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**ROBERT BUICK KNOX**

One's mind goes back to a party of visitors to Westminster College listening to a lecture by the Professor of Church History on the Presbyterian worthies displayed around the walls of the dining hall. Often the account seemed to end with the lapidary phrase: 'A very remarkable man'. Sometimes it was not apparent in what the remarkableness consisted. There were those whose life's work was enshrined in published works, but others whose magic was now traceable only through the tributes paid by their contemporaries.

Many will bid farewell to Buick Knox on his retirement with the conviction that they are seeing the departure of a very remarkable man. He stands midway between the two categories just mentioned. In part his contribution to the life of College and Church stands on permanent record in the printed page; but there is an overplus, much which will be most warmly treasured in memory which escapes such record.

Like Charles Bannerman who scored the first century in Test cricket Buick Knox established one record which will remain for ever inviolate: he alone has been a minister of the Presbyterian churches of Ireland, Wales and England; for the disappearance of the last-named church with the formation of the United Reformed Church in 1972 guarantees the permanence of his unique record.

He has never forgotten, nor allowed others to forget, that he is an Irishman. After his education at Queen's University and the Presbyterian College, Belfast, he succeeded his father in the pastorate of Ballydown and

Katesbridge. Father and son successively provided the pastoral care of Ballydown from 1909–1958, and of Katesbridge from 1938–1958. In 1980 he was to be honoured by the award of a D.D. by the Presbyterian Faculty of Ireland.

Thence in 1958 he was called to the Chair of Church History in the United Theological College, Aberystwyth, where he also taught the History of Doctrine and was a recognized teacher of the University of Wales. He was fully at home in the atmosphere of Welsh Nonconformity, different as it was from Ulster Presbyterianism. Its deep roots in the life of the community, its Puritan strain and its status in the life of the University meant a great deal to him, and those who first knew him afterwards learned to recognize a note of nostalgia when he spoke of his Welsh days – clearer than when he looked back to Northern Ireland.

As an adoptive Welshman he did the job thoroughly, as he did every job thoroughly. In this instance it meant learning Welsh; and learning it not simply to read Welsh Church History, but as a language of conversation and, remarkably, of preaching. The authority of native Welsh speakers can be quoted for saying that his Welsh retained an Irish accent, though to the English such assertions remain beyond testing.

After ten years in the Principality he moved to the Nivison Chair of Ecclesiastical History at Westminster College, Cambridge, where the final 17 years of his active ministry were served. There are many reasons why he will be remembered there. Naturally he will want first emphasis to be given to his contribution to the teaching of Church History, not only in Westminster, but in the Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges which came into being during his time of service and in the University. On his contribution to his subject within the College perhaps the best comment was made by one of his colleagues who said that it was Dr. Knox who had made him understand the meaning of the clause in the Creed 'I believe in the Communion of Saints'. The great figures of the Church's story were kept vividly in the sight of generations of students, sometimes with veneration, sometimes with humour; and sometimes with both at once, since they are not incompatible. Pride of place went to the fathers of the Reformation, but though Dr. Knox was not above describing himself from time to time as a bigoted Ulster Protestant, he gave the Middle Ages a place they deserve, but do not always receive, in theological college teaching. The resonant phrases of the prayers he used from St. Bonaventure linger in many minds.

Within the Federation he served as the only teacher specifically appointed to deal with Church History, and the qualities first the Presbyterian Church and then the URC had learned to appreciate became available to Anglicans and Methodists also.

In the University he lectured regularly, particularly on Scottish Church History, and supervised numerous students at every level up to doctoral work.

If Dr. Knox proved himself a dynamic teacher, sometimes leaving classes panting a decade or two behind as he pressed on through the exciting record of the Church, he inspired awe and envy by the extent of his reading. On the whole he was content to stay within his chosen subject, though one

remembers his recommendation of a work by a distinguished contemporary theologian on the grounds that it is a good discipline to read one incomprehensible book now and then. But Church History itself is a wide field, and there were moments when he seemed determined to cultivate all of it, casually noting some multi-volume work read over the last week or two. It was one of his playful habits to pretend that all other members of the college community — students and Senatus alike — read as extensively, and he would apologise for the familiarity of quotations and references from sources hitherto — and, alas, subsequently — untapped by his hearers.

From this more than extensive reading he retained much more than a mental bibliography of works read, and was able to draw on accumulated treasure to illustrate lectures and — what is more difficult because necessarily unplanned — to respond to enquiries.

As a writer of history his reputation will necessarily depend in considerable measure on his account of James Ussher, published in 1967. Apart from his Irish connections Ussher might have seemed an odd choice for Dr. Knox's special attention. Most of those who have heard his name probably associate it with a somewhat notorious attempt to give a precise date for the creation, but more interesting in some ways is his proposed reduction of Episcopacy. That might sound an attractive prospect for a convinced Presbyterian to study, but Ussher did not intend that his reduction should be equivalent to destruction; rather he sought to commend Episcopacy by reconciling it with what he saw to be good in presbyteral forms.

Dr. Knox gave due honour to Ussher without finding his arguments convincing. Certainly when in the nineteen-seventies and 'eighties the covenant for unity was produced which sought to achieve something like what Ussher had planned more than three centuries earlier he did not find its case convincing.

Dr. Knox's other publications fall into several classes. Some were a product of his service in Wales, and represent his fluency in two languages; some are inspired by his time in Cambridge, including a history of Westminster College; some are specialist studies in the history of Presbyterianism; a surprising number revert to the office and work of bishops, as though this was an issue which nagged and periodically needed to be faced. Certainly he seemed to have more liking for bishops than for Episcopacy. Even so formidable an episcopal and establishment figure as Hensley Henson appeared frequently among his oral if not his literary references. Whatever the topic it can be safely assumed that the style will be readable and stimulating and the scholarship sound. Those for whom Dr. Knox's voice is familiar have the bonus of being able to read the written words with the accents and intonation of the spoken, gaining a whole dimension thereby.

The devoted service given by Buick Knox to the Cambridge District Council of the URC as convener of its Pastoral Oversight Committee and week by week in leading worship among the village churches perhaps ought to be recognized somewhere else than in this publication. Yet there was no

impassable gulf separating Church Historian and servant of the churches. Both activities belonged together. His digging around the grass roots served to remind him of the detail out of which the broad outlines of the history of Christianity have been fashioned; while the rich harvest of his wide reading and deep study entered into the substance of his preaching even in the tiniest congregations. It is not the least tribute to his scholarship that he used it to the benefit of village congregations; nor that they fully appreciated his words and looked forward to his next visit.

A tribute to a career coming to an end is necessarily couched largely in the past tense; but it is one of the advantages of academic work that formal retirement need not mean the end of the chapter. One can recall scholars whose work has flourished chiefly after that stage is reached. The privilege of his active presence will be largely reserved in future for Dr. Knox's friends and colleagues in Ulster; but his former colleagues and innumerable friends in Wales and England will look forward to seeing more work from his pen, and count it as one of their occasions for gratitude that they can supplement the writings with recollections of the writer.

STEPHEN MAYOR

### THE ESSEX CLASSES (1648)

The endeavour in 1648 to establish a web of Classes, consisting of ministers and elders, by counties, throughout the kingdom was a remarkable expression of the desire for ecclesiastical reform. It deserves a closer consideration than it has yet received. What follows is an analysis and interpretation of the situation within a single county.

In civil terms Essex was already of great antiquity. But the county had never had a cathedral. Apart from a few peculiar jurisdictions, its parishes were all included in one or another archdeaconry of the diocese of London. Now for the first time Essex was treated as a self-subsistent entity ecclesiastically.

In some ways it was a conservative reform. The sixteen deaneries, subdivisions of the archdeaconries, were areas which closely corresponded with the civil hundreds and in most cases went by their names. So, in the main, were the fourteen new Classes. In this way the intention to perpetuate the Church-State relationship was indicated; indeed, since names of hundreds not in use for deaneries were now restored, it was emphasized. Again, to serve as basic units within each Classis, the parochial system was preserved. A rector or vicar might now enter his name as the parish's minister or pastor; in law he remained the incumbent of a living within the establishment. Calamy records the bond by which his father, on admission in 1658 to the living of Moreton, promised to pay Richard Cromwell the sum of £10, the first fruits which the Protector had 'inherited' from the Supreme Head (or Governor)

of the Church.

The number of parishes in Essex was approximately 400. The number of ministers and elders nominated for the Classes, taken together, was less than 600. There was thus no attempt to name a minister with even a single elder for every parish. In fact the number of parishes for which ministers and elders were nominated together, or either without the other, was only about 257. Only 161 ministers were named, compared with 432 elders, but despite the greater number of elders the number of parishes with both a minister and one or more elders named was no more than 144. The system worked out for the county may be regarded as representative, but it was so only selectively. The parliamentary ordinance entitled *Directions for the Election of Elders* recognized that there would be congregations 'where no persons shall be found fit to be elders', and in Essex more than 150 parishes were left without any elders at all.

One effect of preserving the ancient boundaries was that the area a Classis covered varied considerably. The blueprint proceeded from no dogmatic ideology requiring so many ministers to the square mile or allowing so many elders per cent. in a parish's population. The Fourteenth Classis, which contained the county town, straggled across three hundreds and compassed as many as 52 parishes, but nominations were made to no more than 14 of these, and for only four parishes was a complement of minister and elders named. The Seventh Classis, on the other hand, consisted of only 15 parishes, but here elders were nominated for every parish, and ministers for all but three. This Classis covered the two hundreds of Harlow and Waltham; the hundred of Hinckford, *per contra*, was divided into two Classes, Hinckford East and Hinckford West, with 22 parishes in each. The Sixth Classis, Ongar, with 25 parishes, had a minister or/and elder or elders nominated for every parish, and as many as 57 elders in the Classis as a whole. In this Classis the number of elders in some parishes was not one or two, but three or four, and at High Laver five, a figure equalled elsewhere only at Great Burstead in Classis II, though surpassed at Chelmsford and Maldon in Classes III and V respectively, which had eight elders each. Variation of several kinds thus obtained throughout.

If by representative is meant chosen by those one represents, the Classes were not so except in the limited sense then acceptable. The enterprise originated in an ordinance of parliament, following which a letter was sent by the Speaker to the standing parliamentary committees in the counties. For Essex we know who were the ten members of the committee who replied with nominations for the Classes to be set up in three of the county's hundreds. Not surprisingly their list for Classis I includes five of their own names: Sir William Hicks, Bt., Col. Carew Harvey Mildmay, Robert Smith, Esq., Joachim Matthews, Esq., and Mr. John Fenning. Others nominated by them for this Classis included Sir Thomas Cheke, M.P., Sir Henry Mildmay, M.P., and Sir Henry Holcroft.

Though Classis I had more than its share of great names among its

elders, these eight point the pattern for the Classes generally. The abolition of the ecclesiastical hierarchy left the hierarchic principle in civil society unassailed and in conservative circles more important than ever. Each list states the elders' rank, care being taken to distinguish an esquire from a gentleman. For Essex as a whole three peers were nominated: the Earl of Warwick for the Third Classis, the Earl of Kent for the Second, and Lord Grey of Werke for the Seventh; six were baronets, seven knights. Five of the baronets and five of the knights, with six other elders, were Members of Parliament. Sir Thomas Barrington, Bt., M.P., also sat in the Westminster Assembly, as on his death did Sir William Masham, Bt., M.P.

It was not the first time that these men had been involved in matters ecclesiastical, nor would it be the last. Sir Henry Holcroft, Sir Henry Mildmay and his nephew Carew had served on the Commission for Sequestration of Scandalous Ministers in 1644; so had nine others, among them Sir Richard Everard, Bt., and Mildmay's son Henry from the Third Classis, Masham's son William from the Sixth, Thomas Cook, Esq., from the Eleventh, and Sir Thomas Honeywood from the Twelfth. When in 1650 a Commission for Parochial Inquisition, and in 1654 a Commission for the Ejection of Scandalous Ministers, was appointed, Carew Mildmay, Sir William Masham and his son, Sir Thomas Honeywood and Thomas Cook were members of both bodies, as were two members of the original committee for nominating elders, Joachim Matthews and John Fenning. Another member of that committee, Robert Smith, served on the 1650 Commission, as did Isaac Allen, Esq., from Classis V; John Mead, Oliver Raymond, Esq., and Robert Crane, from the Eighth, Tenth and Twelfth Classes respectively, were members of the 1644 Commission and served again in 1654. Sometimes those nominated as elders appeared in the humbler capacity of bearing witness against their clergy, or of providing information for the Inquiry into the parishes: from Classis VI, for instance, three came before the 1644 Commission and seven others before the 1650 Commission, none of them above the rank of a gentleman.

It is evident that among the elders nominated for Essex was a group united in the provision of a continuing and consistent ecclesiastical policy and well qualified to provide leadership. The names already mentioned are to be found throughout the Classes with the single exception of the Fourth. The Earl of Warwick's name stands first in the list of elders for Classis III, Sir Thomas Barrington comes first for Classis VII, Sir William Masham with his son for Classis VI, and Isaac Allen for Classis V, while Sir Henry Holcroft and Sir Henry Mildmay with his nephew are near the top of the list for Classis I. They were among the county's leading families. They also strengthened their position by intermarriage. Sir Thomas Cheke married a sister of the Earl of Warwick; Sir William Masham married a sister of Sir Thomas Barrington; Barrington (a cousin of Cromwell) was also uncle by marriage to both Sir Richard Everard and John Mead; Richard Harlackenden was a grandson of Sir Henry Mildmay.

These men were also part of a larger fellowship composed of the

members of the Essex committee of the Eastern Association of 1642. Every one of those whose names have been before us belonged to this body; in fact as many as fifty-two of its hundred members were also nominated to serve as elders. They are to be found in every Classis without exception. The sociological unity that sustained the reform desired in Church and State is clearly demonstrated.

As a consequence of the revolution ecclesiastical patronage suffered disruption, but in Essex more than twenty elders were patrons of livings and continued to present. Among them were, notably, the Earl of Warwick, who presented to as many as nineteen livings scattered through seven of the county's fourteen Classes; Lord Grey of Werke; a number of the baronets and knights, including Sir Robert Kemp, Stephen Marshall's patron at Finchingfield; Isaac Allen and Oliver Raymond; and Daniel Dunn, Esq., and Robert Browne, Esq., in Classis VI, Thomas Wall in Classis VIII, and Richard Cutts and Timothy Middleton in Classis X.

Something of the standing of these elders can be perceived from a consideration of their houses, many of which are still standing, among them the homes of some of those just mentioned as patrons of livings: Wall's at Little Bardfield Hall; Cutts' at Wood Hall, Arkesden; Middleton's at Bentfield Bury, Stansted Mountfitchet. Others include Bobbingworth Hall; and Spains Hall, Sir Robert Kemp's home at Finchingfield. One of the most attractive is the house known as Great Graces: this was the home of Henry Mildmay in the parish of Little Baddow. There is grandeur in what remains of the Earl of Warwick's mansion at Little Leighs.

The mention of these houses is a reminder that those nominated as elders were a body of men who, besides being united by their social and political interests, had the stability that comes of permanent residence. The volatility of the clergy, on the other hand, is truly remarkable. One would not expect to find many like Edward Spranger, Vicar of Harlow from 1613, or Thomas Dunn, Rector of Loughton from 1632, each of whom was nominated to Classis VII, signed the Essex ministers' *Testimony ... to the Solemn League and Covenant* of 1648, and in 1650 was described as 'able and godly', and who at the Restoration conformed, thus evading and outliving the whole of the revolution, whether by timeserving or piety. But the number of ministers who only two years after their nomination to a parish were no longer there is phenomenal. Through the whole period 1640-60 the procession, or succession, of incumbents is, in fact, often a long one. They may remove to other livings in Essex, or more rarely in another part of the country; or they may die; often enough they come like shadows, so depart. *En sequimur omnes*, the minister nominated for Little Bentley (Classis XIII) writes after recording the burials of his three predecessors: by 1650 he was gone himself. The minister nominated for the parish of St. Laurence (Classis V) was already the second successor of the rector sequestered only five years earlier; one year later there was a new rector; only a year later he had died, and was replaced by yet another. Or take Takeye in the Ninth Classis, for which Samuel Story was

nominated in 1648; in 1650 the rector was Steven Rich; in 1653 Charles Morton; in 1655 Morton removed to a living in Cornwall and was succeeded by Abel Collier, who a year later left for a Warwickshire living; in 1659 James Small was admitted, but by the end of the following year the wheels of revolution had turned again and he was removed. In such conditions the classical system was virtually unworkable. Since in intention the ordinance establishing it was not descriptive but mandatory, it could also be argued that, unless constantly updated with the new names needed, it lacked authority. In this regard it was out of date even when it was published, since several of the ministers named had already left their cures.

It might be supposed that the ministers nominated for the Essex Classes would be almost identical with the ministers who signed the Essex *Testimony* of 1648 — almost, because the signatories were about thirty fewer than those nominated. This is not the case, however. Exact correlation is made difficult by the change in incumbents even in one and the same year; but many of those nominated did not sign the *Testimony* while, equally, not all who did sign were nominated. Thus in Classis I, of the thirteen ministers nominated only five signed the *Testimony*, and of the eight ministers in the area of this Classis who did sign three were not nominated; in Classis II, of the fourteen nominated only eight signed and of the twelve in the area who signed four were not nominated; and so on. This negative relationship should not, however, conceal one more positive and significant. Of the seventeen ministers nominated who remained in their livings till they were ejected at the Restoration for nonconformity, all but three had signed the *Testimony*.

These, we may suppose, were men of conviction who provided leadership. The hint is confirmed when we observe that two of the parishes where the seventeen served were Hatfield Broadoak, where the elder nominated (and a good friend of the minister, John Warren) was Sir Thomas Barrington, and Great Baddow, where Henry Mildmay of Great Graces was among the elders; that four of the seventeen owed their livings to the Earl of Warwick; and that four had been ordained, as were so many Puritans, by the Bishop of Peterborough, Thomas Dove. By these criteria we may add two others ejected in 1662, though not from the parishes for which they had been nominated in 1648: John Hubbard, who, after ordination by Dove, had been nominated for, and had signed the *Testimony* at, Boxted in Classis XII, with John Maidstone (later Cromwell's steward) as elder, and who was ejected from Great Oakley in Classis XIII; and Nathaniel Ranew, who, also after ordination by Dove, had been nominated for, and had signed the *Testimony* at, West Hanningfield in Classis III, but who later in 1648 was presented by Warwick to Felsted in Classis XI, where he remained till his ejection.

In 1654 the Vicar of Shalford in Classis XI wrote to Richard Baxter: 'For Essex, wee are the deadest County in all the Nation, Gospel-glutted profession, and this Separation have almost undone us. wee have some good ministers still, But for men of Eminencie since M<sup>r</sup> Rogers died, & M<sup>r</sup> Marshal & M<sup>r</sup> Owen went away, wee have onely M<sup>r</sup> Newcomen of Dedham left'; and



in 1656: 'Essex is in an ill posture, M<sup>r</sup> Newcomen is going to Ipswich as I heare, & another I heare is going out who is one of our chiefe; M<sup>r</sup> Warrin [whom you know] I look on as one of the ablest men wee have'. Firmin had come to Shalford in 1648; but the minister nominated for the parish was Ralph Hills, who later that year signed the *Testimony* as Vicar of Ridgwell in Classis X and at the Restoration was ejected from Pattiswick in Classis XII. In 1648 Firmin was not yet ordained. He desired ordination, but he wished to be ordained locally, not by a Classis in London, as a number of Essex ministers were; he also 'refused Ordination' by 'our Congregational Brethren in Essex', 'because they would not Impose Hands'. Here was an obvious opportunity for action by the local Classis – 'our Classis runnes 14 miles in length, and 20 severall Parishes in it,' Firmin writes – had it been formed; but it existed only on paper. It was not until 1650 that Firmin was ordained, in the form he desired, by Stephen Marshall, Vicar of Finchingfield, Daniel Rogers, Lecturer at Wethersfield, Ranew of Felsted, and others; and then, although it has been claimed as such, it was not a Classical ordination; 'the ministers lived about me', Firmin writes, but Finchingfield was not in the same Classis area as Wethersfield and Felsted. (When in 1658 Calamy's father was ordained at Moreton, the same holds good: the ministers were not all of the same Classis area.)

In a work published in 1653 Firmin relieved himself of some piquant sentiments:—

When I was ordained by the Presbytery, I thought I had the Power of a Pastour conveyed to me: now one part is to Rule, I think, but to say I cannot put forth that Power alone, but I must have more Elders to joyne with before I can doe any thing; I desire to see a Scripture for that...

Would you have Ruling Elders to joyne with me? I observe divers of the Classical Divines question, whether there be any such Office distinct from the Preaching Elder. But though I have not Elders actually ordained... yet I have those whom I looke upon to be Elders, and without whom I do nothing that concerns Discipline. That which hath hindred us, is... I am uncertaine of my abode here. ...

Suppose I stay till the Classis be formed and Act, shall wee have power then to reform? But suppose my people aske other Ministers of the Classis besides my selfe, what power they have to reforme them, who made them Rulers over the people against their wills and consent, having called none but my self for their Pastour? ...

It is all one to be on an Island, where there are no more Churches that *can* combine, and so helpe one another, as to be in another place where are thousands, but none *will*; it is *cannot* there, it is *will not* heare.

Firmin was his own man, pragmatic but principled, with his ear to the ground as well as to Scripture. He was no more a Classical Divine than he was one of the Congregational Brethren; nor yet was he a new-style Episcopalian.

In 1660 he wrote to Baxter of the bishops recently consecrated: 'so they will not force mee to owne their power as being of Divine Authority, I will not oppose them. & would willinglie live under such a Bishop, if I could, for some Episcopacie I owne'. The oversight he believed in was that of a purely voluntary Association consisting merely of ministers, like that gathered in Worcestershire by Baxter, and in 1658 he was active in promoting such an Association. 'The Presbyterial Brethren', he records in a book dedicated to the Association, '... were the first movers'; but by then it was too late.

Till his death in 1652 Daniel Rogers, from whom Firmin says he had been accustomed to 'seeke counsell', had been Lecturer in the next parish to Firmin's, at Wethersfield. Marshall, earlier Rogers' predecessor as Lecturer at Wethersfield, had been Vicar of Finchingfield, but in 1651 had left Finchingfield to be Town Preacher at Ipswich, where he died in 1655. Matthew Newcomen had been Lecturer at Dedham since 1636; in 1655 he also for a time was Town Preacher at Ipswich, but in fearing that Newcomen was about to leave Dedham for Ipswich Firmin was mistaken: Newcomen remained at Dedham till 1662, when he went into exile in the Netherlands, where he died in 1669.

Both Rogers and Newcomen had been nominated to the Classes despite the fact that they were in Lectureships, outside the parochial system. There is an anomaly here, for a Lecturer was without pastoral or disciplinary responsibility, and under the new dispensation his *raison d'être*, which was to supplement an incumbent's inadequate preaching, should have vanished. But to the reformers a Lectureship had become an institution to be cherished and was an honourable position often held by a man of high principle who could hardly be overlooked. The Lecturer at Colchester is another who was nominated to the local Classis.

