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EDITORIAL

The *Independent's* "A-Z of Higher Education Colleges" (25 March 1999) gamely tried to place Homerton College: "Founded in London in 1695 as a dissenting academy whose aims were to provide an untainted course of academic training for the ministry; it trained puritan priests". The charitable will value that last clause's sophistication. Others will find it plain slovenly. It exemplifies that easy ignorance of the broadsheet classes which Elaine Kaye's *For the Work of Ministry* (reviewed here by David Cornick) is calculated to dispel. Colleges figure in this issue: Highbury's Anglican afterlife, New College's birth, early twentieth-century blues at Cheshunt (on the eve of its own Anglican afterlife), different times, different places, different personalities, but markedly similar issues. Death and far horizons also contribute. The Society's Annual Lecture for 1998 encouraged Julie Rugg to explore the implications for townscape, politics, and the Established Church, of the fact that more live Dissenters meant more dead Dissenters. Andrew Porter's appreciation of the missionary archives held at the

School of Oriental and African Studies, and recently endowed by C.W.M., will remind readers of a magnificent and continuing source. His lecture is also to be published by S.O.A.S., where it was originally delivered. Commemorations now cluster insistently. Oliver Cromwell was born 400 years ago and this Society's Congregational predecessor began 100 years ago, spurred at least in part by the celebration of what was then Cromwell's tercentenary. Our next issue will mark that centenary, while this issue notes in passing the approach of a millennium, prompted by two postage stamps in the series "Millennium 1999". Each has a bearing on our history. One illustrates Wilson McLean's "Pilgrim Fathers" and the other displays David Hockney's "Salt's Mill, Saltaire". In one, the Queen's head floats above the hat of a Pilgrim Father and in the other it is pivoted on the cupola of Saltaire United Reformed Church. Is that a chapel first for English philately?

We welcome as contributors Mr. Mercer, recently a postgraduate at the University of Leicester, Dr. Munden, Vicar of Christ Church, Coventry, Professor Porter, Rhodes Professor of Imperial History at King's College, London, Dr. Rugg of the University of York, and as a reviewer, Professor Bebbington of the University of Stirling.

Notes: John Hodgkins has been instrumental in depositing at Gloucestershire Record Office (Clarence Row, Alvin Street, Gloucester GL1 3DW) the Minutes and Financial Records of the Independent Benevolent Society formed in Bristol, December 1799, "For the relief of necessitous Ministers, their Widows and Orphans, in the respective counties of Gloucester, Wilts and Somerset". (D8155 1/1-2. 2/1-6).

Marianne Thorne, Archivist to The Friends of Royal Wanstead (21 Hampstead Gardens, London NW11 7EU), wishes to locate the *tablet* to Andrew Reed (Royal Wanstead School's founder), originally in Reed's Wycliffe Chapel, Commercial Road. Wycliffe's congregation moved to Ilford in 1907, but the chapel itself survived to 1960. Reed's *bust*, also originally in Wycliffe Chapel, is now at Reed's School, Cobham, Surrey.

Members will be interested in a new journal, *The Brethren Archivists and Historians Network Review*; they may obtain details from its editor, Neil Dickson, 3 Arran Road, Barassie, Troon, KA10 6TD.

Abney Park Calendar. Members of the Society who wish to buy a calendar for the year 2000 could not do better than buy the *Abney Park Calendar*, because any profits from their purchases will be given to the Society. Calendars (approx 30 cm x 21 cm with one atmospheric photograph for each month) may be obtained from the photographer, Petra Laidlaw, 2 Alwyne Villas, London N1 2HQ, for £5.75 inc. p. and p.

Correction: J.U.R.C.H.S. Vol. 6, No. 4, p. 262, line 2, should read "For the saints have a liferent tack of the cross of Christ", and not "a different tack": Samuel Rutherford was using a word from Scottish land tenure.

NONCONFORMITY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY CEMETERIES IN ENGLAND 1820–1850

The first half of the nineteenth century was a period during which the power of provincial Nonconformity made itself felt at both national and local levels. Backed by the wealth that was often a consequence of rapid industrialisation, Dissenting communities began to carve spaces for themselves in newly expanding towns and cities. Nonconformist chapels and schools witnessed to communities determined to sustain their independence from the Established Church. One development that has tended to be overlooked is the laying out of cemeteries specifically for the use of Dissenters. Certainly, Nonconformist congregations often used small-scale burial grounds, perhaps attached to individual chapels. However, from the 1820s, a new strategy became open to them: the establishment of larger-scale cemeteries, financed by the sale of shares, for the use of any Nonconformist seeking to avoid burial in consecrated soil.

This paper examines the growth of, and meanings attached to, Dissenters' use of cemetery companies in the first half of the nineteenth century. The example of the earliest such company demonstrates that it could carry a significance beyond the simple provision of space for burial, and introduces themes which this paper will explore. The first cemetery company in Britain – the Rusholme Road Proprietary Cemetery – was founded in Manchester in 1820, and was established by Dissenters as a response to burial grievances. A principal mover in this development was the Congregationalist George Hadfield, doyen of Dissenting agitators, who had commented in his "Personal Narrative" that "it had long been wanted and was resorted to by many; but to us it was a particular advantage, to get our own ministers enabled to preside at our funerals".¹ That Hadfield chose to act in 1820 was significant. Dissent in Manchester had become particularly strong and the city had seen the expansion of Nonconformist communities to such a degree that existing burial places were insufficient to deal with the needs of growing congregations. Of greater and more immediate importance, however, was the fact that Manchester in 1820 had seen one of the earliest church-rate battles. The rate had been increased following a push to build three new churches, and Hadfield had been successful in organising an effective refusal to pay.² Conflict over church rate provided ample encouragement for Manchester's Nonconformists to press for the foundation of a cemetery: consequent antagonism between Church and Dissent meant that there was decreasing possibility of a legislated resolution of the issue of burials; and the successful strike against the church rate increased the determination and the confidence of Dissenters to attack all Anglican monopolies, including the near-monopoly of burial provision.

The Rusholme Road Proprietary Cemetery set an influential precedent, and

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1. Dissenting ministers could not lead services in parish churchyards until 1880. MS "The Personal Narrative of George Hadfield" (1882), p.81. Manchester Archive Office.
 2. *Ibid.*, p.67.

news of it travelled to many Nonconformist congregations. During the 1820s and 1830s in particular, cemetery foundation on a joint stock basis became popular amongst Dissenters, and seventeen companies were founded in places as far apart as Liverpool, London, Portsmouth, Halifax, Newcastle, Birmingham and Leeds. The example of Manchester suggests a number of reasons for this: at the most basic level, Nonconformist congregations were increasing to the degree that more formal and large-scale provision of space for burial was required; there was a need to alleviate the burial grievances which were heightened by the general Church-Dissent conflict that particularly marked the middle decades of the nineteenth century; and the cemetery company could operate as a political tool, expressing the voluntarism at the heart of Dissenting campaigns and depriving the Church of one of its traditional monopolies. The Church's response demonstrates its understanding of the threat posed by such companies.

The growing need for new burial grounds

At the heart of Dissenting use of the joint-stock cemetery was the desire to provide additional burial space. Increases in the Dissenting population meant that already limited resources – usually small graveyards attached to chapels and meeting houses – were heavily taxed. Most of the Dissenting cemetery companies were established in towns with a thriving Nonconformist population: indeed, almost all the towns which had Dissenting cemetery companies had more than fifty per cent of their worshippers attending non-Church of England services.³ In Halifax in 1836, for example, chapels had “either no burial ground at all, or the small place attached to them is completely full”.⁴ Birmingham's General Cemetery Company of 1832 was advertised “in consequence of the general want of burial ground amongst the various religious denominations in the town”.⁵ The Liverpool Necropolis, opened in 1825, was primarily a Congregational concern. The Registrar of the cemetery was John Bruce, who had been co-pastor of the Newington Chapel since the early years of the century. The chapel's congregation had enjoyed spectacular growth under the care of Thomas Raffles, whose charisma had improved the status of local Congregationalism. Attendance at Newington swelled to over 2,000, and included some of the most influential families in the area.⁶ Such increases necessitated greater and secure burial provision, and the foundation of the Liverpool Necropolis was an expedient solution.

A different situation prevailed at Newcastle, where the Westgate Hill Cemetery

3. J. Rugg, “The emergence of cemetery companies in Britain 1820-53”, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Stirling (1982).

4. *Halifax Guardian*, 21 May 1836.

5. *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, 22 Oct. 1832.

6. I. Sellers, “Liverpool Nonconformity”, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Keele (1969).

Company was established in 1825. Newcastle, unlike Liverpool, had a long tradition of independent burial provision which was considered to be more than adequate: indeed, the Nonconformist Ballast Hills Burial Ground had long dominated provision for interment in the town. By the mid-1820s the adequacy of this was being questioned. Newcastle, a port conveniently close to the medical schools in Edinburgh, was worried about body snatching, and Ballast Hills was deemed too insecure. At the same time that moves were underway to raise subscriptions for a new fence for the burial ground, the Trustees of Ballast Hills appointed a committee of six to look into raising money for an entirely new cemetery. The decision was taken to finance the purchase of land through the sale of shares valued at £10 each, a move inspired by the success of the Rusholme Road Cemetery and the Liverpool Necropolis, both of which were mentioned in the Newcastle company literature.⁷ Included in the list of directors were John Bell, Thomas Grey, William Greaves and Archibald Strachan, four members of the Ballast Hills committee.⁸

The cemetery company thus constituted an easy way in which Dissenting burial provision could be financed.

The alleviation of burial grievances

Although in all these cases the desire to increase burial space was a priority, other factors could be of equal importance to Dissenting communities. It was critical that their cemeteries should be independent of the control of the Established Church, should remain unconsecrated and should allow any (or no) burial service to take place. These stipulations met Dissenting objections to the Anglican domination of existing burial provision. Their grievances were two-fold; they covered the prejudice of the clergy with regard to the burial of certain types of Dissenter, and the consecration of parish burial grounds.

Many clergymen felt that their position had become untenable with respect to the burial of Nonconformists, and there was extensive debate on the principles at stake. Indeed, the Protestant Dissenting Deputies addressed the question of burial with more frequency than any other.⁹ The 68th Canon, dating from 1603, forbade ministers to refuse burial except where the deceased had been "denounced excommunicated *majori excommunicatione* for some grievous and notorious

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7. J. Fenwick, *Substance of the Speech given at the General Meeting of the Various Denominations of Protestant Dissenters, of Newcastle upon Tyne, to take into Consideration the Propriety of Obtaining a New Place of Sepulture* (1825). Local History Library, Newcastle upon Tyne Central Library.
 8. MS The Committee's Transaction Book for Ballast Hills Burial Ground. Tyne and Wear Archive Office, Newcastle upon Tyne.
 9. B.L. Manning, *The Protestant Dissenting Deputies* (Cambridge, 1952), p.286.

crime, and no man able to testify his repentance".¹⁰ In principle, therefore, the clergy were compelled to bury virtually all. This rule was qualified by two exceptions – burial should be denied to those dying unbaptised, and to those who had committed suicide. The emergence of religious Dissent on a large, or at least varied, scale in the eighteenth century was to cause problems. Unitarians were not baptised according to rites that invoked the Trinity, and the children of Baptists were not baptised at all. Quite apart from these cases it was sometimes difficult for the clergy to ascertain whether baptism by a lay or Dissenting minister was valid.

Moreover, the clergy were losing the right to judge whether those presented for Christian burial were worthy, and this was severely compromising their ministerial duty. A number of test cases had followed clerical refusal to bury Dissenters, and all had been decided in favour of the bereaved. Many clergymen were unhappy with this violation, in spirit, of Canon 68. A letter to the *British Magazine* in 1834 described the burial of Dissenters according to Anglican rites as a "painful duty", since blessing of those who had reviled "the forms... ministers... and doctrines" of the Church was an insult to those buried with the same rites, but who had been loyal communicants.¹¹ Compared with this, some clergymen decided that the burial grievance of Nonconformists was minimal. One writer declared in 1834:

Bestow not, then, my Lords and Gentlemen, all your compassion on the Dissenters, who, for the want of a greater cause of complaint are straining at a gnat; but have some for the Ministers of the Church, who are compelled to swallow a camel.¹²

Even though the consequent denial of Christian burial evinced "an intolerance worthy of the dark ages"¹³, the *Patriot* – a leading Dissenting journal – recorded a number of cases. Indeed, "scarcely a year elapses in which there do not occur refusals on the part of the clergy of the Established Church, to bury the children of Dissenters".¹⁴ The high morality claimed by the clergy as motivating their refusals to bury did not in any degree lessen the appearance of petty tyranny which their acts bore, especially in the 1830s when the Church of England seemed to be under siege and tempers were running high.

One possible solution was commonly voiced: to allow Nonconformist ministers to lead funeral services in Anglican churchyards. The clergy would no longer be compelled to violate their consciences, and Dissenters would not be refused burial. Furthermore, granting Dissenting ministers the right to officiate in churchyards would answer the wider grievance felt by Dissenters at being compelled to hear a

10. P. Maitland, *The Burial Service, its Legitimate Use Dependent on Church Discipline* (1842), p.13.

11. *British Magazine*, 5 (1834), p.449.

12. *Eclectic Review*, 2 (1834), pp.194-95.

13. *The Times*, 21 Feb. 1834.

14. *Patriot*, 26 Feb. 1834. See also *The Times*, 30 Dec. 1833; 14 Nov. 1839.

funeral service to which they conscientiously objected read over the grave of a loved one. It was known for Dissenters to get round this by adopting a species of modified burial service. A letter reprinted in *The Times* noted the case of a Baptist congregation in Burton, Northamptonshire, which did not have its own burial ground and was therefore obliged to use the churchyard. The Baptist minister walked before the coffin to the churchyard, gave out a hymn at the grave and then retired beyond the limits of the graveyard to give a short address and lead in prayer.¹⁵ Nonconformists, in paying their share of the Church rate, began to ask whether they had rights to exercise with respect to burial in the churchyard. Edward Baines, a Congregationalist and MP for Leeds, voiced the Nonconformists' opinion:

The cemeteries, belonging to the respective parishes of the country, are public property, and have been provided by rates levied on the inhabitants generally, to which Protestant Dissenters have contributed their full portion; we ask, therefore, that these, which in many cases are the burial places of our fathers, may be open to us to bury our dead, in our way, without being compelled to submit to the ritual of the Church of England.¹⁶

Again it must be stressed that the 1830s were no fit context in which the clergy could be expected to be reasonable. Granting the Dissenting ministry the right to officiate in Anglican graveyards smacked of battle dangerously close to home – “are we thus to be heard in our own sacred precincts?”¹⁷ Even if the question of the burial service were resolved, the issue of consecration of the churchyard was further cause for contention. Many Nonconformists preferred burial in unconsecrated soil, agreeing with John Wesley that consecration was “wrong in itself, not being authorised either by any law of God, or by any law of the land”.¹⁸

It would seem that the resolution of burial grievances would necessitate extraordinary measures. In 1842 Richard Fry, minister of the Unitarian Church at Kidderminster, died. His last wish was to be interred in the Old Churchyard, where members of his family had been buried. Fry was noted for his attention to “spiritual and religious freedom”, though how far this led him into Church/Dissent controversy is uncertain. It would seem that some rancour had been provoked, since the response of the local incumbent, Waller (sent by letter to the undertaker conducting Fry's funeral), was unmistakably hostile:

If the corpse is brought to the church, I shall not refuse to bury it; but if it is brought I am thus required to perform the service, I shall take the fact of the funeral coming to the church as a tacit acknowledgement that the

15. *The Times*, 14 Nov. 1834.

16. *Patriot*, 11 Dec. 1833.

17. *The Times*, 20 Jun. 1838.

18. J. Wesley, quoted by G. Collinson, *Cemetery Interment* (1840), p. 192.

deceased did not wish to be regarded in death as a dissenter from our communion.¹⁹

The bereaved, thus refused any form of acceptable burial, were forced to bury Fry in the graveyard attached to the chapel, and the funeral attracted great attention. Such was the disgust aroused by the action of the clergyman that a cemetery company was established, "where ecclesiastical bigotry and High Church despotism shall have no control",²⁰

Although the Kidderminster Cemetery Company was exceptional in being founded as a direct consequence of a single example of clerical intolerance, all Dissenting cemetery companies strove to resolve burial grievances by stressing that burial would be open to all, with no restrictions on the type of service, or on the minister who served, and that the ground would remain unconsecrated. Thus in Newport, the object of the company was stated to be the laying out of a cemetery for "all classes of persons of what religious persuasion soever they may be".²¹ The liberality of Newcastle's Westgate Hill Cemetery was similarly stressed: each of its annual reports was printed with the rubric, redolent of mild Dickensian satire, "Westgate Hill Cemetery: open alike to the Whole Human Family without difference or distinction".²² There was, in addition, no restriction imposed on the type of burial service used. Abney Park Cemetery in London was "open to all denominations of Christians without restraint in forms",²³ and Sheffield's General Cemetery promised mourners "sepulture according to the rite of their own religious faith".²⁴ The Portsea Island General Cemetery promised that:

A minister will be appointed, to officiate as chaplain and registrar, whose services will be at the command of such who wish to avail themselves of him, without charge or fee. On those occasions, it will be left to him to conduct the service as he shall think most for the edification of the parties present. Those who bring their own minister with them, will be at liberty to use what form they please; while others, who prefer it, may inter their dead without any service whatever.²⁵

19. Quoted in E. Evans, *A History of the New Meeting House, Kidderminster 1782-1900* (Kidderminster, 1900), p.104.

20. *Ibid.*, p.105.

21. *Copy of the Deed of Settlement of the Public Cemetery Company established at Newport, Monmouthshire* (1842), p.5. Newport Central Library.

22. *Annual Reports of the Westgate Hill Cemetery Company*. Local History Library, Newcastle upon Tyne Central Library.

23. Deed of Covenant of the Abney Park Cemetery Company, quoted in P. Joyce, *A Guide to Abney Park Cemetery Company* (1984), p.37.

24. MS Minute Book of the Sheffield General Cemetery Company, 30 Sept. 1836. Sheffield Archives.

25. Prospectus of the Portsea Island Cemetery Company (1830). Sanderson Collection, Local History Library, Portsmouth Central Library.

In addition almost all the Dissenting cemetery companies left unconsecrated the land which was laid out. The directors of Newcastle's Westgate Hill Cemetery Company denied the need for such a ritual, noting its lack of biblical precedent, and roundly declaring: "We want no mitred dignity and state, to declare our spot of ground to be hallowed for the dead".²⁶ For Dissenters, joint-stock cemeteries constituted a means by which the sectarian prejudices inherent in old burial practices might be removed, thus providing a solution to long-standing grievances.

Cemetery companies as a political tool

The cemetery company was also politically attractive since it extended effective action in the battle for the abolition of all grievances: burial grounds independent of the Church threatened the financial stability of the clergy.

In the early 1830s there were indications that legislation might eliminate all Dissenting grievances. These included, along with the interment issue, the registration of marriages in Church, admission to Oxford and Cambridge, and the payment of church rate, a tax intended to finance the upkeep of the fabric of the parish church. Agitation for the removal of these imposts had gathered pace, especially through late 1833 and early 1834. Zeal for change was rampant, and Nonconformists felt sure that if the institution of slavery and corrupt electoral practices could be shifted, then surely Anglican hegemony and religious disability must also give way to pressure. Indeed, the timing was doubly propitious: not only was the Dissenting community fully energised, the Church itself was at a low ebb. Ecclesiastical revenues and pluralities were subjected to scrutiny, and the Church was seen to be in need of radical reform.²⁷

However, rather than wait to convene a national campaign, Dissenters chose to act at a local level and to concentrate on the church rate.²⁸ Action was not restricted to solitary individuals. Whole communities took a stance. Because the rate's level was decided in the vestry on the vote of all rate payers it was possible to avoid it altogether. That happened throughout the country. For example, in Nottingham in October 1833, Dissenters – led by the Quaker Samuel Fox – achieved a majority of seventy-three in favour of the adjournment of the vestry for one year, essentially a refusal of the rate.²⁹ Between 1831 and 1851, 632 church-rate contests took place, only 148 of which were unsuccessful.³⁰ Given the apparent success of church-rate battles at this time, the notion of establishing cemetery companies was attractive. Once the church-rate issue had been tackled,

26. Fenwick, *Substance of a Speech*, p.15.

27. See for example G.I.T. Machin, *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain 1832-68* (Oxford, 1977); G. Parsons, *Religion in Victorian Britain* 2 vols (Manchester, 1988).

28. For detail on the purposes of the church rate, see *Quarterly Review*, 53 (1835), p.202.

29. *The Times*, 10 Oct. 1833.

30. O. Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, 1 (1966), p.152.

further moves against church monopolies were inevitable. Here were "armed men...sprung up, all glowing with the strength and stimulus of new life, all prompt for action of some kind."³¹

That the foundation of cemetery companies may be viewed as an extension of church-rate battles is suggested by an analysis of their directorates. For example, Samuel Fox, the Nottingham Quaker, was instrumental in founding the Nottingham General Cemetery Company in 1836. Fox had an enduring interest in the problems of urban sepulture, and during the cholera epidemic of 1832 he had donated ground to be used as a burial site for its victims. Fox had been outraged by the fact that this ground was absorbed by the church and consecrated. It provoked a determination to provide a cemetery in which all might be interred without discrimination. He received additional impetus from the local church-rate agitation, which he steered to victory in 1833.

Fox gathered within the cemetery company men of like mind. Of thirty known directors, details of approximately one third cannot be traced.³² Of the remaining twenty-one, however, it can be established that all were Protestant Nonconformists, except for Robert Willson, later Roman Catholic bishop, who had collaborated with Fox in the foundation of the cholera burial ground in 1832. All the town's leading congregations were represented, including the High Pavement Unitarian Chapel, whose members were "amongst the foremost to prove their attachment to the cause of liberty, civil and religious". Apart from Fox, other directors were actively involved in the abolition of the church rate. For example Joseph Gilbert, Congregational minister, was delegate to the United Committee on Dissenting grievances in London; Hugh Hunter, General Baptist minister, was one of a party representing the anti-rate views of the Nottingham Dissenters to Earl Grey in 1834; and Thomas Herbert, Gilbert's brother-in-law, chaired meetings to discuss the rate's abolition. For such men, the foundation of a cemetery company surely had meaning beyond the provision of additional burial ground; it signified their determination to wrest complete independence from the Established Church.³³

This was certainly the case in Leicester in 1845. In what was possibly the most militant example of company formation, the Leicester directors were fired by the determination not only to alleviate burial grievances, but also to aim for the

31. *Hull Advertiser*, 28 Feb. 1834.

