

CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON AND THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION IN NINETEENTH CENTURY BRITAIN

Baptists and Congregationalists

The establishment of the United Reformed Church in October 1972 has rightly been hailed as an important ecumenical landmark. By contrast, I want to consider it in terms of the comparative histories of Baptists and Congregationalists in the nineteenth century, and to ask the question, Why, for the Congregationalists, did union take place with the Presbyterians on the basis of a sharing of a common reformed theological tradition (which by then had travelled far from both Westminster Confession and Savoy Declaration), rather than with the Baptists upon the basis of an agreed church polity, and well-developed fraternal relationships?

In the lost world of pre-1914, it could be argued that a union of Baptists and Congregationalists had more running for it than that with the Presbyterians. Since modern presbyterianism was largely the product of the migration of Scottish labour, the two English congregational denominations had more in common in terms of both shared history and harmony of mind: what Clyde Binfield calls 'a common fund of received principles as well as prejudices' (1). There were, and are, of course, a number of churches whose church meetings include both Baptists and Paedo-Baptists. Though some of those, which had a mixed membership up until the end of the eighteenth century, bifocated in the nineteenth century under the increasing pressure of denominational consciousness (2), new union churches emerged to take their place, either as a result of individual initiative in the nineteenth century or as a conscious part of combined missionary strategy in more recent years. Even as in the 1790s Rippon had included Mennonite congregations in his *Baptist Register* as a sign of ecclesiastical kinship, so for a large part of the nineteenth century, and into the twentieth century, a list of London Congregational ministers appeared in *Baptist Handbooks* (3). In 1862 there was cooperation over the bicentenary celebrations of 1662 (4), whilst in 1886 Baptists and Congregationalists combined in a London Assembly which encouraged a number of leaders of both denominations in looking forward to the unification of the two national unions which seemed to have so much in common (5). Historically, county unions in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, and Huntingdonshire embraced both Baptist and Independent churches, the first-named taking the ambitious title of the Bedfordshire Union of Christians (6). Or, again, the twentieth century was ushered in for Baptists by a joint Assembly with the Congregational Union in 1901, but a little later attempts to establish a joint Baptist-Congregational Journal came to nothing (7).

The intervention of Spurgeonism

Why, then, did Baptists and Congregationalists move in different directions from the 1880s onwards? Clyde Binfield, from the paedobaptist side of the baptistry, ascribed the cause of the

divergence to the phenomenon he calls 'Spurgeonism'. Tantalizingly, however, having distinguished the movement from the man, he, like many others, fails to give definition to the former. The judgment raises the question as to whether Spurgeon, or *pace* Binfield, Spurgeon's disciples, either brought or attempted to bring a new outlook to the Baptists, and if so in what way did the shape of the denomination change? These are questions which relate both to the conceptual question as to the nature of denomination and to the historical question as to what was the tradition in which mid-Victorian Baptists and Congregationalists jointly stood. Related to this Dr Binfield raises a further issue by introducing the concept of 'Baptists of the opinion-forming sort', as if to distinguish such an elite from what shall I say - 'mere' Baptists. Again this raises questions about the nature of influence - influence upon whom and to what end? For as I understand Dr Binfield, his major complaint about Spurgeonism is not that its influence was negligible but that it was too considerable: his unease seems to be with the quality of the opinion rather than the magnitude of the opinion-forming process involved (9).

Denomination, Church and Sect

Denomination, church and sect are technical terms developed by religious sociologists to describe different kinds of church groups. Most attention here has been given to Troeltsch and Weber's distinction between the inclusiveness of the 'church' or 'parish' type of religious group and the exclusiveness of the 'sect', which has long been used to help in the understanding of the differences between the radical and magisterial reformations. More recently it has been suggested that such distinctions need not be confined to classifying opposite types of religious organization but can also describe a dialectic within the life of religious groups, where the institutional and the crusading elements are always in tension with each other. In addition, the 'denomination' arises as a third type of religious organization. For example, in England, on the one hand, the fighting sects of the seventeenth century, as they came to accommodate (a favourite word with Niebuhr) themselves to the cultural situation of subsequent periods of history, became less and less exclusive. At the same time a church-type organization such as the Established Church of England, has also veered towards denominationalism as it has been compelled to come to terms with the corrosion of a once unitary culture and the emergence of the pluralist state. The industrialising, and in part industrialised society, of early nineteenth century England accordingly sees the complication of the older model of sect and parish, with the emergence of new denominational structures. But ironically there is in this a primitive ecumenism in so far as there emerges a growing recognition of mutual validity between those different denominations: what A. D. Gilbert sees as the introduction of a neo-establishment of 'pluralistic legitimacy' within modern Britain, that is a situation in which the denominations *together* represent *de facto* the new church establishment (10).

Catholic Evangelicalism and The New Denominational Temper

Denominations, then, are not eternal creatures in the history of the church - and in their modern form can be argued as the children of the religious and social turmoil of the late eighteenth century, even as class, in the political world was the offspring of the self-same parents of social and industrial change (11). Professor Ward, for example, argues that 'The outpouring of undenominational religion at the end of the eighteenth century left a mark upon English popular faith which has never been effaced, but within a generation its institutional mechanism had been broken up by denominations pressing the clan spirit as a counterpoise to the divisive effects of social tension... Yet the new denominationalism could no more destroy undenominational evangelicalism than it could understand it' (12).

The new denominationalism of the nineteenth century began with the Anglicans, and with Evangelical Anglicans in particular, principally for three reasons (13). First, they came to the political decision that the pan-protestant agencies - Sunday Schools, itinerant society and the like - which they initially supported as a means of bolstering up the social structure of old English society, were worse than the disease they sought to remedy (14). Secondly, there was a rift between the older and the younger Evangelicals - on the one hand, the readers of the highly respectable *Christian Observer*, and, on the other, those who sought inspiration from the more frothy, charismatic utterances of *The Morning Watch*. This was the journal of that group of enthusiasts who held conferences at Albury Park in Surrey, the country seat of Henry Drummond, M.P., the banker (who had been baptised as a believer by John Harington Evans and for whom he built the John Street Chapel. Drummond subsequently joined Edward Irving's Catholic Apostolic Church). Reacting against such 'ranters' and 'noisy professors', Wilberforce, Simeon and the like began increasingly to emphasise the importance of church order, so much so that David Newsome says of the school as a whole: 'By the 1820s their anxiety had become so intense that occasionally they seem to use the language of the High Churchmen' (15). The third motivation was their desire to increase their influence within their own church, especially through episcopal patronage if that were possible. Again this led to Evangelical withdrawal from general agencies and the establishment of specifically Anglican ones (16). In all this, Wesleyanism, no longer able to continue the pretence of being a society within a church, was not slow to follow in developing its own denominational machine, but inevitably the break-up of the catholic evangelicalism of the early 'nineties affected other traditions as well. For example, in 1809, a group of Baptists, wearying of the Paedobaptist emphases of *The Evangelical Magazine*, founded *The Baptist Magazine*, and soon other denominational instruments and agencies were to follow.

So strong was this force of denomination that the remaining undenominational agencies like the London Missionary Society and the *Evangelical Magazine* tended, by default, to become the instruments of emerging Congregationalism - indeed it has been claimed that the London Missionary Society acted as a sort of 'denominational union' prior to the establishment of the Congregational Union in 1831 (17).

