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## Editorial

The Annual Meeting and Lecture at Nottingham on 5 May, just prior to the General Assembly, was the first we have held in the Provinces and we were pleased to find it well attended. Dr. Gordon Strachan, author of *The Pentecostal Theology of Edward Irving* and Director of the Church of Scotland Arts and Communications Centre, fascinated his audience with his lecture. Together with Dr. Rudolf J. Ehrlich, he had prepared a report on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the light of the charismatic or neo-Pentecostal movement for their General Assembly, 1972, and Dr. Strachan's paper printed in this issue is based upon that report.

Dr. Lea's article which we are glad to publish contains rather more than its title suggests. Anyone interested in Samuel Davidson's removal from Lancashire College in 1857 should see what he has to say about it.

*George Williams and the Y.M.C.A.*, by Dr. Clyde Binfield, one of our younger and most valued historians, contains encyclopaedic information on mid-Victorian nonconformists quite beyond the scope suggested by the simple title. It is a readable, entertaining volume too. We look forward to many such contributions from our Council member.

A blue leaflet about the Society has been printed and is being circulated to churches and libraries. We need to be better known.

# THE REFORMED TRADITION AND THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT

## *The History and Doctrine of Pentecostalism*

Revival meetings at which speaking with tongues occurred — for example at Azusa Street, Los Angeles (1906) — have come to be regarded as the beginning of the Pentecostal Churches.<sup>1</sup> Pentecostalism was soon established in Europe. Revivals had already prepared the way in England and Wales, whence it spread to Kilsyth in Scotland by 1908. Today, Pentecostal Churches are found in practically every part of the world. Pentecostals number at least ten millions, and claim to be the most rapidly growing denomination in the world, being increasingly regarded as the third force in Christendom.<sup>2</sup>

The characteristic teaching of Pentecostalism is a development of doctrines taken over from two main sources: Methodism, and the American Holiness Movement.

One of the marks of John Wesley's thinking was his teaching on 'Christian perfection'.<sup>3</sup> While he believed in gradual sanctification, a 'growing in grace, a daily advance in the knowledge and love of God',<sup>4</sup> he also taught that it was possible to achieve 'entire sanctification' during one's earthly life. Wesley himself surrounded this doctrine with careful qualifications, but it can be understood how his doctrine of 'entire sanctification' can lead to the idea of a second work of grace, subsequent to conversion. As believers we are justified and subsequently we (or some of us) are entirely sanctified.

A coarsening of Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection is to be found in the teaching of the American Holiness Movement, which emphasised the necessity of a second work of grace, a 'second blessing', subsequent to conversion, leading to Holiness. Frederick Dale Bruner introduced the phrase, 'theology of substance', to describe this approach. This implies the rejection of the Reformed rediscovery of the biblical truth of *simul justus et peccator* (righteous and sinner at the same time). From the Holiness Movement, Pentecostalism adopted this 'theology of subsequence'. Conversion is, and must be, followed by a subsequent blessing, commonly called 'baptism in the Holy Spirit'. A 'theology of subsequence' implies two or more classes of believers, a distinction being made between the converted and those who have been subsequently baptised in the Holy Spirit.

Pentecostals believe that what distinguishes them from other Evangelical Christians is their claim to be baptised in the Holy Spirit,

<sup>1</sup>Walter J. Hollenwager, *The Pentecostals*, S.C.M., London, 1972, pp. 22-24.

<sup>2</sup>Henry Pitney van Dusen, article in *Life Magazine*, 6 June, 1958.

<sup>3</sup>John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, London, 1898.

<sup>4</sup>John Wesley, *Minutes of Several Conversations*, 1830, 3rd Ed., 329.

which they see as a decisive event wherein the Holy Spirit takes hold of them, transforms their lives, empowering them for service, and imparts to them the gifts of the Spirit, such as speaking in tongues.<sup>6</sup>

*The Teaching: (a) The Pentecostal Rule of Faith.*

Although a verbally inspired Bible is regarded as the infallible rule of faith and life, Pentecostals are somewhat selective in their choice of proof texts or passages. Their distinctive doctrines are almost exclusively based upon the Lucan parts of the *N.T.*, especially *The Acts of the Apostles* (e.g. 2. 1-4; 2. 38; 8. 4-25; 9. 1-19; 10; 11; 19. 1-7). The remainder of the *N.T.*, is interpreted in the light of such passages.

*(b) The Pentecostal Crisis Experience.*

For Pentecostals, the essential experience is to be filled with the Holy Spirit in exactly the same way as happened at the first Pentecost;<sup>7</sup> but before this can happen there are certain definite conditions to be met, normally considered to be regeneration, obedience, prayer and faith.<sup>7</sup>

Baptism in the Holy Spirit is an additional gift which has to be actively sought as a result of receiving Christ.<sup>8</sup> This raises the Christian, who is already regenerate and who has a clean heart, to an even higher level of existence. 'As sinners we accept Christ, as saints we accept the Holy Spirit.'<sup>9</sup>

*(c) The Initial Evidence of Baptism in the Holy Spirit.*

It is not sufficient to believe or claim that one has been baptised in the Holy Spirit. There must be an external criterion, which, for most Pentecostals, is 'speaking with tongues' (glossolalia). This, however, is regarded as the initial but not the only, or even the most important, evidence of the indwelling Spirit. It is the external, verifiable and assuring evidence that, having been baptised in the Holy Spirit, the spirit of man is dominated by the Spirit of God.

*(d) The Consequence of Baptism in the Holy Spirit.*

The Holy Spirit, given and received once and for all, makes the believer eligible for the reception of His gifts (*I Cor.* 12-14). These gifts have the effect of 'empowering' or 'enabling' the believer for service, because they provide 'a spiritual capability far mightier than the finest natural capabilities could ever supply'.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Cf. T. B. Barratt, *Urkristendom*, Oslo, 1934, p. 14.

<sup>7</sup>Ernest Williams, 'Your Question', *Pentecostal Revival*, 49, 15 June, 1961.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Charles W. Conn, *Pillars of Pentecost*, Cleveland, Tenn., 1956, p. 96.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. Frederick Dale Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, Eerdmans, London, 1970, p. 88.

<sup>10</sup>Myer Pearlman, *Knowing the Doctrines of the Bible*, Springfield, Mo., 1937.

<sup>11</sup>Donald Gee, *Concerning Spiritual Gifts*, A Series of Bible Studies, Assemblies of God, London, 1967, p. 15.

CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF CLASSICAL PENTECOSTAL  
TEACHING FROM A REFORMED POINT OF VIEW

(a) *The Trinity.*

While Pentecostal teaching on the Trinity appears to be orthodox, further examination gives rise to grave doubt. Reformed theology has always affirmed that the primary work of the Holy Spirit is to reveal the risen and living Christ, the only Lord and Saviour, to his Church and people. For Pentecostals, on the other hand, the Holy Spirit, while not exactly replacing Christ, is acting independently of, and in addition to, what Christ has done, and is doing. He comes 'in his own person', as the 'third Person of the Trinity', in addition to the coming of Christ, which takes Place at conversion.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, Pentecostals emphasise, not the one-ness of God, but his three-ness. The Holy Spirit has an existence of his own, and it is the encounter with the Holy Spirit, apart from and beyond the encounter with Christ, which makes the Christian's life complete.<sup>12</sup>

(b) *Faith.*

For Pentecostals, the fullness of the Holy Spirit is a 'second blessing' and is not to be 'appropriated simply by faith'.<sup>13</sup> Thus the great Reformed doctrines of *sola fide* (by faith alone) and *sola gratia* (by grace alone), both grounded in *solus Christus* (Christ alone) are rejected. Pentecostals emphasise what man has to do, 'to yield at every point', 'to go all the way with Christ'<sup>14</sup> and 'to make the yieldedness complete'.<sup>15</sup> This work of total surrender thus becomes man's achievement. Faith is then only a good work, though often devotional language disguises this fact.

