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**THE  
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**Volume 6 No 1 Spring 2010**

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## EDITORIAL

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We welcome to this issue the conservator at Dr Williams's Library, Jane Giscombe, who has written on the relation between Isaac Watts and his readers. Ever the pedagogue, Watts wrote in order to do his readers good and the overwhelming success of his many and diverse publications shows that his readers loved him for it.

Returning to our pages are Roger Ottewill and Willie McNaughton with Congregationalists in Edwardian Hampshire and the early years of the London Missionary Society in Glasgow respectively. In addition, our reviews editor, Jonathan Morgan, offers some reflections on Oliver's son, Richard Cromwell, the second Lord Protector.

## NEWS AND VIEWS

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Our regular contributor, the indefatigable Willie McNaughton, has lodged in the National Library of Scotland and Dr Williams's Library, London, his transcription and annotation of the **Glasgow Theological Academy Minutes 1811–1842**, which gave rise to his article in our Spring 2009 *Magazine*.

The article on **Calvinism and Congregationalism** in our last issue has occasioned some correspondence, among which the following from Tony Tucker.

I was interested to read ... that the Calvinist influence on Congregationalism in the latter years of the CCEW eclipsed other elements in the Congregational way. While I think this was true in the higher echelons of the CCEW (excuse the hierarchical language!), it may have been much less the case at the grassroots. Brought up as I was in West Country Congregationalism, ie completely divorced from Presbyterian influence, it seems to me that the New Genevan movement was a form of 'high' Congregationalism and was rooted in the Congregational way. See the Forward Books which the NG movement produced. That Congregationalism was, as you say, a form of decentralised Calvinism, but I never remember hearing any such expression as the 'Reformed Tradition'. Of course, the NG influence on styles of worship made more possible the union with the PCE, but locally the Calvinist influence was not dominant. Not surprisingly, the union in 1972 pleased neither the ex-Presbyterians nor the Congregationalists! At least at the local level both felt they had been cut off from their roots.

I am doubtful whether the URC in its present form can claim to represent the Calvinist tradition, but these days I am not sufficiently at the heart of things to know. My impression is that any such claim has been much diluted. And I guess I am not the only former Congregationalist to grieve for the loss of so much that was good in that tradition.

In addition, John Taylor (of Minehead) wrote ...

Among the piles of Christmas cards came the “CHS Magazine,” which I found very interesting, not least because of the piece on Calvinism and Congregationalism, topical in this special celebrational year. Because of it [the anniversary year], I made up my mind ... to read the ‘Institutes’. It has been revealing and rewarding. I have tackled it in small doses.

What you say in your article is undoubtedly the case; the roots of Congregationalism go a long way back before Geneva was ever heard of. On the continent the Anabaptists likewise go a long way back. ...

I think someone could write an article showing that Presbyterianism’s roots are not by any means confined to Geneva. Calvin did not commit himself to any particular form of Church government but wisely said it depended on regional circumstances and, moreover, was bound to change as time went by. He says some countries have some true Churches and mentions Germany and France. He makes no mention of Scotland! My conclusion thus far is that Calvin above all was an outstanding scholar who brought to the Reformation the depth of theology and biblical interpretation it needed. He knew the classics, he had read and quoted Augustine and innumerable other Latin and Greek fathers (how did he manage it before card indexes?); he talked of the ancient Church Councils like a professor of Church History. I think his time at college in Paris—at the same place as Ignatius—and his short spell as a Roman priest left an indelible mark on him which appears when he deals with pastoral matters; how he stresses again and again gentleness with sinful people unless they become criminals.

I am left with a mystery. Whether you can suggest an answer I would be interested to hear. He never mentions Luther or Lutheranism. Luther was of the generation before Calvin and his influence was to be found in France and Italy where some clergy and leading laymen had accepted the new theology of faith not works. Perhaps its political implications made him discreet.

## **Lewis Erlanger**

With sadness we must record the death in early February, after a short illness, of Lewis Erlanger of Long Compton Congregational Church, in Warwickshire. Having come to this country as a youth from his native Germany, Lewis settled in England and had been a lay preacher for many years. A great storyteller, he would recall Berlin of the early 1930s with critical affection but was happy in this country. He was a long time member of our society.

## **The Congregational History Society Library**

Pat Hurry, librarian of the CHS library, housed at Bunyan Meeting, Bedford, reports that she has some duplicate copies and some gaps in the collection. She is willing to let go of the former but would like to fill the gaps, if any readers can help in either regard. A modest donation to the society would be welcome for any volumes taken and postage if required. Please contact her directly at Bunyan Meeting, Mill St, Bedford, MK40 3EU.

**Congregational Quarterly gaps**

Vol. 18, No.4, Oct.1940

Vol. 23, No.3, April 1945

## NEW SERIES

Vol. 1, Nos. 2, 3 &amp; 4 (presumably 1984) Vol. 4, No. 4, Dec.? 1986

Vol. 12, No. 2, Summer 1994

**Congregational Quarterly spares**

		January 1952 (2)
April 1928	January 1945 (3)	April 1952 (5)
October 1928	October 1945 (2)	July 1952 (4)
		October 1952 (2)
July 1938	January 1946 (3)	
	April 1946 (3)	January 1953 (3)
January 1939	July 1946 (2)	April 1953 (3)
October 1939	April 1947	October 1953 (3)
April 1940	January 1948 (2)	January 1954 (3)
July 1940	April 1948(2)	April 1954
	July 1948 (2)	July 1954 (2)
July 1941 (2)		October 1954 (2)
October 1941 (2)	January 1949 (2)	October 1955
	April 1949 (2)	
January 1942	July 1949 (3)	January 1956
April 1942 (2)	October 1949 (3)	April 1956
October 1942		July 1956 (2)
	January 1950 (3)	October 1956 (2)
January 1943 (2)	April 1950	
July 1943 (2)	July 1950 (4)	January 1957
October 1943 (2)	October 1950 (3)	April 1957 (5)
		July 1957 (2)
Jan.1944 (2)	January 1951	October 1957 (4)
April 1944 (2)	April 1951 (2)	
July 1944	July 1951 (3)	January 1958 (3)
October 1944	October 1951 (2)	June 1958 (5)
October 1958 (7)		
NEW SERIES		
November 1983	March 1984 (4)	September 1984 (3)
	June 1984 (3)	December 1984 (2)
	Spring 1990	Summer 1993
March 1985 (4)	Summer 1990 (5)	

June 1985 (2)	Autumn 1990 (5)	Spring 1994 (4)
	Christmas 1990 (5)	Autumn 1994 (6)
March 1986 (3)		Winter 1994 (2)
September 1986 (2)	Spring 1991	
	Summer 1991 (2)	Spring 1995
March 1988	Autumn 1991 (2)	Summer 1995 (3)
Summer 1988	Winter 1991/92 (2)	Autumn 1995 (3)
Autumn 1988		Winter 1995
December 1988 (2)	Spring 1992 (2)	
	Summer 1992 (2)	Summer 1996 (3)
Spring 1989	Autumn 1992 (2)	
	Winter 1992 (2)	Spring 1997 (5)

### The Congregational Year Books—gaps

1846	1864	1878	1997
1847	1865	1886	2000
1852	1867	1895	2001
1853	1868	1923	2002
1855	1869	1936	2003
1858	1870	1963	2004
1859	1871	1969	2005
1860	1873	1970	2006
1861	1875	1995	

### CYB—spares

1896	1947 (4)	1960 (5)	1978–79 (2)
1902 (2)	1948 (2)	1961 (3)	1979–80 (8)
1905	1949 (2)	1962 (2?)	1980–81 (4)
1907	1951 (4)	1963–64 (3)	1981–82 (5)
1926	1953 (5)	1964–65 (3)	1983 (15)
1928	1954 (3)	1965–66	1984 (9)
1930 (2)	1955 (4)	1967–68	1985 (2)
1940	1956 (8)	1972	1985/86 (10)
1943 (2)	1957 (4)	1974–75 (2)	1986/87 (11)
1945 (3)	1958 (4)	1975–76 (2)	1987/88 (2)
1946 (4)	1959 (9)	1977–78 (2?)	1988/89 (2)

### The Congregationalist—gaps

No. 26, 2002	No. 35, 2003	No. 49, 2006	No. 50, 2006
Nos. 52–57, 2006–2007	Nos. 58–60, 2007	Nos. 62–66, 2008	

# “A TIME OF JOYFUL ANTICIPATION”: THE PUBLIC RECOGNITION OF CONGREGATIONAL PASTORS IN EDWARDIAN HAMPSHIRE

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## Introduction

It was a time of joyful anticipation, of thanksgiving to God for his leading, a time of hopeful outlook, of girding up resolutely to new things to be done in His might, and a brotherly recognition that though by the very essentials of its existence an Independent Church could have no dictation from outside in the call of the pastor, at the same time they did joy in each other's joy, and take part in each other's efforts, and prayed that each Church should be guided and led to a choice which should be for its own profit, for the profit of the neighbourhood, and for the credit of the denomination.<sup>1</sup>

These words encapsulate something of the expectation and awe associated with the public recognition services and meetings for newly appointed Congregational pastors that were much in vogue during the Edwardian era. They were spoken in 1911 by Alfred Capes Tarbolton, a previous long serving and much respected pastor of London Street Congregational Church in Basingstoke and a man of 'considerable literary gifts',<sup>2</sup> on the occasion of the public recognition of one of his successors, Rocliffe Mackintosh.

For Congregationalists such events served to showcase not simply the arrival of a new pastor but also the life and vitality of the church as a whole. This was facilitated by the considerable press coverage often given to recognition services and associated activities. In many respects they symbolised the outward facing and forward looking stance of the church.

Here it is intended to assess the role and functions of public recognition, drawing upon examples from various Congregational churches in Edwardian Hampshire. This is not to suggest that there was anything distinctive or special about Hampshire, indeed public recognition was a feature of Congregational life throughout the country and beyond. It is simply to provide a restricted geographical focus for discussing the characteristics of public recognition. What follows serves as a contribution to the limited literature on the subject. Indeed, there are very few, if any, substantive references to the process of recognition in

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1 I am very grateful to Professor Hugh McLeod for some very helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article. *Hants and Berks Gazette* (hereafter *HBG*), June 8, 1912.

2 *Congregational Year Book* (hereafter *CYB*) (1926) 183.

the major works on Congregationalism or Nonconformity more generally, such as those by R Tudur Jones and Clyde Binfield.<sup>3</sup> Although Jones refers to the Congregational Union of England and Wales' "Rules relating to the Recognition of Churches and Ministers," he does not seek to interpret them or assess their significance.<sup>4</sup> Similarly in the histories of individual churches or groups of churches, the dates of recognition services might be recorded, but there is no attempt to examine or explain their meaning.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps it was assumed that this would be familiar to the reader.

Whether familiar or not, it is surprising that so little attention has been given to public recognition, since it stands out as a notable feature of Edwardian church life. For example, this is how one recognition service was reported in the *Southampton Times and Hampshire Express* of September 1905:

Tuesday was an important day in the annals of the Kingsfield Congregational Church [in Southampton], the occasion being the special services in connection with the recognition as pastor of the Rev. Robert Ashenhurst, late of Belfast. There was a large attendance in the chapel in the afternoon, when a special service was held. The rostrum and pulpit were beautifully decorated with pot plants, flowers, palms, &c., being the work of the ladies of the congregation.<sup>6</sup>

Although public recognition events were by no means the exclusive preserve of Congregationalism,<sup>7</sup> they undoubtedly had a particular resonance for this denomination, conscious as it was of its longevity and prestige by the Edwardian era.

That said, it is not entirely clear how and when the public recognition of Congregational pastors originated. In all probability it was a nineteenth century innovation perhaps reflecting an increasing self-confidence with respect to the denomination's standing within the community or as Ward puts it 'as the Congregationalists moved from the fringes of society into official culture, from backstreet Bethels into whopping Gothic masterpieces'.<sup>8</sup> A detailed history of Southampton's premier Congregational church, Above Bar, dating from 1909, indicates that the first pastor to be publicly recognised was Thomas Nicholson who commenced his ministry in 1886. The author writes: 'The new era in the history of the Church was celebrated in the public recognition of the New

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3 R Tudur Jones *Congregationalism in England 1662–1962* (1962), C Binfield *So Down to Prayers. Studies in English Nonconformity, 1780–1920* (1977).

4 Jones *ibid* 378.

5 See, for example, E Cleal and T Crippen *The Story of Congregationalism in Surrey* (1908) and T J Hosken *History of Congregationalism in Suffolk* (Ipswich 1920).

6 *Southampton Times and Hampshire Express* (hereafter *STHE*) September 16, 1905.

7 Baptist, and some Methodist, churches also held recognition services for new ministers.

8 R Ward "Professor Clyde Binfield: A Critical Appreciation" in *Modern Christianity and Cultural Aspirations* (ed) D Bebbington and T Larsen (2003) 17.



Pastor in connection with the 224th anniversary of its foundation'.<sup>9</sup> Although the evidence for the pre-1901 period is patchy, it is clear that by the Edwardian era it had become 'customary with Congregationalists to publicly welcome, or recognise their new pastor'.<sup>10</sup>

The first of the sections below provides a brief review of the form and content of public recognition services and meetings. This is followed by an exploration of four functions which they could be said to have performed. The first was to publicise and commend the qualities of the new pastor and occasionally give due acknowledgement to the contribution of his predecessor. A second was to provide a platform for articulating the pastor's aspirations for the future. A third was to symbolise the developing collegiality within Congregationalism or, as Tarbolton put it, experience 'joy in each other's joy' and to denote the closer relations amongst the free Churches more generally. A fourth function was to demonstrate the church's commitment to serving the neighbourhood in which it was situated. It should be noted that recognition meetings were separate and distinctive from the induction of a new pastor; from more informal social events which the church might organise to welcome the new pastor and, where appropriate, his family; from pastor's receptions to meet church members; and from far less frequent ordination services, which were required for those pastors who were new to the ministry.<sup>11</sup>

The source material on which this article is based is limited to newspapers and church records. In these accounts, there is an undoubted bias towards the views of the leadership rather than those of the ordinary men or women in the pew. It is likely, however, that if their views were known they would show that public recognition fostered a degree of pride in the church and inspired hope for the future.

## **The Format of Public Recognition Events**

Although the precise details might vary, in the main public recognition events for Congregational pastors followed a similar pattern. They were often held on a weekday a few weeks after the pastor had arrived, so that there had been plenty of opportunity for establishing a rapport with church members and

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<sup>9</sup> S Stanier *History of the Above Bar Congregational Church Southampton from 1662 to 1908* (Southampton 1909) 210.

<sup>10</sup> *Natal Mercury* September 23, 1903, reprinted in *Lymington Chronicle* (hereafter *LC*) October 22, 1903.

<sup>11</sup> For pastors in this position, there was generally both a recognition and an ordination service. For example, when appointed to London Street Congregational Church, Basingstoke, a recognition service was held for Reginald Thompson on 19 September 1907 and an ordination service on 31 October 1907.

adherents and hopefully he would have 'endeared himself' to them.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, through the selection process, they would have been able to assess his pulpit presence and performance and, if members, to vote on whether or not to invite him to become their pastor. However, as pointed out by Mr Hamilton, a deacon at Avenue Congregational Church in Southampton, on the occasion of Henry Spencer's recognition service in 1913, the Congregationalists' 'method of choosing a minister had its attendant dangers ... [since] they were apt to judge the man by the sermons they heard, whereas they ought to take into account the whole considerations which governed the ministry'.<sup>13</sup> These other considerations included pastoral work and participation in church organisations. By the time of the recognition service, members would have had a much more rounded picture of their pastor and whether or not they had made a wise choice. In the case of Humphrey Davies, who moved from Falmouth to Alton in 1903, the church secretary was able to comment in very positive terms at his public recognition that the new pastor 'had been with them about six weeks, and during that time things had been transformed, and now he knew that if a vote were taken in the church there would not be one hand held against asking Mr Davies to be their minister'.<sup>14</sup> The implication of the reference to 'a vote' would not have been lost on some of those in attendance, since church members had voted twice on whether or not to invite Davies to be their pastor and on each occasion there was a sizeable minority not in favour.<sup>15</sup> Public recognition, however, could be said to have provided an occasion for closure, and possibly even healing, after what might have been a tortuous and fraught recruitment and selection process.

The proceedings often began with an afternoon service, after which there was the inevitable tea.<sup>16</sup> This was followed by a relatively formal evening meeting, generally presided over by one of the church officers, such as the senior (longest serving) deacon or church secretary. It was usual practice to invite not only local ministers and church dignitaries and sometimes the new pastor's predecessor but also representatives from further afield including, where applicable, the pastor's previous church or theological college. If the latter could not be present, they often sent letters or telegrams to be read out during the

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12 From a report on the recognition services for Rev David John, Jewry Street, Winchester, published in *Hampshire Chronicle* (hereafter *HC*), November 30, 1901.

13 *STHE* July 19, 1913.

14 *Hampshire Herald* (hereafter *HH*), November 12, 1904.

15 On the first occasion the voting was 41 in favour, 24 against and 1 neutral and on the second 53 voted 'yes' and 17 'no'. *Minute Book of Alton Independent Church Meetings*, Mar 1892–Nov 1912, Hampshire Record Office 31M93/9

16 In some instances, there was no afternoon service and the formal proceedings began after a public tea.

meeting. Music in the form of organ recitals, hymn singing, solos and other contributions from the choir was also a feature of such occasions. This served to enrich the proceedings and to uplift and motivate those attending.

