for his wife’s good sense is seen in the provisions of his will by which he entrusted her with considerable responsibility.

Their first home, we may assume, was the house built by Samuel Rickards, Jr. in 1742<sup>26</sup> for use as the Baptist manse. Ivimey describes it as “a very comfortable family house, adjoining the meeting-house.” It was replaced by the present manse in 1868. Whatever its “comfort” may have been, we know that Ash bought a house of his own in the town about 25 years later.<sup>27</sup>

Elizabeth bore her husband six children<sup>28</sup> who are all named in his will of 1779, presumably in order of seniority: Eliza, Samuel (an inevitable choice!), Joseph, Martha, Sarah and Luezar (sic). Nothing more has come to light so far about these children except for Joseph; of him Ivimey writes,<sup>29</sup> “Mr. Joseph Ash was for many years a respectable deacon of the church at Broadmead, Bristol, and is now living in the vicinity of Horsley, Gloucestershire.” A diary kept by Joseph Ash has recently come to light through the vigilance of Dr. E. A. Payne.

#### 4. The Baptist Church at Pershore

The church of which Ash became minister in 1751 was by that time already nearly a century old, the traditional date of its formation being 1658. It had enjoyed considerable support under the remarkable ministry of Timothy Thomas from 1696-1716.<sup>30</sup> On his death he was succeeded by his son, who died after only three years as a minister. Mrs. Thomas survived her husband and son and in 1723 she wrote to Philip Doddridge,<sup>31</sup> then at Kibworth, to persuade

him to accept the pastorate at Pershore, where, she urged, he would be able to preach "to above 800 people every Lord's Day." Elsewhere we hear of the "700 hearers"<sup>32</sup> of Timothy Thomas, Snr. in 1715. At that period the church was of mixed Baptist and Independent character<sup>33</sup> which may account in part for this large following, but it is extremely doubtful whether these figures were ever meant to describe the *membership*, but rather the "hearers." Nor would all the congregation have lived in Pershore but would have been drawn from the surrounding villages—a traditional source of the church's strength throughout the 18th and 19th centuries—"the meeting house was thronged with attentive admiring hearers, who came from all the villages ten miles round to attend his (Timothy Thomas, Snr.) ministry."<sup>34</sup> This picture is given further colour by the Anglican Churchwardens' Presentments<sup>35</sup> for the parishes of the neighbourhood in the late 17th century. These frequently recorded the names of Dissenters, labelling them as "Anabaptists" quite often, but nothing approaching 800 is suggested by this source. We may best assume, therefore, a firm nucleus of actual members, with a large following of sympathisers who must have retained their Communion with their parish churches.

In 1726 a membership of 70 is recorded,<sup>36</sup> but some ten years later, Ash's predecessor, Edward Cook, excluded all pædo-baptists<sup>37</sup> from membership and "ye additions in his time fell short of the deaths."<sup>38</sup> These two factors must largely account for the size of the church when Ash began his ministry, there being only 48 members,<sup>39</sup> and a year after his ordination he lost the valuable support of Samuel Rickards, who died in August, 1752.<sup>40</sup>

The population of Pershore in the 18th century remained at about two-and-a-half thousand.

## 5. Income and Business Interests

The stipend John and Elizabeth Ash could rely on was not large although it is difficult to translate it accurately into modern values, especially when allowance is made for the gifts of fruit and vegetables which are still a happy feature of Baptist life in Pershore. Wilson,<sup>41</sup> in a note claiming to be based on the church's state in 1774, says that part of the stipend was derived from legacies, representing invested capital of £300 to £400 (both Samuel Rickards, Snr. and his son left money for this purpose).<sup>42</sup> The interest from these legacies together with the weekly offerings yielded an income of approximately £80 per annum. "But this sum," says Wilson, "is more than they have ever raised for any of their ministers, though in presents of a different kind they have been found generous beyond what might have been expected. To which might be added, that by their peaceable friendly and affectionate behaviour they have contributed much more to the comfort and hap-

piness of their ministers than much larger pecuniary advantages would have done without them."

Opportunities for "larger pecuniary advantages" were not entirely lacking for a man of Ash's talent and he took full advantage of them, proving himself to be as shrewd in business as in everything else. He was fortunate in that through the Rickards family he had excellent contacts with the world of commerce and investment. From the will of Mary Sitch, dated June, 1771,<sup>43</sup> something of Ash's extra-ministerial interests can be seen. Mary Sitch was the sister of Samuel Rickards, Jnr., and Elizabeth Ash had lived with her as a girl. The will suggests that there was a considerable estate part of which was left to her grandson and described as follows.

"All that my Barn and parcel of Land with the Appurtenances thereunto . . . in Catshill, in the parish of Bromsgrove . . . containing by estimation two acres . . . which I lately purchased of John Ash and James Rickards." (The Rickards mentioned here was one of the Birmingham branch of the family.)

Mrs. Sitch also states that her grandson had already bought her other Bromsgrove property, "which I also purchased of the said John Ash and James Rickards," and apparently on account of this he was to pay £500 to her estate. Finally, £43 7s. 0½d.—a nice calculation—was to be paid to John Ash in respect of a debt which her son, John Sitch, had incurred. It is interesting to see that the Sitches continued to figure in Ash's transactions.

From his own will of 1779<sup>44</sup> we learn that John Ash kept a shop but tantalisingly he does not say what it was. He directs that "the said Trade of Business be carried on in the Firm of Mrs. Ash and Company and as near as consistent in the manner that it now is." It is evident that Ash had a high regard for his wife's ability and she may have been helping to look after the shop for some time before his death.

The will also reveals that Ash owned and occupied his own house, since he bequeathed to his "beloved wife" and "dear daughter," Eliza, "all those two Messuages and Tennaments in Pershore afores'd which I lately purchased of Mr. John Sitch the Elder and Mr. John Sitch the Younger." Later on he refers to his property as that "which I do now occupy." The centre of Pershore still consists mainly of Georgian houses with long, mellow-walled gardens behind, and in many cases the original double-fronted house is now divided in two. Judging by the complicated patterns of roofs, chimneys, walls and doors still to be seen in the town many of these divisions could easily date from the 18th century, and it is possible that Ash's "two messuages," which by implication were adjacent, had been divided by the Sitches and re-united to house the Ash

family. The property is almost certainly still standing and the secret is doubtless hidden in one of the bundles of old deeds which Pershore house-owners sometimes show their visitors today. The sale of this Sitch property is, perhaps, reflected in an entry in "Calendar of Letters, 1742-1831, collected by Isaac Mann,"<sup>45</sup> which has the following note: "1176. October 16. A legal document by which John Ash, LL.D. (of Pershore, Worcs.) leaves to John Sitch ("the elder of Kingswood in the County of Wilts"—who, a later note says, died in 1789) the sum of £100. Witnesses: Thos. Hillier and Benj. Bedford."

Elizabeth Ash was authorised under her husband's will to mortgage their property up to £600 if such a sum should be needed to maintain the shop. Any "Issues or Proffits" from the property were to be used first to pay John Sitch, Snr. an annuity of £8 per annum for which "he have got my Bond." Property or effects worth £600 would be a useful amount in the 18th century. The shrewdness Ash brought to his business affairs and the success he achieved is seen from a comparison of the Marriage Settlement and his will 28 years later. A further source of income was his pen and it is his books that we must now consider.

## 6. Author and Educationalist

To his contemporaries Ash was best known as a scholar whose particular interest was in philology and education, which perhaps owed something to his own struggle to overcome a poor start. Whilst still a student at Bristol he contributed to various journals on mathematical questions and, according to Caleb Evans, "made a distinguishing figure in the periodical publications of that day."<sup>46</sup> It was not until 1763, however, that his first book appeared.<sup>47</sup> This was his *Grammatical Institutes, or an easy Introduction to Dr. Lowth's English Grammar*, which seems to have been an instant success for it ran to thirteen editions.<sup>48</sup> There followed in 1775 Ash's magnum opus, *The New and Complete Dictionary of the English Language* in two volumes and including a "comprehensive Grammar." A second edition was published in 1795. The Dictionary was quickly followed by another two-volume work in 1777, *Sentiments on Education*. This is a collection of various authors' views about a wide range of subjects, including, appropriately enough, public speaking. In its obituary to Ash in 1779, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, praised this last work as one "in which the outlines of a good education are traced with a masterly hand."

Ash must have won his reputation fairly early since he was awarded a Doctorate of Laws by a Scottish University in 1774,<sup>49</sup> the year before his Dictionary was published.

*The Lexicographer*. The place which John Ash claims in current works of reference is always under the title of Lexicographer. *The*

*Dictionary of National Biography*, referring to his Dictionary, remarks a little unkindly that it "incorporates most of Bailey's collection of canting words, and many provincial terms with no nice discrimination; best known for the blunder under 'curmudgeon', which Johnson derived from *coeur méchant* on the authority of an 'unknown correspondent'; Ash gives it as 'from the French *coeur*—unknown, *méchant*—correspondent'." One may charitably assume that French was not among the subjects taught at Bristol Academy!

Allibone's *The Critical Dictionary of English Literature* (Philadelphia, 1899) quotes Chalmers on Ash's Dictionary as follows: "The plan was extensive beyond anything of the kind ever attempted, and perhaps embraced much more than was necessary or useful. It is valuable, however, as containing a very large proportion of obsolete words, and such provincial or cant words as have crept into general use."

A further evaluation of Ash's contribution to lexicography is found in M. M. Mathews' *A Survey of English Dictionaries* (Oxford, 1923) which relates that, "In the latter part of the 18th century lexicographers adopted the device of placing stress marks in such a way as to terminate syllables and thereby aid in the pronunciation of words. The Rev. John Ash in his *New and Complete Dictionary of the English Language* of 1775, took credit upon himself for having used stress marks in this manner. Entries in his dictionary like Ab'bacy, Art'ful, Ar'tery, show the helpfulness of his arrangement. In his introduction Ash said he had included in his tionalary 'all the words he could find or remember.' In his efforts to find words he examined closely earlier dictionaries." The mistake over "curmudgeon" is then noted.

The 18th century was an age that witnessed a growing enthusiasm for lexicography, the crowning achievement being that of the renowned Dr. Johnson, who published his dictionary in 1775 after eight years hard work. This made a great impression, not least, apparently, upon the Baptist minister at Pershore, who must nevertheless have felt that there was room for improvement. His debt to Bailey and Johnson (who also relied a good deal on Bailey) is obvious but his use of stress marks to aid pronunciation does seem to have been something of an advance (Mathews, *op cit.*, p. 30). There was sufficient appreciation of his work to merit a second edition sixteen years after his death. Ivimey remarks, with no little pride in a fellow-Baptist's achievement, "His Philological works, his elaborate Grammar and Dictionary, are universally known and highly prized. His *Sentiments upon Education* have been admired for correct thought and solid judgment."<sup>50</sup>

There is a strong tradition that Ash, like a number of other ministers, kept a private school or academy for pupils of which he

first produced his educational books. With his known interest in education it would be more surprising if he had not kept a school, but no description of it seems to exist.

