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JOURNAL
of the
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HISTORY SOCIETY

(incorporating the Congregational Historical Society founded 1899,
and the Presbyterian Historical Society of England, founded 1913)

EDITORS: Revd. Prof. R. BUICK KNOX, M.A., B.D., Ph.D., and
Revd. JOHN H. TAYLOR, B.D.

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Editorial

We are pleased to introduce this, the first issue of the new *Journal* of the new Society, to our readers. It is in succession to the *Transactions* of the Congregational Historical Society which ran to twenty-one volumes and the *Journal* of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England with fourteen.

This issue contains the 73rd and last Annual Lecture of the Presbyterian Historical Society given by Malcolm McAra, the subject of which will be of particular interest to members of the United Reformed Church.

The United Reformed Church is now holding conversations with the branch of the Church known as The Churches of Christ and we are glad to have an article on its faith, history and polity from the Secretary of the Churches of Christ Historical Committee, David M. Thompson, University assistant Lecturer in Modern Church History, Cambridge.

The Constitution of the Society is printed in this issue; the officers and Council are at work; and preparations are made for the first Annual Lecture to be given by our President, Geoffrey Nuttall, during the first General Assembly on 7 May, 3.30 p.m.

We want to continue our policy of making our publication the opportunity for members of the Society to share with one another their interests and work. The Editors and other members of the Council welcome the questions and suggestions you put to them. We particularly like to receive short pieces from students, extracts from documents which strike one as having some special significance. We are always prepared to discuss with correspondents projected articles. We want this to be truly the members' *Journal*.

The United Reformed Church History Society

Constitution

- 1 The title of the Society shall be "The United Reformed Church History Society". The Society incorporates the Congregational Historical Society and the Presbyterian Historical Society of England (hereinafter called "the constituent societies").
- 2 The membership of the Society shall consist of those persons who immediately before the adoption of this Constitution were members of either of the constituent societies and such other persons who are interested in the objects of the Society as shall be admitted to membership by vote of the Council. Associations, including churches, colleges and libraries may be admitted in like manner as corporate members.
- 3 Each member, other than a member who was previously a life member of either of the constituent societies, shall pay such annual subscription as shall be fixed from time to time by vote of the Annual General Meeting, such subscription to be due and payable within one month after such meeting, provided that the subscriptions payable respectively by individual members and corporate members may be fixed at different amounts.
- 4 The objects of the Society shall be:
 - (a) To encourage interest in and the study of the history of the United Reformed Church with its Congregational and Presbyterian antecedents, their origins, principles, theology, churches and missions.

- (b) To publish a Journal regularly.
 - (c) To provide an Annual Lecture.
 - (d) To encourage the collection and preservation of historical records and where appropriate to act as custodian, by arrangement with the United Reformed Church, of manuscripts, books, portraits, paintings and other relevant objects belonging to the Church.
- 5 A meeting of the members of the Society shall be held once in each calendar year at such time and place as shall be determined by the Council. At that meeting the Secretary and Treasurer of the Society shall present reports for consideration and adoption, and officers of the Council shall be elected. Every member and one representative of each corporate member present at a meeting shall have one vote and no more. Special General Meetings of the Society shall be held at such other times and at such places and for such purposes as may be determined by the Council.
 - 6 The officers of the Society, who shall be elected annually, shall be a President, one or more Vice-Presidents, a Chairman of the Council, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Research Secretary, an Editor and such other officers as the Annual General Meeting shall from time to time appoint. Such officers are eligible for re-election, but the President shall not normally be re-elected to serve for a total period of more than five years.
 - 7 Five persons present shall form a quorum at a General Meeting or at a meeting of the Council.
 - 8 The affairs of the Society shall be managed by a Council which shall consist of the officers, six members elected annually by the Annual General Meeting and four persons appointed from time to time by such Committee of the United Reformed Church as its General Assembly shall determine. The Council shall have power to fill vacancies among the officers and its own membership and make regulations and by-laws for the convening and conduct of its meetings.
 - 9 The Council shall submit a report annually to the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church through the appropriate Department.
 - 10 The Society claims the independence due to a learned Society. The Society is responsible for preserving freedom of expression in its publications and proceedings.
 - 11 This Constitution shall not be amended except at a General Meeting by a majority of the members present and voting. Not less than four weeks' notice of any proposed amendment shall be given to the Secretary who shall communicate the same to all members not less than 14 days before the meeting.

CHURCH HISTORY AND THE CHURCH

Until the years after the Second World War the main pattern of historical studies in theological colleges and divinity faculties in the British Isles was woven around the early and reformation periods and it was assumed that the normative types of reform were the national movements in Germany, Switzerland, England and Scotland, and that Luther, Calvin, Cranmer, and Knox were the key figures to be studied. Moreover, since the basic standard used by these reformers was the Bible and in particular the New Testament, this meant that Protestant scholars concentrated on the Early Church as the purest manifestation of what the Church was meant to be, and much of their energy was devoted to discerning how the reformers had restored their Churches towards that pristine purity. Hence the medieval period was generally looked upon as a millenium of darkness which did not merit study save as a quarry from which to draw illustrations of decadence under papal ascendancy.

John Foxe, in his *Acts and Monuments*, had provided an outline of history wherein he traced a decline from the golden age of the Early Church through a silver age to an earthen age when the rule of the papacy had become the rule of Antichrist; the Reformation had been a deliverance from this thralldom, and Elizabeth I had been providentially empowered to consolidate this new-found liberty and complete the purification of the Church of England from the accretions of the centuries. Foxe's reading of history well accorded with the expanding popular pride and sense of national destiny and it also became the framework of study in the rarer academic atmosphere of Oxford, Cambridge and Dublin. Archbishop Ussher, for example, was deeply influenced by Foxe's outline of history.¹ In the twentieth century, the emotional devotion to the idea of Britain's divinely-ordained imperial destiny has faded but there still exist signs of the powerful influence exercised by Foxe's scheme of study. Many university courses leading to theological degrees can still be covered without making any study of the medieval period and in Cambridge, for example, it is possible to gain a theological degree without any study of the Reformation.

There has, however, been a growing awareness that the picture of the Church's history is distorted if it concentrates only upon the early and reformation periods. The Reformation arose out of the medieval Church and was shaped by the reaction against the abuses and accretions of that Church. The forms which emerged out of the upheaval bore obvious resemblances to the medieval antecedents

¹Knox, R. B., *James Ussher*, p. 107 ff.

and can only be understood in the light of those precedents. A cathedral chapter and a presbytery visitation, to mention only one feature each from the structure of the Church of England and of the Church of Scotland, owe their form largely to the medieval background. Secular historians have long been aware of this pedigree and ecclesiastical historians have had to take notice of the fresh outlook. Theological faculties in the new universities have given the study of the medieval Church a place in their curricula. For example, the Faculty of Theology of the University of Wales has been in existence for fifty years and though it has been strongly shaped by the non-episcopal Churches no candidate for a degree can avoid at least a general acquaintance with the sweep of the Church's history across twenty centuries. Moreover, recent contacts between Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches and the self-criticism inside the Roman Catholic Church have made those in the reformed tradition more aware of the extent to which their thought and life have been shaped by the medieval inheritance. There has also been a fresh appreciation of medieval spirituality and culture which the corruptions were not able to quench. It is worthy of note that Dr. Geoffrey Nuttall has recently produced a study of Dante.²

A further and perhaps more dramatic upheaval of the traditional study has been caused by a new interest in the sixteenth and seventeenth-century agitation for a more drastic reform of the churches and a more thorough eradication of the vestigial remnants of the papacy. This agitation arose all over Europe and assumed various indigenous forms and displayed varying degrees of intensity ranging from a moderate puritanism through anabaptism to the multiplicity of groups claiming to have received a special illumination. Any reformer has to face the possibility that he will unleash aspirations and forces which will go far beyond what he has contemplated. This happened at the time of the Reformation. Luther was appalled at the movements which emerged and claimed that they were carrying on his work. The ferocity with which these movements were repressed by both Protestant and Roman Catholic authorities was a measure of their fear of what had arisen in the wake of the reform. Protestant historians have on the whole regarded these trends as eccentricities to be passed by on the other side and as unscriptural excesses, antisocial upheavals and antinomian subversions of personal morality.

During the past decade a spate of learned studies by ecclesiastical and secular historians has gone far to compensate for the previous neglect of these movements. *The Radical Reformation* by Professor

²Nuttall, G. F., *The Faith of Dante Alighieri*.

G. H. Williams of Harvard University and *Patterns of Reformation* by Professor E. G. Rupp of Cambridge University are two wide-ranging surveys within the field. Aspects of the British scene have been investigated by Dr. Geoffrey F. Nuttall in *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* and *Visible Saints*. Recently there have appeared two works dealing with the more extreme manifestations of the movement, B. S. Capp's *The Fifth Monarchy Men: a study in seventeenth-century English Millenarianism*, and Christopher Hill's *The World turned upside down: radical ideas during the English Revolution*. Hill has a vast knowledge of the pamphlet literature thrown up by the movements of the period and he has an uncanny ability to draw upon the apt quotation to build up the case he wishes to build.

This upsurge of interest in this vigorous ferment may in part be the academic urge to explore hitherto uncharted territory and to find material for theses and books but it also arises from a discomfort with many aspects of the main traditions and to a new respect for movements which have a modern parallel in Pentecostal groups, especially in Latin and South America.

In the main Protestant traditions there have been elements of authoritarian intolerance which have become increasingly unpalatable, especially to those inside these traditions. For example, Samuel Rutherford was a devout Scottish minister and scholar and his letters have brought enlightenment to many readers in subsequent generations and his sermons included passionate appeals for a free decision for Christ but there was another side to his teaching. He launched fierce attacks upon all demands for liberty of conscience which he regarded as demands for licence to flout the will of God which had been infallibly set forth in the sacred Scriptures, and which the Church and its ministers, though not infallible, could set forth authoritatively. Unless this was obeyed the way was open for 'millions of faiths with millions of senses and so no faith at all'.³ Such liberty would undermine

all certainty of believing, all steadfastness, rooting and unmovable establishing in the truth, all life of consolations and comforts in the Scriptures, all peace of heavenly confidence, all joy unspeakable and full of glory, all lively hope, all patient and submissive waiting for the fruits of the harvest, all wrestling in prayer, all gloriation in tribulation, and all triumphing in praising, all rejoicing in Spirit.⁴ Rutherford considered that he was softening the seeming rigidity of his policy by saying that the demand for conformity should not

³Rutherford, S., *A Free Disputation against pretended Libersted of Conscience*, p. 28.

