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EDITORIAL

Dr. Carwardine's review articles on aspects of American religious history have been a feature of the *Journal* for some years. In September 1986 he delivered the society's annual lecture during its sixth weekend school, held at Dunford House, Midhurst. That weekend encompassed excursions into local Catholicism, Quakerism, Unitarianism and Anglicanism as well as Congregationalism and Presbyterianism. Its papers ranged from Crisis at Cheshunt College to Eighteenth-century Geneva. Dr. Carwardine's American dimension is printed here.

We welcome as reviewers Dr. Fincham of St. John's College Oxford, Dr. Russell of Northern College Manchester and Mr. Thompson, of the Department of Education and Science. Dr. Knox's review of Gordon Rupp's last book is a tribute to a Methodist historian who belongs to all the churches. *The Times* obituarist (surely Owen Chadwick?) described his as "one of the most enchanting apprehensions of Christianity in any mind of our age."

Innumerable researchers are indebted to the work of a very different kind of historian. An appreciation of Charles Surman, who died last summer, will appear in the next issue.

THE REFORMED CHURCHES AND SECULAR AUTHORITY IN THE UNITED STATES 1776-1861

I

From the earliest colonial days American churchmen have sought to establish and maintain godly government. When the first settlers of New Haven assembled to create a secular authority their minister urged them "to consider seriously in the presence and fear of God, the weight of business they met about, and not to be rash or slight in giving their vote to things they understood not"; they were persuaded "that the Scriptures do hold forth a perfect rule for the direction and government of all men in all duties".¹ The early New England colonies may not strictly speaking have been theocracies, but only those in full church membership were allowed to vote and the minister was always ready to use his pulpit to assert the duties of citizens and – particularly through the election sermon – of rulers. Over the intervening three centuries the Protestant churches, in a context of increasing cultural pluralism, church disestablishment and secularisation, have lost much formal power and informal influence. Many American Christians have nonetheless remained faithful to the early settlers' animating ideal of creating a godly society. The probability that one of the country's leading evangelical preachers and architect of the so-called Moral Majority, Pat Robertson, will run for the presidency in 1988 is a reminder of this persisting determination to use the power of the state to achieve Christian ends and build a city upon a hill.

From the beginning the American churches of the Reformed tradition have contributed largely and disproportionately to the fashioning and sustaining of this relationship between sacred and secular. The full story of their role is beyond the scope of this paper, but reflecting on the period between the political upheavals of the Revolution and Civil War may reveal some idea of their importance. These were the years when Calvinist Protestantism, having been the dominant religious force in seventeenth and eighteenth-century America, had to yield its position of pre-eminence; Congregationalists and Presbyterians, the two largest church families in the country in 1776, lost ground relatively in the face first of the impressive evangelism and democratic Arminian gospel of the Methodists, and later, in the 1840s and 1850s, of the massive influx of Irish and German Catholics. These were also years when Reformed churches, inheritors of a strong Calvinist tradition of political involvement, were having to adjust to a major political transformation.

Colonial politics on the eve of the Revolution were recognisably part of British political culture: access to political power, though broader than in

1. Quoted in Joseph P. Thompson, *The Duties of the Christian Citizen: A Discourse...* (New York, 1848), p.5.

England, was still limited, while patronage and prevailing social deference conditioned and nurtured political relationships. By the time Abraham Lincoln was elected president in 1860 the United States boasted the world's first mass democracy and a recognisably modern two-party system. Two changes in particular had the effect of extending popular political participation: the broadening of the franchise to the point that by 1826 all but three of the twenty-four states had something approaching white manhood suffrage, and a shift away from state legislatures' nominating presidential electors and a variety of office holders, towards popular elections. The consequent incessant electoral contests called forth a new breed of professional politician the most effective of whom recognised that the eighteenth-century politics of deference and gentlemanly pretension had to yield to an active courting of the mass electorate by candidates who used dramatic techniques of electioneering.

Unlike their predecessors, who had stressed the divisiveness, factionalism, corruption and impermanence of political parties, this new school of leaders championed a more positive view, one which regarded parties as essential, permanent and moral elements of the political system. They believed parties would offer a means of controlling the conflicts inevitable in a pluralistic society, help restrain the centrifugal thrusts within the body politic, and provide a restraining channel for the democratic will – as well, of course, as presenting politicians with opportunities for permanent careers in their service. Between 1824 and 1840 the so-called “second American party system” grew to fruition, shaped and defined principally by contests for the presidency. By the 1840 election two evenly balanced, elaborately organized parties competed in all states of the Union, with the exception of South Carolina. At the same time, revolutionary changes in transport and communications helped shrink the nation and enlarge the political community. As party competition intensified and campaigning grew more feverish so levels of voter turnout rose to the point that four out of every five of those eligible cast a ballot in the furious “log-cabin campaign” of 1840. These heights were never quite scaled again but the mature second party system kept its vitality until the early 1850s. Moreover, most of its distinctive features – constant elections, a mass electorate, exuberant electioneering, image building, political management and manipulation, and general acceptance of the permanence and necessity of parties – survived into the new party alignments that succeeded it.²

The responses of the Reformed churches to these political developments were complex and nuanced according to denomination, religious context and previous relationship to the state. New England Congregational churches, for instance, that had known the privilege of establishment (and which in

2. M.J. Heale, *The Making of American Politics, 1750–1850* (London, 1977), pp.116–62; Ralph Ketcham, *Presidents Above Party: The First American Presidency, 1789–1829* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1984); Michael Wallace, “Changing Concepts of Party in the United States: New York 1815–1828”, *American Historical Review*, 75 (Dec. 1968), 453–91; Richard P. McCormick, *The Second American Party System: Party Formation in the Jacksonian Era* (Chapel Hill, 1966).

Massachusetts and Connecticut were to continue loosely to enjoy that status for several decades after the Revolution) were not necessarily to be found on the same political side as those Presbyterians and Baptists who had had to fight for equality of recognition and status. But certain general conclusions do emerge. By drawing on the experience of Congregational and Presbyterian churches in particular, but also using evidence from other Reformed (and notably Baptist) sources, it becomes clear that a vigorous Calvinist tradition of political engagement persisted through the whole period. It played a vital role in the coming of the Revolution and the founding of the new nation. Then it seems, at first sight, to have been shipwrecked on the storm-tossed seas of the early Republic and to have yielded to political quietism. But in fact a politics-focussed and not solely mission-focussed millennialism survived through the first three or four decades of the nineteenth century. This Reformed rationale was to provide the basis for an assertive evangelical re-entry into political life in the northern states in the 1850s, as activist church members took up moral and religious issues – temperance, Roman Catholic intrusions and slavery – whose resolution they regarded as achievable principally by political means.

II

Although the religious awakening of the mid-eighteenth century was at the primary level of operation apolitical, there is little doubt that the reshaped Puritanism that emerged from it contributed significantly to the revolutionary movement. To the inherent tendencies of Calvinist Christianity to question arbitrary rule the Great Awakening added a heightened millennial expectation, which spread beyond evangelical Calvinist circles to the whole religious culture and which provided the interpretative context in which British imperial measures could be judged. The ecclesiastical challenge presented by Anglican assertiveness (in the form of SPG missionary activity and the threat to establish an Anglican episcopate) was only one stimulus to the sacralizing of politics. Even ostensibly economic and constitutional issues took on a religious aspect, since the Manichean cast of mind so firmly embedded in colonial Calvinism was predisposed to interpret all events as part of the constant battle in the universe between God and Satan, Christ and Antichrist, liberty and tyranny. The self-governing experience of New England Congregationalists and the system of representative government of colonial Presbyterianism did much to shape the colonists' political perceptions and their resistance to arbitrary British rule. So, too, did the invocation of concepts of fundamental law, constitutional rights and limited government in "election" sermons. But the shift from resistance to rebellion required a vision of a new social, political and moral order, and this came not just from radical Whig thought nor simply from Enlightenment ideas of progress, but from the religious tradition of millennial prophecy. Congregationalists, Presbyterians and the other Reformed religious groups which sided largely with the revolutionary movement were animated by a sense of their being the chosen people of God and by the conviction that the

universal kingdom of Christ was imminent. An agent of Lord Dartmouth declared with perhaps more perceptiveness than he realised that "Presbyterianism [a term which conventionally included Congregationalists] is really at the bottom of the whole conspiracy."³

After the British surrender at Yorktown, Calvinist clergy, as Ruth Bloch has recently shown, increasingly conceived of the millennium in religious rather than political terms. Ezra Stiles of Yale based his expectation of the setting up of Christ's kingdom on the spread not of republican government but of primitive Christianity, as exemplified in American Congregationalism and Presbyterianism. For a period in the 1790s, during the earlier phases of the French Revolution, when France appeared as an ally in the holy war against tyranny and Catholicism, many Presbyterian, Congregational and Baptist clergy once again cherished a vision of advance through worldly, political means, and allied themselves with the emergent Jeffersonian Republican party. By the end of the decade, however, the French revolutionaries themselves had been cast in the role of Antichrist and an essentially mission-focussed, non-political, evangelical millennialism was to exercise hegemony in many Protestant churches for years to come. During the Second Great Awakening, from the late 1790s to the 1830s, it was through the revival, the mission society, and the benevolent association that Reformed churchmen sought principally to inaugurate a new world order. To some extent, no doubt, this retreat from political engagement was a product of the loss of power consequent upon church disestablishment during and after the Revolution. But the political retreat marked previously established and non-established churches alike. The persisting secondary role afforded to political involvement seems rather to be explained by evangelicals' satisfaction at the extraordinary and accelerating pace of church growth during the first four decades of the century under a voluntary system and an essentially non-political mode of operation.⁴

III

Conservative, non-political, "pietist" evangelicals existed in all denominational families in the first half of the nineteenth century, but were most likely to be

3. Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America: An Historical Account of the Development of American Religious Life*, 2nd ed. (New York 1973), pp.83-105; Ruth Bloch, *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought, 1756-1800* (Cambridge, England, 1985), pp.3-94.
4. Bloch, *Visionary Republic*, pp.94-231; Charles I. Foster, *Errand of Mercy: The Evangelical United Front 1790-1837* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1960); Clifford S. Griffin, *Their Brothers' Keepers: Moral Stewardship in the United States, 1830-1865* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1960).

found in Methodist and Baptist churches, especially in the South.⁵ Most of them viewed politics from a New Testament, Pentecostal perspective, tending towards holiness and in some instances pre-millennial revivalism; they drew on Christ's passive endurance of Roman oppression and his injunction not to interfere with political institutions. They included laymen convinced that, as an Iowa Congregationalist put it, "the standard of holiness is to be raised by preaching the pure, unadulterated doctrines of the cross" and not by "harangues on national policy". They applauded ministers like Thomas Miller, ex-Presbyterian elder, who "had but little to say about politics [and] always said they were a bad tick to bite".⁶

A small minority of pietists refused even to vote. In the case of the Reformed Presbyterians or "Covenanters" non-voting was an implicit article of faith, one of the principles fundamental to the organisation of the church. Their refusal to profess allegiance to an immoral government can be traced back to the tangled origins of dissenting Presbyterianism in Scotland and to fiery conflicts over the union of church and state. Convinced of the morally deficient character of American government – the Federal Constitution failed to acknowledge the existence of God, the authority of Scripture, or the mediatorial reign of Christ over the nations – Reformed Presbyterians refused to "incorporate... with the political body". A schism in 1833 created a New Light church which allowed members to vote and to hold political office, but conservative, rural Old Lights maintained their view of the Constitution as a godless document.⁷

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5. This usage draws on Troeltsch: "Pietism does not seek to reform the world... [It makes] life... more personal and inward... When it does influence civilization at all, particularly on the personal and social side, it does so reluctantly and almost involuntarily". Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*, trans. Olive Wyon (2 vols., London, 1931), II, 718–19. It should be remembered, however, that Troeltsch indicated several kinds of pietism, and contrasted the quietist, Continental model with the Puritan pietism of England, activist and reformist, seeking to reform the culture. William G. McLoughlin, drawing on H.R. Niebuhr and E.S. Morgan regards this dynamic pietist-perfectionism as one of the bases of American civilization, and the tensions within it (between conservatives seeking to maintain perfect moral order and an organic state and antinomians primarily concerned to attain perfect moral freedom) as continuous throughout American history. William G. McLoughlin, Jr., "Pietism and the American Character", *American Quarterly* (1965), 163–86.
 6. George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism: 1870–1925* (New York, 1980), pp.85–93; George F. Magoun, *Asa Turner: A Home Missionary Patriarch* (Boston, 1889), pp.283–84; Thomas B. Miller, *Original and Selected Thoughts on the Life and Times of Rev. Thomas Miller, and Rev. Thomas Warburton* (Bethlehem, Pa., 1860), p.17.
 7. H.K. Carroll, *The Religious Forces of the United States Enumerated, Classified and Described on the Basis of the Government Census of 1890* (New York, 1893), 309–12; Robert E. Thompson, *A History of the Presbyterian Churches in the United States* (New York, 1895), pp.75, 102–4; James B. Scouller, *A Manual of the United Presbyterian Church of North America 1751–1887*, rev. ed. (Pittsburgh, 1887), pp.155–56; Samuel B. Wylie, *The Two Sons of Oil; or, the Faithful Witness for Magistracy and Ministry upon a Scriptural Basis*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia, 1850), pp.47–71.

As for the band of premillennialist evangelicals in antebellum America, it was not just the irremediability of American institutions by political means that encouraged them to shun politics, but the supreme irrelevance of those means during “the last days” preceding Christ’s return “to cleanse his sanctuary”. What, wondered Millerite Adventists, did the result of a presidential election matter when the universe itself was on the eve of destruction, when “all sublunary affairs” were approaching their “final termination”? A heated discussion between a millenarian and a campaigning Kentuckian seemed to end with: “I tell you my friend, you are going to be defeated: Christ is coming to take the reins of government before the next inauguration”, but the politician promptly replied: “I bet one hundred dollars he can’t carry Kentucky.”⁸

“Pietists” and pre-millennialists of this stripe were always a minority in these years, but even the majority of Reformed churchmen hesitated before involving themselves in the new political arrangements of the second party system. They saw in the new guiding maxims of public life – “party is the despot”; “all is fair in politics” – a fundamental threat to American liberty, democratic self-government and the moral order on which the republic’s health depended.⁹ Their arguments were in essence threefold: that party conflict militated against the social harmony on which millennial advance depended, that moral standards in public life had sunk as politicians had allowed party and not country or conscience to make the prior claims on their loyalties, and that the new style of electioneering tended to corrupt the morals and religious habits of the population at large.

