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EDITORIAL

May 1999 saw Scotland's first parliament since 1707. Is that a first course or a main meal since that tardy appointment of a Secretary of State for Scotland which Gladstone, (whose masticating powers were legendary among Liberal children), described as a little mouthful of Home Rule? The Scottish parliament meets, though temporarily, in a building which dominates Edinburgh's skyline; and since that building is the former Free Church College it is as telling a symbol of great disruption as any capital city might have. Four of this issue's articles reflect aspects of the Scottish Dissenting experience. English readers will note its distinctiveness as well as the steady interweaving with English Dissent. John Glass, as David Mullan reminds us, has been called "the Father of Scottish Congregationalism". Thomas Gillespie was a founder of one of the strands in what became the United Presbyterian Church, which in turn contributed signally to the Presbyterian Church of England. Robert Halley, who figured in Roger Tomes's "The Social Conscience of Dissent" (Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 167-184), and was beyond doubt an eminent Victorian Congregationalist, came of Anti-Burgher stock. Ella Gordon, who died in March 1999, and was British Presbyterianism's first ordained

woman minister, began like Glass and Gillespie in the Church of Scotland. In this issue it is thus the Church of Scotland rather than the Church of England which defines the Dissent that is here commemorated. Nonetheless the accents of John Owen and Philip Doddridge intermingle with those of the Evangelical, especially the Whitefieldite, Revival, for what is described has its British as well as its distinctively Scottish and English dimensions.

David G. Mullan, whom we welcome as a contributor, is a Baptist minister and Professor of History and Religious Studies, University College of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia.

NOTE: THE ASSOCIATION OF DENOMINATIONAL HISTORICAL SOCIETIES AND COGNATE LIBRARIES

The Association currently has two major projects. The first is a series of four volumes of Protestant Nonconformist Texts, under the general editorship of the Association's convener, Professor Alan P.F. Sell. The first two volumes, covering the years 1550–1800, will be published in August 1999 by Edinburgh University Press. Volumes three and four, covering the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, will follow in 2000. The texts will illustrate the origins, politics, theologies, worship and socio-political concerns of the several Nonconformist traditions. The series will provide ready access to a variety of documents, some of which are now scarce.

Secondly, a major conference will be held under the Association's auspices from 26-29 July, 2000 at Westhill College, Birmingham. The theme will be "Protestant Nonconformity in England and Wales during the Twentieth Century: A Retrospect". The contributions of Protestant Nonconformists to biblical studies, historical studies, theology, worship, church architecture, evangelism, mission, peace, politics, business and ecumenism will be discussed, as will the influence within Nonconformity of those of Huguenot ancestry. It is expected that the proceedings of the conference will subsequently be published. Further particulars may be had from Howard F. Gregg, 44 Seymour Road, London SW18 5JA.

The next Annual Meeting will be held at 2.00 p.m. on 28 October 1999 at Dr. Williams's Library, when a paper will be presented by Dr. Henry Rack. While membership of the Association is confined to societies and libraries, all interested persons are invited to attend the AGM.

THE ROYAL LAW OF LIBERTY: A REASSESSMENT OF THE EARLY CAREER OF JOHN GLASS*

John Glass¹ (1695-1773) was the founder of an independent sect known in Scotland as the Glassites, and in England and America as the Sandemanians, after his son-in-law Robert Sandeman. In addition to continuing (in Edinburgh until just a few years ago) in its own right as a group of independent congregations, this denomination contributed in the 1760s to the origins of the Old Scots Independents under James Smith and Robert Ferrier, particularly with respect to ideas about the nature of Christ's kingdom; David Dale of Glasgow, Robert Owen's father-in-law, developed his independency in a Glassite direction through their mediation. Former Glassites established an Independent Society in Edinburgh in the 1760s, and Glassite notions also influenced the Scotch Baptists in the same period. With good reason Glass has been called "the Father of Scottish Congregationalism".²

In his early years as a pastor Glass challenged the national church to take a serious look at its past and its present. As a result of the Glorious Revolution, the Church of Scotland had again turned presbyterian, but on condition of laying aside its famous covenants, namely the National Covenant of 1638 and the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643.³ This renunciation was a source of dismay to many

* I am indebted to two institutions for their contributions to the production of this paper. The University College of Cape Breton, through its Director of Research Dr Robert Morgan, provided research grants which supported visits first to the University of Guelph in December 1994 where the paper was begun, and then to Edinburgh in the spring of 1995. In Edinburgh, the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, Director Professor Peter Jones, provided a scholarly environment both tranquil and stimulating. Parts of the paper were discussed in papers given to the Scottish History Seminar at the University of Glasgow in October 1995 and to the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities in November 1995. I am grateful to my friend Dr Derek B. Murray for several discussions about Glass and his movement, and for the loan of his St. Andrews PhD thesis on which his published material is based.

1. While the modern spelling is commonly given as Glas, many of the earliest kirk records and publications report the name as Glass, and that is the form adopted here.
2. Gavin Struthers, *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Principles of the Relief Church* (Glasgow, 1843), 181-3; James Ross, *A History of Congregational Independency in Scotland* (Glasgow: James MacLehose & Sons, 1900), 33-4; Derek B. Murray, "The Influence of John Glas", *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 22, no. 1 (1988), 47-8; Harry Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism* (Glasgow: Congregational Union of Scotland, 1960), 17, n.1.
3. The revolution settlement affirmed the Westminster Confession, but did not rescind the 1662 act which condemned the National Covenant (1638) and the Solemn League and Covenant (1643). It did, however, abolish the 1669 Act of Supremacy, which had made the reigning monarch supreme over ecclesiastical affairs. William Law Mathieson, *Politics and Religion: A Study in Scottish History from the Reformation to the Revolution*, 2 vols. (Glasgow: James Maclehorse and Sons, 1902), ii, 355, 358; *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), 872.

in the church. Some, including the radical Cameronians, insisted that there could be no true church in Scotland without an affirmation of those documents; others in the establishment would not go so far as schism, but they too looked back and longed to see a renewal of the church on a covenanted basis. With such ideas in the air John Glass reconsidered the covenants and the notion of national covenanting; his inquiry resulted in conclusions which led directly to his deposition from the ministry. This paper looks at his early career in an attempt to understand the nature and sources of his theological development; there emerges from his story an interesting view of ecclesiastical life in Scotland during the 1720s, including prominent figures in the national church, along with Cameronians, Jacobites and episcopalians.

Glass was the fifth generation of a clerical lineage, the son of Alexander, minister of the parish of Auchtermuchty in Cupar presbytery. When he was a young boy, the family moved to Kinclaven, Perthshire, where he took his earliest education, thereafter attending the Perth Grammar School and St. Leonard's College at St. Andrews. He graduated M.A. in 1713 and proceeded with his father's recommendation to theological study in Edinburgh.⁴ Later Glass reflected that he had never given serious consideration to anything other than the ministry, but he was inhibited from seeking a place due to a lack of confidence in his own fitness for the work. He commented on his being encouraged to enter into the trials despite his failure to meet either the Church of Scotland's⁵ or his own standards of preparation and experience. Thus it was not by his own doing but at the urging of the presbytery of Dunkeld that this "very hopeful youth" began his passage through the procedural thicket in August 1717.⁶ All along the way he impressed those with whom he had to do,⁷ and the presbytery sought permission from the synod of Perth and Stirling to subject him to the usual licencing trials; this was granted in October 1717.⁸ He then returned to his studies in Edinburgh.⁹ By the end of February 1718 he was back in the presbytery and was engaged to provide public demonstrations of his fitness for ministry.¹⁰ These were concluded without any problems, and on 20 May, "having signed the confession of faith and formula and having promised

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4. Edinburgh University Library, Da. 41, Lists of Theologues in the University of Edinburgh, p. 11. See also J.T. Hornsby, "The Case of Mr John Glas", *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 6 (1938), 115, and *idem*, "John Glas and his Movement" (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1936), 1-4.
 5. This may be a reference to his age, not yet twenty-five. See *A Compendium of the Laws of the Church of Scotland*, 2nd ed.; 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1837), ii, 227.
 6. Scottish Record Office [SRO], CH2/106/3, Dunkeld Presbytery Records, p. 263.
 7. SRO, CH2/106/3, p. 266.
 8. SRO, CH2/449/6, Perth and Stirling Synod Records, p. 126.
 9. Edinburgh University Library, Da. 41, p. 53.
 10. SRO, CH2/106/4, p. 12.

subjection to this and any other presbytery where providence should cast his lot he was licenced to preach the gospel as a probationer".¹¹

These proceedings would generate some controversial statements. In 1726 Robert Wodrow made his first mention of what was quickly turning into a troubling situation in the presbytery of Dundee: Glass's alleged inconsistency with presbyterian tenets. He remembered "that Mr Glass's father was not very fond of his son's tryalls, and said to some he was not pleased with him",¹² an allegation repeated in a 1729 publication by one of Glass's opponents, James Gray, minister of Kettins (Meigle presbytery). After praising the accomplishments of Alexander, he stated that the father was moved to agree to his son's trials "by the Importunity of a certain Minister",¹³ suggesting a real lack of paternal enthusiasm which may have had something to do with Alexander's absence from the first three of the four public proofs of John's ability at presbytery meetings.¹⁴ It is not clear what to make of this shallow reporting by two hostile writers, the second of whom Glass would accuse of perfidy, and it is important not to read into the intimation a theological departure which would only be revealed later.

Glass stated explicitly that when he entered the presbyterian ministry he had considered and rejected the claims of episcopalianism, while to that time he had not looked into congregationalism's arguments, assuming the usual prejudices that "it is mere Confusion, and was the Mother of all the Sectaries". Thus his first subscription of the Formula of 1711 does not pose a problem.¹⁵ So far was he from dissent that he did not hesitate at its declaration of acceptance of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and conviction of the scriptural basis and authenticity of the church's doctrine, worship, and polity, and the promise never to "endeavour, directly nor indirectly, the prejudice or subversion of the same; and I promise, that

11. SRO, CH2/106/4, p. 20. James Thomson, *The History of Dundee*, new ed. by James MacLaren (Dundee, 1874), 374-6 supplies incorrect dates, i.e. 1721 for trials and 1722 for entry into the parish of Tealing. The first of these may be attributed to a letter of 1799 in *Letters in Correspondence by Robert Sandeman, John Glas, and their Contemporaries* (Dundee, 1851), 4.
12. Robert Wodrow, *Analecta*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh, 1842-3), iii, 323. According to an admiring memoir of Glass's life, his father referred to him as Ishmael (*Genesis* 16:12, "his hand against everyone, and everyone's hand against him, and he shall live at odds with all his kin."), and called him an independent; his father-in-law also looked askance at him, but no dates are given for either alleged incident. *An Account of the Life and Character of Mr John Glas* (Edinburgh, 1813), ix-x.
13. [James Gray], *The naked truth* (n.p., 1729), 6.
14. He was there to see his son subscribe.
15. John Glass, *A continuation of Mr. Glass's narrative, containing a true state of the process against him, as it is in the extracts to be laid before the assembly in May 1729* (Edinburgh, 1729), vii. See also Glass, *A narrative of the rise and progress of the controversy about the national covenants, and of the ways that have been taken about it on both sides* (Edinburgh, 1728), 2.

I shall follow no divisive course from the present establishment in this Church".¹⁶ This document would assume a leading role in the unfolding drama.

The next year he was ordained to the charge of Tealing [Tealine, Tealling, Telen] in the presbytery of Dundee. His settlement followed a dispute over the attempt to move William Stewart to that parish from Blair Gowrie: Stewart's parish wanted to keep him, and there was also a question about the Duke of Douglas's right of patronage.¹⁷ It is not apparent that any of this had direct impact on Glass as the duke did not figure in his placement, though Glass, as so many of his contemporaries, would express real concern over forced settlements. The presbytery records indicate that the patron eventually left the call in the hands of the parish, and after the preaching of sermons, Glass emerged early in 1719 as the unanimous choice of the parish. The presbytery then directed him to preach at the next presbytery day, which he did on 25 March to full satisfaction. On 15 April he underwent extempore trials, offered analyses of Hebrew and Greek texts, and won over the entire body:

he was approven in the haill and he having satisfied the presbiterie concerning the soundness of his faith and principalls relateing to the government worship & discipline of this church & engaged to subscribe the confession of faith & formula conform to the Acts of Assembly the presbiterie judge him well qualified to be minister at Tealine and appoint him to be ordained minister on the sixth of May next.¹⁸

Thereafter, at the church on 6 May, according to the rules of the national church, which included a church officer standing at the door and calling for those persons to come forward "who had anything to object against the life and doctrine of the said Mr John Glass", and following a sermon by the Revd. James Marr of Muirhouse, who would be consistently sympathetic to the cause,¹⁹ the presbytery proceeded to ordain him in the usual manner. With the offering of the right hand of fellowship, Glass had been received into the ministry of the Church of Scotland. The minutes betray not the slightest suspicion concerning his orthodoxy, and thus one is driven to the conclusion that, upon arrival, Glass was an unexceptionable presbyterian who showed every sign of being a useful and reliable servant of the church, and indeed we see him taking his regular turn in the functions of the presbytery.

16. *Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1638-1842* (Edinburgh, 1843), 456.

17. SRO, CH2/12/4. Synod of Angus and Mearns Records, pp. 228-33; CH1/3/17, Register of the Acts and Proceedings of the Commission of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, pp. 171, 178-9.

18. SRO, CH2/103/9, p. 110. The process is defined in *Compendium of the Laws*, i, 211-2.

19. Glass, *Narrative*, 64; CH2/12/4. p. 321; CH2/12/6. pp. 129, 146.

Glass soon exhibited a deep concern for what he regarded as the impoverished spiritual state of his parishioners, and it was this condition, rather than bashing episcopalians or uplifting the covenants, which inspired his preaching. Over time some people, both within and without the parish of Tealing, began to respond favourably to his pastoral efforts, but others, including some Cameronians,²⁰ were adamant in their opposition to him. In part, this was a generalised opposition to the prevailing condition of the established church, notably its submission to the Oath of Abjuration of 1711. The oath was an anti-Jacobite measure which supported the revolutionary settlement and entailed a monarch who belonged to the Church of England;²¹ clearly there was no room here for the reinstatement of the covenants. Cameronians believed that what they were seeing were signs of declension – an old enough theme in the Reformed church – and Glass was perturbed by their “magnifying the former covenanting Days, and prophesying of great Days to come, by the reviving of these Covenants; but, as for this Day, expecting no Benefit by the Gospel, nor lying open to its influence”.²² An anonymous critic of Glass in a 1727 tract included a letter, c. 1700, by John Dickson of Rutherglen, wherein he declared: “Ah! for a Touch of that Spirit that was poured down in Floods when the Covenants were solemnly entered into; ... The church was then like the Eden of God”.²³ A stunningly bad poem of forty-three stanzas found its way into print in 1724, expressing the same regret:

We're Married now to England, but Divorced from our God,
As longs the Broken Covenant lays on us like a Load,
A flourishing Church Scotland shall never enjoy,
Until the Sons of Levi their Knavery shall destroy.²⁴

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20. The Cameronians were presbyterians who, following the example of Richard Cameron (died in 1680 fighting at Ayrsmoss), insisted on the continuing obligation of the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant, and thus could not embrace the British monarchy even in terms of its newly affirmed Protestantism. However, they did not resort to Cameron's violent defence of the covenants. The term covers a spectrum of conviction and association; i.e., John MacMillan was not the only centre of gravity. See Robert Wodrow, *Correspondence*, ed. T. M'Crie, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1842-3), i, 84.
21. *Statutes at Large*, 28 vols. (London, 1763-1800), iv, 514. For an example of the divided mind of the church, SRO, CH2/2/619/27, Auchterarder Presbytery Records, p. 6; John M'Kerrow, *History of the Secession Church* (Glasgow, 1841), 5-6; William McMillan, *John Hepburn and the Hebronites* (London: James Clarke & Co., [1934]), 142-51.
22. Glass, *Narrative*, 3.
23. *A letter to a minister in the country* (n.p., 1727), 77. Dickson was minister of Rutherglen from 1655 until 1622 when he was deprived for his nonconformity. He was restored in 1690 and remained until his death in 1700.
24. *A mournfull song, upon the breach of National, and Solemn League, and Covenant: with some of the causes, and direfull effects thereof* (n.p., 1724), stanza 23.

The issue for Glass was essentially a practical and a pastoral one, confronted in the first instance not in the study but in a pastor's interaction with his people. However, the opposition drove him to investigate more fully what it was saying, and to attempt to settle the matter on the basis of scripture. His reading led to a reconsideration of the nature of the kingdom of Christ, hence of the meaning of the covenants. While his congregationalism may have been of more enduring significance, in the first instance of defection it was actually of secondary importance.

J.T. Hornsby, Glass's twentieth-century student, noted that "the Kirk Session records reveal that there was great need for the exercise of church discipline"²⁵ in the parish of Tealing. Indeed there are numerous examples of censure for bad language, violence, drunkenness, "antenuptial fornication", irreligious expression. One angry nonpenitent even referred to "that villan Glass".²⁶ After his deposition, some members of the parish wrote of their deep appreciation for his labours of nine years. He had "found the Parish almost void of any Thing of the Form of Religion, and overspread with Ignorance, but since they have Ground to bless the Lord, that they have found a very desirable Change, by the Lord's Blessing on his Labours".²⁷ His own words in the early pages of the *Narrative* conform to this judgment. However, the estimation of conditions made by Glass and his friends did not go unchallenged by their establishment opponents. Two ministerial foes published their outrage at his aspersions. They complained that he, in assailing the religious conditions of the parish, was abusing the work of his predecessors. Gray noted John Campbell's fine reputation among the "old Professors", as indeed they must have been, as his ministry covered the years 1650-63 - more than sixty years earlier. Glass's immediate predecessor was Hugh Maxwell (1703-1717), of whom Gray asserted an enviable reputation, "a very regular Life, known Abilities, and great Application in his Function".²⁸ The session records would seem to bear out a diligent pastor, but Gray's reproaches miss the point. Maxwell himself had complained from the heart that:

Iniquity abounds among us, the love of many waxeth cold, great deadness,
security seizes this generation.... The case of our corner calls for sympathy

25. Hornsby, "Case of John Glas", 116, n.3.

26. Session records are extant for some years up to 1717; 1718 is badly represented, 1719 not at all; for 1720-21 fairly extensive records are available, nothing for 1722, and then 1723-26, but with nothing further for Glass's period. SRO, CH 2/352/3-4, Tealing Session Records. The riposte is likely from 1723, but the records are a bit ragged. There are no page numbers in --/4.

27. Glass, *Continuation*, 26.

28. Gray, *Naked truth*, 7. See also "A Letter from a member of the Synod of Angus and Mearns to his friend at Edinburgh", (by John Willison?) in *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, no. 498, 6-10 June 1728, pp. 1875-6. [John Willison], *A defence of national churches* (Edinburgh, 1729), i. On questions of authorship, John Glass, *A further continuation of Mr. Glas's narrative* (n.p., [1730?], 1-4, 64-5.

and help from yours [Wodrow's], where the gospel is gaining more ground, and many souls are converted to, and confirmed in Christ. As to my particular concerns, I have cause to lament my ministry has not all that desired success I wish for.²⁹

It would seem probable that this was not a bed of ease for a pastor, though one must also consider that ministers tend to think of their own parishes and congregations as the most depressing.

Is there any means of reconciling these diametrically opposed views of the matter? Clearly, neither side was seeking common ground with the other. Tempers were frayed, reputations were at stake. For men such as Gray, the situation which confronted Glass was not at all abnormal; it was simply the context of a national church which claimed spiritual oversight for the whole of society. They would have deplored, but none the less expected, sexual misconduct, drunken brawling, and the rest. It may be that Glass's youth, inexperience, and idealism meant that he was unprepared for the sometimes sordid grind that parochial discipline could entail. He wanted to build a community of saints and to erect a fence around the committed few with restricted access to the Lord's table, where only the visible saints, defined ultimately in the style of congregational independency, might approach, and to this end he gathered a group in his parish in the summer of 1725. At the same time he viewed the ministry of some of his colleagues unsympathetically; that of John Willison of Dundee especially he condemned for its self-satisfaction and design of imposing an authoritative religious scheme upon the common herd.³⁰

In his telling of the story, Glass raised the issue of Cameronian activity in Angus. He wrote about the case of Francis Archibald, a St. Andrews graduate (MA, 1704) and minister of Guthrie since 1716,³¹ who from 1725 was in trouble

29. Wodrow, *Correspondence*, i, 81, dated 7 November 1709.

30. John Glass, *A letter to Mr. John Willison, on a passage in his synodical sermon, concerning illiterate ministers* (Edinburgh, 1734), esp. 23-31. "Illiterate" here means unlettered in ancient languages, not without the ability to read and write English. He also thought that his adversaries, in seeking to prevent people from reading and interpreting the Bible for themselves, were approximating popery. Glass, *Narrative*, 208. Popery was a common allegation against the establishment, and not only from the Glassites. See, e.g., Glass, *Remarks*, 88. See also James Small, *A short and sober answer to a malicious and calumnious libel* (n.p., [1715]), 8. Small had been outed from his charge by presbyterians on account of his episcopalian sympathies.

31. *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, rev. ed.; ed. Hew Scott; 10 vols. (Edinburgh, 1915-1981), v, 437. Francis Archibald is listed as a probationer in Auchterarder presbytery in 1713. SRO, CH8/195, Lists of probationers and divinity students for 1713, p. 1. Actually, he was licenced by Perth presbytery on 26 January 1709, having been a presbytery bursar during his theological study 1704-8; he was only assisting in Auchterarder presbytery. CH2/619/27. pp. 7, 8, 17, etc.; CH2/299/6, Perth Presbytery Records, p. 196; CH2/299/7. p. 204; CH2/299/8, pp. 213, 237; CH2/299/9, p. 39. There is no obvious reason for the lengthy delay in his finding a charge; certainly no problems concerning his trials appear in the records of Perth presbytery.

with his presbytery (Arbroath) and synod (Angus and Mearns) and thereafter joined Glass. When all members of the presbytery were asked to subscribe the Confession of Faith and the Formula in that year his was the only dissentient voice. Archibald noted that in earlier years he had subscribed on a number of occasions, but since November 1723 had found himself unable to do so. Archibald did his best to affirm the benefits of the revolutionary settlement in Scotland, but he felt that 1690 had awakened the church not of the halcyon years of 1638-49, but of the rather less spectacular 1592.³² He told the presbytery: "In former Reformatiōns, our worthy Ancestors used to beginn with Renovation of our Nationall Covenants and acknowledgement of the Breaches thereof: But upon the Revolution and ever since nothing like that has been done, nor any vigorous attempts to gett it done, to the great grief and offence of many".³³

Archibald, like the Cameronians, thought the kirk was in the unenviable position of having breached its covenants. His was the older way, complaining about the broad toleration of the time, the renewed (since 1712) power of patronage in pastoral settlements, and the apparent loss of the kirk's liberty in requesting regal permission for a national fast, which he did not observe because of the erastianism implicit in the appeal.³⁴ He also submitted a paper on behalf of Alexander Walker who taught at the Arbroath Grammar School. It is not possible here to describe the lengthy history of this individual before the church courts or his relationship with Archibald, but we may note that his subsequent letter to the presbytery contained even more volatile comments than those of the gentle Archibald, who, however, offered something by way of a defence of a covenanted reformation. Walker declined to appear before the presbytery:

for my Principles lead me so according to the word of God and a covenanted reformation,... which I shall adhere to and thro' grace will not eat one syllab of it, for who can countenance this Ministry, while their unfaithfulness is so palpable in neglecting to warn people under such gross apostacy from the way of God after all he has wrought in these lands in the days of our fathers?³⁵

Walker favoured Archibald above the other ministers, and certainly Archibald's peers thought him in the grip of the Cameronians. The presbytery's questions to

32. Cf. Robert Naismith, *Historical Sketch of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1877), 74. The 1592 act was renewed without its abolition of lay patronage. See the Act Ratifying the Confession of Faith and settling Presbyterian Church Government in *The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, 12 vols. (Edinburgh, 1844-75), ix, 133.

