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**CONTENTS**

Editorial .....	509
Geoffrey Nuttall: Early Modern Historian by <i>Patrick Collinson</i> .....	510
“With a Well-Tuned Heart”: a Birthday Tribute from Friends by <i>Raymond Brown</i> .....	513
Geoffrey Nuttall: Librarian by <i>Ronald Bocking</i> .....	525
Geoffrey Nuttall and Three Libraries by <i>John Creasey</i> .....	529
Scholar and Humanist: Reminiscences of a Chinese Student by <i>Tai Liu</i> .....	532
Geoffrey F. Nuttall: a Bibliography 1977-1996 compiled by <i>Tai Liu</i> .....	534
James Birdwood and the Quakers: a Note on an Ejected Minister by <i>Geoffrey Nuttall</i> .....	544
Logical Nonconformity? Conscientious Objection in the Cambridge Free Churches after 1914 by <i>Andrew C. Thompson</i> .....	548
The Presbyterians in Liverpool. Part 4: A Survey 1919-1939 by <i>Alberta Jean Doodson</i> .....	561
Reviews by <i>Peter Newman Brooks, Stephen Mayor and David M. Thompson</i> .....	565

**EDITORIAL**

None will deny the appropriateness of printing, to coincide with his eighty-fifth birthday, a bibliography which lists the published work over the past twenty years of Geoffrey F. Nuttall, Past President of this Society and formerly Editor of one of this *Journal's* two forerunners. It is to be feared that Dr. Nuttall will disapprove of the decision to accompany the bibliography with five celebrations of himself as historian, pastor, teacher, lecturer, librarian, scholar and humanist, not in that order but interchangeably, with a ministry of friendship (and a rare

genius for it) as the common thread. Dr. Nuttall will disapprove of the principle and be dubious about any precedent which it might set. Mercifully he is sufficiently imperfect to enjoy what has so willingly been written. Consequently the editor's sole embarrassment is that he could and should have asked many more to enlarge on what has been written here.

This issue may properly be regarded as a birthday present for Geoffrey Nuttall, but it retains more normal elements. These include, quite uncontrived, a paper from Dr. Nuttall. His first contribution to this *Journal's* predecessor, *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, was in 1931, when he was an undergraduate at Balliol College, Oxford. It is appropriate, and again uncontrived, that this issue should include a paper from Andrew Thompson, who is reading History at Queens' College, Cambridge. Of the other contributors, Patrick Collinson was formerly Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge; Raymond Brown is a Baptist minister who was formerly Principal of Spurgeon's College; Ronald Bocking is a United Reformed Minister who formerly taught at New College, London; John Creasey is Librarian of Dr. Williams's Library; Tai Liu is Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Delaware; and Alberta Doodson is Secretary of Rankin Memorial Church, Liverpool. Our reviewers are from Cambridge: Peter Brooks is a Fellow of Robinson College; Stephen Mayor, until this year Chairman of this Society, taught at Westminster College; and David Thompson is a Fellow of Fitzwilliam College

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### GEOFFREY NUTTALL: EARLY MODERN HISTORIAN

The bibliography appended to Geoffrey Nuttall's 1977 *Festschrift*<sup>1</sup> contained not far short of 300 items (including reviews), 150 of which were already in print before this writer (who has now reached retirement age) had published anything at all. After 1977 there have been twenty more years of steadily productive scholarship, including a work of consummation, *The Correspondence of Richard Baxter*,<sup>2</sup> but not, happily, of conclusion, since Dr. Nuttall's pen is as active as ever. This is a scholarly marathon embarked upon in 1931 and still being run, sixty-five years later. It is, in our own age of excessive specialisation, a uniquely eclectic and varied record for a scholar reckoned to be, and rightly so, an "authority", in Geoffrey Nuttall's case not so much "an" as "the" authority on the history of

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1. Tai Liu, "A Bibliography of the Writings of Geoffrey P. Nuttall 1977", in *Reformation, Conformity and Dissent: Essays in Honour of Geoffrey Nuttall*, ed. R. Buick Knox (London, 1977).
  2. N.H. Keeble and G.F. Nuttall, eds., *Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1991).

English and Welsh Nonconformity. The bibliography reveals a lifelong engagement with Erasmus, read, as he should be read, in the great *Opus Epistolarum* of P.S. Allen; a sympathetically critical account of the liberal high churchman, Bishop Charles Gore, delivered in Westminster Abbey by an uncompromising and uncompromised Nonconformist; writings on violence, war and suffering, by this most Quakerly of Congregationalists; and occasional items in Welsh. When Dr. Nuttall published his Sir D. Owen Evans Memorial Lectures on *The Faith of Dante Alighieri* (1969) there were reviewers who complained that this was not a subject which the author was supposed to know about. But it was a book written from the heart. "I find the *Divine Comedy* an inexhaustible source of inspiration and delight"; delight which, he tells us, began precisely on 26 August 1932 (soon after my third birthday).

But I have been asked to write about Geoffrey Nuttall as an "early modern historian", a construction we use of ourselves as a means of professional identification, but a kind of leg-iron to attach to a scholar whose scope is so much larger than that, and more spiritual, the spirit linking the Bible read and appreciated in the original languages, Bernard of Clairvaux, Dante and Erasmus, with what in a collection of *Essays and Addresses* published in 1967 Nuttall called *The Puritan Spirit*: "that spirit which has driven man at all times to seek a purer way of life, one that was simple and good as opposed to the conventionalities and corruptions in the world around them": a spirit so variously manifested in Sibbes, Owen, Cromwell, Baxter, Fox and Doddridge.

Writing about Richard Baxter in the early days of his encounter with that towering figure (the elderly F.J. Powicke, an Elijah to Geoffrey's Elisha, had said, "read Baxter, read Baxter, read Baxter, ... you will never regret time spent on him"), Nuttall warmed to his "true blend of the spiritual and the rational". No doubt Nuttall was discovering in this admired figure, as we all tend to do, a reflection of qualities which he desired and indeed exemplifies within himself. This is what John Huxtable meant when he called Geoffrey Nuttall, with precision, "an exact and sympathetic" historian.<sup>3</sup>

On the one hand, we have the exact rationality of the historical record, something not to be compromised, nor argued with. Some say that Geoffrey Nuttall's bedside reading consists of Alexander Gordon's articles on the Nonconformists in the *Dictionary of National Biography*; which, if Gordon had never lived, he would have done better. (Nuttall calls the Baxter article in the *D.N.B.* "not very satisfying": a signal here, perhaps, to Professor Colin Matthew, editor of the *New D.N.B.*). Many daylight hours have been spent, in reviews and in correspondence, correcting historical and factual errors in the work of others. We have all known what a dreadful thing it is for our slipshod scholarship to fall into the hands of the living Nuttall. (I shall never forget being told that one of my own lectures was "good rather than very good"). The rationality of Nuttall is the rationality of the definitive calendar of Baxter's correspondence, completed in

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3. *Reformation Conformity and Dissent*, p. 11.

harness with Dr. (now Professor) N.H. Keeble. But with the rational, there is also the sympathetic, the spiritual and ineffable, Nuttall the Dante of back-street conventicles (Rutherford's Tanner's Lane and Eliot's Lantern Yard, *Inferno* or *Paradiso*?), ministers' studies, and of all questing spirits.

The core of the life-work of this very special kind of early modernist consists of his studies of the major figures and tendencies within seventeenth-century English Dissent, with the great editorial work on Baxter preceded by a biography (1965);<sup>4</sup> but with a significant outreach into Wales,<sup>5</sup> and into the eighteenth century, with the work on Doddridge, but including eighteenth century Wales.<sup>6</sup> The core of the core is represented by two books by which Geoffrey Nuttall will always be best known to other historians of the seventeenth-century: *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (1947), and *Visible Saints: the Congregational Way 1640-1660* (1957).

*Visible Saints* contains the essential history of seventeenth century Congregationalists, essential in its concentration on ideal essences. Its chapter-headings run: "Come Ye Out: the Principle of Separation"; "Unto One Another: the Principle of Fellowship"; "A Willing Ideal: the Principle of Freedom"; "Be Ye Holy: the Principle of Fitness".

But *The Holy Spirit* is perhaps the more important book, written at a time when Puritanism was still sovereign, as yet unchallenged by "revisionisms" of various kinds, at the peak of its appeal and importance to early modern historians (J.E. Neale, Christopher Hill, William Haller and Perry Miller were all at work), and which went to very near the heart of the matter. When the leading historian of Puritanism of our time, Professor Peter Lake of Princeton, rediscovered the book in 1992, writing his Introduction to a University of Chicago Press reprint,<sup>7</sup> one is made to share his sense of appreciative excitement. Lake calls the book "an attempt to recreate, to imaginatively inhabit, and to analyse the thought world, the spiritual climate or atmosphere of radical Puritan piety." For me *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* is the greatest apologia for the holistically spiritual reality of Puritanism as religious experience, lived out in the creative tension between word and spirit, and against the incarnation of experience in the institutional church with its sacraments and discipline; but, ultimately, with the Quakers, who cannot be understood outside this tradition, making the attempt (which in the nature of things could never succeed) to escape from institutional constraints altogether.

PATRICK COLLINSON

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4. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *Richard Baxter, "Leaders of Religion"*, (London, 1965).
  5. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Welsh Saints 1640-1660: Walter Cradock, Vavasor Powell, Morgan Llwyd* (Cardiff, 1957).
  6. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *Howel Harris 1714-1773: The Last Enthusiast* (Cardiff, 1965).
  7. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience, With a New Introduction by Peter Lake* (Chicago, 1992). I believe that I am correct in reporting that the reprint was not authorised by Dr. Nuttall and was something of a surprise.

## “WITH A WELL-TUNED HEART”: a Birthday Tribute from Friends

Throughout life Geoffrey Nuttall has proved with Baxter, “He wants not friends that hath Thy love.” As one of his many friends, and with special help from a number of them,<sup>1</sup> I offer this birthday tribute to an outstanding Christian scholar and prolific writer, focussing particularly on some of those qualities of heart with which he has enriched the lives of others. Gifted with a capacious intellect, he has always been interested in the “heart” as well as the mind, persuaded, again with Baxter, that the “transcript of the Heart has the greatest force on the hearts of others.”<sup>2</sup> It is “The Heart of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*” which enthral him,<sup>3</sup> and his fascination with letters is not simply that they “excite a historian by their immediacy” but because, as he discovered in the Doddridge correspondence, something of the writer’s “heart may still be found in them.”<sup>4</sup>

### I

People in various parts of the world have valued Geoffrey Nuttall’s capacity for warm and well-sustained friendship. His interest in others has often meant that initial, almost casual, introductions have developed into lifelong friendships of intellectual and spiritual significance. As a young Congregational minister in his first Church, Ronald Ward wrote to Geoffrey Nuttall, asking him to address his congregation on the subject of pacifism: “Having abandoned the pacifist position myself, I wanted them to hear a point of view different from my own.” He could scarcely have imagined that their first meeting, more than forty years ago, would mark the beginning of “one of the most rewarding friendships” of his life.

In the early 1950s a Methodist postgraduate student came to London to work at the Institute for Historical Research. At that time his supervisor was out of the

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1. In preparing this article I have been greatly helped by the written contributions of Revd. Eric S. Allen, formerly Moderator of the Mersey Province of the United Reformed Church, Dr. Alan Argent, Minister of Trinity Congregational Church, Brixton, Revd. Stephen Copson, Secretary of the Baptist Historical Society, Professor N.H. Keeble, University of Stirling, Edward Milligan, former Librarian of the Society of Friends’ Library, London, Dr. John Newton, Warden of the New Room, Bristol, Dr. W.T. Owen, retired Welsh Independent minister, Dr. Nigel Smith, Fellow of Keble College, Oxford, Revd. Ronald Ward, retired minister of the United Reformed Church and Dr. Edwin Welch, Hon. Archivist, Cheshunt Foundation, Westminster College, Cambridge.
  2. Richard Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, 1696 I. 1. 157, p. 108.
  3. The title of his contribution to P.N. Brooks, ed., *Reformation Principle and Practice: Essays in honour of Arthur Geoffrey Dickens*, 1980, pp. 229-239.
  4. “Philip Doddridge in his Letters” in R.L. Greenall, ed., *Philip Doddridge, Nonconformity and Northampton* (Dept. of Adult Education, University of Leicester), 1981, p. 3.

country but this young “stranger to the capital” became a guest student at New College where Geoffrey Nuttall taught Church History. John Newton’s subject was early seventeenth-century Puritanism in the Diocese of York: “I had no idea, in my ignorance, that the New College church historian was one of the foremost authorities in the world on English Puritanism. Chesterton says in his study of Dickens that sometimes the young and green are ‘taken in’ not in a duplicitous, but a gracious sense. Geoffrey, who had no formal responsibility for me whatsoever, took me in. He was more to me than an academic adviser; he was friend and father-in-God.”

Another London research student graciously “taken in”, again over forty years ago, was W.T. Owen, a London minister eager to work on Edward Williams. He says that, realising that his prospective student had at that time little experience of academic work at that level, Dr. Nuttall insisted on seeing him every week in term over the minimum period of four years allocated to him, as a full-time minister, by the university authorities: “During the first six months especially he painstakingly guided his raw recruit and taught him the technique of research and presentation. The relationship between mentor and pupil during those four years developed into a very close friendship.”

That eagerness to help others has continued into a creative retirement, nor are his interests narrowly confined to ecclesiastical history. Scholars of other specialisations, particularly those sharing his love of English Literature, regularly find their way to his welcoming home. Nigel Smith recalls: “Geoffrey’s published work was easily the most important and helpful scholarship for me when I was writing my thesis in the 1980s. I spent hours poring over library catalogues and bibliographies, making sure I had digested all that there was. Yet I avoided making contact because I knew he was retired, and I was at first wary of what seemed to me a great rigour. Could such an exacting mind be pleasant company? Imagine my delight, having trudged through a clinging frost from Bournville station, thesis in hand as a votive offering, at sitting in Geoffrey’s snug living room, animatedly unpacking our common puritanical interests, and giving each other our own life-histories. It was as if I walked on air when returning to Oxford.” Friendship of such quality transcends the generation-gap, and yet, as Nigel Smith asks, “is it not remarkable that Geoffrey can construct a friendship with someone who is forty-seven years his junior?”

## II

Geoffrey Nuttall’s appreciation of friendship is given most characteristic expression in his letters. He has “always liked letters as a genre” and during his Oxford days “greatly admired the scholarly edition of Erasmus’s letters”<sup>5</sup> by P.S. Allen, an enthusiasm maintained across a lifetime and expressed in his perceptive

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5. *Ibid.*

reviews of the Erasmian correspondence. For several summers his Swiss holiday luggage included either a newly published volume of the letters or a book on the contemporaries of Erasmus. In the quiet beauty of Oberhofen he enjoyed their literary delights and, through them, renewed his wide knowledge of the friends of Erasmus during that formative century, admiring the great Christian humanist's pursuit of truth, especially that "inward Christianity that charmed thousands of men and women bringing the sublimities of the Gospels and St. Paul close to their minds and hearts."<sup>6</sup> There is "the heart" again. And from the letters of Erasmus, first read at Oxford, to those of Doddridge. Once settled in Wiltshire as a young Congregational minister in the immediate pre-war period, he began serious work on the letters of Northampton's famous eighteenth-century minister, borrowing from Dr. Williams's Library the five volumes edited by Doddridge's great-grandson, J.D. Humphreys, and beginning a work of persistent dedication which led almost forty years later to his comprehensive *Calendar of the Correspondence of Philip Doddridge DD (1702-1751)*.

That fascination with letters was also extended throughout a lifetime to the voluminous correspondence of Richard Baxter. Neil Keeble, his co-ordinator of the more recently published two volume Baxter *Calendar* (1991), writes warmly of Geoffrey's own vast correspondence with his friends, predicting that "when the letters his many correspondents have received from Geoffrey Nuttall are finally gathered together in Dr. Williams's Library - as surely they must be - pretty well every British and American seventeenth-century scholar, great and small, of the second half of this century will be represented among them. Now that faxes have been overtaken by e-mail, letters are well on the way to becoming curiosities, an outmoded form. His will probably be one of the last great correspondences, but not merely because of its scale and range." Geoffrey Nuttall has "what one might venture to call a 'congregational' notion of the academic life; he believes in a community of scholars bound together by commitment (and not by promotion prospects, by the imperatives of assessment ratings, by the needs of appraisals or tenure), working in harmony and mutual support. Like his admired Richard Baxter, he develops and sustains friendships through correspondence, and is always ready and willing to reply to any serious and honest enquirer, no matter what might at the time be pressing upon his attention (Jesus, I have heard him remark, seems not to have minded being interrupted). No matter, either, his enquirer's insufficiency, so long as he be a true seeker: while, like Greatheart, Geoffrey Nuttall admires 'a man of his hands', he also, like Greatheart (or, indeed, Cromwell) has it in commission for the weak as well as for the strong."