## 7. The Baptist Preacher

In his churchmanship John Ash was a Particular Baptist and his ministerial activities seem to have been confined to that body. He quickly made his mark in the Midland Association: "Dr. Ash was frequently employed in preaching the annual sermon at the Associations: this he did in 1751, 1755, 1760, 1764, 1767, 1775 and 1778."<sup>51</sup> In addition he is known to be the author of at least two of the Association's Circular Letters—those for 1757 and 1759—as well as being Moderator for some of the Annual Meetings, three of which were held at his church during his ministry. Thus, during his thirty years in the Midland Association Ash was asked to contribute to at least a dozen Annual Meetings, which indicates something of the esteem in which he was held.

He was also in some demand as a preacher outside the Association. His funeral sermon for Caleb Evans' wife in 1771 was printed<sup>52</sup> and in 1778 he was honoured by his old college at Bristol with an invitation to preach there. The structure of a funeral sermon was decreed by custom, which Ash strictly observed in his oration to Mrs. Evans. Even so, it still reads well and implies a lively style, for it contains several passages which must clearly have been uttered with passion and vigour. Of the sermon preached for the Bristol Education Society, as the Baptist College was then called, Dr. E. J. Tongue writes, "It is from Eph. 4 : 11 and 12, 'The perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry.' . . . It is interesting to see how long ago, long before some moderns made such a song about it, that he discusses and approves leaving out the comma after the word 'saints'."<sup>53</sup> Another sermon, "Preached at ye Pithay Meeting on a Thursday even" survives in manuscript,<sup>54</sup> as taken down, apparently, by a member of the congregation. The text is Acts 10 : 33 and is applied to attendance at public worship. The introduction and exposition are balanced and could be used today with little alteration. From this scholarly beginning Ash advances to some very frank remarks about punctuality: "I am sorry to say my Friends that many of you seem not to pay a proper regard to it in so much that many a time half the congregation has been absent at the beginning of the worship." The preacher must have known his congregation well to speak so freely!

The surviving examples of Ash's preaching style add colour to Caleb Evans' judgment: "In his sentiments he was sound, rational, liberal, and strictly scriptural; and in his preaching, plain, practical, powerful, and thoroughly evangelical. His ideas of the great plan of providence and grace were uniform, grand, extensive, and

truly noble; and those ideas he earnestly desired to impress upon the minds of his hearers.<sup>55</sup>

One written work of Ash's should be considered with his preaching rather than with his other writing, which, as we have seen, was of a more academic nature. The book in question is called *Dialogue of Eumenes* and appears to have been a moral tale addressed to young people. It made a singular impression on Caleb Evans who reveals something of its character thus: "Some of the sheets of it I never have read and I believe never shall read, without a moistened cheek and a heaving heart."<sup>56</sup>

## 8. The Hymn Collection

As we receive the new *Baptist Hymn Book* in 1962 it is fitting to recall that one of John Ash's greatest contributions to Baptist life was the production of the *Collection of Hymns* in collaboration with Caleb Evans. The preface is dated Bristol, September 27, 1769. Both Ash and Evans were interested in poetry and belonged to the same private group of verse-writing friends which included Anne Steele, who adopted the *nom de plume* "Theodosia" whilst Ash favoured the disguise of "Eusebius."<sup>57</sup>

The two hymn collectors did not claim to be innovators but their preface does show them to be among the foremost advocates of reform. Isaac Watts and the Wesleys were revolutionising hymn singing, but inevitably many congregations lacked the necessary books and the desire to change old habits. Often a hymn would be composed by a minister for his congregation on one of his sermon themes, each line being read out by him before it was sung. Watts had long urged the abandonment of this method so that the verses could be sung without interruption and Ash and Evans enthusiastically endorsed his judgment. It is significant that as late as 1801, when Isaac James of Bristol published the 8th edition of the *Collection*, he rejected Watts' view in favour of the old line-by-line method, Ash and Evans notwithstanding! The object of the two friends was to provide in a single volume the hymns of several authors in the most useful order. They also explain that several of their personal friends had contributed hymns, notably "Theodosia" (Anne Steele), Benjamin Beddome, the formidable minister of Bourton-on-the-Water, and Benjamin Seward of Bengeworth, Evesham, (the "Seward Lectures" are still given annually in Evesham Baptist Church). There are 412 hymns in the *Collection*, the greater number by Watts, followed by Doddridge and "Theodosia." Of this number twenty-two survive in the *Revised Baptist Church Hymnal* including "Christ, the Lord, is risen today" (with the "Hallelujah!") and "Hark! the Herald Angels sing." It was a highly successful enterprise and was still in popular use in the early 19th century.

## 9. Dr. Ash — the Man and the Minister

Unfortunately it has not so far been possible to trace any portrait of John Ash, but there is considerable evidence of the kind of person he was and the impression he made on others. He was of strong physique which was probably one reason for his early apprenticeship to a blacksmith, and in later life he was noted as being "Blest with a remarkable share of health and spirits, he continued, with scarcely any interruption, in the assiduous, faithful, affectionate and successful discharge of the various important duties of his station, character and office, to his dying day."<sup>58</sup> To this robustness of body was added not only a keen mind but an attractive personality for the record of his friendships suggests that they were happily maintained over many years. We may trace them from the time when the Dorsetshire country lad so impressed Isaac Hann and his congregation at Loughwood; to the striking impression his lively intellect made upon his Bristol tutors, Foscett and Hugh Evans; to his call to Pershore, his only pastorate; to his ready acceptance by the wealthy Rickards family and to his command of the affections of the young and mature Elizabeth Goddard. Above all except his marriage, however, must be set Ash's close and lifelong friendship with his tutor's son, Caleb Evans (1737-1791),<sup>59</sup> who was thirteen years junior to him. He had offered one of the prayers at Caleb's ordination at Bristol in 1767<sup>60</sup> and two years later they produced their *Collection of Hymns*.

There were more intimate ties which like so much of this story are linked with Samuel Rickards, the younger. Another of his sisters, Sarah,<sup>61</sup> had married Joseph Jeffries, of Taunton, who was probably a Baptist minister, although Ivimey is silent about him. From Samuel's "Money Book" we know that their daughter, "Sally," was also brought to Pershore by her good uncle Samuel, boarded with "Bro. Sitch" and educated at Mrs. Linton's school in Worcester, just as Elizabeth and Patty Goddard had been ten years earlier. The rest of her short biography is told by John Ash in his funeral sermon for Mrs. Sarah Evans. He states that: "Mrs. Evans . . . was the only daughter of the Rev. Mr. Joseph Jeffries of Taunton in Somersetshire. She was left an orphan when a child, but her education was, nevertheless, truly pious . . . she became truly religious in early youth. She was baptized and admitted to Christian fellowship in the church of Christ at Pershore in Worcester-shire, about the middle of the year 1760. . . . In the spring of the year of 1762, she became the amiable and pious consort of your present minister." (Caleb Evans was minister of Broadmead, Bristol.) Sarah Evans died in 1771, aged 33. Mrs. Ash and Mrs. Evans were, therefore, first cousins and it is highly probable that Caleb Evans met his bride at Pershore through the good offices of his friends the Rev. and Mrs. John Ash. The wedding may also



have taken place there. A friendship can hardly produce a happier result and it is small wonder that Ivimey remarks, "Dr. Caleb Evans . . . had a very great regard for him (Ash); they had been remarkably intimate for many years."<sup>62</sup>

If the Worcestershire records so far examined are typical, then it is evident that the 18th century Baptist community, which, like all the Dissenting minorities of the day, suffered many civil disabilities, maintained its identity to a considerable extent by inter-marriage within its own ranks, often crossing several counties to do so. Thus it has already been established that the Baptist families of Rickards-Sitch-Jeffries-Ash-Evans were all related by marriage. Property and income of considerable value were frequently involved in these relationships and it is a tribute to Ash's high standing among Worcestershire Baptists that one of them, Thomas Harris, a rich landowner of Hackett's Broughton (now Broughton Hackett, a small village about five miles from Pershore) asked him to be guardian to his daughter, Eleanor, and trustee of her property.<sup>63</sup> This was a common way of preventing a daughter's wealth from passing automatically to her husband on marriage.

On January 28th, 1765, Eleanor Harris, then aged 23, married Richard Hudson (1744-1804) of Pershore. As the bridegroom was an Anglican the ceremony took place in the tiny parish church at Broughton Hackett, where the entry in the marriage register may still be seen, as fresh as when it was first written. John Ash was in attendance and signed as one of the witnesses. Thomas Harris had died before this date and under his will (it is hoped to trace this at Somerset House as it is not at Worcester) the bride was heiress to a comfortable fortune in the form of a number of farms amounting to more than 500 acres.<sup>64</sup> Her husband was ambitious but of only moderate means which he could not immediately increase from his wife's lands without the approval of Ash. Relations must have been harmonious for a year or two later, presumably at Eleanor Hudson's request, her guardian signed an indenture with Richard Hudson making over the Harris property to him.<sup>65</sup> The Hudsons then bought Wyke Manor in the village of Wick, which is separated from Pershore by the river and two meadows. The fine Georgian country mansion stands empty now.

Richard Hudson retained his Anglican allegiance for some years, having his children christened in the parish church of St. Andrew, Pershore (the town had two parish churches opposite each other at this period) and some of them buried there. He became a figure of some prominence in the county as a Justice of the Peace and chairman of Quarter Sessions and probably found it an advantage to remain at least an "occasional conformist." This did not prevent him from establishing a family vault in the Baptist burial ground adjoining the church. This was long after the death of John Ash

but his influence cannot be forgotten when the Hudson story is told. One interesting clue remains: in the Ash-Evans *Collection of Hymns* there is one hymn by a "Mr. Hudson, a private Gentleman"—could this be Richard Hudson of Wick?

Another friend, Joshua Thomas,<sup>66</sup> leaves this brief comment: "I had the happiness to be acquainted with Dr. Ash from the year 1755. He was remarkable for his affable temper and disposition, and was endowed with many excellent talents."

The friends of John Ash could hardly fail to discern, however, that his "affable temper and disposition" were built upon a characteristic firmness and integrity which received forthright expression when necessary. This quality is implied by his sermons but the following letter is a striking example, particularly as it concerns a former friend and fellow-student, who had been considered for the Pershore pastorate before Ash. The letter is undated but speaks for itself. It is copied into a MS. book<sup>67</sup> belonging to John Collett Ryland and is headed, "The Picture of Ingratitude of John Ash of Pershore, Worcestershire In a Copy of a Letter from him to Mr. Ed. Dilly."

"Sir,

My Friend Mr. Ryland, not to say Mr. Dilly, has used me exceedingly ill. The Edition of the Grammars published by you, was, as he confess'd in the Preface, entirely without my Knowledge. Since that time I have heard not so much as one single Word from him by Way of Excuse or otherwise. But as he then made no Alteration and I knew the Man I gave myself no further concern about it. When I was last in London I thought (sic) indeed to have call (sic)<sup>68</sup> on you for some Satisfaction but other Engagement prevented me.

