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EDITORIAL

This issue ranges from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. It touches on professional formation, gender, culture, and society. The evangelical imperative is a steady thread from the concern of John Howe and his father-in-law George Hughes as to what makes a Christian, to the concerns of Jane Brown, Hatty Baker, Constance Coltman, as to what makes a Christian minister. That last question played its part in determining Vincent van Gogh's course, at least while he was briefly working for Congregationalists in Turnham Green. All the contributions, but especially Henry Rack's on the emergence of Manchester's Congregationalism, remind us of the ragged, often contradictory, sometimes surprising, origins of English Congregationalism and of the dogged, often awkward, integrity which marked its development. The divine imperative and human fallibility make for uncomfortable but moving reading. James Pigott Pritchett exemplified that. Edward Royle's account of his work, his character, his faith and their combined significance illustrates the pivotal role which a

professional man, in this case an architect, could play in local life.

We welcome as contributors Kim Fabricius, minister of Bethel United Reformed Church, Sketty; Henry Rack, biographer of Wesley and recently retired from the University of Manchester; Edward Royle, Professor of History at the University of York, and Graham Slater, formerly Principal of Hartley Victoria College, Manchester.

Note: Information about the **Evangelical Continental Society**, founded 1845, is requested by Jonathan Morgan, Dr. Williams's Library, 14 Gordon Square, London, WC1H 0AR: e-mail: 101340.2541 @ compuserve.com.

The Congregational Library is useful for information about the first fifty years; Principal Garvie was a notably strong supporter into the 1920s. When did the society cease operations?

A LETTER OF JOHN HOWE

While in search of another document in the Cheshunt archives I came across a single letter of John Howe.¹ The provenance of the letter is not clear. It was forwarded to Owen Whitehouse at Cheshunt College in 1897 by E. Sidney Hartland of Gloucester, being one of several miscellaneous letters found among his father's papers. There is a further, undated, envelope marking its passage from Cheshunt to Cambridge, addressed to Ernest Johnson, tutor when the college moved. A letter of the Countess of Huntingdon to John Bidwell of Norwich was also collected with the Howe letter by someone in the past.² According to a further undated envelope the Howe and Huntingdon letters were sent by a firm in Covent Garden to Rev. Dr. [Henry] Allon in Canonbury.³ Allon was secretary of the College but died in 1892. Quite how the letters passed from Allon to Hartland is not clear, but they made their way back to Cheshunt.⁴ The mystery is further compounded by a mention in Hartland's 1897 letter of Berridge letters, which he was also forwarding, and which are not to be found in the Cheshunt archives.

This Howe letter is something of a fugitive then. Hartland says "no response was called forth by the publication of John Howe's letter in the *Academy*." It is not listed by A. G. Matthews in *Calamy Revised*. So it may be worth giving the full text here.

. Cheshunt B4/1-4.

.. Cheshunt B4/5.

. Cheshunt B4/6.

. The answer may lie in the friendship between Sydney Hartland's father, Edwin Joseph Hartland (1821-1886), and Henry Allon, who were contemporaries at Cheshunt College. E.J. Hartland was Principal of the Bristol Institute 1863-1879 and then Secretary of the Church Aid and Home Mission Society to 1886. His interest in Puritans is of a piece with his Evangelical Calvinism, which led him from the Church of England into Congregationalism despite the pressure of family and friends.

Reverend & Dear Sir,

I have at length perused your papers to my very great content & satisfaction & do here return them with my hearty thanks for your happy labours herein: & doubt not the church of God when it comes to enjoy the benefit of them (as I know it will bee farr from you to go about to defraud it of what may prove so good an expedient (& I think the only one) to extricate it out of those many perplexing difficulties through which it is striving forwards towards a reformation) will find cause to thank you too and to blesse God for you who did in so much mercy (as I trust) guide you to this undertaking. The only thing to me wherein it seems to want evidence is its applicableness to our particular case about baptism. You grant that the Catechumeni baptizati (viz who were baptised in infancy, yea & in a sense, the non-baptizati too) are within the church (which I think is by no means to bee denied) & that some priviledges do belong to them upon the [?] will it appeare that this priviledge belongs not to them who have their children baptized, if they have children before they are confirmed (as is the common case with us) they bring them baptized & as yet retaining that station in the church which they had by their baptism, though they [?] unto the order of the confirmati? The main objection that I could not frame to myself in the business & I think mentioned it to you when I received your papers from you lies thus.

When a person is capable of being himself baptized then is hee capable of intitling his child to baptism.

But a person is capable of being himself baptized before his confirmation. E[rgo] before his confirmation hee is capable of intitling his child to baptism.

Something I have also had in my thoughts to returne to it. But I desire you to think of the clearest solution you can & when wee meet wee shall compare our thoughts about it.

I show'd your papers to my father Hughes before his departure hence. Hee told me hee did agree to every thing in them except the application of Hebrews 6: 2 (which hee understands in a farr different sense) & professes to like the design of the whole exceeding well, by which I guesse that hee does not suppose [] therein to ly against the practice of generall infant baptism among us. & therefore I could wish it were a little more directly pointed this way though I think some of the corollaries (notwithstanding the forementioned objections) are so levelled as to take away the foundations of all which yet possibly may bee lesse obvious to such as are unacquainted with the [] of the writer. I shall not trouble you further at present but commit you and your labours to the blessing of the Lord & in his name.

Your very affectionate though unworthy brother in the work of Christ
 John Howe
 Torr. August -56

John Howe was in his living at Great Torrington, Devon, in 1656 and had married Katherine Hughes 1 March 1654/5. She was the daughter of George Hughes, an eminent Puritan, vicar of St Andrews Plymouth. This would make sense of the reference to "my father Hughes".⁵ That reference also gives us the clue to the manuscript which Howe and Hughes had read. The topic of who might be admitted to the Lord's Table was of urgent concern to Puritans. The proposition that a person needed to be baptised to be admitted to communion was generally accepted, but what else might be required? A declaration of personal faith accompanied by admission to church membership was the answer of Separatists. A declaration of faith with baptism as a believer was the requirement of the growing number of Baptists. In the letter Howe seems to be aligning himself and his father-in-law with the moderate Puritans who were trying to keep the way open to a national church based on broadly Presbyterian lines. The ancient rite of confirmation, with the laying on of hands, amounted to a public profession of faith with the recognition of that faith by the Church. This was the necessary prerequisite to admission to the Lord's Table. It can be inferred from the letter that confirmation was not universally observed, certainly not in early life, in Howe's experience.

In 1657 was published Jonathan Hanmer's tract *ΤΕΔΕΙΩΣΙΣ: An Exercitation upon confirmation*⁶. Its extended title goes on: *The Antient way of Compleating Church-Members. Wherein is indevoured its Recovery from the Corruptions of Preceding Ages, under which it hath lain so long Buried, and the Restitution of it to its Primitive Use and End. To which are Annexed some Directions for the putting of it into practice: Together with Sundry Encouragements thereunto. Published as an Help for the Reducing of our Churches into Gospel-Form and Order, and as an Expedient to promote Peace and Unity among Brethren.* This title alone might suggest some link with the subject of Howe's letter. Hanmer was a Barnstaple man, ejected from Bishop's Tawton in 1662, who preached widely thereafter, including at Great Torrington.⁷ The pamphlet itself contains proof that it was indeed based on the manuscript which Howe returned to its unnamed author. One of the authorities cited for the laying on of hands is Hebrews 6 verse 2.⁸ This is indeed a reference to the laying on of hands which can be

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5. John Howe and George Hughes both have entries in *DNB* and *Calamy Revised*.
 6. A copy is in Dr Williams's Library; the second edition of 1658 is in New College Library at Dr Williams's Library and the URCHS Carruthers Collection at Westminster College, Cambridge. The URCHS copy was once owned by John Rawlet (1642-1686), Anglican divine, who left his library for the use of the school and living in his native Tamworth, *DNB*. I am indebted to Dr. Geoffrey Nuttall for the bibliographical information and the assurance that the book was well known as a standard work.
 7. *DNB* and *Calamy Revised*.
 8. *Op. cit.* p.27.

understood in two senses. It is either part of the introduction to faith, which can be left behind, or it marks the necessary move from initial repentance to greater maturity. But that this tract was the very one Howe and Hughes saw in draft is confirmed in one of the prefaces, supplied by Hughes himself.

I had in my hand some months past, a few sheets from the Author, of the same Argument, which now, I hear, is growing into a greater volume.

Hughes goes on to make his point that Hebrews 6 verse 2 is not a firm base to build an argument for baptism and the laying on of hands, since the reference may be to Jewish practices. He believes that Confirmation has been made odious and ridiculous by "Popish Blasphemies and Prelatical Corruptions". The conclusion that Hughes reaches is that baptised children deserve careful nurture in the Church to be brought to Confirmation in due course, "after their parental nurture in the Elements of Religion and experience of their profiting in Faith and Godliness by Ecclesiastical Institution." It is also evident that Hughes has provided this preface without reference to the now expanded text

There follows another preface, this by Richard Baxter, declaring that what he said in the *Saints Everlasting Rest* part 4, chapter 4, section 3 about "the sufficiency of Baptism alone for qualifying persons to be admitted by us to the Church-Communion of the Adult" has been misunderstood. Baxter reminded readers that he had also looked for an actual profession of faith by the adult person and had since written other treatises on the subject. Although he had not generally advocated the laying on of hands, because it was contentious, he had always believed that a public profession of faith was necessary on moving from infant to adult membership of the Church. Baxter was sufficiently stirred by Hanmer's work to publish his own *Confirmation* in 1658.

A third preface commending the work follows. This is by Ralph Venning, another Devonian, but by 1657 an assistant to the Surrey Commission and ultimately ejected from his lectureship at St. Olave's Southwark, 1662.⁹ So from this one fugitive letter of John Howe we draw together the threads of a topic which engaged Jonathan Hanmer, George Hughes, Ralph Venning and Richard Baxter. They represented scholarly Puritanism, engaged in serious study of the Bible, Patristics and their mentors, such as Calvin, to form the ecclesial policies of the Church. Their attempts to find comprehension with Episcopalians were doomed to failure. Their fundamental concern, "what makes a Christian?" remains.¹⁰

STEPHEN ORCHARD

9. *DNB* and *Calamy Revised*.

10. The copy of the six volume *Works of John Howe* (ed. Rogers 1863) consulted in writing this article was given to Henry Child Carter by his uncle and then passed into the Cheshunt College Library, was incorporated when Cheshunt came to Westminster and has reappeared as part of the Reformed Studies collection. R.F. Horton also wrote a biography of Howe.

THE RISE OF EVANGELICAL INDEPENDENCY IN MANCHESTER

So far as Dissent is concerned, Lancashire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was notoriously a Presbyterian stronghold. Of the 132 persons and places licensed under the 1672 Indulgence only nineteen were labelled Congregational or Independent: two as Presbyterian and Independent; one as Anabaptist.¹ Though the attributions are not always accurate in such licences they fairly indicate the relative strength of the denominations. Michael Watts's calculations for early eighteenth-century Lancashire produce the following results²:

Presbyterian	42 congregations	8.48% of population (National av. 3.30)
Independent	3 congregations	0.70% of population (National av. 1.10)
Partic. Bapt.	6 congregations	0.41% of population (National av. 0.74)
General Bapt.	0 congregations	0.00% of population (National av. 0.35)
Quaker	22 congregations	0.74% of population (National av. 0.73)

The contrast was even more striking in Manchester where from the 1690s at latest until the late 1750s there were no Independent churches and only small numbers of Baptists and Quakers. The numbers of the former are not known; the latter had perhaps not much more than 100 in 1717 and 165 in 1772. But the Presbyterians numbered up to 1,500 in the early eighteenth century (15% of the population) and probably kept up their strength well for much of the century though declining in proportion to a rising population.³

There are broadly three phases in Lancashire Independent history. First, scattered beginnings in the mid-seventeenth century which by the early eighteenth had produced a mere handful of churches capable of survival. Next, after the mid-eighteenth century striking evidence of a fresh start which included some signs of drawing on old traditions but more of the influence of the Evangelical Revival. Fairly typically the first stage was secession from heterodox old Presbyterian churches. Finally, there was increased expansion in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries under the combined influence of population growth, more vigorous evangelism but probably less help through recruitment from other evangelical bodies than in the south. Apart from this last point the process in Lancashire was much as elsewhere. Perhaps there was less to build on from the past – the element of secession from Presbyterianism is more common. Yet in Manchester this did not apparently weaken the old Presbyterians.

1. Bate, *The Declaration of Indulgence 1672* (London 1908) App. xxxiii-iv
2. M. Watts, *The Dissenters* (Oxford 1978) I, p. 509
3. F. Gastrell, *Notitia Cestriensis* (Chetham Society O.S. XIX, 1849) II(1), p. 57; Evans MS. Dr Williams's Library MS 702, C33 f.58.

In numbers, let alone social influence, Independency was still no match for Presbyterianism in Manchester by 1800 though by that date both were outstripped in numbers by Methodism.

“Manchester” is an ambiguous term. Often the town alone is meant but this must be distinguished from the township and parish. The parish was very large and contained some thirty townships including Manchester and Salford. In the early eighteenth century even the township was not fully built up and what are now inner suburbs were then separate villages. The parish church (now the cathedral) was the Collegiate Church staffed with a warden, four fellows and two chaplains whose work was largely confined to the church itself. When one considers that the population of the township in 1717 was about 9,000 and of the parish about 14,000⁴ and that this increased rapidly for the rest of the century, one can see why some historians have felt that the old Puritan nonconforming inroads reinforced by later Dissent and Methodism were encouraged by the unmanageable size, dispersed population and inadequate pastoral coverage of the established church. Urban and industrial centres in any case tended to favour Dissent in this period.⁵

There is certainly evidence, early and late, of patterns of this kind, yet they are not quite as simple as they may appear and ecclesiastical and social geography are not the only factors involved. Some facts have been overlooked by those citing Manchester as an example of Anglican weakness through having technically only one “parish” church in a large parish⁶. At the time of the Civil Wars the skeletal ministrations of the Collegiate Church were supplemented by a number of chapels of ease – one in Salford, eight more in the villages, and three more were added during the eighteenth century. There were also additions in Manchester township in 1712 and 1756; two more in the 1760s and half a dozen more in the 1780s and 90s. Despite their limitations and gaps in coverage there was a very substantial as well as a prestigious and powerful Anglican presence in the parish. Until the population explosion after 1750 and especially from the 1770s the physical and even pastoral gaps in the church’s coverage were not as glaring as is often supposed though they could be significant in certain localities as we shall see.

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4. Calculated from Gastrell’s family figures for the Collegiate Church only (St Ann’s is not given). The now customary allowance of 4.5 persons per family is used and not 5 as in A.P. Wadsworth and J. de L. Mann’s figures in *The Cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire 1600-1780* (Manchester 1931) App. A.
 5. A.D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England 1740-1914* (London 1976) chap. 5. For Methodism in Yorkshire, where it was found that in Leeds it advanced from the circumference to the centre, see B. Greaves, “An Analysis of the Spread of Methodism in Yorkshire 1740-1831” (Leeds M.A. 1961), p. 8. R. Currie, “A Micro-Theory of Methodist Growth”, *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society XXXVI* (1967), p. 68, argued that the old Dissent grew where Anglicanism was weak, but Methodism where it was strong, but I agree with Gilbert’s findings on this (*op. cit.* pp. 116-21).
 6. W.A. Speck, *Stability and Strife. England 1740-60* (London, 1977), p. 192.

As to Dissent, it too had an important role in providing for dissidents. The social clue to its original rise lies in the capacity of Presbyterianism to be a kind of alternative and respectable "establishment" to Anglicanism and as such capturing the allegiance of a section of Manchester merchants and village gentry in addition to its specifically religious appeal. The leading seventeenth-century ministers, some of whom survived into the 1690s, were all connected by marriage with leading lay families in the parish. Both ministers and lay leaders who chose Dissent represented that split in the local ruling class which had marked the Civil War period and its Presbyterian aftermath. Their position after nonconforming clergy were ejected after 1662 reflects another factor which weakened the Anglican hold especially on the villages. Whereas in the centre Henry Newcome had to minister in houses and a barn until the erection of Cross Street Chapel in 1694 after the Act of Toleration, at least two and possibly more nonconforming ministers successfully retained possession of Anglican chapels of ease: at Denton until 1670 and Birch as late as 1697. This situation was repeated elsewhere in Lancashire and is to be explained partly by local gentry support; partly by the impoverished and unattractive state of the chapels to conforming clergy. These chapels usually had a minuscule endowment supplemented by customary voluntary contributions which were only forthcoming for those ministers acceptable to the local grandees. By the same token, however, if these families returned to Anglicanism or the endowments improved (through Queen Anne's Bounty), conforming clergy could return. This seems to have happened by the early eighteenth century, though there is some evidence that until the 1720s Anglican hold on the villages could still be insecure and at least the Collegiate Church's patronage there be challenged.⁷

The flying start thus enjoyed by Presbyterians in the four chapelries where they had meeting houses continued to offer a local challenge to the church. At Gorton as late as the 1770s almost all the leading families were Presbyterians and it was impossible to levy a church rate.⁸ Even in the central township the Presbyterians retained the allegiance of merchant families at Cross Street, some of them already prominent in the early seventeenth century and others added early in the eighteenth. They had by about 1720 at least 1,000 and by their own account 1,500 attenders. Their powerful body of trustees included leading merchants in families linked by marriage and well represented in the town institutions until the end of the century.⁹ It is remarkable that throughout this period there is little sign of any

7. For Denton and Birch see J. Booker, *History of the Ancient Chapel of Denton* (Chetham Society O.S. XXXVII, 1856), pp. 137-40, 149f.; *History of the Ancient Chapel of Birch* (Chetham Society O.S. XLVII, 1859), pp. 63-70, 78-109. For Gorton as another possibility B. Nightingale, *Lancashire Nonconformity* (Manchester 1890-3) V, pp. 53f. For other Lancashire examples see P.J.W. Higson, "Some Leading Promoters of Nonconformity in Lancashire Chapels" *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society* 75-6 (1965-6), pp. 123-63.

