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# SOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF BAPTIST HISTORY

## INTRODUCTION

This paper is that of a librarian rather than of a historian or an archivist. A librarian sees documents of all kinds primarily from the point of view of their usefulness in providing information, whereas an archivist seems to see them from the point of view of their relationship to other documents, their arrangement, storage and indexing showing these relationships. I want an index which will help me answer real enquiries. A historian views the documents he comes across from a quite different angle again. This approach has to be borne in mind throughout what follows. All the sources I shall discuss are those I have come across in the course of my work as librarian of the Angus Library and in particular in the process of answering the many enquiries we receive every week. I had no academic knowledge of Baptist history before I came and I am indebted to the many scholars, researchers and even the family historians, who have pointed me in the direction of such knowledge as I now have. I am concentrating almost exclusively on British (even English) Baptist history: the rest of the world would require another paper altogether.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SOURCES

A librarian usually goes from the general to the particular and starts with bibliographical sources, but I shall not cover general bibliographical sources, such as the *British Museum General Catalogue of Printed Books*<sup>1</sup>, the *British National Bibliography*<sup>2</sup>, Walford's *Guide to Reference Material*<sup>3</sup>, or even Wing<sup>4</sup> and the STC<sup>5</sup>. All these and many other useful general bibliographical sources or library catalogues, such as the Subject Index to the London Library catalogue<sup>6</sup> and the catalogues and accessions lists of Dr Williams's Library<sup>7</sup>, can be consulted in most large public reference or university libraries. Dr Williams's Library contains far more bibliographical reference tools than the Angus Library, so a study of the background to dissenting history in general and Baptist history in particular should ideally start there<sup>8</sup>. A study of local Baptist history should begin at the local public library, particularly if there is a local studies section, and at the local County Record Office. (Never underestimate the usefulness of the back-files of the local newspaper when writing your church's history.) Particularly useful general catalogues which can help the study of seventeenth-century Baptist history are the *Catalogue of the McAlpin Collection of British history and theology in the Union Theological Seminary, New York*<sup>9</sup>, and the *Catalogue of the pamphlets, books, newspapers, and manuscripts . . . collected by George Thomason, 1640-1661*<sup>10</sup>.

Our study of Baptist bibliography must begin with W. T. Whitley's *A Baptist Bibliography, 1526-1837*<sup>1</sup>. This is subtitled 'being a register of the chief materials for Baptist history, whether in manuscript or in print, preserved in Great Britain, Ireland and the Colonies'. Before first using Whitley's *Bibliography*, it is worth spending some time learning how it is arranged and the meaning of his reference numbers: it took me a long time to work it out when I first came to it. Each item is listed according to the year in which it was published and the last three digits of the reference number after the hyphen represent that year without the initial number 1. The number before the hyphen merely represents the position of the item in the sequence for that year. Thus we look in the author index, for example, under Morgan Edwards and find a series of reference numbers, the first of which is 12-761, so we turn to the year 1761, item number 12, and find Morgan Edwards: *A farewell discourse . . . in Rye*. Dublin, 12mo. Capital letter

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codes then indicate the library or libraries in which Whitley had located the item (not necessarily where it is now), in this instance AM, where A indicates the Angus Library and M the British Museum. The library symbols are listed at the start of the work. We also have in the Angus Library drawers full of Whitley's manuscript 5" x 3" cards, which represent his work towards a third volume of the *Bibliography*, with cards for items dating from 1838 to 1939. They are not always very legible and cause some difficulty in verifying sources.

Whitley was followed by E. C. Starr's *A Baptist Bibliography*<sup>12</sup>, subtitled 'being a register of printed material by and about Baptists; including works written against the Baptists', and published in twenty-five volumes by the American Baptist Historical Society from 1947 to 1976. Starr takes over Whitley's entries, locations and reference numbers without verification, and therefore has the same limitations for early British material as Whitley, but he is very useful for post-1837 publications. There is a separate list of the codes for North American libraries in the first volume of Starr, the 'A' section. Another limitation of Starr is the number of entries taken from W. E. McIntyre's *Baptist authors: a manual of bibliography, 1500-1914*,<sup>13</sup> published A-Day in 1914, because locations for many of the items in question have not been found. Starr's introduction to his *Baptist Bibliography* states that the plan of the work

is to be on a wide and generous basis. The attempt has been made to include writings of Baptists, not only on Baptist topics, but also on topics of general theological, philosophical, historical and social content . . . The works written by Baptists, as well as the works of those who have written against Baptists, or the Baptist position have been included. The writings of other than Baptists are indicated by the term Non-Baptist, for the information of the user. For general interest many references to baptism have been included, in some controversies in which Baptists per se were not involved . . . In scope we have tried to include all Baptists everywhere.

Other useful bibliographical sources include the *Microfilm Catalog of Baptist Historical Materials*<sup>14</sup> available from the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention; *Baptists in Canada 1760-1990: a bibliography of selected printed resources in English*,<sup>15</sup> Dr Williams's Library's *Nonconformist congregations in Great Britain*<sup>16</sup> and *Guide to the Manuscripts*;<sup>17</sup> Clive Field's *Sources for the study of Protestant nonconformity in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*;<sup>18</sup> the catalogue of the library of the Baptist Union of Scotland;<sup>19</sup> the catalogue and supplementary catalogue of the Library of the Gospel Standard Baptists,<sup>20</sup> and the card catalogues of the Angus Library, which now include the catalogue of the former Baptist Union Library (superseding the earlier printed catalogues of the Angus Library<sup>21</sup> and the Baptist Union Library)<sup>22</sup> I have recently compiled a computer-produced list of the theses in the Angus Library, although I have not yet produced a subject index to it, and a catalogue of the periodical holdings of the Angus Library. I hope eventually to produce similar catalogues of the church histories, Association reports and manuscript church records in the Angus Library. Finally, one must not forget the indexes, particularly the cumulative decennial indexes<sup>23</sup> to the *Baptist Quarterly*, as rich bibliographical tools in their own right. This is by no means an exhaustive list of useful Baptist bibliographical materials, but provides some idea of the type and range of materials available.

