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Editorial

The Revd. Dr. Ernest Payne, C.H., died on 14 January 1980. The international Christian statesmanship, denominational leadership and historical scholarship which characterised his life were inseparable. Indeed, they fed each other as his lecture in 1976 to our society on “Nonconformists and the American Revolution” [*J.U.R.C.H.S.*, Vol.1., pp.210 ff.] recently testified and his book, *The Free Church Tradition in the Life of England* [1944], long ago made clear. Dr. Payne was President of the Baptist Historical Society; his family connexions included George Eliot’s schoolmistresses and there were links with our own Abbey Chapel, Romsey. His father heard Joseph Parker damn the Sultan in the City Temple.

We welcome Michael Moody, of Claremont Graduate School, California, as a contributor. Dr. Moody’s current research is on the brothers George and Francis Johnson.

Alan Sell and Richard Carwardine are seasoned contributors. Dr. Sell, who is Principal Lecturer at the West Midlands College of Education, contributes the first full treatment of Henry Rogers, who was once among the best known of literary Dissenters. Dr. Carwardine, whose book on Transatlantic Revivalism is reviewed by David M. Thompson, assesses recent studies of the American wing of the Reformed tradition. His is the first of occasional bibliographical articles on important themes in current research, to be written by historians in their field.

HENRY ROGERS AND *THE ECLIPSE OF FAITH*¹

"If he lives to accomplish our expectations, we feel little doubt that his name will share with those of Butler and of Pascal in the gratitude and veneration of posterity." So wrote W. J. Conybeare in a review of Henry Rogers's *The Eclipse of Faith* (1852) and *A Defence of 'The Eclipse of Faith'* (1854).² Rogers was to write for a further twenty years, and he accomplished much; yet Conybeare's prophecy remains so unfulfilled that the centenary of Rogers's death (20th August 1977) could pass without public acknowledgement.

There are two reasons for this. First, as far as his methodology is concerned Rogers was already noticeably — even defiantly — behind the times in his own day. Loyal to the metaphysical approach of Reid, and to the moral school of Butler, Rogers, so J. B. Paton thought, was "likely to be the last eminent representative of either school."³ Secondly, as far as Rogers's life is concerned, materials are few. For this Rogers himself is to blame. Like his hero John Howe and his near-anagrammatic character R. E. H. Greyson Esq.,⁴ he left little to assist biographers.⁵ Our biographical sketchiness is, accordingly, more than ordinarily justifiable.

I

Henry Rogers was born at St. Albans on 18th October 1806, the third son of Thomas Rogers, surgeon. He was educated first at the school of John Smith, Congregational pastor at Redbourne, Hertfordshire,⁶ and then at that of Mr. J. C. Thorowgood of Mill Hill. On leaving school he was apprenticed to Mr. Ray, a surgeon and Congregational church member, of Milton-next-Sittingbourne, Kent. R. W. Dale, Rogers's student and friend, informs us that "although he never practised, he had the proper professional hostility to Homoeopathy and all other medical heresies."⁷ At the age of nineteen Rogers published *Poems, Miscellaneous and Sacred* (1826), but, despite Josiah Conder's kindly review in the *Eclectic*, he later suppressed the volume. Dale recalls that the only trick a student ever played on

¹The following less familiar abbreviations are here used: *BQR*, *The British Quarterly Review*; *CM*, *The Congregational Magazine*; *Cong.*, *The Congregationalist*; *DMem.*, Memoir of Rogers by R. W. Dale, prefixed to the 8th edn. of *The Superhuman Origin of the Bible*, 1893; *EB*, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 8th edn. (*Cong.* erroneously gives 9th); *EM*, *The Evangelical Magazine*; *ERess*, *Essays from The Edinburgh Review*; *GWess*, *Essays from Good Words*; *Peel*, A. Peel, *The Congregational Two Hundred*, 1948.

²*The Quarterly Review* XCV, Sept. 1854, p. 477.

³J. B. Paton, "In Memoriam, — Henry Rogers," *EM* 1877, p. 602. This is a pessimistic judgement. For example, Robert Flint, in many ways an eighteenth-century thinker, lived until 1910, and his classic *Theism* appeared in the year in which Paton was writing.

⁴"Mr. Greyson" "took infinite pains to prevent any one's having the materials for the purpose" of writing his biography. See *Selections from the Correspondence of R. E. H. Greyson, Esq.*, 1857, I, p. viii. Rogers regretted the fact that Howe "in his last moments laid sacrilegious hands on the voluminous manuscripts which contained the history of his public and private life." *The Life and Character of John Howe, M.A.*, 1862, p. 1.

⁵The following are drawn upon here: New College (London) MSS and Highbury College *Reports* and Minute Books at Dr. Williams's Library; *Cong.* VI 1877, pp. 654-664; *CYB* 1878, pp. 347-8; *DMem*; *DNB*; *EM* 1877 pp. 599-602. Dale's bibliography of Rogers's writings is not quite complete.

⁶For Smith (1775-1848) see *CYB* 1848, p. 241; W. Urwick, *Nonconformity in Hertfordshire* 1884, pp. 301, 406; *CHST* IV, p. 317. His main work was done at Redbourne, 1806-47 where, except on one occasion, he never received more than £10 p.a. for his services. I am indebted to Dr. Williams's Librarian, Mr. John Creasey, for this, and for one or two other pieces of information.

⁷*DMem*, p. viii. Rogers wrote "Three letters to a homoeopathist" in the *Greyson Selections*, II pp. 55-76. For Dale see *DNB Supp.*; *Peel*, pp. 205-6. For the influence of Rogers upon Dale see A. W. W. Dale, *The Life of R. W. Dale of Birmingham* 1899, *passim*.

Rogers was to quote one of his early lines in class.⁸ While at Milton Rogers read Howe's "incomparable treatise" *The Redeemer's Tears Wept Over Lost Souls* in which, as he later wrote, "Howe seems to have caught much of the spirit which animated his Divine Master on that sad occasion to which the discourse in question refers."⁹ Thus began his interest in the Puritan.

Following a meeting with Dr. George Redford, then of Uxbridge, later of Angel Street, Worcester,¹⁰ Rogers's thoughts began to turn towards the ministry. He forsook the surgery for the manse and lodged with Redford for a year, assisting in the work of the Uxbridge church and school, and receiving tuition preparatory to his college career. At the age of twenty he applied for admission to Highbury College, supported by Redford, the Revd. John Dean of Milton,¹¹ and John Ray his former employer.

Rogers, it was said, would have excelled at Oxford or Cambridge, "But the Church that repudiates the name of sect was then the most sectarian institution in the Kingdom."¹² So to the new College at Highbury he went in 1826, having on 1st August preached before the College Committee on *Rom. 1 : 16*. His teachers were William Harris (Theology), Henry Forster Burder (Philosophy), and the youthful Robert Halley (Classics), who was later to terminate a period of service at Lancashire Independent College two years before Rogers went there as Principal.¹³ It may be supposed that Halley who, like Howe before him, combined "a warm attachment to evangelical religion with real catholicity of spirit"¹⁴ struck a chord in Rogers's heart; and that Burder's fondness for the philosophy of Dugald Stewart, Reid's "common sense" successor, appealed to his mind.¹⁵

In August 1829 Rogers went as assistant to Thomas Durant of Poole,¹⁶ though he was never ordained. It appears that a chronic throat condition ruled out the regular work of the ministry. At his College interview his voice was noted as being "rather low and indistinct"; while at Poole he was afflicted in the throat "through

⁸*D.Mem.*, p. x. For Conder see *DNB* IV, pp. 927-8; *Peel*, pp. 135-6.

⁹*Life of Howe*, p.350; cf. pp. 424-7.

¹⁰For Redford (1785-1860) see *DNB* XVI, p. 820; *CYB* 1861, pp. 230-3; William Urwick, *Nonconformity in Worcester* 1897, pp. 121-127.

¹¹Dean was at Milton from 1816, and was ordained there on 31st March 1818. He resigned in 1829. See *EM* 1819, p. 470.

¹²*Cong.* VI 1877, p. 655.

¹³Harris (1776?-1830), Burder (1783-1864) and Halley (1796-1876) are in *DNB*. Halley is in *Peel*, pp. 150-1. In later years Rogers wrote a highly favourable review of Halley's *Lancashire; Its Puritanism and Nonconformity* (1869) which, he said, marked Halley as the ecclesiastical (as distinct from denominational) historian of Congregationalism. See *BQR* L, 1869, p. 92. A later Lancashire historian, Benjamin Nightingale, found Halley's "charming" book to be "often seriously vitiated by the idea underlying the statement that many of the Fathers and Founders of Lancashire Congregationalism 'cared much more for Evangelical doctrine than for ecclesiastical polity.'" See his *The Story of the Lancashire Congregational Union*, [1906], p. 9. *DMem.*, pp. xii-xiii n., lists Rogers's student contemporaries. See also the *Report of the Committee of Highbury College, 1827*. The College was opened on Tuesday, 5.9.1826 (p.3.); fourteen first year students, including Rogers, were enrolled (p. 25). Among subscribers to the College were Durant, Ray and Redford. Rogers himself became a subscriber in 1830. The *Highbury Reports* are at Dr. Williams's Library, as are Minute Books of the College Committee, and the Declaration concerning good behaviour which all students were required to sign. I am grateful to Dr. G. F. Nuttall for drawing my attention to this material, and to the New College MSS.

¹⁴So *DNB* VIII, p. 994.

¹⁵Burder was "a methodical thinker, a great admirer of Dugald Stuart's [sic] philosophy, an admirable teacher of homiletics, a shrewd critic of sermons, an earnest preacher of the gospel, a laborious pastor, and a perfect Christian gentleman." So John Stoughton, *Reminiscences of Congregationalism Fifty Years Ago*, 1881, pp. 14-15.

¹⁶For Durant (1776-1849) see *CYB* 1850, pp. 96-7; *Peel*, pp. 52-3. But W. Densham and J. Ogle, *The Story of the Congregational Churches of Dorset*, 1899, p. 205, have Rogers to Poole in October, and (against Dale's and *DNB*'s 1832) leaving it in October 1831. Cf. *Highbury College Report*, 1830, p. 10.

getting thoroughly soaked on a journey to Bristol;¹⁷ and although in September 1835 he was well enough to undertake a year's supply at Totteridge,¹⁸ "medical opinion was clear that chronic disease of the windpipe would ensue unless the work of the ministry was abandoned."¹⁹ Writing and teaching were to be his happily accepted lot.

From 1832-9 he lectured at Highbury on Logic and Rhetoric in succession to Burder, and in 1836²⁰ he was appointed to the Chair of English Language and Literature at what is now University College, London. In December 1838 he was invited to the Chair of Intellectual Philosophy at the recently opened Spring Hill College, Birmingham, and he assumed his duties there in September 1839. The Spring Hill course comprised two years of Arts and four of Theology, and we find Rogers teaching English Language and Literature, English History, and Mathematics as well as Philosophy. His philosophical text books were Stewart's *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (three volumes, the first dedicated to Reid, 1792-1827) and Whately's *Elements of Logic* (1826, nine editions in all). Such was the teacher's zeal, and so wide-ranging his knowledge, that able students were permitted to proceed to London University's M.A. — generally in Philosophy, Ethics and Political Economy — even though this took them to the end, or near the end, of their College course and curtailed Francis Watts's labours in the theological department.²¹

By now Rogers was becoming known as a writer. He had already introduced works by Jonathan Edwards and Joseph Truman (1834), Jeremy Taylor (1835), Robert Boyle (1836) and Edmund Burke (1837); he had published his *Life of Howe* (1836) and his two London Inaugural Lectures entitled *General Introduction to a Course of Lectures on English Grammar and Composition* (1837). He had contributed to John Blackburn's *Congregational Magazine*, to Conder's *The Patriot*, and to *The Eclectic Review* of which, in 1837, Dr. Thomas Price succeeded Conder as editor.²² His literary talents were sought by Conder who convened the

¹⁷See Densham and Ogle, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

¹⁸CM 1835, p. 582. His old schoolmaster, Thorowgood, had by now set up school there. The Highbury Report for 1835 (p. 22) gives his station as "various"; that for 1836 (p. 18) gives "London (various)."

¹⁹Cong. VI, p. 656. The facts seem to be sufficiently well recorded for it to be surprising that Miall should enigmatically state that "for some reasons the pastoral office did not suit Mr. Rogers." See H. S. Skeats and C. S. Miall, *History of the Free Churches of England 1688-1891*, [1891], p. 659. Whilst there can be little doubt that Rogers's health gave cause for concern, it should also be noted that his finances were in a parlous condition, especially having regard to his forthcoming marriage. The Poole congregation, wealthy though it was, failed to honour its promise of paying him £150 p.a., gradually rising. Having had two ministers of property, "The people have been in the habit for 40 years of giving as little as they can. . . ." See New College, London, MSS (at Dr. Williams's Library) 347/49 — a letter from Rogers to Thomas Wilson, postmark 6.2.1830; cf. L.52/2/105 to John Blackburn on the same subject. Rogers sought the advice of Wilson and Blackburn as to his future. Durant also wrote to both men on Rogers's behalf (L.52/5/20). Rogers, he says, is not "bound by any tie to Poole, which can fairly demand a sacrifice from him. And dear as he is to me, I could not, in conscience, ask him to stay, where his reasonable expectations will not be realised." He hopes that Rogers will find a situation "which should know how to value one of the most able of young men." Other letters and notes from Rogers are 33/19; 409/4; L.52/2/106-9.

²⁰Though Cong. VI, p. 656 has January 1837, Rogers lectured to two Highbury classes twice per week for £100 p.a. See College Committee Minutes for 10.3.1837; cf. *ibid.*, 23.2.1839; and College Reports for 1834, p. 8; 1837, p. 7; 1839, pp. 3-4. At no time did Rogers's name appear on the list of Tutors at the College.