8. Chester Diocesan Visitation returns (1778) in Chester Dioc. R.O. MS EDV 7/1/159.

9. For details of trustees see Sir Thomas Baker, *Memorials of a Dissenting Chapel* (Manchester 1884) Appendix.

shift of these families into Anglicanism as happened elsewhere.

These powerful alternatives of Anglicanism and Presbyterianism did not leave much room for other possibilities. The first example of Independency comes with John Wigan in 1644. He was the curate of Birch where (says Adam Martindale) he persuaded his people to adopt Congregational principles and was ordained "by the imposition of hands of a few ruling elders chosen by the people"¹⁰. Wigan turned soldier but in the 1650s acquired a barn from the College as a meeting house for his church. However, at some point he turned Anabaptist and some of his associates after the Restoration kept that cause going in the town. Evidence for the continuation of an Independent church in the town after the 1650s is scanty, but it is significant that a leading layman in Birch was Colonel Thomas Birch who was also an Independent – though other branches of his family were not. An Anglican report in 1669 speaks of "frequent and numerous conventicles at Birch chapel", chiefly Independent.¹¹ In 1672 the Presbyterian minister Henry Finch was licensed to preach in a chapel belonging to Thomas Birch of Birch Hall. This was notionally the Anglican chapel of ease though it was significantly described by another (conforming) Birch in the 1690s as his "domestick chappell."¹² Finch's congregation was licensed under the Indulgence of 1672 as "Presbyterian and Independent" and there he survived as the nonconforming minister of an Anglican chapel until the Birch family allegiance changed and he was ejected in 1697. Only then did the Presbyterians build a meeting house of their own.

There were attempts in the 1640s by a group of Independents in Dukinfield (just over the parish border) to influence Gorton (where Wigan had also been a curate) to go Independent; and a good deal of debate between Presbyterians and Independents about the use of "gifted brethren" (i.e. lay preachers). Also on the eve of the Restoration there was an abortive attempt at a rapprochement between Presbyterians (not all of whom were very doctrinaire in any case) and Independents.¹³ Some of the post-Restoration ministers had an ambiguous background. At Denton John Angier the Presbyterian hung on as a nonconforming minister in the Anglican chapel until his death in 1670. His assistant and nephew Samuel Angier was a protégé of the Independent John Owen at Oxford and he tried unsuccessfully to succeed his uncle in Denton before emigrating to Dukinfield. Here he founded an Independent church.¹⁴ Even at Cross Street more than one early eighteenth-century minister had Independent connections in his background.

10. R. Parkinson (ed), *Life of Adam Martindale* (Chetham Society O.S. IV, 1845), p. 66.

11. A. Gordon, *Freedom after Ejection* (Manchester 1917), pp. 216, 263.

12. The Indulgence list in Bate, *op. cit.*, xxxiv simply says he had a "general" licence; but the licence for the building describes it as "a private oratory belonging to Thomas Birch Esquire of Birch Hall" and as "Congregational and Presbyterian". After the loss of the chapel from the Dissenters George Birch presented an Anglican "to serve at my domestick chappell of Birch" (Quoted by Nightingale, *op.cit.*, V, pp. 85, 151).

13. Nightingale, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 51-4; Martindale, *op. it.*, pp. 61, 68, 74, 105f., 128.

14. J. Booker, Denton, pp. 137-40; A. Gordon in *Cross Street Bicentenary* (Manchester 1894), pp. 39, 47, 48.

Yet the fact remains that there is no evidence of any distinct and lasting Independent church in the parish or township after the Restoration. Even the ambiguous example at Birch was recorded as "Presbyterian" on its foundation as a new church after 1697. It is true, of course, that the "Happy Union" of Presbyterians and Independents, so shortlived in London, seems to have been more successful in the shape of the so-called "Cheshire Classis" in which Manchester ministers took part.¹⁵ Cross Street never formally used the label "Presbyterian" in its trusts until 1761 (for the poor) and 1778 (for the chapel).¹⁶ One must suppose that any with Independent sentiments in Manchester settled for an undifferentiated Dissent of "Presbyterian" tone at Cross Street. The only alternatives were the unwelcome ones of Baptist or Quaker.

The Baptists had a shadowy existence from the seventeenth into the eighteenth century in various houses and apparently had a meeting house by 1713, building a new one in 1740.¹⁷ They may well have mopped up any non-Presbyterian Dissent from time to time and perhaps occasional seceders from Cross Street even before the more certain losses from that source in about 1760. There are hints that this was not a very strict Baptist church in some eyes as we shall see. Charles Leach,¹⁸ one of the historians of Manchester Congregationalism, thought that the pre-1760 Independents worshipped with the Cross Street Presbyterians until the latter drifted into anti-Trinitarianism and then left to found their own church. We shall see, however, that there was much more to this venture than the rather unlikely possibility of a memory of separate Independent identity having survived from the seventeenth century.

The complex of causes which led to the founding of a new Independent church in the mid-eighteenth century is indeed not easy to unravel due to patchy evidence. The traditional accounts by Presbyterian, Baptist and Congregational chroniclers agree in their main substance though differing in detail. Unfortunately they seldom cite their sources; there is no strictly contemporary account of the course of events; and such contemporary evidence as has survived is fragmentary and often enigmatic. The church book of the new church in Hunter's Croft (later named Cannon Street) begins in 1761 and has valuable details but does not explain the circumstances which led to its foundation. A fragmentary diary by the first minister takes us further back but in a cryptic manner. The later, secondary accounts can sometimes be checked from other sources up to a point, and further light may be offered by considering sources for the state of other churches in the town and for the advent of the Evangelical Revival there – sources which were not used by the Congregational chroniclers.

Various versions of the traditional story appear in Halley, Nightingale, and Leach from the Congregational side; Baker, Wade, and Gordon from the Old

15. Minutes in A. Gordon, *The Cheshire Classis* (London 1917).

16. T. Baker, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-8; A. Gordon, in Cross Street, p. 50.

17. R. Ashton, *Manchester and the Early Baptists* (Manchester 1916) and W.T. Whitley, *The Baptists of North West England* (London 1913), p. 343.

18. C. Leach, *Manchester Congregationalism: Its Rise and Progress* (London 1898), p. 23.

Presbyterian-Unitarian tradition; Ashton and Whitley from the Baptists. These accounts were published between 1869 and the early 1900s. Between them they identify four sources for the new church though not all mention all four nor in exactly the same terms. These sources are: a secession from Cross Street over heterodox preaching on the person of Christ by John Seddon; Scottish immigrants; Methodist or Calvinist preachers from Yorkshire; and a Baptist chapel connection.¹⁹ In some cases the number of seceders or perhaps the whole membership of the new church is said to total about 200.²⁰ The dating of this event is vague: about the middle of the century; or 1756 (the date of the minister's ordination); or 1761 (the date when Seddon is known to have preached his new doctrines). I have not found any example of the full version before Halley in 1869. There is a contemporary letter on Seddon's preaching in 1761 but no mention of a secession.²¹ There is also a story that it caused disputes in the congregation and that Seddon persuaded his senior minister Joseph Mottershead, an Arian, to accept his own more advanced views, at least for a time. But this only appears in print in 1793 and in a different version in 1808. The 1793 version does not say anything about a secession.²² The first clear mention of this over Seddon's preaching is in the prejudiced context of a letter in 1824 during the Manchester Socinian controversy when critics of Cross Street Unitarianism wanted to prove that the chapel had left the orthodox faith of its founders and should therefore forfeit its endowments. It is claimed then that the story of the secession came from seceders only recently deceased; and the figure of 200 first appears here.²³ Sir Thomas Baker, the historian of Cross Street, dismissed the secession story though other Unitarian historians, including the learned Alexander Gordon, accept it.²⁴

In fact all the elements of the story are inherently plausible with some contemporary evidence to confirm them. The secession story is frequently paralleled in Lancashire and elsewhere as one typical source for new Independent churches in this period. Baker objected that the Cross Street records show no loss of trustees or seatholders. If he had records of the latter at this date they have been lost but it is true that no trustees appear to have resigned. This type of seceder, however, tends to come from the lower social end of congregations in conflict with ministers and trustees. The splits were partly social as well as religious and

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19. R. Halley, *Lancashire Puritanism and Nonconformity* (London 1876), II, p. 44 is probably the most familiar version though he omits any reference to the Baptist connection. This is also not made clear in Nightingale, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 107-16 but is recognised in Leach, *op. cit.*, pp. 20ff.
 20. Anon., *The Manchester Socinian Controversy* (London 1825), p. 146.
 21. Quoted in H. McLachlan, *Essays and Addresses* (Manchester 1950), p. 107. See also *Monthly Repository* XII (1817), p. 455; A. Gordon in Cross Street, p. 49.
 22. Life of Seddon by S. Bourn in John Seddon, *Discourses on the Person of Christ* (Warrington 1793), pp. xiii, xv; J. Toulmin, *Memoir of Samuel Bourn* (Birmingham 1808), p. 254.
 23. *Manchester Socinian Controversy*, p. 146.
 24. T. Baker, *op. cit.*, p. 36; A. Gordon in *Cross Street*, p. 50.

seceders of this kind may well not have been seatholders.²⁵ The figure of 200 may well be of the whole new church and the surviving list of Hunter's Croft members at least suggests that even this may have been exaggerated. I have only traced a dozen or so families on the Cross Street baptismal roll who also turn up amongst the new Independents but single people and adherents might be added.²⁶ They do appear to be low in the social scale, some elderly, a few illiterate. At all events there is enough here to show that the tradition of a secession is based on fact. The Scots element is also clear from some of the names though they increase later. The influence of Methodist and Calvinist preachers from Yorkshire also rings true and probably refers to early visitors involved in the prehistory of Methodism in Manchester, though not all were from Yorkshire. Some Methodist converts in fact joined the new Independent church or its Baptist predecessor. Two of the ministers ordaining the first minister – Pye of Sheffield and Scott of Heckmondwike – were Independents from Yorkshire of evangelical sympathies. The Baptist element was ignored or overlooked in the earlier accounts of the story but the first minister's diary confirms that it was important though the precise connection remains obscure.

The story is indeed often both obscure and ambiguous in detail and the full context is now unlikely ever to be known. It is possible that social and economic factors, by helping to create or aggravate gaps in the town's church coverage, played some part. It might seem that the powerful Anglican and Presbyterian presence left little room for anything except the small Baptist and Quaker communities which could mop up those of special religious principles. Even Methodism had a noticeably slow and uncertain start in the 1740s, the society being founded only in 1747 and the first preaching house built in 1751. This was also a very unstable society as we shall see. But the population was expanding and spreading along the Deansgate axis away from the older area around the Collegiate Church in the 1750s, leading to the new St Mary's Church in 1753. Population increase was one of the most explosive and far-reaching of all the non-religious factors affecting church life. There was a physical gap between the Collegiate Church and the future Piccadilly which was never filled by the Presbyterians and only much later by the Anglicans. It may be suggestive that it was in this area that the Methodists built their house in 1747, the Independents in 1762; and where the Baptists had theirs from 1740 if not earlier. The first Independent members certainly came predominantly from this area together with some from the extreme periphery of the parish or outside it.²⁷ Neither they nor the Methodists seem to have had the strength or base in a growing population to float

25. This is the impression given by comparing the social weight of the old Presbyterians with the more plebeian new evangelical Independents deriving from them; and those from the same source who joined the Methodists.

26. The original members up to the death of Warhurst in 1765 number 110: Hunter's Croft (later Cannon Street) church book in John Rylands University Library Congregational College MSS Box 15, ff. 34-9.

27. Most of the members listed in Warhurst's lifetime have addresses attached.

local churches elsewhere in the parish at this stage though they did influence individuals in outlying areas. The new Dissent in Manchester was essentially an "inner city" phenomenon.

The evolution of the old Presbyterianism was another important factor. The Arianism which seems to have affected Mottershead and which was characteristic of the leading ministers at Cross Street until the early 1800s was evidently shifting nearer outright Unitarianism in Seddon though it did not become a cause for secession to the more radical type of anti-trinitarianism until 1787 when the extremists in that direction founded a new church in Mosley Street.²⁸ The death of the last of the old Arian ministers in 1810 was followed by the radical and aggressive Unitarianism of the 1820s controversy already mentioned.²⁹

It is nevertheless possible that even Arianism was too much for some individuals who may have quietly drifted to the Baptists as the only alternative short of the Quakers. In that case the Seddon episode, coupled with evangelical influence and the enigmatic condition of the Baptists by about 1760 may have been the more visible culmination of an earlier trend.³⁰ At all events, when the character of the new Independent church first appears in full detail in 1761-2 it defined itself theologically by recording the orthodox and Calvinist Westminster confession; and ecclesiologically by an elaborate church order explicitly described as that of Independency. For spirituality and discipline it gave an equally elaborate schedule of the duties of ministers, officers and members covenanted together to form a church.³¹

What lay behind this, however, was not simply a reaction against Presbyterian slackness and heterodoxy. There were also the positive forces of the Revival. It is here, I think, that the weaknesses of traditional denominational history become clear, especially for the early stages of bodies emerging in this period and affected by the Revival. The local Methodist, Baptist and Congregational historians have told their stories largely in ignorance of each other and they were liable to focus too narrowly on what they saw as specific denominational origins. This obscured the extent to which their apparently separate histories were really interrelated. It also obscured the uncertainties and fluidity of converts' personal pilgrimages and the instability of their churches when so much was unclear to them about their new orientation and when they were subjected to the attention of competing evangelists. If their records are studied together important connections emerge.

In Manchester in the early 1740s there is evidence of preaching by Benjamin

28. T. Swindells, *Manchester Streets and Manchester Men* (Manchester 1906), I, pp. 189f.; J. Aston, *A Picture of Manchester* (Manchester (1816), p. 96.

29. *Manchester Socinian Controversy*, passim.

30. Ralph Ashton in his *Manchester Baptists* discusses the pre-1760 history of the Baptist church in terms which do not make it entirely clear whether his mentions of secessions from Cross Street refer to 1740, 1760, or both. Leach, *op. cit.*, p. 17 says that the secession story really belongs to an earlier date than the 1760s and probably c.1740. He gives no evidence so he may be following Ashton or some other source.

31. All in the church book, ff. 1-33.

Ingham, an old friend of John Wesley's and founder of a connexion in Yorkshire later largely taken over by the Moravians who were already working in the area. David Taylor, an erratic protégé of Lady Huntingdon, preached here for a time. Various Methodists, notably John Nelson, a Yorkshire stonemason, preached here. More important, one of Taylor's converts from Derbyshire, John Bennet, a Presbyterian turned Methodist, founded a group of societies in the north west. He helped to found the first Methodist society in Manchester though he later became an Independent minister in Cheshire. The Yorkshire connection also included William Grimshaw of Haworth as an occasional visitor. From a wider world George Whitefield visited as did the roving antinomian Roger Ball. More remotely, it is perhaps relevant to recall the Baptist past. William Mitchell and David Crossley had built up a chain of Baptist causes in Lancashire and Yorkshire since the 1690s. At the very end of his life Crossley seems to have preached in Bacup and possibly in Manchester whose Baptists had close links with the Bacup Baptist church. Crossley corresponded with Whitefield in 1743-4 and after his death in 1744 his work was continued by a lay evangelist at the Bacup chapel. He was succeeded by Joseph Piccop who was ordained by the Manchester pastor Winterbottom in 1745. Apparently some Bacup members lived in Manchester in 1761-2 when they complained that they were deprived of the Lord's Supper. They wished to be allowed to form their own church but Piccop refused and cut them off though they were reconciled in 1767.³² Perhaps this disagreement reflects the consequences of Caleb Warhurst, the Baptist minister in Manchester, being ordained as an Independent in 1756, as we shall see. Obscure though the Manchester Baptist situation is, these hints at problems may suggest that this church may have been a kind of cave of Adullam for refugees from elsewhere which may have compromised its Baptist integrity. Certainly Warhurst's connection with the church, obscure though it is in some respects, must have created some kind of crisis when he founded a separate Independent church and we shall see that he came from that tradition originally so that his role among the Baptists must have seemed equivocal.

The proliferation of evangelistic efforts I have described was one important part of the context which created a new evangelical public from very varied backgrounds – Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist, probably in some individual cases Quaker. In due course it would produce limited revolts from Anglicanism and Presbyterianism; a split in the old Baptist church; and the emergence of at least

32. For an account of Methodist origins and their relationship to Warhurst's church see my "Between Church and Sect. The origins of Methodism in Manchester", *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 80(1) Spring 1998, pp. 77-89. For the Crossley connection Whitley, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-90; G.A. Weston, "The Baptists of North West England 1750-1850" (Sheffield Ph.D. 1969) pp. 9-13; F. Overend, *History of Ebenezer Baptist Church at Bacup* (London 1912), p. 153 shows the Bacup connection and the difficulties with Manchester Baptists in 1761-2. For Crossley's correspondence with Whitefield and his possible presence in the Manchester area in 1743-4 see *Christian History* V.ii.52; VI.i.35, ii.62.

two wholly new communities, the Methodists and Independents. There was also eventually a Moravian presence though this came later as a settled community rather than occasional visitors. Something has already been said about the Presbyterian and Scottish elements in the new Independent church but the Baptist and Methodist elements need further analysis.

A key document here is the diary of Caleb Warhurst, the first minister of the new church, especially when read in conjunction with other sources. The diary is fragmentary, lacking beginning or end, and unfortunately some nineteenth-century preserver bound the fragments together in the wrong order with some faulty dates pencilled in. This has misled local historians but I have found it possible to rearrange the fragments and date them correctly by various internal and external clues.³³ The diary gives us some information for about half a dozen years of the prehistory of the church, which emerges as follows.

