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**CONTENTS**

Editorial . . . . .	285
James Hamilton and English Presbyterianism by <i>R. Buick Knox, M.A., Ph.D., D.D.</i> . . . . .	286
Review Article: American Evangelicals and the Pursuit of a Teetotal Millenium by <i>Richard Carwardine, M.A., D.Phil.</i> . . . . .	307
Review Article: William Paton and the World Church by <i>A.G. Macleod, M.A.</i> . . . . .	312
Reviews by Ann Phillips, Walter Houston, Alan Cass, David Bebbington, Clyde Binfield, Stephen Mayor. . . . .	314

**EDITORIAL**

This issue has a nineteenth century flavour, reaching up to Scotland and across to the United States. James Hamilton of Regent Square was one of the great men of English Presbyterianism, yet strikingly "Victorian". Dr. Buick Knox's paper about him was originally delivered at Regent Square in October 1981 as one of the two lectures prepared for the Society's first study day. The second lecture, also on English Presbyterianism in the last century was given by the Revd. David Cornick. The day then changed gear. There was luncheon at Dr. Williams's Library after which members of the society visited Harecourt and Claremont United Reformed Churches.

The Review Articles are by Richard Carwardine who lectures at the University of Sheffield and by Alan Macleod who was Principal of Westminster College from 1955 to 1979. Other reviews are by Ann Phillips, Fellow Librarian of Newnham College, Cambridge; Alan Cass of Sheffield University Library; David Bebbington, Lecturer at the University of Stirling; Stephen Mayor, the Director of the Cheshunt Foundation and Professor of Pastoral Studies at Westminster; and Walter Houston who is Principal MacLeod's successor as the Professor of Old Testament Studies.

## JAMES HAMILTON AND ENGLISH PRESBYTERIANISM

James Hamilton was the son of the parish minister of Strathblane near Glasgow. He was born in 1814 and he grew up in the manse where his father read Kennicott's edition of the Hebrew Old Testament every morning and Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History in Greek every evening. At the age of thirteen James began a diary which he entitled the "Journal of the literary occupations of James Hamilton". On one day he noted that he had read Archibald Bonar's *Genuine Religion the best friend of the people* and five recondite articles from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.<sup>1</sup> He entered Glasgow University at the age of fourteen but his attendance at classes was interrupted by frequent bouts of illness and by absences to attend the funerals of relations, including that of his sister Elizabeth. His aim was to begin the day at 6.45 a.m. with half an hour's study of Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Bible followed by a lecture on Greek and a lecture on Logic and then to have breakfast at 9.30 a.m.; from 10.00 a.m. until 9.30 p.m. the time would be taken up with more lectures on Greek and Logic, by private study and by two hours spent on dinner, tea, walking, writing letters and evening prayers; from 9.30 p.m. until midnight he aimed to read carefully two chapters of the Greek Testament. He resolved never to spend more than seven hours in bed unless upset by illness. He noted on 5 December 1832 that he had sat up much later than usual preparing Greek but, unlike some other students, he had not overslept or missed his class in the morning. He planned not to allow his régime to be broken by going to parties more than once a week but he later noted that in a preceding week he had been out each evening at a lecture, a meeting, a dinner or some other engagement. He estimated that in 1832 he had read thirty-nine duodecimo volumes, eighteen octavos and one quarto. He always carried a book in his pocket for reading in spare moments; Spenser's *Faery Queen* was a frequent companion.<sup>2</sup> After his death an acquaintance recorded that in student days Hamilton had studied vellum tomes "at the sight of which theological students and even doctors of divinity would shudder in these degenerate days".<sup>3</sup> He himself said that as a student he had been prone to "precoçious pedantry". While his main studies were directed towards graduation and entry into the ministry he followed a large number of collateral lines of research in botany, chemistry and astronomy. In the summer of 1837 he travelled over one thousand miles in Scotland looking for botanical specimens; in later life he became a Fellow of the Linnean Society and he wrote all the botanical articles in Patrick Fairbairn's *Imperial Bible Dictionary*. His fellow-students in Glasgow presented him with a certificate which he treasured even more than his University Certificate; they paid tribute to his "distinguished talents, profound erudition, integrity and honest, independent zeal".<sup>4</sup>

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1. W. Arnot, *Life of James Hamilton, D.D., F.L.S.* London, 1878. This work includes extracts from Hamilton's Diary which is not now extant. This work is hereafter referred to as "Arnot".

2. Arnot, 335.

3. From a review of Arnot in *The Weekly Review*, Dec. 24, 1869. This journal was published for the Presbyterian Church in England from 1862 to 1881.

4. Arnot, 60, 97. Patrick Fairbairn was a learned Scottish theologian who translated many volumes of German theology and himself wrote many books particularly on the prophetic books of the Old Testament. He edited the *Imperial Bible Dictionary* which had a wide circulation.

After his father's death in 1835 the family moved to Edinburgh in 1836 and for a year James pursued his course in Edinburgh University where the influence of Professors Chalmers and Welsh was stamped upon him for life.<sup>5</sup> He won the prize in Welsh's class for an essay on "The Importance of Church History in a course of Theological Study".

After the completion of his course he became assistant to Dr R.S. Candlish, the minister of St George's Parish Church in Edinburgh, and he was given charge of a district mission supported by the parish but within three months he was asked to be assistant to the aged minister of Abernyte near Dundee but without any right of succession and so he was not ordained. His diary at this time was marked by constant references to illnesses, a pain in the shoulder, rheumatism, a liver complaint and other infirmities but, as always in his life, this did not prevent him making thorough pulpit preparation and attending to the pastoral needs of the people. He came into touch with Robert Murray McCheyne who was burning himself out in his brief and memorable ministry in nearby Dundee; Hamilton was much moved by McCheyne's expectation of a widespread spiritual awakening. In 1840 Hamilton received a call to Roxburgh Church in Edinburgh where he was ordained on 21 January 1841, but it was only a few weeks later that he received a call from the National Scotch Church in Regent Square in London.<sup>6</sup>

This was a daunting invitation as the Church was still reeling from the consequences of the termination of Edward Irving's ministry. Irving was, and remains, a controversial figure. He had sympathized with a movement which encouraged speaking with tongues and other charismatic manifestations. Regent Square Church had been built to hold the crowds who flocked to hear him but the unusual phenomena and his eccentric teaching on the Person of Christ were so unfamiliar to Presbyterians that he was eventually suspended by the Presbytery of London and then deposed from the ministry by the Presbytery of Annan in Scotland by whom he had originally been ordained. A large proportion of those drawn by his preaching had no attachment to Presbyterianism and when he was silenced only a remnant remained in Regent Square Church. A student, Peter McMorland, was ordained as minister in 1831 and he sought valiantly to rally the remnant but after four years he returned to Scotland. After a further disturbing vacancy the Church, largely on the advice of Candlish, invited Hamil-

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5. Arnot, 89. Welsh, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1843, led the secession which formed the Free Church of Scotland of whose General Assembly Chalmers was the first Moderator. See A.L. Drummond & J. Bulloch, *The Scottish Church, 1688-1843* Edinburgh, 1973, 247-8. Hamilton referred to Chalmers as popular, impassioned, impetuous, the man of power, and to Welsh as academic, reserved, calm, systematic and contemplative, *Works* 6 vols., London, 1869, IV, 198.
  6. Hamilton paid a tribute to McCheyne who died in 1843 aged 29; he said McCheyne had a pensive spirit, a lively fancy, a delicate sensibility, a tender manner and an affectionate heart and was continually about his Master's business: *Works*, IV, 71 ff. *The Weekly Review*, Nov. 30, 1867, 1187. *The Presbyterian Messenger* the monthly magazine of the Presbyterian Church in England, hereafter "Messenger", Nov. 1867, 2-4. J. Hair, *Regent Square* London, 1898, chapters VIII & IX. Arnot, 174 ff.

ton in 1841 to be the minister.<sup>7</sup>

Hamilton as a child had known Irving who was wont to visit the manse in Strathblane and he had seen the silenced Irving in Glasgow where he held a number of meetings but he was now an ill man and Hamilton noted that he had fallen from "the highest popularity to the deepest obscurity". Irving was regarded by most church leaders as a genius wrecked by a wayward spirit, an enthusiast without sober judgement and a teacher drifting into heresy. Several modern writers in the charismatic movement have seen him as the victim of clerical coldness and of the Church's persistent refusal to allow the Holy Spirit to break into the life of the Church.<sup>8</sup> Hamilton looked upon Irving as a mystic in "the mountain sanctuary where the spirits of his sainted sires would come to him, and martyr tunes begin to float through the duskier aisles, and giant worthies enter from the mossy graves and fill with reverend mien the ancient pews" but he judged that in the end Irving had been "the dupe of his own imagination". Something of Irving's spell was laid upon Hamilton but he was a steady churchman and he saw the call to London as a call to build up a church within the presbyterian family.<sup>9</sup>

It was a daunting call to come to a church where Irving's memory was still so potent but whatever the problems inherited from this past they were soon overshadowed by the possibility of the disruption of the Church of Scotland over the issues of patronage and of state intervention in the affairs of the Church. Several test cases had arisen in which the civil courts had overruled the decisions of presbyteries and of the General Assembly and plans were afoot within the Evangelical party in the Church to take over the Church, or, failing that, to secede from the Church. A convocation of ministers was held in 1842 in Roxburgh Church of which Hamilton had been minister and he returned to Edinburgh to be present. The takeover plan proved to be impracticable, though some recent historians have held that such a plan might have succeeded if the Evangelicals had been content to wait for the tide which was already flowing in their favour but they were in no mood to delay. In 1843 the Disruption took place and the Free Church of Scotland came into being with a nation-wide network of churches springing up alongside the parish churches.<sup>10</sup>

In England, by 1842 the presbyterian churches had become the autonomous Presbyterian Church in England but there was still a deep interest in Scottish affairs, and in the Synod of the English Church in 1842 Hamilton proposed that all possible support be given to the Church of Scotland in the struggle for "the right of the Christian people to possess a voice in the appointment of their ministers".<sup>11</sup> When the Disruption took place the vast majority of the

7. A.L. Drummond, *Edward Irving and his Circle*. London, 1938. H.C. Whitley, *Blinded Eagle* London, 1955.

8. C.G. Strachan, *The Pentecostal Theology of Edward Irving* London, 1973.

9. *Works*, IV, 205.

10. J. Hamilton, *The Harp on the Willows, or the Captivity of the Church of Scotland* London, 1843. Drummond and Bulloch, op. cit., ch. XII.

11. *Minutes of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in England* (hereafter referred to as "Minutes"), 1842, 17.

ministers and members of the English Church supported the Free Church and looked upon Chalmers, Welsh, Candlish, Cunningham, Guthrie and Buchanan as heroic figures. However, there was one way in which the Disruption could directly effect English presbyterian churches. Many of the buildings were held by bodies of trustees and, in some cases and contrary to the wishes of the members, the trustees supported the Church of Scotland and claimed possession of the buildings and this meant that minister and people had to leave the buildings and secure or build new premises. This happened in Rodney Street Church in Liverpool; it was retained for the Church of Scotland. In London, the majority of members had to leave the building in Swallow Street and they built new premises in Marylebone which became for many years the strongest English presbyterian church.<sup>12</sup>

The situation in Regent Square proved to be more awkward. The trustees would give no clear indication of their intentions though they allowed the congregation to use the building. There was still a burden of debt outstanding from the time of Irving and the building had become shabby and in need of renovation but the congregation hesitated to do anything about the debt or the renovation, lest having cleared the debt and repaired the building the trustees then might step in and claim the building and eject the congregation. This dragged on until 1860 when the trustees agreed to settle the claim. The congregation raised over £14,000 to cover the settlement and the renovation. This was a generous response from a congregation which had now grown to have a membership of over six hundred.<sup>13</sup>

Hamilton had rallied the congregation and made it a centre for Scots in London, and, being near the railway stations of Euston, St Pancras and King's Cross, it was in a good catchment area for Scots arriving in the city. Hamilton became a prolific journalist, a popular preacher, an ecclesiastical statesman and a prodigious worker in support of many causes and societies. After three and a half years in Regent Square he delivered a sermon in which he reviewed the life of the Church and he found much to encourage him; he rejoiced in "the evident aspect of God's blessing on many homes". He saw room for greater earnestness in the work of the church and in daily business; he called for greater liberality and he said that all contributions could be doubled by a little self-denial and with no loss of enjoyment; there was also need for a greater spirituality marked by "a holy raisedness of conversation".<sup>14</sup> In another sermon on growth in generosity he said that "on the Gospel tree there grow melodious blossoms and sweeter bells than those which mingled with the pomegranates on Aaron's vest".<sup>15</sup> After seven years he again surveyed the life of the church. One hundred and thirty-five had signed the call sent to him but due to death and continual movement in and from the capital only a minority were now in the church. This involved constant partings but membership had increased though in his view

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12. G.G. Cameron, *The Scots Kirk in London* Oxford, 1979, 43-46, 134. R.B. Knox, 'The Relationship between English and Scottish Presbyterianism, 1836-1876', *Scottish Church History Society Records*, XXI, Part 1, 43-66.

