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CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY SOCIETY MAGAZINE

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EDITORIAL

This issue is an interesting departure for our society, as it is the first time since 1984 that an autumn magazine has been produced, in addition to the spring issue. With features on the Surman index of Congregational ministers, other references to Dr Williams's Library, and the Bunyan Meeting library, this magazine has a decided librarian's feel to it. As you might expect, we should be grateful for CHS members' responses to this issue, especially comments on the desirability of having an autumn magazine.

We welcome Patricia Hurry, of Bunyan Meeting, Bedford, to the ranks of our contributors. Having trained at Aberdeen University and spent many years as librarian of the Royal Aircraft Establishment (under that name and its subsequent titles), she became the honorary librarian of the John Bunyan Museum and Library. In this capacity she catalogues new items, deals with visitors and answers enquiries from all around the world.

NEWS AND VIEWS

Many of you will be aware of the major building work being undertaken in the summer and autumn of 2009 in Dr Williams's and the Congregational Libraries. This has caused the libraries to be closed to visitors and readers for as short a period as possible. Yet, as I write in September, the builders are still hard at work and it is difficult to say for certain when the libraries will resume normal service for readers and staff alike. The work is probably the most extensive since DWL moved to Gordon Square, in Bloomsbury, in 1890. The provision of a new street level entrance and lift will be instantly apparent to visitors. However, the creation of new strong-rooms for both libraries and a conservation studio should greatly assist the long term preservation and storage of the collections, especially the manuscripts and rare books.

A Repository for the United Reformed Church Archives

It seems likely, as we go to print with this magazine, that the deposits of archives held in the basement of the URC's offices in Tavistock Place, London, and especially relating to the work of the URC nationally, will in the next few months be removed to the Congregational Library, in Gordon Square. It transpires that the URC general secretary approached the director of Dr Williams's Library in July about finding an appropriate permanent home for these archives, which go back to 1972, and he advised that the Congregational

Library would be the proper place for them. Once the transfer is complete, the whole deposit may occupy an entire bay of the new shelving, when the building work is finished.

With the URC archives having found a home, concerned friends in the Congregational Federation and the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches hope that those bodies will feel that they can act similarly. Historians would certainly benefit if the records of all three bodies (and the Unaffiliated Congregational Churches) were available for research purposes in the same library.

Published Lectures Available

The director of Dr Williams's Library, David Wykes, a contributor to this issue, has agreed that the majority of the Friends of Dr Williams's Library lectures may be offered at half price for a limited time. All those up to 2003 (57) will be priced at £1.25 until Monday, 2 November 2009. Similarly the Friends of the Congregational Library will follow this pattern and back copies of their printed lectures are to be available at the reduced price of £1.00 each. A number of these lectures are on subjects of clear interest to our readers and we urge those of you who have not read or heard them to take advantage of this opportunity. Postage rates will depend on the weight of the package and the location, but the minimum charge will be £1. All enquiries should be sent to the principal librarian, Alice Ford Smith, at Dr Williams's Library, 14 Gordon Square, London, WC1H 0AR.

As a taster of the delights on offer we give here a brief selection of the Friends of Dr Williams's Library Lectures which might be of interest to our readers.

1978 Roger Sharrock *Life and Story in The Pilgrim's Progress*
1994 John Walsh *John Wesley 1703–1791: A Bicentennial Tribute*
1997 David L Wykes *'To Revive the Memory of some Excellent Men:' Edmund Calamy and the Early Historians of Nonconformity*
2000 William Lamont *Puritanism and the Origins of the English Civil War*
2003 Isabel Rivers *The Defence of Truth Through the Knowledge of Error: Philip Doddridge's Academy Lectures.*

Among the available Congregational Lectures are—

1987 Tudur Jones *John Robinson (1576–1625): His vision of Church Society*
1988 Colin Gunton *The Transcendent Lord: The Spirit and the Church in Calvinist and Cappadocian*
1989 Janet Wootton *Dissent BC: The Old Testament's Untold Story*
1992 John Creasey *The Congregational Library*

1993 Alan Tovey *Whatever Happened to the Separatists? A Commemoration of the Martyrdom of Barrow, Greenwood and Penry 1593*
1994 John Travell *'The Necessity of God': The Message and ministry of Leslie D Weatherhead*
1996 Clyde Binfield *A Congregational Formation: An Edwardian Prime Minister's Victorian Education*
1999 Alan Argent *Isaac Watts: Poet, Thinker, Pastor*
2002 David Thompson *The Decline of Congregationalism in the Twentieth Century*.

The Congregational lectures published since 2003, and priced at £3.00 each, include the following
2006 Keith Robbins *Foreign Encounters: English Congregationalism, Germany and the United States c1850–c1914*
2007 Robert Pope *Emerging Church: Congregation or Aberration*
2008 Elaine Kaye *'A Way of Gospel Obedience': The Church Meeting in Congregational Tradition and Practice*.

Of course, the lectures mentioned above are only a small number of those kept at the library and available for purchase. For a full list please apply to the library staff.

The Congregational lecture for 2009 will be given on 26 November by Revd Dr Stephen Orchard on 'Congregationalism and Catholicity'. The venue for this, given the ongoing construction work at Dr Williams's Library, is at present uncertain but is likely to be in central London. As soon as the location is definite, churches and friends will be informed, although I am told that enquirers might look on the library's web site.

Ravenstonedale

The future of the former Congregational chapel at Ravenstonedale, in the upper Eden valley in Cumbria, is sadly still in doubt. The chapel is closely associated with the historian of medieval England, Bernard Lord Manning (d.1941) whose father was the minister there and both father and son are buried in the churchyard with other members of their family. The building was closed in April 2006 by the United Reformed Church when the Sunday congregation of High Chapel, as it is known in the village to distinguish it from the Methodist or Low Chapel, had declined to merely four or five and the URC felt it had no choice but to cease worship on the site. With a relative humidity of 80% in late August, the chapel is in danger of further deterioration, from rotting wood and wood boring beetles. The visitor will immediately smell the damp and the chapel may

also suffer from structural problems, especially around the windows and the ceiling. Clearly this building needs heating and care.

The upper room in the chapel is, however, still used by locals on Wednesday mornings for tea, coffee and general fellowship and visitors are welcome on these occasions (the group does not meet in the winter months). The friendly group which assembles is more than willing to help with queries on local and family history. The hope is that the village may be able to purchase the chapel, refurbish it and reopen the building as a village/community resource.

High Chapel at Ravenstonedale has claimed a foundation date of 1662 and is associated with Christopher Jackson, the ejected vicar of nearby Crosby Garrett, which is west of Kirkby Stephen, the nearest town of any size, and three miles north of Ravenstonedale. The notable Puritan sympathiser, Philip, Lord Wharton, owned extensive estates in the area and many of the Congregational churches in the northern Pennines and Westmorland trace their origins to him. His influence and that of his preachers ensured that these northern fells remained fiercely loyal to Independency and resistant to the pretensions of the Church of England for centuries.

In the twentieth century, among the distinguished ministers of High Chapel have been Arnold Mee whose brother, Arthur, produced the popular children's encyclopaedia, and the theologian, W A (Alec) Whitehouse. B L Manning who was the bursar of Jesus College, Cambridge, and whose health was never robust, loved coming to Ravenstonedale during his university vacations. There he found a peace and serenity which strengthened his Christian faith. Even the notable fell walker, A J Wainwright, found Ravenstonedale to be "a most blessed place".

The former manse, now known as High Chapel House, and itself a grade two listed building set on the southern outskirts of the village, has been refurbished to a high standard and takes guests for bed and breakfast, so that one can stay where Manning found his inspiration and walk, where he did, on the Howgill Fells immediately outside the door. The house is also home to 'Cook in Cumbria', which offers high quality cookery classes in the spacious kitchen.

Hopton URC

The perilous situation of the grade II starred Hopton United Reformed Church, near Mirfield, on the banks of the river Calder, was brought to wider public attention in *Private Eye* in its June/July issue earlier this year. The article pointed to the historic character of this former Congregational chapel and to the apparent indecent haste with which the Yorkshire Synod of the United Reformed Church had acted in trying to find a buyer, whether suitable or not. In the latest *Newsletter* of The Chapels Society (September 2009) in a piece entitled 'Scandal at Hopton', the sale at auction of this sizeable property is reported. The auction of the chapel, Sunday school, graveyard and grounds,

amounting in all to 1.7 acres, was held in late April and the buyer paid a very modest £40,000.

The church had formally closed in 2007 because the small congregation was unable to maintain the extensive property. A developer had hoped to convert the buildings into flats that year but had abandoned this plan. At the time of the auction the Historic Chapels Trust was attempting to put together a rescue bid for the property but learned of the synod's plans only ten days before the sale. Even the URC's own "regeneration body" was involved in the trust's bid but the would-be rescuers had insufficient time in which to raise the required funds.

The Chapels Society's publication concludes this sad story by stating that the URC has "clearly behaved in a scandalous way in rushing to get the site off its hands. It seems most unlikely that any developer in the current climate will do more than build on the vacant land and adapt the ancillary buildings. The chapel itself could well be allowed to fall into further disrepair." All most regrettable and, one had hoped, that situations like this had been consigned to the past.

CHAPEL TOUR—2009

On 8th May, 2009 a small band of CHS members visited three nineteenth century church buildings in one street in Harrogate. Each of the three churches provided us with printed summaries of their histories. First we visited the Baptist chapel located on the north side of Victoria Avenue. There we were met and shown around by the minister, Alan Mair. This is a large Gothic building with a spire at the left hand corner of the south facing frontage and, when opened, it had seats for 600. There is a hexagonal baptistery in a large apse at the front (north). The pulpit is at the east corner of the apse entrance. The west transept contains the organ. The main seated space is open without pillars, with a gallery at the back of the building. It was opened on 20th June, 1883. Prior to that, the schoolroom at the back, which had been opened in 1878, had been used for worship. Leaving the Baptist chapel behind we walked down Victoria Avenue, a wide boulevard fronted with Victorian stone built, slate roofed villas. The villas, once the gracious homes of Victorian magnates, are now mostly converted into offices.

Reaching the western end of the avenue we arrived at West Park United Reformed Church. With the aid of a local historian, Malcolm Neesam, for the early part of the story, they have produced a history leaflet. It explains how the coming and location of the railway led to development which united the two villages of High and Low Harrogate into one town. This development was led by the Victoria Park Company which intended that, as well as fashionable houses, fashionable chapels should also be built along the avenue. In addition to those

we visited, there was a Christian Science church and, just off the avenue, a Roman Catholic church. First of them all to be built on its prestigious site overlooking West Park was the Congregational chapel. Having begun in the early nineteenth century, the cause had outgrown several buildings before it acquired the present site in 1859. The foundation stone was laid in 1861 and the church opened on 13 August 1862.