Professor Keeble continues, "So it is that, over the years, the steady succession of visitors to Queen Mother Court who have signed the visitors' book at no. 35 (with a line left carefully blank between each entry to keep the record clear) have

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6. "Erasmus and Spain: The Vision of Marcel Bataillon" *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 45, No. 1 January 1994, p. 108.

there found not only encouragement for their own work but an update (a word of which he would not approve) on other current projects. Very many of us first learned of each other through conversations at no. 35 and were first put in touch through addresses there given."

Many are the academic projects, books and articles which have been inspired by his contacts and correspondence with others. Edwin Welch first met Geoffrey Nuttall while planning a 1662 exhibition for Plymouth, recalling that a "visit to New College Library not only provided material but also the perfect person to open the exhibition with a speech designed specifically for the occasion. He was not exasperated when I re-appeared a few weeks later asking for similar material on Southampton. As the newly appointed City Archivist my first task was to produce a similar exhibition at record speed."

In the autumn of 1966 Dr. Welch received a postcard which read, as far as he can remember, "Cheshunt has found its archives. You should try to go to Cambridge": "I followed his advice literally by becoming Churchill College's first archivist - a position which allowed me to spend Saturdays with the Cheshunt records." That postcard led eventually to his biography of the Countess of Huntingdon (*Spiritual Pilgrim*, 1995), as well as to a wider interest in English Dissent. Its author says: "It is typical of his kindness and helpfulness that, having read my life of Lady Huntingdon in typescript, he volunteered to read the page proofs too - but with the proviso that they must be timed to the period when he had finished reading the proofs for one friend and was awaiting the proofs from another."

### III

Those who have had this kind of contact with Geoffrey Nuttall are aware not only of his generosity in helping others but also of his passion for thorough and accurate work. Like many others, Alan Argent appreciates the way he is "prepared to set at one's disposal the enormous range and depth of his learning and wisdom" so that he "can become the world's most accomplished research assistant whose knowledge of the sources is unmatched."

Dr. Argent believes that, in part, this is "because he embodies those sources. He not only emerges from the dissenting tradition but he is unashamedly the dissenting tradition, and delights in being a 'living archive'." Geoffrey Nuttall gives his visitors his undivided attention, but this does not mean that "he tolerates nonsense. He complimented me on one article I had written and then stated my next paper was 'not my best work'. He can be devastatingly dismissive of sloppy writing and bad history and is scrupulous in his comments on grammar" and accuracy in footnotes.

In Neil Keeble's experience, if "their responsiveness and warmth is a marked feature of Geoffrey Nuttall's letters their distinctiveness lies in the combination of this quality with a determination to get things right. He has - and it is another Baxterian



quality - a very high regard for accuracy as essential not only to clear thinking but to truthfulness. Sloppy scholarship deceives the reader and betrays its subject."

"Getting things right" is not easy; it takes time and effort. Geoffrey Nuttall shares with the old Puritans a horror of time-wasting and a consequently indefatigable capacity for hard work. His phenomenal industry is evident not only in published projects but in those less likely to be publicly recognised, such as his making his way steadily through the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, noting inaccuracies and inconsistencies for the benefit of a later edition, and through the entire *DNB*, sending cards of comments to OUP. (How many editors involved in its revision will have read it through in its entirety?). Just such scrupulous attentiveness and diligence is at the service of friends and acquaintances. Mention of any seventeenth-century figure will procure, if not at the time then by the next post, genealogical webs of stunning intricacy and finesse. Mention any name, certainly in the early modern period, but probably till the present day, and forthwith first and second cousins are welcomed, with several removed pressing at the door, in-laws, step-relations and assorted liaisons. There are not many historians of Puritanism and of Nonconformity who could - and will - draw you a table of Charles II's mistresses with their illegitimate offspring.

#### IV

But, as Neil Keeble also says, though "accuracy is undoubtedly a necessary virtue, it is not a sufficient virtue. While no one can spot an error more sharply than Geoffrey Nuttall (witness the marginalia in any book he might subsequently lend or give to another) no one is less satisfied than he with work that is drearily factual and pedantically precise throughout. In scholarship there should be something of what, in the devotional life, we would call the spiritual, in the creative life, the imaginative. (It is no wonder that George Fox has such an appeal for him). The past must live. The ability to recover the felt experience and beliefs of the past through a combination of rigorous scholarly research with imaginative sympathy is a quality he shares with two contemporary historians whom he perhaps most admires, and with whom he forms a remarkable triumvirate: Sir Richard Southern and Professor Patrick Collinson."

This "imaginative sympathy" also features in his appreciation of beauty in nature. He tells us that the poet Rainer Maria Rilke learned from Rodin the importance of concentration and "a feeling for stillness" so that, "sensitive to both the little things and the infinities, he might ... look out into the distances, responsive to whatever came to him from out the mysteries with which the earth is crammed."<sup>7</sup> It may be something of what Geoffrey Nuttall values in the Tractarians, their sensitivity to "the invisible world", and what another favourite,

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7. "Conditions of Inspiration: The Formation of Rainer Maria Rilke", *Journal of Theological Studies*, new series, Vol. XXX, Part 2, 1979, pp. 481-98.

Francis Thompson, expressed in familiar verse,

The angels keep their sacred places;-  
turn but a stone and start a wing!

'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangèd faces,

That miss the many-splendoured thing.

His letters, especially during a holiday or after a journey, are vivid and graphic, replete with descriptive detail, exploring not only the natural but the spiritual, quick to point beyond the immediate to the ultimate. Remembering that Geoffrey once told him that, "having studied Baxter, he felt as though Baxter was present, looking over his shoulder", Nigel Smith believes that "Geoffrey has this gift of presence and immediacy too.": "I returned from staying for the first time with Geoffrey in Switzerland and told my wife how Geoffrey had sat above the church at Hilterfingen on a bench under a spreading shady tree, and, observing the tranquil beauty as well as the utter regularity of the scene, remarked that he imagined that this is what heaven would be like. Tears came to her eyes, such was the keen vitality of that image."

Among the letters of over twenty years, I treasure a passage written after a visit to that parish church at Hilterfingen where

there were all the unchanging elements of an experience so identical from year to year as to seem to reflect a divine eternity rather than mere earthly regularity or Swiss clockwork - *from* the steamer majestically coming in, the shining white on the blue of the lake, then passing along below me, half hidden by the trees, and the church clock immediately striking the quarter, and a moment later the bells ringing out calling to church in their tumbling symphony, with an occasional deep-voiced low bell that carries me back to the Elisabethkirche at Marburg, *to* the still, calm, clean, rational, four-square interior of the church, its white-glass windows decorated only by modest coats of arms, with its 'brave pulpit high above the people' (as Matthew Henry would say), a sandglass still projecting from it and greenery dangling in a streamer from it. 'For nothing changes here'. I give thanks for the mercies and care that have preserved me through another year and brought me here again, and pray that I may be kept faithful, and to the end.

Many of his friends have memories of country drives with Geoffrey Nuttall as their able navigator, armed with maps and guide-books as well as his well-stored mind, often in pursuit of some leading personage or family in Puritan or Dissenting history, though not remotely confined to ecclesiastical interests. Edwin Welch recalls that "his conversation is full of interesting comments about such things as hedges in Hertfordshire, and the difference between punting in Oxford and Cambridge."

John Newton has special memories from his teaching years at Richmond of an annual summer day out when he "provided the transport - an antique Morris 8 (1940 vintage) - and Geoffrey planned the routes, provided lunch and gave a memorable commentary on all the sites we covered."

"One year we went to Essex - to Navestock where the great Stubbs had been

rector, who boasted that he ‘knew every toe of every babe born in the parish’. ‘Not surprising’ Geoffrey commented, ‘when you see how small the place is’. Then we went on to Thaxted, and talked of Conrad Noel’s ministry; and went to Finchingfield and other delectable villages. Another year we were in Buckinghamshire, visiting Amersham, Chesham, the Chalfonts, Jordans. We picnicked in a wood on a perfect summer’s day and, while we ate, Geoffrey read me extracts from a thesis he had been sent to examine. They were golden days, unforgettable, and I still relish their memory, and the generosity of the one who devised them.”

Stephen Copson remembers a particular day when such explorations led to momentary embarrassment: “Confronted by a suspicious man who aggressively asked what you are doing scrutinising his house, it is not the easiest thing to explain that it might have been the home three hundred years ago of Freelove Collett. That Geoffrey managed to convey that in such a way that not only did we overcome suspicion but also learned something about the surviving Colletts in the area says something of the quality of Geoffrey’s gracious manner.” Their expeditions have taken them “far and wide: among them detective work about Thomas Hall’s books and a forage ankle-deep in autumnal leaves in search of Dr. Dale’s grave; visits to Harvington Hall to see the priestholes and to Shrewsbury School in search of Philip Henry manuscripts. At Sweeney, looking for a memorial plaque to Walter Cradock, octogenarian knees almost proved the undoing of scholarly rigour. Walking on the Malverns, who else would quote Housman from memory and of course always the habitual nod to RB on the Kidderminster ring road.”

## V

William Law reminds us that it “is not by chance that any man is born at such a time, of such parents, and in such a place and condition.”<sup>8</sup> Geoffrey Nuttall’s love of genealogy and the ongoing story of families is born out of his own indebtedness to the Nonconformist tradition in which he was nurtured. Such gratitude has made him sensitive to family life within his wide circle of friends. Ronald Ward’s experience is matched by others: “As the years have passed he has become so much a part of my family that he may well feel, as we do, that he is almost a member of it. Of course he always towered above us intellectually, with his formidable memory, and his copious store of knowledge and experience. But even when my sons were schoolboys they never thought of him as a remote figure, certainly not a dull one. He is too stimulating a companion for that, sometimes eccentric and always endearing. I remember that once he sent the children a volume of poetry, and one of them said, ‘How kind of his highness to think of our

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8. William Law, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, chapter XXII.

lowness!' - this with a beaming smile of mischievous affection."

I recall an occasion he was staying in our home at Spurgeon's College during a difficult time in the life of one of our children. As the fearful child left for school, Geoffrey gave his quiet, compassionate support - a reassuring smile, a gentle touch of the hand and, speaking softly, a quotation which would have made the tears stand even in Bunyan's eyes, "Fear not the lions, for they are chained."

Recollections of Geoffrey Nuttall's own childhood are happy; they tell of Christian faith visible in everyday conduct. When he went away to school, letters played an important role in confirming that security and nurturing life's enduring values. His debt to the personal example of both father and mother is incalculable. Not long before his mother died in May 1931, after eleven months' struggle with cancer, when she was but fifty and Geoffrey nineteen, she marked a "Little Parable" in her copy of the *Christian World* :

"We stood on the cliff, and watched the ship dip over the horizon, and turning homeward said, 'She's gone!'. But the helmsman stood at the prow, parting the seas to gleaming shores."

One Easter, Geoffrey Nuttall repeated those words to me, adding "It is fifty years ago, but I have never forgotten that silent witness to her faith, which she spoke about less than my father did, who was more demonstrative. But 'No, don't turn to the door or anywhere else', she wrote to me when at prep school I declined to turn to the East with the other boys when on Saturday evenings the Creed was recited, 'but turn your heart to Jesus'." "May I do so", Geoffrey added, "unto the end."

## VI

His interest in early Quakers treated their history "as of first importance, because it indicates the *direction* of the Puritan movement as a whole." His years at Woodbrooke as Research Fellow (1943-45) led not only to an Oxford DD, (becoming, at that time, its youngest recipient and only the second Nonconformist to be awarded the degree) but "also provided something of yet more importance" than excellent resources for historical research, what he described as "the life and fellowship of the Spirit"<sup>9</sup> which he shared with Friends throughout his stay. That creative *koinonia* included his meeting with, and subsequent marriage in the autumn of 1944 to, Mary Powley, "a slight figure, keen blue eyes, an aspect serious, kind and purposeful." Mary was a war widow, ten years his senior, and their complementary partnership of thirty-eight years "bore fruit in widening circles and made their home a place of stimulating talk and generous hospitality."<sup>10</sup>

Edward Milligan says that "looking at them together it's so easy to see their

9. *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, Oxford 1947, p. ix.

10. *The Friend*, July 16, 1982, pp. 877-78.

differences - to see Mary as impulsive and Geoffrey as cautious; to hear Mary's voice as aggressive and strident, and Geoffrey's as persuasive and quiet; to watch Mary working herself up over gin traps, or slavery, or women's rights, or the Sexual Offences Act, and to see Geoffrey, on occasion, just a little worried lest her temperament might affect her health. But it's what they shared that's important and this, in any relationship, often defies analysis and may well be intrusive even to reflect upon. But it was a relationship based on a shared commitment to Christian discipleship - the expression of it may have been in different (sometimes very different) ways but the commitment was firmly shared and equally deep. I think of their after-breakfast Bible reading as a great unifying event in their lives."

Of course, "he was at New College when she was at one committee or another. She was assiduous at attending the meeting for church affairs connected with Golders Green meeting", and devoted herself to other responsibilities among Friends involving her in a wider range of social, political, economic and ethical issues, stretching the mind as well as stirring the conscience. She would frequently travel to Geneva for meetings at the United Nations and "was assiduous in assimilating committee papers and other material which would enable her to contribute with an informed mind as well as a frequently impassioned heart." Another Friend said that, "wherever people were gathered to work for better conditions for women and for peace, Mary might be found" and that to each experience she "brought a purity of wisdom and freshness of perception infinitely touching."<sup>11</sup>

Mary Nuttall's death in 1982 was a great loss but Geoffrey Nuttall's links with her work and interests continue with his nearby Woodbrooke contacts as well as with Birmingham Friends. He knows the historical context, leading personalities and spiritual traditions of Quakerism and, as Edward Milligan says, "has often expounded Quaker insights to others, often more effectively than Quakers have been able to do themselves. He has also on occasion provided Friends with salutary lessons by reminding them that some of their insights are not only (as they fondly thought and too often also said) unique but were shared by many of their fellow Christians; and also by reminding them that by whoring after strange gods they are being untrue to the witness to which they are called. He has been rightly critical of the danger, perhaps inherent in Quaker theology and certainly evident in much Quaker experience, of so emphasising the immanence of God as to seem to neglect, and often actually to neglect, his transcendence." A number of his addresses to "help Friends to be better Friends and to contribute their own insights more effectively to our common vision of God" were, in 1958, gathered in *To the refreshing of the Children of Light*, a year in which he and Mary spent some time at the Quaker settlement at Pendle Hill, Pennsylvania.

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11. *Ibid.*

## VII

Something must be said about his love for Wales, its language, culture, faith and history. W.T. Owen speaks for many in the Principality when he mentions "his abiding interest over the years in Welsh religion and literature, even to the extent of mastering the Welsh language well enough to be able to study the works of the Welsh mediaeval poet Dafydd ap Gwilym. Born and brought up in North Wales, he has been intensely interested in Welsh ecclesiastical history and has enriched it with lectures delivered from time to time in the Welsh university cities, with many articles in Welsh periodicals and especially with the two volumes published by the University of Wales Press, *The Welsh Saints* (1957) and *Howel Harris* (1965)". His contribution to Welsh ecclesiastical history was publicly recognised by the award of the University of Wales Hon. D.D. in 1969 and his election as a Vice President of the Hon. Society of Cymmrodorion in 1978. He has frequently acknowledged his indebtedness to Welsh scholarship and "possibly no historian was more admired by Geoffrey Nuttall than Dr. R.T. Jenkins of Bangor whose racy style of writing appealed to Geoffrey immensely".<sup>12</sup>

## VIII

Geoffrey Nuttall has not only been an avid reader of other people's work; he has enjoyed producing his own. He was destined to be a scholar and writer from the start. In the course of a walk with his mother during a school vacation, she asked about the Reformation. After sharing what he knew, his mother said he had been speaking on the topic for thirty-five minutes and that he ought to write it all out when he got home. He did, and produced his first essay in Church History. Writing, whether letters, articles, reviews or major books, has been one of life's delights, and what a magnificent literary contribution it has been. During the past sixty-five years he has given us about forty books, published lectures and pamphlets, over 300 articles and around 270 substantial book reviews, and innumerable shorter items. Moreover, the work goes on; free from other responsibilities, he has produced marginally more articles for learned journals in his retirement years than during his active teaching career.