Certainly Firmin was not mistaken in pointing to Rogers and Newcomen, along with Marshall, as among the leaders. Newcomen, whose initials, like Marshall's, went to make up the monstrosity 'Smectymnuus', and who, again like Marshall, sat in the Westminster Assembly, where he preached the opening sermon, was in fact responsible for drawing up the Essex ministers' *Testimony* of 1648. Rogers, in turn, drew up, and was the first signatory to, the Essex *Watchmen's Watchword* of the following year, which Newcomen, together with many other ministers in the Classes, also signed. That Firmin considered the Vicar of Hatfield Broadoak, John Warren, 'one of the ablest men wee have' confirms the grounds adduced earlier for regarding Warren as a leader. Calamy records that Warren was 'the first Promoter' of 'a Monthly Meeting of Ministers in those Parts'. This may have been the same as, or have grown into, the Voluntary Association which Firmin favoured.

But, as Firmin lamented, there were not many ministers in Essex with the ability of Newcomen or Warren and with their strength of conviction. At the Restoration about 179 ministers in the county conformed, including many of those nominated to Classes. So presumably did many who had been

nominated as elders: of the Mildmays, for instance, no more is heard. But Sir Henry Holcroft's son Francis became a founding-father of Nonconformity throughout Cambridgeshire and more widely; Richard Cutts' home at Arkesden, Wood Hall, became the meeting-place of the Dissenting church which now worships at Clavering; and the Mashams and Barringtons appointed as chaplains ministers once nominated to the Classes but now ejected, or remembered them in their wills. The later fortunes of several of these ministers may be traced in the diary of their particular friend and benefactor Mary, Countess of Warwick. Back in 1656 John Beadle, Rector of Barnston in the Eighth Classis, one of the livings in the gift of the Earl of Warwick, had dedicated his *Journal* to the Earl and Countess, apostrophizing the Earl as his 'most noble patron, *qui curat oves oviumque magistros*'. Beadle died in 1667, the Earl some years earlier; but when in 1670 Nathaniel Ranew, once Vicar of Felsted, another living in Warwick's gift, but now ejected from it, published *Solitude improved by divine meditation*, he duly dedicated it to the new Earl and Countess, with an epistle addressed to the Countess. The title breathes a thinner air than was abroad in 1648; but so long as the Countess lived, the tradition established by her father-in-law, that 'great Patron and Mecaenas (*sic*) to the pious and religious Ministry', as Calamy's grandfather called him, lived too.

Why did the Essex Classes never function? Some reasons have been suggested already. Others are easier to grasp intuitively than to state tersely. The system was devised by laymen and gave laymen a new ecclesiastical status: it required them to collaborate with ministers, but it gave them a controlling interest. This was to ask much of the more conservative incumbents, men unaccustomed to sharing responsibility and sensitive about their rights. Some ministers might, like Firmin, query the scriptural basis of the new system. Others would follow John Owen, formerly Rector of Fordham, who in a popular manual published precisely in 1648, when he was Vicar of Coggeshall, announced a change in his sentiments: men such as John Bulkley, who was among his successors at Fordham; John Sams, Vicar of Kelvedon, who succeeded Owen at Coggeshall; William Sparrow, Vicar of Halstead, who was 'Early in declaring for the Congregational Way; and a great Correspondent of Dr. Owen's'; and John Stalham, Vicar of Terling from 1632 to 1662, who was 'of strict Congregational Principles'. These men were, moreover, in touch with one another, outside the Classes. Within the Classes it is noticeable that to none of their parishes was a minister nominated.

But the new opportunities offered to laymen would not appeal to all laymen, either. The local squire accustomed to 'running' his parish, especially if he were also the patron, might have small interest in what transpired elsewhere; or, though prepared to extend his own influence, might not welcome what he regarded as interference from outside. Within the parish, men were used to two churchwardens, but one of these they normally elected themselves. It was natural to look carefully, before adopting it, at an arrangement sent down to them from above, particularly one that

merged the local interest in a wider community. Again, laymen sufficiently assured to voice complaints against their clergy before a court might look for a share in ecclesiastical politics themselves. For them the non-parochial Congregational churches held out greater promise, since to form these everyone concerned took part in signing a covenant, and any member might exercise some control through the church meeting. The tide of novelty and individualism was certainly flowing strongly. In the 1650s Baptist missionaries came to Essex in numbers, disputing and disrupting, over tithes as well as doctrine, and (in the words of an early Quaker convert) found 'very many... in that County... weary with running to and fro'. Colchester, which Firmin called 'one of the worst places in the kingdom for opjnjons', quickly became a Quaker stronghold; in James Parnell Essex also produced the county's first notable Quaker martyr. In Quaker records Sir Richard Everard and Thomas Cooke appear as persecutors, but Henry Mildmay, a Cutts, a Barrington and a Harlackenden as 'moderate men'.

\* \* \*

I offer this study, with respect, to one long attached to the Presbyterian system, and to episcopal and pastoral discipline more generally. He may regret that the Essex Classes were not effective, but he has never allowed regrets to affect his scholarship or the pursuit of truth.

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The prime source for the foregoing is T.W. Davids' *Annals of Evangelical Nonconformity in the County of Essex* (1863). I have also drawn on Harold Smith's *Ecclesiastical History of Essex under the Long Parliament and Commonwealth* and W.A. Shaw's *History of the English Church during the Civil Wars and under the Commonwealth 1640-1660*; Calamy's *Account and Continuation*, and A.G. Matthews' *Calamy Revised and Walker Revised*; the volumes on Essex in the Victoria County History and the Historical Monuments Commission; and the published writings of Giles Firmin, with his letters to Baxter in the Baxter MSS. preserved at Dr. Williams's Library and to Winthrop in the Massachusetts Historical Society's *Collections*. For the significance of ordination by Bishop Dove, see my 'Peterborough Ordinations 1612-1630 and Early Nonconformity' in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 30 (1979). 231-42; and for Newcomen's fortunes in the Netherlands, my 'English Dissenters in the Netherlands 1640-1689' in *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis*, LIX. 37-54.

GEOFFREY F. NUTTALL

### 'CATCH A SCOTCHMAN BECOMING AN ENGLISHMAN...'

**Nationalism, theology and ecumenism in the Presbyterian Church in England 1845-1876**

George Young came south from Paisley to be minister of Chadwell Street, Islington in 1849. He had been there but six months before he was

asked to leave<sup>1</sup>. London Presbytery ruled that the break in pastoral relationship between minister and people was caused by 'a defect of adequate adaptation on the part of Mr. Young's ministry to the sphere of labour in which he found himself placed'<sup>2</sup>. It was a sorry affair, but it epitomised the problem of transition, from Scotland to England, and establishment (even if from the Free Church which considered itself the rightful establishment) to dissent. James Hamilton (3), then for eight years minister of Regent Square in London, and already a statesman of authority beyond his years, lamented

... that so many pious and able men failed to adapt themselves. How was it that Scotchmen succeeded in every mission except the mission to England? Why, but because to the Jews Dr. Duncan became as a Jew, and to the Hindoos Dr. Duff became as a Hindoo... But catch a Scotchman becoming an Englishman to the English. We invaded them as in the days of the Border raids, and as a preliminary to their becoming Presbyterians or Christians, insisted on their first becoming Scotchmen.<sup>4</sup>

In 1844 the disruption had severed the umbilical cord between the Presbyterian Church in England and the Church of Scotland<sup>5</sup>, and from then until it united with the English congregations of the United Presbyterian Church in 1876, the Presbyterian Church in England faced the dilemma of maintaining independence or becoming integrated in a larger, British presbyterianism. The church was divided between those who felt they should simply tend the scattered sheep of Scotland in the difficult pastures of the English cities and those who considered themselves charged with an English mission and in consequence wanted the denomination to shed its Scottish clothing and glory in pure presbyterianism. The debate affected every aspect of denominational life, from the supply of ministers to the provision of hymn-books, from the use of organs to schemes for union.

Barely two months after the disruption, Scottish church leaders met in Edinburgh to celebrate the bicentenary of the Westminster Assembly. Their meeting prompted the publication the following year of *Essays on Christian Union*, edited by David King of Glasgow. All the writers, including Thomas Chalmers, James Balmer, J.A. James and R.S. Candlish stressed the need for visible unity. After reading the book, Dr. Patton of New York suggested a convention of delegates from various churches to make a common stand

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1. [The English Presbyterian] M[essenger] March 1850 p.275f. George Young (1818-1889) Paisley 1847-9; Chadwell Street, Islington 1849-50; Canada 1851-89, including chairs at Knox and University Colleges Toronto 1853-89.
  2. *Ibid.*
  3. James Hamilton (1814-67) Roxburgh 1841; Regent Square 1841-67. For Hamilton, see R.B. Knox 'James Hamilton and English Presbyterianism' *JURCHS* 2 no 9 (May 1982) pp.286-307; William Arnot *Life of James Hamilton DD FLS* (London 1870).
  4. M March 1850 p.279.
  5. For the effect of the disruption on the Presbyterian Church in England see D.G. Cornick 'The expansion and unification of the Presbyterian Church in England 1836-76' London Ph.D. dissertation 1982, pp.116-198; for Scotland, Hugh Watt *Thomas Chalmers and the disruption* (London 1943), *passim*.

against Catholicism. Following considerable discussion a preliminary meeting was held in Liverpool in October 1845. It brought together the cream of British Evangelical leadership – the Bickersteths and Baptist Noel from the Church of England, R.S. Candlish and William Cunningham from the Free Church of Scotland, J.A. James and Ralph Wardlaw from the English and Scottish Congregationalists respectively. A selection of distinguished English Presbyterian ministers and laymen attended, among them Hugh Campbell<sup>6</sup>, George Duncan<sup>7</sup>, James Hamilton and Alexander Munro<sup>8</sup>. Thomas M'Crie the younger, then of the United Secession Church but later of the Presbyterian Church in England was also there<sup>9</sup>, as was William Chalmers of Marylebone<sup>10</sup>, whose secretarial minutes formed the basis of the official report<sup>11</sup>.

Two visions of unity were explored – of individual Christians belonging to different churches, or co-operation between churches that could lead to incorporation – the vision of Thomas Chalmers in his paper in *Essays on Christian Union*. The first eventually became incorporated into the Evangelical Alliance which grew from the Liverpool conference and became essentially defensive and polemically anti-Catholic. In both respects it lacked the catholicity of James Hamilton, the young minister of Regent Square and later protagonist of union in the Presbyterian Church in England. For Hamilton the unity of the church was already a Christological reality, yet one which could only be actualised by love – 'In healing the divisions of a divided church, legislation will fail and logic will fail but LOVE will never fail'<sup>12</sup>. This was the instinctive theology of a pastor, not the systematising ecclesiology of a church bureaucrat, and it undergirds (sometimes unwritten) all that Hamilton attempted as convener of the Presbyterian Church in England's union committee in the years 1854-7 and 1862-7 in bringing together his own denomination and the English congregations of the United Presbyterian Church. An ecumenical future was a pastoral necessity to Hamilton who ministered in

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6. Hugh Campbell (1803-1855) Ancoats, Manchester 1838-1849; Professor, English Presbyterian College 1849-1855; Moderator 1855.
  7. George Duncan (1806-68) Kirkpatrick-Durham 1832-43; North Shields 1843-51; St. Mark's Greenwich 1851-61; General Secretary 1861-68.
  8. Alexander Munro (1796-1869) St. Peter's Square (which became Grosvenor Square) Manchester 1832-1869; Moderator 1841.
  9. Thomas M'Crie (1797-1875) Crief 1822-26; out of charge 1826-28; Clola 1828-36; David Street, Edinburgh 1836-56; Professor, English Presbyterian College 1856-67; Moderator Original Secession Synod 1835; Moderator Free Church of Scotland 1856; Moderator Presbyterian Church in England 1858.
  10. William Chalmers (1812-1894) Dailly 1841-44; Marylebone 1845-68; Professor, English Presbyterian College 1868-88; Principal 1879-1888.
  11. The list of attenders is taken from 'Alphabetical list of ministers and other gentlemen attending the conference' pp.69-70 in *Conference on Christian Union. Narrative of the proceedings of the meetings held in Liverpool October 1845*.
  12. *Address on behalf of the proposed Evangelical Alliance*, given in November 1845, and later published by the London Provincial Committee. It was reprinted in *The church in the house and other tracts* (London 1847) pp.126-164. The quotation is from p.130. For his Christological understanding see *The dew of Hermon* (London 1842), and also reprinted in *The church... tracts* pp.80-121.

the godless city of London, where, as he told the Liverpool convention, 'in the neighbourhood of Mr. Noel's church, and mine, not one in fifty of the industrious classes, the hard-working men, frequents a place of worship'<sup>13</sup>, and at the Liverpool convention he found a foretaste of the delights as well as the difficulties of that future, for according to *The English Presbyterian Messenger* (hereafter the *Messenger*) it was a 'pentecostal assembly... a *penumbra* of the glory of heaven — a fore-shadowing of the blessedness of millennial activity... an epoch in the history of the church'<sup>14</sup>. Although Hamilton remained a close worker for the Evangelical Alliance all his life, his pastoral theology and zeal for the conversion of England lent him a catholicity of churchmanship that transcended both the defensiveness of the Alliance, and the rigid, nationalistic, Calvinism of some of his colleagues. Thomas M'Crie, for example, was scandalised by the latitude Hamilton showed in allowing Arminian Wesleyans and even Anglicans to occupy the Regent Square pulpit<sup>15</sup>.

In Scotland after the disruption the old ecclesiastical divisions were losing their meaning as theological and social differences began to cut across rather than co-incide with them<sup>16</sup>, and the romantic, individualistic impulse which had led to the formation of the Evangelical Alliance hardened into a corporate denominational movement amongst the nonconforming Presbyterian churches of Scotland. The United Presbyterian Church was formed in 1847 by a convergence of the Secession and Relief Churches, and the Free Church entered into negotiations with the Original Secession Church (the Auld Licht Anti-Burghers), eventually uniting with them in 1852. By then the possibility of union amongst presbyterians in England had been mooted. In 1849 the new Presbytery of Cumberland (which had only seven congregations) transmitted an overture to Synod to take steps towards union with 'congregations of the same faith and order' belonging to 'a Scottish denomination of Presbyterian dissenters'<sup>17</sup>. The presbytery's weakness heightened awareness of its deficiency as a missionary church, and its members shared James Hamilton's belief that unity would enhance their missionary potential as presbyterians in a country where the very name had been usurped by Unitarians. Union with the 58 United Presbyterian congregations (46 in connection with English presbyteries, 12 in connection with Scottish presbyteries) would be a source of consolidation and witness, for people might no longer think of the Presbyterian Church in England 'as of extraneous origin and extraction' and might remember 'that two centuries ago the English Presbyterian Church numbered above 2,000 ministers and congregations'.

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13. *Narrative...* p.16.

14. M. Nov 1845 p.99.

15. '... in truth and in verity, our friend goes too far.' he protested to Hugh Campbell — letter 14.10.1844 in the M'Crie file in the United Reformed Church History Society Library.

16. Andrew L. Drummond and James Bulloch *The church in Victorian Scotland 1843-1876* (Edinburgh 1975) p.213.

17. The text is given in M. 1849 pp.415-6.

Two ministers from Manchester spoke during the debate on the overture at the Synod meeting at Regent Square. The first, Hugh Campbell, was minister of a mission church at Ancoats sponsored by that great benefactor of English Presbyterianism, Robert Barbour. A precise, sometimes pernicky scholar, Campbell's mind was as at home in Chetham's Library as his heart in working-class Ancoats. He was a passionate advocate of unity, yet, as a perceptive ecclesiastical lawyer, he immediately identified the principal problem for his Synod – the United Presbyterians had no comparable English body because their government spanned the Tweed. The second, Alexander Munro of the fashionable, dynamic, deeply conservative St. Peter's Square congregation, was an establishment man, incapable throughout his long and distinguished ministry of being anything more or less than a Scottish Presbyterian<sup>18</sup>. He had campaigned bravely but forlornly for the legally impossible union between the English Presbyterian congregations and the Church of Scotland prior to 1843, and from then until his death was the focus of conservative caution, forever fearful that the heritage of his fathers would be sold down the English dissenting river. Union, he maintained, should remain a matter of individual conviction, for 'By forcing people to hug one another, you might really make them quarrel'<sup>19</sup>. Their speeches and the convictions of those gathered around them, contained the seeds of conflict between 'pro-England' liberals and 'pro-Scotland' conservatives. Synod compromised. The Cumberland overture was not adopted, but a committee was set up under Hamilton's convenorship 'to consider the whole subject of the admission of or union with ministers or congregations of other denominations'<sup>20</sup>.

During the 1850s the question of union was eclipsed by liturgical storms about the introduction of hymnbooks and the use of organs<sup>21</sup>, but the church remained deeply divided about its identity and mission. At the beginning of the decade they were heavily dependent on the Free Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian Church of Ireland for financial support and a supply of ministers, so much so that George Duncan, Moderator in 1850, admitted in his speech to the Free Church General Assembly that they were 'in a peculiar manner, although not constitutionally, united to the Free Church' – all seven members of the deputation were in fact Scots. Alexander Munro stated the dilemma with simple eloquence when he told them, '... however much I love my native land, and the church of that land, it is yet my desire to appear before you simply as a minister of the Presbyterian Church in England. By that church I am willing to stand or fall'<sup>22</sup>. It was a recipe

18. 'Dr. Munro a dissenter! Why, we can scarcely realise the fact even yet' impishly commented the Manchester satirical journal *The Sphinx* as late as 1868 – vol.1 1868/9 pp.89-90.

19. The report of the Synod is in M. May 1849 pp.535-41.

20. M. May 1849 pp.536/7.

21. R.B. Knox 'Presbyterian worship in England in the nineteenth century' *The Liturgical Review* May 1981 pp.23-33.

22. M. July 1850 p.399.



for tension and conflict. The two-fold task which the denomination set itself, resurrecting the old presbyterian church in England and providing a home for transient presbyterians from Scotland and elsewhere, were not necessarily compatible, especially when translated into the imagery of James Hamilton. The first purpose of the Presbyterian Church in England, he told the Free Church Assembly, was to be 'a nursing mother for your Church's orphan children'<sup>23</sup>; yet it should also be 'a ready ark against the coming deluge' of Anglican excesses. The Presbyterian Church in England could be 'a tonic to English theology' for theology was scarcely taught in English universities, and the Protestant Dissenters were unable to train all their ministers at college. Consequently, he suggested

... the usual ministration of English pulpits are in doctrine very meagre and jejeune... English piety is too moluscous [*sic* molluscous]. It is sadly in want of vertebrae. It needs a backbone. And nowhere would the food be better bestowed, which within its soft frame would go to form bones and cartilage. And with the orthodox osteology of their own English confessions and catechisms (for the Westminster Standards are English), with the firm substructure of a sound and Puritan evangelism covered over with the flesh and sinews and mantling life's blood of English virtues and English graces, southern piety would stand on its feet exceeding strong and fair...

Hamilton was no provincial. When he made this speech he had been minister of Regent Square for nine years and had a growing international reputation as journalist, editor and popular theologian. His concern at George Young's failure to adapt to English ministry, his ardent advocacy of hymn-books and union, show his allegiance to 'pro-England' sentiments. However, this relative liberalism heightens the polarity of his analysis — English theology is soft, meagre, jejeune, Scottish theology firm, sound, Puritan. This blunt dichotomy, although dressed in sophisticated, scientific, Hamiltonian imagery, became an increasingly popular and unthinking response to the task of the Presbyterian Church in England. Five years after Hamilton's speech 'a country minister' wrote to the editor of the *Messenger* distinguishing between two basic types of evangelism — the Methodistic, a religion of hymns and feelings, and the Puritan, a religion of texts, the intellect and conscience. The Presbyterian Church in England could 'infuse into England a portion of that old Puritanic element, essentially manly and of firm staple, which the more effeminate and less instructed type of religion ignores'<sup>24</sup>. It was the tragedy of the Presbyterian Church in England that this essentially superficial analysis hardened into a critical orthodoxy and became the theological justification of a religious sub-culture.

Theological identity with the strict Calvinism of the Free Church led to the deposition of A.J. Ross for false teaching about the atonement in

23. The speech is reported in M. July 1850 pp.400ff. See also William Arnot *Life of James Hamilton DD FLS* (London 1870) p.377f.

24. M. July 1855 p.210.

1852<sup>25</sup>, liturgical identity with Scottish Presbyterianism to the fierce and acrimonious disputes about introducing hymnbooks and organs which raged throughout the 1850s and almost brought the denomination to its knees<sup>26</sup>. The 1858 Synod saw the fiercest debate in its often turbulent history. William Chalmers and his fellow liturgical liberals who were in favour of adapting Scottish practice to facilitate mission in England, and allowing those congregations already using organs to continue to do so, were branded as a 'Young England' party who poured scorn and contempt on the values and principles of their forefathers, Scottish and English<sup>27</sup>. The introduction of organs was breaking the denomination apart. R.S. Candlish warned that liturgical liberalism could threaten relations with the Free Church, and the English Presbyterians were still dependent on her for ministerial manpower and financial viability<sup>28</sup>; some wealthy elders like A.P. Stewart of Regent Square withdrew their financial support from the schemes of the church and the infant college<sup>29</sup>. A new 'disruption', the 'break up of the whole church' was threatened<sup>30</sup>. The fissure opened by the racial dispute led to the abyss. Once its independence had been threatened, and a disruption mooted, the church jolted back to sanity, for, as 'EPB' put it, 'Presbyterians, in Scotland especially, have been notoriously successful in producing sects and divisions; but it will not do this side of the Tweed. Who ever heard of a church being 'broken up' about an organ?'<sup>31</sup>.

Thus, the 1859 Synod was a turning point in the history of the church. Introverted questions of liturgical revision had almost completely eclipsed the concern for unity. In early 1853 complaints were raised that the individualist unity of the Evangelical Alliance was but 'a rope of sand', and an anonymous leading article in the *Messenger* argued that unity must be grounded in Christology, for it was one of the perfections of the bride of Christ<sup>32</sup>. Unity should be a characteristic of the visible church, and conciliar presbyterianism was the true Scriptural catholicity. In 1854 James Hamilton called for

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25. Alexander Johnstone Ross (1819-1887) Langholm 1844-46; Brighton 1846-52; curate of St. Andrew's, Holborn 1866-9; vicar of Snelston 1869-83; vicar of St. Philip's Stepney 1883-87. For the charges against him see *Libel at the instance of the Presbytery of London against the Rev. Alexander Ross, minister at Brighton* (London n.d., but 1852); M. Aug 1852 pp.229-237, 'Mr. Ross of Brighton, a charge of heresy' was reprinted separately as a pamphlet. For Ross's defence see *Defence and letter of the Revd. A.J. Ross* (Brighton 1852); for his life *Memoir of the Revd. A.J. Ross D.D.* 'by his wife' (London 1888).
26. See R.B. Knox 'Presbyterian worship in England in the nineteenth century' *The Liturgical Review* May 1981 pp.23-33; L.H. Bunn 'Seventy years of English Presbyterian Praise 1857-1927' *JPHSE* 11 (1956-59) 173-90; J.F. Marquis 'What we used to do in church' - unpublished typescript in Marquis Box C in URCHS Library; D.G. Cornick, thesis cit. pp.303-16.
27. M. May 1858 pp.151ff.
28. M. April 1859 pp.111-113.
29. M. Nov. 1857 pp.354-6; M. April 1859 pp.111-113 letter from Stewart to the editor, 'Church policy, past and future'.
30. M. April 1859 pp.111-113 Letter from 'EPB'.
31. *Ibid.*
32. M. Feb. 1853 pp.33-9 anonymous leading article, 'The Presbyterian Church no.1 - its unity'.

conversations with other orthodox presbyterians, and found himself convenor of a small yet powerful committee<sup>33</sup>. They met with representatives of the four United Presbyterian presbyteries in England the following year, and found no insuperable barriers to union<sup>34</sup>. Credibility was lent them by Sir George Sinclair's personal attempt to bring together Free Church and United Presbyterian leaders in Scotland in 1856. It is unsurprising that the union committee met but once in 1856, and it is a tribute to the energy of J.G. Wright<sup>35</sup> who drew up the scheme, rather than to the will of the church, that a scheme of union was presented to the 1857 Synod. Its most notable and far-reaching suggestion was that the United Presbyterian Church should form a separate English Synod; its most telling comments that the chief obstacles to union were non-theological. It envisaged an immediate union with the United Presbyterians, Welsh Calvinistic Methodists and 'isolated congregations', which would make them 'the second largest Free Presbyterian church in the Empire' rather than the weak, patronised sister. It was shelved.

