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THE CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY SOCIETY MAGAZINE

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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

We welcome to our pages for this issue the historian of Scottish Congregationalism, William McNaughton, who has written of the difficulties accompanying the founding of a theological college in Glasgow. Roger Ottewill, also a new contributor to our magazine, has described the circumstances surrounding a bazaar in Hampshire Congregationalism at the beginning of the twentieth century. Remaining in the 1900s, we trace something of the creative influences of chapel religion in a small north country town upon a modern literary giant.

NEWS AND VIEWS

We are pleased to give notice of the following event being organized by the **Friends of the Congregational Library**. Their 2009 summer event will be held in Oxford on Saturday, 27 June and begins at 10.30 am at Harris Manchester College, in Mansfield Road. The college library holds significant collections of books and archives on religious dissent, the Unitarian tradition being especially well represented. Among these are the works of such prominent Unitarians as Joseph Priestley and James Martineau, chapel histories, and the papers of Thomas Belsham, George Eyre Evans, Theophilus Lindsey and many others. After lunch at Harris Manchester (participants are advised to bring their own food), the party will move a few yards down the road to Mansfield College to see the library and chapel, giving a nod to Calvin in his quincentenary year. The final visit is to the Angus Library at Regent's Park College. This is the leading library for those researching Baptist history, thought and missionary endeavour. Other Nonconformist traditions are also represented in the collection. The cost for the day is £5. Those wishing to attend should send payment to the Friends of the Congregational Library by 29 May to Rachel Gurney, Bunyan Meeting, Mill St, Bedford, MK40 3EU.

Our CHS secretary, Colin Price, writes to inform readers that the collection of items relating to Congregational history which has been amassed over the years in Nottingham, in the cellar of the Congregational Federation buildings in Castle Gate, has been moved to Bunyan Meeting, Bedford. These books and records have been in the care of Jean Young and Chris Damp for many years but, following all the rain last summer, as Chris states, "the cellar became very damp and everything was going mouldy. So the collection—which I have been calling the CHS collection—has come to Bunyan". There the books are being "sorted,

the local church records will be dispatched to local record offices, duplicates will go and the whole lot will be catalogued and the catalogue placed on the internet". Bunyan has a trained librarian who is systematically sorting through the collection and who is dealing with all the historical enquiries that regularly arrive at the Congregational Federation offices. A copy of the Surman card index, with its summary biographies of Congregational ministers since the seventeenth century, is now also held at Bunyan—this valuable collection was also going mouldy in the cellar! Chris Damp maintains that Charles Surman's index makes a useful addition to the library at Bunyan and that the Bunyan Meeting collection also supplements the usefulness of this CHS collection.

We have recently received ***The Ebenezer Chronicle*** by Barry G Whitehead which arrived too late for review. This is an illustrated history of Ebenezer Congregational Church, Uppermill, Saddleworth, "in the county of York" and consists of 154 pages. Further details and copies are available from the church's present pastor, Frank Wroe, 678 Ripponden Road, Moorside, Oldham OL4 2LP.

CHAPEL TOUR

On Friday 9th May, 2008 our group of enthusiasts met at Loddiswell Congregational Chapel, Kingsbridge, Devon. There we were met by the church secretary, Muriel Carpenter, who welcomed us with tea and pieces of the 200th chapel anniversary cake. We assembled in the 1920s stone built and recently renovated hall, opposite the chapel in the middle of the village. Having explored the chapel, we were directed up a small path from the village centre. Behind the houses we found the burial ground, surrounding the site of the smaller original chapel, built in 1808, the outline of which was still visible.

From Loddiswell we travelled to the, now roofless, chapel building at Ford. Completely separated from its small hamlet, the fair sized ruined chapel is situated within its own burial ground with some recent gravestones. Ford chapel closed "pro tem" in 1949, falling victim to rural depopulation. Once a year, to celebrate the ejections of St Bartholomew's day in 1662, the south west area of the Congregational Federation holds an open-air service here. We were shown photographs of some of these occasions with some old friends of the CHS, like Ron White, taking a part in the proceedings.

From here we went on to the coast at Torcross where we ate our picnic lunch. The chapel is on the edge of the village set back from the beach behind the lagoon. Unprepossessing from the outside, the chapel had inside a display about the history of the Congregational church and the local area. This included the wartime disaster at Slapton Sands, where a large number of American troops died whilst training for the D-Day landings. Hushed up at the time for morale

and propaganda reasons, the full story only emerged many years later. It was a long drive to and along the main dual-carriageway, across the Tamar into Cornwall, and to Cawsand Congregational Church. From this cliff top chapel there is a dramatic view of the sea and coastline. We were entertained to tea in the hall under the chapel. Paul Buet gave us a talk on the history of the chapel and how it came to be reopened in June 2001, having closed the previous year. From there we returned to Plymouth by ferry. Thanks are due to all the churches for welcoming us and especially to Nicola and Greta White for organising the day and guiding us round.

Peter Young

THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF ESTABLISHING A THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Glasgow Theological Academy minutes 1811–1842 shed considerable light on the rationale, *modus operandi*, and importance of ministerial training among early Congregational Independents in Scotland and also on the academic careers of the students mentioned within.

The first class in the institution's forerunner, Robert Haldane's[1] Theological Seminary, had opened in Edinburgh in January 1799[2] under the tutorship of Greville Ewing.[3] Three years later, Ewing severed his connection with the seminary, unable to accept the control Haldane exercised over its affairs.[4] Thereafter, the seminary continued to function until December 1808[5] when it became a casualty of the new views which were assailing the fledgling Congregational churches in Scotland and Haldane's withdrawal of financial assistance.

Having become enamoured with the views of Glas[6] and Sandeman[7] around 1804, Haldane had begun to disseminate their views on church order.[8] His

1 Robert Haldane (1764–1842), cf Alexander Haldane *Memoirs of the Lives of Robert Haldane of Airthrey, and of His Brother, James Alexander Haldane* (1852).

2 Ibid 330.

3 Greville Ewing (1767–1841), cf W D McNaughton *The Scottish Congregational Ministry 1794–1993* (Glasgow 1993) 43.

4 cf G Ewing *Facts and Documents Respecting the Connections which have Subsisted between Robert Haldane, Esq. and Greville Ewing, Laid before the Public, in Consequence of Letters which the Former had Addressed to the Latter, respecting the Tabernacle at Glasgow* (Glasgow 1809).

5 Haldane op cit 330.

6 John Glas (1695–1773) cf *Dictionary of Scottish Church History & Theology,* (Edinburgh 1993) 364.

7 Robert Sandeman (1718–1771) cf Ibid 744.

8 Ewing op cit 82.

9 James Alexander Haldane (1768–1851) cf McNaughton op cit 60.

10 Mutual exhortation involved the exhortation of one another by members of the church in the course of worship. In the Glasite tradition, exhortations consisted of "scriptural phrases connected together by a theme, concluding without any application", cf D B Murray *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* Vol. XXII, 1986, pp 50 & 53–54.

11 cf J A Haldane *A View of the Social Worship and Ordinances observed by the First Christians, drawn from the Sacred Scriptures Alone: being An Attempt to Enforce Their Divine Obligation; and to represent the guilt and evil consequences of neglecting them* (Edinburgh 1805) cp *The London Christian Instructor* (1819) 781.

12 cf W Ballantine *A Treatise on the Elder's Office: showing the Qualifications of Elders, and how the First Churches obtained them; also, their Appointment, Duties and Maintenance; the Necessity of a Presbytery in every Church, and Exhortation, and the Observance of every Church Ordinance on the Lord's Day, in order, amongst other ends, to the obtaining of Elders* (Edinburgh 1807).

brother James[9] published similar views concerning mutual exhortation[10] and plurality of elders a year later[11] and a pamphlet[12] published by William Ballantine[13] in 1807, which struck at the entire order of the public worship of the churches, was widely circulated by Robert as representing his own views. A bitter dispute arose, in which "to train pious men for the ministry—to have public collections for the support of Gospel ordinances—for ministers to wear black clothes—was pronounced anti-Christian. … while those who would not embrace these things, were accused of opposing the cause of God".[14] The trouble culminated with the Haldane brothers becoming Baptists in 1808.

With the seminary's demise came an awareness of the need for the young Congregational churches to facilitate ministerial education and Greville Ewing was to the fore in recognising the need for an educated ministry. Towards the end of 1803, in the light of his experience of Haldane and his academy, Ewing had written a paper entitled 'A Memorial Concerning a Theological Academy', asserting "nothing more directly tends to the progress and prosperity of the Gospel, than the multiplication of able preachers",[15] and stressing the advantages that would arise from the churches organising their own institution.[16] On completion, Ewing had sent the paper to Robert Haldane, who dismissed it as "unnecessary in the present circumstances, and in some respects hurtful",[17] claiming his brother, John Aikman[18] and William Innes,[19] also agreed with him. Ewing shelved his plan. However, in 1808, he published a revision of the plan,[20] which increased interest in the subject and provoked discussion among the churches. Ballantine and others in several pamphlets attacked the proposal. Ballantine stated, "As you have called on the churches to have seminaries of education for the ministry of the Gospel, I would entreat them to consider that there is no warrant for them in the Word of God, that they are inventions of men, and destructive to Christianity. I would also beseech them to walk in the commandments and ordinances of Christ for their education, which, if they do, they may rest assured that schools of divinity are altogether foreign to the nature of Christ's kingdom".[21]

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13 William Ballantine (d.1836), cf McNaughton op cit 10.

14 J J Matheson *A Memoir of Greville Ewing, Minister of the Gospel, Glasgow, By His Daughter* (1843) 327–328.

15 Ewing op cit 83, cf Matheson op cit 320–321.

16 Ibid 84.

17 Ibid 86.

18 John Aikman (1770–1834), cf McNaughton op cit 4.

19 William Innes (1770–1855), cf ibid 71.

20 cf G Ewing *A Memorial on Education for the Ministry of the Gospel* (Glasgow 1808).

21 W Ballantine *Two Letters to Mr Greville Ewing, on Recommending the Gospel; The Miraculous Gifts; and Divinity Schools: Occasioned by his 'Attempt' & 'Memorial'* (Edinburgh 1809).

Nevertheless, meetings held in Dundee and Perth by the churches in these districts in July and October 1809 led to 'An Address to the Independent Churches in the Neighbourhood of Perth and Dundee' being circulated, urging the need to facilitate ministerial education.[22] The address stirred up even greater interest in Ewing's proposal and a meeting of ministers of Congregational churches was held in Glasgow on 13th March, 1811,[23] attended by twenty-eight ministers and the lay-representative of one vacant charge. Letters were also received from another twenty-three ministers in support of the proposal. This meeting agreed to form the Glasgow Theological Academy and Greville Ewing and Ralph Wardlaw[24] were appointed to serve as tutors in the institution where individuals of approved character might undertake a course of study, embracing Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, logic, natural philosophy, mathematics, general history, and theology, connected with a comparative view of philosophical and Christian morality. The course was to be four years, five if necessary. The more advanced branches of classical learning were to be obtained at the university, the expense of which, as well as the support of the students, in cases requiring it, were to be borne by the funds of the institution, this support to be continued one year at least after the commencement of their ministerial labours, if within that time they did not obtain a ministerial charge. All persons received as students were to be recommended by their respective pastors with consent of the churches to which they belonged, decided piety being a qualification indispensable.[25]

Two years later an additional subject was added to the curriculum—academy students at Glasgow University were permitted to matriculate in the moral philosophy class to enable them to proceed to the natural philosophy class.[26] The committee of management consisted of Ewing and Wardlaw (*ex officio*), twelve ministers, and three laymen from each of the charges of Ewing and Wardlaw. Ralph Wardlaw was appointed secretary, his father, William,[27] president, and William McGavin,[28] treasurer. Operations commenced in October 1811 with seven students, another joined them shortly after, and the fact that the last of the students was admitted, "notwithstanding the low state of the funds",[29] would prove to be indicative of the institution's finances in the future, inhibiting

22 cf *Missionary Magazine* (Edinburgh 1810) 285–293.

23 cf Glasgow Theological Academy Minutes, 1811–1842, with note on Origin of the Institution.

24 Ralph Wardlaw (1779–1853), cf McNaughton op cit 166.

25 Matheson op cit 379.

26 *Report of the Committee of Management of the Theological Academy at Glasgow* (Glasgow 1813) 6. (Hereafter these reports are noted *Report* and the year.)

27 William Wardlaw (1741–1821), father of Ralph Wardlaw, merchant and some time Bailie of Glasgow.

28 William McGavin (1773–1832), cf McNaughton op cit 90.

29 Glasgow Theological Academy Minutes 31st October 1811.

the number of students accepted and subject to many appeals for support, despite the tutors' gratuitous services, from the outset. Optimistically, the Missionary Magazine expressed the hope that the institution would prove conclusively the benefits of ministerial training and silence, if not convince, objectors to such institutions.[30]

Of ten students admitted to the Glasgow Theological Academy between 1811 and 1815, James Laird[31] resigned on health grounds, James Fraser[32] died while a student, James Chalmers[33] was asked to withdraw due to his unsatisfactory progress, Ewan Cameron[34] was expelled as a result of "certain painful circumstances" during his residence in the country in the summer, William Muir[35] defected to the Church of Scotland and William Newlands[36] left having, on completion of his studies, resented the management committee's choice of sphere of labour for him. Only John MacLaren,[37] Robert Maclachlan,[38] John Hill[39] and Alexander Ewing[40] completed their studies and were ordained as Congregational ministers.[41] Things could only get better!

The annual report published in 1818 listed two further alumni ministering in Scotland and another, William Swan,[42] in St Petersburg.[43] Swan, in particular, undertook two monumental tasks during his time abroad that enabled the Word of God to be made available to large sections of humanity. Having acquired the language, he translated the scriptures into Mongolian. Then a member of the Russian Government told him of a copy of a translation of the Old Testament into the "Mantchoo or Mandshur" language, made by Roman Catholic missionaries in China and housed in the library of the Holy Synod of the Greek Church in St. Petersburg, and offered him the opportunity to make a copy: he accepted the offer and "completed the work in about eight months; but it was by an amount of labour that seriously affected his health ever after. During these months he copied from 14 to 15 hours a day without intermission, and he had the satisfaction of putting into the possession of the British and Foreign Bible

30 *Missionary Magazine* (Edinburgh 1811) 471.
31 James Laird, cf McNaughton op cit 80.
32 James Fraser, cf ibid 49.
33 James Chalmers, cf ibid 24.
34 Ewan Cameron, cf ibid 21.
35 William Muir (1794–1864), cf ibid 115.
36 William Newlands, cf ibid 119.
37 John MacLaren, cf ibid 97.
38 Robert Maclachlan (c1793–1866), cf ibid 97.
39 John Hill (1787–1848), cf ibid 65.
40 Alexander Ewing (1794–1864), cf ibid 43.
41 cf Glasgow Theological Academy Minutes, 1811–1842.
42 William Swan (1791–1866), cf McNaughton op cit 157.
43 *Report* 1818 p4.

Society, at little or no cost, another translation of the Holy Scriptures".[44] Also listed among the eight students studying in the academy we find Thomas Woodrow,[45] grandfather of the twenty-eighth president of the United States of America, Gilbert Wardlaw,[46] president and theological tutor, Blackburn Theological Academy, 1830–1843, Archibald Jack,[47] president of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1857, and George Downie Cullen,[48] who became secretary of the Glasgow Theological Academy in 1830. However, the report notes, "Six applications for admission … which appeared highly worthy of attention, the Committee have been reluctantly obliged to decline, on account of the deficiency of funds".[49]

The annual report published in 1822 revealed that the institution had a deficit of £119, 19s 1d and informed its readers that, notwithstanding this shortfall, the committee had recently admitted four more students, bringing the number attending the academy to sixteen. That many more applications for admission had been made, three of which the committee would have gladly approved but for the want of funds, and if the institution was to continue it needed increased support from the churches.[50] Around five months later the treasurer intimated that the funds were over £200 in arrears and "the deficiency increasing every month, he found it impossible, with a sense of duty to himself and family and business, to make further advances".[51] The committee appealed to both the Congregational Union of Scotland and the churches for assistance if the institution were to continue. The day was saved by the generosity of the academy's president, the influential Scottish lay theological writer Thomas Erskine of Linlathen,[52] and collections from Edinburgh and other places.[53] Nevertheless, although the number of churches collecting for the academy increased from ten in 1822 to thirty-three in 1823, the latter figure still represented less than half of the seventy-three or so churches connected with the union.[54]

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44 *Scottish Congregational Magazine* (Edinburgh 1866) 105.

45 Thomas Woodrow (1793–1877), cf McNaughton op cit 175.

46 Gilbert Wardlaw, Jun'r, (1798–1873), cf ibid 166.

47 Archibald Jack (1788–1870), cf ibid 71.

48 George Downie Cullen (1799–1891), cf ibid 32.

49 *Report* 1818 p5.

50 cf *Christian Herald* (Edinburgh 1822) 468–470.

51 Glasgow Theological Academy Minutes 4th March 1823.

52 Thomas Erskine of Linlathen (1788–1870). Erskine wrote to Charles Stuart on 10th March, 1823, "… the second edition of my Essay, … tell Mr Waugh to remit to Mr Ewing, for his academy, any share of the profit of the work which falls to me, …" cf William Hanna (ed) *Letters of Thomas Erskine of Linlathen from 1800 till 1840* (Edinburgh 1877) 45.

53 cf. Minutes, op cit 2nd April 1823.

54 cf. *Christian Herald* (Edinburgh 1824) 24–25.

For some, the number of students admitted to the academy was considered to be excessive and, as such, an unreasonable burden had been placed on the churches but it was argued,

> If ever there was a period when a sound liberal education was necessary for the work of the ministry, it is the present. … Knowledge is now brought within the reach of all classes of the community. … who does not perceive that this demands a proportional exercise on the part of Christian teachers, … Much prejudice exists against many dissenters, on account of their supposed want of learning; … Let this calumny be practically refuted, … … Nor is the edification of the churches themselves, less intimately connected with the talents and ability of their preachers. When a minister is settled over a flock, he is required to teach his people the whole counsel of God, … and so discharge the duties of his office, as that no man may be able to despise him. He is not like an occasional preacher, who delivers a few general thoughts, and removes from place to place. He is expected to edify a stated congregation for a series of years, perhaps for life. A minister, in these circumstances, will soon find, that not only were his preparations at an Academy strictly necessary, but that he must, as long as he lives, give himself to reading, to meditation and prayer. …
>
> The present body of pastors … will soon be diminished. Death will gradually thin their numbers, … To what quarter, then, are the churches to look for wise and faithful men to fill their places? Certainly to such an institution as this. When a church is deprived of its overseer, one of three things must follow: either they must look out for one, properly qualified to become an acceptable and useful preacher; or they must choose one or more from among themselves to fill the pastoral office, and thus, in great measure, contract their sphere of usefulness, and contemplate a gradual decrease of their numbers: or they will be at once dissolved, and join themselves to such communions as may appear most convenient. …
>
> It is indeed, painful to learn that the Directors have been under the necessity of reducing the number of students. The supposition that the number was too large formerly, should not be too easily admitted. If only the present stations are to be occupied, the opinion may be correct. But are there no destitute parts of the country where new congregations might be collected? There is already a great deficiency of occasional preachers, which subjects the pastors to many inconveniences. They are thus almost precluded from itinerancy, beyond their own immediate neighbourhood; … But were the congregations at home sufficiently furnished with pastors and teachers, would it not be our duty to attend to the wants of distant nations, and to assist in qualifying men … as missionaries to the heathen …?[55]

Eventually, intimation having been given in March 1824 that both tutors intended to resign at the beginning of May, it was resolved that the committee encourage their fellow Congregationalists to support those students currently connected with the academy until they had completed their courses.[56]

55 Ibid 51–55.

56 Glasgow Theological Academy Minutes 18th March 1824.

Thereafter, three ministers, John Aikman, William Orme[57] and John Watson,[58] secretary of the Congregational Union of Scotland, stepped forward to act as guarantors for a bank loan to the extent of £300 and at the meeting of the union in April the ministers present appointed a committee, "consisting of the pastors of churches in Edinburgh and its neighbourhood", to consider the state of the academy, and suggest how it might better function in the future.[59]

A watershed had been reached in the affairs of the seminary which to date had been very much the *Glasgow* Theological Academy. The committee of management appointed at the outset had consisted of twenty members, the tutors, twelve ministers from various parts of Scotland, and three laymen from each of the tutors' charges but seldom over the years had anyone outwith Glasgow attended the committee, which often met without the quorum of seven. Also, of the forty-six or so students associated with the academy during this period, fifteen were connected with either Ewing or Wardlaw's congregations, three with Aberdeen, two with Edinburgh, two with Islay, twenty with various other parts of Scotland and four with England.[60] When the Congregational Union did meet in Edinburgh in May 1825, it was agreed that the affairs of the academy be placed under the superintendence of a committee consisting of thirty members, resident in different parts of the country, to be appointed at each annual meeting of the Union, and that there should be a general meeting of this committee regularly at the time and place of the annual meeting. The following day, the committee appointed Gilbert Wardlaw,[61] secretary of the institution, and George Yule, treasurer for Edinburgh, it being understood that Mr McGavin was to continue in the office of general treasurer. Also, a sub-committee was appointed to meet in Edinburgh for the examination of students and other business and a sub-committee, for attending to the funds and other local business, was appointed to meet in Glasgow. The Edinburgh sub-committee consisted of eight ministers and four laymen from in or around Edinburgh. To all intents and purposes the executive of the Glasgow Theological Academy was now Edinburgh based.[62] One thing however appears to have remained unchanged. At the annual meeting of the committee in 1827 it was noted "that immediate measures for recruiting the funds have become necessary … and urgently called for".[63] Shortly after, it was agreed that in order to save

57 William Orme (1787–1830), cf McNaughton op cit 121.

58 John Watson (1777–1844), cf ibid 167. Joint-secretary 1812–1816, secretary, 1816–1844.

59 Glasgow Theological Academy Minutes 23rd April 1824.

60 cf ibid.

61 The minutes are unclear as to which Gilbert; Gilbert (1768–c1843), elder brother of Ralph Wardlaw, or his son Gilbert, Jun'r (1798–1873), mentioned above.

62 Glasgow Theological Academy Minutes 5th & 6th May 1825.

63 *Christian Herald* (Edinburgh 1827) 170.

money, the annual examination of the students would take place before the committee when its yearly meeting was held in Glasgow, and, in the alternate year, before the sub-committee at Glasgow, who would report to the meeting of committee in Edinburgh.[64] Interestingly, around this time the committee of management concluded it was not consistent with the aims of the academy to use its funds to support those intending to serve abroad as missionaries and while there could be no objection to receiving missionary applicants providing their own financial support, it was advisable to refer others elsewhere.[65] Perhaps it should be noted here that from the outset all students, missionary or otherwise, were expected to support themselves wherever possible and the ability to do so assisted admission to the seminary.

Financial constraints influenced the academy's approach to missionary and non-missionary students, theological constraints led it in April 1830 to strip Thomas Erskine, described in recent times as "the most significant figure in Scottish theological thought in the quarter of a century preceding the Disruption—and perhaps the nineteenth century",[66] of his office of academy president, due to his advocacy of a doctrine of universal atonement and pardon, that through Christ's death, all are in a state of forgiveness.[67] Three months later, the secretary stated that he had already received six applications for admission and he wished to know how many of them were likely to be received on the funds of the institution. According to the treasurer's accounts there was a balance on hand in April of £205, but Erskine's publishers had been instructed to make no further remittances to the academy until they received a fresh order. Having heard this statement the committee recommended to the secretary to mention to those applicants who were likely to apply elsewhere that all of them could not be received.[68] The financial state of the academy continued to trouble the committee, especially in the light of so many students having been received to the full benefits of the institution. Hence, when McGavin indicated his wish to resign around 1831, it was felt that a sub-treasurer should be appointed in Glasgow and the secretary should go to the west to effect some arrangement which would secure larger and more regular contributions from that locality.[69]

The committee reported in May 1836 that they had fourteen students under their charge, excluding individuals connected with the London Missionary Society, occasional hearers and those from England and abroad, attracted by the

64 Glasgow Theological Academy Minutes 9th October 1827.
65 Ibid 5th April 1826.
66 A L Drummond and J Bulloch *The Scottish Church, 1688–1843* (Edinburgh 1973) 194.
67 Glasgow Theological Academy Minutes 28th April 1830.
68 Ibid 23rd July 1830.
69 Ibid 4th October 1831.