²¹See R. W. Dale in "Spring Hill College," in *Mansfield College, Oxford: Its Origin and Opening*, 1890, pp. 12-13. He writes, "Mr. Rogers had a great influence over all the men, and especially over those who had any intellectual ambition. . . . The Board of Education insisted, from time to time, on the importance of the theological department, but was not disposed to deal severely with the men who neglected it." Evidence of Rogers's inspiring teaching is provided by A. W. W. Dale, *op. cit.*, p. 82: in three successive years Spring Hill men, R. A. Redford, R. W. Dale and J. B. Paton carried off the gold medal in the London M.A. examination.

²²For Blackburn (1792-1855) see *CYB* 1856, pp. 208-10; *Peel*, pp. 138-9; Stoughton, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-9. In a letter to Blackburn dated 8.8.1831 (New College, London MSS L/52/2/108) Rogers confesses that he finds it hard enough to find texts for sermons, but ten times more difficult to find suitable subjects for CM.

committee which prepared the *Congregational Hymn Book* (1836), and in 1837 there appeared his three-volume collection of letters entitled *The Christian Correspondent*. The year 1839 saw his first piece for *The Edinburgh Review*, of which journal he was on two occasions invited to become the editor. His first article for *The British Quarterly Review*, founded by Robert Vaughan in 1845, appeared in May 1849; and his first for *Good Words* in 1862. He reviewed Renan's *Vie de Jésus* for the *London Review*, and the same author's *Les Apôtres* for *The Fortnightly Review*. For good measure he contributed articles on Butler (1854); Gassendi, Gibbon, Robert Hall and Hume (1856); Paley and Pascal (1859); and Voltaire (1860) to the eighth edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. The *Remains of the late Rev. John Morell Mackenzie* (1845); *The Eclipse of Faith* (1852); *A Defence of 'The Eclipse of Faith'* (1854); *Three Letters to a Friend on the Sunday Question* (1856); *Essay on the Life and Genius of Thomas Fuller* (1856); and the two volumes of *Selections from the Correspondence of R. E. H. Greyson Esq.* (1857) also flowed from his pen during this period.

Among the results of Rogers's considerable literary activity was his happy contact with such men of letters as Sir James Stephen, T.B. Macaulay, Thomas Binney, Norman Macleod, and, above all, Richard Whately, Archbishop of Dublin. To Macaulay and Whately he dedicated the first two of his collections of essays from *The Edinburgh Review* (2 vols. 1850; 1855). His appointment with Baden Powell and Isaac Taylor to adjudicate the Burnett Prize Essay is further evidence of the esteem in which he was held. This task entailed the inspection of two hundred and eight essays. On 13th November 1854 the panel decided that the first prize of £1,800 should go to the Lincolnshire clergyman R. Anchor Thompson for his *Christian Theism*, and that John Tulloch should receive the second prize of £600 for his *Theism*. Oddly, it is the latter work which is more likely to be known today, it being the first book of the Principal of St. Andrews.²³

In May 1856 Sir William Hamilton died, and Rogers declined to allow his name to go forward for the vacant Chair of Logic and Metaphysics at Edinburgh. In December of the same year Dr. John Harris, Principal and Professor of Theology at New College, London, died, and not even Binney's pressure could induce Rogers to become a candidate for that position.²⁴ Eventually Lancashire Independent College wrested him from Birmingham. On 9th December 1857 the College Committee resolved to invite Rogers to become President; his acceptance was reported to the Annual Meeting on 28th December; and he took up his duties in April 1858. Thompson records that "The college had a season of rest and quiet work after its recent excitement. Steady progress was made and the numbers increased. The report for 1860 speaks of twenty-nine students being in the house."²⁵ The "recent excitement" was, of course, that surrounding the "advanced" views of the Old Testament Professor, Samuel Davidson, who had resigned on 29th June 1857. Within a month, on 20th July, Principal Vaughan had also tendered his resignation — an inclination he had had for two or three years, and one which "recent events" had "done something towards strengthening."²⁶

²³All those mentioned in this paragraph, except Thompson, are in *DNB*. Binney is in *Peel*, pp. 154-5.

²⁴For Hamilton and Harris see *DNB*.

²⁵Joseph Thompson, *Lancashire Independent College, 1843-1893*, 1893, pp. 150-151.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 146. See further, pp. 127-145; John Lea, "Historical source materials on Congregationalism in nineteenth-century Lancashire," *JURCHS* I 1974, pp. 110-111, and "The Davidson Controversy," *Durham University Journal* LXVIII 1975, pp. 15-32. Vaughan is in *DNB*; Davidson is in *DNB* Supp. *DMem* is weaker on the Manchester years, but Thompson, *op.cit.*, *passim*, aids us considerably.

The eirenic Rogers, sharp-minded but large-hearted, was the man for the hour. By 1862 the number of students had increased to forty-two, and relations with the fledgling Owens College held great promise for the future. In 1864 Rogers tendered his resignation on grounds of ill health, but following the reorganisation of the professorial duties and the appointment of an additional teacher, Caleb Scott,²⁷ Rogers agreed to remain as non-resident President. In 1869 Scott succeeded him as President, though Rogers continued to lecture until 1871 when, following an accident, he finally retired. He went first to Silverdale and then, in 1873, to Machynlleth. The words of gratitude expressed by the Lancashire College Committée were by no means formal: "The committee would not allow the official connexion of Professor Rogers with the college to cease without placing on record their great esteem and affection for him personally, and their high appreciation of the services which he has rendered to this institution. . . . When they bear in mind the circumstances under which he accepted the presidency, the pleasant intercourse and uninterrupted harmony which from the first have subsisted between themselves and Mr. Rogers, and the prosperity which the college at present enjoys, they feel that a large debt of gratitude is due to their retiring professor. . . ."²⁸ On 26th September 1877 the Committee heard formally that on 20th August Henry Rogers had died. He was buried in the family vault of his father-in-law Samuel Fletcher at St. Luke's, Cheetham Hill, Manchester.

Presidential and professorial duties could not entirely still Rogers's pen. In 1862 his re-punctuated edition of Howe's *Works* began to appear; in 1863 there came his satirical *Vindication of Bishop Colenso*; there followed *Reason and Faith: With Other Essays* (1866); *A Sketch of the Life and Character of the Rev. A. C. Simpson LL.D* (1867); *Essays from 'Good Words'* (1867); an introductory essay to Lord Lyttelton's *Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul* (1868); two further collections of essays (1874); and *The Superhuman Origin of the Bible* (1874). This last was the first of a series of Congregational Union Lectures. Though written to be spoken the lectures were, by agreement, never delivered owing to Rogers's precarious state of health.

Among the students who were at Lancashire College during Rogers's period there we may note (with their exit dates) J. A. Macfadyen (1860), J. M. Hodgson (1865), and Elkanah Armitage (1870).²⁹

Those who knew Rogers speak of his humour, his humility, his shunning of the limelight, his simple tastes, his occasional forays into the garden, his delight in country walks, and the beauty of his family prayers. It is true that "His habits . . . were singularly retired, and hence his external life was of a very quiet and even tenor, and marked with but little variety of incident."³⁰ But he bore his share of *internal* anguish. In 1839 he married Sarah Francis, a daughter of W. N. Bentham of Chatham and a kinswoman of Jeremy Bentham. She died shortly after their third child was born. In November 1834 he married Elizabeth, his deceased wife's sister.

²⁷For Scott (1831-1919) see *CYB* 1920, pp. 112-113.

²⁸J. Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-166. Rogers's eirenism had been called into play earlier in his career when, in Jan. 1831, he wrote a conciliatory letter to John Blackburn on behalf of the Dorset ministers, Blackburn feared that the boldness of the scheme of union proposed by the Dorset men would impede progress towards a Congregational Union. See New College, London, MSS L.52/2/107; A. Peel, *These Hundred Years*, 1931, p.52.

²⁹For J. A. Macfadyen (1837-1889) see A. MacKenna, *J. A. Macfadyen, Memoir and Sermons*, 1891, *CYB* 1890, pp.159-62, for J. M. Hodgson (1841-1923) see *Who Was Who 1916-28*; *CYB* 1924, pp. 97-8. For E. Armitage (1844-1930) see *Who Was Who 1929-40*; *CYB*, 1931 pp. 222-3.

³⁰*Cong. vi*, p. 654.

She died after giving birth to their first child — as did his third wife Emma (née Watson), whom he married in 1842. His sister Maria assisted greatly in the upbringing of the young family. Together with her sister Mary Ann she ran a boarding school for boys in Heathfield Road, Birmingham. In 1857 Rogers married Jane, the eldest daughter of Samuel Fletcher. She endowed scholarships to her husband's memory at Lancashire and Owens Colleges, and gave and bequeathed monies to Mansfield College, Oxford. She died in 1891.

II

Henry Rogers was said to be "a literary man pure and simple. His professional work, though most faithfully and conscientiously done, made so small a demand upon his ample resources, that it rather blended with, than presented any contrast to the general complexion of his life."³¹ Accordingly, we turn to his thought, into the clear expression of which Rogers put his best energies. He could be trusted on all manner of subjects, though "Had I been left entirely to my own taste, my preferences would almost uniformly have been for the quiet paths of literature. Into the noisy, dusty, thronged highway of controversy I should have rarely ventured. But I will be bold to say, that no solicitations of others would have induced me to write on themes to which I was not conscious of having honestly endeavoured . . . to render myself competent."³²

Thus we find Rogers writing on "The duration of our coal fields" and on "Railway accidents." When chided by a friendly railway official for his lack of practical knowledge of the latter subject he replied that since railway accidents "are still far too numerous, in spite of the wisdom of those who *are* practically acquainted with the subject, it was open to any one to make suggestions. . ."³³ He wrote in favour of legalising marriage with a deceased wife's sister — a lively current issue which affected him personally, and a cause which his friend Whately likewise supported. He advocated universal education against the possibility that striking workers should be led astray by "a few artful leaders" who would devise a system under which "the poor should make all the laws, and the rich pay all the taxes."³⁴ He supported the education cause on other grounds too, siding with Robert Vaughan, Binney, and his father-in-law Fletcher against the "voluntaryism" of Edward Baines.³⁵ In this connection the adverse crime rate particularly distressed Rogers, and he looked for a time when "every child shall be admissible to the *general* routine of every school that derives any of its funds from Government grants, without any reference to creed or catechism;" and he wanted his countrymen to learn that "it is not safe for a nation to retain in its bosom multitudes of neglected wretches, whose only instructors and examples are ignorance and vice — who, from a childhood of idleness and folly, pass on to a youth and manhood of crime."³⁶ As to punishment for crime we find Rogers hoping that England will resolve that "the enormity of penal settlements shall no longer be endured;"³⁷ and that if capital punishment be retained "as the only absolute security to society against those who

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *EREss* I, p. x.

³³ *GWEss*, p. 367.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

³⁵ For Baines see *DNB*; Peel, pp. 156-7.

³⁶ *EREss* II, pp. 592, 594.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 545.

have once broken into the sanctuary of life," and on the ground that it is more merciful than solitary confinement for life, then the enormity of public execution will be abolished.³⁸

On the matter of constitutional reform Rogers was opposed to the somewhat inflammatory stance of Francis Newman, and in sympathy with Burke's view that we ought "to approach to the faults of the state as to the wounds of a father, with pious awe and trembling solicitude." He could not understand those who demanded universal suffrage whilst excluding "by one comprehensive excision an entire half [the female] of the species." But however extended the suffrage might be, "Wealth, rank, intelligence, education, and all the other elements of political power, would still exert their legitimate, and, alas! often also their illegitimate influence." His own hopes for the nation were "founded on the increase of intelligence, education, morality, religion;" and he could rejoice that "a very large and, we believe, increasing portion of the nation is deeply imbued with a spirit of Religion."³⁹

We shall have more to say about Francis Newman, but first we turn to his brother John Henry who, with his fellow Tractarians, appalled Rogers as much by the arguments with which they supported their views as by the views themselves. Such was the gusto with which Rogers launched his attack that some found his tone too insolent. He had no patience, however, with those who sought to represent erroneous doctrines as being "too sacred for ridicule . . . and too mysterious for reason . . . [satire] is the only style effectually adapted to dispel the false halo of *pseudo-sacred* associations with which so many minds invest them."⁴⁰ Whately opined that the charge of levity came from those who could not oppose Rogers's arguments, and in a letter to his friend he gave his own stock reply to such critics: "If you blame the laughers, how much more those who have *made* the doctrines of religion so utterly ridiculous."⁴¹ The following is a sample of Rogers *contra* the Tractarians:

"Thousands, it is true, are ready to resolve the mystery of [the Tractarians'] conduct by saying, 'Surely these men are either great knaves or great fools:' but in the exercise of that charity which 'hopeth all things,' we will not assume the former; and in the exercise of that charity which 'believeth all things,' we will not assume the latter. We regard them simply as an unexplained *phenomenon*; we stare at them as at a new comet, devoutly hoping, at the same time, that they may be found to move in a hyperbolic trajectory, and that, having swept across our system, they will vanish and return no more."⁴²

The position of the Tractarians constitutes "Romanism, almost perfect in its organs and lineaments, but of Lilliputian dimensions."⁴³ The only consistent Tractarians were those who made their peace with the Pope.⁴⁴ Rogers witnessed with profound disbelief the spectacle of a Catholic Church which was one and indivisible, and which yet encompassed Roman, Greek and Anglican branches all of which excommunicated one another. As for the doctrine of development, "let it not be forgotten that many can play at this game of 'developments'."⁴⁵ Against all who

³⁸ *GWess*, pp. 203-6. Public execution was abolished in 1868.

³⁹ *ERESS* II, pp. 390, 391, 413, 417, 450, 454.

