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POLE MOOR BAPTIST CHAPEL, SCAMMONDEN, HUDDERSFIELD

Reflections on the early history

The history of Pole Moor Chapel spans just over two hundred years, from the first moves leading to its foundation in 1787 until it closed in 1992. This article deals with some aspects of the period from 1787 to 1829. It suggests some revisions of emphasis and focuses on the difficulties and conflicts faced in these early years.

Many early nonconformist tabernacles captured the imagination of later generations, accruing a certain sense of romance from their foundation in secrecy under threat of persecution. Pole Moor Chapel too has captured the imagination,¹ although the Conventicle Act had been repealed well before its foundation. It had its own story² of struggle against local prejudice and intolerance, which explains its situation on a high moorland plateau nearly two miles from, and some six or seven hundred feet above, the nearest sizeable village, Slaithwaite in the Colne valley.

Three short histories of the chapel exist.³ Two were printed privately. The last, celebrating the chapel's bicentenary, was completed only five years before its closure and stands in some measure as a memorial. All the authors were closely associated with the chapel: T.R. Lewis was Baptist minister of the daughter chapel of Scapagoat Hill; W. Turpitt was one of Pole Moor's own ministers; the third combined the researches of two lay-women, A. Crawshaw and M. Wilkinson, one the organist at Pole Moor, the other a member of a neighbouring Baptist church, whose forebears were 'Powlers'. They all record and celebrate the achievements and life of the church and its pastors. Not the result of entirely dispassionate or exhaustive historical research, although the last was based on rather more detached enquiry, they sometimes exaggerate or even perpetuate myth: the myth of the wild situation, the myth of wild people, and the myth of the chapel's missionary origins. These myths do not stand up to investigation.

All the histories stress the unpromising wildness and isolation of the situation. Lewis wrote 'Pole Moor was one of the most unlikely spots in the whole of broad Yorkshire at which to gather a regular congregation. The people lived miles away and had to travel over bad roads and dreary moors.' Turpitt adopted a similar tone: 'There is no town or village of any considerable size within reasonable distance of the chapel. Here and there can be seen groups of cottages which are so few that they hardly deserve to be called hamlets or villages. For the most part it is single cottages with one or more outbuildings attached that is the common sight that meets the eye . . . The situation even today [1913] is a most unlikely one in which to build a Chapel . . . it must seem doubly so when we think of the situation in 1790.' A local historian⁴, D.F.E. Sykes, wrote of 'that wild and mountainous region', while C.E. Shipley,⁵ in *The Baptists of Yorkshire*, asserted that 'Pole Moor . . . must have been a wild and primeval spot.'

Not only was the situation portrayed as wild, but so were the inhabitants.

Turpitt, admitting that he relied on 'tradition', wrote: 'the inhabitants of the surrounding moorland were but little superior to the beasts of the field in their mode of life. The ordinary decencies of life were unknown to them . . . One may gather from the few remaining traces of the huts they used to live in that these people were huddled together in places hardly deserving the name of houses . . . corresponding with the low social state of things on the moorland, there was, we may be sure, an inferior mental condition of things.'

On Pennine moorland 1150 feet above sea-level, the situation had a certain wildness. At the edge of the plateau the land falls away south quite steeply to the upper reaches of the river Colne, and north to a moorland tributary of the Calder. Huddersfield lies more than three miles east, nearer five miles by road. To the west the land rises gradually another 500 feet to the watershed some five miles distant, before dropping into Lancashire. Today the moorland is traversed by the M62, but Defoe's description of his journey in the 1720s from Rochdale to Halifax via nearby Blackstone Edge shows what an obstacle the Pennines could be.⁶ Only in 1806 did a Turnpike Act result in the Huddersfield to Rochdale Road, running by Pole Moor.⁷ There was, however, an earlier road from Huddersfield as far as Pole Moor and W.B. Crump describes the Royal George Inn, about a quarter of a mile away, as a 'nodal point' for the convergence of pack-horse routes, one of which crossed Pole Moor on its way from Halifax to Marsden and Lancashire. Such a situation was by no means unique for a Pennine dissenting chapel. Fawcett's own Wainsgate Chapel,⁸ founded in 1850 above Hebden Bridge, was on the edge of wild moorland, while a tiny chapel founded in 1820⁹ by Hebden Water at Blake Dean on the edge of Widdop Moor was even more remote.

As to the wildness of the people, John Wesley may have written in 1757 of Huddersfield, 'A wilder people I never saw in England',¹⁰ but it seems unlikely that they were much wilder out at Pole Moor. Indeed, the reverse may be true. This was the country of small clothiers and of woollen and fancy woollen weaving. Ten of the first twelve Trustees of Pole Chapel¹¹ were described as clothiers. Defoe described the people a few miles north, through whose settlements he passed, as 'all full of business, not a beggar, not an idle person in sight'. While he wrote early in the eighteenth century, it may not have been so different around Pole Moor towards its end. Ills associated with the Industrial Revolution were soon to bring great hardship, but Crump and Ghorbal¹² saw the late eighteenth century in the Huddersfield area as a time of relative prosperity for domestic cloth manufacture. This is borne out by E.P. Thompson,¹³ who shows the Huddersfield 'fancy trade' in serious decline only from the 1820s. Moderate prosperity is not usually associated with degradation. Turpitt probably generalized from the half-legendary 'Burn Platts' or 'Burnt Platters'.¹⁴ Such a generalization scarcely seems justified.

Many of the accounts of the foundation of Pole Moor Chapel imply that its origins lay in missionary enterprise by the mother church of Salendine Nook, a few miles nearer Huddersfield. Shipley writes of Baptists coming to Slaithwaite in 1788.

According to Lewis, 'some of the Nook members anxious for the spread of Baptist principles commenced cottage preaching in Slaithwaite.' Turpitt wrote: 'It is generally thought, although there is no definite record of it, that certain members of the Salendine Nook Church were prayerfully dismissed . . . to form a Baptist Church at Pole Moor.' The West Riding *Circular Letter* of 1842¹⁵ contains 'A Brief Historical Account of the Churches in the Association'. For Pole Moor it found that 'no record of its early history has been preserved', but continued 'It appears that in 1788 some friends connected with the Denomination and anxious for its extension opened a room for preaching in the village of Slaithwaite'. The suggestion of missionary intent is clear.

Crawshaw quoted letters printed in *Foundations*, the history of Salendine Nook,¹⁶ but in these the missionary aspect is less evident. One, dated 28 October 1787, by Thomas Stutterd,¹⁷ referred to 'our Slaithwaite friends': intending to set up 'a separate interest' in Slaithwaite, they had written requesting help to obtain Baptist ministers to supply them. 'We [i.e. the Salendine Nook Church] thought the letter wrote in a very bad spirit and considering circumstances, their ignorance, poverty etc., most of us could not encourage them . . . John Ramsden moved to give them permission to take their names out of the church book and a majority agreed, but there not being perfect unanimity and night coming on, a decision was postponed. I dread the consequences. A great affliction seems to hang over us . . . I fear the enemy is sowing discord amongst us.' This suggests a secession rather than a planned mission. Stock further quoted an entry in the Church Minute Book, 11 November 1787: 'The following eight persons [named] who lived about Slaithwaite left us, the relation between the church and them being dissolved by mutual consent.' It seems that the mother church acquiesced in a venture which it did not initiate and about which a number of members had serious doubts. Like a wise mother, Salendine Nook seems to have given immediate and continuing support to the new cause. A list of ministerial supplies from March 1788 to July 1789 showed that the Revd Joshua Wood of Nook and most of the local pastors in the Yorkshire and Lancashire Association, including John Fawcett, took turns in ministering to the fledgling church.¹⁸

So Baptists did not 'come to Slaithwaite' in 1788 in quite the sense implied by Shipley: they were already there, at least as individual believers. Exactly why the eight wished to leave Salendine Nook and set up an independent cause is not clear. Stutterd's disquiet suggests a strength of feeling which may indicate doctrinal disagreement. Salendine Nook's moderate Calvinism was reinforced during the pastorate of Joshua Wood,¹⁹ who had a Methodist background and evangelical sympathies, as did Stutterd himself. Perhaps the eight were reacting against this: sympathies for a narrower approach were later to become apparent at Pole, but the venture may have been inspired, as the preamble to the 1790 Covenant²⁰ asserted, by religious zeal, or by a wish to worship nearer to their homes. Whatever the case, others gathered to the cause between the departure of the eight Nook members

in November 1787 and the Article of Union and Covenant of July 1790, the year in which the first Pole Moor chapel was built. The twenty-five signatories included seven erstwhile Nook members, entered consecutively. A further seven individuals appear to have signed in 1792.

