

**THE JOURNAL**  
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**UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HISTORY SOCIETY**  
(incorporating the Congregational Historical Society, founded in  
1899, and the Presbyterian Historical Society of England,  
founded in 1913)

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**EDITORIAL**

This is an enlarged issue thanks to the generosity of the Coward Trust. Two of the articles celebrate the centenary of the building erected for Hackney College on Finchley Road, Hampstead. They were prepared for the centenary commemoration held by the Hackney and New College Old Students' Association on 1st October 1987. This Hackney issue is also a presidential issue,

since it contains a paper by each of our presidents. Dr. Nuttall reminds us of the resources of the New College archives and uncovers more of Congregationalism's *terra incognita*. Dr. Knox characteristically enlarges English horizons. Mr. Macarthur's paper was delivered at Cardiff on 12 May 1987 as the Society's annual lecture. It has a rare immediacy.

We welcome as reviewers Professor K.H.D. Haley of Sheffield and Mr. Wollaston of Northenden. Mr. Taylor for this commemorative issue resumes editorial duties. Mr. Rose has again succoured his brother editors by compiling an index to Volume 3.

### CHARLES SURMAN 1901-1986

Charles Surman who died on 30 August last year was an officer of The Congregational Historical Society for many years and had an unsurpassed knowledge of the sources of Congregational history born of a lifetime's research, collecting information on ministers and churches for the biographical index which is known nowadays by his name.

Charles Edward Surman, M.A., F.R.Hist.S., was born on 27 April 1901 in Leytonstone, educated locally, and after a spell with Spicer's, the paper firm, and another as a housemaster at an orphanage, in 1926 he entered Lancashire College. Undoubtedly the most significant result of his career as a student was his marriage to the Principal's daughter, Ula Grieve. He was ordained at Brownhill Congregational Church, Blackburn in 1930 and subsequently served at Mawdsley Street, Bolton and Trinity, Reading, before settling finally in 1946 at Erdington, Birmingham. He retired in 1972.

He joined the Society soon after leaving college and began contributing to its *Transactions*. In those days his father-in-law, A.J. Grieve, was the President, Mr. G.F. Nuttall was a fellow-contributor. An issue of *Transactions* used to cost between £18 and £21. In 1937 he undertook the research side of the Society's work which he continued until 1958. He also acted as Secretary from 1948 to 52. Many people will gratefully remember his generous help with their historical problems. His chief contribution to *Transactions* was "Presbyterianism Under the Commonwealth," his M.A., thesis, which appeared in 1948-9. His great work, however, was the compilation of the index now bearing his name.

Many readers will have consulted it. There are three copies: one in Dr. Williams's Library, Gordon Square, London, with a second downstairs in The Memorial Hall Library, and the third at the West Midlands Record Office. The index has 30,821 cards giving information on sources as well as simple facts about the lives of Congregational ministers; and at DWL a few thousand further cards provide information on churches. The index is complete up to 1956 although there are a few up-dated cards beyond that date.

What is not generally realised is that Surman initiated the project in 1938 not as an individual effort but a corporate one by the whole Society. A thousand questionnaires sent to County Unions and churches produced many hundreds

of replies which provided a foundation for the index and after two years' work Surman was able to report that he had cards for 15,000 ministers. Then the war spoiled everything. The same corporate effort did not continue afterwards but Surman pressed on.

Few men design and execute their own memorial. Historians are continually grateful to Charles Surman for his monumental index.

J.H. TAYLOR

## **THE BACKGROUND TO THE FORMATION OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH (PRESBYTERIAN AND CONGREGATIONAL) IN ENGLAND AND WALES IN 1972<sup>1</sup>**

A visitor from Mars or even from a moderately high Anglican church sharing in the worship of Union Mill Hill and St. James's Edgware on successive Sundays might well have asked what difference there was between the two. Watts and Doddridge over against Francis Rous and the Metrical Psalter might have been his first impression of difference. But since both these expressed the sense of the majesty of God and the notes of objective worship he might have decided that this was of no great importance. After a further visit he might have noticed varieties of language. Intimations and notices might have had him foxed for a while. If he had read their minutes he would have wondered what a sederunt was and so he might have grown to see that these first cousins had acquired some characteristics of their own. None the less he might well have ended his whole investigation asking what all the fuss was about and why it should have taken nine years to achieve the union and why at the end over 300 Congregational Churches found it impossible to join the new united body. Such Martians were to be found in many of the other churches. The natives versed in the traditions of the two churches were less sure. Was there a fundamental difference to be overcome?

Robert Browne entitled his famous pamphlet "A treatise of Reformation without tarrying for anie and of the wickedness of those preachers who will not reform until the Magistrate command or compel them." Those wicked preachers were the Presbyterianisers of the sixteenth century who strove hard to change the Elizabethan church settlement into a more truly Reformed pattern. Their striving was through the organs of government in attempts to persuade the Magistrate that she had got it wrong. Browne's comment was that they were ready "to remain in open and manifest impurity and deformation because the Magistrate stay you". One of them replied curtly, "Mr. Browne has absurdly erred". If he thought that their acquiescence in the Elizabethan order was due simply to cowardice then indeed he erred. Cartwright and Travers and the

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1. A cassette of this lecture may be obtained from Crosstalk Tapes, 39 Dorchester Avenue, Penylan, Cardiff, CF3 7BS for £2.75 (inc. p. & p.).

Presbyterians of those days did not lack the courage of their convictions. But they held to the idea of one church with one national expression. I doubt if any other possibility occurred to most of them and I am sure that if it did it had no attraction for them. That is why they were impatient of much that Philip Nye and his four fellow Independents did in the Westminster Assembly. That Assembly was charged by the then Magistrate, namely the Long Parliament, to establish one form of church government most "agreeable to God's holy word and most apt to procure and preserve the peace of the Church at home and nearer agreement with the Church of Scotland and other Reformed Churches abroad". The idea of a variety of tolerated sects was never on the agenda and had no appeal for the Divines. Through the thirty years of suppression that followed the Restoration the idea of such tolerated division may have won some reluctant acceptance amongst them but they were ejected in their hundreds in 1662, not because the settlement imposed one form upon the church of the nation but because it was the wrong form and in their view so wrong that they could not give it their unfeigned assent and consent. Their hope was still for Comprehension. When that prospect died they faced the prospect of being a tolerated sect with no enthusiasm and manifest confusion.

The consequence of their uncertainty was the virtual disappearance of that orthodox Presbyterianism from the face of England. When the new Presbyterianism of the nineteenth century sprang to life it was by transfusions from the other Presbyterian Churches of the British Isles and notably from Scotland. Again the idea of one Church for the nation was latent in their ambition. By 1690 the Congregational groupings had accepted the idea of toleration. In the nineteenth century the close ties between Congregationalism and Liberalism reinforced that acceptance and made it into something of an axiom and virtue.

I have spent time on that rough sketch because it points to a deep difference of understanding and approach to the doctrine of the Church. Under the pressing fashions of ecumenicity it had become obscure but in union negotiations the unused lumber in the loft is liable to become the deeply treasured antique for which our fathers died. Besides the difference was real. For the Congregationalist the Church was first local having a universal dimension to which the oneness of Christian experience bore undeniable witness. None the less the idea of unity grew as it were upwards from the local. For the Presbyterian the Church was primarily universal whose local outcrops were bound to acknowledge not only each other but their common source in the One Rock. I could quote P.T. Forsyth to the contrary even as some notes in Oman's *Church and the Divine Order* seem to favour what I have adduced to be typical Congregationalism. Albert Peel and Carnegie Simpson are more normal examples of the division. The lines were not rigid nor were the positions always articulate but they manifested themselves in language. Verbs like "must" and "may", the use of words like congregation and church, questions regarding the places of decision making, about who makes a minister and whose minister is he, all go back to this attitude to the universality and locality of the church. The difference was enshrined in Trust Deeds and had

manifested itself in the attitude to Creeds and Confessions. It was not that either side had strayed far from orthodoxy but one was concerned that the national body should manifest its oneness in some common understanding and expression of their shared faith while the other felt that any insistence on such a national platform might force conscience and deny freedom. The longer our friend from Mars had stayed in either fellowship and the deeper he went into their practice and ethos the more would he have understood that a union between these two traditional ways of being the Church was going to be costly.

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The discussions of the 1960's did not start from cold. Under the stress and hope of the common sufferings of the Restoration period there was a natural drawing together. An Essay of Accommodation was published in 1680 and was the groundwork of the Heads of Agreement on which the Happy Union was sealed in 1691. Those Heads of Agreement refer significantly to the UNITED MINISTERS in and about London *formerly* called Presbyterian and Congregational. The first two Heads are an attempt to bridge the difference and are worth quoting.

1.i. We acknowledge our Lord Jesus Christ to have one Catholick Church or Kingdom - but for the notion of a Catholick visible Church here collected into any formed society, under any visible human head on earth whether one person singly or many collectively we with the rest of Protestants unanimously disclaim it.

1.ii. We agree that particular varieties of visible saints who under Christ their Head are stately joined together for ordinary communion with one another in all the ordinances of Christ are particular Churches and are to be owned by each other as instituted Churches of Christ tho differing in apprehensions and practice in lesser things.

These represented a reversal of the 1680 assertion of the visibility of the Catholic Church.

I suspect that only Presbyterians disillusioned and disappointed by the failure of the Comprehension Bill could have put their name to that attempt at compromise. When the Union died of disagreement or of indifference the search for a common life became peripheral for the next two hundred years. Voices can be heard here and there. When Presbyterian Union took place in 1876 there were some who talked of union with the Congregationalists as the next step. There was too much denominational euphoria abroad for the talk to have much power. It required the political upheavals and the shattering effects of World War I to disturb the easy confidence that brought all the Churches to the peak of their strength in the first decade of this century. World War I emptied the churches of their men folk. Some were dead and others felt that the tragic bloodshed of the trenches made faith in a God of love an idle tale. Edinburgh

1910 and the Lambeth appeal of 1920 set the tide of ecumenicity on its way. Some hoped for a new Comprehension, none more than Carnegie Simpson. A student rag described him by saying "not a man on the Bishop's bench carried more weight than Dr. Simpson." It mocked his girth but paid tribute to the place he had in the inter-church discussions of the next twenty years after Lambeth in which he led the Free Church team.

Others had less confidence in Anglican intentions and so far as I have discovered the first serious attempt at union of our two Churches came in Overtures to the Presbyterian Assembly of 1932. They were moved by T.W. Macpherson for the Manchester Presbytery and J. Macdonald Richardson for Liverpool. Both were Scots though of Free Church pedigree. The effort was blunted by Carnegie Simpson whose motion referred the matter for consideration but significantly omitted to indicate how or when comment was to be received. He was anxious to keep open the wider possibilities set out for example in the Sketch of a United Church which owed much to his pen. None the less he found himself joint chairman with H.C. Carter of a series of conversations that went on almost up to the beginning of World War II. That war put a stop to them but so shook the foundations and the patterns that a new start was always likely.

In 1943 the Layman's Conference of the Presbyterian Church addressed a plea for new conversations to the Assembly. This came before the Assembly in 1944 and the approach to the Congregational leaders that followed found a positive response so that in 1945 a Joint Conference was set going with an explicit aim of union. Along with Sydney Caffyn I was privileged to serve both on that series of talks and throughout the later and successful efforts of the sixties. Strangely no Congregationalist served the double sentence. My education into Congregational principles began with a reading of R.W. Dale but advanced with debate and conversation with Sydney Berry, Gordon Robinson, Nathaniel Micklem and Albert Peel to name but a few. Notable on our side were Macdonald Richardson, S.W. Carruthers, Roy Whitehorn and George Barclay. W.T. Elmslie was the General Secretary at the beginning of this process. I recall his enthusiasm for the idea at a meeting in the old Church House at the end of 1944. Alas by the time the conversations began he and nine others had perished when that newly built office block was blown away by a V.2.

The Conference went quickly to work. Some would say too quickly. A Scheme of Union was issued to the Churches for consideration in 1947. The responses were not very encouraging on either side and the Committee offered them a three-way choice; acceptance, rejection, or closer systematic cooperation. To reject is ungracious, to accept is costly and the middle way has its appeal to the sober minded. Systematic cooperation won the day. To set it going a Joint Advisory Council was established and an act of covenant was celebrated in Westminster Chapel in May 1951. That service lives in the memory for a great address by Douglas Horton from America which reminded us that God had founded the world upon the floods. The communion was presided over by the Chairman of the C.U.E.W., Howard Stanley, and the Moderator of the

Presbyterian Assembly, Joseph Bacon. Curiously both men had led the opposition to the Scheme of Union. Howard Stanley was to make a radical and never fully explained U-turn but Bacon maintained his opposition to his death.

During the fifties the Joint Advisory Council slogged away and a sub-committee on church extension sought to avoid overlapping. A few local unions were set up. A draft constitution for such local unions was given some official approval but it was always the subject of legal doubt. It has to be acknowledged that the work of the Council had little place in the enthusiasms of either Church. The nature of the covenant sealed in 1951 was always capable of two interpretations. Some thought it was a direct stepping stone to union but most saw it as a face saving operation not to be allowed to disturb existing practices.

We must turn aside to look at the wider scene. Archbishop Fisher preached his most famous sermon in Cambridge in 1947. His invitation to the other churches to take episcopacy into their system as a step to inter-communion had two clear outcomes. The Methodist Church was drawn into direct conversations which ended in the rejection of their scheme in the early months of 1972. Those conversations made that largest of the Free Churches a non-starter in any effort at Free Church Union. It also weakened their interest in the work of the Free Church Federal Council. Their leadership was facing the other way. The other outcome of the Archbishop's effort had a more direct effect on Presbyterian-Congregational relations. The Church of Scotland took up the challenge. The two smaller Anglican-Presbyterian Churches were drawn into the conversations. The result was a serious proposal for the introduction of a modified episcopacy into the two Presbyterian Churches and a mutual recognition of ministries as the outcome. Anyone reading the minutes of the English Presbyterian Assembly during the 1950's must draw the conclusion that this discussion was claiming the main interest of the Inter-Church debate amongst us. It has been said that these proposals would have carried the assent of both the smaller bodies but that was never tested because Scotland took fright at the word "Bishop" and turned the whole idea down after painful and costly debate much fired by the Beaverbrook Press. The Church of England was excused debate. But ecumenical endeavour was abroad and the quest for unity was stimulated by the work of the B.C.C. which was already planning the Faith and Order Conference of 1964 which dared to hope for a national union by Easter Day 1980. The tides were ebbing in church membership and attendance though it has to be said that almost alone the Presbyterian Church of England was growing and her membership increased by five per cent in the decade. That growth was part of a genuine effort at internal mission and partly the result of a sustained policy of church extension which had resulted in some strong congregations around London.

I must become personal. When I became Convener of our Inter-Church Relations Committee in succession to Macdonald Richardson in 1956 we were suffering from schizophrenia. The Joint Advisory Council and the Anglican-

Presbyterian debates were being presented to the Assembly by unrelated committees. We created a Department which brought them under one umbrella so that the inter-church debate could have some cohesion. A conference of Presbytery Conveners was held at Rugby in 1959. We looked at the possible roads. A Synod of the Church of Scotland? A Union of all the English Free Churches? A British Presbyterianism covering all four countries? A new effort to get somewhere with the Anglicans? Or a new and determined effort to grow and extend our mission to England? Always the most likely advance was in the direction of the union that was the eventual outcome. At that Conference that possibility was seriously considered but I doubt if it would have commanded majority support had these possibilities been put to the vote. What happened in the car park at the end was to prove decisive. Tim Healey, the then General Secretary, took me aside and said that he had been approached by Howard Stanley to ask if the time had not come for a renewal of direct conversation. A private conversation followed in Memorial Hall. Six of us were there, the Presbyterians Reg Fenn, Tim Healey and myself. Since it was unscripted I have not been able to check my memory but the Congregational group was three out of the four, Howard Stanley, Cunliffe Jones, John Huxtable and John Marsh. The discussion was reported to the Committee on each side. A good deal of negotiation followed and because it met first the idea was taken to the Presbyterian Assembly in 1963. Had the result been other than agreement to proceed, no doubt the resolution would have been withdrawn from the Congregational meetings. In the event the proposal passed both Assemblies and a Joint Committee was established. It was intended that it should be twelve a side but during the summer that grew to seventeen because of the need to include some executive figures. The process was begun.

There was some delay during the summer of 1963 while the membership of the Committee was established. The first meeting was held in Tavistock Place on November 13th. It dealt with the machinery. Expenses were to be shared equally. John Huxtable and Alec Neil had been appointed as chairmen of their respective panels and it was agreed that they should serve alternately as chairmen of the full Committee. When John Huxtable became General Secretary in 1964 he handed over the Chairmanship to John Marsh and when Alec Neil took ill and died Frank McConnell succeeded him as the other Joint Chairman. A Presbyterian proposal that there be two secretaries was passed over on the ground that if one person could be found able and willing to act alone it would save both work and possible confusion in the records. In appointing Martin Cressey as sole Secretary I doubt if either he or we had any idea of what a burden we laid on those still young shoulders. We certainly had no idea of how ably it would be carried. He did it unpaid and in addition to his full time work and to his unrelenting efficiency and to his skill as a draftsman much of the success that attended our efforts is due. The first residential meeting was arranged for New College starting on New Year's day 1964. The Presbyterian representatives thus offered as their first sacrifice any idea that they were simply the Caledonian Society at prayer. What we discovered also at



that first meeting was that both sides had taken care to make their panel representative of the wings as well as the centre of opinion in the two Churches. That no doubt delayed progress in the Committee but it was a measure of the seriousness of the purpose involved. We knew that if union were to be achieved the issues must be faced and the doubters persuaded.

The first evening of the twenty or more meetings of the full committee was taken up with a survey of the territory to be explored. Howard Stanley and I as the General Secretaries of the two churches were asked to describe the bodies we served. Congregationalism was then served by 2990 places of worship, counted 212,017 members and had 197,544 children under instruction. The Presbyterian Church of England reported 346 places of worship, 71,329 members and 28,885 children. Nine years later at the time of union both had declined, by 22 per cent and 16 per cent respectively. We described two bodies unevenly spread over the country. Presbyterians were strong in the north but represented by single congregations in many of the larger towns and absent from great areas of the South and West. Congregationalism was much more evenly spread and with a great number of village churches and with a significant place in English speaking Wales. Presbyterianism had long since disappeared from the villages except in Northumberland. I recall some anxiety on our side as Howard Stanley described some of those village churches and indeed the number of churches of all sorts with less than fifty members, closing as he said at the rate of fifty a year. Presbyterians, used to a centralised stipend system, trembled for the economic future. We no doubt also gave an account of how we were organised and launched a discussion that was designed for mutual education.

What followed proved creative for it set a pattern from which we never needed to turn away. We all agreed that while the past had made us what we were it must not prevent us from an open exploration of what we now believed about the Church to-day and to-morrow. As the most eloquent of the advocates of that view we asked Cunliffe Jones to put his ideas on paper for the next meeting. I believe he began in the train on the way home. The result was the first draft of a statement of Conviction on which a Church Catholic and Reformed might be built. The drafters would be Congregationalists and Presbyterians with their particular inheritance of outlook and practice but the aim would be a picture of a future differing from either past because born out of the theology of Church and Mission by which we now lived.

Five other papers were commissioned and were before us when we next met at Northwood in April 1964. They are an indication of the areas of possible disagreement. Martin Cressey on Ministry, Episcopate and Sacraments; Kenneth Slack on the Potential Union and the Church's Mission; Stanley Ross on Local Church, Session and Wider Councils; David Geddes on membership, Initiation and Communicant Status; and Noel Salter on Why Bother about Presbyterian-Congregational Union. All of them proved seminal in future discussion. Stanley Ross's paper enabled us to isolate certain crucial issues. These were:- terms to be clarified and mutually understood; the nature of authority and the places of its exercise; and as a corollary to that, questions about the ordination of ministers

and elders and the function of elder/deacon and church meeting. The main effort concentrated on Cunliffe Jones's paper and six groups were established to work on its development. Meetings in September and November resulted in a six section document which was issued to the Churches in time for consideration at the Assemblies of 1965. Its title was the one Cunliffe Jones had written under and it was issued to the churches for discussion and as a possible basis for a constitution. The Assemblies agreed to send it out with some degree of enthusiasm and the Committee was able to work at greater leisure while the debate moved out into the Church at large. This was only the first of several documents all of which were thus exposed to the scrutiny of all concerned. If anyone voted for or against the union without full awareness of what they were voting about, then it was a willing ignorance for the Committee did its utmost to draw the churches into the conversation at every point.

During the lull the Committee found itself being asked how its conversations fitted into the wider talks initiated after the 1964 Faith and Order Conference which had put forward the idea of a Covenant aimed at union of all the Churches by Easter Day 1980. Similar questions were asked of the Presbyterians because of a new phase of discussion with the Church of Scotland and the Church of England. Those in the other conversations were unanimous in encouraging us to proceed in our own enterprise as having its own significance whatever happened to these other movements. Encouraged by early responses to the Statement the Committee disbanded its six groups and substituted four which in fact continued as the effective sub-groups to the end. Group A set to work to complete the Statements of Faith and the ordination formulae and affirmations to be made at Baptism and Confirmation. Group B was asked to shape up the character and functions of the Councils of the Church, Group C was to carry that through into an actual body of common life in Provinces, Districts and Local Churches and to suggest how they might be served by offices and officers. To Group D we referred all the issues of finance, legalities, and property. The four Chairmen, Lee Woolf, Macleod, Slack and Caffyn each made a substantial contribution.

When the replies to the Statement of Convictions were collated, out of 90 Presbyterian replies two thirds were generally in favour, but of the 229 Congregational replies only half gave such support. None the less it was decided that we must put the matter to the test. Five major issues were given stress as requiring further study but consent was sought to prepare a Constitution. The Assemblies of 1966 agreed and the tempo of the work had to be quickened. Four full meetings were held and by the one in January 1967 a draft of the Basis of Union was accepted and it was agreed that it be published in time for the meetings of the Congregational Council. A substantial foreword recited the history and set out the hope that prompted its issue. Again it was published as a white paper for discussion and no final decision was asked at this stage. I seem to remember authorising an issue of 20,000. The Assemblies of 1967 remitted it for consideration at all levels.

It was clear that much detailed work assessing the replies and forging the infra-structure (as it would now be called) was going to be required. It so happened that Ted Stanford was retiring from his work as Education Secretary of the C.C.E.W. and it was decided to appoint him as assistant secretary with a small honorarium. By the beginning of 1968 he brought us a massive document setting out the responses. The numbers were encouraging. Out of 941 from Congregational sources 631 gave general approval and out of 130 replies from Presbyterian sources 87 were in favour. His report listed the areas of difficulty which led some to question and some to oppose the suggested Basis. Objectors are more likely to be articulate about their problems than those who approve are about the exact nature of their likings. Those who heard Ted Stanford's verbal report would, I think, agree that he was waving warning signals. We took due note of them but it was by now becoming clear that every revision we made would satisfy some of the critics only to offend some who were happy with the directions so far outlined. I am not sure but it may well be that it was at this stage that we began to insert the word "normally" as a means of rounding some sharp corners. In retrospect one questions the expedient. Words mean different things to different people. To some of us the opposite of normal is abnormal and the easement is then only applicable in exceptional circumstances. To others it seems to have been taken to mean for as long as you like. Had that second understanding been known it could well be that no union would have happened. Anyway an interim report was put out in 1968. We began to look at a possible timetable and agreed that we should aim at a final report for debate at the Assemblies of 1969 with the hope of final consent in 1970 and a union later that year. Alas we were unable to keep to it. While we had always thought that the lawyers would have to be called in we were so anxious to make it clear that we were operating in the spiritual and not the legal sphere that we delayed too long and then asked of willing and able lawyers a speed inconsistent with their task. The Scheme as a picture of what the new Church would look like was complete in time for May 1969. What was lacking was a clear description of the process and a firm picture of how the Church would hold and control its property. The report was thus issued to the Assemblies of 1969 in temporary format for information. Dates were set by which if the legal documents were ready the Scheme might still be put forward for approval in 1970. In the event we had to wait a year. This provoked some frustration amongst proponents and opponents both of whom wanted to clear the air. Wisdom prevailed and suggestions about straw votes were turned down. Since the legal documents included the new trust deeds setting out how all property would be held it would indeed have been foolish to presume on agreement without ample time for considered judgment.

The fateful day came at last with the Assemblies of 1971. They met in London and in Newcastle on Tyne and it was arranged that the debate would take place at the same time and while elaborate steps were taken to keep in touch no indication of how things were going was allowed until both had completed the voting. The fact that the Congregational vote was taken much earlier than the

Presbyterian one caused some fretting at the London end. The fact that for Presbyterians the Assembly vote was the vital one made the longer debate inevitable and even desirable. Late in the evening, in fact after four hours of debate in Newcastle, we were able to report that both Assemblies had agreed by the required majorities. In London the vote was 1888 to 233 representing 89 per cent and in Newcastle 434 to 115 or 79 per cent. The crucial stage for Congregationalism was still to follow for the scheme would fall unless each local church voted by 75 per cent in favour of those present and voting. We still lived dangerously. It was only at a meeting of the Joint Committee at St. Andrews Hall in Birmingham that we knew that all but the two final hurdles had been passed. The result reported was as follows. In favour all the 31 County Unions and the 14 Presbyteries; 1668 churches representing 136,856 members of the CCEW. There is a Press photograph of John Huxtable and me sitting relaxed in armchairs looking as if we had just had a good meal together and that is how we and many others felt that day.

All that remained was confirmation at the two May Assemblies, the Act of Parliament and the final delivery of the new child. The two Assemblies confirmed the votes in May 1972 and both ended with nostalgic celebrations of their past history. I leave the final delivery for a while and turn to look at some of the issues that had to be resolved and at the legal scheme and the Act of Parliament.

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We need to remember that Congregationalism was deep in a process of self examination started by Howard Stanley. Ten Commissions were at work looking at every aspect of the life of the Church. From the point of view of our conversations three were of special relevance. In 1966 during the years of conversation the Congregational Union became the Congregational Church. This was a move in the direction of a more catholic and less rigidly independent stance. It rested on a covenant freely accepted by each local church. It caused some unhappiness but in the event made the decision to form the United Reformed Church much easier. That covenanting process had no legal consequences but it may have affected another area covered by the Commissions. In 1967 there was issued a Declaration of Faith and with it a brief Confession. Neither of these was laid down as a demand upon either ministers or churches but they were given general acceptance. The brief Confession is of interest. Its wording corresponds very closely to that used in the Uniting Service in Westminster Abbey. It has an interesting history. Such a confession is set out in the 1947 Scheme of Union and again the wording is very similar. I recall suggesting its use in the Uniting Service as one acceptable legacy of the earlier attempt at Union. Mistakenly I attributed it to a joint effort by Nathaniel Micklem and Roy Whitehorn. In fact its origin goes further back still to the 1930's and is in large measure the work of Carnegie Simpson. Here of course and in all the doctrinal statements of the Basis we were finding our way through an historic minefield. Arguments about the essential faith were few and were

mainly over particular verbal expressions. The real argument was, as it had long been, about the use to be made of any doctrinal statement. Subscription was a bogey word though the party positions usually attributed to Subscription controversies need to be tested by history. In the case of Salters Hall for instance, it was the Presbyterians who refused to subscribe. The point at issue is fellowship. The Church rests on its common faith. No words can ever define it but words are useful in sounding out its great notes. Freedom is also a note of the Gospel. Local churches of the Congregational order resolved this by covenants which varied from place to place and time to time. If the United Reformed Church were to serve as a national fellowship, then some attempt had to be made to express its shared understanding and to indicate the degree to which to belong to its ministry or its membership required acceptance not so much of any particular formulation but of the shared understanding those words were seeking to proclaim. The schedules for ordinations and church membership indicate the answers we found. The Statement of the Nature of Faith and Order was a too wordy attempt to set out the platform on which we agreed to stand together.

This matter of being a nation-wide fellowship was also the node of the tension about ministry and ordination and, as it has worked out, the argument about presidency at communion. Much confused argument about the priesthood of all believers was really beside the point. There were no doubt a few high churchmen in both denominations who might have talked about the validity of sacraments but the real division was not about priesthood in that sense but about authorisation. There was of course some illogicality about one kind of authorisation for preaching and another for sacraments. Presbyterians were very unhappy about the casual authorisation which seemed sometimes to be exercised by church secretaries at the church door. For myself I was brought up to regard the Communion Service as the showing forth of the Lord's death until He come. Someone must then play the part of the host and victim in that divine drama. I go with Calvin that no one dare assume that role except by the clear authorisation of the church. We reached the compromise that ordination to the ministry carried such authorisation with it but that any extension of that lay with the District Council and not with the local church. I beg leave to doubt whether the union would have happened on terms that extended that authorisation to any class of person. The number of small fellowships and thin spread of the ordained ministry created the need for particular acts of authorisation. If there is to be some official departure from that position then it must be after most careful examination of the principles being thus expressed.

There was of course much discussion of terms: elder, deacon, church, congregation, council or court, moderator, chairman, president. The Basis is firm on the conciliar structure and indeed the four-fold pattern of Assembly, Synod, District Council, Church Meeting emerged at the very earliest meetings and never changed. The use of the word "Moderator" was accepted but related to some body which required to be moderated. The question of final authority between Church Meeting and Elders Meeting was never finally resolved but left

in trust that their spheres of authority would be established by custom. The question as to who makes a minister which was so divisive in the seventeenth century is clearly settled in favour of the District Council though it can be argued that there is an episcopal element in making the Moderator or his deputy preside. Such action on the part of the District Council is only the apex of a pyramid which begins with the individual sense of call, the confirmation of that call by the fellowship from which it has sprung. The pyramid builds up through training and has its last stage in the call of the local church. Some difficulty has arisen because we never achieved the idea set out in all the versions of the Scheme making groups of churches into one church with a power of common decision. The other side of this which was not settled was who unmakes a minister. Logic suggests that since the act of induction is an act of the District Council it must be that Council which accepts resignations or in the last resort severs the tie between minister and pastorate. When the reason for that severance goes deep into the very vocation of the minister it should be for some body wider than the District as in any ordination the District is acting for the wider whole.

Ordination itself and especially the ordination of elders caused much heart searching. The argument was not as to whether the elder was a minister or a priest but it was certainly about whether the eldership was a local order or an order that belonged to the whole Church. The Presbyterian urging in favour of the very idea of the eldership was no doubt partly traditional prejudice but it was also born of a rich experience of what it meant that a local church recognised the qualities of spiritual leadership and called those so gifted to its exercise. The confining of membership of the wider councils to ministers and elders seemed to some a sort of concealed priestcraft but to its advocates a defence against a sort of bureaucratic aristocracy of those who made assemblies their hobby. Those serving at the wider level should be those presently informed and at work in the local church, trusted and appointed by their fellow members. More importantly eldership in the local church should be pastoral and not managerial. The pastoral value of the eldership is of much more importance than the matter of ordination.