In May 1755 James Winterbottom, a Baptist pinmaker doubling up as pastor of his church, engaged Warhurst to help him for three years. Warhurst, a young man aged thirty-two, was the son of a carpenter from Bredbury near Stockport. He was never trained for the ministry but may have been converted by one of the roving evangelists in the area or through the ministry at Hatherlow Independent church to which he and his family belonged.³⁴ Thus Warhurst began as an assistant pastor among the Baptists. It is clearly he who is referred to by Charles Wesley in October 1756. Commenting on divisions and competing preachers confusing the Methodists he writes: "Another new preacher they have also got, a young Baptist, who is gathering himself a meeting out of them...".³⁵ On 8 November 1756 Warhurst records, though without details, that a "covenant" was made to "form a Church of Christ" at "our meeting house". (A few days earlier he had recorded that because there was "a Baptist at our meeting house in Manchester" he travelled elsewhere for a service). On 10 November he was ordained with laying on of hands by the following Independents: James Scott of Heckmondwike Academy which had been founded to uphold orthodoxy in the north of England and nurtured some identifiable evangelicals; John Pye of

33. The original is in Manchester Central Library Archives MS M185 Box 1. Due to the wrong arrangement of the MS the dates given in my account as now correctly identified sometimes differ from those in earlier accounts.

34. The date of settlement is worked out from a diary reference on 18 May 1758 to this being three years since Warhurst "came to a conclusion" with Winterbottom. Warhurst's family details are given (without sources) in the MacFadyen MS *History of Cannon Street* in Manchester Central Library MS M162 Box 54. For Warhurst's Hatherlow connection see G.R. Axon, "Hatherlow Chapel Baptismal Register 1732-81", *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society* XLIV (1927), pp. 56-99.

35. T. Jackson (ed), *Journal of Charles Wesley* (London 1849) II, p. 129.

Sheffield; and Peter Walkden of Stockport.³⁶ This is an interesting combination of older and newer elements developing into evangelical Dissent. Scott looks like a mediating figure between old and new; while Walkden had earlier ministered to Lancashire churches usually identified as “Presbyterian”. At the dinner following the ordination two “deacons” are mentioned who later appear in the church book of 1762. Soon after his ordination Warhurst records the first baptism of a child with expressions of some disquiet, though eighteen months later on 14 May 1758 he merely “dedicated” Winterbottom’s grandchild (presumably a Baptist), also with disquiet. In spring 1758 the “meeting house” was extended and Warhurst indicates that “old Mr Winterbottom” was by now dead. In September a reference to the “Baptist chapel” perhaps suggests that by now, if not earlier, the covenanted group of November 1756 may have been meeting separately.

It is, however, impossible to be quite sure what had been happening. As has already been noted, there are hints that this was probably not in all respects a normal Baptist church: certainly that was the case at least in the early years of some of those founded by Mitchell and Crossley.³⁷ Warhurst’s references to the Winterbottoms suggest that even after his ordination for the “covenanted” church and the death of the older man he received some support from the son and from some pious ladies who later figure as supporting the Methodists.³⁸ Perhaps some kind of pastoral relationship continued with the Baptists. If so, his ordination as an Independent may well help to explain the difficulties that Manchester Baptists had with Piccope and the stricter brethren at Bacup. Whitley certainly visualised him ministering to a mixed congregation of believer Baptists and paedobaptists in the absence of other evangelical causes (though he overlooks the Methodist presence).³⁹

As to his own “covenanted” church from November 1756, Warhurst’s diary references could either imply a mixed congregation within which there was a covenanted group; or two separate congregations meeting in the same (Baptist) building; or that at some point before September 1758 (when he refers to “the Baptists’ chapel”) his own group was meeting in a separate building. The reference to his absence because a Baptist was preaching at “our meeting house” might suggest separate groups using the same building or simply a visiting preacher to relieve him. But the Church Order of 1762 only mentions the church’s

36. For Walkden’s career see an outline and references in my “Survival and Revival: ‘John Bennet, Methodism and Old Dissent’” in K. Robbins (ed) *Protestant Evangelicalism* (Studies in Church History Subsidia 7, Oxford 1990), pp. 20-21. He was later to ordain Bennet as well in 1754 when Bennet became an Independent minister in Warburton, Cheshire. For Warhurst’s connection with Bennet and other ex-Methodist Independents see “Survival and Revival”, pp 16-22.

37. Whitley, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-90; Weston, *op. cit.*, pp 9-13.

38. Reference to old Mr Winterbottom as dead on 18 May 1758 (not 1759 as in Whitley, p. 52); several encounters and hospitality from the son in 1758-9; and for the pious ladies e.g. Mrs Fanshaw on 24 September 1759 and similarly in Charles Wesley’s *Journal* II, pp. 129, 134 for Mrs Ryder and Mrs Fanshaw.

39. Whitley, *op. cit.*, pp. 52f.

earlier life in Coldhouse (Baptist) chapel. That document also implies that their earlier order (presumably the 1756 covenant) was not as correct as they now wished it to be, so this may well imply some kind of compromise with the Baptists. At all events the diary clearly does show that the sources of the new church included a close association with worshippers at the Baptist church.

Moreover, references to individuals and events in the diary show both a fluidity in allegiance and what might be called elements of pan-evangelicalism. There were, for example, people who in the 1740s had associated with Ingham and Bennet and in the 1750s were among those at least visited and preached to by Warhurst, both in Manchester itself and in outlying areas such as Stretford.⁴⁰ Bennet himself, when he broke with Wesley in 1752, turning Calvinist and attempting to keep a party and "round" from societies he had founded, endeavoured to keep contact with outlying groups in Manchester parish. At one point he may have hoped for an arrangement with the Baptists for he had already preached in their meeting house in March 1750 and in April 1752 talked to Winterbottom (he records) "but to little purpose".⁴¹ Two families called Fanshaw and Ryder seem to have offered hospitality and help equally to the Wesleys, Grimshaw and Warhurst, while Fanshaw was an early Methodist trustee.⁴² A family or families of Hopes included members who helped Bennet, while Henry Hope was a member of the first shortlived Methodist preaching house trust yet later a member and deacon of the Independent church. He may well have been the man of the same name whose children were earlier baptized at Cross Street.⁴³ A Samuel Hope helped Bennet in the 1740s.⁴⁴ Arthur Clegg, one

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40. Jonathan Hulme or Holme of Stretford was visited by Bennet the Methodist in 1743, Ingham the Moravian in 1747 and Joseph Piccop the Baptist. Warhurst visited in 1756 and buried him in 1759. See John Bennet MS diary in Methodist Archives, John Rylands Library, 5 July 1743 (slept at Stretford and Holme's house inferred as he took refuge from the mob there earlier: T. Jackson, ed., *Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers* (London 1872) I, p. 65); Rylands Eng. MS 1062, 2 October and 3 December 1747; Warhurst diary 21 October 1756, 11 May 1758, 17 August 1758, 11 February 1759. For the bearing of these contacts on Methodist origins see my "Between Church and Sect", p. 78.
41. Bennet diary 7 March 1750, 7 April 1752.
42. Fanshaw: Charles Wesley, *Journal*, II, p. 129, 134, 135; Warhurst diary 3 July and 28 August 1758. Whitefield: Warhurst diary 16 October 1756. Ryder: Charles Wesley, *Journal*, II, p. 129; Warhurst diary 16 October 1756 and as Warhurst notes that Mrs Ryder was buried at "the Great Chappell" (Diary 14 December 1758) clearly meaning Cross Street, it may be inferred that they originally came from there. For the Methodist trustee lists: C. Deane Little, "Early Methodism in Manchester". *Procs. W.H.S* XXVI (1948), pp. 18-21.
43. Henry Hope: Cross Street baptism register (microfilm in Manchester City Library) 1751, 1752, 1755; Warhurst diary 25 June 1758; Church book ff. 35, 59, 71 shows him to be a trustee and deacon.
44. Samuel Hope helped Bennet and gave land for the first Methodist preaching house and was a Methodist though originally from Cross Street: Bennet diary 14 May 1748; Cross Street baptism register 1741; James Everett MS Notebook on Manchester Methodism, Methodist Archives uncatalogued f. 435.

of Warhurst's closest friends and a deacon from 1756 figures as a host for the Methodists Conference in Manchester in 1765.⁴⁵ Warhurst himself records preaching for the Methodists and on occasion he heard Whitefield, Grimshaw and the Wesleys preach and wished them well, though with some doubts.⁴⁶ He also heard the antinomian Roger Ball inveighing against the Methodists and lost one of his own congregation to him.⁴⁷ Clearly Charles Wesley was correct in saying that Warhurst drew off some Methodists.⁴⁸ When the Baptist meeting house was being enlarged they borrowed the Methodists' house.⁴⁹ One of Warhurst's successors, Timothy Priestley, also preached for the Methodists.⁵⁰ But although Warhurst met, appreciatively, with visiting Methodist preachers, his closest associations were with his "dear Friend" John Bennet, the ex-Methodist turned Independent, and other Independents at least two of whom had a similar background. After Bennet's premature death in 1759, Warhurst and his friends tried to keep Bennet's church going though it has left no further trace in the records. Some entries in Warhurst's diary do suggest, however, that he had contacts with people in former Bennet societies and other with more or less undenominational evangelical sympathies. It may well be that these people were absorbed into Independency as several former Bennet societies disappear from the Methodist records.⁵¹

In November 1761 the history of the Independents suddenly clarifies for then the records of the church book begin with a trust deed for the new meeting house in Hunter's Croft. In March 1762 it records the covenant specifically as for an Independent church; the Westminster Confession; and details of church order and discipline. (It may be noted in passing that Warhurst also recorded personal covenants in the old Puritan style, like some other evangelicals of this period including William Grimshaw).⁵² It is at this point that the members recorded that they had met for some years past but not adhered as strictly to this faith and order as they might have done. In April 1762 the new house was opened and from John Byrom's journal we know that John Newton the former slave-trader helped in the proceedings. At this time he was still hesitating between Dissenting and Anglican

45. Warhurst diary 10 November 1756; Church book f. 57; *Procs. of W.H.S.* XXIII (1933) p. 130; Oldham Street Trust deed in Manchester Central Library Archives MS M60/4 additional; Everett notebook f. 445.

46. Warhurst diary 17 and 21 October 1756, 20 April 1758, 8 May 1758.

47. Warhurst diary 23 April 1758, 22 October 1756.

48. They were also ravaged by ex-Methodist preachers turned Calvinist and the antinomian Roger Ball: Charles Wesley, *Journal II*, pp. 129, 137, 138.

49. Warhurst diary 20 April 1758.

50. Everett notebook f. 431; *Procs. W.H.S.* IX (1913) p. 135.

51. Warhurst diary 6 March 1759, 1 July 1758. Bennet had also visited Bredbury Green where Warhurst frequently visited his own family. For the fate of Bennet's societies see my "Survival and Revival" pp. 81f.; and for a detailed account of Bennet's life S.R. Valentine, *John Bennet and the Origins of Methodism and the Evangelical Revival* (Metuchen, N.J. 1997).

52. Copy in Manchester City Library MS M162 Box 54, pp. 21ff.

ministry while working in Liverpool and Warhurst had already met him there in August 1758 about meeting house business.⁵³

The inner life of the new church is elusive. There are indications that a monthly communion was held, preceded by a preparatory service on Saturday; and that a discipline by suspension and exclusion for misconduct, as laid down in the church order, was implemented. Admission to membership seems to have included the Independent tradition of evidence of personal religious experience. Though no specimens of such testimonies survive from this early period, a unique example in writing is among the Mosley Street church papers, undated but from the 1790s under Kennedy's ministry. This probably conveys the general flavour of such testimonies though it is noticeably less dramatic and emotional than many Methodist examples:

Dear friends, it is with some satisfaction that I come to give you a short account of the dealings of God with me. I was religiously brought up by my parents in the fear of God but having occasion to leave home I was by the Providence of God brought to this town where I have resided for some years past living after the manner of the world and in the ways of sin and part of the time I have heard Mr Kennedy spread the gospel which I find by the grace of God to be effectual for convincing me of the state I am in by nature and of showing the evil of sin and also of the need in which I stand of a Saviour, and as far as I have knowledge of myself I have fled to him for all my salvation. My only end at this time in offering to join with this people is to glorify God and to obey the command of Christ in commemorating his dying love and to be ruled by his church whilst I live.⁵⁴

According to the order of 1762 the church officers were to be simply the pastor and deacons. Later accounts of the church, notably Halley's, complained that "Scotch mist" in the shape of "ruling elders" infected the early stages of this church. Whether or not this is correct it will be recalled that John Wigan in the seventeenth century had been ordained by "ruling elders" and we shall see that at a later stage there was a controversy in Hunter's Croft over this office. The records of the 1762 order certainly did not allow for them. What may have confused Halley is the remark that "A bishop is a church overseer, a presbyter, an elder, a pastor or teacher" appointed by Christ to preach, administer sacraments and maintain discipline. This is clearly a set of alternative scriptural titles for the same officer. But more likely Halley had in mind a printed version of the order in 1764. It asserts that only a pastor and deacon are essential to the church, but allows for the use of teaching and ruling elders (rather like Calvin). The latter are apparently to assist the pastor or to act when one is wanting. But it is made clear that only a

53. John Byrom, *Journal etc.* Chetham Society OS. XLIV, 1857) II(2), pp. 636-7, Warhurst diary 2 August 1758.

54. Loose sheet in church book.

pastor and deacon are required, “the pastoral office containing in it all teaching and ruling charge”.⁵⁵ The church book in Warhurst’s day (he died in 1765) offers no evidence of any but pastor and deacons but there is a letter under his successor Timothy Priestley in October 1778 by a disgruntled Scotsman called Andrew Patten who seems to be complaining that the deacons had arrogated to themselves ruling powers. A proper scriptural church order (Patten claims) is fourfold: pastors, ruling elders, teaching elders and deacons – the full Calvin system.⁵⁶ The church leaders, however, concluded, following the earlier church orders, that the ruling and teaching elders’ functions were embodied in the pastor’s office. It is, however, significant that church officers called “elders” first appear in the records along with deacons in October 1779.⁵⁷

This knotty problem is dwelt upon because it was later to be alleged that ruling elders caused a schism in the church. This, we shall see, may be only at best partially true and certainly did not precipitate a schism for another ten years. In fact, as often happens in small and intense religious communities, there was plenty of dissension over other matters even in Warhurst’s day and much more later. The ministers who followed certainly constituted an evangelical succession. Timothy Priestley⁵⁸ though brother of the notoriously heterodox minister and scientist Joseph, was a strongly orthodox man and a pupil of Scott of Heckmondwike. He often appears in ordinations outside Manchester. His successor David Bradberry or Bradbury⁵⁹ was a protégé of Whitefield and after him came the notable William Roby, the leading Lancashire Independent of his day though bred an Anglican and a former Lady Huntingdon Connexion minister. But an evangelical pedigree and theological orthodoxy do not guarantee a peaceable character. In view of what follows there should be inserted here a more appealing side of the troubled period before Roby arrived.

The Armitage family, so important in nineteenth-century Manchester Congregationalism, originated west of the Pennines before settling as weavers in Failsworth in the mid-eighteenth century. Elkanah Armitage (1749-1835) attended Dob Lane Presbyterian chapel where he was baptized. “The doctrine under which I sat,” he says, “until I was 23 or 24 years old [c.1772] was what was then called Universalism.... I frequently went when our service was ended to hear the Methodists. I loved their seriousness and zeal, but as to their view of Jesus Christ and his atonement, I had no idea”. Then his friend John Hurst, who led the singers at “the Calvinist chapel” (Cannon St) asked Elkanah to help them “for singing was pleasing to my mind”. Here he heard Priestley preach on “If he had thought to have slain us, he would not have showed us such things as these”. “Then a mutual affection took place between me and the gospel of God which has never been broken for 40 years or more” Here, too, he met his wife Ann, also a convert to

55. Quoted in Nightingale, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 114-16.

56. Church book, ff. 72-4.

57. Church book, ff. 75, 79.

58. Biography in *DNB*; Nightingale, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 116-19.

59. Biography in *DNB*; Nightingale, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 119-21.

Cannon Street from Dob Lane, and eventually he moved to Manchester. David Bradberry preached fortnightly in their house; and under Roby Elkanah's son Ziba was led to "think I was a great sinner" and carried on the tradition of house services.⁶⁰

But the letters and other records in the church book show in an impressive and even touching way how the leaders wrestled with the problem of the unsatisfactory character of Priestley as a pastor. Part of the trouble was financial - his salary he found inadequate so he ran into debt and at one stage indulged, literally, in moonlighting. He was charged with knocking up packing cases in the early hours of Sunday for goods to Liverpool. This was always a temptation in Manchester and some ministers actually gravitated to a business career. The officers tried to pay off his debts and raised his stipend from £120 to £170, but to little effect. The long list of charges in any case included neglect of visiting, light and worldly conversation and associations, and vulgar and sensational exegesis of scripture in the pulpit. In the end he was dismissed in April 1784.⁶¹

David Bradberry also crossed his congregation though unfortunately at this point the church book becomes silent about Cannon Street. After Priestley the record suddenly switches to the foundation of and some sketchy minutes about, the new Mosley Street Independent church which evidently took the book with it when it seceded from Cannon Street. The Cannon Street trust records show a history of complaints. The chief motive for the secession is usually said to have been about ruling elders to which Bradberry objected. The Scots element in the old church had strengthened and Scots were certainly prominent among the seceders. An Anglican visitation in 1778 significantly nicknamed Cannon Street the "Scotch Kirk".⁶² As we have seen, the issue of "ruling elders" had already been raised in Priestley's day and elders then appointed, but one may suspect that the conflict with Bradberry was at least aggravated by personality clashes. MacFadyen noted Bradberry's "independent spirit" and disappointment of his high hopes of Manchester.⁶³ He was certainly very obstinate and aggressive after the secession which probably included a majority of the church members and certainly most of the trustees, elders and deacons. This left only the poorer members at Cannon Street. The seceders then tried to obtain possession of the chapel but were locked out and found that because additions to the trust had not been secured legally they could do little about it. In the event Bradberry and his residual congregation survived and the seceders built a new chapel in Mosley Street opened in September 1788. (Not of course to be confused with the radical anti-trinitarian seceders from Cross Street who also built a chapel in that street).