(c) *Justification and Sanctification.*

The Reformers rediscovered the biblical truth that justification and sanctification are two aspects of one and the same reality. Any suggestion that justification is the work of Christ, and sanctification that of the Holy Spirit is firmly rejected. Both are equally the work of Christ, through the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals are right in asserting that salvation depends on the final overcoming of sin, but they overlook the fact that Christ is fully victorious over sin in his death and resurrection. In their view, man must rid himself totally of sin, and so acquire a clean heart to work out his own salvation. As a result 'the doctrine of justification is emptied of meaning and reduced to a preliminary stage for beginners in Christianity'.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Ralph M. Riggs, *The Spirit Himself*, Springfield, Mo., 1949, pp. 79-80.

<sup>12</sup>F. D. Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 1970, p. 71.

<sup>13</sup>Cf. David du Plessis, *The Spirit Bade Me Go*, Dallas, 1961, p. 62.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. T. B. Barratt, *In the Days of the Latter Rain*, London, 1909, pp. 214-215.

<sup>15</sup>Cf. Lewi Pethrus, *Thoughts and Experiences Concerning The Baptism in The Holy Spirit* 2nd ed., Chicago, 1945 p. 61.

<sup>16</sup>W. J. Hollenweger, p. 329.

If this were true, there would be no real assurance for the Christian. According to Calvin, our conscience would 'never be pacified, for we are very far from being perfectly renewed.'<sup>17</sup> The Christian has assurance, because God 'does not justify in part, but liberally' and believers 'may appear in heaven as if endowed with the purity of Christ'.<sup>18</sup>

(d) *Baptism in the Holy Spirit.*

Pentecostals regard 'baptism in or with the Holy Spirit' as an additional working of the Holy Spirit which goes beyond the initiation of the Christian life (justification) and also beyond its progress (sanctification). From the Reformed point of view, to insist on baptism in the Holy Spirit as an experience subsequent to conversion is to deny the all-sufficiency of Christ. Although there are passages in *Acts* which suggest a theology of subsequence when interpreted literally, there are others which are not in harmony with this; and if the New Testament witness is taken as a whole, it is seen that faith in Christ and the reception of the Holy Spirit cannot be separated. How can faith in Christ, the sole Lord and Saviour of men, the only King and Head of the Church, be a half-way house where the believer receives life, but not sufficient power to witness and to serve?

## NEO - PENTECOSTALISM

### *Introduction*

Neo-Pentecostals are believers who hold to some of the insights of classical Pentecostalism, but who choose to remain within the fellowship of the more traditional Churches, believing that if the traditional Churches really practised what they profess to believe regarding the Holy Spirit, the charismatic movement would be welcomed by them. From the side of the traditional Churches, neo-Pentecostals are to be commended for their loyalty and devotion. Originally, classical Pentecostalism was a movement of renewal within the Churches, but doctrinal and other tensions led to separation, and eventually to division among the Pentecostal Churches themselves. To prevent this happening again, our aim should be to hold the charismatic movement and witness within the traditional Churches.

### *History of Neo-Pentecostalism.*

Some trace the origin of the present neo-Pentecostal movement to events within a congregation of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, California. From there the movement spread rapidly throughout the world and penetrated the historic denominations. Neo-Pentecostals understand their movement to have grown, not so much because of the direct influence of classical Pentecostalism, but rather as a reaction to a certain feeling of dryness and inadequacy within the traditional Churches. The Roman Catholic Church has proved to be receptive to neo-Pentecostal ideas, because of its readiness to accept the super-

<sup>17</sup>John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, Wks.4.269.

<sup>18</sup>John Calvin, *Institutes*, III, II, II.

natural within the terms of its faith and life. The movement is also proving to be influential in many countries amongst the younger generation.

### *Doctrinal Position*

To what extent are neo-Pentecostals in doctrinal agreement with classical Pentecostalism on the one hand, and the Reformed position on the other? No definite answer can be given to this question, because strictly speaking there is no unified system of neo-Pentecostal doctrine. Most neo-Pentecostals are primarily concerned with what is to them the all-important experience of the gift of the Holy Spirit, rather than with its doctrinal interpretation.

Neo-Pentecostals face a challenge to their identity by the very fact that they owe allegiance both to their charismatic insights, and to the Church of their fathers. From a logical point of view, neo-Pentecostals would tend either towards accepting the classical Pentecostal interpretation of their experiences, and so attempt to change the Reformed position from within, or towards accepting the orthodox Reformed teaching, and so attempt to re-interpret their charismatic experience in that light. There are neo-Pentecostals who choose the latter alternative; others may not have realised that the alternatives exist. The charismatic movement is not, then, bound to a 'theology of subsequence'. Consequently its members are free to recognise that commitment to Christ, and the reception of the Holy Spirit are correlative. In other words, the believer is baptised in the Holy Spirit when he receives Christ, yet the Spirit will reveal himself successively and variously in the consciousness of each believer. All Christians without exception can, however, quench (cf. *I Thess.* 5. 19) or grieve (cf. *Eph.* 4. 30) the Holy Spirit.

On the other hand, neo-Pentecostals may have legitimate criticisms of certain aspects of Reformed teaching, and in making these criticisms, may have an ancestor in the person of Edward Irving.

### *Criticism of the Reformed Position From a Neo-Pentecostal Point of View.*

In one important respect the Reformed position is criticised and rejected by members of the charismatic movement, even by those who essentially share Reformed insights against those of classical Pentecostalism. What is involved is the question of the continued manifestation of the Holy Spirit in and through its various gifts made available to the Church, as the body of Christ. The criticism is that Calvin and the other Reformers rejected for all practical purposes the possibility of the Holy Spirit continuing to operate through his gifts, such as speaking in tongues, healing and prophecy. The Reformers and their successors confined, quite arbitrarily, it is alleged, extraordinary gifts and ministries to the apostles and the apostolic age. For example, in his commentary on *Mark* 16. 17, 'And these signs (e.g. speaking in

tongues, exorcism and healing) shall follow them that believe', Calvin explains that,

Though Christ does not expressly state whether He intends this gift (the working of miracles) to be temporary, or to remain perpetually in His Church, yet it is more probably that miracles were promised only for a time, in order to give lustre to the gospel, while it was new and in a state of obscurity. It is possible, no doubt, that the world may have been deprived of this honour through the guilt of its own ingratitude — but I think that the true design for which miracles were appointed was, that nothing which was necessary for proving the doctrine of the gospel should be wanting at its commencement. And certainly we see that the use of them ceased not long afterwards, or, at least, that instances of them were so rare as to entitle us to conclude that they would not be equally common in all ages.<sup>19</sup>

In assessing this criticism it is acknowledged that since God has finally spoken in Christ, what have undoubtedly ceased are new revelations.<sup>20</sup> What has not ceased according to Scripture is the promise of gifts. The promise in *Mark* was made 'to them that believe', and this is a promise valid for all times, and to the end of time. There is no warrant in Scripture for confining it to the 'commencement' of the gospel. Here again, we seem to be faced with a case of the Reformers over-reacting against the Roman Catholic doctrine and practice of their day, including, for instance, the raising of 'tradition' to the same level as Scripture, and the popular ascribing of miraculous powers to relics. In defence of the Reformers, however, it must be recognised that they did not reject everything miraculous. The Second Helvetic Confession, for instance, proclaimed the miracle of preaching: the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God. The on-going life of the Church is the true miracle.

*The Insights of Edward Irving (1792-1834).*

The situation in Scotland is now being influenced by the life and teaching of Edward Irving. We do not need here to assess his theology in detail, which would lead us into the discussion of aspects outside the scope of this study, such as his Christology. What is immediately relevant is the fact that he made the first authentic attempt to interpret charismatic phenomena in terms of Reformed theology.

In this connection, Irving discovered a discrepancy between the Reformers' principle of *sola scriptura* (by Scripture alone) and its application in the case of spiritual gifts. The Reformers recognised the signs which 'followed them that believe, but refused to extend the validity of this promise to believers in all ages. Irving, however, despite a thorough search, could find no scriptural warrant that would

<sup>19</sup>John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists*, Wks.3.389. 1846, Vo.1 III, p. 389.

