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BEYOND PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPHERES

Another Look at Women in Baptist History and Historiography

With the advent of women's studies, attention has been given to the need for historical accounts of the contributions of women.¹ Increasingly, church historians have focused on specialised studies of women, though, with few exceptions, they have been slow to respond to the call to include women as prominent figures in the overall story of the church.² Baptist historians, in particular, have appeared highly reticent to write a gender-inclusive history of the denomination. While some attention has been given to contributions of women, our Baptist foremothers have continued to receive far less attention than our forefathers.

An obvious and often cited reason for the non-inclusion of women in general histories of the Baptists is that Baptist history has been 'written by men about men'.³ That fact, combined with the recognition that women are mentioned infrequently in church books and records (except in the case of accounts of church discipline), has led some Baptists to adopt what Elise Boulding has called the 'women as victim' theory.⁴ That is to say, many have concluded that the lack of information in church sources and the absence of women in the overall Baptist story reflects the way women have consistently been the 'victims' of male domination within the denomination, and hence excluded from leadership and decision-making processes within Baptist life.

In the light of Baptist ecclesiology which places emphasis on the church as a 'covenant community' of faith where each member (male and female) shares in duties and privileges of church membership, it seems astounding that historians have had so little to say about the participation of women in Baptist life. No one who has studied Baptist history, however, could deny that historical research, like almost every domain within denominational structures, has been male-dominated. Yet, perhaps the problem is not simply that history has been written by men, but that those who have written our denominational history have yet to find sources for the study which will enable a broader and fuller exploration of women in Baptist life.

WOMEN AND BAPTIST HISTORIOGRAPHY

In his article, 'The Task of the Baptist Historian', and again in the beginning chapter of his book, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, B. R. White points to some of the difficulties, as well as benefits, of studying denominational history. White is aware that there is a temptation for historians, and perhaps especially denominational historians, to become 'too closely caught up in their own personal or partisan enthusiasms' to discern clearly the denominational story.⁵ While acknowledging the accomplishments of early historians, White insists that there is 'the need for much more investigation "in depth" by Baptist historians of their total heritage'.⁶

White's analysis of the work of early historians is accurate as far as it goes. However, he fails to point out that from the beginning, Baptist historians have not only shared particular biases and sometimes written with a particular agenda in mind, but they have also failed to give a story of the whole denomination. None of the early Baptist historians attempted to describe in any detail the contribution of women to the life and faith of Baptists.

Even a cursory examination of several of the early written histories leaves little doubt that Baptist history has been viewed from a male vantage point. For instance, in *The History of English Baptists* (4 volumes, 1738-40) Thomas Crosby, the first Baptist historian to publish a completed work, included biographical sketches of Baptist leaders, who had been 'noted for their piety, learning and usefulness'.⁷

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Crosby's biographical accounts are mainly about pastors and no doubt intended to inspire others, though his account of men of 'piety, learning and usefulness' alone would lead one to believe that there were few women or even laymen to stand for Baptist principles!

Likewise, Joseph Ivimey pointed to the value of biography in *A History of the English Baptists* (1811-30). While he did not completely exclude women in his account, like Crosby, Ivimey tended to focus primarily on the contribution of pastors to Baptist life. Women only seem to find a place in the story when they have made a 'notable' achievement, such as Anne Steele's⁸ contribution to English hymnody. Likewise, some who drew public attention for seemingly inappropriate behaviour merited mention by Ivimey. Anne Dutton,⁹ for instance, who raised the ire and hackles of more than a few men with her writings and correspondence from Great Gransden, Huntingdonshire, as well as Elizabeth Ginn,¹⁰ who was dismissed from the Maze Pond Church in London, were included in Ivimey's account.¹¹

No general overview of Baptists will include everyone. There is little doubt, however, that too often denominational history has been written by men, about men, and by appearance, one might conclude, for men. Yet, in fairness to early historians perhaps it should be noted that the exclusion of women was not entirely due to a male bias, but at least in part to a ministerial bias. That is to say, it appears that early histories were written by focusing on contributions of significant pastors and leaders rather than on church members. Hence, in addition to the exclusion of women, many male church members were likewise omitted from the Baptist story.