There is much more but I turn now to how it happened. Let us begin with the name. Reformed occurs in all the earlier documents for we were trying to find a word that carried us both back beyond our divisions to our origins in the Reformation. It was only in the last series that the word United was added but the two words together do express what we saw ourselves to be. How then cease to be Presbyterian and Congregational and become this new thing? As I have said it was late in the day before we really got down to process. At a meeting in Mansfield Norman Pooler, lawyer but member of the Committee as elder and no mean theologian, spelt out for us how we might proceed. It was a long sustained argument that he put before us. It earned the only spontaneous applause that I recall throughout those nine years. Its essential message was that the idea of a merger was inadequate. The two ways of being the Church were too diverse for patchwork. So came the courageous idea that the two Churches

should will their separate death and their rebirth as one new body. Such was the process we adopted and its achievement determined the immediate steps and the method of voting. Each Church must be true to its own nature in what it was to do. Since the Presbyterian Church was one whole and its unity embodied in the Assembly the vital decision would be made there after all the checks and balances had been exercised locally and regionally. Once Assembly so decided every local church would be carried along with that decision. Plainly that could be unfair in this unique situation where the Church was to will its own demise. It was therefore agreed that each local church would be free to *vote itself out* of the consequences of the Assembly action and to retain the use of the buildings and assets at present held for its purposes.

For Congregational churches the process must also be true to their nature. In a way it was for each local church to vote itself out of separate existence in order to come alive as part of the new whole. This vital difference in the voting procedure was hard to explain and seemed at first sight unfair. It meant that in every Congregational church a quarter of those at a church meeting could prevent that church from entering the union whereas it required three quarters of a Presbyterian Church meeting to do the same thing. Much persuasion and appeal to understanding was required even for the members of the Committee. There is a considerable correspondence from Alec Neil, by this time the ailing Joint Chairman, urging us to find some more equitable solution. In the end the realities of the situation were accepted.

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No group such as the Joint Committee meeting regularly over a period of nine years can fail to leave memories of people. I think first of the two Chairmen: John Marsh, never satisfied with the theological definitions he had himself propounded at the last meeting; Alec Neil, all 6'5" of him and as wise as he was long. His voice came from the depths to make its magisterial utterances. Alas he did not live to see his efforts crowned with success and yet even in his last illness he struggled to keep going and wrote letter after letter in that neat and tiny writing that seemed so unlike his bulk. Cunliffe Jones with his urgent manner played the most creative part but he too suffered from ill-health and had to withdraw almost as soon as he had laid the foundation of the whole enterprise. Joe Figures with all the complications of Lancashire finance and organisation and his concern for national finances was often at work on the brake saying either that we needed more time or else that the trusts were too complicated to be handled except through a scheme of slow, post-union adjustment. He was right in judgment though wrong in principle for the Act took us past adjustment. The delay was human. Basil Hall propounded his understanding of the meaning of being Reformed. We knew that he came from dealing blows at Anglican pretensions to be the Church, but in the Committee he suffered both Presbyterians and Congregationalists with the impatience that fools deserve. Robin Courtney with his edgy independency fought running battles with Brian Pratt whose long years as Assembly Clerk gave his Presbyterianism a certain

rigidity which was sustained by a deeply cherished love for sacramental worship and a profound esteem for dignity and order which seemed to him appropriate to the work of the Lord. Since both of them could argue with cogency and eloquence the battles were a joy to the uninvolved spectators though sometimes costly to the participants. Long before the end of the conversations they learnt mutual respect and won each other's friendship. The felicity of language used in the exposition of the meaning of the sacraments owed much to Geoffrey Holland Williams's love of English and to the theological understanding he reached with John Wilding. Alan Macleod's love of the straightforward and simple is manifest in the functional nature of the constitutional statements and Ronald Bocking's capacity for patient persuasion and exhaustive research is expressed in the layout of Provinces and Districts. Kenneth Slack had more share than most in the editorial processes whether as Presbyterian or Congregationalist. His change of relationship kept him from the Committee for a very short time before he started to play for the other team. The fact that he could do that without loss of integrity is comment on the nature of the divisions that had to be bridged and demonstrated the reality of the Mutual Eligibility agreement of 1958.

What more shall we say? There was Ernest Todd, master as always of detail and joyous companion of Harold Banwell using his great experience to look both at the agreement itself and to help with the shaping of the future machinery. Stanley Ross knew more than perhaps any of us what ecclesiastical polity truly represents and his knowledge made him impartial. One to whom we owed more than can be said was Sydney Caffyn, honorary doctor of science to begin with and knight before the end. Business man, leading citizen, and university pro chancellor, he served on the group discussing union in the thirties and on the joint committee in the forties. No one was more committed to the task than he and he gave generously of his time and skills to draw together all the financial and organisational problems and gather the teams of experts from the two sides to secure a feasible future. We were short on women, but Gwen Hall towards the end of the discussions joined us and her oversight of the voting processes in the churches and her understanding of the churches she represented made a major contribution. I have said nothing of John Huxtable. He was ill for a little time but the minutes of the Committee are eloquent as again and again things were referred for his attention and brought back rounded and complete. Even beyond that the records show the mammoth task that engaged him in Assembly, the office and the churches as he undertook the burden of persuasion and interpretation and weathered the storms of criticism and suspicion that are evident in correspondence both in the Press and in private.

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One major issue concerned the future of overseas work. What we had was typical of what we each were. Congregationalism had long had its links with the London Missionary Society and the Colonial Missionary Society. These had



united to form the Congregational Council for World Mission. While that Council was given rather more direct links with the Congregational Church it still remained an independent trust. Ever since 1844 the Presbyterian Church had had a considerable missionary enterprise notably in South China and Formosa but from the start it was carried on by a committee appointed by and responsible to the Assembly. It was one activity of the Church and as closely integrated into its life as any other purpose. There was one modification of that in the existence of a Women's Missionary Association which for many years employed its own missionaries but the Association was never an independent trust and was always answerable to the Assembly.

There was thus no dispute about the importance of overseas work nor about the need to provide for its vigorous life in the years ahead. Assumptions were easily made on each side. Those serving C.C.W.M. whether in its administration or in the field assumed that being the older and larger it would continue as it was. In any case no one could decide about its future other than its own Council. Those involved on the Presbyterian side were equally sure that the logic of their position was unassailable. It was for the Church to decide how this work should be done. Those at work overseas were very jealous of their position as directly appointed representatives of the Church from which they had received their calling. It looked like an impasse and the cause at stake was warm in the affection of many people. There were strong minded people involved on both sides and in the case of C.C.W.M. there was much property and resource invested in buildings. It has to be confessed that feelings were raised. Fortunately the tides of history were flowing to our advantage. The day of missions and daughter Churches was almost over and the Churches that had sprung from the dedicated work of the saints who often had gone out not knowing where they were going were now looking for recognition as Churches in their own right. The links of love and gratitude were not questioned but daughter no longer wanted to be treated as other than a Church in her own right. It was from the far-seeing though sometimes obstinate mind of Boris Anderson that a solution was indicated. Both Churches were living with an anachronism. The great white Churches of Europe and America were related to us through our Inter-Church Relations Committees while the daughter Churches were linked to the two missionary arms. Surely the union was the moment when this false distinction should be removed and the new independent status of these daughters who in many cases had outgrown their parents should be fully recognised. So we came to the idea of a World Church and Mission Department which would be responsible for guiding the United Reformed Church in all its relations with other Churches, whether at home or abroad. Its direct involvement in the sending of missionaries could then be handed over to C.C.W.M. especially if that body would drop the first C. It was a compromise but it had worked - though at the expense of some of the loyalties to which so much devotion had been given.

Discussion was also proceeding with regard to many other independent trust bodies and again the old principles of independency and church surfaced.

Presbyterians were frankly afraid of independent and self-perpetuating trust bodies. They liked to see where decisions were being made and, through the Assembly, to have the ultimate say and were unhappy to think that small groups of well meaning people could divert resources from the central purposes of the Church. The colleges were a very real case in point. Ever since 1844 the Presbyterian Church had done its own theological training through its own college and with staff appointed by the Assembly. Congregationalism had been served by a series of independent colleges each with its own trust and as this matter came before us it soon became clear that no final solution could be reached before union. The united Church would have to live with anomaly. We had more colleges and college places than we needed. That problem was eased by the voluntary suicide of New College. The anomaly still exists but has not proved disastrous because the nature of the new Church is such that training for the ministry is firmly under the care of the Church and the colleges have accepted that their function is to train those whom the Church recognises as candidates and to train them in some conformity to the wishes of the Church. Goodwill and a common purpose can always find solutions even when the instruments at their disposal are less than perfect.

While these and similar matters were in debate the legal scheme was slowly evolving. Suspicion of lawyers goes deep into most minds and deepest into the mind of those whose zeal for spiritual change is greatest. Many were the voices that asked why we had to bother with legal action and Acts of Parliament. If Independency was almost the embodiment of the idea of spiritual freedom Presbyterians were every bit as concerned that the Church should be and act as a government distinct from civil government. Arguments about the Crown Rights of the Redeemer in His own Church had split the Church of Scotland but as it was reformed in 1929 its freedom to rule itself and to be sovereign over all its spiritual affairs had been enshrined in its splendid declaratory acts. But we were painfully aware that such freedom could be very costly if it ignored or consciously denied the right of the State to uphold the laws governing property. Experience told us of the action of the House of Lords in awarding the property of the Free Church of Scotland to the small continuing body we know as the Wee Frees and of all the costly adjustments that had followed from that judgment in 1901. Our legal advisers were as concerned as any of us to secure the freedom of the Church and to ensure that whatever legal steps might be taken the decision whether to become the U.R.C. or not would be a free decision taken by the Church and no one else. With those parameters a great deal of legal wisdom was going to be needed if a method were to be evolved which would carry our purpose through, leave us free to be the Church and yet secure in the use of property without constant legal battles such as marred too many unions of Churches in other parts of the world. We were fortunate in our advisers Philip Simpson and Norman Pooler, both of whom were good churchmen.

There is no better way of coming to an understanding of the nature of the U.R.C. than by studying the legal introduction which makes it clear that the new Church was intended to be one entity with the parts dependent on the whole and

the members members of the whole though exercising their membership in the parts. The corollary is spelt out in the trust deeds which became effective from the day of formation and superseded the old deeds thus making the property of each local church subject to the purposes of the whole. In a day when many church buildings have outlived their usefulness and yet have either in themselves or because of the sites they occupy become of great value these new deeds have set that value free for conversion into ministry or other active works of the living Church. These changes were profound and have had a deep influence on the life of the Church since its foundation. Because they were so crucial it would indeed have been irresponsible to seek a vote for the whole scheme until local churches had seen the immediate consequence of the spiritual decision that was asked of them.

Once they were approved by legal minds on both sides the next step was to get the Bill introduced into Parliament in time for it to be law in advance of the actual decision of the Churches. Here we were indebted to our Parliamentary agents and draughtsmen who proved not only competent but enthusiastic. It was introduced first into the Lords in November 1971. Its sponsor was Lord Wade. The debate was good natured and support was offered by the Bishop of Hereford, Lord Balerno of the Church of Scotland and Lord Longford who felt that the Roman Catholics should not be left out. When it was taken to the Commons the difficulties began to appear. We were indebted to Methodism in the person of Alex Lyon, then a member of the B.C.C. and M.P. for York. He made the Bill his concern and served us magnificently, seconded by John Roper, in bringing it before the House. As it reached the committee stage opposition was voiced and the Bill was sent to an opposed committee. This met for two days and the case for and against was argued before five members. Austen Spearing, Ivor Morris and David Watson put the case against, arguing that such an act so changed the nature of the independent churches as to be a betrayal of trust. John Huxtable was the chief witness for the defence, and was in and out of the box for most of the two days. In the end it became clear that the Committee would forward the Bill provided one statement was made. The nature of the new Church was such that to leave it any group of people would have to secede from it with the consequential loss of all further interest in it and all further claim upon its property. After consultation a statement was made on our behalf and was later quoted in the House itself. It nowhere appears in the Act itself and as events have proved it has caused some confusion. In retrospect one can wish that the provision had been formally set out in the Act with some terminus as to its effect. It was an assurance that a local church under agreed conditions should seek the consent of the Assembly to leave with its property. In the pressure of circumstances no details were added to indicate what terms would operate for that church if it were so released.

When the Bill came back for its third reading on June 27th we were given warning that there would be opposition and that there might be some attempt to talk it out. This only required that opponents went on talking until 3 a.m. Since the debate was not due until after midnight and since one of the opponents was

Ian Paisley the threat was real. The danger would be avoided if there were at least one hundred members present when the decision was reached. With the help of the Archbishop, Kenneth Greet, and representatives of the Church of Scotland the magic number was safely reached and sustained until 12.30 a.m. Apart from Nigel Spearing and Ian Paisley the other notable opponent was Tony Benn. We were much helped by people like David Steel and at one point when there was some acrimony St. John Stevas rescued us with urbane humour. It was a memorable debate and a great encouragement to feel the support of so many in the House. The Bill became law and the Churches were free to implement its provisions as they were to do (the Royal Assent being given two days later) in the great meeting on October 5th.

The unevenness had an undeniable effect on the outcome. In the end only two Presbyterian congregations opted out. Others took votes that were in excess of 50 per cent, but only the two churches in Jersey and Guernsey had votes in excess of the 75 per cent. Both applied to the Church of Scotland to be received into membership of that Church. There was some sense in the decision in the case of Jersey for the congregation had grown greatly by the accession to its membership after the war of many immigrant Scots. There was an historical irony as well in that those two islands had been the first home of English Presbyterianism as established by the work of Cartwright and Travers. There was also some oddity in the thought of such churches as part of the Church of Scotland and some feeling amongst those who had ministered there during the hard and dangerous years under the Nazi occupation. There was also some inevitable feeling in those churches where the vote to opt out had approached the mystic figure. Another consequence of the constitutional character of the Presbyterian Church was to be shown on a fateful night in 1971 when the two Assemblies made the final decision. They met in London and in Newcastle on Tyne. Elaborate arrangements had been made to communicate because of course the decisions were mutually dependent. Neither was effective without the other. The debate in Newcastle was far from ended when I was informed that the London vote had been taken. The result was not of course communicated. The London Assembly waited with ill-concealed impatience for news that the Presbyterians had made up their mind. The reason for the different time-scale lay in the different significance of the two votes. The vote in Newcastle virtually settled the matter whereas the vote in London was only the opening round in a nation-wide process. For the outcome of that we had to wait until January 1972. At the Joint Committee held in St. Andrew's Hall in Birmingham the voting figures were finally known and we were able to assure the Press that the proposed union was to be accomplished.

From then on attention had to be given to practical details like the setting up of Synod offices and the steps necessary to ensure that there be no break in witness and service. Plans were drawn to enable the new Councils and Synods to assemble and start work. Consultations took place as to where the union would be consummated and celebrated. It was clear that neither Church had a building large enough for the events that had to be envisaged. A serious attempt

was made to hold the uniting Assembly in Westminster Hall, the ancient hall of the Houses of Parliament. Despite some influential voices advocating it, protocol and fear of creating a precedent eventually turned the scale against it. Instead we were able to arrange for the uniting Assembly to be held in Westminster Central Hall by agreement with the Methodists, and the afternoon service of celebration to be in the Abbey. Both events required much detailed organisation. The minutes of the uniting Assembly record thirty-six resolutions. Amongst them were the two vital ones declaring the end of the two separate Churches followed by the third which brought the new Church into being and made the Act of Parliament effective. Officers were appointed and a whole series of decisions taken whose consequence we now live with. The afternoon service took shape in a series of discussions with the authorities of the Abbey with Eric Abbott, the then Dean, being splendid both in hospitality and in thought of what the service was about and what it should express. We entrusted the drafting of the order to Eric Fenn. Few even then remembered the part he had played in the development of religious broadcasting but the choice was right and the service a triumph of design. None who was there will forget the moving moments when the leaders of all the British Churches and representatives of the world Church pledged themselves to further the cause of Christian Unity. Ask what it is that marks the Basis of Union and makes it distinctive and the answer must be that no other Church has that quest for unity as part of its very constitution. That that theme was dominant in the Abbey liturgy was entirely right. Other things that remain in memory of that service include Cardinal Heenan and Michael Ramsey walking together down the aisle, Lord Hailsham leaving the church in tears, the trumpeters playing the descant to "Westminster Abbey" while we sang "Blessed City" and John Huxtable's jaw thrust out as he rebuked the narrow purposes of parish pump theology. For many the day was not yet over for there was another event in the City Temple that evening. I will not forget being drowned in sound in front of a battery of speakers and to my surprise finding release in the sheer blanket of rhythm in which we were wrapped. The sight of John Huxtable and Kenneth Slack performing a modest dance behind the lectern while all of us slowly overcame our inhibitions is another memory of that day.

One sad memory troubles me as I think back. As we processed into the Abbey a long queue was formed to the left of the entrance. In the front of it two who had more share in the costly efforts that lay behind the day than most shouted to me that they were not going to get into the service. So much for the agonies of ticket allocation and detailed planning. Alas enthusiasm had led many who had no tickets to flood the church and others who ought to have been in allocated places were left to listen in St. Margarets. Lighter memories are of the Archbishop having strayed from his place in the Jerusalem Chamber and needing to be rescued from the procession of overseas dignitaries. London is the centre of the world to all Londoners but the uniting events belonged to the nation and to every local church. Orders of Service were drafted for use in the churches on the following Sunday and celebrations were held in Provinces and Districts and the

goodwill of the churches was with us through the following weeks until the wonder died. The crucial tests were still to come. Would the legal provisions of the Act and of the new Trust Deeds be observed and would they give the Church the foundation it needed? Would local churches seize the opportunity and challenge as they decide about elders and names and all the other constitutional choices to see themselves as the Committee had done – as set free to be something new? Tradition is a rich gift but it becomes a tying bond when it denies Christ the freedom to lead His people to meet new days and new visions of His Kingdom. Here as the new notice boards went up was a moment when the churches were given a unique chance to get the balance right. A moment when they could discard much unnecessary luggage, when they could look afresh at all the purposes for which they lived. A moment when that classic cry, “We cannot do that, we have never done it before”, could be silenced by the reminder that every verb had a new subject because we were a new community of faith and fellowship.

Perhaps in 1997 another can lecture not on the formation or achievement of union but on its successes and its failures. Under God’s good hand we did what we did. We buried two Church structures that a new and living Church might offer its life as part of the life of the Church Catholic and Reformed in this country and in the world. Under the same good hand of God may it bear the fruits of love and vision and share them with all the Churches and take its place in the work of salvation.

ARTHUR MACARTHUR

### THE IRISH CONTRIBUTION TO ENGLISH PRESBYTERIANISM<sup>1</sup>

The union of the Crowns and Parliaments of Scotland and England led to an influx of Scots into England and to the founding of Presbyterian churches in England. These were organized into presbyteries and two of them met together in 1836 and petitioned the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to constitute them as an English synod within the Church of Scotland. The

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1. This article is a much revised version of my Robert Allen Memorial Lecture to the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland, 1979. It is based on the following records:  
 Reports and Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.  
 Reports and Minutes of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in England, 1836–1876.  
 Reports and Minutes of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1876–1919.  
 Reports and Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1920–1972.  
*The Presbyterian Messenger* (the monthly magazine of the English Church hereafter referred to as *M.*).

Assembly was reluctant to claim any jurisdiction in the area of another Established Church and therefore advised the petitioners to constitute themselves as an autonomous English Church. By 1842 one hundred and fifty three churches which had claimed the Church of Scotland as their mother Church had now come together in a synod comprising seven presbyteries, and the new Church was called the Presbyterian Church in England.<sup>2</sup>

In 1843 the Church of Scotland was riven by a disruption which led to the formation of the Free Church of Scotland and the sympathies of the new English Church were almost entirely with the Free Church. Close ties were formed with the Free Church and many ministers were drawn from that Church to minister in English churches.

There were also in England some other Presbyterian churches which were attached to the United Presbyterian Church. This Church was constituted in 1847 and brought together congregations formed in earlier secessions from the Church of Scotland. After prolonged negotiations between the Presbyterian Church in England and the United Presbyterian Church it was agreed that the English churches belonging to the United Presbyterian Church should combine with the Presbyterian Church *in* England to form the Presbyterian Church *of* England. This took place in 1876 and the United Church had two hundred and seventy congregations with just over 50,000 members.

These congregations had a large proportion of Scots in their membership but there were also many members with roots in Irish and Welsh Presbyterianism and to a lesser extent in Presbyterian Churches around the world. The Presbyterian Church of England, however, did not see itself merely as a haven for Presbyterian exiles but was remarkably confident about its mission to England. In speeches, sermons, pamphlets and synod reports there was the assumption that the English people, battered as they were by waves of infidelity and by what seemed to be the treachery of the devotees of the Oxford Movement with their Romanizing trivialities, would turn with relief and joy to Presbyterianism if it were to be planted in their midst with dignified buildings, simple and intelligent worship, and an educated ministry. Macedonian appeals were sent out to Scottish and Irish Presbyterianism to send ministers to found and nourish new churches and to reap the harvest which was waiting to be gathered in. It was claimed that even self-interest ought to move other Presbyterian Churches to send help because a strong Presbyterianism in England would be a mighty arm in ensuring the survival of Protestantism which would only survive in Ireland and Scotland if it remained strong in England, which, according to

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*The Irish Presbyterian* (the monthly magazine of the Irish Church, especially Vol.X, 1904).

*A History of Congregations* published by the Presbyterian Historical Society.

A complete list of the Irish ministers who served in the English Church with the dates and places of their service has been prepared and deposited in the Library of the U.R.C. History Society and in Dr. Williams's Library.

2. R.B. Knox, "The Relationship between English and Scottish Presbyterianism, 1836-1876", in *Scottish Church History Society Records*, 1981, XXI, Part 1, 43-66.

one speaker in the Scottish Free Church General Assembly, was "really the heart of the world".<sup>3</sup> These appeals evoked a remarkable response and English Presbyterianism was and remained, as far as its ministry was concerned, a dependent church. In the General Assembly of 1962 the Moderator, Ian Miller, himself a Scot, said English Presbyterianism had been continually revived by blood transfusions from Wales, Scotland and Ireland, from whence came oratory, caution and vigour: oratory from Wales, caution from Scotland and vigour from Ireland.<sup>4</sup>

A college was founded by the Presbyterian Church in England as early as 1844 but neither in London nor in its later existence as Westminster College in Cambridge was it able to meet the demand for ministers in England. Across the years from 1842 to 1972 about twelve hundred ministers were called to English Presbyterian churches. More than half of these were drawn from Scotland. Over a quarter of them were drawn from the Church's own members, most of them trained in its own college, but some of them going to Scotland for their training. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland provided about one sixth of the ministers in the English Church.

One hundred and six ministers were called from churches in Ireland to minister in England. Sixty-five of these remained in England until retirement or death, forty-two of them giving fifteen or more years of service. Twenty-eight returned to minister in Ireland, most of them after spending about five years in England, but a few only returning for a few years before retirement. Ten went to minister in churches in Scotland or overseas, and three went into other professions.

There were sixty-five others from Ireland who began their ministry in England. Most of these were licentiates who had completed their training in Ireland. Some of these wished to gain experience outside Ireland. There were also periods when the Irish Church produced more licentiates than it could absorb and the English Church provided a field for their ministry. Thirty-six of these remained in England until retirement or death, and all but one of these gave over fifteen years service. Twenty others returned to Ireland after serving for an average of five years in England and some of them became notable leaders in their home Church. Nine transferred to minister in churches in Scotland or overseas.

Among the first to come from Ireland was William Blackwood, minister of First Holywood in County Down. He was called to the Caledonian Church in Newcastle on Tyne in 1844. In a few months he received a call to return to Donoughmore in County Donegal and he was inclined to accept the call since his relations with his Newcastle congregation were none too comfortable. However, his supporters in Newcastle asked the presbytery to refuse to transmit the call but instead to grant them leave to found a new church in Newcastle to

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3. The words of James for whom see my article in the *Journal* of the United Reformed Church History Society, ii, 9 May.

4. *M.* 1962.



which Blackwood would be called to minister. Services were begun in the Music Hall and in a few months a congregation of one hundred and forty members had been established. By 1847 a new church known as Trinity Church had been erected. The foundation stone was laid by Fox Maule, M.P. for Perth and later Earl of Dalhousie. The preacher at the opening service was Dr. Henry Cooke, the outstanding Irish Presbyterian dignitary whose influence upon English Presbyterianism will be seen as the story unfolds. Blackwood was elected to be Moderator of the Church's synod in 1846. In 1855 he accepted a call to minister in Philadelphia in America.<sup>5</sup>

Trinity Church in Newcastle had two more Irishmen among its ministers. John Brown Meharry had been ordained in Moy in 1871 and a few months later he was called to Third Armagh Church from which he was called to Newcastle in 1875. From there he went to Crouch Hill in London in 1888 and there he succeeded another Irish minister, Dr. Andrew Charles Murphy, who had been called from Rutland Square Church (later Abbey Church) in Dublin in 1883 and who had returned to Elmwood Church in Belfast in 1887. Meharry had a notable ministry in London and he was Moderator of the Synod in 1906. He died in 1916 and was buried in Highgate cemetery where his remains lie under an impressive angelic figure not far from the huge bust of Karl Marx.<sup>6</sup> In 1903 Trinity Church in Newcastle called John Hamill Maconachie from Trinity Church, Ahoghill, in County Antrim.

In 1904 Maconachie's brother, James, was called from Agnes Street Church in Belfast to Heaton Church, also in Newcastle. Records say that the pews were filled to overflowing during his ministry. He spent thirty years in Heaton after which he retired to live in Putney and then back in Ireland. After the death of his wife in 1940 he went back to Putney to help the Presbyterian congregation whose building had been destroyed in the blitz; he held services in the manse and he solemnized marriages in the still licensed but roofless area of the ruined church. Among his successors in Heaton was another Irishman, Richard Wilson Lawson, who, after wartime service with the Y.M.C.A., had become minister of St. Andrew's Church in Chester and then in Upper Norwood. While in Norwood the records state that there was a very happy occasion when he was presented with a new bicycle to replace one which had been stolen. He was an insatiable purchaser of books of every description and his manse was packed with books on floors and tables; they lined the walls, even the side of the stairs and much of the garage. His highly-esteemed ministry in Heaton came to tragic and accidental end when, on leaving the house of one of his elders, he dashed into the path of a motorist.

River Terrace Church in London had an early Irish connection. Josias Wilson was ordained in Tassagh in County Armagh and then had ministries in Drogheda and Townsend Street, Belfast. He moved to London in 1845. He died in 1847 but in his two years in London he had become a leading figure in

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5. *M.* 1845-47. pp.42, 77, 125, 475, 525.

6. J.B. Meharry, *Sermons* with a memoir by James Burns.

English presbyterianism. He drew large congregations and when he died it was reported that three thousand people attended the funeral in Highgate cemetery. Among those present was the Irish Moderator, Dr. Morgan of Fisherwick Church in Belfast.<sup>7</sup> River Terrace Church looked once again to Ireland and called John Weir who had succeeded Wilson in Townsend Street.<sup>8</sup> Some thought that the congregation, having been spellbound by Wilson, had rushed with indecent haste to secure an Irish successor and this led to a secession and the founding of another church. The Presbytery decided that since River Terrace Church was overcrowded on Sundays it could easily and with profit afford a hiving off of some of its members and the new congregation was officially constituted.<sup>9</sup> In 1855 Weir was Moderator of the Synod and then in 1862 he resigned from River Terrace to join the staff of the British Society for the conversion of the Jews.<sup>10</sup> River Terrace once again looked to Ireland and called Dr. John James Black of Ormond Quay in Dublin but he declined the call.

Some Irish ministers were pioneers in the founding of new Presbyterian congregations. J. Rupert Patterson graduated in Belfast but moved to London for his theological course and he was ordained to be the first minister of Christ Church, North Dulwich, in London. This ministry, begun in 1887, continued for thirty years. He gathered a large congregation and raised funds for the erection of a fine church and for the purchase of a manse. The manse was secured through an arrangement with Dulwich College. His later years were troubled by tensions with members of the congregation and with the presbytery and the General Assembly. He resigned from his charge in 1921 and the presbytery decided this was in the best interests of both minister and people. He claimed that there was still £2800 of stipend due to him and that he had given a loan of £250 to the church and this had not been repaid. He claimed that in the deed drawn up with Dulwich College he personally had been guaranteed the "free and happy" occupancy of the Parsonage for the term of his life. He also claimed that in the proceedings of the presbytery he had been slandered. The presbytery assured him that there had been no slanderous intention in any remarks made in the presbytery but it also insisted that the manse was intended to be the residence of the minister in charge of the congregation. Patterson appealed to the General Assembly which appointed a commission to deal with his case; this met on many occasions and it drew up a report which supported the action of the presbytery but did admit that some words had been used in presbytery at which Patterson could have been reasonably aggrieved but it accepted that there had been no malign intention behind the words. The report recommended that Patterson be paid the outstanding loan of £250 but insisted that he should vacate the manse. The Clerk of the General Assembly, Rev. Thomas Mackay said that if he had received ten shillings for every letter he wrote on this matter he would

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7. *M.* 1845-47, pp.417-8.

8. *M.* 1845-47, p.473; 1862, p.157.

9. *M.* 1864, p.40.

10. *M.* 1862, p.157.

have been a wealthy man and he ended a letter to a member of the commission with the exhortation to "be vigilant, be sober, and take some cooling powders". Patterson died in 1926 and the Assembly's memorial minute paid tribute to "the vigour and enterprise of his early ministry".<sup>11</sup> His brother, John, also came to England and was ordained in 1887 to be the minister in Canterbury.

Trinity Church, Cloughton, Birkenhead, has had three ministers from Ireland. In 1913 William McNeill was called from Adelaide Road Church in Dublin. He was a striking preacher and was a pioneering specialist in the art of addresses to children. In 1935 Andrew Prentice was called from St. Enoch's Church in Belfast. He was a Scot who had been ordained in Scotland before moving to Belfast. He was Moderator of the General Assembly in 1952.<sup>12</sup> In 1963 John William Patrick Williamson was called from St. John's Church in Kenton; he had studied in Westminster College but returned to Ireland to be ordained in Kells and Ervey in County Meath where he remained for four years until he moved to Kenton. He remained in Cloughton until 1972 when he became a Provincial Moderator in the United Reformed Church.

The church in Sale on the edge of Manchester had two Irish ministers. In the time of J. Thoburn M'Gaw the church and manse were erected. He had notable oratorical and debating gifts and moved on to be the General Secretary of the Church. There was a recession in Sale under his successor but the tide turned with the ordination in 1903 of another Irishman, Francis Harvey.

For several of those who came from Ireland their time in England proved to be an apprenticeship for leadership in the Irish Church when they returned.

John Edgar Henry spent two years in the church at Canterbury before returning to Strand Church in Londonderry in 1882 and then in 1890 becoming the professor of Church History in Magee College in that city.

William James Lowe was one of four Irishmen who at different periods were ministers in Islington Church in Liverpool. He spent two years in Liverpool before his return to Strand Church where he remained until 1909 when he became the General Secretary of the Church and built up a reputation as an ecclesiastical statesman.