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### PUBLISHED BAPTIST HISTORIES

I assume here a knowledge of basic Baptist history. For a quick outline of the broad course of Baptist history, refer to the summary in the *Baptist Union Directory*<sup>24</sup> or the excellent fuller outline in Roger Hayden's recent publication in the Baptist Union Christian Training Programme series: *English Baptist History and Heritage*.<sup>25</sup> Earlier published histories have been well summarised in the introduction to Dr B. R. White's first volume of the Historical Society's ongoing series *A History of the English Baptists*,<sup>26</sup> where he describes the bias of Crosby,<sup>27</sup> Rippon,<sup>28</sup> Ivimey,<sup>29</sup> and Taylor,<sup>30</sup> and outlines the later work of Whitley,<sup>31</sup> Underwood<sup>32</sup> and Ernest Payne.<sup>33</sup> I shall quote selectively from this, but recommend anyone who does not know these histories to read the whole section.

From the first, Baptist historians in England have not merely tried to give as adequate a narrative as their sources allow but have seen their task as that of defending their co-religionists and of influencing denominational policy.

This can be seen even in the work of Thomas Crosby . . . *The History of the English Baptists* (4 vols., 1738-40) . . . Apart from attempting a narrative history Crosby sought to put the Baptist case from three particular points of view . . . Since Crosby's work is neither systematic nor analytical it is important to note that it is largely based on manuscripts and printed works which are still available to the historian.

Joseph Ivimey (1773-1834) . . . made the next major narrative contribution with his *History of the English Baptists* (4 vols., 1811-1830) . . . Like Crosby, Ivimey too set out to act both as the apologist for the Baptists and as their critic as well as their historian . . . Since Ivimey's volumes were published with intervals of several years between each one and the next it was not surprising that changing concerns were reflected in them as the work developed . . .

The only General Baptist among the early historians was Adam Taylor (1768-1833) who produced his two-volume *A History of the English General Baptists* in 1818 . . . Taylor . . . wrote quite deliberately to explain the position and to describe the origins of his people. In his second volume Taylor dealt largely with the history of those older congregations which had united with the new body [i.e. the General Baptists of the New Connexion] and its leaders.

During the remainder of the nineteenth century other Baptists were to produce histories of the denomination which took the story beyond the chronological limits of the classic writers already mentioned. Nevertheless, usually the later nineteenth century authors added little to the information about the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries provided by Crosby, Rippon, Ivimey and Taylor . . . It was not . . . until W. T. Whitley (1861-1947) that English Baptist history began to be studied in any systematic way and by modern methods . . . The most recent comprehensive study, by A. C. Underwood, *The History of the English Baptists* (1947) benefited greatly

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from Whitley's work and provided a readable replacement for his *History*. It is significant that, consciously or unconsciously, Underwood, like his predecessors, also hoped to tell a plain tale plainly, together with a defence and explanation of the Baptist case and an attempt to mould the thinking, perhaps the policy, of the denomination.

During the last thirty years [Dr White's book was published in 1983] the writings of Dr E. A. Payne have pointed the way for a younger generation of Baptist historians.<sup>34</sup>

I have quoted at length from Dr White's introduction in order to demonstrate the lack of objectivity in most of the published Baptist histories and I will not go into detail about others which he does not mention, such as J. H. Wood's *A condensed history of the General Baptists of the New Connexion*,<sup>35</sup> published in 1847, or J. M. Cramp's *Baptist history from the foundation of the Christian church to the close of the eighteenth century*,<sup>36</sup> published in 1868. We must also not forget the other volumes in the Baptist Historical Society's series *A History of the English Baptists*, volume 2 on the eighteenth century by Raymond Brown<sup>37</sup> and volumes 3 and 4, on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries respectively, currently in preparation. When it comes to Scotland, one should start with the Baptist Union of Scotland's 1988 publication edited by Dr. David Bebbington, *The Baptists in Scotland: a history*,<sup>38</sup> which updates and extends the 1926 *History of the Baptists in Scotland from pre-Reformation times*, edited by George Yuille.<sup>39</sup> Other useful sources for Scottish Baptist history are listed in the first of these. For world Baptist history, the 1987 volume *The Baptist heritage* by H. Leon McBeth<sup>40</sup> provides a useful summary.

Again, I say little about Strict Baptist history, but would commend the series *The Strict Baptist Chapels of England*,<sup>41</sup> published by the Strict Baptist Historical Society, and S. F. Paul's *Further History of the Gospel Standard Baptists*,<sup>42</sup> and remind you of the Annual Report and Bulletin articles of the Strict Baptist Historical Society.

### OTHER SECONDARY SOURCES

A vast range of useful printed sources exist, but this discussion must be restricted to a few, divided into periodicals, Baptist Union and Baptist Missionary Society publications, Association reports and circular letters, and church histories, magazines and directories.

The most useful survey and description of Baptist periodicals which exists is Rosemary Taylor's 1974 thesis, *English Baptist periodicals, 1790-1865*,<sup>43</sup> the bibliography section of which was published in the *Baptist Quarterly*<sup>44</sup> in 1977. My own list of the periodical titles now held in the Angus Library does not yet include the non-British periodicals which we hold.