The tendency to write Baptist history by focusing primarily on pastors within the denomination was rejected by twentieth-century historian, W. T. Whitley. 'In ecclesiastical history,' wrote Whitley, 'ministers are not the only men who count. . . Baptists beyond others, are especially pledged to recognise and to utilise the priesthood of all believers.'¹² Whitley included a number of women in his *A History of British Baptists* and did more than any British Baptist historian before him to open the way for a broader interpretation of Baptist history.

Whitley's recognition of the need to write history without a bias toward ministerial contributions was a step toward recognising the need to correct a gender bias in denominational history as well. Whitley's work was limited, of course, by his own approach to denominational studies. While he rejected a history which reflected a ministerial bias, he continued to some degree to reflect an institutional bias. That is to say, his history of Baptist life was, in the main, an institutional history. He wrote of the growth of the denomination and any contributions of men or women were viewed from the perspective of denominational or institutional boundaries. Hence, women were mentioned by Whitley primarily when they made a contribution to missions or featured in some other gender-appropriate role within denominational structures.

The most recent single-volume history of Baptists is by Southern Baptist historian, Leon McBeth. Since he is the only person to date to attempt to write a history of women in Baptist life, one would expect to find women included throughout his book, *The Baptist Heritage*. McBeth has been sharply criticised, however, for his failure to include women in any significant way in the overall story.¹³ An early advocate for women in Baptist life, he has consistently called for historians to explore the history of women in the church. Hence, it is surprising that he too tends to give women a relatively minor place in the Baptist story.

McBeth, like other historians, has largely written 'institutional' history, and he describes the growth and development in Baptist life largely in terms of changing denominational structures. Since the structures have been male-dominated, one might expect to find women mentioned only when they have managed to find recognition

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within denominational structures, primarily in missionary endeavours.

McBeth's single-volume *Women in Baptist Life* provides another example of this type of approach to Baptist studies. While seemingly exploring women in Baptist life, his overarching goal is to prove that women have always been involved in ministry in a formal way in Baptist churches. This study is not, as the title suggests, a history of Baptist women, but a history of the institutional involvement of women (primarily Southern Baptist women) in the denomination. His approach is faulty in that he tends to view women from a particular gender-biased institutional perspective, and hence their contributions are visible only when they occur in the male-dominated structures. Moreover, it is an approach which overlooks women of other ethnic or minority groups who have been excluded from access to positions of prominence or leadership roles in denominational life.

In addition to the work by McBeth, in recent years a number of articles have been written on women in Baptist life though, on the whole, these too appear to focus on the issue of women in leadership roles or women who made particular contributions to the institutions of Baptist life. In 1986, for instance, one entire issue of the *Baptist Quarterly* focused on women in Baptist life. Notably, one article by British historian, J. H. Y. Briggs, entitled, 'She Preachers, Widows and Other Women: The feminine dimension in Baptist life since 1600', attempts to give an historical overview of contributions women have made to Baptist life, though it would appear that at times he attempts to draw assumptions on somewhat scanty and insufficient evidence.¹⁴ For example, describing the role of women in Baptist circles, he claims that 'in practice there is evidence of women exercising considerable gifts of leadership in the churches.'¹⁵ As 'evidence', however, he cites the well-known women in the Broadmead church at Bristol. Although Briggs leaves the impression that their example was normative, there is no evidence that this church was typical of the Baptist churches during the period. While Briggs is to be credited with an admirable attempt to recognise the place of women in British Baptist denominational history, the fact that he traces three hundred and eight-six years of the 'feminine dimension of women in Baptist life' in a mere fifteen pages speaks of the need for more careful and painstaking research.