33. SRO, CH2/15/4, Arbroath Presbytery Records, p. 98; CH2/12/6, pp. 140-4.

34. SRO, CH2/15/4, p. 144. See also James Hog and James Bathgate, *Reasons... for their not observing the day of thanksgiving appointed by the king* (n.p., [1724]), esp. 16, "advertisement from the Publisher".

35. SRO, CH2/15/4. p. 145.

him on 27 July 1726 asked whether he had been with the Cameronian ministers MacMillan and MacNeil in Fife a fortnight earlier.³⁶ We have a record of marriages and baptisms performed by John MacMillan, the great Cameronian apostle of the first half of the eighteenth century, and from this we know he travelled north of Glasgow into the region around Stirling, along the Forth to Kincardine and north-east to St. Andrews; there is one reference to Newport, presumably that on the south side of the Tay, opposite Dundee.³⁷ So even though we cannot place him in Fife on the particular date, his presence is by no means a fanciful suggestion. A contemporary asserted that Archibald had travelled to Edinburgh, "50 Miles by Sea and Land", to be married by MacMillan,³⁸ though the latter's register does not include Archibald's name. We also know from the Guthrie session minutes that Archibald was much exercised about a breach of the Lord's day (*not* Sunday) by the reading of public documents, inoffensive in themselves, following the service on the last Sabbath in November 1726:

Because a considerable body of people in these lands bearing witness to the covenanted reformation of these lands have been blessed with did at the renewing of our covenants national and solemn league at Douglass July 24th 1712 with accommodation to the then present time, do testify against prophaning the Lord's day by reading of proclamations wholly irrelative to religion...³⁹

In 1726 Wodrow noted Archibald's connection, never formalised, with MacMillan and that he "read the Covenants on his fast-day before the Sacrament".⁴⁰ It would appear that 1726 was the high water mark of Archibald's Cameronianism; at some point over the ensuing eighteen months he joined

36. SRO, CH2/15/4, p. 149.

37. Henry Paton, ed., *Register of the Rev. John MacMillan* (Edinburgh: Lorimer and Chalmers, 1908), 31.

38. Patrick Walker, *Some remarkable passages of the life and death of Mr. Alexander Peden*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh, 1728), reprinted in *Biographia Presbyteriana*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1827), i, 131. *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, v, 437 gives the date of the marriage as 27 November 1718. If all this is reliable, it adds up to a lengthy relationship between Archibald and the Cameronians, and raises questions as to his entry into the ministry of the Church of Scotland in 1716.

39. SRO, CH2/535/1, Guthrie Session Records, p. 307. The renewal of the covenants at Douglas (more precisely Auchenscaugh) in Lanarkshire was a constitutive event in the history of the Cameronians, from 1743 known as the Reformed Presbytery. See H. M. B. Reid, *A Cameronian Apostle being some account of John Macmillan of Balmaghie* (Paisley, 1896), 175ff; and *The National Covenant and Solemn League and Covenant... at Douglas 24 July 1712. With accommodation to the present times* (n.p., 1712).

40. Wodrow, *Analecta*, iii, 358.

Glass.⁴¹ Thereafter he supplied a notable exposition of the tensions he felt as a minister in the established church.⁴²

The re-establishment of presbyterianism in Scotland was at a price. The church decided that the half-a-loaf of a protestant succession which complied in a presbyterian establishment at least north of the Tweed was the best arrangement on offer, and it dedicated itself, in painfully obsequious language,⁴³ to harmonising itself with that reality. The outcome was rather more erastian than many would have liked,⁴⁴ and the effect was complex. On the one hand the Cameronians, while no longer pushed into armed defiance against the crown, could not make their peace with the new establishment due to the uncovenanted state of the monarchy and the company they would have to keep in that church; even the union might be criticised as "sinful".⁴⁵ This, however, does not mean that all those in the established church were entirely happy with the new arrangement. Ebenezer Erskine⁴⁶ and his colleagues of the Secession would eventually find tensions within the establishment too great and would leave, refusing, however, except for Thomas Nairn, to migrate as far as to join the Cameronians whose outlook on the civil magistracy and the use of coercion in religion were both too extreme for the Secession.⁴⁷ Still others, perhaps for a variety of motivations, stayed on. Some who found a home may have forgotten the covenants, but by no means all belong to this category. Indeed, the minutes of the judicatories record efforts to raise subscriptions for Wodrow's *History of the Sufferings of the Church*

41. Not later than 21 July 1728 when he joined Glass as an elder. *Account*, xliv. It was Glass's later, i.e. 28 July 1727, letter to Archibald that the latter, as one who had been affected by it, published as *A letter from a lover of Zion, and her believing children, to his intangled friend, discovering the mystery of national church covenanting under the New Testament* (Edinburgh, 1728).

42. SRO, CH2/12/6, pp. 140-4.

43. SRO, CH1/3/17, p. 276: "Next to our Glorious Reformation, we esteem the Late happy Revolution, under the Conduct of King William, of ever glorious Memory, Our most Remarkable Deliverance from Popery and Slavery, And your Majesty's happy Accession to the Throne, Our chief Security, Under God, of having those dearest Blessings of Religion and Liberty preserved to this & succeeding Generations..." The declaration goes on to make loyalty to the regime a term of ministerial standing.

44. [John MacMain], *The summons dismiss'd* (n.p., 1722?), 19, 26.

45. *A letter to a minister in the country*, 47.

46. Glass, *Narrative*, 71; [Henry Maxwell], *Memorial concerning the affair of Mr. John Glass* (Edinburgh, 1730), 62-4; Glass, *Remarks*, 8-14. There were points of contact between Glass and Ebenezer Erskine, but nothing further of a friendly nature after an initial reconnoitring. See the latter's *A sermon preach'd at the opening of the synod of Perth and Stirling 10 October 1732* (Edinburgh, 1732); [John Glass], *A supplement to Mr. Ebenezer Erskine's synodical sermon* (Edinburgh, 1732); John Glass et al, *A petition to the Associate Presbytery* (Edinburgh, 1737).

47. M'Kerrow, *History of the Secession Church*, 184ff.

of *Scotland*, first published in 1721-2,⁴⁸ a lengthy work about the covenanters of 1660-88 under the cross, written by one who had determined to live within the establishment.

It was this continuing interest in the covenants which undid Archibald and Glass. Generally their colleagues in Angus clung to the covenants and defended them in print, but did not draw the conclusions which might have pacified Archibald and other incipient Cameronians.⁴⁹ Archibald's rigour was an unwelcome disturbance of an imperfect but tolerable equilibrium in the establishment. Glass might well have become such a man as Archibald and joined *him*, but for his assimilation of other notions about the correct interpretation of the Bible. While Archibald's threat was to question the validity of the established church's claim to the glorious past of the covenanting worthies, Glass threatened to accomplish at least a partial invalidation of that past.

The synod of Angus and Mearns proved a staunch defender of its status quo against any disturbance by Cameronians and protested against Archibald's accusation of a decline from the standards of the Second Reformation.⁵⁰ Among defenders of the covenants was Willison.⁵¹ In *The afflicted man's companion*⁵² he wrote like an old-time covenanter, denouncing theological error, popery, and those who were undermining "the excellent fences of our Reformation, viz. our

48. SRO, CH2/15/4, p. 4; CH2/40/7, pp. 198, 205-6, 219, 262; CH2/103/9, p. 144. See also "Memoir of the Author" by the Revd. Robert Burns in Robert Wodrow, *The History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland*, 4 vols. (Glasgow, 1828-30), i, p. xi. Wodrow's work was not well regarded by Cameronians. See [Patrick Walker], *Some remarkable passages of the life and death of these three famous worthies* (Edinburgh, 1727), 142; on this work's authorship, 162; also Wodrow, *Correspondence*, iii, 218-21, 227, 232.
49. [James Gray], *An essay, to prove the perpetual obligation of the National Covenant of the Church of Scotland* (n.p., 1727), 58, was strenuous about the covenant, but was explicit in not calling for a current public subscription.
50. SRO, CH2/12/6, p. 145.
51. For other examples, see Glass, *Narrative*, 115; and possibly from an interested party in Fife, [James Hog of Carnock], *A letter, wherein the scriptural grounds and warrants for the reformation of churches by way of covenant* (Edinburgh, 1727). On the authorship of this tract, see *Narrative*, p. 116ff.
52. This composition appears in John Willison, *The Whole Works*, new ed., 4 vols. (Edinburgh, 1816), i, p. iv, where the author's Letter to the reader is dated 27 March 1737, and *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanæ*, v, 321 takes that as his first edition. Glass, however, refers to it in his *Narrative*, 146, published in 1728. The earliest edition noted in *The Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue - CD-ROM* (London: British Library Board, 1992) was printed at Belfast in 1744, perhaps a surprising location for the first edition. The resolution to the confusion lies in a wrong date for the author's Letter, where 1737 is a misprint for 1727, as may be seen in the 1755 edition, published in Edinburgh. It appears that the earliest edition, probably 1727, may not have survived.

covenants, confessions, the magistrates power. &c.”⁵³ Elsewhere he identified his allegiance to the notion of a “Covenanted Reformation” and the old mythology about Scotland’s reformed pre-eminence. The obvious question, then, for someone who sounded rather like a Cameronian in many respects, including the duties of the magistrate *circa sacra*, was why he did not fold up his tent, move to another field, and join the Cameronians. He anticipated this and responded: “Though this [schism] be the common talk of some, there is no warrant for this course in the word of God”.⁵⁴ A later publication provided an historical overview of the work of reformation in Scotland, reflecting ideas similar to those in Gray’s *Essay*. Willison reviewed the history of the church in Scotland beginning with antiquity, before pausing at the King’s Covenant/Negative Confession of 1581: “Here we must take occasion to adore the distinguishing goodness of God to this poor nation of Scotland, in bowing and inclining the hearts of the whole nation, as the heart of one man, to enter into a solemn national covenant with God... to make a national surrender of themselves and their posterity to the Lord...”⁵⁵ The issue was defection, by royal agency, from “a covenanted reformation”, but in 1638 the National Covenant was taken up by nearly the entire nation, “without any compulsion”. He proceeded to comment upon the affairs of the revolutionary period and also the restoration, when the “land [was] soaked with blood”.⁵⁶ Of course, the arrival of William and Mary saw the renewal of a presbyterian church, but Willison feared that the general assembly of 1690 represented a lost opportunity: “We wish they had done more to retrieve the honour of these broken and burnt Covenants, by openly asserting the lawfulness and obligation of them, and applying to the civil powers for their concurrence to renew them, or rather of one made up of both, with accomodation to their times and circumstances”.⁵⁷ There is a tell-tale phrase in the paragraph – no self-respecting Cameronian would have consulted the civil power about covenant renewal. Willison looked for a national fast to address the manifold evils, which included past and present “sins and defections”, naming the shabby treatment meted out to the covenants.⁵⁸ However, a national fast in an erastian church would not answer, and Glass later ridiculed the notion in the mordant anticlericalism which emerged from the

53. Willison, *Whole Works*, i, p. ii.

54. John Willison, *The church’s danger and the minister’s duty* [sermon to the synod of Angus and Mearns], in *Whole Works*, i, 197.

55. [John Willison], *A fair and impartial testimony, essayed in name of a number of ministers, elders and Christian people of the Church of Scotland unto the laudable principles, wrestlings and attainments of that Church; and against the backslidings, corruptions, divisions and prevailing evils, both of former and present times* (Glasgow, 1765 [orig. 1744]), 5.

56. *Ibid.*, 18.

57. *Ibid.*, 25.

58. *Ibid.*, 130-1.

process of his deposition.⁵⁹ In 1720 the call for a fast stated: "And considering that notwithstanding the clear Gospel Light that shines amongst Us, by the plentiful Dispensation of pure Gospel Ordinances, *the many strong Engagements both publick and private which we are under to reform & amend our ways...*" The covenants are only alluded to, and there is no suggestion of renewal.⁶⁰ When Gray and Willison criticised Archibald, Glass taunted them: "As to their Worth, I shall not contend about it, most of them have taken Pains to make themselves worth a good deal of Money, and they have not lost a Groat for the Covenants".⁶¹

The uncloseting of Glass's opinions about the invalidity of the covenants and the growth of those views into a *fama clamosa* were due, wrote Glass, to an affair in Montrose which threatened to generate a schism. If Glass meant that this matter was the necessary condition of bringing him notoriety he was surely naive to a fault. It may have been that in the first instance his desire was only to discuss such matters in private with his own people, but it is beyond serious expectation that they would not have spread the ideas abroad, and in due course he himself thought those notions important enough not to try to hide them; indeed their promulgation became a test of his fitness as a preacher of the gospel.⁶²

The issue had to do with James Traill, minister of the second charge at Montrose. We do not know when the unhappy business began. The local records maintain a complete silence during Traill's life, and we observe him as a regular participant in the normal flow of presbytery business.⁶³ However, beneath the tranquil surface supplied by the minutes a controversy was brewing, and it is clear that the presbytery, synod and commission of general assembly were trying to sort it out in 1722.⁶⁴ Apparently some ministers, especially Willison and James Goodsir of Monikie, took offence at something Traill had done, and then pushed the matter in presbytery and in synod "with a Keeness, and unto a length that I hope they themselves now repent of".⁶⁵ Whereas Glass declined to explain the affair, Gray claimed that Traill was an esteemed pastor who fell into bad, i.e. Jacobite and episcopalian, company, where alcohol and conversation were too

59. John Glass, A letter on national fasts appointed by the clergy, 18 August 1735, in *Works*, ii, 314-21.

60. SRO, CH1/3/17, p. 54, etc. Emphasis added.

61. Glass, *Further continuation*, 69; Gray, *Naked truth*, 11; Maxwell, *Memorial*, 61.

62. Glass, *Continuation*, xi.

63. In 1719 he was chosen to attend the general assembly, but asked to be excused, and was; SRO, CH2/40/7. p. 155. In 1720 he was elected clerk of presbytery; p. 303. His numerous absences from meetings were attributed to domestic circumstances, and excused; pp. 117, 124, 162, 224, 249.

64. SRO, CH1/3/17, pp. 252, 254, indicates on 8 August 1722 that the Commission had received materials relevant to Traill's matter, and noted that the relevant presbytery and synod were in dispute about how to sort out the matter. However, all this disappeared before the official records were written up.

65. Glass, *Narrative*, 7.

easy. His worst act was that he was "at length prevail'd on by some... to subscribe for a Contribution toward the Building an Episcopal Meeting-house in Montrose, (which he indeed afterwards got withdrawn)".⁶⁶

The earliest surviving official notice of a problem came when the Montrose session recorded his recent death at the meeting on 1 April 1723, "and they being much concerned for the vindication of his Memory therefore appoints" three delegates to attend the presbytery, and if necessary the synod, in order to effect this goal. On 6 May it was reported that the synod had in fact passed an overture to the effect, and later that year the synod incorporated an act proposed by a committee of the general assembly:

Whereas sometime before the decease of our Reverend and dear Brother Mr James Trail, he had been in a very injurious and unchristian manner defamed and accused as being guilty of several things which appeared to such as knew him well, very disagreeable to all his manner of Life and the Opinion everybody till then entertained of it, and that by private surmises, other undue Methods, and an unsubscribed Letter...⁶⁷

Traill himself had investigated the matter and determined – surely without difficulty – that the letter was by a Mistress Ross (Margaret Goodsir), and while the original "which is supposed to be in the Commission Book" is not there,⁶⁸ two of her letters have survived in which she both pleads her own case as not intending to be his libeller and explains a little of the affair. In the first, dated 3 August 1722, she remarked that Traill had few friends in that part of the world, and these took offence at his contribution toward the construction of "a superstitious schismatical meeting house".⁶⁹ His friends decided that on this basis, along with "several other things in his conversation", they should meet with him in private and express their concerns. His response was anger, and so she took it upon herself to write him an anonymous letter about the issues. He was the one who chose to circulate it, and

66. Gray, *Naked truth*, 9-10. Glass actually attributed similar personal failings to Gray. See *Further continuation*, 66. The story has been repeated, undocumented, in *Account*, lxxxvi; Charles John Guthrie, *Genealogy of the Descendents of Rev. Thomas Guthrie* (Edinburgh, 1902), 40, 51, 127; *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae*, v, 414; Hornsby, "Case of John Glas", 117. The contribution was from an already inadequate stipend. SRO, CH2/40/7. p. 32.

67. SRO, CH2/12/5. pp. 181-2. The Revd. Alexander Molleson, writing of Montrose parish in the *Statistical Account*, noted the sometimes extreme religious feeling in the area up to the middle of the eighteenth century, "and if the clergy were not disposed, to go as great a length as their hearers, they were persecuted much by anonymous letters, threatenings of persecution, and evil speaking". Sir John Sinclair, ed., *The Statistical Account of Scotland 1791-1799*, 22 vols. (Wakefield: EP Publishing Ltd., 1976), xiii [Angus], 560.

68. SRO, CH2/12/5. pp. 285-6, 315-6.

69. SRO, CH1/2/46, General Assembly Papers, fo. 112r.

then threatened her husband, saying that when the affair had finished its course in the church courts he would launch a civil action. In a second letter she protested that the situation had already been aired publicly months before she wrote her letter to Traill. She also went on to express her dissatisfaction at the way the matter had been handled by the presbytery:

they were bound in conscience and by *the covenanted work of reformation* upon the first appearance of prelacy and superstition getting up its head in such a manner to have shouen their zeal for crushing it by calling of Mr Traill to an Account and thereby free this *covenanted church* from that national scandal, and I observing that his brethren took no notice of it and his other disorderly steps did out of my concern for the glory of God and the good of his soul communicate something of my mind to him in a letter not designing it should be make publick...⁷⁰

While Traill's action may have some appeal in the modern age of ecumenicity, it is all but incomprehensible in its own time and place. The synod of Angus and Mearns⁷¹ was no stranger to the phenomena of Jacobite politics and episcopal churchmanship. Indeed it was from Montrose in 1716 that the Old Pretender had sailed away to a foreign refuge, and presbyterians, for all their establishment status, found themselves in an embattled condition. Willison had already published relevant controversial works⁷² and when he had moved to Dundee from Brechin, it is related that "he found it impossible to command the services of a Brechin carter to convey his furniture to his new charge, so violent was the prejudice against him".⁷³ The relevant records are permeated with comments about episcopal preachers, chapels and adherents;⁷⁴ the Montrose session records complain about the local episcopal meeting house.⁷⁵ On 7 March 1716 Traill wrote that he had been forced from his pulpit and had troops quartered on him, and on 18 April he had been sent from a synod meeting to consult with the local authorities about the threatening and insulting behaviour directed at the brethren.⁷⁶ The next year the presbytery sent him to Dun in order to read to the congregation an act of presbytery against the baptism of children of rebels.⁷⁷

70. SRO, CH1/2/46, fo. 117r. The added emphasis brings attention to Ross's language which is highly reminiscent of Cameronian sentiment.

71. Tealing was no exception. Wodrow, *Correspondence*, i, 81-3, 242-51.

72. [John Willison], *A letter from a parochial bishop to a prelatical gentleman in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1714); *An apology for the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1719).

73. David D. Black, *The History of Brechin to 1864*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh, 1867), 119.

74. SRO, CH2/40/7, Brechin Presbytery Records, pp. 10, 33-4, 271, 326, 330; CH2/40/8, pp. 3, 91; CH2/103/9, Dundee Presbytery Records, pp. 107, 122, 152, 349-50.

75. SRO, CH2/943/12, Montrose Session Records, 4 April 1718; CH2/40/7, pp. 157, 167, 175.

76. Wodrow, *Correspondence*, ii, 126-9; and again in 1717, ii, 347; SRO, CH2/12/4, p. 21.

77. SRO, CH2/40/7, p. 23. Complaints continued for years. See the Brechin presbytery's letter to assembly in 1723, CH1/3/17, p. 326.

Gray alleged that Glass was an active pursuer of Traill, an accusation rejected vehemently by Glass who said that some tried to get him to line up against the Montrose pastor, "yet it is notour that I appear'd far otherwise": the more Glass got to know Traill, the more he appreciated him and disliked his detractors,⁷⁸ perhaps a hint of Glass's broad ecumenicity at this stage. The synod records bear out his assertion concerning his own role. Only three men dissented from the rehabilitation: Goodsir, James Ker and Archibald, the latter because he thought the synod should simply stay out of the matter, Traill being deceased. These promised to supply further comment, but nothing of the sort is to be found.⁷⁹

Church records supply a vast historical treasure house for historians, and without them our vision of the times would be much weakened and narrowed. However, they are by no means complete, and both the affairs of Traill and Glass would indicate that modesty and discretion were rules of thumb. At least with regard to matters affecting pastors, every effort was made to remain silent on difficulties and disputes until such time as the business could no longer be contained. Willison stated that he eschewed publicising conflicts among ministers but preferred "to cover their mistakes",⁸⁰ and one may wonder whether, if Glass had repented in 1728 or 1729, records of his process would be extant. Thus the local records have nothing to say of Traill's unhappy progress until after his death, despite his own pursuit of the matter. Not only did the commission not preserve the original letter but the synod minutes for 18 April 1726 indicate the deletion from the record of everything relevant to the case but the bare statement of vindication.⁸¹ His brothers and widow protested against this action; in fact, their own letters were expunged from the official proceedings. When Archibald was being ground up in the church courts for his refusal to subscribe the Formula, recognising the problematical nature of church records, he demanded in April 1727 that the process be either included in its entirety or totally excluded. In the event, the minutes granted his request that his own submission be written out in full.⁸² In Glass's own affair the original mention of concern about his teachings, in the privy censure, was not minuted.⁸³

Thus the minutes of the various layers of church courts present both a sanitised and unsatisfying picture. Sessions, presbyteries, synods were not representative bodies in the full sense of that word; they represented the interests of the clerical elite, and much that went on in the parishes never found its way into the record. By

78. Glass, *Further continuation*, 66.

79. SRO, CH2/12/5, p. 183.

80. Willison, *Whole Works*, i, 190. But Glass commented on the great divisions amongst ministers, expressed from pulpits. John Glass, *Remarks upon the memorial* (Edinburgh, 1730), 80.