Let me, then, make it quite clear that denominational organization and discipline was something of a novelty at the beginning of the Victorian period. Part of the Evangelical inheritance was an alternation between Ward's pan-evangelicalism - that united gospel front against all the problems of the secular world - and the new denominationalism. The instrumentality of functional societies for this or that evangelistic or philanthropic purpose found itself in tension with a comprehensive denominational loyalty that was only very slowly developing.

Accordingly, you will not be surprised if denominational affection and wider loyalties run in double harness throughout the century and on into our own. That is a phenomenon most perfectly witnessed by the Baptist Union calling a man like F. B. Meyer to its presidential chair in 1906. Maybe it is part of the general history of Victorian England, which only slowly saw the emergence of bureaucratic forms and social organizations. For example, coherent disciplined ideological political parties emerge at a pace if anything slower than that of religious denominations.

Theologically, the problem of church bureaucracy in Victorian England is but a time specific illustration of that general religious tension which Jaroslav Pelikan tried to expound with regard to Luther's encounter with the institutions of the late medieval church: 'it was one thing to defy structures in the name of the spirit, it was quite another to cope with the concrete need for structures'. Accordingly his exposition moves from 'spirit *versus* structure' to 'spirit *in* structure' (18).

The Legacy of The Evangelical Revival

Baptist-Congregational divergence also turns upon an interpretation of history. It has been widely recognized that these two independent denominations had their roots in both seventeenth century puritan theology and eighteenth century evangelical experience. In this respect, of course, British Baptists have a different background from European Baptists whose roots are much more in nineteenth century revivalism. The relationship between puritanism and evangelicalism is critical for the understanding of later developments. Dale, for example, seems to see the relationship as dialectical, arguing that theologically 'the characteristic genius of the Revival was silently working against the Calvinistic creed'. Though for a while preachers might offer an Arminian gospel from their pulpits whilst still holding a Calvinistic creed in their studies, 'in time, the fervour of the preaching melted down the rigid lines of the theological system'. 'Moderate Calvinism' was no satisfactory resolution of the problem, for 'moderate Calvinism' was, for Dale, 'Calvinism in decay' (19). Added to this he charged the Evangelical Revival with 'diluting the church polity of Congregationalism': 'The Evangelical Revival insisted on the union of the individual saint with Christ, but the union of the church - an organized society of saints - with Christ was not familiar to it. It cared little for the Church, its whole solicitude was for the rescue of the individual sinner from perdition and the growth of holiness of the individual Christian. It failed to recognize the great place of the Church both in the rescue of men from irreligion and in the discipline

of Christian perfection' (20). Thirdly, Dale charged the revival with diluting the old Independent character, by which he means a deep moral commitment to political justice, a determined mental commitment to intellectual development, and a disciplined and energetic commitment to stable family life and hard work in daily employment (21). In his sermon on 'The Evangelical Revival' he makes the point very clearly:

The multiplication of our congregations and the increase of our membership were so rapid, we received into our Churches such large masses of people who had never been disciplined by the careful and elaborate training common among us in former times, that the traditions of Independency were submerged, and the 'proselytes' became far more numerous than the true seed of Abraham. (22)

So the old order was challenged: 'the intellectual earnestness... disappeared. Congregationalists ceased to be keen theologians and they ceased to be keen politicians' (23). The demands of the evangelical world for evangelism and kindred activities became all-consuming. The Evangelical movement 'has displayed heroic vigour and zeal in evangelizing the world, but it has shown less courage in confronting those great questions of Christian philosophy, which in all the most energetic ages of Christendom have tasked [taxed] the noblest intellectual powers of the Church' (24). No longer was the evangelical nonconformist concerned with a disinterested love of truth for its own sake: even intellectual activity was judged now in so far as it was instrumental in aiding the great evangelistic endeavour. The ministry was increasingly orientated towards an unchurched world and increasingly the pews were filled, and the membership rolls as well, with first generation Christians who, prior to conversion, were well nigh innocent of any Christian doctrine. Here, then, was a conflict between two different styles of religious life and church growth. On the one hand, there was what Dale saw as the puritan tradition of the growth of the church by family worship, nurture, and the catechism of the Christian household, with its influence patiently made within the larger community. For this silent imperceptible pattern of growth, the leaven was seen to be the Biblical authority (25). On the other hand, growth was by evangelistic campaign and attack, with deliberate strategies set upon more immediate goals. For Dale, who has been widely influential in establishing contemporary stereotypes of the Victorian Church, those two elements could not easily be reconciled and had rather to be held in tension with, one suspects at the end of the day, for all the respect for revival as a phenomenon in history, a preference, at least in the experience of his successors, for the puritan, as appropriately reinterpreted, as over against the evangelical (26).

In the first place the stereotype of the uncultured evangelical needs further consideration. Secondly, the context of the ongoing witness of the churches, revivals and revivalism need to be looked at more carefully. And thirdly, I am inclined to think that what Dale and his Congregationalist successors have seen in dialectical terms, Spurgeon, and perhaps many others in the Baptist tradition, saw in rather more straightforward patterns of linear development, particularly when the relationship between structures and spirit are

further pondered.

Evangelicalism and Culture

My erstwhile research student, Doreen Rosman, has just published her study of *Evangelicalism and Culture*, which, whilst not altogether repudiating the Dalean historiography, certainly seriously modifies it. Before the advent of Biblical criticism, the abandonment of Calvinism by many in the reformed tradition, and the impact of evolutionary and relativist world views, nonconformity, with the exception of the increasingly isolated unitarians on the one hand and hyper-Calvinists on the other, had become pretty uniformly evangelical. That would be the assumption to start with before somebody's teaching and behaviour proved otherwise: it was an *opting out* situation.

By contrast by the end of the nineteenth century, you are in an *opting in* situation and evangelicalism amongst dissenters has to be defined explicitly rather than implicitly. For the beginning of the century, Miss Rosman offers the defining sentence: 'Evangelicalism centred upon soteriology, and its soteriology upon the Cross' (27); and that will do for doctrinal definition so long as you also define by association with the evangelical *movement* and by the undergoing of an evangelical *experience*.

Baptists are amongst the Evangelicals shown now to have been somewhat more alert to culture rather than wholly hostile to it. For example, both Robert Hall and Joseph Hughes were at once impeccably evangelical but also associates of Coleridge. To Hughes, one time tutor at Bristol Baptist College, secretary of the Religious Tract Society, and doyen of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Coleridge writes 'Having no-one in the circle of my acquaintance, who is at once competent and interested in religion *theologically*, I had additional pleasure in conversing with you'. He also respected Robert Hall, described by the *Quarterly Review* as 'an absolute master of English', a thinker whose talents were 'surpassed by those of very few men of his time' (28).

But probably the Baptist who made the most impact upon the world of culture was John Foster (1770-1843), a hopeless pastor but a brilliant essayist, who was one of the weightiest contributors to the *Eclectic Review*. Whilst recognizing that there were many areas of Christian truth not susceptible to rational enquiry, he stressed the importance of exercising the mind in those areas where questioning was appropriate. But that is the point: the gospel was *truth* and therefore evangelism involved an intellectual attack upon ignorance, the enemy of truth. By 1810 *The Baptist Magazine* was concerned to point out that the 'prejudice unfavourable to learning' was fast declining and that an educated ministry was becoming more and more important (29).

As the years passed by, the problem of Evangelicalism's relationship to culture was to become more practical than principled: put in simpler language it is the issue of how far the inheritance of a cultured elite can be reinterpreted for a mass constituency. Expressed in that way the question is at once both sociological and theological.