60. Quoted in W.G. Robinson, *William Roby* (London, 1954), p. 53.

61. Church book, ff 79-100, 103, 105, 107, 109, 111-16, 120.

62. For the split see Nightingale, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 137-8; MacFadyen *MS History* ff. 7-9 and legal opinions on possession of the chapel; Church book f. 123 from the new church on 25 October 1787. Anglican visitation in Chester Dioc. Ro EDV7/1/156 from the curate of Chorlton chapel on his parishioners attending the "Scotch Kirk".

63. MacFadyen *MS History*, f. 7.

Halley implied that Presbyterian (and Scots?) feeling provoked a reaction from Bradberry. But according to the seceding elders and deacons it was rather that Bradberry and his supporters tried to dispose of the existing elders and deacons "and to break up that usual form, under which most of them had been taken up as members".⁶⁴ This might imply a personal attack on those holding these offices or an attempt to change the nature of the offices or both. If the seceders were standing up for the eldership it seems odd, as Halley admitted, that (so he claimed) the new Mosley Street church which also acquired a Scottish minister, appears not to have possessed elders at all. In fact this is not clear beyond question from the surviving sources. The initial account already quoted of the secession as seen by the seceders clearly shows them to be led by elders and deacons. What happened after that is unfortunately not clear. The secession began in October 1787 and on 25 October the seceders "formed a church and unanimously elected" elders and deacons.⁶⁵ The new minister, Kennedy, probably stayed from 1789 to 1795, and some of the minutes of the meeting of the church and officers during this period show that the seceding elders and deacons continued to lead. However, their exact offices are not named as such. It may be noted that the obstinate Andrew Patten was admitted as a member in 1791. The minister appears not to have been present at these meetings. It may be that the new church continued to use elders for a time and then abandoned them during Kennedy's ministry.

For what it is worth it should be recorded that the church order, covenant and doctrinal basis of the new church were essentially those of the 1764 version at Cannon Street: the Westminster Confession and the idea that ruling and teaching elders *may* be used but that only pastors and deacons are essential. This was signed by Kennedy on 22 March 1791.⁶⁶ A fresh covenant was taken by the church in 1798 when a new minister was appointed and the officials then are only listed as deacons, including Arthur Clegg who had been an elder earlier. Clearly the eldership had been abandoned by then if it had not been earlier. Perhaps the leaders were more concerned to avoid domination by ministers like Bradberry than about the niceties of Presbyterian and Congregational polity. Another oddity, however, is that Robert Spear appears to have been the "proprietor" of the church property and the congregation could not elect the minister without his sanction.⁶⁷ Despite the "Scotch Kirk" nickname this element was not perhaps as overwhelming in numbers as tradition implied, though their weight may be another matter. A rough count, judging by clearly Scottish names, suggests that perhaps two-fifths of the members of Mosley Street were Scots by 1793; but they

64. Halley, *op. cit.*, (London, 2nd. ed., 1872), p. 521; Manchester Central Library MS M187: Declaration of Elders...latterly at Cannon Street Chapel.

65. Church book f. 123 (now used by the new church). The separate church records of Mosley Street only begin in February 1797; Manchester Central Library MS M162 Box 5.

66. Manchester Central Library MS M162, Box 5.

67. Mosley Street church minutes, Manchester Central Library MS M162 Box 5, 20 and 24 February 1797.

did have a majority of the leaders and a considerable number of the Scots by then were new members and had not been at Cannon Street. Just before 1800 the new option appeared of an immigrant Scottish Presbyterian church in Manchester and it is no doubt significant that Mosley Street lost some twenty members to it during the next few years.⁶⁸

There is one other possible factor in the split. An analysis of the occupations of those baptized at Cannon Street before and after the secession and at Mosley Street is suggestive. Cannon Street before the split had acquired a modest top dressing of merchants (12%). After the split they dropped to under 5% while there were 70% of artisans. Mosley Street, however, had 22% of merchants and only 55% of artisans.⁶⁹ If one cannot be certain that there was a social basis for the split it does seem to be the case that in the years immediately following the separation, the two churches represent, amongst other things, a degree of social differentiation, rather as appears to be the case with splits in later years among the Wesleyans. It may also be significant that Cannon Street until 1807 remained in the original geographical area of the first evangelical churches, whereas Mosley Street planted itself in a socially rising part of the town – the same street as the new Unitarian church and the new Anglican St Peter's. The Methodists in the 1780s had also moved to the edge of the future Piccadilly. Moreover the early signs of political activity in the two churches, being predominantly in Mosley Street, also seem to reflect the humbler status of the residual Cannon Street church. Both churches, indeed, retained an evangelical tone and both took part in the activities of the Itinerant Society and the Lancashire Congregational Union but the most vigorous efforts came at Cannon Street under Roby – Mosley Street seems to have had duller ministers.

But the initial impact of the schism on Cannon Street was devastating. On the eve of secession it had perhaps 180-200 members.⁷⁰ By 1793 Mosley Street had 106 members though only half can be shown to have emigrated from Cannon Street where, admittedly, the records were badly kept. Mosley Street certainly took the leading members and it is likely enough that some were lost altogether to Independency. There is a record that by 1795, when Roby arrived at Cannon Street, there were only sixty-five members and a total congregation not exceeding 150.⁷¹ About that time Mosley Street had double the number of members and no doubt of "hearers". But by 1802 Roby's efforts had raised his membership to 150 and Mosley Street had about 170. Cannon Street went on increasing and apparent

68. Membership list from 1798: Manchester Central Library MS M162 Box 6.

69. Cannon Street baptism register (microfilm in Manchester Central Library); Mosley Street baptism register, Manchester Central Library MS M162 Box 1. A contemporary said that Roby's church "consisted almost entirely of very plain people": quoted in J. Waddington, *Congregational History* (London 1878) IV, p. 57.

70. Calculations based on membership lists in old church book before and after the split and Mosley Street membership lists. But the various versions of the former lists do not always agree and there were complaints that Priestley had not kept the records well.

71. Rylands Library: Congregational College Archive, Roby MSS Box 17.

drops in the next thirty years only reflect Roby's success in founding new causes partly fed by transfers from the parent church. Baptism numbers suggest that Cannon Street may have had twice the numbers of Mosley Street by 1805 and the Cannon Street baptismal registers suggest a large influx of artisans in the late 1790s whether or not they were full members. It is odd that the Anglican visitation of 1804⁷² which gives what generally appears to be a reliable picture of the numbers of members or adherents in the Nonconformist churches has 700 for Cannon Street but 1,200 for Mosley Street when in the light of the figures just quoted one would expect the reverse to be true. At that time the Anglican returns would suggest that there were about 8,000 supporters of Nonconformity or nearly 10% of the population.⁷³ At that date it had hardly begun to penetrate beyond the central township except for the Methodists who by 1800 were beginning to build meeting houses at a time when the old Presbyterians were shrinking relative to the population.

I have tried to trace some aspects of the rise of evangelical Independency in this town from its emergence out of the rich variety of early and confused evangelicalism to the time when it stabilised, only to suffer schism. It did, however, produce the churches which were to lead the Congregationalist life of the early nineteenth-century town and would produce numerous offshoots as the town continued to grow. I have deliberately omitted much consideration of their social characteristics or any consideration of their interest in life, especially political life, outside the churches. Indeed the impression given by studying these records is that, as often happened in the early and most intense phase of the revival, their interests were concentrated on their own souls, the spiritual health of their churches and in varying degrees on evangelism rather than on any attempt to participate in the public life of the town – so far as this was open to people of their modest status. Some early stirrings of such interests can however, be seen even before the end of the eighteenth century at Mosley Street. A study of early nineteenth-century Independency shows that the social changes which these churches experienced made them more politically aware but without losing their evangelical concerns. But that, and the aggressive evangelism led by Roby, is another story.

HENRY RACK

72. Chester Diocesan RO EDV 7/3/325.

73. The combined population of Manchester and Salford in 1801 was about 84,000 and the number of Dissenters according to the 1804 visitation return was 7,960.

JAMES PIGOTT PRITCHETT, CONGREGATIONAL DEACON AND ARCHITECT

James Pigott Pritchett was born at St. Petrox near Pembroke on 14 October 1789. His father, Charles Pigott Pritchett, was rector there, as well as a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, a prebendary of St David's cathedral and domestic chaplain to the Earl of Cawdor. His grandfather had also been a clergyman of the Established Church in Wales and two of his elder brothers followed the family tradition of Cambridge and then ordination into the Church of England.¹ From this unpromising background emerged one of the leading lay Congregationalists in York of the first half of the nineteenth century, as well as one of the city's and county's most prominent and prolific architects.²

James Pigott Pritchett was articled to the architect James Medland of Newington in south London, and in 1808 exhibited at the Royal Academy a bust of Princess Charlotte. The following year, more conventionally, he submitted a "Design for a Villa". Having completed his articles he went to work for Daniel Asher Alexander who, apart from being the man who designed the original Dartmoor prison, was architect for the London dock company, but during Pritchett's two years with the firm Alexander's main commission was Maidstone Gaol. Pritchett then worked for the government Barrack Office in London before setting up in practice on his own in 1812, but within a year he had decided to move to York. On 1 January 1813 he entered into partnership with Charles Watson whose practice was already established in York. For the next eighteen years the two men worked together and, as it can be difficult to distinguish who was responsible for what, in this paper I shall refer to most of the buildings produced by the partnership as though they were Pritchett's wherever other records indicate his personal interest in the organisation that commissioned the works.³

Charles Watson had been in business in York at 26 Blossom Street, just outside Micklegate Bar, since at least 1804 and had been engaged in designing the gaol and court sessions house at Beverley, the latter being completed in 1810. Its classical design with a tetra style portico is to be found in later work both by the partnership and by Pritchett himself. The first work that they did together was to submit the winning design for the new pauper lunatic asylum at Wakefield. In this building we can see another feature of Pritchett's later work - his interest in the

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1. For a Pritchett family tree, see "Pritchett" in the file of Pedigrees compiled by Hugh Murray, copies at York Cemetery, York Minster Library and York City Library; and for an earlier version, J.J. Howard and F.A. Crisp, eds., *Visitation of England and Wales*, vol. 1 (1893), Pedigrees, pp.197-202.
 2. For biographical details, see the *Dictionary of National Biography* vol. xvi, and H. Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 1600-1840* (London, 1978).
 3. The fullest discussion of Pritchett as an architect is G.H. Broadbent, "The Life and Work of Pritchett of York", in W.A. Singleton, ed., *Studies in Architectural History* vol. 2 (1956), pp.102-24. There is a brief appreciation by John Hutchinson, "J.P. Pritchett: A Note", *York Georgian Society*, Annual Report (1977), pp.27-30.

latest technology and the use of it to solve problems to ensure that his buildings were practical and utilitarian, whatever their outward style.

When Pritchett came to York, the Nonconformist cause was at a low ebb. There were important small communities of Catholics and Quakers, but few Baptists and the main Presbyterian church had adopted a Unitarian theology in the later eighteenth century. The Independents of York were a product of the evangelical revival. In 1767 the Countess of Huntingdon and George Whitefield had opened a chapel in a garden behind College Street, near the east end of York Minster. A splinter group withdrew from this in 1781 and built a chapel off Coffee Yard behind Grape Lane in a dense and obscure location near the heart of the city. A further split led to the erection of another chapel in Jubbergate in 1796 and this was the congregation that Pritchett joined when he came to York at the end of 1812. Meanwhile, College Street had passed to a new and short-lived congregation of Baptists and Grape Lane had been acquired successively by the Methodist New Connexion, the Wesleyan Methodists and then the Baptists.⁴ When, or why, Pritchett forsook the Church of England and became an Independent is not clear. His eldest son, born in late 1814, was baptised at Holy Trinity Church, Micklegate (the parish of the architectural practice), but by this time he had already emerged as a leading member of the Jubbergate congregation, so his conversion probably occurred while he was in London.⁵

The Independents at Jubbergate were a small, struggling and unhappy cause. Their minister from 1799 was Godfrey Thurgarland. A leading member of his congregation, William Ellerby, recalled that "he possessed very moderate abilities and married unsuitably, after which it is said he became indolent and addicted to

4. For the early history of the Independents in York, see William Ellerby's manuscript, "A History of the Nonconformist Chapels in York from August 1662 to the end of the year 1822", which forms the first part of a longer manuscript continued by J.P. Pritchett in 1825-1849 and published as *A History of the Nonconformist Churches in York*, edited by E. Royle (Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York, 1993) [hereafter, Ellerby and Pritchett]. The original manuscript (in two versions) is in the Borthwick Institute. Secondary sources include P.M. Tillott, ed., *A History of Yorkshire. The City of York*, The Victoria History of the Counties of England [hereafter, VCH] (Oxford, 1961), pp.406-7, which wrongly dates the College Street Chapel from 1749; J.G.Miall, *Congregationalism in Yorkshire* (London 1868), pp.388-9; and E. Royle, *Nonconformity in Nineteenth Century York*. Borthwick Paper No. 68 (York, 1985).
5. There are a few hints about his possible spiritual journey. From the Evangelical Calvinism of the Church of England in Wales to the interdenominational scene of metropolitan evangelicalism was only a short step and the boundaries between the Church and Dissent were easily crossed in evangelical circles. Pritchett's brother, Richard Charles Pritchett, although a clergyman, married as his second wife in 1814 Mary Needham Burder of Camberwell, and Burder is certainly a strongly Congregational name. The Medlands too had Congregational connections. In York, Pritchett became a leading member and joint-secretary of the interdenominational evangelical Tract Society. I am grateful to Professor Clyde Binfield for informative suggestions on these points.

sottish habits".⁶ A congregation of 150 fell to little over a third of that, and the church declined from about sixty to a dozen. In 1814 a committee of the congregation including Pritchett forced Thurgarland's resignation and with the support of the West Riding Itinerant Society a new start was made. Pritchett took charge of the church books. At a meeting of the great and the good of Yorkshire Independency in November 1814 it was resolved to build a new chapel and Pritchett was one of eight laymen on the committee appointed for this purpose. Though Lendal chapel, which was to result from these efforts in 1816, was designed by the Watson and Pritchett partnership, we can see from Pritchett's involvement as a member of the church that this was primarily his work. As its architect, historian and, from 1816, deacon, Pritchett was Lendal for the next thirty-five years.⁷

The chapel still survives, externally at least, although it has been used for several secular purposes since it closed in 1929. Fortunately we have not only photographs of the interior, but also Pritchett's own plans and elevations prepared in the 1820s to accompany his *History*.⁸ Lendal was a prominent street near the Guildhall and Mansion House, opposite the Judges' Lodgings. The site sloped backwards from the street towards the river Ouse and the chapel was square with five bays and in all four storeys high: a basement to the rear for the Sunday school, a main floor, a gallery, and an upper gallery for 250 Sunday scholars or providing 174 free seats for the evening congregation. This latter was added in 1823 to provide additional accommodation when the chapel was full. It was approached by an external covered staircase, since demolished, on the right-hand side of the chapel. Still there was not enough room, and in 1826 a circular recess was added behind the pulpit to create another 125 seats on two levels. This apse-like extension can be very misleading when seen from the outside although it was typical of Pritchett's ingenuity when faced with a problem. The chapel was also fitted for gas lighting in 1825, the first place of worship to be so lit in York. To the rear of the chapel was a small graveyard where, in due time, Pritchett was to bury his first wife and one of their children.⁹

The reason the chapel was thriving was the appointment of James Parsons as minister. Parsons, who was the second son of the Revd. Edward Parsons of Leeds, was fresh from Idle Academy and only twenty-three when he was ordained to Lendal in 1822, but his success as a preacher and pastor was remarkable. The twelve members who had founded the new church in 1816 had grown under his care to 477 by 1839 when, with no further room for expansion, Pritchett agreed to design a new chapel for Parsons, but this is to run ahead of his story.¹⁰

6. Ellerby and Pritchett, p.28.
7. Ellerby and Pritchett, pp.28-41.
8. The plans and elevations are reproduced in Ellerby and Pritchett, pp.153-69.
9. Ellerby and Pritchett, pp.53-63; York City Archives [hereafter, YCA] 23/2, Lendal Chapel Church Book, entry no. 9, 11 December 1816, Peggy Maria Pritchett, died 21 February 1827 and buried 28 February 1827. See also "Pedigree of Pritchett".
10. Ellerby and Pritchett, pp.48-91. Numbers are taken from YCA.23/2, Lendal Chapel Church Book, and 23/3, Lendal Chapel Minute Book I, p.353. For James Parsons, see *Congregational Yearbook* (1878), pp.332-4.



*Front Elevation
of Lendal Chapel.*

Lendal Independent Chapel, York, front elevation, 1816, drawn
by James Pigott Pritchett, c. 1826. (Borthwick Institute)

Lendal was not the only chapel on which Watson and Pritchett were engaged in 1816. They were also commissioned to build a new large Meeting House for the Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting of the Society of Friends. This was in Far Water Lane (now Friargate), off Castlegate, next to the early eighteenth-century meeting house of the York Quarters. The building was heated by a system of ducts and vents, similar to the method of central heating used for the Wakefield Asylum, but proposals for gas lighting at this time were turned down on grounds of safety. The building was said to be unsafe and was demolished in the 1970s; nothing now remains but some of the gallery columns which have been reused for the entrance porch of the new building.¹¹

The partnership had a Yorkshire-wide reputation. In particular, their work for the East Riding at Beverley and the West Riding at Wakefield would have brought them into contact with the county-gentry and may have drawn them to the attention of Earl Fitzwilliam, the Lord Lieutenant of the West Riding. In 1818 they submitted designs for bookcases in Lord Milton's study at Wentworth Woodhouse, the beginning of a relationship between three generations of Fitzwilliams and Pritchett who became estate architect and responsible for many churches, parsonages, schools and lodges on the south Yorkshire estate.¹²

Pritchett's involvement at Lendal also enhanced his reputation among the Independents of Yorkshire, and in 1824 he was invited by the Independents of Huddersfield to build their second chapel in Ramsden Street; he also designed Nether Chapel, Sheffield, built in 1827, and the chapel for Airedale Independent College, Bradford, completed in 1839 with a Grecian bow front between twin staircase towers.¹³

Pritchett was also gaining a prominent place in the wider Christian and philanthropic community in York and this too brought new work. His involvement with the York Savings Bank, founded in 1816 as a measure to encourage servants not to spend all their money at once, led to a commission to build a new bank for the corner of Blake Street and St Helen's Square in 1829.¹⁴ The previous year he had undertaken his first major piece of Greek revivalist work with a new carriage portico and façade for the Assembly Rooms, to replace the frontage originally designed by Lord Burlington in 1730.¹⁵ There is a strong resemblance between this work and Watson's earlier Sessions House at Beverley. If there are any doubts about Pritchett's own conversion to Greek revivalism, though, this might be

11. Broadbent, pp.108-9; D.M. Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 2 vols. (London, 1999), vol. 2, pp.711-18; Royal Commission on Historical Monuments [hereafter, RCHM], *City of York*, vol. V, *The Central Area* (1981), pp.52-4.