⁴*Ibid.* To the Reader, and also see pp. 194, 255, 352, 362.

extend beyond conformity to the fundamental positions but then as now the attempt to define fundamentals was an exercise on which unanimity was not easily found.⁵ Moreover, he could also argue that the demand for conformity was never intended to ensure a genuine response to Christ but was a law of God and of the land designed to ensure the health of both Church and State; there could be no presumption that all conformists were true believers.⁶

A similar attitude was adopted by John Hacket who was Bishop of Lichfield from 1661 to 1670; he assumed that the Church of England had the exclusive right to proclaim the Gospel and to force the people to conform. He held that no one had the right to scandalise God's glory⁷ and when Christ replied to Satan with the words 'Thou shalt worship the Lord' he made it plain that 'the outward act of worship and adoration is enjoined continually even to the spirits of damnation'. There was thus no injustice in forcing even apostate spirits to acknowledge God.⁸ To allow unfettered freedom was to permit one sinner to affect a thousand more; 'one ring leader is a shoal of heretics'; 'a drop of poison mars a glass of nectar'.⁹

These two instances are typical of the outlook which prevailed in the established churches of the time and it was long before this triumphalism was dissolved. To-day there is an understanding of the protest that it was hypocritical to preach and appeal for a free decision for Christ while at the same time the hearers were being threatened with penalties if they did not at least outwardly conform.

Further, the case for infant baptism seems less assured if it takes place as a result of governmental pressure or of social convention. The failure of parents to take baptismal vows seriously and the widespread reluctance to commit infants to a way of life before they have a capacity to examine it for themselves have led to queries concerning the New Testament basis for the rite and this in turn has led to a greater readiness to re-examine the arguments of the Anabaptists.

Again, the reformed churches accorded a unique place to ministers as the authorised and exclusive expositors and heralds of the Word. Calvin could say that God did not want to be heard save through his ministers.¹⁰ This monopoly could be defended in an age when ministers were often the only persons in the parish with even a moderate education but even then there were unlearned preachers who arose among the agitating groups and challenged both the

⁵*Ibid*, chapter V; also his *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, p. 521 ff.

⁶Rutherford, *A Free Disputation*, pp. 46, 50, 52.

⁷Hacket, J., *A Century of Sermons*, p. 73.

⁸*Ibid*, p. 484.

⁹*Ibid*, p. 528.

¹⁰Quoted by R. S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament*.

competence and belief of the ministers. Much of the pamphlet literature of the seventeenth century centred upon this issue. In the twentieth century it is obvious that ministers can no longer use pulpits to prime the views of hearers whose competence in so many fields must exceed that of the ministers. In seeking to discern the role of the ministry there is now a readiness to reconsider the old controversies. Authority in both Church and State tended to look upon people in the mass as the mob whose voice was seldom, if ever, the voice of reason or of God, and yet there was an increasing awareness of the power of public opinion and agitators were not slow to try to mould this power. John Milton was a notable critic of authority, both civil and ecclesiastical, and he believed in the power of truth to win its way by its own inner cogency without the apparatus of external compulsion; his *Areopagitica* was a powerful plea for freedom from pre-publication censorship, though he also made it clear that authors could be called to account for their views and punished if they violated proper standards. The definition of standards was a difficult issue and Milton fell back to a position where he held that illumination and wisdom required meditation and time for reflection; these could only be had by those who had leisure, that is, by those who had sufficient wordly affluence to allow them this leisure. He became more disillusioned with both people and their rulers and died not only in darkness of sight but in considerable darkness of spirit.¹¹

This is a live issue in the twentieth century when the views of the people are shaped by the newspapers and the broadcasting services and where churches have to make themselves heard amid the welter of competing and often hostile voices and where they are often baffled in trying to decide what the Gospel is saying to the times. All this prepares the way for a fresh look at the seventeenth-century agitators and at the way they had to learn to live in the world. This has paved the way for a book such as Hill's *The World turned upside down* wherein we see groups who believed themselves to be pilgrims passing through this world yet seeking to reshape or overturn its affairs. Sometimes Hill's conclusions are debatable as when he pictures the taming of the Quakers among whom the erstwhile courageous 'sense of the meeting' became the common-sense of a propertied people who no longer wished to turn the world upside down.¹²

A further influence in shaping the fresh awareness of the turbulent movements of the period has been the increasing eminence of American scholars who have been the products of a society where

¹¹For studies of Milton and his thought see W. R. Parker, *Milton* (2v.).

¹²Hill, C., *The World turned upside down*, p. 299.

ecstatic forms of Christianity have been common, the rough conditions of the frontier leading to improvisation and individualism. Groups had to depend upon the persuasion of their message, the warmth of their fellowship and the zeal of their propaganda. Scholars from this background have depicted many aspects of this effervescent phenomenon and English Congregationalists in particular have been made aware of a parallel strand in their own heritage which includes not only the exhaustive treatises of John Owen and the classical hymnology of Isaac Watts but also John Lanseter of Bury St Edmunds¹³ whose strange ministry can be included in what Ronald Knox was pleased to call 'the annals of Christian abnormality'¹⁴.

Within this whole exuberant strand in the life of the Church there were elements of evangelical zeal, spontaneous worship, biblical depth and mystic aspirations and the study of these elements can be a serious academic study but they are also part of a living tradition and have their place, for example, in the pedigree of the United Reformed Church. It may be that the United Reformed Church needs to reclaim and make room for the immediacy and exhilaration associated with this strand in its tradition and to see it with what George H. Williams calls 'a new perspective'¹⁵. On the other hand it would be folly to ignore the weaknesses which so often disfigured the story. There was the arrogance of individuals, the triviality of many alleged revelations, the bitterness of divisions, the distortions of the Bible, the scorn of the intellect, the scandals of various immoralities, and the swift dissolution of some groups which claimed to have an eternal message. A continuing criticism must not be smothered by a fresh appreciation. The United Reformed Church History Society has the responsibility of bringing to the service of scholarship and the Church a discriminating and sympathetic study of all the threads from all the ages which have gone to the making of the heritage in which we stand.

What Dr. Nuttall has said of the seventeenth-century insights can be true of insights derived from all the centuries:

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

R. BUICK KNOX

¹³Morton, A. L., *The World of the Ranters*, p. 27 ff.

¹⁴Knox, R. A., *Enthusiasm*, p.61.

¹⁵Williams, G. H., *The Radical Reformation*, chapter 33.

¹⁶Nuttall, G. F., *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, p. 168.

THE WANDSWORTH PRESBYTERY

I do not know who made the rash suggestion that I should undertake this lecture, but I agreed, almost against my better judgment, simply because I have never refused any duty the Church has laid upon me. I say 'almost against my better judgment' because I am a moral philosopher turned theologian, not a church historian; and yet, when the idea was put to me, I thought it would be interesting to do the research required. It was only then, however, that my enquiring spirit was somewhat daunted, for I came across a sentence in Patrick Collinson's *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (1967) where, after reviewing the evidence he writes: '. . . we must hesitate before joining the modern presbyterian denomination in celebrating November 20th as their anniversary.'¹ That was a cold douche indeed for your aspiring lecturer! However, I think Collinson is unsympathetic to the Presbyterian desire for reform and since there can be no real understanding without sympathy I was encouraged to pursue the enquiry.

Obviously our first task is to understand the context and period in which this event occurred. Our second is to survey the historical evidence and assess its trustworthiness. And only then to seek to interpret it, consistent with our knowledge of the Reformed theology of that period.

The Background

Dr. H. C. Porter, in *Puritanism in Tudor England* (1970) states what he thinks are the four main divisions of Tudor puritan history.² These are (i) the tradition of the separatists; (ii) the evangelical puritans within the Church of England who wanted greater reformation, but did not want either to separate from, or completely to change the church; (iii) what he calls 'the tradition of rhetorical and radical indignation and dissent'; (iv) the 'presbyterian' attempt to establish the Godly Discipline within the English Church in the 1570-80's. Our subject would fall, I suppose in section (iv), but it is to be noted that Dr. Porter includes Field's *A View of Popish Abuses* (1572) in section (iii), while he includes Cartwright in section (iv). It is clear that a neat division of this sort is not possible; and it is important that we start by recognising that everything was in the melting pot in the year with which we deal.

Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558. She had been brought up as a Roman Catholic without the Pope. She strongly cherished the Tudor idea of the Monarch's supremacy, and inherited from her father the conviction that this included supremacy over the

¹*Op.cit.*, p. 138.

²*Op.Cit.*, p. 9

Church in England. As McGrath says: 'She was not prepared to tolerate either a pope of Rome or a pope who had learned his business in Geneva'.³ The political situation encouraged her to maintain the supremacy, for England was weak. Spain and France, both Roman Catholic countries, threatened her, and Elizabeth was anxious not to do anything in her religious settlement to upset them. She also had to contend with protestant exiles returned from the Continent. These considerations, rather than any strong religious convictions, made Elizabeth try to thwart extreme reforming tendencies in the Church and she was fortunate in having Archbishops of the calibre of Parker, Whitgift and Bancroft to carry out her instructions.

Elizabeth began in 1559 with an Act of Uniformity which established the Prayer Book worship of Edward VI's reign — with certain alterations and the Communion Service to do with the real presence of Christ, kneeling to receive the Elements, and the use of vestments. It also included the signing of the cross in Baptism, the use of wafers instead of bread in the Communion and bowing at the name of Jesus. The service was so long that the sermon was often omitted. Naturally the Protestants were upset. They looked for a more radical reformation.

We must be careful in the first place not to use the adjectives 'puritan' and 'presbyterian' in an anachronistic way. I say 'adjectives' because in 1572 we are not dealing with parties, and there was, at this stage, no question of separation from the Church of England. Archbishop Parker used the word 'precisians' i.e. precise men, in a letter to Cecil on 21 January 1570-1.⁴ He uses the word 'puritan' for the first time in his letters, in a letter to Lord Burghley dated 16 September 1572.⁵ 'Separatist' did not appear in print until Robert Browne's *Autobiography* in 1583, and Barrow's *Four Causes of Separation* in 1587 — both well outside our period.

Secondly, we must also remember that most of the people had been nurtured in the old faith of Rome, and that education was at a low stage of development except among the privileged few. This accounts for the fact that it was in the universities that non-conformist tendencies first showed themselves, and at first, in Cambridge more strongly than in Oxford. The reason lies in the lectures given in 1570 by Thomas Cartwright, the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, on the first two chapters of The Acts of The Apostles. In these lectures he dealt with the structure of the Church as it appears

³P. McGrath, *Papists and Puritans under Elizabeth I*, 1967, p.10.