At the afternoon service, the pulpit was often occupied by a visiting preacher of some repute who was likely to deliver 'a forceful sermon to a good congregation'.<sup>17</sup> In 1907, at the recognition service for John Wills, the newly appointed pastor of Christ Church Congregational Church, Southsea, the speaker was the esteemed Rev Silvester Horne who 'preached an interesting and instructive sermon'.<sup>18</sup> A frequent contributor was Rev John Daniel Jones the distinguished pastor of Richmond Hill Congregational Church in Bournemouth, 'whose preaching gifts, much above the ordinary', would be 'effectively displayed'.<sup>19</sup> Their subjects, where known, ranged from familiar texts, such as 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life' to Congregational principles and from 'The prophet, his message and his mission' to 'The optimism of Jesus Christ'. As with anniversary and other special services, it is difficult to assess how these speakers would have felt about the demands placed upon them. It seems likely, however, that, although they would have had full diaries, there would have been a certain amount of recycling in what they had to say. Moreover, one suspects that they would have derived considerable satisfaction from having the opportunity to preach to different audiences.

At the evening meeting there were a series of speeches given by some of the guests and the new pastor. The proceedings were generally brought to a close with the singing of a hymn or the doxology followed by the benediction.

In so far as can be gauged from newspaper reports, public recognition generally combined elements of sobriety with a degree of light-heartedness. With respect to the latter characteristic, in a report on the recognition service for John Rogers at East Cliff Congregational Church in Bournemouth, which was held in 1908, it was observed that: 'Ministers, like most mortals, relish a bit of humour, and can laugh as heartily as anyone at a good joke or story. And as it was a day of rejoicing a laugh was welcome'.<sup>20</sup> One example comes from the recognition meeting for Willie Lawrence at the commencement of his ministry in Lymington in 1903. One of the speakers, Rev Garrett Horder, elicited laughter when, with his tongue firmly in his cheek, he referred to J D Jones, who was presiding, as the "Bishop of Hampshire". He added 'that if bishops were

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17 *STHE* February 5, 1910. From a sermon given by Rev William Miles, president of Hampshire Congregational Union, at the recognition service for Thomas Harries, the new pastor of Northam Congregational Church, Southampton.

18 *Hampshire Telegraph* (hereafter *HT*) July 20, 1907.

19 *Hants and Sussex News* (hereafter *HSN*) July 15, 1903. Comments made in respect of the sermon he delivered at the recognition service for Ernest Thompson at Petersfield.

20 *Bournemouth Graphic* September 8, 1908.

popularly elected, he felt certain they would all vote for Mr Jones'.<sup>21</sup> Another example comes from the public meeting held in Basingstoke in 1907 formally to welcome Reginald Thompson. In his address, the new pastor recounted the following, probably apocryphal, anecdote, much to the amusement of his audience:

Two deacons met at a county union and one said to the other, "I see you have a vacancy in your pulpit". "Yes," said the other, "and we have still got him!" (Laughter). Well, I sincerely hope there will be no "vacancy" in your pulpit.<sup>22</sup>

Further examples come from two recognition meetings held in Alton. At the first for Humphrey Davies, to whom reference has already been made, one of his friends Rev W Justin Evans gave an address in what was described as a 'racy and humorous style'. Amongst a number of witty remarks, he referred to C H Spurgeon's observation that he 'had only met three perfect people and they were a perfect nuisance'.<sup>23</sup> The second is from the 'formal recognition in connection with [the] settlement of Rev Harry Lewis at Alton' in 1911. On this occasion two contributions from representatives of his previous church at Wellingborough were also described as 'racy'. In one instance, laughter was forthcoming when Lewis was described as 'a live man and not a dummy' and that 'if they wanted to starve the cause the best way was to starve the person'. In the other, reference was made to Lewis's 'modesty'. As it was put: 'He ... always undervalued himself. He should not be surprised if he came there for less than he ought to have (Loud laughter)'.<sup>24</sup>

Clearly these examples would not be regarded as particularly humorous by today's standards. Moreover, they were essentially jokes that resonated with the shared experiences of those who were inside the Church and would have probably meant little to outsiders. Nonetheless, they do indicate that, by the Edwardian era, Congregationalists had shed much of the joylessness, particularly associated with Victorian Nonconformity.

By the early 1900s it would seem that public recognition had become something of a ritual or rite of passage, with the proceedings having acquired a rather formulaic character, along the lines of a wedding reception or inaugural professorial lecture. This did not, however, undermine the sense of occasion for the participants or diminish the importance of the functions which it fulfilled.

## Commending and Affirming the New Pastor

One key function of recognition events was to acknowledge publicly the arrival of a new pastor. They symbolized his presence in the local community as

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21 *LC* November 5, 1903.

22 *HBG* September 21, 1907.

23 *HH* November 19, 1904.

24 *HH* December 2, 1911.

both a minister and a public figure and raised awareness of his credentials. The process of recognition combined commendation with celebration and affirmation.

A salient feature of the commendatory nature of recognition services was the tributes from the pastor's previous church and the community it served. These, whether delivered in person or in writing, could often be quite effusive. For example, in 1911 at the beginning of his ministry in Andover, Humphrey Lucas was praised by Mr Michael, a member of his previous church in Monmouthshire:—... who felt sorry that they had parted with him. There was pathos in his story, he said, as Mr Lucas was his friend, his schoolmaster, and the greatest help God had ever given him.<sup>25</sup>

Similar sentiments were expressed at the recognition service for David John held in 1901 at Jewry Street Congregational Church in Winchester. Mr E S Smith representing John's previous church in Boston, Lincolnshire:

... stated that of all the sermons he had heard Mr. John preach he had never left the church dissatisfied. At Boston they owed him a debt of gratitude, and the enormous good Mr John had done could never be erased from their memory [applause].<sup>26</sup>

Likewise, on Henry Spencer's arrival at Avenue Congregational Church in Southampton, Mr Jackson, a deacon from his former church in the Welholme district of Grimsby, 'bore eloquent testimony to the good work he had accomplished there'.<sup>27</sup> While at his recognition meeting in 1910, Thomas Harries, the new pastor of Northam Congregational Church in Southampton, had his work in Milford Haven 'eulogised'.<sup>28</sup> At the commencement of William Miles' ministry at Buckland Congregational Church in Portsmouth, which lasted from 1903 until his death in 1921, two deacons from the church at Launceston, where he had previously been pastor, 'paid a warm tribute to his work as minister, remarking that he would exercise a great influence, and was especially gifted to minister to working men'.<sup>29</sup> As a final example, a telegram from the deacons of John Wills' former church read simply: 'May Croydon's loss be Southsea's gain'.<sup>30</sup>

Sometimes the commendation extended to the pastor's wife. In the case of David Beynon's recognition meeting at Freemantle Congregational Church in Southampton in 1901, it was reported that:

Mr Tovey, on behalf of the congregation at the Newport Tabernacle Church ... wished Mr Beynon every success in his new ministry. They were, he said,

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25 *Andover Advertiser* (hereafter *AA*) October 20, 1911.

26 *HC* November 30, 1901.

27 *STHE* July 19, 1913.

28 *STHE* February 5, 1910.

29 *HT* August 1, 1903.

30 *HT* July 20, 1907.

extremely sorry to lose him. In conclusion he spoke in flattering terms of the manner in which Mrs Beynon had identified herself while at Newport with all movements for the moral and spiritual welfare of the people (applause).<sup>31</sup>

In equally positive terms, Mr Holloway the senior deacon at Andover Congregational Church, said that 'he felt Mrs Lucas would be like a second mother to them'.<sup>32</sup> While at the recognition meeting in 1911 for Frederick Hyde, pastor of Fareham Congregational Church, Rev A J Palmer from London expressed the hope that the church would 'extend a hearty welcome to Mrs Hyde, for to know her was to form a very high opinion of her character and ability'.<sup>33</sup> These and equivalent tributes make it clear that pastors' wives were seen as having a valued and distinctive contribution to make to their husbands' ministry. Indeed, it would not be going too far to suggest that they had their own distinctive ministry to exercise.

When a new pastor replaced a much respected predecessor, it was common practice in his remarks to pay homage to, and praise, the person he was replacing. Thus, in beginning his ministry at the Avenue Congregational Church in Southampton in 1906, George Startup commented that 'one of the first things that charmed him at Southampton was the exceptionally loving way in which they all spoke of their late minister ... [Arthur Martin]'.<sup>34</sup> While Mr Miles 'said that whatever success he might enjoy ... would be largely due to the faithful ministry of his predecessor and friend, the Rev W C Talbot'.<sup>35</sup> At his successor's public recognition, reference was made to Mr Lawrence's 'untiring labours ... [and] his very inspiring sermons', with due recognition also being given to 'the work of Mrs Lawrence'.<sup>36</sup>

In some instances, however, where the previous pastor had left under a cloud or there had been a particularly trying vacancy, it was left to a church official to refer in general terms to the difficulties that the church had faced. At Mr John's recognition, for example, the church secretary spoke of the 'clouds [which had] overshadowed their work'.<sup>37</sup> That said, details were also given of any auspicious circumstances in which the new pastor had been selected, including his initial visit to preach and what subsequently happened in terms of the votes by the membership. Not surprisingly, when the subsequent invitation had been unanimous, as in the case of Hyde, or 'practically unanimous',<sup>38</sup> in the case of

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31 *STHE* November 9, 1901.

32 *AA* October 20, 1911.

33 *HT* October 20, 1911.

34 *STHE* May 5, 1906.

35 *HT* August 1, 1903.

36 *LC* November 5, 1910.

37 *HC* November 30, 1901.

38 *STHE* May 5, 1906

Startup, this was mentioned. Thus, in keeping with the celebratory and commendatory nature of the occasion, the general atmosphere at public recognition events was, not surprisingly, buoyant and upbeat.

## Looking Ahead

Public recognition also carried with it a sense of expectation. A new pastor meant a new beginning. Although the underlying priority of close collaboration between pastor and church members in the interests of fostering the spiritual and numerical growth of the church remained unchanged, recognition served as an opportunity for recasting such aims in terms of aspirations for the future.

For example, at his recognition meeting in 1903, Baker Rowe, the new pastor at Alresford Congregational Church, expressed himself in terms that were frequently heard on these occasions:

He had so far found them a very loving people ... if their work was to be successful they must be united and put their shoulders to the wheel ... they looked to the Sunday school as a nursery to furnish members. He urged them all to work hard and then the church would be a grand and prosperous one.<sup>39</sup>

The importance of sustaining a spirit of unity was a constant refrain. Indeed, one new pastor, Ernest Franks, who served Gosport Congregational Church from 1908 to 1917, indicated that it was this, in particular, which led to him accepting the invitation from the church.<sup>40</sup>

Public recognition also provided new pastors with an opportunity for laying down what today might be called 'markers' with respect to their mode of working. Sometimes these could sound quite stringent. For example, in commencing his pastorate at Winchester in 1913, Albert Hawes made it clear that:

... he wanted perfect freedom of utterance in the pulpit, and that if they (ie the congregation) should be unwilling to give it he should take it, but he hoped he should always have a sense of the responsibility attaching to such utterances. As to visitation ... (h)e had found that the greatest difficulty in one's ministry was to know how to deal with people individually, especially in cases of need, and the only way of ascertaining was by personally visiting them. In cases of real need he should be at their service at any time of the night or day, but if the matter could wait till after two o'clock he asked them not to come for him in the morning. He valued the time up till two o'clock in his study ... With the various meetings which he found existing, he would not have many evenings by his own fireside, but he was sure they would give him as many as possible.<sup>41</sup>

Clearly this would have left his hearers in no doubt as to his *modus operandi* and priorities. That said, in view of the danger of unrealistic expectations being

39 *HC* March 7, 1903.

40 *HT* January 23, 1909.

41 *HC* February 22, 1913.

generated at recognition events, it is not really surprising that new pastors and other speakers should seek to dampen them in their remarks. At Ashenhurst's recognition, for example, Rev Maldwyn Jones, the relatively new pastor of Albion Congregational Church in Southampton, in 'speaking of the work of ministers' observed that 'the expectations could never be realised ... [and] congregations must be charitable'. In his reply, Ashenhurst made reference to a saying that 'a recognition service made a man modest, and he certainly confessed that he was possessed by that feeling'.<sup>42</sup> In a similar vein, Fareham's new pastor Frederick Hyde:

... asked his audience not to expect too much of him, but said he was a Congregationalist through and through, and no one loved the Congregational Church more than he did. He also realised that they had many more worthy men as their ministers, and he promised to try and uphold the traditions of their church.<sup>43</sup>

Since he remained at Fareham for 12 years, a relatively long period, it would seem that, modesty notwithstanding, he and his wife, to whom reference was made earlier in this article, exercised an effective ministry. Walter Vine, who commenced his ministry in Lymington in 1910, observed that:

... [at a recognition meeting] a fancy portrait was painted of the Pastor, as if he were an angel of light. One could only strive to reach that great ideal. They must remember he was just a brother trying to make the world a little bit better and brighter, and that he had a message from God to do so; one who had no doubts as to the ultimate triumph of the Gospel of Christ, and was endeavouring to show how a Christian could live a good life and feel the true presence of the Master.<sup>44</sup>

What this and the other examples highlight is that, in preparing for the work ahead, the new pastor had to tread a fine line between, on the one hand, assuring his congregation of his competence to lead them and, on the other, making them aware that there were limits to what he could achieve on his own. Recognition meetings offered new pastors a golden opportunity for doing this, since they could draw upon the support of their fellow pastors who would be only too aware of the challenges involved. Indeed, as Ebenezer Hitchcock, Lucas's predecessor at Andover, put it 'any minister seeking a "soft job" had better bury himself'.<sup>45</sup>

## Demonstrating Collegiality

As has been mentioned, it was normal practice to invite to recognition

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42 *STHE* September 16, 1905.

43 *HT* October 20, 1911.

44 *LC* November 5, 1910.

45 *AA* October 20, 1911.



events, other Congregational pastors and leading lay members of Congregational churches. Their presence was intended to personify the increasingly collegial character of a denomination that had traditionally emphasised the independence of individual churches. For this reason, it was common practice for the Hampshire Congregational Union to be represented, sometimes by the president, so that the new pastor could be formally ‘welcomed in the name of the Union’.<sup>46</sup> More locally, the greeting could emanate from other Congregational churches in the vicinity, as illustrated by comments made by J D Jones at the recognition meeting for Willie Lawrence:

As a neighbouring minister he extended to Mr Lawrence, a cordial welcome on the part of ministerial brethren in this part of the county. Lymington was the extreme eastern church in the western division of the county, and he had been commissioned to tell Mr Lawrence his brother ministers wished to offer him a very hearty and cordial welcome ...<sup>47</sup>

Such remarks clearly reflected the notion of fraternity and camaraderie that now existed amongst Congregational pastors.

However, recognition was not simply a Congregational affair. Other Free Churches generally had one or more representatives in attendance, together with the secretary of the local Free Church Council. In their contributions to the proceedings, reference was often made to their hope for a close working relationship with the new pastor. Their presence was yet another symbol of the strengthening ecumenical spirit that now prevailed within Nonconformity. As it was put in a letter from Brigadier R Ewins of the Southampton division of the Salvation Army, which was read out during the recognition service, held in 1904, for George Saunders at the inception of his lengthy ministry at Above Bar Congregational Church:

... the members of the army in the town ... unite[d] with the other Christian denominations in wishing Rev Saunders God-speed in his new sphere of work. As an organisation they were deeply grateful for the sympathy and help they had received from Above Bar Church, and it had been a joy to know that although they belonged to different regiments they worked under the same great Leader and they fought for the same glorious side.<sup>48</sup>

In other words, what united them was of far greater consequence than any denominational differences concerning church governance and styles of worship.

A slightly different stance was adopted by A J Summerhill, Petersfield’s Wesleyan Methodist minister, at the recognition service for Ernest Thompson in 1903:

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<sup>46</sup> *HC* November 30, 1901.

<sup>47</sup> *LC* November 5, 1903.

<sup>48</sup> *STHE* December 17, 1904. Saunders was pastor of Above Bar for approximately 16 years.

They welcomed him ... all the more heartily because they understood he was essentially and thoroughly evangelical, and there never was a time in the history of Petersfield and the entire district when a man of that description was needed more than to-day.<sup>49</sup>

This suggests that there was some concern within the Free Church establishment of the town concerning liberalising trends amongst some, at least, of the clergy or possibly moves towards ritualism on the part of the Established Church.

Although it was far rarer for Anglican clergy or lay persons to be present, it was not unknown. Thus, in reporting Humphrey Lucas's recognition in 1911, the *Andover Advertiser* felt moved to comment:

Now, there appears to be no barrier between the religious bodies of the town, for among those who sat down to tea in the schoolroom was the Vicar of Andover (Rev W E Smith), who gave a hearty welcome to Mr Lucas.<sup>50</sup>

The position in Andover, however, appears to have been the exception rather than the rule. While relations between Congregational pastors and Anglican clergy could be extremely warm and productive at the personal level, this did not generally extend to participation in formal occasions such as recognition events. Indeed, sometimes frustration with what was perceived as the standoffishness of Anglicans could surface. For example, at the public recognition of Mr Lewis in 1911, the secretary of the Alton Evangelical Free Church Council and minister of a neighbouring Presbyterian church, expressed his regret that 'their brothers in the established Church would not come and help them'. Specifically, he referred to their unwillingness to join in 'the week of prayer in Alton during the first week in the year'. Needless to say, there were no Anglican clergy present at this recognition.<sup>51</sup>

Amongst the Free Churches, however, there was an element of reciprocity, with Congregational pastors attending recognition services for ministers of other denominations. Thus, in 1905 Alexander Grieve, the newly arrived pastor of Abbey Congregational Church in Romsey, was one of the key speakers at the recognition service for his opposite number in the Baptist church, E J Burrows. After commenting that the occasion 'was the best he had seen since he came to Romsey' he went on to stress the close relations between Congregationalists and Baptists:

He came there to welcome Mr Burrows on behalf of his own Church; there had always been the best of good feeling between the two Churches, and that harmonious relation was only symbolical of the union that existed between their

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49 *HSN* July 15, 1903.

