

3. That there is no separation of the soule from the body at the day of death, but they both lye in the graue till the resurrection.
4. That the calling of our Clergie is altogether unlawfull and Antichristian.
5. That we may keepe any day for the Sabbath as well as the day we keepe.

By me William Johnson Mnr.  
giuen upon oath.

#### NOTES

1. Bodley MS, Tanner 61 Folios 110, 111. The original spelling has been retained although certain conventional contractions have been expanded.
2. Thomason's copy of the *Confession* was dated 16 October.
3. W. T. Whitley, *History of British Baptists*, London 1932 Edn., 74f.
4. Johnson makes no appearance in either *Walker Revised* or *Calamy Revised*.
5. A Captain John Garland served in the New Model Army with Okey's Dragoons until 1649. C. Firth and G. Davies, *The Regimental History of Cromwell's Army*, Oxford 1940, p.p.296-6.
6. G. K. Fortescue, *Catalogue of the Thomason Tracts* (London 1908) suggests that J. C., the author of *England's troubles anatomizes*, was James Cocksque.
7. D. H. Pennington and I. R. Roots, *The Committee at Stafford* 1643-5, Manchester 1957, pp.205, 222.

B. R. WHITE.

## An 1820 Letter on Election

THE LETTER which follows has interest from more than one point of view. The original is now in the possession of Clipston Baptist Church.

It is from the pen of the Rev. John Mack (1788-1831), minister in Clipston from 1814 until his death at the early age of 42. Mack had there succeeded Webster Morris, who printed the earliest of the *Periodical Accounts* of the B.M.S. Morris had himself succeeded Thomas Skinner, from whom William Carey had his copy of the elder Robert Hall's *Help to Zion's Travellers*.

Mack was born in Glasgow and began life as a weaver. He was always of bookish inclinations, but followed an elder brother

into the army. There he went through a vital religious experience, which led to his preaching to his fellow soldiers, after securing a licence from a Church of Scotland presbytery. After a time he was made regimental schoolmaster. While still in Scotland he was baptized by Sandemanian Baptists, but when the regiment moved into Kent came into contact with the Particular Baptist church in Margate. The members of this church called him out to exercise his preaching gifts in the manner then customary.

In February 1812 the regiment was suddenly ordered to Leicester in consequence of threatened disturbances among the local operatives. It was the time of the Luddite troubles. On the Sunday Mack made his way to Harvey Lane and was delighted to hear the famous Robert Hall, then minister there. Hall invited the soldier to occupy the Harvey Lane pulpit and he preached there on several occasions in uniform. What, one wonders, would Carey have said; even the sight of a red coat is said to have distressed him. Hall's great reputation embarrassed Mack, but the young man's native gifts deeply impressed Hall. The latter became convinced he must get Mack out of the army and into the ministry.

This proved no easy task. The commanding officer put obstacles in the way and finally demanded two Scotsmen as substitutes and £100 in cash. Hall set himself to raise the money from his friends, and Mack's brother, William, found the substitutes and himself took them to Derby to the commanding officer.

Mack was then sent for two years to Bristol College, of which Dr. Ryland was President. He preached in Clipston while a student, introduced no doubt by Robert Hall, who was well known there. The church had been pastorless for some time and was greatly drawn to Mack. The members waited until he was able to settle among them in 1814. The ordination service in March 1815 was shared by Francis Franklin, of Coventry, Robert Hall, Andrew Fuller and an Independent minister. It must have been an impressive occasion. It lived in memory even longer than it might otherwise have done, since it proved to be the last service Fuller attended. A month or so earlier he had set out for Scotland to collect money for the B.M.S. and had taken Mack with him. They got so far as Newark before the illness that proved fatal drove Fuller home. Mack went back to Scotland and was able to visit his mother in Glasgow, having to identify himself, because of the change in his appearance and status, by showing his mother a scar on his wrist.

Soon after his settlement in Clipston Mack married Mary Ellis, a granddaughter of Robert Ellis, who after a spell as parish clerk had taken the lead in establishing a Baptist cause in the village of Foxton lying just over the Leicestershire border. The

Ellis family had links with Baptist beginnings in Bugbrooke and the famous College Street minister of the 19th century, J. T. Brown, had Ellis blood in his veins.

When Mack died, all too early as it seemed, in 1831, his widow was left with six children to care for, the eldest not twelve years of age. But many who had admired Mack's character and eloquence rallied to her aid and a public subscription raised over £1,800 — in those days a very large sum.

