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UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HISTORY SOCIETY

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of England, founded in 1913).

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EDITORIAL

This issue marks the centenary of the formation of the Congregational Historical Society and the publication of its first *Transactions*. Consequently six of its papers illustrate facets of Congregational history from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. Yet beyond the facts that three of the papers focus on the south west, two of them focus on how Congregationalists have made their history, and all are about people who happened to be Congregationalists, there might seem to be no

truly common thread. For what have these in common – Dissenters whose overt, indeed violent, rebellion could not shelter under Parliamentary sanction; county-voting gentry for whom occasional conformity was second nature, moving smoothly from puritan orthodoxy to evangelicalism (with Rome round the corner, for traditionary Dissent has strange twists); northern millionaire philanthropists; and villagers on the eve of world war, barely touched by their neighbouring city? One answer is that they show how Congregationalists – indeed Dissent in general – was inextricable from the fabric of British life. Its threads are part of the fabric; eliminate them, and the whole will unravel. Such thoughts are strengthened by a reading of a century of past *Journals* and *Transactions*. Prototypes of each of the six papers can be found in *Transactions*, exploring mission, politics, society, genealogy, with a dash of antiquarianism (which, being innocent of thesis, can be invaluable for thesis makers and mongers) a pot-pourri of papers providing the words, phrases, and idiom, of what proves after all to be a distinctive and coherent language; and language is a key to culture and belief.

With the two remaining papers we return to the society's full canvass: Presbyterians and Churches of Christ, in contrast to each other and in counterpoint to Congregationalists, as experienced in contemporary but historically-grounded liturgy by Scotland and the United States and as illustrated in the political radicalism which is sometimes the disconcerting accompaniment of doctrinal conservatism.

Five of our contributors – Anthony J. Coates, Cyril Grant, Brian Kirk, John H. Taylor and Colin Thompson – are URC ministers; Colin Thompson is also a Fellow of St. Catherine's College, Oxford, and John Taylor was the last editor of *Transactions* as well as our Society's third president. Mary Hora, now of Louisville, Kentucky, was formerly of the University of Toronto; Douglas Farnie is Visiting Professor of Economic History at Manchester Metropolitan University; Michael W. Casey is Professor of Communication at Pepperdine University, Malibu, California.

TRANSACTIONING OUR HISTORY: THE CONGREGATIONALISTS' DIMENSION¹

Careful readers of the *Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society* will note the parenthesis heading each Contents and Editorial page: "incorporating the Congregational Historical Society, founded in 1899, and the Presbyterian Historical Society of England, founded in 1913". That parenthesis explains this paper in celebration of the centenary of the Congregational Historical Society's founding, and it is to be hoped that there will be a Presbyterian companion piece

1. This paper was originally given as the society's Annual Lecture in Union Chapel, Islington, at a Study Day held on Saturday 25 September 1999, to commemorate the centenary of the founding of the Congregational Historical Society.

in 1913. The fact of incorporation was firmly stated in the first clause of the new society's Constitution, sensibly printed in its *Journal's* first issue, and it was given substance by the new society's membership. This was defined in the Constitution's second clause as "those persons who immediately before the adoption of this Constitution were members of either of the constituent societies and such other persons ...as shall be admitted... by vote of the Council..."²

It was, nonetheless, a new society. It was a History Society and not a Historical Society. It published a *Journal* and not *Transactions* or *Proceedings*. And it had a constitutional relationship with the United Reformed Church which, however unremarkable for Presbyterians, would have been regarded by most Congregationalists as unnecessary in practice and undesirable in principle. Indeed unreconstructed Congregationalists might comfort themselves that the new society was a Presbyterian takeover. It was housed in the former Presbyterian headquarters. Its council (the new Church was a proudly multi-conciliar body) included members "appointed from time to time by such Committee of the United Reformed Church as its General Assembly shall determine", and it submitted an annual report "to the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church through the appropriate Department".³ That was not all. The first *Journal* was ten pages longer and ten pence more expensive than the last *Transactions*.⁴ Its first article was entitled "Church History and the Church", and its second began as few Congregationalists would have begun: "I have never refused any duty the Church has laid upon me".⁵ So even the humour was Presbyterian. The third article, as grandly entitled as the first, "Churches of Christ in the British Isles 1842-1972. A Historical Sketch", tended to confirm this churchly obedience, for it reflected the conversations in progress between the United Reformed Church and what the *Journal's* editorial called "the branch of the Church known as The Churches of Christ".⁶ The new society had loyally taken *Semper Reformanda*, the new denomination's motto (perhaps "mantra" would be a more appropriate word for 1972), into its system from the beginning.

Nonetheless, the Congregational continuities were striking, even unexpected. Albert Peel, that most instinctively independent of Congregationalists, battered by the chronic carelessness with which Congregationalism treated its history, its libraries, and its records, would have rejoiced that one of the new society's objects was "where appropriate to act as custodian, by arrangement with the United Reformed Church, of manuscripts, books, portraits, paintings and other relevant

2. *The Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society* [hereafter *JURCHS*], Vol. I, No. 1. May 1973, p.2.
3. *Ibid.*, p.3.
4. 40pp; 40p.
5. R. Buick Knox, "Church History and the Church", *JURCHS op. cit.*, pp.4-9; M. McAra, "The Wandsworth Presbytery", *ibid.*, p.10.
6. *Ibid.*, p.1, à propos D.M. Thompson, "Churches of Christ in the British Isles 1842-1972", pp. 23-34.

objects belonging to the church".⁷ Neither would Peel have objected to the annual grant which the new Church made to its History Society, for that continued the Presbyterian practice which thirty-five years earlier had prompted this characteristic Peelism: "It is right to be taught even by Presbyterianism, and we trust that the Congregational Union of England and Wales will speedily copy this example".⁸ Indeed, shortly before he wrote these words Peel himself had contributed to *Transactions*, "Co-operation of Presbyterians and Congregationalists: Some Previous Attempts", an admittedly none-too-hopeful survey originally delivered on the eve of meetings "to discuss possibilities of union or co-operation between the two denominations."⁹

Perhaps, therefore, we underestimate the extent to which their professional scepticism can provide a bond between historians. The intense affection felt by the new society's officers and council members for their Congregational and Presbyterian formation was both comforting and cementing, safeguarded in their constitution's tenth, and in some ways most significant, clause: "The Society claims the independence due to a learned Society".¹⁰ Any Congregational or Presbyterian continuities should be seen in the light of intellectual independence and learning as well as of denominationalism, and in this light the new Society's Congregational continuities can be extended from content and accent to contributors.

To return to the first *Journal*. Its second article was Malcolm McAra's "The Wandsworth Presbytery".¹¹ Thirty-six years earlier one of the Presbyterian society's formative figures, S.W. Carruthers, had contributed "The Presbytery at Wandsworth" to the Congregationalists' *Transactions*.¹² Although both men seem to have had their subject thrust upon them, McAra did not refer to Carruthers in his piece and, of course, water had flowed steadily under many bridges in the intervening years, as the mills of Puritan historiography ground ever finer. Present-day readers should flinch at Carruthers's second footnote (there were only three) with its engaging confession, "I had hoped to be able to search the MSS in Lambeth Palace Library for further details, but have not had the leisure",¹³ but in fact the structure of his paper and its tone command respect, while those readers who warm to McAra's mounting, although panicky, consciousness of the scholarly shadow of the young Patrick Collinson and smile at the way in which

7. *Ibid.*, p.3. For Peel (1887-1949) see A. Argent "Albert Peel: The Restless Labourer", *JURCHS*, Vol. 4, No. 5, October 1989, pp.319-336.

8. "Editorial", *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society* [hereafter *TCHS*], Vol. XIII, 1937, p.3.

9. A. Peel, "Co-operation of Presbyterians and Congregationalists: Some Previous Attempts", *TCHS*, Vol. XII, 1934, pp.147-163.

10. "Constitution", *JURCHS*, Vol. 1, No. 1, May 1973 p.3.

11. *Ibid.*, p.297.

12. S.W. Carruthers, "The Presbytery of Wandsworth", *TCHS*, Vol. XII, 1936, pp.297-311.

13. *Ibid.*, p.297.

McAra, the moral philosopher, deals with Collinson, the ecclesiastical historian,¹⁴ should know that it was ever thus. A scholar's humour is often feline, therefore graceful, and there has been plenty of it in *Transactions*.

If Patrick Collinson's was a welcome young shadow in the *Journal's* first issue, Geoffrey Nuttall cast an older one. He, who had been *Transactions's* fifth editor, and the Congregational society's last president, was the new society's first president and he delivered its first annual lecture.¹⁵ R. Buick Knox, who was the *Journal's* first joint editor and would be our society's third president, diplomatically ended his "Church History and the Church" with a quotation from Nuttall's *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*. We may hope that spirit has informed the *Journal* as effectively as it expressed the tone of *Transactions*, to which it now takes us. Nuttall was writing of insights,

which make it possible to write history of value, such history as reveals much of men's minds which was hidden from themselves, such history as yields a sense of the whole towards which, unwittingly, the partial and (for the present) conflicting conditions of men are often travelling!¹⁶

So from the first *Journal* to the last *Transactions*. Three of the *Journal's* contributors, Wilfred Biggs, Clyde Binfield, and H.G. Tibbutt, had been active in the Congregational society and another two, Neil Caplan and Edwin Welch, had contributed characteristically to its last *Transactions*; but it is a third contributor to that last issue, R.R. Turner, whose name takes us back to much earlier days.

Turner's paper, "Cavendish Theological College (1860-63): Joseph Parker's Experiment in Ministerial Training", reflects the Congregational society's steady engagement with education.¹⁷ It also reflects a man whom one might regard as ideally representative of that society's membership – a constant encouragement to editors, an Edinburgh first in History and a Cambridge first in Theology, a past

14. "... I think Collinson is unsympathetic to the Presbyterian desire for reform and since there can be no real understanding without sympathy I was encouraged to pursue the enquiry". McAra, *art cit.*, p.10.
15. G.F. Nuttall, "Chandler, Doddridge and the Archbishop: a study in eighteenth-century ecumenism", *JURCHS*, Vol. 1, No. 2, November 1973, pp. 42-56. There will be some debate as to whether Geoffrey Nuttall was fourth or fifth editor, but the succession of editors and associate editors seems to be: (Sir) John McClure (1901: *de facto* editor of first issue); G. Currie Martin and T.G. Crippen (Vol. I, 1901-4); T.G. Crippen (Vols. II-VIII, 1905-23); Albert Peel (Vols IX-XIII, 1924-37); Albert Peel and Geoffrey F. Nuttall (Vols. XIII-XVI, 1938-1949, when Peel died); Geoffrey F. Nuttall (Vol. XVI, 1950); Geoffrey F. Nuttall and Robert S. Paul (Vols. XVI-XVII, 1951-4); Geoffrey F. Nuttall (Vols. XVII-XVIII, 1954-9); John H. Taylor (Vols. XVIII-XXI, 1959-72). Geoffrey Nuttall became president in 1966.
16. G.F. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, Oxford 1946, p. 168, quoted in R. Buick Knox, *art cit.*, *JURCHS*, Vol. 1, No. 1, May 1973, p.9.
17. *TCHS*, Vol. XXI, No. 4, October 1972, pp. 94-101.

warden of Bristol's Broad Plain Settlement and tutor at Bradford's Yorkshire United Independent College and Nottingham's Paton College, where he eventually became principal, the son and nephew of missionaries in Africa, India and China, who himself briefly served in China, and the grandson of one of the society's most distinguished early members.¹⁸ "Robin" Turner's grandfather, George Lyon Turner (1844-1920), a London gold medallist in Philosophy and Logic, who had taught at Hackney and Lancashire Independent Colleges, was foremost among those who laid the foundations for the Congregational Historical Society's learned status. His *Original Records of Nonconformity under Persecution and Indulgence* (3 vols. 1911-14) demonstrated that, but so did the roundedness of his ministry. Lyon Turner had resigned from Lancashire College to return to suburban London where he ministered at Algernon Road, a new cause in Lewisham. There, in the high noon of Edwardian efficiency, he reminded his people of church membership's larger perspectives:

Methods are necessary; organisation is most useful; means *must* be employed; but it is only as we all look to Him, in whose service we are engaged, to work mightily in us, and amongst us, by His Blessed Spirit that we can hope to see the work of the Lord prosper in our midst.¹⁹

And at Algernon Road, as its Jubilee historian recalled, he "drew around him a number of choice spirits, to the great enrichment of the Church". A hint of that temper can be captured in the paper Lyon Turner wrote on "Welsh Nonconformity in 1672" for *Transactions* not long after he had retired from Algernon Road. He described it as an updating of "a very fragmentary and imperfect paper" on Welsh Nonconformity as "revealed by the Licence Documents in the Record Office", and in the course of it, deftly outlining the form, orthography, and geography of his sources for his readers, he brought to life the problem of Welsh history for English scholars: "It must be borne in mind that the Welsh language was as much a foreign language to the officials or clerks in the Home Secretary's offices as Icelandic or Chinese".²⁰ Such glimpses justify the otherwise apparently conventional assessment of his *Year Book* obituarist: "In his scholarship, the purity of his character, the great kindness of his heart, he maintained the best traditions of the old Puritans."²¹

Scholarship, character, and whole heartedness, to which we might add influence without undue numbers, marked the Puritan society which we now celebrate.

Its rise and progress can be charted from a surviving minute book and from

18. Robert Reynolds Turner 1901-1982, "universally known as 'Robin' ". *United Reformed Church Year Book*, 1983, p. 265.
19. 'Hitherto...' *the Story of Fifty Years, 1881-1931: Algernon Road Congregational Church Lewisham S.E.*, unpaginated.
20. G. Lyon Turner, "Welsh Nonconformity in 1672", *TCHS*, Vol. 2, 1908, pp.3, 7.
21. *Congregational Year Book* [hereafter *CYB*], 1921, pp.119-20.

Transactions, whose first issue opened in the time-honoured way of Congregational Church Books. "The Society originated in a suggestion made by the Rev. C. Silvester Horne M.A., in a letter to the Rev. G. Currie Martin M.A., B.D., in the spring of 1899".²²

Origins always merit attention. They can reveal some unexpected roots and in this instance they provide instructive evidence about how Congregationalism worked as it approached its Edwardian high noon. An idea from its most exciting contemporary public figure was refined by men of more retiring but undeniable ability, tested in such denominational structures as were appropriate, canvassed among leading Congregationalists at useful points of assembly, and shaped into shaping itself. It was at once an exercise in fellowship and self-help. Relationships with "official" Congregationalism (an alien concept for independent minds) were neither sought nor refused. At its best it fostered an enduring temper of mutual responsibility, though in different circumstances it could encourage a variant of an old Dissenting complaint, poor-relation syndrome.

What is surprising about the Congregational Historical Society's formation is that it was ostensibly a young people's initiative. Silvester Horne and George Currie Martin were both in their mid-thirties. In 1899 Horne was minister in Kensington and Martin in Reigate, but Horne wrote to Martin in his capacity as Organising Secretary of the Congregational Young People's Union (London District), and it was at a YPU meeting, 18 July 1899, that Alfred Rowland, minister at Crouch End and an unmistakable denominational heavyweight, proposed that Martin invite interested parties to a meeting at the Congregational Union's Bristol Autumnals:

Dear Sir,

It seems to many a suitable time to form a Congregational Historical Society to collect, examine, edit, and publish the numerous interesting documents and records of our Denominational History.²³

Those interested parties were given a helpful idea of who the "many" might be and where they could be found because some of them were named: household names like Arnold Thomas of Bristol, Mackennal of Bowdon, Brown of Bedford; college men like Mansfield's Fairbairn and Vernon Bartlet, and Adeney of New; formidably educated laymen of executive grasp like McClure of Mill Hill and

22. J.D. McClure and G. Currie Martin, "The Congregational Historical Society", *TCHS*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1901, p. 1.

23. Congregational Historical Society Minutes 1899-1911, Dr. Williams's Library, London, [hereafter DWL: CHSM]. For C.S. Horne (1865-1914) see *Dictionary National Biography: Missing Persons*; for George Currie Martin (1865-1937) see *CYB*, 1938, p.665; for Alfred Rowland (1840-1925), minister at Park Chapel, Crouch End, 1875-1911, Chairman C.U.E.W. 1898, see *CYB* 1926, pp.180-1.

A.W.W. Dale, then still a Fellow of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, but shortly to go to Liverpool; lesser-known ministers whose scholarly reputations had nonetheless made their mark beyond denominational bounds, like Powicke of Hatherlow, and men whose future was almost upon them, like Forsyth of Cambridge. Oxford, Cambridge, London, Manchester, Bristol, were thus covered.

A meeting was duly held, 4pm, 17 October 1899, in Broadmead Chapel, Bristol. It would be hard to imagine a more suitable meeting place than that historic Baptist church. Here more suggestive names appear. Another man from what seems in retrospect to have been a quite remarkable circle of scholar-ministers, presided. He was William Pierce of West Hampstead, the church next to Hackney College, a Liverpool Welshman hot on the trail of the real Martin Marprelate.²⁴ New College's Professor Adeney explained and proposed the motion which would lead to the Society's formation and a provisional committee was appointed to draw up a scheme which might be presented to a general meeting in the following year. Adeney and Pierce were members, Currie Martin was its convenor, Brown provided the honoured seniority and Horne added the energy; with Bryan Dale, John Ogle, and Thomas Stephens we find the historians of Yorkshire, Dorset, and Northamptonshire Congregationalism respectively, and in T.G. Crippen, Librarian of the Congregational Library in Memorial Hall, we encounter one of the heroes of the unfolding story.²⁵ Our fathers and founders had done their homework.

The society went public on 9 May 1900. About a hundred "ladies and gentlemen" gathered for a mid-week four-o'clock meeting in Memorial Hall, in the heart of what Congregationalists meant by May week. McClure chaired, Horne spoke, Martin moved.²⁶ It was admirably orchestrated. Prayer was offered by John Eames, minister at Eccleston Square, a now-vanished London church later to be transformed into Maude Royden's Guild House. McClure then called on the memory of R.W. Dale, whose incomparable biography by his son had been published a year or so earlier and whose history of English Congregationalism was now being prepared for posthumous publication. He read from a letter "expressive" of Dale's

feeling for the need of such work as that proposed to be carried on by the Historical Society, which was really work of a high moral and spiritual character. It would save us from our present ignorance of history, and from the quasi-apologetic attitude often adopted on our position.²⁷

Thus blessed by the living McClure and the dead Dale and with a weather-eye on what he described as the excellent work of similar bodies in New England,

24. For Pierce (1853-1928) see *CYB* 1930, p. 232.

25. For Thomas George Crippen (1841-1929) see *CYB*, 1931, pp. 227-8.

26. For Sir John David McClure (1860-1922) see [K.M.J. Ousey], *McClure of Mill Hill: A Memoir By His Daughter*, 1927.

27. DWL: CHSM.

Home concentrated on the society's three-fold purpose – research, half-yearly transactions, and the publication of manuscript records – and he spoke “of the losses that had frequently occurred through lack of such organised effort. Our richest heritage was the thoughts and deeds of the past, and these we should do our utmost to preserve”. Currie Martin “then moved that the Congregational Historical Society be and is hereby formed”. There were supportive speeches from the West Riding's Bryan Dale and Norwich's Dr. Barrett. The seconder was a scholarly layman from Blackheath, E. Pascoe Williams FRHistS, thus bringing the new society firmly within the fellowship of associated learning.²⁸ A treasurer, W.H. Stanier of Swindon, was appointed and the provincial committee ceased to be provisional and was given power to add to its numbers, up to the apostolic total of twelve.²⁹

So was the society formed at Bristol 1899 or in London in May 1900? That question must remain open, though either way it emerged from the congenially sanctified busy-ness of the national Union meetings, and its own business was not long delayed. Its committee met twice in 1900, on each occasion in Memorial Hall's Room 17 at 3.30 p.m. Those meetings were gently suggestive. On 27 June McClure presided over a quartet of secretary, treasurer, Pierce, and Crippen. It is to be doubted whether there was ever a fully attended meeting. Three corresponding members were identified in Norfolk, Pembrokeshire and Durham, the first of many promisingly unavailing county initiatives *pour encourager les autres*; Crippen was asked to prepare an exhaustive Bibliography of Congregational History; and a questionnaire was to be circulated to all churches which claimed to have been formed before 1750, in an attempt to locate and assess their archival holdings. Five months later, 14 November 1900, McClure presided over a sextet of secretary, treasurer, Crippen, Home, Bryan Dale, and Howell Elvet Lewis, the minister of the Welsh Church at King's Cross. This time they had figures in front of them: membership stood at between sixty and seventy, £50 was in hand, 487 questionnaires had been despatched and 140 churches had responded.

28. The Royal Historical Society was founded in 1868; Pascoe Williams had been a member since July 1880, and remained so until removed from its roll in February 1913. Members of other, younger, historical societies can draw considerable comfort from its complicated, indeed academically *louche*, beginnings, candidly outlined in R.A. Humphreys, *The Royal Historical Society 1868-1968*, 1969. By 1900 it had found its moorings, thanks not least to its recent (1897) amalgamation with the Camden Society. I am indebted to Mrs. Joy McCarthy for this information.
29. The society's early supporters had a distinguished posterity. Brown of Bedford was Maynard Keynes's grandfather; Powicke of Hatherlow was the father of Sir Maurice Powicke, the Oxford Medievalist; W.P. Stanier JP, of Oakfield, Swindon, treasurer to May 1905, a senior manager with the Great Western Railway, and the secretary of Sanford Street, the newer and larger of Swindon's two Congregational churches, was the father of Sir W.A. Stanier (1876-1965), doyen of locomotive engineers and only the second such to be elected FRS. (*DNB* 1961-70). I am indebted to the Revd. David Turner for this information.

And “the content of the first copy of the Transactions was then discussed”. McClure, who was a congenitally busy man, had to leave early. No doubt matters had already been arranged but it is tempting to see this new committee following a well-known path: “The preparation of the first issue of *The Transactions* was left in the hands of Dr. McClure (as Editor) and the Hon. Secretary”.³⁰

So much for origins; what of context? Not too much should be made of the approach of a new century, or the prospect sooner rather than later of a new monarch, or of the rage of war (even if, at least in retrospect, a disconcertingly new kind of war) in the Empire, although all those factors hover over the minutes and *Transactions* of the society’s first decade. More should be made of the cumulative impact of contemporary commemorations. Congregationalists had been flexing their memories for forty years: the bicentenary of the Great Ejection in 1862, the tercentenary of the martyrdoms of Barrow and Greenwood in 1893, the centenary of the London Missionary Society in 1895, the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Cromwell’s death in 1898 and the tercentenary of his birth in 1899. Similar commemorations could be manufactured for Watts, Doddridge, and Bunyan, and throughout Britain a growing army of churches and philanthropic agencies were marshalling their jubilees and centenaries, frequently a year out. Each was accompanied by more than celebration for there were bazaars, pageants, publications, buildings, and controversies too, significant steps from self-consciousness to self-confidence, though the former still prevailed. All this contributed to a multi-layered sense of history and of the place of Congregationalists in it.

Yet what was that place? Their citizenship had been confirmed, steadily, statutorily, indeed dramatically, within the lifetime of the new society’s older members; but they were citizens whose loyalty, because they were Christian citizens, had been defined, even strengthened, by prior loyalties – to conscience, to Bible, to the faith once delivered. Other Christians, however, also had prior loyalties; Catholics had. One of the significant features of the nineteenth century’s growing fascination with ecclesiology is the increasing interest which Congregationalists took in it, especially from the 1860s. R.W. Dale played a formative part in this, but he was by no means alone. A weighty volume of essays, to which Dale contributed, bore the suggestive title, *Ecclesia* (1870).³¹ A growing range of buildings expressed the claims of Congregationalists to their share in the Church catholic: Union Chapel, Islington, rebuilt for one of Dale’s fellow essayists and closest ministerial friends; Emmanuel Church, Cambridge, by Union’s architect, where Dale’s son became a deacon; Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road, heir to what the Evangelical Revival had shaped into a Congregational power house; Albion Church, Ashton-under-Lyne, where another of Dale’s fellow essayists had ministered, although not in the present building. Most telling of all, there were Mansfield College, Oxford and, newly opened in the

30. DWL: CHSM, 27 June, 14 November 1900.

31. H.R. Reynolds ed. *Ecclesia: Church Problems Considered in a Series of Essays*, 1870.

retail heart of Manchester, the Rylands Library. These buildings encompassed a disconcertingly wide range of histories and aspirations, but each consciously used an interpretation of the past to justify its presence.