13. Hair, *op. cit.*, 207-210. Also, see my article referred to in previous note.

14. *Works*, I, 1-6.

15. *Works*, II, 160.

there was a "mournful rarity" of sound and saving conversions and he said that in his last year in Abernethy more people had spoken to him of their souls and their salvation than in all the seven years in London. He also lamented his failure to visit the people in their homes as often as he would have wished but he asked the people to take into account his burden of work. In one year he said he had attended two hundred and thirty four meetings, many of which took up a whole day; he had also received twelve hundred visitors to his home, written two thousand letters and prepared many manuscripts for the press. Moreover, there was worry about his health and he said that after a full Sabbath duty he was so drained that it was "usually the middle of the week before I can do any work without a sense of weakness or suffering".<sup>16</sup>

It was inevitable that the minister of a leading London church should have heavy demands laid upon him and he was also drawn into the work of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church. The Synod was a small body and at the beginning of his ministry in London its maximum possible membership was one hundred and forty-four made up of equal numbers of ministers and elders but with an actual attendance of under sixty. Even by the end of his ministry the potential membership had not risen above two hundred. Hamilton devoted much time to the work of the Synod. He was a member of the Home Mission Committee which supervised the planting of new churches in areas where Scots were known to reside. He was on the Psalmody Committee and he advocated the use of hymns as well as the metrical psalms in worship and he had a large hand in producing the *Psalter and Hymn Book* which appeared in 1866.<sup>17</sup> Unlike many advocates of the use of hymns he was an opponent of the use of organs in presbyterian churches and he was sent by the Synod to persuade some churches not to purchase an organ or to silence an organ where it had been surreptitiously introduced. He was a zealous member of the Committee charged with the founding of a Church College in London and when it opened in 1844 he gave lectures in fields not covered by the two professors and particularly in the area of pastoral studies. In the first year he was paid £60 but he returned this fee to the College for the purchase of books and then up to 1851 he gave his services gratuitously.<sup>18</sup> In 1844 he was made Joint-Convener of the committee on Missions to Jews and Heathens, a name later changed to the Foreign Mission Committee and of which he was the sole Convener for many years. He was a member of a committee to foster union with evangelical churches and especially with the English churches belonging to the United Presbyterian Church. It also became almost automatic to put him on synod committees to deal with special issues as they arose. He was convener of a committee set up to prepare a petition to Parliament asking that the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge be compelled to admit nonconformists without requiring them to conform.<sup>19</sup> In 1863 he drafted an address from the Church to the Prince of Wales on the occasion of his marriage.

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16. *Works*, VI, 130.

17. R.B. Knox, 'Presbyterian Worship in England in the Nineteenth Century', *The Liturgical Review*, May 1981, 23-32; Nov. 1981, 79-89.

18. R.B. Knox, *Westminster College, Cambridge* Cambridge 1979; *Weekly Review*, 30 Nov. 1867; *Minutes*, 1848, 10; 1849, 8; 1850, 19; 1851, 10; 1852, 19.

19. *Minutes*, 1854, 81 & 89; 1863, 8.

On several occasions he represented the Synod at meetings of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland.

He was also in demand for his help in activities outside his own denomination. Great annual meetings of the missionary societies were notable features of church life in the nineteenth century and Hamilton spoke to the London Missionary Society, the Wesleyan Missionary Society, the Christian Institution Society, and the Evangelical Alliance of which he was a founder member.<sup>20</sup> It was also the age of the public lecture and Hamilton lectured on astronomy, botany and literature. He had a lecture on "Books and Reading" which he delivered in 1863 in Bishopwearmouth with the rector presiding, and later in the year in the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London with the minister, C.H. Spurgeon, presiding.

One of his most time-consuming activities was in the field of journalism. It was work which he enjoyed. His mind was stored with a vast variety of facts and observations and insights derived from his years of omnivorous reading. He told the people of Regent Square Church that he had kept up his variety of studies until he came to London but he said he had now abandoned the attempt for ever; it had been hard to crucify his devotion to "these favourite studies and pleasant pastimes" in the realms of letters and science. Nevertheless he drew heavily upon his accumulated resources of knowledge to illustrate his articles and sermons and he still found time to learn Dutch so as to be able to read the works of Dutch theologians as he was already able to read works in French, German and Italian. From 1851 to 1859 he edited one or other monthly periodical. First of all, he was called by the Synod to edit the *Presbyterian Messenger* which he used to urge the English Presbyterians to see themselves as a Church with a mission and an opportunity in England. There was, as he had told the Free Church General Assembly in 1850, a prime duty to seek out the Scots who came to England; there were refined and wealthy Scots who gravitated to Cheltenham, Brighton, Hastings and other salubrious spots and in the absence of a presbyterian church they gravitated to the Church of England and became the right arm of the evangelical clergy and then their children became Puseyites, "the girls embroidering altar-cloths and fald-stool covers and the boys making high-church speeches in Parliament"; there were also industrious tradesmen who, failing to find a presbyterian church, joined what they thought to be the next best thing, a baptist or an independent chapel and soon "by dint of superior intelligence and sound theology" they became the leading deacons, and, finally, there were the labourers who broke loose from their ancestral loyalties and became "libertines and lawless livers, and in workshops and factories the apostles of socialism and the champions of infidelity".<sup>21</sup> There was, however, a wider duty and opportunity among the English people themselves and in the journal Hamilton urged English Presbyterians and especially the people and ministers who came from Scotland to distinguish between the essence of Presbyterianism and the rags of Scottish costume. When Paul went to the Gentiles he became a Gentile to the

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20. Arnot, 239.

21. *Messenger*, 1850, 401-3.

Gentiles; when Duncan went to the Jews he became as a Jew; Duff became as a Hindu to the Hindus; Moffat became as a Bushman to the Bushmen; but catch a Scot becoming an Englishman to the English! Hamilton felt that the English soil seemed to have a scunner at English Presbyterianism and he feared this was the result of the poor quality of the clover seed sent into England in past years; many of the ministers sent to England had been the refuse of the Church of Scotland. The Free Church of Scotland had a duty to send some of its best ministers to England, men who would be ready to remain and to make Presbyterianism palatable to the English.<sup>22</sup>

Following the *Presbyterian Messenger* Hamilton undertook in 1854 to edit a magazine for the Y.M.C.A. to quicken the intelligence and refine the taste of young men; this was called *Excelsior* and he produced it for three years during which he wrote four hundred and eighty-three of its two thousand seven hundred pages; in connection with this work he received nine hundred and ninety-two letters and wrote two thousand. In 1857 he undertook to issue a monthly series of extracts from the writings of English authors; he completed the project in three years and the whole corpus was published as *Our Christian Classics*, a minor parallel to John Wesley's fifty-volume Christian Library. A later editorial undertaking was the preparing of the monthly *Evangelical Christendom*, the journal of the Evangelical Alliance, from 1864 until his death. In addition to these journalistic efforts various series of his sermons were published as substantial booklets; for example, the series on Ecclesiastes was issued under the title, *The Royal Preacher*.<sup>23</sup>

The Bible was for Hamilton the authoritative source of all sound doctrine and morality. It was inspired by God who revealed himself in the Bible as the God "whose justice and benevolence are as infinite as his wisdom and power" and "whose dispositions are merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin".<sup>24</sup> He insisted that the Bible was to be taken literally and that all the events which it recorded took place precisely as they were related. He held that criticism had confirmed what the Bible, and particularly the New Testament, had recorded and the reader could be as certain of the main events "as if our actual eyes had seen the miracles or our own ears had listened to its words of wonder". Textual criticism had so surely established the authentic text that "no

22. *Messenger*, 1851, 116; 1853, 131; 1854, 177. "Rabbi" Duncan was an eccentric professor in New College, Edinburgh, who in his approach to the Jews was said to be "half ancient mariner and half wandering Jew". Dr. Alexander Duff was a veteran missionary of the Free Church of Scotland who toured England pleading the missionary cause in spell-binding three-hour orations. See Drummond and Bulloch, op. cit., 43 & 54. See also W. Ferguson, *Hindrances to the Progress of Presbyterianism in England* (An address to English Presbyterian and United Presbyterian ministers in Liverpool, 1872). In his student days Hamilton had visited Crown Court Church of Scotland in London and what he saw seemed to him to indicate that presbyterian prospects in London were low; the church and the people were plain; they seemed heartless and "I question how far it is worthwhile to struggle for its lifeless existence"; Arnot, 112.

23. *Works*, III, 13-243. He never entirely gave up the hope of producing a scholarly work on Erasmus; as late as 1864 he was giving four hours on some days to reading the eleven folio volumes of Erasmus's works which he possessed; see his diary in Arnot, 522.

24. *Works*, II, 12.

man of the slightest pretence to scholarship will impugn the apostolic antiquity and textual genuineness of the New Testament Scriptures". Add to this the deductions of Paley and the deliverances of Chalmers and "few who pretend to common sense will question the historic truth of the events which these scriptures record". Hamilton questioned if there had been a time since the age of the Apostles when the truths of revelation were possessed more copiously or realized more vividly.<sup>25</sup> However, the firmness of Hamilton's assertions has to be seen in the light of the upheaval which was then taking place in biblical studies and in scientific theories about the origin of the universe and of human life. He was clearly unsympathetic with any view of the Bible as the result of the weaving together of many traditions across many centuries. He was, of course, aware of the variety of material and styles in the Bible; God might have written all the Bible himself "on amaranthine leaves engraven in Heaven's own holograph" but he chose to give a collective inspiration to a wide variety of writers. This had its risks and there were "polysyllabic chapters and joyless genealogies" which could repel when heard while "freezing in the atmosphere of some sparse and wintry sanctuary" but these were overshadowed by passages of "the purest beauty and stateliest grandeur"; they had the gracefulness of high utility, the majesty of intrinsic power and the charm of sanctity.<sup>26</sup> The richness was only grasped when read in the original Hebrew and Greek, supplemented by Luther's German translation, Martini's French and Diodati's Italian translations.<sup>27</sup>

Fierce controversy raged around the relation of the Biblical account of creation and the discoveries which seemed to show that the universe had a history stretching back through hundreds of thousands of years, if not millions. At times Hamilton seemed to dismiss the discoveries as the revival of ancient heresies; what were these discoveries but theories which would "leave upon the strand some new chips for the next historian of unbelief to gather!"<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, Hamilton was a keen student of the world of nature and he was convinced by the evidence that there had been geological movements and signs of animal life stretching back through many ages and he believed that "many a race enjoyed the lease of our domains" long before recorded history. Beginning with a "rudimental earth existing as a nebula of rarity incalculable" there followed a condensation to jagged solid rock invested by an ocean and an atmosphere. Or, on another possible hypothesis, the condensation was so orderly that at first the rock was almost a sphere surrounded by an even depth of water, after which internal stresses and strains produced folds and ridges of rock which eventually became the continents. Then by the eroding power of wind and rain alluvial plains were formed; further movements multiplied the variety of hills and valleys, mountains and streams; vegetation grew in the shallows and the heat of the sun dried out the ground and produced the exotic herbage which was once to be found in Britain where the temperature was such as would have made

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25. *Works*, IV, 104-9.