The racial issue which fuelled the fires of liturgical revision was at the root of the division between those who supported a British church, and those who looked for separate Scottish and English churches. William M'Caw<sup>36</sup> set a tone of new realism in his 1859 Moderatorial address at Regent Square. There was 'no prospect' of a restoration of sixteenth century presbyterianism in England. Rather they who were so appropriately called 'The Presbyterian Church *in* England' had to confine their aspirations 'within a much humbler range', and attempt to establish an ecclesiastical middle ground between episcopacy and independency in England<sup>37</sup>. It was with this in mind that the church began to consolidate its material position — endowing the college, creating an Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund, increasing the Home Missions Fund — and turn its energies to ecumenism. Peter Lorimer<sup>38</sup> and Thomas M'Crie, two capable historians on the staff of the English Presbyterian College, thought that celebrating the tercentenary of the Scottish reformation the following year would emphasise the unity and catholicity of presbyterianism. M'Crie, the son of the biographer of Knox and Melville, had played a prominent part in the union of the Original Secession and Free Churches in 1852. His writings on old English presbyterianism emphasised its moderation and

33. M. June 1854 pp.170ff.

34. G.B. Bruce 'Sketch of the history of the union negotiations in England' in *The Presbyterian Church of England: A memorial of union* (London 1876) pp.44-84, pp.46/7. This is by far the best account of the negotiations. Bruce participated in most of them. This article is referred to hereafter as 'Bruce'.

35. John Grant Wright (1821-80) Morebattle 1847-54; St. Andrew's, Southampton 1854-80.

36. William M'Caw (1821-1902) Trinity, Manchester 1846-86; St. Helier, Jersey 1886-1891; Moderator, Presbyterian Church in England 1859; Moderator, Presbyterian Church of England 1882.

37. M. May 1859 p.130.

38. Peter Lorimer (1812-1879) River Terrace, Islington 1837-1844; Professor English Presbyterian College 1844-78; Principal 1878-9.

catholicity<sup>39</sup>. Whilst acknowledging the difficulties, he shrewdly pointed out that the voluntary controversy, which was to wreak havoc in Scotland, was as irrelevant in England as it had been in Australia, and that union in England was essential to prevent Presbyterians coming to England from 'being swallowed up by the large Dissenting communities around them'<sup>40</sup>. In a mood of almost total optimism, Synod appointed a union committee under M'Crie as convener.

From 1859 to 1867 the church was divided into 'British' and 'English' factions, buffeted and bruised by the cavalier brusqueness of the Free Church, and left small and insignificant, struggling for visibility and viability in urban England. Yet the heart of a spiritual giant was beating in the body of the institutional dwarf. Union presented the prospect of visibility, and visibility the opportunity of offering England that judicious blend of Calvinism and presbyterianism which, as William Cunningham had said, 'ought to be ordinarily and generally adequate grounds for the harmonious union of Christian churches'<sup>41</sup>. It was a Scottish, not an English, vision; and the debate was not about the necessity of union (for all were agreed, from the cautious Munro to the flamboyant Chalmers, that mission demanded union) but its mode. Should it be Scottish or English? Should the Presbyterian Church in England be an ecumenical innovator, or should it wait on moves beyond the border and dance to the tune of the Free Church piper? A vocal minority, centred on Munro, inclined to the latter so strongly that in 1861 M'Crie resigned as convener of the union committee lest his views cause financial damage to the college<sup>42</sup>.

The Scottish parents were slowly moving closer together. In 1861 William Cunningham made one of his finest speeches, supporting the newly united church in Australia. He found no theological tenet of the United Presbyterian Church objectionable<sup>43</sup>. In 1862 R.S. Candlish, long an advocate of union in Scotland, urged union on the 1862 English Presbyterian Synod as a strengthening of presbyterian witness south of the Tweed. He echoed Hugh Campbell's prophetic insight of 1849 that the principal difficulty was that the United Presbyterians had no equivalent organisation to the English Presbyterian Synod, but suggested two possible solutions – the formation of an English United Presbyterian Church, separate from its Scottish parent, or the absorption of the Presbyterian Church in England into the Free Church. The former would produce an English church, the latter a British. In moving his vote of thanks to Candlish, Munro tartly suggested that 'they

39. See, for example, his inaugural lecture, 'The primitive Puritanism of England' M. Dec. 1856 pp.353/4 for a report; 'Catholicity of our Presbyterian forefathers' M. 1861 pp.333-41; *Annals of English Presbytery from the earliest period to the present time* (London 1872) *passim*.

40. M. June 1859 pp.188/9.

41. Robert Rainy and James MacKenzie *Life of William Cunningham D.D.* (London 1871) p.429. The speech was also reported in M. June 1860 p.203f as the article, 'Calvinism and Presbyterianism'.

42. Bruce p.49.

43. A.L. Drummond and J. Bulloch *The church in Victorian Scotland 1843-74* (Edinburgh 1975) p.317; Robert Rainy and James MacKenzie, *op cit* pp.448-65.

should make a movement towards conjunction in Scotland before trying the experiment in England<sup>44</sup>. Imperial visions of a disestablished presbyterian union throughout the three kingdoms of Scotland, England and Wales jostled with national aspirations. Varying estimates of the relationship between mission, union and nationalism appeared in speeches, articles and letters, but in 1863 the mists began to clear and the difficulties of a British church became plain. In March John Cairns<sup>45</sup> threw his considerable weight behind union<sup>46</sup>; in April the English Presbyterian Synod realised that complex problems lay in the path of union with the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists<sup>47</sup>; and in May a break through occurred when the United Presbyterian Synod decided to form an English Provincial Synod, purely as an administrative device<sup>48</sup>. As a denomination they still favoured a British church which gave them all the advantages, and none of the disadvantages of a separate English union<sup>49</sup>. They appointed a committee to confer with any committee which might be formed by any of the other presbyterian denominations north or south of the border. A few days later the Free Church General Assembly reciprocated, but instructed its committee to limit discussions to Scotland, and the English Presbyterians found themselves implicated in a wider union than they had seriously considered, yet excluded from discussions which had momentous implications for their future<sup>50</sup>. The joint committee drew up a programme for negotiations, of which the ninth head, 'Relation of the churches, if united, to ministers and congregations beyond the limit of Scotland', was crucial to the Presbyterian Church in England<sup>51</sup>.

The Free Church was treating the English Presbyterians in her normal cavalier manner. The Presbyterian Church in England presbyteries erupted in anger and tension between 'British' and 'English' almost reached breaking point. Office-bearers from both churches met in London, and it was discovered that whilst the United Presbyterians were in favour of British union to a man, the English Presbyterians called unanimously for a smaller English union<sup>52</sup>. Wounded fury vented itself in the pages of the *Messenger* and in presbytery meetings. The union tide was rolling on. Presbyterians had united in New Zealand, Canada, Australia and America<sup>53</sup>, yet they could not be in-

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44. M. June 1862 pp.134-5.

45. John Cairns (1818-1892) Golden Square, Berwick 1845-76; Professor, United Presbyterian College 1867-79 (held at first in conjunction with his Berwick pastorate); Principal 1879-92.

46. M. March 1863 pp.74-5.

47. M. May 1863 p.151.

48. U[nited] P[resbyterian] M[agazine] June 1863 p.266f.

49. Cairns' view is given in *Weekly Review* May 23 1863 pp.77-8. A carefully reasoned and balanced assessment of the United Presbyterian position is given by David King in a pamphlet, *The contemplated union of Presbyterian churches* (Edinburgh 1863).

50. M. Aug 1863 p.238.

51. *Report of committee of union May 1873* (United Presbyterian) pp.1-36 gives an account of the history of the negotiations issued by the joint committee. This report will be referred to hereafter as the 1873 Union report.

52. M. Aug 1863 p.239; *Weekly Review* 4 July 1863 pp.277-8.

53. M. Aug 1863 p.238.

volved in British negotiations until the Free Church committee received fresh powers of incorporation from the 1864 General Assembly. It was therefore not until July 20, 1864, that the Presbyterian Church in England took part in the union negotiations for the first time. These were to prove absurd as the United Presbyterian, Free Church and English Presbyterian delegates all pursued different aims, British, Scottish and English union respectively. The future of the Presbyterian Church in England became dependent on the progress or regress of larger Scottish discussions, and just as the deliberations of the Church of Scotland in 1839 had made the formation of the Presbyterian Church in England inevitable, so the deliberations of the Free Church of Scotland in 1865 and 1866 paved the way for its transition into the Presbyterian Church of England. The extent of union (the ninth head) was referred to individual denominational committees. On January 17, 1866, the Presbyterian Church in England voted (not surprisingly) for a union 'which should not cross the border' by 11-4<sup>54</sup>, a decision echoed by the Free Church<sup>55</sup>. The joint committee considered these denominational responses during February and March, toyed with the concept of federalism<sup>56</sup>, and referred the matter to the separate denominational supreme courts. The imperial ideal was over, and the prospect of union in Scotland diminished as opposition grew in the Free Church, fostered by James Begg. The 1867 union debate in the Free Church General Assembly was, in the words of Rainy's biographer Carnegie Simpson, 'fateful not merely for the union cause, but for the future history of the Free Church of Scotland'<sup>57</sup>.

The future lay in England, but nine years hard and frustrating negotiation lay ahead before the union of 1876<sup>58</sup>. Many United Presbyterians still hankered after the larger union or for some modified form of federalism, as did some English Presbyterians. The United Presbyterians stood to lose much — 'the moral backing and material help derivable from five hundred churches for the sake of one hundred and forty, and most of these young and with their own resources taxed to the utmost', their own extensive preachers' list, their foreign missions 'with their reflex influence on the home church', and considerable endowments like the Henderson bequest<sup>59</sup>. It was a large sacrifice to ask, and it is to the credit of the English Presbyterians that they recognised this, and in spite of seemingly interminable stalling and indecision, waited patiently and quietly for the United Presbyterians to reach their own decision in their own time. Oswald Dykes<sup>60</sup>, Hamilton's successor

54. Bruce p.53.

55. UPM June 1866 pp.266-79.

56. Bruce p.53.

57. Patrick Carnegie Simpson, *The Life of Principal Rainy* (London 1909) vol.1 p.173.

58. For a detailed account of those nine years, see Cornick, thesis cit. pp.336-358.

59. Robert Balmarnie 'The difficulties that lie at present in the way of union in England', a paper read to a conference of English and United Presbyterian office-bearers at the English Presbyterian College, 2 Dec. 1873, and reported in UPM April 1874.

60. Oswald Dykes (1835-1912) East Kilbride 1859-61; Free St. George's, Edinburgh 1861-65; out of charge 1865-69; Regent Square 1869-88; Principal, English Presbyterian College (which moved to Westminster College, Cambridge in 1899) 1888-1907.

at Regent Square and the ablest of the younger generation of ministers, who was to become an ecclesiastical statesman and scholar of renown in the Presbyterian Church of England, spoke to the crucial 1874 United Presbyterian English Synod. His assessment of the future of presbyterianism in England was sober and realistic. The Presbyterian Church in England had become 'an English Presbyterian Church and not merely a Presbyterian Church in England'.

They felt more and more that the bridge across the Tweed had been broken, and that their ships were burnt, and that they were now Englishmen, though hitherto their ministry was incidentally and accidentally composed of men from Scotland and the North of Ireland. Their church must inevitably drift farther and farther from the Scottish connection, in proportion as it struck its roots further down and began to take the flavour of the soil, as Englishmen were reared for its ministry and as it contained congregations with two-thirds, three-fourths, and sometimes four-fifths of pure English blood<sup>61</sup>.

In spite of long memories and cherished dreams, the Scotchman was becoming an Englishman. The union of 1876 symbolised that ecclesiastical metamorphosis. Legally the Scotchman could be none other than an English dissenter, even if his spiritual heart remained in Edinburgh.

James Anderson, veteran of the disruption, scholar, statesman, and above all pastor, was elected the first Moderator of the new church. In his moderatorial address he recalled words of William Cunningham at the 1860 Synod. The true unity of the church was mystical, hidden in the body of Christ, but for the sake of the world the church must be seen to be one. They had come together 'under the constraining conviction that unity is a formative element in the constitution of a Christian church', and had gained thereby an 'increment of power' which would enable them more effectively to fulfil their mission in England 'in confronting the world of unbelief and the multiform legions of evil', and join with other denominations in the 'evangelisation of the godless and neglected masses who have placed themselves outside the pale of religious ordinances'<sup>62</sup>.

Theology mingled with pragmatism, evangelical duty with fear of eclipse. The union of 1876 was in part the expression of the conservative solidarity of a migrant sub-culture, yet it was also a positive and costly response to the godless English city. Any church union is an untidy tangle of theological perceptions and socio-economic forces. Such simple sociological models of ecumenism as the response of a waning sub-culture to religious decline have been criticised for failing to do justice to the historical evidence<sup>63</sup>. Bryan Wilson's thesis that ecumenism reflects the weakness of

61. UPM Nov. 1874 pp.511-14.

62. Bruce p.107.

63. David M. Thompson 'Theological and sociological approaches to the motivation of the ecumenical movement' in *Studies in church history* vol.15 (1978) ed. Derek Baker pp.467-79; A.D. Gilbert *The making of post-Christian Britain* (London 1980) pp.126ff.

religion in an increasingly secular society, that it is primarily a clerical movement, and that church unions involve compromise and surrender of principles<sup>64</sup>, is contradicted at every point by the English Presbyterian experience.

If weakness is to be measured by membership increase and density, the Presbyterian Church in England was not weak. Membership doubled from c.15,000 in 1850 to 29,251 in 1875<sup>65</sup>, its density (as a percentage of the total population over 15) rose steadily from 0.13 in 1866 to 0.17 in 1875, and continued to rise in the united church to 0.32 in 1908, falling thereafter. If weakness is measured by smallness, the Presbyterian Church in England was weak, and continually aware of its weakness, and it is easier for a small denomination to have a fast growth rate. The 1849 resolution was inspired in part by the need for visibility, yet it must also be seen in the theological context of the movement towards co-operation between churches in Scotland following the disruption, and the open, reconciliatory attitudes towards other Christians expressed by Hamilton, Chalmers and others in their work for the Evangelical Alliance. Presbyterianism has lay participation, responsibility and leadership written into its structure. The work of elders like the English Presbyterians Robert Barbour and George Barclay Bruce and the United Presbyterian Samuel Stitt in the negotiations leading to 1876 contradicts Wilson's clerical argument. The United Presbyterians and the Free Church were ostensibly kept apart in Scotland by what Rainy called 'this precious civil magistrate who has been dandled into such ridiculous importance', that is by the relationship between church and state. However unwillingly, the English Presbyterians had lived with voluntarism through their history. In 1876 they accepted this in theory as well as practice and renounced the establishment principle, although as William Chalmers had pointed out, they were hardly likely to be faced with the possibility of ever being part of an established church<sup>66</sup>. The old Scottish doctrinal and denominational divisions were irrelevant in England. The national context encouraged a re-assessment of priorities in the Presbyterian Church in England. This was not compromise, but an intelligent revaluation of priorities for being the church in a changed context and different society.

The experience of the Presbyterian Church in England suggests that the context in which a church finds itself is an important factor in ecumenism, and that in migrant religious communities the interaction between denominational identity and nationalism can be a source of dynamic tension. The conflict between men like Munro who wanted the church to be chaplain to (and therefore part of) a Scottish sub-culture in England, and those

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64. Bryan Wilson, *Religion in secular society* (London 1966) 2nd edition 1969 pp.151-205.

65. The 1850 figure is taken from A.D. Gilbert *Religion and society in industrial England* (London 1976) pp.41-2, the 1875 figure from 'General Statistics of the Presbyterian Church in England 1876', printed in reports submitted to Synod 1876, pp.233-245.

66. M. June 1859 pp.188-9.



like Hamilton and Chalmers who knew that it had much more to offer English religious life, provided the impetus to re-think the role of the denomination. That rethinking created the bridge that links what has been called the 'popular ecumenism' of the age of itineracy with the 'modern ecumenism of decline'<sup>67</sup>. Modern ecumenism should not be divorced from its Victorian past, either from general missionary history, or from the experience of the English Presbyterians. A line may be traced from the Indian summer of the age of popular ecumenism in the Evangelical Alliance, and the Scottish disruption, to the union of 1876 through the work of James Hamilton, Thomas M'Crie, William Chalmers and others. From there in the united Presbyterian Church of England it leads to Edinburgh 1910 where Campbell Gibson<sup>68</sup>, who had been Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of England the previous year, was Chairman of the Commission on the Church on the Mission Field<sup>69</sup>, and where William Paton would have been an eager listener and steward, but for the exigencies of the Williams Scholarship examination at Westminster College.

DAVID CORNICK

### THE IRISH BACKGROUND TO THOMAS CAMPBELL'S *DECLARATION AND ADDRESS*

Buick Knox once remarked jokingly that Churches of Christ were founded by a 'renegade Irish Presbyterian'. His reference was to Thomas Campbell, minister of Ahorey, near Armagh, from 1798 until 1807, when he emigrated to the United States. There in 1809 he published the *Declaration and Address*, which since 1981 has appeared in the footnote to paragraph 18 of the Basis of Union of the United Reformed Church as one of those 'formulations and declarations of faith' valued by members of Churches of Christ 'as stating the gospel and seeking to make its implications clear'. The choice of the *Declaration and Address* for this reference may seem strange when it is remembered that it was published a quarter of a century before any Churches of Christ as such were formed in Great Britain. It was probably never as widely known and read as the book by Thomas's son, Alexander Campbell, *Christianity Restored* (1835), particularly in its second edition of 1839 when it was retitled *The Christian System*. Indeed the *Declaration and Address* was not published in Britain until 1951, with an Introduction by Dr. William Robinson. What claim therefore does Thomas Campbell have to be regarded as a founder of Churches of Christ? What is the significance of Campbell's Irish background in his thought? How helpful

67. A.D. Gilbert op cit p.58-9.

68. John Campbell Gibson (1849-1919) Missionary in Soraton 1874-1919; Moderator Presbyterian Church of England 1909.

69. Kenneth Slack 'English Presbyterians and the ecumenical movement' *JPHSE* 12 (1960-63) pp.142-155.

is the concept of a founder of a religious movement anyway? This essay is an attempt to answer these questions.

It is generally agreed that Thomas Campbell is a neglected figure. Archibald McLean wrote in 1909 that 'Thomas Campbell has been overshadowed and his work largely forgotten' and that he 'has not received the credit due him'.<sup>1</sup> Lester McAllister in 1954 described him as

a transitional figure, forming a link between the religious traditionalism of the Old World and the spirit and zeal of the New — a man who, like so many in America at that time, lived the first half of his life in Ireland and the last half on the American frontier.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, as most writers have admitted, the basic outline of Thomas Campbell's Irish career given in most books is that drawn from the early chapters of Robert Richardson's *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell* (1868), which when closely examined turn out to be remarkably vague. Nowhere has any analysis of the *Declaration and Address*, including the most detailed in Frederick D. Kershner's *The Christian Union Overture* (1923), attempted to relate it to the positions Campbell took up in Ireland, except in general terms. Fortunately however, sufficient material survives to make such a comparison a most illuminating one. It may also suggest that the document is not so American as has sometimes been supposed.<sup>3</sup>

Thomas Campbell was born on 1 February 1763 at Sheepbridge, near Newry, and died on 4 January 1854 at Bethany, West Virginia. His father was a member of the Church of Ireland, and his grandfather a Roman Catholic. Thomas was drawn to the religious meetings of the Seceder Presbyterians and, somewhat to his father's dismay, expressed a wish to become a Seceder minister. Initially he supported himself by becoming a schoolmaster, and was then enabled by the generosity of a local Seceder, John Kinley, to enter the University of Glasgow, from which he graduated probably in 1786.<sup>4</sup> Subsequently he attended five annual sessions at the Anti-Burgher Divinity Hall at Whitburn, West Lothian, under Archibald Bruce, continuing to support himself as a schoolmaster and marrying in 1787.<sup>5</sup> He also preached in congregations without a regular minister until his own call to become minister at Ahorey in 1798.

1. A. McLean, *Thomas and Alexander Campbell*, Cincinnati n.d., 3, 48.

2. L.G. McAllister, *Thomas Campbell: Man of the Book*, St. Louis 1954, 11.

3. e.g. D.H. Yoder, 'Christian Unity in Nineteenth-Century America' in R. Rouse and S.C. Neill, *A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517-1948*, London 1954, 237-9.

4. R. Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, Philadelphia 1868, i 21-25. McAllister, *Thomas Campbell*, 26, gives the dates of Campbell's time in Glasgow as 1783-86, and *A History of Congregations in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, 1610-1982*, Belfast 1982, 9 gives the graduation date as 1786. There is no record of his matriculation or graduation in the published records of Glasgow, and D. Stewart, *The Seceders in Ireland*, Belfast 1950, 233, expresses doubt about his education in Glasgow.

5. The dates here are more obscure: Richardson gives none; McAllister says he attended the Divinity Hall from 1787 to 1791 (31), whilst Stewart says he entered the Hall in 1792 (437). The latter date fits more naturally with his ordination in 1798, though the precise date of that is uncertain.

The first episode in which Campbell emerges as a person with a particular stance is his involvement with the Evangelical Society of Ulster. On 10 October 1798, despite 'a great fall of rain', a considerable number of people including thirteen ministers of four different denominations gathered in Armagh to discuss what they could do to spread the Gospel. After worship, in which Campbell led in prayer, the meeting appointed the Revd. George Maunsel, Rector of Drumcree (Church of Ireland) to the chair. A plan for forming an Evangelical Society to sponsor itinerant preaching was then read by the Revd. George Hamilton, minister of the Burgher congregation in Armagh where the meeting was held. Hamilton was Moderator of the Burgher Synod in Ireland in 1797-98 and had preached the sermon at the opening worship. The meeting unanimously agreed to form such a society, and elected Hamilton secretary and Mr. Samuel Carson of Armagh treasurer. Campbell became one of the five ministers on the committee, which also included seven laymen.<sup>6</sup> The support of itinerant preaching by a society of subscribers with a mixed clerical and lay committee was a common feature of the evangelical revival in the 1790s, as it affected Anglicans, Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists on both sides of the Irish Sea. Such societies were also as often as not undenominational in their composition. Similarly they were opposed by more conservative churchmen in all denominations because they fell outside the regular discipline of the Church, whatever that discipline happened to be.