50 *AA* October 20, 1911.

51 *HH* December 2, 1911.

Churches. He welcomed him with heartiness and great affection to their brotherhood (hear).<sup>52</sup>

Thus, public recognition often served to highlight the spirit of amity that now existed amongst many of the Free Churches as well as the increasingly collegial nature of Congregationalism.

## Serving the Neighbourhood

In keeping with the precepts of the social gospel, public recognition could also be seen as an opportunity for a Congregational church, in the person of the new pastor, to express its commitment to serving the community at large or as Tarbolton put it, to 'profit the neighbourhood'. However, while this might have been the aspiration, there is relatively little evidence of it being to the fore. For example, civic dignitaries unconnected with the church do not appear to have been invited as guests nor do the 'good works' provided for the wider community figure to any great extent in what was said and done at recognition events.

Moreover, even at the recognition service for Henry Spencer who had had considerable experience of public service it was made clear that the church was his priority:

He knew what it was to be a member of the Education Committee and of the Board of Guardians and to serve the town in various ways. But the Avenue [Congregational Church] and the mission at Portswood must come first. When those had been attended to, whatever time he had to spare would be given to the town and district.<sup>53</sup>

In this connection, it is noteworthy that in his obituary in the *Congregational Year Book* reference is made to the fact that he had 'a wide view of the many ways in which the Kingdom of God can be advanced, he consecrated all his varied gifts and powers to this end, and to taking an active part in public life'.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, he was awarded an OBE for services rendered to the troops passing through Southampton during the First World War.

Overall, perhaps the most that can be said is that 'profiting the neighbourhood' was an implicit rather than explicit feature of the process of public recognition. Many Congregational churches undoubtedly benefited the area in which they were located not only through their spiritual and pastoral work but also in meeting social, recreational, educational and even economic needs. It is therefore surprising that at a time when addressing these needs by putting into practice the ideals of the institutional church and other initiatives was to the fore, greater attention was not given to the 'public' dimension of

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<sup>52</sup> *Hampshire Independent* September 23, 1905.

<sup>53</sup> *STHE* July 19, 1913.

<sup>54</sup> *CYB* (1930) 236.

Congregationalism during public recognition events. This would have been another way of augmenting, in Tarbolton's words, the 'credit of the denomination'.

## Conclusion

From the examples provided in this article, public recognition events can be seen as a form of ratification and endorsement. Although the focus of attention was the new pastor and, if married, his wife and family, they lent credence to the role of the church in ministering to the spiritual and, to a lesser extent, social needs of those living in the area in which it was situated and in its dealings with other churches. They also heightened the expectations arising from a fresh face in the pulpit and on the doorstep when a pastoral visit was required. Very often the anticipation was palpable, thereby placing considerable pressure on the new pastor to perform creditably notwithstanding all the caveats that were often expressed during the recognition process. They could also be very uplifting occasions. In the words of Thomas Lee Hutson in 1911, at the beginning of his ministry in Petersfield, 'recognition services [were] a source of inspiration and strength'.<sup>55</sup>

However, there does appear to have been a degree of tension between what might be characterised as the inward facing aspects of recognition and the outward facing implied by the use of the term 'public'. The evidence suggests that the proceedings were focussed primarily on what might be described as the church community, albeit broadly defined, rather than the wider populace. Thus, it could be said that describing the process as a 'public' one gives a somewhat misleading impression. That said, the popularity of public recognition during the Edwardian era does seem to reflect the desire of Congregationalists to flaunt not only their credentials as a well established and authentic Christian denomination but also their professed commitment to serving the neighbourhood.

At some point, the call for public recognition events (in addition to ordination and induction services) appears to have waned, for they are no longer a prominent feature of the ecclesiastical landscape. It seems likely that they died out during the inter-war years, a casualty of the gradual decline in the standing and influence of churches. If this is the case, then their high profile during the Edwardian era and the sense of 'joyful anticipation' that infused them are testimony to the ongoing optimism within grassroots Congregationalism at that time.

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*Roger Ottewill*

# THE GLASGOW COMMITTEE OF THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY 1796 TO 1803

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The manuscript minutes of the Glasgow Committee of the London Missionary Society, 1796–1803, consist of forty-four unbound pages threaded together, each approximately 7.2 x 11.5 inches, with the first two pages preceding the actual minutes, containing the *Plan* of the Society. In the care of a former Council for World Mission secretary of the Glasgow District of the Congregational Union of Scotland until 2006, the manuscript has since been gifted to the National Library of Scotland, accompanied by a transcribed and annotated copy made by W D McNaughton.

Neglected for nearly two hundred years, the manuscript takes us back to the end of the eighteenth century when evangelicalism in Scotland was more venerable than robust,<sup>1</sup> when the command of Jesus “*Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature*” began to take possession of men’s minds and prompt them into action. Evangelical developments south of the border, such as William Carey’s success in founding the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792<sup>2</sup> and the formation of the London Society in September 1795, served to heighten the conviction in Scotland that missionary endeavour was a necessary part of the Church’s life. Hence, the report in the first issue of *The Missionary Magazine* in July 1796 that, “Besides the Missionary Societies at Glasgow and Edinburgh, other Societies, having the same object in view, have lately been formed at Stirling, Kelso, Paisley, Greenock, Perth, and Dundee. Some of these have chosen to act by themselves, and some to unite with the Missionary Society of London”.<sup>3</sup>

The Glasgow Missionary Society was among those who chose to act alone. It was instituted in February 1796 and at the beginning of June its funds were in excess of £1100”.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, the smaller Glasgow Committee of the London Missionary Society, formed around May 1796, was quite distinct from the larger Glasgow Society and was “determined to join” the London Society “before the Glasgow Society was formed; and indeed ... never dreamed that there would have been any Missionary Society in Great Britain, but the London;

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1 W L Mathieson *Church and Reform in Scotland, A History from 1797–1843* (Glasgow 1916) 50.

2 G Smith *The Life of William Carey* (2nd edition 1887) 45.

3 *Missionary Magazine* (hereafter *MM*) (Edinburgh 1796) 45.

4 *Ibid* 46.

& Committees of it in different towns in England and Scotland".<sup>5</sup> Two hundred years or so later, the Glasgow Committee minutes serve to furnish us with an insight into the enthusiasm of one of the smaller Scottish missionary societies closely associated with the Dissenting community.<sup>6</sup>

### Extracts from Minutes

The Committee of the London Missionary Society in Glasgow concluded, that a Plan<sup>7</sup> should be adopted, for their future regulation, and, after mature deliberation, agreed unanimously to the following.

*Plan*

*I.* The Name. The Glasgow Committee of the London Missionary Society.

*II.* The Object. The sole object is to assist the London Missionary Society to spread the knowledge of Christ among heathen and other unenlightened nations.

*III.* Members. Persons subscribing half a guinea, or more, annually, and every benefactor making a donation of two guineas and a half, are eligible to be elected members of the Committee. The number of members are not to be fewer than twelve, nor more than twenty, five to be a quorum.

*IV.* Meetings. The Committee shall meet on the first Thursday of every month, for carrying our purpose into execution. Each meeting to be opened, and concluded with Prayer, by the members in rotation; and regular attendance will be expected.

*V.* Correspondence. That a correspondence should be carried on between the London Missionary Society, and the Committee once a quarter; and occasional correspondence with other Committees in connection with the London Society, &c. that we may strengthen one anothers hands in the good work in which we are engaged.

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<sup>5</sup> See below, letter dated 24th May, 1799.

<sup>6</sup> cf Sermons preached on behalf of Glasgow Committee:

Preacher	Denomination	Date	Venue
Andrew Duncanson	Burgher	17th May 1796	Relief Church, Campbell St.
Niel Douglas	Relief	5th June 1796	Relief Church, Dovehill
Patrick Hutchison	Relief	2nd Jan. 1797	Relief Church, Campbell St.
John Brown	Burgher	10th April 1798	Chapel of Ease
Patrick Hutchison	Relief	10th May 1799	Relief Church, Campbell St.
Greville Ewing	Congregational	17th Sept 1799	Tabernacle, Jamaica Street
Mr. Thomson	?	3rd June 1800	Relief Church, John Street
Greville Ewing	Congregational	27th May 1801	Tabernacle, Jamaica Street

VI. General Meeting. Since the Committee must be standing, a General Meeting will be held once a year of the subscribers, on the first Thursday of June, that they may have access to see the proceedings of the Committee; make choice out of their number, of new members to fill up any vacancy in the Committee; elect a Treasurer and Secretary for the ensuing year; and receive an account of the proceedings of the London Missionary Society.

VII. Funds. The donations and annual subscriptions, to be collected annually by the Treasurer; an account of which to be entered regularly in the Committee's Books; and remitted once a year to the Treasurer of the London Missionary Society, for which a receipt is to be got and kept. The books to be open to the inspection of every subscriber, that all may be satisfied that the money put into the hands of the Committee, is applied for the sole purpose, mentioned in article II.

Glasgow 14 May 1796<sup>8</sup>.

George Buchanan  
Alexander Corbett  
John Thomson  
John Robertson  
Andrew Robertson

William Dalgleish  
James Mckenzie  
James Gardner  
James Robertson  
William Harley  
William McCallum  
Bowman Fleming  
Robert Gilchrist  
John Frame  
James Richardson

**Glasgow 2nd June 1796** The Committee met this evening according to appointment. On account of Mr. Bell's<sup>9</sup> connection with the Glasgow Society,<sup>10</sup> he refused his pulpit<sup>11</sup> to Mr. Douglas,<sup>12</sup> unless the sermon to be preached by him should be advertised in the newspapers, which postponed the sermon to Sabbath evening next.

The address from the Perth Society for propagating the Gospel among Heathen nations, was read; also a letter from Greenock, intimating that on Monday last, the ministers of different denominations, and a few other friends to religion met, when they unanimously agreed to form themselves into a Committee of the London Missionary Society; a monthly meeting for prayer was

7 Three days after the plan was signed, Andrew Duncanson (1768–1819), minister of the Airdrie Burgher congregation, preached a sermon before the friends of the London Missionary Society at the Relief Meeting house, Campbell Street, Glasgow. *MM* (1796) 278ff. A Duncanson *Divine Agency necessary to the propagation of Christianity* (Glasgow 1796). For Duncanson see R. Small *History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church, from 1733 to 1900* (Edinburgh 1904) Vol II, 123–124.

8 The five signatories on the left of the plan did not sign until 3rd August, 1797.

9 Thomas Bell (1733–1802), Relief minister cf *Dictionary of Scottish Church History & Theology* (hereafter *Dictionary*) (Edinburgh 1993) 69.

10 The Glasgow Missionary Society as distinct from The Glasgow Committee of the London Missionary Society.

11 The pulpit of the Dovehill Relief Meeting-house.

12 Niel Douglas (c1750–1823), Relief minister cf *Dictionary* 254.

appointed, and subscriptions opened, when those present subscribed above one hundred pounds.

**7th July 1796** The Committee met this evening, being the first Thursday of the month, according to our plan. The Committee were appointed to meet on Monday the 6th ult.; but it was found inconvenient, as a few friends supped that evening with Mr. Douglas, &c. Mr. Douglas preached a sermon on Sabbath evening the 5th ult. for the benefit of the London Missionary Society, from *Isa ii.2* ... to a very crowded congregation; the collection amounted to £17.1~

The Minutes of the Directors of the London Missionary Society, for May and part of June were read; from which it appears that money is coming in but slowly. The Committee agreed to call in their subscriptions, and remit the London Society ...

**4th August 1796** The Committee met this evening, when the subscription papers were produced; the annual subscriptions amount to £36.9..6, and the donations to £23..16~, which, with the collections at the Sermon preached for the benefit of the London Missionary Society, amount to £102~. It was agreed to remit the same next week, ... It was agreed to hint to the Society in London, the danger of trusting their money in the Stocks; and to order a dozen & a half of the Sermons preached before the Society in May at their General Meeting; and like numbers of the Addresses to the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands, with a few copies of the Missionary Hymns.

**1st September 1796** The Committee met this evening, and were informed that on the 8th ult. a draft in London was got from Messrs Scott Moncrieff & Dale, on Down & Co Bankers in London for £102 Sterling, the amount of the cash collected by the Committee, and remitted to Mr Love,<sup>13</sup> Secretary of the London Missionary Society; the receipt of which he acknowledged by his letter of the 11th ult, in which he observes, "I sailed to Gravesend yesterday in the ship with the Missionaries, several Directors &c. She will leave Gravesend probably this evening.<sup>14</sup> Having returned from that place to-day ... It gives me satisfaction, and will give pleasure to the Directors, that your liberality is so abundant, when so much has been collected in Glasgow by the district Society. ..."

Two hundred and fifty copies of Mr. Duncanson's sermon were sent to Mr. Love, London ...

The subscription papers were returned to Messrs Richardson, Gardner, Harley, Frame & Fleming; and they were requested to be diligent in getting new subscribers, seeing the London Society has been at great expense in purchasing and fitting out the *Duff*, with thirty missionaries, Governor Dawes,<sup>15</sup> Captain Wilson<sup>16</sup> and sailors, for a voyage to the South Sea Islands: and will annually need great sums of money to carry their benevolent plan into execution. ~

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<sup>13</sup> John Love (1757–1825) cf *Dictionary* 498.

<sup>14</sup> cf *MM* (Edinburgh 1796) 135ff.

<sup>15</sup> William Dawes (1762–1836), Governor of Sierra Leone Company.

<sup>16</sup> James Wilson cf Lovett *The History of the London Missionary Society 1795–1895* (1899) Vol I.



**6th October 1796** The Committee met this evening, and were happy to hear the favourable account concerning the missionaries on board the Duff; and that they had sailed on their voyage for the South Sea Islands, on the 22nd September, as narrated in the Evangelical Magazine for October. ~

Seeing the first Thursday of November may be the Fast-day prior to the celebration of the Lord's Supper here ... it was agreed ... that the next meeting of the Committee should be held on Monday evening the 7th of said month.

**7th November 1796** The Committee according to appointment met this evening, and were happy to hear the accounts of the London Missionary Society in the Evangelical Magazine for this month; a letter from Dr Haweis,<sup>17</sup> from one of the missionaries, and from Captain Wilson, from the same were read. The Rev'd. Messrs Duncanson & Bayne<sup>18</sup> were so good as to call on the Committee, who were employed in prayer. It was agreed that a sermon should be preached on Monday the 2nd of January next, for behoof of the London Missionary Society; Mr. Harley was desired to ask Mr. Bayne to preach said sermon. ~

**1st December 1796** The Committee met this evening, when it was reported that Mr. Harley according to appointment of last meeting, had asked the Rev'd. Mr. Bayne of Greenock, to preach a sermon on Monday the 2nd of January next for the benefit of the London Missionary Society; and not having received a positive answer; it was thought proper to write him on this subject. To which Mr. Bayne replied, that there were certain circumstances, which upon due reflection, compelled him in a manner, to decline at this time at least, the task that had been assigned him. A letter was sent to the Rev'd. Mr. Duncanson, Airdrie, also asking him to preach said sermon; who also excused himself. It was therefore agreed that a few lines should be sent to the Rev'd. Mr. Hutcheson,<sup>19</sup> Paisley, inviting him to preach on said occasion.

The Address from the Dundee Society for propagating the Gospel, was read, and gave much pleasure. ~

**5th January 1797** The Committee met this evening, and were happy that on Monday last an excellent sermon was preached to a large Congregation of all denominations, in the Relief Meeting-house, Campbell Street, by Mr. Hutcheson of Paisley, from Psalm Lxxxix.v.25. ... In explaining the words Mr. Hutcheson remarked ... "How remarkable is the period, which God hath chosen to put in the hearts of his servants and people to use means of propagating the Gospel among heathen nations ...

Many fleets has Britain sent from her ports laden with the instruments of death; but the Duff does us more real honour than them all". ... The collection at said sermon amounted to £26 Sterling ...

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17 Thomas Haweis (1734?-1820).

18 Kenneth Bayne (1767-1821), Church of Scotland minister cf H Scott *Fasts of the Church of Scotland* Vol III (Edinburgh 1920) 200.

19 Patrick Hutchison (1741-1802), Relief minister cf *Dictionary* 420.

Minutes from the Directors for October, November & December were read, as also an Address to Clergymen,<sup>20</sup> of the 14th November ...

**2nd February 1797** The Committee met this evening, and agreed that we should collect our annual subscriptions, and what other money we could by the middle of April, and transmit it to the London Missionary Society, that it may make a part of their Funds for this year, seeing they received no money for that purpose after the first of May. And before we remit said Society, it was proposed that we should have another sermon to help our Funds; ...

**2nd March 1797** The Committee met this evening, when it was agreed, according to our last minute, that a letter should be wrote to the Rev'd. Mr. Bayne, Minister in Greenock, asking him to preach a sermon for behoof of the London Missionary Society, about the middle of April ...

