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EDITORIAL

Our three articles fall into a general category. The argument of each is perhaps unexpected, certainly uncomfortable. Professor R. Buick Knox's paper was the Society's Annual Lecture for 1983, delivered at Northern College, Manchester (as it must now be called), as the centrepiece of a highly successful study day. This was the second such day to be organised by the society. Dr Brown's article is a stimulating extension of his contribution on the Congregational ministry, which we published a year ago. Dr Mayor's paper continues our policy of occasional transatlantic glances, while injecting an element of debate whose sharpness we welcome. We also take a transatlantic glance to pay tribute to Professor Roland H. Bainton, the distinguished church historian who died recently and whose roots were in English Congregationalism.

We welcome as reviewers Raymond Brown who is Principal of Spurgeon's College, London, and Jack Garside who is minister at Horsham.

THE BISHOPS AND THE NONCONFORMISTS IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The reign of Elizabeth I was a sparkling era when she presided with superb delicacy over a country bursting with expansive energy, and her policy was vindicated by the crowning mercy of the dispersion of the Spanish Armada, a victory which also neutralized the force of papal threats. At least, that is how it looks in the light of hindsight. For Elizabeth herself her days and nights must have been filled with apprehensions and uncertainties. Resurgent Tridentine Catholicism abroad and sinister papal plots at home were a constant anxiety, and if that was not enough there was a widespread and persistent campaign for a more thorough reform of the Church of England to bring it into line with what were regarded as the best continental models of a reformed church, particularly that in Geneva. To give way to this agitation would, in the Queen's view, have made the Church less likely to embrace the majority of the population and would have further widened the divisions within the country. Moreover, it would have made the government more susceptible to the pressure of ministers of an aggressively Protestant turn of mind, and Elizabeth was determined that she would not be the prisoner of any clerical party, indeed not even of her own episcopate.

The sovereign had always had a great influence in the appointment of bishops in England, and at the Reformation the power to appoint bishops was formally vested in the Crown and there were critics who looked upon the Tudor bishops as state officials. In practice, this royal absolutism was limited; bishops had to be chosen from the available clerical talent, and it is to the credit of the Crown that many of those chosen were not obsequious non-entities but gifted men with a sense of pastoral responsibility. Elizabeth chose the majority of her bishops from those who had gone into exile in the time of Queen Mary. They were men of firm character and sound learning and they had been deeply influenced by the faith and order of the reformed churches on the Continent and had a sympathy for the demands for a further reform of the Church of England. In the end they were able to achieve little which was contrary to the policy of the Queen and of Archbishop Parker, but they were far from being royal puppets. None went so far as Archbishop Grindal in resisting the Queen's commands, but there were few who did not think that they had a calling from God and were not mouthpieces of royal policy.¹

Bishops often found it to go against their personal inclinations when they had to discipline clergy who advocated ecclesiastical changes with which they had some sympathy but which were contrary to the Queen's commands. Many of the agitators made it easy for the bishops to tolerate them by stressing the points on which they knew the bishops would agree, namely the need for more effective preaching and for constant resistance to the claims of the Church of Rome. They were as eager to retain their livings as the bishops were eager not to have to eject them. By artful evasions many clergy retained

1. P. Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants* (Oxford, 1982), ch. 1, and pp. 22, 29.

their positions in the Church, even under the primacy of so zealous an advocate of conformity as Archbishop Whitgift. Professor Collinson and Dr Peter Lake have recently emphasized the range of diverse practices which were able to shelter within the Church of England.² It is probable that there was a greater potential for fission due to the puritan movement than these scholars acknowledge, and indeed Collinson himself in one of his excellent miniatures has remarked that local and unofficial movements formed a transitional puritanism leading to the Dissent of the seventeenth century. Nevertheless, their emphasis has shown the reluctance of bishops to silence the clergy and of the clergy to be silenced.³

When James I ascended the English throne any hopes that his presbyterian upbringing in Scotland would predispose him to favour the puritan programme were soon dashed. Indeed, it is likely that the puritans had few such hopes. The Millenary Petition which was presented to James on his arrival in England included no demands for changes in the episcopal system but was a plea for greater concern to provide godly preachers and biblically-based ceremonies in the parishes. James made it clear at the Hampton Court Conference that episcopal government would remain and he also managed to get a form of episcopacy reimposed in Scotland. Three Scottish bishops were given an aura of canonical respectability by being brought down to England for consecration. One of the three consecrating bishops was Andrewes of Ely and he raised the point that they had not been episcopally ordained to the priesthood, but he was overruled on the ground that presbytery ordination was acceptable when, as in Scotland, episcopal ordination had not been available.⁴

Andrewes was at that time bishop of Ely and was later translated to Winchester. He has been seen by many as a model Anglican but there were in him, as Professor Elton finds in Thomas More, "consecutive layers of indeterminacy".⁵ A man of elevated devotional and moral principles and of worldly cunning, of occasional eloquence and frequent tedium, of biblical scholarship and harsh partisanship, he worked amicably with the diverse team of scholars which prepared the Authorised Version of the Bible and yet castigated any who suggested that the Book of Common Prayer was not fully in accord with biblical teaching. He enjoyed preaching but was scathing towards those who wanted more and better preaching in the pulpits; it was, he said, "the common error that sermon-hearing is the *Consummatum* of all

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2. Collinson, op.cit.. P. Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (C.U.P., 1982). See the reviews of these two works in previous issues of this *Journal*, May and October, 1983, Vol. 3, Nos. 1 and 2.
 3. P. Collinson, "Cranbrook and the Fletchers", in *Reformation Principle and Practice* (1980), ed. P.N. Brooks, p. 174. Professor George Yule has also stressed that the Puritans assumed they would remain in the Church which they hoped to transform: *Puritans and Politics, 1640-1647* (Sutton Courtenay Press, 1981), ch. 3.
 4. J.H.S. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland* (Oxford, 1960), p. 207.
 5. G.R. Elton, "The Real Thomas More", *Reformation Principle and Practice*, p. 24.

Christianity".⁶ All citizens had a duty to conform to the ordinances prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer; "without ceremonies neither comeliness nor orderly uniformity will be in the Church".⁷ Moreover, if the ecclesiastical hierarchy were to be replaced by government by presbytery, it would only be a short time before monarchy would be replaced by republicanism.⁸

John King, bishop of London, preached at Hampton Court in 1606 in the series of sermons addressed to Scottish representatives to convince them of the merits of episcopacy. King admitted that there had been delinquent bishops in the past but he also held there had been many who adorned their office which had a rightful and essential place in the Church.⁹ In the same series John Buckeridge, President of St John's College, Oxford, and later to become bishop of Rochester, scorned the claims of presbytery to be a "divine and apostolic institution" and he marvelled at the readiness of so many to "so greedily drink down this delicate wine of human plausible invention".¹⁰ As for the reluctant conformists who agitated against prescribed ceremonies he expressed great disgust; he was particularly incensed by those whose pride made them refuse to kneel at the Sacrament: "Good God, is it idolatry to kneel at God's Table?". Abraham and many biblical figures fell on their faces before the Lord and Jesus himself fell upon his face in the Garden.¹¹

The record of William Laud as the hammer of nonconformity needs no amplification and yet it is important to note the regret and apprehension which by times are found in his words; he regretted that "too many of us priests" were guilty of troubling the waters of Church and State and he quoted Calvin whom he classed among the learned in support of his position:

He which will order his prayers aright must begin not with himself but at "Dominus ecclesiae corpus conservet."¹²

His apprehensions about the future come out in his admission that were it not for Christ's promise that the gates of hell would not prevail against the Church "I should think it is, as the world takes it for, a house of butter against the sun".¹³

Joseph Hall, after being dean of Worcester, became bishop of Exeter in 1627 and was translated to Norwich in 1641; he had some sympathy with the agitation against the existing order and he took the risky course of urging controversialists to put "a charitable construction on each other's acts and intentions".¹⁴ He said unjust aspersions were too common; strict and peace-

6. Lancelot Andrewes, *Works* (Anglo-Catholic Library, 1841-54), V, 202

7. *Ibid*, V, 60

8. *Ibid*, IV, 306

9. J. King, *The Fourth Sermon preached at Hampton Court* (1606), p. 9

10. J. Buckeridge, *A Sermon at Hampton Court before the King's Majesty* (1606), pp. 15, 23

11. J. Buckeridge, *A Sermon before his Majesty at Whitehall* (1617), pp. 5, 8

12. W. Laud, *Works* (Anglo-Catholic Library, 1847-60), I, 28; see also 49

13. *Ibid*, I, 111

14. J. Hall, *Works* (ed. P. Wynter, 1863), V, 516

able men were branded as puritans; puritans were branded as hypocrites; a man freer in his way of life was called a libertine; a scrupulous man was called a schismatic; an observer of traditional ways was called "a time-serving formalist". In 1641 as the tensions increased Hall still hoped it would be possible to wean moderate critics from their association with the anti-episcopal campaign and he urged that the fairest interpretation be put upon the aims of those seeking ecclesiastical changes.¹⁵ Even in 1644 he ventured to preach in Norwich and to lament "our uncharitable censures of each other".¹⁶ He grieved that many whom he believed had the true fear of God in their hearts were divided on "some collateral matters".¹⁷ Yet for all his charity, Hall did not approve of the campaign against the Church; schism was a grievous offence, and it was pathetic to see the Church bleeding over "these apples of strife".¹⁸ Desirable as was earnest preaching, "too many pulpits were full of curious affectations of new quirks of wit, new crotchets of conceit, strange mixtures of opinions, insomuch as the old and plain forms were grown stale and despicable".¹⁹

John Hacket, who was to become bishop of Lichfield at the Restoration, was in the thirties a celebrated preacher in his pulpit at St Andrew's Church in Holborn. He had no doubt that preaching was a vital means of grace: "Negligent silence in pastors is a stifling of the grace of God".²⁰ "A pastor without a tongue is but an idle shepherd".²¹ Nevertheless he was a severe critic of those who were agitating for even more sermons; he felt there was sufficient provision already and he said it was only a pretended discipleship which was not "content with a moderate measure of heavenly manna in a fit proportion to digest it".²² In England religion was well planted and what was needed was obedience to the precepts already set forth in many sermons. More sermons could be counter-productive in their impact:

Too much familiarity breeds contempt, but, excepting some special occasions, I would make it Sunday's religion. A stomach overcharged is more prone to crudities than good digestion.

A seasonable rain enricheth the earth with store, but when showers come fast one after another the fruits of the field are spoiled with must and rottenness.²³

Robert Sanderson, the Restoration bishop of Lincoln, was horrified by the agitation which led to the Civil War. Preachers and pamphleteers "like the frogs of Egypt croak in every corner of the land" and poured scorn on the

15. J. Hall, *Works* (ed. P. Wynter, 1863), V, 530-1

16. *Ibid.*, V, 573

17. *Ibid.*, V, 581

18. *Ibid.*, V, 31

19. *Ibid.*, V, 202

20. J. Hacket, *A Century of Sermons* (ed. with Life by T. Plume, 1675), p. 86

21. *Ibid.*, 664

22. *Ibid.*, 943

23. *Ibid.*, 472

Church's ceremonies such as the making of the sign of the cross, kneeling at the Sacrament and wearing vestments; these were customs ordained by lawful authority for the sake of "order, comeliness and uniformity" and were indeed "things indifferent".²⁴ Objections were therefore a trifling about trifles by men whom Sanderson sadly noted should have known better; many of them were godly men whom he respected and he appealed to "the learned sort of my brethen" to cease from strife.²⁵ Some of these brethren, he said, complained that because of their attitude to what were admittedly indifferent matters they were ridiculed as precisians and puritans, and he granted that many of them may have had to endure unfair mockery but it was not wholly misapplied to them because they were somewhat arrogant in "offering themselves into every pulpit before they were sent for, running from town to town";²⁶ they were idolising their own inventions which had strands of "ignorance, hypocrisy and partiality".²⁷ Sanderson claimed that even if "everything is not point-wise as we would have fancied to ourselves it should be" it was still possible to enjoy the Gospel in England and it was tragic that sincere men should deprive themselves of the opportunity to preach because of stubbornness over indifferent things.