⁴Parker's Letters, p. 377.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 398.

in the two chapters, and used them to urge that the only 'officers' of the church should be pastors and deacons, and that the rule of bishops should be replaced by that of the minister and presbytery of the local church.

Cartwright made a great impression on his students and contemporaries, among whom were many who later took an important part in spreading presbyterian ideas. But it is a mistake to see these Reformed doctrines as an original discovery, or a new departure. As Dr. Porter says, these debates, 'were seen by contemporaries as part of a story going back at least to A.D.250.' Porter notes that Whitgift wrote, 'That very perfection of an outward *platform* of a church, which you challenge unto yourselves, is one step to novatianism, and well deserveth the name of catharism.'" It is noteworthy that Cartwright uses the same word when, in the *2nd Admonition to Parliament* (1572) he outlined a '*platforme* out of God, his boke . . . according to his will in the same revealed, and the examples of the best churches beyonde the seas, as Geneva, Fraunce etc.'

Thirdly, we must remember that at Elizabeth's accession many of the exiles from the Marian persecutions returned: and indeed we find many of them not only in bishopricks, and parishes, but also as members of parliament. They brought back with them the Reformed doctrines they had learned in Geneva and Frankfurt, and a liking for the 'Forme of Prayers and Ministration of the Sacraments' which was used by John Knox with his Congregation of Marian exiles in Geneva, and which they thought preferable in doctrine and ceremonies to the Book of Common Prayer.

Fourthly, we should note that French and Dutch Reformed congregations were established in London, and the returned exiles would find themselves in great sympathy with their religious outlook. The Church of The Strangers legally authorised by Edward VI in 1550 with A'Lasco as Superintendent was Reformed in doctrine and organisation; and, although A'Lasco left the country in 1555 when Mary came to the throne, Elizabeth allowed the congregations to continue and no doubt they contributed by their encouragement to the strength of the Reformed cause.

This is, in outline, the background against which we must see the Wandsworth Presbytery of 1572. Let us now examine the scanty historical evidence we have about it.

The Historical Evidence

The only information about the first Presbyterian experiment in

*J. Whitgift, *Wks.*, Ed. J. Ayre, I. 74.

'Puritan Manifestoes, Ed. W. H. Frere and C. E. Douglas. 1907, p. 94.

practice of which we have a record comes from Richard Bancroft, a strong opponent of Reformed doctrine, in a book called *Dangerous Positions and Proceedings, published and practised within this Island of Britain under the Pretence of Reformation and for the Presbyterial Discipline*. This was published in 1593, twenty years after the event, when Bancroft was Bishop of London. Bancroft writes:

Whereupon, presently after the said Parliament (viz. the Twentieth of November, 1572) there was a Presbytery erected at Wandsworth in Surrey, as it appeareth by a Bill endorsed with Mr. Field's hand, thus: The Order of Wandsworth. In which Order the Elders Names, Eleven of them, are set down: The Manner of their Election declared: The Approvers of them (one Smith of Mitcham, and Crane of Roughamton) are mentioned: Their Offices and certain general rules (then given unto them to be observed) were likewise agreed upon and described.*

It is to be noted that Bancroft gives as his authority for his account 'a Bill endorsed by Mr. Field's hand'. This 'Bill' is no longer extant; and we must ask what it was and where Bancroft got his knowledge of it.

The latter question is the more easily answered. In his *Advertisement to the Reader* Bancroft writes:

The Author of this Treatise was required by some Persons of Honour . . . to set down by way of an Historical Narration what he had observed touching certain Positions holden, and some enterprises achieved or undertaken, for recommending and bringing the Presbyterial Discipline into this Island of Britain under Pretence of Reformation.

Now Bancroft was Chaplain to Sir Christopher Hatton and to Archbishop Whitgift, both of whom were members of the Court of High Commission, and it is reasonable to conjecture that Whitgift and Hatton were the 'Persons of Honour' in question, since Bancroft can only have had access to the documents of the High Commission through them. Possibly the 'Order of Wandsworth' was found in Field's possession when he and Wilcox were sent to Newgate prison for their part in drawing up the First Admonition to Parliament. As Bancroft refers to it as a 'Bill', doubtless it was a Manuscript which Field had endorsed. Field certainly had no part in the actual setting up of the Presbytery of Wandsworth in 1572, for at that time he was in Newgate prison. There is doubt, therefore, whether Bancroft's date, 20 November, refers to the institution of the Presbytery of Wandsworth or to the date of Field's endorsement of the Order for it; and that question will never be settled since

**Op.Cit.*, I. 66-7.

neither the original 'Bill', nor any copy of it exists.

What, then, was this 'Presbytery' as Bancroft calls it? It cannot have been a presbytery in the modern sense of the word, a church court having jurisdiction over all the congregations within its bounds, since such a church structure did not exist at that time. Bancroft himself always calls what is nearest to our presbytery a 'classis' or conference.⁹ 'There ought to be erected in every church a presbytery', that is a consistory of Elders in every congregation: and in ch. 14 he makes it clear that to do this was the main aim of the 'classes' in his day: '. . . Richard Holmes affirmeth . . . that the Ministers in their Classes have resolved to erect up their several Presbyteries in their own Parishes . . .'

The conference idea appears to have originated in Zurich where it was employed to encourage Bible study. These meetings appear to have had their beginning in England in Cambridge for the same purpose. Chaderton, a Fellow of Christ's College from 1568-1576, is said to have met in a weekly conference which included three puritan thinkers who became well known later, Culverwell, Knewstubb and Carter, and one anglican, Lancelot Andrewes.¹⁰ Later we hear of what is called 'The Prophesying', the dominant aim of which was to encourage and instruct the unlearned clergy in doctrine and Bible study. The classis was a meeting of ministers who met not only for study and preaching, but to exercise some oversight of the parishes in an area. 'This is what I call a conference, where sondry causes within that circuit, being brought before them, may be decided and ended.'¹¹ And it is possible that the London Conference had a good deal to do with the setting up of the Wandsworth Presbytery.

Note that Bancroft only mentions the eleven elders and the way in which they are elected. The only Ministers' names he gives are the two 'approvers', Smith and Crane. The Wandsworth Presbytery cannot have been a Classis. It must have been a congregational consistory, what we should call a Session, although why it should have needed 'approvers' is not clear. Is Bancroft using 'approvers' here in a loose sense, as Collinson maintains he uses the name 'elder'?¹²

This confronts us, however, with the most difficult problem of all. The Vicar of Wandsworth from 1561 to 1585 was John Edwyn who, although a puritan (if we are to believe the *First parte of a Register*), is never mentioned in Bancroft's account, as one would

⁹*Ibid.*, III, ch.10.

¹⁰Collinson, p. 126

¹¹*A Second Admonition to Parliament in Puritan Manifestoes*, p. 108.

¹²Collinson, p.138.

expect him to be if this Wandsworth Presbytery was a parochial session exercising discipline over all the parishioners. There are no Wandsworth Parish records for this period, so it would appear that we shall never be able to solve this mystery, although later we shall try to hazard some conjectures.

Interpretation

How then are we to interpret the scanty historical material which we have? Let me state as an axiom that, in my opinion, any historical interpretation must take account of Reformed doctrine and teaching as they had developed on the continent, as well as in Scotland. During the formulative period of Reformed theology in England according to Professor Chadwick, 'There is not something which one might call an English School of theology, but only English theologians influenced by Wittenberg, or Zurich, or Geneva, or Strasbourg.'¹³ It is precisely this influence which we have to remember. I have argued that the Wandsworth Presbytery was a consistory of elders; but what meaning did people in 1572 give to the word 'Elder'? in Calvin's Geneva Ecclesiastical Ordinances of 1541 we read that the elder's office

is to take care of the life of everyone, amiably to admonish those whom they see weakening, or leading a disorderly life and, where it may be advisable to bear report to the company which will be deputed to apply brotherly correction.¹⁴

As is well known the Genevan Magistrates reserved to themselves the right to pronounce judgment. But did Calvin himself think of the elders as agents of repressive moral judgment? In his draft he had written, 'there should be no strictness that should burden anyone, and even none but medicinal corrections, in order to call the sinners to our Lord'.¹⁵ In other words, as Wendel points out, he regarded the office 'as an aspect of the cure of souls'.¹⁶ Unable to establish church discipline in Geneva, Calvin went to Strasbourg in 1538 where he came into close contact with Bucer. In 1533 Bucer had drawn up a draft of 22 articles of faith in which he states that elders

were to be differentiated from the preachers whose function was to proclaim and interpret the Gospel, while the elders' task was pastoral, to protect and lead God's people so they would be piously taught and live blessed lives.¹⁷

In the first edition of the *Institutes*, published in 1536, Calvin did not mention either elders or consistory. Significantly it was not until he returned from Strasbourg that he embodied them in his

¹³*The English Church and the Continent*, Ed. C. R. Dodwell, p. 61.

¹⁴J. Calvin, Ed. J. Allen, 7th Op. 10a, 22.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, op. 10a, 30.

¹⁶F. Wendel, *Calvin*, 1963, p. 78.

¹⁷M. R. Chrisman, *Strasbourg and the Reform*, 1967, p.216.

own system."¹⁸

Grindal obviously thought the elders had a wider function than the oversight of moral conduct. In 1564 he wrote to William Cole, the preacher of the English merchants in Antwerp, that he should use the English Prayer Book, but take as much or as little of it as he and the elders of the congregation thought advisable.¹⁹

Another and more important reason against interpreting the function and office of an elder as merely a moral censor is the theological views of the Reformers on the relation between faith and works. Calvin, after pointing out that Scripture 'admonishes us that we ought to be holy because our God is holy', continues . . . but the Scripture deduces its exhortation from the true source, when it not only enjoins us to refer our life to God, the author of it, to whom it belongs . . . but adds that Christ, by whom we have been reconciled to God, is proposed to us as an example whose character we should exhibit in our lives . . .

I do not so rigorously require evangelical perfection as not to acknowledge as a Christian one who has not yet attained to it: for then all would be excluded from the Church . . . For he (*i.e. Christ*) everywhere recommends integrity as a principal branch of his worship . . . as though it had been said that the beginning of a life of uprightness is spiritual, when the internal affection of the mind is unfeignedly devoted to God in the cultivation of holiness and righteousness.²⁰

For, as Dr. T. H. L. Parker says, 'this purification is the inward work of the Holy Spirit, who changes the will and affections of the believer, setting him free from sin, giving him victory over temptation, and inspiring him to good works.'²¹

If that be the case, then to do good works because of the censorship of an elder, or for any other reason than an unfeigned devotion to God, would have no value in the sight of God. Remember that this was not only the teaching of Geneva, but also of Frankfurt and Strasbourg with which the returned Marian exiles in parishes up and down the land would be familiar, and it becomes difficult to accept the flat statement that the elders were merely censors of morals. They were certainly that, and there is abundant evidence to prove it, but it is a superficial interpretation of the office of the eldership in the sixteenth century which sees it only as that.

