

THE JOURNAL
of the
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HISTORY SOCIETY

(incorporating the Congregational Historical Society,
founded in 1899, and the Presbyterian Historical Society
of England, founded in 1913).

EDITOR: PROFESSOR CLYDE BINFIELD, M.A., F.S.A.
Volume 6 No 7 December 2000

CONTENTS

Editorial	467
What Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge were doing when they were not writing hymns by <i>Andrew C. Thompson</i>	469
Dissent and the Weaver: George Eliot's <i>Silas Marner</i> by <i>Christine Richards</i>	483
The Progress of the Intelligent, the Moral, and the Kindly: Robert Vaughan's Celebration of Urban Culture in <i>The Age of Great Cities</i> by <i>Mary Hora</i>	496
Zion, Manchester by <i>Stephen Mayor</i>	503
The Overlooked Pacifist Tradition of the Old Paths Churches of Christ: Part II – Labour and Pacifist Ties from the 1920s to the Present by <i>Michael W. Casey</i>	517
R. Tudur Jones 1921-1998: Congregational Minister, Church Historian, and Welsh Nationalist by <i>Robert Pope</i>	529
Reviews by <i>John Proctor, Andrew C. Thompson, and Alan Tovey</i>	542
Local Church Histories by <i>Stephen Mayor</i>	547

EDITORIAL

Perhaps the theme of this issue is encapsulated in the title of Mary Hora's contribution : sidelights on the progress of the intelligent, the moral, and the kindly. What is perhaps more striking is the variety of dissent which has sustained our tradition, some of it in steady reaction to those more dominant tendencies which have resulted in the United Reformed Church. This is the value of the contributions by Christine Richards and Michael Casey. All the contributions have something to say about the social, cultural, intellectual, and ecclesiological

We welcome Dr. Christine Richards, formerly Senior Lecturer in English Literature at the University of North London, and the Revd. John Proctor, Director of New Testament Studies at Westminster College, Cambridge. They join Andrew Thompson of Queen's College, Cambridge, Mary Hora of Louisville, Kentucky, Stephen Mayor, formerly of Cheshunt and Westminster Colleges, Cambridge, Michael Casey of Pepperdine University, Malibu, Robert Pope of the University of Wales, Bangor, and Alan Tovey, General Secretary of an Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches.

We congratulate our Chairman, Professor Stephen Orchard, on his appointment as Principal of Westminster College, Cambridge, in succession to our Review Editor, Dr. David Cornick, who is to leave Westminster in July to become General Secretary of the United Reformed Church. Dr. Robert Pope has succeeded Dr. Cornick as Review Editor.

We note here the death of one of our most distinctive members, *Ernest William Dawe* (1923-2000), secretary of the Congregational Historical Society from 1954 to 1957. Ernest Dawe was a London graduate and New College man, brought up in Lavender Hill Congregational Church, Battersea. He combined his historical interests with the London Congregational Union's Youth Department and ministry at Dalston (1950-57). From 1957, however, he ministered in the Evangelical Church of the Palatinate, his service in Germany reflecting his lifelong commitment to the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, his work in the 1950s for Donald Soper's Order of Christian Witness, and his wartime work in the coalmines as a conscientious objector. His was a quintessentially twentieth-century ministry.

WHAT ISAAC WATTS AND PHILIP DODDRIDGE WERE DOING WHEN THEY WERE NOT WRITING HYMNS

My title alludes to the widely held perception that what Watts “did” was write hymns; Doddridge too, although his case is perhaps more complicated because within the Dissenting tradition he is known today predominantly as a hymn writer although something of his activities as an educationalist, particularly at the Northampton Academy, might also be known. Outside the Dissenting tradition his reputation is more balanced, in the sense that his other activities are regarded as important. This is, however, a balance at the margins. A survey of eighteenth-century historiography reveals that Watts is far more frequently referred to, both in specialist religious history of the eighteenth century and in more general history, while Doddridge is barely mentioned.

This paper suggests a readjustment¹. We need to broaden our collective focus and take Watts’s and Doddridge’s other contributions to eighteenth-century Dissent more seriously. Their contemporary reputations were not based solely on the writing of hymns and the paraphrasing of psalms.

Hymns and historiography

What explains the near universal emphasis on the primacy of their hymnody in assessments of Watts and Doddridge? It would be foolish to ignore the importance of hymns to Protestantism in general and Dissent in particular. There is much to be said for the view that the Reformation became assimilated and accepted at a local level in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries through the replacement of Catholic liturgical practice (which was far more popular than many historians of the last generation were prepared to concede) with the Protestant habits of psalm singing.² Isaac Watts’s activities marked a break from the hard-line Calvinism of the seventeenth century, which had regarded even hymn singing as an ungodly activity. Watts, with his interest in “relevance”, which extended to versions of the psalms written from the theological perspective of the New

-
1. A version of this paper was first given to the URC History Society Study Weekend at Westminster College, Cambridge, on 12 September 1998. My concern there was to indicate why the commemoration of the 250th Anniversary of the death of Isaac Watts ought to concentrate on more than his poetic abilities. Some of this material was first used in an undergraduate dissertation entitled “The reception of John Locke in eighteenth-century dissenting thought” (University of Cambridge, BA Dissertation, 1998). I would like to thank Dr Geoffrey Nuttall, Dr David Wykes, and Mr John Creasey for their help. The trustees of Dr Williams’s Library kindly allowed me to consult manuscripts in their possession. Professor J.C.G. Binfield offered a number of helpful suggestions on a previous draft.
 2. See E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (New Haven and London, 1992) for the strength of Catholic piety and D. MacCulloch, *Building a Godly Realm* (London, 1992) for a brief summary of the establishment of a more Protestant culture.

Testament (for were not the confessions and affirmations of the Psalms a Jewish, as opposed to strictly Christian, legacy?), could place himself at the beginning of a new era in Dissenting hymnody. The importance of the hymns of Watts, Doddridge, and Wesley should not be underestimated, especially when we recall the extent to which hymns formed a large part of Dissenting identity: "hymns are for us Dissenters what the liturgy is for the Anglican. They are the framework, the setting, the conventional, the traditional part of divine service as we use it".³

This trend can be illustrated in other ways. According to Erik Routley, Doddridge was the author of 375 published hymns, and in 1951 Routley argued that Doddridge should be viewed as the fourth best English hymn writer, after Watts, Wesley (whose positions are not definitely apportioned) and James Montgomery, who gets the bronze medal.⁴ The old *DNB*, at least in its incarnation on CD-ROM, lists Watts's profession as "hymn writer" (Doddridge is described as a "dissenting divine"). Canon Henry Leigh Bennett, who wrote the 1899 article on Watts, claims he wrote over 600 hymns, of which about twelve were still in general use. Julian has only 454 hymns on his list in his *Dictionary of Hymnology*.⁵ More recently, Michael Watts, in his history of Dissent, noted that by Watts's death in 1748 sixteen editions of his hymns and seven of his psalms had been published and, while mentioning some of his other activities, concluded "but it is as a hymn writer that Watts is remembered today when many other excellent pastors are forgotten".⁶ Linda Colley's only mention of Watts in *Britons* is to point out how he contributed to notions that Britain was *the elect nation* by changing "Israel" to "Britain" in his psalms.⁷ She refers, of course, to the *Psalms of David, imitated in the language of the New Testament*.⁸ This lack of attention to Watts is particularly striking because Colley lays such emphasis on the existence of a common "Protestant" identity in early eighteenth-century Britain; opposition to "Popery" was far more important than the tensions between different sorts of Protestants. Dissenters have used hymns as significant parts of their own identity.

-
3. B.L. Manning, *The Hymns of Wesley and Watts* (London, 1942), p. 133. For a more recent example, consider the failure of *Hymns and Psalms* to become an ecumenical hymnbook in the 1980s, due, to a large degree, to the insistence of the Methodist Conference that a requisite number of hymns must originate from the pen of the great Wesley.
 4. E. Routley, "The hymns of Philip Doddridge", in G.F. Nuttall, ed., *Philip Doddridge, 1702-51* (London, 1951), pp. 46-78, a.f. p. 46. The 1951 volume, it should be added, is a notable exception in the historiography because of its attempt to deal with all aspects of Doddridge's work.
 5. J. Julian, *A Dictionary of Hymnology* (London, 1892), pp. 1236-41.
 6. M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters: from the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 311-12.
 7. L. Colley, *Britons* (New Haven and London, 1992), p. 30.
 8. Isaac Watts, *The Psalms of David, imitated in the language of the New Testament* (London, 1719).

Historians of Dissent have reinforced this view and the other activities of Watts and Doddridge have been marginalised.

Short Biographies

Watts was born in 1674, the eldest of nine children of a Southampton clothier. His father was a Dissenter and was imprisoned while Isaac was a child. Legend has it that the young Isaac was suckled by his mother on the steps of Southampton Gaol, while she was waiting for news of her husband. Although this probably tells us more about the importance which later Dissenters attached to identifying their heroic hymn writer with their earlier sufferings than about historical veracity, the perception is as telling as the reality.

Isaac was a precocious child. He learnt Latin from the age of four, Greek from nine, French from ten and Hebrew from thirteen. In 1690, at the age of sixteen, he was sent to the academy of Thomas Rowe in London. Rowe was one of the earliest exponents of the "new" philosophy of Descartes and Locke. He is said to have encouraged critical thought amongst his students: indeed it is Watts who provides us with some of the little information we have about the curriculum of academies before 1700, based upon his experience under Rowe.⁹ Watts's knowledge of Locke, however, is unlikely to date from this period. Although Locke's three major works, *A Letter concerning Toleration*, *The Two Treatises of Government* and *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* were all published in 1689-90, only the last was acknowledged by Locke. His authorship of the other two did not become widely known until the publication of his will and the first edition of his complete works after his death in 1704. Watts left the academy in 1694 and returned to his home in Southampton, where he wrote many of his *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* during the next two years, although they were not published until more than a decade later.¹⁰

He spent the next six years of his life as tutor in the house of Sir John Hartopp in Stoke Newington. His reading from this period was probably the basis for his future writing. It is likely that he made his acquaintance with Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the Scriptures* in this period. Watts became minister at Mark Lane Congregational Church in 1702, where John Owen had served. Cromwell's granddaughter was in the congregation. However, his poor health meant that he had an assistant, Samuel Price, from 1703. In 1712 he was invited to take up residence in the Abney household, where he remained until his death in 1748, when he was buried in Bunhill Fields. A monument was subsequently erected in Westminster Abbey. It was the general patronage, above all else, that enabled him to write as much as he did.¹¹

9. Watts, *The Dissenters*, pp. 311-12, H. McLachlan, *English Education under the Test Acts* (Manchester, 1931), pp. 49-52.

10. Isaac Watts, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (London, 1707-09).

11. The catalogue of the Cambridge University Library has around 120 separate editions of works by Watts, of which hymns, as such, form a relatively small part. The English Short Title Catalogue generates over 3000 references to his works. As a means of comparison, Doddridge has about sixty and 600 references respectively.

Philip Doddridge was born in 1702, the youngest of twenty children and he showed so few signs of life at first that it was feared he was stillborn. He also came from solid Dissenting stock. His grandfather had been ejected in 1662 and his father was a prominent lay Nonconformist. Doddridge was educated in Kingston-upon-Thames and later at the academy of John Jennings at Kibworth in Leicestershire, despite the offer of the Duchess of Bedford to pay for his education at university, with a view to the Anglican priesthood. The influence of Jennings on Doddridge cannot be overestimated. Jennings used his own textbook on Logic at Kibworth, *Logica in usum juventutis academicae*, "a great deal of which was taken from Mr Locke, with large references to him and other celebrated authors, under almost every head", as Doddridge later described it in a letter.¹² Doddridge's commitment to Dissent was reinforced at this time by his reading of Calamy's *Defence of Moderate Nonconformity*, the second volume of which was regarded as a Dissenting "classic" and, in the opinion of his biographer and assistant, Job Orton, swung the balance for Doddridge in favour of Dissent.¹³ Doddridge took over from Jennings in Kibworth in 1723 at a salary of £35 per annum, which he regarded as adequate, given that he could board for £10 a year. He ministered in Market Harborough from 1725 and then moved to Castle Hill, Northampton in 1729, taking the academy with him. He remained in Northampton until his death, not without notice, because he was one of the last tutors to be prosecuted under the provisions of the Act of Uniformity against Dissenting educational institutions.¹⁴

-
12. McLachlan, *English Education*, p. 136. Doddridge's hymns, we note *en passant*, take up but one quarter of one of the five volumes of the 1803 edition of his complete works.
13. Job Orton, *Memoirs of the life, character and writings of the late Reverend Philip Doddridge, DD of Northampton* (London, 1766), p. 184. Interestingly, Calamy was to claim in his autobiography that

I had also a message from the ingenious Mr Locke, letting me know that he had read this Introduction [to the *Defence*], and thought it such a defence of Nonconformity as could not be answered; and that standing to the principles there laid down, I had no occasion to be afraid of any antagonist.

The fact that this letter does not appear in Locke's published correspondence only makes the matter more intriguing. See Edmund Calamy, *An Historical Account of my own life, with some reflections on the times I have lived in*, ed. J.T. Rutt (2 vols., London, 1829), ii, pp. 30-1. See also Orton, *Memoirs of Doddridge*, p. 96 and Daniel Mayo, *A funeral sermon occasioned by the much lamented death of the late reverend and learned Edmund Calamy, DD* (London, 1732), p. 26.

14. See G.F. Nuttall, "Doddridge's life and times", in Nuttall, ed., *Philip Doddridge, 1702-51*, pp. 11-31. See also Nuttall's introduction to *Calendar of the Correspondence of Philip Doddridge, D.D.* (London, 1979), pp. ix-xxxvi.

Doddridge has been better served by recent historians than Watts, who lacks a full modern biography.¹⁵

The Academies

The first area of activity outside hymnody that I want to consider is that much written about, but little understood, institution, the Dissenting Academy. John Thompson's recent history of the Coward Trust (which gave financial support to Doddridge), indicates the complexity of the scene after 1738 and illuminates the complex relationship between Coward, his trust, Watts (one of the first trustees) and Doddridge, whose sympathies were a little too broad for some, Abraham Taylor included.¹⁶ The Dissenting Academy needs to be revisited. The most comprehensive book on the subject remains McLachlan's *English Education under the Test Acts*, although this is now over sixty years old.¹⁷ While the conventional historiography has probably overestimated their general significance, no study of Watts or Doddridge, or indeed of their contemporaries, should ignore the importance of the academies for the formation of Dissenting identity.¹⁸ At Northampton, lay students studied for three years and ministerial students for five. The academies, especially Northampton, provided crucial institutional contexts for the dissemination of ideas, particularly the "new philosophy" of Locke, not least because their tutors often moulded curricula to suit their own interests. One needs to remember the impact of particular textbooks. Watts's *Logick: or the right use of reason* (1725) and Doddridge's *Lectures on Pneumatology, Ethics and Divinity*, published in 1763 but in circulation in manuscript form long before that, were the

-
15. The most recent biography of Watts is A.P. Davis, *Isaac Watts* (London, 1948). Watts's earlier biographers range from the ubiquitous Paxton Hood (recommended by Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology*, p. 1236) to Samuel Johnson, who included Watts in his *Lives of the poets*. The tercentenary of his birth produced a Southamptonian commemoration, David Fountain's *Isaac Watts Remembered* (Worthing, 1974).
 16. J. Thompson, "A History of the Coward Trust", supplement to *The Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society*, 6 supplement 1 (May 1998), pp. 1-15. See also J.H. Taylor, "The Congregational Fund Board, 1695-1995", supplement to *The Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society*, 5 supplement 1 (1995) for Watts's involvement with that institution.
 17. H. McLachlan, *English Education under the Test Acts* was published in 1931. I believe David Wykes is writing a major book on the subject and I know of at least one graduate student (at the University of Osnabrück) working on them. See, as an introduction, D.L. Wykes, "The contribution of the dissenting academies to the emergence of rational dissent", in K. Haakonssen, ed., *Enlightenment and religion: rational dissent in eighteenth-century Britain* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 99-139.
 18. Wykes, "The contribution of the dissenting academies", pp. 100-101 and p. 134 emphasises the tiny number of students at the academies and the unjustified importance given to them by historians of education.

staple of the curricula in the more liberal academies.¹⁹ A trawl through the manuscript essays and lecture notes from students at Northampton and Daventry for the second half of the eighteenth century would be likely to reveal a wealth of references to these works.²⁰ Hence my first area of “doing” concerns the provision of educational material.

Importance of Education

Yet the interest in education no more stopped at the classroom door than it had begun there. One of Watts’s other areas of interest was the education of younger children. He wrote hymns specifically for children, first published in *Divine songs, attempted in easy language for the uses of children* in 1715. They remained popular for most of the eighteenth century. These were complemented by catechisms for the young. He argued that it was necessary to teach children as they acquired the capacity to reason: a child needed to be shown how to distinguish the useful parts of scripture (which I take to imply that Watts did not believe that all scripture was directly useful – tales of Old Testament killings were a particular source of his displeasure), and the age of a child should determine the length of catechism suitable for use. Hence he provided a shortened version of the Westminster Catechism and, as that which was learnt by rote had to be understood as well as remembered, he provided an explanatory commentary.²¹ It is worth noting here that Doddridge’s classic *Rise and progress of religion in the soul* was fully in line with Watts’s more general concern to teach both body and soul. It has been argued recently that both Watts’s and Doddridge’s educational projects should be viewed as part of the rise of “candour” and “civility”, typified by the values of Addison and Steele’s *Spectator* and captured in Langford’s description of the eighteenth-century English as a “polite and commercial people”.²² Yet the hatred of sectarianism found in Doddridge’s lectures should not be taken to mean that he had retreated into some sort of universal humanism. To be and to educate “meer” Christians was his, and Watts’s, aim and it is difficult to explain Doddridge’s *Family Expositor* in any other way. This brought scripture and commentary into the homes of his flock and continued the growth of biblical paraphrases, to which Locke had made a significant contribution himself. Thus my second area of “doing” is that of the general education of Dissenters, in schools, homes and churches. My third area of “doing” is the engagement of both

-
19. See A. Sell, “Philosophy in the eighteenth-century dissenting academies of England and Wales”, *History of Universities* 11 (1992), pp. 85-6 for the difference in more evangelical institutions.
 20. This assertion is based on a limited sampling of the material, to which Dr G.F. Nuttall kindly drew my attention. At that time, I was looking for references to Locke.
 21. Isaac Watts, “A discourse on the way of instruction by catechism and of the best manner of composing them”, in *Works* (6 vols., London, 1753), iii, pp. 205-15.
 22. A. Saunders, “The state as highwayman: from candour to rights”, in Haakonssen, ed., *Enlightenment and Religion*, p. 253.

Doddridge and Watts in serious and rigorous intellectual debate, first as illustrated in Doddridge's lectures, and then as encountered both in Watts's verse and his philosophy.

Doddridge's lectures

There is more to be said on Doddridge's lectures themselves. They were much copied in both form and content.²³ The first thing to note about them is that they were given in English. Doddridge was the first tutor to switch from Latin, still the universal language of scholarship, to English.²⁴ Secondly, Doddridge's students were able to take down the lengthy set of lectures (over 600 pages, containing 110 lectures in the first published edition) verbatim because Doddridge expected them all to be proficient in his modified version of Jeremy Rich's shorthand system (which he also published). Surviving lecture notes demonstrate that most were taken down in shorthand.²⁵ The lectures followed the pattern of Doddridge's tutor, Jennings, and proceeded from proposition to demonstration, to axiom to scholium, corollary and lemma and the pattern was maintained throughout.²⁶ They were sometimes criticised for providing simply the pros and cons for every argument. Priestley remarked of them, "the general plan of our studies which may be seen in Dr Doddridge's published lectures, was exceedingly favourable to free enquiry, as we were referred to authors of both sides of every question". It is this remark which is the basis for most of the assertions about the "liberalism", whatever that means in an eighteenth-century context, of the Northampton Academy. Yet it is possible to view the material in a different light. Doddridge's lectures were an astonishing compendium of knowledge. Anthony Lincoln found twenty-six references to Pufendorf, sixteen to Grotius, twelve to Sidney, eleven to Locke, as well as others to Temple, Voltaire, Charles XII, Montesquieu, Hobbes, and More in Doddridge's lectures on government alone. As such, it reads like a *Who's Who* of early modern political thought and Doddridge had read them all.²⁷ J.W. Yolton doubts whether there was any other contemporary work with a comparable scope in either Oxford or Cambridge when it came to moral philosophy.²⁸ However, as Murray points out, Doddridge was quite clear that it was the vital truths of

23. See *inter alia* DWL MS 69.3 (John Horsey, *Five Lectures on Government and thirteen on the British Constitution*).

24. McLachlan, *English Education*, p. 21.

25. Much to the frustration of present-day historians, such as myself, not proficient in the system.

26. See A.V. Murray, "Doddridge and Education", in Nuttall, ed., *Philip Doddridge, 1702-51*, pp. 102-21 for more details.

27. A. Lincoln, *Some Political and Social ideas of English Dissent, 1763-1800* (Cambridge, 1938), p. 90.

28. J.W. Yolton, "Schoolmen, Logic and Philosophy", in L.S. Sunderland and L.G. Mitchell, eds., *The History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 5 (Oxford, 1986), p. 574.

Christianity as taught in scripture that the student was to regard constantly when coming to a decision on individual cases.²⁹

The assumption behind this approach was that the truth of religion can not only cope with rationality but is reinforced by it. Hence, the “danger” of free thought is minimal because the higher truth of religion, backed by reason, will triumph. Doddridge’s religion, like that of Watts and Locke, was both rational and revealed. Yet it would be wrong to view Doddridge as simply a sponge for the ideas of others. His views on Locke demonstrate this. With regard to government, Doddridge argued that in the case of an inability to subsist it was possible to seize another’s land, thus reflecting Locke’s key argument that the world had not originally belonged to anybody.³⁰ He maintained that entry into society was for the securing of property rights, which was facilitated by creation of an impartial judge (2T§87); that an original contract existed (2T§§95-112) and that Locke had refuted Filmer (IT ch iv-vi), thus demonstrating a detailed acquaintance with Locke’s *Two Treatises*.³¹ Locke’s defence of toleration published in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution made him a Dissenting hero. Yet, in a published sermon on toleration, where one might have expected his name to be more prominent, Doddridge only referred to him at the margins. This, as Thomas argued, could be explained by the “public” nature of the document: in his “private” lectures, Doddridge was perfectly willing to mention Locke frequently.³² It is, however, worth remembering how infrequent quotations from any source, other than scripture, were in eighteenth-century sermons. In this context a direct reference to Locke’s writings looks more, not less, important.

Yet, as will be seen, Doddridge backed Watts over and against Locke on the question of personal identity.³² He also noted that Locke’s notion of liberty was subject to change and verging on the confused. Sometimes Locke appeared to talk only of external liberty but at others this was extended to philosophical liberty.³⁴ Doddridge also had his doubts about Locke’s credal minimalism. For Locke, the reading of scripture facilitated informed criticism of Church dogma and his dislike of dogma can be seen in the assertion in the *Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695) that belief in the Messiahship of Christ was the necessary minimum of faith.³⁵

29. Murray, “Doddridge and Education”, p. 106.

30. Philip Doddridge, *A course of lectures on the principal subjects in Pneumatology, Ethics and Divinity with reference to the most considerable authors on the subject*, ed. S. Clark (London, 1763), p. 134.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 156-62. (Doddridge’s references).

32. R. Thomas, “Philip Doddridge and liberalism in religion”, in Nuttall, ed., *Philip Doddridge, 1702-51*, pp. 126-8.

33. Doddridge, *Lectures*, p. 23.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

35. John Locke, “The reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the scriptures”, in *The Works of John Locke* (3 vols., 2nd edn., London, 1722), ii, p. 495. There is now a paperback reprint of *The reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the scriptures*, facsimile reprint, ed. V. Nuovo (Bristol, 1997).

Locke's credal minimalism was developed early³⁶ and, as applied in the *Reasonableness*, could be used as a defence against deism because it countered deist claims through an inclusive definition of belief.³⁷ Yet Doddridge thought that there was more to historical Christianity than Locke was prepared to concede and, like Watts, was concerned about the issue of the limits of salvation.³⁸ Thus, Doddridge's lectures provided both a comprehensive and a critical approach to large portions of contemporary knowledge and they had enormous value in introducing his students to that knowledge within a critical but Christian framework.