The less impact you make on the unchurched masses the less the threat to inheritance, the greater that impact, the greater the need for reassessment of that inheritance in purely operational terms, and to that issue the discussion must now turn.

The Revival and the Mission of Old Dissent

Halevy believed that by the end of the eighteenth century old-dissent had 'lost all capacity for propaganda' (30). Some quarrel might need to be made with that judgment in terms both of chronology and totality. Already in 1770 the establishment of the New Connexion among the General Baptists had brought the fruit of the revival into the denomination. By the later 'seventies Andrew Fuller was wrestling with the Calvinism of the churches, his own reading of the scriptures and the biographical reports of North American coreligionists like John Eliot and David Brainerd 'who preached Christ with so much success to the American Indians' (31), trying to find some new synthesis. In 1781 he published *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, thereby providing a theological basis on which many amongst the Particular Baptists were able to appropriate the new evangelistic urgency of revived religion, a task that John Howard Hinton was to repeat in his *The Work of the Holy Spirit In Conversion* (1830) for his fellow ministers of the 1830s.

By the 1790s, however, there was a general concern to institutionalize the evangelical experience in terms of a battery of home mission and itinerant societies, very often established on a pan-evangelical basis, though sometimes the basis for cooperation was a joint Baptist-Congregational enterprise, whilst in other situations the work was purely denominational. So, for example, what became the Baptist Home Missionary Society dates back to Saffery and Steadman's preaching tour of Cornwall in the summer of 1797 on behalf of the B.M.S. They were well received, and in an assessment full of sociological significance, they comment

The inhabitants, as to the main bulk of them, being either miners or fishermen, are more in a state of independence, and less subject to the influence of superiors, who may be hostile to itinerant preaching than those counties which depend wholly upon agriculture. To which I might add, that the labours and successes of the Methodists have largely contributed to civilize the inhabitants in general, and to bring them into habits of hearing the word'. (32)

Although in the West Country there was a good reception and no hostility, in other parts of the country, as the report above gives warning, - for example Suffolk - both opposition and persecution were encountered. Until 1833, the Society operated without great publicity but from then on *The Baptist Magazine* began to canvass support, and work spread to the Scillies with the further prospect in view of opening up work in the Channel Islands. (33) The first full-time agents were employed in 1820, and by 1831 there were forty of them, reflecting the priorities of Dr Francis Cox, joint secretary from 1824, who thought the Society better advised to support full-time itinerants rather than the release of settled ministers for short periods of itinerancy. Achievements in terms of churches planted - 20 between

1820 and 1827 - and believers added to church rolls - 300 in 1835 - seemed only to be limited by the slenderness of the financial support forthcoming, which was less than a tithe of what the B.M.S. was able to command. In 1822 *The Baptist Magazine* reported the income for 1821 of the Bible Society as £104,000; of the B.M.S. as £11,600 (well behind the Wesleyan Missionary Society, the L.M.S. and the C.M.S., which ranged from £27,000-£33,000); of the Baptist Irish Society as £2,000 and of the B.H.M.S. as only £930. (34) The Society, for all its penury, was, however, careful not to employ men of 'slender abilities' lest 'they impair the cause they were employed to promote'. (35)

In 1835 Dr Cox, accompanied by Dr James Hoby, both of them twice presidents of the Union, visited the States, to make an assessment of the quality of American revivalism. Cox's report on that visit (36) became a key document in formulating subsequent home mission policy. He stressed the commitment of church members to work for the conversion, not merely the moral reformation of others, and in this respect the enquiry meeting was recommended as an appeal technique. There was a need for the work to be supported by associations for prayer, and in particular, the formation of maternal associations charged with interceding for their own families was encouraged, for the youth of the Christian family, it was argued, should be looked to as a natural source of new disciples. There needed to be a strategic planting of new churches in needy areas whilst again churches should plan their own bifocation when they reached an appropriate size. The seconding of settled ministers to periods of itinerancy found new support. Finally, local evangelistic campaigns - 'protracted meetings' was their language - were recommended as part of home mission activity (37).

Encouraged by Cox's support, the Home Missionary Society under the motto 'Unceasing Conquest' (38) adopted a fairly well-structured revivalist strategy of evangelism, which entered its most successful period (1836-41) during the secretaryship of the energetic Charles Roe, son in law to William Steadman, and called by Carwardine 'the personification of the revivalist wing of the Baptist denomination' (39). Aided by the twin threats of 'Infidelity' and 'Popery', Roe increased the income of the Society to £5,000 p.a., with the establishment of many more regional auxiliaries. He directed funds more strategically, withdrawing them from unproductive situations if needs be, and successfully deployed effective evangelists like Thomas Pulsford, of whom it was said that he passed through the churches 'like a flame of pentecostal fire' (40). Though apparently successful in the short term, financial problems in the early 'forties (the watershed according to Ward between revival and revivalism (41)), coupled with less encouraging growth statistics promoted a reassessment of Home Mission strategy, with the revivalist approach giving way to the older pattern of village evangelism in neglected areas. Churches ought not, it was argued, to be allowed to develop a dependency upon a succession of revivalists; the local pastor ought to be the proper evangelist. But once the Society had come to that conclusion it found it difficult to secure support for its separate existence.

Indeed this was near the heart of Baptist difficulties about Home Missions. It was not that they were in any way reluctant or

unenergetic, rather that they saw evangelism as so much the *raison d'être* of the life of the church, that they were repeatedly uneasy about assigning that task to specialised agencies. There were, however, areas where the sovereignty of the local church did not obtain; that is why the Home Mission Society found it easier to justify its work in areas of sparse rural population. It also for a time turned its energies to work in the centre of cities, again an area where Baptists were willing to admit the difficulty of applying their theology of the local church and were instead prepared to sponsor 'missions', either the proprietories of particular individuals, or the creature of some larger autonomous church within the same city.

Part of the issue was also that distinction between revival and revivalism. The Home Missionary Society was born out of the eighteenth century revival: of that there can be no question. In the relatively short period from 1835-1841 the Society pursued its work by a straight-forward adoption of the principles of transatlantic revivalism but these were already beginning to drag by the opening of the 'forties, and were accordingly dropped. Though the routine work of the Home Missionary Society continued through the 'fifties, in the 'sixties the Society was struggling, and in 1865 was amalgamated with the Irish Society. From 1878 the combined Society began to work in ever closer association with the Union until in 1882 the society merged with the Union. This amalgamation, it was argued, would give home mission a more central position and the Union a more urgent purpose.

The Home Mission Society may have decided against revivalism as a strategy but that did not prevent Baptists being greatly affected by the Evangelical Awakening of 1859. Dr Orr, the historian of that movement, pays tribute to the openness and cooperation of the denomination and sees this as explaining why in the decade following, the denomination was able to reap the harvest of the movement in increasing membership rolls and new churches established. Moreover he also sees revival as in part responsible for the increasing number of churches taking up membership with the Union in the 'sixties (42). In due course, Baptists were again to take a leading part in the Moody campaigns in the late 'seventies and the Torrey-Alexander campaigns of the turn of the century, a reversion once more to revivalist techniques of transatlantic origin.

The problem for the Home Missionary Society, then, was that it found itself caught between spontaneous revival movements and the basic Baptist belief that the local church, and the churches in their associations, were supremely the engine of evangelism and, therefore, special agencies, and even the special techniques of the revivalist, were secondary.