81. SRO, CH2/12/6, p. 34.

82. *Ibid.*, 46-7.

83. SRO, CH2/103/10, p. 132. Not mentioned 26 October 1726; p. 38.

their silence with respect to Traill, the records fail to disclose the full extent of Cameronian support in the midst of episcopal strength, and those who tried to denigrate Glass's claims cannot readily be trusted.⁸⁴ Ross and her supporters may well have considered defection to the Cameronians despite her protestation that the Church of Scotland was still "the best, and purest in the world". The established church was threatened; it was inconsistent in its response to the challenges of the time, and while Glass would not likely downplay the extent and seriousness of that threat, he can be credited with an uncommon honesty in dealing with the situation.

Under the pressures and influences already noted, by 1725 Glass had come to a spiritualised conception of the church, distinct from the state and composed of true believers. We shall explore the details of this view later. Conflict with the establishment was not long in coming. Glass recounted a fast-day sermon preached by James Goodsir. "His sermon was full of the Covenants, without any Caution",⁸⁵ and Glass was moved to preach a reply, from the same pulpit. By the end of that year he had written to Archibald about his notions, and when the letter was circulated in 1726,⁸⁶ the process had begun which would in due course see Glass deposed from the ministry of the church and born the spiritual leader of a new religious society.

In his letter of December 1725 to Archibald, Glass underlined his difficulties with the covenants, and especially the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643 whereby the Scots and the English parliamentary party bound themselves to mutual support and to a presbyterian religious settlement in England.⁸⁷ He identified his essential scruple with a clear and decisive distinction between the churches of the Old and New Testaments.

Willison, reported Glass, inflamed public opinion against him, giving other ministers "odd Impressions of me",⁸⁸ and comparing the current affair with the process against Professor Simson of Glasgow.⁸⁹ The Dundee minister tried to block Glass from giving a communion sermon,⁹⁰ but Glass was not one to be

84. Gray, *Naked truth*, 8.

85. Glass, *Narrative*, 12.

86. His letter in the *Narrative* in 1728. It had already been quoted and rebutted in two tracts the year before. See *A review of a paper lately printed against the being and binding of our sacred national covenants* (Edinburgh, 1727). Catalogues attribute this work to John MacMain, but its preface indicates that the body, apart from some additional material, was composed by a "R[everend] Author"; Macmain was a schoolmaster, with theological training. See MacMain, *Summons dismiss'd*, xv. The other tract is *A letter to a minister in the country*. See also Hog, *Letter*.

87. See my "'Uniformity in Religion': The Solemn League and Covenant (1643) and the Presbyterian Vision", in *Later Calvinism: International Perspectives*, ed. W. Fred Graham (Kirksville, Missouri: Sixteenth Century Studies Society, 1994), 249-266.

88. Glass, *Narrative*, 46.

89. *Ibid.*, 53. Simson was alleged to be sympathetic to Arminianism and Socinianism.

90. Communion services were big events, because infrequent, drawing people from neighbouring parishes, and encouraging, indeed necessitating, the attendance of other ministers.

blocked and went ahead. He attempted to defend his views, and spoke favourably of the covenanting martyrs of the reigns of Charles II and James VII. They had testified to the kingdom of Christ to the effect that the church had no earthly head, and that it might have no officers not authenticated by Christ. They were, however, wrong when it came to the matter of making Christ's kingdom a worldly entity.⁹¹ In the *Narrative* Glass said he would honour the martyrs in so far as they followed Christ, asking, "Is there no Mids between Madness and unerring Wisdom? Or are worthy Ancestors to be followed any further, than as they follow Christ?"⁹² This sort of reasoning earned him a rebuke "as another start up Machiavel".⁹³ Glass was reported as saying that "our Martyrs died as Fools, and they were Self-murderers". Later Willison preached that the National Covenant was "the Glory of our Land", and implied that the Spirit's outpouring at that time was in clear distinction from the present. Shortly afterward, on 7 September 1726 at an exercise, a part of the presbytery meeting where a sermon was heard and "impugned" by the others, Willison affirmed that the covenant meant that Scotland "was married to the Lord".⁹⁴ Glass responded, and earned the reproaches of even those who were not typically eager for the covenants. Before storming out Willison reminded Glass that his views were inimical to the church's established doctrine, intimating thereby that he wanted Glass under "the Lash of Authority".⁹⁵ In the wake of this nasty scene Goodsir refused the Lord's supper to those who would not own the covenants. Nevertheless the presbytery did not minute the episode, but Glass refused the request to keep silence on the controverted issues.

The matter then came under review at a meeting of the synod of Angus and Mearns. Toward the end of the meeting a motion was presented to the committee of overtures "that there should be an Act made, asserting the Obligation of the Covenants".⁹⁶ This went nowhere, but synod did refer Archibald to review by a committee – at this early stage he was still hot for the covenants "and against the present legal Establishment, as inconsistent with them".⁹⁷

Around the same time the near-superstitious reverence accorded the martyrs was emphasised following the reinterment of the bones of some of the martyrs of 1681 in Edinburgh in October 1726. Willison spoke of them.

for a Testimony against the Opposition now made to the Covenants and against the present Apostasy. Such a Story as this was firmly believ'd by

91. *Ibid.*, 56.

92. *Ibid.*, 99.

93. *A letter to a minister in the country*, 55.

94. Glass, *Narrative*, 63. See also *A letter to a minister in the country*, 72.

95. Glass, *Narrative*, 68.

96. *Ibid.*, 79. There is no record of this in the minutes, but as we have seen, that in no way impugns the credibility of Glass's statement.

97. The synod minutes note only his delay in signing the Confession of Faith and the Formula. SRO, CH2/12/6. p. 22.

some well meaning People in Dundee, That the spot of Ground where the Heads of these Martyrs lay bore the finest Flowers, and when Mr. G----s began to speak against the Covenants, the Flowers wither'd. The Heads of the Martyrs, when taken up, were perfectly fresh, so that their Faces could be known.⁹⁸

Over the winter popish sympathies were alleged against anti-covenanters, but Glass responded that some local people, including an old person who had suffered in the bad times, were wearying of the affair; he queried whether these good folk sensed "the old Prelatical persecuting Spirit" at work in the cabal which had formed against him.⁹⁹ Thereafter more letters were written, replies and counter-replies were produced, and the affair ground on. The next synod, 18 April 1727, faced the issue again and, in the midst of its deliberations, consulted Archibald, who, as we have seen, posed the opposite problem to Glass – he took the covenants with a disconcerting seriousness. "He was heard," wrote Glass,

and he said to this Purpose, That they, who had separated for the Sake of the Covenants, lookt upon the Ministers of this Church of two Sorts; the one materially denying the Covenants, and formally professing them; the other formally denying them and they lookt upon this last Sort as most ingenuous. And as for them that had not yet separated, he could speak best for himself; and for him, he declar'd that what I had advanc'd against the Covenants had made him more easy.¹⁰⁰

Confusion prevailed and a motion for the covenants was tabled, but a group

98. Glass, *Narrative*, 80. It is commonplace in this controversial literature to find names replaced in part by dashes. The reinterment would seem to be that described in [Patrick Walker], *The last speeches and testimony to a covenanted reformation* (Edinburgh, 1726), 4-5. See also Walker, *Some remarkable passages*, 138-41. In a similar vein it was alleged c. 1710 that Robert Bruce's body was uncorrupted eighty years after his death. Robert Wodrow, *Life of Robert Bruce*, in Bruce, *Sermons* (Edinburgh, 1843), 150. It would make an interesting study to examine the survival of medieval superstitious modes of religious thought and practice in Scottish piety in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. One is reminded here of the incorruptibility of Cuthbert's body, according to Bede's life of Cuthbert. See *Lives of the Saints*, trans. J.F. Webb (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), 123. The preface to *Last speeches* is signed Philalethes Philadelphus Antiaspondus: Alexander Walker, the erstwhile Arbroath teacher of Archibald's acquaintance, signed his defiant letter to Arbroath presbytery, Philalethes Antiaspondus. SRO, CH2/15/4. p. 145. One suspects a relationship between the two, and the suspicion is strengthened by the fact that upon leaving Arbroath, Alex. Walker went to Edinburgh, p. 183. See also CH2/12/6. p. 62.

99. Glass, *Narrative*, 82; see also 209.

100. *Ibid.*, 110-1. Wodrow, *Analecta*, iii, 449, indicates that Archibald had not yet gone over in October 1727.

which included Willison and Goodsir submitted a protest, which Glass took as a libel against himself, declaring that those in opposition to the covenants “advanced Principles against the civil Magistrates Power *circa sacra*, and inconsistent with the present Establishment”.¹⁰¹ Glass thought this bizarre, in that acceptance of the present establishment was itself inconsistent with sincere covenanting.

The synod of 17–19 October 1727 brought matters to a head, recommending a process against Glass *usque ad sententiam*, to be submitted to the commission of general assembly. This was carried by a large majority.¹⁰²

The presbytery, with some additional external members, began to deal with him 26 March 1728, requiring resubscription (his third signing) of the Formula and Confession of Faith. The first he flatly refused, and said that his faith was in the Confession of Faith, implying that that symbol contained somewhat more (i.e. power of the magistrate *circa sacra*). He affirmed the presbyterian polity of the Formula but could not adjudge it to be *jure divino*; he lacked that level of certainty and “he trembles at the thought of adding any Thing to the Words written in the Book of God”.¹⁰³

The next synod, 16–18 April 1728, suspended him and Archibald. At the general assembly, 11 May, the case was referred to the commission which continued the suspension but declared that it might be lifted by synod upon receipt of satisfaction.¹⁰⁴ Despite his suspension Glass had continued his pastoral functions – by now he cared nothing for the authority of a synod, which he viewed as the first sign of declension from the primitive foundation of the Christian church¹⁰⁵ – though he claimed not to have addressed controversial matters, but the presbytery reported that the minister sent out to supply the charge was kept from entering the premises and he thought that there was no use going back “to give any further disturbance to so resolute people as they are”,¹⁰⁶ an allegation repeated and rebutted in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*. Thereafter discussions continued at various levels, but while considerable patience and concern for the dissidents was demonstrated, there was no way to bridge the gulf, and deposition was pronounced at the October synod. At the commission meeting in March 1730, one proposal set forth was that Glass would voluntarily demit his charge, and then the deposition would be quashed, but while it appears he might have accepted the offer, it was

101. Glass, *Narrative*, 114.

102. *Ibid.*, 199–201.

103. Glass, *Narrative*, 212–3.

104. The matter found its way into the local newspaper. *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, no. 486, 13–14 May 1728, p. 1821; see also no. 490, 21–23 May 1728, pp. 1841–2. Glass, *Continuation*, 26 ff.

105. Glass, *Narrative*, 101; *Remarks upon the memorial* (Edinburgh, 1730), 77; John Glass, *The speech of Mr. John Glas before the commission of the general assembly, 11 March 1730* (Edinburgh, 1730), 3, 12, 15.

106. SRO, CH2/103/10, p. 189; see also p. 185. *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, no. 498, 6–10 June 1728, 1875; no. 503, 18–20 June 1728, 1893.

defeated.¹⁰⁷ His obduracy had become a liability, and the opposition to him solidified. Glass certainly demonstrated that he knew how to make constitutional procedures work, though he was ultimately unsuccessful in winning the court battles. One may wonder what he hoped to achieve. It is difficult to conceive that he really wanted any longer to keep his place in the corrupt and perverted establishment, and it may be that his procedural challenge was a mistake. A forthright, principled appeal to the public through the press might have anticipated the success of the Relief presbytery by thirty years,¹⁰⁸ but Glass was a different man from Thomas Gillespie; he may not have been an easy person to get along with, and he moved further and further out of the mainstream.

So Glass's deposition from the ministry was confirmed¹⁰⁹ and his place at Tealing was turned over to another. The commission recorded this minute on 8 March 1732: "The Reverend Mr John Willison one of the ministers of Dundee represented that the parties concerned in the process referred by the late assembly to this commission anent planting the paroch of Tealline had agreed among themselves, and that since, the paroch is peaceably settled".¹¹⁰ Thus the curtain was drawn, discretely, as if nothing had happened. However, it was surely a striking irony that when Glass's successor at Tealing, John Stewart, preached to the synod on 17 October 1738, he emphasised the necessity of believing freely, and "that in Matters of Religion we must judge for ourselves". He even cited Glass's favourite text, *a kingdom that is not of this world*, John 18:36-7.¹¹¹

While Glass would articulate a number of significant opinions as his thought developed, one complex issue may be seen as fundamental – the role of the Bible and its proper interpretation, with particular reference to the notion of the covenant. While he addressed all these issues during the controversy in his *Narrative* and the *Continuation*, our primary focus in this analysis will be upon his

107. SRO, CH1/3/19, pp. 365-70; Glass, *Remarks*, 64ff.

108. Gavin Struthers, *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Principles of the Relief Church* (Glasgow, 1843), 179.

109. In 1739 his deposition was reversed, not at his own request. Thus the kirk considered him a Christian minister, but not of the Church of Scotland until such time as he made peace with it. *Annals of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 1739-1752* (Edinburgh, 1838), 10. Archibald suffered termination of his appointment, but his deposition was lifted, to the dissatisfaction of the synod. SRO, CH1/3/19, pp. 464-6; *A letter to the honourable _____ ruling elder, containing an argument for the reponing of the Reverend Mr. Francis Archibald to his charge* (n.p., [1730?]; *Reasons and grounds of protestation and complaint* (Edinburgh, 1731); Wodrow, *Analecta*, iv, 261-2; Correspondence, iii, 489.

110. SRO, CH1/3/19, p. 558; see also CH2/12/6. PP. 185-6.

111. John Stewart, *A Sermon preached before the provincial synod of Angus and Mearns, at Dundee 17 October 1738* (Edinburgh, 1738), 10, 27. Stewart was no Glassite, and in his sermon one hears the rationalistic strains of the Moderates. He was minister at Tealing from 1731 until his death in 1764. *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, v, 372.

The testimony of the king of martyrs.¹¹² The book deals generally with Christ's kingdom seeking to define its nature, extent and purpose, according to Glass's understanding of the Bible. The pivotal chapter is the second where Glass introduces and develops his typology. Typology, of course, was nothing new, and was a standard feature of Protestant and Reformed exegesis, supplying a means of connecting the two testaments of the Bible. Here is the crux of the matter. For Calvin and his tradition, typology was a means of preserving continuity; with Glass, however, typology becomes the means of digging a chasm.

There is no doubt that Glass knew of and drew from the fathers of independency,¹¹³ including John Owen, the sometime favourite of Cromwell. Glass's developing congregational polity could well have been informed by Owen's, and his own migration to independency from presbytery sounds very much like the English independent's.¹¹⁴ However, Glass certainly burst asunder the boundaries defined by Owen, not least of all the hermeneutics of typology.

The editor of Wodrow's *Correspondence*, Thomas M'Crie, stated that *Testimony* "was, in fact, a treatise by Dr. Owen, given a new form, without due

112. John Glass, *The testimony of the king of martyrs concerning his kingdom* (Edinburgh, 1729). More than one secondary source has misdated this work. See Wilson, *History and Antiquities*, iii, 270 [1728]; D. MacFadyen, "Glasites", in James Hastings, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 13 vols. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1908-26), vi, 231 [1727]; *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, v, 371 [1727, 1728, 1729, etc.]; Lynn A. McMillon, *Restoration Roots* (Dallas: Gospel Teachers Publications, 1983), 20, 23 [1727]; Geoffrey Cantor, "Dissent and Radicalism?: The Example of the Sandemanians", *Enlightenment and Dissent*, 10 (1991), 4 [1727]; D.B. Murray, "Glas, John", in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, 364 [1725]. I have seen no catalogue reference to an edition earlier than 1729. See Wodrow, *Correspondence*, iii, 458, n. 1; Glass, *Works*, i, p. v; *Account*, lxvi. Willison published a rejoinder to other works by Glass in 1729 [*A defence of national churches*]; he would surely have included a testimony had it been available.

113. Hornsby, "Case of John Glas", 118-9; Murray, "Influence of John Glas", 46.

114. Owen wrote that when he was about twenty-six or so, he had not acquired an appreciation of the debate, "especially as stated on the congregational side".

...being unacquainted with the congregational way, I professed myself to own the other party, not knowing but that my principles were suited to their judgment and profession, having looked very little farther into those affairs than I was led by an opposition to Episcopacy and ceremonies. Upon a review of what I had there asserted, I found that my principles were far more suited to what is the judgment and practice of the congregational men than those of the presbyterian.

His preference had in part been predicated upon his concern about "democratical confusion". He subsequently turned to John Cotton's *The keys of the kingdom of heaven* (1644). Sinclair B. Ferguson, *John Owen on the Christian Life* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), 5. See also Peter Toon, ed., *The Correspondence of John Owen (1616-1683) with an account of his life and work* (Cambridge: James Clark and Co. Ltd., 1970), 19.

acknowledgement.”¹¹⁵ Actually, it appears that M’Crie borrowed his comment, without due acknowledgement, from a history of English dissent, and along the way strengthened a weak allegation into a calumny. Bogue and Bennett had written that “the *sentiments* of Dr. Owen... were adopted by Glass, and given in a new form, without due acknowledgement, in his *Testimony of the King of Martyrs*.”¹¹⁶ Even this is erroneous. With Owen, typology played an important but restricted role, as in his sermon to parliament on 24 October 1651, *The advantage of the kingdome of Christ*, a work produced to glorify God in the wake of the defeat of “our Oppressors in Scotland” at Worcester. Here, typology¹¹⁷ supplies a reminder to the victorious English government to ensure that this success should not breed a false sense of what is important; it must be remembered that the spiritual kingdom of Christ is paramount, and civil government must be subordinated to those high ends. In his work on the person of Christ we observe how typology links Old Testament worship to Christ; in his commentary on Hebrews he wrote that “the tabernacle that Moses made was a sign and figure of the body of Christ”.¹¹⁸

Significantly, Owen’s use of typology, like most Calvinists’, did not lead him into a categorical opposition to magisterial involvement in religion nor to an established church, so long as it was comprehensive, with a broad fringe of toleration around the edges.¹¹⁹ The magistrate had a real obligation to support the Christian religion: “If it once comes to that, that you shall say, you have nothing to doe with Religion as Rulers of the Nation, God will quickly manifest that he hath nothing to doe with you as Rulers of the Nation”.¹²⁰ This entailed maintenance of the preaching of the gospel, protection of sincere Protestant worshippers, supply of houses of worship, support of ministers, along with suppression of “all outward appearances and demonstrations of such superstitious, idolatrous, and unacceptable service”.¹²¹

115. Robert Wodrow, *Correspondence*, ed. T. M’Crie, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1842-3), III, 458, n. 1.

116. David Bogue and James Bennett, *The History of Dissenters*, 2nd ed.; 2 vols (London, 1833), ii, 45. Emphasis added to point out that the original statement did not extend to a clear implication of plagiarism.

117. John Owen, *The advantage of the kingdome of Christ* (Leith, 1652), 4. See also Toon, ed., *Correspondence of John Owen*, 38.

118. John Owen, *Christologia: or, a declaration of the glorious mystery of the person of Christ-God and man*, orig. 1679, in *Works*, ed. Wm. H. Goold, 24 vols. (London, 1850-5), i, 253ff; *An exposition of the epistle to the Hebrews*, orig. 1680, in *Works*, xxiii, 46.

119. James Moffat, *The Life of John Owen, Puritan Scholar* (London: Congregational Union, [1911]), 48. See also Owen, *Two questions concerning the power of the supreme magistrate about religion and the worship of God, with one about tithes*, orig. 1659, in *Works*, xiii, 507-16.

120. John Owen, *A Sermon preached to the parliament, 13 October 1652. Concerning the kingdome of Christ, and the power of the civile magistrate about the things of the worship of God* (Oxford, 1652), 36.

121. Toon, ed., *Correspondence of John Owen*, 29.

These notions about the role of the state in religion, while moderate, would have had little appeal for Glass, and therefore one is disinclined to suggest a profound indebtedness to Owen for the biblical hermeneutic which Glass employed to dissolve the spell of the covenants. Indeed Wodrow himself had discounted the connection with independency: "I am ready to think, no Independent in England would stand up for Mr Glass his principles".¹²² He had travelled far beyond the positions occupied by Cotton and Owen and the dissenting divines in the Westminster Assembly.

In the indexes to the twenty-four volumes of Owen's collected works there is nothing about *John* 18:36-37, Glass's basic text for his *Testimony*. We do, however, meet with that text in the words of an English preacher not long before Glass's entry into the ministry. Benjamin Hoadly, Bishop of Bangor and a rising star, preached a noted and widely circulated sermon before the king on 31 March 1717. It seems likely that it is this to which James Adams, minister of Kinnaird in Gowrie, referred obliquely in *The independent ghost conjur'd*,¹²³ and to which John Willison referred more explicitly in his *Defence of national churches*, even stating that Glass's opinions were drawn from Hoadly, rather than Jeremiah Burroughs and other independents.¹²⁴ Entitled *The nature of the kingdom, or church, of Christ*, the sermon dwelt upon Jesus's answer to Pilate, "My Kingdom is not of this world". Certainly the text fits Glass's *Testimony*, and some of the ideas, as far as they go, are compatible, as indeed Glass allowed.¹²⁵ He argued that "kingdom of Christ" was synonymous and coterminous with "church of Christ", over which Christ was the only king to the exclusion of all human authorities, the upshot being that there are "no Judges over the Consciences or Religion of his People".¹²⁶ The similarities with Glass's teachings are obvious, but the element of typology is entirely lacking, and Glass would not have been at home with Hoadly's pronounced latitudinarianism; hence Hoadly could have exercised at most only a limited influence over his development at Tealing.

Glass did not often cite sources or name influences in his writings, and thus he did little to help the historian to identify the source of his thinking. One interesting suggestion lies buried in the obscurity of an anonymous pamphlet entitled *A letter to a minister in the country*, where a Glassite production (apparently a letter from a convert) was alleged to contain "the plain Language of the Sectaries";¹²⁷ the

122. Wodrow, *Analecta*, iv, 188. See also *A letter to a minister in the country*, 44.

123. [James Adams], *The independent ghost conjur'd: being a review of three letters clandestinely sent to a minister in the presbytery of Dundee, in answer to his Queries concerning the lawfulness of national covenanting* (Edinburgh, 1728), 67-8, 70.

124. Willison, *A defence of national churches*, 189, 211. See also J. T. Hornsby, "John Glas: His later life and work", *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 8 (1941), 106.

125. Glass, *Further continuation*, 12. Walter Wilson, *The History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses*, 4 vols. (London, 1808-14), iii, 268 stated that Hoadly's sermon was esteemed among the London Sandemanians.