Watts and Locke

If Doddridge's lectures were a singular contribution to Dissenting education, the work of Watts was more disparate but in its cumulative effect no less important. Again, there was a significant engagement with Locke, which has suggestive implications for our understanding of Locke as a secular rationalist. Watts repeated notions popularised by Locke in his *Letter on Toleration* when he wrote that the civil power should be tolerant and non-coercive with regard to religious belief.³⁹

However, we need also to consider Watts the poet with regard to Locke. Poetry is not just entertainment and it certainly was not in the early eighteenth century. In June 1704 Watts wrote the following lines about John Shute Barrington, who had been a fellow student of Watts at the Dissenting academy run by Thomas Rowe and who became an Irish peer and a leading protector of Dissent:

Go, friend, and wait the Prophet's flight,
 Watch if his mantle chance to light
 And seize it for thy own,
 SHUTE is the darling of his years,
 Young SHUTE his better likeness bears,
 All but his wrinkles and his hairs
 Are copy'd in his Son.⁴⁰

-
36. J. Tully, *An approach to political philosophy: Locke in contexts* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 49 which describes the existence of Christ, heaven, hell and a core of ethics as the necessary minimum of belief for toleration as early as 1659.
37. J. Marshall, *John Locke: resistance, religion, and responsibility* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 409.
38. Doddridge, *Lectures*, p. 430.
39. Locke had argued that it was impertinent for the civil power to interfere where matters of salvation were at stake. See, Isaac Watts, "A new essay on civil power in things sacred", in *Works* (London, 1753), vi, pp. 135-76.
40. "To John Shute, Esq; on Mr Lock's dangerous Sickness some time after he had retired to study the Scriptures", in Watts, *Horae Lyricae: Poems chiefly of the lyric kind* (2nd edn., London, 1712), stanza 2, pp. 166-7.

The mantle Barrington was supposed to seize was that of Locke. While the sentiments expressed may not have been wholly accurate as to the relationship between Locke and Barrington, the suggestion that Barrington could be regarded as a successor of Locke is interesting in itself. Watts's poetry can also be used to illustrate his attitude to Locke's minimal faith, of which, as we have already seen, Doddridge disapproved. The very nature of Locke's minimal requirements left him open to the charge of heterodoxy. Isaac Watts was unconvinced by Locke's approach to matters of religion, as this extract from *Horae Lyricae* illustrates:

Thus Reason learns by slow degrees
 What Faith reveals; but still complains
 Of Intellectual pains
 And Darkness from the too exuberant Light
 The Blaze of those bright Mysteries
 Pour'd all at once on Nature's Eyes
 Offend and cloud her feeble sight.⁴¹

Watts regarded reason as a poor substitute for revelation. More importantly, he expressed the hope in the fourth stanza that Locke would, in heaven, beg forgiveness of the triune God and that

External darkness veil the lines
 Of that unhappy Book
 Where feeble Reason with false lustre shines,
 Where the meer Mortal Pen mistook
 What the Celestial meant!⁴²

To aid understanding, Watts added the following note:

See Mr Lock's Annotations on Rom. iii.25 and paraphrase on Rom. ix.5, which has inclined some readers to doubt whether he was fully persuaded of the Deity and satisfaction of Christ. Therefore in the fourth stanza I invoke *Charity*, that by her help I may find him out in Heaven, since his Notes on 2 Cor. v.ult. and some other places, give me reason to believe he was no Socinian, tho' he has darken'd the glory of the Gospel, and debased Christianity, in the Book which he calls the *Reasonableness* of it.⁴³

-
41. Isaac Watts, "On Mr Lock's annotations upon several parts of the New Testament, left behind him at his death", in *ibid.*, stanza 1, pp. 205-6.
 42. *Ibid.*, stanza 4, p. 207. The word "feeble" in line 13 of the stanza (describing reason) was changed to "glimmering" from the 3rd edition onwards.
 43. Watts, "On Mr. Lock's annotations", in Watts, *Horae Lyricae*, (7th edn., London, 1737), note, pp. 182-3. The note from the 2nd edition, on p. 207, contained the first sentence alone.

Watts was dissatisfied with the extent of the faith portrayed by Locke in the *Paraphrase* and the *Reasonableness*. Elsewhere, he noted that, "his [Locke's] writings relating to *Christianity* have some excellent thoughts in them; tho' I fear he has sunk some of the divine themes and glories of that dispensation too much below their original design".⁴⁴ Watts was not unsympathetic to Locke's work. Indeed, his works are some of the most detailed and concentrated engagements with Lockean thought that can be found in the eighteenth century. However, his was a critical engagement and on this point he disagreed with Locke.⁴⁵ Here, it is worth turning to Watts's philosophy more generally.

Watts and Philosophy

If Locke, Berkeley and Hume were the Manchester United, Arsenal and Liverpool of eighteenth-century philosophy, then Watts was a Sheffield Wednesday or a West Ham - middle of the table but certainly in the premier league and on a good day difficult to fault. His fame spread as far as the ivory towers of Christ Church, Oxford, where Yolton has found him to be recommended reading in the eighteenth century and Julian claimed that his philosophical textbook, *Logick*, was a well-known textbook at Oxford within living memory.⁴⁶ Indeed, as McLachlan argues, the equation "Locke plus Watts" constituted the basis of freethinking and liberalism among eighteenth-century Dissenters.⁴⁷

What does an examination of his *Logick* reveal about his philosophy? The first precept which Watts sets out on the first page is that the design of logic is to teach the right use of reason and it is this, above all other things, that has raised western Europeans above savages.⁴⁸ Secondly, logic is based upon the contemplation of ideas, which express both apprehensions and perceptions.⁴⁹ This is a philosophical language which comes almost directly from Locke's *Essay concerning human understanding*. Thirdly, Watts commends education because it removes prejudice, particularly those old wives' tales concerning bugbears and ghouls so often engendered by servants and about which Locke had complained in *Some thoughts*

44. Watts, *Philosophical Essays on various subjects*, facsimile reprint, ed. J.W. Yolton (Bristol, 1909), p. viii.
45. Hence I would not regard Watts's specific criticism of the *Paraphrase* as indicative of his general attitude to Locke, as Wainwright does in his introduction to John Locke, *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St Paul*, ed. A.W. Wainwright (2 vols., Oxford, 1987), p. 63.
46. Yolton, "Schoolmen, Logic and Philosophy", p. 586 and Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology*, p. 1236. Julian was writing in 1892, of course.
47. McLachlan, *English Education*, p.54.
48. Isaac Watts, *Logick; or the right use of reason in enquiry after truth*, (3rd edn., London, 1729), p. 1.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

concerning Education.⁵⁰ Finally, Watts argues that reason and revelation are never in conflict and sets out the basis for this assertion.⁵¹

Part of the problem with much that is written on the eighteenth century is a tendency to assume that, in religious terms, reason and revelation were polar opposites. The *via media* of much of Watts's writing can be seen in his response to the publication of Matthew Tindal's deistic tract *Christianity as old as creation* in 1730. In a dialogue, *The strength and weakness of human reason*, Logisto, the deist, confronted Pithander, the local Anglican parson.⁵² Their conversations were moderated by Sophronius, a "man of latitude" who talked to Presbyterians and even Quakers and Catholics and was, consequently, distrusted by Pithander.⁵³ It was Sophronius, with whom Watts appeared to identify himself most strongly, who introduced Locke's arguments about the weakness of heathen philosophy compared with Christian revelation.⁵⁴ Locke's argument about the insufficiency of reason for the majority was also advanced, whereby Locke, in a sense, stepped back from his reliance on pure reason, as taken from the *Essay*, and conceded that for many there was simply not enough time to derive every natural law for oneself and, thus, the perfect body of ethics found in the New Testament was essential for the majority.⁵⁵

As a last example of Watts's philosophical ability, it is worth exploring further his engagement with Locke as found in his *Philosophical Essays*. In the preface to that work he wrote:

He [Locke] has proceeded to break our philosophical fetters... I acknowledge the light and satisfaction which I have derived from many of his works... His *Essay on the Human Understanding* [sic] has diffused fairer light through the world in numerous affairs of science and of human life. There are many admirable chapters in that book, and many truths in them, which are worthy of letters of gold. But there are some opinions in his philosophy, especially relating to *intellectual beings*, their powers and operations, which have not gained my assent. The man who hath labour'd to lead the world into freedom of thought, has thereby given a large permission to his readers to propose doubts, difficulties or remarks which have arisen in their minds, while they perceive what he has written.⁵⁶

50. *Ibid.*, p. 215 and John Locke, *Some Thoughts concerning Education*, eds., J.W. and J.S. Yolton (Oxford, 1989) § 138 and § 191.

51. Watts, *Logick*, p. 245.

52. Isaac Watts, *The Strength and weakness of human reason* (London, 1731), p. 7.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 27. Locke's *Reasonableness* 2nd edition is quoted. The reference is to Locke "The reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the scriptures", in *Works of John Locke*, ii, p. 530.

55. Watts, *Strength and Weakness*, p. 29.

56. Watts, *Philosophical Essays*, pp. viii-ix. The first edition appeared in 1733.

Watts's subsequent discussion of innate ideas typifies many aspects of his engagement with Locke. Locke's refutation of the innateness of any natural, moral or philosophical ideas was stated.⁵⁷ This refutation of innate ideas was the subject of Book I of the *Essay* and is one of its most enduring legacies – with the exception of Noam Chomsky, no modern philosopher has sought to revive the notion that our minds have sets of moral instructions already present at the moment of birth. Watts agreed that such innate ideas were not present at birth. However, a number of simple ideas were present from such an early stage in life, through sensible impression, as to be practically “innate”.⁵⁸ The capacities of preordering and linking that had been given to us by the Creator suggested that the mind was not a complete “tabula rasa”.⁵⁹ He argued for some sort of innate principles, although he was not an advocate of “moral sense”, and claimed that Locke had thought the same.⁶⁰ Watts was prepared to use Lockean concepts and language but not simply to accept the “great Mr Locke” and relinquish the power of his own reason.

Then there is the question of personal identity, alluded to earlier. Locke denied that personal identity was predicated on the presence of the soul in his example of the prince and the cobbler.⁶¹ This raised questions about Christian understandings of bodily resurrection. Watts was interested in the question of personal identity and the thinking soul,⁶² and argued that the soul could, in fact, think and that the soul thought during sleep, thus contradicting the *Essay*, II.i.11-12.⁶³ This was linked to the question of personal identity because it countered Locke's emphasis on consciousness as the necessary and sufficient condition for personal identity. In some sense personal identity for Locke was not totally “there” during sleep, a position from which Watts dissented. Watts claimed that the soul survived death and noted Grove's, as well as Clarke's and Bentley's, work on the subject.⁶⁴ Watts also considered the problems posed by loss of memory to Locke's theory of personal identity (classically stated by Berkeley). The possibility raised by the *Essay*, II.xxvii, that one forensic person could exist simultaneously or successively in several men was dismissed as absurd.⁶⁵ Watts was unconvinced by the claim of

57. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

58. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-2.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 112.

61. The example of the prince and cobbler considered whether a prince, with knowledge of his past life, would be the same person in the body of a cobbler. Locke argued that the body itself was also part of identity thus denying that the soul was the sufficient constituent of personal identity. See John Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P.H. Nidditch, (Oxford, 1975), II.xxvii. 15.

62. Locke's discussion of primary and secondary qualities had been considered in Watts, *Logick*, p. 14, 24. Watts cited the *Essay*, II.viii for the discussion of qualities and II.xxii for the discussion of substance.

63. Watts, *Philosophical Essays*, p. 116, 125.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 306.

the Mayor of Queenborough, cited by Locke, to be Socrates.⁶⁶ Watts was also sceptical about the forensic use of "person" and subjected the *Essay*, II.i to detailed analysis.⁶⁷ When considering the question of the resurrection of the same body directly, he adopted a position between Locke and Bishop Stillingfleet, his chief opponent on this issue. He agreed, with Locke, that the same body of particles could not be resurrected (indeed given his view that our body particles change frequently, he was not convinced that we had the "same" body even within our own lifetimes) but, using the scriptural metaphor of the grain of wheat,⁶⁸ he argued that the essence of the resurrected body was used in the heavenly body.⁶⁹ Watts's own work on personal identity was well regarded. Doddridge sided with Watts, as opposed to Locke, on this issue, citing the implausibility of transferred consciousness as a crucial factor in his decision.⁷⁰

Conclusion

Watts's philosophy illustrates that he had an intellect of high calibre and one that was regarded as such outside Dissenting circles. The same could be said of Doddridge and his lectures, which were to reach an even wider audience after their publication in 1763.

There is room for a further observation about Locke. Before 1969 Locke was portrayed, particularly by American authors, as the creator of secular liberalism. The current picture of Locke, and one that informs my account, is of an individual whose religion permeated every aspect of his being and who published nothing but religious works for the last ten years of his life. This may seem irrelevant until we reflect that much of the criticism of what might be called "the gospel and public culture" movement is directed towards Locke, as the father of the essentially pagan Enlightenment. I believe that this attack is unsustainable. More attention should be paid to those like Locke and Watts and Doddridge who sought to hold together both revealed and reasonable religion.

From within the Dissenting tradition we need, if we are to take the legacy of Watts and Doddridge more seriously, to extract them from the shell of Dissenting hagiography: the beatification of our hymnwriters. Indeed the contribution of hymnody gains in significance when set in an educational and philosophical context. Watts and Doddridge anniversaries should be about even more than hymns.

ANDREW C. THOMPSON

66. *Ibid.*, p. 304 and Locke, *Essay*, II.xxvii.14, 19. Locke has Quinborough.

67. Watts, *Philosophical Essays*, p. 307 and pp. 126-32.

68. See John 12:24 and, more crucially, I Corinthians 15.

69. Watts, *Philosophical Essays*, pp. 183-94.

70. Doddridge, *Lectures*, p. 23.

**DISSENT AND THE WEAVER:
GEORGE ELIOT'S *SILAS MARNER***

I

Some twenty-five years ago Valentine Cunningham observed that Henry James's assumption that Silas Marner was a Methodist had been responsible for generating a tradition of misreading of the relationship between Eliot's text and church history. "Ever since Henry James dubbed him so," Cunningham argued, "Silas Marner has been commonly described as a Methodist, whereas the slightest acquaintance with church history would reveal that the deacons and democratic government of Lantern Yard indicate a congregationalist group and not a Methodist chapel."¹ It is not surprising that Henry James, an American, whose foremost admiration in the 1860s when he wrote his article on George Eliot,² was for the French novel, should have got it wrong. He had already seriously misrepresented the work of his compatriot the Congregationalist Harriet Beecher Stowe in a review, which had revealed, among other things, a critical insensitivity to church history, especially in *Dred*, the novel of which George Eliot had written so admiringly.³ But in citing David Cecil, Joan Bennett, and Robert Speaight⁴ as critics who followed James's assumptions, Cunningham's own observations are not altogether accurate either. Joan Bennett makes no reference to Marner's apparent Methodism, not even in her relatively extended discussion of the scene when Dolly Winthrop, the wheelwright's Anglican wife, learns from Marner, the village weaver, that he was once a chapel-goer. This scene could be said to be central to the Christian discourse of a novel which Eliot carefully set at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, a good decade before the development of the railways. For, before this revolution in communications it would have been only too easy for working-class members from different

-
1. Valentine Cunningham, *Everywhere Spoken Against: Dissent in the Victorian Novel*, (Oxford, 1975), p. 6. I am grateful to Clyde Binfield, Valentine Cunningham and Henry Rack for their help in the preparation of this paper.
 2. Henry James, "The Novels of George Eliot", *Atlantic Monthly* (October, 1866). Rpt. in Leon Edel and Mark Wilson (eds.), *Henry James: Literary Criticism: Essays on Literature, American Writers, English Writers*, (New York, 1984), p. 916.
 3. Christine Richards, "Henry James, Harriet Beecher Stowe and the 'Art' of Fiction", *Literature and History* (Spring 2000), pp. 43-55. George Eliot, "Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Dred*, Charles Reade's *It is Never Too Late to Mend* and Frederika Bremer's *Hertha*", *Westminster Review* (October, 1856), Rpt. in A.S. Byatt and Nicholas Warren (eds.), *George Eliot; Selected Essays, Poems and Other Writings*, (London, 1990), pp. 379-88.
 4. Joan Bennett, *George Eliot: Her Mind and Her Art*, (Cambridge, 1966), p. 134. David Cecil, *Early Victorian Novels: Essays in Revelation*, (London, 1934), p. 308. Robert Speaight, *George Eliot*, (London, 1954), p. 62.

denominations within the Christian church to fail to recognise each other as believers of the same faith. Silas's Dissenting background, for example, denoted by his use of the word "chapel", prevents Dolly from recognising him as a Christian because she has never heard the word – indeed at first she thinks it might signify some haunt of wickedness. And his similar fear of the word "christened", having only heard of baptism, and especially only of "the baptism of grown men and women"⁵, enables us to go one step further in identifying Silas Marner's sect not as merely congregationalist (with a small c), but Baptist. However, as his relationship with Dolly Winthrop progresses she learns that Silas's references to the Bible are to the Book she does recognise. "And your'n's the same Bible, you're sure o'that, Master Marner – the Bible as you brought wi' you from that country – it's the same as what they've got at church, and what Eppie's a-learning to read in?" (202). Dolly's reaction is not surprising for the wife of an artisan who has lived all her life in a place so far from the turnpike that "it was never reached by the vibrations of the coach horn or of public opinion" (53). With its geographical isolation, its squire, its local parish church, its rectory, its lack of any other place of worship and its general ignorance of issues outside its own rural community, the working-class inhabitants of Raveloe would be more likely to find any form of Christian belief other than that with which they are familiar – an Anglicanism never apparently unsettled by sectarianism – outside the range of their experience. This would have been especially true of what was taking place in the towns since it was here that the various forms of Dissent burgeoned in the period, reflecting the changing socio-economic structure of England. It is therefore no accident that George Eliot used the north-south divide in her novel to emphasise these historical changes, and placed her fictional Lantern Yard somewhere vaguely "North'ard" (p. 54), clearly in one of the rapidly developing manufacturing towns whose exploding populations were uncatered for by the established church, and Raveloe in "the rich central plain of what we are pleased to call Merry England" (p. 53). But although Lantern Yard and Raveloe are fictional in that they did not exist as actual places, Eliot's "realism" – which John Bayley has more aptly termed historic pastoral⁶ – nevertheless reveals a social structure which her middle-class Victorian readers would have readily recognised. The same is of course true of her representation of the denominations of Christianity symbolised, perhaps a little simplistically, by the two places.

Cunningham's omission of any reference to Q.D. Leavis's rather important speculations on the doctrinal background to *Silas Marner* represents another

-
5. George Eliot, *Silas Marner: The Weaver of Raveloe*, (1861) Q.D. Leavis, (ed. and intro.) (Harmondsworth, 1967), p. 182. Subsequent references to this text will be given parenthetically. Leavis uses the 1868 edition whereas most recent editors tend to use the Cabinet Edition of 1878. This contains "grown-up" instead of "grown".
 6. John Bayley, "The Pastoral of Intellect", Barbara Hardy (ed.), *Critical Essays on George Eliot*, (London, 1970), p. 199. As a critical term realism rose to an unprecedented height in the nineteenth century, but its philosophical assumptions have been radically questioned by twentieth-century critics.

curious gap in his discussion of the way literary critics have dealt with the text's relationship to church history. Compared to the work of earlier critics, Leavis's research on the doctrinal background and her use of textual evidence is groundbreaking. A detailed note to her 1967 edition, for example, reveals how, unlike Henry James, she recognised – and wrestled with – the problem of identifying the particular variety of Dissent of the Lantern Yard community (pp. 250-51, 24),⁷ where, by the dubious practice of the drawing of lots, Silas Marner is found guilty of a crime he does not commit, the theft of chapel funds during his night shift at the bedside of the dying deacon. In fact Leavis was probably the first critic to argue convincingly that Eliot's concern in the novel lay chiefly in the provision of the kind of evidence which would show features of Dissent extreme enough for the purpose of opposing the religious cultures of Lantern Yard and Raveloe. However despite the fact that Leavis's knowledge of church history was either too limited, or her scholarship too cautious, for her to identify what Eliot's narrator describes as the "church assembling in Lantern Yard"⁸ as congregationalist, the identification Cunningham was to make almost a decade later, she nevertheless went as far as to surmise that the reformed church, as expressed in the system of Calvin, was the most likely candidate because of the way Eliot introduces into the early part of the novel beliefs such as the assurance of salvation, the religious experience of election and the democratic nature of the government at Lantern Yard. Leavis's interpretation of *Silas Marner* also includes the drawing of lots under Calvinism, but this assumption is perhaps too clear cut at a time when there was considerable blurring between Calvinistic and Arminian theology and practice. If, however, the accent of Silas's sect was Calvinist (which it certainly seems to be), then, with the reference to baptism in the scene already mentioned, and with the textual emphasis Eliot gives to election, which will be discussed later, the likelihood is that it would have been Particular Baptist (i.e. believing in Particular Redemption) as opposed to General Baptist (i.e. believing in General Redemption). Also Particular Baptists, themselves divided by their degree of proximity to Calvinism, were far more numerous than the New Connexion of General Baptists who began in the 1770s. Whether Eliot had in mind a moderate or more extreme sect of Particular Baptists when she depicted Lantern Yard it is impossible to say. The only firm conclusion to be reached is that it was Particular Baptist.

On the question of the drawing of lots, Eliot possibly imported this into Lantern Yard chapel practice from Wesleyan Methodism since in 1792 the Methodist Conference had drawn lots over the administration of the Sacraments, a decision

-
7. The introduction to this edition has been reprinted in G. Singh (ed.), *Q.D. Leavis, Collected Essays: Vol. 1: The Englishness of the English Novel*, (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 275-303. However, this reprint does not contain Leavis's notes to the text which include some of her most valuable insights, especially those relating to the role of Calvinism in the text.
 8. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

justified by the precedent of the choice of Matthias to fill the place of Judas.⁹ On the other hand, in religious circles generally, divinatory recourse to the detection or trial of suspected criminals had been an established, although controversial, practice since the Middle Ages. Keith Thomas has documented how society as a whole had long been accustomed to referring potentially contentious decisions to lot,¹⁰ with Tacitus recording that this was a practice of the ancient Germans; and that in the twelfth century pilgrims had cast lots to determine which shrine they should visit. With such substantial Biblical warrant – there are some twenty to thirty references to lot-drawing in the Old and the New Testaments – the clear indication was that a choice made in this way would have received some sort of divine approval. George Eliot would certainly have been aware of the history of the controversy surrounding the practice of lot-drawing in 1860 when she was writing *Silas Marner*. The combination of her personal experience of Evangelicalism from attendance at Miss Wallington's boarding school in Nuneaton and of Baptist theology at the Misses Franklin's school in Coventry – the Franklins were Particular Baptists – together with her later scholarship, which included translations of Strauss's *Das Leben Jesu* (1846) and Feuerbach's *Das Wesen des Christentums* (1854), gives us an insight into the way her knowledge of these aspects of church history and doctrine had developed long before she turned to fiction in the later 1850s. Adding to the picture are Eliot's conversations with her Methodist aunt, Mrs. Samuel Evans, with whom in the late 1830s she used to debate predestination – upholding the Calvinist position against her aunt's mild Arminianism.¹¹ Whatever her precise sources were, however, the three short fictions which constitute *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1858), and the novels *Adam Bede* (1859) and *Silas Marner*, testify to her scholarly approach to church history and doctrine in the period in which each fiction is set.