James Brown Dougherty was called to Nottingham where he was ordained and he was soon recognized as one of the ablest younger ministers in the Church but in 1879 he returned to be professor of Logic and English in Magee College. In 1890 he became a Commissioner of Education and in 1895 he was appointed to be a full-time civil servant and he rose to be Assistant Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant. He was made a knight of both the Order of the Bath and the Royal Victorian Order. Between 1914 and 1918 he was M.P. for Derry.<sup>13</sup> His entry in *Who was Who* omits any mention of his ordination.

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11. Minutes of the General Assembly 1921, p.748; 1923, p.395; 1923, pp.420-431; 1927, p.822. The Dulwich and Patterson files in Tavistock Place.

12. J.M. Barkley, *St. Enoch's Congregation, 1872-1972* (Belfast, 1972), ch.VIII.

13. *M.* 1868, .255.

The greatly talented John Waddell began his ministry in 1912 in the large congregation of First Bangor but he broadened his experience by going to Egremont Church in Birkenhead. At that time this was the largest congregation in the Church. He remained there for six years until 1918. In an Easter Meditation in the *Presbyterian Messenger* in the dark wartime month of April 1918 he wrote that the Resurrection message was the message of joy, courage and hope. He returned to be minister of Fisherwick Church until his retirement in 1945. He became Moderator of the General Assembly but was a dominating figure in all its annual meetings and was rarely, if ever, worsted in debate.<sup>14</sup> He was succeeded in Fisherwick by John Herbert Withers who had gone from Ireland in 1936 to be ordained as minister of St. John's Church, Kenton; he returned to be minister of Portstewart in 1940. His fame as a preacher spread far beyond the English and Irish Churches.<sup>15</sup>

All the Irish ministers who came to England did so in response to calls from congregations but there were various contributory factors which led to the decisions to seek and accept these calls. At times, as in the 1940's, the Irish Church had more licentiates than it could absorb and some were ready to go to England. There were also those who were liberal in political outlook and for a time at least wished to have a change of scene. There were also periods when the English ministerial stipend was larger than that in Ireland and this was attractive to some hard-pressed ministers. Elders in the English Church were remarkably generous in their desire to secure a good standard of ministerial payment. In the presbytery of Lancashire one elder said that only if ministers were offered stipends comparable with those paid to deans of cathedrals would churches get the proper calibre of ministers. After the end of the war in 1945 Irish stipends rapidly overtook those offered in England and this may have been a factor in reducing the flow of ministers from Ireland, but it was by no means the only factor.

Ministers often made their decisions for highly personal reasons. James Alexander Rentoul was ordained to be minister of Ray in County Donegal in 1871. His father and grandfather had been ministers in the same church before him. He had dreams of a legal career and he accepted a call to Woolwich in 1881. He combined his ministry with legal studies and graduated in law in 1884 whereupon he resigned his charge but was retained in the London Presbytery as a minister without charge and he exercised a freelance ministry. He entered politics and was member of Parliament for East Down from 1890 to 1892 and in 1895 he became a Judge of the City of London Criminal Court.<sup>16</sup> Four of his cousins ministered in the English Church. Alexander Rentoul was ordained in Liverpool in 1866 and returned to Lomgford in 1873; Robert William Reid Rentoul was called to Darlington in 1880 and returned to Clonmel in 1892; John Lawrence Rentoul was ordained in Southport in 1872 and went to Australia in

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14. H.C. Waddell, *John Waddell*.

15. J.H. Withers, *Our Past Years: Fisherwick, 1823-1973* (Belfast, 1973).

16. A.G. Lecky, *Roots of Presbyterianism in Donegal* (new ed., Belfast, 1978).

1876; another John Lawrence Rentoul was called to St. George's, Sunderland in 1886 and went to Scotland in 1892.

Among other ministers of St. George's Church, Sunderland, there have been Jackson Smyth Wood, James Miller Craig and George Alexander Harding. Wood came from County Antrim and had a long pedigree in Irish Presbyterianism; he was trained in Belfast and was ordained in St. George's Church in 1892 and moved to Clapham in 1904 and to Gloucester in 1929. He retired in 1938, thus completing a long ministry during which he had also taken an active part in the wider mission work of the Church. Craig was ordained in Letterkenny in County Donegal in 1900; he moved to Sandymount in Dublin in 1903 from which he was called to St. George's Church in 1917; he moved on to Golder's Green Church and then returned to Hamilton Road Church in Bangor in 1928. Harding completed his college course in Belfast in 1944 and after ministries in Derby and Bedford moved to St. George's Church in 1969 and he remained there for nine years.

A fringe figure in the life of English Presbyterianism was the brilliant Scot, Edward Masson. He had intended to enter the ministry of the Church of Scotland but he was caught up in the struggle of the Greeks against the Turks, a struggle, as he called it, of the Cross against the Crescent. He entered the Greek legal profession and became Attorney-General. In one case he spoke in Greek for four hours with great fluency and eloquence. He also had a part-time position as a professor of history in the University of Athens. He then abandoned his prestigious eminence to complete his training for the ministry and became a licentiate of the Free Church. In 1847 he was appointed to be the professor of Biblical and Ecclesiastical Greek in Belfast and he had the strong support of Henry Cooke. However, in 1854 his chair was abolished and he was declared redundant and, despite the advocacy of the Lord Lieutenant in Dublin, he found himself in "comparative destitution". There were complaints that his work was inefficient but, as Dr. Robert Allen put it, "there are few who will pretend that the practice of dismissing inefficient teachers is a widely-established one". Dr. Allen thought that the episode did little to enhance the reputation of Irish Presbyterianism and he says that Masson returned to Greece where he died. It remains to be added that after his dismissal he was cordially received by the presbytery of London as a preacher within its bounds and there can be few presbyteries which have had among their number a Knight of the Greek Royal Order of the Saviour.<sup>17</sup>

Some Irish Presbyterians were associated with the missions of the English Church. Among these were Robert Rentoul, W.E. Montgomery and John Steele. Rentoul was a member of the family which had already sent five members into the English ministry. After graduating in Dublin and studying theology in Belfast he was ordained to be an English Presbyterian missionary in China where "often under conditions of loneliness and physical hardship he showed at all times a devoted and gallant spirit". His health was gradually impaired and

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17. R. Allen, *The Presbyterian College, Belfast, 1853-1953* (Belfast, 1954), pp.76-86.

he died unexpectedly during his second furlough in 1926 when he was only forty years of age. Montgomery was the son of Dr. Henry Montgomery, the founder of the fine evangelistic and philanthropic mission in the Shankill Road in Belfast. By the time of his retirement from the mission in Taiwan in 1949 he had become a respected figure among the Christians on the island. Steele was born in 1868 in Cork and after graduating in Ireland he went to England to teach. Then he trained for the ministry in the college in London and went to Swatow in China in 1892. After twenty-seven years in China he returned to England and became minister at Reading. He did not lose his interest in China and its language. Despite defective eyesight which troubled him all his life he became a specialist in Chinese and for his work he received the degree of Doctor of Literature from Queen's University, Belfast. He developed a Braille Chinese system and at the age of eighty-three learned to read Braille in English. He died in 1960 at the age of ninety-two.

The steady strand of Irish ministers in the English Church along with the far larger number of Irish elders and members in the churches ensured an Irish flavour in the proceedings of sessions and presbyteries and of the Synod and General Assembly. The flavour was strengthened by many invitations to leading Irish ministers to be preachers and lecturers on special occasions and by the presence of an Irish delegation in the Synod and Assembly. Among the visitors none was more frequent or better known than Dr. Henry Cooke.

Cooke had risen to eminence as a doughty controversialist in the struggle with Arianism which divided the Irish Church in the early decades of the nineteenth century; his reputation was reinforced by his power as a preacher in May Street Church which was built specially for him. He wielded much influence in the troubled world of Irish politics and was a dominating figure in the General Assembly. His influence over the ministry was guaranteed by his appointment in 1847 to be the first president of the new Presbyterian College in Belfast; he held this position until his death in 1868. Students whom he had taught often invited him to preach in their churches and this accounted for many of his visits to England. He spoke at the laying of the foundation stone of Trinity Church, Manchester, in 1845, and preached at its subsequent opening. He was similarly involved at Broad Street Church, Birmingham, in 1849. He preached at the opening of St. George's Church in Liverpool in 1845, St. Andrew's in Bolton in 1846, and St. Andrew's in Southampton in 1853 when there were said to be present "highly respectable people of every denomination". He attended the ordination of William McCaw, an Irish licentiate, in the new Trinity Church in Manchester. He was at the induction of James Breakey who had come from Carryduff in County Down to Sheffield in 1854; Cooke returned to Sheffield for the opening of a new church when he preached at three services. His sermons were said to be marked by the clearness, eloquence, beauty of illustration and grace of delivery for which he was famed. He was the preacher at anniversary services in Whitehaven in 1849 and was there for the opening of a new church in 1857. He preached at Newcastle upon Tyne in 1849 and at Cheltenham in 1859. In 1863 he preached and lectured at Trinity Church, Newcastle, and he was

reported to have "lectured at considerable length and with his accustomed eloquence and vigour on Presbyterianism in Ireland".

Even Cooke's lightest word could arouse interest in English Presbyterian circles. In 1859, just after the English deputies to the Irish Synod had spoken, Cooke was heard to exclaim, "For the sake of human life, let in some air". A contributor to the English *Presbyterian Messenger* speculated on what these words could mean. Coming from anyone else the remark could have been ignored but Cooke never spoke lightly or unadvisedly and no wise man entered lightly into debate with him. He could as easily scathe with indignation, annihilate with wit, mystify with words, or crush with eloquence, as he could eat his dinner. It was therefore important to take seriously his lightest word. Coming, as his remark did, at the end of the speeches of the English deputation, it could be taken as an insult to the English deputation. Of course, it could have been an innocent remark indicating that on that "hot and dusty" July day in the old and unventilated Fisherwick Church there was need for windows to be opened. Add to this the atmosphere electric with news of the Great Revival and Cooke may have felt stifled by having to share a pew with half-a-dozen raw-boned Celts; hence the cry for air. Or it may have been that Cooke had been so entranced by English eloquence which had wafted him to the third heaven that it was only when the speaking stopped that he realized he was near to asphyxiation. Yet there was the more serious possibility that Cooke was suggesting that the English Presbyterians were given to shutting windows and keeping out the fresh air of new ideas. How could he have got such an idea? How could anyone accuse the English of "an obstinate and miserable conservatism"? Why, English Presbyterians were now standing to sing the Psalms! It was the Irish Presbyterians who still sat to sing the Psalms and some of them thought that the habit of standing for the singing was a sign of the approach of the last and perilous days spoken of in the Scriptures or as a stage in the transformation of English Presbyterians into Holy Jumpers. Surely it was the English who were letting in the fresh air. If Cooke thought otherwise he needed to be enlightened. So the question remained, what did he mean?<sup>18</sup>

However, when he died, the *Presbyterian Messenger* carried a copious tribute in which it was said that he had "all the poetry and humour and flowing rhetoric of his nation" and "his presence was enough to fill the largest church or hall in any part of the three kingdoms". His fame was immense. He was and has remained a controversial figure. His career has been studied by friend and foe and he has been variously assessed as a folk-hero, an ecclesiastical opportunist, a Machiavellian politician, an Irish Athanasius, a noble churchman and a Christian gentleman. The recent biography of Cooke by Professor Holmes points out the many and contrasting facets of his character but emphasizes that he was "the judicious father in God who inspired and helped other ministers of Christ and servants of men"; he was a warm human being and a Mr. Valiant-for-

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18. *M.* 1859, p.270.

Truth. English Presbyterians held him in high regard.<sup>19</sup>

Cooke was also kept in touch with the English Church through his two sons-in-law, William Gordon and Josias Leslie Porter, who both ministered in England for short periods, Gordon in Workington, and Porter in Newcastle upon Tyne.

The annual Irish delegation to the Synod and General Assembly kept Irish affairs before the English Church. The Synod heard harrowing tales of the effect of the potato famine and it was much concerned by the confrontations between Orange and Green in Liverpool as a result of the influx of starving Irish people into the city. There were stern criticisms of the Roman Catholic priesthood which, according to some speakers, had so subdued and debilitated the people that they could not cope with adversity. There were even accusations that priests had diverted relief funds to the building of chapels.<sup>20</sup> The offer of a government grant to Maynooth seminary aroused great apprehensions in both the English and Irish Churches. In Ireland it hastened the decline among Presbyterians of their sympathy with Roman Catholics as fellow-sufferers under civil disabilities. Presbyterians were more and more prone to see themselves as part of a Protestant minority threatened by an alliance of nationalism and Roman Catholicism and they saw the grant to Maynooth as an encouragement to the movement which would in the end subvert the British connection. In 1845, Josias Wilson, whose brief ministry in England has already been noted, told the Synod that in his opinion Maynooth was the source of "thousands of clerical agitators" who were a trouble to "one of the finest countries on the face of the earth".<sup>21</sup> In 1850 Thomas Millar of First Lurgan Church told the Synod of the militant mood of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. However, he was challenged by J.A. Huie, the minister of Wooler, who said that the Roman Catholic priests were the real pastors of the people and the cause of the unrest in Ireland was the favoured position of the Church of Ireland, "the most absurd establishment the world ever saw". He was severely rebuked by the Moderator who said the Synod entirely dissented from his remarks.<sup>22</sup> Among others who dwelt upon the theme of the papal pressure in Ireland was Dr. Hugh Hanna, known colloquially in Ireland as "roaring Hugh" but described in the *Presbyterian Messenger* as "a divine of dashing vigour".

In 1922, Lowe, by then the Irish Moderator, addressed the General Assembly in the aftermath of the Great War and amid the turmoil of the partition of Ireland which resulted from the refusal of Protestants in the North to bow to the decision of the Parliament of the United Kingdom to give a measure of Home Rule to Ireland. Protestants wanted neither home rule nor partition but to remain as part of the United Kingdom and Lowe said Ireland was "the victim of hand-to-mouth experimentation on the part of British politicians". Thomas

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19. R. Finlay G. Holmes, *Henry Cooke* (Belfast, 1981).

20. *M.* 1846, p.306.

21. *M.* 1845, p.4.

22. *M.* 1851-52, p.155.



Haslett, the Moderator in 1926, told the Assembly that "the recent political upheaval in Ireland had completely subsided and there is now settled peace and order between North and South".

Subsequent moderators told the Assembly of the prospects and difficulties facing the Irish Church but Irish affairs were pushed from the centre of interest by the approaching Second World War. However, Irish affairs have returned to trouble the Churches again and since the formation of the United Reformed Church Moderators from the Irish Church have had sombre messages as they have told of the trials undergone by many presbyterian families in Northern Ireland.

The influence of Irish Presbyterianism upon the English Church could be illustrated from the history of most of the congregations in the Church. Many members and elders had roots in the Irish Church. Two examples will have to suffice.

In Plymouth, in the nineteenth century, there were many soldiers and sailors of Irish birth. There were shipwrights from Belfast who had to service the naval vessels which had been built in Belfast. Dr. Wright, the energetic minister of Southampton, saw the need for a Presbyterian church in Plymouth and he visited Belfast and persuaded the presbytery to undertake the founding of a church in Plymouth. In 1857 two ministers from Belfast held services in two temperance halls and a petition signed by four hundred and sixty-seven persons was sent to the War Office asking for a piece of land on which to build a church towards which the Irish Church had promised to give £200. Eventually a building costing £3000 was erected in 1862; it was made of corrugated iron lined with wood and painted to give the appearance of a stone-built structure. The church called as its first minister Joseph Wood, an Irishman who had already come to England to be minister at Warrington. He remained in Plymouth until his retirement in 1897. When he died in 1911 the Synod's memorial minute said he was "one of not a few eminent ministers our Church owes to Ireland". In his time the church in Plymouth was twice rebuilt and expanded to hold one thousand people. In 1864 the congregation and its buildings were transferred from the presbytery of Belfast to the Presbyterian Church in England.<sup>23</sup>

In Cambridge there were a number of Irish teachers and students in the University. Services for worship began in the Guildhall in 1879 and two of the early elders came from Irish Presbyterianism. Professor Alexander Macalister had been the Professor of Anatomy in Trinity College in Dublin and had been an elder in the Irish Church. On his transfer to the Anatomy chair in Cambridge he gave his full support to the new Presbyterian venture and was the first Clerk of Session. For over thirty years he devoted himself to the congregation and its buildings; he was superintendent of the Sunday School and he founded the Cambridge University Presbyterian Association. He was also convener of the Synod's Foreign Mission Committee. His son, Stewart, was the first organist of

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23. E. Welch, "Presbyterianism and the Rise of Marine Engineering" in the *Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society*, i, 4, pp.141-151.

the new church; he became a celebrated Orientalist and Archaeologist and was appointed to be the Professor of Celtic Archaeology in University College, Dublin, and he was an elder in Adelaide Road Church and a leading figure in the Irish General Assembly. On his retirement he returned to live in Cambridge and became active once again in St. Columba's Church.

The other notable early Irish elder was Hugh Porter, son of the minister of New Row Church in Coleraine. He went into the linen business and became a partner in the great Cambridge store of Robert Sayle; he became a magistrate, a city alderman, and a deputy-lieutenant for the county. He had two sons; one, Hugh, became a lecturer in history in Christ's College and also an elder in the church; the other, Samuel Lowry, was also a member of the church and he became a Lord Justice of Appeal. Among subsequent elders was Dr. Helen Megaw, a University Lecturer and a daughter of Mr. Justice Megaw. Dr. George Hall, son of Dr. Richard Hall, minister of Megain Memorial Church in Belfast, was church treasurer; he was a Fellow of St. John's College, and subsequently became the Professor of Mathematics in Nottingham where he has also been an elder in St. Andrew's Church. Professor R.K. McElderry, the Professor of Greek in Belfast, was on the church committee during his student days in Cambridge. People with an Irish background are still to be found in the eldership and membership of the church.<sup>24</sup>

The relationship between the English and Irish Churches was a two-way traffic. Mention has already been made of ministers who returned to Ireland and made a major contribution to the life of the Church. Mention may also be made of Irish Presbyterian students who studied in the college of the English Church in London and in Cambridge. Twenty students were in this group. Among these were the brothers Jackson and Richard Smyth who were in the college in London in the eighteen-fifties; both returned to Ireland and both became moderators and doctors of divinity. Richard was deeply moved by the religious and political situation in Ireland. He came under the influence of the Revival of 1859 and he was alarmed by the plight of Irish farmers and he became a member of Parliament in order to champion their cause. He was appointed to a professorship in Magee College. Whenever he visited the English Synod he was always received as an honoured guest and was often invited to address the fathers and brethren. The Smyth family was represented in the English ministry in a later generation by Jackson Smyth Wood who has already been mentioned. John Park was an early student in the London college and on leaving the college in 1845 he was appointed Professor of Metaphysics in Magee College and in 1868 he moved to the chair of Logic and Metaphysics in Queen's College, Belfast. George Hanson completed his course in 1881 and was called to First Ballymena Church; he moved to Rathgar in Dublin in 1886 and then to Marylebone in London in 1898. In 1909 he returned to Belfast to be minister of Duncairn but after two years went to Canada where for almost twenty years he had a remarkable ministry. He returned to England to be minister of

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24. R.B. Knox, *St. Columba's Church, Cambridge, 1879-1979* (Cambridge, 1979).

Kensington but died soon after his return in 1928. Other London students were John Love Morrow, Charles Davey and J. Lyle Donaghy and they had notable ministries in Ireland. Among those who studied in Westminster College were Edwin Augustus Elliot Burrows, minister of Knock in Belfast, two Park brothers who both became Moderators of the General Assembly, John Worthington Johnston, noted for his athletic prowess in student days and for his courage as a parachute padre, and George Brian Greer McConnell, minister of Donore in Dublin.<sup>25</sup>

Cambridge has not been the natural haunt of Irish ministerial students and could not compete with the appeal of the Scottish strongholds of Presbyterianism and Reformed theology but through the writings of its famous scholars and through the small stream of its former students in the ministry it has had an influence upon the Irish Church.

English and Irish Presbyterianism had close links and had an influence upon each other. In 1972 one tenth of the ministers in the English Church had an Irish background. In the United Reformed Church the proportion is much less, probably about one in fifty, and this includes some with a background in Irish Congregationalism. In many of the congregations in both traditions there are members with an Irish Presbyterian background and thus the links are still in existence.

R. BUICK KNOX

### THE RISE OF INDEPENDENCY IN LINCOLNSHIRE: THOMAS WILSON AND THE STUDENTS

Despite the early promise of Smyth and Robinson, Lincolnshire has always proved stony ground for Independency. J.T. Barker's *Congregationalism in Lincolnshire* (1860) is a painstaking production but slight. There was relatively little to record.

The activity of Thomas Wilson, Treasurer of Hoxton Academy and then Highbury College from 1794 to 1843, in sending students as evangelists and potential pastors to many parts of the country, including Lincolnshire, and in recovering disused buildings or buying land and erecting new chapels, is known from the *Memoir* (1849) of him by his son Joshua; but though careful and orderly in construction and using original correspondence this was a work of piety. Wilson's organizing power, dedication and persistence are not in question; but the *Memoir* gives an impression of straightforward level success never likely to correspond closely to what occurred. The scores of letters to Wilson from students, ministers and others written within a few years of the beginning of

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25. R.B. Knox, *Westminster College, Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1979).

operations and still preserved<sup>1</sup> not only throw light on Wilson's method of going to work but yield a truer, more lively picture of ups and downs, with local indifference and opposition, ill health, restlessness and at times insubordination in those sent out, and persisting financial anxieties. The account that follows is based largely on these letters. The story they tell is a very human one and often melancholy. Yet of all the few congregations recorded for Lincolnshire in the United Reformed Church *Yearbook* about half owe their origin to Wilson's energy, patience and generosity.

Wilson's considerable interest in Lincolnshire began with a visit he paid in 1818 to Market Deeping. Three years earlier he had rescued a chapel there from the threat of sale and had sent out a student from Hoxton, Isaiah Knowles Holland, who in 1820 removed to St. Ives, Huntingdonshire.<sup>2</sup> Seven letters from a later minister, John Steward, survive, written between 1828 and 1832. The first of these reports growth in the congregation of a kind calling for galleries and a schoolroom to be added; later, a brewhouse encroaches on the premises and there are difficulties over the boundary wall. By 1831 the writer is on the defensive, fears his preaching has had no effect, and asks for an appointment elsewhere. In August 1832 he knows of only two conversions by his ministry in "this degraded place": "the opposition the persecution and want of success that I am compelled to endure have almost overwhelmed me". "Can you direct me to any other station?" In the following month Wilson heard from the minister at Stamford, George Wright, that there were "several friends who would come forward if Mr. Stewart was removed".<sup>3</sup> Stewart remained at Market Deeping, however, and died there on 11 August 1835.

From Market Deeping Wilson went on to Long Sutton and Wisbech.<sup>4</sup> He had already sent a student named William Holmes to Wisbech at midsummer 1817. "A temporary place of worship, a large wool-chamber capable of holding about 300 persons, was crowded, and some striking instances of conversion occurred". At the end of the year Holmes returned to Wisbech, twelve months later a new chapel was opened, and in 1819 Holmes was ordained as pastor. He remained at

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1. Most of these letters are in the New College, London, MSS. now at Dr. Williams's Library; a few are in the Congregational Library MSS. now also at Dr. Williams's; the latter are distinguished from the former in the references below by the insertion of CL before MSS. For biographical and bibliographical directions acknowledgement is due to C.E. Surman's card-index, also at Dr. Williams's.
  2. *Memoir*, pp.364, 372. Holland continued till 1860 as minister at St. Ives, where he died in 1873 (*CYB*, 1874). For his application to Hoxton, see MS. 322/8/1-2.
  3. MSS. 331/50, 336/50, 341/40, 380/65, 302/7, 61; CL MSS. GB 17/54, 55. The date of Stewart's death is recorded in the *Patriot* for 26 August 1835 (a reference which I owe to Mr. John Creasey).
  4. Wisbech is in Cambridgeshire but is in the Lincoln(shire) District of the United Reformed Church, grouped with Long Sutton.

Wisbech till his death in 1854.<sup>5</sup> During the 1830s he several times wrote to Wilson in support of applicants to Highbury.<sup>6</sup>

About the time of Holmes' coming to Wisbech the curate of Long Sutton, Samuel Maddock, was "turned out" by the Bishop of Lincoln as part of a "campaign against Calvinistic doctrine."<sup>7</sup> "Eight or nine poor praying men" from Maddock's congregation, "feeling, as they express it, "as sheep having no shepherd", walked over to Wisbech "and with tears", Holmes wrote later, "importuned me to come over and help them". After visiting them over three months for a Thursday evening "lecture" in a barn "capable of holding about 350 persons", which was "well filled", Holmes wrote to Wilson for help, and a student named Thomas Evans was despatched "on an exploring and evangelising mission".<sup>8</sup> In February 1819 Wilson wrote congratulating Evans on the "pleasing prospects" at Long Sutton, where a chapel was soon opened and a church formed on Congregational principles. It did not, however, have Evans as its pastor; for in July of that year he left Long Sutton for Shaftesbury, where in August he was "set apart by ordination", and where he remained till his death fifty years later.<sup>9</sup>

Long Sutton was beset with difficulties. On 13 December 1823 James Monro, also from Hoxton, wrote to Wilson of his decision to resign owing to financial straits and "very unhandsome conduct" by the local Committee towards his wife and himself. His successor, another Hoxton student named Henry John Bunn, stayed for ten years but was often unhappy. In February 1828 he wrote to Wilson criticising the congregation and desiring a new post, but in March he decided to remain. In May 1829 he found his salary inadequate - "I really think if I were to suffer myself to grow old with them they would eventually half starve me" - and again wished to remove, but by August he had again made up his mind to stay. In May 1830 he wrote of fresh difficulties, this time involving legal proceedings that had cleared him of all charges brought against him, "the bill being thrown out by the Grand Jury". In 1833 he left Long Sutton for Yardley Hastings in Northamptonshire.<sup>11</sup>

Although his sojourn at Long Sutton was brief, Thomas Haynes had not been inactive. Hearing that Wilson "thought there was a fine opening for a new cause

5. *Memoir*, pp.369-70, 375-6, including a letter signed by Holmes, together with two deacons and thirty-seven other members unnamed; *CYB*, 1855; also memoir in *Evangelical Magazine*, 1855, which mentions a Hoxton student at Wisbech preceding Holmes named Wildsmith and records the opening of preaching stations at Emneth, Newton and Parson Drove (all in Cambridgeshire).
6. MSS. 234/1/2, 306/11/2, 308/16 (endorsement), 351/24.
7. *DNB*, s.v. Sir George Pretzman Tomline, Bishop of Lincoln.
8. *Memoir*, p.370; *CYB*, 1870, p.290.
9. *Memoir*, pp.374-5; W. Densham and J. Ogle, *Story of the Congregational Churches of Dorset*, 1899, pp.238-41; *CYB*, 1870.
10. CL MS. GB 17/43; for Monro's application to Hoxton, see MS. 376/4/1-2.
11. MSS. 338/10, 332/32, 382/16, 343/9, 342/7, 333/49; T. Coleman, *Memorials of the Independent Churches in Northamptonshire*, 1853, p.302. He died in 1884 (*CYB*, 1885). For his application to Hoxton, see MS. 325/5/1-3.

at Boston", he "went over to reconnoitre", and with the help of Holmes of Wisbech and others followed the plan used at Long Sutton before his own arrival. A Tuesday evening "lecture" was established for three months in the "Guard-room" in Pen Street; students were then sent from Hoxton for a month at a time: first, the son of the Lady Huntingdon minister in Dublin (William Cooper), William Haweis Cooper, who soon returned to Dublin to assist his father;<sup>12</sup> then Benjamin Byron, whom we shall meet again; then Thomas Haynes. In October 1819 a church was formed, a chapel to hold about 700 persons was built at a cost of £12,000 by the munificence of Joseph Claypen (later a deacon at Paddington Chapel), and Haynes was ordained as pastor.<sup>13</sup> In June 1820 he writes "We are going on comfortably and prosperously", and in August that the church "continues to increase"; "our Galleries are going on rapidly".

In later letters (1829-31) Haynes tells of the establishment of a Loan Tract Society in Boston, employing about forty distributors who visited about 1,500 families once a fortnight; raises the question whether members of the Church of England unwilling to become Dissenters yet "statedly worshipping in our congregations" might be admitted to "occasional communion", as was already the practice with those "who have for a season worshipped with us"; and refers to a chapel about to be built in the neighbouring village of Kirton with a preacher named Brooks.<sup>14</sup> On 16 April 1830 he wrote "We are going on prosperously. Several striking instances of conversion amongst aged persons have lately occurred, as well as among the young. I hope to introduce several of the former class to Church Fellowship soon";<sup>15</sup> and on 8 November 1833 he wrote thanking Wilson for a tract which had led a young man with Baptist connections to be received into the church without immersion and "a Lady in respectable life the child of Baptist parents to be convinced of the non importance of immersion" and to be admitted after baptism by sprinkling.<sup>16</sup> Haynes remained in Boston till 1836. He was a valued agent of Wilson in "extending the good work", the instrument of "aggressive movements" in several directions, with a particular interest perhaps in Spalding and Louth.<sup>17</sup>

12. The MSS. include a number of letters from W.H. Cooper written from Dublin, and three written from Hoxton, in one of which (MS. L 52/3/75) he describes life at the Academy. His second name commemorated his parents' friendship with Thomas Haweis (CYB, 1847).

13. *Memoir*, p.371; P. Thompson, *History and Antiquities of Boston*, Boston 1856, p.205; Barker, pp.30-1. A letter of 3 June 1829 from Claypon (MS. 382/19) requests a supply during the absence of Haynes owing to the death of his father: a coach left London for Boston on a Friday evening and another on a Saturday morning; the journey took 14½ hours.

14. CL MSS. GB 17/46, 47; MSS. 382/33, 333/6, 301/17. Edward S. Brooks, the first pastor of the church formed at Kirton on 4 August 1831, remained till 1838, when he transferred to Sleaford; the Kirton chapel was not newly built but rented and later bought from Baptists (Barker, pp.40, 49).

15. MS. 333/40.

16. CL MS. GB 17/2.

17. *Memoir*, p.371; CYB, 1884.

But first we should turn to Lincoln, where in 1819 a former General Baptist meeting-house was procured, and a student named William Gear was sent to preach in it. Wilson's *Memoir* records the opening of a newly built chapel in November 1822 and passes immediately to the arrival of S.B. Bergne in 1830.<sup>18</sup> But before two years were out Gear was no longer in Lincoln: in October 1822 he was ordained pastor at Market Harborough.<sup>19</sup> The course of events in Lincoln following his departure may be pieced together from the letters.

First, Benjamin Byron moved over to Lincoln from Boston: a letter of 29 January 1824 is preserved in which he and the Lincoln church commend an applicant to Hoxton.<sup>20</sup> After six years he reports financial failures in members of the congregation, in the case of one of them to the tune of £30,000. "Religion is extremely flat in Lincoln", he writes; he would welcome removal.<sup>21</sup> He did remove – to Ashburton, Devon, and in 1831 to Newport, Mon., where he remained till his death ten years later.<sup>22</sup>

In February 1829 Robert Coupland of Waddington, a village south of Lincoln, wrote to Wilson of the need for a successor to Byron, whom he describes as "a pious, consistent Minister of the Gospel", though occasionally appearing "not very amiable" through "a degree of warmth" in expressing himself. In May he reported that a student named Joseph Wall, who in the previous year had been supplying at Louth, had been invited.<sup>23</sup> Wall came; but in a series of letters written in August and September, some of them from Coupland's home at Waddington, he told of division and dissension in the congregation and of his decision not to stay in Lincoln,<sup>24</sup> and by October he had removed to Leek, in Staffordshire.<sup>25</sup>

Wilson's practice of sending students successively for a month at a time was almost bound to lead to division. In October another student, William Parker Bourne, wrote that the Lincoln congregation had chosen him in preference to

18. *Memoir*, pp.379–80.

