

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Baptist Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bq_01.php

- The Life and Death of Vavasor Powell*, 1671, p.191.
- 11 *Metaphors of Self*, 1972, p.31.
- 12 Charles Doe, *Collection of Experiences*, 1700.
- 13 Michael McGiffert, ed., *God's Plot: the Paradoxes of Puritan Piety, being the Autobiography and Journal of Thomas Shepard*, 1972.
- 14 *The Autobiography of Richard Baxter*, ed. N. H. Keeble, 1974, pp.10-11.
- 15 Peter Carlton, 'Bunyan: Convention, Language, Authority', *ELH* 51, 1984, pp.17-32.
- 16 Anna Trapnel, *A Legacy for Saints*, 1654, p.2.
- 17 Doe, p.31.
- 18 J.-M. Benoist, *The Structural Revolution*, 1978, p.14.
- 19 Michael Edwards, *Towards a Christian Poetics*, 1984, p.130.
- 20 John Hall, 'Self' in *Poems*, 1647, reprinted in *Saintsbury, Minor Poets of the Caroline Period*, 1906, II, p.220.
- 21 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 1970, p.385.
- 22 An earlier version of this paper was delivered to the November 1986 meeting of the Literary Studies Group of UCCF; I should like to thank the group for their criticism and encouragement.

ROGER POOLEY, *Lecturer in the Department of English, University of Keele*

REVIEW

Gordon Wilkins, *By Hands, Bullocks and Prayers*, 1987. Available from author, 1 Hill View Close, Colwall, Malvern, Worcs, WR13 6RF. £8.95 + £1.00 p & p.

This book has a charm of its own and although written about the Kond Hills in India and in particular about the Moorshead Memorial Hospital at Udayagiri; it has something in common with 'Miss Read' and Laurie Lee. The reminiscences of Dr Gordon Wilkins and his wife, Honor, have been considerably helped by the discovery of 170 letters sent home to Gordon's father between 1936 and 1946.

The record is meticulous and wide-ranging. It includes information on how to make needles for record-players, home-invented board games and what to do when the local community runs out of small change, as well as details of local life and the maintenance of good health in the tropics. The period covered begins in the pioneer days of the thirties and is continued to the present day. This must be one of the last records of a pioneer, and thus has an advantage of being able to compare early treatment with some modern techniques. The period also relates to the transfer of responsibility to Indian hands. It is not possible to read this book without developing a respect for the commitment of missionaries referred to and to the continuity of the contribution of several missionary families. Whilst having a clear impact on the local community, these missionaries worked hard to maintain their own culture and tradition amongst themselves. One ponders too on the prayer support which must have been generated by the correspondence.

P. E. T. BRIGGS

that which not only searches us but breaks us. And a Christianity which would exclude none has no power to include the world.
(pp. xxxii and 62)

NOTES

This paper was first given as the Annual Lecture of the Baptist Historical Society 1988.

The text of the Baptist Confessions of Faith will be found in the two collections by W. J. McGlothlin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, London, 1910 and W. L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, Judson Press, 1959. The *Baptist Times* editorial was for 11 February 1965 and the E. L. Wenger articles, 'Confesions, Creeds and Covenants', appeared on 15, 22 and 29 April 1965. The MSS *Records of the Western Association*, commenced by Caleb Evans, are in the Bristol Baptist College Library. The Baptist Catechisms are all listed in E. C. Starr, ed., *A Baptist Bibliography*, and those quoted are held in either the British Library or Bristol Baptist College Library. The extensive quotation from my essay, in K. Clements, ed., *Bound to Love*, is reproduced with permission. Keith Clements' contribution to the BWA Doctrine Commission was made available to me by the author and the text will subsequently appear in the *Baptist Quarterly*. The report *Baptists and Unity* was published by the Baptist Union, London, in 1967.

ROGER HAYDEN *Superintendent of the Western Area of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Secretary of the Baptist Historical Society*

Edward Royle, *Nonconformity in Nineteenth-Century York*, Borthwick Papers, No. 68. St Anthony's Press, York, 1985, 39 pp, fl-80.