Drawing on the same vision of social unanimity that had informed much eighteenth-century political thinking, secular and Puritan, Reformed Protestants commonly invoked the warnings of George Washington’s Farewell Address and attacked the “foul spirit of party” for artificially dividing a naturally harmonious community and for unpatriotically putting the interests of a mere section or faction before the nation as a whole. Cornelius Cuyler, pastor of the Second Presbyterian church in Philadelphia, complained that “invidious distinctions are made, and the parties excited against each other” for selfish advantage, not because of any “natural and irreconcilable” enmity between them. To such minds Americans’ common attachment to republicanism, free institutions, the Union and Christian principles indicated an essential unity, a

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8. Jonathan K. Peck, *Luther Peck and His Five Sons* (Cincinnati, 1897), p.216. For Millerism and its prophecies of the world’s end, first in 1843 and then in March and October 1844, see Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1950).
 9. Alexander, T. McGill, *The Presence of God a People’s Prosperity: a Sermon...* (Philadelphia, 1841), p.7; Benjamin Labaree, *A Sermon on the Death of General Harrison...* (Middlebury, Vt., 1841), pp.14-15; Stephen Colwell, *Politics for American Christians; or, a Word upon our Example as a Nation, our Labour, our Trade, Elections, Education, and Congressional Legislation* (Philadelphia, 1852), pp.52-55; *Oberlin Evangelist*, 20 Nov. 1844; James C. Watson, *Oration on the Death of William Henry Harrison* (Gettysburg, 1841), p.19.

“pulse of social feeling” that political parties prevented from flowering except briefly at times of national crisis or tragedy. When President William H. Harrison died shortly after the log-cabin campaign of 1840 evangelicals in unison told a stunned nation that his removal had been designed by God to demonstrate the folly of party strife and the essential oneness of the nation. “Have not Americans sacrificed their brotherhood at the shrine of party Molochs?” asked John Duncan of Baltimore. “Or, does the exalted Son of God – who founded political science upon the philosophy of human nature – sanction such unfraternal detraction and discord?”¹⁰

Reformed churchmen and women shared the widespread belief that standards of morality had degenerated under the pressures of the new political system. Candidates for office, the Congregational minister Leonard Bacon complained, were selected by their parties on the evidence not of their ability but their “availability” or electoral potential. The ever-tightening bonds of discipline and loyalty ensured that the party would rally to the colours of men whose character and lives would not bear close scrutiny, and who, as “bagatelle politicians”, were in public life for the spoils of office and for opportunities for outright fraud.¹¹ Public morals were said to be vulnerable to heavy drinking and “bacchanalian orgies” at various levels of government. “Maddened, wine-heated politicians” quarrelled, swore, spat, threatened and stabbed one another, “and in defiance of the laws of God and man, challenge[d] each other to deadly combat”. Drinking, gambling and profanity were a trinity of vices commonly attributed to steam-boat travelling politicians. Drink also underlay Sabbath-breaking, the most serious examples of which – Sabbath-sittings of congress –

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10. Leonard Bacon, *The Duties Connected with the Present Commercial Distress. A Sermon...* (New Haven, 1837), pp.12–14; Cornelius C. Cuyler, *The Signs of the Times: a Series of Discourses...* (Philadelphia, 1839), p.261; William Ramsey, *A Sermon Occasioned by the Death of William Henry Harrison...* (Philadelphia, 1841), p.14; John Wheeler, *A Discourse, Occasioned by the Death of Gen. William Henry Harrison...* (Burlington, Vt., 1841), pp.12–15, 30–32; William T. Dwight, “A Great Man Fallen”. *A Discourse on the Death of President Harrison...* (Portland Me., 1841), pp.17–19; William C. Crane, *A Discourse Occasioned by the Death of William Henry Harrison...* (Montgomery, Ala., 1841), p.7; John Mason Duncan, *A Discourse Delivered on the Fast Day Recommended by the President of the United States* (Baltimore, 1841), pp.21, 24–30; Nathaniel Hewit, *Discourse at the Funeral Solemnities...* (Bridgeport, Ct., 1841), pp.12–13.
11. Bacon, *Commercial Distress*, p.12; Edward A. Lawrence, *A Discourse on the Death of.. Daniel Webster...* (Boston, 1852), p.14; Silas McKeen, *God Our Only Hope. A Discourse on the Condition and Prospects of Our Country...* (Belfast, Me., 1837), pp.20–22; E. Stearns, “Christian Politics”, *Quarterly Christian Spectator*, 10 (1838), 437; Calvin Fletcher, *The Diary of Calvin Fletcher*, ed. Gayle Thornbrough, Dorothy L. Riker, and Paula Corpuz (6 vols., Indianapolis, 1972–1977), III, 80; Horace Bushnell, “American Politics”, *American National Preacher*, 14 (Dec. 1840), 201; George Lewis, *Impressions of America and the American Churches: From the Journal of the Rev. G. Lewis...* (Edinburgh, 1845), pp.394–96; Charles White, “Political Rectitude”, *American Biblical Repository*, 3rd ser. 2 (Oct. 1846), 602–12.

“phrenzied and half intoxicated multitude of the nation’s counsellors”.¹²

This lack of public virtue was held to be closely related to an insidious and developing godlessness in civic life. Reformed Protestants nostalgically invoked an idealised model of an earlier generation of political leaders who had publicly recognised their responsibilities to a Christian God; in particular they lauded the exemplary Washington, who had maintained a “deep and home felt piety” in his public dealings. But the first president had so plainly been succeeded by “infidel, swearing, drunken blacklegs” that decent Christian men now feared to expose themselves to the corrupting influence of politics and refused to stand for office. “The holding of office under the present system of politics”, reflected William McCollom, “is considered *prima facie* evidence against a man’s Christianity”. In their unprincipled determination to please all men, a Harrisburg Presbyterian acidly complained, politicians were inclined “to laugh with the Infidel, and pray with the Christian”. They might attend church, but there seemed every reason to assume that the wry confession of Martin Van Buren, political manager *par excellence*, that “I am accustomed, when men are preaching, to occupy my mind with political thoughts”, provided evidence for a general indictment of his breed. A number of random examples of the incomplete hold of scriptural Christianity over contemporary politicians did not augur well: Governor Bell of Texas invoked in a proclamation of thanksgiving “the beautiful and expressive language of the Bible” to rejoice that “the Winter of our discontent is gone”; and an Ohio politician announced that the course of the opposition party reminded him of the passage of holy writ, “*Whom God intends to destroy he first makes mad*”.¹³

The corrupting influence of the new party system seemed most evident during the “political phrensy”, “volcanic and subterranean thunderings” and “reckless agitation” of election campaigns. Demagogues and conniving newspaper editors traded in “falsehood, slanders, bribes”; shunned solemn discussions of political principle in favour of venomous personal abuse and the “scalping and roasting alive of opponents”; resorted to forgery and trickery; aroused “low passions” and “wild, blind, reckless partisanship” in the “fickle multitude”. Men consequently sank their reason, intelligence and individual judgment – the very essence of both Protestantism and democratic republicanism – in servility to a

12. *Oberlin Evangelist*, 28 Mar. 1849; Labaree, *Harrison*, pp.13, 19; George Duffield, *A Thanksgiving Sermon. The Religious Character of a People the True Element of Their Prosperity* (Detroit, 1839), pp.12–13; Cuyler, *Signs of the Times*, pp.75–81; Charles White, *A Sermon... May 14, 1841, the Day of the National Fast...* (Owego, N.Y., 1841), pp.31–34; Jonathan Blanchard, *A Perfect State of Society...* (Oberlin, Ohio, 1839), p.12.
13. Wheeler, *Harrison*, pp.26–27; Colwell, *Politics for American Christians*, p.59; Henry A. Boardman, *A Sermon Occasioned by the Death of William Henry Harrison...* (Philadelphia, 1841), pp.18–24; John Richards, *Eulogy Pronounced Before the Citizens of Windsor...* (Windsor, Vt., 1841), pp.16–18; Cornelius C. Vanarsdale, *Lessons of Wisdom for a Mourning People...* (Philadelphia, 1841), p.16; William R. De Witt, *A Discourse on the Life and Character of Francis R. Shunk...* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1848), p.26; David O. Mears, *Life of Edward Norris Kirk, D.D.* (Boston, 1877), p.49.

party's success at the polls. "Men are always irresponsible when they act in masses", Horace Bushnell reflected. "Conscience belongs to the individual, and when all individuality is lost, conscience is lost too." Little wonder that he and other Reformed spokesmen considered political parties and their electoral activities to be "the worst form of papacy ever invented".¹⁴

No-holds-barred electioneering threatened to destroy "the morals and conscience of the community". The hickory poles, log cabins, cider barrels and other partisan symbols were a frivolous expense: "a reckless waste in useless trappings", sighed Mary Riggs, "of that which might have supplied many perishing heathen with the bread of life". Swearing, gambling, drinking and tobacco-chewing reached distressing levels. (One minister reported from Baltimore at the climax of a presidential election: "As the tidings grew more and more unfavourable to the whigs, the ladies say that they spit tobacco in such quantities, that Market St. for several days could not be promenade with any safety to their dresses - the pavement was so flooded.")¹⁵ In such a context the religious sensibilities of Christians themselves were vulnerable. Religious activities and revivals declined; family worship and the home were neglected. Even ministers' piety could suffer. James Welch, an agent of the American Sunday School Union itinerating in upstate New York confided to his diary in 1840: "For several months past I have not enjoyed the sweet intercourse of soul with my Saviour that I ought... This I believe to be owing very much to my wandering manner of life... and also to the fact, that I have allowed myself to feel too much interest in the political excitement which has surrounded me ever [*sic*] where I go for the last twelve months past." The inner calm of the church was as susceptible to disturbance as the spiritual peace of the individual. The Baptist evangelist Thomas Sheardown told of "fearful alienations" in churches during the log-cabin campaign. On the last evening of a largely unsuccessful protracted meeting in New York state the revivalist overheard one member of the church offering thanks to God for answering his daily prayer that "little or nothing [be] effected"; incensed by the pastor's readiness to allow the church's use for political purposes to one party but not to the other, the man had set out vindictively to choke off the revival effort. One church member later begged forgiveness of another, confessing "Your politics were the opposite of mine. You know I would often drive around, on your carriage road, with my buggy blazoned with "Tippecanoe". I would sing a song, crack my whip, and was gone.

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14. John M. Krebs, *Righteousness the Foundation of National Prosperity. A Sermon...* (New York, 1835), p.21; Edward N. Kirk, *An Oration on the Occasion of the National Fast...* (New York, 1841), p.25; John Codman, *The Importance of Moderation in Civil Rulers. A Sermon...* (Boston, 1840), p.14; Cuyler, *Signs of the Times*, p.289; Oberlin Evangelist, 9 Oct., 20 Nov. 1844; Horace Bushnell, *Politics Under the Law of God. A Discourse...* (Hartford, Ct., 1844), pp.11-12.
15. Mrs. Stephen R. Riggs to her brothers, 20 Jan. 1841, Riggs Papers, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia; White, *National Fast*, p.37; R. Emory to C. Emory, 13 Nov. 1844, Emory Papers, Drew University Library, Madison, N.J.

I knew it would make you mad. I did it wilfully.”¹⁶

Many of those who spoke for the Reformed churches, then, considered parties and popular elections to be political elements inimical to religion and good social order, and their view was seemingly confirmed by God’s dealings with their nation. Why else should he have removed William Harrison and Zachary Taylor from presidential office if not to rebuke the convulsive electioneering and gladiatorial warfare that surrounded them? Yet from the earliest years of the second party system there were those who recognized that, as Tryon Edwards argued, “parties ever must exist in our land”. “Honest party differences”, he acknowledged, “we must ever expect will exist; and thorough and frequent scrutiny of opposing principles, we must expect will ever be made; and both are deeply to be respected and desired, for they are the pledge of our safety.” The inherited, Puritan vision of a consensual, organic society grew dimmer as Reformed Protestants came increasingly to accept political parties as irremovable elements in free democratic life, a necessary evil whose worst excesses might perhaps be eliminated but whose presence had to be stoically endured. Some indeed came to look to parties as agents of moral and religious progress and called for a “Christian party in politics”. Ezra Stiles Ely, pastor of the Seventh Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, was one of the earliest to see the merits of a combination of evangelical voters co-operating to secure the election of “sincere friend[s] of Christianity” who would “act in conformity with its precepts”. His appeal to “the truly Christian sects” in 1828 brought down on his head a heap of abuse from within and without the evangelical churches: was this not the re-creation of a Calvinist establishment by some other means? Yet the call was highly significant and underscores the fact that even during these years of mission-focussed evangelicalism, the Calvinist vision of politics as a means of introducing God’s kingdom remained strong and ensured that Reformed Christians could not ignore their public social responsibilities. As the pre-eminent revivalist Charles G. Finney realised, “Politics are a part of religion in such a country as this.”¹⁷

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16. William Wisner, *Incidents in the Life of a Pastor* (New York, 1852), pp.267–70; *New York Evangelist*, 21 Nov. 1844; James E. Welch diary, 7 Oct. 1840, Presbyterian Historical Society; William B. Sprague, *A Sermon on the Danger of Political Strife...* (Albany, 1844); Thomas S. Sheardown, *Half a Century’s Labors in the Gospel... An Autobiography...* (Lewisburg, Pa., 1865), pp.24–42, 247–49.
17. Dwight, “*A Great Man Fallen*”, pp.17–19; Erskine Mason, *God’s Hand in Human Events. A Sermon... on... the Death of President Taylor* (New York, 1850); Abraham B. Van Zandt, *God’s Voice to the Nation: A Sermon Occasioned by the Death of Zachary Taylor* (Petersburg, Va., 1850), pp.15–16; Tryon Edwards, *God’s Voice to the Nation: A Discourse...* (Rochester, N.Y. 1841), pp.9–10; Boardman, *Webster*, pp.35–36; Joseph L. Blau, “The Christian Party in Politics”, *The Review of Religion*, 11 (Nov. 1946), 18–35; “Party Spirit in America”, *Christian Review*, 20 (1855), 96–108; Thompson, *Duties of the Christian Citizen*, pp.15–16; South Middlesex Conference of Churches, *The Political Duties of Christians. A Report...* (Boston, 1848), p.22; Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (New York, 1835), p.274. Ronald P. Formisano, *The Transformation of Political Culture: Massachusetts Parties 1790s to 1840* (New York, 1983), 93–101, documents the shifting attitudes to party amongst the Massachusetts clergy from 1800 to 1844 and notes the explicit and controversial acceptance of the benefits of party in the 1840s.