The associations, themselves, had largely been revived at the end of the eighteenth century for the fulfilment of a missionary mandate: in Geoffrey Nuttall's words, they were 'out to convert not to conserve' (43). But the witness of the associations was not without difficulty. For example the London Baptist Association had to be reformed in 1865 when its predecessor became moribund. Interestingly *The Freeman* notes of this venture, in which Spurgeon took a leading part, that 'the Strict Communion brethren' were very evident but that

the basis of the new Association was so broad, 'it does not rest in a creed but simply with wide basis of evangelical sentiment' (44). The new Association set itself deliberate targets including the opening of 'at least one new chapel each year' (45). Spurgeon's own contribution was instrumental in establishing over 200 churches in the London area (46). But his influence was more than regional. Whitley in his *Baptists of North West England* says 'The new life in the south stirred up by the advent of Spurgeon to London had flowered in the Pastor's College and the seed was now being scattered over the north' (47). J. M. G. Owen in *Records of An Old Association* pays similar tribute for the West Midlands (48). In these days of sophisticated statistical technology, it might be possible to do what would have been well nigh impossible without its aid - namely to try and discover how many newly founded Baptist churches in the second half of the nineteenth century owed some debt to Spurgeon - a sermon (if they were particularly fortunate), a donation, a letter of commendation or a pastor (though there can be few like my home church which sold parian busts of Spurgeon to aid the building fund!). How quickly did the Pastor's College and the Colportage men take up leadership in the churches throughout the kingdom, including the pulpits of 'opinion-forming churches'? A comprehensive answer to such questions would be of very great importance. Be that as it may, Spurgeon's commitment, was like that of so many, to evangelism through the local church, though he admitted that the Home Missionary Society was a good second best:- 'It was a grand thing when Fuller felt that if the Church would not do its work, the work must be undertaken apart from the Church organization, and it is a noble thing that if the Churches will not do their home-mission work there should be a society to take it under its care', but ideally the churches should make the society redundant and by the excellence of their own work provoke its demise (49).

Other examples of association initiatives could be given: the Northern Association was particularly diligent in its evangelistic work, setting aside men as full-time association evangelists, who were to be more than colporteurs but resist the affectation of revivalists:- in fact they look rather like association pastors. In 1870 the Association sought for funds for the support of two men and was delighted to be able to appoint four, and soon the work was being aided by the activities of Moody and Sankey (50). This encouraged the Union in 1880 to commission a number of its leading ministers - Archibald Brown, J. R. Wood, Dr Landels, E. G. Gange, and T. W. Medhurst - to visit up to seventy towns for special missions (which were to be popular though with care to distinguish them from revivalist services) (51). Evangelism remained very much a Union priority with a number of B.U. missionaries appointed, the most notable of whom was F. C. Spurr who served from 1895-1905. At the same time F. B. Meyer encouraged his fellow Baptists to take part in a Forward Movement, linking together all the Free Churches, which did not compartmentalise evangelism and social concern, making an honest attempt to overcome the individualism of traditional evangelicalism.

May I conclude this section by offering Dr Tidball's judgment that Baptists, notwithstanding the faltering history of the Home Missionary Society, showed greater coherence in their approach to evangelism

than any other denomination, largely avoiding both the extremes of revivalism and that of losing a concern for the spiritual needs of the individual in an exclusive concern for the social gospel (52). In the history of home missions, Baptists and Congregationalists start from the same itinerary imperative at the end of the eighteenth century, but as the century progresses so some cleavage, if not in principle, then in accent and atmosphere, begins to emerge (53). By contrast, Spurgeon's evangelistic passion is in tune with the common evangelical and evangelistic inheritance of the first half of the century. As over against the case that 'Spurgeonism' was responsible for Baptists and Congregationalists going their separate ways, there is as much evidence for 'Baldwin-Brownism' representing the element of novelty. Not that Baldwin-Brown had the same kind of organizational following among the Congregationalists as Spurgeon had among the Baptists, but rather in that he was quite happy to see himself in the role of the appointed spokesman for Liberal Congregationalism; he was in Clyde Binfield's phrase 'Congregationalism's chief lightning conductor' (54).

Creeds and Controversies

To add much to what has been written on the Downgrade Controversy at this point would not be helpful, but some comment cannot be avoided. Dr Payne, in his history of the union, muses on the question whether, if the union had in 1837 adopted a declaration of faith as comprehensive as that adopted by the Congregationalists in 1833, 'they would have been able to avoid the sad breach in their ranks which occurred in 1887' (55). In view of Spurgeon's desire for the Union to adopt a basis similar to that of the Evangelical Alliance in 1846, the question seems appropriate. Whereas the General Union of 1813 had adopted a summary doctrinal statement that reflected closely the doctrinal commitment of the Particular Baptist associations of the time, the constitution of 1832 merely refers to 'ministers and churches who agree in the sentiments usually denominated evangelical' (56). This was in large measure due to the difficulties at that time of securing agreement between those whose Calvinism was more traditional and those who had developed a Fullerite position, whilst the formula also looked to the possibility of opening up fellowship with the New Connexion. But even this minimalist confessional stance was further weakened in 1873 when the reference to 'sentiments usually denominated evangelical' was dropped from the objects of the Union. In its place there appeared a statement emphasising the liberty of each church to interpret and administer the laws of Christ, and making explicit the conviction that 'the immersion of believers is the only Christian baptism' (57), apparently identifying the mode and the subject of baptism as of equal importance. Dr Payne suggests that behind the change lay Charles Stovel's fear of the Union taking to itself anything like the capacity for undertaking synodical action. The ruggedness of independency is very apparent, as is also the whole nineteenth century dissenting aversion to credal language which Victorian nonconformists, almost certainly wrongly, in view of the record of seventeenth century confessions and covenants, took to be part of their treasured inheritance.

A typical statement of the non-credalistic position is offered by H. B. Murray in *The General Baptist Magazine* a month before the Union adopted its Declaratory Statement.

Now it appears to be of the utmost importance, in the face of the present dilemmas and future probabilities, that we should hold fast to this great principle - that God's word, and God's word alone, is our lamp and guide, and that we are to be judged by its light alone. As a Protestant and a Free Churchman, I am willing to have my orthodoxy tested by the Bible, but by it alone; no man-made creed or humanly-prepared confession of faith is to be that by which my faith shall be tested and tried. Our Creed and Basis of Union should be the New Testament, and we need and should have *none other*. Man-made creeds have always been a source of division and bitterness; the purest age of the church was when it had no formulated creeds; nothing but the sacred writings, which each Christian, as he could obtain them, studied for himself, seeking the illumination of God's Spirit.

For we must either assert the infallibility of the men who have drawn up our creeds, or admit that they are liable to err; and if they are liable to err, then we must admit the possibility of their systems being imperfect, partial, containing meagre and one-sided statements of things, or even containing some things that are not true at all. And if *all* human creeds are possibly and probably imperfect, and possibly contain things that are not true, then I do not see how we dare make any of them the basis of Christian union, or the test of a man's Christianity, while we have in the Bible a complete and perfect system of infallible truth.