West Park URC is another large gothic structure, with the spire this time at the right hand corner of the west facing frontage. We were shown around by Janet and Trevor Roberts, administrator and treasurer respectively. Along the southern side, overlooking the avenue, are twelve stone carved heads depicting reformation, nonconformist and Congregational heroes including John Wyclif, Oliver Cromwell, King William III and Isaac Watts. A recent renovation has created a carpeted foyer below the gallery which it is hoped will be used to welcome weekday visitors to a café style outreach. There is still a large worship space with a central pulpit and a recently acquired and restored Binns organ. The various rooms and halls are well used by local groups.

Retracing our steps about a quarter of the way back down the avenue we reached, on its south side St Paul's URC. It was opened in an "iron church" in 1875 as a preaching station—part of the church extension work of the presbytery of Darlington, being formally constituted as a Presbyterian church in the following year. Plans were drawn up for a stone church with a spire but, when in 1885 the foundation stone was laid, the plans were for a church with a tower which was named St Paul's in 1890. Again a large building with an upstairs rear gallery and central pulpit, it was the natural place of worship for Scottish visitors to the spa town. Many of these returned regularly, among them Robert Crawford of Ayrshire who donated a tower clock and a bell to hang in the tower in 1940. We were entertained to tea afterwards in one of the church halls. Many thanks are due to the church members who welcomed us and to the minister, Brian Hunt, who had also put us in touch with the other churches.

Peter Young

CALVINISM AND CONGREGATIONALISM

The French reformer, John Calvin (1509–64), was without doubt the most influential thinker on the development of Protestantism, after Luther, and the impact of his theology and the example of his church in Geneva extended throughout Europe in his own day and beyond. His thinking played a telling part in this country on the Separatist and Independent churches of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Indeed so great was his influence that the assertion, repeated in a recent scholarly work, is that the roots of Congregationalism, like those of Presbyterianism, lie in "the reformed Protestantism of Calvin".[1]

This sweeping claim certainly requires some qualification, especially in this quincentenary year of Calvin's birth, for many church historians have held that other forces were at work in the beginnings of English religious nonconformity. Michael Watts began his survey of *The Dissenters* by stating that "English Dissent springs from two different theological sources and for much of its history flows in two distinct currents, the one radical, the other Calvinist". The latter current, he found, flows from "the wider river of English Puritanism" whose doctrine is Calvinist and stresses "the sovereignty of God and the predestination of man either to salvation or reprobation". This then would seem to accord with the depiction of Congregationalism as part of the broad Calvinist coalition (or "that somewhat amorphous theological pantechnicon known as 'Calvinism'", as B R White put it) which was active both in England and Wales, and on the European mainland.[2]

However Watts also stated that the "origin of the earlier, radical stream is less easy to discover"—thereby explaining, at least in part, why this elusive stream has often been overlooked. He maintained that "it is likely "that this early stream may be "traced back to fifteenth-century Lollardy" and that it was "subsequently fed from the turbulent waters of continental Anabaptism" in the sixteenth century, although other scholars have disputed this latter claim.[3]

The Lollards

K B McFarlane wrote of the Lollards, those late medieval English Christians

1. *D Rosman The Evolution of the English Churches 1500–2000* (Cambridge 2003) 324.
2. M Watts *The Dissenters I: From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford 1978) 7, B R White *The English Separatist Tradition* (Oxford 1971) xiv.
3. Ibid. Neither Champlin Burrage in *Early English Dissenters* (Cambridge 1912) nor B R White in *The English Separatist Tradition* accept that continental Anabaptism affected English dissent before the early seventeenth century.

who sought to follow the ideas released by John Wyclif (d.1384), as probably developing as separate gathered congregations, somewhat resembling the later Brownists. Certainly they survived in England, despite persecution for heresy, until the coming of the English reformation in the reign of Henry VIII (1509–47). Scholars acknowledge the line of thinking which descends from Wyclif to Jan Hus in Prague and through the Hussites of Bohemia to the sixteenth century continental reformers. However they are unsure of the exact direction of Wyclif's influence in England.

In the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries Lollardy seems to have become "something of a broad church". Wyclif had expressed cautious reserve about the veneration of images but many Lollards went further in rejecting outright all such veneration. Wyclif had advocated the teaching of the people in the vernacular; he wrote in English as well as in Latin, and certainly he inspired the translation of the Bible into English. Again Wyclif "castigated … the malpractices of the papacy, the prelates, the monastic and fraternal orders, the abuses of indulgences, excommunication, images, pilgrimages" because they could not be traced to scripture. With regards to the eucharist, Wyclif denied that the substance of the bread and wine changes at consecration, arguing that the substance of the bread and wine remain the same. Although he did not go so far, some of his followers taught that the eucharist was solely a memorial of Christ's passion.[4]

The wandering Lollard preacher, teaching in the market places of towns and villages in fifteenth century England, may have invited condemnation as much as, if not more than, sympathy but the survival of Lollardy suggests considerable vitality and a core of support among the populace. The influence of the Lollards is difficult to trace precisely, therefore, but it cannot be dismissed as negligible.

Other Possible Influences

Geoffrey Nuttall once indicated that he believed it probable that the areas of the greatest influence for good of the medieval friars in England were also those where early Separatist and independent churches later grew up.[5] Furthermore he pointed out many years ago that some aspects of medieval monasticism displayed features that were at one with later Congregationalism. For instance, each Cistercian abbey was "self-sufficient and self-governing" and "the individual monk was subject to no external interference or control".[6] Modelled on the

4. K B McFarlane *John Wycliffe and the Beginnings of English Nonconformity* (1952), ODNB.

5. Private information.

6. G F Nuttall *Visible Saints. The Congregational Way 1640–1660* (Oxford 1957) 3. Here Nuttall was quoting from D Knowles The Religious Orders in England I (Cambridge 1948) 153.

Cistercian system of government were the Premonstratensians or White Canons who were described by their historian as comprising "independent congregations" and as "self-governing entities within the church—a status which carried with it the rank of an abbey for every full-sized convent, and, above all, the privilege of exemption from episcopal authority".[7] The Dominican friars were "from the first extremely democratic in constitution", although Dom David Knowles pointed out that this should not be understood as "a conscious movement towards democracy" for Dominic's purpose was "efficiency … in the truest sense of the word".[8]

The lines of these influences are again hard to establish without question—a persecuted movement, like Lollardy, for instance, tries not to leave much written material, for fear of alerting the hostile authorities—but it is inconceivable that these various forces left no enduring mark, albeit now largely invisible, on the English people and their religious thinking. These factors may then have surfaced in the openness of some among the English to radical, separatist Christianity. Patrick Collinson has argued that "the popular protestant element in Elizabethan society was not subordinate to the preachers, but possessed of a mind and will of its own". Moreover he maintained that "the character of popular Protestantism" in the sixteenth century "inevitably tended towards congregational independency".[9]

The Historic Roots of Congregationalism

Modern Congregationalism traces its beginning to the Protestant reformation. Certainly one might assert that Luther's teaching of the priesthood of all believers was taken up by the early Congregational churches, although they argued that he did not carry this doctrine to its logical conclusion. As early as 1550, evidence exists of groups of men and women, gathering together to hear the word of God and to administer the sacraments, or ordinances, as they would have called them. These were separatist underground churches, having broken away from the national Church in protest at the return to Roman Catholicism of Queen Mary. During her reign some refugee English Protestants made their way to Geneva and studied Calvin's reforms at close quarters, bringing these ideas back with them after Elizabeth I's accession in 1558. Only when it became certain that Elizabeth would not allow further Church reform than the modest Protestantism of her ecclesiastical settlement of 1559, did the Separatists of her age look back at the Marian underground churches as the example to follow.[10]

7. Nuttall ibid, H M Colvin *The White Canons in England* (Oxford 1951) 11f.
8. Nuttall ibid 4, Knowles op cit 154, 158.
9. P Collinson *Godly People* (1983) 2–3.
10. *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*.

At this stage the virility of Calvinism and the questioning spirit of an indigenous tradition of independency were both influences on the Separatists.

As Geoffrey Nuttall has written of the refugee Walloon church which called Calvin's Burgundian contemporary and friend, Valerand Poullain (*c.*1509–57), to be its pastor at Glastonbury in the early 1550s, it was an "example on English soil of what later it is usual to call Congregationalism or Independency".[11] Driven into exile at Frankfurt during Mary's reign, this church "declined to accept authoritative guidance from Calvin, justifying its independence by reference to Calvin himself: 'they had learned from his writings, they said, 'that one church was not subject to another'".[12] If this is an early model of Independent church government, it neither demonstrates Calvin's control nor the absence of his influence; rather it uses his teaching to support its independence from him and from other outside authorities, apart from God. It shows that some reformers believed Calvin's thought justified a form of independent church order which many Presbyterians, in particular, would disavow.

During the Elizabethan age Separatists, like Richard Fitz, Robert Browne (c1550–1633), and Robert Harrison (d c1585), and the martyrs Henry Barrowe (c1550–93), John Greenwood (c1560–93) and John Penry (1563–93) emerged from the underground churches. Others fled for refuge to the Netherlands from where in 1620 the Pilgrim community sailed to New England. Nevertheless the Separatist churches grew in number before the English civil war and by 1631 eleven such churches existed in London. It is probable that these churches—independent without, congregational within—were influenced immediately by Calvinist teaching. Yet again it is difficult to dismiss that native independent spirit, fed by the Marian Separatists and further back in time by Lollardy, and perhaps by the monastic tradition and the friars, which responded directly to hearing and reading the scriptures in their native tongue.

Patrick Collinson found evidence that "sectarianism and doctrinal idiosyncrasies … persisted obstinately in districts with an old dissenting tradition, such as the weald of Kent and parts of Essex". He states that the Puritan clergy did much "to reduce such spiritual anarchy to a coherent and orderly Calvinism". That "spiritual anarchy", which he identified, had long existed in parts of England like East Anglia where "inchoate groups of the godly-minded" still attended the parish churches but would in time come to form Independent churches.[13]

Congregationalists have always stressed both the primary authority of the Bible and the freedom of the Spirit, and we may infer that this indicates their

11. G F Nuttall *Visible Saints: The Congregational Way 1640–1660* (Oxford 1957) 5. Nuttall is here quoting from Poullain's biographer, Karl Bauer.

12. Ibid 6. For Poullain see *ODNB.*

13. Collinson op cit 12–14.

indebtedness to both the mainstream continental reformation and to a variety of other more diffuse currents. These emphases combine to make Congregationalists unwilling to demand that church members subscribe to the ancient creeds, or to more recent confessions, as a condition of acceptance into fellowship. The few declarations of the faith which Congregationalists have produced, like the Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order, were undoubtedly Calvinist in theology; this declaration, in particular, reproduced much of the earlier Westminster Confession of 1647 which is assuredly Presbyterian.