When the Antiburgher Synod met in 1799 a question was raised as to whether the Evangelical Society of Ulster was constituted 'on principles consistent with the Secession Testimony'. Campbell was called upon to explain his involvement in the Society. The Synod agreed with the pious purpose of the Society and the zeal of its members, but they resolved that

the principles of the Constitution are entirely latitudinarian, whereby the truth of the Gospel is in danger of being destroyed and the practice of godliness overthrown where they have been established in the providence of God.

They also believed that

while the zeal of the Society would carry them out to the enlargement of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, on the one side, it would eventually undermine and destroy it on the other.<sup>7</sup>

Campbell agreed to accept the Synod's advice to withdraw from the committee, remaining only a subscriber. But in the following year a related problem was raised: what was to happen to members of the Church who joined praying

6. T. Witherow, *Historical and Literary Memorials of Presbyterianism in Ireland, Second Series (1731-1800)*, London 1880, 310-12; J.S. Reid, *History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, Belfast 1867, iii 415-17.

7. Minutes of the Antiburgher Secession Synod, 21, quoted in P. Brooke, *Controversies in Ulster Presbyterianism, 1790-1836*, Cambridge Ph.D. thesis 1980, 47; Stewart, *The Seceders*, 104-5. I am grateful to my former research student, Dr. Brooke, for originally drawing my attention to this material.

societies under the inspection of the Evangelical Society of Ulster and not under their own ministers? The Synod decided to encourage all their congregations to set up their own praying societies and to admonish all their members to withdraw from private religious societies and to join those under the supervision of the Synod. The friends of the Evangelical Society issued publications in which, to quote Dr. Stewart,

they endeavoured to prove the propriety of a universal coalescence of all people apparently pious, without respect to any decided profession of religion or form of Church government.<sup>8</sup>

But the Synod responded by issuing a public warning against the neglect of public worship, and then in 1802 made the establishment of praying societies in their congregations mandatory in the hope that this would be a barrier 'against that straying, instability, and wandering of youth after the new-fangled notions of a wavering and unsettled generation'. There is no record of Campbell's response to these later developments.

The Burgher Synod also turned against the Evangelical Society. It is possible that their motion of 1797 instructing each minister to promote prayer in their congregations for the spreading of the Gospel (following a similar motion in Scotland the year before) actually encouraged George Hamilton to take his initiative in 1798. Nevertheless when questions were raised about the Society in the Synod of 1799 a resolution was passed, rather milder than the Antiburghers', recognising the sincerity of the Society's promoters but urging caution in the presbyteries about any neglect of the Church's Gospel, Doctrine, Discipline and Worship. In 1801 the matter was raised again, and the four ministers connected with the Society agreed to discourage lay preaching, to disapprove of Evangelical Society preachers entering any congregation without the minister's consent, and to discountenance 'promiscuous communion in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper'. This did not satisfy a minority who felt that the Society was a threat to presbyterian principles. In 1802 Hamilton withdrew and became an Independent, taking most of his congregation with him; and John Gibson of Rich Hill had already done the same. By this time Campbell lived in a farm near Rich Hill, and Richardson (who seems not to have realised that Gibson's congregation had a Seceder background) remarks that Campbell used to attend evening services at Gibson's church where he was always made welcome.<sup>9</sup>

In retrospect the suspicion and hostility with which the Evangelical Society of Ulster was greeted seem strange or perverse. But there are two interacting explanations which need to be remembered. One is political.

8. Stewart, *The Seceders*, 106-7.

9. *Ibid.*, 186-90; Richardson, *Alexander Campbell*, i 59-60. There is some doubt about the date of Gibson's secession: in his account of Rich Hill (343) Stewart does not give a date, but in describing Sligo (348) where Gibson ministered first says he was excommunicated in 1803. The *History of Congregations* agrees in saying he was excommunicated in 1803 (755), but says he resigned in 1800 (736). This seems implausible if, as Stewart says (188), the Synod appointed a committee to negotiate with the four ministers in 1801. It would seem probable that Gibson resigned after the Synod of 1801 but was not formally excommunicated until 1803.

Itinerant preaching has always been suspect to the political authorities, whether one thinks of mediaeval friars, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century conventicles or the eighteenth century movement of Wesley and Whitefield. The suspicion arises because such preaching gathers together potentially excitable crowds listening to people, possibly with less education than might be desired, who are not subject to established ecclesiastical authority, at least in its local embodiment. In the 1790s itinerant preaching had been linked with 'democratical' sentiments in the emotional atmosphere of the war against France. But in Ireland particularly the abortive rebellion of the first half of 1798, which forced the cancellation of the Antiburgher Synod, made everyone jumpy. What evangelicals saw as a characteristically optimistic response to the disturbed state of the country in the autumn following the uprising seemed to more cautious souls to involve great risks.

The other explanation is ecclesiastical. The Evangelical Society applied in January 1799 to the London Missionary Society for two preachers, and Hamilton attended the May meeting of the Society that year. The fundamental principle of that Society, adopted in 1796, was

that our design is not to send Presbyterianism, Independency, Episcopacy, or any other form of Church Order and Government... but the Glorious Gospel of the blessed God to the Heathen.<sup>10</sup>

The Antiburgher Synod in Scotland had been the first presbyterian body to condemn the constitution of missionary societies in 1796, obviously with the L.M.S. in mind. But the other Churches in Scotland were alarmed by the formation in Edinburgh in 1797 of the Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home, in which Robert and James Haldane took a leading part. In 1799 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland passed an Act against itinerant preachers and Sunday Schools, and the Antiburgher Synod deposed the Revd. George Cowie of Huntly, who had supported itinerant preaching. In 1800 some of the first students trained at the Haldanes' seminary in Edinburgh went to Ireland, and in October 1801 James Haldane himself visited Ulster and was accompanied by George Hamilton. This was presumably the occasion when he preached at Rich Hill, and Thomas Campbell heard him.<sup>11</sup> The Scottish presbyterian reaction to the Haldanes and the introduction of Haldane-trained itinerants into Ireland in 1800 may well explain the intensification of suspicion. For Seceders did not regard church order as an incidental matter, and their lingering attachment to the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643, with its vow to further the reformation of religion in England and Ireland to bring it into conformity with that in Scotland, still

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10. R. Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1895*, London 1899, i 49-50: for Hamilton's letter see *Evangelical Magazine*, vii, 1799, 126-7.
  11. A. Haldane, *The Lives of Robert Haldane and James Alexander Haldane*, Edinburgh 1855, 177-9, 236, 239-40, 280-2; H. Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism*, Glasgow 1960, 68-74; Richardson, *Alexander Campbell*, i 60 - this presumably explains why Richardson (73-74) seems to regard the Evangelical Society as a Haldaneite group.

counted for something.

This is the context in which to view the second issue on which Thomas Campbell took a public position — the revision of the Narrative and Testimony of the Secession Church. The Secession Church came into existence in 1733 as a result of a protest about the way in which patronage was working in the Church of Scotland since its restoration in 1712. But that grievance was the last in a cumulative sequence, all of which were concerned at the possibility that the Church was drifting away from the orthodoxy of the Westminster Confession and the Form of Church Government. The subsequent division of the Secession into Burgher and Antiburgher in 1747 turned on a similar matter, since in certain Scottish burghs the burgesses were required to swear an oath to uphold the national religion of the realm, which on a strict interpretation Seceders believed to be false.<sup>12</sup> In Ireland, where the established Church was Anglican and where the Burgess Oath did not exist, the strength of the Seceders lay in their commitment to orthodox presbyterianism and a church responsive to the wishes of the people. Nevertheless it remained the law of the Church that a minister when being taken on trial had to enter into the Bond for the renewing of the Scottish National Covenant of 1638 and the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643.<sup>13</sup> In 1790 the Irish Antiburgher Synod asked the Scottish General Synod to accommodate the Act and Testimony of the Church to the present times, thereby inaugurating a sixteen-year discussion. A draft of a new Narrative and Testimony was presented to the General Synod in 1796 and then remitted to presbyteries for consideration. In 1802 the Irish Antiburgher Synod discussed a draft, when Thomas Campbell took exception to chapters 18 and 23 on the ground that

a number of difficulties have occurred from the said chapters, of a very embarrassing tendency to many ministers and others, whom it must materially affect if it be made a term of communion in its present form.<sup>14</sup>

The two chapters concerned referred to covenanting and to church discipline. The perpetual obligation of covenants was recognised but it was not held that they could impose a religious profession by external force. Church discipline involved the right of excommunication. Campbell read his objections at the Synod of 1803 and they were sent to presbyteries for inspection. It does not seem that they had any effect on the final version which was completed in May 1804 and received by the Irish Synod in 1806. At that time Campbell deferred stating his objections until the following Synod, by which time he had arrived in America. The main discussion in Scotland on the new Narrative

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12. A.L. Drummond and J. Bulloch, *The Scottish Church, 1688-1843*, Edinburgh 1973, 30-44, 50-51, 110-12; Stewart, *The Seceders*, 42-53.

13. The text of these may conveniently be found in S.R. Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution, 1625-1660*, 3 ed, Oxford 1906, 124-34, 267-71.

14. Stewart, *The Seceders*, 101.

and Testimony turned on the modified claim made for the power of the civil magistrate in matters of religion. The Westminster Confession in chapter 20 on Liberty of Conscience and chapter 23 on the Civil Magistrate had not hesitated to give the civil power authority to establish uniformity in matters of religion. The new Testimony modified this, and as a result the more conservative 'Old Lights', led by Campbell's old teacher, Archibald Bruce, and Thomas McCrie, withdrew in 1806. Campbell was clearly of 'New Light' persuasion, and the points on which he had reservations suggest that he favoured greater liberty of conscience even than the new Testimony allowed.<sup>15</sup> In so far as the new Testimony was moving to a view of the Church as a voluntary association, as well as a body independent of the state, Campbell was moving with it, and possibly, if his experience in the Evangelical Society of Ulster is a guide, ahead of it.

The third issue on which Thomas Campbell took a stand is closely related to the last — the question of union between the Burgher and Anti-burgher Synods. The desire for greater cooperation between the two groups in Ireland surfaced at the turn of the century, probably as a result of the cooperation in evangelical enterprise. So long as the Irish Synods were dependent on their parent bodies in Scotland, progress on this matter depended on events in Scotland, so the movement also involved a desire for greater independence for the Irish Synods. In 1800 it was proposed at the Anti-burgher Synod that the connection with the General Associate Synod of Scotland should be dissolved and that steps be taken to enter into ministerial connection with the Irish Burgher Synod. Discussion of the matters was reserved to a future meeting. The Burgher Synod appointed a committee in 1803 to meet representatives of the Antiburghers to discuss union, and Campbell was included in the group appointed by the Antiburghers to negotiate. The combined committee met at Rich Hill in October 1804 and again at Lurgan in March 1805. Thomas Campbell drafted the report, with its propositions for union, which included the wish for a Testimony adapted to the Irish situation. Campbell was Moderator of the Irish Synod at its meeting in Belfast in July 1805, and it is therefore no surprise that he was asked to present the Synod's case to the General Synod in Glasgow. That Synod rejected the terms for union, and also the request for Irish independence, though one member subsequently remarked to Alexander Campbell, 'While in my opinion he out-argued them, they out-voted him'. So nothing was done until 1816, when negotiations were renewed and in 1818 the two Synods united and declared their independence of the Scottish Synods (which themselves united in 1820).<sup>16</sup> The significance which Campbell himself attached to his work for union is perhaps indicated by the fact that his report and proposals were quoted extensively in Alexander Campbell's

15. *Ibid.*, 101; Brooke, *Controversies*, 60-61; R. Small, *History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church, 1733-1900*, Edinburgh 1904, ii 232-3.

16. Stewart, *The Seceders*, 101, 107, 193-4, 199-200, 431; Richardson, *Alexander Campbell*, i 56-58; McAllister, *Thomas Campbell*, 52-56.

memoirs of his father. That report contains these memorable words:

This, our unhappy division, appeared to us an evil of no small magnitude, whether abstractly considered as inconsistent with the genius and spirit of the Christian religion, which has union, unity, and communion in faith, hope and love, for its grand object upon earth, or whether considered in its hurtful tendencies, as marring and embarrassing the cause which it was thus the grand object of the secession to promote.<sup>17</sup>

That object was, of course, the proclamation of God's free grace to sinners.

In 1807 Campbell was urged for health reasons to seek a change of environment, possibly by taking a long sea voyage, and somewhat reluctantly he resolved to go to the United States. He arrived at Philadelphia when the Associate Synod of North America was in session there, and was admitted to membership upon presentation of a certificate from the Presbytery of Market Hill. At his own request he was appointed to serve in the Presbytery of Chartiers in south-western Pennsylvania since his destination was Washington, Pa, where several friends from Ireland had settled. It is not necessary here to retell the story of how within a year he had incurred the censure of the Presbytery being charged both with doctrinal unsoundness on the appropriation of saving faith, the nature of the atonement and the possibility of life without sin, and with laxness in discipline in not regarding confessions of faith as terms of communion, in allowing ruling elders to pray and exhort in the absence of ministers, in allowing members to hear ministers of other persuasions and in preaching in congregations without leave of the minister. This censure was sustained by the Associate Synod in 1808, and in 1809 having failed to find satisfaction Campbell withdrew from it. He was deposed from the ministry in 1810.<sup>18</sup> What is startling about this episode is the speed with which Campbell, who had been sufficiently respected in Ireland to be Moderator of Synod, should come into conflict with the Seceder Synod in America. It is possible that the doctrinal charges may have been influenced by personal animus, but in the matters of discipline Campbell did nothing he had not done in Ulster and denied preaching in a congregation without leave. What we see here is a clash between a conservative Seceder position in the U.S.A. which was already on the defensive in Ireland, and a representative of the new evangelical mood spreading throughout the British Isles.

Campbell's response to these events was the formation of the Christian Association of Washington in August 1809, the purpose of which was to promote 'simple, evangelical Christianity, free from all mixture of human opinions and inventions of men'. It was not intended to be a church but rather a society of 'voluntary advocates for church reformation'. It was for this association that Campbell wrote the *Declaration and Address*, published towards the end of 1809. The Address was submitted 'to all that love our

17. A. Campbell, *Memoirs of Elder Thomas Campbell*, Cincinnati 1871, 210.

18. McAllister, *Thomas Campbell*, 67-95; W.E. Garrison & A.T. DeGroot, *The Disciples of Christ: A History*, rev. ed., St. Louis 1958, 129-39.



Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, throughout all the Churches', and was an eloquent appeal for a united Church on the basis of the practice of the primitive Church as exhibited in the New Testament. It culminated in thirteen propositions of which the first read:

That the Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one, consisting of all those in every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to Him in all things according to the scriptures, and that manifest the same by their tempers and conduct, and of none else, as none else can be truly and properly called Christians.

There should therefore be no schisms or uncharitable divisions in the Church, and this could be achieved by requiring nothing of Christians as articles of faith or terms of communion 'but what is expressly taught and enjoined upon them in the word of God'. Campbell allowed 'inferences and deductions from scripture premises' to be called the doctrine of God's holy word, and also regarded 'doctrinal exhibitions of the great system of divine truths' as highly expedient, but he insisted that they were not binding on individual consciences any further than they perceived the connexion.<sup>19</sup>

The immediate practical consequences of the *Declaration and Address* were negligible. The Christian Association did not grow. Campbell, reluctant to form a new sect, sought recognition from the regular Presbyterian Synod of Pittsburgh in 1810 but this was refused. In 1811, therefore, it constituted itself a church, and as a result of its examination of scripture adopted both weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper and believer's baptism by immersion. After some sixteen years as part of a Baptist Association from 1813, the new movement separated from the Baptists in the early 1830s and united with Barton W. Stone's Christian Churches in Kentucky. The Disciples of Christ had come into being.

What then is the significance of the *Declaration and Address*? In recent years it has been recognised by Disciple historians that it is misleading to interpret the origins and history of Disciples of Christ in terms of the influence of the Campbells alone.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless the ideas of the *Declaration and Address*, particularly in Thomas Campbell's motto, 'where the holy Scriptures speak, we speak; and where they are silent, we are silent',<sup>21</sup> became normative for the new movement. Despite his references to the hopeful context of a new country, free from a civil establishment of religion and connexion with a Roman Catholic hierarchy, and his assertion in the closing pages that divisions among Christians made the gospel incredible to the American Indians, Campbell's main ideas derived from his Irish experience. The model for the Christian Association of Washington seems to have been the Evangelical Society of Ulster, and the itinerant preaching which he encouraged regardless of denominational divisions was a familiar method for him. His concern that only scripture should be binding on the Christian

19. T. Campbell, *Declaration and Address*, (ed W. Robinson) Birmingham 1951, 4, 6, 15-17.

20. e.g. D.E. Harrell, *Quest for a Christian America*, Nashville 1966, 19-20.

21. A. Campbell, *Thomas Campbell*, 19.

conscience shows both a characteristic evangelical confidence in the compatibility of scripture and the essential truths of the Westminster Confession and also a continuing worry about the binding character of inferential truths that had first shown itself when the Secession Testimony was being revised. The Appendix to the *Declaration and Address* defends it against charges of latitudinarianism and also warns against the evil consequences of excommunication, thus picking up the concern he had voiced in 1802-3.<sup>22</sup> His overriding concern for the unity of the Church flowed from the work he had already undertaken in Ireland. In his attitude to baptism and the weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper subsequently, there is also a parallel to the views of Alexander Carson. Carson was Presbyterian minister of Tobermore, County Londonderry, who withdrew from the Synod of Ulster in 1805 because of his worries about the sincerity of their adherence to scripture and their distrust of itinerancy. His brother was treasurer of the Evangelical Society of Ulster. The opening paragraph of Campbell's *Declaration* on the need for everyone to judge for himself bears a striking resemblance to the preface to Carson's *Reasons for Separating from the General Synod of Ulster*.<sup>23</sup> Campbell also seems to have shared Carson's view that baptism as a believer should not be a condition of admission to the Lord's Supper.<sup>24</sup>

This is not to say that Campbell was a derivative thinker. But it is a warning against an uncritical use of the image of a 'founder' when talking about new religious movements. Those that develop and grow usually do so because of something more than the influence of one man, or even two. Thomas Campbell was one of a number of men at the end of the eighteenth century who sought the renewal of the Church through the rediscovery of biblical preaching and a return to primitive Church practice. It is only in this context that the relation of Thomas and Alexander Campbell to the British Churches of Christ can be understood. Churches of Christ in Great Britain grew from Scotch Baptist roots and the Scotch Baptists had a cool relationship with the Haldanes' movement in Scotland which so influenced Alexander Campbell. In Ireland there have only ever been a few congregations of Churches of Christ though one or two of these had personal links with relatives of the Campbells. But it was the reception and circulation of Alexander Campbell's *Christianity Restored* that led various British leaders to break away from the Scotch Baptists in search of a broader vision in the 1830s and 1840s: and the *Declaration and Address* has a prominent place in the preface to *Christianity Restored*. It is not surprising therefore that, in the context of their ecumenical commitment in the twentieth century, British

22. F.D. Kershner, *The Christian Union Overture*, St. Louis 1923, 120-25.

23. 'We are also persuaded that, as no man can be *judged* for his brother, so no man can *judge* for his brother; but that every man must be allowed to judge for himself...' Campbell, *Declaration*, 3: 'It is his duty in everything to judge for himself, and in no instance to be the disciple of man.' A. Carson, *The Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament*, (*Works* iv) Dublin 1856, xi.

24. G.C. Moore, *Life of Alexander Carson, LL.D.*, New York and London 1851, 83-89; cf Carson, *Works*, iv 193-4.

Churches of Christ should claim the *Declaration and Address* as part of their heritage. Campbell concludes the *Address* with references both to Jesus's prayer for unity in John 17, and his commandment to love one another in John 13: 34-35. Characteristically his final sermon on 1 June 1851 was on Jesus's other love-commandment in Matthew 22: 37-40, a sermon on God's mercy and love in creation and redemption:

Whoever has, by studying this blessed book, fallen in love with God, and is doing the things therein commanded, and which are comprehensively summed up in the two great commandments which we have been considering, is on the way to eternal bliss, and he will see in all things nothing but God.<sup>25</sup>

This emphasis on simple biblical truths was the key to Thomas Campbell's theology, born as it was out of the late eighteenth-century mix of rationalism and evangelicalism which proved so fertile for nineteenth-century Christianity.

DAVID M. THOMPSON

## HIGH CHURCH PRESBYTERIANISM IN SCOTLAND AND ENGLAND

In common with other churches in Britain in the nineteenth century the English Free Churches witnessed a revival of interest in the forms of public worship. There was a liturgical renewal similar to that which had been inspired in the Church of England by the Oxford Movement.<sup>1</sup> Church services changed dramatically in a comparatively short period of time. The practice of reading prayers became more common instead of extempore prayer. Printed orders of service were issued in certain congregations. Service books were compiled by individuals and for the use of denominations. Organs were installed, choirs formed, and hymn books were published. Greater attention was paid to the interior decoration and layout of church buildings, and Gothic established itself as the accepted style of ecclesiastical architecture. The Presbyterian Church of England shared in several of these developments.<sup>2</sup>

In this revival the English Free Churches were in line with the progress made in the Presbyterian Churches in Scotland. Worship was transformed in similar ways and liturgical societies were formed in all three of the main denominations north of the border.<sup>3</sup> The established church led the way with the formation of the Church Service Society in 1865, and the first edition of

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25. *British Millennial Harbinger*, 3 series, vii, 1854, 230-37: the quotation is on p.235.

1. Horton Davies, *From Newman to Martineau, 1850-1900*, Worship and Theology in England, Vol.IV (London, 1962), pp.65-89.
2. See R. Buick Knox, "Presbyterian Worship in England in the Nineteenth Century", in *Liturgical Review*, Vol.XI, 1981, pp.23-33, 79-89.
3. C.G. McCrie, *The Public Worship of Presbyterian Scotland*, historically treated, The Cunningham Lectures, 1892 (Edinburgh, 1892), pp.341-53.

its popular service book, *Euchologion*, was published two years later.<sup>4</sup> The United Presbyterian Devotional Service Association was founded in 1882, and the Public Worship Association of the Free Church came into being in 1891.

What has not always been realised is that in the Presbyterian Church of England, as in the Church of Scotland, there was an additional interest at this time in the doctrinal basis of worship. There was a parallel concern to that shown by the Oxford Movement for the catholicity and divine nature of the church. This theological emphasis found expression in the Church of Scotland in the Scottish Church Society, formed by a group of leading ministers and laymen in 1892.<sup>5</sup> The aim of this Society was to defend and advance "catholic doctrine" as found in the ancient creeds and in the reformed confessions of the Kirk. They were concerned lest, in the wave of liturgical and other changes in the life of the church, the fundamental principles of the faith should be neglected and forgotten. They felt the need for a more firm avowal of the church's belief since there was a danger that reforms in worship would be concerned merely with ceremonial for its own sake. Through their historical study the founders of the Society discovered that certain catholic principles of worship had been advocated at the time of the Reformation, attitudes which had since been overtaken by influences which did not necessarily belong to the original reformed heritage of the Church of Scotland. They were also concerned to assert what they considered to be catholic principles in relation to other areas of the life of the church, such as the subscription of ministers and elders to the *Westminster Confession*, ordination to the ministry, and the movement towards reunion with other denominations. The term "high" church in relation to the members of the Scottish Church Society thus has reference to their concern for the place of doctrine and not to a desire for greater ritual. The Society also wished to emphasise the place of the church as the guardian of the truth. A "high" churchman was therefore someone who had a "high" view of the church as an institution in preserving catholic doctrine.