The church was now safely launched, cared for in its first two years by a Mr Bruce,²¹ whose name, unlike those of subsequent pastors, does not appear in the Church Book. One of Stutterd's letters²² has him living at Pole by 1789 and receiving £10-00 per annum, while one of September 1791 from William Briggs²³ mentions his 'supplying' for Bruce during an absence in Birmingham 'on begging business'.²⁴ In January 1790 Stutterd states that Bruce 'frequently walked from Leeds to Pole, preached twice, and returned the same night'. Rippon's *Annual Register* records a church, but no pastor, in 1790 at 'Slaughwaite', and by 1793 gives Charles Bamford as the pastor. The latter's gravestone also records him as 'the first pastor'. Whatever Bruce's status, his connection, according to Stock, had ceased by May 1792.²⁵ In July 1793 Charles Bamford accepted a call.²⁶

The 1842 *Circular Letter*²⁷ skates over the years up to 1808, giving little more than the names of Bruce and Bamford. Only with the appointment in 1808 of Abraham Webster, after a four-year interregnum, is there an indication of coming troubles: 'Previously . . . certain sentiments had been introduced into the church of a questionable character which paved the way for the spread of similar principles and practices'. All three histories mention difficulties experienced by Pole Moor over the next fifteen years. It seems that the trouble originated in the long gap between Bamford's death and Webster's appointment, when 'the church appears to have been without a spiritual guide'.²⁸ Close scrutiny of the Church Book, however, together with evidence from other sources, suggests that the church may have experienced troubles as early as 1804, possibly from the very beginning. Thomas Stutterd's initial forebodings may have been justified.

The first sign of discord appears in January 1789: Thomas Stutterd wrote to his brother John:²⁹ 'An unhappy division has lately taken place amongst the people there. John Woodhead and his wife and two Taylors pretend they are dissatisfied with the site of the intended meeting house.' They were attempting to rally support and raise funds for an alternative in Marsden, higher up the Colne valley.

The next sign is an entry in the Church Book, which follows, after a few empty pages, the signatories to the Covenant and reveals measures to establish rules for the orderly conduct of 'causes that are brought before the church', viz:

- 1st: That every member keep their seat while every cause is tried and every act past [*sic*]
- 2nd: That only one member speak at a time
- 3rd: That no cause be received by the church by no messenger from any member unless it is not possible for that member to come him or herself
- 4th: Our Brethren to give their Judgement on every cause and Sisters to be called upon as evidences and the church shall submit to a majority as the voice of God in every cause

5th: That every member absent at a Church Meeting when churches Acts are past [*sic*] blaming the church for such Acts shall be adjudged criminal

This may suggest previous lively and undisciplined scenes, but does not imply serious doctrinal controversy and may merely indicate uneducated or semi-literate people feeling their way uncertainly towards a proper church order. It is not clear whether the undated entry was made before or, as Crawshaw suggests, after Bruce's departure, but it was evidently before the arrival of Charles Bamford, since the rest of the page is left empty and the Call to Bamford is recorded on a new side.

There is further and clearer evidence in the Church Book that all was not well. The entry of 14 July 1793, referring to Bamford's call, stated that he had accepted it conditionally, 'under the consideration that he would dissolve our church state and renew our Covenant . . .'. The members had 'heartily submitted' to this, 'being Consious [*sic*] of, and deeply humbled under a sense of our former disorders'. The renewal of the Covenant follows the Call but Lewis made no reference to it, while Turpitt treated it as though it were the first and only Covenant of the church.³⁰ Crawshaw quoted the 14 July entry in full without comment. The 1790 Covenant had only five sections, closely based on that of Salendine Nook.³¹ Of the Nook Covenant, Stock commented, 'the absence of doctrinal assertions is remarkable'. This may have been, as Chadwick pointed out, because the Confession of Faith (which at Salendine Nook, though not at Pole Moor, stressed points of agreement with other denominations) comprised a summary of doctrinal beliefs, while the Covenant was its 'counterweight, dealing with practical conduct'. Any such distinction was blurred in the 1793 Pole Moor Covenant, which began with a 'doctrinal assertion' concerning 'special grace' articulated by those who perceived themselves as 'a small remnant of the Redeemed' who could but 'hope' that they had been called by grace. It bound the signatories to ensure that 'whatsoever is contrary thereunto . . . shall receive no countenance'. Such ideas, or persons holding them, were to be made known to the church, 'though it be the wife of our bosom'. Failure to repent of any offence after two warnings would lead the church 'to proceed to the solemn act of seperation [*sic*] and cutting off', though such comment is set within a consciousness that their Calvinism was part of the contemporary 'divided state of Christianity'.

The remainder of this longer Covenant was considerably more detailed as to required conduct. Whereas the earlier one merely bound the signatories 'to fill up our places in the House of God', the later elaborated, 'nothing but absolute necessity shall keep us at home'. Those who had on occasion to absent themselves should 'faithfully and truly render reasons to the church'. The signatories were 'not to countenance, encourage, wink or connive at, or suffer sin in or upon another', but rather to 'faithfully admonish, earnestly exhort and carefully rebuke such'. A cautionary clause warned against rumour and hearsay, and asserted the importance of verifying accusations: 'we will not make our imaginations and thoughts the Rule of our judgement', nor 'make our fancies our Oracles'. The Covenant had its down-

to-earth advice: for example, to masters requiring them to seek the moral welfare of their servants, and to all church members and their families 'to strive to fill up our working homes with honest labour', and to be honest in conversation and 'not to cheat and overreach them in buying or selling, or defrauding them of what they have a right unto; not exacting more of them than what is our Due, but to be just in all our Dealings with them and punctual in all our performance of our promies to them, though it should be to our loss, to pay them all our just and lawful Debts contracted of things bought or borrowed and to withhold from them nothing that may do them good if it is in the power of our hand to do it ...' They were, however, to avoid sinful conformity to the behaviour of the world, abstaining from the 'sins of the Times', exemplified as 'the observation of those unscriptural Holy Days and feast times, as Fairs, Tides, Rush-bearings and Races'. Fairs and races are easily understood. Unscriptural Holy Days would refer to the patronal festivals of local parish churches, often the focus for local works, whilst rush-bearings represented another point at which folk culture was brought into church with the approval of the established church. The Covenant concluded with a commitment to avoid all sinful conformity to men of the world, while yet 'behaving ourselves towards them in a reverently Humble, useful way . . . as neighbours and fellow creatures who should not be cheated in buying or selling'.

The three histories present a confusing picture of the theological stance of the first pastors. Bamford's insistence on a new Covenant³² may suggest a difference of doctrine between himself and the church at Salendine Nook. Turpitt, echoing Sykes, wrote that Bamford was a 'High Calvinist endorsing generally the theology of Dr Gill'.³³ However, as these and other sources show, Bamford was a friend of the Revd John Hirst of Bacup, who spoke warmly of Bamford in his Memoirs. Sellers implies³⁴ that Hirst was not a High Calvinist, in spite of his 'hesitation to offer the grace of God freely'. He is mentioned by John Haslam as approving of Fuller.³⁵ Sellers also writes of Bamford that he was a convert of Grimshaw's.³⁶ This, and the fact that he took part with John Fawcett in Robert Hyde's ordination at Salendine Nook in 1795³⁷ suggests perhaps that Bamford was cautiously moderate. If he was *not* a High Calvinist it may be that the 'former disorders' against which the new Covenant was directed had been of a High Calvinist character. His stress on discipline may have been little different from that of Joshua Wood, who in 1777 told the Nook members that he would become their permanent pastor 'so long as you are willing to conform to the laws of Christ'.³⁸

It is not immediately clear in the Church Book where the signatories to the 1793 Covenant end and the entry of newly baptized members begins. However, the signatures of Charles Bamford and his wife are followed by twenty-four names which occur earlier, either in 1790 or 1792 (eight who signed the 1790 Covenant are missing from the 1793 list, but only one is clearly recorded as having died; possibly some were not prepared to accept the new Covenant). Names then continue without a break, with thirty-one previously unrecorded names before the first clear indication

of a baptism on 31 August 1797. William and Hannah Taylor were the first of some twenty-eight more or less clearly dated baptisms before 1804, when Bamford died. Most or all of the thirty-one were evidently baptized between 1793 and 1797. The 1842 *Circular Letter* gives the number of baptisms under Bamford as fifty, while Rippon³⁹ records about sixty members in 1798. The church had in eight years more than doubled its original membership, suggesting that Bamford's bid to restore order and harmony was successful. Rippon specifically mentions 'a pleasing and increasing congregation', adding that 'the good old pastor is more popular than ever'. Moreover, 'exclusions' or 'separations' were correspondingly few. The Church Book records only three definitely occurring, between 1800 and 1803; no details are given, but all three were members prior to Bamford's coming. Three more, two of whom were earlier members, were excluded either during Bamford's ministry or in the interregnum following it. John Lunn was 'separated for vile conduct'. John Armitage and Thomas Sykes, whose name was heavily erased, were 'restored' in 1808, shortly after Abraham Webster became pastor.