And as this is the right attitude for every Christian man to assume, so is it the right attitude for our churches to take. Each church claiming *liberty* (as the constitution of the Baptist Union declares) to *interpret* and to administer the laws of Christ, we stand responsible to no council and to no creed, but to God and His Word. I glory in this liberty. It is a principle that is of the very essence of Christianity. As a Body we should rejoice in our freedom; for it is peculiar to us as a denomination that we have no human creed or confession of faith to which we are compelled to subscribe upon pain of penalty or expulsion. We are under the dominion, in matters of faith and doctrine, of no Synod, Conference, or Board. The only court of appeal we recognise is the Bible; the only creed we know, the words of Christ and His apostles. (58)

This was Clifford's position and it was not far removed from Spurgeon's own means of disengaging from the high Calvinism of John Gill. Perhaps rather sentimentally Clifford reflected on the authority of his ministry in these terms:

My attitude towards Creeds, Cliffordian and otherwise, is one of persistent investigation, with a high resolve not to be misled by terms or confused by the clouds that emerge from

the hoary past. I have told you before that I had my creed from my Mother when she told me to find out the meaning of Christ's teaching for myself and then to stick to it in scorn of consequence. That was the 'instruction' I received from one who was 'in Christ before me', and had more influence on me than all theologians and bishops and ecclesiastics I have known. Sixty years in London have vindicated for me my Mother's advice. The 'doxies' "ortho" and "hetero", have interested me and do still, but the main purpose of my spirit, if I know it, is to *live at* the vital centre and work from it. (59)

In the first sermon preached in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Spurgeon declared:

If I am asked to say what is my creed, I think I must reply, 'It is Jesus Christ'. My venerated predecessor, Dr Gill, has left a body of divinity, admirable and excellent in its way, but the body of divinity to which I would pin and bind myself for ever, God helping me, is not his system of divinity or any other human treatise, but Jesus Christ, Who is the sum and substance of the Gospel, Who is in Himself all theology, the Incarnation of every precious truth, the all-glorious embodiment of the way, the truth and the life. (60)

Accordingly his letter to Dr Culross from Mentone in November 1887 is germane:

Do I need to say that with you and such brethren as Dr McLaren, Mr Aldis, and Dr Angus I have no sort of disagreement, except that you stay in the Union and I am out of it?...

So long as an Association without a creed has no aliens in it, nobody can wish for a creed *formally* for the spirit is there; but at a time when 'strange children' have entered, what is to be done? Whatever may *theoretically* be in your power, you *practically* have no power whatever. You will go on as you are; and unless God's grace calls back the wanderers, their numbers will increase, and their courage will call them to speak out more plainly, to the sorrow of the faithful ones who shielded them in patient hope of better things...

Your very clear declaration, that the Union could not have a creed, or as I read it, could not declare its doctrinal views other than by practising baptism and the Lord's Supper, closes the door finally against me. Neither do I knock at that door, nor wish for another door to be made. The good men who formed the Union, I fancy, had no idea that it would become what it now is, or they would have fashioned it otherwise. It has, by its centralization and absorption of various Societies, become far other than at the first. This is a good thing, but it involves a strain on the frail fabric which it is ill adapted to bear. So I think; but time will be the best proof of *that*. (61)

Spurgeon, the non-credalist of 1861, had become the credalist of 1887. The quarter of a century separating those two dates had been difficult for the churches, with traditional theological thinking challenged by new knowledge in all spheres. The undiscerning response of some, and the wildness of others, shattered the older community of outlook in evangelical nonconformity. The star of the spirit's leading seemed difficult now to follow, and men of cautious temperament like Spurgeon, their fears heightened by some more conservative than themselves, turned back to confessional guarantees in terms of doctrinal declarations (62). The scripture to which earlier nineteenth century dissenters had turned as 'creed enough' was now so much in question among the leaders of the churches that it seemed to need credal support. Moreover creeds were promoted not for their own sake but for a purpose - the creed was not to be, in Samuel Booth's words an 'historical statement' descriptive of a common commitment, rather creeds were being advocated for the purpose of imposing credal tests. That is what caused the difficulty. In a letter to William Cuff of Shoreditch, Clifford wrote, 'It is not creeds as creeds: it is coercion through and by creeds I object to' (63). That is exactly the point. I believe that whilst many of his fellow Baptists were not far from Spurgeon in his Evangelical Calvinism (64), and certainly shared his evangelistic enthusiasm, they parted company on the nature of Christian fellowship. Balancing the often contradictory demands of freedom for the individual, and fidelity to the faith once given, was no easy task, on which every i could never be dotted or t crossed.

At the same time, the mission of the church, in the expanding world of the nineteenth century, demanded more and more of denominational machinery if any coherent response to the situation was to be made. Spurgeon recognized the need for centralization but was clearly suspicious of it: earlier he had written questioning the whole *raison d'être* of the Union.

The expedient is not needed among Churches which are each one self-governing and self-determining, such churches can find their own affinities without difficulty, and can keep their own coasts clear of invaders. Since each vessel is sea worthy in herself, let the hampering ropes be cut clean away and no more lines of communication be thrown out until we know that we are alongside a friend who sails under the same glorious flag. In the isolation of independency, tempered by the love of the Spirit which binds us to all the faithful in Jesus Christ, we think the lovers of the gospel will for the present find their immediate safety. (65)

But whereas the autonomy of the Metropolitan Tabernacle with its vast array of agencies was a possibility, the isolation of the average Baptist church was not without grave danger both to its survival and its mission. The union was of fundamental necessity in enabling the strong to help the weak in a nation-wide missionary fellowship.

Again the context of the Downgrade Dispute was the desire to further the integration of General and Particular Baptist work which Charles Williams made one of the aims of his presidential year, even

though there were fears on both sides. In commending the proposal to the General Baptists, John Clifford went further, albeit with a highly individualistic view of baptism; 'Will it be long before Baptists and Independents are able to unite in the New Testament principle that "the obligation to be baptized springs out of the relationship of the soul to the Saviour, and not from the relationship of the believer to the church", and that therefore "the whole question of baptism must be left to the individual conscience". (Constitution of Westbourne Park Church)' (66). It has been repeatedly stated that Spurgeon's quarrel was not with Dr Clifford or with the Evangelical Arminian tradition as upheld by the various Methodist churches. Fullerton records how in a Baptist Union Assembly in Leeds, Spurgeon read from Romans 10 and, pausing at verse 13, he remarked, 'Dear me! How wonderfully like John Wesley the apostle talked! *Whosoever* shall call. *Whosoever*. Why that is a Methodist word is it not?' But he went on to say that a reader of Romans 9 would find that Paul wrote 'wonderfully like John Calvin - The whole of truth is neither here nor there, neither in this system nor that. Be it ours to know what is Scriptural in all systems and to receive it' (67).

Though brought up in a Congregational manse, Spurgeon's confidence in the Independents was less certain than that placed in his own denomination. As with his fellow Baptists, he had good relationships with, and a high regard for, a number of leading ministers: Dr Allon of Islington, Guinness Rogers of Clapham, and Alexander Raleigh in particular received his approbation. But he had already expressed his concern about theological developments among the Congregationalists. For example, as early as 1856 he had rather mildly joined in the censures on T. T. Lynch's new hymn book (though his position is not altogether clear because even at the time he spoke of Lynch as 'a good man who is very much misunderstood' and as late as 1891 reviewed a volume of Lynch's sermons indicating that they contained 'a great deal of the Gospel in solution') (68). Four years later, Spurgeon took on his more formidable neighbour, Baldwin Brown, first of Claylands Chapel and then of Brixton Independent Church, who in 1859 published the *Divine Life in Man*. J. Howard Hinton was appalled by its contents and published strictures on passages from it in March and April 1860 in *The Baptist Magazine*, of which Spurgeon was a one time editor. These were afterwards reprinted as a pamphlet, which was rather meanly reviewed by *The Freeman*. This review caused seven London ministers (Edward Steane of Camberwell, Daniel Katterns of Hackney, Spurgeon, Charles Stanford also of Camberwell, W. G. Lewis of Westbourne Grove, William Brock, and Joseph Angus) to write a letter of protest which focussed not only on the heterodoxy of Brown but on the position of *The Freeman*, as 'the organ of the Baptist denomination' in so dealing with the matter.