26. *Works*, II, 89-110.

27. *Works*, II, 137.

28. *Works*, VI, 468-9.

pineapples grow on the Grampians. Then the forests were swept away and deposited as the future coalfields of Wales, Scotland and the north of England. There were huge animals the only evidence of whose existence is the fossils to be found entombed in rocks. All this took place through countless centuries.

Hamilton did not find any difficulty in harmonizing this with the Genesis story. He said that not every idea claimed to be scriptural was properly scriptural and it had been gross misreadings of Scripture which had made it seem hostile to Galileo, Copernicus and Newton. Hamilton found the key to harmony in the first two verses of Genesis; the heavens and the earth were created countless ages ago and the earth was covered with water and with darkness but the Spirit of God was moving on the face of the waters; that movement embraced many ages during which the geological and botanical preparations were being made for the new era beginning with the creation of light. These were the wonders "of the chaos-lighted fields of a world before the World".<sup>29</sup> Thereafter, the process was as described in the following verses. Hamilton was totally opposed to any theory of development which held that one species was gradually transmuted into another so that limbs became wings or that "the elephant is an improved edition of the oyster".<sup>30</sup> In his view, the only basis for the world as it is is an all-wise Creator. Even the ragged and rough form of the surface of the earth was the result of divine foresight; if the rock foundations of the south-west of England had not known huge displacements the tin deposits, instead of being at a depth of three hundred fathoms would have been at the undiscoverable depth of several miles.

Hamilton carried the literal understanding of the Bible into all the events therein recorded such as the feeding of the Israelites in the wilderness; he reckoned their number to be about two million including women and children and he scorned the idea that these could ever have been fed by quails and manna to be found naturally in the desert; nothing less than divine provision could have sustained them. Not for Hamilton any idea such as that in Sturdy's recent commentary that the quails were migratory birds trapped as they swept over Arabia and that the whole account is a post-exilic idealistic reconstruction based on the journey of a few thousand refugees from Egypt.<sup>31</sup>

It would, however, give an unbalanced view of Hamilton's outlook if he were seen as one for whom these were the dominant issues. For him the main themes of the Bible were summed up in the Creed of the Church, and the Bible had to be studied with this as a regulating standard. He did not believe the Bible was properly studied if it was taken bit by bit, verse by verse; each verse had to be read in the light of the overall doctrinal plan and to be seen to fit into that plan. At the heart of the Bible is the Saviour of sinners. Christ is seen in the whole Bible, though with different degrees of clarity, beginning with dim shadows, focussing into flitting shapes such as might be seen on a misty morning, but when the mists clear he is revealed; he is revealed, not created. The Bible

29. *Works*, IV, 88.

30. *Works*, IV, 45.

31. *Works*, IV, 1-42 & 462; J.V.M. Sturdy, *Numbers* CUP, 4.

"lets forth the mind of Jehovah in successive instalments, even as the world was able to bear it", but "all that it lets forth is real, unchanging, eternally true". The Jews among whom the Bible was written were not a model people but a mould for a nobler revelation. God has sent forth his Word and he "never loses sight of his arrows". The fulfilled prophecies and the recorded miracles all attest that Jesus was all he claimed to be. Such miracles were no longer to be expected; "it would go far to put an end to industry and forethought if hunger could always reckon on miraculous loaves and pain could always count on a supernatural cure".<sup>32</sup>

The centrality of Christ in Hamilton's teaching was always clear. Christ is "the truth, the Amen, the supreme reality, the great Teacher who shows us plainly of the Father, the one Mediator who, coming from heaven, alone can take us thither, the mighty Revealer and Restorer". Hamilton proclaimed this faith at a time when many writers seemed to be involved in the rationalistic erosion of the doctrine of the divinity of Christ; he said many were being buffeted on a sea of speculation as they read an Essay or Review or sailed "in the gay old craft which Voltaire built, which Tom Paine bought for a bargain, second-hand, and which, repainted and christened by a bishop, has lately come out a regular clipper". Similar teaching was being propagated by "Paulus, Strauss and other German infidels", "voluptuous theologians who mope away their lives in selfish meditations". "Picturesque theories were blooming like the flowers of the season" but let it be remembered that the flower fadeth but the word of God abides!<sup>33</sup>

Hamilton noted that leaders like Peter the Great had been known to lay aside their imperial dignity in order to learn how their people lived and worked, but even more wonderful was the descent of the Saviour to the humble carpenter's shop. His life proved that "rough work is no reason for rude manners or a vulgar mind". "In the guise of a labouring man the Saviour fought the world's corruptions and overcame". "The Saviour assumed our nature and visited our world"; he came into "a moral lazaretto", but even more important, he compensated for all the wrong that had been done in the world and by his expiation God could still be just when forgiving sinners. "The righteousness of Christ, as the sinners' representative, is the most golden thing in all the Gospel".<sup>34</sup> Christ's work was complete; he had stood as "the substitution in the sinners' stead and the satisfaction rendered to divine justice".<sup>35</sup> "The atonement was God's love providing a satisfaction to God's justice and making it consistent with his rectitude, as it is delightful to his benevolence, to pardon the sin and restore and renew the sinner".<sup>36</sup> It was only such an atonement which could restore the balance which had been shattered by sin. The fallen race was in a prison locked not only by Satanic bolts and bars but by the adamant lock of eternal justice;

32. *Works*, I, 13; II, 14, 24, 62; III, 388; VI, 17 & 229.

33. *Works*, III, 82 & 466; IV, 307-9.

34. *Works*, I, 375-83.

35. *Works*, II, 154-5.

36. *Works*, III, 419.

the key had been flung into the ocean of divine wrath and release only came when Christ braved the cruel sea, grasped the key, and put it in the lock of the gates and he still had the key and his blood-red banner flies from the topmost battlements of the devil's fastnesses.<sup>37</sup>

Sinners are "justified by a gracious God" and nothing they can do can merit this amazing gift; "a justifying righteousness is not a privilege you buy but a present you receive". Hamilton often pointed to the way in which people did seek to accumulate merit through their own achievements; this, he held, was the endemic but hopeless quest by human beings and it was typified by the elder brother in the parable of the prodigal son; he was unable to sympathize with divine generosity and resented as a wrong to himself the kindness extended to his brother. He was also a type of the Judaizers in the Apostolic age who looked askance at the Gentiles and grudged "the portion of Israel, God's firstborn, should be given to the heathen prodigal". Or, he could be seen in "the dry and pedantic professor in a time of religious awakening who does not like the interruption of the ordinary tranquil routine, and who liked least of all the ragged reprobate, the outcast newly-reclaimed, his younger brother".<sup>38</sup> Human pride and its capacity for self-deception made Hamilton turn at times to the doctrine of predestination as the only effective ground of any person's salvation but on the whole he did not like the doctrine or the way it had been presented; it had been used to turn the God of the Gospel into the Fate of Mythology whereas it was meant to be an expression of "ecstatic thanks to God"; "the stately doxology" of thanks to God for his undeserved mercy had been transposed into the elegy of hope and the requiem of effort. In Hamilton's teaching no doctrine could be properly taught if it undermined personal decision and unremitting effort.<sup>39</sup>

His emphasis upon constant endeavour was based not only upon the Ten Commandments and other biblical exhortations but upon the fashion of his day which stressed the rewards of industry. There was a natural conscience but it could be "bribed and silenced and perverted and there is scarcely anything to which a natural man may not reconcile his conscience"; the Christian conscience is not the same as "the special-pleading conscience of the unconverted man".<sup>40</sup> Yet, in many ways Hamilton saw the structure of British society as in accord with the Christian ethic. All people had a work to do, the labourer to toil with diligence, the wealthy to bestow assistance to help the needy, and all to be done with joyous delight and not in "a sort of perpetual somnambulism". Hamilton called his hearers to think of the industry behind Butler's Analogy, Newton's letters, Cowper's hymns, Henry's Commentary, and Whitefield's travels.<sup>41</sup> He also lamented the waste of talent through indolence or dissipation. He found a striking illustration in the career of Richard Porson, the brilliant classical scholar

37. *Works*, IV, 65.

38. *Works*, II, 393.

39. *Works*, VI, 42-44 & 53.

40. *Works*, IV, 102.

41. *Works*, IV, 9-19, 28-29.

who became a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Regius Professor of Greek in the University and died at the age of forty-nine in 1808; he had been welcomed at the board of rich and clever men, and "to feed the wit he plied the wine, till, in floods of liquor, wit and wisdom both were drowned and the remains of the scholar buried in mere beastliness, the sot disappeared from society".<sup>42</sup> The version of his downfall given in the Dictionary of National Biography is that "habits grew upon him which were wholly incompatible with steady labour". Time, for Hamilton, was a fleeting gift and it was a duty to "clean up its golden dust, those raspings and parings of precious duration".<sup>43</sup>

Time was well spent in acts of Christian goodness towards others:

It is love carrying medicine to the sick, food to the famished; it is love reading the Bible to the blind and explaining the Gospel to the felon in his cell; it is love in the Sunday class or in the ragged school; it is love at the hovel door or sailing far away in the missionary ship.

Frequent references to the duties of servants reflect the large number of servants in the big London mansions who were of Scottish and Welsh descent, and who made up a large part of the congregations in Scottish and Welsh churches in London. Hamilton stressed their obligations to be polite and prompt and to show "a lowly, cheerful and obliging piety". Servants downstairs had an important influence on the peace of the house. They had also great privileges; they had no rent to pay and no rates to pay, no food or candles to buy, no fear of starvation or of destitution and "few classes in modern society are so rich as domestic servants" and from their savings they could educate a "nephew or young brother"; "a shilling spent at the pastry cook's could buy a Bible for a heathen family".<sup>44</sup>

The Christian would have a measure of refinement and "a relish for a higher literature than the half-penny ballad or the Sunday News". Decorum and decency would be found in Christian homes; many a man had been driven to penny theatres and to the taverns by tawdriness and turmoil in the home; sandals down at heels, tufts of ragged hair asserting their freedom through rents in the frowsy caps, chairs without bottoms, grates without bars, creaking discord, a feed to-day and a fast to-morrow, and the squalling of turbulent children are more than a match for any man, but religion would make things neat and tidy. "A filthy fireside" revealed a wife with no talent for neatness while an efficient wife kept a home where "a limpid daylight looks in at their unsullied window"; a wife who would keep her husband from bad company must have "a trim and smiling chamber awaiting his return". Admittedly, "a wife had many things to vex her" and she might find it difficult to "quell a smouldering wrath" but a wife could be "the ventilator of the smoky chamber".<sup>45</sup>

Students would also find that "God denies nothing in the way of learning to well-directed diligence" Newton claimed that his discoveries were made

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42. *Works*, I, 302.

43. *Works*, IV, 28-29.

44. *Works*, I, 496-502; II, 183.