32. Lists of directors compiled from two sources: *Nottingham General Cemetery Company: Circular* (1836), Local History Library, Nottingham Central Library and *Annual Reports of the Nottingham General Cemetery Company*, Nottingham Archive Office. Sources for further prosopographical study included F. Harrison, "The Nottinghamshire Baptists", unpublished M.Phil dissertation, University of Nottingham (1972); R. Mellors, *Men of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire* (Nottingham, 1924). Full details in Rugg, "Emergence of cemetery companies", chapter 3.

33. See also J. Morgan, "The burial question in Leeds in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries", in R. Houlebrooke (ed.), *Death, Ritual and Bereavement* (London, 1989).

complete separation of Church and State. Dissenters on the town council proposed the foundation of a joint-stock cemetery, taking care to explain the principles underlying their decision: the directorate

have been induced, or rather compelled to adopt this course, in consequence of the apparently great and unsuperable difficulties, in the way of reconciling the various and conflicting views of Churchmen and Dissenters. They find it impossible for Dissenters to act in concert with Churchmen in this matter, without making such extensive concessions for the purpose of obtaining their concurrence, as would compromise their own religious principles and feelings of independence. This being the case the establishment of a cemetery jointly by Churchmen and Dissenters would be positively objectionable.³⁴

Indeed, the proprietors were most anxious that their voluntarist principles be known, declaring that a number of those involved in the scheme "hold very decided views on the impropriety of the connection of Church and State".³⁵ This, admittedly extreme example indicates the degree to which voluntarism could underlie company formation.

The Church response

The Church was by no means unaware of the critique of both burial grievance and Establishment implied by the cemetery companies, and it certainly could not ignore the threat to its financial position presented by the foundation of new cemeteries. For example, in Spitalfields in London, over forty per cent of clerical income rested on burial fees alone.³⁶ Furthermore, the economic success of the Dissenting cemetery companies in the 1820s and early 1830s had heralded the arrival of companies with a more profit-orientated stance. These speculative cemetery companies had flourished in London, opening the spectacular cemeteries at Norwood and Highgate.³⁷ In the capital the threat presented to clerical incomes by the new extra-mural cemeteries had been contained to some degree by the Bishop of London, C.J. Blomfield, who had enforced compensation clauses on companies which opened consecrated grounds. These specified that payment should be made by the company to the vicar of the parish where the interred had resided. The payment varied according to the expense of the burial. Enforcing the

34. *Leicester Chronicle*, 27 Sep. 1845.

35. *Ibid.*

36. *Report from the Select Committee on Improvement of the Health of Towns: Effect of Interment of Bodies in Towns* (1842), p.186.

37. For further detail of speculative cemetery companies, see Rugg, "Emergence of cemetery companies", chapter 4.

payment of compensation charges was not, however, a wholly satisfactory solution. There was still felt to be some degree of financial loss: for example, the customary presentation to the officiating clergyman of mourning gloves and hatband constituted a considerable perquisite which would be missed if the burial took place outside the parish.

Clerical compensation was clearly not an adequate solution, especially since it could not be imposed on the Dissenting companies. The Church habitually attacked cemetery companies when their establishing acts were passing through Parliament. Because Dissenting companies could be founded through deeds of settlement, no such opportunity for inserting compensation clauses existed. Entirely new legislation was needed. The Church found a determined champion in the Liberal M.P. William McKinnon, who was the first to introduce legislation to deal with the complex issue of burials, ostensibly as a sanitary matter. It is more likely, however, that on the subject of interments at any rate, McKinnon had larger fish to fry than public health. According to the *Patriot*, his regard for public health in sepulchral matters was only so much "drapery", concealing a determined attempt to protect the interests of the Established Church.³⁸

That the financial stability of the clergy was the issue weighing most heavily with McKinnon is shown through the progress of the Select Committee on burials which he conducted in 1842. Clergymen were questioned about losses in income suffered through the opening of private burial grounds and cemeteries. The evidence of the Bishop of London was almost exclusively taken up with references to the clergy's reliance on burial fees and funeral perquisites. McKinnon's concern for such matters seemed to confirm that he was indeed "a cat's paw to the clergy".³⁹ His stated intention had been to implement reforms without harm to existing interests, and the Report's resolutions underlined this: it was recommended that existing and new extra-mural cemeteries should be managed by parochial authorities, financed through the levying of a special rate. This last requirement alone was enough to convince Dissenters that McKinnon's scheme was "of selfish origin and sectarian character".⁴⁰ McKinnon's proposals looked like a retaliation on the part of the Church against the Dissenters' use of the cemetery company. Sheffield's General Cemetery Company expressed opposition to his plan, "as his views are narrow and exclusive and would if carried into effect be injurious to institutions like ours".⁴¹ The following year the Company reported "with satisfaction" the failure of McKinnon's bill – "an unjust, illiberal and partial enactment".⁴² McKinnon had only succeeded in highlighting the strength of the

38. *Health of Towns, An Examination of the Report and Evidence of the Select Committee of Mr McKinnon's Bill; and of the Acts for Establishing Cemeteries around the Metropolis* (1834), p.6. This pamphlet reproduces articles on the subject, first published in the *Patriot*.

39. *Ibid.*, p.9.

40. *Ibid.*, p.6.

41. MS Minute Book of the Sheffield General Cemetery Company, 10 Aug. 1843.

42. *Ibid.*, 12 Aug. 1844.

Church's vested interest in burials, and made it less likely that the Government would consider resolving such a complex question.

Although protective national legislation was proving difficult to frame, at the local level the opposition of clergy and bishop could seriously hamper any chance a cemetery company might have to succeed. This was especially so during the 1840s, when cemetery company foundation expanded dramatically in response to fears about overcrowding in churchyards. Even when the advancement of Dissenting rights was not a purpose of the cemetery company, the Church could prove to be an effective opponent. For example, in Reading during the early 1840s, battles with the clergy cost the cemetery company over £130 in legal fees.⁴³ In other cases the clergy succeeded in blocking the foundation of a company altogether. In Hereford in 1847 the intervention of the bishop put an end to plans to form a cemetery, even though it was backed by the town's leading citizens, including the mayor and M.P.s.⁴⁴ Again, in Oxford, clerical opposition prevented the formation of a new company in 1847, even though the existing churchyards were seriously overcrowded.⁴⁵ The church was well aware of the threat inherent in company formation.

The attitude of the Church towards the joint-stock cemetery was not, however, entirely condemnatory. Given the right directorate, the purchase of burial ground through the sale of shares could just as easily advance the cause of the Established Church. Three Anglican companies were founded at Liverpool, Birmingham, and Nottingham in 1826, 1846, and 1851 respectively. All were distinguishable by a denominational consciousness which was essentially defensive in tone. The Liverpool St James Cemetery illustrates this point. The foundation of the Liverpool Necropolis in 1823 was met with Anglican disdain. The St James trustees stressed, by contrast, their connection with the Church. Their cemetery would "provide for the members of the established Church and for others who prefer burial in *consecrated* ground". Furthermore the company, far from constituting even an indirect threat to Church monopolies, would be "a... project which will tend materially to give additional strength and stability to the Ecclesiastical Establishment of the country."⁴⁶ All its profits were to be directed towards some unspecified Church purpose. That Anglican militancy could easily match the intensity of Dissenters' passions is shown by the Church of England Cemetery Company of Birmingham, established in 1846. Of the twenty-five directors, details of twenty can be traced and fifteen of these were connected with Anglican institutions: for example, eight were members of the Church of England

43. *Reading Cemetery Company Particulars of Expenditure* (1852). Local History Library, Reading Central Library.

44. W. Collins, *Modern Hereford* (Hereford, 1911), p.41.

45. See *Report of the Sub-committee of the General Cemetery Society presented to the Council of the City of Oxford* (1844) and the *Oxford Parish Burial Ground Committee Report* (1844). Both in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

46. MS Minute Book of the Trustees of the St. James Cemetery, 2 Sep. 1825.

Lay Association (C.E.L.A.), some on its committee.⁴⁷ The connection between the company and the C.E.L.A. was unmistakable, and it was clear that the Church Cemetery Company was part of the more general effort to support the Church. In the *Seventh Annual Report* of the Association, a notice declared

Your committee have much pleasure in announcing the expected formation at an early day, of a Church of England Cemetery... It is repugnant to every Religious feeling for Churchmen to bury their dead in unconsecrated ground, and to this must ere long have been driven, but for this patriotic gesture.⁴⁸

Thus the cemetery company could be a political instrument for Dissenter and Anglican alike.

Conclusion

Differing degrees of Dissenting militancy were instrumental in the foundation of cemetery companies all over England. For all these companies, discontent over burial grievances was a vital factor which ensured that their land remained unconsecrated and that liberality was expressed with regard to the funeral service. The reforming zeal which roused Dissenters in 1833-34 gave the cemetery company a degree of political significance, since it was clear that private provision constituted a powerful weapon in the battle to relieve the Church of England of one of its ancient monopolies: the church was losing ground in the "Empire of Death".⁴⁹ Clerical incomes were threatened and the Church's hold on parishioners was undermined. It was obvious that the Church felt under pressure from the cemetery company. The clergy of Oxford, faced with the possibility of a general cemetery in the city declared:

It has always been the practice of the Church to make provision for the interment of her dead as the last act of Christian fellowship... This is the ancient practice, from which we do not feel at liberty to depart.⁵⁰

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47. List of the directors taken from W. Wilson, *A History of the Church of England Cemetery and the History of Christchurch, Birmingham* (Birmingham, 1900). Prosopographical details taken from a range of sources including J.A. Longfield, *Modern Birmingham* (Birmingham, 1873); and F.L. Colville, *Worthies of Warwick* (Birmingham, 1869). For full details see Rugg, "Emergence of cemetery companies", chapter 3.
48. Preliminary address of the C.E.L.A., reprinted in their *Seventh Annual Report* (Birmingham, 1845), p.7.
49. *Health of Towns*, p.10.
50. Untitled circular dated 8 Jan. 1844. Bodleian Library, GA Oxon b112 (207).

The dignity of that statement was undercut by a leaflet issued by the clergy which addressed “Englishmen throughout the country”, in panicky tones, to “defend the walls of the Church of England, and set up her bulwarks”.⁵¹ Although the clergy of Oxford were successful in blocking the establishment of a general cemetery, on a nationwide scale the battle was lost. The Church’s universalist claims – at least with regard to burial – had been irrevocably undermined by the power of provincial Nonconformity.

JULIE RUGG

HIGHBURY COLLEGE, ISLINGTON, 1826-1951

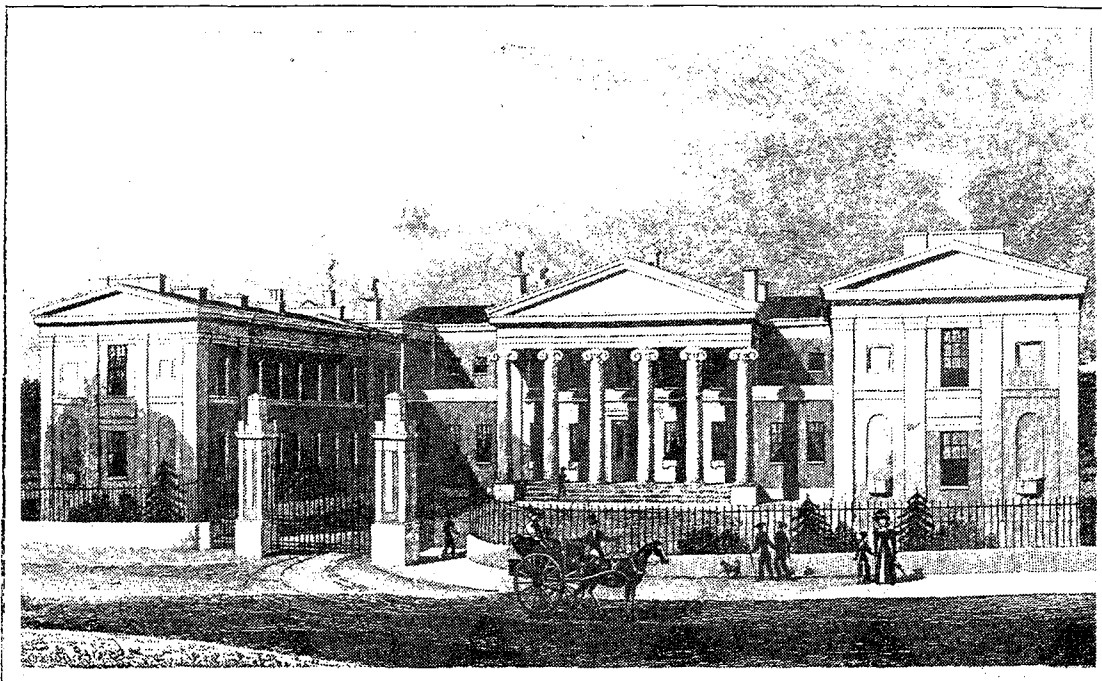
For football supporters, Highbury is synonymous with Arsenal and the Gunners, but for church historians, Highbury is associated with training for ordination and teaching. Highbury College, Islington, was opened in 1826. The impressive classical building was occupied first by Congregationalists, 1826-50, and then by the Church of England, 1850-1940. It was demolished in 1951 and some uninspiring London County Council flats were erected on the site.

The origins of the Congregational College at Highbury go back to 1783 when a college was established in Mile End. It was transferred to Hoxton in 1791 and then to Highbury in 1826. The intention was “to supply the urgent spiritual necessities of villages and other destitute parts in the country”.¹ The college was situated four miles from Charing Cross, with views north towards Highgate Hill and Muswell Hill and south towards Limehouse parish church, Greenwich Hospital and ships on the River Thames. It was a healthy and pleasant environment for the students. At that time Highbury had few residents and the area remained largely undeveloped until the 1850s and 1860s.

The Congregational benefactor Thomas Wilson² (1764-1843) was regarded by his son as “the founder of Highbury College”.³ He purchased the land for £2,100 and in 1834 bought adjacent land as a recreation ground for £430. The property was situated in what successively became known as College Road and, after it was straightened, Highbury Park North and, from 1876, Aubert Park.⁴ Wilson laid the

51. *Oxford Parish Burial Ground Committee Report.*

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1. J. Wilson, *A Memoir of the life and character of Thomas Wilson Esq.* (London, 1846) p.48.
 2. Thomas Wilson was a cousin of Daniel Wilson (1778-1858), minister of St John’s Chapel, Bedford Row, London, (1808-24), Vicar of St Mary’s, Islington, (1824-32), and Bishop of Calcutta, 1832-58.
 3. Wilson, *Memoir of Thomas Wilson, op. cit.*, p.398.
 4. Aubert Park was named after Alexander Aubert (d.1805), an astronomer who had his own observatory at Highbury House.



Engraved by J. H. P.

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HIGBURY COLLEGE, SOUTH WEST FRONT.

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foundation stone on 28 June 1825 at which an address was given by the Revd. George Clayton.⁵ At the opening ceremony on 5 September the following year, addresses were given by the Revds. Henry Forster Burder and William Harris and, after the proceedings, 130 ministers and gentlemen dined at the Highbury Tavern. Wilson served as the college treasurer and in October 1840 was presented with an ornamental vase, based on a huge Roman vase at Warwick Castle, with a relief of Highbury College on the plinth, and costing 200 guineas.

The building was designed by a London architect, John Davies (1796-1865). His most important buildings were Highbury College, the new synagogue, Great Helen's Bishopsgate (1838), and the Ock Street Baptist Chapel, Abingdon (1841).⁶ Highbury College consisted of three wings, each 175 feet long and forming three sides of a quadrangle. It cost £16,397 and was opened with a debt of £7,000.

The institution was managed by a committee chosen from among the subscribers and supported by voluntary contributions.

Candidates must be single men eighteen years and upwards, with some preparatory instruction in Latin and other attainments. The course of instruction consists of Latin, Greek and Hebrew languages, moral philosophy, theology, biblical criticism, etc. The college affords accommodation for forty students, each having a separate study and bedroom. On the basement story are convenient domestic apartments, and there are several lecture-rooms and apartments for the resident tutor. It contains also a library of 4,000 volumes.⁷

The students worked a long day. They were awakened by a bell at 6.00 a.m. (6.30 a.m. November to February), and had family worship at 7.30 a.m. followed by breakfast. After morning lectures, dinner was at 3.00 p.m. The day ended with supper followed by family worship at 10.00 p.m. and bed at 10.30 p.m. The students had a study on the ground floor and a bedroom on the first floor. They were permitted to exercise in "the grounds and walks below the garden", but were not "permitted to smoke tobacco or any other herb in the college, or in any part of the premises".⁸ Between 1826 and 1850, 214 students were trained at Highbury, four of whom were ordained into the ministry of the Church of England.

From 1843 discussions took place concerning a possible union of London's Independent colleges. In 1850 Highbury was closed and combined with Homerton College and Coward College to form New College London. This later worked

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5. *An address delivered on laying the foundation stone of Highbury College, by the Rev. G. Clayton; and also addresses delivered on the opening of the college, by the Rev. H.F. Burder MA and the Rev. W. Harris LLD* (London, 1826).
 6. H. Colvin, *A biographical dictionary of British architects 1600-1840* (Yale University Press, USA, 1995) pp.294-295.
 7. *The history and traditions of Islington*, (London, 1842) p.95.
 8. *The internal economy of Highbury College* (London, 1842) p.9.

closely with Hackney College, and from 1924 was called Hackney and New College. New College, as it subsequently became known, closed in 1977.⁹

In May 1850, a group of Anglican Evangelicals, under the chairmanship of The Earl of Shaftesbury, purchased the former Highbury College for £12,500. Four months later, after the erection of two lecture rooms, a model practising-school for 150 boys, a master's house, and alterations amounting to £6,000, the Church of England Metropolitan Training Institution was opened. In the fourteen years of its existence 558 students were trained, a number of whom taught overseas with the Church Missionary Society. This is hardly surprising since the two principals were committed Evangelicals involved with CMS and both became missionary bishops. Vincent William Ryan became the first Bishop of Mauritius, 1854-68, and Charles Richard Alford, the Bishop of Victoria, Hong Kong, 1867-72.

Like the Church of England Training School at Cheltenham, the Highbury Training Institution was based "upon Scriptural, Evangelical and Protestant principles" but, unlike Cheltenham, it did not survive. When it closed in December 1864 nineteen of the remaining twenty-seven students completed their training at Cheltenham and £14,000 was transferred to Cheltenham for the erection of what became known as St. Mary's Hall for women students.¹⁰

In the autumn of 1863, the London College of Divinity (LCD) opened in temporary premises in Kilburn.¹¹ In 1865 the Highbury buildings were purchased for £12,500 by the Revd. Alfred Peache and his fellow trustees: the Earl of Shaftesbury, Revd. Joseph Ditcher and Alexander Haldane. Peache and his sister Kezia had inherited a fortune and used it for Evangelical causes. After minor alterations the west wing and principal's house were opened in January 1866. Over the next eighteen years the buildings were enlarged and the grounds extended. Most of the development took place through the generosity of Alfred and Kezia Peache. In all they gave upwards of £70,000, something like £3,500,000 in today's currency. The extensions to the original buildings took place under the superintendence of the Evangelical architect, Ewan Christian. The new wing, which included a large oak-panelled dining hall, with kitchen and laundry below, was opened in 1875, and other rooms the following year. Between 1879 and 1884 the wing was extended to include an impressive gateway and porter's lodge, three lecture rooms, a tutor's apartment, infirmary and large chapel. The new frontage in Avenell Road had an imposing entrance and was designed to resemble the gateway of St. John's College, Cambridge. This was intended to enhance the architectural appearance and academic standing of the institution.

9. G.F. Nuttall, *New College, London and its library* (London 1977). S.G. Wilson, *The University of London and its colleges* (London, 1923) pp.83-88.
10. St. Mary's Hall, Cheltenham (later known as Shaftesbury Hall) was opened in 1869 and closed in 1994. C More, *The training of teachers, 1847-1947* (London, 1992) p.32, note 50.
11. A. Munden, *The History of St John's College, Nottingham, Part One: Mr Peache's College at Kilburn*, (Nottingham, 1995).

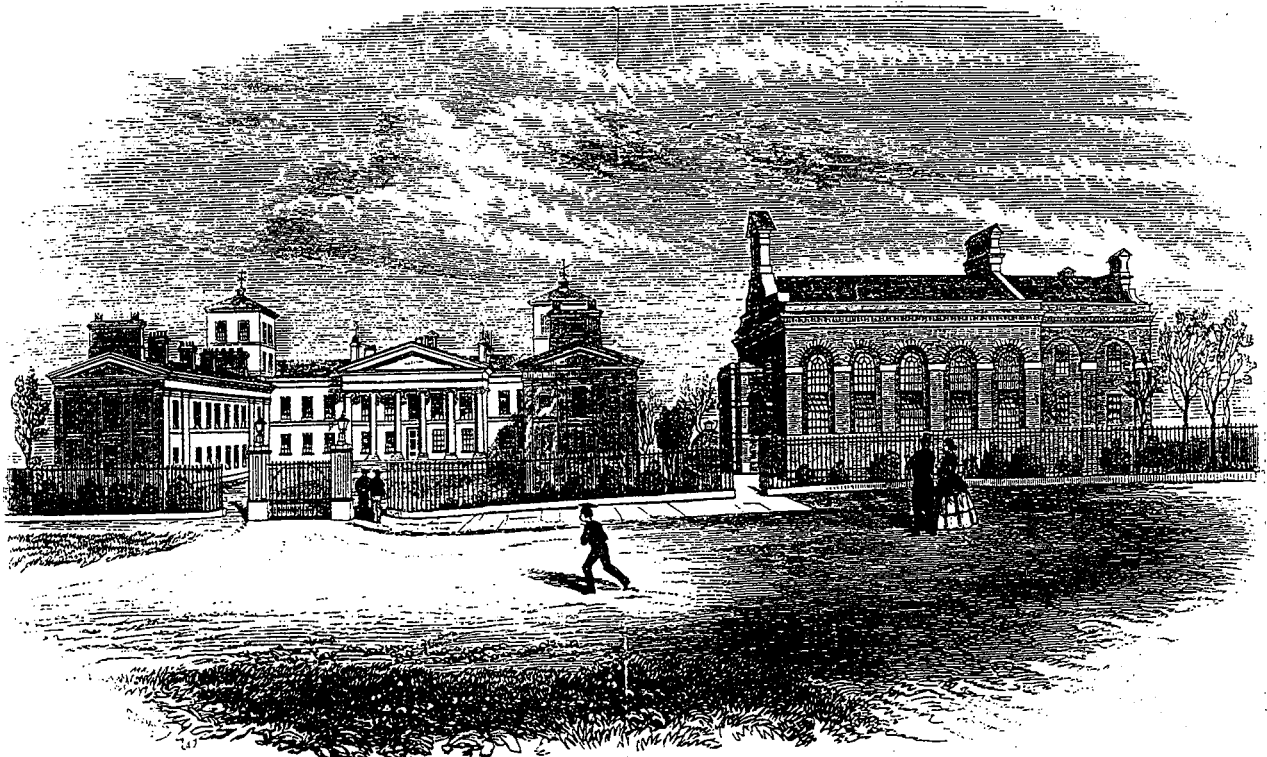
The college buildings were situated at the southern end of a twelve-and-a-half acre site. There were two football pitches and two cricket grounds. There were two of each because one was used by the students of LCD and the other by students of the Church Missionary College, Islington. However the extensive grounds were too large for the needs of the college, and attracted the attention of would-be purchasers. Attempts were made to purchase parts of the site, and in 1909 an offer of £40,000 was made for the whole site for housing. Although the college was in need of income, the offer was turned down. But in 1912 the college council were approached by the Woolwich Arsenal Football and Athletic Club. They were looking for a new site north of the River Thames and situated near to an underground station. The outcome was that the college leased half of the recreation ground at an *increasing* rental – £700 in the first year, £800 in the second year, £900 in the third year and £1,000 for subsequent years. The Club also spent £10-12,000 on levelling the sloping site. Nearly 1,000 people objected to the development, but 2,500 were in favour. A number of safeguards were written into the contract. There was to be no gambling, no sale of alcohol, and no football was to be played on Christmas Day and Good Friday. At that time there was no consideration given to the playing of football on Sundays. Until 1934 the staff and students of LCD were given free tickets to all league matches, but not to cup ties.

