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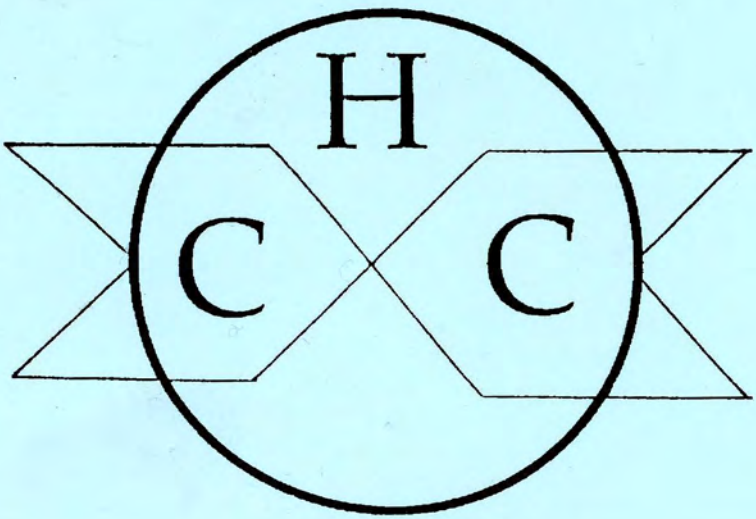
Congregational History Circle

Volume 3 Number 6



Spring 1998

The Congregational History Circle Magazine

Volume 3 No 6 Spring 1998

Contents

EDITORIAL

We welcome Brian Reed as a contributor to this issue of our magazine. Brian Reed is himself a minister at Westminster Chapel and he will be producing an illustrated and more detailed account of Samuel Martin's life and work in booklet form later this year. To obtain a copy contact him at Westminster Chapel, Buckingham Gate, London, SW1. Derek Watson's paper on Watts is his tribute to that hymn-writer on the 250th anniversary of his death. Yvonne Evans returns to the Gainsboroughs in order to trace the origins of the family's Congregationalism. Music and art provide a common theme for Watts and Gainsborough while Martin's creativity is revealed in his love of God which informed his compassion for God's suffering children.

NEWS AND VIEWS

American Congregationalism and the Anti-Slavery Movement

One of our correspondents in the United States of America, Prof Jeff Cox, has sent a cutting, from the Des Moines Sunday Register, of Iowa, in which a Congregational church in Burlington is noted as having been a haven for runaway slaves on the path to freedom. Burlington is a port and, in the nineteenth century, it was used by those who ran the legendary 'underground railroad' that took slaves and their families north to Canada and freedom. Running from Hawkeye Creek, close to the Mississippi river, is a tunnel which leads to a basement room at First Congregational Church. There runaway slaves found temporary shelter until church members could move them safely into private homes or barns. After dusk they were spirited back to the church basement then, when safe, they scrambled down the passage and continued north along the protective river's edge under the cover of darkness.

The underground railroad was a secret system, operating throughout fourteen northern states from Maine to Nebraska. Runaway slaves were called freight and stopping places were stations while those who helped the slaves - men and women, black and white - were conductors. Estimates suggest that about 100,000 slaves were freed by way of the railroad, many in the 1840s and '50s.

The building of First Congregational Church, Burlington, and its tunnel, began in 1843 when the town was a muddy frontier settlement. Three years later Iowa became a state and, fifteen years later the American Civil War broke out in 1861. In 1867 the church was replaced with a larger building but the underground tunnel and its entrance to the church basement remained and still remain.

William Salter, minister of the church 1846-1910, was a very active abolitionist when such activity was illegal. He risked the wrath also of marauding Missouri slave catchers who ranged into Iowa and were not above burning churches. The present ministers find their church's history not only edifying but also helpful in turning their own hearts and minds toward current spiritual and social needs.

Congregationalism was involved in other ways in the anti-slavery movement in the USA. An entry for December 1840 in the diary of the Congregational minister of Thomaston, Connecticut records, "Took up a collection..... for the Amistad captives". - a clear reference to the imprisoned Africans, taken from the slave ship "Amistad" by the US navy, who were charged with murder and mutiny. This episode has become more widely known because Steven Spielberg has recently made a popular film about it. The author of Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852), Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896), was herself a Congregationalist, as was her father, Lyman Beecher (1775-1863), a noted minister.

Congregationalists were active also in the formation of the American Missionary Society in 1846, a non-denominational reform society which worked for an end to slavery. The AMS sent teachers to the southern states, after the Civil War, to instruct freed slaves in reading although they were often the victims of Ku Klux Klan aggression.

Coward Trust etc

Dr John Thompson has written a history of the Coward Trust. The trust itself is to be thanked for publishing this as a joint supplement of the URC Historical Society and our own CHC. Members of the CHC should be receiving this supplement in the Spring of 1998.

Our sister society, the United Reformed Church History Society, published a supplement to its Journal (vol 5, supp. no.2), in September 1997, which is of particular interest to CHC members. Reformed and Renewed 1972-1997 Eight Essays, edited by Clyde Binfield, commemorates twenty-five years of the United Reformed Church. Properly and generously Dr Binfield recalls that the changes of these years have had a profound effect on the Congregational Federation, the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches, and "those Congregational Churches and Churches of Christ which have remained outside the larger re-groupings", as well as the United Reformed Church. The essays are not intended as history but rather as personal reflections. They include Ronald Bocking on the Congregational approach to 1972 and the URC, Martin Cressey and Arthur Macarthur on the Presbyterian, and Philip Morgan as an observer from the Churches of Christ. In addition John Travell and Alan Tovey write of the Congregational Federation and An Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches respectively. Two younger ministers, one URC and one Congregational, Stephen Brown and Deborah Martin, both ordained in 1989, for whom 1972 is history, contribute the remaining two articles. Lastly an afterword by David Thompson is included. This supplement provides a valuable resource.

Elisabeth Murray

The death of Elisabeth Murray, aged 88 years, in February, 1988 should not pass unnoticed by Congregational historians. She was the daughter of Harold Murray, a schools inspector, but, more significantly, the grand-daughter and biographer of James 'Dictionary' Murray (1837-1915). James Murray taught at Mill Hill School from 1870 to 1885, was a faithful Congregationalist, and a teetotaller. Elisabeth Murray's Caught In The Web of Words (Yale 1995) tells the story of her grandfather's remorseless pursuit of accuracy in his lexicography which resulted in The New English Dictionary. The NED

outstripped all previous dictionaries, employing new scientific philology and listing in full every word and idiom. It grew from an anticipated 7000 pages in 1879 to 15487 pages on eventual publication in 1928. At his death, although The New English Dictionary was not finished, he had been knighted, had received degrees from nine universities, and enjoyed international respect. In Oxford Murray was often to be seen riding his bicycle, with his white beard blowing in the wind. He was a deacon of George Street Congregational Chapel, Oxford for fifteen years.

Elisabeth Murray herself graduated in history from Somerville College, Oxford in 1931. She worked in Manchester and later at Girton College, Cambridge before serving 1948-70 as principal of Bishop Otter College, Chichester. Significantly her grandfather's biography was a retirement project.

Ian Sellers

Sadly we must report the death of Dr Ian Sellers who contributed to our Spring 1994 issue. His article, "The Threapwood Story", dealt with several small country churches in Cheshire. In his latter years he had lectured on Baptist history at the Northern Baptist College. He was the author of the very useful Nineteenth-Century Nonconformity (1977) which appeared in the Foundations of Modern History series, published by Edward Arnold, and he collaborated with John Briggs in editing Victorian Nonconformity (1973), a volume of extracts from contemporary records, journals, biographical accounts etc. Sellers was a good historian, as his many articles in the learned and denominational journals testify.

Lesslie Newbigin

We also note the death of Lesslie Newbigin on January 20th, 1998 at the age of 88 years. Although not one of the framers of the United Reformed Church, his life and teaching could be seen as inspirational to its founders, especially, but not exclusively, those on the Presbyterian side. Newbigin was an unashamed advocate of the institutional unity of Christians and, aged 38, was chosen to serve as one of the first bishops in the newly formed Church of South India in 1947. Such early recognition was reward for his energy, commitment, fine intellect and spiritual perception.

James Edward Lesslie Newbigin was from a well-to-do home in Newcastle upon Tyne where his ship-owning family attended Jesmond Presbyterian Church. He was educated at the Quaker school at Leighton Park, Reading and 1928-31 at Queen's College, Cambridge, where he became interested in the Student Christian Movement. He served as SCM secretary in Glasgow 1931-33, prior to ministerial training at Westminster College, Cambridge 1933-36. He went with his wife , Helen Henderson, to the mission field in Madras, India and, with interruptions, remained working in India until his retirement in 1974. Thus he spoke on questions of reunion, the world Church, and the missionary movement with a unique authority and, as the years progressed, with a deserved and growing reputation. He was the only Presbyterian to become a bishop in 1947 and his A South India Diary (1951) gives a clear insight into his pastoral view of his role as Bishop in Madurai and Ramnad. In 1953 he published the influential The Household of God and in 1966 Honest Religion for Secular Man.

In 1974 on his return to Britain he joined the URC as a minister, although retaining and using the title bishop, and was a lecturer at the Selly Oak colleges in Birmingham for five years. He was moderator of the URC general assembly 1978-79 and 1980-88 served part-time as minister of the small church at Winson Green which had been threatened with closure. He never stopped writing, producing six books between 1984 and his death. His The Gospel in a Pluralist Society (1989) attempts to address contemporary problems for the churches in England.

His status as an ecumenical statesman was recognized by the award of a CBE in 1974 and by his being given honorary doctorates by six universities. In recent months he had become particularly involved with a response to the URC General Assembly's vote on the issue of homosexual ministers. Although theologically acute and personally charming, he could be curiously inflexible and dismissive with those who questioned his approach to unity and saw the needs of the British churches and people differently from him.

Publications

In the year in which we recall the 250th anniversary of Isaac Watts' death it is timely to record the publication of two new books on hymns. Firstly Peter Newman Brooks in Hymns as Homilies (1997) offers his learned reflections on several well-known hymns from the Reformation onwards. He argues that the great traditional hymns serve both to inform and educate the faithful and to maintain the faith. He includes in his discussion hymns by Luther, Thomas Ken, Doddridge, Watts, Charles Wesley, Toplady, John Newton, Keble, Newman, Charlotte Elliott, Cecil Frances Alexander and John Ellerton.

Secondly Ian Bradley has published Abide With Me – The World of Victorian Hymns (1997) in which he examines many of the nineteenth century hymns we all know and probably love. He traces their influence in literature, culture and theology, exposing many myths attached to them and revealing that, beneath and alongside the triumphalist imperialism, lie doubts, uncertainties and humility. Bradley's sensitive Christian faith informs his writing.

The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (1997) deserves high praise. This reference work should be on your shelf where you will have constant recourse to it. Many entries are little gems in this new edition which is larger and more comprehensive than its predecessors. All the articles have updated bibliographies and most entries have been revised. The ODCC first appeared in 1957 and the second edition was published in 1974. Thus subjects such as Liberation Theology and Feminist Theology have been added and more positive evaluations of other religions have influenced the relevant entries. CHC members may be interested to read under "Congregationalism" that simply "the greater part" of the Congregational Church in England and Wales joined with the Presbyterian Church to form the United Reformed Church in 1972. Both An Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches and the Congregational Federation are mentioned. Included in the bibliography for this entry are not only the still useful five volumes of John Waddington's Congregational History (1869-80) but Reg Cleaves' Congregationalism 1960-1976: The Story of the Federation (Swansea 1977) and the little-known J Corrigan The Prison of Piety: Catholick Congregational Clergy at the Beginning of the Enlightenment (New York and Oxford 1991). In short this ODCC is indispensable!

Arthur Macarthur has written his life story in Setting Up Signs: Memories of an Ecumenical Pilgrim (1997). He was the general secretary of the Presbyterian Church of England 1960-72, joint general secretary of the URC 1972-74, and its sole general secretary 1975-80. He was therefore one of the architects of the URC and should have much to say on this. However, beyond describing what happened, Macarthur is curiously silent about why matters turned out as they did. Yet he was not writing to answer my questions so perhaps I should not be too disappointed. His book offers us an entertaining story of a gracious and humble man who, to his credit, has reserves of humour – a quality to value in a church bureaucrat! Unfortunately the caption beneath a very solemn photograph bears the accusation, "Assembly Moderator Kenneth Slack indicts" Macarthur as his successor. Surely this should be inducts!

Also among the recent publications we should note is the January 1998 edition of the Epworth Review (Vol 25 No.1), containing an extended profile of Geoffrey Nuttall written by Clyde Binfield. As Richard G Jones states, in his editorial, it is not only a profile but also "a plea for us to pause and appreciate the precious tradition within Nonconformity, and especially Congregationalism, of the scholar-pastor. Nowadays one might hear Christians remark that 'we don't want ministers with three degrees; what are those?' but classic dissent never encouraged that anti-intellectualism, and Wesleyans too tended to abhor it. Instead congregations wanted someone who had studied the Bible profoundly, had mastered the main intellectual challenges of the time, and who could therefore help everyone to worship God with heart and soul and mind. The pastor was both preacher-inspirer and 'my learned friend' : in that atmosphere Geoffrey Nuttall was reared. How poverty-stricken we would be if that tradition were to die out and the ministry became devoted to spiritual excitements rather than discernments." Thus we are reminded of the precious contribution made to our churches by such scholar-pastors. Congregationalism has known many of them and we should value and, where possible, cultivate such gifted ministers still. They are a rare blessing.

Geoffrey Nuttall himself has been, and still is, a unique blessing to Congregationalism in particular and to the wider church. We should still read him because the lessons of his scholarship and learning have yet to be learned. Clyde Binfield is to be thanked for this profile which unhesitatingly I recommend to all.

For Your Information

The CHC should note the appointment of Dr David Wykes as Director of Dr Williams's Trust from September 1998. He brings to this new post his scholarship and experience as a research fellow in history at the University of Leicester. We wish him well.

Readers should be aware in 1998 of the 400th anniversary of the Edict of Nantes which granted the Huguenots a considerable measure of legal protection and religious freedom in France.

The annual service, commemorating the 1660/62 ejections of Nonconformist clergymen, will be held on Saturday 22nd August 1998 at Cole Abbey Presbyterian Church, Queen Victoria Street, London, EC4 at 3.00pm. Before the service a posy will be laid at the memorial stone outside Memorial Hall, Fleet Lane, EC4 at 2.15pm. For details contact the editor.

CHAPEL CRAWL 1997

In May 1997 members of the CHC visited a number of historic chapels in the Oldham area. Our visit lacked the usual fine historical expertise which has characterised previous tours. However, thanks to the good offices and local knowledge of John Wibberley of Greenacres a programme of routes around the district was devised. We spent a considerable time looking at Greenacres which has recently experienced extensive and radical building alterations. The sanctuary area has been completed and is now very impressive. We donned hard hats and looked around the "tower" area – upstairs. The minister, Neil Chappell, spent some time describing his church's history, beginning with the Rev Robert Constantine (1618-1699). Constantine was ejected in 1662, for not conforming to the prayer book of the Church of England, from his post as curate of the "ancient chapel of ease of Oldham". Constantine was forced to leave Oldham and his place was taken in the parish by John Lake, later Bishop of Chichester. He settled at Birstall in Yorkshire for a few years before returning to Oldham. In 1672 he was licensed there as a Presbyterian and the meeting house at Greenacres was noted at the quarter sessions in July 1689. "He liv'd to be very aged, and his Parts decay'd and his Memory fail'd..... In the prime of his Days, he was a Man of a clear Head, pregnant Parts, solid Learning, and sweet Converse. He was a well accomplish'd Preacher, of a valuable Tongue, and audible Voice, good Method, and very taking....." (AG Matthews Calamy Revised 1934).

From Greenacres we visited the Saddleworth village chapels of Ebenezer, Uppermill, Dobcross and Delph. Of these, Ebenezer looked delightful while the magnificent premises of the now redundant chapel of Dobcross with its Anglican-like structure and a range of buildings for caretaker, minister and Sunday school, now alas, all sold, looked distinctly like a lost opportunity.

Colin Price

THE GAINSBOROUGH FAMILY IN SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE

This year sees the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the induction, in 1748, of the lesser-known, but talented brother, Humphry (1718-76), of the famous artist, Thomas Gainsborough (1727-88), to the pastorate of Henley-on-Thames Congregational Church. (The exact date is unknown,[1] but it must have been very late in the year[2]). Coincidentally, it is also the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the death of their father, John Gainsborough (1683 - 29th October 1748).[3]

The Gainsboroughs, like many families in the 18th and 19th centuries, had very few male Christian names. In the Gainsborough family there was a plethora of Johns and Thomases. I have, therefore, added a simplified family tree and follow the Roman numeral nomenclature of J. O. Dodds[4] which is also used by Hugh Belsey in his catalogue of the paintings of the Gainsborough family[5].