In this they were products of their age quite as much as they were products of their builders' essays in ecclesiology and a clutch of largely secular factors also played their part in producing the ground for the new society. There were rapid developments in the concepts and techniques of history, along with significant changes in higher education generally – its location, its structure, its content and syllabus. Oxford, Cambridge, Scotland, and Trinity College, Dublin, could now be reached through London, Manchester, and university colleges sprouting throughout England and into Wales. Such places were springboards for colleges spread across the Empire and far beyond its bounds. There was an academic discovery of America. Germany's allure was greater than ever. These changes in the frontiers of higher education marched with political and municipal changes. There was an aesthetic dimension to all of them. To Gothic churches should be added Renaissance institutes and Baroque town halls, signalling a past which the present had annexed or justified or, if necessary, invented. The Memorial Hall, for example, John Tarring's Free Gothic city rockface in Devonshire limestone, which opened on Farringdon Street in 1875, commemorated the Great Ejection on the site of the old Fleet Prison "in which some of their martyrs were confined and cruelly used".³² Such buildings were a natural carapace for association: a fellowship, a council, a society. The nineteenth century, a truly heroic age for both the new professions and old ones renewed, was also a golden age for archeological, antiquarian, and record societies, in which town met country and differing gradations of gentleness tentatively overlapped. Dissenting gentleness (not quite a contradiction in terms) were found naturally among them, usefully prepared by their strenuous apprenticeship in the teeming world of mutual improvement. Such societies, moreover, offered openings to humbler people than these. They suggested career openings for teachers and librarians, as well as lecturers and journalists. Thus the Historical Association was founded in 1906.

It would, in short, have been strange had a Historical Society not been formed at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by Congregationalists proudly anxious about their ancestry, both literally and figuratively, concerned to place, ideally to rehabilitate, but always as accurately as possible, Lollards, Anabaptists, Separatists Brownists, Pilgrim Fathers, Cromwell, Milton, Bunyan, Watts, Doddridge, incorporating them within the spiritual world which the Evangelical Revival had largely reshaped and which was still close enough to their own formation for them to react against it. In their history they might find not just the communion of saints in retrospect but some useful tools for reexamining their own theological, political, and cultural thinking. It was an enterprise which promised fellowship, comfort, enjoyment, and excitement.

All this is shown in the personnel of the society, both officers and members. It

32. *CYB*, 1876, p. 474.

is shown in *Transactions*, where antiquarian, genealogical, ecclesiological, social, literary, and political interests blend to provide a remarkably coherent account of a way of life five hundred years deep. It is also shown in its own history, in which a loose yet distinctive corporate fellowship develops a consistent mentality capable of producing work of considerable, even path-breaking quality. In the early years the excitement was patent. It was never quite lost, even if the lengthening struggle for members, income, and recognition, voiced in too many editorials, militated against the single-minded pursuit of scholarly excellence, not least when placed at the service of the churches. To adapt the words of the poet most frequently quoted by literary Congregationalists in contemporary sermons, the society's reach was ever greater than its grasp.³³

To end with a three-fold, long amen: a strategy, a tragi-comic reality, and a word of comfort.

The strategy is voiced by T.G. Crippen, who was perhaps the society's first hero. He was not, strictly speaking *Transactions's* first editor; that distinction fell, if only for one issue,³⁴ to J.D. McClure and was then shared with G. Currie Martin, but Crippen was, nonetheless, for twenty-five years the society's editor and secretary, in Albert Peel's words "alike its greatest benefactor and its most devoted servant."³⁵ The excellence of *Transactions* was the mark of Crippen's excellence. He wrote much of it, and re-wrote more. "One thinks of him", reflected A.J. Grieve, the society's president at the time of Crippen's death, "as going to and fro among his little flocks in Boston Spa, Fulbourn, Oldbury, Kirton, and Milverton for thirty years, and then for thirty more in the Library at the Memorial Hall, a man of God, with no desire for the limelight, but day by day doing what his hands found to do, 'as poor yet making many rich, as knowing nothing and yet possessing all things'."³⁶

It is tempting to categorize Crippen as an antiquarian. Friends and family nicknamed him "the Encyclopaedia".³⁷ He was more than that. Listen to him at the society's tenth annual meeting, at Memorial Hall, 11 May 1910.³⁸ It was an

33. All this was judiciously summarised by A.J. Grieve, addressing the society's Annual Meeting at Bournemouth, October 1925, "The Congregational Historical Society. A Survey, 1900-1925", *TCHS*, vol. IX, pp. 195-204.

34. 58pp., in print for ten years, and obtainable from the Book Saloon, Congregational Union of England and Wales, Memorial Hall, London E.C.

35. "Editorial", *TCHS*, Vol. IX, p. 193.

36. That was literally true, and a Crippen Memorial Fund was set up for his daughters. (*TCHS*, Vol. XI, No. 1, pp.1-2, 63-4). A.J. Grieve, "In Memoriam, T.G. Crippen, 1841-1929", *ibid.*, pp.3-4. Crippen is a Huguenot name, *Crépin*, from Saumur. One suspects that he and his daughters cut their genealogical enquiries short of the notorious Dr. Crippen, who lived in Holloway; our Crippen settled in Nunhead. For Grieve see C.E. Surman, *Alexander James Grieve M.A., D.D. 1874-1952: A Bibliographical Sketch*, Manchester, 1953.

37. *CYB*, 1931, p. 228.

38. The following account is drawn from DWL: CHSM, 11 May 1910.

important meeting even if the attendance was “unusually meagre”. The chairman, John Brown, once of Bedford, now of Hampstead and retired,³⁹ referred carefully to the death of Edward VII: “it was agreed that an expression of loyal regret, and of hope for the prosperity of King George V should be entered on the minutes”. A little later a young man in his very early twenties, “Mr. A. Peel, at the request of the Chairman, gave an account of his work on the Morrice MSS.” Enter the society’s second hero, after Crippen.

But this was Crippen’s moment. He gave an account of the society’s Sheffield meeting, held the previous October, during the Congregational Union’s Autumnals. This too had been thinly attended. Even in those supposedly more spacious days the society’s meeting competed forlornly with the other delights of the Assembly’s fringe, but the Sheffield meeting was doubly hit for its principal speaker, the Revd. G. Smith of Bradford, could not be there in person any more than his audience could, and his paper “was read by your secretary”, who was unimpressed. “It was a compilation of local interest from various sources, partly from a printed pamphlet, partly from a back number of our own Transactions, and partly from MS notes... that portion which relates to the Attercliffe Academy will be printed in due course – probably in our next issue”.⁴⁰

Crippen had not finished. Among the society’s members was Joseph Joshua Green, of Tunbridge Wells but about to move to Hastings, about whom Crippen had made enquiries some years previously. Reassurance had come then from W.H. Summers, the historian of Berkshire and Oxfordshire Congregationalism. “He is a Friend”, wrote Summers.⁴¹ He was also, as Friends were easily tempted to be, an indefatigable genealogist, immersed in Sussex family lore. Crippen communicated something of this to the 1910 Annual Meeting, with considerable and possibly jealous understatement:

Mr. J.J. Green has furnished a rather lengthy account of his Puritan Ancestors, who were connected by marriage and otherwise with some of the most conspicuous names in the history of early Nonconformity.

Since those names included Walter Raleigh, Katherine Parr, Thomas Cartwright and the Throckmortons, Crippen’s controlled excitement is understandable.⁴²

39. For John Brown (1830-1922) see A. Peel, *The Congregational Two Hundred 1530-1948*, 1948, pp.206-7.
40. It was, as rewritten by Crippen, to whom it is attributed in *Index to the Transactions... (1904-1964)*, p. 22. see “The Attercliffe Academy”, *TCHS*, Vol. IV, pp.333-342.
41. W.H. Summers to T.G. Crippen, 24 September 1904. DWL:CHSM.
42. *The Transactions* harvest of this research can be found in “Some Puritan Genealogies”, *TCHS*, Vol. IV, pp. 96-7; J.J. Green, “The Puritan Family of Wilmer; their Alliances and Connections”, *ibid.*, pp.129-147; *idem*, “Matthew Meade A.M. and his Sermons”, Vol. V, pp.116-121. I suspect that the Wilmer connections could have been extended down the generations to include Richard Cobden, the Free Trade statesman, whose daughter Emma Jane married the publisher T. Fisher Unwin, from a family of traditionary Congregationalists.

The real meat of Crippen's report, however, is yet to come, unadorned, drily relevant, immensely suggestive, however much it might seem to us to stand to reason:

it would be desirable on many grounds to institute enquiry into the disappearance of Congregational Churches which formerly existed both in urban areas and rural localities. Of the rural churches, some no doubt died of hyper calvinism; some were deserted through depopulation; some, maintained with difficulty, were replaced by Methodist churches which met the needs of the people more efficiently. In the cities, especially London, a different story would have to be told; how on the expiry of leases some were killed outright by ground landlords; others, in crowded but impoverished neighbourhoods, were suffered to die because of an exaggerated theory of Congregational Independency, strongly tainted with commercialism. A thorough investigation of the causes why those churches became extinct might move those that are able to take precautions against similar failures in time to come.

In the world outside Memorial Hall, a historiographical revolution was in progress. Political, social, and economic history were all in process of transformation. The Congregational society was signally aiding the transformation of Puritan history, but here, in 1910, Crippen is lifting the whole of ecclesiastical history into the late twentieth century. Here, prompted no doubt by the social investigators who milled around Edwardian England, is foreshadowed the world of E.R. Wickham and beyond, a morning star of that Ecclesiastical History Society of which Crippen's editorial successor but one, Geoffrey Nuttall, is the senior surviving member.

So to the tragi-comedy. Those who are depressed by the constant dumbing-down of knowledge might take heart (or not) from this example of what an editor will immediately recognise as a "filler". The year is 1938. The Editor is Albert Peel. He calls his filler "Congregational Historians in the Making":

Clearing out a desk in the Congregational Library recently I came across some howlers collected from the papers of junior children some years ago: the examination was on denominational history. Among men who went to Mansfield College were Robert Browne, John Howard, and David Livingstone. Silvester Horne and J.H. Jowett,⁴³ however, seem to be the 'star turn', to judge by the examples given below:
Silvester Horne used to wear a light grey suit and brown shoes. He taught the men to smoke and the women to sow [*sic*] and so make the evening enjoyable...

43. For Jowett (1863-1923), see A. Porritt ("with a Foreword by the Archbishop of Canterbury"), *John Henry Jowett C.H., M.A., D.D.*, nd. (1924).

Silvester Horne went about his work quietly and peacefully...

Jowett was very advanced in the way he used his language...

Isaac Watts was a man who found religion easy.

Isaac Watts wrote hymns – also comic songs.

Watts passed on to the land of never-withering flowers of which one of his hymns were composed...

John Milton was the poet who wrote beautiful poems, the best of which is 'The Tulip and the Butterfly'.

Livingstone – a stone that will for ever live...

I wasn't there when we learnt about John Howard...

The first Congregationalists were called 'Brownies'.

Watts changed the way they gambled through the service...

J. Henry Jowett tried to do all he could. At first he thought he would be a bachelor but some people needed something more than that, so he became a Minister...

You do not have to pay a price to belong to a Congregational Church.

The rule of Congregational Churches is not to have any fancy services, only plain, and to obey the minister's rules...⁴⁴

The perceptive historian is unlikely to find a better snapshot of Congregationalism in the 1920s and 1930s.

Finally, the word of comfort. From the first there were non-Congregationalists in the society's membership. To the Quaker Joseph Joshua Green might be added the Bootham master, A. Neave Brayshaw; the Baptists contributed W.T. Whitley, the Presbyterians J. Hay Colligan, and the Unitarians Alexander Gordon and George Eyre Evans, each of them a resonating name for Dissenting historians. There were other weighty names, Charles Harding Firth for example, and from within the denominational fold W.H. Wills, Albert Spicer, Henriqueta Rylands, and the Colman sisters were among those who ensured a degree of financial stability. On 7 May 1905 George Eyre Evans wrote to Crippen from Aberystwyth the sort of letter which editors (and secretaries) receive less frequently than most might wish, yet such a letter as would gladden any editor's heart with its words of encouragement and good work in progress.

In the long catalogue of beneficent acts to me personally which I owe to Dr. McClure comes that of enlisting my interest in the Congregational Historical Society; to the Annual Meeting on the 10th inst. be my almoner to offer my thanks, and tell the members that if we have done no more than issue the one fat volume in which our first six transactions appear, we have cause to be grateful. Let us go on steadily.

My contribution to the coming year (i.e. if you want it) will be an article on Early days of Nonconformity at Yarmouth. It so happens that I have dug

44. A. Peel, "Congregational Historians in the Making", *TCHS*, Vol. XIII, 1938, pp.120-1.

out a large mass of practically unknown matter, about the period 1667-1671, from the State Papers, and have the article well nigh ready for you.

To Browne's illuminating pages 208-251, we will attempt to add greater light, thanks to the chatty letters written from Yarmouth by Richard Bower to Joseph Williamson, secretary to Lord Arlington.

May the Society go on and to knowledge add yet more knowledge, this is the wish from the eternal silences of our Cardiganshire mountains of

Your fellow member,

Geo. Eyre Evans.⁴⁵

That article duly appeared in *Transactions*⁴⁶ and the answer to Evans's wish still echoes unassumingly yet distinctly down the generations.

CLYDE BINFIELD

MONMOUTH'S REBELLION – THE SKELETON IN THE CUPBOARD?

"I can smell a Presbyterian forty miles off," cried Judge Jeffreys. He was supposed to be trying Captain Marders, the Constable of Crewkerne, who had been described to the court as "a good Protestant." Jeffreys's outbursts are notorious but in this case he was merely expressing what James II ordered him to do: to root out Dissent, political and religious in the West Country.

I find it strange that Monmouth is not mentioned in Dale's massive *History of Congregationalism* and that he has but a brief mention in Tudur Jones's *Congregationalism in England*, though the book gives a thorough description of persecution up to this time. In all the denominational historical journals, there is no more than a couple of pages concerning Monmouth's mother.¹ What particularly surprises me is that Thomas Crippen put nothing in the *CHS Transactions* when he wrote extensively about the subject for the *Somerset County Express* just before the Great War. Why this silence?

In recent times fresh light has been thrown on the Rebellion by historians such as Chenevix Trench, Peter Earle, and MacDonald Wigfield.² They have set out to

45. G. Eyre Evans to T.G. Crippen, 7 May 1905. DWL: CHSM. See also J. Browne, *History of Congregationalism... in Norfolk and Suffolk* (1877), pp.208-251.

46. G. Eyre Evans, "Early Nonconformity in Yarmouth", *TCHS* Vol. II, 1906, pp.403-9.

1 *The Baptist Quarterly*, XX, pp.129f.

2 C.C. Trench, *The Western Rising* (1969); P. Earle, *Monmouth's Rebels – the Road to Sedgemoor* (1977); W. MacDonald Wigfield, *The Monmouth Rebellion – a social History* (1980).

set right erroneous ideas long accepted as truth. Macaulay dismissed Monmouth's army as a few thousand "colliers and ploughmen," "Somerset clowns," an incident of little importance in the South West. Thus Jeffreys's behaviour becomes heinous. If, however, the uprising was really worrying in 1685, what he did, though by our standards appalling, is more understandable. There was no further trouble in the South West.

Colliers and ploughmen were scarce in Monmouth's force which consisted chiefly of yeomen and workers in the wool industry. Earle tells us that they were mature men, "almost entirely Nonconformists from the great bastion of Dissent in the three Western Counties of Somerset, Devon and Dorset."³

From the Calendar of State Papers Domestic we learn that while Charles was still on the throne some Whig aristocrats were planning to overthrow James, should he succeed to the throne, using Dissenters' meeting houses as recruiting offices for their forces in Cheshire, London, and the South West. Taunton is singled out as a "factious town," which is not very surprising since it had suffered several months' siege by the Royalists during the Civil War and about a third of it had been burnt down. Its Mayor, Stephen Timewell, was at his wits' end trying to keep the town under control. On 11 May 1683, the day the town celebrated annually the lifting of the siege in 1645, he called on a crowd of over a thousand to disperse but was jeered and clapped. Verbal and physical abuse followed when a ring-leader was arrested and the guards at the gaol suffered a hail of stones, the constable being hit by one weighing a pound. The tax-collector was set upon, by people emerging from a conventicle, according to him. That night someone set fire to the gear in the market square. It was noticed that people in the crowd were wearing orange colours. The mayor had the meeting-houses watched and no gathering took place in them that summer. He was not satisfied, however, and so in August he went further.

I pulled down all the lasts and galleries in that great meeting-house called Poole with all the doors and gates and likewise all the seats, pulpit and galleries of the Baptist meeting-house and burnt it together in the market place. There were about ten cart-loads. We were till three in the morning before it was all burnt; and we were very merry before it with the bells ringing all night.

The "great meeting-house," he explained, "was the eye of all the West of England for Presbyterians and for meetings and now it is all gone."⁴

Let us return to the Duke of Monmouth. How close was he to Dissent? His mother had connections. She resided with Peter and Margaret Gosfright, members of William Kiffin's Particular Baptist congregation, in 1654 (when Monmouth was four years old) and Peter's brother George, who was later in Holland with the

3. Earle p.5.

4. CSPD: *Chas. II. XXV* p.4; 1683: *Jan-June* p.250.

Duke and was paymaster to the army he raised, claimed to have witnessed Charles's marriage to Monmouth's mother, Lucy Walter(s). We should also note that Kiffin's grandsons, Benjamin and William Hewling, joined the rebels and were in due course executed.⁵ Monmouth chose a Presbyterian, Robert Ferguson, as the army's chaplain. His talents lay in oratory and spinning marvellous, bold schemes, normally unworkable. Nathaniel Hook, a young Irish Congregationalist, was made Monmouth's personal chaplain. It was Hook whom Monmouth sent on a mission to London to rouse sympathisers for his cause when he was becoming desperate during his campaign before Bristol. Hook failed. Great hopes had been pinned on Matthew Meade of Stepney, London's most popular and influential Dissenting minister, but Meade would not touch it. Hook saw the way the wind was blowing, joined the Established Church, and when James fled abroad in 1688 went with him. The last that is heard of him is his becoming a Roman Catholic and fighting against Marlborough.⁶ Monmouth was not renowned for his judgment of character.

Lest we are tempted to suppose Monmouth was merely using Dissent, we should take into account the contents of his pocket-book found on him after his execution. This fashionable courtier, lover of hunting and dancing, had another side: he had composed for private use a large number of prayers and also tried his hand at religious verse, none of much merit.⁷ Let us say, then, that he was closer to Dissenters than either William of Orange or Mary.

Monmouth's tiny force, three vessels carrying eighty men, a few cannons, and some stores, landed at Lyme Regis on 11 June 1685, fully expecting uprisings to break out in London and Cheshire. Recruiting and training began and the army moved inland to Axminster. We are very fortunate in that the Independent Church here produced its *Ecclesiastica* or *Book of Remembrance*. It tells us that the Duke's arrival aroused the hope "that the day was come in which the good old cause of God and Religion that had lain dead and buried for a long time would revive again." Its dynamic pastor, Stephen Towgood, and its elder, Thomas Lane, led many of their flock into the rebel army.⁸

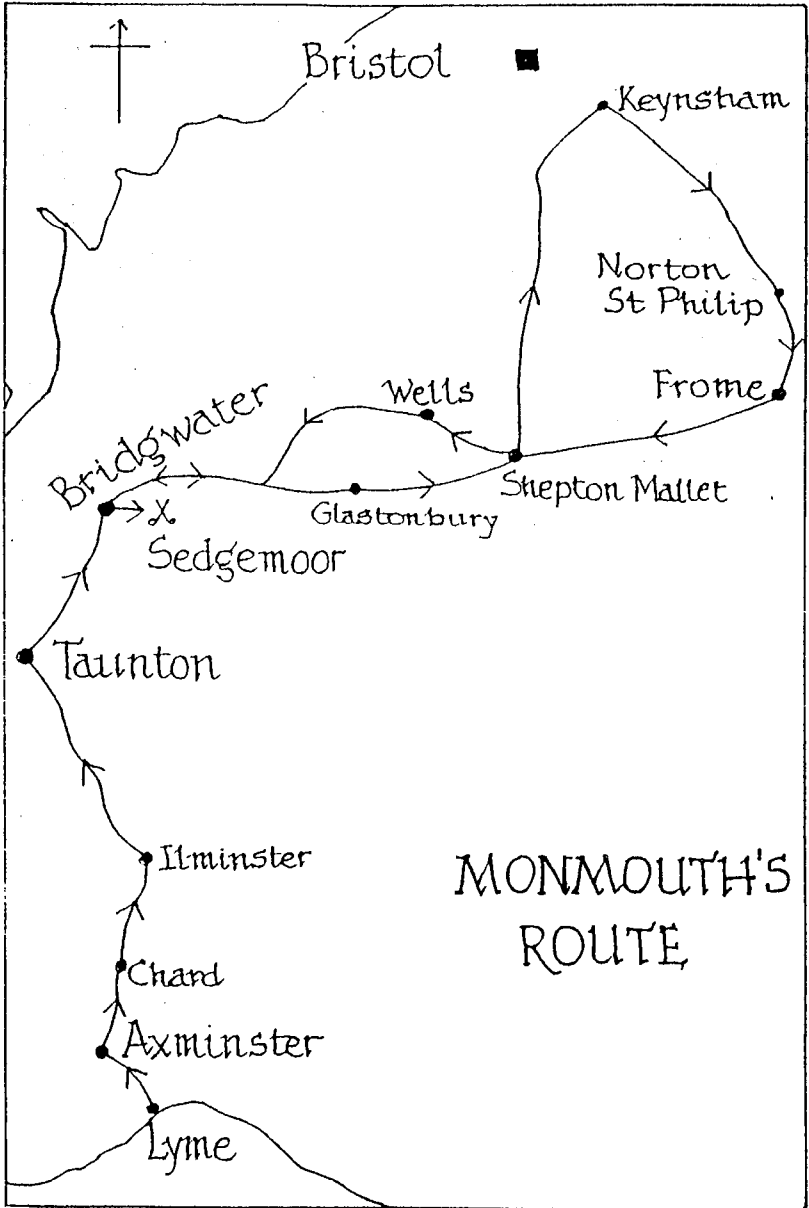
This is not the place to trace the progress of the rebellion. However, at Taunton, the rallying-point, on 19 June, the Duke was presented with twenty-seven flags for the army by the twenty-seven Maids of Taunton. He kissed each girl and thanked them for the work of their school. They were presided over by the Headmistress, Miss Blake, who bore a Bible in one hand and a sword in the other. An informer in the crowd made a list of the names of the girls, drawing attention to those with wealthy parents. After Sedgemoor, this proved useful to the Royalists who imposed a fine of £2000 on the families. It is useful to us because we find that some of the girls' names corresponded to names on the Paul's Meeting

5. See note 1.

6. Wigfield, *The Monmouth Rebels* (arranged alphabetically).

7. Wigfield, *The Monmouth Rebellion* pp.20ff.

8. *Ecclesiastica*. Ed. K.W.H. Howard (1978) pp. 98ff.



conveyance. The next day Monmouth was proclaimed king, a step taken, it was said, to counter allegations that the uprising was republican.⁹

Monmouth went to take Bristol but for some reason hesitated and then retired, only skirmishing with the Royalists. People said he was silent and depressed. Defeat stared him in the face. Stephen Towgood and Thomas Lane did not hesitate. They perceived the rebellion was a lost cause and and they marched most of their men home.¹⁰

By 6 July at Sedgemoor it was all over; the rebel army destroyed.

Within a fortnight Monmouth was beheaded and 1400 rebels were in prison. Some thousands more were rounded up because they had been absent from home at the time of the battle. Unfortunately, no records of mens' religion were taken; their addresses and occupations were, but in a few cases we do know their religious allegiance. Three ministers went to the gallows. Sampson Larke was a Baptist, hanged at Lyme. Richard Evans, minister and physician, simply described as a Nonconformist, was executed (we do not know where). A Presbyterian from Portsmouth, John Hicks, died at Glastonbury. He was taken at Dame Alice Lisle's near Winchester, where he stayed that night and she was beheaded for her hospitality. She was over ninety years of age. Did Jeffreys remember that when he in turn lay in the Tower of London? Another Nonconformist minister suffered imprisonment; John Vincent had broken into St Mary Magdalene at Taunton to seize weapons in the Royalist armoury there. Two friends from Martock, John Bisse, a Nonconformist Teacher, and John Gardiner, a ministerial candidate, were pardoned. Their friends raised £700 for their reprieves, all of which went into the pockets of the local officials as their pardons came *gratis* from London. John Hucker was hanged in Taunton. He was the leading layman of Paul's Meeting. His house had been licensed for Presbyterian meetings in 1672 and his signature appears on the conveyance for the land on which the meeting-house stood (and still stands). He was a wealthy serge manufacturer as well as a captain of horse and he it was who entertained Monmouth when he was in Taunton. Somehow, his son, Robert, managed to be pardoned in 1687 although he too was an army captain. Abraham Holmes, an Anabaptist, and senior officer, was hanged at Lyme and Robert Perrot, also a Baptist, Second-in-Command at Sedgemoor, died at Taunton. Another Baptist, Samuel Glisson, was hanged at Sherborne. After hanging, these men were drawn and quartered and various parts of them distributed around the county and put up on show, having been tarred against the elements and birds of prey. It is surprising to find Thomas Paull, hanged at Frome, and Walter Osborne, who was pardoned, described as Quakers.¹¹

Not all the Axminster church rebels escaped Scot-free. Two were apprehended on the way home. Thomas Smith escaped but died soon afterwards. He is described in *Ecclesiastica* as "a timorous man." John Ashwood, the other man,

9. Wigfield, *The Monmouth Rebellion*, p. 44; Paul's Meeting Records.

10. *Ecclesiastica*, *ibid*.