19. Coleman, p.142; *CYB*, 1858. The MSS. include a letter from Gear from Market Harborough and a later letter from Bradford-on-Avon, commending a student to Highbury; for his application to Hoxton, with support from his minister, Charles Maslen of Hertford, see MS. 322/6/1–.

20. MS. 326/2/1–2.

21. MSS. 336/14, 339/3.

22. The MSS. include a letter from Byron from Ashburton, and another from Newport.

23. MSS. 297/19, 382/21–2; 337/25, 336/54. In 1828 Coupland was Treasurer of the Lincoln Auxiliary of the LMS (*Evang. Mag.*, 1821, pp.225, 391).

24. MSS. 343/27–9, 380/70.

25. MS. 382/60. For letters from Joseph Abbott of Leek on arrangements were Wall not to stay, see MS. 382/1–2. Wall soon removed a few miles north-west of Leek to Middleton near Youlgrave, where he remained till his death in 1838. For a letter of 1831 from him, from Middleton Hall, the home of the Bateman family (cf. *DNB*, s.v. Thomas Bateman, 1821–61), with whom Wilson stayed and corresponded (*Memoir*, pp.340–5), see MS. 298/1, and for letters from (an earlier) Thomas Bateman, MSS. 302/5 (enclosing a letter from Wall), 343/4. For Wall's application to Hoxton, see MS. 328/13/1–2.

Wall; but three days later he wrote again complaining of difficulties.<sup>26</sup> Wall's supporter, Robert Coupland, was dissatisfied with Bourne,<sup>27</sup> and in the following month Bourne decided to leave Lincoln.<sup>28</sup> Almost as if the two places were in one and the same circuit he followed Wall to Leek, where Wall had not settled. Bourne did not settle either, though later, in 1838, he returned to Leek for a pastorate lasting two years.<sup>29</sup>

At last, late in 1830, someone more permanent arrived in Lincoln in the person of Samuel Brodribb Bergne, a Highbury student who a year earlier had been mentioned by Joseph Wall as a suitable candidate for Leek.<sup>30</sup> On 4 April 1831 Bergne wrote describing the state of religion in Lincoln and inviting Wilson to his impending ordination, and on 5 September he sent a cheerful survey of what was almost a year's work.<sup>31</sup> Things now went well, and in 1840 a more spacious chapel (Newland) was built, to seat 1,050 people.<sup>32</sup> A draft agreement announcing the sale of the old chapel by William Alers Hankey, Claypon, Joshua Wilson and others to the same three persons and others including Bergne, dated 16 January 1844, is preserved, together with three letters written in February by Bergne.<sup>33</sup> Three years later he left Lincoln for the Poultry in London.<sup>34</sup>

Wilson was also interested in Spalding, where through the good offices of Haynes of Boston a building used by a Baptist church had become available. In January 1819 Wilson received a report from a student whom he had sent there named Matthew Jeula "of what prospects this place affords for the establishment of a new Interest": "there are some respectable and wealthy people... prospects are very encouraging", with people standing in the congregation on Sunday evenings and more than two hundred present on week evenings. At Christmas Jeula returned to Spalding and in May 1820 wrote requesting Wilson's aid in building a new chapel. In 1821 a chapel was opened, at a cost of £1,200, Claypon of Boston having again contributed generously, and Jeula was "set apart" as pastor.<sup>35</sup> Six years later he accepted a call to Northgate Street, Bury St

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26. MSS. 343/7, 380/12.

27. MS. 380/20; and for renewed criticism of Bourne by Coupland, MS. 380/21.

28. MS. 382/11-13.

29. Though described by a neighbouring minister as very acceptable, Bourne soon reported difficulties at Leek (MSS. 348/12, 302/49, 55). In 1837 he removed to Teignmouth, where he died in 1840. For the situation at Leek, see Letters of July 1831 from Susanna Ashton, of Daisy Bank (MSS. 302/19, 298/11), and from a neighbouring minister reporting opposition to the Ashton family (MS. 302/48); also a letter from Joseph Abbott (MS. 301/23).

30. MS. 382/60.

31. MSS. 299/3, 230/6; Bergne was perhaps a brother of John Brodribb Bergne (*DNB*).

32. *Memoir*, p.380.

33. CL MSS. GB 17/33-6.

34. Sir [J.W.] F. Hill, *Newland Congregational Church 1820-1974*, Lincoln 1979, pp.4-5, with full-page reproduction of portrait of Bergne facing p.18. Bergne died in 1880 (*CYB*, 1881).

35. *Memoir*, p.380; CL MSS. GB 17/93, 94.



Edmunds,<sup>36</sup> and no more letters from him written from Spalding are preserved.<sup>37</sup>

In June 1827 the student who came to Spalding in Jeula's place, George Robert Hewlings, wrote twice to Wilson complaining of an uncomfortable reception;<sup>38</sup> in 1828 "the Church, being in a disorganized state, voluntarily disbanded, and a new Church was immediately formed", consisting of ten members;<sup>39</sup> and on 18 June 1829 Hewlings was ordained pastor.<sup>40</sup> He remained at Spalding till 1835, when he removed to Edmonton and Tottenham. Later he appears to have become a minister in the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion.

On 16 June 1820 Haynes wrote from Boston of "a very extensive desire" for the Gospel in Louth, where he had secured a building.<sup>41</sup> "The Population is 6000 or 7000", he wrote, "the major part of whom are respectable and lovers of the Church". "A Gentleman of considerable opulence" named Allenby, a man of "piety and modesty", "promised some pecuniary assistance". "His wife I am informed was a member of an Independent Church in Lancashire". Haynes urged Wilson to send a student. "They must have an *attractive Preacher* as the Methodists are very numerous and tolerably well supplied": Mr. Gear "will be just the man". "*Talent* and affection" are required, "the one to *attract* and the other to *attach*".<sup>42</sup>

"We have sent Mr. Soper to make a beginning at Louth", Wilson replied in July.<sup>43</sup> "Great interest was excited". In August Haynes wrote that "the prospects are certainly very pleasing", and in September Soper, who accepted "a pressing invitation from the regular hearers... to become their minister", wrote "We have now a large and respectable congregation", including many from the parish church: "the Clergy begin *to rave*"; the Methodists also "are unremitting in their opposition".<sup>44</sup> In 1821 a chapel was built, a church was formed, consisting of nineteen members, and Soper was ordained.<sup>45</sup> He remained for some years, but in January 1828 wrote complaining of the financial situation and also of ill health. A former Hoxton student named Robert Bayley helped out as a supply;<sup>46</sup> but Soper's illness was a severe one; on 21 February he resigned, and on the following day a deacon named R.C. Tolson wrote for a "replacement",

36. *Evang. Mag.*, 1828, p.314; J. Browne, *History of Congregationalism... in Norfolk and Suffolk*, 1877, p.418.

37. The MSS. include letters from Jeula from Bury, and one from Hoxton (MS. L52/3/37). He died in 1854 (CYB, 1855).

38. MSS. L52/5/10, 12.

39. Barker, p.51.

40. *Evang. Mag.*, 1829, p.502.

41. *Memoir*, p.377.

42. CL MS. GB 17/46.

43. *Memoir*, p.375.

44. CL MSS. GB 17/47, 48; *Memoir*, p.378.

45. Barker, pp.43-4.

46. MSS. 331/22, 31.

suggesting Alfred Pope of Leamington or John Tippetts of Nuneaton, both of them former Hoxton students.<sup>47</sup>

News of the vacancy travelled in many directions. In February a former Hoxton student, John Anderson, who had ministered in Lincolnshire at Market Rasen, wrote from Dorchester that he was willing to supply at Louth, and in March another, Thomas Lamb, who had succeeded Anderson at Market Rasen, that he had left Rasen and was now at Louth.<sup>48</sup> A third, John Rennie, also wrote in March from Inch in Aberdeenshire that he was willing to supply at Louth, but not "on probation", as his work lay in Scotland.<sup>49</sup> Yet another, Richard Fletcher, came from Doncaster, where he was not happy, to give Louth a trial, but on 23 April wrote of difficulties there: he had no desire to settle; and on the previous day, and again in May, Tolson sent further letters telling of the problems following Soper's illness and Fletcher's decision not to stay.<sup>50</sup> Later in May Soper, still in Louth, wrote again of the difficulties there; but by now he had received an invitation to Grantham, and on 24 June Charles Wright, presumably another deacon, wrote repeating the request for a "replacement".<sup>51</sup>

On 8 August the bleakness of the situation was described afresh by Mrs. Allenby, writing from Kenwick House, outside Louth. Later that month Coupland's erstwhile protégé, Joseph Wall, was acting as a supply. The congregation was evidently divided, for on 12 September Wall wrote of a dispute concerning Soper, who four days earlier had written from Grantham that he had no wish to return to Louth unless apologies were made.<sup>52</sup> In October James Knight (a much earlier Hoxton student) wrote from Kingston, where he now ministered, that he could not afford to accept Louth.<sup>53</sup> Matters dragged on through the autumn and winter, with several further letters from Elizabeth Allenby, a fresh correspondent named Thomas Forman, and a former Hoxton student, John Hill, who acted as a supply before accepting temporary charge of Wilbarston and Ashley in Northamptonshire.<sup>54</sup> In July 1830 Mrs. Allenby wrote that things were still not settled.<sup>55</sup> Two years later, in May 1832, Wilson learned from Soper that the chapel was "on the verge of becoming private property";

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47. MSS. 331/35, 332/18. The MSS. include several letters from both Pope and Tippetts, together with the application of each to Hoxton.

48. MSS. 338/1, 332/23.

49. MSS. 338/29-31. The MSS. include several letters from Rennie, together with his application to Hoxton.

50. MSS. 338/16, 17, 337/8, 23-4. Fletcher did not stay as long as a year at Doncaster (J.G. Miall, *Congregationalism in Yorkshire*, 1868, p.255). For his application to Hoxton, with support from his father, Richard Fletcher, then minister at Bicester, John Pye Smith and others, see MS. 326/12. He died at Hornsea in Lincolnshire in 1873 (*CYB*, 1874).

51. MSS. 338/34, 337/18, 19; 335/48.

52. MSS. 337/1, 25; 336/54, 49. Kenwick House is now Kenwick Hall.

53. MS. 336/36. The MSS. include other letters from Knight. He died in 1864 (*CYB*, 1865).

54. MSS. 338/19, 20; 297/23, 334/10-13. The MSS. include other letters from Hill, some from Hoxton. He died in 1862 (*CYB*, 1863).

55. MS. 346/2.

Soper urged that, if it were to be sold, a young man should be sent to Louth "with moderate talents and a kind *pastor's heart to visit &c.*"<sup>56</sup> In October 1832 a further report came from John Gray, a Louth solicitor: "the Chapel has, thro' mercy, weathered so many storms that some of us are encouraged to hope it may yet be saved".<sup>57</sup>

Not until 1833 did the ailing congregation find a minister in Robert Slater Bayley, the man who had helped out when Soper first fell ill, and who now transferred to Louth from Lane End, Staffordshire. In 1834 he published a history of Louth, *Notitiae Ludae*, but he did not stay long. In 1835 he went on to Howard Street, Sheffield.<sup>58</sup>

In her latest letter Mrs. Allenby added that the minister at Alford, Thomas Harris, was ill. Alford does not figure in Wilson's *Memoir*, but Harris once again was an emissary from Hoxton. He went there in 1827 and wrote that he had decided to stay, "although the prospect is not very promising at present" – "the Society of Methodists in this place are very active and a little afraid of me".<sup>59</sup> In March 1828 he wrote twice describing the situation and reporting his decision to accept an invitation to become pastor.<sup>60</sup> In July he wrote again of his work, but by October he was having difficulties.<sup>61</sup> The illness of which Mrs. Allenby wrote persisted, and in October 1831 he asked to be removed.<sup>62</sup> It might have been better if he had been. "From the first some friends of the cause suspected him of Popish tendencies" – his ill health was put down to ascetic emaciation – and in 1842 he resigned and became a Roman Catholic.<sup>63</sup> This perhaps explains why the work at Alford is not mentioned in the *Memoir*. During the 1850s the cause became extinct.

Another town which attracted Wilson's attention was Horncastle. In 1821 a student named John Pain spent seven Sundays there before returning to Hoxton to finish his course. He then received an invitation to go back which carried more than 130 signatures, and accepted it. A chapel measuring 36 feet by 50 was built, and was opened on 28 March 1822. Pain was ordained as pastor of the recently formed church on 10 May and continued at Horncastle till his death in 1844.<sup>64</sup>

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56. CL MS. GB 17/49.

57. CL MS. GB 17/50.

58. *DNB*; Miall, p.355. The MSS. include a number of letters from Bayley, some from Lane End. For his application to Hoxton, see MSS. 228/2, 350/1/1. At Sheffield he caused offence by remarks at the opening of Mount Zion (MSS. 279/1-4). He died in 1859 (*CYB*, 1860).

59. CL MS. GB 17/1.

60. MSS. 338/22, 336/27.

61. MSS. 335/18, 343/14.

62. MS 302/52. For Harris's application to Hoxton, see MS. 326/15.

63. Barker, pp.28-9.

64. *Memoir*, pp.378-9, quoting from a letter of May 1822 from Pain to Wilson; *CYB*, 1845. For Pain's application to Hoxton, see MS. 322/17; the MSS. contain nothing further from Pain, but in June 1828 William Parker wrote twice from Horncastle requesting financial aid towards the erection of a gallery (MSS. 335/30, 336/43).

If Horncastle may be regarded as a story of quiet achievement, this cannot be said of Market Rasen. An indication of the opportunities was given to Wilson by Soper of Louth in a letter of 27 June 1821: "the house which had been offered us was torn down", but a loft over the theatre had been obtained.<sup>65</sup> A student, John Anderson, was sent from Hoxton, a chapel built in 1822 and a church formed in 1823; but the cause "sank under an oppressive and overwhelming burden of debt".<sup>66</sup> Its decline is recorded in the correspondence in full melancholy detail.

Anderson was ordained as pastor in 1824 but did not stay.<sup>67</sup> By December 1827 his successor, Thomas Laurence Lamb, was deploring the bad state of the congregation and was doubtful whether to continue.<sup>68</sup> In January 1828 he writes again: the situation has deteriorated and he asks for another opening. In other letters written this month W. Hemming, presumably a deacon, agrees that the finances are in a bad way but also criticises Lamb as too retiring: the Methodists are strong.<sup>69</sup> There is also a letter on the situation at Rasen written from Dorchester by Anderson.<sup>70</sup> In February both Hemming and Lamb wrote again, Hemming to say that the financial collapse would force closure, and Lamb that he would not remain; and on 3 March Lamb wrote from Louth, as we saw earlier, that he had left Rasen.<sup>71</sup> A meeting held on the following day to deal with the finances was reported to Wilson by Hemming on 15 March.<sup>72</sup> Four days later the Principal of Wymondley College, Thomas Morell, wrote to Wilson that his nephew had been invited to Market Rasen. This was John Holmes, whose advent Hemming reported later in March; but Holmes was undecided whether to stay.<sup>73</sup> Early in June he was likely to leave and later that month a financial statement from Hemming was accompanied by a request for a new minister.<sup>74</sup> In August William Sanderson wrote from Rochdale offering his services,<sup>75</sup> and in October Anderson made a further show of goodwill to Market Rasen by

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65. CL MS. GB 17/66.

66. *Memoir*, p.381.

67. Barker, p.46.

68. MSS. 331/2, 3. Lamb was unwilling to think of Bere Regis in Dorset; the former Hoxton student who did go to Bere at this time (Densham and Ogle, p.23) was the author of *Congregationalism in Lincolnshire* (1860), who published it while he was minister at Louth.

69. MSS. 331/13, 7, 16.

70. MS. 331/23.

71. MSS. 331/44, 31, 332/23. The MSS. include letters of 1829-30 from Lamb, from a number of places. In 1829-31 he was at Gorleston, Suffolk, but was disappointed (MS. 348/17; Browne, pp.541-2). For his application to Hoxton, see MS. 323/12/1-3. He died in 1848 (*CYB*, 1848).

72. MS. 332/27.

73. MSS. 332/29, 33.

74. MSS. 335/20, 336/29-30. Holmes later succeeded Lamb at Gorleston (Browne, loc. cit.). He died in 1897, aged 92 (*CYB*, 1898).

75. MS. 336/30 verso; for the troublesome situation at Rochdale in which Sanderson was involved, see MS. 336/18.

visiting it before finally accepting the pastorate at Dorchester.<sup>76</sup> Another former Hoxton student, John Philip, was also supplying at this time.<sup>77</sup>

At last, on 26 November, Hemming reported that, though the situation was bad, there was some improvement following the arrival of another former Hoxton student, William Roaf; but a day earlier Roaf had written to say that his health would not permit him to stay even a few weeks.<sup>78</sup> On 27 November he repeated this, and in December Hemming recorded his regret at Roaf's departure.<sup>79</sup> In January 1829 he forwarded a letter from another former student, Cuthbert Robert Blackett, but added that he did not consider Blackett suitable; once again he pronounced the closure of the chapel imminent.<sup>80</sup> In July, however, he reported that the chapel was not yet sold, and proposed alterations to it. He continued to write at intervals: in October the cause was still declining.<sup>81</sup> The last reference to it is in a letter of 14 September 1831 from William Roaf, now at Ellesmere.<sup>82</sup> The chapel was demolished, and the cause became extinct.<sup>83</sup>

For his approach to Grantham, as to Long Sutton and Boston, Wilson had an agent outside the county in the minister at Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. James Roberts, who had been sent from Hoxton in 1820 to Melton Mowbray, where in the following year a new chapel was built: "reconnoitered Grantham" in his own words (and spelling), "and found, with a little arrangement, an opening there".<sup>84</sup> In 1822 a church was formed; but the man ministering to it, James Mountford,<sup>85</sup> was untrained. He was persuaded to accept an offer to make good his deficiencies by a period of study with the minister at Rothwell,

76. MS. 340/2; Densham and Ogle, p.124. For Anderson's application to Hoxton, see MSS. 322/1/1-2. In 1841 he returned to Lincolnshire, and in the following year, with support from Sir Culling Eardley Eardley (*DNB*), became the first pastor of a church at Caistor, which soon became extinct (Barker, p.47). He died in 1866 (*CYB*, 1867).

77. MS. 340/17. Philip was minister at Weldon and Corby, Northamptonshire, where he died in 1837 (Coleman, pp.331-2; *Evang. Mag.*, 1837, p.73).

78. MSS. 340/9, 22.

79. MSS. 340/23, 341/21, 22.

80. MSS. 341/23-4. The MSS. include several letters from Blackett, from different places. For his application to Hoxton, see MS. 382/2. He died in 1853 (*CYB*, 1854).

81. MSS. 342/19, 380/32-4, 346/39.

82. MS. 302/39. The MSS. include several letters from Roaf from Ellesmere. For his application to Hoxton, with support from his father, John Roaf, minister at Woodford Green, see MSS. 326/24/1-8. He died in 1870 (*CYB*, 1871).

83. Barker, p.46.

84. *Memoir*, pp.380-1, 384. The MSS. include letters from Roberts from Melton Mowbray. See further G.E. Moulam and P. Freeman, *Melton Mowbray Congregational Church 1821-1971 (1971)*. For Roberts's application to Hoxton, see MS. 322/19/1-6. He died in 1860 (*CYB*, 1861).

85. Mountford returned to Lincolnshire to minister at Grimsby to a church owing its origins to the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, which soon became extinct (Barker, p.39). For his application to Hoxton, see MS. 325/10.

Northamptonshire, Walter Scott,<sup>86</sup> who prepared many men for Hoxton and the ministry, including Bunn of Long Sutton, Bourne of Lincoln, Hewlings of Spalding, Bayley of Louth and Williams of Newark; and after a visit from Wilson to Grantham, Roberts's "dear college friend", Alfred Dawson, was despatched from Hoxton and in September 1823 was ordained. Another chapel was now erected, at a cost of £2,300. Dawson, who is described as "just the person wanted in that respectable town",<sup>87</sup> kept Wilson well informed of the building developments. In November 1822, when his "probationary months" were almost expired, he wrote of an exchange with Gear, "as there are many friends at Harborough who wish to hear me"; he had also heard that he had been "mentioned at Lutterworth"; yet he felt strong ties to Grantham through his "apparent success". In the following February he told of a visit from Mountford who "complained of poverty, and his clothes shewed that his complaint was well founded". In July 1823 he wrote "I should not doubt ultimate prosperity so long as we are enabled in dependence on the divine blessing to pursue a steady, quiet, unobtrusive course".<sup>88</sup> But he did not stay. In 1825 he went on to Dorking, where he remained till his death in 1835.<sup>89</sup>

Dawson's successor, a former student named Thomas Wallace, proved unsatisfactory. Early in 1827 he dissolved the church on the ground that his "ministerial authority" was "so determinedly opposed by several persons", and formed a new church, consisting of twenty-three members.<sup>90</sup> In February Dawson, now at Dorking, sent Wilson a distressing account of the disagreement between the Grantham Committee and Wallace, who considered he had been "treated with great rudeness and insolence";<sup>91</sup> and on 3 March Wallace wrote defiantly that he could not comply with the Committee's terms and that, if the chapel were closed against him, he would procure a temporary place till a new chapel could be erected.<sup>92</sup> The Committee stated their own position in a letter written a year later, giving details of an outstanding debt, and a week later one of their number, Robert Brown, wrote for advice in the dispute.<sup>93</sup> In the same month, March 1828, Dawson again wrote twice from Dorking with pungent

86. The MSS. include a considerable number of reports on the students in training with Scott (himself a former student at Hoxton) and of letters of support for their applications to Hoxton or Highbury during his years at Rothwell (1813-33); in 1833 he became Tutor of Divinity at Airedale College, Bradford, where he remained till his death in 1856 (Coleman, pp.76-8; K.W. Wadsworth, *Yorkshire United Independent College*, 1954; *CYB*, 1857).

87. *Memoir*, pp.382, 384.

88. CL MSS. GB 17/8-10.

89. See R.S. Scragg, *Three hundred years of Congregationalism in Dorking* (1962). The MSS. include a number of letters from Dawson from Dorking, together with one written while at Hoxton.

90. Barker, p.37.

91. CL MS. GB 17/11.

92. MS. 332/2.

93. MSS. 332/20, 26.

criticisms of Wallace.<sup>94</sup> Still Wallace would not resign.<sup>95</sup>

In June Richard Soper came over from Louth where, as we have seen, he had been ill.<sup>96</sup> Later that month Brown wrote that the Grantham congregation was disposed to give Soper an invitation, and by September Soper had decided to accept it.<sup>97</sup> By this time Wallace, who in July had returned money received from Wilson on loan, had carried out his threat and established a separate cause in the town known as Providence Chapel.<sup>98</sup> On 10 January 1829 Soper sent Wilson a fresh appraisal of the situation at Grantham (and also at Sleaford – on the same day a letter was sent from Sleaford telling of the division in the Countess of Huntingdon’s chapel there), and by April he could record that the congregation was growing; but in May his chest complaint had returned, and in September he asked for four weeks’ leave.<sup>99</sup> It had been no comfort to him to have Wallace also in Grantham. On 6 May 1829 he wrote “Mr. Wallace will, I understand, preach his farewell sermon to his people to night. I am grieved to think of the injury he has done the cause of religion and of *dissent* in this Town – The explosion with him and his followers is tremendous – I dare not commit the facts to paper”. Providence Chapel did not long survive Wallace, who went on to Petworth; later, at Bridport, he again left the church and founded a separate cause, which was closed on his removal five years later.<sup>100</sup>

Soper remained at Grantham for many years, and in 1830 and again two years later sent cheerful progress reports to Wilson.<sup>101</sup> In 1834–5 he was still corresponding: “The cause of Christ continues to prosper at Grantham our great difficulty is with our enormous debt”. After six years the number of members had risen from ten or eleven to more than fifty. “We have succeeded in establishing a British School”. But he continued to suffer from ill health due in the doctors’ opinion to “extreme debility from over exertion”.<sup>102</sup> In 1845 he left Grantham for York.<sup>103</sup>

Newark-on-Trent, over the border in Nottinghamshire, provides the last chapter to Wilson’s Lincolnshire operations. In 1822 Wilson had gone on from Grantham to Newark. His agent at Melton Mowbray, James Roberts, “acting under the same auspices” as for Grantham, also “visited Newark, and negotiated for the purchase of land” there by Wilson. In October 1822 Roberts laid the foundation stone of a chapel, as he had done at both Melton and Grantham, and in the following March the chapel was opened, measuring 80

94. MSS. 338/12, 13.

95. MS. 338/36.

96. MSS. 337/18, 19.

97. MSS. 335/6, 337/20.

98. MSS. 337/26, 20.

99. MSS. 341/37; 341/32; 380/64, 382/58, 343/23.

100. MSS. 382/58, 302/42. For Wallace’s application to Hoxton, see MS. 323/23. He died in 1889, aged 85 (*CYB*, 1890).

101. MSS. 347/54–5; CL MS. GB 17/49.

102. CL MSS. GB 17/12–14.

103. Miall, p.389. For Soper’s application to Hoxton, see MSS. 322/21/1–4. He died in 1857 (*CYB*, 1858).

feet by 48.<sup>104</sup> In August 1823 George Withers wrote to Wilson, with a letter from Ann Withers to Mrs. Wilson, in which each reported favourably on the character and suitability for Newark of a Hoxton student named Charles Williams (my great-great-grandfather); Wilson also heard from W.B. Rawson of Nottingham that "the principal people" at Newark thought Williams "just the man for them".<sup>105</sup> Williams accordingly remained in Newark, where in November 1824 a church was formed consisting of eight members, and in the following April he was ordained as its pastor.<sup>106</sup> Williams had a number of Lincolnshire connections. Almost at once he took part in the opening of the chapel at Grantham;<sup>107</sup> later, with Wilson's assistance, he gave twelve months' training to a Grantham church member, a saddler by trade, William Robinson, who in 1833 became minister of the Lincolnshire village church at Carlton-le-Moorland on the estate of George Fillingham (a Baptist church, but Robinson remained an Independent).<sup>108</sup> Williams was early on on terms of friendship with the Fillinghams, and some of his letters to Wilson were written from Carlton, where his son Charles married George Fillingham's orphaned daughter, making her home his own and supporting the village chapel.<sup>109</sup>

Wilson's *Memoir* relates how, as in too many other cases, the Newark chapel struggled with debt: in 1828 it was advertised as for sale by auction. With gifts and loans from Wilson, the debt was eventually paid off, but it is the burden of almost all the correspondence from Williams.

In the first letter preserved, written on 26 June 1828, shortly after the advertisement of the auction (a copy of which is also preserved), Williams had evidently been charged with inattention to finance and is on the defensive.<sup>110</sup> In October Robert Brown, the Grantham deacon, wrote appealing for aid for Newark.<sup>111</sup> In two letters from Williams in the following June the mood is more cheerful, but financial difficulties still press,<sup>112</sup> and during August four further letters carry the same burden.<sup>113</sup> On 26 August Anne Rawson, of Wincobank Hall, near Sheffield, wrote to ask if Wilson or his son would replace her late husband on a trust for the Newark chapel which her husband had helped to establish. She accompanied her request with favourable comments on Williams, and in September Williams wrote to thank Wilson for acceding to

104. *Memoir*, pp.382, 384-5; G.H. Peters, *New light on an old town*, Newark 1951, pp.29-30.

105. CL MSS. GB 20/4-5.

106. *Memoir*, pp.385-6; Peters, pp.30-1, with reproduction of carte photographs of Williams and his wife, ad fin.

107. *Evang. Mag.*, 1823, p.470.

108. MS. 302/2. For a letter of 1831 from Robinson, written from Grantham, see MS. 299/1. In 1849 he went on to Redbourn, Herts., where in 1850 he was ordained and where he remained till his death in 1854 (*CYB*, 1855; *Evang. Mag.*, 1855).

109. See G.F. Nuttall, "Family Memorials: Carlton-le-Moorland Baptist Chapel, 1818-1856", in *Baptist Quarterly*, xxviii (1979), 184-90.

110. MS. 335/47; CL MS. GB 20/6.

111. MS. 336/12.

112. MSS. 297/45, 48.

113. MSS. 342/35-8.



it.<sup>114</sup> In January 1830 a settlement seemed in sight, and to the request for a loan to pay off a mortgage on the chapel Wilson later that year responded with £1,200,<sup>115</sup> his son Joshua adding a donation on his own account. In a letter of thanks to Joshua Wilson Williams wrote: "removals and deaths make... sad inroads in the number of our old supporters; and accessions from the mass of those who are sunk in utter indifference, or who cherish High-Church notions are now very rare".<sup>116</sup> Williams also continued to correspond with Thomas Wilson.<sup>117</sup> But he was becoming restless: "my hopes have been disappointed" and "I have now a family".<sup>118</sup> By February 1831 financial difficulties were pressing on him personally.<sup>119</sup> In March 1832 "more than 120£ are yet due to me", yet without this sacrifice "the cause here would have been wrecked".<sup>120</sup> In September he repeated his desire "to find some other sphere", and in the following June he wrote that he had accepted a call to Salisbury.<sup>121</sup>

In August 1833 Wilson received an "exact account" of "the state of the cause at Newark" from a Highbury student named Samuel Luke. "This cause may yet revive", Luke thought. Nearly five hundred had attended on the last sabbath evening, with eighty at the Monday evening prayer meeting. "The church prejudice is very strong, but it is evidently yielding".<sup>122</sup> There was still a small debt on the chapel but Wilson renewed his generosity, and in a letter of thanks written in January 1835 the church's two deacons trusted that "under the blessing of God, this place of worship will now be handed down to future generations".<sup>123</sup> With another former Hoxton student, Henry Leonard Adams, as its minister, the church entered a more prosperous period, and the chapel continued in use till 1932. It was then sold, and the remaining members of the church joined those of a second Independent church in the town that had originated in a secession from it in 1888.<sup>124</sup>

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In the story thus pieced together the human interest is in the struggle of these mostly very ordinary young hopefuls, who may have found a path to their own betterment socially and intellectually, but who are aware of this less than of

114. MSS. 342/32, 39, 347/62.

115. MSS. 348/27, 347/63; *Memoir*, p.386.

116. CL MS. GB 20/7.

117. MSS. 349/25, 333/43.

118. MS. 346/65.

119. MSS. 302/4, 298/2.

120. CL MS. GB 20/8.

121. CL MSS. GB 20/9, 10. Williams died in 1866 (*CYB*, 1867). A prolific writer all his life, he published while at Newark a *Domestic Guide to the Footstool of Mercy* and a *Missionary Gazetteer*: see further *DNB* s.v. his son F.S. Williams.