<sup>20</sup>Cf. *Westminster Confession of Faith*, I.

justify belief in the cessation of spiritual gifts. Preaching in 1827 on *Acts* 2. 38, 39, 'Repent and be baptised everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost', he says:—

'The other part of the dispensation of the grace of God under which the baptised are brought is expressed in these words: 'And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost'. By which, they say, we ought to understand, not the outward gift of power which hath ceased, but the inward gift of sanctification and fruitfulness, which all believe to be co-essential in the salvation of a sinner with the work of Christ itself. But for my own part, I am inclined to understand both; for I cannot find by what writ of God any part of the spiritual gift was irrevocably removed from the Church. I see, indeed, that she hath lost the power which heretofore made her terrible as an army with banners; so also hath she lost the bright and glorious raiment which made her fair as the moon and clear as the sun; but why she may not hope, yes assuredly believe, to have the former, when the Lord shall see it good, as well as the latter, is what I cannot see, the one being truly as supernatural a work of God as is the latter.'<sup>21</sup>

Irving made a further point of particular interest in our present attempt to produce a synthesis between Pentecostal and Reformed insights. He refused to accept the Reformed viewpoint that the outward gift of power had ceased while the inward gift of sanctification and fruitfulness had not:

I never ceased to believe that the spiritual gifts and the spiritual office-bearers as they are enumerated in Scripture (*I. Cor.* 12. 4-11; *Eph.* 4. 7-17; *Romans* 12. 6-9; *I Peter* 4. 10, 11 etc.) together with the various supernatural methods of operation recorded in the Gospels and in *The Acts of the Apostles*, are not accidental and temporary occurrences of a miraculous kind for certain special ends and occasions, but substantial and permanent forms of operation proper to the Holy Ghost and in no wise to be separate from Him or from the Church which is His chosen residence and temple, the 'Body of Christ' and the 'fulness of Him who filleth all in all'.<sup>22</sup>

For him the reception of miraculous gifts and ministries did not depend on the 'theology of subsequence' with which Pentecostal thinking has become associated. Irving taught that the outward gifts of the Spirit had generally ceased not because they were intended to be temporary, as the Reformers had taught, or because believing Christians had not received a second blessing in the gift of the Holy

<sup>21</sup>Edward Irving, Second Sermon on Baptism, *Collected Writings*, Vol. II, Ed. G. Carlyle Strahan, 1864, p. 276.

<sup>22</sup>Edward Irving, Facts Connected with Recent Manifestations of Spiritual Gifts, *Frasers Magazine*, Jan. 1832.



Spirit, as most Pentecostals were to teach, but simply because of a lack of faith, over the centuries. According to him, miraculous gifts and ministries would be received both by the Church and individual members, if only there was faith.

This is the challenge of the neo-Pentecostal movement to the Church, to accept by faith that which has already been granted by grace.

If the charismatic movement is to find a legitimate place within the Reformed tradition, the Church will have to make an attempt to combine two great biblical truths:—

- (a) 'For it is by his grace you are saved, through trusting him; it is not your own doing. It is God's gift, not a reward for work done' (Eph. 2. 8-9. N.E.B.)

Salvation, which includes the reception of the Holy Spirit, is by grace through faith, the gift of God.

- (b) '... when God gives you the Spirit and works miracles among you, why is this? Is it because you keep the law, or is it because you have faith in the gospel message? (Gal. 3. 5, N.E.B.)

This faith is, however, not merely the intellectual assent to certain verities but also the outward powers which enables the body of Christ as a whole and its members as individuals to accomplish today the mighty acts of faith witnessed to in *Heb.* 11. 33ff. Spiritual gifts received by faith will renew the Church, but more than that, such gifts will take the Church right out into the world.

C. GORDON STRACHAN

#### BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

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## HISTORICAL SOURCE MATERIALS ON CONGREGATIONALISM IN NINETEENTH CENTURY LANCASHIRE

The problems involved in making a comprehensive study of Victorian Nonconformity are various and complex. The best documented aspects revolve around great personalities, with the resultant temptation to regard these at least as illustrative. Yet they are far from typical, and need to be placed in the less distinguished context of normal church life. In the same way, the apparent importance of large, wealthy, urban churches needs to be balanced by recognition of the ubiquitous working-class and mission churches.

Furthermore, because during the nineteenth century denominational organisation developed, based on the capital, there is a tendency to regard the records of national bodies as representative. This is dangerous. Within Victorian Dissent, there was tension between the capital and the provinces, a theme well portrayed in H. R. Martin's *The Politics of Congregationalists, 1830-1856* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Durham 1971). To present a complete analysis, therefore, historians must not place exclusive reliance upon national sources.

A proper balance of interpretation can be obtained by consulting provincial records as well, and, in view of the development of county unions which paralleled that of national unions in the nineteenth century, surely these cannot be rare. Certainly those in Lancashire are very full. The records of the Lancashire Congregational Union (founded in 1806), and of the Lancashire and Cheshire Association of Baptist Churches (founded in 1837), bodies which became the largest regional organisations of their respective denominations, are now available to students. The Congregational archives are to be found at the County Record Office, Preston, whilst those concerning Manchester churches are at the city's Record Office.

In general, the source material discovered has two distinct advantages. One is that it is less concerned with projecting a public image than that of national unions. There is recurrent controversy, realistic comment and outright criticism. Another is that, because regional unions assisted numerous financially dependent churches, reports, statistics and decisions provide a wealth of detail about individual congregations and their relative status, none of which can be found elsewhere so fully.

The records of the Lancashire Congregational Union fall into

four categories. There are (i) minute books of the business sessions of annual meetings; (ii) minute books of committees; (iii) published year books (variously named), and (iv) miscellaneous items. The minutes of the annual assemblies are the most complete. Five volumes cover the years between 1806, when the Union was formed, and 1893, when the printed report in the Lancashire Congregational Calendar became accepted as authoritative. Of these five volumes, the first is framed behind glass in the Union offices! But all the others were lost until recovered recently in a trunk, sunk in dust and moulds of decaying documents, in a dark and dirty basement. As it is, the second volume has not been found. From 1831 to 1893, however, the run of minute books is complete. It is even supplemented by a rough book for 1841 to 1856, in which the Secretary appears to have made draft notes during Union meetings, regrettably without adding personal comment or doodles.

The content of these books is largely concerned with administration. They record the official recognition of ministers newly settled in the region, by which acknowledgement pastors were authorised to take advantage of the various ministerial welfare schemes organised in the county, and similarly they enact official approbation of ministers leaving the area for churches elsewhere, so that they can enter their new sphere of labour duly accredited. To this extent there is an element of the ministerial friendly society about the Lancashire Congregational Union. Regrettably little biographical detail is included in these enactments, and even obituary notices are singularly generalised. The second main administrative task of the Union's annual meetings was to approve, and supervise the distribution of funds to dependent churches. There were many of these, over one hundred and twenty in the first sixty years of the Union's existence, and for the most part only the minimum of information is entered: the church, proposer, seconder and the amount. In addition to this, arrangements for the superintendence of these supported churches were also made. Not a great deal beyond this type of information will be found here; even so, what is to be discovered is helpful in tracing the growth of individual congregations.

There are, however, occasional resolutions upon pressing issues of the day. When compared with similar Baptist records the Congregationalist ones contain a surprisingly small number of such items. Even so, those that are to be found are highly significant, as they can be taken as a reliable indication of grassroots attitudes to religious and secular questions. In the 1830's some of these resolutions were frankly political, but thereafter there is a dearth of any apparent interest in contemporary affairs, no opinion being expressed, for example, on the Corn Laws or Graham's Factory Act. Up to the 'sixties, decisions and attitudes are recorded only on such matters as denominational literature and evangelisation. From the 'sixties however, the situation changes. Detailed resolutions are passed, citing the reasoning behind required reforms in public life, as much as the

reforms themselves; in the Gladstonian era, they turn to issues such as disestablishment, temperance, education and peace. Nevertheless this type of entry in the minute books remains infrequent.