It is a cliché of Eliot criticism to observe that her research for her fiction was meticulous. The preparation for the portrait of Dinah in *Adam Bede* involved her in an annotation of Robert Southey's *Life of Wesley* for its use in the scene for the preaching early in the novel. Cunningham has traced the way that Dinah's sermon weaves together many allusions from scripture, taking, as John Wesley did, Luke iv 18 for her text, thereby paralleling the first sermon he preached in the fields.¹² Moreover, the rhetorical pattern of Dinah's sermon follows that recommended by Wesley, and its significance in the text lies chiefly in its revelation of the nature of the young preacher's mission, namely to value humble life, a narrative emphasis

-
9. A.W. Harrison, *The Separation of Methodism from the Church of England*, (London, 1945), p. 41. For a seventeenth-century General Baptist instance, however, see G.F. Nuttall's forthcoming *JURCHS* article on the Speldhurst Church Book.
 10. Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England*, (London, 1971). Rpt. (Harmondsworth, 1978), pp. 139-146.
 11. George Eliot to Sarah Hennell, 7 October 1859, Gordon S. Haight (ed.), *The George Eliot Letters*, Vol. III (Newhaven Conn, 1954-5), p. 175.
 12. Cunningham, pp.148-52.

also to be found in *Scenes of Clerical Life* and of course in *Silas Marner*, not insignificantly subtitled "The Weaver of Raveloe". In *Silas Marner* sensitivity and discriminating feeling are given to the poor or artisan class while the upper classes affect a coarse mode of estimating the former's capacity to feel, the general opinion being that deep affection is incompatible with those of "callous palms and scant means". The comment by the narrator in *Silas Marner*, "that Godfrey [Cass, the squire's son]... had not the opportunity, even if he had had the power, of entering intimately into all that was exceptional in the weaver's experience" (218) is in some ways an echo of the narrator's comments in the famous chapter XVII of *Adam Bede*, in which we find, at least in her fiction, the most eloquent expression of Eliot's "doctrine of sympathy", the humanist philosophy which came to replace her belief in any orthodox form of Christianity.¹³ It is probably true to say that although her attitude varies from text to text, the denominational history in her fiction is by-and-large written from this perspective. Her representation of Methodism in *Adam Bede*, for example, although very sympathetic compared to the harsh picture of Baptist chapel practice in *Silas Marner*, shows the *volte face* on her much earlier defence of Calvinism, but it is still doctrinally subservient to the humanist viewpoint, upholding the agenda on Christianity she set out to the publisher Blackwood while writing *Scenes of Clerical Life*. In fact as G.H. Lewes explained somewhat duplicitously to Blackwood in 1856 on her behalf while helping to conceal her gender:

It will consist of tales and sketches illustrative of the actual life of our country clergy about a quarter of a century ago; but solely in its *human* and *not at all* in its *theological* aspect; the object being to do what has never yet been done in our Literature, but we have had abundant religious stories polemical and doctrinal, but since the 'Vicar' [of Wakefield] and Miss Austen, no stories representing the clergy like any other class with the humours, sorrows and troubles of other men. He [George Eliot] begged me particularly to add that – as the specimen sent will sufficiently prove – the tone throughout will be sympathetic and not at all antagonistic.¹⁴

This is a slick piece of marketing on Lewes's part. Emphasising that the setting of the series would be historical would have done much to assure Blackwood that the work would not be competing with novels such as Anthony Trollope's *The Warden*, the first in the Barchester series, published in 1855, and admired by discriminating critics. In fact it is possible that *The Warden* may have been behind

-
13. Gordon S. Haight, *George Eliot: A Biography*, (Harmondsworth, 1985), p. 186. The essay "Evangelical Preaching: Dr Cumming" contains without doubt her most eloquent criticism of the type of Evangelicalism of which she most strongly disapproved. *Westminster Review*, (October, 1855). Rpt. in Byatt and Warren (eds.). John Cumming (1807-1881) ministered at Crown Court Presbyterian Church, London, from 1832 to 1879.
14. Haight, (1954-5), pp. 269-70.

George Eliot's idea not only for her own series but for her biting attack a year later on that sub-genre of romantic novels by women on the theological, especially Evangelical, subjects that she dubbed the oracular and White Neck-Cloth schools.¹⁵

II

This then is something of the biographical and intellectual background for the denominational history in *Silas Marner*, the plot of which Eliot appears to have constructed as a way of launching the theme of unbelief which is so skilfully interwoven with her critique of lot-drawing, election and assurance of salvation, these seeming to be at the root of the injustices she associated with fundamentalist Dissent in the period covered by the novel, namely the late 1780s to the 1820s.¹⁶ Eliot was no doubt thinking of the reception of her historical novel when dealing with the relationship between unbelief and these practices and doctrines which would certainly, following the enormous success of *Adam Bede*, have been of considerable interest to a mid-nineteenth-century audience. But her own interest also clearly lay in tracing Silas Marner's road back to belief through his prolonged encounter with a less narrow denomination than that symbolised by the Lantern Yard he had despairingly left behind. Silas *had* to be found guilty of the theft of chapel funds, lose his faith both in divine justice and in the denomination which used the casting of lots as a form of trial. Indeed the recurrence of reference to this ritual throughout the text provides an ongoing impetus and cohesion for the narrative, sustaining Eliot's critique of an outmoded chapel practice which encouraged superstition and which, when it went wrong, could, as it does with Silas, lead to states of extreme spiritual despair. As the narrator tells us in chapter one: "This resolution [lot drawing] can be a ground of surprise only to those who are unacquainted with that obscure religious life which has gone on in the alleys of our towns." (p. 60). In fact it is the outcome of the lot-casting incident every bit as much as the betrayal by his friend, William Dane, and the subsequent loss of Sarah, his betrothed, which is at the root of Lantern Yard's and Silas's rejection of each other. Silas's decision to leave the town, and his gradual spiritual regeneration within the milder rural Anglicanism of Raveloe, gives him, and the reader, a new perspective on the relationship between different denominations within Christianity and the law in the period. In fact one of the salient discourses of the narrative is the growing perception of this simple but by no means unintelligent weaver that a serious flaw exists in the judicial system countenanced by his relatively well-established fundamentalist sect, and his attempt to have it

15. George Eliot, "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists" *Westminster Review*, (October, 1856) Rpt. in Byatt and Warren (eds.), pp. 141-63.

16. Leavis dates the novel in the period from the later 1780s to the 1820s interpreting the narrator's phrase in chapter one "in the early years of this century" as being some time in the first decade of the nineteenth century because Marner has been at Raveloe for fifteen years. This puts the flashback of the Lantern Yard period to the later 1780s, p. 249.

addressed. The Methodist Conference's debate on whether or not their preachers had authority to administer Communion by recourse to prayer followed by the drawing of lots¹⁷ may have been behind Eliot's censure of the practice especially if it involved judgement of that class of person whose scant education deprived them of the power of independent thought. Consider, for example, the first person narrator's comments in chapter one.

On their return to the vestry there was further deliberation. Any resort to legal measures for ascertaining the culprit was contrary to the principles of the church in Lantern Yard, according to which prosecution was forbidden to Christians, even had the case held less scandal to the community. But the members were bound to take other measures for finding out the truth, and they resolved on praying and drawing lots... We are apt to think it inevitable that a man in Marner's position should have begun to question the validity of an appeal to the divine judgement by drawing lots; but to him this would have been an effort of independent thought such as he had never known; and he must have made the effort at a moment when all his energies were turned into the anguish of disappointed faith. (pp. 60-62)

Although Silas went home to take "refuge from benumbing unbelief by getting on to his loom and working away as usual" (62), he does not retire timidly from the place of his injustice. His recognition of his friend's opportunistic plot to steal both the church money and his betrothed in a single move results in a public accusation – a scene of admirable confrontation – which should remove any critical judgement of Silas as a passive pawn.¹⁸ "You have woven a plot to lay the sin at my door ... there is no just God that governs the earth righteously, but a God of lies, that bears witness against the innocent.' There was a general shudder at this blasphemy." The sanctimoniousness of William Dane's reply, within the broader complex of their friendship, is proof enough of the moral issue raised by doctrines which could all too easily be exploited in the interests of rivalry and a higher place on earth and in heaven: "I leave our brethren to judge whether this is the voice of Satan or not. I can do nothing but pray for you, Silas.'" (61) From this we can see how Eliot's inclusion of the drawing of lots embodies the complexity of the moral issues she also sees associated with election and assurance of salvation. In fact the close relationship between Dane and Marner, alluded to by the Lantern Yard brethren as David and Jonathan, is represented almost entirely within the framework of these beliefs, which was, we are told by the narrator, often a topic of conversation between the two friends. This topic is not without its competitive side on Dane's part especially after Silas's fall into a cataleptic trance at a prayer-meeting gives him, because of its interpretation by members as a divine

17. See above, n.9.

18. Yet oddly Terence Cave considers Silas to be a passive character. Terence Cave (ed.), Introduction to George Eliot, *Silas Marner: The Weaver of Raveloe*, (Oxford, 1996), p. xvii.

favour, a special place in the community. William's election had been less spectacular, a dream in which the words "calling and election sure" had appeared to him on a white page in the open Bible (58). This, together with the narrator's passing references to Dane's over-severity towards weaker brethren and his tendency to be over-dazzled by his own light, leave the reader, if not Silas, in no doubt about hypocrisy; but competition with his friend is intimated to the reader when Dane fails to go along with the interpretation the rest of the community assigns to Silas's trances. Dane's suggestion that Silas's trance might just as well be a visitation from Satan as from God is incontestable in the circumstances, believed even by the credulous Silas, whose faith in his friend blinds him until subsequent events force him to recognise that the man he has for nine years befriended is none other than a rogue.

III

The philosophical power of *Silas Marner* lies to a very large extent in the encounter Eliot sets up between Particular Baptist and Anglican theory even though, in realist terms, Baptist practice emerges as too one-dimensional and Anglicanism as more fully and fairly rounded. But fiction is not history and her severe treatment of Dissent here may have been behind her decision not to name it, a departure from her practice in the other fictions which deal with Dissent and Evangelicalism, most notably *Scenes of Clerical Life*, *Adam Bede*, and *Felix Holt*. Anglicanism as exemplified by Raveloe is also not named as a denomination but, as the established church, is easily recognisable through constant references to the parish, the rector and other Anglican ornaments such as the altar-cloth. In fact the nature of Raveloe Anglicanism is summed up explicitly by the narrator who comments on the more relaxed devotional habits of the villagers, clearly intended as a contrast to Lantern Yard. In Raveloe, standing well with heaven is "greedy", and the keyword to church-going is, "moderation", as opposed to the active pursuit of "election" and "salvation" in the Particular Baptist community:

The inhabitants of Raveloe were not severely regular in their church going, and perhaps there was hardly a person in the parish who would not have held that to go to church every Sunday in the calendar would have shown a greedy desire to stand well with Heaven, and get an undue advantage over their neighbours – a wish to be better than the 'common run', that would have implied a reflection on those who had godfathers and godmothers as well as themselves, and had an equal right to the burying service. At the same time, it was understood to be requisite for all who were not household servants, or young men, to take the sacrament at one of the great festivals: Squire Cass himself took it on Christmas day; while those who were held to be 'good livers' went to church with greater, though still with moderate, frequency. (133)

With the Lantern Yard episode represented in the form of a flashback, the body of the fiction consists of Silas's social and spiritual integration into Raveloe from the position of an alien, of whom the community is initially suspicious. His hermit-like existence and habits of a heathen by weaving on Sundays on a loom whose distant hum does not escape the ears of the villagers, or their censure, are gradually undermined by a series of social events whose significance at a human level forces him to recognise the difference between the denomination he has left behind and the one towards which he is unconsciously travelling. As the only weaver in Raveloe and neighbouring Tarley, his accumulation of a pile of golden guineas which, during his lonely evenings, he counts in a habit that becomes a ritual, is central to this discourse. The theft of the guineas by the squire's younger son, serves both as a structural parallel to the earlier theft at Lantern Yard, and as the catalyst for the social integration of Silas beyond the strict transactional stance he has till then taken on his linen sales. The scene in the Rainbow public house where he goes to announce the theft reveals the difference between his former society and the one to which he now, albeit peripherally, belongs. Gone are the rituals of lot-drawing, for Silas now recognises his access to structures of justice that exist outside the church. Although nothing comes of the villagers' call for Master Kench the constable, or for Justice Malam, in circumstances where Silas's gold, together with the body of the squire's reprobate son, are lying at the bottom of the water-filled stone pits – where they remain undiscovered for eighteen years – Eliot's point here is to emphasise a social structure which depends on a system of justice outside Christian belief. In fact the discussion of the legal procedures in the Rainbow after Silas has made his theft known is clearly set up in opposition to the lack of any proper redress available at Lantern Yard. Moreover recognition of his plight, which embodies Eliot's doctrine of sympathy, is here almost synonymous with the attitudes of certain parishioners, especially Dolly Winthrop. Thus before Christmas – the choice of season is not accidental – Silas's first two visitors, the clerk of the parish, Mr. Macey and Dolly Winthrop, arrive, providing an opportunity for two scenes whose interpretation as an allusion to Job's comforters¹⁹ reveals the Biblical perspective of the narrator. The word comfort – and later comforts – is initially used in a longish first-person commentary prior to the visits, and the general tone, one of supposition, with the narrator discoursing on the kindness and lack of hypocrisy in Raveloe, provides a further contrast to the William Dane version of Baptist duplicity given such prominence in the earlier episodes.

We can send black puddings and pettitoes without giving them a flavour of our own egoism; but language is a stream that is almost sure to smack of a

19. David Carroll has commented that Job is offered various explanations by his "comforters" and that, like Job, Silas accuses God for his misfortunes. David Carroll (ed.), George Eliot, *Silas Marner: The Weaver of Raveloe*, (London, 1996), pp. 185, 190.

mingled soil. There was a fair proportion of kindness in Raveloe; but it was often of a beery and bungling sort, and took the shape least allied to the complimentary and hypocritical. (131)

It is of course a feature of the dominant discourse of the text that both visitors should stress the importance of Christian observances, especially church-going, with the irony of the scenes working through the reader's knowledge of Silas's history. Mr. Macey advises Silas to have a Sunday suit made so that he can attend church regularly, and Dolly, together with her young son Aaron, urges him to go to church to take the Christmas sacraments, and offers a gift of small lard cakes, with the sacred initials IHS – the same as those on the parish altar cloth – pricked on them.²⁰ In line with the regenerative part she and her son are to play later on, Dolly's visit is more positive than that of Mr Macey, who interprets Silas's vagueness about how long he has been at Raveloe as that of a man who probably never knew "when Sunday came round" and is a "worse heathen than many a dog", a view echoed by Crackenthorp, the rector, who believes that Silas's money was stolen because of his overvaluation of it and his failure to attend church. (130). Thus the stance taken by the church dignitaries ensures that Raveloe Anglicanism is not without its own prejudices and superstitions. On the other hand Dolly Winthrop, as representative of working-class Anglicanism, although failing in her attempts to encourage Silas to abandon working on a Sunday, and to participate in the Christian Christmas, does not associate Silas's misfortune with his unbelief. Here the narrative demands collaboration with the reader who, unlike Dolly, cannot help but recognise that Silas is not yet ready to join any form of Christian worship, the spiritual damage to him being such that "his soul was still the shrunken rivulet, with only this difference that this little groove of sand was blocked up, and it wandered confusedly against dark obstruction" (140). Anglicanism alone, then, is not the answer to Silas's social and spiritual isolation. It takes the unexpected arrival of a human being, a young, lost toddler, together with the development of a relationship with this newly acquired foster-daughter over a sixteen-year period, for the rivulet to begin to flow freely again.

How does this happen? Eppie's arrival, coinciding with Silas's loss of his guineas, is the beginning of the process, but it is not a process that takes place outside Anglicanism. The first stepping-stone is the christening in the parish church, for it is Dolly, Silas's adviser on baby-care in all its aspects, who forces the issue. The series of exchanges between Silas and Dolly, especially their discussion about the name of the child, represents the beginning of an acceptance of this strange new denomination. And just as important is Dolly's acceptance of Silas's Christianity, for it is she – with Eppie – who helps him tread his way back

20. Neither she nor Silas knows the meaning of the monogram, and editors of *Silas Marner* have – as have Christian commentators over time – varied in their interpretation of it.

into society. It is his choice of Hephzibah, his mother's and his sister's name (183) – with its diminutive Eppie – together with his assurance that the name is Biblical, that impresses Dolly,²¹ just as his literacy, when he had shown that he could read the initials on the lard cakes, had impressed Aaron. In fact this episode, which concludes with Silas's first appearance in church for the christening, represents the real start of his journey from Baptist to Anglican belief, and provides the narrative thrust of the second part of the fiction.

IV

It is thus in Book 2 when, after a break of sixteen years, the past breaks into the present, that George Eliot focusses on a resolution of the denominational issues. The five most significant scenes here are those depicting Silas and the now eighteen-year-old Eppie making their way home after Sunday morning service, Silas's discussion with Dolly about the drawing of the lots at Lantern Yard, Eppie's rejection of her real father, Godfrey Cass, the squire, Silas's and Eppie's journey to Lantern Yard, and finally her marriage to her godmother's son, Aaron, in Raveloe Church. The first of these shows how Silas and Eppie, carrying a prayer-book, have become integrated into the parish community and its customs, confirming and extending the narrator's summarising comment that "By seeking what was needful for Eppie, by sharing the effect that everything produced on her, he [Silas] had himself come to appropriate the customs and belief which were the mould of Raveloe life; and as, with reawakening sensibilities, memory also reawakened, he had begun to ponder over the elements of his old faith, and blend them with his new impressions, till he recovered a consciousness of unity between his past and present." (201,202). What Silas has not pondered on, however, is the undemocratic nature of Anglicanism compared to that of his Baptist sect, a difference illustrated by their leaving church in the wake of the richer parishioners who have "chosen this bright Sunday morning as eligible for church-going" (195).

-
21. Fisch has argued that Silas establishes the character of Dolly, his new found source of comfort, by reviving the Puritan fashion of naming, and he argues somewhat dubiously that the Bible is more than a key to the characters and their thoughts, but a key to a novel which exhibits the specific kind of realism and economy of Old Testament narratives. For example, he claims that Ruth and the Genesis narratives provided Eliot with a key to a balance of the wonderful and the everyday, the fabulous and the realistic. Harold Fisch, "Biblical Realism in *Silas Marner*", Mark H. Gelber (ed.), *Identity and Ethos: A Festschrift for Sol Liptzin* (New York, 1986), p. 347. However, this view removes Eliot from the literary history of nineteenth-century realism in which she sought to embed her narratives. This commitment can be seen when Blackwood criticised her depiction of the doctrinal conflict in "Janet's Repentance" as too extreme. She based her defence on the fact that the real events – surrounding John Edmund Jones, perpetual curate of the Chapel of Ease at Stockingford, Nuneaton – were much more violent than those in her fictional Milby. Haight, pp. 9, 235.

This point is an important one because it is later touched on by Eppie when she rejects her real father for Silas. With her fine awareness of the subtleties of class distinction the young girl recognises that such a change in social status would also entail, in the days of pew rents,²² having a seat at church. So, quite apart from not wanting to leave the man who for sixteen years has both fathered and mothered her, what Eppie is also in principle rejecting is an Anglican hierarchy symbolised by pew ownership by the wealthier members of the church. Instinctively, then, Eppie opts for the lower layer in the hierarchy, a position more closely allied to the democratic arrangement in chapels such as Lantern Yard, earlier described as a place where “the poorest layman has the chance of distinguishing himself by gifts of speech and has, at the very least, the weight of a silent voter in the government of his community.” (56) On this issue Q.D. Leavis has astutely observed how Eliot with her usual acumen has made the important point about Dissent, namely that whatever its theological demerits or its disadvantages in other ways, it had the value of obliging its members to take responsibility, supply initiative, and co-operate in the financing of a religious organisation of their own choice.²³

Clearly the subject of Silas’s deepest meditation in the early years of his migration which he discussed with Dolly, is lot-drawing, and the scene of this discussion, together with the mediating voice of the narrator, is perhaps one of the most powerful in all of Eliot’s writing. The years of meditation and peace at Raveloe bring about a gradual desire in him to have explained the mistake which had “thrown that dark shadow over the days of his best years” (202), and consequently, in response to Dolly’s many questions, he retells his story several times, so firm is her belief in his innocence and yet such her amazement that lot-drawing with its Biblical warrant has provided false testimony: “I’ve been sore puzzled for a good bit wi’ that trouble o’ yourn and the drawing o’ lots; and it got twisted back’ ards and for’ ards... I can make nothing o’ the drawings o’ lots and the answer coming wrong’ ” (203, 204). The change in Marnier, though wrought both by the years and by the influence of Dolly’s questioning, is his coming to terms with the view that good in the world lies beyond human understanding. Consequently he interprets Eppie’s arrival as a Providential compensation for his earlier misfortunes: “There is good i’ this world – I’ve a feeling o’ that now; and

22. For a discussion of the history and sociology of pew rents see D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*, (London, 1989), p. 112.

23. Leavis’s sources are from Archbishop Temple who suggested that the self-government of the local chapel has been a fruitful school of democratic procedure (John S. Whale, *The Protestant Tradition: an essay in interpretation*, [Cambridge, 1955]), and Beatrice Webb’s *My Apprenticeship*, (London, 1926), where Webb comments (chapter 3) that the Co-operative Society, the Trade Unions, the Friendly Societies and the Labour Party “owed everything to the training that the chapel form of worship provided for the working class.” (Leavis p. 250).

it makes a man feel as there's a good more nor he can see... That drawing o' the lots is dark; but the child was sent to me: there's dealings with us – there's dealings' ” (205). In consequence these conclusions inspire him to make his return journey to Lantern Yard, a return based on two questions, first, a need to know whether, after thirty years, some sign of his innocence has been revealed, and, second, a wish to communicate to Mr Paston, the minister, “a man with a deal o' light”, the result of his simple meditations on lot-drawing and what the very much more assured religious community of Raveloe Anglicanism and the judicial system there have to offer. “I want to speak to him about the drawing o' the lots. And I should like to talk to him about the religion o' this countryside, for I partly think he doesn't know on it' ” (238).

But Silas's objectives are frustrated, for social change and the progress of the industrial revolution are Eliot's resolution for these inner conflicts and outward historical issues, a resolution reinforced by the introduction of a symbolism of light and dark. Setting off in search of light, Silas and Eppie find only darkness. The “great manufacturing town” in which Lantern Yard was situated has, over the last thirty years, changed almost beyond recognition, the chapel itself being replaced by a factory. Silas's fear of the changes is echoed by Eppie's country-eyed bewilderment at the “dark ugly place” which, “worse than the Workhouse... hides the sky” (239). On their return Silas treats their findings philosophically, however:

‘The old place is all swep' away, ... the little graveyard and everything. The old home's gone; I've no home but this now. I shall never know whether they got at the truth o' the robbery, nor whether Mr Paston could ha' given me any light about the drawing o' the lots. It's dark to me, Mrs Winthrop...’ (240, 241).

This impressively handled journey is rapidly, perhaps a little too rapidly, followed by a conventionally happy ending, the marriage of Aaron to Eppie in Raveloe Church, an event which is heavily embedded in a discourse of “light”. Eliot gives free rein to her considerable knowledge and power of description of the countryside on the wedding day, when “the sunshine fell more warmly than usual on the lilac tufts” and “a light bridal dress could be worn with comfort and seen to advantage” (241), when the “great lilacs and laburnums in the old-fashioned gardens showed their golden and purple wealth above the lichen-tinted walls, and when there were calves still young enough to want bucketfuls of fragrant milk”. Too idyllic, and a little over-symbolised perhaps, by “light” against the unresolved, unchallengeable “darkness” of Lantern Yard, the highly selective opposition between the Christianity of town and country is a firm reminder that we are reading fiction, but fiction in which the writer has contrived to manipulate to admirable aesthetic advantage, and with considerable accuracy, much recognisable historical fact.

**THE PROGRESS OF THE INTELLIGENT,
THE MORAL, AND THE KINDLY:
ROBERT VAUGHAN'S CELEBRATION OF URBAN
CULTURE IN *THE AGE OF GREAT CITIES***

The social history of nineteenth-century Britain has been largely shaped by the paradigms of the Left; and Frederick Engels's portrait of Manchester, with its grim descriptions of a fledgling proletariat, has become the touchstone for studies of urban life and the "condition of England" question.

But it is often forgotten that even to Engels towns were not entirely evil, and many of his contemporaries vigorously defended the great towns as bastions of political, social, economic and intellectual liberty. One of the most notable celebrations of urban culture was Robert Vaughan's *The Age of Great Cities*, published in 1843. In that year Vaughan, who was the first Professor of History at the London University, moved to Manchester to take up a new post as Professor of Theology and President of the Lancashire Independent College, a newly-founded Congregational theological college. In 1845 he would found and edit the highly-respected *British Quarterly Review*. He has been described as the "principal cultural midwife of early Victorian Dissenting culture".¹ It seems fitting that he set down his thoughts on urban society just as he was moving to the "shock city" of his time.²

Urban historians have seen the book as something of an anomaly. They claim that *The Age of Great Cities* foreshadowed modern urban theory in its stress on the great and unique potential of urban life,³ yet failed to address the terrible urban problems of its time.⁴ In this paper I would like to suggest some reasons for this apparent anomaly. I think that the explanations can be found in Vaughan's identification of the city with Nonconformity, and in his determination to

1. Clyde Binfield, "Hebrews Hellenized? English Evangelical Nonconformity and Culture, 1840-1940" in Sheridan Gilley and W.J. Sheils, eds., *A History of Religion in Britain: practice and belief from pre-Roman times to the present* (Oxford, 1994), p. 323.
2. The term was coined by Asa Briggs in the Introduction to *Victorian Cities* (London, 1963), p. 51, and has been used as a starting-point by historians ever since. See for example David Vincent's review of Alan Kidd's *Manchester* (Keele, 1993) and Andrew Davies's and Steven Fielding's *Worker's Worlds: Culture and Communities in Manchester and Salford, 1880-1939* (Manchester, 1992) in *Albion*, 26, 3 (1994), p. 545. The review begins "Both of these books cite in their opening pages Asa Briggs' famous description of nineteenth-century Manchester as the 'shock city of the age.'" I am indebted to Stephen Heathorn for this reference.
3. William Sharpe and Leonard Wallock, "From 'Great Town' to 'Nonplace Urban Realm: Reading the Modern City,'" in William Sharpe and Leonard Wallock, eds., *Visions of the Modern City* (London, 1987), p. 35.
4. H.J. Dyos, "Agenda for Urban Historians" in H.J. Dyos, ed., *The Study of Urban History* (London, 1968), p. 3.

challenge the myth of rural England. Martin Wiener's *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit* ignited a debate about the supposedly anti-industrial, anti-urban character of British culture, since rekindled by W.D. Rubinstein's *Capitalism, Culture and Decline in Britain*. Surely it is significant in light of this debate that *The Age of Great Cities*, described as "the most sweeping and impassioned statement of the urban ethos to appear anytime in England or anywhere in the century",⁵ should have been written by a Nonconformist.