Bamford himself testified to the happy state.⁴⁰ 'we have a large congregation of attentive hearers. This is a wonder to us ourselves, and our neighbouring sister churches. I never had such a prospect of usefulness since I entered the ministry. We had twenty added to the church this summer.' No date is given, but the Church Book suggests the remark belongs to the early years of his ministry. He continued: 'I have the affections of the church and all the congregation which tends to make me both comfortable and useful. I never had so much pleasure and liberty in the pulpit before; hence I rejoice with trembling.' Corroboration is provided by the Revd John Hirst of Bacup.⁴¹ Referring to Bamford's ministry at Pole and successful efforts towards paying off the church's debt, he wrote: 'Here he was more active, useful and happy than in any former place. His ministry was well attended and much blessed. He himself was highly esteemed by the people for his work's sake.'⁴² Bamford was sixty-six when he came to Pole in 1793, with a long ministerial career in a variety of churches behind him.⁴³ The eleven years at Pole Moor were not merely his last but, it appears, his crowning years.

The next twenty years of Pole Moor's history were turbulent and suggest a *return* to the disorder which Bamford had kept at bay. Just over a month after his death on 4 September 1804,⁴⁴ the deacons received a letter of advice from Bamford's friend, John Hirst,⁴⁵ who wrote, 'Lose no time, if possible, in obtaining a minister. Being long supplied with various preachers . . . too often Divides the Affections of a Church . . . and then they can hardly ever be united in one man. As a Brother and Elder I have given you my counsel, but nevertheless I leave you to your liberty to act as may appear best to you.' He advised them to choose as pastor someone in broad agreement with the Covenant. His words appear prophetic. Whether the church deliberately failed to heed his warning or were unable to find a new pastor quickly, there followed a four-year 'interregnum'. It was not until 4 January 1808 that Abraham Webster received a call⁴⁶ signed by only twenty-three

members. During this period much of Bamford's work was undone. The 1842 *Circular Letter* mentions, without details, 'sentiments . . . of a questionable character', which had 'paved the way for the spread of sinful principles and practices'. Turpitt recorded, though without giving a source, that William Gadsby was one of those who supplied the church during the interregnum, implying that his theological ideas were influential at Pole Moor. Webster seems to have faced as great a challenge as had Bamford. Aged about forty-three and ordained about fifteen years when he came to Pole, he had less ministerial experience but was no novice.⁴⁷ Turpitt, while maintaining that Webster differed theologically from Bamford, does not demonstrate this clearly.⁴⁸ He emphasizes his belief in the continuing relevance of the Moral Law for believers. This, together with the fact that on leaving Pole in February 1818 he succeeded Fawcett in the church at Hebden Bridge, suggests he was no High Calvinist. Turpitt goes on to claim for him, however, that he denied 'faith and repentance' to be 'duties on the part of the unregenerate', but then says that intervention from Salendine Nook caused him to modify his viewpoint and that later he did appeal to the consciences of believers.⁴⁹ Perhaps Webster was grappling with the 'modern' question but finding it hard to abandon the narrower stance entirely. In this he may not have been unlike Bamford and perhaps Hirst. His first ministry at Pole seems to have been less happy than Bamford's, for, despite between thirty-six and thirty-nine baptisms, there were a number of exclusions and a secession.

Eight 'exclusions' or 'separations' can be identified with certainty. Too much should not be made of these⁵⁰ but, if a High Calvinist element is accepted as existing at Pole, it may be possible to see in this light the exclusions in 1810 of James and Mary Cock for non-attendance, and four members (including Salendine Nook founder member, John Woodhead) on 6 January 1811 for 'disorderly behaviour'.⁵¹ There is nothing conclusive here, however. The problem for the historian is that in the records of this chapel the theoretical denying of the authority of the Mosaic law and the practical flouting of its demands are closely associated, making it impossible to be sure which exclusions stem from objection to the authority of the law and which from simple moral failure. Of the remaining two exclusions, both in 1808, no reason is given for one, but the other, of James Varley, 'Cut of [*sic*] for denying the divinity of Christ at our Church Meeting', suggests the existence of theological liberalism, as well as conservatism, within the congregation.

Curiously, there is no explicit reference in the Church Book to the most dramatic evidence of controversy during Webster's pastorate. In 1811 seven members seceded over a doctrinal disagreement:

. . . our Minister declared that all who did not believe the moral law of Moses was a perfect rule of life for believers must be cut off from the church, we, having felt the law's power in our conscience, have been glad to hear the small voice of the Gospel saying, 'This is the way, walk ye in it'. Therefore upon our denial of the law being our rule of life, we have separated from the

church.⁵²

This critical piece of evidence has the authority only of secondary sources, though John Robinson's exclusion in 1820 uses language which echoes this citation. The 1811 seceders, who appear to have adopted a High Calvinist position, perhaps influenced by Gadsby⁵³ during the interregnum, formed a church in Slaithwaite, popularly known for years as 'Gadsby's'.⁵⁴ Notwithstanding this secession of those who held to a narrower Calvinism, doctrinal conflict evidently continued at Pole and may have contributed to Webster's departure in February 1818.

This time the period without a regular minister was much shorter. Lawrence Shaw's 'Call' was recorded in the Church Book in 1819 but his connection with the church had begun some eight months earlier.⁵⁵ During his ministry doctrinal controversy seems to have reached crisis proportions. Graphic evidence appears in the Church Book: several pages are defaced with heavy scribblings and crossings out of names. It is not easy to unravel the evidence: difficulties begin with having two lists for Abraham Webster's first pastorate, both headed by his name. The first, dated at the beginning of his ministry, 18 May 1808, has the names of twenty-one new members baptized between 1808 and June 1818, the last ten after his departure in February 1818. The first of the heavy crossings out occur on this list. After a two-page gap a new list begins. The name 'Abraham Webster, Pastor', has subsequently been heavily crossed out. Most of the first fifty-one subsequent names occur also in the first list or earlier. Then follow the names of those entered as new baptisms, most between 1811 and 1816. The last six names, however, also occur near the end of the earlier list.

The signatories to the Call to Shaw follow after a short gap. The scribblings and crossings out continue on the second Webster list, reaching a crescendo on the pages following the Call to Shaw until 1823, after which they cease. It is not immediately obvious when the crossings out occurred, nor why or when the first Webster list was abandoned and the second begun. It may have been about 1811, perhaps after the Gadsbyite secession. Finally, it is not clear when the baptisms of Shaw's pastorate end and those of Webster's second pastorate (1824-9) begin. Close scrutiny yields some clarification and provides evidence of a troubled pastorate.

There appear to have been difficulties almost from the start of Shaw's connection with the church. After preaching on 1 October 1818, he was invited to supply for six months. The church was apparently split between those who found Shaw acceptable and those who did not.⁵⁶ There was one definite exclusion during this period, in January 1819, of Thomas Sykes for a second time.⁵⁷ The names of a further three, occurring at the end of the first Webster list and apparently baptized in June 1818, were vigorously crossed out, probably excluded some time before June 1819 since they do not occur as signatories of the Call to Shaw.

A meeting on Easter Monday, 12 April 1819, considered what was to be done at the end of Shaw's six months supply.⁵⁸ A compromise was reached: he was offered a further twelve months supply to June 1820.⁵⁹ This arrangement was,

however, quickly overturned, apparently by a decision at a subsequent Church Meeting, influenced by Shaw's plea for a permanent appointment.⁶⁰ The Church Book records: 'June 1819. We whose names are undersigned have agreed to give Mr. Lorance [*sic*] Shaw a Call to take the Pastoral Care of the Church at Pole'. Forty-four names follow before the next baptismal entry in May 1820.