To generalise about the usefulness of these, largely nineteenth-century, periodicals is hard. The *Baptist Magazine*,<sup>45</sup> the *General Baptist Repository and Magazine*<sup>46</sup> and Rippon's *Baptist Annual Register*<sup>28</sup> are a mine of detail on Baptist churches, ministers, lay people and the movements in general, while the *Missionary Herald*,<sup>47</sup> published both separately and in the *Baptist Magazine*, and the *Missionary Observer*, from 1822 only published in the *General Baptist Repository and Magazine*, provide full information on the missionary work of both societies until they merged in 1891, when the *Missionary Herald* took over all the missionary reporting. There were many more periodicals, some only lasting for a few years and often from one specific section of the Baptist community, which will repay careful study with a wealth of interesting information. For

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example, Strict Baptist periodicals containing details of churches, obituaries and similar useful information from a historical point of view, include *The Gospel Herald*<sup>48</sup> and *The Earthen Vessel*,<sup>49</sup> which later merged, and *The Gospel Standard*.<sup>50</sup> One must not forget the newspaper *The Freeman*<sup>51</sup>, later to become *The Baptist Times*,<sup>52</sup> with all its fascinating details of Baptist life (and death): unfortunately, most of our volumes have no index, although one was published in some years at least. While most of these periodicals are of use only for the nineteenth century, the *Baptist Annual Register*,<sup>28</sup> published from 1790 to 1802 (the individually published issues are not in fact identical to the four bound volumes, leading to a confusion in some pagination citations) reaches well back into the eighteenth century with its lists of Particular Baptist churches and wealth of biographical information on their ministers.

The publications of the Baptist Union and the Baptist Missionary Society are too numerous to mention individually, but apart from the statistical and biographical information to be gleaned from the pages of their Annual Reports,<sup>53</sup> <sup>54</sup> one must stress the prime importance of the *Baptist Handbook*,<sup>55</sup> now *The Baptist Union Directory*,<sup>56</sup> for biographical information about ministers and missionaries, as well as for statistical details of churches. From a study of these volumes over the years, and of the *Baptist Union Annual Reports* from 1832 to 1844 and the *Baptist Manual*<sup>57</sup> from 1845 to 1859 which preceded them, a church's history can often be traced.

Another valuable printed resource for Baptist historical research is the whole body of reports and circular letters published by the Associations. From the eighteenth century onwards these reports usually included statistics of the churches in the Association, the names of ministers and messengers to the Association Assembly or Conference, as well as news from the churches. It is thus possible to trace the history of a church, the career of a minister, or the course of denominational history in a region by means of these reports. Although the Angus Library has quite full collections of these reports, we do not have complete sets, particularly for the early years, and we should always be grateful for any spare copies anyone has for disposal. I should also point out a slight difficulty you will encounter when looking for the library's earlier holdings in the catalogue: the original Angus Library holdings of pre-1900 circular letters are catalogued under the heading 'CIRCULAR LETTERS' and arranged by date, usually without a cross-reference under the name of the Association, whereas all the Association reports and circular letters which came with the Baptist Union Library or which have been deposited since then are arranged according to the Association. I should dearly like to incorporate the former into the latter, but this will take time.

Other useful printed sources include church histories and magazines, which vary enormously in quality and accuracy. (If you are compiling your church's history, remember not only to list your sources but also to give their whereabouts, e.g. 'Church Book, now in the . . .shire County Record Office'). The church histories in the Angus Library are still being sorted into one sequence arranged alphabetically by place and the catalogue entries are not yet consistent.

### BIOGRAPHICAL SOURCES

Useful biographical sources not already mentioned include first and foremost the *Dictionary of National Biography*.<sup>58</sup> I am frequently amazed at how often people forget to look there first for information about prominent Baptist ministers. Another useful general source is the *Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals in the Seventeenth Century*.<sup>59</sup> Dr White's participation in this three-volume work has ensured the inclusion

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of plenty of Baptists. Continuing with the seventeenth century there is considerable biographical detail in A. G. Matthews' *Calamy Revised*<sup>60</sup> and *Walker Revised*,<sup>61</sup> as well as Samuel Palmer's *The Nonconformist's Memorial*,<sup>62</sup> but historians of the seventeenth century need no introduction to these works. For the London area, there is a wealth of biographical information about Baptist ministers in Walter Wilson's *The History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses in London, Westminster and Southwark, including the lives of their ministers*,<sup>63</sup> and the various accounts of the ministers buried in the Bunhill Fields burial ground, notably J. A. Jones' *Bunhill Memorials*<sup>64</sup> of 1849 and A. W. Light's *Bunhill Fields*<sup>65</sup> of 1913 and 1933.

Turning to the more specifically Baptist sources, the general histories already referred to are often useful for biographical information (a name index to Ivimey has been produced by K. W. H. Howard<sup>66</sup>), as well as others such as Joshua Toulmin's revised editions of Daniel Neal's *The History of the Puritans*.<sup>67</sup> For the eighteenth century we have noted the biographical usefulness of Rippon's *Baptist Annual Register*, and into the nineteenth century periodicals supplement the biographical information about Baptist ministers to be gleaned from the pages of the *Baptist Handbook*. We are fortunate to have a copy of the Baptist Union's handwritten index to the memoirs of ministers in the *Handbook*, the *BU Annual Reports* 1832-44, the *Manual of the Baptist denomination* 1845-59, and the *Baptist Magazine* for earlier years. Another unpublished biographical source in the Angus Library is Whitley's card index of Baptist ministers. This is both useful and frustrating: useful when he gives dates which one had not previously found out, but extremely frustrating when one would like to know the sources from which he obtained his information - any he does give are usually in such an abbreviated form that hours of guesswork and discussion are wasted trying to identify them. Unfortunately, the same can be said for Whitley's *The Baptists of London*,<sup>68</sup> which is an otherwise extremely useful source in identifying Baptist churches and their ministers in the London area.