Articles like those by Briggs and McBeth have opened the way for the study of Baptist women in Britain and America. As William Brackney points out in his recent work, *The Baptists*, however, within the Baptist family around the world there has been far too little attention to the role and contribution of women.¹⁶ Significantly, in his book, Brackney attempts to recover the story of Baptist women in exactly the way that historians Crosby and Ivimey began to tell the story of English Baptists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He devotes a large section of his book to biographical sketches of Baptist figures and includes the stories of a number of women.

Brackney is not the first, of course, to provide biographical sketches of women in Baptist life. In 1955 A. S. Clement, a British Baptist, edited a small volume entitled, *Great Baptist Women*. It was a companion volume to another small book about Baptist men, entitled, *Baptists Who Made History*. Both were published in the year of the Jubilee Congress of the Baptist World Alliance and were intended, in Clement's words, to 'stimulate interest in Baptist History and also inspire other women (and men too) to loyal and devoted service to their Lord - and ours.'¹⁷ To his credit, Clement recognised that the women selected for inclusion in the volume were not wholly representative of women in the denomination, since he apologised for the 'undue proportion of space given to women who rendered distinguished services in overseas mission work'.¹⁸ Significantly, though, Clement pointed out that from 'the beginning the mission field provided women with opportunities for leadership in the

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church, the which seizing, they have been able to develop the talents God gave them.¹⁹

Other biographical accounts of women which largely focus on women and missions could be added to the sketches provided by Clement. These too are a reminder that the story of women in Baptist life has largely been viewed and described by those who approached Baptist studies within a particular institutional framework. Brackney is correct in pointing to the need for biography, but there is a need for critical biography which seeks to explore the life and thought of Baptist men and women apart from institutional expectations.

In addition to critical biographies, Baptists also need to attempt to find ways to enlarge the picture of Baptist life provided by a strictly 'institutional' approach to history. One way of doing this would be by attempting more local and regional histories.²⁰ The value of regional studies was pointed out by Ernest Payne some years ago in the preface to his volume, *The Baptists of Berkshire*. Recalling comments by W. T. Whitley on the need for county and regional studies in Britain, Payne urged Baptist historians to consider the need to study Baptists more closely by smaller regions. Payne pointed to the value of regional story for Baptists as a whole, though it may also be noted that more focused studies of specific areas would allow for a better understanding of women.

If women, as well as men, are to be included in a serious and scholarly retelling of the Baptist story, it is imperative that historians begin to focus attention on regional studies and critical biography. Given the dearth of information in church histories and, indeed, in the church minutes of most Baptist congregations, many historians may argue that information about the role of women in Baptist life is simply not available. Others may argue that women have not been significantly involved in Baptist life or that because history has been written by men and about men there is insufficient evidence to draw an analysis of the role women have played. Yet, perhaps the problem is not simply the lack of sources, but the type of sources which have been examined.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RELIGION AND THE PROBLEM OF SOURCES

In her formative essays on women in the Renaissance, Joan Kelly called on historians to take into account a number of factors when considering women and history: (1) the regulation of female sexuality as compared with male sexuality; (2) women's economic and political roles, i.e. the work they performed as compared with men and their access to property, political power, and the education and training needed for work, property and power; (3) the cultural roles of women in shaping the outlook of their society and access to the education and/or institutions necessary for this; (4) ideology about women, in particular the sex-role system displayed or advocated in the symbolic products of the society, its art, literature and philosophy.²¹ Any attempt to address these concerns, in Kelly's opinion, calls attention to the need for an awareness of women's roles in both public and private spheres.

Those writing after Kelly have continued to explore the roles of women in public and private spheres, though some have called into question any assumption that the boundaries of private spheres and public spheres have ever been rigid. Instead, historians, such as Diane Willen, have argued that in some cases women moved beyond the private into the public sphere, 'albeit in ways that did not call into question or threaten the traditional patriarchy or hierarchy.'²²

The idea of exploring the role of women in public and private spheres may be particularly helpful for the study of women in Baptist life. Here the public sphere may be broadly identified with the 'institutional' life of the church. This would include meetings of local churches, associations, state or national bodies, as well as

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associated auxiliary bodies. It follows, then, that men who have written 'institutional history' have largely focused on the public sphere. Their primary sources for studying Baptist life have been the 'official' records of local churches and associations. These records were usually kept by a male member of the congregation and women were mentioned only when they joined the church, transferred their membership, or, as sometimes happened, faced the censure of the congregation when they were disciplined for misconduct.