It is interesting to compare the list of signatories with the membership of the church at the end of Webster's ministry. A note for 1817, in ink contemporary with the baptismal list, gives the membership as fifty-four. A further three baptisms are recorded in June 1818 (after Webster's departure in February but before Shaw's arrival), together with a further three which, though undated, probably belong to the same period. This brings the number of members up to sixty. Examination of the list of those signing the Call shows the discrepancy between the number of earlier members and the number of signatories to be even greater than at first appears. Only twenty-seven of the forty-four signatories (including the six baptized during the interregnum) appear earlier in the Church Book. Seventeen are apparently entirely new, with no separate record of baptism (this may suggest Shaw deliberately 'packed' the church with supporters). When this is taken into account, the discrepancy between the previous membership and the signatories to the Call is thirty-three. The second Webster list contains the names of thirty-five individuals who did not sign the Call, including that of Thomas Sykes who, as we have seen, had been excluded in January. Allowing for one or two deaths, this suggests that a substantial number of existing members may have been unwilling to sign the Call to Shaw. This does not in itself indicate that they ceased to be members or to attend the chapel (the Call to Webster had had only twenty-three signatures, certainly not the entire membership in 1808). The fact, however, that some of the names not on the Call to Shaw were added again after 1823 as if new members suggests that some did leave at this time.

In spite of such hints of difficulties, from one angle Shaw's ministry may be seen as successful. Turpitt says that 'about 50 persons were baptized by Mr Shaw'. This accords reasonably well with the evidence of the Church Book:

Number of names on the Call but not recorded earlier	17)
Number of baptisms (mostly dated) June 1818-June 1823	41) 58

From the exclusions a rather different picture emerges. Three occurred together on 28 July 1820. 'Henery Wilkinson', baptized only in June 1818 was 'cut off for charging the minister with preaching erroneous doctrine'. Joseph Bamforth, baptized under Webster in 1812, was 'cut off for refusing to fill up his place', while John Robinson, whose membership was first indicated on the Call to Shaw, was 'cut off for denying the Law of God to be the rule of the Believer's conduct'. Clearly the Slaithwaite secession had not embraced all who believed that gospel grace excluded Christians from all ideas of moral responsibility, whilst others seem to demonstrate the fruit of such apparent 'antinomianism'. Hannah Bamforth was excluded for 'irregular conduct' some time between 1820 and 1822. A further

three, perhaps four, exclusions for 'vile' or 'disorderly' conduct, occurred either in 1821 or 1827: the date is indistinct.

In 1823 came the climax: on 13 March a group of ten men and women were 'solemnly excluded as members of the church for creating a disturbance in the church and encouraging others therein', and the next entry, for 5 June, lists a further fifteen individuals 'solemnly excluded for being led away by the above named disturbance and for refusing to acknowledge their fault to the church'. The entry continued, 'These two acts are acts of necessity and not of choice. It is our prayer to God that they may all be led to repentance for their fault.' The restrained, measured tones stand in sharp contrast to the angry crossings out of the names of these former members where they occur earlier, as signatories to the Call, on the second Webster list, and one or two also on the first, as if to wipe out all trace of them. Below the 1823 exclusions, the loss to the church is calculated in a neat sum:

Number of members	82
Excluded from them	25
Present number	57

The total number of exclusions under Shaw comes to a minimum of twenty-nine, possibly as many as thirty-three. Between fifteen and seventeen of the twenty-nine had been baptized under Shaw.

Conflict had now reached its peak. The dramatic scribbles and crossings out in the Church Book abruptly cease. Shaw left a year later, in May 1824, to take up a pastorate a few miles to the north at Steep Lane.⁶¹

What lay behind the turbulence of Shaw's pastorate? The sources are more consistent about his theology than about that of his predecessors. According to Sykes, Turpitt and the 1842 Circular Letter,⁶² he arrived an ardent High Calvinist, later swinging disconcertingly to a Low Calvinist position, though the timing is not clear. Shipley's reference to his views as 'more liberal than Pole Moor could appreciate'⁶³ presumably refers to the later period. Yet it seems to have been his style, quite as much as his theology, which was the real trouble at Pole. In his early, High Calvinist days he adopted, according to Turpitt, a confrontational approach, declaring his opponent's beliefs to be witchcraft.⁶⁴ His later volte-face did nothing to restore equilibrium, merely exchanging one set of opponents for another. His affronted former supporters now accused him of teaching contrary to the Articles of the Church. According to Sykes and Crawshaw,⁶⁵ it was these who were the subjects of the March and June exclusions in 1823.

In July Webster returned, to remain until his death in December 1828.⁶⁶ Of this period, Turpitt asserted that 'many returned to their spiritual home, while peace and harmony were restored and enjoyed'. The evidence of the Church Book broadly supports this. Between June 1823 and April 1830 thirty-seven names were added. Of these, twenty were evidently baptisms: one before Shaw's departure, two either under Shaw or Webster, thirteen after Webster's return, and four after Webster's death. Seven were presumably restorations of some excluded between 1820 and

1823. Five others had been members during Webster's first pastorate, but had not signed the Call to Shaw. It is not possible to ascertain the category of the remaining five. By the time H. W. Holmes accepted the pastorate at Pole in May 1830,⁶⁷ these additions must have gone some way, allowing for deaths, towards restoring the membership to its 1818 level.

These early years of Pole Moor should be viewed in the context of wider Baptist trends. In the early and middle years of the eighteenth century the threat had been that a narrower, more restrictive form of Calvinism might stifle more outward-looking views, preventing or impeding further growth and even leading to decline.⁶⁸ The narrower High Calvinism was expressed particularly in the writings of John Gill (1697-1771) and John Brine (1703-65). The threat was steadily and ever more strongly countered by the growth of Moderate or Low Calvinism, one of whose best exponents was Andrew Fuller (1754-1815). This was fostered in, and spread from, such centres as the Bristol Academy and the Northamptonshire Association. Moderate or evangelical Calvinism gave increasing emphasis to education for the ministry, to mission at home and abroad, and to churches associating on a regional basis to counter isolationism. Central doctrinal points at issue related to the doctrine of predestination, its interpretation and implications. Was 'offering Christ' to the unregenerate appropriate since, if they were not numbered amongst the elect, no amount of preaching could make them so? Were the elect themselves thus freed by the Gospel so that the law of Moses was not binding on them? The latter argument, with its apparent invitation to all kinds of licence, brought against the High Calvinists the accusation of antinomianism.

Pole Moor's mother church of Salendine Nook seems to have stood in the mainstream Particular Baptist tradition from its foundation. The Confession of Faith of 1743⁶⁹ (which was similar to those of Rawdon in 1715, Barnoldswick in 1744, and Gildersome in 1749)⁷⁰ was at pains to stress its agreement, wherever possible, with 'the summaries of heavenly doctrine and Confession of Christian Faith' of other 'Christian Brethren or Churches of Christ', notably the Church of England, the Church of Scotland and the Congregationalists. Chadwick has shown that Moderate Calvinism was in the ascendant in the 1770s, with an influx of refugees from Venn's church in Huddersfield following his departure in 1771, and the arrival of Joshua Wood as pastor.⁷¹ Wood, like Hugh and Caleb Evans (1713-81 and 1737-91) of the Bristol Academy and also John Fawcett, was a devotee of the writings of the New England theologian, Jonathan Edwards (1703-58).⁷² Of him Haykin has written: 'more than any other eighteenth-century author, Edwards showed Sutcliff and fellow Baptists like Fawcett, Evans and Fuller how to combine a commitment to Calvinism with a passion for . . . fervent evangelism'. Chadwick shows, too, the importance of Thomas Stutterd, who travelled all over the country in the wool trade, 'helping to break down the isolation and introspection to which Dissenting Congregations could be prone, by establishing links, for example, with Sutcliff at Olney in Northamptonshire.'

In the West Riding of Yorkshire as a whole, in spite of some strong High Calvinist influences,⁷³ there was a marked impetus towards Moderate Calvinism, much of it stemming from the indefatigable John Fawcett (1714-1817) of Hebden Bridge. He was instrumental in revitalizing the Yorkshire and Lancashire Association,⁷⁴ which, though repudiating High Calvinism in 1757,⁷⁵ had been weakened by schism.⁷⁶ In 1791 the Association, meeting at Salendine Nook, condemned the 'odious demon' of religious bigotry.⁷⁷ Alvery Jackson of Barnoldswick⁷⁸ advocated 'offers' of salvation in *The Question Answered*, his argument against the High Calvinists. James Aston, coming in 1805 to Lockwood, a daughter church of Nook founded in 1795, claimed within a year to have gained forty-four new members as a result of village preaching.⁷⁹ By 1805 Yorkshire had its own Baptist Academy with a student of the Evans', William Steadman (1764-1837), as its first President.⁸⁰ Against this background, both national and local, there appears to have been a significant reactionary influence at Pole Moor coming in part from among the membership and in part from the pastor.