122. CL MS. GB 20/10a. Samuel Luke settled at Queen Street, Chester, in 1835; he died in 1868 (*CUB*, 1869). His letter to Wilson was forwarded by Samuel Plumbe of Highbury College, with a letter describing the situation at Richmond, Hexham, Leonards on Sea, Wareham and Beccles.

123. *Memoir*, p.386.

124. For letters from Adams, see MSS. 234/21, 325/1, 28, 347/1, 351/1.

Christ within them the hope of glory, lifting their horizons from the brewery next door to the parameters of the kingdom, and amid taunts and opposition giving them a gospel with power to redeem and to gather churches.

The last word must rest with Thomas Wilson and his exercise of an apostolate by remote control, inspired, we may suppose, by St. Paul and, more immediately, by Lady Huntingdon. Those Wilson despatched travelled by coach now, not on ponies; and he intends them to stay where he sent them, not to go on travelling, as the Countess wished. But Wilson was no less imperious in "stationing" and (where necessary) in moving around, and as faithful as she in perpetual correspondence, advice and financial aid. What he said went: the students were dependent on him, and had no appeal to anyone else. It was to him that their initial applications had been addressed; now, they may send respects to his wife or his son, but not once do they mention Principal or governing body. We may presume that he knew he was supported; but it was not the day of consensus or the conciliar. He got things done. His is one of the faces of Independency, and to some it may seem an ugly face; yet without him the United Reformed Church would have far fewer congregations, and in Lincolnshire would scarcely exist.

G.F. NUTTALL

### **HACKNEYED IN HAMPSTEAD: THE GROWTH OF A COLLEGE BUILDING**

From Hackney to Hampstead is literally a case of upward mobility. Should the case be studied there come into play matters of personality, policy, necessity, community, status, and mission, woven into two chronologies, one of them tense with the quick passage of each student generation, the other a prolonged tutorial perspective, the whole of them caught – our case study encased – within brick and stucco and stone and green slate and terracotta. Packaging, however, though the foundation of life for the college community and a running sore for the college committee, is usually the least of the historian's concerns. It is our concern now.

Our subject has its ambiguities. We celebrate the centenary of the Hampstead buildings of Hackney College, a matter as straightforward as the buildings are uncomplicated. I would suggest that we also celebrate the jubilee of what was built when New College at last left St. John's Wood (or is it Swiss Cottage?), and that matter is as complex as those plain buildings are subtle. For from Hackney to Hampstead is now also from Hoxton (if not Gracechurch Street) via Highbury, and from Wymondley (if not Oswestry and Northampton) via Coward in Bloomsbury, and from Homerton too, all of them merged and renewed via St. John's Wood (or is it Swiss Cottage?) in this Hampstead saga of the Finchley Road. There to this day their prehistories stand commemorated in the stained glass of what was briefly a chapel and in the heraldic panels of what

was once the library, collegiate symbols facing each other across the almost cloister of an almost quadrangle.

Consequently my beginning neither in Hampstead nor Hackney, but in Highbury is not an irrelevance. It is a fair exploitation of our subject's elasticity in place, time, occasion and medium. The place is a terrace off Highbury Hill looking down to what is now Arsenal Football Ground. The time is the 1820s, a summer stonelaying in 1825 and an autumn opening in 1826. Each occasion is a college occasion. "The World has her gala-days" and this was one for the church.<sup>1</sup> The summer weather was English summer weather, none too "cheering and auspicious" for an auditory "deprived of the clear shining of the sun, by the cloud that cometh between, and... transiently incommoded by the violence of the wind and the rain".<sup>2</sup> The medium was the word spoken in prayer and prophecy, the former implored by the tutors of Wymondley, Homerton and Hackney, the latter proclaimed by George Clayton, Henry Forster Burder and William Harris. Their rhetoric was as timeless as their manner was of its time. They mingled audacity and deference, faith and resentment, fusing them with spiritual and secular aspirations in equal measure, displaying a touch too defiantly the prickly tension between the form and the content of a minister's training. Why build? Why build like this? What messages do we send with this modish grandeur of ours?

Clayton, Burder and Harris had answers and to spare. "The *hearers* are learning to *think*, and they now expect excitement to *thought* as well as to *feeling*; the *minister* must therefore have learned to think - to think clearly and to think deeply, and to express his thoughts luminously and impressively." Thus Dr. Burder, envious with emotions "not easily embodied in language" of the "well-stored libraries, and the spacious quadrangles, and the embowered and cloistered walks of colleges richly endowed in ages which have passed away". He was resentful of their tests and oaths and subscriptions "by means of which a dominant hierarchy triumphs in its power of exclusion". He was exhilarated by the imminent comeuppance promised to the old universities by London's new university "unmanacled by sectarian tests". He was carried away by the religious possibilities of Protestantism's secular gospel, competition. "I rejoice... in the multiplication of our theological seminaries".<sup>3</sup>

Thus too Dr. Harris, whose ministry in Cambridge had led him by occasional invitation into some cloistered college walks as well as past many more. Harris laid careful claim to what he yet took care to deprecate. "We profess not to qualify for distinction and fame, aspirants of the Bar or the Senate, but to prepare for the far more important functions of a christian minister... We aim not to invest, with decorations of amusing eloquence, him who desires to charm

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1. The phrase was George Clayton's. *Addresses Delivered on Laying the Foundation Stone, and on the Opening of Highbury College* [28 June 1825 and 5 September 1827], 1826, p.6. N[ew] [College] MSS. 513.

2. *Ibid.* p.5.

3. *Ibid.* pp.33, 25, 26, 28.

for a season the religious voluptuary.”<sup>4</sup> But the talents needed for what they professed to do and not to do were interchangeable. Which brings us back to the packaging celebrated by this stonelaying and opening.

George Clayton used William Harris’s trick of rhetoric to place the new spiritual enterprise in the very league that he affected to downgrade:

“In this view, the building... deserves to be considered as infinitely more important than the exchange of commerce, the museum of philosophy, the halls of justice, the senate-house of legislators, or the palaces of kings. When we think of the worth of the soul, and of the fearful dangers to which it is exposed – created originally in the image of God, capable of divine associations and heavenly felicities, and destined to an unchangeable and immortal duration beyond the boundaries of the present life – and then connect with all these considerations the designs of this Institution – it rises to an incomparable and unmatched magnificence.”

And he clinched his argument with a splendid debating point: should anyone view college building schemes as extravagances and ask “To what purpose is all this waste?” he begged them to recall “the original propounder of that most inapposite enquiry”, the rigid economist who sold his Lord for thirty pieces of silver. And “who would wish to talk after him?”<sup>5</sup>

With generous expenditure and an ample style thus sanctified there remained a strategy to be justified. For Dr. Burder, rejoicing in collegiate multiplicity, “the present system of distinct and distant institutions” allowed for the “advantages of locality... felt and appreciated throughout an extensive sphere of towns and villages, of which the theological seminary is the centre”.<sup>6</sup> Dr. Harris expanded this: “Those who, contemplating our academical structures, perceive merely the fabric, and the accommodations, and the site, perceive but little... They are the hearts of our ecclesiastical community, and according to their tone and vigour of impulse, diffuse life, health, and growth to all its members. Momentous consideration!”<sup>7</sup>

Whether heart or soul or mind or brain or nerve-centre, the seminary was clearly a vital organ for an evangelical body. As much as, indeed almost more than, a local church it was ceasing to be a post house and about to become a junction whence God’s agents entrained spruced and equipped for eternity. It was changing with the times, “college” now and “academy” no longer, that being a term “more frequently employed to denote an elementary school for children”.<sup>8</sup> And of all the colleges Highbury marks a key point of departure, beginning in 1825 what Hackney completed sixty years on.

The 1820s and 1830s were good years for rebuilding colleges. Homerton, for

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4. *Ibid.* p.45.

5. *Ibid.* pp.10, 18, 19.

6. *Ibid.* p.28.

7. *Ibid.* p.44.

8. *Ibid.* p.30.

example, was pleasantly rebuilt in 1824 a seven bay villa, pilastered and pedimented, pediment over the three central bays, pilasters separating the central five. Airedale, on the edge of Bradford from 1834, was not so much a villa, more a classical country house. Coward, when Wymondley went to Town in 1832 was really a short London terrace, a happy composition of three elegant town houses adorning their surroundings rather than detracting from them.

Highbury, however, high on its terrace above generous grounds, was neither town house nor suburban villa. It echoed the British Museum, already building on Great Russell Street, or it was a foretaste of University College, planned for Gower Street. It was an institution, built for a purpose. Its design (by John Davies, later district surveyor for Tower Hamlets; he had apparently beaten William Tite)<sup>9</sup> was exhibited at the Royal Academy and it excited professional admiration, especially in comparison with its Islington contemporary, William Brooks's Church Missionary College. That looked "more like the baldness of northern Calvinism, than the chaste beauties of the simply decorated church of England", but Highbury reflected "much credit on the architect for the selection of his materials from the choice storehouse of Ionian antiquities".

"It consists of a centre and two very deeply projecting wings. In the middle of the centre building is an hexastyle Ionic portico, of the Ilyssus example, with a pediment above it. The ends of the projecting wings are tetrastyle in antis, and have also pediments and acroteria which conceal chimneys within them."<sup>10</sup>

It cost between £17,000 and £20,000. And it was short-lived. In 1849 it was sold to the Anglicans for considerably less than it had cost, first to train teachers, and then once more for ministers. That dramatic step deprived Nonconformity of its grandest piece of institutional classicism (Mill Hill School apart) but it testified to the rapid pressures which change forced on London's Congregationalists. It was in part a radical response to need, in part an enforced rationalisation, for Highbury merged with Coward and Homerton to reappear on a fresh site and in another style as New College "an extensive edifice near the 'Swiss Cottage', which not long ago stood all alone in the country, but is now in the midst of 'villa residences', smart as compo can make them".<sup>11</sup> The site was a coup. Behind the college and within three years of its opening a layout was proposed for what in another decade had become the ultimate respectability of Belsize Park. New College was to its hinterland what Lancashire Independent, a few years older,

9. Engravings of the constituent colleges are collected in N.C. MSS. L 64/1. On 16 November 1824 William Tite wrote to say that he would enter the competition (217/7). Tite, later the architect of Regent Square, The Weigh House, and Mill Hill School, reached the height of his profession, amassed a fortune, was knighted and entered Parliament. His best known building is the Royal Exchange (1840-44). All this came "after failing in several competitions". See *D.N.B.* for Tite (1798-1873).
10. T.H. Shepherd and J. Elmes, *London in the Nineteenth Century*, 1827, Reprint edition New York 1978, p.145; see also K. Sugden, *History of Highbury*, Islington 1984, pp.11-12, 44-5.
11. *Builder*, Vol.IX No.462, 13 December 1851, p.787.

rather larger, and in a similar style, was to Whalley Range. London had met Manchester, Congregationally speaking, in the age of Great Cities.

The cost was little more than for Highbury (£12,000–£15,000 was specified; in the event it was over £23,000) though the new college was not to be residential. This suggests rationalisation and it hints at a debate which has yet to be satisfactorily resolved between the advantages of collegiate residence for eighteen year olds as opposed to lodgings. Everything else about the scheme suggests respectability. Ten architects were invited to compete, among them John Davies and Sir Charles Barry.<sup>12</sup> Alas, Highbury Ionian was old hat and there was to be no Big Ben for Swiss Cottage, but the adjudicator knew what he was about. He was John Shaw, architect and surveyor to the ground landlords and midway in his career between the Royal Naval School (later Goldsmiths' College; stone laid 1843) and Wellington College (stone laid 1856). He knew about institutions.<sup>13</sup> Shaw's choice was the young J.T. Emmett of Carey Street who had already designed the Congregational Church in Camden Road, Holloway (1846). What Emmett did for Swiss Cottage was radical in its way: a counter establishment's takeover bid for traditional values, dressed stone not compo, more Oxford than Cambridge, "founded on the received Collegiate type; ... Late Perpendicular in style, with a central tower."<sup>14</sup> *The Builder* liked it. Though its library was "somewhat too chapel-like" and its tower too heavy, "the general appearance of the building is good: it has variety without studied irregularity"; and *The Builder* complemented the architect on his best features, the staircase and the library roof.<sup>15</sup> To arrive acceptably the new must seem old. Emmett had worked a minor miracle at the foot of Finchley Road. All in all "it was, undoubtedly the most beautiful building in Hampstead".<sup>16</sup>

So far Hackney has been the dog that has barely barked. Hackney lacked the intellectual pedigree of Doddridge-descended Wymondley and Pye Smith-inspired Homerton and it had none of the pious direction of Thomas Wilson's Highbury. Hackney's genesis was cottage sermons and village itinerancy at the demotic end of the Great Revival's "catholic Christianity", and though it held proudly to this tradition these evangelistic beginnings took the form as the years passed more of a commemoration of benefactors than a gospel actuality. Or so it was presented in a building appeal of 1859, the most representatively Victorian year of the age:

"This Society originated about the month of May, 1796, in the united efforts of the late Rev. JOHN EYRE, A.M., of Hackney, and

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12. R.H. Harper, *Victorian Architectural Competitions*, 1983, pp.88, 185, 209.
  13. For Shaw (1803–70) see F.M.L. Thompson, *Hampstead. Building a Borough 1650–1964*, 1974, pp.66 and *passim*; D. Newsome, *A History of Wellington College 1859–1959*, 1959, pp.36–42 and *passim*.
  14. John Thomas Emmett fl. 1846–1868. *Builder op. cit.*
  15. *Ibid.*
  16. "Alas, that it had to go..." A.E. Garvie, *Memories and Meanings of My Life*, 1938, p.146.

his Christian friends, Mrs. MATHER, EDWARD HANSON, ESQ., and Mr. DAVID WHITAKER, for the purpose of spreading the knowledge of the Gospel, by preaching and other scriptural means of instruction.

Having succeeded in planting several Mission stations, they felt the want of faithful Evangelists to occupy them, and this led to the establishment of the Theological Seminary in 1803, under the presidency of the late Rev. GEORGE COLLISON, whose Tutorship was mercifully continued for forty-three years.

In 1801 the late CHARLES TOWNSEND, ESQ., was added to this little band, and in January, February and March, 1803, Mr. EYRE, Mr. TOWNSEND, and Mr. HANSON terminated their Christian course; Mr. Townsend bequeathing to the Institution the munificent sum of £10,000. At this period the Society was joined by the late Rev. MATTHEW WILKS, the Rev. ROWLAND HILL, JOSEPH HARDCASTLE, Esq., and other distinguished Ministers and laymen, to whom its Missionary Character and Evangelical and Catholic principles were powerful recommendations.

The Society has been the honoured instrument of rendering valuable assistance, in various ways, in the promulgation of the Gospel, and has educated nearly 200 young men for the work of the Christian Ministry. These brethren have laboured successfully in our own country and in foreign lands – for the Society's field is the world".<sup>17</sup>

This could hardly be bettered as a classic demonstration of institutional growth – evangelical flair and freedom constrained by Mr. Townsend's £10,000 and Mr. Collison's forty-three years into standard college order. Opinions will differ as to whether we have a hardening of arteries or a channelling of energies, a mutation which is random or purposive, a predestination forced by inner constitution or external circumstance. What is reasonably clear is that London's Village Itinerancy could not easily have responded otherwise to the challenge of education, health hazards, railways and a Hackney whose population was to grow from 13,000 in 1801 to 199,000 in 1891.

A picture can be constructed of the Village Itinerancy as it stood on the eve of its absorption into the Age of Great Cities<sup>18</sup> from particulars of a freehold estate at the turn of Well Street into Grove Street, between what are now Balcombe Street and Lauriston Road, to be sold in sixteen lots on 8 May 1840.<sup>19</sup> It is a collection of properties such as might be found in any growing country town. The better ones are let with anything from seven to twenty-four years to run. These form the core of the property, five brick houses grouped irregularly at

17. N.C. MSS. 291/23.

18. The concept publicised by Robert Vaughan of Lancashire Independent College in his book of that title, 1843.

19. N.C. MSS. 267/7.

Well Street's corner: two small ones and three larger. One of these has three storeys and thirteen bedrooms. Another is "A Very Spacious Old Mansion House". The third completes a mini-terrace with the smaller houses. Each of them has stables and a coach house, and in the spacious old mansion's case there are two acres and more of south-facing orchard. Round the corner into Grove Street there are two more lots, one dependent on a delapidated wheelwright's shop and the other a public house, with tap and coffee rooms and brew and counting houses and a three-stalled stable.

So it might always have been. So, if the late Malcolm Currie's heirs and trustees had their way, it would soon cease to be. Social change was written in to each sale particular. The wheelwright's shop offered "a favourable site for Building" and the neighbouring ten lots were a parcel of building sites. There was thus little prospect that the five good houses would again be used as five good homes. Nor had they for some years. None of them was any longer a private residence. For this corner was where Well Street turned into a grove of academe to form a trinity of seminaries. The spacious old mansion was Mr. Lockwood's Seminary for Young Gentlemen. The three-storeyed, thirteen-bedroomed brick corner house was Mrs. Yeoman's Ladies' Seminary. And the other three were leased to the Village Itinerancy, two as students' lodgings and the third for lecture rooms and library and dining room with the precursors of a later generation's prefabricated terrapins to be found at the back. That is to say, a "Large Walled Garden now used as a Play Ground" was bounded by a building fitted up with a dozen studies "and other conveniences for an Academic Establishment".

Those three freeholds were sold for £1130. It is not clear that they were sold immediately to the sitting tenants. What is clear is that the college committee swiftly addressed itself to the insistent facts of urban life and cumulative delapidation. Between 1843 and 1846 they bought the freehold (for £1312.11.10 including fees) and they rebuilt (for £4488.5.10). The uneven brick terrace of three houses, two small, one large, was replaced by a tallish, flattish, shallow, stone dressed and stucco-faced block, twelve bays long, with a minimal concession to decoration. That "baldness of Northern Calvinism" which had so struck James Elmes at the Islington C.M.S. College was a fanciful riot compared to the austerity of Hackney's new Well Street. The cost too was an austere satisfaction. And there was one extravagance. The garden was landscaped.<sup>20</sup> It was not a large garden, just enough room at the front for shrubs, ornamental trees, a gravelled path and a boundary wall "to be covered with Ivy as far as possible"; and at the back a rectangle, perhaps 38' by 50'. Hence the extravagance, just £6.8.0. The committee went to Robert Marnock, recognised in his day as the country's leading landscape gardener and recognised now as a major practitioner.<sup>21</sup> Marnock was curator of the Royal Botanic Society's Garden in Regent's Park. He was also a Scotsman whose work was at once

20. N.C. MSS. 85.

21. For Marnock (1800-1889) see *D.N.B.*



“sound and severely economical” and “natural” and “picturesque”. Marnock was a great man for ground cover and sinuosity. He was all shrubs and ivies. Until recently he had been a Hackney nurseryman. And here one discerns the omnipresent, omnicompetent hand of the Morleys, possibly Samuel, probably his father John.

Although their prime collegiate interest was Homerton, the Morleys helped Hackney as they helped most London Congregational causes. John Morley (1768–1848) was a deacon at his nearest Congregational church, Dr. Burder’s St. Thomas’s Square. He lived to the west of the seminary, on the same side of Well Street, at The Eagles, three acres and two eagles carved on the gate posts. The Eagles had a camellia house, a long rose walk and a Dutch garden which was “a curiosity in that day”.<sup>22</sup> Did Marnock work for John as he certainly did for Samuel thirty years later in Kent?

Marnock gave the matter his courteous consideration, not that there were many options open to him. The small kitchen garden marked off by its privet hedge would, he supposed, “perhaps be useful to the [principal’s] family in the production of celery, and common pot herbs...”; the “Department for the students in which to take air and exercise” (a rectangle some 10’ by 30’) would “probably admit of no other arrangement, than to continue the centre as an open space covered with gravel, and surrounded by such Trees along the boundary walls, as would afford shade and shelter”. That left the garden proper: a lawn broken by a trio of shrubberies and small trees and irregularly shaped flower beds, and wherever possible ivies “and ornamental creeping plants and dwarf ornamental trees” to cover embarrassments and enhance perspectives and allow for little walks. Thus the kitchen garden’s privet would be fronted by a shrubbery; so would the ash place for the students’ rooms; and the end wall was to be lowered in the centre and banked with shrubs, as if the grounds rose beyond it. It was remarkable value for money.

All this was a rebuilding rather than an enlargement and it was not the end of the matter. By 1859 an enlargement was called for. The place was bursting at the seams. It housed only a dozen, perhaps fourteen, students (a quarter New College’s non-residential capacity). Hackney’s population was now approaching 40,000 and it would more than triple in the next decade. Lodgings would therefore be at a premium. Somehow eight more students must be provided for, to bring the complement up to twenty. That would mean replanning the lecture and eating rooms as well as the living and sleeping accommodation. The immediate cost would be £1800 with extra annual running costs thereafter of at least £300. Perfectly pitching the appeal to match the need the Village Itinerancy boldly took on the global village:

It has been estimated by a competent authority that the Students who annually leave our Colleges are not equal to the number of deaths, retirements from age and infirmity, and removals to our Colonies; but, in addition to this call for more labourers, there are

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22. E. Hodder, *The Life of Samuel Morley* 1887, pp.26, 9–11.

wide and effectual doors open in India, China, and Africa, where the fields are white unto the harvest.<sup>23</sup>

Hackney survived in Hackney for a further twenty-five years, the Mrs. Partington of the Congregational Colleges alike in theology and environment. Hackney was still a middle class area but it was lowering its sights and Well Street was rapidly on the slide. The Eagles was about to become the Hackney Reform Club. Student numbers grew and the buildings could not keep pace. There was no more room on the site; and the Goldsmiths Asylum now filled the neighbouring two acres of orchard. By 1885 one third of the student house were in lodgings. The House Committee Minutes suggest the tensions natural in this community of muscular young Christian men swimming closer to the tide of darkening London. Some tensions were timeless, like the "inconsiderate acts on the part of some of the Students during Lecture time having caused annoyance especially to one of the professors; and no explanation or apology having been made, mainly as it seemed because the actual offenders were shielded by the action of the other students"; or the "various irregularities... with regard to the serving of meals" which somehow tied in with students who "invited their female friends to the College and received them in their studies"; or the round robin signed by twenty-two of the men "requesting that as the Winter is coming on, they may be allowed to smoke either in the front room in the basement of the Dormitory wing:- or else in their Studies after 9.00 p.m."; or the principal's concern that "Students' Tea Parties... in connexion with cricket and football matches" were being held "at the expense of the College with greater frequency than in former years". More serious of course was A.I. Anthony's typhoid fever. And then there was the ungranted request of Mr. Free for permission "to sleep at home (in Hampstead) two nights a week for the sake of his health".<sup>24</sup>

That was in October 1886 and it was the sort of justified cheek to which theological students are prone since for two years the college had owned a site in Hampstead; five months earlier there had been a stonelaying ceremony; and within a year Mr. Free might be sleeping in Hampstead anyway, and yet still in Hackney.

Hackney's Hampstead flight was the work of three men and a place. The men, each of them a new broom, were Hackney's principal, its secretary and its architect. The place was Hampstead.

Hampstead was the best servanted borough in London, but when it came to butlers it slipped to seventh place in the league... a comfortable, prosperous, desirable, attractive residential district with quite a few wealthy residents, but... bourgeois through and through.<sup>25</sup>

23. N.C. MSS. 291/23.

24. Hackney College House Committee Minutes 1884-1903, 6 November, 4 December, 1884; 5 November, 3 December, 1885; 7 October, 1886; N.C. MSS. 176.

25. Thompson, *op. cit.*, p.51. The following account of Hampstead depends on this book.

Hampstead money was London money and Hampstead culture fed on the education necessary to produce that money, breeding enough self-confidence for the mercantile and professional spirit of its men of affairs to flow over into the finer arts. So Hampstead rose from the stucco and compo of St. John's Wood and Belsize Park to the red brown bricks and warm tiles and white casements of Norman Shavia and Kate Greenawayland.

Hampstead Congregationalism was a success story to match the money and the culture. Two churches fed the foothills; Haverstock Hill at the turn into Maitland Park and New College Chapel at the head of Avenue Road. The former flourished. The latter marked time. Well towards the summit and breaching the district's instinctive Anglicanism, hexagonal in best Waterhouse purple and majolica, "clear, hard and rigid",<sup>26</sup> a third church, Lyndhurst Road, took breath and waited. That church flourished from the start. Within twenty years, by the turn of the century, it was "from every point of view by far the best attended place in Hampstead. Here Dr. Horton reigns; here are forces of great good".<sup>27</sup> Here fled and for a while worshipped the uprooted Congregationalism of Islington, Camden Town and Hackney, of Union, Park and Clapton Park.

Hampstead was growing. Over 45,000 in 1881, nearly 82,000 in 1901. Most of that growth had been in Hampstead's West End which was, socially speaking, its east end. That was partly attributable to the local pattern of landownership and partly to the pattern of communications; to the Finchley Road, late monument to the pre-railway age, and to the railway age itself. One of the charms of the site purchased for Hackney College was its proximity to three railways but the chief charm was what made it a bastion against the waves of humanity engulfing lower-lying suburbs: the point where geography met a change in landowning pattern and policy to allow for a slower and more selective residential development. In such an area, away from the Finchley Road and the three railways, chapels and trains and trams were intrusions to be fought. Hence the success of Lyndhurst Road, the one chapel outside the foothills and the old town to surmount the prejudice even though no tram could reach it on Sunday or any other day up Haverstock Hill. No wonder Lyndhurst Road's bright spirits were prime examples of poachers turned gamekeepers. Secure in their obtrusive new villas on Parliament Hill they battled with the best to save the Heath, just as Hackney came west to join them.

So to the men. For the principal it was an eight-year-old dream come true. Alfred Cave was - for public consumption - what Ebenezer Viney, the Hackney treasurer, described him as being:

a man of large culture, of considerable learning, of boundless enthusiasm, of a passion for teaching, of wide and broad sympathies, and yet of exact and definite theological opinions.

26. N. Pevsner, *London, Except the Cities of London and Westminster*, Hammondswoth, 1952, pp.188-9.

27. R. Mudie-Smith ed. *The Religious Life of London*, 1904, p.134.

(Hear, hear.) He was conversant with the various sophisms and philosophical speculations of the day, and yet held, with a firm, tenacious grasp, the great fundamental truths of the Gospel, and thus was qualified to deal with the sincere doubts and difficulties of those under his care.<sup>28</sup>

This needs decoding since what made Cave such a success as a principal made him vulnerable to a more critical posterity. Ministry was in the Cave family. His mother was a minister's daughter and his nephew capped his own career. For so Congregationally successful a man Cave's life was curiously thwarted. Chronic heart weakness turned him from medicine and then from the mission field. It cut short his two pastorates and it invaded his first year at Hackney.<sup>29</sup>

Ebenezer Viney's assessment was echoed a dozen years later by the *Year Book* obituarist: "He was passionately fond of theology. He was an extensive reader and a patient thinker, exact in method and luminous in exposition... an example of what a preacher should be". He was a traveller too and a gardener (did much remain at Hackney of Marnock's creation?) and a good companion. "Notwithstanding an occasionally brusque manner, he was essentially kind and reasonable."<sup>30</sup> And he succeeded in his determination, born of ill health and sound sense, to leave Hackney, taking his college with him.

Hampstead was a sensible destination for a New College man. It promised both rational cooperation and decent independence. What now seems a wasteful duplication then allowed a new principal the best of all worlds. And best of all was an up-to-date base from which to promote the old Itinerancy's special mission. For Hackney represented the conservative part of Congregational theology.

Cave came to it as a prolific young scholar. His *Introduction to Theology* (Edinburgh 1885) was more than adequate proof of his credentials but his strength, grounded in *The Inspiration of the Old Testament Inductively Considered* (1888) lay in his massive championship of traditional criticism. Or so it was bound to seem to intelligently conservative Congregationalists-in-the-pew as they listened to what they hoped to hear from an expert to whose specialism they naturally (as experts in their own field) deferred. Cave took on Robertson Smith and the Wellhausen school of Old Testament criticism to beat them on their own ground. He failed. His scholarship has been dismissed as fiasco, "a measure of the bankruptcy of traditional Old Testament scholarship in England". "He succeeded in founding no opposing school of criticism, not even in leading a conservative movement within the Church. The last decade of his life was characterized by a mild chagrin that the world of critical scholarship refused to take his criticisms seriously."<sup>31</sup> But thanks to Cave Hackney became a

28. *The Nonconformist and Independent*, 14 May 1886. N.C. MSS. 267/8.

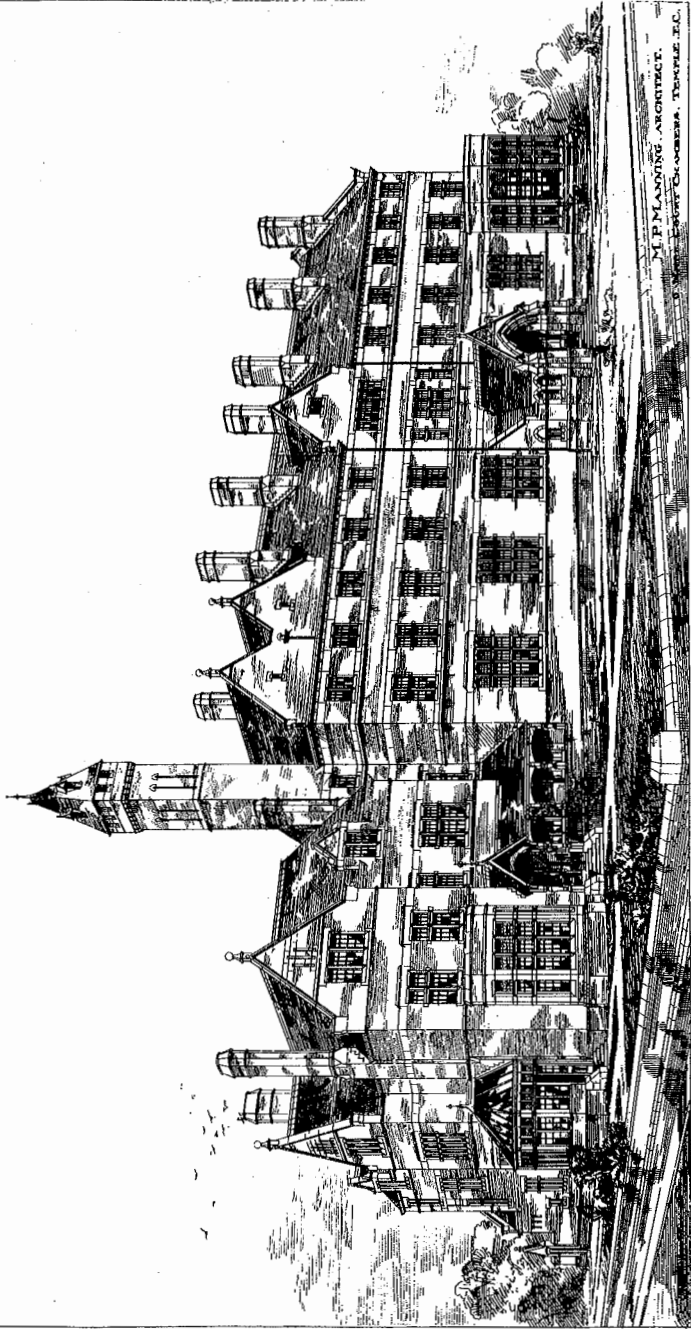
29. For Cave (1847-1900) see *C.Y.B.* 1902 pp.161-4.