11. Wigfield, *The Monmouth Rebels*.

was condemned to death, reprieved, and survived to become minister of the Congregational church in Exeter. John Spiring (Spearing) was transported to Barbados. Friends paid his owner a ransom and he sailed homewards only to be wrecked and drowned. Thomas Coad, whose son became minister of the Congregational church at Dorking, was one of the few to return. He went to Jamaica where he was noted for lay preaching. Another Axminster man was killed near Taunton early in the campaign. A young man who went westwards to join Monmouth was Daniel Defoe, but he was not at Sedgemoor where three of his fellow students at Newington Academy lost their lives. Defoe, as a trooper in the Volunteers, was to go to meet William of Orange at Henley when he advanced on London. Newington Academy was Independent.¹²

While Jeffreys subdued the South West he could not change the minds and hearts of its people. Take the case of Francis Luttrell who commanded the Somerset Militia. Ordered south to block Monmouth's advance, his troops dissolved into the countryside. Upon receiving fresh orders to march to Bridgwater he set out but never reached there. Three years later, however, when William landed in Devon, Luttrell was able to recruit a thousand men in three days and march to Exeter, and the officers were all dressed in blue and orange. This regiment eventually became the Green Howards.¹³

Monmouth's rebellion was foolhardy and tragic. Men of power and influence would have nothing to do with it but the Nonconformists were not so wise. They had smarted under persecution – the Axminster congregation was always having to meet in remote forests – and the Duke's call seemed a divine intervention. Probably William Jenkyn, whose father was a Nonconformist minister who had died in Newgate, summed up the feelings of the martyrs. Before his execution in Taunton he wrote to his mother:

I dye a martyr for the Protestant religion, and merely doing my duty, in opposing that flood of Popery, which seemed to be just overwhelming the Church and interest of Christ in these nations.¹⁴

Others might have added secondly that they stood for regular Parliaments.

There is evidence enough to show that Dissenters in the South West were deeply involved in Monmouth's rebellion. Probably many historians in former times were ignorant of this. Some, however, knew about it, but were not proud of it. Was it not a skeleton in the cupboard to a patriotic Briton? Perhaps not: the men (and women) who suffered on Monmouth's side did so both in the cause of a representative Parliament and for "the Church and interest of Christ in these nations."

JOHN H. TAYLOR

12. *DNB*, sub Daniel Defoe.

13. Geoffrey Powell, *The Green Howards* (1968) p.17.

14. Wigfield, *The Monmouth Rebels*.

THE WELMANS OF POUNDISFORD PARK

The Welmans lived at Poundisford Park in the parish of Pitminster, just a few miles to the south of Taunton, in Somerset. Philip Doddridge claimed to be a distant kinsman and visited them when he came to Taunton for the ordination of Benjamin Fawcett, one of his pupils, as assistant minister of Paul's Meeting. Doddridge wrote to his wife, Mercy, at Northampton, telling her about it in a letter dated 17 June, 1742.¹

Some of the Welman women preferred to marry in the neighbouring parish of Angersleigh, but a number of the family, men and women, are buried in the church of St. Mary and St. Andrew in the village of Pitminster. Their memorials are together on the south wall of the church, one large, indeed composite memorial, flanked by three separate ones (shown opposite).

The family worshipped at Fulwood Chapel and to avoid driving all the way round by Pitminster in the south or by Trull in the north, a carriage way was made across the fields from their house to the chapel. The Fulwood cause was first inspired by Thomas Forward, the ejected minister of Pitminster in 1662. In 1672 he registered himself as a Presbyterian Teacher and his house in Pitminster as a place of worship. Two later ministers at Fulwood, Stephen James and Henry Grove, were also lecturers in the Taunton Dissenting Academy associated with Paul's Meeting.

Fulwood Chapel was rebuilt by the Welmans in 1813 next to the site of the previous chapel, which, according to Kelly's Directory, had been erected in 1732, replacing another chapel in its turn. The chapel closed in 1956 and has been converted into a private house. Inside, on the south wall, there is still a memorial to the Welmans. It is high up, the lettering faint and difficult to read:-

Sacred to the memory of Thomas Welman Esq. of Poundisford Park,
Obit. 28th Jan. 1829 aetat 84.

He was a Christian in whom were combined true piety, great humility,
cheerfulness and uniform sweetness of the temper which gained him
the love of all, a real non-conformist but no bigot. He loved all who loved

-
1. Deeds and documents relating to Fulwood Chapel are lodged with Broomhead and Saul, solicitors of the Taunton District of the United Reformed Church. The registers of the parishes of Pitminster, Angersleigh, and St. Mary's Taunton, are deposited with the Somerset Record Office, Taunton. Further information has been drawn from Burke's *Landed Gentry* (1937 - sub. Welman of Trewarthenick, formerly of Poundisford Park and Norton Manor); Kelly's *Directory for Somerset* (1897); A.G. Matthews, *Calamy Revised* (Clarendon Press 1988); G.F. Nuttall, *Calendar of the Correspondence of Philip Doddridge, 1702-1751*, (Northamptonshire Record Society and the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, 1979); J. Savage, *The History of Taunton in the County of Somerset* (Taunton, 1822); R.W. Vivian-Neal, *Poundisford Park* (guidebook; undated).

To the memory of those pious and beloved relatives whose ashes repose in the adjoining vaults, this tablet is affectionately erected by Charles Noel Welman, Esq., of Poundisford Park. April 1836.

Isaac Welman Esq.

of Poundisford Park, late of Upcott

Obit. March 9th 1715 aet 69.

Simon Welman, eldest son of the above

Obit. at Cutliffs, May 19th, 1716, aet. 33.

Prudence, wife of Isaac Welman.

Obit. 1720, aet. 74.

Elizabeth, wife of Simon Welman,

Obit. 1764, aet. 81.

Also of Isaac, grandson of the abovesaid,

Obit. 1754, aet. 15.

Jane Welman, mother of the last named

Obit. at Bath 1775, aet. 55

Isaac Welman, her husband, likewise of Poundisford Park.

Obit. 1782 aet. 72.

Elizabeth, daughter of John Lock, Esq.

and wife of Thomas Welman, Esq.

Obit. 1788, aet. 21.

Whose daughter Elizabeth married

The Hon. Charles Noel Noel, afterwards Lord Barham

And obit. in 1811 aet. 25.

Also to the memory of Elizabeth Meech

Daughter of Isaac and Jane Welman, obit. 1795.

Jane Welman, sister of the last, obit. 1821, aet. 82.

And Thomas Welman Esq, their brother of Poundisford Park,

Obit. Jan. 28th, 1829, aet.83.

Rebecca, youngest sister of the above,

Obit. Sept. 6th, 1831, aet. 83.

Hebrews II: 13.

Sacred

to the blessed memorie
of the well beloved
Thomas Edward Welman
Eldest Son of
Charles Noel Welman
and
Anna Eliza, his wife
a dear child of rare promise
who departed this life
May vii. Mccccxli
Aged iii years and x months.
Requiescit in Pace!

To the honoured memory of
The Hon^{ble} Charlotte Noel
Wife of
Thomas Welman Esq.
Who died at Clifton
August 1869. Aged 77
Erected by
Her affectionate Son
Charles Noel Welman

In memory of
Annette Elizabeth
the beloved wife of
Charles Noel Welman
who died at Clevedon
May 1st 1887
Aged 70 years
R.I.P.

the Saviour, and this cause which he laboured to extend. In 1813 he united with his sisters Jane and Rebecca, his cousin Miss Hawker of Poundisford Lodge and his son in law the hon. Chas. N. Noel, now the Earl of Gainsborough, and a few others in erecting this chapel, after having worshipped in the adjoining building which was consecrated for the service of God by his beloved grandmother, Mrs. Tristram, to whom Doddridge bore a pleasing testimony in a letter from Taunton, 1742.

"I am just returned from the polite family of the Wellmans, the glory of Dissenters in these parts, one of the most considerable in England, and on the whole, such a one for all that is great and good as I never before knew." Nor did these come short of the excellencies of their ancestors but having spent their days in devotedness to God and in serving their generation, fell asleep.

This tablet is erected by Thomas Thompson of Poundisford Park as a tribute of high respect and ardent love.

September 1847.

The Poundisford estate originally belonged to the bishops of Winchester. In 1534 Bishop Gardiner divided it into two parts and leased them. Eventually, the Hill family came to own both parts. The Lodge in the northern part was built first and was so called because it was built on the site of the verderer's lodge. The house in the southern part, called The Park, was built a few years later by William Hill, who began work on it in 1546. The last of the Hills to own the Park was Sir Roger Hill who moved to Denham Place, Buckinghamshire.

Simon Welman, a doctor practising in London but originating from Taunton, bought Poundisford Lodge in 1704 and The Park from Roger Hill in 1706. Simon, however, died in 1708 before he could move in and the first Welman occupant was his brother and heir, Isaac.

The owners of Poundisford Park were:-

	Roger Hill (Knight) MP	sold 1706
to	Dr. Simon Welman MD	died 1708
to brother	Isaac Welman, High Sheriff of Somerset	died 1715
to son	Simon Welman	died 1716
to widow	Elizabeth Welman	died 1764
to son	Isaac Welman	died 1782
to son	Thomas Welman	died 1829
to widow	Charlotte (second husband Major Thomas Thompson)	died 1869
sold to	The Helyars of Poundisford Lodge in 1869.	

Charlotte was the second wife of Thomas Thompson (1785-1865). His daughter by his first wife was Jemima Luke (1813-1906) who wrote the hymn – "I think

when I read that sweet story of old" – which was first sung by her Sunday School class in Pitminster. Thomas himself was treasurer of the Home Missionary Society.

Not all the Welmans lived at Poundisford Park. Charles Noel Welman lived at Norton Manor (Norton Fitzwarren) for a number of years and Isaac lived at Upcott Hall in Bishops Hull for a period, whilst Simon Welman inherited the Great House (now the Manor House) at Bishops Hull in 1761 from his aunt Prudence who had married the owner, John Wyatt, at Angersleigh in 1697.

An earlier Thomas Welman was the ejected minister of Luppitt in Devon in 1662, whilst his brother Tristram was curate to George Newman, minister of St. Mary's in Taunton. Tristram died as a young man in 1650. The Welmans of Poundisford Park are descended from the uncle of Thomas and Tristram, Simon Welman who was buried in St. Mary's

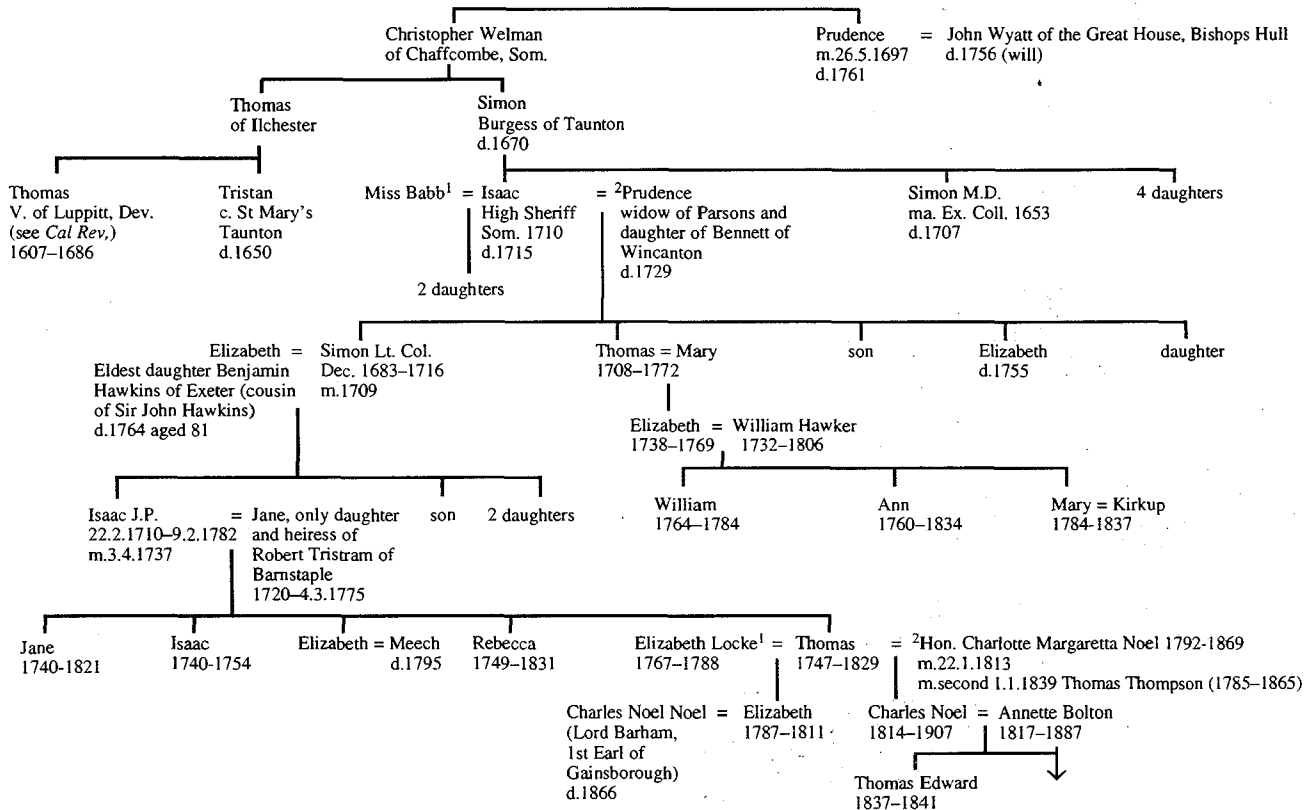
The names of members of the family appear repeatedly in the affairs of the Nonconformist churches and chapels in the Taunton area. Thomas, Isaac, and Simon appear as trustees of John Wyatt's legacy to Bishops Hull Chapel in 1756. The name of Thomas Welman was on the foundation stone (now obscured) of Norton Fitzwarren Chapel which was built in 1821 and is now the URC's South West Provincial Office. The Welmans also endowed the chapels. Prudence Welman, in her will, left money to Fulwood and Bishops Hull. Her daughter Elizabeth left money for Fulwood and its minister. Rebecca Welman and Charlotte Thompson also remembered Fulwood in their wills.

Thomas Welman autographed his copy of the Report of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Missionary Society (it became the London Missionary Society in 1818) at which Isaac Tozer, the minister of Pauls Meeting, was one of the preachers. Perhaps they travelled to London together in 1799.

The family is extensive, the names Simon, Isaac, Thomas, and Prudence occurring repeatedly in the various branches, sometimes making identification difficult. The family tree [Fig. 1] traces those who had most to do with Poundisford Park and Fulwood Chapel.

The family believed in supporting all the local Dissenting congregations and was indeed as Doddridge claimed, one of the most considerable among the Dissenters in England. It seems, however, that even considerable Dissenters need a change for, as well as worshipping at Fulwood, Isaac and his children Thomas and Rebecca rented a pew at Paul's Meeting. More dramatically, within another two generations, the Welmans, like many of their aristocratic Noel kinsmen, had become Roman Catholics. Charles Noel Welman (who was an Edinburgh graduate), so conscious of his puritan ancestry when he came of age in 1836, had six sons and five daughters in addition to the little boy commemorated in Pitminster Church. His eldest surviving son, like his third daughter, married into the Stonors who were, without doubt, to adapt Doddridge, one of the most considerable, even a glory, among England's Catholics. Charles Noel Welman's eldest daughter became a nun, so did four of his Welman granddaughters, whilst a Sónor great-grandson became a Benedictine. Their secular siblings seem to have

THE WELMAN FAMILY



lived the lives expected of their class – the army, the navy, the empire, and the county – but one would like to know more about the inner lives of the Welmans of Poundisford Park, Norton Manor, Fitzroy House and, latterly, of Trewarthenick.²

BRIAN KIRK

**ENGLISH NONCONFORMITY AND THE INVENTION OF
TRADITION: ROBERT VAUGHAN AND THE BICENTENARY OF 1662**

Again and again our age is called the Age of Revivals; and undoubtedly it has been marked by some singular and unexpected resuscitations.... we find ourselves carried back two hundred years, and plunged into the whirlpool of Republican and Royalist contention. ...This is a 'revival' indeed; and it will be well if the bad passions of two hundred years ago do not revive with its controversies.¹

This reviewer was correct; the second half of the nineteenth century saw a tremendous proliferation of commemorative events, celebrated with lavish ceremonies supposedly based on historical precedents. Eric Hobsbawm has called these events "invented traditions."² Over the last decade or so, scholars have continued his pioneering efforts to study them. Most of these studies have focused on the ceremonies created by the governing classes of western Europe.³ But

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2. One would like to know more about the relationship between Thomas Thompson and the younger Welmans. Thompson, of Brixton before Poundisford, was prominent at Bengo Collyer's Hanover Chapel, Peckham. Described by T.G. Crippen as "only moderately wealthy", he founded the Sailors' Society in 1819, and was treasurer of the Home Missionary Society for forty years. His daughter Jemima, wife of Revd. Samuel Luke, wrote the hymn in 1841. (T.G. Crippen, "Hanover Chapel, Peckham", *TCHS*, 3, 1907-8, p. 165). The C.N. Welmans became Catholics in 1850, the 2nd Earl and Countess of Gainsborough in 1851, and Sir Paul and Lady Molesworth of Trewarthenick, whose estate the Welmans inherited, in 1852. I am indebted to Dom Aidan Bellenger for this information.

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1. "The Bi-Centenary of Nonconformity", *The London Review*, XVII (1862), pp.492-3.
 2. Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions" in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: 1983), pp.1-14.
 3. See for example Sean Wilentz, ed., *Rites of Power: Symbolism, Ritual, and Politics Since the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: 1985); D.E. Barclay, "Ritual, Ceremonial, and the 'Invention' of a Monarchical Tradition in Nineteenth-Century Prussia" in Heinz Duchhardt, Richard A. Jackson and David Sturdy, eds., *European Monarchy: its evolution and practice from Roman antiquity to modern times* (Stuttgart: 1992), pp.207-220.

traditions were also invented by other, less powerful groups in society, and in some cases their celebrations of the past presented a challenge to the establishment.

One of the clearest examples of invented tradition among such groups in Britain occurred in 1862. In that year, a large number of Nonconformists, mainly of the old Dissenting denominations and led by the Congregationalists, decided to celebrate the bicentenary of the ejection of approximately two thousand ministers from the Church of England. These ministers lost their livings because they refused to submit to the Act of Uniformity of 1662, which required subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles and a declaration that the Book of Common Prayer contained nothing contrary to the Word of God.⁴ The Ejection was a crucial event in the development of Nonconformity: the state gave up any pretence of religious comprehension, and a clear line could now be drawn between Churchmen and Dissenters.

One of the most prominent participants in the Bicentenary celebrations was Robert Vaughan.⁵ Vaughan had already had a notable career as the first Professor of History at the London University, as the first President and Professor of Theology at the Lancashire Independent College, and as the founder and editor of the *British Quarterly Review*. As an historian who had concentrated much of his attention on the seventeenth century, it seemed natural for Vaughan to take a leading part in the Bicentenary commemoration; indeed, he wrote the official "Memorial Volume" entitled *English Nonconformity*. However, when one looks more closely at the nature of the celebration, Vaughan's decision to participate is surprising. In many ways, the Bicentenary was a vehicle for radical Nonconformity, whereas Vaughan was known as a conservative, intent upon improving relations between Nonconformists and Churchmen, with a view to raising the social profile of Congregationalism. The Bicentenary celebrations had the opposite effect. The "bad passions" alluded to by the *London's* reviewer were rekindled with a vengeance, even though they were not a direct revival of those of the seventeenth century. The historical fact of the Ejection became the object of intense scrutiny, with Dissenters and Churchmen alike reinventing its significance to support their own views of current issues such as Disestablishment and the political role of Dissent.

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4. For an account of the Ejection, see A.G. Matthews, *Calamy revised: being a revision of Edward Calamy's "Account" of the ministers and others ejected and silenced, 1660-2* (Oxford: 1988, 1st pub. 1934) and R. Tudur Jones, *Congregationalism in England 1662-1962* (London: 1962), pp.46-62.
 5. For an introduction to the life and career of Robert Vaughan, see Clyde Binfield, "Hebrews Hellenized? English Evangelical Nonconformity and Culture, 1840-1940" in Sheridan Gilley and W.J. Sheils, eds., *A History of Religion in Britain: practice and belief from pre-Roman times to the present* (Oxford, U.K. and Cambridge, U.S.A., 1994), pp.322-327.

Vaughan was the centre of this intense intermingling of past and present. The aim of this paper is to determine what the controversy revealed about Vaughan's thought, and what it revealed about the state of Congregationalism in the period of uncertainty preceding the Gladstonian alliance. There are three sections. The first is a brief consideration of the study of invented tradition and its application to the Bicentenary. The second describes the context within which the Bicentenary was planned and celebrated.⁶ The third concentrates on the pivotal role played in the commemoration by Vaughan. His goals of preserving Evangelical Christianity and raising the profile of Congregationalism remained constant, but his actions and writings during this period demonstrate that he could no longer be said to represent politically conservative Dissent.

I

Eric Hobsbawm has defined "invented tradition" as

a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past. ... However, insofar as there is such reference to a historic past, the peculiarity of 'invented' traditions is that the continuity with it is largely fictitious. In short, they are responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition.⁷

Initially, it might appear to be doing the Bicentenary celebration an injustice to describe it as an example of "invented" tradition. Tangible links certainly did exist between the "Two Thousand" of 1662 and the Nonconformists of 1862: some Nonconformist churches could trace their roots back to the congregations gathered by the ejected ministers, and generations of Dissenters had followed in their footsteps by refusing to submit to the conditions required by the Act of Uniformity. However, no tradition of commemorating the Ejectment existed; no similar celebrations were held in 1762. Moreover, the ejected ministers had never been held up as models for contemporary Nonconformists to emulate. Indeed, the fact that many of their religious and autobiographical writings were out of print and hard to obtain testifies to the lack of popular or scholarly

6. For the importance of context to the study of such events, see Elizabeth Hammerton and David Cannadine, "Conflict and Consensus on a Ceremonial Occasion: The Diamond Jubilee in Cambridge in 1897", *Historical Journal* 24, no. 1 (1981), pp.111-146.

7. Hobsbawm and Ranger, *Invention of Tradition*, pp.1-2.

interest. Throughout his life, Vaughan had been involved in various attempts to remedy this situation, and to stimulate Nonconformist interest in the religious past in general. One of his most notable contributions in this sphere was the volume of Wycliffe's works which he edited for the Wycliffe Society. That organization, founded in 1842 to publish a series of "tracts and treatises illustrative of the theology and polity of the British Nonconformist churches, commencing with the works and times of Wycliffe and proceeding regularly to the present period"⁸ was a disappointing failure, as it could not find enough subscribers. Its founder, John Blackburn, reproached Nonconformists for their apathy and lack of historical awareness:

We are a people who have a history, but we neglect our documents. Let us awake to a consciousness of our own history as doing much to teach statisticians and legislators that, after all, the Kingdom of Christ is best governed by its own laws, and sustained by its own resources – resources not wrung from a reluctant contributor by the force of law, but cheerfully given by the force of love.⁹

This evidence that ordinary Nonconformists were not interested in their historical heritage calls into question John Vincent's assertion that the "real corpus of thought uniting the middle class ... was ... a view or recollection of English history. Dissenters, above all, were formed in a historical culture of almost Judaic narrowness."¹⁰ More recently, Simon Gunn has followed in Vincent's footsteps. He has described the tradition of militant Dissent descended from sixteenth-century puritanism as forming "a distinct historical patrimony which gave middle-class radicalism much of its sense of mission."¹¹ It seems more likely that prominent Nonconformists were trying to create precisely such a historical culture (although not one of "Judaic narrowness").¹² The Bicentenary was their most sustained effort to revive links to the past, and a remarkably self-conscious attempt to use them to achieve contemporary aims.

8. Albert Peel, *These Hundred Years: a history of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1831-1931* (London: 1931), p. 122.

9. *Ibid.*

10. John Vincent, *The Formation of the Liberal Party, 1857-1868* (London: 1996), p. xxvii-xxix.

11. Simon Gunn, "The 'failure' of the Victorian middle class: a critique" in John Seed and Janet Wolff, eds., *The Culture of Capital* (Manchester: 1988), p.37.

12. Vaughan had always been anxious to dispel the image of Dissenting culture as narrow and barren. In his essay "Characteristics of Dissent" (1847) he warned that the spirit of intolerance and narrowness among Nonconformists would drive away men of wealth and education.

Thus, the very first issue of *The Nonconformist*¹³ for 1862 told its readers that it was their duty to familiarize themselves with the men of 1662. It was hoped in this way to “beget a corresponding spirit [of 1662] in the men and women of 1862.”¹⁴ The Nonconformists were well aware of other such revivals and their utility. At their Conference in January 1862, the Welsh Independents praised the recent revival of Welsh ballads.¹⁵ However, the writings and actions of the ejected ministers were of far greater and more solemn importance to British culture, they claimed, and it was disgraceful that they were not more widely known and respected.¹⁶ The comments of the Revd. T. Rees strikingly echo the sentiments of John Blackburn:

The memory of the Two Thousand has been sadly neglected. ... It is agreed to commemorate all who have left a mark on their age. No one did more than the Puritans. They made Britain what it is. The most effectual mode to preserve their memories is to gather up the fragments, for only fragments remain. There are many things in the State-paper Office, noblemen’s palaces, and parish registers – to search these would not be too much were all to join.¹⁷

In other words, the Nonconformist heritage was a real one, but it had never been systematically exploited. Sociological theories may shed some light on why an influential section of Nonconformity felt the need to do so in the early 1860s.