Meanwhile, though moderate Calvinism had been gaining ascendancy,⁸¹ particularly after the deaths of Gill and Brine, there was not only some resistance but, from the turn of the century, a definite counter-attack⁸² led, in the north, by Kershaw of Rochdale and Gadsby of Manchester. Gadsby, in 1805, withdrew his church from the Association and 'began to lead off splinter groups and breakaway flocks'.⁸³ It seems likely that Pole Moor was affected by this backlash. The struggle between High and moderate Calvinism, evident in the secondary sources and hinted at in primary material, threatened to hinder the growth of the church and lead it away from the influence of its more moderate mother church. Although supported and nurtured by ministers and lay men from member-churches of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Association, and although Salendine Nook was a member, Pole did not itself join until 1830.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, there seems to have been no actual breach with Nook, and Shaw actually married Hyde's daughter.⁸⁵

Perhaps what we see at Pole Moor are very fine gradations of insufficiently understood theological difference which, combined with Yorkshire forthrightness and independence of mind, required a greater clarity of doctrinal understanding and greater wisdom than were for some years available to the church leaders to ensure harmony and unity.

It is hard with hindsight to understand the appeal of High Calvinism. E.P. Thompson⁸⁶ argued that 'faith in a life to come served not only as a consolation to the poor, but also as some emotional compensation for present sufferings and grievances'. Pole Moor's early years coincided with the onset of increasingly serious economic difficulties for small clothiers and hand-loom weavers, emanating from the Industrial Revolution. There was, as Thompson has shown, much political radicalism in the Huddersfield area and the Luddites were operating in 1812 not far from Pole Moor. Perhaps some of those at Pole, rather than becoming politically active, took refuge instead in a spiritual conflict; their response to earthly hardship

may have been to secure themselves on their Hill of Zion⁸⁷ behind the impregnable walls of Election, set apart from the rest of suffering humanity.

The early history of Pole Moor illustrates the paradoxical nature of the Gathered Church, with the jealously guarded tradition of the freedom and independence of the local church. To some, association seemed to threaten that tradition, while others found that associating guarded them from the worst dangers of error and excess. Thompson saw liberty of conscience as the one great gain for the common people ultimately preserved from the Commonwealth.⁸⁸ At the mercy of the country gentry and of corrupt corporations in towns, and excluded from any part in government, 'the chapel, the tavern and the home were their own. In the "unsteeped" places of worship there was room for a free intellectual life and for democratic experiments . . . ' In their 'tabernacle on the hill'⁸⁹ those independent and forthright Yorkshire weavers, smoking their long clay pipes,⁹⁰ and giving earnest argument and counter-argument, doubtless well supported by biblical references, were surely 'cocks of their own midden'.

For E.P. Thompson, no great friend to religion especially in its more extreme forms, 'The very anarchy of Old Dissent, with its self-governing churches and its schisms, meant that most unexpected and unorthodox views might suddenly appear'.⁹¹ The context was his assessment of Dissent's part in creating the intellectual foundation for the emergent working class as a discrete and ultimately political entity. In the years immediately before, during and after the cataclysm of the French Revolution, the country seethed with a welter of radical ideas, political and religious, many of which, Thompson argued, had their origin in Dissent. Whether the autonomous churches were crucibles for creative thinking or hot-beds of dangerous heresy depends on one's standpoint.

The freedom of the fledgling church at Pole Moor, however, was leading it, as maybe Stutterd had foreseen, into a morass of bitter and arid controversy. The same might to some extent be said of the controversies surrounding the various interpretations of Calvinism as a whole. Something not far removed from casuistry seems to have been necessary to overcome the pitfalls of its complex doctrines, only too easily over-simplified or caricatured.⁹² What Brown has called 'intricate expositions of High Calvinism and their counterparts'⁹³ often led to polarization and misinterpretation. If even Gill's High Calvinism is open to question,⁹⁴ and if Fuller himself misunderstood him, as Ella argued,⁹⁵ what hope could there be for the relatively uneducated 'Powlers'? Maybe Turpitt⁹⁶ should have the last word: 'Theology is ever changing, religion alone is permanent . . . much unpleasantness existed [at Pole Moor] through mistaking theology as the essential vital thing'.

The real achievement of these early years of Pole Moor's history is to be found not in mission, not in triumphing over supposed geographical isolation, over wildness of landscape or of human character, but, more soberly, in eventually drawing back from self-destructive conflict and vanquishing the spiritual isolationism of the elect, of which Pole Moor chapel, on its moorland plateau high above the

increasingly populated and industrial valley bottom, could so easily have become a lonely symbol.

NOTES

- 1 The chapel inspired great loyalty, members still attending having moved away. Even subsequent generations would return for special occasions. Burials still take place at Pole Moor of individuals whose parents or grandparents worshipped there. On 6 October 1945 *Picture Post* had an article on 'Sunday with the Powlers', and the BBC once presented a programme about the chapel.
- 2 As well as the three chapel histories, see C. Hulbert (the Anglican incumbent), *The Annals of Slaithwaite Church*, 1864; D.F.E. Sykes, *The History of Colne Valley*, Slaithwaite 1906. The *Circular Letter of the West Riding of Yorkshire Association of Baptist Churches*, 1842, said the Earl of Dartmouth would not allow a dissenting chapel on his land, so, 'being driven from the place by Aristocratic Intolerance', they built in Scammonden in 1790.
- 3 T.R. Lewis, *A Short Historical Sketch: Pole Moor Baptist Church, Scammonden, Huddersfield*, c. 1896; W. Turpitt, *An Outline of the History of Pole Moor Baptist Church 1788-1914*, (private) 1913; A. Crawshaw and M. Wilkinson, *Tabernacle on the Hill: A History of Pole Moor Baptist Church, Scammonden, 1787-1987*, (private) 1987.
- 4 Sykes, *op.cit.*, chapter 7.
- 5 C.E. Shipley, ed., *The Baptists of Yorkshire*, 1912, p.232.
- 6 Daniel Defoe, *A Tour through the whole island of Great Britain*, Penguin edn.1971, pp.487ff.
- 7 W. B. Crump, *Huddersfield Highways Down the Ages*, Wakefield 1968, pp.88ff.
- 8 Shipley, *op.cit.*, pp.88f.
- 9 I. Sellers, ed., *Our Heritage: The Baptists of Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire 1647-1987*, Leeds 1987, p.24.
- 10 Quoted by E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Classes*, Penguin edn. 1991, p.31.
- 11 Deed of Transfer, 28 February 1817, quoted by Crawshaw, *op.cit.*, p.18.
- 12 W. B. Crump & G. Ghorbal, *The History of the Huddersfield Woollen Industry*, 1935, pp.59-68.
- 13 Thompson, *op.cit.*, pp.297-315.
- 14 The Burnplatters apparently lived just below Pole Moor and became a by-word in the locality for primitive living conditions and manners. They were probably victims of the handloom weaving depression after the 1820s. Sykes quotes G.S. Philips, *Walks Around Huddersfield*, 1848. See Alan Brookes, *The Handloom Fancy Weavers*, Honley 1993, p.50.
- 15 *Circular Letter of the West Riding of Yorkshire Association of Baptist Churches meeting in Rochdale, 1842*.
- 16 P. Stock, *Foundations*, Halifax 1933.
- 17 *ibid.*, p.390. Stutterd was an influential lay member of Salendine Nook, a schoolmaster and then a traveller in the wool trade. His brother John was Baptist minister at Colnc, Lanca.
- 18 Stock, *op.cit.* p.391, refers to this list. The 1842 *Circular Letter* also recorded that 'Messrs Crabtree, Fawcett, Hartley and Parker were amongst the ministerial brethren who supplied'.
- 19 R.E. Chadwick, *Sacred Ground, High Tradition: Salendine Nook Baptist Church 1743-1993*, private publication, 1993, pp.5-7.
- 20 The 1790 Covenant, with details of baptisms and other material up to 1874, is in *Our Church Book, July 1790*, part of the Pole Moor Records, West Yorkshire Archive Service, Wakefield.
- 21 'Mr Bunce' in *Circular Letter 1842* was probably a misprint.
- 22 Quoted by Stock, *op.cit.*, p.393.
- 23 *ibid.* Briggs was another of Salendine Nook's influential laymen (see Chadwick, *op.cit.*).
- 24 To obtain funds to finance the new church.
- 25 Stock shows that the Yorkshire and Lancashire Association meeting at Cowling 1792 undertook to supply Pole Moor, and refers to a list of such supplies from July 1792 to February 1793.
- 26 Recorded in *Our Church Book* (see n.20).
- 27 *op.cit.*
- 28 *ibid.*
- 29 Quoted by Stock, *op.cit.*, p.391.
- 30 Turpitt, *op.cit.*, p.18. For 1790 he only mentioned a Confession of Faith (p.16).
- 31 Given in full in Stock, *op.cit.*, p.69. Pole Moor's Covenant is here transcribed as Appendix A.
- 32 Stock referred to the history of Pole Moor's daughter-church at Scapegoat Hill, written in 1921 by N. Haigh (the present author's grandfather), where in 1899 the Covenant was amended to exclude such sentences as 'whatever is contrary to them [the doctrines of Calvinism]