30. *Ibid.* p.163.

31. W.B. Glover, *Evangelical Nonconformists and Higher Criticism in the Nineteenth Century*, 1954, pp.219, 190, 193 and *passim*.

HACKNEY COLLEGE.

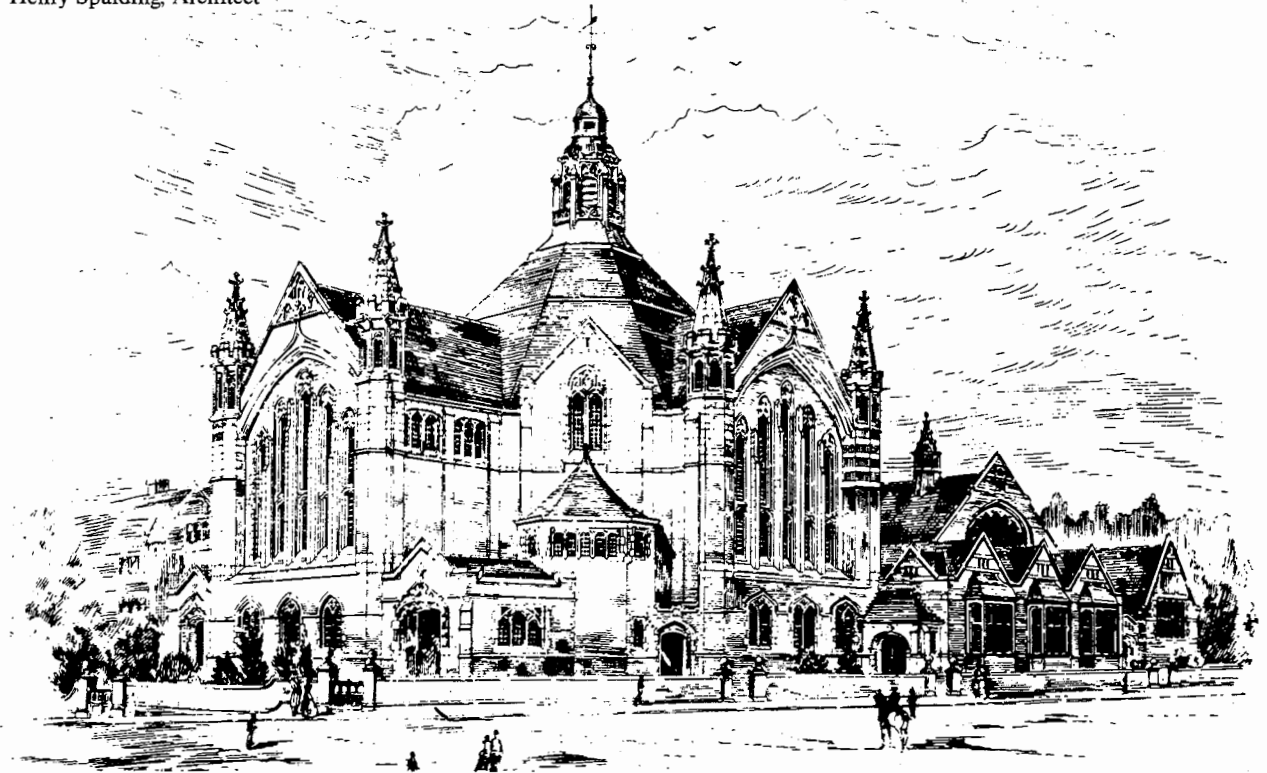
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sufficiently lively prospect for that greater – and in the 1880s as yet unlikely – leader of Congregationalism’s conservative part, P.T. Forsyth, to take on the succession. Need more be said?

The second of the three new brooms was old enough to be Alfred Cave’s father and powerful enough, should he wish, to be Alfred Cave’s ruination. He was John Nunn, college secretary from 1875 to 1909 and one of those almost-one-pastorate men whose strength used to be a wonder of the Congregational world. In forty-two years at Haverstock Hill, from 1850 to 1892, he received 1500 people into membership, an achievement too easily obscured by the fact that this almost-one-pastorate man’s church was also an almost-one-pastor’s church. At the end his church was drained by his people flocking up the hill to Lyndhurst Road. There Nunn joined them. But in his prime he was a most credible minister, with his smoking conferences for working men, his “tact, preciseness, courtesy, and wonderful memory”, his executive skills on behalf of all aspects of London’s official Congregational life and especially his *alma mater*, Hackney College. As his nephew put it, the whole of his life save for three years in Shepton Mallet “was spent in the capital city of the Empire”.<sup>32</sup> We are back to the Village Itinerancy’s grasp of the global village.

Forty years on Haverstock Hill can endear Hampstead to a man. Whether or not Nunn found the site he surely found the architect.

Michael Prendergast Manning is a shadowy ornament to his profession. Whether from bad proof reading or poor handwriting his very initials are in doubt. Were they J.P., R.J., W.P., M.J., or M.P.? All appear for what seems to be the same man. He practised between 1851 and 1902 chiefly from 6 Mitre Court Chambers, Temple. His seems to have been a run of the mill practice in the institutional interstices of his profession. He competed for almshouses, schools, asylums and hospitals from Sheffield to Caterham. His Sheffield School of Art (1855) was an intensely busy little Ruskinian street-front. He secured the first prize for the Queen Square Hospital for Epileptics, London, in 1879. His Anglican church work included St. Mary’s, King Henry’s Road, Primrose Hill (1883), since praised as “quite exceptionally well detailed”.<sup>33</sup> His Congregational work included the chapel at Twickenham Green (1866), a strange courtyard composition “partaking of a Byzantine character” which the *Year Book* called “a specimen of very successful planning and effective grouping”.<sup>34</sup> *The Richmond and Twickenham Times* was not so sure:

Had Solomon been an architect... [he] would have been sorely puzzled to define its architecture correctly. The gentleman from whose very original brain the design emanated need not fear a charge of plagiarism in matters architectural. In appearance the building is unique, and as a matter of taste it is a question whether it

32. For Nunn (1824–1913) see *CYB* 1915, pp.169–70.

33. Pevsner, *op. cit.* p.187; Harper *op. cit.*, p.260. I am indebted to Mr. J. Franklin, British Architectural Library, for much information about Manning, fl. 1851–1902.

34. *CYB* 1867, p.351.

would not be well for it always to remain so.<sup>35</sup>

This was the man selected – there is no evidence of a competition – to put Hackney on the Hampstead map. Why? Because he was in fact a sensible, unflashy fellow and good at his job? Or did he know John Nunn, who had a deacon called C.J. Manning living nearby in Maitland Park?<sup>36</sup>

The stonelaying in May 1886, thirty-six years to the day since London's last such Congregational ceremony, also on the Finchley Road (and "the world had not stood still since then"),<sup>37</sup> was not the best time for such a venture. Mansfield College, Oxford, was creaming off the generosity of the denominational magnificos and Samuel Morley, the most generous of them all, took mortally ill at the point of the stonelaying. A London luncheon to promote the new Oxford college was one of his last public engagements. Even so Morley's £800 to Hackney was to be its largest single donation.

Despite the Townsend £10,000 and annual endowments worth £3,000 Hackney was not a rich college. The current subscription list produced £260 a year, barely double what one Lancashire church alone had been giving to its local college thirty years before.<sup>38</sup> Voluntaryist northerners were scandalised that London's colleges should depend so much more on the dead than the living for their funds. Consequently the pressures were all for a building to celebrate economy.

In this respect the experienced Michael Manning contrasted well with young John Emmett thirty-six years back down the road at New College.<sup>39</sup> Emmett had to contend with a committee expecting more rooms for less money, a builder whose sums were at fault, striking workmen, rubbish-clogged drains, and the "very treacherous 'soapy' nature of the local clay". His correspondence with William Farrer, who was to New College what John Nunn was to Hackney, is spiced with exasperation. There was altogether too much explaining to be done in words of one syllable. ("The doors in the basement were not required until the Committee decided to place the Lavatory there"). And Emmett was the victim of his own insouciance:

The design itself is at present but a mere undigested sketch without a single detail decided upon and as these things stamp the Architect I must do them all myself.

But such details – an extra storey for the tower, a turret for the library, plate glass for the principal's windows, gas for every room – had to be cleared with the Committee all the same. "Do not forget to furnish us, on Wednesday (at *One*

35. 11 October 1873, quoted in A.C. Brier, *Chapel Next the Green: The Story of Twickenham Congregational Church*. Twickenham 1982, p.10.

36. A. Mearns, *London Congregational Directory and Church Guide, 1889*, 5th Ed. 1889, p.266.

37. Thus William Holborn, *The Nonconformist*, *op. cit.*

38. *Ibid.* The church was Albion, Ashton-under-Lyne.

39. The following account is based on N.C. MSS. 187/3/11; and Rough Minutes of Committees No.1. (1850-1868) especially 1851-2. N.C. MSS. 141.



o'clock)", William Farrer wrote with brisk carefulness", with *all* the requests and suggestions which you wish to present respecting the Building. Above all, pray let us have the *sketches* and *proper estimates* for *Gas Fittings*; without which it is impossible to get *a vote* for the purpose from the Council or the Building Committee. If you can *come* to the Meeting, so much the better". And Emmett only got his way with oak rather than deal doors by paying for them himself.

Manning seems to have had no such trouble, or none that has survived. Any differences between his published design and the finished building seem to result more from convenience than economy: the south end has lost its pencil thin campanile between the principal's house and the college proper, but instead a spirited and turreted gatehouse has appeared at the north: a gable has gone; the great bay window has switched ends. Clearly Manning met his client's needs admirably and they met his modest whims genially. Or so Nunn felt. "The architect", he explained, "longed to make the ceiling of the library a little more worthy of the chief room of the building, and so they allowed him a little extra... and he thought an oak floor would be better than a deal floor."<sup>40</sup>

It is a most business-like building. There is no room here for Oxonian fantasy. That sort of thing was left for Swiss Cottage, or the names of surrounding roads. Well Street's stuccoed austerity was relaxed for Finchley Road, but not too relaxed: "the details are simple and effective, and serve to impart a suitable and distinctive appearance, without the use of very elaborate or expensive ornamental features."<sup>41</sup> At the opening those present learned that this meant "the later period of the Tudor style of architecture". For those who relied on the *Year Book* it was simply "Domestic Gothic". With thirty-six students to house and £12,000 (though by 1886 the building fund was more realistically set at £20,000) to do it in, to have promised more would have been a hostage to fortune.

Any sense of ornament, or rather of movement, depends on the materials, red brick to Finchley Road, stock brick to the back, and terra cotta dressings, that flexible, durable, London fog resistible late Victorian discovery. And there is much to be said for it, the more so now that the browns and darkening greens have been banished by creams in the corridors. The entrance hall and staircase just escape meanness. The corridors are generous. The students' wing, a study and a bedroom for each, manages to be at once solid and homely, and almost cramped, like most manses. The library, that key room in any theological college since usually it had to double for meetings, was decidedly fine. It held two hundred. Here Manning allowed himself to dream, with a reticently Tudoresque ceiling now picked out in sub-ballroom green and gold and pompadour; and a knightly stone-hooded fireplace that is almost High-Victorian as if a sobered William Burges has briefly called, attracted by the

40. *Nonconformist and Independent*, 27 October, 1887, N.C. MSS. 267/9.

41. *CYB*, 1885, p.246.

gatehouse turret; and a deep bay window now hallowed and coloured by memorial glass for college men who died on course or at war, each memory topped by a crown.

The principal's house is similarly generous. Good hall, good drawing room, a sensible study, with none of the mercantile grandeur of Whalley Range or the donnish pretentiousness of Mansfield, Oxford. It is all rather Hampstead, making do on the wrong side of Finchley Road, a good neighbour for the domesticated Wagnerianism and slightly misplaced aspirations of Parsifal Road. Such good sense marks the whole composition. The kitchens were at once close to the principal's dining room and the students' dining hall. The students lodged in a wing furthest from the main road "so as to secure sufficient retirement and as much quiet as possible". There was - shades of winter in Well Street and outbreaks of typhoid - great emphasis on warmth and sanitation. The former meant a mean winter temperature of 60°F; and within a year Professor Christie was finding his lecture room unbearably hot.<sup>42</sup> The latter meant arrangements "of the simplest and most effective character, means being provided for inspecting, cleaning, and automatically flushing and the most recent improvements and suggestions of sanitary science applied to all fittings and the drainage system throughout".

So to the stonelaying and the opening. The rhetoric had moved on since Highbury's day, sixty years earlier, and most of the personalities had passed on, but the emotions like the weather (Hackney's stonelaying too was thoroughly wet) were unchanged. There was the same defensive triumphalism. Here was "the one Collegiate Home for Congregational students in London".<sup>43</sup> That was because this college, unlike New College, was residential. Here was nobody's rival. Certainly not New College's. And that hallowed Congregational cry, federation not amalgamation, was duly raised. Amalgamation was "neither lawful nor desirable", but Alfred Cave looked forward to a union of teaching staffs.<sup>44</sup>

This was not all sentiment. There was a stand to be taken and John Nunn took it. "On this important and historical occasion the final answer of the committee and the professors to all enquiries was that they took their stand in the old paths." And that meant (this time the words are Cave's) preacher-pastors, impregnable Bible-based, versed in "the fascinating story of the Christian Church". And could even Oxford do that? William Holborn, the Kensington layman, weighed in here. "He had no opposition to the proposed college at Oxford; he wished it every success. But, although it might be a very brilliant and reasonable experiment, it was an untried one".<sup>45</sup>

Not all the notes struck were defensive. Two speakers of markedly different temperament and constituency contributed another sort of insight. Cheshunt's

42. House Committee Minutes, 7 March 1889, N.C. MSS. 176.

43. William Holborn, at the stonelaying, N.C. MSS. 176.

44. *Ibid.*

45. *Ibid.*

H.R. Reynolds, rarest and most refined of college principals, reminded his auditory that here was "a new instrument for the storage of spiritual force... another observatory of Divine and human things" whence students could see ever further "into the breadth of the world and into the depths of heaven".<sup>46</sup> And Alexander Mackennal, whose statesmanship was stamping Mansfield College as much as it stamped Manchester and whose Hackney presence was a great olive branch, seized on the residential side. He meditated on it as a vacation spot for occasional retreats: "it would be very helpful for persons engaged continuously in ministerial work, giving out more than they had opportunity for taking in, if they could spend a week in free spiritual converse and in reviving the springs of spiritual life."<sup>47</sup>

That left Joseph Parker. He was there as local resident, conservative force, and City pulpiteer. His was the heavy humour which inaugural jollities demanded. He contemplated the arrival in his neighbourhood of some forty young men and their tutors. It would have "a very happy effect on the moral atmosphere of Hampstead". And "possibly some day, when the deacons of the City Temple were in a benignant temper, when everything seemed sunlit and musical, he might suggest that it would be well to contribute to this college ten or twenty guineas".<sup>48</sup>

Such carefulness with funds was catching. A memento of it survives from the stonelaying. Samuel Morley should have laid the stone but he was now an ailing man, so the college treasurer, Ebenezer Viney, replaced him. It was his first stonelaying. But the silver trowel had already been inscribed. No matter. Viney's name was plated over Morley's, just the tail of the "y" of Morley standing in for that of Viney. Ever a sense of proportion.

Each of Finchley Road's Congregational Colleges almost had a chapel in common. A chapel had been part of Emmett's original design for New College but it had been deleted ostensibly to test the waters. They were tested. In the winter of 1850-1 a site was leased at the head of Avenue Road. Emmett's services were retained and he designed a pleasantly Gothic church to seat 600 (400 more if galleries were ever built) and cost £3,000. Its secretary, Nathaniel Jennings, wrote to the Coward Trust for money. "There is perhaps hardly a suburb of London in which such a provision is more urgently required".<sup>49</sup> Perhaps so, though few in St. John's Wood, that suburb whose homes "first made the state of semi-detachment incarnate",<sup>50</sup> ever worshipped in the new chapel. It was something of the sort with Hackney College.

Immediately to its north, bounded by Burrard Road, was the perfect site for a church: on a corner, facing a major thoroughfare and reaching back to a social melting pot. Across Finchley Road, still largely undeveloped, lay Froggnal.

46. *Ibid.*

47. *Ibid.*

48. *Ibid.*

49. Jennings to Thomas Piper, 3 February 1851; N.C. MSS. 187/6.

50. Thompson, *op. cit.*, p.66.

Westfield College was to leave Maresfield Gardens for Kidderpore Hall in 1890 and the district was ripe for the very best in Queen Anne sweetness and light. Immediately to the south developments were planned of houses and flats for professional people (who else dared live in a Parsifal Road?) and behind the college, across the social chasm of West End Lane or blighted by the Hampstead Cemetery at Fortune Green would congregate an ever denser lower middle class and superior artisan world, housed in the Pooter-Tooting terraces of Agamemnon, Ajax, Achilles and Ulysses or the grander heights of Gondar Gardens, looking down on Cricklewood, heroic names for unheroic architecture and prime territory for missionary Christians. And all of it only just in the future.

West Hampstead's population doubled in the 1880s and rose half as much again in the 1890s. By 1901 it was 27,000. In the new college's hinterland the Anglicans carved out Emmanuel parish, at West End Green (begun 1882, formed 1885, built 1898) and St. Luke's, across in Kidderpore Avenue (1898). By 1901 nearly 10,000 lived in the former parish, under 3000 in the latter. From a Free Church angle the Congregationalists had no competition. Yet they never secured more than a toehold on what should have been a perfect terrain. Observers were mystified. Charles Booth put it down to the flat dwellers, "only one remove from hotel life", breeding transience and Bohemianism and stifling the family virtues; and he noted the influx of Jews.<sup>51</sup>

Nonetheless the Congregationalists pushed ahead. Their brief was a chapel to seat 700, perhaps 300 more in future galleries, with ample schools. It would be built in stages. It was to develop as a normal church. It was not intended to be the Hackney College Chapel.

In September 1891, this time in competition, Michael Manning wrote to John Nunn with his designs.<sup>52</sup> He aimed at a church "more elaborate perhaps in some of its details" than the college but designed to "produce one architectural composition". That meant a red-brick, terra cotta and Broseley tiled rectangle. There was a characteristic utilitarianism about it. Inside there was a "glazed brick dado of suitable tint", easy to clean and dispensing with plasterwork. It was to be gas-lit, though Manning observed that "at no very distant day lighting by means of electricity will no doubt become reliable and within compass of this district". He was right. Hampstead's municipally owned power station was opened in 1894 a few minutes' walk down the hill and across the railway track.

As yet there was no congregation and no services. Those began only in April 1893, in the college library. By then of course the forward movement was a foregone conclusion. The site was in hand and freehold and so were the plans. They were not Manning's. They proposed a quite different solution. With their designer, we come to the last but one in our solid procession of chapel and college practitioners.

The Spaldings of Spalding and Hodge, Drury Lane, were paper makers. They

51. *Ibid.* p.378 and *passim*.

52. N.C. MSS. 249/1.

had a tendency to literature, philosophy, the professions and Kentish Town. Samuel Spalding (1807-43) left paper for the ministry, moral philosophy, ill health and an entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. His brother Thomas (1805-87) lived philanthropically on paper near Hastings. Thomas married into philanthropy as well; his father-in-law was Andrew Reed, the founder of asylums and orphanages. The Henry Spaldings were part of North London Congregationalism's insistent upward drift, in their case from Edward White's Hawley Road church to R.F. Horton's Lyndhurst Road. There they contributed to funds and committees from the early days. Domestically they ranged round Broadhurst Gardens, Ellerdale Road (Meadowbank), Lyndhurst Road itself, and Belsize Avenue. There Henry Spalding (1839-1910) died. He was the architect of West Hampstead Congregational Church.

Like most sensible Victorian architects Henry Spalding was more practical and institutional than artistic.<sup>53</sup> His was a London practice with a Hastings outlier, run from the 1860s with a succession of partners, Patrick Auld, Alfred Cross, his own son Reginald. From their office, well publicised where it most mattered by a run of competition successes, flowed a stream of public baths, municipal libraries, schools, hospitals, Y.M.C.A.s, homes for the disadvantaged, offices for City firms, council houses. Henry developed an expertise in working class housing and wrote on the matter. He also "designed many of the larger residences at Hampstead" as well as its public baths on Finchley Road and its Y.M.C.A. There was also an ecclesiastical slant to his work. He had trained in the late 1850s in the Bloomsbury offices of those splendid Low Church and chapel men, the Habershons. Like theirs, his clients flourished in deacons' vestries: hence offices for the London Missionary Society and the London City Mission; the Workmen's Club House for the Browning Settlement; and a string of churches and church halls in north and west London - churches for Harlesden and Cricklewood, halls for East Finchley and Kentish Town, and a whole apparatus of halls and parlours for Lyndhurst Road itself. There, "in the Romanesque style of architecture, in order to harmonise",<sup>54</sup> he erected a massive complex which Horton loyally declared made his church look as large as a cathedral, "when the trees are bare".<sup>55</sup>

Spalding's essay at West Hampstead was a tribute to Lyndhurst Road. It was a Waterhouse octagon in red brick and terra cotta, plastered and distempered inside, roofed in green slate and windowed in coloured glass. Such a shape kept the hearers in range of the preacher's voice and allowed for galleries without "recourse to the usually objectionable columns of iron and steel" so offensive to sight and sound. It would hold 1100, 300 of them in the galleries. The schools were to be ample and flexible: a hall easily partitioned into classrooms, parlours and kitchens and a two-bedroomed caretaker's house. The church, costed at

53. For Spalding (1839-1910) see *Journal R.I.B.A.*, 30 July 1910 p.702; *Builder*, 2 July 1910, p.21.

54. *C.Y.B.*, 1906, p.108.

55. R.F. Horton, *Autobiography*, 1917, p.246.

£11,000 from site to fees, would come first. When the schools followed their provision was slimmed down.<sup>56</sup>

At first all seemed set fair. By 1900 the membership was 200. And there it stopped. According to the 1903 *Daily News* census while Lyndhurst Road attracted nearly 900 to each service, morning and evening, New College Chapel drew 111 in the morning, 86 in the evening, none of them children, and West Hampstead drew 162 in the morning (40 of them children) and 210 in the evening (27 of them children, one fewer than at Lyndhurst Road). By contrast Emmanuel's congregations were 425 and 340 morning and evening respectively, and St. Luke's were 300 and 280, each of them with a larger complement of children; and the West Lane Synagogue drew 898 (220 of them children) on the first day of Passover. Was this church apparently at so dramatic a social confluence nonetheless at the wrong confluence? Or was it simply that such a church held few charms with Lyndhurst Road up one hill and St. Andrew's Presbyterian (from 1904) down another? Had West Hampstead produced an R.F. Horton followed by a Copland Simmonds all might have been different. It was not enough to grow alongside Hortons-in-embryo at the College.

There remains one last architectural adventure for the Hackney site.

Tutorial cooperation between Hackney and New was signally advanced in 1922 when A.E. Garvie, Principal of New College, also became Principal of Hackney. There was still no question of a physical amalgamation and Garvie had no intention of moving house. Morally and legally, however, the two united as Hackney and New in 1924 and ten years later the legal union was concentrated geographically. The most beautiful building in Hampstead was sold. Flats and shops in blocks replaced it and the proceeds went to upgrade the Hackney students' quarters and to provide new lecture rooms, boardroom, library, chapel, squash court and cloister. The scheme was so characteristically utilitarian that it is easy to miss its merit, even its elegance, as part of a great tying of loose ends. Hackney and New now became New College *tout court*. Its principal now was Sydney Cave, Alfred's nephew but Forsyth's pupil.<sup>57</sup> He too became a college principal while still in his thirties (Cheshunt, 1920-33) and he was only fifty when he returned to Hackney. His life was less thwarted than his uncle's. His were the contacts and the enlargements which eluded the older man: a period in Berlin, a decade of mission in India. The former tempered his intellect, the latter informed his scholarship, the whole was a preparation for academic activity in London's Faculty of Theology, whose formation with Hackney and New as recognised schools within it had been one of the last strivings of Alfred's life.

Sydney Cave shaped and ministered to this last stage of union. George Churchus Lawrence projected it in brick and plaster. Lawrence stood in the line

56. *C.Y.B.*, 1894, p.172. The subsequent attendance figures are taken from Mudie-Smith *op. cit.*, pp.165-7.

57. For Cave (1883-1953) see *C.Y.B.* 1954, pp.506-7.

of Manning and Spalding.<sup>58</sup> That is to say, he excelled at institutions and factories. He produced banks and insurance offices, a Y.M.C.A., a sanatorium, an eye hospital, a smallpox hospital and a mental hospital. He was also an architect's architect, a good committee man in his profession's councils with, as his obituarist put it, "a distinct leaning towards the legal side of his profession". A recent commentator is more succinct, "probably more of an architectural entrepreneur than an original architect".

For our purposes he had distinct advantages. In his early career he had designed Bristol College's Tudorish brick buildings in Tyndall's Park and for thirty years he had been the partner of Bristol's leading and probably best architect, Sir George Oatley. Oatley was a man of flair, variety and swagger should swagger be needed.<sup>59</sup> His Wills Memorial Tower for Bristol University triumphantly tells this to all who pass by. He was also a mainstay of Clifton Down Congregational Church, which was very much a building for architects' architects. Lawrence worshipped there too; he "occasionally did voluntary duty at the organ".<sup>60</sup> Since Sydney Cave's sole English pastorate had been at Henleaze, Bristol, it is tempting to see him as the man who brought Lawrence to Finchley Road. Congregationally the partnership's most recent work, more Lawrence than Oatley, had been Bristol's Knowle Park Church. "Lowly in stature... and of common clay with the brick-built houses of the people",<sup>61</sup> it was a gentle essay in good form, and good form counted with George Lawrence. "He was a stickler for accuracy in architecture and in draughtsmanship, and for professional ethics. His tastes were simple - a trait that was evident in his designs... He was a great admirer of the classic style, its beauty of line and detail, and he delighted in working in that manner".<sup>62</sup>

Lawrence's contribution to what we must now call New College might almost be described as stripped Wren. Manning's work was tactfully reordered. Two rooms were fitted out at the north end, their names, Cave and Coward, *in piam memoriam* rather than in theological judgment.<sup>63</sup> The library became the dining hall, and the dining hall became the chapel. That left the problem of marrying the new block with the old in such a way as to complete a college rather than cater for Topsy. For Manning's backside was in his best brick hospital-for-epileptics style. What to do?

The existing buildings for all their mess roughly formed three sides of a quadrangle. Lawrence completed the quadrangle. He ran his new library block parallel to Manning's Finchley Road block and he balanced Manning's students' wing, which now linked these two blocks, with a cloister. This had the

58. For Lawrence (1872-1938) see *Journal R.I.B.A.*, 5 December 1938 p.154; A. Gomme, M. Jenner, B. Little, *Bristol: an Architectural History*, 1979, p.438.

59. For Oatley (1863-1950) see Gomme, *op. cit.*, p.439.

60. *J.R.I.B.A.* 1938 *art. cit.*

61. *CYB*, 1933, p.212.

62. *J.R.I.B.A.* *art. cit.*

63. "Coward" was in fact the office of the Coward Trust. *CYA* 1939 p.736 + Illus. and plans.

double merit of providing what every college quadrangle ought to have and masking the irregularities of the principal's backstairs and kitchen quarters.

Did he succeed? At first sight the Lawrence buildings disappoint with their grimed and institutional Fletton brick; and their landscaping has given way to car-parking. Tarmac is no substitute for turf and flowering cherries. The library block might be a telephone exchange or a bypass factory for electrical gadgets. With its Crittall windows it is light and airy for its workers, but not worth the second look which in fact it deserves. So look again at the metal-framed windows and the modish little balconies brightly painted in blue, sparingly placed to overlook what is now the largest stretch of car park; and the blue painted panels bearing emblems of the constituent academies to face and enliven the quadrangle, each panel fitting between ground and first floor windows. Here all the references are meeting house, the 1690s stripped down to suit the 1930s. They are Dutch. That is the message of the brickwork and the long hipped roof.

Within, all is change. The meeting house and the academy have almost gone, their spirit held in a light utility for which the only word is "elegant". The library, subdivided now and partitioned, was traditionally planned – a large hall ringed at first floor level by a generous gallery – to hold New College's 30,000 volumes. It must have been a room of simple and insistent allure, a summons to study. At each end are the best features of the whole college, staircases with flowing metal rails, proof that the streamlined 1930s could produce Puritan design. Here is the restraint which makes for liberation. Hearts should lift, not sink, at the sight of a staircase and Lawrence's library stairs are uplifting. His Board Room too is a Puritan model of restraint, a plain room pleasant with linenfold from John Emmett's building and modestly dominated by the simplest of fireplaces: just a stone surround to a hearth, save that there is no flue behind it. Reticence? Or deceit? Or an enjoyable conceit?<sup>64</sup>

Should any reader glance across the quadrangle, there could be no escape from Manning's Mary-Annerly. So Lawrence toned it down with a simple, obvious, gesture. His dining-hall-turned-chapel becomes quite clearly a meeting house box. George Lawrence has done it again. It is all a matter of the windows, such as William Coward might have known, or Southwark's John Lawrence whose bequest of 1673 tenuously linked a remote Hampstead posterity with the age of Bunyan and Black Bartholomew.

The chapel was the last of the buildings to be completed. Its liquid windows, emblematic of past achievements like the library panels across the grass, were installed in January 1952 by E.A. Udall, Chairman of the College governors and son of an old member; panelling, a pulpit and a lectern followed shortly after, in memory of Sydney Cave.

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64. The plainness is more apparent now than when built, since the walls were hung with portraits and pictures from New College. The Library lacked any accommodation for a librarian; indeed there were no rooms at all for the college staff to use as individual studies.



The Lawrence buildings were completed in 1937 and opened in 1938 (4 May) by Lord Athlone. As Chancellor of the University and a minor member of the royal family (indeed, as one of the last of the "old" royal family) his presence was a doubly gratifying if easily taken for granted mark of recognition and his speech was a gracefully drafted tribute to the landmarks in the college's progress. By then both New College Swiss Cottage and Hackney College Well Street had gone. Well Street had proved hard to sell but by 1895 it had become a branch workhouse for Bethnal Green. That phase was over by 1914 and by 1936 its building had gone, more suitably, usefully and much more handsomely replaced by the Orchard Primary School.<sup>65</sup> That left Coward, which still survives in Byng Place, and Highbury, which survived two wars to be demolished after a fire in 1946.

The Second World War was also decisive for the churches most closely associated with this paper. The long twilight of Haverstock Hill, West Hampstead and New College Chapel ended with the war, their last recorded memberships 45, 30 and 60 respectively, their secretaries living in Ruislip, Bushey and Hendon respectively. They had no full-time ministry. When war broke out West Hampstead suspended its services. They were never resumed. By 1946 and with remarkably little alteration the building became what it remains, the Shomrei Hadath Synagogue. Lyndhurst Road closed in 1978, just outliving what it had just preceded, Hackney in Hampstead. The buildings of each survive, the former partly turned into flats, the latter as the Open University's Parsifal College. Who knows what grail it hides, set behind almost the last trees to front what once was one of Hampstead's most commanding avenues?