126. Benjamin Hoadly, *The nature of the kingdom, or church, of Christ* (London, 1717), 11.

127. *Letter to a minister in the country*, 69.

context is the interpretation of the parable of the tares, a touchstone of sentiment about religious liberty. In fact, it is not difficult to find both Glass's hermeneutical method and its particular application in the writings of English authors rather more radical than Owen in the early and middle decades of the seventeenth century. Most prominent among these was Roger Williams, and while it cannot be proven, one suspects that somewhere along the way Glass read *The bloody tenent of persecution* (1644). If this theory is correct, we need not be surprised that Glass did not mention Williams's name. He would have been ostracised all the more quickly and completely by those who honoured the Second Reformation whose heroes had execrated Williams's ideas, though sometimes honouring his person.¹²⁸

Williams, contemporary with Owen, had used typology to shatter the pretensions of national covenanting and identification of later nations with the supposed precedent of Israel.¹²⁹ He appears to have appropriated his version of typology from the writings of the early General Baptists who returned to England from Amsterdam c. 1612. This is not to suggest that they were the inventors of a hermeneutical tradition – Cyril of Alexandria was not a stranger to it in the patristic era – but it is their particular application of the method to the question of religious liberty which demands our attention.¹³⁰

Among Williams's important statements are a thorough-going typological disjunction between the earthly types of the Old Testament and the heavenly and spiritual antitypes of the New; the impossibility of another earthly Israel with national covenants; an absolute rejection of any molestation based upon belief or worship; a restriction of magisterial responsibility to "the bodies and goods of the subject"; and an interpretation of the parable of the tares which excluded all grounds for persecution. All the main points of Glass's theological writings to 1730 are to be found in Williams.

Glass argues that the Old Testament portends the New; the former deals with temporal and earthly matters, the latter with eternal and heavenly. He notes how the Jews of Jesus's time expected an earthly kingdom, "and under the influence of this fatal Mistake, they rejected Jesus and delivered him up to Pilate".¹³¹ The key of course is to view the Old Testament as the type of the New, which is the

128. Robert Baillie, George Gillespie, and Samuel Rutherford all wrote against Williams's typology and its application to the question of religious liberty.

129. David G. Mullan, "Roger Williams and the Elect Nation: The Theological Critique of a Religio-Cultural Myth" (ThM thesis, Emmanuel College, University of Toronto, 1981).

130. Glass could have had direct knowledge of Cyril in view of his familiarity with Christian antiquity. He wrote several controversial tracts in which he made use of his patristic learning. See, e.g. *A view of the heresy of Aerius* (Edinburgh, 1745) and *Tradition by the succession of bishops* (Edinburgh, 1752). On Cyril, see Alexander Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: interpreter of the Old Testament* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1952); and Robert L. Wilken, *Judaism and the early Christian mind: a study of Cyril of Alexandria's exegesis and theology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971).

131. Glass, *Testimony*, 14.

antitype and the determinative element in the hermeneutical relationship; Glass referred to the New Testament as the “infallible Guide” for his hermeneutic.¹³² Of singular importance is Glass’s assertion that certain categories of the Old Testament no longer have validity: “the New Testament speaks nothing of a National Church”, nor did it support national covenanting. Israel was indeed a work of God, but it was so in a typical sense, never to be repeated, a shadow passed away now that the light of the gospel has come.

In April 1728 the synod of Angus and Mearns proposed to Glass a number of queries. His answers included a thorough and final repudiation of the notion of national covenanting which had no foundation in the Bible. As for whatever *true* reformation of religion had been achieved in Scotland, and presumably England (“lands”), it “was carried on by the Word and Spirit of the Lord Jesus, by New Testament”.¹³³ This view has two corollaries. First, Israel was one earthly nation, but the kingdom of Christ is composed of “Men of all Nations and Places of the Earth”.¹³⁴ Second, Glass effectively excluded the magistrate from all things pertaining to religion; the purview of civil jurisdiction includes only the second table of the decalogue.

We shall return in a moment to Glass’s reconstruction of the kingdom and his critique of covenanting, but at this point we must note a muted but still significant comment on covenant theology as it likewise served to hold both testaments together all the more tightly. Also known as federal theology, this system had dominated Reformed thought since the end of the sixteenth century when it was developed in the Palatinate. Its essence lay in two covenants: an Edenic covenant of works by which God bound himself to grant salvation to all who fulfilled its conditions, and which remains universally and perpetually binding; and the covenant of grace made in Christ to save those whom God has elected from eternity to be recipients of his mercy. The covenant of grace did not appear only with Christ, but was revealed in the garden of Eden. As Robert Rollock (d.1599) said, the distinction was one of clarity – “because Christ was not as yet manifested in the flesh, therefore the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace is more sparingly and darkly set forth in it [Old Testament]”.¹³⁵ If Rollock introduced the scheme into Scotland, men such as Samuel Rutherford and David Dickson promoted it in the next two generations. Glass, however, took exception to the terminology of federal theology:

Our Divines are very shy to use the Scripture Expression in this Case, and shun to call them two Covenants, but think they express the Thing better when they call them two Dispensations of the Covenant of Grace. And they take this Way to establish this great Truth, that none were saved since the

132. *Ibid.*, 45.

133. Glass, *Narrative*, 220.

134. Glass, *Testimony*, 117. See also *Narrative*, 18-23.

135. Robert Rollock, *Select Works*, ed. Wm M. Gunn; 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1849-1844), i, 46. Cf. MacMain, *Review of a paper*, 56. Rollock is cited in *A letter to a minister in the country*, 63.

Fall, but through Christ by Faith in him. Their Design is good, but why should they shun to use the Scripture Language...?¹³⁶

The author of scripture himself had chosen to speak of two different covenants, distinct as heaven and earth, wrote Glass. He did agree that under the old covenant salvation was still by faith, anticipation of Christ's fulfilment of the promises on which the Old Testament was grounded, but covenant theology failed to take seriously the fact that the apostles made "such a World's Wonder of the excellency of the new State of Things".¹³⁷ Glass also argued that no one was ever saved through the national covenant made with Israel. It was only a schoolmaster. Thus Israel's typical pattern of a kingdom of the Lord erected and defended by human, earthly means was no more, once the coming of Christ had shaken the earth and the heavens.

Under the new covenant there could be no earthly force or coercion. Glass draws the same conclusion from the use of typology as Williams had in denouncing persecution for religion. Filled with bitter irony Glass writes:

But especially the Kings must nurse [*Isaiah* 49:23] the Church by defending her from the Arguments of such Teachers, as the dignify'd Clergy judge Hereticks or Schismaticks, and by their Authority pronounce them such, while they either cannot stop their Mouths by convincing Arguments, or will not be at Pains to do it, and the King is to defend the Church from such false Teachers, by cutting them off, or some Way effectually restraining them from speaking.¹³⁸

Here was the "Royal Law of Liberty".¹³⁹ Glass regarded liberty of conscience as a natural right,¹⁴⁰ to be defended by earthly kingdoms, and which Protestant powers, including Scotland, had done well to uphold. However, the specific tenets of Christianity were none of natural civil, or earthly, thus their defence must be according to different criteria.¹⁴¹

136. Glass, *Testimony*, 85.

137. *Ibid.*, 146.

138. *Ibid.*, 59.

139. Glass, *Narrative*, iv.

140. John Glass, *An explication of that proposition, contained in Mr. Glass's answers to the synod's queries* (Edinburgh, 1728), 61.

141. There is an intriguing document in this aspect of Glass's controversy. An anonymous writer replied to some queries that James Adams had written out for Glass. How they got into his hands is not clear, and his name is never mentioned, but Glass denied his own authorship, hardly necessary in view of the distinctive, though compatible, approach. The replies, with Adams's responses, are in Adams, *The independent ghost conjur'd*. On the question of authorship, see Glass, *Narrative*, 82-3. The anonymous writer played John Locke to Glass's Roger Williams, deleting the verbose theological arguments and focussing upon the philosophical theory of rights. See Winthrop S. Hudson, "John Locke - preparing the way for the Revolution", *Journal of Presbyterian History*, 42 (1964), 19-38. Glass refers to Locke in *Further continuation*, 12.

Glass had not far to go to identify an example of error in this respect. He thought the Scottish Revolution was admissible in so far as it was "a civil Affair in Opposition to Tyranny, and to the common Enemy of the Liberties of Mankind in the Kingdom of the World, the Pope of Rome". By a sermon he had brought down upon his own head the wrath due to Quakers as his words were apparently capable of meaning support only for "passive Obedience and Non-resistance", which opinions were tantamount to opposition to the "Protestant Cause",¹⁴² but this was not his position. Nor was the problem with the theological tenets advanced in that heroic period, many of which were honourable and owned by God.¹⁴³ The crux of the matter was that by its defence of "a particular Religion by the Sword", the covenanting movement led ineluctably to the violation of a free conscience – the pursuit of one natural right had led to excess and the invasion of another. Elsewhere Glass attacked the very implementation of the covenants. He queried, not unlike John Corbet ninety years earlier, whether the covenants had been taken freely, "after Examination of Truth and Falshood according to the Word, as to all the Things engaged to in these Covenants? Or was the whole Nation ever perswaded of the Truth of those Things by the Evidence of the Word?"¹⁴⁴ He regarded the national quality of the covenants as rooted in the exercise of force rather than genuine understanding and "hearty Consent", thus challenging the constitutional pretensions of covenanting political thought.

Glass contrasted the kingdom of Christ which implied patience and cross-bearing with the worldly kingdom and its rather different methods: "It is no Wonder that this Doctrine gave Surprise in this Time of the World, when there is so little Distinction to be seen between His Subjects and the rest of the World". He recognised the impact of his ideas: "Christ's Subjects of different Denominations will have Rest, and Popery cannot take Place while this is maintained; *but then our abjured Toleration will take Place*".¹⁴⁵

Glass's opponents sought to appropriate the light of nature as a means of authenticating the covenants. He thought this odd as these theological opponents, of a conservative orientation, must thereby talk "in the very Language of those, whom they have been inveighing against, as fast as any, under the Name of Naturalists and Rationalists".¹⁴⁶ He was no friend to notions of natural religion, and his apparent commitment to a rational theology must be seen within a fuller context. The establishment (spiritually not legally speaking) of the kingdom of Christ is predicted upon truth to which the human being is expected to assent, "a Perswasion of a Thing upon Testimony", rather reminiscent of John Cameron. This truth has to do with the efficacy of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the testimony to which is found in the Bible which is of central importance to

142. Glass, *Narrative*, 187.

143. Glass, *Testimony*, 169.

144. Glass, *Narrative*, 93.

145. *Ibid.*, 188; emphasis added.

146. *Ibid.*, 207.

Glass. Such truth, however, is not a natural thing: "This Truth comes into our Minds and Hearts from above by Divine Teaching" and it is "engrafted in our Minds", *James* 1:21. Not growing naturally in them, but brought from else where and engrafted, "that we may bring forth a new Kind of Fruit, according to the Nature of the Graft, and not according to the Nature of the Stock..."¹⁴⁷ As such, truth, as Glass is interested in it, is something which involves the human being but transcends each one's potential for discernment, and while the language may not be exactly the same, Glass sounds like a Calvinist who holds to the Bible and the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit. We might describe it as self-authenticating, and certainly Glass did not see its acceptance as grounded in either enthusiasm or human wisdom.¹⁴⁸ He thought there were external evidences which supported Christianity, but these were of no significance for faith, since persuasion based upon the supposed adequacy of "philosophical Argument" produces not faith but science. Genuine faith is determined by the substance and the means of the argument.¹⁴⁹ Nor is this an arid intellectualism divorced from deontological considerations, for this gospel truth "must be a living Principle of Action in us".¹⁵⁰

With authentic Christianity narrowed in its propositional content Glass could defend his ecumenicity, celebrating the diversity of "Christ's Subjects" amongst all the nations and parties and classes of the world. They might differ in the grace and light allotted them, and are subject to error: "Uniformity, in all these Things, which some of them may judge very necessary, is not to be expected here; but herein they are all one, but they are *every one of this Truth*, yea, even tho' they may have different Speculations about it, and Controversies of Words while the *Truth* itself reigns in all their Hearts".¹⁵¹ While Glass did not countenance the teaching of perfectionism, he did insist that the Christian must, however fallibly, embrace the whole of scripture. He did not see many positive signs; indeed, he sounded rather like a covenanting Jeremiah when he deplored the lack of obedience to Christ and a preference for worldly conformity, "so little Self-denial, and patient bearing the Cross after him, so little Good-will and Forgiveness to Enemies, and so very little Brotherly-love and Charity and Mercy to the Poor...."¹⁵² He himself chose the way of suffering and sacrifice, and in at least this respect he could have laid claim to

147. Glass, *Testimony*, 215; see also 193.

148. *Ibid.*, 257-8.

149. *Ibid.*, 192. This may be contrasted with a statement by Glass or whoever wrote *A supplement to Erskine's sermon*, 18. The writer commented, in a sceptical vein that evokes Montaigne's essay, "Apology for Raymond Seebond": "the most of the people born and bred in a country, so made and called christian, are christians, the same way that people born and bred in a heathenish or Mahometan country, are heathens or Mahometans". See Donald M. Frame, trans., *The Complete Essays of Montaigne* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), 325: "We are Christians by the same title that we are Perigordians or Germans".

150. Glass, *Testimony*, 227.

151. *Ibid.*, 234.

152. Glass, *Testimony*, 265-6.

being the true heir of early covenanters such as Samuel Rutherford who preached in the 1630s: "For the saints have a different tack of the cross of Christ, while we are here, and aye ill weather... ever the cross".¹⁵³ In addition to losing his charge, Glass suffered various calumnies from holding disorderly meetings to sanctioning an incestuous marriage by one of his people.¹⁵⁴

Had Glass's movement been spectacularly successful, his answers to the questions he raised could not have been without real significance for the matter of Scottish national identity, if only because his religious reconstruction had no room for the issue. Like Roger Williams, he denied that any nation has ever occupied the covenantal position of the Jews. Israel as a temporal entity will always remain *sui generis*. Thus while Glass would gain his reputation as an independent, not without warrant, the initial impulse lay in the destruction of the idea of a national church which in the Scottish experience of reformation hinged upon the practice of national covenanting. In the hermeneutics of a radical application of typology, so similar to that of Williams, Glass found a means of offering the Church of Scotland freedom from a past it could no longer deal with effectively.

DAVID G. MULLAN

THOMAS GILLESPIE AND PHILIP DODDRIDGE

Thomas Gillespie (1708–1774) entered the ministry of the Church of Scotland in 1741 with his mind and heart set on exercising a ministry of pastoral care and preaching within the confines of the parish of Carnock, in the county of Fife. No one who attended his induction service in Carnock could have imagined the impact which his life would have on the ecclesiastical politics of the eighteenth century, as well as the influence he would exercise on the piety of countless Christians to whom he ministered over the next thirty-three years. His involvement in the Cambuslang and Kilsyth awakenings brought him to the attention of evangelicals, in Britain and North America.

153. Samuel Rutherford, *Fourteen Communion Sermons*, 2nd ed.; ed. A.A. Bonar (Glasgow, 1877), 226.

154. On disorderly meetings in Dundee, Brechin and Perth, see Gray, *Naked Truth*, 58ff, where he noted that those in attendance were the "very scum of those that go to church", "light People and School boys... a kind of religious Mob". See also Maxwell, *Memorial*, 61; Glass, *Remarks*, 26; Robert Sandeman, *A letter to Mr. William Wilson* (Edinburgh, 1736), [ix]; *Advertisement by the Town-Clerk of Perth*, bound at the end of Glass, *Further continuation*, repudiating the aspersions. Wilson was with the Erskines in founding the Associate Synod, and his fervour may have been heightened by the competition. The town clerk was George Miller, who represented Glass in the judicatories considering the case. Glass's newly installed elders were ridiculed for their lack of classical education; Glass, *Letter to Mr. John Willison*. On the accusation of sanctioning an incestuous marriage, SRO, CH2/12/6. p. 160; John Glass, *A dissertation on incest*, orig. 1730, in *Works*, ii, 470-98.

Gillespie worked to revitalise the Church of Scotland. As a correspondent of Jonathan Edwards, he sought the advice of the great New England philosopher and theologian, as he attempted to understand and encourage the work of the Holy Spirit following his involvement in the Cambuslang revival associated with the visit of George Whitefield to Scotland. Gillespie was an ecclesiastical politician of considerable influence, whose main achievements were in articulating the evangelical opposition to the institution of patronage in the Church of Scotland.¹ He adopted a resolute attitude against patronage at the General Assembly in May 1752 which led to his deposition from the ministry of the Established Church.

In 1761, Gillespie founded the Presbytery of Relief, noted for its commitment to religious liberty, open communion and tolerant attitudes towards other Churches. In January 1774 it had grown to nineteen congregations and by 1847, the year in which it joined with the United Secession Church to form the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland, it had 136 congregations.

Gillespie entered the University at Edinburgh about 1732, later in life than most, indeed at a time when many people of his age had already graduated and were being licensed to preach.² He began his studies at a time when the University was undergoing a radical change, both in its teaching methods and curriculum. The initial move away from the regency system towards professional specialisation, which had first been made at Edinburgh in 1708, had brought about a "quickening of the spirit of intellectual enquiry."³ This was followed up by the introduction of a new generation of professors who had been influenced by the Enlightenment with its object of "mutual improvement by liberal conversation and rational enquiry" and who influenced many graduates.⁴ These professors laid the "philosophical, social, academic, and ecclesiastical groundwork for Moderatism and the mature Scottish Enlightenment."⁵

By about 1730 the University had developed a wide range of subjects in which

1. John K. La Shall says that "His significance lies in the principles which his firm stand helped to establish." See the article on "Thomas Gillespie" in *The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography*, ed. Donald M. Lewis, Oxford, 1995, i. 442.
2. Henry Davidson graduated from Edinburgh in 1705 when he was only eighteen, and Thomas Boston Jr. was licensed by the Presbytery of Selkirk on 1 August 1732 when he was nineteen.
3. R.G. Cant, "Origins of the Enlightenment: the Universities" In *The Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment*, edited by R.H.Campbell and A.S. Skinner, (Edinburgh, 1982), p. 47.
4. P. Jones, "The Scottish Professoriate and the Polite Academy." In *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, edited by Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff. (Cambridge, 1985) p. 99. The Rankenian Club, named after the tavern at which it met, had a membership of nineteen by the mid 1720s, six of whom were university professors, five advocates, two doctors and four from other professions.
5. R. Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment*, (Edinburgh University Press, 1985), p. 153.

the teaching was undertaken by specialist teachers who were aware of the latest developments in their fields of study. In the twenty or so years since the Union of 1707, "the college, which had been little more than a Presbyterian seminary, was transformed into a self-consciously modern academy with faculties of law and medicine as well as philosophy and theology."⁶

Gillespie appears to have completed his three year course in Philosophy, and to be nearing the end of his further three years study in Divinity,⁷ when he left the University in 1738. Probably at the urging of his mother, who had joined the recently formed Secession Church in Edinburgh, Gillespie left Edinburgh to attend the newly formed Secession divinity hall in Perth where William Wilson had been appointed the Theological tutor.

Gillespie was soon troubled by two aspects of the new Church. First, he was concerned over the "plan of their principles" which would eventually lead them to a much more restricted understanding of communion with other Christians.⁸ Secondly, he did not find the theological atmosphere at Perth one in which he could live; indeed, he left after only ten days. Their rigidity and opposition to evangelicals who remained within the Church of Scotland left him feeling isolated.

We know nothing of the next two years of Gillespie's life, until 1740. In that year,⁹ on the recommendation of twelve ministers of the Church of Scotland,¹⁰ five of whom had been among the Marrowmen,¹¹ he was admitted to Philip Doddridge's Academy at Northampton for the completion of his theological education.

To understand the background of Doddridge's celebrated Academy, we must consider the nature and growth of English Dissent. The early part of the eighteenth century had been marked by the rapid expansion of Dissenting Churches in England. Between William's accession in 1689 and 1720, some 4,358 meeting-

6. Phillipson, "Culture and Society", p. 429.

7. *Acts of the General Assembly*, p. 665.

8. Struthers, *Relief church*, 5.

9. Gavin Struthers is wrong to suggest that Gillespie went to study with Doddridge immediately he left Perth. See Struthers, *History of the Relief Church*, pp. 4-6. Gillespie was one of nineteen students who began their studies under Doddridge in 1740. See *List of Doddridge's Students* in Dr. Williams's Library, 93.A.2.

10. Thomas Gillespie, *Treatise on Temptation*, (Edinburgh, 1774), p. 3 where the twelve ministers are named as Henry Davidson of Galashiels, Gabriel Wilson of Maxton, James Wardlaw of Dunfermline, James Smith of Newburn, William Gusthart, Alexander Webster and John Hepburn of Edinburgh, James Walker of Canongate, Neil McVicar of West Kirk, James Kid of Queensferry, John Bonar of Torphichen, and Alexander Wardrobe of Whitburn.

11. The five ministers who had been associated with the Marrow Controversy were Henry Davidson, Gabriel Wilson, James Wardlaw, James Kid, and John Bonar. By the time Gillespie went to Northampton five of the other Marrowmen, James Hog, James Bathgate, Thomas Boston, John Williamson and William Hunter, had all died and Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine had formed the Associate Presbytery.

houses were licensed for public worship,¹² an indication of the flourishing state of Dissenting devotion. Dissent was strongest in urban areas, and of the 1,238 Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist congregations which existed between 1715 and 1718, more than half of them met in cities, boroughs, or market towns,¹³ their social composition matched by that of the surrounding community.¹⁴

In church organisation it was often difficult in England to distinguish between a Congregational and a Presbyterian Church because years of persecution had made it difficult for any network of Presbyteries, Synods and Assemblies to act effectively. However, although Presbyterian churches had often been forced by circumstances to be independent of one another, they were not congregational. The chief difference between the two groupings was that Presbyterians "admitted to communion all who lived respectably and had some knowledge of the Christian religion", while the Congregationalists "restricted communion and church membership to those who were able to give an account of the work of grace in their souls."¹⁵

Although there were numerous books and pamphlets which appeared in the 1730's bemoaning the spiritual decline of Dissent,¹⁶ Philip Doddridge believed that decline occurred only "in those places into which the Arian and Pelagian doctrines have been introduced which is chiefly tho' not only in the Western and Southern Counties."¹⁷

Philip Doddridge (1702-1751) became the minister of the Castle Hill Congregational Church at Northampton on 19 March 1730. Gillespie arrived at Northampton at a time when the church had experienced a period of "sensible revival", the church consisting of "230 members of which about 130 have been admitted since I became their Pastor."¹⁸

12. Paul Sangster, *A History of the Free Churches*, (1983), p. 114. Horton Davies, *The English Free Churches*, (Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 119. Figures for the total number of Dissenters in early-eighteenth-century England are as follows:

Presbyterians	179,350	3.30% of population
Independents	59,940	1.10%
Particular Baptists	40,520	0.74%
General Baptists	18,800	0.35%
Quakers	<u>39,510</u>	<u>0.73%</u>
All Dissenters	338,120	6.21%

M. Watts, *The Dissenters*, (Oxford, 1978), p. 270.

13. M. Watts, *The Dissenters*, *Ibid.*, p. 285. The figures which Watts gives for England are "63.2% of Presbyterians" and "69.5% of Independents... worshipped in cities, boroughs, or market towns." *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, p. 353.
15. *Ibid.*, p.291.
16. David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*. (London, 1989), p.21.
17. Letter from Doddridge to Daniel Wadsworth at Hartford in Connecticut Colony, 6 March 1741, in G.F. Nuttall, *Calendar of the Correspondence of Philip Doddridge*, (London, 1979), p. 130.
18. G.F. Nuttall, *Ibid.*, p. 131.