⁴⁰ *Essays on Some Theological Controversies of the Time*, new edn. 1874, p. vii; cf. *ERESS* I, preface. J. H. Newman is in *DNB*; F. Newman is in *DNB* Supp. Vol. XXII.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. viii.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. x.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

would dispute the ability of the plain man to gain a knowledge of the gospel directly from the scriptures (and therefore to be in need of mystery-mongers) Rogers maintained the certainty and sufficiency of the Bible as the rule of faith and practice.⁴⁶ It is a testimony to the insight of Rogers that his articles on Tractarianism "led to an offer of a living in the Church, from a dignitary who too hastily assumed that none but a clergyman could have penned such essays."⁴⁷

III

Although Rogers would write on the variety of subjects suggested to him, critico-biographical studies of literary men were "to my own mere tastes, more pleasant themes."⁴⁸ In prosecuting these themes, and although some of his articles were occasioned by the appearance of new books, he did not need to remind his readers that "it is long since reviewers supposed it to be necessary that they should have some book to review."⁴⁹ In the course of an article on the literary genius of Plato and the character of Socrates Rogers discloses his own hand thus: "Difficult as it may seem at first sight to believe, the history of philosophy and every-day observation compel us to admit that there is a class of persons who imagine that whatever is obscure is profound; and who love the notion and reputation of depth so much that they prefer a muddy stream, however shallow, to a clear one, however deep."⁵⁰ A lover of Plato, Rogers was no uncritical Platonist — on the contrary, he can speak of "the veriest gibberish of the Alexandrian Platonists."⁵¹

Erasmus, great as he was, is criticised for not appreciating that there can be no reformation of morals without the recovery of evangelic truth. Luther's way is lauded over against the "small time-serving expedients of Erasmus."⁵² Calvin is defended against those who would without qualification denounce his complicity in the burning of Servetus. Rogers would have us remember the times in which Calvin lived; the fact that he was not alone in passing judgement on Servetus; and the fact that others, not excluding Cranmer, were no less guilty in similar ways. He suspects that many are glad to condemn Calvin because they hate his theology — and they have not always taken the trouble to ascertain the true nature of that.⁵³

Henry Rogers enjoyed himself with Thomas Fuller, divine and wit, whose writings, unlike those of Jeremy Taylor, were not encumbered with what Milton called "marginal stuffings."⁵⁴ We learn something about Fuller's style and Howe's expansive nature from the former's successful request to the latter to coach him to pass the Triers: "You may observe, Sir . . . that I am a somewhat corpulent man, and I am to go through a very strait passage: I beg you would be so good as to give me a shove, and help me through."⁵⁵ Mention of Taylor prompts the reflection that Rogers who had, after all, professed English Language and Literature, paid great

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 284-5.

⁴⁷*Cong.* VI, p. 660.

⁴⁸*EREss* I, p. xiv.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p. 300.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p.308.

⁵¹*Reason and Faith*, p.68.

⁵²*EREss* I, p. 162.

⁵³*BQR* IX, May 1849, pp. 443-472. In the 1862 edn. of Howe's *Life* Rogers took his own medicine in revising his earlier, somewhat harsh, view of Cromwell. See *op.cit.*, pp. 440-443.

⁵⁴*EREss* I, p. 31; Taylor's *Works*, p. xxxiii.

⁵⁵*Life of Howe*, p.80.

attention to style in relation to content. Learning, as in Taylor's case, could impede style; or thought could over-reach it, as with Howe.⁵⁶ Taylor was threatened by an over-keen imagination, and as for Coleridge — Rogers valued his poetry as much as he loathed his philosophy. He wrote on the history of the English language, and upon the need "to guard it with jealous care as a sacred deposit. . . Our brethren in America must assist us in the task. [Shucks!]"⁵⁷ Style in the pulpit concerned Rogers too. He looked for careful preparation and an abhorrence of all such affectations as those whereby "Heat straightway becomes 'caloric,' lightning, the 'electric fluid;' instead of plants and animals, we are surrounded by 'organised substances;' life is nothing half so good as the 'vital principle;' 'phenomena' of all kinds are very plentiful; these phenomena are 'developed' and 'combined,' and 'analysed,' and, in short, done everything with, except being made intelligible."⁵⁸ Staunchly opposed to Coleridgean haze and Emersonian fog, his own unadorned pulpit style was approved not least by the ordinary folk who heard him.⁵⁹

Rogers had little patience with Voltaire, "the glory and the shame of French literature" who, *pace* Condorcet, left no work of first rank. He was a versatile, a witty, but an "unballasted soul," and at his door must be laid much of the responsibility "for the moral, if not the political, enormities of the Revolution."⁶⁰ Gibbon's treatment of Christianity greatly displeased Rogers, though Christians may take some comfort from the fact that if Christianity could have been harmed by an historian, that man was Gibbon. Yet one hundred years on the effects of his polemic against the Faith are "quite inappreciable."⁶¹

Marvell and Robert Hall excited Rogers's admiration, but it was to John Howe that he returned time and again. He threw himself into his *Life of Howe* after the death of his second wife, whilst staying at the home of John Brown of Poole. R. F. Horton's complaint at the *Life of Howe* with its "diffusive comments, interesting for the biography of Henry Rogers" but "tiresome in the Life of John Howe"⁶² holds the clue to its usefulness for our purposes. Howe's spirit accords well with that of Rogers. Though a nonconformist Howe's "temper and spirit were so transcendently catholic." He devoted his whole life to "the cause of our common Christianity."⁶³ As ecumenically enthusiastic as Baxter, Howe was more practical, wondering in a letter to Baxter (who sought a wider union) "whether it may not be a more hopeful course to attempt first the reconciling only of the two middle parties, Presbyterian and Congregational? inasmuch as the extreme parties would be so much startled at the mention of a union with one another . . . that it might possibly blast the design in its very beginning."⁶⁴ Rogers thoroughly approved of Howe's desire for union with all who held to the essential doctrines of the gospel: "To feel ourselves one with those who differ from us, requires and proves the existence of an ardent charity: to be one with our own party, demonstrates, at best, only our participation in the opinions of others, and

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 332.

⁵⁷ *ERess* III, p. 294.

⁵⁸ *ERess* I, p. 416.

⁵⁹ *Mansfield College*, p. 11; cf. *DMem*, pp. xx, xxi. In the *Greyson Selections* I, pp. 178-183, Rogers pays much attention to the diligent preparation required before preaching to a "rustic audience."

⁶⁰ *EB* XXI 1860, pp. 656, 662-3, 663-4, 670.

⁶¹ *EB* X 1856, p. 616.

⁶² R. F. Horton, *John Howe* 1895, p. v.

⁶³ *Life of Howe*, p. vi.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 62. (We seem to have heard similar remarks much more recently).

frequently no more than a participation in their prejudices."⁶⁵

Henry Rogers did not confine his attention to the famous. He writes interestingly on the merchant prince, Samuel Fletcher who, having become a nonconformist because of Anglican lethargy, made an invaluable philanthropic contribution. Oddly, he does not refer to his father-in-law's connection with Lancashire College. It is from elsewhere that we discover that Fletcher was on the first College Committee, that he presided at the tea party on the occasion of the opening of the College, and that he gave £1,300 to the College building fund — the third largest contribution.⁶⁶ Rogers seems to be in error in thinking that the original conception of Owens College was Fletcher's,⁶⁷ for in 1836 Harry Longueville Jones had published "A Plan of a University of Manchester." Some of those who studied this plan eventually became trustees of Owens College.

His friend A. C. Simpson drew a delightful study from Rogers's pen.⁶⁸ After an unduly long apprenticeship in as remote a place as he could find this retiring but able man, who loved Luther, Butler and Coleridge, declined a number of positions which would have brought him into greater prominence. He stayed at Fulbourn "until famine drove him out of it." Supported by his friend George Redford he settled at Hereford where he remained until he discovered that the Angel Street church was subsidising his stipend. He proceeded to Oundle, where he declined Joshua Wilson's request to deliver the Congregational (or similar) Lectures — and the £100 that went with the privilege. "I will not allow you to allure or frighten me into situations which, in my conscience before God, I cannot possibly fill," he wrote. On he moved to Cardiff where, even in winter his study grate was "unconscious of a fire"; and he retired to Long Sutton, dying on 17th March 1866.⁶⁹

Above all, there is Rogers's tribute to his friend John Morell Mackenzie, after whom his son Henry Mackenzie Rogers was named. Mackenzie had followed Rogers as assistant at Poole (1832-6); he then went to Nile Street, Glasgow (1837-9), and thence to the Chair of Church History at Glasgow University. A good swimmer, he lost his life in the attempt to rescue others when the S.S. Pegasus, bound from Leith to Hull, went down off the Farne Islands on 19th July 1843.⁷⁰

Some of Rogers's remarks upon the many philosophers he passed in review are highly suggestive — indeed, in some cases his critical judgements, then novel, have become standard. Bacon's *Novum Organum*, Book One, in which the inductive method is extolled, and in which it is emphasised that "the subtlety of Nature far transcends the subtlety of either sense or intellect"⁷¹ was his *vade mecum*. It was precisely this intellectual humility that Rogers found absent from Descartes's *a priori*ism.⁷² Bacon and Descartes are neatly contrasted thus: "Each of these great philosophers . . . was deeply imbued with the importance of a Method; and each recognised, though in *reversed* proportions, the necessity of *both* induction and

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁶⁶ J. Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 19, 64, 66.

⁶⁷ *GWEss*, p. 147.

⁶⁸ *CYB* 1867, p. 132, gives his names in the order Calovius Abraham. His papers are at Dr. Williams's Library.

⁶⁹ See *BQR* XLVI, July 1867, pp. 143-179; reprinted with additional extracts from Simpson's letters, 1867.

⁷⁰ For Mackenzie (1806-1843) see *EM* 1845, pp. 673-6; *CM* 1838, p. 61; Cong. VI 1877, p. 660; *DMem*, pp. xv-xvi, lxiv; Densham and Ogle, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

⁷¹ *Reason and Faith*, pp. 320, 388.

⁷² *EREss* III, p. 36.

deduction in rearing the fabric of science.”⁷³ For all his admiration of Bacon, Rogers can subject him and Descartes to common criticism: “It is evident that both Bacon and Descartes thought that a system of rules might be devised which would do much more than any such system can; which, in fact, would wonderfully diminish that interval which must ever subsist between a great genius and a great blockhead.”⁷⁴ Gassendi is applauded for being one of the first Frenchmen to appreciate the worth of Bacon, and for his attempts to investigate and co-ordinate facts — unlike Descartes, who sought to *create* from meditation.⁷⁵

Pascal is praised for his insights and precision;⁷⁶ the versatile Leibniz is rebuked for his inability to make his insights intelligible. Indeed, “His *Monads* are unintelligible even to his most devoted commentators; his *Pre-established Harmony* has long since been dissolved.” Moreover, “the books cited have been long forgotten . . . even the *doctissimus Hackmannus* and the *illustrissimus Kettwigius* have somehow become obscure.”⁷⁷ The sad truth is that Leibniz’s fondness for the purely abstract hypothesis “prevented a docile observance of the maxims of the Inductive Philosophy.”⁷⁸ On the other hand, not even Jonathan Edwards can more effectively demolish “that great phantom of the ‘liberty of indifference’ ” according to which the will is free only when it acts absolutely without motive, and which would render all man’s acts destitute of moral quality.⁷⁹

Rogers made strenuous efforts to rescue Locke from the hands of such men as Condillac and Condorcet, who were representing him as a pure sensationalist. Though Locke was not always self-consistent, Rogers emphasises the importance he attached to reflection. Locke’s empiricism, he declares, has much more in common with Cartesian rationalism than has sometimes been supposed.⁸⁰ Dale states that Rogers’s support of Locke was given at a time when Kant, Cousin and Hegel held the minds of many⁸¹ — all of which confirms the same writer’s view of Rogers that “there was in him very much of the temper and spirit of the Evangelical Nonconformists of the eighteenth century; their intellectual method of dealing with religious truth was largely his; and the contents of their religious creed were, in substance, the contents of his own creed to the very end.”⁸²

There were, however, eighteenth-century men with whom Rogers felt thoroughly ill at ease — Gibbon and Voltaire among them. But his patience never wore thinner than it did with Hume. He found the most sceptical philosopher to be the most bigoted historian. As for Hume’s inconsistency of life: “Magnanimously

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁷⁵ *EB* X 1856, pp. 434-8.

⁷⁶ *EB* XVII 1859, pp. 323-330.

⁷⁷ *ERE* I, pp. 166-7.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

⁸⁰ Thus the distinguished Locke scholar, R. I. Aaron, can say on this point, “from the middle of the last century onwards a saner view . . . has prevailed, and it has become clear that rationalism is as essential an element of Locke’s philosophy as it is of Descartes’s.” See his *John Locke*, 3rd edn. 1971, Appendix IV, p. 331. Rogers was a pioneer towards this saner view, and on his relevance to Locke studies see A. P. F. Sell “Locke and Descartes through Victorian Eyes,” *Philosophical Studies*, forthcoming.

⁸¹ See *Mansfield College*, pp. 12-13.

⁸² *DMem*, p. xii. It is significant that, according to Caleb Scott, in his Lancashire College days Rogers was lecturing on Pye Smith’s *Four Discourses on the Sacrifice and Priesthood of Jesus Christ*, 1828; John Davison, *Discourses on Prophecy*, 1824; George Hill, *Lectures on Divinity*, 2nd edn. 1825; William Paley, *Evidences*, 1794, and *Horae Paulinae*, 1790; and Butler’s *Analogy*, 1836. See *DMem*, p. liv. Dale’s mind, by contrast, moved in a direction influenced by Erskine of Linlathen, McLeod Campbell, F. D. Maurice and F. W. Robertson. See A. W. W. Dale, *op.cit.*, p. 704.

declaring at one time that the philosopher must abide by the *truth* . . . he, at another, advises . . . a sceptical friend to accept church preferment, and preach what he did not believe . . . He wrote, as it were, with the old Roman *stylus* — a sharp pen at one end, and an instrument of erasure at the other.”⁸³ Butler and Paley were very much more congenial company. Indeed, they were Rogers’s (and Whately’s) mentors in apologetic method — and with the mention of apologetics we approach Rogers’s *forte*.