45. *Works*, I, 410-14, 438-42.

because he could pay longer attention to the subject than most men cared to give.<sup>46</sup> Without steady application the student need not expect the treasures of knowledge to fall on "your loitering path some twilight like Minerva's owl". Teachers could also be indolent and instead of seeing scholars as immortal spirits with expanding minds they could see them as "rows of turbulent rebels, a rabble of necessary torments". "God had so made the mind of man that a peculiar deliciousness resides in the fruits of personal industry". "The prosperous fruit is already growing on the shores of eternity from the seeds which you scattered on the streams of time".<sup>47</sup> Students for the ministry had to be diligent and alert; many a text was "fire till a non-conducting intellect encased it".<sup>48</sup> There was need for more than "sound words and systems of theology"; without the life-giving Spirit there were no more than "the crystallised evaporation of Bible truth". Bible truths could be arranged in catechisms and "theological compends" just as flora and fauna could be classified in museums, but just as the world of nature could only be seen in all its fullness in the splendour of Alpine pinnacles, smoking cataracts, surging forests and sparkling rills, so the student of the Bible needed to emerge from the "cell of gas-lit orthodoxy on to the fields of sun-gilt revelation."<sup>49</sup>

Hamilton was eager to affirm his position within the Evangelical tradition in the Church. He looked back with admiration to puritan figures of the seventeenth century who were noted for "reverence, adoration and self-denial".<sup>50</sup> After an eclipse under "the boisterous irreligion of the later Stuarts" there had been a fresh flowering led by Whitefield, Romaine, Berridge, Newton and Venn. Hamilton felt that this revival had not the "stately pile of Pauline theology" which had marked the seventeenth century but he admitted its "eager sincerity". There was also John Wesley whose industry was sublime. But Hamilton did not think Wesley's Journal to be great value; it was little better than "a turnpike log" and had "an air of arrogance and egotism" but there was an undoubted "power in his presence" and his gifts of order and activity were evident in the Methodist people who were dissident but not dissenters, connectional but catholic.<sup>51</sup> Hamilton was also rather critical of Simeon, the more recent Evangelical leader who had a remarkable ministry stretching over almost fifty years in Holy Trinity Church in Cambridge. Hamilton granted that he had been diligent and zealous in his love of the Bible and he said Simeon's most effective work had been done in his early untrammelled and unflattered days but as he became a well-known dignitary he absorbed hierarchical pretensions and advocated exact conformity and "reverence for the rubric and obedience to the bishop". Hamilton found fault with Simeon's methods of biblical study on the ground that the Bible could only be properly studied by grasping its "pervasive principles", "a gravitational centre" which had to be kept in mind when dealing with individual texts. He

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46. *Works*, I, 78-80.

47. *Works*, I, 92 & 95.

48. *Works*, III, 128.

49. *Works*, VI, 41 & 51; see also II, 134.

50. *Works*, IV, 140.

51. *Works*, IV, 151-6.

held that without some such cardinal truth as Luther's stress on the righteousness of God or Wesley's emphasis upon the love of God there could be no energetic ministry or wide reformation. To help preachers Simeon had produced "twenty dense volumes of Helps to composition". Hamilton exclaimed:

Only think of it! And only think of the parishes which get these spectral helps as regular sermons! This Homiletic Bone-House contains no fewer than twenty-five hundred "skeletons", and however vigorous and effecting they might be when Simeon himself lived in them they are now too many and exceeding dry.

Hamilton felt that clergy nourished on such a diet would be overladen with truism and shackled by routine and would not be venturesome missionaries or bold and original evangelists. Simeon's guidance to students in Cambridge had been a leading to the sermon fishery rather than to the field of battle. Little wonder that Thomas Arnold of Rugby was not impressed by the Evangelicals whom he met if they were Simeonites.<sup>52</sup>

In contrast to Simeon, Hamilton placed his own major hero, Thomas Chalmers, a man of "princely mind", who when he expounded the Scripture did not take verses in isolation but saw every verse in relation to his own basic principle of "man's need which had been met by God's gift".<sup>53</sup> It was this sense of the wonder of the Gospel which drove him to resist state interference in the spiritual affairs of the Church and to lead the exodus of 1843. He directed the building of a new vessel "large enough to carry every true-hearted man who ever trod the old ship's timbers"; the new vessel took to the seas with "banner unfurled and showed the covenanting blue still spotless and the symbolic bush still burning".<sup>54</sup>

As a presbyterian minister in England Hamilton met many nonconformist ministers and people and he found much common ground with them as in 1862 they recalled the ejections of 1662. He was at one with them in demanding the removal of residual civil disabilities but his emphasis was somewhat different from that of indigenous nonconformity. He had no objection to what he would have regarded as a proper form of establishment where the state encouraged and financed the work of the Church; he was not tied to the voluntary principle and he stressed the reluctance with which many had taken the decision in 1662 to refuse to conform. Manton and Calamy and others would have conformed if they could have dispensed with the surplice and the sign of the cross in baptism and if the words of the Book of Common Prayer had been so amended as to avoid the view that everyone baptized was there and then regenerate or that there was a sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection for everyone who was buried. In the event, not only were these requests not met but proof of having

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52. *Works*, IV, 186-90; cf. III, 319. His Evangelicalism did not blind him to virtues in other traditions; he regarded Arnold as a clear thinker (*Works*, I, 134), and he maintained a friendship with A.C. Tait who was a fellow-student in Glasgow and who became Bishop of London and Archbishop of Canterbury; he was Broad Church rather than Evangelical: Arnot, 465.

53. *Works*, IV, 212.

54. *Works*, IV, 200-202.

received ordination by "the mystic touch of prelacy" was made obligatory for every clergyman, and assent had to be given to the declaration that all things in the Book of Common Prayer were consistent with the Word of God. Even more vindictive was the timing of the enforcement of the Act of Uniformity; the August date ensured that the nonconforming clergy were deprived of the whole year's stipend from tithes which was due in September.<sup>55</sup>

Just as many were reluctant nonconformists in 1662 so was Hamilton in 1862. He had a high regard for many Anglican clergy, thousands of whom were "amongst the most estimable of the sons of men" and were "pleasant companions, large-minded scholars, warm-hearted Christians, fair and open disputants", but who, when they came together officially, submerged their generous impulses under a stiff and stately churchmanship; listening to many of them in Convocation, it was hard to see inside the "pasteboard colossus" a good Christian. When the Church of England took notice of other Christians its salutation was so statuesque and icy as to induce rigours and a shivering ague and at times it was hard to see whether the Church of England was making for "the enchanted shores of popery" or for the "breakers of rationalism". Yet, Hamilton confessed that he had "a sincere and somewhat anxious affection" for the Church of England:

I like to see the parish church with the turfy mounds around it where, under the yew-tree shadows, the fathers of the hamlet sleep; and when the pastor is a true father in Christ, I scarcely know a spectacle more touching than the resort of a united people to such a sanctuary — through lanes balmy with blossom and in the minstrelsy of mellow chimes made yet more sabbatic — the peer from the parkgate, the labourer from the lodge, the lone widow from the almshouse, and, at the head of his rosy cavalcade, the yeoman tramping sturdily, all going to the house of God in company. And I own the spell of the mighty minster, the shrine where the faded centuries still linger, the axis round which revolve the ecclesiastical annals of provinces or kingdoms.

And, whether it is in College chapel or Cathedral choir, I love to hear, in words as old as Ambrose, to music old as Gregory, the daily anthem ascending, till, in melodious agony, floor and roof vibrate together, and traffic, hearing the hallalujah, bates its breath as it hurries by and is hushed into a moment's sacredness.<sup>56</sup>

In such a mood Hamilton numbered himself among "reluctant dissenters" and wished the Church of England would allow what Manton and his colleagues asked for two centuries earlier and "remove the pretensions to a peculiar apostolicity" and concentrate on "the loyalty to the Saviour which supersedes sectarianism" and would leave no room for clerical freethinkers or Jesuit Anglicans; "I wish it; I dare hardly say I hope it". He sensed that though the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishops of London, Norwich and Durham sympathized with this comprehensive aim there were hosts in the Church of England still crying,

55. *Works*, IV, 345-58.

56. *Works*, IV, 361-2.

“Stand firm, bench of bishops”. These hosts demanded the retention of the wedding service which drove many to the registrar’s office or to the dissenting chapels; they demanded the retention of the damnatory clauses in the Athanasian Creed and the commination service for Ash Wednesday: “a little occasional cursing is so comfortable”.<sup>57</sup> The hope of accord was also dampened by the thought that among dissenters his reluctant dissent was a minority position. The majority seemed determined to obliterate Establishments and Hamilton feared that if dissent continued to grow as it had in the previous thirty years the disendowment of the national Churches of England and Scotland must follow.<sup>58</sup>

Hamilton’s attitude to the Church of England was illustrated by his response to a request from Leone Levi, an elder in Regent Square Church, about occasional conformity. Levi was a converted Italian Jew who became an authority on commercial law and an advocate of arbitration as a means of settling international disputes. He was appointed to be the first professor of commerce at King’s College, London, but on condition that he receive communion in the Church of England. Hamilton told him that such an action would not prejudice his position in Regent Square Church; indeed it was a liberal concession on the part of the Church of England to offer him the chair without requiring him to be a confirmed member of the Church of England and Hamilton saw Levi’s acceptance of the invitation to receive communion as a recognition of the Church of England as a true Church of Christ and a practical expression of fraternisation with the Christian brethren within its pale.<sup>59</sup>

Hamilton’s presbyterian detachment from the other Churches in England did not prevent him from encouraging closer relations between members of different Churches. In 1842 he was made convener of a Synod committee to open the way for union with “Evangelical Bodies whose principles are in accordance with our own”.<sup>60</sup> The only organic union which came about through the work of this committee was the union with the presbyterian churches in England which were attached to another of the branches of presbyterianism in Scotland, namely the United Presbyterian Church, and this union took place in 1876 almost a decade after Hamilton’s death. Hamilton, however, had been a key figure in the formation of the Evangelical Alliance in 1846. This was not an alliance of denominations but of individuals in many denominations. Among the factors leading to the formation of the Alliance was the need for a combined witness in the face of Tractarianism within the Church of England, of a new aggressiveness in the Church of Rome, and of a sceptical rationalism. In the early stages of the Alliance there was much excited oratory about Popery and Puseyism but it soon moved to a more positive witness. Hamilton said that the Alliance had members from over fifty denominations and they had come together on the basis of agreed truths, principally the inspiration of the Scriptures, the

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57. *Works*, IV, 359-67: the Archbishop of Canterbury was J.B. Sumner and the bishops of London, Norwich and Durham were, respectively, A.C. Tait, J.T. Pelham and Charles Baring, the latter two being counted as Evangelicals.

58. *Works*, IV, 364-6.

59. Paper in the archives of the United Reformed Church. Article on Levi in *DNB*.

60. *Minutes*, 1842, 32.

Trinity in the Godhead, human depravity, the Incarnation of Christ, the Atonement, and the everlasting span of blessedness and of punishment. This accord was a witness to the catholicity of the Alliance.<sup>61</sup>

Hamilton's concern for unity had a strong theological basis. The Church was already one because of oneness with Christ. "For ages a divided Church has been the lamentation of the holiest of men", and many of its wisest members had sought the healing of its divisions, but most of the methods devised had led to new divisions; legislation, general councils, royal proclamations, agreed platforms had all been unable to heal the breaches.<sup>62</sup> The Evangelical Alliance had shown that without surrender of denominational convictions and without cessation of denominational effort there could be union on the great doctrines of the faith and there were ample tasks to be done in seeking the sheep in the wilderness without breaking into each other's fold.<sup>63</sup> The unity of the Church had not yet come but it would be "the glory of the latter day, the crowning achievement of the Holy Spirit". Such unity as there was in the early Church was only "a moment's sun-blink" and Christians soon became like scorpions in a glass bottle with room only "to fret about and strike their stings into one another". When a unity was enforced in the Middle Ages it was the unity of "sleepers in the funeral vault". At the Reformation room had to be made for the right of private judgement and conscientious conviction and no unity can be achieved if these have to be surrendered. Nor can unity be achieved if sects demand "one font, one surplice, and one service-book". Yet, said Hamilton, when the common ground occupied by the different denominations was examined it made the points of disagreement seem insignificant. He hoped that if members of the various denominations knew each other better they would think more highly of each other and he himself found joy in knowing Episcopalians, Congregationalists, unworldly Moravians, lively Wesleyans, fervent Welsh Methodists, serene Swiss Protestants and practical and business-like Americans. Even more important was the sharing in missionary endeavour; city missionaries in London found their denominational differences wither as they waged war on the hosts of darkness, and missionaries everywhere were drawn together as they faced atheism and unbelief; "the unity of the Church and the conversion of the world are intimately connected". Something of the vision of unity came alive in the May meetings of the missionary societies when glowing reports of advances and martyrdoms were presented and when sermons by the pulpit giants of the day refreshed the faithful and spurred them on to greater effort, but, said Hamilton, "the flush of May meetings are only a truce in the acerbity of denominational rivalries". Unity would have to be more than a mere agglomeration of

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61. *Works*, IV, 113-126, 371-4; VI, 488 & 491.