Even his letters are, as Ronald Ward reflects, "not infrequently works of art", always sensitive to the thought and concerns of the recipient of the letter as well as his own wide interests. Nigel Smith recalls that "in some earlier letters, he built his sentences out of phrases from the prose of Virginia Woolf, making the literary experiences of his youth meet with my experiences as a tutor in English literature.

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12. "The Genius of R.T. Jenkins", *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1978, pp. 181-94.

(Of course, I didn't catch the subtlety of this at first!)" Geoffrey Nuttall's articles and printed lectures, always produced well in advance of deadlines, usually pass through at least five or six drafts before they begin to give their author some sense of satisfaction.

Wide reading, aided by an astonishingly retentive memory, soon becomes evident in his own prolific writing. Neil Keeble marvels that though "he centres on what he calls his 'great four' - Baxter, Bunyan, Fox and Cromwell - he can talk wonderfully of Thucydides, Aeschylus, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Rilke, Dafydd ap Gwilym, spanning literatures, cultures and religious allegiances with extraordinary catholicity. I have heard no one speak more movingly of Mary Tudor." That last revealing comment is, perhaps, a fitting point with which to turn to Geoffrey Nuttall's pastoral sensitivity.

## IX

Although the close of his Warminster ministry in 1943 marked the end of a full-time pastorate as such, Geoffrey Nuttall has never ceased to be a pastor in his teaching, preaching, writing, and at the personal level in his conversation and especially through his letters which have become vehicles of continuing pastoral concern. Ronald Ward recognises that Geoffrey Nuttall is "a brilliant conversationalist and letter writer. But admiration for brilliance is not the stuff of friendship. As a scholar he is known far and wide, but not everyone knows that within the scholar is a Christian pastor, one it is good to know in time of trouble. There must be many that have found strength through his practical realism, and comfort through his unfailing kindness."

The pastoral dimension frequently emerges in his writings, as in his published lecture on James Nayler. At its close, Geoffrey Nuttall says that

theologically Nayler did in his last years provide something of the balance needed over against Fox, which psychologically he had always provided. In Fox, even in his earliest strivings, there is, in Neave Brayshaw's words, 'no confession of yielding to temptation.'<sup>13</sup> Now to Fox's tremendous idealism, to his conviction and triumphant exhibition that 'the power of the Lord is over all', we owe a debt that is immeasurable. I have tried elsewhere to give full weight to this.<sup>14</sup> But for less heroic souls a rigorous (not to say rigorist) perfectionalism easily becomes a shallow humanism, in which sin is overlooked not overcome. For a balanced theology Nayler's realistic perception that the struggle with sin continues and Nayler's pity for the bemused, backsliding Christian, are indispensable. For *we* do yield to temptation all too often. When we do, the thing to remember about Nayler is

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13. A.N. Brayshaw, *The Personality of George Fox*, 1933, p. 20.

14. Introduction to John Nickalls's edition of *The Journal of George Fox*, Cambridge, 1952, pp. xix-xxxvii.

not that he fell but that by God's grace he rose again, that he came *through*. "Though at some times the clouds may be so thick, and the powers of Darkness so strong in your eye that you see him not, yet love him and believe, and you have him present": that is the message of James Nayler.<sup>15</sup>

There is the sensitive pastoral touch, that combination of gentleness and strength which Francis Paget saw in Pusey and to which Geoffrey Nuttall drew attention in his devotional study of the loving kindness of God.<sup>16</sup> They are spiritual qualities in a man of whom, as Nigel Smith believes, "we should not be averse to saying, as would have been said of him in another age, that he is angelic, combining the friendly compassion of a Raphael with some of the judgmental severity of a Michael. Can there be anyone who has so faithfully excelled in living out their principles of ministry, scholarship and fellowship?"

He has enjoyed a wonderfully creative retirement. Honours have continued to come to him - Visiting Professor and Fellow of King's College, London, election as a Fellow of the British Academy, as well as invitations to give special lectures, and write essays for *festchriften* presented to distinguished colleagues. His scholarship has enriched our minds and widened our horizons, but it is the warmth and integrity of Geoffrey Nuttall's Christian commitment, reflected in all he does, that is a continuing inspiration. Eric Allen has valued his friendship since student days, and always invited him to lead in extempore prayer at his inductions. He cherishes many of his former tutor's sayings: "In matters of conscience there is no majority", and "One must have faith for oneself - but not by oneself". Frequently in ecumenical discussion, Eric Allen has often been helped to "appreciate the nature of true dialogue which allows us to bear authentic witness to the truth, whilst allowing the other equal opportunity to witness to their strong convictions." Over the years he has especially valued what Geoffrey shared in his study of Christian Pacifism:

It is easy enough to believe in a thing passionately and to try to force it on others. It is also easy enough to be indifferent. It is difficult to believe in a thing passionately and to want others to believe in it too, but still to respect their personality and spiritual autonomy and seek only to persuade them, and to win their willing mind.<sup>17</sup>

Over sixty years ago Dr. F.J. Powicke discerned that "willing mind" in the young Geoffrey Nuttall. He was the first to invite him to read Baxter and, says Geoffrey, "urged me so solemnly that I could not but feel he looked on me as his Elisha."<sup>18</sup> What outstanding distinction he has brought to that succession and with what responsibility for the future, for, by his warm and practical encouragement,

15. *James Nayler, A Fresh Approach*, 1954, p. 20, quoting Nayler, *Milk for Babies*, 1661, p. 3.
16. *Better Than Life*, 1962, p. 65, cf. Francis Paget, *Faculties and Difficulties for Belief and Disbelief*, 1916, p. 128.
17. *Christian Pacifism in History*, Oxford 1958, p. 61.
18. *Richard Baxter*, 1965, pp. vii-viii.



he has cast his own mantle over the shoulders of others. On his eighty-fifth birthday they, with many more, greet him with immense gratitude and wish him many happy and fruitful years to come.

RAYMOND BROWN

### GEOFFREY NUTTALL : LIBRARIAN

For thirty-two years Geoffrey Nuttall was Lecturer in Church History at New College London; and for some years adding Elementary Hebrew which he also taught to good effect having a deeper sympathy with the average student than might have been the case with a specialist Hebraist. During that time he influenced generations of men and women training for the ministry by his combination of high academic standards and deep personal faith. In this he mirrored the best of those beloved Puritans of the seventeenth century, his chosen specialist period, into whose lives and times he entered so sympathetically. Moreover, anyone who has heard him read the Bible, pray and preach in the college chapel or elsewhere, has been left in no doubt that Geoffrey Nuttall is first and foremost a minister of the Gospel who has always seen his work in the college and beyond as the exercise of that ministry.

Another aspect of this sense of purpose lies in his quiet persistence in achieving a goal. In 1945 the period of Church History was up to 461AD; in later years students were taken through the whole sweep of the history of the Church, culminating in the English Dissenters. Such persistence also showed itself in the changes in the college library and its place in the world of scholarship.

New College London was a river fed by many tributaries: In 1850 Homerton, Highbury and Coward (the direct descendant of Philip Doddridge's Academy at Northampton) Colleges came together to form New College, located at Swiss Cottage, Hampstead. In 1924 there was a further amalgamation with Hackney College, established in 1803 to train ministers for the Village Itinerancy, which in 1887 had moved to the Finchley Road site on which the final New College was located. All these colleges, and their preceding academies, had contributed their libraries with their separate classifications. The resultant jumble, not helped by the upheavals of the war years when the college buildings were taken over by a government ministry, meant that half of the library was, in effect, uncatalogued. The Revd. James Binns, who had been both Secretary and Librarian since 1934, had kept order in the modern section, but had never found time to tackle the older books. This must have tried Geoffrey Nuttall's patience as he pursued his historical researches, though it was well known among the students that the small bay in which he was often to be seen, held a splendid collection of funeral sermons.

In 1958 James Binns retired and his work divided: Margaret Canning became Secretary and Geoffrey Nuttall Librarian. Both were excellent appointments and the reports on the Library often refer to the help given by Miss Canning and her

assistant Mrs. Smith.

The task before him was formidable, there being somewhere between twelve and fifteen thousand books to be sorted and then to be catalogued. Sometimes there were duplicates and a decision had to be made as to which to keep and which to make available to fill up gaps in, say, Dr. Williams's Library. Cognisance had to be taken not only of the condition of a certain book, but also to whom it had previously belonged; for some had been bequeathed by Philip Doddridge or John Pye Smith to the academies of which they had been the Principals. Occasionally much older volumes, even incunabula, would come to light. Soon it was clear that this library had a treasure which should be made available to the wider world of scholarship, and by February 1960 the Executive Committee had agreed to employ Miss J.M. Procter as a part-time cataloguer under Dr. Nuttall's supervision. He then estimated that the work should take two to three years, in fact, by the summer of 1962 the work was done. For this massive task as Librarian Geoffrey Nuttall received an honorarium of £50 p.a.; the truth is that it was really a labour of love.

I can still picture Geoffrey Nuttall moving swiftly about the library, gown billowing out behind him, running briskly downstairs to see whether this book in his hand was in Wing's "Short Title Catalogue" (of works published between 1641 and 1700) and feeling excitement if it were not; for that meant that New College might hold the only copy of an early book whose provenance had not previously been known. There were such finds and later records show that eminent scholars came to see treasures which he had unearthed: from the Bible Society to see Bibles and Testaments from the sixteenth century, William Carey's New Testament in Bengali (1801) or the two copies of Luke's Gospel in Malagasy (1828), the first book to be printed in that language; from the Jews College London to see the six volumes of the Amsterdam Babylonian Talmud (1644-7); from the Natural History Museum to see the fifteen works by Linnaeus in the section on Botanica; from Oxford to see Erasmus's Leiden Opera (ten vols. in eight 1703-6). So one could go on. There were found to be some 4,000 Funeral Sermons (1611-1863), including the 1,900, preached between 1577 and 1866, gathered by Charles Godwin, bookseller of Bath, into a bound set of volumes, with its own manuscript catalogue; all valuable source material on people's lives.

The modern part of the library was not forgotten. Library business was put on a disciplined footing and Miss Procter completed her time by checking that the cataloguing of this part was correct.

Discovering precisely what was present in the library was one thing; being able to use it another. For some books needed rebinding before they could be frequently handled. By the middle of 1962 it was reported that of the 7,229 volumes from the academies, no less than 1,528 were in need of repair. Clearly a college which could only allocate little over £100 p.a. for new books could not finance such an operation. Thoughts had for some time been turning towards the Pilgrim Trust and at the meeting of the College Board in January 1963 it was reported that a grant of £4,000 had been made "for the repair of certain categories of books in the Library". This work was quickly put in hand.

The process of cataloguing had revealed how important a collection of Nonconformist history and theology was held at New College. Several volumes were not held at Dr. Williams's Library, some not even by the British Museum. But however valuable a collection, it is of no use to scholars unless they know that it exists and is accessible. Moreover the college library also contained a considerable number of manuscripts of great historical interest, including a collection of those written by, and relating to, Philip Doddridge. These too needed putting into order, listing, and their location made known. Geoffrey Nuttall accomplished this end with his usual skill.

During the latter part of 1964 Sir James Fergusson, Keeper of the Queen's Records in Scotland, visited the college to see four manuscript letters in the Doddridge Collection. Impressed by the collection he asked permission to tell the Historical Manuscripts Commission about it. Subsequently the Secretary of the Commission visited and offered help, at no cost to the college, with the listing and arrangement of the manuscripts. The resultant lists would be filed in the National Register of Archives, copies being supplied to the college and other libraries. At its meeting in January 1965 the College Board accepted the offer, though not permitting access to Minute Books after 1910.

In a lecture given in 1977 Geoffrey Nuttall revealed that in 1959 the late Professor W.A. Jackson of Harvard University had visited the college library and had been excited by what he found. As a result he accepted New College as an additional location in the new edition of Pollard and Redgrave's "Short-Title Catalogue" (books published in Great Britain and Ireland, and English books printed abroad between 1475 and 1640). This really was to join a small and distinguished company.

It is one thing to read what an author has written, or to learn how an academy was organised (Philip Doddridge's rules for the Northampton Academy, then on display at the college were particularly interesting for the alterations he made, no doubt occasioned by someone finding a loophole). But one is left with the desire to know how the person looked. In this respect New College was particularly fortunate in its collection of portraits, many in the Board Room and the Dining Room. So, in 1966 Geoffrey Nuttall invited the Assistant Keeper of the National Portrait Gallery to visit the college. The result was a request to photograph the portraits of twenty-six who were mentioned in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. This was done the following year.

All this had been accomplished in a relatively short time. At their meeting in June 1970 the Governors of the College, noting that Geoffrey Nuttall had completed twenty-five years on the staff, passed a special resolution of appreciation of his service as Lecturer, Pastor, Scholar, and of his involvement in the work of the University, adding:

The governors recall with gratitude that it was largely through his efforts that the Pilgrim Trust gave a substantial grant to the Library and that the Historical Manuscripts Commission offered to catalogue the College's numerous and valuable manuscripts. As a result the College is becoming known throughout

the world as the custodian of material which is of great interest to scholars, particularly those interested in the Dissenting Academies. The Board is glad, therefore, of this opportunity of placing on record its sense of indebtedness to Dr. Nuttall for all that he has done and is doing for the benefit of the College.

That resolution is a reminder that all the work on the college library had been done in the midst of a busy life. Apart from lecturing and preaching, a steady stream of articles and reviews flowed from his pen. For two years he was Dean of the Faculty of Theology in the University, and for another period Chairman of the Board of Studies in Theology. His election as President of the Ecclesiastical History Society 1972/3 was further recognition of his standing in the world of scholarship, a standing eventually given widest recognition with his election as a Fellow of the British Academy. But his first concern was the educating of men and women for the Christian ministry and this meant that their needs and concerns, let alone those of the many Ph.D students whom he supervised, also made proper calls on his time.

Nevertheless, by the time of that congratulatory resolution the work on the library had been done, insofar as that can be said of any library. All was catalogued, put into good order, and becoming widely known for its treasures for the scholar to explore. Yet, in the Minutes of that same Board Meeting mention was made of a forthcoming enquiry into the governance of the University of London. It was like the Biblical "cloud as small as a man's hand" and was to prove as overwhelming. Four years later the blow fell.

The Theological Faculty of the University of London was formed in 1900 by using the resources of the theological colleges in the area (Hackney, New, Cheshunt, Regent's Park, Richmond, and St. John's Hall Highbury - to be joined in 1908 by King's College Theological Department). The teaching of the faculty was drawn from those colleges; for instance, Sydney Cave, Principal of New College, was a Professor of Theology in the University. This state of affairs continued until two University Professors (in Old Testament and the Philosophy of Religion) were appointed in the late 1940s, to be followed in 1958 by the creation of several Professorships and Readerships in Theology, all based at King's College. The University was taking responsibility for funding the teaching of Theology. The theological Colleges, known as Schools of the University, were not eligible for any grants from the University Grants Commission.

By 1972, when Richmond College closed, the only Schools left from the early days were New and King's College Theological Department; though these had been joined by the Roman Catholic Heythrop College on its move to London from Oxfordshire.

The proposals from the University enquiry (The Murray Report) were that the theological "Schools" should use the facilities now available at King's College for the academic teaching of their students and themselves be concerned solely with those matters which related directly to the students as ordinands.

This was to cut right across the ethos of New College, which had sought the highest academic standards in the context of ministerial training; the very

combination personified in Geoffrey Nuttall. Representations were made, but when King's College Theological Department decided to accept the proposals it was clear that New College could not continue as at present. Inflation was also making its financial viability more doubtful. Therefore it was decided that the work of the college should be discontinued in its present form from the end of the session 1976-77. (The building was then leased to the Open University, the income from that lease making a considerable contribution to the cost of training ministers for the United Reformed and Congregational Churches).

What should happen to the library? It would have to be dispersed. Having worked so hard to put the library, which housed some 30,000 volumes, into its current position of excellence, Geoffrey Nuttall now had to advise on its disposal; a truly painful experience. In the event some 15,000 went to Dr. Williams's Library; 10,000, including the volumes from the Dissenting Academies and books printed in English or in England 1500-1640, to be held in a special "New College Collection". Dr. Williams's Library also agreed to house the manuscripts and portraits. Many of the modern books went to Spurgeon's College and Trinity College Bristol.

By securing this move to Dr. Williams's Library Geoffrey Nuttall ensured that his years of work had not been in vain. Indeed, by keeping so much of the collection together in this way, and so easily accessible to scholars, he made a further important contribution to scholarship. No less important is the fact that, but for his labour in the New College library, the closure of the college could well have meant that some of the treasures of that library would only have been discovered when they came under the auctioneer's hammer. That instead the remarkable collection was secured for future use was almost entirely due to the vision, perseverance and hard work of Geoffrey Nuttall - Librarian.