All of which demonstrates the impermanence of place but none of which is to deny the force of George Clayton's words that gusty June day on Highbury Hill in 1825:

The occasion which has brought us this day is of no ordinary importance. It stands very intimately connected with the best interests of man, considered in his individual character, his social relations, and as a candidate for immortal bliss.<sup>66</sup>

Our presence in this place is one outworking of that relationship, and a witness to its possibility.<sup>67</sup>

CLYDE BINFIELD

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65. I am indebted to Mr. N.W. Gibbs and Mr. D. Mander and Mr. J. Newman, Hackney Archives Department, for this information.

66. N.C. MSS. 513.

67. I am greatly indebted to the following for their help in furnishing information and references during the preparation of this paper: Miss M. Canning; Mr. J. Creasey (Dr. Williams's Library); Dr. K.W. Daisley and his colleagues at Parsifal College; Mr. J. Franklin (British Architectural Library); Mr. N.W. Gibbs, Mr. J. Kitsberg (Shomrei Hadath Synagogue); Mr. D. Mander and Mr. J. Newman (Hackney Archives Department); Revd. Dr. G.F. Nuttall; Revd. J.H. Taylor, Mr. J.H. Thompson.

## P.T. FORSYTH: 1848-1921

Quite soon after I had succeeded Sydney Cave at New College, there was discovered (I never knew how) an unusual portrait of Forsyth, which I at once asked to have in my study, where it remained for the rest of my time and, I am fairly sure, for the rest of Charles Duthie's time as well. The portrait is unusual in at least two respects. For one thing, it shows Forsyth with a beard, looking rather like George V; for another, as a visitor acutely remarked (not knowing of whom the portrait was), it was unusual for a photographer to catch a person actually thinking. When I had to get used to living in Forsyth's old house, which was in many respects an awe-inspiring experience, it was good to have his watchful eye on me; and while I had no illusions that I would be his match, I liked to think that he would encourage me to go on thinking.

Alas, that was as far as I could get towards answering one of the questions set for today: what was Forsyth like? I never knew him: he died in 1921, when I was but nine years old. So I have had to rely on what I have read; on the recollections of his daughter, Jessie Forsyth Andrews; and on such of his students as I came to know, Lovell Cocks, Maurice Watts, Harold Bickley, P.J. Spooner, Stanley Green: some of those who were here in the days when, just above the college, there were fields before you got to Golders Green. Or Hendon.

Forsyth seemed to know how to combine kindness with severity, and that, in a way, would be difficult, if not impossible, today. Of his kindness, I recall hearing from one of his former students who, while in his student days, lost both his parents in fairly quick succession. He told me that the letters Forsyth sent him and the talk he had with him were very important elements in what kept him going. Of Forsyth's severity, on the other hand, I recall hearing of one man whose effort in the dreaded sermon-class drew forth the comment: "That would do no harm". Of another it is said that his course ended abruptly. The man's father was a very well-known preacher, and the son had preached a cut-down version of one of his father's efforts in sermon-class. Forsyth realised what was going on, and eventually said: "Now that Mr. X has shown us so clearly how he understands his calling, he will leave the College by..."; and he presided over his exit later that morning. On the other hand, those who were fortunate to have been trained by him recall the way in which he would take whatever text had been the basis on which the sermon had been built, and show what other possibilities lay within it. One of my own acts of piety was to persuade the Independent Press to publish some of Forsyth's MSS and notes in *Revelation Old and New* (1962). Some of the items were sermons preached on important occasions; others are from his own pencil notes of words to be used in this college itself.

It so turned out that for a period the principal of New College was A.E. Garvie. This was at the time when, as you might say, Hackney College was what New College was to become, for there were two such colleges within a short space of

one another. Of what was Hackney College Forsyth was the Principal; and he was a very different man from Garvie. One of Garvie's strengths was that he was a great advocate and exponent of the history of dogma school and there are many of his books which will endure in that tradition, not least among them his famous work on the *Ritschlian Theology*. For a while the two colleges worked together, the foundation on which the union of the two eventually came about. One of the students told me that while it was generally thought that Garvie's lecture notes were the better preparation for the London BD examinations, it was in fact the stimulus given by Forsyth which often brought out what you needed for the occasion; and the man who told me this assured me that what he had described was not his own experience only.

There is no doubt that Forsyth's lectures were more inspirational whereas Garvie's tended to be more factual. Forsyth's were also more controversial, particularly with reference to R.J. Campbell's words and works. Lovell Cocks remembered well the occasion when Campbell had brought out a new book; Forsyth opened his lecture with the words: "He's done it again, gentlemen! Froth, gentlemen; froth!! Champagne froth, I grant you; but froth, gentlemen, all the same".

But now we must ask wherein Forsyth's greatness lay.

There has been in the last forty years or more a renewal of interest in him and there was from 1938 a reprint of his main works by the Independent Press. Those who recall A.M. Ramsey's 1960 Drew Lecture, while he was Archbishop of York, will remember his admiration for Forsyth's writings; and in this he was typical of a good many who were thankful for Forsyth's effort to bring back theology to its proper task.

It used to be said that Forsyth was Karl Barth or Emil Brunner before either of them; that he used to say much the same thing in a form more acceptable to the Anglo-Saxon mind. I can understand why that was said, particularly by those who found Brunner altogether more acceptable than Karl Barth; yet I suspect that the suggested equation is too simple and easy. The range of Barth is, no doubt, much greater than Forsyth's. Yet the effect of the two is similar in that both, it seems, ask whether the message of the Kingdom is to be understood in its own light or whether it is to be seen and understood in that of some other philosophy or ideology. To take an example, according to Adolf von Harnack some of the sayings and deeds attributed to Jesus could not have been true because they assumed that miracles happened: the Gospel had to be understood in the light of what was then taken to be modern science.

Rudolf Bultmann has asked the same sort of question more recently: have we to understand the Gospel in terms of a certain sort of existentialism?

Let us go back for a moment to the various tussles which Forsyth had with R.J. Campbell, and ask why it was that the dispute seemed so important. Because Campbell represented a very popular view of the Christian religion which presented Christianity without the Cross. It was a form of Hegelian Idealism in which the achievements of mankind were seen to be a pledge of even better things to come in which the remaining faults of man and society would be done

away by an increase of human wisdom and the spread of the Christian spirit. The enormous success of Campbell at the City Temple and in his popular writings made him the almost inevitable focus of this widespread view.

Forsyth reacted violently with almost everything he had got against what he saw to be the head and front of this offending: it was a form of the Gospel which was not a Gospel at all; and in many of his books the Cruciality of the Cross was his theme; and from it he rarely departed. Indeed, it is a notable feature of these writings that it is more difficult than it usually is to tell by context from which book a particular quotation comes. "This one thing I do": the apostolic exhortation was rarely more seriously taken.

What needs to be noted for the moment is that Forsyth was attacking Campbell and all who thought like him because they represented a view of religion which was not centred on the truth of the Gospel; and what Forsyth had to say is as relevant as ever though the context has considerably changed. You can still get warm applause for what is at best the vague idealism which does not really engage the true issue. You can still hear that sort of sermon and if you do not hear it so much in sermons as you used to, you can get it at Rotary Clubs and meetings of Boy Scouts.

Having dealt with his most notable controversy, I must attempt to describe what I take to be Forsyth's main message.

It is generally agreed that the *Person and Place of Jesus Christ* (the Congregational Union Lecture for 1909) was his most important work; certainly, it is the one to which much reference is made in recent comment. The directness of the approach is described by Lovell Cocks thus: "the writer chases no hares, stoops to pick up no golden apples, but runs swiftly and surely to his goal".<sup>1</sup>

It was fashionable at the time to call folk to believe *with* Christ. Here was a renewal of the call to believe *in* him. Whereas in A.D.451 men had sought to explain the person of Christ in intellectual terms, Forsyth criticised them and what they did for neglecting the moral terms in which, in his judgement, the matter should be considered. Not long before Forsyth's time Kenotic theories had attempted to explain the person of Christ in terms of what aspects of the Godhead could be set aside and what retained to make possible the Incarnation. "He laid his glory by": that goes well enough in Wesley's hymn; but can such an Incarnation be one really? Forsyth's answer is that a true explanation of Phil. ii, 6-11 is that the various attributes of the Godhead were retracted into a different mode of being (from what was actual they had become potential); but his major contribution seems to me to have been his declaration that the earthly ministry was followed by a *plerosis*, a self-fulfilment. In this way as if in Jesus Christ we had not only the whole range of God, but the whole heart of him. And if you should suppose that Forsyth was a dry-as-dust academic working along the rules of some theological game, remember this saying of his during this very book:

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1. *Expository Times*, April 1953, p.195.

I should consider life well spent, and the world well lost, if, after tasting all its experiences and facing all its problems, I had no more at its close, to carry with me to another life, than the acquisition of a real, sure, humble and grateful faith in the eternal and incarnate Son of God.

That quotation not only indicates how existential was Forsyth's faith, it also reminds us that often in his writings he sounds like a preacher. His books were lectures, published as spoken, rather than written for some academic occasion.

It is appropriate to observe also that Forsyth continually stressed the moral element in theology. This is to be found in all his works, and inspires what he wrote about the *Justification of God* (his war-time book), *The Theory of Church and State*, and *Marriage: its ethic and religion*. None of it was ever merely academic or intellectual: it is all moral as well, that is to say, as affecting the life of men and women in their relationship as moral beings to God. What had called forth his criticism of Chalcedon informed all his thought about all things.

What do I take to be Forsyth's influence today? What is his message in this century?

I suggest two things. First, there will always be those, I hope, who read Forsyth and are stimulated by him. For myself, I must say, that to read a chapter of almost any of his books is like drinking champagne, stimulating and exciting. To put it more soberly, I find him enlivening in the sense that he makes you aware of the moral bigness of the Gospel and its consequences for Church, for State and for Art. His work dates, of course, some of the details need much modification; but the positive drive behind his thought is, like that of Maurice, something of permanent importance.

But I would venture further, for I suppose that what is being written by Bishop Lesslie Newbigin and Professor Colin Gunton at present raises in a contemporary form many of the same issues as Forsyth. As I understand the matter, which goes back as far as the Enlightenment, men have assumed that the only knowledge that counts comes from what can be measured. The scientific method determined what can be certainly known; and anything else had to be known in terms of it and be counted as opinion. We do not need to complain, for the splendid results that have derived from the scientific method and its subsequent technology need no explanation or praise. To comment on our own patch, for instance, we need not and do not complain of the advances in Biblical Studies. But it is when we come to philosophy and theology that we are driven to ask if we have to express the Gospel in the current way of thinking, or if there is not some means whereby the Gospel sets its own terms of reference. Harnack and Bultmann each in their own time and in their very different ways sought to understand and interpret the Gospel in fashionable terms. Is that the only way?

A good many, most notably Karl Barth, have asked the question; so far there has been a variety of responses. Thomas Torrance in such books as *Space, Time*

and *Incarnation* (1969) and *Space, Time and Resurrection* (1976) has suggested a new understanding of the way theology and scientific method can be related; and in the course of exploring these opinions and convictions has referred to the work of Michael Polanyi of whom the *DNB* (1971–1980) said that with F.A. Hayek and Sir Karl Popper, his was

the vision of a new kind of philosophy, one that would relate science harmoniously to other modes of human knowing, which drew him on... Though [he] made full use of critical, empirical and analytical methods, he never gave them priority. He knew that the roots of science lay deeper and he claimed that the commitment of any explorer, or a group of explorers, to the discovery of hidden order in the universe and of faith in the order were prior requirements for all acts of discovery... Thus he challenged the conventional wisdom that scientists are cool and detached and that their judgements are value-free.

John Hapgood, Archbishop of York, has made use of Polanyi's distinction between two different kinds of knowledge. While science is the great example of "articulate knowledge" and its exponents are so used to be so used to be so impressed by it that they would claim that it is the only reliable kind of knowledge there is, Polanyi presupposes, another kind of knowledge – "inarticulate knowledge" which

allows us to believe that our gropings after the meaning of things and our sense of the mystery of existence are not simply mistakes and misunderstandings... It becomes possible to see how there can be a confused and partial knowledge of reality, which is genuine even though it cannot be brought within the bounds of science.<sup>2</sup>

It seems to me that Lesslie Newbigin's *The Other Side of 1984* (1983) and *Foolishness to the Greeks* (1986) together with Colin Gunton's *Enlightenment and Alienation* (1986) have called Christian thinkers to follow this type of reasoning. They would claim that there is a valid way of understanding the Word of God which can stand on its own feet and needs not to be interpreted in terms of something else.

I judge that in following such a way of thinking the devotees of Forsyth would be well employed, for I think that there is a real sense in which the advocates of Newbigin and Gunton are following in different terms the main aspects of those faults which Forsyth found in the Hegelian Idealism of his day. They are asking the same questions, which he answered in his own way. I hope that many will look at his work with this in mind. It will demand much energy. In the Memoir which his daughter, Jessie Forsyth Andrews, included in the 1938 edition of the *Work of Christ*, which is far too good to miss, there is a description of Forsyth writing a lecture or a sermon:

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2. J. Hapgood, *Religion and Science* (1964) quoted in J.S. Peart Binns *Living with Paradox* (1987).

at these times he was wrestling with thoughts almost beyond human expression; and he wrote with a physical and nervous intensity which shook the desk, and which after an hour or two left him utterly spent, stretched out white and still upon his study couch, until the Spirit drove him back to pen and paper.<sup>3</sup>

That explains something of his unusual style; it also explains why a few pages of his work recharges the battery as little else.

### EIGHT BOOKS ABOUT P.T. FORSYTH

- W.L. Bradley, *P.T. Forsyth: the Man and his Work*, 1952.  
 R.M. Broan, *P.T. Forsyth: Prophet for Today*, 1952.  
 H. Escott, *Peter Taylor Forsyth: Director of Souls*, 1948.  
 G.O. Griffith, *The Theology of P.T. Forsyth*, 1948.  
 A.M. Hunter, *P.T. Forsyth: Per Crucem ad Lucem*, 1974.  
 J.K. Mozley, *Heart of the Gospel*, 1927.  
 J.K. Mozley, *The Doctrine of the Incarnation*, 1936.  
 J.H. Rodgers, *The Theology of P.T. Forsyth*, 1965.

**BOOKS BY P.T. FORSYTH.** (This is derived from a list published in *The Work of Christ* by Jessie Forsyth Andrews in 1938, which I have updated.)

- 1886 *Pulpit Parables for Young Hearers* (with J.A. Hamilton)  
 1887-8 *Religion in Recent Art* (Second edition in 1901)  
 1893 (Contribution to). *Faith and Criticism*  
 1896 *The Charter of the Church*  
       *Intercessory Services*  
 1897 *The Holy Father and the Living Christ*  
 1899 *Christian Perfection*  
       *Rome, Reform and Reaction*  
 1901 *The Taste of Death and the Life of Grace*  
 1908 *Positive Preaching and Modern Mind*  
       *Missions in State and Church*  
       *Socialism, the Church and the Poor*  
       *The Inspiration and Authority of Holy Scripture* (with Munro Gibson)  
 1909 *The Cruciality of the Cross*  
       *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ* (Fourth Edition 1930)  
 1910 *The Work of Christ* (Second Edition 1938)  
       *The Power of Prayer* (with Dora Greenwell)  
 1911 *Christ on Parnassus*  
 1912 *Faith, Freedom and the Future*  
       *Marriage: its Ethic and Religion*  
 1913 *The Principle of Authority*  
 1915 *Theology in Church and State*

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3. Jessie Forsyth Andrews in P.T. Forsyth, *The Work of Christ*, 1938 eds., p.xxvi.

- 1916 *The Christian Ethic of War*  
*The Justification of God*  
*The Soul of Prayer*
- 1917 *Lectures on the Church and the Sacraments* (with H.T. Andrews)
- 1918 *This Life and the Next* (Second Edition 1946)
- 1957 *God the Holy Father* (a re-issue of three well-known sermons by Jessie Forsyth Andrews)
- 1962 *The Church, the Gospel and Society* (two addresses to the Congregational Union in 1905)  
*Revelation Old and New* (addresses and sermons collected by John Huxtable)

JOHN HUXTABLE

## REVIEW ARTICLES

THE AMERICAN CHURCHES  
AND THE PROBLEM OF SLAVERY

*Shadow on the Church: Southwestern Evangelical Religion and the Issue of Slavery, 1783-1860.* By David T. Bailey. Pp.293. Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1985.

*The War Against Proslavery Religion: Abolitionism and the Northern Churches, 1830-1865.* By John R. McKivigan. Pp.327. Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1984. \$35.75.

*A Divine Discontent: The Life of Nathan S.S. Beman.* By Owen Peterson. Pp.xvi, 224. Mercer University Press, Macon, Ga., 1986.

*Episcopal Vision/American Reality: High Church Theology and Social Thought in Evangelical America.* By Robert Bruce Mullin. Pp.xvi, 247. Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1986. £20.00.

*Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denominational Schisms and the Coming of the American Civil War.* By C.C. Goen. Pp.x, 198. Mercer University Press, Macon, Ga., 1985. £11.66 [paper].

*Christian Reconstruction: The American Missionary Association and Southern Blacks, 1861-1890.* By Joe M. Richardson, The University of Georgia Press, Athens, Georgia. Pp.ix, 348. \$30.00.

When Harriet Martineau visited the United States in 1836 she was appalled at the moral spinelessness of the American clergy, "their disinclination... to bring what may be disturbing questions before their people". They appeared most culpably timid over the issue of slavery. Southern ministers acquiesced in the efforts of slaveowners to present slavery as a "positive good", in some instances explicitly encouraging the gathering "Great Reaction" of their own region against outside attack; northern clergy sought to blunt the edge of a nascent abolitionist movement whose stridency and radicalism they feared would divide the churches and shatter the God-given political Union. Such postures



encouraged antislavery crusaders both at home and abroad to write off the American churches as "the bulwarks of American slavery" and their ministers as a "brotherhood of thieves". Under a voluntary church system, where the clergy were dependent for financial support on their congregations, what could be expected but that ministers would be tempted to follow rather than to shape public opinion – a public opinion generally indifferent and often hostile to schemes to improve the lot of the black race?

Each of the books considered here tends both to modify these harsh judgments and yet to confirm their essential truth. David Bailey's valuable, if flawed, study of the Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists and Disciples of Christ in the "Old Southwest" serves in very broad terms to reinforce the conclusion of Donald Mathews's *Religion in the Old South* (1977) that southern evangelicalism lost its transforming social energy between the post-Revolutionary years and the mid-nineteenth century, to become one of the pillars of the social status quo. But Bailey's book is more than an echo of Mathews's work, for it succeeds in showing the points at which the experience of Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama and Mississippi differed from that of south-eastern states (on which Mathews's study is largely based). In particular he argues that blacks in the southwest in many ways engaged on an equal footing with white in day-to-day worship and in the disciplinary activities of the church, at least up to 1830.

The work is organized around the experiences and outlook of four successive generations of evangelical ministers: those of the first, frontier generation, who tended to oppose slavery, but whose position on the political periphery and whose lack of cohesion prevented the emergence of an organized antislavery movement; the cohort whose principal concern was the Great Revival of the first decade of the new century and whose judgment on slavery followed the theological fault-lines of that religious upheaval; the "silent generation" of the years between the war of 1812 and 1830, who sought to avoid direct confrontation on social and political matters; and, finally, a modernizing generation of young enthusiasts who, by promoting a range of benevolent reforms known in the north-east since 1800, hoped to bring the south-west into the mainstream of national religious life, but who deliberately turned their backs on the region's antislavery traditions, salving their consciences by engaging in missionary work amongst the slaves.

Bailey's approach necessarily leaves unanswered many questions about the place of the laity in southwestern religion and church members' relations with their clergy. More surprisingly, his climactic final generation receives disproportionately less attention than the earlier ones; remarkably there is no attempt to consider the question of slavery and territorial expansion, as raised by the issues of Texas annexation and the Mexican War. Again, his use of the ministerial "generation" or "cohort" as an analytical tool is imaginative but, as employed here at least, problematic. It is not wholly clear whether his generations represent only the new ministers of the period or the whole ministry. If only the entering clergy, were they necessarily the most influential? And to what extent was there a generational self-consciousness? Fortunately these

questions do not threaten Bailey's conclusions regarding the broad shifts in ministerial opinion on slavery over the period as a whole. Essentially there seem to have been two principal elements at work in church leaders' increasing acceptance and even defence of the "peculiar institution".

First, it is clear that as slavery became economically more important to the life of the region so ministers themselves came to enjoy many of its material benefits. By 1810 seventeen per cent of the population of Tennessee were slaves; slaveholding was to become even more entrenched in the life of the lower southwest, especially the plains of Alabama and Mississippi, with the spread of cotton culture in the 1820s and 1830s. Ministers were not immune to the lure of slaveholding as a means of improving their social status and wealth. Secondly, and perhaps more significant, there was the importance of lay slaveholders to the churches as a source of prestige and wealth. The evangelical churches that dominated the life of the region had little desire to lose members, jeopardise souls and rock the ecclesiastical boat. The voices of those like David Rice (b. 1733), who had seen slaveholding itself as a sin, had never been strong, but they yielded wholly in the early nineteenth century to those who criticised only the evil *consequences* of slaveholding: the breaking up of families, the deficiencies in slaves' education and religious training, the harshness of plantation life. Bailey's chapter on the Disciples of Christ shows clearly their backsliding from the early antislavery positions adopted by Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone to one where Church unity was prized over all else: by 1850 the Disciples held more slaves per capita than any other denomination. Bailey is in no doubt that the voluntarist ecclesiastical structure in America, where the denominations were exposed to the rigours of the free market, encouraged compromise with the prevailing culture over difficult moral issues. He could perhaps have stressed even more than he does the inconsistent attitudes to Church unity that such considerations generated: locally church members had to be propitiated, while simultaneously at a national level schism was a tolerable, even welcome, price for achieving the protection of slaveholders' interests. Many evangelicals saw the division of the Presbyterian Church into New and Old School in 1837-38 and of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1844 as necessary and acceptable means of sectional self-defence.

Yet it is manifest that the southwestern churches and their leaders were not invariably blind followers of public opinion, and that economic and ecclesiastical pressures to conform to slavery's imperatives were in some cases offset by the antislavery intellectual traditions of the Enlightenment and of varieties of millennial religion. Antislavery attitudes continued to find expression in the upper stretches of the old southwest, in Tennessee and Kentucky. Here in the 1850s, as lower southern churchmen polished a positively pro-slavery argument, Robert Breckinridge, John Graves and John Pendleton and a number of other Presbyterian and Baptist ministers persisted in challenging the public orthodoxy that there was no moral issue to discuss. On the eve of the civil war the southwest's regional coherence was breaking down.

John R. McKivigan's purpose in *The War Against Proslavery Religion* is to examine the relationship of self-declared abolitionists to the northern churches. His essential arguments are two-fold: that genuine abolitionism, a minority strain in northern life, had very little currency in the churches; and that the activities of church-oriented abolitionists helped push the churches towards a more radical antislavery position than they would otherwise have adopted. If the first conclusion is less startling than he suggests, and the second not wholly proven, there is no doubt that his research has been prodigious and careful, and that the book makes available a valuable doctoral thesis to a wider readership.

Few northern churches accepted the abolitionist argument that slaveholding was a sin in itself. The "ritualist" or "liturgical" denominations, in particular the Roman Catholics, Episcopalians and Lutherans, generally regarded the issue of slavery in much the same light that they considered other topics of social reform, as a matter outside the churches' proper jurisdiction. In contrast, the northern wings of the major evangelical denominations, at the heart of American religious life, were ready to discuss the moral implications of slaveholding, and to impose restrictions on the appointment of slaveholders to senior ecclesiastical and missionary positions, to the point of provoking schism in the three largest churches - Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist. But in none of these instances did the resulting northern branches embrace out-and-out abolitionism and on the eve of the civil war they continued to embrace border-state slaveholders within their communions. Only a small number of denominations - Quakers, Freewill Baptists and number of schismatic "come-outer" sects - adopted a firm stand against all fellowship with slaveholders. This was why the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) was moved to declare that the American Church was not the Church of Christ, but "the foe of freedom, humanity and pure religion".

McKivigan's analysis of the elements that helped fashion how particular denominations responded to the antislavery impulse is careful and broadly persuasive. Institutional, theological and geographic factors were all at work. Centrally governed churches with a national constituency were less likely to take a stand against slavery than were churches enjoying congregational autonomy within the free states. Arminian and moderately Calvinist churches fortified with evangelical doctrines of postmillennialism and perfectionism were more likely to give succour to reform movements and to see slavery as a sin that had to be immediately removed than were strict Calvinist or premillennialist bodies. However, the author has difficulty navigating the cross-currents of the Methodists' doctrine of holiness, which pulled many into an inner-directed drive for perfection but which he also sees, contradictorily, as explaining the "come-outerism" of Orange Scott and other Methodists who established their own abolitionist sect. Ultimately, however, there seems little reason to dissent from the view that whatever the particular pattern of their perspectives, most northern churches were unable to move significantly ahead of public opinion; as the leaders of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (AFASS) argued, the churches were "so entirely identified with the rest of the community,

that we are not likely to see them taking a stand, on any subject, greatly in advance of the body of the people".

The second element of McKivigan's argument, centring on the contribution of church-oriented abolitionists to the anti-slavery stand of the churches, demonstrates clearly that both wings of the abolitionist movement maintained close ties with organized religion. The schism in the AASS in 1840 derived in part from a conflict between the more orthodox, evangelical followers of Lewis Tappan, Joshua Leavitt and James Birney and the antinomian, perfectionist critics of mainstream religion, represented by William Lloyd Garrison and Parker Pillsbury. Yet many Garrisonians, as well as their critics in the AFASS, remained in church membership and worked in a variety of ways to promote the cause. Anti-Garrisonians in particular encouraged the setting up of inter-denominational antislavery societies and conventions designed to co-ordinate the abolitionizing of the churches, and in the late 1850s established a permanent Church Anti-Slavery Society, following the death of the AFASS. They worked to sever all links, including financial ones, between slaveholders and the "Benevolent Empire" of missionary and religious publication societies; largely falling short of their aims, they instead set up their own tract and missionary organizations.

McKivigan sees such efforts, together with the Garrisonians' wider influence over northern public opinion, as important contributions to the growing antislavery activism in the northern churches on the eve of the Civil War. The problem with this argument is that it estimates the unmeasurable. Antislavery sentiment did of course grow in northern religious circles in these years. But it is hard to prove that the abolitionists contributed significantly to this development. Certainly the harsh attacks that Garrison, Wendell Phillips and others launched on the orthodox churches were just as likely to alienate those disposed towards a moderate antislavery stand as to woo them. Far more evidently instrumental in moving the churches in the desired direction was the sequence of political events during the 1840s and 1850s – the annexation of Texas, the Fugitive Slave Law, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Dred Scott decision – which seemed to indicate that the southern "Slave Power" was intent on transforming slavery from a local practice of limited viability in the cotton states into a national institution. Northern public opinion interpreted these events partly through the lens of church membership. But it was not an abolitionist lens. Rather it was the lens of those uneasy about slavery, who wanted to see its extension thwarted, but who were aware that there were constitutional and racial barriers to its abolition.

One of that minority of churchmen who were, in fact, prepared to challenge prevailing public attitudes to slavery was Nathan Beman. In *A Divine Discontent* Owen Peterson offers a fascinating if deficient biography of this strong-willed, self-reliant, commanding but sometimes hasty and reckless man, whose stand against the South's "peculiar institution" contributed not only to the Presbyterian schism of 1837–38 but also to division in his own family. Beman was born in New Lebanon, New York, in 1785, grew up in an Episcopalian home, was

educated and ordained as a Congregationalist, and served as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Troy, upstate New York, for forty years. As teacher, editor, minister of the gospel and lecturer he threw himself energetically and uncompromisingly into crusades he considered essential to the advance of Christianity, education and American democracy. Beman was an early advocate of Charles Finney's "new measure" revivalism that swept across the north-eastern states in the 1820s and 1830s; he acted as host to Finney in Troy, and as "Warhorse of the New School" upheld in Church councils the revivals and their theological underpinning. This activist creed he carried into his battles against Catholicism, political corruption, Sabbath-breaking, gambling, prostitution - and slavery.

On this last his views graduated from defending colonization (that is, the voluntary emigration of free blacks from the United States to Africa) in the later 1820s to a fully fledged abolitionism. From 1835 he was active in the American Anti-Slavery Society, attacking the "hands off" policy of many clergy and on one celebrated occasion defiantly opening his pulpit to Theodore Weld, the Society's pre-eminent lecturer, in face of anti-abolitionist fury and the remonstrations of the city's mayor. At the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1837 Beman led those New School forces that failed to stop four northern synods being driven out for favouring novel theology and a sympathizing with abolitionism; in 1838 he was elected Moderator of the confused Assembly that saw the separation of New and Old Schools. His convictions hardened by time, he continued through the 1840s and 1850s to address the issue from his pulpit in both its political and moral dimensions.

In all this there might seem little to distinguish Beman from a score of other antislavery campaigners spawned by new school Calvinism and Finneyite revivals. Unlike Weld, Lewis and Arthur Tappan, Joshua Leavitt and others, however, he had known slavery at first hand and had the unique and poignant distinction of being stepfather to the radical Southern secessionist, one of the architects of the confederacy, William Lowndes Yancey. In 1813 ill health had sent Beman south to the academy town of Mount Zion, Georgia, and for the next ten years he was to serve in that warmer climate as a teacher and Presbyterian pastor. In addition to invigorating a struggling rural church, establishing an influential academy for the children of planters and founding a newspaper, he suffered the loss of his first wife and married Caroline Bird Yancey, the young widow of a South Carolina lawyer. Marriage briefly made Beman a slaveholder, for Caroline brought with her three slaves. At this time he was a firm colonizationist, clear that schemes of emancipation were "wild and destructive", but equally sure that Christians had a duty to improve the lot of slaves and to offer them instruction. Before accepting the call to Troy in 1823 Beman sold his slaves for \$700, an action that was to leave him open to the charge of "hypocrite" in his later, abolitionist years.

Under his stepfather's roof in Troy and in the northern academies in which he received all of his formal education, the young William Lowndes Yancey found himself exposed to Beman's Calvinist, revivalist, reform-oriented principles

and practice as well as to the continuing influence of southern values of privilege, aristocracy and propriety as mediated through his strong-willed, highly independent mother. New York and New England were given the child but they did not make the man: when Yancey returned to the South after ten years he was untouched by antislavery. Rather his stepfather's influence was more to be seen in his crusading zeal, in his determination – encouraged by religious conviction – never to compromise, and in the directness and earnestness of his oratory. The gap between Beman and Yancey widened as the years passed, though stepfather never publicly attacked stepson by name, even at the height of the crisis of 1860–61. Slavery was a solvent, too, of Beman's second marriage, for amongst the elements of discord was Caroline's difficulty in accepting her husband's denunciation of slavery as a sin, inconsistent with the Bible; in 1840 she returned to the South permanently.