I now find by your Letter that a second pirated Edition is in the press with some Alterations, not to say Improvs by Mr. Ryland, which I look upon as a further abuse of that Friendship that once subsisted between us, and such an one as, I do assure you, I will not put up with. If he has given you to understand that I ever gave him any Liberty to alter, publish or do anything with it, he has greatly abused you. I look upon the Copy to be entirely my own Property at my own Disposal. And if the present Edition is printed off without my first seeing the proposed Alterations I will actually redress myself to the utmost of my Power. Mr. Ryland may have made some Improvts but I must be convinced of this and approve of what he has done. And I hope both of you will give me leave and Opportunity to make what Alterations I may think proper in my own Work for my own is shall still be. When that is done, as to Terms, they shall not be unreasonable on the part of

Yr hub Sert.

JOHN ASH.

My Friend Mr. Hurt will be in Town next week and I will desire him to call on you for the Copy of the proposed Alterations."

Ryland was an awesome presence to many of his fellow Baptists and on one famous occasion rebuked William Carey, but to an outraged John Ash he was a literary pirate who had abused a friendship. The letter indicates plainly enough the strong character of its author who was certainly not one to be trifled with when he considered principle to be at stake.

## 10. Last Days

In the 18th century death often came early even to the strongest. Ash was certainly one of these, but he died when only 55, at the height of his powers. His end seems to have come suddenly but he faced it with the calm and patient consideration that must belong to any man who is capable of producing a dictionary single-handed. On the last Sunday but one before his death he preached as usual,<sup>69</sup> apparently unaware of his condition, for it was noted later as a signal portent that his last two sermon texts were Amos 4: 12, "Prepare to meet thy God" and Psalm 40: 13, "Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me, O Lord, make haste to help me." When told that he had "the Diabetes" and that it was incurable, he replied simply, "O Lord, Thy Will be done!" and in his methodical way turned to settle his earthly affairs.<sup>70</sup>

His will<sup>71</sup> is dated 8th April, 1779, only two days before his death, which is a further indication of its suddenness. The handwriting of the will is almost certainly that of Ash himself as it is in the same long sloping style as his familiar and distinctive signature. It betrays no hint of infirmity and as the will was proved without difficulty the following September it is evident that Ash knew the necessary legal procedure in a field that is full of snares for the amateur. His witnesses were John Haydon, the elderly minister of Westmancote (about six miles from Pershore—it is a small village) who was to be Ash's successor at Pershore, Benjamin Bedford, a notable member of the church at Pershore, and Samuel Gibbons, of whom nothing further is known.

The main provisions of the will have already been described, but some interesting details remain. Ash took the unusual step of making his wife and eldest daughter, Eliza, the executrices of his will, which was an eloquent compliment to their ability and good sense in what was very much a man's world. His son, Samuel, presumably the eldest boy, was perhaps married or otherwise independent, for he was to receive nothing immediately, but on his mother's decease the houses were to be his. The shop was to be kept in business for Joseph who was under age. For the rest, "the whole of my Effects not before disposed of my Stock in Trade Book Debts

Household Furniture Chyna Plate Linnen and whatsoever I am possessed of" were to be equally divided between his wife, four daughters and son, Joseph. Elizabeth Ash survived her husband by several years for it is known that she lived once again in one of the Rickards houses in the High Street from 1785 to 1788.<sup>72</sup>

The church at Pershore where Ash spent his whole ministerial life was left at the end of his ministry not large, but reasonably secure. He had found it with a membership of 48 and received in 90 new members during his ministry so that by 1778 the church could claim a membership of 79. The following year, however, seventeen of these were dismissed to form a church in a neighbouring village so that at the time of Ash's death the membership was reduced to 58.<sup>73</sup> It is interesting to notice that the village in question was Westmancote, on the side of Bredon Hill. Its association with Pershore Baptist Church was then already over a century old for the Rickards family came from there originally and the Church Wardens' Presentments<sup>74</sup> of the last quarter of the 17th century indicate that there was a lively Baptist community in the village. Ivimey gives an account of the church as from 1769.<sup>75</sup>

After so long a ministry the congregation at Pershore enjoyed many ties of affection with their minister and were proud of his many achievements, for his name was known and honoured far beyond the bounds of the town and of the Baptist denomination: they "thought themselves equally honoured and happy in their connection with him as their friend and pastor."

So said Caleb Evans in the funeral sermon preached for his old friend on the text of Acts 20: 37 and 38—Paul's farewell to the Elders of Ephesus. The burial was in the church itself for the tombstone may still be seen in the floor of the left-hand aisle. The stone is polished and of a far more durable quality than any of the others to be seen in the church or burial ground and hence is well preserved. The wording expresses the feelings of the congregation for their late minister and goes beyond the merely conventional.

In Memory of  
THE REVEREND JOHN ASH LLD.

He lived highly esteemed and honoured by the World  
For his great Abilities and learned Publications  
Justly beloved by all that knew him for his  
Integrity Piety Benevolence  
And many other Virtues  
Peculiarly endeared to the Christian society of this Place  
In the Character of a faithful and affectionate Pastor  
For more than twenty eight Years.

He died in the Meridian of his Fame  
 And usefulness both as an Author and a Minister  
 On the 10th Day of April 1779

Aged 55

Deeply Lamented.

To perpetuate the Remembrance of the many Excellencies  
 Of so great and good a Man  
 His much afflicted Congregation  
 Have here placed this humble Monument  
 Sorrowing . . . that in this World  
 They shall see him no more.

The last two lines are an echo of Evans' funeral text and we may conjecture that he advised on the wording of the whole memorial.

## 11. Conclusion

If today John Ash has been largely forgotten by the denomination he served so well, it should at least be remembered that in his own generation, especially in literary circles, his was a respected name, and he was familiar both with London, where his publishers were, and with Bristol, where many Baptist friends welcomed him. Several of his works, notably the Dictionary, the English Grammar and the Hymn Collection were still being reprinted years after his death. As late as 1801, in the 8th edition of the Hymn Collection, Isaac James could say of Ash, "his 'Grammatical Institutes' are well known throughout the Nation." *The Gentleman's Magazine* obituary spoke of his "celebrated English Grammar" and ranked its author as "an eminent Dissenting Minister."

Ash does not appear to have been an original scholar—few men are, but the Georgian age saw the rise of the ordering and cataloguing of knowledge in dictionaries and similar works of reference which were an essential foundation to the development of our own contemporary critical-analytical approach, and to this work John Ash bent his talents as a cultured man of his time. It is hoped, however, that the evidence offered in this account presents far more than a remote academic figure. We shall best honour him as an honest, educated, well-loved Baptist minister who fully merited the tribute of his friend, Caleb Evans, "A man of a clearer head, a sounder heart, or of more amiable, steady, happy temper the world hath seldom seen."

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> J. Ash and C. Evans, *A Collection of Hymns adapted to Public Worship*, 8th ed., edited by Isaac James, Bristol, 1801. See the Advertisement which follows the Preface (pages not numbered). In this Advertisement James gives a brief biography of Ash and Evans.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Wilson MSS., *An Account of Various Congregations in England Among the Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists*. Vol. iv. Pershore is No. 10 of the fifty-one included here. The Walter Wilson MSS. are to be found in Dr. Williams's Library, London.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists*, Vol. 4, London, 1830, p. 561.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> So Dr. E. J. Tongue, former librarian of Bristol Baptist College, in a personal letter of 8th Sept., 1958, apparently quoting a college list of former students.

<sup>6</sup> Ivimey, *op. cit.*, p. 561.

<sup>7</sup> From a funeral sermon for John Ash by Caleb Evans, April, 1779, on the text *Acts* 20: 37-38. Ivimey (*op. cit.*, p. 562) quotes part and the full sermon is in a MS. volume of sermons in the library at Baptist Church House.

<sup>8</sup> In a personal letter of 18th Aug., 1960.

<sup>9</sup> See n.1 above.

<sup>10</sup> See introduction of *A Charge and Sermon delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. Mr. Caleb Evans, August 18, 1767, in Broad Mead, Bristol* (published at Bristol by S. Farley), in a volume of sermons in Bristol College library, preached by and on behalf of Caleb Evans. See also Ivimey, *op. cit.*, pp. 274-5.

<sup>11</sup> Ivimey, *op. cit.*, p. 461.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p. 267.

<sup>13</sup> Walter Wilson MS., *Biographical Collections*, Vol. I, p. 37. See n.2 above.

<sup>14</sup> Ivimey, *op. cit.*, p. 609.

<sup>15</sup> See *The Money Book* of Samuel Rickards the Younger, an item in the Rickards Family Papers to which I have had access by courtesy of Capt. E. Rickards, whose help and kindness I gratefully acknowledge.

<sup>16</sup> Ivimey, *op. cit.*, p. 561.

<sup>17</sup> See n.15 above.

<sup>18</sup> See n.13 above.

<sup>19</sup> Ivimey, *op. cit.*, p. 560.

<sup>20</sup> The deeds of Pershore Baptist Church.

<sup>21</sup> The will is among the Rickards Family Papers.

<sup>22</sup> See n.15 above.

<sup>23</sup> Rickards Family Papers.

<sup>24</sup> MS. in the writer's possession, a gift from Capt. E. Rickards.

<sup>25</sup> MS. in the writer's possession.

<sup>26</sup> Ivimey, *op. cit.*, p. 555.

<sup>27</sup> The will of John Ash in the Worcs. Archive Office, the assistance of whose staff is greatly acknowledged.

<sup>28</sup> Ivimey, *op. cit.*, p. 562.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 556ff.

<sup>31</sup> From a thesis on Doddridge by the late Rev. F. W. P. Harris, to which I have had access by courtesy of Mr. F. Marshall of Birmingham.

<sup>32</sup> Walter Wilson MSS. See n.2 above.

<sup>33</sup> Ivimey, *op. cit.*, pp. 560-1.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, p. 557.

<sup>35</sup> In the Worcs. Archive Office.

<sup>36</sup> Ivimey, *op. cit.*, p. 559.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 560-1.

<sup>38</sup> Walter Wilson MSS. See n.2 above.

<sup>39</sup> See n.37.

<sup>40</sup> Rickards Family Papers.

<sup>41</sup> Wilson, see n.2.