In 1924 the college council sold the whole property to the Arsenal Football Club for £47,736, and the college entered into an eighty-year lease, this time paying a *decreasing* rental – £1,000 for the first five years, £950 for the second five years and £900 for the eleventh and subsequent years. The investment from the £47,000 provided a substantial income for the college. The grounds were much reduced in size and no longer included a football pitch, but two hard tennis courts were constructed in the principal's garden.

In November 1940 the college building was damaged by a land mine and bomb and the whole college community (apart from the caretaker) was evacuated, never to return. In all over 2,000 students had been trained at St. John's Hall. The premises were then used for various purposes. The basement became a stretcher-party depot, and the Home Guard used the middle quadrangle as a rifle-range. From 1942 the buildings were requisitioned by the National Fire Brigade.¹² In May 1946 a fire was started by children playing in the West wing and it soon spread to the library and the principal's house. The property was beyond repair and the locality was not what it had once been, so the council decided to relocate the college.¹³ Various fixtures were removed from the chapel and stored elsewhere, and the lease discontinued with the Arsenal Football Club. In the summer of 1947

12. *The Daily Mirror*, 20 March 1944,

13. Between 1940 and 1947 the London College of Divinity (popularly known as St John's Hall) was in various locations. From 1947 to 1957 it was situated at Lingfield, Surrey; between 1957 and 1970 at Northwood, Middlesex (when the property was bought by the London Bible College) and since 1970 it has been at Bramcote, Nottingham, as St John's College.



CHURCH OF ENGLAND METROPOLITAN TRAINING INSTITUTION, HIGHBURY PARK.
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the buildings were photographed for the Survey of London and in 1951 they were demolished and LCC flats erected on the site.

For over 110 years the property had been the home to three places of education – Highbury College, the Church of England Metropolitan Training Institution, and the London College of Divinity. Consideration was given to placing a blue commemorative plaque to mark the site but nothing came of it. The only echo of the existence of the colleges was kept alive well into the 1980s by the Arsenal Football Club which called an indoor training centre “The College”.

ALAN MUNDEN

NEW COLLEGE, LONDON: ITS ORIGINS AND OPENING

By the mid-decades of the nineteenth century there was a growing demand for reforms in the system of training ministers for the Nonconformist churches, especially within the Congregational denomination. Critics of the theological colleges, such as George Hadfield, treasurer of Lancashire Independent College, and Revd. J. Blackburn of the Congregational Union, were quick to point out that by the 1840s less than seventy per cent of Nonconformist ministers had received a college education and that the training provided in the colleges was often inadequate, not cost effective, and inappropriate to the needs of some congregations.¹ At a time when the churches required more educated and cultured ministers to keep pace with an advancing and increasingly well-educated society the colleges were producing ministers who were often poorly equipped and in some cases were sheer embarrassments. It was imperative that if the churches were to keep an educated youth in Nonconformist pews the colleges would have to produce more and better trained ministers. Church leaders and college principals were increasingly aware that reform of the collegiate system was necessary and in mid-century a succession of college conferences was held to suggest measures which would lead to greater efficiency and increase the supply of better-trained ministers.² At these conferences and at deliberations of the Congregational and Baptist Unions numerous courses of action were debated and innumerable resolutions passed. One reform which figured prominently was some measure of college co-operation and amalgamation. This, it was suggested, would not only improve efficiency and make the colleges more cost effective but would also improve the quality and scope of the training by increasing the number of tutors.

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1. G. Hadfield, *An Intended Address on the Laying of the Foundation Stone of the Lancashire Independent College*, (1840); J. Blackburn, *A Memorial on the History, Position and Prospects of the Independent Colleges*, (1844).
 2. Conferences of delegates from the Congregational colleges were held in 1845, 1865, 1872, and 1877 while the Baptists arranged a conference for representatives of the four Particular Baptist colleges in 1846.

With the exception of the Wesleyan Theological Institution, the Nonconformist colleges had been established without any central planning and problems had arisen over the concentration of colleges in one locality. They were supported by voluntary contributions which meant that they were built in or near areas of denominational strength, which in turn meant that many of them were closely situated to one another. This also entailed a duplication of service and a steady drain on the financial resources of local churches. Many had sprung up during the Evangelical Revival in a generally uncoordinated fashion, established by "individuals who had but little knowledge of what was necessary... and very little consideration was given to their locality or the relationship of one college to another".³ The problem was most evident among the Congregational colleges and especially within the metropolitan area where, by the 1840s, Highbury, Homerton, Coward, Cheshunt, and Hackney colleges were training ministers for the Congregational churches.⁴ In Yorkshire, Rotherham and Airedale colleges were in relatively close proximity and often duplicated each others' work. By mid-century it had become apparent that the existence of so many colleges with their individual staffs, collections, and committees was a burdensome way of providing ministerial education. It seemed a waste of money and energy for the Congregationalists of 1840 to maintain twelve colleges in England and Wales with thirty-one tutors to teach 211 students.⁵ College amalgamation, however, was a volatile issue and college committees, while in principle accepting the need for some measure of merger and recognising the benefits that this would bring, jealously guarded their heritage, buildings, and independence, and were proud of the links which their colleges had forged with local churches and which they had feared would be broken in the event of amalgamation with another college. If the colleges were reluctant to co-operate, only some centrally directed plan would achieve the desired mergers, but herein lay the dilemma facing the Baptists and more especially the Congregationalists. Both denominations lacked a strong central authority competent to introduce reforms into colleges which were legally independent of them. In any case Congregationalists and Baptists were deeply suspicious of any centralising tendency. Given the lack of central directives and the jealously guarded traditions of independence, the merger in 1850 of Homerton, Highbury and Coward colleges to form New College was an exceptional development which showed what could be achieved when individual colleges were prepared to set aside mutual suspicions and put the need for reform before the continuation of their own identity. A merger of the metropolitan

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3. T. Robinson, "Desirable Reforms of our College System", *Christian World*, 23 Oct., 1877, p.5.
 4. Cheshunt College was officially an institution to train ministers for Lady Huntingdon's Connexion but by mid-nineteenth century the majority of its students were destined for Congregational churches.
 5. Figures are taken from Hadfield's *Address*, pp. 69-70. Cheshunt College is included as one of the Congregational colleges.

Congregational colleges was first formally mooted in October 1843, when a meeting of a special sub-committee of Homerton and Highbury Colleges took place to "consider if by combining some of our collegiate institutions the object for which they were established might be more efficiently promoted". At this meeting it was resolved to invite the trustees of Coward College to attend another meeting the following week.⁶ It is not known whether the Coward Trustees accepted the invitation and what, if anything, happened at this planned meeting but formal negotiations seem to have been abandoned for a further four-and-a-half years.

The issue was revived in March 1848 when William Smith, the distinguished classical tutor of Highbury College, no doubt acting with the knowledge and approval of his college committee, published an open letter to the trustees and committees of Coward, Homerton, Highbury and Cheshunt Colleges outlining in some detail a plan for union. He set out his arguments in favour of a united college, the crux of which was that one large college rather than several small ones "would afford a very superior education at a smaller cost". He stressed the comparative inefficiency of the system of several small colleges in close proximity providing much the same training. Even those which could afford three tutors were unable to provide a thorough collegiate education, however competent their tutors might be. No college, Smith observed, had more than one theology tutor and no one man, he argued, could hope to teach efficiently all the subjects in a Biblical and Theological curriculum. To Smith the importance of these subjects demanded "at least three or four tutors". Moreover, it was his view that the small number of students in each institution seriously injured their intellectual development for it gave them little incentive to assert their intellectual capabilities. None of the colleges was running to capacity. According to Smith, the combined number of students in the four colleges in 1848 did not exceed sixty, although they could accommodate 100. Not only was the maintenance of several small colleges inefficient it was also exceedingly costly: during the 1840s the combined number of students in the four colleges rarely exceeded seventy but the combined expenses of the four exceeded £7,000 per annum. The education of each student cost more than £100 a year. The annual reports of Highbury, Homerton and Cheshunt Colleges revealed that for several years income had not been equal to expenditure and that the colleges were in debt. Smith could not believe that it would be possible to overcome this financial problem by increasing subscriptions. "I fear", he gloomily predicted, "that the incomes of those institutions, so far as they depend upon the subscriptions, will gradually diminish, as there is a wide-spread conviction that the present plan is attended with unnecessary expense". Finally he argued that the existing system was an "intellectual waste" for tutors were teaching classes of eight or ten students when they could just as easily have been teaching

6. Letter from J.H. Godwin of Highbury College to Trustees of Coward College inviting them to a meeting to discuss amalgamation, 26 October 1843. MS in D.W.L. N.C.A. 419/38/1.

classes of thirty or forty. Better yet, greater specialisation would be possible for a united college would have more tutors than any existing institution could maintain.⁷

Smith's proposals for a united college were remarkably close to what was achieved after almost two years of discussions. He proposed that the new college should not be housed in any of the existing institutions but should be a totally new venture in a new building. It should not be residential but should follow the pattern of the Scottish universities whose students lived at home or in approved accommodation. It should be open to lay students whose presence, he maintained, would be beneficial to the theology student who could gain from this social intercourse a clearer insight into the ways of the world. The college would be governed by a council of representatives from the trustees and committees of the constituent colleges and of members elected annually by the subscribers to the new college. It would be financed by equal contributions from the sale of the existing colleges as well as by public subscriptions and fees. Smith's final proposal concerned the course of study. There would be two faculties – a Literary and a Theological. The former should have at least four tutors (or professors as he called them) and the latter at least three.⁸

Smith's proposals were received favourably, if not warmly, by the trustees and committees of the four colleges. Perhaps not surprisingly Highbury was the most enthusiastic in its support for what its classical tutor proposed. At a meeting of the Committee of Highbury College on 28 April 1848 it was unanimously resolved that "some union of the metropolitan colleges as suggested in Dr. Smith's letter, is desirable", and a special sub-committee was set up to discuss a merger with delegates from Homerton, Cheshunt and Coward Colleges.⁹ It is not known how enthusiastically the other colleges received the proposals but they were sufficiently interested to send delegates to a meeting of representatives from all four colleges on 1 May 1848 at which it was unanimously agreed: "That in the judgement of this meeting one collegiate Institution for the metropolis, in connection with the Congregational churches would be more efficient than the continuance of several in and around London". Most of Smith's proposals were approved and the delegates agreed to meet at regular intervals to advance the proposals. It was also resolved to invite the committee of Hackney College to send delegates to the next meeting.¹⁰ It would appear that Hackney's committee declined, for no

7. *A Proposal for an union of Coward, Homerton, Cheshunt and Highbury Colleges, submitted by William Smith to the Trustees and Committees of those Institutions*, (1848), pp.1-2. Pr. Pamphlet in D.W.L. N.C.A. 395/1.

8. *Ibid.*, pp.3-4.

9. Highbury College Minute Book, March 1846 to May 1850, Committee Meeting 28 April 1848, pp. 63-65, MS in D.W.L. N.C.A. 134/1.

10. Minutes of the meetings of the Associated Committees of the Metropolitan Colleges on the subject of their proposed union into one institution, 1 May 1848. MS in D.W.L. N.C.A. 174/1.

representative attended the second meeting of the Associated Committee of the Metropolitan Colleges on 5 June 1848.¹¹ Hackney's decision probably owed much to the difference in emphasis it placed on ministerial training. Although by the 1840s it had adopted a more academic style than had prevailed at the time of its founding, it still concentrated on producing preachers rather than scholars, who could sustain village churches that were too weak to support a pastor. The ethos and organisation of the new college was arguably too scholarly to satisfy the objectives of Hackney Theological Seminary. It was not until 1924 that Hackney would finally merge with the new college.

Highbury and Homerton were now clearly forcing the pace and at this June meeting it was resolved that, as a preliminary measure, the union should consist of Homerton and Highbury with the other colleges joining later.¹² No explanation is given as to why Homerton and Highbury decided to act independently. It would seem that their initiative was to avoid unnecessary delay from prolonged internal discussions on the part of those who entertained greater doubts or who were faced by more formidable obstacles to merger. The Coward Trustees, for instance, would not have overall control over the new college and they were no doubt apprehensive over their role in it. Cheshunt faced even more formidable obstacles. It was written into that College's trust deeds, dating from 1783, that its students, tutors, and trustees must subscribe to the Fifteen Articles, which amounted to a confession of orthodox Calvinism.¹³ Such Calvinistic orthodoxy might be undermined at the united college and to change the trust deeds would have necessitated an Act of Parliament which the trustees were not prepared to consider. As a consequence Cheshunt withdrew from the negotiations. The Associated Committee meeting of 14 February 1849 was the last to be attended by delegates from Cheshunt, while Coward proceeded at a slower pace than Homerton and Highbury. On consecutive days in November 1848 Homerton and Highbury Colleges held Extraordinary General Meetings for their subscribers to consider the plans for a united metropolitan Dissenting college. The Reports of these meetings are very similar in content and language and indicate a close association between the two colleges. Both proposed that the "colleges of Homerton and Highbury should be associated together in a merged venture", but expressed the hope that "other colleges may subsequently enter into the same union". Both concluded with reference to the possible need for an Act of Parliament to effect the proposed merger, although neither welcomed this on the grounds that it would be costly and time consuming.¹⁴

11. *Ibid.*, 5 June 1848.

12. *Ibid.*

13. J.F. Beighton, (ed.), *Deeds of Trust and Like Documents Relating to the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion*, (1874), pp. 35-44.

14. Report of an Extraordinary General Meeting of Subscribers to Highbury College to consider a plan for the union of some of the Metropolitan Dissenting Colleges, 17 November 1848, pp.1-4. Pr. Document in D.W.L. N.C.A. 393/3; "Plan for the Union of the Metropolitan Colleges", reproduced in Homerton College Report, 1849, pp.15-23. D.W.L. N.C.A. 547/33. Homerton's subscribers had met on 16 November, 1848.

The possibility that an Act of Parliament might be required was first voiced by William Smith in his open letter of March 1848. An Act would be necessary if trust deeds had to be altered or amalgamated. Smith was confident this would not be necessary but Thomas Jarman, the legal adviser to the two colleges, was less optimistic. He pointed out that legislation might be required to entitle the united college to legacies and donations given to the two institutions separately. "There may be grounds", he wrote, "to contend that one college has become merged in the other or that both have become extinct. The question of identity would I think be likely to lead to litigation...". He also made the point that Highbury's deeds prohibited members of its committee from making any alteration to the original objects of the institution; it would be a "point of consideration whether the proposed admission of lay students [was] not such an alteration of the 'object' as the deed forbids".¹⁵ As a result of Jarman's advice solicitors for the two colleges gave notice of their intention to apply for an Act of Parliament to enable the union to take place.¹⁶ In the event this proved unnecessary. The admission of lay students must have been deemed not to contravene the trust deeds of Highbury College; the merger could be effected without disturbing the existing trusts.

Following the meetings in November 1848 a plan for union was presented to simultaneous Extraordinary General Meetings of subscribers to the two institutions on Friday 2 March 1849. At both meetings the plan was unanimously adopted. The property of the separate institutions was to be sold and the money used to purchase land for a non-residential college. This was to be governed by a council composed equally of nominees of the two merged institutions, with provision for other institutions joining at a later date.¹⁷ By July 1849 the trustees of Coward College had agreed to join and to contribute one third of the amount needed for the erection and maintenance of the new college, which would now be governed by an equal number of representatives from the three associated colleges. A piece of land in St. John's Wood, "about a half mile north of the Regent's Park at the junction of the Avenue and Finchley Roads" was purchased for £2,800. It was hoped the building would be completed for the admission of students in October 1850.¹⁸ In the meantime details concerning course content, fees and admission procedures were to be agreed by representatives of the three colleges.

15. Letter from Thomas Jarman, Lincoln's Inn, to Savell and Fox, Solicitors to Homerton College, 10 November 1848. MS in D.W.L. N.C.A. 395/4.
16. Document giving notice of intention to make an application to parliament to bring in a bill to enable the colleges of Highbury and Homerton to unite and form one society under a new name or title. MS in D.W.L. N.C.A. 359/6.
17. Minutes of an Extraordinary General Meeting of Members of the Homerton College Society held at the Congregational Library on Friday 2 March 1849. MS in D.W.L. N.C.A. 359/6.
18. Report of the Committee of Homerton College, 1849, pp.12-13. D.W.L. N.C.A. 547/33. For Coward College see J.H. Thompson, *A History of the Coward Trust, the First Two Hundred and Fifty Years 1738-1988*(1998), pp.64-8, Supplement 1 to the *JURCHS*, Vol. 6.

Although by mid-summer 1849 the Coward Trust, the Homerton College Society, and the Committee of Highbury College had pledged their support for the new college it remained to be seen how the Congregational Fund Board would react. Since its inception in 1695 the Fund Board had supported students at Homerton College and contributed towards the tutors' salaries. It now had to redefine its relations with the new institution. Although its continued support was not crucial to the survival of the new college it would be most welcome. By April 1850 the Board had decided that it would no longer contribute towards the salaries of the tutors at the proposed college but instead would contribute £400 per annum to support ten students, with the understanding that members of the Board should have seats on the Council.¹⁹ Until 1887 the agreed number was four but in that year the annual grant was reduced to £300 and the membership to three. Although this number was increased to six in 1893 there was no corresponding increase in funding.²⁰

The foundation stone of the new college was laid on 11 May 1850 and New College admitted its first students – fifty-five theology students and four lay students – in October. The college buildings were not complete and classes were conducted in a house, “temporarily engaged for the purpose”.²¹ The college was governed by a Council of two Treasurers, an Honorary Professor (John Pye Smith), six Professors and twenty representative members. Of the six professors, four were in the Theology Faculty. John Harris, Professor of Systematic and Pastoral Theology, was College Principal. William Smith, whose proposals had done so much to revive interest in a united college, was Professor of Classics. The other layman was Edwin Lankester, Professor of Natural Sciences.²² The course, which was of five years duration, consisted of a literary course (two years) and a theological course, but it was stipulated that the literary course, “may be abridged or dispensed with in the case of students who may be found, upon examination, to possess such an amount of proficiency in learning as to qualify them for entrance upon the theological course”. Every candidate was required to pass a college matriculation examination in English grammar, Greek, Roman and English history, arithmetic and the first book of *Euclid's Elements*. Those who had not reached the required standards were encouraged to place themselves under a recommended minister for preparatory tuition. The literary course was to consist of tuition in Classics, Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Natural Sciences, English and Rhetoric, French or German and Logic and Moral Philosophy. The theological

19. Homerton College Minute Book. Committee Meetings on 7 November 1849 and 10 April 1850. MS in D.W.L. N.C.A. 118/1.

20. P.J. Turquand, *A Brief Historical Sketch of the Educational Institutions Connected with the Congregational Fund Board*, (1896), p.11; see also J.H. Taylor, *The Congregational Fund Board 1695-1995* (1995), pp.19, 24-5, Supplement 1 to the *JURCHS*, Vol. 5.

21. *Congregational Year Book, 1850*, pp.204-205.

22. *Ibid.*, p.206.

course included Systematic Theology and Homiletics, Criticism and Interpretation of the New Testament, Hebrew, the "Greek and Latin Fathers", Ecclesiastical History, and Old Testament Criticism, with Chaldee, Syriac or Arabic.²³

A new and important departure was the admission of lay students. Not since the closure of Daventry Academy in 1789 had Congregational colleges opened their doors to students not intending to become ministers. According to the Council of New College many parents had expressed a need to provide for the higher secular education of their sons on Christian principles, and it was felt that as the curriculum provided for literary as well as theological education it would be easy to accommodate lay students and provide them with "a curriculum adequate to the demands of literature and science in the present day". It was suggested that this would not only bring educational benefits to them but it would also benefit ministerial students for it would "release them from undesirable professional isolation" and would "stimulate their mental activity and their energy in their work as students". Moreover, lay students would provide a valuable source of income. They were, however, subject to strict regulations. They could make no demands on college funds and their presence was in no way allowed to interfere with the primary objective of the college which was ministerial training. They also had to satisfy the Council as to their moral character.²⁴

Lay students were admitted to any of the classes in the college upon the payment of the appropriate fee.²⁵ In 1850 these were £1 per session for two or more classes and 10/- per session for one class. In addition to these fees there were the class fees of either £5 or £3 per session depending upon the subject taught. For instance, one of the four original lay students, Walter Sumpter, paid £11.00 to the college in fees for the academic year 1850-51: £5 for tuition in Greek and Latin language and Literature and £5 for attending classes in Mathematics together with his £1.00 session fee. It was also possible to pay the class fees in two equal instalments. Robert Tidman, another of the original four students, paid in October 1850 £7.10/- to the college: £2.10/- for a half session in Latin and Greek, another £2.10/- for a half session in Mathematics, £1.10/- for a half session in Logic and Rhetoric and his £1.00 session fee. (Presumably the session fee had to be paid in full at the beginning of the academic year).²⁶

The opening of New College marked a new departure in co-operation among Nonconformist colleges and paved the way for future mergers. Its success showed that one large college with a specialist staff was superior to several smaller ones. It provided a more comprehensive course than any other theological college could offer and was more cost effective. By the mid-nineteenth century the

23. *Address of the Committee of New College and Preliminary Statement*, (1850), pp. 12-14. Pr. Booklet in D.W.L. N.C.A., 138.