These minute books should be read in conjunction with those of the committees. There is a three volume run of minutes belonging to the Executive Committee, from its inception in 1845 to 1900. Here we find the steps that led to recommendations to the County Union. The same is true of the minute books of the regional committees. Four such district organisations were created, based upon Preston, Blackburn, Liverpool and Manchester. No records of the Blackburn Committee have been found, but one book for Preston (1868-1908) has been discovered, another for Liverpool (1866-1905), and two for Manchester (1852-1874; 1875-1902). To a large degree, both in personnel and in function, the Executive Committee and the District Committees duplicated each other. Indeed they were really no more than different parts of the one administrative procedure and structure. Thus their minute books convey very similar information. These committees record detailed facts about numerous dependent chapels, their finances and membership. The cumulative picture reflects the many facets of provincial Congregationalism, good and bad, even to the 'profound indignation, sorrow and regret' of a District Committee, provoked by a promising young evangelist of the fast-growing, new church at Dalton-in-Furness, who eloped 'to America with the school teacher who resided in his house, leaving his wife and family destitute.'

The rationale behind the factual picture that can be built up from minute books is found in the year books of the Lancashire Congregational Union. These have had a chequered career. No annual reports have been traced before the Lancashire Congregational Calendar made its appearance in 1866. Thereafter complete runs of the Calendar are available, at both the County Record Office and the John Ryland's Library. Most important is the space devoted to addresses, debates and sermons, where we find contemporary interpretations of the contemporary scene. This direct access into Victorian thought, reveals, for example, the exuberant self-confidence born of successful religion, the struggle to prevent the liberalisation of evangelical theology, and the secularisation of church life, all of which characterised Congregationalism at this time. Yet the Calendars have more to offer. They contain considerable factual information and statistics, about the churches themselves, and also about the work, state and finances of the numerous local denominational organisations, from the Lancashire Independent College to the county Pastors' Insurance and Retirement Funds. Once again intensely particular information is presented in a regional context, with, for instance, the short reports on churches maintained by Union funds, while fiscal tables, officials' statements, subscribers' complaints and committee surveys, all help in the evaluation of how typical is each of the reported churches.

It needs to be clearly stated that all these County Union sources

are useful to a variety of historians. Manifestly no regional study of Victorian Dissent should overlook them. Neither should a denominational or inter-denominational history. The records of a County Union are also vital to the historian of a single chapel.

In Lancashire however, little more will be gleaned from the rest of the County Union materials. These miscellaneous items are trivial save for the Journal of the Secretary to the Executive Committee, 1847 to 1854. Within a very short time of its creation, the Union Executive found voluntary service inadequate, and so in 1847 it appointed the Rev. D. T. Carnson to be its full-time Secretary. One of his duties was to make a report on each of his visits to churches helped by the Union; these reports make up the three volumes of his Journal. The whole is a fascinating account of the small Congregational churches in Lancashire, some in rural areas, struggling for survival, some in isolated, new industrial communities, where poverty was inhibiting progress, and some in urban or suburban areas, receiving financial assistance until they were established. Carnson visited no less than fifty of these churches each year for seven years, and his reports on every journey are meticulously written, usually between two and three pages in length. Each one gives full information on the work and activities of the church, the size and character of the congregation, the church membership, and the teachers and scholars in both Sunday and Day schools. There are also detailed particulars of the finances. Besides this, Carnson adds his own evangelical and dis-establishmentarian observations upon the locality itself in terms of population and employment, upon the religion of the place including an assessment of relations between the denominations, and upon the spiritual state of the people. The Journal is thus a fascinating historical document, informative to secular historians as well as to those with a special interest in Nonconformity. It is hoped that current negotiations can be completed for the text of the Journal to be published by the Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire within the next five years.

Manifestly those engaged upon writing the history of one or more of the Lancashire Congregational churches, must turn to these county Union archives. But equally important, of course, are the records of the congregations themselves. Thanks largely to stringent clauses in the Trust Deeds drawn up during the nineteenth century, these are not too hard to find. If the church is still functioning, then hopefully its minute books will be maintained on its premises. For those that are closed, documents should be found at the County Record Office, Preston, the Manchester Record Office, or Manchester College. No general observation is required here upon these records — they are typical of their kind — all that needs to be added to information on where they can be located, is to say that there appears to be a great number extant, unsorted and unidentified, but preserved.

In its heyday, the Lancashire Union was the strongest Congregationalist association in the provinces, and so it acquired early its own

ministerial training academy, first in Blackburn, and later in Chorltoncum-Hardy, Manchester. The College adds to the available sources on local Congregational history. All the minute books of the Lancashire Independent College Committee have survived, seven volumes covering the Victorian era from 1842 onwards. From these a number of interesting themes can be traced. The general organisation of the institution itself is the most obvious. Even though the minutes of sub-committees, such as the House, the Academic and the Finance Committees, appear to have been lost, all their important recommendations are entered in full in the general Committee records, from the trivial (regulations on smoking in students' rooms) to the serious (recurrent monetary embarrassment despite many sizeable legacies). Also the curriculum and form of the training given at the College can be quite clearly traced. Indeed the whole pretentious atmosphere of the Victorian institute exudes from its minute books, which narrate the resolute attempts to achieve high scholastic attainments and to establish a respected professional reputation, whilst drawing upon candidates often of very limited educational background. Equally the summaries of interviews with students are most revealing of the type and motivation of the people involved.

From time to time matters of controversy are to be found in the College Committee minute books, raising questions of far wider concern than ministerial training alone. Of these the most important is the Samuel Davidson dispute of 1856-1857. The whole episode is meticulously documented. The lengthy minute book entries are even supplemented by the bound volume of the original manuscript report of the sub-committee appointed to make initial enquiries into the allegations levelled against Davidson. With very little additional help from published material, notably in the form of biography or of the College history, it is possible from these sources alone to reconstruct the whole episode. What emerges is hardly the situation as assumed in several denominational histories. Davidson appears a fool, his folly lying both in his failure to appreciate the strength of his opponents, and also in his verbal commitment that, accepting the criticisms of his book, he would speedily publish an orthodox explanation of his real meaning. When his explanation did appear, it failed to fulfil his promise, and hence he gave to his powerful and resolute enemies the stick of duplicity and immorality (it was common practice for students to be expelled from the College for lying) with which to beat him, as well as that of heterodoxy. Davidson certainly exacerbated his problems, even if he did not actually create them. The records also show that, while the struggle between conservative and liberal theology underpinned the whole issue, the debate was never overtly conducted at a doctrinal level. The College Committee was mostly concerned not to offend its financial supporters, by being seen to harbour an unorthodox theologian on its staff. Its strategy throughout was to whitewash, blurring the essential theological issues. This too, of course, means that the traditional interpretation

of the incident is invalidated. Rather than being evidence of the extensive advance of liberal doctrine amongst the churches, it denotes the opposite. The conservatism of most local Congregationalists was such that the College authorities patently could not afford to be associated with rationalism and higher criticism, even if scholastically it was defensible. For this reason alone, Davidson had eventually to go, but only after every effort had been made to retain him, not out of sympathy, but because his dismissal itself implied the College had deviated from orthodoxy. When it is recalled that this controversy occurred at the time of the Rivulet dispute and the disquiet over Campbell's control of Congregational journalism, and that some of the personalities involved were also prominent in the conflict at the Leicester conference twenty years later, then again in this single local occurrence there is further illustration of need to qualify the interpretation of national or denominational developments by reference to provincial archives.

There are other valuable, if somewhat unusual, sources of information at the College. Over the years, there has been compiled a *Register of Students, Blackburn Independent Academy and Lancashire Independent College, 1816 to 1936*. This is an improvised collection, in alphabetical order, of typed biographical details on each student who has passed through the College. Each entry summarizes date of birth, church membership, duration of training, qualifications acquired, subsequent ministries, and any other extraneous information, all culled from college and denominational publications. This alone is of value, for from such a compilation can be calculated statistical data concerning the regions upon which the College drew and which it served at various periods, the variety of training received, the numbers who remained faithful to Independency, or who used the advantages they received as stepping stones to the Established Church, professional or academic advancement. Taken together the biographical lists are a useful guide to a sociological analysis of the Victorian Congregational pastorate. Yet the validity of this analysis is increased by the addition to the typed summaries in many instances of surviving personal documents on the students. These vary considerably in nature, though formal application forms are most common. They provide a very real insight into the motives that guided many to enter the ministry, and also into the evolving doctrinal climate as the century progresses. Many admitted in the last two decades would not even have been recognised as Christian before 1840. The 'death' of doctrine, as generation succeeded generation, can be carefully followed, and no doubt the statements of candidates for admission must for the most part have reflected what was being taught in the congregations.