University of Glasgow's reputation and at the same time taking the opportunity of hearing the academy tutors.[70] The executive of the academy may have removed to Edinburgh in 1825 and the institution may have continued to suffer from under-funding thereafter, but the tutors' lectures never ceased to influence many, among whom were Robert Ferguson DD, LLD,[71] secretary of the British and Foreign Sailors' Society 1836–50, William Lindsay Alexander DD, LLD,[72] professor in the Theological Hall of Congregational Churches in Scotland 1854–82, Anthony Thompson Gowan DD,[73] also a professor in THCCS 1855–81, Henry Wilkes DD, LLD,[74] professor in Congregational College of British North America 1870–86, John Kennedy DD,[75] professor in New College, London, 1872–76, John Kirk DD,[76] professor in Evangelical Union Theological Hall 1860–76, Andrew Russell DD,[77] James Robertson Campbell DD,[78] Alexander Gordon LLD,[79] Archibald Duff DD,[80] William Harris,[81] India, 1830–c1833, Charles Rattray,[82] Demerara, 1834–1871, William Penman Lyon,[83] India, 1837–40, Robert Caldwell LLD, DD,[84] India, 1838–91, John Stronach,[85] Singapore, Amoy, Shanghai, 1838–76, John Smith Wardlaw, DD,[86] India, 1842–59, LMS. Institution at Highgate and St John's Wood, 1863–72, James Kennedy,[87] India, 1839–77, Thomas Leys Lessel,[88] India, 1837–52, 1861–68, David Livingstone,[89] Africa, 1841–73, along with those who went forth to serve churches in Scotland and elsewhere and whose services would go unrecognised by other institutions. The tutors themselves were honoured in their day, Wardlaw with a doctorate of

70 *Report* 1836.
71 Robert Ferguson (1806–75) cf McNaughton op cit 45.
72 William Lindsay Alexander (1808–84) cf ibid 5.
73 Anthony Thompson Gowan (1811–84) cf ibid 56.
74 Henry Wilkes (1805–86) cf ibid 170.
75 John Kennedy (1813–1900) cf ibid 76.
76 John Kirk (1813–1886) cf ibid 78.
77 Andrew Russell (1807–81) cf ibid 140.
78 James Robertson Campbell (1814–84) cf ibid 22.
79 Alexander Gordon (1808–89) cf ibid 55.
80 Archibald Duff (1810–83) cf ibid 39.
81 William Harris (1805–33) cf ibid 62.
82 Charles Rattray (1803–77) cf ibid 131.
83 William Penman Lyon (1812–77) cf ibid 86.
84 Robert Caldwell (1814–91) cf ibid 20.
85 John Stronach (1810–88) cf ibid 156.
86 John Smith Wardlaw (1813–72) cf ibid 166.
87 James Kennedy (1815–99) cf ibid 76.
88 Thomas Leys Lessel (1807–84) cf ibid 82.
89 David Livingstone (1813–73) cf. W G Blaikie *David Livingstone* (1910) 16–17 & D Livingstone *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* (1857) 5.

divinity from Yale University in 1818[90] and Ewing by the College of Princeton, New Jersey, in 1821.[91]

Ewing's eyesight was deficient and it became even more severely impaired[92] in 1836, the same year in which it was mooted that the academy appoint a salaried tutor.[93] While consideration was being given to this appointment, John Morell Mackenzie[94] was formally recognised by Nile Street Church as Ewing's ministerial colleague on 27th July, 1837.[95] The following month, Ewing suffered a slight stroke and, while making a partial recovery, Mackenzie was called upon to supply his place in the institution.[96] This arrangement appears to have been acceptable to the church but his later decision to accept a position as a full-time lecturer in the academy was not. It appeared imperative to the church that in the event of Ewing's death it should have "a pastor exclusively devoted to their service". Faced with the choice, Mackenzie decided in May 1839 to resign his charge.[97] Ewing approved of Mackenzie's choice.[98]

Having commenced with seven students in 1811, the committee reported twenty-seven years later that there were twenty-two students under the academy's full control, plus four outwith Glasgow prevented from returning due to the need to supply churches during the winter, five London Missionary Society students, two other missionary students received by the society and attending the lectures of the tutors, though they belonged to another denomination, three students from England attending the University of Glasgow, and several others, members of churches in Glasgow, wishing to devote themselves to the ministry, upwards of forty benefiting from the institution in one way or another.[99] However, increasing numbers of students were accompanied by accommodation problems. At the outset, two members of the committee had been appointed to look out for a suitable room for the meetings of tutors with students in 1811,[100] five years later it was found advisable to rent a room which could house the library, accommodate the students when they

90 cf W L Alexander *Memoirs of The Life and Writings of Ralph Wardlaw, DD,* (Edinburgh 1856) 193.

91 Matheson op cit 465–466.

92 Ibid 556–559.

93 cf Glasgow Theological Academy Minutes 12th October, 1836.

94 John Morell Mackenzie (1806–43), cf McNaughton 94.

95 cf *The London Christian Instructor* (1838) 61; cp *Scottish Congregational Magazine* (1843) 410 & Matheson op cit 562.

96 Matheson op cit 562–563; cp *Scottish Congregational Magazine* (1843) 410.

97 cf Matheson op cit 563–564. cp. *General Account of Congregationalism in Scotland from 1798 to 1848 and Particular Accounts Referring to Separate Counties,* no date (c.1848) Section 8, p2.

98 Matheson op cit 564–565.

99 *Report* 1838.

100 Glasgow Theological Academy Minutes 26th August 1811.

wished to consult the books, and serve as a lecture room.[101] Later still, in September 1822, the New Academy Rooms at the back of George Street Chapel were nearly ready and Mrs Campbell, a member of the church in Nile Street, was appointed mistress of the house, having it rent-free for her services.[102] Fifteen years or so on, it was noted "the Academy Room has been very much crowded by the numbers attending, and the place is literally too strait for them"[103] and it was agreed the present apartment be enlarged or another rented.[104] Those appointed to obtain a more commodious classroom reported in October 1838 that they had hired a large hall in George Street for the present and the matter was again remitted to them to procure a more permanent arrangement, as they deemed necessary.[105] Meanwhile, "On considering the state of the funds and that many churches had not contributed to them, it was suggested that deputations should be sent to them".[106]

Not only did the number of students and place of meeting vary over the years, so did the composition of the academic year. Initially, the academy's students attended university classes in the winter and the academy lectures and other exercises in the summer, with a "vacation of about a month in July and August".[107] Later, the students attended both academy and university during the winter, October to April, and had the summer months as a vacation, during which time most were engaged in preaching from May onwards.[108] Later still, at Mackenzie's instigation, the course of study at the institution was extended two months beyond 1st May, the usual session at the university, in order that he might have the undivided attention of the students for that period.[109]

The latter change to the academic year would appear to have arisen out of a degree of tension concerning student supply. Prior to the *de facto* removal of the executive to Edinburgh in 1825 the tutors and management committee members located in the west to all intents and purposes had handled student supply. The responsibility thereafter basically rested with the Edinburgh sub-committee, who had among its members both the academy secretary and the secretary of the Congregational Union. Between 1827 and 1832 student supply was publicly dealt with at the academy AGM but in July 1832, a few months after the AGM, at a sub-committee meeting comprised of Aikman, Cleghorn,[110] Watson, union

101 *Report* 1816 p13.
102 Glasgow Theological Academy Minutes September 1822.
103 *Report* 1837 p7.
104 Glasgow Theological Academy Minutes 3rd April 1838.
105 Ibid 30th October 1838.
106 Ibid 5th April 1838.
107 *Missionary Magazine* (1812) 437.
108 J Ross *A History of Congregational Independency In Scotland* (Glasgow 1900) 107.
109 Glasgow Theological Academy Minutes 5th April & 30th October 1838.
110 John Cleghorn (1769–1843), cf McNaughton op cit 25.

secretary, and George Cullen, academy secretary, Cullen "read several letters from places supplied by students or requiring supply, and stated what he had done in making appointments. Various suggestions for future arrangements were made and the necessary measures were remitted to Mr Watson and him for further consideration: it being understood that they would in meantime see the different stations supplied".[111] At the 1833 AGM, "much conversation ensued respecting the appointment of students to stations for the summer; but ultimately all the arrangements were left with the Secretary and Sub-Committee for further consideration".[112] Eighteen months later, the sub-committee, having considered the appointments proposed for the winter and found it impossible with the students who had left the academy but who were still under their control to supply the churches and stations that were vacant, decided on the suggestion of Mr Watson to keep two of the students due to return to Glasgow in the field to supply these places. The Minute states, "It was with great reluctance that the Committee have adopted this measure and they leave the arrangement with the Secretary".[113] At the following AGM in April 1835, "The Committee proceeded to consider the appointments for the summer and after hearing the report of the Tutors as to the fitness of each student for the work of preaching the Gospel, gave such instructions for their employment as appeared prudent. And understanding that this year the Committee of the Congregational Union would require the services of many of the young brethren it was proposed and agreed to place the appointments for the summer altogether under the charge of Mr Watson and a Sub-Committee consisting of the brethren in and near Edinburgh".[114]

Intriguingly, one year later it was minuted,

> The Committee then proceeded to make some preparatory arrangements for the appointments of the students during summer. Read a letter from Dr Wardlaw in answer to an application by the Secretary for advice from the Tutors, which they decline giving, and having enumerated the places requiring supply, and so far as they could with their present knowledge of the attainments of the students, those who are likely to be employed in preaching, it was found that the number of preachers was at least equal to the number of places from which the Committee hope a suitable adjustment will be made at the General Meeting which is fixed for Wednesday forenoon the 4th May …[115]

And the annual report presented on 3rd May 1836, while noting that the institution had for some time been producing on average five preachers annually, a large number in proportion to the ordinary size of the class, asserted this was not achieved at the expense of the students' studies in an attempt "to supply the

111 Glasgow Theological Academy Minutes 16th July 1832.
112 Ibid 3rd April 1833.
113 Ibid 22nd October 1834.
114 Ibid 8th April 1835.
115 Ibid 4th April 1836.

urgent demands of vacant churches and preaching stations". Rather the rapid throughput was due to the fact that many prior to their admission, "had made considerable progress in their education for the ministry, and that some had even been accustomed to attend the usual exercises of the Academy before coming formally under the control of the Committee". Hence, this was to be seen "not as a doubtful, but as a favourable feature in the present procedure of the Institution, and an improvement on its early history, that now having an opportunity of receiving young brethren who have been sometime preparing themselves … the Committee are enabled … to send out yearly a much greater number of labourers". This report also stated that the committee had "little to remark respecting the employment of the students during last summer, further than that nearly the whole class were constantly engaged in preaching, and that their services were scarcely sufficient for the numerous churches and preaching stations requiring supply. … The appointments were made last session, from time to time, by a Sub-Committee, including the Secretary of the Congregational Union, who took charge of the necessary arrangements".[116] When the management committee met three days later to make appointments for the students during summer, the secretary referred to the previous year's procedure and sought to determine the mind of the committee on the subject. After some discussion it was moved by Dr Wardlaw and "resolved that henceforward the allocation of the students during summer be placed under the direction of a sub-committee consisting of the secretary of the Congregational Union and the secretary of the academy, with four members of the committee of each of these institutions; and that the following members be appointed from this committee for this year, Messrs Alexander, Kinniburgh, Tod and Sommerville, Jun'r".[117] All of the foregoing were members of the Edinburgh sub-committee.

On 23rd March 1837, the "Secretary mentioned that he had received no answer to an application made on the 14th to the Tutors for a list of the students qualified to preach during summer. After hearing various letters from places wanting supply, and reckoning so far as they could the number of students to be employed, it was found that there were more places than preachers. The further consideration of this subject was delayed till the letter of the Tutors was received and in the meantime the Secretary of the Union and the Secretary of the Academy were requested to prepare some plan for the Committee to consider when they next meet".[118] Interestingly, the annual report in 1837 speaks of the academy's operations as being "generally acknowledged to be closely connected with the preservation of the Churches and their extended usefulness"[119] and

116 *Report* 1836 pp3–5.
117 Glasgow Theological Academy Minutes 6th May 1836.
118 Ibid 23rd March 1837.
119 *Report* 1837 p3.

elsewhere Watson was thanked, as convener of the sub-committee for student supply for the trouble he had taken supervising the engagements.[120] The following year it was reported that,

> When the period arrived for the class to assemble at Glasgow, for the winter session, … very great difficulty was experienced in providing supply for many of the places which had enjoyed the services of Students. So urgent was the representation made to the Committee of the necessity of the case, that however unwilling to interrupt the regular course of study, they were compelled to sanction an arrangement, by which two of the more advanced Students remained in the north, completing their College course at the University of Aberdeen, and other two have continued their services during winter to the Churches at Gatehouse and Arbroath, on the understanding that they shall be allowed to return to Glasgow at a future period, …[121]

By this time John Morell Mackenzie had begun to supply Ewing's place in the academy and, at his instigation, the course of study at the institution was extended two months beyond 1st May, the usual session at the university, in order that he might have the undivided attention of the students for that period. He would appear to have been something of a new broom and while the academic year had been extended at his request nevertheless others had expressed the hope "that due attention would still be given to the regular supply of vacant churches and preaching stations".[122] A year later, the committee urged Hugh Smith[123] to continue to supply Falkland in the winter contrary to Mackenzie's wishes.[124] Shortly after, a delegation from Glasgow arrived in Edinburgh with proposed alterations to the management of the academy made by Mackenzie with the support of the other tutors. Namely,

> 1. That with the exception immediately subjoined the students shall all be admitted for the full period of four years' study in the Academy instead of leaving the term of their education to the subsequent decision of the Committee.
>
> 2. That those Students who have completed their course at College before they enter the Academy should continue in it not less than three years.
>
> 3. That the practice of sending students to other universities than that of Glasgow during the Academic Session should be entirely abolished.
>
> 4. That the practice of sending a student to supply a vacant church or station during one or more sessions of his professed connexion with the Academy should be henceforth abandoned.
>
> 5. That no student who has to attend the Classes at College and at the Academy

120 Minutes 5th September 1857.
121 *Report* 1838 p5.
122 Glasgow Theological Academy Minutes 30th October 1838.
123 Hugh Smith, cf McNaughton op cit 150.
124 Glasgow Theological Academy Minutes 15th October 1839.

should be allowed to continue at the same time an agent of the City Mission or of any similar society.

The committee, without seemingly entirely acquiescing in the above, assured the tutors that it was only under the pressure of peculiar circumstances that they had acted without the advice of the tutors in any case and they would in future obtain the consent of the tutors before any abridgement or extension of a student's course or study takes place.[125] Wardlaw and Mackenzie remained unsatisfied. Eventually, the following appeared among proposed laws and regulations in 1841:

> The regular course of study shall consist of four consecutive terms of eight months each at the Academy, viz. from 1st November to 1st July, during which period, the Students shall not be allowed to engage in any employment that would interfere with the due prosecution of their studies. In cases where elementary education has been required, a fifth year may be added; and for such as have previously attended the Languages and Logic Classes in any of the Scottish Universities, three years shall be considered sufficient. But no departure shall be allowed from the regular course of study, except on the recommendation of the Tutors to the Committee.[126]

Little did the tutors or committee suspect that seven of the individuals[127] admitted to the academy in 1840 and 1841 to study under the above regime would be expelled, along with two others admitted in 1843, for their views on the Atonement and thereafter enrich the life of the nascent Evangelical Union. At any rate, the committee of management was able to assert on 19th April, 1842, that it no longer felt the need to vindicate the principle on which the Glasgow Theological Academy was established.

> The lingering prejudices of those who at first opposed the institution have gradually been displaced; … not by the light of Scripture and reason alone, but by the fact … that the cause of God in connexion with the Congregational churches in this country, is … sustained and extended, chiefly through the instrumentality which this Academy regularly supplies. … [Indeed] it may … be asked, what would have been its [the ministry's] present condition, if this institution had not existed, … What would have been in that case the very limited influence of the churches in the urgent circumstances of this eventful time? How utterly unprepared and unprovided must they have been … In bearing testimony for Scriptural independence and purity of communion,—in pleading for these principles, not in word only, but in deed and truth …[128]

125 Ibid 30th January 1840.

126 *Report* 1841 p9.

127 Ebenezer Kennedy (c.1817–1889), cf McNaughton op cit 76; Alexander Duncanson (1814–87), cf ibid 40; William Bathgate (1820–79), cf ibid 11; Gilbert McCallum (1820–90), cf ibid 87; Alexander Cochrane Wood (1818–69), cf ibid 174; James Samson (c.1811–86), cf ibid 143; James Bishop Robertson (1819–94), cf ibid 137; David Ferguson (d.1878), cf ibid 45; Fergus Ferguson (1824–97), cf ibid 45.

128 *Report* 1842 p3.

The academy was flourishing in that there were twenty-nine students engaged in its regular exercises, two of whom were connected with the London Missionary Society, and several others attending who were not regularly under the control of the committee. Nevertheless, despite the fact that there was a greatly enhanced appreciation of the academy's worth among the churches, the committee was still constrained to express regret that so many of the churches neglected to contribute to its funds, … "It will be seen by the Treasurer's accounts subjoined, that the income of the past year is greatly insufficient for the expenditure. Were it not for the extraordinary contributions they have been favoured with, the Committee would be altogether unable to carry on this work, … even on the scale to which they have been confined".[129] Confined or otherwise, the Glasgow Theological Academy minutes appear to reveal that the academy had at least one hundred and seventy-four students associated with it between 1811 and 1841.

Greville Ewing died on 2nd August, 1841.[130] John Morell Mackenzie's career at the Glasgow Theological Academy was cut short when he died in the wreck of the steam-ship Pegasus on the night of 19–20th July, 1843.[131] Ralph Wardlaw continued to serve the academy until his death on 17th December, 1853.[132] The metamorphose of the Glasgow Theological Academy over the years resulted in the Scottish United Reformed and Congregational College.

William D McNaughton

129 Ibid 9.
130 Matheson op cit 594–601.
131 *Scottish Congregational Magazine* (1843) 408.
132 Ibid (1854) 32.

BASINGSTOKE'S GRAND "REFORMATION TIMES" BAZAAR 1903: ASPIRING CONGREGATIONALISM

Introduction

A 'brilliant spectacle' was the phrase used by the *Hants and Berks Gazette* to describe the grand "Reformation Times" bazaar held in Basingstoke's Drill Hall on Wednesday and Thursday, 4th and 5th March 1903, under the auspices of London Street Congregational Church.[1] Even allowing for a touch of journalistic hyperbole, the language coupled with the substantial amount of newsprint devoted to the bazaar indicates that it was a noteworthy event in the life of the community.[2] As the newspaper observed, it was 'necessary to go back some fifteen years to the "Puritan" Bazaar organised by the same church to find an event to compare with it in its artistic features or to surpass it in its financial success'.[3] Indeed the net sum raised by the bazaar was £278 or over £20,000 in today's terms.

Although at one level the bazaar was primarily a means of raising money, at another it could be said to symbolise the central role which the Congregational church played in town affairs at this time. As one of Basingstoke's historians has remarked, 'Toward the end of the Victorian era, the [Church's] congregation included most of the influential businessmen in the town'.[4] It was also well represented on the borough council, with the mayor, Alderman Wadmore, attending the bazaar 'not merely in his state capacity, but as a member of their own church', as the minister, Rev Alfred Capes Tarbolton,[5] put it in his vote of thanks. In seconding the vote, Alderman Edney, another church member, highlighted the mayor's involvement with 'Christian work at the Congregational Church' and his particular concern for young people, having once been a Sunday School teacher.[6]

1 *Hants and Berks Gazette* (hereafter *HBG*), March 7, 1903. During the second day of the bazaar it was decided to extend it to Friday.

2 In addition to the *HBG*, three other newspapers, the *Hampshire Chronicle* (hereafter *HC*), the *Hampshire Observer and Basingstoke News* (hereafter *HOBN*) and the *Andover Advertiser,* also covered the bazaar.

3 *HBG*, March 7, 1903.

4 A Attwood, *The Illustrated History of Basingstoke* (Derby, 2001) 72.

5 A C Tarbolton began his ministry at London Street in 1887.

6 At the time of the bazaar the mayor was seeking to establish a boys' brigade company in the town.

London Street Congregational Church traced its origins to the mid-seventeenth century, when it was 'formed under the Pastorate of the Rev John Hook, a clergyman ejected in 1662 under the Act of Uniformity'.[7] The church building in London Street was opened in 1801 and enlarged in 1839 and 1870. 'With its attractive façade complete with pillars of Grecian style',[8] the church 'dominated', and still does, the built environment of the area where it is located.[9] By 1903 it had 213 members, 526 Sunday school scholars, 51 Sunday school teachers and 33 lay preachers, and it was by far the largest church in the northern district of the Hampshire Congregational Union (HCU).[10] A census of churchgoing in Basingstoke carried out two weeks after the bazaar confirmed the Congregationalists as the largest of the Nonconformist denominations in Basingstoke in terms of the size of the congregations, with 385 being recorded at the morning service and 486 at the evening.[11] Since the church had 700 sittings, this equated with 55 per cent occupancy in the morning and nearly 70 per cent in the evening.

The church appears to have benefited from the economic progress which Basingstoke made during the Victorian era thanks to its location at the junction of the railway lines from London to Southampton and to Salisbury and Exeter. Furthermore, it continued to thrive throughout the Edwardian era, although its growth in membership did not quite keep pace with the increase in Basingstoke's population.[12] In Tarbolton, who had begun his Basingstoke ministry in 1887, the church also had a very effective leader.[13] He was described as 'a man of gentle spirit, quiet enthusiasm, broad culture, and poetic genius, who deserved the confidence and affection of a united and loyal congregation',[14] as well as one whose 'ministry was of a strong, virile type'.[15] Following Tarbolton's resignation in 1907, due to the ill health of his wife, the church continued to prosper under the short, three year, pastorate of his dynamic young successor, Rev Reginald Thompson.[16] The church reached the peak of its pre-First World

7 *Basingstoke Congregational Church Manual* 1908, Hampshire Record Office.

8 Attwood op cit 67

9 D Stanley *Within Living Memory* (Basingstoke 1968) unpaginated.

10 *Hampshire Congregational Union Annual Report* (1903). The next largest churches at Alton and Andover only had 115 and 120 members respectively in 1903.

11 *HBG* March 21, 1903.

12 In 1901 the members of London Street constituted 3.5% of Basingstoke's population aged 18 and over. In 1911 this had fallen to 3.3%.

13 He had previously been the pastor of West Dulwich Congregational Church.

14 Quoted in *London Street Congregational Church Basingstoke Triple Jubilee Celebrations 19th to 23rd November, 1950* p12.

15 *Congregational Year Book* (1926) 183.

16 R W Thompson was chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales 1938–39.

War membership in 1914, with 273 on its roll.[17] By this time the pastor was Rev Rocliffe Mackintosh, who held the post until 1926.

The choice of the Reformation as the theme of the bazaar, which was held at the height of the controversy over the Education Act of 1902, intimates a desire to make a politico-theological point by 'conveying to the mind some suggestions of those great historic principles which lovers of religious freedom will always hold dear.'[18] This was reinforced by the presence of the Earl of Portsmouth, who was one of the 'big hitters' for Protestantism in Edwardian Hampshire, and the Countess of Portsmouth. A contemporary source refers to the Earl as being 'widely-known for his zealous adherence of Broad Church principals (*sic*) and sturdy guardianship of what he conceives to be the highest interest of the Anglican Church'.[19] Another states that he was 'keenly adverse to the principles and practices of the Ritualist Party, and … [had] entered the campaign … against the adherents of that religious Body with a zeal and energy that brook no denial.'[20] Thus, notwithstanding his Anglican background, in his 'stirring' opening address he stressed that this was 'a time when all those who value the principles of the Reformation and the Protestant faith should stand together'.[21]

As Simon Green observes: 'Bazaars were … popular features in the organisational life of religious associations during the second half of the nineteenth century'[22] and their popularity undoubtedly continued into the twentieth. However, he equates them almost exclusively with 'the doctrine of voluntary beneficence'.[23] Although the fiduciary aspects of the "Reformation Times" bazaar were undoubtedly of considerable importance, from a historical perspective it can also be said to have encapsulated communal, theological and political, as well as financial, concerns. It is with the exploration of such concerns, and the meanings that might be attached to them, that this paper is primarily concerned.

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17 *Hampshire Congregational Union Annual Report* (1914). In addition 37 country members belonged to the satellite preaching stations in Basingstoke's hinterland for which London Street had oversight.

18 *HBG*, March 7, 1903.

19 *Hampshire and Some Neighbouring Records: Historical Biographical and Pictorial* (Allan North 1908) unpaginated.

20 C A Manning Press *Hampshire and Isle of Wight Leaders: Social and Political* (1903) unpaginated.

21 *HBG*, March 7, 1903.

22 S J D Green *Religion in the age of decline: Organisation and experience in industrial Yorkshire, 1870–1920* (Cambridge 1996) 165.

23 S J D Green "The Death of Pew-Rents, the Rise of Bazaars and the End of the Traditional Economy of Voluntary Religious Organisations: The Case of the West Riding of Yorkshire, c1870–1914" *Northern History* 27 (1991) 198–225.