I begin with a broad summary of the principal criticisms made of cities in Vaughan's day, because so much of *The Age of Great Cities* is devoted to rebutting them. The issue is complicated by the fact that to some extent Vaughan was setting up a straw man to demolish.

The anti-city critique was shaped by complex and overlapping aesthetic and social concerns, expressed in either literary or factual "scientific" forms.⁶ Industrialization and urbanization were conflated to such an extent that it is often impossible to disentangle critiques of the city from critiques of industrialization. The cities were seen as a threat to physical and moral health, to traditional social relations, to social stability, as an affront to aesthetic standards and as the birthplace of a powerful and insensitive new élite. This was often coupled with a fatalistic, cyclical view of history which held that all great civilizations, including that of modern Britain, followed a similar and inevitable pattern of rising, flourishing and then decaying.

Vaughan, on the other hand, espoused the classic Victorian ideal of progress, and he maintained that throughout history, progress had always originated in cities. Furthermore, contemporary British civilization would avoid the cyclical pattern of decline that had destroyed its predecessors because it was uniquely blessed with the benevolent influence of Protestant Christianity.

Vaughan's account of the development of modern European society followed a now familiar pattern of charting the rise of an urban middle class, fuelled by a religious myth, variously called "Protestantism," the "Protestant work ethic" or the "Puritan ethic". Supposedly, this myth fostered a new respect for wealth gained by individual effort, while it simultaneously destroyed medieval values and corresponding social relations.⁷ Vaughan differed from his successors, such as Marx, Weber, or R.H. Tawney, in that he saw these developments as completely positive. Furthermore, for him the "Puritan ethic" was a reality, and not merely a myth. This is not to suggest that he was naïvely unaware of the existence or power of myths; for him, as we shall see, the real myth was the insidious idealization of the pre-industrial, medieval age.

-
5. Andrew Lees, *Cities Perceived: Urban Society in European and American Thought* (Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 45.
 6. Catherine Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form 1832-1867* (The University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. xi.
 7. Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty* (New York, 1984) p. 24.

Vaughan tried to show how Nonconformity was in tune with the spirit of the age and how it embodied the most positive aspects of the national identity. As in his historical writings, he was intent on demonstrating that the Nonconformists were not a fringe group operating on the margins of society, but rather the firmest proponents of the beliefs and values that increasingly came to be seen as distinguishing Britain from her neighbours and rivals. This was no coincidence, Vaughan maintained, for the only type of religion that was suited to the modern urban world was a voluntary religion that had no ties to the state.

He had already outlined this position in *Congregationalism: or, the polity of independent churches, viewed in relation to the state and tendencies of modern society*. This work was based on an Address Vaughan had delivered to the Congregational Union in 1841. The similarities between that volume and *The Age of Great Cities* (although the latter is on a much grander scale) are striking, and this goes a long way towards explaining the seemingly unwarranted optimism of *The Age of Great Cities*. In the earlier work, the Congregational polity was described in terms akin to those he was to use to describe the urban polity – it too was self-governing, free from aristocratic control, led by the most virtuous and meritorious. In *The Age of Great Cities*, the word “cities” is substituted for the word “Congregationalism”; significantly the latter word never appears in *The Age of Great Cities*, in keeping with Vaughan’s desire to reach a wider audience and to stress the broad national implications of this argument. So, for example, a chapter in the earlier work entitled “Congregationalism in its relation to popular intelligence” was reworked and entitled “On the age of great cities in its relation to popular intelligence;” “On Congregationalism in its relation to higher departments of learning and science” became “On great cities in their relation to science, art, and literature,” and “On the public press in its relation to Congregationalism” became “On the freedom of the press, in its relation to great cities, and to morality.” The chapters were not exactly alike, but their messages were similar. Nonconformity, like the cities, welcomes responsible citizens and encourages popular intelligence. Like the city, Nonconformity is accused of being hostile to the higher pursuits, yet it seeks its leaders from the broadest base of popular intelligence, rather than relying on “privilege or prescription.” Vaughan saw the city, specifically the provincial city, as the place where Nonconformity could make its mark and its home, free from aristocratic interference. His glorification of certain aspects of urban life was actually a glorification of the fundamental qualities of Nonconformity.

Vaughan’s terminology was similar to that employed so effectively by the Anti-Corn Law League, and indeed Vaughan was a prominent participant in the Ministerial Anti-Corn Law Conference held in Manchester in 1841, where he delivered a speech that contained many of the ideas that were to appear in *The Age of Great Cities*. He ridiculed “the fear which many professed to entertain, lest the influence of our aristocracy should be lessened [by the repeal of the Corn Laws], and contended that it was proved beyond a doubt by history that it was our commercial towns which raised this country to its eminence and relieved its people

from the state of vassalage they were originally in."⁸

In their propaganda, the Anti-Corn Law Leaguers frequently invoked the powerful image of the industrious classes struggling against the landed aristocracy. The rhetoric of the League essentially denied the possibility that the two worlds, the medieval and the modern, which the Leaguers themselves had delineated, could co-exist harmoniously. This imagery had dramatic implications for the city, specifically the provincial city, for it was identified with one of the combatants in this struggle.⁹ London, on the other hand, came to be seen by the provincial middle classes as the stronghold and playground of the élite they most resented – and envied. Although Vaughan adopted the oppositional motif, his approach to provincialism was more ambiguous than that of the Anti-Corn Law League or of fellow Nonconformists like Edward Baines.¹⁰ His work was not a celebration of provincialism triumphant; rather, he wanted to free the industrial cities of the taint of provincialism, and demonstrate that they formed an integral part of the national culture – that they were not narrow in view, thought or interests. Hence, he was determined to prove that cities were the birthplace of all that was intelligent, moral and kindly – values that he deemed quintessentially good, modern and “manly”. In keeping with the oppositional motif, he argued that true provincialism was to be found in the rustic countryside.

So, for example, Vaughan questioned the claim that social relations in the countryside were warmer and more harmonious than those existing in the cities. Even when landlords acted with a strong sense of *noblesse oblige*, he maintained, the nature of their relationship with their tenants was fundamentally degrading and outdated. “Protection, and favour, and even sympathy, may descend from those who are above to those who are beneath, but it is still as from the high to the low. It is not the more full, manly, and moral sentiment which has place between equals.”¹¹ Vaughan scoffed at the claim that landlords were somehow inherently superior to businessmen or manufacturers because they were so deeply attached to the land, rather than to ephemeral monetary speculations: “The great farmer [landlord] and the great manufacturer owe their origin to the same cause – the command of capital.”¹²

As a result of such rural capitalism, a stark contrast had developed between the perceived beauty of the countryside and the actual degradation of the rural labourers.¹³ According to Vaughan, the neglect of the rural labourers which was

8. *Manchester Times and Lancashire and Cheshire Examiner*, Sat. 21 August 1841.

9. Asa Briggs has described how the northern cities became associated in people’s minds with danger, “agitation,” *Victorian Cities*, p. 117.

10. See Baines’s pamphlet *The Social, Educational, and Religious State of the Manufacturing Districts* (Leeds, 1843).

11. Robert Vaughan, *The Age of Great Cities* (hereafter *AGC*) (London, 1843), p. 281.

12. *AGC*, pp. 287-288.

13. Vaughan’s comparison parallels Raymond Williams’s classic condemnation of the way labourers were obliterated from the idealized artistic landscapes and “improved” actual landscapes of the eighteenth century, in *The Country and the City* (London, 1973).

inherent in the old system meant that, ironically, the rural world which he claimed was still seen by many as the quintessence of England, was now little more than an embarrassment. Here he was anticipating that criticisms of urban industrial life and, by extension, Nonconformity, would ultimately lead to the charge that it was somehow "un-English". The real danger to patriotism was not to be found in the cities, where people chose allegiance to the country in a rational process, he insisted. The "bond between vassal and chief must be replaced by one binding a citizen to his country."¹⁴ Vaughan used medieval terminology to play up the differences between blind obedience and rational choice, between a state religion and voluntary religion.

Life in the cities actually enabled people to make the transition from medieval to modern values, Vaughan maintained. Factory operatives increased their intelligence and raised their standards of morality through observing the working of the machines and following a regimented lifestyle. Vaughan acknowledged that use of machinery meant that the worker might in fact lose what specialized skills he might have possessed; on the other hand the worker was being exposed to the ingenuity of the machine "which will broaden his mind and demonstrate to him that society is constantly progressing rather than stagnant."¹⁵

Yet "education comes not from the structure of a loom, but from the texture of society," Vaughan insisted, and he stressed that the cities provided superior facilities to the countryside. Education in villages consisted only of "instilling subservience in villagers."¹⁶ By contrast, Vaughan claimed that the towns were relatively free from the "discountenance or control of powerful individuals or classes."¹⁷ As a result, their inhabitants had unrestricted access to knowledge and became much more "citizens of the world." Furthermore, the large, highly-concentrated population of the towns meant that urban schools had to compete with one another for students; this competition naturally led to a superior level of education.

Vaughan also maintained that the democratization of knowledge was an aspect of rural life that promoted social stability. Whereas in the ancient world, the pleasures of literature had been the preserve of a small élite, in the towns it had "become a principle that knowledge should be made available to all."¹⁸ The fact that knowledge had ceased to be exclusive greatly reduced feelings of difference, and of envy; essentially, the distinction between classes was greatly reduced and this promoted social stability.

14. *AGC*, p. 269.

15. *AGC*, p. 159.

16. *AGC*, p. 148.

17. *AGC*, p. 153.

18. *AGC*, pp. 80, 83.

This view was completely antithetical to that of many of Vaughan's contemporaries. The latter often depicted urban dwellers as a race apart, with, as Deborah Epstein Nord has shown, anthropological overtones.¹⁹ The factory system was accused of breaking down moral values by removing youngsters from parental control and keeping them in close proximity to one another without regard for their sex or age. The factories were seen as little cities in themselves, complete with an unruly, uncontrolled and uncontrollable population, lacking a recognised hierarchy; essentially, criticisms levelled at cities and at the modern industries were identical.

Martin Wiener has shown how the perceived anonymity and overcrowding of cities were seen to present a challenge to the prevalent ideal of individualized internal moral governance.²⁰ Vaughan argues that, in fact, it was only in cities, where supervision and surveillance by social superiors were minimal, that the individual had the opportunity to develop an independent sense of right and wrong. He agreed that some traditional moral values were breaking down in the cities, but he interpreted this phenomenon as a sign of the advent of a higher morality based on Christianity and disinterested affection.

In manufacturing and commercial societies, paternal authority ended much sooner as the children were able to find independent employment much easier. As a result, "the ties which bind men artificially to their family" were gravely weakened, but "all that is natural in the family relation" was immeasurably strengthened. The family, when it ceased to be united by economic necessity, could become a unit held together by pure affection, a situation that Vaughan deemed to be more civilized and "natural" than any other. The parent-child relationship became "more free, familiar and inviting", the parents "more considerate and kind because they know it is their only means of influence."²¹ The intermingling of economic and family affairs was outdated and immoral, in his view, and the mark of a backward civilization.

Vaughan also gave a uniquely urban dimension to the ideology of the separate spheres. In cities, women were kept out of the public spheres and were thus allowed to exercise their full range of feminine qualities without blunting them in the brutality of the public sphere. The spirit that had made these changes possible was "manifestly the civic spirit."²² Parental and masculine authority was actually

19. See Deborah Epstein Nord, "The Social Explorer as Anthropologist: Victorian Travellers among the Urban Poor" in William Sharpe and Leonard Wallock, eds., *Visions of the Modern City* (London, 1987), pp. 122-34. She contends that this phenomenon was most clearly developed in the writings of Henry Mayhew.

20. Martin J. Wiener, *Reconstructing the criminal: culture, law, and policy in England, 1830-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 18-19; see also *ibid.*, p. 26 for the dichotomy between "civilization and "barbarism" or "savagery".

21. *AGC*, p. 284.

22. *AGC*, p. 71.

stronger in cities, according to Vaughan, because it flourished naturally, without enforcement by the state or by tradition.

Vaughan's description of the city as the site of virtuous social transformation seems hopelessly idealized and unconvincing, even in light of his religious motivation, and it is easy to dismiss him as a bourgeois apologist.²³

But his idealization of urban values had another, conscious purpose: he believed he had to use the same weapons as his opponents who stressed the degradations of urban life. He could accuse the countryside of every imaginable backwardness, and describe in detail the misery of the rural labourers, but he recognized that rural England had always had one great advantage: the aura of rich literary and artistic associations that surround it. The great danger, in Vaughan's view, was that critics of cities conflated literary and artistic images with real images of the countryside and thus carried the debate into the realm of imagination and emotion. Vaughan countered this trend with a purely intellectual argument based on historical precedent; he seems to have had no personal contact with the modern city or its inhabitants at all, quite unlike Mayhew, Engels or Dickens. The colourful descriptions, the vivid characterizations, the sense of being physically present as an observer are all missing, except, ironically, in the sections about the great cities of antiquity, where the reader is taken on an imaginary tour and urged to picture their magnificent edifices and bustling squalor. The sections dealing with modern cities are curiously lifeless, except for extracts from other authors. Yet Vaughan, just like Engels, Dickens or Mayhew, was trying to "read the 'illegible' city."²⁴ In his hands the city became a great metaphor for the Congregational polity, as he tried to accustom a broader audience to the idea that Nonconformity lay at the heart of modern society, that it was in fact the staunchest upholder of its most cherished values. For groups that felt marginalized, therefore, in this case the Nonconformists, cities symbolized a place where they could experience liberty and progress rather than misery and disorder. Ultimately, the book does not replace the myth of rural England with a new urban one. Perhaps this is where Vaughan fits into the debate about whether British culture is profoundly anti-urban: the urban side was never able to muster an aesthetic alternative. In *The Age of Great Cities*, to use Clyde Binfield's paraphrase of Matthew Arnold, the Hebrew was not entirely Hellenized.²⁵

MARY HORA

23. Graeme Davison, "The City as a Natural System: Theories of Urban Society in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain" in Derek Fraser and Antony Sutcliffe, eds., *The Pursuit of Urban History* (London, 1983), p. 369. Vaughan advocated considerateness and humanity as solutions to the social tensions of modern life, arguing that "little more [was] needed than that the wealthy and higher classes should treat their inferiors with humanity."
24. Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight* (Chicago, 1992), p. 18.
25. See Clyde Binfield's discussion of Vaughan in "Hebrews Hellenized? English Evangelical Nonconformity and Culture, 1840-1940" in Sheridan Gilley and W.J. Sheils, eds., *History of Religion in Britain* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 323-327.

ZION, MANCHESTER

A brief history of Zion, by the late Ian Sellers, appeared in this *Journal* twelve years ago.¹ I have one advantage over Dr Sellers: I belonged myself to Zion from 1927, when I was carried in for baptism, to 1954, when I left to be ordained elsewhere. Moreover I grew up believing that there was an intimate connection between Zion and my family. My father was (though not simultaneously) a deacon, captain of the Boys' Brigade company, a Sunday School teacher, church treasurer, and church secretary; my mother succeeded him as a deacon after his death; between them they belonged to a large selection of the innumerable organizations based there. My grandmother ran the PME – the "Pleasant Monday Evening". A mere list of the societies of one kind and another which were on offer – PME, PSA (for men on Sunday afternoons), the Regnal League, the Social Hour, Boys' Brigade, Life Boys, Girls' Life Brigade, Young Worshippers' League, the Childhood (what was that?), the Cripples' Guild, the Rambling Club, and so on – offers an evocative catalogue of the life of inner city church activities between the wars. I shared in some – Life Boys and then Boys' Brigade, for example. In my infancy I was under the impression that none saw their parents at home both at once: one was always at Zion.

To understand the place Zion occupied in their lives it is necessary to say something about its peculiar character. The church dated from the early years of the nineteenth century, and around the middle of that century a rather impressive building in the neo-classical style then going out of fashion for Free Churches was built. In the years before the First World War it was demolished to allow for the erection of an Institutional Church, under the influence of Silvester Horne, who had done the same with his own church in London, and with the financial provision of Mrs Rylands of Lancashire cotton connections.² The theory was that Christianity was to be commended to the working-class populations of such districts as Hulme by an institute which catered for all their needs; not quite all, since Nonconformity was strongly teetotal; such churches included a bar, but serving soft drinks only.

Zion was notable not only for the number of its organizations but also for the complication of its premises. To take the latter first, I once counted seventy rooms of various kinds. It was a monument of architectural eccentricity, and seemed to be full of mysterious passages and rooms hidden away in odd corners, not to mention innumerable stairs: it seemed to be on quite a variety of levels, though the area was flat. There was a flat roof for such events as sales of work, which must have given trouble from the start. For a small boy it was wonderland: you could explore and expect for a long time to discover new territory.

-
- 1 I. Sellers, "Zion, Hulme, Manchester: Portrait of a Church", *JURCHS*, Vol. 4, No. 3, October 1988, p. 216-230.
 - 2: For Mrs Rylands see D.A. Farnie, "Money-Making and Charitable Endeavour: John and Enriqueta Rylands of Manchester", *JURCHS*, Vol. 6, No. 6, May 2000, pp. 435-9.

As my list suggests organizations existed to cover every felt need and some none had felt till their attention was attracted. Apart from the Sunday School there were two or three for women and two or three for men, and such recreational affairs as an orchestra, the rambling club, badminton (there was a sizeable gymnasium), not to mention cricket and football.

The building was opened in 1911, and the First World War, breaking out three years later, must have limited its heyday to extreme brevity; at any rate after 1918 the men came back in smaller numbers and new attractions made the recreational and social side less relevant. But through to the Second World War, when the building was to be used for civil defence purposes including a rest centre for those losing their homes, it could be said that something happened every day of the week. Most, if not all, of the organizations survived till the war, if with much reduced numbers.

There were subtle, or not so subtle, social differences among the organizations. The PME was for women; but the Social Hour I remember as the *Ladies* Social Hour, though listed as *Women's* in documents quoted below. Regnal was a creation of the inter-war years and aimed to provide for all-round needs, physical, mental and spiritual. One might join the Outer Circle without commitment to religious belief, and progress later to the Inner, which was distinctively Christian. The Outer Circle invited a variety of speakers : I remember that a political series included a Mosleyite, who in my memory was William Joyce, Lord Haw-Haw, who subsequently broadcast Nazi propaganda from Germany. If my memory serves me well he was probably the only visiting speaker at Zion who ended on the gallows.

My mother was an enthusiastic member of the rambling club; perhaps my father was at one stage, but I do not remember his being so in my time. As a confectioner my mother would work all night and spend the next day walking in Derbyshire.

My mother looked back to earlier days as a golden age, perhaps lost in two instalments. The "old Zion" was loved more than the 1911 building ever was, not surprisingly; and the ministry of H.H. Brayshaw and his assistant David Ness could never be matched : Brayshaw stayed about forty years, from the 'eighties to the 'twenties, so overlapping the change of premises; Mr Ness was his assistant for a long period of the middle.³ A second declension was occasioned by the outbreak of war in 1939. Many of the organizations continued, but were much depleted and, living out of Manchester, my parents' involvement was necessarily reduced, though we managed to attend every Sunday. Sometimes this involved train journeys, marginally worse on Sundays than on weekdays; but my father was able to secure a petrol allowance, even at the stage when there was no basic allowance – you could only get petrol for approved purposes – because the Boys' Brigade

3. For Henry Hutton Brayshaw (1858-1936), minister at Zion 1885-1926 ("and ... incidentally a first-rate golfer") see *CYB*, 1938, p. 654; for David Ness (1866-1932) assistant minister at Zion 1905-6, 1911-31, see *CYB*, 1933, p. 240.

company served also as a cadet unit. So most weeks we could use the car; my mother had a conviction that this usage was stretching the law, and huddled down in the back seat to avoid being seen, in a manner calculated to attract the attention of every policeman we passed.

Most of my parents' friends were Zion members, present or past. Zion was a centre of upward social mobility. I was under the impression that successive generations were always on an upward trend, and was puzzled how there could still be poor people. There were of course degrees of advance, defined by where you moved from Hulme. Minimally you went to Moss Side, which in later decades would hardly be regarded as progress. Old Trafford and Chorlton-cum-Hardy were better; Whalley Range *sounded* better but was already a bit ambiguous. Real achievement was to end up in Cheadle Hulme, Wilmslow, or, best of all, Bramhall.

None of my parents' friends had higher education in the sense of a University degree or equivalent, but on the whole Zion men, though not their wives, carried their education further from school days by evening classes. I suppose they would universally be classed as lower middle class.

Much of the life of Zion centred on the Hills. Partly because they were older than my parents and their contemporaries they stood somewhat in the relationship of senior friends to them all. Harold and Florence Hill were brother and sister. Neither married, and they lived together all their lives, in the house in which they were born, in Old Trafford. When it was rendered uninhabitable by an air-raid they moved out till it was restored and then moved back.

Harold (admired enough by my parents to provide my middle name) was an old boy of Manchester Grammar School, which indicated a measure of social prestige in his day. He worked for the city council, eventually becoming chief rating officer, presumably a well-paid job. His home was unimpressive, and he could rarely be observed spending any money except on holidays. These, without being indulgent, were quite enterprising, involving staying in various parts of the British Isles. Harold was a great walker, regularly leading Zion rambles, which were not trivial activities. He kept a strict discipline in all respects, including timekeeping and especially honesty carried beyond the demands of practicality: he was known to spend a great deal of time on Sunday School accounts correcting minute errors of the odd halfpenny. His sense of responsibility also demanded that he should keep unused emergency food supplies which came by some means across the Atlantic during the war, keeping them till they deteriorated and became useless. When he died his house contained huge numbers of copies of the *Manchester Guardian*, treasured as sacred writ not to be thrown away. His Sunday School cupboard was full of paper, pencils and other useful items kept against a rainy day which never came. He administered the large departmental Sunday School but refused out of modesty to adopt the title of Superintendent and insisted that he was merely the Secretary.

My parents considered him a saint; the fact that some of his principles were to my mind irrational probably does not distinguish him from other saints. One could hardly swear in his presence, and such vices as smoking or drinking alcohol could

hardly be contemplated. He rejected drink and Sunday cinemas on the grounds that one could not imagine Jesus so indulging himself, which seemed hardly relevant to the cinema and obviously erroneous in the case of drink.

Florence was the female equivalent. She was extremely gentle and ladylike, but like Harold had a nice sense of humour, of a kind appropriate to church magazines. She ran an adult class in the Sunday School, which seemed to consist entirely of females of uncertain age who had something wrong with them; variety was provided by the distinction of physical and mental limitations.

All Zion members paid tribute to the Hills, and they were genuinely good, kind and in some ways wise people. The only excuse for describing them in such a journal as this is that they are representative of a type of Nonconformity which must be among endangered species, if not actually extinct, to-day. But theirs is not the only model of goodness. Extravagant generosity, to the point of waste, would be inconceivable to them, as much as a wild party with rather too much food and drink. They were perhaps examples of late-Victorian and post-Victorian Nonconformity, the political Liberalism which peaked in the 1906 election, and a certain character represented by the *Manchester Guardian* of C.P. Scott and the Lancashire cricket of the inter-war years. Harold was a pacifist of a naive kind ("Can you imagine Jesus driving a tank?") and carried on an extensive correspondence with serving soldiers in the First World War, of which I possess the letters between him and my father. He edited the church magazine, with well-written articles spiced with gentle puns.

The character of the services was determined largely by the shape of the building, or rather what might be called the auditorium. Pews were unknown; there were tip-up seats, a large platform with a former cinema organ dominant, and numerous doors clearly marked EXIT. The services inevitably became performances by the minister, suited to the dramatic style of the minister there throughout my youth, Stanley Perkins.

Such archive material as I inherited from my parents is by no means representative, but fills out some parts of this picture.

There is, for example, a preliminary sketch of the *Proposed Zion Institutional Church*, preceding the rebuilding of 1911.

The following suggestions are made by the sub-committee with reference to the accommodation required, and will be submitted for approval or amendment at the next meeting of the Joint Committee.