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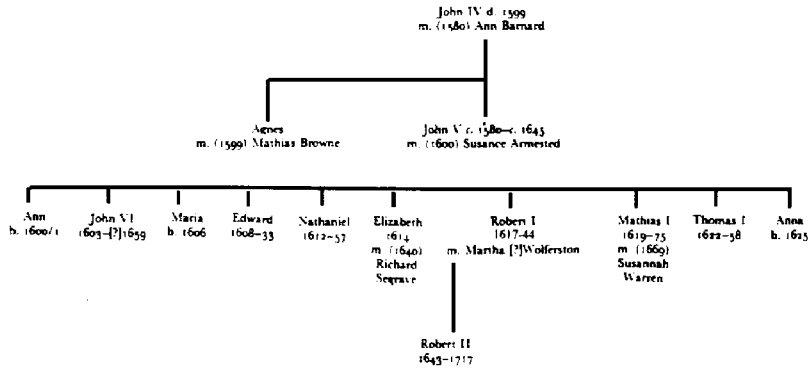
1 G.H. Peters The Life and Work of Humphrey Gainsborough (Henley 1948) 15

2 G.F.Nuttall Calendar of the Correspondence of Philip Doddridge DD (1702-1751) (1979) 287 letter 1402 which is dated 13th October 1748 and speaks of Humphry at Newport Pagnell

3 Belsey Gainsborough's Family Sudbury (1988) 56

4 J.O. Dodds The Gainsboroughs of Aveland (Sudbury 1986)

5 Belsey op.cit.



The marriage of Mary Burrough to the above John VII introduced a new name Humphry (without the e) in honour, we presume, of her brother, the Revd Mr Humphrey Burrough (a curate at St Gregory's, Sudbury, and the headmaster of the Grammar School, Sudbury). The rare name, Mathias, had appeared earlier in one of the younger sons of John V and Susance Armested, perhaps because John's sister, Agnes, had married a Mathias Browne in 1599. (Mathias I was baptised , as were all his younger brothers and sisters, at St Andrew's, Horbling by Simon Bradstreet, formerly a fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and "a notable non- conforming member of the Lincoln Diocese".)[6] The name, Mathias, is used for the son of Robert II, the brother of Thomas II and John VII. In the next generation, one of John's son is also called Matthias (but with a double t). He died young.

At the dissolution of the Gilbertine Priory of Sempringham in September 1538, Lord Clinton, later first Earl of Lincoln, acquired the lands, including most of Billingborough. His need for tenants gave the Gainsborough family the opportunity to farm the land at Fen Edge which was particularly sought after.[7] The first record of a Gainsborough in the village of Billingborough occurred in

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[6] ibid. 10

[7] Dodds op.cit. 5

the 1544 subsidy roll. Two years later John I appears in the 1546 subsidy roll.[8] The Gilbertines were the only purely English monastic order. It was founded by Gilbert, parish priest of his native Sempringham, when he advised seven women to live by the Cistercian Rule. Soon he added a group of lay brothers and sisters to help with the manual work. In 1147 the Cistercian order at Citeaux declined his request to govern his community of women. He, therefore, appointed in 1148 Canons Regular of the Augustinian rule to be the spiritual directors of the nuns. These Canons Regular lived a common life together and these communities took the form of a double order which continued, until surrendering their houses to the Crown without resistance at the dissolution of the monasteries.[9] G.F. Nuttall, in Visible Saints (1957), points out that these eastern counties had earlier been "prominent in a religious movement of a radical kind: 'the preponderance of the East Anglian element' had been observed among the first Franciscans in" England.[10] This may also apply to the Gilbertines who had an independent attitude to ecclesiastical structures.

The freeing of land for the fenland people may have been seen by them as an escape from the oppression of the Church. This was reinforced by the church reforms of Archbishop Cranmer and Edward VI. It is not surprising that, in the 16th century, religious non-conformity became an important feature of Lincolnshire life. Psychologically it suited the fenland character which stressed independency and sturdy self-sufficiency. By 1584 13 percent of the clergy were reported as being non-conformable.[11]

The Elizabethan ecclesiastical settlement, to the dismay of some bishops and Protestant reformers, showed the cautious nature of Elizabeth I. The reigns of her Protestant brother, Edward, and her Roman Catholic sister, Mary, produced in her a dislike of fanaticism. In church affairs, she set no "windows into men's hearts and secret thoughts".[12] Late in her reign she described her wishes for the church: "We know not, nor have any meaning to allow that any of our subjects

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8 ibid.

9 Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (3rd edition) (1977)

10 G.F. Nuttall Visible Saints (Oxford 1957) 21

11 Lincolnshire Record Society C.W. Foster vol 23 (1926) 'Church and State' quoted by Dodds op.cit. 14

12 J Spedding, An Account of theLife and Times of Francis Bacon (Boston 1878) quoted in S.B. Babbage Puritanism and Richard Bancroft (1962) 2

should be molested either by examination or inquisition ... as long as they shall how themselves quiet and conformable".[13] Babbage comments, "On the basis of a settlement both tolerant and comprehensive, she hoped for a general conformity in practice. It was essentially the policy of a politique and realist".[14] This settlement was neither to the taste of the Marian bishops nor the returning emigrés hot for reform. By 1589 Thomas Cooper wrote of the increased frustration of radical reformers amongst whom were those "earnestly affirming and teaching, that we have no Church, no bishops, no ministers, no sacraments; and therefore that all that love Jesus Christ ought with all speed to separate themselves from our congregation, because our assemblies are profane wicked and antichristian".[15]

The accession of James I in 1603 produced more agitation for church reform. In Suffolk a petition to the King protested against such "offensyve things" as: "ye Ignorant and vnlearned Ministerie, the half Ministers called deacons, the non Resident Ministery, the pluralitie of Lyvinge conferred to one, The many offensyve Ceremonies, As the Cornered Cappe, typpet, Cloake, and surplice".[16] In Oxfordshire the petitioners asked that their: "owne yooke may be made much lighter in these things, viz. those ceremonies that seeme superstitious, as the crosse in Baptisme, and what els in the Lyturgie may require redresse".[17] James, claiming the "divine right of kings", was unsympathetic to Puritan demands. After the rejection of the Millenary petition and the failure of the Hampton Court conference, the Puritan cause was severely damaged .[18]

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[13] S.P.Dom., Eliz. I, Vol LXVI, no 54 S.B. Babbage op.cit. 3

[14] ibid

[15] An Admonition to the people of England (1589) ed. E Arber, 119 quoted in S.B. Babbage op.cit. 9

[16] Additional MSS., 38,492, f. 71 quoted in S.B. Babbage op.cit. 51

[17] Sloane MSS., 271, f. 20. 16 May 1603 S.B. Babbage op.cit.

[18] ibid. ch2

Although papal authority and Roman Catholic dominance had been abjured, much pre-reformation canon law was still binding in the Church of England.[19] On January 31st 1603, royal authority was given for the preparation of revised ecclesiastical canons which, in the prevailing climate, would be detrimental to the Puritans. However many ordinary people and ministers desired Church reform. Hence these stringent requirements could not be implemented in all places, so that many ministers, who would not comply with the new canon laws, continued in pastoral charge.

In Lincolnshire the fen drainage policy of James I (and later Charles I) was seen by the fenland people as an attempt to remove their "free commons and their perquisites" and give them to noblemen and favourites of the high church party. Thus this policy strengthened their non-conforming attitude. [In 1636 the Earl of Lindsey, Sir William Killigrew and others drew up schemes to drain the fen of Billingborough and Horbling amongst others. Within a few years the fenland people had torn down the sluices, broken the drains and restored the Commons for another hundred years.][20]

In the diocese of Lincoln many clergymen would not conform; including Simon Bradstreet, vicar of Horbling,[21] who, since his institution in 1596, had never worn a surplice and had been admonished many times.[22] In July 1605, he wrote to the Bishop of Lincoln: "Concerning my conformite I beseech your LL. giue me leave and leysure to goe somewhat slowly that I may goe the more suerly".[23]

At the bishop's triennial visitation in 1607, Bradstreet was "presented as being one not wholly conforming himself to the orders and ceremonies appointed in the Prayer Book and Canons", refusing to use the sign of the cross or wear the

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19 ibid. 74

20 Dodds op.cit. 15

21 C.W. Foster The State of the Church, lxxiii-iv quoted in S.B. Babbage op.cit. 92n

22 S.B. Babbage op.cit. 220

23 Correspondence of William Chadderton, cor/13/2,f.19 quoted in S.B. Babbage op.cit. 220

surplice.[24] In the Libri Cleri for 1611. his good behaviour was reported. "saving hee is not conformable".[25] Such delaying tactics worked well in Bradstreet's case. although they did not work for all the clergy in the diocese.[26]

The Episcopal Visitation book. Lincoln 1607. reveals disturbances in the diocese with Puritan ministers. receiving support from their people. Babbage notes that. among others. Hugh Blythe. vicar of Appleby. was censured "for not wearing his hoode and Tippett". and Simon Bradstreet "for yt he (doth not) wholly conforme himselfe vnto orders and ceremonies ... in crosse and surplice".[27] Robert Hargrave. curate of Stanton under Barden. was known for his aggressive nonconformity. Children were brought to him from neighbouring parishes to be christened "without the sign of the crosse". So intense was the desire to escape what they believed was superstitious nonsense. that one man was censured. "for carryenge his child to bee christened in a boate to Stanton without the sign of the Cross by Robert Hargraue". Many found kneeling to receive the elements at communion idolatrous. Some clergy. including Hargrave. were censured for giving communion to those who would only receive it standing.[28]

John IV Gainsborough died in 1599 whilst his son was a minor. In 1600 by this son's, John V. marriage to Susance Armested. at St Peter's. Lincoln. he inherited his father's property. Between 1600 and 1606 the first four of his children were baptised at St Andrew's. Billingborough. Probably the movement in 1611 of John V (c.1580-1640) and his wife Susance from Billingborough to the neighbouring village of Horbling. almost certainly during this religious ferment. had a religious cause.[29] Both Billingborough and Horbling parishes (in the Wapentake of Aveland) lay across the dividing line. the Car Dike. between the fens and the dry lands of the limestone hills of south-east Lincolnshire. Farmers grazed their stock in the summer in the fen and in the winter on the dry pastures of the higher. limestone hills. They were among the wealthiest livestock farmers in the east midlands.[30]

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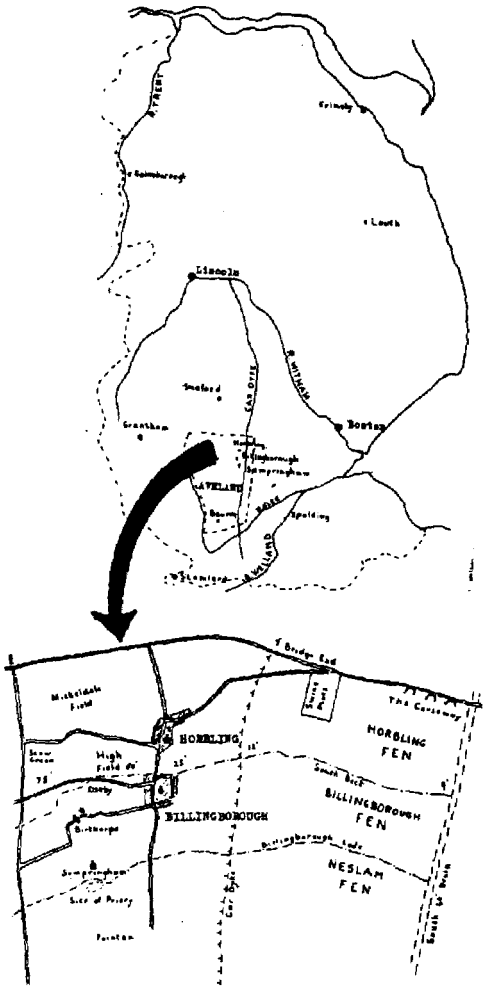
[24] ibid.
[25] ibid.
[26] ibid. 351
[27] ibid.
[28] ibid.
[29] Belsey op.cit, 8; CHC Magazine vol 3 no5, 33
[30] Dodds op.cit. 5



As in the 17th Century, indicative heights in feet above sea level.

All things being equal (the lease might have run out in Billingborough), one attraction of Horbling for the Gainsboroughs was Simon Bradstreet, for whom John V was often churchwarden. Therefore Nathaniel, Elizabeth, Robert I (1617-44), the great-grandfather of Thomas and Humphry, Mathias I, Thomas I and Anna were baptized without being signed with a cross. Interestingly, this Simon Bradstreet was the father of Simon Bradstreet (1603-97), Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony 1679-86 and 1689-92[31] and, hence, the father-in-law of Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672), "America's first woman poet".[32] Simon Bradstreet the elder, vicar of Horbling, died in February 1620/1.[33] The Alumni Cantabrigiensis is unclear about William Carter who was vicar of Billingborough in 1621.[34] However by September 1632 James Morton held in plurality both Billingborough and Horbling. He was ejected in 1662.[35]

During some 47 years, a Gainsborough often held a position of importance in the church and village of Horbling and continued to do so during the conflict between Parliament and King. The Fens were solidly Parliamentarian but the Royalists held Newark. The fate of Lincoln was often in the balance in the war and life could be difficult in south Lincolnshire. John VI died around 1659. After this there appear to be no mention of any Gainsboroughs of this family in Lincolnshire. Robert I and his brother Mathias (who may have left Horbling after him) first appear in the Lavenham Muster Roll in 1638.[36] The life of the Gainsborough family in Suffolk, producing such splendid offspring, had begun.

Belsey's Gainsborough's Family, with paintings of the Gainsboroughs in the 18th century, has two likenesses of John VII painted by his son, Thomas. One, painted three years after John's death, is described on a label in Thomas' wife's, Margaret Burr (1728-98), handwriting. This is an example of Thomas' "prodigous visual memory".[37] Belsey observes that verification of this talent can be found in comparing The Pembroke Family, painted by Gainsborough from

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31 DNB Missing Persons
32 DNB
33 Alumni Cantabrigensis vol I part 1 203
34 ibid 302
35 A.G. Matthews Calamy Revised (Oxford 1934) 357
36 Dodds op.cit. 1; Belsey op.cit. 10
37 ibid. 58

memory, and the original by Van Dyck.[38] The other portrait, George William Fulcher describes as having "humour and indecision ... stamped on his features".[39] This seems a fitting epitaph for the kindly and generous but improvident John. The paintings of his brother, Humphry, are most interesting. One, previously identified as their brother 'scheming Jack' and earlier, by G.W. Fulcher, as their father[40] has now been identified by Belsey as Humphry, painted in the mid 1750's. It shows him in profile, a pose usually associated with posthumous portraiture, but in sober apparel, with a broad brimmed hat. Philip Doddridge, writing to a former pupil, Samuel Wood, minister at the Old Meeting, Norwich, writes on 13th October 1748, that Humphry Gainsborough of Newport Pagnell is "a worthy Man and thorough Calvinist but low spirited and seems to have some objections against Suffolk".[41] This contrasts with a likeness of Humphry, painted twenty years later, of a bare headed man, with the light falling directly on his face. Belsey notes that the sitter's upward glance is unusual. He writes, "it is tempting to see this as an indication of Humphry Gainsborough's strong religious convictions"[42] and the non-conforming beliefs which had come to him (and his siblings and cousins) from his Lincolnshire forebears.

Yvonne A. Evans

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38 ibid.

39 G.W. Fulcher Life of Thomas Gainsborough (1856) 206 quoted in Belsey op. cit. 56

40 Belsey op. cit. 66

41 G.F. Nuttall Calendar 287

42 ibid. 68

ISAAC WATTS 1674-1748 MEASURED BY HIS SOUL

On a wall, outside my nearest branch of Marks and Spencer, is a plaque identifying the site of the Meeting House, which became Above Bar Congregational Church, Southampton. Here Isaac Watts worshipped, here his hymns were first sung and here his family may have worshipped since before 1588, often in secret, with a doorman keeping watch .[1]

In the late 17th century worshippers here were mainly 'respectable' and middle-class, like Isaac Watts senior, a deacon of the church, and Nathaniel Robinson, the pastor. Robinson had been rector of All Saints, a nearby church, and was one of the clergymen who dissented when the Act of Uniformity became law on St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24th 1662.[2] A Congregationalist, in March 1673 he and Watts senior were imprisoned for worshipping contrary to the Church of England. On release in September, Isaac married Sarah, daughter of Alderman Richard Taunton.[3] The following July 17th, Isaac, the first of nine children, was born. Within a few days his father was again imprisoned for violating the Conventicle Act of 1664. Tradition reports that Mrs Watts would seat herself on a horse-block, near the prison door by the South Castle (Old Town), to suckle and nurse Isaac, believing that his crying would give his father pleasure![4]

The Watts' home in French Street no longer stands, though the school site where Watts senior headed a successful boarding school remains. Home life was strict and daily Watts' father led family prayers. Once during prayers, Isaac tittered. When his father, who himself composed sacred verses, demanded the reason he replied that he had seen a mouse go up the servant's bell rope and the thought came to him; -

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1 S Stainer History of the Above Bar Congregational Church, Southampton (Southampton 1909)

2 A G Matthews Calamy Revised (Oxford 1934) 413, DNB

3 AP Davis Isaac Watts: His Life and Works (1943)

4 T Wright Isaac Watts and Contemporary Hymn Writers (1914) 8

"There was a mouse . for want of stairs
Ran up a rope to say his prayers".

This early poetic skill was not appreciated by his father, still less when the lad tried a second rhyme: -

"O father, father, pity take
and I will no more verses make".