- whoever may bring it shall receive no countenance or encouragement . . .'. By then 'a more catholic spirit in its attitude towards Christians of other denominations' prevailed (and at this time Particular and New Connexion Baptists were formally coming together). Haigh wondered whether the Covenant which came directly from Pole Moor had originated at Salendine Nook. Stock indignantly - and correctly - denied this. The Nook Covenant had never been altered; the daughter-church had been less open than the parent!
- 33 Turpitt, *op. cit.*, p.18; Sykes, *op. cit.*, from notes.
- 34 Sellers, *op. cit.*, p.16.
- 35 J. Haslam, *The Yorkshire Baptist Association*, in Shipley, *op. cit.*, p.275.
- 36 Sellers, 'Other Times, Other Ministries: John Fawcett and Alexander McLaren', *BQ* 32, 1987, p.182.
- 37 John Rippon, *Baptist Annual Register*, 2, 1794-7. Bamford addressed the deacons.
- 38 Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p.6.
- 39 Rippon, *op. cit.*, 3, 1798-1809.
- 40 A letter to Hirst of Bacup is quoted with minor variations by both Turpitt and Crawshaw. The version here is Turpitt's, *op. cit.*, p.17.
- 41 Hirst's memoirs are quoted by Crawshaw, *op. cit.*, p.14.
- 42 Thomas Stutterd's wrote, 28 November 1798, 'Pole . . . C. Bamford, Pastor, good congregation and increasing. The old man is very popular. As John Sutcliff of Olney observed to me some time ago he was never so before'. Stock, *op. cit.*, p.34.
- 43 W.T. Whitley, *Baptists of North West of England 1649-1913*, 1913.
- 44 Recorded in *Our Church Book*.
- 45 Quoted in full in Crawshaw, *op. cit.*, p.15.
- 46 Recorded on inside cover of *Our Church Book*.
- 47 For details of Webster's career, see *Baptist Magazine* 21, 1829; Whitley, *op. cit.*
- 48 Turpitt, *op. cit.*, p.21.
- 49 *ibid.*, p.21.
- 50 Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p.7, for Salendine Nook: 'Of the members admitted during the first forty years of the church's life, more than one in five were at some time or other excluded'.
- 51 Not clearly legible; could read 1812 or 1814.
- 52 See Sykes, *op. cit.*, p.233. He claims it was signed by the minister of 'the new conventicle' and by 'Edmund Sykes, deacon'. An Edmund Sykes appears in the Church Book in the first Webster list but not in the second.
- 53 William Gadsby, *Doctrinal Antinomianism Refuted*, in *Gadsby's Works*, Manchester 1924.
- 54 J. Sugden, *Slaithwaite Notes of the Past and Present*, Manchester 1905, p.319, has a chapter about Providence Baptist Church entitled 'Gadsby's of Old'. The sobriquet lasted well into the middle years of this century.
- 55 Turpitt, *op. cit.* p.23; Crawshaw, *op. cit.*, p.19.
- 56 Crawshaw, *op. cit.*, p.19.
- 57 Thomas Sykes was one of the eight original Nook members named in the Church Minute Book. *Our Church Book* shows him excluded under Bamford or soon after, and restored under Webster in 1808. In 1817 he became one of the first Trustees of the chapel (Crawshaw, *op. cit.*, p.18), but does not re-appear after the 1819 exclusion. Turpitt, *op. cit.*, p.27, refers to him as a firm believer in predestination and election.
- Of the other seven Nook founder members, John Woodhead was excluded in 1811, one may never actually have become a member, one died soon after 1793, three do not appear after 1790. Elias Cock remained active, becoming a Trustee in 1817, until his death in 1824.
- 58 Crawshaw, *op. cit.* p.19.
- 59 This decision is recorded on the inside front cover of *Our Church Book*.
- 60 Crawshaw, *op. cit.*, p.19.
- 61 *ibid.*, p.20.
- 62 Sykes, *op. cit.*; Turpitt, *op. cit.*, pp.23-4; Circular Letter, *op. cit.*
- 63 Shipley, *op. cit.*, p.233.
- 64 Turpitt, *op. cit.*, p.23; see also Sykes, *op. cit.*
- 65 Sykes, *op. cit.*; Crawshaw, *op. cit.*, p.20.
- 66 Crawshaw, *op. cit.*, p.21.
- 67 Recorded in *Our Church Book*.
- 68 M. A. G. Haykin, "'A Habitation of God through the Spirit: John Sutcliff (1752-1814) and the revitalization of the Calvinistic Baptists in the late 18th century"', *BQ* 34, 1992, p.304.
- 69 Included in the letter of dismission from Rodhill End/Stoneslack: Stock, *op. cit.*, pp.68f.
- 70 Shipley, *op. cit.*, p.89.
- 71 Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p.5.
- 72 Haykin, *op. cit.*, p.307.
- 73 Sellers, *op. cit.*, p.16.
- 74 R. Brown, *The English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century*, 1986, p.81.
- 75 Sellers, *op. cit.*, p.19.
- 76 Brown, *op. cit.*, p.86.
- 77 Sellers, *op. cit.*, p.13.
- 78 Brown, *op. cit.*, pp.140, 172.
- 79 *ibid.*, p.123; Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p.8.
- 80 Brown, *op. cit.*, p.123.
- 81 *ibid.*, pp.91-5.

- 82 Sellers, *op.cit.*, p.21. But also see J. H. Y. Briggs, *The English Baptists of the Nineteenth Century*, Didcot 1994, pp.148-9, where the dogmatic Calvinism of the Yorkshire churches is still seen as a particular difficulty in bringing Particular and New Connexion Baptists into one body in the late 1880s.
- 83 Brown, *op.cit.*, p.129.
- 84 The Association *Circular Letter*, 1830, shows Pole Moor brought into membership by H. W. Holmes when he became pastor that year.
- 85 Crawshaw, *op.cit.*, p.19. Susanna Shaw's Dismissal to Pole Moor from Salendine Nook in 1822 and subsequently to Steep Lane is recorded in the Church Book.
- 86 Thompson, *op.cit.*, pp.36.
- 87 The date stone of the 'new' chapel at Pole Moor, built in 1858, bears the legend, 'The Hill of Zion Yields a Thousand Sacred Sweets'.
- 88 Thompson, *op.cit.*, p.56.
- 89 The title of Crawshaw's history, taken from the Pole Moor chapter heading in Sugden, *op.cit.*
- 90 *ibid.*, p.73, recalling his own attendance at Pole in the mid-19th century, wrote of both men and women smoking pipes as they exchanged views on doctrine and discussed the day's sermon in the lunch break between services.
- 91 Thompson, *op.cit.*, p.39.
- 92 *ibid.*, p.38, quoting Northamptonshire Association *Circular Letter*, 1770: 'The coming soul need not fear that he is not elected, for none but such would be willing to come'.
- 93 Brown, *op.cit.*, p.73.
- 94 For discussion of this, see Haykin, *op.cit.*, p.304. For a strong defence of Gill, see G. M. Ella, 'John Gill and the Charge of Hyper Calvinism', *BQ* 36 (1995).
- 95 *ibid.*, p.166.
- 96 Turpitt, *op.cit.*, p.21.

HEATHER WHEELER *Retired Head of History and Deputy Head Teacher, is descended from 'Powlers': her great-great grandmother and great-grandfather were members of Pole Moor, and her mother of the daughter church at Scapegoat Hill. While tracing these forebears, she became interested in the history of the church.*

APPENDIX A THE POLE MOOR COVENANT 1790

Editors' note: We do not often reproduce documents but judge it good to do so occasionally. This Confession of Faith and Solemn Covenant is the kind of material that researchers use when working on a subject like Pole Moor. We have not reproduced the list of signatories, nor the many biblical references cited in the original. The erratic spelling has been retained. The original document is now in the keeping of the West Yorkshire Archives Service in Wakefield, numbered C862/3/1/1 and should not be copied without WYAS permission which has been granted for reproduction in the Baptist Quarterly, as has that of the Yorkshire Baptist Association.