A printed letter from Messrs Haldane,<sup>21</sup> Bogue,<sup>22</sup> Innes<sup>23</sup> & Ewing<sup>24</sup> was read, giving an account of their intention of going out to the East Indies;<sup>25</sup> annexed to which is a line from Mr. Ewing, asking our Committee to write the Directors of the East India Company for liberty to these Gentlemen to go to Bengal, to preach the Gospel. And a letter being presented for that purpose, it was approved of, and put under cover to David Scott Esq'r., Chairman of the Court of Directors, to be presented by him at their first meeting.

Our letter to the Directors was as follows. ~

Honourable Sirs,

Glasgow 2nd March 1797

The Glasgow Committee of the London Missionary Society understand that Robert Haldane Esq'r. and others, who made application to you for liberty to go to Bengal, and spread the Gospel of salvation among the poor Heathen, have not yet obtained your consent; this circumstance gives us much concern. We are not without hope, however, that the Honourable Directors, upon due reflection, will most cheerfully allow the said Gentleman and others, to go out in your vessels, to your territories, to spread abroad the light of the glorious Gospel. This step would undoubtedly ensure the happiness and prosperity of your Honourable Company, and yield them the most heart-felt satisfaction through life, and at the hour of death: and the blessing of millions of poor heathen would come upon you, nay, even your memory would be dear to generations yet unborn.

We are assured from sacred scripture that the gospel will be preached among all nations on the earth; and that this happy period is at no great distance, many learned men are clearly of opinion. And who should take the lead in this

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20 *MM* (1796) 282 & 312ff.

21 Robert Haldane (1764–1842) and James Haldane (1768–1851). A Haldane *Memoirs of the Lives of Robert Haldane of Airthrey, and His Brother, James Alexander Haldane* (1852).

22 David Bogue (1750–1825), cf *Dictionary* 83.

23 William Innes (1770–1855), cf W D McNaughton *The Scottish Congregational Ministry 1794–1993*, (Glasgow 1993) 71.

24 Greville Ewing (1767–1841). J J Matheson *A Memoir of Greville Ewing, Minister of the Gospel, Glasgow. By His Daughter* (1843).

25 Haldane op cit Chapter V.

delightful work but the inhabitants of Great Britain, who have long enjoyed the light of the Gospel? The London Missionary Society indeed has sent a ship to the South Sea Islands for this purpose; but how narrow is the scale on which their missionaries must act, when compared with the many millions of precious souls who are perishing for lack of knowledge in the East Indies?

O when the Gospel shall be preached among all nations of the world, war will, then be at an end, and all mankind will live as brethren. How delightful the prospect! and how much to be desired to put an end to blood-shed, and the many miseries attendant on war?

Hoping the Honourable Directors will take this matter into serious consideration, and grant the request of these Gentlemen, who are actuated by no worldly views in going abroad, but solely to intimate the glory of God, and the best interests of immortal souls, we are in the name, and by appointment of the said Committee, most respectfully,

Honourable Sirs, your most obedient and humble servants,

Signed { Wm. Dalgleish, Treasurer.  
{ James Mckenzie, Secretary.

**10th April 1797** The Committee met this evening, ... Mr. Bayne, Minister in Greenock attended said meeting and was asked to preach a sermon for the benefit of the London Missionary Society, sometime this month, to help our funds, ... but he excused himself, on account of his intending to go to the north country soon; but he promised to give us a sermon some months hence. The Committee were happy to see a letter in the Evangelical Magazine for this month from Mr. Robson<sup>26</sup> on board the Duff, dated from Rio Janeiro 18 November<sup>27</sup> when all the missionaries were well, and had had a pleasant voyage of seven weeks, with a fair wind; and were to proceed on their voyage to Otaheite<sup>28</sup> with all speed.

**25th April 1797** The Committee met this evening, and the members who had subscription papers produced them. The annual subscriptions for this year amounts to £40..8..6, and the donations to £11..3~ which, with £26 collected at a sermon on the 2nd January by the Rev'd. Mr. Hutcheson, amounts in the whole ... to £77..11..6~ for which sum a Bill in London ... was got from Messrs Scott Moncrieff & Dale ... and remitted in a letter to the Rev'd. Mr. John Love, Secretary to the London Missionary Society; in which he was asked to acknowledge the receipt of this sum, and £102 we remitted him last year, in the Evangelical Magazine; where many smaller sums from Scotland have been mentioned as received; which occasioned some of our subscribers to withdraw their subscriptions this year, seeing no notice had been taken of any money remitted by our Committee. ...

At the desire of the Rev'd. Mr. Innes, Stirling, we wrote a second letter, which differed little from our former, to the Directors of the East India Company, in favour of Messrs Haldane, Bogue, Innes, Ewing &c who intend to go to Bengal,

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26 Thomas Robson, mate under Captain Wilson on the Duff.

27 *MM* (1797) 187–189.

28 Tahiti.

and spread the Gospel among the Heathen, which letter we sent under cover to Mr. Ewing, Edinburgh.

**4th May 1797** The Committee met this evening, when the minutes of the London Missionary Society the 1st inst. were read; also a letter annexed from Mr. Love, in which he acknowledged the receipt of our letter of the 26th ult. covering a draft on London for £77.11.6 ... A letter was read from Mr. Niel Douglas, in which he said he intended to be here at the meeting of the Relief Synod the third Tuesday of this month; and would preach a sermon for the benefit of the London Missionary Society.

**1st June 1797** A General Meeting of the Committee was held this evening being the first Thursday of June, although Mr. Douglas came here to a meeting of the Relief Synod, and proposed to preach a sermon for the benefit of the London Missionary Society, on Sabbath evening the 23rd ult. The Synod having appointed him, another minister and a preacher to go through the shire of Argyle this summer,<sup>29</sup> and preach wherever they could find hearers on any day, and converse with the people on religious subjects, the Synod begged our Committee would allow Mr. Douglas to preach a sermon<sup>30</sup> on said evening for their benefit, which was readily agreed to.

A letter was read from Mr. Love, giving a very agreeable account of the General Meeting of the London Missionary Society in May, which gave much pleasure. ... The Committee then read over the list of annual subscribers for the London Missionary Society and made choice of the following Gentlemen to be members of the Committee, viz. Messrs. Robert Walker, John Thomson, George Buchanan, Robert Moffatt, James McEwan, Alexander Corbett, John McIntosh, John Robertson, Andrew Robertson, Donald Munro. ...

**6th July 1797** This evening the Committee should have met ... but it was thought unnecessary, seeing they met on the evening of the 5th inst., after hearing an excellent sermon preached in the Chapel of Ease<sup>31</sup> for the benefit of the London Missionary Society by the Rev'd. Mr. John Love, Minister of the Gospel in London and Secretary to the said Society, from 1 Chron. xii. v.18, when the collection amounted to £27.10~ Sterl.

**3rd August 1797** The Committee met this evening, the Rev'd. Mr. Love was present, and after prayers read an address from the Rev'd. Mr. Bogue to the Directors of the London Missionary Society concerning the training up of missionaries. A memorial was also read from Messrs Bogue, Haldane, Innes and Ewing to the Directors of the East India Company, asking their liberty to go out to Bengal to preach the Gospel. After which Messrs George Buchanan, Alexander

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid 286–289.

<sup>30</sup> N Douglas *Messiah's Glorious Rest in the Latter Days—A Sermon, delivered in the Associate Church, before The Missionary Society, Dundee, 1st May 1797*; and in the Relief Church, Dovehill, Glasgow, 21st May, when a Collection was made for the benefit of a Mission to the Highlands of Scotland (*Dundee 1797*).

<sup>31</sup> The Free Presbyterian Meeting-house, or Chapel of Ease, in Cannon or North Albion Street?

Corbett, John Thomson, John Robertson & Andrew Robertson were admitted members of the Committee, and signed our Plan.

**7th September 1797** The Committee met this evening, and were happy to hear from the Minutes of the Directors of the Society for August, that a missionary society had been lately erected in Sweden, who will correspond with the London Society concerning missionaries being sent to preach the Gospel among the heathen.<sup>32</sup> We were also happy to hear that Dr Van der Kemp<sup>33</sup> in Holland, and others had offered themselves as missionaries to the London Society, and were accepted ~ and that several missions were intended to be sent soon to different quarters of the Globe.

**5th October 1797** The Committee met this evening, and were glad to hear from the minutes of the Directors that a mission was proposed to be sent to the East Indies &c and that several missionaries had been approved and accepted. That Dr. Van der Kemp had arrived in London from Holland, and intended to go out as a missionary. ...

**6th November 1797** The Committee met this evening according to appointment, and it was agreed to write Mr. Bayne, Minister in Greenock, to preach a sermon here for the benefit of the London Missionary Society, on the first of January ensuing. A letter was accordingly wrote to him, but not sent, since he had declared to a member of the Committee, who had asked him to preach on said occasion, that it was absolutely impossible for him to comply with our request; begging that no letter might be sent to him for that purpose.

**7th December 1797** The Committee met this evening, and appointed one of their members to write the Rev'd. Mr. Jack,<sup>34</sup> Minister in Greenock, and ask him to preach a sermon here on Monday the 1st of January for the benefit of the London Missionary Society.

**4th January 1798** The Committee met this evening, when the two members who were appointed to write the Rev'd. Mr. Jack, and ask him to preach a sermon ... gave their reasons for not doing so. The Committee were of opinion that we had lost a favourable opportunity in not having a sermon on new-years-day; and that it would be right we had at least two sermons annually for the benefit of the London Missionary Society.

**1st February 1798** The Committee met this evening, & ... agreed that means should be used to have a sermon preached here for the benefit of the London Missionary Society in April next, rather than in the present month, seeing a number of friends to religion have contributed lately for the erection of a new Gaelic Chapel<sup>35</sup> here, and for Sabbath Schools in the neighbourhood.

**1st March 1798** The Committee met this evening, and agreed that a sermon should be preached on Tuesday evening the 10th prox. at six o'clock, for the

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32 *MM* (1797) 475.

33 Johannes Theodosius Van der Kemp *ibid* 573. Cp. I H Enklaar *Life and Work of Dr JTh Van der Kemp, 1749–1811* (Cape Town 1988).

34 Robert Jack (1760–1837), Burgher minister of Small op cit Vol. II, p.174.

35 Gaelic Chapel, Duke Street.

benefit of the London Missionary Society. Three ministers were named for this purpose and letters were desired to be sent to them. viz. Mr. David Dickson,<sup>36</sup> Edinburgh, Mr. John Brown,<sup>37</sup> Whitburn, and Mr. Jack, Greenock.

**10th April 1798** According to appointment the Committee met this evening, when a letter of the 9th ult. from Mr. Dickson, Minister in Edinburgh was read, excusing himself from preaching a sermon for the benefit of the London Missionary Society, as mentioned in our last minute. Mr. John Brown, Minister at Whitburn, was wrote to for this purpose, and returned for answer, he would cheerfully come on purpose and preach said sermon. Mr. Brown being present at said meeting. The last minutes of the London Society were read, as also an Address from them to their Brethren Clergy and Laity in Holland, Sweden and Germany,<sup>38</sup> Mr. Brown was asked to read said Address from the pulpit tomorrow evening after sermon ...

**3rd May 1798** The Committee met this evening and were happy that Mr. Brown preached a sermon as mentioned ... to a crowded congregation in the Chapel of Ease, from Mal. 1st v.11. ...

The collection at this sermon amounted to £38..10~ of which £5 was given to Mr. Brown for his expenses in coming here &c. The Committee were indebted to J Mennons printer £4 for a number of advertisements in his, and the Edinburgh newspapers, and 1000 copies of our address. They also owed D. Niven printer a balance of £5 in payment of Mr. Duncanson's sermon, a great number of which is still on hand unsold, besides 250 copies which were sent to the London Missionary Society.

These sums were also deducted from said collection, which leaves a balance of £24..10~, which will be sent to London with the collection at Mr. Love's sermon, the annual subscription & donations for this year ...

Copy of a letter to Mr John Love Secretary to the London Missionary Society.

Rev'd. & Dear Sir,

Glasgow 8th May 1798

Enclosed you have a draft on London for £109..10..6, being the amount of our annual subscriptions, donations and collections at sermon, & annexed list, for this year; for which please send us a receipt by Mr. Bowman Fleming and Mr. John Robertson, two members from Committee who have gone to London to be present at the meeting of the Society this week.

If we had not been tied down by the Rules of our Committee to send all the money we collect to the London Society, we would more cheerfully [sic] have contributed to the Baptist Society, to enable Messrs Thomas<sup>39</sup> & Carey to print the New Testament in the Bengalee language; but we have no doubt the Society to which we belong will contribute liberally for this important purpose.

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36 David Dickson (1754–1802), Church of Scotland minister cf Scott op cit Vol I (1915) 147.

37 John Brown (1754–1832), Burgher minister cf *Dictionary* op cit 100.

38 *MM* (1798) 154–158.

39 John Thomas (b1757).

We are happy to learn that you intend to send missionaries soon to the East & West Indies &c. To keep up the missionary spirit among your friends in Scotland, it will be necessary to do all in your power. In sending out missionaries annually; it encourages the friends of religion to contribute cheerfully, when they hear of their money being put to immediate use: But if a Missionary Society covet to be rich, and wish to have a large capital stock, this not only thwarts the design of the contributors; but has a direct tendency to overturn the plan in every aspect. "Freely ye have received, freely give".

There are no subscribers for the missionary scheme who do not earnestly wish to see the fruit of their liberality. At the present awful crisis, who can say where money will be safe, should the French invade our Island? And the deplorable case of the poor ignorant heathen, who are daily dropping into eternity in multitudes in their sins, calls loudly for your utmost exertions to send them the Gospel, altho' at the expence of the last shilling the Society is prospered of. Besides the time, we hope, is approaching, when money in this respect will be useless; when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea; and all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest.

I am happy to advise you that a young man, Mr. George Martin, attended the meeting of our Committee last Thursday evening, and informed us, "That he had followed the weaver business for several years; but had always entertained a desire to go to sea; but could not think it his duty to sail in our merchant ships, on account of the immoralities which too frequently prevail among sailors. He laments that he did not offer himself when hands were wanted for the Duff. And should the Society, on the arrival of this ship, fit her out for another voyage he would most readily go in her; and after a voyage or two, when he has acquired a greater degree of knowledge and experience, would have no objection to go out as a missionary, if the Society shall think him qualified; and do all in his power to spread the honour of the Redeemer's name; and publish the glad tidings of salvation to the heathen, wherever Divine Providence shall determine".

He is a pious lad, of good natural parts; has a good degree of knowledge, and in our opinion would make a good missionary in a short time. You will be so good as to communicate this to the Society, and let us know the result, as the young man will look for an answer.

We had a delightful gospel sermon, in the Chapel of Ease, to a crowded Congregation, from Mr John Brown, Burgher Minister at Whitburn, for the benefit of the Society on the evening of the 10th April ... Wishing the Divine presence may accompany the Society in their different meetings this week, I am in name, and by appointment of the Committee,

Rev'd Dear Sir, yours most sincerely,

Signed James Mckenzie.

PS In the above mentioned draft on London, remitted Mr Love, there is included £10.15, which was received from Mr. Duncanson, being a collection for the London Society in his Congregation.

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40 Ibid 278–284.

41 *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* (1798) 254–255.

**7th June 1798** The Committee met this evening, and were happy that a letter<sup>40</sup> had been received from Captain Wilson of the Duff from China, dated the 16th of December 1797, a copy of which was received the 17th ult., and brought such important intelligence that it was thought necessary to satisfy the friends of the London Society, to reprint it: 360 copies were accordingly thrown off and sent to different towns in Scotland, and a goodly number distributed in Glasgow & the neighbourhood ... The Committee were also happy to see in the Evangelical Magazine a letter<sup>41</sup> from Mr. Nobbs<sup>42</sup> one of the missionaries who went out in the Duff; and an account of the General Meeting of the London Society, the second week of May.<sup>43</sup> A letter was read from Mr. Love of the 12th ult. acknowledging the receipt of our letter of the 8th ult., with a Bill on London, being the amount of our annual subscription, donations and collections at sermons for this year; ...

This evening ... the meeting ... agreed to add a few more members to the Committee, when the following Gentlemen were chosen for that purpose, viz. Messrs Thomas Lillie, James Corbett, John Wingate<sup>44</sup> and Robert Moffat.

**5th July 1798** The Committee met this evening, and were happy to hear that the Duff, missionary ship new arrived at Cork in Ireland the 25th ult. on her way to London. Two letters<sup>45</sup> from a Sailor on board the Duff to his Wife and Daughter in London, dated Wampoo near Canton in China, 19th December 1797, were read from the Evangelical Magazine, for July ...

**2nd August 1798** The Committee met this evening, when the minutes of the Directors of the London Missionary Society for May and June were read, which contain a good deal of information .... Among other articles of intelligence, mention is made that Dr. Van der Kemp and others are to set out on a mission to the Cape of Good Hope with all possible speed; that several Gentlemen had insured £1300 on the Duff at one penny @ cent, &c.

**6th September 1798** The Committee met this evening, and were favoured with Mr. Love's company ... the time was agreeably spent in conversation concerning the late mission to Africa, &c.

**4th October 1798** The Committee met this evening, and observing that a great number of articles are wanted for fitting out the Duff for another voyage to

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42 Isaac Nobbs cf Lovett op cit Vol I, 127 & 134.

43 *MM* (1798) 284–286.