Young Isaac showed an unusual passion for learning. Aged four he began to learn Latin. At the Free School he was inspired by the headmaster, Rev John Pinhorne who added studies in English, Greek, Hebrew and, unusually, French. Possibly the latter entered the syllabus because of the French Protestant refugees in the town.[5] Aged nine, Isaac began a table of 'Memorable affairs in my life' and in 1683 wrote, 'I had the Smallpox' and 'My father persecuted and imprisoned for Nonconformity 6 months – After that, forced to leave his family and live privately in London for 2 years'. Isaac had asked his father to write home telling the family how they should behave. Isaac senior obliged cheerfully. There were harrowing stories of suffering. The Watts must have known of Lady Lucille Lisle, a 70 year old widow condemned by Judge Jeffreys for giving hospitality to fugitives from Sedgemoor, who was publicly beheaded at Winchester, a 12 mile coach ride from their home.[6]

After the Glorious Revolution of 1688, conditions for the Watts and their friends at the meeting house improved. At school Isaac was exceptional . The local physician, with others, offered to pay his fees through university. This would have meant conforming and how could one whose father had suffered for his beliefs give lip-service to the establishment to gain an education? Instead, aged 16, he left school to enter the dissenting academy at Stoke Newington.[7]

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5 Davis op. cit. 8,9 T Wright op.cit. 16
6 Davis op.cit. 5,6 Wright ibid.14
7 Davis 9,10,13

The years 1690-94 were momentous for Isaac. Having recovered from 'a great and dangerous sickness', his study years were free from the intestinal and head disorders which troubled him for much of his life. Watts made many life-long friends at Rowe's academy, including several who conformed and became bishops and archbishops. The Principal, Thomas Rowe, modelled the academy on Calvin's school in Geneva. Watts learned to prefer the 'language of artisans, countrymen and merchants before that of wits and scholars', taking this language into his verse. His formal studies included philosophy, the sciences, and theology, and Isaac disciplined himself to work well into the night, continuing this practice for the rest of his life. During his academy years, Watts worshipped with the Independent church at Girdler's Hall where Rowe was pastor. In December 1693 he was accepted into membership. Then, before his 20th birthday, he was back at home, his formal education completed. Modestly he decided he was too young to take a church and he remained for two years with his parents.

During this period, encouraged by Above Bar Church, Isaac wrote many of his best-loved hymns.[8] He regarded his verse-making as an accidental consequence of his profession. Aged 22, he started work, at the home of Sir John and Lady Mary Hartopp at Stoke Newington, as tutor to their son. He also continued his studies in preparation for ministry. Occasionally he accompanied the Hartopps to their country seat, leading services in the ancient meeting-house which still stands in the village of Freeby, Leicestershire.

In the Spring of 1698, at the dissenters' chapel in Mart (later Mark) Lane, near Fenchurch Street, London, Watts began to help the minister, Dr Isaac Chauncy. In 1702, at the start of Queen Anne's reign, Watts was ordained pastor at Mark Lane. Watts then lived with Thomas Hollis in the Minories and suffered several months of debilitating illness. Samuel Price was appointed as co-pastor and the following year the church, grown large, moved to Pinners' Hall. By 1708 the congregation, with 400 members, had moved again to larger premises in Bury Street.[9]

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8 ibid.

9 For Chauncy see DNB and AG Matthews CR 112

Since Watts' ordination, feeble health had prevented his giving full-time service. His offers to retire were dismissed by the church meeting. They encouraged him to write. Eventually in August 1712 he did retire from the ministry aged 38.

Watts carefully documented his work and teaching which later formed sections of books on a variety of subjects. His first educational publication, Logic (1725), remained a text book at Oxford and Cambridge for 120 years and was used in academies in both England and New England. He wrote on astronomy, geography and grammar, as well as composing poetry for adults, Lyric Poems (1709), and for children, Divine and Moral Songs (1715). Divine Songs was the source of many late 18th and early 19th century children's verse and hymns. These verses from Divine Songs are headed "Against quarrelling and fighting":

"Let dogs delight to bark and bite
for God has made them so,
Let bears and lions growl and fight
for 'tis their nature to.

But children you should never let
such angry passions rise;
Your little hands were never made
to tear each other's eyes."

He approached the children of his day with attractive, well-illustrated books and verses because he was certain that they would teach young people about the Christian God, giving them a sure hope for their future.

In 1702 Sir Thomas and Lady Mary Abney invited Isaac to be their guest for a month. The visit was extended and Isaac spent the second half of his life with the Abneys, staying either at their country home, Theobalds, Cheshunt, Hertfordshire or at the Manor House, Stoke Newington, being Sir Thomas's chaplain during his time as Lord Mayor of London. Isaac never married but confided in his friend Samuel Say (son of Giles Say, ejected from St Michael's,

Southampton)[10] how he hoped he would find the right lady. In 1705 he in fact proposed to a poetess, Elizabeth Singer. On meeting him, she was disappointed by his appearance and his marriage proposal met the rebuff, "Mr Watts, I only wish I could say that I admire the casket as much as I admire the jewel". Watts was conscious of his short stature, little over five feet, and wrote :

"Were I so tall to reach the pole
and grasp the ocean in my span
I must be measured by my soul.
The mind's the standard of the man".

Watts took frequent trips to the New Forest, the spa towns, Tunbridge Wells and Bath, riding hundreds of miles on horseback, but he suffered from a disease, probably neurological, which pursued a relapsing and remitting course throughout his life, entering a progressive stage four or five years before his death.

Sheltered by the Abneys, Watts influenced the future Evangelical leaders, Wesley, Whitefield and Edwards. They corresponded and visited him, as did Frances, Countess of Hertford and Selina, Countess of Huntingdon. His rooms were a clearing house for American problems. He helped find donors for Harvard, choose professors and books for New England, counselled New England's governors, and generally entered into the life of that colony. Watts encouraged Philip Doddridge to establish his academy in Northampton[11], and advocated physical training, painting and singing be added to the curriculum. Watts possessed the Puritan love of music and recreation. He maintained a steady flow of educational and theological writings and in 1727 two Scottish universities, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen, honoured him with doctorates of divinity. Watts also had tolerance and generosity, trying to reconcile Christians who differed on minor points of doctrine. In his will he left money to poor clergy of the established church as well as to poor Nonconformist ministers in Southampton.

A few miles from my home, one can take an exhilarating miniature railway and ferry trip, across the river Test, to Southampton Old Town. Once there, it is but a short walk to where the Watts family lived. Tradition has it that

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[10] AG Matthews op. cit.

[11] M Deacon Philip Doddridgeof Northampton (Northampton 1980) p98, 105

Isaac enjoyed the view looking west across the river where, in the foreground of the New Forest, were beautiful meadows, a vista which inspired an early hymn, "There is land of pure delight, where saints immortal dwell". In this Watts turns to the Exodus story of the Israelites' first glance at the promised land, across the Jordan.

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
stand dressed in living green.
So to the Jews old Canaan stood
while Jordan rolled between".

The Jordan serves as a symbol of death and Canaan as a picture of heaven, the land of pure delight. Watts entitles the hymn "A prospect of heaven makes death easy". For the Christian death is but "the narrow sea", separating this life from the heavenly, and may be faced without fear;

"Could we but stand where Moses stood
and view the landscape o'er,
Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood
should fright us from the shore".

Another early hymn focuses on heaven itself; "Come, let us join our cheerful songs, with angels round the throne", based on Rev.5:11-13. Gathered round God's throne, living creatures, elders and angels praise God and sing "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power, wealth, might, honour, glory and blessing". Here on earth, met for worship, we echo that song:

"Worthy the Lamb our lips reply,
for he was slain for us".

Often in his praise hymns, Watts introduces a cosmic element and now he enjoins us, with the whole creation, to pay honour to Jesus, Lord of all. The idea is expressed in a verse frequently omitted.

"Let all who dwell beyond the sky,
the air and earth and seas
unite to lift his glories high
and sing his endless praise". (Jubilate Hymns 1982)

The hymn, "Come we that love the Lord, and let our joys be known", clearly expresses his conviction that Christians have no occasion to be gloomy. His last line conveys the hope of glory; "We're marching thro' Immanuel's ground to fairer worlds on high". Watts entitled the hymn "Heavenly joys on Earth". So we have the verse;

"For we by grace have found
glory begun below;
Celestial fruits on earthly ground
from faith and hope may grow" (Rejoice and Sing 1991)

which originally was:

"The men of grace have found
Young glory here below:
Young glory here on earthly ground
From faith and hope may grow".

The first hymn he composed:

"Behold the glories of the Lamb
amid His Father's throne,
Prepare new honours for His name
and songs before unknown"

was sung after service one Sunday in 1694 at the start of Rev William Bolam's ministry in Southampton – possibly to the melody we know for "While shepherds watched their flocks". Bolam encouraged Watts to write a hymn each week.[12]

[12] T Wright op.cit.

In his parents' house, by 1700, some two hundred songs "before unknown" were composed. Many passed on broadsheets into Nonconformist churches. Meanwhile Hymns and Spiritual Songs had been compiled but remained unpublished until 1707. Then, two years later, the book was revised and expanded. Of its 350 hymns at least a dozen are commonly found in today's hymnals.

1. Come, let us join our cheerful songs
2. Come we that love the Lord
3. How beauteous are their feet
4. Give me the wings of faith to rise
5. I'm not ashamed to own my Lord
6. Jesus invites his saints
7. Join all the glorious names
8. Nature with open volume stands
9. There is a land of pure delight
10. We give immortal praise
11. When I survey the wondrous cross
12. With joy we meditate the grace

Perhaps his greatest hymn is "When I survey the wondrous cross", based on Gal.6:14, "God forbid that I should boast, except in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ". This powerful hymn, "a native masterpiece", as AG Matthews called it, is one of the earliest in English to include the personal pronoun. Written for the Lord's supper, it is much used as a passion hymn. Matthew Arnold described it as the finest in the English language.[13] Watts' "vividly emblematic" fourth stanza, "His dying crimson like a robe", is often omitted "to placate some squeamish Anglican sensibility". The picture of Jesus bathed in blood is shocking, almost revolting. Watts intended us to feel the horror of the crucifixion, with its "bleak challenge". We are thus prepared for the final lines confronting us with the demands of the cross;

> "Love so amazing, so divine
> demands my soul, my life, my all".[14]

Other masterpieces from this collection of 1707 are "Join all the glorious names" – a splendid pageant, with several fine tunes. The first verse acknowledges in Christ all the attributes of the persons of the Godhead, i.e. wisdom (of the Son, the Word), love (of the Holy Spirit) and power (of the Father). Watts has eleven verses, with each dwelling on one of the "glorious names" or "offices of Christ", such as Redeemer, Conqueror, Guide, Shepherd,

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[13] KL Parry(ed) Companion to Congregational Praise (1953) xix, 82.

[14] D Davie(ed) The New Oxford Book of Christian Verse (Oxford 1981) xix, xxiii

Advocate, Captain and Counsellor. In "Give me the wings of faith" we have the testimony of those who have run the race and how Christ, through his supreme sacrifice, has brought them to heaven. Few writers touch the sorrows of life more tenderly, or comfort the bereaved more wisely than Watts. Doddridge in May 1731 told Watts that this hymn moved many in his congregation to tears, preventing them from singing further.[15] Watts' poetry took religious dissent "by storm", providing "an utterance, till then unheard in England, to the spiritual emotions, in their contemplation of God's glory in nature and his revelation in Christ". His verses made hymn singing "a fervid devotional force".[16] Dr Johnson, in "the crowning work of his old age" The Lives of the English Poets (1779-81), included Watts in his landmark statement of critical taste and judgement.[17]

Watts wrote his verse, "a select company of superlative excellence", when hymn singing was a new and doubtful form of devotion. Some thought the hymn dreadfully human as opposed to the psalm's divine authority! However Watts saw that the English hymn could not depend upon the metrical psalm's renovation and improvement. His hymns are characterised by "tender faith, joyousness, and serene piety", although some of "dubious quality" are now forgotten.[18]

Before Watts was 40 he had composed a further 300 hymns mostly based on selected psalms. The Psalms of David, Imitated in the Language of the New Testament, and applied to the Christian State and Worship (1719) is his second major hymnal. These hymns were to be a supplement to his earlier verse and, in the early 18th century, served as a bridge for reluctant hymn singers crossing into human hymnody. About 20 of these psalm-hymns are found in contemporary hymnals and nine are popular today.

13. Give to our God Immortal praise, Psalm 136:1-9
14. How pleased and blest was I, Psalm 122
15. I'll praise my maker while I've breath, Psalm 146
16. I sing the almighty power of God, Psalm 33:5, Psalm 32:8 (first pub. Divine Songs (1715)
17. Jesus shall reign where'er the sun, Psalm 72:12-19

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15 Parry op.cit 177
16 DNB
17 M Drabble (ed) The Oxford Companion to English Literature (Oxford 1985) 1048.
18 DNB , Parry op.cit. xii

18. Joy to the world, Psalm 98:4-9
19. Our God, our help in ages past, Psalm 90:1-6
20. Sweet is the work, my God, my King, Psalm 92
21. This is the day the Lord has made, Psalm 118:24-26

Among these is the finest missionary hymn of all, "Jesus shall reign". The psalmist calls on God to help the nation's rulers govern in righteousness but Watts substitutes Jesus for the king, in a glorious prophetic picture of the beneficent effects of Christ's Kingdom:

> "Blessings abound where Jesus reigns;
> the prisoners leap to lose their chains,
> The weary find eternal rest,
> and all who suffer want are blessed" (Rejoice and Sing 1991)

This hymn was sung by several thousand people on Whit Sunday, 1862 when the island of Tonga adopted a Christian form of government. Many from Fiji, Samoa and Tonga, including old chieftains and warriors, sobbed as they realised the gospel had rescued them from cannibalism.

"Our God, our help in ages past", inspired by the first six verses of Psalm 90, is headed "Man frail and God eternal".[19] In 1702 Watts wrote an ode to Queen Anne at her accession. In 1714 he wrote this hymn at the end of her life. Parliament had passed the Schism Act, which would have been a major setback to dissenters and their children's education. However the queen died before this could be enacted and the hymn was Watts' response. It has served the British nation and Commonwealth as a second national anthem. How ironic that a hymn, so identified with the sovereign and the British establishment at the Cenotaph, was written by a dissenter in thankfulness to God for the passing of the monarch.

The earliest hymnbooks omitted two of Watts' original nine verses. Early in the 20th century a third verse was removed; the discarded lines tell of the destruction of nations. Since World War II another verse, stressing human ephemerality, has, especially at Remembrancetide, troubled many:

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[19] Parry op.cit. 32, John Wesley substituted "O God" for "Our God" in his Psalms and Hymns in 1738.

"Time like an ever-rolling stream
bears all its sons away;
They fly forgotten, as a dream
dies at the opening day".

To make Watts' line two more acceptable, the Jubilate team (Hymns for today's Church 1982) have amended it to "will bear us all away" while Rejoice and Sing (1991) prints the weak "bears all our years away". From its early days the hymn's most acceptable tune was St Anne, composed by William Croft (1678-1727).[20]

"Watts' Cradle Hymn" appears in the new Oxford Book of Carols (1992) and has fourteen verses; the first and last are;

"Hush! my dear, lie still and slumber, Holy angel guard thy bed,
Heavenly blessings without number, gently falling on thy head;

May'st thou live to know and fear him; trust and love him all thy days.
Then go dwell for ever near him, see his face and sing his praise;"

In 1719 Watts, aged 44, stopped writing hymns though he lived another 30 years. At his death in November 1748 he was a national figure who, alongside his evangelistic fervour, had a conciliatory approach to other Christians, making

[20] DNB

him a dissenting ecumenist. Considering his radical ways, his audacity in hymn writing, and his fame, he had few enemies while those he counted as friends included the Archbishops of Canterbury, York and Tuam (Ireland) and the Bishop of London.

Watts' essays on the Trinity brought him into forced contact with the Deists. Some debate whether or not Watts in later life became a Unitarian. But how could the writer of "We give immortal praise to God the Father's love", praising God the Son (and "now he lives") and God the Spirit (with "new-creating power") and ending with the superb

> "Almighty God, to thee be endless honours done,
> The undivided three, and the mysterious one;
> When reason fails with all her powers,
> There faith prevails, and love adores"

ever become a Unitarian? Watts had a prophetic vision of an inclusive ecumenism, a sign that Christ will lead all into the City of God where there are no longer any labelled churches.

In the autumn of 1948, British churches celebrated the bicentenary of Watts death. On November 16th in Liverpool an act of worship began in a downtown church, with thanks given for "a life that was quiet and uneventful, of a man small in stature and crippled with illness most of his life". The drama was presented by two readers, the president (the church's woman minister), two choirs, each of eight young people, together with supporting organist and congregation. They told of the witness of Isaac Watts, ending with a wreath laying and blessing. The drama was written by Eric Shave (1901-96) of Crosby, Liverpool and entitled "The Singer of New Songs". The event initiated the present writer's interest in hymnody. A memorial stone to Isaac Watts is in Westminster Abbey while several statues and relics survive in Southampton and London. Yet Watts' best memorials remain his hymns.

Derek Watson

SAMUEL MARTIN OF WESTMINSTER

"It is not creeds men want, but a living Christ;

it is not Churches men want, but a real Christianity;

it is not orthodoxy men want, but the reality of religious life."

Samuel Martin, True Christianity - Pure Socialism. 1851. p18.

Introduction

At his death in July 1878, Samuel Martin was described as "one of the best known Congregational ministers in London".[1] "a power in the religious life of the land far beyond his own denomination"[2], "perhaps the greatest moral force in London over the awakened intellect and conscience of young men".[3] The Christian reported that "as a Congregational minister he soared above denominationalism; as a preacher ... he deserved the title of great; but as a Christian he was greatest of all."[4]

Obituaries and funeral sermons must be treated with care, they highlight the beautiful and cover the warts; but Martin was a significant figure in his day, and laid foundations for the future. However, his significance has been sadly overlooked by this century, as nothing has been written about him since two short articles in 1904 and 1905. We shall see that, though known for his gentleness and humility, and a convinced, conservative evangelical, his views were

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1 The Times, July 8th 1878
2 Christian Globe, July 11th 1878
3 Methodist, July 12th 1878
4 The Christian July 18th 1878

frequently radical for his day. This arose out of two strong characteristics, his ambition to "be natural, not imitating any man"[5] and his heartfelt response to the urban conditions surrounding the chapel. Many of his radical views pre-dated those of later, more famous leaders. He influenced his denomination, the YMCA, the (National) Sunday School Union, perhaps even the Salvation Army, and the community where he lived and worked. Yet he was a reluctant controversialist and his poor health left him without the energy or the will to engage in the ecclesiastical politics which pioneer views and controversy bring.