Moreover, this interpretation is borne out by the *Directory of Church-Government* of 1644. Professor Lorimer, in his introduction

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p.228.

¹⁹Collinson, p. 67.

²⁰J. Calvin, *Institutes*, III. vi. 4, 5.

²¹*The Oracles of God*, 1947, p. 91.

to the facsimile, published as a contribution to the Tercentenary commemoration of the Presbytery of Wandsworth justly considers this is substantially the same book 'as that referred to in the proceedings of the Parliament of 1584, and which was annexed to a Petition . . . presented to the Commons by the puritan ministers in which they prayed that the said book "might be from henceforth authorised, put in use and practiced throughout Her Majesty's dominions".' For in the *Directory* we read,

in every particular Church there ought to be a Presbytery, which is a consistory, and as it were a Senate of Elders; under the name of Elders here are contained they whom in the Church minister doctrine, and they whom are properly called Elders.

It is true that the *Directory* goes on to say that it is one of the elder's duties to correct the wicked 'with ecclesiastical censures according to the quality of the fault'; but surely we have to interpret this duty in the whole context of Reformed teaching concerning the elder's pastoral responsibility as set forth by both Bucer and Calvin, and the *Admonition to Parliament* of 1572, in which its authors, drawing on Acts 15: 4 and I Cor. 12: 28 state that, 'concerning Seniors . . . Their office was to governe the Church with the rest of the Ministers, to consulte, to admonish, to correct, and to order all things apperteing to the State of the congregation.' And, 'The final end of this discipline is the reforming of the disordered and to bryng them to repentence, and to bridle such as wold offend.'²² Surely this is a pastoral work.

Collinson brings evidence to show that we must beware of the loose employment of the term elder in contemporary documents. He reminds us that in 1591 Bancroft wrote, 'It is not found as yet for any certainty whether they have hitherto made choice of any elders, but many vehement conjectures that they have'. And, in the previous year, Egerton, Field's close, collaborator, asserted plainly that, 'we abstain from excommunication, because we have no elders as yet.'²³

Dr. R. Buick Knox, in his interesting 1970 Lecture to this Society entitled "A Pedigree for Presbyterianism", says that, 'the appointment of elders was only likely when the government could be won over and become willing to approve the nomination of elders'.²⁴ Certainly this was what the Presbyterians wanted: they were not Separatists, prepared to start a reformation 'without tarrying for anie.' As Cartwright wrote in *A Reply to an Answer*, 'this is no innovation but a renovation'. But there is evidence that they

²²*Puritan Manifestoes*, p.17.

²³Collinson, p. 350f.

²⁴*J.P.H.S.E.*, XIV. 3. p. 91.

were preparing to make a start towards Presbyterianism, not only in the development of the 'propheseyings' into the 'conferences' but also in the matter of elders. For example, Thomas Edmunds of London stated in the Star Chamber that it was their intention to conceal 'the names either of presbytery, elder or deacons, making little account of the names for the time, so as their offices might secretly be established.'²⁵

In this connection it is of significance to remember that in Scotland as early as in 1558 elders were elected in Dundee and Edinburgh; while the *Book of Common Order*, compiled by John Knox, and confirmed in 1562 by the General Assembly of the Scottish Church as 'ane uniforme order to be keepit' contained forms for the election of elders.²⁶ I find it hard to believe that the Protestants in England, many of whom had been in Geneva and had embraced presbyterian views, were ignorant of what was taking place in Scotland in the matter of the eldership, or that even Bancroft, who had a nose to smell out everything which savoured of a puritan view, did not understand fully, in the year 1572, what the office of elder, signified, and used the word loosely, as Collinson suggests.

The members of the Wandsworth Presbytery did not act purely on their own initiative. There was a strong 'conference' in London, of which Field and Wilcox were prominent members. Field and Wilcox were the authors of the *Admonition to Parliament*, presented in 1572, presumably before the last week of June, when both were in Newgate prison. And we remember that Bancroft's record of the Wandsworth Presbytery was based on a 'bill endorsed by Mr. Field's hand'. Collinson tells us that 'we have Thomas Edmund's Star Chamber testimony that the cell formed by Field and Wilcox as early as 1571 continued its meetings . . . and there are some independent traces of its activities?'²⁷ It does not seem to me to be beyond the bounds of reasonable conjecture to think that this 'cell' had a hand in persuading some of the Wandsworth parishioners of puritan persuasion to elect elders. We must remember that then Wandsworth was not in London but in Surrey, and subject to the Bishop of Winchester. John Edwyn, the Vicar of Wandsworth, was examined on 30 April 1584 by the Bishop of Winchester.²⁸ His examination, however, was on *The Book of Common Prayer* only. This raises important questions connected with the Wandsworth Presbytery. Cooper's translation from the episcopate of Lincoln to that of Winchester took place on 12 March 1584, and the election was confirmed on 23 March. For Cooper to have examined Edwyn

²⁵Quoted by Collinson, p. 351.

²⁶J. H. S. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland*, 1960, p. 162.

²⁷Collinson, p. 233.

²⁸*The Second Parte of a Register*.

on 30 April, so soon after his election, suggests that Cooper wasted no time in looking into the burning question of puritanism in his diocese. The Winchester Record Office in a letter to me wrote that 'during most of his episcopate Cooper was much more concerned with recusants than he was with puritans'; but Dr. T. M. Parker gave me facts which show that this statement needs qualification:

(i) Cooper opened the attack on *An Admonition to Parliament* in a sermon at Paul's Cross on 27 June 1572, although he admitted in the sermon that some of the complaints in the *Admonition* were justified.²⁹

(ii) If we may infer it from the initials 'T.C.' Cooper wrote in 1589 *An Admonition to the People of England*, in which he answered the first Marprelate Tracts.³⁰ He had himself been attacked in two tracts, one of which (the third) bore the title, *Ha ye any Worke for the Cooper*, and which was a reply to his *Admonition*.

These facts suggest that, in general, Cooper was an opponent of puritanism, and, since the vacancy in the episcopate of Winchester, created by the death of Bishop John Weston on 23 January 1584, was filled so quickly, Cooper's translation might have been due to the fact that Archbishop Whitgift thought the diocese, which included South London, needed a strong rule: and also perhaps Whitgift decided that his own antipuritan policy could do with reinforcement near London. This would also explain, in some measure, Cooper's examination of Edwyn so early after his confirmation in the See, for the diocesan officials may already have had suspicions of Edwyn before Cooper arrived.

Dr. Parker suggests to me that the fact that Edwyn was examined on the Prayer Book only and not on the Discipline may be due to one of three reasons:

- (1) that Edwyn disliked the Prayer Book but was not interested in the Discipline;
- (2) that the authorities had no incriminating evidence against him in respect of the Discipline when he was examined in 1584. If this were the case he might not have discouraged the attempt to set up a session in Wandsworth even if he took no active part in it;
- (3) that between 1572 and 1584 Edwyn may have changed his views about the Discipline and was in 1584 only a puritan of the anti-Prayer Book kind.

²⁹W. H. Frere, *The Eng. Ch. in the Reigns of Elizabeth and James*, 1904, p. 181.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 251

As we have no evidence to support any of these suggestions, we can only conjecture; and my own view is that, whatever Edwyn's private convictions upon the subject of 'The Discipline', he had not expressed them publicly. His parishioners, therefore, would have had favourable circumstances for setting up a voluntary discipline, as Bucer had suggested in Strasbourg in 1546.³¹

It might be argued that it must remain a mystery how this happened in the way Bancroft said it did without the Vicar of the parish being involved in it. But might he not have been involved without actually taking part? In 1547, in Strasbourg, the Rat rejected Bucer's suggestions for establishing The Discipline, but the congregation of Young St. Peter had called a meeting for 8 November, long before the outbreak of difficulty over discipline. The minister, Paul Fagius decided to permit the meeting to take place, despite the Rat's mandate forbidding all congregational meetings, justifying his action on the grounds that it was his duty to educate and lead his parish.³² Might not John Edwyn have, in a similar way, allowed those of his parish who desired to establish the discipline for themselves to do so without himself taking any leading part?

No doubt the venture was kept secret. This was the general policy later. Bancroft tells us that in the 1580's 'they had dealt long . . . in the Practice of their Discipline after such a secret Manner . . .'³³ And even Bancroft might have remained ignorant of the Wandsworth experiment, had not he seen the 'Bill' endorsed by Field's hand. And if so, who knows how many other experiments of a similar sort may not have taken place?

There is one circumstance which, in my opinion, is relevant which I have never seen mentioned in the discussion of the Wandsworth Presbytery. It is that there was a Huguenot settlement in Wandsworth at this time, strong enough in numbers and influence to obtain from the authorities permission, in 1573, to use a building for worship. The Wandsworth Librarian, in a letter, says that *The Victoria County History of Surrey* (1912) follows Hammond who, in *Bygone Wandsworth* says that, 'the Presbyterian Chapel, built opposite the Parish Church in 1573, was used by the Flemmings already here, and later by Independents and others.' The Huguenot Burial Ground, 200 yards or so away at the top of East Hill, is still in existence. For a long time this congregation used a French translation of the Anglican Prayer Book, but no copy of this trans-

³¹Chrisman, *Op.Cit.*, p.229.

³²Bellardi, *Die Geschichte der Christlichen Gemeinschaft*, p. 97, quoted by Chrisman.

³³*Dangerous Practices*, p. 133.

lation appears to be extant; and we do not know if, or how, 'The Discipline' was exercised. It seems reasonable to conclude, however, that they would follow what, in those days was called 'the face of the best reformed churches on the continent'; and, if so, would have sympathised with and lent encouragement to those who wished to erect a session or senate of elders in the Parish Church of Wandsworth.

A. F. Scott Pearson thought the Wandsworth episode was a separatist movement, but this is highly doubtful if we remember the known views of the leaders of the London Conference at this time who desired not Separatism, but, if we can coin a word, to 'presbyterianise' the Church of England. Moreover Bancroft tells us that in 1588 Coventry decided that 'as yet the people are not to be solicited publicly to the Practice of the Discipline: till they be better instructed in the knowledge of it.'³⁴ And Collinson draws out the implication of this, viz. that the Presbyterian leaders 'did not envisage the immediate conversion of any parishes into publicly organised presbyterian churches.'³⁵ It follows, therefore that this was unlikely to be the case in Wandsworth in 1572.