A Difference in Spirit

However even a keen ecumenist, like Daniel Jenkins, recognised that the similarities between Congregationalists and Presbyterians should not be allowed to obscure a real "difference in spirit".[14] The "decentralised Calvinism" of the Congregationalists, as it has been called, meant that, unlike the Presbyterians, they acknowledged the freedom and independence of each local, gathered church. In addition, they accepted that the Spirit not only called and calls churches into being but also provided the necessary gifts for their ongoing life and development. This has led to Congregationalists, from the earliest days, forging spiritual and sometimes personal links with radical forms of Protestantism, among the 'sects' and the Quakers, as well as with Presbyterians.

The theologian, P T Forsyth, a favourite of the twentieth century's new Genevan school, recognised that "Classic Congregationalism … represented a fusion of Calvinism with the emphasis on the free leading of the Spirit which was characteristic of Anabaptism". It was, wrote Jenkins, "a church of the Word, but it was also a church which believed that God had more light and truth to break forth from His Word and gave gifts to His people for the discernment and declaration of that light and truth". Following Forsyth, Jenkins accepted that Congregationalists have an affinity with bodies of the "spiritualizing type", like Baptists, Mennonites and Quakers. Congregationalists, therefore, are not to be so set in "a rigid orthodoxy" that they are unable to follow the Spirit into new ways.[15]

Differences in Later Development

The five dissenting brethren of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, supported by a handful of other assembly members, produced *An Apologeticall Narration* in 1643/44 to justify their refusal to sign the Westminster Confession. They stoutly

14. D T Jenkins 'Congregational Theology' in A Richardson and J Bowden (eds) *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology* (1983).

15. P T Forsyth *Faith, Freedom and the Future* (1912), D T Jenkins *Congregationalism. A Restatement* (1954) 31–2, 48–9.

defended what they saw as the Congregational cause and opposed the introduction of a Presbyterian system of church order in England.

Fifteen years later approximately two hundred representatives of 120 Congregational churches met in late 1658, in the chapel of the old Savoy Palace in London to discuss their understanding of the Christian faith. They drew up a preface, a declaration of faith which strongly resembles the Westminster Confession, and a platform of church discipline. The preface is an apology for the divisions of the reformed churches. It affirms the freedom of the Spirit "who does not whip men into belief … but gently leads them into all truth". The declaration of faith professes "the modified Calvinism of the Westminster Confession" with some alterations, such as rejecting the power of the secular authority to punish heresy. The third part, dealing with the institution of churches, declares that all necessary power is vested in each individual church and repudiates the institution, by Christ, of a wider organization. The moving spirit at the Savoy was John Owen but other leading participants included Philip Nye, Thomas Goodwin and William Bridge—all three of whom had been members of the Westminster Assembly.[16]

Post-Restoration attempts to fuse the Independents and the Presbyterians foundered largely on theological differences. The Congregationalists, in spite of their Calvinism (some individuals, like John Goodwin, were Arminian, not Calvinist, in belief), held to a broader, more evangelical interpretation of the faith than the more precise and doctrinaire Presbyterians.

Calvinism and the Congregational Churches

The Calvinism of the Congregational churches was always "of the open sort", as Jenkins wrote, and this made them sensitive to new movements of thought. The growth of rationalism, the rise of Methodism, and the evangelical revival in the eighteenth century led to a modification of Calvinist thinking in the Congregational churches. However the openness of Congregationalists to the emotions, the imagination and the movement of God's spirit in the heart, evident in the hymns of Watts and Doddridge, allied to their refusal to rely on the intellect alone, helped to prevent Congregationalists from turning their backs on Calvinism altogether and from following many English Presbyterians into abandoning the Trinity and becoming Unitarians.[17]

The Declaration of Faith and Order, issued in 1833 by the Congregational Union of England and Wales (founded 1831), set forth a lengthy statement of "a diluted Calvinism", as Albert Peel described it, which was representative of the views then dominant in the Congregational churches in the first half of the

16. *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (3rd edition 1997).
17. D T Jenkins, op cit.

nineteenth century. It was not binding on the churches. Its moderate Calvinism was tempered by a "warm" adherence to the "evangelical preaching of Christ crucified". This declaration was included in successive *Congregational Year Books* until 1918 when, for reasons of "economy", it was discontinued.[18] In the twentieth century the Congregational churches, like other Christians, moved further away from strict Calvinism, although many influenced by the continental theologians, Barth and Brunner, and by the new Genevan movement associated with Nathaniel Micklem and John Whale, found it timely to reconsider his teaching.

Congregationalism's Roots

The contribution of Calvinism both to Congregationalism's origins and to its later history is justly acknowledged, especially in this year of his commemoration. Yet it is clear that other forces were at work in the coming together of those streams which became the English Congregational churches. Historians of Welsh Independency and Scottish Congregationalism might point to even more diverse forces operative in their countries' readiness to accept the autonomy of the Spirit led, gathered church. However Congregationalism was "one of the tendencies of the reformation, and not necessarily the most dominant. But", wrote Collinson, "it is hard to see how the movements generated within popular Protestantism, left to themselves, can have had any other end".[19] Those movements included the potent force of Calvinism but were also fed by an older religious independency.

One is tempted to suggest that, in the years leading up to and after 1972, the advocates of the United Reformed Church, by stressing almost exclusively the Calvinist influence on Congregationalism, overlooked other forces which were active in the origins of the Congregational way. As a result the URC has come to represent that tradition which reaches back to the Calvinist reformation whereas the Congregational Federation and the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches, though aware of Calvin's contribution, are more open, probably unwittingly, to a freer moving of the Spirit among Christ's people which stems from, and accords with, an earlier Spirit led stream.

Alan Argent

18. A Peel *These Hundred Years* (1931) 68–78.
19. Collinson op cit 17.

BORELAND BIBLE AND MISSIONARY SOCIETY

'This is a penny a-week Society, formed last year among the colliers at Dysart coal works, who reside at the village of Boreland.

There is one peculiarity of this Society which I believe is productive of much good to the individuals concerned. They meet regularly on the evening of the first Saturday of the month, and, after *business* of the Society is transacted, *one person reads aloud for an hour, the most interesting part of the monthly religious intelligence*. The business part too is very simple. The treasurer produces a savings-bank book at each meeting, shewing that last month's subscription had been paid into it, and this is the only book they require. There is a collector for every twelve members, who also circulates among them the Missionary Register, and whatever papers are handed to him by the preses or treasurer. At the annual meeting the funds are disposed of to the Societies most in need at the time.'[1]

Comment

I came across the above in the September 1822 issue of *The Christian Herald*, which was the denominational magazine of Congregationalists in Scotland. I had never noticed it before and it drew me up. One hundred and seventy-eight years ago there were men in my locality, miners whose lot was lot was hard and precarious, concerned about foreign mission and contributing to it from their meagre earnings.

What's the big deal?, you may ask; Fife is no stranger to miners. True, but the miners with whom we are conversant today do not live in serfdom, compelled by law to labour their whole life without hope of freedom, stemming notably from the Act of 1606 attempting to stamp out labour poaching and desertion. "If the land was sold they passed with the pit to the purchaser as part of his property. If the son or daughter of a collier or coal hewer once went to work he or she was 'thirled' to it for life. If a workman ran away or gave his services to another coalmaster, he was accounted by an ingenious twist of the law a thief, and punished for having stolen himself, who was his master's property."[2] Servitude made them a hereditary class. "There existed the strange practice of binding their infants over to the master at the time of baptism, in the presence of the minister and neighbours as witnesses; and when a thriftless collier was in sore need of

1. *The Christian Herald* (1822) 350–351.
2. H G Graham *The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (1909) 531.

money to defray christening festivities, he often sold the freedom of his son to the employer, who gave arles or earnest money to the father, promising to provide his baby serf thereafter with a garden and house, and protection in sickness and age. From that hour the 'arled' child was recognised as bound for life to the pit."[3]

The wages were not mean but high wages could not compensate for the stigma and burden of perpetual servitude. Partial emancipation was achieved for some in 1775 but many continued in slavery all their days, unless they survived until 1799 when unconditional freedom was granted to all. With emancipation old hands eagerly sought escape from their hated life, though they only received elsewhere half of what they previously earned, while others were reluctant to fill their places due to the lingering stigma of slavery.

The miners who formed the Boreland Bible and Missionary Society would have been pretty conversant with the miner's lot, past and present, and possibly there would be some who could recall the days when insubordinate miners were punished by having their necks placed in iron collars or "juggs" which were "fastened to the wall". For example, James McNeill of Tranent, who died in 1844, at the age of seventy-two, declared that in his day rebellious miners, with their necks encased in these iron collars, were "nailed to the stoopside of a prop at the pit bottom for a whole day at least".[4]

A few lines from a hymn come to mind when I think of the founders of the Boreland Bible and Missionary Society:

Our fathers were high-minded men,
Who firmly kept the truth;

For all they suffered little cared
Those earnest men and wise;
Their zeal for Christ, their love of truth
Made them the shame despise:
Nor should their deeds be e'er forgot,
For noble men were they

As faithful as our fathers were
May we their children be;
And in our hearts their spirit live,
That gained our liberty.

William D. McNaughton.

3. Ibid 532.
4. T Johnston *The History of the Working Classes in Scotland*, (no date) 80.

THE SURMAN INDEX ON LINE[1]

Charles Surman (1901–86), who was a Congregational minister and was the research secretary of the former Congregational Historical Society for many years, compiled an extraordinary biographical card index of Congregational ministers which was given to Dr Williams's Library in 1960. It has proved of great benefit to historians and, in recent years, has increasingly been used by those researching family history, even being instrumental in answering questions submitted to a television programme, one episode of which was filmed in the library's reading room.[2] The Surman Index on line makes the contents available electronically via the internet for the first time. The index includes the names of about 32,000 ministers, and, where known, their dates, details of their education, ministries or other employment, together with the sources used. It covers the period from the mid-seventeenth century to 1972, and though it focuses on England and Wales, it includes Congregational ministers serving abroad provided they trained or served as ministers in Britain. Although intended as an index of Congregational ministers, it also gives details of seventeenth and eighteenth century Presbyterians. The card index has been much used by academics but also by local and family historians.

This open access on line edition has been funded by a 'small research grant' from the British Academy, with further grants from the Congregational Memorial Hall Trust and Dr Williams's Trust. We readily acknowledge the financial support of these bodies, without which the work could not have been undertaken. This edition of the database is the property of the Dr Williams's Centre for Dissenting Studies. Citations should take the form 'The Surman Index Online, Dr Williams's Centre for Dissenting Studies, http://surman.english.qmul.ac.uk'. The database and interfaces were designed and the work undertaken by Richard Gartner, under the direction of Dr David Wykes, the director of Dr Williams's Library.

The History of the Surman Index

When Charles Surman gave his card index to the library in 1960, the Friends of Dr Williams's Library paid for the specially constructed drawers made to hold the cards, which are now situated in the gallery overlooking the library's reading

1. This is an edited version of the introduction to the index on line.
2. The library's archivist, our CHS reviews editor, Jonathan Morgan was able to settle the question, from the Surman index, by announcing that the enquirer's grandfather had been a Congregational minister in St Petersburg before the First World War.

room. A second copy of the index was given to the Congregational Library and is now housed at Bedford.