This paper is an introduction to Samuel Martin and concentrates on his work among children and young men and his social concern. It belongs to a later work to explore the broader picture of this multi-facetted man.

Woolwich to Westminster

Early years and background

Samuel Martin was born on 28th April 1817 in Woolwich, to an austere Calvinistic father, a shipwright by trade; and a pious, tender mother who died when Samuel was eleven. She possessed "great natural spiritual and intellectual power"[6] and encouraged him towards Christian work. He seldom referred to his father,[7] but from his comments about family life it becomes obvious that he valued his mother's tenderness more than his father's austerity.[8]

The other great influence on his early life was his well respected minister at Salem Chapel, Woolwich, Thomas James, brother of John Angell James. Martin affectionately dedicated his first volume of "discourses to youth" to his mother and the second to his pastor. He wrote "in your Sabbath School I first attempted to teach and to preach - in your Missionary Association I first caught the missionary spirit - in the meetings of your church for prayer I first led the devotions of others...[and you] guided me with a course of preparation for the

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5 Address to Sunday School Union, Sunday School Chronicle, Aug. 2nd 1878

6 Congregational Year Book (1879) 330

7 Rev. Joshua Harrison, Funeral Address Samuel Martin In Memoriam

8 eg. The Work of God's Word, 68 and many similar examples

ministry".[9] He valued James' continued support through "the trials of my personal and domestic circumstances" .[10] Thomas James became a significant example to Martin, developing his passion to encourage and support young people.

At twelve years of age, within months of his mother's death, his father sent Samuel away to train in architecture but he left, after seven years, to prepare for missionary work at Western College (then at Exeter)[11] gaining a BA.[12] Poor health prevented his going to India with the London Missionary Society but his gifts were recognised and in 1839 he became Pastor of Highbury Chapel, Cheltenham, staying three years. The congregation quadrupled and cleared their debt. He pastored at York Road, Lambeth for a few months[13] before accepting the pastorate at the year old Westminster Chapel in 1842 at the age of 25.

Westminster Chapel 1842-1878

Martin had become pastor at the centre of the British empire and within two or three minutes walk of some of the worst housing conditions in London. His first emphasis was to help young people, a concern which never left him and it was to them that he addressed many lectures and books. In 1843 the school

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9 Youthful Development - or Discourses to Youth, classified according to Character, dedication. (1846)

10 At least two of Martin's children took their mother's surname - see Alice Trice Martin (Samuel Martin In Memoriam) and the oldest son Charles Trice Martin (1841-1914) became the Assistant Keeper of the Public Records and author of major reference books eg The Record Interpreter. This may point to a breakdown in relations between Samuel and his father, (or equally to a breakdown between Samuel and his own children or a tribute to their mother's care.)

11 Transactions of the Congregational History Society (TCHS) VII 104 The college later removed to Plymouth.

12 City & Clerical Directory (1860)

13 Obituary Evangelical Christendom Aug. 1 1878, 247, Congregational Calendar (1842) 99

room (still in use) was added to the Chapel, accommodating both Sunday and day schools and, following his lecture Light in life's Morning (1847) about childhood conversion, he became well known for his care for children.

He possessed a questioning, scientific mind and his sermons are dotted with illustrations from astronomy, chemistry and general science[14] as well as extracts from verse and prose. He devoted a YMCA lecture to an overview of inventions and discoveries once rejected but now seen as commonplace,[15] revealing a progressive mind lending particular support to geological research.[16] In his lecture "True Christianity - Pure Socialism" (p24) he records "I used to listen to the music of the spheres, but my ear caught the groans on the human part of God's terrestrial creation and now I labour and long for the harmony of mankind."

In London he attended lectures by Michael Faraday whom he greatly admired, lecturing on him shortly after Faraday's death in 1867. Martin acknowledged "from that day until now the character and pursuits of the Professor have been objects of deep interest to my mind and heart, exerting, moreover, a very decided influence on my mental life".[17]

One characteristic, drawing Martin to Faraday, was the breadth of his theological approach. Though Faraday was an elder among the Sandemanians, Martin relates that he was "kept free from... useless strictness and rigidity and dangerous narrowness. Some men are below their creed. Faraday was above his peculiar religious belief. Some men are worse than their creed, but Faraday was superior".[18] Here is one of Martin's major strengths but also one which rendered him vulnerable.

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[14] eg Conformity and Nonconformity Address to Cong. Union as President, May 1862

[15] Opposition to Great Inventions and Discoveries in Extra Work of a London Pastor (1863)

[16] ibid 99

[17] Michael Faraday, Philosopher and Christian (1867)

[18] ibid 33

Throughout his ministry Martin demonstrated a clear evangelical faith, preaching the gospel, upholding the Bible as the authority for the Christian's faith and life,[19] and emphasising the individual's holiness and contribution to the Church, [20]. In an age which was wading into an uncharted sea of religious doubt he preached with conviction about heaven and hell.[21] He also occasionally stated what he did not believe or accept, including Roman Catholic doctrines and the willingness of the Church of England to harbour such diverse elements as the liberal Essays and Reviews, the broad church groups, semi-popish supporters of Pusey and ritualists, as well as Evangelicals.[22] Yet he considered that "the straitness of the different Christian sects upon points non-essential is one great hindrance to their success in proselytism"[23] and refused to allow secondary issues to create barriers. He preferred to emphasise the positive aspects of the gospel rather than run down another's convictions. In a day of emerging doctrinal *shibboleths* Martin observed the purist's dilemma - "we see Christian men run from some error in doctrine, and, in their zeal to reach the utmost point of distance, embrace another error."[24]

As well as being an acknowledged evangelical, he was an avowed non-conformist. He was particularly vehement about the value of non-conformity in his Presidential address to the Congregational Union in 1862, the tercentenary of the Puritan movement and bicentenary of the "great ejection".[25] However, he did not let his free church ardour build barriers to genuine fellowship with Christians

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19 satisfying Bebbington's four-fold profile of an evangelical, 'conversionism' 'activism' 'Biblicism' & 'crucicentrism' D. Bebbington Evangelicalism in Modern Britain (1989) ch. 1

20 cf. Wolffe's perception of evangelical individualism J. Wolffe Evangelicals Women and Community in Nineteenth Century Britain (1994) Open University Course A. 425 Study Guide 19-21

21 eg. Jesus Christ Lord in Heaven and Lord over hell Sermon III 4th series and Hell: the Place, the Torments and the Tenants sermon XVI 3rd series

22 eg. Prove - then hold fast Undated sermon, 4th series, 183-192, pub. between 1861-65, Lawful Strife (1853) sermon to London Missionary Society

23 Lawful Strife 19

24 The Duties of a Church towards its Neighbourhood, 31 in Rain upon Mown Grass (1871) 491

25 Conformity and Non-conformity in 1862

outside Congregationalism and those in the Church of England, even those whose convictions were less than thoroughly evangelical (eg. Dean Stanley). He brought his friends to Westminster as visiting preachers (eg. Spurgeon)[26] and "did not cease to call upon Christians to love one another."[27] When Martin and seven friends presented a communion plate, flagon and chalice to Westminster Hospital in 1869 it was with the "earnest prayer for the unity of all Christians in works of charity and true religion."[28] This desire for fellowship and evangelical unity particularly marks his work with young people.

He joined the Evangelical Alliance in August 1859[29] and its Committee of Council in December.[30] Unfortunately - in company with others - he attended no meetings of the council.[31] but did not appear in the 1860/61 list of Council members. Three reasons seem possible, the first being overwork. This was a period of great expansion for Westminster Chapel culminating in the demolition and rebuilding of the Chapel in 1864/5 (greatly enlarged to seat well over 2,000).[32] While the Chapel still had a local ministry, his preaching attracted the attention of Members of Parliament and dignitaries visiting London.[33] He was increasingly involved in the Congregational Union. He presented a highly respected paper in 1859, Searchings of Heart, challenging his brethren to greater personal holiness and a more conscientious attention to pastoral work, "he melted all hearts by the saintly fervour of his call".[34] He became President of the Congregational Union in 1862-3. He was also in demand as speaker at special events, anniversaries, pastoral inductions etc. including R.W. Dale's ordination at Birmingham in 1855.[35]

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26 Westminster Worthies in Westminster Record Jan. 1905, 19

27 Evangelical Magazine (1878) 547

28 Photograph of communion set (with notes on rear), held at Westminster Chapel, Campbell Morgan library

29 EA. Committee of Council minutes vol. 2, 314

30 ibid 326

31 ibid The minutes for the next year show no attendance. He was irregular in paying subscriptions, see EA. subscribers lists in EA. year books.

32 The new building, (the present) opened July 6th 1865

33 C. Binfield George Williams and the YMCA (1973) 300

34 Evangelical Magazine (1878) 550

35 Sermon at The Ordination Services of the Rev. R.W. Dale (1855)

Secondly his health was declining, to the point in the mid 1860s where he was persuaded to take an assistant. The contributor to Evangelical Christendom reckoned that his poor health, combined with an "absolute and exclusive devotion", was to be a "thorn in the flesh" to him, limiting his energy, his ability to fulfil his potential and "limited unduly his influence."[36]

Martin the reluctant controversialist.

A third reason for his lack of involvement in the EA may have been some disillusionment with its effectiveness in uniting evangelicals. His friend Lord Shaftesbury also resigned after a year despite becoming a vice president of Council.[37] Shaftesbury wrote in 1846 "The Evangelical Alliance is like the Anti-Corn Law League, a "great fact". It does not appear likely, however, to have practical results in the same proportion."[38] Martin felt the brickbats of doctrinal purists as he refused to become exclusive in his fellowship. Martin may well have recognised early the potential within the EA for controversy and division despite its vision for unifying evangelicals. During this period of Martin's association with the EA a crisis erupted over a tribute the EA Council made to the late Baron de Bunsen. De Bunsen had lent considerable help to the EA in its work against religious persecution in other countries. However some felt there were ambiguous aspects to his theology. Following vociferous complaints by purists the Council withdrew its tribute. While this controversy raged Martin addressed the EA's annual prayer assembly in January 1861 on Hindrances to Prayer.[39] His role in the EA was to encourage from the back benches.

Martin was no stranger to controversy but his reconciling nature did not embrace it willingly. His constant desire was to "be natural, not imitating any man"[40]; one motto was "I prefer to whet my own sword"[41] but this independence

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36 Evangelical Christendom August 1 1878, 248
37 EA. Council minutes vol. 2
38 Binfield op cit 158

39 EA. Council Minutes vol. 2, 430 (invitation) and 438/9 (report and thanks)
40 Address to the Sunday School Union, Sunday School Chronicle Aug. 2nd 1878
41 Westminster Worthies Westminster Record, Jan 1905

of thought and expression led him into painful controversies. His outspoken lecture trilogy on Christian Socialism (1851-2) must have been considered controversial, considering the blows he struck at middle class society, as he delivered an evangelical, but sympathetic response to the new Christian Socialist movement. Then in 1855 he was one of fifteen leading clergy who signed a letter of support for Thomas T. Lynch, the author of a book of religious poetry, The Rivulet. It was at once assumed that these fifteen all endorsed its theology, which was found to be wanting. [42] Once more a number of vocal Church leaders stirred up a storm of protest. Views became so polarised that the Cheltenham churches refused to host the Congregational Union's autumnal meetings in 1856, leading to their cancellation. Martin was to the fore in seeking a change of emphasis in future Union meetings, from business to devotion and fellowship, in the hope that this might reduce the possibility of future division. In Searching of Heart (1859) he applauded the Union for the change. [43]

Considering his pastoral burdens and his physical weakness, it seems reasonable that Martin lacked the stamina demanded by the politics of national evangelical public life. In declining an invitation to attend a Sunday School meeting (undated) he wrote "Public life in London is a vortex, sir, into which if a minister allows himself to be drawn. It will whirl him about to his destruction." [44]

Family life, health and death.

Little is known of his wife Mary Trice (from Tunbridge Wells)[45], except that they married in October 1839[46], had one daughter (Alice[47]) and five (or four) sons,[48] Martin seems to have kept his family out of public view. The English Independent remarks on Mary's wisdom, power, calmness, piety, describing her

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42 R T Jones Congregationalism in England (1662-1962) (162) 250

43 Searching of Heart 16

44 Sunday School Chronicle August 2nd 1878

45 DNB A branch of the Trice family was based near Wadhurst, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge (see note 10 above)

46 DNB

47 The album Samuel Martin in Memoriam is dedicated to Alice Trice Martin

48 eg Daily News July 11th 1878. An article in Industrial Review July 13th, 1878 mentions four sons and one daughter.

as "his helper indeed" and commenting that she contributed to the "efficiency of his work."[49] W. Hardy Harwood (using material by Thomas James) summed up Martin's life in 1914 - "...not only was he a popular preacher, but he did much to purify and improve the squalid neighbourhood about Westminster Chapel, making it much more than a mere preaching place..."[50]. A later, more famous minister at the Chapel, D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, said that Westminster Chapel's acoustics killed its preachers until the advent of amplification,[51] and the burden of regular preaching in a difficult building was bound to exhaust a weak man like Martin. His health was such that he became "venerable in appearance before he had reached middle life."[52] He rarely rested and always cut enforced convalescence short, returning to work immediately he felt a little stronger. Henry Reynolds comments on Martin's conscientious attention to work, constantly "overtasking" his strength; he struggled "with work far beyond his strength by the power of an iron will and a faith which, whenever his work was in question, raised him almost above physical weakness; and he died...more from absolute nervous exhaustion than from any specific disease."[53] Towards the end, Charles Spurgeon was told "You would be grieved if you could see poor Samuel Martin; his mind is completely gone, and he has become quite childish."[54] Though Mary was to survive him by two years she had been paralysed herself for several years (perhaps from a stroke) and this added to his devastation. At that time he said "...we were so entirely one, we had no reserves;"[55] but in their last months they could neither care for or even see each other.[56] He died on July 5th 1878, aged 61, within months of passing the work to his associate, Henry Simon, and his funeral was attended by many dignitaries of his day, including Lord Shaftesbury, with Dean Stanley officiating at the graveside.[57] Mary was unable to attend the funeral.

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49 English Independent July 18th 1878
50 Sub Rosa Club in TCHS XII 137 (1933-36).
51 Centenary Address 1964. Westminster Chapel Archives
52 Evangelical Magazine (1878) 547
53 Congregational Year Book (1879) 331f
54 C.H. Spurgeon Autobiography (1899) 283 footnote
55 J. Harrison Samuel Martin In Memoriam
56 Christian Globe July 11th 1878
57 e.g. Daily News July 11th 1878

The Chapel held him in such high esteem that in 1880 they commissioned a bust from one of the great sculptors of the day, Calder Marsh, now on display in the Campbell-Morgan library at the Chapel he loved. Henry Reynolds summed up Martin's personal life and ministry thus - "One half of his entire being was within the veil and at home in heaven, while the other was tenderly alive to all the interests of this world of sin, suffering and conflict. He had large and comprehensive views of truth, great sympathy with the perplexities of honest men, and a most marvellous power of entering into the sufferings of any who came to that tender heart of his for consolation. His insight and sympathy cast an intense and vivid gleam of light upon the truth, or the circumstance or the difficulty brought before him."[58]

Of Families, Children and Young Men.

When Martin moved to Westminster the Congregational minister, Thomas Binney commented on the advantages in calling a 25 year old man - "a young man in the pulpit appealing to the young man in the pew"[59] Throughout his 35 years at Westminster people of all ages valued his sensitive pastoring but he had a place in his heart for children and young people.

Martin had known from experience at home what good (and bad) parental nurture in the faith could be like. It seems likely that there was also an emphasis on good parental nurture - especially by mothers - from his pastor, Thomas James, for on the death of John Angell James, Thomas's brother, it was written "...he [*and therefore also Thomas*] was blessed with a mother who to a more than ordinary degree of intelligence united deep personal piety. It was her practice, as her son was accustomed long afterwards to relate, to take her children, one by one, into her closet with her, and there supplicate God's blessing upon their progress in after [meaning later] life."[60] Martin's personal experience and the teaching from his pastor combined to develop an acute appreciation of what was effective nurture - and an understanding of what was not acceptable in the nurture of children.

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58 Evangelical Magazine (1878) 546-7

59 Sunday School Chronicle August 2nd 1878

60 Evangelical Christendom Nov. 1, 1859, 403

He believed both parents to be responsible for child care, contrary to his own experience - "There are some children who have never been able to speak to their father"[61]... "The day was when mother had nothing or little to do with instruction and education. But so soon as [this was righted] then the father began to give her an undue share of the responsibility...the father grievously and sinfully neglecting it. This is not right."[62] and "...some earthly fathers always keep their children at a distance...."[63] Martin had a deep understanding of the maternal or female aspects of God's character, especially set out in a sermon entitled God comforting as a mother (1878, based on Isaiah 66.13, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you") saying "God is not only a pitiful father, he is also a comforting mother...let it be observed that God is no more man than woman. In the fullness of his infinite nature He is both woman and man." (p2).[64] These insights reflect his own feelings about his mother and his distant and austere father. Unfortunately there is little recorded about his relationships with his own children except that he loved cricket and taught his sons to play.[65]

Martin noticed children, lecturing and writing of their conversion and spiritual growth in Light in Life's Morning for the Sunday School Union (1847, a lecture delivered in London, Manchester and Andover).[66] Outlining childhood spirituality he emphasised characteristics of childhood conversion, the child's appreciation of the cross in terms of atonement - often accompanied by a sense of guilt, forgiveness and assurance -

Make me thy child, a child of God,
Wash'd in my Saviour's precious blood;
And my whole heart from sin set free -
A little vessel full of thee.[67]

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[61] The Work of God's Word sermon 6, 4th. series undated

[62] Jesus Christ, the Pattern, Means and End of Parental Training - Sermon April 20th 1856. (1st series 1860 and single publication 1856.) It is an aspect of family life which JA. James omits when writing of the role of women in Woman's Mission (1852).