R. Rouse & S. Neill, *A History of the Ecumenical Movement* London, 1954, 318-324; the Evangelical Alliance was founded in August 1846 and had the support of Merle D'Aubigné of Geneva, Patton of Princeton, John Angell James of English Congregationalism, and Chalmers of Scotland. Its magazine, *Evangelical Christendom*, was said to anticipate the *International Review of Missions*; Hamilton was its editor from 1864 until his death in 1867.

62. *Works*, IV, 113-4.

63. *Works*, IV, 118-22.

nominal Christians and not "a latitudinarianism which surrenders truth for peace, and purity for quiet" and which leaves "that scantling of truth after every man has subtracted the doctrines against which he entertains a prejudice". Such unions would be "a filling of the Charnel-house, a heaping of the compost pile". Proper unity occurred when true believers saw eye to eye and God joined heart to heart and then there would be no triumph of partisanship and no humiliation in concession. At times Hamilton saw his own time as "an ebb-tide period in the Church's history" when the denominations had just enough life to continue in their separate rocky pools but once the tide of the Spirit flooded in again sectarianism would be swept away in the inundation of love and joy.<sup>64</sup>

Turning now from Hamilton's outlook upon the Church, its faith and its divisions, to his outlook upon the world in general and upon the affairs of his time, he shared much of the Victorian mingling of pessimism and optimism, of conservatism and exuberant expectation. His pessimism had its roots in the sombre doctrine of original sin and in the menacing challenge to faith from the inequalities and cruelties of life. He knew the frailty of his own body and he encountered disease in many homes and particularly tuberculosis which he called "the national malady"; many sought relief in the milder Mediterranean climate and a visit to some of these winter refuges was to feel surrounded "by the living dead" where the process of decay was plain to be seen and also an intense craving for recovery; "Is there no antidote to this cruel malady?"<sup>65</sup> Infant mortality was common and he was often called to homes stricken with grief at the loss of a child, but he felt there was a sharp distinction to be made between sudden death and death preceded by long suffering. A child dying at birth or because of a sudden sickness was taken away from this wicked world and this could be seen as a merciful providence but the prolonged suffering and the decay into a long decrepitude was a sore trial of faith since a child so stricken could not be said to have "sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression". Hamilton produced a message of hope from a vivid account of a possible Alpine experience; while crossing a glacier a traveller comes across a chasm and hears in the depths the sound of running water and if the traveller were to descend into the chasm and plunge into the sub-glacial river and undertake a frightful swim under the black resounding vault in a wild and wintry world he would before long see light and would emerge on the green pastures and sunny slopes of Chamonix or the Grindelwald, and that same water which was grimly frozen in the glacier now supplied the Lemane lake and made glad the city of Beza and nourished the olives of the Ardèche and the vineyards of Vaucluse. Likewise, people have to enter the crevice called pain and plunge into the icy stream of suffering as they watch the sorrows of others; "the distribution of diseases and poverty and other forms of calamity is so unequal that we can only account for it by taking refuge in God's sovereignty", and yet it would seem at first glance that if there is a government of infinite rectitude something has gone

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64. *Works*, II, 449-476.

65. *Works*, VI, 151.

wrong and indeed all has gone wrong due to Adam's transgression which tapped "a magazine of woe, a hidden sea of sorrow, and with a deadly exhalation filled the air of earth".<sup>66</sup> In this sin-ruined, wrath-beleagured city the missiles fly and the tender babe was no more sure than the aged transgressor; perils lay in wait for unsuspecting human beings and there was no guarantee of immunity from the fell stroke. People had a duty to be as watchful as they could so as to parry the assaults and one precaution could be to keep in good physical form. Addressing students, Hamilton advised them to get adequate sleep and exercise; if they sat up to do "late night-reading of romances" they would grow nervous and dyspeptic and develop strange hallucinations that Mr Spurgeon did not preach the Gospel, that Lord Palmerston was a Russian spy, or that Dr Cumming, the redoubtable Church of Scotland minister of Crown Court Church, was in the pay of Pope Pius IX. Students need not develop the physique of giants but they could, for example, take a winter walk in search of mosses or go on a butterfly hunt in summer.<sup>67</sup>

Heavy as was the burden of human suffering, Hamilton saw a far heavier burden in human sin. Some, he said, were so entangled in the miry pits of divers lusts and passions that they were doomed to be prisoners in the dungeon of despair; others tried to find a place of escape in the Tower of Carnal Security where they dwelt in "the airy vaults of decency and outward morality" or even in the surrounding gardens where there was a form of godliness and they fancied that "the top story of the devil's stronghold was the state cabin of the vessel bound for Immanuel's land".<sup>68</sup> The state of the world was a witness to "arbitrary and oppressive human nature"; everywhere there was "the music of breaking hearts" and the sighing of "the prisoner whom the despot has doomed"; "from Austrian dungeons and Ural mines the groans of patriots confess the power of tyrants".<sup>69</sup> At home, the rich were extravagant and the poor were improvident; there was the "tyranny of Squires and capitalists" who exploited tenants and workers, and there was the tyranny of workers who compelled their fellow-workers to connive at crime. Social reform was needed but there could be "no faith in any social reform which overlooks the fact that man is a fallen being". Governments had to be as efficient as they could be but they could not "cure the real complaint of the species"; "the plague of society is too virulent for any medicine native to our earth".<sup>70</sup>

On the other hand, Hamilton often echoed the exuberance of his age and shared the excitement over explorations, discoveries, researches, inventions and expanding prosperity. To live in such a society was a finer challenge to Christian obedience than an anchorite's isolation.<sup>71</sup> Hamilton admired the successful men of politics and business and he saw their accumulated wealth and power as a due reward for the responsibilities they bore. The statesman looking out of his

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66. *Works*, VI, 474-483.

67. *Works*, IV, 318-9.

68. *Works*, I, 50; IV, 56-63.

69. *Works*, III, 117.

70. *Works*, I, 458-66.

71. *Works*, III, 331-3.

Belgravian window might envy the coalman heaving coal into the cellars of the great houses because the "grimy giant" soon ended his day and went home to dreamless slumber while the statesman lay awake wrestling with the problems of the nation. The banker might get a tattered boy to carry his portmanteau and the "ragged satellite" would be glad to receive a shilling while the banker would remain burdened by the problems he would give a thousand pounds to solve. The Bible did not teach it was a sin to be rich; it gave honourable mention to Abraham's independence, Nehemiah's hospitalities and Job's charity, and not every beggar was a deserving Lazarus. God did relieve the needy but there had to be prosperous people in a position to be used by God in his work of helping the needy. It was men of wealth who had brought about the emancipation of the slaves and the reform of prisons.<sup>72</sup>

Hamilton was also an eager student of new discoveries and inventions. Astronomy was discovering new galaxies and giving hints of further galaxies yet to be discovered and there were perhaps worlds "at this very moment endeavouring to telegraph across the silent abyss of space".<sup>73</sup> He saw the wonders of his time as the flowering of a Christian civilization vastly superior to earlier Roman, Greek, Chinese and Indian civilizations, "if we may give so grand a name to a grotesque and puerile culture"!<sup>74</sup> Roman civilization had produced a remarkable literary flowering in the musical wisdom of Cicero, the sublime speculations of Lucretius and the sweet voice of Virgil, but along with this there was a fearful depravity. A patrician could writhe with graceful agony over a false note in music and could preside imperturbable over the tortures of a slave or a prisoner, or he could weep over Ovid's epistles and yet gloat on the convulsions of dying gladiators.<sup>75</sup> Britain had reached "the pinnacle of outward advantage", free from the threat of invasion and from internal repression, with the door of opportunity open for a boy to become a More among lawyers, a Latimer among preachers, and a Raleigh among statesmen.<sup>76</sup> Hamilton was thrilled by the evidence of human ingenuity displayed in the Exhibition of 1851 at the Crystal Palace; such a variety of materials with different qualities were, for example, used for human clothing; the silken cravat came from a worm, the hat from a beaver, the broadcloth from a sheep amid the snow of the Cheviots, the boots with soles from a cow, and uppers from a goat, and gloves from the rats of Paris or the kittens of Worcester.<sup>77</sup>

Not all the citizens of Britain would have risen to Hamilton's standard for committed Christians but he held that Christian influence had spread far beyond the bounds of the faithful. Its fruits were seen in hospitals, asylums and orphanages and in the emancipation of the slaves and in a new care for the beasts of the field.<sup>78</sup> Christianity had been "an antidote to the natural cruelty of man" and

72. *Works*, III, 141-3.

73. *Works*, IV, 85.

74. *Works*, II, 77.

76. *Works*, III, 200-201.

77. *Works*, V, 288-9.

78. *Works*, II, 80-81.

had brought to an end the horrors of gladiatorial shows and of bull-baiting. It had smoothed the gothic gruffness of the cross-grained northerners of Europe into something like civility and had been the seed-bed of "the gallant and high-souled courtesy of the age of chivalry".<sup>79</sup> In more recent times its influence had percolated into "that conventional urbanity which makes intercourse so easy and society so pleasant".

Christianity, and, in particular, its renewal at the Reformation, had caused a great outburst of scientific research. The Chinese had indeed outstripped the West in spinning silks and making porcelain, in compiling almanacs and sinking artesian wells while in the west lazy monks were droning masses and feudal barons were knocking out each other's brains, but now the West was brimming with ingenuity. Machines were now able to pump water out of mines and the Davy lamp had removed the peril of fire-damp. In the time of Napoleon France was unable to import sugar but scientists found the answer in sugar-beet. The demand for oil had almost led to the extermination of the whale, but now gas could be produced from coal and still leave valuable coke. Pharmacy had eliminated the need for two-thirds of surgery cases, and surgery could take place without pain.<sup>80</sup> In time the vast stores of hydrogen bound up in the ocean would be released and provide boundless energy. All this made the age "the busiest and most intelligent generation the world has ever seen" and science was "capable of making this age a blessed one".<sup>81</sup>

Hamilton saw all this ingenuity as the gift of God and he was troubled because people rarely credited God with their gifts; they were willing to speak of the God-given instinct of bees in organizing their hives, but they gave the credit for their own ingenuity to their own reasoning powers. Hamilton held that bees had their own kind of reasoning power just as human beings had but in both bees and people it was the gift of God. Hamilton noted how the bee extracted honey from the flower of the fuschia. These flowers were in the form of long pendant tubes which were too long for the haustilla of the bees to reach up to collect the honey, but if the apex of the trumpet is examined it can be seen to be pierced by a tiny perforation; this was the engineering device of the bees to drill a hole to get in at the honey, just as the Chancellor of the Exchequer gets additional revenue by indirect taxation.<sup>82</sup> If this instinctive ingenuity is a gift of God, surely, said Hamilton, human reason can be no less a gift of god.

Hamilton died on 24 November 1867. The Presbyterian Church lost a leader who was loyal to its standards and discipline, but he was also a man of his time. Victorian exuberance jostled in his mind with a sombre view of human perversity. Loyalty to traditional biblical interpretation waged war with the uncomfortable pressure of fresh literary and scientific discoveries and speculations. Denominational assurance was in tension with Christian comprehensiveness. Within half a century, the biblical scene had changed, imperial glory was on

79. *Works*, II, 160.