IV

In essence, two sorts of pressure drove the major Calvinist churches towards political engagement, one external, the other from within. First, total withdrawal from politics would have set them swimming against the tide of American popular culture in an era when in so many other ways they found themselves flowing with it. Evangelical Protestants, ministers as well as laymen, found it difficult not to be carried along by the unprecedented popular enthusiasm for political electioneering. A Methodist presiding elder in eastern Tennessee in the early 1840s described something of the transforming power of partisan politics on the community's life:

The hotels, the stores, and even the shops were regarded as Whig or Democratic, and thus patronized by the parties. There was scarcely any such thing as neutrality. Almost every one – high or low, rich or poor, black or white – was arranged on one side or the other; and if any one, though a minister of the Gospel, refused to allow himself to be classed with either party, he was very apt to be denounced by both.

Under the pressure of such high partisanship some religious groups retreated from an earlier “no politics” position. The Reformed Presbyterian schism mentioned earlier followed directly on dissident members' voting in the 1832 election. Jacob Osgood of New Hampshire had classified the federal government under the Virginia Dynasty as “the beast”, had professed Christ as the only ruler and had been “Redeemed from town meetings. And voting for men”, but his followers were drawn as if magically from these earlier loyalties into the Jacksonian coalition of the 1830s and 1840s.¹⁸

Secondly, most evangelicals through the first half of the nineteenth century, especially Calvinists of the Reformed tradition, but also many Arminians, remained profoundly influenced by the Puritan conception of the state as a moral being and by its corollary, that Christians had a political duty to develop and maintain virtue and the highest standards in the conduct of civil affairs. They recognized their responsibility not just as citizens but as Christians to protect their country's precious but vulnerable experiment in republicanism and representative democracy, widely thought to be “the purest and best of all human governments”, one which came closer to the ideal standard of excellence than any other man had devised. Their faith in democratic republicanism ran far deeper than their defensive, conservative reaction to the social changes of the first half of the nineteenth century might suggest. It was the excrescences and perversions of the political system, not its basic principles, that caused concern. For Thomas H. Skinner, the influential east-coast Presbyterian, the nation's prosperity derived from the placing of supreme power in the hands of a popular

18. H.H. Green, *The Simple Life of a Commoner. An Autobiography* (Decorah, Iowa, 1911), pp.51–52; Jacob Osgood, *The Life and Christian Experience of Jacob Osgood...* (Warner, N.H., 1873), pp.1–32, 61–65, 84, 114–16.

majority. Such men saw the positive side of elections: the “sublime moral spectacle” of millions of freemen scattered across the country peaceably choosing their next ruler; the essential “self-control” of the electorate, the “self-recovering energy” of the United States Constitution; the orderly transfer of power from one administration to another.¹⁹

What gave American civil institutions their particular charm and significance was not their efficacy or novelty but the fact that they appeared, in William Dwight’s words, “consonant with the genius of Christianity”. If there was some argument over the scriptural justification for democracy – Horace Bushnell demanded to know where precisely Christ had sanctioned democracy and warned sternly against “Gospel jacobinism” – there was more general agreement that American republicanism enjoyed biblical sanction, that as Theodore Frelinghuysen argued, “Republic is a word of Christian meaning”. The Baptist Robert Turnbull took the text “God hath made of one blood all the nations of men to dwell upon the face of the earth” to support his contention that the principles of freedom and equality written into the Federal Constitution were scripturally sound.²⁰ But American republicanism was not just scripturally-based: it was God-given, part of the Lord’s “grand and glorious destiny” for the country. A divine providence had protected the nation’s civil and religious liberties through the Revolution, superintended their codification in the Constitution and ensured their survival through the trials of the war of 1812. It was clear to the New York Presbyterian John Krebs that “*God... has made us to differ.*” Nathaniel Bouton elaborated on the same theme: the free inhabitants and institutions of the United States contrasted starkly with “the benighted... subjects of despotic power in Asia and Africa”, “the serfs of Russia”, “the unenlightened... tenants of Ireland”, “the vassals of Spanish and Turkish domination”, “the... convulsive and unintelligent liberty of France”, and “the mixed freedom and oppression of England”. America’s function was to provide “a monument and pattern of liberty” that would “spread joy over the whole earth”, secure “the world’s enfranchisement”, lead the nations “to peace,

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19. T.H. Skinner, *Religion and Liberty. A Discourse...* (New York, 1841), pp.22–24; Bela B. Edwards, *Address Delivered on the Day of the National Fast...* (Andover, 1841), pp.22–25; Mark Hopkins, *A Sermon, Delivered at Plymouth* (Boston, 1847), pp.14–16. Fred J. Hood, *Reformed America: The Middle and Southern States, 1783–1837* (University of Alabama, Ala., 1980) argues persuasively that the political thinking of many early nineteenth-century Baptists, Methodists and Episcopalians was much influenced by the Reformed tradition.
20. Dwight, “*A Great Man Fallen*”, pp.14–15; Bushnell, “American Politics”, 199–200; Theodore J. Frelinghuysen, *An Inquiry into the Moral and Religious Character of the American Government* (New York, 1838), p.143; Robert Turnbull, *The Mighty Fallen! A Sermon...* (Boston, 1841), pp.19–20; Charles B. Boynton, *Oration, Delivered on the Fifth of July 1847...* (Cincinnati, 1847), p.19; Lyman Beecher, “Republicanism of the Bible”, *The Hesperian: or Western Monthly Magazine*, 1 (1838), 47–53 [“our own republic, in its constitution and its laws, is of heavenly origin. It was not borrowed from Greece or Rome, but... from the Bible”]; Enoch Pond, “Republican Tendencies of the Bible”, *American Biblical Repository*, 3rd ser. 4 (Apr. 1848), 283–98; John Mason Peck, *The Principles and Tendencies of Democracy. An Address...* (Belville, Ill., 1838), p.11.

prosperity, and civil and religious" freedom and thwart the ambitions of despots who prayed the American experiment would fall. Bela Edwards invoked John Winthrop: "our invaluable civil polity... is... like a city set on a hill".²¹

Republicanism was a beautiful but tender plant, a form of government "which has never yet succeeded since the world stood". Without the protection of public virtue and religion it would perish. This conviction had in part originated in the blend of Common Sense philosophy and Reformed theology found in the teachings of John Witherspoon and Samuel Stanhope Smith at the College of New Jersey. It was a belief that found its way into Washington's Farewell Address and came deeply and widely to affect political and religious thinking. Its mid-nineteenth-century proponents saw no inherent contradiction in their pursuing a public and influential role for religion while subscribing to a Federal Constitution which ruled that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion". Cornelius Cuyler stressed that he was "not a believer in the absurdity of making men religious by law". Many drew a distinction between "a government under the control of a usurping church" and "one which is pervaded by the religious sentiment holding itself responsible not to a church, but to God, wielding a power derived, not from hierarchy, but from Jehovah's throne". As Thomas Skinner explained, "Between legislative interference [in religion] and absolute unconcern, there lies a wide field of favourable and most genial influences". The moral code of Christianity had a clear part to play, not just in keeping individual citizens up to the mark but in ensuring that the political body in its different manifestations should be "an image of the great king". Government was not just a social compact of human creation but an instrument of God.²²

Practically speaking, this meant, first, that rulers were expected to follow Washington's commended example in publicly recognizing God's providential government. One means was through a wider adoption of the Puritan annual thanksgiving for national blessings, a biblical duty, explained Samuel Burchard, "consonant with the purest feelings of Christian patriotism". By no means a universal practice, it achieved a wider currency in the pre-civil war period; Alfred Brunson recalled that in Wisconsin territory in 1840 the governor

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21. Krebs, *Righteousness*, p.6; Nathaniel Bouton, *The Good Land in which We Live. A Discourse...* (Concord, N.H., 1850), pp.9-10; Bela Bates Edwards, *Address Delivered on the Day of the National Fast* (Andover, 1841), pp.22-28; Joseph Abbott, *A Sermon Preached on the National Fast, May 14, 1841...* (Salem, Mass., 1841), p.13; Charles B. Boynton, *Our Country, the Herald of a New Era. A Lecture...* (Cincinnati, 1847), pp.4-13, 20; B.F. Morris, *Our Country. Three Discourses...* (Lawrenceburgh, Ind., 1848), pp.3-21.
 22. Hood, *Reformed America*, pp.7-112; Cuyler, *Signs of the Times*, p.291; Boynton, *Our Country*, p.12; Skinner, *Religion and Liberty*, pp.vi, 74; Frelinghuysen, *Inquiry*, pp.iii-iv, 184-98, 200-01, 207; Duncan, *Discourse on the Fast Day*, pp.6-7; Bushnell, *Politics Under the Law of God*, pp.10-11; J. Alden, "Baird's Religion in America Reviewed", *American Biblical Repository*, 3rd ser. 1 (1845), 492; Edward W. Hooker, "Political Duties of Christians", *American Quarterly Observer*, 1 (July 1833), 14; Lyman H. Atwater, *The Importance of Good Rulers... A Sermon...* (New Haven, 1844), pp.3-8.

called for a thanksgiving day to satisfy the Christians of eastern origins, but it was so much a novelty that westerners "knew not how to begin or end the service". Reformed churches hoped, too, that chief executives would appoint days for fasting, humiliation and prayer similar to those called during the Revolutionary struggle; they were as unimpressed by Jackson's failure to act during the cholera epidemic of 1832 as they were cheered by John Tyler's recommendation of a national fast at the time of Harrison's death.²³ Many believed that the best way for the nation's rulers to acknowledge their dependence on God was to provide Christian chaplains for congress, the army and the navy. There was some resistance to their appointment, since the government's paying of clergymen seemed a direct violation of the separation of church and state, and Reformed churchmen howled loudly when some state legislatures defeated proposals to appoint chaplains to conduct daily prayer.²⁴

Secondly, rulers had a duty to ensure that their civil laws reflected "the Divine law" and that legislation was consistent with "the great statute book", the Bible; they should honour the institutions of Christianity and safeguard the religious liberties of their subjects. Reformed Protestants worked to sustain state laws against blasphemy and those protecting the right to undisturbed worship, but their most persistent concern was to maintain "the Sabbath and its sanctions" against erosion by state and federal laws. It was understood that church attendance was not a matter for civil enforcement; but it was equally clear that the government's blessing on Sunday travel by railroad, canal or turnpike, and in particular the opening of government post offices and the movement of federal mails on the Sabbath trampled on the religious liberties of pious citizens. A contributor to the *Philadelphia Repository* complained of the widespread and corrosive impression "that the violation of the Sabbath by a state is not a crime of the same magnitude as its violation by an individual".²⁵

A nation had, in fact, as much duty as any individual to behave in a moral, Christian fashion. It had a collective personality and could "fill up the measure of its iniquity" as well as any one of its inhabitants. Commonly taking as their

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23. Samuel D. Burchard, *Causes of National Solicitude. A Sermon...* (New York, 1848), p.5; Alfred Brunson, *A Western Pioneer: or, Incidents of the Life and Times of the Rev. Alfred Brunson...* (2 vols., Cincinnati, 1880), II, 140; Philip D. Jordan, *William Salter, Western Torch-bearer* (Oxford, Ohio, 1939), p.58; David H. Riddle, *The Morning Cometh; or, The Watchman's Voice. A Discourse...* (Pittsburgh, 1841), p.3; William B. Sprague, *The Voice of the Rod. A Sermon...* (Albany, 1841), pp.5-6; Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America", *Daedalus*, 96 (Winter 1967), 1-21.
 24. Opponents of government-appointed chaplains, who included Antimission Baptists in the South, forced the Thirty-third Congress to address the issue in 1853-54: the offices were retained. Lorenzo D. Johnson, *Chaplains of the General Government, with Objections to their Employment Considered* (New York, 1856), pp.5-23.
 25. *Western Christian Advocate*, 16 Oct. 1840, 4 Feb., 2 Sept. 1842; *New York Evangelist*, 7 Mar., 19 Apr. 1844; McGill, *Presence of God*, p.9; Nathaniel Gage, *Sins and Dangers of the Times. A Sermon...* (Haverhill, Mass., 1838), pp.6-9; Cuyler, *Signs of the Times*, p.293.

text Proverbs xiv 34 (“Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people”), Reformed preachers pursued through the pages of the Bible and their history books the evidence that “destruction awaits a wicked nation”. “Where”, asked a Cincinnati Presbyterian, “is Nineveh and Babylon, and old Tyre? Where is the throne of Alexander, the seat of Caesars,... the dukedoms of Edom and the mighty republics of Greece?” Revolutionary France had been “drenched in blood” for abolishing the Sabbath and pronouncing all religion a delusion. Most persuasive of all was the destruction of Jerusalem, the scattering of the Jews and the other sufferings that the sins of God’s chosen people had called down upon them. If America’s rulers lapsed from the highest standards of public virtue and ignored the voice of God the country would forfeit its status as most favoured nation and exemplar to the world: “the destroying angel”, Joseph Abbott warned, would “number the days of our prosperity” and the dawn of the millennium would be postponed.²⁶

In their sermons, tracts and flourishing weekly and quarterly press, Reformed ministers and laymen elaborated at length the duties of the Christian in God’s new Israel. Carrying into the political arena a conscience purified by the Lord’s grace, he had an obligation to cultivate an energetic, participatory citizenship. Its staple ingredient should be “frequent and earnest prayer” for the nation’s rulers, for the scriptures enjoined intercessions for magistrates and those in authority. “As without prayer for ourselves, we cannot hope for the blessings of heaven”, a New Orleans Presbyterian observed, “so without prayer for our rulers, we have no right to look for public blessings.”²⁷ But prayer alone was insufficient. Just as evangelicals developed an “instrumentalist” theology of revivals that encouraged the use of means extending well beyond prayer – protracted meetings, sustained preaching, the call to the altar, and so on – so too they advocated various additional methods to achieve Christian political ends.