Cartwright affirmed, according to the Star Chamber Proceedings 33 Eliz. A 56 No 1: 'that neither he, nor any other to his knowledge, had erected, practiced, or put in use the authority or power of an eldership, or presbytery, or any part thereof.' On account of this and other reasons, Scott Pearson concludes that the Wandsworth Presbytery may have been 'a court of a secret and independent body containing congregationalist as well as presbyterian elements.'³⁶ And it is interesting to note that J. M. Ross, who gives a good summary of the historical evidence concerning the Elizabethan Elder thinks that the first experiments in Presbyterianism had a tendency to be Congregationalist in nature, since the Conferences had no official constitutional standing, although there can be little doubt that they were behind them, as the Dedham Minutes show.³⁷ Both Burghleigh and Donaldson make the same point in respect of early Presbyterianism in Scotland.³⁸

We have no idea what the function of the two 'approvers' of the Wandsworth Presbytery, Crane of Roehampton and Smith of Mitcham, can have been unless it was a reversion to the custom of the early church to associate neighbouring presbyters with these occasions. Scott Pearson suggested that Crane of Roehampton might be the

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 87.

³⁵Collinson, p. 351.

³⁶*Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritan*, 1925, p. 80.

³⁷*J.P.H.S.*, 1953 and 1954.

³⁸Burleigh, p. 311; Donaldson, *The Scottish Reformation*, 1960, pp. 81f.

Nicholas Crane, who was a separatist preacher.³⁹ Collinson, however, has reminded us that 'Mr. and Mrs. Crane of Roehampton were among Thomas Wilcox's correspondents,' and he is inclined to identify Crane with 'Anthony Crane, Master of the Queen's Household, and his wife Elizabeth who lived at East Molesey Priory, not far away.' Mrs. Crane after the death of Mr. Crane married in 1589 the Northamptonshire M.P. George Carleton (well known for his puritan sympathies) 'and at about the same time her Thames-side house was made available for the printing of the first of the Marprelate Tracts.'⁴⁰

It may be so; or it may not be so. We just do not know, and we must be content to leave it at that.

MALCOLM McARA

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³⁹Pearson, pp. 74-81.

⁴⁰Collinson, p.138.

CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE BRITISH ISLES 1842-1972

A Historical Sketch

The first conference of Churches of Christ in Great Britain met in Edinburgh on 18 and 19 August 1842, but the origins of the movement go back several years earlier.¹ The main impetus came from the publication in England of the writings of Alexander Campbell. Campbell was the son of Thomas Campbell, a Seceder Presbyterian minister in Ahorey, Co. Armagh, who emigrated to the United States in 1807. Alexander attended classes at Glasgow University before joining his father in the U.S.A., in 1809. In that year Thomas Campbell published his *Declaration and Address*, which was a call for Christian union on the basis of the New Testament.² The Campbells adopted believer's baptism by immersion in 1812, and though they thus became Baptists their relationship with other Baptists was always rather uneasy. Eventually in 1830 they and their followers separated from the Baptists to become the Disciples of Christ.

In 1833 William Jones, a Scotch Baptist pastor in London, heard about the Campbellite movement in America and corresponded with Campbell. He decided to publish a journal to spread these new views and for sixteen months in 1835-36 he edited *The Millennial Harbinger and Voluntary Church Advocate*....The name 'Millennial Harbinger' was copied from Alexander Campbell's own journal, but the material Jones printed was mainly from *The Christian Baptist*, a paper published by Campbell between 1823 and 1830. Jones's paper circulated mainly among Scotch Baptists. They had begun in Scotland in 1768 when Archibald McLean and Robert Carmichael had left the Glasites (founded by John Glas in 1730) because they had come to believe in believer's baptism.³ In the 1790s they had spread to England and North Wales, but outside London were to be found mainly in the Midlands and North. It soon became clear that there were points of divergence between Campbell and the Scotch Baptists, and Jones ceased publication.

¹There is an account of the meeting in the *Christian Messenger* (1842), pp. 279-84. This is the main journal of Churches of Christ with a continuous run since 1837, though the name changed from time to time.

²T. Campbell's *Declaration and Address* was reprinted in a modern edition, edited by Dr. W. Robinson in 1951.

³For the Glasites and Scotch Baptists, see A. C. Watters, *History of British Churches of Christ* (Indianapolis, 1948), pp. 8-14; W. Robinson, *What Churches of Christ Stand For* (Birmingham, 1926), pp. 22-23; T. Witton Davies, "The McLeanist (Scotch) and Campbellite Baptists of Wales, *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, VII (1920-21).

The damage, however, was done. Controversy broke out among the Scotch Baptists over the new views and the first church to divide over Campbell's teaching was that at Park Street, Nottingham. The main differences were that those who followed Campbell asserted that baptism was for the remission of sins, and they rejected the Calvinist doctrine of election held by Scotch Baptists. Tension rose during the autumn of 1836, and when the pastor absented himself on Sunday 18 December, thus denying the church a celebration of communion, a group of fourteen led by James Wallis and Jonathan Hine withdrew and formed a separate church on 25 December.¹ Wallis began to publish his own journal, *The Christian Messenger and Reformer in March* 1837. Through this other groups, which had no contact with the Scotch Baptists, wrote to Wallis: these included a church at Cox Lane, Denbighshire, founded by John Davies in 1809, a church at Wrexham and a church at Shrewsbury. Other churches which made contact were an Independent congregation, founded in 1804, at Dungannon in Ireland, and a Scottish Independent congregation at Auchtermuchty, Fife, founded in 1807. The leaders of this latter church, John and George Dron, also brought another congregation into the movement, an independent evangelical church at Dundee led by G. C. Reid.² Reid had been a full-time minister and he became the first travelling evangelist for the new cause. Between 1840 and 1842 he visited most of the churches which had been formed and it was his initiative that led to the first conference at Edinburgh.

It is clear therefore that the early Churches of Christ came from various traditions, but the Scotch Baptist tradition was dominant. The geographical distribution of the Scotch Baptists, for example, profoundly influenced that of Churches of Christ. Of the 51 churches listed at the first conference, 21 were in Scotland and apart from London the most southerly church was in Loughborough, Leics. There was, however, a significant difference between the Scottish churches, moulded in a predominantly Presbyterian atmosphere, and the English and Welsh churches which were much more closely related to the Particular Baptists. This also explains why Independency was the starting point for their understanding of the doctrine of the Church. But they were never isolationist. In order to avoid the bickering of the Scotch Baptists their conferences from the beginning renounced any disciplinary function, but those attending in the

¹S. Mottershaw, *A History of the Church of Christ, Long Hedge Lane, Nottingham* (Nottingham, 1886), p. 4f; *British Harbinger* (1868), p. 374.

²Watters, *op. cit.*, pp. 16f., 32f. *Christian Messenger* (1840), pp. 144f., 240-44; *British Millennial Harbinger* (1865), pp. 246-48; *British Harbinger* (1868), pp. 336f., *George C. Reid, Our First Evangelist* (Southport, 1885), p. 4-12.

early years were called 'messengers' in the old dissenting tradition and were representatives of their churches in a way that later generations were not. The side of Campbell's teaching that most appealed to the Scotch Baptists was the attempt to restore New Testament Christianity, and this explains the popularity of Campbell's *Christian Baptist* with its plea for 'the Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things.'

The first resolution of the conference of 1842 was to obtain statistics of the churches, and the second laid the foundation for all subsequent cooperative activity:⁶

That this meeting deem it binding upon them, as disciples of Jesus Christ, to cooperate for the maintenance of evangelists to proclaim the gospel.

The committee of three Nottingham brethren set up to organise this work, however, found it difficult to raise the necessary funds and by the end of 1845 they were forced to end their efforts. In 1847 a second conference was held, under the chairmanship of Campbell himself who was visiting England at the time, and it was decided to begin the work again. From 1847 the General Evangelist Committee reported annually. At first it supported no evangelist full-time, and from 1848 the initiative here was generally taken by District Associations. But in 1855 a special committee was set up for an effort in Manchester and for some years the two committees existed side by side. When Wallis and Hine (the Secretary and Treasurer) resigned in 1861 because of advancing age, the Committee was reconstituted with a different membership including representatives from several churches. It is interesting that members of the committee had to be officers in their own churches.⁷

The Conference, which has met annually since 1847 (except for 1840), first defined its aims in 1851:—

That this cooperation embraces only the subjects of evangelization, and disclaims all intention of forming a body having power, or intention to receive or reject churches with reference to fellowship; and will receive messengers from any church recognizing the principles of our Lord — one faith, one baptism or immersion, one body, one spirit, one hope, and one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in all — and who attend to the positive institutions of Christ on the first day of the week. It also disclaims all power to hear or settle matters of discipline, or differences between brethren or churches.⁸

Ten years later the basis was redefined as follows:—

That this Cooperation shall embrace such of the churches contending for the primitive faith and order, as shall willingly

⁶*Christian Messenger* (1842), p. 283.

⁷*Christian Messenger* (1847), p. 498; *British Millennial Harbinger* (1855), pp. 410-12, 454-56; (1861), 464; (1862), 321.

⁸*British Millennial Harbinger* (1851), p. 371: reaffirmed the following year, *ibid.*, (1852), p. 378.

be placed upon the list of churches printed in its Annual Report. That the churches thus cooperating disavow any intention or desire to recognize themselves as a denomination, or to limit their fellowship to the churches thus cooperating; but on the contrary, they avow it both a duty and a pleasure to visit, receive, and cooperate with Christian churches, without reference to their taking part in the meetings and efforts of this Cooperation. Also, that this Cooperation has for its object evangelization only, and disclaims all power to settle matters of discipline, or differences between brethren or churches; that if in any instance it should see fit to refuse to insert in, or to remove from the list, any church or company of persons claiming to be a church, it shall do so only in reference to this Cooperation, leaving each and every church to judge for itself, and to recognize any fellowship as it may understand the law of the Lord to require."

This statement, less specific theologically than that of 1851, and also more open towards Christian union, remained the basis of the Association until 1967, though there were some verbal alterations in 1948.