12. Broadbent, pp.111, 119.

13. Broadbent, pp.110, 115; Ramsden Street and Nether Chapel have been demolished, but College Chapel survives, though it is now a warehouse and much altered.

14. W. Camidge, *York Savings Bank: its history, formation and growth* (1866). Camidge was a local historian, Methodist local preacher and secretary to the Savings Bank. See also RCHM vol. V, pp. 203-4.

15. Broadbent, pp. 111, 115.

dispelled by his most important work after the ending of the Watson partnership in 1831 when Pritchett set up his own at 13 Lendal. His major work was for the York Cemetery Company, set up by leading York citizens, including himself, in response to the environmental health problem of over-full city graveyards. The cemetery grounds are only semi-formal but the architecture is classical, from the sarcophagus which adorns the perimeter wall to the gate lodge and, above all, the chapel (1836-7). This is a half size Greek temple based on the Erectheion in Athens. The windows are actually tapered to the top to give the illusion of greater height than is in fact the case. True to Pritchett's love of the modern and ingenious, a hydraulically-operated trap door opens in the chapel floor to allow coffins to be lowered directly into the catacombs below.¹⁶

Pritchett was nothing if he was not adaptable. By the 1830s his general preference for Classical forms had followed the fashion for outright Greek revivalism, but at the same time he was developing Tudor Gothic in his commissions for the Dean and Chapter of York Minster while building gothic revival parish churches at various locations in Yorkshire. The first work for the Minster was a new Deanery, designed for a site between the Chapter House and the medieval Archbishop's Palace in 1827 but delayed by the Minster fire of 1829 and completed only in 1831. A feature of the new Deanery was its bathroom with hot water on tap, heated by the kitchen fire below. There followed St Peter's School built in Minster Yard on the site of the old deanery in 1830-3, the Wills Office (though actually built as two houses), and the nearby Consistory Court in the same style. There was also work of a more domestic nature undertaken in the city. Pritchett and Watson were probably responsible for the large villa at 65 Bootham (1827), and Pritchett designed the houses which fan out from Precentor's Court to High Petersgate by the west face of the Minster (1838) as well as 48-50 Low Petersgate which in fact form the back of the Wills Office.¹⁷

By the 1830s a further centre of activity, second only to York, was emerging in Huddersfield, thanks partly to the influence of Independents in the town and partly to the Fitzwilliam connection. When John William Ramsden succeeded his grandfather to the family estates, including the manor of Huddersfield, in 1839 at the age of eight, his mother, Isabella, was the most influential of the trustees. She was, on her father's side, the daughter of Thomas, Lord Dundas and, on her

16 RCHM, *City of York*, vol. IV, *Outside the City Walls East of the Ouse* (1975), p.29; Broadbent, pp.114, 119.

17. Broadbent, pp.112-13; RCHM vol. IV, p.62; vol. V, pp.104, 165-6, 181-2, 187. For the suggested attribution of 65 Bootham, see N. Pevsner and D. Neave, *Yorkshire: York and the East Riding. The Buildings of England*, second edition (1995), p.241.



York Cemetery Chapel; James Pigott Pritchett 1836-7. (Edward Royle)

mother's side, of Charlotte Fitzwilliam, sister of the fourth Earl Fitzwilliam.¹⁸

Pritchett's acquaintance with Huddersfield, which had begun with the building of Ramsden Street chapel in 1824, was renewed a decade later when he was called in to advise on the state of the parish church, the roof of which was collapsing. Pritchett recommended partial rebuilding for £2,200 and ended with a total rebuilding for £10,000, but he used the same Perpendicular style (rather than the more fashionable Decorated), the same basic layout and also – disastrously – the same stone, which was laid the other way on with the result that it rapidly exfoliated as it weathered. A feature of the old (and new) churches was the over-large south transept, looking more like a Nonconformist chapel attached to the side of the church. Inside there was banked seating in the transept, galleries and a central pulpit. This and the box pews were not removed until 1873. Though Pritchett inserted a central aisle, ever the practical man his own preference was for side aisles on acoustic grounds – a place of worship was somewhere to hear the word of God and see the pulpit. When the new church was opened in 1836 it had gas lighting, twelve years after Pritchett had introduced this modern convenience at the Ramsden Street chapel. The rebuilt parish church in Huddersfield represented for Pritchett a transition from Nonconformist Classical style to Church of England Gothic Revivalism. The latter matured with his design for St Mary, Rawmarsh, near Wentworth Woodhouse in 1839 and then flourished in true Camden Society style at Meltham Mills, near Huddersfield, in 1845.¹⁹

From the 1830s there was a great deal of work in Huddersfield as the town expanded rapidly. The minister at Ramsden Street, W.A. Hurdall, took a leading part in establishing the Huddersfield College Company in 1839 to open a modern school free from Church influences. A site was chosen in New Road next to Highfield Independent Chapel (rebuilt in 1842-3) and Pritchett was appointed architect. He virtually recycled his St Peter's school on a larger scale, in Tudor Gothic with turrets and castellations.²⁰ During the 1840s the Ramsden trustees, who owned most of the ground on which the centre of Huddersfield stood, decided to redevelop the town in the manner of Grainger and Dobson in Newcastle. Pritchett was invited to play a leading part in this and in 1843 his second son, Charles Pigott Pritchett, moved to the town to open an office for "J.P.

18. Isabella Ramsden was later to write, "We must steer clear of Mr Pritchett, in his profession as an architect he has given the Ramsden family a lesson not to be forgotten (in the works he performed at Brotherton Church) of the instability of his building" – quoted by E.J. Law, *Joseph Kaye, Builder of Huddersfield, c.1779 to 1858* (Huddersfield Local History Society, 1989), p.20. Brotherton church was built in 1842, and still stands. See also D.J. Wyles, "Architectural Design in Nineteenth Century Huddersfield", p.308, in E.A.H. Haigh, ed., *Huddersfield, a Most Handsome Town* (1992), pp.303-40, citing West Yorkshire Archive Service, Kirklees, Ramsden Papers DD/RE/c/3.
19. Broadbent, pp.113-14, 120-1; P. Ahier, *The Story of the Three Parish Churches of St Peter the Apostle, Huddersfield*, part 3 (1950), pp.215-34.
20. Broadbent, pp.119-20; Wyles, p.329. The school is illustrated on p.545.

Pritchett and Son". At the centre of the new town was to be a large square, St George's Square, at the top end of which was to stand the new railway station for the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway and the Huddersfield and Manchester Railway. This station, now a grade 2 listed building, is generally regarded as one of Pritchett's finest works. Is it perhaps fanciful to see a resemblance between the station, with its extended Palladian frontage and Wentworth Woodhouse? The fifth Earl Fitzwilliam, Isabella Ramsden's cousin and a Ramsden Trustee, laid the foundation stone in 1846 but the building was not completed until 1850. With its dominant central portico, side colonnades and outer trianion-like temples (actually booking offices for the two railway companies) it is a remarkable building. A further Pritchett touch was the installation of a gas cooker in the refreshment room kitchen instead of an open fire, to provide more rapidly-cooked meals for travellers.²¹

On the side of the square opposite the station, Pritchett designed in 1853 the Lion Arcade, built in the Italianate style, 180 feet long with a lion over the central pediment. The roof was of cast iron and glass, materials made popular by Paxton for the Great Exhibition building in 1851. The shift to Italianate designs marked the end of the Greek revival period and this style was preferred for the south side of the square after Pritchett's grand Classical design for a Town Hall was turned down by the Improvement Commissioners – a decision now much regretted.²²

By this date Pritchett was in his sixties and the next generation was beginning to take over, so it is time to say something about his family before returning to his later work in York.²³

In August 1813, Pritchett married Peggy Maria Terry of Beckenham, whom he had presumably met when working in London. Their eldest son, Richard Charles, became a Congregational minister, trained at Rotherham and ordained to Bethel church at Darlington in 1840.²⁴ The second son, Charles Pigott, became an architect like his father²⁵. A third son, James Delabere, died in infancy. A daughter, Maria Margaret, married the architect, John Middleton, who practised

21. Broadbent, pp.121-3; Wyles, pp.328-9.

22. Wyles, pp.329-31; Broadbent, pp.123-4.

23. For details of the family and what follows, see the "Pedigree of Pritchett" and references in *York Courant* 3 January 1814, *Yorkshire Gazette* 24 February 1827, 10 January 1829, 24 July 1847, 31 March 1855, 7 November 1863; also YCA 23/1, Lendal Church Baptismal Register; 23/2, Lendal Church Church Book; and 23/18, Salem Chapel Church Book.

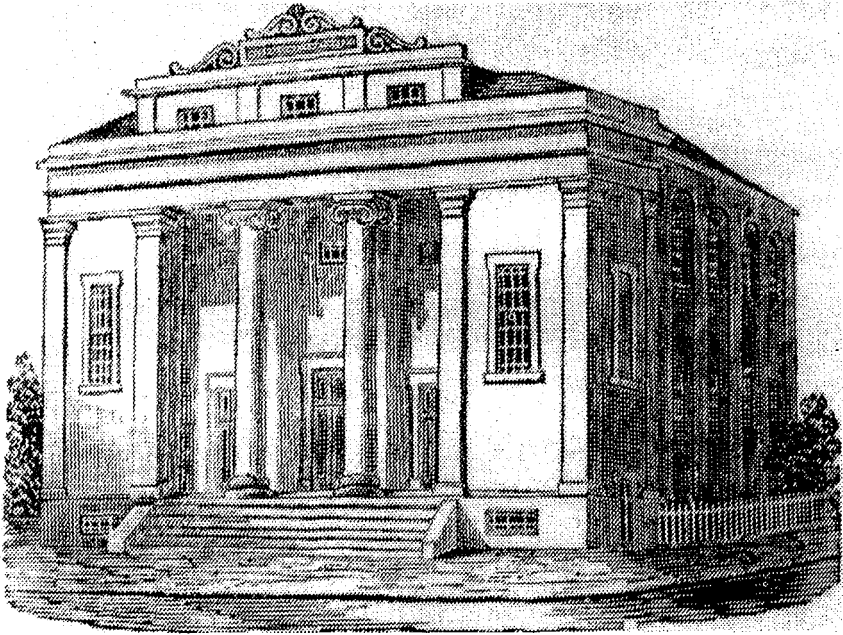
24. Richard Pritchett (1818-81) remained in Darlington until 1850 when he moved to Derby but then resigned in ill-health. He went to Weston super Mare in 1853, retiring in 1871 first to Penzance and then in 1877 to Bristol. During his years at Penzance he was interested in the work of the YMCA. – *Congregational Year Book* (1882), pp.324-6.

25. Charles Pritchett (1818-91) left Huddersfield, possibly after the death of his wife in 1859. He married again in 1860, in London, and in 1862 was said to have joined the Church of England. He died in Hastings and was buried in Bath.

in Darlington.²⁶ Peggy Maria died in 1827 and two years later Pritchett married Caroline Benson of Thorne near Doncaster. The eldest son of this second marriage was James Pigott Pritchett junior, who also became an architect. In 1850 he worked in the Huddersfield office before moving to Darlington in 1852. The following year he entered into partnership with his father, but in 1854 took over Middleton's practice. The second son, John Benson, became a surgeon, first in York and then in Huddersfield from 1862 when he became the first medical officer of health for the town.²⁷ His younger brother, Henry, also a surgeon, practised in nearby Rastrick. There were also twin daughters by the second marriage: Emma Susanna, who died in childhood, and Caroline Benson, who met the fate of many youngest daughters and never married. Pritchett himself died in York in 1868 and his wife Caroline eleven years later. They are buried in York Cemetery, not far from Pritchett's Greek temple.²⁸

But we must not bury him yet, for we left him in York in the mid-1830s at the height of his powers, building Tudor Gothic for the Dean and Chapter and Greek revival for the Cemetery Company. Lendal chapel was thriving and Pritchett was senior deacon and the energy behind what he regarded as "his" church. He took a leading part in the politics of Dissent, including the campaign (1824-42) against the Unitarians to win the Lady Hewley Trust for the Trinitarian dissenters²⁹ and in 1840 he was the architect chosen to rebuild the Lady Hewley almshouses on the site of the Hewleys' house next to St. Saviour's Church, the original almshouses in Tanner Row having been demolished to make way for the first York

26. Maria Margaret Pritchett (1817-85) married John Middleton of York, subsequently Darlington, in July 1844 and transferred her membership to Darlington. Their son, John Henry (born 1846), was educated at Cheltenham College and then Exeter College, Oxford. He became Professor of Fine Art at Cambridge (1886-95), Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum (1889-92) and Art Director at the South Kensington Museum from 1893 until his death from an overdose of morphia in 1896. His father, who died in 1885, at Newcastle Emlyn in Wales, was buried in Cheltenham.
27. John Benson Pritchett (1831-84) moved from Salem, York, to Ramsden Street, Huddersfield, in 1862 where he "entered upon a professional partnership with an influential firm" (*Yorkshire Gazette*, 5 July 1862). He was Medical Officer of Health 1873-7. In 1876 he "separated" from the church at Ramsden Street, shortly before a major doctrinal division in the church. See J.B. Eagles, *John Benson Pritchett. First Medical Officer of Health for Huddersfield* (Huddersfield Local History Workshop, 1984).
28. *Yorkshire Gazette* 30 May 1868. The grave (8702), opened for Emma Susanna in 1847, is a horizontal tomb without headstone on the outer edge of the old burial area facing the gate lodge and to the left of the main drive to the chapel. The engraving on the base of the tomb is now illegible but "In memory of Caroline, wife of J.P. Pritchett" can just be made out on the lid.
29. *Congregational Magazine*, new series vol.4 (1828), pp.275-7, sets out the issues. See also A.J. Long, *The Lady Hewley Dispute, 1830-42* (Yorkshire Unitarian Union, 1988). For reference to the Hewley dispute and Pritchett's campaign to maintain the non-sectarian nature of Lord Wharton's bibles, see Dr. Williams's Library, Congregational Library Mss. Ilc32/23 and 25, Pritchett to Joshua Wilson, 12 January, 27 February 1822; also Ellerby and Pritchett, pp.43-4 and *York Herald* 30 May 1868.



Salem Chapel, York; James Pigott Pritchett 1839. (Borthwick Institute)



Hillhouse Congregational Church, Huddersfield; James Pigott Pritchett, junior,
1863-5.

Railway station. He again chose the Tudor Gothic style.³⁰

The previous year Pritchett built Salem for James Parsons and the congregation at Lendal, of whom 368 moved to Salem with Parsons leaving Pritchett at Lendal to start again with only seventy-four members. Salem was built in St. Saviour's Place, looking down St Saviourgate, not far from the Unitarian Chapel. It was demolished in 1963, but surviving photographs give some sense of the interior. Pritchett gave his services free in the building of this chapel and in his choice of style we can see his preference for the Classical approach. The design is similar to that employed at College Chapel, Bradford, except here instead of a Greek bow front there were two Ionic pillars fronting a recessed entrance on account of the lack of depth to the site. At the rear of the pulpit there was an apse as at Lendal but this was encased in ancillary rooms and so not visible externally. Salem was to be matched the following year at the other end of St Saviourgate when James Simpson of Leeds designed another Greek temple, this time for the Wesleyans.³¹

Pritchett's last venture into chapel building in York was for the Primitive Methodists who since 1820 had languished in the dark, damp and obscure Grape Lane chapel. In 1851, reinforced with new members and money from the Wesleyan Reform secession of that year, they acquired a site in Little Stonegate and invited Pritchett to design them a chapel. He did so, in the Italian style, and it was called "Ebenezer". Because the house purchased for the site was side on to the street with a garden in front, the chapel also had to be built in this way, with apparently twin staircases from outside at each end of the frontage. Actually the main staircase is only at the right hand side. This leads down to the basement Sunday school, as at Lendal, and also up to the main floor of the chapel and the upper gallery. Though a printing works from 1901 until 1998 and now incorporated into Borders Bookshop, the interior retains something of the atmosphere of a chapel. Because the site was so cramped, Pritchett resorted from the start to the device he had introduced at Lendal in 1823 of a second gallery at the back of the Sunday School.³²

With his sons playing a major role in the architectural practice, Pritchett now took a lesser part. It is unclear which Pritchett was responsible for the cemetery chapel at Huddersfield in 1853, but James Pigott junior probably handled the Mechanics' Institute at Darlington in the same year. After 1854 he worked on his own account, establishing an extensive practice mainly in County Durham and the North Riding, but he maintained some of his old connections, designing in 1863 Hillhouse Congregational Church in Huddersfield, and in 1866 he was architect

30. Broadbent, p.120; RCHM vol. V, p.96.

31. R. Willis, *Nonconformist Chapels of York, 1693-1840*. York Georgian Society Occasional Paper no 8 [1963], pp.27-33 and photographs; Broadbent, p.119; RCHM vol. V, pp.54-5.