The Scottish Church Society at first encountered misunderstanding and opposition in some quarters, but before long it had won a place in the life of the church. Its position was put forward energetically through its conferences and publications, and by the advocacy of some of its leading members. Men such as Dr. James Cooper, later Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Glasgow, Dr. John Macleod of Govan, a powerful figure both in the parish ministry and on the floor of the General Assembly, the liturgical scholars Dr. George W. Sprott and Dr. Thomas Leishman, and

4. See Douglas M. Murray, "Disruption to Union", in Duncan B. Forrester and Douglas M. Murray, eds., *Studies in the History of Worship in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1984), pp.85ff...

5. Douglas M. Murray, "Doctrine and Worship" in *Liturgical Review*, Vol.VII, 1977, pp.29ff...

the theologians Professor William Milligan and Dr. H.J. Wotherspoon, ensured that the Society's position was at least respected if not fully accepted in the church at large.

A Church Society was not formed in the Presbyterian Church of England until 1917, but it had similar concerns to its Scottish counterpart. The following reference to its formation appeared in the *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England*:—

“A number of Ministers and Office-bearers connected with the Presbyterian Church of England met in October, 1917, and formed a Church Society with the object of developing the study of English Presbyterianism, particularly on the subject of Ordination, Church Worship, and similar questions.”<sup>6</sup>

The Rev. W.S. Herbert Wylie of Ealing was elected the first President of the Society and the Rev. John Hay Colligan of West Norwood became the Secretary. Members of the Scottish Society welcomed the formation of a sister society south of the border. They noted at their annual breakfast in 1918 that the aims of the English Society were

“to foster a due sense of the historical continuity of the Catholic Church, to maintain the necessity of a valid ordination to the Holy Ministry, and to observe in a fitting manner the act of Ordination.”<sup>7</sup>

It was observed that the phraseology was “not quite unfamiliar” to high churchmen in Scotland.<sup>8</sup> When James Cooper was the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland he attended a meeting of the Church Society during a visit to London in 1918. During the previous year he had answered what he termed an “important” letter from the Rev. F.W. Anderson of Chester on the ordination rule in the English Presbyterian Church.<sup>9</sup> Further contact between the two societies took place when the Scottish President, H.J. Wotherspoon, conveyed the greetings of the President of the English Society, F.W. Anderson, to the members at their annual meeting in Edinburgh in 1923.<sup>10</sup> Wotherspoon thought that the Church Society in England was on the same lines as themselves and that, in circumstances of greater difficulty, had “ventured a similar pleading”.

In their Secretary, John Hay Colligan, the English Presbyterian Church Society had a strong advocate. A graduate of Glasgow University<sup>11</sup> he trained for the ministry at Westminster College, Cambridge. He was ordained in 1900 at Lancaster and he also exercised ministries in Liverpool, West Norwood in London, and in Chester. He was one of the founders of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England, became the Editor of its Journal in 1917, and

6. *The Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England*, Vol.I, 1919, p.224.

7. Scottish Church Society, *Annual Report*, 1917-18, p.20.

8. H.J. Wotherspoon, *James Cooper: A Memoir* (London, 1926), p.296.

9. The Diaries of James Cooper, Aberdeen University Library, MS.2283/39, 14 November 1917, p.91.

10. Scottish Church Society, *Annual Report*, 1922-3, p.16.

11. *The Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England*, Vol.VIII, 1946, pp.79-81.

was its President from 1925 until his death in 1945. His publications include *The Arian Movement in England* (Manchester, 1913) and *The Geneva Service Book of 1555* (Manchester, 1932). No doubt because of his influence the *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England* has various references to both the English and the Scottish Church Societies. Notice was made of the death of Professor James Cooper in 1923,<sup>12</sup> and there was a reference to the publication of a series of Occasional Papers by the Scottish Society in 1925.<sup>13</sup> Cooper represented a bias towards the Anglican Church among Scottish high churchmen and he favoured a more ritualistic approach to worship than that which was typical of the mainstream of the movement. The Journal regretted that the programme of the Church Society north of the border showed a tendency to follow Cooper too closely and to imitate the language and practices of non-presbyterian churches. The aims of the English Society, it was said, were simpler and its members had refrained from taking any concerted action in the courts of the church. On certain occasions members of the Scottish Society had met together to discuss their approach to proposals about to come before the General Assembly.

It would appear that the English Society was not active for very long after 1923 when the greetings of its President were conveyed to their Scottish brethren. In an unpublished paper, D.G. Dollery, an elder of Tooting Church in London, remarked that the Society lapsed after the First World War but that a revival was being considered in the late thirties.<sup>14</sup> It does not seem, however, that the Society was revived to any great extent and the references to its existence remain as a reminder of one element of the Presbyterian Church of England in this period which looked for inspiration to a group in the Church of Scotland rather than to the United Free Church.

One of the main concerns of the English Presbyterian high churchmen was with the doctrine and practice of ordination. D.G. Dollery remarked that the Society had no "sacerdotal" aims, but sought mainly "to safeguard and watch over the preservation of all our distinctive Presbyterian features, to see that the rite of ordination was carried out... and to re-assert the historic continuity of the Church."<sup>15</sup> Shortly after the formation of the Society, Colligan published a booklet on ministerial ordination at the request of the Committee, and a reply to his arguments was made by Ernest G. Atkinson of the Public Record Office, who was President of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England from 1916 to 1924.<sup>16</sup> Colligan's pamphlet illustrates some of the main concerns of high churchmen over ordination, but it does not contain a lengthy theological account of the ministry. To understand

12. *Ibid.*, Vol.II, 1923, p.229.

13. *Ibid.*, Vol.III, 1926, p.191.

14. D.G. Dollery, "Presbyterian Orders and Government", unpublished paper in the archives of the Scottish Church Society, Revised 1937, p.17.

15. *Ibid.*

16. J. Hay Colligan *English Presbyterian Orders*, issued by the Church Society of the Presbyterian Church of England (London, 1918); Ernest G. Atkinson, *A Reply to "English Presbyterian Orders"* (by J. Hay Colligan, M.A., Bromley, 1918).

something of the background to their thinking it may therefore help to sketch in some of the ways in which their Scottish counterparts developed the doctrine of the ministry in this period.

Members of the Scottish Church Society saw the ministry first and foremost in "vertical" rather than in "horizontal" terms. The ministry was a gift to the church from Christ by the Spirit. It does not have any importance or validity in itself but only as it shares in the one ministry of Christ which he exercises on earth through the church his body. Scottish high churchmen rejected the view that the ministry derives from the church. Ministers are sent by Christ to the flock; they are ambassadors for Christ and are his representatives.<sup>17</sup> High churchmen also saw the ministry of word and sacrament as preceding the church. The first step which Christ took in constituting the church, they said, was the calling, ordaining, and commissioning of the apostles.<sup>18</sup> The apostles prefigure the ministry rather than the church as a whole and it is from them that the ministry derives. In the person of the apostles the ministry thus came before the church and was its germ and nucleus.

In seeing the ministry as a sharing in Christ's ministry, members of the society also wished to emphasise the priesthood of Christ rather than his role as prophet and king. They felt that the ministry of Christ as priest had been neglected in the Church of Scotland, in spite of the reformed emphasis upon the "priesthood of all believers". In Scotland the prophetic ministry of Christ had been given importance with the stress upon the place of the sermon in worship. The kingship of Christ had also been upheld over against the claims of the state, as seen in the various conflicts between church and state over the centuries. But the priestly ministry of Christ had largely been forgotten. Professor William Milligan of Aberdeen, the New Testament scholar and theologian, did much to rehabilitate the doctrine of the priesthood of Christ in the church.<sup>19</sup> In Milligan's view, the priesthood of Christ had been neglected because of a right rejection the priesthood of the clergy at the time of the Reformation. Presbyterian churches had been suspicious of the term "priesthood" ever since. He and his fellow high churchmen did not wish to promote sacerdotalism. The church's priesthood was not something which it exercised independently, in its own right, but only in union with the one priesthood of Christ. Christ has made a perfect offering of himself to the Father on our behalf by his life of obedience offered upon the cross once for all, and having now risen and ascended he continues to exercise his priestly ministry at God's right hand in heaven where he is the source and centre of the life of the church. The ministry of the church is a partici-

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17. H.J. Wotherspoon, "The Doctrine of the Church and Christian Reunion" in Scottish Church Society, *The Lambeth Encyclical*, and other proposals considered, Conferences, 1920 (Edinburgh, 1921), pp.12-13.

18. H.J. Wotherspoon, and J.M. Kirkpatrick, *A Manual of Church Doctrine* (London, 1919), p.142.

19. William Milligan, *The Ascension and Heavenly Priesthood of our Lord*, The Baird Lectures, 1891 (London, 1892).

pation in the one continuing ministry of Christ as priest.

The ministry, however, is representative, not of the priesthood of the church, but of the one priesthood of Christ. Members of the Scottish Church Society thus disagreed with the view of the Anglican theologian R.C. Moberly that the ministry is representative of the universal Christian priesthood.<sup>20</sup> The minister, said Moberly, is called to personify and to realise the characteristic priestliness of the church, not because he is something which the church is not, but because he is sent to represent, in his own personality, that which the church as a whole cannot help but be.<sup>21</sup> According to Wotherspoon and Kirkpatrick, however, ministry is Christ's and does not derive from the church.<sup>22</sup> The ministry represents Christ to the people. If the ministry sometimes appears to represent the people then that is because the action then in hand is one which belongs to Christ's mediation for his flock. If sometimes it appears to represent Christ to the people then that is because the action is one which belongs to Christ's mediation for God. Inasmuch as Christ's mediation is twofold, being from God to man and from man to God, ministry in Christ's name also appears in that twofold character. Nevertheless in all it does the ministry comes from Christ.

The church as a whole, however, also shares in the priesthood of Christ. The church has a priestly calling, in a different sense from the ordained ministry but still in an important way. "God forbid", said Wotherspoon, "that it be the clergy only, or the clergy in any peculiar or exclusive sense", who are the priests in Christ.<sup>23</sup> There is as much need in the church for priestly doorkeepers and choir members as there is for priestly presbyters and bishops. Ministers and people need to realise the common priesthood of Christ, each in their own way. High churchmen did not wish to elevate the ministry as a separate caste at the expense of the ministry of the laity, although they would be accused of that very tendency. Dr. Thomas Leishman told the members at one of the early meetings of the Scottish Church Society that it was up to them to refute by their lives the prevailing notion that to magnify the office of the ministry is to glorify the person who exercises it.<sup>24</sup> William Milligan thought that the ministry was best described, not as a priesthood, but as the "servants of the priesthood".<sup>25</sup> The very last thought in the minds of the members of the Society, he said, was that of forming the ministry into a separate caste to come between Christians and their Father in heaven. It was difficult, however, for high churchmen to correct the popular impression which their writings on ministry conveyed,

20. Wotherspoon and Kirkpatrick, *Manual*, p.147; H.J. Wotherspoon, *Religious Values in the Sacraments*, The Croall Lectures, 1926-7 (Edinburgh, 1928), p.262; R.C. Moberly, *Ministerial Priesthood* (London, 1907).

21. Moberly, *op. cit.*, p.260.

22. Wotherspoon and Kirkpatrick, *Manual*, pp.146-7.

23. H.J. Wotherspoon, "Universal Priesthood", in *What Happened at Pentecost?* and other papers (Edinburgh, 1937), p.97.

24. Scottish Church Society, *Annual Report, 1894-5*, p.12.

25. William Milligan, "Letter from the President", in *Scottish Church Society, Conferences, First Series* (Edinburgh, 1894), p.10.



and some of them did not help by seeming to attract too much authority to themselves in their exercise of the ministry.

There were two practical concerns about the ministry arising from their doctrinal position which Scottish high churchmen shared with their counterparts in the Presbyterian Church of England. The first area of concern related to ordination. Believing that ministry is a gift of Christ to the church and does not emerge out of the church, they wished the act of ordination to stress this vertical dimension. Since Christ is the ultimate and true "ordainer", ordination is to be by the laying on of hands of those who are already of this ministry and who have themselves received the ministry from Christ in this way. They were constantly on the alert for any irregularities with regard to the practice of ordination. They insisted that ministers from congregational churches were ordained by a presbytery when they were admitted to the ministry of the Church of Scotland. They were also anxious to show that there had been an orderly succession of ministers in Scotland from before the Reformation, that the presbyterian ministry shared in apostolic succession. They believed in a ministerial, rather than in an episcopal, succession but their attempts to establish such a succession by the laying on of hands immediately after the Reformation in Scotland was not entirely convincing. They also wished to show that presbyterian orders had been recognised by the Church of England in the post-Reformation period. In the Anglican communion, they said, ordination was carried out by bishop and presbyters acting together, not by the bishop alone. In the act of ordination, in their view, the bishop took part as a presbyter rather than as a bishop. James Cooper pointed out that when three Scottish ministers were consecrated as bishops in London in 1610, their presbyterian ordination was considered to be valid since they were not required to be ordained as presbyters before they were consecrated as bishops. Cooper was pleased when he noted that the Lambeth Conference of 1908 had referred to the precedent of 1610 as a possible way forward in discussing the reunion of the two national churches.<sup>26</sup>

In his paper J.H. Colligan expressed a similar concern with regard to ordination. He was anxious to show that the Presbyterian Church of England had a more catholic doctrinal heritage with regard to the ministry than had sometimes been realised. He, too, saw the ministry as coming to the church directly as a gift from Christ. Ordination should be by the laying on of hands of ministers and exclude lay involvement. Presbyterianism in England had wished to reject prelatical episcopacy in the past, but it had much more in common with historic episcopacy when it came to ordination.<sup>27</sup> Like the Scottish high churchmen he wished to show the common ground between presbyterian ordination, properly understood, and that found in the Anglican

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26. James Cooper, *Church Reunion: the Prospect in Scotland*, reprinted from the *Irish Church Quarterly*, April 1910 (Dublin, 1910), p.10. Cf. James Cooper, *Reunion: A Voice from Scotland* (London, 1918), pp.33, 43.

27. Colligan, *English Presbyterian Orders*, p.1.

Church. Colligan saw the origins of the presbyterian ministry in England in the Church of England and considered that the period from 1549 to 1649 was one of "Presbyterianised Episcopacy".<sup>28</sup> He also referred to ordination in the Anglican communion as being carried out by bishops along with presbyters. In the sixteenth century, he said, the bishop was not allowed to carry out ordinations without other priests being present<sup>29</sup>. Ministers are not created by congregations. Although their ordination usually takes place in the context of a call to a particular church, the ministry derives its authority directly from above, not from the congregation.<sup>30</sup> In this respect the presbyterian view differed from the independent view whereby ordination was only valid in the congregation in which the minister was ordained. A presbyterian minister, he said, was ordained to the church catholic. In his later paper, D.G. Dollery saw the differences between the presbyterian and the congregational views of ministry in a sharper light. In his view, the presbyterian doctrine of ordination is closer to that of evangelical Anglicanism than to that of the Free Churches.<sup>31</sup>

In reply to Colligan's arguments, E.G. Atkinson emphasised the importance of the congregation's call when a minister is ordained. A minister cannot exercise his ministry in a vacuum; the congregation and the minister are inter-dependent.<sup>32</sup> He accused Colligan of glorifying the office of the ministry as a class apart from the congregation. Atkinson also criticised him for stressing the continuity at the time of the Reformation while passing over the very real changes in ministry which took place.<sup>33</sup> In particular he thought that the view presented by Colligan meant that ministers were being exalted above elders. The eldership was the second subject on which high churchmen north and south of the border shared a similar outlook and concern.

Scottish high churchmen were convinced that the view, prevalent in the Secession tradition, that minister and elder belonged to the same office was not true to the classical presbyterian position. In his major study of the eldership in the Scottish tradition, G.D. Henderson later came to the conclusion that two views of the office could be distinguished.<sup>34</sup> One view he describes as the "presbyter" theory, which sees the elder as an order of ministry on the same level as the minister of word and sacrament. In this view the office is a scriptural one and the elder should be ordained for life. This outlook is found in the *Second Book of Discipline* and in the Secession Churches of the eighteenth century where the distinction came to be made between the "teaching" elder or presbyter and the "ruling" elder. The other view Henderson characterises as the "lay" theory of eldership. It can be

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28. *Ibid.*, p.2.

29. *Ibid.*, pp.2-3.

30. *Ibid.*, p.10.

31. Dollery, "Presbyterian Orders and Government", p.13.

32. Atkinson, *A Reply*, p.2.

33. *Ibid.*, p.3.

34. G.D. Henderson, *The Scottish Ruling Elder* (London, 1935), Chapter VI.

traced from the *First Book of Discipline* where elders are to be elected annually and are not to be ordained to their office. This view came to be prominent in the "auld kirk" tradition in Scotland. Elders are not seen as an order of ministry, scriptural precedent is not claimed for the office, and elders are clearly differentiated from the ministry of word and sacrament.

It was the latter view which found most acceptance among Scottish high churchmen, as seen in Wotherspoon and Kirkpatrick's *Manual of Church Doctrine*. Although published independently, this work had originally been planned as a publication of the Scottish Church Society, and came to be regarded by high churchmen as a faithful statement of catholic doctrine. The section in the book on the eldership is entitled "Lay Eldership".<sup>35</sup> The authors do not consider the elder to be an order of ministry and biblical evidence is not adduced in support of the office. The eldership is regarded as a useful means of governing the church and of providing assistance to the minister. The office could be resigned and it lapses when an elder ceases to be a member of the Kirk Session. James Cooper did not wish to speak of the elder being ordained but preferred to say that they were "admitted" to office.<sup>36</sup> Elders were not necessary for the life and well being of the church, as were ministers, but they were allowable.

The liturgical scholar George W. Sprott, however, thought of the elder as an order of ministry. After his experience serving in the church overseas, in Canada and then in Ceylon, he wished to combat Anglican claims about the universal validity of the threefold ministry of bishop, priest and deacon. He countered such arguments by putting forward an alternative threefold pattern of ministry which he saw in the early church, that of presbyters, elders and deacons.<sup>37</sup> Elders, in this view, should thus be ordained to their ministry by the laying on of hands. Sprott was not typical of Scottish high churchmen of this period. But when Wotherspoon and Kirkpatrick's *Manual* came to be revised in 1960 by Professor T.F. Torrance and Dr. R. Selby Wright, one of the most notable single differences between the two editions was the section on the eldership. In the revised edition the section is entitled "The Eldership". Scriptural justification is claimed for the office and authorities such as Calvin's *Institutes* and Knox's *Book of Common Order* are cited in support of this view. The elder, however, is still seen to be different from the minister in the task which he performs. He is a representative of the people in assisting the pastoral work of the minister and leading the response of the congregation in worship and service.<sup>38</sup>

35. Wotherspoon and Kirkpatrick, *Manual*, pp.176-9.

36. James Cooper, *The Elder: the nature of his office and his opportunities of usefulness in the present day* (Dundee, 1907), p.4.

37. G.W. Sprott, *The Worship, Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1863), pp.6-7.

38. Wotherspoon and Kirkpatrick, *Manual*, p.176; H.J. Wotherspoon and J.M. Kirkpatrick, *A Manual of Church Doctrine*, according to the Church of Scotland, Second Edition, revised and enlarged by T.F. Torrance and R. Selby Wright (London, 1960), pp.99-102; Cf. R. Buick Knox, "A Pedigree for Presbyterianism", in *The Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England*, Vol.XIV, 1970, p.94.

The English presbyterian high churchmen were also of the opinion that minister and elder did not belong to the same office. Colligan pointed out that the view of eldership which prevailed at the Westminster Assembly was very different from that which held that the office was *de jure divino* no less than the minister.<sup>39</sup> E.G. Atkinson, on the other hand, was equally critical of Colligan on the eldership as on ordination. He held the "presbyter" theory, that both ministers and elders are ordained to a spiritual office by the laying on of hands. The elders shared in the work of the ministry along with ministers. If Colligan's view was correct, he said, then ministers would have to undertake all the teaching in Sunday Schools themselves and would have to deliver the bread and wine at communion to the worshippers in the pews, or in Anglican fashion require them to come up to receive the sacrament individually from him.<sup>40</sup>

In both England and Scotland high churchmen were thus accused of unduly elevating the office of ministry at the expense of the elder and the church member. Their main concern, however, had been to point to the true source and centre of all ministry in the church in the continuing life of Christ as high priest. It was a pity that this central theological concern could be lost sight of and that they sometimes appeared to uphold status and maintain unhelpful distinctions within the body of Christ.

DOUGLAS M. MURRAY

## IN SEARCH OF MRS. A.: A TRANSPENNINE QUEST

Of course, there are reasons for doubting whether any historical evidence can establish particular facts. There are matters in which we do not trust one or two of our own senses, we demand more accuracy than is possible to the unaided use of these. And when the historical evidence is all before us, there remains the question — what is the interpretation we are to put on all this?<sup>1</sup>

That quotation, which may serve as epigraph for this paper, occurs in the correspondence between a Victorian Congregational minister, Manchester suburban and big denominationally, and one of his flock, "a lady who had been brought up in the atmosphere of a cultured religious home, [now] married and settled in a distant manufacturing district".<sup>2</sup> This correspondence, which began in May 1880 and ended with the minister's death in June 1904, so impressed his biographer that he devoted four out of the twenty-four chapters of the minister's *Life and Letters* to it. "The letters challenge

39. Colligan, *English Presbyterian Orders*, p.5.

40. Atkinson, *A Reply*, p.8.

1. Alexander Mackennal to Mrs. A., 10 February 1881, in D. Macfadyen, *Alexander Mackennal B.A., D.D., Life and Letters*, 1905, p.14.

2. *Ibid.*, p.94.

comparison with those of Fenelon, F.W. Robertson, or Erskine of Linlathen," he felt, "but in singleness of aim and continuity of sustained effort, they are probably unique".<sup>3</sup> And he, who had previously edited Mme. Guyon's *Method of Prayer*, headed these chapters "A Spiritual Directorate". The letter which has provided this paper's epigraph was written in the first year of the correspondence; the editor heads it "A Theory of Religious Doubt".

Who was the minister and who his correspondent? The answer to the first is easy; that to the second is not now likely to be discovered. The transpennine quest which follows is therefore pure hypothesis.

It begins in Manchester with Alexander Mackennal, a Cornish Scot forty-five years old in 1880, well educated in the contemporary commercial middle-class way, a graduate of Glasgow. Mackennal had ministered since 1858 to four Congregational churches, each pastorate marking a fresh stage in denominational influence: Burton on Trent, "its outlook on moral and public questions... naturally affected by the staple trade of the town",<sup>4</sup> Surbiton Park, with the Liberation Society's John Carvell Williams, that London Welsh scourge of English Churchmen, as a deacon; Gallowtree Gate, Leicester, with William Baines as a member, whose imprisonment thirty years earlier for refusal to pay church rate had been the flashpoint in the movement which produced the Liberation Society; Bowdon Downs, Cheshire, with a deacon whose daughter married William Baines's son. Mackennal was at The Downs from January 1877.