[63] Strong Confidence - Sermon May 23rd 1858, (2nd series no. 11. 1860)

[64] Sermon 1 in Comfort in Trouble 2nd edn (1878)

[65] J Harrison op cit

[66] Sunday School Chronicle August 2nd, 1878.

[67] Light in Life's Morning 29 (the original source of verse is not acknowledged)

- and a hope of heaven. He believed the spiritually minded child would have a concern to share the gospel and to help others both physically and spiritually. They would study the Bible - "in the mind of a godly child we shall discover a spirit of inquiry into religious truths" (Light in Life's morning p16), and have a desire to encourage others to read the Bible. However, he could see danger ahead for the child who is pressurised to be "spiritually minded" and he pleaded that children should be steered clear of pharisaism, "avoid whatever will feed formality, hypocrisy, pride or selfishness" (p54), "moroseness or any such evil, must counteract any religious teaching" (p59). He also encouraged an enlightened and attractive approach to children through his Sunday preaching to parents and Sunday School teachers, "Parents, do not teach your children despondingly, but teach them cheerfully, joyfully and hopefully,... you [Sunday School teachers] do not do your work gloomily,... if catechisms... will help... use them - but if they come between the gospel and the children then throw them away"[68] - a somewhat radical approach for the evangelical of the mid ninteenth century. He wrote family devotional and Sunday School materials and preached at the London meetings on the first Sunday School Union day of prayer for children, encouraging parents to train their children by example as much as lecturing them. He warned parents that some aspects of adult life and behaviour might obliterate the Christian teaching given to a child.[69] While several Sunday sermons refer to children being present in the service[70] he was one of the first to ask for separate services for children, contrary to contemporary teaching which regarded enforced attendance at adult services as the forming of a good habit. According to Martin, making children attend services which they could not understand bred hatred of Church.[71]

Families with children suffering from mental handicaps were not ignored. He preached a sermon "on behalf of the Asylum for idiots" (1875) which, despite the anachronistic title, - insensitive to our ears - showed a profound sympathy with the families involved. The asylum was another charitable institute in which Martin had an active interest.

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[68] The Work of God's Word 71
[69] Evangelical Christendom April and May 1864; 204, 259f
[70] e.g. The Cross of Christ to none effect undated - 1st series, 1860, No.1, p 9
[71] Sunday School Chronicle August 2nd 1878

However, it was in his support for young men that he was more famous. As a young man he preached sermons specifically for his contemporaries, for he not only had the spiritual care of young people from Chapel families, but also those drawn to London from other areas by the lure of better work. There was a distinct possibility that employers would take advantage of naive young people or that they might become unemployed in a society with no safety nets. There was also the fear that they might be tempted by the varied entertainments available in London. From the outset of his ministry at Westminster he preached to "the young" every second Sunday evening of the month.[72] Twenty three years earlier J.A. James published a sermon, Youth Warned (1824), the kind which anxious parents and aunts would buy for their charges! Martin might well have owned a copy, he would certainly have known of it. James concluded his sermon by identifying three groups of young people - those living in the fear of God, those moral but not "pious" (converted), and those who rejected God's ways - and warning these in particular. Martin extended James' approach, devoting a full sermon to each of twenty four classifications. Twelve of these sermons were published as Discourses to Youth classified according to **circumstance** (1845, with an introduction by J.A. James) and a further twelve " - according to **character**" (1847). He was as uncompromising about vices and licentious company as James - "Alas! the crocodile is clean, the tiger is kind, the adder is harmless, many devils are innocent in comparison with such persons."[73] However, where James took a distinctly judgmental view of the temptations on offer, Martin allowed himself to be more sympathetic toward youth, "...sympathy with the perplexities of honest men..."[74] as Reynolds later described him. Among Martin's classifications were also included the uneducated, the sensitive, the moral and the godly youth.

He founded and took a lifelong interest in the young men's study group at the Chapel[75] and it is interesting that one speaker, Leonard Hughes (presumably under Martin's authority), observed that "young men are often enough told what

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72 H Simon in The English Independent July 18th 1878
73 Discourses to Youth, Classified according to character 39
74 H Reynolds in Evangelical Magazine (1878) 546-7
75 Westminster Worthies in Westminster Record (1905) 18

not to do at the casinos, caves and filthy glory dens of this city, but never what they may do - cannot a young man enjoy each or all of the recreations (billiards, foils etc.) without carrying them to a passion?"[76]

George Williams (then 22 and in June 1844 to become the founder of the YMCA) heard Martin as early as March 1843. Martin and Westminster Chapel feature frequently in the early history of the YMCA and Williams' biographer, Clyde Binfield, writes "[Martin] remained fully alive to the needs of young men and his sympathy with the YMCA was life-long and had begun in 1845 at the latest. Martin was among the first vice-presidents and Exeter Hall lecturers, and his appearance on their platforms was welcomed for the next thirty years".[77] The lectures cover a wide spectrum of interests, including Christian lifestyle, biblical subjects and general and ecclesiastical history.

1851 was the year of the Great Exhibition, Prince Albert's great project. In setting up the exhibition the Prince claimed that "Man approached fulfilment of his great and sacred mission in the world", and that "the Bible had nothing to do with the products of modern industry" therefore the Bible Society, for example, had no right to a stand at the exhibition.[78] As a Christian response to this attitude - to remedy "the unnatural divorce of business and religion in modern society"[79] the YMCA asked Martin to compile a volume of essays - The Useful Arts: their birth and development. This was "designed to cast *historic* and *moral* light on the Great Exhibition, and to show the relationship subsisting between vital Christianity and the development of art and industrial resources".[80] With his wide literary and considerable scientific interests Martin was well suited to the task. In his preface Martin told the Prince, "We aim at securing a recognition of God as present in the mill, ...and in the workshop... that the highest art is but a realisation

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[76] Papers read at meetings of the 'Young Men's Class, 1857-59' Westminster Chapel Archives, Binfield op cit 301

[77] ibid 46f

[78] Speech at the Mansion House, 1850. O Chadwick The Victorian Church (1966) vol 1, 461

[79] E Kinnaird Reminiscences (1925) 71, 77, 113, 191, Binfield op cit 173

[80] Binfield ibid, 176, 6th annual report of YMCA 1850-51, 20

of the Divine idea in man's constitution".[81] A copy was presented to Prince Albert, in the hope that it might shed new light in royal places on the spiritual links to art and industry.[82]

I have concentrated on Martin's platform ministry to young men but Martin was also prepared to get involved in their social care and to campaign for social reform. Martin never lost his understanding and empathy with the young - "at the ordination of a nervous young minister, Mr. Martin left the platform and his brother ministers and sat down at the young man's side. When urged to return, he replied, 'No; I want specially to sit by you, for it is lonely for you here' ".[83]

In Faith and Family Life,[84] the historian Doreen Rosman confirms the contemporary perception that family relationships among nineteenth century evangelicals could be oppressive. We find parents not prepared to trust their offspring, applying emotional blackmail, maintaining heavy control over attitudes, behaviour and associates, and without doubt many children and young people grew up in what we might term "exaggerated spiritual pressure". From a modern perspective we may find shades of this in Martin's work. He was a man of his time; but he recognised many of the dangers and his teaching and admonitions are shot through with gentleness. He advised parents to let children be children and not constrict them, to discourage a pharisaical mindset which many of his day regarded as a sign of childhood piety and to give them attractive teaching which they would enjoy. Above all he told parents to give a positive example to their families. Again we see Martin's radical and individual edge which made him a pioneer. His care for the young earned him the accolade, "perhaps the greatest moral force in London over the awakened intellect and conscience of young men".[85]

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[81] Frontispiece to S Martin The Useful Arts (1851). Martin's chapter one, on the exhibition, was included in Selections from Standard English Authors (Univ of Calcutta 1860). DNB

[82] Martin preached on the same subject The worker and his tools - 5th series, no.9, 85

[83] The Christian July 11th 1878

[84] Open University, Course A.425, Offprints collection pp.129ff

[85] Methodist July 12th 1878

The duties of a Church towards its neighbourhood.[86]

Ironically the shadows of Westminster Abbey and Buckingham Palace fell upon the worst slums in London! It was Cardinal Wiseman's use of slum in describing these "congealed labyrinths of lanes and courts, of alleys and slums" which first brought the word into popular use. Dickens dubbed the area *the Devil's Acre*. There was not only "poverty and misery but criminality such that an investigating clergyman was warned in 1846 that he was risking his life".[87] The construction of the prestigious Victoria Street, driven through the area from Westminster to Victoria Station in the 1850s, only penned the poor into worse conditions. Isobel Watson tells us that "72 lived in one of the twelve, six roomed houses in one court. From another in the course of three months, 69 young people had been sentenced to transportation, and one hanged...half the population were, it was estimated, burglars, pickpockets, forgers and prostitutes; the other half beggars and hucksters.... nine in every ten Westminster beggars (there were more than 800) were quartered here".[88]

The worst areas were Palmer Street and Broadway - three minutes walk from Westminster Chapel, others nearly as bad were Old Pye Street, Duck Lane and Abbey Orchard Street approximately seven minutes away, "in the Broadway, you may see the filthiest court in Westminster", wrote Hollingshead. "The narrow roadway up it is worse than a sewer, because there is no flow of water; and among its swarms of inhabitants are several sweeps... Dead dogs, soaking fragments of old placards and other refuse lie among the bricks and dust, and the space is watched by closed, battered houses with black, jagged window-panes".[89] Charles Booth published his map depicting areas of London poverty in 1889 and even then small sections of this area were still regarded as the worst in west London.[90]

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86 Title of a sermon in Rain upon Mown Grass (1871)

87 I Watson Pimlico Past (1993) 81ff Could this be Martin in his early explorations?

88 ibid p82

89 J. Hollingshead Ragged London (1861) 101-112

90 C Booth A Descriptive Map of London Poverty (1889), London Topographical Society reprint (1984)

At this point Samuel Martin's humility creates difficulties in effective research. He had a "dread of having Christian work in any way paraded"[91] and in his preaching did not refer to works he was associated with, and even when he wrote of "Christian works" he never hinted at the role he himself played in them. He also encouraged members of his congregation to undertake works as individuals - with Church support but not as official Church undertakings. This leaves us with little documentary detail, no minutes or written record, so we rely on vague information from reminiscences in obituaries. Martin's involvement remains difficult to estimate, yet such commendations which exist, and references in obituaries to his burden of work point to a high degree of personal involvement. Among those commendations were C.H. Spurgeon – "The Rev. Samuel Martin and his congregation work among the degraded, and largely help them in their poverty",[92] and W.H. Harwood "he did much to purify and improve the squalid neighbourhood".[93]

Martin believed that God sent the Church (represented by its individual Christians as well as the corporate body) into its neighbourhood. In his sermon The duties of a Church towards its Neighbourhood[94] he complained that while the Anglican parochial system created an authoritarian, possessive attitude, non-conformists can lose touch with their area altogether.[95] He would have agreed with his contemporary Conybeare that most Evangelicals want "not a Parish, but a Congregation. The possession of a chapel in a large town, which he may fill with his own disciples, is his ideal of clerical usefulness".[96] Martin held that the Church has duties to its locality as "lights to the world... holding forth the word of life", and as "salt to the land...Your (individual) character must ...disperse prejudice, awaken attention, arouse the consciences of men, check sin, and keep from barrenness the field of Christian effort". This involved consistency in the home and in social and business circles, maintaining Church harmony and love, providing Church buildings and services which attract people (he advocated that

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91 Evangelical Christendom August 1, 1878, 248

92 C H Spurgeon The Sword and the Trowel (1868) 446

93 TCHS XII 137. Harwood based his material on that of Thomas James.

94 Rain upon Mown Grass (1871) A sermon preached c.1864, 511, 513, - refers to church buildings which are attractive. The Chapel was being rebuilt at this time.

95 ibid. 492-495

96 W J Conybeare "Church Parties" The Edinburgh Review (1853) CC, 293

Christians should learn lessons from the gin-palace!), founding benevolent institutions and getting involved in secular institutions. He wrote "the salt must be scattered. It must not lie in heaps... and the value of day-schools is without price... The multitude cannot appreciate the conduct of a man who is a martyr to mere religious opinions; but they can appreciate self denial and kindness, in clothing the naked, in feeding the hungry, in ministering to the sick and in relieving the fatherless and widow" (p503). We know of one area where Martin practised what he advocated. He believed that ministers should serve on local hospital boards and management committees and be guardians of the poor (given the time!). Under Martin's leadership so many members of Westminster Chapel became involved with Westminster hospital that a Canon from Westminster Abbey feared the erosion of the role of the established Church in the hospital. At a special court he moved that "none but members of the Church of England should control the spiritual or temporal affairs of the hospital". Martin met these objections and argued convincingly that nonconformists had every right to make their contribution on an equal footing.[97] He himself served on the management from 1845-72.[98]

Among children, the British Monthly records that "he founded large Sunday and day schools behind the chapel, established branch Sunday Schools and ragged Schools in the poorest parts of Westminster and opened a home for outcast boys in Smith Street".[99] He promoted the Shoe-black scheme, established by Lord Shaftesbury, enabling boys in care to make a modest living on the street. A group of shoe blacks attended the Chapel and were represented at his funeral.[100]

He encouraged Miss Sherman (daughter of a ministerial friend) to open her home as an orphanage and this was also recognised as part of the chapel work.[101] Shortly after moving to Westminster, during the 1840s, he helped Charles Nash, a draper turned school-teacher to fulfil his concern for outcast boys

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97 The Christian Herald July 24th 1878

98 DNB

99 Past and Present of Westminster Chapel The British Monthly Nov 1904, 534

100 Several newspaper reports, e g Daily News July 11th 1878

101 The British Monthly op cit

and young offenders. In 1852 Martin wrote, in A Place of Repentance,[102] rebuking some who "believed that the reformation of a thief was impossible and raised various objections to his mode of operation". However, with Lord Shaftesbury's help (and Martin's support) the work grew from one rented room to an establishment of 4,522 square feet with dormitories, work-shops and training facilities for seventy boys at a time, taking its place "among the most important benevolent enterprises of the day" (pp11f), evidently reforming many lives. Even the Queen made a "munificent donation" (p86). Mr Nash lived out Martin's emphasis on "self denial and kindness"; in the early days of the work Nash not only paid for the care of these boys out of his own earnings as a teacher, he even mortgaged his own clothing to borrow "and was living on a few pence per day in order to provide out of his own small income food for the lads". In time he was faced with a choice between teaching and caring for the lads - he chose the latter. So involved was he that he became "dinnerless and penniless" until Lord Shaftesbury heard of the work. As numbers grew they moved into a larger apartment. "The character of this house involved fresh self-denial. Every room was tenanted by thieves, and other characters both male and female, of the lowest and most depraved description. The street door had not been closed, either day or night, during several years. The natural silence of the night was broken by incessant quarrelling and fighting; and sometimes the riot in a single room required three of four policemen to quell it. ...the dangers arising to the lads from the other inmates were warded off by their kind guardian leaving his own family, and sleeping in the same apartment as the lads. This he did for the space of three months. Sleep was generally impossible to him, but his presence preserved the needful separation between his charges and the other lodgers; and he was often useful in quelling the almost hourly riots". Eventually, in September 1848, they took over the whole house, and "the lads cleansed, whitewashed and painted every room".(pp8-10).

Two large prisons lay within a few minutes walk of the Chapel - one at Millbank and the other occupying the site where Westminster Cathedral and the surrounding residences are now situated. It seems likely that Martin would have known of the work and ideas of Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845), though there is no record in Martin's writings of any contact with penal reform organisations. We do

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[102] A Place of Repentance. An account of the London Colonial Training Institution (1852) 9

know that Martin was not optimistic about the role of straightforward punishment in state prisons. In A Place of Repentance... (1852) and The Reformation of Criminals, and Adult Male Reformatory Institutions (1863),[103] Martin accepted that the state is responsible to punish, but believed punishment achieved nothing except to harden the criminal and teach him more criminal ways. Martin also believed that Christians bear a responsibility for the welfare of prisoners, and in not helping such young men their fate may be "chargeable upon themselves". He wrote, "Let us not call the nation Christian while one of our prisons in Middlesex at this hour contains 1000 of our countrymen and another [nearby] encloses 300 criminals under 20 years of age".[104] He encouraged ministers and laymen (not churches) to "lay aside all that is merely ministerial, ecclesiastical and official and retaining only that which is essentially and prominently Christian, bring their personal compassion and their individual Christianity to bear on the mind and heart of the criminal". He believed that any Christian work among prisoners should be characterised by, and aim to bring, *Mercy* and *Hope* because "the criminal is kept to his evil course by sheer despair".[105] He listed the aims of the reformatory as awakening the conscience, softening the heart, arousing self-respect, and teaching integrity, truth and good relations between man and man, and man and God. The Christian's responsibility did not end there, however, for once a young man had shown a moral change the reformatory was responsible to help him start a new life, at home or abroad (ideas predating William Booth's In Darkest England, and the Way Out,[106] 1891, by some 40 years). He declared, "At nothing short of reformation and restoration should such institutions aim".[107] A Place of Repentance closes with a lengthy (perhaps even exhaustive) record of residents, their condition on entering the reformatory, their progress and what they may have gone on to. A number emigrated to the colonies and America with Lord Shaftesbury's sponsorship.