The Dr Williams's Library has the original lists of Dissenting congregations in England and Wales, by counties, with names of ministers, compiled by the Presbyterian, Dr John Evans, in 1715, as well as those by the Baptist Josiah Thompson, compiled in 1773. These are both of particular value in eighteenth-century research. An index to the Evans list has been published as Dr Williams's Library Occasional Paper no.11,<sup>69</sup> and a transcript of the Thompson list was published in the *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, vol.5.<sup>70</sup> Another useful eighteenth-century list, containing biographical information about both Particular and General Baptist ministers, was compiled by the Revd John Collett Ryland in 1751, in the Warwick Baptist Church Minute Book: a transcript of this was published in the *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, vol.6<sup>71</sup>.

The reports and magazines of the Baptist Colleges are another useful source of biographical information. A minister's career can often be traced through these, as most of the reports list the current whereabouts of former ministerial students, and usually also note the year of their death. The more renowned former students may even qualify for an obituary in the college's report. The Angus Library has a good collection of these reports, but it is not complete and the individual colleges might be expected to have a more complete set of their own reports. When searching for college reports it is always important to remember the various amalgamations and changes of name, i.e. Horton, Rawdon, Manchester, Midland ultimately joined together as the Northern Baptist College; Abergavenny, Pontypool and Haverfordwest into the South Wales Baptist

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College at Cardiff; Llangollen moved to the North Wales Baptist College at Bangor; Stepney to Regent's Park; the Pastors' College at Metropolitan Tabernacle became Spurgeon's College. Do not forget the Scottish and Irish Baptist Colleges, although we have very few of their reports.

### PRIMARY SOURCES

The 'Church Book' is the primary source for historical research about an individual church or the people connected with it - minister, elders, deacons, members. It usually contains the minutes of the Church Meetings, including applications for baptism and membership and often contains lists of members at certain dates and even records of births, marriages and deaths in some instances. This was sometimes the reason for the non-surrender of pre-1837 registers not found among the 'Non-Parochial Registers' in the Public Record Office. Other useful church records are the minutes of deacons' meetings, Sunday School minutes, accounts, and such registers as were not surrendered. The records which survive are kept in a wide variety of locations: many have been retained by the church itself, often under conditions which do not bode well for their chances of survival; some have been passed to the local Baptist Association for safe keeping; some have been deposited with the local County Record Office; some, deposited originally with the Baptist Historical Society or the Baptist Union, are now in the Angus Library and others have been deposited directly with this and other Baptist theological college libraries. Those from the North-West of England deposited with the Northern Baptist College or its predecessors now form part of the Northern Baptist College Collection in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester. A number of early General Baptist Church records are in Dr Williams's Library and there are some Strict Baptist churches' records in the Strict Baptist Historical Society's Library at Dunstable and the Gospel Standard Baptist Library in Hove. Published, edited transcripts of church records should not be forgotten, such as those published by the Hanserd Knollys Society in the nineteenth century,<sup>72 73</sup> the Broadmead, Bristol records edited by Roger Hayden<sup>74</sup> and the Society's new series of *English Baptist Records*.<sup>75 76 77</sup>

This most fundamental source for research into denominational history often proves to be the most difficult to trace. The autonomy of the local Baptist congregation and its resistance to any form of central organization or authority has made for specifically Baptist problems in the storage and handling of local records. Although advice can and has been given to local churches by the Society, the Baptist Union and the Associations as to what to do with their records, there is no authority to require the deposit of certain types of records with, for example, a local County Record Office or a Baptist College Library. Tracing these records is therefore not easy, in particular in the case of extinct churches. For churches still in existence the B.U.'s 1984 survey of the whereabouts of church records was useful, and I have the forms resulting from this survey in my office, but unfortunately only a small proportion of churches responded. An earlier survey in 1961 had a slightly higher response rate, but had asked for, and therefore received, much less detailed information concerning holdings. Included with the results of these surveys are reports and indexes of a few of the County Record Offices' Baptist holdings; I am trying to encourage more to send these, and any reports which Associations have compiled at one time or another. The more information sent to the Angus Library about the whereabouts of a church's records the better. Another very useful index of Baptist church records is included in the pamphlet by the Revd Geoffrey R. Breed, entitled *My*

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*ancestors were Baptists: how can I find out more about them?*,<sup>78</sup> available from the Historical Society's Treasurer or from the Royal Society of Genealogists for £2.20. As well as describing the best way to attempt to trace Baptist ancestors, this useful pamphlet also lists Baptist registers and records in the Public Record Office, in the Society of Genealogists' Library, in the Gospel Standard Baptist Library and in the Strict Baptist Historical Society's Library. Finally, I hope to produce a proper index of the church records in the Angus Library in the not too distant future: at the moment they can be traced through the card catalogues, the archives indexes and my memory!

The National Register of Archives set up by the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts and housed in Quality House, Quality Court, Chancery Lane, London is also well worth a visit when attempting to track down Baptist records. The Register and some of its indexes are in the process of being computerised and I have been given a printout of the Baptist entries. These are Baptist records both in the holdings of County Record Offices and in private hands. The printout is in no particular order: I should like one day to enter these details in a master file, sort them alphabetically and merge them with the information in the files in my office and other existing indexes to create a centralised index of Baptist church records, like that being created by the Methodist Archives and Research Centre in the John Rylands Research Institute in Manchester, but that is another project which may take many years to complete.