No comparable sympathy for the agitators was shown by John Cosin who became bishop of Durham at the Restoration and was a firm administrator of the law on conformity, though it should also be noted that while in exile in France he had close links with the Huguenots. However, his verdict on nonconformists in England was clear:

They crept into office, nobody knows how, and so overweening of their own worth that the Church shall never need to trouble herself for the matter to call them or send them, for they are upon their journey long ago; they send themselves and can preach, order, rule and govern or do anything ye will have them do better than all the mitred bishops.²⁸

Bishops in the Church of Ireland had to apply a similar policy of conformity but this was an impossible task in the face of a numerically overwhelming majority of Roman Catholics. In such a situation, there was a readiness to accept assistance from all who would help the minority Church to survive. A number of presbyterian ordinands from Scotland had managed to infiltrate into the pulpits of parish churches. Accommodating bishops had taken part in ordination services which they could defend as episcopal ordinations while the presbyterians were able to satisfy themselves that they had been ordained by presbytery. These ministers were zealous in their pastoral work and were welcomed by many as allies in the struggle for survival. However, they sat loosely to the laws, customs and ceremonies of the Church

24. R. Sanderson, *Thirty-five Sermons* (7th ed., 1681), p. 9

25. *Ibid.*, 11, 17

26. R. Sanderson, *Twenty-one Sermons* (1681), p. 219

27. *Ibid.*, 11

28. J. Cosin, *Works* (Anglo-Catholic Library, 1843-55), I, 92

and there was bound to be a clash when bishops such as John Bramhall of Derry determined to force the clergy to conform to the law. When these Scots were deprived of their office it was not on the ground of defective ordination but of insubordination after ordination.²⁹ Jeremy Taylor applied this policy firmly after the Restoration when he became bishop of Down and Connor and Dromore. He had always been a stern critic of nonconformity in spite of the fact that he could also write so liberal a work as *The Liberty of Prophesying*, but in practice his policy was clear:

Is it not a shame that the people should be filled with sermons against ceremonies, and declamations against a surplice, and tedious harangues against the poor airy sign of the cross in baptism? Can the definition of a Christian be that a Christian is a man that rails against bishops and the common Prayer-book? And yet this is the great labour of our neighbours that are crept in among us; this they call the great work of the Lord.³⁰

Let no man, upon his own head, reprove the religion that is established by law and a just supreme authority.³¹

When private persons are rude against the doctrines of authority they are seldom in the right.³²

In the years leading up to the Civil War the erupting rash of sectarian groups seemed to many existing and future bishops to be the inevitable result of failure to crush the agitation for change within the Church. Scruples about trifles had become sources of schism. Questioning of authority had become a rebellious arrogance. Claims to the right to expound the Scripture had led to a variety of opinions which could not be contained in any Church. Benjamin Laney who was to become bishop of Peterborough in 1663 said that to allow people to preach what they will for as long as they will, to pray how they will, to stand or kneel as they will could only lead to a confusion and sectarianism which could not be the will of God. Sectarians were replacing the public service of the Church by their own dreams and ridiculous fancies and had become "a kind of godly atheists". The stream of the Word of God was no purer in sectarian pitchers than in the Church's fountain:

Every sect sees the face of its own religion in the Scriptures, not because it was there before but because his strong fancy brought it thither; he thinks he sees that in the Scripture which in truth is only in his own imagination.³³

Hall, already noted as a man with some understanding of the puritan scruples, was aghast at the outcome when presumptuous unlearned tradesmen in blue aprons turned themselves into licentiates in divinity and talked of

29. R.B. Knox, *James Ussher* (Cardiff, 1967), ch. XI, especially pp. 180-83

30. J. Taylor, *Works* (ed. by R. Heber, 1839), VI, 524

31. *Ibid.*, VI, 528

32. *Ibid.*, VI, 529

33. B. Laney, *A Sermon preached before His Majesty at Whitehall* (1675), p. 28

theological questions they did not understand.³⁴ He fumed against the “dis-temper and malcontented persons and the furies of anabaptism and separation”; such people were like “colic in the guts”.³⁵ In 1641, shortly before the outbreak of the war and before he himself was silenced, he spoke in Exeter Cathedral of “uncouth sects lately risen out of hell”.³⁶ Their teaching was being spread by “the inundation of libellous, scandalous, malicious pamphlets as have lately broke in upon us”.³⁷ In a sermon which he ventured to preach during the war he attributed the catastrophes to “hellish hersies and atheous paradoxes which have poisoned the very air of our Church”.³⁸ He listed the extravagances of the sects; there were those who favoured divorce and polygamy; there were ranters, seekers and shakers; there were those who threw doubt on the Bible, on the doctrines of immortality and the Trinity and the godhead of Jesus; there were those who encouraged antinomian extremes. He spoke of one who put himself forward as God Almighty, another as Christ, another as the Holy Ghost, and another, “a vile adulterous strumpet”, as the Virgin Mary. The presses were, he said, “openly defiled with the most loathsome disgorgements of their wicked blasphemies”.³⁹ Hall felt that the plight of the country was due to the failure of the King and Parliament to “take speedy order for the suppression of this wild variety of sects and lawless independencies ere it be too late”.⁴⁰ Hacket similarly deplored the activities of “the mountebanks in divinity that will promise many sorts of remedies to a sin-sick soul when there is none at all”.⁴¹

There is evidence for most of the deviations listed by Hall, but the aim of the great majority of the parliamentary critics of the episcopal system was not to open the gates for sectarian excesses but to produce a reformed established system orientated to presbyterianism and erastianism, and it was only in dire straits that they countenanced the toleration of Independency alongside their projected established Church. Nevertheless, the years between 1640 and 1660 seemed to the bishops to confirm their worst apprehensions. They lost their positions; some of them went abroad and some lapsed into unwonted silence, sheltering in the homes of friends or of sympathetic royalists. Apart from Laud none were put to death. Few of them ventured to defy the new regime and some were like Brian Duppa of Salisbury who confessed that he had withdrawn into his shell, and he was probably the bishop most eager to uphold the episcopal system.⁴² Perhaps the most notable feature of these two decades was that about 6000 clergy were able, as Duppa said, to “prudentially manage” and were left in possession of their livings, and evidence

34. J. Hall, *Works*, V, 419

35. *Ibid.*, V, 505

36. *Ibid.*, V, 530

37. *Ibid.*, V, 532

38. *Ibid.*, V, 632

39. *Ibid.*, V, 633

40. *Ibid.*, V, 238

41. Hacket, *op. cit.*, p. 38

42. R.S. Boshier, *The Making of the Restoration Settlement* (1951), 26

emerges from time to time that the Book of Common Prayer was more continuously used than has often been supposed. Various factors made this possible; there were protective and powerful friends among the laity, remote geographical situations where prying parliamentary eyes did not reach, and various garbled versions of the Book of Common Prayer which kept the substance of the book but enabled people to say that they did not use the book.⁴³ Personal timidity may also have enabled many to make sufficient concessions to secure their positions, and there was also the difficulty of finding replacements if there were to be a more thorough purge. However, few were satisfied with the situation; ministers of Independent outlook were ill at ease when they were put in charge of parishes from which the incumbents had been ejected; they thought of the Church as the gathered company of believers and yet they had to act as if all in the parish were members of the Church. Ministers of presbyterian outlook were angry as the longed-for prospect of a presbyterian establishment vanished. Episcopalian clergy were restless, both those who were enduring the hardships of sequestration and those who had made compromises and made an uneasy conformity.

Then came 1660 and the Restoration. It has long been held that during the Interregnum the deposed bishops had been timid in ensuring the preservation and continuation of the episcopal order and that by default they had almost allowed their order to become extinct.⁴⁴ If the interregnum had continued for some more years it is not improbable that this would have happened. The Restoration was therefore from the episcopal point of view a timely, indeed providential, event. However, the general view has then proceeded to claim that the King and Clarendon and Gilbert Sheldon, who is seen as their ecclesiastical adviser, returned with a determination to restore undiluted episcopacy forthwith and they can be credited with forestalling the dread possibility of episcopal extinction.⁴⁵

This view has recently been re-examined by Dr I.M. Green and in the light of his work it needs considerable modification.⁴⁶ Green holds that the key motive in Charles II's policy was his desire to ease the position of Roman Catholics so that they could live openly under the monarchy, though he himself was not an avowed Roman Catholic. He thought he could best secure this relief by promoting a general flexibility, and, in particular, by holding firm to his own prerogative to dispense individuals from conformity. As for Charles's advisers, Sheldon, soon to be bishop of London and archbishop of Canterbury, did not emerge as an Anglican stalwart until 1662, and Clarendon was an Erastian more concerned for national unity than episcopal continuity.⁴⁷ Hammond, the one Anglican who had clear convictions about the

43. J. Taylor, *Works*, XV, 290ff.: this is Taylor's version of The Order for the Lord's Supper.

44. Boshier, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-29

45. *Ibid.*, chs. III and IV

46. I.M. Green, *The Re-Establishment of the Church of England, 1660-1663*. (O.U.P., 1978)

47. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-25

necessity of episcopacy and might have led a Laudian party, died shortly after the Restoration.⁴⁸

The King, however, soon discovered that the writing of the agenda for ecclesiastical reorganization was not to be entirely in his hands. As was to be expected, sequestered clergy soon reclaimed their parishes, and many, usually with the help of the local gentry, succeeded in their claim and the intruded ministers began to be ejected. However, many of the sequestered clergy by now had died and there were others who had properly been ejected for scandalous lives and whom neither squire nor parishioners wished to see reinstated. This meant that the ministers who had replaced them were able to remain in office, but if they had not been episcopally ordained, would they not now have to be so ordained?

The King left the answer to the Convention Parliament which contained many presbyterian sympathizers and which produced a bill confirming in office all ministers who had been in office on 25 December 1660 but with three exceptions. First, a minister would have to give way to a sequestered minister whose claim was upheld. Second, a minister who had been improperly passed by Cromwell's Triers would have to give up his position. Third, a minister who had supported the execution of Charles I or had opposed the Restoration would have to forfeit his position. Green holds that these exceptions affected about 700 clergy, but the issue of ordination was not made important and there is only one case in 1661 when proof of ordination was demanded.⁴⁹ When the issue of ordination became central in 1662 many who were ejected had been approved under the 1661 act.

Green also questions the view that chapters were hastily re-established to ensure the functioning of the machinery for episcopal appointments. The two chapters first to be reconstituted were Westminster and Windsor and they had no bishop to appoint. The chapters of Rochester and Oxford were soon reconstituted but their bishops were among the survivors. Winchester, Durham and Canterbury had sufficient surviving canons to form a chapter quorum, but it was two months before their machinery worked to elect their bishops.⁵⁰ Moreover, the idea that the King had a firm plan for the speedy re-staffing the Church seems insubstantial. A draft of eighty-six names of clergy suitable for appointment as bishops had been drafted in the King's circle on the Continent but it was no more than a draft and was not followed even in part. In the scramble for offices, suitors with strong local support were often appointed. The King made two hundred appointments to fill vacancies in cathedral chapters in the first few weeks after his return, but seventy of these had managed to make some sort of conformity in the forties and fifties, and there were some who were too young to have held any previous office. A further sixty of these had been sequestered for a time but had then come

48. I.M. Green, *The Re-Establishment of the Church of England, 1660-1663* p. 24. See also J.W. Packer, *The Transformation of Anglicanism* (1969) for a study of Hammond.

49. Green, *op. cit.*, p. 54

50. *Ibid*, pp. 66-68

to terms with the changed circumstances and had managed to regain their positions. Green holds that there were in fact very few episcopalians who had not to a greater or lesser degree conformed in Cromwellian times.⁵¹ The King does not seem to have been inclined to an inquisitorial policy about the record of those who said they were ready to conform. Deaneries were offered to known Presbyterians. Bishoprics were offered to Reynolds, Baxter and Calamy and none of these were on the continental list. Baxter was attracted but his scruples triumphed. Calamy might have accepted if it had not been for the strong pressure of his wife's kindred, the Newcomen family which had puritan ties. Reynolds accepted Norwich. Few who could be expected to be champions of a Laudian policy were appointed to high office in this first wave of appointments. It was the aged bishop Juxon who was raised to Canterbury. The King and his advisers were eager to see the restoration of parochial ministry without an upheaval which would leave a legacy of rancour, and there were clergy who had too many skeletons of conformity and wavering loyalty in the cupboards of memory to wish for any drastic inquisition.

However, there were other forces at work and among these the most vigorous was the corps of local gentry. Many of its younger members had been brought up during the preceding twenty years and they had often had sequestered clergy as their tutors and they had thus imbibed a strong desire to overthrow the legacy of those years. They gained a sweeping victory in the parliamentary election at the end of 1661 and the resulting Parliament was rightly known as the Cavalier Parliament and it embarked upon a stern programme of legislation which rather unfairly came to be labelled as the Clarendon Code. Clarendon did not initiate the legislation and he had been involved in the King's earlier policy but as the King's leading minister he was inevitably held responsible for government policy. Parliament rushed the new Act of Uniformity into law in May 1662 and put it into action by August 1662.⁵² This has been regarded as a particularly spiteful action as it deprived any clergy who were likely to be ejected of the payment of tithes which were due at the end of August.