The most essential of these was “a regular and conscientious exercise of the elective franchise”. Voting was more than a banal mechanism of democratic politics. For many it was an inestimable privilege and priceless trust, with an at times transcendent significance. The great majority were ready to accept Francis Wayland’s counsel that Christian citizens were morally obliged to vote

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26. Krebs, *Righteousness*, p.6 and passim; William Ramsey, *A Sermon Occasioned by the Death of William Henry Harrison...* (Philadelphia, 1841), pp.6, 14; Sprague, *Voice of the Rod*, pp.21–22; Joshua L. Wilson, *A Sermon, in Memory of the Death of William Henry Harrison...* (Cincinnati, 1841), pp.9–10; Labaree, *Harrison*, pp.8–11; Vanarsdale, *Lessons of Wisdom*, pp.34–36; William B. Sprague, *A Sermon Addressed to the Second Presbyterian Congregation in Albany, March 4, 1838...* (Albany, 1838), p.7; Abbott, *Sermon on the National Fast*, p.20.
27. Heman Humphrey, *Death of President Harrison. A Discourse...* (Amherst, 1841), pp.22–23; William C. Anderson, *The Republic and the Duties of the Citizen. A Sermon...* (Dayton, Ohio, 1847), p.15; William A. Scott, *The Duty of Praying for Our Rulers: a Discourse...* (New Orleans, 1843), p.3 and passim. For the argument that “the habits of praying for [public men of the opposite party] would soften the asperities of political strife” see Thompson, *Christian Citizen*, pp.11–13.

in every election. They should not be bullied out of their democratic rights by those who sought to curb evangelical influence in politics, who feared a revival of early colonial arrangements by which the franchise was restricted to church members, and who wished to encourage a "public sentiment" that it was improper for ministers to vote. In practice most ministers were determined voters, as in the case of the Dutch Reformed pastor, George Bethune, who "would stand at the poll... for hours to deposit his vote". Casting a ballot was unquestionably a moral act. Each voter should remember he was accountable for the actions of those he elected. Far too many men, complained an Old School Presbyterian, were Christians in church only, praying on the morning of election days for "just men, ruling in the fear of God", but then stepping out to commit the sin of "bad voting".²⁸

In a world where lay evangelicals often participated actively and significantly in the political life of the community,²⁹ many Reformed churchmen argued that their duties properly extended no further than "silent voting" and a "pious resignation" in the face of the result. The true Christian would avoid party caucuses or "gabbling about party questions". He would not succumb to poisonous abuse and personal denigration, staples of electioneering wholly at odds with his obligation to avoid "speaking evil of magistrates". Equally ruinous was the "idolatrous homage" and "fanatical praise" political supporters tendered their leaders. Their faith in human instrumentality superseded a proper trust in God. President Harrison's death, for example, was widely interpreted as a rebuke to the "man worship" of the preceding election campaign.³⁰

If these limits on political activity were appropriate for laymen then they were *a fortiori* proper for ministers. The American reported by Harriet Martineau to have said that the country's clergymen were "a sort of people between men and women" nicely represented their position, which fell short of the adult white male's unquestioned freedom to air his political opinions, and engage energetically in party politics, but which exceeded that of the unfranchised

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28. John Rankin, *The Duty of Voting for Righteous Men for Office* (n.p., n.d.), passim; Abraham R. Van Nest, *Memoir of Rev. Geo. W. Bethune, D.D.* (New York, 1867), p.361; *Baptist Banner* and *New York Observer*, cited in *Western Christian Advocate*, 14 Oct. 1842, 5 July 1848; Charles S. Porter, *A Discourse Occasioned by the Death of William Henry Harrison...* (New York, 1841), p.23; Bushnell, *Politics Under the Law of God*, p.16.
29. Stuart Blumin's study of the ten Protestant churches in Kingston, New York, in the 1850s (which included two Presbyterian, two Baptist and two Dutch Reformed) suggests that the churches' lay leadership tended to be active in the wider life of the community, and constituted 28.6% of the town's political activists. Blumin, "Church and Community: A Case Study of Lay Leadership in Nineteenth-Century America", *New York History*, 56 (Oct. 1975), 404-5.
30. Sprague, *Voice of the Rod*, pp.14-15; Riddle, "Morning Cometh", pp.18-20; Humphrey, *Harrison*, pp.20-21. Van Zandt ruminated: "Perhaps there are no people more prone than we to worship the idol of an hour... There is in this modern apotheosis of individuals an atheistical contempt for Jehovah, which may be well supposed to provoke his displeasure." Van Zandt, *God's Voice*, pp.13-14.

woman. Both Calvinist and a wider public opinion tended to the view that ministers should maintain as far as possible a public political neutrality. Of course, at a time when the ballot was hardly secret, the determined citizen could with little difficulty detect the party loyalties of his pastor. But silent ministerial voting was a qualitatively different act from active canvassing for a political party or candidate, which in many cases the church authorities formally condemned. Nor should "petty popes" use their pulpits for partisan appeals. Thomas Cleland, Presbyterian, lifelong Democrat and friend of Andrew Jackson, was presented as an exemplary model of how even the most politically committed minister could keep partisanship out of his pulpit.³¹

This emphasis on restraint and self-denial represented only one, if significant, element within politically-engaged evangelicalism. Many aspired to a more active political involvement, arguing that since they willed "good and righteous measures" they should logically go well beyond prayer and "silent voting". It was open to all Christians to write to their senators and representatives or even, less discreetly, to lobby at Washington and state capitols; many denominational causes, especially educational ones, were advanced in this way. Some had private access to politicians through close friendship. Edward Norris Kirk's lifelong association with William Seward dated back to their days as student lawyers. The Presbyterian Robert W. Landis regarded the New York Whig John Price Wetherill as "one of my dearest and best friends"; John Mason Peck was equally close to Governor Thomas Carlin of Illinois. At a more public level, committed Christians could sign and circulate petitions for government assistance, for instance in protecting outdoor religious gatherings from hooligan interruption or in sustaining a decent observance of the sabbath.³² Nor was open identification with a political party necessarily undesirable. A Baptist editor urged "the *Christianizing* of an organized party" through believers' carrying their religion with them into party meetings. There was inevitably much argument over the extent to which political issues should be discussed in the pulpit. It was not only in New England, although there the tradition was most firmly rooted, that ministers believed as did Eden Burroughs Foster that they should be "deeply interested in all that concerned the public welfare, and... that the pulpit should be used as much as the press in shaping public opinion in all great questions of the day". European visitors commonly

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31. Harriet Martineau, *Society in America*, ed. Seymour Martin Lipset (New York, 1962), p.352; Edward P. Humphrey and Thomas H. Cleland, *Memoirs of the Rev. Thomas Cleland, D.D.*... (Cincinnati, 1859), p.189; John Codman, *The Signs of the Times. A Sermon...* (Boston, 1836), p.7. The Whiggish George Duffield, aware of public scrutiny and confident that Zachary Taylor would win, cast his vote for Lewis Cass, the Democratic candidate, in the 1848 presidential election, out of "[p]ersonal attachment and to prevent him and his family from harbouring feelings toward myself which might in any degree impair my usefulness". Lewis G. Vander Velde, "Notes on the Diary of George Duffield", *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 24 (1937), 59.
32. C.L. Woodworth, "Edward Norris Kirk", *Congregational Quarterly*, 20 (Apr. 1878), 260; R.W. Landis, *Journal*, unpaginated, Presbyterian Historical Society.

alluded to this "political meddling", noting that in America the pulpit had a "license for political discussion" which, they contended, it happily lacked in the Old World. They were aware that on some estimates canvassing, parading with candidates, taking the stump and even editing political newspapers were legitimate activities for both laymen and ministers provided the aims were righteous and the means honest.³³

The doctrine of political activism reached its logical conclusion in Reformed Protestants' standing for and serving in public office. That there were disreputable men in political service did not fundamentally challenge the view that the life of a statesman was "a high and holy calling". Some ministers were ready to face the electorate but most of the committed Christians who aspired to local, state and national posts were laymen. Many of these carried with them a reputation as leaders in church, missionary and benevolent work. Daniel Haines, prominent lay Presbyterian and active in Bible society circles, became governor of New Jersey. The most active layman of his time and the holder of an impeccable Reformed pedigree, Theodore Frelinghuysen, earned the title of "the Christian Statesman" by combining his ardent championing of evangelical causes as a United States senator and, later, vice-presidential candidate with an impressive list of responsibilities in national societies: the presidencies of the American Tract Society, American Bible Society, and American Board of Control for Foreign Missions, a fifty-year vice-presidency of the American Sunday School Union, and a directing role in the affairs of the American Temperance Union and American Colonization Society. Out of a similar mould came George N. Briggs, urbane Whig congressman from Massachusetts, later to become state governor, whose Baptist upbringing and early conversion established the basis for lifelong prominence in revivals, overseas missions and moral reform.³⁴

IV

Clearly, then, the Reformed churches during the years of the Second Great Awakening did not employ moral suasion to the exclusion of all political means in the pursuit of millennial triumph, nor was the rationale for political activism

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33. *Christian Watchman and Reflector*, 11 Aug. 1840; Eden B. Foster, *Four Pastorates. Glimpses of the Life and Thought of Eden B. Foster, D.D.* (Boston, Mass., 1883), p.70; Lewis, *Impressions of America*, p.394; Thomas Nichols, *Forty Years of American Life* (2 vols., London, 1864), II, 232; *Oberlin Evangelist*, 25 Sept. 1844. For the view that evangelicals and "good men" had a duty to involve themselves in party primaries and other meetings, see for example Samuel T. Spear, *The Politico-Social Foundations of Our Republic. A Sermon...* (New York, 1845), p.12; Thompson, *Christian Citizen*, pp.16-17.
34. James W. Alexander, *Forty Years' Familiar Letters of James W. Alexander, D.D.*... (2 vols., New York, 1860), II, 76; Talbot W. Chambers, *Memoir of the Life and Character of the Late Hon. Theo. Frelinghuysen, LL.D.* (New York, 1863); *Oberlin Evangelist*, 25 Apr. 1849. *Sketch of the Life and Character of George N. Briggs, Late Governor of Massachusetts* (Boston, 186?).

allowed to atrophy. In the 1820s and 1830s the political issues of principal significance to evangelicals – the regulation of the Sabbath, the elimination of duelling, gambling and horse-racing, for instance – assumed a relatively marginal importance in state and national political debate, and for as long as that debate focussed primarily on issues whose moral and religious edges were not especially sharp – currency, banking and economic development – then resistance to full-scale partisan embroilment was relatively easy. In many cases party differences seemed irrelevant, factitious and, in moral terms, insignificant. Yet the existence of a prescription for political activity meant that when the focus of American political argument shifted through the 1840s and 1850s to embrace the issues of temperance, Roman Catholic intrusions, schooling, war, the extension or restriction of slavery and the future of the Union itself, more and more men and women in the Reformed churches were ready to adopt a highly visible political, often partisan, posture.

Under the second party system the partisan loyalties of the Reformed churches had not been uniform. As Horace Bushnell claimed, religious believers were “more or less equally divided between the parties”.³⁵ There was no “Christian party in politics” to harvest the Reformed vote. Congregationalists and New School Presbyterians did indeed tend towards a Whig party which appeared to promise an active, benevolent government that would regulate social behaviour and maintain moral standards; but many Baptists and Old School Presbyterians leant more in the direction of the Democrats, who offered a neutral, passive government to a society in which regenerate individuals should regulate their own behaviour voluntarily. When this party system broke down in the early 1850s under the pressure of issues that the Reformed churches themselves had played a significant part in thrusting into national life, new politico-religious alignments emerged, along sectional axes.