Although the index was originally sponsored by the former Congregational Historical Society, the work was largely that of Surman himself. He had joined the society in 1936 when his father-in-law, Dr Alexander Grieve, then principal of Lancashire Independent College, was president of the CHS. That same year A G Matthews, the author of *Calamy Revised*, and also a Congregational minister, sketched out a scheme for sponsoring and guiding research and agreed to act as 'Research Organizer'. This initiative apparently came to nothing, but two years later, at the society's AGM in May 1938, Surman outlined an ambitious project to create 'A Directory of Congregational Biography'. It is clear that Surman had already begun work on the card index following the suggestion of his father-in-law that he prepare a biographical list of the students who had attended the Lancashire and Yorkshire Independent Colleges and earlier institutions. Indeed in October 1936, he told E J Price, the principal of Yorkshire United Independent College, that he had 'sometimes thought it would be valuable to have a Directory of Congregational Biography'. By the time of his announcement in May 1938 Surman had completed about 5,000 cards. Two years later, following the return of several hundred questionnaires from the thousand sent out, he had 15,000. The work was interrupted by the Second World War. Thereafter Surman worked on his index for an hour every day including Sundays, despite a busy pastorate.

In 1958 he resigned as research secretary to the Congregational Historical Society after twenty-one years. Aware of the value of the index to researchers, he offered it to Dr Williams's Library to be available for students and others to consult. Surman in fact created two card indexes: the first of ministers, which forms the database; the second of churches, much less well known, which was also given to Dr Williams's Library. It is hoped at some later stage to convert the second index, listing all known Congregational churches and causes.

Inevitably in an index constructed over a period of twenty years, which is principally the work of a single compiler, there are additions and corrections to be made. The quality of the original cards (many of which are coloured and typed in red as well as black ribbon using a manual typewriter) has presented difficulties in ensuring the accurate transfer of data. The cards have been scanned, processed using Prime Recognition OCR software, and then sent to India where they were checked, corrected and marked up in XML by Tricom Infotech Solutions Limited. There are also problems of consistency: earlier academies are sometimes identified by the location, sometimes by the theology tutor, both of which often changed. There are inconsistencies with which congregations are named, how place names are spelt (especially Welsh names), and county designations made. Much time has been spent trying to remove these

inconsistencies. All place names have been checked manually against an electronic gazetteer. The pre-1972 counties and parishes have been retained. Revd John Taylor, once a Congregational, later a United Reformed Church minister, has brought Surman's index up to 1972, adding further details from yearbooks and other sources, such as the *Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society*. Unfortunately the index does not contain full details of ministers who did not join the URC or who later became ministers in the Congregational churches after 1972.

Using the Surman Index

The data may be sorted by four main fields: surname, career (which covers congregations and non-ministerial employment), counties or countries, and education. There is also a search option, but variations in spelling, particularly of surnames, may lead to poor results. Therefore it may be more satisfactory to browse one of the main fields for relevant names or categories. Images of the original cards can and should be seen for each person: to check the accuracy of the transfer of data, to find any additional information, and most importantly to see a list of the sources which Surman consulted.

Browsing the database is possible by—

- surname: the surname of the minister
- career: the places or institutions where the minister worked or preached
- county/country: the county (for the UK) or country (overseas) in which they worked or preached: this is a drop-down list listing the counties of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, followed by overseas countries in alphabetical order
- academy: the academy, or other educational institution, at which they were educated.

With the exception of the county/country option, which is a drop-down list, clicking on one of the options above brings up a list of the letters of the alphabet: click on one of these to see all entries beginning with that letter.

You can search the database by clicking on the search button in the upper right of the screen: this opens a new window. You have the option (choose from the drop-down menu at the top) of searching for ministers, career locations or academies. You can search by minister's names, career locations, counties/countries or academies, and limit your results by dates (of births and deaths if searching for ministers, or tenure of post if searching careers). You can use Boolean operators to limit or expand your search by choosing the required operator from the drop-down list and filling in the second search term in its respective box. Results are displayed in the left-hand frame of the screen—click on an entry to bring up the full entry for that person/place/academy in the

right-hand frame. Clicking on a name in this frame (ministers, places or academies) will bring up the full entry for that name.

You may see images of the original cards, for any minister, by clicking on the button marked—View card images—when viewing their entry. At this early stage in the life of the on line Surman index, it is important to note that there is also a button, marked Email us about this record, which researchers should use to send us a message with any corrections for this entry should they spot any errors in it.

Sources

The great strength of the index is Surman's exhaustive searching of printed denominational sources (see sources option in database for list of main sources searched). He noted changes in annual listings, as well as abstracting details from obituaries published in the *Congregational Year Books* (1846–1972) and denominational periodicals, such as the *Evangelical Magazine*, the *London Christian Instructor or Congregational Magazine*, and the *Christian Reformer*, none of which is indexed comprehensively—although he did not always transcribe accurately and sometimes he corrected details. He also searched denominational historical society journals, such as the *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society* and the *Unitarian Historical Society*, as well as the many county histories of Congregationalism, such as Nightingale's *Lancashire Nonconformity*, Browne's *Congregationalism in Norfolk and Suffolk*, Miall's *Congregationalism in Yorkshire*, Urwick's *Nonconformity in Cheshire* and his later study of *Hertfordshire*, David's *Evangelical Nonconformity in Essex*, Sibree's *Warwickshire*, Coleman's *Northamptonshire*, Densham and Ogle's *Dorset*, and so on, many of them imperfectly indexed. A real strength of the index is the inclusion of data from the histories of individual churhes, many of them ephemeral. Surman included modern reference works such as the original *Dictionary of National Biography*, as well as more specialised works on religious dissent such as G Lyon Turner's *Original Records*, where he noted the references to ministers in the 1669 conventicle returns and the application for licences under Charles II's declaration of indulgence of 1672, Alexander Gordon's *Freedom After Ejection* (1917) with its biographical index, and A G Matthews's indispensable *Calamy Revised* (Oxford 1934; 1988) and *Walker Revised* (Oxford 1948; 1988).

Much could be added from local sources: Surman largely ignored county histories (including the *Victoria County History*), parish and local studies, and most importantly archival sources. A good deal more is available now than fifty and more years ago, particularly electronically. Many of the now rare nineteenth century items, such as Walter Wilson's valuable *The History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses, in London, Westminster, and Southwark*, four volumes (1808–14), have been reprinted, or are available on Google Books.

The Contents of the Index

In using the index it is important to note the following. It is an index of Congregational ministers. However, given that many churches which had originally been Presbyterian became Congregational in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Surman also included English Presbyterian and Unitarian ministers, at least before about 1800; these Presbyterians were English and not Scottish. It does not include General Baptists (Old or New Connexion), Particular Baptists, Scottish Presbyterians, or ministers of the Presbyterian Church of England (founded by Scottish Presbyterians in the nineteenth century), or Methodists, except incidentally, and in those cases largely because they had been or became Congregational ministers or served Congregational churches. Since modern religious dissent was a consequence of the ejection of about two thousand ministers and teachers from the established church between 1660 and 1662, most of the first generation of nonconformist ministers had served in the Church of England. There are later examples of dissenting ministers who conformed and of a smaller number who left the C of E for dissent. These changes can be identified through the Surman index and the Clergy of the Church of England Database at www.theclergydatabase.org.uk. An index of obituaries in Unitarian periodicals can be found at www.unitarianobituaries.org.uk.

Again, given that the original purpose of the index was to create a directory of Congregational ministers, Surman was not very interested in family details—parents, siblings, spouses, or children, unless they too were Congregational ministers, so family researchers need to do further work. Although he attempted to include the dates of births and deaths of the ministers where known, he made no serious effort to obtain such details from registers or other sources. Some laymen are included in the database, either because they were educated at a dissenting academy or because they subsequently followed a lay career.

Corrections and Additions

We should welcome corrections of errors (particularly relating to the transfer of data from the cards where mistakes have occurred), additional information (especially relating to dates, career details and education), and notification of important manuscript material and illustrations (especially in private hands). Please note that it is not intended that the database should provide a detailed history of the individual or his or her family. The library would be pleased to have gifts of manuscripts and papers, both originals and copies. The Dr Williams's Library and the Congregational Library both have ongoing projects to collect the papers of twentieth century Congregational and Unitarian ministers.

Use the email address—Surman@dwlib.co.uk—to send corrections and

additions. To enable the library staff to assess the evidence, please provide clear and full references.

David L Wykes

A READER'S RESPONSE

Those who use the Surman index on line will soon spot difficulties. For instance, when looking up the entry for the notable late nineteenth century Congregational minister, James Baldwin Brown, readers will be disconcerted to find it missing. The card at Dr Williams's Library is a replacement—presumably the original has at some point been mislaid, or damaged, or stolen. This has resulted in Baldwin Brown simply being omitted—an oversight which needs to be rectified at the earliest possible convenience.

Given that the names of chapels do change, some entries may be misleading, especially when searching by name of chapel or geographical area. For instance, when looking up Brixton, one is led to the once prominent Brixton Independent Chapel (which closed in the years after the Second World War), along with a number of ministers who had some other connection to Brixton. These include one who was a Liberal MP, two who were giving oversight to unnamed churches in Brixton, another who was a minister of an unknown church on Brixton Hill (could this be Streatham Hill Congregational church—now Brixton Hill URC?) and two who lived in Brixton between pastorates or in retirement. As a result these ministers appear, often incorrectly, to have been the ministers or members of Brixton Independent Chapel. Indeed it is possible that several of them attended one of the other Congregational churches in Brixton—at the beginning of the twentieth century there were at least three such alternatives. Given that these instances may not be exceptional, then the possibility of wider errors is apparent and the usefulness and reliability of the Surman index on line are lessened.

Given that the "site has been optimized for use with Mozilla Firefox" some users of other browsers such as Microsoft Internet Explorer may experience some difficulties. However the quick search facility and the four possible search categories make the on line version useful, as well as accessible, but the above errors show that no entry should be regarded as definitive, without checking the image of the individual minister's card in every instance. However errors can and have been corrected using the "email us" button on every minister's record which creates a numbered reference to the minister concerned. Everyone should make as much use of this facility as possible by searching all the chapels and ministers they are familiar with and sending in any corrections they find.

ELNORA AND JOHN FERGUSON

The death of Elnora Ferguson (1929–2008) in December last year, almost twenty years after her husband John, marks the passing of another personal link with pre-1972 Congregationalism. John Ferguson (1921–89) was almost the all purpose academic—theologian, classicist and historian—full of enthusiasm and recalled by one former colleague at the Open University, even in his maturity when director of studies in arts, as volunteering with boyish eagerness to teach as many courses as he possibly could. Colleagues found themselves, therefore, needing to rein him in so that he simply could not take on too much.[1] John's last academic position, before his retirement in 1986, was as president of the Selly Oak Colleges, in Birmingham. Throughout his adult life he was "persuasive in debate", bringing "a clear and cultivated mind and an articulate Christian faith … to every task in his varied but always purposeful life".[2]

John Ferguson had a proper respect for the Christian ministry, seeing it as a high calling and regarding his own life in academia as a soft option. The problems of ministry in the inner city churches were to him more challenging, rewarding and exhilarating. He failed to understand why any minister would choose to forgo work in the churches for the groves of academe.