- 42 Rickards Family Papers.  
 43 Worcs. Archive Office.  
 44 *ibid.*  
 45 *The Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. vi. (1932-3), p. 85.  
 46 See n.7 above.  
 47 Ed. F. W. Bateson, *The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1940), p. 932.  
 48 A. C. Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists* (London, 1947), p. 140.  
 49 Ivimey, *op. cit.*, p. 562.  
 50 *ibid.*  
 51 *ibid.*  
 52 *A Sermon occasioned by the Death of Mrs. Sarah Evans, wife of The Rev. Caleb Evans of Bristol, Who died November 7, 1771. . . with the Oration delivered at her Interment.* Printed and published at Bristol by W. Pine. It is bound in the same volume as that referred to in n.10 above.  
 53 In Bristol College library, bound in a volume with sermons by other ministers.  
 54 MS. in Bristol College library.  
 55 See n.7 above.  
 56 *ibid.*  
 57 *ibid.* and Ivimey, *op. cit.*, pp. 310ff.  
 58 See n.7 above.  
 59 Ivimey, *op. cit.*, pp. 274ff.  
 60 See the Advertisement of *A Charge and Sermon* referred to in n.10 above.  
 61 Rickards Family Papers.  
 62 *op. cit.*, p. 561.  
 63 C. E. M. Hudson, *The Manors of Wike Burnell and Wyke Waryn in the County of Worcester*, Oxford, 1901. The book might better be described as the Hudson family history.  
 64 *ibid.*  
 65 *ibid.*  
 66 Ivimey, *op. cit.*, p. 561.  
 67 In Bristol College library in a MS. book of J. C. Ryland. Again, this is a reference which I owe to the kindness of Dr. Tongue.  
 68 Are this and the previous (*sic*) Ryland's comment?  
 69 Walter Wilson MSS. See n.2 above.  
 70 By Caleb Evans, see n.7 above.  
 71 Worcs. Archive Office.  
 72 Rickards Family Papers.  
 73 Ivimey, *op. cit.*, p. 561.  
 74 Worcs. Archive Office  
 75 *op. cit.*, p. 549.  
*Author's note*—In addition to the debts acknowledged in the above foot-  
 notes, I owe much to the help of Mr. P. G. Feek, B.Sc., J.P., son of the  
 late Rev. J. H. Feek, Baptist minister at Pershore, 1873-1904.

G. H. TAYLOR

## The Hymns of Katherine Sutton

THE appearance of *The Baptist Hymn Book* has once again brought into focus the subject of hymns, their use and their origin. As far as Baptists are concerned, historical research has done nothing to detract from regarding Benjamin Keach as the fountain-head of congregational hymn singing. Nonetheless, every fountain draws its supply from elsewhere and, before Keach, there were hymn-writers and hymn users and others who, though not actively engaged in hymn-writing themselves, encouraged others and brought their labours to light. One such encourager was Hanserd Knollys and recognition of his work is a fitting prelude to the main theme of this article.

We first come across Knollys in connection with the Jacob-Lathrop-Jessey church in London, so called from its succession of pastors. From this Independent paedo-baptist church arose various Particular Baptist congregations, the parent church finally becoming what would now be regarded as a "Union" church of Baptist and Congregational loyalties. Knollys, as a member of the original church, became convinced of Believer's Baptism. He was pastor of one of the seceding churches but the secessions were obviously of a friendly nature for it was Knollys who baptized Jessey in 1645. Knollys lived through the troubled yet fruitful years of the seventeenth century, being implicated in the Fifth Monarchy movement. After the collapse of the Commonwealth government, the restoration of the monarchy and the subsequent execution of those who had put Charles I to death, the Fifth Monarchy men, under Venner, made the last desperate attempt to set up the Fifth Monarchy (i.e., the Kingship of Christ) by force. The rebellion was instantly and easily crushed. Knollys, along with a number of other Baptists, was held in custody for 18 weeks, being released at the time of the coronation of Charles II. When again threatened, Knollys went to Wales, then Lincolnshire and finally escaped with a party to Holland. His property in this country was confiscated. For a short time he was with his wife and two children in Germany, returning to England in 1664.

Knollys, along with Kiffin and Keach and four other ministers, was responsible for the calling together of the first Particular Baptist Assembly in 1689. Over 100 churches were represented and it is from this assembly that the idea came for a fund to maintain ministers and preachers and assist ministerial candidates in their



studies. It was another twenty-eight years before the Particular Baptist Fund was actually founded.

One of Knollys' earliest contributions to Baptist thought was his *Moderate Answer*, 1645, in which he followed Smyth in stating that the Church was built not upon the Covenant principle, whereby members agree to walk together in God's ways, but upon baptism. Faith, repentance, public testimony and baptism were the marks of the true entry into the Church. "Knollys died at a ripe old age, occupying his later years writing upon apocalyptic which had always interested him and infected his mind with Fifth Monarchy views." (Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists*, p. 110.)

A Fifth Monarchy Baptist, Anna Trapnell, produced *The Cry of a Stone* in 1654. This was a collection of prayers and spiritual songs from which it would appear that some sort of primitive hymnody was known in this movement which claimed Hanserd Knollys' interest.

Another close contact between Knollys and an early pioneer of hymn-singing was in the person of Thomas Tillam who was a member of Knollys' church and later founded the Baptist church at Hexham. Three hymns of his own appeared in a work published by him in 1657. These were "An Hymn celebrating the Lord's Sabbath, with joyful communion in the Lord's Supper . . .," "An Hymn in honour of the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost" and "That Hymn especially designed for the Sabbath" (Psalm 92).

It seems likely that Knollys would have had knowledge of, even if he had not given active support to, these efforts of Tillam and, later, Keach. Beyond doubt is the preface which he wrote to the publication of Katherine Sutton's works in 1663. We have already noted his presence in Holland during that year and it is almost certain that Katherine Sutton was a member of his church and went over to Holland with him.

The title page of Katherine Sutton's book reads as follows: "A Christian Womans Experiences of the Glorious Working of God's Free Grace. Published for the Edification of others, by Katherine Sutton, Luk. 24. 24 And they found it even so, as the Women had said. At Rotterdam Printed by Henry Goddaeus, Printer in the Newstreet. Anno 1663."

In his preface Hanserd Knollys commends this book not as a clear exposition of the Christian life but as the account of a sincere woman's experiences. He writes somewhat apologetically of the rather bad arrangement of the material but bids the reader remember the circumstances of the writer. He describes the work as a "Basket of Fragments of the Gospel." He commends Katherine Sutton's witness in her own family circle—her example of family prayers.

Knollys refers to the hymns contained in the book and brings the support of scripture to bear on the matter of singing, as well as praying, in the Spirit. He says this, however, "The singing of Psalms ought to be performed by a gift and the assistance of the spirit as well as prayer. Now as to take a book and read a prayer out of it or to say a prayer without a book, is not to pray in the Spirit, so to read a Psalm in a Book, and sing it, or to sing the Psalm without the Book is not to sing in the Spirit."

From this it would appear that Knollys approved only of unprepared, *ex tempore* prayer, and of hymn-singing, as we would say, on the spur of the moment. This would limit hymn singing to a solo voice and not permit of congregational singing. Katherine Sutton would have sung her hymns as solos. To Keach must still belong the credit for introducing a hymn book for public worship. To Katherine Sutton's publications we now turn.

Katherine Sutton commences the story by recounting her first contact with a religious meeting. She went not out of any love for the people of God but to watch what she could observe. The minister's text was *Romans 2 : 4, 5, 6* "or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee unto repentance : but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous Judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds." "Verily at this opportunity the dread of God did much smite upon my heart, that I had so long sinned against his patience and goodness." The experience was followed on the next night by a temptation to starve herself to death. "I then cast away my prayer book, for it did not reach my necessities, and I cried unto the Lord alone to teach mee (sic) to pray." Then followed a deep conviction of sin "with fears that I could not be a child of God" but the Lord upheld her. Two years passed. "In this time I was called by my friends into a dark corner of the land full of ignorance." Her friends persuaded her that she should get married. She married a God-fearing man. The differences between herself and her husband on spiritual things led to deeper prayer and searching of the scriptures. Various sermons and texts which proved of help are then listed and briefly commented upon : *John 1 : 2, 3; Heb. 6 : 5, 6; Mark 6 : 20*, etc. Her account reveals an introspective approach, refusing all comfort save that which would come when God was pleased to do so by the power of His Spirit. ". . . and a particular person was set on my heart to begge of God for, and in a short time the Lord was pleased to answer my desire in working a work of grace in that soul."

Going to live with a family (against her own wishes because there was antagonism to religion, but submitting to God's will) one

of the household was converted. The death of her child caused heartsearching as to her own state before God and whether the child was saved, but after six months she recovered her sense of assurance. "After this the God of comfort was pleased to withdraw and leave mee in a deserted condition." She learned the discipline of God's apparent desertion as a teaching against self-sufficiency. "Further while I was under that ministry, God was pleased to convince mee of the falsness of their Worship, which in that place was then used, and having an opportunity to go with others to communion (as they call it) I could not kneel as the rest did, but sat down as if I had kneeled : and as I there sat, it came upon my heart to think thus (as if it had been spoken to mee) why dissemblest thou a worship before the Lord, hee that commands thee to kneel there, may as well command thee to kneel at an Altar, (although at that time there was nothing known of setting up of Altars) which thing I made known to that Minister, and did warn him that if Altars should be set up, that he would not (for filthy lucre sake) kneell at them himself, nor compel others so to do : But he told mee he could not believe any such thing should be : but if it should bee so he promised mee he would not conform to them. But in a short time he found it too true, for Altars were reared up, and he poor man (contrary to his promise) did conform himself in that thing, and compelled others so to do : but the first time he did so, it pleased the Lord to smite him with a sore languishing disease, that he went out no more. . . . Soon after I was at the Christening of a child (as they call it) at which time God was pleased to convince mee of the evil and falseness of that piece of Worship also."

Following the use of a formal prayer on a national fast day, she withdrew from this congregation (quoting *Revelation* 22 : 18, 19 in support of her viewpoint), gave herself to prayer and fasting with some others, and finally moved house "to a place where I did enjoy the hearing of a good man preach, and had the sweet benefit of some private meetings." A period of spiritual joy and assurance followed, then one of temptations, but, believing in the prayer of Jesus Christ Who had prayed for her (*John* 15 : 17, 19), she recovered, and enjoyed further and fuller communion with God in His ordinances. The death of a child, a "distemper that my joynts and sinnews were by fits bound up" were her next misfortunes. The illness, however, departed while the congregation prayed for her.

She desired baptism. "Now that which made me willing to obey the Lord, in this Ordinance, was the command of Jesus Christ in *Mat.* 28 : 19 and *Acts* 10 : 48 and the example of Christ and the practice of the Apostles, and primitive Saints, together with the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost annexed (sic) thereunto."

A prayer for the pouring out of "his blessed Spirit upon mee "

was offered. "And after long seeking (especially one day) being very earnest and importunate with the Lord, after which I went out to walk, and on a sudden I was indued with the gift of singing, in such a way and manner as I had not been acquainted with before: and immediately this following song came in (as fast as I could sing it) as followeth: it was in the year 1655 in the Moneth (sic) of February.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1 <i>Come home, come home, thy work<br/>is done,<br/>My glory thou shalt see;<br/>Let all the meek ones of the earth<br/>Come home along with thee.</i></p> <p>3 <i>Admire, admire, my love to thee,<br/>Which took thee from so low,<br/>And set thee in high places free,<br/>Where thou my love might'st<br/>know.</i></p> <p>5 <i>Let not the wicked know thy joy:<br/>But let my servants hear.<br/>What I have done for thee my<br/>love<br/>Since thou to mee drew'st near.</i></p> <p>7 <i>I will appear in my glory, and be<br/>a perfect light.<br/>Admire, admire, the thing that I<br/>will do,<br/>All nations shall it hear, and know<br/>What I am doing now.</i></p> <p>9 <i>All they that in high places sit,<br/>And takes their honours low,<br/>Shall be made tremble, quake and<br/>pine<br/>When they my justice know.</i></p> | <p>2 <i>Cast off the world, it is too base<br/>And low for thee to dwell;<br/>I have redeem'd thee from the<br/>pit,<br/>And lowest place of Hell.</i></p> <p>4 <i>Wing thou aloft, and cast thyself<br/>Into mine Arms of love;<br/>Look up, look up, and thou shalt<br/>see<br/>My glory is above.</i></p> <p>6 <i>My servants walk in clouds and<br/>begg<br/>They do not see my light:<br/>The day draws near, and will ap-<br/>pear,<br/>That I will shine most bright.</i></p> <p>8 <i>I will a habitation be<br/>To them that fear my name;<br/>They shall lie down in safty, and<br/>Give glory to the same.</i></p> <p>10 <i>Come hide, come hide, come hide<br/>with me.<br/>Come hide thee in the Rock;<br/>Come draw thy Comforts high<br/>from mee,<br/>I my treasures unlock.</i></p> |
|---|---|

Immediately after this poem, she introduces her next: ". . . this following prophesye (sic) given in unto mee.