Martin took personal interest in the recently established London City Mission. He superintended a local missionary, Mr. Bowskill for some years until 1871, when exhaustion eventually persuaded him to hand this duty to one of his

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[103] Paper in Extra Work of a London Pastor (1863)
[104] A Place of Repentance 92
[105] The Reformation of Criminals 305
[106] J R Moore Religion In Victorian Britain (Manchester 1988) III 305-312
[107] The Reformation of Criminals 306

leading deacons, Charles de Selincourt.[108] Mr. Bowskill worked in the area bounded by Old Pye Street, Great Peter Street, St. Anne Street and St. Matthew Street. His work is also recorded by Spurgeon in 1868,[109] and was characterised "not so much by preaching as some of us would desire, yet by visitation and instruction good is done. ...there are plenty of schools, and so well has the area been canvassed that it is only among the lowest of the inhabitants that the children are entirely neglected". There were services in private rooms and for the servants of the Westminster Palace Hotel as well as open air preaching in courtyards so confined that "they who chose to listen could do so without being seen or coming into the open street". The preaching was accompanied by the comings and goings of those entering "the houses of iniquity" and the "raillery or pressing invitations of their companions". He also had mission rooms "which in this neighbourhood are not easily filled". Spurgeon considered the most important work to be visitation of the lodging houses, tenanted by beggars and street hawkers, where Mr. Bowskill preached in the kitchens, turning frequent heckling to his advantage.

We have already seen that Martin enjoyed contact with his pastor's famous brother, John Angell James, pastor of Carr's Lane, Birmingham and a leading national Congregational minister. However, their lifestyles were quite different. Whereas James preached mainly to the wealthy, married well (twice) and moved out to the suburbs of Edgbaston,[110] Martin remained for all his ministry within walking distance of the Chapel,[111] sought contact with the poor, refused to save and gave his spare money away.[112] The Sunday School Chronicle records an example of his attitude to money and luxury. Having preached on Matthew 5,13 *Ye are the salt of the earth*, at York Road Chapel he was offered a cab ride home through the rain. He declined the offer, an action cited as a clear

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[108] London City Mission archives

[109] C H Spurgeon The Sword and The Trowel (1868) 446f

[110] L Davidoff and C Hall "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus; men, women and religion" Family Fortunes (1987)

[111] He lived in apparently substantial homes at 75, Warwick Square, Pimlico, (City & Clerical Directory 1860) and at 19, Belgrave Road (correspondence with Spurgeon Dec. 17th. 1870 - Spurgeon's autobiography vol. 4, 141) which was perhaps a manse, being next to Eccleston Congregational Church, now demolished.

[112] Evangelical Christendom August 1st 1878, 247f

example of consistency between what he preached and his daily life.[113] Martin's Christian responsibility for the urban poor was particularly pronounced during the early 1850s when he published his lecture trilogy on Christian Socialism, denouncing the middle classes for their treatment of the poor. **True Christianity - Pure Socialism** "*In your longings for pure Socialism my heart is one with you. I used to listen to the music of the spheres, but my ear caught the groans of the human part of God's terrestrial creation, and now I labour and long for the harmony of mankind*"[114]

On 24th February 1848 revolution broke out in Paris. It was the year of revolutions. In England Chartists convened a "monster" meeting, to march from Kennington Common to the House of Commons on April 10th. London expected violence. In the event torrential rain dampened their enthusiasm and the revolution did not occur. Yet that day drew together F.D. Maurice, Charles Kingsley and J.M. Ludlow who founded the Christian Socialist movement. Within two days Kingsley issued placards and on 6th May the penny journal Politics for the People appeared. In August 1849 Maurice talked about "Christian communism" and in January 1850 the title Christian Socialism was formally adopted. The work had both a campaigning arm and a practical emphasis. Ludlow planned a series of tracts confronting "the unsocial Christian and the unchristian socialist". They also established workshops and workers associations (co-operatives) including one in Pimlico, near Martin's home.[115] Martin's friend Lord Shaftesbury was also involved in these. Then in June 1851, during the Great Exhibition, Kingsley preached a controversial sermon The Message of the Church to the Labouring Man which was not clearly expressed but was misunderstood and denounced by the chairing cleric. It was similarly misrepresented by the press. According to the reports, Kingsley said that Christianity **is** Socialism. In the ensuing uproar the group was attacked by the press, the Church and the establishment, so by December 1854 they were a spent force.

The basis of their socialism was Christianity and their aim was to "christianise the socialist movement", preventing revolution through reform. However their Christianity was not evangelical in doctrine. Maurice and Kingsley

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[113] Sunday School Chronicle August 2nd 1878
[114] S Martin True Christianity - Pure Socialism (1851) 24
[115] Chadwick op cit vol.1, 346-363, 544-550

were renowned for their broad Church views, preferring to preach the incarnation to the cross, and they were more at home with German neology and Romanticism than biblical evangelicalism.[116] (They may have been sympathetic to Lynch's Rivulet which Martin endorsed in 1855).

Samuel Martin and Christian Socialism

In 1851, Samuel Martin delivered and published his lecture True Christianity - Pure Socialism, presenting an evangelical base for Christian Socialism.[117] Basing his thesis on 1 Cor 10,24: - "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth", he wrote, "If this be a Christian precept, and if it be sustained by the Christian system, then the purest Christianity is the truest Socialism" - similar to the press reports on Kingsley. It appears that Martin was as radical as Kingsley! Probably Martin knew a lot about Maurice and his friends for apart from theology they shared much common ground. He may have met Maurice - both were involved in preparations for Working Men's Sunday in 1867[118] - but Martin seems not to have joined the Christian Socialist movement and his lectures contain no reference by name to Christian Socialism, Chartism or their leaders. (Martin's address on Working Men's Sunday was directed at the wives of working men and avoided controversy).

In his lecture Martin denounced society as a whole (despite notable exceptions) as "seeking their own" in disobedience to 1 Cor 10,24 (p4), maintaining that consumers paid the lowest prices at the expense of the labourer who was ground down "to a wage that does not give him daily bread. The manufacturer wears out the God-made and God-like beings in his factory" (p5). Like Maurice he advocated that the worker should have a voice, or even control, regarding the price for which his goods were sold. He castigated fraud, nepotism and meanness in commerce, trading, benevolent and religious societies, acknowledging that evangelicals were not above similar practices. He indicted the

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[116] Bebbington op cit 15, 93,144

[117] Delivered in the presence of one 'who has done much to tune the voices of our nation, but he cannot harmonise souls' - a possible reference to Lord Shaftesbury, p.24. The platform is unknown - probably not the YMCA.

[118] Evangelical Christendom Feb. 1867, 97 and April 1867, 166-172

House of Commons, and the "poor man's Church" (Roman Catholicism?). London was afflicted with problems of water supply and disposal of sewage, a matter brought to a head in 1855, the year of the "great stink", when parliament deserted Westminster. Martin's Chapel and the local people could not escape the smells! He asked, "What but the pecuniary interests of a few, prevents our city from being abundantly supplied with pure water, and cleansed from the exhalations of the dead?" "Is there not in every sect a mean craving for numbers, position and power which... is only a gilded form of selfishness?" He warned of God's curse on the selfishness of the rich, resulting in misery for needlewomen, slopworkers and journeymen who lack "a fair day's wage for a good day's work" (pp6,7). "It cannot be the will of God that the agricultural labourer and his family should starve on a shilling a day while the farmer riots in good living and the owner... lives as a prince". He challenged the establishment to look on all men as equals – "Every man, in his eye, has God for his father; and is, therefore, substantially equal...men possessed by such principles and sentiments must spread pure Socialism...such men are as salt to the earth"(p17).

To Martin, charity was no cure (p8) – "We ask for the starving..., not charity but justice, extend to them what is right and equal, and they can dispense with your charity ... A fair wages law would render needless a poor-law". By then the clergyman and social experimenter, Thomas Chalmers, had died (1847). His pilot schemes at Tron in Glasgow and at West Port, Edinburgh, had failed (1837 and 1847), ending his attempt to structure Church support for the poor based on individual effort combined with neighbourly benevolence. They had been found wanting both economically and socially.[119] Martin knew of Chalmers' work and of the scheme's faults. As a result he went further than Chalmers in his perception that state intervention was the means to a cure. However his encouragement of individual Christian work reflects Chalmers' support of individual effort and, in the end, Martin did not go as far as Chalmers in producing practical proposals for reform.

Occasionally he almost referred to Chartists and, when he did, it was to disassociate himself from them – "some men are asking for 'community of property', common labour for the common good, concert in the division of employment and for the forcible destruction of our system of competition" (p8),

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[119] J F McCaffrey Thomas Chalmers and social change

but "our faith is not in these remedies". He declined to support "association" (unions) (p8) – "Association, unless carefully checked, destroys personal effort, and cripples individual energy". He resisted any idea of sweeping away class distinctions. "We are not defending all the ranks which men have set up, but we assert that God has laid the foundation of ranks" (p19).

Having identified society's failings, what does Martin propose? Here his passionate radicalism moderates and his suggested cure lies in the nature of personal spirituality, the Christian as salt and light in society. Quoting Acts 2,44-45, they "had all things in common; and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men, as every man had need", he appealed for the Christian fruit of love, in master and servant, all being neighbours, a "non-explosive" revolution of love likened to a seed bursting with life (p22). He built this on Philippians 2,4-8, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus who...made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and humbled himself". Christ's sacrificing himself for others was the model and motive for Christians to carry others' burdens (p13). This "pure socialism *in the heart*" was to be worked out in obedience to Christ, in the home, Church and society (p16). Those thirsting for freedom would find liberty in God's Son, those seeking brotherhood would realise and promote it in discipleship to Christ, and those wanting community should "acknowledge Christ as your king, and you enter on a fellow-citizenship and fellow-heirship... do what Christ bids you, and you shall be as salt to the earth" (p21). He encouraged the "narrow-minded, cold-hearted, misanthropic disciple seek another's weal...[so that] the face of society shall be renewed" (p14). Typically, he wrote, "It is not creeds men want, but a living Christ; it is not Churches men want, but a real Christianity; it is not orthodoxy men want, but the reality of religious life" (p18).

Martin issued two sequels in 1852, The Straits of Pure Socialism, and The Anti Socialist warned of God. One wonders whether criticism swayed him to qualify his initial outbursts. He portrayed society as a pyramid, the ambitious climbing over the poor (Straits p4), and encouraged Christians to forsake ambition. He criticised those who "purchase a racehorse and grudge a penny to educate a child, who pet a dog and scorn a labourer" (p8). Martin, ever the realist, knew the poor may have impure motives. He censured drunkards and ne'er-do-wells motivated by jealousy (pp6f). However, while recognising the failings he

also stressed the need. In Anti-socialist he claimed that helping the needy is a responsibility - as mariners passing a sinking ship. He drew this from the parable of the sheep and goats (Matt 25, 31-46). He took a similar stance with young criminals. He wrote, "The falling of a mountain, the wandering of a star are nothing to Him compared with the self created and sustained delusions of a human soul...the being I neglect is His own child - for the creature I refuse to serve, Christ died" (p13). He concluded, "Do you say, no man has yet asked me to relieve his want, to be his neighbour and his brother? I reply, the poverty, the disease, the death, the ignorance, the vices, the myriad woes and wants of men ask you - they call loudly, urgently, pitifully. The Saviour of men Christ Jesus, and God by Him, asks you, nay commands you, to be by a true personal Christianity a pure Socialist" (p18f).

Martin's influence

At this time Martin was at the height of his powers (he was 34 years old in 1851) and near the peak of his influence. He used this to support the "Early Closing Movement", campaigning to allow shop workers home at a reasonable hour.[120] This was formerly the "Ten hour movement", formed in association with the Chartists. It was the nearest Martin came to links with them. Martin also encouraged Nash's work at the reformatory through his book, A Place of Repentance (1852). Like Wesley, his social emphasis arose from a passionate concern for the poor and the welfare of his young people, so frequently overworked and underpaid. The historian, Hempton, remarks that "Wesley's involvement in politics... was widely approved".[121] It is doubtful whether there was similar approval for Martin's dabbling in politics for, while he continued to carry a burden for the community, after 1852 we see no further glimpse of his passion for the poor. There is silence about this period in his obituaries, as though it was best glossed over.[122] Even while delivering these lectures Martin seems

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[120] 7th annual report of YMCA 1851-2, Binfield op cit 158, S. Martin Serpents in Hedges: a plea for moderation in the hours employed in business (1850).

[121] D Hempton Evangelicalism in English and Irish Society 20

[122] except for a reference in "Past and Present of Westminster Chapel" The British Monthly (1904) applauding True Christianity - Pure Socialism

sensitive to the storm he might raise, for while his passion was uninhibited, confronting injustice, he withdrew into personal ethics and individual Christianity for the solutions. The radical at heart possibly met the unforgiving boundaries of conventional evangelicalism. It is hard to think of an independent thinker like Martin being governed by the opinions of others but, subject to ill health, he may have had neither energy nor time, amid other duties, to continue to fight for these ideals. Possibly friends feared that Martin would suffer a similar fate to Maurice and persuaded him to avoid controversial matters.

Conclusion

The historian, Mark Noll,[123] stresses the flexibility of evangelicalism in varied situations, an ability to metamorphose in different environments. Martin showed that the evangelical passion, experienced in the rural or mining scene, with its social dimension, could be a dynamic in the city. He recognised the needs of his people, both those in his church and those in the community, and applied the gospel to those needs, whether with children, young men, wives of workers or the poor. In his desire to be himself, to "whet my own sword", "not imitating any man", he fell between evangelical establishment and evangelical dissent. This is evident in the unfortunate timing of the Pure Socialism lectures (1851/2). Martin had associated himself strongly with the Great Exhibition and his skills had been used to influence no less a figure than Prince Albert in the book The Useful Arts. Parents also trusted him to lead young people aright, so to follow these with an attack on the establishment as, True Socialism, was tactless and ill timed. For not only had he criticised attitudes to the poor but he also criticised political institutions and royal patronage, and the behaviour of the British in India! He criticised political institutions for pandering to their supporters - likening them to "fountain jets, which only throw the water to the height of the reservoir whence they are supplied", he took a shot at royal patronage (while protesting his loyalty), "I often feel, as I look at the royal arms upon places of merchandise, that the best arms which a man can place over his business are his own"[124] i.e. his integrity. Regarding India, he complained – "misgoverned India needs the

[123] M Noll Revolution and the rise of Evangelical social influence in North Atlantic societies (1994) reprinted in OU Course A.425 Offprints Collection. 199ff, 208

[124] Extra Work of a London Pastor (1863) 101, delivered 1854/5 as YMCA Lecture

missionary; the government of that country, more anxious for a dividend than for the well-being of millions of souls, have taken the Indian's bread, and have given him a stone; and unless we make haste to show that British rule in India is not Christianity, an Englishman's name will be sufficient to prevent his being listened to as a missionary",[125] and warned England of Babylon's fate for her pride and jingoism.[126]

Yet that is the nature of the prophet, speaking for righteousness and godliness even while commending those things which are good, as he commended the Great Exhibition. However, in Victorian London, riding two horses was always liable to be a rough ride, inevitably unseating the less fit and vulnerable, like Martin.

Martin knew his weakness but was no quitter. He was determined to serve Christ, preach Him to all indiscriminately, to support the young and to serve his community. Near the end of his life he preached Ready to Halt,[127] telling of his refusal to give in after "travelling so far in this divine road...when you halt it shall be when you have 'finished your course;' then you will be ready to halt... you will have arrived at home, - home, glorious home! *I may halt when I reach my home.*" (pp149f).

Brian A Reed

[125] Lawful Strife op cit 47
[126] The worker and his tools sermon IX in 5th series 85
[127] Comfort in Trouble sermon XIII undated

BOOK REVIEWS

Christian Fellowship or the Church Member's Guide by John Angell James. Edited and Abridged by Gordon T. Booth. Pp 63. Quinta Press 1997. £3.75. Quinta Press, Meadow View, Quinta Crescent, Weston Rhyn, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 7RN. ISBN 1 897856 04 0.

Last year the CHC Magazine reviewed Quinta Press's reprint of RW Dale's A Manual of Congregational Principles. John Angell James was Dale's predecessor at Carrs Lane Congregational Church, Birmingham, ministering there 1805-59, with Dale as co-pastor from 1854. Both books went through numerous editions but here the similarities end. Dale's Manual is reproduced in full as a hardback with a sober green cover at a cost to the reader of £13, whereas James' Guide is considerably cut down, has a soft cover with a "cuddly" picture of sheep, a quotation from Psalm 100 and is economically priced. The editor hopes that the book will appeal to "evangelical" Christians new to Congregationalism and perhaps to faith. James' book had a wide appeal in his own day and the editor's aim should not prevent those who go by other labels or who eschew them from reading it.

The Guide was first published in 1822. It went through changes in the various editions although the greatest was the enlarged 9th edition. The section on the private administration of the Lord's Supper was dropped in that, although it is reproduced here, as it was in James' Works, with the comment by his son as editor that James maintained this view until his death. The 13th edition, published in 1870, was abridged by James' son – a precedent for the present edition, although it was not as much reduced. This volume has been shortened by the cutting out of whole phrases, sentences and paragraphs. Some of the language has been changed to bring it in line with the modern day. On p10 "badminton clubs or literary societies" read originally "sick clubs and literary societies". It has not been customary among Congregationalists to require assent to a creed,

confession or basis of faith although that has not stopped them from asserting their beliefs in occasional published statements. That adopted by the Congregational Union in 1833 is reproduced here although it was not included until the tenth edition.