By the 1860s therefore the basic structure of the Churches of Christ and their fundamental principles were clear. The main service each Lord's Day was a Communion Service. The order usually followed what was felt to be a pattern in Acts 2:42 — the Apostles' doctrine (teaching), fellowship (offering), breaking of bread and prayers.⁹ A few churches still follow this order today for the same reason. Prayers were offered by any brethren who wished — an inheritance from the Glasites and Scotch Baptists. Entry into the Church was by believer's baptism (immersion). The other dominant feature of the movement was the lack of a professional ministry. As had been common in the humbler dissenting churches in the late eighteenth century, pastors were usually in secular employment; and following Scotch Baptist practice there was usually a plurality of ministers in each church, as each congregation called and ordained its own elders (or bishops or pastors) and deacons. In some cases a church would call presidents (to preside at the Lord's Table). The varied origins of local congregations meant that a uniform pattern was slow to emerge, and it was not helped by the 'Plymouthian leaven' of T. H. Milner in Scotland, who virtually equated membership of the church with ministry.¹⁰ The other order of ministry was that of evangelist. These were full-time ministers, but their concern was to plant new causes and encourage existing ones rather than to

⁹*British Millennial Harbinger* (1861), pp. 463f. Until 1967 this resolution was printed at the beginning of the *Churches of Christ Year Book*.

¹⁰*Christian Messenger*, (1847), pp. 43-48.

¹¹The phrase is David King's: L. King, *Memoir of David King*, 239ff.

exercise pastoral care. Nevertheless, several evangelists bemoaned the lack of a full-time pastoral ministry in the churches.¹² At the end of the 1860s also, the name was formally adopted. At the beginning objections were made to denominational names and the early groups were known as 'Christians', 'Disciples', 'Christian Brethren', 'New Testament Disciples' etc. Another name often used (following the example of Campbell in the U.S.A.) was 'Reformers' and this was taken up in Wallis's magazine, *The Christian Messenger and Reformer*. But in 1869 a committee was appointed to consider the adoption of a common name so that confusion might be avoided in the 1871 Census, and as a result in 1870 it was resolved:

That the Churches throughout the kingdom be recommended to use in all public documents the name 'Church of Christ', and that individuals designate themselves 'Christians'.¹³

By the end of the 1860s the membership of Churches of Christ had just topped 4,000 in just over 100 churches. This compared with 1,300 members in 42 churches reporting at the first conference in 1842. Though this represented a doubling of the total, it bore no comparison with the dramatic expansion in the U.S.A. The reason usually given for this was a lack of qualified exangelists and it was suggested that help should be sought from the American Churches. But reports filtered back across the Atlantic that the Americans admitted unbaptised persons to the Lord's Supper; it was already known that they took a more liberal view of the order of service and because of the greater number of full-time ministers the practice of open prayer was less widespread. Space prevents a detailed examination of the controversy, but it made a significant impression on the British Churches and damaged relationships with Disciples in America for fifty years. The British Churches refused to accept the help of American evangelists who were prepared to admit to Communion those who were not immersed believers, and some British evangelists who had gone to America for a time found themselves unacceptable on their return.¹⁴ Timothy Coop, a Wigan business-man and treasurer of the General Evangelist Committee, was disappointed by the refusal to accept American help and gave support in the later 1870s to evangelists sent by the Disciples' Foreign Christian Missionary Society to Britain. These men founded Churches of Christ on American lines, which formed their own Christian Association separate from the British Conference.¹⁵

¹²e.g. Henry Exley, *British Millennial Harbinger* (1865), p. 254.

¹³*British Harbinger* (1869), p. 308; (1870), p. 313. The name 'Church of Christ' was commonly used by the old dissent to describe an individual congregation.

¹⁴Watters, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-66; *British Millennial Harbinger* (1860), pp. 451f., (1862), 59-63, 66-68; *British Harbinger* (1866), pp. 320, (1868), 411-16, (1869), 13-17, 196-202.

¹⁵See W. T. Moore, *Life of Timothy Coop* (London, 1839).

The British Churches did not, however, neglect the need to train evangelists. They lacked the resources to found colleges like those in America, but instead promising young men went to study with a more experienced evangelist. David King began this work in Birmingham in 1866 using a combined fund gathered by himself in England and T. H. Milner in Scotland. In 1876 the Annual Meeting took over direct responsibility by forming a Training Committee.¹⁴ This was a sign that the Annual Meeting was gradually assuming responsibility for more work than the placing of evangelists. In 1871 a Reference Committee had been appointed to consider recommendations to the Annual Meeting and to take action on the Meeting's decisions.¹⁵ In 1872 a Sunday School Conference was held at the time of the Annual Meeting, and the Meeting appointed a General Sunday School Committee in 1876.¹⁶ In 1885 a Publishing Committee was appointed to publish books, pamphlets, periodicals and tracts for the Churches and in 1889 a Magazine Committee was set up. The two privately owned journals, King's *Ecclesiastical Observer* and G. Y. Tickle's *Christian Advocate* were replaced by an official magazine, the *Bible Advocate*, which was edited by David King until his death in 1894. The Magazine and Publishing Committees combined in 1905.¹⁷ The 1903 Annual Meeting commissioned the publication of a Hymn Book for the Churches which appeared in 1908, replacing earlier personal collections by Wallis and King.¹⁸ From the mid-1880s interest developed in foreign missions, and in 1891 a Conference Paper was read by John Crook (Secretary of the General Evangelist Committee) on 'Foreign Missions and our Relation thereto.' It was decided to form a committee to gather information on the matter, and at the Jubilee Conference in Edinburgh in 1892 a Committee for Foreign Mission Work was appointed. Work began in Burma in December the same year.¹⁹ In 1895 the Reference Committee was extended to include all Chairmen of Standing Committees.²⁰ From 1880 also a Sisters' Conference and a Temperance Conference were held during the Annual Meeting week but their committees did not become Standing Committee of the Meeting until the twentieth century.

¹⁴*Ecclesiastical Observer* (1876), p. 250; Watters, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-73.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, (1871), p. 310.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, (1876), p. 253.

¹⁷*Ecclesiastical Observer* (1885), p. 134; *Year Book 1889*, resolutions 14-15; 1905, res. 26-32. (From 1886 the Minutes of Conference were printed in the *Year Book* and will be referred to as numbered resolutions).

¹⁸*Year Book, 1903*, res. 40-41.

¹⁹*Year Book, 1891*, pp. 18-31, res. 20-22; 1892, res. 35, 49.

²⁰*Year Book, 1895*, res. 39.

The dominant influence in Churches of Christ in the later nineteenth century was undoubtedly David King. He took the lead in founding the Manchester and Birmingham churches and was a powerful evangelist. King had been a Wesleyan Methodist before joining the Churches of Christ; it is interesting to compare him with James Wallis. For Wallis conversion to a Campbellite position represented a broadening of his previous Calvinism derived from the Particular Baptists, whereas for King it represented a narrowing of a previously broad evangelical tradition. Though a man of very considerable gifts, he regarded the New Testament as a statute-book for the Church, and he was apt to take a very literal view of its demands: he refused to accept nomination for the eldership because he had no children.²³ King was the leading protagonist in the controversy with the American Churches over admission to Communion, and he also spoke against the proposal to establish a Foreign Missionary Committee.²⁴ After his death in 1894, a gradual change began particularly through his pupil, Lancelot Oliver, who succeeded him as editor of the *Bible Advocate* and also Alexander Brown (who died in 1893) as theological tutor. Oliver carried on these two tasks until 1918 when his health broke down; he died in 1920. He was more flexible than King and the different tone of his writing can be seen in his book, *New Testament Christianity*, published in 1911 in which restoration of the New Testament order is seen as a means to Christian union.

There were other signs of a more open attitude in the Churches too. One of these was an increasing stress on evangelism. By the mid-1870s there were fifteen evangelists, most of them employed by districts rather than the General Evangelist Committee. A new dynamic was brought by Sydney Black, a grandson of Wallis, who was enabled by his father's help to be financially independent of the churches. Between 1883 and 1888 he worked in the provinces and then returned to London to begin work on his own home ground. He took a leading part in urging a 'Forward Move' in evangelism in 1890, and his own church at Twynholm Hall, Fulham, resembled the Wesleyan Central Halls and Baptist Tabernacles of the same period. Though his view of the New Testament demands was no more liberal than King's, he was prepared to adapt his organisation to the needs of the time and Twynholm Hall was much involved in social work.²⁵ It soon became the largest church in the country with

²³Watters, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-101. Cf. L. King, *op. cit.*, pp. 76, 119 for examples of King's attitude to the New Testament.

²⁴See his 'Letters to American Disciples' in the *British Harbinger* for 1863 and 1869. The debate on the Foreign Missions issue is in *Bible Advocate* (1891), pp. 246f.

²⁵See T. J. Ainsworth, *Sydney Black* (London, 1911).

a membership of over 600.²⁶ By 1900 there were 173 Churches of Christ in Britain with a membership of 11,789.

Further changes came in the twentieth century. The Conference Paper of 1904 was on the relation of Christianity and Social Questions. A discussion in 1909 on the use of instrumental music in public worship is notable because the case in favour was vigorously argued. Previously most of the churches had refused to use instrumental music on scriptural grounds. Some of the leaders were prepared to consider theological change as a result of the impact of biblical criticism and scientific development. J. B. Rotherham, who had been an evangelist in the 1860s but spent the rest of his life in publishing, rejected the idea that the pioneers' conclusions about the Bible did not need revision.²⁷ Joseph Smith, an engineer who later became a tutor at the new theological college, took a similar line in his Conference Paper of 1910 on the Alienation of the Masses from the Church. In the next year Charles Grieg of Manchester discussed Higher Criticism directly. The development of foreign mission work was also a broadening influence. In 1903 work was extended from Burma to Siam, and this quickly became the main field due to the work of Percy and Mary Clark at Nakom Pathom, near Bangkok. In 1909 the Annual Meeting also authorised the Foreign Missionary Committee to take over work in Nyasaland, and at Daltonganj in India.²⁸

The immediate post-war period saw two developments which have profoundly changed the character of Churches of Christ. Both had their origins just before the war and were signs of the liberal trends just referred to. The first was the opening of Overdale College, Birmingham, in 1920 with ten students in residence. The need for a new training scheme had first been mentioned by John M'Cartney, who had responsibility for Correspondence Courses, in his Presidential Address to Conference in 1912. As a result a Conference Paper was read in 1913 by W. B. Ainsworth, proposing the establishment of a theological college, and preparations for this went ahead in the war years. William Robinson, a former schoolmaster, was selected to be Principal and he studied at Mansfield College, Oxford, before taking up his duties.²⁹ The work of Overdale in training men for the ministry and the writing of Robinson himself (in such books as *Essays on Christian Unity*, 1922, and *What Churches of Christ Stand For*, 1926) soon made their influence felt. In 1931 Overdale moved

²⁶It joined the Baptist Union in 1929.

²⁷See J. G. Rotherham, *Reminiscences of J. B. Rotherham* (London, 1922).

Rotherham's main work was *The Emphasised Bible* (London, 1897-1902).