Since it has been customary for the religious activity of women to be perceived as belonging to the private sphere, it is not surprising that little information can be found in these official 'institutional' records. The problem, however, is not that the records were kept by a male member of the congregation, as is sometimes supposed, but that they were records which described life in the 'public' sphere. There are examples, of course, such as the few which Briggs pointed to in his article on 'She Preachers, Widows and Other Women', which seem to highlight the fact that women held leadership roles in the church. Instead of arguing that these prove that women held leadership roles in the public sphere (which again seems to be a way of looking at women only from the dominant-male, 'institutional perspective'), perhaps it would be possible to say that they are examples of instances when women managed to find ways to enter the public sphere without threatening the male hierarchy within the structures of Baptist life.

SOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF BAPTIST WOMEN

If Baptist historians are to include women in the denominational story, it is imperative that they begin to look for new sources which point to the ways (albeit, considered gender-appropriate and non-threatening to male patriarchy), by which women were able to cross over the boundaries from private to public spheres. There are a number of sources which might prove helpful.

For many years historians have noted the value of diaries and journals.²³ Scholars undertaking Puritan studies, for instance, have found that journals provide much insight into spirituality and devotion.²⁴ Given the Puritan/Separatist roots of Baptists, not surprisingly, there are examples of some Baptists who kept diaries and journals. Sermon diaries were particularly common during the eighteenth century among Baptists who were literate.²⁵ These journals will often include comments on the sermon or references to ministers or church meetings.²⁶ However, there are other personal journals which may offer the historian insight into spirituality and devotion, as well as giving a particular perspective on life within the 'public' sphere or the community of faith.²⁷

In addition to journals, Baptist historians wishing to focus on critical biographies or regional studies will discover that personal papers and correspondence enable one to explore participation in the life of a community of faith and often give perspectives on theology and devotion. Some attention has been given to correspondence of missionaries in Baptist life but, as already noted, these have generally been studies made from the vantage point of writing 'institutional' history and exploring contributions mainly within the 'public' sphere.

One of the most useful sources for the study of Baptist women may be the exploration of different types of literature.²⁸ For instance, although Baptist historians have recognised the way A. C. Dayton's novel, *Theodosia Ernest, or the Heroine of Faith* (1865), was used to spread the ideas reflected in Landmarkism among Southern Baptists in America, little has been done to explore the impact of fiction on Baptist life. Yet, novels may represent one way that women moved beyond the private to the public sphere in Baptist life. While an invaluable source for study, historians will realise the need to approach a study of literature with some caution. Literature may

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often indicate the way women were portrayed or wished to be portrayed. That is, fictional accounts offer impressions of the perceived role of Baptist women, or at least what they wanted it to be, or perhaps thought it should be.

Susan H. Lindley has pointed to the value of studying novels in her article, 'Women and the Social Gospel Novel'. While they are not factual accounts of church life, as Lindley points out, (1) novels may offer historians a way of exploring less 'professional' theological aspects of the Social Gospel movement; (2) novels may offer insight into roles of women (for even male authors found it difficult to write a story without women figures); (3) novels were 'didactic' and provide insight into a particular set of values and course of action; (4) since it was socially acceptable for women to write novels, they point to ways that women moved beyond the private sphere and offer insight into women's perceptions of religious experience.²⁹

Poetry and hymnody also provide interesting sources for the study of women.³⁰ Some attention has been given to Baptist women hymnwriters, but much more needs to be done if their contribution to theology and devotion is to be realised. Hymnody is an excellent example of the way women were able to cross over from the private to the public sphere without threatening the male patriarchy. Though often barred from the pulpit, it was considered gender appropriate for women to compose verse to be sung by members of the congregation. Hymnody was a means through which believers could give expression to the personal dimension of faith in public worship³¹ and it became a way for women to preach the Gospel.³²