James writes well on behalf of Congregationalism. He does not, however use some of the phrases we commonly hear today from its advocates. There is no mention of "the gathered church". Although he is at pains to point out that Congregationalism is not a democracy, he does not mention "seeking the mind of Christ" at Church Meeting. He stoutly defends Congregational principles against other forms of church government, especially criticising the Church of England. Nevertheless such remarks are tempered by reminders that others' views should be respected.

James is concerned that a pastor's scriptural authority should be respected. Clearly he feels that in too many churches "the pastor is depressed far below his just level ... his person is treated with no respect" (p25). Again this is balanced by passages elsewhere showing how Congregationalism prevents empire building by ministers or factions within the fellowship. James is most concerned that members should not indulge in gossip, complaining about their minister or their brethren (but should defend them "against .. groundless attacks" (p27)). Concern over the conduct of others should be dealt with in accordance with Matt 18:15-17. Similarly he abhors the practice of transferring to another church over a disagreement which should rather be resolved; and the poaching of members from other churches, "how much better to convert sinners than Christians of one name into Christians of another". (p35)

Although Quinta aim to publish the works of eminent Congregationalists, this book will not satisfy those looking for a reproduction of an important work. It is difficult to see how this could have been achieved without prejudicing the editor's stated aim of producing a book which will advocate Congregationalism to an average modern reader. It is not possible to satisfy both aims in one book. The examples given above, however, show this book to be worthwhile reading for both existing as well as new Congregationalists.

James in his preface to the first edition says: "The chief value of a work consists in its utility. We may be surprised by what is original, amused by what is

entertaining, and dazzled by what is splendid: but we can be benefited only by what is good." While it would be possible to write a guide to Congregational practice for a 20th (or 21st) century audience from scratch, this volume is certainly of use and is reasonably priced enough for churches to purchase a few that can be lent to enquirers or new and existing members.

Peter Young

Building Jerusalem: Nonconformity, Labour and the Social Question in Wales, 1906-1939. By Robert Pope. Pp xiii, 269. University of Wales Press, 1998. £25.00. ISBN 0 7083 1413

Wales in the early 20th century was dominated by the advent of Socialism. Yet curiously the role of Nonconformity in the rise of the labour movement there has either been neglected or deliberately ignored by recent social historians. In the early years of this century Socialism offered the working class a cause akin to religion, writes Robert Pope, yet "one whose vision would bring social and material rather than specifically spiritual rewards". Increasingly the future for Welsh Nonconformity came to be "indissolubly bound to its reaction to the labour movement" and to its political demands, while the working class found itself more and more attracted to the new "religion of Socialism".

Therefore Socialism, presented as a "semi-religious creed", posed the chief threat to both church and chapel in Wales. Yet many Nonconformist ministers realised the need for social reform and also understood that such reform required the "character–transforming Christian dynamic". Socialism was criticised because it did not meet the moral and spiritual necessity for the individual to be born again. Such criticism was not levelled at Liberal and Conservative political theories because they did not present themselves, like Socialism, as a moral crusade. Many Nonconformist ministers gave support to Socialism, several seeing Keir Hardie as a hero, although others opposed it, seeking to discredit its followers. Indeed many "Socialist" ministers remained active supporters of the Liberal party, although by 1918 Labour had virtually replaced the Liberals as the most potent and popular political force in Wales.

Robert Pope does not confirm the popular view that the rise of Socialism coincided with and caused the decline of chapel-going. He states that the loss of some working class men is offset by the fact that many remained active Nonconformists while working class women were solid chapel-goers throughout this period. All this despite the labour movement's understanding of religion as "fundamentally social and practical" rather than "individual and credal". Pope concludes that those who left the chapels gave "trivial reasons" for going. Some Welshmen were very critical of Nonconformity while inconsistently holding a completely uncritical attitude towards Socialism. Many early labour leaders simply replaced one set of beliefs with another, based on "action and economics" and centred on human activity. Clearly Socialism for men like James Griffiths and Cliff Prothero became a substitute religion, demanding total commitment.

Yet Pope asserts that Nonconformity and Socialism "must have flourished alongside each other" for a time and, for many, they were not "mutually exclusive". To suggest otherwise is "over-simplistic". Indeed he cites examples of mine owners and managers, as well as workers' representatives, being chapel deacons, and writes of one miners' leader who was the secretary of a local chapel and who, at meetings with the colliery owner during industrial disputes, always began such meetings with prayer. Pope shows that few left the chapels or the unions because of unemployment.

He includes statistics for Nonconformist membership for the counties of Carmarthen, Glamorgan and Monmouth which point to a steady rise in numbers for the three denominations – Independent, Baptist and Methodist – up to 1926. Thereafter the figures show a steady decline. Significantly no dramatic growth nor decline can be traced. The Welsh revival of 1904 does not show a decline at its end nor does the Great War cause a decline.

Robert Pope sees Wales in this period as "a complex society in which there was no real choice between Christian religion and Socialism but in which the two were held in some kind of tension or even equilibrium by the vast majority of ordinary working people". In south Wales sport and the public house had an important place alongside the chapel, trade union and politics. However in addressing issues of social reform Nonconformists confronted a theological problem. Nonconformists believed that the individual was accountable before God while Socialists held that men and women were victims of their environment and,

therefore, were not "individually responsible for their destiny". Would social progress by itself improve men and women morally and spiritually? The liberal theology of the day stressed the brotherhood of man which, when put into practice, would clearly usher in the Kingdom of God.

Pope maintains that Nonconformity lost its status in Welsh society because it abandoned the only path which could ensure success, that is "a spiritually informed commitment to politics". During the First World War Welsh Nonconformist ministers were generally silent about social issues although they returned to them in the 1920s. Herbert Morgan, a pacifist, Baptist minister, believed that men left the chapels through indifference and insincerity. Social reform led to inter-denomination efforts and, although the 1920s were the decade of the Kingdom, such efforts weakened the hold of the chapels in Welsh life. The formation of the Urdd y Deyrnas (Order of the Kingdom) was to begin a great campaign providing a focus for Christian social thought among young people. Although the study of the social implication of the Gospel was encouraged by the Urdd, membership of the churches was not stressed.

During the 1920s the chapels faced mass unemployment and the General Strike of 1926 yet by the close of the decade congregations increasingly expected Nonconformist ministers to keep out of politics. By the 1930s younger ministers came to see theological liberalism as out-dated, turning rather to Barth and the confrontation of totalitarian political regimes abroad. Nonconformists who flirted with Socialism came to be seen as having an inadequate theology of sin. Influenced by Reinhold Niebuhr, theologians came to offer an "alternative vision", i.e. that while Christians should struggle for social reform they need to recall that a perfect social system is an impossibility on this earth. Thus, says Robert Pope, theology in 40 years turned full circle. Indeed Welsh Nonconformists, he concludes, never had a "specifically social theology" but rather made a Christian contribution to contemporary social debate. Certainly the labour movement eventually replaced the Nonconformist hegemony in Welsh life although, Pope reminds us, the chapels remained a strong influence until the 1950s.

Yet the "saddest indictment" of this age is that, despite all the hope and optimism, little was accomplished. Indeed, without God, nothing was left to differentiate the church from other human movements. The failure of these Socialist ministers was their inability to retain the allegiance of the working class.

This book reveals meticulous research as the impressive bibliography shows, including personal papers, journals and newspapers, official reports, recorded interviews, biographies and autobiographies, contemporary publications, and scholarly articles and theses. It is published as part of the University of Wales series, Studies in Welsh History, and is based on Pope's Ph.D. thesis. The narrative and thematic structure of the thesis has been revised in this publication to give a clearer chronology and, in the revision, Pope felt it necessary to drop a major chapter on Welsh theology. Indeed one feels the lack. Amid the detailed narrative of Pope's history one misses an analysis of the theological positions, adopted by the various protagonists. Without such theology the book concentrates on socio-political aspects, providing a corrective to the socialist historians who have held sway in Welsh academic circles. However such concentration means Pope addresses the issues on political terms rather than theological.

The title, Building Jerusalem, derives from William Blake's poem, with its line, "Till we have built Jerusalem", but in Wales, not England. The various groups tried to grasp the opportunity to rebuild Welsh society as best they could after 1918. Robert Pope is a Christian scholar whose book shows his mastery of detail and sources. Yet in ways it also shows the difficulties of publishing a Ph.D. thesis, with so great a wealth of detail at the expense of an overview, offering the reader a general understanding of the subject. Such massed detail fails to excite the reader and enlist sympathy. Again this subject, the relationship of Christian people to social reform, is not exclusively Welsh and some awareness of the wider dimension might answer the charge of insularity. Yet this is a book which will command respect and attention from all working in the field.

The occasional error intrudes. Robert Pope throughout wrongly refers to "Congregationalist" ministers rather than using the correct adjective Congregational. Surprisingly in such a book we are not provided with any maps, implying that all readers are expected to be very familiar with the geography of Wales, including its hamlets and villages, as well as the major industrial centres. But it is a book for the Welsh, you may say. Are there no geographically challenged Welsh men and women? I know quite a few, most of them pious Nonconformists!

A History of Taunton URC Bishops Hull by Brian W Kirk. Pp67. Published by the author, James Cottage, Stogumber, Taunton, Somerset, TA4 3TL. 1997. £3.00 plus postage.

Brian Kirk was the minister of Bishops Hull 1968-96. In this history he gives an account of an important Congregational church which claims a 1662 foundation and links to a notable dissenting academy. Kirk tells his story mainly through the ministers of Taunton who include such eminent men in the late 17th century as Joseph Alleine, Nathaniel Charlton and Matthew Warren. He has used the church minute books throughout, recording one minister's resignation in 1899 after 18 months because some members' conduct was "distasteful" and "injurious to the work", another in 1903 dying of tuberculosis aged 43, and always the continuing struggle to make ends meet. Precarious finances tell a sad story of stipends being reduced in the early 20th century. In the late 1940s and early 50s Wilfred Alan Bush (later to join the Congregational Federation) was minister when the Congregationalists attended celebratory services at the parish church but, when invited back to the Congregational chapel on Coronation Day 1953, the vicar refused to attend, so the Congregationalists "humbly went to St Peter and St Paul" instead. In 1966 four churches in Taunton considered uniting – Bishops Hull, North Street, Paul's Meeting and Rowbarton – as one pastorate. North Street withdrew, although the other three united and Brian Kirk himself became their minister in 1968.

This is a worthy account of a church's life over three centuries, containing a complete list of its ministers, including the author whose loyalty to and love for his people are clear.

The Church on Castle Hill: The History of Castle Hill United Reformed Church, Northampton. By Malcolm Deacon. Park Lane Publishing, Castle Hill URC, Northampton 1995. No price. Pp100 ISBN 0 9523 188 1 4.

This is a handsome, well-produced church history of coffee table book proportions, with illustrations on almost every page yet, with its own claim to originality. Malcolm Deacon, who earlier wrote the life of Doddridge in Philip Doddridge of Northampton (Northampton 1980), has turned his attentions to the

story of Doddridge's church. Deacon, a local historian and now the minister of this church, clearly knows his sources. Indeed he tells us that in the preparation of this book he consulted the original deeds of the church, many of which are on parchment and have not been carefully scrutinised for over a century. During his researches he discovered some previously unpublished letters of Doddrige.

Malcolm Deacon gives his readers a brief introduction to the history of the town and its dissenters before conducting them through the years, beginning with the early ministries in the late 17th century. We have a section devoted to Doddridge and his influence, in which the author reminds his readers of Bishop Jebb's verdict on the dissenter-"a burning and shining light which, in days of more than ordinary coldness, Divine Providence was pleased to enkindle, in order to impart both warmth and illumination to the professing Christian world".

After Doddridge we are rapidly moved through the next century in 16 pages, and again, in equal space, moved to 1905. This enables the author to give more significance to the 20th century which, of course, is probably what local readers want. Deacon modestly reports his own good work in the church's growth in members and its now having his own ministry full time. His book records the changing name of the church over three centuries from Castle Hill Meeting in 1695, Doddridge Chapel in 1862, Doddridge and Commercial Street Congregational Church in 1959 (when the two fellowships came together) and then Doddridge and Commercial Street URC in 1972. In 1995 the church happily reverted to its original name and is now Castle Hill URC.

This book contains a select bibliography, a complete roll of ministers and assistants who have served at Castle Hill, and four brief appendices. These latter deal with the sundial, dated 1695, on the chapel wall which bears a shortened version of a Latin verse by Cato, translating roughly as "Take time by the forelock". Other appendices detail Nonconformist burials at Castle Hill, a travelling pulpit which Doddridge had used when preaching on Creaton village green and which was presented to Castle Hill URC by Creaton URC in 1994, and then also a diagram, revealing the historical development of Castle Hill's church buildings.

This is a useful history of a very important church. Although of principal interest to locals, the Doddridge dimension renders it a wider appeal. I commend it to CHC members as an interesting read and also as a model of how to set out such a history.

Alan Argent

The History of Two Hundred Years of Christian Fellowship (1796-1996) at the Congregational Church in Moreton-in-Marsh. Section 1 by W Edward Francis, Section 2 by Gwen Booth. Obtainable from RV Flexman, 5 Fosseway Drive, Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos., GL56 0DU, no price.

The treasurer at Moreton-in Marsh, RV Flexman, has sent a copy of the church history which has been produced in two parts. An earlier version covers the first hundred years, section 2 covers the last century. The founding declaration is to the point.

"We the members of the Independent church, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire, acknowledge the Word of God contained in the Old and New Testaments as our only rule of faith and practice; in token thereof we have herein affixed our names, desiring to receive to our Communion all whom the Lord hath received."

The first pastor, John Mann, was a noteworthy figure in dissenting circles. The Horne family were supporters of the church. Those who do not know of Silvester Horne may remember his son, the comedian, Kenneth. The booklet is well written and contains a complete list of ministers. Although not priced, Mr Flexman would welcome donations for the history. The church has also produced an inventory of its records, comprising 35 items, including the church book from 1801, with comments on all church members.

Colin Price

Wentworth College A History: Beyond The Best by Teresa Carlysle Pp 76 1997, £10.00 +p&p. Wentworth College, College Road, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH5 2DY

Wentworth College was formed by the amalgamation in 1962 of two Christian girls' schools: Milton Mount College and Wentworth. Three books have been written about Milton Mount (founded 1871) but nothing before this about Wentworth's history. Wentworth is the only surviving public school founded by a Congregational minister (JD Jones), backed by an individual Congregational church (Richmond Hill. Bournemouth in 1899). At its founding government policy promoted Anglican schools and Wentworth was not founded as a Congregational or free church establishment but as a school "which should be defintely Christian but.... free from sectarian bias". All school records and governors meeting minutes dating from before 1963 were destroyed in a fire at the school solicitors in the 1980s so the history has been written on the basis of personal memory.

The book was produced to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the school, enabling extra expense to make it a fitting memorial. Although only a paperback, it has a glossy cover and photographs of events and period memorabilia on almost every page. Old girls' anecdotes, school magazines, local newspapers, and notes from an uncompleted history provide the sources for a lively read. Wentworth owes much to the continued active involvement in its life of JD Jones and we are provided with his biography in brief. Jones appears time and again in the school's first 43 years. He played a decisive role in major decisions, choosing heads, conducting Bible classes and acquiring Llantysilio Hall near Llangollen for the school when it was evacuated during World War II.

The history continues with a chapter on each headmistress. The author regrets being unable to find many details of the first head, Miss E I Parker Gray (1899-1911), who was forced to resign through ill health. Although Mrs Carlysle discovered no conclusive evidence of numbers attending in the first year, photographs suggest a few small boys went to kindergarten. School numbers increased quickly. The second head. Minnie Davie (1911-34) had "great personality and strength of character". She was a horticulturist, played hockey for her county, and valued education in music, art and elocution. She preferred boarding school to day school, writing in the school prospectus "the chief aims of

the school are to give every girl that training in character, based on the Christian faith, which helps to make her a power for good in whatever sphere of life she moves, and to develop to the full such capacity as she has so as to fit her for whatever position she may have to fill". In 1923 the school moved to Wentworth Lodge on the cliffs outside Bournemouth, changing its name a few years later. During the miners' crisis in the 1920s the school adopted a school in Wales, sending regular food parcels and making clothes for patients in hospital.

The third head, Miss Bourne (1934-58), was a Congregational minister's daughter, herself educated at Milton Mount. She kept "rules.. to a minimum". One change, much appreciated by the girls, was that staff ate the same food as everyone else. During Miss Bourne's headship the school was evacuated due to bomb damage in 1940, two weeks before the Autumn term. JD Jones secured the use of Llantysilio Hall which had no electricity, no heating other than an open fire, shortage of food and the necessity to keep some pupils at school in the holidays. Miss Bourne coped well, keeping hens and bees, collecting rose hips and wild fruit and retaining a happy atmosphere. Illustrations include cartoons and photocopies of the War Times clothes list and 1941 Summer term programme.

The fourth head, Miss M Everett (1958-61), was promoted from being her deputy on Miss Bourne's resignation. Little is known of her although as a history teacher she was said to "make history live" and she wore fashionable clothes. The fifth head, Nora Hibbert (1961-82), was appointed when Dr Sidney Berry, Jones' successor as chairman of the governors, proved the leader the school needed after two quick changes of head. Miss Hibbert's discipline was strong and the school experienced progress and prosperity during her time. She played the viola in the school orchestra (the size of a small symphony orchestra), dressed as an Elizabethan lady on a Shakespeare weekend, accompanied the girls on school outings and read stories to new boarders. Her talks during school prayers are remembered as inspiring.