According to Hobsbawm, traditions are invented in order to establish or symbolize “social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial

13. *The Nonconformist*, a newspaper founded by Edward Miall in 1841 to “unmask the Church and to brace Dissent,” (Clyde Binfield, *So Down to Prayers: studies in English Nonconformity, 1780-1920* [London: 1977], p.111), was the voice of radical Nonconformity and its motto “The Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion” was ridiculed in a famous passage in Matthew Arnold’s *Culture and Anarchy*. Jean Smallbone, in “Matthew Arnold and the Bicentenary of 1862,” *Baptist Quarterly* 14 n.s. (1951-2) pp. 222-226, suggests that Arnold’s hostility towards the Nonconformists arose from his disgust at the controversy surrounding the Bicentenary.
14. “What of the year 1862?” in *The Nonconformists*, vol. 11 (Jan. 1, 1862), p.2.
15. Romantic mythologizing about the Welsh past is a classic example of invented tradition. See Prys Morgan, “From a Death to a View: The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period” in Hobsbawm and Ranger, *Invention of Tradition*, p.43-44: “By his various books on Welsh music published between 1784 and 1820 Edward Jones was one of those who turned Welsh culture from being one of decaying but unselfconscious survival into self-aware revival, and the result, though often bogus, was never dull.”
16. *The Nonconformist* 11 (Jan. 22, 1862), p.104-5.
17. *Ibid.*, p.104.

communities."¹⁸ Their primary function, therefore, is to unify a group and to reinforce its identity. Hobsbawm is following in the footsteps of Emile Durkheim, who saw such celebrations as consensual festivals in which societies uphold and reaffirm collective values.¹⁹ Stephen Lukes has taken a more cynical view of such celebrations, seeing them instead as propaganda for a particular value system.²⁰ The Bicentenary celebration is a complicated case because it was clearly not a national festival organized by the ruling élites. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how it could have been celebrated without causing offence to members of the Established Church. Thus, it differed dramatically from other commemorative events, such as Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee of 1897. As Elizabeth Hammerton and David Cannadine have concluded in their study of that event: "To the extent to which there was conflict [surrounding the Jubilee], it was over *how* to celebrate, not *whether* to celebrate. In so far as there was disagreement, it took place within the shared assumption that there should, indeed, be a celebration."²¹ No such shared assumption existed regarding the Bicentenary.²²

It therefore may be seen at two levels: first, as a challenge to the national consensus, and secondly as an attempt by an influential group within Nonconformity to strengthen their vision of a collective Nonconformist identity. What makes the Bicentenary such an interesting example of invented tradition is that it did not succeed in bringing the Nonconformist community together; in fact it heightened the divisions between the moderates and radicals. Furthermore, it exacerbated existing tensions between the Nonconformists and other groups. An examination of the political and religious atmosphere of the late 1850s and 1860s may suggest why the promoters of the Bicentenary thought that the Nonconformist identity needed strengthening in 1862, and why they were prepared to risk presenting such a challenge to the established Church.

II

By the late 1850s, the position of moderate Dissenters in the political arena was a comparatively favourable one, due in large part to Palmerston's conciliatory

18. Hobsbawm and Ranger, *Invention of Tradition*, p.9.

19. Hammerton and Cannadine, "Conflict and Consensus," p.112.

20. *Ibid.*, p.113.

21. *Ibid.*, p.143.

22. A similar division of opinion on the interpretation of a historical event marked the tercentenary of the first Dutch settlement in South Africa in 1952. Some opposed commemoration of what they considered to be the birth of white oppression in South Africa, while others believed the arrival of the Dutch should be celebrated as the beginning of "civilization:" in Southern Africa. See Ciraj Rassool and Leslie Witz, "The 1952 Jan van Riebeeck Tercentenary Festival: Constructing and Contesting Public National History in South Africa," *Journal of African History* 34 (1993), pp.447-468.

policy.²³ Their more radical brethren, however, were placed increasingly on the defensive. The diminution of class tensions and the continuation of Christianity's civilizing mission among the "lower orders" were Palmerston's main aims; and he hoped to achieve them by encouraging the alliance between Evangelical Churchmen and moderate Dissenters. Palmerston favoured Evangelicals in his religious appointments, gave way over the Great Band Question and the census question and personally endorsed the abolition of church rates.²⁴ Nonconformist social aspirations were encouraged when a small handful of prominent Nonconformists were granted baronetcies. Palmerston was successful; in general, the "aristocratic embrace largely succeeded in stifling the radical inclinations, such as they were, of wealthy Dissenters."²⁵ Liberal Nonconformist MPs also appeared to be neutralized. One prominent example was Edward Baines, returned for Leeds in 1859, who became a staunch Palmerstonian and eventually abandoned the cause of Voluntaryism in education.²⁶ Another was James Kershaw, Mayor of Manchester, Liberal MP for Stockport and an important backer of Lancashire Independent College and the *British Quarterly Review*.²⁷ A former Anti-Corn Law Leaguer and Peace Movement supporter, Kershaw became an avid supporter of Palmerston's foreign policy: "What a pity so good a man should be so timid in support of peace and so rash on the side of all cruelty and crime," John Bright wrote of him in 1856.²⁸ All of this had the effect of embittering the more radical Nonconformists, who felt that the moderates had sold out.

Their disillusionment was deepened by the fact that a symbolic victory over church rates had seemed so close at hand in the late 1850s. Ironically, the prospect of their success had aroused a fierce reaction within the Church, which was

23. See E.D. Steele, *Palmerston and Liberalism, 1855-1865* (Cambridge: 1991), pp.165-186.
24. The Great Band Question was the debate over whether Sunday concerts should be allowed in London parks. In 1856, in spite of working-class protests, the government gave in to Evangelical pressure and cancelled the concerts. And in 1860, the government, again under Nonconformist pressure, abandoned plans to conduct a house to house census of the religious beliefs of the population (which would have shown a very large Anglican majority as it would not have recorded actual attendance). See E.D. Steele, *Palmerston and Liberalism*, p.178.
25. *Ibid.*, p.181.
26. For an analysis of the Baines dynasty of Leeds, see Clyde Binfield, *So Down to Prayers*, pp.54-101.
27. Kershaw was a trustee of the college and contributed generously to the building fund. See Joseph Thompson, *Lancashire Independent College, 1843-1893* (Manchester: 1893), pp.40, 65. He was also one of the four prominent men (the others were Elkanah Armitage, Samuel Fletcher, and William Neild) who audited the financially-troubled *British Quarterly Review* in 1856 and urged that it be saved. See Manchester Central Library, Local Studies: Archives, MISC 410/3.
28. John Bright to J.B. Smith, 18 Jan. 1856, quoted in Anthony Howe, *The Cotton Masters 1830-1860* (Oxford: 1984), p.231.

capitalised upon by the Tories. The Church Institution was founded in 1859 to defend the union between Church and State, and it rapidly spread throughout the country in the form of local associations. Church rate abolition bills began to be defeated in the Commons even though, or perhaps because, the Liberation Society, whose main aim was the disestablishment of the Church of England, was campaigning with increasing vigour.²⁹ Steele has argued that Disraeli failed to rally his party with the cry of "Church in danger" mainly because leading Conservatives did not believe the slogan nor did they wish to provoke the Dissenters. He does admit, however, that the slogan greatly appealed to Conservatives at the constituency level. The debates in the House of Commons over the church rates certainly took on a new resonance. Lord Robert Cecil characterized the debate thus:

On the one side [referring to the earlier speech of Edward Ball, a Conservative, in favour of church rate abolition] there was simply a conscientious desire to be exonerated from a grievance; on the other Dissent was made a mere cloak for political designs, and the opposition of the hon. Member for Birmingham [John Bright] to church rates was but the prelude to an attempt to level the Church itself to the ground.³⁰

Disraeli echoed Cecil's accusations a year later:

Hitherto, the only conclusion at which I have arrived is the conviction that when the question of church rates was first brought forward for public discussion much too narrow and limited a view was taken of it by Parliament. The truth is, we have discovered, after the discussion of the question for a quarter of a century, what important interests and what great principles are involved in it. The principle of a National Church, the practice of local government, the privileges of the great body of the population, and above all, that principle of the predominance of the majority, on which the whole social system of this country depends, were

29. See G.I.T. Machin, *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain 1832-68* (Oxford: 1977), pp.305-308. Machin paints a much less rosy picture than Steele of the relations between Palmerston's government and the Dissenters. The title of his chapter on the years between 1859 and 1865 is significant: "The Hardening of Conflict: Dissenters and Church Defenders". The difference between Machin and Steele's descriptions may be due to the fact that they are concentrating on different bodies within Nonconformity, Machin on the more radical groups, Steele on the more conservative. For the electoral strategies of the Liberation Society, see David Thompson, "The Liberation Society, 1844-1868" in Patricia Hollis, ed., *Pressure from Without in early Victorian England* (London: 1974), pp.210-238.

30. Lord Robert Cecil, 6 Mar. 1861, 161 H.C. Deb 3s, col. 1510. Edward Ball, of Burwell, Cambs., was a prominent Congregationalist, as well as politically Conservative.

all really involved in what was brought before us at first merely as a sectarian grievance and parish quarrel.³¹

The Nonconformists were thus depicted as trying to undermine the social and political foundations of British life.

The radical Nonconformists were both gratified and alarmed at the reaction they had provoked. They seized upon the Bicentenary as a way of rallying the troops around the voluntary cause. Although *The Liberator*, the main organ of the Liberation Society, claimed that it was not organizing any special effort for the Bicentenary because it did not want to exacerbate divisions among Dissenters and preferred instead to foster "a spirit of hearty cooperation,"³² and Edward Miall³³ stated that he and his colleagues from the first "had been averse to put what were called their extreme views in the foreground on this occasion, and thought it impolitic that this movement should be identified with the Liberation Society,"³⁴ the 1861 Party Manifesto of the Liberation Society said that the Society would make full use of the Bicentenary to further its aim of exerting greater pressure on the Liberal party.³⁵ Indeed, the idea of celebrating the Bicentenary originated within a group of Congregationalists who were all members of the Liberation Society.³⁶ Church defenders certainly saw the Bicentenary as a front for the Liberation Society. "It is a desperate effort of the political leaders of the Liberation Society to rally the scattered forces of Dissent, and concentrate them [on] ... an ungodly attack on the Church of England."³⁷

The Bicentenary also caused tensions among the different Nonconformist denominations. The Congregationalists, after much debate, decided not to cooperate with the central committee of Independents, Baptists, Presbyterians and Quakers which had been formed to take united action. The Congregational minister Samuel Martin spoke bitterly against yoking themselves "with those with whom we have not perfect sympathy or trust."³⁸ Arguments flared among the Congregationalists themselves over the purpose of the Bicentenary. Moderates tried to restrain their radical brethren. John Stoughton, for example, protested that this "was not the occasion when they should bring forward as the basis of their proceedings the principle and practice of the Anti-State-Church Association. They

31. Benjamin Disraeli, 24 June 1862, 167 H.C. Deb. 3s, cols. 1011-1112.

32. *The Nonconformist* 11 (Feb. 5, 1862), p.125.

33. Edward Miall (1809-1881), Liberal MP (1852-1857, 1869-1874) was the most prominent member of the Liberation Society. He was chiefly known for his opposition to the State Church.

34. *The Nonconformist* 11 (Jan. 29, 1862), p.104.

35. William H. Mackintosh, *Disestablishment and Liberation: The Movement for the Separation of the Anglican Church from State Control* (London: 1972), p.61.

36. *Ibid.*, p.126.

37. *The Nonconformist* 11 (Jan. 22, 1862) p.68, quoting from *The Record*, Jan. 20, 1862, an Evangelical newspaper.

38. *Ibid.*, 65.

would indeed be perverting the events of 1662 if they were made the mere standpoint of voluntarism.”³⁹ The Revd. R. Macbeth protested that the “prominent idea in the minds of these men [the originators of the Bicentenary idea] was simply the accomplishment of some strictly spiritual good in their own several spheres of influence and action.” He was referring mainly to chapel building and evangelization.⁴⁰ The fact that such objections were made shows that the Bicentenary must have been taken over, or at least appeared to be in danger of being taken over, by radicals. How did Vaughan, an acknowledged moderate, become so closely involved with “inventing a tradition” which bolstered the claims of the most radical segment of Nonconformity and provoked such unfavourable reactions from the Church of England and his own colleagues?

III

Nineteenth-century obituaries of Vaughan state that he underwent a change of heart relatively late in life (he died in 1868), and attribute it to various causes.

It was not surprising that, as he [Robert Vaughan] advanced in years, he looked doubtfully upon some of the more advanced Liberals of the time; and dissented from parts of their policy. It was far more wonderful to note how his prejudice against these onward movements gradually relaxed, and especially how he was led to acquiesce in that aggressive action against the Established Church to which at the commencement he was so intensely hostile, and which, indeed, *The British Quarterly* was intended quietly to discountenance.⁴¹

He [Robert Vaughan] was a typical representative of the most advanced ecclesiastical politics of the past generation, but he did not, at all events until the last year of two of his life, reach the level of the present one. This development of opinion in an old man, due partly to the Bicentenary controversy, and partly to the growth of Ritualism and Rationalism – and especially the former – in the Establishment, was unremarkable. It is all but certain that had his life been spared he would have identified himself with the Liberation Society, his sentiments towards which had undergone a marked change. ... He was one of the few men who are more radical in old age than in earlier times; but the change came too late for him to take any active part in the anti-State Church agitation. Not the less, however, he was a political Dissenter.⁴²

39. *Ibid.*, 66.

40. *Ibid.*, (Jan. 29, 1862), p.103.

41. J. Guinness Rogers, “Congregational Worthies, III, Dr. Robert Vaughan,” *The Congregational Review*, II (Oct. 1890), p.352.

42. “Dr. Robert Vaughan,” *The Congregationalist* IV (Mar. 1877), p.133.

Historians have agreed that Vaughan's decision in 1861 to support voluntarism in education was an important turning point in his life.⁴³ It must be noted, however, that Vaughan had never been opposed to the principle of voluntarism; he had only believed that the majority of the population was not yet ready to adopt it. This important distinction was made by F.R. Salter forty years ago.⁴⁴ Salter cited as his evidence a pamphlet written by Vaughan in 1838 entitled "Thoughts on the Past and Present State of Religious Parties in England." This work was "a defence of the voluntary principle, moderate and persuasive, hoping for better relations between Anglicans and Dissenters, accepting the Established Church of England as the denomination of the majority but regretting its past intolerance and apprehensive of the effects of any future extension of 'ecclesiastical favouritism' by the State."⁴⁵

The same sentiments can be found in the earlier issues of the *British Quarterly Review*. In the second issue in 1845 Vaughan argued that it was futile for Nonconformists to press for immediate disestablishment of the Church of England. "If church-of-Englandism ... is in our statute book, it is there because it was first in the mind of our people. Were it to become extinct tomorrow, as a matter of law, it would exist as strictly as before, as a matter of social preference."⁴⁶ The only way to battle with the established Church was to demonstrate the superiority of Dissent. He cautioned his readers to avoid "dogmatism and upbraidings,"⁴⁷ and urged them to abandon their spirit of retaliation against past slights and injustices.⁴⁸ "[I]f many pious episcopalians," he claimed, "who are just now deeply offended with the divided state and declining religion of the established church, could only see in protestant nonconformity a haven of rest, a home for piety, we are constrained to think that many of the best of that class would fly to us as a refuge ...".⁴⁹ He had dreamed of voluntarism becoming the "principle not of a sect but of a nation. Hitherto it has been left to be worked by the middle and humbler classes, almost exclusively – but" he urged "let it also become the principle of the wealthy, the educated and the powerful."⁵⁰

43. Clyde Binfield, *So Down to Prayers*, p.89 and R.Tudur Jones, *Congregationalism in England*, p.273 both mention how Vaughan converted to voluntarism just as it was on the wane.

44. F.R. Salter, "Political Nonconformity in the Eighteen-Thirties," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 3(1953),p.141-2.

45. *Ibid.*, p.141.

46. Robert Vaughan, "Oxford and Evangelical Churchmen," *British Quarterly Review*, 1 (May 1845), reprinted in *Essays on History, Philosophy and Theology*, vol. 1 (London: 1849), p.131-2.

47. Robert Vaughan, "Lord John Russell," *British Quarterly Review* (hereafter *BQR*), 1 (Feb. 1845), reprinted in *Essays*, p.92.

48. Robert Vaughan, "The Pilgrim Fathers", *BQR* 1 (Feb. 1845) in *Essays*, p.47.

49. Robert Vaughan, "Lord John Russell", p.92.

50. Robert Vaughan, "The Priesthood of Letters", *BQR* 3 (May 1846), in *Essays*, p.188.

His address to the Autumn Assembly of the Congregational Union in 1861 on the subject of the Bicentenary was just a restatement of his earlier view that voluntarism would triumph only through democracy: "if the State Establishment ever ceases to exist, it should be so by the will of the nation – and what the nation chooses to do of its free will surely can hardly be a hardship or a wrong. ... All grades of Nonconformists hold this view – Mr. Edward Miall and Robert Vaughan alike."⁵¹ The real modification of his thought by 1861 was symbolized by the coupling of his name with Miall's. Vaughan was no longer convinced that the gentle persuasion of setting a good example was the best way to win converts to voluntarism. As a result, he became more openly supportive of the aims of "political Dissent."

Vaughan's change of heart was signalled in the first issue of the *British Quarterly* in 1862 by an unattributed article which argued that the polite cooperation of the Nonconformists with the Liberals was an exercise in futility. After establishing that "there would be no Liberal party at all without Dissent" it stated:

Our complaints, as Dissenters, against the Liberal party, may we think, be resolved into two:- Firstly, that in their electioneering arrangements it appears to be an habitual and steady policy to palm or force upon Liberal constituencies candidates who distinctly do not represent the Dissenting element in those constituencies; and, secondly, that there is a practical connivance in the absence of M.P.'s on divisions in which Dissenters are interested, of men not amenable, unfortunately, to constituencies, but who are always to be counted on for the right lobby upon questions having the same relative importance to the Government.⁵²

The Nonconformist seized upon the article with relish and stated that even the *British Quarterly*, "which represents the more moderate section of Nonconformists, is struck with the injustice under which they labour."⁵³ An earlier article in *The Nonconformist* had praised Vaughan by name for his learning and more importantly, for his criticism of those who condemned political Dissent.⁵⁴ Vaughan must have been accused of betraying his earlier beliefs and submitting to the agenda of the Liberation Society, for he defended himself indignantly in a later issue of the *British Quarterly*, where he maintained

51. John Waddington, *Congregational History 1850-1880*, vol. 5 (London: 1880), p.346.

52. "The Free Church of England," *BQR* 35 (Jan. 1862), p.232.

53. *The Nonconformist* 11 (Feb. 5, 1862), p.131.

54. *Ibid.*, 11 (8 Feb. 1862) p.21. Vaughan's defence of "political Dissent" was that the Prayer Book was a politically-inspired document and that therefore opposition to it must also assume a political dimension. See "Anno 1862 – Revision of the Liturgy," *BQR*, 35 (Jan. 1862), pp.3-39.

that his views had not changed, although he admitted that he had become more outspoken.

It seems to have been discovered by some persons that this journal has taken new ground on questions of this nature [the relations between the Church and Dissent]. We are not ourselves conscious of any change. But there are times when it may be well to say little, or even to say nothing; and there are times when it is a right thing to speak, and to speak unmistakably. In politics, civil and ecclesiastical, we are what we have always been; and our declared opinions concerning men and affairs have always been our own.⁵⁵

Several reasons may be suggested for why Vaughan thought 1862 was the time when it was "a right thing to speak."

The most obvious reason, and the one given by Vaughan himself, was the reaction that the Bicentenary provoked among some Churchmen. Vaughan described their language as "the most offensive that can be imagined."⁵⁶ The fierceness of what Waddington appropriately called "bicentenary warfare"⁵⁷ bears out Machin's contention that the conflict between Nonconformists and Churchmen was sharpening during this period and endangering the alliance of moderates that Palmerston had hoped to foster.

One of the most notable defenders of the Church was Lord Robert Cecil (the future Conservative Prime Minister Lord Salisbury), who launched a devastating attack upon the principles of the Bicentenary celebrations in the *Quarterly Review*.⁵⁸ His position was summarized by *The Illustrated London News* for its middle-class audience:

It has been boldly argued on the Church side that the Nonconformists, who were wrongful holders of Church livings, whence they had previously turned out the lawful owners, were no more to be pitied than a person who is compelled to make restitution of stolen goods, and, further, that the Dissenters of the present day have little, in doctrine or in practice, in common with the ejected clergy.⁵⁹

Cecil's attack must have been particularly hurtful to Vaughan both for the strength of its argument and for its criticism of Vaughan's abilities as an

55. Robert Vaughan, "The Act of Uniformity: its antecedents and effects," *BQR*, 35 (April 1862), p.323.

56. Robert Vaughan, "The Act of Uniformity: its antecedents and effects," *BQR* 35 (April, 35 (April 1862), p.323.

57. Waddington, *Congregational History*, p.321.

58. Lord Robert Cecil, "The Bicentenary," *Quarterly Review* 112 (July 1862) pp.236-70.

59. *The Illustrated London News*, Aug. 30, 1862 p.226.

historian.⁶⁰ Cecil accused Nonconformists of presenting distorted accounts of the past to support their present claims. The Bicentenary, he maintained, was merely an elaborate diversion to disguise an attack on the Established Church in order to denude it of its wealth and prestige. Vaughan later said that "the higher class of Churchmen have so far avoided the subject that Nonconformists have hardly had an antagonist whom it has not been a humiliation to vanquish"⁶¹ but Cecil's criticism, coming from precisely the sort of well-educated man Vaughan had hoped could be persuaded to adopt a more tolerant attitude to Dissent, must have been deeply upsetting.

The Methodist *London Review* also subjected Vaughan's Bicentenary pronouncements to mild ridicule, pointing out that the ejected ministers had supported the idea of a state church. "We will not be tempted into controversy on Church government; but we can hardly suppress a smile when we find this learned man [Vaughan] claiming for that system of Independency which he upholds, but which many of the men whose commemoration he was initiating so cordially hated, and constantly protested against as a novelty – an apostolic, or even pre-apostolic, origin."⁶² Like Cecil, this author also questioned Vaughan's historical acumen. He compared Vaughan's "disdainful sharpness" in dealing with historians whose opinions differed from his own to Carlyle's methods. It is tempting to speculate that the author may have been familiar with Vaughan's highly critical review of Carlyle's edition of Cromwell's letters.⁶³ The article must have struck a nerve, for Vaughan replied to it in a lengthy footnote in which he defended the accuracy of his calculations about the number of ejected ministers. He also took exception to the tone of the article, which suggests that he had expected a more supportive response from the Methodists.

Seriously, if when Independents come into controversy, the organs and leaders of our older Methodism *must* take part against us, it is a pity that they cannot manage to do so in a way to allow of our looking on their antagonism with some measure of respect. ... It is not long since the Methodists had their Centenary, and truly had the Independents been disposed to criticise what was done at that juncture, there was room

60. It may have brought back memories of the unfavourable review Vaughan's *Revolutions in English History* (3 vols. 1859-63) received in the *Edinburgh Review*. See *The Congregationalist* IV (March 1877) p.136.

61. Waddington, *Congregational History*, p.370.

62. "The Bi-Centenary of Nonconformity", *London Review* XVII (1862) p.503.