CONCLUSIONS

In an article entitled 'History: Too Much Or Too Little?', Ernest Payne noted that one woman, a Mrs James,³³ was listed as a member of the Baptist Historical Society of Great Britain when it was formed in 1908. The next year, however, he said her name was replaced in the list of members with her husband's name. Payne mused:

Had she strayed by accident or design into the meeting of the Historical Society on April 30th, 1908? Or was it afterwards felt unbecoming for her to be the only woman in an otherwise male society, or alternatively, unfitting for the society to have on its roll a member of the sex not at that time granted the vote? Was it simply a printer's error? Who can tell?³⁴

Today women are no longer excluded from our historical society meetings. Yet, they continue to be largely excluded from the pages of our histories. It is imperative that historians begin to focus on critical biography as well as local and regional history in order to gain a better perspective on women in Baptist life.

It is no longer enough to say that the story of women in the denomination has been told by men and about men. It is time to search for new sources, to examine other sources which will enable historians to move beyond public and private spheres. No longer is it possible to tell the story of Baptists in terms of pastors or institutional leaders. Historians must search for sources which will portray a wider picture of Baptist life, one including all Baptists, men, women, and children, as well as minority groups within Baptist life.³⁵

Church records, of course, are important to any understanding of Baptist life. Yet, to look only at church books and records provides a denominational history which reflects the public, male-dominated, institutional life of the denomination alone. Moreover, it perpetuates a false dichotomy between public and private spheres in religious life. To have a better understanding of women in Baptist life, historians must see that, while the perception of women's roles in Baptist life have been viewed as belonging to the private sphere, women were actively involved in the life of the

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church and found ways to give public expression to their faith, though in ways that did not challenge male patriarchy.

In 1946 the American historian, Mary Beard, wrote that women have been a force in making all of history and should be included in historical accounts.³⁶ Women have been a vital force in Baptist life. However, to tell the story of Baptist women is not a matter of trying to include women in the historical account, but it is to tell the story of Baptist life more fully. Without their story, we do not have the story of Baptist life.³⁷