32. W. Camidge, *Ye Olde Street of Pavemente* [n.d.], p.136; RCHM vol. V, p.52; Borthwick Institute, MRC.4/1/3, Methodist Records, Primitive Methodist Connexion, York Circuit, Quarterly Meetings, 1846-53.

for the new Fulford parish church on the outskirts of York. In each case he built in Gothic.³³

Meanwhile Pritchett senior had withdrawn amid controversy from activities at Lendal, and what should have been a profitable semi-retirement became rather unpleasant. After Parsons's departure the church at Lendal had experienced some recovery of members under his successor, Charles Payton. Forty-five new members were added in 1840 and membership rose to 170 but these figures were never to be matched again. Payton died suddenly in December 1844 and Pritchett did not get on with his successor, Richard Soper. In January 1845 he resigned from the church and did not rejoin until June 1848 after Soper's departure. Membership was now down to 104. Pritchett did not get on with Soper's successor either and refused his election as deacon in 1850. When he agreed to stand again in 1854 he was defeated. Although he remained active in the church and Sunday school, and continued as a trustee, this marked the end of his dominance of Lendal.

Pritchett must have been a formidable figure for any new pastor to confront, and none stayed long before ill-health or another vocation called them away. Stability was not restored until after Pritchett's death in 1868 though, to be fair, perhaps James Parsons's retirement from Salem in 1870 reduced the attraction of the rival cause and helped the latest minister at Lendal, Charles Illingworth (1870-1887), to bring some stability and even growth to Lendal. But thereafter, as with Arnold's *Dover Beach*, there was but a "melancholy, long, withdrawing roar".³⁴

It would be wrong, though, to end this paper with the picture of a difficult and strong-willed old man, though undoubtedly he was this also. James Pigott Pritchett was a prolific architect who, if not among the greats, has been described as leaving "a corpus of honest work without which the northern landscape would be the poorer".³⁵ Nonconformist architecture is ephemeral and much has been lost. In York, the Meeting House and Salem Chapel have gone, as have Ramsden Street, Huddersfield, and Nether Chapel, Sheffield. Lendal is a mere shell, as is College Chapel, Bradford. Only Ebenezer survives and this is not really typical of his work, except for his ingenuity in manipulating the restricted site. Undoubtedly, Pritchett knew how to build a good chapel. He was interested in acoustics, heating, lighting and ventilation and was prepared to use the latest technology to achieve his desired ends. As an active Congregationalist he knew from inside what a chapel needed to be like. He was less happy when building for the

33. An exception was the chapel at Armley Cemetery, Leeds (1887). For a list of J.P. Pritchett junior's principal works, see D. Ware, *A Short Dictionary of British Architects* (London 1967), p.188 and N. Pevsner, *Yorkshire: The North Riding. The Buildings of England*, (1966).
34. Ellerby and Pritchett, pp.105-18; YCA 3/4-5, Lendal Church Meeting Minute Book II-III, 5 January 1846, 3-10 November 1850, 6 November 1854; 23/2, Lendal Chapel Church Book, no.10, J.P. Pritchett. For the later history of Lendal, see the Editor's Epilogue in Ellerby and Pritchett, pp.119-25.
35. Broadbent, p.102.

Established Church although like any good businessman he could always produce the style to his clients' taste, if not their purse. The Classical was his own mature preference and, with the portico to the Assembly Rooms, York Cemetery chapel and Huddersfield Railway station he produced a quality of design which is now regarded not only as his best, but among the best of its kind in the country.

As a church member and deacon he must also be respected. As a newcomer both to the denomination and to York, he took control of the struggling and demoralised church at Jubbergate and between 1814 and 1822 laid the foundations for the astonishing success enjoyed by James Parsons. Pritchett as much as Parsons made the Congregational cause in York in the first half of the nineteenth century the force it undoubtedly was. For what happened after the 1840s, let those who know how to retire gracefully at sixty cast the first stone.

EDWARD ROYLE

THOMAS SLADE JONES AND VINCENT VAN GOGH: A NOTE

In Twickenham Road, opposite Isleworth Congregational Church, there is a rambling Georgian house bearing a round blue plaque telling passers-by that Vincent van Gogh lived there in 1876. In fact he was only there from July till December. During that time he was an assistant to the Revd. Thomas Slade Jones, whose boarding-school was there.

In *The Complete Letters of Vincent van Gogh* edited by J van Gogh-Bonger (1958-60) there are several letters from Vincent to his brother Theo giving lengthy descriptions of his life at this period. Incidentally they testify to his intense powers of observation and vivid penmanship. In one of the letters he is delighted to announce that in future "he would not have to teach so much," but would "work more in his [Slade Jones's] parish." For Slade Jones was not only running a school but an "infant" church at Turnham Green, about three miles distant, towards Hammersmith. Indeed, in another letter van Gogh describes paying visits to children's homes on the new housing estate at Gunnersbury and draws a word-picture of a smoky locomotive drawing a train along the embankment; it is now the route of the District Line. Another page reports on van Gogh's preaching at a chapel at Ham, near Richmond; a copy of the sermon is attached. How well it was received we do not know but it is much more biblical and theological than most beginners would prepare. However, one has to remember that Vincent's father was a Dutch pastor in the Reformed Church.

Van Gogh-Bonger in his comments says that Slade Jones was a Methodist minister. Why he thought so we cannot tell. It would be very odd for a Methodist minister in the 1870s to be long enough anywhere to open a boarding-school. It is not uncommon, however, for a Congregational minister to do so. In fact, Thomas Slade Jones (1829-83) was a Congregational minister. He has a card in the Surman Index at Dr Williams's Library and his obituary appears in the *Congregational Year Book* (1884).

The obituary tells us that it was Slade Jones himself who purchased a plot of land in Chiswick High Road and had a temporary church erected on it. It was one of the prefabricated iron buildings decorated with a little spire which were favoured by home missions in Victorian times. They were commonly called "tin tabernacles" in my youth. Van Gogh-Bonger thought it was a wooden structure; such a mistake is understandable in a Dutchman. Van Gogh did a small sketch of it in the margin of a letter in which he gives an account of the first anniversary of the church. Remarkable as his gifts of observation were, his memory failed him there - he omitted one of the windows. Slade Jones's enterprise flourished and his name appears on one of the foundation stones of the rather grand gothic church by T. Lewis Banks that was erected shortly before his death.

Early in the 1960s, when a thorough spring-cleaning was undertaken at Gunnersbury Congregational Church (as Turnham Green had renamed itself), there came to light two interesting items. One was a collecting card for the young

New Congregational Church
TURNHAM GREEN.

The public worship of God has been conducted just two years in the Lecture Hall, Turnham Green.

For some time past, the Alder and Committee had decided on taking ground for building as soon as suitable pieces offered itself; but an unexpected advertisement has compelled them to take immediate action. On the 12th. May, 1875, the Lecture Hall was temporarily closed, and the following Sunday Congregation and Sunday School were scattered, they being unable to secure any other place to meet in.

It was felt that something must be done, and it was immediately resolved that the Alder and Committee should, if possible, find a site for a new building. A plot of ground in the Turnham Green Land has been taken, and a plan of a building of sufficient size to hold 200 persons has been prepared. The cost of the building, when erected, will be about £1000. The Alder and Committee have been secured to build an iron building, and a site of a new building, towards which we are trying off the like bill, nothing is in the hands of the Alder and Committee.

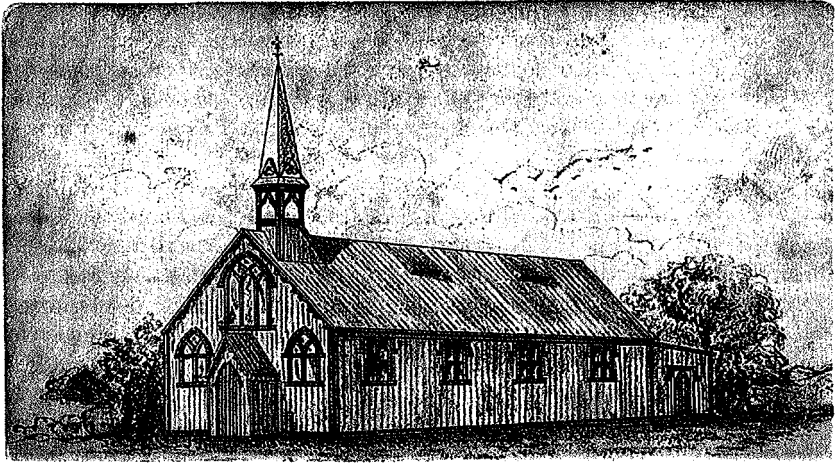
The Congregation and Sunday School are so poor and the support is so small, that it is impossible for the Alder and Committee to do so suddenly, that it is necessary to have recourse to the sympathy and liberality of a general public. The whole cost of the building, including the ground, will not exceed £1000, towards which the Congregations are invited, and begged to be forwarded with a view to delay as possible.

A large Contribution would be very gratefully appreciated by the Staff of **J. VAN GOGH** another by the end of October.

SLADE JONES, Minister.
 HOIAR COVEY,
 LEAFWORTH, (W.)

C. ARTHUR BROWNE, Camden House, Turnham Green.
 S. WHITTINGHAM, Broadway.
 G. WHALEY, Gunnersbury Road.
 C. RUGLANDSON, Broadway.
 W. BLACKMAN, Priory Road.
 J. LYON, Chiswick.

Committee.
 June 1, 1875.



Collecting Card for Sunday School Room and Iron Building, Turnham Green Congregational Church, 1875.

church, its front cover showing an illustration of the iron building (probably supplied by the manufacturer). The other was a slim, shiny black exercise book containing the Sunday School Meeting Minutes for the first five years on the site. Sadly, they were scrappily kept yet, happily, they provided a few references to van Gogh. An undated meeting recorded "that Mr Vincent van Gof be accepted as coworker." At a meeting in November (otherwise undated) van Gogh seconded a motion to hold special children's services on Thursday evenings at 6.30. Furthermore, at this meeting it was resolved "that it be optional with Teachers whether they visit their own scholars or Mr Vincent visit them". Later, "Mr Richardson proposed and Mr Statham seconded that Mr Vincent be supplied with all the names and addresses of the scholars in the school and that he go round to each class for particulars of those who require visiting".

Van Gogh went home for Christmas and never returned. On 5 February 1877 the meeting instructed the secretary to send to Mr Vincent for his resignation "as he had left the country". From his letters it seems that van Gogh had applied for a missionary's post in London without success. Possibly this was with the London City Mission but their records were lost in the Blitz. Back home he started a course of training for home mission work but did not stick at it and then he worked for a time as a missionary among Belgian miners and peasants and that too came to grief. In this period he did some very moving drawings of country life among the poor; they manifest his empathy with Dickens. Unemployed, he turned to art. But he never sold enough work to keep himself; he lived on the hand-outs that Theo, the art-dealer, sent him. What is truly amazing is that Slade Jones took the trouble to travel to the Continent to see his protégé and encourage him to respond to God's calling.

We are left with questions and no answers. Why was van Gogh turned down for mission work in London? Why was he considered unsuitable? Slade Jones thought highly of him. Did he discuss the Congregational ministry with him? What transpired? Was van Gogh purposefully escaping from Slade Jones when he went home and never returned? All we can say is that if he had become either a missionary or minister the world would have lost hundreds of exciting pictures and some very moving ones.

The information was passed on to Theo's grandson in 1965 when I was at Arnhem. The Turnham Green/Gunnersbury records have been deposited with London Metropolitan Archives.

JOHN H. TAYLOR

FROM "WOMAN MINISTER" TO "MINISTER"?

One Hundred¹ Congregational Ministers Ordained between 1917 and 1972 in England and Wales

In 1927 Albert Peel, editor of the *Congregational Quarterly* and one of the most erudite of Congregational historians, published a book called *A Hundred Eminent Congregationalists* (London). It included one woman, Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Twenty-one years later, Peel expanded the original work and published *The Congregational Two Hundred: 1530-1948* (London 1948). In the introduction to the second work he wrote that he now considered that his earlier American entries were too ministerial and too masculine, adding that "perhaps the British lists are open to the same criticism". Yet in 1948 there was still only one British woman, although five American women were now included.² This well illustrates the invisibility of women in the received tradition of Congregationalism in the middle of the twentieth century.

Nevertheless by the middle of the twentieth century Congregationalists were taking some pride in the fact that theirs was the first British denomination to recognise the ordination of a woman to pastoral ministry. The possibility of the ordination of women, and of their public role in the life of the church, had already been discussed in both Anglican and Free Church circles in the years immediately before the First World War, alongside the growing movement for women's suffrage. The two themes, often combined with pacifist sympathy, were part of the agenda of both the (Anglican) Church League for Women's Suffrage,³ founded by Claude Hinscliff in 1909, and the Free Church Suffrage League, founded in 1913.⁴

In 1913 Ursula Roberts, wife of the Rector of St George's, Bloomsbury, sent out invitations to a conference to be held in September 1914 to discuss the issue of the ordination of women. The planning group included two Anglican women who were to play a leading role in the movement for the ordination of women later in the century – Maude Royden (1876-1956), a key figure in this debate, and Edith

1. This number is approximate, because some of the relevant early statistics are unclear. A few women were ordained elsewhere but recognised as ministers by the Congregational Union of England and Wales.
2. Jane Addams, Katharine Bates, Harriet Beecher, Anne Hutchinson, and Julia Lathrop.
3. This became the League of the Church Militant when partial women's suffrage was achieved in 1918. The League then voted, after passionate debate, to "challenge the custom of the Church of confining the priesthood to men." See Sheila Fletcher, *Maude Royden* (Oxford, 1989), p.188. See also Brian Heeney, "The beginnings of Church Feminism: Women and the Councils of the Church of England 1897-1919", *JEH* 33/1 (1982), pp.89-109.
4. Its journal, *The Free Church Suffrage Times*, began publication in 1913 and continued from 1916 until 1920 as *The Coming Day*.

Picton-Turbervill (1872-1960).⁵ Because of the outbreak of war, the meeting was postponed, and was eventually held as a "quiet day and conference" in April 1917, and therefore attracted little public notice.⁶

For some time, and certainly by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, a few women had been regularly leading worship and taking a pastoral role in Congregational churches. Even in the nineteenth century it was not unknown for a woman to gather a small group unofficially for worship. In his history of Lancashire Nonconformity, Benjamin Nightingale recorded that the Congregational church at Nether Kellett owed its existence to a Miss Bateman, "who for 56 years laboured as a Christian worker and teacher" among the local people, and gathered what soon became a preaching station.⁷ The Bible Christians had allowed women to preach throughout the nineteenth century, but their influence diminished as the denomination became more "respectable" and the practice ceased altogether when the Bible Christians merged with the United Methodist Free Churches and the Methodist New Connexion to form the United Methodist Church in 1907.⁸ The first known official example among Congregationalists is that of Jane Brown, who was recognised as pastor of Brotherton Congregational Church by the Yorkshire Congregational Union in 1899. By 1907 three more women had been officially recognised as pastors by their county unions: Florence Astbury at Carrs Lane, Birmingham, Eliza Emma Harris at Middlesborough, and Edith Thomas at Leek.⁹

The first woman to hold full pastoral charge in England was a Unitarian, Gertrud von Petzold (1876-1952). She was born in East Prussia to a Lutheran family, but received her higher education at the University of Edinburgh and Manchester College, Oxford. In 1904 she was called to pastoral charge at Narborough Road Free Church, Leicester, where she remained for four years. Later she spent time in the United States, but finally returned to Germany after the outbreak of the First World War. There she remained for the rest of her life, apart from occasional visits abroad.¹⁰ Her example was soon followed by others, and in the 1920s and 1930s the Unitarians had more women ministers than any other denomination.

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5. Maude Royden was acknowledged as an outstanding preacher but was not always treated sympathetically by the Anglican hierarchy. See Sheila Fletcher, *Maude Royden* (Oxford, 1989). Edith Picton-Turbervill was active in ecclesiastical, social and international affairs, and became a Labour MP in 1929. See Edith Picton-Turbervill, *Life is Good* (1939).
 6. See Fletcher, 164.
 7. B Nightingale, *Lancashire Nonconformity* vol. I, (Manchester, n.d. c.1890), p.244.
 8. See David Shorney, "Women may preach but men must govern: gender roles in the growth and development of the Bible Christian denomination" in R.N. Swanson (ed.), *Gender and Christian Religion, Studies in Church History* 34 (1998).
 9. See Emily Janes (ed), *The Englishwoman's Yearbook and Directory 1907-8* (London, 1907).
 10. See Keith Gilley, "Gertrud von Petzold - The Pioneer Woman Minister" in *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society* XXI/3, 1997.

The first Congregational preacher to come to public notice was Hatty Baker, who acted as unofficial minister at Horsted Keynes. Louisa Martindale¹¹ had raised funds to build a Congregational hall for worship, with the approval of the Sussex Congregational Union, the condition being that there should be equality of the sexes in the leading of worship and management of the hall. For two or three years in the first decade of the twentieth century Hatty Baker shared the leading of Sunday worship alternately with students from Hackney and New Colleges in London. This is how the reporter Christina Sinclair Bremner described her in the *Christian World* on 15 April 1909:

She is a student, a woman of education, spiritually-minded, capable. Dressed in a black Geneva gown, cap and plain white collar, Miss Baker reverently conducted the devotions of the congregation. The sermon was thoughtful, carefully prepared, and left much that is practical and applicable to the conduct of life in the minds of her hearers. I was struck by the number of heads of families, who listened to those half-hour sermons with the closest attention. Miss Baker has baptised children, officiated at the communion table, and on the very day of my visit, heads of households, women as well as men, were signing a requisition to allow marriages to be solemnised in this beautiful little church.

Later she shared in the leading of worship in Plymouth, working in partnership with a male minister along the lines she had advocated in a lecture to the Liberal Christian League, published as *Women in the Ministry* in 1911. She was also secretary of the Free Church Suffrage League, believing that educated women needed a religion “that allowed them equal rights and opportunities with men, and that gave them a place and standpoint of their own”.¹² She was remarkably modern in many of her views.