80. *Works*, IV, 289-300.

81. *Works*, IV, 85-94.

82. *Works*, IV, 279, 281-2.

the wane, and Churches had passed their Victorian numerical zenith, but the story of Hamilton and his teaching and his florid literary imagery recall the earlier age.

R. BUICK KNOX

## REVIEW ARTICLE

### American Evangelicals and the Pursuit of a Teetotal Millennium

*The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition.* By W.J. Rorabaugh. Pp. xvi, 302. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1979, £9.50.

*Sobering Up: From Temperance to Prohibition in Antebellum America, 1800-1860.* By Ian R. Tyrrell. Pp. xii, 350. Greenwood Press, London, 1979, £14.95

*Southern Evangelicals and the Social Order, 1800-1860.* By Anne C. Loveland. Pp. xi, 293. Louisiana State University Press, London, 1980. \$30.00.

*A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837.* By Paul E. Johnson, Pp. ix, 210. Hill and Wang, New York, 1978, paper, \$4.95.

*The American Jeremiad.* By Sacvan Bercovitch. Pp. xvi, 239. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, Wisconsin, 1978, £9.00

Given America's reputation as a hard-drinking society attracted to over-ambitious schemes of alcoholic prohibition, it is curious just how little historians have bothered themselves with the years of the early and middle nineteenth century when that reputation was established. Between 1790 and 1830 Americans drank more alcohol per capita than ever before or since: domestic critics referred repeatedly to their country as "a nation of drunkards"; foreign visitors like Isaac Candler confirmed this picture of heavy drinking Americans, who were "certainly not so sober as the French or Germans, but perhaps about on a level with the Irish." The organised temperance movement that this "veritable national binge" threw up had by the 1850s garnered sufficient popular support to make a marked political impact and secure the passage of prohibitory laws in several states. Gratifyingly, in the last few years a number of able historians have set about remedying this long neglect — hitherto the only serious work on nineteenth-century temperance was John A. Krout's *The Origins of Prohibition* (1925), a scholarly but largely narrative account of the movement — and have collectively given us the sort of well-rounded picture that Brian Harrison has provided for England in his exemplary *Drink and the Victorians* (1971).

W.J. Rorabaugh's splendid book sets out to tell us why Americans of both sexes, in all regions, in all social groups and classes drank so much in the early national period; at its peak in 1830 the annual per capita consumption of distilled spirits, for example, had risen to over five gallons. Rorabaugh uses the techniques of both history and the social sciences to speculate on the factors that lay behind this extraordinary consumption. In large part the burgeoning whisky industry of the early nineteenth century — whisky and hard, or fortified, cider were the two most popular alcoholic beverages of the period — was explained by the huge expansion of grain production in the growing west at this

time when transport remained slow and expensive: surplus grain was better stored and more profitably shipped as spirits. It was only the transportation revolution of the second quarter of the century that allowed an expansion of the grain trade which in turn helped reduce whisky production. As well as being abundant and cheap, strong drink was regarded as healthful and as an aid to digestion. The monotony of the American diet, dominated by corn, pork and greasy foods, and by primitive cooking techniques, found an antidote in the strong flavour and bite of cider and whisky. Rorabaugh, however, is not wholly satisfied with these economic and dietary approaches and offers a psychological explanation of Americans' drinking habits, one which is as attractive as it is speculative. Most historians recognise that the first half century of the new nation's life was marked by dramatic social and economic changes as the country's population grew, shifted and experienced the transition to a national market economy. Rorabaugh contends that it was those social groups most severely affected by these changes that drank most: farm-labourers with dwindling chances of buying their own farm, factory workers, skilled craftsmen for whom the traditional social progression was blocked, clergymen and other professional groups who faced a threat to their social status, lumberjacks, canal builders and other members of a new mobile class that lacked roots and social ties. This is an exciting book, but in the end its major thesis must remain for the present unproven: the correlation between rapid social change and heavy drinking need not constitute a causal relationship.

After 1830 Americans' consumption of alcohol dropped significantly, as drinking came to be seen as a great social evil. If Rorabaugh helps us understand why Americans drank, Ian Tyrrell provides an authoritative and considered study of the energies that went into their kicking the habit. *Sobering Up* examines the antebellum temperance movement through its three major phases from its inception in the 1820s. The early leaders and strongest supporters of the American Temperance Society, formed in 1826, were "upwardly mobile promoters and their evangelical allies" whose efforts were directed largely at the respectable and temperate, not the confirmed drunkard. By exerting a moral power over socially influential distillers, traders and moderate drinkers, temperance reformers expected to achieve much more than by trying to reach the drunkard. Their constituency helped shape their message: only by total abstinence from spirits would moderate drinkers be reclaimed. The position of lower and lower middle-class drunkards could not be indefinitely ignored, however, and it was concern over their plight that produced the Washington self-help societies of the 1840s, composed largely of artisans, both ex-drunkards and lifelong abstainers. The relation of these newer societies to the evangelically-oriented older societies (themselves put under strain by the shift to teetotalism in the 1830s) was never easy, but a combination of reformers from both groups, middle-class evangelicals and artisans, took the crusade into its third, prohibitionist phase in the last 1840s. Not that efforts towards legal coercion were new: there had been, for example, earlier attempts to abolish liquor licensing laws, which seemed to give a shield of respectability to the traffic in the alcoholic

drink. What was new was the attempt to get stricter and more effective state-wide laws; new, too, was the bubbling enthusiasm for this "Maine Law crusade", so called after the successful introduction of prohibition throughout that state in 1851. By 1855 a dozen or so states, largely in the north-east and the west, had followed suit. Tyrrell provides a useful summary rather than a definitive statement of the political impact of these movements which helped shatter an established party system already under strain from the related nativist question; the book concludes with a chapter on the increasingly successful challenge to prohibition, especially through the courts, in the middle and late 1850s.

Prohibition failed, but the temperance movement had been markedly successful in reducing the rate of alcohol consumption. Taken together recent writings tend to offer two compatible explanations for this success. First, they detect significantly stronger support for the movement in those areas of the country, the north-east and parts of the middle Atlantic states and of the mid-west, where industrialisation and the commercialisation of agriculture had moved the fastest; the movement in all its phases was relatively weak in the South. In his impressive case-study of Worcester, Massachusetts, Tyrrell persuasively identifies the strongest supporters of temperance amongst the more innovative and entrepreneurial of the farmers, manufacturers and skilled tradesman, men who as employers regarded drink as inimical to the regular work patterns that the "modern" world demanded. Temperance men were the "improvers" of the new economic order.

Secondly, there is agreement that new attitudes to drinking were shaped by mental changes wrought by the Second Great Awakening, a period of fundamental religious upheaval lasting from the 1790s to the 1840s. Rorabaugh argues not just the conventional wisdom that in a period when men and women displayed a fervent desire for religious salvation, abstinence from alcohol came to be seen as a sign of grace; he also speculates that the Awakening transformed America, that it turned a low-motivated into a high-motivated society by moulding a generation of young Americans who aspired after social success and spiritual growth. Tyrrell, too, emphasises the youth and commitment of the early vanguard of the American Temperance Society and finds in its evangelicalism the source of much of the movement's language and ideology; these reformers saw vividly the eternal consequences of a habit which destroyed the moral sense and self-control on which man's salvation depended. In the South, too, for which we sadly lack any authoritative study of the movement, the churches' view of drink shifted during this period. Anne Loveland's study of the attitudes of Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian ministers on social issues points to their concern about mounting intemperance, especially amongst church members, from the second decade of the nineteenth century onwards; both church-based and non-church-based societies were dominated by evangelicals.

That entrepreneurial improvers and millennialist evangelicals were often one and the same is the thesis of Paul Johnson's deservedly acclaimed study of revivals and society in Rochester, New York. This flour-milling and manufacturing town became the fastest growing community in the United States in the 1820s as it cashed in on transportation changes that allowed the Genesee valley

to become overnight one of the greatest grain-growing regions of the world. The town was dominated from the outset by millers, merchants and master craftsmen, who at first tended to live and work in the same neighbourhoods, and often the same houses, as their employees. But during the 1820s work groups grew in size, and the integrated work and family life of the master and wage-earner dissolved, and workingmen moved into neighbourhoods of their own, noisier and less private than those of their masters. Johnson sees this as the context and the explanation of the emergent temperance reform. Up to 1850, when master and wage-earner worked and drank together in household workshops, the temperance question was a non-existent issue. But as proprietors retreated into their middle-class temperate domestic economy, so drinking became an autonomous part of working-class social life; the drink, food, and lodging once provided by merchants and masters were now being offered by workingmen's boarding houses. By 1828 temperance reform obsessed the middle-classes, and every old family church contributed leaders to the town's temperance society. Its work, however, was largely ineffectual until the arrival in 1830 of Charles Grandison Finney, the pre-eminent revivalist of his day. Then dramatically, a revival of such potency ensued that it made Rochester's name familiar throughout evangelical circles across the country. It drew disproportionately from the ranks of businessmen and master craftsmen, especially those most directly responsible for the upheaval in the traditional relationship between classes; it generated a sense of an impending millennium and the christianisation of the world; it drew many workingmen into the churches; it gave unprecedented energy to the temperance campaign. The revivals of 1830 and the years following melted the class lines of the late 1820s and gave temperance reform a potency it had not enjoyed hitherto.

It would, be a mistake to infer that there was a single, coherent evangelical response to the temperance crusade. Evangelicals were at times bitterly divided over the means they should use and the extent to which their opposition to alcohol should be taken. By no means all agreed that separate temperance societies were advisable. The New York editor Nathan Bangs spoke for many when he argued that the churches themselves should be the agencies for effecting changes in drinking habits. His criticisms of separate temperance organisations found an echo in the South where fear of dependence on "human instrumentality" made many convinced non-drinkers fight shy of these essentially "secular" bodies. An even more vigorous debate arose over the demand for legal restrictions on drink. The question of whether community behaviour should be regulated by moral pressure or legal coercion continued to exercise the evangelical mind throughout the antebellum period. The resistance that many put up to prevent the passage of temperance or Sabbath observance laws, for example, reflected both a profound belief in the unfettered operation of moral choice as well as a fear of a clergy-dominated state. When the older temperance societies tussled with the Washingtonian movement on this issue in the 1840s, many Baptist and Methodist workingmen, brought up to be suspicious of Presbyterian and Congregationalist ambitions, would have nothing to do with schemes of legal coercion that smacked of clerical manipulation. Equally there were tensions

every time the movement shifted to a stricter definition of temperance. By no means all churchgoers accepted the call for total abstinence from spirits; where grain production for distilleries continued to hold a central place in the economy, or where spirit drinking played a major cultural role, even church resistance to change was strong. Loveland could perhaps have made more of the place of spirits in the South, where so many church members were involved in the business. And when the shift to teetotalism came in the 1830s and 1840s, its implications for the use of fermented wine in the communion service threw many churches into a paroxysm. Relatively few churches actually switched to unfermented wine, partly for practical purposes — grape juice was difficult to get and preserve — and partly because of the apparent blasphemy of the radicals' position: Gerrit Smith, for instance, urged Americans to forsake the example of Christ, who had lacked the "better knowledge of our times". Such "ultraism" only served to harden many against teetotalism, especially in the South, where the fear of abolitionism engendered a suspicion of all radical reform.