NOTES

1. Joan Kelly, a Renaissance historian, was one of the first to attempt to construct a 'vantage point' from which to study women in history, see *Women, History and Theory*, Introd. by Blanche W. Cook, Clare Coss, Alice K Harris, Rosalind P. Petchesky and Amy Swerdlow, Chicago 1984.
2. Elizabeth A. Clark, *Ascetic Piety and Women's Faith*, New York 1986; D. A. Johnson, *Women and English Religion 1700-1925*, 1983; Carol and John Stoneburger, eds., *The Influence of Quaker Women on American History*, New York 1986; Susan Mosher Stuard, ed., *Women in Medieval History and Historiography*, Philadelphia 1987; Earl Kent Brown, *Women in Mr Wesley's Methodism*, New York 1983; Roland Bainton, *Women of the Reformation in Germany and Italy*, Minneapolis 1973; Dorothy Bass, *American Women in Church and Society, 1607-1920*, A Bibliography, Auburn Studies in Education, No.2, New York 1973; Penelope Campbell, 'Presbyterian West African Missions: Women as Converts and Agents of Social Change', *Journal of Presbyterian History* 56, 2, 1978, pp.121-132; Susan A. Soerio, 'Feminine Orders in Colonial Bahia, Brazil: Economic, Social and Demographic Implications, 1677-1800', in *Latin American Women*, Asunción Lavrin, ed., 1978, pp.173-197; Linda Frey, Marsha Frey and Joanne Schneider, *Women in Western European History: A Select Chronological, Geographical and Topical Bibliography from Antiquity to the French Revolution*, 1982.
3. McBeth, *Women in Baptist Life*, Nashville 1979, p.9.
4. Elise Boulding, *The Underside of History: A View of Women Through Time*, Boulder Colorado 1976, p.8.
5. B. R. White, 'The Task of the Baptist Historian', *BQ* 22, July 1968, pp.398-9; *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 1983, pp.6-7.
6. White, 'The Task . . .', pp.399,403.
7. Thomas Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, IV, 1740, p.245.
8. Anne Steele (1717-1778) was born in Broughton, Hants, to William and Anne (Froud) Steele. Writing as 'Theodosia', her first volume of poetry, *Poems on Subjects Chiefly Devotional*, was published in 1760. Many of her hymns were later included in John Ash and Caleb Evans, *A Collection of Hymns Adapted to Public Worship* (1769), which became known as the Bristol Collection and was widely used by 18th-century British Baptists until the publication of John Rippon's *A Selection of Hymns from the Best Authors Intended as an appendix to Dr Watts Hymns and Psalms* (1787). See the correspondence of Anne Steele in the Steele Family Papers on micro-film in the Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford: Broughton Church Book III. Ivimey, *History*, IV, p.312.
9. Anne [Williams] Dutton, born in 1692 in Northamptonshire, was married to Benjamin Dutton, pastor of Great Gransden Baptist Church, Huntingdonshire. Under the pen name 'one who has tasted that the Lord is gracious', she wrote a number of works and corresponded with the revivalists, Howell Harris, George Whitefield and John Wesley. For a bibliography of her works, see *Transactions of BHS* VII, pp.129-146. For three letters to Doddridge, see G. F. Nuttall, ed., *Calendar of Correspondence of Philip Doddridge, 1702-1751* (Historical Manuscripts Commission 1979), pp.192,309. She is also noted by G. F. Nuttall in 'Continental Pietism and the Evangelical Movement in Britain', in J. van den Berg & J. P. van Dooren, eds., *Pietismus und Reveil*, Leiden 1978, and 'Methodism and the Older Dissent', *URC History Society Journal*, October 1981, p.266.
10. Ivimey notes that Elizabeth Ginn was excluded from the church for having 'Unitarian-sentiments', *A History of the English Baptists III*, 1811-30, p.492.
11. Joseph Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists*, III, 1811-30.
12. W. T. Whitley, *A History of British Baptists*, 2nd edn. rev. 1932, p.viii.
13. Carolyn Weatherford [Crumpler], 'Shaping of Leadership Among Southern Baptist Women', *Baptist History and Heritage* XXII 3, July 1987, noted that in 850 pages women are mentioned on only 66.
14. Briggs is presently working on *The English Baptists of the Nineteenth Century*, to be published by Baptist Historical Society of Great Britain. It is hoped that he will include more women in the story than were included in the companion volumes, B. R. White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 1983, and Raymond Brown, *The English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century*, 1986. (It is understood that White's volume is being revised to include a