63. "*Cromwell's Letters*", by Thomas Carlyle, *BQR* 3 (Feb. 1846) pp.50-95.

enough. But we do not remember that any Congregationalist wrote one unfriendly line concerning it.⁶⁴

Negative reactions could not have prompted Vaughan's initial outspokenness, however. There was another factor behind his decision. It lay in his alarm at the spread of the ideas associated with the higher criticism.⁶⁵ The *British Quarterly* had always contained essays warning against the higher criticism,⁶⁶ but in 1860 the controversy over *Essays and Reviews*⁶⁷ gave the issue unprecedented publicity. The incident might only have remained an opportunity for Nonconformists to survey smugly the disarray in the enemy camp, had Canon Miller of Birmingham not claimed that the ideas of the essayists could also be found in Dissenting chapels.⁶⁸ Miller's accusations were hotly denied at the spring meeting of the Congregational Union, for "[i]f it could be shown that the Congregational ministers were recreant to the truth, their testimony in favour of the principles for which the ejected suffered the loss of their livings would have little or no value. ..."⁶⁹

64. Robert Vaughan, "The Church of England in 1862 – what next?" *BQR* 36 (Oct. 1862) p.459. The Wesleyans celebrated the centenary of the formation of the first Wesleyan Methodist Society in 1839. Vaughan's memory was not quite accurate; the *Congregational Magazine* published a mildly critical article about the Centenary, accusing the Wesleyans of "eulogizing the servant and the system at the expense of the Master he served, and the truth he preached. We are sure our brethren have not intended this, but in the spirit of love, we frankly warn them against a boastful strain of eulogy upon Wesley and Wesleyan Methodism, their tendency to which has been observed by our esteemed christian brethren of other denominations as well as by ourselves." *Congregational Magazine* 3, 3rd series (1838) p.214. The Wesleyans raised a very large sum (£220,000) through their Centenary Fund to defray the costs of pensions, schools and indebted chapels. Their success may well have been a factor in the Congregationalists' decision to celebrate the Bicentenary.
65. "Higher criticism" at that time referred to the study of the Bible as a historical document, largely by German scholars. It cast doubt on Scriptural infallibility.
66. Ironically, as Willis B. Glover has pointed out, journals like the *BQR* which published attacks on the German works actually helped publicize them. See Willis B. Glover, *Evangelical Nonconformists and the Higher Criticism in the Nineteenth Century* (London: 1954), p.41.
67. *Essays and Reviews*, published in 1860, was a volume of essays by Broad Churchmen which advocated the higher criticism. The book caused great controversy over what breadth of opinion the Church should tolerate in its ministers. See Josef L. Altholz, "The Mind of Victorian Orthodoxy: Anglican Responses to 'Essays and Reviews,' 1860-1864," *Church History*, 57 (1982), pp.186-197.
68. Waddington, *Congregational History*, p.230.
69. *Ibid* For the role of Miller see also Timothy Larsen "Victorian Nonconformity and the Memory of the Ejected Ministers: the Impact of the Bicentennial Commemorations of 1862", in R.J. Swanson ed., *The Church Retrospective, Studies in Church History* Vol. 33, Woodbridge, 1998, pp.459-473.

For Vaughan, the controversy must have had painful parallels to the Davidson case.⁷⁰ The position of the essayists was not unlike that of Davidson before he was forced to resign. The Davidson affair could be seen as proof of Miller's allegation that the Congregationalists were harbouring unsound theologians, and not just in their chapels but in the very heart of their educational institutions. From another point of view, it was also uncomfortably apparent that powerful Congregational ministers, like John Kelly of Liverpool, were ready to drive people with whom they did not agree from their positions, thus making a mockery of their championship of religious liberty. Vaughan's tactic for coping with this ambiguous situation was to take the offensive. He set out to prove that the Established Church was by its very nature more likely than Dissent to produce heterodox thinkers. The Bicentenary provided an opportunity for him to do this.

At the autumn meeting of the Congregational Union in 1861, Vaughan conceded that the critics of the Bicentenary were right when they argued that the ejected ministers did not share the objections of modern Congregationalists to a State Church, but he did not agree that this meant that the two groups had nothing significant in common. The ejected ministers, Vaughan argued, were men of their time who simply could not visualize religious life without some form of state church. "Religious intelligence, like all other intelligence, is a growth. It does not become perfect at once; it would be unnatural if it did."⁷¹ According to Vaughan, the link which bound the men of 1662 to those of 1862 was conscience. He compared the authors of *Essays and Reviews*, who "believe scarcely anything" yet "stand at the altars of the English Church and avail themselves of the influence which that status gives them," to men like Baxter and Howe who had refused to conform even over relatively minor matters of ritual. Vaughan accused the Church of England of encouraging hypocrisy in its ministers by requiring them to profess belief in a deeply flawed Prayer Book, and he countered accusations that the Congregationalists wanted the rules of subscription relaxed so that they could return to the Church and enjoy its benefits by reiterating that Congregationalists could never countenance any State interference in religion. In his writings during the Bicentenary year, he concentrated upon providing historical justification for these views.

Vaughan's articles in the *British Quarterly* were therefore less concerned with the ejected clergy than with the historical foundations of the Church of England. The task of mythologizing the Two Thousand was left to periodicals like the *Nonconformist*, which published a list of their names over the span of the year accompanied by appropriate biographical notes. Vaughan devoted himself instead

70. Samuel Davidson was a professor at the Lancashire Independent College who resigned in 1857 after he was accused by the Revd. John Kelly and others of harbouring unsound views of Biblical inspiration. Vaughan as President of the College had not supported Davidson over this issue, and he also resigned in that year. See Roger Tomes, "We are hardly prepared for this style of teaching yet": Samuel Davidson and the Lancashire Independent College", *JURCHS*, Vol. 5, No. 7, October 1995.

71. Waddington, *Congregational History*, p.345.

to demonstrating that the Act of Uniformity since its inception had had a demoralizing effect on the Church, and was largely responsible for its present divisions. The Prayer Book, he maintained, promulgated doctrines such as baptismal regeneration and priestly absolution that were repugnant to any true Protestant. This was not surprising, for, as Vaughan demonstrated at great length and in great detail, the Prayer Book was the piecemeal result of years of political manoeuvring in the sixteenth century. "It must, then, be remembered, that if the piety of the past had much to do in making this ancient Rubric ... the ignorance, the vices, and the darings of priestly ambition in that past, had also done much toward that result."⁷² Ironically, Vaughan applied the same techniques of historical analysis to demolishing the pretensions of the Prayer Book that the practitioners of the higher criticism applied to the Bible. He strove to demystify the Prayer Book by reducing it to the status of a deeply-flawed historical document. When ministers of the Established Church gave their assent and consent to everything in it, he concluded, either they were veering dangerously away from Protestantism to Romanism, or they had vowed to uphold doctrines they did not believe.

He had been warning his readers of the former phenomenon for years.⁷³ Significantly, he saw Tractarianism as part of a "historical pattern of action and reaction." "What the Laudian school was in the time of Charles the First, the Jacobite and Nonjuror schools became in the time of William the Third; and in the doings of the modern Tractarians we see, in fact, little more than the return of foiled opponents to a stale and baffled experiment."⁷⁴ What made the situation at the present time so dangerous, in Vaughan's view, was that the opponents of Tractarianism were pathetically ineffectual, whereas the Tractarians, unlike their historical counterparts, were "persons of unblemished reputation, some of them eminent in learning and capacity, and governed by religious principle and feeling..."⁷⁵

Vaughan's criticisms were aimed squarely at the Evangelical party in the Church of England. He had always regarded them as the last hope for the Church, as modern-day Puritans, as a bulwark of true Evangelical Protestantism against the Romanist tendencies of the Tractarians. In an early essay, he had urged them to separate from the Church, and compared their concern for material advantage unfavourably with the anti-Erastianism of their Tractarian opponents:

The school of Ward and Newman are manifestly better believers in the self-sustaining power of their system, than the professed disciples of Venn and Scott. While the former are heard to speak concerning the influence of the civil power upon the ecclesiastical in this country, as being so little to their mind that they should rather congratulate themselves on their freedom, than

72. Robert Vaughan, "Anno 1662: *Revision of the Liturgy*," *BQR* 35 (Jan. 1862) pp.33-4.

73. For example, the first issue of the *BQR* contained the article "Tractarian Theology: *Ward's Ideal of a Christian Church*" by George Redford.

74. Robert Vaughan, "Oxford and Evangelical Churchmen," p.111.

75. *Ibid.*, p.104.

complain of their poverty, if that influence were wholly withdrawn, the latter still cling to state patronage as the great stay of their cause.⁷⁶

Vaughan justified this call to separation by appealing again to the repeating patterns to be found in history. He depicted the Ejection as one glorious event in a long tradition of Nonconformity beginning with Wycliffe. This tradition, Vaughan maintained, was fundamentally evangelical. Throughout history, men had broken from the State church as they realized that it was failing in its fundamental task of spreading the gospel of individual salvation through Christ. Thus, the spirit which motivated the Nonconformists of the sixteenth century also motivated the Methodists of the eighteenth:

In both cases, the great doctrine was justification by faith, and the regeneration of the heart, not merely by a natural influence of divine truth, but by means of a divine power superadded to that truth. In a word, their religion was such as is denoted by the term Evangelical; and the new religious feeling which has been diffused throughout this country since the rise of methodism, is, in nearly all that is distinctive of it, a revival of the piety of the elder puritans, and the still older protestant reformers.⁷⁷

According to Vaughan, Evangelicalism was a steady presence throughout British history, although it manifested itself in outwardly different forms. History progressed as this spirit reached more and more people. Modern Evangelical Churchmen were stubborn and dangerous holdouts against this irresistible tide. He described their position thus:

We see, then, that such is the condition of the law in our Established Church, that men in that communion may Rationalize so far, on the one hand, as to become little better than Deists; or may Romanize so far, on the other hand, as to become little better than Papists, and still be accounted good Churchmen. The Evangelical party ... have their position between these two hostile parties. ... How can we acquit them of guilt ... We speak confidently when we say, that in the absence of the Evangelical party in the Church there would be no Established Church. The good they do directly cannot be severed from the evil they do indirectly. We see that, according to present law, the State is destined to give its endowments and its prestige in favour of sending a mixed flood of scepticism and superstition over the land; and this soul-destroying pestilence is to come, not as a temporary

76. *Ibid.*, p.134.

77. Vaughan, "Lord John Russell," p.57.

visitation, but is to take with it the permanence of law. For all this our Evangelical clergy must be held responsible so long as they do not take action against it. If they did not uphold it, it would not be there.⁷⁸

By remaining within the Church, the Evangelicals were giving their tacit approval to the High and Broad Churchmen, and to the authors of *Essays and Reviews*. Furthermore, the fact that the authors of *Essays and Reviews* were Churchmen had given their works unwarranted prominence. "Out of the National Church neither the men nor their books would have attracted more than a passing notice. The thoughts they put forward are not new ... The glaring breach of promise ... gives an accidental importance to the utterances which constitute it."⁷⁹ Vaughan contrasted the apathy and divisiveness of the Established Church with the vigour of the Nonconformists who were focussing their energies on spreading true Evangelical protestantism to combat "the flood of scepticism and superstition."

A tangible manifestation of their success was the construction of hundreds of Memorial chapels as part of the Bicentenary celebrations. As Vaughan proudly stated: "It was proposed to build 100 Memorial chapels, the number will be not less than 300."⁸⁰ The chapels represented the triumph of voluntarism. They seemed to Vaughan to confirm what he had written many years before: "our great exception to the church of England relates to its failure as a *religious* institute. It does not inculcate ... the religion set forth in its own articles, and still less the religion set forth in the book from which those articles are said to be derived... Lord John Russell views the church of England as the best adapted agency for giving a scriptural religion to the people ... We, on the contrary, are obliged to regard that institution in a very different light."⁸¹ The Nonconformists were surpassing the Church in its most fundamental task, and simultaneously ensuring the triumph of voluntarism. "In all our great cities, and in our towns, the majority of worshippers are, in one shape or another, Nonconformists; recognised as such by law ..."⁸²

The other major Bicentenary project, in addition to various college endowments, scholarships and a Pastors' Retiring Fund, was a Memorial Hall, which would provide an impressive headquarters for the Congregational Union and Library. This project met with some opposition. Some Congregationalists saw it as "a sacrifice to *denominational vanity*."⁸³ This was precisely the kind of attitude that Vaughan had always fought against; he believed that the Congregationalists could

78. Robert Vaughan, "The Church of England in 1862: what next?" *BQR* 38 (Oct. 1862) pp.445-6.

79. Robert Vaughan, "English Thought and the English Church," *BQR* 36 (April 1862) p.476.

80. Robert Vaughan, "The Bicentenary Year", *BQR* 39 (Jan. 1863) p.242.

81. Vaughan, "Lord John Russell," p.58.

82. Robert Vaughan, "The Act of Uniformity" p. 322.

83. Waddington, *Congregational History*, p.334.

survive only by keeping their wealthier and more cultured members, and this in turn could only be achieved by raising the status of the denomination through projects like Memorial Hall. "It is easy to sneer at these classes as the fashionables and respectables, but to be severed from them is to be doomed to inefficiency," he had written in 1847.⁸⁴

The Bicentenary celebration was thus the culmination of tendencies within Congregationalism as a whole, and within Vaughan's thought specifically. The Congregational leadership had made earlier attempts to create a sense of historical identity among their members, but the Bicentenary was their largest and most sustained effort. This was so because they felt, paradoxically, both confident and threatened. Confident because, on the radical side, the political organization of the Liberation Society had never been so powerful or sophisticated; and on the moderate side, never had so many Nonconformists been incorporated into the political nation. Threatened because their success led to the growth of powerful opposition within the Church. The Bicentenary commemoration aroused intense controversy for it claimed a tradition for Nonconformity in opposition to that of the Established Church. It struck at the ambiguity which lay at the heart of the alliance between Dissenters and Evangelical Churchmen. However much they might agree on theological and moral issues, the question of the Establishment loomed irreconcilably between them. Vaughan was at the centre of the controversy because he interpreted the past in a way most threatening to the Established Church. The Liberation Society was intent on using the spirit of 1662 to politicize wavering or moderate Nonconformists – "Self-culture will be sure to produce its appropriate fruits. When the heart is a-glow action becomes easy – becomes an indispensable necessity."⁸⁵ Vaughan's message was more radical for it was aimed at Churchmen, not Nonconformists. He was exhorting the Evangelicals to emulate the Two Thousand and leave the Church. The Nonconformist tradition which Vaughan "invented" was not separate or narrow; it was constantly interacting with and purifying the main stream of British history. Eventually, he believed, it would *become* the main stream. He had hoped to hurry its progress along by raising the social and cultural profile of Nonconformity. The early issues of the *British Quarterly Review* were optimistic about the prospects of success, but by the 1860s, with rationalism and ritualism seemingly growing more powerful and widespread. Vaughan grew pessimistic about the future of Evangelical Christianity. As he had argued in *The Age of Great Cities*, Evangelical Christianity was the only guarantee that individualistic, industrial society would remain tolerable.⁸⁶ He therefore abandoned his moderation and embarked on a campaign against the forces which he saw arrayed against his vision of progress.

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84. Robert Vaughan, "Characteristics of Dissent," *BQR* 6 (Aug. 1847), reprinted in *Essays*, p.205.

85. *The Nonconformist* 11 (Jan. 1862) p.2.

86. See Mary Hora, "The Age of Great Cities", *JURCHS*, forthcoming.

MONEY-MAKING AND CHARITABLE ENDEAVOUR: JOHN AND ENRIQUETA RYLANDS OF MANCHESTER

Like Palestine, Lancashire belongs to everybody. It is a part of human experience; the messianic corner of earth in which the new world was announced.¹

The name of John Rylands has become famous by virtue of its association with a great library. The name remains more familiar than the details of his life. The sources for the study of that life became available only from 1968 and, above all, from 1984 when the archives of the firm were placed on deposit in Manchester. Only in 1989 and 1993 were the first detailed biographies of the man and his wife published. Together their lives offer an insight into the religious history of Lancashire and into the neglected links between the worlds of business and of religion. The capacity of Lancashire for faith is revealed in the surviving belief in magic, superstition and witchcraft, in the survival capacity of the old faith in what Richard Garnett in 1858 described as "the most Roman Catholic county in Great Britain", in the eclectic practice of the De Trafford family, whose members were re-converted to Catholicism c.1636 but continued until the 1840s to be interred within the Old Church, in the efflorescence in 1727-39 of masonic lodges, followed by friendly societies and trade unions, modelled on the masonic pattern, in the early appearance of fringe religious cults and in the tardy reception of "the social gospel". The simultaneous expansion of industry, commerce and religion in Manchester transformed it into "an active manufactory of agitation and thought", harbouring as many living causes as Oxford did lost ones.² By 1849 the city had 102 cotton mills and 102 places of worship. It early acquired a notable clutch of charities, established by Anglicans and Wesleyan Methodists, with the Dissenters "at an almost immeasurable distance behind".³ From 1796 it had become a cradle of missionaries, recruited into the service of the London Missionary Society.⁴

John Rylands as a Manchester Merchant

One Manchester man, who lived and died a commoner, remained throughout a

- 1 W.H. Mills, *Sir Charles W. Macara, Bart. A Study of Modern Lancashire*, (1917), p.130.
- 2 W.H. Mills, "Manchester of Today" in H.M. McKechnie (ed), *Manchester in 1915* (1915) p.9.
- 3 John Wilks, "A Week at Manchester", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 45, April 1839, p.494.
- 4 Henry Shaw, *Manchester Pioneers of the Cross* (1907).

long life “a modest merchant, a dutiful citizen and a humble lover of letters”.⁵ The personal qualities of John Rylands (1801-88) were remarkable but became known only to his intimates. “You are respected most by those who know you best”.⁶ His life was epitomized in the title of the biography of a Congregational minister, *Ever working, never resting: a memoir of the Revd. John Legge Poore* (1874) by John Corbin. A model of diligence, he spent a twelve-hour day working in his small office, disposing of estate business early in the morning, leaving the evening free for charitable activity and working a sixteen-hour day throughout his life. At the firm’s warehouse he received the representatives of innumerable societies and causes. Many he invited to share the midday meal, taken at a long table occupied by his chief employees whilst he himself remained “the most modest and unobtrusive in the company”.⁷

John Rylands remains a unique figure rather than a representative one in the history of British business, without any parallel in the history of Manchester or even of London. Self-effacing to an unusual degree, he excelled all other Manchester men in the magnitude of his achievements. He became the city’s greatest merchant manufacturer during the golden age of “Cottonopolis”. The firm he established enjoyed an unusually long life-span (1819-1953), mainly because of the commercial skills of the founder and the high reputation of its wares. During the 1860s Rylands & Sons became the leading firm within Britain’s leading industry, “the recognized and undisputed head and leader of the cotton trade” and “the monarchs of the cotton industry of England”.⁸ During the 1870s it became “perhaps the largest and most important manufacturing and mercantile undertaking in the whole world”.⁹ John Rylands himself became “the greatest merchant prince the world has ever seen”.¹⁰ He became the chief shareholder in the Manchester Ship Canal Company, established in 1886, and Manchester’s first multi-millionaire. On his death in 1888 he left £2.6 millions, or one hundred-fold the £26,829 left by his own father in 1847 and the largest fortune of any cotton magnate down to that date. He had conducted his life as a Christian capitalist, holding fast to the tenets of a Christian political economy and believing in the essential relevance of the truths of Christianity to the conduct of daily life.

- 5 *Manchester Guardian*, 7 October 1899, p.7i, Dr Andrew M. Fairbairn. For a fuller assessment of Rylands in the context of recent historiography see D.A. Farnie, “The Wiener thesis vindicated: the onslaught of 1994 upon the reputation of John Rylands of Manchester” in D.J. Jeremy ed., *Religion, Business and Wealth in Modern Britain*, (1998) pp. 86-107.
- 6 S.G. Green, *In Memoriam John Rylands* (1889), pp.31-33, quoting from the address presented on the occasion of his commercial jubilee on 22 December 1873.
- 7 S.G. Green, “The Late Mr John Rylands, of Manchester”, *Sunday at Home*, 23 March 1889, p.183.
- 8 *Manchester of Today* (1888), p.79, *British Trade Journal*, 1 April 1887, p.277.
- 9 *Momus*, 15 May 1879, p.81.
- 10 *Commerce*, 5 July 1893, p.17, Lawrence Cowen.



Enriqueta Rylands, c. 1875

The Image of John Rylands

John Rylands has been harshly criticized as “a real Scrooge”, as a tyrannical employer who exploited his employees and as a tight-fisted millowner who made a fortune by paying low wages. Such judgments stem from ignorance, from prejudice, and from what Goethe termed “the Spirit, which always denies”. “The blood of his workers runs down the steps of his library” was the brisk verdict passed by one doctor visiting Manchester in the 1960s. To other observers he seemed interested only in the making of money,¹¹ did not know how to spend the money he made and even sought to buy admission to heaven through works of charity.

It is true that the firm did not pay high wages to its mill-hands. But such hands were in general unskilled machine minders. Production was undertaken by machines and not by manual labour. Warehousemen earned more than mill-hands because they served the firm’s customers directly and contributed more to its prosperity. In any case wages did not create the proprietor’s wealth. Other firms paid low wages but none accumulated a fortune comparable to that of John Rylands. Making a fortune in the cotton industry was never easy, particularly during the era when John Rylands flourished and competition became more intense than ever before. For the first twelve years of his business career he did indeed attach too much importance to the acquisition of wealth. In 1829 he was shattered by the death of his mother Elizabeth Pilkington (1764-1829). He then learned the lessons of humility, faith and charity, formed the resolution to live for the good of others, as well as for his own, and never thereafter swerved from that resolution. Thenceforward his firm prospered as never before. Within fifteen years John Rylands had become the largest textile merchant in Manchester and, almost against his own will, Lancashire’s first millionaire. He acquired his wealth simply by producing goods of quality and by selling them cheaply. In consequence the economic world beat a path to the doors of his warehouse and thrust money into his hands in exchange for his wares. In short he made his money in free, fair and open competition with other merchants. Thus he conferred substantial benefits upon the consuming public, the bulk of whom were working-class customers for the firm’s staple product of fustians. The profit-ratio of the firm remained consistently low: its high returns were generated by a swelling turnover. The abiding interest of John Rylands became the creation of a great and viable business. In fulfilling that aim he performed a considerable social service by giving secure employment for so long to so many. It is true that he was not one of the noble twelve millowners, mostly Dissenters, who ran their mills full-time throughout the testing times of the Cotton Famine. In 1873 he incorporated the firm as a joint-stock company with a capital of £2 millions: it became a virtual industrial partnership with its shares held by 454 senior employees (buyers, travellers, managers) and its dividends restricted by its “Governor” to 5%. By

11 W.F.M. Weston-Webb, *The Autobiography of a British Yarn Merchant* (1929), p.61.

1875 the firm employed 12,000 hands and so supported at least 40,000 persons. Working conditions were good and strikes were rare. Such an achievement was noteworthy in view of the declining profitability of the mills. The successors of the "Governor" began in 1888-89 to sell off the least profitable mills and reduced the labour-force by 40% from 12,000 to 9,000 in 1905. They nevertheless retained a strong sense of obligation to their mill-hands, believing that "the mills must be kept going".¹²

John Rylands as a Philanthropist

In devoting his life to good works John Rylands followed in the tradition established by his family. That family commemorated the mother of John Rylands by the establishment in 1829 of the Gidlow Lane Memorial School in Wigan. In 1830 at the age of twenty-nine John Rylands was baptized and his life was transformed. In 1834 he became a deacon of John Birt's Baptist chapel in Manchester and played an active part in the life of the congregation. In 1839 the firm acquired a mill at Ainsworth, between Bury and Bolton and provided the village with a chapel, with schools and with a library. Then John Rylands acquired mills in Gorton in Manchester in 1843 and established there in 1845 a library, a news-room and a school. He earned the praise of the Inspector of Factories, Leonard Horner, in 1846 for the provision of such liberal facilities for the education of his workfolk. He also earned the public thanks of the hands for his strict compliance with the Ten Hours' Act of 1847. He nevertheless encountered strong opposition to his efforts to induce the hands to occupy their free time in "pleasing and useful recreation", suffered a two-months' strike in 1849 and removed his residence from Ardwick to Longford Hall in Stretford in 1857. Thereafter his philanthropy seems to have been most active during two distinct phases, in 1855-64 and in 1874-86. Those phases coincided with the influence exerted by his respective wives, Martha and Enriqueta. Thus in 1855 he became a life member of the Manchester and Salford Asylum for Female Penitents, which had been established in 1822 with the Baptist minister John Birt as secretary. John Rylands served the Asylum first as house-steward and then from 1871 as treasurer, in succession to Elkanah Armitage (1794-1876). In 1864 he established a female orphan asylum, enlarged its accommodation to cater for fifty girls and secured the services of two Lancashire MPs as patrons of the Rylands Home and Orphanage. Then in 1865 he co-founded, together with his wife Martha and William Woodward, a millionaire provision merchant, and his wife, the Servants' Home and Free Registry, in order to provide respectable servants with temporary board and lodging and to maintain a registry for the benefit of both servants and employers. He built model mills at Wigan in 1862-64 and earned the praise of the Earl of Derby for creating what was "a pleasure to the eye to rest on, so well has

¹² Archives of Rylands & Sons Ltd, Minutes of the Board of Directors, IV, 376, 16 June 1906.

architectural effect been studied in its construction".¹³ From 1866 he became interested in Italy and learned Italian: he proved a liberal benefactor to the poor of Rome, established an orphanage there and was made in 1880 a Knight of the Order of the Crown of Italy by the King of Italy. He also supported the establishment in 1869 of the Manchester and Salford Boys and Girls Refuges and Homes and in 1871 of the Manchester Religious Institute, for the joint use of three societies, the Bible Society, the Religious Tract Society and the Manchester City Mission.

After his third marriage in 1875 he renewed his philanthropic activity. In 1876 he opened Abbey Hey School in Gorton, for the children of his mill-hands. In 1877 he financed the construction of six adjoining residences at Sunnyside in the grounds of Longford Park, in order to provide almshouses for aged gentlewomen. In Stretford he built a superb Town Hall in 1875, established a free lending library and a coffee-house in 1883 and inaugurated the Longford Institute in 1886, which was comparable to similar institutes established by Henry Lee at Sunnyside in Bolton, by Hugh Mason in Ashton-under-Lyne and by W.H. Houldsworth in Reddish. Finally, he endowed the township in 1886-87 with public baths. At Heapey near Chorley he founded a mill school and a institute. In the Isle of Wight he established in 1881 a rest home for ministers and their wives: he acquired a country seat near Ryde in 1882 and established there another Longford Institute in 1886, with an associated coffee-house and library.