Manchester College Library also holds two special collections of documents. The first of these includes information not specifically about the nineteenth century, but which is significant. The College owed its foundation very largely to the energy, ability and generosity

of George Hadfield, M.P., the local solicitor who gained national notoriety not least for his personal, legal battles to restore Unitarian chapel buildings, and the Lady Hewley Trust, to orthodox Dissenters. Although soon estranged from the College, because of the activities of Robert Vaughan, its first Principal, Hadfield nevertheless bound all the documents he had accumulated in these processes of litigation, and deposited the resulting volumes in the College Library. They remain there to this day, a rich fund of information on the history of Non-conformity in many parts of the country over at least two centuries, and also on the particular ways in which Unitarians were deprived of much of their property in the early nineteenth century.

The second special collection in the College Library comprises the manuscripts of (apparently) all the sermons preached by Thomas Raffles, pastor of the influential Great George Street Chapel, Liverpool, from 1812 to 1861. The scripts are well preserved, protected in cardboard boxes and arranged in yearly sequence, but difficult to read, however, because of the Raffles' handwriting. Nonetheless the existence of such a set of manuscripts must surely be exceptional.

These, then, are the principal sources for the study of Congregationalism in Victorian Lancashire. It should be stressed, however, that they represent only the beginning of a full examination. For in addition to the particular information which each type of record yields, it also helps to identify the principal ministers and laymen involved, and not a few minor personalities as well. By compiling a full list of these, a student may trace each individual in events and activities outside the immediate denominational sphere. To this end, reference to any of the collections of documents important in the history of the county, such as the Melly Papers in Liverpool Record Office, or the Wilson Papers in the Manchester Record Office, or to the Bright and Cobden collections, and even to the Gladstone manuscripts, is often revealing. Similarly local newspapers can be used to follow actions of identifiable persons. Thus out of what are essentially administrative records of the Lancashire Congregational Union, can grow a thorough examination of social, economic and political aspects of church life.

JOHN LEA.

### ABBESS RODING CHURCH 1698-1790

*What follows is a transcript (with omissions, as indicated) of the account written by Joseph Corbishley in the first twenty-two pages of the church book of the Congregational church at Abbess Roding, Essex, now represented by the congregation of the United Reformed Church at White Roding. The book, for access to which I have to thank a former church secretary, Mr. Richard Daines, is now on deposit with the Essex County Archivist at Chelmsford.*

G. F. Nuttall



## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION AT ABBOTS' ROOTHING 1698-1790

by Joseph Corbishley

January 1st 1820. The Friends and supporters of the Protestant Dissenting Interest, established many years ago and still assembling at Abbots' Roothing, in the county of Essex — grateful to God for the religious privileges which they and their Ancestors have so long enjoyed, are desirous of recording (so far as the particulars can be ascertained) an Historical sketch of the origins and progress of their church and congregation.

.....the following account is derived from printed funeral Sermons, with a few authentic MSS. of ancient Date and also from the oral testimony of the most aged Members of the Church.

Situated as the Meeting-House is, literally in the centre of Cornfields, with only a few scattered Dwellings near, and almost inaccessible through the badness of the Roads; it must excite surprise that any persons should have thought of establishing an Interest in so retired and unfavourable a spot. Perhaps indeed the hope of escaping the cruel and malignant eye of persecution might have rivetted these friends of Religion to the very spot on account of its obscurity; for the "Troublous Times" were not wholly gone by in which their fathers, desirous of worshipping God according to the dictates of their consciences, fled into the woods and held their Meetings in the thickets of the forest, through fear of interruption, imprisonment or Death. . . .

This Religious Society, under the auspices of Heaven, originated, about the year 1698, with the Revd Samuel Pomfret, an eminent Dissenting Minister in London. The fact is authenticated by the following extract from Mr. Pomfret's Funeral Sermon which was published in May 1722 by the Revd Mr. Reynolds. In describing the success of his friend's Ministry Mr. R. thus writes:— "When under much weakness, through a fit of sickness, He was invited by a friend & citizen to Rookwood-Hall in Essex, where he continued some weeks for recovery of his strength. Tho much impaired, he could not satisfy himself without preaching every Lord's day during his stay there, to such as would come and hear him. And tho (as his wife hath informed me) there had never been a Meeting of Dissenters before in that place, several Hundreds of People from the Parts round about came to hear him, who afterwards formed themselves into a Church, and are as I understand a flourishing Society to this day. The People were exceedingly affected by his Ministry and gave many proofs of the great veneration and esteem they had for him". Page 88, 89.<sup>1</sup>

This extract confirms the tradition that the pious and wealthy Owner or Occupier of Rookwood-Hall was induced by Mr. Pomfret (two or three other Individuals favouring the design) to convert an old Malt Office upon his premises into a place of worship for Prot:

<sup>1</sup>Thomas Reynolds, *Funeral Sermon for . . . Samuel Pomfret*, 1722, loc. cit. For Pomfret, see *D.N.B.* Rookwood Hall still stands.

Dissenters. . . . . the few Parishioners who loved the gospel, which Mr. Pomfret preached to them, were constrained to provide a place of worship for themselves; and their Malt Office, though a rude pile, nor indulged with Episcopal Consecration, was endeared to them as "the House of Prayer" and richly honoured with the Divine Presence. On this account, the subsequent building now used for Public Worship is, to this day, by many familiarly designated "Rookwood Hall Meeting".

When the place was fitted up, Mr. Pomfret, it is conjectured, kindly exerted himself in procuring Ministers to supply the Pulpit; and in the course of 3 or 4 years, the Congregation considerably increasing, the Revd. Daniel Wilcox became their stated Preacher. A church was then formed under the Denomination generally called Presbyterian & Mr. Wilcox was ordained to the Pastoral Office September 15th 1703.<sup>2</sup> — It is proper to state that *Presbyterian* Societies in England at that time, scarcely differed except in Name from those styled Congregational. They received the same grand and essential Doctrines of the Gospel and recognized the Independence of Churches. The only difference consisted in this that the Presbyterian Churches were not altogether so strict in their Discipline as the Congregational; and that their inferior Officers were entitled *Elders* rather than *Deacons*.

Mr. Wilcox's settlement promised great things to the Infant Church, as he was a Man distinguished by eminent Piety; considerable powers of Mind; extensive acquirements; and glowing Zeal. His continuance however was very short. After labouring with considerable acceptance and success at Abbots' Roothing for about 3 years, he was chosen Assistant to Mr. Doolittle at Monkwell Street London and removed thither towards the close of 1706.<sup>3</sup> . . .

Soon after Mr. Wilcox's removal the views of the destitute Church were happily directed to the Revd. Lachland Ross, a native of Scotland, who accepted an Invitation to the Pastoral Office and commenced his stated labours among them early in the Spring of 1707. — This invaluable Minister proved a signal blessing to the People of his Charge and to the Cause of Christ in the Neighbourhood . . . Besides his publick services on the Lord's day, it may literally be said that he preached the Gospel "from House to House", having licensed rooms in many of the surrounding villages, which he frequently visited during the week that he might proclaim the Word of Life . . . His kind attention to the Immortal Interests of the Young must not be overlooked; it was his constant practice, by Catechetical exercises, to impress religious principles on their minds. Influenced by Apostolic

<sup>2</sup>Cf. James Wood, *The returning our Spirits to him that gave them; considered, in a funeral sermon occasioned by the death of . . . Daniel Wilcox, 1733*, p. 35, n.1: 'Mr. Wilcox was Ordained by Mr. Spademan, Mr. Tong, Mr. Robinson, and Mr. Sheffield, at Abbots Roothing in Essex, Sept. 15, 1703.'

<sup>3</sup>Chosen Assistant to Mr. Doolittle, October 27, 1706, whom he Succeeded': James Wood, loc. cit. For Thomas Doolittle, see *D.N.B.*; *Calamy Revised*, ed. A. G. Matthews.

precept, it was this devout Pastor's delight to "pray without ceasing" and through his lovely example a devotional spirit happily pervaded the congregation at large. An association was formed of pious Young Men who met together frequently for Prayer at the house of one of the Brethren. . . .