*Shall light appear, and darkness done away:  
Shall sommers green be cloathed all in grey:  
Shall a bright morning set in shadowes dark,  
Oh! England, England, take heed thou dost not smart."*

She then records her conviction that God will afflict the nation, and a catalogue of its sins follows: sloathfulness, deadness, unfruitfulness, unbelief and idolatry in four forms: 1. Ways of worship, 2. "in respect also of resting upon duty, and so not resting upon Jesus Christ that Rock of Ages," 3. Covetousness, 4. Pride. She asks:

*"Didst thou not hear a voyce from on high,  
Deny your selves (take up the crosse) or verily you shall die?"*

About 1658 to the best of her remembrance (having lost the original book) these words came :

*Awake therefore to righteousness,  
The Lord is near at hand:  
And will afflict now very sore  
By sea and like by land.*

“This was again brought to mind in January 1662.” “And this seems to agree with, and is a further addition to what was given mee in before in the Year 1657 which is as followeth

*There is a time approaching near at hand,  
That men shall be in fear by sea and land:  
There is a time, there will be alteration;  
And this same time doth hasten to this nation;  
Let now my children hearken to my will,  
And they shall see I will be with them still.”*

Suggestions for personal conduct are followed by numerous scriptural quotations concerning God’s judgment on, and dealings with a rebellious nation (the 8th century prophets naturally play a large part in this treatise).

*Oh, now my soull! give glory to the Lord.  
For this rich mercy he doth thee afoard;  
He made the heavens, and ordered every light;  
He takes the hearts up of his people quite. (1658)*

“And as I was on a Journey this also was given in :

*When that this green shall blossome bear,  
And birds shall pleasant sing;  
Then shall there be a knell most sad,  
In every place, heard ring.”*

Repeated “sickness of agues and feavours,” which continued throughout her life, led to a sense of sin at not having shared these prophecies with the Church. “I did declare something, but not so fully as I should: and indeed would have done fearing it would not be born, for which I was mourning before the Lord: and as I was mourning, I was put upon singing, as followeth :

*Cease thou thy mourning, and see thou dost praise,  
For thou shalt do my will in all my wayes:  
Thy work shall be praises now for to sing,  
Because thou hast chosen Christ to be thy King.*

*Lift up your heads redemption draweth near,  
Do not at all possess thy heart with fear:  
Lift up your heads, and look to heaven high;  
For God will make his people glorify.*

*Draw water from the wells that are so deep;  
You shall drink flaggons of my love when others are asleep."*

The conviction to record her experiences of thirty years comes. She mentions that the two main periods of prophecy were in 1655 and 1658. "Then by his (God's) hand of providence I was removed again out of England into Holland." The original book was lost in the shipwreck. (It would appear that no lives were lost.)

A time of spiritual dryness: "Then this came in:

*Upon the fountain thou shalt live,  
Fresh streams of love I will thee give:  
Thou shalt be made all times to see,  
There is a fountain flowes in mee."*

Further comments regarding spiritual truths, most of them extremely obvious, e.g., several paragraphs are devoted to quoting scripture in support of the truth that one can pray to God without words. She is concerned to emphasise that these teachings of the spirit come not of herself, but of God's Spirit. "And verily the more watchful I was against sin unto duty, the more of his divine presence was afforded." Persistence in prayer, especially in dry periods, leads to blessing, neglect of prayer to deadness. She commends family instruction by reading, prayer and catechising.

*As for the work of Babylon,  
It is a mighty work, and strong:  
But yet my power shall it compleat,  
For my wisdom is mighty great:  
They must sit still, behold my power,  
Which worketh for them hour by hour.*

Then comes a plea not to delay in any leading of the Spirit, and not to neglect any Gospel ordinance and commandment of our Lord. Do not be discouraged to do duty "though never so weak." "Oh! let us be wary how we spend our precious time, for it hath a lock before, but none behind: I am of a fearful timorous spirit naturally, but I find it a great help to dash Babilons brats in the first rice." Next a sort of homily on the failure of works to justify, and one on "now the Spirit is Truth, light and love" consisting almost entirely of scriptural quotations. Her oft-repeated theme is the exhortation to offer praise and thanks to God. "Beware of evil thoughts, idle words and foolish jesting, for the sweet refreshing joy of the Lord is a thousand times better than all sinful mirth." "Sins of fleshly pride will bring God's Judgment." Following the theme of *Galatians 5: 16<sup>f</sup>*, she closes with the example of *Daniel*.

The address to the COURTEOUS READER which follows expresses the hope that the setting forth of her experiences will be of

help to some if not to all. She herself is filled with much self-loathing but she believes to have been guided by God in the writing of these experiences. To testify that she has received the gift of singing as well as that of prayer, she presents a few of "those Hymnes and Spiritual Songs." "As I was waiting on the Lord, in that Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, this following short Hymne was immediately given in.

- 1 *O now my soul go forth with  
praise  
For God excepteth thee always;  
Thy life is bound up now in mee,  
My precious death hath set thee  
free.*
- 2 *This Testimony I thee give,  
As this bread was broaken, so  
was I,  
That thou in mee mightest never  
dye:  
My blood doth justify the same,  
That thou mayest praise my holy  
Name.*
- 3 *My Covenant I have made with thee,  
So that thou are now whole set free:  
Sin nor Sathan cannot thee charge,  
Because my love hath thee enlarg'd,  
So sure as I am plas't above,  
So sure art thou now of my love."*

"Another time I have been waiting on the Lord in breaking bread :  
And soon after was given in this following :

- 1 *The Spring is come the dead is  
gone,  
Sweet streams of love doth flow:  
There is a Rock, that you must  
knock,  
From whence these streams do go.*
- 2 *The Banquet's set, the King is  
come,  
To entertain his Guest:  
All that are weary of their sins,  
He waites to give them rest.*
- 3 *Then come, and take your fill of  
love,  
Here's joy enough for all.  
And see our King so richly clad,  
And give so loud a call.*
- 4 *Here's Wine without money or  
price:  
Here's milk to nurish babes:  
You may come to this banquet  
now,  
And feede of it most large.*
- 5 *Then comfort you your selves in him;  
Tis sweet to see his love,  
That they, that are redeemed by him,  
May live so free above."*

"And while the afflicting hand of God was upon mee in some measure, this following was given in one evening, as a song of instruction.

- 1 *Afflictions are not from the dust,  
Nor are they in vain sent:  
But they shall work the work of  
him,  
That is most nobly Bent.*
- 2 *Then let thine eyes look upon  
him,  
Which worketh in the dark:  
And let thine heart imbrace his  
love,  
Least thou from him should'st  
start.*

- 3 *Although thou canst not see his work,  
Yet waite on him with joy:  
For none shall hinder now his work,  
Nor none shall him Anoy.*
- 4 *Thou must be willing to take up  
The cross, to follow him,  
And waite till he will make his cup,  
To flow up to the brim.*
- 5 *Seeing thou art now called unto  
The purpose of his will,  
Let not afflictions trouble thee,  
Believe, and stand thou still.*
- 6 *If that the Lord did not thee love,  
He would not this pains take,  
To let thee see his grace in thee,  
And also thee awake.*
- 7 *It scowes away the drosse from thee,  
And takes away thy tinne:  
It makes thy soul fit for to hear  
The voice of thy sweet King.*
- 8 *It makes the soul further to know  
The Sonship of his grace,  
And weanes the soul from things below,  
That it may seek his face.*
- 9 *It puts the wise to see his work,  
And puts him in the way,  
That he may forthwith seek the Lord,  
Without further delay.*
- 10 *It makes him now resolve upon  
Obedience to his grace;  
And watchful in the way he goes,  
That he may seek his face.*
- 11 *It makes him look for strength from God,  
To heale his sliding back:  
It makes him look up to the Rock,  
For that which he doth lack."*

Nov. 20, 1656.

- 1 *Zion is God's precious plant,  
The Lord will watter it every day:  
Oh! Zion is God's holy one,  
It shall not whether nor decay.*
- 2 *Zion is that fenced wall,  
A Tower that none shall throw down:  
O! Zion is that glorious hold  
That God will keep both safe and sound.*
- 3 *Zion is that pleasant Plant,  
That God will hedge about each hour;  
O! Zion is God's heritage,  
And he will keep it by his power.*
- 4 *Therefore let not thy heart now faint,  
For Zion's sake hold not thy peace;  
For our God will hear Zion's Plaint;  
Therefore give thy God now no rest,  
Till thou with Zion he hath blest.*
- 5 *Let Zion know her time drawes near,  
She may look up now without fear:  
Let Zion know her God doth live,  
That hath her portion for to give.*
- 6 *Let Zion's children now rejoyce,  
And let them praises sing:  
O! let them lift up pleasant voyce,  
In honour to their King.*



- 7 *Let Zion know her God is true,  
That will her mercies now renew,  
She shall receive great things  
from him,  
Who is her glory, and her King.*
- 9 *Our King shall reign in right-  
eousness,  
His glory shall shine forth;  
He will come forth in Judgment  
then,\*  
For his poor saints comfort.*
- 11 *Then let my people quiet sit,  
And wait on him with joy;  
There is a time drawes near at  
hand,  
Nothing shall them Anoy.*
- 8 *Although afflictions should hold  
on,  
And troubles should arise;  
Yet God will own his precious  
one,  
Their prayers he'll not despise.*
- 10 *Our King shall reigne in glory  
then,  
He shall himself come up,  
His enemies then shall fall with  
speed,  
And be made but a puff.*
- \* For the confirmation hereof do  
ye mind these two Scriptures:  
Esai 45: 13 and Psalm 89: 19.