RONALD BOCKING

## GEOFFREY F. NUTTALL AND THREE LIBRARIES

In the tribute to Geoffrey Nuttall which stands at the beginning of the *Festschrift Reformation, Conformity and Dissent*, edited by R. Buick Knox, and presented in 1977, John Huxtable named the three libraries with which Geoffrey has been most concerned, New College, London, Dr. Williams's Library, and the Congregational Library. My purpose is to say more about his involvement with these libraries than was possible in that tribute.

Geoffrey Nuttall was introduced as a reader at Dr. Williams's Library in June 1940 by the Revd. A.G. Matthews, one of his mentors in the "Historical study" that he gave as his reason for joining. He was then the young minister of Warminster Congregational Church. Fifty-six years later, and in retirement, he may still be found there engaged in the same pursuit, and during these years of constant use he has contributed much to the work of Dr. Williams's Trust and Library.

His appointment at New College, London, in 1945 gave him easier access to Dr. Williams's and he was soon marked out by the then Secretary of the Trust, the Revd. Roger Thomas, who was to become Librarian also in 1946, as Trustee potential. In 1946 Roger Thomas suggested to the Trustees that they might in future look more widely than had been their custom when vacancies occurred on the Trust. They agreed, and within a year had elected two whom their Secretary had found for them. The first was Professor Theodore H. Robinson, the second was Geoffrey Nuttall. Elected in October 1947 he took his seat on the Trust in January 1948. For some years now he has been the Senior Trustee. He has served continuously on the Library Committee and, until recent Committee reorganisation, also on the College Committee. When the Friends of Dr. Williams's Library was founded in 1947 he became a founding member. He has served on its Committee, was its President from 1980 until 1992, and gave its lecture in 1951 on *Richard Baxter and Philip Doddridge: a study in a tradition*.

The bare recital of dates gives only a part of the picture. Those who know him are well aware that Geoffrey Nuttall does not take any responsibility lightly and is never content merely to be a passenger. His attendance at meetings of the Trust has always been exemplary and on these occasions his views are always delivered with principle. To successive librarians he has ever been ready to give assistance and until his removal to Birmingham came in monthly to participate in book selection. He is known to all who have worked for the Library, and in them, and their work, he has taken an interest as individuals, seeking to encourage them. This has been greatly appreciated.

In all the activities of the Library and Trust he has fully participated, whether in the publication of catalogues of accessions, of Occasional Papers, or in such projects as the recataloguing of the pre-1800 books relating to English Nonconformity. To the late Miss Woodward who carried out this work he gave much assistance. He has long been intent that the library and its treasures should become better known.

This was all part of the vision, shared with Roger Thomas, that to continue as a living institution the library had to move on from its role as a lending library, to develop a role as a research library. Gradually, over the last forty years, it has done this drawing scholars from many countries. Geoffrey Nuttall's insistence on the need to publish catalogues and lists has been part of this process. His own work has greatly assisted in this. The *Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter*, most of which is held at Dr. Williams's, is a case in point. He began work on it over forty years ago before handing his material to Dr. Neil Keeble to complete and together they brought it to publication in 1991.

He has given much to the library in another way. The number of research students whom he has supervised, has helped, or who have sought his willing help, is considerable. Very many of these have been advised to use Dr. Williams's Library and, more often than not, told what items they should consult, for his knowledge of the stock is vast. Many of these students have come from North America and there the word has gone round that it is a good thing to consult Dr.

Nuttall, as well as to come to Dr. Williams's. The amount of time, experience, and patience that Geoffrey Nuttall has expended in this field of teaching is incalculable, and to it Dr. Williams's Library has been a witness. The library knows too that the claims of its Friends have been regularly urged.

When Geoffrey Nuttall went to New College, London, in 1945 the College Librarian was its Secretary, the Revd. James Brangwyn Binns, who was a good servant to the College where he had himself trained but not perhaps the most suitable of Librarians. He retired in 1958 and Nuttall was appointed to succeed him. He had not been long at New College before discovering the importance of the library inherited from the Academies of earlier days and when it came into his charge he lost as little time as possible in putting it into order, doing much work himself. Students became accustomed to seeing him sorting books with his nose and mouth protected from dust at his wife's insistence. In 1963 he was instrumental in getting a grant from the Pilgrim Trust for the re-binding of many of the older books. He later supported the work of the Historical Manuscripts Commission in cataloguing the extensive collection of manuscripts at New College, begun in 1965 and occupying three years.

The decision to close New College as a teaching institution in 1977 meant that decisions had to be taken over the future of the library. It was unquestionably now in a more ordered and appreciated condition that it had been, perhaps since the days of Dr. Newth. Dr. Nuttall wished that the older books, which had come from the academies, should be kept together and his place on Dr. Williams's Trust and his long association with its library ensured that these books, with others, came to Dr. Williams's. This did not happen without discussions between the two institutions, but these were successful, and with the books came the manuscripts and the portraits. It fell to Geoffrey Nuttall to sort out the books that were to come to Gordon Square and this involved him in much labour, but it was a task he willingly entered into. Some of the great knowledge he had acquired of the library he had lovingly cared for may be found in his *New College, London and its Library: two lectures*, published by Dr. Williams's Trust in 1977.

Geoffrey Nuttall had come to know the Congregational Library in the old Memorial Hall in Farringdon Street whilst a student. Its Librarian, Dr. Albert Peel, was another of his mentors in historical study, and they were to work together on the *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society* and the *Congregational Quarterly*. It may be that the virtual closure of the Congregational Library on the outbreak of war in 1939 was what brought the young Nuttall some months later to Dr. Williams's Library. It was intended that this closure should be "for the duration" only - a phrase which some will recall - but it was 1957 before it opened again. Why this was may be read in the present writer's Congregational Lecture in 1992, *The Congregational Library*. The effect was to deprive scholars of access to a remarkable collection. Once the war-time requisition of parts of the Memorial Hall was lifted in 1950 Geoffrey Nuttall was one of the group which urged that the Library be re-opened as soon as possible, and again some years later. In the interim he had obtained the services of New College students to check and clean the books

as vacation labour. He was subsequently to support efforts to move the Congregational Library to another location, but these were not successful. John Huxtable knew of all this and commented "it is one of his regrets that he has had less than he wished to do with the Congregational Library."

Those words appeared in 1977. Five years later, after quite lengthy discussions, the Congregational Library was re-located in part of Dr. Williams's Library, and the long deferred re-cataloguing began. A suggestion made twenty years previously had finally come to acceptance and Geoffrey Nuttall's long held desire that the Congregational Library should become accessible is fulfilled.

In various ways he has contributed to the history of these three libraries. He has for them a great affection. They are part of the heritage that he cherishes and has done so much to make known. Many of the books have belonged to those whom he honours and reveres and has taught others to appreciate. We, in our turn, wish him to know the affection in which he is held by the many whose lives he has touched.

JOHN CREASEY

### SCHOLAR AND HUMANIST: REMINISCENCES OF A CHINESE STUDENT

It was on a late October afternoon thirty years ago that I first met Dr. Nuttall. I still remember the moment vividly. I was in a small reading room on the second floor of Dr. Williams's Library in London, groping uncertainly through the earlier volumes of the *Transactions* of the Congregational Historical Society, when Dr. Nuttall walked in. Obviously bewildered to find a Chinese student in that library of English Puritanism and Nonconformity, he stopped and introduced himself, and asked who I was and what I was doing there. Of course, I was delighted to meet him. His *Visible Saints* I had long read; it had, indeed, been the main source of inspiration for my own study on the Puritan divines and the Puritan Revolution. Yet I was apprehensive, too. I feared that he would find my interest in seventeenth-century English history ill-advised, as, I knew, some other scholars did, and throw cold water over my enthusiasm. Not at all! "What are you working on?" "The Barebones Parliament, Dr. Nuttall." "I'm delighted to hear it." He smiled encouragingly and not only offered his help there and then, but, when we parted, told me to seek him out at New College whenever I needed advice and guidance in my research work in London.

I had arrived in London less than three months earlier, and it was my first visit to England. Given that I had been brought up in the old Chinese classical culture, then uprooted by a destructive civil war, and subsequently detained in a concentration camp for many years, I must have appeared to Dr. Nuttall pitifully ill-prepared for the research project I had in hand. If he ever felt this, he never showed it. In fact, he never appeared to be uninterested in my work or condescending in his advice. On the contrary, he turned my many subsequent



visits into valuable opportunities of intellectual enrichment. He always took me in our conversations far beyond the narrow questions I raised into the broader historical and intellectual world, only in the context of which could my questions properly be understood. In the best Humanist tradition Dr. Nuttall accepted a foreign student into the realm of his academic specialism.

From these conversations I gradually learned the indivisibility of men and ideas in history. Often when I approached him with questions about a particular sermon or pamphlet, he would start with the author and, from an inexhaustible knowledge of the period, talk to me about the author's family, education, religious and social associations, and earlier and later career. I came to realize that without such historical and biographical context to pursue ideas in history was like chasing floating particles in the air. More importantly, he also helped to cultivate in me a genuine longing, and I hope an ability, too, to know the Puritan divines with empathy. Dr. Nuttall's devotion to Puritan studies and his understanding of Puritanism from within its own tradition are the most valuable benefits a student of the subject could hope to receive. They would enable one to read the Puritan divines feelingly and to enter into their beliefs and convictions, perceptions and sensibilities more fully than would otherwise have been possible. The Puritan divines ceased to be a stereotyped, homogeneous clerical class and became real individuals in history, each with his own ideas and ideals, hopes and fears, aspirations and aversions. Their positions and activities in the Puritan Revolution can be understood without modern political values and ideological judgments injected into their lives. Detachment and objectivity are the fundamental canons in the historical discipline, but beyond them I found in Dr. Nuttall an example of what seems to me the best and the most objective kind of historical study.

I must not, however, confine my reminiscences to the area of my own research, for, during my many visits throughout these years, Dr. Nuttall always found time to share with me his other intellectual interests; and when I compiled bibliographies of his publications I realized more clearly the much wider world of his scholarship. First, it is important to note, he has sought to pursue Puritanism beyond its conventional limits of study in English to Wales and the Netherlands and, with his exploration of Welsh and Dutch sources, has greatly broadened our knowledge of the movement. Secondly, he has carried on his study of the Nonconformist tradition from Richard Baxter to Philip Doddridge in the eighteenth century, thus providing a sense of continuity as well as change in history. And he has also remained faithful to his earlier intellectual loves, Desiderius Erasmus and Dante Alighieri.

Dr. Nuttall is not only an inspiring mentor but also a generous friend. He has extended to me and my family much kindness throughout these years. I recall our many walks, through the woods of Hampstead Garden Suburb, in the park at Bournville, and over the hills of Oberhofen. Dr. Nuttall would pleasantly display his love of nature, telling me the name of every wild flower which happened to be in our path. I remember a delightful journey through the Severn valley and, particularly, an enchanting trip to Aberystwyth, when he entertained my wife and

me with local lore on the way, and explained to us the basic pronunciation of the Welsh language. I also cherish the memory of quiet, unhurried hours in his study, when, after tea, he would read to me passages from English poetry. I still hope one day to fulfil our plans to visit the Lake District and some of the finest cathedrals in England.

I am deeply and affectionately grateful, therefore, that in my long intellectual pilgrimage in the West I have met Dr. Nuttall: a man of great learning, profound devotion, and magnanimous humanity.

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#### Abbreviations

<i>ABQ</i>	<i>American Baptist Quarterly</i>
<i>BQ</i>	<i>Baptist Quarterly</i>
<i>CHMC</i>	<i>Cylchgrawn Hanes y Methodistiaid Calfnaidd</i>
<i>Cofiadur</i>	<i>Cofiadur sef Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hanes Annibynwyr Cymru</i>
<i>EHS</i>	<i>Ecclesiastical History Society</i>
<i>ER</i>	<i>Epworth Review</i>
<i>FQ</i>	<i>Friends' Quarterly</i>
<i>HeyJ</i>	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
<i>HistJ</i>	<i>Historical Journal</i>
<i>History</i>	
<i>HMPECA</i>	<i>History Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America</i>
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
<i>JFHS</i>	<i>Journal of the Friends' Historical Society</i>
<i>JSA</i>	<i>Journal of the Society of Archivists</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>JURCHS</i>	<i>Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society</i>
<i>NAvK</i>	<i>Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis</i>
<i>NP&amp;P</i>	<i>Northamptonshire Past and Present</i>
<i>PWHS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society</i>
<i>Reconciliation</i>	
<i>Reform</i>	
<i>RQ</i>	<i>Reconciliation Quarterly</i>
<i>RS</i>	<i>Religious Studies</i>
<i>SH</i>	<i>Southern History</i>
<i>TCHBC</i>	<i>Trafodion Cymdeithas Hanes Bedyddwyr Cymru</i>
<i>THSC</i>	<i>Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion</i>
<i>TLS</i>	<i>Times Literary Supplement</i>

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Compiled by TAI LIU

## JAMES BIRDWOOD AND THE QUAKERS: A NOTE ON AN EJECTED MINISTER

James Birdwood (1637-93) is not one of the better known ejected ministers. His name is spelt variously (Birdwood, Burdwood, Bardwood)<sup>1</sup> and the identity of the place where, after his ejection from St. Petrock's, Dartmouth, he spent the years 1665-70 has been mangled. He was fined but "never imprison'd nor apprehended". He published only two books, both at the very end of his life.

He was nevertheless a man of note. He was of an old Devon family, with an estate which he sold when for a time he had thoughts of emigrating for conscience' sake. He had eminent friends, such as Vice-Admiral Sir John Kempthorne, Dr. Richard Burthogge, who wrote on Locke, and Thomas Boone, to whose recommendation to Cromwell John Howe owed his chaplaincy at Whitehall. He was "a practical popular Preacher" - even after his ejection "great Numbers ... flock'd to hear him from the adjacent Parts". He was also sufficient of a scholar to set up a "Latin-School" at Dartmouth till he was overtaken by the Five Mile Act.

When he sold his estate at Preston, north of West Alvington, he rented another "at Batson in the Parish of Marlborough near Kingsbridge". This was Malborough,<sup>2</sup> close to Salcombe; Batson is a little to the East. Here he "met with some Disturbance from the Quakers, of whom there were many in those Parts".

From early days Friends had a patron in Henry Pollexfen (or Polixphen), in whose house at Woolston, north of Marlborough, Thomas Salthouse defended Quakerism on 26 July 1656, in a dispute with the Rector of West Alvington, Francis Fullwood, before going on to Batson for another dispute on the following day.<sup>3</sup> Pollexfen's conviction resulted in his imprisonment in that year - although, as George Fox remarks, he "had been a Justice of peace for ye most parte of 40 yeares past."<sup>4</sup> Pollexfen died in September 1662; but when Fox was on his

- 1 I follow A.G. Matthews, *Calamy Revised* (Oxford, 1934), in writing Birdwood, but E. Calamy, *Continuation* (1727), pp. 244-9, from which I take passages not otherwise attributed, has Burdwood.
- 2 Strictly, Malborough was not a parish but a chapel-of-ease in the parish of West Alvington (J. Ecton, *Thesaurus* [2nd edn., 1754], p. 125). In *Freedom after ejection* (Manchester, 1917), ed. A. Gordon, p. 225, it is confused with Marlborough, Wilts.
- 3 Thomas Salthouse, *The hidden things of Esau brought to light* (1657), p. 13. Salthouse reprints, and claims to correct, much in Francis Fullwood, *A true relation of a dispute* (1656), to which he is replying. For access to a photocopy of Salthouse's tract I thank the Librarian, Woodbrooke, Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham.
- 4 G. Fox, *Journal* (1910), ed. N. Penney, i.237, with note on p. 439; for meetings at Pollexfen's house in 1656 and 1660, and for a letter written from it, see my *Early Quaker Letters from the Swarthmore MSS.* (1952), Letters 331, 558, 516. Sir Henry Pollexfen, of Sherford across the Kingsbridge estuary, who was counsel for Baxter before Jeffreys and who defended the Seven Bishops, was perhaps his nephew.

travels in 1666, setting up monthly meetings, to do so for Devon he came "Into the Southams",<sup>5</sup> where "wee had some of all ye men friends together" at the home of "ye widdow Philipps";<sup>6</sup> and this, like Birdwood's, was at Batson. Fox's organizing Friends into monthly meetings is often regarded as the beginning of a second phase of Quakerism, less aggressive and offensive, but the behaviour from which Birdwood suffered in the later 1660s was the same as Friends' practice ten years earlier. "They came often into the Meeting while he was Preaching or Praying, and when he had ended<sup>7</sup> would wrangle and dispute with him". It is a useful corrective.