IV

The clue to Rogers’s apologetic method lies in his commendation of that of Butler:

“In every age, some of the principal, perhaps *the* principal, objections to the Christian Revelation, have been those which men’s *preconceptions* of the Divine character and administration — of what God *must* be, and of what God *must* do — have suggested against certain facts in the sacred history, or certain doctrines it reveals. To show the objector then . . . that the very same or similar difficulties are found in the structure of the universe and the divine administration of it, is to wrest every *such* weapon completely from his hands . . . He is bound by strict logical obligation either to show that the parallel difficulties do *not* exist, or to show how he can solve them, while he *cannot* solve those of the Bible. In default of doing either of these things, he ought either to renounce all *such* objections to Christianity, or abandon theism altogether. It is true, therefore, that though Butler leaves the alternative of atheism open, he hardly leaves any other alternative to nine-tenths of the theists who have objected to Christianity.”⁸⁴

In similar vein Rogers answers those who suggest that Paley’s *Evidences* are *passé*. Christianity depends upon facts; those who would oppose the Faith must show that the alleged facts are *not* facts: “Now the *mode* of doing this admits of no great choice; changes of form or detail there may be, but there can be little more.”⁸⁵

What Butler did was to turn the weapons of the Deists upon themselves: his opponents for the most part remained theists.⁸⁶ Perhaps Dale and his fellow students felt that Rogers should have taken the atheistic alternative more seriously. Be that as it may, Rogers, though convinced that reason is coeval with faith, and notwithstanding his recognition of the fact that reason is a limited monarch since first principles are received by faith, nevertheless contends that “Faith herself shines only so long as she reflects some faint illumination from the brighter orb [i.e. reason].”⁸⁷ Man “is placed amidst evidence amply sufficient to justify his reasonable faith, and yet beset with difficulties that may well baffle an indocile

⁸³EB XI 1856, p. 8.

⁸⁴EB VI 1854, pp. 32-3.

⁸⁵EB XVII 1859, p. 202.

⁸⁶See further, A. P. F. Sell, “Arminians, Deists and Reason,” *Faith and Freedom*, Autumn 1979, pp. 19-31. In the *Greyson Selections II* pp. 193-245, we find eight letters “To a friend who had become a Deist.”

⁸⁷*Reason and Faith*, pp. 1, 9, 136.

reason.”⁸⁸ Even so, “The evidence which *sustains* Christianity is all such as man is competent to consider, and is precisely of the same nature as that which enters into his every-day calculations of probability; while the objections spring entirely from our ignorance and presumption.”⁸⁹ One may indeed be a Christian “without traversing these labyrinths,”⁹⁰ but Christianity needs, and has, its defence against falsehood and error, and in these matters we, like Butler, find that probability is our guide. From this vantage point Rogers launches into the defence of the Bible on the one hand, and the confutation of sceptics and “mystical” Christians on the other.

What is at stake under both headings is the supernatural: “Having reduced the Bible itself to a chaos, it is not surprising that [those who deny the supernatural] should deny that anything systematic can be evoked out of it.” What the Bible gives us is not infallible truth, but substantial truth. It does not follow, however, that the Bible may safely be left to man’s “verifying faculty.” Rogers has no time for that “spurious charity” which seeks “to cover the multitude of theological errors, and leave it just the same whether men receive or reject even so cardinal a fact as the resurrection of Christ. . . .”⁹¹ The supernatural is too deeply-rooted in Christianity for the “scouring fluids of Rationalism to wash it out . . . the only consistent Rationalism is the Rationalism which rejects it all”⁹² as did that of Voltaire. This theme is reiterated in many of Rogers’s writings, often in connection with refutations of Strauss and Renan. Strauss is condemned for his metaphysical mysticism which, against the advice of Bacon, enables him to deny the facticity of the miraculous, and hence to deny the supernatural, simply because such considerations go against his experience. To Rogers Strauss is but an incarnation of the previous century’s Deists.⁹³ Happily for Rogers, Strauss’s theory “is even now fast losing its transient *prestige*. These shining exhalations from the bog of scepticism glimmer, flicker, and vanish. . . .”⁹⁴ Renan is suffering a like fate. His *Vie de Jésus* is not competent to make infidels out of the English, working as it does from the *assumption* that there never was nor could be anything of a miraculous nature. The anti-supernaturalists studiously refuse to attempt to demonstrate the truth of this bold claim.⁹⁵ In his review of *Les Apôtres* Rogers chides Renan with being at least as incredulous as any believer in miracles: “If M. Renan sincerely believes that he has accounted for the belief in the Resurrection, the phenomena of the Pentecost, the conversion of Paul, by maniacal illusion, helped by a thunderstorm or two, or some such accidents, he must not be surprised if the world should suppose *him* the subject of ‘hallucinations’ which, though of different kind, are quite as wonderful.”⁹⁶ As for Bishop Colenso, Rogers wrote his tongue-in-cheek *Vindication* of the Bishop to prove either that the

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 35. He quotes Pascal with approval: “There is light enough for those whose sincere wish is to see, — and darkness enough to confound those of an opposite disposition.”

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 54; cf. *Defence*, pp. 180, 218.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁹¹ *BQR* XLIII, Jan. 1866, pp. 171, 183-4, 186, 187. Cf. *Life of Howe*, pp. 21-25.

⁹² *Reason and Faith*, p. 111; *BQR*, Jan. 1866, p. 187.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 63, 82. On the other hand, neither present-day humanist philosophers such as A. G. N. Flew, nor most contemporary biblical and philosophical theologians would wish to regard miracles in the way that Rogers (in the line of Paley and Hume) did — as breaches of the natural order.

⁹⁴ *EB* X 1856, p. 616.

⁹⁵ *Reason and Faith*, pp. xiv, 169-172, 180. Elsewhere he writes of Dutch, French and German churchmen who are found following Renan in rejecting the miraculous, and the characteristic doctrines of Christianity, whilst they are “yet asserting, and their compatriots echoing, their right to retain their professorial chairs and pulpits!” *GW*Ess, p. 84.

⁹⁶ *GW*Ess, p. 356.

work attributed to the Bishop was not really from his hand at all, or else that he had written as he had in order to test the gullibility of scepticism.⁹⁷

Rogers summed up his defence of the Bible in *The Superhuman Origin of the Bible* (1873) in which he set out to show that "the Bible is not such a book as man would have made if he could; or could have made if he would." He seeks to construct a cumulative argument designed to impress upon the sceptic the difficulty he is in if he is content to posit a human origin of the Bible. Unaided human reason is not likely, given the prevalence of pantheism in early times, to have devised a monotheism; to have adumbrated a system in which ethics is subordinated to theology; to have invented a Christ of such a character, or a religion whose universal sway is to be gained by moral force alone. And would unaided men have been honest enough to have described themselves as sinners? Further, there are the singular coincidences of scripture and history; the unity of the Bible; the way in which, as Paley showed, the Bible is self-interpretative; the style of the Bible, and the exceptional position of the Bible in the world: welcomed by all races, productive of a prodigious literature. Analogies are then drawn between the Bible's development and blemishes and similar phenomena in nature "which is incontestably His work."⁹⁸ [Incontestably? — But we forbear] The books of nature and of scripture are alike the work of God.

Much of what Rogers here writes has a subjectivist ring about it; and it can never be easy for a person who maintains both the right of private judgement and the supremacy of scripture to guard himself on all flanks at once. One of his successors in the Congregational Union Lectureship, whilst grateful for what Rogers had done to help men appreciate the Bible as literature, nevertheless thought that there remained something to be done from the side of the Bible understood as inspired revelation.⁹⁹ It is further noticeable that Rogers does not argue from the inerrancy of the scriptural autographs as Princetonian conservatives were doing — in fact, he does not believe in it.¹⁰⁰ A reviewer declared that the *Superhuman Origin* "goes a long way towards establishing not only the superhuman, but the Divine origin of Holy Scripture with all who believe in a living God."¹⁰¹ The qualification is important, and reveals once again Rogers's underlying Butlerian assumption that the enemy to be attacked is an inconsistent *theistic* one. The book had run to its eighth edition by 1893, when Marcus Dods favourably reviewed it and noted that "really it is rather the superhuman origin of Christianity that is dealt with."¹⁰²

Without doubt Rogers's most exciting and stimulating apologetic work is his *The Eclipse of Faith* (1852), in which Dale could recognise traces of discussions which he and other students had enjoyed with the author at Spring Hill College.¹⁰³ The book was in large part a reply to Francis Newman's *Phases of Faith* (1850) in which Newman, increasingly sceptical of historic Christianity, showed a grim — and, as Rogers thought, an inconsistent — determination to remain a theist.

⁹⁷See *Good Words* 1863, p. 85; republished separately in the same year. For the general background to the nineteenth-century debate about the Bible see A. P. F. Sell, "The rise and reception of modern biblical criticism," *The Evangelical Quarterly*, July 1980. Colenso is in *DNB*. See also P. B. Hinchliff, *John William Colenso, Bishop of Natal*, 1964.

⁹⁸*The Superhuman Origin of the Bible*, p. 299.

⁹⁹Alfred Cave, *The Inspiration of the Old Testament Inductively Considered*, the seventh Congregational Union Lecture, 1888, pp. 3-4. For Cave (1847-1900) see *CYB* 1902, pp. 161-4.

¹⁰⁰See *The Superhuman Origin of the Bible*, p. 317, etc.

¹⁰¹*BQR* LIX, April 1874, p. 589.

¹⁰²*The Expositor*, 4th ser. VIII 1893, p. 158.

¹⁰³*Mansfield College*, p. 10.

Silvester Horne rightly described *The Eclipse* as "one of the sensations of its day."¹⁰⁴ By 1854 it was into its fifth thousand, and among those who praised it highly was Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh who thought that after Butler it was "the most convincing book I ever read on its subject."¹⁰⁵ Newman, as might be expected, thought otherwise. In an appendix to the second edition of *Phases* (1853) he complained of misrepresentation and garbling — and received Rogers's devastating *Defence* (1854) for his pains. Accused of treating sacred things with unbecoming levity, Rogers retorted that he was not aware that in treating of Newman's position he was handling anything *sacred*¹⁰⁶ — and so it went on. To Binney the *Defence* was "the best thing you have ever done,"¹⁰⁷ and, as we saw at the outset, Conybeare's review of both books was highly complimentary. "We think," he wrote, "that the Socratic weapons have never, since the time of Plato, been wielded with more grace and spirit."¹⁰⁸ There are dialogues; there are dreams; there is the reading of papers — and all in the most incisive style and suffused with wit. It is the work of an eighteenth-century man. Rogers did not see the necessity of taking the force of Hegelianism, of evolutionary thought, of Schleiermacherian theology, all of which, as his contemporary Stoughton realised, had resulted in the fact that "those principles which lie at the basis of what we call Natural Religion have manifestly undergone a change."¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless Rogers makes some telling points against some of the enemies of the Faith, ancient and modern, and the briefest sampling will constitute our final tribute to him.

The main characters in *The Eclipse* are Harrington, a sceptic; Fellowes, a thinly disguised Newman with leanings towards Theodore Parker; and Mr. B. — Henry Rogers. Fellowes, having rejected an external revelation, remains an intuitionist theist, and both Harrington and Mr. B. take him to task over this. One day a larger group assembles, and in describing its members Rogers displays his style, his wit, and his aversions: "Our host had provided for our mutual edification an Italian gentleman . . . a young surgeon from —, a rare, perhaps, unique, specimen of conversion to certain crude atheistical speculations of Mr. Atkinson and Miss Martineau; a young Englishman . . . just fresh from Germany, after sundry semesters at Bonn and Tübingen, five hundred fathoms deep in German philosophy, and who hardly came once to the surface during the whole entertainment; three Rationalists . . . a Roman Catholic priest, an admirer of Father Newman, who therefore believes everything; our sceptical friend Harrington, who believes nothing; and myself, still fool enough to believe the Bible to be 'divine' . . . you will acknowledge that a more curious party never sat down to edify one another with their absurdities and contradictions."¹¹⁰

One night Mr. B. dreams that all the pages of all the Bibles had become blank — a calamitous situation indeed to have the external revelation removed! "There was universally, however, an interest in the Bible now it was *lost*, such as had never attached to it while it was *possessed* . . . Some, to whom their Bible had been a 'blank' book for twenty years, and who would never have known whether it was full or empty . . . were not the least loud in their expressions of sorrow at this calamity. One old gentleman, who had never troubled the book in his life, said it was

¹⁰⁴C. S. Horne, *A Popular History of the Free Churches*, [1903], p. 413.

¹⁰⁵Quoted in *DMem*, p. xlvi.

¹⁰⁶*Defence*, p. 30.

¹⁰⁷Quoted in *DMem*, p. xlvi.

¹⁰⁸*The Quarterly Review* XCV, Sept. 1854, p. 449.

¹⁰⁹J. Stoughton, *op.cit.*, p.75.

¹¹⁰*The Eclipse*, pp. 167-8.

'confounded hard to be deprived of his *religion* in his old age. . .'¹¹¹ In desperation people tried to remember what the contents of the Bible had been, but so conflicting and biased were their recollections that "it very clearly appeared that tradition was no safe guide; that if, even when she was hardly a month old, she could play such freaks with the memories of honest people, there was but a sorry prospect of the secure transmission of the truth for eighteen hundred years . . . All the ethical maxims, indeed, were soon collected; for though, as usual, no one recollected his own peculiar duties or infirmities, every one, as usual, kindly remembered those of his neighbours. Husbands remembered what was due from their wives, and wives what was due from their husbands . . . Undertakers said there was a 'time to mourn;' and comedians that there was a 'time to laugh;' young ladies innumerable remembered that there was a 'time to love;' and people of all kinds that there was a 'time to hate;' everybody knew there was a 'time to speak;' but a worthy Quaker reminded them that there was also a 'time to keep silence.'¹¹² Such is the chaos of a bookless revelation.