In addition, to the printed reports and circular letters of the Associations, various manuscript records originate from the Associations. From an early stage in Baptist church history, at least the 1650s, individual Baptist churches made contact with others of a similar persuasion in their vicinity and these informal contacts were soon formalised into regular Associations. The earliest records of the meetings between the 'messengers' were often kept in one or more of the individual Church Books, some of which have been published by this Society,<sup>79</sup> but by the eighteenth century letters between the churches, accounts of the Association meetings, and details and statistics of the churches in an Association in the form of an Annual Report were being kept for most Associations, and many survive in manuscript form, most often under the charge of local Association secretaries, details of whom can be found in the *Baptist Union Directory*. A few of these early Circular Letters are in the Angus Library, such as those of the Midland Association addressed to Bewdley Baptist Church,<sup>80</sup> and a number of other Association records - minutes, correspondence, details of churches, etc. - have also been deposited here, but there is no central file showing the whereabouts of early Association records: present Association secretaries ought to be able to locate their early records, but the changes in Association names and areas covered over the last three centuries will sometimes make this difficult.

Alongside the local Associations other assemblies, societies, boards and organizations soon grew up, whether from a group of like-minded ministers meeting in an eighteenth-century London Coffee House or from a felt need for wider co-operation and discussion of issues of mutual concern. All these organizations produced records and correspondence, some of which have survived. Of singular importance in the study of Baptist history are the minute books of the Particular Baptist Fund, now on deposit in the Angus Library. This Fund was established in 1717 as a result of the response to a 'Proposal for raising a Fund' contained in a letter sent out to Particular Baptist churches in and about London proposing:

that a Public Fund, or Stock, be raised . . . for the support and

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maintenance of honourable Ministers, and providing for a succession of such. That this Fund shall be for the use and advantage of those Churches only that go under the denomination of Particular Baptists. That it be begun by taking subscriptions and making a public collection for it in the several congregations of that persuasion in London and the parts adjacent, and by the free gift of any particular persons whom God hath blest with an ability and disposition for such an extensive and pious charity . . .<sup>81</sup>

The lists of ministers, churches and colleges helped by the Fund from its foundation until 1975, as well as the discussions of the principles involved in making allocations, all contained in the Minutes, are a rich source of denominational history. A similar Fund, the Bristol Baptist Fund, of smaller financial resources, was formed in Bristol in the same year as the Particular Baptist Fund was founded, 1717, and still functions today: an account of it is given in a pamphlet published in 1958.<sup>82</sup> Other Baptist organizations whose occasional minute books are in the Angus Library include the Society of Baptist Ministers in London (General Baptist<sup>83</sup>), the General Baptist Building Fund,<sup>84</sup> the Conferences of New Connexion General Baptists,<sup>85</sup> the Baptist Board,<sup>86</sup> the Baptist Monthly Meeting<sup>87</sup> and the London Association of Strict Baptist Ministers and Churches.<sup>88</sup>

Apart from a few files and selected minute books which came to the Angus Library with the Baptist Union Library in 1985, the archives of the Baptist Union of Great Britain (and Ireland until 1988), in the form of the minutes of the meetings of Baptist Union Council and its various committees, have been retained by the Baptist Union at the new joint headquarters of the BU and the BMS at Didcot, and have been bound in volumes, some of which have been indexed, I believe. I understand that it is hoped to have these sorted and many of them put on microfiche. They are not yet available for public access. The Baptist Union Corporation Ltd holds the Deeds and Title of several thousand church properties and correspondence files concerning churches going back many years. A considerable amount of historical archive material in the form of related minute and account books was discovered during the course of the move to Didcot and afterwards and has been forwarded to the Angus Library. Duplicate marriage registers received from the Registrar General for many years were distributed by the British Records Association to the appropriate County Record Office.

The complete archives of the *Baptist Missionary Society* up to thirty years ago were deposited with the Angus Library at the time of the move to Didcot in the summer of 1989. They contain not only committee minutes of the Society from the earliest days, but also correspondence, diaries and reports from the missionaries overseas and from the officers of the Society at home. Many of the archives are of wider interest than for students only of Baptist history, such as George Grenfell's original survey books of the Congo, William Carey's accounts of the first missionary endeavours in India, Roxburgh's Indian botanical works first printed and annotated by Carey in Serampore, in which the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew have shown an interest, first-hand accounts of the Boxer Rebellion and later martyrdoms in China, the slave trade in the West Indies, or, more recently, the linguistic and botanical researches of John Carrington in Zaire. Much of the pre-1914 material has been microfilmed, and there is a summary

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\* Since writing this paper, it has been arranged to move these records to the Angus Library.

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catalogue of this;<sup>89</sup> there are also detailed catalogues by country of the correspondence of missionaries whose association with the Society ceased before 1914 and there is a register of missionaries to 1942, giving dates of appointment and retirement or death and geographical area of missionary activity. For material after 1914 there are as yet no proper catalogues, apart from a handwritten shelf-list, originally compiled in London as an assessment for future microfilming, rather than as a catalogue to be used to locate documents, but an archivist has been working since June 1990, sorting and arranging the material and making preliminary lists, prior to making a full catalogue and index of the material on computer. Missionary correspondence is currently arranged by country, and then within broad dates alphabetically by surname (or husband's surname, in the case of women missionaries injudicious enough to marry a male missionary during the course of their employment with the Society!), so it is not too difficult to locate an individual missionary's file.

In addition to the archives of the Society itself, there are some useful historical documents given to the Society at one time or another, such as the single minute book of the Baptist Itinerant Society for 1797 to 1812,<sup>90</sup> or of the General Baptist Missionary Society for 1816 to 1861,<sup>91</sup> or documents not directly connected with the Society, such as the bound volume of letters dated 1736-1779, mostly addressed to John Sutcliffe,<sup>92</sup> or the scrap book volume on the Down Grade controversy.<sup>93</sup> The BMS Archives also contain interesting photographs, lantern slides and scrap books of press cuttings and a large collection of printed vernacular materials in a wide variety of oriental and African languages, including many translations of the Bible or of the New Testament published by the Serampore Press, but these collections have not yet been catalogued.