An Article of Union of the Gathering of the Baptist Church at Slightwaite

We whose names are under written having had for some time a desire to promote the baptist interest in our neighbourhood having been encouraged by some of the ministers of our Denomination and having of late called

on their help and set up our stand for that purpose We finding many people flocking round it we are encouraged Thearby to take this opportunity to form ourselves into a gospel church We having given ourselves to the Lord reciprocally give ourselves to and Recive each other as members of a church and promise to abide by each other and by

the cause of Christ and to walk together according to the rules of God's Church which we purpose to have inserted in the Ritten covenant hereafter to be Drawen up & signed by us.

July 1790

the Churches' Confession of faith, the solom Covenant of Church Communion...

1 of the Holy Scriptures

the holey scriptures containing the old and New testament or the writings of the prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles commonly called the holey Bible or the writen word of God and the only perfict certion and Infalible Rule of faith and obedience By which all spirits, Doctrins, men & works are to be Tried and no other Writings Whatsoever are to be Estemed of Equal Authority Infalibility & Deiveine majsty with those and the holy scripture next to the spirit of God who Dictated it is the Best interpreter of it self, all preaching is to be out of and according to it and Nothing is to be imposed or bound upon the Consience of any but what is contained therein or agreable thereunto. Neither is any thing to be added unto or taken from the same.

2 of God

there is onley one Living and true God of Eternal Existance a pure spirit without parts and passions of infinite perfictions unsearchable in Wisdome glorious in holiness fearfill in praises Allmighty in power Gracious and mercifull abundant in Goodness and truth unchangeably the same Creator and upshoulder of all things and in this one Godhead there are three that bear Record the father the word and the holy Ghost of Equal power and Glory.

3 of the Decres of God

God in his most holy and wise Counsel haith

fore ordained and Determined all future Events in his work of Creation provedince and grace so that nothing comes to pass by chance with Respect to God, nor any otherwise then as he hath appointed, who worketh all things according to the Council of his own unchangeable and Rightous will, yet so as that there by, God is neither the author of sin, nor hath fellowship with any therein nor is Violence offered to the will of the Creature nor yet is the Liberty or Contingence of cecond causes taken a way But Rather Established.

4 of Election

Election is an act of the sovereign will and good pleasure of God whereby before the foundation of the world he hath chosen in & given to the Lord Jesus Christ A certain select Number out of the Húman Race whom he hath for the praise of the glory of his grace unchangeably ordaned to Eterneal Life and theaire names weare all writton in the Lambs Book of Life never to be Raised out increased or Diminished and this Election hath not for its foundaton Either faith, Repentance, obedince, or any other good thing foreseen in or done by the Creature, as Qualifications moving God to Chuse them nor are these the Causes, but the Effect of and flow from Electing Love as streames from a fountain.

5 of Man

Man was Created by God in his own Image of Rightousness and true holyness, in which Estate he had power perfectly to obey the Law of his maker, yet was he mutable and Liable to sin, as the Event Declares in his wilfull apostacy from God, in which apostate state he hath Nither will nor power to do that which is truly good, his understanding is Darkness, his mind is full of Enmity against God, his Affections vile and Earthly, and his hole Heart the verey spring and fountain of polution, and filthiness, he is without

Rightousness, without strength, without God in the world, a Child of wrath under the Curss and Condemnation of the Law, and Exposed to Eternal Ruin and Destruction.

6 of Redemption

it pleased God in his infinitely wise Council to set apart his only begotten son, the scond person of the Ever Blessed trinity, as the head, and saviour of his body the Church, and according to the Covenant of peace which was between them Both, the son in the fulness of time appointed By the father, did by the power of the Holy Ghoast take mans Nature upon him, in the wombe of the vergin Mary, so that Two Distinct Natures, the Godhead and the Manhood, where inseparably Joined Together. Without Conversion Composition, or Confusion, Making one Christ, he was in the form of God, took upon him the form of a servant, was made under the Law and Did answer all its Demands, in purity of Nature and sinless obedience, and so Brought in an Everlasting Righteousness. Moreover the sins of all those for whom He be came suirty to þe God of Justice. we are Charged upon him and he bare them in his own body on the Tree, when he offered up himself, a Sacrifice without spot to God, by which offering he hath perfected for Ever them that are Sanctefied, or set apart, and he was Delivered for our offencess, so he was Raised a gain for our Justification, and ascended up to the Right hand of God, where he sits as the advocte of his people, till he Appear the Second time, without sin unto Full Salvation.

7 of Regeneration

Regeneration is a work of the spirit of God a new Covenant Blessing and Extended to all the new Covenant seed. it Consisteth in Quickening the soul, Dead in sin by A communication of Life from Christ the New Covnant Head, in Consequence of which

there is Light in the understanding, the will is Reconciled to the will of God, all the Affections are spiritualized, and the happy subject of this Deveine Change is Graceously inclined, sweetly Drawn, and powerfully inabled to Follow on to know the Lord.

8 of Justification

Justification is an Act of Gods free grace and Blessing Decreed for all the Elect of God before the world began, they Being Called to in Joy it by faith, throu the Redemption which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. it is at once full and compleat, they being Justified from all things, and Clothed in the Rightousness which is of God by Faith, and unto all and upon all them that beleve and this Act of Grace shall never be Revoked But Abideth for Ever for those who are Justified by Grace, are Hears According to the hope of Eternal Life And shall not come into Condemnation.

9 of Adoption

Adoption is an act of Gods Grace, where unto all the Elect whear predestinated by Jesus Christ, in perfection of which devine predestintion they are Brought out of Darkness into Light, and Turned from saton unto God, they are made partakers of the Divine Nature, put among the Children of God, and Blessed with the spirit of adoption, whereby they Cry Abba father they are intitled to all the privlidges of Gods house, are under his fatherly protiction compassionat Chastisement, Heirs of God and sure to enjoy the Kingdom prepared for them before the world Began.

10 of Sanctification

Sanctification is a work wrought and gradually carried on in the Regenerated by the spirit & word of God. The seed of grace being planted in them is watered by fresh Communications of grace from Christ who

is made of God unto his peple sanctification. out of whose fulness they Receive all the streams of sanctifying as well as Regenerating Grace under the powerfull influence where of they are Inabled more and more to Die unto sin and walk in newness of Life, wating on God in the ordinances of the Gospel. Till they grow up into a Ripeness and meetness for Glory.

11 of Faith

Justifying Faith is a saving grace wrought in the heart of a sinner by the word and spirit of God, where by he being Convinced of his sin and misery, and of the utter in Ability in himself and all other Creatures to Recover him out of his Lost and miserable Condition, he not only assenteth to the truth of the promiss of the Gospel, but also Reciveth and Resteth upon Christ, and his Righteousness therein Revealed, for the pardon of his sin, and Acceptance of his person, he is Rightous in the sight of God.

12 of Repentance

True & Evangelical Repentance is a grant of sovering Grace whereby a sinner is Brought to see the Evil of sin, as its own Nature Contrary to the spotless purity of an holy God and A manefest Breach of his Just & holy Law. the only thing that ripeats Between God and man and nothing short of the precious Blood of Christ can Remove the Guilt and purge away the filth thereof which fill his soul with godly sorrow for his un godly Deeds with self Lothing and abhorence for all his abomianations, with a Desire to forsake Every false way to Live to the Lord with full purpos of heart serve him in holiness and Righteousness all the Days of his Life.

13 of Good Works

Works Truly and properly Gods are only such as spring from a Right principle, are done according to a Right Rule, and Drected

to aright End, and are preformed only by those who are Regenerated by the spirit of God. for altho men in the state of Degenrate Natuere may do works that are materealy and apparently good; yet being Destute of a good principle, they Err in the manner and End of performing them, so that they cannot be acceptable to God as done by them. and Altho good works done by the Regenerate are not the matter of there Justification before God, nor in aney sence the Cause of there salvation; yet are they Comanded by, and acceptable to God - throu Christ, and Evidence our Faith and Love in subciction to him; are good and profitable to men: ornamental to the Gospel; and serve to put to silance the Ignarance of foolish men, for which Resons they ought to be constantly maintaining And Carfully observed, by all the followers of Christ Jesus.