In the Autumn of 1719 died, at an advanced Age, the Revd. Mr. Lukin<sup>4</sup> who had been one of the ejected Ministers. . . . This learned man was for many years Chaplain in the Family of Lord Masham of Oates<sup>5</sup> and regularly preached to a small Society of Prot: Dissenters at Matching. On the death of Mr. Lukin, his Widow applied to Mr. Ross and to Mr. Wiggett<sup>6</sup>, then Minister at Hatfield-Heath, for their joint assistance "in carrying on the Gospel at Matching" and it was arranged by these good Men to preach there alternatively every Sabbath Morning, each, when thus engaged at Matching, giving up the alternate publick Service in his own place. This arrangement, though it added to Mr. Ross's fatigue, was the means of continuing for a few Years longer this antient but reduced Society and instead of weakening, it rather strengthened the Cause at Rookwood Hall.

Mr. Ross's hearers, at his own place, greatly increased and many additions were made to the Church. The building, which they then occupied, became incapable of accommodating the numbers who crowded within its Walls and it was found necessary to erect a House for God. — A piece of freehold ground not far from Rookwood Hall and in the same Parish was generously given by Mr. Joseph Springham of Cockerells (a frequent Benefactor to this Interest) on which the present Meeting House was erected. It is a large, commodious and respectable building; capable of seating about 800 People and was opened for Public Worship about Michael: 1730. A Book containing the Names of the Subscribers and Benefactors to the new Meeting is preserved, in which the first donation is dated December 23rd 1729 and in 8 or 9 Years £630 was raised which probably defrayed or nearly so the cost of the building. Of this sum Mr. Ross and his congregation contributed the greater part and the remainder was supplied by the benefactions of a few Individuals; among whom we find the endeared name of Dr. Watts. For the security of the Congregation, the Estate was conveyed to Trustees duly chosen and to this day, when necessary, the Trust has been renewed, according to the Terms of the Deed.

In the new Meeting Mr. Ross preached with increasing ardour and success, and though the place was large he had always a numerous and often a crowded Auditory. Delightful unanimity & harmony and the Lord sent them abundant prosperity. — But alas in about 11 years, after this auspicious aera, this faithful Servant of Christ was

<sup>4</sup>Henry Lukin, Rector of Chipping Ongar, who was not formally ejected, d. 17 Sept. 1719; see *D.N.B.*; *Calamy Revised*.

<sup>5</sup>Samuel Masham, 1st Baron Masham (1679-1758): see *D.N.B.*, s.v. his wife, Abigail, Lady Masham.

<sup>6</sup>George Wiggett: T. W. Davids, *Annals of Evangelical Nonconformity in . . . . Essex*, pp. 406, 421.

removed by Death. . . . A plain Stone in Abbots' Roothing Church Yard has the following Inscription

"Here lyes the Body of that eminent Divine, the Reverend and Learned Mr. Lachlan Ross who after having for Thirty Three years laboured in the work of the Ministry at Rookwood Hall with uncommon diligence, singular prudence & faithfulness Entered into his rest the 7 of December 1740 Aged 60 years 2 months 21 days being regretted by all who had the happiness of his Acquaintance".

Towards the latter end of Mr. Ross's ministry Mr. Springham (the generous Individual before alluded to) assigned over two Cottages &c. nearly adjoining the new Meeting in Trust for the benefit of the successive Ministers, probably thinking they might be converted into a convenient Parsonage House. This however was never done and the Ministers, taking the rent of the Cottages, still lived, till a more pervaded the whole Society; the Pastor & the Flock rejoicing together recent period, in the Gentleman's End (*it was so called*) of Rookwood Hall Farm House. . . . .

On the decease of the late eminent Man of God, the destitute Flock were induced to invite as his Successor the Revd George Ross (though of the same name, this Individual was not related to their late Pastor and certainly of a very different Spirit) who accepted their Invitation and was ordained in June 1741.

Scarcely however had the newly ordained Pastor entered upon the duties of his solemn Office, when he conducted himself in a manner the most arbitrary; unscriptural and Anti-Christian, disgusting the Major part of the Church and Congregation too. In the spirit of the very Pope himself, this Prot: Dissenting Pastor drew up a Covenant and declared that he would not administer the Lord's Supper to any of the Members unless they subscribed it; absolutely refusing them the right not merely of *considering* but even of *reading* the articles of the Covenant previous to their subscribing it. . . . in a very short time an open rupture ensued between him and his People, which terminated in Mr. George Ross's removal. . . .

Though Mr. Ross's connection with the Church at Abbots' Roothing was thus unpleasantly dissolved, yet for some years he continued to reside in the Neighbourhood and preached regularly, both parts of the Sabbath day to the small Society at Matching before mentioned. A Funeral Sermon which he delivered to that People is in Print, bearing date [1748]<sup>7</sup>. At length however Mr. R. removed to

<sup>7</sup>A space left for the insertion of the date was not filled in. The reference is to: George Ross, Minister of the Gospel, *Sovereign Grace Triumphant in the Salvation of a perishing Sinner*. Represented in a Sermon Occasioned by the Death of Mr. John Boyce, Carpenter of the Duke Privateer . . . . Preached at Matching-Green February 14, 1747-8. London: Printed for the Author, 1748. Price six-pence. Preface to reader dated From my Study at Matching-Green in Essex, Feb. 25, 1747-8. (Copy in Dr. Williams' Library.)

a distant part of the Country and on his removal the Society at Matching became extinct. The principal persons of which it was formed attached themselves — some to Abbots' Roothing — and others to Hatfield Heath. Nevertheless to this day an Evening Lecture is occasionally preached in the Village (a room being licensed for the purpose) by the Ministers stationed over those Neighbouring congregations.

With Mr. Ross's removal from Abbots' Roothing the tempest subsided and tranquility was regained by the settlement of the Revd. John Cook who entered on the Pastoral Office towards the end of 1743. This good man was not favoured with a liberal education but he was a laborious & faithful Pastor, greatly attached to and respected by his Flock. After continuing about 35 years, and being far advanced in age, increasing infirmities constrained him, January 1778, to resign his charge. . . . he died December 20th following and was buried in Abbots' Roothing Church on Christmas day.<sup>9</sup>

One circumstance connected with Mr. Cook's Ministry requires particular notice. It will be remembered this religious Society was originally designated *Presbyterian* and it was so styled till this period when the *Congregational* Order of Church government appears to have been preferred and adopted. The authority on which this fact rests is — a written Fragment relating to Mr. Cook's Ministry, from which, it is certain, the term *Elder* was dropped and *Deacons* regularly chosen as in Congregational or Independent Churches.

On the resignation of Mr. Cook, through the kind assistance of the Revd Mr. Brewer of Stepney<sup>10</sup>, a Mr. Offwood<sup>10</sup> filled the vacant Pulpit about 9 months. — But the next Pastor to be recorded is the Revd Mr. McNeeley, from the Old College Homerton, whose Ordination, June 24, 1779, again excited the grateful feelings and cheerful hopes of the good People at Abbots' Roothing.

This respectable Minister's continuance, however, was short. In about 4 years Mr. McNeeley thought proper to leave. His resignation was given in May 18th 1783 and the July following he removed to Yarmouth.<sup>11</sup>

The lamented vacancy was soon filled up by the settlement of the Revd Thomas Eisdell, a student also from Homerton College, who was ordained at Abbots' Roothing July 21st, 1784. The Revd Messrs Angus of Bp. Stortford; Hobbs of Colchester, and Wickens of

<sup>9</sup>Of John Cook nothing more seems known.

<sup>10</sup>Samuel Brewer, d. 1796: see *Evangelical Magazine*, 1797, pp. 5-18.

<sup>10</sup>Ezekiel Offwood, later minister at, and benefactor of, Stebbing, Essex: Davids, pp. 452, 479.

<sup>11</sup>For the settlement at Yarmouth on 20 Oct. 1785 of Samuel (not James, as Davids, p. 452) McNeely, see John Browne, *History of Congregationalism . . . in Norfolk and Suffolk*, p. 616; cf. p. 248, with n.†. In a list of Homerton students in New College, London, MSS. 54/4/11 his name is given as John.