24. *New College, London, Regulations of the Council for the Reception of Lay Students, 1850*, pp.3-8. Pr. Booklet in D.W.L. N.C.A., pp.3-8.

25. *New College, London: Lay Students Tickets and Fees*. MS in D.W.L. N.C.A. 272.

26. *Ibid.*, *Regulations for Reception of Lay Students*, pp.10-11.

**FEE PAYABLE FOR LAY STUDENTS AT NEW COLLEGE, LONDON,
OCTOBER 1850**College entrance fee

£1.00 per session for 2 or more classes

10/- per session for 1 class

Class fees

Greek and Latin Language and Literature

Junior Class (i.e. 1st year) £5.00

Senior Class (i.e. 2nd year) £5.00

Mathematics and Natural Philosophy

Junior Class £5.00

Senior Class £5.00

Natural Sciences

Junior Class (Chemistry, Mineralogy, Geology) £3.00

Senior Class (Botany, Zoology, Hum. Physiology) £5.00

Logic, Rhetoric and Mental and Moral Philosophy

Junior Class £3.00

Senior Class £3.00

Ancient and Modern History

Each class £2.00

German

Each class £3.00

French

Each class £3.00

Nonconformist churches, and especially the Congregational churches, were demanding more from their colleges than at any former period in their history, and in the view of the trustees and committees of Coward, Homerton and Highbury colleges, this demand would in every respect be more completely met by one large and efficient college. The question must be asked, however, as to why the Congregational metropolitan colleges agreed to unite when at the same time Rotherham and Airedale, on the one hand, and the four Particular Baptist colleges on the other, refused to enter into serious negotiations. Their reluctance was due almost entirely to the fear of losing their identity. In the case of the metropolitan Congregational colleges it had been made clear from the outset that a united college would be an entirely new venture, governed by an equal number of representatives from the merged institutions, none of which could be perceived as a junior or senior partner in the alliance.

M.J. MERCER

THE CRISIS AT CHESHUNT COLLEGE

Cheshunt College, so called from its location in the town of Cheshunt, Hertfordshire, was the continuation of the college founded by Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, at Trefeca, mid-Wales, in the 1760s. The course of its history for most of the nineteenth century was relatively uneventful, with the majority of its alumni proceeding to ministry in the Congregational churches, though a relationship not easy to define persisted with the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, the small denomination which was another lasting memorial to the life and labours of Selina. At the end of the century the Principal was Owen Charles Whitehouse, whose relationship with the student body does not seem to have been particularly happy. This fact led to a crisis in the opening years of the twentieth century which coincided with a recognition that the continued existence and usefulness of the college depended on its removal from Cheshunt to another site. This paper traces the progress of this crisis through the pages of the minute book of the trustees, so providing not only a record of events but also something of the flavour of their discussion.

The story begins on 3 June 1902 with the note in the minutes:¹ "At this period Dr. Whitehouse came in and read a short paper on the future of the College, and the matter was left for further discussion". This may have been partly because only four Trustees were present: C.B. Brooke (in the Chair), Evan Spicer, F.J. Butcher, the Revd. R. Lovett. It is interesting that only one of the four, Lovett, the Secretary, was ordained, and that so prominent a figure as Spicer should be

1. References are to the minutes of the Trustees for the relevant period, catalogued as C/19 in the archives of the Cheshunt Foundation in Westminster College, Cambridge. Hereafter listed as *Minutes*.

involved. A month later we read: "The proposals of Dr. Whitehouse as embodied in a paper read at the previous meeting were again discussed."²

The paper itself is inserted in its original handwritten form inside the cover of the minute-book. Although described as a "short paper" it fills four closely-written pages, referring to the declining number of students, the lack of a possible link with a University, of other local colleges with which co-operation might be possible. Cheshunt alone, Whitehouse notes with a touch of eloquence, "has remained in its antique sylvan seclusion". All its professors were "recognized teachers of the London University". The best solution would be to co-operate with, preferably unite with, Hackney College. He appends a schedule of fourteen branches of theology (though referring to them in his text as thirteen, which suggests the last is an afterthought), which the four professors struggled to cover:

Systematic Theology

Historical Theology

Biblical Theology

Comparative Theology

Philosophy of Religion

Christian Ethics

Homiletics and Pastoral Theology

Ecclesiastical History

Apologetics

Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis

New Testament Exegesis and Language and Study of the Septuagint and Apocrypha

Aramaic, Syriac and Rabbinic Hebrew

Biblical Criticism and Introduction

Bible History and the History of Egypt and Western Asia including Archaeology

While one sympathizes with the staff who sought thus to perform the obviously impossible, one's concern extends at least equally to the students on the receiving end of their attempts.

Whatever the proposals were nothing happened for the moment, but in February 1903 a special meeting was called because Whitehouse had submitted his resignation as Principal.³ In his letter to this effect he said that he had frequently contemplated this step during the past year for three reasons: "(1) The financial

2. *Minutes*, 9 July 1902; p. 22.

3. *Minutes*, pp. 27ff.

condition of the College – a cause of constant anxiety to him, (2) A feeling that his personal hold on the students was not such as he would desire, and (3) The succession of difficulties which had made his post particularly arduous for the eight years he had held it.”

Lovett, as recipient of the letter of resignation, had replied, and subsequently talked with Whitehouse, and the immediate cause of the crisis came to light: “It appeared that an unusually large proportion of the students had been absent from a recent weekly prayer-meeting, that the Principal had subsequently asked the Senior Student if there was any special reason for these absences, and that the Senior Student had given such a reply as to lead Dr. Whitehouse to the conclusion that the men had lost respect for him as Principal: upon which he had interviewed the students as a body and informed them that believing this to be their attitude he should place his resignation in the hands of the Trustees.” The Trustees seem to have recognized that the blame for this situation was unlikely to lie wholly on one side, and resolved: “It was regretted that the Students had used the Prayer Meeting to make known their dissatisfaction with the Principal, but the Students could not be allowed to decide as to the fitness of the Principal: it was also regretted that the Principal had announced his resignation to the Students before consulting the Trustees and with regard to the broader issues of the welfare of the College as a whole.”

It is at once clear, however, that the Trustees’ regret at the announced resignation was limited, for the prospects which were under discussion consisted of a possible amalgamation of Cheshunt with another college, and Whitehouse’s action would solve the familiar problem of what to do with two Principals. The minutes continue: “Considerable discussion followed, first as to the Resignation itself, second as to its bearing on any important departure affecting the future of the College. Mr. Lovett assured the meeting that in the event of an amalgamation, the Principalship of the combined Colleges would present no difficulties so far as Cheshunt was concerned, Dr. Whitehouse having some time ago expressed his readiness, on an amalgamation, say of Cheshunt with Hackney, to act subordinately to Dr. Forsyth.” Lovett proceeded to give details of discussions he had had with Forsyth and other representatives of Hackney College. The meeting eventually resolved:

1. That this meeting stand adjourned to Thursday, March 5th, at 2.30 p.m., at 50 Upper Thames Street, to consider further the resignation of the Principal, also the question of the appointment of a Sub-Committee to confer with the Hackney College Trustees on the subject of a plan of co-operation between the Colleges.
2. That Mr. Lovett write to Dr. Whitehouse and say that his letter of Resignation had caused a good deal of anxiety to the Trustees, that the information before them is not such as to enable them to reach any definite decision, that they propose to hold another meeting in a week’s time, when

Professors Andrews and Johnson and the senior students of the three highest years are to meet them.

Whitehouse's colleagues, Andrews and Johnson, were interviewed separately on the crisis and answered questions with the discretion one might expect. Andrews said he had not been at the meeting at which Whitehouse announced his resignation; that he knew nothing of the prayer-meeting incident till told of it by Whitehouse, and that he had interviewed the senior students. He was pressed to explain the dissatisfaction with the principal, and reported the following complaints, while saying he did not himself agree with them:

1. They were not getting the help they desired from the Principal's lectures, which they described as too minute, over-elaborated, and not sufficiently in touch with their practical requirements as students for the ministry.
2. The Saturday prayer meeting at which the address was always given by the Principal lacked freshness and inspiration, and did not help them.
3. There was a growing feeling that they could not go to the Principal about their difficulties. Those who *had* gone had not found him sympathetic.

He did not think the prayer-meeting incident was a deliberate demonstration, but that the small attendance was due to a combination of accidents. This last is a significant comment: Andrews took the sparsity of attendance to be accidental, while the sensitive Whitehouse saw it as a deliberate affront.

Johnson replied in similar terms. He denied that there was any general feeling of dissatisfaction with the Principal, and that the absences from the prayer-meeting were deliberate. He hoped Whitehouse would withdraw his resignation. The students, he said, were not competent to judge what teaching was best for them.

Whitehouse's biography offers fairly extensive rebuttal of the allegation that he fell short in his relationship to students, but is hardly unbiassed, being a work of family reverence.⁴ It is noteworthy that his appointment, to succeed the very successful H.R. Reynolds in 1895, followed considerable hesitation on the part both of the appointing committee and Whitehouse himself, mainly on grounds of lack of pastoral experience.⁵ While the expression of student dissatisfaction is faithfully reported⁶ it is followed by a much longer account, with quotations, of the warm tributes which came later from former students.⁷

4. *Owen Charles Whitehouse of Cheshunt College. The Plain Tale of a Godly Scholar's Life, Told by his Daughter and Others* (Cambridge, 1916).

5. *Minutes*, pp. 66f.

6. *Minutes*, pp. 82ff.

7. *Minutes*, pp. 100ff.

At this point the specific issue of the resignation was overtaken by the general negotiations about the future of Cheshunt. The incident leading to the resignation illustrates what must often have been the experience in theological colleges and other institutions: misunderstanding fuelled by the over-sensitive suspicions of the central figure, unwise response by students, the rallying round of colleagues to put the best light on the situation, the bewilderment of the Trustees, outsiders from the daily life of the college, anxious to stand by their Principal but evidently unsure whether it was not all largely his fault.

Forsyth was also brought into the discussion and his enthusiasm for an amalgamation, if he had any, was evidently cooled by this affair. He had written expressing hesitation, as he put it, "in taking on men who had rebelled against authority and had been allowed to succeed", a version of events which sounds very Forsythean:⁸

With this cloud hanging over the situation representatives of Cheshunt and Hackney met. Lovett stated the Cheshunt position:

Mr. Lovett outlined the position of Cheshunt at the moment, explained that they were one professor short, that the Trustees held in their hands the Resignation of the Principal, and that the scant supply of suitable candidates combined with repeated financial difficulties pointed to the desirability of effecting if possible some Working Arrangement with one of the London Colleges, and that Hackney seemed to offer the best prospects of union. The matter had already been discussed informally in the year 1902, and Dr. Whitehouse had then made it clear that he would not allow his position as Principal to stand in the way of any scheme of closer union.⁹

From the subsequent discussion twelve points are listed as having arisen; presumably the order is that in which they arose, but it is disconcerting that the very first of them notes that Hackney is about to launch a special appeal for funds and it was thought that public knowledge of a proposed merger might have adverse effects, while the second raises the question of Cheshunt payments to Hackney for maintenance of students. However, if it is difficult to detect wild enthusiasm in the minutes, the report ends: "At the conclusion of the discussion it was found that both parties were of one mind on all the essential points..."

At this stage a hitch occurred. At the annual meeting of the Cheshunt subscribers on 6 October 1903 the plans of the Trustees were opposed. The Trustees noted that of 269 subscribers the meeting had an attendance of only sixty-four, not all

8. *Minutes*, 16 March 1903, p. 34.

9. *Minutes*, pp. 35ff. At this meeting all the Trustees were present (Evan Spicer, James Brown, C.B. Brooke, R. Lovett, F.J. Butcher) with the exception of Henry Lee who was ill. The Hackney representatives were three unnamed Trustees and one professor, W.H. Bennett.

subscribers, and that opposition to their plans was carried by a vote of twenty-five to thirteen. They therefore issued a policy statement¹⁰ explaining why they proposed to remove from Cheshunt. Recognizing that departure from Cheshunt would be painful, they thought there were reasons why it was desirable and indeed inevitable. This is too long to quote in full, but it is an interesting illustration of the problems encountered by a small theological college. They explained that the standard course consisted of three years for a London Arts degree, two years for what was called the "Senatus Academicus course" and one year for "post graduate work in various fields". This had worked well, but the limited resources meant that the course had been identical for many regardless of ability: "It has always had to be the same grind, at the same pace, for weak and strong alike, and the result to some has been almost disaster." The standards demanded by universities had risen, and unless more could be provided men would go elsewhere:

To some this prospect brings no dismay; it is merely academic and they do not care for academic distinctions, and fret against academic requirements. No doubt good work can be done without troubling about the University at all equipped as Cheshunt has been. But the issue must be clearly faced. Do the Cheshunt constituency deliberately consider that the needs of the Churches are best met by their College giving up its attempt to hold its own place, and taking a lower position than its old-time compeers, and are they content that it stands on the same level as the Nottingham Institute? There is much to be said for a graded organisation of our Colleges, so long as some are content with Christian humility to take the subordinate positions. About one thing there can be no question. Academically, unless its resources are enormously increased, Cheshunt College cannot continue to hold its honoured place in the front rank of Free Church colleges.

In a sense it is curious that this issue should have arisen at this particular point in time, since the academic possibilities for Cheshunt students had just improved:

In 1900 the University of London was reorganised. Cheshunt now became a theological class of the divinity faculty, rather than a constituent college, and prepared students for the new B.D. degree instead of the more general B.A. One might have expected this to benefit the college, since the B.A. course had demanded a wide range of study and had not generally been taken. In practice the students found the new B.D. which they were all to take a difficult exam., especially as the college was so distant from the other classes in the faculty.¹¹

There is no obvious way to assess the calibre of the students at this period. Their

10. The statement is inserted between pages 43 and 44 of the minutes.

11. S.C. Orchard, *Cheshunt College* [ND], p. 15.

performance in examinations is recorded in a vast leather-bound volume covering the period from 1880 to the removal to Cambridge and still less than half full.¹² Four (Evan Rees, Henry R. Moxley, W.E.H. Organe BA, and Edward Hall) were "Exit men", for whom there are no marks (except for the Christmas examinations for Hall), but the comment is made: "Have diligently attended classes at New College with satisfactory testimony from Dr. Pryce". The marks that are recorded range from 75% to 48% (totalling and averaging marks for subjects), except for Egerton Crookall, who achieved only 32% at Christmas and 46% in summer. In any case there is no way of knowing what the standard internal marks represent.

Apart from such comparisons with other colleges, the memorandum goes on, the main point is that a larger staff would be needed to meet the growing requirements, and this would be possible only in some form of partnership. If the present opportunity were lost it might be many years before there was another. It was untrue to say that this change would mean that Cheshunt would be "destroyed": it would live on elsewhere.

A table mainly of financial statistics followed. The Trustees wished to call attention to five facts:

1. The fall in subscriptions, from £493 in 1892/3 to £384 in 1902/3.
2. The insignificant sum raised by subscriptions and collections: in the former year 24% of total income, in the latter 21%.
3. The growth in the annual deficit, from £16 to £213 in the same period.
4. The increase in the cost per student per annum, from £85 to £111.
5. The decrease in the number of students, from thirty-three to twenty-one.

To try to found a new Cheshunt College elsewhere would be impracticable. The financial difficulty alone would be insuperable, the Trustees asserted: "What sane man of business would give a sovereign towards the erection of a new theological college?"

With a nice symmetry there were five arguments in favour of the proposal to merge with Hackney:

1. Hackney was founded by the Revd. John Eyre, an old student of Cheshunt.
2. The educational needs would be met by the union proposed.

12. Cheshunt archives C/8/15.

3. The students would become part of a wider community involving not only Hackney but in certain respects Regent's Park College also.¹³
4. Village churches served from Cheshunt could still be served from London.
5. The removal to London would strengthen Free Church witness there and win additional support.

Following this initiative things moved on smoothly for a time. Application was made to the Board of Education for a scheme permitting joint working with Hackney. But then on 27 July 1904 a cloud appeared: Mr. Lovett was instructed to ascertain as soon as possible whether Dr. Forsyth would consent to sign the Articles. This refers to the Articles derived ultimately from the Countess of Huntingdon and containing an uncompromising statement of eighteenth-century Calvinism. Evidently Forsyth raised difficulties, since we find next an attempt to persuade the Board of Education, acting in its capability as overseer of educational charities, to "modify the rigid interpretation of the doctrinal sections of the Deed of Trust of the College." Whitehouse's biographer attributes the unwillingness of the Board to agree to this change to nervousness arising from the very recent judgment by the House of Lords in the matter of the "Wee Frees". She comments: "One more case of the dead hand of the past crushing down the vitality of the present."¹⁴ There was also correspondence with the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, which naturally saw itself as the guardian of the Huntingdon tradition.¹⁵

The effect of these negotiations was that all suggestion of uniting with Hackney in London suddenly disappeared from the minutes. Instead, on 21 December 1904 we find a totally new proposal, or rather pair of proposals:¹⁶

Mr. Lovett reported on an informal and unofficial interview which he had had with the Rev. J.B. Figgis of Brighton, who called upon him at 65 St. Paul's Churchyard, and in which the idea of removing the College to Cambridge was discussed and also a suggestion which had been made by the Rev. F.B. Meyer¹⁷ that the college should be removed to the

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13. This was the Baptist College, subsequently moved to Oxford, but retaining its original name.
 14. *Whitehouse*, p. 76.
 15. *Minutes*, p. 58.
 16. *Minutes*, p. 74.
 17. Meyer was arguably the most prominent Baptist of his generation. It is a comment on the sense of Free Church unity, or at least closeness, that he should have been involved in these discussions.

neighbourhood of Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road with the Rev. J.D. Jones¹⁸ of Bournemouth as Principal.

The next week Lovett suddenly died, but the new plans continued to be considered. In January 1905 it was reported that various people whose views had been canvassed favoured the Cambridge proposal, and a letter was read written by Lovett just before his death "in which he spoke not unfavourably of the Cambridge scheme."¹⁹

James Brown in reporting also said he had seen Professor Johnson, who had responded in true academic fashion by giving him "comparative estimates of advantages and disadvantages as between Oxford and Cambridge", a comparison one would dearly like to possess.

As the new idea began to take off Whitehouse complicated matters by resigning again. Again the event took a characteristic form. On 9 February 1905 we read:

Mr. James Brown reported that he heard that (at a private meeting called by Dr. Whitehouse for prayer, at the College during the previous week) Dr. Whitehouse had announced his resignation of the Principalship of the College at Midsummer. It was decided that Mr. Brown should write to him privately and unofficially, asking him to state what his feelings were on the subject and what he really wished to do, as the Trustees had understood that he had arranged with the late Mr. Lovett to remain for a short period.²⁰

But in a letter Whitehouse reiterated his intention to resign.

By March 1905 Johnson had visited Cambridge three times to spy out the land, as well as visiting Oxford at least once, and he was reimbursed expenses of £2.16.00 [£2.80] to cover these, which seems very modest even for an age before inflation really took off.²¹ It was resolved that because of vacancies on the Trust no decision should be taken about the future of the College, but at the same meeting, in apparent contradiction, it was decided to apply to the Board of Education for a new scheme and to remove the college to Cambridge at the earliest opportunity, in rented accommodation till a new building could be erected. Whitehouse was to be asked to remain in office at Cheshunt if the college needed to continue there for the moment, or to move to Cambridge as "First Tutor", teaching Hebrew, Old Testament exegesis, "and any other similar subject which might be necessary", whatever that might imply. He at once agreed to all this, willingly giving up the office of Principal and receiving a salary of £300 per annum.²²

18. Jones was Meyer's equivalent among Congregationalists: prominent in every aspect of the denomination's life; not least in raising funds.

19. *Minutes*, 11 Jan 1905, p.80.

20. *Minutes*, p. 84.

21. *Minutes*, p. 88.

22. *Minutes*, p. 91.

In dealing with the legalities involved the Trustees also grasped the doctrinal nettle, by seeking authority to apply to parliament for a modification of the Fifteen Articles, "and the omission of the Abhorrence Clause contained in the Trust Deed in order to remove the serious obstacle presented by them to obtaining President, Tutors and Students to join the College."²³ The Abhorrence Clause was of course an uncomplimentary reference to the Pope which no longer seemed appropriate at the beginning of the ecumenical century.

One, though hardly decisive, argument in favour of the move to Cambridge, was that the students were "vigorous advocates" of the move.²⁴

The move to Cambridge was effected. It is a tribute to the foresight of the Trustees in 1905 that the Scheme they drew up largely remained in force till Cheshunt joined forces with Westminster College in 1967 (significantly something no-one contemplated in 1905) and in large measure is still the legal basis of the Cheshunt Foundation. The government of the College by a very small group of Trustees and a larger committee, which sometimes led to conflict, was replaced by a board of Governors representing various interests. The 1905 college report²⁵ lists no fewer than twenty-five. Two represented the University of Cambridge (but both were members of Emmanuel Congregational Church); three the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion; four the Congregational Union of England and Wales (but one was W.B. Selbie, Emmanuel's minister); two the Cheshunt Union of Old Students; six the subscribers; one the teaching staff (Ernest Johnson); and a further seven were co-opted "being former Trustees". The Trustees of the Connexion made the point that they should have five or six representatives, but then settled for three, which their representation remains. The present Cheshunt Foundation is administered by a Board of Governors more or less identical in formal terms, although of course successor bodies replaced the Congregational Union and the LMS, and not all bodies entitled to representation have taken up their full quota.

The college at Cheshunt passed into the hands of the Church of England, and served for many years, as Bishop's College, for the training of Anglican priests. The Countess of Huntingdon would not necessarily have disapproved – so long as they were doctrinally sound.

Various lessons might be drawn from this story. It is an advantage to have a theological college Principal with a thick skin, though it is uncertain whether this ideal is always attained. The minutes record much more about finance than about theology: this is the kind of matter on which a body of Trustees, particularly living at a distance from the college, is likely to be eloquent and at least in some degree expert. In the formulation of schemes, however well-planned, hitches arise. It might have been anticipated that Peter Taylor Forsyth would look very closely at a theological document drawn up in the heat of the Calvinistic controversy of the eighteenth-century, but not that Lovett would collapse and die in the middle of

23. *Minutes*, pp. 91f.

24. Orchard, p. 15.

25. Cheshunt archives C9/8/15.

master-minding the removal of Cheshunt. Least of all could it have been anticipated that to schedule the opening of the splendid building created for Cheshunt in Cambridge for 1914 would turn out an unfortunate piece of time-tabling.