Spurgeon subsequently spoke and wrote on the issue on his own account and it became clear that whilst the main target of his concern lay beyond denominational boundaries, he also feared that the Baptist denomination might be contaminated and was clearly hurt by what he regarded as the trivially inappropriate response of *The Freeman* and personal hurt counted considerably with Spurgeon (69). It should be noted that Hinton and the seven correspondents between them

represented central denominational leadership at that time, the list containing four presidents and two secretaries of the Union. Spurgeon was not then isolated on the issue of substance and with others found a powerful way of letting his principles be known. But already the issue of confidence in denominational instruments was being raised.

In November 1877, he gave a foreshadowing of what was to come, in his reaction to the Leicester Conference of Congregationalists concerned to extend the bounds of Religious Communion to all men of goodwill which was organized by the Reverend J. Allanson Picton. This led to some men questioning the continued orthodoxy of the Congregational Union. Baldwin Brown, then its chairman, made a bold plea for freedom in the spirit, but despite his eloquence the majority of the Union chose to reaffirm the Declaration of Faith and Order of 1833. In a letter to Henry Allon of November 1877 Spurgeon writes:

The delightful liberality of some of your truly good men is abused into a covenant with death and hell. The Arianism of the Doddridge time is upon us again. I thank God that the men are mostly beneath contempt but I am sorry that some of your really solid brethren are the screen behind which they skulk. (70)

He followed this up after the 1878 May Meetings which reaffirmed traditional doctrines, with congratulations to Allon:

Many fears are removed and hopes confirmed, God bless the Congregational Union is my hearty prayer. Your loose fish swam so near the top of the water that they were always visible, but now I trust they will seek deeper waters.

I fear I shall never see your brethren up to my standard, but it is a joy to me to feel that at least the great facts of our religion are heartily believed ... Could we not as Independents and Baptists have some *public* fraternization one of these days? (71)

At that date then there was cause for concern, but not sufficient to prevent Spurgeon from desiring joint public action with the Congregationalists.

His correspondence with Allon, with whom from time to time he exchanged pulpits, continued. A letter on Bradlaugh's parliamentary candidacy, dated 23 June 1880, is of special interest:

Our people greatly appreciated your boldness at the Liberation Society meeting. There are brethren who are startled at the idea of combatting for atheists but even these say 'bravo' to the bold avowal. I wish the question stood in connection with a worthier man. One sickens at the creature - who will do his best to bespatter us if he gets in - yet the rights of man are not to be denied. (72)

Spurgeon responded well to generous feelings and the celebration of his jubilee in 1884 was such an occasion when the demonstration of

Christian fraternity led him to confess:

We are supposed as a Christian Church to be a sort of menagerie needing great skill on the part of our Keeper to prevent our devouring one another - but the supposition is slanderous as the last few days have proved. We do not need to have our teeth drawn and our claws cut out, we have the affection after all. God send us more of it combined with fidelity. (73)

The antagonist in the last external controversy was Joseph Parker of the City Temple and the subject matter has often been represented as simply that of theatre-going. But that was only part of the issue. At the beginning of the Downgrade controversy, Spurgeon had received a letter from Parker, seeking him to participate in a conference concerning the vindication of 'the old Evangelical Faith' - 'the occasion should be devoted to clear and simple testimony to our faithfulness to Evangelical doctrine' (74). The courteous invitation was equally courteously but emphatically refused (75). Parker pressed the issue and Spurgeon was forced to be explicit: frankness required him to say that he did not detect in Parker's ministry, consistency of support as a champion of the faith: 'The Evangelical faith in which you and Mr Beecher agree' affirmed Spurgeon 'is not the faith which I hold', and then he went on to criticise Parker's theatre-going, ending with the hope that the differences could be treated as private to the two parties concerned (76). The matter did not wholly end there, however, for in April 1890, the *British Weekly* published an open letter, without known provocation, from Parker to Spurgeon advising him 'to widen the circle of which you are the centre... My dear Spurgeon, you are too big a man for this ... Scatter your ecclesiastical harem. I do not say destroy your circle. I simply say enlarge it' (77). A year and half later a somewhat chastened Parker again addressed Spurgeon through the *British Weekly*, paying tribute to Spurgeon's stoic battle with suffering, concluding 'What if, after all, you should prove to be the broadest-minded man among us?' (78).

How is one to assess this controversy in the light of the comparative histories of the two denominations?

The second half of the nineteenth century like the latter part of the eighteenth century saw the two denominations facing theological challenges. At the end of the eighteenth century the question was how to amend an inherited Calvinist theology and Puritan church polity to take account of the revival experience. Out of that challenge, emerged the Baptist Union. The questions of the second half of the century were more difficult, arising in part at least from a supposedly hostile world beyond the church. No longer was the problem that of accommodating unanticipated success, but how to retain confidence in a world of many uncertainties. If Congregationalists and Baptists responded very similarly to the theological challenges of the Evangelical Revival and the missionary movement, their attitudes to the increasingly antagonistic poles of freedom and fidelity in the late nineteenth century saw the beginnings of diverging paths. I do not believe that credal confession significantly helped the Congregational Union to guard its orthodoxy, nor do I believe that the Baptist Union

was seriously impeded by its lack of confessional statement prior to 1888.

In the Downgrade, Spurgeon won half a battle, the Union made its doctrinal standard clear, but it was not prepared to use that standard as a credal test and to engage in any kind of witch-hunting for which it hardly had the power, at least over pastors of self-governing churches - and no other church, with greater familiarity with creeds and central authorities, seemed better equipped so to do.

In conclusion then, by the end of the nineteenth century the socio-theological atmosphere of the two denominations caused the two unions to move in different directions. Dale's dialectical view of the relationship between puritanism and evangelicalism allowed the Congregationalists to become an increasingly middle-class denomination and to espouse the bourgeoisie aspiration after progress (79). By contrast the Baptists, lingering longer with their inherited Calvinism, or moderating it more slowly, continued longer to make an appeal to the small shopkeeper, the artisan, and to some of the working-classes who, notwithstanding the fashion for unchurching the masses, you find in considerable numbers in the membership rolls of Baptist Church Books (80). The Revd Stephen Davis, secretary of the Home Missionary Society, witnessed:

Whatever be the fact in other denominations, it is not to be forgotten in relation to our own that in the majority of our Churches and congregations, the working classes, as it is the fashion to call them, outnumber the middle class. In general, they are not more alienated from us than other sections of the community. (81)

To such a constituency, a fashionable progressive gospel, attractive as it might be to an aspiring bourgeoisie, made little appeal.