The Cathedral City of York was no appanage of the Church of England, for in 1837 over half the church attendances were at Nonconformist places of worship. Edward Royle, Senior Lecturer in History at the University of York, having previously written on the Church of England in Victorian York, in this succinct study turns from church to chapel. Two statistical surveys of religion in the city undertaken in 1837 and 1901 enable him to supplement the 1851 religious census with an illuminating analysis of the main changes in denominational strength. The Unitarians enjoyed the distinguished ministry of Charles Wellbeloved (1792-1858), the Independents that of James Parsons (1822-70). The Quakers, with Tukes then Rowntrees prominent, were strong, but the Methodists, who built some grand edifices, were strongest. After some small and transient causes, Baptists established themselves more firmly in 1862. Under F. B. Meyer, the evangelist D. L. Moody, in his first mission in Britain, brought about a 70% membership increase in two years. A second Baptist Church that existed briefly in York from 1880 is omitted from this booklet, but in general it is an unusually well researched and authoritative study of provincial Nonconformity.

D. W. BEBBINGTON

Doreen M. Acton, *A History of Brentwood Baptist Church*, 1986, from Brentwood Baptist Church, 26 Holmwood Road, Shenfield, Brentwood, Essex, CM15 8QS. 172 pp.

This is the epitome of what a local church history should be. Not content to chronicle events within the church community as if it were the only Christian organisation in existence, the author sets them within the whole story of the local community and acknowledges the ecumenical context of the Baptist work. It demonstrates how a Christian community which began in sectarian spirit could broaden its stream of life into the river of the whole people of God - a transition not made easily, requiring great tenacity, but bringing its own fruitfulness over the years.

The sectarian origins are portrayed in the local newspaper report of William Walker's speech at the opening of the new chapel in October 1885. The work had begun in Walker's preaching while a member of Spurgeon's College, after a series of meetings in the Town Hall organised by Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle Country Mission. No acknowledgement from Walker of the needs of the unchurched masses about them: just an attack on his fellow churchmen! 'The Revd William Walker, who was warmly applauded, pointed out that the struggle between Sacerdotalism and the pure Gospel was going on, and would go on, he believed, with increased vigour. No Church was better able to combat this Sacerdotalism than the Baptist Church. (Hear hear). Ritualism had made tremendous strides in the past thirty years, and this with Tractarianism had given such an impetus to Sacerdotalism and Popery which it would take years to drive back: but with Christ in their side, they were ready for the fight. (Applause)'. (p.13)

The battle was joined with more than fellow Christians. Church documents show how Walker responded to 'Downgrade'. Opening the bazaar in 1888, he called it a 'Spurgeonic' bazaar: one of Spurgeon's deacons was to open it, some boys from Spurgeon's orphanage were to be present at it, as was a former Spurgeon's student who continually reminded those present of the financial needs. 'The one great person they lacked was Mr C. H. Spurgeon himself. In his present hour of difficulty and ill-treatment from many quarters, they emphatically stated that they were proud to be with him, however remotely. (Applause)'. (*Essex Times*)

Later the church almost came to grief when Dr R. F. Weymouth, a church officer for many years, fell out with a minister who introduced infant dedication and named people at their baptism. The Trustees once closed the chapel against the minister and those who agreed with him - as the local paper rejoiced to record.

The church began to recover, helped by C. H. Spurgeon's brother-in-law, Donald Henderson, and the long ministry of lay pastor Prothero Ford, who sold tea to pay the expenses of preaching the Gospel! The church never looked back and its growth is well delineated. The post-war pastorate of E. G. Keed (1945-9) is revealing: Keed had begun at the 'fashionable, theologically liberal and socially aware Queen's Road' in stark contrast to Brentwood where he ended his ministry. Needing a manse, Keed wrote for help to an Essex

Baptist Association official who replied, 'It is a bold but essential venture to acquire a manse & indeed we are all doing it now. My own church after 52 years is compelled to do so'. Keed recognised the gifts within his diaconate and proceeded to develop them, rather than feel threatened by such talents. The partnership between N. D. Belham and Keed set a new understanding of the nature of the church. Minister and laity complemented each other.

This history has much to offer. It is well written, significantly illustrated, and tells the story as it is. It is a fine social document of the place over the past 100 years. Above all, it documents the transition from sectarianism to mainstream, outward-looking, evangelical churchmanship which is well able to handle the ecumenical dimension of today.