The Church

- (a) To seat 1200 persons
- (b) To be galleried & seated after the Leysian model⁴

4. This is a reference to the Wesleyan Leysian Mission, City Road, London (1901-6), which held 1,750. Its architects too were Bradshaw and Gass, a Bolton firm with a national reputation for large educational, ecclesiastical, and commercial plant.

- (c) To have a platform including rostrum to hold 100 persons
- (d) The entrance to be from Stretford Rd and account to be taken of the noise from traffic

Assembly Room

That under the Church an assembly room (with cloakrooms) for 500 to 700 persons be provided.

That under the Church or in connection with it there be

- (a) Crush Hall
- (b) Pastor's Vestry
- (c) Deacons' Vestry
- (d) Choir Vestry
- (e) Ladies' Vestry

Sunday School

Entrance Mulberry Street with controlled access to Church

- 1) Ground Floor
 - (a) Infants' Assembly Hall for 200
 - (b) 2 classrooms for 30 each
 - (c) Cloakroom for 200 Hooks
- 2) Ditto
 - (a) Assembly Hall for 250 Juniors – with large cloakroom
 - (b) Superintendent's office, 2 Secretaries' offices, Teachers' cloakroom & conveniences for boys and girls
- 3) First floor
 - (a) Assembly Hall for 300 boys and girls (Intermediate)
 - (b) 10 classrooms to seat about 30 each
- 4) Ditto
 - (a) Assembly Hall for 250 Senior scholars
 - (b) 10 classrooms to seat 30 each

Lavatory accommodation may not be necessary if access is given to that in the Institute.

Institute Entrance from Stretford Road and Mulberry Street

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Ground Floor | (a) Billiard Room with ample accommodation for 4 tables
(b) 2 Games Rooms
(c) Refreshment Bar between Billiard Room & Games rooms
(d) Cloakroom & lavatory accommodation for men |
| First Floor | (a) Drawing or Common Room corresponding in size to the billiard room
(b) A girls' Games Room
(c) A Sewing Room
(d) Cloakroom & lavatory accommodation for girls
(e) Kitchens |

Basement Entrance from Mulberry Street

The basement under the Institute and Sunday School to be used for

1. Gymnasium with gallery
2. 2 Rackett (*sic*) Courts
3. Semi-Billiard Room for Boys
4. Games Rooms (2 or more)
5. Reading Room
6. Dressing Room with Lockers
7. Drying Room
8. Lavatory, 6 Bowls and usual Conveniences for Boys
9. Office at the Entrance to control admission (to be on the ground floor)
10. Room for Stores, Coats, Wood etc.
11. Boilers & Heating apparatus

(Signed) F Dyer
31/12/06

These plans were not carried out in full, but the resulting building was much what was here envisaged. The rear area of the Institute appeared in the film *The Whisperers*, though with almost subliminal brevity. This film of 1966 was a vehicle for a star (and Academy Award winning) performance by the aged Edith

Evans. A deflating thought is that this location was included as suiting the particularly gloomy character of the film.

And a letter from my father on behalf of a group proposing the formation of a *Dramatic Society*:

42 Warde Street
Hulme
Manchester

Nov 25th 1911

Dear Sirs,

A meeting was held on Thursday last (the 23rd inst) to consider the advisability or otherwise of forming an Amateur Dramatic Society in connection with Zion. The idea has been taken up with a fair degree of enthusiasm by the Young men and women of the Sunday School and bids fair to be a success, providing the sanction of the Deacons is given to the scheme. The scope of the Society will be limited to purely Dramatic productions, such as Shakespeare or, if possible, modern plays, all of which, of course, will be submitted to you for approval. We ask for your hearty co-operation and trust that we shall have any help you can render in the flotation of the Society. I am sure you will agree with me that an Amateur Dramatic Society, successfully managed, will prove to be a Financial Asset to the Church, to say nothing of its moral influence.

I enclose a list of members of the Committee, also officers, and may say that a rule has been passed giving power to the Committee to accept or refuse candidates for membership.

I also beg to make application for use of a small room for Committee meetings on Tuesday evenings from 9 to 10 pm for a few weeks.

Thanking you in anticipation of an early reply.

Yours faithfully

(signed) Frank Mayor

The Deacons. For Self and Co-secretary.

A pencil note at the bottom reads: *Allow Com[mitt]ee meetings without prejudice.* I remember the society functioning till the Second World War, my father being a regular participant. I do not recall any Shakespeare : there were popular plays of the era : *The Passing of the Third Floor Back* by Jerome K. Jerome, and *The Monkey's Paw* by W.W. Jacobs; but also some Galsworthy and other more up-market plays.

The inter-war period is represented by *Zion at a Glance*. This is an illustrated brochure, unfortunately undated. However, the opening paragraph refers to 112 years' history, which probably dates it to about 1929; this in turn suggests that it belongs to the opening period of the ministry of Stanley Perkins.⁵ The text is reproduced here and the illustrations listed.

Our Premises

ZION Church is one of the largest Institutional Churches of any denomination in the North of England. It is situated on one of the main arteries of Manchester, and is a central church, with the tramways converging from many directions upon it. The Church and Institute are built in one block which reaches back from Stretford Road to the street behind. It is a comparatively new building dating from 1911, and is built on the most up-to-date institutional lines, with 75 rooms and a Church Hall seating nearly 1,100. It was erected mainly by the generosity of the late Mrs. Rylands, whose munificence also provided two other famous buildings in the city, namely Rylands Library and the Milton Hall. Zion has a fine tradition of 112 years' history, the first building being the fifth Congregational church to be built in Manchester, and the second building in 1841, resembling a stately Roman temple with Corinthian columns.

Our Equipment

The present commodious buildings are excellently equipped, with spacious assembly and crush halls, numerous classrooms and committee-rooms, a large gymnasium, roomy kitchen and

5. For James Stanley Perkins (1890-1973), who also ministered at Openshaw, and Cheadle, and was the last minister at that cathedral of Congregationalism, Cavendish Street (1964-9), see *URC YB*, 1975, p. 302.

refreshments room, a flat promenade roof, a suite of four rooms for the Boys' Club, an extensive Men's Cloakroom with four billiard tables, and the fullest accommodation for each department of the Sunday School. Provision is thus made for the development of the body, mind and soul of all ages and both sexes in the matter of services, meetings, clubs, guilds, leagues and brigades. Part of the area in which the Church stands is the most congested and slum-ridden portion of Manchester, with a population more teeming even than that of Ancoats and one of the most over-crowded in Europe. Of the 26,000 over-congested homes in the city which are below standard in housing conditions, no small portion is to be found in certain areas of Hulme, which ZION Church serves. The Church and Institute are a Second Home for not a few of our young people, and there are approximately 35 active organisations which touch the lives directly of something like 3,000 persons.

A Week at Zion

A week's work at ZION runs something like this:-

On SUNDAY the morning worship meets and is followed by public worship, attended also by the Young Worshippers' League, while the Boys' Brigade Bible Class is also in progress upstairs. In the afternoon school again meets with its 360 scholars, 5 teachers and six departments. Meanwhile the PSA [*Pleasant Sunday Afternoon - SHM*] Brotherhood, the largest in the city area, is assembling with its orchestra of 30 performers. In the evening, in addition to public worship, a Childhood Service for 500 youngsters, is held with the aid of a lantern and a small army of helpers. Meanwhile the Wayside Pulpit outside the Church is proclaiming its silent message. In the winter season, the day's worship sometimes concludes with a Church Membership Class, except when the Communion is celebrated. On Sundays also nearly 300 magazines are given out each month, and IBRA [*International Bible-Reading Association - SHM*] members received their leaflets, while in the summer an open-air service is held.

On MONDAY a visitor entering ZION would find the Cripples' Guild assembled, and the PME for women gathering in the Church. Meanwhile, the Savings Bank Depositors are arriving and a small Missionary Class is being held. Later in the evening the PME Council may be meeting or the PME Choir practising.

On TUESDAY the visitor would find the Badminton members in eager fray, and the Boys' Club full of young enthusiasts.

On WEDNESDAY the Christian Endeavour is held, the Junior Preparation Class meets, and the Boys' Brigade parade for drill. It may happen also that the Church Meeting is being held, or the PSA Council is in session, or a meeting of our League of Nations' Union branch is taking place.

On THURSDAY our visitor would find the Women's Social Hour assembled in the afternoon, and in the evening the Primary and Upper Primary Preparation Classes in attendance; the PSA orchestra rehearsing, while perhaps the Diaconate is in session elsewhere.

On FRIDAY, if our visitor dropped in to the Men's Club, he might find a billiard handicap in progress, or downstairs the boys exercising in the gymnasium. He could hear the childish trebles of the Childhood Choir practising, followed by the more mature voices of the Church Choir rehearsing, and above it all the resounding fanfare of the bugle practice of the Boys' Brigade. In addition the Life Boys would be found at play, and the servers in the refreshment room, as on other nights, fully occupied.

On SATURDAY the visitor would find our Men's Football Team scoring goals on Christie's Playing Fields, and quite probably our Boys' Football Club doing the same in Chorlton Park not far away. In summer the boys would be at cricket instead, while a number of our young folk would be far away on a ramble across the moors. In the evening 1,000 children and adolescents would be seen gathered for an entertainment while if it happened to be Christmas Day, nearly 1,000 children would have gathered for breakfast and 150 homes would have enjoyed our presentation of a Christmas dinner.

To the Reader

Such a full programme of varied activities requires the services of a small army of voluntary workers to keep up with the pace of the Living Church. Our aim is to make ZION a real 'Church Home', and this is being realised, but it is impossible to carry through so vast an enterprise without a considerable supply of funds. If, therefore, the reader approves of the Christ-like work we strive to do among many who are poor and some who are almost destitute, we appeal for their moral and financial support, and shall be pleased, at any time, or by appointment, to show them something of our multifarious work in actual operation.

Zion Organisations : Approximate Statistics

Church Members	320	Boys' Cricket Club	15
Country Members	51	Savings Bank Depositors	150
PSA Brotherhood	300	Women's Social Hour	30
PME for Women	250	Christian Endeavour	25
Sunday School	360	Church Choir	20
Teachers	57	PSA Orchestra	30
Young Worshippers' League	50	Saturday Entertainment	1000
Childrenhood Service	500	Primary Preparation Class	8
Boys' Brigade	37	Upper Primary Preparation Class	8
Life Boys	24	Junior Preparation Class	8
Girls' Life Brigade	20	Badminton Club	40
Cripples' Guild	20	Church Membership Class	20
Diaconate	18	Refreshment Room Servers	10
League of Nations Union	153	Missionary Class	8
IBRA	96	Childrenhood Choir	12
Magazine Circulation	300	PSA Council	24
Men's Club	60	PME Council	24
Boys' Club	40	PME Choir	13
Rambling Club	30	Xmas Breakfast for Children	950
Men's Football Club	15	Christmas Dinner	150
Boys' Football Club	15		

The illustrations were of the Revd. D. Ness, the Revd. J.S. Perkins, the Revd. H.H. Brayshaw, Zion Congregational Church and Institute, the Billiard Room, Poor Children being given breakfast on Christmas morning, another view of our Christmas Breakfast—Babies Section, and the Lord Mayor of Manchester at ZION for the Children's Entertainment.

The inter-war period is represented too by a letter addressed to the members in 1931 by the two ministers, Stanley Perkins and David Ness:

Dear Fellow-Member,

In enclosing your Communion Card for 1932 we send you our best wishes for a New Year of happy fellowship and useful service.

As we look back over the events of the past year, we feel abounding gratitude for the work done and the united and willing spirit in which it has been accomplished.

The Bazaar, which raised the astonishing sum of £914 – and all has not yet been received – knit closer together those who were already bound by ties of friendship, and introduced more fully to our fraternity those who were less widely known. In this and other ways it has been of real benefit to our Christian community, and has certainly revealed to all what a wholehearted Church we are when called to a great endeavour.

We should like to direct your attention to a number of important forthcoming events in 1932. The New Year will be ushered in at ZION by the usual Watch-night service at 11 p.m. and the Workers' Consecration Service will take place at 10.30 on New Year's Sunday morning, to be followed by the Communion, when ten or more young people, mostly young men, will join our Church and receive the right hand of fellowship. This will be an encouraging and inspiring commencement of our Church year.

On Wednesday, February 10th, the Annual Congregational Party will take place, and we hope you will note that the date of the Annual Rally of Manchester Congregationalists in the Free Trade Hall will be March 9th. The young professor, J.S. WHALE, and also Mrs BINNS, will speak.

The Sunday School Anniversary will be celebrated on March 13th, when the Rev. JOHN BEVAN, of Balham, will occupy the rostrum, and as the Sunday School is an integral part of the Church, we mention the matter here and ask you to reserve the date.

Our Church Anniversary will be held on October 16th, then Rev. JAMES CREGAN, whose popularity in Manchester has never faded, will be our preacher. On November 6th, we are to have the exceptional privilege of a visit from the venerated Dr HORTON, of Hampstead, and that will indeed be a red letter day. And finally, November 27th has been provisionally reserved for a visit from Miss WILHELMINA STITCH, whose fragrant words to us last March are not forgotten.⁶

We extend to those who have suffered bereavement during the year our heartfelt sympathy and praise God for the worthy witness of those who have gone before.

6. For J.S. Whale and R.F. Horton see *JURCHS*, Vol. 6, No. 2, May 1998, pp. 97-131 and *JURCHS* Vol. 5, No. 4, May 1994, pp. 215-231. For John Bevan (1877-1946), who ministered at Balham (1921-46) and was noted for his *Christian World* column "Questions and Answers", see *CYB* 1947, p. 457. For James Cregan (1857-1935), who ministered at Cavendish Street (1904-14), and Paddington Chapel (1914-31) see *CYB* 1936, p. 650. Wilhelmina Stitch (1888-1936) has a notable plaque at Golders Green Crematorium, commemorating her as author and "Lady of the Fragrant Minute".

We thank all those who have so splendidly co-operated with us during the last twelve months, and pray God's blessing on the work at ZION which is yet to be.

Yours sincerely,
D NESS
J.S. PERKINS

Guiltily, one confesses to a wish to have heard what fragrant words Wilhelmina Stitch might have had to offer, rather than what the young professor J.S. Whale provided on this occasion.

After 1945 a more populist approach was called for, with a brochure entitled *Wot's On?* This was produced jointly by Bridgewater Hall Methodist Church, St Stephen's Parish Church and Zion. The Zion minister was Alan Chambers, who served from 1944 to 1953, and probably this joint effort dated from the immediate post-war years.⁷ The page devoted to Zion is as follows:

Zion Congregational Church and Institute,

223-225 STRETFORD ROAD

Minister:

J Alan Chambers, BD

SUNDAY SERVICES

10.30 pm	Morning Worship
2.45 pm	Sunday School
3.00 pm	Brotherhood Community Forum
6.00 pm	Children's Special Service (Sept-Apr)
6.30 pm	People's Service

Youth Activities

Girls' Life Brigade (6-17)	Friday	6.30 pm
Life Boys (9-11)	Mon & Fri	6.30 pm
Boys' Brigade (12-17)	Wed & Fri	7.30 pm
Junior Christian Endeavour (10-14)	Wednesday	7.00 pm
Young Worshipers' League	Sunday	10.30 pm
Refreshment Room		

⁷. For John Alan Chambers (1915-54), see *CYB* 1955, p. 10.

Men's Activities

Men's Regnal	Alt Mon	8.30 pm
Men's Club	Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri	7.00 pm

Women's Activities

PME Women's Meeting	Monday	7.30 pm
Women's Social Hour	Thursday	3.00 pm
Ladies' Regnal	Alt Monday	7.45 pm

Mixed Activities

Christian Endeavour	Wednesday	7.30 pm
Badminton	Tues & Thu	7.30 pm
Choir	Friday	7.45 pm
Brotherhood Orchestra	Monday	8.00 pm
Saturday Night Concerts, Socials, Plays, Dances &c.		

General

Baptisms on 3rd Sunday each month.
 Churchings and Weddings by arrangement.
 Advice Bureau, Friday from 7.00 pm

Further information will gladly be given by the Minister
 Telephone : CHOrlton 2985

These fragmentary relics of Zion's history convey strongly the feeling of a departed world; not less from the ones of a few decades ago than from those from more remote times. The grandiose plans for a church which would serve as social and recreational centre for a whole neighbourhood have their counterparts to-day, though such former anticipations are hardly acknowledged. But the host of organizations filling every slot in the week's timetables in the post-1945 years sound if anything more outdated.

STEPHEN MAYOR

THE OVERLOOKED PACIFIST TRADITION OF THE OLD PATHS CHURCHES OF CHRIST

PART II: LABOUR AND PACIFIST TIES FROM THE 1920S TO THE PRESENT

As the Old Paths movement gained momentum in the early 1920s, Old Pathers made their Labour sympathies clear. T.E. Entwistle said in 1922: “the wise will weigh Labour’s message for themselves [and] Christians will need to weigh the claims of Labour lest they be found fighting against their Lord.”¹ Such thinking was common in the Churches of Christ, especially in the Old Paths Movement. At the South Wales Conference in 1920 the conference paper “credited the Labour Party as being nearest to the Christian idea ... the Labour Party opposed tyranny, oppression, wage slavery, war, class distinction, and social inequality.”² William Ridley, the division secretary (and an imprisoned objector during the war), declared that these ideas of the Labour Party “were admitted to be part of and received their authority from the teachings of Christ, which implies that the New Testament ... compels us, in Christ’s name to practice these things.”³

The ties between Old Paths ideology and Labour Party (and radical) activism were strong. Joseph Barker, the father of Walter Barker (the publisher of Old Paths journals and pamphlets), was a Labour Councillor in Heanor. Barker worked in the hosiery trade and was active in the “Trade Union Movement.”⁴ D.B. Lawley, from the Blackburn chapel, was an unsuccessful Labour candidate for parliament in 1922. Lawley had signed the 1914 and 1916 protests over military service and conscription, actively helped objectors during the war and was married to a sister of the imprisoned Wilson brothers.⁵ ILP activist John T. Taylor in 1928, at the Humberstone Garden chapel, unsuccessfully moved: “That owing to the decision of the Annual General Meeting [i.e. the Association] again to have American preachers, who believed in open communion, come and preach in this country for the Churches, we sever our connection with the co-operation.”⁶ Twenty years later Taylor expressed his concern over Churches of Christ liberalization in the Old Paths journal *Scripture Standard*.⁷ Welsh miner Bill Hurcombe, who signed the

1. *Bible Advocate* 1922, p. 183.

2. *Ibid.* 29 October 1920, p. 526.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.* 1936, p. 144.

5. *Ibid.* 1922, p. 185 and interview with Vi Wilson Allan.

6. *Minutes of the Humberstone Garden Christian Meeting House* (1909-1945) as cited by Peter Ackers, “West End Chapel, Back Street Bethel: Labour and Capital in the Wigan Churches of Christ c. 1845-1945,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 47 (April 1996), p. 320. I am again indebted to Dr. Ackers for his advice in the preparation of this paper.

7. *Scripture Standard*, 1948, p. 188 and 1952, p. 186.

1917 protest against the Association's accepting of the American-inspired Christian Association, and his young son, also Bill, who was also to become a leading Old Paths preacher, handed out ILP and Communist literature during the 1926 General Strike. The younger Hurcombe recalled that many in the Treharris chapel were ILP members.⁸

Unsurprisingly some radicals who disagreed with the liberalization of the Churches of Christ sought expression for their radicalism outside the Churches of Christ altogether. Arthur Horner, a promising young Welsh preacher, clashed often with the Churches of Christ Training Committee (the forerunner of Overdale College) over his political activities.⁹ The Training Committee provided education for prospective preachers. His own period of study as a Church of Christ preacher ran the typical course of six months, but he clearly was at odds with the more liberalizing Churches' leadership.¹⁰ The Training Committee was based in Birmingham where the Association's *Bible Advocate* was published and Lancelot Oliver, the editor, was one of Horner's teachers. Horner signed the 1914 and 1916 protests over war and conscription, and was chairman of the South Wales Conference in 1915.¹¹ After his imprisonment as an objector from 1917 to 1919 Horner never returned to the Churches of Christ: indeed he helped to found the British Communist Party in 1920. Eventually he rose through the ranks of various miners' unions to become the General Secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers.¹² Horner's Church of Christ and Welsh pacifism represented "a new socio-political consciousness amongst the Welsh workers" that "gave impetus and vigour to the new socialism."¹³

All through the 1920s the *Bible Advocate* contained reprints of Labour Party writings or support for Labour perspectives. T.E. Entwistle, one of the leading anti-war and Old Paths preachers, had a monthly column filled with pro-Labour comments. Entwistle kept Old Paths readers abreast of pacifist/labour opinion and activities. His column "Topical Notes" was also filled with criticism of the liberalization of the Association of Churches of Christ. He quoted with approval a Labour paper: "Government of the people by the majority of people is the form of government which the vast mass of the Labour Party favours, believing that the people should be allowed to decide their own destinies, and that any kind of autocracy is objectionable."¹⁴ This Labour egalitarianism easily accords with the

8. Interview with Bill Hurcombe, Jr., Newport, Wales, 20 February 1997.

9. Arthur L. Horner, *Incorrigible Rebel* (London, 1960), p. 14.

10. *Bible Advocate* 2 January 1913, p. 8 and 25 July 1913, p. 476.

11. *Ibid.* 29 October, 1915, p. 629.

12. John Saville, "Arthur L. Horner, Communist and Miners' Leader," *Dictionary of Labour Biography* V, pp. 112-8. Horner called himself a Baptist probably thinking that most of his readers would have no clue as to the identity of the Churches of Christ. Labour historians have failed to recognize Horner's true religious heritage.

13. Kenneth O. Morgan, "Peace Movements in Wales, 1899-1946," *The Welsh History Review* 10 (June 1981), p. 416.

14. *Bible Advocate* 1922, p. 122.

Old Path preference for the priesthood of all believers and opposition to ministerial education or clerical authority.¹⁵

D.B. Lawley defended the miner, the cotton operative, the agricultural labourer, and “the common people” and attacked the rich. The inequalities between the rich and the poor “more glaringly patent and obvious as the poor become poorer and the rich ... flauntingly exhibit of their expenditure ... confound and disgust the Christian.”¹⁶ The *Bible Advocate* commended Lawley’s Labour Party and Christian activism: “Bro. Lawley with a passion for men’s needs, sees the condition of the people, those who were acclaimed as heroes, for whom nothing was too good, in promise, but who can now find no homes, no houses, no work, no land fit for heroes.”¹⁷ The *Advocate* also agreed with his condemnation of the rich: “He sees men who out of the necessities of others have built up wealth and fortune.”¹⁸

Labour and radical sympathies continued to be expressed in Old Path circles. Walter Barker continued his father’s Labour proclivity. In 1939 he presented a paper at a District conference on “What Should be the Attitude of the Christian Church to National and International Affairs?” He said Christ did not come “to bolster up a system which creates a few people abounding in wealth while large numbers have insufficient to meet the primary needs of life.” The church gave to whomever had need. “The economic implications of the Gospel are clearly communistic: equality.” He concluded: “The Church [should] declare this word of truth, and so save the world from an economic system characterized by injustice and oppression almost too grievous to be borne.”¹⁹ Harold Baines argued that the Church needed to help “the hundreds of thousands of honest men who, through no fault of their own, are thrown on the industrial scrap heap.” He believed churches “amongst the outcasts of society have a most fruitful field of labour.”²⁰ W. Hailstones said that he was a “Pacifist, Socialist and Professing Christian” at a Slamannan District meeting in Scotland and he pointed “out the things and influences which opposed” them.²¹ In the early 1950s when Labour supported the Korean War and military buildup, the *Scripture Standard* was quick to point out that Labour had “betrayed their trust,” betrayed “the common people” and was “selling the pass.”²²

15. See Ackers, “West End,” p. 319 where he makes this point about the sectarian Back-Street Bethels.

16. *Bible Advocate* 1925, p.173.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Scripture Standard* 1939, p. 134.

20. *Ibid.* 1940, pp. 5-6.

21. *Ibid.* 1941, p. 46.

22. *Ibid.* 1951, p. 149 and 1950, p. 131.