44 John Wingate was one of the individuals whose conduct the Reformed Presbyterian Church pronounced “sinful and offensive”, in having attended the first sermon in connection with the Glasgow Missionary Society, preached in April 1796 by Robert Balfour (1748–1818), one of the Established Church ministers of Glasgow. As the individuals would not submit to censure, the process terminated in their expulsion from the denomination. Wingate eventually joined the Tabernacle Congregational Church, Jamaica Street, from which he moved to North Albion Street Congregational Church at its formation in 1803. H E Clark, *Memorials of Elgin Place Congregational Church, Glasgow. A Centenary Volume, 1803–1903* (Glasgow 1904) 152–153. Cp *An Adherence to the Missionary Society of Glasgow, defended* (Glasgow 1796).

45 *MM* (1798) 326–329.



the South Sea Islands, as mentioned in the *Evangelical Magazine* for this month,<sup>46</sup> the Committee agreed to send Mr. Hardcastle,<sup>47</sup> Treasurer to the Society, ten pieces of Cotton Cloth dyed yellow, as also several books on divinity &c. in a present and appointed another meeting to be held on the 18th inst. for said purposes. ...

**18th October 1798** The Committee met this evening according to appointment, but the muslin intended for a present to the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands not being ready, nothing was done ...

**20th October 1798** The Committee met again this evening, when the muslin was presented; and along with it, the Committee agreed to send 150 copies of Mr. Duncanson's sermon &c. ~ accompanied with a letter to Mr. Hardcastle, Treasurer to the Society of which the following is a copy.

Dear Sir,

Glasgow 22nd October 1798

At the meeting of our Committee the 4th inst. we observed in the *Evangelical Magazine* for this month, a list of various articles "wanted for the equipment of the present mission to the South Seas", and it was unanimously agreed to send a present for the said purpose. You will accordingly receive a box directed for you containing 10pcs. 235yds. Of yellow muslin; we fixed on this colour since it seems to be esteemed by the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands. You have also 150 copies of a missionary sermon, preached at the desire of our Committee by the Rev'd. Andrew Duncanson, &c.

We are sorry you did not mention particularly the subscription for this year from Glasgow, which was the case formerly; and the more so seeing the draft we remitted included £10..15~ a collection in Mr. Duncanson's Congregation at Airdrie.

Mr. Love brought with him Minutes of the Directors for part of May & June; since which I have only received a copy of the minutes following, which were six weeks in coming here. The minutes for Scotland may be put up in a parcel directed to me, and sent to Mr. Chapman<sup>48</sup> a day or two before the end of each month; and he will send them along with the *Evangelical Magazine*, which arrives the 3rd of each month ...

We are sorry you have made the history of the voyage of the *Duff* such an enormous price,<sup>49</sup> which will defeat the design of the publication, namely to inform the friends of the missionary plan, at least this will be the case in Scotland. It is to the middling and lowest classes of people, that the Society is indebted for money remitted from this country. The higher ranks among us have other things to mind than religion, and laugh at missions to the heathen. Had the Directors fixed the price at half a Guinea for the fine, and 3/6 the coarse, a hundred copies would have been sold for one at the prices mentioned. People are keeping off expecting a second edition from Ireland. Maps, charts & views are little understood or valued by common people.

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46 *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* (1798) 427–428.

47 Joseph Hardcastle (d1819).

48 London Missionary Society's printer? cf Lovett op cit Vol I, 80.

49 *MM* (1798) 569. cp. Lovett op cit Vol I, 80.

The Box was sent to Leith to go to London by the Berwick Smack, on Tuesday last, and will be with you next week I expect. Wishing you much success in finding missionaries, and necessaries for the present mission.

I am with respect, Dear Sir, your most obedient Serv't,

James Mckenzie.

**5th November 1798** The Committee met this evening according to appointment, when nothing of importance came before them. Mr. Love favoured the Committee with his company ...

**6th December 1798** The Committee met this evening, and understanding that Mr. Pitcairn,<sup>50</sup> Relief minister at Kelso, intended to be here soon, it was agreed to write him, and beg he would be so good as preach a sermon for the benefit of the London Missionary Society in one of our churches, on the first of January ensuing.

**3rd January 1799** The Committee met this evening when a letter from Mr. Pitcairn was read, in which he excuses himself from preaching ... Mr. Love was also wrote begging he would preach a sermon on the first of January; but he excused himself also at that time.

**2nd May 1799** The Committee met this evening, and considering the London Society would meet next week, and that we have had no sermon for their benefit for a twelve month past, agreed to write Mr. Jack, Minister at Greenock, begging he would be so good as preach a sermon here for said purpose; as soon as convenient for him. It was also agreed to collect the annual subscriptions and donations for said Society for this year, and remit the whole to London without delay. ~

**23rd May 1799** The Committee met this evening. Mr. Jack was wrote to for a sermon, as was agreed to at last meeting. He declined to comply with our request, for reasons known to himself. Mr. Hutchison, Paisley, was next wrote to for said purpose, to which he readily agreed, and on Friday evening the 10th inst. preached an excellent sermon in the Relief Meeting-house Campbell Street from Eph.ii.12. last clause, ... which he was requested to publish, along with his sermon in said place, on the first of January 1797 from Psal. LXXXIX.25. To which he was not averse, if the Committee would assist him in the sale of them: to which they agreed. The Congregation was but thin the 10th inst. on account of a heavy rain, and consequently the collection small, only amounting to £10..15..6; which with the annual subscriptions for this year amounting to £36..15~, and donations £12..9..6~ amounting in all to £60 Sterling, we remit to London, under cover to Joseph Hardcastle Esq'r., Treasurer to the Society, as follows ~

Dear Sir,

Glasgow 24th May 1799

Your letter of the 13th November I received acknowledging the receipt of a Box with yellow muslin &c for the missionaries in the South Sea Islands. You mention in your letter, "If our Society have any missionary objects in view, it would give you pleasure to be apprized of them, if not, and yet have missionaries,

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50 John Pitcairn (d1829), Relief minister cf Small op cit Vol II 46 & 269.

&c:” from which we conclude, you take us for a part of the Glasgow Missionary Society, altho’ quite distinct from it. We are a Committee of the London Society, and were determined to join your Society before the Glasgow Society was formed; and indeed we never dreamed that there would have been any Missionary Society in Great Britain, but the London; & Committees of it in different towns in England and Scotland.

The public have been much disappointed by the very long delay in publishing the history of the voyage of the Duff, which has not yet reached Scotland ... and many are hurt a great deal by the 8vo. copy being dropt, a bookseller here had ordered two dozen of them, and expected to have sold a great deal more. It is proposed to print a second edition in 20 no’s at 1/- each; But alas! Many of the best friends of the missionary plan in Scotland, so far from paying one pound for this history, cannot afford a crown for it. We are sorry to trouble you again on this subject.

Enclosed you have a draft on London for £60 Sterling, the amount of our annual subscriptions, donations and a collection at a Sermon & annexed list. We are sorry the sum falls so far short of what we remitted you formerly ... but we hope to make the next remittance better.

It gave us much pleasure to hear that you were enabled to send out another mission by the Duff in December. The success of the former mission, and the safe arrival of the present, are daily petitions with us, and thousands more, at a throne of grace. ... I am in name of the Committee, Dear Sir,

your most obedient Servant,

J Mc~

**5th September 1799** The Committee met this evening when a letter from Mr. J. Wilson<sup>51</sup> late mate of the Duff to Captain Wilson was read giving an account of the Capture of the Duff; with remarks by the Directors on this mysterious providence.<sup>52</sup> Also three letters were read from Bristol giving an account of the expulsion of eleven missionaries, four women and four children from Otaheite.<sup>53</sup>

Mr. Ewing having seen these letters, proposed to preach a sermon for the benefit of the Society and read the letters from the pulpit in the Tabernacle on Tuesday evening the 10th instant. This proposal the Committee readily agreed to; and ... it was also agreed to advertise said sermon in the Glasgow Advertiser and Courier; and lodge subscription papers in the shops of Messrs Corbett & McLeod; Mr. William Dun, Watchmaker; and Mr. Ogle, Bookseller.

**3rd October 1799** The Committee met this evening, and were informed that Mr. Ewing in place of preaching a sermon for the benefit of the London Missionary Society on Sabbath evening the 15th ult. ... chose rather to preach it on Tuesday evening the 17th ult. for the advantage of the collection ... He accordingly read on the 10th ult. after sermon a letter from Mr. J. Wilson late mate of the Duff, giving an account of the capture of that vessel by the Buonaparte

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51 One of the mates of the Duff and nephew of Captain James Wilson. *MM* (1799) 364.

52 *Ibid* 364–366.

53 *Ibid* 420–424.

Privateer off Rio Janeiro; and the Directors' remarks on this disappointment and loss. He also read three letters from Bristol, giving an account of the expulsion of eleven missionaries, four women and four children from Otaheite, and of their having been carried to Port Jackson. He gave intimation that a sermon would be preached in the Tabernacle on Tuesday evening next for the benefit of the Society. ... Mr. Ewing on the 17th ult. preached an excellent sermon accordingly from II. Cor. IX.11-14. After which he read three letters<sup>54</sup> from Captain Robson, concerning the capture of the Duff. The collection amounted to £100.12.5¼. Subscription papers were also lodged in the shops of Messrs Corbett & McLeod, Mr. Dun, watchmaker & Mr. Ogle, bookseller, and subscriptions to the amount of £7.10~ were obtained, and a draft on London for £108.3 was transmitted to Mr. Hardcastle ...

**7th November 1799** The Committee met this evening, and were happy to learn from the Evangelical Magazine that all the missionaries who were on board the Duff when she was captured, were safely arrived in England. The Committee were also glad to hear good accounts through the same channel, of the Missionary Society at Rotterdam; also of the erection of Sabbath Schools in England, &c.

**5th December 1799** The Committee met this evening when the minutes of the Directors of the London Society from the 28th Oct'r. to the 11 November were read. The Committee were happy to learn the success of the Gospel in many places in North America, as mentioned in the Christian Magazine &c.

**9th January 1800** The Committee met this evening and had the minutes of the Directors of the London Missionary Society from the 24th September read to them, which amongst other things give an account of a Resolution to send thirty missionaries to the South Seas by the Royal Admiral, intended to sail soon for Port Jackson.<sup>55</sup>

**8th May 1800** The Committee met this evening, when minutes of the Directors were read ... [and] it was agreed that Messrs Wingate & Frame should ask the Rev'd. Mr. Watson,<sup>56</sup> Relief minister, to

preach a sermon for the benefit of the London Missionary Society, in the new Relief Meeting-house here as soon as convenient after his settlement there. And that the members who are entrusted with subscription papers use means to collect the annual subscription, and procure donations for said purpose as usual.

**12th June 1800** The Committee met this evening, when Mr. Frame informed them that the collection at the sermon in the Relief Meeting-house, John Street, on Tuesday evening the 3rd instant by the Rev'd. Mr. Thomson, Minister in Edinburgh, amounted to £11.15.4. The subscription papers were produced, and £20 had been received, but as several subscribers were not in town, and as some donations were expected, it was thought proper to delay shutting up the collection for this year for a few days, especially since some subscribers could pay nothing this year. ...

54 For two letters dated 26th February and 13th March, 1799, see *ibid* 470-473.

55 *Ibid* (1800) 36-39.

56 John Watson (d.1823), Relief minister cf Small op cit Vol II 46-47.

Joseph Hardcastle Esq'r.

Glasgow 18th June 1800

Dear Sir,

Enclosed you have a draft on Down Thornton & Co. for £47..6..4 @ 45 .... from the Glasgow Committee of the London Missionary Society. We are sorry this sum is so small; but owing to high Taxes, the dearness of Provisions, and dullness of Trade we could not make it more. Some of our principal subscribers could give little or nothing, having laid out what they could spare to preserve the lives of their fellow creatures at home. We tried every means to raise money as usual, but without effect. We had a sermon for the benefit of the Society, which was but thinly attended, and the collection amounted only to £12 which is included in the said draft. We shall not trouble you with a list of subscribers this year, seeing it may be too late to be inserted in the general list with the sermon preached in May.

We would have been glad your letters from Otaheite and Port Jackson had been more agreeable; and some of your friends lament that they have been made so public at the present period in the Weekly Register, Missionary Magazine,<sup>57</sup> &c. The times to favour these parts of the earth is seemingly not yet come; nothing but perseverance and prayer for a blessing on your exertions will avail. The disagreeable views concerning some of the missionaries is disheartening; But the end of the London Society has been gained in a great measure by causing Christians in different quarters of the globe to use means of spreading the gospel among heathen countries. Wishing success to the missionaries formerly sent, and now sending out by the Society,

I am in name of the Committee, Dear Sir, your most obed't. Serv't.

J. Mck~

**14th May 1801** The Committee met this evening, and after reading the minutes of the Society, which gave encouraging accounts of their correspondence with other societies &c. It was agreed on account of the present scarcity of money, not to call on the annual subscribers for payment of their subscriptions this year; but apply to Mr. Ewing for a sermon in the Tabernacle, for the benefit of the Society ...

**11th June 1801** The Committee met this evening ... Mr. Ewing had been waited on, and asked to preach a sermon for the benefit of the London Missionary Society, to which he readily agreed. The sermon was preached in the Tabernacle on Wednesday evening the 27th ult. when the collection amounted to £16..9..4. This sum, with a donation of a Guinea from Mr. Moses Gardner, the Committee agreed to remit to Mr. Hardcastle, Treasurer of the Society London.

Joseph Hardcastle Esq'r.

Glasgow 12th June 1801

Dear Sir,

Enclosed you have a draft on London for £17..10..4 from the Glasgow Committee of the London Missionary Society, being a collection at a sermon by the Rev'd. Greville Ewing. We are sorry this sum is so very small; but the hardness of the times prevents the friends of the Society from contributing as they wish for

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57 *MM* (1800) 263–265.

so important a purpose, having taxed themselves heavily for a twelvemonth past in supplying the wants of a vast number of poor people, who could not support themselves. We hope however, for better times, when we shall be enabled to contribute as usual for the Society. It gives us pleasure to hear that the last General Meeting, was so agreeable, and well attended; and hope a Divine blessing will attend the exertions of the Society for spreading the Gospel among the heathen nations.

I am in name of the Committee, Dear Sir, your most obed't. Serv't.

J. Mck~

**13th August 1803** The Committee met this evening, and were glad to hear that Mr. Brooksbank<sup>58</sup> of London had agreed to preach a sermon for the benefit of the Society, on Tuesday evening next; and that Mr. Wardlaw<sup>59</sup> had agreed to give the use of his Chapel for that purpose.

Joseph Hardcastle Esq'r.

Glasgow 19th August 1803

Dear Sir,

I am sorry our Committee have been so irregular in their remittance to you. The two late years of scarcity put it out of our power to send what we intended; the wants of the poor were so many and great, that everything that could be spared was laid out for their relief.

Last year we were disappointed of a sermon from Mr. Mason<sup>60</sup> of New York, who spent so much time in Ireland, that on his return here, he could not stay a night, the ship he sailed on being just on the wing. Had time permitted, he said, it would have given him great pleasure to preach a sermon, for the benefit of the London Society.

We intended to have remitted you in May last. We got the consent of Mr. Richards of Hull (who preached a Sabbath for Mr. Ewing when at London) to preach a sermon for us; we also got a Church for the purpose; but we could get no sermon for want of a pulpit! By an Act of the Synod of Relief, as well as the General Assembly, no Minister can preach in their pulpit but Presbyterians.

We embraced the opportunity of Mr Brooksbank being here, to ask a sermon of him, to which he readily agreed; and we were favoured by Mr Wardlaw with his Chapel for that purpose; and on Tuesday evening last, we had a collection at said sermon, which amounted to £24 ~, for which we sent you by Mr Brooksbank, Scott Moncrieff & Dales draft on Down & Co. We are sorry the sum is so small; but trade here is very dull at present, and people stopping payment almost every week, hence Cash is exceeding scarce. The Lord is pleading a controversy with our nation, & particularly with this town; and without repentance & reformation, we cannot reasonably look for deliverance.

By the .... published with the sermon this year we are sorry to observe that

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58 Joseph Brooksbank cf Lovett op cit Vol I.

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

60 John Mitchell Mason (1770–1829), Secretary of the Missionary Society at New York.

your disbursements have so far exceeded your income. But are glad to see by the Report the promising appearance of success to the missionaries sent out by the Society. That the Society may have divine direction in ...

The extant minutes of The Glasgow Committee of the London Missionary Society finish without indicating the demise of the Society but it is interesting to note that Greville Ewing, Ralph Wardlaw and others formed "an auxiliary to the London Missionary Society" in 1815.<sup>61</sup>

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*W D McNaughton.*

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61 Matheson op cit 414.

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## WATTS AND HIS READERS

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### Moral Purpose

Isaac Watts observed that some ‘dream out their days in a course of reading, without real advantage’, yet in his writings, principally his hymns, he intended that his readers should profit from his works. The quotation is taken from Watts’s *The Improvement of the Mind* (1741), a title which itself suggests the author’s pastoral concern for his readers’ welfare and the preacher’s desire to improve them morally, educationally and spiritually.<sup>1</sup> My concern in this paper is principally with Watts’ readers and with the benefits which they may have received from his writings and especially his hymns. Who were his readers? And how did he accommodate his writings to their needs, as he perceived them? Given that Watts made them known, we are also in the fortunate position of being able to reflect a little on his own views on reading.