Later, Harrington treats us to a brilliant skit on Straussian methods. He sets out to prove that "Papal aggression is impossible." The record of recent events (i.e. c. 1850) is found eighteen hundred and fifty years on, and is "interpreted" in accordance with German presuppositions. It is first declared that all the names in the record are allegorical. Thus, for example, there never was a Cardinal Wiseman: "In all probability the name was selected just in the same manner as Bunyan in his immortal *Pilgrim's Progress* . . . has chosen 'Worldly Wiseman' for one of his characters."¹¹³ As for the *two* Newmans, "In all probability the names were suggested to the somewhat profane allegorico-satirical writer by that text in the English version, 'put on the Newman,' the new man of the *spirit*. We are almost driven to this interpretation, indeed, by the extreme and ludicrous improbability of two men — brothers — brought up at the same university, gradually receding, *pari passu*, from the same point in opposite directions, to the uttermost extreme; one till he had embraced the most puerile legends of the middle ages, the other, till he had proceeded to open infidelity."¹¹⁴

At the end of the *Defence* Rogers confessed that he had shunned and deleted many "deserved sarcasms" which had occurred to his mind and flowed from his pen. He had done this "mainly from the recollection of HIM."¹¹⁵ He bids his Reader a "hearty farewell," and expresses his hope thus: "May we meet at last, and Mr. Newman with us, on those peaceful shores on which these storms never beat. . ."¹¹⁶ We cannot suppress the suspicion that, however good-natured, it will be some fraternal.

The weapons with which Rogers attacked the naturalism and gnosticism of his age were, though deftly wielded, somewhat rusty then, and they are virtually obsolete now. It was so much easier for him to assume an all but universal theism than it is for us. But his conviction that faith, though eclipsed, will shine again, may be ours also. The ghosts of naturalism and gnosticism still haunt theology, and Henry Rogers may, in his quaint and often saucy way, warn us against them. But the ghosts will not be laid by eighteenth-century devices. The standing challenge, then, is to rehabilitate the supernatural (which a gospel of *grace* must surely presuppose) without exchanging faith for gullibility, or succumbing to deism; and to ensure that human reason neither demeaned nor deified, is made the servant of the gospel.

ALAN P. F. SELL

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 231. This dream, prefaced by brief biographical notes, is retold for the young in *The Free Presbyterian and Young People's Magazine* LXXXI, July 1976, pp. 278-80. This, in the official journal of a thoroughly Calvinistic Church, is the only recent reference to Rogers that I have found.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 241-2.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 348.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 349.

¹¹⁵ *Defence*, p. 204.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

NEW LIGHT ON FRANCIS JOHNSON AT CAMBRIDGE, 1589-1589/90

Francis Johnson (1563-1617/8) was one of English Separatism's most distinguished leaders. The London Separatists elected him their pastor in September 1592, and, for the next quarter of a century, he led them, first as fugitives and prisoners in England and later as exiles in The Netherlands.¹ As time passed, other Separatist churches also looked to him for counsel. Indeed, so pervasive became his influence that Henoch Clapham, an Anglican adversary, tauntingly labelled him "the Bishop of *Brownisme*."²

For Johnson, as for many others, traumatic experiences and heated conflicts marked the road to separation. Perhaps the greatest shock that he experienced was the loss of his fellowship at Christ's College, Cambridge, and his expulsion from the university in 1589. The cause of his difficulty was a university sermon extolling presbyterianism which he had preached at Great St. Mary's church on 6 January 1588/9. Johnson's words created a furore, and both he and Cuthbert Bainbrigg, who had voiced offensive views in the same place on 5th January, were prosecuted in the Vice-Chancellor's Consistory Court. Bainbrigg eventually recanted his opinions and remained at Cambridge, but Johnson refused to compromise and was expelled.

Although most of the circumstances surrounding Johnson's trial and ejection are known, scholars have overlooked two significant pieces of evidence.³ The first is a letter⁴ (reproduced below) from Robert Hardye, a Manchester Puritan, to his son Samuel, one of Johnson's pupils.⁵ Written on 5 May 1589 during the height of the uproar over Johnson's remarks, it broadens the dimensions of the case. On the one hand, it reveals that some undergraduates were taking sides in the dispute. On the other, it shows that Johnson was communicating the substance of his position to Puritans outside the university, presumably in the hope of enlisting their support. Robert Hardye's words reveal the same widespread Puritan sympathy for Johnson's plight that was implicit in Johnson's later appointment to the pastorate of the English Merchant Adventurers' church at Middelburg previously held by Thomas Cartwright.

The second neglected item of information is an entry in the *Acta Curiae* books of the Vice-Chancellor's Court dated "9 Martij [1589/90]." For the first time, it allows

¹No biography of Johnson exists. The most recent account of his life and his church is contained in chapters five and six of B. R. White, *The English Separatist Tradition from the Marian Martyrs to the Pilgrim Fathers*, Oxford, 1971.

²Henoch Clapham, *A Chronological Discourse touching, 1. The Church. 2. Christ. 3. Anti-Christ. 4. God & Magog. etc. The substance whereof, was collected about some 10. or 11. yeares since (as may be gathered by an Epistle prefixed before a Tractate, called, The Visible Christian) but now digested into better order; and first published. By the author himselfe*, London, 1609, sig. [1 2 verso].

³The best account so far of these events is Peter Lake, "The Dilemma of the Establishment Puritan: the Cambridge Heads and the case of Francis Johnson and Cuthbert Bainbrigg," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, xxix (1978), 23-35. See also H. C. Porter, *Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge*, Cambridge, 1958, 157-163, 188-189.

⁴Christ's College MS. 3, Christ's College, Cambridge. I wish to thank Gillian Farmer, Sub-Librarian of Christ's College, for providing me with a copy of this letter. John Peile published an incomplete transcription of this document in 1907. After re-collating the manuscript, I have been able to improve and complete his work. My revised version appears below. See John Peile, "An Old Letter," *Christ's College Magazine*, xxii (1907), 2-8.

⁵Robert Hardye was a gentleman and citizen of Manchester. His name appears in various places in the Chetham Society publications as a city official and juror. He died between 5 October 1598 and 12 April 1599. His son Samuel is listed as his heir. See John Harland (ed.), *A Volume of Court Leet Records of the Manor of Manchester in the Sixteenth Century*, Chetham Society vol. 1xiii (1864), 171 and 187. See further, James Tait (ed.), *Lancashire Quarter Sessions Records*, vol. i: *Quarter Sessions Rolls 1590-1606*. Chetham Society vol. 1xxvii (1917), 1, 17, 35, and 48.

approximate dating of Johnson's departure from Cambridge. The passage reads as follows:

M Iohnson promisinge toe departe this towne and leave the universytye for soemutche [so much] as hee seethe hes [his] place and fellowship ys disposed of and cann by no meanes not withoute great trouble recover the same agayne: M^r Vicechancellor doeth release him from his imprisonmente and give him tyme to dispose of his pupilles and other thinges so as he depart frome this towne some tyme before Easter and noe more returne agayne otherwise then [than] as a stranger.⁶

* * * * *

[Robert Hardye to Samuel Hardye]⁷ 5 May 1589 Immanuell from Manchestar Samuell, with lovyng salutations desyryng the Lord God to bless the[e] and thy brother and make you faythfull in His churche, and that you may be as pillars in the sanctuary [sic] to sarve the Lord with all obedience and feare, to His glory, the proffet off His people, and your evarlastyng comfort, so be yt. Thy tutor dothe wyte to me that uppon thi promyse off amendmynt at Christyde last that then thou dydest take suche a paynfull course and that with gret care and dyligence dydest aply thi study at good exersyses, as he dyd resayve gret comfort off thi doyngs and a very good hope of the[e]. But now off late thou doest retorne to thi acustomed trad[e] which wilbe thy owne decay, and so I do persayve by thi gret expences which ys more then [than] I am able to bayr, and will make me a begar yff I should folow thy mynde. I would haue the[e] to know thy estate and my abylyte and good mynde towards the[e]. I pray the[e] not to abuse thi selfe and ondo me allso. Thi tutor dothe sarteffye that he wuld haue the[e] placed in some other coledge with som honest man, and he will do his best hearin. It should seme to me that he hath no good lykyng off the[e]. Samuell, he ys a vertewous man and suchaon [such a one] as doth feare God arighte, but I do see by thi lettars that thou doest not consayve [well] off his doynges which are holye and iuste s[illegible] the fear off God [b]effore him, I wolde haue bene heartely glade that thou hadest taryed [with] him and remayned in the [co] ledg and to haue contynewed ther, but I do [fe]ar the abuse to M^r Cla[r]ke⁸ will expell the[e] the same; and allthough he [d]yd abuse the[e], I would tho[u] hadest suffred the same, so woulde he haue been ashamed and hereafter haue standen thi ffreed. Samuell, I would [be] glad that thou wouldest procede bachelor at this comensment, and to tary in the house; and desyre thy tutor or some other to agree the matar, for I do feare that thi tutor with that blessed Benbrige⁹ shall be expelled; but the ground whearuppon the[y] stand ys holye, and the Lord God strengthen them in His truth that they may be found faythfull and constant in the cause off God. Therfor, I pray the[e] for to reverente [reverence] them and wishe them well for Ierusalem sake, and so doying the Lord will bless the[e] for ther cause ys the Lordes, which in the end will [doth?] prosper maugar [in spite of] the harts of the adversarys off His truth, which the Lord graunt for the comfort of His elect. I know the doctryne that was taught the syxt [of]

⁶Cambridge University Library, Vice-Chancellor's Court, *Acta Curiae* books, V. C. Ct. I. 26, volume for 1 October 1589-31 August 1590, fol. 171 verso (bound upside down).

⁷Abbreviations have been expanded, and capitalization and punctuation modernized.

⁸Richard Clerk, or Clarke, D. D. Elected Fellow of Christ's College, 1583. Member of the small anti-Puritan minority in the college. See John Peile, *Biographical Register of Christ's College, 1505-1905, and of the Earlier Foundation, God's House, 1448-1505*, 2 vols. Cambridge, 1910, i, 156.

⁹Cuthbert Benbrige or Bainbrigg. Elected Fellow of Christ's College, 1583. See Peile, *Biographical Register*, i, 149.

January, the fyrst Pet[er] 5-4,¹⁰ was a most holy doctryne and religious, which the pride of this liff and the glorye off this world may not away with, but muste varysh at the brighte beames off the sunne shyne of Godes truth. The Lord God lighten the hart off our blessed soveringe [sovereign] and hir counsell that a parfytte [perfect] rēformation may be wrought in the mynestery with godly discyplene. Thi tutor dyd send me a some [sum, summary] off the doctryn that he taught, and I pray the [e] to thank him for yt; and yff leasure had sarved, I would have wrytten to him. He dyd resayve off the cariar xl^s, and sarteffyeth me that tho[u] [you?] art in his det. I do thynke the[e] to be to[o] prodigall. I hartely desyre the [e] to amende the same, and do not ovar press me, for yt ys gret tyranye. That which I wear able I will alow the [e] with a good hart, and ther fore I pray the [e] not to greve me with oppressyon, for thy expences are to[o] far out off ordar. I do very often complayne to the [e] of thi selff; but thou art eythe[r] deaff or forgetffull, not knowyng thi selff. Samuell, I do think that to remayn in the coledg whear thou art wear gret credytt for the [e]; and therfor to procede bachelar ther, for a felow shipp will rather be had in that place then [than] in any other. I do fear that thi tutor and M^r Benbrig shall losse ther romes, but do hearin as the Lord God shall move the [e]. And thus the Lord God blesse the [e] and thi brother. The carier ys away, and that maketh me to conclude, prayinge the [e] to haue a godlye care of thi selff, and me allso. Thus, in post haste, ounst [once] and allwayes I comend the [e] to God. Thi father, Robart Hardye. [Addressed on back:] To his lovyng sonne Samuell Hardye, [s]choler [i]n Christes Co[llege], Cambrydge.

¹⁰I. e., I Peter 5:1-4.

MICHAEL E. MOODY

“ONE OF THE FINEST PIECES IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE”: HENRY GROVE, A NOTE

“The Rev. Henry Grove was a Presbyterian minister who kept school at Taunton. He was born there in 1683, became a teacher at the age of 23 (already married) and worked for the next 18 years in the Taunton Academy, his department was Ethics and Pneumatology. He spent his leisure in religious controversy, writing an ‘Essay on the Terms of Christian Communion’, a ‘Discourse on Saving Faith’ and an ‘Essay on the Soul’s Immortality’ and miscellanies in prose and verse, including Nos. 588, 601, 626 and 635 of the ‘Spectator’. He received also £20 a year for ministering to two small congregations in the neighbourhood of Taunton. His wife died in 1736 and he in the year following. His works appeared in 1740 in 4 vols. 8vo.”

Thus a note in the collected edition of the *Spectator*. It has, however, proved possible to discover more about Henry Grove.¹ He was educated at Rowe’s Academy, Newington Green² along with a number of other useful and famous students, including Isaac Watts, with whom he established a continuing friendship.³ Indeed, a dedicatory poem by Grove appeared in the 1709 edition of Watts’s *Horae Lyricae*, and was reprinted in all subsequent editions.

Samuel Johnson thought very highly of Grove’s essays in the *Spectator*, particularly no. 626, which he called “one of the finest pieces in the English language — the paper on ‘Novelty’ yet we do not hear it talked of. It was written by Grove, a dissenting teacher.”⁴

Henry Grove wrote with a cheerful optimism, stressing the natural goodness in man, the possibility for all men to cultivate benevolence and to curb selfishness. He held that every man feels pity for those in distress — even children react thus, and their reaction is not calculated or premeditated:—

“Children and Persons most Thoughtless about their own Condition, and incapable of entering into the Prospects of Futurity, feel the most violent touches of Compassion.”

This innate goodness in man he derived from the all-beneficent Creator:—

“who hath an absolute Fulness of Perfection in Himself, who gave Existence to the Universe, and so cannot be supposed to want that which He communicated, without diminishing from the Plenitude of His own Power and Happiness.”

Unlike the Greek gods, the God of the Christians is concerned with the beings He has created:—

“Surely, next to the survey of the immense Treasures of His own Mind, the most exalted Pleasure he receives is from beholding Millions of Creatures, lately drawn out of the Gulph of Non-Existence, rejoicing in the various degrees of happiness imparted to them”.

¹ See also *Dictionary of National Biography*.

² A. P. Davis, *Isaac Watts*, 1948, p. 13.

³ Davis, *Isaac Watts*, p. 52 states that Grove was first cousin to Watts; but this misapprehension appears to arise from the fact that Watts’s mother was Sarah Taunton, whose father, Alderman Richard Taunton, left money for the founding of the Taunton School in Southampton; whereas Grove taught in the Academy established at the Somerset town of the same name.