The reaping machine of the Act of Uniformity began in earnest to sweep through the clerical fields separating conformist from nonconformist. Dr Green now points out that when the lists of the ejected nonconformists are examined they are far from being a Roll of Honour of those who refused on principle to submit to episcopal ordination. Out of over 1900 names there were 420 who had been episcopally ordained before 1642 and forty-five who had been episcopally ordained in 1660 and 1661. If episcopal ordination had been the sole criterion of conformity these men could easily have conformed and held their positions and their stipends, but there were now other features to be considered. Some who had been episcopally ordained had

51. Green, pp. 69-70

52. *Ibid.*, ch. VII. R. Tudur Jones, *Congregationalism in England, 1662-1962* (1962), pp. 56-60

probably become convinced that it was not the sole acceptable form of ordination or that it was not so scripturally-based as ordination by presbytery. Sympathy for those whose ordination by presbytery was the cause of their ejection may have been a factor in causing others to refuse to conform; this was a factor in the mind of Richard Baxter. The reasons for both conformity and nonconformity in 1662 were mixed and complex and many men came to their decision one way or the other only after painful deliberation. There were clearly men of good faith on both sides of the divide and in many cases the issue must have been decided on personal and family grounds as much as on great principles and there were bishops who were troubled when men they had known as colleagues in the universities and in the ministry chose the nonconformist way. Hacket of Lichfield gave a month's grace to Dr John Bryan and Dr Obadiah Grew, two Coventry clergymen, in the hope that they would come to conform, but this hope was not realised.⁵³ He also failed to persuade John Billingsley of Chesterfield to conform,⁵⁴ and he was specially grieved that Anthony Burgess of Sutton Coldfield also refused to conform. Burgess had been a Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and Hacket considered him fit for "a professor's place in the University".⁵⁵

When ministers had made their decision to refuse to conform they faced the consequences with great courage. Dr Tudur Jones claims that among the ejected ministers who could be classed as Congregationalists only one, Samuel Crossman, changed his mind and conformed; he eventually became the dean of Bristol but he is probably more honourably remembered as the author of the hymn, "My song is love unknown".⁵⁶

After 1662 the bishops looked out upon a very different scene from that surveyed by their predecessors. It was no longer a case of numerous agitators within the Church with a few separatist groups outside; there were now nonconforming congregations meeting more or less openly in many parishes and led by dedicated ministers. The hardships endured under the Clarendon Code were sufficient to give these congregations the aura of martyrdom, but the absence of the old Courts of Star Chamber and High Commission meant there could be no thorough policy to eradicate nonconformity permanently from the scene and it is unlikely that even that could have been finally effective. Moreover, many clergy who had conformed only after long deliberation must have had uneasy feelings about the sufferings of former colleagues and there was also the anxiety that the divisions would make it more difficult to present a united resistance to Roman Catholic infiltration. Therefore, severe as were the restrictions upon the nonconformists, bishops had to come to accept that dissent was likely to be a continuing feature of national life and episcopal pronouncements combined condemnation of nonconformity with persuasion to return to the fold.

53. White Kennett, *A Register and Chronicle, ecclesiastical and civil, from the Restoration of King Charles II* (1728; only vol. I printed), I, 917

54. *Ibid.*, I, 918

55. *Ibid.*, I, 816, 820

56. R. Tudur Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 59

Sparrow of Exeter, a noted royalist, preached at his Visitation of the diocese in 1676 and lamented the continuing attacks upon those who preached and practised "decency and order in the service and worship of God", "obedience to the King and his laws" and "obedience to the Church".⁵⁷ It was the work of false prophets to encourage the forsaking of "the lawful and public assemblies established by just authority in the houses of prayer".

What therefore hath been delivered and believed as commands of Christ by the general testimony of the universal Church in all ages ought to be firmly believed upon the same consentient testimony we perceive and believe the canonical Scriptures to be the Word of God.⁵⁸

Preaching in 1678, Sprat, then a canon of Westminster and later to be bishop of Rochester, condemned the furious zeal which led to the execution of Charles I and he commended a true zeal inclining the mind towards heaven, "a gracious constitution of the whole mind". All Christians had a duty to abhor "all falsely inspired principles of godliness" and "anti-christian raptures of zeal".⁵⁹ Here was a new serenity appropriate in an early member of the group which formed the Royal Society.⁶⁰

Stillingfleet had been secretly ordained by Bishop Brownrig and after the Restoration he became a distinguished London clergyman and in 1689 became bishop of Worcester. He was disturbed by the persistence of dissent even though there was unity on the fundamental matters of faith. Disagreement over secondary trifles did not, in his view, justify separation from the Church of England, and he drew up an *Irenicum* which while preserving episcopacy to ensure uniformity would, he believed, make it possible for Presbyterians to conform.

Our divisions in religion have made us not more contemptible than ridiculous to foreign nations, and it puzzleth the wisest among ourselves to find out expedients to keep us from ruining one of the best Churches of the Christian world.⁶¹

It was vain to hope "the Protestant religion can be preserved among us without upholding the Church of England".⁶²

All parties pretend to a zeal for peace so that they may have it their own way, by which it appears that it is not peace they aim at, but victory, nor unity so much as having their own wills.⁶³

St Paul had urged the churches to keep "the same rule" and it was clear that

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57. Anthony Sparrow, *Caution against False Doctrine in a Sermon to his Diocese* (1676), p. 11
 58. *Ibid*, 29
 59. Thomas Sprat, *A Sermon preached before the King at Whitehall, December the 22nd, 1678*. pp. 35, 42, 44
 60. See article on Sprat in *DNB*
 61. Edward Stillingfleet, *Works* (6 vols., 1710), I, 117; see also 277, 297
 62. *Ibid*, I, 193
 63. *Ibid*, I, 278

the Apostles "did not leave all persons to act as they judged fit" and rulers in the Church had to keep "the zeal of well-meaning persons within its due bounds".⁶⁴ Just as private soldiers could not expect to have the overall views of their commanders and had at times to obey orders which seemed perplexing, so it was the duty of "scrupulous and conscientious men" to allow to the Church's rulers "a better capacity of judging what makes for the safety of the whole".⁶⁵

Stillingfleet found the obstinacy of dissenters inexplicable. Some dissenting ministers, he said, had conceded that parish churches were true churches and that occasional conformity was permissible, but if it was permissible to communicate at all why not regularly? Others held that Christ had "instituted only congregational churches" which had "the sole power in themselves", but even Calvin, "a person of great and deserved reputation among our brethren" did not hold this atomic view of the Church.⁶⁶ Even if the Church had developed from congregational units that was no argument for reversion into an infant state. Would this involve a return to feet-washing and community of goods? There was no reason to break the unity of the Church for the fancy of "a primitive platform". Peace and order were essential for any stable society and there could be no peace and order if "every man maintains his point and thinks it his duty to yield in nothing".⁶⁷ Stillingfleet, however, was also a defender of each person's "natural right" to judge for himself and so he had to face the criticism that this undermined his call for conformity but he did not accept the criticism:

I would not be mistaken, it is liberty of judgment that I plead for, not of practice; that may justly be restrained by the laws of the Church where the other is allowed, because the obligations to peace and unity are different from those to faith and inward assent.⁶⁸

Stillingfleet held that claims to toleration came ill from those who during the Interregnum had not tolerated those who differed from them; they were willing to acknowledge the power of the magistrate when it was on their side and they had denounced toleration as "the mother of confusion, the nurse of atheism, the inlet of popery, and the common sink of all errors and heresies" and he said there were still some who had the audacity to ask for the revival of the Solemn League and Covenant.⁶⁹ He warned the critics of the present system that "an universal toleration is that Trojan horse which brings in our enemies without being seen".⁷⁰

The ever-present enemy was generally believed to be the Roman Catholic Church. This was common ground between conformists and nonconformists.

64. Edward Stillingfleet, *Works*, I, 281

65. *Ibid*, I, 282-3

66. *Ibid*, I, 285-7

67. *Ibid*, I, 565

68. *Ibid*, I, 185

69. *Ibid*, I, 297

70. *Ibid*, I, 299

Annual sermons to commemorate the Gunpowder Plot kept that fear alive and it was fuelled by reports of plots in England and of rebellions in Ireland and then by the deliberate support given to the Roman Catholic cause by James as Duke of York and later as James II. All this fresh fuel kept the commemoration sermons at the end of the century as fiery as at the beginning. When the nonconformists refused to take advantage of the Declaration of Indulgence which was introduced by James II this tempered much of the episcopal hostility to the nonconformists, who by their action had refused to benefit themselves at the expense of the Church of England. The accession of William and Mary and the granting of a limited toleration made the bishops realize that there was decreasing force in any demands for enforced conformity and that henceforth they would more and more have to depend on persuasion rather than legislation to uphold the Anglican position. Moreover, a new type of bishop began to be appointed. William favoured men who were prepared to cool the heat of controversy and to come to terms with more diversity in society. For a time bishops were faced with the possibility of the emergence of a Non-juring Church composed of Anglicans who would not renounce their loyalty to the house of Stuart. For example, Thomas Ken of Bath and Wells refused to take the oath to William and Mary and was replaced by Richard Kidder, a scholar with a deep interest in the expanding fields of scientific research and a man of generous dignity towards his predecessor. His conciliatory spirit was not reciprocated; Ken's friends made it clear to Kidder that he was unwelcome and Ken himself referred to Kidder as a hireling, and yet it is Ken who is remembered as the saintly and devotional hymnwriter while Kidder is entirely forgotten.⁷¹ Though the Non-juring threat eventually evaporated it was sufficient to divert attention from the other dissenters for a time.

When Archbishop Tillotson preached about nonconformity it was clear that there had been a change in the climate of controversy. He regretted the "unchristian divisions and animosities" over comparative trifles and which led to differences which were so hard to heal. The rise of "little sects and separate congregations" militated against "an established and national religion, firmly united and compacted in all parts of it" which alone could meet the challenge of the Church of Rome.⁷³ The nonconformists shared with the Church "all the substantial parts of God's worship and the great duties of the Christian life".⁷⁴ Yet he did not believe that it would be right to allow unlimited diversity within the Church so as to meet all scruples. He believed that reasonable people could be expected to accept what had been decreed by the Church's governors who were men of piety and prudence and he did not think this acceptance would violate the rights of conscience

71. See articles in *DNB* on Ken and Kidder, and in the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* on Ken.

72. John Tillotson, *Works* (5th Folio Ed., 1707, and Edition in 12 vols., 1743) Folio, 219

73. *Ibid.*, F. 220; also see XI, 4754, 4759

74. *Ibid.*, F. 219

and of private judgment. Modest people could safely bow to "the general voice of mankind, being next the voice of God himself".⁷⁵ It could not be right, in his view, when such divisions crept into family circles and kept them from uniting in family prayers or moved them to fashion children by "infusing into them the particular notions and phrases of a sect".⁷⁶ However, in dealing with these problems he encouraged freedom from passion and from unseemly reflections upon opponents and stressed the need for close and clear reasoning. These were "virtues to be praised wherever they are found, even in an enemy, and worthy of our imitation".⁷⁷

Simon Patrick of Chichester preached before William in 1689 and lamented both the divisions which had rent the Church throughout the ages and the corporal punishments which had been introduced by the Church of Rome and "the retinue and train of Antichrist" to suppress them.⁷⁸

Men do not differ more in their countenances than they do in the frame of their understandings, and therefore we must not spend our pains in making all men think alike, for it is impossible to be effected.⁷⁹

However confident people were about their own opinions others could "think they have as great reason to be confident in their persuasion as we are in ours". Differences of opinion were likely to persist but these differences were prone to develop into divisions which could not be bridged even by the clearest reasons, but Patrick was hopeful that in the new climate after 1689 dissenters would be content to live within the constitution of the country; "I do not see how we can fail to come to a happy agreement". He held that it would be sound sense to accept the teaching of experts in their own field, especially of divines in the field of religion, though "not with an absolute resignation, but with a modest deference to their judgment in their own faculties".⁸⁰ As long as there was agreement on the necessary scriptural doctrines, there could be differences on lesser matters without loss of affection.⁸¹