H C Carter and Cambridge

Like many others, including our own former editor, Bill Ashley Smith, at Cambridge when an undergraduate John Ferguson became a member of Cong Soc and came under the potent influence of Henry Child Carter (Father Henry or Polly, as he was variously known), the minister of Emmanuel Congregational Church there 1910–42. When considering his future, John had once asked Carter if he should seek ordination, only to receive the answer, "What is that?" Indeed some of the most distinguished Congregational ministers of former years deliberately chose not to be ordained (R F Horton and Geoffrey Nuttall among them)—an interesting tradition maintained still by some in the Congregational Federation, if not in all other branches of the Congregational family. Elnora came from her Lancashire home to Newnham College, Cambridge, where she read economics and statistics in the late '40s, when women were not recognised as members of the university. From there she moved to the London School of Economics and gained an MA in social work.

1. Private information.
2. *Reform* (July/August 1989) 17.

John's eventual appointment as president of the Selly Oak Colleges, in Bournville, Birmingham, seemed to integrate so many of their interests, in justice, peace, Christianity and the developing world. Like these colleges he would become associated with "missionary and academic excellence", as John Hibbs put it.

Ferguson observed of his mentor, with regard to Cong Soc, that Carter's policy was one of "masterly inactivity". When Carter eventually retired it took four years to replace him and in that interval the numbers in Emmanuel grew and the life of the church was strengthened. John saw that as the "highest possible tribute" to Carter's enduring work as minister. Like many in the Congregational churches then and since, Ferguson consistently held that ministry belongs to the whole church. He stated that "If there is a full-time salaried 'minister' (s)he is there to support the members in their ministry. The minister is not the church". One feels that this view needs to be heard increasingly today, especially in those independent churches, where the minister and elders assume or are given too much power, thus depriving the members from the full development of their several callings and talents.

Ministry in the Church

Given his considerable personal achievements, one might have felt the Congregational Federation's ephemeral publications did not merit John's full attention. Yet in 1989, John brought his academic rigour and extensive experience to bear in writing in the CF's newsy publication *Congregational Quarterly*, in response to a piece by Graham M Adams, then the CF's general secretary, that Paul wrote to the church at Corinth thus.

"Within our community God has appointed, in the first place apostles, in the second place prophets, thirdly teachers; then miracle workers, then those who have gifts of healing, or ability to help others or power to guide them, or the gift of ecstatic utterance of various kinds. The operative word is **or** (1 Cor 12:28). Again, as in Ephesians, we read: And these were his gifts: some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers (Eph 4:11)." Yet, Ferguson wrote, "And we say, to one person, 'you do the whole lot'." He noted that Adams had listed the functions of a minister as leading worship, administering the sacraments [careful readers may pause here, to notice that neither Ferguson, coming from Carter's tutelage, nor Adams, perhaps influenced by the Welshman Reg Cleaves, used the sadly now ubiquitous Anglo-Catholic term celebrating, although he did use sacrament, rather than the earlier term ordinance]; congregational leadership; enabling; visiting; teaching; counselling; personal development; administration; training; community involvement." Ferguson pointed out that these qualities were "only some that seemed important" then to Adams.

At this point Ferguson invited his readers to join him in breaking into song, writing in a parody of W S Gilbert's "a modern Major-General" from *HMS Pinafore*,

> "I am the very model of a Nonconformist minister,
> I've various attainments, both the frivolous and sinister,
> I break the ice so skilfully when chill around is hardening,
> I place the flowers tastefully and do a spot of gardening.
> I dance with grace the waltz, gavotte, the quickstep and the minuet,
> I cooked with various seasoning the spam out of a tin you ate.
> I'll give an exhibition of some sleight of hand and conjuring,
> And tell you all the history of Whiggism and Non-juring.
> In fact, in my accomplishments (both frivolous and sinister)
> I am the very model of a Nonconformist minister."[3]

This casual, throwaway ditty manages to reveal the intelligence and perception with which Ferguson treated the CF's discussion of the place of ministers. Given that Ferguson's ideal minister was probably a version of his Cambridge mentor, Polly Carter, and his comments simply could not have referred to that pastoral paragon, he went on to remark that he had known ministers who were "marvellous pastors" but who should never have been allowed to lead worship, whose preaching was "splendid" but whose prayers were "abysmal", who were "teachers but not prophets, or prophets but not teachers, or who were forceful leaders with no capacity to help others, who had wonderful grace in personal encounter but ought never to chair a church meeting". And he believed that such knowledge, culled from his experience, was by no means unique to him but was universal. One wonders whether the CF was able to incorporate his insights and wisdom into its thinking.

The Right Priorities

John Hibbs recounts two stories relating to John Ferguson in his book, *The Country Chapel* (1988). He recalls Ferguson's story of the Norfolk chapel where the secretary "liked to run the show". The church secretary asked the visiting preacher in the vestry if he was needed to read the notices and received a negative reply, "O, don't bother, I'll do them", said the preacher, thereby inadvertently giving offence. The secretary found it hard to settle in the service and, as the sermon began, "his eye lighted upon the clock, and lit up. In the midst of the preacher's words he got up and fetched a chair, stood upon it, and turned a very noisy key, crunch—crunch—crunch." During the evening service the unused secretary decided that he must feed the stove noisily with coke, each piece placed individually for maximum effect. In this instance, as Hibbs states, this secretary found the chapel more important than the preacher and, perhaps,

3. Congregational Quarterly vol 7, no 2 1989 p 19—vol 7, no 3, 25, obituary by John Hibbs.

his own office more important than the word.[4] We should remember always that the church exists to proclaim the word of God.

As a transport specialist, Hibbs also tells Ferguson's story of the east coast main line train travelling south from Edinburgh to London and making an unscheduled stop at a tiny station in Northumberland. There a first-class passenger was seen to lean out of the carriage and ask "the station-master cum ticket collector cum crossing keeper" if this was "King's Cross, my man"? To this the railwayman replied politely but "in broad Geordie, 'Noa, but it's the same forrm'". Ferguson rightly commented that the little chapel where he heard the story belongs to "the same firm" as St Peter's in Rome, or St Paul's in London.[5]

The stories testify to Ferguson's understanding of the importance of the easily overlooked. In the country chapel worldly vanity may intrude among the apparently faithful officers; while the small, seemingly insignificant station is still part of the mainline service and is deserving of respect.

A Church's Ministry

In Ferguson's informed opinion, any church which aspired to "the condition of the New Testament church" would look at the work as a whole and then divide it between the members. He knew that "even the oldest and most bedridden and housebound can exercise a very special ministry of prayer on behalf of the whole congregation". He maintained that pastoral visiting should in the first instance be "the calling of elders and deacons" and that if the church had a full time minister then (s)he could valuably supplement this work. Unusually he argued that in general the minister should not chair church meetings, but instead (s)he should speak from the floor, like any other church member.

He also felt that the minister should not lead every act of worship and cited his and his wife's experience in California where they had been members of a very large church with five ministers. There the ministers did not lead worship nor preach more than once or twice a month and that, he testified, made their leadership far "fresher". In addition, two or three members of the church were always on hand to lead prayers, or to give "the brief mission spot", or read the lesson. He judged that "That was a church because all members were actively involved, and the ministers worked as a team with them, each giving support to his or her special gifts".

Pacifism and Ecumenism

John and Elnora Ferguson were lifelong Christian pacifists, as were so many whose Congregationalism was nurtured at the feet of 'Polly' Carter. In the years

4. J Hibbs *The Country Chapel* (1988) 75–6.
5. Ibid 30.

after the Cold War, Elnora was chair of the National Peace Council. As ecumenists, they were prepared to work within the United Reformed Church after 1972 (at the time of his death in 1989 John was a member of Weoley Hill URC) but they were also long time personal members of the Congregational Federation and remained committed to the Congregational ideal. Although John had been brought up in the Church of England, he rejoiced in the title a 'rugged old Independent' and believed that the relative weakness of Congregationalism meant that the force of its contribution to the ecumenical instruments in the British Isles was lessened, a fact which he regretted.

John and Elnora were both advocates of "a very positive pacifism". During the Second World War, when his studies in classics at Cambridge were interrupted, John served in civil defence and gained a London degree in divinity as an external student. Perhaps second to his profession of Christian faith, John Ferguson had "a lifelong commitment to the cause of international peace and co-operation", as Stephen Mutch noted. The United Nations Association's magazine *New World* wrote of Ferguson. "He gave us a lifetime of active and enthusiastic service … On the UNA Executive Committee … he was chairman from 1980–84. He threw himself into every aspect of our work at a time when the UN was in the doldrums."[6]

After the Second World War he taught classics at university in this country for some years before being appointed to the chair of classics at Ibadan University, in Nigeria. Elnora was a teacher of remedial mathematics and in Nigeria she helped to set up one of the country's first sixth form colleges for girls. In west Africa both gained from experiences which were to inform their later contributions to British church life and to the academic world. In South Africa John and Elnora became activists for peace and human rights, earning them the distinction of being banned by the apartheid regime for their stand for racial equality.

They spent three years in the United States of America, in California, where again they campaigned for peace, before returning to Britain where John became the first dean and director of studies in arts at the Open University. He wrote much on the classics, on education, history and pacifism, as well as poetry and hymns, one of which, included in *Rejoice and Sing*, asks characteristically "Am I my brother's keeper?" and goes on to assert that "no man is an island

> divided from the main,
> the bell which tolled for Abel
> tolled equally for Cain".

The last verse speaks of the faith which sustained the Fergusons throughout and which challenges Christians still.

6. *Reform* (October 1989) 23.

"As long as people hunger,
as long as people thirst,
and ignorance and illness
and warfare do their worst,
as long as there's injustice
in any of God's lands,
I am 'my brother's keeper';
I dare not wash my hands."[7]

The internationalists, John and Elnora Ferguson, took that moral responsibility seriously, knowing that their efforts made a difference, perhaps a vital difference, to their immediate society and to the world.