Northern evangelical Protestants, showing more partisan coherence than hitherto, gravitated towards a party whose character and leadership they did much to shape. The agitation out of which the Republican party developed, essentially over the extension of slavery into the twin territories of Kansas and Nebraska, owed more to the moral outrage channelled particularly through Reformed churches than to any other force. Ministers thundered from their pulpits and blasted unregenerate politicians in their polemical literature; three and a half thousand New England clergy petitioned Congress. (“Three thousand men who have the ear of the people once a week are formidable. Probably five hundred of them will preach sermons about [the Kansas-Nebraska bill] and a hundred or so may get printed”, James Russell Lowell told Charles Sumner. “I fancy I see, ‘I will spew thee out of my mouth, a sermon by Rev. Eldad Hicks’, and ‘Ichabod, or his glory is departed, a discourse delivered on Fast Day by Revd. Silas Hopkins.’”) Congregational, Presbyterian (especially New School) and Baptist ministers were active in setting up the new political coalition and could be found campaigning vigorously on its behalf in state and

35. Bushnell, *Politics Under the Law of God*, p.9.

national elections. "The Clergy and old women get the Church members to go for Fremont", complained a New Hampshire Democrat in the presidential election of 1856, during which clergy might be found at the polls urging voters to "vote as you pray, and pray as you vote!"³⁶

The manifest involvement of the northern churches in the developing political agitation over slavery drove many leading southern Protestants, including those of the Reformed tradition, to assume a position of political withdrawal or at least public reticence and to develop an appropriate theological justification for that retreat.³⁷ But far from turning their backs on their Calvinist traditions, the northern Reformed churches, armed with a belief in the duty of political involvement and convinced of the special character and mission of American republicanism and of their obligation to defend it through active citizenship, found no contradiction between historic belief and current political imperative. Storming into the political battleground, they carried with them a contempt for the pragmatic routine of politics, for the bargaining and necessary compromise of principles that was the essence of day-to-day government and policy-making. Their temper was less yielding, more visionary, even utopian, than that of the practical politician. A new passion and moral intensity entered political life. So too did intransigence. And such were the necessary, if not sufficient, conditions for civil war.³⁸

RICHARD CARWARDINE

ISAAC WATTS'S WILL

On 24th November 1748 Enoch Watts wrote from Southampton to Nathaniel Neal in London that he had been advised of his "Brother's Extremity and being near his last hour of life".¹ He told Neal, who was to be his fellow executor of Dr. Watts's will, that he was too ill to visit London and suggested that Neal should

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36. S.W. Dearborn to J.H. George, 29 Oct. 1856, John H. George Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society; J.R. Lowell to C. Sumner, 23 Mar. 1854, Charles Sumner Papers, Harvard University. (Transcripts generously provided by W.E. Gienapp.)
 37. In fact when Lincoln's election threw the nation into crisis Southern Presbyterians and other Reformed churchmen were quick to remove their self-imposed gag and to demand secession as a means of preserving slavery and the southern way of life. See, for example, Ernest Trice Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South* (3 vols., Richmond, Va., 1963-1973), I, 510-71. But for their continuing doubts about human ability in political matters (as in the work of salvation), see Anne C. Loveland, *Southern Evangelicals and the Social Order 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge, 1980), pp.257-65.
 38. James H. Moorhead, *American Apocalypse: Yankee Protestants and the Civil War 1860-1869* (New Haven, 1978) suggests how the pre-Civil War millennialism of the northern evangelical Protestant churches helped take them towards and into the conflict, and provided them with a language and a framework for interpreting it.
 1. All items referred to by date alone are taken from the correspondence between Neal and Watts which is now amongst the Hollis Trust papers in the Sheffield Public Library (reference LD 1171). Almost all are addressed by Watts to Neal.

consult with Lady Abney about the funeral arrangements. Dr. Watts's death took place at Lady Abney's house in Newington where he had lived for many years. Two days later Neal replied to Watts that "your Brother Dr. Isaac Watts having beyond all expectation held out till 3 o'clock yesterday in the afternoon expired". This was the beginning of a year-long correspondence between Enoch Watts and Neal while they disposed of the doctor's property and paid all his legacies. Although Watts had left his affairs in order, making a will and an assignment of his copyrights in good time, his relations created problems for the two executors. However Nathaniel Neal was an attorney who worked for the Million Bank² in the City, and Enoch Watts was a customs officer at Southampton and the member of his immediate family whom the doctor trusted most. Together they were able to solve all the problems.

The smaller legacies were divided almost equally between London and Southampton. Isaac Watts had spent much of his life in London as the minister of the Bury Street church, but he was born and reared in Southampton, where many of his relations still lived. His father had been a deacon of the Above Bar Independent Church there. Before 1688, like many other nonconformists in the town, he had suffered persecution, but after Toleration he became an honoured and distinguished citizen. He served various offices in the parish of St. Michael, and was invited to sign the returns at parliamentary elections.³ His son Enoch and his daughter Sarah had stayed in Southampton. The latter had married another member of the Above Bar congregation, James Brackstone, early in 1708,⁴ but was now a widow. His son Richard was a prosperous London medical practitioner, and his son Thomas was the postmaster of Chichester. All were prosperous and Isaac Watts's only poor relation was a married niece, Mary Chaldecott, whose husband was so very anxious to see the benefits of a bequest of South Sea stock. The London bequests were to Lady Abney, her family and servants.

The first problem which Watts and Neal had to solve was the arrangements for the funeral. In his will the doctor had asked to be buried "with as little funerall show and pomp as possible".⁵ But earlier in 1741 he had prepared "Instructions to Dr. Watts Executors" setting out what he wished in detail. A copy of this had gone to his brother Enoch. He now sent it on to Neal:⁶

If I dye in or near London I would chuse to be buried in the New Burying ground in Bunhill fields, deep in Earth, and among the reliques of many pious friends and predecessors, with whom I desire to be found in the Resurrection. Let the funeral be by Day-

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2. The Million Bank was established in 1694 by the subscribers to William III's million lottery. See *Guide to the Public Record Office*, vol. 1 (1963), p. 35.
 3. Southampton Record Office [SRO], St. Michael's poor rate book, 1672-1701; SC2/1/8. Public Record Office, Returns of MPs for Southampton 1701-12.
 4. SRO, PR7/1/1/2, f.34.
 5. The will was proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury on 6 Dec. 1748. There is an official copy in LD1171.
 6. 27 Apr. 1749.

light and early, with as little Expense and show as possible, not Exceeding Twenty pounds at the utmost.

Let two Independent Ministers, Two Presbyterians, and Two Baptists attend the Corps, without regarding whether single or Married, nor shall any Scarves or Rings be given, only hatbands and gloves, which a foolish Custom seems to have made necessary.

I prefer a funeral from some publick hall or Meeting house near the Burying place, as being most convenient for pious and profitable Conversation among my friends, Meeting there and walking to the grave, if the Season will permit if not, let there be three or four coaches, tho' I do not approve of that hurry and pomp if it may be done otherwise.

In the absence of Enoch Watts Neal had requested Dr. Richard Watts to be present at the reading of the will on the day after the doctor's death. Lady Abney, Miss Abney, a nephew and several others were present.⁷ Afterwards they discussed the funeral arrangements - "tho' we are all averse to anything of show, yet the limits prescribed in the paper you sent up appear impossible to be observed". Lady Abney had proposed a lead coffin, costing £12 or £13, because this would enable the funeral to be postponed until Enoch could reach London. The ministers would not be able to walk to Bunhill Fields even if the weather were fine because there would be "such a mob attending 'em as would be indecent and intolerable". If only two ministers were to be invited from each of the three denominations then some of his "most intimate friends must be overlooked" in favour of two Baptists whom he hardly knew. For this reason five or six coaches were to be provided for the mourners as well as a hearse. The expenses were to be double that allowed in the "Instructions" because the doctor was "so publick a character and was so highly esteemed amongst the dissenters". In explaining all this to Enoch Watts, Neal added that it must be more elaborate than their funerals because "customs and Popular prejudices are stubborn things".

Enoch Watts agreed to all these extra payments, but pointed out that if Neal paid all the "Legacies for Mourning" immediately there might not be sufficient cash in hand for the burial arrangements.⁸ In his reply to Neal he explained that he felt somewhat better and would leave Southampton by coach on Wednesday and reach Newington on Friday, December 2nd. However the funeral was not to be postponed until he arrived. Whether he made the funeral or not, Enoch Watts was in London from 2nd December until 19th January. During that time the executors proved the will at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury on 6th December and paid out the smaller London legacies.

7. 26 Nov. 1748.

8. 29 Nov. 1748.

They also discussed the question of a tombstone. In his Instructions the doctor had dictated the wording to be used:

I give my Executors leave to put a flat stone on my Grave, if they please, but let the Inscription be this purpose in English vizt.

Isaac Watts Pastor of a Church of Christ in London, Successor to the Revd Mr Joseph Caryl Dr John Owen Mr David Clarkson, and Mr Isaac Chancy, after... years of feeble Labours in the Gospel, interrupted by... years of tyresom Sickness, was at last dismiss to rest the... day of... A.D. 174. Aet. ...

11 Cor. V.8. Absent from the Body, present with Lord... Col.III.4. when Christ who is our Life shall appear, I shall also appear with him in glory.

IN UNO JESU OMNIA

After various discussions and some improvements in spelling, this inscription was used, but Sir John Hartopp and Lady Abney, who paid the cost of the stone, added a postscript:

This monument, on which the above modest inscription is placed by order of the deceased, was erected, as a small testimony of regard to his memory, by Sr JOHN HARTOPP BAR. and DAME MARY ABNEY.

It was completed and in position by June of the following year.⁹

The chief family beneficiaries of Watts's will were his sister Sarah and her children, Joseph, Mary, Sarah and Martha. They all shared £1000 in 3 per cent Consols, and the daughters received his library, which was sold by the executors for their benefit. £880 in Bank of England stock was left to Enoch and his sister, while the daughters were the residuary legatees. Enoch inherited all the household goods. The Southampton minor legacies presented few difficulties. £7 was left to help poor dissenters in the town, and a like sum for poor Anglicans, but all those benefiting were to have attended public worship regularly. Two legacies showed that the doctor had kept abreast of recent developments. Francke's orphan house in Halle (Germany), the predecessor of many such evangelical enterprises was given £10 with instructions as to how it could be paid, and the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge in the Islands and Highlands of Scotland received the same. £20 was to be distributed amongst dissenting ministers, and students for the ministry were to be aided by a book fund which would lend copies of listed volumes (Doddrige was included, but nothing by Watts himself) to them, converting them to a gift if their conduct were satisfactory. The Bury Street church received a legacy of £100 - half to be used to renew the lease on the meeting house and half for the use of the poor. A more important legacy was the gift of all his unpublished manuscripts to David

9. 27 June 1749.

Jennings and Philip Doddridge,¹⁰ with power to decide what was suitable for publication. As was mentioned earlier he had already given the copyright of his published works to his executors.

Soon after his return to Southampton in January Enoch Watts wrote to tell Neal that he had arranged for a catalogue of the library to be prepared.¹¹ The compiler was found by Neal – John Parker whom he later paid five guineas for his work. Watts hoped that a bookseller would buy the books as a lot and put it up for sale. He obviously knew of the dubious contemporary booksellers' practice, saying that the purchaser if possible should be "some person who may have others to dispose of and place 'em among Dr. Watts', his name will Encourage the Sale". Neal was slow in conducting the negotiations for the sale, and six months later Watts was very concerned to learn that Watts's booksellers, Oswald and Buckland, had only offered £55 for all the books.¹² Another bookseller then raised the price to £60. When Oswald and Buckland also offered £60, the executors agreed to sell to them.

Since one of the doctor's nephews, James Brackstone, was also a bookseller, it might appear unusual that he was not approached. However Watts had cut him out of his will because he felt that his nephew had treated him "wickedly and shamefully", while the Bury Street church had expelled James for the same undescribed offence.¹³ The letters between Neal and Watts make the nature of the nephew's offence clear for the first time. It would appear from their comments that James Brackstone had obtained a manuscript of his uncle surreptitiously and published it to his own advantage. The most likely candidate is *A Faithful Enquiry after the Ancient and Original Doctrine of the Trinity*, published in 1745 and immediately suppressed.¹⁴ Enoch Watts also appears to have believed that his nephew had joined with New England booksellers to produce pirated editions of Watts's works. At the beginning of 1749 he asked Neal that "Care and Inspection may be used against any pyrating or printing any part of the Coppys without leave, because some persons may possibly be tempted to do it; and I should as soon suspect my Nephew J.B. as anyone".¹⁵ In February he urged Neal to take advantage of the interest occasioned by the doctor's death and sell the copyrights before a pirated edition could appear. However it was not until May that Oswald and Buckland told Neal that they were prepared to pay "Top-Market price" for the copyrights. But before making a definite offer, they wished to know how many copies of each had already been printed and when.¹⁶

10. David Jennings preached Watts's funeral sermon and later wrote a brief memoir. Both he and Doddridge had long been Watts's friends.

11. 17 Sept. 1749.

12. 27 June, 3 July 1749.

13. A.P. Davis, *Isaac Watts* (London, 1948), p. 65.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 117.

15. 28 Jan. 1748/9.

16. 27 May 1749.

It is clear that Isaac Watts had adopted a very businesslike attitude to his literary work. Only one copyright had been sold outright – *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* – for which he had received only £12, but was now worth £210.¹⁷ All his other works had been licensed to different booksellers to produce a single edition. Enoch Watts had his brother's volume of agreements and accounts with booksellers between 1718 and 1748 which showed that £1637 had been received from these licences to print. The booksellers mentioned in the letter are Cliffe, Ford, Clark, Hett, Mathews, Brackstone, Longman, Rivington, Oswald and Buckland. On June 3rd Watts sent Neal an account of the potential profits:

I have a Computation of the first Cost and Charge of every kind for Copy mony, paper, printing, etc. of his Books, and how they were sold, and what were the booksellers proffits, vizt. on his 2 volumes of Sermons, his Logic, and Psalms small edition. vizt. on 1000 of his sett of sermons the booksellers profit was £71:15:0, on 1000 of his Logic £38:14:0 and for 5000 of his small edition of Psalms after all Charge of Copy, mony, paper, mony lying Dead till sold (at 8 per Cent interest, compounded), printing and Stationers hall Demands on the Psalms and portorage, the proffit to the Bookseller was £90:00:0. But these Schemes I have under the Doctors own hand of particulers as given him by a Bookseller who printed them and publisht are not necessary to show immediatly to Booksellers, but only to Assure you and them the value of em...¹⁸

Watts also suggested that the copyrights should be auctioned to ensure that they got the best possible price, but Neal continued to negotiate with Oswald and Buckland.

On July 8th Watts wrote to him again about the need to sell the books before pirated editions began to appear.

What think you of advertising in the papers, that the Officers of the Customs by land and water Carriage, have orders to search for, and seize books imported and brought into England Contrary to Law, as defrauding the revenue, and hurting the fair Trader at home, whose property they may be, for printing and publishing in England.

I am confident that restlesse and wicked Nephew of mine, the Bookseller will Endeavour every way possible spoil the Sale of the Coppys for other's benefit, since he is to have no benefit himself as once with reason he might have expected, and I question if he be not concern'd in what is already done of that nature in New England, as he is acquainted with his Uncles Correspond[ents] there and they not apprized of his base behaviour to him before his Death.

17. 3 June 1749.

18. *Ibid.*

Watts also suggested obtaining a confirmation of their rights to the books:

I should be glad to pay £50 towards procuring a Clause in an Act or Bill in Parliament, for appropriating Coppys of books, or for getting a Patent from the Crown or Secretary of State, for assuring to the purchasers these Coppys of my Brother's for a certain time and shall be willing to pay an Able Council for his advice on the Subject.

Five days later he wrote again making the same two suggestions of a protection for the copyrights and alerting the Customs to seize any pirated copies. He added

I am glad you have consulted Mr. Longman, who I believe is a person of substance and Character in the Trade, as my Brother had a good opinion of him, when he discarded his Nephew J.B. and would have been Concern'd with him alone afterward, Longman declin'd it in point of honour to J.B. who had first introduc'd him to my Brother, as appears by a letter of his to the Doctor, which my sister Brackstone will show you in a few days.

