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FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE RYLAND FAMILY

Colston's Girls' School in Bristol has a library named the Ryland Library, in honour of Charles Julius Ryland, a friend and benefactor of the school who, it was discovered on his death in 1909, had willed his very considerable private library to the school. It was indeed considerable, consisting of some 10,000 volumes, and was the collection of a gentleman of wealth, education and taste. Not entirely conservative taste, either, containing as it did the complete works of Oscar Wilde and a series of the Yellow Books.

The approach of the school's centenary year awoke among some members of the staff an interest in certain details of the school's history and they approached me, as librarian of Bristol Baptist College, to enquire as to the relationship, if any, between the College's John Ryland and the Charles Julius Ryland who had been such a friend to the school.

I imagined - mistakenly, as it turned out - that it would be a fairly straightforward enquiry. To my surprise and dismay, I could not trace any connection at all. The common surname indicated that the descent would have been through the male line, but it became clear that Charles Julius was not the son of Jonathan Edwards Ryland and there did not appear to have been any other son of John Ryland. Nor could I trace the descent through any other son or brother of John Collet Ryland of Northampton, the father of our John Ryland.

The only loose end I found was a brief mention in the DNB of 'a child' - no name or even sex given - born to John Ryland's first wife, Elizabeth, née Tyler. This child was born on 9 December 1786 and its mother died some seven weeks later, on 28 January 1787. There being no mention anywhere else of this birth it seemed likely that the child had died also, such infant deaths being all too common.

That was where the matter rested for the next eighteen months. At that point I began the task of recataloguing the contents of the second of two tall, glazed bookcases in the College library, the first of which I had previously completed. One of the items I found was a tatty old Bible. The front cover was detached, the back cover missing altogether, and the volume had never been catalogued, but when I examined it more closely I discovered it to be a Ryland family Bible, the property of one John Tyler Ryland. In it he had recorded most carefully his own date and place of birth, his mother's name and the date of her death, his own marriage in 1811 and the names and dates of birth - and in several cases, also death - of all his children.

John Tyler Ryland was, in fact, the unnamed 'child' mentioned in the DNB and so far as I can discover, nowhere else. Between 2 April 1812 and 27 July 1833 his wife Elizabeth bore him fourteen children, of whom six died in babyhood or infancy. The last of these fourteen children was Charles Julius Ryland. John Tyler Ryland died in 1841 when Charles Julius was eight and his mother died in 1856. Charles Julius Ryland was therefore the grandson of John Ryland. The school was

delighted with the information, even though it arrived too late for their centenary.

I, however, was left wondering. Why was all the paternal pride and attention focused on Jonathan Edwards, while the first son, John Tyler, was apparently overlooked - indeed, totally ignored? It was not even that he lived far away. His address shows that his whole married life was spent within a couple of hundred yards of the College where his father was Principal. May it perhaps have been that Elizabeth Tyler was Ryland's first love and that subconsciously he blamed the baby for her death and was never able to forgive him for it? If so, he would not have been the only father to react thus. I can think of no other explanation which would satisfactorily account for the startling difference in his attitude towards his two sons. Whatever the reason for Ryland's behaviour, the facts detailed here show him in a considerably less favourable light than that in which he usually appears.

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SALEM, HAY-ON-WYE, AND BRONYDD BAPTIST CHURCHES

Revd Evan Lewis was minister at Hay-on-Wye from 1889 to 1894, with oversight of Bronydd for part or all of that time. When he moved from Hay to Calvary Treforest he naturally took his notebook and diary with him. His notebook contains lists of members of the three churches and is now with the Calvary Treforest archive in Glamorgan Record Office, together with fragments of his diary and a few biographical notes. The quantity of material is very small but it could be of interest to anyone researching Hay and Bronydd churches who might be unaware of its existence so far away from its subject area.

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