Gilbert Burnet was one of the few bishops who had not been educated in either Oxford, Cambridge or Dublin; he had been trained and episcopally ordained in Scotland, but came south and eventually made his way to the Netherlands where he became the adviser of William and Mary on British affairs. In 1689 he accompanied William and Mary to England and became the bishop of Salisbury. He wanted the Church of England to be Protestant and comprehensive and he disliked "the diversities among us about some

75. John Tillotson, *Works.Ibid*, F. 588

76. *Ibid*, F. 622

77. *Ibid*, F. 521

78. Simon Patrick, *A Sermon preached in the Chapel of St James before his Highness the Prince of Orange, the 20th January, 1688/9*, Part II, 20

79. *Ibid*, 34

80. *Ibid*, 35

81. S. Patrick, *A Sermon preached before the Queen at Whitehall, March 1, 1688/9*, p.36

lesser things" which weakened "the common interest of the Protestant religion in which we agree".⁸² He was saddened by what he regarded as a surly rebuff to pacific overtures: "Distempers are far gone when the patient rages at the first mention of a medicine".⁸³ Yet, the Church of England had a duty to act with such modesty and generosity that people would not be repelled by "the prejudices of our education or those angry impressions which we have so long cherished in ourselves and others" and thus "overcome their evil with our good".⁸⁴

However, there was here a patronising attitude which was almost certain to be counterproductive. Sincere as Burnet and other bishops were in their conciliatory moves, the assumption that nonconformists were causing division over secondary matters, that the Church authorities knew what was best for the Church and country, and that unity had a priority over considerations of scripture interpretation and personal conscience was not likely to bring them to conform. By 1694 Burnet himself had come to realize that such appeals were not likely to succeed and he even feared that the toleration already given would encourage "the free range of enthusiasm" which had ravaged the country half a century earlier.⁸⁵

The century ended with the leaders of the Church of England reluctantly coming to see that unity was unlikely to be attained by force or by persuasion. During the century their attitudes to nonconformists had ranged from an angry resolve that they had to be crushed, through an exasperated grief that those who had so much in common with the Church of England should be so obstinate over what the bishops regarded as secondary matters, to a wistful longing for union among all those who faced a common threat from the Church of Rome, from atheism, and from extravagant sectarianism. Even at the end of the century they were still reluctant to acknowledge that pluralism in religious loyalties had come to stay. Some even hoped that a reversion to severer penalties under Queen Anne would restore the Church's power but any such hope perished with her death. During the next century the established and dissenting traditions became distinct features of national life.

Nevertheless, dissent, however strong its positive defence of Independence as a form of ecclesiastical polity, and however splendid its prosperity in the heyday of nineteenth-century liberalism in thought and politics, has never been able to shed completely the awareness that the reason for its existence lies in its relation to the Church of England. This has also been a feature of the subsequent dissenting movement known as Methodism. Many dissenters have continued to see their identity in a witness against the claims of the established Church. Others have aimed to keep open the bridges with the

82. Gilbert Burnet, *An Exhortation to Peace and Union in a Sermon preached at St Laurence Jury on Tuesday, the 26th November, 1689*, p. 11

83. *Ibid*, 14

84. *Ibid*, 16-17

85. G. Burnet, *Restoration Commemoration Sermon* (1694), p. 14

Church of England. Some tried the bridge of occasional conformity. Even more have crossed the bridge of full conformity and not a few bishops have been descendants of those whose roots were deep in the dissenting tradition. A paper on the attitude of twentieth-century bishops to nonconformity would be very different from this paper but the episcopal policy in the seventeenth century still shapes the situation as it is today and the end is not yet.

R. BUICK KNOX

MINISTERIAL LEAKAGE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: AN EXPLANATION ?¹

Few would argue with David Thompson's assertion that nonconformity was one of the major formative influences on Victorian Britain, for the census of 1851 revealed that roughly half of the seven million attending service on census day were counted in nonconformist chapels.² Even if it were relatively simple for a Victorian to avoid attending acts of worship it was virtually impossible for him to escape entirely from the long shadows which nonconformity cast over a whole range of social customs, attitudes and institutions: for example, towards alcohol, welfare, animals, and leisure.³ Political life, too, especially in the years between 1870 and 1914, was informed by a vital and powerful nonconformist conscience.⁴

The main physical embodiment of this pervasive influence was the ubiquitous chapel, its human expression the full time minister. As nonconformity became more acceptable and even respectable in the course of the nineteenth century so the professional minister came to enjoy a widely acknowledged status and influence which was both symbolised and served by the increasingly middle class manner of living which many of them adopted.⁵ The fifty years or so before the first world war apparently represented something of a ministerial golden age as far as Congregationalism is concerned. With over 3000 men in 1900 the denomination had more ministers than any

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1. The research on which this paper is based has been financed by the Social Science Research Council as part of my larger investigation, "The nonconformist ministry of England and Wales, 1830-c1930". I have to acknowledge the permission of the Trustees of the Dr Williams's Library to quote from archives in their care. I wish also to thank Dr Stanley Russell of the Congregational College, Manchester, and Revd S.H. Mayor and Dr E Welch for their guidance through the Cheshunt archive at Westminster College, Cambridge.
 2. D. Thompson, *Nonconformity in the nineteenth century* (1972), p. v.
 3. B. Harrison, "Religion and recreation in nineteenth century England", *Past and Present*, 38 (1967).
 4. See S. Koss, *Nonconformity in modern British politics* (1974); and D. Bebbington *The nonconformist conscience. Chapel and politics, 1870-1914* (1982).
 5. R. Helmstadter, "The nonconformist conscience" in P. Marsh ed., *The conscience of the Victorian state* (Brighton, 1979).

other nonconformist body.⁶ Furthermore, each one exercised considerable power within his church, and, man for man, was generally better paid than his Methodist or Baptist counterpart. Men like Dale and Horne enjoyed national reputations and in an age when the sermon was still a major means of communication the great Independent preachers attracted large crowds, often from outside the immediate confines of chapel society. When he was at the height of his fame R.J. Campbell's listeners could only get in to hear him by dint of queuing, while (to give an earlier example from another denomination) the Wesleyan Morley Punshon's hearers were alleged to include large numbers of actors hoping to pick up tips on gesture, voice projection, and speech delivery.

Yet by the turn of the century there were signs that all was not well lower down in the ranks of the Congregational ministry. It was disturbing, for example, that the number of applications to the ministerial training colleges was declining. Thus Cheshunt College, having won the Congregational Colleges' football tournament in the 1890's, was unable to field a team at all by 1902. More serious, perhaps, was the high and remarkably consistent wastage of ministers and theological students. Principal Whitehouse of Cheshunt reckoned that of 320 Congregational students trained at the college between 1853 and 1903 fifty had either joined other churches or left the ministry altogether. This high rate of attrition — about sixteen percent — is more than confirmed by an analysis of the Cheshunt Admissions Register, which covers the period 1847-1885. It reveals a twenty one percent loss, 48 of the 300 students failing to complete the course and a further fifteen quitting the ministry after leaving college.⁸ The New College Register of Students contains career details of 868 of the 1009 theological students who attended between 1851 and 1909. Of these, sixteen percent were lost to the denomination, thirteen percent failing to finish and the other three percent giving up subsequently.⁹ Lancashire's record was, if anything, rather worse. Of 107 students at the college between 1889 and 1911, twelve percent were no longer in the pastoral ministry within five years of leaving college, and another twelve percent failed to complete their course on grounds of ill health, educational inadequacy, or were asked to leave due to immorality.¹⁰ On average, therefore, it seems that between 1850 and 1914 about one in six of Congregational theological students found the training too intellectually or physically demanding, or else discovered that it provided an inadequate preparation for the realities of ministerial life. Indeed, one student had made this very point in arguing the case for Congregationalism to encourage the

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6. In the same year there were 2202 Wesleyans, 955 Primitive Methodists, and just under 2000 Baptists. R. Currie, A. Gilbert and L. Horsley, *Churches and church-goers: patterns of church growth in the British Isles since 1700* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 204-5, 209.
 7. O.C. Whitehouse to R. Lovett, 26 April 1904. Cheshunt Archives, C9/6/82.
 8. Cheshunt College. Admissions Register, 1847-1885. Cheshunt Archives, C6/2.
 9. New College. Register of Students. Dr Williams's Library. NCA 153/1.
 10. Lancashire Independent College. Register of Students. Congregational College, Manchester. Archives.

growth of a strong lay ministry. Laymen, he suggested, had "daily contact with the hard facts of life... the regular minister must have an uncommon power of imagination and of sympathy with men if, while he does not share the incidents of their lot, he can always affect them by his language for good".¹¹ By the mid 1890's Cheshunt was so short-staffed that it had abandoned the teaching of pastoral theology altogether. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that the wastage rate was so high and that many men found the demands of the ministry too much, the transition from college to chapel too traumatic. "It was", recalled A.M. Fairbairn, "a season of mental storm and doubt, when the very foundations of faith seemed to be shaken... life seemed a ruin, all its plans had been thrown down".¹² The evidence suggests that, unlike Fairbairn, a good number were unable to pick up the pieces of their ministerial careers.

Although the worst effects of this wastage were to some extent masked by the fact that there were generally more ministers than churches in the denomination, Congregationalists did share in the general contemporary nonconformist concern about college efficiency and economy.¹³ Indeed, they had more reason to be concerned since a higher proportion of their men underwent formal ministerial training. As early as 1847 sixty percent of those listed in the *Congregational Year Book* had attended a college or an academy such as Rotherham. By 1900 the proportion of trained men had risen to seventy nine percent.¹⁴ There was much discussion of curriculum content and steps were taken to foster active cooperation between different institutions, for example, Hackney and New, and Cheshunt and the Midland Baptist College. Yet no one raised the possibility that what lay behind the high leakage rate was not so much the deficiencies of the colleges' administrative structures or course content, but the inadequacies of the very men who staffed them. That nobody should suggest this explicitly is, of course, perfectly understandable but there are some tantalising pieces of evidence which do indicate the existence of such misgivings. For example, Cheshunt students virtually forced the resignation of Principal Stowell in the 1850's, having been "disappointed in the expectation that during their stay at the College, they should have found in the President a Pastor who would have cared for their spiritual improvement".¹⁵ Almost fifty years later another Cheshunt principal, O.C. Whitehouse, resigned not long after students charged him with being "not sufficiently in touch with their practical requirements as students for the ministry".¹⁶ Similarly, Principal Scott of Lancashire was

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11. "Reasons for an educated lay ministry", Cheshunt College Magazine, 1873-4. Cheshunt Archives, C7.
 12. *Congregational Year Book*, 1913, p. 165.
 13. J.E.B. Munson, "A study of nonconformity in Edwardian England as revealed by the passive resistance movement against the 1902 Education Act" (Oxford D.Phil thesis, 1973), p. 36.
 14. Calculated from *Congregational Year Book*, 1847 and 1900.
 15. Cheshunt College. Governors' Minutes, 23 April 1855. Cheshunt Archives, C1/8.
 16. Cheshunt College. Trustees' Minutes, 5 March 1903. Cheshunt Archives, C1/19.

described by one of his former students as being headmasterly, and so devoid of humour, imagination and originality that "I never felt at home and quite natural with him".¹⁷

While it would be misleading to relate the high ministerial wastage solely to the deficiencies of college personnel, there is thus a strong case for investigating the qualities, experience and background that they brought to their work. After all, they were ultimately responsible for the quality and adaptability of the pulpit ministers. As Samuel McAll put it, the position of principal at Hackney, which he was offered in 1860, entailed much greater responsibilities than those normally met in congregational ministry because it involved instructing "those who may become centres of influence to others, probably through many years".¹⁸ Similar sentiments were expressed by another Hackney tutor, J.R. Thompson: "I rejoice in having opportunities of preparing for the ministry those whose vocation it will be to communicate truth and to inculcate righteousness and piety. The responsibility of having so large a number of young men under my constant tuition and influence, is very present to my mind."¹⁹

What this paper proposes to do, therefore, is to examine the backgrounds and careers of college and academy heads in the period between 1830 and 1910. The institutions whose principals are covered comprise Airedale and Rotherham academies; Yorkshire United College; Cheshunt; Hackney; New and its constituent parts, Coward Academy, Highbury and Homerton Colleges; Lancashire Independent College; Western; the Congregational Institute at Nottingham (subsequently Paton College); Mansfield College, Oxford, and its Birmingham ancestor, Spring Hill, and the Welsh colleges of Brecon and Bala, though the latter was also responsible for training ministers of other denominations. All those whose period of office lasted for less than five years have been excluded on the grounds that such a short tenure was unlikely to have left much impression on a large number of students. This provides us with a total of 37 individuals, representing ninety percent of these principals in office between 1830 and 1910. The decision to deal only with the heads of these institutions has been prompted in part by the need to keep to manageable dimensions the number of individuals under scrutiny. There is, however, more than a purely statistical reason for this. The college principals were ultimately responsible for setting the general tone of student life, usually taught theology, and had the pastoral oversight of their men. In institutions which generally had quite small teaching staffs, theirs was almost certainly the main influence to which the students were ex-

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17. E. Tongue, Recollections and reflections. Mss contained in Lancashire Independent College. Register of Students Y - Z; Congregational College, Manchester. Archives.
 18. S. McAll to Hackney College Committee. 1 February 1860. Village Itinerancy. Minutes of Committee commencing 1859. Dr Williams's Library, NCA/70.
 19. J.R. Thompson to Hackney College Committee, 28 April 1882. Hackney College. Minutes of Committee commencing 1878. Dr Williams's Library, NCA/74.

posed. This was probably why the long-serving Cheshunt tutor, E.W. Johnson, expressed some reservations about the committee's bold proposal to offer W.E. Orchard the college principalship in 1914. In some evangelical fundamentals, commented Johnson carefully, Orchard was still "a young man feeling his way".²⁰ Furthermore, it was an influence which often lasted well beyond the aspiring minister's college years.