He and J.B. agreed for the last 6000 printed of the Psalms in 1742 and shipt (I believe) a great many of them for New England, but were lost or taken on the voyage.

Mrs. Brackstone made the journey to London – she had previously been too ill to do so – and was entertained by Lady Abney. She lodged at Mrs. Watt's house in Sice Lane on her way to Newington and had a conference with Neal while she was in town. Enoch cautioned her beforehand not to take up too much of Neal's time. However Watts assured Neal that she was "as Capable as most to transact any businesse with". They all agreed that an auction was the best way of proceeding, although Watts pointed out to Neal:

We can't guard against J.B.s projects and Contrivances to get them, if he be resolv'd on it, tho' I had rather loose £50 than they should be at his mercy, But if he will give so much more than another, he must have them at Auction... as for others of the Trade declining to bid on him as a point of honour, for his being related to the Author. I am Confident he has himself no honour, and would not use them with any in this matter, since he used the Author so basely, and no harm if they knew it.¹⁹

However some of the booksellers tried to persuade them to make a private agreement instead of an auction. Then they alleged that the value had been lowered by copies printed in Holland, New England or Scotland.²⁰ Watts suggested that Neal reassure them with a summary of the law:

The Officers of Customs may and do seize them and search for 'em as for other smuggl'd goods, the books are forfeited to the

19. 20 July 1749.

20. 29 July 1749.

proprietors of the Coppys and a peny per sheet besides, (and the Officer seizing has a halfpenny per sheet payd by the Company of Stationers for his encouragement:) these were our directions when I was an Officer of Customs, by 8th of Queen Anne chap 19...²¹ this I know to be true in Fact, and I have seen within this month at our Customhouse here at Southampton, a parcell of books under Seizure for attempting to smuggle them. This, one would think should render their being brought in from abroad, very difficult and Expensive, and therefore should not be urged as a reason for lowering the Value of our Coppys.

Watts hoped that they would get between £800 and £1000 for the copyrights, but in September Neal was obliged to settle for £600 from Mr. Waugh. Even then Watts hopefully suggested that Mr. Waugh should "give to Each of us, my Sister Self and you, a sett or 2 of Each Cobby as he shall reprint them, well bound and lett'r'd, which I think is a Trifle and will not be refused".²²

The last difficulty discussed in these letters was the disposal of the unpublished works. The will gave "all my manuscripts of every kind" to Jennings and Doddridge to judge their suitability for publication. But there was some ambiguity about the nature of this gift because the executors were also instructed to give the editors some recompense for their trouble. From this Watts argued that

I think, its plain the Intention is that those Manuscripts are to be Delivered to them for perusal only and judging what is proper to be printed, and the property thereof is to go as his other Coppys of printed books are, vizt. to the Executors as by the Deed poll, for the use of me and my sister. Why else are the Executors to pay for the trouble of perusal and judgement, if the property was intended for Dr. Dodderidge and Jennings that property would be sufficient gratification.²³

When Neal and Watts met in London they must have discussed this further, and it was agreed that Doddridge should go ahead with printing the second part of *The Improvement of the Mind* which was left almost ready for the press. Meanwhile Jennings had completed a catalogue of thirty-seven manuscripts which Neal sent to Doddridge on 8th March 1748/9.²⁴ The question of ownership continued unsettled for another four months, Watts confining himself to saying "I would have nothing publisht of my Brothers, but what may be honourable and worthy of him".²⁵ Eventually he agreed that Neal should either pay the editors for their labour or allow them to receive all the profits on

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21. Watts appears to be mistaken in this citation, but the chapter numbers have been changed since his day.
 22. 2 Sept. 1749.
 23. 28 Jan. 1748/9.
 24. Neither this nor the catalogue of Watts's printed books has survived.
 25. 6 Apr. 1749.

anything which was published. However the letters do not reveal the final decision on this.

By October 1749 the executors were drawing up their final accounts and Watts told Neal that the family wished to give him another ten guineas "for his faithfull Care and Dispatch".²⁶ Even then there were problems.

My Nephew Jo. Brackstone tells me a young man call'd twice in your absence and left word at your house that he was Dr. Watts's heir, if he should call again, let him be Examin'd and taken into Custody, if fraud or forgery be apprehended, for my Nephew Jo. is perswaded something is hatching of that kind.²⁷

Dr. Richard Watts had also taken offence and returned to his former ways. Watts wrote again to Neal in November asking

how is Dr. R. Watts as to health and senses, for as we have no Correspondence with 'em we hear nothing of either of that family any more than if they were dead.²⁸

There are two further letters which relate to payment of interest on the legacies. Mary Chaldecott and her husband were still anxious to receive their money as soon as could be and wrote several times asking for it. The whole collection, preserved by accident with the records of a Sheffield charity casts an interesting light on the publishing trade in the early eighteenth century as well as the characters of Isaac Watts and his relations. Like many of his contemporaries in the dissenting ministry, Watts was as good a businessman as divine. Despite his poor health he was able to write a large number of very popular works and retain the profits for himself. Some of his relations looked to him for financial assistance even though they were not themselves poor. His nephew James Brackstone clearly expected more from his uncle than he was prepared to give. Dr. Richard was sufficiently wealthy not to need a large legacy (as Isaac stated in his will), but the distribution of the legacies caused him some offence which is not obvious from these letters. It may be that he was a supporter of James Brackstone and thought him ill-treated. It is sad that Isaac Watts's last years were so disturbed by two of his kinsmen.²⁹

EDWIN WELCH

26. 14 Oct. 1749.

27. 2 Nov. 1749.

28. - Nov. [1749].

29. I am grateful to the staff of Sheffield Public Library Archives Dept. who have supplied me with information and photocopies of the letters, and to Dr. G.F. Nuttall who has read and commented on this article.

REVIEWS

The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli. By W.P. Stephens. Pp.xii, 348. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1986. £27.50.

Zwingli, the leader of the reform in Zurich, has been overshadowed by Luther and Calvin. The 1984 celebrations to mark the five-hundredth anniversary of his birth were tame when compared with those surrounding the same Lutheran anniversary in 1983. Unlike Calvin, Zwingli left behind no worldwide network of churches to keep his name alive. Nevertheless, recent studies by Professors Locher and Potter and now by Professor W.P. Stephens of Aberdeen University show that Zwingli had a distinct and influential theological position.

Stephens has made a thorough study of Zwingli's works which in the critical edition fill fourteen volumes with more to come, and, as the ample bibliography shows, he has also digested a comprehensive array of related literature. The book might give the impression that Zwingli's theology was a hazy and elusive system of thought; Stephens says there is ambiguity in his doctrine of God, arbitrariness in the use of Scripture, ambivalence in his understanding of human nature, and a far from uniform view of the relation of Word and Spirit. Add to this the incomplete availability of a proper edition of all his works and Stephens concludes that any study of Zwingli's theology must still be provisional. Add, further, the fact which Stephens displays so clearly that Zwingli's thought was shaped by his controversies with Roman Catholics and Anabaptists and was developing through the turbulent ten years of his life as a reformer and there is room for speculation as to how far he had reached a definite position and as to the lines his thought might have taken if his life had not been terminated on the battlefield in 1531 when he was aged forty-seven.

Nevertheless, this volume shows that Zwingli was a profound and courageous biblical scholar and a practical reformer. His teaching was marked by several assumptions which consistently controlled his thoughts amid the changing circumstances of his time.

First, there was his constant reference to the Bible as the source and norm by which all doctrine had to be tested.

Secondly, there was the conviction that at the core of the biblical message there is God whose providence is over all his works and whose provision for human salvation through the person and work of Christ is the expression of his incomparable grace and favour.

Thirdly, there was the influential framework of thought drawn from his study of John and Paul and also of Augustine and Erasmus. From Augustine he drew the conviction that God alone can know the secrets of the human heart and therefore God alone knows who are the true believers who comprise the Church whose exact bounds are invisible to human observers. On the other hand, the visible Church is a society of those who profess to believe and whose profession has to be accepted as genuine, subject as far as possible to the tests of conduct and of conformity to what makes for the health and unity of the Church.

Fourthly, Zwingli believed that in a properly reformed situation Church and State should be in accord, the civil authorities being enabled to administer discipline and to make provision for the preaching of the Word and for the upkeep of the ministry, though not having any right to define the Word which the ministers were to preach. This, they received from their mutual study of the Bible and through the leading of the Spirit.

Fifthly, from Erasmus, Zwingli drew the conviction that truth, wherever it is found, is Christ's, and therefore Christ has had his unwitting witnesses in the moral lives of many pagans, but this only reveals the privilege it is to have direct knowledge of Christ himself. Erasmus also brought to Zwingli the conviction that a human being is made up of soul and body; this is in some degree parallel to Paul's distinction between the spirit and the flesh but is given a sharper distinction than is to be found in Paul. Zwingli makes much of the Johannine dictum that what is born of the flesh is flesh and what is born of the spirit is spirit (3:6). This sharp distinction leads to the conclusion that the soul can in no way be affected by any action in or by the body such as receiving water in baptism or receiving bread and wine in the Lord's Supper. Following Erasmus, Zwingli made much use of John 6:63: "The Spirit gives life, the flesh is of no avail". Neither Sacrament makes the recipients believers, though they may help in confirming faith.

Baptism is a sign of God's pledge to be in a covenant with his people and this involves children of believers. They are in the covenant and are entitled to be baptized. Baptism is also the pledge of those who are being baptized or who are bringing their children to be baptized that they will remain within the faith. It is also a sign of the unity of the Church which is a vital strand in Zwingli's teaching. Stephens shows how Zwingli laid increasing stress upon this Sacrament.

Zwingli is perhaps most remembered for his insistence that the words "This is my body" mean "This signifies my body" and that the main feature of the Lord's Supper is the remembrance of what happened to Christ on the Cross. This led to sharp controversy with Luther who stressed the presence of Christ in the Sacrament. Though they could agree on fourteen and five sixths out of fifteen Articles of Faith, their division on the remaining sixth part of one Article caused a lasting division among the churches of the Reformation. Zwingli has had a rough time at the hands of scholars who have assailed his stress upon the commemoration in the Sacrament to the neglect of the communion with the living Christ. Yet Stephens holds that when all Zwingli's teaching is taken into account he had a higher esteem for the Sacrament than appeared in the heat of controversy and that it is a mistake to say, as is often done, that he held the Sacrament to be a mere memorial. It may also be that Zwingli's teaching is nearer the belief of many church members than that to be found in Calvin and in such documents as *The Shorter Catechism*. Stephens, however, sticks closely to expounding Zwingli's teaching and does not diverge into comparisons with other teachers nor does he seek to estimate their respective merits.

This is a work of sound scholarship. It provides a fresh and reliable guide to Zwingli's theology. It requires close attention and will stretch the reader's vocabulary.

R. BUICK KNOX

International Calvinism, 1541–1715. Edited by Menna Prestwich. Pp.403. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1985. £35.00, pbk. £12.50.

Among items from the royal collection recently displayed in the British Library was a splendid *Mappa Mundi Papistique* presented to Queen Elizabeth I in 1568 by the city of Geneva where it had been printed. The map displays the catholic world as a frightening and lifelike serpent whose tentacles reach northwards towards the protestant communities, nestling together for protection. It demonstrates the theme of this comparative study of the international connections which held Calvinist protestantism together in the period from the beginning of Calvin's permanent residence in Geneva in 1541 to the revocation of the edict of Nantes in 1685. The subject is beyond the resources of one historian and the editor, Menna Prestwich, has put together a team of thirteen historians to look in detail at various subjects and regions. The treatment is exemplary, even if one cannot help but conclude that the ideal of an international Calvinist fraternity were greater than the fractured and fragmented reality dictated.

From the beginning, the Calvinist house had many mansions, only one of which was reflected in the stereotyped, harsh, austere, double predestinarian theology of the famous synod of Dort of 1618 or the *Consensus Helveticus* of 1675. The late Richard Stauffer's contribution to this volume presents a flexible and humanist *Calvinus oecumenicus*, tirelessly working for a broad protestant concord, forceful against nicodemites and libertines but cautious in statements about predestination and unwilling to make ecclesiastical discipline a part of the essential notion of a Church. His influence would therefore inevitably be at least as strong on European protestants outside the narrow confines of the orthodoxy of Dort as within it. In these pages, there are latitudinarians in England, the Low Countries, France and North America on the tough theological issues of the covenant of grace and even sacramental theology. There is Calvinist episcopalianism in the Anglican and Hungarian churches and Calvinist congregationalism alongside a decentralised Calvinist independence in Massachusetts. Calvin answered for many, but in different ways.

Nor was Calvin's Geneva the power-house of a Calvinist international movement for long. As Gillian Lewis demonstrates, the heyday of Geneva's role lasted no more than about thirty years after Calvin's death. Theodore Beza, Calvin's loyal successor, faced internal disputes in the company of pastors, a body where the talents were increasingly thinly spread just at the moment when the confessional politics of Europe as well as internal pressures within the Genevan polity moved them all towards more rigidly defined theological and moral statements.

Elsewhere, the diversity was quite startling. The sections on England (by Patrick Collinson) and France (by Menna Prestwich, Elisabeth Labrousse and Philippe Joutard) provide elegant and fresh syntheses of what is comparatively well-known. Less familiar is the "ambivalent face" of Calvinism in the Low Countries discussed by Alastair Duke where strong Erastian pressures from city magistrates and keen internal debates about the nature of the true Church

among Dutch Calvinists combined to keep them a tiny minority in the Dutch republic. The "stop-go" character of the Scottish reformation, both politically and ecclesiastically, is stressed by Michael Lynch. The two chapters on Calvinism in the Rhineland (by Henry Cohn) and Hungary, Bohemia and Poland (by R.J.W. Evans), above all, are warmly to be welcomed as the only treatments of their subjects in English. Both are written with a sense of the contrasts to be drawn between central and western Europe. The history of Hungarian and Transylvanian Calvinism is particularly striking. A Calvinist church was successfully established there which owed little formal allegiance to Calvin or Geneva. Its churches had Lutheran superintendants rather than pastors and presbyteries although the faithful called them "bishops" (paradoxically, only the catholic church in Transylvania lacked bishops in the second half of the sixteenth century). It was sustained by the Hungarian aristocracy which ensured an extreme independency in the local church - incumbents were not only elected but re-elected annually. Hungary also enjoyed a "Second" or "puritan" reformation which begs comparison with that in England - the famous English puritan divine, William Perkins, had his works translated into Magyar as early as 1620! Finally, towards 1685, Hungarian Calvinism suffered (but ultimately survived) persecution at the hands of the Habsburg rulers of Hungary, remarkably similar in character to their French coreligionists.