The subsequent independent history of Cheshunt was never very easy: Stephen Orchard's brief history gives due attention to the successes; as is only appropriate from one of the more distinguished alumni, but one senses a continuing concern about shortage of students and money, and perhaps not every choice of President (to use the customary Cheshunt term) was equally inspired. In some ways Cheshunt seemed to do as well without one: Ernest Johnson and much later Cyril Blackman carried the college as Resident Tutor. Still, this is not an obituary notice; merging its work with Westminster College in 1967 the Countess's college survives and serves in new ways as the Cheshunt Foundation.

The town of Cheshunt lies in a relatively barren academic area, though to-day the presence of the headquarters of Tesco might provide at least some convenient shopping facilities. The difficulty of maintaining a theological college with what was really an inadequate basis is very evident; the subsequent history of Cheshunt in Cambridge illustrates that further, with pleas for increased financial support to save the college recurring from time to time, as well as regrets at the small intake of ministerial students, partially countered by opening courses to others, such as industrial students. When the decision was taken to move across Cambridge and share premises and activities with Westminster some at least of the same considerations arose. But the Trustees of 1905 did well in the circumstances, handling the prickly personal relationships tactfully and planning for the future in a way which proved far-sighted.

STEPHEN MAYOR

THE COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION AND ITS ARCHIVAL LEGACY

This paper celebrates the generosity of the Council for World Mission.¹ The Council has placed in the keeping of the School of Oriental and African Studies, an archive which includes the records of the missionary enterprise known for the greater part of two centuries as the London Missionary Society, as well as those of the Presbyterian Church of England's Foreign Missions Committee, and the Commonwealth Missionary Society. It has expressed its intention of continuing to

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1. I am particularly grateful to Rosemary Seton, the Archivist, and her staff at the School of Oriental and African Studies, and to Nils Kristian Hoimyr, Archivist, at the Norwegian Mission Society, Stavanger, for help in preparing this paper, originally delivered as a Special Lecture in the Assembly Hall, at the School of Oriental and African Studies, 18 March 1999.

transfer its papers to the School's Archives and so steadily to update the collection, which currently runs to 1970. It has also most handsomely endowed the School with the means to conserve and make available that archive for the future.

If celebration on such an occasion seems natural to us as, in one way or another, inheritors of the collections, it is salutary to recall that archives have not always been a source of good cheer. Even the London Missionary Society's own historians have sometimes had a tough time with its records. Richard Lovett, for instance, author of the Society's centenary history, was perfectly frank in his Preface. Referring to himself, he wrote "Had he realized six years ago that the work would have demanded *half* the patient research, the weary plodding through letters, reports, books, and material of many kinds, and the prodigal expenditure of time it has required, he would never have dared to undertake it. ...Friends", Lovett went on, "have from time to time expressed to him their gladness in anticipation of the volumes. If their joy in studying them is but a tithe as keen as his in saying farewell to them he will be amply repaid..."² However, Lovett at least completed his two mammoth volumes, which was more than his predecessor, William Ellis, had managed to do when entrusted with the chronicler's task ahead of the golden jubilee in 1845. What had then been planned and subscribed to as a single volume was overwhelmed by Ellis's absorption in the archival detail. Although Ellis eventually promised under pressure to keep his account within two volumes, only a first volume ever appeared, and that was largely taken up with the Pacific, Ellis's own first love and scene of the Society's earliest work.³ Ellis and Lovett both had to suffer the reproach implicit in the Directors' commissioning of separate brief and complete histories so that the public should have something in hand on the actual day of commemoration.⁴

Wrestling with the Society's history and archives became no easier with time. Lovett had already tried to distance himself from history as written by Ellis, with its sentimental benevolence and highlighting of evangelical inspiration in the biographical detail. "History possesses a charm as a narrative of thrilling episodes in the past", Lovett wrote, "But missionary history is hardly worth the telling, unless it leads the reader to bring the experience of the past to bear upon the missionary problems of to-day, and enables him to solve the problems of to-day by the insight and the instinct ...that reward the patient investigator into the deeds and purposes of those who have gone before." Here was an expression of the

2. Richard Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society 1795-1895*, 2 vols., (London, 1899), p.vi.
3. William Ellis, *The History of the London Missionary Society, Vol. 1* (London, 1844); Ellis to A. Tidman, 20 Sept. 1844, CWM Home Correspondence Box 8 Folder 8 [hereafter 8/8 etc].
4. *Brief Review of the London Missionary Society from its formation, September 1795. Presented by the Directors at the annual meeting... 1845* (L.M.S., London, 1845); C. Silvester Horne, *The Story of the L.M.S.* (London, 1895); Ellis to J.J. Freeman 27 July 1844, CWM Home Correspondence 8/7.

administrative concern with "the science of missions", an intellectual pursuit increasingly in vogue at the turn of the century.⁵ However, this functional, analytic purpose of Lovett's account was overshadowed by the continuing preoccupation of his age with individual personalities; this was demonstrated, as he put it, in his own "attempt to do full justice to quiet and diligent workers, and to unobtrusive but faithful service" as well as to the great names which had distinguished the Society's nineteenth-century record.⁶

In this century, Norman Goodall's volume for the Triple Jubilee of 1945 was planned in the aftermath of the wartime bombing of the Society's headquarters in 1941. Goodall felt far more acutely than Lovett this tension between the detail of the archival record and the thematic illumination of developing problems faced by the Society. In line with convention, his account "was commissioned as a supplement to Lovett, with the intention of bringing the 'standard' history of the Society up to 1945", but Goodall himself felt drawn to comment on missionary policy far more than his predecessors. Constrained by his brief to include a mass of local and personal detail, "much of it domestic to the L.M.S." in order to furnish "an account of what happened", he nevertheless struggled through twelve years of a very busy life to place his material "in the context of a more general study."⁷ The volume which was finally published in 1954 was in many respects an uneasy compromise, reflecting both Goodall's awareness of the pressures for change in missionary activity and modes of commemoration, and his inability to respond to them more than so far. Nevertheless, his book succeeded in pushing to the fore questions of interest for the work of Western missions as a whole during the period.

Religious and ecclesiastical rethinking forged ahead in the late 1950s and 1960s. In Britain, the emergence in 1966 of the Congregational Church of England and Wales, and its subsequent union with the Presbyterian Church of England, brought into being the United Reformed Church in 1972. Global change, marked by the end of the European colonial empires, required both redefinition of the relationship between the British churches and those overseas, and the complete reconstitution of Congregational missionary activity. As the old vision of Britain as the dynamic centre of missionary initiative steadily faded, so in 1966 the L.M.S. and the Commonwealth Missionary Society ceased to exist. In place of the traditional voluntary missionary society, mission and church were integrated in the new Congregational Council for World Mission. This in its turn rapidly developed as an international body. Linking Congregational and Reformed Churches worldwide, the CCWM was rechristened in 1977 as the Council for World Mission.

5. Stephen Maughan, " 'Regions Beyond' and the National church: Domestic Support for the Foreign Mission of the Church of England in the High Imperial Age, 1870-1914" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1995).
6. Lovett, Preface, pp. vii-viii, ix.
7. Norman Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society 1895-1945* (Oxford University Press, London, 1954), Preface, pp. xi-xii.

For the bi-centenary in 1995, an altogether different kind of commemorative volume was thus both appropriate and finally inevitable.⁸ The CWM commissioned not a single author but an editor and a team of contributors. Regional chapters were written by individuals with first-hand experience as missionaries in their field, sometimes with reference to central archival material but reliant on many and varied sources. These drafts, the editor explained, were then “discussed with national colleagues to ensure that no single viewpoint determines the selection and interpretation of such a large body of source material”. Chronological completeness was abandoned, and, for reasons provided by the General Secretary in his Preface, “it was decided to end the present story at 1977”, the date of the CWM’s emergence. Sensitive to difficulties which, as far as one can see, had hardly touched earlier chroniclers of the Society, “it was felt that the period 1977-95 is still a history in the making for the Council for World Mission, and therefore too close for a proper historical evaluation to be made”.⁹

Against this background of scholars’ shifting and sometimes problematic relationships with the CWM archive over more than two centuries,¹⁰ it is worth considering at least some aspects of the case for its preservation. Why keep it? Has it not become long since unmanageable and incomprehensible as a whole? What is special about it that warrants endowment? Is there any need to write more about the past activities of the LMS? At least some of the answers to such questions necessitate a look, first, at the Society itself, and then at the character and content of the archive.

There has never been any shortage either of admirers ready to emphasise, or of claims to be made for, the importance and distinctiveness of the London Missionary Society. Speaking for many others, the well-known historian of missions, Kenneth Scott Latourette, once drew up a list of its outstanding characteristics. Established in 1794-95, the LMS was one of the oldest Protestant missionary societies; it was also one of the largest agencies in the Protestant missionary movement, having sent out almost 2,400 missionaries as well as their wives in the period down to 1923. It was not only very much to the fore in promoting evangelization in South Africa and India but had led the missionary penetration of the South Pacific, China and Madagascar. The *Register* of its missionaries contained some of the most famous missionary names of all – such as Robert Morrison, David Livingstone, and James Chalmers. Finally it had produced outstanding missionary leaders – Arthur Tidman, Ralph Wardlaw Thompson, Frank Lenwood, and Norman Goodall – and some of the most widely-known and admired members of new or “younger” churches – K.T. Paul and Paul

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8. Bernard Thorogood (ed.), *Gales of Change. Responding to a shifting missionary context: the story of the London Missionary Society 1945-1977* (WCC Publications, Geneva, 1994).
 9. *Ibid.*, p. 1; D. Preman Niles, “Preface”, p. viii.
 10. Other manuscript histories and notes which never saw the light are preserved in CWM Home Odds 2 and 1/2.

Daniel in India, and in China Cheng Ching-yi and Dr. Wu Yi-fang. Taken as a whole, Latourette concluded, "the record of the London Missionary Society constitutes a major chapter in the history not only of Christian missions but also of the entire Church".¹¹ Some years later, when Max Warren suggested that "any serious student of modern history must find some explanation of the missionary expansion of the Christian Church", the history of the LMS was clearly seen as likely to throw light on the subject.¹² More than fifty years on, these are not judgments from which contributors to the current *Oxford History of the Christian Church* would seem to dissent.¹³

Apart from these yardsticks, however, there was one hallmark which distinguished the LMS from all other societies. In May 1796, meeting at the Castle and Falcon Inn in Aldersgate Street in the City of London, the Directors agreed on what became known as the Society's "fundamental principle":

As the union of God's People of various Denominations, in carrying on this great Work, is a most desirable Object, so, to prevent, if possible, any cause of future dissention, it is declared to be a fundamental principle of the Missionary Society, that our design is not to send Presbyterianism, Independency, Episcopacy, or any other form of Church Order and Government (about which there may be differences of opinion among serious Persons), but the Glorious Gospel of the blessed God to the Heathen: and that it shall be left (as it ever ought to be left) to the minds of the Persons whom God shall call into the fellowship of his Son from among them to assume for themselves such form of Church Government, as to them shall appear most agreeable to the Word of God.¹⁴

It is well known that it proved impossible for the Society to maintain this early unqualified non-denominationalism. As other missionary societies formed around their own churches or denominational allegiance, so in 1818 The Missionary Society, as it had been called, joined the distinctive prefix "London" to its name, and emerged largely by default as the vehicle of Congregationalist and Presbyterian missionary enterprise. Many who extolled the principle of freedom in choice of church order also failed to understand the extent to which the patterns of their own teaching and organization carried exclusive messages about the right relationship of church and community. As Norman Goodall suggested, "Protestant

11. Latourette, "Foreword" to Goodall, *History of the London Missionary Society*, p. v.
12. M.A.C. Warren, *The Missionary Movement from Britain in Modern History* (London, 1965), p. 10.
13. For example, Adrian Hastings, *The Church in Africa 1450-1950* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 175-6, 246, 295.
14. Lovett, I, pp. 49-50. Every *Annual Report* contained a statement of the Fundamental Principle. It was incorporated as Article III into the Plan and Constitution of the LMS, which replaced the earlier Regulations in 1870.

churches have been notoriously absent-minded about power. Because they live by goodwill and proclaim Christ-likeness it is too easily assumed that no one holds, enjoys or misuses great power over others.”¹⁵ Nevertheless, the LMS’s original commitment to the fundamental principle continued to encourage in it an unusual degree of openness towards other missionary societies and other cultures, a marked sympathy with the practice of comity and cooperation with others in the mission field, and a particular interest in the promotion of district councils and church union overseas.¹⁶ Thus the LMS was prominent in such enterprises as the London Secretaries Association (1819), the Religious Tract Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the International Missionary Council, and later the World Council of Churches. It also provided an important input to the growing missionary responsiveness to non-Christian religions after 1900, represented by “fulfilment theology”.¹⁷

These characteristics were not simply manifested in but were further enhanced both by the flexibility inherent in the LMS’s organization as a “voluntary society”, and by practical injunctions which were eventually written into its *General Instructions to Missionaries*. The Fundamental Principle inescapably carried implications for the relationships both of missionaries to converts and church members, and of church with state.¹⁸ In few places is this more clearly spelt out than in the General Instructions finally agreed in 1873, where Article 12k is nothing if not emphatic:

Do not ANGLICISE YOUR CONVERTS. Remember that the people are foreigners. Let them continue as such. Let their foreign individuality be maintained. Build upon it, so far as it is sound and good; and Christianize, but do not needlessly change it. Do not seek to make the people

15. Goodall, *History of the London Missionary Society*, p. 246.
16. A major study of the LMS’s approach to the practice of “identification” with other cultures, is Jonathan J. Bonk, “‘All things to all men’. Protestant Missionary Identification in Theory and Practice, 1860-1910. With Special Reference to the London Missionary Society in Central Africa and Central China”, (Ph.D. thesis, Aberdeen, 1984). For LMS members’ roles in the emergence of the South India United Church in 1908, the Church of South India (1947) and the Church of Christ in China: Goodall, pp. 86-95, 117-41, 213-22, and Bengt Sundkler, *The Church of South India: The Movement towards Union, 1900-1947* (London, 1945).
17. F.S. Piggin, “The Social Background, Motivation, and Training of British Protestant Missionaries to India, 1789-1858” (Ph.D. thesis, London, 1974), pub. as *Making Evangelical Missionaries* (Sutton Courtenay, 1984); R. Rouse and S.C. Neill (eds.), *A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948* (London, 1954), chaps. 6-7; W.R. Hogg, *Ecumenical foundations: A History of the International Missionary Council and Its Nineteenth-Century Background* (New York, 1952).
18. For the implications of voluntary societies, Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Modern History* (New York and Edinburgh, 1996), ch. 18.

Englishmen. Seek to develop and mould a pure, refined, and Christian character, native to the soil.¹⁹

In the attitude of the Society and its missionaries to political authority, an aversion in principle to anything which savoured of establishment influence or control was also equally marked. In the official guidance offered for "the conduct of Theological Institutions", for example, it was laid down that "In the choice of students, state-nomination, and the urgency of men of rank and authority, must be firmly, yet wisely resisted."²⁰

The Society's expressed principles and commitment have sustained often remarkable degrees of activism against injustice and of openness to the needs and contributions of others from outside the LMS itself. This was expressed in support of the interests of those indigenous Christian communities they wished to nurture; in protest against local governments, colonial authorities, and other influential interest groups who wished to control and exploit local peoples; in the encouragement given to the efforts of other missionary societies; and in adaptation of the Society's own methods to the needs of different fields.

The nineteenth-century history of southern Africa provides many illustrations of these characteristic tendencies. David Livingstone, for example, was one early advocate of reliance on African evangelists, urging the Society's Directors to allow him to

make the most of whatever agents we can find. Although desirable that they have somewhat more than decided piety, it is, I conceive, not absolutely necessary. Evils may arise from their ignorance and mistakes, but good will certainly be done, and I should hope it will abide, while the effects of their deficiencies will vanish before more efficient agents whom they themselves may now be instrumental in partially preparing.²¹

Livingstone went on: "The more I see of the country, ... I feel the more convinced that it will be impossible if not impolitic for the church to supply them all with Europeans. Native Christians *can* make known the way of life."²²

In the face of white South African opposition, a different tradition of LMS activism, rooted in an egalitarian conviction of the African's capacity for improvement and directed at the character of colonial government, was sustained by a succession of LMS figures such as Dr. Van der Kemp, James Read, Dr. John Philip, and later John Mackenzie and John S. Moffat. Through their defence of

19. *General Regulations for the Guidance of the English Missionaries of the Society* (London, 1873), Pt. II General Instructions for Missionaries, Article 12k.

20. *Ibid.*, Pt. II. 3. On the Conduct of Theological Institutions, para 7.

21. Livingstone to J.J. Freeman, 23 Sept. 1841, in I. Schapera (ed.), *Livingstone's Missionary Correspondence 1841-1856* (London, 1961), p. 3.

22. 3 July 1842, *Ibid.*, p. 19.

African rights to land, trade and labour, they worked to preserve what they could of the independence of African peoples such as the Khoi and Tswana, often by attempting to mobilize imperial authority against the ambitions of local settler communities.²³ The Protestant missionary enterprise as a whole and the interests, peace and prosperity of southern Africa's peoples were also to be advanced by co-operation between different missionary societies. Thus Dr. Philip welcomed the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society and assisted in their early work with the Sotho in 1833; he encouraged the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and played an important part in shaping the early activities of both the Berlin and Rhenish societies.²⁴ Robert Moffat and others in the Society seem to have been instrumental in influencing the choice of Natal as the Norwegian Mission Society's sphere in 1843-44. Relations with foreign societies and individual missionaries naturally had their ups and downs, but remained a significant feature of LMS work in many different places. In continuation of this tradition a century later, at the end of the Second World War, collections were being made in LMS missions around the world for the "Help Holland Fund."²⁵

In recent years, and especially for the period to about 1850, historians have developed a much more suitable understanding than many contemporaries were ever able to attain, of the constraints inseparable from the colonial context within which the missionaries worked. Scholars are now much more aware of the consequences of missionaries' frequently imperfect understanding of African or other indigenous societies; and of the ability of local people – both white and non-white – to exploit the missionaries' presence to their own advantage.²⁶ As a result of this work, among the dominant features of missionary activity have been found "inconsistent... fickle and contradictory" behaviour, persistent compromise and

23. See Greg Cuthbertson, "Missionary Imperialism and Colonial Warfare: London Missionary Society attitudes to the South African War, 1899-1902", *South African Historical Journal* 19 (1987), 93-114; and, most recently, for the role of the LMS in Bechuanaland in the 1890s, Neil Parsons, *King Khama, Emperor Joe and the Great White Queen* (Chicago and London, 1998).
24. For Philip's role with the ABCFM, see Andrew Porter, "North American experience and British Missionary Encounters in Africa and the Pacific, c.1800-1850", in M. Daunton and R. Halpern (eds.), *Empire and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples* (London, 1998), pp. 345-63.
25. For examples of less harmonious relations, see Karel Schoeman (ed.), *The Missionary Letters of Gottlob Schreiner 1837-1846* (Cape Town, 1991); Joseph Mullens to Secretary, Norwegian Missionary Society, 16 December 1871, and the annotated copy of *London Missionary Society: Norwegian Mission to Madagascar* (London, 1872), in General Sekretariatet Box 4/6, and Box 56A pp. 28-29, NMS Archives (Stavanger); "L.M.S. Triple Jubilee Celebrations in the Telugu Field held in Jammalamadugu, 22nd and 23rd September 1945", typescript, CWM Archives, IN/64/105.
26. See, for instance, Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*, 2 vols. (Chicago, 1991 and 1997); Timothy Keegan, *Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the Racial Order* (Cape Town and London, 1996).

departure from principle. These characteristics have been explained as the inevitable consequences of the powerlessness of missionaries caught in a colonial situation, features which result from missionaries' "entrapment betwixt colonizer and colonized, between the dominant and the subordinated".²⁷

As with evidence of the LMS's eventual susceptibility to denominationalism, so it is hardly cause for surprise if members of the LMS were at times no more nor less able than those of other societies to steer clear, for instance, of the racialism and convictions of cultural superiority especially characteristic of nineteenth-century society. In parallel fashion, the Society and its missionaries frequently abandoned the principle of political non-involvement if there seemed no other way to promote or protect their work. In practice, the implications of the Fundamental Principle had always to be balanced against the objects of the Society as defined from the beginning in its *Regulations*. The Society's members did not always think carefully about distancing themselves from the seductive attractions of patronage by those in government or other positions of power; at other times, despite their best efforts, they simply found themselves inextricably caught up in political difficulties.

The range of such entanglements was enormous. In Sydney, en route for Tahiti in 1816, the good-natured William Ellis warmed immediately to Governor Macquarie's present of 100 ears of wheat, retailing home how "it was brought to this country by the Governor who when travelling through Arabia plucked it as he walked through the fields, near the spot which it is supposed was formerly the Garden of Eden".²⁸ If these were early days and this was the deference of innocence and naiveté, altogether more problematic was the world, say, of the 1950s, where the interplay of race and politics seemed likely to overwhelm the Society's work. In South and Central Africa, against the backcloth of Nationalist policies inside the Union and the complications of the Seretse Khama affair, that "marriage which shook the empire", the Society's Secretary, R.K. Orchard, had few illusions as to the difficulties it faced. He defined the central issue in stark terms:

The urgent need to create one Church, free from racial discrimination and able to be pastorally and evangelically effective amongst an increasingly mobile African and European population, is in considerable tension with denominational responsibilities which are concerned to provide denominational shepherding for their European members wherever they are found in Africa. ... The fragmentation of the Church along both racial and tribal lines is a very grave and imminent peril.²⁹

27. Comaroff, I, p. 286, based on the South African record.

28. William Ellis to George Burder, 10 Dec. 1816, CWM South Seas 2/3.

29. R.K. Orchard to Dr. S.M. Berry, 8 March 1950, CWM AF 40/File 83 B, "Racial Situation. Correspondence 1950". On Seretse Khama, Thorogood, p. 22, is discreet as to the divisions within the Society; for a study of its place in imperial policy, see Ronald Hyam, "The Political Consequences of Seretse Khama: Britain, the Bangwato and South Africa, 1948-1952", *Historical Journal* 29, 4 (1986), 921-947, with references to the LMS and the "marriage" quotation at pp. 921-22.