Each of the studies so far mentioned tends to look for the motivation of evangelicals who joined the temperance crusade in the social changes of the early nineteenth century. Rorabaugh and Johnson see the movement as offering a means of cultivating the social stability and emotional maturity necessary for a developing industrial and commercial society. Tyrrell agrees: with the exception of the very early temperance societies, through which Congregational and Federalist conservatives particularly sought to retain their ecclesiastical and political power and the social status quo, temperance men and women generally welcomed the economic changes of the period. (Southern evangelicals seem to have been less enthusiastic.) This emphasis on social control is legitimate enough, provided it is not seen as the sole, nor the principal motivation of evangelical reformers: an ordered society, controlled by evangelical values was only the means by which Americans would fulfil their mission as God's chosen people. Sacvan Bercovitch's elegant interdisciplinary study of the American jeremiad from the earliest Puritan period through to the nineteenth century reminds us of the nation's persistent sense of mission and progress, the high millennial hopes that marked both sacred and secular life. To be sure this is largely a study of Puritan rhetoric, and Bercovitch may be drawing too many conclusions from only one form of evidence. But his book implicitly invites us to put the temperance movement — and indeed all other reforms in the post-Revolutionary period — into the context of Americans' sense of their special destiny. Johnson and Tyrrell help identify the social roots of temperance; Bercovitch shows us its deeper meaning. It is worth recalling Charles Finney's appeal to Protestants during the Rochester revival, that "if they were united all over the world the Millennium might be brought about in three months." Temperance was only a means to an end: the inauguration of Christ's reign on earth.

RICHARD CARWARDINE

## REVIEW ARTICLE

### William Paton and the World Church

*Red Tape and the Gospel: A Study of the significance of the ecumenical missionary struggle of William Paton (1886-1943)*, by Eleanor M. Jackson. Pp. 409. Phlogiston Press. 1980. £15.

As the title suggests, there is more to this "massive biography" (the description is the biographer's — p. 311) than the life story of "Bill" Paton. It traverses some well-explored territory, notably the great days of the Student Christian Movement, the origins of the International Missionary Council and the movements which led up to the formation of the World Council of Churches in the post-war period. But a measure of freshness is provided by the way in which Paton's personal story is shown as being deeply involved in the history of these institutions. It might be said that Paton's career is used by the biographer as a convenient peg on which to hang a study of the missionary and ecumenical movements of the first half of the twentieth century.

The book is elaborately documented (as one would expect of a Ph.D. thesis), there being 85 pages of notes, appendices and index. The notes do not contribute much to the reader's understanding or enjoyment of the book. But of course they will be a boon to anyone in future who wants to take further any of the matters discussed — provided they have the same access to the documents that the author had.

Yet out of the midst of all this detail there emerges a recognisable picture of an extraordinarily competent, hardworking and dedicated ecclesiastical statesman, with a strong personal faith in Jesus as Lord, with a sense of missionary urgency to share the gospel which had shaped his own life, and a vision of a united church which has yet to be translated into reality. His concern for people is seen at every point: in his sympathy with the demands of Indian nationalists for independence, in the support he procured for "orphaned missions" in the war years, in the help he offered to European missionaries interned in India, in his efforts to counter anti-semitism and to give practical help to Jewish refugees from Germany, and in his work for aliens and prisoners of war.

There is an element of *déjà vu* in the long account of the work of the I.M.C. with its debates on the integration of church and mission, on the value of other religions and on missionary obligation, and in the description of the integration of the Life and Work and Faith and Order movements which ultimately (after Paton's death) led to the formation of the W.C.C. The discussion could sometimes have been shortened, as for example on the problem of setting up Tambaram 1938, the difficulties encountered with missionary societies, with indigenous churches, with the "theme" of the conference, and with the South African delegates. But it is remarkable that one man played such a decisive part in all these events, being secretary of the I.M.C., and serving the W.C.C. in its "provisional" state for the five years up to his death.

Having read the book I am still left in some doubt as to why it was entitled "Red tape and the Gospel". Paton, willingly or otherwise, was a bureaucrat, and the title may be meant to suggest that in spite of all the red tape he was involved in with church and mission bodies, with civil services and government departments, he still managed to preach to gospel. Or it may be a reminder that the

Christian mission is not conducted in a vacuum, but East and West have to take into account ecclesiastical establishments, organised society, national and international interests. Certainly for anyone bothered by bureaucracy, Paton's methods offer a technique worth emulating: "He learnt how to use red tape to tie other people in knots and even to construct a noose for them to hang themselves in" (p. 130).

As an ex-student and teacher at Westminster College, Cambridge, I was surprised that so little reference is made to Westminster College as being in any way a formative influence in the thinking of one who spent three years doing his basic theological studies there. John Skinner, Principal during Paton's time at the college (1908-1911), is referred to (p. 62) as his "mentor" in the area of the Christian attitude to war, contributing to the development of Paton's thinking from pacifism to "political realism". But Skinner is also credited (or dis-credited) with being in part responsible for Paton's lack of any real doctrine of the Church in his early days in the S.C.M. "Judging from Skinner's writings the subject would not be given much prominence on the Westminster College syllabus" (p. 298). But why make such a generalisation on the basis of a study of Skinner only? Skinner was an outstanding Old Testament scholar of his day, and one would agree that for him ecclesiology would be a low priority in theological studies. But on the staff at Westminster at the time were John Oman, whose book *The Church and the Divine Order* (1911) suggests that he understood the relevance of the Church; also P. Carnegie Simpson whose *Church Principles* is still a classical expression of the reformed doctrine of the Church (followed up later by *The Evangelical Church Catholic*); and finally C.A. Anderson Scott who wrote on *The Church: its Worship and Sacraments*. If Paton lacked an adequate concept of the Church until later in life, it was not because of, but rather in spite of, his theological training in Westminster College.

As one brought up in the Presbyterian Church of England tradition, as Paton also was, I find a few of the statements of the book surprising, to say the least. On the fly-sheet, Paton is described as "an ecclesiastical statesman from Scotland". In fact, he was born in London; his father was an elder and he himself a member of St. George's Presbyterian Church, Croydon; he was educated in Oxford and Cambridge, ordained in the Presbyterian Church of England, worked in England, India and the Continent, but never in Scotland. Does the misstatement reflect the view, apparently still held in some quarters, that there are no Presbyterians except in Scotland?

On page 25 occurs the extraordinary statement: "It is an admitted fact that spiritual leadership was not required of elders in the Presbyterian tradition". The period under review is around 1900. Perhaps at that date the elders of St. George's, Croydon, were failing in their duty, though more than a vague "it is admitted" would be required to convince me that that was the case. But to make such a generalisation about elders in the Presbyterian tradition is to misrepresent the facts and perhaps to do a disservice to ecumenism in our day. For if there is one thing more than another that Presbyterianism has to offer to a uniting Church, it is the fine tradition of spiritual leadership exercised by its elders. Anglicans profess to look forward to the day when they can share in and experi-

ence that spiritual leadership by lay men and women in the Church. Are we to tell them that their hopes are dupes and that the eldership never has been what it was intended to be?

Finally, on p. 323 the suggestion is made that "the English Presbyterian hierarchy did not appreciate Paton". I would reverse the charge and suggest that Paton, in virtue of his work for the world church, grew away from his origins in English Presbyterianism. Indeed, on p. 320 it is stated that the "official Presbyterian Church had become too narrow for him". But Presbyterians have always felt a glow of pride in remembering him as one of the outstanding Church leaders of his age. It is not without significance that the picture of Paton on the dust cover of the book is a replica of the enlarged photograph which hangs in Westminster College.

A.G. MACLEOD

## REVIEWS

*The New Oxford Book of Christian Verse*. Edited by Donald Davie. Oxford University Press, 1981. £7.95.

It is forty-one years since Oxford's earlier *Book of Christian Verse*, so they and Professor Davie cannot be accused of indecent haste in producing a new one. What is most refreshing about Professor Davie's selection is that he is emphatic that there can be as much artistry in the "plain style" of the great hymnwriters as in the more elaborate manner more often thought of as poetic. Just over eight pages of Watts, sixteen of Wesley — this is lavish, and it is satisfying to see the place of these poets in the canon rightly insisted upon.

Who has been squeezed to allow for this generosity? Professor Davie admits to giving pride of place to Herbert, Vaughan, Smart and Cowper (there is more of the latter two than we should expect). Donne is compressed a bit, but not too severely; Dunbar, to my way of thinking; Blake; and Hopkins . . . but this is an endless game. Not the least pleasure of Professor Davie's selection is the occasional truly off-beat item, such as the one poem here by the spirited Isaac Hann (previously unknown to me), beginning

Devil! I tell thee without nubbs or jubbbs,  
Thou were no match at all for Catherine Stubbs.

Inevitably, it is the beginning and the end of a chronologically arranged anthology which are most revealing. The beginning of this one is rather tentative, with wholesale "translation" of poems even as late as the thirteenth century; was anything so sweeping necessary? The twentieth century is handled with much more confidence. No one can expect an anthology to include every favourite, and everyone must be pleased to make new acquaintances. I should have liked more Elizabeth Jennings, though; and above all, more David Jones. If Langland, equally difficult of access, can be anthologized, so surely can Jones — a service to potential readers of this great but seldom-attempted poet. But one cannot but be grateful to Professor Davie for a stimulating choice of poems and (in the valuable introduction) an equally stimulating defence of the choice.

ANN PHILLIPS

*The Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture.* By William J. Abraham. Pp. 126, Oxford University Press, 1981, £9.50.

The author writes as an avowed evangelical who has become dissatisfied with the modern conservative evangelical doctrine of inspiration. He traces the error to a confusion between divine inspiration and divine revelation. A more satisfactory theory of inspiration would be closely related to the normal meaning of the word in other contexts, as when a teacher is said to inspire his pupils: thus the act of inspiration is not separate from God's acts in general, and the writers retain their individuality and propensity to error. The authority of the Bible, however, is grounded in the quite distinct fact of divine revelation by speech acts, recorded in the Bible. Dr Abraham asserts that his views are in line with the older evangelical tradition which goes back to Wesley and the Reformers.

This book is well-written and persuasive, but it will have little impact. There is little new in it for the "liberal" believer, while the conservative constituency to which he appeals will undoubtedly disown him. Their clinging to inerrancy is not the result of an intellectual mistake, as Dr Abraham appears to think: it is the expression of a social and psychological need. It is the source rather than the result of their doctrine of inspiration, which will hold sway as long as there are evangelicals who need the Bible to be inerrant.

WALTER HOUSTON

*Scottish Methodism in the Early Victorian Period: The Scottish Correspondence of the Rev. Jabez Bunting 1800-57.* Edited by A.J. Hayes, and D.A. Gowland. pp. viii, 144, Edinburgh University Press, 1981, £8.00.

This appropriately illustrated and helpfully annotated volume rounds off the publication, undertaken by W.R. Ward and here completed by A.J. Hayes and D.A. Gowland (whose *Methodist Secessions*, Chetham Society, Manchester, 1979, should be noted by readers of the *Journal*), of selections from Jabez Bunting's correspondence, surely one of the most valuable enterprises in Methodist historical scholarship. Here is an important contribution to our understanding both of *British Methodism* and of the Reformed world north of the Border. English readers will find it made abundantly clear that while Methodism comes in many shapes, each of them indefinably Methodist, not one is in itself "Methodist". For Reformed readers there will be an added fascination: in Scotland, in contrast to England and Wales, there was no empty territory between Establishment and Dissent, ripe for a Methodist occupation; and Scottish Methodism was bravely, apostolically, often exasperatingly weak. In Scotland the religious (and therefore the political and cultural) Establishment continued in a genuinely national dimension the ideal polity of Medieval Christendom, and that Establishment was sufficiently self-confident to contain methodising tendencies, even to cope with the unchurched forces of an industrialising society. And that Establishment was Reformed. Scottish Methodism had its options defined by Scottish Presbyterianism; that was the system against which Methodism had to measure itself in Scotland.

Indeed, even Presbyterianism's bewildering proneness to secession and disruption rather strengthened the image of a secure Kirk. Bunting's Scottish correspondence is naturally an interesting commentary on the events leading to the Disruption of 1843; but the Scottish Methodists were as uncertain of the Free Church as they were of the Established Church. As an Edinburgh supernumerary, John McLean, reflection upon Established, Free and United Presbyterians, put in 1855:

"... of course I am too established a Wesleyan to suppose that the scriptures made . . . any . . . detail of church arrangement, imperative, except where the prosperity of the work of God demands. The reality of a *visible* Church, should I think be carefully kept up, along with the reality (not of an *invisible* Church, as our Calvinist friends are too apt at once to run the thing to) — but of a *spiritual* and *converted* church such as I believe we have; visibly embodied in our own beloved and precious Methodist Societies."