Within a year of Miss Hibbert's becoming head, Milton Mount and Wentworth amalgamated. A clear statement of Milton Mount's financial problems and the new town Crawley's compulsory purchase of school land, forcing their governors to close that school, are clearly set out. In 1961 the minister of Richmond Hill, Trevor Davies, became chairman of the Wentworth governors (after Berry's death) and quickly realised Wentworth's own lack of finance. In

1962 the two sets of governors agreed the schools should amalgamate under the title Wentworth Milton Mount. The joint school was to increase its number of pupils while management remained with the Wentworth governors, increased by three Milton Mount nominees. Control of MM finances remained with the MM governors and the joint school became a charitable trust. In 1964 the Miltonian Guild (MM old girls) gave money to build a much needed sixth form room. In the following eighteen years a mammoth programme of improvements took place to enable the school to fulfil the agreement in full – financed by the MM governors and fund raising efforts. From 1963 onwards Teresa Carlysle has written her story from official records. The lack of anecdotal contributions make this chapter more accurate but less interesting. The human stories behind the main players are missing. In 1961 she tells us that The Bournemouth Times had almost written off Wentworth but the amalgamation gave a future to both schools as one.

Miss M Vokins, the sixth head (1982-90) held training sessions for the staff to meet new national education requirements and different public examinations. She introduced careers lessons and computer training and in 1989, with a loan from the MM governors, a swimming pool was built. Old girls from both schools contributed to the appeal to pay off the school loan. The present head, Miss S Coe (1991-), is a great admirer of Miss Bourne. The greatest change under her headship has been to abbreviate the school name to Wentworth College, taking one word from the name of each school.

Copies of the book are only available from the college office. I believe the book contains vital fragments of original sources for anyone studying Christian schools or the life of JD Jones. I do not think the whole book is of equal value. Scope exists for further research and it is clearly hard to judge the contribution of recent heads without the benefit of historical perspective. Yet this attractive first history of Wentworth deserves to be read.

Rosemary Bishop

The Congregational Lecture 1997. A Prodigal Daughter Posting the Bible: Poststructuralism and the Parables by Susan Durber, ISSN 0963-181X Pp18 1997, £2.00. The Congregational Memorial Hall Trust (1987) Limited, Caroone House, 14 Farringdon St., London EC4A 4EB.

In this talk, Susan Durber draws our attention to the possibilities of using another tool in the exegesis of a biblical passage in the context of either private study or public worship - post-structuralism. This way of analysing texts emerged in the 1960s, partly within French structuralism, as a reaction against its perceived pretensions to scientific objectivity and comprehensiveness. Although the term covers a wide range of opinion, including the later works of Roland Barthes, the psychoanalytical theories of Jacques Lacan, so beloved of film critics, and the cultural-political writings of Jean-Francois Lyotard, Dr. Durber concentrates on the philosophical deconstruction of language and knowledge practised by Jacques Derrida. Durber writes;

"Knowledge is possible only via the languages we write and speak and is never simply 'present' as though it could come to us without the mediation of signs. And the signs refer endlessly to one another with no fixed point of reference, no 'great sign' to end the search for meaning." (p1)

Although its influence on French intellectual life had waned by the end of the seventies, post-structuralism has had a delayed effect on the cultural life of the English speaking world, especially America.

In an attempt to undermine any theoretical system which claims to have universal validity, Derrida emphasises the instability of meaning in language, by basically attacking the concept of binary opposition. That is, he dissolves the relationship between language and meta-language; (i.e. the language about language) and hence, most importantly, between all literature (including the Bible) and criticism. This he replaces by a non-hierarchical or 'free play' of meanings. Susan Durber comments at the beginning of her lecture:

> "Constraints of time and space will not give me the freedom to demonstrate everything of the glorious playfulness of post structuralism, its prodigal proliferation of ideas and strategies, so resonant for our times. However, I hope that time may be generous enough to let me offer you, if not a definitive introduction, then at least a post(card) from the edge, at least a wish that you could be here in a country far from historical criticism and taste something new of the pleasures of the text." (p1)

This method of analysing texts, therefore, stresses their indeterminacy, a principle of uncertainty which denies the existence of any final meaning which can bring to an end the play of meaning between the elements of a text. Derrida invented the term différance (by combining the two meanings of the French verb différer – to differ and to defer or postpone) to indicate simultaneously two senses in which language denies the full presence of meaning, Durber, quoting Derrida's Living on Borderlines, writes:

> "... a 'text' (that) is henceforth no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces, referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces." (p3)

Hence, unlike the influential Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, any linguistic element – a sign – is seen by Derrida as having no positive meaning, but only an effect of meaning arising from its differences to other elements. Différance, a key concept in Derrida's philosophy, therefore stresses that signification is only possible by 'spacing out' both signifier (signifiant) the concrete component of a sign, and its conceptual meaning – the signified (signifié). Hence meaning, in this theory, appears merely as a 'trace' of other terms within or across any given term. Durber, quoting Derrida's The Postcard, writes:

> "... you understand, within every sign already, every mark or every trait, there is distancing, the post, what there has to be so that it is legible for another, another than you or me..." (p2)

Susan Durber analyses the parable of the prodigal son, not in the context of biblical criticism or canonical context, but in relationship to other unrelated texts, such as that favourite of postmodernist literary criticism, King Lear. She therefore abandons orthodox exegesis in favour of 'traces'. Derrida has attacked the logocentric view of platonic, philosophical and religious thought which had dominated western culture. He believes that the concept of logos - the ultimate principle of truth and reason - is merely the repression of différance in favour of a transcendental signifier, such as the concept of God. Dr. Durber suggests, citing the Old Testament Biblical critic, Walter Brueggemann, that there should be a movement "away from the quest for 'real knowledge' for universal and general truth" and to take delight instead in the 'little stories' of the bible which are quirky and ill fitting. (p4)

This is unfair to Brueggemann as, although following Lyotard, he believes that there may be no "grand Story" i.e. an inclusive meta-narrative, and hence biblical stories are contextual, localised and multi-faceted, the Bible is still, as a text, the centre of the creative work of interpretation in the preaching and liturgy of the church. As Brueggemann wrote in the The Prophetical Imagination , "the first and indispensable step we need to take is to immerse ourselves in the Bible as the non - negotiable, canonical foundation of our faith". The church, therefore , has to re- appropriate "its memory which is encoded paradigmatically in the Bible" . In To Pluck Up, To Pluck Down : A Commentary on the Book of Jeremiah 1-25, he amplifies his argument: "the text does not need to be applied to our situation, rather, our situation needs to be submitted to the text for a fresh discernment... subverting old readings for new, dangerous, obedient readings". To Brueggemann, the Bible must be treated imaginatively but his concept of the Bible, as a unified story, does not sit well with a post-modern rejection of meta-narrative. Perpectivism is a defence against both the threat of objectivism and the lesser problem of relativism. There is however a rigidity in a perspectivism which neglects the fact that God is a mystery outside our limited perceptions, neither is God an object on which we act, but is the source of all action. Durber believes that there is absolute freedom in the analysis of biblical texts. Brueggemann believes that a Christian post-modernist imagination must be seen from the perspective of the gathered church. Durber's analysis of biblical texts ranges too widely and fancifully and is too personally idiosyncratic to be of general use. The term " Imagination" in a post-modernist sense derives from Samuel Taylor Coleridge who in his Biographia Literaria (1817, chapter 13) defines the

imagination as that which "dissolves in order to recreate". Durber seems to use fancy rather than imagination in much of this talk.

However Susan Durber has drawn our attention to the importance of using scripture imaginatively from various perspectives. She reminds us also that the Talmudic interpretations of the Old Testament have a long and honourable history.

Yvonne A. Evans.

OBITUARY

John Whale (1896-1997)

John Seldon Whale was a distinguished theologian and historian of Christian doctrine whose scholarship led to a renewal of interest in Calvin's teaching among Congregationalists in particular. In the 1930s and 40s Whale was associated with Nathaniel Micklem in the revival of Genevan neo-orthodoxy, regarding positively that Reformed churchmanship which favoured synods and inter-church councils. Whale, Micklem, JD Jones and others were criticised in the 1930s for stepping to the right together and thus leading Congregationalism away from theological liberalism.

Whale was born on 19th December 1896 at Mevagissey, Cornwall, the son of his namesake, a Congregational minister and his wife, Alice Emily Seldon. He was educated at Caterham School where he rose to be head boy. During the 1914-18 war he served with the Friends Ambulance Unit as an orderly on a hospital ship, with the YMCA, and with the Serbian Relief Fund. After the war he studied at St Catherine's Society, Oxford, obtaining a first class degree in modern history in 1922, before moving to Mansfield College to train for the Congregational ministry. In 1925 he became minister of the important Bowdon Downs Congregational Church, Cheshire remaining there until 1929, when he returned to Oxford to teach ecclesiastical history at Mansfield and general history at St Catherine's.

In 1933 Whale moved to Cambridge to become President of Cheshunt College. He had married in 1926 Mary, the daughter of Henry Child (Polly) Carter, the notable minister of Emmanuel Congregational Church, Cambridge. While at Cheshunt Whale's achievements were considerable and there he first came to public prominence as a lecturer, preacher, writer and broadcaster. Lloyd George praised his preaching genius and AJ Cummings regarded Whale as a dominant pulpit personality of the future.

In 1936 Whale was invited to become minister of The City Temple in London but he took the advice of his former principal at Mansfield, WB Selbie, who plainly told him that it would kill him. That he lived to be 100 years old is therefore ironic. In 1938 Whale was given an honorary DD by Glasgow University and in 1942-43 he served as moderator of the Free Church Federal Council. However in 1940 Whale had given a number of open lectures at Cambridge to which he drew a very large audience. These lectures were later published under the title Christian Doctrine (1941) and remained in print for over fifty years.

The 1939-45 war necessitated a drop in candidates for the ministry and in 1944 Whale left Cambridge suprisingly to become headmaster of Mill Hill School, in north London, which had been founded by Congregationalists at the beginning of the 19th century. The school had been evacuated to St Bees, in Cumberland and Whale, although later to regret the move to Mill Hill, revived its academic reputation. In 1951 he left the school, thereafter to hold a succession of lectureships in the United States between 1951 and 1968. His failure to return to a full-time academic position did not prevent his writing and in 1955 he published The Protestant Tradition and in 1960 Victor and Victim. In 1971 Christian Reunion appeared arguing that scholarship has removed most obstacles to church unity.

Whale retired eventually to his cottage, Wild Goose, at Widecombe-in-the-Moor, in Devon and there in extreme old age, he was reported as scaling a ladder to attempt repairs to the roof. He died on September 17th 1997. One son became an Anglican and was for a time Head of Religious Broadcasting at BBC television, and was editor of The Church Times 1989-95. A plaque to commemorate John Whale is to be unveiled in the chapel of Mansfield College, Oxford in the early Spring of 1998.

Joe William Ashley Smith (1914-97)

I first came to know Bill at northern area meetings in the early days of the Congregational Federation. They were always held in rather dank, cold chapels on Saturday afternoons so it was rather an eye opening experience to witness this elderly, but vehement schoolteacher enthusing on, defending or advocating a variety of topics. Later when the CF tutorial board was formed Bill served on that with me. By then he had retired after a successful career, as headmaster latterly at Billingham, having "filled in" as a lecturer at two colleges. A Congregationalist through and through, Bill had an amazing ability for breaking down barriers – all the more noteworthy for a mathematician. Bill maintained his interest in maths but extended this into the history of dissenting academies, hymnody and missiology. He broke down barriers between denominations and between people in church and in village.

His knowledge of the Church of England and the prayer book was remarkable, as was his love of parish churches. When talking to the rector of Caistor in Lincolnshire he told me, "Of course Bill knows more about my church than I do". The list of Congregational chapels with which he was associated in recent years reads like a list of those doomed to close – Shildon, Clough Foot, and Brookenby. Yet he had an intimate knowledge of scores of chapels and could reel off their history and ministers.

He was proud of his undergraduate years at Cambridge and of his friendship with the Rev HC Carter (Polly) – so nicknamed because of a prominent facial feature, which nonetheless did not prevent his admirers wearing a specially made tie adorned with parrots. He once showed me the rooms where he had lived in Trinity and spoke of Cheshunt College in the 1930s and of his contemporaries, Alf Sadd, the martyred LMS missionary, and CK Barrett, the New Testament scholar. We talked for many hours at his house in Heptonstall, near Hebden Bridge, at Blacksmith's Cottage, Thwaite, Swaledale, and at his book filled house at Caistor, Lincolnshire.

Bill maintained a constant flow of preaching, keeping meticulous detail of places, texts and, of course, hymns. He stated towards the end of his life that he

had "only preached forty times last year"! I know that he had often driven the twelve or fifteen miles to Brookenby only to find he was alone there. Yet he was not discouraged and always cheerful with regard to his own life and others. Ever ready to explain why things had gone wrong, he never admitted despair.

His written work was extensive and he always was willing to provide reviews for this magazine. His M Ed. thesis was published as The Birth of Modern Education (1955) while he wrote the biographies of various hymn writers for the Companion to Hymns and Psalms(1988) and contributed to the Dictionary of Religious Education (1984). His last article for the CHC Magazine was on Little Church in Ealing (Vol.3 no.3 1995) which he attended as a small child. Bill was a founder member of this history circle and later became its president. For his kindness, generosity, good humour and unswerving Christian faith he will be long remembered.

Colin Price

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

The Baptist Quarterly (XXXVII July 1997 no.3)
H Wheeler "Pole Moor Baptist Chapel, Scammonden, Huddersfield: Reflections of the early history; also the 1790 Covenant". A R Cross "Rev Dr Hugh Martin: Ecumenical Controversialist and Writer". A P F Sell "Potted Evangelicals: A Review Article", of the Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography.

(XXXVII Oct 1997 no.4)
I Sellers "W T Whitley: A Commemorative Essay". K Manley The Right Man in the Right Place: W T Whitley in Australia 1891-1901". D S Russell "Baptists in Central and Eastern Europe in the Post-War Years: Recollections and Reflections".

(XXXVII Jan 1998 no.5)
R Hayden "Leonard George Champion 1907-1997". R Mason "H Wheeler

Robinson Revisited". P Ramsbottom "A Chiliasm of Despair?: The community worshipping at St George's Road Baptist Chapel. Manchester". F Bowers "Letters of a Baptist Architect".

Journal of the Friends' Historical Society (vol 58 no.1)
H L Ingle "Future of Quaker History". G F Nuttall "The Quakers and the Inquisition". M J Wigham "Some Irish Quaker Naturalists". S A Holland "Augustus Cove and the Grand Junction Canal Company". A Mackinnon "My Dearest Friend: Courtship and Conjugality in some mid and late Nineteenth Century Quaker Families". W R Chapman "James Nicholson Richardson 1846-1921".

Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society (XXI no.4, April 1996)
L Smith "The Great Let-down and its Legacy: The New Theology and the Order of the Brotherhood of the Pioneer Preachers". G M Ditchfield "Unitarians and Philanthropy 1760-1810". A Ruston "Unitarian Attitudes Toward World War I". T Rail "William Russell 1740-1818". T Cross "From Friar to Free Christian: James Martineau and Rodolph Suffield". M Hutt "John Aikin: Biographical Memoirs of Medicine in Great Britain (1780)".

The Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society (vol 5 no.10, June 1997)
G F Nuttall "Pennar Davies (12 Nov 1911- 29 Dec 1996): Complexio Oppositorum". I M Randall "How to Work a City Church: Christchurch, Westminster Bridge Road, from the 1890's to the 1920's". A Argent "The Pilot on the Bridge: J D Jones (1865-1942)". R Goldring "Divorce and Dissent: Free Church Attitudes to Divorce and Remarriage 1910-1937". A J Doodson "The Presbyterians in Liverpool Part 5: A Survey 1939-1945".

(Vol 5 Supp. No.2, Sept 1997)
A L Macarthur "The Presbyterian Road to 1972". R Bocking "The United Reformed Church: Background, Formation and After". M Cressey "Notes of the Theology of Union: Theological Aspects of the Formation and Process of the United Reformed Church Before and After 1972". P Morgan "1972 and the Churches of Christ". J Travell "The Congregational Federation 1972-1997". A Tovey "An Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches 1972-1997". D J Martin "The Continuing Congregational Way: A Personal Reflection". S L

Brown "A Modern Church? Reflections from a First Generation Minister".
D M Thompson "Afterword".

(Vol 6 no.1, Oct 1997)
F Deconinck-Brossard "Patterns of Preaching and Worship among 18th Century Dissenters. R J Carwardine "Abraham Lincoln and the Evangelical Roots of American Political Culture". P Ackers "Exodus: Labour Emigration from the English Churches of Christ to Canada during 1906 and 1907. F Hale "Quod est Veritas? The Misappropriation of Religious and Athletic History in Chariots of Fire". A J Doodson "The Presbyterians in Liverpool Part 6: A Survey 1945-1972".

Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society (vol 51 part 2, May 1997)
E Welch "John Fletcher and the Trevecka College Revival". P Olleson "The Music of Samuel Wesley on Record". P B Nockles "Methodists and Tractarians", "Methodist Archives Manuscript Accessions".

(Vol 51 Part 3, Oct 1997)
R F S Thorne "Altogether Now – The United Methodist Church 1907-1932".
D C Dews "The Methodist New Connexion in Leeds (Part 1)".

(Vol 51 Part 4, Feb 1998)
D C Dews "The Methodist New Connexion in Leeds (Part 2)". B C Redwood "Diana Thomas of Kington". J Dale "Charles Wesley Junior's Copy of the Life of M. de Renty". J A Vickers "The W H S Library" (now in Westminster College, Oxford).