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- chapter on 'Women in Marriage and Ministry'.)
15. J. H. Y. Briggs, 'She Preachers, Widows and Other Women: the feminine dimension in Baptist life since 1600', *BQ* 31 7, July 1986, p.334.
 16. W. H. Brackney, *The Baptists*, 1988, p.302. His analysis of Baptist historiography worldwide seems to be an accurate one. Except for his article, 'An Agenda for the Eighties', *American Baptist Quarterly*, I 1, October 1982, pp.40-42, the study of women in Baptist life has not been highlighted in any of the bibliographical and historiographical essays presented in the last forty years. See, for example, Winthrop Hudson, 'Themes for Research in Baptist History', *The Chronicle* XVII 1, January 1964, pp.3-23; Gaylord P. Albaugh, 'Themes for Research in Canadian Baptist History', *Foundations* VI 1, January 1963, pp.42-55; Edward C. Starr, 'Research in Baptist History', *The Chronicle* XVI 3, July 1963, pp.129-133; Edwin S. Gaustad, 'Themes for Research in American Baptist History', *Foundations* VI 2, April 1963, pp.146-173. H. Wayne Pipkin, 'Resources for the Study of Baptist History in Europe', *American Baptist Quarterly* I 1, October 1982, pp.69-73. William C. Fletcher, 'Historiography of the Russian Baptists', *BQ* 22, July 1968, pp.371-4.
 17. A. S. Clement, *Great Baptist Women*, 1955, preface.
 18. *Ibid.*
 19. *Ibid.*
 20. Roger Hayden, 'Writing the History of a Local Baptist Church', *BQ* 22, July 1968, pp.409-17, provides some helpful direction and information on this subject. Examples of local and regional history among British Baptists may be found in *The Records of a Church of Christ in Bristol, 1640-1687*, ed. Roger Hayden, Bristol Record Society, XXVII, Bristol 1974. *English Baptist Records 1: The General Baptist Church of Berkhamsted, Chesham and Tring, 1712-1781*, transcribed by L. G. Champion, 1985. K. E. Smith, 'The Community and the Believer: A Study of Calvinistic Baptist Spirituality in Some Towns and Villages of Hampshire and the Borders of Wiltshire, c. 1730-1830', unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1986.
 21. Joan Kelly, 'Did Women Have A Renaissance', in *Women, History and Theory*, Chicago 1984, p.20.
 22. Diane Willen, 'Women in the Public Sphere in Early Modern England: The Case of the Urban Working Poor', *Sixteenth Century Journal* XIX 4, 1988, p.569. See also *Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Literary and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Mary Beth Rose, Syracuse Univ. Press, 1986.
 23. Quakers and Methodists have made wide use of diaries in their efforts to explore life and thought within their traditions.
 24. Daniel B. Shea, *Spiritual Autobiography in Early America*, Princeton 1968; Patricia Caldwell, *The Puritan Conversion Narrative: The Beginnings of American Experience*, Cambridge 1983.
 25. According to Roy Porter, literacy among the population in Britain in the 18th century is not easily judged. He estimates almost all the males from the middle class and above were literate, but only half of the labouring men, while the women were proportionately less literate. *English Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 1982, p.183.
 26. For an early example of these diaries, see 'London Preaching about 1674', *BQ* 1922-23, pp.233-35; Ernest Payne, 'The Diaries of John Dyer', *BQ* 13, 1949-50, pp.253ff, pp.303ff; Ernest Payne, 'The Diaries of Joseph Ash', *BQ* 22, July 1968, pp.352-59.
 27. See for example, *Memoir of Mrs Eliza Ann Chipman*, ed. Allen B. and Carlene E. B. Robertson, in *Baptist Heritage in Atlantic Canada*, Baptist Historical Committee and Acadia Divinity College, Hantsport, N.S., 1989. Other journals of Canadian Baptist women are also mentioned in the introduction to this volume.
 28. This author is currently completing a study of deathbed testimonies of Baptist women in the 19th century.
 29. Susan H. Lindley, 'Women and the Social Gospel Novel', *Church History* 54, 1985, pp.56-73.
 30. G. Malmgreen, *Religion in the Lives of English Women, 1760-1830*, 1986.
 31. M. F. Marshall and J. Todd, *English Congregational Hymns in the Eighteenth Century*, Lexington, Kentucky 1982.
 32. Significantly, hymns were often a way of summing up Gospel teaching in Baptist churches and often it became the practice for a hymn to be sung at the end of the sermon to sum up the content of the sermon. On more than one occasion, a hymn written by Anne Steele was sung at the Broughton church after her father, William Steele, preached. See the diaries of Anne [Cater] Steele, on microfilm, Angus Library, Oxford.
 33. Isabel [Riley] James was born in Middleton-in-Teesdale and educated at Gateshead H.S. and Home and Colonial Froebel Training College in London. According to Ernest Payne, she held the first meeting of the Baptist Women's Home Auxiliary (later Baptist Women's League) in her home in 1908. A leader among Baptists, James served as president of the Baptist Women's League in Britain (1916) and addressed the women's meeting of the Baptist World Alliance in 1911 and 1923. She and her husband, Russell James, FES, were personal members of the Baptist Union from 1907 and 1905 respectively. E. A. Payne, *The Baptist Union: A short history*, 1959, p.165; *The Baptist Who's Who*, 1933, p.135; *The Baptist World Congress: Record of Proceedings*, 1911, pp.167-171, and *Third Baptist World Congress: Record of Proceedings*, 1923, pp.125-6.
 34. Payne, 'History: Too Much, Too Little', *BQ* 22, July 1968, p.389.
 35. In addition to the inclusion of women, we need to think of ways to include other minority or ethnic groups in our history writing. For instance, some attention has been given to a history of work with the hearing impaired in