Elnora as Widow

The Christian faith, which the Fergusons shared, inspired in them both, and enabled Elnora in her widowhood, to maintain "an indefatigable stream of charitable and voluntary work", which included her role as chair of the Peace Museum which continued until her death at the age of 79 years. For this work she received honorary degrees from the universities of Birmingham and Coventry.[8] Elnora was active in the Birmingham area as chair of the Selly Oak Peace Council which was "a motley group of … protesters that centred physically around Birmingham Cathedral". She was able to persuade "the militant left, Baptists, Muslims, pacifists and assorted rainbow coalitions" to co-operate in an anti-war campaign based in the city, using tact, firmness and the "timely offer of a free booking in a Quaker college".[9]

Elnora and John Ferguson were cultivated, liberal Christians, that is they were nourished by a broad faith which found expression in active involvement; they were liberal, generous and gracious in their dealings with people; and their political sympathies were informed by the desire for peace, reconciliation, conflict resolution and understanding between races, nations and religions, and a concern for the environment. Holding convictions in common, they were always supportive of each other's interests and witness to principle. They were also hospitable and friendly, with a keen sense of enquiry about individuals. That is, they would at any time have been rare beings, all too rare in our own age, and, although we may humbled by them, we should learn from them. In recent years Elnora had taken to attending the Bournville meeting of the Society of Friends, near her home, and there she felt at ease among fellow pacifists. Given her wide sympathies and many social, religious, and peace and justice interests, a memorial service for Elnora Ferguson was held at noon in Birmingham Cathedral on 27 June, 2009.

7. *Reform* (July/August 1989) 17, *Rejoice and Sing* (Oxford 1991) no 609.
8. R Bechler *Peace News* (2009) issue 2509.
9. Ibid.

The Congregational Peace Fellowship hoped to be represented at this service. Certainly members of the fellowship have a deep respect for Elnora and John Ferguson and their tireless advocacy of peace, of thoughtful Christian witness and related causes. Elnora, although she moved on in her personal pilgrimage of faith, latterly to the Bourneville Society of Friends, retained contact with her earlier connections, including the Congregational Peace Fellowship. In quiet, often unnoticed, ways the Congregational churches have gained much from those, like the Fergusons, whose discipleship has enabled them to maintain a singular and distinctive witness which has enriched us all.

Alan Argent

THE CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY SOCIETY LIBRARY

I am the librarian of the John Bunyan Museum in Bedford, and have recently been asked and agreed to become the librarian of the Congregational collection, now housed in Bunyan Meeting, and also research secretary to the Congregational History Society. My minister, Rev. Christopher Damp, and the *CHS Magazine* editor have asked me to explain what has been happening to the Congregational History collection and library, since it was removed from the lower reaches of the Congregational Federation premises in Castle Gate, Nottingham, where the relative humidity was dangerously high and the books were visibly suffering. From there it was delivered to the safe keeping of the John Bunyan Museum in Bedford.

The museum is housed in part of the same building as the Bunyan Meeting Free Church, built on the original site where John Bunyan preached in the seventeenth century, and has recently celebrated the tenth anniversary of its reopening after a major refurbishment. It contains many artefacts relating to John Bunyan's life and times, among other things the anvil he carried round Bedfordshire while pursuing his tinker's trade, and a metal violin which he made. The library comprises 2,300 items, including copies of Bunyan's major writings, such as *The Pilgrim's Progress, The Holy War* and other works (some translated into over 200 foreign languages and dialects), several biographies of Bunyan and other historical figures, pamphlets and sermons, historical background, and Nonconformist church history, hence the connection with the Congregational history collection.

The Move to Bedford

I realise that the Congregational history library in Nottingham had had an unfortunate experience with damp, and that our minister, Chris Damp (no pun intended!), suggested bringing the entire collection to Bedford and asked me if I would be willing to look after it. It had to be done quickly, so everything was hastily (and randomly!) packed into cardboard boxes. At the moment I am engaged in cataloguing everything so that we have a full record of what is there. We decided that we had better freeze everything, to make sure that no bugs or pests were included, so the process is taking longer than it would have done otherwise, but it is now well underway. Once that is completed an informed decision will be made on the best location for the books and papers. Amongst the rescued collection are records of Paton College (formerly the Nottingham

Congregational Institute) where ministers were trained since the nineteenth century, minute books and archive material from several county Congregational Unions, and general reference material on the history of Congregationalism.

And very importantly there is also the Congregational Library version of the Surman Index, as reported in David Wykes's article in this *CHS Magazine*, a card catalogue with biographical information on thousands of Congregational ministers. This version of the index does not contain all the corrections, emendations and additions which are now in the Surman index at Dr Williams's Library. With the help of the Surman index at Bunyan, I have been having the pleasure of answering enquiries from people researching their family history or historical background for a project, a very interesting part of the work involved.

My post as librarian at Bunyan is a voluntary one (I work mainly from home), and it is difficult to estimate just how much longer the organisation of the Congregational History Society material will take, but at least in the near future all the items will be catalogued, and can therefore be easily found and consulted when necessary. Progress reports can be supplied whenever required.

Patricia Hurry

REVIEWS

***The Reformation in Rhyme: Sternhold, Hopkins and the English Metrical Psalter; 1547–1603*. Pp 364. By Beth Quitslund. (St Andrews Studies in Reformation History.) Ashgate, Aldershot 2008. £60.00 hardback. ISBN 978–75466–326–3.**

Through All the Changing Scenes of Life and *As Pants the Hart for Living Streams* are examples of metrical psalms (Pss 34 and 42 respectively) which have survived into modern use. Few others have done so, save in the Church of Scotland, but from the sixteenth century until well into the eighteenth, metrical psalms were the staple musical fare of ordinary chapels and churches where there was neither trained choir nor organ. The two quoted are from the *New Version* of metrical psalms published in 1696 by Tate and Brady. It was intended to supplant what became known as the *Old Version,* compiled in the sixteenth century. It is with this version that the present book deals.

Though widely referred to as Sternhold and Hopkins's psalms, the book shows that no fewer than eight authors are represented in the final collection. A well researched appendix shows for the first time the authorship of each psalm; another deals with previous misattributions. Unlike the *New Version*, these psalms were written, revised and collected over a period of time. Successive chapters deal with Thomas Sternhold's first publication of just 19 psalms up to 1549; his further publications and those of his imitators up to the death of Edward VI; the continued use and development of the genre by Protestant writers overseas, during the reign of Mary I; the subsequent publication of the Anglo-Genevan Metrical Psalter (1556); the completion and revision of the entire collection under Elizabeth I; and their usage during her reign up to the end of the Tudor dynasty in 1603.

This survey is primarily historical. The music to which these psalms were sung is barely mentioned. Nor is there any systematic discussion of the texts from a literary standpoint. What is dealt with in some detail is the manner in which the wording of particular psalms was subject both to theological and political influences, which changed during the period covered. To give but one of many examples; during Mary I's reign William Whittingham versified "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" (Ps 137) as "Alas, said we, who can once frame/His sorrowful heart to sing:/The praises of our loving God,/Thus under a strange king?" There is no mention of a king in Whittingham's scriptural sources, and this is considered to be an oblique reference to Mary's husband, Philip of Spain.

In addition to the appendixes already mentioned, there is a full chronological list of metrical psalm publications during the period covered, a list of the

considerable quantity of non-psalm material included, and an extensive general bibliography.

The way in which the history of the English Reformation is reflected in the particular manner in which psalms were versified, subsequently revised, and anthologised into the *Old Version* is the theme of this scholarly and carefully researched treatise. It has no particular resonances for Independents, but is a valuable contribution to the history of English Protestantism.

Professor Beth Quitslund is from the English department of Ohio University.

Francis Roads

***Meet the Puritans. With a Guide to Modern Reprints.* By Joel R. Beeke and Randall J. Pederson. Pp xxxvi, 896. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Reformation Heritage Books, 2006. US $35.00 hardback. ISBN 978–1–60178–000–3.**

This book comes from a publishing house devoted to reprinting 'puritan classics'. Dr Beeke and Mr Pederson believe puritan literature has 'relevance and power' for modern Christians. Their book closes with a prayer that readers will be 'fed and refreshed by the puritan giants who have gone before us'.

Meet the Puritans invites readers to encounter seventeenth century writers (and a few from the eighteenth), all with works reprinted between 1956 and 2005. The editors provide brief biographies of the writers in question: nearly 150, mostly from England and New England, but also a dozen Scottish divines and a dozen more to represent the Dutch Further Reformation—this breadth is welcome. Each biography is followed by an introduction to that author's modern editions. Often, these are reprints published by Reformation Heritage Books or its subsidiary Soli Deo Gloria, but Beeke and Pederson also include output from scholarly presses, like Yale's edition of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (1957–) and Sargent Bush's *The Correspondence of John Cotton* (University of North Carolina Press, 2001). The book aims to be exhaustive: indeed, readers are invited to send missing titles to Dr Beeke, so that future editions can be updated. The book opens with a brief definition of puritanism, and a devotional section on 'How to Profit from Reading the Puritans'. Then it reprints 'A Brief History of English Puritanism' from *A Devoted Life* (2004), edited by Kelly Kapic and Randall Gleason. The book includes a glossary, literature review, bibliography, and index of authors and book titles. There is no index of themes: readers are referred instead to Robert Martin's *A Guide to the Puritans*.

For this reader, the book sails rather too close to hagiography, and is uncritical when it comes to reflecting on the culture and context of puritanism. An obvious omission from the bibliography is *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560–1700* (1996), edited by Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales. Although the list of books cited does include important studies by Theodore Bozeman, Charles Cohen, Patrick Collinson and Peter Lake, their insights make little

impact on the text. The editors highlight Geoffrey Nuttall's *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (1946, reprinted 1992), but with a hint of surprise that Nuttall should explore links between puritanism and the Quaker tradition (p 831); suspicion of 'unorthodox' contamination of puritanism appears again when Anne Hutchinson of Massachusetts is said to have 'openly lapsed into mysticism'. (Hutchinson is one of a tiny handful of women to appear in the book in her own right.) *Meet the Puritans* overlooks recent studies which document the fluid and contested streams of 'orthodoxy' within puritanism, especially David Como's *Blown by the Spirit* (2004).

The book accepts without question the value of modern reprints. My own instincts, I admit, are those of a researcher: I prefer to look at the original. Nowadays, those of us lucky enough to have access to *Early English Books Online* can easily read and download puritan texts. The market for puritan works in modern print is already moving online, or to CD, with searchable texts. Before long the internet will make 'reprints' redundant; specialist websites will replace a guide like this. When that happens, the rather bewildering array of information in *Meet the Puritans* could be reduced to a simpler but more nuanced guide to puritan spirituality.

Susan Hardman Moore—University of Edinburgh

***Nonconformity in Derbyshire: A Study in Dissent, 1600–1800*. By Stephen Orchard. Pp xi, 198. Paternoster, Milton Keynes, 2009. £19.99 Paperback. ISBN 978–1–84227–620–4.**

This short study does, as the publisher claims, break new ground in providing an account of Dissent in Derbyshire from its origins to the early nineteenth century. The first part forms a chronological narrative from early Puritanism, through the Civil War and Interregnum, the Ejections of 1662, Toleration after 1689, and the decline of Dissent in the eighteenth century. The text is based on reasonably wide use of central and local archival sources, and of the secondary literature, both local and general. The most glaring omission is Richard Clark's Oxford D.Phil. thesis of 1979, nor has Orchard used either Jill Dias's work on Derbyshire in the early seventeenth century or Lynn Beats's on the Civil War.