From the moment of every student's entry — not merely until the day of his leaving — but, as we gather, in most cases, so long as that student... lived, Henry Reynolds (principal of Cheshunt for over thirty years) watched over him with fostering care. It is in our brother's letters to his former pupils, coupled with letters from many of them, that we find the great work of his life exhibited.²¹

In order to bring out changes over time the seventy five years before 1914 have been divided into three equal parts. Each individual has been allocated to the period which covers his time in office. Thus group A contains those serving during 1840 to 1864, group B covers 1865 to 1889, and group C contains those active in the years 1890 to 1914. Where any individual's office overlapped these terminal dates by more than three years he has been included in each appropriate group. Thus A.M. Fairbairn, principal of Airedale (1877-1886) and of Mansfield College, (1886-1909) is in both group B and C. John Morris, who governed Brecon from 1854 to 1896, is included in all three groupings. This approach will provide us with what is in effect a moving picture of the men responsible for training the Congregational ministry at a time when society itself was undergoing fundamental social, economic, scientific, and intellectual change. Finally, it should perhaps be noted that despite the wide range of sources from which evidence has been drawn for this study — obituaries, private correspondence, biographies, autobiographies, entries in the *Dictionary of National Biography* and Boase's *Modern English Biography*, and Surman's index of Congregational ministers kept at Dr Williams's Library — there are still a few, probably now unfillable, gaps in our knowledge. The most serious from the point of view of the social historian is the lack of any systematic information concerning the occupation of our subjects' fathers and thus the difficulty of allocating them to a social class.

Table 1 analyses the principals' birthplaces and several features prompt comment. One — the small number originating in London — is not surprising, given the relative weakness of nonconformity in the capital for much of the nineteenth century. More striking is the high proportion drawn from the

20. E.W. Johnson to Cheshunt Committee, 18 June 1914: Cheshunt Archives, C9/6/88.

21. *Henry Robert Reynolds DD. His life and letters*, edited by his sisters (1898), p. vi.

Celtic fringes, a proportion which became larger as the century progressed.

Table 1. *College principals. Place of birth (by %)*

	A	B	C
Rural Wales	15	15	19
Rural Scotland	—	12	19
Urban Scotland	5	6	13
Isle of Man	5	—	—
<i>Total Celtic</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>51</i>
Abroad	—	—	6
Rural England	20	24	19
Urban England	20	6	6
Market town	25	24	6
London	10	18	13
<i>Total Rural</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>57</i>

This is in line with the general pattern of ministerial recruitment which relied heavily on the Welsh and Scots.²² It is also at one with the high and growing percentage coming from rural areas which were to some extent synonymous with the Celtic regions. Even ignoring those born in market towns, where the dominant ethos was almost certainly agrarian rather than urban or industrial, about a half of principals in office between 1864 and 1914 had been reared in environments whose values were markedly different from those of the urban, industrial society in which Congregational ministers were increasingly called to work in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Furthermore, as Table 2 suggests, many of the principals had had fairly sheltered upbringings because a fifth of group A, rising to a third of group C, came from ministerial homes. In this, their experience was not

Table 2. *College principals. Personal background (by %)*

	A	B	C
Ministerial father	20	29	31
Work prior to ministry	50	47	38
Work not known	15	12	12
No work prior to ministry	35	41	60

dissimilar to that of their students. About ten percent of Lancashire's total intake between 1843 and 1911 came from ministerial homes, but there was a tendency for the proportion to rise towards the end of the period. Of those entering the college between 1889 and 1911, almost twenty two percent

22. See Kenneth D. Brown, "The Congregational ministry in the first half of the nineteenth century: a preliminary survey", *Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society*, 3 (1983).

had ministerial fathers.²³ Nearly thirty eight percent of Cheshunt men in the years 1900 – 1910 (the only years for which the Admissions Register recorded such details) were sons of the manse.²⁴ From such homes “worldly” influences were usually very carefully excluded. Thus Parkinson Milson had to confess his shame at a childhood dissipated in illicit enjoyments such as “kite flying, marbles, rabbit trapping, fishing and wood sports”.²⁵ The lack of perspective and understanding that such an upbringing might produce was well summed up by one disillusioned Methodist. He had, he claimed, been totally unable to assess the values of the world or of his religion because he had nothing against which to measure them. “I had no data concerning the lives of ordinary men. The only lives I knew by actual observation were highly specialised. I was as truly separated from the common life of mankind as though I inhabited a cloister.”²⁶ The table also indicates that the proportion of principals from backgrounds likely to have been this restrictive was higher at the end of the century than at the beginning. Thus at the very time when the chapel’s dominance over much social activity was being challenged by the growth of commercial sport and entertainment, and when its hold over men’s minds was weakening in the face of new scientific and historical knowledge, ministers were *increasingly* likely to have been trained by men whose own perception of the world had been conditioned in a very different intellectual climate.

To some extent, perhaps, the limitations imposed by birthplace and upbringing could be offset by some secular work experience. Principal Garvie certainly believed that this had been of value to him. “I am now grateful that I had this experience of the ways and works of the world of business, and gained the discernment I now have into human disposition and character under the test and stress of the existing economic system.”²⁷ Garvie, however, had worked in a Glasgow draper’s, and of the seventeen individual principals who had worked before entering the ministry none had worked in industry while eight had shared Garvie’s experience of retail or commercial enterprises. It is worth setting against Garvie’s enthusiasm, therefore, the statement made by W. Johnson, Secretary of the National Union of Shop Assistants, to the Royal Commission on Labour of 1892-93:

The average warehouse clerk and assistant goes into the business at an early age. Indeed, from the time he goes in as a rule he is shut off from all communication with the world and he does not know really the changes that are taking place around him. He does not read the daily papers... and knows nothing of the outside world.²⁸

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23. Calculated from Lancashire Independent College. Register of Students. Congregational College, Manchester. Archives.
 24. Cheshunt College. Admissions Register 1900-1910. Cheshunt Archives, C6/5.
 25. G. Shaw, *Life of the Reverend Parkinson Milson* (1893), p. 10.
 26. W.J. Dawson, *The autobiography of a mind* (1925), p. 43.
 27. A.E. Garvie, *Memories and meanings of my life* (1939), p. 63.
 28. Quoted in R. McKibbin, “Work and hobbies in Britain, 1880-1950” in J. Winter ed., *The working class in modern British history* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 141.

In this respect once again the principals' backgrounds reflected that of their students. The previous occupations of 166 Lancashire students between 1866 and 1911 are known. Twenty three percent were students but forty two percent had worked in shops and offices.²⁹

Even if Johnson were wrong and Garvie right the benefits of such employment could not have lasted very long because the median age at which the principals began their own ministerial careers of training was twenty years.

Table 3 indicates that the principals tended to be appointed fairly young, the bulk of them between 35 and 49. They thus took to their educational work a relatively brief acquaintance with the practicalities of ministerial life. Over half of them had less than fourteen years in the pastoral

Table 3. *College principals. Age at appointment and ministerial experience (by %)*

Age at appointment Age in years	Age at appointment			Years	Years of ministry before appointment		
	A	B	C		A	B	C
30 – 34	25	12	6	0 – 4	15	18	6
35 – 39	15	29	25	5 – 9	15	24	19
40 – 44	20	29	19	10 – 14	20	18	31
45 – 49	20	6	19	15 – 19	20	29	31
50 – 54	10	17	13	20 – 24	20	6	—
55 – 59	5	—	6	25 – 29	5	—	6
60 – 64	5	6	13	30 – 34	5	6	6

ministry though in the earlier period a few, like Pye Smith at Homerton and George Collison at Hackney, were ministers of churches as well as college principals.

One corollary of this relatively early appointment was that those appointed tended to keep their offices for a long time. As Table 4 shows, the proportion serving for more than twenty years never fell below forty nine percent. In this situation there was always an intrinsic danger that ideas and beliefs would become stultified and that individuals would become progressively less able to adjust to the demands made by the advance of knowledge and to social change. Perhaps this was what lay behind the students' complaints about Whitehouse in 1903.³⁰ Certainly Dr Vaughan, Principal of Lancashire from 1843 to 1857, is reported to have experienced "a flutter of jealousy and again of alarm" when his students took to attending lectures at the newly opened Owens College in Manchester.³¹ To some extent the danger of ossification could be countered by involvement in the world of learning and activity outside the limits of the denomination. A proxy

29. Calculated from Lancashire Independent College. Register of Students. Congregational College, Manchester. Archives.

30. *Supra*, p. 96.

31. F.J. Powicke, *David Worthington Simon* (1912), p. 17.

Table 4. *College principals. Length of time as principal (by %)*

Years in office	A	B	C
5 – 9	5	—	6
10 – 14	25	6	25
15 – 19	20	29	19
20 – 24	20	6	6
25 – 29	—	6	—
30 – 34	10	35	31
35 – 39	—	6	6
40 – 44	20	12	6

measurement of this is contained in Table 5 which tries to estimate the degree to which the college principals were thus engaged in political, recreational, educational, municipal, charitable, and intellectual activity. With the exception of the Primitive Methodists the Congregationalists perhaps had the greatest interest in the world of affairs. In addition, their generally higher levels of education ensured that their contribution to theological and secular learning outweighed that of the other nonconformists, in volume at least. Even so, the table shows that only about half the principals were actively

Table 5. *College principals. Intellectual and social activity (by %)*

Type of activity	A	B	C
Theological publications	55	59	75
Other publications	10	24	19
Social/political involvement	35	53	50

involved in social, political, or intellectual institutions outside college. Thus F.J. Falding (Yorkshire United) was chairman of the local infirmary board and David Rowlands (Brecon) was a member of the local city council and its education committee. The other half, however, was evidently more like D.W. Simon who “confined himself to his duties as Principal and Tutor – seldom taking part in outside functions”.³² There is even some evidence that the colleges were reluctant to expose their students to such outside influences. In 1889 Cheshunt turned down an offer made by one of the trustees, Albert Spicer, to bring Henry George free of charge to lecture to the students on the land question.³³

In his stimulating discussion of falling nonconformist growth rates after 1885, A.D. Gilbert suggests that such a decline was an inevitable concomitant of an urbanising, industrialised society.³⁴ There are doubtless many reasons why, in principle, this process occurred but this paper at least raises the possibility that part of the explanation lay in the type of men charged with

32. F.J. Powicke, *David Worthington Simon* (1912) p. 215.

33. Cheshunt College. *Governors' Minutes*, 15 April 1889. Cheshunt Archives, C1/16.

34. A.D. Gilbert, *Religion and society in industrial England* (1976), pp. 187 ff.

ministerial training in the nineteenth century. On the whole, they had little personal experience of secular, industrial life. Their formative years tended to be spent in areas whose dominant ethos was mainly agrarian, and often in homes whose outlooks were bound by the sometimes narrow demands of chapel propriety. Although they were quite well equipped academically and entered their educational work at relatively early ages, their long tenures of office meant inevitably that they always ran the risk of losing such touch as they had with the realities of nineteenth century ministerial life. David Simon actually said as much, confessing in 1903 that as a theological teacher he was "bound to deal with questions that seldom or never arise on the horizon of a working life".³⁵ Of course, there were those who did try to improve college courses in order to acquaint students with new ideas and give them a better grasp of the modern intellectual world in which they would have to function. One can instance here Simon's decision to dispense with Paley's *Christian Evidences* when he went to Spring Hill in 1869.³⁶ Most, however, appear to have shared the philosophy of the Cheshunt tutor who reported in 1835 that "the experience of years has only confirmed the judgment which the Resident Tutor had long ago formed — that the regular drilling in those facts of learning which comprise a good general education is that which, under God, tells most in the real and efficient improvement of the students".³⁷ Thus Dr Scott was so concerned about one of his students who had expressed some unorthodox views about the person of Christ that he prayed for him regularly at the college's public evening service.³⁸ There is even a hint that some applicants were turned down because they were likely to prove too independently minded. At least, Hackney rejected one man in 1880 on the ground that "he is 27 and judging from his papers his mind and his opinions are too 'set'..."³⁹