It remains unknown whether, like the Wesleyan Richard Haworth (1820-83) of Ordsall, Salford, John Rylands devoted one tithe of his income to charitable purposes. In general he remained, as a strict economist, unsympathetic to small causes but he maintained a large number of pensioners and kept secret many of his largest benefactions. Throughout a life of toil, trial and tragedy he bore in mind the successive losses he had himself suffered, of his revered mother, of two wives, of three sons and of four daughters. He therefore made special provision for the bereaved, for the orphan, for the widow and for the aged poor. He agreed with Bunyan that "the soul of Religion is the Practick part" and exemplified in his own life the highest ideals of the Christian. "He was always ready to stand up and fight for the weak".¹⁴ "Pure religion... is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction". (*James*, I:27). Only in his final will did the range of his charitable endeavours become partially known.

The Will of John Rylands

The estate of £2,574,922 paid stamp duty of £77,226 or 3%. In his will John Rylands bequeathed £75,000 to relatives and friends, £132,300 to his employees, and £157,000 to forty-four charities. £38,000 was left to six named directors of the firm. Nothing was bequeathed to Reuben Spencer (1830-1901) who had been one

13 *Manchester City News*, 15 April 1865, p.3i.

14 S.G. Green, *In Memoriam John Rylands* (1889), p.8.

of his closest colleagues and his first biographer but who had attempted a palace coup within the firm in 1874. £90,800 was left to 292 employees as the co-creators of the firm's prosperity. That large group included 106 salesmen, forty-five travellers, forty-six buyers (including two future directors), forty book-keepers (including two future chairmen) and twenty-two foremen. The friends of John Rylands included seven clergymen, especially his biographer, the Revd. Samuel G. Green (1822-1905). The discriminating nature of his charity is revealed in the range of institutions excluded from the will. In accordance with Congregational tradition he left nothing to specific churches, not even to the Union Church in Stretford which he had helped to found in 1864. Nothing was left to such associations as the British and Foreign Bible Society (1804) or the Liberation Society (1844). Nor did he bequeath anything to societies founded for such purposes as the preservation of the Sabbath, the reformation of manners or the diffusion of the gospels of peace, temperance, penal reform, vegetarianism and the prohibition of tobacco. Local institutions overlooked included the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, the Manchester Deaf and Dumb Benevolent Association and the Manchester Sanitary Association. Two-thirds of all the charitable legacies were devoted to educational causes, especially that of religious education. The five largest bequests of £10,000 each were made to the Baptist College, the Congregational Chapel Building Society, the Religious Tract Society, Owens College and the Manchester Warehousemen and Clerks Orphan Schools. John Rylands doubled the value of his legacies by distributing them in the form of shares in the firm. Their market value doubled (1890-97) and dividends averaged 12.5% (1895-1907), or treble the return upon consols. The bulk of the estate, £2,210,622 or 86% of the total, he left to his widow and executor, who became the chief shareholder in Manchester's two leading firms, Rylands & Sons and the Manchester Ship Canal Company.

The Will of Enriqueta Augustina Rylands

Much less information is available upon Mrs Rylands than upon her husband. Enriqueta Augustina Rylands (1843-1908) was the great-grand-daughter of a prominent Scottish American merchant, John Forbes (1767-1823) and was possessed of immense practical capacity. She closely resembled her husband in her formidable abilities, in her strength of will and in her philanthropic disposition. A cradle Catholic, she had moved against the tide of the age by converting in her teens to Congregationalism. She followed the example of John Rylands in devoting her own time as much as her wealth to good causes. She always avoided dispensing charity by cheque and consistently preserved anonymity in her donations. Possessed by a positive passion for privacy, she abhorred publicity and would never appear in public. She employed the Congregationalist, the Revd. J.W. Kiddle (1834-1911) as her personal almoner but she entrusted the writing of the memorial biography of her husband to the Baptist minister, Dr. Green. She maintained the book depository established by John Rylands in Stretford Town Hall for the distribution of improving literature to Sunday Schools and to



Enriqueta Rylands, c. 1905

ministers. She especially favoured impoverished ministers and supplied them with whole libraries. She decided to commemorate her husband in the most appropriate manner, to associate his name for ever with his own ideals and in particular to reflect his profound commitment to the study of the Bible. She chose as the site of a great memorial library "one of the lowest and most notorious slums in Manchester"¹⁵ and so rehabilitated one of the major approach roads to the city. She invested a million pounds in the John Rylands Library, in its land, building, books and manuscripts. She exercised a comprehensive supervision of all aspects of its construction. The creative employment of her wealth contrasted with the philanthropic sterility of the London textile merchant, Walter Morrison (1836-1921).¹⁶

When she died in 1908 her estate of £3,607,056 paid death duty of £650,000 or 18%. She left £191,000 to her friends, £514,000 to her relatives and, to the astonishment of the contemporary press, £448,000 to fifty-two charities, or treble the amount bequeathed thereto by her husband. Her legacies included gifts to eighteen of the same institutions favoured by her husband. But they differed significantly from those of John Rylands. Only one-fifth may be classed as religious in contrast to the 65% of her husband's. She devoted less to religious education and little more to the cause of missions. She had found that "these religious Societies are so slippery"¹⁷ and she had sought in 1890 to nullify her husband's bequest to Bala Independent College in Wales.

She proved more liberal in her legacies to hospitals, especially to those which had offered her some relief from rheumatism. She was generous in her gifts to ragged schools and to women's charities. Above all, she favoured education and made her largest bequests to the John Rylands Library (£200,000) and to the University of Manchester (£75,000). "People who were at one time inclined to cavil with the form taken by the tribute to her husband's memory have come to understand the value which accrues to the community by her departure from the beaten track of charity. She converted a beautiful ideal into a still more beautiful deed."¹⁸

The John Rylands Library was intended to serve as a Nonconformist library for the north of England, for the benefit of both ministers and laity. Its essential character was "Biblical and theological, a great means for educating men in Scriptural knowledge".¹⁹ The group of statues in the foyer symbolized the superiority of Theology to both Science and Art. The history of the library remains one of the great success stories in the cultural history of the twentieth century. It has survived the long and melancholy decline of the Nonconformist churches from their climacteric of 1906. Since 1972 its name has been extended to the main

15 *Lancashire Congregational Year Book*, 1908, p.103, W. Hockett.

16 *Northern Finance and Trade*, 20 April 1898, p.316.

17 Mrs E.A. Rylands to W. Linnell, 3 April 1893, in relation to the American Episcopal Methodist Committee.

18 *Manchester Courier*, 5 February 1908, p.6iii.

19 *Manchester Guardian*, 7 October 1899, p.7i, Dr Andrew M. Fairbairn.

university library. Since 1988 the John Rylands Research Institute has endowed the city with another memorial to its most eminent Victorian. The library itself remains an enduring monument to a notable partnership in charitable endeavour.

“Mr and Mrs John Rylands will be loved and honoured so long as Manchester endures”.²⁰

D.A. FARNIE

**CHARITABLE LEGACIES OF JOHN RYLANDS (1888)
AND OF MRS RYLANDS (1908)**

	JOHN RYLANDS		MRS RYLANDS	
	Number	Amount (£)	Number	Amount (£)
Religious Education	11	55,000	7	44,000
Missions	7	24,000	7	28,000
Aged Ministers	7	21,500	3	15,000
Education	2	20,000	4	295,000
Hospitals	5	21,000	10	27,000
Orphanages and Youth Societies	8	13,000	13	22,000
Women's Welfare			7	21,500
TOTAL		154,500		452,500

**BEQUESTS COMMON TO THE WILLS OF BOTH
JOHN RYLANDS AND MRS RYLANDS (£000)**

RELIGIOUS	J.R.	E.A.R.	SECULAR	J.R.	E.A.R.
Religious Tract Society	10	5	Owens College	10	25
London Missionary Society	5	5	Manchester Warehousemen Schools	10	20
Baptist Missionary Society	5	2	Manchester Royal Eye Hospital	5	2
Lancashire Congregational Union	5	10	Manchester Asylum for Females	5	2
Baptist College	10	5	Manchester Y.M.C.A.	3	2
Chapel Building Society	10	5	Manchester District Provident Society	0.5	1
London City Mission	5	3	Manchester Boys & Girls Home	1	5
Manchester City Mission	5	5	Hazelwood Home at Ryde	0.5	0.5
Wesleyan Missionary Society	2	3	Gardeners Royal Benevolent Society	0.5	3
TOTAL	57	43		35.5	60.5

THE BRISTOL CONGREGATIONAL ITINERANT SOCIETY

SOME PERSONAL REMINISCENCES 1936-1941

The Bristol Congregational Itinerant Society (BCIS) was founded in 1811 with the object of "evangelising the villages in the vicinity of Bristol".¹

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, city churches were awake to the need for missionary work in lands on the verge of being opened up by Britain and other European countries. But there were those even more concerned for the heathen on their own doorstep and they pointed to the "open wickedness and dense ignorance" that characterised rural life adjacent to the city.

Seventy years earlier Wesley and Whitefield found those places to be no less depraved, but as the result of their ministrations many were converted and the scene was transformed; but not everywhere nor perhaps for very long.

Thus in 1808 small groups of Christians from the Bristol churches ventured into the outlying communities and were shocked by the profligacy they found, or as one writer describes it "a heathenism as dense as any in Polynesia or central Africa held sway amid the groves".

During the next thirty years Christian work was begun, or revived, and churches built in sixteen villages within as many miles of Bristol. In nearly every case there first came cottage meetings for prayer and Bible study and the establishment of a "Preaching Station". As numbers increased so did the need for a church building, and there are several instances of a plot being given by those sympathetic to the cause.

The first such Christian community to come into being under the auspices of the BCIS was Oldland Common, a village six miles from Bristol where it is recorded that "the Lord's Day was an occasion for brutal sports and evil pastimes". By 1820, a church had been built which could claim to have a congregation of 300 with 120 children in the Sunday School. Preachers walked from Bristol to conduct the services – a round trip of twelve miles; and for the first thirty-six years of the Society's existence there was no transport of any kind.

The countryside of the nineteenth century supported a much larger working population than it does today and this was reflected in the numbers attending the newly-founded churches. Clutton, for example, nine miles from Bristol in the old Somerset coalfield saw the opening of a Congregational church in 1834, which by 1851 averaged a Sunday morning congregation of 150, an evening one of 220 and a Sunday School of 170. Clutton was one of those nine churches of the Society where a day school also became established – in 1860. Few children had access to

1 In preparing this paper I have drawn on the following sources: *Congregational Year Books* 1905, 1936, 1966; *Gloucester and Hereford Congregational Year Books*; *URC Year Book*, 1997; Ignatius Jones, *Bristol Congregationalism* (Bristol, 1947); G.H. Wicks, *Bristol's Heathen Neighbours* (1911).

free schooling and illiteracy was widespread. The Society therefore pioneered elementary education in places where children and even adults had to be taught the alphabet before they could begin to read the Scriptures. Weekday attendances of 70-100 children were not uncommon, and full-time teachers were employed.

The money for all these projects seems to have been readily forthcoming. Undoubtedly some funds were raised locally, but little could have been done unless large sums had been given by wealthy Christians in Bristol. A case in point was the Day School in Upton Cheyney, erected in 1848 at a cost of £117. A Mr Holmes of Bristol gave all but £17 of that. The church itself, opened in 1834 at a cost of £360, numbered among its trustees both W.D. Wills and H.O. Wills upon whose tobacco firm much of Bristol's prosperity was built.

The trustees of the church at Marshfield were well-to-do businessmen including: a draper, basket-maker, grocer, tobacconist, watchmaker, bookseller, and a "gentleman". The building opened in 1848 free of debt at a cost of £1,200, providing accommodation for 400, and with an almost instant congregation of 350. Such was the buoyancy of church life that in 1853 a day school was added, together with a teacher's house. The following year a reading room and library were opened. However, the BCIS report for 1855 adds this warning note: "Let the Marshfield friends look to their prayer meetings; the Lord will be inquired of in this matter".

My own association with the Society began in 1936 when at the age of sixteen I rashly offered my services as a preacher, and was immediately taken on – no questions asked.

In that year, I delivered my first sermon at Warmley, a small cause on the edge of Bristol, dating from 1846. Again, the building, erected for £273, was opened free of debt and, once more, this was due to the generosity of Bristol friends. One of the later members of this church achieved world-wide fame in 1939 when King George the Sixth in his Christmas broadcast quoted lines from a poem of hers published twenty-five years before:

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year
"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown".

But he replied,

"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God.
That shall be to you better than a light and safer than a known way".

The authoress, Minnie Haskins, whose family owned a local pottery and brickworks, had been an ardent worker in the church at Warmley; a Sunday school teacher as well as leader of the Women's Bible Class and the Christian Endeavour.² The 1890s were a very fruitful period for the church. In 1895 there

2 M. Louise Haskins (b.1875), worked in London and India 1914-18, she was supervisor of Women's Employment and Industrial Welfare in a controlled factory; thereafter she lectured at the London School of Economics, retiring in 1944. She published five volumes, chiefly of verse, between 1908 and 1942.

were 139 girls and 117 boys in the Sunday school and the premises had to be enlarged. Conversions were frequent. However, one member offered a word of caution and spoke of the need to distinguish between conversion and excitement.

In 1972 the church decided not to become part of the United Reformed Church but to continue as an independent congregation – which it still does, but with sadly reduced numbers in a neighbourhood which has become a populous suburb of greater Bristol.

For the BCIS preachers going out from the city, transport to village churches was always a problem. It is not until 1847 that a charge for transport appears in the Treasurer's accounts, and this is an item of "£10 toward the cost of 2 new coburgs". Long before 1936 however, trains, trams, and cars had taken their place. Yet at that time there was no public conveyance in Bristol before 2 p.m. Therefore, in order to get to my "preaching station" I had to walk two-and-a-half miles from my home on the outskirts to the city-centre street of Old Market. It was here that Mr Pullen of Bluebird Garages in Marshfield waited in a large black Daimler for up to six lay preachers, and there was space in that limousine for more. The vehicle became known to those who rode in it as the "Hallelujah Chariot", or by some the "Glory Wagon".

Mr Pullen would drop us off, one by one, at our various churches along, or adjacent to, the main A420 London road. Warmley would come first, then Wick, followed by Cold Ashton, Marshfield and finally North Wraxall – fifteen miles from Bristol. Once there, it was for the whole day since all those churches had an evening service, and this always drew a larger congregation. Later in the day it was possible for us to return to Bristol by the hourly bus.

Churches in other directions could be reached by early morning branch line trains. Clutton was on the Bristol to Frome line. The train leaving Temple Meads at 9 am was known as the "Lay Preachers' Special". This was because such people were often the only passengers; they were destined for Congregational, Methodist and Baptist churches at successive villages down the line. Although the line closed in 1964 it lasted longer than some of the churches it served, though little trace remains of it today.

Upton Cheyney, halfway between Bristol and Bath, is still one of the remoter surviving outposts of the Society. Situated on the slopes of Lansdown Hill – the site of a fierce battle in 1643 between the forces of Cromwell and King Charles I – its appearance has scarcely changed in the last century and a half. Even today it has no shop and is on no bus route. There is one hostelry and the United Reformed church is the only place of worship, founded in 1830 as a Congregational church. One hundred years before, John Cennick a co-worker with Wesley and Whitefield came to preach in a farm kitchen. He created such a sensation that hundreds gathered from the surrounding villages hoping to hear him. Before long however a gang of hooligans, aided and abetted by the local squire, made trouble by flinging dirt and dead dogs at the preacher as well as whipping him and beating him with sticks. Having heard of this the miners of nearby Kingswood held prayer meetings and public fasts in support of the preacher and peace was eventually restored.

During 1794 an application was made to the Bishop of Gloucester for a licence to hold Nonconformist worship in the village. Eventually a chapel was built in 1834 for £360 and once again the munificent W.D. and H.O. Wills were trustees. In 1849 a day school was added and opened with a class of forty scholars.

As late as the 1930s it was still possible to get within walking distance of Upton Cheyney by taking a train from Temple Meads to Bitton Station on the Bristol to Bath London Midland and Scottish Line. From Bitton the preachers were required to walk the rest of the way along the Bath Road, through the village of Bitton finally turning into a narrow lane that led up to Lansdown Hill.

In 1937 at the time of my first visit, and upon arriving at Bitton Station about 10.30 am, I realised that it was not going to be possible to arrive in time for the 11 o'clock service, but this I was determined to do. Undaunted therefore, I knocked at the door of the only house in the village which had a car parked outside, and explained my predicament, saying that if the owner would drive me to Upton Cheyney I would give him a shilling. (Since my weekly wage was only seven shillings and sixpence, that was big money to me.) The owner of the car agreed to my offer even though neither of us knew the exact location of the church. The village of Upton is a complex of narrow lanes without any main street and this made the church more difficult to find. In fact we did not find it. The driver went back home with his shilling and left me to find my own way. After running madly through a ploughed field I arrived drenched in perspiration and full of apologies. Only one person was present – the church secretary. He was quite unperturbed and explained that in order to allow time for the preachers to walk from Bitton, the morning service was not held until 11.30 am. Nobody had told me that.

In 1947 the church was described as “still smiling and flourishing”. Today it is a different story. There is a congregation of eight, only one of whom lives in the village. It seems that any possibility of growth is precluded by an ancient trust deed that forbids new building. But there may be a glimmer of hope. On a recent visit I was told that the future of the church lies in its adjoining graveyard. Since it is the only one in the vicinity the villagers had nowhere else to be buried, thus providing an incentive to keep the church open.

One of my most vivid memories of service with the BCIS in the 1930s and 1940s belongs to Westerleigh. Some eight miles north of Bristol, this church was established in 1815 as a Sunday School. The following year a kindly farmer lent the largest barn in the district for Sunday worship and it became full to overflowing each week. For the next thirty-five years the people suffered from the disability of being without a purpose-built church. No landlord would sell a site because none relished the prospect of having a Nonconformist chapel in the neighbourhood. Eventually a plot was given by a working man, but unfortunately it was well outside the village. As elsewhere, a day school was also started on the premises. Hymns were accompanied by flutes, violins and bass viols.

Today, Westerleigh is almost part of the town of Yate, but until recent years it was off the beaten track. This may account for some of the eccentricities which characterised the people. One in particular is that at the close of the evening

service, before the preacher departed he was asked to wait in the vestry for a few minutes. The deacons then held an impromptu meeting in a corner of the church to decide whether the minister for the day should be given his expenses. If they approved of him he got them; if not, he did not. (There were no women lay preachers in those days. They did not begin to appear on "the plan" until many years later.)

It was at Westerleigh that I experienced one of the most bizarre Sundays of my life. On 28 August 1940, as usual, hospitality for the day was kindly provided, as usual, by two elderly maiden ladies. During the afternoon they asked me if I was fond of plums. They had a Victoria plum tree in the garden, which was heavily laden with the fruit. I was invited to pick and take home with me as much as I could carry. Encouraged by this I filled two large bags as well as my briefcase. At the same time, so temptingly luscious was the fruit that I ate more of it than was wise. It was with dismay, therefore, that when being called in for afternoon tea the ladies offered me a huge bowl of plums and custard.

At the 6.30 pm service I parked my load of fruit in the vestry and at the close of worship walked with it one and a half miles to the main road hoping to catch the 8.00 pm bus to Bristol. Unfortunately it sped past - full up. That meant waiting until 9.00 pm. That one too was packed and did not stop. The 10.00 pm bus was the last, and it took me on board.

Before long we heard sounds of thunder in the distance. But it was not thunder, for Bristol was in the throes of a full-scale air raid. Our driver stopped for a consultation with the passengers. The question was: should we wait outside the city until the air raid was over, or take the risk of going all the way in? We all seemed to be more anxious to get home if possible in spite of the dangers, than to sit in the bus, perhaps for most of the night. Consequently we raced into the city, cowering down beneath the seats, and arrived in the centre unscathed, about midnight. Bombs were still being dropped and buildings blazed all around us.

Passengers had to make their own way home as best they could. Mine was on the outskirts, which meant an uphill walk of about two miles, amid thunderous crashes and flames. The journey was made no easier by the fact that I was weighed down by the bags of plums. About halfway, and quite exhausted, I sat down on a roadside seat and ate some of them. At last, sometime in the middle of the night, and with immense relief I arrived home safely, to find that my parents were in bed peacefully sleeping and oblivious to the raid. But I was determined they should hear my story, so I woke them up and offered them a plum. They were astonished.

Cold Ashton is a village which, like Upton Cheyney, is in a kind of time warp. Dominated by a magnificent manor house and a rectory almost as large, it is and always has been without a shop, public house or bus. It was without a Nonconformist church until 1864. At that time the church at Marshfield two and a half miles away was flourishing and its members knew that the people at Cold Ashton "longed for services and prayer meetings". A "scripture-reader" was sent from Marshfield to begin cottage meetings, and soon a chapel was built. For this purpose a local carpenter gave a piece of his own garden, albeit some distance

from the village, and adjoining what is now the A46 from Bath to Cirencester. In 1880 a Sunday school was established with fifty children.

It is lamentable that the written history of many village churches is so sparse. In the case of Cold Ashton there are no records whatsoever. My own recollections of the church and its tiny congregation go back sixty years and while being outlandish, provide no answers to the questions we should like to ask. Cold Ashton was third in line of those dropping-off places between Bristol and North Wraxall. I would arrive about 10.00 am for the 10.30 am service. John Lewis, aged ninety, would already be there reading his Bible in preparation for worship. It was the same John Lewis who had helped to start the Sunday school in 1880. Being a true countryman he knew nothing of city life, and on the few occasions he had been into Bristol, it was always by horse and cart.

He, with wife, daughter, and son-in-law (Mr and Mrs Caine) would entertain me for the day in their three-hundred-year-old cottage. On one occasion in 1938 there was great excitement because that week they had obtained their first "wireless set". It was "on" all that Sunday afternoon. There was no conversation since all were avidly listening in. Old Mr Lewis frequently broke in with such remarks as "Wunnerful in it?, In it wunnerful?" as though unable to believe his own ears.

Mr Caine, partially crippled, was almost as old as his father-in-law and appeared to live a separate life from the rest in an adjoining room. On some of my Sunday visits I was invited to spend part of the afternoon with him. This could be a disconcerting experience. He hardly ever spoke and smoke a virulent pipe, which filled the air with its fumes. Instead of joining the rest of us for meals he kept an iron saucepan of thick whiteish-green gruel bubbling away on the coal fire, and every so often would bend forward to lift a ladleful of it to his lips. I remember nothing of the little he ever did say except for one startling statement. It was the early part of the Second World War, soon after there had been an air raid on Bristol. At the end of a protracted silence he calmly remarked "There be a main big time bomb in the garden". In fact it was so, but none of the family seemed apprehensive. It appears that the bomb went so far down into the ground without exploding that the bomb disposal experts were unable to recover it and there it remains to this day.

The church at Cold Ashton received local renown for one eccentricity in its worship. It was this: immediately the Lord's Prayer was announced the members of the congregation (all ten perhaps) would move toward the walls, climb up onto the windowsills and kneel there facing outward, resuming their seats at the conclusion of the prayer. No one knows why this was done, but the practice was noted by all visiting lay preachers.

The Revd. Ronald Bocking who became a student at New College, London, also served the BCIS from September 1941 to October 1942, and says "The months in Bristol played a vital part towards my call to the ministry".

He recalls that the church at Westerleigh still used the Congregational Hymn Book of 1856. On one occasion his hostess for the day asked him for the evening hymns. Upon his mentioning the first one she said "Good gracious, we haven't

been that far forward in the book for years". That same morning he had journeyed out from Bristol in the "Hallelujah Chariot" only to find the church empty but "a good fire in the vestry".

At the Wick church he had the temerity to ask for an order of service – which enquiry elicited the following response from an old deacon – "We leave that to the preacher, we are Nonconformists here, we don't conform to anything".

My own varied experiences in serving the village churches from 1936 to 1941 were formative. For several years, with my parents, I had been a member at Brislington Congregational Church amongst whose large congregation were several lay preachers. It was the minister especially, Dr William Painter, who through his thoughtful and lucid sermons stimulated me to "have a go".

At that time it was my ambition to be a journalist, and I nearly did become one, but gradually my thoughts were turned toward the ministry, and the village churches played no small part in convincing me that I was being led in this direction.

The committee at Lancashire College was not so easily convinced, but eventually gave me the benefit of the doubt and I became a fulltime student there in September 1941.