As well as exercising a "careful and conscientious ministry,"¹⁹ his most lasting influence on the history of evangelicalism was his Theological Academy.²⁰ This began in his own house in 1730 with forty carefully selected students. It would appear that students were accepted by Doddridge following recommendation by friends and fellow ministers.²¹ The work grew and in 1740 he had to acquire larger premises. By 1743 he had sixty-three students living in Northampton.²² In total over 200 students passed through the Academy in its twenty-two years of existence at Northampton, of whom 120 became ministers of the Gospel. Doddridge was assisted in the Academy by a series of assistant tutors,²³ the best known of whom was Job Orton. Orton had entered the Academy in August 1734 and in 1739 he became Doddridge's first assistant tutor, being licensed as a minister in the same year, and acting as one of the elders at the Castle Hill Church.²⁴

The Academy provided a comprehensive course, including mathematics, science, natural philosophy, and moral philosophy. Doddridge was concerned that "polite literature" would "not by any means be neglected", although "it is not the one thing needful."²⁶ Doddridge's personal concern was to make his students into "citizens of the intellectual world."²⁷

As the great majority of his students were destined for the ministry "the chief object of their attention and study... was his system of divinity,"²⁸ and a series of

19. G. Rupp, *Religion in England 1688–1791*, (Oxford, 1986), p. 165.

20. Doddridge received the degree of DD from Marischal College, Aberdeen on 27 May 1736 and from King's College, Aberdeen on 5 July 1737. See Nuttall, *Correspondence*, p.86.

21. See letters written in August 1733 from Revd. John Barker in Hackney and Doddridge's reply regarding a "clergyman's son in Norfolk, who desires to be brought up as a dissenting minister." Philip Doddridge, *Diary and Correspondence of Doddridge*, ed. by John Doddridge Humphreys, (London 1829), vol. III, pp. 203–208.

22. Doddridge charged fees of "sixteen pounds a year board, and four pounds teaching "as well as a contribution towards the Library. *Diary and Correspondence, Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 206.

23. Doddridge's assistants in order were Job Orton, Thomas Brabant, James Robertson and Samuel Clark (son of Dr. Samuel Clark). Malcolm Deacon, *Philip Doddridge of Northampton 1702–51*, (Northampton Libraries, 1980), p. 163.

24. Doddridge described Orton as "one of the best preachers & of men." G.F. Nuttall, *Correspondence*, p. 131. Orton left Northampton in 1741 to become minister of a combined Independent and Presbyterian congregation in Shrewsbury, moving to Kidderminster in 1765, where he died in 1783. Orton was to become Doddridge's first biographer in 1765. See M. Deacon, *Philip Doddridge*, pp. 93, 163.

25. Philip Doddridge, *Works*, Vol. IV, p. 231.

26. *Ibid.*

27. Peter Jones, "The Polite Academy and the Presbyterians, 1720–1770" *In New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland*, Edited by John Dwyer, Roger A. Mason & Alexander Murdoch, (Edinburgh, 1982), p. 160.

28. Philip Doddridge, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 56.

230 divinity lectures formed the backbone of his entire academic course. Doddridge was concerned to preserve a proper balance between a general knowledge of polite literature and philosophy and the “great doctrines of the everlasting gospel.”²⁹ He feared that many ministers in his day were being tempted to “wave the Gospel, that we may accommodate ourselves to their taste; which, if we do, we may indeed preserve the name of virtue, but I fear we shall destroy the thing itself; lose it in our congregations, and probably in our hearts too.”³⁰ He was concerned, not only to provide a well-educated succession of ministers but, above all, men who had a burning passion to win souls for Christ. It was evangelism which was “the thread on which his multicoloured life was strung. It was for this above all that he wrote, preached, corresponded and educated his students in the Academy.”³¹

The education which was provided at Northampton was not only broad in curriculum, but also liberal with regard to the tolerance which Doddridge displayed towards divergence of opinion. In this, Doddridge was following the example of his own tutor at Kibworth, of whom he wrote, “Mr. Jennings does not follow the doctrines or phrases of any particular party; but is sometimes a Calvinist, sometimes an Arminian, and sometimes a Baxterian, as truth and evidence determine him... he always inculcates it upon our attention, that the scriptures are the only standard of orthodoxy, and encourages the utmost freedom of enquiry. He furnishes us with all kinds of authors upon every subject, without advising us to skip over the heretical passages for fear of infection.”³² Doddridge continued the same liberal tradition in his own academy at Northampton. Alan Saunders comments that “Doddridge’s theological lectures at his Dissenting academy... were undogmatic-charitable to all, comprehensive in their coverage of every side in controversial issues.”³³ This intellectual openness must have had a liberating effect on Gillespie as he came from Scotland, where the orthodoxy of the Westminster Confession of Faith was virtually unquestioned and unquestionable.

It would be wrong, however, to draw the conclusion that Doddridge was indifferent toward theological truth, or that he was opposed to holding any doctrinal convictions. He believed that,

truth is indeed too sacred a thing ever to be denied on any consideration

29. *Ibid.*, p. 225.

30. *Ibid.* In his letter to Daniel Wadsworth he explains that he takes time to “frequently converse with each of them alone, and conclude the conversation with prayer.” G.F. Nuttall, *Correspondence*, p. 131.

31. *Ibid.*, p. xxxv.

32. Doddridge, *Diary and Correspondence*, Vol. 1, pp. 155–6, 198. R.K. Webb comments that Doddridge’s “profound tolerance for differing points of view... led to criticism from the more strictly orthodox.” “The Emergence of Rational Dissent” in *Enlightenment and Religion*, Edited by Knud Haakonssen, (Cambridge, 1996), p. 33.

33. Alan Saunders, “The State as Highwayman: From Candour to Rights” in *Enlightenment and Religion*, p. 253.

and... neither honour or charity will allow us to give it up, as a point of mere indifferent speculation... but let it be in a manner worthy of him, a manner which may not offend him as the God of love. And let us be greatly upon our guard that we do not condemn our brethren, as having forfeited all title to the name of Christians, because their creeds or confessions of faith do not come up to the standard of our own.³⁴

Doddridge's basic conviction was that the Bible formed the foundation of all theological truth. It was this principle which led him away from bestowing an authority upon credal statements which tended to test and regulate theological formulas, as well as being cautious about going further than the Bible allowed in making dogmatic statements about matters relating to the Christian faith.

Central to his understanding of the Christian faith was the gospel of grace which centred on the cross of Christ, "not a subject which grows out of date in a few months" rather "the joy of the church in all ages."³⁵ Although he accepted a Calvinistic understanding of the doctrine of Election,³⁶ he did not draw the conclusion that Christ died only for the elect. "It is plain..." he maintained "that there is a sense, in which Christ may be said to have died for all, i.e., as he has procured an offer of pardon to all, provided they sincerely embrace the Gospel."³⁷ To Doddridge, the doctrine of limited atonement was an instance of human logic going beyond scripture.

Doddridge attracted several Scottish students such as Gillespie who had already attended the university stage of their education.³⁸ Among those who crossed over the Border to further their education were Gilbert Robertson, minister of Kincardine,³⁹ James Robertson, Professor of Hebrew in the University of Edinburgh,⁴⁰ and John Fergusson, son of Lord Kilkerran.⁴¹ John Erskine, who later became the leader of the Popular party in Scotland, had wanted to go to

34. Doddridge, *Works*, (London 1803), Vol. IV, p. 283.

35. Doddridge, *Works*, (1802-5), Vol. 2, p. 553.

36. *Ibid.*, Vol. 5, p. 259-261.

37. *Ibid.*, pp. 214.

38. S.G. Harries, "The Status of Doddridge's Academy", *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, (17) 1952, pp. 19-25. Humphreys comments that "some young Divines from Scotland, who had studied and taken the usual degrees in the Universities there, and had begun to preach, came to attend his Divinity Lectures, and receive his Instructions, before they settled with parishes in their native countries. During their residence with him they preached occasionally in the dissenting congregations of that town and neighbourhood, and two of them were ordained there." *Diary and Correspondence*, Vol. 5, p. 546.

39. Robertson was one of the two students from Scotland, who along with Gillespie were licensed and ordained while at Northampton. Hew Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, (Edinburgh, 1916), Vol. VII, p. 61.

40. G.F. Nuttall, *Correspondence*, p. 317.

41. G.F. Nuttall, *Correspondence*, p. 187.

Northampton, but Doddridge observed "his parents forbade it, much to his mortification and mine."⁴²

Although Gillespie's stay at Northampton was only to be a few months duration (the normal period of study being five years for those studying theology)⁴³ the influence of Doddridge on his life and ministry proved to be significant in four areas.

First, Doddridge had a profound impact on Gillespie's preaching. One of Doddridge's personal influences on his ministerial students involved the careful attention which he gave to their sermon making. He encouraged them to preach in the surrounding villages, developing their skills in a practical manner under his direction. He was also a man of great evangelistic zeal, undoubtedly influenced by his contact with the Evangelical Revival⁴⁴ and the Moravian missionary vision.⁴⁵ The Academy has been described as being "distinguished by the enthusiasm of its men for ministry overseas."⁴⁶

Secondly, Doddridge introduced Gillespie to the larger international community. Gillespie was later to become a correspondent with Jonathan Edwards and it may well have been during his stay at Northampton that he first became acquainted with Edward's *Faithful Narrative of the Surprising work of God... in Northampton in New England* which was prepared for publication by Isaac Watts, and read avidly by Doddridge.⁴⁷

Thirdly, Gillespie imbibed from Doddridge's Academy a commitment to the ideal of Christian unity. Doddridge's attitude towards Christians within other Churches was of warmth and welcome. Gillespie had left a situation of secession in Scotland where many were increasingly suspicious of ecumenical relationships. Doddridge, however, had a passion for unity amongst Christians, feeling grieved that many people of his day failed to recognise that "dissensions among Christians" were "a means of bringing the truth and excellence of the Christian religion into question."⁴⁸ He was impatient with denominationalism, which he called "party spirit" and did all that he could to bring Christians together. It was this spirit that led Doddridge to have discussions with the Archbishop of

42. Philip Doddridge, *Diary and Correspondence*, Vol. IV, p. 207.

43. M. Deacon, *Philip Doddridge*, p. 97.

44. George Whitefield visited Northampton in May 1739 and was, "courteously received by Dr. Doddridge" G. Whitefield, *Journals*, (London, 1965), 273; John Wesley was corresponding with Doddridge as early as March 1739. See J. Wesley, *Journals* ed. by N. Curnock, Vol. 1, p. 155.

45. Doddridge's connection with, and interest in Count Zinzendorf came through a conversation with the young Benjamin Ingham, when he returned from Georgia. G.F. Nuttall, *Philip Doddridge 1702-51 His Contribution to English Religion*, (London, 1951), p. 83.

46. C.L. Mitton, "Philip Doddridge - Poet, Preacher and Pedagogue", *The London Quarterly Historical Holborn Review* (October 1965), p. 291.

47. G.F.Nuttall, *Philip Doddridge, 1702-51*, p. 83.

48. Note on *John* 17:21 from Philip Doddridge, *Family Expositor, in Works*, Vol. 7, p. 339.

Canterbury, Dr. Herring, as well as Baptist pastors, showing friendship to both John Wesley and George Whitefield, as well as more traditional Dissenters. For Doddridge the Christian was,

bound in duty affectionately to esteem and embrace all who practically comply with the design of the revelation and love of our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, how much soever they may differ from myself in their language or their conceptions about any speculative points.⁴⁹

Fourthly, Doddridge instilled in Gillespie his liberal attitude with regard to subscribing to Confessions of Faith. Doddridge's position was summed up in his Divinity lectures, in which he displayed his dislike of "requiring those who are to be publick teachers in the church to subscribe, or virtually to declare their assent to such formularies."⁵⁰

Gillespie was to face such a dilemma when he returned to Scotland in 1741 and was required by the Church of Scotland to subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith. He was reluctant to endorse fully a signing of the Confession of Faith as it related to the Power of the Civil Magistrate in religious matters.⁵¹ His convictions were so strong that he did not require any elders whom he ordained during his ministry in Carnock to subscribe to the Confession of Faith.⁵²

It would appear that the particular concern which Gillespie had related to Chapter XXIII of the Westminster Confession of Faith and the portion within section III which declared that

The Civil Magistrate... hath Authority, and it is his duty, to take Order, that

49. John Waddington, *Congregational History 1700-1800*, (London, 1876), pp. 280ff.

50. Philip Doddridge, *Works*, Vol. V, pp. 230-231. Doddridge was not unconcerned with what a minister believed. He generally recommended that someone who was about to be ordained drew up, "the confession of his faith... in which it is expected, that the great doctrines of Christianity should be touched upon in a proper order, and his persuasion of them plainly and seriously expressed, in such words as he judges most convenient. And we generally think this is a proper and happy medium, between the indolence of acquiescing in a general declaration of believing the Christian religion, without declaring what it is apprehended to be, and the severity of demanding a subscription to any set of articles where if an honest man, who believes all the rest, scruples any one article, phrase, or word, he is as effectually excluded, as if he rejected the whole" Vol. IV, pp. 271-272.

51. *Minutes of the Dunfermline Presbytery 1729-1745*, Scottish Records Office, CH2/105.6, 3 June 1741.

52. Following Gillespie's deposition in May 1752, a committee of the Presbytery of Dunfermline reported that "the Session of Carnock went off the rules of this Church in their way of choosing and admitting Elders and Deacons... requiring no more of them before the congregation but to declare their adherence to the Scripture and the Rules of the Church and without ever desiring them or any other of the Elders formerly ordained to subscribe the Confession of Faith and Formula appointed for all Elders to subscribe." *Minutes of the Dunfermline Presbytery 1751-1760*, S.R.O. CH2/105.8, p. 151c.

Unity and Peace be preserved in the Church, that the Truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all Blasphemies and Heresies be suppressed, all Corruptions and Abuses in Worship and Discipline prevented or reformed, and all the Ordinances of God duly settled, administered and observed.⁵³

Gillespie was licensed at Northampton as a Preacher of the Gospel on 30 October 1740, and ordained on 22 January 1741 by a class of Dissenting ministers, of which Doddridge was the Moderator. It was at this point that he left Northampton, on Doddridge's proposal, to go to a Church at Hartbarrow for a month "on mutual trial."⁵⁴ Hartbarrow, near Cartmel Fell, just inside the Lancashire border, had been the home, for a short time, to Richard Frankland's Academy from when he moved there in 1685 until he moved to Attercliffe, in Yorkshire, in the latter part of 1686.⁵⁵ The last recorded minister of the Church was John Jackson who appears to have left in 1737.⁵⁶ Gillespie, then, may have been one of the last ministers to have served in this Church which ceased to exist in 1746.

There may have been several reasons why Gillespie did not stay at Hartbarrow. Doddridge had been informed that "the Presbyterian ministers of this North Class of Westmoreland and Cumberland are extremely prejudiced against Scotch Ministers in General."⁵⁷ It is possible that the combination of a small congregation struggling to support him, and ministerial prejudice against him as a Scot, convinced him to return to Scotland after only a matter of weeks. Gillespie later explained to the Presbytery of Dunfermline that he had left Hartbarrow earlier than anticipated because "his health did not agree with the dampness of the place."⁵⁸ This appears to be a weak reason, especially in view of the fact that the Parish of Carnock was described as being "rather damp in winter and spring."⁵⁹ Although his stay at Hartbarrow had been short, it seems to have been warmly appreciated

53. *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter XXIII.iii. Doddridge was convinced that there was no evidence in Scripture for the interference of the civil magistrate in religious matters. P. Doddridge, *Works*, Vol. V, p. 284. He was equally concerned that ministers of the gospel did not "arrogate any secular power, or pretend to any authority over the civil liberties of mankind," and thus "understand the doctrine of the two swords, with which many have been so fond of meddling... to the dishonouring of the Christian name, and the destruction of many of their fellow creatures." *Works*, Vol. IV, pp 215–216.
54. G.F. Nuttall, *Correspondence*, p. 128.
55. See the article on "Richard Frankland" in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. VII, p. 628.
56. Francis Nicholson and Ernest Axon, *The Older Nonconformity in Kendal*, (Kendal, 1915), pp. 442–443.
57. G.F. Nuttall, *Correspondence*, p. 218.
58. *Minutes of the Presbytery of Dunfermline 1729–1745*, CH2/105.6, August 19, 1741.
59. Sir John Sinclair, *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, (Edinburgh, 1794), Vol. XI, p. 481.

by the congregation, because he brought with him “a testimonial subscribed by the principal members of the congregation, recommending him to any body of Christians with whom he might labour.”⁶⁰ Whatever his real reason for leaving Hartbarrow, Gillespie arrived in Scotland in March 1741 with a commendation from Doddridge, Job Orton, and thirteen other ministers “as a deeply-experienced Christian, well qualified for the important work of the ministry, and one who bade fair to prove an ornament to his holy profession, and an instrument of considerable usefulness to the souls of men.”⁶¹

Gillespie’s thirty-three years had seen several changes in direction, and been characterised by a great deal of uncertainty, as well as by some irregularity with respect to the Church of Scotland. Yet his spiritual life had undoubtedly been enriched through his contact with Christians holding a variety of different opinions. He was a man who would neither be restricted in his circle of Christian fellowship, nor allow his conscience to be at the beck and call of any human group. Like many other men, he must have entered the ministry with a certain degree of apprehension, as well as with an expectation of being used in the advancement of the Kingdom of God. He believed that the word of God gave “strong encouragement to those who desire to put honour on the name of Christ... to help in this time of great need.”⁶² As yet unmarried, and living in a manse which he would later describe as being in a “bad case,”⁶³ Gillespie began a ministry that would be marked, not only by consistent zeal for pastoral work, powerful and influential preaching, but also by national controversy.

He entered the ministry of the Church of Scotland at a time of acute social unrest and profound religious uncertainty. The Secession Church, to which he had very briefly belonged, was continuing to expand. The Parish of Carnock felt the effects of the Secession, both through Ralph Erskine’s ministry in Dunfermline and the presence of the societies at nearby Torryburn and Culross. Within a few years of Gillespie’s settlement, moreover, the Church of Scotland, would be profoundly shaken by the revivals at Cambuslang, Kilsyth and elsewhere in Scotland.

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60. *Minutes of Presbytery of Dunfermline 1729–1745*, CH2/105.6.

61. Thomas Gillespie, *Treatise on Temptation*, in Preface by John Erskine, pp. iii–iv.

62. From a Sermon preached on the Fast Day in the Tolbooth Kirk of Edinburgh on 1 November, 1741. *M.S.S. Sermons*, in two small volumes, f7v.

63. *Minutes of Dunfermline Presbytery*, CH2/105.6, 24 March 1742.

ROBERT HALLEY (1796 – 1876)

Robert Halley's life spanned one of the most important periods of change and reconstruction for Congregationalism. When he was a theological student, he required a licence from a magistrate in order to preach; his, dated 24 November, 1816, was signed by Sir Daniel Williams J.P.¹ When he died Congregational ministers were serving on school boards. Well-known ministerial contemporaries included Thomas Binney, John Angell James, and Robert Vaughan. Because Halley's writings and teaching had great relevance for the society and the Congregationalism of his day it is worth looking at him in more detail than is often given to him.

Robert Halley was born 13 August, 1796, at Blackheath, which was then still in Kent. His father, a Scot and the youngest son, came from farming stock in Glen Almond, Perthshire. Trained as a nurseryman, he came to England to be head gardener on an estate at Bere Regis, Dorset. Bere's Independent church had originated in 1662; on his first Sunday there, Halley was invited to sit in the square pew of the main tradesman of the town, Mr. Bellows, whose daughter, Ann, he later married, and in time they moved to Blackheath where Halley had bought nursery gardens. Blackheath was then a fashionable summer resort for London merchants and tradesmen. As his grandson was to write:

Mr. Halley's nursery grounds were a favourite resort. There was a large pond, on which a boat was kept for hire, and in which swans and other water-fowl sailed; and there was a grotto with a little fish pond by it, where a royal eagle was chained; and there were arbours where Blackheath belles and beaux could conveniently consume Mr. Halley's fruit. His gardens were even patronised by royalty – the princesses from the Ranger's House in Greenwich Park occasionally promenading there.

It came as a shock to the local people that on Mr. Halley's first Sunday there they found the gardens closed, as well as on all subsequent ones. This was because he had walked to London in order to attend Oxenden Chapel in the Haymarket.²

Halley's first wife died while Robert was still a child and in 1811 he married Elizabeth Booth, but she died after she had given birth to her only daughter, and this meant that five children were left motherless. It was then that Mr. Halley decided to discontinue the long Sabbath walk to London and to join Butt's Lane Meeting, (later known as High Street Chapel) at Deptford. Although brought up a Presbyterian in Scotland (Robert later referred to his father as "an old strict Anti-burgher of the strictest sect of Presbyterians.") he soon became a deacon there, and also a Sunday school teacher. On Sunday mornings father would set off across

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1. R. Halley, "Memoir", in E.J. Evans and W.F. Hurndall (eds.), *Pulpit Memorials*, 1878, p. 293.
 2. *Ibid.*, p. 292.

the Heath, accompanied by his sons. Between the morning and afternoon services they lunched in the vestry, and any time left over was spent visiting the poor and sick. In the "table pew" was kept Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, and while Mr. Halley was on his visitations Robert and his brothers were expected to study it. After the afternoon service there was the walk home. In the evening "the family were assembled, and catechised *more majorum*."³

Robert and his brothers attended a private school at Maize Hill Greenwich, which was run by one of the deacons. For a child the Meeting House must have seemed a forbidding place. Underneath were graves and vaults but Robert observed that "within the meeting-house only one monument was admitted, whose white marble and glittering crown of gilded stars perpetuated the memory of the Rev. Stephen Olding, a favourite pupil of Dr. Doddridge, and for thirty-two years the beloved pastor of the church." Over the pulpit "was a massive sounding board, strangely believed to reflect the preacher's enunciation with additional power and distinctiveness upon his attentive or sleeping audience." Robert became a member of Butt's Lane at the age of sixteen, although he later pointed out that "it was not usual at that time for persons so young to become members of the regular old fashioned Independent churches" because they "preserved the dignified formality and exclusiveness of the early Independents." Before membership he had been encouraged to take communion (which was then unusual for a child); Robert said it was because his father had been brought up amongst Presbyterians.⁴ In March 1823 Halley married Rebekah Jacob at Lewisham. She was the oldest daughter of a timber merchant at Deptford, and for forty years she helped him in his work. Their biographer son said that "she so ordered the home that nothing should interfere with his duties; she relieved him of all care in money matters and in general business. Later one of his students was to say that Halley would speak of her as the 'grace and ornament of my life.'"⁵

At the age of fourteen Robert had entered his father's business but it was not the type of work that appealed to him. As his son wrote later: "Manual dexterity he never had, and he could not hide from himself that this was not the calling for which he was adapted. Time, however, made plain to him in what direction his duty lay." At Butt's Lane Halley was not only a Sunday school teacher but also a regular and active participant in prayer meetings. It was, therefore, not surprising that people wanted him to consider training for the ministry, and he was accepted by Homerton College. He began the six-year course on 18 January 1816. It included Latin, Greek and Hebrew, Biblical criticism, dogmatic theology, homiletics and philosophy. One of his tutors was John Pye Smith, for whom he always had the highest regard.