- 1 *The poor then of the flock shall find a rest,  
And I their God, and portion, will them bless  
And they shall to me for a refuge fly,  
And I will be their helpe continually.*
- 2 *Then shall their souls alone in mee rejoyce,  
That I have made of them my onely choice;  
I will fill them in that day with my power,  
So shall they wait on me then every hour.*
- 3 *Their soul shall be as watered plants with dew,  
And I my mercy will to them renew;  
Their beasts shall be engaged with my love,  
For I will move in them from power above.*
- 4 *This is the portion that I now will give,  
Unto all those that strifes humbly to live;  
Therefore rejoyce in God your onely guide,  
Which in this day of trouble will you hide.*

- 1 *Awake, awake, put on my strength,  
And mine owne comelyness,  
Look upon mee for I have  
Wrought thy deliverance.*
- 2 *Thou art black but comely in  
Mine eyes, that doth behold,  
Thee swearing mine own right-  
eousness,  
Which glory cannot becould.*
- 3 *I waited long on thee, to see,  
When thou wouldst mee imbrace,  
And when thou wouldst look up  
to mee,  
To see my glorious face.*
- 4 *And now, what say'st thou unto  
mee?  
Have I not done thee good?  
And have not spar'd to set thee  
free,  
Mine own Son's pretious blood.*

- 5 *Therefore let all thy life be now,  
A sacrifice of praise,  
And let my holyness give up  
Thy self in all my wayes.*
- 6 *Let not the World so sad thy  
heart,  
Nor cast thee down so low,  
For if thou wait upon my grace,  
My secrets thou shalt know.*
- 7 *Be watchful, and keep close to  
me,  
Thy Garments: do not staine;  
And that will be to thy poor soul,  
A certain heavenly gain.*
- 8 *Take heed of glorying in my  
love—  
But walk humbly and low,  
For it is onely my fulness,  
That makes thee thus to flow.*
- 9 *There is by pathes to wander in,  
That Sathan would advance,  
But I will keep thee in my power,  
And be thy deliverance.*
- 10 *Be watchful and keep close to  
mee,  
My Garments do not soyl,  
For they are thine to cover thee;  
Be watchful the a while.*

- 
- 1 *Oh! where shall I find now  
A people quicken'd still,  
That seek all times to live on God,  
And eek to do his will.*
- 2 *A people that deny themselves,  
And eek the cross up take,  
That doth delight in God alone,  
And eek the World forsake.*
- 3 *A people that abhor themselves,  
And over their sins weep,  
A people mourning o'er the land,  
And doth him dayly seek.*
- 4 *A people that believes in God,  
By faith drawes vertue still;  
Lay hold on promise which is true,  
Contented with his will.*
- 5 *A people that the world esteem,  
Keeping close there dayly,  
And for a rule the same to take,  
When others from it fly.*
- 6 *Their hearts are fastened on the  
Lord,  
They for a refuge fly,  
That God would now help by his  
power,  
In their extremity.*
- 7 *Their cries are now unto the Lord,  
They seek in him to hide,  
To take of now his heavy hand,  
And let not wrath abide.*
- 8 *With such a people would I spend,  
My life and days now here:  
Oh! think upon thy servant, Lord,  
And to me now draw near.*

“I assure you Courteous Reader these are not studied things, but are given in immediately.”

It was at Dr. Payne's request that research into the contents of Katherine Sutton's book was undertaken. To him I am indebted for the suggestion of an account of Hanserd Knollys preceding the account of Katherine Sutton and for much of the information about Knollys himself. Readers familiar with Dr. Payne's chapter in the *Baptist Hymn Book Companion*, "Baptists and Their Hymns," will recognise the quotations concerning Thomas Tillam.

## In The Study

ANOTHER Theology of the Old Testament!<sup>1</sup> Or at least the first instalment of it; for we still await the translation into English of the second volume of this work, with its discussion of prophecy and the great prophetic witnesses. Meanwhile, there is more than enough here to permit of provisional assessment and to preoccupy the student for many a long day to come.

The sub-title of this volume is significant. It is *The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions*, and that is a fair and accurate pointer to its content. Attention is centred on the Hexateuch and its theology. There is introductory consideration of the historical development of Jahwism and its sacral institutions. There is subsequent examination of the Davidic and messianic promise, and of Israel's response to the revelatory and redemptive activity of her God. But the heart of Von Rad's concern remains the process of credal and confessional statement and restatement that echoes the dealings of God with his people and that makes the Old Testament what it essentially and uniquely is.

So it inevitably follows that judgment and criticism may be recorded from twin perspectives. We must ask first about adequacy and legitimacy of method. Is this the way to write Old Testament theology? It is certainly an unusual way. Because the Old Testament proceeds from first to last with constant and recurring reference to the history of salvation, the task of the scholar is nothing less and nothing other than the rehearsal of that history. He is not to concern himself with world views, even if the world he takes is the world of Israel's distinctive faith. So the argument runs. And it is a cogent argument. But it seems to me that the compelling force which Von Rad's treatment undoubtedly exerts stems not a little from the fact that he is in the event less than rigid in the working out of his thesis. Enunciated in abstraction, that thesis seems both diametrically opposed to the approach of most of his peers in this field and open to most of the criticisms they will wish to level against him: But applied in the style which Von Rad in fact uses, it becomes less exclusive and thus less unsatisfactory. The author has not, I judge, been wholly consistent. He surely found it impossible so to be. The result is a type of treatment which, while not quite

<sup>1</sup> *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. I, by Gerhard Von Rad. Oliver & Boyd. 45s. 1962.

meriting all that is claimed for it, is magnificently complementary to more familiar ways of presentation.

But the second question that can and must be asked relates to content rather than method, to the actual material presented, illuminated, and discussed. Here I think commendation can be whole-hearted, if one proviso be noted. Von Rad is a leading exponent of a certain critical approach and a certain complex of critical positions. These are assumed rather than argued, asserted rather than discussed; and the student will wish constantly to remind himself that many scholars will dissent at crucial points. Granted an overall sympathy with and assent to the positions of the Alt-Noth school however, it is almost impossible not to award this volume highest praise. One of the great merits of Von Rad's general position and approach is that it enables him to do justice to sections of the Old Testament that in many an Old Testament theology scarcely seem to belong. His treatment of the Wisdom literature and of many of the Psalms constitutes in itself a valuable contribution to Old Testament understanding.

Von Rad is not the man to underestimate the cultic background of so much of the Old Testament material. Indeed there is an increasingly realisation of the necessity of this emphasis for a true understanding of the genesis of Scripture as a whole. Accordingly it is not surprising that a good deal has been written of late on the subject of New Testament worship. Everyone knows the difficulty and the temptation. The difficulty arises from the paucity of relevant evidence. The temptation is to generalise from all too few particulars, to impose structure and form according to pre-supposition. To live with the difficulty while conquering the temptation is no mean achievement. This is the attainment of the Professor of New Testament at Halle. It is also the justification for the translation of his important investigation.<sup>2</sup>

Professor Delling is not unmindful of sacramental observances; but in the main his concern is with the form and content of early worship in its non-sacramental expressions. The way of influence and deduction cannot be avoided, but a thorough knowledge of non-Christian background, a keen attention to detail, and a sensitive awareness of the nuances of the sacred text, protect the study from all the wilder flights of fantasy. Concern is not too rigidly and narrowly directed. Worship is helpfully explored against the wider backcloth of the church and its ministries; and the "what" is allowed to point backwards to the "why."

Certain details provoke, some to applause, some to disagreement. One of our continuing problems is whether the Service of Word and Sacrament was originally one unified whole. Delling answers

<sup>2</sup> *Worship in the New Testament*, by D. Gerhard Delling. Darton, Longman & Todd. 35s. 1962.

by drawing a distinction between Sunday and other days, and by suggesting the unity of the Lord's Day Service. Intriguing also is his conclusion about the restricted use of the congregational Amen —its special attachment to doxologies and blessings. On the other hand he fails to be convincing in his argument from the Pauline epistles that the Old Testament was not read in Gentile Christian worship. We can hardly get this from 2 Cor. 3: 14 and Romans 10: 4, unless *telos* be drastically misunderstood. Finally there may be noted as characteristic of the quality of this book the terse and devastating note on Cullmann's familiar argument on the relationship of *koluein* to baptism. This curiosity of scholarship is rigorously cut down to size. We must hope it will not be reinflated. Though I fear it will continue to haunt the theologians in Scottish universities for many a long day.

All such theories and hypotheses must be ever and anew brought back to the bar of sober scriptural exegesis. If our doctrines wander far from this base we are always in danger. So it is that every careful exegetical labour must command its measure of gratitude. A close investigation<sup>3</sup> of 1 Corinthians 15 is a recent venture of this kind, and it finds its appropriate place in the familiar series of *Studies in Biblical Theology*. Mr. Dahl sets over against each other the two main lines of interpretation established over the years, and is concerned to sketch a fresh possibility. It is commonly argued that the Pauline teaching is that the redeemed will be enabled to enjoy eternal life in its fullness through the provision of another body in the eternal world. This is "the accepted exegesis." It was arrived at in contradistinction to the belief that the apostle's teaching was that our present physical bodies are to be wholly restored at the Last Day, and that this would be the lot of the righteous and unbelievers. This is "the traditional view." In neither case does so brief a summary do justice to the complexities of presentation. But Mr. Dahl provides the comprehensive statements we require and buttresses them by ample reference and quotation. He also underlines the difficulties and justifies a plea for restatement.

A resurrection body "somatically identical" with the one we now possess — such is the conclusion to which we are led. But the section by section exegesis must be followed and the whole argument carefully weighed if the reader is to understand and reach his own verdict. Suffice it to say that this careful study is biblical exposition at its best, and that the journey has its own value and fascination irrespective of the validity of the terminus and goal.

One caution only. The main title could be misleading. This is advance on a narrow front in respect of a carefully delimited problem. The result is not the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body. For that we should require at the least a similar ex-

<sup>3</sup> *The Resurrection of the Body*, by M. E. Dahl. S.C.M. 12s. 6d. 1962.

amination of 2. Cor. 5 and a far deeper appreciation of the corporate nature of resurrection fullness.

*Studies in Biblical Theology* set the fashion for the launching of series. Among the most recent is Nelson's *Library of Theology*. It is an ambitious project. It is to range over the fields of Scripture, church history, doctrine, systematic theology, comparative religion, philosophy of religion. It aims at the production of substantial works that will remain standard for a generation; and we can but hope that it will not take a generation to produce. The first volume<sup>4</sup> is already available to us. Ironically enough it is a republication of a treatise that appeared as long ago as 1918.

This is not an easy book to read right through. Probably many will be content to use it for reference purposes. Yet there is enormous loss if the picture is not seen as a whole. Dr. Franks uses a broad canvas. His main sections treat of Patristic Theology, of Mediæval Theology, of Older Protestant Theology, of Modern Protestant Theology. It will be apparent that his major preoccupation is Protestant doctrine, that the climax towards which he moves is the thought of Schleiermacher and Ritschl, that his story ends at the opening of the twentieth century. His learning is encyclopædic, his judgment perceptive, his labour less dated than we have any right to expect.

The method he adopts is to let his sources speak liberally and freely. This is right and necessary; but it does make for the danger of inundating the reader with a series of disconnected historical notes. So. Dr. Franks seeks to guard against this peril by the careful use of contextual statement, summary recapitulation and reference backwards and forwards. He is least successful in the study of the early period where the undeveloped nature of the theology lends itself ill to his systematisation. Once the lines are more clearly and solidly drawn he proceeds magnificently.