Dunmow,<sup>13</sup> with other Ministers, engaged in the Service.—

. . . . The Congregation at this time generously exerted themselves to provide a comfortable residence for their Minister. The Village of Fyfield, though 4 miles distant from the Meeting-House, was selected at the particular request of Mr. Eisdell and a suitable purchase was made; secured in Trust &c.

Unhappily a trifling dispute arose between Mr. E. and some of his People, which occasioned his removal in 1789 after staying with them about 5 years.<sup>14</sup>

On leaving; Mr. Eisdell recommended as a Supply, to his late Flock, the Revd Joseph Corbishley, from St. Neots,<sup>14</sup> who soon received an Invitation to the Pastoral Office, which he accepted and entered on his official Duties in July 1790.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup>For John Angus (1724-1801), see William Chaplin, *The Memory of the Just*, 1802; for Giles Hobbs and Aaron Wickens, cf. Davids, pp. 376 and 386.

<sup>14</sup>After a period at Andover, Eisdell ministered at Biggleswade from 1806 to 1813: New College, London, MSS. L 3/15, pp. 307-8.

<sup>15</sup>Corbishley, who came from the church at Charlesworth, Derbyshire, and had been trained at Hoxton Academy, was ordained at St. Neots, Huntingdonshire, on 4 September 1787: *ibid.* pp. 785-6.

<sup>16</sup>Corbishley remained at Abbots' Roothing till his death on 19 August 1831: *Evangelical Magazine*, 1832, p. 72.

## KELD CONGREGATIONAL SCHOOL

In the summer of 1973 the Primary School at Keld was voluntarily closed and the few remaining children moved to a school at Gunnerside, six miles lower down in Swaledale. This marked the end of nearly two hundred years of village education begun by the first Independent minister at Keld, high in the Pennine hills of north Yorkshire, and associated throughout with the Congregational Church there, which now belongs to the United Reformed Church.

Edward Stillman came to Upper Swaledale about 1789, preaching in barns or out of doors for a couple of years until the people of Keld asked him to be their minister. In the early 1790s he built a small chapel with two adjoining rooms, on the site of an earlier place of worship. It was said to have cost £700 and he raised the money on begging tours of the country. He lived in one of the rooms; the other he used as a schoolroom. About 1818 the house and chapel were enlarged.

In 1842 a new minister, James Wilkenson, built a new school at a cost of £84. 12. 8½. Details of all who contributed towards this are given on the original subscription list. It is headed: 'Subscriptions Towards the Building of a New School House in connexion with the Independent Chapel, Keld, Swaledale, Built in the Year of our Lord

1842'. The highest subscription was £6. 5. 0 the lowest one shilling, and there were many of that amount. Details are also given of the expenditure: £4 for the purchase of an old building on the site (a map shows this to have been a ruined barn and a pig-sty); £15. 5. 7½ for timber; 5s. for Plaster Hair and carriage; £6 for windows; £2. 8. 8 for 'slateing'; 9s. 4d. for coals for lime; £19 to the mason; £5. 13. 4 to the carpenter; 15s. to T. Peacock and Sons for five days' work; and to T. Alderson 'to Ale for reasing' 5s. The total cost of £84. 12. 8½ was £6. 4. 2½ more than the subscriptions. So Mrs. Thompson gave the additional amount and the school was paid for. Five years later they added a bell in a turret on the roof. It still bears the date and the signature, J. Metcalfe, above a heart-shaped opening in the side of the turret.

The minister continued to act as schoolmaster for many years, but later, schoolmasters and assistant teachers were appointed. An agreement of October, 1866 between the Rev. James Wilkenson and George Fawcett reads as follows:—

Mr. Wilkenson undertakes to allow George Fawcett the use of the schoolroom and school furniture without any charge for rent, and undertakes to pay George Fawcett the sum of Ten Pounds per annum for one year in addition to any school fees which may be paid for the education of the children. This sum of Ten Pounds Mr. Wilkenson engages to pay in equal quarterly amounts of Two pounds ten shillings each. . . . George Fawcett on his part engages to instruct and educate the children to the best of his ability, to keep the schoolroom and school furniture in good order and to be responsible for any damage that may be done. . . . and to keep the windows and furniture in good repair at his own expence. He also engages to pay particular attention to the behaviour of the children and in all respects to conduct the school in the best manner that he can. The schoolroom to be always at liberty when required for Sunday School purposes, or religious services or lectures. . . . This agreement to commence on the first Monday in January 1867 and to terminate on the last Saturday of December 1867, but may be renewed from time to time if desired by all parties concerned.

Before Mr. Fawcett's appointment the school had been in charge of Miss Scott. A copy of the 'Course of Instruction and Terms', dated 9 January 1865 and signed by James Wilkenson on behalf of the Committee, reads as follows:—

3rd Division. Reading, Spelling, writing, plain sewing, knitting and general course of Instruction. 2d. per week or 2/- per qtr.

2nd Division. Reading, Spelling, writing, arithmetic, Geography, English Grammar, Vocal Music, plain Sewing, Knitting. 3d. per week or 3/- per qtr.

1st Division. Reading, Spelling, writing, arithmetic, English Grammar, composition, Geography, Mapping, Natural and Civil History, Vocal Music, Fancy Needlework and Knitting. 4d. per

week or 4/- per qtr.

All school pence to be paid in advance.

School Hours. Morning from 9 to 12. Afternoon from half past 1 to 4.

Scholars to purchase their Copy and Ciphering Books, Pens, Penholders and Pencils.

Each scholar to pay 3d. per qtr. of the two winter qtrs. for school fire.

Children admitted at 3 years of age and upwards.

Regular attendance, clean hands and faces. Hair combed and a willing conformity to the order and discipline of the School are requested of all Scholars. Refractory Scholars will be dismissed. One month holiday at Midsummer and Christmas.

There are also copies of the Inspectors' Reports for the years 1873-98 preserved. Here we find mention of the difficulty of travel to 'this remote moorland school'; there is general commendation of the work done. However, here and there we find a gentle reprimand: 'the sewing is capable of improvement'; 'the accounts should be kept in a suitable account book'; 'the arithmetic requires improvement'; 'with proper maps there is reason to hope the children will do better in Geography'; 'the singing is weak': 'my Lords will look for decided improvement in arithmetic next year'.

In 1882 it was hoped that the Committee of management would find it in their power to enlarge the school as it was overcrowded. Meanwhile it was urged that the windows be made to open for the sake of ventilation. On several occasions it was noted that subjects were not quite up to the required standard but the grant had been recommended because of the exceptional difficulties connected with such a remote school. The behaviour and good manners of the children were frequently mentioned.

In 1894 the children were apparently still paying fees for fuel and the authorities frowned upon this as, according to the Elementary Education Act of 1891, no fees whatever were to be charged. Structural improvements were carried out in 1897 after repeated urging by the Inspectors and others and a note by the new Head Inspector stated,

The order is excellent and the attainments give promise of improvement under the present teacher. The schoolroom has been enlarged and a cloakroom has been provided. The offices are not approached separately from the schoolroom. More than one seat is not allowed in any closet.

There were 56 names on the school register in 1877, but some of the causes of later decline had already reached Swaledale. The lead-mining industry which had been active for many centuries was facing economic disaster and the exodus of inhabitants from the dale had already begun. Whereas in 1851 the population of Keld, together with farms even higher up the dale, was 391, today the adult population, apart from people using week-end cottages, is about 60. The number of children in the school remained at about 50 until several



years into the present century, and then it persistently declined. For many years the Head Teacher has been the only teacher. Following the 1944 Education Act, the Local Authority took over all financial responsibility for the school, but the Yorkshire Congregational Union and the Keld church have appointed most of the managers and the minister has been their chairman.

In 1972 the North Riding Education Committee produced a Draft Plan for Primary Education and it became apparent that the Keld School must shortly reach the end of its service and the children be taken to the new and larger school at Gunnerside. The change was precipitated when one Keld child went off to boarding school and a gamekeeper's family with four children moved elsewhere. With one other boy about to leave for secondary school (nearly 25 miles away at Richmond), this left only four children. For their sake the change was desirable. So, after nearly two hundred years, Keld Congregational School closed, surely one of the last few primary schools closely connected with the denomination, if not the last.