In February 1909 the question of the recognition of “women pastors” was brought to the General Purposes Committee of the Congregational Union by the secretary of the East Glamorgan Congregational Association, with particular reference to a possible candidate, Miss Clarice Smith. The following month, the committee sought authorisation from the Council of the Union to hold a joint meeting with the Settlements and Removals Committee to consider the issue. The result was a joint meeting on 7 September (attended exclusively by men). “After a very lengthy discussion the general principle that the time had come when it would be advisable to recognise women as accredited ministers under the conditions governing the admission of men was affirmed by 14 votes to 10.” By the time a formal resolution to this effect was put to the meeting, another member

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11. Louisa Martindale (1839-1914) was the daughter of James Spicer, whose family were prominent benefactors of Congregational activities. She was active in many public spheres, particularly in societies concerned with the position of women. See Hilda Martindale, *From One Generation to Another 1839-1944* (London, 1944).
 12. *Christian Commonwealth* 27 July, 1910.

had changed his mind, for this was agreed by 15 votes to 9. The one proviso was that the conditions on which men might be exempted from the requirement of a college course were not to be extended to women candidates (though this seems soon to have been ignored).¹³ A later commentator remarked that "no one thought at that time that advantage would be taken of such a decision",¹⁴ and the decision did not merit mention in the Council's report to the Assembly in that year.

There the matter rested until 1917, by which time one woman *had* fulfilled these requirements. Constance Todd was brought up in a cultured and comparatively affluent Presbyterian family which valued education for daughters as much as for sons. Her father, George Todd, was an Assistant Secretary in the Scottish Education Department, a former Exhibitioner at Balliol College, Oxford. Her mother, Emily Ellerman, was one of the first generation of women to study medicine, though a serious accident prevented her from practising as a doctor. Constance was sent to St Felix School, Southwold, then followed her father as an Exhibitioner to Oxford, where she studied history at Somerville College before the First World War. By the time she had finished her course, she was convinced of a vocation to ministry, but was led to understand that the Presbyterian Church of England would have no sympathy with such a proposal. She therefore went to see the principal of Mansfield College, W.B. Selbie, early in 1913. He was persuaded that her call was genuine and recognised that her intellectual ability and attainment equalled if not exceeded that of his male students. He apparently did not deem it necessary to consult the College Council formally before making this decision to accept her. She entered the College in Michaelmas Term 1913; by the time she had completed the three-year course with some distinction, she was already engaged to be married to a fellow student, Claud Coltman. She was instrumental in inviting Maude Royden to address a meeting of the College's Junior Common Room on "the spiritual significance of the women's movement" in November 1914, and took the chair for the meeting. The two became lifelong friends, and shared in work for peace as well as in promoting the ministry of women.

Another speaker to the Junior Common Room at Mansfield was the charismatic "catholic" Presbyterian minister of the Congregational King's Weigh House, W.E. Orchard. Constance Todd and Claud Coltman were deeply influenced by him, and attended his church in the West End of London frequently. When the Weigh House looked for someone to take charge of their Darby Street Mission (sacrificial work, with one low salary), Claud Coltman and Constance Todd felt that this was a need to which they could respond. The church then officially "called" them as assistant ministers, with special responsibility for Darby Street. They were ordained on the evening of 17 September 1917, with Orchard, the future Roman Catholic priest, presiding alongside three Congregational ministers – G.E. Darlston (whose daughter, Mary Osborn, was later ordained), Stanley Russell and Leyton

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13. General Purposes Committee Minute Book 1893-1910, entry for 7 September 1909. Congregational Library, Dr. Williams's Library.
14. Report of Congregational meetings in the *British Weekly* 4 October, 1917.

Richards. Maude Royden (whose own preaching ministry at the City Temple had begun the previous day) was among the congregation. The following day Constance Todd and Claud Coltman were married, again at the Weigh House.¹⁵ They were actually inducted to the pastorate at Darby Street in December; this time, W.B. Selbie, principal of Mansfield College, and R.J. Evans, secretary of the London Congregational Union, took part.¹⁶

It was only after her ordination that Constance Coltman's request for recognition as a Congregational minister came to the London Congregational Union, who referred the matter to the General Purposes Committee of the Congregational Union. It came before their meeting on 1 October, when the committee was told that Constance Coltman had taken the full course at Mansfield College and after being granted a leaving certificate had received a call to the King's Weigh House. They then decided "to recommend that the rules as at present framed do not prohibit recognition of women who have fulfilled the regulations."¹⁷ According to the report in the *British Weekly*, during the debate Gerard Ford had suddenly remembered the discussion of eight years previously, and the relevant Minute Book was sent for,¹⁸ which confirmed the matter. Constance Coltman's name appeared in the next *Congregational Year Book*, listed alongside other ministers.¹⁹ Although the ordination of Constance Todd was reported in detail in the *Christian World* and the *British Weekly*, and reference was made to it as "a revolutionary proceeding", it did not cause any great stir at the time. More attention was being given in Congregational circles to a proposal to group the county unions together in nine associations, each with a superintendent or moderator – perceived as a great threat to traditional Independency.²⁰

Looking back, what was the real significance of the event? Over the following fifty-five years, until 1972, when most Congregationalists and all but one of the English Presbyterian churches came together to form the United Reformed Church, about 100 women were ordained as Congregational ministers in England and Wales – one or two each year until the number began to accelerate slightly after 1960. These women constantly reiterated that they thought of themselves as "ministers", not "women ministers" – a term most of them disliked and still dislike. But inevitably they were perceived as such, and there was much they experienced in common: lower salaries, smaller churches, and more

15. In 1968, shortly before her death, Constance Coltman told the author that it was important to her that she was ordained in her own, rather than her married name.
16. For a fuller account of Constance Coltman (1889-1969), see Elaine Kaye, "Constance Coltman – a forgotten pioneer" in *JURCHS* 14/2 (1988), pp.134-146.
17. General Purposes Committee Minute Book 1910-21, entry for 1 October 1917. Congregational Library, Dr. Williams's Library.
18. See *British Weekly* 4 October 1917.
19. Claud Coltman had studied at a Baptist college before coming to Mansfield, and for the first few years of his ministry his name appeared among the list of probationary ministers of the Baptist Union. By 1923 he was listed among Congregational ministers.
20. See *Christian World* 11 October 1917.

unemployment. Most encountered obstacles and prejudice, though some have affirmed that they found very little.

One important factor was that the work of all ministers, men as well as women, depended not only on their acceptability to the Congregational Union, but also crucially on the willingness of a local church to call them to pastoral charge. However well educated and trained a minister might be, she could never assume that a call would come. In a few cases it did not, and in others only after a long period of waiting. It was often the small church which could only afford a small salary whose members were driven to consider calling a woman minister without family commitments. Once a church had actually experienced the ministry of a woman, prejudice almost invariably diminished.

In the long term the acceptance of women ministers also depended on the willingness of the colleges to admit women students. Mansfield, as we have seen, admitted the first woman in 1913. She was treated reasonably well by her fellow students in the Junior Common Room, and in fact before she left she told them that "the three years she had spent at Mansfield had been among the most wonderful in all her experience". In 1942 Dorothy Wilson (1893-1956) was admitted and took the B. Litt degree while following the ordination course.²¹ Earlier that year she had presented a memorial to the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England seeking admission to Westminster College, Cambridge, but was told that while she was free to study there to enhance her existing work "outside the limits of the regular ministry of this Church", she could not be considered as a candidate for ordained ministry. She therefore applied to Mansfield, where she was much respected by her fellow students for her expertise in Christian Education (she had been Young People's Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of England during the First World War), and had she not suffered ill-health throughout her life would undoubtedly have played a leading role in the Congregational denomination. She looked back with gratitude to the encouragement she had received from Principal Selbie, recalling that "to his women students he was so kind and fair and wise; never hiding from them the fact that life for a woman minister is yet bound to be difficult but also making clear his conviction that God can speak through a woman as well as through a man".²²

In November 1918 the Lancashire Independent College responded to an enquiry about the admission of women students by agreeing that "the College should make provisions for the training of women, with a view to their entrance into the Congregational ministry on the same terms as men". The first student, Margaret Hardy (later Fullerton) was admitted at the age of thirty-four in 1923, soon followed by two younger women, Constance Clark and Kathleen Hall (later

21. Her thesis on "Child psychology and religious education" was published by the SCM press under that title in 1928. She wrote a number of other books on religious education. See *Mansfield College Magazine* Jan 1957, pp.325-6.

22. *Mansfield College Magazine*, June 1932.

Hendry),²³ New College admitted Mary Collins²⁴ in 1919. Western College admitted Ellen Leaton²⁵ in 1929. The Yorkshire United Independent College did not admit its first woman student, Beryl Russell (she later married a fellow student, Harold Bennett), until 1949. Brecon College admitted Jean Wilkinson in 1954, and Cheshunt College, Cambridge, admitted Janet Webber in 1958. More than half of the women we are considering were educated for ministry in colleges, but their scattered distribution in different colleges meant that their presence and contribution made very little impact on the colleges as a whole. It goes without saying that there were no women on the academic staff of the theological colleges.²⁶

Of those who did not undertake a college course, the majority qualified by working with a tutor and taking the examinations set by the Union for candidates in "special circumstances". They were usually placed on what was then known as "List B", a group of so-called "evangelists" who could not expect the same recognition or salary as those on "List A", to which they would hope to progress.²⁷ A few of these were women who had served the church in other capabilities and finally, often after retirement, discovered that the way was open for them to prepare for the ordained ministry.²⁸ One of the most colourful was Ivy Jeffers,²⁹ who shared a show-business partnership with her husband – he was a comedian and she was a cinema organist – as well as teaching music and drama, and was eventually ordained at the age of sixty-eight.

In 1932 the Congregational Union appointed a commission to enquire into various problems relating to ministry. Their report in 1934 included a section on the ministry of women, in which they reported that "it seems clear that our Churches are not often disposed to invite women to undertake the duties of the regular pastorate," and stated that "we cannot be satisfied with the present state of affairs."³⁰ They recommended the appointment of another special commission to

23. Margaret Fullerton (1890-1980) and Constance Clark (1902-69) exercised a notable joint ministry in Leeds in the 1930s. See *URCYB 1981*, p.249 and *CYB 1969-70*, p.429.

24. Mary Collins (1874-1945). See *CYB 1946*, pp.438-9. She spent the rest of her life in Bow, first as minister of North Bow from 1923 until 1933, during which she struggled on a low salary in order to help to reduce the church's mortgage. In her retirement she was active in the temperance movement.

25. Ellen (Nellie) Leaton (1884-1964). She had eight pastorates over twenty-four years. See *CYB 1964-5*, p.443.

26. Justine Wyatt was the first woman to be appointed to the staff of a theological college in the Congregational or Presbyterian tradition when she was appointed assistant chaplain at Mansfield College in 1981.

27. This differentiation was abolished later.

28. These included returning missionaries such as Sarah (Sally) Ffrench, Ivy Greaves (who was actually ordained in China), Helen Rolles, Dorothy Havergal-Shaw, Evelyn Turnbull and Myfanwy Wood.

29. Ivy Pearl Rawkins Jeffers (1900-95). See *URCYB 1996*, p.265.

30. *CYB 1935*, p.91.

report on the problem. At first the commission only included one woman, Mrs L.B. Hall, but later at the request of the Women's Guild two more women, Mrs J.H. Jowett and Mrs S.M. Berry, were added. Their report, which was presented to the Assembly in 1936, took a broad view of the understanding of ministry and dealt with lay preaching, administration and children's work as well as the work of ordained ministers. The report referred to seventeen women having been ordained in the nineteen years since 1917, thirteen of whom were currently in pastoral charge.³¹ All had reported on their experience, with more that was positive than negative to recall. All affirmed their love of preaching as much as of pastoral work, and a few even expressed their preference for preaching, challenging the current perception that women's particular gifts would be pastoral. But the commission found evidence of "a widespread and strong unwillingness among the churches to consider a woman as candidate in a vacancy," and there is a clear implication in their report that women were being offered smaller salaries than male counterparts. At no time, however, did they express doubts about the value of women's ministry, their evidence "excludes even the suggestion that the principle of the eligibility of women for the ministry in the Congregational churches should be challenged," adding that "it is only as women are able to prove their distinctive worth that any change of attitude and action by the church can be expected."³²

The commission reflected current attitudes and practice in other professions in recommending that it was not desirable for a woman to continue in a pastorate after marriage; in their view it would conflict with the duties of a wife and mother. This view was accepted by some, though not all, of the early ordained women, many of whom voluntarily resigned on marriage. Thus when Kathleen Hall married James Hendry she resigned from her pastorate, and only returned to stipendiary ministry after her husband's death. Others, such as the Coltmans and at least four other couples, dealt with the problem by having a joint pastorate of husband and wife. Of those who were ordained before 1972, thirty-three were married; in one or two cases they were not ordained until after the death of their husbands. In 1924 Edith Pickles was called to succeed her husband, Albert Pickles, as minister of Stanley Congregational Church in Liverpool after his death.³³ Eleanor Shakeshaft was called in 1941 by Herne Bay Congregational Church to succeed her late husband, Roland Shakeshaft. She proceeded to take the required training and examinations, and held pastoral charge at Herne Bay for nineteen years.

It was because of the difficulties, or alleged difficulties, of finding churches for newly-qualified ministers that New College decided in 1939 that it would only admit women if they were already graduates or had private means; in other words, if they could support themselves should they fail to be called to a church. This

31. At the time there were 1,380 male ministers in pastoral charge on List A, and 186 on List B. See *CYB 1937* p.802.

32. Their report is in *CYB 1937*, pp.84-93.

33. She later changed her name by deed poll to Lees. See *CYB 1963-4*, p.436.

policy was not altered until 1946 when Florence Frost-Mee, a young widow of thirty, who had a teaching certificate but not a degree, decided to challenge it by writing to the chairman of the governors to seek an interview with the principal. He finally gave in after an hour and a half's fierce argument, agreeing that the grounds for this policy were untenable. When she finished her course, Dr Cave had the grace to write to her saying how much he had valued her contribution to the college, and how greatly he had admired "the way you got over the difficulty of being the only woman in a College of men."³⁴ Later she was the first woman to be appointed a governor of the college.³⁵ The college did, however, set a minimum age limit of twenty-eight for women, but not for men, for some further years.

There was one comparatively short-lived attempt to provide education and training for women in a separate institution, staffed by women with some male help, in Liverpool at St Paul's House. Muriel Paulden³⁶ had originally hoped to be a missionary and went to Carey Hall in Birmingham in 1915 to prepare for service in India. When she was declared medically unfit, she was invited to run a Christian Training Centre at Berkeley Church, Liverpool. Two years later, in 1922, the congregation called her to be their minister; she remained there until her retirement in 1957. Conscious of the challenge of new housing estates and the building of new communities after the end of the Second World War, she opened St Paul's House in 1946 to train women to serve the needs of these new areas. They were to live simply in community while training for three years, then were ready to go out to build up small churches or start new ones for a period of two years, before returning to base for recuperation, in readiness for a new call. According to Muriel Paulden, they were to be ready "to take all the risks which a pioneering movement entails". In practice, they usually prepared the way for a full-time, usually male, minister. As attitudes changed, many of these women were eventually ordained, and enjoyed full pastoral change. For example, Alice Platts, who succeeded Muriel Paulden as Warden of St Paul's House in 1957, was eventually ordained in 1968, and served as minister in Leeds. The experiment lasted almost twenty years, and trained at least twenty women, until the more general acceptance of women at theological colleges made its existence superfluous.

What of leadership roles? The outstanding example of a woman who was given recognition as a leader was Elsie Chamberlain, who was elected to the Chair of the Congregational Union in 1955, the only woman to be so honoured before 1972. She became almost a household name after joining the BBC in 1950, and taking part in religious broadcasts for many years. She and her husband John

34. Letter in the possession of Florence Frost-Mee. Private interview June 1996.

35. Florence Frost-Mee went on to have three pastorates in the London area between 1951 and 1984.

36. Muriel Olympia Paulden (1892-1975). See Derek Watson, *Angel of Jesus* (1994). It has to be said that her former colleagues and students are not all happy with the description of her as an "angel".

Garrington, an Anglican priest, had many obstacles to both marriage and ministry in their path, but her outstanding qualities and his loyalty ensured that they triumphed over them.³⁷ Other women were in time elected as chairmen [sic] of local associations.

Almost thirty years after the 1936 report to Assembly on the ministry of women, in 1965, another report was presented, by a committee, chaired by Charles Haig, which had been asked to respond to a report from the World Council of Churches.³⁸ At the time of their report, thirty-five women were in pastoral charge, altogether there were fifty-nine women on the Roll of Ministers List A and six on List B, together with four who had the necessary qualifications but had not yet received a call.³⁹ In addition, eleven home missionaries were listed. Those who had been ordained before 1936 reported more discouraging experiences than the more recently ordained, both in gaining admission to a college and in gaining a "call". It was still the case that most of the churches which called a woman were small ones, and the committee reported that "a woman must be more gifted and better qualified than a man to obtain an opportunity equal with his". However they also commented: "Increasingly it is the individual personality and the ability to do a job of work, not the sex, by which a person is judged fit to be a minister."