⁴ Boswell: *Life of Johnson*, ed. Hill Powell, III, p. 33. April 10th, 1776. See also IV, p. 32, 1780 (from a collection of sayings for which Boswell was indebted to his worthy friend Langton.).

Grove disputed the low opinion of man held by Hobbes and some of the Greek philosophers. He admitted that man's physical and temperamental composition may cause difficulties for some when they attempt to act with generosity; but a habit of beneficence can be cultivated by all and is most to be commended in those for whom it is difficult to practise.

Grove showed his belief in the immortality of the soul in the essay (no. 626) on Novelty, which won Dr. Johnson's praise, and he developed his argument for this belief more fully in the final essay, where he stated that:—

“the End for which He designed His reasonable offspring is the Contemplation of His Works, the Enjoyment of Himself, and in both to be happy.”

One lifetime, he says, would not suffice for this, adding:

“For my part, I freely indulge my Soul in the confidence of its future Grandeur: it pleases me to think that I, who know so small a portion of the Works of the Creator, and with slow and painful Steps creep up and down on the Surface of the Globe, shall e'er long shoot away with the Swiftmess of Imagination, trace out the hidden Spring of Nature's Operation, be able to keep pace with the heavenly Bodies in the Rapidity of their Career, be a Spectator of the long Chain of Events in the natural and Moral Worlds, visit the several Apartments of the Creation, know how they are furnished and how inhabited, comprehend the Order and measure the Magnitude and Distance of those Orbs which to us seem disposed without any regular Design and set them all in the same Circle; observe the Dependance of the parts of each System, and, if our minds are big enough, to grasp the Theory of the several Systems upon one another, from whence results the Harmony of the Universe.”

Here we glimpse a scientific mind eager to learn more of God's creation; and Grove's praise of Sir Isaac Newton's genius in the same essay underlined his approval of the scientific approach. Grove showed none of the narrow-mindedness or gloom popularly attributed to the opinions of Dissenters.

Later, in the last essay, Grove made a passing reference to what will befall unbelievers in the next world. We are shown no picture of retributive punishment, but rather:—

“Will there not a Time come, when the Freethinker shall see his impious Schemes overturned, and be made a convert to the Truths he hates; when deluded Mortals shall be convinced of the Folly of their pursuits?”

We may contrast this optimistic, open-minded attitude displayed by Grove with Boswell's account of his earliest religious experiences:—

“My mother was extremely pious. She inspired me with devotion. But unfortunately she taught me Calvinism. My catechism contained the gloomiest doctrines of that system. The eternity of punishment was the first great idea I ever formed. How it made me shudder! Since fire was a material substance, I had an idea of it. I thought but rarely about the bliss of heaven because I had no idea of it. I had heard that one passed one's time there in endless praise of God, and I imagined that that meant singing psalms as in church; and singing psalms did not appeal to me.”⁵

Grove's is a clear, attractive, eighteenth century prose illuminated on occasion by whimsical illustrations — perhaps the most charming being the introduction to the essay on Novelty:

⁵From *A Sketch of the Early Life of James Boswell, written by himself*, 1764.

“When I have seen young Puss playing her wanton Gambols, and with a thousand antick Leapes express her own Gayety at the same time that she moved mine, while the old Grannum hath sat by with a most exemplary Gravity, unmoved at all that past; it has made me reflect what should be the occasion of Humours so opposite in two Creatures, between whom there was no possible difference but that of Age; and I have been able to resolve it into nothing else but the *Force of Novelty*.”

This is a delightful domestic vignette, and a clever method of catching the attention of the reader and focussing it on his subject.

Grove wore his erudition lightly; his classical references and quotations were woven in to the body of his essays, he expected his readers to be familiar with his references and felt it unnecessary to explain them in detail — it is to be remembered that he was a tutor at Taunton Academy. References to Cicero’s opinion of the immortality of the soul, as to Plato’s theory of Ideas, and to the Greek philosophers’ opinion of the attitude of their gods to human beings may serve to suggest his classical learning, but he was also fully acquainted with the thinkers of his own day — witness his reference to the views of Hobbes, and his praise of Sir Isaac Newton.

In short, he leaves in the reader’s mind an endearing picture of a cheerful, learned minister, devoting his life “to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever.”⁶

FRANCES HODGESS ROPER

⁶Henry Grove’s essays appeared in the *Spectator* on the following dates:— No. 588 Sept. 1st 1714; No. 601 Oct. 1st 1714; No. 626 Nov. 29th 1714; No. 635 Dec. 20th 1714.

ERNEST ALEXANDER PAYNE, 19 FEBRUARY, 1902 – 14 JANUARY, 1980

I

Dr. Payne was a remarkable person. Unless you were perceptive, he could at first seem rather ordinary. How far this was deliberate, regretted by him or unconscious, it would be hard to say. He appeared not interested in himself. Under pressure, he might have referred, a little gruffly, to Jesus's words about self-denial, saying goodbye to all you have, losing your life. Certainly he received a hundredfold now in this time: brothers and sisters throughout the World Church, and in the British Council of Churches a throne all his own for judging Israel. The man whose manner breathed "If I honour myself, my honour is nothing" became a C.H.

In more secular terms, he was like a judge. The disinterestedness, integrity and dependability, the calmness and largeness of mind, that go with the judicial cast of mind fitted him to survey, and engage with, an issue and then pronounce on it. Even when what he said was not accepted, his judgment was valued. One listened, weighed and respected.

He had hoped to be a missionary, and spent some years on the headquarters staff of the Baptist Missionary Society. *The Prayer Call of 1784* (1941), which he wrote for the Society's Triple Jubilee, is particularly fine. He was attracted to church history, and returned to Oxford as Senior Tutor at Regent's Park College, with, in time, a Lectureship in the University; but his interest in the missionary movement did not lessen.¹ In 1951 he left Oxford to become General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, and soon showed himself an outstanding administrator; but he in no way abandoned church history. His ability to keep so many oranges in the air at once, while also holding high office in the British Council of Churches, the Baptist World Alliance and the World Council of Churches, was extraordinary. He remembered everyone and everything, and never put a foot wrong or dropped a brick or stitch.

If he promised support, you could count on it, and he was as faithful in that which is little as in much. When the Free Church Historical Societies set about preparing a bibliography² that would contribute to the tercentenary of 1662, many a man in his position would have sent a representative to the little group that met quarterly at Dr. Williams's Library, or have contented himself with benevolent oversight; but whoever else might be absent, the one who, after a hard-pressed day at Baptist Church House, was *always* there was Dr. Payne.

We who have an interest in Free Church history owe him much. A recognized authority on the sixteenth-century Anabaptists, on whom he contributed a chapter to the *New Cambridge Modern History*, he wrote the history of *The Baptist Union* (1959), of *The Baptists of Berkshire* (1952) and of many Baptist churches,³ as well as a stream of articles for the *Baptist Quarterly*, which for six years he edited. But while

¹"Among our greatest needs is a history of the B.M.S.": see his lecture to the Baptist Historical Society on the occasion of its diamond jubilee, in *Baptist Quarterly*, xxii, 1968, pp. 387-97.

²*The Beginnings of Nonconformity, 1660-1665: a checklist*, ed. G. F. Nuttall, 1960.

³Bugbrooke (1930), Clipston (1932), Towcester (1936), Roade (1938), College Street, Northampton (1947). Dr. Payne presented some 400 chapel histories to Dr. Williams's Library, where he was President of the Friends of the Library as well as an active trustee: see his *A Venerable Dissenting Institution: Dr. Williams's Library 1729-1979*, 1979.

valuing his Baptist ancestry on both sides of his family,⁴ including links by marriage with that "key figure", Abraham Booth,⁵ he was a Mansfield Baptist and for some years was in membership at the Hampstead Garden Suburb Free Church. His *The Free Church Tradition in the Life of England* (1944) was long unrivalled. President of the Baptist Historical Society, he lectured to the Congregational Historical Society⁶ and later to our own Society,⁷ as well as, last May, to the Wesley Historical Society.

To the end, he was never inactive or without projects. When, last year, a manuscript catalogue of the manuscripts in the Congregational Library, which had been lost, was at last recovered, Dr. Payne was in the Library within a month or two, and knew what he hoped to find. Only a week before his death he told me he had read every word of the *Calendar* of Philip Doddridge's correspondence published last autumn. He was planning to edit a collection of Fuller's letters.

He was also a gifted biographer, ready to tackle personalities as varied as those of the scholar Wheeler Robinson (1946), the *Baptist Greatheart* J. H. Rushbrooke (1954) and the *Veteran Warrior* B. Grey Griffith (1962). "The wide range of his interests and influence and the volume of work he accomplished were possible only by rigid self-discipline, but under a somewhat austere manner lay a simple kindness, a deep interest in human beings, and unusual spiritual understanding and power". These words, from an article by him in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (1941-50)⁸, are as true of himself as of Wheeler Robinson, of whom he was writing. The devotion to the calling of the Christian minister which undergirded and unified all he did may be found, with something of his heart, in a tribute to his life-long college friend, John O. Barrett, printed privately a few months ago.⁹

GEOFFREY F. NUTTALL

II

Ernest Payne's recognition as a leading figure in the Ecumenical Movement came early and lasted until the moment of his death; and it is remarkable that as his involvement in the affairs of the World Council of Churches increased his service to the British Council of Churches and the Free Church Federal Council never diminished. Perhaps it was his inherited and deeply held conviction that the local is the true focus of the universal which explained his unusual capacity to serve so widely without becoming ecumenically "airborne". He was in many respects an unrepentant English Free Churchman, valuing much in the tradition into which he was born and to which he continued to be a steadfast witness; particularly was this so in respect of its radical tradition in politics and its testimony to a liberal outlook in theology. Yet he was also a repentant Free Churchman, acknowledging freely the less admirable traits in Dissenting history and longing for the day when the visible unity of the Church should become possible. This impenitent penitence made it

⁴His father and grandfather were successive treasurers of the Downs Chapel, Clapton: see his boyhood memories in *B.Q.*, xxvii, 1977, pp. 34-44.

⁵See his "Abraham Booth, 1734-1806", in *B.Q.*, xxvi, 1975, pp. 28-42.

⁶"The First Free Church Hymnal (1583)", in *C.H.S.T.*, xviii, 1956-9, pp. 3-16.

⁷"Nonconformists and the American Revolution", in this *JOURNAL*, i, 1973-7, pp. 210-37.

⁸In the 1941-50 volume of the *D.N.B.* he also wrote on Rushbrooke, and in the 1951-60 volume on M. E. Aubrey.

⁹A copy is available at Dr. Williams's Library.

possible for him to become so remarkably sympathetic and trusted a figure in all ecumenical circles. In addition was his diligence in mastering the increasing mass of documents which must have crowded his office and study, his shrewdness in seeing what were the underlying issues in any discussion, and his firm fairness in chairing the many committees and commissions over which he was called to preside. Those who were present at the most recent W.C.C. Assembly in Nairobi speak of his memorable mastery of its discussions; and part of his authority on such occasions derived from his ability to keep calm in the midst of heated discussions.

From 1962 to 1971 he was chairman of the Executive Committee of the British Council of Churches, and at the time of his death its Honorary President, an office specially created for him to mark his ecumenical standing. At the second Assembly of the World Council of Churches he was elected Vice-chairman of its Executive Committee (1954) and he was one of its Presidents from 1968 to 1975, being the only English Free Churchman ever to hold that office. His association with the Free Church Federal Council was even longer, and he was its Moderator from 1958 to 1959. For a long period he was particularly concerned to guide its thinking on education, and it was largely due to his influence that the Council's attitude on this subject became more ecumenical. He was also a leading figure in its thinking about Church and State. His book *The Free Church Tradition in the Life of England*, regarded as a classic of its kind, has no doubt served to make clear to many who are not Free Churchmen the genius of this tradition. In addition to all these ecumenical services, Ernest Payne was diligent too in his work for the Baptist World Alliance. In that fellowship he had great influence, particularly with Russian Baptists: this also was part of his ecumenism.

All this is some indication of the trust in which Ernest Payne was held by a wide circle of people from all parts of the world; it is less easy to speak of the affectionate admiration which so many came to have for one who did not find it at all easy to be forthcoming. Yet his personal interest in and concern for a great many was very real; and his loyalty to people and cause was unwavering.

JOHN HUXTABLE

AMERICAN EVANGELICAL PROTESTANTISM AND THE REFORM IMPULSE:

Review of:—

The Antislavery Appeal: American Abolitionism after 1830. By Ronald Walters. Pp. xvii, 196. Johns Hopkins University Press, London, 1976, £8.25.

Chariot of Fire: Religion and the Beecher Family. By Marie Caskey. Pp. xv, 442. Yale University Press, London, 1978, £18.00.

Religion in the Old South. By Donald G. Mathews. Pp. xx, 274. Chicago University Press, London, 1977, £7.70.

American Apocalypse: Yankee Protestants and the Civil War 1860-1869. By James H. Moorhead. Pp. xiv, 278. Yale University Press, London, 1978, £12.60.

Evangelical Protestantism was never more pervasive in its influence on American society and culture than in the early and middle years of the nineteenth century. After the Revolution American evangelicals, responding to the intellectual challenge of rationalist religion and the political challenge of church disestablishment, made strenuous efforts to fill the churches of the East and to reach the growing population of the Mississippi Valley. By the 1850s, following the "Second Great Awakening", one American in every seven was a member of an evangelical church; even more numerous were the church adherents, unconverted churchgoers sympathetic to evangelical doctrines and values. The numerical strength, financial wealth, educational institutions and aggressiveness of evangelical groups gave them an influence which even the historians of secular society are eager to assert. In recent years, for example, the political historians Ronald Formisano and Eric Foner have interpreted the Republican Party of the 1850s, with its high moral tone, nominating conventions akin to camp-meetings, and revivalist fervour, as in many ways an evangelical movement in politics.¹ Indeed, Formisano's analysis of electoral returns concludes that the single most important determinant of voting behaviour in the 1840s and 1850s was denominational affiliation; Calvinist evangelicals — Baptists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians — were much less likely to vote for the Democratic Party, the party of the Roman Catholics and the anti-evangelical denominations, than for the Whigs (later Republicans) with their call for activist government that would legislate in the area of personal morality.