Isaac Watts (1674–1748) is best remembered as an exceptional hymn writer, yet he was also a preacher, a poet of distinction, a writer of moral verse for children, a logician and a philosopher. In his lifetime his writings were translated into many languages and he was particularly admired in New England, Germany and the Low Countries. As a Congregational minister (whose church contained members of Oliver Cromwell’s family and many of the former Cromwellian inner circle), he was properly concerned for the moral health of his church members and, by extension, for that of his readers. He had clearly defined ideas about the tastes and needs of his readers and made considerable efforts to meet these in his writings. His great popularity, during and after his own lifetime, suggests that he was right in his assessment. In addition, he freely advised other writers, who looked to him for guidance, to follow his example and employ words and constructions that were readily understood by the less able and little educated. Indeed Watts was so successful in this that he was revered by some of the common working men and women of the early eighteenth century.

### His Background

Born in Southampton, the son of a clothier, at Watts’s birth, his father was in prison for his religious nonconformity and Watts senior was to suffer similar punishment in 1678 and 1683.<sup>2</sup> Isaac’s parents recognised their eldest son’s ability

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<sup>1</sup> I Watts *The Improvement of the Mind* (1741) 44. A second part was published posthumously in 1751. ODNB.

<sup>2</sup> ODNB.



early in life and encouraged his studies. Yet they and he understood that his progress to university was impossible, because he could not in conscience subscribe to the 39 articles of the Church of England. His education was, therefore, as good as it could be in these less than ideal circumstances.

The precocious Watts had studied Latin with his father when aged four and, at the free grammar school in Southampton from the age of six, he added to this Greek, French and Hebrew. Refusing in 1690 a university place, he chose to attend Thomas Rowe's academy, in London. Under the 'gentle Rowe', whom he recorded affectionately in verse, his studies included classical and modern philosophy, and divinity.<sup>3</sup> By February 1699 he had become an assistant to Isaac Chauncy, pastor of the Independent church in Mark Lane in the City, and in 1702 became the senior pastor, an office he retained until his death. In 1708 the church moved to a new meeting house in Bury Street, St Mary Axe, also in the City of London.<sup>4</sup>

The breadth of Watts's publications shows how much he drew on his knowledge of earlier authors and on his extensive reading. He put much weight on the importance of reading and on the use and development of the memory. If a text or poem was worth reading, it was worth keeping alive in the memory, he maintained. He repeatedly and clearly expressed these ideas in his writings.

## Watts's Readers

In that less than literate age, who then were the readers of this small, clerical figure who stood so firmly outside the ecclesiastical and civil establishment and who seemed detached from many of the pressures which weighed on his contemporaries? Watts's readers were drawn from a wide cross section of society. His own church attracted a large congregation and he was experienced in teaching and preaching to all ages and backgrounds. His congregation would have included tiny infants and the elderly, and his preaching had to address both the well educated and the almost uneducated. It would also have drawn listeners whose background was different from his own, some of whom were not committed dissenters. He tried to encompass their varied needs in his writings. His friend and younger contemporary, Philip Doddridge (1702–1751), who taught in his academy in Northampton, making use there of Watts's writings, expressed this in his dedication to his influential *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul* (1745), where Watts was congratulated for reaching so many diverse readers. Watts's publications were found in the homes of 'a Multitude of Families, and Schools of the lower Class, ... forming Infant-Minds, ... [addressing] studious Youth ... in private Academies, ... in the most publick and celebrated Seats of

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3 ODNB.

4 ODNB.

Learning; ... in Scotland, and in our *American Colonies* .. in our *English Universities* too'.<sup>5</sup> The admiring Doddridge thus made clear that Watts not only wrote for a wide-ranging audience but that he had succeeded in being accepted by all sorts and conditions of people.

In dealing with his youngest readers, Watts sometimes addressed them through their teachers. In *A discourse on the way of instruction by catechisms* (1736), he 'argued forcefully' for different catechisms for 'different ages and capacities'. For children, aged 3 or 4 years, the emphasis, he believed, should be on their learning short sentences; whereas those slightly older, between 5, 6 and 7 years, should tackle simple questions and answers, which he again provided in this work. 'Memorizing' was the vital task he set for children, aged between 7 and 10 years. Yet for children of 10 to 12 years, he felt in particular that more able students might profit from reading his own writings with some annotation.

## Watts the Teacher

In this Watts became the teacher par excellence, for learning to read was the essential aim of these exercises. The modern historian of the catechisms of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Ian Green, feels that Watts's scheme was altogether too 'demanding and idealistic' and that the high-minded Watts did not in truth clearly understand the levels of illiteracy, amongst many of the children for whom he had written. Indeed Green wonders if Watts had composed these exercises with his own younger self in mind, thus confusing his own quite exceptional ability as a child with the more commonplace abilities of others.<sup>6</sup> In my view this is a telling point. Watts's experience of children was of those in his chapel, and perhaps in other chapels where he preached, as well as the children of the Abney household. In both the chapel and the Abney household reading was an important part of people's lives. In the preface to his *Divine Songs attempted in Easy Language* (1715), which is addressed to 'all that are concerned in the Education of CHILDREN', Watts again reinforced his ideas about reading and memorizing. 'What is learnt in Verse is longer retained in Memory, and sooner recollected', he wrote. 'This will be a constant furniture for the Minds of children, that they may have something to think upon when alone, and sing over to themselves.' As suggested earlier, he then stated his pastor's interest in the spiritual well being of his readers—'this may sometimes give their Thoughts a divine Turn, and raise a young meditation.'<sup>7</sup>

Watts's many theories about reading are scattered liberally throughout his publications. For the child in 'The Art of Reading and Writing English' (1721),

5 P Doddridge *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul* (1745) vii–viii.

6 I Green *The Christian's ABC: Catechisms and Catechizing in England, c. 1530–1740* (Oxford 1996) 272.

7 I Watts *Divine Songs attempted in Easy Language* (1778) ix.

dedicated to Sarah, Mary and Elizabeth Abney, the children of his patron, his ‘Design [was] ... to lead English Readers into an easy Acquaintance with their mother-tongue’.<sup>8</sup> While, for the adult in a chapter entitled ‘Words’ in his *Logick* or *The Right Use of Reason in the Enquiry after Truth* (1724), he stressed the importance of ‘words’ and the communication of knowledge through language. He stated confidently, ‘The right use of words enable us to bypass error’. While for the academic he held that a well written book of a scholarly nature should be read twice—the first reading, which should follow a study of the preface and contents of the book, should be concerned with assessing the general ideas running through the text and an understanding and noting of the writers ‘manner and skill’.<sup>9</sup> The second reading should be intense and should include an evaluation of ideas, so as to clearly understand the strengths and weaknesses of the work. He recommended that all original sources should be checked and he encouraged annotation and the marking of passages containing ideas, which were new to the reader, so that they could easily be referenced at a later date—a habit which he himself, and other scholars, followed.

A practice he used, while at Rowe’s academy, in common with his fellow students, was to have his books bound, with alternating blank pages (interleaved), enabling him to make his own responses to the subject under study, a little akin to glosses. This became a lifelong habit (one which Geoffrey Nuttall, perhaps independently of Watts’s influence, later adopted, as a perusal of his books reveals).

## Reading with Discernment

Watts advised that reading should be undertaken with discernment, the ideas retained and meditated upon. If the work in hand was going to improve the reader’s mind, the reader should engage both mind and heart in the exercise.<sup>10</sup> Therefore his central thesis was that reading should be undertaken for the improvement of the mind and should always be taken very seriously; he was critical of those who made no close observation, nor analysis of their reading matter:

‘Perhaps their eye slides over the pages, or the words slide over their ears, and vanish like a rhapsody of evening tales, or the shadows of a cloud flying over a green field in a summer’s day.’<sup>11</sup>

On books of ‘diversion and amusement’, which include ‘little common pamphlets’ (as Watts put it), and possibly should include chap books, and ‘history,

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8 I Watts *The Art of Reading and Writing* (1740) ix.

9 Watts *Improvement of the Mind* 42.

10 Ibid. 47.

11 Ibid.

poesy, travel and newspapers’, he recommended only one reading, unless the work was particularly well written or contained significant and well thought out ideas.<sup>12</sup>

Therefore his readers, from childhood to adulthood, moved from pronunciation to the study and significance of words, to the importance of reading, and then to intense reading and the analysis of texts.

## Hymns

With the hymn, Watts dedicated his efforts to devising the precisely right words for the singer and reader. In consideration of hymns, both singing and reading, the church father, Augustine of Hippo (354–430), had written;

‘A hymn is the praise of God by singing.

A hymn is a song embodying the praise of God.

If there be merely praise but not praise of God it is not a hymn’.<sup>13</sup>

Watts’s compositions accord with Augustine’s definition but he was always aware of contemporary needs and, therefore, wrote with both praise of God and his readers’ requirements in mind. Let us examine hymn singing in the early eighteenth-century and, in particular, Watts’s attitude to this. When young Isaac had found singing William Barton’s hymns dull and repetitive, his father had challenged him to write something better. As a result he turned to writing hymns, which at first seemed to circulate only in manuscript. In the late seventeenth century the fashion of lining-out hymns was widely practised, in which a clerk, deacon or minister would read out one or two lines of a hymn to the congregation which would sing the words back. A parliamentary ordinance of 1644 had set out a rule concerning lining-out; so that the whole congregation ‘may join herein, everyone that can read is to have a psalm-book and all others ... are to be exhorted to learn to read.’ Yet for the time being, given that many could not read, it was considered ‘that the minister or some fit person ... read the psalm line by line before the singing thereof’.<sup>14</sup> This practice continued for ‘the sake, allegedly, of the illiterate’ for many years.<sup>15</sup> It meant that the hymn was long drawn out and, although it helped those unable to read, some in the church found this painfully tedious.

Over sixty years after this ordinance, Watts’s hymns and psalms were published under a number of titles—each title aimed at a different audience. In these verses Watts revealed his ability to articulate, for a wide variety of readers, what they felt but often could not find the words to express. Thus he spoke for

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 48.

<sup>13</sup> P A Scholes *The Oxford Companion to Music* (Oxford 1945) 448.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid 452.

<sup>15</sup> A G Matthews “General introduction” in *Companion to Congregational Praise* (ed) K L Parry (1953) xx.

them and educated them at a single stroke. For instance, in the preface to *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1706), Watts wrote that he had laboured hard to entertain ‘souls truly serious, even of the meanest capacity’. As is now well known, Watts deliberately tailored his constructions, in order to reach the ‘plain’ or ‘mean’ reader.<sup>16</sup> His use, therefore, of what he called ‘sunken language’ was his deliberate attempt to speak to the common man, which in the long run proved of universal appeal. Although unhappy about the lining-out tradition, Watts knew that he had to accommodate his writing to it. Not only were some attendees at church unable to read, many, including some who could read, found that they could not afford to buy hymn-books. Consequently Watts wrote hymns so that each line or two made complete sense, making lining-out less destructive to the sense and meaning of the hymn. Sometimes, while writing for publication, his thoughts took flight, his ideas became more colourful, and his diction more sonorous. When his words rose above the restrained language aimed at the ‘plain’ reader, he set this work aside for a different audience. These more elevated works became the poems, *Horae Lyricae*, in which he endeavoured ‘to please and profit the politer Part of Mankind...Persons of a richer sense, and nicer education’.<sup>17</sup>

Under the sub-heading, ‘Of the Use of this Psalm-Book’, in Watts’s preface to *The Psalms of David* (1719), we learn that the intended readers and singers were varied—assemblies, and private families in both the parlour and the closet. He encouraged readers, who owned their own psalm-books, to bring them to gatherings for worship and to follow the singing. This indicates that he knew that a number of his (and other) people owned psalm-books which they used for private devotion and for family readings, but which not all, at least, regularly brought to the meeting house. Watts also advised the clerk to read the whole psalm to the congregation before starting the lining-out, to give the church a foretaste of the theme and meaning of the hymn.<sup>18</sup>

## Reading and Singing

Watts believed that ‘[b]y the art of reading we learn a thousand things which our eyes could never see.’<sup>19</sup> As we have seen, he accommodated his readers by making every effort to design his language and shape his thinking, so as to aid the articulation of their devotions and their vision. He understood that the heart of the singer was full of ‘spiritual Affections’ but awaited the right words to express his/her praises to God. Therefore the need for printed hymns was paramount. Indeed, as he stated, ‘Many Ministers and many Private Christians’

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16 I Watts *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1740) ix.

17 Ibid.

18 I Watts *The Psalms of David* (1719) iv–vi.

19 I Watts *Improvement of the Mind* (1801) 227.

pleaded with Watts to compose new spiritual songs.<sup>20</sup> However, once Watts's hymns were in print, they were not immediately accepted by all: for some they were too free and enthusiastic. Yet, in a relatively short time, his words seemed to have become the natural medium of praise. As a result of Watts's publications, there was established at the King's Weigh House Chapel, London, in the early nineteenth century, a regular lecture on 'How to sing'.<sup>21</sup> Indeed singing is to a great extent dependent on reading, and it is doubtless true that singing Watts's hymns led to a desire to understand the words better and was an incentive for many worshippers to learn to read. Churches, chapels and meeting houses, therefore, became even more a medium of general education and, by the end of the eighteenth-century, Sunday Schools, principally then for adults, reinforced this trend.

In considering the singers of Watts's hymns, we must allow the possibility that his words may have been the first religious poetry, outside of scripture, which some had ever heard or read. For the first time, poetical language was available in English for the expression of their faith. By its nature (hymn) singing is repetitive and easier to commit to memory. Therefore hymns involved not only reading and singing, but also the use and training of the memory. Doddridge, writing to Watts in May 1731, gave a glimpse of the attitude of a large gathering towards his friend:

'On Wednesday last I was preaching in a barn to a pretty large assembly of country people, at a village... we sung one of your hymns ... I ... observe[d] tears in the eyes of several of the auditory, and after the service ... some ... told me that they were not able to sing, so deeply were their minds affected with it, and the clerk, in particular, told me he could hardly utter the words of it. These were most of them poor people who work for their living ... I found they had read several of your books with great delight, and that your Hymns and Psalms were almost their daily entertainment.'<sup>22</sup>

Again citing Doddridge on Watts; 'by your sacred poetry, especially by your psalms, and your hymns, you are leading the worship, and I trust also animating the devotion of myriads, in our public assemblies every Sabbath, and in their families or closets every day'.<sup>23</sup> So Watts's verse was being sung in churches, albeit at a time when only the wealthier attendees owned hymn books. Several of Doddridge's academy students bought copies of *Psalms* at this period at the cost of 3/6<sup>d</sup>.<sup>24</sup> Churches were not then in a position to buy books in any number, although some obviously owned a collection of hymn books for lining

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20 I Watts *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* vi.

21 Scholes *op cit* 221.

22 G F Nuttall *Calendar of the Correspondence of Philip Doddridge DD (1702–1751)* (1979) letter 357.

23 Doddridge *op cit* viii-ix.

24 Congregational Library ms 2.e.43.

out. The Oakham (Rutland) church book records, for example, in November 1800 the purchase of: ‘Dr Watts Hymn Book for the pulpit 4s’.<sup>25</sup> Modern scholars concur that not until the early to middle nineteenth century did churches and chapels, rather than individuals, purchase hymns books in any quantity; and then the purchased books were usually those published for the use of particular denominations.<sup>26</sup>

## Family Devotion

What of books for family reading and private devotion? In 1712, due to ill health, Watts went to live with Sir Thomas and Lady Abney in Lime Street, in London, and at Theobalds in Hertfordshire, and, after Sir Thomas’s death, at Abney Park, Stoke Newington, with Lady Abney and her daughters. Here he stayed for the rest of his life and here he affected the entire household in its reading.

The practice of reading in the Abney home was well established. As tutor to the Abney children and chaplain to the family, Watts frequently carried out reading exercises on Sunday evenings. Such practice was not unusual in educated families where such reading was an established religious discipline.<sup>27</sup> It was not uncommon for Watts to call on a footman or servant to read selected works to him. I think, given Watts’s attitude to reading, that none in the Abney household was likely to escape the experience of reading. We know, from a letter to Doddridge, that Watts read and was read to in his sick bed. From his being read to, in this fashion, he complained to Doddridge that ‘some of our Servants do not Understand your Writings when they are read in the Parlour, and scarcely when they read themselves’. He had read a manuscript copy of Doddridge’s *Rise and Progress* to his servants and he wanted Doddridge, like him, to employ ‘sunken language’. Evidently the servants were read to and also read in private.<sup>28</sup>

## Joseph Parker—Amanuensis

Joseph Parker was the steward to Lady Abney and an amanuensis to Watts for twenty-one years until his death; as such he read regularly to Watts and wrote for him. He also had a close understanding of Watts’s system of shorthand.<sup>29</sup> Both he

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25 A J Grieve “Congregational Praise: Some Back Numbers” in *Companion to Congregational Praise* xxxi.

26 Private conversations with Prof David Bebbington, University of Stirling, and Prof Grayson Ditchfield, University of Kent.

27 N Tadmor ‘In the even my wife read to me’: women, reading and household life in the eighteenth century’ in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England* (ed) J Raven, H Small and N Tadmor (Cambridge 1996) 170–173.

28 Nuttall *op cit* letter 963.

29 A P Davis *Isaac Watts His Life and Work* (1943) 66.

and his wife Mary owned copies of Watts's hymn books and several of their books survive, with others from the Abney household. Parker owned a volume of *Horae Lyricae* (1743) which carries his name in ink on the front fly-leaf. Although rebound in 1963, the uncut edges remain intact suggesting Parker's book was purchased in a temporary binding. This book was intended for an educated person, which Parker undoubtedly was, as he was responsible for running the household. His wife owned a copy of *The Psalms of David* (1743), bound in blue goatskin and decorated in blind with gilt edges, and she gave her daughter copies of both *Psalms* (1740) and *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1740), both inscribed 'Sarah Parker Given me by my Mama 14 Ma:<sup>h</sup> 1759'. Lady Abney also had a presentation copy of *Psalms*, given to her by Watts and initialled by him. This is a particularly extravagant copy bound in a fashionable Psalm book style of the day.