3. R. Halley, *A Short Biography of the Rev. Robert Halley, D.D.*, 1879, p.iii; for the Anti-Burgher reference see R. Bruce, *Centenary of Highfield Chapel, Huddersfield*, Huddersfield 1872, p. 136, and *Congregational Year Book*, 1877, p. 368.
4. R. Halley, "Recollections of Old Dissent", *The Congregationalist*, 1874, pp. 224-7.
5. "Memoir", *op. cit.*, p. 294.

Halley was ordained at Old Meeting, St. Neot's, Huntingdonshire, on 11 June, 1822. Before he commenced his ministry, in a letter to his future wife, Rebekah, dated 18 October, 1821, he set out his aspirations for his ministry:

I begin to know and grow attached to the people. I hope my preaching is such as will be really beneficial, at least I endeavour to make it so. I wish not to be thought a fine preacher – I despise those who do. It is my desire to be the means of instructing and improving a plain, thoughtful, serious people... I hope that whoever may be their pastor, he may be at once (O rare combination!) prudent and zealous, studious and active, alike removed from the coldness of a professional scholar and the empty frippery of our modern preaching orators – in short one like Mr. Morell. It would be at once an advantage and disadvantage to succeed him...⁶

While he was there Halley preached three times each Sunday “and once in the week in the town chapel and usually twice in the neighbouring villages,” sometimes in the kitchens of sympathetic households.⁷ Apparently it was no more than everybody expected him to do; he said that it gave him the advantage “of being able to preach or speak in an emergency without premeditation.” It was something he recommended to young ministers.⁸ Halley indeed coached ministerial students as well as those preparing for L.M.S. service. The Halleys had three sons, two of whom became ministers, and the third a surgeon in New Zealand.

In June 1826, when Halley had been at St. Neot's for five years, he applied for the post of classical tutor at Highbury College. In the final paragraph of his letter of application, he wrote:

Upon the whole I hope I feel that I am not my own; but that it is my duty and inclination to occupy any situation in which I can most usefully promote the interest of the Church of Christ.

I shall be happy to explain myself further if you think it desirable...⁹

After an interview, which included a viva in Latin and Greek authors, he was offered the post. His letter of acceptance suggests that he felt “called” to undertake the work:

After serious deliberation, and I trust earnestly seeking Divine direction, I

6. *Short Biography*, *op. cit.*, pp. vi–viii, xiv.

7. *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

8. *Congregationalist*, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

9. R. Halley to Thomas Wilson, 8 June 1826, (New College Archives, Dr. Williams's Library).

believe it to be my duty to accept your invitation to become classical Tutor in New College at Highbury. I therefore undertake the important charge with the consciousness of much weakness, and with a humble dependance upon divine aid. Next to the blessing of God, I look with confidence to the advice and co-operation of your respected Tutors, and to your ready assistance in every effort to promote the literary and spiritual prosperity of your Academic Institute.¹⁰

Inevitably a large proportion of his time was spent on Latin and Greek studies; however, in the New Testament Greek classes Halley had the opportunity to show that he was also a theologian of some substance. He encouraged his students to ask questions, and if he could not always answer them, he suggested where they might find the information.

It was during this time that he wrote a letter, later published in pamphlet form, to James Yates, the Secretary of the Unitarian Association. The Unitarians had published in 1808 an *Improved Version of the New Testament*. Halley contended that Unitarians, like anyone else,

must be held to the only true principle of biblical signification, or, where that cannot be done, the exact sense of every passage, irrespective of the results. The translator has nothing to do with consequences. They belong to another department of theology.

He told Yates the question between them was "simply this; upon the principles thus laid down, is the 'Improved Version' a translation or a creed?" Halley then proceeded to conduct a detailed examination of the Greek text. He maintained that if introductory words were necessary to complete the sense of a passage, they ought to be printed in italics, whereas if the sense were complete without them "their insertion is creed and not translation."

Halley could not let Yates's claim that Unitarians had suffered martyrdom for their faith pass without comment:

Be those honours justly or falsely claimed, the time of Unitarian martyrdom has passed away. For what should they suffer? They will make no confession: 'I believe as far as the Scripture teaches' ... The renunciation of all creeds is a sure protection against suffering for any... The association of martyrdom with religionists, who deny all confessions, is palpably absurd.

In any controversy in which Halley was involved he appears always to have conducted himself with dignity, and his closing words to Yates are a good illustration of this:

I beg to conclude with the assurance, that, if I have not avoided the

10. R. Halley to Committee of Hoxton Academic Society, 14 July 1826 (NCA, DWL).

common fault of controversialists, but in the warmth of discussion, have allowed any thing to escape me inconsistent with the respect which is due to a gentlemen and a scholar, – and I am sure you are both, – I shall be most anxious to be made acquainted with it; and, on the first opportunity, to modify or retract it.¹¹

If it is borne in mind that when Halley wrote there were strong tensions between Independents and Unitarians because of the Lady Hewley Case,¹² Halley's words appear particularly gracious. Princeton University recognised Halley's scholarship at this time by conferring upon him a D.D. degree. When he received the letter he thought it was a hoax because he was puzzled how he could possibly be known there. From then on he was "the Doctor at Highbury."¹³

With a London base Halley had many opportunities to preach in the metropolis. At about that time evening services were more generally introduced, in addition to the afternoon ones. In the evenings they often had "lecturers." His biographer pointed out that then:

Omnibus communication between different parts of London was only at its commencement, and Dr. Halley frequently conducted the morning and afternoon services in the City or the West End, walking to his destination, and returned three or four miles on foot to 'preach the lecture' at the Lower Road Chapel, or at Union Chapel, Islington, or at some other suburban chapel.¹⁴

Halley was a member of the Anti-Slavery Society; it was an issue on which he felt very strongly. On a visit to Turkey, he recounted how, in Constantinople, he had observed at first hand a slave market:

I saw several black and two fine white girls brought from the huts into the street and submitted for sale... The dealers, both sellers and buyers, were elderly men. They pulled down the girls' veils – which, however, they speedily readjusted – looked at their teeth, felt them in the most indelicate

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11. R. Halley, *A Letter to the Rev. James Yates, M.A., containing An Examination of his Defence of the Improved Version in his Letter to the Vice-Chancellor on the Case of Lady Hewley's Trust*, 1834, pp.7, 39, 67–8.
 12. "Throughout the 1830s and early 1840s the Lady Hewley case – a legal proceeding whereby the Independents claimed that all Unitarian Chapels and foundations which dated from the eighteenth century were their rightful property – introduced an element of bitterness in the coolness that always existed between the Unitarians and the rest of dissent. Increasingly sections of the Unitarian body saw the Church of England as the lesser of two evils." J.Seed, "Liberal Culture in Manchester", *Social History*, Vol. 7, p. 10.
 13. "Memoir", *op. cit.*, p. 298.
 14. *Short Biography*, *op. cit.*, p. xi.

manner, and then bargained. A beautiful white girl was subjected to a long examination and then refused, at which she was evidently mortified. Our attendant, however, said the dealer was only attempting to reduce her price, about 4,000 piastres. A black girl was sold for 2,000 piastres – about £20.¹⁵

On 7 February, 1833, Halley preached at Hackney to the monthly meeting of Congregational ministers on “The Sinfulness of Colonial Slavery”, based on *Proverbs* 24 11–12, and subsequently published. He told them that it was a Christian duty to work for the abolition of British colonial slavery:

The subject proposed for consideration is the sinfulness of neglecting to promote the immediate extinction of Colonial Slavery. If slavery be an unrighteous usurpation, it is evidently the duty of all Christians, as they shall answer at the bar of God, to employ every proper means in affecting its entire abolition. The guilt of neglecting this duty is proportionate to the evil of the system. It is my intention, this morning, to show that British Colonial Slavery is so enormously criminal as to justify the application of the awful considerations of this passage to all Christians, who are not strenuously engaged in removing this weight of national guilt. If, as we are told by those immediately interested, it is the sin, not so much of themselves as of the whole nation, then these declarations become still more awful...

Halley pointed out that slavery was “a more ancient institute” than Moses, “which we acknowledge he permitted, but did not establish.” By his time it was widespread among nations, and Halley argued that “as their languages show, the general idea was the service of prisoners of war rendered to the conquerors to whose clemency, or cupidity, they owed the preservation of life.” Just as Moses allowed war, he could hardly have prohibited slavery “when the exchange of prisoners was utterly unknown...”

Halley said that if the question were asked if slavery could be vindicated by an appeal to the New Testament the answer would be: “Yes, if it be a state affording greater facilities, and more forcible inducements for improving the character, and augmenting the happiness both of the master and the servant... if it be a bond of mutual good-will, sanctified by the sweeter influence of Christian charity...” But if, on the other hand, it was a violent infringement of man’s natural rights, and an attempt by one class to gain power over another, “then indeed we will listen to no appeal to the New Testament in its favour.”

Halley maintained that slavery was “a murderous system. Its victims are nigh unto death; they are ready to be slain.” He pointed out that in ten years in the British colonies the slave population had declined by 50,000; that single fact

15. *Ibid.*, p. lxx.

showed “a tale of intense misery” because it was one of the most constant laws of nature that population should increase.

Halley concluded his sermon by appealing to:

Freeman, patriots, philanthropists, Christians, lovers of the Sabbath, friends of missions, our appeal is made to you. For the sake of our country, what a weight of guilt does she bear! ... – for the sake of our brethren and sisters in hard bondage, and their and our common Saviour, who will accept the act of kindness done for them, as though it were done unto himself, – promptly and firmly unite, in the benevolent spirit of your religion, to procure a legislative enactment, commensurate with the demands of justice and mercy; abandon the gain of oppression and hire of the labourers now in your storehouses ... put away the evil of your doings; cease to do evil; learn to do well... The great national reproach will be rolled away, and Britain become an example to the world, of the strength of religious principle notably triumphing over the avarice and heartlessness of commercial speculation.¹⁶

Although Halley was only one amongst many Dissenting ministers and reformers concerned about slavery, his sermon made a great impression: for some it was his chief claim to fame.

Halley considered that prayer was of fundamental importance. He addressed the London Congregational ministers on this subject in 1831,¹⁷ and based his lecture on *Psalms* 122 vv.6–9 “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem...”: he objected to the semi-Pelagian view “that man of himself originates the earliest desires after God, and the first movements of prayer.” He accepted man’s human depravity, and if any examples were needed to illustrate it he cited private assassinations, duels, suicides, religious persecution and wars:¹⁸

The preacher cries Sabbath after Sabbath, ‘Go and wash in Jordan’: the leper replies in the pride of his heart, ‘Are not Abana and Pharpar... better than all the waters of Israel?’ The skill of the preacher is exhausted; but the Spirit of God interposes, and makes the leper willing to wash even in Jordan that he may be healed of his disease.¹⁹

Halley went on to argue that prayer was “efficacious in obtaining this special

16. R. Halley, *The Sinfulness of Colonial Slavery*, pp. 3, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 27. It was later in 1833 that Parliament emancipated all slaves in the British empire. The act included compensation of £20m. to the slave owners.

17. R. Halley, *The Prosperity of Churches promoted by Social Prayer. A Discourse delivered in Claremont Chapel, Pentonville, on Thursday, October 6, 1831.*

18. *Ibid.*, pp.8–9.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

operation of grace.”²⁰ Therefore, for the churches to be prosperous there was a need for what he called “social prayer.”²¹ He argued that in Sunday worship “when the minister prays *for* the people rather than *with* them” there was the danger that the people regarded the service “as something ministerial and professional, with which they are little to do, unless it be to criticize the performance.” Were that tendency to continue it would prove harmful to both the ministry and the people. As an illustration of this he cited “the rise of Popery... the clergy were distinguished by nothing as much as their secularity and pomp: the mitre became the rival of the diadem... the throne of the bishop in the cathedral was as lofty and magnificent as that of the prince in the judgment-hall.”

In his view:

The sure preservative against any approach of this danger, is social prayer, church-meetings, the interchange of devotional exercises where nothing is professional, but all unite in one character; and nothing formal, but everything simple, free and spiritual.²²

Halley was one of the directors of the L.M.S. and regularly attended its meetings. In the summer of 1838 an annual meeting was held at Haverfordwest, where he was supplying the Tabernacle pulpit for a few weeks. At the meeting, when it was eight o'clock, Halley rose to speak. He admitted that he had hardly been aware of what had been going on because:

as I watched the hand of the clock my thoughts were far away in the West Indies. Allowing for the difference of longitude, it is just now four o'clock; the slave under the name of apprentice, is laying down his hoe, never again to take it up as a slave.

His words were greeted by cheers, and his biographer said:

Stimulated by their enthusiasm, the speaker – often struggling to be heard above the cheers – poured forth a torrent of eloquent appeal to instruct, elevate, and Christianise the now freed negroes.

Apparently this enthusiasm was backed by a special collection for the West Indian Mission of over £100. Halley's son, Robert, was present, and he thought that it was at that meeting that his father first became conscious “of his power on the platform.”²³

In 1839, after thirteen years at Highbury College, Halley accepted a call to

20. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 31–2.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 36–7.

23. *Short Biography, op. cit.*, pp. xxxiv–xxxvi.

Mosley Street, Manchester, where he succeeded Dr. McAll. In his letter of resignation to the Committee of Highbury College he made this suggestive point:

I can truly say that the interests of the College have not been overlooked in my estimate of the whole case – Indeed no consideration has more seriously impregnated my mind than the conviction that I have, to some degree, lost the zeal and ardour with which, perhaps too eagerly, I have been attached to classical literature. The painful apprehension of increasing unfitness for my present department of tuition, is not among the least powerful motives which induce me to accept the invitation to the pastoral office, which has been most unexpectedly presented to me...²⁴

Halley received the call to Mosley Street on 28 February, 1839, and in July he commenced his ministry there. The call had not been unanimous: 130 had voted in his favour, with twelve against and two abstentions. (The membership at the time was between 400 and 500). The church record stated:

It was certainly the case that many who voted for him had doubts upon their minds as to his keeping together a congregation, which Dr. McAll, by his extraordinary eloquence, had collected from all parts of the town and neighbourhood.²⁵

Mosley Street occupied a very influential position in the life of the town. Manchester's new municipal council (1838) gave an opportunity for Radicals and Nonconformists to be involved in political activity.²⁶ After Halley had been at Mosley Street for under a year, the trustees of Coward College, London, approached him to become Principal and theological tutor. According to his biographer, it was something for which he had yearned, but Halley consulted his deacons, who referred it to the church members. They were unanimous that he should stay. Halley, therefore, concluded that "it would be my duty and my happiness to remain."²⁷ His son considered that his nine years at Mosley Street "were the best years of his ministry."²⁸

In the first winter there he initiated a fortnightly series of lectures for young men, many of whom worked in the cotton trade; these he ran for the whole

24. R. Halley to Committee of Highbury College, 7 March 1839 (NCA, DWL).

25. B. Nightingale, *Lancashire Nonconformity*, Vol. V, 1893, pp. 137–147; MS History of Mosley Street Independent Chapel.

26. Manchester's first Mayor was a Unitarian, followed by a Quaker, and then by James Kershaw (see below n. 33), a deacon at Mosley Street. The Mosley Street Congregationalists and Cross Street Unitarians were foremost in civic involvement. *Short Biography, op. cit.*, p. xlii.

27. *Ibid.*, p. xlv.

28. *Ibid.*, p. li.

eighteen years that he was in Manchester. The first lecture dealt with the early Biblical records:

That the voice of geology might speak truth that the world was not created and made in six literal days, that the flood did not extend over the whole earth, were views quite new to the young men of Manchester, and excited some misgiving amongst the elder members of his church.

Groups of young people from as far afield as Ashton and Bolton walked to Mosley Street to hear the lectures.²⁹

In Manchester there was plenty of scope for Halley to express his public concern about social issues.³⁰ He frequently spoke in the Corn Exchange and the Free Trade Hall. At the beginning of the 1840s the two great issues were free trade and the abolition of the Corn Laws; Manchester was the base for the Anti-Corn Law League for Lancashire, and weekly meetings took place. Although Halley's sympathy was with them he only occasionally spoke at them but:

when it was proposed to hold a conference of ministers of all denominations to consider the mischievous bearing of the Corn Laws upon the social condition of the people, he endorsed the proposal, with all his heart. He felt that great injury was being done to the labouring classes for the sake of a very problematic advantage to the agricultural interest.³¹

The conference took place in 1841, and "was attended, among others, by 276 Congregationalists."³²

Halley has been remembered for one particular event in which he intervened. It was during a food riot in 1842. His son recalled the occasion:

My father's friend and deacon, Mr. Kershaw, was mayor; a mob was assembled in Stevenson Square, the temper of which was not easy to determine. Dr. Halley coming into the square found his friend uncertain whether to read the Riot Act or to try some other means. 'Let me see what

29. *CYB*, 1877, p. 369.

30. Halley was a great admirer of Lord John Russell (later 1st Earl Russell), who had campaigned for repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, 1828, and was the real architect of the 1832 Reform Act.

31. *Short Biography*, *op. cit.*, p. xlviii.

32. F.R. Salter, "Congregationalism and the Hungry Forties", *TCHS*, November 1955, p.107; see also R. Tomes, "The Social Conscience of Dissent c. 1841" *JURCHS*, Vol. 6, No. 3, November 1998, pp. 167-184. Halley's role was characteristically statesmanlike. It alarmed him when his conservative London friend, John Blackburn of Claremont Chapel, numbered him among the "agitators". See T. Larsen, "Friends of Religious Equality; The Politics of the English Nonconformists, 1847-1867", University of Stirling PhD, 1997, p. 26.

I can do', said my father. 'By all means' said the mayor. With his powerful voice he called to the crowd to hear him... He began with a few sympathetic words, lamenting the distress, and put himself *en rapport* with the audience.

Halley pointed out that only abolition of the Corn Laws was "the true remedy for the wide-spread suffering", and he pleaded with them to petition, and to support the mayor, who was "a leader in the free trade movement." His son stated:

His speech ended, the crowd (now good-humoured) gave forth cheers, whether for the mayor, or Dr. Halley, or the Anti-Corn Law League, or the People's Charter, or any or all of them, I am not quite sure. All danger of a riot was now over.³³

After Halley had been at Mosley Street nine years, the church decided to move to Cavendish Street because the majority of the members now lived in that vicinity. The land, and the new building, in a Gothic style, with Edward Walters, architect of the Free Trade Hall, to design it, cost £30,000, and it was opened in June 1848. Perhaps surprisingly his son made the comment: "He had a larger building and more hearers at Cavendish Street, but it never seemed to the writer that he was so easily and entirely master of his audience as in the old place."³⁴ The chapel had seating for 1,700 people.³⁵

Something must be said about preaching, and Halley's attitude to it. At Mosley Street his predecessor, McAll, had apparently wearied his people with exceptionally long sermons, and, therefore, in the pulpit a special device had been fitted which indicated, by loud knocks, when the sermon had passed one hour. However, McAll is said to have deadened the sound with his handkerchief. During Halley's ministry the instrument fell into disuse as "he could be trusted not to exceed the appointed hour by more than ten minutes."³⁶ His son confirmed that he "generally preached for an hour or more, and kept the attention of his audience."

Titles of some of Halley's sermons (the selection is included in his Biography) were: "The Inviolable Body of Christ" (*John* 19:36), "A Pilgrim's Songs" (*Psalms*

33. *Short Biography, op. cit.*, pp. xlvii-xlviii. James Kershaw (1795-1864), of Victoria Park, calico printer of Leese, Callender and Co., Alderman, 1838-50, Mayor 1842-3, MP Stockport 1847-59. On the Council of the Anti-Corn Law League, and a founder of the Manchester Reform Club, he was a supporter of the Lancashire Public School Association, hosting a breakfast in January 1851 addressed by Richard Cobden: its twenty-one guests included Robert Halley, Robert Vaughan, and Samuel Davidson (the two latter from Lancashire Independent College).

34. *CYB*, 1877, p. 369.

35. *Lancashire Nonconformity, op. cit.*, p. 144.

36. "Memoir", *op. cit.*, pp. 299-300.

119:54), "Beholding the Crucifixion" (*Gal 3:1*), "Light in the Clouds" (*Job 37:21*), "The Christian Tradesman" (*Matthew 5:13-16*). His son had made a choice of some of his printed sermons but he said that they were "not likely to do justice to his reputation." However, his eldest sister and others "thought that they would be acceptable to those numerous persons who have heard him preach, and whose memory would help their imagination to fill up what is deficient, and that they would be useful to other readers." With regard to the preparation of his sermons:

His plan seems to have been to take a certain number of sheets of paper, generally four, sometimes more, and to have written till he came to the end of his paper. Occasionally he ended with notes and hints for the remainder of the sermon, but generally he broke off in the middle of a sentence. Hence the powerful appeals with which he ended his discourses and the happy illustrations which he threw in seem to have been unwritten, if not *ex tempore*.³⁷

Halley's biographer included "The Christian Tradesman" as a specimen of the "Lectures to Young Men", but no date is given as to when it was delivered: Christianity was

not so refined and unearthly as to be visible only in the devotions of the sanctuary. It comes down to the everyday business of life, follows the man from the sanctuary to the warehouse or the workshop, presides over his bargains, balances the scales of his traffic; consecrates his gains to the service of God, and imparts strength to resist the temptations of the world... In the sanctuary it sings and it prays; but in the market it buys and it sells;... To blend fervour of Spirit with diligence in business is the working-day service of the Lord. In trading with a sincere Christian, you hold his salvation as security for his behaviour. In the entries of his journal he is reminded of other records of the day, which must hereafter be produced at the tribunal of the universal Judge. To that solemn review all his transactions are to be referred.³⁸

When Halley became Chairman of the Union in 1855, his Autumn address, delivered at the Poultry Chapel, London, on 23 October, was entitled "The Preaching prevalent at the present time in the Denomination." He admitted that he had had to depend mainly on reports of preaching, and also on occasional sermons in the press. He concluded that: "the preaching of our younger brethren is simple, earnest, truly evangelical, appropriate to the times, and upon the whole, better than that of the age which is passing away. The deficiency is, I fear, in directness, practicalness, and bearing upon the ordinary business of daily life." He felt that

37. *Short Biography, op. cit.*, pp. iv-v.

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 244, 247.

college students, when they began their ministries, "having suffered some disadvantage in that course of studies, seem to lose their power and freedom as soon as they begin to preach the glorious Gospel of the Lord Jesus... Their stiff and restrained address is not natural, but acquired, and the more offensive, therefore, unnatural." In view of this he wanted to suggest that the colleges should secure for students "practice in preaching."³⁹ "They have had enough of the cloister, let them appear publicly in the church." The colleges might "give the men the material, but they cannot the power of the preacher." Halley also lamented the decline in piety of the ministry and the churches. "Is the spirit of the world becoming strong in our churches?... If our sanctuaries are the resorts of world-minded men, who affect our administration and discipline by their influence; and if we have not power, by our preaching and prayers to overthrow the tables of the money-changers, and to cast out the unclean spirit, our mission is over, our work is done, and the hour of our bondage is to come upon us."⁴⁰

It was while Halley was in Manchester that he gave two courses of lectures on the Sacraments, the first series on Baptism, and the second on the Lord's Supper. These were subsequently published in two volumes in 1844 and 1851, and a preface added.