The Quakers were not Birdwood's only trial. He had perhaps chosen Batson as a secluded hamlet in what was a large parish, in an outlying part of county and diocese; but the informers were out and about. "One *Beer* or *Bear* (who had been for some time the Head of the Informers, and now for the good Service done the Court, and High-Church, in disturbing Conventicles, was advanc'd to the Degree of a Justice of the Peace ...) ... and a Crew of Informers ... were let loose upon him, to his great Trouble and Vexation". "On *Sept.* 11. 1670, a Crew of Informers and Plunderers came to his House, where they found him with no more than four besides his own Family, singing a Psalm". The number legally permitted was thus not exceeded, but this did not prevent "the Worshipful new Justice" from fining Birdwood £20 for preaching and another £20 for allowing his house to be used for the purpose.<sup>8</sup> "He could no longer stay at Batson".

The informers made a good day of it. That same day, Sunday 11 September 1670, led by a cousin of the Justice with the same name, they came to Elizabeth Phillips's house, where about eighty Quakers were meeting for worship. They broke the door open and took goods valued at £31.11.1, "leaving neither Bedding nor Bed-clothes", with lesser distrains on others present, including Henry Pollexfen's widow.<sup>9</sup> They also demanded £20 "for a pretended Preacher, though the Meeting was held in Silence." An appeal before Justice John Biere (another variant on Beer or Bear) was brought by Widow Phillips and others, denouncing "the Warrants which authorized the Distresses" as "grossly erroneous". Walter Campion, a blacksmith who claimed to "know them very well, for I do shoe their

5 This phrase, omitted in the 1694 edition of Fox's *Journal* but restored in Penney's edition, refers to the district known as the South Hams.

6 Penney, ii.23, with note on p. 424.

7 On "speaking after the priest had done", see W.C. Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism* (2nd edn., Cambridge, 1956), pp. 133, n.2, 557.

8 These were the legal amounts fixed by the Second Conventicle Act passed earlier in the year, "recoverable by distress, and ... to go in thirds to the King, the poor, and the Informer": W.C. Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism* (2nd edn., Cambridge, 1961), p. 67

9 This was Jane Pollexfen, who died in 1682, aged about 70: F.W. Dymond, *Devon and Cornwall Quarterly Meeting ... trust property within the county of Devon* (1899), p. 29.

Horses”, gave evidence that “They have their Fifth-day Meeting, which is their silent Meeting-day, and their First-day Meeting, which is their Preaching-day, and then they do all preach” – “An’t like your Worship, Sir, they are all Teachers, for, they say, they are moved by the Spirit”. The verdict none the less went against them.<sup>10</sup>

John Bear, of Bearscombe, near Kingsbridge, was notorious for “the energetic and persistent cruelty with which he harassed the Nonconformists”, a Quaker historian writes, adding “the early Minutes of our Monthly and Quarterly Meetings contain ample evidence of his misdirected activity and zeal”.<sup>11</sup> Another ejected minister, Edmund Tucker,<sup>12</sup> received the same treatment at his hands as Elizabeth Phillips. A.G. Matthews quotes from *A True and faithful narrative of the sufferings of many Christians in Devon* (1671) “a remarkable Instance of the Partiality of the famous Justice *Beer* or *Bear*, and the Barbarity of the Informers, who *tore down all the goods in Mr. Tucker’s House*” and “*seized not only his Bed and Bedclothes but the poor Children’s Wearing Clothes ...*”<sup>13</sup> But there is perhaps no other case where we have detailed accounts, preserved independently of each other, of informers’ incursions at meetings of two different denominations in the same locality on the same day.

The Quaker response to persecution is legendary, though true. William Penn sums it up when he writes that Friends “did not only refuse to be revenged for Injuries done them ... but they did freely *Forgive*, yea, *Help* and *Relieve* those that had been *Cruel* to them, when it was in their *Power* to have been even with them”; adding with truth “of which many and singular *Instances* might be given”.<sup>14</sup> How did James Birdwood respond? Not to put too fine a point on it, like a good Quaker! When the informers who disturbed him “gave vent to their Malice, in abusive and reproachful Language”, he “bore all these Affronts and Indignities with Patience and Chearfulness, *taking joyfully the spoiling of his Goods*.”<sup>15</sup> To one more furious than the rest, he mildly said, *I pray God to forgive thee.*” His response was perhaps commoner than we suppose. When in 1685 his erstwhile colleague at Dartmouth, John Flavell, had his effigy carried through the streets and

10 See Joseph Besse, *Collection of the sufferings of the people called Quakers* (1753), i.155-9, a full and circumstantial account, with much *oratio recta*.

11 Dymond, p. 27.

12 For Tucker, see *Calamy Revised*; for Auton, where (as Tooker) he took out a licence in 1672 as a Presbyterian, Matthews reads Anton, and G.L. Turner, *Original Records of Nonconformity under Persecution and Indulgence* (1911), ii.1167, identifies it with Aveton Gifford, but Auton, like Woolston, is north of Marlborough.

13 Matthews, pp. liv-lv, quotes this passage from Calamy, *Continuation*, p. 328; the author of the tract (Wing N 229, H 1881), which is anonymous, was John Hickeys (*D.N.B.*). Calamy, *Continuation*, p. 175, draws on it also for the sufferings of Gaspar Hickeys *D.N.B.*, where its title is given as *True Narrative of sufferings of Christians called fanatics*).

14 W. Penn, preface to G. Fox, *Journal* (1694), f.D.1.

15 Heb.x.34.

then burnt, and was told of this, "he made no other Return, than in the Words of our Saviour, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*"<sup>16</sup>

Frequent changes in his place of residence brought Birdwood no respite. In one place "his old Enemies gave him new Troubles", and he was again fined £20; in another he still "met with hard Treatment". But he would say, "*I have lost Estate, Relatives, and Health, and yet God is my God still. And I am a broken Vessel, fit for no doing work, but call'd to suffering Work*".<sup>17</sup> Did John Flavell have Birdwood in mind when, in a sermon intended for the United Brethren of Gloucester, Dorset, Somerset and Devonshire, he wrote "Many thought the Days of our Prosperity, and Opportunities of our Service, had been numbered and finished; and that God had no more Work (except suffering-Work) for us?"<sup>18</sup> In 1691 Flavell and Birdwood were together again in Dartmouth, and, had the sermon been delivered, it is likely that Birdwood would have been present, ill health permitting.<sup>19</sup>

But the stresses of what Flavell calls "the sad and silent Years that are past" had left Birdwood a sick man. For several years he "indur'd most exquisite Torment by the Strangury".<sup>20</sup> He bore it, as he had borne persecution, with "admirable Patience": "he still acknowledg'd that his Afflictions proceeded from a Loving Father". They also, Calamy believed, "made him the more able to pen"<sup>21</sup> the books he published.

The titles of Birdwood's two books show what Calamy meant. The first, published in 1690, was entitled *Heart's ease in Heart-Trouble, or a Sovereign Remedy against all troubles of heart that Christ's Disciples are subject to, under all kinds of Afflictions in this Life. Prescribed by that great Physician, the Lord Jesus Christ, which hath never failed those that have used it or ever will.*<sup>22</sup> Of this there is a copy in the Congregational Library.<sup>23</sup> Of the other book no copy has been traced, but its title is known from the Term Catalogue for Michaelmas 1693. It was *Helps for faith and patience in time of affliction in Three Parts, viz. 1. Samson's Riddle Spiritualized. 2. Orthodox Paradox: or the greatest Evil working*

16 E. Calamy, *Account* (1713), p. 220. Cf. E. Calamy, *Continuation*, p. 470, of Thomas Horrockes, the ejected Vicar of Maldon, Essex, who, when during his trial in court an alderman "rose from the Bench, and gave him a Box on the Ear, and beat off his Sattin Cap", "stoop'd down and took it up again, and thank'd the boisterous Gentleman".

17 Psalm xxxi.12.

18 For this sermon (which was not delivered) and its occasion, with fuller quotation, see this *Journal*, 4.4 (June, 1989), p. 242.

19 By this time Birdwood was receiving financial support from the United Brethren (*The Exeter Assembly* [Devon and Cornwall Record Society, n.s., 6, .963], ed. A. Brockett, pp. 11-12), as well as from the Common Fund in London (Gordon, p. 226).

20 Calamy, *Account*, p. 220.

21 *Ibid.*

22 Wing B 747, as by J[ames] B[ardwood]; *Term Catalogues*, ii. (1905). 330, as by J.B., Minister of the gospel.

23 Congregational Library *Catalogue*, ii (1910).42, as by James Burdwood.

*the greatest Eternal good. 3. Heaven and Earth Epitomized: or Invisibilities, the greatest Realities.*<sup>24</sup> Birdwood's association with John Flavell was appropriately commemorated by the inclusion at the end of the volume of an unpublished tract by Flavell, *A sure tryal of a Christian state*.

GEOFFREY F. NUTTALL

### **LOGICAL NONCONFORMITY? CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION IN THE CAMBRIDGE FREE CHURCHES AFTER 1914<sup>1</sup>**

Many historians have seen the Great War as a crucial event in twentieth-century ecclesiastical history. This paper considers a single issue, pacifism, among a particular group, Cambridge Nonconformists, but the impact of this group at local and national levels should not be underestimated.

Traditionally Dissenters were associated with the Whig, rather than the Tory party, and during the nineteenth-century most Congregationalists, in particular, and Nonconformists, in general, were Gladstonian Liberals. Consequently, they took a less imperialist attitude to foreign affairs and had a traditional opposition to war, which may have helped to create an atmosphere in which pacifist ideas could later develop. Indeed, opposition to war was "a position which it was relatively easy for a nineteenth-century Englishman to hold, since with the exception of the Crimean War Britain was not involved in any European wars between 1815 and 1914."<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, objection on grounds of conscience was not new. Anti-vaccination campaigns and passive resistance to the 1902 Education Act had provided earlier examples of such objection.

Undoubtedly the issue of Belgium and the case of those who argued that the War was just, had an effect, but the background of Nonconformity remained. This paper considers individuals in two congregations in Cambridge, St. Columba's Presbyterian and Emmanuel Congregational Churches. Although Wesley Methodist and St. Andrew's Street Baptist Churches may well have had pacifists

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24 *Term Catalogues*, ii.474, as by James Birdwood, late Minister in Dartmouth.

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1 I would like to thank the staff of the Cambridgeshire County Record Office and the Cambridgeshire Collection for their help. Messrs. A.A. Smith, K.A.C. Parsons and A.J. Armour offered helpful advice on the whereabouts of church archive material and Mr. N.F. Kember helped with material relating to the Fellowship of Reconciliation. I owe a debt of thanks to the History Department of Hills Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge, particularly Mr. S.F. Lang, and to my parents for their meticulous advice.

2 David M. Thompson, *Let Sects and Parties Fall*, Birmingham, 1980, p. 121.



of their own, no significant documentation survives.<sup>3</sup> Most evidence survives about those with University connections so this paper concentrates on them.

The outbreak of war in August 1914 immediately affected the congregations of Emmanuel and St. Columba's. Almost at once the Board of Management, which was responsible for the day-to-day running of St. Columba's, met informally and agreed to lend crockery to the new army camp on Coldham's Common, and to set up a Reading Room for soldiers in a room at St. Columba's during the evening.<sup>4</sup> The church halls were later commandeered by the military and used by recruits to Lord Kitchener's army and the Welsh Territorial Division. Although the Church occasionally provided preachers for the soldiers, the Church custodian, Mr. Circuit, reported that the soldiers were mainly Welsh Calvinistic Methodists and their spiritual needs were cared for by their chaplain, Caithe Davies.<sup>5</sup>

The situation at Emmanuel was slightly different. Initially, the schoolroom was used by the Belgian Refugee Committee, but this had ended by October. Following a meeting organised by the Mayor, it was agreed to billet soldiers on Church premises over the Christmas period.<sup>6</sup> Castle End Mission, which was associated with Emmanuel, was later commandeered by the military.<sup>7</sup>

Within Cambridge as a whole the Cambridge Free Church Council, which provided a forum for local Free Churches, acted promptly. The Council responded to a call from the National Free Church Council for a list of ministers who might serve as chaplains to the eastern base hospitals. At the same time, the Council instituted a weekly service for prayer and intercession, which was to continue in various forms for the duration of the war.<sup>8</sup> While these actions would appear to be evenhanded, at least one member of the executive committee seems to have felt otherwise. J.C. Isard, the treasurer, a schoolmaster at The Leys and almost certainly a Methodist, wanted to give responsibility for the service to the President of the Council and to H.C. Carter, minister of Emmanuel. Isard was always first to introduce new ways of contributing to the war effort.<sup>9</sup>

3 This is not quite true. Cambridge University Wesley Society Minutes, 21 January 1915 (Cambridgeshire County Record Office, R80/085, Minute Book IV) records details of a talk given by J.E. Adcock on "Pacifism as part of Christian Doctrine" which traced pacifism among Christians since the second century. The talk was followed by "a long and varied conversation ... enlivened by many brilliant sallies of wit on the part of Mr. Adcock".

4 St. Columba's Presbyterian Church, Cambridge, Board of Management Minutes, 23 August 1914 (C.C.R.O., R85/031, 1895-1917, p. 110). This decision was confirmed by the meeting of 26 October 1914 (*Ibid.*, p. 114).

5 *Ibid.*, 26 April 1915, p. 146.

6 Emmanuel Congregational Church, Cambridge, Deacons' Meeting Minutes, 28 October 1914 et seq. (Emmanuel United Reformed Church, Cambridge, Deacons' Minutes 1914-1934, pp. 13-18).

7 *Ibid.*, 1 November 1915, p. 30.

8 Cambridge Free Church Federal Council, Minute Book, 21 August 1914 (C.C.R.O., R84/42).

9 *Ibid.*, 25 September 1914 and 18 November 1915.

What of individual Nonconformists? Henry Child Carter (1875-1954) was educated at Mill Hill and Oriel College, Oxford, where he read Classics. He trained for the ministry at Mansfield College, Oxford, and had ministered in Wolverhampton before moving to Cambridge in 1910 to be minister of Emmanuel Congregational Church. His comments in the Emmanuel Newsletter for September 1914 are interesting, particularly when one compares them with the pacifist position he was to hold so strongly in later life. At the top of the Newsletter appears the text Carter had chosen to be the motto for the year. It was Romans VII v.31, "If God be for us, who can be against us?". Beneath is printed a letter to the Members of Emmanuel entitled simply "The War". Carter began by pointing to the challenges that war makes on a person's faith and urged his readers to consider their positions carefully, but went on to say that, although it was a surprise to find themselves as supporters of the war and although they had not believed in Germany's hostile intentions, they had been proved wrong. However, it was good that they had not been better prepared for war, because if this had been so they would have lost the moral high ground. Germany was viewed as the aggressor and England as the protector of liberty. Indeed, Germany "has provoked us into war by an act of wanton aggression upon a small nation ... our people are united in the conviction that our cause is right, that this is a holy war, united as they have never been in the course of our history." Carter justified war as a necessary evil, if right were to prevail. Provided the cause were just, it was worth fighting for. He was clear that they were fighting Prussian militarism and the German spirit which exalted "might as right". For Carter, his country's motivations were clear. "It is not our own nation's danger, though that is real, it is the danger threatening the liberties and the progress of the world that calls us. Will any one of us hold back, be unwilling to suffer, unready to sacrifice, at such a time?"<sup>10</sup>

It is interesting how typical Carter's view of the Prussians is. Sir Edward Grey told the American Ambassador as early as 4 August 1914 that Germany was divided between Moderates and the Prussian war party. He continued "it is not the German people, but Prussian militarism which has driven Germany and Europe into this war". This idea of the "two Germanies" became the standard British line and remained so until the outbreak of the Second World War.<sup>11</sup>

In December 1914 Ebenezer Cunningham (1881-1977) was elected a deacon of Emmanuel, a position he held continuously until his death. Cunningham had grown up in London, won a major scholarship to St. John's College, Cambridge, to read Mathematics, and was Senior Wrangler in 1902. Having worked in junior posts at Liverpool University and University College, London, he returned to St. John's in 1911 as a college lecturer in Mathematics. When the war broke out many undergraduates volunteered and Cunningham describes those who were left in

10 Emmanuel Congregational Church, Cambridge, Newsletter, September 1914 (Emmanuel U.R.C., Cambridge, Leaflets 1911-1919, no. 45).

11 D. Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled: British Policy and World Power in the 20th Century*, London, 1991, pp. 101-2, 118-20, 138-9.