In striving, for example on Northern Rhodesia's Copper Belt, to realize "in practice as fully and as rapidly as may be possible... the true nature of the Church as a community transcending race and class", the Society and its missionaries found themselves liable to serious internal differences of opinion and open to fierce criticism from every side.³⁰

On this occasion, however, I am not primarily concerned to follow through the equivocations, misunderstandings, and limited or short-lived successes which often attended missionary efforts. Too frequently these have become the preoccupation of scholars concerned to demonstrate once more the often familiar limitations of contemporary perception and comment. If, instead, we start from an acceptance of imperfections and the need for every-day compromises as the norm of missionary existence; if we readily acknowledge the elements of tragedy experienced by many on both sides in the missionary encounter when ideals and practice proved irreconcilable; and if we substantially discount the over-optimistic claims of contemporaries with axes to grind, it then becomes possible to bring principles of church organization and particular missionary theologies back into the picture. Once we recall that missionaries took such issues seriously, two central questions immediately suggest themselves: "to what extent did significant ideological differences exist *between* missionaries and denominations which shaped the pattern of their work and their practical bargains with indigenous societies?", and "what were the roots of these differences?"

Why was it, for example, that, despite often serious divisions over South African issues, the LMS and its associated churches continued to appear far more openly critical and actively committed than other societies on the spot in their defence of African rights until well into the twentieth century?³¹ That there was widely felt to be such a tradition, both associated with the LMS and capable of periodic revival, seems clear enough. Was it also the case, both in southern Africa and elsewhere, that the essential decentralization of LMS congregationalism and the modes of leadership consequently derived from its view of church order, made it easier for local peoples to capture and control the churches, than was the case in episcopal churches?

Faced with such questions, it is time to ask whether what has become the conventional scholarly wisdom – that is, an insistence on the overwhelming importance of local conditions and the irrelevance of missionary theology or strategy to the emergent forms of Christianity and new churches – should be qualified.³² As an issue in the history not only of Christianity's expansion but of

30. R.K. Orchard to A. Baxter, 7 April 1954, CWM AF/27/File 20 "Church in a Bi-Racial Society 1951-54".

31. For introductions to the LMS and twentieth-century developments in southern Africa, Goodall, ch. 4, and Thorogood, ch. 2.

32. Cf. F. Fuglestad and Jarle Simensen (eds.), *Norwegian Missions in African History. Vol. 2 Madagascar* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 53-4; and for the local capture of the church, Paul Landau, *The Realm of the World: Language, Gender, and Christianity in a Southern African Kingdom*, (London, 1995).

Britain's own religious communities and those of the areas where it worked overseas, the extent, character, and impact of the exceptionalism of the LMS remains well worth studying.

The CWM's archive is, and will remain, central to any such study and to a deeper understanding of the Society's influence at the different levels of world, regional and domestic British history. The work of the LMS, the Presbyterian Church of England, and the CWM has inevitably given them a prominent place in the processes whereby not only were the Christian religion and Britain represented to the extra-European world, but many of the world's peoples became in some way familiar to the inhabitants of this country. The Society was, in effect, an agent of what is commonly referred to these days as "globalization", a process and a condition promoted through its own persistent commitment to Christian cooperation and "ecumenism": It is worth turning to consider how the archive inevitably reflects and illuminates those roles of mediator and interpreter.

Much of the archive is taken up with 2,358 boxes of records and letters, plus some 12,000 photographs. It contains incoming letters from missionaries in the field to the Secretaries and the Directors at home; the records of committees, such as the publication committee; the accounts of distant stations written by deputations sent to inspect the work; financial records; the registers of missionaries' children; annual or decennial reviews; and much more. In one sense therefore, the archive is itself a splendidly evangelical phenomenon. Like Lovett's *History* or Stock's four volumes on the Church Missionary Society, it expresses a resolute attention to detail and practical accomplishment. It provides a record of how time and money were spent. A monument to the principle of accountability, it contains the evidence by which all could judge and be judged, and has constituted the necessary basis for periodic reassessments of the societies' progress. As such it has always provided the CWM and its predecessors with a launching pad for prayer and improvement, as well as grounds for future hope.

For all their daunting physical extent, however, the correspondence and administrative records of the LMS are not complete. As with any large organization, there have been accidental survivals, losses and attrition: although, unusually, missionary candidates' application papers have survived, sadly much of the outgoing correspondence to missionaries in the field has been destroyed. More interestingly, administrative requirements and expectations were often at odds with what missionaries would willingly provide. Some members of the Society were alarmed by the archive and the use to which its contents might be put.

David Livingstone was one of those at times reluctant to keep the required journal, and regretted that the selective publication of missionaries' letters sometimes created ill-feeling. "If one man is praised, others think this is more than is deserved, and that they too... ought to have a share. ... In some minds [my letters in the Society's *Chronicle*] produced bitter envy, and if it were in my power I

should prevent the publication of any in future".³³ Others resented the mistakes, inaccuracies, and what they saw as slanted editing in the Society's publications. James Chalmers hated what he referred to as "the begging friar business and the telling of pointed tales"; he thought it "a pity to overstate facts, to make 'striking' missionary speeches. I know a little of the tendency to make a great deal of a little, but I also know its evil effects".³⁴ The views of these men begin to indicate where gaps and evasions may exist in the record, and so point to some of the difficulties which face us all in getting at the reality of mission enterprise via its surviving documents.

We should also remember that neither the Society's missionaries nor its officers ever viewed the written remains as constituting the whole archive. Members of the Society sought constantly to augment the information contained in their own paper-work, trying to extend their knowledge of missionary activity in general and of the lands where they went to evangelize. One consequence of this was the correspondence from the LMS which survives in the archives of foreign missionary societies, such as the American Board in Boston, the Norwegian Mission Society at Stavanger, and the Basel Mission. Another lies in the importance commonly attached to books by individual missionaries – so many of whom were, in Victorian parlance, self-made and essentially self-educated. This was paralleled at LMS headquarters by the extensive Library gradually built up by its organizers. A working library if ever there was one, it was of crucial importance then, and the availability today alongside the Society's papers of its 13,000 books and pamphlets which are now in process of being catalogued, is still of very considerable scholarly value. The Library's East Asian holdings, and the Presbyterian Church of England's records which are particularly strong on China and Taiwan, provide a notable instance of such continuing complementarity.

Although other missionary societies acquired libraries, the LMS commitment to non-denominationalism, and to local preferences in matters of church order, required in particular an understanding of the setting for its missionary work. As a comment on deputation-work by missionaries home on leave in the annual *Report* for 1892 made clear, "there are wider views of the work as a whole which a missionary, telling the story of his own labours, can scarcely be expected to dwell upon, but which need to be set before the intelligence and conscience of Christian people, if any adequate idea of the extent and the requirements of the great enterprise is to be formed".³⁵

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33. To Arthur Tidman, 26 April 1852, in Schapera (ed.), *Missionary Correspondence*, p. 204; to his mother, 14 May 1845, in I. Schapera (ed.), *David Livingstone: Family Letters*, 2 vols., (London, 1959), I p. 121.
 34. J.M. Hitchen, "Formation of the Nineteenth-Century Missionary Worldview: The Case of James Chalmers" (Ph.D. thesis, Aberdeen, 1984), pp. 56, 61-2; also J. Davies to J. Arundel, 22 April 1831, CWM South Seas 8/1.
 35. *Report of the London Missionary Society* (1892), pp. 7-8.

Several kinds of publication helped to develop this sense of context, so essential to the Society's strategic planning, to the involvement of subscribers, and to missionaries' understanding of their own tasks. These include not only the LMS's own *Chronicle*, and its monthly or annual reports, but especially the literature produced by other missionary bodies; accounts of travel, exploration, and studies of non-Christian peoples; and works throwing light on the encounter of western with non-western societies. Occasionally it is possible to glimpse the practical integration of the two parts of the archive, library and correspondence. Letters surviving in the papers of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions at Harvard University are very revealing of the manner in which from the 1820s a succession of Foreign Secretaries went about exchanging and soliciting publications in order to construct their own collection and inform others. In 1836-37, for example, when the depredations of uncontrolled white settlement and commerce were causing widespread concern in missionary and official circles, Ellis obtained from Rufus Anderson at the ABCFM in Boston the gift of a considerable number of books on the North American experience of settler-Indian contacts.³⁶ Donor and recipient anticipated that as a result LMS policies would become better informed and so more effective.

Other accessions were both more fortuitous and substantial. Dr. William Lockhart was the Society's first medical missionary, appointed to China in 1838. He was also an inveterate book collector, and at his death in 1896 bequeathed his large collection to the Society. Accounts of the handing-over ceremony neatly capture the library's various and overlapping functions. Lockhart's books had been listed and the decision was formally taken to print the catalogue "to make known the nature of the Lockhart Library and possibly to make it useful to students and others"; it was also agreed that copies "will be forwarded to Oriental Societies and the leading libraries of the world".³⁷ On the same occasion, items from the collection were introduced to those present to show "how far the Chinese were advanced in certain directions, and how lacking they were in other directions, and gave an idea of what the great mental force bound up in the Celestial Empire might become if only inspired... by the Gospel of Jesus Christ."³⁸

Lockhart was also one of the substantial number of LMS missionaries who

36. See the series Miscellaneous Foreign Correspondence, in the American Board Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University; and Andrew Porter, "The Career of William Ellis: British Missions, the Pacific, and the American Connection", in Alan Frost and Jane Samson (eds.), *Pacific Empires: Essays in Honour of Glyndwr Williams* (Melbourne U.P., 1999).
37. Catharine Lockhart (widow) to Lucy (daughter), 14 Oct. 1896, no. 307 copy, The Lockhart Correspondence, MS 380645/1, SOAS Archive; *Report of the London Missionary Society* (1897), p. 10; Goodeve Mabbs, *Catalogue of Books contained in the Lockhart Library, and in the General Library of the London Missionary Society* (London, 1899).
38. Newspaper report, [*The Times?*], Lockhart Correspondence (n.37) above.

contributed to the Society's Library through their own published work.³⁹ Of the 1,120 missionaries despatched by 1900, it has been conservatively estimated that at least thirteen per cent produced books, and still more than ten per cent even if translation work is excluded. Output ranged from the elementary to the formidably learned, from juvenile hagiography to the humane scholarship of James Legge and J.N. Farquhar, or the medical studies of Andrew Davidson.⁴⁰

The Society's contribution to cultural, ethnographic, and scientific knowledge and education was not simply confined either to its own or to other libraries. Its missionaries and supporters were often avid collectors of the most miscellaneous items – "idols", clothing, carvings, botanical and other natural history specimens. Large numbers of these were sent to the Society's headquarters, where they were gradually assembled in what became the Missionary Museum. Already in 1816, William Ellis can be found writing from Paramatta (New South Wales), that "Mrs. Shelly begs your acceptance of a Warrior's Sash or Breastplate and Club to deposit in the Museum... I have sent you a flying Squirrel skin...".⁴¹ The first published catalogue of the collections appears to date from 1826, and went into later editions. In the 1870s the Museum was one of the sights of the metropolis, remarkable to contemporary guides not least for the claim that "its Tahitian collection rivals Capt. Cook's in the British Museum".⁴²

Whether Ellis's squirrel skin was still among the several specimens of *Galeopithecus* catalogued later in the century is not known. Other items on display, however, ranged from the enormous and symbolically significant to the ostensibly trivial. "A gigantic Idol, twelve feet high covered with bark cloth, ornamented with black zigzag lines, brought from Raratonga", and King Pomare's household gods, dwarfed in every respect Items 62-66 in the African Section, described as "Numerous rows of dried peas, etc".⁴³ Although little more than a bare list, the catalogue linked items wherever possible to their donors, especially if they were well-known missionaries, and provided references to the books in which their origins were mentioned.

Although the Museum was still regularly advertised in 1903, this third dimension of the LMS archive has long since been dispersed. For a long time, however, its contents played an important part in publicising the Society's work

39. William Lockhart, *The Medical Missionary in China: A Narrative of Twenty Years Experience* (London, 1861).

40. See Andrew Walls, *Missionary Movement*, chaps. 14, 16, esp. pp. 189-92, 196-7, 217, for the LMS.

41. Ellis to George Burder, 31 Oct. 1816, CWM South Seas 2/3.

42. *Catalogue of the Missionary Museum, Austin Friars* (London, 1826) and later editions in the CWM Archive; Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects* (Harvard U.P., 1991), p. 155; John Timbs, *Curiosities of London Exhibiting the Most Rare and Remarkable Objects of Interest in the Metropolis, with nearly Sixty Years' Personal Recollections*, (New ed., corrected and enlarged, London, 1876), p. 599.

43. *Catalogue*, pp. 5, 9, 34.

and exhibits were frequently required for various kinds of display. By the 1890s if not earlier, the Museum itself seems to have been frequently on the verge of becoming unmanageable, but was able to find some relief in the growing appreciation of its holdings by other museums and anthropologists. A number of Pacific items were transferred to the British Museum in 1891; 178 African exhibits, mainly “weapons and axes”, were bought by the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford.⁴⁴ Others still, according to the annual *Report* for 1897, were boxed up for the purpose of “loans to illustrate talks and lectures, and for use at missionary exhibitions. Many of these curios are arranged neatly in portable cases, each case containing a small but ample supply for an evening’s profitable use”.⁴⁵ In the years immediately before the First World War, attention seems to have shifted away from in-house exhibits to the much grander spectacle of missionary exhibitions, such as that mounted by the LMS in 1908 under the title “The Orient in London.” The role of such displays and educational activities in shaping British domestic perceptions of the non-European world is of considerable current interest to cultural historians, but their significance is still far from being comprehensively assessed.

If much of this paper has focused on the nineteenth century, it is not least because for the years beyond 1914, much of the history of the LMS has yet to be thoroughly studied. Themes already well-established in the historiography of the nineteenth century – such as the relations of the LMS with other societies and new churches, with political authorities, colonial governments, and local leaders – take on very different forms from the 1930s in the context of war and decolonization.⁴⁶ The contributions of the LMS and CWM to the continuing history not only of education, but of social welfare, aid and development policies overseas, have also barely been considered either for their intrinsic interest or for their wider relevance.

Given the commemorative and celebratory context of this paper, it is also worth observing that among the subjects to which modern historians have recently turned their attention, the practices of “commemoration” have a notable place. In offering

44. Annie E. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (New Haven, London, 1994), p. 148. Coombes appears mistaken in attributing the earliest museum to the Wesleys, p. 168; see n. 42 above.
45. *Report of the London Missionary Society 1897*, p. 10. For the similar practice of the CMS, Coombes, *Reinventing Africa*, pp. 174-8, and chap. 8 for the missionary exhibitions.
46. For example, H.L. Hurst to W. Scopes, 22 Oct. 1945, while commenting on difficulties with the Anglicans, developed his views on bishops – “As a class, I am afraid I don’t like bishops very much, but I do recognise the arduous and delicate nature of their job in these days.” See too debate on the bearing of current events such as the moves towards church union and political independence on the distinction between spiritual and political freedom, developed in correspondence between H.L. Hurst and T. Narasimhan, autumn 1945. Both in CWM Archive, India Correspondence, IN/64/105.

ample material for such study, missionary societies enable us to examine further still the uses made of history and their own archive by missionaries at work in their everyday roles as evangelists, interpreters, and mediators between cultures. I began with the memorials created in Britain by the LMS and CWM's hand-picked historians; let me end with the simultaneous activities of members of the mission themselves in the field. During the Society's local celebrations of the 1945 Triple Jubilee, for example in India, "historical surveys" were seen as having an important role. At the school in Bishnupur (Bengal), "boys and masters staged a play depicting the main incidents in the life of Livingstone". It was not only Livingstone who featured at Murshidabad, for there F.W. Whyte recorded how, in a theatrical performance "representing the various LMS fields, ... the African spokesman in particular managed to create many laughs by a semi-comic characterization". Francis Whyte did not speculate on the origins of Bengali satire of a stereotypical African, but felt obliged nonetheless to reassure London that this "did not ... mar the message and general effect of the play". The general conclusion was rather, wrote Herbert Popley, that Indians involved in the Jubilee "have learnt a lot of what has been done all over the world in these past 150 years. This little incursion into history has I think been very useful, especially coming as it does just at the end of this war period."⁴⁷

Whether for "little incursions into history" or for major research projects, there is surely no doubt that the archive will continue to be well and effectively used. That it can be so deserves the gratitude of us all, both to the present Council for World Mission and to their predecessors. I suspect too that the Director of the School has further reason to be thankful. With the demise of the museum, and the disappearance not only of Ellis's flying squirrel but of Showcase Q containing a "Boa Constrictor in the act of destroying a fawn", at least he will not have to face insistent calls for the head-hunting of a taxidermist-in-residence.

ANDREW PORTER

47. F.W. Whyte to Irene Fletcher, 5 September 1945; F.W. Whyte, "Triple Jubilee in Murshidabad" (typescript); and H.A. Popley to H.L. Hurst, 23 Sept 1945; CWM Archive, India Correspondence, IN/64/105.

**REVIEW ARTICLE:
RETHINKING THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT**

REVIVING THE ANCIENT FAITH: THE STORY OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AMERICA. By Richard T. Hughes, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA and Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 1996.

Denominational history is written from the perspective of the present, no matter how meticulous and objective the research involved. The dominant narrative pushes to the side alternative historical opportunities and possibilities, and occludes other lines of development that have continued into the present. As in history generally, the story usually remembers “winners” before “losers” and “leaders” rather than “followers”. A clear and apparently natural path is charted through the clutter and confusion of the past to arrive at the door of the present. This is true of Stone-Campbell history on both sides of the Atlantic.¹ Thus David Thompson’s influential history of the British Churches of Christ appeared just as the majority within that group completed its evolution from an obscure Victorian sect to join the United Reformed Church, placing a cap-stone on one historical narrative.² American Disciples faced no such obvious disjuncture, and, until David Edwin Harrell’s crucial revisionist work appeared in the mid-1960s, the course was a smooth unfolding of Alexander Campbell’s ecumenical insights in the same direction of modern, liberal Protestant Christianity.³ Richard Hughes’s book offers a new and challenging perspective on the American “restoration” movement, focused on its conservative wing, but with lessons for the historiography of the entire movement.

The fissiparous nature of the Stone-Campbell movement is bound to threaten any settled denominational judgment on its shared history. The large American movement formally divided in 1906 between the Northern *Disciples of Christ* and

1. See M. Casey and D. Foster (eds.), “Introduction”, *The Renaissance of Stone-Campbell Studies* (forthcoming). Barton Stone and Alexander Campbell were the acknowledged “founders” of the American movement, though Campbell became the senior partner and Stone was little known in Britain. This rubric covers a wide and shifting nomenclature, variously Churches of Christ, Disciples of Christ, Christians, Campbellites, Christian Brethren, Reformation movement and so on.
2. D.M. Thompson, *Let Sects and Parties Fall: A short history of the Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland* (Berean, Birmingham, 1980). Thompson’s interpretation underpins the most recent URC account. See D. Cornick, *Under God’s Good Hand: A history of the traditions which have come together in the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom* (URC, London 1998).
3. D.E. Harrell Jr., *A Social History of the Disciples of Christ, Volume 1, Quest for a Christian America: The Disciples of Christ and American Society to 1866* (Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville, Tennessee, 1966); and *The Social Sources of Division in the Disciples of Christ, 1865–1900* (Atlanta Publishing Systems, 1973). See also: “The Sectional Origins of the Churches of Christ” *Journal of Southern History* 30 (August, 1964).

non-instrumental, Southern *Churches of Christ*, leaving the latter far smaller and poorer, as the former inherited the main institutions. Subsequently, between 1927 and 1968, another portion of the Disciples broke away to form the independent *Christian Churches*; while by the 1950s the *Anti-Institutional Churches of Christ* had completed a process of separation from the non-instrumental Churches.⁴ Today, there are many smaller fragments, from small clusters of “One Cup” congregations to the notorious Boston Church of Christ, with its reputation as a campus “cult” in Britain and the United States. According to Hughes, by 1990 the US Churches of Christ tradition alone comprised eight wings and 1,700,000 members. In Britain, we see a similar picture, but in miniature. For instance, of the three Wigan chapels to which earlier generations of my family belonged, only the town-centre Rodney Street completed the transition to the URC, before closing in 1989.⁵ Albert Street, Newtown, joined the *Old Paths* in 1947, a group now linked to the conservative US Churches of Christ though this chapel has closed too. Victoria Road, Platt Bridge, stayed the course with the “association”: but found URC merger a bridge too far, and is now affiliated to the *Fellowship of the Churches of Christ*, a grouping sponsored by the US Christian Churches, centred at Springdale College, Selly Oak, Birmingham. The same pattern repeated itself across the country, with smaller chapels opting out of mainline denominational development. These tiny, isolated, declining British congregations now constitute a meagre constituency for any serious intellectual challenge to the denominational conventional wisdom. Still, it should be remembered that the final URC destination would have seemed highly unlikely around the turn of the century, when British leaders, like David King, were closer to the US conservatives, and liberals were marooned in a small, separate *Christian Association*. At that time, English emigrants to Canada formed their own congregations rather than sup with liberal Disciples.⁶ Even when the leadership began to gravitate towards mainstream Nonconformity, after the Great War, the Baptist Union appeared for decades a more likely destination and at least one important congregation took this route.⁷

4. Non-instrumental Churches refuse to use organs or other musical instruments in worship. I would like to thank Mike Casey of Pepperdine University, California and Steve Wolfgang of Kentucky University for reading an earlier draft of this paper and guiding me through this complex process of division.
5. See P. Ackers, “Who Speaks for the Christians? The Great War and Conscientious Objection in the Churches of Christ”, *JURCHS*, 5 (3) October, 1993, pp. 153-167.
6. P. Ackers, “Exodus: Labour Emigration from the English Churches of Christ to Canada during 1906 and 1907”, *JURCHS*, 6 (1) October, 1997, pp. 33-45.
7. The obvious connection was believer's baptism, and this was the course taken in 1913 by Twynholm, London, the largest church in the association with 671 members. See Thompson, *Let Sects and Parties Fall*, pp. 127 and 138-139. Cornick, *Under God's Good Hand*, p. 164 attributes the general theological change of direction to William Robinson (1888-1963), the first Principal of Overdale College in Birmingham: “He was to have a formative influence on the Churches, re-interpreting their restoration heritage in the light of the ecumenism of the 1920s and the best of current Bible scholarship”.

These similarities and contrasts call for a better understanding of what was going on across the Atlantic, if we are to grasp the American influence in Britain and compare the course of the two movements. In the United States, the sheer size and vitality of the conservative tradition has provided a social and intellectual platform for challenging the Whig version of Stone-Campbell history as the road to denominational maturity, progress, modernisation, respectability and all that. Harrell personified this, since he wrote as a leader in the Anti-Institutional Churches, themselves larger than most British denominations. He broke the smooth water of Disciples history, by tracing division back to the sectional social forces of Slavery and Civil War, and showing how, when confronted with this real crisis of American society, Northern liberals were forced towards a more worldly and denominational theology; while for Southern conservatives the "lessons of defeat" drove them in the opposite direction towards an other-worldly, sectarian worldview. For Harrell, "the twentieth-century Churches of Christ are the spirited offspring of the religious rednecks of the post bellum South."⁸ His second volume developed the economic and social class basis of division, between the backward, impoverished South and prosperous North. In this respect, the Churches of Christ entered the twentieth century as historical "losers", a marginalised voice of the Southern dispossessed. In the words of Richard Hughes, "Churches of Christ, in their separation from the Disciples, lost not only thousands of members and hundreds of church buildings but also their social standing in scores of communities from Tennessee to Texas".