For the time being the church survives in this remote hamlet at the head of a dale which is so delightful, especially on a sunny summer day. It is easy to be romantic about it all. It is difficult to make a worth-while life there a practical possibility for ordinary people.

K. W. WADSWORTH

### Obituary Notice

## LILLIAN W. KELLEY, M.A.

Miss Kelley died on 23 April 1974 at the age of 84 years. The Society was represented at the funeral service at her church, Regents Square.

Miss Kelley was Colleague Archivist of the Presbyterian Historical Society 1929-43; Archivist 1943-47; Curator and Archivist 1947-59; Editor of the *P.H.S., Journal* 1948-59. When she retired the Council recorded a minute of its appreciation of her long and loyal service (*P.H.S., Journal*, Vol. XI. 216). She built up the Society's museum in Regents Square Church. When Church House and Regents Square Church were destroyed in February 1945 and the Society's property was removed to the vaults below Marylebone Presbyterian Church, the dungeon, as they became known, she was found drying, cleaning and sorting hundreds of dirty, damaged and damp books and documents, as well as numerous portraits and museum exhibits. In 1957 she was engaged in the move back to Tavistock Place, only to face once again the wretchedness of damp walls, defective flooring and finally flooding.

Miss Kelley loved her work and surmounted all difficulties. She always set herself a very high standard and spared no effort to reach it.

## REVIEWS

*Victorian Nonconformity* by John Briggs and Ian Sellers (Edward Arnold, 1973, 180 pp., £3 cloth, £1.50 paperback).

This is a useful collection of documents which illustrate the Nonconformist contribution to the life of Victorian England. Whilst some comparison is possible with David Thompson's *Nonconformity in the Nineteenth Century* (reviewed in the *Journal* of April 1973) the intention of this collection is rather different. The authors have not set out to provide a general impression of Nonconformist life in the period but have concentrated upon presenting 'the feel of those things which concerned Nonconformity as a whole'. It is, in a sense, the public face of Nonconformity with which they are concerned. Whilst there are some 'domestic' themes, those of Conversion, the Sacraments, attitudes towards Death, and others, the real value of the book lies in its illustration of the dialogue between Nonconformity and wider Victorian society. The issues of public and private morality, political and educational controversies, cultural attitudes, the place of mission and evangelism at home and abroad, the growing evidence of Nonconformist co-operation, all find a place. It is inevitably in a collection of this length that whilst practically everything is touched upon, few subjects can be explored in more than a superficial fashion. For those who seek an introduction to the study of Nineteenth Century Nonconformity the documents there will provide some helpful lines for further study, and both the brief biographical notes on leading Nonconformist figures and the suggestions for further reading will be useful. In the absence of any good modern general history of Nonconformity in this period to read alongside the documents, something more satisfactory than the introductions to each section would have been welcome.

NIGEL J. W. APPLETON

*Association Records of the Particular Baptists of England, Wales and Ireland to 1660: Part 3. The Abingdon Association.* Edited by B. R. White (The Baptist Historical Society, 1974, 92pp. £3).

Dr. White and the Baptist Historical Society are to be applauded for managing to continue this series. We now have altogether 215 pages of records and notes concerning associations in South Wales and the Midlands (Part 1); the South West and Ireland (Part 2); and here, Abingdon, which embraces a large area of the Thames Valley, commencing on the '8th day, 8th month (vulgarly, October) 1652' and concluding on the '19th and 20th dayes of the 4th moneth 1660'. The records show that the churches felt a very real need of one another and sought guidance and help in dealing with their internal problems. Doctrinal questions as such seem to have taken up little time, most of the matters discussed arising from church members' actions and attitudes. Should they pay tithes? What about marriage with unbelievers? Should a church member continue a personal

friendship with someone excommunicated? What about members who stay away from the Lord's Table? The questions are settled by Bible study and debate. Sometimes they get down to the Greek — the meaning of *Heb.13.17*, for example, they find 'not so dark'. Towards the end of the period the Quakers cause some disturbance.

A large number of notes on places, persons and events, cross-referenced to other sources, are provided, the fruit of many hours research.

J. H. TAYLOR

*The Elect Lady*, by G. W. Kirby (The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, 1972, 30p.)

This is a very readable tribute to the formidable, determined and dedicated Countess of Huntingdon whose activity made a mark in the Christian world of her day and whose name is still remembered in her Connexion and whose influence is traceable in the traditions of the URC and of the Presbyterian Church of Wales.

R. BUICK KNOX.

*Also received:—*

*A Short History of Beaconsfield and Holtspur United Reformed Church (1704-1974)* by Cecil L. Brown and Lawrence L. Perry (1974, pp.8).

*Which God is dead?* by R. C. Zaehner (Friends of Dr. Williams's Library, 28th Lecture, 1974, 30p. from Dr. Williams's Trust, 14 Gordon Sq., London, WC1H 0AG).

*Lady Huntingdon and Spa Fields Chapel* by Edwin Welch (in *The Guildhall Miscellany*, Vol. IV, No. 3, October 1972.)

## LIBRARY ACQUISITIONS

Band (Edward) *Working His Purpose Out*, 1948.

Brayshaw (A.N.) *Quakers: Their Story and Message*, 1969.

Collinson (Patrick) *Mirror of Puritanism: Life and Letters of Godly Master Dering?* F.W.L., 1963.

Greer (R.M.) *History of the Presbyterian Church in Singapore*, 1950, repr. 1956.

Kirby (G. W.) *The Elect Lady; Countess Huntindon*, 1972.

Ross (J. M.) *Index to Assembly Minutes, 1921-1972*, 1973.

Slack (Kenneth) *City Temple: One Hundred Years*, 1974.

*Suffolk Review*, 1973.

Thomas (Roger) *Daniel Williams: Presbyterian Bishop*, F.W.L., 1962.

White (B.R. Ed.) *Association Records of the Particular Baptists of England, Wales and Ireland to 1660: Part 3. The Abingdon Association*, 1973.

Wilson (J.F.) *Pulpit in Parliament*, 1968.

## OUR CONTEMPORARIES

*The Baptist Quarterly*: Vol. XXV

This is a substantial journal made possible by the annual subscription rate of £4 (ministers and students £2). The articles cover historical and contemporary subjects both local and national and from home and overseas. Among contributors are Dr. E. A. Payne, Principal B. R. White and Professor W. R. Ward. There is an appreciative notice of the formation of the URC and of our own society.

*Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*: Vol. XXXIX, 1973-4.

Among the articles there is one on Hoxton Independent Academy whose buildings were taken over by the Methodists in 1834. B. G. Holland provides an interesting article on the 'charismatic' character of response to Wesley's preaching in No. 3. October 1973.

*The Bulletin of the Presbyterian Hist. Soc. of Ireland*: Nos. 3 and 4.

These issues contain articles which cast light on revivals and rifts in some Irish Presbyterian Churches and also on the tangled links of religion and politics in Ireland. There is also a John Knox Commemoration sermon by Professor J. M. Barkley.

*Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hanes Eglwys Methodistiaid Calfinaidd Cymru*: The Journal of the Historical Society of the Presbyterian Church of Wales: Vol. LVIII.

In 1973 the Welsh Presbyterian Church recalled the two hundredth anniversary of the death of Howel Harris and this volume recalls some aspects of his influence. It includes the commemorative address given at the General Assembly by Dr. R. Buick Knox.

*Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society*: Vol. XV. no. 3, Oct. 1973.

Russell Richey continues his article on Joseph Priestley's worship and theology, and Gordon Bolam his records on the Association of Dissenting Ministers in Northamptonshire. Sadly, the number also has an In Memoriam for Gordon Bolam. Alan Sell contributes an article on three Unitarian ministers in Walsall in the last century.

*The Journal of the Friends' Historical Society*: Vol. 53. no. 2, 1973.

This issue contains a variety of articles. Andrew Brink dwells on the Fall, Adam's, according to Milton, and James Nayler's; Kenneth Carroll writes on Henry Fell, traveller and printer in the seventeenth century; Jean Mortimer describes an early Quaker poet, Mary Mollineux; there is an account of the Birkbeck Library, York; and another of the extent of Quaker records in Lambeth Palace Library.

Also received: *Reformed World* and the *Bulletin* (Soc. de l'Histoire du Prot. français).