14 of Perseverance

All those who are Redemed by Christ, and Called By his Grace, are secured in his hand so that they Never finally fall from grace But shall certainly hould on their way and Indure to the End. The firm foundation of there Certain perseverance his, in the Immutable purpose of God; the unchangeable, sure, and Everlasting Covenant of Grace; the Indwelling of the spirit of promise, and the Remaining of the Incoruptible seed of God in them. So that (Nothing not withstanding) altho they meet with Terrors without, fightings and fears within, and sore Conflicts with the powers of Darkness, yet they are and shall be more then Conquerers, being kept By the power of God through Faith unto salvation.

15 of Assurance

Assurance of salvation, through Christ, is attainable in this Life, and is to be Considered Either objectively or subjectively. Now the wekest beleiver hath

an assurance in the object of Faith which is Christ Revealed in the word of truth whom they Are made willing to Receive in all his offices. Assurance in the subject is not only By the grace of the spirit wrought in us, But also by the voice of the spirit in And by the word of grace. Bearing witness with our spirits that we are the Children of God. and as this is a blessing promised, so it is the Duty of all Belivers who have not attained it to seek after and pray for it.

16 of the Law

The Law of God which is called moral as given to Adam, was a Covenant of Life, and altho man Transgressed and kept it not, yet it is not made void, But Remains the same spiritual, holy, just and good Law; unchangable in its Nature; uneversal in its Extent, and perpetual in its Duration. Reaching to all Times and places; Laying all men of Every Rank And Degree under an Indispensible obligation; And Threatning Death to all that Refuse to obey it. and altho all Belivers are Delivered from it as a Covenant of Life, and Redemed from its Curse that was due unto them as Transgressors, yet are they not Exempt from its precepts as a Rule of Obedience; But are bound to square there Lives According to this Rule, and if they are Regardless thereof they are sure to come under Gods fatherly Chastisements for the same.

17 of the Gospel

The Gospel strictly taken is Good Newes from heaven, glattidings of salvation to Lost sinners of mankind, And contains in it Exceeding great and preacious promises of pardon to the gulty, cleansing to the fillthy, sight to the Blind, hearing to the Deaf, spech to the Dumb, feet to the Lame, Life to the Dead, Light to them that sit in Darkness, Comfort to the mornners, Liberty to the Captives, streangth to the weak, Clothing to the Naked, Bread to the Hungry, water,

wine and milk for the thirsty soul, And heaven to those who have Deserved the Lowest hell.

18 of Baptism

Water Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testement Institued by Jesus Christ, And ought to be observed and practised By all his faithful followers. The only proper subjects to whom this ordinance is to be Adminstered are Belivers, that make a profision of there Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And the Due order and proper mode of Administration, According to the New Testament, is, a solam signification Burying in, or Covering under water By a minester of Christ, in the name of the father, and of the son, and of the holy Ghost.

19 of the Lords Supper

the Lords supper is an ordinance of the New Testament Institued by Jesus Christ And is to be continued in his Church, untill he come. The outward Elements thereof are Bread and wine, which the Lord Jesus Christ hath commanded to be Received. The form of Administration is a solom, Religious Breaking and Eating of Bread, pouring out and Drinking Wine. The posture in which it is to Be Received is not standing or kneeling; But sitting, as being the propre Table gesture.

20 of Death

It is Apointed for all men once to Die, both Good and Bad. Death is a Dissolving of the Vital union between soul and Body; the Body Returning to the Dust Till the Morning of the Resurrection, and the soul to God who gave it. Moreover, the souls of the faithful ascend into God's Imnitate presence, and Enter into the Joy of there Lord, and not into some other Apartment or porgatory, According to the Vain Dreams And unscriptural Notions of the Papists and

others. But the souls of the Wicked Desend into Hell that place of Torment there to Remain for Ever and Ever.

21 of the Resurrection And Eternal Judgment there will be a Resurrection of the Dead, both of the Just and the unjust. The Just shall arise by Virtue of there union with Christ, and Being Awakend out of there sleep, by the Voice of the Archangel and the trump of God, they shall Ever be with the Lord. And they that Remain alive at that day shall be Cought up to Gather in the Clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they Ever be with the Lord. And the Wicked shall be Raised by the power of God and Brought Before the Judgment's seat of Christ where He will set the sheep on his Right Hand and the goats on his Left. And then shall the King say to them on his Right hand, Come ye Blessed of my Father, Enter into the Kingdome prepared for you from the Foundation of the world. Then will he proceed to pronounce the Rightous sentance of Condemnation on those on the Left hand, with an woful Depart from me ye Cursed into Everlasting fire prepared for the Divil and his Angels. So those Named, the wicked, shall go away into Everlasting punishment; But the Righteous into Life Eternal.

The Solemn Covenant of Church Communion

We a few poor unworthy sinners yet we hope the Called of God according to his purpose, do solemnly Engage to God and to one another in the manner following.

1st We this day Avouch the Ever Blessed Jehovah, Father, Son, and holy Ghost, the one only true and Living God, for oure new Covenant God and all sufficient portion, and give ourselves to him alone for his peculiar people in a perpetual Covennant, never to be forgotten.

2^d We Receive and submit to the Lord Jesus Christ as oure only savior, Prophit, priest, and king, in whome we trust alone for wisdom, and Righteousness Sanctification and Redemption.

3^{ly} We Devote and Consecrate ourselves as Living Temples to the Holy Ghost, our Sanctifier, Guide and Comforter, whose Gracious operations And Heavenly Conduct we Desire Dayle more and more to Enjoy Experince and Follow.

4^{ly} We Take the holy scriptures of the old and New Testament, as the only Ground and Rule of our Faith and practice, Desiring through the help of his Grace therein promised, to be in all things Conformed to the holy will of God threine Revealed.

Fiftly According to the tenor of which Devine oracles, and Depending for performance only on the Devine help and Assistance And promises Deeply sencible that we Are not Sufficent, of our selves, but that all our Sufficiency Both to will And to do that which is good is of God whose Grace alone is sufficient to inable us to do all the following things throu Christ strengthening us in a single Dependance on him, and as in Duty bound, we now Covenant with God Each for our selves, and Jointly, to gather

1st To Worship God in spirit And in truth. And to keep his ordinances, as he hath delivired them unto us.

2^d To be subject to that Devine order and Discipling, which Jesus Christ our only king and Lawgiver, hath Apointed in his Church and not to forsake the assembling of our selves together for the publick worship of God in its Appointed seasons, But to Continue Stedfastly in our Relation to one another and fill up our places duly in the house of God, and Chearfully Maintain his worship therein to the Best of

our Capacity untill Death calls or Devine providence shall seperate us one from another.

3^d To Love one another, with pure Harts fervantly, and Endiavor to keep the unity of the spirit, in The Bond of peace, for the Honour of God, and our Mutual Good unto Edification.

4th We will also make it our Care through the afforesaid help to walk Before the Lord in our own houses With upright Hearts and to keep up the Worship of God therein, by daily prayer, and praises to God And Diligent Reeding the Holy Scriptures that the word of God May Dwell Richly in us.

5th And as we have given our Children to the Lord by a solemn Dication, so

we will Endeavor to teach them the way of the Lord, and Commad them to keep it, seting before them an holy Example, worthy there Immitation, and Continuing in prayer to God, for theire Conversion And Salvation.

6th We will Endeavor by the Grace of God to keep ourselves pure from the sines and vices of the times and places wherein we Live, so that none May have occation given by our unholy Lives to speak Evile of Gods holy Ways.

7th and Lastly And all this under an Abiding sense that we must shortly give up oure Accounts to him that is Ready to Judge the Quick and Dead to which Solomn Covenant we agree in the preasence of the all knowing And heart searching God.

SOCIETY OFFICERS' MOVES

The Secretary, Revd Stephen Copson, now Secretary of the Hertfordshire Baptist Association, expects soon to move from his present temporary accommodation but post will be forwarded from the address shown on the front cover of this issue.

The Editor, Mr John Briggs, will soon move to Birmingham as Principal of West Hill College. We should be able to give both new addresses in the October issue.

CUMULATIVE INDEXES

Cumulative Indexes to Volumes XXI-XXXI and to Volumes XXXII-XXXVI will be available from mid August on disc in ASCII format. These will cost £10-00 each and may be obtained from the Treasurer, Revd T.S.H. Elwyn, 28 Dowthorpe Hill, Earls Barton, Northampton, NN6 0PB.

PLACE OF PUBLICATION

In bibliographic references in the *Baptist Quarterly*, if the place of publication is not given, London should be assumed.