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- Southern Baptist life by Donnie Wiltshire, *In That Day, An Interpretive History of Southern Baptist Deaf Work*, Lafayette, Louisiana, 1988.
36. Mary R. Beard, *Woman As A Force In History*, New York 1946.
37. Since the writing of this article two important items appear in W. H. Brackney and Ruby J. Burke, eds., *Faith, Life and Witness*, Birmingham, Alabama, 1990: the late Heather Voss, 'The Ministry of Women in the Baptist Churches of the USSR', pp.129-138, and Eljee Bentley, 'Women of the Southern Baptist Convention', pp.138-146.

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REVIEW

B. Hall, *Humanists and Protestants, 1500-1900*, T. & T. Clark, 1990, 380pp, £12-95

Successive generations of students at Cambridge and Manchester have reason to be thankful to Basil Hall for his succinct and perceptive lectures on Reformation themes. That interest remains the heart of this volume of his collected essays. Starting with the importance of Biblical Humanism, Hall presents two lengthy evaluations of the contributions of the early Spanish reformer, Cardinal Ximenez of Toledo inspired the production of the Complutensian Bible which set down purified Greek, Latin and Hebrew texts of the scriptures, before the Inquisition put such activities under threat. Erasmus, Dutch promoter of that same trilingual scholarship so crucial to Biblical Humanism, sought to apply his un-scholastic 'philosophia Christi' to the practical reform of the church.

The Reformation itself is here approached through Hall's study of 'The Reformation City' (which amongst other things puts the Münster episode in the context of other urban responses to reformation teaching); Bucer's concept of Diakonia; the lost hopes of the Colloquies of Christendom in the critical years between 1539 and 1541, one of history's great 'might have beens', seen here as a prelude to the establishment of the Joint Committee of the WCC and the Secretariat for Unity; the life of the wandering Polish Reformer, John a Lasco, and his resistance to credalism; and the inconsequential history of Lutheranism in England which had pretty well run its day by the end of the sixteenth century.

Three further essays take us into the seventeenth century: the first enters the minefields of definitions of puritanism, robustly attacking the generalisations of general historians hitting out at Trevelyan, Tawney and Hill, though the ecclesiastical historians, H. C. Porter, Patrick Collinson and Richard Greaves, scarcely fare better, whereas S. R. Gardiner of an older generation receives high praise. Hall's remedy is an etymological trail through seventeenth-century usage which, referring to both John Robinson and Thomas Helwys, properly distinguishes separatist from puritan in the period 1570-1640, and argues against the use of the general term Puritan in the period thereafter. This naturally leads into contrasting studies of Defoe and Swift as dissenter and churchman, both of whom it is argued perpetuated the 'reverent scepticism' of Erasmus.

The last essay is a 50-page study of Alessandro Gavazzi, a priest of the Risorgimento, and chaplain to Garibaldi's forces, who was driven by Pionono's desertion of the revolution and the rising tides of ultramontaniam to desert his Catholic faith and found his Free Church of Italy. In Gavazzi's life the religious aspirations embraced by the risorgimento are made clear, but his Free Church of Italy, Erasmian as much as reformed, never became the force he hoped for within a united Italy, and after 1905 merged into Methodism which itself was to unite with the Waldensians, the most ancient heralds of the evangelical faith of Italy.

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