Cambridge as, "mainly men under age, medically unfit, or people like myself, to whom the whole idea of war seemed irrational, impossible of achieving good, and, in particular, entirely foreign to the meaning and practice of Christianity."<sup>12</sup>

Cunningham seems to have developed this position over a number of years. His London upbringing and his parents' concern had highlighted the dangers of alcohol and he became a total abstainer at an early age. This he viewed as part of a wider Nonconformist temperament in both religion and politics. Therefore, it came as no surprise to discover that he found himself adopting a pacifist position. This first manifested itself during the Boer War when Cunningham could not agree with enthusiastic calls to defend British interests through force in an area where he thought both British and Dutch commercialism was damaging the native populations. Subsequently, he visited a school friend, Stanley Goodall, a naval architect at Devonport, and, having been over the battleship *King Edward*, he felt distinctly uneasy. The visit "clinched the conviction that war cannot be good or bring good to nations of the world. My nonconformity was growing".<sup>13</sup> Cunningham had no doubts about declaring his pacifist convictions in 1914.

Another prominent local Nonconformist also declared his pacifist convictions as soon as war broke out. Dr. Alexander Wood (1879-1950) was a staunch Presbyterian and an Elder of St. Columba's from 1907. His Presbyterianism was one of the few things he shared with his father, Sir Alex Wood, an uncompromising Tory. The younger Wood studied with Lord Kelvin at Glasgow University, obtaining a Doctorate of Science. In 1906 he came to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, as an advanced student. He was very active in the Union Society as "an ardent Liberal with a deep concern for social reform".<sup>14</sup> In 1909 he became a Fellow of Emmanuel College and later a University Lecturer in Physics. Meanwhile he was becoming involved in the work of the York Street Mission, which was linked to St. Columba's. He was concerned by the poor housing conditions and the seasonal unemployment, created by the University, which he found in the St. Matthew's Ward, for which he was to be Councillor from 1926 to 1945.<sup>15</sup> In 1914 Wood, like Cunningham, adopted a pacifist position and became Superintendent of the local Red Cross Ambulance Brigade, which was responsible for conveying injured soldiers from the railway station to one of the military hospitals in Cambridge.<sup>16</sup>

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12 E. Cunningham, *Ebenezer-the autobiography of Ebenezer Cunningham*, MS copy, 1970, p. 47.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 10 and pp. 20-2.

14 C.E. Raven, *Alex Wood - the man and his message*, London, 1952, p. 2.

15 P.M. O'Neill, "Alex Wood", *Cambridgeshire Local History Council Bulletin*, No. 37, 1982, pp. 22-24. O'Neill's article is part of an essay about the York Street Mission, which appears in the *Bulletin*, No. 36, 1981. It serves as a useful introduction to Wood's life. Wood was returned, unopposed, for St. Matthew's Ward from 1930.

16 E.M. Wood, "Alexander Wood, 1879-1950", *News Sheet* of St. Columba's Church, Cambridge, December 1967 (Cambridgeshire Collection, C.83.03).

It is important to remember that the reaction of most Nonconformists was to support the war. The role of W. Robertson Nicoll, later knighted for services to the Liberal Party, was crucial. He was editor of the *British Weekly*, the leading Nonconformist newspaper, and on 6 August 1914 published a leader entitled "United we stand". From then on "his one absorbing care was how to secure victory".<sup>17</sup> Lloyd George might have appeared to be the obvious leader of the Nonconformist anti-war party, but he lacked the conviction necessary for that role. In fact Lloyd George used Nonconformist leaders like Nicoll and the Baptist John Clifford to woo Nonconformists to the "just war" cause. From November 1914 most traces of apology had disappeared from his public pronouncements in favour of war.<sup>18</sup>

So to the events which precipitated a crisis of conscience for Henry Carter and caused him to change radically his view on Christianity and war. In February 1915 Carter attended a meeting of the University Nonconformist Union. The speaker, Maude Royden, had already declared herself to be a total Christian Pacifist.<sup>19</sup> Her address marked a decisive point in Carter's struggle to achieve his own Christian view of war. Just after war had been declared, he had gone for a long walk with Cunningham to discuss the situation. Cunningham's response had been unequivocally pacifist. Carter had felt unable to agree and he continued to consider the question for the rest of the year.<sup>20</sup> Cunningham claims that during Maude Royden's talk Carter sat with his head in his hands looking as if he were in mental and spiritual agony.<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate any particulars of what she said, but her message is unlikely to have differed greatly from other Christian pacifists. What is most likely is that her address was the final nail in the coffin for Carter's support for the war. He had been considering the matter since August 1914 and this talk was the culmination of his struggle. Maude Royden's influence was probably partial but it was also decisive.

Had Carter been merely an individual member of the Emmanuel congregation his personal views on the war would have been largely unimportant. As it was, he held a position of responsibility and influence where his views on anything were

17 T.H. Darlow, *William Robertson Nicoll-life and letters*, London, 1925, p. 236.

18 For Lloyd George see C. Hazlehurst, *Politicians at war: July 1914 to May 1915*, London, 1971, pp. 61-9 and 219-20. The role of Robertson Nicoll and a general discussion of the issues can be found in A. Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform? War, Peace and the English Churches 1900-1945*, London, 1986, pp. 21-53.

19 Maude Royden became Assistant Preacher at the City Temple, London in 1917, thus being the first woman to have a major permanent pulpit. She was a prominent member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and was well known "as a feminist, socialist, Christian activist and pioneering woman preacher." (Alan Bishop and Y. Aleksandra Bennett (eds), *Vera Brittain's Diary: 1939-1945*, London, 1989, p. 312). See also Sheila Fletcher, *Maude Royden: A Life*, Oxford, 1989.

20 Cunningham, *Ebenezer*, p. 48.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 48.

likely to affect, in one way or another, the way he preached the gospel. The evening following the talk by Maude Royden the deacons of Emmanuel met. After the meeting, Carter came over to Cunningham and told him that he was "off the fence".<sup>22</sup> His new views did not have immediate repercussions but this was soon to change. The May Newsletter included, in the form of a prayer, an appeal to consider one's motivations in relation to conflict.<sup>23</sup> Carter informed a deacons' meeting at the end of September that he proposed to read a statement about his changed views to the next Church Meeting.<sup>24</sup> There, he duly read his statement, asking that no discussion take place on it at that meeting.<sup>25</sup>

Apparently a group of deacons, led by A. Negus, a local builder,<sup>26</sup> and the Church Secretary, A.G. Almond, were unhappy about the way Carter had acted. He had shown sympathy with undergraduates opposed to the war and this, coupled with the fear that Carter was spending too much time with students to the detriment of the older members, caused them to be critical of Carter's ministry.<sup>27</sup> The conditions within the church were discussed at length in March 1916.<sup>28</sup> The meeting was adjourned to 4 April. Carter did not attend this meeting but Cunningham, who had missed the previous meeting, did. Negus wanted to allow the Church Meeting to discuss Carter's changed views on war.<sup>29</sup> This resolution was replaced by one which expressed the view that discussion in Church Meeting was unhelpful at the present time, but also noted that "there have been occasions on which his [Carter's] actions in regard to this matter have not been altogether in the best interests of the Church". The deacons respected the sincerity of their minister's beliefs and expressed the hope that their actions had not added to the problem.<sup>30</sup>

Despite the more conciliatory tone of the second resolution, it did not prevent a further period of crisis. The exact chronology of what followed is difficult to ascertain. Cunningham maintains that the day after a Deacons' Meeting when Carter's ministry had been criticised, Carter told him that he was going to resign.<sup>31</sup>

22 *Ibid.*, p. 48. Cunningham also reports this incident in an address he gave in Emmanuel on 10 October 1954 to commemorate Carter's life. A copy of this address is in the archives in Emmanuel U.R.C. and Cunningham reprints the address in his autobiography (see above), pp. 127-133.

23 Emmanuel Congregational Church, Newsletter, May 1915 (Emmanuel U.R.C., Cambridge, Leaflets 1911-1919, no. 53).

24 Deacons' Meeting Minutes, 28 September 1915, p. 28.

25 Emmanuel Congregational Church, Church Meeting Minutes, 6 October 1915 (Emmanuel U.R.C., Cambridge, Church Meeting Minutes, 1892-1923, p. 334).

26 A.A. Smith to A.C.T., Cambridge, 8 June 1993.

27 Cunningham, *Ebenezer*, p. 51.

28 Deacons' Meeting Minutes, 27 March 1916, p. 35.

29 *Ibid.*, 4 April 1916, p. 35.

30 *Ibid.*, 4 April 1916, p. 36.

31 Cunningham, *Ebenezer*, p. 51.

The problem is that the only mention in the Deacons' Minutes of direct criticism of Carter is at the meeting of 4 April and Carter did not resign until 30 May. There had been a Deacons' Meeting on the previous evening but the only reference to trouble occurs when the question of an assistant choirmaster is postponed until the return of normal conditions: which could refer to the present situation or to the end of the war. Perhaps the simplest explanation is that Cunningham was mistaken in the dating of events when he wrote his autobiography some sixty years later. However, what is clear is that a letter of resignation from Carter was read to the Church Meeting on 30 May 1916.<sup>32</sup> The letter started by pointing out that the deacons had made clear their feelings about his attitude to the war and, although he had hoped that these differences of opinion would not be insuperable, he now felt that he should resign. He had taken upon himself the responsibility of bringing this matter before the Church because it was the deacons' wish that he should do so. He expressed gratitude for six happy years among them and remained convinced that, despite present circumstances, they all shared a similar view of the essence of their faith. His one regret was that at the start of the war he was misled by the politically charged atmosphere to adopt a position which justified war. He believed that he had sinned by taking up a position which he was now convinced was contrary to the will of God. He sought forgiveness from the Church because he viewed the present problems as his fault but at the same time appealed for unity among the membership. He wished to depart as soon as possible and apologised for any inconvenience this might cause. The letter is written in the simple style which was the hallmark of his preaching.<sup>33</sup> Above all it conveys a deep sense of sorrow, but at the same time Carter is saying, "here I stand, I can do no other".<sup>34</sup> The meeting was adjourned, at the suggestion of Cunningham, until 5 June.

The meeting on 5 June was presided over, at the deacons' request, by W.B. Selbie, Carter's predecessor at Emmanuel, who had moved to become Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford.<sup>35</sup>

The meeting was well attended by members and a large number of undergraduates, who were almost certainly sympathetic to Carter, were also present. Carter's letter was read again and statements were made on behalf of the

32 Church Meeting Minutes, 30 May 1916, p. 340. The actual letter of resignation is in the minute book between pp. 339 and 340.

33 J.W. Ashley Smith, "Recollections of Cambridge Congregationalism in the 1930s", *The Congregational History Circle Magazine*, Volume 3 No. 1, Spring 1993, pp. 5-11. Commenting on Carter's preaching style, Ashley Smith notes that "[it] might be called homely, with much use of unaffected language". Cunningham notes at various points that Carter's message was always couched in simple terms.

34 Cf. Luther at the Diet of Worms (1521), "*hier stehe ich, ich kann nicht anders*".

35 Selbie's attitude to students and lecturers at Mansfield who were pacifist can hardly be called tolerant. C.H. Dodd wrote that he was more worried about telling Selbie that he would refuse to be conscripted than by the prospect of a prison term. (Alan Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform?*, London, 1986, p. 50).

deacons. After some discussion, E.W. Johnson proposed a resolution which expressed the profound distress of the Church at Carter's resignation and asked him to withdraw it. This was carried and at this, according to a prearranged course of action,<sup>36</sup> the deacons resigned.<sup>37</sup> A group of deacons did not offer themselves for re-election.<sup>38</sup> They claimed that their reasons did not arise directly from a difference of opinion over the war, contrary to claims made by "non-members and occasional worshippers" (which presumably refers to students), and they deplored the way in which the latter presented their case.<sup>39</sup> Carter himself appeared sure that it was his views on war which were at issue in his letter of resignation. This might not have been the whole reason for discord, but the perceived view both then and later was that this matter lay at the heart of the conflict.<sup>40</sup> The Church elected new deacons and found a new Church Secretary, A.S. Ramsey,<sup>41</sup> to replace Almond. It was a period of crisis but Carter stood firm and continued at Emmanuel until 1944.

Meanwhile other pacifists in Cambridge had been busy. Even before the war attempts had been made to form a group for promoting peace through Christian witness. A conference in Constance to set up such an organisation had to be postponed because of the outbreak of war but at the end of 1914, a group met in Cambridge and they set up what was to become known as the Fellowship of Reconciliation.<sup>42</sup> The venue for this meeting was the Arts Theatre which had been secured by Cunningham.<sup>43</sup> Although a number of influences went into the formation of the FoR, it is clear that Cambridge people played an important role. The Fellowship's latest history cites John Skinner, Principal of Westminster College and a member of St. Columba's, as a crucial influence on some of the founders.<sup>44</sup> Carter consulted Skinner in the crisis of 1916 and they were firm friends. Furthermore, it seems likely that there is an element of truth in Herbert Farmer's claim that the origins of the FoR lay, at least in part, in meetings in Dr.

36 Cunningham, *Ebenezer*, p. 51.

37 Church Meeting Minutes, 5 June 1916, pp. 340-341.

38 They were A.G. Almond, a tailor, A. Macintosh, an ironmonger, T.A. Mathers, a silversmith, A. Negus, W.H. Townsend and G. Turner. I owe the information about their occupations to A.A. Smith.

39 Church Meeting Minutes, 30 June 1916, pp. 342-3. A copy of the statement of the disaffected deacons appears between pp. 343 and 344.

40 Cf. B.L. Manning, *This Latter House*, Cambridge, 1924, p 19: "on the attitude to war proper for Christians a serious difference of opinion and conviction shewed itself."

41 For further details on Ramsey, particularly in relation to his son Michael, later Archbishop of Canterbury, see O. Chadwick, *Michael Ramsey - a life*, Oxford, 1990, pp. 3 ff.

42 R. Tudur Jones, *Congregationalism in England 1662-1962*, London, 1962, p. 360.

43 Cunningham, *Ebenezer*, p. 49.

44 Jill Wallis, *Valiant for Peace*, London, 1991, p. 6. See also J. Ferguson, "The Fellowship of Reconciliation: A Personal Retrospect", *JURCHS*, Vol. 3, pp. 392 ff.

Skinner's study early in the war.<sup>45</sup> Cunningham, Wood and Carter were members from the beginning. Cunningham reported in the Emmanuel Newsletter later that year that he had attended an For conference and explained the aims of the organisation. He pointed out that war denies the power of good over evil and that despite suspicion from the rest of the nation, the FoR felt called to bear witness through living in a way which had loving one's neighbour as the ultimate principle. "We do not know where this may lead us, to poverty, perhaps, or to obscurity. But we trust that in humble waiting upon God we may be shewn the way, and we pray that we may be faithful to it."<sup>46</sup>

Whilst pacifists might find solidarity in organisations such as the FoR, the national climate was distinctly unfriendly and from 1916 onwards became increasingly more difficult. Before 1916 those who objected to war could avoid military service by not volunteering. The Military Service Act made unmarried men between the ages of eighteen and forty-one subject to conscription in January 1916 and these provisions were extended to married men in May of that year. While those who objected to war could appeal to tribunals, this was not always easy. The tribunals consisted of respected members of the local community and a military representative. Walter Crosthwaite's description of the tribunals, while based on experience in another part of the country, was perhaps typical: "we saw our young men turned down by tribunals of which leaders in their own Churches were chairmen. Brethren, some of whom were elders in the Churches, sat on magisterial benches and handed their own Brethren over to their persecutors."<sup>47</sup> Cunningham and Wood came before the same tribunal. The chairman of the tribunal was George Turner, the Mayor, a member of Emmanuel who had served the church as a deacon until he had declined to accept nomination for re-election in June 1916.<sup>48</sup>

Wood had little trouble with the tribunal because he had been working as an ambulance organiser since the beginning of the war. This work was judged to be acceptable and he was allowed to continue with it. Another Emmanuel member, Dr. J.A. Crowther, a Fellow of St. John's and a physicist who had been using his knowledge working at the Emergency Hospital in the radiographic area, was also before the tribunal. He appealed against conscription on the grounds of his faith but said he was prepared to continue his work at the hospital. This request too was granted. Cunningham said that he had an offer of employment at a local school and he had been granted leave of absence from St. John's. He was not prepared to serve in the military because he felt that it was against Christ's teaching. The

45 Cited by E.M. Wood, "Alexander Wood, 1879-1950", *News Sheet* of St. Columba's, December 1967 (C.C., C.83.03).

46 Emmanuel Congregational Church, Newsletter, August 1915 (Emmanuel U.R.C., Cambridge, Leaflets 1911-1919, no. 56).

47 Quoted by Thompson, *Let Sects and Parties Fall*, Birmingham, 1980, p. 123.

48 For a wider consideration of Tribunals see John W. Graham, *Conscription and Conscience, a history 1916-1919*, London, 1922; repr. New York, 1969, pp. 68-110.



tribunal allowed him to teach or to find agricultural work. The military representative promptly objected on the grounds that teaching was not in the national interest and Cunningham had to face an appeal tribunal. This upheld the military's objection and Cunningham had to find agricultural work.<sup>49</sup>

He found work at Chivers in Histon, with another Emmanuel member. However, this was not to last. T.R. Glover, another Fellow of St. John's, secured a position at the Y.M.C.A. in London for Cunningham on the grounds that it was not dignified for a Fellow of a Cambridge college to work on the land. Cunningham was unhappy at the Y.M.C.A. and again appealed to a tribunal to become a teacher. Although there was a shortage of teachers, the appeal failed and Cunningham spent the rest of the war as an agricultural worker in Hertfordshire.