The second part contains several lists, of which the longest is a gazetteer of early Derbyshire Nonconformity. The details given here will help anyone tracing a Dissenting minister active in Derbyshire or the history of Nonconformity in a particular place.

Described thus, the book sounds as though it is a useful addition to local studies of Dissent and to serious work on early modern Derbyshire. Unfortunately, its value in both respects is severely weakened by the carelessness with which it has been produced. In the first place, the book has been typeset by the author. This form of parsimony by small publishers rarely produces successful results, just as few typographers can write good history. More seriously, the book shows no sign of having been edited. Mistakes in place-names abound, both in

Derbyshire ('Eggington', 'Muggington', 'Chelmerton') and further afield ('Castle Donnington', 'Pottersbury'). Lichfield has not been a 'Joint Record Office' since 1974 and the National Archives has not been the PRO for a decade. The punctuation in the footnotes is poor; the bibliography does not list journal articles cited in the references; and James Clegg has become 'William Clegg' in the list of published sources.

The appendices are just as bad. No source is given for the list of ordinations in the Wirksworth classis; a list of Dissenters 'transcribed from the Assize records' appears to be from J C Cox's edition of the Quarter Sessions records; and the 'Gazeteer' (as it is spelt) of Nonconformity contains unlocated place-names and other errors. Where are 'Armescroft', 'Clough Head', 'Coldmer' or 'Slack Houses'? Which 'Blackwell' or 'Butterley' is the author referring to? 'Glasswell' is a scribal error, not an alternative form of Glapwell. Kirk Ireton and Little Ireton have been entered twice, under K and L as well as I. None of the appendices has been included in the index.

As it stands, this book (which seems overpriced for an amateurishly typeset, cheaply printed, perfect-bound, paperback of less than 200 pages with no illustrations) may be of some value as a starting point for more careful research but with a little effort it could have been made a great deal more useful.

Philip Riden—University of Nottingham

***Religion and place: Liverpool's historic places of worship*. By Sarah Brown and Peter de Figueiredo. Pp 96. English Heritage, Swindon, 2008. £7.99 paperback. ISBN 978–1–87359–288–5**

This book is part of an English Heritage series on Liverpool's historic built environment. It is short but covers a lot of useful ground, both in terms of the particular buildings highlighted and the issues raised. It is very well illustrated, with every double-page spread having at least one image, and a high technical quality throughout.

Although the book does not contain any biographical notes on the authors, both are widely published and well known in their fields. Sarah Brown is a lecturer in the History of Art at the University of York, with a particular specialism in stained glass and architectural history, while Peter de Figueiredo is one of the country's leading experts on historic buildings conservation.

There are five main chapters. 'Worshipping with the wealthy' traces the eighteenth and nineteenth century drift of Liverpool's richest citizens away from the city centre into more salubrious suburbs, such as the Princes Park and Sefton Park developments, and what is now known as the 'Georgian Quarter' south of the University campus. As they went, they built monumental places of worship, illustrated here by examples such as the Classical-columned St Bride's, Percy Street, the Gothic-vaulted St Agnes's, Ullet Road, and the extraordinary Princes Road Synagogue.

From the mid-nineteenth century, the city's population increased very

rapidly, and Irish Catholics in particular became one of Liverpool's largest communities. 'Blessed are the poor' considers the buildings created for the expanding working-class districts in the north end of the city and in Toxteth. Highlights here include an evocative cut-away drawing of the crypt of St Anthony's, Scotland Road. There is also an interesting discussion of lesser-known churches built for the new housing estates of the 1930s.

Liverpool's two cathedrals then have a chapter devoted to them, charting the determination of both the Anglican and Roman Catholic communities to build great cathedrals for the twentieth century. Liverpool's cosmopolitanism is then the subject of 'A single city of many nations', which explores buildings such as the Scandinavian Seamen's Church on Park Lane and the Al-Rahma Mosque, Hatherley Street. Finally, 'Facing the future' offers examples of adaptation of religious buildings, from the creation of community offices under the galleries of a working church, to the more radical alterations to redundant churches, such as the climbing walls built inside St Alban's, Athol Street.

Two useful maps conclude the book; one plots the large number of places of worship active in 1905, the other identifies a much smaller range of buildings surviving a century later.

Clearly, a book of this size can only do so much. Those seeking comprehensive coverage and more detail will need to use the larger specialist works listed in this book's guide to further reading, such as Joseph Sharples' new Pevsner volume, *Liverpool* (2004). As an attractive and engaging introduction and overview, however, this volume does its job very well indeed.

Graeme J. Milne—University of Liverpool

***Probing the past: a toolbox for Baptist historical research*. By Susan J Mills. Pp 199. Baptist Historical Society, Didcot, 2009. Available from Rev. Roger Hayden, 15 Fenshurst Gardens, Long Ashton, Bristol, BS18 9AU, e-mail: rogerhayden@tiscali.co.uk £9.50 paperback. ISBN 978–0–903166–39–3.**

It is difficult to review a book on the sources for Baptist historical research by somebody as well qualified by her experience as Susan Mills, the former librarian of Regent's Park College, Oxford, which includes the Angus Library. A glance at the contents page and a dip into the book itself shows the wider range of topics covered. The coverage is mainly of English Baptist history, although Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, together with resources in the United States, are certainly not ignored. A general criticism is, however, that there is no overview of Baptist development, which leaves readers, with little knowledge of Baptist history, without any guide to the confusing distinctions, for which Baptists are so well known.

The book's subtitle does, however, refer to Baptist historical research and this leads to the other major problem, which would be relevant, if any such study should be conceived covering Congregationalists. She states on p 44 that Strict Baptist sources are not covered in great detail. Why was this decision taken? She

only refers to a number of works which are either polemical, and in one case out-of-date, if Gospel Standard Strict Baptists are being studied, whilst one important series of histories by Ralph Chambers is only mentioned in the references and bibliography. Some books, such as Geoffrey Breed's pamphlet on Baptist ancestors, are mentioned as giving useful information and the Strict Baptist Historical Society and the Gospel Standard Library are referred to, but, especially as no background is given to put the various sections of the Strict Baptists into context, uncritical use of these sources could be highly misleading. Some Strict Baptist periodicals are mentioned, but only one Strict Baptist Association, the records of which happen to be at the Angus Library, and not the Strict Baptist Bible Institute, and the two Strict Baptist Missionary Societies. She comments on the lack of objectivity in general Baptist histories, but this is still true of the present work, in which the treatment of Strict Baptists also lacks balance. The absence of context on the General Baptists also obscures research in this area and similar problems arise concerning Seventh Day Baptists and independent Baptist churches. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that this is mainly a toolbox for Baptist Union research or for research on those groupings connected with, or sympathetic to, this position.

How does this affect the study of the history of Congregationalism? Its convulsions during the last half-century may easily produce similar results in a book on Congregational sources, to those I have detected from the longer standing divisions of the Baptists. It will be only too easy for the Congregational Federation, the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches and the independent Churches to receive similar treatment to the non-Baptist Union groups, producing the same imbalance, whilst the little known High Calvinist churches, known generally as the Calvinistic Independents, need to be considered. Incidentally these latter do not seem to have attracted the attention of anybody working on the history of mainstream Congregationalism and perhaps there should be some discussion on the reasons for, and the rightness of, this situation. Susan Mills has certainly produced a useful book for a section of the Baptists, one that could, however, have been more comprehensive and had more context; but for those researching the history of Congregationalism, and of other denominations, the danger is that it sets a poor example from such a distinguished author. This, of course, forms part of a wider debate to be had on the lack of attention given to smaller groupings by the majority, one which, fortunately for the health of religious history, still seems to have a long way to run.

Jonathan Morgan

***Mansfield's Ministry: a celebration of ordination training at Mansfield College, Oxford, 1886–2009*. Ed Anthony Tucker. Pp 103. Occasional Paper No. 2 of The United Reformed Church History Society, June 2009. £7.50 paperback. ISBN 978–085346–270–5**

Issued at the moment that the last United Reformed Church ministerial student at Mansfield College completed his training, this 'celebration' brings together a number of articles that address divers aspects of the contribution Mansfield College has made to Biblical and theological learning and to the life and health of Congregationalism and its ecumenical offshoots since 1886.

The collection begins with the editor's scene-setting preface that notes the United Reformed Church decision to cease sending candidates for ministerial training to Mansfield with the ominous-sounding comment—"history will judge that decision". This is followed by a number of informative articles: Jack McKelvey reviews the broad sweep of Mansfield College's engagement with ministerial training; Donald Norwood assesses the extensive contribution of Mansfield alumni to the world-wide ecumenical movement; Walter Houston records the world-class contribution of Mansfield College to biblical studies; Norman Hart considers the role Mansfield played as a place of spiritual support for non-conformist students all across the Oxford University community; Colin Thompson highlights the significant contributions of Mansfield to liturgy, church music and hymn-writing; Charles Brock notes the particular links between Mansfield and the United States; Janet Wootton writes of Mansfield's contribution to the ongoing education and learning programmes of the Congregational Federation; and Kirsty Thorpe tells the particular story of women who prepared for ministry at Mansfield. To all of this, Donald Sykes has added a note on the relationship between Mansfield and the Oxford Theology Faculty and then there is a final chapter—"Mansfield Voices"—which offers brief and varied personal reminiscences of Mansfield by a dozen folk who trained for ministry there.

As a complete outsider, I found this collection to be a fitting celebration of significant things within a story that is well worth celebrating. However, for me, Janet Wootton's article proved the most intriguing and encouraging. Janet tells of the crucial role played by a number of people trained at or influenced by Mansfield in the initial and ongoing development of the Congregational Federation's own Integrated Training Course. She witnesses to an unleashing of key Mansfield values (crucially, a whole-hearted engagement with learning in the service of Christ, church and mission) in this fine course that vigorously resists the restricting of Christian learning to those privileged to gather in a special place to train full-time for full-time ministry. If it was visionary to move Congregational ministerial training to Oxford in the 1880s, perhaps it was just as visionary around a century later to move back out to take key Mansfield values and share them with the whole people of God? Janet gives me hope that in a new and exciting way, some of the best of Mansfield is out there already and

ending initial ministerial training within the confines of the college may be no more than part of the URC's response to the same vision.

J M Campbell—Manchester

***The History of Ballynahinch Congregational Church 1902–2002*. By Betty McKee. Pp 95. Ballynahinch Congregational Church, 2005. Available from the church: info@ballynahinchcongregational.com £5.00.**

Mrs McKee has researched the history of the first one hundred years of Ballynahinch Congregational Church from material in the church minutes, and from the reminiscences of senior members of the church. The book of 95 pages is structured around the years of the various ministers of the church. It is extremely well illustrated from reprints, not only photographs of people and places, but also programmes of notable occasions in the church's life.