It will already be apparent that Mackennal's professional progress was within a world marked by family interconnectedness and political sharpness. Manchester was one of this world's capital cities. Its spiritual dimension was a chapel dimension, and while it would be hard to decide which Manchester chapel was the city's true cathedral or which creed its true orthodoxy, or which minister its true bishop (for how could one measure Cross Street and Upper Brook Street against Cavendish Street or Grosvenor Square, Union Chapel against Chorlton Road, Rusholme against Rusholme Road, any more than Dr. McLaren, Dr. Thomson, Dr. Macfadyen, or Dr. Finlayson could be set against each other?) Bowdon Downs, several miles to the south west, would have to come high in the reckoning. Here, at the furthest shores of cottonopolis, with the deer parks of Tory earls and Whig barons in ebb tide beyond them, lived the prefects of the Manchester School. Here, from 1877 to 1904, in an easy gothic chapel as secluded and detached as the best cottonman's villa, ministered Alexander Mackennal. Other congregations may have been as remarkable, none can have been more so, and none can have reflected so faithfully the elements which made a great city tick in the later nineteenth century, before they too were drawn into the ebb tide.

All this, personalities and pew numbers, communions attended and offices held, clubs joined and charities supported, is easily ascertainable from

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3. *Ibid.*, p.95.

4. *Ibid.*, pp.20-1.

church rolls, local *Who's Whos* and obituary cuttings, and some of it has been described elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> What is harder to capture in an age which questions the "spirituality" of pastorates devoted to rich and powerful souls is the spiritual quality which informed the statistics. Perhaps Mackennal's biographer, who turned in later years to the Garden City movement and wrote a life of Ebenezer Howard,<sup>6</sup> felt this; which is why he displayed the letters of this "Spiritual Directorate" as rare evidence for the inner nature of a successful pulpiter and ecclesiastical statesman. We may think so too, faint echoes of past controversies notwithstanding. For this reason we should pause to recapture their flavour.

The Mackennal recalled years later by those, old now, who once sat under him, was a weighty preacher, solid in all senses of the word, Victorian therefore. These letters show the preacher as pastor, intellectually vigorous, responding to the enticements of religious fashion, reconciling some of them to a broad faith within the Christian mainstream (had he been an Anglican he would have been a Broad Churchman), explaining them to his people.

In her first surviving letter to Mackennal, early in May 1880, Mrs. A. (so she appears throughout the *Life and Letters*, anonymous at her own request) posed one of those eternal questions of faith: how can Christianity possibly be reconciled "with the actual, horrible facts of life or death"?<sup>7</sup> Within two days Mackennal had responded:

I think you are taking too much of the burden and sacrifice of life upon you, and very much of that burden you could roll over on Christ... Why should you, frail and tremulous as you are, want to take all the world's burden on yourself? You don't, you will say, only you can't help the pressure of it, you can't shut out the vision. But what if you saw that the burden was being borne? Surely, He sees what you see, feels what you feel; what lesson ought this calmness to bring to you?...<sup>8</sup>

That led on to eternal life. Mackennal went into the matter at considerable length:

After all, there is no great courage in my going out into eternity as I say. I have far more reasons for my faith in God and the gospel than for most of the beliefs I cherish. I am a student in a small way of natural history and a believer in evolution, but the notion that all has evolved itself, with no intelligence to direct the process, and no power to bring it out is absolutely incredible... No, the scheme of the gospel which affirms that all is working together for good, that even such sufferings as yours are only the result of an overstrain of exquisite sources of

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5. For an exposition of this see C. Binfield, *So Down to Prayers*, 1977, esp. pp.162-185.
  6. Dugald Macfadyen (1867-1936) ministered at St. Ives (Hunts.), Hanley and Highgate between 1892 and 1914. He lived in Letchworth without pastoral charge from 1915 and wrote *Sir Ebenezer Howard and the Town Planning Movement* 1933.
  7. Mrs. A. to Mackennal, 2 May 1880, Macfadyen, *Alexander Mackennal*. op. cit., p.97.
  8. Mackennal to Mrs. A., headed "Spiritual Diagnosis", 4 May 1880, *ibid.* pp.97-8.

feeling which mean power, and that these same sufferings shall have their result in fuller power, in wisdom and sympathy, is reasonable; nothing else seems reasonable when compared with it.<sup>9</sup>

There the writer sounds a note of optimism which has seldom since been possible. It occurs throughout the correspondence:

Human ingenuity makes guns, and trades unions, and masters' associations and such things; and human fancy fills our days with darkness and our nights with horrors. Which is more rational? The belief that Christ is the Son and Revelation of the Father, or the creature of human speculation, the outgrowth of human history? Men have marred the image, how can they have called it into being?<sup>10</sup>

So the letters continued. The Trinity? Mackennal catches it in a postcard sent on Bastille Day, 1887:

A little child drank of a stream -- 'the brook in the way' -- and 'lifted up her head'. Rambling on she came to the fountain from which the stream flowed. To which should she be most grateful? Stream, fountain, or the draught in her?<sup>11</sup>

Two months later Mackennal came very close to interpreting something nearly as knotty as the Trinity, the Idealist philosophy of T.H. Green:

There is a solemn consciousness of which we can only speak with trembling; the consciousness of a life in one deeper than his own life; moulding and fashioning even that self, at once surrounding and enveloping the personal being, so as to give us the sense of being in God and God in us, and also quickening the personal life to higher and holier things; things impossible to self becoming possible; intense personal life and at the same time the overpowering of the self-consciousness by the consciousness of the deeper life. I should not dare to speak thus except to anyone who knew what I meant.<sup>12</sup>

This was all within bounds. "I think it is sometimes a duty to repress feeling, the purest and most warranted, to repress it even before God, lest we be unfit for the common demands of life and the changing aspects of duty".<sup>13</sup> That was in 1890. Eight years later Mackennal reflected upon Calvinism as crystallised spiritual experience:

9. Mackennal to Mrs. A., headed "The Grand Absurdity", 11 May 1880, *ibid.* pp. 101-2.
10. Mackennal to Mrs. A., headed "Birth to God Includes the Intellect", 22 October 1880, *ibid.* p.110.
11. Mackennal to Mrs. A., 14 July 1887, *ibid.* p.132. A more helpful response than that of the Quakeress Hannah Whitall Smith who, when faced with a visitor's complaint that "she had never been able to understand the doctrine of the Trinity" is supposed to have replied "But it is perfectly simple, all you have to do is to think of a Threepenny Bit". Barbara Strachey, *Remarkable Relations*, 1980 p.166.
12. Mackennal to Mrs. A., headed "Personality and Life in God and Man", 30 September 1887, *ibid.* pp.140-1. "It would be a noble revenge, if the doctrine of evolution, so much reviled by the theologian and novelist, could establish the fact that, from the beginning of life, there was an original activity within the individual which was the foundation for the highest ethical development". (Mackennal to Mrs. A., headed "The Evolution of Will", July 1894, *ibid.* p.202).
13. Mackennal to Mrs. A., 9 April 1890, *ibid.* p.185.

The old Calvinistic doctrines, election, effectual calling, final perseverance, which seem to us so unreasonable, so shocking, take on new forms when they are the expression of our sense of God's absolute and utter trustworthiness, of our unworthiness, and yet our sense that He is to be thus trusted for ourselves.<sup>14</sup>

So much for Alexander Mackennal. How does Mrs. A. emerge from these letters? Their editor tells as much as he thinks necessary. "She had read widely, and her tastes had taken her to Whateley, Berkeley, Mill, Reid and Locke 'at an age when', as she owned, 'no sensible girl would know what metaphysics were'." She had left Bowdon on her marriage and had allowed her chapel links (or at least her Congregational chapel links, for she subsequently "lived much with Unitarians,") to lapse, "her difficulties... accentuated by a sensitive nature and bad health".<sup>15</sup> Then, early in 1880 and back visiting in Bowdon, she worshipped once more at The Downs, sitting under Mr. Mackennal (the doctorate came in 1887) and meeting him the following day at one of those literary societies which placed Bowdon in the Manchester School's scholarship stream. He struck her then as unbearably jolly:

and when the guests were gone she challenged him with the question, I know you think — how can you smile? Is it temperament; or have you any rational ground for looking so absolutely happy, when you know what is going on in the world? He looked at her gravely... and then said, 'No, it certainly is not temperament; will you write to me when you get home and ask me that again?'<sup>16</sup>

Their correspondence began some months after that. Mrs. A. was widely read, leisured, chronically sick, her illness feeding her despondency. Was there life after death, she wondered in her first letter, musing as a mother of babies:

It often seems to me dreadful to be forced to go on thinking even after you are dead. And I cannot imagine a more tormenting condition than that of a mother, watching her children from behind an impassable barrier, seeing them suffer, unable to speak a word or reach out a finger.<sup>17</sup>

Such doubts worried her for years. Early in 1881 she had read and been greatly comforted by F.D. Maurice's *Notes on the Gospel of John*. Yet

Suppose the account of the life and words of Christ to be true and that He was all they represent Him, and yet that He was mistaken — that He kept His faith and hope up to the end, and then passed into the dark unconsciousness of an absolute death?<sup>18</sup>

Mrs. A. kept on with her reading. Early in 1885 it was Henry Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, highly thought of by evangelicals for

14. Mackennal to Mrs. A., headed "Calvinism as Crystallised Spiritual Experience", 23 October 1898, *ibid.* p.275.

15. *Ibid.* pp.94, 132.

16. *Ibid.* p.95.

17. Mrs. A. to Mackennal, 2 May 1880, *ibid.* p.97.

18. Mrs. A. to Mackennal, 30 January 1881, *ibid.* p.111.



whom Drummond was a tame scientist. Mackennal was restrained in his approval: "I recognise the great power of the book, and the beauty of it in many places. The enthusiasm and scientific fervour are also delightful. But from a religious standpoint I find it unsatisfactory; it is narrow, chilling, and self-sufficient".<sup>19</sup> Two years later Mackennal showed a sensitive awareness of his friend's Christian frustration:

Let me say how well I understand your impulse to go and pray for some soul out in the dark, you don't know whom or where. If you were a visiting or a teaching woman, or one able to do the outside work you long for, you would find such impulses take form in effort and prayer for people you know. But you are shut in from all that; and He who has shut you in has not debarred you from praying. You are of the workers and the watchers...<sup>20</sup>

Mrs. A.'s illness showed no abatement. Years later she would write of a pain which "swooped down like a great black bird on her head".<sup>21</sup> In June 1889, in a letter which asked for Mackennal's opinion of the Keswick movement, she wrote "It has been well worth while to cough and ache all over", but in the following year a painful operation convinced her that the "human capacity for pain is infinite".<sup>22</sup> She had been at the brink of the abyss, indeed she had been pushed into the abyss. How could she believe in the love of God who allows such things? "Are you well enough for a little scolding?" Mackennal replied robustly,

You are constructing a universe out of your own emotions; and because remembrance may be undying you are throwing the shadow of your hours (2 hours x 60 = 120 minutes) over all eternity.

You ought to pull yourself up and say 'this won't do, and I know it'.<sup>23</sup> Things were not much different in March 1891, with human life more senseless than ever in her eyes. What of the tragedy of a mother's death at the birth of her child? No wonder that in 1894 she wanted to know Mackennal's views on faith healing or, four years later, on Christian Science. Mackennal was mischievously brisk about faith healing. He enclosed a note from a mutual faith healing friend, apologising for absence from a meeting because of illness.

So the letters developed. More books and articles were read (Liddon, the High Churchman; Balfour, the future prime minister; Archdeacon Wilson, an Anglican of the Mackennal stamp; R.W. Dale; Maeterlinck the poet). More doctrines were examined (there was a striking exchange on the sacrament of communion: there was nothing Zwinglian about Alexander Mackennal). Incidents were probed. One particular incident occurred in the late 1890s when at last Mrs. A. was achieving a measure of spiritual peace, only to come

19. Mackennal to Mrs. A., 23 January 1885, *ibid.* p.117.

20. Mackennal to Mrs. A., headed "the Larger Hope", between 16 February and 5 June 1887, *ibid.* p.129.

21. In 1898. *Ibid.* p.271.

22. *Ibid.* pp.180, 183.

23. Mackennal to Mrs. A., headed "Robust Commonsense", 25 March 1890, *ibid.* pp. 183-4.

up against the barriers which divided the English denominations. A new curate had

turned her away from the communion to which she loved to go with her husband and boys. The curate suggested confirmation, to which she replied that having been a member of the Church of Christ for thirty years she would consider such a thing to be as wrong as it would be to go through the ceremony of marriage over again, thereby throwing a doubt on all her previous life; ... she owed the supreme debt of her religious life to the Congregational ministry.<sup>24</sup>

So who *was* Mrs. A.? There must have been many women like her linked to Bowdon Downs, but the Mrs. A. of the "Spiritual Directorate" fits most easily into one particular Downs family, that of John and Isabel Mills of Thornfield and Northwold, two solid Bowdon villas announcing all that need be known about Manchester School life.<sup>25</sup> John Mills (1821-96) was a banker, born in Ashton-under-Lyne. He worked his way up from a clerkship in the Alliance Bank's Rochdale branch to a directorship and thence to the general secretaryship of the new Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank whose Rhenish Renaissance headquarters faced Spring Gardens at the heart of commercial and municipal Manchester. Isabel Petrie Mills (1828-1919) was a Rochdalian, an engineer's daughter related to most of the families who made Rochdale go-ahead and radical. They had been Methodists, John in the New Connexion (with a brother who became its President of Conference in 1854) and Isabel with the Free Methodists, but when they moved to Bowdon in 1863 they turned to the Downs Congregational chapel, whose organist John Mills became.

They had lively minds, coated in John's case with a certain hardness, in Isabel's with a measure of silliness. Alexander Mackennal caught something of John Mills's steady, inflexibly enlightened business code in the funeral sermon which he preached in October 1896:

A man of many gifts, united in a somewhat rare combination. Of strenuous nature... he was also a severe thinker, of the old Manchester School in politics and economics, to whose traditions of humane sentiment and exact, even hard, common sense he was always true.<sup>26</sup>

A model bank manager in short. And a rare one too. For this chapel organist also composed hymn tunes, wrote verse (published posthumously by T. Fisher Unwin<sup>27</sup>), contributed literary and musical criticism to the Manchester Press, was on friendly terms with its politicians (John Bright's family were old friends of Isabel's family). In his youth John Mills went to see Wordsworth. In middle age he entertained the Hungarian freedom fighter, Louis Kossuth.

24. *Ibid.* p.266.

25. For whom see [Isabel Petrie Mills] *From Tinder Box To the "Larger" Light. Threads from the Life of John Mills, Banker (Author of "Vox Humana") Interwoven With Some Early Century Recollections By His Wife*, Manchester 1899.

26. *Ibid.* p.388.

27. J. Mills, *Vox Humana: Poems*, 1897.

From the 1860s the context for such radicalism was the Downs chapel and the literary and musical, Hallé and *Examiner*, *Guardian* too, circles of Manchester's most exclusive suburb.<sup>28</sup>

This idyllic suburbia had a transpennine summer station: Dr. Macleod's Hydro at Ben Rhydding, Ilkley. Hydropathy became the rage in the 1840s. The water cure, the incessant application of water, both internally and externally, to purge impurities from the system, was a godsend to that great and growing Victorian army of men and women with the leisure and means for hypochondria. The Millses were converted to the cause in the late 1840s and remained faithful to Ben Rhydding for years, joining its "merry and motley crew in search of health under the pleasantest conditions",<sup>29</sup> meeting among the merry and the motley such interesting folk as a sister of Tennyson's, Octavia Hill the disciplined philanthropist, Mrs. Craik the novelist, Millais the artist and, among the crew, Bradford woolmen, a steady pacification of northcountry Quakers, and sometimes a mystery man. In 1848, with Europe smouldering in revolution and France already aflame, a darkly mysterious foreigner, joined at the last minute by a lady "carrying only a small handbag", suddenly left. Could it have been, Isabel wondered subsequently, Louis Napoleon, the future Prince President and French Emperor, taking the cure under Dr. Macleod before going on to cure the ills of France, a Bonaparte in Wharfedale?<sup>30</sup>

It was at Ben Rhydding in April 1854 that the Millses came across a mother and daughter, Mrs. and Miss Pipe, the daughter a martyr to headaches and nervous prostration, both of them Manchester born and Methodist, like the Millses, although the Pipes's Methodism was Wesleyan. Miss Pipe was a schoolmistress. But she was more than just a schoolmistress. She was, in Isabel Mills's opinion, "a pioneer in the change of views as to the necessities of education for girls".<sup>31</sup>

The implications of Mrs. Mills's opinion, which many shared, have been explored elsewhere.<sup>32</sup> For the purposes of the present paper the point of the encounter at Ben Rhydding was that the moment she met Hannah Pipe Isabel

28. Mills's most intimate friend was Alexander Ireland (1810-94, see *D.N.B.*), publisher of the *Manchester Examiner*, whose mantle was assumed by the *Manchester Guardian* after 1886. Two of Mills's nephews, Haslam Mills and Saxon Mills, became notable journalists, the former with the *Manchester Guardian*, the latter in London.

29. Isabel Mills, *op. cit.*, p.158.

30. *Ibid.* pp.165-6.

31. *Ibid.* p.163: and her husband was bowled over: "Miss Pipe has just passed a couple of days with us", he wrote to a mutual friend, 17 January 1881. "Did ever any woman carry with her such an aspect of serene, self-controlled power-of the healthy equipoise of vital energies, dominated to that *apparently* (but only apparently) passionless calm by conscience and soul?" *Ibid.* p.321.

32. Anna M. Stoddart, *Life and Letters of Hannah E. Pipe*, 1908; and two versions of the same theme - C. Binfield, "Victorian Free Church Girls' Education: An Essay in Connections", *Wesley Historical Society (Yorkshire Branch) Bulletin*, No.40 April 1982, pp.14-30; *Belmont's Portias: Victorian Nonconformists and Middle-Class Education for Girls*, Dr. Williams's Trust, 1981.

Mills "vowed that whatever economy or sacrifice it might entail, our two daughters should in due time go to Miss Pipe, if only for the sake of the gentle but powerful moral and spiritual tone she could impart; and so, not only our two eldest, but five out of the six daughters went to her in turn."<sup>33</sup>

It is this paper's contention that Amy, the eldest of the girls, born in 1849, was Mrs. A.

Amy Mills (1849-1936), whom they called "Filia", was closest to her father in temperament and interests. Perhaps that is why she married later than some of her younger sisters. When she was eight Louis Kossuth presented her with a history of Hungary.<sup>34</sup> She too wrote verse. "Your 'Marriage' sonnet has been seen by Mr. Mackennal, who liked it much", John Mills wrote to her in 1885:

I think it the best you have done so far as I know. The latest sonnet, 'Science and Poetry', also shows gathering force, though it would be the better for some constructive changes.<sup>35</sup>

Eleven years later she wrote lines in memory of her father, capturing that Idealist philosophy which so captivated later generations of Manchester Schoolmen:

What was here thy dim Ideal  
Now thou know'st, the only Real<sup>36</sup>

Amy Mills was at Miss Pipe's school, Laleham, Clapham Park, from 1867 to 1868, and for some of that time Hannah Pipe was on holiday at Bowdon. Amy was at Laleham for finishing and she was not there long for in March 1868 she had to return home, ill. Miss Pipe comforted her:

I quite understand what it is that you complain of; I understand it only too well... Quiet concentration of mind upon the sure promise of God is necessary, and a putting away of all hopeless fancies.<sup>37</sup>

Hannah Pipe and Amy Mills continued to correspond, the tone of such published fragments of their letters as have survived echoing the tone of the correspondence between Alexander Mackennal and Mrs. A. First, however, what happened to Amy Mills?

On 3 May 1876 she married Arnold Thomas Watson of 10 Broomhall Place, Sheffield. Who were the Watsons? Sheffield may never have produced a society to rival that of Manchester for the very good reason that the

33. Isabel Mills *op. cit.*, p.163, quoted in *Belmont's Portias, op. cit.*, p.24.

34. Isabel Mills, *op. cit.*, pp.265, 307, 370.

35. John Mills to Amy Mills-Watson, 19 October 1885, in *ibid.* p.373 "Science and Poetry", beginning "Mysterious sisters! great revealers twain

Of one sole glory!..."

and containing the lines "Science of rhythmic order frames the laws  
That shape the immortal poem..."

is printed pp.375-6.

36. *Ibid.* p.387.

37. Hannah E. Pipe to Amy Mills, 9 April 1868, Anna Stoddart *op. cit.* p.184. She ended: "The mischief and the pity is that all the time people are praying they expect their *praying* to help them, and not God..."

Sheffield economy did not allow in such powerful measure for the heady Manchester mixture of commerce, manufacturing, the professions and the Germans. Sheffield's reservoir of leisure and talent was more restricted, less cosmopolitan. Even so Sheffield's middle-class culture should not be downgraded and the Watsons provide an example of a Sheffield family moving from industry, Sheffield style and small scale, to the professions, carrying as hand baggage that passion for science which was the mark of an educated Sheffielder. Arnold Watson (1846-1924) was a stockbroker and chartered accountant. The family firm, John Watson and Sons, still exists as John Watson, Sons and Wheatcroft.<sup>38</sup> Its founder, John Watson, curly haired and fine featured, began as a silversmith but became an accountant and stockbroker in 1845. The broking and the accounting were carried on in tandem until 1921.

The firm is of interest for two reasons. First, its growth coincides with the rise of chartered accountancy as a profession. John Watson and his two sons were founder members of the Sheffield Incorporated Society of Chartered Accountants in 1877 and, with their two partners, of the national Institute of Chartered Accountants in 1880. Their firm was one of sixteen to survive recognisably to the Institute's centenary in 1980.<sup>39</sup> Secondly, they maintained a unique link with one of Sheffield's formative industries. From 1854 to 1941 a Watson, father, two sons and grandson, was Assay Master.

It is, however, Arnold Watson's connexion with the Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society<sup>40</sup>, its scientific bias providing a suggestive contrast to the literary, musical and economic societies which filled John Mills's leisure hours in Bowdon, which needs further exploration here.

When Amy Mills, in her late twenties, met Arnold Watson, fast approaching thirty, his Robin-Goodfellowish features (Arnold's elder brother William Henry was side-whiskered and tended to fat) were singled from the results of a scientific experiment,<sup>41</sup> for Arnold neatly combined science and business. He was a partner in the family firm, a member of the Sheffield Stock Exchange (from 1870), president of its chartered accountants (in 1885), Assay Master in the 1890s and Guardian of the Assay Office thereafter.<sup>42</sup> He was thus of the essence of the Sheffield Lit. and Phil., named Arnold after neither Matthew nor Thomas but Sir Arnold Knight, the doctor, who was the Sheffield society's first president.<sup>43</sup> For over forty years Arnold

38. Although no member of John Watson's family now belongs to it, I am indebted to one of the present partners, Lawrence Watson (the surname is coincidence), for information about the firm's history.

39. R.H. Parker, "Those First Councillors..." *Accountancy*, May 1980 p.39.

40. See W.S. Porter, *Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society. A Centenary Retrospect 1822-1922*, Sheffield 1922, on which the following account is based. A photograph of Arnold Watson faces p.74.

41. I am indebted to his granddaughter, Miss E.L. Watson for this and other details.

42. S.O. Addy and W.T. Pike, *Sheffield at the Opening of the Twentieth Century: Contemporary Biographies*, Brighton 1901 p.162.