A final chapter translates in full an older essay by Herbert Lüthy on the Weber thesis which has hitherto only been available in abridged form in English. This takes us back to the basic moral imperatives in Calvinism and how much they really influenced Calvinists in early modern Europe. The question whether "protestant man" (to use Léonard's term) existed is posed from time to time in this volume without receiving a clear answer. It is a further merit of this distinguished synthesis, however, that it sets the agenda for renewed comparative historical enquiry and debate.

M. GREENGRASS

Episcopacy in Scotland: the history of an idea, 1560-1638. By D.G. Mullan. Pp.vii, 279. John Donald, Edinburgh, 1986. £25.00.

The mixed polity of the reformed Church of Scotland, part presbyterian, part episcopalian, has always attracted controversy. How irresistible was the advance of presbyterianism after 1560? Did the survival of episcopacy in the later sixteenth century and its regeneration after 1596 reflect anything more than the Crown's desire to reassert conventional channels of control? Were the popular roots of episcopacy so shallow that the crisis of 1638 provided the occasion rather than the cause of its demise? Although these problems have been investigated by several distinguished scholars over the last generation, *Episcopacy in Scotland* is the first full-length study of the order between 1560 and 1638. Much of the book recounts the familiar story of changing episcopal fortunes. On finer points of interpretation, Mullan offers his own contribution. Thus he sides with Donaldson and Foster and against Lee in maintaining that

James VI's restoration of episcopacy was premeditated; conversely, he quarrels with Donaldson's view that the Covenant favoured moderate episcopalianism. The book also contains two major contentions. One is that throughout the period the episcopate were handicapped by their reliance first on the nobility and then on the Crown. In the sixteenth century the nobility sent their sons into the order and plundered episcopal temporalities; and in the early seventeenth century James VI and Charles I used the episcopate to enforce deeply unpopular policies. The second, and related argument, is a failure in leadership. The pre-Reformation episcopate was "awash in immorality and negligence" and its successors performed little better. The conduct of Patrick Adamson, Archbishop of St. Andrews 1576-1592, "debased and discredited episcopacy". The Crown's convenience rather than popular support explains the re-emergence of episcopacy between 1596 and 1610. Mullan maintains that whatever the qualities of a Cowper or a Forbes, "general lassitude" characterized the episcopal bench after 1596, and the Caroline bishops did little or nothing to protect their increasingly vulnerable position. This line of analysis fails to carry conviction. It ignores some important findings of modern scholars: historians such as Jenny Wormald (whose book *Court, Kirk and Community*, published in 1981, is inexplicably omitted from the bibliography) have suggested that the pre-Reformation episcopate included several active reformers, and that changing expectations rather than prelatial corruptions help explain the spread of protestantism. Moreover, Mullan ignores rather than refutes Foster's depiction of an energetic episcopate operating in the dioceses after 1610. Indeed, important questions such as episcopal relations with local magnates, or the distribution of episcopal patronage, are given cursory treatment. It is not unreasonable to suppose that episcopal practice at diocesan level affected contemporaries' perceptions of the office. Mullan is most at home dealing with polemical printed sources; and for those interested in the early Scottish presbyterianism, chapter 8 is an illuminating discussion of the two competing historiographical accounts of the early kirk which emerged after 1610. This debate, in Mullan's view, did have an important and unforeseen consequence. For in the late 1630s, he suggests, the "presbyterian view of the past was the millstone which crushed episcopacy".

KENNETH FINCHAM

Ernest Gordon Rupp 7 January 1910-19 December 1986.

Religion in England 1688-1791. By Ernest Gordon Rupp. Oxford History of the Christian Church. Pp.584. Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1986. £45.00.

The closing days of 1986 were saddened by the news of the sudden death of Gordon Rupp but they were also lightened by the appearance of this addition to the fine new Oxford History of the Church.

Gordon Rupp had a distinguished career as a Methodist minister and as a University professor. His influence was felt in many branches of the Church and among many generations of students. His interests were wide and deep. He made his name as the leading British authority on the life and teaching of

Martin Luther but the range of his books and occasional papers show his familiarity with other areas of the Church's story, early, medieval and modern. It is specially fitting that this final work should deal with the eighteenth century where he had his deep roots as a Methodist and where he had been concentrating his studies in recent years.

The eighteenth century was for long regarded as an arid period in the story of English religion, marked by coldness in faith, lukewarmness in devotion, moralism in theology, and worldliness in the Established Church, a bleak age relieved only by the warmth of Methodist renewal which was itself weakened by internal divisions and by its separation from the Church of England.

Many scholars in this century have devoted themselves to a lifetime of study of the eighteenth century and have produced a number of valuable works which Rupp claims have taken away the reproach of the eighteenth-century Church. His own teacher, Norman Sykes, was a pioneer in this endeavour and Rupp himself has now produced this comprehensive survey. The reader is led through the main features of the century, the inheritance from the years of civil and religious strife, the accession of William of Orange, the residual Non-jurors who could not bring themselves to renounce their oath to King James, the ascendant Latitudinarians who tried to cool the heat of religious strife, and the persisting Dissenters who could not in conscience conform to the ways of the Church of England, tempered though they were, and who kept their witness alive in chapels and dissenting academies. The path leads through the writings of rationalists like Whiston and Clarke, through the labyrinthine doubts and reservations of the Deists and through the attempts of writers such as Bentley, Swift and Butler to defend the faith. The journey then leads through fields with growing crops of Charity schools, Sunday schools, Foundling hospitals and general hospitals and there are the rich harvest fields of the Evangelical Revival, the Religious Societies, the Moravians, the Wesleys and the people called Methodists and their tensions with George Whitefield and the Countess of Huntingdon and the Welsh Methodists.

The reader will find enjoyment, enlightenment and an increased sense of the continuing Christian witness throughout the century. The story has the stamp of Gordon Rupp's wit, wisdom, apt comparison with other ages, and homiletic application. Some readers may think that the preacher comes through too strongly in an academic treatise, but Rupp could not erase this side of his personality without being false to himself.

His special flair appears again and again in his miniature biographies which strew the pages. It is very gratifying to see Archbishop Tillotson rehabilitated not only as a teacher of morals but as a firm believer in the redeeming life and work of Christ. It is good to read the accounts of the evangelical high-churchman, William Law, and of the impressive and imperturbable bishop, Joseph Butler. There is a fine portrait of Samuel Johnson who had a profound faith in God, a sense of the misery of the human lot, a fear of losing his reason, and a deep compassion for the needy and the afflicted. The portrait of the Wesleys is obviously the work of a devoted but not uncritical son of the Methodist

movement. Readers of this Journal will appreciate the fine chapters devoted to Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge.

Readers will also chuckle over the flashes of wit. Archbishop Sharp of York, the favourite of Queen Anne, had "the precious charisma of personal charm without which archbishops, as Tenison of Canterbury could ruefully have told him, are accounted as dead before princes". William Whiston was "a perennial Cambridge type, of immense and many-sided learning, combined with feeble judgement and complete faith in his own opinions". Bishop Watson was dissatisfied with his poor diocese of Llandaff and preferred his Cumbrian estate where "he sought earnestly the best gifts, the charisma of Capability Brown".

There are also judgements which stimulate thought and may arouse some queries. Once Bishop Ken's morning and evening hymns are known by heart "neither dawn nor dusk can ever be quite the same again". Archbishop Wake was much given to ecumenical ploys but he was "realist enough to know where irenical lines could profitably be drawn" and "he had the noble vision of a rather lonely spirit who having begun his ministry by pleading the cause of unity laboured for it to the end". As for Bishop Butler, one is either for him or against him but "those who are for him cannot escape affection for this invariably disconcerting genius". Philip Doddridge, "having met the grimmest experiences of the human condition, could none the less, as a Christian, sing". William Law is commended as a source of spiritual wisdom for our age when "so many have turned from Christian traditions to wizards that chirp and mutter, compassing land and sea to sit at the feet of any plausible guru".

As for some general trends in the century, there is sufficient ground for Rupp's verdict that the Presbyterians who had been so strong were now weakened by Socinian infiltration and by lethargy and "needed the blood transfusion of an evangelical revival", but some readers may want to challenge the verdicts that the Baptists of the time could "likely wipe the floor in debate with a modern nonconformist congregation" and that the Quaker faith and practice have been "the most impressive revival of Johanne Christianity in Protestant history". There is also the verdict that the legacy of all the deist doubts and questions is the erroneous and generally plausible idea that "somehow honest doubt is more honest than honest faith".

The divisions within the Church lay heavily upon Gordon Rupp and there is a note of sorrow that the Church of England was not able to keep the Nonconformists and the Methodists within her fold. Dealing with the years after 1688 he says we look in vain in the field of Anglican theology "for any expression of regret or pity, still less of penitence, from any eminent Church of England leader, about the pains inflicted on the Nonconformists, or any unease about the cultural apartheid within which they were now compressed". As for the separation by the Methodists, "the leaders of the Church of England, as with the nonconformists a century before, were content to absolve themselves with an untroubled conscience from the doleful schism". There are also hints of the sorrow he felt at the failure of the recent attempts to recover the links which had

once kept the Methodists within the Church of England; even after two centuries the Churches have not studied the problems and opportunities in containing various strands within one Church and are still "obsessed with the feeling that unity must mean, not diversity, but uniformity". He also draws a lesson from the Anglicans who in the past were eager for fellowship with Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed Churches abroad but wished the Nonconformists at home would disappear; "like some modern successors, they made up for their lack of service towards their separated brethren at home by compassing sea and land to love the brethren they have not seen".

Nevertheless, in spite of disappointments with the present age and with many features of the eighteenth century, Rupp ends with a gracious verdict on the Church of England which in that century embraced the vast majority of the English people:

So, regularly as an incoming and ebbing tide, the worship of the Church drew in its people and discharged them again for the business of daily living. With all the defects, things worked out much better than the recital of woes would suggest, and, as in all ages, men made the best of what they had no power to mend. It cannot be said that over England as a whole the hungry sheep looked up and were not fed. And then, as always, God had his own ways of circumventing the follies of his people, and he never ceased to satisfy the empty soul and fill the hungry with goodness.

It is too much to hope that all readers will find every aspect of the century to be treated as they would wish or that they will agree with every judgement, but they will be stimulated to fresh thinking, and they will be remarkably well-read if they are not better informed.

R. BUICK KNOX

The Rise and Development of the Sunday School Movement in England 1780-1980.
By Philip B. Cliff. Pp.396. National Christian Education Council. 1986.
£27.00.

Sunday Schools have become an historical battleground. Were they an indigenous part of working-class children or a bourgeois instrument of social control? T.W. Laqueur's brave and bold argument in *Religion and respectability: Sunday Schools and working class culture 1780-1850* (1976) that the primary divisions in early Victorian society were vertical rather than horizontal - between the "rough" and the "respectable", the "idle" and the "industrious" - has received severe criticism, for the evidence about Sunday Schools is partial and its interpretation difficult. The complex patterns of social relationships within individual schools and the geographical variation between them demand caution and nurture ambiguity.

Philip Cliff's contribution to the debate is therefore timely and valuable; timely because his knowledge of source material is considerable, valuable because his work is the distillation of a life-time's work within and reflection upon church education. He views the Sunday School movement as a whole, for

it died in the 1950s and the "family church" rose phoenix-like (albeit with only one wing) from its ashes.

He traces the long journey from its source in the instincts of Raikes and his precursors, in whom genuine Christian charity mingled with a deep yearning for the reformation of manners and conservative social control - "clean faces, clean hands and hair combed" was Raikes's only rule for scholars in 1784. It continues across the wide plain of mid-Victorian success - 3½ million scholars were in Sunday Schools in 1870 - to the slough of unimaginative Evangelical Bibliolatry, and beyond into the marshes of two world wars and a bewildered nostalgia for past glories - in 1939 "almost 70% of the staff in the schools were over 30, with an emphasis on the rising years". The journey ends with visions of a brave new curriculum, no longer Bible but child centred. The work of the Froebellians George Hamilton Archibald and "Bert" Hamilton and the transformation of West Hill into Westhill gave the church back her children and stimulated the growth of "family church".

The journey is fascinating, if oversignposted with footnotes as all theses tend to be, and this was originally a Birmingham sociology Ph.D. *En route* Cliff lets us see familiar landmarks with new eyes. Each historical chapter is balanced by a sociological analysis of the developing institution under the sub-headings rules, premises, finance, teachers, materials, rewards and results. Laqueur's work is placed in a more thorough statistical context, his assumptions gently questioned. Alive to the subtle nuances of the nonconformist denominations of Victorian England, Cliff's account of the social constituency of teachers is precise and sympathetic. A Primitive Methodist teacher from Durham would differ considerably from a Congregationalist from London Road, Chelmsford, but as a Mancunian teacher confided to his diary, they all strove to "bring glory to God" by their work, not exercise social control or inspire socio-political liberation. The same precision leads him to suggest (*contra* E.P. Thompson *et al*) that it was the Sunday School movement, not Methodism, that saved England from revolution, for such Sunday Schools as Stockport were undenominational, not Methodist.

His understandable pre-occupation with the Schools occasionally leads to unbalanced historical judgements. The "discontinuities" caused by the Reformation were hardly the product of an "unthinking" Protestantism, and the readers of this *Journal* may be surprised to learn that it was the espousal of the family church concept by Congregationalists and Presbyterians which "eventually led to the organic union of the English Presbyterian and Congregational church families".