Throughout these years there was a comparatively low-key Society for the Ministry of Women which acted as a support group for those working for the ordination of women and those already ordained. An interdenominational society, it was founded in 1929 after the granting of suffrage to women on the same terms as men led to the disbanding of the League of the Church Militant. The president and inspiration of the Society was the Anglican Maude Royden. Constance Coltman was already president of the Fellowship of Women Ministers, a group of about twenty who had met together in Oxford each summer. She became a vice-president of the new Society. In 1942 the name was changed to "The Society for the Equal Ministry of Men and Women in the Church", but this was thought by many members to be too provocative, and in 1957 it reverted to its original name. Its twice-yearly newsletter and regular meetings, usually in London, were the

37. See Margaret Stansgate, *My Exit Visa* (London, 1992), pp.198-200. Janette Williams, *First Lady of the Pulpit: Elsie Chamberlain* (Lewes, 1993) is an interesting and fairly anecdotal account of Elsie Chamberlain by her daughter. See also Alan Argent's articles on Elsie Chamberlain in the *Congregational History Circle Magazine* 1999, 2000, and 2001.
38. The committee, chaired by the Revd. Charles Haig, consisted of four male ministers and two laywomen. The Revd. Florence Frost-Mee was subsequently added to the committee.
39. See *CYB 1964/5*. The total number of ministers at the time was 1,774, of whom 1,275 were in pastoral charge. The *Baptist Handbook* for 1964 lists two Baptist women ministers, one of whom was in pastoral charge, and one probationer. There were also sixty-nine Baptist deaconesses and one probationer. The Presbyterians had two women ministers, while the Methodists had not yet implemented their earlier decision to allow women to be ordained.

means of keeping in touch. The newsletter, copies of which are preserved in the Fawcett Library in London, included reports from all over the world. One key figure in this was a woman who was never herself ordained, but whose wide contacts, determination combined with charm, and enthusiasm for theology, provided support to scores of other women. Margaret Stansgate left the Anglican Church in 1948 after realising that there was little hope of progress towards the ordination of women in that church in the new future, and became a Congregationalist.⁴⁰ She was then appointed the Free Church president of the Society. There was considerable overlap in membership between the Society for the Ministry of Women and the International Association of Women Ministers (originally preachers), formed in St Louis, Missouri, in 1919, which English women joined, though its annual meeting was never held in England until 1974. There was a great sense of solidarity among these women, and much mutual support.

Lady Stansgate's change of denomination illustrates the fact that, for many of these women, denominational loyalties were less important than equality in ministry. As one woman (Rachel Storr) has put it, "I became a Congregationalist because the call to the ministry became stronger than allegiance to any one denomination". A substantial minority of the ministers considered here (about 15%) were originally members of other denominations, most of them either Methodists or Anglicans.

When Doreen Hopewell retired from Saxmundham Congregational Church in 1970 she wrote in the newsletter of the Society for the Ministry of Women (no 31, July 1970), "It has been a hard and strenuous fight, but it has been well worth while if doors have been opened to make it possible for other women to receive a call to the ministry." It would be beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the reasons, inside and out the church, for much change of attitude in the mid to late 1970s, but we may note that from about 1977 the number of women seeking ordination began to increase substantially, as did their acceptability to larger and more vigorous churches. They should not forget the pioneers who helped to make their path easier.⁴¹

ELAINE KAYE

40 See Margaret Stansgate, *My Exit Visa* (London, 1992). It is unfortunate that she herself never finished this work, and that the last part is necessarily sketchy. She was the first president of the Congregational Federation.

41. The author is indebted to Janet Lees and Kirsty Thorpe, with whom she is working on the project, "Daughters of Dissent", for stimulating discussion on some of the themes raised in this article.

REVIEWS

A Public Meeting House in Sheffield: Upper Chapel (Unitarian) 1700-2000, a Meditation by Kenneth L. Patton, A Sermon and A Lecture by Clyde Binfield, Sheffield, 2001, pp.56, £6.50 inc. p&p. Available from Revd Geoffrey R. Usher, MA, Upper Chapel, Norfolk Street Sheffield S1 2JD. Cheques payable to Upper Chapel.

Chapel anniversaries often afford the opportunity to record stories of courage, perseverance and endurance as well as the ordinary and every-day affairs in which all chapels have to engage in order to survive. The resulting publications vary in their appeal: some genuinely have a significance wider than their locality, others will raise a glimmer of interest only among the most faithful of the current membership. This booklet concentrates on a story which is fundamentally a local one: Sheffield and the contribution made by Upper Chapel to its civic and cultural development. But it is told with a sense that, by its very nature as a chapel, its witness must resonate far wider than its own four walls and it reminds us all that this is the essence of being church.

The booklet opens with a reflection by Kenneth L. Patton entitled "This House" which delineates the purpose of a meeting house in humanistic, liberal and unmistakably Unitarian terms. It is the ideas contained therein which provide a framework for Clyde Binfield's tercentenary sermon and lecture delivered, respectively, on Sunday 29 October and Wednesday 8 November 2000.

The sermon, hardly surprisingly given Professor Binfield's recent interests, celebrates the building itself but goes on to a recollection of some of the characters who gave life to Upper Chapel's mission and witness, particularly the Revds Timothy Jollie, Brooke Herford and James Laughland (who ministered to nearby Unity Church, Crookesmoor). The sermon closes with a call to the present day congregation to continue the church's witness into its fourth century, maintaining "an act of collective citizenship, not the tremors of some privatized piety" so it can continue to be, in Kenneth Patton's words, a house "for the full and undivided conflict of opinion".

The lecture is thematic rather than chronological and recalls the formative role of division in Dissenting history, it pays tribute to the "learned, credible, solid" ministers, and it celebrates the congregation made up, in part, of prominent, well-to-do families who had a wider significance in local industry and in the formation of the borough and city of Sheffield. Paradoxically, Upper Chapel was also the promoter of unity by drawing together radical and conservative views. Respectable members became ever more conservative politically but they entertained ministers of a radical persuasion such as Joseph Evans, a supporter of American independence and the French Revolution, and Brooke Herford, an early advocate of trade unions. As with Unitarianism in general, the chapel promoted a sense of "thinking and doing for yourself" and this independence of thought was considered more important than conformity to creed and custom and more important too than political and social extremism.

This is not a chapel history, but a celebration of a chapel's history, more an assessment of its witness and contribution to civic life than a chronological description of events. Underlying it all is the sense that its mission in the past can inspire further activity in the present. It is both lively and provocative, and for those reasons can claim the interest of those who know the church and the city and those who do not.

ROBERT POPE

Tanning-Barn to Church: The Dissenting Congregation of Wheatley over Two Hundred Years. By John Fox, with Colin Thompson. Wheatley United Reformed Church, 1997. Pp.64. £3.00. Available from the Church Secretary, Wheatley URC, High Street, Wheatley, Oxford [no ISBN given].

This is an engaging portrait of a lively village church over 200 years. Wheatley is the home of a rural community not far from Oxford, on the route to London. Its Dissenting meeting was first granted a licence to worship in 1796 and began its life under the general supervision of New Road Church (a gathering of Baptists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists) in Oxford. When the New Road congregation split in 1830, Wheatley came under the supervision of the newly-established George Street Congregational Church. In 1841 it became a Home Missionary Station. It has had its share of problems, financial and pastoral, which are not glossed over, but has survived strengthened into the mid-twentieth century, and since the formation of the United Reformed Church has actually increased in membership by 50%. Its recent history reveals a remarkable combination of ecumenical co-operation with a strong Reformed commitment. (The history was published just before the church called the vicar of Wheatley parish church to be their minister as well).

The publication is remarkable in that the greater part of it is written by a sympathetic Roman Catholic author resident in the village. The history is set in the context of both local and national life and events. It makes good use of the available sources, and a good blend of interesting anecdotes with more serious reflection. Colin Thompson's final section is a personal account of the church's life since the formation of the URC.

This is a welcome addition to the growing number of chapel histories – informative, lively and hopeful.

ELAINE KAYE

A Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland. Edited by John Vickers; Epworth Press: 2000. £30.00. ISBN 0 7162 0534 3.

This new Dictionary of Methodism is going to be an indispensable item on the church historian's shelf. In order to make this a manageable volume it is not a comprehensive dictionary of Methodism. Rather more than its 408 pages would be taken up by a comprehensive listing of office bearers in the various historic strands of Methodism. Mere piety and denominational loyalty does not secure a place on these pages. So there will be arguments about the content along the lines of who would make the best Methodist eleven of all time when people find their interests under-represented. For what it is worth I would have sacrificed a trophy like Baroness Thatcher to include more people in public life who have also been active in the denomination. That, however, is a personal preference to set against the rich diet which is here and which I have already tested against research projects. Faced with a reference to "Dr Hannah" in an 1843 context, who seemed to be a Wesleyan, the Dictionary reveals to me Dr John Hannah (1792-1867; e.m. 1814) tutor at Hoxton, twice President of Conference, with enough supporting biography to make it clear that this is the person in question. Though not every Methodist whose history you might wish to discover is to be found here, the Dictionary is comprehensive enough to be an invaluable first stop in research, especially as it has bibliographical references to carry the enquirer to a next stage if that is necessary. As in the DNB the articles carry identifiers for the authors, which adds a dimension to the exercise. So we have Pauline Webb on Philip Potter, Geraint Tudor on Howell Harris and John Vickers himself on many persons and topics, along with many Methodist luminaries writing about others.

There are one or two traps for the non-Methodist. Not all the acronyms are explained. Some of the cross-referencing has slipped past the sub-editor's checks. That the Countess of Huntingdon "did not actively participate" in the Calvinistic controversy of the 1770s is true only in the sense that she did not speak at Conference, but Fletcher and Benson were made to choose between her and John Wesley in writing and without room for compromise. However, this is a catholic Methodist Dictionary and the Countess, George Whitefield, John Berridge *et al.* are included in their rightful place, as co-adjutors with the Wesleys in the Evangelical Revival, even if the subsequent denominations failed to correspond with their brightest hopes for the Church.

STEPHEN ORCHARD

Hugh Price Hughes: Founder of a New Methodism, Conscience of a New Conformity. By Christopher Oldstone-Moore, University of Wales Press, 1999. £25.00, pp.393. ISBN 0-7083-1468-6.

In 1926 J.G. Mantle wrote a short biography of Hugh Price Hughes (1847-1902) with the subtitle, "A Strenuous Life". About the aptness of that description there is little room for disagreement. Hughes was undoubtedly a

human dynamo, almost indeed a force of nature, who spent himself prodigally in an amazing range of activities and burnt himself out at the age of fifty-five. Dr. Oldstone-Moore's title, however, makes broader and more controversial claims. Granted that Methodism changed during Hughes's lifetime and that something describable as The Nonconformist Conscience emerged, can the contribution of one man really be the key to both developments?

In a footnote to his introduction, Oldstone-Moore affirms that "Hughes's importance to Methodist history has long been recognised, even if not well understood" and, in support of this judgment, refers to a pioneering chapter by Dr. Maldwyn Edwards. Though Edwards acknowledges that Hughes was the dominant influence in Methodist development from the death of Jabez Bunting to Methodist Union (1932), he cannot accept that he was a great preacher, thinker, or social philosopher. He concludes, however, that "he was truly great as a prophet". Oldstone-Moore has no truck with modified rapture. For him, Hughes was outstanding as platform orator, preacher, publicist, journalist and ecclesiastical statesman: a man of poise and power in public, diffident, shy and even boyish in private. And he explains that Hughes is not well known today because, as a man of action and not primarily a writer, he spoke to his times and not to posterity.

Even Oldstone-Moore, however, has to admit that Hughes had many significant failures (as when trying to extend the length of ministerial appointments within Methodism) and that there were contradictions in the goals which he pursued (as between his commitment to a more democratic constitution for Methodism and his stress upon the need for strong ministerial leadership). Nevertheless Oldstone-Moore has an exciting tale to tell and, having researched it thoroughly, he tells it with verve and clarity. His first four chapters examine Hughes's training, his mentors and the experiences that shaped his thoughts and guided him towards a dual career as an evangelical preacher and social activist; and the final four investigate the career of the mature Hughes during the two phases of the development of the Forward Movement, a personal crisis arising from his criticism of Methodist Missionary policy and his years as President of the National Council of Evangelical Free Churches (1895) and of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference (1898).

Three threads in the book's rich texture are of special interest. First, Oldstone-Moore defends Hughes's stature as a thinker, not only by quoting Lloyd George – "...the quality of his faith almost obscured his intellectual gifts. Yet no man could have any doubt of those gifts" – but also by offering a detailed analysis of the theology expressed in his four volumes of sermons: *Social Christianity* (1898), *The Philanthropy of God* (1889), *Ethical Christianity* (1892) and *Essential Christianity* (1894). In addition, he makes the point that, by contrast with the thought of other Christian Socialists, "Hughes's important ideas relating religion and society arose from a Methodist conversion theology and were shaped in the political and theological ferment of the revival, temperance and purity movements" and that younger Methodists "discounted Hughes's intellectual importance because he was not a part of the scholarly discourse in which they had been trained".

Secondly, Oldstone-Moore seeks to correct the way in which the Nonconformist Conscience has been understood. "It has been mistakenly assumed that the term 'Nonconformist Conscience' was coined by especially broad-minded people who meant to disparage its narrowness. In fact, it was coined as a Conservative attack on Nonconformist support for Home Rule. The true origin of the term reminds one of both the complex and the liberal quality of Nonconformist politics rather than its narrowness". But in that case, what about the methods of political agitation which Hughes and others employed? As D.W. Bebbington has remarked: "Politicians could afford to ride out the storms of Nonconformist displeasure, confident that it would die away as soon as a new obsession arose."

Thirdly, the transformation of Methodism from a Connexion into a church is identified as the "leading idea of the Forward Movement" and therefore one of the key elements in Hughes's broader ecumenical vision, pursued in the conversations at Grindelwald and Lucerne but finally finding more limited expression in Free Church co-operation. It is fascinating that one who sought a "militant Christian united front", a national church which could bolster radical social and political transformation, should be best known as a reformer of Methodism and a gadfly of Nonconformist consciences.

And that brings us back to the book's title. The author himself shows some signs of uncertainty whether it actually expresses what needs to be said. We find: "Perhaps John Clifford was right in seeing Hughes as much a culmination in Methodist history as a new beginning", and Hughes is described not as the Nonconformist Conscience itself but as its "voice". Such things perhaps point to a need for conceptual clarification at crucial points. But this stimulating book illuminates neglected areas of Methodist and Free Church history and raises questions (e.g. about styles of leadership in the church) which are very topical indeed.

GRAHAM SLATER

Theology through Preaching. By Colin Gunton. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2001, pp. x, 214, ISBN 0-567-08774-3.

I was afraid to review Colin Gunton's *Theology through Preaching* because I thought it might threaten a friendship. My fear was unfounded. The real threat is that the review might become an ovation. This collection of thirty sermons, spanning the liturgical year, preached by the Professor of Christian Doctrine, King's College London, at Brentwood United Reformed Church, Essex, where he is Associate Minister is such that when I put it down I wanted to stand up and applaud – or rather say the Grace. Professor Gunton tells us that he learned from Mansfield College Principal John Marsh "that a sermon should set forth the free gift of God in salvation". He learned well.

Professor Gunton also tells us that "Sermons are not first of all to educate us or tell us how to behave", but he is equally gifted and effective in these secondary

matters. Without a trace of didacticism biblical texts are explored and interpreted both contextually and intertextually. There is close attention to detail but not to scholarly minutiae. And although there is the exceptional infelicitous literary construction (e.g. "that wherein"), this preacher stands squarely in the pulpit, not on the podium, and certainly not on a soapbox. Revelation is assumed, not argued. So you will find no apologetics here – Professor Gunton is not ashamed of the gospel or defensive about the scriptures – and his polemics (against New Age superstition or our obsession with management and training) are never strident. Overwhelmingly the emphasis is God's healing Yes to his broken creation.

Nor in telling us how to *behave* does he *tell* us how to behave. As there is no lecturing, so there is no hectoring. We are spared pep-talks on the one hand and tellings-off on the other. *Applicatio* is not added to *explicatio* but issues from it just as ethics issues from doctrine and righteous action from Spirit-formed character. And because – not although – these sermons are pastorally situated in the life of a particular community (as the odd allusion confirms), their appeal transcends the local: *tua res agitur*.

They certainly speak in everyday language, though correct rather than colloquial, and to everyday life, though conventional rather than controversial. The broadsheets clearly lie next to the Bible on Professor Gunton's desk, and news items serve both as introductions and illustrations. Which brings me to the first of a few caveats: Why then does Professor Gunton not address some of the *big* issues of our day; war and peace, immigration and racism, poverty and debt, human sexuality and homophobia? Where is the *theological* guidance the people of Brentwood need for fulfilling their Christian *political* responsibility? To refer to Karl Barth's saying about prayer being "the best service the church can do for the state" is insufficient; it needs to be supplemented by Barth's statement that "The Church must stand for social justice in the political sphere". After all, we are talking here about the drafter of the Barmen Declaration.

Observe also Professor Gunton's citations. There are numerous hymns and plenty of intellectual heavyweights, but there are few references to contemporary literature or music, films or television. Professor Gunton's tastes are highbrow rather than popular, which would put his preaching at a disadvantage in most congregations. And he clearly regards postmodern culture as a wasteland without oases. I am not so pessimistic.

Perhaps most critically of all, these sermons seldom make us laugh, or even smile. Not, of course, that the preacher is an entertainer – but without a seasoning of humour, sermons soon become insipid. Moreover, as Bonhoeffer suggested, real seriousness is never without a dash of humour.

But take these comments as praising by faint damn. Here are expository sermons of the highest calibre, lucid, insightful, wise, humane. They worthily continue the tradition, from Calvin through Schleiermacher to Barth and Moltmann, of the unity of teaching and preaching in the Reformed professor. "The Holy Spirit" – the recovery of pneumatology has been central to Professor Gunton's doctrinal project – is itself worth the price of entry. "The Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel" is as textured an analysis of grace and obligation as you

are ever likely to see. And the concluding sermon on the death of one-and-a-half year old Benjamin Gunton is as profound as it is poignant.

There is an Introduction to the book by Colin Gunton's colleague and friend Christoph Schwöbel entitled *The Preacher's Art: Preaching Theologically*. Valuable in itself as an essay on homiletics, it is also an overture that promises a symphony to come in thankful praise of our Creator and Redeemer. We are not disappointed. And to end with what is not to be found in *Theology through Preaching* – a cliché: this collection should be on every minister's bookshelf and in every church library.

KIM FABRICIUS