The social repercussions of an active evangelicalism were probably best seen in the burgeoning reform movements of the era. Alice Felt Tyler's designation of the period as one of "freedom's ferment"² rather hints at the Enlightenment sources of the schemes for social reconstruction, but this ideological stimulus was less significant than that provided by energetic Protestants armed with appropriate evangelical doctrines. Baptists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians in particular (Methodists in the early part of the century were markedly backward in their contribution)³

¹Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War*, New York, 1970; Ronald P. Formisano, *The Birth of Mass Political Parties: Michigan, 1827-1861*, Princeton, 1971, which follows an approach taken originally by Lee Benson's influential *The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case*, Princeton, 1961.

²Alice Felt Tyler, *Freedom's Ferment: Phases of American Social History from the Colonial Period to the Outbreak of the Civil War*, Minneapolis, 1944, which does in fact recognise the contribution of evangelicalism to the reform impulse.

³Lois W. Banner, "Religious Benevolence as Social Control: A Critique of an Interpretation", *Journal of American History*, 60 (1973), 28-31.

promoted a series of benevolent and moral reforms that included not just the overtly religious and evangelistic — home missionary work, Bible and tract distribution, Sabbatarianism — but those too which sought to improve social conditions: poor relief, education, temperance and antislavery, for example. In all this they were inspired by a series of beliefs with powerful social implications: the notion of “disinterested benevolence”, taken in part from the eighteenth-century Congregationalist Samuel Hopkins, who considered that a sovereign God ordered men to act “for the sake of the glory of God and the greatest good of mankind”; the doctrine of millennialism, that Christ was soon to return to earth to establish a utopian society — a doctrine made all the more persuasive by the rapid and continuing secular and religious progress of the United States in the early Republic; and the concept of perfectionism, the idea that the regenerate sinner had a duty to press on to a higher state of holiness in which he would properly understand God’s will and work for the perfection of society.⁴

Of the multitude of good causes that evangelicals took up, antislavery has received most attention from historians. The classic statement of the evangelical stimulus to abolitionism is Gilbert Hobbs Barnes’s *The Antislavery Impulse*, first published in 1933 and still the starting point for the subject. Writing when an economic interpretation of the origins of the Civil War prevailed, and when the status of evangelical Protestantism could scarcely have been lower within intellectual circles, Barnes set out to show that a “revival of religion . . . could produce a social movement of intrinsic importance”⁵, that historians’ picture of early nineteenth-century evangelicalism had been viewed through the distorting prism of the socially bankrupt revivalism of the 1920s. For Barnes, the key to the new phase of the abolitionist movement in the 1830s — with its rejection of gradualism and its call for immediate emancipation — was the revival movement of the Presbyterian evangelist, Charles Grandison Finney, in upstate New York in the 1820s. Finney’s converts, stimulated by his particular brand of Calvinism, were taught to “make benevolence the ruling passion”⁶ and through the quiet genius of one of them, Theodore Weld, were moulded into an effective band of abolitionist crusaders. Oversimplified as Barnes’s treatment is now considered to be, it has formed a foundation for the more sophisticated analyses of recent years — the most noteworthy being those of David Brion Davis and Bertram Wyatt-Brown⁷ — which continue to explore and reaffirm the evangelical-romantic, as opposed to the enlightenment-rationalist, basis of antislavery.

Each of the four studies under review here develops and refines our understanding of this relationship between evangelicalism and the reform — particularly antislavery — impulse. Ronald Walters’s treatment of religion in *The Antislavery Appeal* is part of a broader purpose: to move away from the question

⁴William G. McLoughlin, Jr., *Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham*, New York, 1959, pp. 101-6. Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth Century America*, New York, 1957, offers the best working out of the relationship between perfectionist beliefs and social action.

⁵Gilbert Hobbs Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse 1830-1844*, with an introduction by William G. McLoughlin, Jr., New York, 1964, p. xxv.

⁶Theodore Clark to Theodore Dwight Weld, 24 December, 1830, in Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, New York, 1934, I, 38.

⁷David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823*. Ithaca, 1975; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery*, Cleveland, Ohio, 1969. See also Lewis Perry’s excellent *Radical Abolitionism: Anarchy and the Government of God in Antislavery Thought*, Ithaca, 1973.

that has loomed largest in antislavery writing — what moved certain people and not others to join the abolitionist movement? Instead his intention is to inquire why the antislavery commitment took a particular shape at a particular time — to ask what was antebellum and American about antislavery rather than to ask what was peculiar about abolitionists (p. 147). Borrowing more from the anthropologist than the sociologist, he examines the literature of abolitionism not to learn about slavery but about the social and cultural context in which that propaganda was written; he concludes that the new view of slavery that emerged after 1830 indicated that major shifts were taking place within American society. Changes in the structure and economic activity of families, the acceleration of the growth of the Northern economy, a burgeoning nationalism — each of these affected abolitionists' perceptions of themselves and of the South, leading them, for example, to focus respectively on slavery's effects on domestic life, on the economic shortcomings of southern society, and on their own role as destroyers of slavery and redeemers of the nation. Walters thus gives an explanatory status to broad social and economic changes that affected many who were not abolitionists, including anti-abolitionist Northerners and pro-slavery Southerners. This does not necessarily invalidate his argument, though it does serve to emphasise what antebellum Americans held in common, not what divided them. And while this emphasis, in Walters's sensitive hands, provides a welcome change from many of the tired analyses of the antislavery movement, it does run the danger of ignoring the conflict between abolitionists and their foes.

Evangelicalism provides one of the dominant influences that Walters explores; to this extent he goes along with Barnes, Davis and those who emphasise abolitionism's debt to American Protestantism. Revivals and antislavery shared techniques of conversion, a demand for immediate commitment, a common biblical language and often the same meeting places; the famous Lane Debates of 1834, for example, when theological students debated the slavery issue over eighteen days and finally took a stand for immediate emancipation, were little more than a protracted meeting of the kind popularised in the revivals of the 1820s.⁸ Yet Walters refuses to travel the full path that Barnes's study seems to encourage: revivals and antislavery were not one and the same. Though very few abolitionists were avowed atheists, a distinguished group of leaders were Protestants of non-evangelical persuasion. The Methodists, the most revivalist of all denominations, were reluctant to follow the logic of Wesley's antislaveryism into full-blooded abolition. Many converts were far too deeply affected by the era's prevailing racialism to feel any sympathy for abolition; one who claimed to have been in heaven while in a trance was asked "if she saw any black folks in heaven" and replied: "*Oh! I didn't go into the kitchen*". Revival converts who did take up the cause of the slave often waited some years before doing so — Theodore Weld himself a prime example. (Walters here makes the plausible suggestion that it was not the revival but the emotional void created by its passing that stimulated an individual's entry into the reform movement.) Moreover, the most prominent evangelists were not prepared to put antislavery before the saving of souls; indeed by 1860 Charles Finney had gone even further than Walters's description suggests, denouncing a number of the leading abolitionists as liars, infidels, fools, enthusiasts and fanatics.⁹ Increasingly abolitionists made plain

⁸Theodore Dwight Weld to James Hall, 30 May, 1834, in Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld*, I, 136-46.

⁹Emma Brown to Emily Howland, 29 November, 1860, Emily Howland Papers, Cornell University Library.

their disappointment with revivalism and organised religion, and came to see the clergy as interested principally in maintaining their authority (by bowing before a public opinion hostile to abolition) in a society where their status was under challenge. Many like William Lloyd Garrison withdrew from the orthodox churches, though not from religion altogether; antebellum society was too overwhelmingly Christian for that. Eventually the religion they fastened on was that represented by the abolitionist crusade itself: antislavery was a church that provided for its members a faith, a commitment and the means of transforming American life. Walters concurs with Henry Ward Beecher's description of the American Anti-Slavery Society: "An uncanonical Church you are, a Church without ordination, but in my judgement a Church of the very best and most apostolic kind, held together by the cohesion of a rule of faith and an interior principle".

Walters's refusal to make a simple equation between evangelicalism and reform finds indirect support from Marie Caskey's religious biography of Lyman Beecher and his eleven children, a rich, thoughtful study of their spiritual struggles, the development of their formal ideas, and the relationship of those ideas to day-to-day experience and personal crisis. Though there is no room in this long book for the author's study of the Beechers's active role in reform, it nonetheless shows us that evangelicalism in the antebellum period, even among the reform-minded, was not constant, unified, unchanging; and that by no means all who were touched by its doctrines were sucked into benevolent activity. Critics might argue that the experience of the Beecher family was hardly typical: the contemporary division of mankind into "Saints, Sinners and Beechers" testified to their seeming uniqueness; but in fact as ministers, lecturers and authors they communicated with a vast, unmeasurable audience whom they both influenced and represented.

Anxious that his children should think and argue their way towards Congregational faith with the same vigour that he had brought to his own reinterpretation of Calvinism, Lyman Beecher encouraged domestic theological disputation. They overdid it. Just as he had broken with traditional Hopkinsian strict Calvinism, attempting to balance dependence on God with reliance on the ability of man (a course which led to charges of "crypto-Wesleyanism" and an unsuccessful heresy trial), so his children asserted their theological independence of him and broke even further away from Calvinism. In some ways their faith showed common characteristics: all, for instance, replaced their father's vision of God as a glorified, unchanging, impassive deity with one of a fond father who felt and suffered for man. But there were marked divergences in their faiths, and these lie at the heart of Dr. Caskey's study. Catharine, who moved towards Pelagianism and the Episcopal Church, and Isabella, who ultimately espoused Spiritualism, she sees as "moralists" who argued for moral perfectionism and, as a corollary, limited man's dependence on God. Charles and Edward, the "prophets", loyal to Congregationalism and Presbyterianism, were the most serious theologians of the family, out of tune with the prevailing liberal, nondoctrinal evangelicalism, their discordance reflected in their curious theology of the pre-existence of souls. Harriet, Henry Ward and Thomas were "Christocentric liberals", anti-Calvinist, reacting against the harsh doctrines of predestination and election, and placing the love of Christ, not the cruelty of God, at the centre of their preaching. One of Henry Ward's genial, nondoctrinal sermons, "For God so loved the world", "annoyed [Lyman] exceedingly", and he complained that his son "had no business to tell sinners of the love of God without telling them of the wrath of God."

In their Connecticut home, the Beecher children absorbed a powerful sense of mission. From Roxana Foote, Lyman's first wife, they learnt the meaning of Hopkinsian "disinterestedness"; her sister Mary, a refugee from her West Indian slaveholding husband, fostered their antislavery feelings; Lyman himself, an apostle of activism, contributed a ferocious zeal for temperance, Sabbath-observance, peace and other humanitarian works by which the Kingdom of God would be set up on earth. Most of the children acquired a determination to do good to their fellow men. Isabella's serious interest in antislavery and women's rights was reinforced by her husband's active abolitionism and candidacy for the Liberty Party; both Charles and Edward abhorred slavery, the latter helping to organise Boston ministers against the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. Most influential of all in this sphere, of course, were Henry Ward, who used his Brooklyn pulpit for trenchant criticisms of slavery and other social evils, and Harriet, whose work as a novelist and propagandist received full acclamation in the Senate at the time the Emancipation Proclamation was issued. Yet there was one major exception to this pattern. Thomas Kinnicut Beecher, like Harriet and Henry Ward, gave primacy to the love of God; unlike them he had not the least enthusiasm for reform. The awe and envy in which he held his older siblings (he was the next to youngest, son of Lyman's second wife), his pessimistic, depressive temperament, his illnesses and nervous crises, the considerable influence of the social quietist, Horace Bushnell: one or all of these may explain why he rejected as meddling even the most apolitical of reform schemes. He had no time for abolition and saw the Civil War as a useless conflict precipitated by Yankee interference. Though after the war he stood as a candidate for the Greenback Party, this seems to have been part of a wider eccentricity that included riding an adult-sized tricycle and drinking beer. His views were well summarised in a letter to his like-minded younger brother James in 1855: "I agree that slavery exhibits monstrous iniquity, but so does liberty; I agree that popery is an awful delusion, but so is Protestantism. . . . Were I a one-eyed reformer, I should be a great, red-hot zealous man. But I have looked and loved and longed and suffered. I see more things at a time than most men do. I give it up".

It is the American South, however, which provides the most obvious challenge to the proposition that evangelicalism necessarily stimulated antislavery activity. Southern white churches participated in the "Great Reaction" of the 1830s, as the slave states attempted to seal themselves off from the abolitionist attack; each of the major evangelical denominations there — Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians — eventually separated from their northern co-religionists over the place of slaveholders within the church. Strangely, in view of its recognised importance, we have lacked an authoritative general study of the development of southern evangelicalism before the Civil War, one which puts into proper context the churches' relationship to slavery.

Donald G. Mathews has filled this gap with aplomb. He brings to his study of *Religion in the Old South* the polish one might expect from the author of the best work on American Methodism and slavery.¹⁰ His "essay", as he modestly calls it, is a welcome synthesis of primary and secondary writings, full of his own interpretations. He shuns a denominational approach and makes little of theology, not just because others have made these familiar, but because he is more interested in examining evangelicalism as a whole and in treating it as a social process. His major

¹⁰Donald G. Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism: A Chapter in American Morality 1780-1845*, Princeton, 1965.

object is to answer the question: how did evangelical Protestantism take root in the southern colonies and develop to become the predominant religious mood of the South, so that being southern seemed to be synonymous with being evangelical? Mathews finds the answer in the area of the section's social development, and on the whole his argument is persuasive, despite his tendency to blur the line between religious motivation and the social function of religion. The eighteenth-century revival, channelled through the "New Light" Presbyterians and Baptists, and the Methodists, was a rebellion by an "independent" lower-middle class against the unsatisfactory Anglicanism of the traditional social élite. As early as 1792 a majority of the professing Christians in the South were evangelicals, a new community whose religion gave them a self-confidence and a sense of their own worth. In the early nineteenth century their institutions and ministry helped define them as a distinct group and to enhance their status in a society where economic and territorial expansion were shifting the patterns of power and wealth. By the 1850s an impressed observer could describe the evangelicals' ministry as "learned and polished; their Doctors of Divinity and professors numerous; and their membership enlightened and refined".