At the end of the seven hundred pages I was left with two general reflections. How ancient so many of our characteristically modern problems and questions turn out in fact to be. And how much more careful and precise they were in past ages in drawing distinctions and in defining terms than is many a modern theologian. This difference may partly be due to our concern with biblical ways of thinking and our healthy impatience with artificial subtleties. But in part it is surely due to a tendency towards laziness of thought and application. Either way, we owe an unbounded debt to tradition; and this monumental study can still help us to learn of it.

Dr. Franks leaves us with no word of the great theologians of our own century; and that is unfortunate, for it has not lacked figures of note. We have heard a great deal of P. T. Forsyth in the

<sup>4</sup> *The Work of Christ*, by R. S. Franks. Thomas Nelson. 30s. 1962.

last fifteen years. It was high time that our generation was reminded of his great contemporary, James Denney. Now a lively study of his theology<sup>5</sup> is provided in *The Preacher's Library*—a series which declares its task to be to assist the proclamation of the Gospel “under modern conditions.” Perhaps it is this quivering determination to be relevant that prompts us to constant self justification for the commendation of any pre-war writer. Forsyth must always be presented as the man who anticipated Barth; and the cover of this new volume trumpets of Denney that “in a sense, he was a Barthian before Barth.” It is all rather misleading and non-sensical—and quite unnecessary. Denney spoke with enormous power in his own time. In so far as he had greatness, he speaks still.

For him the centre of Christianity was the Atonement. On most other doctrines his writing was occasional. It may be that this accounts for the slightly disappointing impression this study leaves. Mr. Taylor has had to make too many bricks with too little straw. He does it conscientiously, bravely. But it does not quite come off. To fill his pages he must present in summary form the results of his hero's close attention to New Testament material and at this point he cannot win. Critically, Denney is dated, and the result is to remove him from us. Exegetically, his key positions belong to the accepted assumptions of our time, and so the interest flags.

If all this sounds disparaging, it is not intended to be. From this book we gain some real appreciation of the tremendous contribution Denney made in and to his time. But the man and his thought are inseparable. To paraphrase and docket him is to extinguish his flame. Only when Denney himself is quoted is the fire rekindled. He speaks so pungently, so powerfully, so clearly, that lesser voices become but echoes. Our highest debt to Mr. Taylor is that again and again he lets Denney speak. Our most worthy response will be to turn from this study to its sources, to read or re-read great theology which can be preached today.

The roll which includes Forsyth and Denney would not be complete unless it also bore the name of John Baillie. His recent death deprived the British theological firmament of one of its brightest stars. But his Gifford Lectures had already been fully prepared, and in their published form<sup>6</sup> he speaks to us still. Against the modern philosophical background of logical empiricism and existentialism and in particular opposition to all forms of reductive naturalism, he grapples with the problems attaching to our knowledge of God. We see him wrestling with the epistemological status of faith, exploring the nature and office of theological statements, striving to define and understand the nature of certitude and the test of reality, bravely exposing his Christian commitment to the challenge

<sup>5</sup> *God Loves Like That!* by J. R. Taylor. S.C.M. 27s. 6d. 1962.

<sup>6</sup> *The Sense of the Presence of God*, by John Baillie. Oxford. 30s. 1962.

of comparative religion, seeking without evasion to justify "the scandal of particularity." A keen and sensitive mind has given us the fruit of a life time's reflection on those ultimate questions which present themselves inescapably to a faith that is determined to be rational.

How is this testament to be assessed? There is undeniably much on the credit side; for here a mature wisdom has striven successfully to see things steadily and see them whole. Typical but intriguing is the explanation offered as to why God has ordained that in one Name only all men shall find salvation. It is that thus the Father has ensured that as a man finds Him he of necessity finds his brother also. This is truly and convincingly said. And it is of similar importance to be reminded of the way in which Christian affirmations should contribute to "the frame of reference which serves for the guidance of Christian living," and that therefore "no affirmation has right of place within a system of Christian theology if it has no such usefulness." Such significant examples could be multiplied.

Nevertheless, there are hesitations. I must confess that I find the attempt to illumine providence by reference to chance and indeterminacy exceeding odd. But this perhaps should carry no more weight than that of a merely personal reaction. Much more serious is the failure at some crucial points really to come to grips with the contemporary logical empiricist assault. Certainly Baillie recognises that the crucial question concerns not verification but falsification; but at this point he seems to sidestep and evade. Let us take a problem that he himself enunciates: What would constitute a disproof of the love of God? Now Baillie's answer, as I understand him, is to say (1) that there are criteria by which points of doctrine and belief may be tested, and in the particular cases we must agree that upon the production of certain evidence the belief in question must be surrendered; and (2) that we must distinguish between such particular beliefs and that which underlies them as ultimate, that which is given in an act of primary awareness, that which is none other than the primary apprehension by faith of God's revelation of himself in Jesus Christ. This is self-authenticating. It cannot be tested by reference to something outside itself. Here only the failure of the primary apprehension can destroy.

Now these two assertions are, I would suppose, exactly true. The trouble arises when we set them alongside the problem already enunciated. If the critic produces evidence against the love of God, he is generally informed that we mean something different by "love" to what he supposed, and that therefore his evidence falls. Indeed it soon transpires that any objection he may advance will be rebutted by some quick juggling with the word "love" and that in fact nothing will be accepted as disproof at this point. Evidently



we have removed this belief from (1) to (2), have merged it with the "primary apprehension." This may be fair enough. But is this Dr. Baillie's position? The answer is far from clear. And if it is his defence, then in what way does he delimit the content of the basic primary awareness? Again I cannot see that he has clearly faced the issue.

Perhaps I have said enough to indicate the general nature of my reservations. This is a book which is at once sober and stimulating. But there remains just the feeling that for Gifford Lectures it is a shade lightweight, and that its Scottish author never quite felt the full blast of the disturbing modern gales.

It is encouraging to find an essay on preaching<sup>7</sup> included in another familiar series: *Ecumenical Studies in Worship*. It will give the lie to the many who still like to claim that the exponents of liturgical revival are totally uninterested in the proclamation of the Word of God. But even apart from such considerations, the placing of this study reveals a shrewd and accurate judgment at work. For it could, I think, be reasonably argued that the most significant part of it is the final section, the brief concluding chapter that bears the title *Preaching as the Reformed Church's Contribution to the Ecumenical Movement*. No one will wish to treat the preaching of the Word merely as a key to the ecumenical impasse. But if it is much more besides it might turn out to be this as well. The proclamation that builds up the Body of Christ inevitably tramples under foot the false idols that divide.

This emphasis is crucial. But in the hands of the Professor of Practical Theology in Neuchatel University it gives a decisive twist to other material that has its own considerable and independent value. Here preaching is treated theologically—and thus practically—as it always ought to be. The important questions of nature, authorisation, context, and preparation are all brought under discussion, with many an apt phrase and penetrating dictum. Some of the verdicts of detail we may wish to question. At several points I for one would query or dissent. What matters is that such verdicts are the result of the application of theological criteria clearly enunciated; and Von Allmen will abide dissatisfaction if it be grounded either in criticism of a theological criterion or in questioning of its valid application.

As a demonstration of method and quality let one quotation suffice. We should "use words smacking of the soil rather than the academy. God is not a weakling or a purist. He ordained for the sacrament simple, solid, wholesome things—water, bread and wine; and we should therefore use in our sermons words which can bear comparison with the means of the sacraments. Too often we

<sup>7</sup> *Preaching and Congregation*, by J. J. Von Allmen. Lutterworth Press, 7s. 6d. 1962.

preach as though we baptized with syrup and communicated with pastry. That is perhaps one of the reasons why there are fewer men than women at our services." Oh dear, oh dear! Enough there to set a Church Meeting twittering or a Fraternal foaming.

N. CLARK

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Reviews by : G. EVERY, B. HARRISON, W. E. MOORE, H. MOWVLEY.

## Reviews

G. R. Beasley-Murray: *Baptism in the New Testament*. 424 pp. 50s. Macmillan.

The Principal of Spurgeon's College has put us all in his debt by his full and weighty discussion of every text in the New Testament with any direct bearing on the theology and practice of baptism. An Anglican who is in no sense a specialist in New Testament studies must have diffidence in reviewing this, especially in this place. First of all he must bear witness not only to the immense trouble that has evidently been taken to do justice to the views of scholars in every Western tradition, including Roman Catholics, but also to the balanced reserve, so far as he can judge, of Dr. Beasley-Murray's own exegesis.

That there should be some relation between the making of proselytes to Judaism and of converts to Christianity, both in the method of instruction and in the manner of reception, is at any rate inherently probable. It does not follow that Christian baptism, or the baptism of John, is a direct development from the baptism of proselytes. The absence of evidence for Jewish baptisms before the New Testament may be an historical accident, but it has some weight. Dr. Beasley-Murray seems to me perfectly justified in insisting on the radical difference between the place of baptism in Jewish and Christian initiation. The baptism of John, which he is disposed to interpret as a symbolic action, an acted prophecy, may bear some relation to the lustrations of Qumran, but "there is no point at which contact can be found between John's baptism and proselyte baptism." (p. 42.)

In the discussion that follows of "the foundations of Christian baptism," based on a careful analysis of texts, I find myself sometimes in doubt whether particular passages are not too narrowly applied to baptism in water where the apostle has in mind the whole process of conversion, and the incorporation of new Christians into the body of Christ by baptism and communion. It may be indeed a mistake to treat *I Corinthians* 10: 1-4 as "instruction on the nature of the sacraments" (p. 181), but it seems to me difficult to deny the eucharistic reference of the whole passage down to 12: 13. This has at any rate some significance for the relationship between later developments in the practice of Christian initiation

and the understanding of baptism in the New Testament in terms that include the eucharist.

In his last chapter on "the rise and significance of infant baptism" and in his postscript on "Baptismal reform and inter-church relations" Dr. Beasley-Murray passes outside the strict field of New Testament studies. His judgment within that field commands respect, if not complete assent. I am especially impressed with his contention that *I Corinthians 7:14* cannot possibly refer to a practice in any way analagous with proselyte baptism, but is rather an argument against the baptism of children in the Corinthian church at the time.

What Dr. Beasley-Murray seems to me to have missed is the difference between three kinds of baptism of infants:

1. The baptism and first communion of very young children, often but not always infants in arms, who were baptized with adult converts, but not subjected to the elaborate exorcisms of the catechumenate, at any rate from some time in the second century.

2. The clinical baptism of infants in the first week of life. This seems to have become the African custom, diffused in the West by the influence of S. Augustine, who saw in the practice of infant baptism conclusive evidence of original guilt. Infants thus baptized underwent the subordinate ceremonies at the blessing of the font at Easter or Pentecost, but very few were baptized in church in the West in the Middle Ages.

3. Infant baptism in the face of the Church as this was restored by the Reformers, often but not always with the implication that the symbolic meaning is more important than the effect on the particular infant.