The historical irony, almost a century on, is that Hughes now writes as a Professor at Pepperdine University, Malibu, California – a fabulous, modern campus overlooking the Pacific Ocean and just one of several Churches' Universities – at a time when the former Southern sect has probably overtaken the Disciples in size and influence. In short, this is the story of losers who became winners and thereby can demand that the jury re-examine the past. Hughes's target is a condescending Disciples historiography which has dismissed the Churches as "little more than a splinter group" from the main body. His approach is to "explain the character of the Churches of Christ" both by taking their specific story forward from where Harrell closed, in 1906, and, by going right back to Campbell and Stone, to show that his group represents a continuous development of certain central emphases in their theologies, and not some bizarre and inexplicable deviation. Hence, part one, subtitled "The Making of a Sect", explores the separate conservative legacies of Campbell and Stone, and their subsequent interpreters, such as Walter Scott and Benjamin Franklin, or David Lipscomb, the influential author of the quietist and pacifist manifesto, *Civil Government* (1889). Part two, "The Making of a Denomination", traces the theological evolution of the Churches

8. Harrell, "The Sectional Origins", p. 277, quoted Hughes, p. 16. For a reflection of this in preaching styles, see M. Casey, *Saddlebags, City Streets and Cyberspace: A History of Preaching in the Churches of Christ* (Abilene Christian University Press, 1995) reviewed by the writer in *JURCHS*, 6 (1) October, 1997, pp. 63-64.

of Christ since the formal rift with the Disciples.⁹ If Hughes is reclaiming Stone-Campbell history for the now prosperous conservative wing of the movement, his approach is neither exclusivist or triumphalist. He recognises, for instance, that the liberal Disciples are legitimate heirs to at least one strand of Campbell's thought. Equally, while this is a denominational story, it is far from a self-satisfied, congratulatory one. Rather, Hughes stares back past the bright, shiny modern denomination to the lost idealism of earlier days in the poor South with a sense of "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (*Mark*, 8.36 *King James* version).

Harrell's study depicted a Stone-Campbell "common mind" sundered by the pressure of external social forces. He recognised ambiguities and contradictions in the thinking of the early "restoration" movement, but saw these bonded together by the moderate temper of the founders and early leaders. By contrast, Hughes locates a deep flaw in the cloth of the movement, as this was woven from the emotional, apocalyptic religion of Barton Stone and the rational, this-worldly outlook of Alexander Campbell. They shared Presbyterian roots, "But if Alexander Campbell was essentially a rationalist, Stone was essentially a pietist". To complicate matters further, Campbell's own mind was divided between the "sectarian primitivism" of his early *Christian Baptist* day, and the "rational progressive primitivism" of the later years when the restoration fervour cooled and he trimmed to the larger cause of patriotic, Protestant America. The Campbellite and Stoneite trends came together to strive for a restoration of primitive, New Testament Christianity. Yet each comprehended this project in its own way. The initial victor was Campbell's rationalism, grounded in Scottish common-sense realism, which saw the Bible as a plain text of facts and commands that could be readily understood and followed. Among those, Campbell construed an injunction to believer's baptism for the forgiveness of sins. Whereas Stone's Southern revival had the same general biblical outlook, his "rough" frontier movement was initially looser on baptism and open to ecstatic displays brought on by the spirit. For Campbell, the spirit spoke mainly through the word, and for his sectarian, legalistic followers this soon hardened into the proposition "only" through the word. Stone also entertained an "apocalyptic" outlook which saw all current human institutions as rotten and fallen and awaited God's kingdom, with hints of pre-millennialism. By contrast, Campbell held an optimistic, post-millennial outlook on US society, as progress appeared to be creating the Kingdom of God in nineteenth-century Protestant America.

Crucially, the two leaders also bequeathed contrasting images of what the restoration Church should be. As a result, throughout this entire history, deeper theological differences often surfaced as symbolic disputes over the form of

9. Like Harrell, Hughes leans heavily on the sociology of sect-to-denomination, at times uncritically, thus: "in sociological terms every Christian tradition in America must exist as either sect or denomination". (p. 5). Casey and Foster, *The Renaissance* explores some other interpretative frameworks.

church life, from instrumental music in worship to centralised missionary or, TV evangelistic activity. For Campbell's liberal Northern followers, the church became another denomination within progressive, Protestant America. Amongst his Southern sectarian successors it emerged as an equally permanent sect which claimed to have recreated the one true Christian church and saw itself surrounded by imposters. Within the latter group, but sceptical of its powerful organisational dynamic, the remnants of the Stone tradition fought a rearguard action for a non-denominational vision of a church that was not of this world and would never become complete or permanent on earthly soil. "These two opposing worldviews" - the conservative coalition of Campbellite sectarianism and Stoneite apocalyptic thinking versus Campbellite progressive liberalism - mediated and elaborated by second generation leaders, their colleges and publications, "helped create, by 1906, two well-defined denominations: Churches of Christ and Disciples". More than this, when the apocalyptic and sectarian elements of the conservative coalition began to separate in the interwar years, Hughes returns once more to foundation thinking to explain the main division within the Churches of Christ as they negotiated their own tortured path from sect to denomination.

As with Harrell, there is a social geography of division in Hughes's depiction of this highly decentralised, congregationally-based movement. Congregations grounded in the Stone-Lipscomb tradition were typically found in Kentucky or Tennessee, while Foy E. Wallace's Texas became the stronghold of Campbellite sectarianism. During the inter-war years, the apocalyptic hostility to civil society, linked to non-voting and pacifism, was defeated by a combination of sectarian legalism and patriotic fervour. However, both wings were in motion as growing middle-class, urban respectability created pressures to join mainstream white, American Southern society. Thereby, a conservative religious "tradition of essentially left-wing sympathies for labour, the poor, and the downtrodden" made the rapid transition to full-blown political conservatism. While the Churches' sectarian outlook, as the one true church, inhibited their formal engagement with the religious and political Right, they ran alongside the patriotic defence of White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, American civilisation against the depredations of Communism, Catholicism, Liberalism and Modernism. In Hughes's account, it is only in the post-war, denominational period that we see the Churches shift from the twin axes of their own introverted theology, as TV evangelists and 1960s radicals begin to push aside old internal reference points.

The most intriguing feature of the entire journey is that the Churches were unable, through their own sectarian restoration myth, to acknowledge any sense of this reality or of historical motion itself. In their "historical naiveté", as Hughes puts it, "Churches of Christ began as a sect and evolved into a denomination but denied that they were either". The official view remained that they were neither a sect nor a denomination, but the exact reincarnation of the New Testament church. They had no founder or founding date because they had existed in pristine form since the first century A.D. However, this complacent brand of conservative sectarianism was broken by the new mood of the 1960s, as reformers began to

question the myth and smuggle in styles of worship and theological emphases drawn from charismatic Christianity. An iron emphasis on obeying biblical commands and following the biblical pattern of church government gave way to stress on the influence of the Spirit and greater focus on Christ and the example of his life. Hughes ends on a pessimistic note, arguing that the Churches had demolished the apocalyptic pillar of their faith, the principle source of imagination, grace and radicalism in the tradition, to be left with an arid and outdated literal reading of the bible. As the objective scientific culture that fostered rapid post-war Churches' growth gave away to the post-modern era of subjectivity and emotion, the Churches appeared out of step with the religious mood of America.

Today we find the Churches borrowing from liberal theological scholarship and Pentecostal worship, and trying to resuscitate elements of the apocalyptic tradition.¹⁰ For all this, we should note that most serious Christian theology has worn badly against contemporary concerns, so that today many local congregations, of all denominations, almost dispense with it. And while the Campbellite agenda and epistemology is now arcane (in fact, the notion of inductive scientific knowledge perished long before post-modernism, notably through the work of Karl Popper), the idea of returning to a simple, voluntary, undenominational Christianity, untainted by state power, untrammelled by ecclesiastical hierarchy, and free of dogma, remains an attractive one. The historical irony, dramatised by Christ's own life, death and resurrection, is that earthly losers can be spiritual winners. Thus, for Hughes, Barton Stone's apocalyptic vision, which once appeared most dated by modernisation and out of tune with the age of science, now seems more relevant than the more "rational" and "sensible" but sterile doctrine that followed. In a similar vein, William Blake's ephemeral religion of the "imagination" has a greater appeal to the contemporary age, than the bleak religious consciousness of the chapel with "*Thou shalt not write over the door*".¹¹

Hughes's remarkable thesis is that while social forces played their part in shaping the theological choices of the Churches, the basic ideological trajectory was pre-programmed by the minds of the two founders. Of this he makes no bones:

The Disciples of Christ essentially are the flesh-and-blood embodiment of a *denominational* idea that was present in the mind of Alexander Campbell... On the other hand, Churches of Christ essentially are the flesh-and-blood embodiment of a *sectarian* ideal that was present not only in the mind of Alexander Campbell but perhaps even more fully in the mind of Barton W. Stone.

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10. Hence, the 1998 *Christian Scholars Conference* at Pepperdine University, Malibu, California, included two full sessions on "R.H. Boll and the Apocalyptic Tradition".
- 11: S. Gardner (ed.) *William Blake, Selected Poems* (University of London Press, 1962), pp. 119-120 "The Garden of Love".

Thus, at first glance, Hughes's history appears to be an unfolding of competing zeitgeists; first conservative against liberal, then sectarian against apocalyptic. The detailed argument, however, is often much more complex and subtle than this, as when he traces the tangled thread from George S. Benson's Stone-Lipscomb origins to his virulently pro-business and anti-Communist brand of political conservatism. In such places, the author captures skilfully the unintended consequences of old theological positions in new social milieux and the constantly shifting "elective affinity" between religious ideas and socio-economic pressures.

While Harrell depicted his work as "Social History", Hughes describes *Reviving the Ancient Faith* as "primarily an intellectual history" though one that pays "serious attention to the social setting". If, as another historian, H. Stuart Hughes, argues, intellectual history extends "all the way from the shoddiest journalism to the most abstruse scientific and philosophical investigations", this work covers the full gambit, from the "higher" theology of Campbell, immersed in the philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment, to the more vulgar, "lower" level, popular religion disseminated by some of his followers.¹² In historical method, if not argument, the gap between Harrell and Hughes is narrow. For with the restoration movement, institutional social history and populist intellectual history converge on the same main sources, above all the numerous subscription journals. Hughes quotes the observation of W.T. Moore, a late Victorian Disciples leader, that "the Disciples of Christ do not have bishops, they have editors", and we soon discover that most significant leaders both edited a journal and led a bible college. Other denominations would have directed the author to their "confessions of faith", to the writings of bishops, or to the minutes of national conferences. But, in formal terms at least, the Churches had no hierarchy, no creeds, and no official theological or social policies. There was just the written word and common sense, and a sharp distinction was drawn between matters of biblical "faith" and matters of human "opinion". As the result, Hughes draws his history largely from the pages of the journals. Nevertheless, several factors bring him closer to the mentality of popular religiosity than such institutional sources would normally do. First, the movement began "dirt poor" especially in the South, with slender links to any establishment. Thus, even the editors are far-removed from those Victorian ecclesiastical leaders in the established Churches of England and Scotland, who belonged to a completely different social class from the working poor. Rather, we find numerous "organic intellectuals", especially in the earlier years, like Benjamin Franklin who expressed his "plain and democratic gospel" in a homespun, populist way, blending "his vision of primitive Christianity with lower socio-economic class prejudices", akin to the "workerism" found in sections of the European labour movement. "Franklin helped father within Churches of Christ a radically primitivist and sectarian subtradition rooted in economic deprivation and estranged from the world of culture and education." No one could be further from

12. H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890-1930* (Harvester, Brighton, 1979 Edition) p. 6 and p. 9.

the conventional religious journal editor. Secondly, there is scope for diversity, with rival journals and a reasonable tolerance of different views within these, many rising like woodsmoke from backwoods meeting houses. Membership subscriptions acted as a democratic check on existing journals, with rival and breakaway ones constantly created to champion new or old causes. Finally, when, in this century, an educated middle-class begins to dominate the official organs and smoothly ease the Churches away from former fundamentals, like pacifism, the author cleverly tells the tale from the perspective of the dissidents – quietists and pacifists in the Lipscomb tradition, anti-institutionalists, black Churches and 1960s Radicals – as they fight a rearguard action against a peculiarly conservative kind of modernisation. In these ways, *Reviving the Ancient Faith* provides a uniquely rounded picture of the religious mentality of the Churches.

The great strength of Hughes's approach is that it allows us to follow the theological development of a movement that denied any such thing, revealing the real movers and shakers hiding behind the myth that no ecclesiastical power structure existed. For curious newcomers to Campbellite thought, he takes the theological ideas seriously, explains them clearly, and enables them to discern what was radically distinctive about the mind of the Churches of Christ. This said, his theological determinism may also distort the presentation of the Churches as a people. As we have seen, theology in general, and the tension between the Stone and Campbell traditions in particular, becomes a central explanation for all the major tensions, from the final break with the Disciples in 1906 to the twentieth-century drift to a patriotic political conservatism, even to some development away from this in response to 1960s countercultural radicalism. Seen through the eyes of religious ideologues this is bound to appear the case. After all, all foundation myths are ambiguous and plastic, and it is precisely the role of religious leaders to rake through the ashes of the past to find embers that fire the present. Hughes only appears fully aware of this once the twentieth-century Churches' leadership gallops towards acculturation in the conservative mainstream, while denying any historical development beyond the original rediscovery of the New Testament Church pattern. Yet this is true for other, earlier, religious opinion formers, whose theology becomes, in part, a rationalised response to external social forces, such as Southern poverty after the Civil War, the pressure of political conservatism before and after the Second World War or the boom in evangelical spirit-led religion in recent years. Seeds of some of these existed at the time of Stone and Campbell, but others are quite new and unrelated to the problems the founders encountered. It is one thing to insist that Churches' theology was an important shaping influence in its own right, not reducible to external socio-economic factors; it is quite another to suggest that the foundation plea survives, like a message in a bottle, unsullied by the cultural streams that bore it.

At a still deeper sociological level, I wonder about the meaning of the Churches' version of Christianity for the poor farmers and workers who long dominated its congregations. As the official version ossifies into a legalistic, rational reading of the New Testament as a series of commands and a pattern for lay, democratic

government, we wonder why people became Christians and what it meant for their lives. Clearly, some imprints of the distinctive Campbellite ethos are significant, notably the dry, non-emotional character of the services. Yet this cannot be all, since these people were poor, often desperate and suffering, and faith must have meant more to them than adhering to a set of rules. Moreover, they pored over the Bible more than almost any other group, so some of the “core” Christianity of Jesus – the humanitarian impulse Harrell describes – must have rubbed off and entered into their lives. So even in this decentralised and relatively democratic grouping there is a case to counter the “view from above”, articulated and rationalised in print, by a feel for the “view from below” as experienced in the extemporary atmosphere of the Sunday meeting and expressed in the working world outside. In short, doctrine may become arid, as men close their hearts and engage their brains, but popular religion of the dispossessed must give some expression of, and meaning to, people’s lives. So at the heart of this book lies a mystery of why the Churches of Christ became such a dynamic movement, why it attracted the poor and what it did for them in their lives – what was their religious experience? Neither Hughes nor Harrell really plumbs these social depths. We need some good “oral history” studies.¹³

Reviving the Ancient Faith also suggests to me a number of interesting research themes to extend Thompson’s denominational history, and complete our understanding of the British Churches and their place both in a very different society and within the global restoration movement. One approach is to *deepen* the labour and social history of a movement, which in Britain attracted not poor farmers, but urbanised miners and shoemakers.¹⁴ There are similarities between the theological heritage and lower-class instinct of these two groups, as there are between the self-help culture of the American frontier and the British co-operative and labour movement. But there are also striking differences between the social forces at work on the poor of the rural American south and the urban, industrial British working classes. In 1879, a leading British Congregationalist informed the Evangelical Alliance, “The spirit of the age was socialistic. Individualism is accounted to be selfishness. Men place before themselves the glory of the commonwealth...”¹⁵ In contrast, Socialism does not make the index of Hughes’s

13. Harrell, *Quest for a Christian America*, p. viii argues that, “The vast majority of people in all times have been inarticulate in their own day and remain a silent statistic to the most diligent historian... Not all of the characters discussed were preachers or editors but these leaders are the main players”.
14. See P. Ackers, “West End Chapel, Back Street Bethel: Labour and Capital in the Wigan Churches of Christ c. 1845-1945”, *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 47 (2), April 1996, pp. 274-297; and “The Churches of Christ as a Labour Sect”, Special Note in J. Saville (ed.) *The Dictionary of Labour Biography*, Vol. X (Macmillan, London, forthcoming).
15. Quoted in D.M. Thompson, “The Emergence of the Nonconformist Social Gospel in England” in K. Robbins (ed.) *Protestant Evangelicalism: Britain, Ireland, Germany and America, c. 1750-1950; Essays in Honour of W.R. Ward* (Blackwells/Ecclesiastical History Society 1990) p. 272.

study.¹⁶ Another avenue is to *widen* the British story by telling the full tale of the Old Paths congregations, as Mike Casey has begun to do. A further valuable approach would be to *extend* detailed work on the Churches backwards to the earliest congregation to test the widely-shared view that the British Churches were largely a native construction drawing on indigenous traditions. Linked to this, it would also be interesting to *deconstruct* the social geography of the Churches to see how far different sectional theological traditions reflected the contrasting Protestant cultures of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Welsh-speaking Wales. Finally, there is scope to *compare* entire restoration movements, in Britain, Canada, New Zealand or Australia, or sub-groups, like coal-miners or farmers. In sociological terms, each national road makes an interesting comparison, with certain theological premises held fairly constant, relatively limited direct contamination from overseas (though US evangelists of various stripes were a continual feature of the smaller movements), and contrasting economic, social and political contexts. Finally, there is a need to *expand* the perspective beyond the Chinese walls of the denomination to situate the Churches, both nationally and locally, within the broader socio-economic, political and religious stream of each society and community. People do not live inside any given Church, they rub shoulders with many others in their family, community and country, and through this they change both themselves and their Churches. "Social forces" are crucial after all, but Hughes has shown us the material they have to work on.

PETER ACKERS

16. In the industrialised North the picture was very different, and Harrell includes a fascinating chapter on "The Churches and Organised Labour", with some quotations from Disciples members (before the formal split) who were active trade unionists. See *The Social Sources of Division*, pp. 105-136. Remarkably, Southern conservative editors, like David Lipscomb, expressed a consistent "option for the poor" which extended to endorsing the struggles of the northern organised working classes.

REVIEWS

For the work of ministry: A history of Northern College and its Predecessors. By Elaine Kaye. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1999. Pp. 284. Hardback £29.95.

This is much more than the history of a distinguished theological college. It is the history of Congregationalism transposed into an educational key, rich with the melodies of local pride and denominational constraint, evangelical expectation and theological innovation, regional bloody-mindedness and prophetic vision. It is at once provincial, for Congregationalism's roots were determinedly provincial, and national for from those roots grew a sub-culture of friendships, families and collegial interconnections. As Elaine Kaye shows, its theological institutions lent shape to, and in turn were shaped by, those related worlds. Indeed, their very physical presence tells the story – from the domesticity of the first academies to the quiet ecumenical modesty of Luther King House via the solid classicism of Rotherham and Airedale, the grandiloquent castellated Gothic of Irwin's Whalley Range aristocratically extended by Waterhouse, and the witty gentility of Henry Bryan's Western College, Bristol. Here is variety and depth, adaptation and creativity, set against a rise to respectability which turned to contraction and union in the strange new world of twentieth-century decline.

A history such as this could easily have fragmented into disparate studies of Northern's predecessors – Lancashire, Yorkshire United, Paton, and Western. Chronological architecture prevents that. Dissenting academies are allowed to breathe their own air. The urban colleges stand together. The challenges of the twentieth century starkly face all. National economics provides the narrative that unifies provincial diversity. Congregationalism's greatest strength was its most vulnerable weakness – independence. As Henry Allon pointed out in 1872, provincial vitality could be interpreted as “reckless waste”. Sixteen colleges and thirty-seven professors serving one denomination was gilding the lily. So, a century in which theological institutions were spawned like salmon was to be followed by a long, painful history of closure and amalgamation.

Elaine Kaye allows us to sample the glory and to feel the pain. Congregationalist bazaars which transformed St. James's Hall, Manchester, into a medieval German town for ten days in 1882, commandeered special excursion trains, and raised £12,000 for Waterhouse's extension of Whalley Range are balanced by the foundering of successive commissions on the ministry some thirty years later “on strong local loyalty”. Retrenchment inevitably followed. The surprise is that so many survived for so long – more a tribute to regional doggedness than educational good sense. Dr. Kaye has an acutely sensitive ear for the regional diversity that is such a crucial part of her story. Each of Northern's predecessors had its own flavour, its own style, built of scholarship, worship, and people, and with beguiling narrative simplicity she allows them to be themselves.

None more so than College Principals who, it has frequently been said, were pseudo-episcopal figures, friends, confidants, advisers and guides to students long

before they had left college. They are re-created here in limpid yet disciplined style – Ebenezer Griffith-Jones at Bradford so impassioned by the theological argument whilst driving his car that road safety took a decidedly second place; R.S. Franks of Western naming his hens Aquinas, Alexander of Hales, Bonaventura and Duns Scotus; and that winsome, gentle ecumenist J.B. Paton persuading bishop Christopher Wordsworth of Lincoln to express the sympathy of the English churches with the Old Catholics. They are painted in the round, as university-affiliated teachers, churchmen, and scholars. Whether such detail can rescue them from Kenneth Brown's sociological analysis will be a matter of judgment, but here at least is a different perspective and food for thought.

The history of English theology would have been the poorer without these institutions. The pioneering church historian Robert Vaughan, two giants of Old Testament studies, Samuel Davidson and the Primitive Methodist A.S. Peake, and those now neglected liberal theologians Ebenezer Griffith-Jones, C.J. Cadoux, and R.S. Franks, all made their mark on the lives of Northern and its predecessors. Their minds, and those of many more, are opened to us with concise insight.

This is a very different history from Dr. Kaye's *Mansfield College, Oxford, its origin, history and significance* (Oxford, 1996), but it complements it strikingly. If Mansfield is the history of the Congregational voice Matthew Arnold failed to hear, this is the history of the voice he heard and scorned. As we read, we are privileged to hear it attain a radically different maturity. Northern is not Mansfield, it could never have been. In one matter, however, they are at one, for both have had the wisdom to invite Elaine Kaye to be their historian. By that act the present Governors of Northern have placed us in their debt. No student of English Congregationalism can afford to neglect this study, for with quiet authority it has redrawn the landscape.