43. For Sir Arnold Knight (1789-1871) see F. Boase, *Modern English Biography* Vol.2.

Watson was on its council, for over thirty years he was its treasurer, twice its president and latterly its source of lore and history. And its history was very much that of Sheffield's educational establishment, cutting through barriers of sect and profession, though never through those of social respectability. Arnold Knight was a Roman Catholic; Unitarians provided the intellectual ballast; Arnold Watson was a Churchman. All were respectable. The list of presidents reflects every Sheffield name of note: Arnold Knight, James Montgomery, Asline Ward the diarist, G.C. Holland the radical medical polymath, Henry Clifton Sorby the metallurgist, Samuel Earnshaw the mathematician, J.D. Leader the newspaper proprietor and local antiquarian.<sup>44</sup> Firth College appeared through a professorial trinity, W.M. Hicks, C. Moore-Smith, R.J. Pye-Smith.<sup>45</sup> Heavy industry was there with (the formerly Methodist) Willoughby Firth; large scale drapery with (the actively Methodist) Skelton Cole.

In short, the Lit. and Phil. saw itself as for some years indeed it was, the pacesetter of intellectual Sheffield. Arnold Watson's connexion with it spanned its gold and silver ages. It also spanned the years when Firth College and its University successor muscled in and the Lit. and Phil's pace faltered in the face of social change and the universalising of education. Arnold Watson sat on the new University College's governing body.

His scholarly contribution leaned to biology, astronomy and microscopy with a passion, as only an inland Sheffielder might have, for marine zoology and a specialism in tube building worms, on whose habits he read a paper.<sup>46</sup> Every year he attended the meetings of the British Association, staying in separate quarters from his family so that he could display his worms to his cronies in complete freedom. Otherwise his recreations were Saturday football at Hillsborough, summer cricket at the Hallamshire, carriage drives (with motor car drives in afterlife) and Church each Sunday. It was Church, not chapel; Arnold Watson was churchwarden at St. Thomas's, Crookes.

Which is where this paper returns to his wife.

Amy's life with Arnold was that of the comfortable middle classes, Broomhall Place giving way to Tapton Crescent Road, a number to a name. For the John Millses it had been Northwold, which they built. For the Arnold Watsons it was Southwold, which they built. The house is still there, half-

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44. For Montgomery (1771-1854) see *D.N.B.*; for Ward (1781-1871) see A.B. Bell (ed.), *Peeps from the Past*, Sheffield 1909; for Holland (1801-65) see *D.N.B.*; for Sorby (1826-1908) see *D.N.B.*; for Earnshaw (1805-88) see Boase *op. cit.* Vol.I; J.D. Leader (1835-99) was the son of the founder of the *Sheffield Independent*.

45. For Hicks (1850-1934), professor of physics and Sheffield's first vice-chancellor see *Who Was Who*; Moore Smith was professor of English 1896-1924; for Pye-Smith (1848-1921), professor of surgery, and grandson of Dr. John Pye Smith of Homerton, see *Who Was Who*.

46. His "Contemporary Biography" phrased it delicately: "his recreations are of a scientific character, and he has for some years been successfully making original investigations in certain branches of marine zoology". Addy and Pike, *op. cit.*, p.162.

timbered in well-shrubbed grounds famous once for their dahlias and specially planted with silver birch trees and poplars. Southwold looks across the great bowl of Sheffield rather as Northwold faces Cheshire's last wide valley to Manchester. There the Watsons lived, two sons, Buller the coachman, Charlotte the cook, gardener, kitchenmaid and odd help.

What can be gleaned of this life survives from some of Miss Pipe's letters and from a granddaughter's memories. In 1886 Hannah Pipe was delighted at "the likeness of your little sons... Their heads are of a fine type, full of power and sweetness".<sup>47</sup> But in that year Amy Watson's health had forced her to give up her outside interests, one especially — the Snowdrop Band which she had founded to protect factory girls from the contamination of coarse conversation. Miss Pipe was greatly interested in the Snowdrop Band, wondering whether it might be adapted for an orphanage in which she had an interest, and she wrote later to another friend: "Your scientific work and Mrs. Watson's practical work interest me alike profoundly... You are planning the golden streets, and she is carving the gates of pearl".<sup>48</sup>

This recalls a woman in her early forties. The granddaughter's memories are naturally of a much older woman, very small, very pretty, and very careful, but intellectually alert, her staff latterly reduced to a companion and a maid, liking to drive out each afternoon in an open carriage, a ritual developing as her fur cape, her bonnet, and the foot-muff containing a hot water bottle were arranged around her — just such a ritual as her mother had described of a Rochdale neighbour a century back.<sup>49</sup> This Mrs. Watson is remembered as rheumatically, short-sighted, but otherwise healthy for she lived well into her eighties, talkative and outgoing, an accomplished water-colourist (her drawing-room pleasantly fussy-artistic, with its oriental screen and art objects), and a linguist, happily talking French to Belgian wartime refugees.

There was one other interest in her life. Although her husband was warden at St. Thomas's Crookes, the parish church nearest to Southwold, Mrs. Watson went to Broompark, the Congregational church nearest both to Southwold and to Broomhall Place; or at least, she did so in later years.

Broompark, founded in 1864, was relatively new to the chapel scene when Amy Mills came to Sheffield as Amy Watson. In setting, appearance and social catchment Broompark should have been Sheffield's equivalent to The Downs. Yet it was never quite like that. Sheffield was at once too Methodist and too Low Anglican a city and Broompark failed to attract the sort of minister who could do what Mackennal achieved at Bowdon. Mrs. Watson, for example, sat under H.H. Oakley, a scholar who in appearance and dignity was saintlier and more attenuated than any dean but who preached

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47. Stoddart, *op. cit.*, p.331.

48. *Ibid.* pp.332, 381 (letter of Hannah Pipe to Mrs. [later Lady] W. Huggins, 19 November 1891). Amy and her father seem to have had a special fondness for snowdrops.

49. Miss E.L. Watson; and Isabel Mills, *op. cit.*, pp.63-4.

the chapel dry.<sup>50</sup> H.R. Moxley, who succeeded Oakley, was little better for there was an angularity about him.<sup>51</sup> So Broompark's membership hovered at the hundred mark and the church never filled. Its projected galleries were never built.

Yet its membership was as able and interesting as it was perforce select.<sup>52</sup> Notable Sheffields paused at Broompark on their way to St. Mark's Broomhill or St. John's Ranmoor: Birks the brewer<sup>53</sup>; the electroplate Bingham of Walker and Hall; one of the metallurgical Sorbys; the Leaders of the *Independent*; the Innocents who were architects, especially of Sunday schools, their work a commentary upon their surname; the Cockaynes and Tuckwoods, solid names in drapery and provisions; Rutherford Pye-Smith, the surgeon who succeeded Arnold Watson as president of the Lit. and Phil., Sir William Hart, who was for a while Broompark's treasurer and Sheffield's town clerk. The church's financial connexion was as impregnable as Fort Knox, literally so since the membership included Walter Knox, gold medallist in chemistry, silver medallist in botany and a chartered accountant.<sup>54</sup> Like Arnold Watson he was a father and founder in his profession, with a London office, a practice which embraced the Salvation Army and the Midland Railway, and H.O. Wills II of Bristol as his father-in-law. Broompark was thus all members but no numbers. Amy Watson, so her grandchildren recall, was among them, knitting and sewing and painting in water-colours for its bazaars, entertaining its people to summer teas at Southwold, subscribing to the *Congregational Quarterly* so that she could pass it on to the minister with advice which he did not always take, and sometimes visited by her mother with her own supply of the Liberal and Free Church press.<sup>55</sup>

50. For H.H. Oakley (1850-1937), minister at Broompark 1887-1922, see *Congregational Year Book 1938* p.666.

51. For H.R. Moxley (1881-1963), minister at Broompark 1923-36, see *Ibid.* 1965 p.445.

52. This account owes much to the minute books and manuals of Broompark Congregational church, now kept at Trinity United Reformed Church, Sheffield.

53. The Birkses were kin to the Crossleys of Halifax and to T.R. Birks (1810-83), F.D. Maurice's ultra-Evangelical successor as Knightsbridge Professor of Moral Philosophy at Cambridge.

54. For George Walter Knox (1847-1926) see R.H. Parker, *art. cit.* pp.36-42; Addy and Pike *op. cit.*, p.160; E. Hampden Cook, *The Register of Mill Hill School 1807-1926*, London, priv 1926, p.99. Knox ("Bona Vetus Nox") was at Mill Hill School with three Sheffield Pye-Smiths and two of his school contemporaries also became accountants. To him might be added Sir George Franklin (1853-1916), of Broomfield, the Mr. Nice of Sheffield Toryism and the Mr. Liberal of Sheffield Anglicanism, who admired Oakley and worshipped at Broompark and contributed to its causes when not across the way at St. Mark's. The Sheffield descendants of Knox's and Franklin's firms merged.

55. H.R. Moxley continued the financial tradition, for he was a bank manager's son. Mrs. Watson was amused at his forthright rejection of a Christmas text which she once suggested. A photograph survives of Mrs. John Mills at Southwold, in old age, surrounded by the *British Weekly*, the *Manchester Guardian* and other supports. As for bazaars, although in 1906 Mrs. Watson had been unable, because of her precarious health, to open the Broompark bazaar, she could write in 1934 of "Nov 29th, our sale at Broompark, Prince George's Wedding Day and my 85th birthday!" [Miss E.L. Watson].



Which brings this paper back to where it began: Alexander Mackennal and Mrs. A.

Mrs. A. reflected in February 1898 that she had "been a member of the Church of Christ for thirty years".<sup>56</sup> Amy Watson, then Mills, joined Bowdon Downs Congregational church on 28 December, 1864, shortly after her family settled in Bowdon.<sup>57</sup> Mrs. A. wrote in November 1895 of how "twenty or thirty years ago" she had discussed Christian perfection with George Macdonald, the mystical poet-novelist who had marked the thought of many of her generation.<sup>58</sup> Amy Watson, then Mills, met George Macdonald in 1868-9, perhaps earlier. He was an old friend of both the Mills family and of Miss Pipe.<sup>59</sup> Mrs. A. then moved, on her marriage, to a distant manufacturing town, where she did not at once renew her Congregational connexions and where she was in Unitarian circles. Amy Mills, now Watson, moved to Sheffield in 1876, and did not at that time link with Broompark, which was only a short walk away from her husband's family home. Sheffield is certainly distant from Bowdon in mentality, if not in miles, but the Unitarians fit less easily. Manchester Unitarianism combined panache with gravitas. Sheffield Unitarianism was quietly influential. There were certainly Unitarians in Lit. and Phil. circles, but any chapel connexion between the Watsons of Broomhall Place and Unitarianism remains as yet unconfirmed.<sup>60</sup> There are other congruences, however. Mrs. A. met Alexander Mackennal on a visit to her old home very early in 1880. Amy Watson, who left Bowdon in the year of Mackennal's call to its pastorate, certainly met and admired him and was at pains to keep up with all the Bowdon news. Amy Mills and Mrs. A. both had long periods of illness which in their prime frustrated any satisfying outside activity. Both were doubting, questing Christians, helped most by a liberal theology which had developed from the Congregationalism which neither wished to put behind them. Both were mothers of sons. Mrs. A. referred in 1880 to her "babies".<sup>61</sup> In 1880 Mrs. Watson's boys were under four years old; one indeed was under a year old. In 1893 a "mother of boys" asked Dr. Mackennal's advice about appropriate sex education for her sons. Were there any delicately frank books? Mackennal's reply is a masterpiece as

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56. Macfadyen, *op. cit.*, p.266.

57. The Bowdon Downs records are now at Manchester Central Library. I am indebted to Miss Jean M. Ayton, Manchester City Archivist, for confirmation of Amy Mills's membership.

58. Macfadyen, *op. cit.*, pp.207-8.

59. John Mills wrote to a friend, 30 November 1868, "George Macdonald comes to us December 21 with sermons and lectures, the latter on 'Hamlet'", and soon afterwards, Isabel Mills recalled, Macdonald was at Ben Rhydding (Isabel Petrie Mills, *op. cit.*, pp.320, 164). Macdonald lectured on literature to Miss Pipe's pupils at Laleham.

60. From c. 1876 to 1890 H. Watson was on the Committee of Upper Chapel, and in the 1890s he contributed to its chapel fund. [I am indebted for this information to the Revd. P.B. Godfrey]. Unless he was Arnold Watson's elder brother, William Henry Watson, there would seem to be no connexion.

61. Macfadyen, *op. cit.* p.97.

well as a period piece.<sup>62</sup> Although this letter is not grouped with those of the "Spiritual Directorate", it is easy to believe that Mrs. A. was that "mother of boys"; and one of Mrs. Watson's boys was approaching his fifteenth birthday in June 1893.

There are two other clues, farther fetched yet not to be ignored.

In 1899 Mrs. A. corresponded with the Archdeacon of Rochdale, J.M. Wilson, about his Hulsean Lectures *The Gospel of the Atonement*.<sup>63</sup> Was her correspondence with the archdeacon prompted by chance curiosity? Or were there links which would permit a Victorian lady to write to a strange parson? Archdeacon Wilson was one of Anglicanism's tolerant men. He had Dissenting friends. He also had a doughty daughter, Mona, the first woman to achieve seniority in the Civil Service, and educated at St. Leonard's, the school which succeeded Laleham in the affections of discerning parents. Several Bowdon families, especially among the Mills acquaintance, had prominent Rochdalian connexions as well as daughters at St. Leonard's.<sup>64</sup> There is more. Archdeacon Wilson had become best known as headmaster of Clifton College, that tolerantly evangelical public school opened in 1862 with a strong clientele from business families, Nonconformists among them. Bowdon families sent their sons to Clifton. Did Sheffield families? Some did. Some of the Firths went, and the Marsh brothers, of whom Parker Marsh of Broom Grove House became a Guardian of the Assay Office. A large number of Mrs. Walter Knox's Bristol relations went, and so did one of the Sorbys (perhaps a son

62. The letter deserves full quotation: "... I do not know any such books as you speak of for boys; and, indeed, I am not sure that Dr. Pomeroy's book [probably H.S. Pomeroy, *The Ethics of Marriage*, N. York 1888.] could be written for young people. Parentage is the end of marriage; but in all its higher significance, that is one of the latest lessons we learn. To try to anticipate these lessons would be to degrade the whole process. Marriage is a part of religion; its mysteries are revelations, and are only made known by practical experimental knowledge. There is a kind of profanity in trying to pull out the spiritual beauty of facts which will unfold themselves if we will be patient – trying to force open the bud which time and sunshine and growth will open – and the same sort of profanity is in trying to reveal the hidden treasure of marriage and love to those who have neither the requisite knowledge nor maturity of character.

You have recognised that in the little tractlet which you sent me yesterday. You could speak to X in due time, in the same way; not saying the same things, but pursuing the same patient, gradual way. A boy can understand that the charm of association with girls must be kept free from indelicate thoughts. A young man can understand that the purity of any one in whom he is specially interested is his to watch over as a sacred charge. There are other things about which, in due time, his father can better speak to him – that the incidents of manhood are not sins; but that out of such incidents come thoughts which, not sinful in themselves, it is a sin to encourage and please oneself with". [A. Mackennal to a mother of boys, 3 June 1893, *Ibid.* p.375].

63. *Ibid.* p.287: *The Gospel of the Atonement: the Hulsean Lectures for 1898-1899*, 1899.

64. For Mona Wilson (1872-1954), first woman Health Insurance Commissioner 1911-19 see *Newnham College Register 1871-1971*, Vol.I, 1871-1923, Cambridge 1979 p.118. (She had one Newnham contemporary from a leading Sheffield family, Cecilia de Bartolomé). For J.M. Wilson (1836-1931) headmaster of Clifton College 1879-90, Vicar of Rochdale and Archdeacon of Manchester 1890-1905, see *James M. Wilson: An Autobiography 1836-1931* (1932).

of the Broompark deacon). Alas, the Arnold Watsons sent their sons to Oliver's Mount, Scarborough. They would anyway have been too young for Wilson's headmastership, but their cousin, Bernard Watson, son of Arnold's brother and partner, William Henry Watson, went to Clifton in 1884.<sup>65</sup> Perhaps such links would suffice for a compulsive letter writer, whether Mrs. A. or Mrs. Watson, to add the archdeacon to Dr. Mackennal and Miss Pipe in her list of correspondents.

The second clue comes from the Sunday early in 1898 when Mrs. A. brushed with that "new sacerdotalism, in the shape of a new curate" which "turned her away from the communion to which she loved to go with her husband and boys".<sup>66</sup>

St. Thomas's Crookes would not now be associated with any kind of sacerdotalism, nor had it been in the 1870s, but from 1882 to 1901 its vicar, Constantine Clementson, was a young man of vigour and views. He built a vicarage and a chancel, repewed the nave, beautified the whole. He wrote a book, *These Holy Mysteries*, and he was president of the Lit. and Phil. in 1891. The memoirist of Sheffield Anglicanism described how, "Amiable, cultured, and thoughtful, he, to the regret of his many friends, was led to adopt somewhat advanced Church views". The *Sheffield Telegraph* preferred "to think of him, not as a High Churchman, but as a man".<sup>67</sup> Was this the new sacerdotalism? Between December 1888 and his death in 1901 Clementson had six curates of whom J.S. Barry served from May 1897 to November 1898.<sup>68</sup> Was he the curate? It was certainly at this time that Mrs. Watson turned to Broompark for at church meeting, 30 November 1898, "The Pastor read a transfer from the Rev. Dr. Mackennal, on behalf of the Church at Bowdon, in favour of Mrs. Arnold Watson, who, though she had long been resident in Sheffield has maintained her connection with the Bowdon Church, but now desires to be united with the Church at Broompark."<sup>69</sup>

Arnold Thomas Watson died in 1924, his widow in 1936, a lady, as Broompark's minister told church meeting, "of undoubted distinction of

65. Bernard Watson was at Clifton 1884-5. F. Borwick ed., *Clifton College Annals and Register 1862-1912*, Bristol 1912, p.213 and *passim*.

66. Macfadyen, *op. cit.*, p.266.

67. For Clementson (1854-1901) see Addy and Pike, *op. cit.*, p.98; W. Odom, *Memorials of Sheffield: its Cathedral and Parish Churches*, Sheffield 1922, p.125.

68. I am indebted for this information to Miss Ruth Harman, Sheffield Central Library. John Shafto Barry b. 1861, son of T.P. Barry of Allahabad, led a life which, sometimes literally, was a perpetual curacy; in Yorkshire 1884-1901; in Notting Hill 1901-09; finally at Eastbourne 1909-12. [J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses 1715-1886*, vol.1 1888; *Clergy List 1909*; *Crockford's Clerical Directory 1938*] Barry's churchmanship was certainly high. St. Columb's Notting Hill, where he was curate 1904-9, rejoiced in incense, Easter processions and Stations of the Cross; St. Peter's Eastbourne where he was curate 1909-12, is recalled as the highest church in Eastbourne. St. Columb's is now St. Sava's Serbian Orthodox Church. St. Peter's, a gift of the Duke of Devonshire, was demolished in 1971. I am indebted to Mr. B. Curle of Kensington Central Library, Miss Alison Minns of Eastbourne Central Library, and Canon J.A. Cotton for this information.

69. Broompark records.

mind and spirit".<sup>70</sup> Of their sons, Vincent settled in Scarborough, in a house called Eastwold. Mrs. Vincent Watson, the daughter of Charles Tuke of the notable Lancashire architectural firm of Maxwell and Tuke, belonged to one of the great hydropathic Quaker families.<sup>71</sup> Like her mother-in-law she was a woman of advanced views, educated at an unusual Methodist school, Wintersdorf, Southport. She too preferred certain chapels to most churches because she liked a good intellectual sermon, settling at Purley so that she could sit under Arthur Pringle.<sup>72</sup> And she had met her husband at a hydro, not indeed Ben Rhydding but at St. Anne's on Sea. The other son, Arnold (after his father) Petrie (pr. Peetrie, after his grandmother's family) Watson, a lover of Italy, although he died in Worthing, inherited equal amounts of his father's fortune and his mother's health, perhaps her hypochondria, certainly her temperament. He married into a Sheffield family noted for its pork pies and its intelligent patronage of the arts. It too had married into Manchester's intellectual Bowdonia. When he died, in 1964, Arnold Petrie Watson left a fine collection of early scientific works, subsequently auctioned, and generous sums of money to King's College Cambridge, where he read history, and the University of Sheffield, where he studied between school and Cambridge.<sup>73</sup> The bequests greatly surprised their recipients.

But was his mother Mrs. A.? That may never be known. The originals of the letters have yet to be traced. Perhaps they were destroyed after the publication of Mackennal's *Life and Letters*. They seem not to have survived among the descendants of either Mackennal or his biographer; neither do the many copies of the *Life* still kept *in piam memoriam* by them contain a pencilled note or key. As for Mrs. Watson, a few of her letters survive with her granddaughter who also has a copy of *Life and Letters*. That too came from Amy Watson. It is unmarked. What the Watsons do not have are the originals of Mrs. A.'s letters to or from Mackennal. Perhaps that is not surprising. In later life Amy Watson took pains to ensure that her various correspondences and those of her mother, often with people of past note, should go to appropriate homes. The letters may surface yet.

And as to the appropriateness of so tentative a transpennine quest for an essay in honour of Buick Knox, it might be suggested thus: even if Mrs. A. and Mrs. Watson prove to be quite different people, they shared the same religious and intellectual culture. The hypothesis may be false, but I will stand by its context. The variety of that context – Yorkshire and Lancashire, industry and commerce, science and art, Congregational and Methodist – deserves celebration, not least because the society which formed that culture

70. 20 February 1936, *Ibid*.

71. She descended from the third son of William Tuke of York (1732-1822), founder of The Retreat: see *D.N.B.*

72. She joined Purley Congregational Church in July 1918 and within three years had become its third woman deacon. [Purley Congregational Church records]. She preferred to be known as Mrs. Tuke Watson, rather as her mother-in-law was sometimes Mrs. Mills Watson, and as *her* mother had called herself Isabel Petrie Mills.

73. For A.P. Watson (1879-1964) see King's College Cambridge, *Annual Report*, 1964, p.50.

has largely disintegrated. Its economic foundations have gone, although some of its values remain. Bowdon Downs and Broompark remain as buildings, the former holding a house church grown too large for its house, the latter housing the gymnasium of an independent girls' school. The *people* of Bowdon Downs have united with the nearby Presbyterians and those of Broompark have united with two quite different Congregational churches. Thus elements of their tradition remain within the United Reformed Church. The writer of this paper joined Broompark on his arrival in Sheffield in 1964; now his daughters, one of them the last infant to be baptised there, perform gymnastics where once such things were mental matters for pulpit and pew alone. At the time of writing Broompark's descendant is seeking a minister. Should that minister be Westminster-trained, then the Reformed view of history which will from time to time escape the pulpit will most likely have been largely shaped by Buick Knox. What will it find to recognise in this retrospect from the pew?<sup>74</sup>

CLYDE BINFIELD

### “ONE EUCHARISTIC FELLOWSHIP”

When the Constitution of the World Council of Churches was revised at the Fifth Assembly in Nairobi (November-December 1975), there was serious debate and a counted vote on only one of the sub-paragraphs. This was the new opening one of Section III, “Functions and Purposes”, and stated as the first of these “to call the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship expressed in worship and in common life in Christ, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe”. This formulation reflected the aim assigned to the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC, “to proclaim the oneness of the Church of Jesus Christ and to call the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and in common life in Christ, in order that the world may believe”. The Constitution adds a reference to action, “to advance towards that unity” to the general aim, “in order that the world may believe”, because the Council as a whole can take such action, whereas the Commission is a deliberative, consultative and teaching body rather than an executive one.