ROGER HAYDEN

L. J. Maguire, ed., *The Browne American Letters, 1794-1831*, The General Baptist Assembly, 14 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0AG, 1987. 90pp.

This is a most attractive volume of letters written by James Browne, his relatives and friends to and from America and deposited in the West Sussex Record Office. The letters provide a rich insight into both the domestic and ecclesiastical life of the community of old General Baptists who were associated with the churches at Ditchling and Horsham and those who migrated from those communities to New York State at the very end of the eighteenth century. On the one hand the correspondents tell of the decline of the General Baptists and the hoped-for revival of their fortunes in S. E. England. On the other, the North American emigrants found it difficult to gather a congregation committed to their particular beliefs: Ann Billingshurst writes to her brother, 'When we first came here they seemed to be much pleased with T.B. (her husband). We had something more than the Room would hold. There would be many outside but after they found that he believed in the final Restoration of the wicked they thought he was a Dangerous man, and were afraid to Attend his Preaching for fear that they should be drawn aside into Damnable Herisys'. In due course the family was in fact to attach themselves to a Universalist congregation. Doctrine notwithstanding, patient struggling with adversity bears testimony sometimes silent but from time to time articulated of an enduring piety and faith. 'I often wish I could be at Horsham meeting!', the sister wrote from America, 'and hear Such preaching as I used to hear but that is a Foolish Wish for I have the Same Heavenly Father here that I had there to protect and comfort me, the Same Bible to Read and Meditate, and Blessings Sufficient to make a Contented Mind Cheerful and Happy. But we are Such poor Frail Creatures we are apt to Look back with Regret to the Enjoyments we have Lost'. From England James Browne writes in 1820, 'Very important and valuable changes have taken place with respect to religion in England - since you left it we have new Unitarian congregations, Unitarian Book Societies, Unitarian Fund Societies, Unitarian associations, and Fellowship Fund, societies all over England and Scotland'. A change had taken place.

J. H. Y. BRIGGS

John Caffyn, *Sussex Believers: Baptist Marriage in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, Churchman Publishing Ltd, Worthing, 1988, 318 pp with illustrations. £12.95.

This handsomely produced book breaks new ground for Baptist history. As the author rightly says, 'no appraisal has ever been made of Baptist attitudes to marriage', and he also points out that even such comparatively recent work as M. R. Watts, *The Dissenters* (1978) depends upon 'an impressionistic rather than statistical background' for its comments on the economic and social aspects of Dissent generally. Mr Caffyn's own concern is with the small General Baptist community in mid-Sussex and, inevitably, he has much more material available for the 18th century than for the 17th century - though that does not mean his references to the earlier period are without considerable interest and value.

If the reader comes to this book hoping to learn about the inwardness of Baptist thinking concerning marriage he or she will be disappointed. On the other hand, if the student wishes to understand how the conviction that marriage must only take place within the believing Baptist community worked out there will be much to discover. Admittedly, Mr Caffyn's samples are small and the problems facing the researcher, as he himself points out in his chapter on 'Research constraints', are great. Nevertheless there is much here to challenge the local and family historian elsewhere and some reason to question the misty generalisations of which those working on a wider scale are sometimes guilty. Astonishingly, in view of all the pressures towards 'mixed marriage' which the author himself outlines, his figures indicated that, down to 1750, 96% of churchmembers married within their own community and, even in the last half of the 18th century, 85% continued to do so. At the same time the small sample of examples of those who 'married out' certainly suggests that normally the consequence was to lose the new family to the General Baptist denomination.

It is also very interesting that, even before Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753, most leaders and ordinary members of these General Baptist churches were married in parish churches. Nevertheless, the study of how long married couples lived in the 18th century is rather more surprising in its results: the men tended to live on average to 70 and the women only to 67. But this is far too interesting a book for the reviewer merely to pluck out a few plums: it is one that Baptist historians ought to possess not merely for information about its own district but to pose questions about other periods and places in our story.

Perhaps I may close with one quotation, a letter from Ann Billingham in 1827, who had emigrated to America about thirty years earlier: 'I often wish I could be at Horsham Meeting, and hear such preaching as I used to hear'. That underlines something of the style of their religion.

B. R. WHITE