CYRIL H. GRANT

THE OVERLOOKED PACIFIST TRADITION OF THE OLD PATHS CHURCHES OF CHRIST

PART I:

THE GREAT WAR AND THE OLD PATHS DIVISION

Most standard histories of British pacifism focus on political pacifists like the socialists or religious liberals like the Quakers.¹ Religious sects with unorthodox religious beliefs like the Christadelphians, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Seventh-Day Adventists or churches that are biblical literalists like Pentecostals or the Plymouth Brethren are slighted.² They often proclaim that

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1. Martin Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain 1914-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).
 2. For pacifism in Christadelphians see Charles Lippy, *The Christadelphians in North America* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989) pp. 250-4. For pacifism in Jehovah's Witnesses see M. James Penton, *Apocalypse Delayed: The Story of the Jehovah's Witnesses* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985) pp. 55-6, 142-3, 202. There are several sources on Seventh-Day Adventist pacifism: See George R. Knight, "Adventism and Military Service: Individual Conscience in Ethical Tension", in Theron Schlabach and Richard T. Hughes, ed. *Proclaim Peace: Christian Pacifism From Unexpected Quarters* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997) pp. 157-71 and Peter Brock, *Freedom from Violence: Sectarian Nonresistance from the Middle Ages to the Great War* (Toronto; University of Toronto Press, 1991) pp. 230-258. For Pentecostals see Jay Beaman, *Pentecostal Pacifism: The Origin, Development and Rejection of Pacific Belief among the Pentecostals* (Hillsboro, Kansas: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1989). For Plymouth Brethren see Brock, pp. 259-68.

they are primitivists; that they are restoring the Christianity found in the pages of the New Testament. Often part of this primitivism is a pacifist ethic that refuses to fight in war or sanction the legitimacy of war. Peter Ackers has traced an incidence of pacifism within the British Churches of Christ around Wigan during the First World War finding fascinating links between Labour activism and pacifism.³ Ackers says that these primitivist pacifists “simply faded away”. In fact, they remained in protest as a small overlooked sectarian group, the Old Paths Churches of Christ.

David Thompson in his history of the Churches of Christ, while mentioning the Old Paths division, focuses on the denominational development of the mainstream of the tradition. This paper, using Old Path sources unavailable to Thompson, helps to investigate more of the variety of the Church of Christ tradition. The Old Paths Movement objected to the developing ecumenicity, pro-war thought, and other liberalizing trends, and so separated from the Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland long before the Association merged with the United Reformed Church. While the division was “official” by the mid-1940s, it had been emerging for many years. 1924 was the first Old Paths conference, but it had been preceded by several anti-war conferences during the Great War. The *Interpreter*, the journal that espoused Old Paths views, was established in 1908 to combat liberal trends in the Churches.⁴ While 1924 was the first time the name “Old Paths” was used this paper will employ the Old Paths label to signify those churches which had protested at changes in the Churches of Christ from 1900. The term “Old Paths”, used frequently by conservatives in the tradition, comes from *Jeremiah* 6:16 “Stand by the ways and see and ask for the old paths.”⁵ Today the Old Paths Churches of Christ are very small, with ninety-five congregations and some 3,600 members in the United Kingdom.⁶ This paper explores the origins of

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3. Peter Ackers, “Who Speaks for the Christians? The Great War and Conscientious Objection in the Churches of Christ: A View from the Wigan Coalfield”, *Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society* 5 (October 1993): pp.153-67. I am greatly indebted to Dr. Ackers who read and commented on earlier drafts of this paper.
 4. *The Interpreter* was a monthly journal produced by the emerging Old Paths movement. Unfortunately the Old Paths Churches have not preserved their literature very well. John Morgan of Hindley apparently has a complete run of the Old Paths journal that frequently changed its name: *Interpreter* (1908-1916), *Apostolic Messenger* (1916-1920), *Bible Advocate* (1921-1934) and *Scripture Standard* (1935-). Corby Bible School has some of the *Scripture Standard* that replaced the *Bible Advocate*. Scattered copies of the Old Paths journals can be found in the private libraries of various Old Paths leaders.
 5. While many accepted the term some, with their strong primitivism, refused the label arguing that their local congregations and others like them are not a separate movement or church but simply Christians who are part of the universal church that follows Christ.
 6. Mac Lynn, *Churches of Christ around the World: Exclusive of the United States and Her Territories* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1900) p.275.

the division which crystallised in 1924. A future paper will explore the continuing Labour and pacifist ties of the Old Paths Churches.

The British Churches of Christ had a pacifist heritage. James Wallis, early leader and editor and founder of the Churches' *British Millennial Harbinger*, was pacifist: "We would not, for a thousand worlds, meet death in an effort to slaughter those whom Christ died to save. Warriors we would be, but in that army whose Captain is the Prince of Peace."⁷ Wallis's successor as editor, David King, also held strong pacifist convictions.⁸ The Churches of Christ held these convictions into the twentieth century. In the Boer War the Churches' Annual Meeting entered "our solemn protest against the military spirit so prevalent in British society generally..."⁹ In 1901 Henry Tickle presented a conference paper concluding that Christians should follow the primitive church and "decline all such (military) service whether voluntary or compulsory", even if this meant "penalties in person or property".¹⁰

The First World War shattered the pacifist consensus of the Churches.¹¹ The more denominational Churches abandoned pacifism to support King and Country, and to enter into mainstream middle-class Nonconformity. The sectarians engaged in "the last stand of a humble primitivism" and "against these new compromises".¹² The back-street Bethels of the Churches, centred in working-class life, produced Labour leaders while the "West End chapels" were controlled by successful business leaders.¹³ While the general social composition of the Churches changed from working-class to middle-class, and a more liberal (and hierarchical) theology triumphed, the primitivist strain remained with the "Old Paths" division in the Churches of Christ.¹⁴

The Old Paths Churches ostensibly separated in opposition to higher criticism, theological education, and open communion. Ackers suggests that a working-class/middle-class schism could also be a factor in the division. The Churches of Christ produced significant Labour leaders before more liberal theology began to dominate them. Amos Mann (1855-1939) and J.T. Taylor (1863-1958) established the Humberstone Cooperative near Leicester. Robert Fleming (1863-1939) from Belfast also was a prominent co-operator. Joseph Parkinson (1854-1929) was

7. *British Millennial Harbinger* 1861, p.607.

8. *Ibid.*, 1862, p.28.

9. David M. Thompson, *Let Sects and Parties Fall: A Short History of the Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland* (Birmingham: Berean Press, 1980), p.121.

10. *Ibid.*, p.122.

11. *Ibid.*, pp.122-5 and Ackers, "Who Speaks".

12. Ackers, "Who Speaks," p.155.

13. Peter Ackers, "West End Chapel, Back Street Bethel: Labour and Capital in the Wigan Churches of Christ c.1845-1945," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 47 (April 1996): pp.298-329.

14. Thompson, pp.158-9.

president of the Wigan Miners' Association and a Labour party leader.¹⁵ Ackers has traced other less known activists.¹⁶ Through the egalitarian chapels, working-class people were able to gain leadership, organizing and public speaking skills otherwise unavailable to them. Despite the difficulties of British industries after the Great War, it is doubtful that working-class constituencies would readily have given up these leadership outlets.

The Old Paths Churches of Christ continued the tradition of labour-activism, pacifism, and general radicalism. The primitivist pacifists did not fade away but many withdrew in protest at the *embourgeoisement* of the Churches of Christ.¹⁷ As one Old Paths leader put it: "Pacifism, Labour Party activism and 'Old Paths' doctrine went hand in hand."¹⁸ The Old Paths pacifists were radicalized by the experience of the Great War and for the rest of their lives pressed for working-class values through political, pacifist, and Labour Party protest at middle-class British values.

In 1914, after the outbreak of war, T.E. Entwistle, an evangelist at "radical" Merthyr Tydvil, "the cradle of working-class protest" in Wales,¹⁹ organized a published protest against military service. There were 226 signatories from the Churches of Christ: "We beg, therefore to protest against the suggested introduction of Compulsory Military Service, and if it is introduced we are prepared to resist it with all our powers, by the Grace of God, in spite of fine, imprisonment, or if need be, death."²⁰ Early in 1915 Entwistle presented a paper at a local conference in Wigan to strengthen the opposition to war.²¹ He wanted chapels to protest to Parliament regarding impending conscription and when that

15. H.F. Bing, "Amos Mann", pp.230-1 and Bing, "Robert Fleming", p.122 in *Dictionary of Labour Biography, Volume I*, eds. Saville and Bellamy (London: MacMillan, Oxford, 1972). Parkinson's and Taylor's entries will appear in Volume X. On Humberstone see B. Lancaster, *Radicalism, Co-operation and Socialism: Leicester Working-class Politics, 1860-1906*. (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1987) p.142.
16. Peter Ackers, "The Churches of Christ as a Labour Sect", *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, forthcoming.
17. This is not to say that all the working-class leaders abandoned the denominational Churches of Christ. Clearly many Labour leaders and workers stayed while some middle-class persons and leaders went with the Old Paths movement. While the division was powerfully driven by an economic/social basis, for some the theological reasons were the primary concern.
18. Interview with Alex Allan, Aylesbury, 18 November 1996.
19. Kenneth O. Morgan, "Peace Movements in Wales, 1899-1945," *The Welsh History Review* 10 (June 1981): p.414.
20. *1914: Churches of Christ in Great Britain*. (Heanor: W. Baker, [1914]). Entwistle was originally from Blackburn, England, another stronghold of Labour activism. Interviews with Vi Wilson Allan, Aylesbury, 18 November 1996.
21. *Bible Advocate*, 12 March 1915, pp.121-3, and 19 March 1915, pp.133-4. The *Bible Advocate* was a weekly journal sponsored by the Cooperation.

did not happen he hoped that individuals would protest.²² Entwistle then organized a petition for Church of Christ members, which he published and sent to Parliament in early 1916.²³

Conscription galvanized the anti-war movement in the Churches. Entwistle began by soliciting the names and addresses of brethren with conscientious objection to war so that they could "have some opportunity for consulting each other on the matter, so as to get some advice on what course to adopt in the event of conscription being introduced..."²⁴ Soon anti-war brethren were organizing meetings. The anti-conscription Churches members around Glasgow met early in 1916 at Great Wellington Street to discuss what to do about the draft. They agreed that Christians "could not under any circumstances take the Military Oath." When objectors were "called up, they should apply for forms of exemptions which should be filled up and returned." If anyone was "compelled to do work of service to the State, it was agreed they should demand to be given work on the railways of this country."²⁵ Robert Price became the secretary of the conscientious objectors who met at the Platt Bridge chapel in the Wigan district. The Platt Bridge meetings in February and March 1916 advised objectors to seek absolute exemption through the tribunal process and offered an anti-war manifesto:

Our voice is the voice of a number of men who are bound by deep conscientious convictions to refuse military service of any kind, whatever the consequences for refusal. Our objection to taking any part in military service is not merely negative, but rests fundamentally upon a recognition of a positive obligation to Christ, whose life was a protest against force and militarism.²⁶

Arthur Smith announced that he wanted to organize a meeting of conscientious objectors in the Birmingham Churches "to consider our position, and to encourage each other in the stand we are prepared to make."²⁷

Another meeting at Platt Bridge on 22 April drew persons from Ashton-Under-Lyne, Blackburn, and Manchester, and called for "brethren of like mind in other districts to organise themselves into local working committees" to assist conscientious objectors. These local committees were then called to send

22. *Ibid.*, 29 October 1915, p.613 and 26 November 1915, p.693.

23. *A Protest By Members of the Churches of Christ Against the Military Service Act, 1916* (Heanor: Walter Barker, [1916]).

24. *Bible Advocate*, 12 November 1915, p.660.

25. *The Interpreter* 1916, p.15. The exact date of the conference is not given but this was the February issue of the journal.

26. *Bible Advocate*, 18 February 1916, p.107 and 10 March 1916: p.157. Also see Ackers, "Who Speaks," pp.157-8. The manifesto was also published in *The Interpreter* 1916, p.26.

27. *Bible Advocate*, 19 May 1916, p.317.

"representative brethren" to a "united" or national conference in Wigan on 12 June.²⁸ The Wigan conference drew representatives from thirty districts including Glasgow, Swindon, Merthyr, Bristol, Leeds, Birmingham and Nottingham.²⁹

T.E. Entwistle chaired the national meeting and Walter Crosthwaite spoke on "The Relationship between the Pro-War and the Anti-War Brethren."³⁰ Crosthwaite warned that the relationship between the two sides was "strained to the breaking point". He believed that the roots of the differences preceded even the Boer war, "Many of us have had a feeling that for a long time the Churches have been drifting from the position they are pledged to uphold." Some attended the Annual Meetings and after fighting for their position with their "back to the wall" came away "depressed" feeling as one Old Paths supporter said, "This co-operation is doomed." Crosthwaite added, "If the A.M. [Annual Meeting] was a democracy instead of an aristocracy things would be different." Crosthwaite also attributed the problem to the rising economic level of Churches members: "What was said of one brother is true of many, 'He had the misfortune to get rich... and conscious of the power of the dollar.' 'Beware,' said Wesley to his followers, 'lest rich men become a necessity to you.'" Crosthwaite could "best account for the changed attitude of many brethren regarding war to this cause." Crosthwaite also believed that there was "a lack of plain, definite, New Testament preaching and teaching". As he argued, "Strangers attending many of our meetings would detect no difference between us and the sectarian body around us; and many of the addresses delivered from our platforms would be just as acceptable in a Methodist chapel or anywhere else". He asked, "Can the pro-war and anti-war brethren be reunited? As a people we plead for the union of believers on the New Testament scriptures... It is the introduction of things foreign to the New Testament teaching that causes division". He concluded, "So on this question, if we cannot unite on New Testament ground we cannot unite at all. Is the New Testament pro-war or anti-war? Personally... I should have to put in the New Testament *en bloc*, as the lawyers say, on the anti-war side".³¹ Despite these ominous words Crosthwaite was not ready for division and was still optimistic for unity:

I trust the outcome of our meetings will be a strenuous endeavour to win the brethren back to the New Testament position. We cannot influence and

28. Ackers, "Who Speaks," p.159 and *For His Name's Sake, being a record of the Witness given by Members of Churches of Christ in Great Britain against Militarism during the European War, 1914-1918* (Heanor: Walter Baker, 1921) p.129. This work has been reprinted recently, (Reading: R.M. Payne, 1996) and is available on the internet at the following address: www.netcomuk.co.uk/~pdover/index.htm
29. *Apostolic Messenger* 1916, p.12.
30. *Bible Advocate*, 2 June 1916, p.349 and *The Interpreter* 1916, p.42.
31. *Peace, War, and the Churches of Christ, Papers on the Attitude of Members of the Churches of Christ to War, being the Proceedings of a Conference, held at Wigan, June 1916, with the addition of a Forward.* (Heanor: Barker, [1916], pp.7-10.

win back the Churches by withdrawing from them. We must stay in as the salt to season and save the whole. Brethren we shall need patience. Think how slow the Church was to realize her true position in regard to slavery; how slowly the Church of Christ has learned New Testament teaching regarding intoxicating drink. These facts should teach us patience, and lead us to believe that war is absolutely and altogether anti-Christian at all times and in all circumstances... By seeking to unite the brethren on New Testament teaching by earnestly and lovingly exhorting them, we shall prove ourselves true pacifists.³²

The meeting produced more anti-war resolutions, support for conscientious objectors who were now being imprisoned for their stand, and identified 125 men who were ready to resist conscription.³³

Anti-war conferences began springing up all over Britain, in Leicester,³⁴ the Nottingham district,³⁵ the Yorkshire district,³⁶ and in areas previously mentioned. These meetings apparently occurred with frequency and loyal attendance; for example the Birmingham conscientious objectors met twenty-three times in the first year.³⁷ Sensing continued perseverance the Central Committee of Anti-War Brethren which organized the first national conference met at Blackburn in December 1916 and announced a second national conference.³⁸

As the Annual Meeting met in the same town, on 6 August 1917 the second national anti-war conference was held in Leicester with doubled attendance from the first national conference. A large number of resolutions were passed, urging the government to enter into negotiations for peace and protesting at the treatment of imprisoned objectors. They also wanted these resolutions to be taken up by the Annual Meeting and demanded that Churches committees withdraw money invested in war loans. The conference also recommended "that meetings of Pacifist brethren be held in the various centres once a month, the meetings to be of a devotional character or business character and that Sisters be invited."³⁹ At the 1917 Annual Meeting T.E. Entwistle took up the question of money invested in War Loans or "blood money". J.W. Black of Leicester objected to this label. Entwistle's efforts fell on deaf ears.⁴⁰

At this same meeting the more liberal and American-supported Christian Association was united with the Co-operation despite the objections of the Old

32. *Ibid.*, pp.11-2.

33. *For His Name's Sake*, p.131.

34. *Bible Advocate*, 8 December 1916, p.742.

35. *Ibid.*, 22 December 1916, p.766 and *Apostolic Messenger* 1916, p.67 and 1917, p.8.

36. *Apostolic Messenger* 1917, p.8.

37. *Bible Advocate* 22 June 1917, p.298 and *Apostolic Messenger* 1917, p.80.

38. *Apostolic Messenger* 1917, p.36.

39. *Ibid.*, 1917, p.98

40. *Ibid.*, p.101.

Paths group.⁴¹ The origins of the Christian Association began in 1875 when an English evangelist Henry Earl with American support established a congregation using American methods: open communion (allowing unimmersed adults to take communion), instrumental music, and choirs. Soon two other churches with American support were established with a prominent American W.T. Moore as an evangelist at one of them. Moore was from the more liberal side of the tradition in the United States.⁴² In 1881 these churches formed the Christian Association, maintaining ties with the more liberal American Disciples of Christ. The Christian Association moved in more ecumenical circles than the Cooperation. They had participated in the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910, appointed a commission to the World Conference on Faith and Order, and worked with the National Free Church Council.⁴³ While it is doubtful that the union was deliberately undertaken to strengthen liberal trends against the Old Paths movement, conservatives perceived the union as a threat; 406 individuals published their dissent in the *Apostolic Messenger*:

We ... strongly disapprove of the undue haste with which the A.M. [Annual Meeting] received into Co-operation the Christian Association of Churches without first consulting the Churches in the matter. We wish to strongly disassociate ourselves from any seeming departure from the 'Old Paths', or to encourage any neglect of New Testament teaching or Apostolic practice. We do earnestly appeal to all our brethren to make a firm stand for New Testament Christianity *at all times*.⁴⁴

41. *Ibid.*

42. The tradition in America had similar divisions. The overall movement was known as the Disciples of Christ, with the terms Christian Church and Churches of Christ used interchangeably. In 1906 the movement officially divided with the recognition of the Churches of Christ as a separate entity by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Churches of Christ, the more conservative churches, opposed the use of instrumental music in worship services. David Edwin Harrell argues that social sources of division were as significant as the theological. He dates the division back to the American Civil War, noting that the Churches of Christ were mostly in the Southern States and pacifist while the more liberal churches, the Disciples of Christ, were in the Northern States and supported the Civil War. W.T. Moore supported instrumental music and the northern efforts during the Civil War. See David Edwin Harrell, *Quest for a Christian America* (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1966). More recently Richard Hughes has argued that Harrell overlooked theological considerations and dates the source of the division to an incompatibility between the worldviews of the two American founders of the tradition, Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone. See Richard Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith: The Story of the Churches of Christ in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).

43. Thompson, pp.82-5, 107-12.

44. *Apostolic Messenger* 1917, p.138.

Many years later, Walter Barker recalled the Leicester Annual Meeting:

[T]hose supporting the war and those opposed to it gathered in strength on the afternoon when the all-important decision was taken. The margin of votes cast was a very narrow one between the two sides, but the elation of the war-minded on the platform at their victory had to be seen to be believed. One excited member [J.W. Black] showed his joy by dancing around in an astonishing way.⁴⁵

While clearly conflating the events regarding war and the Christian Association, the two went hand-in-hand as far as Barker and the Old Paths movement were concerned.

On 30 March 1917 the third national anti-war conference was held in Leicester with the Humberstone socialist J.T. Taylor as the chairman.⁴⁶ R.K. Francis spoke on "What should be the immediate attitude of the Anti-War brethren to the present Co-operation of Churches of Christ?" Francis probably advised against division since unlike most in the Old Paths movement he did not separate from the Cooperation.⁴⁷ The "animated discussion" that followed suggests that many were urging division. The conference passed a resolution urging on the government "the importance and urgency of entering into Peace negotiations, in the name and cause of humanity and Christianity."⁴⁸

The fourth and final national anti-war conference was held simultaneously with the 1918 Annual Meeting in Birmingham. This conference focused on the plight of men who were imprisoned or doing alternative service as conscientious objectors. It sent a resolution to the Prime Minister, Home Secretary, and local Members of Parliament asking for the release of incarcerated objectors:

Many of them are serving their third or fourth sentence because they have remained true to their convictions that *all* war is wrong. This should be sufficient proof of the sincerity of their conscientious objection and should entitle them to the absolute exemption, which the law provides.⁴⁹

Many of the men who objected to war had a very difficult time and their experiences transformed their outlook.

Jack Luck of the anti-war committee was able to track sixty-one men out of at least seventy-seven men from Churches of Christ who went to prison. He found eighteen men who were granted alternative service by the tribunals. Very few, possibly only two men, were granted full exemption as absolute objectors even

45. *Scripture Standard*, 1961, p.79.

46. *Apostolic Messenger* 1918, p.48.

47. For his loyalty to the Cooperation see Thompson, p.159.

48. *For His Name's Sake*, p.135.

49. *Ibid.*, p.136.

though most objectors in the Churches of Christ sought such exemption.⁵⁰

Robert Price was probably the most militant of all the imprisoned conscientious objectors. While serving as the secretary of both the Platt Bridge and the national anti-war meetings, he was fighting for his own exemption. He and his brother Edward were denied full exemption on 18 March 1916 by a local tribunal.⁵¹ Both were arrested and handed over to the military at Ormskirk on 4 April 1916.⁵² On 12 May, after hunger striking, they were discharged as medically unfit.⁵³ But this was just the start, since both were recharged and brought back to prison after regaining their strength under the "Cat and Mouse Act". Robert was court-martialled three times and served over two years in prison sentences.⁵⁴ While at Wandsworth Prison he reported:

On the "compound" at Etaples, we were horsewhipped, half-choked by sandbags slung round our necks, and thrown into dark cells. Later, for an hour and a half, ten or twelve of the army's biggest bullies set about five of us, for refusing to obey the order to "double" – and we were whipped, struck and kicked, with fists and boots, thrown down, kicked whilst down, thrown against the railings, shaken as a dog would shake a rat, pushed and dragged about until totally exhausted, and we were all on the point of collapse.⁵⁵

He also witnessed the brutality meted out to objectors:

At Les Attaque, I saw a youth chained hands and feet, stripped naked, doubled over an officer's knees, and then thrashed by two or three others with their metal mounted belts. The shrieks of agony, which lasted long after the incident was over, I shall never forget. Again, I heard the cries of a man who was shot whilst trying to escape. He was brought back, thrust into a cold cell, whipped with officers' belts, and allowed to bleed all night, if needs be to death.⁵⁶

50. *Ibid.*, p.25. Through research in T.H. Harvey's papers, the Central Board for Conscientious Objectors papers, the Friends Service Committee papers (all located at Friends House in London), oral history interviews with families of Church of Christ conscientious objectors, and lists of objectors published in the *Bible Advocate* and the *Interpreter/Apostolic Messenger*, I have found at least seventy-seven incarcerated men from Churches of Christ. I found only two men granted total exemption. One of the two, W. Norman Nelmes, served with the Friends Ambulance Service Corps.
51. Friends Service Committee Series Box 34, Newspaper Cuttings 3, NonFriend Local Tribunal Cases. Friends House, Euston Road, London, NW1.
52. Friends Service Committee Series Box 35, Newspaper Cuttings. Friends House.
53. Conscientious Objectors Information Bureau, Report # VII, 12 May 1916 in Friends Service Committee Box 6, Friends House.
54. *For His Name's Sake*, p.125.
55. - *Ibid.*, p.60.
56. *Ibid.*

Price never recovered from this experience and he died young in 1927.⁵⁷ Both Edward, who died in 1949, and Robert remained with the Old Paths protest.⁵⁸

Clifford Cartwright was sent to France along with fifty-nine other men and thirty-four of them were given death sentences which were then commuted to ten-year prison sentences.⁵⁹ The *Labour Leader* reported that many of these men were “members of the I.L.P.” and that “nearly all” belonged to the No Conscription Fellowship (NCF).⁶⁰ Cartwright belonged to the NCF, which successfully lobbied for the return of these objectors to Britain.⁶¹ Arthur Wilson and three of his brothers were imprisoned. Arthur, indeed, was court-martialled four times. After serving over two years he became ill through neglect and died in Strangeways gaol 11 December 1918.⁶² This experience radicalized his imprisoned brothers, especially Harry Wilson.⁶³ The *Labour Leader*, an I.L.P. paper, reported on the brutal treatment of Cecil Foster, a member of the Bethesda Church of Christ in Manchester.⁶⁴

The Old Paths journal, the *Interpreter* (which changed its name to the *Apostolic Messenger* in 1916 and to the *Bible Advocate* in 1921), kept pacifists informed about anti-war activities.⁶⁵ The journal was filled with anti-war literature reprinted from the *Labour Leader*.⁶⁶ Walter Barker, the publisher of the *Interpreter/Apostolic Messenger*, also published all the pacifist Old Paths pamphlets. Barker advertised his printing services in the “hybrid” Christian-Socialist journal. *The Crusader* established by Wilfred Wellock, a Methodist lay preacher who became a Labour M.P. in 1927.⁶⁷ The *New Crusader* became the *Crusader* and helped establish in 1921 the “No More War Movement”, the successor to NCF.⁶⁸

57. *Bible Advocate* 1927, p.132 for Robert's obituary.

58. *Scripture Standard* 1949, p.128 for Edward's obituary.