He admitted that:

With the cares of a large congregation, of late too much neglected, and, what has been far more embarrassing, the incessant interruptions of a populous neighbourhood, theological studies of this kind must be conducted under great disadvantages. I have often thought it my duty to relinquish them altogether...

Perhaps indeed, he wished that he had:

Had I foreseen that the selection of the subject would have involved me in so many controversies, I should have turned my attention to some other department of theology...

And he insisted that when he embarked on the subject he had no idea that it would bring him into collision with the Baptists:

If I can succeed in convincing our Baptist brethren, not that we are right, but that we have a case which honest men may honestly maintain without being chargeable with criminally resisting the truth, so that churches have no authority to prescribe any regulation upon the mode or the subjects of baptism, my chief object in pursuing this controversy will be attained. As

39. He recalled how the Evangelical Academies at the turn of the century had sent students out to preach: some of the best preachers were thus trained.

40. *Congregational Year Book*, 1856, p. 46, 49, 50, 51.

these opinions prevail, the two denominations will unite upon the principle, not of open communion churches whose principle is toleration of error... but upon the higher principle of unsectarian churches, whose principle would be a disavowal of the authority to determine in such a controversy, the members baptizing how, and when, and where, and whom they please; and whose pastors would be chosen and ordained, 'not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel.' In such a state of union the truth, wherever it lies would, I doubt not, soon be acknowledged.⁴¹

In Volume I Halley proposed that the Sacraments were:

significant rites – emblems of Divine truth – sacred signs of the evangelical doctrine – designed to illustrate, to enforce, or to commemorate the great and most important truths of the Gospel. Baptism, we believe is the sign of purification on being admitted into the Kingdom of Christ; but neither the cause nor the seal of it.

Halley was against referring to the sacraments as “seals of grace” because they were then opposed to the doctrine of justification by faith.

With regard to immersion, he considered that it was not indispensable: “pouring or sprinkling is sufficient to constitute the Christian rite which is the emblem of the cleansing of the heart by the truth and Spirit of Christ.” He maintained that in “any sacrament there is nothing moral, nothing holy, nothing religious, nothing of the least worth, except conscientious obedience to Christ...” This was a point of view he continually emphasised to the Baptists:

I can, and I do, most conscientiously avow, that I have not the slightest wish to make a single convert to sprinkling. I have no preference for any mode, I only attempt to vindicate our right to be regarded as baptized Christians, to which character we have, I believe, as good a title as any church on earth can supply...

Although the Baptist Tract Society insinuated that “we are the least in the Kingdom of heaven, we have no desire to adjudicate the position which they occupy in the common temple of the Lord’s congregation.” Halley contended that the original Greek would not sustain the conclusion of “our Baptist friends on philological grounds”, and if one conceded that the word usually meant “to dip and nothing else”, he asked “are we, on that account, so to restrict the administration of the Christian rite, as to exclude pouring and sprinkling?...”

41. R. Halley, *The Sacraments*, Vol. 1, pp. v, vi, vii, viii. Halley’s views, while unacceptable to Baptists, were to some extent put into practice 126 years later with the union in 1981 of the United Reformed Church and Churches of Christ.

Halley examined a number of New Testament references to baptism in considerable detail and asserted that:

there is no text of holy Scripture which requires faith, or any other Christian principle, as a necessary pre-requisite for baptism – no passage which rejects any candidate on account of not possessing it. If we are correct in this assertion, *our Baptist friends limit the commission of our Lord* (Mt. 28:19), *i.e. alter its terms, without any scriptural authority whatsoever.* [his italics]

He maintained that both good and bad men were baptized by the apostles.⁴²

In Part II, “The Lord’s Supper”, Halley emphasised that the Lord’s Supper was essentially “a social observance, a service of the whole church, or a community of saints.” It was not a private observance, and he taught that only the persons who properly constituted a church were qualified to participate in it. He used the word “church” as it was used in the New Testament sense in phrases such as “the church of Corinth”, “the church of Cenchreae.” Halley stressed that:

In [the Catholic] administration of the mass, the character of a supper, and even of a commemoration, is entirely abrogated. The priest is authorised to offer a true propitiatory sacrifice for sin. Instead of a table he has an altar, and instead of bread and wine, he professes to obtain by transubstantiation the real body and blood of Christ. The character of the service is entirely and avowedly sacrificial...

At the time, Halley felt that he must “expose” the inconsistencies of the Anglo-Catholics with regard to the Thirty-nine Articles of their church “so much as to show the unreconcilable opposition of their doctrine to the testimony of Holy Scripture.” Another important objective of the Lord’s Supper was nonetheless “to unite in fraternal love the several members of a Christian church. It is a holy communion – a common participation of the benefits procured by the death of Christ.”

Throughout these lectures, Halley maintained that the Lord’s Supper was a sacramental commemoration of “the propitiatory sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, once offered for the sins of the world.” Most of what he had to say on the subject can be summed up by saying it was and is a commemoration by *emblems*, which Christ himself had appointed.⁴³ A reviewer in the *Eclectic Review* concluded:

We have freely given utterance to our dissent from some of Dr.Halley’s

42. Halley, *The Sacraments*, Vol. 1, pp. 95, 104, 293, 302, 504–5.

43. *Ibid.* Vol. II, pp.71, 73, 74, 133, 134, 135, 220–1.

opinions, but we cannot part from him without an assurance of the deep impression the perusal of his work has left upon our minds of respect for his learning and talents, and of esteem for him as a man and a minister of Christ.⁴⁴

The work was a massive undertaking: the two volumes amounted to 1,007 pages.

Halley made a valuable contribution towards the shaping of Congregational polity, especially after the formation of the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1832. He described an Assembly as “a general representation of the Congregational churches... because I believe it generally and fairly represents the opinions and feelings, the thoughts and purposes, of our numerous congregations.” Yet in stating that, he recognised that those who attended had not been directly elected, and he went on to say “By such direct representation – may our Assembly never be constituted.” He feared that elected delegates would soon “become invested with authority”, and would then overrule “the free and independent action of our people.” Any decision taken ought to depend “upon the voice of the people” and “the love of the churches.” Therefore, such a constituted Assembly could never do more than “give a weighty and influential expression of general opinion.”⁴⁵

In an ordination charge of 1833, Halley said that he would choose the word “society” or “fellowship” rather than “church” or “congregation.” “A congregational church is strictly a society – a number of persons forming a social union for social worship – a union of many in one common interest.” Because it was a voluntary society it meant that “No man is to be forced, no man is to be bribed into church fellowship... Our only influence is the voice of reason, the gentleness of persuasion, and the cords of love.” On that principle all church censures must proceed:

We have authority to reprove, to suspend, or to exclude an offender, because he intrusted it to us on his admission into our society.

He thought that Congregationalists had an advantage in dealing with offenders, which the Church of England did not have, because they could urge:

You have yourselves deposited the authority in our hands, the name in the church book is the warrant for its exercise... we appeal to the New Testament, they to canon law: our spiritual weapon was intrusted to us by the offender; their carnal weapon was given them by the magistrate.

Halley maintained that “none but saints, sanctified men, are the proper subjects

44. *Eclectic Review*, 1845, Vol. xvii, p. 151.

45. *CYB*, 1856, pp. 44–5.

of Christ's kingdom." He went further: "our dissent is founded on the absolute necessity of a holy and evangelical ministry." He disagreed with the twenty-sixth article of the Church of England "which declares that evil men, if lawfully ordained, do minister by Christ's commission and authority." Halley then went on to point out the dangers of an unconverted ministry. "A congregational church", he said, "is *a proselyting society* [his italics]; or in modern language, a missionary society."⁴⁶

In 1855 Halley lamented their general decline in piety

God, in mercy to our country, raise up others, Primitive Methodists, Free Church Scotchmen, United Presbyterians, any evangelical and free people, to do our work, which, while the spell of the world is upon us, we cannot do with faith, honesty and power!⁴⁷

In 1869 Halley published his lectures on "Lancashire, its Puritanism and Nonconformity"; these had been delivered in Manchester and later published when he had returned to London and the academic life. The second volume was from the death of Charles I down to "Modern Dissent." He observed strains of Presbyterianism in Congregationalism:

The modern Independents have, moreover, renounced most of the peculiarities by which their fathers were distinguished from the Presbyterians. They no longer acknowledge the distinction of pastor and teacher;... their ministers occupy a position in almost every respect more like that of the old Presbyterian master than that of the Old Independent teacher; and their deacons are entrusted with much of the spiritual service which was entrusted to the ruling elders of the Presbyterians.

Halley pointed out that in Lancashire there had been five towns which were the sources from which evangelical Nonconformity had been diffused throughout the country: Manchester, Liverpool, Bolton, Blackburn and Lancaster. The Lancashire Congregational Union had been formed in 1806, and often through its encouragement and assistance:

where a new factory has drawn round it a working population, a congregational chapel has risen almost simultaneously with the mill, and a Sunday school has quickly been opened to afford good training for the children...

46. *Discourses delivered at the Ordination of the Revd. J. Stoughton to the Office of Co-Pastor with the Rev. A. Redford, William Street, Windsor 1 May 1833* by Robert Halley (and two others), pp. 4-7, 14, 17.

47. *CYB*, 1856, p. 51.

He noted that:

In many instances the work has prospered where the manufacturers have opposed, as well as where they have encouraged, the agency.

Halley was of the opinion that Congregationalism in the county was much less stiff and formal compared with “the southern and eastern counties.” Scotchmen he saw as forming an important part of the Nonconformists of Liverpool and Manchester.⁴⁸

In addition to his massive work on *The Sacraments*, in 1847 Halley also wrote a small volume entitled *Baptism, and the Designation of the Catechumens, not the Symbol of the Members of the Christian Church: A Reply to the Lectures of the Rev. Charles Stovel*. His biographer claimed that the lectures “excited considerable attention amongst the Congregational ministers” and caused them to modify their views, giving the “death-blow to the custom, prevalent in many of our churches, of refusing baptism to the children of parents who were not church-members.”⁴⁹

On the Bicentenary of the Act of Uniformity, Halley delivered a lecture on the Act’s “Design and Effects” in London for the Central United Bartholomew Committee. He gave an historical survey of the previous 200 years. In his opening words he drew attention to “criminations and recriminations” which had unfortunately arisen out of the Bicentenary Celebration, and he said he wanted to try to conduct religious controversy “in a Christian spirit.” Halley maintained that because even the Evangelical clergy of the Church of England believed “the truth of every word of the Prayer Book” – and that was “the teaching of a sacramental religion which includes the radical principles of Romanism” – the Protestantism of England could only be safe with Nonconformists. He objected most strongly to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. The conclusion of his lecture was:

the one and only object of the Act of Uniformity was to exclude all Puritan or Evangelical ministers from the church of England, or to render them incapable of honourably continuing their ministry in it.⁵⁰

Several years earlier, in 1853, Halley had lectured under the auspices of the Liverpool Sunday School Institute on Protestant Nonconformists. This was entitled *The Ejected Ministers* (of 1662), and it is interesting to note his concluding words:

Be it yours to transmit it [i.e. Nonconformity], to your successors with its

48. R. Halley, *Lancashire: its Puritanism and Nonconformity*, 1869, pp. 415, 461, 475, 494.

49. *Short Biography*, *op. cit.*, pp. lxxxii–lxxxiii.

50. R. Halley, *The Design and Effects of the Act of Uniformity: A Lecture delivered in Willis’s Rooms, St. James’s, May 20th 1862*, pp. 101, 104–5, 109.

principles unimpaired, its evangelical doctrine uncorrupted, and its true character preserved, whatever may be its changes in minor matters, so that its future may be worthy of its past history, until the day come *when Conformity and Non-conformity will be blended* [my italics] in the liberty with which Christ shall make his people free.⁵¹

Halley considered the relation of the Church to the State in a lecture of that title in 1870. He confined the subject to England where:

The Supremacy of the Crown is the great principle which has made the English Church what it is, and given form and character to its government, its doctrines, its services, its officials, and in short to all belonging to it.

He pointed out that the Anglican clergy were as much servants of the State as, in temporal things, army officers or excise collectors were. He then looked at its "Supremacy" and finally dealt with objections to it. He observed that in Britain's colonies "religious establishments have fallen, or are falling, and then Episcopacy started to act more vigorously than when it had been established."⁵²

In 1857, at the age of sixty-one, Halley left Manchester, where he had ministered for twenty-eight years, for London, where he succeeded John Harris as Principal and Professor of Theology at New College.⁵³ At New College's annual meeting, which had been held on 30 June, the Governors reported that to find a successor to Harris had been "an occasion of great anxiety", but after "careful inquiry, patient deliberation and earnest prayer" they had been guided to invite Halley. In Manchester Halley was never on the staff of the Lancashire Independent College, although he had been a governor. At New College there were still some who remembered his previous time in London as classics tutor at Highbury.

Halley was inducted at a special service in the Poultry Chapel, London, on 25

51. R. Halley, *Lectures on Protestant Nonconformists* (Liverpool Sunday School Institute), 1853, p. 180.
52. R. Halley, *The Relation of the Church to the State*, (Congregational Union Tracts, No. 5, Second Series), 1870, pp. 4, 28.
53. His departure followed his inevitable participation in the Davidson affair. He sat on the committee of enquiry and in 1857 he proposed the motion which at once expressed confidence in Samuel Davidson's theological views, appreciation of his tutorial services, and personal regard, while urging him to explain his "incautious language" in "several parts of his recent work." Davidson was not mollified. See J.A. Picton, "The College Crisis", in Anne Jane Davidson ed. *The Autobiography and Diary of Samuel Davidson DD LLD*, Edinburgh 1899, pp. 47, 53-4; R. Tomes, "We are Hardly Prepared for this Style of Teaching Yet; Samuel Davidson and Lancashire Independent College", *JURCHS*, Vol. 5, pp. 398 ff. At New College Halley had to steer his ship through the choppy waters aroused by his colleague, J.H. Godwin's, *Congregational Lectures on Christian Faith*, delivered 1858, published 1862. Godwin, unlike Davidson, survived in a college post, retiring in the same year as Halley.

September, 1857 “in the presence of a large and deeply interested congregation.”⁵⁴ He had always liked the lecture room – and at Manchester he must often have missed it – so in his last working phase he was in his element. One of his students recalled:

The freshness of his mind, the absence of all that was dry and rigid in his opinions and conversation, made us feel as towards him a brother; while his venerable age and character, joined to his tenderness and simplicity caused us to look up to him as a father.

Someone else said that his “reverential spirit” was one of the features of his character:

When dealing with abstruse metaphysical arguments, respecting the ‘being of a God’, the Christian believer was never lost in the philosopher. His inquiries into these subjects seemed but to confirm his faith in God, whilst they bowed him in wonder and adoration lower at His feet.⁵⁵

In the sermon class with the junior students it was said that he treated them “as fledglings and was never harsh.” However, in the senior class “all his native shrewdness, humour, and terseness had full play.” And when a bad sermon had been delivered, he would look at the student, with a twinkle in his eye and say:

you only require three things to make you a first class preacher. First, you require good thought. Secondly, you require good thought well expressed. Thirdly, you require that good thought well expressed, impressively delivered; and then you will make a very popular preacher.

When a student’s delivery was “doleful”, he would tell him “You will perhaps become a very popular preacher; but if so, it will be in delivering funeral sermons.”⁵⁶

Halley spoke twice at the centenary services of Highfield Chapel, Huddersfield, held in February 1872: he was then seventy-five. On the first occasion his text was II *Kings* 18:4. He spoke for about an hour, and a hearer commented on:

The vigour and freshness of thought, the aptness of illustration, the simplicity and yet beauty of the style, the intense earnestness, and the clear powerful voice of the preacher, united to make the sermon a treat of no ordinary character to the thoughtful hearer.⁵⁷

54. New College, London, *Report*, 1857, pp. 8–9.

55. “Memoir”, *op. cit.*, pp. 304–5.

56. *Short Biography*, *op. cit.*, p. lxxxvi.

57. R. Bruce, *Centenary Memorial*, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

On another day (the centenary lasted over a week) Halley spoke about the history of Highfield Chapel, and he concluded with an appeal for “steadfast adherence to Evangelical doctrine and simple earnest worship.” He was unable to say “God speed” to any preacher who did not preach plainly and earnestly, “first, the great Protestant doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, without works, moral or ceremonial; and secondly, the atonement for sin, made by the death of our blessed Lord...” In a sense this was Halley’s farewell and he himself recognised this by saying he was bidding farewell to the denomination with which he had been connected for so long, for his work was nearly over.⁵⁸

After fifteen years at New College – and then in his seventy-sixth year – Halley decided that the time had come for him to resign as Principal. He wrote to tender his resignation on 5 March, 1872, saying that he could not do so “without some reluctance and painful feeling”, and pointing out that before long he must expect “to feel the infirmities of advanced age.”⁵⁹ However, he then spent part of the next academic year as a substitute for David Worthington Simon, who was on sick leave and was Professor of Theology at Spring Hill College, Birmingham.

Up until a few months before his death, Halley preached most Sundays, and is said to have preached in every English county except Rutland. Even when on holiday he usually had a preaching engagement.⁶⁰

In 1873 Halley’s eldest son, Robert, became minister of Trinity Chapel, Arundel. By then Halley was living at Clapton in North London. He would sometimes stay with Robert at Arundel, although he refused to hear either of his two ministerial sons preach. He was of the opinion that “the elder would have been an excellent preacher if only he had the gift of speech, and the younger if he had anything to say.” However, two months before Halley died circumstances meant that he had to attend the Arundel church.⁶¹

In the summer of 1876 – because some decorating was being done at his London home – Halley decided to spend the summer at Arundel; he and some of his family

58. *Ibid.*, pp. 139, 140.

59. R. Halley, Letter of Resignation, 5 March 1872 (NCA, DWL, Ref. 270/6/1).

60. *CYB*, 1877, p. 370.

61. *Short Biography, op. cit.*, pp. xciv–xcv. Robert Halley jr. (1827–85) clearly lacked his father’s presence and executive grasp, while possessing his charm: MA London 1847; Professor of General Literature, Lancashire Independent College 1850–6; Principal, Doveton Protestant College, Madras 1856–63; first Headmaster of what became Tettenhall College, 1863–9 (an impossible job: there were administrative, disciplinary, and financial difficulties); minister at Arundel thereafter; John Jacob Halley (1834–1910) emigrated to Australia, for health reasons, in 1854, became a Congregational minister in 1860, and chaired the Congregational Union of Victoria 1871–2, 1908–9. He married Margaret Fletcher, daughter of Richard Fletcher, minister of Grosvenor Street Church, Manchester, 1831–53, and sister of William Roby Fletcher, himself a notable Congregational minister in Victoria and South Australia; their daughter, Ethel Mary Halley (b. 1865) served the LMS in Shanghai 1891–1911.

rented for three months Batworth Park house.⁶² From there he would have looked across the country to Arundel Castle. He said that he enjoyed the short country walks down the avenue which led from the house. However, he had a premonition that he would not see his London home again. He preached what was to be his last sermon at Arundel on 25 June, and by then he was only a shadow of the preacher he had been in his prime. It was his desire that he should preach once more: on his eightieth birthday on 13 August, but by then he did not feel well enough. On the following Thursday he was taken ill, and when he went to bed that night he said: "I must thank God first," and then after a few words of prayer he said: "I thank Thee, O God, that Thou hast been with me to the very last."⁶³ The next day, Friday, 18 August, 1876, he was unable to get up, and before midnight he died peacefully at Batworth Park.

On Sunday, 27 August, funeral sermons were delivered at Arundel by Professor Urwick, at Clapton Park Chapel by T.W. Aveling, who had been one of Halley's Highbury students, and at New College Chapel by Lt. D. Bevan, a former student there, and Halley was buried in Abney Park cemetery. He had had a long and fruitful life as minister, theologian, college principal, writer, and, last but not least, loving father, as much to his students as to his children.

ELISABETH J. NEALE

ELLA GORDON (1909 – 1999)

It was 1956 before the Presbyterian Church of England ordained its first woman minister. Even so it was the first of the connexional Churches to break through that barrier. Methodists and the Church of Scotland were some years behind and the Churches of Christ and the Church of England at least two decades later. Conciliar processes preserve coherence but move with a deliberate haste. We still wait for Rome and Constantinople.

It took the record and qualities of a very special person to raise the issue in a way that compelled decision. Annie Isabella Gordon, Ella as we came to know her, was such. Born in Aberdeen in 1909, she spoke with the soft cultured accent that has been described as the best example of spoken English. She came early to a sense of call to the full time service of the Church. Is the sense of vocation God's most effective instrument in the shaping of history? Providence and freedom have to find balance if the Kingdom is to come and nowhere do they meet more decisively than at the point where someone faces a call. Ella took two degrees, B.Sc in 1933 and M.A. in 1934, both from Aberdeen University. With this two-

62. Batworth, about a mile south-east of Arundel, was a seat of Edmund Constable Maxwell Stuart. This suggests considerable means: Halley's son-in-law, Walter Ashton, was a Lancashire banker, with distinguished descendants in the legal and art-historical worlds.

63. *CYB*, 1877, pp. 370-1.

sided equipment she asked the question to which she got the expected answer. Whatever her gifts or attainments there was no road into the ministry in the Church of Scotland. She offered herself for service under the Women's Foreign Mission of the Church and was appointed to Manchuria where she arrived in 1936. There followed five years in a country in political turmoil. Ella was sent packing in 1941 when the turmoil ended in Japanese occupation. The packing was far from pleasant.

Back in Scotland in the midst of a World War, she did various work for the Church of Scotland and took a two year course at St. Colm's Missionary College, working for a B.D. The course included time in Cambridge under H.H.Farmer. Her first class degree, with a distinction in Systematic Theology, came in 1945. Still cherishing her sense of call she made sure that the course included all the elements required for entry into the ministry. In 1946 she was appointed to a teaching post in Nagpur University. A year later she was able to return to Manchuria having, as she said, to re-learn Mandarin. But then there was Mao and the Communist take-over. She and her colleagues were expelled in 1949.

A story from that period speaks volumes of the kind of affection she always evoked. She had a beloved bicycle which the children with whom she was at work dismantled, distributing the parts for safe keeping, to prevent them from being requisitioned. When things eased and Ella was back in Britain the children gathered the parts together and assembled them. They then rode the bicycle over 100 miles to the nearest port and addressing it to Miss Ella Gordon, Liverpool, they shipped it off. The reunion was somehow achieved; with reverent joy on Ella's part. It remained her only vehicle in all that followed.