Clearly there were many factors at work behind the high rate of loss among Congregational ministers and students in the late nineteenth century. But there appears to be sufficient evidence to support the thesis of this paper that one of those elements lay in the type of college principals who were appointed. Because no-one would discuss openly such a potentially embarrassing and unpleasant possibility the evidence tends to be indirect and hazy. But it is there. It is supported by the development after the first world war of a marked trend towards appointing much younger and more highly academic men. By then, however, it was too late. As one minister put it in 1930:

We are suffering terrible loss because the theologians have not been as free generation by generation to express their theology as scientists their science and philosophers their philosophy. The result is that orthodox religion is something not only ancient but static.⁴⁰

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35. Powicke, *op. cit.*, p. 239.
 36. D.A. Johnson, "The end of the 'Evidences': a study in nonconformist theological transition". *Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society*, 2 (1979).
 37. Cheshunt College. Governor's Minutes, 29 April 1835. Cheshunt Archives, C6/6.
 38. W.A. Lupton to C. Surman, 22 March 1936. Lancashire Independent College. Register of Students, K — M. Congregational College, Manchester. Archives.
 39. S. Newth to J. Farrer, 3 August 1880. New College Archives. Dr Williams's Library, NCA 219/95.
 40. M. Barwell to F. Lenwood, 13 November 1930. Dr Williams's Library. Archives, MS 24/164/12.

ENGLISH NONCONFORMITY AND THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Until fairly recently times it was possible to discern a rough parallel, and certainly a fairly close relationship, between the religious history of England and that of the U.S.A. William Penn and George Whitefield were names known and honoured on both sides of the Atlantic. The YMCA and the Salvation Army began in Britain but flourished also in America. Primitive Methodism was an English response to American frontier experience. The English Free Churches in their Victorian heyday knew that their forefathers had done great things on the Mayflower and in pioneering days in New England, while Methodists recalled with more mixed feelings the experience of their founder in Georgia. In the course of the nineteenth century the tradition represented by the English Free Churches experienced explosive growth in America and at least something of an incoming tide in Britain. The 1851 Census of church attendance showed that Nonconformity, once regarded as very much a minority interest, had more or less drawn level with the Established Church. In an increasingly rough parallel it can be discerned that religious life in America flowed first into historic Dissenting bodies, especially Congregationalism, and then into Methodist and Baptist churches.

In both countries the trend seemed to be towards Protestant pluralism. In both there was a rapid increase in the size of the Roman Catholic population, in both cases through immigration; but in both the Roman Catholic Church remained socially peripheral. By the later nineteenth century the heirs of historic Dissent on both sides of the Atlantic were convinced that the future was theirs. Despite the failure of English Free Churchmen to secure the disestablishment of the Church of England they were conscious till late in the nineteenth century that they were on the winning side. But from this point a wide divergence begins to open up between American and British experience.

American Protestantism, of the brands related to English Nonconformity, went from strength to strength as the nineteenth century gave place to the twentieth. In some measure this progress was concealed by the changed pattern of immigration. The historic sources of American immigration were replaced by new ones. From central Europe came millions of Lutherans, Roman Catholics and Jews, and ultimately large numbers of Eastern Orthodox. There seemed reason to suppose — to *fear*, most Americans would have said — that these new groups would bring about the end of America's Protestant era. But for two reasons this did not happen. For one thing the new groups took on an American colouring which was itself largely the result of moving into a strongly Protestant environment. Jews became Liberal or Conservative, not Orthodox. Roman Catholics drifted so far into American ways of thought and behaviour that "Americanism" became an official

heresy. There was resistance; especially from the Vatican, of course. The drift was halted. American Roman Catholics became Ultramontanes, Jews reverted to Orthodoxy. But not altogether: the Protestant age left its mark.

The classic study of this development is Will Herberg's *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* (Revised edition Anchor Books, 1960. Originally published 1955). Herberg dedicated his book to "the Third Generation, upon whose 'return' so much of the future of religion in America depends", and a part of its message is given in that very dedication. Herberg sees the first generation of immigrants as foreigners who will always carry with them their Italian or Polish or other background; their children are altogether American — deliberately so; *their* children, the "Third Generation", remember what their parents wanted to forget — their Old World ancestry and heritage. But there is no going back to a lost world. The recovery of the churches which follows from this turning back to the old ways is an Americanized recovery. A new form of religion emerges: American religion, recognizably such even though it expresses itself in Protestant, Catholic and Jewish forms. "For all their particularities of background and development, American Protestants, Catholics, and Jews are basically Americans and reflect the common patterns of American religion."¹

Thus the churches, at a time when one might have expected that the secularizing forces of the modern world would make their effects felt, received a new source of strength: as the reserves of ethnic consciousness, adapted (of course unconsciously) to American contexts and values.

The threefold religion of America was more Protestant than it was Catholic or Jewish. The new immigrants, Catholic or Jewish, took on a character determined to a large extent by the American context, and that content still reflected the influence of Protestant churchmanship. Moreover, the old-established Protestant churches were not themselves overshadowed by the new influx, but experienced a great expansion. Some indeed failed to do so: Episcopalians, Congregationalists and Unitarians, all groups which had played a great part in American history, failed to hold their place in the ranking order and became relatively minor groups. But Methodists and Presbyterians continued to expand fairly rapidly, and the Baptists grew explosively, to become one of the strongest denominations. Between 1900 and 1975 the Baptists multiplied by 5.8, the Methodists by 2.4, the Presbyterians by 2.0, the Disciples, a much more recent group, by 5.5. The Episcopalians did well proportionately, multiplying by 4.2 in this period, but they had already moved a long way down the list. By 1975 the Baptists, Methodists and Disciples numbered 47.5 million, the Episcopalians 3 million. Congregationalist figures are complicated by their union with the Evangelical and Reformed to form the United Church of Christ. The largest groups did particularly well among the black population, and two-thirds of the way through the twentieth century 86% of American blacks were Baptists or Methodists.

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 219.

To some extent the more radical bodies, and especially the Baptists, remained on the margin. The Southern Baptist Convention, to which the most rapid growth was confined, was regional, and socially down-market, so that it became commonplace to speak of the denominational mobility which accompanied the social. But this hardly bears on the main issue. Down to the present day, despite periodical announcements that the great American Protestant society is about to be taken over by Roman Catholics, Orthodox, the fringe sects, or oriental religions, the denominations which are most similar to English Nonconformity have continued to flourish.

Very different is the story of English Nonconformity itself. Influential in the 1870s, if not quite so powerful as they imagined, these denominations found themselves by the middle of the twentieth century without any appreciable influence on national life.

When did this change take place? As in other fields, there is a distinction between appearance and reality. In appearance the whole cataclysmic decline took place in the course of a single generation: one might even date it precisely between 1906 and 1935. How is it possible to provide such precise termini, even in the realm of appearance? Stephen Koss, in his *Nonconformity in Modern British Politics*,² provides the answer. 1906 and 1935 were the dates of two General Elections, in both of which the Free Churches sought to play a prominent part.

At the end of 1905 the Balfour government, pressed by numerous problems and with a depressing record of bye-election defeats, resigned. A General Election followed early in 1906. The Liberals won the largest majority ever attained by a British political party (the enormous majority of 1931 was for a coalition). Several issues were credited (or debited) with this result. The previous election had been held in what appeared to be the closing stages of a successful war, or at least a war which was to have a reasonably successful conclusion, even if the earlier stages of the struggle against the Boers had been rather disastrous. Some swing back was to be expected. The provision of indentured Chinese labour for South Africa under conditions alleged to be inhumane was represented as "Chinese slavery", and humanitarian interests were aroused fairly widely. Above all, the Conservatives were split, as they had been more than half a century earlier, between Free Traders, who included the Prime Minister, Balfour, and advocates of Protection, carefully renamed "Tariff Reform", under the generalship of the most charismatic politician of the day (as a later generation would have called him), Joseph Chamberlain.

Presumably any sort of split would have been damaging, but the Liberal Free Traders were able to represent this particular one as meaning that the Tories intended to get back into power by retaining as much Free Trade support as possible and then introducing tariffs on food: a Liberal government, they claimed, stood for a big loaf, a Tory government for a small one.

2. Stephen Koss, *Nonconformity in Modern British Politics* (1975). See also D.W. Bebbington, *The Nonconformist Conscience* (1982).

Certainly an over-simplification, but skilful propaganda, which was to prove effective.

The Nonconformists had their own particular grievance: the Education Act of 1902. For a generation they had protested against the 1870 Act, which they regarded as too favourable to Anglican schools. Now, instead of redress for this injustice, they were faced with an Act which increased the support for those schools by providing grants not only from national taxation as before but from the local rates too. All the grievances accumulated over past centuries against the established church welled up. Moreover, the Roman Catholics had by now built a good number of schools, which were likewise entitled to assistance, creating another slogan: Rome on the rates. The Nonconformists did not have many schools, except for the Wesleyan branch of the Methodists, and that branch was notoriously less united in hostility to the Act than other Nonconformists.

The degree of Nonconformist bitterness over the 1902 Act seems in retrospect extreme, though probably more comprehensible in America than in Britain, since it was in essence a protest against the privilege of establishment, in the name of the separation of Church and State. The Nonconformists believed that church schools would be substantially financed by the whole community, including themselves, but not sufficiently controlled by the public authorities. They were especially concerned about the single-school areas: the districts where the only public elementary school belonged to the Church of England, so that all children would need to attend it — a legacy of the policy of 1870 of building schools only where there were gaps, and not where schools already existed, even if they were denominational.

Some nonconformists were so strongly aroused that they resorted to passive resistance. This consisted in deducting from their rate payments a sum they calculated as intended to provide support for the obnoxious schools. When they were brought to court and refused to obey injunctions to pay, order was issued that their property should be seized and sold to cover the amount lacking. Since this was never very much the protesters were not precisely turned out of their homes. It was said that the normal seizure was of a teapot, which, when publicly sold, was often bought by a supporter of the cause and presented back to the owner, to be seized again next time. It was one of history's minor martyrdoms.

The 1902 Act ensured that the majority of Nonconformists campaigned for or at least warmly supported the Liberals in the 1906 election. It is true that the same would have applied to any election for decades past, but rarely had there been so strong a sense of mission. There was not of course unanimity. The Wesleyan Methodists, the Unitarians, and the Presbyterians were not so convinced that the Liberals deserved their votes. It was the Baptists, the Congregationalists, the non-Wesleyan Methodists and the smaller groups such as the Quakers, who felt most strongly. But there is no doubt that Nonconformity as a whole, especially as represented by the Free Church Council, eagerly supported the Liberals.

When the Liberal Party achieved its unprecedented majority, the Nonconformists not only celebrated; they claimed credit for it.

A large number of Nonconformists themselves were elected to parliament — more, they boasted joyfully, than to any parliament since Cromwell's day. (Whether the precedent should have been regarded as encouraging is another matter). The other forces operating against the Conservatives were overlooked, and it was assumed that public feeling against the 1902 act had played a major part. Obviously this is unlikely. More people were worried at the prospect of dearer bread than were inspired by the example of the passive resisters. Still the Nonconformists had their finest hour, and they made the most of it.

By the outbreak of World War II in 1939 it was roughly true that Nonconformist influence on public affairs was nil. Dr Koss provides tables showing Nonconformist participation in every General Election from 1900 to 1935 inclusive, analysed by party and by denomination, giving figures both for candidates and for MPs elected. The following statistics are confined to the successful contestants.