It seems appropriate, and has certainly been welcomed by researchers since 1989, that this rich store of research materials should now be located in the same library as other related collections of documents. An obvious example concerns the voluminous writings of William Carey: there were collections of his letters and other writings in the original Angus Library,<sup>94</sup> along with various artefacts connected with his life; another major collection of his letters came with the Baptist Union Library in 1985;<sup>95</sup> and all his official correspondence and journals were in the BMS Archives.<sup>96</sup> Added to which, letters of his keep turning up in private hands and are passed to us, more hitherto uncatalogued papers of his were found in a safe in London during the move to Didcot, and in 1990 I came across some more in an old wooden trunk in the College containing the papers of S. Pearce Carey.<sup>97</sup> They were totally unsorted and uncatalogued when I found them, but a qualified archivist graduate of the College has voluntarily sorted these papers and produced a catalogue of the collection.

Brief mention has been made of the printed reports of the Baptist theological colleges, but the archives of the colleges themselves are a useful source of historical information. Some are more easily accessible than others. Spurgeon's College in South London has a useful card index to all former students, referring back to a numerical entry in a large register, which gives full details of each student's home background on entering the college and subsequent career in the ministry. Similarly, Bristol Baptist College, founded in 1679 and earliest of the Baptist Colleges, has an alphabetical card index of Bristol College students, giving comprehensive biographical and bibliographical details. At Regent's Park College, founded in 1810 as Stepney College in London, we cannot boast such an easy way into the careers of our former students, particularly in the nineteenth century, and many of the college's early minute books have been lost. The nineteenth-century records which have survived, such as letters to Principal Joseph

## THE BAPTIST QUARTERLY

Angus, have never been indexed, so I usually prefer to use the College's printed annual reports for any enquiries concerning former students. Bristol Baptist College also possesses the papers of many of its former students who became prominent Baptist leaders in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, making a rich Baptist archive complementing that of the Angus Library. Mention has already been made of the Northern Baptist College Collection in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester, but for the actual archives of the Horton, Rawdon, Manchester and Midland Colleges enquiries should be made of the Principal of the Northern Baptist College in the first instance. I would imagine that the Welsh, Scottish and Irish Baptist Colleges have retained their own archives, but I have no personal knowledge of them. Their addresses are in the current *Baptist Union Directory*.

In addition to these sundry archive collections, the Angus Library holds a wide variety of miscellaneous manuscript materials, from the autographic notes of John Collett Ryland<sup>98</sup> to the letters of Joshua Thomas to John Rippon concerning his *History of the Welsh Association* and concerning students at Bristol;<sup>99</sup> from the Steele family papers<sup>100</sup> and the Reeves' Collection of letters to John Saffery<sup>101</sup> to the complete Baptist Union collection of documents relating to the Downgrade Controversy,<sup>102</sup> to name but a small selection. There are catalogues of some of these collections and most of them have at least a brief mention in the card catalogue of the Angus Library.

An unpublished resource of great value is our collection of dissertations and theses, mostly by our own former students. As already mentioned, I have produced a list of these and there are also subject entries for many of them in the Angus Library card catalogue.

### THE ANGUS LIBRARY

The original heart of the Angus Library was a large collection of printed and manuscript works by English Baptists and other Nonconformists dating from the early seventeenth century left to Regent's Park College by Dr Joseph Angus, Principal of the College 1849-1893, and later catalogued and enlarged by Dr George Pearce Gould, Principal 1896-1920. Other significant collections have been deposited with or donated to the library and in 1985 the Baptist Union Library, which had earlier incorporated the Baptist Historical Society's library of manuscript and early printed Baptist materials, became part of the Angus Library. Finally, in the summer of 1989, when the Baptist Union and the Baptist Missionary Society moved their offices out of London to new joint premises in Didcot, the archives of the BMS were deposited with the Angus Library and the various collections were brought together and relocated in three large rooms of mobile shelving and one smaller room in the basement of the College, with the newly built addition of a Librarian/Archivist's office and a research room both for College research students and for visitors to the Angus Library. Room 1 of the mobile shelving contains the majority of the original printed books and pamphlets from the old Angus Library as well as the manuscript minute books. Room 2 contains all the periodicals, the Association reports, the majority of the church histories and magazines, the printed books which came from the old Baptist Union Library, the hymn book collections from the original Angus Library, the BU Library and the Psalms and Hymns Trust, the artefacts, microfilms and other non-book materials, some of the slides and photographs from the BMS Archives and a number of other special collections. Room 3 contains the BMS Archives, with the BMS collection of vernacular materials currently shelved in the corridor. Room 4 may become an audio-visual room.

## SOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF BAPTIST HISTORY

I hope this brief introduction to sources of use in the study of British Baptist history, particularly those in the Angus Library, will help those who have not yet embarked on such a study to get started and may even have provided one or two extra hints for those who are already fully versed in the major sources available.