Financial

As spelt out in the official programme, the objects of the bazaar were to raise money '(1) "in aid of the funds of the Hampshire Congregational Union, which relies on help of this kind in order to carry on its work in the poorer districts of our county; (2) in aid of the renovation of our village chapels, our evangelistic and other allied works; (3) towards the purchase of a site for a Mission Hall in the newly developing part of the town." '[24] The HCU was greatly dependent on its annual bazaar, which was held in different locations each year, to replenish its funds for supporting those churches that did not have the resources locally to sustain their work in full. In the main, this meant the smaller village churches. As reported:

> Last year £937 (i.e. 1902) was given to the villages for the support of evangelists and pastors of small churches. That might seem like a large sum, but when it is divided amongst so many it did not amount to more than enough to bring the stipends of the Evangelists up to £80 a year, and of the pastors of small churches to £100. About £350 was granted to twelve small churches and £600 to eighteen evangelistic stations.[25]

The existence of the Fund very much reflected the responsibility which larger churches in urban centres felt for the survival of the smaller village churches in their rural hinterlands. As pointed out by the mayor, the great principle of the HCU was 'that the strong should help the weak, and what could be more praiseworthy?' [26] Significantly, the northern district was the principal beneficiary of this exercise in cross-subsidisation.[27] From the perspective of the villages such support could be justified on the grounds that with rural depopulation many of the young people brought up in the local Sunday school and there socialised into the Christian faith and practices of Congregationalism would ultimately move on to become, hopefully, members of town churches.

In his remarks at the bazaar Rev Richard Wells, the general secretary of the HCU,[28] was fulsome in his praise of 'the splendid service that Basingstoke always does in regard to village work'.[29] Indeed, through its satellite churches and preaching stations, London Street aspired to promote the cause of

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24 *HBG* March 7, 1903.

25 *HBG* March 7, 1903. By way of comparison, Tarbolton's stipend was £300 per annum.

26 *HBG* March 7, 1903.

27 For example, in 1902 northern district churches and individuals contributed £56 17 3d to the requisite HCU fund, while churches and preaching stations received £348 8 2d. *HCU Annual Report* (1902).

28 He was also pastor of Havant Congregational Church and was to become secretary of the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

29 *HBG* March 7, 1903.

Congregationalism beyond the borders of the town.[30] Nonetheless, the success or otherwise of these outreach ventures was variable and as noted:

> It is impossible to state definitely how much good has been done in all the villages. Our workers have all done their part willingly and well, and we believe that much good must be the result of so much loving service.[31]

In some ways, the good that was done can be seen as an expression, with respect to religious faith, of 'the intimate links between town and surrounding countryside', which Jonathan Brown has identified and explored in the socio-economic sphere.[32] Similarly, as Diana Stanley has written: 'Town served country and the country supplied the town in an inseparable dependency'.[33] Thus, it was recognised that 'if these bazaars were the means of keeping up the income they were worthy of earnest support.'[34]

However, altruistic considerations of this kind were unlikely to maximise takings. In order to achieve this goal, the bazaar had to lure what today would be called 'punters' and encourage them to put their hands in their pockets. With this in mind, the bazaar incorporated a wide variety of attractions. These included the stallholders, primarily women, being attired in costumes 'illustrative of various Periods and Countries of the Reformation';[35] music; *tableaux vivant*; conjuring; and competitions; as well as 'an art gallery, fairy well, fish pond, and a bandstand'.[36] Having provided details of what was on offer the *Hants and Berks Gazette* concluded: 'It will readily be seen, therefore, that what with the attraction of the stalls and the varied entertainments, visitors to the bazaar had plenty of temptations to part with their money'.[37] In this context, the use of the

30 There were no fewer than eight Congregational churches for which London Street acted as the mother church. These were at Cuffaude (30 sittings, founded 1873); Ellisfield (30, 1894); Farleigh (40, 1900); Mapledurwell (90, 1864); Pyott's Hill (90, 1872); Round Town (30, 1869); Winslade (90, 1887); and Worting (90, 1872) *HCU Annual Report (1903)*.

31 *HCU Annual Report (*1902).

32 J Brown "Market Towns and Downland in Hampshire 1780–1914" *Southern History* 28 (2006) 90.

33 Stanley op cit. The area served by Basingstoke comprised the parishes (in alphabetical order) of Andwell, Basing, Bradley, Bramley, Church Oakley, Cliddesden, Deane, Dummer with Kempshott, Eastrop, Ellisfield, Farleigh Wallop, Hartley Westpall, Herriard, Mapledurwell, Mortimer West End, Nately Scures, Newnham, North Waltham, Nutley, Pamber, Popham, Preston Candover, Sherborne St John, Silchester, Stratfield Turgis, Stratfield Saye, Sherfield-upon-Loddon, Tunworth, Up Nately, Upton Grey, Winslade & Kempshott, Weston Patrick, West Sherborne, Worting, Woodmancott, Wootton St Lawrence and Weston Corbett.

34 *HBG* March 7, 1903.

35 *HBG* February 28, 1903.

36 *HC* March 7, 1903.

37 *HBG* March 7, 1903.

word 'temptation' might seem a little unfortunate! One assumes that raffles and games of chance were eschewed on moral grounds, given that the Nonconformist Conscience remained a powerful influence on conduct as well as campaigning at this time.

In financial terms the bazaar was deemed to have been a considerable success. However, the expenses amounted to £88, with a great deal being spent on 'the scenic arrangements' which consisted of 'a representation of the exterior of a medieval English castle, with turrets and castellated walls.'[38] For this purpose the organisers used the services of Messrs H S Kelly and Co of Liverpool, 'the well-known bazaar decorators, who expressly painted the scenery to suit the requirements of the building and the occasion.'[39] Thus, it would appear that no expense was spared. However, it meant that with £366 being raised in total, just under 25 per cent of the takings was absorbed by costs. Of the remaining £278, £100 was contributed to the funds of the HCU and the balance was used by London Street to support its evangelistic work.

The concern with money, while understandable, can be seen as a double edged sword. On the one hand, it could be regarded as a distraction, diverting attention away from the church's principal goal of saving souls. As Albert Peel argued in 1917: 'Hundreds of churches … exhaust all their energy in raising money to maintain a ministry … they have no strength … left for the specific task for which they exist—the winning of men and women for the Kingdom of God.'[40] On the other hand, the camaraderie, fostered by organising and running major fund-raising events such as bazaars, undoubtedly helped to strengthen the bonds of fellowship and the sense of commitment and belonging amongst church members. Put another way, it was as important for churches to attend to the challenge of retention as to that of recruitment.[41]

Communal

In view of its scale, the bazaar undoubtedly involved a considerable amount of collective effort and enterprise. By this means, it gave church members a focal point for their endeavours and a sense of worth in human terms. In the newspaper reports those with key roles as stall holders were named, thereby adding to the kudos attached to their involvement. As Green acknowledges, bazaars 'were self-consciously communal and festive events'.[42]

Not surprisingly in the organisation of the bazaar there was a strong element

38 *HBG* March 7, 1903.
39 *HC* March 7, 1903.
40 A Peel *Inevitable Congregationalism* (1937) 8.
41 D M Thompson *The Decline of Congregationalism in the Twentieth-Century* (The Congregational Lecture 2002).
42 Green "Death of pew-rents" 223.

of gender demarcation along traditional lines. It seems that men made the decisions and directed affairs while women implemented them. As it was put, somewhat disingenuously, in one newspaper:

> Assisted by a Committee of gentlemen as far as their comparatively limited capacities enable them to help in the affair which depends largely for its success upon women's skill and industry, the ladies worked at their task with such remarkable enthusiasm and unity that we may safely aver that few undertakings of this kind have had a more brilliant issue.

Although this might sound a little patronising to modern ears, the bazaar undoubtedly provided the women of the church, who would have represented a majority of the membership, with a further opportunity to bond and prove their usefulness. Perhaps women were more effective than men in encouraging those who attended the bazaar to spend.[43]

From the perspective of the community at large, the bazaar is a good example of the contradictions in the Nonconformist psyche, to which Jeffrey Cox has drawn attention. While Nonconformists might have been criticised as killjoys, due to their commitment to temperance and Sunday observance, as he points out, they provided 'entertainment for the general community more readily than the Anglicans.'[44] The variety of attractions has already been mentioned and as the *Hampshire Chronicle* commented a 'picturesque and animated scene … presented itself' to everyone visiting the bazaar.[45] Thus, notwithstanding the theme of the bazaar, in its planning and presentation to members of the wider community the church was at pains to counteract any thoughts of abstemiousness.

The number of those attending is not recorded but various speakers made reference to the support which was received from across the denominations in Basingstoke. For example, the mayor commented that: 'They could congratulate themselves that they had the sympathy and help of other Churches—not only of the free churches, but the Established Church also. He was struck and pleased yesterday to see prominent members of the Episcopal Church here to give them their support and sympathy.'[46] Moreover, on each day of the bazaar the ministers of the Countess of Huntingdon and Wesleyan churches respectively played a part in the opening ceremony. This evidence, along with the earlier references to its links with the economic and political spheres, clearly demonstrates London Street's ability to connect with the community at large. Nonetheless, while engaging with the wider world it had to pay due regard to maintaining the

43 *HBG* March 7, 1903.
44 J Cox *The English Churches in a Secular Society Lambeth* (Oxford 1982) 85.
45 *HC* March 7, 1903.
46 *HBG* March 7, 1903.

integrity and distinctiveness of its core evangelistic mission. Thus, each day the bazaar was opened with the singing of a hymn and prayers.

At the same time, it was increasingly being recognised that the church, as a community of seekers and believers, had an important social role, which needed as much attention as that of outreach and evangelism. As David Thompson points out, during the nineteenth century, 'Congregationalism was able to ignore its problems of retention because of its success in recruitment'. However, as he goes on to argue: 'When both became problems, decline was inevitable'.[47]

Seen in this light, the "Reformation Times" bazaar had a part to play both in representing the London Street Congregational Church to those outside of its fellowship and in sustaining and enthusing the membership, especially women. It can also be argued that, in order to offset the possible moral ambiguity of using money making to these ends, it was necessary to provide the bazaar with a theological edge.

Theological

Given that each stall at the bazaar portrayed a theme from Protestant history, including John Calvin and Geneva, Martin Luther, the Pilgrim Fathers, John Knox and the Huguenots, the bazaar was clearly designed to remind those who attended of their national religious heritage. It was also a celebration of the Reformation. As Tarbolton commented in his opening remarks:

> They were pleased that their efforts to-day should be under the banner of the Reformation, which was noble in its aim, and the principles of which were not less important today than they were in the sixteenth century. Each stall was under the banner not of a patron saint, but of a Reformer whose visage looked down upon them—noble men and true.[48]

By drawing attention to the fact that each stall was under the patronage of a Reformer rather than a patron saint, the minister was, tangentially perhaps, making a theological statement.[49] At the time many Nonconformists, as well as some Anglicans, felt that the Protestant ethos of the Established Church was being undermined by Romanising practices promoted by the extreme High Church Party. Thus, it could be argued that the underlying meaning of the bazaar in theological terms was to present the Free Churches as the true heirs of the Protestant Reformation and not least the Congregationalists. Indeed, Tarbolton went as far as to say that 'they might look upon … [the Reformers] as forerunners of our modern Nonconformity, as well as of Protestantism'.[50] How

47 Thompson op cit 31.

48 *HBG* March 7, 1903.

49 A full list of stalls and their patrons were: Tudor (sign of Cranmer); Early English (Wycliffe); German (Luther); Swiss (Calvin); Scotch (Knox); Florentine (Savonarola); Pilgrim Fathers (Edward Winslow); and Huguenot (Coligny). *HC* March 7, 1903.

50 *HBG* March 7, 1903.

far the emphasis on Protestantism was at the expense of evangelicalism, which had been the lodestone for most Nonconformists during the nineteenth century, is difficult to say. What is apparent is that the discourse of Evangelicalism was being replaced by that of Protestantism.

As a prelude to the bazaar, on the Sunday before, Tarbolton preached on 'The true significance of the Reformation times' at London Street's evening service. During his sermon he drew attention to what he regarded as the 'essential principles' of the Reformation, including 'a vindication of the supremacy of conscience … the exaltation of Holy Scriptures as the one standard of faith and morals as against tradition … [and] direct access of the individual soul to God.'[51] He also saw these principles as being under threat from what he described as the 'anti-Reformation movement'.[52]

Nonetheless, although Nonconformists sought to differentiate themselves from Anglicanism, particularly of the Tractarian variety, it would seem that relations across the Free Church-Anglican divide in Basingstoke were relatively good. A few weeks before the bazaar was held, eleven ministers from all denominations, together with some 1100 other members of the community, signed a memorial to the magistrates 'in favour of a reduction of the number of licensed houses in the borough.'[53] Temperance was a topic on which there was broad agreement between the denominations, at least in Basingstoke. Indeed, Tarbolton drew attention to the fact that the signatories 'represented not one section of the religious community alone; the Established Church and the Free Churches united in it.'[54] In addition, to reinforce the point made earlier, 'attendance at the bazaar was very representative, people of various denominations, including friendly members (both clergy and laity) of the Church of England, showing cordial sympathy with their neighbours of the Congregational Church.'[55]

Moreover, by inviting the Earl of Portsmouth, an Anglican, to give the address at the opening ceremony, common cause was being made with those members of the Church of England who were extremely unhappy with the direction which their denomination had taken. Thus, in his address the Earl was prepared to excoriate the 'class of persons who call themselves members of the Protestant Church of England, but who have too long submitted to the introduction into the Church of England of principles alien to the Reformation'. In his view, 'if the Church … [was] to remain as an exponent of religious truth in this country it … [would] have to discard the unauthorised

51 *HOBN* March 7, 1903.
52 *HOBN* March 7, 1903.
53 *HBG* January 24, 1903.
54 *HBG* January 24, 1903.
55 *HBG* March 7, 1903.

and illegal practices and views which are being adopted by modern priests (applause)'. However, while being a forceful advocate of Protestantism, he was keen not 'to imply anything personal to any particular clergyman of the Church of England'. Indeed, he took pains to point out that the vicar of Basingstoke was 'an old friend of mine' and that he was neither 'intolerant' nor 'bigoted'. Consequently, Basingstoke was 'fortunate' to have such a minister at the parish church.[56]

In dealing with theological issues the Earl displayed many character traits highlighted by a contemporary biographer:

> … the noble Earl is also sympathetic and open hearted. Whilst vigorously supporting what he considers to be right and just, and though thoroughly outspoken in controversy, he is never forgetful of the fact that courtesy is due to everyone, and he is particularly careful to say nothing that might leave reasonable room for anybody to question the sincerity and earnestness of his convictions.[57]

Arguably, in his personality the Earl embodied an emerging tension between a desire to defend the tenets of Protestantism and a wish for a stronger ecumenical spirit amongst Christians of different traditions at a time when the threat from secular values and distractions was becoming more overt. A similar tension was also apparent in the political sphere.

Political

With the furore surrounding the Education Act being at its height in early 1903, it was not really surprising that the Earl of Portsmouth should make extensive reference to it in his opening address at the bazaar. In so doing, he clearly felt uninhibited by the nature of the occasion from not only expressing his views in a forthright manner but also blurring the boundary between politics and religion. He described the Act as 'reactionary' and argued that: 'The primary iniquity … [was] that while the public are to pay, the privileged are to control'.[58] Then, adopting an even more belligerent tone he went on to exhort his hearers to resist:

> Never let one of you rest until you get this Act removed from the statute book (applause). Remember this, that if the principles of freedom and the principles of Nonconformity are to be respected in this country, Nonconformity must show that it is a political force, a fighting force (hear, hear). If it submits to injustice of this kind all I can say is that I think its religious influence will be considerably reduced, and as regards political and public influence, it will cease to exist (hear, hear).[59]

This was undoubtedly a call to arms and by identifying with Nonconformists on

56 *HBG* March 7, 1903.
57 Manning Press op cit.
58 *HBG* March 7, 1903.
59 *HBG* March 7, 1903.

this issue, he was undoubtedly distancing himself from those Anglicans who were supporters of the 1902 Education Act and, in many cases, on the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church. Such a stance was adopted partly for doctrinal reasons but also for partisan. At some point the Earl had rejoined the Liberal Party under Henry Campbell-Bannerman, having been a Liberal Unionist for a time, and the Education Act was seen as a convenient stick with which to beat the Unionist Government.

As well as commenting on the controversy surrounding the Education Act in broad national terms, the Earl took the 'opportunity of replying to a great number of letters and expressions of opinion' concerning the position in Hampshire and in particular representation on the county education committee. He did so as a representative of 'Liberalism in the county'.[60] While making clear that he had every confidence in the council chairman, Lord Northbrook, who, he believed, was acting with 'strictest impartiality', he had this advice for his audience:

> But as regards the attitude and position of those who object to the principles of the Act, and who want to get represented on the Committee, my advice to them is this: You must act together. You must consider what, under the circumstances, is a fair and reasonable representation on the Committee. When you have fully and, carefully and exhaustively considered that matter, and decided in your own minds what should be the least number of representatives upon that Committee to enable your opinions to be fairly and reasonably put forward and dealt with, then, if you are unable to get that number upon the Committee, the wisest, the strongest and only course to take is for no progressive member to agree to serve on the Committee at all (applause).[61]

Although he did not expect this eventuality to arise, he nonetheless felt obliged to address the subject in view of its topicality. Clearly, he did not consider that there was any incongruity in speaking about an overtly party political issue on such an occasion as a church bazaar. Furthermore, judging by the reactions of the members of the audience with the reported 'applause' and 'hear hears' it was clear that what he had to say accorded with their expectations.

The impact of the Education Act was also linked to the importance of evangelistic work in the villages. In his opening remarks at the start of the second day of the bazaar, Mr J R Ridley representing the HCU argued that:

> … in view of the Act which had just been passed … they should keep alive in the country places those principles which were dear to them as Free Churchmen. They must see to it that the country churches had someone to lead them, someone who should be competent to advise them in questions of difficulty that might arise from time to time, and who would be able to take the place of spiritual adviser and teacher. The children of their villages who would by-and-bye

60 *HBG* March 7, 1903.
61 *HBG* March 7, 1903.

> move to larger towns and perhaps cross the water should receive in early days that confirmation of the principles of the Free Churches and Nonconformity.

In this respect, Congregational pastors and evangelists were seen as a counterweight to Anglican teachers in the Church schools, which were the norm in a substantial number of Hampshire villages, thereby adding weight to the need for funds to pay them an adequate salary.

In many respects the political overtones of the bazaar resonated with the coalescing of the sacred and the secular which characterised the life of many churches at this time. Indeed, in a sermon on "Christianity and Politics", Rev John Daniel Jones, the renowned Congregationalist, who was pastor of Richmond Hill Congregational Church in Bournemouth, went as far as to argue that engagement in political activities was 'as religious as leading a prayer-meeting … [and] as religious as teaching in the Sunday School'.[62]

Thus, not surprisingly, many members of the clergy were heavily involved in public affairs. At the time of his resignation it was pointed out that Tarbolton had 'taken an active and eminently useful part in the public life of the town, more particularly as a member of the late School Board and Manager of the present Council Schools, as well as a member of the Board of Guardians'.[63] Similarly, as has been mentioned, some church members were on the borough council, while a number were also magistrates. Furthermore, Tarbolton, along with many Free Church colleagues, was to play a 'high profile' role in the campaign of passive resistance against the 1902 Education Act. Thus, it would have been more surprising if the bazaar had been an entirely apolitical affair. It was just one example of the resurgence of political Nonconformity, after a period of relative quiescence, to which many commentators have drawn attention.[64]

Conclusion

The support and press coverage given to Basingstoke's grand "Reformation Times" bazaar was testimony to London Street Congregational Church's undoubted standing in the local community as well as the HCU. Taken at face value, it was indicative of the church's energy and entrepreneurial spirit and can be seen as a synthesis of "embodied" and "diffusive" Christianity, with its Reformation theme; secular location in the Drill Hall; and various entertainments.[65] Furthermore, coupled with the church's continued expansion

62 "Christianity and Politics", A Sermon Preached at Richmond Hill Congregational Church by the Pastor, Rev J D Jones, MA, BD, *The Richmond Hill Magazine and Congregational Record*, New Series, VII, 5: 37–8.

63 *HBG* February 2, 1907.

64 See, for example, S Koss *Nonconformity in Modern British Politics* (1975) especially chapter 2; J Munson *The Nonconformists: in search of a lost culture* (1991) especially chapter 10.

65 J Cox *English Churches in a Secular Society: Lambeth 1870–1930* (Oxford 1982) 93–5.

in the years leading up to the First World War, it could be regarded as emblematic of Callum Brown's 'faith society'.[66]

However, the bazaar also demonstrated Congregationalism's preoccupations and dilemmas in the early twentieth century. These related to the physical and communal well-being of the Church as well as its engagement with the wider world. While it might be overstating the case to refer to this as a 'crisis of faith', there were signs that all was not well.[67] The ongoing struggle to fund the work in villages, concern over the threats to the Protestant heritage of the country and the controversy associated with the 1902 Education Act, all served as reminders of the challenges the Church faced. For many Congregationalists they were also distractions, undermining the Church's ability both locally and nationally to save souls. In other words, evangelical zeal was being compromised even as the Church sought to reach out to the wider community. No evidence has been found of the thoughts and reactions of those attending the bazaar. Although they are likely to have been impressed by the 'spectacle', the religious theme may well have been overshadowed by the more 'worldly' aspects.

Seen in this light, the bazaar serves as a microcosm of the stresses and strains then facing Congregationalism. Although it would be too simplistic to argue that a single minded pursuit of evangelical goals had been superseded by a more complex set of aspirations—financial, communal, theological and political; nonetheless for vibrant Congregational churches, like London Street, the social and cultural milieu that they now had to negotiate was somewhat more perplexing than it had been during the mid-Victorian era.

Roger Ottewill

66 C G Brown *Religion and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Harlow 2006) ch 2.

67 A Gilbert *Religion and Society in Industrial England: Church, chapel and Social Change, 1740–1914* (1976) 184–6.

V S PRITCHETT, SEDBERGH AND EDWARDIAN CONGREGATIONALISM

The writer and literary critic, Sir Victor Sawdon Pritchett CH CBE (1900–97), always known to his readers as V S Pritchett, and to his friends as VSP, had close links to early twentieth century Congregationalism in the north of England.[1] He recalled the first twenty years of his life in his autobiography, *A Cab at the Door* (1968), in which he claimed teasingly that the "only certainty" of his ancestry is that he came "from a set of story tellers and moralists and that neither party cared much for the precise"—an interesting legacy for a mature teller of tales, but problematic for a sensitive boy. He elaborated, the "story tellers were for ever changing the tale and the moralists tampering with it in order to put it in an edifying light". His mother's family were "all pagans", he stated, and "she, a rootless London pagan, a fog-worshipper", yet one of "the decent London poor", was brought up on the folk-lore of the north London streets. In contrast, his father's forebears were "harsh, lonely, God-ridden sea or country people who had been settled along the Yorkshire coasts or among its moors and fells for hundreds of years".

According to VSP's memoirs, his parents anticipated that their first child would be a girl whom they planned to name after the elderly Queen/Empress. When a little boy was born his paternal grandfather, William Henry Pritchett, a Congregational minister then in Repton, in Derbyshire, urged the parents to call him Marcus Aurelius (after the Roman emperor/philosopher), a name in line with their preference for the imperial but one that probably derived from his own classical studies, in preparation for the ministry. Although his parents called him Vic, the adult Pritchett disliked his name and declined to use it.[2] In 1906 his grandfather became the minister of Sedbergh Congregational Church, then in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Given the upheavals in Pritchett's childhood, his long and frequent stays in the Yorkshire manse of his grandparents provided much needed stability. In this paper I examine the early influences upon Pritchett, his

1 I thank Revd Carole Marsden, Elspeth Griffiths, and members of Sedbergh United Reformed Church for access to the records of Sedbergh Congregational Church.

2 V S Pritchett *A Cab at the Door* (Penguin 1979) 9–10—hereafter referred to as *Cab*. In his Whitbread prize winning biography, Jeremy Treglown asserts incorrectly that W H Pritchett was minister in Ripon, and dismisses VSP's truthful memory of it as Repton, *V S Pritchett. A Working Life* (2005) 7, 259.

experiences in Yorkshire, and the effects which its Edwardian Congregationalism had upon him and his work.

Pritchett's Achievement

Pritchett was a man of letters—critic, essayist, novelist, biographer and travel writer—in the English tradition of Charles Lamb and William Hazlitt—yet he was best known for his short stories, publishing over one hundred. Like Chekhov, whose life he wrote, he explored the workings of unassuming lives and found meaning in the incidental. Needless to say, several of his tales draw on the personalities and events of his early life.