T.R. Glover himself is an interesting figure. Brought up as a Baptist, he attended Emmanuel while an undergraduate and occasionally went to Friends' Meetings. He joined the Passive Resistance Movement in 1902 and he had great sympathy with conscientious objectors during the war. He tried to see that they received fair treatment but he found the views of some absolutists unreasonable. Cunningham and Carter did not fall into this category and so he continued to support and encourage them, even though he spent much of the war working for the Y.M.C.A. in India.<sup>50</sup>

Eventually, Cunningham was able to return to its post at St. John's, although Glover told him that some members of the college would rather have seen his head on a spike at the gate.<sup>51</sup> Due to his absence from academic circles, Cunningham had been unable to keep up with developments in the theory of Relativity. Before the war, Cunningham had been one of the leading British experts on Einstein's new approach to physics, but developments which led Einstein to postulate his General Theory in 1915, meant that Cunningham was no longer in the forefront of these advances.

Cunningham did not only suffer academically. Although he was appointed a Tutor, a position of great responsibility, it soon became apparent that St. John's was not prepared to have a former conscientious objector in such a position. The reason for this was simple. The Tutor's duties included maintaining good contacts with schools, particularly Public Schools, and the College did not want its reputation to be tarnished. Cunningham was found an administrative post instead.<sup>52</sup>

Nonconformists, whether pacifists or not, could still seem foreign to Cambridge, even after 1918. Most university tests had been abolished in 1871, and Cunningham, Wood and Glover were all "dyed-in-the-wool college men" but the

49 Cunningham, *Ebenezer*, pp. 52-3.

50 Cf. H.G. Wood, *Terror Reaveley Glover*, Cambridge, 1953, p. 60 et seq.. Carter's problems are dealt with on pp. 116-8.

51 Cunningham, *Ebenezer*, p. 57.

52 *Ibid.*, p. 70.

professor of archaeology, Sir William Ridgeway, could still comment to Glover in 1914 that "if the Kaiser would only promise to destroy the cathedrals on the conquest of England, the wicked dissenters would welcome him with open arms".<sup>53</sup> Glover did not apply for the Dixie Chair of Ecclesiastical History, when it became vacant in the early 1920s, because he was a Nonconformist.<sup>54</sup> No Nonconformist had ever held a university chair in the Divinity Faculty and Glover would only have been the second layman to hold one. It was C.H. Dodd who was to become that faculty's first Nonconformist professor when he was elected to the Norris-Hulse chair in 1935.<sup>55</sup>

Wood continued to play a prominent role both in life at St. Columba's and in the wider community. He became politically active, joining the Labour Party.<sup>56</sup> In 1929 he stood as the Parliamentary Candidate for the University, telling his electors that, "the paramount need of the present international situation is a bold, aggressive and even venturesome peace policy".<sup>57</sup> In 1931, 1934 and 1935 he stood as the Borough Candidate. His strong convictions made him easy to smear and he was no political dogfighter, but his support increased.<sup>58</sup>

Wood was re-adopted as Borough Candidate in February 1937 but the outbreak

53 C.N.L. Brooke, *A History of the University of Cambridge - Volume IV 1870-1990*, Cambridge, 1993, p. 393. Brooke considers the dons' religion in this century, including that of Glover, Manning and Wood, on pp. 388-406.

54 H.G. Wood, *Glover*, p. 141.

55 This does not mean, however, that Nonconformists did not hold chairs in other faculties. Sir German Sims Woodhead was professor of pathology from 1899 and he was also a deacon of Emmanuel until his death in 1921. During the war he was a colonel in the R.A.M.C. John Holland Rose was a member of both Emmanuel (1912-17 and from 1925) and St. Columba's (1917-1925). He became the first Reader in Modern History in 1911 and in 1919 was appointed the first Vere Harmsworth Professor of Nautical History. Lord Rothermere, who gave the money for the chair, reserved the first appointment to himself and gave it to Rose in recognition of his exceptional contribution to the war effort, through his lectures to soldiers and civilians. Courtney Kenny, while never a member of Emmanuel, was a resolute attender as well as being F.W. Maitland's successor as Downing Professor of the Laws of England. One of Kenny's acts, as a Liberal MP from 1885 to 1888, had been to introduce legislation demanding the repeal of laws restricting expression of religious opinion. For Sims Woodhead see J.A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, Cambridge, 1955, Part II. Vol. 5, p. 568. For Holland Rose see Venn, Part II, Vol. 5, p. 358 and *Dictionary of National Biography: 1941-1950*, pp. 736-7. For Kenny see Venn, Part II, Vol. 4, p. 24 and *DNB: 1922-1930*, pp. 466-7. (I would like to thank Dr. J.C.G. Binfield for drawing my attention to these three figures).

56 The actual date when Wood joined is unclear. O'Neill's claim that it was during the war is almost certainly mistaken. Raven thinks that he joined in 1925 (p. 7) but I feel that this is too late given that he had helped set up a University branch of the Party in 1923.

57 "To the Parliamentary Electors of the University of Cambridge", (C.C.R.O., 416/036).

58 Raven, *Alex Wood*, p. 7.

of war in 1939 caused further problems within the Cambridge Labour Party. Indeed, "when Wood resigned his candidacy in 1943 there was clearly some relief that the party could resume its propagandist role without laying bare its internal differences over the prosecution of the war".<sup>59</sup> Wood had become increasingly involved at a national level in the pacifist movement both in the FoR and the Peace Pledge Union and was indeed Chairman of the executive of the Peace Pledge Union during the war. This was far from an easy job. In May 1940 Wood, together with five other members of the P.P.U., was convicted for having contravened Defence Regulation 39a(1). They had incited servicemen to disaffection by, among other things, publishing a poster with the caption "War will cease when men refuse to fight. What are you going to do about it?". In 1943 Wood faced further difficulties when a leading member of the P.P.U., Stuart Morris, was convicted under the Official Secrets Act for receiving leaked documents. Vera Brittain suspected that the whole incident was a government plot to discredit the P.P.U., but she was also critical of the lack of support which Wood and the P.P.U. gave to Morris.<sup>60</sup>

There remains another figure whose actions during the war need to be examined. Henry Carter and Ebenezer Cunningham were both friends of Bernard Lord Manning (1892-1941). Manning, the son of a Congregational minister, came up to Jesus College, Cambridge, in 1912 to read History, with a major scholarship. Manning became an associate member of Emmanuel Church and later a full member, when it was clear he would be staying in Cambridge. He obtained a first class degree in History, stayed on to do research and became a Fellow of Jesus. He was later to be Bursar and Senior Tutor of that college.<sup>61</sup> Manning had chaired the meeting of the Nonconformist Union in 1915 which had proved so decisive for Carter, yet he was no pacifist. He was in Cambridge for most of the war solely because he could not pass an Army Medical Board. He served the nation by working in the Historical Research Department of the Ministry of Munitions for part of 1918.<sup>62</sup> Both Manning and Carter were to have great influence on the development of Congregational thinking on war during the 'twenties and 'thirties.

Carter's contribution to the debates of the Congregational Union Assembly in 1929 provides one of the few published examples of his work.<sup>63</sup> Carter maintains a moderate position in urging the merits of the peacemaker when compared with

59 C.J. Howard, Introduction to Ep Microfilm Ltd., *The History of the Labour Party at local level: Cambridge and Cambridgeshire*, reel 1 (C.C., C.33.3 MICRO 2).

60 Bishop and Bennett (eds.), *Vera Brittain's Diary: 1939-1945*, London, 1989, p. 41 and pp. 201-236.

61 F. Brittain, *Bernard Lord Manning*, Cambridge, n.d. I have used this biography as the standard work for details of Manning's life. See also C. Binfield, "Bernard Lord Manning 1892-1941", *Reformed Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 1, No. 3, Winter 1993-4, pp. 5-11.

62 F. Brittain, pp. 26-32.

63 H.C. Carter, "The Spirit of the Peacemaker" in *Christianity and War: Six Addresses to the Autumn Assembly of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, Norwich, 1929*, London, 1929, pp. 63-7.

the absolutist principles of Leyton Richards<sup>64</sup> and the historical, realist approach of Manning.<sup>65</sup> It is this moderate attitude which characterises all these Cambridge conscientious objectors.

Many of the similarities between Carter, Cunningham and Wood are obvious. They shared an Oxbridge education, had radical political tendencies, were strong supporters of the League of Nations after the war and, incidentally, all tectotal. Yet these similarities are really all symptomatic of a "Nonconformist temperament". The problem with ascribing their pacifism simply to their shared religious and political outlook is clear. Men like Manning and Glover had been educated in a similar fashion, were also political radicals and strong supporters of the "Dissenting Interest" within the University, yet they were not pacifists. It is interesting, although almost certainly irrelevant, that Manning and Glover were historians while Wood and Cunningham were scientists. However, from the surviving documentation, it seems that in this specific group of Cambridge Nonconformists pacifism was the preserve of people who were, in relative terms, intellectually privileged. The records of the Cambridge Tribunal, which might have yielded further names, do not survive. This is not, however, surprising because it was decided in 1921 that all correspondence and minute books, with the exception of the Central Tribunal, should be destroyed.<sup>66</sup> Consequently, research in this area has to make disproportionate use of the accounts of the pacifists themselves and this necessarily restricts the scope of enquiry.

What is, perhaps, more significant is the division between the deacons of Emmanuel before and after the crisis of 1916. While the university Nonconformist community at least tolerated pacifist views, the Nonconformist Cambridge business community, as represented by Emmanuel's deacons, was far less tolerant. Perhaps their choice of Selbie to chair the crucial meeting was attributable to Selbie's known personal views. Furthermore, Almond was replaced as Church Secretary not by another businessman but by A.S. Ramsey, a Mathematics don at Magdalene.

Undoubtedly, others contributed to the growth of the Fellowship of Reconciliation but Cunningham played an important role in its formation and Wood was later to become its Vice-Chairman. Indeed, on Wood's death the Fellowship instituted an annual lecture in his memory, the first of these given by his friend and colleague from Emmanuel College, Canon Charles Raven, an Anglican pacifist of some renown.

The holding of pacifist convictions was not easy. Even after the war both Cunningham and Wood had to make sacrifices for their beliefs. Cunningham's career suffered while Wood felt he had to resign his Parliamentary candidacy in 1943, particularly unfortunate for him personally, since A.L. Symonds became the

64 L. Richards, "The Christian Objection to War" in *ibid.*, pp. 43-57.

65 B.L. Manning, "The Place of War in History" in *ibid.*, pp. 7-19.

66 John Rae, *Conscience and Politics - the British Government and the Conscientious Objector to Military Service 1916-1919*, London, 1970, p. 259.

first Labour M.P. for the Borough in 1945. A road on the Arbury Estate and the Labour Party headquarters bear Wood's name and there is a memorial plaque to him in St. Columba's, yet a recent history of that Church, while noting his political and religious activities, fails to mention his pacifism.<sup>67</sup>

After the crisis of 1916, Carter faced relatively few difficulties but the period before this was obviously one of great strain. This is illustrated best by Carter's hymn from these years,<sup>68</sup> which starts:

Give me, O Christ, the strength that is in thee  
that I may stand in every evil hour;  
faints my poor heart except to thee I flee,  
resting my weakness in thy perfect power.<sup>69</sup>

The majority of Nonconformists, both in Cambridge and nationally, were like Glover and Manning in that they did not agree with war, but were not prepared to oppose it actively. A minority found this incompatible with their understanding of Christianity. Cunningham's comments preached in a sermon shortly after Carter's death, could equally be applied to himself or Wood:

His pacifism was no isolated conviction, but flowed from the heart of his faith. It was a new challenge to make the way of redeeming love the whole rule of life.<sup>70</sup>

ANDREW C. THOMPSON

## THE PRESBYTERIANS IN LIVERPOOL : PART 4 A SURVEY 1919 - 1939

The Great War had made a great difference to all the churches. Not only was there a shortage of men to lead the congregations in the future, but those who came back were unsettled. Many drifted away and those who stayed were unsatisfied.

The period between the Wars saw churches in difficulties, with falling rolls, falling attendances and financial troubles. Churches in pleasant suburban areas did not fare too badly, but those in downtown Liverpool were hard hit, and the Presbytery suggested that some should unite in order to reduce the number in the centre. They particularly wanted Canning Street and Myrtle Street to unite: they

67 R. Buick Knox, *St. Columba's Church 1879-1979*, Oxford, 1979, p.18.

68 The text appears first in Emmanuel Cong. Church, Newsletter, September 1915 (Emmanuel U.R.C., Cambridge, Leaflets 1911-1919, no. 57). This suggests that Erik Routley's dating of the hymn to 1917 is mistaken (*Hymns and Human Life*, London, 1952, p. 101), and means that the hymn dates from Carter's period of struggle with the problems of pacifism.

69 *Congregational Praise*, London, 1951, no. 532, verse 1. The hymn, with slightly altered phrasing, appears in *Rejoice and Sing* at no. 524.

70 Cunningham, *Ebenezer*, p. 130. I have a typed copy of the address, given to me by Mr. A.A. Smith, and it was also printed in *Congregational Quarterly*, Vol. XXXIII, October 1955, p. 88 ff.

were close, and both were vacant. However, neither church wanted this under any circumstance. By contrast the two churches in the Prince's Park area agreed to unite.

The situation became so bad that between the Wars five central churches closed: *Trinity, Belvidere Road, Prince's Park* closed in 1926 and joined with *Prince's Road* in the latter's church to form *Trinity, Prince's Road*. *Shaw Street* closed in 1931 and the congregation moved to *Rankin Memorial, Norris Green*. *Canning Street* closed in 1932 and the congregation moved to *Allerton, St. George's, Myrtle Street* closed in 1938 and the congregation moved to Maghull and founded *St. George's, Maghull*. *Mount Pleasant* closed in 1939 and the congregation joined Allerton.

However, although five central churches closed, the Presbytery wanted to keep a similar number of churches in the Liverpool area. But in 1926, the churches in the now down-town Prince's Park, which were only a few hundred yards from each other, and were both suffering because of their nearness to Sefton Park Church (one was half a mile away and the other three-quarters of a mile away) united to form one congregation, *Trinity, Prince's Road*.

Then a new cause was founded in Bootle. It was the only one to be started by the Presbytery's Home Mission and Church Extension Committees, and was known as *Linacre Park Institute*. It almost failed to get going, for a large minority of the Presbytery felt that the area was too limited, too sparsely populated, and there were other claims on church funds. The advocates of the new cause agreed that the area did not warrant a regular congregation, but argued that a mission-type Institute was needed, for there was no other church at work in the neighbourhood, and the Presbytery had secured the only available site. The Institute was opened in 1928 under the charge of the session of *Trinity, Walton*, with a lay preacher as superintendent. It was raised to the status of a preaching station in 1949, but became a local church only on the formation of the United Reformed Church in 1972.

The Presbytery's preferred policy was to move the down-town churches to the outskirts with help and support from the Church Extension Committee. In 1931, the Presbytery built a church on the new corporation housing estate of Norris Green. They wanted a congregation from a down-town church to move there and, three weeks before the building was to be opened, the minister and congregation of *Shaw Street* were asked to become the minister and congregation of the new cause. They agreed to this at a Congregational Meeting two days before the opening. The new church was *Rankin Memorial, Norris Green*.

In the following year, another new building was opened, this time at *Allerton*, designed by the same architect and with many similarities. The Church Extension Committee had had talks with the congregation of *Canning Street* and they had agreed to transfer to the new church.