Ballynahinch is a small country town in County Down, Northern Ireland, not far from Downpatrick, where St. Patrick's grave may be seen, nor from Newcastle, where "the mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea". I have read the history with pleasure and interest, especially in view of my personal knowledge of some of the ministers and members of the church, during my own 25 years' ministry in Belfast.

The church originated during the period of the divisive issue of home rule for Ireland 1870–1920. Most Protestants feared the imposition of home rule, but the three Presbyterian ministers in the town at that time favoured it, and the book tells of how on Sunday, 5th February 1902, a number of men walked out of the morning service at 1st Presbyterian Church, Ballynahinch. A public meeting was called in the Courthouse the following Thursday, when two Congregational ministers explained the principles of Independency. Services began on Sunday, 16th February, 1902.

The infant church was known simply as "The *Independent* Church"—but many in the congregation did not like this name (obviously the principles of Independency and Congregationalism were not fully understood). The name of the church was changed to the *Congregational* Church, and it joined the Congregational Union of Ireland, which had been formed in 1829.

In 1902 the foundation stone was laid for the first church building, known as the Iron Church. It collapsed during a heavy snowfall in 1908. It was not long before a new permanent building was erected and opened in 1910. Mrs McKee recounts the way in which various building projects have been undertaken over the years, and how an extensive graveyard was acquired.

She also recounts the blessing of God on the church in raising up men and women for Christian service. The 1950s seems to have been a fruitful period, when one man went to the Scottish Congregational College, and two others to Paton College, Nottingham, to prepare for Christian ministry—one of these was Jack McKelvey who, after following further studies in America, went to lecture at Adams United Theological College, Modderpoort, South Africa. Dr

McKelvey's name appears as a contributor to the *New Bible Dictionary* (published by Inter-Varsity Fellowship 1962). The 1980s were also fruitful years for men and women to leave all for Christ and take up ministries in various capacities.

In summary, the book is full of facts of the church's 100 years of existence. The detailed record would probably not be of wide interest to people outside Northern Ireland. The inclusion of more insights into the spiritual life, and the impact of the church on the community would have been more helpful. I read a similar history recently, where the authors state: *"This booklet is not intended as a mere nostalgic look over the past fifty years of the Church's history. Rather it is a record of God's provision and faithfulness to His praying people, and the aim is to give Him all the glory. Nevertheless we need to acknowledge the part that ordinary men and women contribute to the Lord's plan and purposes…".* Perhaps this emphasis could have made this history of wider significance.

Malcolm Coles

***Dr John Kennedy of Dingwall. Sermon Notes 1859–1865.* Pp xxviii, 390. The James Begg Society, 2007. £18.00 hardback. ISBN 978–0–9539241–0–3**

As the title says, this is a collection (a substantial one) of the sermon notes of Kennedy of Dingwall (1819–84), minister of the Free Church congregation in Dingwall from 1844 until his death. Kennedy is a figure of unsurpassed importance in the religious history of the Highlands in the generation after the Disruption of 1843, when the Free Church was formed. His eloquence as a preacher helped to give him an almost patriarchal status as spokesman of Highland Presbyterian spirituality. The valuable introduction by Neil Ross introduces us to this and other aspects of Kennedy's life.

Because of Kennedy's stature, this nicely produced volume is a welcome addition to historical resources for that period in Scotland's church history. The preface tells us that the sermons are transcripts from two of Kennedy's notebooks, the first dated December 1859, containing a relatively lengthy series of three discourses on Habakkuk 3:2, the second containing sermons preached between December 1863 and March 1874. The current volume includes the whole of the first notebook, and part of the second up to the close of 1865, with the hope of a second volume to complete the series.

Potential readers should not be under any misapprehensions; the overwhelming majority of sermons here are in brief, dry, skeletal note-form, and are not suitable as devotional literature. (Exceptions are the discourses on Habakkuk 3:2, and an extended treatment of Galatians 3:26.) The volume's value is as a historical record of Kennedy's preached theology. Anyone researching the content and development of Kennedy's religious thinking will have to refer to this collection as an indispensable primary source.

By and large what we find in the sermons is the tradition of "experimental Calvinism": confessional Reformed theology translated into subtle, highly wrought religious experience—in some ways, a sort of Presbyterian *Pilgrim's*

Progress. Expository preaching does not readily lend itself to this pattern of piety, and it is no surprise that Kennedy's mode of preaching was not expository but topical. Like his English contemporary and friend, C H Spurgeon, he did not preach his way through books of the Bible, but took a different text each week, according as that particular text had gripped him. The divergence from Calvin's own practice could hardly be greater; but I mean this only as a historical observation—no value judgment is intended. To adjudicate by frequency, John's Gospel and the Letter to the Hebrews were Kennedy's favourites—ten sermons on each.

The volume has an index to the texts treated by Kennedy, but no general scripture index and no topical index. Perhaps the publishers might give serious consideration to supplying these for the projected second volume, where indices for both volumes could be included?

I warmly commend this volume as a significant contribution to nineteenth century Scottish church historical studies.

Nick Needham—Highland Theological College, Dingwall.

***Geoffrey Fillingham Nuttall 1911–2007*. Collated by Ron Bocking, 2008. Pp viii, 55. Available from Revd R Bocking, 25 Wilberforce Rd, Norwich, NR5 8NE. Paperback.**

This is a collection of "Addresses, sermons and tributes" from Geoffrey Nuttall's funeral and memorial services, together with Nuttall's own reflection on Charles Wesley's hymn "Wrestling Jacob" which was the substance of a paper given by him in 1998 to a reunion of the New College, London, Old Students Association. This latter was, as Colin Richards claims in the foreword, "the last occasion on which he spoke in public" and, from it, readers who knew GFN will recall "the unmistakeable precision, tones and emphases which so characterised his delivery, and the love for his subject and his hearers which always shone through".

The addresses here include a remembrance from Goff Nicholls who was often Geoffrey's preferred choice as chauffeur—his car was the most comfortable! Goff explained how startling and unusual was GFN's first appearance at church in Bournville. David Cornick gave thanks for a colossus of a scholar (who wrote for the *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society* in 1931 and for its successor journal in the United Reformed Church History Society in 2003) and yet who was at the same time always a faithful and wise pastor. Raymond Brown, who preached marvellously without a script at GFN's funeral service before a formidably erudite band of friends, here offers a version of his sermon from notes. It still has power to move and shows how disarmingly honest and humble the normally proud Geoffrey could be. Raymond revealed how better we all are for having known this sometimes curmudgeonly saint.

From the memorial service in November 2007 come two addresses—by Neil Keeble and Clyde Binfield. Both are personally revealing. Neil Keeble,

concentrating on the scholar, reminds us of GFN's taste for "the distinctive, the idiosyncratic, the individual" and of his admiration for three contemporary historians—Dom David Knowles, Sir Richard Southern and Professor Patrick Collinson—but again testifies to GFN's painstaking willingness to help and thereby train younger scholars. Clyde Binfield, turning to the gospel minister, shows GFN's wish to point beyond his subjects of study "to the God whose showers of blessing came down" wherever they went. Both Neil and Clyde touch on the graciousness of Geoffrey and also on the grace of God evident in him.

This welcome collection reminds me that I must re-read Geoffrey Nuttall and refresh my heart with his friendship and learning. This slim volume conveys something of his warmth, unique power and fine Christian understanding.

Alan Argent

***A Land of Pure Delight: Elijah Morgan and the Saints of Bethel*. By Isaac Owen. Pp vi, 163. Church in the Market Place Publications, Warrington, 2009. £9.95 paperback. ISBN 978–1–899147–67–0.**

The cover of this novel contends that it is 'a witty, affectionate and erudite evocation of Welsh rural life in the early nineteen-fifties'. It begins with the call of a new minister (Elijah Morgan), fresh out of theological college, to lead the life of Bethel Congregational Church set somewhere in rural Wales. In a mixture of caricature and parody, made all the more interesting because of their proximity to truth, the author weaves a tale which includes the petty, narrow-minded (or 'fundamentalist') deacon who seeks to censure the minister following rumours of his attendance at a dance hall; the treasurer whose vocation had descended into an obsession with matters fiscal to the detriment of all other considerations; and the women of the catering committee who wield more power than even the deacons. There is the scholarly minister from a nearby town who had earned a DD for an esoteric piece on Denys the Pseudo Areopagite, who is recorded as offering a prayer 'which had something to do with the way in which we are all encompassed by sublimities of ethereal beauty, eternal reality and incomprehensible magnitude about which we can say nothing' (p.15), and the minister with the honorary doctorate awarded by 'a small American college' for his pulpit presence as well as his reputation for sermons which could move any congregation—liberal or conservative, young or old—but which were devoid of any biblical exposition.

Underlying the story itself is a clear, if perhaps unintended, sub-theme questioning the way in which young men, schooled at their seminaries in the latest biblical criticism and theological construction, seemed ill-prepared to face the every-day challenges of ministry as they sought to bring their enlightened and educated liberalism into contact with the generally conservative but overwhelmingly pragmatic Christianity they found in the pews. Those who made a success of it, suggests the book, were those who managed to earn the

respect and even love of their people rather than those who made any real impression on the belief and practice of their congregations. The book seems sympathetic towards Elijah Morgan's liberalism, but if it realises that it failed to make contact with the chapel folk, it fails to see that this might well have been one of the reasons that, even in the 1950s and the context of apparent numerical strength, the writing was on the wall for Welsh Nonconformity.

The novel evokes a period in which chapel life was being challenged by the modern world, both socially and theologically, but where it remained sufficiently strong to remain unbothered by either changing social mores or by the patterns of contemporary scholarship. The author recounts his tale in a fairly sympathetic manner. The characters tend to be one-dimensional, partly because they represent caricatures rather than icons of Welsh Nonconformity's past. Perhaps because of that, it might be enjoyed most by those who have some prior knowledge of 1950s Welsh Nonconformity, for without it much of the story would probably make little sense. It remains an easy and enjoyable read, a gentle, witty tale of an age that has long since passed. As such it might well appeal most to, and be enjoyed best by, a rather select readership and one which, sadly, continues to diminish.

Robert Pope—Bangor University

ALSO RECEIVED

***Congregational Tales: Four Centuries of Congregational Folk in Market Harborough*. Ed Richard Pickering. Pp 60. Market Harborough Congregational Church, Leicestershire, 2008. Available from Richard Pickering, 10 Highfield Street, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 9AN. £5.00 + 70p p&p paperback.**

A common criticism of chapel histories is the tendency to tell the story through the succession of ministers. This has been avoided here by telling the story through chronologically arranged tales of different individuals and families in the church fellowship including ministers.

***Sisters of Sinai: How Two Lady Adventurers Found the Hidden Gospels*. By Janet Soskice. Pp xiv, 338. Chatto and Windus 2009. £18.99 hardback. ISBN 978–0–7011173–41–8**

The story of Gibson and Lewis has been told more than once before, but a major publisher and serialisation on BBC Radio 4 has brought them to a wider public notice through this detailed work.

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