But when system meets system . . .

This ideological dilemma, the incompatibility of the extremes of Methodism and Calvinism, was equally capable of transmission across the generation and out to the mission frontier. Scholars of the Bible Christians will recall Sam Pollard, temporarily cooped up in 1887 in a China Inland Mission station on the Yangtze: "... their rank Calvinism and persistent longing for our blessed Lord to come and do the Emperor, I don't like. These ideas must necessarily influence all their methods of work. I don't want Christ to come down to reign as an Emperor. Let us have the meek and lowly Jesus as our King until the world is won, and when we leave here let us enter into the other Kingdom". Pollard could overcome his disgruntlement with a noisily triumphant — and sweaty — all-night prayer meeting, and take off to the freed spirit's open places; Wesleyans in Scotland had to wear their rue with a difference.

ALAN CASS

*Belmont's Portias: Victorian Nonconformists and Middle-class Education for Girls.* By Clyde Binfield. Pp. 35, Dr. Williams's Trust, 14 Gordon Square, London, 1981, 80p.

In this lecture for the Friends of Dr Williams's Library, Dr Binfield explores what is a little-known tract of territory — for most of us think of Victorian female education as largely a matter of languages, arts and deportment, "finishing" what had never begun. Dr Binfield leads off with the Congregational minister Benjamin Parsons, who set out in his writings in the eighteen-forties "to prove satisfactorily that the minds of women are equal to those of men" and who moreover declared in print, "I write not for ladies but for women."

The tension between an ideal of womanhood which saw women as never needing to work, and an economic situation which meant that often they must, provoked from the eighteen-forties onwards the foundation of new girls' schools; and as Dissent was to some extent socially isolating, Dissent accordingly set up for its daughters schools of its own.

Dr Binfield traces the fascinating story of the proliferation of Nonconformist schools and colleges up to the founding of Milton Mount in 1871. Dover, for example, had not only the "Belmont" of the title but also the Misses Haddon's — a school with its eye on Cambridge, and careers. "Sensibly ladylike women were the aim" — but they were women, not ladies, still.

Such is Dr Binfield's rich awareness of all the connections and inter-connections of Nonconformists — by marriage, by teaching, by ministry, by trade — that to read him is at times like standing at the foot of a waterfall of names. But his waterfall proves Benjamin Parsons's view of the importance of pure water ("where baths cannot be obtained, a sponge might be useful"); and the impact leaves one braced, not numbed, and eager for more from Dr Binfield on this subject.

ANN PHILLIPS

*The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Sunday.* By John Wigley. Pp. viii, 216. Manchester University Press, 1980, £14.50.

Luther and Calvin were above criticism among the Evangelical Protestants of nineteenth-century Britain, except in one important respect: they had failed to hallow the sabbath. Since the sixteenth century there had developed a sturdy tradition of Sunday observance peculiar to the English-speaking world. That tradition, usefully considered in the first chapter of Dr Wigley's book, was one of the reasons why Sunday was treated so punctiliously by a high proportion of the population during the Victorian age. The other chief reason, according to Dr Wigley, was sabbatarian pressure from Evangelicals that reached a crescendo in the 1850s, decayed from the 1870s, revived in the Edwardian years and was reduced to the rump of the Lord's Day Observance Society (L.D.O.S.) after the First World War. While touching on popular habits — the way Sunday was actually spent — the author has concentrated on discussing this sabbatarianism, together with its ramifications in politics and the resistance it provoked.

He makes a number of telling points. Sabbatarianism, he shows, was normally directed against Sunday recreation and travel rather than against Sunday labour. Both recreation and travel could be classed as voluntary; labour might be justified as necessary. The motive behind sabbatarianism was not the humanitarian one of protecting the workers from exploitation but the more narrowly religious one of freeing the nation from the sin of sabbath-breaking. The movement was not primarily a Nonconformist cause: the support for the L.D.O.S. came almost entirely from the Church of England. Nor, the author argues, was it intimately associated with the temperance movement: the L.D.O.S. endorsed mealtime opening and off sales at public houses on Sunday. Sabbatarianism, he claims, was a phenomenon of the middle classes, helping to confirm their superiority to the profligate working people. Here, perhaps, there is most room for doubt about the author's case. Although L.D.O.S. members may have been middle-class, this small group (there were never more than 3,000 members of all the sabbatarian societies put together) does not fairly represent the extent to which the Evangelicalism that was the vehicle of sabbatarianism had permea-

ted the upper strata of the working classes. Observance of the sabbath was a condition of respectability, but respectability was as much the goal of skilled artisans as it was the possession of the professionals who largely composed the L.D.O.S.

It is refreshing that Dr Wigley has drawn not only on such sources as Hansard, Parliamentary Papers and L.D.O.S. records but also on literary allusions to the use of Sunday. He is particularly sensitive to the difficulties of Evangelical Nonconformists who wished the sabbath to be observed but did not wish the state to enforce it. And he has included brief appendices on the sabbath issue in Scotland and in Wales and another on the tangled legislation on the subject. Altogether he has written a study of the Sunday question in the nineteenth century that is much more thorough than anything previously in print.

D.W. BEBBINGTON

*Politics and the Churches in Great Britain 1832 to 1868.* By G.I.T. Machin. Pp. viii, 438, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1977, £15.00.

The modern English churchman cannot complain at the variety or quality of the history that has been published around him in the past twenty five years and especially in the past ten. Hagiography is out, and in its place is sociology, or rather a judicious shading from the political into the social and thence into the sociological. Victorian England especially has come into its own, although there are signs that Britain between the Wars is about to burst among us.

A rehearsal of sample scholarship is instructive. Horton Davies's five decker brought *Worship and Theology in England* up to 1965. Single deckers have dealt with denominations (John Bossy on English Catholics to 1850; Elizabeth Isichei on Victorian Quakers; David Thompson on the Churches of Christ up to yesterday); or areas (what Wickham began on Sheffield now includes Obelkevich, Everitt, Moore, McLeod, Yeo, on Lincolnshire and Durham, London and Reading); or issues (Laqueur on Sunday Schools). Methodist history is in its prime. For politics we have Stephen Koss and now David Bebbington on the Nonconformists and their consciences. For politics shading downwards into society there have been for some time Inglis, Jones and Mayor on churches and labour (big or small L). On Church and Society there are Edward Norman's naughty tract in the grand manner ranging from 1770 to 1970 and Kitson Clark's undervalued *Churchmen and the Condition of England*, restricted to 1832-1885; and both of them restricted to Anglicanism. Alan Gilbert's very different *Religion and Society in Industrial England* pushes us back to 1740 (but stops at 1914) and ranges beyond the Establishment. There remain the two deckers: Owen Chadwick on the *Victorian Church*; Michael Watts, whose *Dissenters* up to the French Revolution is the first dose; and Dr. Machin, whose *Politics and the Churches* is also a first dose.

Such a survey suggests the dual value of Dr. Machin's book. It fits usefully into the interstices of a generously covered area; it stands in its own right as a contribution to scholarship. The subject precludes facile reading, yet the style is admirably clear, and there is an especially helpful scene-setting. This displays the

differing views as to the proper nature and scope of a national church (was it a Whiggish convenience or a Tory essential?) and the ways in which those who dissented from it were necessarily constrained by law. This book is, in part, a narrative trundle through ecclesiastical politics. This is not to be rude, because nowadays narrative trundles are too frequently replaced by thematic jet-setting, and yet they provide the detail that we need to know and too often cannot find. Dr. Machin's excellence lies in his ability to point up the various stages of his trundle.

In an ordered industrial society change must mean statutory change. Where that society has an established church, especially if both are based on property (and in Britain's case there are two established churches), ecclesiastical change means statutory change. That means politics. Dr. Machin strikingly demonstrates the extent to which church affairs not just irritated but dominated parliamentary business in the Ages of Reform and Equipoise. Because Westminster represented four nations, Dr. Machin does what church historians fear to do: he displays the church concerns of Ireland, Wales and especially Scotland.

The heroes of the book, therefore, are less the Edward Mialls and the Henry Richards (or the Beresford Hopes) than the Prime Ministers. Lord John Russell plays a curiously pivotal role. It is odd to reflect that his Ecclesiastical Titles Bill of 1851, in reaction to the "Papal Aggression" whose immediate effect was to turn the Duke of Norfolk into an Anglican and whose latest out-working is Basil Hume, was the last measure of religious discrimination between denominations passed by a British government. The book's first hero is Robert Peel, whose Anglican intensity, recently examined by Boyd Hilton, is, I think underestimated by Dr. Machin. The dominant figure, however, is the slowly unmuzzling Gladstone. In 1841 a Unitarian M.P. groaned: "What an insult to the Commercial interests and the friends of free trade to have a negro driver appointed a Vice President of the Board of Trade". In 1859 J.J. Colman, then still a Baptist and not yet an M.P., felt much the same. By 1868 all had changed. Here now was the disestablisher of the Irish Church, the breakfast with Dissenting parsons, the object of peculiar fascination for Free Churchmen, although it will be for Dr. Machin's next volume to suggest his particular rapport with Scottish Free Churchmen, their ministers Gladstonian Liberals almost to a man, in sharp contrast to the Church of Scotland. Dr. Machin unpacks this well, paying due attention to Gladstone's unique fusion of conviction and expediency, not least in his religious see-sawing with Disraeli.

One thing is clear, the theme of Dr. Machin's next volume cannot be what in fact it is for this one, the best way for Government to secure, as Gladstone put it, "the greatest holiness of the greatest number".

J.C.G.B.

*The Nonconformist Conscience: Chapel and Politics, 1870-1914.* By D.W. Bebbington, Pp. 193, Allen & Unwin, London, 1982, £10.00.

Nonconformity has in recent years begun to receive the concentrated attention of historians. D.M. Thompson, Clyde Binfield and Stephen Koss are among those who have thrown a flood of light on Victorian and twentieth-

century Nonconformity, with a detachment and professionalism some of the older denominational historians lacked. A corpus of work has now appeared which can stand comparison with the scholarship long applied to Puritanism and earlier Dissent.

Dr. Bebbington offers a systematic survey of Nonconformist involvement in politics in his period, so providing an inverse sequel to Koss's *Nonconformity in Modern British Politics*, with a decade of overlap.

It is a mark of the change which has come over Free Church historiography since Victorian times that Dr. Bebbington, though himself a Free Churchman, is lukewarm about some of the least of the causes promoted by Nonconformists and often critical of their methods. On disestablishment, social problems and the Free Church Council movement he covers ground already relatively familiar, drawing heavily on personal memoirs and on the religious press. Perhaps the most valuable part of his work is his study of the Free Churches and Irish Home Rule and his chapter entitled "The Role of Britain in the World", with its revelation of the extent to which Nonconformists sometimes succumbed to the temptations of imperialism.

The safest generalization one can venture is that no generalization is safe. While some Nonconformists consistently, and most at times, were enthusiastic supporters of Home Rule, the Irish Roman Catholics were never very welcome allies, and the Parnell case, from which the notorious phrase Dr. Bebbington adopts as the title originates, dealt the alliance a fatal blow. International affairs in some ways posed an even sharper challenge. Essentially Nonconformists tended to see issues in simple terms — things were either right or wrong. But international crises were (and are) rarely definable without unwelcome complexities.

Nonconformity had an almost pathetic anxiety to be found on the side of righteousness; but on very many issues, though not all, there is no such side. Virtue and sin do not split on party lines. Radical movements, Christian and other, are still learning that lesson. The story of the Nonconformist Conscience is valuable reading for them.

STEPHEN MAYOR