The letter that follows was written in 1820 to Martha Ellis, an elder sister of John Mack's wife. Martha was living in a household in Surrey where hyper-Calvinism was evidently still cherished. Mack's exposition of the doctrine of election is interesting and valuable as an example of his gifts and as coming from one brought up in Scotland but decisively influenced by the evangelical Calvinism associated with the names of the elder and younger Hall and Andrew Fuller. It is also an indication of the seriousness with which theological issues were considered and an illustration of a pastor's concern for one of his members, who was also a relative by marriage.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

CLIPSTONE Feby. 29th 1820

My dear Martha,

I am sorry you should for a moment suppose that my delay in writing has proceeded from any diminution of regard; although, at the same time, I must confess, I did not know in what manner to address you. Unfortunately, you have fallen among a class of people, whose religious sentiments however plausible they may appear, are in direct contradiction to the Scriptures of truth. Your mind seems perplexed about the doctrine of election. This subject has been acknowledged, by the greatest and best of men, to be one of the most mysterious parts of revealed religion, but whilst I am sensible of all the difficulties that attend it, I have no hesitation in saying, that when viewed in a proper light, it is a most important doctrine of Christianity. What, then, you will enquire, is the light in which it should be viewed? I answer it should be viewed not *apart from*, but in *connexion with* the other doctrines of religion. The doctrine of election, is not *the Gospel*; but that which accounts for the reception of the Gospel by *some*, while it is rejected by *others*. Why do some who believe the Gospel, while other treat it with contempt? Not because they are better than others, but because God with mercy inclines their hearts by the

operation of His Holy Spirit and whatever he does, he must have determined to do from eternity: because no new idea can ever arise in the divine mind. It follows, therefore, that the only use to be made of election, is to humble us in the dust before God that our depravity should be so great as to require such an influence to incline our hearts to a Redeemer who is so worthy of our regard, and to excite in us adoring gratitude that he should make us to differ from our fellow men; and if, we have reason to believe, from the *effects* the Gospel has produced in our hearts and lives, that we belong to the *election of grace*, we shall be stirred up to walk worthy of God, who has called us to his eternal Kingdom and glory by Christ Jesus. Now, if your present associates went no further than this, you would find little or nothing to perplex your mind, but unfortunately they do not stop here. Under the pretence of magnifying the doctrine of Election they abuse it. They take it out of its place in the Christian system, and pervert it from its original design. Instead of employing it to excite gratitude in *saints*, they use it to quiet the consciences of *sinners*. "Poor things" they say "What can they do, they cannot convert themselves, they cannot wait till it is ascertained whether they are elected". The absurdity of such reasoning will best be seen, by stating a parallel case. God has fixed by an irreversible decree the duration of our lives. No man can die *till* his appointed time, and no man can live *beyond* it. "Is there not an appointed time for man upon the earth?" Well then, what should we think of the man who should say— Why should I take nourishment to support life? I *cannot* die till the appointed time? Should we not say that he *abused* and *perverted* the doctrine of the divine decrees? The truth is, that neither the doctrine of the divine decrees in general, nor the doctrine of Election in particular, constitute the rule of duty. As I said before, the doctrine of Election is not *the Gospel*.

The *Gospel* is glad tidings to all of every description inviting them to receive salvation through Christ. The *doctrine of Election* teaches those who *have believed* to ascribe their salvation entirely to divine grace. Hence, if you read the second Chapter of the Acts you will find that Peter in addressing the unbelieving Jews, never mentioned Election,—nor did Paul when addressing the unbelieving Gentiles in

the thirteenth Chapter of the same Book, utter a syllable on this subject. They preached the Gospel, inviting all who heard them to receive the blessings; but when men believed, and turned to God, both these Apostles taught them to trace their salvation to the electing love of God. How then, are we to acquire a knowledge of our election? By making our calling sure — By diligence in the divine life — By adding to our faith virtue, knowledge etc. etc. 2nd Peter 1st Chapter verses 5, 6, 7-10 — I feel very sorry that I have not an opportunity of conversing with you as it is impossible to meet every objection in a letter. I perfectly well know what kind of people you are among; as I have often met with persons of the same description. They are a generation more remarkable for *conceit*, than *sense*; for *spiritual pride*, rather than *humility*; for *impudence*, rather than sound *Scripture knowledge*. They are a generation — “O how lofty are their looks, and their eyelids are lifted up”. — It is customary for them in argument to quote *their own experience*, just as if that could be received as proof — I really am concerned that my sister Martha should have fallen into such a den, not of Lions, (for that is too noble a creature to compare them to) but of wild and ferocious cats. I do not deny, but that there are many good people among them, but they are generally weak in their minds, and not a little cracked in their heads. Now, dont you imitate my example, and be long in writing. If I do not always answer your letters, it is not because I have no regard and love for you, but because I have an incurable aversion to letter writing.

I am etc. etc.

John Mack

P.S. Your sister desires her love to you, she is well. I go to Scotland this summer with Mr. Ward to collect for the Mission. Your Father is as usual — Mrs. Viccars is poorly with a fever — write as soon as ever you can.