Pritchett published two volumes of autobiography, both well received by the critics. His overbearing father, a dreamer who continually ignored the shabbiness which his persistent failures forced upon his family, dominates the first volume. As late as the mid 1940s his father still affected VSP powerfully. After a visit from his parents at that time, Pritchett wrote, "He is so vulgar, so boring, so destructive", and, on another occasion, he articulated his father's potential for his fiction, "I must write about him quickly, turn him into cash". He was to inspire some of VSP's most telling fiction.[3]

In time VSP's achievement was recognised by visiting professorships and lectureships at several American universities, including Princeton, the University of California, Berkeley, Brandeis, and Columbia. He received honorary doctorates from Leeds, Columbia, Sussex and Harvard, became president of the English branch of PEN (Poets, Essayists and Novelists) in 1971 and international president of the PEN Club in 1974. He was honoured with a CBE in 1968, a knighthood in 1975, became a Companion of Literature (Royal Society of Literature award) in 1988, and a Companion of Honour in 1993. Success brought him membership of the Savile and Beefsteak clubs and a home in Regent's Park Terrace, in London.

This home, which his wife called "the word factory" and where they lived for forty years from 1957, allowed VSP from the window of his study on the fourth floor to watch, with child-like wonder, the movements of the clouds. To him frontiers were always romantic, a notion which probably sprang from his enjoyment of travel. To cross a border was thrilling, although a frontier for Pritchett could be something unconscious, marking the journey from the material to the imaginative. He saw his Regency home as set in "an ideal frontier", the beautiful houses in Regent's Park Terrace being close to Camden Town's hustle and bustle, leaving him "perfectly situated between his aspirations and his origins". When shopping in Camden, he might see a face or overhear a phrase which would provide a basis for his creative genius. As Margaret Drabble

3 J Treglown *V S Pritchett. A Working Life* (2005) 1.

wrote, his stories contain an "extraordinary cast of ordinary people". In an interview, given when he was 85, he said his head was "full of voices waiting to be attached to characters, characters looking for incidents", and these unexploited incidents may have been from the last month or from his childhood, all waiting to be written.[4]

Pritchett's Early Life

Pritchett's beginnings were far from auspicious. He was born on December 16th, 1900 in lodgings over a toy shop in St Nicholas Street, Ipswich, a rundown part of the medieval town near the docks.[5] He was the first of four children of Walter Sawdon Pritchett and Beatrice Helena (nee Martin). Walter and Beatrice had met in Kentish Town in London where the charming but luckless Walter and his wife-to-be had worked as shop assistants. Having resigned their jobs, the 22 years old Walter became a newsagent and stationer in Rushmere in Ipswich. His son wrote of Walter as "one of nature's salesmen" but "even more one of nature's buyers". He convinced himself that his "measly little" Ipswich shop was a "superb" opportunity and decked it out with "new splash", spending so freely on fittings that nothing was left for stock. Sadly few customers came—the "new paint smelled of sin to them", surmised VSP—and in a matter of months, Walter was "bankrupt, or if not legally bankrupt, penniless and pursued". Walter's solution was to pawn all he could, his watch and chain, and Beatrice's engagement ring, and to place his pregnant wife in rooms over the toy shop. After VSP's birth, "the young Micawber" dispatched both wife and child to his father's manse.[6]

In London again, Walter quickly put all embarrassments behind him. He went to the Wesleyan church, having abandoned the Congregationalists, and, VSP stated, he sang "his debts away in a few stentorian hymns".[7] Perhaps he suspected that the Wesleyans would provide him with more prestigious contacts and business openings than the Congregationalists? His previous employer, who owned the shop in Kentish Town, was a Wesleyan and a freemason.[8]

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4 *Who's Who 1995*, D R Baldwin *V S Pritchett* (Boston, Mass 1987) 27, *The New York Times* 16 Dec 1985, *The Independent* 22 March 1997, *Daily Telegraph* 22 November 2001, Treglown op cit 183.

5 Ibid 7, *ODNB*.

6 *Cab* 9–11. VSP's memory is at fault here. He states in his memoir that he and his mother were sent to his grandfather's Yorkshire manse, but his grandparents did not move to Sedbergh until 1906, so the infant Pritchett must have gone to Repton. Certainly he remembered the visits to Sedbergh more clearly and more fondly, as he admits (ibid 31), and his adult self saw all his childhood visits to his grandparents as if they were to that town.

7 *Cab* 10–11.

8 Ibid 20, ODNB.

VSP somehow recalled that journey north of his mother and his newly born self as "miserable". His mother had seen "Love in a nice little shop" as ideal but, in the disgrace of running away from Ipswich, she felt "wretched, frightened and ashamed". She explained that she had been brought up "straight" and had "never owed a penny". Nor was she very welcome in Repton, because Walter's mother disapproved of her daughter-in-law, and VSP described their arrival at the manse as "awful". He continued, "My grandmother was confirmed in her opinion—she had given it bluntly and within earshot, when my father had first taken my mother there, wearing her London clothes—that her favourite son had been trapped and ruined by a common shop-girl of whom she said: 'I lay she's nowt but a London harlot'". She had offered to take baby VSP from his mother to bring him up herself, an offer which Beatrice bitterly resented and of which she often reminded the growing boy.[9]

According to VSP, his father was always an unreliable scapegrace, and the constant financial difficulties of his business dealings led to the family's peripatetic existence, moving home eighteen times before VSP's twelfth birthday. They lived in Woodford, Derby, Palmer's Green, Balham, Uxbridge, Acton, Ealing, Hammersmith, Camberwell, Ipswich, Dulwich and Bromley. The title of his autobiography, presenting the image of a horse drawn cab, reflects this instability and neither implies wealth nor a jolly outing, but rather the unseemly flit from one lodging to another. On these occasions the cab, in which his mother was invariably crying, would take the family to an underground station and then they would arrive at a new home. Although VSP lived in many London suburbs and went to different schools, he eventually was placed at the well-to-do Alleyn's School, in Dulwich, which he left aged 15.[10]

William Henry Pritchett

VSP's grandfather was born in Hull in January 1854, the youngest son in a fishing family. His father had been a North Sea trawler man and his brothers had all drowned in fishing accidents between Hull and the Dogger Bank. His protective mother took him to Bradford, "away from ships", where he had been brought up "in great poverty". He had worked "on the roads" before joining the army in the 1860s. VSP commented that "since only the hungry or the riff-raff did this, he must have been in a poor way". He had enlisted in the artillery and often recounted a story of his military misadventures. His battery was stationed near a seaside town, probably on the Mersey, and was engaged in target practice. Merchant and other vessels were granted safe passage but W H Pritchett fired his gun against orders, sending a "cannon ball through the mainsail of a passing

9 *Cab* 11.
10 Ibid 26–28, *ODNB.*

pleasure yacht". VSP noted the "rasp of glee in his voice when he stressed the word 'pleasure'".

Dismissed from the army, he worked as a bricklayer which entailed his walking from town to town and to his arrival in Kirbymoorside, also in Yorkshire, where he met his future wife. By then he had begun attending one or other of the "gospel halls and missions" which abounded. VSP believed that his "rough distinction" lay in "his commanding manner and … fine voice". He sang well, "loved the precise utterance of words" and language in general. She was attracted by "his militant looks, his strength and his voice".[11]

W H Pritchett's obituary in the *Congregational Year Book* glosses over this period of his life by claiming that, after "a good elementary and commercial education", he had enjoyed success in his "business career" in his youth and early manhood. It relates that he came under Christian influences and sought a way to pursue a call to ministry. As a result, he joined the Manchester City Mission and for years was "one of its most successful evangelists". VSP's account is more fulsome. According to "family legend", when VSP's grandfather was aged only 22, "he filled the Free Trade Hall in Manchester with his harsh, denouncing sermons".

Having "got him off the builder's ladder", wrote VSP, his wife "arranged for him to be sent to a theological college in Nottingham". At this stage VSP's account and the Congregational records differ. Having speculated on whether William Henry would have married Mary Helen if he had remained merely "a common workman", for she was a "tailor's daughter", VSP then states that "at nineteen or twenty, on his prospects, his grandfather married her and went off to Nottingham as a student, and in a year was a father". This is not reconcilable with the fact that he entered the college in 1891 and it may be that VSP confused his grandfather's years working for the Manchester City Mission with his time at Nottingham.

In that year 1891, aged 37 years, he became a student at The Congregational Institute for Theological and Missionary Training, at Nottingham, later known as Paton College (after its first principal, John Brown Paton). The institute was designed to train for the ministry men with few academic pretensions who might be older than students at the other colleges. Paton men in general could devote less years to preparation and study. Such mature but less educated men, the college founders argued, might otherwise be denied the opportunity to serve. The emphasis was on "subjects of practical importance", and several hours each week were spent on evangelism linked to churches and mission stations. J B Paton saw preaching as "the most important ministerial task" and prepared men to preach "with conviction and understanding". The college course normally

11 *Cab* 14.

took two years to complete, although a third year was possible for advanced students. Paton himself was absent from Nottingham 1889–91, taking enforced rest due to overwork.[12]

In Nottingham W H Pritchett had only "a small grant to live on" and in consequence he took "odd jobs". He told VSP that "he learned his Latin, Greek and Hebrew travelling on the Nottingham trams". In addition, he tried to "save pennies" because the arrangement was that he should pay back the cost of his education within five years. This must have been a hard time because VSP's own father, Walter, had "unhappy memories of a hungry childhood, and one of great severity" in which he had been "wretched".

Later in 1891, the same year that he entered the college, W H Pritchett became the pastor at Holme Lane, Bradford where he remained until 1895, moving to Repton in 1896.[13] Why he spent only a few months at his formal course of study is difficult to determine but the harsh conditions endured by the family may help to explain it. In the late nineteenth century, it was not unknown for a promising student preacher to be plucked from his college, having been identified by a church as the right man for its needs. Certainly Pritchett regarded himself as having been trained at the college, as did the Congregational Union of England and Wales, and, for the rest of his life, his name in the annual *Congregational Year Book* was followed by Nottingham, in capital letters, which format was the convention for ministers with a college training.

Once he had completed his formal studies, VSP wrote, "grandfather triumphed". However, if this was W H Pritchett's triumph, his grandson wondered why his pastorates, after Bradford, were in "smaller and smaller" towns, "the little towns of the moors and fells" where the minister might earn only a modest stipend. Had he expended all his energy "in getting out of the working class and becoming a middle-class man", VSP pondered?

A Sedbergh Ministry

W H Pritchett stayed at Repton longer than at any of his five pastorates. He was there 1896 to 1906 when he moved to Sedbergh. He had received an invitation to Sedbergh in October 1905, after the unanimous call of the church meeting, which had asked for and received the "sanction" of the Yorkshire Congregational Union before issuing its invitation (the YCU made a grant to the church to support its ministry). He was offered a stipend of £120 per annum, with the manse and its garden, and it was stipulated that the "engagement" was for five years. W H Pritchett replied, stating that, "after careful deliberation and much

12 *Congregational Year Book* (1927) 150, E Kaye *For the Work of Ministry* (Edinburgh 1999) 134–144, Treglown op cit 7, *Cab* 11–15.

13 *CYB* ibid.

prayer", he would accept, although he referred to the "united ministry" of pastor and members. He continued humbly, "I am not an absolutely perfect man, therefore do not expect too much from me, at the same time I hope to labour with you in the Christian ministry in the building up of believers and in the salvation of the unsaved". The church meeting decided that it must outlay money to alter the manse.[14]

Pritchett took the chair for the first time in Sedbergh for a social meeting on New Years' Day, 1906, a few months before he came formally as minister, in May. The church meetings were then held monthly with only 9, 10 or 11 members on average in attendance. On 30 May it was proposed to invite local ministers and lay folk to the recognition services for Pritchett's settlement. At the church meeting on 1 August, 1906 it was resolved that the church should join the Congregational Union of England and Wales.[15] On 29 August, 1906 the meeting agreed to ask the modernist Revd Rhondda Williams to preach in the chapel at Sedbergh on his visit.[16] In January 1911, after the treasurer had presented his annual accounts, W H Pritchett congratulated the church on "the excellent state" of its finances.

The church held a tea and public meeting every year to mark the anniversary of the pastor's settlement there, implying general satisfaction with his ministry. In January 1907, probably at Pritchett's prompting, it was decided that future church meetings should be held bi-monthly (not monthly as hitherto) and that these meetings should be followed by supper and a social hour, to which members of the congregation would be invited, at the charge of 6d each with all proceeds going to the church funds. The harvest festival was to be held in late September and it was resolved that the pastor would write to invite the chairman of the CUEW, Mr Compton Rickett MP, to preach on that occasion. Pritchett also proposed that, "with a view to securing the attendance of those men and women" who did not attend any place of worship, a service should be held on alternate Sunday afternoons from February until May. The new pastor was beginning to make his presence felt.

In May 1907 it was agreed that W H Pritchett should exchange pulpits with Revd Frederick William Bryan[17] of Centenary Congregational Church,

14 Sedbergh Congregational Church Book 1840–1926, retained at Sedbergh United Reformed Church.

15 Ibid. Sedbergh Congregational Church was described in the *Congregational Year Book* (1906) 380, as "not yet in the Union".

16 T Rhondda Williams (1860–1945) was minister of the sizeable Greenfield Congregational Church, Bradford 1888–1909. J Taylor and J C G Binfield *Who They Were in the Reformed Churches of England and Wales 1901–2000* (Donington 2007) 244–5.

17 F W Bryan (1867–1954) was trained as a Methodist at Handsworth Wesleyan College but entered the Congregational ministry. He served in Lancaster 1906–10. *CYB* (1955) 508.

Lancaster, for the 1908 harvest festival services, on the last Sunday of September. That year the Wesleyan minister in Sedbergh, Mr Davidson, was to speak on the Monday of the harvest meetings. In January 1908 the church reported to the Yorkshire Congregational Union, mentioning the "diligence and energy" of the previous year's work, stating that "while we have nothing of an exciting character to chronicle we are able to report unity of spirit and steady painstaking endeavour on the part of a small band of devoted workers who carry on the work of God here". It boasted that the Sunday school was "in a very healthy condition", possessing a number of "very intelligent teachers and officers", and it reported increased attendances at Sunday services. The church still owed £110 for work on the manse and asked the Yorkshire Union for a grant of £30 for the current year.

In June 1908 the church agreed to use individual communion cups and in August Pritchett was to procure two trays, each containing 25 cups (in the event one generous woman paid for one tray of cups). The harvest festival Sunday drew "crowded congregations" to hear Bryan of Lancaster preach. Among the various social activities put on by the church, "an entertainment" was held in July 1909, Pritchett was to hire slides for a lecture, and a potato pie supper was planned for March 1910. In 1909 the harvest festival preacher was Edwin Relfe Barrett (1848–1914) of Salem, Bradford, who had worked for the London Missionary Society in Shanghai 1873–78.[18] Pritchett preached that day in Salem. The new Wesleyan minister (un-named in the minutes) was asked to speak on the Monday of the harvest celebrations. In October 1909 the church meeting recognised the need for "new windows" in the chapel and proposed to hold a "mens own with an open service every two months" throughout the winter. It was suggested that a picnic be held in June 1910 to help with church funds.

If all this suggests that the pastor's work was bound up with the minutiae of church affairs, then with hindsight an entry in the minutes for December 1909 seems to presage a coming world crisis. The church meeting considered resolutions, passed by representatives of the Christian churches of the United Kingdom and of Germany—in London in June 1908 and in Berlin in June 1909. The members approved these and expressed their "earnest desire that the bond of peace between the two peoples may be preserved and strengthened".

A wider arena of concern, than merely Sedbergh, also surfaced in late May and early June 1910 when the two days conference of country churches in 'Craven and the Dales' was held at Sedbergh, only the fourth such conference (after Kirkby Stephen 1907, Settle 1908, and Skipton 1909). The subjects discussed by the ministers and layfolk (35 in all from 17 churches) were 'the public worship of the Free Churches' and 'how to retain our young people'. One notable speaker there was Revd Bertram Smith of Salem, Leeds and it was felt

18 *CYB* (1915) 133–135.

that the conference brought "inspiration".[19] In August and October 1910 the church meeting was exercised about how to raise money for the CUEW's new initiative, the Central Fund, and, in February 1911, Pritchett was asked to explain the object of the Central Fund from the pulpit one Sunday.

On 31 August, 1910, a special church meeting, with 19 present, discussed extending Pritchett's pastorate which was due to end in May 1911 under the original arrangements. This subject was current for some months and in October that year a special meeting of "members, seatholders and subscribers", held after a Sunday service, expressed appreciation of Pritchett's ministry and a wish to extend his pastorate by a year, so that it would finish at the end of April 1912 (or earlier, if he desired). The inevitable parting could not be delayed beyond this and, on 7 March, 1912, Pritchett submitted his resignation, having accepted the ministry of Hollingworth Congregational Church, Cheshire. The minutes record his reference to "a comparatively happy and useful Ministry" at Sedbergh—not exactly a glowing commentary on his time there.[20]

Pritchett's Remaining Ministry

The 1906 returns in the *Congregational Year Book* state that the Repton church could seat 300 but then had 42 members, 70 scholars, 9 teachers and one lay preacher. In contrast Sedbergh Congregational Church in 1906, although it could seat 400, had 36 members, 60 scholars, 12 teachers but no lay preachers. It appeared marginally the weaker cause, although neither was strong by the standards of the time. A year later in 1907 the number of church members at Sedbergh had declined to 33. Many more may have attended, for the church then had 69 children in the Sunday School and 12 teachers, although it still had no lay preachers. The keen, new pastor faced a challenge. In 1912, the year in which W H Pritchett left for Hollingworth, near Manchester, where he remained until 1917, the Sedbergh church returned figures of 38 members, 51 scholars and 19 teachers.[21] It seems that his ministry there had succeeded in keeping the church together but had witnessed no spectacular growth.

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19 Ibid. Bertram Smith (1863–1943) was one half of a distinguished joint ministry with Francis Wrigley at Salem, Leeds. Uniquely they were elected together to the chair of the CUEW in 1928. H J S Guntrip *Smith and Wrigley of Leeds* (1944), Taylor and Binfield op cit 210–211. For the Dales Conference see T Whitehead *History of the Dales Congregational Churches* (Bradford 1930) 17–18.

20 Ibid.

21 *Cab* 15, 20, *CYB* (1906) 266, 380, (1907) 318, (1912) 310. Charles Surman in his index of Congregational ministers, held at Dr Williams's Library, recorded W H Pritchett as also serving the church at Barrow-on-Trent when he ministered at Repton. The year books do not confirm this, listing Barrow as a branch church, but as "vacant" throughout Pritchett's time in Derbyshire. In VSP's obituary in *The Independent* (22 March 1997) it is wrongly stated that he spent time with his grandmother in Jedburgh.

In 1917 he left Hollingworth and moved to Edgworth Congregational Church, Bolton, where he remained until his death on 31 May, 1926. His brief obituary in the *Congregational Year Book* describes him as "a good man, a faithful pastor and an earnest preacher of the Gospel"—a conventional but not illuminating epitaph.[22]

Grandfather and Father

The "benevolent" grandfather, kind and indulgent to VSP, had earlier been the chief cause of Walter Pritchett's "wretched childhood" and, it seems, had been "a harsh, indeed a savage, father". VSP had known him in his "easy country days, idling with his small congregations of country folk" and "talking of Carlyle and Ruskin and English history". In contrast, VSP's father, Walter, had known him as a "disciplinarian not long out of the Army, living from hand to mouth in industrial towns, sending his children off to school hungry". The Victorian martinet at home forbade the children to sit for their meals—"it would make them soft". Rather they were to "stand rigid at the table in silence while they ate their food", like soldiers in the barracks. VSP's father and uncle were "not allowed out of the house after six in the evening, not even when they were grown up". VSP was unsure what schools they went to because his father always evaded the subject, "either out of shame or because he hated being definite about anything". At that time "Education was expensive" and VSP's grandfather, who talked at length about "the beauties of education", seems to have given little to his sons. The pensive grandson commented, "He lived—as my father was to do—in a dream".[23]

Walter, aged 14, had first run errands for a grocer's shop and had later worked behind the counter. At 16 he befriended a local doctor, leading to his wish to become a doctor or surgeon himself (well beyond his father's means). One evening he was at the surgery when a man's poisoned thumb was being dressed but "the sight of pus and blood" caused Walter to faint. As a result he arrived home late, just before 8 pm, to be greeted by his father "with a carriage whip in his hand". VSP explained that "Whipping was common in the family" but Walter was then almost a man. VSP's grandfather "roared at him for disobeying orders, accused him of drinking or going after women"—a scene "re-enacted" by Walter himself when VSP and his brother were in their late teens. When Walter answered, "he was struck across the face and the back by the whip, two or three hard blows. That was enough: hatred had been growing for years." In the middle of the night, Walter climbed out of the window, hid in the railway station and

22. *CYB* (1927) 150, Sedbergh Congregational Church—church meeting minute book.

23 *Cab* 20–21.

took a train to York the next morning to stay with an uncle. From there he travelled to London, and in Kentish Town found employment in a store, with staff living in dormitories on the premises, like the draper's apprentices in H G Wells' *Kipps* (1905). VSP's mother was outraged at the whipping and held her mother-in-law partially responsible; "And his mother standing there, doing nothing, seeing her son horse-whipped—I could have limbed the old …".[24] She left the sentence unfinished.

Mary Helen Pritchett

According to her grandson, Walter's mother, Mary Helen Pritchett (nee Sawdon), although a minister's wife, was vain and jealous. She coveted other women's possessions—"a dress, a brooch, a ring, a bag, even a baby". VSP described her as a "bonnie little white-haired woman with a smile that glistered sweetly like the icing of one of her fancy cakes". Yet he wrote that she "fed her mind on love stories in the religious weeklies and the language of fornication, adultery, harlotry and concubinage taken from the Bible" and all this "sharpened by the blunt talk of the Yorkshire villages". She used the term harlots as "a general name for the women of her husband's congregations who bought new hats". Wrongly assuming that Beatrice must have taken her baby son to Repton to leave him there, she believed she would return to London on the next day's train.

Yet if VSP was severe on his grandmother, a severity absorbed from his mother's shame, he also recalled homely pleasures at the Repton manse. Although his older self recollected little of his visits there, he remembered details like "the large stone pantry smelling of" his "grandmother's bread and the pans of milk; and … the grating over the cellar where my grandfather used to growl up at me from the damp, saying in his enormous and enjoyable voice: 'I'm the grisly bear.'"[25]

According to VSP, his grandmother had always lived in small Yorkshire towns or villages, although we must assume that she was in Manchester with her husband and also in Nottingham. In addition she lived in Derbyshire, in Repton, so VSP's account needs to be read carefully. She was, he stated, the youngest daughter of a tailor in Kirbymoorside, "in the godly Pickering valley", and "was vain of her clothes and her figure". He recalled her, unflatteringly, as having "pale-blue eyes deeply inset, a babyish and avid look, and the drooping little mouth of a spoiled child. Her passion for her husband and her two sons was absolute; she thought of nothing else" and, he confessed, "me she pampered". Her defensiveness arose in her attitude to "outsiders" with whom she was always

24 Ibid 21, *ODNB.*
25 *Cab* 11–12.

"right vexed" or "disgoosted". She let her 'Willyum', VSP's grandfather, "out of her sight as little as possible".[26]

VSP in the Sedbergh Manse

VSP's Granda, as he was called by his grandchildren, may have grown tired of hearing his wife berate other women. Unlike his wife, he was "kind" to his daughter-in-law and "liked her good sense and common London ways". Beatrice thought him "a hard man, too God-fearing for her, but decent". She would announce that she belonged to "the poor old Church of England, say what you like about it".[27]

As a child, VSP heard the story of his grandfather's expulsion from the artillery more than once, "sitting with him under a plum tree and eyeing the lovely Victoria plums in his garden at Sedbergh on the Fells". The yacht's rich owner had complained, leading to his grandfather's court-martial and dismissal from the army, an outcome which he forever regarded as unjust. "The moral", drawn by W H Pritchett, was "that you could never get a fair deal from the officer class; he could, he conveyed, have wiped the floor with any one of them". The tale told and retold, he would fetch a stick for his grandson and put him through his military drill—"Ready! Present: Fire!" and "more alarming, the Prepare to Receive Cavalry". Young VSP would go down on one knee, in the manner of the British squares, "the stick waiting to bayonet the impending charge of Lancers on their horses". With his "loud, resonant voice", W H Pritchett, "a fairish actor, could evoke the gallop of horses and spears instantly".

The mature VSP decided that the outward demeanour of this "peaceful minister concealed a very violent man", believing that his "religion made him live well below his physical strength and natural vitality". The minister would give his grandson a Victoria plum and moralize. "He pointed out that war was wicked—on wickedness he was an expert—and that to become a soldier was the lowest thing in life, though he was proud of knowing what lowness was". He would add that VSP's uncle, "his wicked younger son … had brought sorrow on them all by running off to be a soldier in turn". That news, it was alleged, had turned VSP's grandmother's hair white overnight. His parents had gone to York to buy the boy out of the forces for £25 which was costly for them, because VSP's grandfather was never to earn more than £150 per annum. On his death he left only £70 in Co-op notes in a tea caddy. "That £25 must have drawn blood".