DAVID CORNICK

H.H. Farmer's Theological Interpretation of Religion: Towards a Personalist Theology of Religions. By Christopher H. Partridge. Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1998. Pp. xii + 402. £69.95.

Those elected to important positions in succession to great and revered men face a difficult task. Often their own work may be neglected because it is eclipsed by that of their illustrious predecessors. H.H. Farmer succeeded his own teacher, John Oman, as Barbour Professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster College, Cambridge, and later C.H. Dodd as Norris-Hulse Professor of Divinity at the University of Cambridge. Perhaps Farmer's position among British theologians has been underestimated because his work remains overshadowed by these two giants. Christopher Partridge's book is to be welcomed first and foremost for drawing attention to Farmer and his writing: Farmer surely was one of the more important British theologians of the twentieth century. The second thing that Dr. Partridge succeeds in doing is to demonstrate the contemporary relevance of

Farmer's work, particularly his approach to Christianity's place among, and relationship to, "non-Christian" religions.

Farmer was an essentialist, whose work was based on a subtle relationship of Oman, from whom Farmer gained his appreciation of Friedrich Schleiermacher's "liberal" theology. It is Schleiermacher's "feeling of absolute dependence" which seems to lie behind Farmer's assertion that all religious experience is the experience of the one true Reality, though Farmer always maintained that Christ is the definitive revelation of that Reality, and that, consequently, Christianity is the true, thoroughly "living" religion. While he asserted that *Deus cognitus, deus nullus*, he also affirmed that the Christian claim was precisely that God can be known fully in Jesus Christ (cf. Jn. 1.18). In order to maintain the uniqueness of Christianity, Farmer posited an "epistemic distance" between the Creator God and the human creation, one that is compounded by human sin. Thus while all people can experience God, they will not all interpret the experience correctly, nor can each interpretation of this general revelation provide "saving knowledge". There will be as many interpretations as there are interpreters, not just because it is a distinctly personal experience and that the interpretation of that experience can be wrong, but also because God's nature is rich and complex. Farmer maintained that where religious claims contradicted the Christian claim, they can be said to be wrong. Conversely, if they concur, they can be "known" to be true.

Farmer's approach was "personalist", where the personal God becomes known through a "singular, bipolar relationship" in which human beings relate to God and to each other because they are persons and because they have relationships. This results in a plurality of reactions to the one, divine self-disclosure, and a variety of interpretations of that experience. Experience of God was the experience of the Will of an other which limits the activities of our own. All personal encounter takes this form, but encounter with the Divine Will (a term which corresponds to the Divine Being) results in a sense of Absolute Demand (Oman's term, refined by Farmer) because it cannot be denied and it cannot be ignored. Its claim is absolute. But because full humanity can be achieved by surrender to this absolute demand, experience to God can also bring "final succour" (also Oman's term). This experience is both pragmatic because it fulfils the human need to be at home in the universe, and coercive because it leads to the awareness of the sacred and thus to the need for obedience and submission to the moral duty. While this is present, a religion can be said to be living. But Farmer was not tempted to leave the religious situation so open-ended. Rather, he saw his task as arguing for the uniqueness of Christian faith. As a result, he asserted that religions that do not have Jesus Christ, even those whose adherents may possibly be in conversation with God, are, as systems, to be dismissed as wrong and misleading.

Through an essentialist and personalist approach, Farmer's work suggests a way forward that avoids much of the "relativism versus objectivity debate" in recent theologies of religion, while maintaining a role for claims of Christian uniqueness. In this way, Farmer's work avoids the erroneous search for continuity which plagues much contemporary work in this field. Furthermore, in a culture which is

dominated by the exaltation of the self as an individual unit, the priority given to personal need and fulfilment, and the assertion that truth is merely a relative concept, Farmer's work offers a timely reminder that the encounter with the holy, especially as found in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, should not be mistaken for "aesthetic appreciation", "psychedelic experimentation" or simply feeling good. Rather it is the experience of God as other, who demands all ("absolute demand") while also giving all ("final succour").

The argument in the book is clear, careful and systematic, drawing on and quoting from the wide variety of Farmer's published and unpublished work. Often the information is set in a wider context by comparing and contrasting it with the writing of other prominent theologians of the time (particularly Brunner whose similar method brought different conclusions) and their forbears (particularly Kant, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Otto, and Oman) either in the text or in the copious footnotes. Dr. Partridge also compares Farmer's suggestions to those of John Hick and Wilfred Cantwell Smith to support effectively his thesis that Farmer's theology of religions is more appropriately *Christian* and Biblical than theirs, and thus a vital contribution to the contemporary debate. He concludes by offering possible avenues for further exploitation, recognising that Farmer himself was probably too broad and general about other religions, failing to recognise the piety, and the "personalism", of the individuals involved.

This is probably a book for the specialist, though it must be highly recommended, particularly to those who are interested either in British theology or in the theology of religions. Sadly, its price is prohibitive. This is a shame, for it deserves to be read.

ROBERT POPE

H.H. Farmer, *Reconciliation and Religion: Some Aspects of the Uniqueness of Christianity as a Reconciling Faith*. Edited and Introduced by Christopher H. Partridge, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press. 1998. Pp. civ + 236. £59.95.

H.H. Farmer delivered two sets of Gifford Lectures in the University of Glasgow during the session 1950-1, a matter of months after his appointment as Norris-Hulse Professor of Divinity at the University of Cambridge. Endowed by the will of Adam, Lord Gifford, the lectures were to be held in the Scottish Universities with the specific intention of promoting natural theology in as wide a sense as the term allows. Farmer set about making the case that Christianity belonged both to the general class of religion and also to a class of its own. The former was the central point of his first set of lectures, published as *Revelation and Religion: Studies in the Theological Interpretation of Religious Types* (London: Nisbet, 1954). The latter point was the subject of his second series of lectures. It was Farmer's original intention to publish these latter lectures, but for various reasons (explored in the introduction in this volume), they remained in unpublished manuscript. Despite Farmer's probable dissatisfaction with their

content, their publication here, with an informative introduction to Farmer's thought along with careful editing by Christopher Partridge, is to be welcomed.

Farmer's prime concern in these Gifford lectures was to demonstrate that Christianity was unique among the religions because of its message of reconciliation. Reconciliation here is to be seen in its widest sense of integration and even unification. Although God is encountered as personal in all religious experience, this personal God is encountered most fully in Jesus Christ. The problem raised by Farmer's point was the self-authenticating nature of religious experience. Experience of God could be known to be such, but only through the experience itself. Of course, this has the advantage of affirming that God is beyond us and made known only through his own self-disclosure, but it leads to the problem of being unable to identify objectively which experiences are authentic on anything but a personal and individual scale. This is worrying because Farmer maintained that, because of sin and epistemic distance between humanity and God, it was possible not only to arrive at different interpretations of Ultimate Reality but also at erroneous ones.

Arguing from a quasi-natural, theological perspective (in accordance with the requirement of the Gifford Lectures), Farmer posited four main classes of duality and "contrariety" which are evident from human experience and are only reconciled into one whole by Christian faith, namely (i) God and the World (including God's Immanence and Transcendence and the relationship between Time and Eternity), (ii) God and the Self (which is the experience of absolute demand and final succour and asks the question concerning the relationship between morality and religion), (iii) the Self and the World, and (iv) the Self and Other Selves. These are not absolute categories in the sense that there is much cross-fertilisation between them. In this way, the experience of God is that of absolute claim which corresponds to notions of God's transcendence, an apprehension of God's otherness and distance from humankind. Yet it is simultaneously an experience of God as love, in which the human subject becomes saved into the true life with God, and God's immanence is revealed as final succour in absolute demand. The transcendence and absolute demand, and the immanence and love of God, are both revealed in Jesus Christ, where the Divine draws near in becoming a man for human salvation. This same Jesus Christ, the incarnation of God, is the only one to reconcile time and eternity because he both breaks into (discontinues) history as the enfleshment of eternal God, and has continuity with history as a historical person, a Jew in the context of the Jewish people and its history.

Farmer's work is an attempt to bring synthesis and unity to a world of duality through what he perceived to be the only means possible, the fulfilment of the Divine, reconciling will in Jesus Christ. Only in Christ is the reconciled life possible while also recognising the dualities of life. And this, Farmer states right at the end, is best seen in the Doctrine of the Triune God, with the worship of whom he began his first set of Gifford Lectures.

The publication, for the first time, of Farmer's second series of Gifford Lectures

reveals the wealth of insight and scholarship that is to be found in British theology when we, who have been raised in Germanic forms, are prepared to look. It also shows that there is much to be learned in our current theological situation from the wisdom of past teachers. Farmer was able, in a sophisticated way, to maintain a sustainable argument for Christian uniqueness alongside a recognition of God's omnipresent availability to all people. But Farmer never lost sight of the inevitable discontinuity which exists between the human and the Divine which is necessarily present in all experience of living religion. If the publication of these lectures can help us to remember this, and to recognise its implications in full, it may also help us out of the current pluralistic impasse which savours too much of "becoming all things for all men". The project will then have been more than worthwhile.

ROBERT POPE

Pulpit, Table, and Song. Essays in Celebration of Howard G. Hageman. Edited by Heather Murray Elkins and Edward C. Zaragoza, Lanham, MD and London: The Scarecrow Press, 1996. Pp. xi + 286. £37.55.

The Eucharistic Service of the Catholic Apostolic Church and its Influence on Reformed Liturgical Renewals of the Nineteenth Century. By Gregg Alan Mast, Lanham, MD and London: Scarecrow Press, 1999. Pp. ix + 183. £46.80.

Howard G. Hageman was President of New Brunswick Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in America, and a founding member of Drew University's Graduate Program in Liturgy. His thought and liturgical practice were grounded in Scripture, moulded by the Reformation and fertilised by the evangelical catholic thrust of the Mercersburg theology of Nevin, Schaff and their heirs.

The papers in this memorial volume fall into three categories. Under the heading, "Reformation in Evangelical Revival", Dirk W. Rodgers, writes on the content and influence of John á Lasco's liturgy of public repentance; Horton Davies shows that Zwingli's "memorialism" concerning the Lord's Supper, though it played down the sense of the eternal priesthood of the Son of God, nevertheless recovered for worshippers the truth that through their obedience to the dominical command the Lord would reveal himself to them; A. Casper Honders encourages us, when pondering the Reformers and music, to distinguish carefully between their attitudes to music within and without worship; Kenneth E. Rowe writes on the Palatinate liturgy of the Pennsylvania German Reformed, remarking that it has suffered undue neglect (though see now Deborah Rahn Clemens's dissertation on the topic); Robin A. Leaver discusses the preaching lectionary of the Dutch Reformed Church (1782); and Randall Balmer reflects upon the historiographical neglect of religion in the Middle Colonies –New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware.

Part Two concerns "19th-Century Revivals/20th-Century Renewals." Gregg Alan Mast shows how, despite Irving's departure from the Church of Scotland, the Church Service Society was strongly influenced by the liturgy of the Catholic

Apostolic Church; Martin L. Cox investigates the largely urban sacramental revivalism of the Anglo-Catholic Ritualists, as exemplified by their Twelve Day London Mission of 1869; Fred Kimball Graham discusses some hymn tunes loved by members of the Methodist Episcopal Church; Daniel Kames Meeter answers his question, "Is the Reformed Church in America a liturgical Church?" by saying, "Constitutionally, yes; in practice, by no means always" – and he quotes Hageman's fine invitation to communion; and Edward C. Zaragoza offers a structural analysis of the sacred space at St. Mary's [Benedictine] Abbey, Morristown, New Jersey.

The theme of Part Three is "Professor Hageman and his contributors". Heather Murray Elkins considers Christ's presence in both preaching and sacraments, showing how some United Methodists are learning from the Mercersburg tradition, the founders of which regarded the Methodism of their day as exemplifying much that was wrong with worship; Norman J. Kansfield discusses Hageman and the hymnology of the Reformed Church in America, and refers to the contribution of Erik Routley; Hageman's own hymn, "And as this grain has been gathered", is set to music by David M. Tripold; and a chronological bibliography of Hageman's writings, and brief biographical notes on the contributors, complete the work.

Many matters for further reflection arise from this stimulating volume, among them the fact that ministers and elders, not the people, are asked in John á Lasco's liturgy whether an individual's public confession is acceptable; and the way in which the rite makes a serious attempt to affirm both Christian freedom and ecclesiastical discipline. The German Reformed held communion seasons, often lasting from Friday to Monday. The Dutch Reformed preaching lectionary sought to balance the claims of the major seasons of the Christian Year against the Reformed principle of *lectio continua*. The religiously pluralistic Middle Colonies were in advance of (Congregational) New England in the matter of toleration. R.W. Dale thought that Nonconformists might learn something from the use made by Anglo-Catholics of the heritage of liturgical and devotional literature. Meeter confesses that the four smaller American Reformed churches of Dutch heritage rally "around one or two doctrinal issues which are virtually impossible to explain to those outside the tradition" – in which connection Hageman's own words are pertinent and of wider application:

Would the preaching in the Reformed Churches have become so loosely connected with the gospel, as it has in some places at least, if every Sunday it had been followed by the proclamation of the Lord's death till he come? Or could the Reformed churches have proved such fertile soil for the growth of sectarianism, producing one schism after another in their history, if every week they had reminded themselves that 'we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread'?

Hageman's quoted lament that so many of the popular evangelical hymns are

not addressed to God, but are all about ourselves, is also worthy of note:

When we have been singing about nothing but ourselves and our needs for a long time, it can get pretty boring. It really is a relief to sing about a good and gracious Father. Perhaps I should say more accurately, to sing *to* a good and gracious Father. For that is basically what a hymn is.

There are a few misprints, and one or two clumsy sentences. Cox has a statutory remark about “arid” deism, and uses “imminent” for “immanent”. But overall these are thought-provoking papers which may even stimulate liturgical reform and renewal in some quarters. Nothing would have pleased Howard Hageman more.

Gregg Alan Mast’s book introduces the Catholic Apostolic Church and its founders, Edward Irving, Henry Drummond and John Bate Cardale, and shows how its liturgy influenced the German Reformed Church through Schaff and the Mercersburg divines, the Church of Scotland (this chapter being largely a reprint of Mast’s paper in the Hageman *festschrift*), and, to a lesser degree, the Dutch Reformed Church in North America. The influence flowed from Albury, Surrey, to Mercersburg; thence to Scotland, and from there back to the Dutch in America. Mast concludes that the nineteenth-century liturgical renewals provided the foundation for inter-Protestant dialogue and for (later) Roman-Protestant rapprochement. In an appendix he suggests that Joseph Wolff, who moved from Judaism to Roman Catholicism, and thence to the Church of England, may have been among Cardale’s liturgical mentors.

Mast records the judgment of Horton Davies that whereas such revivalists as the Oxford Tractarians and the Cambridge Ecclesiologists focused upon institutional issues, while Plymouth Brethren, Primitive Methodists and the Salvation Army emphasised the charismatic, the Catholic Apostolic Church uniquely combined the charismatic, millennial, institutional and liturgical motifs. But this means that the liturgical-institutional Mercersburgers, Scots and Dutch shunned a good deal of what the Catholic Apostolic Church had to offer. Some explanation of this would have been welcome (though guesses come easily). The oddest statement in the book is that in which we are informed that the incarnation, Mercersburg’s central theme, was “drawn from German idealism”.

This work is based upon the author’s Drew dissertation of 1985. One could wish that the bibliography had been updated, and that account had been taken – at least in the notes – of important relevant books and articles published since that date.

These liturgically and ecumenically suggestive books are sturdily and attractively produced, albeit at prices which will place them beyond the reach of many who would benefit greatly from them.

ALAN P.F. SELL

Building Jerusalem: Nonconformity, Labour and the Social Question in Wales, 1906–1939. By Robert Pope. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998. Pp. xiv + 269, ISBN 0-7083-1413-9. £25.00.

In 1921 D. Miall Edwards, a leading Welsh Independent minister, translated William Blake's "Jerusalem" into Welsh. The "green and pleasant land" naturally turned into Wales, where a new Jerusalem, the subject of this book, was to be built. It was to be a renewed social order that was to reflect the priorities of Christ. Liberal in theology and idealist in philosophy, Edwards was the pre-eminent member of his denomination who was engaging with the social question in his day. He served at the Memorial College, Brecon, until 1934, but in that year he was succeeded by J.D. Vernon Lewis, a Barthian. Lewis and his contemporary at Bala-Bangor College, J.E. Daniel, led the neo-orthodox revolution in Wales. In 1930 Daniel told the Union of Welsh Independents that the establishment of the kingdom of God could never be a human achievement. He was breaking decisively with the prevailing temper, represented by Edwards, that made the building of the kingdom the central Christian task alongside the proclamation of the Fatherhood of God and the cultivation of the brotherhood of man. The period when the kingdom theme predominated is a main subject of this book written by a Lecturer in Contemporary and Applied Theology at the School of Theology and Religious Studies for the University of Wales, Bangor. As these instances drawn from the book's pages suggest, it does not shirk theology.

Yet its great strength is that it combines analysis of the chapels' theological approach to social issues with a deep appreciation of the attitudes of the working men who in these years were turning from Liberalism to Labour and, in many cases, socialism. The volume is as concerned with why so many Welsh workers, (though less often their wives) slipped their Nonconformist moorings, as with how the chapels responded to the complex crisis that was thrust upon them. It draws on the recorded memories of miners and the periodicals that circulated amongst them. Socialism, argues Dr. Pope, was a species of faith, and in that sense the offspring of the chapels. People were drawn to socialism primarily because, like the ex-Evangelical Unionist Keir Hardie who had been transplanted to the Valleys, it was profoundly ethical in its rhetoric. The pre-First World War interaction between Nonconformity and socialism is catalogued in detail. Most, though not all, pro-socialist ministers were liberal in theology, often followers of R.J. Campbell. Nonconformist critics of the new political creed, on the other hand, usually criticised it for its claims about the decisive influence of the environment over human beings that seemed to negate their capacity for moral choice. Meanwhile the South Wales Miners' Federation (the "Fed") was becoming an alternative social focus to the chapels. After the war the Labour hegemony was soon so firmly established that there was no need for it to court the Nonconformists as it had earlier on. Yet religion still played its part in the evolution of Labour because the chapels were still strong, especially where the Welsh language prevailed.

Nonconformity responded to this ferment, according to Dr. Pope, less than

adequately. There was a retreat from politics after 1910 (a phenomenon paralleled in England) that turned into a stampede after 1918. As labour was becoming more political, Nonconformity was becoming less. Instead, again from 1910, chapel leaders concentrated on holding conferences on social questions. There was a grand one in Cardiff in 1911 that stressed the need for churches to create an atmosphere for social reform, but it turned sour when it was discovered that Lloyd George had been invited as a speaker and when he used the opportunity to advertise the credentials of the New Liberalism. Nonconformists majored on educational work, suggests the author, leaving the application of principles to others. There were isolated efforts on behalf of the unemployed and the otherwise deprived, but they were the initiatives of individuals – men such as two ministers of Congregational churches, Leon Atkin and T. Alban Davies. There was little corporate effort despite all the pretensions of the liberal theologians.

Perhaps the extent of the liberal dominance is exaggerated. Stray bits of evidence in Dr. Pope's pages suggest that most of the chapels, unlike many of their representative voices, were still evangelical in their priorities. The immediate response to the preaching of the young Martyn Lloyd-Jones, for instance, would support this interpretation. Perhaps, too, the extent to which liberalism was derived from Ritschl is over-stressed. A great deal of the expectation of the coming of the kingdom of God was simply an extension of the traditional postmillennial teaching of the chapels. And perhaps, even though this book was published under the auspices of the Board of Celtic Studies of the University of Wales, the linkages with English developments could be developed more. The weighty prestige of A.M. Fairbairn, for example, lay behind the emphasis on the kingdom of God, but he is not included. A.E. Garvie is mentioned in passing, but his inspiration for social engagement is not considered. Nevertheless this book is to be applauded for its synthesis of familiar general history with the interior life of the Nonconformist community. It greatly assists the monoglot historian of Nonconformity by revealing the riches of the Welsh language sources in an English text. Our understanding of the engagement between Nonconformity and Labour has been considerably deepened.

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Griffith John: Apostle to Central China. By Noel Gibbard. Pp. 250. Bridgend: Bryntirion Press, 1999. ISBN 1-85049-150-X.

Griffith John (1831-1912) deserves to be remembered alongside his fellow Welshman, Timothy Richard, and James Hudson Taylor, as one of the most significant figures in the late nineteenth-century British missionary endeavour in China. Unlike Richard and Hudson Taylor, however, he has not been the subject of any recent writing. Dr. Gibbard's biography is hence to be welcomed as the first major study of John since R. Wardlaw Thompson's biography published in 1906, a work whose content appears to have been contributed largely by John himself.

Gibbard's book is securely based on extensive reading of both Welsh and English primary sources and hence makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the work of the London Missionary Society in the provinces of Hubei (Hupeh) and Hunan. The LMS mission in the city of Hankou (Hankow) in Hubei province was pioneered by John from 1861, and proved one of the most fruitful Protestant fields in China: by 1889 John could claim (though Gibbard does not substantiate the claim with figures) that the LMS had more converts in Hankou than the China Inland Mission had in all China). John was clearly a strong-minded individual who did not always find co-operation with missionary colleagues easy. This was evident particularly in the sphere of Bible translation, in which John produced his own Wen-li and Mandarin versions of the New Testament, but declined to co-operate in the production of the Union Version of the Bible initiated by the Shanghai Missionary Conference of 1890. He was also prepared to play the imperial card. On more than one occasion this Welshman attempted to silence Chinese opposition with emphatic and unashamed declarations that he was an "Englishman", and he had no qualms about appealing to British consular and naval protection during the anti-foreign riots of 1895. Nevertheless, John won the respect and affection of countless Chinese Christians: at the celebration to mark his fifty years of work in China, he was repeatedly spoken of as one "who has loved us".

Dr Gibbard's book is stronger on detailed narrative than on the wider context of China missions and the interpretative issues which the subject raises. There are quite a number of errors which do not inspire total confidence. Roland Allen appears as Richard Allen; Hannah Whitall Smith as Hanna Whitall Smith; Joshua Marshman as William Marshman; Young J. Allen as J. Young Allen; Adrian A. Bennett as Arnold Bennett; Timothy Richard's *Conversion by the Million in China* as *Conversion of the Millions in China*. This book will not become the authoritative statement on Griffith John, but it will be read with profit by many.

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