A copy of *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1740), probably owned by Watts himself, still survives. It is a neat octavo volume, bound in black turkey, and elegantly decorated with blind tooling, in fact a 'sombre' binding. The edges are black, and green silk markers have left their imprint on pages annotated by Watts. One copy of *Divine Songs for Children* (1716), dedicated to Sarah, Mary and Elizabeth Abney, a 'sumptuous' copy and a gift to Elizabeth Abney, initialled by Watts, has been tracked to the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York; it was sold by Sotheby's in March 1907.<sup>30</sup>

## Elegant and Cheap Bindings

Many surviving copies of Watts's hymns and psalm books, from the eighteenth century, afford a wealth of insights into the lives of his readers. I can only make general points here—on the range of bindings, from the cheapest to the most expensive. Indeed the wide social division between those who owned copies is marked. The books carry the names of men, women and children; some are passed to successive generations in the same families. Others are presentation copies given to children and adults. I shall undertake to describe a sample to show the extremes of wealth and poverty of his readers.

A second edition (1709) of *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* is bound in an elegant sombre binding. This book has been well used, with sections marked in ink for easy reference.<sup>31</sup> A later edition of the same title, bound in sheepskin with simple blind decoration, carries an advertisement which forms the front pastedown. It reads as follows:

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30 Catalogue of Pierpont Morgan Library, accessed on line.

31 British Library c.108 cc *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1709) enlarged edition. It carries the book plate of James Sullivan Starkey who had the foresight to keep his hymns in their original binding. ODNB. Starkey (1879–1958) was a poet and editor.



'it is desired, that no persons will offer to *sell* this Book, but (as it was freely given) first read it with serious Attention, and earnest Prayer to GOD for his Blessing upon it, as a Direction to heavenly Wisdom and Happiness; and then lend it to Friends and neighbours for the same kind Purposes'—this from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge amongst the Poor and owned by [Mary Lea].<sup>32</sup> This edition was printed by J F and C Rivington, J Buckland, J Johnson, T Longman, T Field, C Dilly and W Goldsmith. It is bound in sheepskin and stitched—the needle and thread being taken straight through the whole book rather than sewn through the folds—and is a very cheap form of binding. Another copy, also cheaply bound in sheepskin, whose first owner was Judith Ruffer in 1770, became the property of various members of the [Hooseman] family. Three generations of this family owned the book which includes the second date of 1791.<sup>33</sup> This cheaply bound, but cherished, volume contains notes from Watts's 'Pearl of price unknown', hymn CXIX in part two of the book, written on the front fly leaf. A certain Martha Nichols bought a 1785 American edition of *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* with money she had inherited. Inside is written 'Martha Nichols ... Her himn Book'. Clearly she wrote but poorly at the time of her buying the book, which obviously was precious to her. A copy of *Divine Songs for Children* (1783), quite unlike the copy dedicated to Elizabeth Abney, and belonging to Thomas Mayo ('His Book 1786'), is in what was then a typical school canvas binding.

## Other Readers

Who else were among Watts's readers? The comments of other contemporaries offer insights into widely held attitudes towards his publications. In particular, we should mention the response of Samuel Johnson who found Watts's verse 'easy and elegant' to the ear. He believed Watts to be 'one of the first authors [who] taught the dissenters to court attention by the graces of language' and to show them, 'that zeal and purity might be expressed and enforced by polished diction'.<sup>34</sup> He was impressed by Watts's use of words, which he liberally used to supply definitions for his dictionary; he found it 'not always exactly pure, ... [but full of] copiousness and splendour, and shows that he was but a very little

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32 The Congregational Library, H16.3.29, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1788). It reads, 'it is desired, that no person will offer to sell this Book, but (as it was freely given)'. For the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge amongst the Poor see S Mandelbrote 'The Publishing of Religious Books by Voluntary Association', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* vol v, 1695–1830, (ed) M F Suarez and M L Turner (Cambridge 2009) 622.

33 Watts *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*: (25th edition) British Library (RB 23A 8218).

34 D Davie *A Gathered Church* (1978) 39.

distance from excellent'.<sup>35</sup> If, as Isabel Rivers has written, the 'poetry of Watts took the religious world of dissent by storm', then Johnson's verdict on his verse shows that some literary figures of the day, outside that world, took delight in his composition.<sup>36</sup>

We should include some consideration of the publications and sales statistics of his works, with regard to Watts's readers. In the early eighteenth century the first of Watts's hymn books, *Horae Lyricae* (1706; enlarged 1709), was published; it was followed by *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1707) which quickly went into an enlarged edition, also in 1709. Some ten years later appeared his *The Psalms of David Imitated in the language of the New Testament* (1719). These books came to be seen as a unity and in time were often printed and bound together. By the end of the century, there were 163 editions of the *Hymns*. In the following century, many further editions of Watts's hymns were published, its popularity growing particularly in the United States of America. It seems that American readers, even in the eighteenth century, wanted to know 'How to live in this world' and that the compositions of Isaac Watts, particularly his *Divine Songs* (reprinted 58 times between 1730 and 1800) and his *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (45 editions between 1742 and 1800), helped them to do so.<sup>37</sup>

As Asa Briggs has recently stated, Longmans took 'the lead in publishing Watts, and their imprint appeared on seventeen Watts's reprints during the last decade of the eighteenth century'.<sup>38</sup> The earlier publishing history of *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (first edition 1707) indicates that this work had gone into its fourteenth edition by 1739, when it was published in both London and Boston, Massachusetts. In London in 1740 seven publishers came together to publish Watts's hymns, with the certain knowledge that by publishing them they carried no financial risk at all. They were, in short, onto a sure-fire winner, a publisher's dream! These London publishers were Midwinter, Ward, Longman, Hett, Hitch, Hodges, and Davidson.

In an age when most book editions numbered about 750 copies, the publishing company Longmans produced huge print runs (well in excess of 4000 copies, perhaps as many as 50,000) of Watts's *Hymns* and of Johnson's *Dictionary* which were their 'staple' titles.<sup>39</sup> Such 'an influence', as Watts clearly had, is 'too

35 S Johnson *The Lives of the most eminent English Poets* (1781) vol. IV, 279, J R Watson *The English Hymn* (Oxford 1997) 136.

36 ODNB.

37 R L Martin III 'North America and Transatlantic Book Culture to 1800' in *A Companion To The History Of The Book* (ed) S Eliot and J Rose (Oxford 2007) 269.

38 A Briggs *A History of Longmans and their Books, 1724-1990* (2008) 64.

39 J Raven 'The Book Trades' in *Books and their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England: New Essays* (ed) I Rivers (2001) 22, *The World of Rural Dissenters 1520-1725* (ed) M Spufford (Cambridge 1995) 94. It is difficult to track the authority for Stephen's reference—the ODNB says possibly 50,000.

intangible in its nature to be easily measured',<sup>40</sup> which Donald Davie, the poet and critic, pointed out is a cavalier way of treating Watts's popularity for over 200 years among English speaking people, many of whom knew no other poetry. Davie stressed that we have 'no method by which to translate the quantitative facts, of so many copies sold and printed year after year, into the qualitative consideration of how they conditioned the sensibility of the English-speaking peoples. What we can and should do, however, is to confess and insist'—as Leslie Stephen, the cultural historian and literary critic, did not—'just what a vast lacuna this reveals in our pretensions to chart cultural history, and diagnose cultural health, on the evidence of printed literature'. Davie concluded that Watts's *Hymns and Psalms* has been 'more influential' than any other popular work of its century—'more than Johnson's *Dictionary*, more than *Robinson Crusoe* or *Gulliver's Travels*, more even than *The Seasons*' (James Thomson's poem) and this fact has been ignored or received 'only marginal notice in histories of our literature'! Davie felt himself to be 'neither prepared nor competent to rectify this state of affairs'. Rather he wished 'to probe a little behind Stephen's lordly or flurried parenthesis: 'Whatever their literary merit'. Unlike Stephen, Davie was confident that Watts's hymns had great literary merit, and 'may well have been an influence for the good, a *civilizing* influence'. Indeed, Davie judged Watts to have been 'a genius'.<sup>41</sup>

## Conclusion

That Watts had many readers in his lifetime and afterwards is incontestable. His hymns are deeply embedded in the culture of the English speaking peoples (although they are sung in translation in countries as far afield as Nigeria and Korea) and his hymns are still lined out in churches and meeting houses in the southern states of the USA. By using 'sunken language', by making his diction understandable to his readers/singers, he was able to meet their practical and spiritual needs. Here lay the advantage for his eighteenth century singers/readers, as indeed it did and does also for those who gather every year at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. For those needing to express collective and personal remorse, his words in 'Our God, our help in ages past' based on scripture, but echoing Ovid, have proved an effective and eloquent summary, speaking of loss and of eternal purpose, of mortality and of hope.<sup>42</sup>

The success of Watts's hymns, and the particular advantage he brought to his readers, rested on his ability to create a language which spoke to and for people

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40 Davie op cit 33.

41 Ibid 34-36.

42 'Time, like a long flowing stream, makes haste into eternity, and is for ever lost and swallowed up there; and while it is hastening to its period, it sweeps away all things with it which are not immortal.' This is a translation from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

of all conditions. Watts was exceptional because, in his verse, he articulated the contemporary appetite for popular works of devotion, for sung praise. His creative genius was able to supply it.<sup>43</sup>

His published works, almost from their first appearance, were recognised as expressing sensitively, but simply, the thoughts and feelings of those who were otherwise at a loss to speak of their experiences. He touched them in their immediate need (to read, write, learn and sing) and taught them of eternal verities, as he, and often they, understood them. Leslie Stephen avoided analysing Watts's popularity by saying there is no way of measuring the public's need for his hymns. Donald Davie, and I agree with him, disputes this point, arguing that the huge public sales alone demonstrate a healthy appetite for the hymns. He goes on to touch upon their literary merit. Reading them again, I find that many fail to speak of my spiritual experience, although a number still ring true.

Davie also asks if the hymns were an influence for the good, 'a *civilizing* influence' in Watts's own day and since? This is a valid question, again avoided by Stephen, although Davie clearly believed that Watts's verse had been of great benefit. Readers of this magazine will surely agree with that. Without doubt, Watts's readers have found his language an aid to their devotions and to their lives, as he intended they would.

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Jane Giscombe

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43 A G Matthews op cit xix.

## ‘TUMBLEDOWN DICK’: RICHARD CROMWELL, THE SECOND LORD PROTECTOR: THOUGHTS TOWARDS A REASSESSMENT

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There has been constant argument, since his death, about the reputation of Oliver Cromwell, but his son, Richard, has had to suffer popular derision as ‘Tumbledown Dick’, a failure as Lord Protector, in succession to his father, and a nonentity as a person. A search of the internet shews this is still true—as well as revealing contradictory facts about his life and career—even though there is some grudging admiration of his personal character. Last October, however, I attended a study day, arranged by the Cromwell Museum and the Cromwell Association, in conjunction with an exhibition at the Cromwell Museum in Huntingdon, which, hopefully, will begin a revaluation of Richard Cromwell. Four academics focused on his early life, on his relationship with his younger brother, Henry, on his Parliament and on his later life.

The picture that emerged was of a godly, intelligent, gentle and dignified person, whose lack of political experience was a serious drawback, when he was faced with the irreconcilable aims of the politicians and the army during his brief Protectorate. He was too young to have had meaningful military experience in the Civil War, although he appears to have briefly served in the Lifeguard of Lord General Fairfax, whilst, as only the oldest surviving son of his father, he was not originally expected to become his heir. At the beginning of the Commonwealth period he was active in the local administration of Hampshire, where he lived, and, when his father became Lord Protector in 1653, this was an elective post that did not imply that Richard would succeed him. Although the appointment did draw him a little more into national politics, he only attained a prominent position, when the Humble Petition and Advice of 1657 enabled his father to nominate his successor. He then became Chancellor of Oxford University, was nominated to the Second Chamber and regularly attended the Council of State, to which he was appointed, but it seems his father only decided to name him as his successor just before he died on 3 September 1658. Although Richard had widespread popular support, he could not, without the personal authority his father had achieved, contain the military, financial and political problems of the period. He resigned on 25 May, 1659. At the Restoration he went into voluntary exile, mainly in France, as Mr Clarke, and was separated from his wife, who died before his return in 1681, and from his family. The government mainly left him alone before and after his return and he

died at Cheshunt, in 1712, seven years after his son, Oliver, having lodged with the Pengelly family there, and previously at Finchley, for over thirty years.

What was he like as a person and why was his life such an apparent failure? Just before his resignation he wrote to his brother, Henry, then Lord Deputy of Ireland, 'I am now in daly expectation what course they will take with me. My confidence is in God and to him wil I put my cause'. He appears as a godly, quiet unassuming and man and the programme of the study day sums him up as follows:

'The popular judgment of Richard Cromwell as Tumbledown Dick and a failure is unjustified. His protectorate was faced with a range of difficulties, political, financial and military, and he was ill-equipped in many ways, bur he was in some measure successful. As Head of State he was both dedicated and conscientious and spoke effectively. He never sought to misuse or abuse his power in any way and tried to resolve the difficulties that the nation faced openly and honestly. Whether a different second Lord Protector might have secured a republican England has often been debated, but will never be answered.'

More needs to be known about such an important figure and it is to be hoped that the papers will be published in the near future so that a full reassessment can be undertaken. 'Tumbledown Dick' is an obviously unfair epithet, given by hostile contemporaries, and an integral part of this reassessment must be to look at his faith and religious affiliations. This project will surely be of interest to readers.

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*Jonathan Morgan*

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## REVIEWS

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***Sukey Harley*. By Jane Gilpin. Pp 78. Gospel Standard Trust Publications, 2008. £5.95. ISBN 978 1 897837 87 0.**

The *Memoir of Sukey Harley of the Parish of Pulverbatch, near Shrewsbury* by Jane Gilpin, the late Rector's Daughter has been republished in an attractive format illustrated with several photographs. Sukey Harley (née Susan Overton) was the youngest but one of sixteen children born at Polimoor on the Long Mynd in Shropshire about 1780. Her father died when she was three years old and she grew up as 'a very wild, unruly child'. As soon as she was old enough she went into service at a local farmhouse. She loved work and became a good servant. She married early. Her husband Charles was a farm labourer and unlike Sukey was quiet and steady. She thought that religion was 'for the gentlefolks' and she said that 'On Sabbath morning we used to collect together in a large barn, dancing and revelling and fooling away the time. I was a very good tuner on the fiddle, and they used to dance. This is the way my Sabbaths were spent.' However, the witness of two neighbours had a profound influence on her. She was dramatically converted one day when she was alone in her bedroom. Her new faith gave her a desire to read the Bible. Sukey and her family moved to the outskirts of Pulverbatch, where Revd William Gilpin was rector, but her lively faith and conversation met with much opposition and resentment. Under the influence of friends and acquaintances, Mr. Gilpin's daughters Jane and Mercy left the parish church and met with Sukey and others for worship in cottage or farmhouse on the Sabbath. Jane Gilpin, who therefore knew Sukey well, recorded many of their conversations.

James Bourne spent several months at Pulverbatch and his ministry there had a profound influence on Sukey's spiritual development. Jane Gilpin's *Memoir* includes one letter from Mr Bourne to Sukey and another from her to Mr Bourne. It would have been helpful to the general reader if the Publisher had provided some information about James Bourne or at least drawn attention to their own publication, *James Bourne: His Life and Times* (ISBN 978 897837 68 9). Sukey was critical of the Baptists that she had met and their emphasis on believer's baptism. So it is perhaps not surprising that the publisher has added a footnote: 'May those of us who love the ordinance of believer's baptism ... bear in love with those who, like us, are in the flesh with all its infirmities'.

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*Michael J. Collis*

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***A History of Christianity. The First Three Thousand Years.* By D MacCulloch. Pp xxii,1161. Allen Lane, 2009. £35.00. ISBN 978-0-713-99869-6. Diarmaid MacCulloch's *A History of Christianity*. BBC DVD video 2 disc set. £19.99. bbcvd3132.**

I watched the six episodes of MacCulloch's history on BBC 4, at first from mere curiosity to see what he could do, and later because I was hooked. MacCulloch, professor of the history of the Church at Oxford University, is best known for his scholarship on the reformation of the Tudor Church of England. He is no Starkey (a provocative and opinionated observer at Henry VIII's court) nor Schama (an immensely learned, if twitchy, human text book). Rather MacCulloch, the new boy on the televisual history block, wearing almost throughout his cricket umpire's Panama hat and lightweight summer jacket (supplanted by a Russian astrakhan and thicker clothing in Moscow), manages to convey an air of authority whether in China, being harried by infuriated villagers from filming at the door of a once Christian monastery, later a Taoist pagoda, and now a Buddhist temple; in Korea, at a modern revival meeting attended by thousands of enthusiastic worshippers; or off the west coast of Ireland, failing to climb the steps to the rocky heights of a monastic Atlantic outcrop. This tourist guide to Christianity, sporting perhaps the garb of Oxford imperialism, undermines preconceptions by stressing so consistently the worldwide nature of the faith.