²⁸*Year Book*, 1909, res. 12.

²⁹*Year Book*, 1912, pp. 22-25; 1913, pp. 26-41; 1918, pp. 96-98; 1919, pp. 125-6.

from Moseley to become one of the Selly Oak Colleges. This ecumenical atmosphere also assisted the second development which was participation in the wider ecumenical movement. In 1914 Conference appointed a committee of seven to share in the Faith and Order Movement. This group was also empowered to confer with Disciples of Christ in America and the Christian Association in Britain, and one of the first fruits was a union between the Churches of Christ and the Christian Association in 1917. A previous attempt at union between 1901 and 1905 broke down over the Communion question. On this occasion an acceptable settlement was reached, though some churches on both sides withdrew in the 1920s³⁰. The main work of the group was the preparation of a statement, approved by the 1918 Conference, for presentation at the Geneva Faith and Order Conference in 1920. Through the work of William Robinson Churches of Christ took a full part in the preparation for the Conferences at Lausanne in 1927 and at Edinburgh ten years later.³¹ The Union Committee which had been appointed on an annual basis since 1914 became a Standing Committee of the Conference in 1926, charged with the responsibility for ecumenical affairs.³²

Churches of Christ reached their maximum membership of 16,596 in 1930 and this had declined by just over a thousand at the outbreak of the Second World War. But the 1930s were generally a time of confidence. In 1930 a Central Council was formed with representatives from the six main standing committees to coordinate the policy of the Churches, especially where large expenditure was involved. The Council absorbed the old Reference Committee in 1942.³³ A new hymnbook, *The Christian Hymnary*, was published in 1938 which reflected a more catholic use of hymns, particularly in the section on the Lord's Supper. The World Convention of Churches of Christ met in Leicester in 1935, symbolising the greater world consciousness of the movement, and in this period fruitful contacts were growing between the British and American Churches.

Churches of Christ emerged from the Second World War with a membership reduced by 3,000. For some years there had been increasing tension between the more conservative churches and the rest, particularly over biblical criticism, instrumental music, attitudes to the theological college and Christian unity. Various attempts were made to seek reconciliation and maintain the fellowship, but in 1947 most of the remaining 'Old Paths' churches (as they were known) withdrew from the Association. The break caused much sadness,

³⁰*Year Book, 1905*, pp. 144-66; *1914*, res. 13-14; *1917*, pp. 59-69.

³¹See especially Dr. Robinson's contribution to R. Dunkerley (ed), *Ministry and the Sacraments* (London, 1937).

³²*Year Book, 1926*, res. 6.

³³*Year Book, 1930*, res. 19; *1942*, res. 7.

but it did enable the Association to move faster in an ecumenical direction. In 1947 also a Commission was appointed to study and report on the work and status of the Ministry. An earlier Commission, appointed in 1936, had been concerned with Ordination. Its Report, approved by Conference in 1942, formalised the procedures for ordination to the ministry: evangelists were to be ordained at the Conference for work amongst the whole brotherhood; and local churches were urged to make sure that they had an ordained local ministry of elders and deacons.³⁴ This work was now taken a stage further. The Report of the Commission on the Ministry adopted by Conference in 1952 and 1953, was significant in abandoning the previously cherished belief that there was only one pattern of ministry in the New Testament, which was embodied in Churches of Christ practice. But whilst recognising that other forms of ministry might be traced to the New Testament, the Commission refused to agree that any of these later developments was binding on all churches. No changes were suggested in the pattern of ministry in Churches of Christ, but the churches were urged to give more adequate recognition to the work done by full-time ministers. The term 'Minister' was substituted for 'Evangelist'.³⁵ As a result ministers did come to take a much greater part in the work of national committees, and this also coincided with a general development after 1930 whereby a much higher proportion of ministers worked under the direction of the General Evangelist Committee, known after 1937 as the Home Missions Committee.

Another significant theological change of the 1950s was a relaxation of the strict communion practice whereby only those baptised as believers were admitted to communion. Following a Conference Paper in 1954 by R. N. Walters, Secretary of the Union Committee, Conference approved in 1956 the practice of 'Guest Communion', under which visitors to congregations might be invited to receive communion without making enquiries beforehand.³⁶ In the early 1960s after the New Delhi Assembly of the World Council of Churches, a broader suggestion was made, that those in good standing with other Christian Churches might be admitted to what was termed 'Guest' or 'Ecumenical Membership' in local congregations without having to be baptised as believers. The suggestion was made particularly in the context of churches in new housing areas, but redevelopment of inner city areas in these years meant that some older churches soon found themselves in similar situations. The more revolutionary

³⁴*Year Book, 1936*, res. 58-59; 1942, pp. 132-49; res. 24. The theological development of the Churches between 1935 and 1960 is discussed in J. Gray (ed.), *Towards Christian Union* (Birmingham, 1960).

³⁵*Year Book, 1947*, res. 37-38; 1952, res. 24-26; 1953, res. 24-25.

The Report of the Commission was also bound with the 1954 Year Book.

³⁶*Year Book, 1954*, pp. 39-50; 1956, pp. 119-21, res. 8.

nature of this proposal meant that the Churches were given longer to think about it, and it was not formally adopted as the policy of Conference until 1972.³⁷ In both cases local churches had to decide for themselves whether to follow Conference's lead, but by 1972 over four fifths of the Churches practised Guest Communion and nearly a quarter had already adopted ecumenical membership.³⁸

These reappraisals of traditional positions were due to the increasing ecumenical involvement of Churches of Christ after 1942. The ecumenical scholarship of Dr. William Robinson was the pre-eminent influence here, and he was followed by James Gray (his successor as Principal of Overdale College) and Dr. W. G. Baker of Edinburgh, both of whom like Dr. Robinson represented Churches of Christ nationally and internationally on ecumenical bodies. From 1942 to 1950 discussions took place with the Baptist Union over a possible union, but after it became clear in 1947 that organic union was unlikely because of the Baptist practice of open membership (admission to membership without baptism) the two sides settled for 'close association'. This did not, however, produce the hoped for results.³⁹ After the Nottingham Faith and Order Conference in 1964 the Union Committee decided to make a fresh exploration of the possibility of organic union. Contacts were made with the Baptist Union and the Congregational-Presbyterian Joint Committee. The latter invited Churches of Christ to send observers to their negotiations in 1966, and at the same time it gradually became clear that the Baptists had substantial reservations about the goal of organic union. The warm reception given to the Churches of Christ observers by the Congregational-Presbyterian Joint Committee led the Central Council to consider how the Churches might be involved in decision-making about union. A four-stage programme was proposed: the first stage was to secure the support of the churches for a covenant to work and pray for Christian union, which was completed in 1969 when churches representing more than 80% of the membership indicated their approval. The second stage was to secure support for the opening of negotiations and it was recommended that the direction in which to move was that of the United Reformed Church. By 1972 this had been supported by churches representing more than 60% of the membership, with some churches not then visited. In order not to delay Conference therefore approved the opening of negotiations and the United Reformed Church agreed to this at its inaugural assembly on 5 October 1972.⁴⁰ The third and fourth stages — negotiations and approval of a scheme of union — lie in the future.

³⁷J. Gray, *Implications of New Delhi for Churches of Christ* (Birmingham, 1962); *Year Book*, 1964, pp. 55-67; 1972, res. 14.

³⁸Information provided by the General Secretary.

³⁹*Year Book*, 1942, res. 16; 1947, p. 72; 1950, res. 23.

⁴⁰*Year Book*, 1969, pp. 65-70, res. 10; 1972, res. 21.

The period since 1939 has thus been a mixed one for Churches of Christ. The decline in membership which was perceptible in the 1930s accelerated after the war and by 1970 the total membership of 5,148 was only half the figure twenty years earlier. Increasing mobility in society has taken a heavy toll of a scattered community, especially its young people. Inevitably this has led to some loss of confidence, but the reaction was not the isolationism which followed a similar disappointment in the later nineteenth century. Younger leaders, especially ministers, reared in an ecumenical age have been keen to work for the wider Church, though the impact of this has often been more local than national. In Scotland Churches of Christ have taken part in the Multilateral Church Conversation, and overseas the missions of the British Churches have also developed ecumenically. The churches in Thailand became part of the United Church in Thailand, the churches in India joined the Church of North India in 1970 and in Malawi Churches of Christ are involved in conversations with Anglicans and Presbyterians. The next few years will be critical in determining whether the Churches in the British Isles can find a similar ecumenical fulfilment to their witness.

DAVID M. THOMPSON

THE BURIAL OF THE REV. THOMAS MORE

There is considerable evidence to be found in Calamy's *Account* and elsewhere of the affection and respect with which some ejected ministers were treated. Recently a group of papers dealing with an incident of this kind in Dorset, which is mentioned by neither Calamy nor A. G. Matthews has come to light. It also corrects a date of death in *Calamy Revised*.

The papers are amongst those of General Thomas Erle which have been deposited at Churchill College by his descendant, the late Admiral Sir Reginald Plunkett-Erle-Drax. General Erle lived at Charborough near Wimborne Minster in Dorset. He was both a soldier and a politician, and a staunch supporter of William III. At the time of the incident he was Member of Parliament for Portsmouth and Commander in Chief in Ireland, so that the papers are either those of a relation Robert Erle, or of the General's Dorset agent, Joseph Dolling, or are copies sent to Thomas Erle for information.¹

The Rev. Thomas More was ejected from the rectory of Hammoon, near Sturminster Newton, and about twenty miles from Charborough, in 1662, and he refused the patron's offer to represent him "because unsatisfied with the Terms of Conformity".² He moved to Milton Abbas, some ten miles away, where he continued to preach although "very poor and in debt". More died in August 1700 (not August 1699 as stated by A. G. Matthews) and his wife wished him to be buried in Milton church. The vicar of the parish, Mr. George Marsh, insisted on reading the service himself.

A paper drawn up by the anti-Marsh faction soon after the burial gives the full details.

On August 11th last past Mr. Moore an Ancient Deceased Minister, being by his wife's desire to be buried in the Parish Church of Abby Milton, The Churchwarden of the Parish gave orders it should be done, but Mr. Marsh the Vicar of the said Parish being a very young Man newly come to it, send word it should not be done, either in the Church or Churchyard unless he buried him, tho' he was very Civilly requested to the contrary, whereupon before they proceeded any further, there was great care taken by all that were present, and others in the house to lay An injuncion and strict charge on all the company that, noe disturbance of any sort during the whole funerall either in wrd or Action should be in the least offered to any Person what soever, Eespecially in the Church or to the Minister of the Place: In order to which 6 Men takes up the Corps and bare it of whom the Churchwarden

¹Churchill College, Cambridge, Erle 4/5.