59. *For His Name's Sake*, p.65-9. For the historical account of all these objectors in France see John W. Graham, *Conscription and Conscience: a History 1916-1919* (London: G. Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1922) pp.110-35.

60. *Labour Leader* 29 June 1916, p.3.

61. Friends Service Committee, Box 30, Friends House.

62. *For His Name's Sake*, pp.74-5.

63. Interview with Vi Wilson Allan. Mrs. Allan is the niece of Arthur and Harry Wilson.

64. *For His Name's Sake*, 120. See Elders' Minute Book, Bethesda Church of Christ, Manchester, 5 April 1918, Churches of Christ Archive, Selly Oak Colleges Central Library, Birmingham.

65. In 1921 the Cooperation's official journal the *Bible Advocate* changed its name to the *Christian Advocate*. William Kempster, the editor of the Old Paths *Apostolic Messenger* immediately changed his journal to the *Bible Advocate* in an attempt to pick up subscribers from the Cooperation journal. The Cooperation *Bible Advocate* was a weekly and is cited by date, month, year and page number while the Old Path *Bible Advocate* was a monthly and is cited by year and page number.

66. *Interpreter* 1915, pp.25, 49, 65 and 1916, pp.9, 25, 33.

67. *New Crusader* 2 November 1917, p.4; 9 November 1917, p.4; 17 November 1917, p.4; 18 January 1918, p.8 and 25 January 1918, p.8.

68. Ceadel, pp.50-2.

The Old Paths division accelerated rapidly after the war with its journal reporting on the threats of the ecumenical trends. Robert Price gloomily reported about two "delegate meetings" in Leeds designed "to arrive, 'if possible', at a basis of co-operation". Price found only "sharp and clear cut" division on "fundamentals". The progressives used "foreign and strange terms where Scriptural and Apostolic language would be more becoming". Price stood for the "old paths", "first principles" and the "all-sufficiency of Scripture in matters of religion". He draw the line in the sand: "We in this fight have staked our all on a complete return to 'the ancient order of things'; a return to the Spiritual Life of the Apostolic Church. We stand where David King stood, nay we take our stand on ground chosen by the Apostles, and refuse to yield". He unwittingly forecast division: "Failing these basic principles being conceded, is there any other basis of union which we can accept?"⁶⁹

In 1921 the "Committee" (apparently the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors) consisting of T.E. Entwistle, W. Crosthwaite, Arthur E. Smith and Jack Luck, Secretary, published *For His Names Sake*, a record of the pacifists during the war from the Old Paths perspective.⁷⁰ George Hassell wrote that to remain silent on the war issue any longer was wrong. He noted "that during the war fellowship in some Churches was almost impossible".⁷¹ Because so few Churches were sympathetic to teaching peace, he concluded: "if we are to remain faithful to our conviction, there is only one of two courses left to us, either to teach within the Churches or voluntarily to exile ourselves. Far better to adopt the latter course than to prove unfaithful!"⁷² The Old Paths movement was to struggle for the next twenty years over which method of protest to take.

In 1923 the Brighton church protested at the Annual Meeting against the Higher Critical views published in the *Christian Advocate* (now the name of the weekly Cooperation journal) and against Overdale College's alliance with the Student Christian Movement (SCM). SCM had emerged in the late nineteenth century as an evangelical organisation with roots in the Kewstic Convention. It rapidly became more ecumenical in the early twentieth century, backing the Edinburgh Missionary Conference. Since Anglo-Catholic and Broad Church Anglicans participated, social conscientiousness and openness to critical views of scripture developed and conservative evangelicals abandoned it.⁷³ The Old Paths

69. *Bible Advocate* 1921, pp.74-6.

70. The only original copy of the 1921 edition in the United States has a pasted printed plate on the inside cover saying: "With Christian greetings from the Committee. T.E. Entwistle, W. Crosthwaite, Arthur E. Smith, Jack Luck Secretary. 146 Mere Road, Leicester. Publishers of *For His Name's Sake*." This copy can be found in the Library of Harding University, Searcy, Arkansas, United States.

71. *For His Name's Sake*, p.140.

72. *Ibid.*, p.143.

73. Adrian Hastings, *A History of English Christianity, 1920-1990* 3rd ed. (London: SCM Press, 1991) pp.86-91 and D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1989) p.188.

movement reflected the developments of wider British religion.

The Old Paths *Bible Advocate* warned that “the Churches have come to the gravest crisis they have ever faced...”⁷⁴ In December William Kempster, the *Bible Advocate* editor, called for a conference to discuss the impact of Higher Criticism or Modernism on the religious world so that “all those who stand for the ‘Old Paths’ could decide on their ‘future position and attitude.’”⁷⁵ The first annual Old Paths Conference was held at the YMCA at Leeds on 23 February, 1924 with the theme: “Churches of Christ and Higher Criticism”.⁷⁶

While it was the first “official” meeting of the Old Paths churches, clearly the Leeds meeting had precedents in the four national anti-war conferences. The same constituents attended both sets of meetings and the official Association Churches treated their participants as outcasts. Albert Brown, the editor of the *Christian Advocate*, refused to publish a notice of the Old Paths meeting and refused to give it space in the “Coming Events” section of the paper.⁷⁷ The meeting set out the key theological disagreements from the Old Paths perspective:

That this Meeting of Churches of Christ views with misgiving and sorrow the widely spreading departures from “The Old Paths” – the principles, precepts and examples of Christianity, found in the New Testament, as seen in –

1. The growing influence and encouragement of destructive “Higher Criticism” or “Modernism”.
2. The encouragement of class distinctions and the avowed intention to obtain “Divinity Degrees for preachers of primitive Christianity”.
3. The increasing use of Instrumental Music in Worship.
4. The support and encouragement of Women Preachers and Teachers in the Church (save as an accord with all New Testament teaching.)
5. The expressed aim of one Church one Preacher, and thus the total or partial exclusion of Mutual Ministry.
6. Unscriptural means of obtaining finances of Evangelistic work, such as Collections in Sunday Schools, Sales of Work, and Open-air Collections.

This meeting deplores all departures from New Testament Christianity, and urges upon all Members of Churches of Christ to stand firm on the Scriptures of God, adhering to the principles that, Where the Bible speaks we speak and where the bible is silent we are silent. So that all may speak the same things and that there may be no divisions among members of Churches of Christ.⁷⁸

74. *Bible Advocate* 1923, p.135.

75. *Ibid.*, p.185.

76. *Ibid.*, 1924, p.1.

77. *Ibid.*, p.38. In contrast Brown was allowed to speak at the Old Paths Conference.

78. *Ibid.*, p.35.

The Old Paths protest was launched with this resolution. While the theological rationale was prominent, class division came up. The second proposition objected to the class distinctions that ministerial theological education implied. Ten months later, in December 1924, the second Old Paths meeting was held in Leeds and Harry Wilson, imprisoned as a conscientious objector in the Great War described those who attended the Annual Meeting as “largely of the leisured class of our community”.⁷⁹ He believed that if the working class of the Churches of Christ were educated about the new trends those trends could be stopped.

The Old Paths movement at this point only agreed to protest; they could not easily find a common means of objection. Some churches and individuals wanted to withdraw from the Cooperation of Churches of Christ. Many churches supported the protest but could not support division. Other churches were internally divided over the protest and could not support withdrawal. A proposal calling for the withdrawal of chapels failed. The meeting was able to pass a resolution calling for a referendum on Overdale’s affiliation with SCM. A committee was formed to further this protest in the hope that if the working class of the Churches became aware of the new ecumenical trends, they would be halted.⁸⁰

The division gradually solidified through the Old Paths meetings and journal (the *Bible Advocate* until 1934 and the *Scripture Standard* 1935 to the present). In 1943 the Association began a series of meetings with Old Paths leaders to attempt reconciliation but they predictably failed for each side had moved in very different directions.⁸¹ In 1947 the Association’s Central Council sent a confidential letter to Association officers and committees making the division official. The Council said:

The Scriptures enjoin upon us that we should ‘mark them which cause division’. It is, therefore, our painful duty to point out to the Churches that the brethren calling themselves “Old Path” are, as a matter of fact, *a separate body of people*, with the avowed objection of working in our Churches as long as possible in order to disrupt more of them.⁸²

The council advised that Association Churches should treat Old Paths Churches “as belonging to a separate body of people and not as one of our own Churches” and that Old Path preachers “would not be accepted, nor would notices of its

79. *Ibid.*, 1925, p.8.

80. *Ibid.*, pp.4-9.

81. Thompson, p.159 and John Allen Hudson, *The Church in Great Britain* (Old Paths Book Club, 1948) pp.222-6. Thompson gives the Association perspective of the division and Hudson the Old Paths perspective.

82. *Strictly Confidential: Statement on “Old Paths” Situation*. A copy can be found in the Churches of Christ Archive, Selly Oak Colleges Central Library, Birmingham and it has been reprinted in Hudson, pp.227-33.

anniversaries, etc. be given out". Finally no Association "Church should allow *The Scripture Standard* or any other of the literature of this divisive body, to be sold or distributed".⁸³ The Old Paths leaders obtained a copy of the letter and published a reply to what they called a "Modern Papal Bull", hoping that Churches "will surely resent this attempted domination by an utterly unauthorised body". They concluded: "If the parting of the ways has not been reached before, it has been reached now".⁸⁴

MICHAEL W. CASEY

REVIEW ARTICLE A MOMENT IN REFORMED LITURGY

To Glorify God: Essays on Modern Reformed Liturgy. Ed. by Bryan D. Spinks and Iain R. Torrance. Edinburgh; T. & T. Clark, 1999. Pp. xv, 272. £24.95. 0 567 08606 2.

This fascinating book brings together seventeen studies of the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s *Book of Common Worship* (1993; *BCW*) and the Church of Scotland's *Common Order* (1994; *CO*), by a wide range of scholars, themselves drawn from an equally wide range of views on the theological and liturgical spectrum. Among them are several Anglicans, one from the Russian Orthodox Church and another from the Free Church of Scotland. If overall *CO* seems to be judged less favourably than *BCW*, this may be because different writers are working from different briefs; *CO* seems to have attracted more analytical and critical studies than *BCW*.

Despite the varied approaches, the book works as a whole. At a fundamental level it deals with two Reformed liturgies of the mid-1990s from the English-speaking world. But a number of themes run through it: the liturgical consequences, for example, of the Church of Scotland's being a national Church, as opposed to the gathered nature of its American sister. The contrasts are, as one would expect, most evident in baptismal, marriage and funeral rites, in which the Church of Scotland has to make pastoral provision for a degree of folk religion which its American sister probably does not, a point made particularly by both Kenneth Stevenson (11) and Bryan Spinks (12) in their respective studies of marriage and funeral rites. David Searle (9) detects a greater resistance in *BCW* than *CO* to "any creeping tendency towards universalism" (p.156), which may also reflect the Scottish need to minister in a welcoming way to those with little contact with the Church. The sharpest criticism of *CO*, however, comes in William Storrar's provocative analysis of post-modern Scotland (5) and of the phenomenon

83. *Strictly Confidential*.

84. F.C. Day and W. Crosthwaite, *Not 'Strictly Confidential': An Answer to Statement on 'Old Paths' Situation* in Hudson, pp.234-8.

of believing without belonging. Post-modernism is a slippery term. But Storrar defines what he means by it, and persuades me that prayers for the Crown, the High Court of Parliament and the Commonwealth do lend a British and Unionist tone to a nation which now has its own Parliament (though that could hardly have been foreseen when *CO* was being prepared). Perhaps it is time to include prayer for the European Union as a matter of course in our liturgies.

The collection begins with an introductory piece by Charles Robertson on *CO* and two primarily historical and descriptive accounts of *BCW* (2-3) by Horace Allen and Harold M. Daniels. Daniels notes how influential Vatican II proved to be as a spur for liturgical reform beyond Rome. He might have added that the appearance of the New English Bible New Testament in 1961 also forced Churches to think about modern language in worship, though he is right to say that only in the 1980s and 1990s did this begin to be used with confidence. Inclusive language about humans, and a willingness to use a wider range of language about God than traditional images of patriarchy and power, have raised new questions, which both books have wrestled with, though in her powerful critique of the theological problems inherent in some of *CO*'s alternative triadic formulae (7; pp. 103-108), Kathryn Greene-McCreight draws attention to problems which all drafters of liturgical material would do well to ponder.

BCW seems less afraid of embracing more catholic forms of worship. Among its noteworthy features are the expectation of a weekly Eucharist as the norm, the large number of Eucharistic prayers (twenty-four in all, including specimens for weddings and funerals), the incorporation of the Narrative of the Institution into the Eucharistic Prayer, which Daniels claims is no longer a pressing issue among the Reformed (p. 38), the inclusion of a renunciation of evil in the single baptismal rite, and a greater emphasis on the visible signs (plenty of water to be used; oil is permitted). One notes, too, the increasing significance of the liturgical year, particularly the Paschal mystery, and of the Common Lectionary, the shortcomings of which are persuasively argued by John Goldingay in "Canon and Lection"(6). *CO*, on the other hand, retains the Narrative in its traditional Reformed place as the warrant, following the declaration by General Assembly in 1986 that this was normal Scottish usage. This seems to me one of those shibboleths we can happily discard. Once one stops being legalistic about the boundaries between prayer and reading/narrative in the Eucharist, and approaches the liturgy as a single extended act of prayer, the distinction between what constitutes a prayer and what does not can turn into the kind of scholastic nit-picking which fuelled the Reformation in the first place.

As I have suggested, *CO* receives more intense scrutiny than *BCW*. Kathryn Greene-McCreight finds its God "a generic God whose story is blurred and garbled", because "this God is not tied to any specific narrative at all" (p.113). The verdict may be harsh, but I am glad that I am not alone in regretting, as she does, the absence of virtually any reference to the history of Israel in the Eucharistic prayers. The sudden leap from creation to Incarnation is disconcerting and inappropriate, rather like the widespread Reformed attitude that between the New

Testament and the early sixteenth century there was no theology or church history worth speaking of. To divorce the Eucharist from the narrative of which it is the climax and fulfilment is an odd way of respecting Scripture. *CO* is not alone; the new Methodist Eucharistic prayers are not much better in this respect. In the next essay (8) Arlo D. Duba is similarly critical of the christology of *CO*, finding it too narrow in comparison with *BCW*'s balance between classical and "from below" models, though he finds its morning and seasonal prayers more satisfactory, and praises the beauty of the language of its Eucharistic prayers. He singles out the intercessions of the American book for their lack of reference to the life and work of Christ, but elsewhere finds its christology both "cross-centred and creation-filled" (p. 140):

Iain Torrance's study of the two baptismal liturgies (10) begins with a strong statement of Reformed principles, of Christ as the central *mysterion* of the sacraments, and of baptism into the totality of his life rather than into a community, especially when this carries with it some of the more unfortunate implications of membership (he cites clubs and passports as examples). He also sees baptism in Reformed terms as God's gift, not a mark of our faith, a view which surely needs to be emphasized in our highly individualistic times. He is especially interesting when he talks of the sacrament in terms of "a stage of growth, not a completion" (p. 166) and of its nature as "a boundary which is not a perimeter" (p. 165). Though one must agree that it is Christ, not water, that is crucified for us (p. 168), I sense here the old Reformed suspicion of drawing attention to the visible and material aspects of sacraments. Do we not need to be more incarnational in our celebration of them? There cannot be a sacrament of baptism without water, even though what baptism accomplishes is inward and spiritual, because the work of the incarnation of the Word was not accomplished without flesh and blood.

A more critical voice is heard in James Kay's assessment of these same rites from a dogmatic perspective. He sees real difficulties – even the whiff of dualistic heresy – in *BCW*'s formulation of the renunciation of evil, while both texts are found wanting in their lack of reference to covenant theology. He rejects chrismatic signation, offered as permissive in *BCW*, as unscriptural in the context of baptism. Yet as he himself notes, one of the striking differences between the two Churches is that while the Church of Scotland regards baptism as preparatory to admission to the Lord's Supper, PC(USA) views it as sufficient for communicant membership. In that sense chrimation could be seen as representing the strengthening or confirmation of faith which in most paedo-Baptist Churches interposes between baptism of an individual and his or her subsequent profession of faith. Part of me wants to say amen to the American theology, and regard all the baptized as members of the Church. But part of me also wants to make proper liturgical provision for those baptized as infants to enter into the full privileges and responsibilities of membership, as the Basis of Union puts it. In either case, baptismal and confirmation liturgies need to be more memorable than they customarily are: formal four-course meals rather than a snatched buffet.

Kenneth Stevenson is more positive in his evaluation of marriage liturgies (11). Though he finds *CO* patchy, he detects both traditional and innovative elements in it, with particularly warm words for the introduction of the idea of covenant into the second of its three Orders, even if he thinks it over-emphasized. He asks, though, how three different rites can relate the fact (or ideal) of a national Church ministering within a common culture. He thinks *BCW* is bolder, if sometimes slick. He is especially taken with one of its two Declarations of Intent, for use when both partners are baptized, which speaks of the honouring of the calling received in baptism (union with Christ and the Church) through marriage. His enthusiasm is well placed, not only because of the link with the Coptic practice of chrismation of the couple, but because of the revaluation of marriage in the Reformation as a vocation in which God's will could be done every bit as fully as in monastic celibacy.

Bryan Spinks finds less to praise in the funeral rites (12). He begins with a helpful historical survey, noting how Reformation rites led to a "liturgical silence concerning the departed Christian" (p. 190), in their abandonment of the late medieval mechanisms of penance and absolution before death. Many now feel funeral rites to be impoverished, particularly as so many associated customs have all but disappeared. *BCW* comes out well, in offering a pre-funeral order for the Comforting of the Bereaved, a strong soteriology and ecclesiology, with a Pauline emphasis on baptism into the death and resurrection of Christ, and provision for non-believers. But *CO*, lacking any reference to baptism or the Lord's Supper, is criticized for the language of "release" of the soul (by whom and to whom?). Spinks recognizes, though, that the Scottish rites have been shaped by the difficulties faced by a national Church which often has to officiate at the funerals of those with little or no belief.

In a short but interesting reflection on Daily Prayer in the two books (itself a remarkable development), Graham Woolfenden contends that their origins lie in an evening vigil of light and a morning vigil for sunrise. In both cases, the brevity of the act and the richness of imagery of sleep and waking, darkness and light, make them attractive additions. A continental critique is represented by Bruno Bürki's comparison of *CO* with recent German, Swiss and French Reformed liturgies (15). He shows just how much Reformed liturgy has developed: it has, for example, recovered a sense of the connection between creation and redemption in the Paschal mystery, so that the prayer of thanksgiving has become trinitarian and doxological, with anamnesis and epiclesis at its heart. Hence the Eucharist is rescued from becoming a sacrament of the cross alone, a purely historical observance, penitential in tone, dividing Christ and the Spirit. But he thinks there is still a long way to go. He regrets the lack of real co-operation between Reformed Churches in their liturgical work (amen to that), the lack of "any real development of symbolic representation in the liturgical celebration" (p. 238), which is "a rather dry succession of mediating and spiritualizing prayers" (p. 239). He also finds too little sense that it is a "living drama with general participation" (p. 239), with rubrics too often reading "The minister says". I agree. But Donald Macleod, author

of the last essay, "Calvin into Hippolytus" (17), written from a Free Church of Scotland perspective, most certainly would not. I warned to his contribution, though more out of a sense of nostalgia for something left behind than out of agreement with his principles. He strikes the one truly dissentient note in the book, though his targets are very predictable – the moving of the focus from the Word to the sacrament, with too much emphasis on the elements and what happens to them; the suggestion that we have anything to offer, or that the Lord's Supper can be called a sacrifice; the lack of warnings against not discerning the body; the double epiclesis. It may be that *CO* shows, as he charges, no sensitivity to Highland evangelicalism and the hesitation of the Gael over taking communion, but it does not occur to him that such hesitation is probably misplaced and may have more to do with pre-Reformation practice of infrequent reception (as opposed to attendance) than with anything Reformed.

There is just one study which demands that we think seriously about the language of the liturgy. Bridget Nichols restricts herself to *CO*, but what she has to say needs to be studied carefully (16). The relationship between language and theology in liturgy is notoriously problematic: simplicity and clarity do not easily co-exist with depth and mystery, nor imagery with theological precision. She examines several places where she finds *CO* wanting, sometimes because it is being fashionable, at other times bathetic. But she also finds much to praise, especially in its more Celtic material, which she connects with the way other liturgies in the English-speaking world of North America and Australasia have begun to reclaim their indigenous traditions. It would have been good to have a similar piece about the language of *BCW*.

This book provides a remarkable snapshot of a creative moment in Reformed liturgy. As in the case of hymnody, there seems, curiously, greater vitality in the Churches at a time of numerical decline than in times of expansion. The one voice largely absent from the book is the one which reflects creatively on the relationship between liturgy and mission. Will these liturgies be celebrated by an ever smaller number of people, or will they begin to speak to those who have abandoned the Church or for whom its worship seems irrelevant and alien?

I end with a practical suggestion. *To glorify God*, and the liturgical texts it studies, ought to be required reading for every ordinand of the United Reformed Church. Given the low level of liturgical competence within it, and the neglect of Reformed liturgy as a core subject in our theological colleges or on other training courses, I can think of no better way of introducing the clergy of the future to the traditions we have inherited and the issues which face us in worship at the start of the new millennium. Too often the freedom we claim is an excuse for badly-constructed orders of service and for laziness in adhering to outmoded forms. We are only entitled to consider ourselves inheritors of the Reformed tradition when we turn to the theological principles which inform it, and let them question our unexamined assumptions.

COLIN THOMPSON

SHORTER REVIEW

Doctor of Souls. Leslie D. Weatherhead, 1893-1976. By John Travell, Cambridge: Lutterworth 1999. Pp. 325. £19.50

This is a good and useful and well-researched biography of Leslie Weatherhead. Hitherto we have had only the biography by Weatherhead's son, Kingsley, *Leslie Weatherhead. A Personal Portrait*, published one year before Weatherhead's death. That was a valuable book, but there is much fresh material and analysis here.

Weatherhead attracted immense fascination from church-goers and non-church-goers in the middle years of the twentieth century. At a time when church attendances were falling, especially in the Free Churches, he packed them in. His books were widely reviewed in the secular as well as the religious press. He was not a theologian, but he raised serious theological questions – and some that were not so serious. He combined strong evangelical appeal and a great love for Jesus – he spoke of the “transforming friendship” – with what seems now, and seemed to many then, an outrageously liberal and reductionist theology. How did he do it? Kenneth Slack, in reviewing the earlier biography, wrote, “... in the end, when the biographer has done his excellent best, a mystery remains”. But Travell helps us to understand the mystery better.

Perhaps the most valuable element in Travell's biography is that he brings out the humanity and vulnerability of Weatherhead. After all, one of his books was called *Wounded Spirits*. This is particularly evident in his correspondence, previously unpublished, with Travell and others during his years of retirement. Weatherhead managed in his writing and preaching to communicate with his hearers and readers that he, too, was like them, a sufferer, with doubts. But, unlike some, who merely bare their souls and share their doubts, Weatherhead was able to demonstrate in his life and ministry the strength that comes through weakness. Travell, who was close to Weatherhead, with similar sensitivities, brings this out well.

Another valuable element is the large number of quotations from press reports and book reviews. These are not easily accessible to the general reader and capture well the contemporary estimate of Weatherhead. In the book reviews, there is the constant hostility of the *Church Times*, and the often surprising approval of evangelical reviewers, who, while disliking his theology, sense a genuine evangelical note in him, with his great devotion to the person of Jesus.

No biography can be complete and the reviewer will always find omissions. I would have liked to see more quotations from Weatherhead himself (but that would have reduced the number of press reports and book reviews) and a more thorough analysis of his style. Perhaps a personal reminiscence will demonstrate the artistry which enabled Weatherhead to capture popular attention...

Easter Day 1967 fell during the vacancy between the ministries of Leonard Griffith and Kenneth Slack. In those days, the BBC reported on the one o'clock

news on Easter Day what the Pope had said in Rome, what the Archbishop of Canterbury had said in Canterbury Cathedral and what the minister of the City Temple had said in the City Temple. Who should be invited to preach that day? Weatherhead, obviously! I, as assistant minister, received his text during the week before and read it through to find the most striking quotation to be sent in advance to the BBC. I found it, and then checked with Weatherhead that that was what he intended. It was. It read, "If I had a teenage daughter, I would rather she went to Vietnam – yes, mini-skirt, guitar, boy friend, the lot – to minister to little babies, blinded, burnt and mutilated by damnable American bombing, than that she went to Church here every Sunday, if by doing the latter, she identified the religion of the gay, royal, risen Christ, with the irrelevant nonsense frequently dished out in some churches, passing itself off as the Christian religion".

It is all there, in one sentence: politics (damnable American bombing), sex (boy friend, mini-skirt), sentiment (little babies), a swipe at traditional religion and a reference to the risen Christ.

The BBC no longer broadcasts what is said in the City Temple on Easter Day – that is a world away. But we can still learn from Weatherhead the need for simplicity, honesty in belief, admitted vulnerability, and empathy with ordinary people, their fears and doubts. John Travell helps us to penetrate more deeply into the mystery that is Weatherhead and learn from it, but the mystery remains.

TONY COATES