Of these only the first is relevant to historical questions relating to the practice of the first Christians. Only the second and third are relevant to the controversies of the Reformation and since. As an historian, I agree with Dr. Beasley-Murray that "pressures . . . upon the Church from within and from without" (p. 352) played a large part in the development of the baptism of children into infant baptism, but I see this pressure primarily in terms of the difficulty of sending the baby home when the catechumens were dismissed. The clues are in the Eastern practice of baptizing infants when their mothers are ready to make their communion in church. In some Eastern communities children who die unbaptized before this are sanctified by their mother, who may not nurse her baptized children before her purification. Objections to the communion of infants were met in the West by the separation of baptism and first communion, but baptism in the East still means both (and chrismation). So I believe the early Church understood the New Testament, rightly or wrongly.

C. F. D. Moule: *The Birth of the New Testament*. 252 pp. 25s.  
A. & C. Black.

This is the first of the companion volumes to Black's N.T. Commentaries. It is the kind of book which has been crying out to be written for many a long day. For there are still people who speak and think as if the N.T. is primarily a literary work, as if, to put it naïvely, the writers sat down round a table and said, "Now let's write the N.T." But we are dealing here, as the title of Professor Moule's book says, with "birth"—not with production. There is, of course, a manner of dealing with the physiological "facts" of birth which removes the mystery and the wonder. There are also Introductions to the Literature of the N.T. which deal with the "mechanics" of the process by which the N.T. came into being. They examine the N.T., book by book, dealing with questions of authorship, date, destination, etc. All most necessary, but it sometimes leaves one gasping with wonder at the erudition, and, occasionally, at the ingenuity of the writer himself.

"Is this not a miracle of the Spirit?" exclaims Professor Moule near the end of the book. And that is the proper reaction to a scholarly, careful, and reverent enquiry into this "birth." It brings us to our knees before the sheer mystery and wonder of it. Professor Moule has many interesting and valuable things to say about the usual problems of N.T. Introduction, but the "mechanics" or physiological "facts" with which he deals are the circumstances and needs of the worshipping, witnessing, suffering Church. "Probably at no stage within the N.T. period did a writer put pen to paper without the incentive of a pressing need." He enquires into the origins of the N.T., not book by book, but, so to speak, need by need: "The Church at Worship"; "The Church Explains Itself"—which is sub-divided into (1) "Stages of Self-Awareness" (i.e., in relation to Israel), (2) "The Use of the Jewish Scriptures," (3) "The Gospels and Acts" (The Gospels are "aids to Christians in explaining their faith and defending it when occasion offered"), (4) "The Reign of Christ" (dealing with the derisive question "Where is your Messiah?"); "The Church under Attack"; Building the Superstructure and Consolidating"; "Variety and Uniformity in the Church"; "Collecting and Sifting the Documents" (i.e., the Canon).

Here is one of many jewels: "N.T. eschatology at its deepest level concentrates upon entering into, implementing, loyally expressing that which is already given, which is Christ; it does not say, 'How long will it be before the whistle blows 'no side'?' but, 'Where ought I to be now, to receive the next pass?' In other words, the fact that the kick-off has taken place, that the game is on, and that we have a Captain who can lead us to victory, is all that matters."

This cursory glance at the chapter headings may convey the impression that the author is maintaining that the Church, and its needs, were the determining factors in the making of the N.T. True this book is a child of "form criticism." Nevertheless, as Professor Moule observes, "a good many of the assumptions that frequently go with form-criticism have been discarded or qualified" in his book. Right at the beginning we meet with the much-needed caveat that "our professors are in danger of crying worship, worship where there is no worship." And one thing clearly emerges from each chapter—that, while the N.T. undoubtedly took its genesis, humanly speaking, from the questions that were asked in those early days (by the Church and its opponents, and by enquirers like Theophilus), it was Jesus Himself who, through the Holy Spirit, brought the Church and the Jewish and Gentile world not only into the position of needing answers but also (more important) of needing to put the questions. Characteristic is the statement that "the dominant use (of scripture) was as compared with its Jewish antecedents—a quite new and convincing one: and the best explanation for this is that it was derived from the Lord himself." Or again, after a convincing picture of the wide range of Christian doctrine and practice with which a traveller from Jerusalem to Ephesus would meet, say, in A.D. 60, we are confronted (all the more because of this variety which some exponents of N.T. unity are apt to overlook) with an equally convincing demonstration that "its various writings speak with a remarkably unanimous voice of a single Gospel and of one Lord." Yes, indeed, a "miracle of the Spirit."

Professor Moule closes with a plea for the "ethical translation of the Gospel" in our own day, and urges that this "translation" must be carried out in the same manner as were the Christian ethical decisions of the first century—through "informed discussion, prophetic insight, ecstatic fire—all in the context of the worshipping, and also discriminating, assembly, met with the good news in Jesus Christ behind them, the Spirit among them, and before them the expectation of being led forward into the will of God."

To the interesting list of contrasts between circumcision and Christian baptism on pp. 48-50 we would add—the need of faith.

W. E. MOORE

R. W. Thomson and J. E. T. Hough: *The Service of our Lives*. 120 pp. 6. 6d. S.C.M. Press

The co-authors of this excellent little book, who need no introduction here, lead into their main theme with a chapter on "The Affluent Society" which gives a vivid sketch and interpretation of society, at least, as we know it. This provides the broad and contrasting background to our thinking on Christian Stewardship which is summarized in Chapter 2 as "the sustained, sacrificial and

systematic offering of time, abilities and material possessions of all kinds, in the belief that they are a trust from God to be used according to his will, for the good of his world-wide family in response to the redeeming love made known most perfectly in Jesus Christ."

For Chapters 3 and 4 a couple of arresting headings have been found under which to discuss time and talents, namely "Consecrating the Clock" and "Frozen Credits or Working Capital." The writers may begin with the man who, upon retiring at 65, found he had spent 22 years in bed asleep, but go on to say valuable things about finding the correct proportion of time for the right ingredients in the mixture of daily life in work and leisure, emphasizing, and giving practical advice about, the vital things for which a Christian must "make time" (e.g., Bible study, prayer and thought).

The fourth chapter is concerned with the stewardship of "skills with which we have been endowed" and in the realm of Christian service in the community "large pastoral opportunities" are indicated for people who fulfil the condition of sharing in Holy Communion—"to be in love and charity with your neighbours"—and who care for the lives of others and who are ready to fill the gaps in the "social service state" by informed and "personal" co-operation with professional workers. (A note on the "Southbridge experiment" in Birmingham might have been helpful here.)

In thirteen pages the writers manage to cover an amazing amount of the Biblical teaching on possessions offering a number of clues to some of the sayings of Jesus and Paul. Schemes for Christian Stewardship are described briefly and sources for more detailed information documented. The writers can commend all the schemes they mention (with words of warning about professional firms) but stress planning in detail, adequate Biblical teaching, the need for well produced literature and the use of the lay forces in the church. What cannot be commended is the continuance of "haphazard methods" without system or teaching.

This book is packed with live material for teaching and proclaiming Christian Stewardship. Not only is it a challenge to individuals to make an "honest and sober" assessment of what they must offer to God but also a challenge to all the churches for which Mr. Thomson and Mr. Hough write, to catalogue the abilities God has given them, to break out of some of the existing patterns of local life and find the stimulus of worthwhile tasks and existing opportunities.

This book is a worthy contribution to the "Living Church" Series and will be read widely—it will do good work in the hands of Church membership enquirers. There is a slight misprint on the last line of page 44.

B. HARRISON

*Oxford Bible Atlas*. Edited by Herbert G. May with the assistance of R. W. Hamilton and G. N. S. Hunt. 144 pp. 21s. Oxford University Press.

Every student of the Bible needs a good Bible Atlas and here is one available at a very modest price. It contains a very brief introductory survey of the history of the Biblical period, four physical maps, twenty historical maps (fifteen for the O.T. and five for the N.T.), two archaeological maps, an article on Archaeology and the Bible, and a Gazetteer.

It is difficult to avoid comparing it with the *Westminster Historical Atlas* and it must be said at once that it has several distinct advantages. It measures only approximately 10 x 8 inches and is consequently easy to handle. Each map has the relevant text on the facing page so that there is no need for frequent turning of pages for reference. The maps showing vegetation and rainfall form a useful section. The relief maps are excellent making the overall picture of the contours of the Bible lands easy to grasp.

In the historical maps these heavy contour features have been fully retained with the result that sometimes the special feature of the map does not stand out as clearly as it might. For instance, the *Westminster Historical Atlas* with its use of colour gives a much clearer view of the settlement of the tribes in Palestine. The trade routes on p. 67 and the Assyrian boundary on p. 71 are faintly marked although these are the points of the maps. The map showing the spread of Christianity does not indicate the route of Paul's journeys although their course is mentioned in the text. On the other hand, the two double page maps of Palestine in O.T. and N.T. times are excellent.

In the Introduction compression has resulted in a somewhat arid account of the struggles between the Seleucids and the Ptolemies, but there is a very good section on the Jewish Diaspora which provides an excellent background for the spread of Christianity. The text facing the maps consists of an outline of Biblical material with special references to the places concerned. In the main uncritical, it provides a good commentary on the maps. The article on Archaeology is especially good, showing its relevance to modern Biblical study. The illustrations are well selected and are placed near the appropriate text.

Altogether this is a most useful piece of work and a very handy tool for student, minister or layman who wishes to understand the movements and conditions of the people of God throughout the centuries.

H. MOWVLEY



The Independent Press has published a useful series of biographies in connection with the 1662 celebrations. Each runs to about 20 pages and costs two shillings. Each is called *A Heritage Biography*, and the following people are covered :

|                         |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| John Penry              | Vavasor Powell        |
| Joseph Parker           | Roger Williams        |
| William Carey           | John Goodwin          |
| John Bunyan             | John Angell James     |
| Jonathan Scott          | Thomas Goodwin        |
| C. H. Spurgeon          | Benjamin Keach        |
| The Dissenting Deputies | Robert Browne         |
| Robert Hall             | Isaac Watts           |
| John Milton             | Barrowe and Greenwood |
| John Robinson           | R. W. Dale            |
| John Howe               | Philip Doddridge      |
| Richard Baxter          | Andrew Fuller         |
| John Owen               | Oliver Cromwell       |
| George Whitefield       | Benjamin Waugh        |

**Other books received include:**

- Olive Parker, *The New Commandment*. 79 pp. 7s. 6d. Darton, Longman and Todd.
- Thomas Gornall, *A Philosophy of God*. 247 pp. 21s. Darton, Longman and Todd.
- Thomas H. Keir, *The Word in Worship*. 150 pp. 15s. Oxford University Press.
- John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*. Edited by Roger Sharrock. 183 pp. 35s. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press.
- Harry Escott, *Isaac Watts*. 302 pp. 28s. 6d. Independent Press.
- R. Tudor Jones, *Congregationalism in England*, 504 pp. 63s. Independent Press.
- Hugh Montefiore and H. E. W. Turner, *Thomas and the Evangelists*. 128 pp. 10s. 6d. S.C.M. Press.
- E. N. Ducker, *A Christian Therapy for a Neurotic World*. 224 pp. 21s. Allen and Unwin.
- S. H. Hooke, *Babylonian and Assyrian Religion*. 128 pp. 14s. Blackwell.
- Len Addicott, *Cry Angola*. 144 pp. 6s. S.C.M. Press.