This "social process" was inevitably and inextricably linked to the issue of slavery: evangelicals achieved cultural dominance and full respectability at the same time that slaveholding grew more entrenched and secured virtually unanimous public endorsement. Yet evangelicalism had not originally lacked the ideological potential to promote antislavery feeling: the earliest white evangelicals sought to break down the social distance between white and black. Some of them were ardent abolitionists, stirred in part by natural rights and republican philosophy, but more by the egalitarianism implicit in evangelical conversion and the belief that slaves should be treated as morally responsible human beings, free to exercise their own self-discipline. Yet "they could not create a long-lasting abolition movement where the social context could not support it" (p. 75): some evangelicals left the South, many more compromised with slavery. It was not that evangelicals had lost their appetite for reform in general. Temperance and the pursuit of "evangelical usefulness" characterised southern perhaps even more than northern life. But evangelicals possessed no sense of moral responsibility for achieving a fundamental change in the social structure. Instead, church energies that in the free states went into antislavery went in the South into the Mission to the slaves, by which blacks would be converted, masters would respect the humanity of their labourers, and the South as a whole would become a morally healthier and safer society. At the same time evangelicals developed a slaveholding ethic which offered a defence of social inequality, based on Scriptural precept; slaveholding they regarded as a positive Christian responsibility. However, they never achieved a total congruity between evangelicalism and proslavery. First, they could not completely turn their backs on the past. Ambivalence and guilt continued to characterise their response to the peculiar institution; Basil Manly, a defender of slavery in public, privately confided that he hoped God would provide "a way of escape from it". Secondly, by taking evangelical religion to the slaves, they created a black Christianity which generated a sense of hope, victory and "liberty" that drew much closer than their own religious profession to the original message of southern evangelicalism in the eighteenth century. It is one of the strengths of Mathews's book that — whatever its perversity of emphasis (a book on southern religion with so little on revivals), its occasional density of style, and its understandable omissions (we now want to know, for

example, how evangelicalism may have worked itself out differently in urban and rural settings) — it makes clear how the southern evangelical's response to slavery and reform can be squared with the apparently contrasting experience of his northern counterpart.

For American Protestants the Civil War came not principally to interrupt, but to confirm their antebellum millennialist and reforming mood. Southerners, convinced for a generation or more of Yankeeism's growing infidelity and deviation from the strait evangelical way, saw themselves as establishing a Confederate Israel. For their part, northern evangelicals — their opinions examined with skill and elegance in James Moorhead's book — invested the war with an apocalyptic significance that grew naturally out of their antebellum millennialism. Moorhead concentrates on the evangelical establishment of Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians, gleaning much from their pamphlet sermons and (a rich but largely underused source) their weekly newspapers. Though one may question how widely held amongst ordinary churchgoers were the views that he examines, it is clear that many leading evangelicals regarded the war as both a punishment for sin and a means of the inauguration of God's long-promised Kingdom. Americans' materialism and lack of internal discipline and, above all, their toleration of slavery had effectively broken their special covenant with God. But there was no reason for pessimism. God would establish his Kingdom, albeit through bloodshed and violence. War, the equivalent of mass revival, would make men fit for republican government, would make Americans homogeneous, strong, disciplined and loyal, would purge the country of slavery, the Antichrist. The war was to be seen as the final battle before the millennium, the ultimate crisis in world history, after which America would become God's instrument in the conversion of the world.

Such a vision did little to help evangelicals face the problems of post-war Reconstruction and the later challenge of the Gilded Age. Convinced that the Civil War was the last great struggle before the millennium, that racial and national harmony would follow swiftly the Christian martyrdom of Abraham Lincoln, they were psychologically ill-equipped for the disappointments of the Johnson and Grant years; indeed a new generation of evangelicals jettisoned the optimistic post-millennialism of the past for pre-millennialism, or "dispensationalism", the doctrine that the work of the regenerate on earth could not inaugurate the Kingdom, that human society was getting progressively worse, not better, and would continue to deteriorate until the cataclysmic Second Coming. More important from the perspective of the present essay were the limitations of the traditional evangelical approach to reform. What was needed, if Reconstruction were to achieve genuine racial equality, was vigorous activity from the federal government to restructure southern society and her economy; land reform was a *sine qua non* of black advance. But evangelicals shared in the prevailing distaste for such a complete abandonment of *laissez faire*. In this they were more than children of their age. The evangelical emphasis on self-examination and self-discipline meant that they saw reform in voluntarist and individualist terms. The starting point for social improvement was the moral regeneration of the individual, not tinkering with social institutions. Evangelicals were prisoners of their own tradition.

The spirit of Gilbert Hobbs Barnes's seminal work, then, lives on in the pages of the books under review here: whatever the deficiencies and inconsistencies of evangelical thinking on reform, no study of "freedom's ferment" will get very far by

ignoring evangelical Protestantism. Yet evangelicalism by itself does not wholly explain changes in the pulse rate and targets of reform. Without embracing a rigid economic determinism, historians like Ronald Walters have begun to find clues in the economic and social changes of the Jacksonian period, from the 1820s to the 1840s. Though few now have much to say in favour of David Donald's essay on the abolitionists, in which he attributes the emergence of "immediatism" to the declining economic and social status of the antislavery leadership, it may well be that he is correct in a broader sense: the rapid territorial, economic and urban expansion of Jacksonian America shook the traditional social order at many points, provoking all kinds of fears and hopes which reformers were able to exploit.¹¹ It is in this direction that future research seems likely to go.

RICHARD CARWARDINE

¹¹David Donald, "Towards a Reconsideration of Abolitionists" in *Lincoln Reconsidered: Essays in the Civil War Era*, 2nd edition, New York, 1961, pp. 19-36.

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REVIEWS

Richard Baxter and the Millennium. By William M. Lamont. Pp. 342. London, Croom Helm, 1979, £13.95.

This is not always an easy book to read and the publishers' claim that it will be accessible to students and sixth formers can be queried. Dr. Lamont's style is sometimes elliptical and often allusive, though his antitheses, a favourite device of this author, are frequently illuminating once sufficiently pondered. He assumes a readership well versed in the intricate theological disputes of the seventeenth century, though, to be fair, he does provide brief portraits, in an appendix, of Baxter's "friends and enemies". But Dr. Lamont's considerable achievement is in no doubt. He has made much fuller sense of Baxter's mind and development than anyone before.

The key to understanding the man turns out to be his fear of popery, a permeating influence on his life and thought. With this went a millennial commitment, though, for good reasons that Dr. Lamont explains, Baxter only produced a systematic eschatology at the end of his life. The book is not a biography but a series of studies which are so subtly woven together that the reader ends by feeling that he has come to terms with the whole man. Baxter's humanity is exemplified; his breadth of sympathy is illustrated; his theology, political views and practical concerns are shown to have been wholly coherent. Thus in the *Holy Commonwealth*, Dr. Lamont asserts, Baxter "showed a cheerful willingness to work any constitution which secured godliness". Baxter, we are reminded, did not seek the image of the unforgiving polemicist: in a dedicatory epistle to *True Christianity* he hoped "it might be numbered with those books that are carried up and down the country from door to door in pedlar's packs".

What makes this book so satisfying is its broad perspective. In a fascinating chapter on the 1650s, for instance, we are shown how the search for a middle way in theology complemented Baxter's efforts for reconciliation between Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Independents and his stress on the role of the godly magistracy. His place in the mainstream of the Puritan tradition becomes clear. Baxter himself linked the evangelicalism of the Worcestershire Association with the Grindalian way of local activism. Dr. Lamont has equally interesting things to say about Baxter's leadership of Nonconformity after the Restoration and his apocalyptic studies of 1686, but his most important revision concerns Baxter's view of the origins of the Civil War. Here his close study of the various texts of the autobiography is crucial and treason, not tyranny, emerges as the critical issue. Baxter, like Prynne, saw Charles I as the dupe of the papists in need of rescue from his captors: the war was fought for religious self-preservation. This is merely one instance of the originality of Dr. Lamont's work, an originality built on the solid foundations of patient research.

ANTHONY FLETCHER

The Scots Kirk in London. By George G. Cameron. Pp. xiv, 272. Becket Publications, Oxford, 1979, £5.95.

Dr. Cameron has filled a gap in our knowledge of the many attempts to found and sustain Presbyterian churches in London in connection with the Church of Scotland and he has provided a survey which is not otherwise available. It contains details of several churches which are now forgotten. Much space is devoted to the two

surviving London churches in Crown Court and Pont Street. The survival of Crown Court Church and its repeated resuscitation from seemingly terminal adversities is a remarkable record of Scottish perseverance. It may surprise and disappoint some readers to learn that the common view of its origin as the Kirk of the Crown of Scotland associated with the Scottish Court in London had its source in a romantic fantasy of Lady Frances Balfour; the truth seems to be that the Church was an eighteenth-century foundation in a street called Crown Court.

We are given graphic accounts of the notable ministries of Henry Hunter in London Wall Church, of John Cumming and Joseph Moffett in Crown Court, and of Archibald Fleming in St. Columba's, Pont Street. We are also given a fine account of the work of the Royal Scottish Corporation, the Royal Caledonian Asylum (now School), and the provision for old and young people in housing and hostel projects.

The notes at the end of each chapter are a rich mine of information about persons and places and events.

The ties with the Church of Scotland were severely torn by the Disruption of 1843 and much of the vitality of the Scottish presence in London went into the Presbyterian Church in England; it may be argued that this book does not give sufficient place to the Presbyterian Church in England (after 1876, of England) as the home of a great deal of the Scottish Presbyterian witness in London.

The volume has a sumptuous format and is reasonable in price but its substance is not always clearly arranged and there could be improvements in the indexing. There are also misprints and omitted words. There were Forty-two Articles, not Forty-three (p. 2); there is a ten-year error in the dating of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew in France (1572); in appendix D 1760 appears several times as 1970. The interesting series of photographs is not arranged in sequence and does not include the exterior of the rebuilt St. Columba's, Pont Street. However, we are much indebted to Dr. Cameron for a valuable study in Scottish and Presbyterian history in England.

R.B.K.

Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790-1865. By Richard Carwardine. Pp. xviii, 249. Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn. and London, 1978. £12.50.

Several books have been written about revivalism in America and in Britain, but Dr. Carwardine's book is the first to present a sustained discussion of the links between the two. Another advantage of his approach is the way he considers both the Calvinist and Methodist strands of revivalism: this enables him to demonstrate that the message and method of C. G. Finney, who is a leading figure in the book, were not quite as novel as has sometimes been suggested. An admirably succinct opening chapter describes the general development of American revivalism in the period under discussion, noting incidentally the significance of the British contribution to American Methodism after independence. This leads into the main section of the book, on American revivalists in Britain.

First, there is a discussion of the growing interest in revivalist methods during the 1830s, particularly among Congregationalists, led by John Angell James, and Baptists. The visits of two American revivalists are then discussed in some detail; James Caughey was in Britain from 1841 to 1847, working mainly among

Methodists, and Charles Finney was here between 1849 and 1851. Dr. Carwardine brings out the significance of Caughey's visit, which has tended to be neglected, and also shows that, by comparison, Finney's success among Baptists and Congregationalists was much less spectacular. Furthermore, revivalism emerges as a factor in some of the ecclesiastical troubles of this period. Though not an issue in the Scottish Disruption, revivalism was supported by many of the new leaders in the Free Church of Scotland after 1843; and, although Caughey's compliance with the ban placed upon him by the Wesleyan Conference in 1846 prevented division at that time, the supporters of revivalism were nearly all on the Wesleyan Reform side of the 1848-49 schism — Sheffield, the scene of some of Caughey's greatest successes in 1844, has remained a centre of Free Methodism ever since.

The book concludes with a discussion of the 1850s, and in particular the American revival of 1857-58 and the British revival of 1859. In both the theme of entire sanctification, or "perfectionism", played a more important part, and the way was thus prepared for the work of Moody and Sankey, and the Keswick movement in the 1870s. Revivalism became respectable, and its atmosphere less emotional — at least by the standards of Lorenzo Dow at the beginning of the century.

This is an important book. It fills a gap in nineteenth-century religious history, and is meticulously researched. Dr. Carwardine also challenges some cherished views on the subject: for example, at several points he shows that the appeal of revivalism cannot be explained simply in terms of social class; and he is similarly sceptical of the use made in American history of the "frontier" thesis to explain the nature of revivalist success. Instead he emphasizes the difference between American and British expectations of revivalist success, and also the significance of Anglican suspicion of or indifference to revivalism. Whereas in the United States by the mid-nineteenth century the largest religious group was Methodism, firmly committed to revivalism and deriving social prestige from its success, in England, and to a lesser extent in Scotland, the established churches remained the largest and most socially prestigious religious bodies, and they still treated revivalism with disdain. *Transatlantic Revivalism* will provide useful material for reflection as the Nationwide Initiative in Evangelism gets under way.

DAVID M. THOMPSON

What Next? By G. A. F. Knight. Pp. 128. St. Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1980, £2.75.

This is a thrilling autobiography of a man who has now retired after a life as a Church of Scotland minister, a missionary to the Jews in Hungary, a professor of Old Testament studies in Knox College, Dunedin, and in McCormick Seminary, Chicago, a pioneer of theological education as the first Principal of the Pacific Theological College in Fiji, a prolific expositor of the Old Testament, and a Moderator of General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. He had unhappy interludes in St. Andrews and in Sydney but for few men can the appropriate doors of opportunity have opened so often and so propitiously.

In the story of his close and dangerous links with the Jews we come across the names of Adolph Saphir and Alfred Edersheim who both became ministers in the Presbyterian Church of England.

Nichol MacNicol was not the editor of *The British Weekly* (p. 15).

This story will be of absorbing interest to all readers but especially to Scots and Presbyterians.

R.B.K.