As the Presbytery built both *Rankin Memorial* and *Allerton Churches* at the same time and then arranged for the down-town congregations to move out, some comparisons can be made between the two situations. (The writer can speak from first-hand experience, for she has attended *Rankin Memorial* all her life, and has

been managers' clerk and church secretary there for upwards of twenty years).

The Presbytery wanted to start a couple of churches in the new housing estates on the outskirts of the city. There would be money for this both from the Jubilee Church Extension Fund, which was raised in 1926 as a celebration for fifty years of the Presbyterian Church of England, and from the will of the late John Rankin. So the Presbytery looked around and fixed on Norris Green and Allerton as the prime areas. The years have proved that Allerton was a very good choice and that Norris Green was less so. The Allerton site was at the junction of two main roads - Mather Avenue, leading out from the city, and Booker Avenue, a wide cross road - therefore the church was in a prominent position, with good 'bus routes. The houses were good-sized, semi-detached and detached, mostly private, with only a few built by the corporation. Rankin's site at Norris Green was in the centre of a corporation housing estate, where the population soon became mainly Roman Catholic, because Catholics tended to have the large families which qualified for the corporation's houses. Its 'bus route was a cross-city one, which made the church difficult to get to.

The Assembly's Home Church Committee purchased the two sites in 1929 and the Presbytery appointed the same architect for both. The two churches were in the same style. The bricks were similar - a poor, rustic type, which let in water. The windows of each were leaded lights; the halls and ancillary accommodation were alike; even the exterior detailing of the brick was practically the same. Throughout the years too, both churches have had similar problems with their buildings - dampness, difficulty with heating the long corridors and, later, vandalism, because the low roofs are easy to climb. Neither congregation would say that the Presbytery made a success of its buildings. However, Allerton has coped better with the situation for it has had a large membership, with the money for necessary repairs. Rankin struggled with a large, cold, damp building. It was blitzed in the Second World War, which did not help matters. The cost of keeping the building water-tight was a constant drain on a small congregation with little money. Finally, the vandalism was such that the church had to be pulled down. The hall became the church and for the first time the Norris Green congregation has a building with which it can cope.

The only other congregation in Liverpool to move before the War started was St. George's, Myrtle Street, which moved to Maghull, a new estate of private houses, in 1939.

Over in Birkenhead, Hamilton Memorial was complaining of its proximity to Brassey Street Mission. They decided to move half a mile, to a newly developed area from which they were already drawing members. They had not the money to build a new church themselves, but received help from Trinity, Cloughton, (whose mission Brassey Street was), and the Presbytery's Church Extension Committee. The move was a success; both Hamilton Memorial and Brassey Street prospered.

Between the Wars most of the churches just outside Liverpool's city centre as well as those in the centre of Birkenhead and in Bootle, were encountering increasing difficulties. Some of them, like Grange Road, Birkenhead, wanted to

move to the outskirts; but Grange Road was unable to sell its building before the option on the new site ran out. (The notice board advertising the sale remained for over twenty years). A bequest gave renewed hope, but the decline started again, and then there was no longer the leadership for removal and a fresh start. This was a problem which declining churches faced time and time again. When a church started to decline, and a move was mooted, the majority of the congregation were often opposed to the idea. When the congregation did agree it was often too late. Other churches might want to move, but be unable to sell their site, like Grange Road, and unwilling to leave until they had sold it; others took a chance, like Derby Road, which moved and then had difficulty in selling the building which had to be demolished at their own expense. A few fortunate congregations like Shaw Street and Canning Street, had premises built for them by the Presbytery, which sold their old buildings when they moved into the new. The decision and ability to move was influenced by any number of factors.

The shortage of houses meant that a church could find it difficult to provide a manse. There were other shortages, as well as rising prices, which left many churches with less money to spend on the minister's stipend, the church officer's salary, the mission, or repairs to the building. Everton Valley was in this position, but when it was suggested that they unite with another church they turned the idea down. By contrast Fairfield reached its greatest membership during this time, later than might have been imagined - perhaps because it was further from the city centre.

Many churches were faced with large bills for repair probably because they had been busy with other things in war-time, when most of the men were away. Some were faced with dry rot. Several found it difficult to raise the money. Some tried to let the halls on week-nights, others planned bazaars and similar money-raising activities. For some the financial position was grave: membership had declined and with it the number who could contribute, but expenditure had not been pruned.

However, not all were in such a plight. West Kirby was doing well. Green Lane erected halls and Wavertree, given £12,000 by an anonymous benefactor, was able to build a massive church.

Towards the end of the 1920s the General Assembly decided that any minister in charge for seven or more years must regard himself as available for approach by any congregation. One church that was affected by this was Grange Road, whose minister had been there for nine years; he quickly received a call to another church; and Grange Road managed to replace him.

The 1930s saw financial depression, and many churches were chronically short of money. Some chose this moment to introduce the Free Will Offering Scheme instead of pew rents; fewer people attending church meant fewer seats taken, with resulting loss of income. In the Free Will Offering Scheme members agreed to put the same amount in an envelope each week. If they were absent they would put their envelopes on the collection plate when they were next at church. This was found to be a better way of raising money for the ongoing work of the congregation, even if it made more work for the treasurer. But perhaps the most



notable financial innovation, and one that caused an awful amount of trouble and upset, was at Trinity, Bootle. Its managers decided that all monies from all organisations should be handed to them, as they thought that they should be in control of all finance. They asked for the credit balances from the Sunday school and King's Missionary Band to be handed to the church treasurer. When this was refused, the managers called a meeting of all organisations and told them that, as these organisations had money while the church had a large deficit, the managers should handle all the money, for this would reduce the overdraft. Naturally the organisations did not want to do this. There was trouble and a loss of goodwill. Matters did not improve until the minister resigned.

At the same time, Sunday schools were becoming smaller. There were fewer children, and those that there were, found other interests, such as the cinema. Moreover, the pattern of families attending church together was ceasing, as fathers lapsed from church-going after the War. One consequence was the difficulty (and expense) of finding boys to pump the organ by hand, so the wealthier churches invested in an electric blower. One result of the shortage of men was that many churches, greatly daring, resorted to "Lady Managers".

At times there are glimpses of wider issues: Fairfield and Smithdown Gate opposed licences for cinemas in immediate proximity to the church. The latter congregation also sent a resolution to the Presbytery regretting the extension of the hours during which public houses were to be opened. The Presbytery adopted the resolution and sent it to the civic authorities.

ALBERTA JEAN DOODSON

Note: For a bibliography see *JURCHS*, Vol. 5, No. 6, May 1995, pp. 368-9.

## REVIEWS

*Elizabethan Essays*. By Patrick Collinson. Pp. xiv + 265. London: Hambledon Press, 1994. £35.00. ISBN 1 85285 092 2.

The last volume to appear with a very similar title in 1958 - *Essays in Elizabethan History* - was the work of Sir John Neale, the Tudor scholar whose studies were steadily demolished by the late Sir Geoffrey Elton much in the way huge, partially-devastated, inner-city areas were cleared for new building after the 1939-45 war. A pupil of J.E. Neale, G.R. Elton had little time for his mentor, and any prefatory comment to a review of an updated collection of Elizabethan essays cannot but contrast the approach of two eminent Tudor scholars to their research supervisor or *Doctor Vater*. For Patrick Collinson, albeit critical in the way to be expected of one obliged to come to terms with historical controversies as the very catalyst of Clio's discipline, clearly retains both affection and respect for Neale in whose name he was invited to give the two Memorial Lectures reprinted here. The first of these, delivered before the University of Manchester (1986) is a lively

piece entitled "The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth I", and like "Puritans, Men of Business and Elizabethan Parliaments", given at University College, London, a year later, finds its focus largely in political affairs rather than in the religious issues which, as the author's principal interest, provide the overall subject for six other essays in an important work of seminal scholarship.

No brief review can do justice to the range of religious ideas that come under scrutiny in these pages. But the reader will at least grasp the measure of what awaits in a spectrum aptly likened to a rainbow crossing the Tudor universe. Rising from John Foxe the martyrologist on its radical left, the arc at its height probes Gloriana's own faith before making a sharp descent into the reactionary right and that "Turncoat" Perne of Peterhouse. Nor is the Bard forgotten, resplendent focus on "William Shakespeare's Religious Inheritance and Environment" revealing a background that, if it owed much to the scripture, prayer-book and homilies of the Settlement, drew so heavily on a long period of papist and puritan *imbroglio* as to cloud the refracted effect of so much on "Shakespeare himself" (p. 252).

*De Republica Anglorum*, Patrick Collinson's Inaugural Lecture as Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge, figures prominently in this volume. Far more than a tribute to his predecessors - though the subtitle "History with the Politics Put Back" does nothing if not expose Elton to the full glare of footlights centre-stage - this is no mere *pièce d'occasion*. In fact, like the whole collection, a volume superbly produced by The Hambledon Press with eighteen dramatic engravings and woodcuts mostly taken from the title-pages of contemporary tracts, here is a work that will foster further fascination for Elizabethan times when they have "surely never been more exciting, more original [and] more creative" (p. 27).

PETER NEWMAN BROOKS

*Whence and Whither. 150 Years of Reformed Church Worship in Summertown.* By Helen Mead. Pp. 51. Oxford: Harold Copeman, 1994. £3.95. ISBN 0 951579843.

Some years ago, when a URC History Society group visited Summertown URC in Oxford, the minister began his talk to us with the words: "The most important thing about Summertown is that its lay members have always been more distinguished than its ministers."

Helen Mead's short history of the church bears out this claim (or admission). It surveys tersely the record of a church which has never had great number of members but has included among them such familiar names as Micklem, Marsh, Caird, Dodd, Goodall, Routley and others. It is a church which has a broadly liberal tradition and been alert to contemporary social pressures and obligations. It has been open to accusations of political correctness, which means greater readiness to respond to the new than to stand blindly for the traditional.

This history is, as its length suggests, a sketchy account: the succession of

ministers is noted, but one learns little about them; the distinguished members appear as little more than names; there is no index. "The twentieth century began with an epidemic of influenza which postponed the January Tea Meeting to the end of the month" is a piece of information with a certain period charm, but one would like to know more about the social character of the membership and about the changing character of public worship: neither unmentioned, but neither described in much detail.

The flavour of passing years in Summertown comes over, but a more substantial history would be welcome.

STEPHEN MAYOR

*Halls of Zion: Chapels and Meeting-Houses in Norfolk.* By Janet Ede, Norma Virgoe and Tom Williamson. Pp. 69, Norwich: University of East Anglia, Centre of East Anglian Studies, 1994. £6.95 incl. p&p. ISBN 0906219 35 3.

*A History of the Nonconformist Churches of York.* By William Ellerby and James Pigott Pritchett, edited by Edward Royle. Pp. x + 179. York: Borthwick Texts and Calendars 19, 1993. £11.00. ISSN 0305 8506.

*Memorials of the Independent Chapel at Rothwell.* By George T. Streater. Pp. 247. Rothwell United Reformed Church, 1994. £9.95. ISBN 0 9524519 0 5.

*A History of Creation United Reformed Church, 1672–1993.* By M.A. Townsend. Pp. 113. Creaton United Reformed Church, 1993. £10.00

Chapel histories come in all shapes and sizes, and this selection is no exception. Two come from universities and two from the churches themselves, and this is reflected in the production and layout. The survey of nonconformist chapels in Norfolk was an ambitious venture, involving many volunteer recorders as well as the professionals who put the material together. The result is a beautifully illustrated little book, with many original plans and diagrams: for example, there is a plan of Wymondham Independent Chapel of 1851, showing the allocation of seats in the original box pews (rearranged in the 1870s), and detailed plans of the schoolrooms at Princes Street Congregational Church, Norwich in 1879, reflecting the seriousness with which the educational task of the church was undertaken. There is even a little section on tin tabernacles.

The emphasis in this study is more on the buildings than the congregations which inhabited them, but it is not simply an architectural history. The relationship of changing styles to upward social mobility is discussed, and also the location of chapels on the edge of villages or in the centre. The text refers to twentieth-century buildings but there are few illustrations of these (and it is unfortunate in a book of this quality that the adjective "United Reform" is consistently used). The index gives a complete list of chapels in Norfolk with a note on their present use if they have been closed: this will be invaluable to any explorer of a very interesting county.

Dr Royle's edition of the Ellerby and Pritchett *History of the Nonconformist*

*Churches of York* is in the Borthwick Texts and Calendars Series, and is a welcome acknowledgement of the significance of the original materials of dissent. The history is in two manuscript volumes, recently acquired by the Borthwick Institute. The major part of it was written by James Pigott Pritchett, architect and deacon of Lendal Chapel, York, between 1825 and 1850. The earlier part, tracing the history until 1816 when Lendal Chapel was founded, was written by William Ellerby, drawing mainly on secondary sources.

The story reflects the revival of Congregationalism in York in the early nineteenth century after the original seventeenth-century Presbyterian congregation had become unitarian. Lendal Chapel became the centre of an effective group of village churches, served by an Itinerancy Society, the accounts of which are included alongside the chapel accounts in the text. The form of Pritchett's history is essentially that of an annalist, recording the events of each year more or less as they happened. As such it is more of an original source than an analytical history. The final chapter, written in 1850, tells the story of Pritchett's disagreement with the new minister, Richard Soper, which resulted in his temporary withdrawal from membership. Pritchett lasted longer than Soper, but he left others to complete the story.

Dr Royle does this with an epilogue on the history of Congregationalism in York since 1850. Congregationalism was stagnating even in the later nineteenth century, not helped by competition between two large chapels, Lendal and Salem. Lendal Chapel eventually closed in 1929 and a new chapel was built a little further away from the city centre in 1934. Salem merged with New Lendal in 1962, and since this book was written New Lendal has joined with St Columba's, the former Presbyterian church in the centre of York, founded in 1874. There are two useful appendices – a biographical index, and a collection of the original plans and elevations.

Mr Streater's book on Rothwell fills a significant gap in the histories of mid-seventeenth century Congregational churches. Rothwell is one of a small group of churches within the United Reformed Church, which can document its origin before 1662. The church covenant was signed in 1655, and the history of the congregation has been continuous since then. It is interesting within a tradition that emphasises the nature of the church as the fellowship of believers that the histories of its congregations are so often centred around its ministers. Mr Streater follows this pattern in dividing his chapters according to the tenure of each minister; and he also gives an account of the earlier and subsequent careers of the ministers who have served Rothwell. Some of these gained distinction in different ways. Walter Scott, after being minister from 1813 to 1833 went on to become Tutor and eventually Principal of Airedale College, Bradford. W.T. Matson, who was minister for a much shorter period (1873-1879), is still remembered as a hymn-writer, and one of the hymns he wrote while at Rothwell is reprinted. The church's third minister, Richard Davis (1689-1714), also published a hymn book in 1694 which went through eight editions, the last appearing in 1833.

Rothwell is a typical Independent chapel in Midland England, originally

drawing members from a wide area and gradually founding daughter churches. The shifting relationship between Baptists and Independents is a constant theme as, less fortunately, are disputes between members and ministers from time to time. In the nineteenth century the church developed educational work and a role in the local community. In the 1980s the church responded to the challenge of dry rot with an extensive restoration programme which was supported by English Heritage. Mr Streater's history quotes extensively from the complete set of Church Books from 1655.

Barely ten miles from Rothwell is Creaton, whose Independent church is the subject of the last history. Though the least elaborate of the four books under discussion, in some ways it is the most enterprising. It begins with a conventional account of a ministerial succession which goes back to the ejection of Richard Hook in 1662. The formal dating of the church from 1694 when the first building was opened is a good illustration of the differences in calculating church dates. Some take the earliest recorded date; others, like Creaton, pass over the period when a congregation had no fixed abode in the Restoration period and take the date of a permanent building. What is most remarkable is that this small village church had its own minister until after the second world war when, with the church roll falling below 20, a shared pastorate had to be accepted. Indeed the church nearly closed in the 1960s but was saved by new housing development and devoted ministry.

The novel part of this history is the careful research on the members of the church, using parish registers and census returns. This section begins with a discussion of the various bodies of trustees since 1694, and then goes on to consider a series of families with long associations with the church. There is also a series of memos on individual members, derived from newspaper or magazine articles. This is the first church history I have read to give such an extensive treatment of ordinary members. Although it is easier to research the membership of a small church in a settled community, the approach is a model for other local histories. There is a section on plans and elevations, derived from contemporary records. Spratton chapel, which was a daughter church of Creaton, has its own history. It was built in 1806 and eventually sold in 1893, having latterly been rented by the Salvation Army. Finally there is a section on Sunday School and adult activities at Creaton. All this shows that small churches need their histories as much as large ones.

DAVID M. THOMPSON