When the First World War ended many churches and conferences began to make official statements deploring war. Almost immediately after the war, the United States and Britain engaged in a "military action" in Russia in an attempt to overthrow the Bolshevik government.²³ This now forgotten conflict prompted protests from some Churches of Christ. Fred Heasman, an imprisoned conscientious objector in the Great War, reported that the Tunbridge Wells chapel passed a resolution which strongly deprecated "any further interference by" Britain "in the internal affairs of Russia, and call[ed] upon the Government forthwith to publicly repudiate any further warfare with Russia." The church also "urged that all the Churches in the Co-operation should take similar action."²⁴ The Mitchell Street church in Wigan also sent a resolution to the Prime Minister protesting at the Russian military action.²⁵ The Platt Bridge Chapel sent a protest and £2 toward a fund for the Russian famine.²⁶

Robert Price reported that the Conference in Yorkshire sent a resolution to the War Office, the Foreign Office, and the Prime Minister protesting against the fighting in Russia and urging "the Government to use all their influence to procure a speedy general disarmament of all nations, to the end that war may be abolished." They also sent a telegram to the British Prime Minister, then in Switzerland, asking that he "immediately exercise his clemency by releasing Terry McSwiney [sic] and other hunger strikers now suffering imprisonment for political offences."²⁷ Terence MacSwiney was the Lord Mayor of Cork, who had been presiding over an IRA conference when arrested for sedition. He immediately began a hunger strike which he continued in Brixton gaol until his death after seventy-four days. He and the ten other Irish hunger strikers brought world attention to the Irish rebellion. The Labour Party and most British working-class people supported Irish Home Rule, hence the degree of sympathy with Sinn Fein and the protests at British treatment of the strikers.²⁸ This appeal by Price, Entwistle and the Yorkshire conference shows the intertwining of Old Paths doctrine, pacifism and labour sympathies.

23. Richard H. Ullman, *Intervention and the War: Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-1921*, I (Princeton University Press, 1961) and Ullman, *Britain and the Russian Civil War: Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-1921*, II (Princeton University Press, 1968).

24. *Bible Advocate* 1920, p. 454.

25. *Ibid.*

26. Ackers, "West End", p. 311.

27. *Bible Advocate* 1920, p. 454.

28. Edgar Holt, *Protest in Arms: The Irish Troubles, 1916-1923* (New York, 1960), pp. 218, 222-2. On 29 June 1921 the Dudley Road Church of Christ also passed a resolution "appealing to the Government to change their policy as regards Ireland." The church opposed violence by the British and felt that Irish liberty "is rightly and justly theirs." They urged, "Let the voice of the Churches of Christ ... be heard ... pointing a way to solution." Dudley Road Church of Christ, Birmingham, Minute Book, 1916-1944. Churches of Christ Archive, Birmingham University.

In September 1922 the East Ardsley church protested at the British fighting in the Middle East and sent a resolution to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for War, and their local MP urging the government "to avert the calamity of war" because the church "oppose[d] the resort to arms ... being fully convinced that the tragedy" could "be prevented by wise statesmanship."²⁹ A few months later, in February 1923, reflecting their working-class constituency, the East Ardsley church sent another resolution to the Prime Minister and Parliament: "with deep concern [over] the serious problem of unemployment existing in the land, with the consequent poverty, starvation and misery", they "urgently and respectfully appeal[ed] ... that the proposed measures" were "inadequate, and that unless fuller provision" was "made, trouble must eventually ensue."³⁰ The Bedminster Church in Bristol sent a resolution to the Annual Conference held at Nottingham saying that in light of the growing threat of war they "earnestly urged" the Annual Conference "to make a determined and definite stand against all forms of War and press for the preservation of Peace within the Empire and the World."³¹

Besides the general pacifist outlook of the emerging Old Paths churches, support for the wider peace movement was developing. In 1926 Arthur Daniell, a member of the Bedminster church who had been imprisoned as a conscientious objector in the Great War, urged readers of the *Bible Advocate* to get "Arthur Ponsonby's Peace Letter, sign it, and influence all those in their church and locality to sign it also."³² Ponsonby, an MP who had switched from the Liberal to the Labour Party after the war for pacifist reasons, started his Peace Letter in 1925 with a refusal "to support or render war service to any Government which resorts to arms." He articulated a new utilitarian or humanitarian approach to pacifism, believing that the costs of war would outweigh any possible benefits and arguing that "all disputes" could be settled by negotiation or arbitration.³³ William Kempster, editor of the *Bible Advocate*, had copies of the letter available. Daniell believed that the time was ripe for pacifists to "obtain a hearing from the common people."³⁴

In the 1930s pacifism accelerated in the Churches of Christ among the Old Paths movement. In February 1933 students at the Oxford Union voted that "this House will in no circumstances fight for its King and Country."³⁵ What became known

29. *Bible Advocate* 1922, p. 162.

30. *Ibid.* 1923, p. 47.

31. Minute Book of the Bedminster Church of Christ, Bristol, in possession of the Bedminster Church Secretary, Geoff Daniell. Mr. Daniell is the son of Arthur Daniell, conscientious objector in the First World War.

32. *Bible Advocate*, 1926, p. 47.

33. Martin Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain 1914-1945* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 80-1. Ceadel labels Ponsonby's pacifism humanitarian and utilitarian and calls it "the major pacifist innovation of the inter-war period."

34. *Bible Advocate* 1926, p. 47.

35. Charles Chatfield, *For Peace and Justice: Pacifism in American, 1914-1941* (University of Tennessee Press, 1971), p. 260. Also see Ceadel, pp. 127-33.

as the Oxford Pledge spread to other universities with wide publicity. Within a few weeks Walter Barker read a paper supporting the Pledge at the Ilkeston district meeting. Barker argued that war was not reasonable nor a solution to problems. He opposed a proposed policy of spending four and a half million pounds on the military. He maintained that "as Christians we can never condone, sanction, much less take part in war, for the simple reason that the teaching of Jesus Christ is opposite and condemnatory thereto." Christians had "the highest possible grounds for refusing to fight even at the call of King and country."³⁶ The meeting unanimously passed a resolution "against war in any circumstances whatever, as being contrary to the teaching of Christ." It was sent to the Prime Minister, local MPs, and the District Conference of the Churches of Christ and published in the *Ilkeston Advertiser*.³⁷ The Argyle Street Church of Christ, Hindley, one of the staunchest in the Old Paths movement, went on record in June 1933 stating "their entire disapproval of WAR in any aspect, and pledge themselves not to further the interests of war."³⁸ They sent the resolution on to the Association's Annual Meeting in Barrow. Two Churches of Christ in Blackburn unanimously passed a resolution in 1935:

that we confirm the attitude taken by many of our members during the last war, in refusing to take the military oath or to render any service whatever in aid of war; and that we reaffirm our determination to encourage all our members to refuse to take the military oath, or to participate in any way in carnal warfare, whether described as aggressive or defensive, at any time.³⁹

They urged other Christians and the Churches to do the same.

Walter Crosthwaite, now editor of the new Old Paths publication *Scripture Standard*, quoted H.R.L. (Dick) Sheppard's famous letter to the press of 1934 declaring "that war of any kind, or for any cause, is not only a denial of Christianity, but a crime against humanity, which is no longer to be permitted by civilised people." Crosthwaite published Sheppard's anti-war resolution and added: "It is surely the duty of all Christians and Churches to use all their influence on the side of peace and by broadcasting the principles of their Master ... seek to make war impossible."⁴⁰ Later in 1935 Crosthwaite implored: "As those who stand for a complete return to New Testament Christianity we should be foremost

36. *Bible Advocate* 1933, p. 45.

37. *Ibid.* 1933, p. 45.

38. Church of Christ, Argyle Street, Hindley, Church Business Minutes, 22 November 1922 to 13 December 1939, in possession of John Morgan, Church Secretary, Argyle Street Church of Christ, Hindley.

39. *Bible Advocate* 1933, p. 76.

40. *Scripture Standard* 1935, p. 16. On Sheppard's peace movement see Adrian Hastings, *A History of English Christianity, 1920-1990*, 3rd ed. (London, 1991), p. 332.

in making our voices heard, and our influence felt, on the side of peace, and against all war."⁴¹ George Hudson of Birmingham in a speech at an Old Paths conference in April 1935 at Wigan thought that Christians had "failed to take advantage of opportunities" to push for peace as Britain seemed on the verge of war with the deteriorating situation in Ethiopia. In another conference in September they took Crosthwaite's and Hudson's advice and passed a resolution: "Resolved that we, members of various Churches of Christ in Great Britain, appreciate the efforts of His Majesty's Government in their endeavour, through the agency of the League of Nations, to bring about a settlement of the dispute between Italy and Abyssinia."⁴² On the verge of the Second World War, in November 1938, the Beulah Road Church of Christ, East Kirkby, "renounce[d] war" and vowed "never to support or sanction another."⁴³ While pacifism generally collapsed in British society and in Nonconformity in the face of the Second World War, in the sectarian Old Paths movement it took root even more tenaciously.

The *Scripture Standard* reported districts and churches that sought total exemption for conscientious objectors.⁴⁴ On the whole the tribunal system worked much better in the Second World War than in the First, and most objectors obtained the status they sought.⁴⁵ Nonetheless some of the Old Paths leaders were "pained" when elders in the Church of Christ disagreed with objectors from the Churches during tribunals.⁴⁶ Some of the Old Path congregations strictly "disfellowshipped" (excommunicated) members who joined the military.⁴⁷ Most objectors in the Old Paths churches were able to obtain alternative service or work of national importance under civilian control. R.A. Hill of London worked for a time with Civil Defence Service (CDS) and then later as a glazier when CDS laid workers off.⁴⁸ One Old Paths member, Tom Dand of Mapplewell, whose property contained valuable timber, was able to employ objectors as workers.⁴⁹

In 1941 women became eligible for conscription. In reality it was not a *military* conscription for women could elect to enter Women's Services or were "free" to select Civil Defence Service or industrial work. Even so, many women registered their conscientious objection and went through the tribunal process. Some

41. *Scripture Standard* 1935, p. 56.

42. *Ibid.* 1935, 130.

43. *Ibid.* 1938, p. 186.

44. *Ibid.* 1939, pp. 82, 90.

45. Rachel Barker, *Conscience, Government and the War: Conscientious Objection in Great Britain, 1939-1945* (London, 1982).

46. *Scripture Standard* 1940, p. 23.

47. *Christian Soldier* March 1945, p. 5. This is an American Churches of Christ journal where Old Paths leader R.A. Hill wrote a letter describing the situation in Britain. This practice apparently ended sometime after the war. See *Scripture Standard* 1959, p. 77.

48. *Christian Soldier* March 1945, p. 5.

49. *Scripture Standard* 1962, p. 11.

obtained alternative service while others went to prison.⁵⁰ R.A. Hill's wife drove an ambulance for work of national importance.⁵¹ Peggy Wilson of Blackburn (daughter of the First World War conscientious objector Slater Wilson) went to prison at Strangeways in Manchester for three months for refusing to make mail bags.⁵²

The Blackburn chapel had been a centre for Old Paths pacifism in the First World War, when the Wilson brothers took a leading role against war and conscription. Most chapel members of military age were active in the Peace Pledge Union (PPU) during the Second World War.⁵³ This was a direct outgrowth of Dick Sheppard's 1934 letter and had been launched by him in 1935. It combined the pacifist concern "to prevent war by political means" with the more traditional movement "of personal conscientious objection."⁵⁴ Before Britain entered the war over 100,000 people had signed pledges that they would renounce war and would neither sanction nor support another one. During the war PPU's membership declined, so it focused more on helping conscientious objectors. A loyal core remained, of which the Blackburn chapel members were part.⁵⁵

Many of the key Old Paths preachers of the mid-twentieth century were conscientious objectors during the war. Albert W. Winstanley, who attended Argyle Street in Hindley as a child, was granted an unconditional exemption as an objector for the entire war.⁵⁶ Frank Worgan, also an Argyle Street member, had his appeal for unconditional exemption refused. He did alternative service first with the National Fire Service and then as a coal miner.⁵⁷ Leonard Channing, a native of London, did alternative service first as a farm labourer and then worked with the civilian ambulance service.⁵⁸ Andrew Gardiner, who preached in Scotland, was exempted from military service because he worked as an engineer.⁵⁹ Tom Kemp, also from the Hindley congregation, was a noncombatant but failed his physical and was allowed to return to his position as a grocer's assistant.⁶⁰ Bill Hurcombe, who had helped his father hand out ILP and Communist pamphlets, did alternative service around Bristol.⁶¹

50. Barker, pp. 110-1.

51. *Christian Soldier* March 1945, p. 5.

52. Interview Vi Wilson Allan.

53. Interview Vi Wilson Allan.

54. Hastings, p. 333. Also see the official history of PPU, Sybil Morrison, *I Renounce War: The Story of the Peace Pledge Union* (London, 1962) and Ceadel, pp. 220-315.

55. Barker, pp. 98-101.

56. A.E. Winstanley, "Present Day Evangelism," in John Allen Hudson, *The Church in Great Britain* (Old Paths Book Club, 1948), p. 255.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 256 and interview with Frank Worgan, Stockport, England, 29 March 1997.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 257.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 259.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 258.

61. Interview with Bill Hurcombe, Jr.

After the war the Old Paths Churches confronted the problem of conscription. W.B. Jepson wanted all the anti-war brothers and sisters "called together" to make a "united protest" against conscription, "the menace to all true peace", which was about to become law.⁶² When the Korean conflict involved Britain young men faced conscription again. *Peace News*, the PPU's paper, reported the case of Reginald Manning, an upholstery workshop assistant and a member of the Ilford Church of Christ. Manning told the tribunal that since he followed the Sermon on the Mount he could "not love men and kill them." His conscience told him that it was "a sin against God to enter the armed forces with the intention to kill or injure because God has said that man has been made in His likeness." He could not do noncombatant work because "without those services this evil of war could not continue."⁶³ The tribunal gave him noncombatant status only. (The *Scripture Standard* did not report the final outcome of Manning's case). A.R. Frith, realizing that conscription-age Christians needed help, called for a meeting so that Old Path churches could discuss the problem.⁶⁴ On 22 September 1951, at the Friends' Meeting House in Manchester, a meeting on the Old Paths "attitude toward war" was held. Frith said that the conscientious objectors of the Great War had "blazed the trail." The anti-war conferences of that war were recounted. Objectors from both World Wars narrated their experiences. Even some who had served in the Forces "condemned war as being of the devil and demoralizing, and said that at whatever cost they would not serve again." The *Scripture Standard* agreed, along with R. McDonald a conscientious objector from the First World War, to inform men of the available help for objectors.⁶⁵ Crosthwaite devoted an entire issue of the *Scripture Standard* to reviewing the historic stance of the Churches of Christ against war. He recalled "the time when those who joined the 'Forces' were separated from fellowship, and when those in the Police Force were looked upon with suspicion."⁶⁶ In 1954 the Blackburn Church, where Harry Wilson was the secretary, passed a resolution calling for an end to conscription and sent it to their local MPs, the Minister for War, and the Government: "We believe that the conscription acts of all countries jeopardise the peace of the world; and that to outlaw conscription will go farthest in preventing war."⁶⁷ This was the last time that a resolution against conscription was published in the *Scripture Standard*. Other issues now became centre stage in the pacifist cause.

In 1952 Britain exploded its first atomic bomb. Much of the protest was confined to pacifist groups and the Old Paths Churches of Christ were no exception. Harry Wilson wrote in the *Scripture Standard*: "Are we going to sleep while another ghastly Hiroshima is made of many parts of the world?" He wanted the Old Paths

62. *Scripture Standard* 1946, p. 117.

63. *Peace News* as cited by the *Scripture Standard* 1952, p. 46.

64. *Scripture Standard* 1951, p. 92.

65. *Ibid.*, pp. 163-5.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

67. *Ibid.* 1954, p. 5.

Churches to “awake and help save the bodies and souls of men in and out of the battlefield.” He feared they would “find the air filled with those dropping atom-bombs, hydrogen, napalm, and bacteria, etc. which will destroy all life and vegetation.”⁶⁸ When the Archbishop of York, Cyril Garbett, protested against the use of the napalm bomb in Korea by British and American forces, Harry Wilson wrote to the *Daily Mirror* applauding him: “It is high time the Churches and their leaders got down to it or if it is not already too late with the stockpiling of these Devilish instruments.”⁶⁹

In 1957 Britain exploded its first Hydrogen Bomb and anti-nuclear protests rapidly expanded, focused in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND).⁷⁰ Concern in the Old Paths Churches paralleled this protest. Charles Melling, now editor of *Scripture Standard*, reacted against the British decision to test an H-Bomb:

Surely as regards the H-bomb we Christians must cry aloud and spare not. We need something of a burning indignation of the prophets against evil, injustice, hypocrisy and oppression. We must not simply deplore the immoral forwarding of this weapon, but should make our objectives known where they will be best understood – in Parliament. Our local MP should be written to this effect.⁷¹

Walter Barker, the publisher of the *Standard*, concurred:

Political action depends largely on public opinion and unless men and women of thought and feeling make known their opposition to what is being proposed to be done, this great sin against humanity will be committed in our name. Brethren make widely known to your members of Parliament your intense objection to this dreadful proposal.⁷²

The Blackburn church sent a resolution against the “bomb” to the British government protesting against the nuclear tests and asking for “the money, energy and zeal used in the manufacture and testing of the bomb to be turned into channels for the benefit of mankind the world over.” Harry Wilson urged other churches to protest, “that humanity may be saved in time and in eternity.”⁷³

The early 1960s saw the height of the CND campaign and many in the Old Paths Churches continued a anti-nuclear stance. In January 1962 J.E. Breakwell wanted the Old Paths churches to arrange a special meeting so that “we could raise our

68. *Ibid.*, 1952, pp. 88-9.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

70. Hastings, p. 510.

71. *Scripture Standard* 1957, p. 67.

72. *Ibid.*

73. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

protest against further nuclear testing. If a meeting could not be scheduled he wanted a petition circulated and sent to the government. He was especially concerned at the contamination of children's milk by strontium 90.⁷⁴ Harry Wilson joined in calling for Christians "everywhere to protest to MPs and governments."⁷⁵ Walter Barker, Albert Winstanley, and the *Standard* editor, Charles Melling, all wrote of their alarm at the threat of nuclear annihilation.⁷⁶ Church members were invited to join the Aldermaston March against nuclear weapons on 21-23 April, 1962. They planned to worship with the congregation at Reading on Sunday.⁷⁷ The composition of the CND between 1958 and 1965 was compatible with the historic stance of the Old Path Churches: 46% were Christian, 46% were absolute pacifists (a quarter of them supported the Peace Pledge Union) and 51% were members or "strong supporters" of the Labour Party.⁷⁸ These connections between the Old Paths Churches and the CND once again indicate a propensity for Old Pathers to favour Labour. Most in the CND were supporters of the Labour Party and Labour saw CND as standing "in the grand tradition of morally inspired Labour peace movements ... the socialist commitment to 'peace and brotherhood.'" ⁷⁹

The pacifism of the Old Paths Churches has not been uniformly "political", as some have defended more traditional sectarian pacifism. A small minority argued that Christians should not participate in politics at all, not even to vote. They believed that all human governments were in rebellion against God and "worldly" or evil.⁸⁰ A more common minority position was the view that while Christians might properly vote and express their pacifism, they should not get involved in political protest movements. Len Channing was concerned that Christians were getting "mixed up" with protests and demonstrations against nuclear weapons believing that it was "their duty to join." These Christians would "find themselves marching alongside Anarchists, Trotskyists, Maoists, and the like." Channing thought Christians were to extend "the borders of Christ's kingdom" that is, convert others and live model lives.⁸¹ Channing and some of the Second World

74. *Ibid.*, 1962, p. 8.

75. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

76. *Scripture Standard* 1962, pp. 129-30, 157-9, 161-3; 1963, pp. 41-2, 53-4; 1964, pp. 5-6.

77. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

78. Richard Taylor and Colin Pritchard, *The Protest Makers: The British Nuclear Disarmament Movement of 1958-1965, Twenty Years On* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 22-5.

79. Richard Taylor, *Against the Bomb: The British Peace Movement, 1958-1965* (Oxford, 1988), p. 311.

80. *Scripture Standard* 1946, pp. 11, 26-8, 58-9. This view is similar to the pacifist views found in the American *a cappella* Churches of Christ, which is the American equivalent to the Old Paths movement. See Michael W. Casey, "From Patriotism to Pacifism: The Emergence of Civil Religion in the Churches of Christ in World War One," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 66 (July 1992), pp. 376-390.

81. *Old Paths* 1995, pp. 9-12. This article is a reprint from some other Old Paths source. Unfortunately I do not know when it was originally written.

War conscientious objectors tended to be less political than those from the First World War, perhaps reflecting their easier wartime experience.⁸²

Since the early 1960s few articles on pacifism have appeared in the *Scripture Standard* but most church leaders and members in the Old Paths churches still object to war and discourage young men and women from joining the military.⁸³ For example, in 1962 (after National Service had ended) the *Scripture Standard* published a statement which objectors might sign seeking for exemption from combatant and noncombatant service. The statement was filled with primitivist rhetoric: "My duty and obligation to God is superior to all other obligations (Acts 5:29; Matt 22:37)" and "My God in the Bible forbids that I engage in carnal warfare..."⁸⁴ In the late 1960s a soldier was converted at the Beech Hall church in Wigan. He and the Old Paths Churches immediately sought his release from the army.⁸⁵ After several months and a payment of £250 he was released "on conscientious grounds."⁸⁵ In 1972 the editor of the *Scripture Standard*, Charles Melling, wrote against war. He argued that war was futile and brought about the breakdown of moral and spiritual values. Most important, Melling concluded, "the teaching of the gospel is that our dealings with others are to be altogether in love."⁸⁷ He remembered that the right of alternative service was due to the sacrifice of the Great War's conscientious objectors: their loyalty to God rather than to men made the way clearer and easier for their younger brethren later to follow." He recognized that "it is still a courageous step to make ... even the very terms 'Conscientious Objector', 'Conchie,' and 'Pacifist' are often used as a sneering reproach." In that situation the Christian was "to accept the consequent suffering and hardship cheerfully and without resentment, and to show by any means within his ability his concern to love and serve his fellows." The Christian objector was "serving the cause and displaying the love of his Master Jesus Christ", given that he was "not carried about by every changing fashion or conviction but that his convictions are deep and true."⁸⁸ If Britain were to reinstate conscription or enter a protracted war, primitivist voices from the Old Paths Churches would again be part of the British pacifist protest.

MICHAEL W. CASEY

82. Interview with Frank Worgan.

83. Occasionally a non-pacifist leader will emerge. For example, the *Christian Worker*, a major newsletter for the Old Paths Churches, is edited by Graham Fisher who grew up in the Association of Churches of Christ and shifted to the Old Paths Churches as an adult. While he allowed pacifist articles in the *Christian Worker* he closed the columns to further discussion on the issue in 1997. The *Scripture Standard* remains committed to the pacifist position.

84. *Scripture Standard* 1962, p. 113.

85. *Ibid.* 1967, p. 118.

86. *Ibid.* 1968, p. 142.

87. *Ibid.* 1972, 98.

88. *Ibid.*, pp. 110-1.

**R. TUDUR JONES 1921-1998:
CONGREGATIONAL MINISTER,
CHURCH HISTORIAN AND WELSH NATIONALIST**

Nonconformity became the primary expression of Christian faith in Wales during the nineteenth century. The Anglican Church, restricted as it was by legal constraints on the formation of new parishes, could not keep pace with the population movement and the development of new towns around coal-mining, and iron- and steel-working industries. The chapels were centres of cultural and social exchange, and the formative influence on the development of community spirit. Nonconformist ministers became leaders of the people, and in turn, as the franchise was extended, they became directly involved in political issues attempting to give expression in real terms to their faith, to their understanding of the nature of politics, and to their perception of Welshness. Men such as William Rees,¹ Samuel Roberts² and Henry Richard³ all sought to work out their Christian faith in such a way that would affect Welsh society for the better. They contributed to the debate about society and politics, while also agitating for peace, the repeal of the Corn Laws and educational reform. Their politics were radical, expressed through the Liberal Party and finding its most potent edge by the end of the nineteenth century in the *Cymru Fydd* or *Young Wales* movement spearheaded by two Nonconformist laymen, Thomas Edward Ellis (a Calvinistic Methodist)⁴ and David Lloyd George (who was at least a nominal Baptist, after childhood attendance at the Church of Christ in Criccieth).⁵ The growing sense of national identity during the nineteenth century was indelibly linked to political activity as a necessary adjunct to personal faith. And Christian faith, for the vast majority of religious Welshmen, was expressed through the Welsh language and the Nonconformist chapel.

-
1. William Rees (1802-83), known as "Gwilym Hiraethog", was a Congregational minister who was largely responsible for the awakening of Welsh political consciousness through his journal *Yr Amserau*. See J.E. Lloyd & R.T. Jenkins (eds.), *The Dictionary of Welsh Biography Down to 1940 (DWB)* (London, 1959), pp. 831-2.
 2. Samuel Roberts (1800-85), known as "SR", was a Congregational minister who agitated for social reform particularly concerning the repeal of the Corn Laws and the rights of tenant farmers. See *DWB*, pp. 879-80.
 3. Henry Richard (1812-88), "the Apostle of Peace", was originally a Congregational minister in London and then a Liberal MP. He attempted to act as an apologist for Wales in the English press, giving particular attention to the Rebecca Riots. In Parliament he was "a firm upholder of Welsh and Nonconformist rights." See *DWB*, p. 849.
 4. T.E. Ellis (1859-99) was Liberal MP for Meirionnydd and a firm advocate in Parliament of Welsh interests.
 5. For an analysis of Welsh politics at this time which includes mention of the Nonconformist influence, see Kenneth O. Morgan, *Wales in British Politics 1868-1922* (Oxford, 1963).

