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## NOTES

- 1 Future references to *The Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan* (1976-) will be cited in the text as *MW*.
- 2 Kaufmann's point that providence is the key to understanding *Mr Badman* does not contradict mine about the importance of conduct-books; his simply emphasizes another aspect of this remarkable work.

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Patricia Crawford, *Women and Religion in England 1500-1720*, London/New York: Routledge, 1993, pp.x, 268. ISBN 0-425-01696-7.

Baptists, who have long cherished the concept of the priesthood of *all* believers, should be among the first to welcome the relatively recent emphases among historians on social and women's history. In this respect this latest book in Routledge's *Christianity and Society in the Modern World* series is of special interest. The focus of the author, who teaches at the University of Western Australia, is on the role of women in the entire gamut of English-speaking Christianity, from Catholics to Quakers. Yet she has two significant sections about the way Baptist women lived out their faith (pp.147-152 on 'Theories and practices of family relationships in Baptist and Independent churches'; pp.198-204 on female religious experience and spirituality in Particular and General Baptist churches between 1660 and 1720), as well as various other insights and reflections about female Baptist experience interwoven throughout the book.

Crawford's main thesis, amply demonstrated, is that religious experience 'was of central importance in the lives of women in England in the early modern period'

(p.209), and that especially in the 1640s and 1650s female participation in religious debates profoundly shaped the course of historical events. In this period, for example, we learn of Elizabeth Poole, a member of William Kiffin's congregation in London. On 29 December 1648 and 4 January 1649, Poole appeared before the Army Council with the backing probably of Oliver Cromwell and Henry Ireton. She urged the council to bring Charles I to trial, but to spare his life. Supporting this message of clemency was a vision that she had received from 'the babe Jesus' within her (p.109, 137). Crawford takes particular note that such language is unique to women. While men during this period spoke of Christ within them, women like Poole had recourse to female metaphors drawn from pregnancy and lactation (p.17). Poole's message was eventually rejected by the Council and she herself excommunicated from her church (p.137), but Crawford sees her experience as a good example of 'the political importance of female prophecy' (p.136).

Indeed, discussion of female speech loomed large in Baptist circles during the 1600s. For instance, the Particular Baptist churches in the Abingdon Association debated during the 1650s 'how far a woman may speak in the church and how far not', concluding that women should not be allowed to preach or lead the congregation in prayer (p.147). Such resolutions were not always accepted demurely. Around 1657 Sarah Latchet, who eventually became a Quaker, interrupted a Baptist minister, Thomas Ewins, during his sermon. As he was preaching, Latchet began speaking in a loud voice so as to be heard, Ewins' response was brutal: 'it were fitter such a idle huswife were wipt, and sent . . . to work, than to go about rayling at people as she did' (p.151). Nor did all Baptists agree with the perspective of the Abingdon Association. The General Baptist church that met in Bell Alley, Coleman Street, London, during the 1640s had a female preached, Mrs Attaway, who could attract a congregation of over a thousand on Tuesday afternoons (p.135). In the 1690s the Horsleydown congregation that Benjamin Keach pastored allowed women 'to speake and sing, to teach and admonish in the Worship and servis of God in his Church' (p.198). Though, with regard to the latter, Crawford notes the ironic situation that transpired when Mary Leader publicly maintained that giving women such a large role in the church was unscriptural. Keach refused to believe that Mary's views were her own, and blamed her husband for them. 'You have finely dragg'd her up', he told Luke Leader (pp.198-9)! Little wonder that Crawford can comment that 'women's position in the Baptist churches remained ambiguous' in the years between 1660 and 1720 (p.203).

Yet some of Crawford's judgments are open to dispute. For instance, deaconesses in the Broadmead Church in Bristol were required to be sixty years of age and either unmarried or widowed, leading to Crawford's comment that 'apparently Baptists shared the conventional assumption that women were insatiable for sex until well after the menopause' (p.201). This might be the case - or it could simply be another example of Baptist primitivism and desire to model the church after the ecclesial blueprint found in Scripture, here I Timothy 5.9, 11,14. Such minor disagreements aside, Crawford is to be commended for a fine study that breaks new ground and points out new directions for Baptist research and reflection.

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