That the "uneducated" W H Pritchett, who had hitherto lived "by manual labour", had chosen to become a Congregational minister needed an

26 Ibid 12.
27 Ibid 16.

explanation from VSP. He offered a careful, but long-winded, discursion on English social history. The "industrious poor" of the 19th century were urged to practice "self-improvement" and dissenting churches put "ambition" into their heads. VSP argued that religion was "a revolutionary force, for it countered the political revolutionaries" and "put a sense of moral cause into the hands of the ambitious". He held that the teachings of Thomas Carlyle—"the gospel of work"—and of John Ruskin had affected hundreds of thousands of men like his grandfather. He continued, "Snobbery and the Bible are dynamic in English life; respectability or—to be kinder—self-respect is the indispensable engine of British revolution or reform; and revolutions occur not in times of poverty but when certain classes are getting just a little better off. As you rose socially … you rose in virtue… among Protestants, the tendency to break up into sects comes from a nagging desire to be distinctive and superior, spiritually and socially, to one's neighbours". Allowing for such influences, VSP should not have overlooked his grandfather's faith and vocation, though he conceded that "religion must have been strong in him".[28]

VSP's father had experienced culture shock in London. Not only was he unused to friendship with young women—"I could tell", said Beatrice, that "he had never met a girl before"—but also "There had been no drink at the Manse", whereas in his London lodgings, with his future mother-in-law, "someone was always going round to the off-licence". He thought Beatrice's mother not very clean and knew that she could not cook as well as his own mother. Finding that hard London water did not thoroughly remove dirt, he sent his shirts and underclothes to Yorkshire to be washed and starched or ironed by his mother. VSP recalled rows between his parents, in which his father claimed to have raised his mother "from the gutter" (VSP called this "no more than Yorkshire plain-speaking"), while Beatrice mocked his piety with phrases like "two-faced Wesleyans" and "Hallelujah, keep your hands off".

Somewhat awkwardly Walter, with his manse upbringing, courted Beatrice. Her "idea of pleasure was Hampstead Heath Fair and the music halls". They went boating on the Thames and "rioted with the mob" at the relief of Mafeking in May 1900, he carrying her on his shoulder round Trafalgar Square while she waved a union jack. Yet Walter could not stand "a dirty joke" and was mildly disconcerted by his wife's taste for music hall humour. Her "hysterical" laughter had been known to rouse those in the gallery, causing them to shout and egg her on.[29]

28 Ibid 14.
29 Ibid 21–24.

Walter's Admiration for Dramatic Preachers

Walter's desire to "clean up" the Martin family physically and morally, allied to his own piety, led to his taking Beatrice on Sundays "to hear the famous preachers at the City Temple" on Holborn Viaduct. In the late 1890s they would have heard the wayward and outrageous "pulpit genius" Joseph Parker (1830–1902), for whom The City Temple had been built in 1874, and they may have heard his successor, the questioning but vulnerable R J Campbell (1867–1956), who raised hackles in the next decade with his so-called new theology. Certainly Walter admired Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–92), the Baptist preacher of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, at the Elephant and Castle. VSP wrote that his father "loved" the "dramatic manner" of such preachers and that he would recount a story told by one of them. When entering The City Temple one Sunday morning, the preacher had overheard "two young sparks debating whether to go in or not. 'Damn it, what odds', said one and went in." Walter liked that and quoted it for years after.

In keeping with many who attended churches and chapels at that time, he "wanted religion to smarten up and get snappy". He liked evangelical singing and sang well himself for he had been trained in "one of the excellent Yorkshire choirs". He mainly sang hymns, his favourite being 'Tell me the old, old story' which came so "richly" from him that it brought his children almost to tears when they were young. Walter knew that successful preachers—"Big men" he called them—were then well paid. VSP described this as the period when "the Victorian Grand Old Man or Great Men were beginning to be succeeded by the Big, like Selfridge and the new race of great shopkeepers in London, Manchester and Chicago". Given the consuming interests of his father, VSP wrote, "He did not really distinguish between the big shopkeepers and the popular Nonconformist preachers, who had also broken with the theology of the Victorian age". Walter knew that he lived in changing times and that "suddenly money was about, commerce was expanding, there was a chance for the lower middle class" to have "a slice of the money the middles had sat so obdurately on for so long." In the 1900s Walter took to smoking cigars and Beatrice, "hunching her shoulders a little before his self-confident ambition, also sparkled and admired". VSP related how these expansive evenings would end with his father feeling hungry—"he became cheerfully gluttonous", a consequence of childhood deprivation. Indeed he talked for hours about food, "as much as he did about religion".[30]

Christian Science and Ipswich

W H Pritchett would sometimes visit his son's family in London where he

30 Ibid 23-24, A Peel *The Congregational Two Hundred* (1948) 208–9.

would sarcastically denounce Walter's "latest religion", for his son was always seeking to find a new and better expression of religious faith. Walter had left "the Congregationalists, the Baptists, the Wesleyans, the Methodists in turn, being less and less of a Jehovah man and pushing his way—it turned out—toward the Infinite". When the family lived at Hammersmith the children were sent to the Salvation Army. Walter eventually settled with Christian Science which enabled him to sing chirpily to his wife during various family crises:

> 'Oh dry those tears
> Oh calm those fears
> Life will be brighter tomorrow.'

VSP's aunt in Ipswich married a devout Presbyterian, her second husband, who once showed VSP and his brother Gordon the works of "a fraudulent American woman: Mary Baker Eddy". He told the boys that their father was wrong to have become a follower of "that woman" because she is "one of the false prophets" which the New Testament warns against. The boys' uncle had told their father that Christian Science is "trash". As a teenager VSP himself converted to Christian Science, which he rationalised as a desire for friends, given that its Sunday School catered for people until they were twenty. Their Ipswich cousin, Hilda, disliked her step-father's Presbyterianism and took the two boys to her High Church to see "the ritual and smell the incense of that fashionable religion". However VSP was "bored". Hilda was fond of her uncle, VSP's father, but, having inherited the illness which killed her father, she found Christian Science unacceptable. On being told by him that she was not ill, she announced that he had broken her heart. "His religion is not Love, it is cruel", she said, and a month later she was dead.[31]

In Ipswich the children first attended the Congregational Sunday School but found it "a riot of thrown hymn-books". At the Church of England they were confused by the prayer book and its theology. VSP later expressed surprise that in spite of his father's religiosity he was never baptised.[32]

The Call of the North

VSP knew his paternal grandparents best from his visits north. As part of the family's removal from one house to another, he and his father would often leave Beatrice to settle into the new house while they arrived at Euston Station in the middle of the night. VSP would be dispatched by midnight train to Repton or Sedbergh where he might stay for weeks and on occasions for months on end. Indeed VSP attributed his love of travel—"change, journeys and new places"—to this early peripatetic existence from which he benefited by becoming a distinguished travel writer.

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31 *Cab* 75–6, 79, 142, 153, 196–7.
32 Ibid 79.

VSP recalled alighting from the night train with his father, "at a junction near Kendal, at the gateway through the mountains to the Scottish border". There they would "cross the lines and take the little train to Sedbergh". That junction was Oxenholme, now promoted for its proximity to the Lake District. From Sedbergh station they would take a "horse brake" up Main Street, often following a herd of cows. "By the Manse and chapel, Granda was waiting" while "in the distance, on her whitened doorstep and close to a monkey-puzzle tree, stood Grandma in her starched white apron, her little pale iced-cake face and her glasses glittering."

VSP remembered arriving at Sedbergh when he was six—probably the first time he had gone there because his grandfather only moved to the town in 1906 when VSP was six years old. His grandmother would not let him into her clean house until she had inspected his apparel. She complained that his buttons were loose or missing from his jersey, his stockings had holes in them, and his shoes were worn through. She concluded, "Eeh, he looks nowt but a poor little gutter boy".

On his part VSP greatly enjoyed these visits. He "was glad to be rid of the family", scarcely thinking of his mother or brother and sister for weeks. In Sedbergh he found what he was made for: "new clothes, new shirts, new places, the new life, jam tarts, Eccles cakes, seed-cakes, apple puffs and Yorkshire pudding". He knew that his grandparents "looked at each other" and at him "with concern" but he did not then understand that, almost every time the family moved house, his father was out of work or was "swinging dangerously between an old disaster and a new enterprise" and was being pursued by people to whom he owed money. He did not realise that his mother wept because of this, although he did know that she often barred his father's leaving for work in the morning and screamed from the gate, "Walt, Walt, where's my money?" In contrast, however, he perceived that in Sedbergh "there was domestic peace".[33]

Sedbergh

Sedbergh is a small market town on the north-western fringes of the Yorkshire Dales national park (formerly in the West Riding, it is now in Cumbria, after the local government reforms of 1974). It is eleven miles from Kendal and between ten and fifteen miles from Hawes in Wensleydale and Kirkby Stephen in Cumbria. VSP described it as "that neat town of grey stone lying under the bald mountain" which he thought was called "the Berg" and as "a small old town smelling of sheep and cows, with a pretty trout beck running through it under wooded banks". The town itself long had a sleepy air, although the countryside round about retained its untamed nature. Daniel Defoe in the 1720s found adjoining Westmorland "the wildest, most barren and frightful" county in

33 Ibid 26–30, 58, *ODNB.*

England and "the Hills of Mallerstang Forest", to the north of Sedbergh, "in many places unpassable".[34] The Howgill Fells, "cropped close by sheep, smelling of thyme and on sunny days played on by the shadows of the clouds, rise steeply behind the town and from the top of them one sees the austere system of these lonely mountains running westward to the Pikes of the Lake District and north to the border". Not far off, continued VSP, "one sees the sheepwalks of Scott's *The Two Drovers*, the shepherd's road to Scotland. The climate is wet and cold in winter; the town is not much sheltered and day after day there will be a light, fine drizzle blowing over from Westmorland and the Irish Sea. When it begins people say, 'Ay, It's dampening on'."

Yet VSP's affection for Sedbergh shone through. "These people are dour but kindly", he wrote. Dorothy Wordsworth recorded visiting Sedbergh with her brother, William, on market day in October 1802 and the young VSP felt an affinity with the romantic poet and even dreamed of being one of the Lake poets. "We had a common experience of Lakes and Fells", he wrote, and, learning that Wordsworth had been poet laureate, VSP prayed every night until he was 16 that God would make him poet laureate before he was 21 years old.[35]

The parish church, St Andrew's, chiefly 13th century, is set apart at one end of the narrow, main street. From the ancient moorland parish of Sedbergh, four additional parishes were created—Dent, Cautley, Garsdale and Howgill. At the opposite end of Main Street, where it meets Joss Lane, is the Congregational (now United Reformed) Church which stands slightly above the shops. Past the market place, set back from the street, is the Methodist Church. Sedbergh is chiefly known for its public school which was founded in 1525. A new school was built in 1716 but, with more new buildings in the 19th century, this came to serve as the library and museum. In 1820 William Wordsworth placed his son at the school.[36] VSP met one of the public school boys in the manse and was told of "their terrible fifteen mile 'runs' across the fells, the toughest schoolboy run in England". VSP had often seen the boys "slogging along near the ravine".[37] The school song, repeated by Wainwright, and referring to three local fells, relates that 'It is Cautley, Calf and Winder that makes the Sedbergh man' and Winder lies immediately behind the town which bestraddles its lower reaches and looks down on the river Rawthey. Sedbergh school's rugby union teams have supplied internationals to the home nations and, at least, one captain to the England team.[38]

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34 Ibid 30, D Defoe *A Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1927) ed G D H Cole, vol II, 679–680.

35 *Cab* 29–31, 99, M Moorman (ed) *Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth* (Oxford 1971) 160, Treglown op cit 12.

36 H Davies *William Wordsworth* (1980) 250.

37 *Cab* 36.

38 A Wainwright *Walks on the Howgill Fells* (Kendal nd) walk 7 p1

Although no railway now serves the town, reinforcing its detached and tranquil air (the M6 motorway hurtles north-south a few miles to the west), a rail line was introduced to the town in 1861, enabling visitors to come and go on the London and North Western Railway. The panorama of hills and dales to a small boy from London, like VSP, must have fed endless dreams of adventure.

Sedbergh and Nonconformity

Nonconformity of various shades had been evident in the vicinity of Sedbergh for centuries before the 1900s when young VSP frequented the town. One early Protestant martyr, John Bland, vicar of Addisham, Kent, who was burnt at the stake in Canterbury in July 1555, was born in Sedbergh, although educated at Eton and Cambridge.[39] How much of Bland's stern Protestantism arose from his Sedbergh beginnings is uncertain, yet within a few years radical Protestantism had planted deep roots in this area.

Giles Wigginton (fl 1564–97), vicar of Sedbergh 1579–85, was deprived of his living by the bishop of Chester for his Puritanism. He was described by Archbishop Sandys of York as labouring "not to build, but to put down and by what means he can to overthrow the state ecclesiastical". Wigginton had powerful support among the Puritan gentry around Sedbergh but was apprehended for unlicensed preaching in private houses. He moved to London where he joined the separatists and was embroiled in the Martin Marprelate controversy. Several of his Yorkshire flock were excommunicated.[40]

Quakers were active around Sedbergh from the 1650s. On his travels George Fox convinced people in Wensleydale, Garsdale, Grisedale, Dent and Sedbergh. He had a vision of "a great people in white raiment by a river-side coming to the Lord" which he identified as close to Sedbergh. On nearby Firbank Fell he preached to over 1,000 people and in 1652 he gathered a meeting at Brigflatts, just over a mile from Sedbergh; the ancient meeting house there, still in use, was erected in 1675.[41]

Oliver Heywood (baptised 1630–1702), who after 1662 was the leading Nonconformist preacher in the north of England, recorded that his son, John, preached in a house at Middleton Head, near Sedbergh in October and November 1681. Yet John found that his sermons did little good, for the people were "hard, dead, senseles still, would have talkt with one another and laught as he was preaching". He had "fretted at the heart" over them. Oliver advised his son not to settle there.[42] Peter Walkden (1684–1769), the Lancashire pastor and

39 *ODNB.*
40 Ibid.
41 J L Nickalls (ed) *The Journal Of George Fox* (Cambridge 1952) 104, 106–8.
42 J Horsfall Turner (ed) *Rev Oliver Heywood 1630–1702; His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books* (Brighouse 1881) vol II, 207–8. John later served at Rotherham and Pontefract. *ODNB.*

diarist, preached his first sermon at Garsdale in June 1709 and was ordained there in October that year. In 1711 he moved to serve two churches in the Forest of Bowland. Yet in 1733 he recorded in his diary that he had preached at Garsdale in April, having earlier that week preached at Ravenstonedale, 6 or 7 miles away. From Garsdale he journeyed on horseback to Dent to encourage the faithful.[43]

The John Evans list of dissenting congregations, compiled 1715–17, includes, under the West Riding, a reference to a meeting house at Garsdale, six miles east of Sedbergh. This meeting house had opened in 1698 and may have continued in use for about fifty years.[44] Therefore the history of Sedbergh and its environs provided some encouragement to those aiming to found a Congregational cause there. The landed gentry in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and some country families in the eighteenth had favoured serious preaching and Sedbergh had once a reputation for godly and radical Protestantism. In the early nineteenth century the desire for more challenging religion resurfaced.

Sedbergh Congregationalism

In 1821 the poor state of worship and the "unsatisfactory ministry" of the parish church resulted in "the pious people" of Sedbergh choosing to unite "for prayer and reading the Scriptures" in their cottages. In 1823 they had so increased that they invited a lay preacher from Dent (now little more than a village but in the early nineteenth century larger than Sedbergh) to preach to them and gained help from nearby ministers. The Congregational church at Dent had been gathered in 1809, assisted by an older cause in Ravenstonedale, a few miles away. In 1825 the students of Airedale College, Bradford, began offering aid to Sedbergh, and in 1826 a church was formed with 18 members.[45] In 1828 this new Congregational cause started to build its first chapel, which opened the following year when 250 to 300 people were regularly attending. This chapel was replaced in 1871.[46]

The Sedbergh circuit of the Wesleyan Methodists was created out of the

43 P Walkden *A Diary from January 1733 to March 1734* (Otley, West Yorkshire 2000) 95–7, G A Foster (ed) *Rev Peter Walkden's Diary and Early Nonconformist Baptisms* (Bury, Lancashire 1996) 119, *ODNB*. Ravenstonedale was set in an area of early and strong nonconformity. The chapel there claimed a foundation date of 1662 but was perhaps founded soon after the Toleration Act of 1689, in a private house, with the financial support of Lord Wharton. B Nightingale *The Ejected of 1662 in Cumberland and Westmorland* (Manchester 1911) II, 1096.

44 T Whitehead *History of the Dales Congregational Churches* (Keighley 1930) 360, ms of the Evans' list of dissenting meeting houses, held at Dr Williams's Library, 14 Gordon Square, London WC1H OAR.

45 Whitehead op cit 362, J G Miall *Congregationalism in Yorkshire* (1868) 344–5.

46 C F Stell *An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting-Houses in the North of England* (1994) 305.

larger Hawes circuit in 1871 and in 1882 it returned a total of 279 members. By 1900 this had declined to 165.[47]

VSP's Sedbergh Childhood

VSP stated unequivocally that Yorkshire, by which he meant Sedbergh, is "the most loved of all the many places of my childhood". There he went to his first school, "at the top of the town, up the lane from the Manse garden" and, sixty years later, he found it reassuringly unchanged. He recalled that the school was divided into two classes, with forty or fifty children in each class, the girls wearing "pinafores and long black or tan stockings". The common surnames in the school were "Douthwaite, Louthwaite, Thistlethwaite, Braithwaite, Branthwaite" and the children spoke a dialect which young VSP found hard to follow. They came from farms and cottages.

VSP confessed that as a London child "with a strange accent" he began "to swank, particularly to the girls". One girl offered to show him her belly if he lowered his trousers which he did, but she broke her word and told the teacher, which was "the first of many painful lessons" for VSP had "instantly loved girls". This incident was reported to his grandparents, as were one or two school yard scuffles and pranks. He had been caught "pee-ing over a wall to see how far" he and the "village lads" could reach; and he had joined a local boy in slipping into an old woman's cottage to steal "some Halma pieces from her desk". Unfortunately they "lied about this", which resulted in his grandfather spanking him when he was naked in the bath tub. VSP's screams, that he hoped his Granda "would be run over by the London express at the level-crossing the next time he crossed the line at the Junction", led to his being spanked again.

VSP was then removed from the school in response to the neighbours' gossip. He was surprised at this because he was "a pious little boy, packed with the Ten Commandments and spotless on Sundays". Indeed the farmers' boys and the blacksmiths' and wheelwrights' sons thought him "a townee and a softie", because he would never "herd sheep, shoe or ride a horse, use a pickaxe or even work in a woollen mill". At that age VSP intended to be a preacher like his grandfather who had begun teaching him Latin from 'fidei defensor' on the coins. VSP wanted to be a defender of our faith and was prepared to receive cavalry which for many years he confused with Calvary.[48]

Life in the Sedbergh Manse

VSP found the Sedbergh manse "a kind, grave house". It "smelled of fruit", was

47 A P F Sell *Church Planting. A Study of Westmorland Nonconformity* (Worthing 1986) 69–70.

48 *Cab* 31–2.

"as silent as church" and contained "churchy furniture in yellow oak, most of it made by country craftsmen" who embellished it with carved "acorns or leaves all round the edge of a table". Only the ticking of the grandfather clock disturbed the silence, for all was "polished, still and clean". There he slept in "a soft, feather bed and woke to see the mist low down on the waist of the Berg". His grandfather grew plums and pears on the garden's brick wall and, in the flower beds, roses, stock, carnations and sweet williams and, under the wall flowed a stream from the mountain.

VSP's grandparents were then in their early fifties and his grandmother's "first passion" was cleanliness. She scrubbed him in the zinc tub in front of the kitchen fire, once taking two days vainly trying to wash away a mole on his nose. His grandfather, he felt, had "a genial sadistic touch" pointing out a scar on VSP's nose which appeared "to shine like a lamp" and rendered him "ridiculous". He also said that VSP's nose was "the nearest thing to an elephant's foot he had ever seen" in order to make his grandson angry. "It was Yorkshire training".

His grandmother had a weekly routine. She wore her hair curlers until late in the afternoon when she put on one of "her spotless blue dresses". Only on Mondays did she look less than neat. Then she wore a man's cloth cap, a rough skirt, and wooden clogs to do the weekly wash of "sheets, pillow-cases, towels, table-cloths and clothes". She used the wash-tub in the cobbled yard and boasted, in her neighbours' hearing, that her linen was "of better quality, better washed, whiter and cleaner" than that of any woman in the town. With the house smelling of "suds and ironing", at 5 pm she sat down to read *The British Weekly*. She reserved Tuesdays and Thursdays for baking bread and cakes. On Wednesdays she cleaned the house ferociously—carpets were hung on the garden line to be beaten by his grandfather. This caused ill feeling which was still present forty years later when VSP returned to Sedbergh. He found "one or two old people" who "spoke in a shocked way of their working-class minister who was under the thumb of his 'stuck up' wife. That came of a man's marrying above himself ".

On Wednesdays she took up the linoleum so as to scrub the floor boards and "hours of dusting and polishing" followed. VSP's Granda would respond to all this activity, in a "thundery" voice, misquoting scripture, "Woman, … lay not up your treasure on earth where moth and dust doth corrupt". This drew the reply, "Eeh Willyum, … wipe your boots outside. Ah can't abide a dirty doormat. Mrs So-and-so hasn't whitened her step since Monday". Then she settled down to an evening of making rag rugs or crocheting lace or making doilies.

The Sunday school at Sedbergh Congregational Church had high standards, with one pupil gaining first prize in all England in the Sunday School Scripture Union in the junior division in 1909, and again taking first prize in all England in the lower middle division in 1911. VSP recalled a meeting for Sunday school

teachers at the manse, which involved hunting in the fields along the beck to see who could collect and name the largest number of different wild flowers in an hour. The winner, an older woman, found 57 varieties. They returned to grandmother's parlour with the "sun shining through the little square lights" to "a state tea" of scones, tea cakes, Eccles cakes, jam tarts, iced tarts, sultana, Madeira, seed and jammed sponge, puffs and turn-overs, and to her comment that "nowt like it would be seen on any table in town". After a sung grace, "conducted by the eldest of the teachers, each taking parts, bass and tenor, soprano and contralto", they set to. VSP noted that the eldest teacher "tipped his tea into his saucer, blew on it and drank" which caused him to shout, "Look at the man… He's being rude." General consternation followed, with the old man denouncing "London manners" and the story being told in the town and reported to VSP's father. It was brought up year after year. "To think that a boy, a relation of the minister's too, and already known to have exposed himself in school, should say a thing like that."

Manse life was "laborious and thrifty" and coal was eked out piece by piece to make "an economical fire". VSP was "thickly clad in Yorkshire wool", throughout "winters of valley fog or snow", but he "remembered no cold". Granda grew vegetables and raspberries which he sold in the summer for twopence a cup. His secret vice was cigar smoking which the "Congregationalists would not have tolerated in their minister, any more than they would have stood for drinking", although VSP knew that he had drank a glass of "strong home-brewed ale at an isolated farm". His cigar smoking took place in "the petty or earth closet at the end of the garden" where he locked himself in with the Bible and paper to write his sermons. His wife disapproved of his smoking and "beat on the door with a yard-broom, shouting, 'Willyum, Willyum, come out of that, you dirty man'."[49]

Sedbergh Sundays

W H Pritchett had a busy Sunday. He had an early and late morning service, another in the afternoon and one in the evening. He prepared "in a soldierly way, as for battle", shaving so closely that he usually had a spot of blood on his chin. He wore a gown or "surplice", as VSP called it, "a disappointing, cotton affair". VSP wore his "Sunday best" with a sailor collar, tight vest, and linen breeches to endure "the agony of sitting in those oaken pews" and keeping his eyes fixed on his grandfather. He never understood the sermons which were long, as were the hymns. The boy liked "the cheerful break when the plate" went round and the "happiness of putting in a penny". He sometimes giggled when

49 *Cab* 32–37, Whitehead op cit 366–7, Sedbergh Congregational Church, Sunday School minute book, held at Sedbergh United Reformed Church.

his grandfather announced the total for last Sunday's collection, at his north country pronunciation of halfpenny, with a broad a.

Sunday lunch was invariably cold beef "for it is wicked to cook anything on Sundays—except Yorkshire pudding", which VSP knew was "sacred". His grandmother's Yorkshire pudding was far superior to "that heavy soggy fatty stuff" which is often goes by that name in England and the USA. "One might be eating butterflies so lightly" did it float down; it was his grandmother's "form of poetry". Sunday afternoon was serious. VSP had no toys or games at the manse, nor did his father when he was a boy, but neither did he miss them. VSP found "enough in garden, country or the simple sight of things" to keep him occupied. On Sundays he was allowed into his grandfather's study, a small room with a few hundred books in it. Granda read to the boy "some pious tale about, perhaps, a homeless orphan, driven to sleep on straw, in some shed in Manchester, surrounded by evil-doers". The boy survived near-starvation to be rescued by "benevolent middle-class people".