Even in the twentieth century, Nonconformist ministers maintained a political role. During the early decades, many of them could be found on Socialist platforms preaching a message of social amelioration and justice for the "labour" cause. Men such as T.E. Nicholas, D.D. Walters, Herbert Morgan and R. Silyn Roberts⁶ all linked their commitment to Christianity, learned and promulgated through the Nonconformist chapels, with a burgeoning commitment to their language and culture which would develop into a religiously motivated, benign nationalism later in the twentieth century. Ministers and laymen such as the Baptist pastor Lewis Valentine, the Calvinistic Methodist school-teacher D.J. Williams, and the Congregational tutor J.E. Daniel played a prominent part in the founding and development of the Welsh Nationalist Party in 1925, renamed *Plaid Cymru*, the "Party of Wales", in 1945.⁷

The Chapel maintained a political status throughout the twentieth century, spurred on by the need to fight for language and culture both of which appeared to be under serious threat. It was into this religious tradition, Christian Dissenting, political and unmistakably Welsh, that R. Tudur Jones was born and raised. And it was this tradition which he led for over forty years with a formidable intellect, deep-seated passion and Christian beneficence.

R. Tudur Jones

Robert Tudur Jones was born in Tyddyn Gwyn,⁸ his maternal grandparents' home, just outside Llanystumdwy, Criccieth, on 28 June 1921. His mother,

6. T.E. Nicholas (1879-1971), an accomplished poet and political propagandist, was famous for leaving the ministry to become a "tooth-puller". He was an avid supporter of Stalin and Mao, though he maintained a link with Welsh Congregationalism through his membership of Seion Chapel, Baker Street, Aberystwyth. R. Tudur Jones was later his minister. D.D. Walters (1862-1934) preached a radical and revolutionary socialist message from the unlikely position of Congregational minister in Newcastle Emlyn. Herbert Morgan (1875-1946) was an early member of the Independent Labour Party and a prominent spokesman on its behalf while also ministering to the Welsh Baptist congregation in Castle Street, London, which counted Lloyd George among its adherents. He was later director of Extra-Mural Studies at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. R. Silyn Roberts, (1871-1930) was the Calvinistic Methodist minister at Tanygrisiau, Blaenau Ffestiniog, who was the first to publicise the ILP in Welsh. The relationship between the chapel and the labour movement in Wales is the subject of Robert Pope, *Building Jerusalem: Nonconformity, Labour and the Social Question in Wales 1906-1939* (Cardiff, 1998); also *idem*, *Seeking God's Kingdom: The Nonconformist Social Gospel in Wales 1906-1939* (Cardiff, 1999).
7. These men, and their contribution to the Nationalist movement, are discussed in D. Hywel Davies, *The Welsh Nationalist Party 1925-1945: A Call to Nationhood* (Cardiff, 1983).
8. A memorial plaque was unveiled on the cottage in June 2000.

Elizabeth Jane Williams, was for a period a nurse at Woodford Bridge, Essex, and then in Canada and in Cardiff, while his father, J.R. Jones, hailed from Chwilog in Caernarfonshire. His father's work as a railwayman soon meant that the family had to move to Rhyl, which was far-removed from Chwilog and Llanystumdwy; more urban, more busy and more Anglicised. Holidaymakers flowed into the town during the summer months and Mrs Jones opened the house to "full-boarders". In 1932, Elizabeth Jane died at the age of forty-four, and a maiden aunt came from Chwilog to look after the family. Rooms were still let out to lodgers, but the atmosphere in the home changed and, for the eldest child, this meant "peeling potatoes, tons of potatoes, scraping carrots and slicing French beans. And then came the dish-washing, mountains of dishes".⁹ The Jones family were committed to the chapel and to the expression of their faith in their natural tongue, and they became members of Carmel Welsh Congregational Church where the father taught in the Sunday school and the son became famed for his ability to remember and recite not just Biblical verses, but whole chapters or Psalms. He recalled, many years later, how an art teacher, Miss Wilkinson, had written on his school report card "Jones lacks ambition." Having no artistic talent, he felt unable to confide in her that he had the early ambition of driving stream locomotives and later the ambition to be a preacher. "They might well laugh at you."¹⁰ He began to preach at the age of sixteen.

In 1939 the eighteen-year-old Robert Tudur was presented to the council of Bala-Bangor College to undergo preparation for Christian ministry among the Welsh Congregationalists (Independents). Having been accepted, he entered the University College of North Wales, Bangor, as Price Davies Scholar to read for a BA degree. He graduated in 1942 with First Class Honours in Philosophy and was awarded the Sir Henry Jones Memorial Prize,¹¹ the first of many awards in recognition of his academic and intellectual prowess. He then enrolled on the University of Wales BD scheme which was until 1969 a post-graduate degree, and which, in Bangor, was taught largely by the professors of the two theological colleges.¹²

These were exciting days in Bala-Bangor. The principal, John Morgan Jones, was by then the main spokesman for theological liberalism in Wales. Having gone

9. "A fair haven: R. Tudur Jones returns to Rhyl", in *Planet* (August/September 1985), p. 79.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

11. Sir Henry Jones (1852-1922) was a Welshman who became professor of Philosophy successively at Bangor, St Andrews, and Glasgow. His Gifford Lectures, *A Faith that Enquires* (London, 1922) were highly acclaimed expositions of philosophical idealism. See *DWB*, p. 466.

12. Alongside the Independent College (Bala-Bangor) was the North Wales Baptist College. Each was staffed by two professors (one being the principal) with the Congregationalists teaching Doctrine and History, and the Baptists responsible for Bible studies.

to Berlin on a Proctor's scholarship from Mansfield College, Oxford, John Morgan Jones attended Adolf Harnack's famous lectures *Das Wesen des Christentums*¹³ at the end of the nineteenth century and for the next forty years he extolled the virtues of "true Protestantism": freedom of the individual conscience to follow its own understanding of the divine reality. This led him into a disavowal of traditional Christian forms and an affirmation of what could be interpreted as goodness, truth and beauty in all aspects of human life. For Morgan Jones, education far more than church worship was the chief expression of this religiosity, and he tended to be dismissive of religious practice as he got older: an ironic standpoint for a principal of a theological college. He taught Church History and was a tacit Socialist who had turned his back on the Liberal Party after the debacle of conscription and the "coupon" election of 1918.

His colleague, J.E. Daniel, was younger and held the opposite pole of opinion to John Morgan Jones in virtually all things. He was one of the first defenders in Wales of Karl Barth's dialecticism that suggested there was a gulf between humankind and God traditionally recognised in Christian theology as "sin". Only God could bridge the gulf, and he had achieved this in Jesus Christ. The Kingdom of God was not the natural goal of all human striving which would be established once sufficient numbers committed themselves to self-sacrificial service; rather it was an apocalyptic event in which God brings history to an end and begins a new creation, simultaneously judging and forgiving human beings who, in Christ, will go on to enjoy fullness of life. Daniel taught Christian Doctrine, and was a founding member of the Welsh Nationalist Party.¹⁴ Each man matched the other for erudition and ability; and they often debated, even argued, over points of doctrine, to the delight of the students.¹⁵

In his early theological education, Tudur Jones received the benefit of an exposition of theological liberalism at its best and also an exposition of its weaknesses by the astute dialectician. He learned of humanistic socialism and of intellectual nationalism. He would eventually integrate Church History and Christian Doctrine through his speculation in the history of Christian Thought, while he also recognised the need for intellectual nationalism to be moderated by

-
13. Published in English as *What is Christianity?* (London, 1901). John Morgan Jones corresponded with Harnack until the great liberal theologian's death in 1930. In a glowing tribute which he gave to his former teacher, Jones recalled that the lectures were "warm, enthusiastic sermons" which had saved "one sinner at least, as a brand from the burning." John Morgan Jones, "Adolf von Harnack 1851-1930", *Yr Efrogrydd*, VI/11 (August 1930), p. 285.
 14. For J.E. Daniel, 1902-1962, see R. Tudur Jones, "J.E. Daniel", in W.T. Pennar Davies (ed.) *Athrawon ac Annibynwyr: Portreadau ac Astudiaethau* (Swansea, 1971), pp. 128-142; D. Densil Morgan (ed.), *Torri'r Seiliau Sicr: Detholiad o Ysgrifau J.E. Daniel* (Llandysul, 1993), pp. 9-91; E.D. Jones and B.F. Roberts (ed.), *Y Bywgraffiadur Cymreig 1951-1970 (Bywg.)* (London, 1971), p. 21.
 15. Trebor Lloyd Evans, "John Morgan Jones", *Y Genhinen* (1961-62), 11; the doctrinal disagreement between the two men is discussed in Pope, *Seeking God's Kingdom*, pp. 141-9.

a practical sense of the state's responsibility for the welfare of its citizens. But it must be said that Daniel seems to have been the greater influence of his two teachers: Tudur Jones was happier in expressing an orthodox, Calvinistic understanding of Christianity than the humanistic liberalism that had been in vogue until 1939. He rejected the anthropocentrism of theological liberalism, but did not replace it with the pietistic, individualistic evangelicalism which had been prominent in some circles since the Welsh Revival of 1904-5. Instead, he developed a theology of the Word in which God is revealed through Scripture whose words are applied to all aspects of life, for life is lived before the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who is sovereign over all.

In 1945, Tudur Jones graduated BD with distinction in the Philosophy of Religion and in Church History and the highest marks ever awarded in the University of Wales Faculty of Divinity. He was awarded a University of Wales Scholarship and the Dr Williams's Scholarship, before moving on to Mansfield College, Oxford. Mansfield too had been the scene of theological debate during the previous decade. The principal, Nathaniel Micklem, had made a journey through theological liberalism to the rediscovery of dogma, based largely on a rediscovery of Calvin and the church fathers. He was opposed in this, and in other things, by the vice-principal, C.J. Cadoux, who had maintained throughout an allegiance to the tenets of liberalism.¹⁶ Though undoubtedly aware of this, it seems that Tudur Jones was both engrossed in his own research and already too advanced in his own thinking for it to have affected him much. College life did not pass him by, however, and he was president of the Junior Common Room in 1946-7.

At that time, Mansfield was not part of the University of Oxford and students seeking to matriculate for a degree had to join St Catherine's Society. Tudur Jones did so, and registered for a D.Phil. His research topic was "The life, work and thought of Vavasor Powell (1617-1670)", undertaken with the supervision of Claude Jenkins,¹⁷ which he successfully completed in two years and which won him the Fairbairn Essay Prize. His doctorate having been awarded at the earliest opportunity, Tudur Jones was free to study for a year at the Faculty of Protestant Theology in the University of Strasbourg. On his return, he married Gwennlian Edwards, with whom he had been a fellow student at Bangor. Together they had five children, two daughters and three sons. All three sons followed the father into the Congregational ministry, two also becoming historians in their own right. Sadly their eldest son, Rhys, contracted cancer and, after a long illness, died in 1996.

-
16. See Elaine Kaye, *Mansfield College Oxford: Its Origin, History and Significance* (Oxford, 1996), chapter 10.
 17. Claude Jenkins (1877-1959), Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Canon of Christ Church, was, according to R. Geraint Gruffydd, "a convinced bachelor with a myriad of stories circulating about him (including the untrue and slanderous story that he never published anything except for a pamphlet in the *Benn's Threepenny Series!*"). See *idem*, "Hanesydd y Piwritaniaid a'r Hen Anghydfurfwyr yng Nghymru", in E. Stanley John (ed.), *Y Gair a'r Genedl: Cyfrol Deymged i R. Tudur Jones* (Swansea, 1986), pp. 19-20.

After marriage came ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament and service as minister of Seion, the Congregational Church on Baker Street, Aberystwyth. His work in the pastorate would come to a premature end only two years later when he was called upon to return to Bala-Bangor as a tutor in Church History.

There had been considerable changes at Bala-Bangor since Tudur Jones's departure in 1945. J.E. Daniel had resigned to take up a post as an inspector of schools. John Morgan Jones died in 1946 from lung cancer, undoubtedly the result of his heavy smoking. The new principal was Gwilym Bowyer, who had been influenced by Daniel and was responsible for teaching Christian Doctrine. His colleague was W.T. Pennar Davies who had gone to Bangor in 1946 from Minster Road Congregational Church in Cardiff to teach Church History.

Pennar, like Tudur Jones, was a Mansfield man and between them they dominated the theological scene in Wales for forty years. Though always on friendly terms, the two men were quite different in personality and outlook and held theological views which were diametrically opposed to one another. Pennar was not a philosophical theologian. His interests were literary and his greatest contribution was made in the field of religious literature and its criticism. He disliked Calvin's teaching, but his confidence that people experienced God allowed him to recognise the depth of religious experience which Calvinists had expressed. Tudur Jones was more orthodox and more appreciative of the Reformers' theological contribution, but his personal tribute to Pennar was touching

I had innumerable opportunities to wonder at his scholarship and at the breadth of his learning. But more than that, I admired his patience, his graciousness, his humility and his courtesy. But I realised also that there was strength and decisiveness behind these graces. It is true that we were at opposite poles concerning theological convictions but that was not a means to cloud our friendship, perhaps because we had long agreed to disagree!¹⁸

In 1950, Pennar left to become vice-principal and then principal of the Memorial College, Brecon, and thus a vacancy emerged at Bala-Bangor for a Church Historian. Gwilym Bowyer and the secretary of the Committee approached the deacons of Baker Street asking them to release their young minister to teach at Bala-Bangor for the good of the wider church. This they did, and Dr Tudur (as he was known to generations of students) began his life's work of teaching Church

18. From Tudur Jones's introduction to W.T. Pennar Davies, *Cudd Fy Meiau* (Swansea, 1998), p. 25. The book contains an account of Pennar's spiritual journey during 1955-6. Originally published weekly, and then as a book (Swansea, 1957), it was republished with an introduction and notes by R. Tudur Jones following Pennar's death in 1996.

History and Christian Thought, training men for Christian ministry, providing the church and the wider academic community with resources and linking this with a commitment to his nation and culture. On Gwilym Bowyer's death in 1965, Tudur Jones became principal of Bala-Bangor and remained as such until his retirement in 1988.¹⁹

History

It is as a historian of Christian institutions, characters and thought that Tudur Jones made his greatest academic contribution. When asked once during a radio interview why he had chosen to concentrate on history rather than on one of the other theological disciplines, he replied that the reason lay with his college principal, John Morgan Jones. Intending to retire within the year, John Morgan Jones called his young student into his study and informed him that the Congregationalists would require a successor to teach the subject in the college. It was the principal who intimated that Tudur Jones was to be that man.

Tudur Jones's early training had been at the hands of John Morgan Jones, R.T. Jenkins, the Professor of Welsh History in the University of Bangor who is revered as much for his literary style as for his historical insights,²⁰ and the University librarian, Thomas Richards, who published four weighty volumes of history of the Puritan period in Wales between 1920 and 1925.²¹ It was into Richards's field that Tudur Jones would first step, though he would ultimately combine Richards's penchant for conveying facts with Jenkins's literary artistry.

The first piece of historical research that he undertook was his doctoral thesis for the University of Oxford. The subject, Vavasor Powell, offered sufficient untapped manuscript sources to be the subject of original research, and Tudur Jones outlined his life and contribution, as well as comparing his theological thought with others in Wales at the time. Powell adopted the Puritan position partly under the influence of Walter Cradoc,²² one of the founder members of the first independent

19. After Tudur Jones's retirement, Bala-Bangor was united with the Memorial College (which had removed from Brecon to Swansea and thence to Aberystwyth). The college building was sold and the Welsh Independents concentrated their theological training in Aberystwyth.

20. For R.T. Jenkins (1881-1969), see *Bywg.*, pp.85-6.

21. For Thomas Richards (1878-1962) see *Bywg.*, pp. 172-3. The four books are *A History of the Puritan Movement in Wales: from the Institution of the Church at Llanfaches in 1639 to the Expiry of the Propagation Act in 1653* (London, 1920); *Religious Developments in Wales, 1654-1662* (London, 1923); *Wales under the Penal Code, 1662-1687* (London, 1925); *Wales under the Indulgence, 1671-1675* (London, 1928). These books constitute 306, 547, 184 and 261 pages respectively and are described by Geraint H. Jenkins as "exceptionally heavy" and one "must have considerable good will, discipline and patience to read them". Geraint H. Jenkins, "Dr. Thomas Richards: Hanesydd Pwritaniaeth ac Anghydfurfaeth Gymreig", Henry Lewis Memorial Lecture, 1994, p. 4.

22. For Walter Cradoc (1610?-59), see *DWB*, p. 85.

congregation in Wales in Llanfaches. He became vicar of Dartford before being licensed to preach in Wales during the Civil War. Opposition to Cromwell and the Protectorate, as well as his nonconformity, resulted in lengthy spells in gaol, though he holds the distinction of having been acquitted by the Prestatyn Assizes in 1642 on a charge of "inconformity". The thesis was never published in full, but formed the basis of a number of articles in English and a sizeable volume in Welsh published in 1971.²³

Puritanism, the antecedent of modern Congregationalism, was Dr Tudur's first historical interest. His intellect and scholarly care, alongside his ability to complete substantial work in a minimum time, made him the ideal person to be commissioned to write the official commemorative volume marking the three-hundredth anniversary of the 1662 Ejection. Published in 1962, it remains the authoritative and erudite study of the formation and development of Congregationalism. In the book, Tudur Jones managed to integrate the two aspects that mark all his later writings, namely the highest level of scholarship and meticulous research, and a readable and fluent style.²⁴ In 1966 his corresponding study of Welsh Congregationalism appeared.²⁵ Neither book is a straightforward history of institutions. Being convinced that the church was the gathering of the people of God dedicated to obey and glorify him in the world, Tudur Jones ensured that the books also identified the way in which Congregationalists understood their theology and ecclesiology through piety, devotion and other religious practices as much as through written records. In so doing, he brought the history into closer contact with a modern readership, and used the historical aspects of the story to drive home points of relevance to the modern world. These two books, along with seven scholarly articles, were submitted as a folio to the University of Wales in 1968 for which he was awarded the degree of DD.²⁶

23. "Vavasor Powell and the Protectorate", in *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society* XVII/2 (1953), pp. 41-50; "The Sufferings of Vavasor", in Mansel John (ed.), *Welsh Baptist Studies* (Swansea, 1976), pp. 77-91; *Vavasor Powell* (Swansea, 1971). There is a brief summary of Vavasor Powell's life and work by R. Tudur Jones in *DWB*, p.777.

24. *Congregationalism in England, 1662-1962* (London, 1962).

25. *Hanes Annibynwyr Cymru* (Swansea, 1966).

26. The articles were "Gweinidogion ymneilltuol Dinbych", (from *Y Cofiadur* (1957), 34-51); "Thomas Jones, Caer", (from *Y Cofiadur* (1958), pp. 40-51); "J.R. Conwy", (from *Trafodion Cymdeithas Hanes Sir Gaernarfon* (1960), pp. 149-71); "Religion in post-Restoration Brecknockshire, 1660-1688", (from *Brycheiniog* VIII (1962), pp. 11-66); "Dylanwad y mudiad Methodistiaidd ar Ymneilltuaeth Cymru yn y Ddeunawfed Ganrif", (from *Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hanes y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd* (1962), pp. 52-70); "Eglwys Loegr a'r Saint, 1660-1688", (from *Diwinyddiaeth* XIV (1963), pp. 24-40); "Agweddau ar ddiwylliant Ymneilltuwyr, 1800-1950", (from *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1963), pp. 1-19).

Although he continued to publish on Puritan themes,²⁷ Tudur Jones's interests took a turn after the publication of his study on Welsh Congregationalism. Moving from the Puritan period, he switched his attention to the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. His volume on the formation and development of the Union of Welsh Independents, published after its centenary, is an erudite comment not just on the activities of a denomination but on the religious, theological and social scene in Wales during the century which followed its inauguration in 1872.²⁸ The volume is far more readable and fascinating than the title suggests; and combines the art of the historian to record and interpret the events with the science of the theologian and critic who brings to bear his analytical eye on the thought and opinion of each age.

Ffydd ac Argyfwng Cenedl (Faith and the Crisis of a Nation) is Tudur Jones's two-volume magnum opus in which he analysed religion, politics and society in Wales during the period 1890-1914. As in so many countries, 1914 was a watershed for Wales even if it is only possible to recognise it by hindsight. The old world came to an end when Germany, the seat of learning and enlightenment, annexed "little Belgium". Tudur Jones analysed the malaise in Welsh life, culture and, specifically, religion of the period, and used his historical commentary to make points of more contemporary significance. These books remain the most perceptive of volumes to have appeared in Welsh.²⁹ The movement of the Reformation in Europe, tracing its history in different countries and exploring the heroes, villains and martyrs of each situation, was the subject of a book which was published in 1985,³⁰ while his interests in later years turned towards the early Methodists in Wales³¹ and then towards the history of evangelicalism.³²

Tudur Jones was a consummate historian. Always thorough in his research, as is testified by the countless references which append his articles and books he

-
27. "Relations between Anglicans and Dissenters: The promotion of piety, 1670-1730", in D. Walker (ed.), *A History of the Church in Wales* (Penarth, 1976), pp.79-102; "The healing herb and the rose of love: the piety of two Welsh Puritans", in R. Buick Knox (ed.), *Reformation, Conformity and Dissent: Essays in Honour of Geoffrey Nuttall* (London, 1977), pp. 154-79; "Cewri ar ei gliniau", E. Wyn James (ed.), *Cwnwl o Dystion* (Swansea, 1977), pp. 9-41.
28. *Yr Undeb* (Swansea, 1975).
29. The two volumes were published in Swansea, 1981 and 1982.
30. *The Great Reformation: From Wyclif to Knox - two centuries that changed the course of history* (Leicester, 1985) was published as *The Great Reformation: A wide-ranging survey of the beginnings of Protestantism* (Bridgend, 1997).
31. "Rhyfel a gorfoledd yng ngwaith William Williams Pantycelyn", in J.E. Wynne Davies (ed.), *Gwanwym Duw: Diwygwyr a Diwygiadau: Cyfrol Deyrnged i Gomer Morgan Roberts* (Caernarfon, 1982), pp. 144-63; "Diwylliant Thomas Charles o'r Bala", in J.E. Caerwyn Williams (ed.), *Ysgrifau Beirniadol IV* (Denbigh, 1969), pp. 98-115.
32. *Pwy yw'r Bobl Efengylaidd?* (Cardiff, 1996).

referred with judicious equanimity to original manuscript and published sources as well as to secondary and comparative literature, and was able to compare and criticise them in such a way as to make a judgement on the material itself. Always possessed of his own opinion, he never sacrificed scholarly standards to express it; rather his judgement was backed up by meticulous detail and solid argument. And it was all expressed clearly in strong and idiomatic Welsh, or in fluent and simple English. His work is characterised by the communication of the most complicated of events and abstruse of ideas in a clear and readable style that was, like his conversation, also tinted with a degree of humour.

Alongside a heavy teaching load at Bala-Bangor, and the stream of articles and books which flowed from his pen, he was also committed to writing weekly columns in Welsh-speaking newspapers and denominational newsletters, treating aspects of faith, culture and events in the modern world. This issued from his awareness that as a minister of the gospel, part of his work was to reach Christians, to instruct them in Christian faith and to help them practice their faith in daily life. It has been calculated that there are probably around 1,750 of these articles in existence, and they cover a variety of subjects including "Mozart", "Miss World", "Mao Tse-Tung", "Trees", "Beatrix Potter" and "Eating Nuts".

Nationalist

Alongside his didactic work as a historian, Tudur Jones took an active interest in public affairs and in politics. Throughout his life, he spoke and wrote in defence of the nationalist cause, and took a more active role through Plaid Cymru, of which he was Vice-President and a parliamentary candidate for the constituency of Anglesey during the 1950s and 1960s. For him, nationalism was not the kind of sinister theory it is often considered to be: it certainly was not meant to promote exclusivism, but rather "it asks nothing for itself that it does not wish for others."³³ His most detailed exposition of the nationalist position came in a book published in 1974 under the title *The Desire of Nations*. The book is at once a cool critique of nationalist theory and, as would be expected from a historian, a penetrating analysis of the historical development of nationalist movements and thought. But it is not without fire: it contains a passionate defence of the nationalist position, tinged with a sense of Christian calling. While generally good-humoured, it also rises to heights of powerful invective against the kind of nationalism that seeks to exalt one nation, its culture and institutions, above all others. This, he explained, is the danger of English nationalism; a phenomenon so covert that its very existence is denied. "An Englishman never calls himself a nationalist," he wrote. "This is one of the characteristics of English Nationalism"³⁴ And he quoted George Mosse that "the denial of ideology can be one of the most powerful ideologies."³⁵

33. *The Desire of Nations* (Llandybie, 1974), p. 207.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

35. *Ibid.*, George L. Mosse, *The Culture of Western Europe* (London, 1963), p. 61.