Back home, deeply frustrated but neither rebellious nor with any weakening of her sense of call, she taught science in Glasgow in Woodside Secondary School. In Cambridge she had been in touch with leaders of the Women's Home Church Committee of the Presbyterian Church of England, and with the significant work of the Church Sisters who had been a part of the Church's life for many years. She was recruited in 1952 and appointed in North Shields where the newly united congregation of St. Columba's was trying to establish work in a large new estate on the west of the town.

When, under the leadership of Dr. George Barclay, St. Columba's was born, two sites at opposite ends of the borough were earmarked. One of them was near where the Sunday School Union had tried to develop a Sunday School. Finding much difficulty they challenged St. Columba's as to whether they meant business. We took the view that a Sunday School with no church as its continuation would be a poor thing. Services were therefore started at 8 p.m. in the local School. This often meant four sermons on a Sunday and a walk accompanied by an elder or two from the evening service (then the service of the day) for more than a mile. As we looked ahead there was anxiety as to whether we could maintain it. Ella was welcome indeed, even though we did not yet know how great was our privilege.

Going to meet this person with her three degrees and her wonderful experience, I had my worries as to whether it would work. Could this woman with her

academic achievements and interests minister with understanding and without frustration in a community whose concerns had to be more deeply engaged in the struggle to meet basic needs? I need not have worried. Her gospel was for all, as was her friendship. The face that looked out of the train window was encouraging. As we travelled down to Shields on the local train and then walked to the manse I told her that she had come on the day of our Annual Sale so that she would be left for the afternoon to get sorted. She must have popped into a shop on the way, for by the time of the sale there were a number of newly embroidered handkerchiefs which she brought to the sale itself. Ella had arrived.

Quickly she won the affection and warm support of the parent church and of the still tiny company at West Chirton. There, her industry and care for people moved mountains. Nine baptisms one Sunday afternoon were only one sign of her influence and I had no worries about the degree of preparation they had involved. My real worry was that I might let her down by baptising them by wrong names. It registered with me that she was already the real pastor and that I was a fifth wheel to the coach, present only because I was a minister and she was not. If she ever felt that it was never evident.

Leading members of our national Church Extension Committee came up to look at us. They agreed that the site already ear-marked should be bought. It was our practice for that to be done by the Church at large but the local building operation had to be financed locally. A "two-way" church, as we then called it, with the hall separated from the chancel by a curtain, was designed by architects from St. Columba's and money was raised mostly by its members. It is impossible to say how much of even that was due to Ella's presence and the confidence she had evoked.

One day she arrived at the manse with a sheet of paper. It was her application to be received into the ordained ministry of the Presbyterian Church of England. That church had gone on record in 1921 as authorising the ordination of women to the eldership and declaring that there was no theological bar to their entrance into the ministry. No doubt the First World War with its immense casualty list had left all the churches wondering where their men had gone. Women in many cases carried the life of the churches during that awful time. Women elders began to appear and by 1956 had become a natural and accepted part of the life of nearly all our congregations. But in the thirty-five years that had passed several gifted women had tested the waters with regard to the ministry. For one reason or another the time was never right. At least one of them joined the ranks of the Congregational ministry and made a real place for herself. So, what should I do with Ella's application? It was carefully drafted with a full *curriculum vitae*, including her training, the story of her overseas service and of her work in North Shields. Its tone was right because it was genuine. Stressing that the nature of the pastoral relationship required entry to the full ministry she went on to say: "I feel quite unworthy of that high calling, but frankly it is not on the grounds that I happen to be a woman."

Warning her that she might very well suffer the same disappointment that had

come to previous applicants, I took her application to the appropriate Presbytery Committee. She had of course become known and esteemed in the Presbytery and when her record was thus set out, I recall that the Chairman of the Committee, Alan Whigham Price, commented to the (male) ministers present that we had better not lay ourselves open to comparison. The Presbytery debated, and when put to the vote the decision to forward the application of the Assembly saying that it "heartily approves and endorses her application" was carried by fifty-six votes to one, with five abstentions.

The Assembly proved more cautious. Two well-known and respected ministers moved that the 1921 decision should be re-examined and the principle reviewed. They had substantial support but when their amendment was put to the vote it was lost by 123 votes to 229. The original resolution was then put and carried, 253 voting for and only twenty-five against.

Ella Gordon was thus declared to be eligible for a call. It was clear that if we were to ordain a woman we would never have a better candidate. She was outstanding in ability, experience and personal grace of character. She was obviously delighted but responded without any triumphalism, as she had accepted her previous standing without any bitterness.

A call followed very speedily to the nearby church at High Howden. She was ordained there in November 1956. Apart from making undue demands upon herself, her service there for the next five years was beyond praise. It was not a strong church but she nourished its life and won the affection of her people and high regard in the community.

A new chapter opened when in 1961 she was called to Norris Green in Liverpool. Rankin Memorial, as it was called, had a close association with Queen's Road Youth Club, an outreach venture to inner city youth which originated in the former Queen's Road Church (which had had a share in the birth of Everton Football Club). Ella became Convenor of the Management Committee. Largely through her influence the Liverpool Presbytery, in an act of real faith, decided to take responsibility for continuing this pioneering project in a disused public house, which they purchased. The Rock Church was eventually established as a result of this work which owed its life at a critical moment to Ella Gordon's strength of purpose.

Ill health, due in part to the demands she put upon herself, led her from the pastoral ministry to teach at the Selly Oak Colleges in 1966, and to retirement in 1968. This she spent in Edinburgh, Comrie, and finally in Muthill, where she died, 31 March 1999.

A bald record does not do justice to the ability and dedication of this gracious woman. As a pioneer of women's ministry she knew that she was watched and that makes for loneliness. As she in turn watched the slow acceptance of women's ministry in the other Churches there was no triumphalism in her mood, just humble costly faithfulness to her sense of call and a quiet acceptance of the difficult pastorates which fell to her care. She came to the ministry in spite of the prejudices of the time and raised it to new levels of respect by her vision of its

meaning and the mature and often mischievous humour with which she met disappointments and frustrations. By her unshaken faith, she strengthened her friends and won enduring love from those who came under her care. She waited for companions but ten years later only three other women had become ministers of the Presbyterian Church. Perhaps she had set too high a standard.

Scholarly, spiritual, and sensitive with a simple delight in God's creation, she reached out to people of all ages and backgrounds in a loving, caring, and practical way, endearing herself to them and strengthening them in Christ.

ARTHUR MACARTHUR

THE NEWTON AND BULL PAPERS AT LAMBETH PALACE LIBRARY

Lambeth Palace Library houses a large MS collection of correspondence, diaries, and sermons which illuminate the lives and faith of John Newton and his circle of Evangelical friends, especially the Revd. William Bull, Independent minister of Newport Pagnell. I was alerted to their presence by Dr. Geoffrey Nuttall, in December 1997, who had been told about them by Dr. Edwin Welch. Dr. Welch died before he was able to contribute a note on the papers, so I have been asked to do so in his stead. Briefly, the collection is as follows:

MSS. 2935–43. Newton Papers: These were purchased at Sotheby's (22 June 1976, lot 212) with the aid of the Friends of Lambeth Palace Library, the Friends of the National Libraries and the Goldsmiths' Company. They include letters from Newton to his wife Mary and correspondence with George Whitefield, James Stillingfleet, John Thornton, Mary Unwin, Zachary Macaulay, William Carey and others, as well as letters from Hannah Wilberforce to Bull. They also include a description of Newton's course of study and spiritual meditation after his conversion, his "Lectures on the Acts of the Apostles", sermons on St. Luke's gospel, an engagement diary for 1767, and travel diaries for 1791–4, 1800 and 1803.

MSS. 3095–8. Correspondence of the Revd. William Bull: These papers were purchased at Sotheby's (14 March 1979, lots 330–331) with the aid of the Friends of Lambeth Palace Library and the Victoria and Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund. They include correspondence between Bull and Newton and letters from Newton to his wife's family, the Catletts, as well as letters to Newton from various correspondents including John Berridge, Charles Simeon and Henry Venn. There are also letters to Bull from Samuel Greatheed, Rowland Hill, Francis Okeley and John Thornton, amongst others, and a volume of sermons by John Laton of Chatham, Kent.

MS. 3534. Miscellaneous Papers: This is a guardbook which contains twenty letters from William Cowper to Bull, purchased with the aid of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Victoria and Albert Purchase Grant Fund, and the Friends of Lambeth Palace Library at Sotheby's (27 September 1988, lots 118–20), and a letter from Newton to Lady Hesketh, also purchased at Sotheby's (20 July 1989, lot 51).

MSS. 3970–3975. Newton and Bull Papers: These papers were purchased with the aid of the Friends of Lambeth Palace Library, the Victoria and Albert Purchase Grant Fund and the Friends of the National Libraries from John Wilson (Autographs) Ltd. in 1995. They include a transcript of Newton's slave ship diary for 1751–6, an incomplete commentary by Newton on St. Matthew's Gospel, letters to Newton from a large number of correspondents, including John Berridge, Bull, the 2nd Earl of Dartmouth, Thomas Scott and Henry Venn. There are also letters to Bull from James Belsham, Francis Okeley, Samuel Greatheed, Mary Newton, John Thornton, Hannah Wilberforce and others, letters from Bull to his wife Hannah and son Thomas, and correspondence and family papers of Thomas Palmer Bull.

The papers are in good condition and certainly repay attention by students of the Evangelical Revival. Lambeth Palace Library is freely open for research. Readers wishing to examine the MSS should write to the Librarian at Lambeth Palace Library, London SE1 7JU (telephone: 0171 928 6222, fax: 0171 928 7932).

MARILYN LEWIS

REVIEWS

Under God's Good Hand. By David Cornick. London: United Reformed Church, 1998. Pp. 214. ISBN 0 85346 175 9, £11.99 pbk.

Do not be deceived, for if David Cornick offers "a simple aim" for his book – namely "to introduce members of the URC and others to the history of the traditions which joined together to form the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom" – the finished work is far more than a mere denominational survey. In fact, this splendid little book manages effectively to analyze both Dissent and Dissenters since the Reformation "turned Europe upside down in the 1520s and 1530s."

The author uses six lively chapters (all of them rooted in "time charts" of real value to the general reader) to afford far more than careful narrative, and illustrates a vast range of material with much period quotation and pertinent judgment. In line with the demands of modern scholarship, the very word "reformation" is thus as carefully defined as a series of extracts from his works focuses the spiritual dilemma Martin Luther had to face and to resolve. Turning to John Calvin, Dr.

Cornick is clearly on home and hallowed ground when he firmly recognizes the Genevan patriarch as "the theologian of the incarnation." Equally clear that "Presbyterianism and Congregationalism were international phenomena," Dr. Cornick's deft brushwork skilfully highlights the significance of the developing "Protestant diaspora" which, down long centuries, strove to counter the rigidity of differing establishments in Church and State. For again and again in these pages, spirit confronts structure until toleration emerges. It is then that the faithful gain their crucial second wind and coveted recognition. For theirs is essentially a discipleship of individuals seeking first the Kingdom of God in the divine economy of heaven, and no longer giving priority to the earthly rule of monarch or prelate. But in 1691, any "Happy Union" of Congregationalist and Presbyterian proved more apparent than real to resemble rather "an unhappy stand-off".

It certainly proved the case that "very real differences of style and theology between the two communions" delayed true union for a further three hundred years. Yet what a triumph that Union has ultimately achieved, particularly since it also came to embrace the Re-formed Association of the Churches of Christ (1981). Lost opportunities may still frustrate, but to reach a principled pinnacle is great gain, and in his *Postscript*, Dr. Cornick is right to rejoice in a "Reformed heritage" reaching "back over nearly half a millenium [*sic*]", a heritage of three great traditions rich in their "deep commitment to and love of the Word of God."

PETER NEWMAN BROOKS

Sion Chapel, Ashbourne: Letters and Papers, 1801-1817. Edited by Edwin Welch. Derbyshire Record Society, 1998. £30.00.

In his final illness Edwin Welch gave priority to finishing the publication of documents relating to Zion Chapel, Ashbourne, which shared trustees with Cheshunt College. He believed, rightly, that we have little access to chapel records in the wider sense. The chapel's own records are in the Derbyshire County Record Office and comprise the usual collection of minutes and registers. In the Cheshunt College archives is the correspondence between the local committee and the national trustees. Taking the two together we have a fuller documentation of the life of an early nineteenth-century chapel than we are customarily given. Publishing the results makes them accessible to a wider public.

The difficulties of superintending a Derbyshire chapel from London are wonderfully illustrated. At one point William Pearson, the local secretary to the Chapel, resigns in despair. The resignation is decorously dressed in the language of Calvinist piety, as is his re-appointment. Pearson makes his apologies for the lack of success in promoting the chapel and mistakes in administering its funds. The other main correspondent, William Hodson, expresses the frustration of the trustees that money is spent without authority and that local people do not raise more. To add to the complexities, the chapel had almshouses attached, for which suitable candidates had to be found. Behind the scenes, William Cooper, the

prosperous merchant who endowed the Chapel, and then his widow, make their own decisions and exert their own pressures.

The generosity of Mrs. Cooper did help the church acquire additional land to the east, on which the manse and schoolroom were subsequently built. The original purchase was to prevent speculative building overshadowing the chapel. The newly purchased land was let as a garden whenever a tenant could be found, though the trustees grumbled at the low rental return on the capital investment. Originally the chapel was used for a Sunday School and when the gallery was added at the back, to accommodate the organ, the space beneath was assigned to the school. In modern times the church apse was filled by a great nineteenth-century organ and the children decanted to the schoolroom on site.

From this often mundane correspondence we learn some important things. The joint promotion of evangelism in Ashbourne by the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion and Thomas Wilson left tensions in the congregation at Zion Chapel. There was always a rumbling of discontent from those who wanted to establish an Independent church. This led to two clear statements of policy from the trustees, who were of the Connexion. One was that a distinguishing mark of the Connexion was the reading of Prayer Book services, because they were basically Anglicans forced to take advantage of the provisions for Dissenters. The other was their unwillingness to take on any more dissenting trusts, when an extension church in Yeavely was proposed. The trustees of Cheshunt College were already patrons of the living of Aldwinkle. One may assume that they might have accepted further opportunities of patronage in the Church of England but were unwilling to be seen as promoters of Independent chapels. Independents were sometimes their allies, but they were aware that not all Independents had embraced the evangelical Calvinism of George Whitefield.

One interesting case of church discipline emerges. Pearson reports in confidence to the trustees that he suspected a woman member of twenty years' standing was having an affair with a French prisoner of war. Many such prisoners were held in Ashbourne. He followed her one night, hoping to confirm his suspicions. To his mortification he trailed her to the house of a young man from the congregation. Hodson advised him that she should be denied communion and sent to Coventry. Nothing is said as to the young man. In addition to such punitive discipline the inhabitants of the almshouses only held their tenancy so long as they attended chapel services. They were also expected to make a contribution towards their own keep and be of good moral character. Nor could they be paid their pension if they became too ill to remain in the almshouses. The Trustees stated that they could not make exceptions to these rules since they were part of Cooper's original trust.

The correspondence also throws light on the movement of ministers within the Connexion in the years after the founder's death. It must have been the inducement of Cooper's trust and the availability of ministers which kept the congregation from moving into Independency. One of the local committee throughout the period covered in the book was a preacher among the Independents. Later he was to become an Independent minister.

One gap in the commentary and notes supplied is any reference to Thomas Wilson's papers in the Congregational Library. From these it is evident that Wilson played an active role in developing the evangelical congregation which met in the old Presbyterian chapel in Compton, Ashbourne, before 1801. Wilson was offended that Cooper abandoned the old building when he endowed the new chapel, without consultation. This building was demolished subsequently and it is not the same as the surviving Presbyterian chapel building identified by Christopher Stell. By his munificence Cooper tried to secure the cause for the Connexion, specifically forbidding Independents to use the building. It was not until the formation of the United Reformed Church in 1972 that the Cheshunt College trustees finally transferred the trust, the congregation having been effectively Congregational, and then URC, for over 100 years. In 1998, as Edwin Welch's last book was prepared for the press, the URC church in Ashbourne finally left Cooper's Zion Chapel building, which was beyond their capacity to repair, and went to share the use of the Victorian building of St. John's Church, Ashbourne. St. John's was built and endowed by Low Church evangelicals who regarded the ancient parish church of St. Oswald as far too broad. The first trustees would have regarded the present state of affairs as a move in the right direction.

STEPHEN ORCHARD

Christian Fellowship or The Church Member's Guide. By John Angel James. Edited and abridged by Gordon T. Booth. Pp. 64. Quinta Press, Meadow View, Quinta Crescent, Weston Rhyn, Oswestry, Shropshire, England, SY10 7RN. 1997. £3.75. ISBN 1 897856 04 0

The works of the great Congregationalists still repay reading, and Quinta Press may be congratulated for its intention to reprint a selection. John Angell James, minister of Carrs Lane Congregational Church, Birmingham 1805–59, first published this work in 1822 for his own fellowship. It ran to thirteen editions by 1870. This is an abridgement for the tenth edition of 1861, in the collected works edited by James's son.

Gordon Booth states that his aim, in publishing *Christian Fellowship* in this form, is "to provide churches with something to put into the hands of members and potential members who are unfamiliar with the Congregational tradition." Booth hopes to preserve much of "the flavour of James" for although it is "shortened, nothing has been removed." Lest any should feel James wrote from too narrow a focus, he encouraged his readers to "maintain a spirit of Christian charity towards those who differ from us." Rather let us "broaden our interest beyond the scope of our own denomination and abhor the tone and temper of sectarian bitterness". Whether we believe this book is the right one to be given to new church members or not, we should all say Amen to that.

However, readers of this journal might have preferred a full text of *Christian Fellowship* rather than this abridged version. For instance, James, in his 1822

edition, urged the value of union in order to spread the Gospel. "Many objects of vast importance to the spread of the gospel in the world can be accomplished by the union of churches which cannot be effected without it. Union is power ... United fires brighten each other's blaze and increase each other's intensity ..."

I should like more of James.

I find the shiny and illustrated cover quite inappropriate.

ALAN ARGENT

Pilgrims in Mission: Celebrating 150 Years of the English Presbyterian Mission. By George Hood. Pp. 174 + xvi. Alnwick: George Hood in association with the United Reformed Church, 1998. £4.95 + £1 p & p (available from the Tavistock Book Room). ISBN: 0 0533153 04

George Hood, former missionary in East Guangdong and author of two valuable books on the missionary era in China, has prepared for publication this collection of memories of those who served the English Presbyterian Mission in its final years up to 1972. The reminiscences, originally prepared for the 150th anniversary celebrations of the Mission in 1997, cover the Mission's major historic fields in East Guangdong (Lingdong), South Fukien, and Formosa-Taiwan, and also its work in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and Singapore-Malaysia. Hood has added an introduction which emphasizes the profoundly catalytic significance for the Presbyterian Church of England – perhaps more than any other – of the enforced withdrawal between 1950 and 1953 of its personnel from China, which had accounted for 80% of the Mission's human and financial resources. The experience of exile from China and relocation from Taiwan, Singapore-Malaysia and elsewhere provoked critical reflection on the nature and conduct of Christian mission. It also involved missionaries in new ecumenical partnerships which anticipated the wider unity which followed for their denomination in England after 1972. The reminiscences themselves are inevitably a disparate assortment. That by Dan Beeby, reflecting on his own experience of exile from Taiwan at the hands of the Kuomintang in 1972, stands out for the glimpse it affords into how one missionary, through the sometimes painful process of bringing into juxtaposition his reading of scripture and the political events in which he was immersed, discovered new depths of meaning in the gospel.

BRIAN STANLEY

John Williamson Nevin, American Theologian. By Richard E. Wentz. Oxford: OUP, 1997. Pp. viii + 169. £29.99.

Richard E. Wentz of Arizona State University, raised in the tradition of which he writes, here adds to the growing body of literature on the Mercersburg movement. Deriving its name from the Pennsylvania location of the German

Reformed Seminary, and its intellectual impetus from F.A. Rauch, J.W. Nevin and Philip Schaff, this tradition represents a plea on behalf of the catholicity of the church conceived as an organism, and for a liturgy which draws upon the heritage of the ages and gives due place to the sacraments; and this in face of sectarian attitudes and revivalistic methods current in America in the nineteenth century. The legacy of Mercersburg is a living one, as is evident from the activities of the Mercersburg Society which was constituted in 1983.

The Mercersburg tradition has generally been regarded as rooted in the intellectual soil of the Romantic movement, of which Hegelian and post-Hegelian immanentism is a conspicuous aspect. Under this influence many theologians came to exalt the incarnation of Christ sometimes (as Bomberger and others thought of Nevin, and as James Denney, for example, thought of the idealists of his day) at the expense of the Cross.

Professor Wentz does not deny the importance of Nevin's intellectual inheritance, but clearly feels that some have paid almost exclusive attention to it (though he overlooks a good deal of post-1986 Nevin scholarship, which is unfortunate). He wishes to redress the balance by presenting Nevin as a distinctively American theologian who reacted against the socio-religious trends of his day which, he believed, were fostering the disintegration not only of the churches, but of American culture as a whole. Nevin is thus seen as an "outsider" to the mainstream of American religious life. To Nevin the culprits are Puritanism, revivalism, individualism and voluntarism.

An outline of Nevin's life and work is followed by discussions of the nature of systematic theology, the public character of theology, a radical and realized catholicity, the theology of history, nationalism and the American Republic, missions, and liturgy and the American cultus.

Wentz does well to elevate the socio-religious stimulus and challenge to Nevin's received idealism, and some of his assertions are in the best sense provocative, for example: "The significance of Christianity may well be found in its philosophy of history, not in a salvationism that nourishes believers." He capably indicates the novelty of Nevin's stance: he opposed American naturalism and rationalism which failed to understand the true nature of the Church, and he was at odds with his theological compatriots in insisting that theology is not a matter of thinking about faith, but of thinking by means of it. It is good to be reminded of Nevin's view of the Catechism, which is not without significance as we seek to form Christians for a new millennium: "The Catechism is more than mere doctrine. It is doctrine apprehended and represented continually in the form of life."

Perhaps as a concession to fashion Professor Wentz declares that his work "is not an intellectual biography in the modernist sense of that genre but rather a kind of postmodern portrait of Nevin's ideas." Any proposition which begs three questions tends to obscure more than it explains. More seriously, Wentz fails to give Nevin's theological opponents a fair hearing: for example, the views of Bomberger are communicated all too briefly, and this *via* a secondary source which mangles them. Again, when Wentz, expounding Nevin's view of the

mystical union with Christ, says "Although he would not have understood it so, there is a sense in which [Nevin's theology, here deemed sophisticated] offers to dialogue with a Buddhism that insists on the necessity of transcending the experience of ordinary, particular selfhood", there are no balancing words from those who feared for the scandal of particularity in Nevin's hands. Nevin is let off the hook regarding his view of the Church as the extension of the incarnation, and his claim that "our nature as a whole was lifted from its fallen state, and brought into union with God" demands closer analysis than it here receives.

But there are many good things in this stimulating book, and for reminding us of the Mercersberg witness concerning the importance of the heritage of faith, the catholicity of the Church, and the peril of individualism in religious life, Professor Wentz is warmly to be congratulated.

ALAN P.F. SELL