Having failed to read these tales for himself (some words were too long for a small boy), VSP gazed at "the green Berg" and watched the cloud shadows make "grey or blue faces on the grass, and the sheep nibbling there". He found "the quiet and loneliness … exquisite" and enjoyed his grandfather's turning his pages "in such a silence". VSP's mother said Granda's preaching "was hard and monotonous and that he was one to whom hatred and the love of truth" were almost equivalents, that is he held that truth is "afflicting and unpleasant". VSP felt that he "argued people into hell", making it "unattractive" and "boring" which, VSP judged, was a mistake for, when congregations dwindled, he did not realise that sin attracts and that its condemnation needs to be even "more voluptuous".[50]

W H Pritchett as Minister

VSP analysed his grandfather's relation as minister to his flocks. The churches had wanted "an artist" but found instead they had "a critic" which "puzzled" them. His "enormous success in the Free Trade Hall at Manchester was not repeated". He was at heart an intellectual and some, including VSP's own parents, thought his marriage to "a vain, houseproud and jealous girl who never read anything in her life except the love serial in the *British Weekly* and who upset the ladies of his many chapels by her envies and boastings was a disaster" for him.

The Congregational system of inviting the minister to serve a local church meant that, once word of her character had been discovered, churches were reluctant to call him as pastor. Yet VSP wrote, "how can one judge the marriages of others?" In old age VSP saw his grandfather as an "immigrant in a new

50 *Cab* 38–39

country—for that is what his middle-class life was"—and the process was "exhausting" for him.

Granda's stories often included references to the Ten Commandments, especially to honour one's parents—although he had a low opinion of VSP's own parents. The theft of the old lady's Halma pieces led to teaching about "Thou shalt not steal" and he was "vehement" about murder which attracted him. VSP reflected on the story of Cain and Abel, for he too had a younger brother whose goodness was palpable and of whom he was at times jealous. Granda was very interested in Dr Crippen and made VSP, then aged 9 or 10, study the case thoroughly. Granda drew a plan of Crippen's house, and "the bloody cellar" where his wife was buried, for VSP to consider. "He had a dramatic mind."[51]

In the summer VSP went with his grandparents to stay with his great uncle and great aunt in York. Great uncle Arthur was a cabinet maker and a sceptic. He and the Congregational minister argued. To the minister, Arthur was "naive and a joke" while Arthur saw the minister as "a snob, a manual worker who had gone soft and who was hardly more than his wife's domestic servant". Arthur loved York Minster for its detailed carvings and masonry whereas Granda was "enraptured" by its "grandeur, height and spaciousness". Yet the latter regretted that it was controlled by "the rich and ungodly" (ie the Anglican establishment) and witnessed not to "the Truth but to a corrupt and irrelevant theology". To him the minster was "scarcely the house of God … but the house of a class". He spoke severely, "you cannot … worship God freely here. You have to pay for your pews". The clergy were like "Pharisees in the Bible."[52]

A Young Dissenter let loose in London

The teenaged VSP, leaving school to work for four years in a tannery in Bermondsey, in south London, retained much of the thoughts and impressions he had received from his exposure to religious dissent. His regular lunch time activity was to visit the City of London Wren churches but, as a "clerkly follower of Ruskin", he found the "classical Italian beauty" of St Stephen's, Walbrook, "cold" and to his dissenter's conscience it seemed "moneyed and even immoral". He considered the "elegant St Mary Woolnoth and … St Magnus the Martyr and its carvings … as worldly as the boardrooms of banks". Across the river in Southwark Cathedral, he experienced "the 'mechanical' worship of the Church of England" when a "young clergyman sitting at a harmonium in one of the aisles was teaching another the correct intonation of 'The Lord be with you' and the response 'And with thy spirit', which they repeated dozens of times, trying to get it right". The older writer confessed that he might then "admire" their

51 Ibid 39–40, 53.
52 Ibid 41–46.

efforts, although his teenaged self had "scowled like a Bunyan at 'vain repetitions'". In contrast, he appreciated the ancient St Bartholomew's the Great, calling it the "one real church" on his tour, but failing to explain this favourable verdict.

He visited these churches not only out of "a stern cultural duty", but also out of "a growing piety towards the London past". Like many City workers then and since, he took pleasure in the lunch time organ recitals. Having been introduced by a neighbour to Sibelius and Rachmaninoff, he was "entranced by Bach's fugues". His older self judged his taste then as "literary" and attributed it to the influence of Robert Browning—"all my tastes were conventionally Victorian", he wrote.

Pritchett came to know "the alley ways of the city" and delighted to be sent further afield to Westminster. In Fleet Street he "stared longingly at newspaper offices". He admitted that he had then wished to be in love but, truth to tell, "was already in love with London". Although he was too shy to go into pubs—and hated "anyway the taste of beer"—he would listen "to the rattle of dominoes among the coffee tables of the Mecca as far north as Moorgate, and obscurely" felt his passion. He understood that he did not share the feelings of those who wrote the London travel guides which he had consulted, but a London of his "own was seeping into" him unconsciously: although he dismissed this as an "everyday experience". Yet to him London was not merely a city but rather it assumed the character of "a foreign country as strange as India".[53]

On the whole, however, work for the young bowler-hatted VSP at this time was dull and pleasure scarce. Working six days a week, from 9 am to 7 pm on weekdays and until mid-afternoon on Saturdays, he had little free time. Sundays were also tedious but were "brightened only by that brief hour at the Sunday School" when he might meet other young people, especially girls. Yet, as we have seen, he began to find compensations in the job.[54]

Bromley and the Devil

The outbreak of war in 1914 led Walter Pritchett to enlarge his upholstery business and move to factory premises near Smithfield. This also entailed the Pritchett family moving home from Dulwich, where they had been fairly well settled, to Bromley, on the outskirts of the London conurbation. VSP's father was called up to work in an aircraft factory in Hertfordshire.[55] VSP became friends with a neighbour, a young French pianist named Frank, and the two would walk around Bromley together. VSP knew that folk in Bromley, like most English people, were Protestants although Frank was a Catholic, "the only religion that

53 Ibid 157, 164, 174–5.
54 Ibid 165, Baldwin op cit 9.

cared about art", wrote Pritchett. In fact VSP felt that "the forms of Protestantism" in which he was brought up taught its followers to think of life "rigidly in terms of right and wrong". He believed that that was not likely "to fertilize the sensibilities or the poetic imagination" which explained his inability to enjoy poetry.[56]

One day Frank denounced VSP for going to "that church where they don't believe in the Devil" to which he added, "You are a fool". Pritchett confirmed that he did not believe in the Devil which evoked the response, "I've seen him. He haunts this town. He's dressed in red. He's a living person. Let's go out and you'll see him." As a result the two friends went on "long hate walks, looking for the Devil", but eventually decided to give up.[57]

In 1919 VSP succumbed to the influenza which was then sweeping the world. His illness was long lasting and resulted in his not going back to the leather trade. Instead, aged 20, he went to Paris and to an independent life. He was to become a writer, "a man living on the other side of a frontier", as he described it.[58]

Pritchett's Fiction

VSP's life was far from idyllic, with a disturbed childhood, a failed first marriage, and some awkwardnesses in his second marriage, yet it perfectly accorded with his love of books. He wrote that he had always thought of himself, and therefore of his subjects, "as being in life", and that he saw books as "a form of life, and not a distraction from it".[59]

Critics agree that the years he spent in France, Spain and Ireland where he worked in the early 1920s, enabled him to see his own country as an outsider.

"Anything foreign interests me more than England does", he once said. "I'm a natural European. I knew Spain from the bottom up" and "could speak village Spanish".[60] However his troubled and peripatetic upbringing, in which he observed and suffered from the unfulfilled fantasies of his father and the consequent unhappiness of his mother, had already set him apart from his contemporaries. He loved travel and his imagination was fired by Spain which led to his first travelogue, *Marching Spain* (1928), to a collection of stories, *The Spanish Virgin and Other Stories* (1930), and to the distinguished *The Spanish Temper* (1954). He always retained strong feelings for Spain—"It was a country that made a person of you", he stated.

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55 Ibid 6, *Cab* 134–6.
56 Ibid 97.
57 Ibid 192–3.
58 Ibid 208–211.
59 *The Independent* 22 March 1997.
60 *The New York Times* 16 Dec 1985.

VSP wrote four novels between 1929 and 1937—*Clare Drummer*, *Elopement into Exile*, *Nothing like Leather* and *Dead Man Leading*—all of which were greeted coolly by the critics. His last and perhaps best novel, *Mr Beluncle* (1951), centred on Philip Beluncle's religious zealotry and, on VSP's admission, was loosely based on the Christian Science beliefs of his father. Beluncle's mother in the book resembles Walter Pritchett's own mother, as portrayed in *A Cab at the Door*. In this novel VSP attempted to exorcise the demons of his father's "comic pretensions and religious self-delusions". Yet Beluncle is a monstrous hypocrite, although at essence he is hollow, for behind his moral posturing is a man who sustains his business by embezzlement and infusions of capital which he lavishly spends.[61]

VSP was a good linguist, at ease in Spanish and French, who wrote a life of Balzac, but, though he knew no Russian, he wrote biographies of Turgenev and of Anton Chekhov, the playwright and short story writer. Learning that Turgenev liked Walter Scott's forgotten novel *St Ronan's Well*, he himself read it. He had read Scott extensively when young but had never seen that, explaining that he did not care to read of saints. In returning to Scott, he confirmed that he did not see himself as a critic but rather as "an imaginative traveller or explorer".

Pritchett believed that "the work of all novelists" is "diffused autobiography" and his own fiction should be seen in that light. In 1935 he described his father and grandfather as "men of egotistical and romantic nature, who loved words" and whose religious instincts had greatly influenced his imagination. A year later, in an essay on Turgenev, he wrote, perhaps thinking of his grandfather, "The world would be poor without the antics of clergymen".[62] Religion, if not Congregationalism, continually surfaces in his tales. In his story 'The Voice' he tells the tale of a disgraced Welsh cleric trapped in, and rescued from, a bombed church during the Second World War. 'The Wheelbarrow', which Alfred Hitchcock considered making into a film, again deals with religion. It concerns a handyman and revivalist preacher who is physically attracted to his female employer. 'The Cuckoo Clock', one of VSP's earliest stories, contains clear autobiographical references. In this the fictional Uncle Ben seems a fusion of several VSP relatives from the north, especially his grandfather. The boy is drawn to his aunt and uncle's cuckoo clock which appears to be the only frivolous possession in their spotlessly clean home. Attempting to teach him what the commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill', means, his uncle makes the frightened child point a loaded gun at his aunt. Inevitably the gun goes off and shatters the cuckoo clock. Asleep in his bed that night, the child dreams of a falling cherry blossom which, when he bends to pick it up, it blows away from him "like the

61 Baldwin op cit 71–5.

62 Treglown op cit 12, 111, VSP *Balzac* (1973) 108.

surf of the sea till only one petal was left, and it became a little shrivelled up dead cuckoo with all its feathers off". The experience which lay behind this episode is related in VSP's autobiography *A Cab at the Door.*[63]

In his short stories he wrote about the lower middle-class—shopkeepers, pub landlords, clerks, antiques dealers, housewives—in an economical, humorous style. Two of his most famous stories, "The Saint" (1940) and "the Sailor" (1939), deal in different ways with the interplay of religious belief and the ethics of ordinary life. In "The Fly in the Ointment" (1978), he explored the father-son relationship, again using his own father as the model for a bankrupt businessman visited by his son on the day his father's company goes into receivership. After a row between them, the father, in a familiar tirade, complains that he should not have pursued wealth but followed the example of the Israelites and simply collected manna in the wilderness.[64]

In 1962 appeared VSP's *London Perceived* which reveals an insider's view of his home town. He was not concerned with the tourist's interest in the aristocracy. Rather he was at ease in the markets, gardens, parks, pubs and churches frequented by ordinary Londoners. Among the past citizens he noted are Wren, Inigo Jones, Hogarth and rather curiously Dr Nicholas Barbon, the son of the more famous Praise-God Barebone, which reinforces his focus on the Puritan nature of the city's development. He had long held that religion, and particularly Puritanism, had had a formative influence on English social attitudes.[65]

Conclusion

VSP died on 21 March 1997 in the Whittington Hospital, Archway, north London. He was not only respected and admired for his literature but was much loved as a man, genial, warm, modest and sensitive. The overwhelming impression of his two volumes of autobiography is of his "affectionate delight in storytelling, in capturing his past through anecdotes".[66]

Given the turmoil at his childhood home, he had come to love the warmth and lack of pretence of the north of England but he remained "nervous of its frown; and even of the kindly laughter" which he heard there. He returned "sadly" to London after his Yorkshire visits yet, in his "mind's eye", he saw "the white road going across the moors, like a path across a swollen sea, grey in most seasons but purple in the summer, rising and disappearing, a road that I longed to walk on, mile after mile". He never found another road to move him "so

63 'The Voice' is in *It May Never Happen Again* (1945), 'The Wheelbarrow' is in *When My Girl Comes Home and Other Stories* (1961) and 'The Cuckoo Clock' is in *The Spanish Virgin and Other Stories* (1930). *Cab* 50–52.

64 *The New York Times* 16 Dec 1985, 22 March 1997.

65 Treglown op cit 127.

66 A Thwaite in *The Guardian*

strangely" until 1924 when he was in Castile. That brought back his childhood adventures in Sedbergh and resulted in his walking across Spain which itself led to his first book, *Marching Spain* (1928), a vivid description of an idiosyncratic journey through Estramadura, from the south to the north of Spain, only a few years before the outbreak of civil war. One episode included in this book is the stoning of a Protestant chapel by Catholic zealots. Late in life he came to love the cliffs of Cornwall, relishing those places from which he could watch the moods of the sea, and perhaps recalling his grandfather's family links to the sea.[67]

In his maturity, VSP turned away from Christianity. Indeed he wrote that he was "sick" of the Christian God by the 1920s although, in his memoirs, he stated that if he ever thought of "a possible God some image of the Berg comes at once" to mind, as do also "certain stones", he remembered, "in the ravine". In his second volume of autobiography, *Midnight Oil*, he wrote, "I was fanatical about writing", when a young man in Paris, "the word and the sentence were my religion". As an adult VSP realised that his father had had little imagination, although he had fantasised greatly, revealing both his weakness and superficiality. Instead his mother had been the imaginative one for, as he put it, "imagination grows from indigenous deep roots".[68] It is clear that his childhood experiences in Yorkshire, and at Sedbergh in particular, helped to provide the future writer with such deep roots. The indelible impressions received during his time among the Congregationalists of Sedbergh—of hills, clouds, the freedom of being away, and the warmth of the people—formed a powerful memory and became a creative influence on his imagination.

Alan Argent

67 *Cab* 47, 52, Baldwin op cit 43, *ODNB*, *The Independent* 22 March 1997.
68 *Cab* 39.

REVIEWS

***A short world history of Christianity*. By Robert Bruce Mullin. Pp Xiv, 312. Westminster John Knox, 2008. £19.99. ISBN 978–0–664–22686–2.**

The author Robert Bruce Mullin describes the genesis of his book thus: beginning with the laudable premise that 'good history must be clear history', he has set out to write a book which draws on 'more than three decades of interactions with teachers and students of Christian history'. The author writes in his introduction that telling the story of Christianity 'has become an urgent task', since 'the influence of religion in human affairs has increased', but 'paradoxically, […] people are increasingly without a grasp of its basic outline.' It is certainly the case that there is a need for a reliable, accessible, coherent and comprehensive narrative of Christian history for beginners in the field, and for teachers of A-level students and undergraduates. Does this book fit the bill?

In many ways, the book succeeds in being accessible, informative and interesting. Each of the seven sections deals with a separate epoch of Christian history, from the early Church, through the 'Constantinian Revolution', the medieval period, the Reformation, the nineteenth century, to the twentieth century and the postmodern era. The sections are usefully subdivided into ten-page to fifteen-page chapters, written in a lively style with (on the whole) short, pithy sentences, and with key points highlighted in text boxes. On the negative side, the contents of many of the chapters are only obvious to the beginner in retrospect, being headed by such uninformative titles such as 'Defending and Defining' (on the years AD 100–300), 'Defining and Dividing' (on Athanasius and Augustine), 'Endings and Beginnings' (on AD 1200–1500) and 'Reason and Faith' (on Methodism and eighteenth-century Evangelicalism).

This surprising choice for an introductory guide points to a further question faced by readers of a book of this nature: what can they hope to learn? The author succeeds admirably in raising a huge number of theological, political and social issues; however, his ten-page chapters covering up to three hundred years of Christian history at a time feel slightly too long for summary, and yet too short either for detail or for convincing argument. Mullin's decision to write a 'world history' leaves him with a delicate balancing act. Such a format requires both detail (we have sections on missionaries to China, the churches in Ethiopia, India and Korea) and sensitive argument (the rise and fall of successive Christian 'Empires' is a key theme of the book). As a result, the author wisely offers us merely tantalising glimpses of a huge range of exciting prospects, encouraging us to 'finish this book hungering for more in-depth knowledge' (the author again, in his 'Introduction'). However, some readers of this magazine may be disappointed at the small amount of space offered to religious dissent, with only a handful of mentions of Congregationalists, Baptists, Quakers, or

Presbyterians, and no acknowledgment of the existence of the United Reformed movement. Christianity's historic opponents (for the purposes of this book, they include paganism, Judaism and Islam) are similarly dealt with fleetingly, with little space afforded to the discussion of modern multiculturalism.

The book is at its best when it limits itself to chapters with a short time frame, a clear goal and a particular rather than a global perspective. The passages on the theological controversies of the ecumenical councils, for instance, are refreshingly clear-headed, precise, concise, intelligible and useful. Also of great value is the substantial section on Christianity in the nineteenth century. These are perhaps the parts that beginners and students may find most helpful. The book probably will not succeed—in Britain, at least—in becoming a standard textbook on the subject of worldwide Christianity. However, it certainly offers a straight gate into a vast number of territories, exposing students and general readers to themes and contexts which they can pursue at greater length through other means.

Mark Burden

***Letting God be God: The Reformed Tradition*. By David Cornick. Darton, Longman and Todd, 2008. £9.95. ISBN 978–0–232–52722–3.**

'Christ was not crucified on a cathedral altar between two candlesticks, but on a city rubbish dump between two thieves' (p 146). Cornick's use of a George MacLeod quotation illustrates the heart of his book. For he does not argue that the Reformed tradition is non-Catholic (he insists the Reformed are a Catholic people! P 131), or divisive (at their best, he believes the Reformed are 'open to the authentic Church wherever it may be found' p 132, though at their worst, they deny any such catholicity!). Essentially, though, his point is that the Church's true catholicity is found in a 'worldly' spirituality which rediscovers God in Christ in the world.

So, throughout the book, there is a proper tension. On the one hand, there is God's 'transcendence'. Historically the Reformed took it to necessitate a reaction against Roman Catholicism's attempts to 'contain' God within human art or sacramentalism. To balance this, Cornick identifies Reformed appreciation of beauty, art and creativity—from Calvin, to John de Gruchy, in the struggle against the ugliness of apartheid. So, on the other hand, there is God's 'immanence', which underpins Reformed commitment to social and political transformation. After all, referring to Calvin and RW Dale, Cornick notes that the point of Christians' involvement in politics is 'to let God's beauty be reflected in social and political space' (p116). Of course, Reformed history is more chequered, but for Cornick, 'it was in social and public space that the Reformed slowly discerned the link between ugliness and sin, and beauty and truth, and the ways in which Christ turned the one into the other on Jerusalem's rubbish tip' (p.128).

In that sense, Reformed spirituality is truly 'Catholic', when it rejects the division between spirituality and worldliness, or between one church and another, being instead truly 'ecumenical', that is, concerned with God's entire oikumene (p.152), the whole of God's 'economy', the transformation of the world. Thus, in discussing Reformed approaches to prayer—both extempore and prepared (specially composed, rather than liturgically set)—Cornick emphasises the place of the Lord's Prayer and how the petition for daily bread signifies well the concern with economic justice.

The book is part of the Traditions of Christian Spirituality Series, which also includes Grace that Frees: The Lutheran Tradition, and Silence and Witness: The Quaker Tradition; so this is a broader discussion of Reformed traditions (plural). It begins with an historical overview, taking us on a whistle-stop tour of Calvin (whose nuances with regards to 'election' distinguish him from certain traits of Calvinism pp 91–4), Arminius (God's grace is resistible), and other thinkers and debates, with examples from Presbyterianism, Congregationalism, organically united Churches, and younger movements, namely the Iona Community and Taizé. Arguably, it could be more systematic in distinguishing between the various traditions; and apart from a fascinating exposition of Isaac Watts' hymn, When I survey the wondrous cross (pp 96–8), which sees it as a moving example of how Reformed spirituality holds together God's comprehensive initiative and the call for human responses to it, there is nothing on Congregational hymnody. Nor does it address the relationship between Anabaptist or Baptist spiritualities and the wider Reformed tradition.

However, its principal approach in discussing Reformed spirituality is to weave in and out of theological themes—A Speaking God and a Listening People, A Choosing God and a Chosen People, A Holy God and a Worldly People, and A Loving God and a Catholic People. His discussion of the Reformed rediscovery of the Word is particularly important. While the concern with Biblical authority was partly about getting 'back to basics', this engagement has never been 'basic', Cornick explains, since scholarship has always played a part. (Calvin himself was a serious interpreter of Patristic writings.) The use of the Bible in preaching is powerfully demonstrated by Cornick's admiration for Walter Brueggemann: that preaching is a dynamic event which invites the congregation to make God's alternative reality more fully present. Thus, in Reformed spirituality, this invitation bears more fruit when rooted in community, as fellow-travellers and pray-ers seek to realise it 'on earth as it is in heaven'—and it is in that light, that I really appreciated this exploration of the Reformed tradition/s.

Graham Adams

***Pilgrims. New World Settlers and the Call of Home*. By Susan Hardman Moore. Pp xiv, 316. Yale University Press. 2008. £25.00. ISBN 978 0 300 11718 9.**

The title *Pilgrims* suggests a religious motive in the decision to leave home and cross the ocean. Would God bless the venture? This work treats not only with the emigration of thousands from England to the New World in the early 17th century but also with the less well known return of perhaps a quarter of those who went. Given that the eight to twelve weeks Atlantic crossing of 3,000 miles (one ship took twenty-six weeks to reach New England) was to be feared—hazards included storms, shipwrecks, pirates, privateers and Turks—why did so many return?

By researching first hand accounts of returning migrants, Susan Hardman Moore has undermined the traditional understanding of the 'Great Migration' of the 1630s when between 13,000 and 21,000 left this country to populate the wastes of New England. She begins with the story of Susanna Bell whose deathbed speech recounts her leaving England, her experiences in Massachusetts, and her voyage home after ten years away. Indeed more people left New England 1640–60 each year than went there. Susanna had interpreted the death of her infant child in 1634 as evidence that she should agree with her husband to emigrate. The Bells wanted a safe haven to worship God according to their consciences. In consequence Susanna was shocked by the refusal of the church at Roxbury, near Boston, to admit her as a member until she could give clear evidence of her own experience of God's grace.

Religion was not merely one motive among many in the decision of such migrants: it was central. The stories of most travellers from New England only survive in traces, and Hardman Moore's best evidence comes from an identifiable cohort of emigrant ministers, like Thomas Allen of Norwich who was excommunicated in 1636 for non-compliance with the directives of the new bishop, Matthew Wren. Allen objected in particular to the order to set the communion table against the east wall, with no seats near, and a rail in front for parishioners to kneel at, which 'reeked of a return to the Catholic Mass'. He was followed to Massachusetts by some of his parishioners who, like other Puritans, saw it as a refuge from those who opposed reform in the Church. Migrants to New England, unlike those to Virginia, often travelled in inter-related communities, such as those from East Anglia, the West Country, Yorkshire and Lancashire.

Life in Massachusetts was not easy. Of the thousand or so who arrived in the summer of 1630, on 17 ships in the fleet that brought the first governor of the colony, John Winthrop, 200 returned to the old country within a year. Harsh winters killed the weak, houses often went up in flames, the land needed more manual labour than at home, and wolves savaged the farm animals.

Thomas Allen was one of 76 ministers who sailed to New England 1629–40. Rooted in the parishes, and neither radicals nor separatists, these migrant preachers only reluctantly became detached from the Church of England, under

threat from Laudian bishops. A fifth of these clerical migrants came from the diocese of London alone. Some clerics refused to go because they feared denuding England of a godly witness and the calling of the Short Parliament in 1640, the probability of reform in England, and of civil war, all deterred potential emigrants.

By the 1640s the settlers' churches had transformed vague principles into 'the New England Way' or Congregationalism. This model of church was distinct from existing English and European reformed churches. It involved the use of covenants, solemn binding agreements, which brought settlers together with common rights and duties, in both religious and civic life—Hardman Moore gives examples of 'church-gathering' in Boston. Champions of this 'New England Way' claimed to have rediscovered the pattern of New Testament purity and that Christ's visible church existed only in local gatherings of 'saints'. As Hardman Moore puts it, in words recognisable to later Congregationalists, "No infrastructure existed beyond the local congregation, except for the duty of churches to consult each other for advice, and the responsibility of magistrates to stamp out heresy. Church members voted one another in and out, and elected or ejected ministers. In a draughty meeting-house, or in a barn or the open air, the community gathered by a covenant constituted the Church". The "most striking innovation" was the decision to ask those wanting to join the church, like Susanna Bell, to provide a personal testimony of their own religious experience.