Those who readily dismiss nationalism because it “arouses bitter passions which divide humanity”³⁶ will not be easily convinced. But Tudur Jones’s nationalism was not as partisan as it may appear. He held himself to be firmly in the tradition of Griffith Jones, the eighteenth-century parson of Llanddowror, Carmarthenshire, who inaugurated circulating schools and taught Welsh people to read their Bible;³⁷ Michael D. Jones, Congregational minister and principal of the theological college at Bala;³⁸ Robert Ambrose Jones, known as Emrys ap Iwan, Calvinistic Methodist minister and prominent among forgers of nationalist sentiment in Wales;³⁹ the academic and “cultural nationalist” O.M. Edwards;⁴⁰ D. Miall Edwards, Wales’s foremost theologian between the two world wars;⁴¹ and the radical, Catholic convert, playwright and first president of the Welsh Nationalist Party, Saunders Lewis.⁴² The nationalism which Tudur Jones learnt from them was based on a recognition of common human value and engrained with divine providence, Christian vocation and human compassion. It was, perhaps, Emrys ap Iwan who expressed this better than any. Addressing the youth of Wales, he wrote:

Remember first of all that you are *men*, of the same blood as the English, the Boers, the Kaffirs and the Chinese; therefore, be prepared to grant them the privileges that you wish for yourselves. Remember in the second place, that you are a nation by God’s ordinance; therefore do what you can to keep the nation inviolate, by nurturing its language and every other valuable thing that belongs to it. If you are unfaithful to your country and language, how can you expect to be faithful to God and to humanity?⁴³

36. *The Desire of Nations*, p. 195.

37. For Griffith Jones (1683-1761), see *DWB*, pp. 463-4.

38. For Michael D. Jones (1822-98), see *DWB*, pp. 495-6. After training for the Congregational ministry at Highbury College, London, Jones was ordained in Ohio, U.S.A., and later contributed to the establishment of a Welsh colony in Patagonia. He was responsible for the theological college in Bala which split from the denomination over the issue of “presbyterianising” the Welsh Independents. For a time there were two colleges in Bala, though they were reunited in 1886 in Bangor, hence the name “Bala-Bangor” for the Independent College in the city. Michael D. Jones was the “father of the nationalist renaissance in Wales”.

39. For Emrys ap Iwan (1851-1906), see *DWB*, pp. 509-10.

40. For O.M. Edwards (1858-1920), see *DWB*, pp. 192-3. Although for a time MP for Meirionnydd, Edwards was more concerned with issues of language, literature and identity than with the establishment of a distinct, political entity, hence the epithet “cultural nationalist”.

41. For D. Miall Edwards (1873-1941), see Pope, *Seeking God’s Kingdom*, pp. 38-55.

42. For Saunders Lewis (1893-1985), see Bruce Griffiths, *Saunders Lewis* (Cardiff, 1989).

43. *The Desire of Nations*, pp. 181-2; R. Ambrose Jones, *Homiliau* (Denbigh, 1907), pp. 52-3.

This vision of nationalism owes more to Biblical and Calvinistic sources, explained Tudur Jones, than to German Idealistic Philosophy. Both Hegel and Fichte had suggested that there was some kind of divine providence at work in the development of a nation. However, their philosophical schemes had tended towards pantheism in which God and the world were identified. Rather than this, the vision espoused by Emrys ap Iwan was of God somehow above the world and yet intrinsically involved in the world. Nationality is not “an inevitable disclosure of divinity” (Fichte), but belongs to human, creaturely life. In that life, human beings can be obedient or disobedient to God. Maintaining nationhood is, above all, the way that obedience to God’s will can be worked out.⁴⁴ Such an approach is not governed merely by political concerns. Rather it is motivated by an understanding of God’s sovereignty over all aspects of life and by the recognition that all aspects of life are meant to glorify God. Tudur Jones found a parallel to this kind of Christian approach to politics in general and nationalism in particular in the work of the nineteenth-century Dutch Calvinist minister, reformer and politician, Abraham Kuyper.⁴⁵

Other aspects of his life

Alongside historical and political work, Tudur Jones was also Wales’s foremost theologian. He discussed aspects of contemporary theology, particularly those that appeared to be most popular such as John Robinson’s *Honest to God* in the 1960s,⁴⁶ and the theology of hope in the 1970s.⁴⁷ He produced one study book in Welsh discussing the Holy Spirit,⁴⁸ while theological issues and their relationship with contemporary matters were often the subject of his weekly columns,⁴⁹ and were conveyed also through his pulpit ministry. He was committed to the Congregational way which, he insisted, found its roots in the early church and in the New Testament. According to seventy-five out of eighty references in the New Testament, a church exists, he pointed out, wherever the people of God gather.⁵⁰ He went on to say that the New Testament makes no mention “of the local congregation as a member or branch of an all-encompassing, organisational

44. *The Desire of Nations*, pp.180-1.

45. See “Abraham Kuyper”, in Noel A. Gibbard (ed.), *Ysgrifau Diwinyddol 2* (Bridgend, 1988), pp. 105-22; also “The Christian doctrine of the State”, in *The Congregational Quarterly* XXXI/4 (October 1953), pp. 314-21. One commentator has suggested that Tudur Jones owed much of his mature thinking to Kuyper and his school, and to the Princeton tradition in the USA. See R.M. Jones, “R. Tudur Jones fel llenor a newyddiadurwr”, in *Cristion* 83 (1997), p. 15.

46. “Wir Dduw”, in *Y Cylchgrawn Efengylaidd* (1963), pp. 9-14.

47. “Diwinyddiaeth gobaith”, in *Y Traethodydd* (1971), pp. 157-74.

48. *Yr Ysbryd Glân* (Caernarfon, 1972).

49. At least one collection of work was published under the title *Ffydd yn yFfau* (Swansea, 1973).

50. *Hanes Annibynwyr Cymru*, p. 13; Tudur Jones quoted Edward Schweizer, *Church Order in the New Testament* (London, 1961), p. 23a.

body." He served his denomination, and Nonconformity generally, by becoming Chairman of the International Congregational Fellowship 1981-85, Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council of England and Wales 1985-6, and President of the Union of Welsh Independents 1986-7.

Alongside this activity, he was appointed as a special lecturer in the History of Christian Thought in the University's Department of Biblical Studies from 1966, and became Honorary Professor in the (by then) Department of Religious Studies in 1990. He was Dean of the University of Wales Faculty of Theology in 1974-78 and Dean of the Bangor faculty 1978-81. The University of Wales recognised his achievements by awarding him the degree of D. Litt (honoris causa) in 1986, unusually while he was still in post. He continued to work, writing and lecturing, retiring from teaching only in 1997. His last major project was to co-edit a volume of Nonconformist texts which he completed,⁵¹ along with his usual article for *Y Cymro*, before shutting his study for the summer break in July 1998 as had been his practice for forty years and more. He died suddenly on the morning of Thursday, 23 July.

It is impossible to give a short summary of R. Tudur Jones's contribution to all aspects of public life in Wales. Those who knew him remember the historian, the theologian, the teacher and college principal, the preacher, the pastor, the nationalist, the character, the private family man, the witty raconteur, the quiet, thoughtful and even distant man, or the friend. No aspect of his life should be isolated from the others, neither should distinctions be made between the views he held. It was because he was a Christian raised in the Nonconformist tradition and a Welshman raised in the ancient tongue that he took part in political activity and recognised the responsibility so to do under God's total sovereignty over the whole of life. This motivated him as a scholar and teacher, as much as a preacher and minister. He was neither partisan in his nationalism nor sectarian in his nonconformity. Rather his views gained their validity through an intimate relationship with wider political internationalism and theological catholicity. Had he published more in English, then doubtless even more honour would have come his way, and there were certainly offers of more lucrative positions in more celebrated institutions. But his love of land, language and culture, all implicit in his sense of Christian vocation, dictated that he remain in a small theological college in Wales responsible by and large for providing ministers for the Welsh-language churches. The day will come when someone will provide a more comprehensive account of his life and more thorough assessment of his work and contribution. Until then, we cannot but agree with R.M. Jones that he was "Welsh Protestantism's hero during the twentieth century,"⁵² and with Geraint H. Jenkins that he was "an important Christian historian – indeed, the greatest in the history of our nation."⁵³

ROBERT POPE

51. *Protestant Nonconformist Texts vol. 1 1500-1750* (Edinburgh, 1999). He was joint editor with Arthur Long.

52. R.J. Jones, "R.Tudur Jones fel llenor a newyddiadurwr", p. 17.

53. Geraint H. Jenkins, "R. Tudur Jones fel ysgolhaig a hanesydd", in *Cristion* 83 (1997), p. 21.

REVIEWS

The Millennium and the Book of Revelation. By R.J. McKelvey. Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 1999. Pp. 112, £9.99 paperback. ISBN 0-7188-2988-0.

Jack McKelvey is a widely respected minister of the United Reformed Church, who served as Principal of Northern College, Manchester, for thirteen years, and then as Assembly Moderator in 1994-5. Two of the great passions of his ministry are that the New Testament be clearly taught and understood in the church, and that Christians take seriously God's special concern for the oppressed and disadvantaged people of our world. This accessible and important book contributes significantly to the first of these aims, and shows how very closely the second issue is connected to it. Christians who read the New Testament acutely and sensitively will find themselves turning in active love to address the suffering and injustice around them.

The "millennium" is not the turning of our calendar from 1999 to 2000 – neither dome nor bug is of much interest to McKelvey – but refers to the thousand-year period of Revelation 20. 1-6. These rather cryptic paragraphs, from one of the most difficult portions of the Bible, have aroused the curiosity of Christians across the ages and prompted a great deal of enthusiastic and often erratic theology. McKelvey aims to survey this body of interpretation, to debunk most of it, and to replace it by a realistic, historical and wholesome understanding of the Book of Revelation.

So the book has two parts, corresponding to the two elements of the title. The first, of about thirty pages, is entitled "Millennial Hopes". It tracks the ways in which future hope, and especially notions of a coming thousand years of bliss, have shaped Christian theology from earliest times. We are introduced to the doctors of the church, from Justin Martyr to Jürgen Moltmann, also to an endless procession of the zealous and the zany, from Montanists to Mormons, from Turkey to Texas and Tokyo, from the second century to the end of the twentieth. With only thirty pages available, most of this procession passes too quickly for us to see much detail, but McKelvey offers plenty of references to more specialist works for the reader who wants to find out more. Helpfully the detail is fullest for the most recent movements, those that have contributed to our present awareness of the Christian scene. Thus McKelvey sets the stage for his own exposition of Revelation, in the second part of the book.

In about fifty pages we are led swiftly through Revelation in a broadly sequential fashion, from John's Lord's Day vision of Chapter 1 to the New Jerusalem at the end. McKelvey is concerned to anchor our understanding of the text in the historical background from which it emerged. The Roman Empire was the major player, wielding power and authority, sucking the wealth of the world into a giant economic vortex, yet also beguiling and seductive, as its imperial ideology and idolatry invited the loyalty and worship of subject peoples. Against this dominant culture John speaks a voice of Christian dissent, pointing to the tenacity of faith,

the folly and fragility of materialism, and the ultimate authority of the justice of Christ. The passage about the millennium belongs to this framework. It depicts – symbolically, for Revelation is full of symbols – that costly and even sacrificial witness to the rule of God will not be futile but will be vindicated, for the faithful will share in the victory of the crucified Christ.

McKelvey intends his reading of Revelation to stir us. Christians must not accept tyranny, idolatry, oppression and manipulative materialism, but must pray, live, speak and work to oppose them and to transform God's world. We represent a different way of living and a different Lord, who calls his people to patient, active, committed and costly hope.

If you want a book on Revelation and on Christian hope that is well-informed and up-to-date in its biblical scholarship, where the chapters are manageably short and the style crisp, clear and compact, with a decent set of indices at the end – and if you are prepared to be stirred rather than soothed by your reading – try this.

JOHN PROCTOR

Isaac Watts: Poet, Thinker, Pastor. The Congregational Lecture 1999. By Alan Argent. Pp. 32. London: The Congregational Memorial Hall Trust (1987), 1999. £2.00. ISSN 0963-181X.

After the festivities surrounding the 250th Anniversary of Isaac Watts's death in 1998, it is appropriate that Alan Argent chose Watts as the subject of his 1999 Congregational Lecture. Watts spent most of his adult life in and around London, the city to whose ecclesiastical history Dr. Argent has devoted much time. Moreover, Watts must loom large in any account of the Congregational tradition in the eighteenth century, reflection on which, broadly conceived, this lecture is designed to facilitate.

The three aspects of Watts's life mentioned in the title are dealt with sequentially. Although a little more space is devoted to the first, that of "poet", both "thinker" and "pastor" are given adequate space in this concise account of Watts's life. This comes as a welcome relief from the usual emphasis on Watts as hymnwriter, which has tended to characterise most recent treatments of him. Argent allows Watts to speak for himself, with frequent quotation from Watts's publications. The extent and diversity of Watts's output indicates his wide interests and supports the tripartite division adopted in describing his life.

Constraints of space do not permit much consideration of Watts within the wider context of the eighteenth-century religious scene either in Britain or abroad. The extent of both Watts's and his friend and colleague Philip Doddridge's circle of contacts with America and Europe was impressive, after all. Given the recent historiographical emphasis on the clerical and religious aspects of the English enlightenment, it seems probable that future work on Watts could profit from seeing him not exclusively as a "Congregational" or "Dissenting" figure. However, Watts, like too many of the major Dissenting figures of the eighteenth-

century, lacks a decent modern biography and in the absence of such a work Argent's lecture serves as a useful and readable introduction to an important, and neglected, figure.

ANDREW C. THOMPSON

Keepers of the Covenant: Frontier Missions and the Decline of Congregationalism 1774-1818. By James R. Rohrer. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995. Pp. x, 201. £27.50. ISBN 0-19-509166-3.

This book, which originated as a PhD thesis at the The Ohio State University, gives a new definition to the initials CMS since it is about America and the Connecticut Missionary Society. Professor Rohrer engages with sociological interpretations of the Christian missionary enterprise. He says that it is the first publication "devoted exclusively to the home missionary efforts of the post-revolutionary Congregational clergy". The work contains much original research and careful analysis of CMS frontier activity between 1798 and 1818, though the inevitable density of the dissertation might have been relieved by a clearer subdivision of material within the chapters.

The home missionary needs were discussed at the June 1774 meeting of the Connecticut General Association. The CMS was formed from the Connecticut Committee of Missions along the lines of the BMS and the LMS at the June 1798 Connecticut General Association meeting and was received with enthusiasm both in England and New England. The previously existing North Hartford Missionary Society merged with the newly created CMS, the NHMS having a formative influence on the new society.

James Rohrer highlights the tensions between the "Old Light" pastors and the "New Light", Edwardsean divines, with their theology of revival. The "New Light" theologians rejected the half-way covenant and encouraged millennial expectations. Under this eschatological impulse of the New Divinity the CMS had the aim of evangelising native Americans as well as white settlers, though the former aim was not achieved in the Society's lengthy history. The Society was not politically motivated – as democratic Jeffersonian supporters claimed it was: "The voluminous reports, journals and sermons of CMS employees for the years 1798-1818 are virtually devoid of political content".

The importance of James Rohrer's work lies especially in its challenge to two modern assumptions: first that Congregational leaders failed to adapt to the changes needed to adjust to the demands of frontier ministry and especially to the newly unleashed democratic impulses. Rohrer argues that they were neither theological nor sociological misfits. The second modern assumption Rohrer confronts is that religious decline occurs when the church becomes secular. These pioneer missionaries were aggressive evangelists holding their own with their contemporaries in other denominations. Yet Congregationalism declined. Why? Rohrer argues that it was because these Congregationalists saw them as "Keepers

of the Covenant" unlike the Methodists who are regarded as a sect (the Congregational churches of Connecticut were not disestablished until 1818, hence the *terminus ad quem* of the author's disquisition), they were concerned not only to convert individuals but to gather them into churches, into communities of visible saints. Their requirements for membership and continuance in membership were *rigorous*. That was the cause of their decline.

However, the ultimate question is not the diminution but whether we judge the Congregationalists to have been right in the standards they set: certainly, in their demands they were in line with the early Congregational tradition. Nevertheless, Rohrer has provided us with a significant work and one which is of inspirational as well as academic use.

ALAN TOVEY

British Quaker Theology since 1895. By Martin Davie. Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997. Pp. 300. £49.95. ISBN 0-7734-8611-9.

This study reproduces the author's D.Phil. thesis at Oxford (Mansfield College, 1992) submitted under the title "A Study in the Development of British Quaker Theology since 1895 with Special Reference to Janet Scott's 1980 Swarthmore Lecture 'What Can'st Thou Say? – Towards a Quaker Theology' ". Martin Davie has recently become Theological Adviser to the House of Bishops; his own academic background and spiritual pilgrimage is outlined in John Wenham's autobiography *Facing Hell* (1998, pp. 220-221, 224). Dr. Davie's book retains the format of the thesis but this is no disadvantage since the full argument is clearly presented and substantiated by considerable quotation from the sources. Of additional value is the fact that the footnotes are at the foot of each page.

The main contention is that until 1895 Quakerism shared with other Christian traditions the core of conviction represented in its teaching on Revelation, God, Christ, Man and Salvation, the topics discussed in Janet Scott's lecture, which form the framework of Davie's discussion. Davie shows that liberals at the 1895 Manchester Conference reflected the liberal teaching on biblical criticism and the inroads made by science as reflected in R.W. Dale's *The Living Christ and the Four Gospels* (1891) and in *Lux Mundi* (1889): "Alongside the uncontroversial and Evangelical contributions to the conference there were also twenty-two Liberal contributions. Although this was the smallest category of contributions it was also the most significant because the Liberal understanding of Quakerism was to shape the way that British Quaker theology was to develop until the beginning of the 1960's". Although liberal Quakerism became the dominant theological influence among Friends in this century – with famous Quaker names crossing Dr Davie's pages – evangelical Quakerism did not die out: witness the robust defence of orthodoxy in the journal *Friends' Witness to Scripture Truth* – the evangelical equivalent of *The Friend* which was published between 1908 and 1942. The debate in this century is narrated in detail. From the early 1960s onwards,

however, ideas more radical than those of liberal Quakerism (which had many ideas which were distinctively Christian) moved into the mainstream of British Quakerism. Such ideas were also to be seen in other denominations including some Anglican theologians of the period, culminating in the Bishop of Woolwich's *Honest to God* (1963). At this point Dr. Davie is heavily dependent on Adrian Hastings and Keith Clements, though he makes no reference to Eric James's biography of John Robinson. Such radical views among Friends were epitomised in Janet Scott's 1980 lecture. In that lecture, however, she tried to bridge the gap between the factions which now dominate Quakerism – a more traditional element and the radical element to which Scott herself is committed and which has moved away from traditional Christian beliefs altogether and tends towards universalism.

In his final chapter Davie rehearses his essential argument and poses searching questions for modern-day British Quakerism. For example, he asks whether the movement should have progressed in this direction. Furthermore, he asserts that the modern diversity in Quaker theology makes it difficult to say what Quakerism is: and that, he says, is a distortion of Quaker teaching.

There are a number of typographical errors and George Buchanan Grey of Mansfield College should of course be Gray. Geoffrey Nuttall's works on Quakerism are not mentioned at all. But there are some more fundamental issues too. Thus we need to look to other scholars for emphases in early Quaker teaching and practice which Martin Davie tends to underplay. For example, the prominent element in early British Quakerism of the immediacy of the work of the Spirit is brilliantly brought out in Leo Damrosch, *The Sorrows of the Quaker Jesus – James Nayler and the Puritan Crackdown on the Free Spirit* (1996), and also in T.L. Underwood, *Primitivism, Radicalism, and the Lamb's War: The Baptist-Quaker Conflict in Seventeenth-Century England* (1997).

Nonetheless, Martin Davie has presented us with a persuasive argument and a very informative book.

ALAN TOVEY

LOCAL CHURCH HISTORIES

Those who diligently record the history of local churches rarely tell us what we want to know; roughly speaking Demography, Liturgy, Theology; in plainer terms answers to the questions What sort of people attended the church? What was the worship like? What did ministers and people believe? This lack is hardly surprising, since the answers are always difficult and sometimes impossible to discover.

One Family Unbroken. York Road United Reformed Church, Woking, by Valerie Allen, 1989, 13pp. catches something of the atmosphere of past days, consisting of verbatim reminiscences of members. A history of the church appeared in 1974.

An Ever-Flowing Stream. The Story of Immanuel United Reformed Church, Upham Road, Swindon, by Stephen Brain, 1999; Pp. 78 + v; £3.50 from the author at 149 Goddard Avenue, Swindon SN1 4HX, has at least the virtue of honesty. So much of the record refers to tensions, problems and dissent that it is encouraging to find that in recent years things seem to have improved. Perhaps this explains why the 132 years from 1867 to 1999 accounted for nineteen ministers, some distinguished, but averaging only seven years in Swindon. The A4 format and highly glazed paper are rather unattractive; perhaps one has (grudgingly) to accept the style "Rev Lowe" as one among many American intrusions which are now common here; but it is a pity that the intrusive apostrophe in *it's* implies a spelling mistake every paragraph or so.

A Century for Christ: Lavister Chapel 1890-1990, by Nigel J. Lemon, tells the story of a small chapel on the border of Cheshire and Wales.

Felixstowe URC has produced a centenary booklet entitled *One Hundred Years of Worship – Two Streams Converge* (40 pp. 2000; no author or price stated), mainly on the history of the Presbyterian church, with which the Congregational united in 1978. The flavour of a past era is conjured up when one reads:

In the Congregational Hall in Cobbold Road, a Miss Stubbings in 1903 sang at a Tea Meeting 'The Gleaner's Slumber Song' and 'The Lost Chord', while a choir rendered 'Lift up your Hearts' and 'The Radiant Morn'.

More such snapshots would have helped.

Those interested either in Essex or in chapels would profit from, and enjoy, *Chapels in Essex*, by Rosalind Kaye, 1999, ISBN 0 946434 03 4, 72pp., with 27 colour and 62 black and white illustrations; £7.95 + £1.05 p&p, from Chellow Dean Press, 1A Capel Rd, Colchester, CO3 3TU. The author traces the changing architectural fashions but refrains from judgement of them.

Public Spirit: Dissent in Witham and Essex 1500-1700, by Janet Gyford, illustrated by Ray Brown (published privately, 1999. Pp. xii, 216. £13.50 by post; £10.00 in bookshops within ten miles of Witham, £15.00 elsewhere) is definitely something else. In an accompanying leaflet the author of this privately published book commends it for the beautiful drawings it contains. This is a classic piece of underselling: while the drawings are indeed excellent the book is also a major piece of scholarship. There are 170 pages of main text, but the format is A4, double columns, closely filled: a rough calculation is that they contain 125,000 words. The notes fill twenty-two pages of small print, again in two columns; there are about 550 notes, containing anything up to twenty references each. There are seven pages of bibliography with about fifty entries per page. The index has about 130 entries, some with numerous page references.

So much for quantity. Qualitatively, this is a thoroughly sound study of religious life in an Essex town through the Reformation, the rise of Puritanism, and the turbulent days of the seventeenth century. Every claim is carefully documented, with extensive use of numerous public records and the now customary analysis of will preambles. Along with similar local studies it helps to render some national assertions about the religious life of the period suspect. Witham is not Bray, but clergy and laity usually survived alleged national earthquakes in religious systems.

Many of the names mentioned remain just that – names; but one gets to know a little about the Puritan Lady Barnardiston, and especially the naughty Francis Wright, vicar for eighteen years despite a range of offences of which habitual drunkenness was only the most obvious, ejected by the Commonwealth, but restored, without reforming his behaviour, in 1660. Quakers are prominent towards the end, Nonconformists (the author strictly restricts the term to the clergy ejected at the Restoration) less so; that their remote successors constitute the present Witham URC is acknowledged.

The production of the book is as impeccable as the content (though one would have preferred more pages rather than the double columns). It was quite a relief to identify a harmless misprint somewhere near the end. It is pity the book did not appear on the list of a professional publisher, but it by no means lacks professionalism.

It can be obtained for £12.50 from the author at Chalks Road, Witham, CM8 2BT; Tel 01376 513238; Email: janet@gyford.com. It is worth a good deal more to anyone interested in Essex or Nonconformist history.

STEPHEN MAYOR