The forbiddingly weighty book, its scholarship ruling it out as a true companion to the DVD, pleased this reader from the outset, beginning as it does with a discussion of Samuel Crossman (a nonconformist in 1662 who later conformed) and his majestic poem of faith 'My song is love unknown'—"a work of genius", writes MacCulloch. From this intimate hymn, the author tells his readers (he uses the same phrase in the television series) that Christianity is at root "a personality cult". Well, I'm not sure I like that! It smacks more of a television sound bite than Oxford erudition. Yet the author correctly understands that Christians believe they may still meet Christ in a way "comparable to the experience of the disciples" and this meeting "transforms lives". MacCulloch justifies his subtitle of three thousand years, by pointing before Christ to Greece and Israel, but also to Christianity's assured future.

MacCulloch is not afraid to be autobiographical, confiding that his parents took him, as a small boy, to various churches where he fell in love with the drama and discovered his life's work. His subject, he tells us, is an "epic story" with its "crusaders and sadists", involving incredible folly and great goodness and creativity. MacCulloch aims to tell the stories of both extremes. He accepts that in modern Europe Christianity is threatened by apathy but responds by stating that the history of world Christianity is one of "relentless expansion", so that now there are two billion Christians worldwide—a comforting thought for those gathered in a small chapel on a wintry night in mid-March!

I appreciate MacCulloch's respectful willingness to taste and see by always worshipping with the diverse groups of Christians to whom he introduces his



viewers and readers. He witnessed with pleasure in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre the spectacle of the Latin mass, with full organ, struggling against the spirited chanting of the Miaphysite Copts. There the bearer of the Coptic censor sent a cloud of incense “billowing into the heretical Latin West”. At no point does he patronise those he meets—outside Damascus at a Syriac Orthodox seminary where we learn of the glorious mystery and symbolism of eastern faith, in Geneva, Jerusalem, Seoul, nor Mexico City. He relates that the music of the Church has its origins in Edessa and traces a direct link to the guitars and tambourines of modern Pentecostals. His sense of wonder surfaces in his confronting the site of Simeon Stylites in Syria, leading him to describe the stump of his pillar as “a well sucked holy lollipop” and Simeon on his pillar as having been a “lighthouse”!

We learn of the seventh century emergence of Islam and the challenge to the old Christian centres in the east. Indeed we discover that the city of Baghdad would have been a likely capital for worldwide Christianity in the 8th century but for the rise of Islam. Does the act of prostration in Islamic worship originate with Christian worship? The Nestorian churches, with their headquarters in what is now Iraq, proselytised east in central Asia, India and in seventh century China (about the same time as Britain was being converted). We do not spend overlong in the British Isles so, for many, his story is fresh.

Neither the televised series nor the book offers a history of ideas: indeed theology is but lightly treated, though it is not ignored, and smaller groups, offering vital and sometimes complex correctives to the major denominational players, may feel short changed. Congregationalism (unlike the United Reformed Church) figures in the book’s index, as does the London Missionary Society, although Independency which should be there, according to references on pages 1125 and 1130, appears to have gone missing. He is no apologist for western Christianity, stressing the eastern origins of the Church, and wishing to demonstrate the “extraordinary diversity” of the faith. Yet he finds unexpected parallels—Wales and Korea, for instance—pointing out that biblical translations revived national pride (as they did also for the language groups of eastern Europe leading to a renewal of Orthodoxy in those lands), enabling their peoples to rediscover their identities and survive intact foreign occupation.

The medium of film demands meaningful images and the sites alone may not convey the substance of MacCulloch’s spoken text. The choppy waters of the Bosphorus do not necessarily conduct me to the Christological councils of the 4th and 5th centuries. In contrast to film, books are “storehouses for human ideas”, as MacCulloch writes of the Bible and demonstrates here in his own book. Having begun it with Crossman’s hymn, he ends with Isaac Watts’s verse.

‘Let every creature rise and bring  
Peculiar honours to our King’.

Watts’s reference to this “glorious particularity of individual religious experience” is taken by MacCulloch to mean that the “bizarre” sufferings of “a derided or persecuted sect” in one age often have become “the respected norm

or variant” in another. He cites here the abolition of slavery, the ordination of women and the avoidance of meat-eating or tobacco. At the last, he (re)turns to wonder—surely present in those childhood visits to churches with his family—and states that even those who see Christianity as a series of stories “may find sanity in the experience of wonder: the ability to listen and contemplate”. He holds that Christianity has even more surprises and secrets to reveal.

This handsome book contains 25 maps, 68 illustrations, end-notes and a large index. For a hardback of such quality it is cheaply priced.

Ever enthusiastic if measured, MacCulloch is an erudite and trustworthy guide, amid the uncertainty of our twenty-first century, and the DVD serves as a marvellous introduction to Christianity’s history. It is fun and I commend it to churches. Those individuals who wish to know more must buy the book. May MacCulloch’s work re-awaken interest in the history of the Christian faith. Its wide compass should remind us to be more accepting of all members of the household of God.

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*Alan Argent*

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***An account of the Baptist churches of Shropshire and the surrounding areas.* By Michael J Collis. Shropshire Group of Baptist Churches, Heart of England Association, Sarn, 2008. £12.50 but £15.00 by post. ISBN 978-0-9560329-0-4. Copies obtainable by post from Mr E W Green, 17 Glendinging Way, Madeley, Telford, TF7 5SX (cheques payable to Shropshire Group of Baptist Churches).**

This substantial paperback is essentially a list of Baptist churches in the area covered, preceded by an introduction setting the national and local scene. What sets it apart, however, from many other similar publications is partly the standard of production, for it is well bound, well designed, opens flat, has a clear typeface and is a pleasure to use. It is also extremely well researched, covering the chapels in detail, with a large number of well chosen photographs, clear maps, a detailed bibliography and endnotes, the latter becoming all too ubiquitous these days in place of the more user friendly footnotes, and a lengthy balanced introduction. As the author says, this is the first attempt to tell the story of the churches of Shropshire and those in neighbouring counties with which they have been associated. I have had to use R F Skinner’s *Nonconformity in Shropshire, 1662–1816* published over forty years ago and, whilst admitting that it does not seek to cover the same field, it is a frustrating book and historians, both local and national, will be pleased to have now a resource that Dr Collis modestly says ‘is by no means a definitive history of Baptist work in Shropshire, but it is hoped that its publication will stimulate further research’. The time and effort that must have been put into its preparation is amply justified.

A number of questions are raised by its publication, of which only a few can be mentioned. The juxtaposition of the illustrations of the old and new chapels in Chester Street, Wrexham, the latter built on the old site in 1876, speaks clearly

of the changed attitudes, and the assumptions underpinning them, of Victorian Nonconformists, who were self-confident and wanted to challenge the Established Church. The chapel at Lord's Hill, Snailbeach, also has a fascinating architectural history, now with an entrance to the gallery either from inside or by crossing a small bridge from the hillside by the chapel, but it was connected as well with the dispute over High Calvinism in the mid nineteenth century—and has had Calvinist ministry again in recent years—shows something of the relationship between Nonconformity and the once extensive mining industries of Shropshire and, unexpectedly, was supported by the 7th Earl of Tankerville, the major landowner in the area, and his wife: he both preached and sang in the chapel in the early twentieth century. Even small, isolated and apparently uninteresting chapels can tell an important story. The recent history of the Cornerstone Baptist Chapel in Oswestry has led to the adoption of a former warehouse for worship in comparison to chapel at Llandrinio, which had closed as early as 1902, becoming a dwelling house with some resemblance to a Swiss chalet.

There is much of interest in such books, especially one so well produced and written. It should stimulate further research. The challenge is to other areas to produce similar surveys and also to other Nonconformists in the area to produce their own accounts. It would be good to review in a few years time an item on Congregationalism in Shropshire.

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*Jonathan Morgan*

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***Religion and Place in Leeds.* By John Minnis and Trevor Mitchell. Pp vii + 80. English Heritage, Swindon, 2007. £7.99 paperback. ISBN: 978-1-90562-448-5.**

England's surviving churches and chapels constitute perhaps its greatest architectural inheritance. But as John Minnis and Trevor Mitchell demonstrate in this exhilarating guide, they amount to something more than that as well. For 'places of worship' were never merely 'distinctive building types'. They serve as 'hubs of community identity'. Most of all they stood (and stand) as testaments in the history of a faith, of a place and its people'. In England's great industrial cities that has long been true for many faiths, many places and many peoples too. Nowhere is this more so than of the city of Leeds. Indubitably one of England's great industrial cities, it has also been a major centre of foreign immigration into this country. Irish Catholics from the 1820s, Jews after 1860, Afro-Caribbeans in the wake of World War II, together with Indians, Pakistanis and subsequently Poles, Bosnians and East Africans have left their mark on this city, not least in forming its variegated religious landscape. Thus church and chapel are now matched by synagogue, mosque and temple.

Unselfconscious secularists are sometimes tempted to minimise that legacy as no more than a historical curiosity. How wrong they are. This spirited survey shows how the very contours of nineteenth-century Leeds remain

incomprehensible, unless conceived in relation to contemporary church-building efforts. No less, it establishes how the same follows for the twenty-first century city and its mosques. Minnis and Mitchell are primarily architectural historians. Theirs is first a history of building, style and landscape. Faith, doctrine and liturgy come second. But they appreciate the profound connections between the two. Better still, they understand how social change links the one with the other. Directing their principal concern to the ecclesiological history of the city since 1914, they properly concentrate on the suburbs rather than the centre; more impressively still, on the typical rather than the exceptional. They make no bones about the failures of twentieth-century Christian mission; here as elsewhere in urban Britain. But they rightly emphasise the elements of renewal observable in post-Christian in this, as in many other, northern cities. Only the wilfully blind could fail to see the parallel between Shah Jalal Mosque in Harehills—a vast red brick structure, ennobling local terraced houses formed in 1978, and the United Methodist free Church, built for Armley in 1900. Either them or Anglican architects; compare each and their aesthetic ‘rightness’ with St Richard, Church of England, Seacroft, scarcely distinguishable from the council estate which it serves.

The result is a work which, though ostensibly modest in aim, actually achieves truly penetrating insights. Social historians of nineteenth century nonconformity will learn much from its discussion of the origins and consequences of ‘dissenting gothic’ (a more ambitious, because more expansive, style than eighteenth-century classical.). Chroniclers of modern secularisation will note how little impact a declining Methodism had in the provision of public housing and ecclesiastical renewal in postwar Leeds. Everyone might properly ponder on just how deeply organised religion contributed to the development of the pre-1945 city and how much denominational Christianity (at a minimum) was harmed by its subsequent back-up. Put another way: the M1 might be to blame for more than the contemporary, physical, isolation of Beeston. Handsomely produced, beautifully illustrated and engagingly written, *Religion and Place* provides food for thought to any serious-minded citizen.

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*Simon Green, University of Leeds*

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***The Memoirs of an Italian Protestant Pastor: The Things that are Behind.* By A Deodato, translated by Ruth and Bill Cowhig. British Bus Publishing, Telford 2009. £18.95. ISBN 978-1-90487-595-6.**

The Deodato children state the rationale for this book in their introduction. “The memoirs don’t contain particular revelations relative to the history of the Waldensian Church or facts that are not already noted in another way”. The value of the Memoirs lies in their first-hand account of “situations experienced in everyday life” during tumultuous periods in the recent history of the Waldensian Church.

The advent of Fascism lurks in the background of these Memoirs. Deodato

recalls a dinner that he and fellow seminary students attended with Moderator Vittorio Alberto Costabel in the mid-1920s. Giacomo Matteotti, leader of the United Socialist Party in the Chamber of Deputies and an early critic of Benito Mussolini, had disappeared from Rome. The discovery of his body in a shallow grave triggered large, anti-Fascist demonstrations. In the wake of these events, Costabel appealed to the students “to take great care and not be tempted to look for martyrdom”. The anecdote reflects the prudent stance of Waldensian leadership during these difficult years.

At the heart of the Memoirs lie the experiences of Deodato as a pastor in Naples during World War II. Military occupation, religious intolerance and aerial bombardments transformed routine pastoral tasks—conducting marriages, obtaining food for children in church schools, visiting the sick—into epic undertakings. As the member of the Waldensian Board responsible for the diaspora in Sicily and southern Italy, Deodato had an administrative role that grew in visibility and importance once the Allies arrived. He established relationships with British and US chaplains and military personnel that served the Waldensian Church well during the last years of the war and the rebuilding period that followed.

The election of Deodato as Moderator of the Waldensian Board in 1951 embroiled him in monumental challenges. He travelled abroad often to raise funds for the church and faced complex negotiations that ranged from the establishment of a legal office, charged with the task of defending religious liberty in Italy, to exploration of a possible union of the Waldensian and Methodist Churches.

Although Deodato was a classmate of Tullio Vinay during seminary and participated in the work camps that built Agape, the Memoirs are largely silent about Vinay. The implication is that Deodato was necessarily focused on the administrative and institutional needs of the church. A reader interested in this period of the history of the Waldensian Church would do well to read the Memoirs in conjunction with Vinay’s accounts of Agape and the Servizio Cristiano.

An anecdote in the Memoirs foreshadows the current Waldensian commitment to religious pluralism and the development of multiracial congregations. During the mid-1950s, the Board collaborated with the High Commission for Refugees of the World Council of Churches to host Russian refugees at Villa Olanda. When the Board built a chapel in which the refugees could conduct Orthodox services, criticism from some quarters was swift and intense. “What a scandal! The Waldensian Church had built a chapel where images appeared”? Deodato responded forthrightly. “Really, would the Waldensians who had been persecuted for centuries because they wanted to maintain their faith alive, want to impede the refugees from holding their services of adoration and praise?”

***Congregationalism and Catholicity: The Congregational Lecture 2009.* By Stephen Orchard. Pp 23. The Congregational Memorial Hall Trust (1978) Ltd. £2.00. ISSN 0963-181X.**

The title of this lecture may at first sight suggest a contradiction. What could radical Protestantism have to do with smells, bells, vestments, episcopacy and the other accoutrements of the Roman church and its imitators (but that's Catholicism, I hear you say, although catholicity in this lecture seems to imply some relation)? As Orchard reminds us, the word Catholic is Greek for universal and the lecture surveys Congregational views of catholicity from the sixteenth century to the present.

In the process some problems emerge, as he refers to the Elizabethan Henry Barrow as a Congregationalist where most historians would describe him and his colleagues as Separatists—forerunners of Congregationalism rather than originators. He also dates the foundation of the Congregational Union of England and Wales as 1833 when the date is actually 1831. He defines Congregationalism with reference to the gathered and covenanted fellowship, which thus has authority to carry out the commission of Christ. He is content to call this body the “local church” which has “sufficient authority” to govern its affairs. The meaning of catholic he leaves to God’s judgement—God knows whom He shall admit to the New Jerusalem. I find that his definition of Congregationalism leaves a yawning chasm between the “local” church and the universal church which other denominations may all too easily fill with intermediate bodies which they call “The Church”.

His examples of Congregational catholicity often are mere references to relationships between churches or denominations. In the twentieth century he has ignored *Essays Congregational and Catholic* (1931), edited by Albert Peel, which contains “Congregationalism the True Catholicism” by C J Cadoux. Cadoux argues passionately, from the Congregational viewpoint, that the local church is the Church, responsible only to Christ and that no other earthly body should be allowed the title of church. Its catholicity arises from the absence of credal tests for church membership and its invitation to the Lord’s Supper for “all who love our Lord in sincerity and truth”. Cadoux defines the universal Church as containing all Christians, that is those who follow the Lord Jesus.

Another modern Congregationalist Orchard might have noted is Daniel Jenkins. In a paper submitted to the World Alliance of Reformed Churches general council in 1982, Jenkins described his own book, *The Nature of Catholicity* (1942), as youthful rebellion but insisted:

I should want to stand by its positive argument. Ubi Christus ibi ecclesia. The catholicity of the church is to be found where there is faithfulness to the apostolic testimony to Christ.

Approaching his conclusion he states:

Churches aspiring to catholicity should have flexible structures and ... be as decentralized as is compatible with a worldwide mission and the need to maintain institutional integrity against concentrations of secular power.

These structures are certainly compatible with Congregationalism. The address to secular power is often, in the UK, carried out by para-church bodies, like the Three Denominations or Christian Aid, and sometimes by secular bodies that number Christians among their founders and supporters, like Amnesty International or the Fairtrade Foundation.

Orchard's lecture concludes that Congregationalists have much to offer the universal church with our (he says "their") view of catholicity. True, but he lacks both the militancy of Cadoux and the reasoned argument of Jenkins.

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*Ian Black*

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## Books for Congregationalists

**Manual of Congregational Principles** by RW Dale,

**The Atonement** by RW Dale,

**Visible Saints: The Congregational Way 1640–1660** by Geoffrey F Nuttall

**Studies in English Dissent** by Geoffrey F Nuttall

**Christian Fellowship or The Church Member's Guide** by John Angell James

**The Anxious Inquirer** by John Angell James

Quinta Press, Meadow View, Weston Rhyn, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 7RN 01691 778659

E-mail [info@quintapress.com](mailto:info@quintapress.com); web-site: [www.quintapress.com](http://www.quintapress.com)

Readers of this journal will be interested in some of the draft books being worked on. If you visit the web-site and click on the PDF Books link you will find draft versions of many books by important Congregationalists of the past, including John Cotton, Richard Mather, William Jay, John Angell James, RW Dale and PT Forsyth.

Also Edmund Calamy's 1702, 1713 and 1727 volumes of Richard Baxter's *Life and Times* detailing the ministers ejected in 1662 (these 5 volumes were the basis of AG Matthew *Calamy Revised*).

Click on the Whitefield link and there are further links to sermons of George Whitefield never yet reprinted and a new edition of his Journals that is more complete than that currently available.

There are many other titles too numerous to mention.







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