²A. G. Matthews, *Calamy Revised* (1934), p. 354.

was One, and 6 Ministers goe by and held up the Covering; At the Church Hatch the said Vicar (notwithstanding the said Civill request made) did meet them and went on before the Corps reading what he had a Mind to, till he came into the Church, and soe having ended, he went directly to the Pulpitt and sate down in the reading Desk, and all in very great peace, Order and Silence, and the Ministers that held the Covering, left their hold and returned immediately out of the Church, The others that bare the Corps went on directly to the Grave and laid the Corps in the Grave. Mr. Marsh on a sudden came to the Grave in an exceeding furious Manner, and in a Strong Chollerick passion with a loud voice fell to threatening what should be done to all, and with very unfitt unchristian like language exprest him selfe in a railing Manner tho' those who were with present desired him to read if he pleased that he would and they would not offend him, he asked if they thought he would read now it was in the Grave: if he would not they could not tell what more to say.

He never offered to read a word at the Pulpitt, nor desired them to stop that he might, nor offered to read a Word at the Grave, but refused it when he was asked, there was not any sort of Noise or disturbance in the least during the whole time till he made it. Marsh, however, insisted that there had been a riot and that on the 11th day of July (*sic*) in the year of our Lord 1700 at the burial of Mr. Thomas Moor a late Non: Con: Teacher in the Parish Church of Milton Abbas in the County of Dorsett Mr. George Marsh Vicar of the said Parish was interrupted and disturbed in the Execution of his Ministeriall office and hindred from burying the said Mr. Thomas Moor according to the form of the Church of England as by Law established.

He also instigated an indictment at the country quarter sessions against Mr. Combes and others for a riot in the church making it "his business to ride and row about the Contry to insence the Gentlemen thereof and others of a riotous unlawfull Assembly and disturbance".

On 13th, 14th and 18th February, 1700/1 Robert Erle sitting as a magistrate at Sturminster Marshall heard evidence from twelve who were present at the burial, all of which supported the anti-Marsh faction. At the same time efforts were made to end the dispute, both by those indicted and by some of the local gentry. Marsh agreed to withdraw "the indictment against the Presbyterians" if they would acknowledge their guilt and pay his expenses before the end of the month. It is uncertain whether he was successful in this, but the absence of further papers suggests that he was persuaded to let the whole matter drop. It would be interesting not only to know the sequel, but also the names of the six ministers who accompanied the corpse and whether the twelve witnesses were all Presbyterians.

EDWIN WELCH

REVIEWS

Chapel, by Kenneth Young. (Eyre Methuen, London, 1972. £3.50)

Mr. Young's sub-title is: "The joyous days and prayerful nights of the Nonconformists in their heyday, circa 1850-1950." He states that he is concerned "above all with Nonconformist people and their memories of chapel days." It would have been more accurate to relate his book to 1890-1950 on the weight of this collection of memories.

The spread of these memories over the several denominations is uneven. The Methodists are most prominent and there are a fair number of references to the Congregationalists but the only mention of Presbyterianism is an incidental mention of "Scottish Presbyterians." There are some quite interesting personal recollections and a few entertaining anecdotes.

It would be unfair to criticise the author for the impression left by this particular range of other people's memories that in chapel life the Bible was barely noticeable, and support for overseas missionary enterprise was minimal. But Mr. Young's own linking comments fail to recognise effectively that a good many of the chapels made a significant mark on the social, economic and political life of the local communities in which they were set — even after 1900.

The chapter on "Chapels And Their Upkeep" is disappointingly slight. Mr. Young wonders how "chapels were built, who paid for them . . ." He mentions in passing a loan by the Baptist Building Board to a Baptist church but he ignores the English Congregational Chapel Building Society which during its first ten years from 1853 to 1863 helped in the building of some 200 Congregational churches.

The fourteen illustrations are well chosen but scarcely justify with the 227 pages of text this price of £3.50.

NIEL CAPLAN

David M. Thompson, *Nonconformity in the Nineteenth Century*, (Routledge Kegan, Paul (1972), £3.00 cloth, £1.50, Paperback).

'Victorian Studies' is now fashionable in schools and universities and its needs are met by ever increasing quantities of selected documents, collected sources and similar "studies in depth". It was inevitable that Nonconformity should eventually be covered. This is a deceptively modest addition to the subject. A plain, simple commentary avoids most of the pitfalls (except, perhaps, concerning Sabbatarianism) natural to a general survey, and deftly suggests that variety in Nonconformity which outsiders persist in ignoring. The selection of documents is masterly and the mixture of memoirs and novels with blue books and year books reminds us that our sources are as rich as they tend to be disorganised. Each reader will have his favourite quotations: this reviewer particularly valued an extract from *Felix Holt*, *Edward Miall* on class-consciousness, *The Hornet* describing Spurgeon's "business" at the Elephant and Castle, and C.

Maurice Davies sampling Regent Square on the eve of Synod in the early 1870's. Even then a union of Churches was in the air.

The most helpful aspect of the book is the way in which the varieties of Methodism are integrated with the rest of Nonconformity (one wishes that there had been more room for the United Methodist Free Churches) and the most surprising note is that education is adequately treated without mention (honourable or otherwise) of Edward Baines.

Dr. Thompson has succeeded in compiling a book which is not selective history. His achievement is valuable. At the very least it should be required reading for all theological students and lay preachers, and, until the melancholy gaps revealed in the bibliography are filled, his book will serve as an excellent introduction and a promise of more to come.

CLYDE BINFIELD.

L.C.U. Story, 1873-1972, by John H. Taylor (London Congregational Union, City Temple, Holborn Viaduct, E.C.1, 1972, pp. 48, 20 pence).

John Taylor has often shown his industry and patience in researching into Congregational Year Books and Victorian church minutes and pamphlets. The passing of the London Congregational Union, with its proud history, deserved a story in print and Mr. Taylor has provided a popular account which, although full of fact, is yet eminently readable and well illustrated. Copies should be in the hands of every Congregationalist because the booklet touches on many events and persons who may quickly be forgotten with the passing of the L.C.U. and the demolition of Memorial Hall in Farringdon Street, London.

It is very much to be hoped that before too long the author will provide us with a full-scale book on the Congregationalism of Greater London through the years and of the part played in it by the London Congregational Union.

H. G. TIBBUTT

A century of service. The Yorkshire Congregational Union 1872-1972 by Kenneth W. Wadsworth (pp 68. np.)

This could so easily have been just an arid list of events and people, of value as a book of reference and nothing more. In fact, it is a clear and perceptive account of an important century of change. Mr. Wadsworth not only knows the details but knows how to assess their significance. His introductory section provides a most useful sketch of some of the factors which affected Congregational churches not only in Yorkshire but also in many other parts of the country.

Those with connections with Yorkshire churches will value this careful piece of work. Those from other parts of the country could well look at their own history in the light of the author's sympathetic understanding of what we commonly call success and failure.

WILFRED BIGGS

W. L. Wade, *West Park Congregational Church (Queen Street Memorial) Leeds: 1672-1972; Three Hundred Years of Witness*, (18pp. no price given) is a clear review of what claims, with justice, to be the oldest Congregational Church in Leeds. The Church worshipping successively at Call Lane, White Hall, Queen Street and West Park is outlined and the historian of Congregationalism quarrying for local particulars will find sufficient of them here.

The Hampshire Congregationalist, Final Issue, No. 97, contains a concise and workmanlike history of the Hampshire Congregational Union, by the Revd. Arthur Nagle. The Yorkshire and London Unions have already celebrated their ending by booklets: it is to be hoped that other counties will follow suit.

C. BINFIELD

LIBRARY ACQUISITIONS

Popular Belief and Practice, Studies in Church History edited by G. J. Cumming & Derek Baker; *Story of the London Congregational Union* by John H. Taylor; *History of Worship in the Church of Scotland* by William D. Maxwell; *Puritanism in Tudor England*, edited by H. C. Porter.

Dr. S. W. Carruthers was an outstanding member of the Presbyterian Historical Society and before his death he had completed an extended survey of the life of Zachary Crofton, a stormy non-conformist divine who died in 1672. A proper typescript of this work has now been prepared and is available for consultation in the United Reformed Church History Society Library. The Society is much indebted to Dr. Carruthers' daughter whose generosity greatly assisted the cost of typing and binding the work.

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

Reformed World (Vol. XXX, Nos. 1-4, 1972)

This volume contains news and articles dealing with the worldwide life and work of churches belonging to the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. There is a discriminating welcome by our own Dr. Daniel Jenkins for the United Reformed Church and it is of interest to note his call for watchfulness lest the system of provincial moderators become a form of 'creeping episcopalianism'. There are articles on Christian theology by Jurgen Moltmann, on revelation by J. C. McLelland, on Christian ethics by S. H. Mayor, and on evangelism and education in the Reformed Churches by E. G. Homrighausen. There is an interesting article by Paul H. Ballard on 'Harvey Cox; a theology of style'.

Journal of Presbyterian History (Vol. 50, Nos. 1-3, 1972)

This is the journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and this volume includes articles dealing with the tensions aroused in American Presbyterianism in the nineteenth century by the issues of slavery and of doctrinal restatement; these articles centre around the life and work of Henry J. van Dyke, Sr., Calvin Colton, Francis J. Grimke and Philip Schaff. There are also articles assessing the work of two twentieth-century Presbyterian leaders — J. A. Mackay as a discerner of a changing climate within Roman Catholicism, and J. C. Bennett as a theologian and a prophet of Christian social responsibility.

R.B.K.

Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hanes (Journal of the Historical Society of the Presbyterian Church of Wales: 3 issues in 1972).

In these issues there appears the second part of Rev. G. L. Griffiths's Lecture, *Philip Oliver and his Connexion*, and the first part of Mr. F. Price Jones's Lecture, *Yr Achosion Saesneg* (The English Causes). Rev. D. Ben Rees contributes an article on *Joseph Jones, Pioneer of the English Causes*. As usual, the Journal contains extracts from various sources.

Bulletin (Qtly, 1972), Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme français.

Bulletin (Qtly, 1972), Société de l'Histoire du Prot'me français.

Jacques Sole is providing a substantial series of articles on the religion and morals found in Bayle's *Dictionnaire*.

We note that *The Baptist Quarterly* (XXIV.6) was devoted to memoirs of Henry Wheeler Robinson. Joseph Priestley's worship and theology is presented by R. E. Richey in *The Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society* (XV.2). We are grateful also to have received *The Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* and *The Journal of the Friends' Historical Society* for 1972.