Peterson's biography has clear merits, not least in setting out in straightforward fashion the major landmarks of Beman's career (British readers will find special interest in the chapter on his visit to England in 1839, when he addressed the Congregational Union and the New British and Foreign Temperance Society as an ambassador for revivalism, antislavery and teetotalism). It is particularly informative in telling the sad story of his second marriage. But, quite apart from its minor errors (an anachronistic reference to the Whig party in 1832 [p.197], the creation of a bizarre presidential candidacy in 1840 [p.194], the misdating of the delivery of one of Beman's important antislavery sermons in 1850 [p.198]), there is a weakness of contextual grasp which is signposted by the absence of important secondary works from the bibliography; where, for example, is George Marsden's study of New School Presbyterianism, or Leonard Richards's work on anti-abolitionist mobs, or Lawrence J Friedman's and Robert Abzug's important insights into evangelicalism and antislavery? The principal problem, however, is beyond Peterson's grasp: the lack of any diary or substantial corpus of private papers that can elucidate Beman's personal relationships. Without these our knowledge of this fascinating second-rank figure of nineteenth-century reform must inevitably remain incomplete.

At the other end of the spectrum from Beman's political involvement stood the social quietism of the ritualist denominations. Robert Mullin's fine monograph on high church Episcopalian theology and social vision indicates how one particular minority grouping fought to resist the pressure towards social action, on slavery in particular, exerted by the wider evangelical culture. After the Revolution Episcopalians faced the problem of self-definition and of recovering from their prejudicial association with the British establishment. Under the leadership of John Henry Hobart, Bishop of New York (1811–1830), high churchmen fashioned a new apologetic synthesis, one which turned for its authority to the pre-Constantinian church. Theologically, this incorporated an emphasis on the regular and continuous functioning of grace, in contrast to the conversion-centred approach of evangelicals. At the same time Hobart injected new life into Anglican devotionality. Unmoved by the evangelicals' vision of America as God's new Israel, with all that that implied for the sacralizing of

politics, and rejecting the Erastianism of the Church of England, the Hobartians found in apostolic exclusivity the justification for the sharp separation of secular and sacred. During the troubled 1830s, high church Episcopalianism, with its offer of social peace and order, achieved unprecedented influence. Thereafter, however, its position was eroded, as high churchmen divided in their response to the romantic movement, Tractarianism, and the political crisis over slavery. The Protestant Episcopal Church avoided the schism over slaveholding that shattered the unity of the major evangelical churches, but the rearguard action of high churchmen to keep religion and politics strictly compartmentalized finally yielded before the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter.

It is C.C. Goen's contention that what has been described above - the churches' marching very largely in step with public opinion - constituted a major failure of moral leadership. *Broken Churches, Broken Nation* adopts an explicitly critical perspective on the country's religious leaders for abandoning a truly prophetic ministry in favour of material sectional interests and institutional growth. Most modern historians would no doubt privately share his view of the churches' silence on racial issues, but Goen's harsh judgments, though elegantly presented, will seem to many to belong to the world of the moralizer rather than the professional historian. By failing to take a stand in what was a struggle over fundamental American values, he is saying, Church leaders increased rather than reduced the likelihood of bloody civil war.

Goen's lamentation comes at the end of a work that explores the ramifications for the American Union of the schisms in the major evangelical churches. In summary, he sees evangelical Protestantism as one of the most important bonds of social and cultural unity in the early nineteenth century. The largest Churches - Presbyterian, Baptist and Methodist - and the burgeoning benevolent and home missionary societies had national constituencies; their theology and practices served to bind men and women into structures that extended beyond the locality, state and section. When the agitation over slavery severed those bonds fifteen or twenty years before the civil war the consequences were more than symbolic. Schism encouraged the view that if ecclesiastical secession could be peaceable then so could political separation. It also created the conditions for growing mutual misrepresentation and recrimination between the sections. Moral outrage and a sense of moral superiority were at least partly sustained by distorted images - distortions which would have been less likely to exist in a world of communicating Christians.

Goen lays himself open to the charge of introducing a form of "religious determinism" into civil war historiography, but he is not saying that the Church divisions "caused" the civil war, rather that they made sectional abrasiveness all the more likely. He might, however, have made his point more tellingly if he had been able to illustrate it in more immediate human terms, to have shown how individual churchgoers could conflate their ecclesiastical and political loyalties. When northern ministers were tarred and feathered for daring to take the gospel into the border slave states, when northern and southern halves of divided

Churches looked ultimately to a Supreme Court for a fair distribution of Church property, and when its judgment appeared to favour the South, then the attitudes of northern churchgoers were already set into a mould of sectional animosity well before that animus was reinforced by the sectionally divisive political events of the 1850s. It is a shame, too, that Goen's "comprehensive" treatment makes no real attempt to unravel the significance of the religious revival of 1857-58; historians regularly nod in its direction, but seem confused about its actual meaning. Other questions emerge from this stimulating book. Does the author not exaggerate the extent of the support for "peaceful secession" in northern Churches during the 1850s? And if the majority of churchgoers were women (as they were), and if women's political and public role was conventionally limited (as it was), what does this mean for an argument that presupposes a strong connection between secular and ecclesiastical worlds?

During the Civil War the major northern Churches, at least, came to endorse the exclusion of slaveholders and to demand emancipation, but these changes seem perhaps little more than accompaniments to shifts in the wider public perception of what was best for the Union. Moreover, emancipation when it came did not revolutionise customary racial attitudes. One test of the depth of northern Church commitment to the ending of racial prejudice and to the advance of blacks to full equality with whites came in the aftermath of emancipation, when ex-slaves desperately needed material and moral support. Since James McPherson published *The Struggle for Equality* in 1964 a number of historians has investigated northern humanitarians' role in the post-Civil War South. Joe Richardson now adds a study of the work of the American Missionary Association, a body composed largely of anti-Garrisonian abolitionists and Congregationalists, whose importance during the after the Civil War derives from its work as a fund raiser and as a pioneer of black education.

Richardson brings a sympathetic but not partisan eye to bear on the AMA. He shows how it began by offering freedmen material relief, spiritual uplift and common school education during and immediately after the war but turned later to providing normal schools and colleges for the training of black teachers. The Congregationalists Lewis Tappan and George Whipple, and other AMA leaders, convinced of the blacks' innate capabilities, regarded Christian education as a means to the "social emancipation" that had to follow the Thirteenth Amendment. Their desire to train up blacks to citizenship and incorporate them into a casteless society fused with urgent demands for education from freedmen who had learnt that knowledge was power. The AMA chartered seven colleges between 1866 and 1869, and trained over 7,000 of the 15,000 black teachers at work in the South by 1888.

According to Richardson the AMA was more successful than other organizations because it enjoyed good relations with the government-established Freedmen's Bureau and because it received support from northern Churches during years when secular giving dried up. But whereas McPherson considered the AMA's evangelicalism helped it in its overtures to southern blacks,



Richardson maintains that the association's lack of sympathy for black religion explains why in over thirty years "intellectual" Congregationalism made only a feeble impact on freedmen. Richardson examines the AMA's challenge to the South's racial code and shows how this faltered in the face of southern opposition and northern indifference. He describes vividly the sufferings and hardships that courageous missionaries and teachers faced.

It is a shame that Richardson tells us so little about the religious content of teachers' training. More seriously, although he may be correct to indict AMA teachers for paternalism, a conviction of Yankee cultural superiority and insensitivity to the blacks' own culture and religion, he tends to lose sight of the fact that this was the corollary of the evangelical Protestant imperative that sent them south in the first place. But this is a good book, well produced and illustrated, valuable not least for reminding us that, whatever the temptation to write off the Churches of the Civil War era for their moral cowardice in the face of insensitive public opinion, there were many courageous exceptions to Miss Martineau's rule.

RICHARD CARWARDINE

*The Unitarian Heritage: An Architectural Survey of Chapels and Churches in the Unitarian tradition in the British Isles.* By Graham and Judy Hague. Pp.156. Sheffield, Unitarian Heritage, 1986. Obtainable from Rev. P.B. Godfrey, 62 Hastings Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S7 2GU. £10.00 inc. p.&p.

Ninety years ago, in 1897, when George Eyre Evans published his *Vestiges of Protestant Dissent* he wrote to a fellow Unitarian minister to complain that "enthusiasm amongst our men and people for any research into the history of old Dissent is at a very low ebb"; many of his letters of enquiry had gone unanswered. Of his book he added "we are funny folks; one man wants much less in it and a cloth cover... another congratulates me on the paper and uncut edges; another finds fault in the rough paper and complains of the trouble of cutting the edges" whilst another "comes along and tells me he worships in a "Unitarian chapel" and in reply to my modest answer that the building in which I hope he regularly says his prayers is by its trust deed erected for the use of "Protestant Dissenters" he quotes the gilt letters on the notice board!" It is unlikely that any member of this Society will fall into the error of supposing that "The Unitarian Heritage" is any more the exclusive preserve of a single denomination than are the mediaeval parish churches which we have long been taught to admire. That so many of our ancient meeting-houses are now in the care of societies which describe themselves as Unitarian is a quirk of history, for in their turn these buildings have served many masters and rounded to many and varied doctrines. Not all that felt the cold wind, as some would say, of Arian preachers continued along that road, some congregations reverted to their earlier orthodoxy whilst others divided and built new chapels which now form another part of our Nonconformist Heritage. Had the "orthodox predators", as our authors call them, who first set covetous eyes on "the Unitarian chapel in John Street, Wolverhampton" in 1816 not been prevented by the Dissenters'

Chapels Act from amassing further spoils might this not now have been a United Reformed Heritage? But the only beneficiaries at John Street were the lawyers whose fees exhausted the trust funds. Little enough now remains for congratulation in the case of Risley Chapel, which was more successfully rescued from the heretics, and ministers and congregations may well be thankful that their Unitarian brethren still care, however reluctantly, for so many major monuments of our common past.

Graham and Judy Hague have interpreted their title in a liberal way to embrace much that might appear peripheral to its denominational limitations. The presence of Bullhouse Chapel, Penistone, whose Independency seems as immovable as its gritstone walls, will cause some surprise; it qualifies on the grounds of the heterodoxy of one or more of its late eighteenth-century ministers. On this definition of a "Unitarian chapel" few early buildings can escape notice, though strangely Tunley Chapel, Wrightington, which did pass through such a phase and was one of the few early meeting-houses to belong to the Presbyterian Church of England, has failed to achieve a mention. Likewise the Lower Meeting-house, Darwen, its interior now sadly disfigured, is absent - though Nightingale records that its minister in 1791 was "Unitarian in his views, and of doubtful moral character" - attributes which do not necessarily go together.

Though Unitarian in content the book is trinitarian in arrangement, each of the eight chapters being divided in a manner which should delight the orthodox, into three parts. First there is a general discussion of the period or location covered by the chapter, the last three being devoted to Wales, Scotland (by Andrew Hill) and Ireland (by John McLachlan). Then follows a descriptive gazetteer of relevant chapels remaining in use by Unitarians, and finally a more extensive list of "disused and demolished chapels" which includes those still in use by other denominations. The general accounts of developments in chapel building will be found particularly helpful to those whose knowledge of nonconformist architecture has not extended much beyond their own immediate neighbourhood or denomination. The great variety to be found amongst the buildings of that amorphous group of societies and denominations which since 1928 have been gathered under the banner of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches will never cease to amaze. The homely little chapels of the Old Connexion General Baptists, the scant but important reminders of the Cookites and Barkerites, the occasional Universalist meeting, and above all the Presbyterian and Independent meeting-houses, some dating from the first short-lived attempt to union, give a broad conspectus of Nonconformist architecture which, but for the absence of a Quaker strain, might appear complete. There is much here of direct relevance to later Presbyterian or Congregational Churches. The Ancient Chapel of Toxteth, a puritan foundation of 1618, was the first home of the founders of Great George Street chapel, Liverpool; the Great Meeting, Hinckley, bears witness to the early preaching of "the great Independent Philip Doddridge"; the Octagon Chapel, Norwich, was influential not only on the design of Methodist chapels but also

on some Congregational buildings, such as the forerunner of Lion Walk, Colchester; and Matthew Henry's Chapel, Chester, a sad loss, where a gallery was added in 1706 "for use of Independents in the congregation".

Readers with detailed knowledge will inevitably find some errors of fact, such as the two Chichester chapels (p.44) which should be dated 1721 and 1728, or the unguarded repetition of ancient fables as (p.25) that in early meeting-houses "steeples and the ringing of bells were forbidden". The quality of architectural criticism is not enhanced by describing Belper chapel as "the upper segment of a cube", and a failure to note that a pediment has been removed from the front of Bury St. Edmunds or that the cusped circular window formerly at Brixton was not original emphasizes the need for circumspection. But errors of this nature, though unfortunate, do not invalidate the importance of the achievement in providing the first comprehensive study of its kind which not only includes all the chapels in use by the denomination throughout the British Isles but also the very numerous places which have at one time or another had some connection with it. The mere task of visiting and collecting information is immense and the presentation of the results accompanied by numerous photographs and other illustrations does great credit to all concerned. Some improvements might be suggested. Two pages of plans do little to add to our knowledge, nor do the pages of sketch elevations which might have been more useful if accompanied by a critical appraisal. But, in all, this is a book which Nonconformists, architects, historians and many others will find fascinating and instructive; at a price which can barely cover the costs of publishing it must be the bargain of the year.

C.F. STELL

### APT FOR GOD'S WORSHIP

Three recent publications - the most recent of them exemplary but not generally available - testify to the ripple effect which chapel architecture begins to have in informed quarters.

*Nonconformist Chapels in Staffordshire* is a draft report which was authorised for consultation by Staffordshire's County Planning Committee's Countryside Sub Committee in April 1986. Such an initiative is to be welcomed and its merits widely canvassed. It embraces two workmanlike surveys, on background and buildings. The former falls for the unsatisfactory cliché that congregations "drifted" into Unitarianism; and it might, for completeness' sake, have added the Wesleyan Reform Union to those Independent Methodists who resisted Methodist Union in 1932, and sketched in the formation of the United Reformed Church forty years on. The latter assumes that the chapel building tradition faltered from 1890 and ended in 1914. That is not true, as conservationists are already beginning to discover. These, however, are quibbles vanquished by the report's third survey, entitled "Redundancy and Re-use", by an inventory of Staffordshire chapels, and by two appendices which deal with grants, planning and the law. These clinch the report's usefulness as a probe for

conscience and consciousness alike; and readers of this *Journal* will be interested to note that of thirty-five "Congregational" chapels in this strongly Methodist county, fifteen are "listable" (although only four of them are in fact listed, twelve of them still in use); ten are worthy of preservation (seven of them still in use); four are of some merit (all of them in use); and only six are of little architectural or historic interest. If this is how those harassed but knowledgeable souls, the planners, see us, we need to take note, if only for defensive action.

*Hallelujah! Recording Chapels and Meeting Houses*, 1985. Pp.66 (obtainable from the Council for British Archaeology, 112 Kennington Road, S.E.11 6RE, £2.95) is a spur to offensive action, although agnostic ministers and all church secretaries would be well advised to buy a copy as a defensive measure. This is a handbook compiled by the Council for British Archaeology's Nonconformist Working Party, an advisory and monitoring body spearheaded by Christopher Stell. Its aim is to stress the part which individuals and local groups can play in studying and recording the chapel side of our architectural heritage. Its assumption is that no chapel is safe and that each chapel shares in that most urgent of contemporary needs - the eternal vigilance which is the price of liberty. Its method is first to ask and then to answer the question: "But what do we see in these places?"

Like the Staffordshire report, *Hallelujah!* has a chapter on architectural and historical background. Indeed, it comprises half the book. It is, however, an admirable chapter, stepping with some delicacy and precision over what is never less than a minefield, bringing in Moravians, Catholic Apostolics, Roman Catholics and Christian Scientists (the last by virtue of a photograph. The illustrations and plans are crucial to the whole). The account of Kings Road Baptist Church, Reading, is a model of authoritative concision and contexting and that of Ringwood Unitarian Church is particularly well served by an isometric drawing.

Thus stimulated, the reader is ready to learn how to find a chapel and what, record-wise, might be found within it and about it. Once found, the chapel must be recorded and the reader, transformed now into an "enthusiastic amateur... standing.. with clipboard and measuring rod in hand", is told how to do this and is promised a future, indeed an eternity, of "unlimited opportunities and unending pleasure". With the record straight, the reader is next told what to do with it (a typescript for the library, a checklist for the record office, a note and query for the local journal). And there is a note on planning law.

*Hallelujah!* is painless and informative. It is out to make converts, but it will also provide guidance, even enlightenment, to sceptical church officers mystified at the increasing importunities of amateur conservationists. Indeed, organisers of Junior Church and F.U.R.Y. groups should take note of the possibilities afforded by this fresh perspective on partners in learning.

*Hallelujah!* is English. *Welsh Chapels* is by the director of the Glasgow School of Art (Anthony Jones, *Welsh Chapels*. Pp.87, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, 1984. £3.25). This too is a missionary work, made memorable by 118 black and white photographs and sixteen plates in hauntingly effective colour.

The illustrations provide the *hwyl*. The text is less memorable. Certainly a gift for apt quotation and the telling phrase makes a strong case for "the most expressive architecture in Wales", indeed for Wales's *national* architecture, with chapels like barns, "granaries of God", "apt for God's worship", as if the barn were a "deeply-embedded moral imperative, a race-memory", and with pulpits from which the preacher commanded "like a captain on the bridge of a ship". This is splendid. What is not so satisfactory is the failure to pursue the subtle architectural implications of varying churchmanship. There is another flaw. The author is wedded to a thesis which is curiously limiting, and almost Pevsnerian: Wales's national architecture is a Welsh vernacular which flowered until overcome by the modish influences, via England, of "architecture", in the shape of France, Italy and German. These are dismissed as decadence, as eccentric visions, as the "eclectic borrowings and eccentric conglomeration of fads and fancies", as "the horrors that litter the period". This is good fun but it is very unfair. There is more to Tabernacle Congregational, Milford Haven (1909) or even Crwys Road Presbyterian Cardiff (1899) than decadence. To an English eye most of the chapels illustrated in *Welsh Chapels* seem Welsh: they would not be found in an English town. Does this suggest that one should look again at this supposed lack of distinct "style" of Welsh chapel architecture as it developed from the 1870s, and anchor it more rigorously in its social and ecclesiastical context? Bethesda, Ton Pentre (1909), and Tabernacle, Cardigan (1870) are no less respectably expressive than Capel Pen-rhiw (1777). And it is as unhelpful to say of Wales as it is of Staffordshire that in "1914, the First World War, chapel-building comes to a halt". But the illustrations are superb. For them all can be forgiven. *Hallelujah!*

J.C.G.B.

## REVIEWS

*Saints: Visible, Orderly and Catholic: The Congregational Idea of the Church.* By Alan P.F. Sell. Pp.173. World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Geneva and Pickwick Publications, Allison Park, Penn., U.S.A. 1986. Obtainable from URC Bookshop, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT. £5.50.

Dr. Sell, who has been Theological Secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in Geneva since 1983, has not forgotten that he is a minister of the United Reformed Church and a member of our Society, and this he proves with this fresh examination of the Congregational tradition from Browne and Fitz to Huxtable and Jenkins. A decade after the formation of the United Reformed Church and at a distance from it, Dr. Sell began asking what had become of the Congregational Way within the new Church.

The distinctiveness of this Way is what he terms "grounded saintship". Those who follow it are not simply individual Christians who meet to worship and receive teaching; they are joined one to another in fellowship, members of the

body of Christ, and "together they comprise that corporate priesthood of believers whose members enjoy direct access to the Head". But how has the idea stood up to the winds of change? And how have Congregationalists viewed meetings such as Synods, which hold the ground between the local congregation and the Church Catholic?

Dr. Sell offers a comprehensive survey of what Congregationalists have said about these matters. If anything, he overdoes quoting from them. A vast range of people is quoted and the references take up forty pages. So there is less commentary than one would like to see and what suffers in particular is discussion of the influence of secular ideas on our traditions. Politics, urbanisation, education, even ecumenicism are kept beyond the scope of the study. Should they be?

The conclusion is eventually reached that the URC Basis of Union preserves the essence of grounded sainthood, but the author has real doubts as to whether the practice of the churches, particularly over standards of membership, discipline and admission to the Sacraments "is as faithful to its principles as even it might be". We should be grateful to Dr. Sell for tackling the subject in depth and getting it published.

JOHN H. TAYLOR

*The Covenant of Grace in Puritan Thought.* By John von Rohr (AAR Studies in Religion 45. Scholars Press, Decatur, Georgia). Pp.226. Cloth. \$18.95.

Here is an interesting book with a correct but hardly inspiring title. It could have been called "The Heart of the Puritan Gospel", for by the end of it, the reader will feel he understands, and perhaps even sympathises with, the teaching and preaching of the Puritans. What they preached about is far from dead today. What is the relationship between God and man? What are their roles? What weight is to be given to each? If God is gracious and forgiving, why do Law, morality and obedience matter?

John von Rohr, Professor Emeritus of Historical Theology and History of Christianity at Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, California, has spent much of his life familiarising himself with the vast literature of Puritanism, particularly of the earlier phase before the Civil Wars. It was twenty-five years ago that he contributed to our predecessor, the CHS *Transactions*, an article on Henry Jacob. This book is a cornucopia overflowing with choice quotations from Puritan writings and sermons. William Ames on faith has a liturgical ring: "to believe in God is... to cleave to God, to leane on God, to rest on God". To those of little faith, John Rogers says: "A weak hand receiving a gift, makes the gift our own, as well as if it were received with more strength." And to those in doubt William Perkins says, "Hee which never doubted of his salvation, never beleaved."

Von Rohr traces the beginnings of Covenant Theology to the Reformers' return to Scripture for guidance and finding there from the Book of Genesis onwards the Covenant theme. He goes on to describe the nature of the Covenant of Grace and whether it was conditional upon the believer's behaviour. Next

comes the Puritan understanding of Christian growth, with God as the "heart-mender" (Robert Harris). The chapter on Predestination will probably be the one most readers will fix their attention on, and there we are shown how Puritans saw the doctrine as their greatest blessing: "our Election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant and unspeakable comfort" (Church of England Article XVII). The pastors laboured, on the one hand, to overcome the doubt and despair of those who judged themselves reprobated, and on the other, to shake the complacency of the carefree. Orthodox Puritans were in the most difficult position for they tried to steer a middle course between Antinomianism and Arminianism and were bound to veer from one side to the other.

This fascinating study is too limited. One wishes there were some treatment of the political application of the Covenant. What of the preachers who addressed Parliament? And what of the Scottish influence? The other weakness of the book for the reader without a great knowledge of the period is that the effects of passing time on Puritan thought - we are talking of say four generations - do not stand out clearly. Indeed, more historical commentary and less quotation might have made the book even more profitable.

JOHN H. TAYLOR

*Philip Doddridge (1702-51) and the Netherlands.* By J. van den Berg and G.F. Nuttall. Pp.110. E.J. Brill/Leiden University Press. Publications of the Sir Thomas Browne Institute, New Series, No.8. Leiden, 1987: 40 guilders (U.S. \$18.25).

When the time comes for a systematic account of relations in religion between the British and Dutch to be written, as it surely ought to be, this small book will be a useful foundation for work on the eighteenth century. Though one imagines that Professor van den Berg is primarily responsible for the Dutch background and Dr. Nuttall for the English, they are, according to the preface, jointly responsible; and no better qualified or more harmonious partnership could easily be imagined.

Doddridge was never in the Netherlands, and there is no sign here that he read Dutch, although he had a few Dutch pupils in his Academy at Northampton. He used the seventeenth-century Latin works of theologians like Marckius and Witsius as text-books but not, it would appear, those of any Dutch contemporaries. He did correspond with the ministers of English Reformed churches in the Netherlands, such as David Longueville, and was sufficiently interested in Dutch affairs at the time of the French invasion of 1747-8 (which he saw in the same light as the Popish invasion of Britain in 1745 by Bonnie Prince Charlie) to write two *Addresses to the Protestant inhabitants of the United Netherlands*: he thought that the Dutch should turn away from their sins, for he was critical of Dutch religious life, in particular their neglect of family prayer and (like Puritans of the Stuart period) the laxity of their Sabbath observance; he hoped to see William IV of Orange as a worthy successor to "that illustrious hero", William III.

The main theme of the book however is the impact of translations of Doddridge's devotional and theological writings upon the Netherlands; the hymns for which he is now best-known were not translated until the mid-nineteenth century. Such translations were not new, for the works of many Puritan and other divines had appeared in Dutch: according to Schoneveld, 46 editions of Perkins appeared in translation in the course of the seventeenth century. It is difficult to be sure how widespread a knowledge of English was; too much should not be made of difficulty in finding translators, for experience shows only too clearly that it is possible to get the sense of a book in a foreign language without being able to attempt a translation for publication, but translations must greatly have increased Doddridge's readership in the Netherlands. Some thirty editions and reprints appeared in his lifetime or in the generation after his death.

Though it is impossible to be precise about the extent of their influence, it is clear that a distinction must be made between devotional and theological works. In the former the combination of a rational outlook with a genuine evangelical piety which avoided any danger of a cold and formal religion gave him readers in the Netherlands as it did in England. Publishers competed for his books, and amongst those commending him was the Theology Faculty at Leiden. Posthumously, however, his reputation was mixed up in the theological controversies of the age between the moderates in the Dutch Church who did not want a rigid enforcement of the doctrines of the Synod of Dort and the High Calvinists who insisted on confessional purity. The same moderate, irenic and "Baxterian" outlook which brought him many admirers led others to attack him (like Watts) as a dangerous heretic, and opponents like Van der Kemp were able to confront him on the basis of extracts from his *Course of Lectures* which suggested Arianism. The truth was that Doddridge allowed his students to make up their own minds without pressure, and fell into the familiar and ill-understood habit of putting the pros and cons of the case. It is significant that among his publishers Tirion was a member of the unorthodox Collegiants, and most of all his middle way between Arminianism and Calvinism was thought too close to the doctrines of the Remonstrants. These controversies are briefly explained and the conclusion that Doddridge's was "a genuine contribution to the revival of religion in a country for whose well-being he was deeply concerned" seems well-justified.

K.H.D. HALEY

*A History of the Manchester and Salford Shaftesbury Society.* By Ian H. Wallace. Pp.38. (Privately published, 1987. Obtainable from Mr. R. Edgerley, 5 Holt Street, Peel Green, Eccles, M30 7HQ. Price £1 plus p.&p.)

Ian Wallace is an example of the local minister in pastoral charge who contributes to our understanding of the local church history of the area in which he serves. In truth he has become (in the best possible sense) a part of that history himself: the current URC *Year Book* shows only two surviving pastorates longer than his thirty years at Patricroft.



The Shaftesbury Society is the fairly recent name for what used to be, in the blunter Victorian terminology, the Ragged School Union. In this little book we are given vignettes of a past society: the Manchester area in the generation or two following the notorious description of its horrors in Engels's *Condition of the Working Class*. The work among the most deprived children has taken various forms over the decades, not least in taking them out of the smoke and grime of the city (not wholly gone still and certainly not forgotten) into the fresh air. Rowarth or Birkdale must have been fresh indeed by contrast, though Heaton Park could hardly have been a trip to paradise.

It has been a worthy cause, with good church people at the heart of it. The later sections of the account reveal increasing uncertainties; deprivations remain, but they are often more subtle, and a trip to the sea no longer meets the need.

STEPHEN MAYOR

*A History of English Christianity, 1920–1985.* By Adrian Hastings. Pp.720. Collins, London, 1986. £25.00.

This is a very large book. Its author, Adrian Hastings, succeeded David Jenkins in the chair of theology at Leeds. He sees his book as "some sort of sequel" to Owen Chadwick's *The Victorian Church*, and also as some sort of counter to the tendency amongst historians to "oversecularise English history" and "to draw a veil of silence over the Church". That is a valid point, as is the obvious counter that English history has indeed become more secular. His preface continues with three further points: first, even such a large book on such a subject needs drastic exclusions; secondly, it is based overwhelmingly on secondary material which has "notable gaps"; thirdly, it is very idiosyncratic. "The book depends unblushingly upon my own view of things – a personal judgement as to what really matters and why it matters".

This is a perfectly valid criterion for an author to adopt and it is clear, from his treatment, that he thinks the Free Churches "really matter" much less in 1985 than they did in 1920. Moreover, even at the start of his period, the signs of decay and decline were there behind an outwardly impressive facade.

There is an easy quantitative measure of this: the book has only two chapters devoted solely to the Free Churches – one in the section "1920 and Before", and one on the 1930s. For subsequent years there are three chapters headed "Anglicans and the Free Churches" and the latter tend to take less and less space in these. On a crude page count the Free Churches take just under one tenth of the book. Now it is incontestable that the years Hastings covers did indeed show a massive and accelerating decline in adherents, but, at their opening, in Hastings's own words, Free Church people, while certainly not half of the nation, were "Certainly... a good half of the English men for whom religion meant anything much".

In part his portrait is structured both by the evidence available – in easily accessible secondary form – and by his treatment of it, and this would make an interesting extended historiographical piece, but more important is his central thesis that the Free Churches were increasingly insecure on their hold of the

essentials of a truly dynamic, and therefore viable, faith. A man like Forsyth could try to re-emphasise essentials, but he was "hardly heard", in a period when the Free Churches were "near mortally weak in theology", and when "Eucharistic minimalism only formed part of a far wider negativity displayed by pure unestablished Protestantism towards the wider practice of religion and the relationship between religion and life". Behind the outward apparent success of the late nineteenth-century Free Church was a bleaker reality, "Its mind and policy most emphatically controlled by elderly traditionalists, its atmosphere quite other than free". As the period progressed there were changes but "the continual process of assimilation towards "ecumenical" and "Catholic" religious attitudes subtly undermined, especially for the young, the justification for independent existence". Again this central thesis could do with fuller examination, as could the generally skimpy discussion of politics. For the moment let the engrained habit of decades of reading books with an examiner's eye take command. Here are ten questions and assertions for discussion, each based on a quotation from Hastings:-

- 1) "The Free Churches grew within them [the suburbs] as a duck in water".
- 2) "By the late nineteenth century the English Free Churches were near mortally weak in Theology".
- 3) Was the key divide between early twentieth-century Anglicanism and the Free Churches "A contrast between sacrament and sermon"?
- 4) "The history of the Free Churches is, to a very considerable extent, the history of the movement from the congregational to the denominational model".
- 5) "Nonconformity was rendered viable in relatively large scale modern terms but at the cost of much that was most characteristic of it".
- 6) "Little more than institutionalised emotionalism and moralising". How fair is this comment on the inner religious life of the Free Churches?
- 7) "Too little doctrine and too little sacrament".
- 8) "What had gone was the sense of daring, of desire to scale the height of national life". Was this true of the 1930s Free Churches?
- 9) "Why do all this and remain a Congregationalist?" Discuss with reference to Principal Micklem's inter-war career.
- 10) "One step forward, the creation of a rather temporary tent". Is this a fair description of the formation of the U.R.C.?

E.P.M. WOLLASTON