The differences between the two denominations have become clearer as the history of the new century has unfolded, but the roots of those divergencies are to be found in the second half of the nineteenth century. I do not believe 'Spurgeonism' represents a new initiative. Spurgeon may have been very largely isolated on the issue of credal tests, but it is a mark both of his influence and denominational concern that his withdrawal should be the cause of so much anxiety, for both Dale and Parker knew long periods of estrangement from the Congregational Union. Substantially, I believe Spurgeon's faithfulness to traditional beliefs and his evangelistic passion were widely reflected throughout the churches of the Baptist Union, and were part of the witness of both Baptists and Congregationalists earlier in the century. The party of divergence from the inherited tradition was not Spurgeon's influence amongst the Baptists but the more pronounced liberal drift of Congregationalism in theology, in mission and in church order. Indeed if you were looking for a figure exemplifying isolation within the Baptist denomination, I would think you might find it in S. A. Tipple, almost you might say Spurgeon's local minister when he lived at Westwood (that is if one could detect anything of the theology of the local church in Tipple's

eclectic congregation at Central Hill, Upper Norwood). Certainly Tipple's ministry was full of opinions but as to commitment to, and long-term influence on, the denomination - I find little trace (82). Would, I wonder, his eccentricities have been less apparent among the Congregationalists - I think so.

Finally, I believe this divergence of traditions can be related to the sacramental beliefs and practices of the Baptists. 'Believers' baptism' underlines the Baptist understanding of the nature of the church, the priority of evangelism, and commitment to Evangelical belief. Morris West expresses the ecclesiological point clearly in his report of the Louisville Consultation on Baptism:

It may be argued that those who practise infant baptism and those who practise believers' baptism start from different 'models' of the Church. Those practising infant baptism see the Church as an ontologically given community into which a child is incorporated, whereas Baptists and those practising believer's baptism, view the Church as a community which is constituted by the activity of God on the individual who responds consciously and believes and so becomes a participating member of the community. (83)

From that same statement, it will also be clear why the practice of Believers' Baptism keeps the obligation to evangelise, as well as the experience of conversion, central to the history of all religious revivals, ever before the attention of the Baptist family of churches. And thirdly, though there has been, and properly continues to be, a liberal tradition within Baptist Churches, it seems to be that Believer's Baptism establishes certain evangelical priorities within such liberalism, nowhere better seen than in the life of John Clifford, with his life-long commitment to personal evangelism. Accordingly whilst liberal enquiry amongst the Baptists is properly critical and probing, it is never foot-loose. As the Declaratory Statement of April 1888 puts it: 'The Union... is an association of churches and ministers; professing not only to believe the facts and doctrines of the Gospel, but to have undergone the spiritual change expressed or implied in them. This change is the fundamental principle of our church life' (84). The Evangelicalism of the Baptist people is at once both doctrinal and experimental.

NOTES

This paper was presented to the Society's Spurgeon Ter Jubilee Day Conference at Histon on 8 September 1984.

- 1 C. Binfield, 'Congregationalism's Two Sides of the Baptistery', *Baptist Quarterly*, July 1975, p.130.
- 2 E. A. Payne, *The Baptist Union: A Short History*, 1958, p.10 cites Oxford as an example.
- 3 J. Rippon, *The Baptist Annual Register 1790-1802*, Payne, op.cit., p.10.
- 4 A. Peel, *These Hundred Years*, 1931, p.240.

- 5 Payne, op.cit., p.10, 123-4, Peel, op.cit., p.289.
- 6 The tradition of churches with mixed membership, in this area dating back to the seventeenth century, was reinforced by the catholic evangelicalism of the late eighteenth century, out of which the new itinerant societies and county associations, such as the catholically named Bedfordshire Union of Christians (1797), emerged. W. R. Ward, *Religion and Society in England, 1790-1850*, 1972, p.48.
- 7 Peel, op.cit., p.349, 393. For a fuller study of Baptist Congregational kinship, see E. A. Payne's 'Baptist Congregational Relationships' in the *Congregational Quarterly*, July 1955.
- 8 Binfield, *Baptist Quarterly*, July 1975, p.130. The sentences - "Spurgeonism" is a comforting, understandable, proven but intuned thing' - 'It accurately reflected a not unjustified pessimism about the way things were going that was not peculiar to Baptists' - 'It does not, however, seem to reflect adequately the tendencies of opinion-forming Baptists' - though they offer judgment in abundance, hardly afford a definition. Since I wish to argue that Spurgeon in large measure represents a continuity of tradition rather than a new departure, it does not seem incumbent on me to define a phenomenon I hardly believe to have existed.
- 9 Binfield, *Baptist Quarterly*, July 1975, p.120, p.130, and also his *So Down to Prayers*, 1977, p.26. In his article Binfield suggests that, although Spurgeon himself was the product of a Congregational as much as a Baptist context, "Spurgeonism" divides the two bodies, but in his book he ends up by suggesting that mainstream Baptists were perhaps different from mainstream Congregationalists: 'mainstream Baptists were after all to be found in the residuum of quiet Baptists, village Baptists, strict Baptists'. The adjectives - quiet, village, strict - are judgmental, and provide a different answer to the question initially posed by his 1975 article, namely 'whether or not Victorian Baptists of the opinion-forming sort - aggressive Christians from outward-looking Churches, self-confident in the world - in fact formed Baptist opinion'.
- 10 A. D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England*, 1976, pp.138-43. H. R. Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*, 1929, chapters I & X. J. H. Y. Briggs: 'From Christendom to Pluralism' in *Essays in Evangelical Social Ethics*, ed. D. F. Wright, 1978, p.59-61, 62-4.
- 11 H. Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780-1800*, 1969, p.176. On p.196 Perkin links the two phenomenon together when he suggests that 'sectarian religion was the midwife' bringing the new class society to birth.
- 12 Ward, op.cit., p.2-6.
- 13 For a fuller discussion of Evangelical enthusiasm for church order at this time, see D. Newsome, *The Parting of Friends*, 1966, especially Chapter 1.
- 14 Ward, op.cit., p.41.
- 15 Newsome, op.cit., p.10-13, O. Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, Part I, 1966, p.35-7. D. Rosman, *Evangelicals and Culture*, 1984, p.20ff.
- 16 Rosman, op.cit., p.21-3. 17 Ibid.
- 18 J. Pelikan, *Spirit Versus Structure' Luther and the Institutions of the Church*, 1968, p.3-4.