Nonetheless, this rich and perceptive study highlights the irony that Sunday Schools sought to provide Christian nurture yet flourished because they provided keys to the secular kingdoms of success and social mobility - the keys of literacy. The church was genuinely, if only half-wittingly, an agent of liberation for many. Children brought up to read "Cau-ti-ons and Di-rec-tions a-against the Vi-ces to which Child-ren are most li-a-ble" (*The Child's First Book* SPCK 1780) could grow up to read *The Rights of Man* as easily as the epistles of

Paul. However, after the watershed of the 1870 Education Act Christian education in churches became as much a source of oppression as liberation. The Word was not broken but given unpalatably whole. "Stick to the book", Bishop Fowler of the American Episcopal Methodist church advised the World's Third Sunday School Convention in 1898 "... it will bring us through... stories and illustrations are of great value in impressing the truth, but they cannot be substituted for the Word of God". And until the days of Archibald, Hamilton and Westhill they were not. The Protestant, nonconformist tradition is a tradition of the Word, expounded in words to those who understand words. It is a tradition of teaching. Cliff graphically illustrates the limits of cognitive Christian nurture. He looks wistfully at Orthodox and Catholic worship where experience leads to questioning, questioning to knowledge and hopes for a day when parents and children will join together in ritual exploration, "every parent [a] teacher, and every place a 'school of the Lord' ". Such a history, such longings, raise hard questions for those in our tradition. In answering them we will ignore Dr. Cliff's study at our peril.

Finally, the publishers are to be congratulated for a beautifully illustrated and printed book, produced to the highest standards. It is to be regretted that printed journals and individual Sunday School histories are not listed separately in the bibliography, but that is a small regret. Although expensive this book is excellent value in content and form.

DAVID CORNICK

Theology in Turmoil. By A.P.F. Sell. Pp.198. Baker Book House, 1986. \$9.95.

Alan Sell, theological secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, has written a very readable, wide-ranging account of the conservative-liberal controversy, concentrating in particular on the period between 1890 and 1930. Behind this work there is ample evidence of very wide reading, and wherever possible Dr. Sell judiciously attempts to allow his protagonists to put their case in their own words. This certainly brings the narrative to life, though it might lead to the mistaken impression that the basic position of these theologians could be summed up in two or three sentences, which would be a complete injustice to many of them.

The title is an apt one, and the book is at its best in showing the diverse and intertwining strands of the conflict. It is moreover a timely work, as we are all aware that something like this particular battle still goes on, and if we wish to investigate its roots, Dr. Sell's documentation will be an invaluable aid.

Yet this survey does not convey any profound understanding of what was at the heart of the conflict; perhaps, indeed, we are too close to it to be able to make such a delineation, for it is when the author tries to pull trends together that reservations immediately arise in our minds. He suggests, for example, that theological liberalism could be viewed as various aspects of "immanentism", a procedure only too reminiscent of the tactics of the encyclical "Pascendi", when the source of Roman Catholic Modernism was attributed to the postulate of "vital immanence". Yet what is the nature of this "immanence"? If it is

ontological, what are we to make of Schleiermacher's deity, so transcendent that in no way can he become involved in the temporal process except by means of an eternal decree? Does it rather imply a certain continuity of moral values as holding together both God and man, the lasting theological contribution of the Kantian revolution? Then what are we to say of one of the author's heroes of the right, P.T. Forsyth, in calling for the "moralization of dogma"? To view theological liberalism as the outworking of "immanentism" is no more plausible than the attribution by T.F. Torrance and his followers of all the present ills of theology to "dualism". Perhaps at this stage, we can do no more than revert to the truism that the conflict arose out of the proper desire of doing justice to what is essential to Christianity within the context of the "knowledge-explosion" of the modern world. For the reviewer, however, the book came most alive in the more extensive discussion of the work of J.G. Machen, and it may just be that a close study of the work of the foremost protagonists on either side, e.g. B.B. Warfield and Ernst Troeltsch (whose name strangely only appears once - in a footnote) might bring us closer to the heart of the matter.

STANLEY RUSSELL

Dissent or Conform: War, Peace and the English Churches 1900-1945. By Alan Wilkinson. Pp.xvii, 361. SCM Press, London 1986. £10.50.

Eight years ago Alan Wilkinson wrote a well researched, well disciplined book on the Church of England and the First World War. His present book is more ambitious in period and treatment, and (it must be said) less successful.

Wilkinson's subject is the English Churches' reaction to international crises from 1900 to 1945. His heroes are the "creative dissenters" (mainly Anglican) "who are true to the subversive character of the biblical message". The underlying theme is how the Church can be a creatively dissenting community in the world. The dominant subjects are war and peace, but in his preface Wilkinson identifies half a dozen sub-themes and challenges the reader to find more.

Faced with so much material the author's own advice to treat it as a set of case studies is wise. Three books in one would be another approach. The first is about the Free Churches and the Great War. To those familiar with the story of near-pacifism transformed overnight to lurid patriotism there are no surprises, but the material is gathered together nowhere else. Free Churchmen whose historical sense seems to falter after the eighteenth century will find this part of Wilkinson's book valuable if sketchy. Nonconformists began the War as about the largest religious grouping in the country. Their leaders walked the corridors of power, industrial and social as well as political. Asquith's Cabinet was full of them. Yet they had failed, in Wilkinson's view - and he is hard to contradict - to use their position as outsiders on the inside to create an alternative society. In the War they compromised their differences with a society bent on destroying the Nonconformist virtues. At its end, they received the symbol of conformist acceptance, their own national service of thanksgiving in the Albert Hall in the presence of the King and Queen.

The second "book" tells a more familiar story, pacifism between the Wars. It has three themes. First, the persisting horror of the War - "Never Again" - which led to strong publicly expressed Church support for the League of Nations Union, an attitude which contrasts strikingly with today's ambivalences. Then the growth of a variety of pacifist groups with off-beat Christian leadership. Wilkinson's set pieces on Raven and Sheppard are particularly good. Finally, the descent to War as idealism faced the reality of the dictatorships and we were back again at conventional Christian patriotism. All this is well told, but there are few new insights and Cadoux is the only Free Church figure with a serious mention.

The third "book" has all the attractions - and deceptions - of history so recent that it stirs personal memory. Wilkinson calls it "English Christianity in the Second World War". It is by far the best part of the book. Bishop Bell is the hero. Micklem has a walk-on part. Patriotism tempered by compassion and constraint is the flavour which emerges from Wilkinson's telling of the story. One is struck again by the plainness of the ordinary man's attitude to the War, and the absence of high-sounding rhetoric from pulpits which so tarnished the image of the Church at home during the Great War and caused so many to turn their backs on it afterwards.

In an epilogue, Wilkinson contemplates the powerlessness of the Churches to turn the tide against them, whether they conform or whether they dissent. He overlooks one of the more striking passages of his earlier book, the indifference of the vast majority in the trenches to organized religion and the ease with which they had escaped its influence. That at a time when nominally the churches were strong. As against society, Christians have always been a dissenting minority. The minority is now smaller, and the illusions of the would-be conformist Establishment have been destroyed. War and international crises may have accelerated the transformation but they have not affected the direction of the change.

J.H. THOMPSON

Harry Emerson Fosdick: Preacher, Pastor, Prophet. By Robert Moats Miller. Pp.608. Oxford University Press. 1985. £30.00.

"Fearless Fosdick" was an American cartoon detective modelled after Dick Tracy. Harry Emerson Fosdick was an American preacher as renowned as Billy Graham in his day, but he was not really modelled after anyone. Not Jonathan Edwards, not Billy Sunday, not Norman Vincent Peale, not Martin Luther King. The reason he is on his own is because he became a popular preacher who considered himself an "evangelical liberal", a pacifist, scholar, Christian humanist, friend of the rich. It was John D. Rockefeller, Jr. who in many ways set him up and built Riverside Church for Fosdick's use. It was high society in New York and elsewhere that loved him fervently. These factors put him out of reach of his preaching predecessors, and most of us too.

Robert Moats Miller's careful biography tries to look at Fosdick from a variety of angles, and its length leaves one burdened with material. The reader is

worn down with testimonials to Fosdick's greatness. But, though reverent, the author is not writing a hagiography. He presents some criticisms of Fosdick from the major theological and ecclesiological figures of the time, but is anxious to prove that many of the slings and arrows are wide of the mark.

How was Fosdick fearless? Among other things, he became embroiled in the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy from the start. Being a liberal Baptist minister in New York's influential First Presbyterian Church, full of senators, bankers, and other major people of the time, he was a moving target for those in both national denominations with grave doubts about his lack of credal orthodoxy or any other kind of orthodoxy. Fosdick was able to present a liberal Christianity to the masses, especially the unshuffled, rich and educated masses. But if he was at least one generation behind most of his colleagues at Union Seminary (where he also taught for thirty-eight years), Fosdick was not really sure that he should try to catch up.

He was willing to fight old, intellectually tired battles that were nevertheless important to the majority of Christians. He took on William Jennings Bryan, the anti-evolutionist, and numerous other big names in American Fundamentalist circles. The battles were very intense. Fosdick wanted to look again at Virgin Birth, bodily resurrection, and, when considered, most everything else on the credal menu. It is nice to have the Rockefellers behind you as well as thousands of parishioners and millions of radio listeners.

The most devastating criticisms of Fosdick came, however, from those who helped bring down the liberal optimistic cause in American religion. Reinhold Niebuhr, a good friend of Fosdick, found his view of human nature and therefore his pacifism too simple in a complex world. Biblical scholars pointed out that Fosdick's major theological effort, *A Guide to Understanding the Bible*, was evolutionist in its theory, finding the biblical witness to be based on God's progressive revelations starting with primitive Abraham and ending up with sophisticated Jesus. Mankind was getting smarter about God the way scientists progressed with the understanding of the universe and the way certain German and American philosophers of the nineteenth century grasped history. The result was that Jesus was largely seen to be the end product of a process of learning rather than the crux of a salvation. The Atonement is reduced to At-One-Ment in the classic liberal mould.

So Fosdick was a creature of his time and I am not sure that Miller sees this quite clearly enough. He has made his hero bigger than he really deserves. Maybe it is because he is not sensitive enough to the massive theological-social issues of the first half of the century, or perhaps he simply agrees with Fosdick. Historians, like every one else, do not see eye to eye on what and who is important. Robert Handy gives Fosdick only two brief references in *A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada* (1976) and then only as a "popular radio preacher". Scant praise. There is more to Fosdick than that for the American scene. He does represent liberal religion in a popular but not populist way and so becomes an important figure that makes him worth writing about. He was, without doubt, a preacher of weight, a counsellor of sensitivity, a

pursuer of civil liberties and a reformer of society. He would take on the high and mighty yet spend hours with the troubled and disturbed. But he was not an original thinker and although one cannot help admiring Miller's brobdingnagian effort, I would have trimmed the book down – for my own sake let alone my readers'.

CHARLES BROCK

SOME CONTEMPORARIES

The Baptist Quarterly (XXXI, 5–8, 1986)

No.5: David Thompson, "John Clifford's Social Gospel"; J.H.Y. Briggs, "Charles Haddon Spurgeon and the Baptist denomination in nineteenth century Britain"; L.G. Champion, "Robert Robinson: A pastor in Cambridge". No.6: D.W. Bebbington, "Baptist Members of Parliament in the twentieth century"; J.B. Whiteley, "Church discipline in the Loughwood Records". No.7: John Briggs, "She-preachers, widows and other women: The feminine dimension in Baptist life since 1600". No.8: Rosemary Chadwick, "Independence or co-operation? The Yorkshire Baptist Association, 1880–1914"; M. Nicholls, "Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Educationalist: Part I – General educational concerns".

Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research (LVII no.136, 1984)

B.W. Quintrell, "Oliver Cromwell and distraint of knighthood".

Calvin Theological Journal (XXI, 1, 1986)

Christopher B. Kaiser, "Calvin, Copernicus, and Castello".

Epworth Review (XIII, 1, 1986)

Alan Sell, "Some reflections on Reformed-Methodist relations".

The Evangelical Quarterly (LVIII, 1986)

No.1: Anthony Dallison, "The latter-day glory in the thought of Thomas Goodwin". No.2: Harry L. Poe, "Bunyan's departure from preaching". No.3: Alan C. Clifford, "John Calvin and the *Confessio Fidei Gallicana*".

Historical Journal (XXVII, 4, 1984)

N. Carlin, "Leveller organisation in London".

History (LXVIII, 224, 1983)

S. Reynolds, "Anticlericalism and the English Reformation".

Journal of Ecclesiastical History (XXXV, 1984)

No.3: P. Tudor, "Religious instruction for children and adolescents in the early English Reformation". No.4: J.W. Martin, "The Protestant underground congregations of Mary's reign".

Mid-Stream (XXV, 2, 1986)

Clark M. Williamson, "Disciples baptismal theology".

Proceedings of the Huguenot Society (XXIV, 2, 1984)

D.L. Rickwood, "The Norwich Strangers 1565-1643: a problem of control"; C.M. Vane, "The Walloon community in Norwich: the first hundred years"; A. Pettegree, "The foreign population of London in 1549".

Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society (XLV, 1-6, 1985-6)

Pt.1: John P. Tuck, "*Primitive Physic* - An interesting Association copy". Pt.2: John A. Newton, "Samuel Annesley (1620-1696)"; Betty I. Young, "Sources for the Annesley family". Pt.3: G.E. Milburn, "Early Methodism and the Huguenots". Pt.4: J. Waller, "Methodism in France". Pt.5: Paul Glass, "Hugh Price Hughes and the West London Mission". Pt.6: Norman W. Taggart, "Methodist Foreign Missions, The first half century".

Reformed World (XXXIX, 1986)

No.1: H. Vroom *et al.*, "Sola Scriptura". No.2: John H. Leith, "The writing of a Reformed confession today"; Alan Sell, "The Lord's Supper in the Reformed family". No.3: Alan Sell, "Some Reformed responses to *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*". No.4: Stephen Williams, "Reformed perspective on mission and hope".

Transactions of the Royal Historical Society (5th series, XXXVI, 1986)

G.E. Aylmer, "Collective mentalities in mid seventeenth-century England: I. The Puritan outlook".

Transactions of the Unitarian Society (XVIII, 4, 1986)

R.K. Webb, "Views of Unitarianism from Halley's comet"; John McLachlan, "Domesticity and romance in early Victorian Ulster: Peeps into a Non-Subscribing past"; Alan Ruston, "The Unitarian correspondents of W.E. Gladstone: The British Library MSS".

ALAN SELL