In 1906, according to Koss's calculation, 185 Nonconformists were elected; in 1935, 65; so already a decline of two-thirds is recorded. In 1906 no fewer than 157 of the 185 were Liberals. Even allowing for the huge Liberal majority this meant that a large section of the Government side of the House was Nonconformist. A further 20 were Labour (though this is slightly misleading, as Koss includes the "Lib-Labs" — working class candidates backed by the Liberal party, who might more properly be counted as Liberals). By and large the Labour members supported the Liberal Government, bringing the Nonconformist pro-Government vote up to 177. There were 6 Conservatives and two "other".

In 1935 the 65 Nonconformists elected consisted of 9 Liberals, 16 Liberal Nationals, 29 Labour, 10 Conservatives and 1 Independent. It was still very difficult for Nonconformists to describe themselves as Conservatives, but the 16 Liberal Nationals were supporters of the Conservative Government. But even including them, the Government relied on Nonconformists for only 26 votes. Nonconformist support was spread over all parties. The implication is that whereas in 1906 the Nonconformists saw themselves as having particular interests, or particular ideals, which committed them to the Liberals, no such consensus existed in 1935. Nonconformists in 1906 were Liberals because they were Nonconformists; it is unlikely that by 1935 a consideration of Nonconformist principles split them among all the parties. They selected their political allegiance on other grounds.

Despite the overwhelming predominance of Liberals among the Nonconformists elected in 1906 it is possible to recognize some denominational variations. The 6 Conservatives consisted of one Presbyterian, two Wesleyans, and three Unitarians. These were the three least typical of the denominations of Nonconformity from a political point of view. By 1935 there were 10 Conservatives, 8 of them Methodists (now united) or Unitarians. One

Baptist and one Quaker defied tradition by supporting the Conservatives. The real heart of political Nonconformity was among the Congregationalists, the Baptists and the Primitive Methodists. In 1906 the two first-named denominations (the Primitive Methodists are more difficult to track historically because of the Methodist union) supplied 90 MPs (73 of them Congregationalists), of whom 79 were Liberals. By 1935 the same two denominations accounted for only 17, of whom one Baptist was the solitary Liberal. The rest had not gone right over to the Conservatives. Five were Liberal Nationals, ten Labour. The traditional Nonconformist Radicals no longer had a home. This is another sign that Nonconformity *as a movement* had lost its influence. Individuals still counted: several were in the Government. It was the Government of the appeasement policy, which did not bode well for the hopes of a future revival.

The loss of corporate influence was not immediately apparent to the Free Churches. They continued to pass resolutions on public affairs. Their leaders had a good deal to say about the "Nonconformist Conscience". Their sense of importance was flattered by the extraordinary attempt of their political hero, Lloyd George, to climb back to power by using the Free Churches — extraordinary because he must have been almost the only politically aware person in Britain to imagine that such a campaign had the slightest chance of success. The Free Churches gave him a platform and a channel of publicity, but they no longer represented any coherent political interest. Many Free Churchmen now voted Conservative, as some always had done. Many voted Labour. Even those who reckoned themselves Liberal were split into two hostile factions, and sometimes more than two. The Liberal Nationals, those who supported Ramsay Macdonald's National Government of 1931, were rapidly becoming assimilated to the Conservatives. The Liberals proper, who kept their independence, were led by Lloyd George. The emergence of the Liberal Nationals meant that the National Government of the 'thirties included strong Free Church representation. Subsequently this would not be put down to the credit of the Free Churches, since the National Government received a bad retrospective press, on domestic as well as international issues. From the fall of the Chamberlain Government in 1940 for a generation no one had anything good to say of it, and only very recently has its measure of achievement become visible. The Labour Party, now clearly the main opposition, also drew heavily on Nonconformist sources. In this sense Free Church influence continued; even in a very limited sense expanded, for whether a Conservative or a Socialist occupied 10 Downing Street the Government would include Nonconformists. Some Free Church journals delighted in finding Free Church affiliations or connections for prominent public figures: the new Cabinet minister is cousin to an elder in Bristol, or his father was a Methodist local preacher; or, more pathetically, he himself attended a Baptist Sunday School as a child and "retains the values" he learned there — even though he is now a nominal Anglican or a convinced agnostic. This is the mentality of the sect, which needs to find social prestige even if it be by

devious means. As corporate bodies the Free Churches lost all their influence.

If the appearance is of a catastrophic decline in Free Church power and influence in a single generation, between 1906 and 1935, the reality is of a slower, but not less total, loss. Perhaps the tide turned, as has been suggested, around 1870. Membership figures hardly kept pace with population thereafter, and governments lost the habit of flattering the Nonconformists. The 1906 result was an optical illusion. The thunderous Liberal victory, won for other reasons, coincided with a Nonconformist campaign on behalf of the Liberals. But if the elections are merely symbolic a true fact is symbolized: focussed a little too sharply, but really there.

This process of religious decline – or at least decline in Church affiliation – has become a major topic of discussion and dispute in recent years. It is debated whether it is to be equated with secularization, or whether that is to be regarded as a distinct phenomenon; even whether the term has any clear significance. Alan Gilbert, in *The Making of Post-Christian Britain* (Longman, 1980), is among those who do identify the two. He gives a brief account of the history of secularization, and examines its relationship to social class, leisure, the use of Sunday, and mobility. He sees the response of the churches expressed partly through a secularization of the Church itself, and partly through ecumenism, regarded as a drawing together of the churches all threatened by historical forces. Whenever the onset of secularization may be dated, its progress was obscured till the 'eighties: "The fact was that residual social advantages were simply obscuring, temporarily, the impact of cultural secularization". (p. 76).

This is Gilbert's assessment of the churches generally; but still more was Nonconformity standing on melting ice: "Ominously, however, the great era of Methodist and Dissenting expansion was drawing to a close even before Victoria's reign began". (p. 82) Temporarily the Free Churches were able to identify with causes important to sections of the population; but this period was passing: "A decline of Free Church evangelicalism accompanied the growing respectability of the chapel, and the gradual integration of chapel folk into the mainstream of English society". (p. 147)

Something like the same picture is portrayed in Hugh McLeod, *Religion and the People of Western Europe 1789 – 1970* (OUP, 1981), a comparative study of the topic under various heads: the countryside, urbanisation, the middle classes, the working class, and so on, drawing on the author's knowledge of the literature of several countries, but chiefly Britain and France. Here one finds the same apparently inexorable decline of all the main churches, with English Nonconformity well to the fore in the downhill march.

A more localized, and in some ways more thorough, survey is Jeffrey Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society* (OUP, 1982 and reviewed in this *Journal*, Vol. 3. No. 1. May 1983, pp. 30-33), a study of the Lambeth district of London, treated as a specimen case of the history of the period. Cox sees the decline of the influence of the churches as a consequence of the replacement of their function as providers of social service by public

provision — already in the mid-nineteenth century he sees them as keeping up their strength only by turning into social agencies. This is related to Gilbert's interpretation of the survival of Victorian Nonconformity as a consequence of socio-political factors, essentially temporary in character. Cox qualifies the secularization thesis by pointing out that an institution may be on the way out yet for the time being important: "Historians often imply, perhaps unconsciously, that a declining institution like the church is, by definition, unimportant". (p. 23) Much of his book is a survey of the ways in which the Victorian churches of Lambeth continued to be important: through direct poor relief, indirect forms of relief, education, clubs, popular recreation and entertainment. (pp. 84ff.) But if important, religion was becoming innocuous: Cox quotes an onlooker as commenting on an Anglican sermon at a somewhat later date: "I can imagine no body of decent human beings, from Athenian ladies listening to an Epicurean philosopher in a rose garden to a Leaguer of the Guises hotly engaged in exterminating the local Huguenots, who might not have listened to it without offence". (p. 124)

The debate has been about the *causes* of the decline of the churches, not about whether it has occurred, and the reasons given have had to reckon with the fact that it has been a differential decline, in which the Free Churches have suffered more than others.

In America nothing like this happened. It is not possible to draw precise parallels, even by way of contrast, since we cannot talk of the Free Churches except by including all the churches. But those most closely related to the British Nonconformist tradition have continued to flourish and play a full part in public life. The growth of Evangelicalism reached a climax in the 1980 Presidential election campaign, when all three candidates declared themselves born-again Christians.

Of the 15 Presidents of the United States in the twentieth century, down to 1984, three (Harding, Truman and Carter) have been Baptists, one (Coolidge) a Congregationalist, two (Hoover and Nixon) Quakers, three (Wilson, Eisenhower and Reagan) Presbyterians, making nine from the main denominations constituting English Nonconformity. To these might be added Johnson (Disciples), Taft (Unitarian) and perhaps at a pinch Theodore Roosevelt (Dutch Reformed). There have been two Episcopalians (Franklin D. Roosevelt and Ford), but only one Roman Catholic (Kennedy), and no Lutherans, no Jews, none from the sects, and no admitted freethinkers,

Supreme Court Judges make rather a different impression. Of 47 appointed in the twentieth century the surprising number of 13 have been Episcopalians, and there have been five Roman Catholics and five Jews. The "Nonconformist" denominations, including Unitarians and Disciples, supply 18. The remaining six consist of five simply listed as "Protestant" and one Lutheran. However, it is plain that overall the denominations related to English Nonconformity have constituted a substantial part of the American Establishment this century.

What accounts for these wide differences in religious experience? Why

have two traditions so closely related in origin and running a roughly parallel course for so long belatedly met such different fates? Theological difference hardly accounts for it, for theological fashions too have often moved in parallel. The scientific discoveries and the developments in Biblical criticism in the nineteenth century affected both countries, and met the same variegated response in both. Both have had their liberal phases, and their reactionary phases, and their iconoclastic radicalism. Sometimes the same prophetic authors have won response from the rising generation on both sides of the Atlantic: sometimes a louder echo has been awakened at a range of 3000 miles and more: one thinks of the greater popularity of C.S. Lewis in America than in Britain. The same evangelists have tried to win converts in both countries — though by and large this has been a one-way traffic, moving opposite to the path of the sun.

Obviously an answer must be found in the social sphere, but to say that is not to say much. Some species of animals and plants, transported to unfamiliar territory, have flourished out of all proportion to their native condition. Something like this seems to have happened to English Nonconformity: carried across the Atlantic it has spread and flowered and borne fruit beyond all comparison with its native record. But whereas the plant or animal flourishes in its new setting for reasons fairly easily identifiable, the ecology of religious species is more problematic. What differences between Britain and America account for the different fate of Baptists, Methodists and analogous groups in the two countries?

One of the most obvious differences between the two countries is that England had, and has, an established church while in America there is a strict separation of church and State. At first sight this might seem an explanation of the relative weakness of the English Free Churches. They have been excluded from the privileges of the political establishment, and until fairly recent times have suffered some social disadvantages. This, it might be thought, has hindered their advance. Their American counterparts, free from such restrictions, have done better.

But a moment's thought will show that this explanation explains nothing. What is immediately apparent is that the great advance of English Nonconformity occurred during the period when the social stigmas remained, while its decline began more or less at the point when at last it celebrated victory. What explains this curious fact? A possible explanation is that the strength of Nonconformity lay precisely in the fact that it was Nonconformist. Nineteenth-century Free Churchmen resented the fact that they were treated as outsiders; at least they said they did. But it is difficult to resist the impression that many of them enjoyed their deprivation. The position of the Free Churches, outside the established order of things, made them the natural focus for those who were, or thought they were, marginal to contemporary society. They did not attract the outcasts; these benefited from the ministrations of the Salvation Army, but they did not make up the membership of the Army any more than of the main Free Churches. The appeal of Non-

conformity was to those just outside the pale. It gave a social location and a religious identity to groups who felt that they had arrived, but whose arrival had not been acknowledged. This is clear from the particular claims they made for themselves and the particular boasts they were inclined to utter.

They claimed that they represented the present and the future, while the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches represented the past. The more or less democratic structure, especially of the Congregational and Baptist churches, helped to support such a claim. They claimed that they represented enlightenment against obscurantism. They claimed that their academies were better than Oxford and Cambridge Universities (which they had been, in some respects, when the ancient Universities were at their worst). They claimed the virtues which were most approved in their age — those which collectively constitute the Protestant ethic. They made up a religious and social opposition, a focus of alternative loyalties over against those which collectively constituted what later came to be lumped together as “the Establishment”. In this wider connotation the Establishment meant something much wider than the Church of England, though it included the Established Church as its heart. It encompassed also the two ancient Universities (whereas the new ones, except for Durham, were anti-Establishment and usually founded by Nonconformists): the “public” (i.e. private and prestigious) schools, especially Eton; the peerage; the landed interest — great landowners and large-scale tenant farmers. There were even a few rash souls who ventured to criticize the Monarchy. It was respectable, this opposition; it did not go in for Marxism or free love, but it offered an alternative public philosophy. That was its strength and the means by which it grew.