### NOTES

- 1 British Museum General Catalogue of printed books to 1955. Compact ed. 27 vols. New York, 1967. Supplements, 1956-65 (5 vols.) 1969; 1966-70 (3 vols.) 1974.
- 2 British National Bibliography Cumulative subject catalogue, 1951-54 (2 vols.), 1955-59 (3 vols.), 1960-64 (3 vols.), 1965-67 (2 vols.) 1968-70 (2 vols.) and current issues.
- 3 Walford, A. J. ed., Guide to reference material. 5th ed. 3 vols. London, Library Association, 1989-91. Vol.2 Social and historical sciences, philosophy and religion, edited by Alan Day and Joan M. Harvey. 1990.
- 4 Wing, D. G. Short-title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales and British America, and of English books printed in other countries, 1641-1700. 3 vols. New York, 1945-51. 2nd ed. 1972- .
- 5 Pollard, A. W. & Redgrave, G. R. A short-title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland and of English books printed abroad 1475-1640. 2nd ed. revised & enlarged, begun by W. A. Jackson & F. S. Ferguson; completed by Katharine F. Pantzer. 3 vols. London, The Bibliographical Society, 1986-91.
- 6 London Library: Catalogue. Subject index, by C. T. Hagberg Wright. Vol.1. London, 1909. Vols.2-4, Additions, 1909-22, 1923-38, 1938-53. London, 1923, 1938, 1955.
- 7 Dr Williams's Library: Catalogue of the Library in Red Cross Street, Cripplegate. 2 vols., 1841. Catalogue of books, pamphlets, etc., placed in the Library from 1842 to 1885. Catalogue of Accessions 1900-1950, 1951-1960, 1961-1970, 1971-1980. London, 1955, 1961, 1972, 1983.
- 8 e.g. Nuttall, G. F. ed. The beginnings of nonconformity, 1660-65: a checklist. Dr. Williams's Library, 1960.
- 9 Gillett, C. R., ed. Catalogue of the McAlpin Collection of British history and theology in the Union Theological Seminary, New York. 5 vols. New York, 1927-1930.
- 10 British Museum: Catalogue of the pamphlets, books, newspapers, and manuscripts relating to the Civil War, the Commonwealth, and Restoration, collected by George Thomason, 1640-1661. 2 vols. London, 1908.
- 11 Whitley, W. T. A Baptist Bibliography, 1526-1837. 2 vols. London, 1916, 1922.
- 12 Starr, E. C. A Baptist Bibliography. 25 vols. Hamilton/Rochester, N.Y., American Baptist Historical Society, 1947-1976.
- 13 McIntyre, W. E. Baptist Authors: a manual of bibliography, 1500-1914. Parts A-Day. Montreal, Toronto, 1914.
- 14 Southern Baptist Convention Historical Commission: Microfilm Catalog of Baptist historical materials. Nashville, TN, (1984) and supplements.
- 15 Baptists in Canada 1760-1990: a bibliography of selected printed resources in English; prepared by Philip G. A. Griffin-Allwood, George A. Rawlyk, Jarold K. Zeman. Hantsport, N.S., 1989.
- 16 Dr Williams's Trust, Nonconformist congregations in Great Britain: a list of histories and other material in Dr. Williams's Library, London, 1973.
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- 18 Field, Clive D. 'Sources for the study of Protestant nonconformity in the John Rylands University of Manchester'. Reprinted from Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester, vol.71, no.2, Summer 1969.
- 19 Baptist Union of Scotland: Catalogue of library kept in Adelaide Place Baptist Church, 209 Bath Street, Glasgow, Glasgow, 1906.
- 20 Catalogue and Supplementary Catalogue of the Library of the Gospel Standard Baptists, Hove, 1952, 1977.
- 21 Catalogue of the books, pamphlets & manuscripts in the Angus Library at Regent's Park College, London, London, 1908.
- 22 A catalogue of the Baptist Union Library, Baptist Church House, Southampton Row, London, W.C., London, 1915.
- 23 Sparkes, D. C., Cumulative index of the Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society. London, 1966. Cumulative index of volumes I-X of the Baptist Quarterly, London, 1970. Baptist Quarterly cumulative index volumes XI-XX. London, 1976. Index to the Baptist Quarterly, new series volume xxi to xxxi. Halifax (1989)