- 19 R. W. Dale, *History of English Congregationalism*, 1907, p.587-8.
- 20 Ibid., p.590. 21 Ibid., p.590-1.
- 22 R. W. Dale, *The Evangelical Revival and Other Sermons*, 1880, p.16-17.
- 23 R. W. Dale, *History*, p.591.
- 24 R. W. Dale, *Evangelical Revival*, p.23-4, where Dale argues that in the late eighteenth century 'the general movement of European thought' meant that a theology which was worked out in the particular context of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was becoming dated. By contrast the new intellectual climate demanded new theological statements but this the Evangelical Revival neglected. The charges are serious: 'a permanent suppression of the intellect is one of the worst kinds of suicide; and a Church which cannot speak to the intellect of every age and of every country in its own tongue - according to its own intellectual methods - has lost that noble gift of which the marvel of Pentecost was a transcendent and comparatively worthless symbol'. Dale asks whether that 'gift is likely to appear among the heirs of the Evangelical Revival - whether the heirs of the Evangelical Revival have any earnest desire for the gift', and answers that the revival 'has been more eager to seek and to save the lost than to investigate the foundations of Christian doctrine'.
- 25 Ibid., p.14.
- 26 Following Dale see, for example, J. W. Grant, *Free Churchmanship in England, 1870-1940*, n.d. (c.1950), p.96-100. D. Jenkins, *Congregationalism: A Restatement*, 1954, p.60. D. Davie, *A Gathered Church: The Literature of the English Dissenting Interest, 1700-1930*, 1978, esp. pp.19-36, 55-72. In the case of Dale himself notwithstanding his caveats about the Evangelical revival, his appreciation of its positive contribution must not be forgotten, as also his support of D. L. Moody and his campaigns, particularly that of 1875, see *The Life of R. W. Dale of Birmingham*, by A. W. W. Dale, 1902, p.317-22, 348-51, 701ff.
- 27 D. Rosman, op.cit., p.10.
- 28 Ibid., p.205. 29 Ibid., p.213.
- 30 E. Halevy, *A History of The English People in 1815*. Book 3. Pelican Book Edition 1938, p.29.
- 31 A. Fuller, *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, Preface to Second Edition 1801, p.1.
- 32 J. Rippon, *The Baptist Annual Register*, ii, 1794-7, p.460ff. Cited by my former research student, Derek Tidball in his Ph.D. Thesis, 'English Nonconformist Home Missions, 1796-1901', esp. p.119-171, to which I am much indebted in the writing of this section of this paper.
- 33 Tidball, op.cit., p.124.
- 34 *Baptist Magazine*, 1822, p.468.
- 35 Tidball, op.cit., p.127.
- 36 Francis Cox, *Suggestions designed to promote the Revival and Extension of Religion*, 1835.
- 37 Tidball, op.cit., p.129-30. 38 Ibid., p.403.
- 39 R. Carwardine, 'The Evangelist System: Charles Roe, Thomas Pulsford and the Baptist Home Missionary Society', *Baptist Quarterly*, January 1980, p.212.
- 40 C. E. Shipley, *The Baptists of Yorkshire*, 1912, p.208.

- 41 Ward, op.cit., p.287.
- 42 J. Edwin Orr, *The Second Evangelical Awakening in Britain*, 1949, p.190-2, 270-1.
- 43 G. F. Nuttall, 'Assemblies and Associations in Dissent, 1689-1831' in *Studies in Church History*, Vol.VII, 1971, p.289-309. For an analytical list of County Associations noted by *The Evangelical Magazine* see Tidball, op.cit., Appendix A, p.410.
- 44 Cited by W. Y. Fullerton in his *C. H. Spurgeon*, 1920, p.309.
- 45 W. C. Johnson, *Encounter in London*, 1965, p.2.
- 46 Ibid., p.19.
- 47 W. T. Whitley, *Baptists of North West England*, 1913, p.213.
- 48 J. M. G. Oliver in *Records of An Old Association*, 1905, p.623.
- 49 Cited by D. Tidball, op.cit., p.158.
- 50 Tidball, op.cit., p.160-2.
- 51 Ibid., p.162-3.
- 52 Ibid., p.171.
- 53 Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London*. Third Series vii 1902, p.130ff, may press distinctions too far when he writes 'while the religious influence of the Congregationalists turns largely on social and educational methods and finds in full and healthy occupation the balance wheel of life; and while the Baptist's filled with conviction of sin, cling to the anchorage of faith; the Wesleyans trust to the heightening of emotion to lift them out of sin, and raise their hearts to God'. Cf Tidball, op.cit., p.314-7, 320. Jeffrey Cox's *The English Churches in a Secular Society: Lambeth 1870-1930*, 1982, provides further evidence of divergence between Baptists and Congregationalists in their attitudes to Christian mission at the end of the nineteenth century.
- 54 C. Binfield, *So Down to Prayers*, p.197.
- 55 E. A. Payne, *The Baptist Union: A Short History*, 1959, p.62.
- 56 Ibid., p.61.
- 57 Ibid., p.109-110.
- 58 H. B. Murray: 'Our Creed; or the Baptist Rule of Faith' in the *General Baptist Magazine*, March 1888, p.81-5.
- 59 Sir James Marchant: *Dr John Clifford, C.H.*, 1924, p.xiv-xv.
- 60 *C. H. Spurgeon's Autobiography*, Vol.III, 1899, p.1.
- 61 Ibid., Vol.IV, 1900, p.262-3.
- 62 John Clifford records in his diary for 1921, a visit to E. G. Gange, a one-time intimate of Spurgeon and a student of Pastor's College, who had notable pastorates at Broadmead, Bristol and Regent's Park Chapel, London. Clifford writes that Gange 'attributed the Down Grade controversy to the influence of a few men who filled Spurgeon's mind with doubt and distrust of his brethren'. Marchant, op.cit., p.249.
- 63 Cited by E. A. Payne, 'The Down Grade Controversy: a Postscript', *Baptist Quarterly*, 1979, p.156.
- 64 See L. G. Champion, 'Evangelical Calvinism and The Structures of Baptist Church Life', *Baptist Quarterly*, January 1980, p.196ff.
- 65 *Sword and Trowel*, 1887, p.360, cited by Payne, *History*, p.142.
- 66 *General Baptist Magazine*, March 1887, p.103.
- 67 Fullerton, op.cit., p.121.
- 68 *Autobiography*, II, p.262-9, Fullerton, p.291f
- 69 *Autobiography*, II, p.269-281.
- 70 A. Peel, *Letters to a Victorian Editor*, 1929, p.344.
- 71 Ibid., p.345.
- 72 Ibid., p.347.
- 73 Ibid., p.351.

- 74 Fullerton, *op.cit.*, p.297. For purposes of comparison it may be noted that Spurgeon last appeared on the platform of the Baptist Union in 1882 and that in February 1886 he wrote to Samuel Booth with regard to the work of the Union, 'I am anxious not to be asked, that I may not be obliged to decline'. E. A. Payne, in the *Baptist Quarterly*, 1979, p.151.
- 75 Fullerton, *op.cit.*, p.298
- 76 *Ibid.*, p.299-300. Henry Ward Beecher, was America's leading pulpiteer and certainly an advocate of 'modern' preaching, though in 1863 he gave an address at James Spurgeon's recognition service as pastor at Bayswater. He had visited Britain a second time in 1886 when he occupied Parker's pulpit at the City Temple which in particular seems to have offended Spurgeon.
- 77 *Ibid.*, p.300-301. 78 *Ibid.*, p.301.
- 79 C. Binfield, *So Down To Prayers*, p.26-9. See also K. S. Inglis, *Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England*, 1963, p.14-16, where Thomas Binney's dictum 'Our mission is neither to the very rich nor to the very poor, but to the great middle section of the community' is cited.
- 80 R. Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America*, 1978, p.77-8. I. Sellers, *Nineteenth Century Nonconformity*, 1977, p.1ff.
- 81 Cited in Tidball, *op.cit.*, p.141.
- 82 A. Porritt, *The Best I Remember*, 1922, p.4-6.
- 83 M. West, 'Towards a Consensus on Baptism? Louisville 1979' in the *Baptist Quarterly*, January 1980, p.227.
- 84 E. A. Payne, *History*, Appendix VI, p.271.

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Baptist Historical Society will take place on Monday, 28th April 1986 at 4.30 p.m. in the Lloyd Jones Hall at Westminster Chapel.

The Henton Lecture will be given by the Revd Dr G. Henton Davies, M.A., M.Litt., B.D. His subject will be 'Bound for (South) Wales'.