Reformers in England came to divide into those who criticised the developments in New England, broadly English Presbyterians, and those who welcomed the New England Way and followed it, the Congregationalists. Critics, like the Scots polemicist Thomas Edwards, argued that this way was incompatible with parish religion, causing John Cotton and Richard Mather to repeat that the New England churches were not separatist but retained links with the English parishes. Yet if Archbishop Laud and the bishops had driven godly preachers abroad in the 1630s, their fall in the 1640s led to one in three migrant preachers returning to England. In addition almost one in two Harvard students left New England and, Hardman Moore calculates, that a minimum of 1,500 settlers went back to England in the 1640s and 50s, although she allows it is possible that as many as 3,600 returned. Using the minimum estimation, these figures mean that those returning to England may have been somewhere between one in nine and one in fifteen of the immigrants, or, using the higher estimation, one in four or one in six. She admits that any figures must be tentative at best, as in truth they do seem, although on firmer ground she states they indicate "a significant rate of return".

Increase Mather, Richard's son, who travelled to England aged 18, and returned to New England at the Restoration, observed in 1689, that since 1640 more people had left New England than had gone there. The motives of those returning were varied—some came to fight in the parliamentary forces and some became army chaplains. If New England had been a refuge in troubled times, by the late 1640s it was a backwater. Under Cromwell, England practised

freedom of conscience in religion while New England did not, thus providing a further incentive to return. Some ministers, like John Cotton, understood their allegiance to 'the New England Way' as obliging them to decline invitations from England.

Returning colonists often gravitated to those London churches which followed 'the New England Way', like St Dunstan in the East, St Stephen, Coleman Street and St Margaret, New Fish Street. A high number of New Englanders joined the Independent church in Stepney. About half, of the 60 or so colonists who took parish livings in England, favoured churches, modelled on the New England pattern, but also wished to preach to the whole parish. This ambiguity enabled some former New England preachers to conform in 1662. Thus, although New England fulfilled the ideal of a reformed parish, ex-colonists often compromised in England. John Cotton allowed that what was appropriate in Massachusetts might not work in England, for the colonial churches started from scratch but in England they had to restore and reform the parishes.

Much in this academic work is admirable and new, but it also covers well trodden ground in giving reasons for disaffection in 1630s England. The tension between parish and gathered churches was explored by G F Nuttall in his *Visible Saints* (Oxford 1957) where he denounced those Congregational ministers who attempted to serve both gathered and parish churches in the 1650s as "lesser men", although he did not delve into the New England background which many shared. The book bears marks of its PhD origins, with case after case cited in evidence, so that each point is demonstrated to a fault. This does not make for fluency. The title *Pilgrims* is explained in appendix 1 and, although it has biblical and 17th century precedents, its popularity derives, as the author acknowledges, from the 19th century, and is questionable. The book is as much, if not more, about the impact of New Englanders on the English churches, rather than on the churches of New England, and its cast of characters includes many familiar from events in the old country, like the Fifth Monarchist, Thomas Venner, and Sir Harry Vane, not a regicide but considered "too dangerous to live", who was executed in 1662, and the turncoat, George Downing, all of whom spent years in the colonies.

Despite these quibbles, this is an important work, especially for historians of Congregationalism and those interested in the impact of the New England Way on the English churches and the development of 'the Congregational Way'. Over half the book is devoted to four valuable appendices, listing those who returned to England 1640–60, New England's ministers detailed by the dioceses of origin, and preachers and students etc from New England. In addition, the work has 16 illustrations, end notes, a scholarly bibliography, a helpful map of New England c. 1660, and a comprehensive index.

Alan Argent

***Cavan, 1609–1653: plantation, war and religion*. By Brendan Scott. (Maynooth studies in local history) Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2007. £9.95. ISBN 978–1–84682–062–5**

Sixteenth-century Cavan, straddling the frontier between the provinces of Leinster and Ulster, was troubled. Rival families clashed in bids for a local supremacy. The periodic disturbances culminated in widespread rebellion during the 1590s. In the aftermath, rebels' lands were forfeited and bestowed on newcomers. In this way, Cavan served as a model to test the programme of plantation which would be adopted on a grander scale in Ulster after 1607. Champions of plantation hoped to attract English and Scots settlers to the region. The results, while not negligible, disappointed sometimes extravagant expectations. Nevertheless, towns were founded, one of which, Belturbet, incorporated as a borough in 1613, prospered. In contrast, other townships remained puny.

Brendan Scott's helpful study of the resulting achievements and setbacks is the seventy-first in a series of pamphlets on Irish local history. Many of these publications, originating from the local history courses at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, have become minor classics. Dr Scott's analysis of County Cavan before and during the war of the 1640s maintains the high standards. The evidence, hardly abundant, is sifted carefully. He shows that in the official vision of a new Ireland religion was central: like Scotland and England, Ireland was to become a Protestant kingdom.

The activities of the two rival churches, Protestant and Catholic, are traced. In comparison with other dioceses in Ulster, that of Kilmore, which largely coincided with County Cavan, was not generously endowed in the new settlement. Poverty and the impropriation of church livings to laypeople—often Catholic—produced the familiar results: pluralism, non-residence and low educational and pastoral standards. A new bishop, William Bedell, appointed in 1629, attacked the problems. Bedell, an Englishman, arrived after a short spell as provost of Trinity College Dublin. He intended to evangelize in the Irish language in order to win the locals to Protestantism. However, as Dr Scott makes clear, the bishop faced hostility among his own clergy and some lay-people, fearful that their lax ways would be threatened. Comparable obstacles lay in the path of the Catholic bishops, keen to introduce into the area the more rigorous practices demanded by the Council of Trent. Bedell, although respected by some local Catholics, had his life shortened by privations suffered during the 1641 uprising. His Catholic counterpart, Eugene McSweeny, evaded the Cromwellian repression and, fortified with whiskey and brandy, hung on until 1669.

Brendan Scott's conclusions suggest the patchy impact of the favoured Protestant newcomers. Their arrival excited animosities: animosities that help to explain the bloodshed of the 1640s. Thanks to Dr Scott's careful investigations, the causes of communal and confessional strife in one contested district have come into sharp focus.

Taken in conjunction with Brian MacCuarta's recent book, *Catholic revival in the north of Ireland, 1603–41*, this research adds valuably to understanding how

counter-reformation Catholicism defeated many of the intentions of the Protestant state in Stuart Ireland.

Toby Barnard

***John Owen: Reformed Catholic, Renaissance Man*. By Carl R. Trueman. Pp 132. Ashgate, Aldershot, 2007. £16.99. ISBN 978–0–7546–1470–8**

It ranks, at this stage, as an arrant truism to say that Owen is enjoying an unprecedented amount of scholarly interest. While the rising tide of academic interest in Cromwell and the Cromwellians has lifted all the boats of that problematic group known as Puritans, the increase seems to be more dramatic in Owen's case, and a number of studies have concentrated on the life, career, and theology of the parliamentary preacher.

This volume, as part of Ashgate's 'Great Theologians' series, clearly endorses the re-evaluation of Owen's contemporary and continuing importance and it is equally clear that Carl Trueman believes the designation to be appropriate. The Owen who emerges from Trueman's study is, above all else, a theologian of immense importance and European stature, who has been the victim of a history written by the victorious royalists, who have been far too successful in their effort to excise and obliterate Owen's role in the shaping and articulation of 'Reformed Orthodoxy.'

The concept of a 'Reformed Orthodoxy' is an important one for this book—it is this tradition in which Trueman locates Owen. This orthodoxy is a development of the doctrines of the Reformation, but it is also influenced by and indebted to patristic theology and to the scholasticism of the medieval church. Owen, for Trueman, did not start with a blank slate, and he is, thus, best understood as a 'Reformed Catholic'. Furthermore, it is this indebtedness to the medieval Christian heritage that, in conjunction with Owen's philological, linguistic, and theological expertise and his defence of the innovative theology of the Reformation that makes Owen the Renaissance man of the title. Trueman is making a deliberate and important point here—a large part of his aim in this book is to counter what he conceives as popular and scholarly misconceptions of Puritans as arid and unimaginative theologians, inflexible and unoriginal thinkers. That such stereotypes have existed is impossible to deny, but in attacking them with such vim, this volume does seem a little dated—it seems unlikely that any scholar of church history worth his salt would assume the validity of this portrait.

Interestingly, Trueman chooses to discuss Owen's importance and contribution in a European context. This allows him to bypass some of the vexed questions that attend the study of 'Puritans' in an English context and does, most usefully, remind us of the pan-European nature of the debates that Owen intervened in. There is a trade-off here, of course, and Trueman's decision does limit the attention that he is able to pay to some important aspects of Owen's thought. However, given the aims and interests of this volume, the price seems a reasonable one to pay: the insights gained outweigh those sacrificed. In this

European context, Trueman devotes his chapters to the discussion of Owen's theology of God, his understanding of the Divine covenants, and their implications for his Christology, and his understanding of justification.

This is an interesting and useful book, but it is not without its problems. Most striking of these is a dense writing style whose stodginess is accentuated rather than relieved by occasional forays into the vernacular—a reference to 'needle-headed numptiness' (p.121) being only the most outstanding example of this. Trueman's writing also suffers from a use of 'Reformed' and 'Reformed Orthodox' as nouns which this reviewer, at least, found irritating. And Trueman's use of these terms reveals a more serious problem. For all his calls for nuance and an informed approach to Reformation theology, he is far too quick to refer to Reformed orthodoxy as though that were some monolithic standard by which Owen can be judged. It is not, and Trueman's own book makes that clear. The book is also marred by typographical errors and the omission of a bibliography.

Mark S. Sweetnam

***An Account of the Life & Death of Mrs Elizabeth Bury*. Ed. Kevin McGrane. Pp. xxiii, 382. Reformation Heritage Books, 2006. £15.00. ISBN 978–1–892777–99–7.**

Elizabeth Bury's life (1644–1720) spanned the period from the Civil War to the reign of George I. The daughter of a Cromwellian cavalry officer and step-daughter of an ejected minister, the wife first of a Puritan gentleman and then of a Dissenting minister, she was immersed in the sufferings, spirituality and emerging cultural identity of English Dissent's first century. She kept a diary in shorthand from 1664 to 1690, then in longhand for the rest of her life. In the year of his wife's death, the Revd Samuel Bury published the first edition of this book, using about a tenth of her longhand diary, which has since perished. Second and third 'corrected' editions followed in 1721, and there was sufficient interest in the American colonies to justify a Boston edition of 1743, re-set but otherwise reproducing all the printing errors of the third edition. These early editions contained, in addition to the diary, Samuel Bury's addresses to the reader and to 'the Dear Relations and Friends of the Deceased', his account of his wife's life and death, an elegy by Isaac Watts, a selection of Elizabeth Bury's letters, and her funeral sermon preached by her William Tong, all of which are reproduced in the 2006 edition. Additionally, the new edition contains Samuel Bury's 'The Dying Pastor's Last Legacy to his Flock', his will and the will of Elizabeth's first husband Griffith Lloyd.

Beyond the modernisation of spelling, capitalisation, italicisation and punctuation, the major change in this edition is a substantial reorganisation of Samuel Bury's selections from the diary. Bury arranged the entries under the subject headings of 'Her Self-Examinations', 'Her Sabbath-Frames and Services', 'Her Remarks on herself at Sacraments, and Covenanting with God', 'Her Accounts of herself on Days of Fasting and Prayer', 'Answers to Prayer, and Deliverances in

Danger', and 'Some of her Morning and Evening Remarks'. Kevin McGrane has restored the original chronological order of the diary, with a key to Samuel Bury's classification for each entry, 'in order to trace social development and thought, rather than classifications according to her husband's judgment'. Copious footnotes explain obsolete words, identify individuals and books, and give the complete text of all scriptural references. A bibliography lists mainly seventeenth- and eighteenth-century books which shed further light on the context of Elizabeth Bury's life, but a few quite recent works are included and critically discussed in the preface.

In his preface, Joel R. Beeke urges readers of Elizabeth Bury's diary not to 'compare her level of spirituality with your own lest you become discouraged, but [to] use her spiritual instruction and example to help you forward in your walk with God.' This reviewer was more interested in the historical value of the diary as an example of the combination of intense, introverted emotion with immersion in Scripture which would later characterise the evangelical revival amongst Dissenters.

Marilyn Lewis

***Katherina Schütz Zell, Church Mother: The Writings of a Protestant Reformer in Sixteenth Century Germany*. Edited by Elsie McKee. Pp 267 including bibliography and index. University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London 2006. £35.00 cloth, ISBN 0–226 97966–0. £14.00 paper, ISBN 0–226–97967–9.**

The series of which this book is a part is called, 'The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe'. It aims to bring the writings of women into the public domain, in contradistinction to the 'first voice', which is that of 'the educated men who created Western culture.'[1]

The book contains introductions and bibliographies by both the volume editor and the series editor, the bibliographies confusingly set at the beginning and end of the text. There follows a series of translations of Zell's writings, each with an introduction by the translator, gathered under two sections: 'Lay Reformer, Teacher and Pastor' and 'Autobiography and Polemic'. A letter from Ludwig Rabanus to Zell is in an Appendix.

Katherina Schütz Zell is of fundamental importance to the development of the churches of the Reformation. She married Matthew Zell, a priest, deliberately and consciously creating a new way of life for the priesthood. She writes: 'With God's help I was … the first woman in Strasbourg who opened the way for clerical marriage. … I myself married a priest with the intention of encouraging and making a way for all Christians'.[2]

Her compassionate, practical intelligence is shown in her exhortation to the

1. ix.

2. Apologia for Master Matthew Zell, her husband, who is pastor and servant of the Word of God in Strasbourg, because of the great lies invented about him. 77.

women of Kentzigen, suffering under persecution, whom she addresses as 'Sisters with me in Jesus Christ',[3] and, close to my own heart, in her concern that the congregations of reformed churches should have 'Christian and Comforting Songs of Praise' to sing.[4] In both cases, her words are grounded in scripture and responsive to the needs of her readers. In response to the need for songs to replace the liturgy familiar from the Roman Church, she finds and recommends a collection from the Moravian community (great singers and writers of hymns), which she divides into cheap and convenient booklets for the use of the common people. It is their praise that she honours, in contrast to the 'priest, monk or nun in their incomprehensible choir song'—a practical reference to the priesthood of all believers, as McKee notes in a footnote.

Schütz Zell clearly saw herself as Matthew Zell's partner in ministry, their marriage modelling a new relationship between men and women. She preached at his funeral—an extraordinary action by a woman of the time.

***Handfuls of Purpose: Gleanings from the Inner Life of Ruth Bryan*. By Ruth Bryan. Pp 474. Reformed Heritage Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2006. £16.00. ISBN 1 60178 003 4.**

The title of the book hints at the rich biblical flavour of this collection of writings from the diary and a few letters of Ruth Bryan. She called herself 'the gleaner', like the Ruth of Scripture, and what she gleaned were handfuls of purpose.

Ruth was writing during the middle years of the nineteenth century. Her book is prefaced by a short contemporary biographical sketch, as was common for collections like this, which draws on a long tradition of commending women writers. Though 'diffident and retiring', she was qualified by her 'deep and privileged insight into God's word' and 'quickness of mental perception' to impart 'the sweetest and most glowing views' of Jesus.[5]

The bulk of the book consists of a diary, starting when the author was 17 years old, and ending with her untimely death from cancer in 1860. She reflects on a life which knew material deprivation, anxiety and ill health. Her attitude is generally one of '*deep* humiliation and self-abasement'[6] before God, again, characteristic of the writing of women at this time, and in preceding centuries.

She makes little reference to the great historical events of her time. A passing reference to the day of national humiliation and prayer (April 26th, 1854) contains none of the spiritual depth of Anne Steele or the political wit of Anna Laetitia Barbauld in reference to similar events in the previous century. She also

3. Letter to the suffering women of the community of Kentzingen, who believe in Jesus Christ, sisters with me in Jesus Christ (1524) 50.

4. Some Christian and comforting songs of praise about Jesus Christ our Savior, his incarnation, birth, circumcision, etc, out of a very fine songbook, about which more will be said in the foreword. 92.

5. xi-xii.

6. Diary entry for January 3rd 1830, p. 21, her emphasis.

refers to the writings of Anne Dutton (1698–1765), a powerful and prolific Baptist woman writer, but she lacks her vitality or intellectual vigour.[7]

Rather, Bryan chronicles Sunday worship, daily Bible readings, and the day to day events of her life. Within this sphere, her insight is profound and her handling of scripture deft. For example, she interweaves the image of Christ as the bridegroom—a common theme in women's spiritual writing—with Ruth's relationship with Boaz, to sometimes startlingly erotic effect.

These are two truly worthwhile additions to the library of anyone interested in the history and spirituality of the Church in two different eras. It is encouraging to see the writings of women being reprinted and translated for a new generation.

Janet Wootton

***Nonconformist Communion Plate and Other Vessels*. By Christopher Stell. Pp viii, 52, 123 b&w illustrations. (Occasional Publications no 4) The Chapels Society, 2008. £15.00. ISBN 978–0–9545061–2–4.**

Unlike the silver of the Church of England, the communion plate belonging to the various English nonconformist denominations has attracted little attention. Apart from two articles on 'Some Old Silver Communion Plate of English Nonconformity' by E.A. Jones (1905–6), an incomplete series of articles on Unitarian communion plate by G.E. Evans (1927–40), and an article on 'The Communion Plate of Early Methodism' by J.C. Bowmer (1949–50), there has never been a comprehensive survey of the subject.

This book by Christopher Stell owes its origin to the *Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting-houses*, undertaken for the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (subsequently English Heritage) and published in four volumes 1986–2002. During the preparation of that inventory he took the opportunity to inspect and record whatever plate was available and relevant to the buildings under review.

The book opens with a six-page 'Introduction', providing a succinct but comprehensive overview of nonconformist plate. Much is of domestic origin, reflecting the generosity of benefactors; and not all is of silver, since pewter and other base metals were much favoured by less wealthy congregations. The three main categories of vessel usually required for communion are cups, flagons and plates, while other items of church metalwork include alms-dishes and baptismal bowls.

Communion cups are found in a remarkable variety of forms, and the author identifies nine different types. Some rural churches were presented with small domestic cups, the earliest dating from 1641. Beakers were commonly used for communion cups in the Netherlands, and it is significant that the small numbers

7. Diary entries for March and April 1852, pp. 308–9.

noted in English dissenting churches (from before 1654) are mostly found on the eastern side of the country.

The standing cup on a baluster stem without handles appears in considerable numbers and forms some of the oldest items of chapel plate, the earliest example dating from 1632. A simpler and in some ways a more practical form of standing cup has a relatively plain hollow stem, often enriched with a small moulded band at mid height. First found in 1696 and particularly popular in the first half of the 18th century, this form is the closest to contemporary Anglican examples.

Of domestic origin like the beaker, the two-handled communion cup was the vessel most favoured by English nonconformist congregations. The most frequent is the plain, undecorated cup with a pair of handles, on a moulded base with a vestigial stem, found from 1690. A small number of cups made in the late 18th century are notable for their sharply tapered bodies, almost V-shaped, with handles rising high above the rim.

More elaborate are the many two-handled cups with gadrooned decoration around the lower part of the bowl and often with a cartouche, the earliest dating from 1691. Eight two-handled cups, made between 1659 and 1676, have the lower part of the bowl ornamented in repoussé with scenes of the chase, while two further cups of 1683 and 1695 are decorated with Chinoiserie engraving: clearly of domestic origin, their flagrantly secular decoration seems remarkably inappropriate for sacramental use. A few mugs or single-handled cups appear from the late 17th century, some of which may have been converted from domestic use.

A very few small tankards have been noted, the earliest again dating from the late 17th century. Some were probably used as flagons, but others may have been used as communion cups. The number of silver flagons recorded is relatively small in comparison with the frequency of silver cups, and it may be supposed that these were more often of pewter. The earliest silver ones date from 1718, and nonconformist flagons are indistinguishable from contemporary Anglican examples.

As with flagons, silver plates are not numerous, and the earliest dates from 1663. Simple pewter plates are more frequent, and may have served a range of functions in addition to holding bread for communion. Broader or deeper dishes have been regarded as either alms-dishes or possibly as baptismal basins. There are also a few pieces of silver or base metal clearly made as baptismal basins.

Most of the items discussed date from before 1800. Silver continued to be acquired in the 19th century, but the development of Sheffield plate, Britannia metal and electroplating—all cheaper substitutes for sterling silver—met the increasing demands of growing and multiplying churches. The needs of large and 'respectable' congregations are represented by several sets of communion plate, but a set made by Elkington & Co. in 1874 is exceptional for its similarity to Gothic Revival Anglican plate. The general acceptance of the 'common cup' was seriously eroded by the introduction of individual communion glasses from about 1905, a practice which spread rapidly through most nonconformist churches.

Closely associated with the practice of communion are the metal disks by which pastors regulated attendance at the infrequent celebrations of the sacrament, particularly among Presbyterian congregations in northern England

following the practice of the Church of Scotland. The book illustrates a selection from the collection of the former Presbyterian Historical Society of England.

The largest section of the book is 'An Inventory of English Nonconformist Plate', cataloguing the holdings of 344 congregations arranged by county and cross-referenced to the Royal Commission volumes. Each piece is described, its inscriptions recorded, its marks interpreted (giving the maker, and the date and place of assay for silver), and its dimensions given.

If the book can be criticised, there are, perhaps, two areas in which one might wish for more information. The first concerns the period covered. The author says that the Inventory "does not pretend to be an exhaustive list of all the plate in the possession of the various nonconformist churches of England. At best it may be claimed as representative of the many and varied items which have been found acceptable in differing circumstances over the past three centuries." However, although the Inventory includes later pieces from the collections surveyed, the discussion and illustrations are very largely confined to pre-Victorian plate. This is the direct result of the Royal Commission's *Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting-houses* concentrating on buildings before 1800, plus important ones up to 1850. The result fails to reflect the enormous number and variety of nonconformist churches built and furnished since 1800, and seriously distorts our understanding of the Victorian contribution to nonconformist plate.

One might also regret the failure to analyse the distinctions between the plate of different denominations. Many congregations changed denomination, most notably those which became Unitarian (104 out of the 344 in the Inventory), but looking simply at the original affiliation of each there are, for example, 134 Presbyterian, 101 Congregational, 64 Baptist, 20 Methodist, 10 Independent, 5 Unitarian and 5 Moravian. It would be interesting to know whether there are any variations between the plate of these different denominations, and how this might reflect doctrine and practice. For example, the Wesleyan Methodist tradition of the real presence of Christ in holy communion is distinct from the view of the sacrament shared by most other nonconformist denominations. The plate of 13 Wesleyan Methodist congregations is recorded here, and this understanding of the sacrament may be reflected in the 1825 communion set at the Brunswick Chapel in Leeds and the late 19th century chalice-like cups at Gomersal in the West Riding.

Such reservations apart, this elegantly designed book deserves high praise. Silver is very difficult to photograph, and the illustrations here (mostly by Royal Commission photographers, with the rest by the author) are of commendable clarity. There is a concise bibliography and an extremely comprehensive index. The book is a work of meticulous scholarship, filling a gap in the history of English silver and making an outstanding contribution to the study of the material culture of English nonconformity.

Peter Boughton

***Selina, Countess of Huntingdon*. By Alan Harding. Pp xiii, 220. Epworth, Peterborough 2008. £12.99. ISBN 978–0–7162–0611–8.**

Over the past decade or so there has been quickened interest in the Countess of Huntingdon. Patron of the eighteenth century's most noted preacher, George Whitefield, she emerged a major player on the Methodistic stage. Lifting high the Calvinistic banner, she soon joined battle with John Wesley's decidedly non-Calvinist forces. Despite her undoubtedly sincere commitment, the combination of her imperious temperament and Calvinism's apparently negative view of humanity meant that, by the time of their simultaneous deaths in 1791, Wesley's brand of Methodism had far outstripped the Countess's—an imbalance set to increase dramatically during the nineteenth century.

Several years ago Alan Harding, an Anglican parish priest, produced a considered and valuable work on the development of the Countess of Huntingdon's denomination, her 'Connexion'. With less success has he turned his hand to this biography. It contains no bibliography of printed works, while the list of manuscript sources reveals important omissions. Since it contains no notes, we are advised that to 'identify the source' of 'statements [not to mention quotations] made in this book' it will be necessary 'in most cases to find them in the footnotes' (p. 208) of three earlier books. These include my own *Queen of the Methodists*. Whether one should be flattered or offended by this remarkable procedure, as a practical tool it is at once both useless and academically distinctly dubious.