With the removal of restrictions the claim to stand outside the Establishment wore thin. Nonconformists were admitted to parliament. They were allowed to celebrate their own weddings and to bury their dead in the parish churchyards. They gained access to the ancient Universities, as well as helping to found new ones. They began to be represented on public occasions. A big and unexpected step came in 1914 — as unexpected as, to most people, the outbreak of war. Their clergy were exempted from military service along with the Anglicans, but could be appointed chaplains — along with those same Anglicans. As chaplains they were paid from public revenues — the ministers of the churches which had denounced the public funding of denominational schools as a dangerous intrusion of Erastianism. All along they continued to protest that they were outsiders, untainted by public recognition. But here they were receiving something approximating to the privilege of establishment themselves. Those who felt disinherited, outsiders knocking vainly on the doors of social acceptance, would have to look elsewhere.

The weakness of English Nonconformity in the twentieth century is part of a larger issue: the weakness of all branches of the Church in Britain compared with its strength in America. Statistics suggest that about 40% of American adults are to be found in church on an average Sunday, about 20%

of Britons, which includes Scots, who are more devout than the English. But within this general phenomenon there is a more specific one. In the nineteenth century Nonconformity appeared to be gaining relatively to the Established Church. In the period following the 1851 census this may have been an illusion, and by the end of the century it certainly was. But till the early years of the twentieth century Nonconformity was apparently a powerful force in national life. Then, quite suddenly, the bubble was pricked; the Emperor, a wisp of smoke blowing away, was discerned to be naked. The thesis of this paper has been that the strength of Nonconformity was as a focus of discontent. The Establishment found at last the secret of defeating the dissenters, a secret that had eluded Tudors and Stuarts long ago: it gave them what they asked for. The denial of their last demands, represented by the provisions of the 1902 Education Act, served only to call attention to how much they had received, and to show them up as malcontents who would never be satisfied, ready to court a not-too-severe martyrdom for issues of secondary importance.

The absence of the issue of establishment in America seems very likely to account for a great deal of the difference in the religious history of that country and Britain over the past few decades. Yet this conviction has been challenged persuasively by E.R. Norman in *The Conscience of the State in North America* (1968). Norman denies that any total contrast is to be found in the field of Church-State relations on the two sides of the Atlantic. In Britain on the one hand, and in the United States and Canada on the other there has been a loosening of the bond, but it happens to have gone further and progressed faster in the western hemisphere. In Britain the link between Church and State has weakened a good deal (leaving aside the special case of Wales, where it has been legally severed), while in North America there are extensive relics of the connection, including the survival of religious teaching in schools, in defiance, or at least in evasion, of rulings of the Supreme Court.

But Norman's argument does not really eliminate the alleged contrast. He shows that the divergence is not absolute: there are parallels between the course of events in Britain and that in Canada and the U.S.A. But the acknowledged differences of degree and of pace are sufficient to account for divergent consequences. The differences of degree approximate to a difference of kind, and the argument which has been advanced here — that the decline of English Nonconformity is accounted for in large measure by the fact that it has ceased to serve as a focus for social discontent — has not been disproved by Norman's thorough and interesting study.

Other kinds of parallels may be sought. Are there churches in America which occupy the position which English Nonconformity occupied a generation or two ago, and if so does the subsequent fate of the English churches offer any basis for anticipating their future? There is no parallel to be found in the mainstream churches related to English Nonconformity. Congregationalists, now merged in the United Church of Christ, Presbyterians and Methodists,

while they may rank some steps socially below the Episcopalians, do not represent the underprivileged in American society. Nor do the Baptists, though perhaps the explosive expansion of the Southern Baptists owes something to their sense of not being fully accepted by the more sophisticated eastern establishment.

But the more obvious parallel is with the black churches. Here we have a substantial minority of society which has a strong sense of being a valuable part of the nation, often more faithful to traditional American values than the whites, but denied the recognition which it deserves. To the English visitor listening to the black preacher the notes of Victorian Nonconformity seem still to be sounding. The political aims of full recognition and fair treatment are expressed through religious phraseology; fervently-held religious convictions find expression in social and political ideals. For many blacks the Church still holds a place which is more central than for most other people, and ministers are social leaders in ways which white clergy have largely ceased to be. If black hopes and ambitions find their fuller satisfaction over the next generation the churches will need to rethink their role if they are not to experience the vicissitudes of English Nonconformity.

STEPHEN H. MAYOR

REVIEWS

The Great Debate. By Alan Sell, Pp. 141. H.E. Walter Ltd., 1982. £2.95.

In this interesting and useful book Alan Sell has provided us with an exposition of the doctrine of salvation as it has been variously interpreted within the Calvinistic and Arminian traditions. His exploration of the theme and its exposition since the sixteenth century is lucid and relevant. It is no mean achievement to be able to trace the development of such a massive subject through several centuries within the compass of 140 pages, but Dr Sell has done it with commendable clarity whilst remaining scrupulously fair to those whose views he does not share. For his chapter headings he uses the imagery of a flowing river — The Source, Some Tributaries, In Full Spate, Running into the Sand. When one tries to understand the distinctive contribution of varied contributors to this debate one is tempted to feel that, without a sure guide, the student may consider himself impossibly lost within a bewildering labyrinth of conflicting ideas. Dr Sell is such a guide, however, and as he introduces us to the various participants in this theological discussion, both on the continent as well as in this island, we begin to see our way clearly and discern a series of well-marked paths. The author has given to us an excellent example of good writing in the field of historical theology. It reflects wide and careful reading over many years. It is particularly valuable for the insights it provides into English religious life and thought since the Reformation particularly, though not exclusively, for those within Dissenting and Methodist traditions. The whole work is carefully documented and its

detailed footnoting will prove exceptionally useful to more serious students who wish to study the ramifications of this doctrine and its influence on the churches. Dr Sell is persuaded that "an amelioration of Calvinism is to be preferred to a capitulation to Arminian extremes". He knows that his task is a difficult one and has provided a helpful glossary "in the hope of assisting the general reader through the theological thicket" he has "undertaken to explore". The only slight disappointment about the book is that it would have been of considerable interest to see what form this debate has taken more recently, for example, the important discussion in R.T. Kendall's *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*, and Paul Helm's reply in *Calvin and the Calvinists*, but perhaps Dr Sell will do that for us elsewhere. If he does, we can certainly rely on an exposition of other people's views in a literary style which is vigorous and enjoyable to read. We all hope that his new work in Geneva with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches will still leave him time to produce helpful books of this character.

RAYMOND BROWN

Puritans in Politics. The Religious Legislation of the Long Parliament. 1640-1647. By G. Yule, Sutton Courtenay Press, Appleford House, Appleford, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4PB. Cased Library edition £32; paperback £16.

Professor Yule's book springs from his conviction of the need for a fresh analysis of the religious debates in parliament during the 1640s which can be set beside the established accounts of political developments by historians such as David Underdown and Mark Kishlansky. He has fulfilled his brief in such a commendably succinct and careful manner that this work should become required reading for those who wish to understand that difficult decade. Readers of this journal are likely to be sympathetic to Yule's starting point, almost tiresomely reiterated, that many MPs brought a depth of "biblically controlled" spirituality to the question of what form of church government should replace episcopacy. After a lengthy introduction which includes some nice material relating to gentry piety in the first decades of the seventeenth century, he embarks upon a chronological account of the evolution of the religious settlement of 1646. His assertion that there was an agreement in 1641 and 1642 between MPs already veering to the Presbyterian or Independent viewpoint not to raise the issue of what should follow the destruction of episcopacy rests on no specific evidence. Political contingencies may have played a larger part than he allows in explaining the Commons's failure to face the ecclesiastical future while war was breaking out. But the arguments set out thereafter are generally convincing. The publication of the Independents' *Apologetical Narration* on 1 January 1644 is seen as a turning point, shattering the dream of a clear biblical solution that all could accept. Yule shows how the gentry's concern for scriptural warrant was used negatively to prevent full clerical domination on Scottish lines but he also demonstrates the strength of theological commitment to Presbyterianism among the London clergy. He skilfully delineates the shades

of opinion on the crucial issue of toleration within a loose system of Presbyterian government that almost all MPs, whatever their personal inclinations, came to recognise was a necessary foundation for religious and social order. Yet the army coup of 1647, he persuasively argues, ended any real chance of that system being enforced. The tolerant and comprehensive Cromwellian church, which allowed congregationalism to find deep roots, was thus the logical conclusion of the political impasse of the 1640s. The most striking limitation of the book is the absence of a local and personal context: the principal MPs involved in the debates are somewhat disembodied figures because little attention is given to establishing them as individuals who brought to Westminster the intense religious experience of their own towns and villages.

ANTHONY FLETCHER

Godly exercises or the devil's dance? Puritanism and Popular Culture in Pre-Civil War England. By Jeremy Goring. Friends of Dr Williams's Library: Thirty-Seventh Lecture, 1983.

This is an excellent example of the examination of minute particulars which turn out to shed light on wider issues. In brief compass the author discusses Puritan objections to popular entertainments (especially maypoles) and is led on to the important question: When did the term Puritan come to signify a killjoy, as well as, or rather than, a person holding particular religious convictions? This is a thoroughly-documented account of an interesting topic.

STEPHEN H. MAYOR

Per Caritatem Servite: A History of Paton Congregational College, Nottingham. By Ian H. Wallace. 1984. Obtainable from the author at 32 Cecil Road, Eccles M30 0FZ. £2.50 plus 75p. for postage.

One year's suspension for being out all night and for coming in after 10.30 p.m. on several occasions; three months reversion to 'probationer' status for preaching one of Robertson's sermons: these disciplinary measures would not go down well with students today. It was a different world in the 1890's and these are two of the more bizarre incidents recorded in this excellent history of the college to which many of us owe so much.

The first part of the research was done by the late Principal R.R. Turner who, for health reasons, handed over the completing of the task to Ian Wallace. He has now provided the history of the college from its founding as Cavendish Theological College, Manchester, in 1858, through the years as Nottingham Congregational Institute, beginning in 1863 under the great leadership of J.B. Paton and continuing as Paton Congregational College in Nottingham until 1968 when it pooled its resources with Western College, Bristol, and Northern College to form the Congregational College, Manchester, whose present Principal is a former Paton student.

This eminently readable account has been gleaned from Annual Reports

and the minutes of the main committees of the college. The story has burned in the bones of Ian Wallace as a story which he had to tell and record for posterity.

The whole life of Paton College seems to have been lived against a backcloth of constant financial straits. Adequate resources are never available where the underprivileged are involved. Yet the author seems to overstress the 'cloth-cap' image in his introduction. The college was ahead of others in the provision it made for training mature students, many of whom were married men, some with families. Within the reviewer's memory many were not 'sons of the working-class'. There is a somewhat judgmental personal reference at the foot of page 89 which, in the opinion of the reviewer, would have been better omitted.

The work is a cyclostyled production with a printed cover. The use of only one side of the paper and the tidy arrangement of chapters and paragraphs has given the work an impressive clarity and neatness. Typing errors are very few.

In the main this is a very good and absorbing history of a college which, like the Tabernacle in the wilderness, never had a really permanent home.

JACK E. GARSIDE

LOCAL HISTORIES

Dewsbury United Reformed Church (formerly Ebenezer Congregational) has produced a centenary brochure with a difference. For over twenty years this town-centre church has been at the centre of proposal after proposal for town-centre development. Centenary year sees the result: Princess of Wales Precinct with Ebenezer redivivus as its centrepiece, cleaned and gleaming and Frenchly Gothic amidst the puritan restraint appropriate to a commercial precinct. There is an air of celebration about the brochure which the circumstances entirely justify: but what a world of restraint surrounds this key sentence — "The action of an independent citizen, one John West of the Civic Society, in securing 'Listed Building Status' for the Sanctuary, did much to lift the burden of choice and establish, as we can see in retrospect, the way forward...".

J.C.G.B.

The present minister of Zion United Reformed Church, Cottingham, is the nineteenth in a succession which has been continuous since 1696. By coincidence he shares surnames (Dawson) with the first, although as far as Christian names go Abraham has given place to Arnold. His church's history, first published in 1969, has been revised and brought up to date. Its cover portrays a building in complete contrast to the church at Dewsbury, yet as finely representative. *Zion United Reformed Church, Cottingham, founded 1792* (50pp) is obtainable from the church secretary, Mr A. Jones, 27 Devon Street, Cottingham, North Humberside, for 75p. (post and packing extra).

J.C.G.B.