The debate about Article III (i) was about two phrases — “visible unity”

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74. A personal postscript might be in order: several of the author's pupils have benefited from Sheffield University's Petrie Watson awards; some of Mrs. Petrie Watson's kinsmen lived for a period in his present house; and Mrs. A. figured (in a descriptive rather than an investigative or interpretative way) in the first draft of a paper published in *TCHS* as “Thomas Binney and Congregationalism's 'Special Mission'” (Vol. xxi, No. 1 June 1971 pp. 1-10) Mrs. A. was deleted from that paper, to its advantage. It is hoped that her reappearance is neither impertinent nor disingenuous.

and "one eucharistic fellowship". On the former Bishop Nikolainen said on behalf of his church: "the Lutheran Church of Finland has officially discussed the proposed new constitution and is willing to accept it, because it holds that the goal of visible unity does not necessarily mean unity of jurisdiction or church government" ("Breaking Barriers, Nairobi 1975", Geneva, WCC, 1976, p.190). He requested that this statement be included in the Minutes. Since the eventual voting was on the sub-paragraph as a whole, one cannot be sure whether some of the objection to it was on the ground of the phrase "visible unity" but one may guess that those who were unhappy at the thought of a unity or jurisdiction or church government at regional, national or world level, would have been reassured by the fact that Bishop Nikolainen's statement was allowed to stand without comment and so presumably as one possible interpretation of the Constitution.

The vote was 461 for the sub-paragraph, 31 against with 13 abstentions; if the guess above is right, the 44 who were not in favour represented the hesitation about stating that the goal of visible unity is necessarily coupled with the vision of one eucharistic fellowship. These certainly included representatives of the Salvation Army, whose spokesman on that occasion was Commissioner Williamson, and of those branches of Quakerism that are members of the WCC. When the Salvation Army later changed its relationship with the WCC to that of a body sending only non-voting fraternal delegates, one of the reasons given for the change was this phrase "one eucharistic fellowship".

In the collection of essays "Ecumenical Perspectives on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" (ed. Max Thurian, Faith and Order Paper 116, WCC, Geneva, 1983) there are brief statements (pp.161-2) from the Friends United Meeting and the Salvation Army on the document "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" (Faith and Order Paper 111).

The Friends proposed an addition to BEM as follows: "Because the Friends United Meeting is not identifiable as a eucharistic Fellowship employing rites which uses material signs, but do have a sacramental life through the living Presence of Christ which is shared in common with Christian bodies who are identifiable as eucharistic Fellowships, they are accepted into the oneness of the Church. Although this document is addressed primarily to those communions who use material signs, the Friends United Meeting accepts them as significant expressions of oneness in Christ". The grammar, with its fluctuation between singular and plural, seems to reflect the feeling that the Friends United Meeting is a council of individuals; the "them" of the final clause probably means the sections of BEM rather than "material signs". To this statement we shall look back later.

The somewhat longer statement of the traditional position of the Salvation Army authorised by the present international leader, General Jarl Wahlstrom, refers to the acceptance of the SA within the fellowship of the WCC and its use of some outward signs, such as the enrolment ceremony for Salvation Army Soldiership. It then adds: "Nor is the teaching of Holiness,

the seeking of that blessing and the subsequent living of a life that is wholly sacramental, any less significant to the Salvationist than participating in a communion service and its subsequent relation to daily living”.

To these statements the present writer can add two personal recollections. One comes from the Fourth Assembly of the WCC at Uppsala, after the approval of a long statement on “Worship” which included the plea (“The Uppsala Report 1968”, Geneva, WCC, 1968, p.82): “We urge that all churches consider seriously the desirability of adopting the early Christian tradition of celebrating the Eucharist every Sunday”. A Baptist woman speaking about her experience in a local church expressed a feeling that this plea would fall on deaf ears in many local fellowships, because they do not see the Eucharist as central to worship in this particular way. The other recollection is of a stage in the life of the Chapel of Unity at Coventry Cathedral when there was a rule (long ago changed) forbidding any celebration of Holy Communion in the Chapel. The Quaker representative on the Coventry Cathedral Joint Service Centre Council remarked: “I defy anyone to prevent my fellowship from holding its communion with the Lord there”.

The two statements and the two recollections have caused the writing of this paper, to re-examine some ecumenical assumptions about the place of the Eucharist in church life. These are usefully summarised in BEM (p.16, paras. 30 and 31 on “Eucharist”):

“30. Christian faith is deepened by the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Hence the eucharist should be celebrated frequently. Many differences of theology, liturgy and practice are connected with the varying frequency with which the Holy Communion is celebrated.

31. As the eucharist celebrates the resurrection of Christ, it is appropriate that it should take place at least every Sunday. As it is the new sacramental meal of the people of God, every Christian should be encouraged to receive communion frequently.”

An earlier version had spoken of a *norm* in these respects: BEM Essays, p.209: “As the Eucharist is the new liturgical service Christ has given to the Church, it seems normal that it should be celebrated not less frequently than every Sunday, or once a week. As the Eucharist is the new sacramental meal of the people of God, it seems also normal that every faithful should receive communion at every celebration”.

### THE RANGE OF DIVERSITY

The material assembled so far reflects points of tension between the ecumenical convergence in thought about the eucharist and three groups of Christians.

There is first a tension with those who are frequent attenders at the Eucharist in Churches with a daily or weekly pattern of celebration but do not themselves communicate frequently. They are the “target” of the second part of BEM 31.

Secondly, there is a tension with those whose churches celebrate with

relative infrequency (annually, biannually, quarterly, monthly), though those who attend these infrequent celebrations are often numerous and would normally expect themselves to communicate there. They are the "target" of the first part of BEM 31.

Thirdly, there is a tension with Christian communities, the Salvation Army and the Society of Friends being the best-known instances, who do not "use material signs", but testify to their frequent communion in the Spirit with the Lord Jesus Christ. They are the "target" of the first part of BEM 30.

The second part of BEM 30 and the change from speaking of what is normal to speaking of what is valuable, helpful or "appropriate" (BEM 31) reflect a certain degree of recognition within the Faith and Order Commission that the tensions just described do exist!

With the WCC aim of "one eucharistic fellowship" in mind, therefore, this paper will continue by exploring historically three questions:

- (1) At a Eucharist should all the Christians present who are "in good standing" and thus permitted to communicate actually do so?
- (2) Should all churches celebrate the Eucharist at least every Sunday?
- (3) Are the Christians who do not celebrate the Eucharist at all called to repentance and change if they are "to advance towards unity"?

### (1) NON-COMMUNICATING ATTENDANCE?

It is clear from the Evangelists' accounts of the last supper that they understood it as a meal which included special actions and words by which Jesus broke bread and passed a cup for his disciples to eat and drink. This evident form of the last supper led naturally to an assumption that all the Christians present at a eucharist would receive the elements; Yngve Brilioth, in a study in 1930 which brought together ecumenical reflection on the matter, puts the point very strongly: "the act of communion was from the very beginning the chief expression of the sense of Christian fellowship, and the act itself was more expressive than any words. During the whole of the period before Constantine, it seems that the communion of all the people was an integral part of every mass... (*Eucharistic Faith and Practice Evangelical and Catholic*, London SPCK, 1930, p.32). As Brilioth proceeds with his survey, under the five headings of Thanksgiving, Communion, Commemoration, Sacrifice, Mystery, he notes with regret the change that came over the post-Constantinian church. By the Carolingian period (p.80) "it was already the common practice that communion was only given at a few masses, and the minimum requirement was that everyone should communicate three times a year. Later on, it was reduced to once a year; and the Easter communion took its place as a sort of general muster of all members of the church who were not under a censure". The Sunday mass remained the parish service but most of those present did not receive communion.

At the Reformation there was a restoration of the communion of all the people. Brilioth points to Luther's early writings, before he became involved in polemic, for some magnificent expressions of the sense of fellow-



ship in Christ. “Christ with all his saints is one spiritual body, just as the people in a city are a community and a body, and every citizen is related as a member to his neighbour and to the city... Thus to receive this sacrament in bread and wine is naught else than to receive a sign of this fellowship and incorporation with Christ and all his saints” (p.96 quoting Luther, Weimar ed., II, 743). We shall turn under the next heading to the question of frequency of celebration but the principle is recognised in all the early German Church Orders that there can be no mass without communicants (see Brilioth pp:126 and 133). It is interesting in the light of the growth since 1930 of the Parish Communion movement in the Church of England to observe Brilioth’s (sympathetic) criticism of the Anglo-Catholics who had in his day created a split between the early service for communion and the sung mass where the priest alone received and the central part of the service for the non-communicating congregation was the consecration and elevation, the adoration of the mystery of incarnation and redemption. Bishop Gore had to write: “We must not be content with restoring as our chief act of worship a service in which the communion of the people does not form an important part”. (*The Body of Christ*, London, John Murray, 1901, p.276).

Brilioth does not deal with the post-Tridentine Roman Catholic Church or with the Orthodox Eastern Churches. The same development that took Anglo-Catholics to the Parish Communion has had a widespread effect on Roman Catholic eucharistic piety. On the Orthodox side Timothy Ware wrote in 1963: “There seems every hope that (the) movement towards frequent communion will continue to gain ground slowly but surely in the years to come” (*The Orthodox Church*, London, Penguin, 1963, p.294) where by “frequent communion” he means the frequent receiving of communion at the Eucharist which is the main Sunday service in every Orthodox parish.

Nevertheless Ware acknowledges in the same passage that “Most Orthodox at the present day receive communion infrequently — perhaps only five or six times a year — not from any disrespect towards the sacrament, but because that is the way they have been brought up”. Clearly the matter of habit, the way we have been brought up, is a major factor. But why did “habit” change after the early decades of the Church’s life? — and why has “habit” been so resistant to the renewed theology of the eucharist, with its fresh emphasis on the communion of all the people? Brilioth (p.81) suggests strongly that an unbalanced stress on the dangers of unworthy reception was at the root of the change: “there was more anxiety to prevent unworthy communion than to exhort to frequent communion”. Once “put off” like this the people then became slack.

At the Reformation the warnings to the careless were renewed but coupled now with the promise of grace to the sinner. “Imperfection is no barrier to communion: on the contrary, if we were perfect we should not need the Sacraments”. (S.H. Mayor *The Lord’s Supper in Early English Dissent*, London, Epworth, 1972, p.xv). This renews a note sounded by

St. John Chrysostom: do not stand by without partaking on the excuse that you are not worthy: either go away or repent and partake (see the end of his Third Homily on Ephesians). The Westminster Assembly's Directory for the Publick Worship of God calls on the minister to warn the ignorant, scandalous and profane but "on the other part, he is in an especial manner to invite and encourage all that labour under the sense of the burden of their sins... assuring them... of ease, refreshing, and strength to their weak and wearied souls" (from the section "On the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper"). Luther even urges that those who cannot or do not desire to receive should yet remain and see the sacrament received and hear God thanked and praised (Brilioth p.140). Here he echoes the Eusebius of the Homilies, cited to the same effect by Gore (p.276) from the summary of the Homilies in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography* (Smith and Wace, London, John Murray, 1889, Vol.II, p.307).

Non-communicating attendance by those regarded as able to communicate has never been banned by canon law. Clement of Alexandria (Strom. i.1.5) begins a tradition of regarding it as a matter of conscience for the individual. But the assumption that those who may communicate will communicate is made in the early church, recovered at the Reformation and has become almost universal among the theologians of the ecumenical movement. Yet if the answer to our first question is a confident "Yes", this makes the second question about how often a local church should celebrate communion even more important for the individual Christian. To the second question we now turn.

### AT LEAST EVERY SUNDAY?

That the early church thought it right for the Eucharist to be celebrated frequently, at least every Sunday, is evident (see, for instance, the article "Communion" in the *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, Smith and Cheetham, London, John Murray, 1876, p.419, for a useful summary of evidence). Daily communion was recommended by Cyprian; Hippolytus wrote a treatise (now lost) "On whether the Eucharist should be received daily" (see Brilioth p.32). As we have seen, this frequent celebration came to be associated with infrequent communion by lay people, three or four times a year or at Easter only.

At the Reformation there was a strong attempt by leading reformers, including Luther and Calvin, to restore a weekly Eucharist with communion of all the people. The attempt largely failed and some leaders, particularly Zwingli, did not even agree with the attempt. In the "Action oder Bruch des Nachtmals" of 1525 it is directed that the communion be celebrated four times in the year, at Easter, Pentecost, Christmas and once in the autumn. The Easter communion might be divided up among several celebrations to meet the needs of the large numbers attending then (Brilioth p.161). Brilioth comments that this enactment, which brought the number of celebrations into line with the number of times in the year that lay people had normally

communicated before the reform, was felt adequate because the service is a corporate act of praise and thanksgiving and in no way a means of grace “except in so far as ‘the word’ has a place in it” (p.162). This comment is misleading, since the exceptive clause is all important for the Zwinglian rite. The thanksgiving is, throughout, a response to the word made visible and present.

When the Calvinist theology of the sacraments made headway in Reformed churches rather than the “Zwinglian” (which was in any case not necessarily that of Zwingli himself), it was still associated with the emphasis on the Living Word in the midst of His people, calling them to a particular act of recollection, penitence and thanksgiving. It is interesting that in giving his account of Scottish Presbyterian practice (p.189) Brilioth misses one of the chief points about the distribution of the metal Communion Tokens. He mentions the invitation, often inscribed on them, “This do in remembrance of me”, and the “follow-up” discipline of those who failed to attend. But the main point of the tokens was that they were given to those who had responded appropriately when catechised by the minister and elder(s) concerning their faith and discipleship. The removal of this discipline often had the effect of turning the quarterly communion into that “general muster of all members of the church who were not under censure” that Brilioth deplors; but Dr. Mayor points out: “It would be grossly mistaken to suppose that importance (of the Lord’s Supper) varies simply with frequency; the example of the Church of Scotland, with the Lord’s Supper only once a quarter, but a major occasion in the life of the parish, is often quoted” (Mayor p.160).

Dr. Mayor rightly refers his readers to the moving description by Professor Donald Baillie in *The Theology of the Sacraments* (p.91f). Baillie acknowledges that these quarterly or even biannual “communion seasons” in the Highland parishes were remote from the intention of the Westminster Assembly, which had directed that “the communion, or supper of the Lord, is frequently to be celebrated”. Yet “at least it was a real sacrament, holy, supernatural, sanctifying, a great and potent means of grace to the most devout members of the Church” (p.92). This is a truer estimate of the infrequent celebration in the Reformed tradition than Brilioth’s comment on Zwingli’s “Action”.

When Zwingli proposed quarterly communion (and Calvin’s Geneva at least a monthly one in one of the three city churches, as a compromise between Calvin and the city fathers), this was not merely a concession to “habit”. It made of the communion season a moving and emphatically dramatic expression of the central realities of faith, on which, because it was infrequent, the believer could concentrate faith, hope and love. As the Reformation spread, there continued to be debate over the right frequency, and to the general argument for “impressiveness” there were added from time to time additional considerations – the dearth of ordained and instructed ministers to preside and preach (for communion without preaching reduced the bread and wine to “dumb elements” – see Mayor p.23, the dearth of

instructed believers to communicate, and the need that the president be not simply *a* minister but *the* minister of that local church, able to discern those who were ready to come to the table. On this last account some Independent churches went without the Lord's Supper for long periods while they had no minister of their own (Mayor pp.43, 56-7). John Owen and, more forcefully, Richard Baxter pleaded for a weekly celebration (Mayor, pp.113, 139) and some Baptists (to this end?) held that the Lord's Supper might be celebrated without an ordained pastor (see A.C. Underwood *A History of the English Baptists*, London, Kingsgate Press, 1947, p.50).

There was, of course, in these controversies a steady search for Scriptural evidence, but it is not easy to come by. Thomas Goodwin, the leader of the group of Independents at the Westminster Assembly in *The Communion of the Churches of Christ* (Book vii, ch.5) argued from Acts 2, 42 and 20, 7, but neither of these is logically sufficient in-itself. The disciples' continuing in the breaking of bread and the fact that Paul presided at a gathering for the purpose of breaking bread on the first day of the week are not conclusive proof for Goodwin's thesis of a weekly Sunday celebration. So Goodwin had to develop a long, involved argument with many "if" clauses (see Mayor p.93). At least one set of earnest readers of Scripture, Jehovah's Witnesses, has decided that the Lord meant to initiate an annual celebration. "The Holy Communion is called 'Memorial Supper' and is a purely commemorative meal to which no sacramental significance is attached. It is celebrated annually at Easter; at the beginning of the movement it was held as near as possible to the day and hour of the Last Supper" (Molland, *Christendom*, London, Mowbrays, 1958, p.346, describing the Witnesses' practice). One need not agree with the Witnesses in other things to see that they have a point here.

So the second question may appropriately be answered in the terms of the jury verdict permissible under Scottish law, "Not proven". There is a good and strong case for weekly celebration and communion but there is also a case for alternative patterns.

#### NOT IDENTIFIABLE?

It will be evident that the "Not proven" verdict depends on the answer given to various theological questions which this paper does not even touch; if they are answered in certain ways, in terms of the manner in which the Eucharist nourishes the Christian life, then plainly a quarterly interval between such nourishings would be folly. Yet many Reformed Christians give theological answers which enable them to regard the quarterly communion season as still appropriate. Those who give importance to the Eucharist by frequent celebration can usually understand, even if they do not approve, those who give importance to the Eucharist by occasional and solemn celebration — and vice versa: but both groups find it difficult to come to terms with the fact that there are bodies claiming the name of Christian which do not celebrate the sacraments at all. So we come to our third question — will

an advance towards unity for Friends and Salvationists require of them an “about turn” on this matter of conviction among them?

That it is a matter of conviction and not of indifference is evident. Among the early Friends William Dewsbury writes: “I could find no peace in that worship of God the world hath set up, as in receiving bread and wine, which they told me was the seals of the covenant. Then much fear seized upon my soul, and Judas’ condition was cast into my mind, until it were shewed that the seal of the covenant was the Spirit of Christ and no outward element, and the Supper was the body and blood of Christ, which the world doth not know... (*Christian Life, Faith and Thought in the Society of Friends*. London, Friends Book Centre, 1922, p.20). This viewpoint is developed in later exposition of the “new covenant” theme in the Letter to the Hebrews; ‘it continues to be our settled conviction that, in establishing this ‘New Covenant’, the Lord Jesus Christ did not design that there should be any rite or outward observance of permanent obligation in the Church... The eating of the body and the drinking of the blood is not an outward act. They truly partake of them who habitually rest upon the sufferings and death of their Lord as their only hope and in whom the indwelling Spirit gives of the fullness which is in Christ. It is this inward and spiritual partaking which is, as we believe, the true supper of the Lord’ (*Christian Life* p.114). Hence the comment of my Quaker colleague at the Chapel of Unity in Coventry (above p.253).

On the other hand Friends have emphasised experience of Christ and the sacramentality of all life. “We do not make use of the outward rites of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, but we do believe in the inward experiences they symbolise. Our testimony is to the actuality of this experience even without the external rite” (p.82). “Without the introduction into our worship of the ‘consecrated elements’ we do often in our religious meetings feel that we are... fed by an unseen hand”. “A dedicated life is itself the great sacrament”. “I think I can reverently say that I very much doubt whether since the Lord by His grace brought me into the faith of His dear Son, I have ever broken bread or drunk wine, even in the ordinary course of life, without the remembrance of, and some devout feeling regarding the broken body and the blood-shedding of my dear Lord and Saviour” (*Christian Life* p.112-3). George Fox himself refers to Revelation 3, 20 (“I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me”): “Is not this supper beyond and a further supper than taking the elements of bread and wine in remembrance of His death?” (p.113).

The statement of the Friends United Meeting does them less than justice in saying they are “not identifiable as a eucharistic fellowship employing rites which uses memorial signs”. In an obvious sense this is true but by concentrating upon the risen, living Lord and the present Spirit the Friends may be said to be, in their ideal, the most frequent celebrants of “one eucharistic fellowship”. This does not remove the difficulty of their advance towards unity but it does set it in a positive rather than a negative light.

The Salvation Army has echoed a further theme of the Friends' testimony, namely distress at the divisions of Christians over the meaning and practice of the sacraments. "Outward ritual", writes a Friend, "has far more effect in hiding this unity and in separating the children of God than in uniting them. We therefore discard these outward rites." (*Christian Life* p.112) and William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, argued that "converted drunkards might fall foul of fermented communion wine, male chauvinists might object to women celebrants — but to abandon women evangelists would be unthinkable. Dissension might break out over who might participate and who might not" (John Coutts *The Salvationists*, London, Mowbrays, 1977, p.72).

More generally, Salvationists have seen themselves as heirs of the Friends' tradition, of "George Fox and his Salvation Army two hundred years ago" (see Coutts p.72). They put the point already noted from the Friends that (compare Dewsbury) "Another mock form of salvation was presented in the form of ceremonies and sacraments" (Coutts p.72). "We say not that the revelation of Christ to the soul depends on the truth of the Bible... the truth of the Bible is established by the revelation of Jesus Christ in us and the glorious fulfilment in our hearts and lives of just precisely what it promises" (Bramwell Booth quoted by Coutts p.11, and exactly corresponding with the thought of Robert Barclay, the seventeenth-century Quaker theologian, quoted in *Christian Life*, pp.99-100). The Salvation Army statement about BEM emphasises the "living of a life which is wholly sacramental".

More particularly the Salvation Army claims to be "not a church" but "a permanent mission to the unconverted" (General Osborn, Coutts p.68); "an army separate from, going before and all round about the existing churches" (General Booth, Coutts, p.73). The Salvation Army, therefore, does not prohibit its own people from taking the sacraments and in a few places, notably in Scandinavia, this still happens, though it must be acknowledged that the main symbolic acts in the lives of Salvationists are those particular to the Army, from coming to the Penitent-form to the placing of the Army flag on the coffin of the Salvationist "promoted to glory" (Coutts p.74).

Once again we can discern some grounds for hope with regard to the advance towards unity. If the main objection to the Eucharist among Salvationists is that it has divided Christians instead of uniting them, that its "introduction would create division of opinion and heart burning" (Coutts p.73), then any movement towards one eucharistic fellowship by other Christians will ease the way for Salvationists to give real effect to their theoretical willingness to become a movement for evangelism carried out by those who are also members of a church and there participate in the sacraments.

So the answer to our third question is "No": advance to unity can be by developing the convictions of Friends and Salvationists, not just abandoning them.

**SUMMARY**

The conclusion to which this paper points is that the very real difficulty felt by Friends and Salvationists at and after the Nairobi Assembly of the WCC is occasioned by a too narrow understanding of what could be meant by “one eucharistic fellowship”. It further suggests that if the *breadth* of meaning in that phrase is to become clear, it will be well to recognise more fully the *diversity* of practice in celebration and in reception of communion which still exists despite BEM 30 and 31 and may have better ground than those paragraphs of BEM concede. Nothing in this paper removes the urgency of moving forward from the convergence of BEM to a true consensus about Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry.

MARTIN CRESSEY

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**Abbreviations**

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BT	Biblical Theology
CCH	Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hanes (Journal of the Historical Society of the Presbyterian Church of Wales)
CQR	Church Quarterly Review
ER	Ecumenical Review
ET	Expository Times
JPHS	Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England
JURCHS	Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society
LQHR	London Quarterly and Holborn Review
LR	Liturgical Review
MC	Modern Churchman
RSCHS	Records of the Scottish Church History Society
SCHSR	Scottish Church History Society Records
SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology
YT	Y Traethodydd

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