Forward thrust is hindered by organisation. For example, chapter 9 is 'Trevecca College', chapter 14 'Life at Trevecca College'. The intervening chapters swing well away from Trevecca. A chapter entitled 'Conversion' begins: 'We do not in fact know a great deal about the events surrounding Lady Huntingdon's conversion' (p 31). While Harding is capable of a nice turn of phrase—having the Countess wear 'her soul on her sleeve' (p 56)—for the most part the writing is pedestrian. On the other hand, some readers could be startled by a person being described as 'hard up' (p 8), or that in her early married years the Countess was 'pretty normal' (p 30), later forming contacts with most of 'the big names' among Anglican evangelicals (p 58). Sometimes the writing is vacuous: 'There was nothing unusual in the eighteenth century about starting a new religious denomination—although of course not everyone did it!' (p 202). Other times coy: some of the Countess's preachers found antinomianism 'a rather convenient doctrine to use with reluctant young women in their congregations!' (p 24). Other times blindingly unclear: itinerating offering the opportunity of 'going out to preach the gospel in a very literal way' (p 112).

Among several factual errors: Thomas Woolston was not a Deist, intent on destroying Christianity. Bishop Richard Watson did not reject the doctrine of the Trinity. George Whitefield did not visit 'all corners of the British Isles during the course of 1750' (p 51) (he did not enter Wales or Ireland during that year). His rebuilt London Tabernacle was opened in 1753, not 1755. Daniel and Nathaniel's surname was Rowland, not Rowlands. Wesley's London chapel was the

Foundery, not Foundry. Lord and Lady Huntingdon's seat was Donington, not Donnington. Martin Madan's support of polygamy was rather more than 'apparent' (p 59). None of these, probably, is a hanging offence and surely will only elicit a caution when the author is brought to ultimate historical judgement.

Substantive errors cause greater concern. Harding believes that the Countess was not unduly bothered about Roman Catholics, when the reverse was stridently true. To suggest that her earliest meetings with John Wesley in 1741 were 'an exchange between equals about the faith and how it should be spread' (p 34) flies in the face of abundant evidence that she was at this time a disturbed and seeking neophyte who looked to the Wesleys as a child looks to a parent. The claim that Whitefield at times 'even hinted that she might assume a leadership role' (p 44) is remarkable, since he trumpeted this to her and to all who would listen. George Whitefield did not do hinting. One of the most serious errors, if only because he labours the matter at length, is Harding's firm assertion: 'Lady Huntingdon herself wrote some hymns, though it is often difficult to be confident about the authorship of hymns ascribed to her'. After that circular claim, we are informed that 'one hymn that was certainly by her is called "Blow ye the trumpet"' (p 122). On the contrary: 'Blow ye the trumpet' was written by Charles Wesley and first published in 1750. There is no evidence that the Countess ever wrote hymns.

Harding usefully and clearly explains the legal context Methodists faced seeking to regulate newly-formed chapels and the twist furnished by Lady Huntingdon. On occasion he appears to promise true insight. For example: she 'established contacts with a band of religious leaders whose extrovert personalities matched the starkness of the gospel they taught' (pp 48–49). However, nothing has hitherto been said suggesting such 'starkness', and the point is never elaborated further, let alone mentioned. In general, there is too much skating the surface, too great a lack of penetration or sustained development of thought.

If one accepts it for what it is, this is a decent if decidedly derivative introduction to the Countess's life and work. Its errors are disturbing, yet not destructive of the whole. Harding, however, has missed the opportunity to write a sharply-focused 'popular' biography. While he clearly has conducted some original research, much of what he writes regarding his subject's life has been gleaned from the work of previous biographers. In the end, Harding appears far more comfortable dealing with the mechanics of the Countess's Connexion than with developing a well-rounded and sustained evaluation of the Countess herself.

Boyd Stanley Schlenther

***The 1851 Religious Census of Northamptonshire*. Edited by Graham S Ward. Pp viii, 266. Northamptonshire Record Society, 2007. £9.50 plus postage and packing from Northamptonshire Record Society, Wootton Hall Park, Northampton, NN4 8BQ. ISBN 0 901275 65 4.**

The Government's 1851 ecclesiastical census is a unique resource for the study of religious provision and practice in Victorian Britain. With this affordable paperback, Northamptonshire becomes the nineteenth English county for which there is a modern critical edition of the unpublished returns for each place of worship (there are also two volumes for Wales). The editor is Graham Ward, an acknowledged expert on Northamptonshire Nonconformity, with several print publications and a website in this field to his credit. However, this is no solo effort. The basic task of transcribing the 1851 ecclesiastical schedules for the county was begun as long ago as 1988, by an adult education class in Northampton under the late Victor Hatley. It is therefore appropriate that this book appears as the Northamptonshire Record Society's second Victor Hatley Memorial Volume.

The core of the edition (pp. 61–207) is the transcript of the 661 returns relating to 619 places of worship (from duplication or other causes there was sometimes more than one return for each church or chapel). They mostly appear in the order in which they were filed at the Census Office, by registration district (twelve in and five outside Northamptonshire), sub-district and place, although the uninitiated would have to consult the index by registration district on p. 251 to ascertain this, since the signposting in the main sequence is inadequate. The transcript also needs to be read in conjunction with appendix 1 which explains, albeit too briefly, editorial policy and practice. Ward has valliantly adhered as faithfully as possible to the content of the original documents, but—with literally hundreds of informants—this can sometimes result in a confusing and inconsistent page layout, especially when compounded by editorial anomalies (such as an idiosyncratic approach to line-breaks). The transcript is enriched by 202 footnotes, which particularly supply biographical detail about respondents, often quite full in relation to Anglican clergy but generally sparser for lay Nonconformists (where typically only the occupation from a contemporary directory is noted). There are thorough indexes of persons, places and denominations and a shorter index of subjects. Ward has deposited an electronic (Excel) version of the data with the Economic and Social Data Service, where they are available to be repurposed.

Of the 619 places of worship 59 were Independent and five joint Baptist and Independent, disproportionately situated in towns, with 17,899 sittings and an attendance of 22,317 on 30 March 1851 (16,382 in the general congregation and 5,935 at Sunday school). These figures represented 12.5 and 13.0 per cent respectively of the total for all denominations, some distance behind the Baptist (16.7 per cent) and Methodist (17.8 per cent) shares of attendance. The largest Congregational chapel was Yardley Hastings (with 1,338 present), others exceeding 1,000 being Kettering, Northampton (Commercial Street),

Peterborough and Rothwell. At the other end of the spectrum, sparsely-attended evening services were held in private dwellings at Clay Coton, East Farndon, Great Oakley, Scaldwell, Sutton Bassett and Thorpe Malsor. Smaller than usual congregations were attributed to agricultural work (at Paulerspury and Yelvertoft) and illness (Byfield). The minister at Byfield further blamed the paucity of Sunday scholars on 'the intolerance of parties connected with the Established Church', but relations were more cordial at Brigstock (where many Anglicans came to the evening service at the chapel) and Great Doddington (where many Congregationalists attended the parish church after a morning prayer meeting at their chapel). The Independent causes at Broughton and Glinton made no return to the census.

The transcript is complemented by a substantial introduction (pp. 1–59), which would have benefited from a more logical structure. On the whole, the discussion of the methodological and interpretative challenges of the religious census is weak and unsystematic. Ward's consideration of the Northamptonshire ecclesiastical landscape, and his analysis of the census results for the county as a whole and (in the introduction and appendix 2) sixteen larger centres of population, are much stronger. Good use is made of the various statistical measures and presentation techniques (maps, bar-charts, tables) developed by Keith Snell and Paul Ell in their *Rival Jerusalems*, and there is an excellent treatment of the relationship between land ownership and religious diversity. Otherwise, Ward's familiarity with the recent secondary literature of the religious census seems limited, and his bibliography is certainly short and eclectic. The attempt (appendix 3) to identify places of worship not returned at the census is partial, especially for Nonconformists where he is reliant upon county directories. By analogy with research on other areas, recourse to Methodist circuit plans and denominational handbooks would probably have considerably increased the number of missing returns. Appendix 4 helpfully reproduces the *Northampton Mercury*'s religious census of Northampton in 1881.

Clive D Field

***Wales. Churches, Houses, Castles.* By Simon Jenkins. Pp xi, 292. Allen Lane, 2008. £25.00. ISBN 978–0–713–99893–1.**

Simon Jenkins has published earlier works on the buildings of England and now turns to the land of his father. His love of Wales is clear from the outset in this book, which is dedicated to the memory of his father, the scholar and Congregational minister, Daniel Jenkins, who was from Dowlais, then in the industrial heartland of south Wales, but who pastored for many years in central London. Daniel recalled the Welsh two-storey terraced cottages of his childhood as different from the Scottish and English tenements, because they allowed easy access to the fresh air of the mountains all around. As the author points out, the English are on the whole woefully ignorant of Wales, as indeed I was until I

married a Welsh speaking Welsh woman and came to know the land, its people and traditions.

The book's introduction offers the reader a sweep through Wales's history and its buildings from the stone circles, henges, cromlechs and barrows, *c.*2,500 BC, to the 20th century. En route we touch on saints Patrick and David, the poets, Aneirin and Taliesin, and the epic *Mabinogion*. We learn that Celtic churches were usually "short, with no architectural division between nave and chancel", that chancels were square-ended, unlike Norman apses, and the churches had no towers. Such sacred enclosures may be sensed at Llandrillo in Clwyd and at St Govan in Dyfed. With stone in abundance, by the 11th century churches were being built in stone. Jenkins points out that Welsh churches, often called Norman, like Penmon on Anglesey (which he rates one of Wales's 30 best buildings), and Tywyn in Gwynedd, may not be so; the rounded arch which survives in Strata Florida in Dyfed, although post-dating the conquest, is clearly not Norman.

The reader learns of Hywel Dda who ruled much of Wales in the 10th century, and whose law, based on kinship and the rights of women and children, survived in parts until the 16th century and was an early realisation of "Welsh cultural self-awareness". In the 11th century, Gruffudd ap Llwelyn, king of Gwynedd, became through conquest the first ruler to unify the country. The English earl Harold Godwinesson conspired at his murder by a Welsh rival, 3 years before the battle of Hastings, leaving Wales ill equipped to fend off the imperialist Normans, who took 3 years to conquer England but 3 centuries to subdue Wales.

Keeping Wales in check involved a chain of castles, strategic marriages, monasteries and colonies, as well as the creation of the Marcher Lords. The remains of 600 early medieval fortresses have been traced in Wales and the marches, with the strongest at Chepstow dating from 1067. Close to their castles the Normans set up 70 colonies for settlers from France or England, and from Flanders in south Pembrokeshire ('little England beyond Wales'). Settlers gained trading privileges in return for defending the castle when needed—the Welsh were excluded from such colonies. We meet Nest, the princess whose abduction from the formidable Cilgerran Castle earned her the title 'Helen of Wales', and her grandson, Gerald the chronicler, half-Welsh and half-Norman. Keen to bring Welsh Christianity under Canterbury and Rome, the Normans invited Augustinians and Benedictines to set up houses at Llanthony, Ewenni, Brecon and elsewhere, and St David's Cathedral was rebuilt. The Cistercians, at the behest of Welsh princes, settled Strata Florida and churches at Margam, Tintern, Valle Crucis, and Abbey-cwm-Hir were built. When the great monasteries resounded to Latin and French, the parish churches still used the Welsh tongue.

Not all the castles of Wales were built for the English but some, like Cricieth, Castell y Bere and Dolwyddelan, were ordered by Welsh lords; these three to guard access to Snowdonia. The wars of Edward I led to the death near Builth Wells of Llywelyn ap Grufudd, the last Welsh ruler, in 1283, resulting in Wales being ruled by an English king whose son became its prince. Edward built 17

castles, 3 of which (Conwy, Harlech and Caernarfon) Jenkins puts in his top 30 buildings, describing them as not "merely awesome" but "spectacular". The custom of pilgrimage was strong, to St David's in the south and to Enlli on Bardsey, off Llyn, in the north. Pilgrims took news, learning, money and disease to remote corners, like the isolated church of Llangelynnin, south of Conwy, which still has an old well and the ruin of a hostel and stable. As Jenkins, who "has loved this church since childhood", puts it, "Llangelynnin is a supremely evocative relic of Christianity in Britain".

During the Glyndwr revolt 1400–09, Wales asserted its independence again, a time still evoked by nationalists as a golden age, though not a decade long. Glyndwr fled to the hills but was never betrayed. The Tudor monarchs had Welsh ancestry, with Henry VII born in Pembroke Castle, and Henry VIII in 1536 legally uniting England and Wales, and demanding that landowners speak English. The new Anglo-Welsh aristocracy converted castles into mansions—Carew, Powis, Raglan and Manorbier—and Jenkins identifies the 1576 Plas Mawr in Conwy (also in his top 30) as the finest Tudor town house in Britain. He commends the hall houses of Welsh hillsides, evident at St Fagan's open air museum, the Tudor modernization of Gwydir in Gwynedd and Tretower in Powys, and the benefits to Welsh churches in the Tudor age from slate roofs, porches and rebuilding. Jenkins notes the carpenters' poetic skills in that "Church screens were as distinctive a feature of Welsh art as the ancient Celtic crosses". The dissolution of Welsh monasteries raised few protests and, as in England, monastic fittings were looted to supply secular houses with fine features. The Welsh language profited from the translation of the Bible into Welsh in 1588, which held sway until the 20th century. Jenkins does not concern himself with whether Wales had its own distinctive architecture—styles cross borders and take root.

Georgian houses in Wales were not designed by leading architects, although he admires reception rooms at Chirk (in the top 30) and Picton. Regency Gothick survives well in James Wyatt's Plas Newydd (also in his 30) on Anglesey. Jenkins suggests those looking for Welsh 18th century architecture should walk through the "Georgianized boroughs" of the earlier settlements of Pembroke, Monmouth, Conwy, and Beaumaris which he sees as "among the pleasantest small towns in Britain". The only new notable Georgian church was built in 1736 at Worthenbury, in Clwyd. Revival came with the preachers, Howel Harris and Daniel Rowland, (his sermons could last 6 hours) who founded schools and took Bibles to the villages. The Nonconformists and Methodists gave the Welsh enthusiasm, education and charity—Rhondda alone had 150 chapels in the 19th century and Glamorgan had 1,600 (200 designed by William Jones, a local minister). In Wales as a whole there were more chapel seats than people! The chapels were classical in design, a protest against Anglican gothic, and Sunday schools dominated Welsh society. As Jenkins observes, chapels make "every Welsh settlement instantly recognizable as such, in a religious pluralism replicated in no other community in Europe".

The Victorians' Anglican response came with Sir George Gilbert Scott

restoring cathedrals, Henry Wilson creating the Art Nouveau Brithdir church (in the top 30), near Dolgellau, and John Gibson's church at Bodelwyddan (also in the 30), among other initiatives. Jenkins praises the sensitive restorations of W D Caroe throughout Wales, especially at Llandaff Cathedral and Patrisio church (both in the 30). With so few churches and chapels still in religious use, the challenge to Welsh planners is to find a sensitive re-use for former places of worship. In the 19th century the Marquess of Bute built Wagnerian fantasies at Castell Coch and Cardiff Castle, while the neo-Norman Penrhyn Castle, Gwynedd, (all 3 in his top 30) is, states Jenkins, the chairman of the National Trust—he is also chairman of the *Buildings of Wales* series, published by Yale, which has been appearing over 30 years and is due to be completed this year—, "a triumph of National Trust restoration". Llandudno, where I holidayed as a child, was said to have an aspect "worthy of the Bay of Naples" which, Jenkins suggests, describes more appropriately Clough Williams-Ellis's Portmeirion (famous from the television series *The Prisoner* and in the top 30).

Welsh industry had its effects on civic buildings, as on Cardiff City Hall (in the top 30)—"the most lavish in Britain, and unashamedly nationalist in its iconography". Yet the coal industry was in slow decline and Welsh architecture declined with it. Mid-twentieth century Wales "lost identity and heart" and the new buildings reflected the lack of imagination and zest.

In this book Jenkins tries to rebut the claim that Wales lacks "an aesthetic sense" and, in my view, he succeeds. Wales's intense beauty—my in-laws' home was on the edge of the south Wales coalfield but the address was Prospect Place, with fine views of the 'mountain' behind—allows the low roofed farmhouse, with its slate flagstones, to adorn the landscape. But, as Jenkins points out, the slate village nestling against "a mighty spoil tip" (probably now landscaped in grass and trees) and the rendered chapel are also "quintessentially Welsh". He favourably compares Welsh hamlets and workmen's cottages to their equivalents in England, Scotland and Ireland and concludes that Wales's "inclination to sell itself short does its history a disservice". Yet this is part of the Welsh character, an enjoyment of sadness—a typical Welsh story is a 'stori drist'—and here he may not succeed. He tells his readers that, although relics of the past, especially the recent industrial past, are swiftly vanishing, his chosen buildings in the book are mostly intact and he is not pessimistic. He wants "more forceful intervention in reinstating old buildings" that have fallen into ruin, for Wales has "simply too many ruins". Such action would enable "a newly confident country" to "handle its pains and glories, its past humiliations and its future triumphs".

It would be invidious to complain of Jenkins' choice. Yet I have never seen a castle more romantic in its setting than that at Carreg Cennen, and the plain chapels at Maesyronnen and Nanhoron (all of which he includes, but not in his top 30) set my pulse racing in a way that Llandaff and the great houses, like Powis, fail to do. I might even have found some space for the birthplace—almost a hovel and, therefore, of course, nobody's best building!—of the bard and minister, Howell Elvet Lewis (Elfed), near Carmarthen. Yet this is Jenkins' choice, not mine, and I appreciate his recollections of past visits. I note that he thinks

Craig-y-Nos, the opera singer Adelina Patti's house in the Brecon Beacons, is "within the bounds of architectural redemption" and I pray that judgement applies to Wales as a whole.

Suffice to say that, just as with Tim Hughes's *Wales's Best One Hundred Churches* (Seren 2006), reviewed in this magazine last year, I want to travel to Wales with this book and spend as long as it takes to visit these churches, houses and castles—those I know and those I don't. The buildings included in the book were all visited by Jenkins, so sadly several chapels are omitted because access was not possible. Like Hughes, he was thrilled by the remoteness of the chapel at Soar-y-Mynedd which R S Thomas called "the chapel of the soul". He relates the preaching visits there of Revd David Idris Owen in the 1930s who took a train from Aberystwyth to Llanddewibrefi, and then had an eight mile horse ride over the mountains. Owen led one service in the chapel and a second in the parlour of a local farm and, on one occasion, nearly died in a snowstorm on his way back to the station!

This is a beautiful book—produced to a high standard and inexpensive given its lavish quality. Whether it will serve Jenkins' aim to help the Welsh "feel more of a coherent people within a coherent country" and "to entrench their language and culture in their institutions" remains to be seen. Each building is rated with 1 to 4 stars. The photographs are superb throughout; the maps for each chapter (for Anglesey, Clwyd, Dyfed, Glamorgan, Gwent, Gwynedd, and Powys) are clear; and each building is described briefly. The book carries a glossary of architectural terms and common Welsh words, a bibliography and an index. I wonder if Jenkins' use of Methodists and Calvinists is always clear, in that Wales has Calvinistic Methodists and Wesleyans etc. Yet I have no hesitation in recommending this elegant book.

Alan Argent

***A Memoir of Troubled Times. Hans and Gertrude Wedell.* Augmented and edited by Renate Rocholl and Eberhard George Wedell. Translated from German by Katherine Wedell and Maggie Hoeffgen. Pp X, 200, 63 illustrations. New European Publications, 2008. £14.99. ISBN 978–1–872410–69–2.**

This book gives a vivid account of the twelve years, when the Wedell family's survival was ensured through the help of fellow Christians in Britain (notably the Bishop of Chichester, George Bell) and in the United States of America (Reinhold Niebuhr, John McKay and others). After the Nazi-German pogroms in November 1938, when Christians with Jewish links were faced with starvation in the concentration camps, Hans and Gertrude Wedell and their four children spent some years in England and the United States. Hans was born at Düsseldorf in 1881, the son of Rabbi Dr. Abraham Wedell. He was baptized in the Protestant Church of Rath, near Düsseldorf in 1914, and married Gertude Bonhoeffer in 1919, a cousin of the famous Protestant member of the Resistance, Dietrich

Bonhoeffer. In 1935 Hans resolved to serve God as a minister of his Church, just as he had served him up to then as a barrister accredited to the High Court in Düsseldorf between 1907 and 1938.

The nucleus of the volume, that is chapters three, four, and five, are the reminiscences of Gertrude Wedell, originally in German. It relates, in her inimitable style, the larger part of her life and work with Hans, and without him, during the six years in the United States 1939–45. The memoir describes her unconventional trust in the goodness and protection of God. In the 1990s her writings were published by the Archives of the Protestant Church in the Rhineland. Two reasons have caused the editors, 13 years later and a long time after the events, to prepare an English text: Hans and Gertrude both spent a significant number of years in England and the United States. The other reason is the historical interest in the fate of one family in the context of the history of the 20th century. In order to fill out the remarkable partnership of Hans and Gertrude, the editors have added chapters one, two, six, and seven to the memoir. Most of the material for these parts, including the illustrations, comes from the archives of the Wedell family and from friends of the family.

The first chapter contains a description of the circumstances of the two families from which they originate. Chapter two traces Hans' development from jurist to theologian. It demonstrates Hans' personal identification with the Pauline experience of Christ as the fulfilment of the law, and, to him, the self evident move of the faithful Jew into the Christian community. The reader also recognises Hans' progressive disillusionment with the clerical hierarchies in the Christian churches. Chapter six is dedicated to Hans' theological work, mainly between 1950 and his death in 1964. In these years he was able to use his experience in exile to identify new methods of pointing the way for the Christian witness in the modern world. The editors describe the last fifteen years of Gertrud's life in chapter seven, which records her constructive activity and the many fruitful friendships she was able to develop in Germany.

Stefan Samerski

***'A Way of Gospel Obedience': The Church Meeting in Congregational Tradition and Practice. The Congregational Lecture 2008.* By Elaine Kaye. Pp 23. The Congregational Memorial Hall Trust (1978) Ltd. £2.00. ISSN 0963–181X.**

One might argue that the church meeting is the distinctive feature of Congregational polity, shared by Baptists and Congregationalists. This lecture surveys what has been said about it by significant Congregational thinkers of the 17th and 20th centuries, namely John Owen (1616–83), Daniel Jenkins (1914–2002), Geoffrey Nuttall (1911–2007) and Erik Routley (1917–1982). It also quotes some of the surviving records of 17th century Congregationalism. We learn that churches then corresponded with one another but any advice given was just that and each was free to come to its own decisions. We are reminded

that R W Dale (1829–1895) saw the church meeting as "one of the chief means of grace". Owen and Nuttall both point to the importance of the guidance of the Holy Spirit in coming to decisions. Several times it is observed that decisions are best achieved by consensus and Jenkins points out that this gives the lie to those who accuse Congregationalists of individualism. The church meeting is not a democracy for it "seeks … to discern the mind of Christ". Routley observes that this form of government is best suited to small churches. All these things sit unhappily with "that united Church for the manifestation of which we all long", asserts Elaine Kaye in her opening paragraph, surely appealing to an outmoded idea of ecumenism?

The Congregational Lecture is an hour long and in printed form is a small pamphlet. It is a challenge therefore for the lecturer to compile all the material for the subject in hand and whittle it down to its final form. Unfortunately over half this lecture consists of an introduction to the lives of the four main thinkers, leaving space for only a short outline of their views.

The lecture is addressed to the initiated. To make the case for the church meeting to followers of other traditions, more description is required. Examples of actual church meetings in a variety of churches would have added illumination. I should have liked more on the nature of church government and authority. These terms are used but to support the argument for the church meeting they require further examination. Where does the authority come from and by what right does the church meeting exercise it? The quotations from Routley suggest it derives from the members themselves. What would the other thinkers say to that?

There are a couple of errors concerning Geoffrey Nuttall. On p18 a footnote lists his book *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* as published by Oxford University Press. It was published in Oxford but by Basil Blackwell. On the same page we are told of his ordination at Warminster. Nuttall claimed that, in the R F Horton tradition, he was not ordained, although elderly locals recall a service of recognition and this may explain the confusion. This lecture would make a good first draft or introductory chapter to a book on the church meeting or on Congregational principles. I hope that such a book will be forthcoming to make the case for Congregationalism in the 21st century.

Peter Young

Secretary:
Rev. C Price
The Congregational Chapel
Pound Green
Guilden Morden
Royston
Hertfordshire
SG8 0JZ

Treasurer:
Rev. C J Damp
Bunyan Meeting
Mill Street
Bedford
MK40 3EU

Distribution:
Peter I Young
The Flat
Trinity Chapel
St Matthew's Road
London
SW2 1NF

Editor:
Dr A Argent
125 Sudbourne Road
London
SW2 5AF

Reviews Editor:
Jonathan Morgan
St Andrews
Hilders Cliff
Rye
East Sussex
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