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- 27 Crosby, T., *The history of the English Baptists from the Reformation to the beginning of the reign of King George I.* 4 vols. London, 1738-40.
- 28 Rippon, J., *The Baptist Annual Register*, 4 vols. or 41 parts. London, 1790-1803.
- 29 Ivimey, J., *A history of the English Baptists* 4 vols. London, 1811-30.
- 30 Taylor, A., *The history of the English General Baptists*, 2 vols. London, 1818.
- 31 Whitley, W. T. *A history of British Baptists*. 2nd ed. London, 1932. (One of the Angus Library copies has been annotated by Whitley towards a 3rd ed., 1943.)
- 32 Underwood, A. C., *A history of the English Baptists*. London, 1947.
- 33 e.g. Payne, E. A., *The Baptist Union: a short history*, London, 1959; *The Fellowship of believers*, rev. ed. 1952; *The Free Church tradition in the life of England*, 3rd ed. 1951; *The first generation*, 1936; *The great succession*, 1938; *The Baptists of Berkshire*, 1951, to name but a brief random selection.
- 34 White, B. R., *op.cit.* pp.12-20.
- 35 Wood, J. H., *A condensed history of the General Baptists of the New Connexion*, preceded by historical sketches of the early Baptists, London, Leicester, 1847.
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- 42 Paul, S. F., *Further history of the Gospel Standard Baptists*, 6 vols. Leicester, 1951-69.
- 43 Taylor, R., 'English Baptist periodicals, 1790-1865: a bibliography and survey', Thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy in the University of London, 1974.
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- 47 *The Missionary Herald*, London, Baptist Missionary Society, 1819-1991ff.
- 48 *The Gospel Herald*, vols.1-54, 1833-86. Vols.75-138, London, 1919-1970. 1887-1916 *The Earthen Vessel and Gospel Herald*.
- 49 *The Earthen Vessel: (and Christian Record)*. Vols.1-67. London, 1845-1916. 1887-1916 *The Earthen Vessel and Gospel Herald*); continued as *The Gospel Herald and Earthen Vessel*.
- 50 *The Gospel Standard*, vols.1-153. London, 1835-1987 (Angus Library latest vol.).
- 51 *The Freeman*, London, 1855-99. *The Baptist Times and Freeman*, 1899-1925.
- 52 *The Baptist Times*, 1825-1991ff.
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- 55 *The Baptist Handbook*, London, 1861-1972.
- 56 *The Baptist Union Directory*, London, 1973/4-1991/2ff.
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  - 73 Underhill, E. B. ed. *Records of the Churches of Christ, gathered at Fenstanton, Warboys, and Hexham, 1644-1720*, London, 1854.
  - 74 Hayden, R. ed. *The records of a Church of Christ in Bristol, 1640-1687*, Bristol Record Society, 1974.
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  - 76 *Church book: St. Andrew's Street Baptist Church, Cambridge 1720-1832*, English Baptist Records 2. Baptist Historical Society, 1991.
  - 77 Copson, S. L. *Association life of the Particular Baptists of Northern England 1699-1732*, English Baptist Records 3. Baptist Historical Society, 1991.
  - 78 Breed, G. R. *My ancestors were Baptists: how can I find out more about them?* London, Society of Genealogists, 1988.
  - 79 White, B. R. ed. *Association Records of the Particular Baptists of England, Wales and Ireland to 1660*, 3 parts + Index. London, Baptist Historical Society, 1971-4.
  - 80 *Midland Association circular letters, 1715-1772*, originally in the possession of Bewdley Baptist Church. ms. Angus Library ref. F.P.C. E7.
  - 81 *Particular Baptist Fund: Fund Book I, 1717-1729*. ms. (Spelling modernised)
  - 82 *Bristol Baptist Fund, 1717-1958*, n.p., n.d.
  - 83 *An account of the proceedings of the Society of Baptist Ministers in London from 17 August 1714 to 16 August 1736*. Ms.
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  - 85 *The Association Book belonging to the New Connexion of General Baptists, 1797-1826. General Baptists of the New Connexion, Conference minutes, 1770-1798. General Baptists New Connexion, Lincolnshire Conference: minute book of the quarterly meetings, 1791-1803. Lancs. and Yorks. General Baptist conference, 1873-1891. Midland Conference minute book, 1859-1891. General Baptists Yorkshire District: minute book of quarterly conference, 1841-1873*. Ms.
  - 86 *Baptist Board: Minute books, 1818-35, 1835-72, 1872-91, 1932-72*. Ms.
  - 87 *London: Baptist Monthly Meeting. The minute book of the Baptist Monthly Meeting . . . 1748-1829*. Ms.
  - 88 *London Association of Strict Baptist Ministers and Churches: Minute book, 1846-53*. Ms.
  - 89 *Southern Baptist Convention Historical Commission: Guide to microfilm of Baptist Missionary Society Archives, London, England, 1792-1914*. Microfilm publication no. 3350, reels 1-90. Nashville, Te. n.d.
  - 90 *Minutes of the proceedings of the Baptist Society in London for the encouragement and support of Itinerant Preaching, 1797-1812*. Ms.
  - 91 *Minutes of Transactions at the Meetings of the Committee of the General Baptist Missionary Society instituted at Boston 1816. 1816-1861*. Ms.
  - 92 *Original letters, 1736-1779. Sutcliff Papers. Bound vol. Msa.*
  - 93 *The Down Grade controversy and the Rev. C.H. Spurgeon, 1887-89. Bound volume containing printed articles and ms. letters mounted as in a scrapbook.*
  - 94 *Jabez Collection. F.P.C. E.17(a). Other*

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- miscellaneous individual letters, variously indexed.
- 95 William Carey Collection. William Carey Letters 1787-1814 - volume.
- 96 William Carey, Journal, 1793-1795. Missionary correspondence, 1792-1834, Boxes IN13 - IN15.
- 97 Samuel Pearce Carey Collection. 4 boxes.
- 98 Ryland, J. C. Autographic notes of J. C. Ryland and of Dr John Ryland, from the Library of W. G. Lewis. (Not 'autobiographical notes', as in Whitley 49-792.) 6.e.15.
- 99 Thomas, Joshua. Letter to J. Rippon. ms. F.P.C. E.16 (27-33).
- 100 Steele Collection. 3 boxes mss. Broughton Collection: Steele family papers 1698-1920, B11/1-7.
- 101 The Reeves Collection. 4 boxes mss.
- 102 Papers connected with the Downgrade controversy. 2 boxes. Uncatalogued.

SUSAN J. MILLS *Librarian/archivist, Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford*

## ANGUS LIBRARY MANUSCRIPT ACQUISITIONS 1991

- Angmering & Findon Chapels, West Sussex - minute book 1906-1924
- Brockenhurst Baptist Church, Hants. - various accounts and minute books, 1895-1987
- Buckingham Baptist Church, Bucks. - church book 1842-1870
- Iwerne Minster Baptist Church, Dorset - accounts 1878-1953, church book 1865-1960
- South Lee Baptist Church, London - church minutes 1938-1960, deacons' minutes 1891-1909
- Monksthorne and Burgh Baptist Church, Lincs. - accounts 1793-1815, 1822-1907, church book 1692-1825, minutes 1843-1911, register of births and deaths (includes church and association meeting minutes) 1745-1825.
- South Hinksey Baptist Church, Oxford - minute book 1914-1954
- Oxshott Mission Chapel, Surrey - minutes 1908-1941
- Potters Bar Baptist Church, Herts. - church books 1802-1846, 1869-94
- Sandhurst Baptist Church, Kent - church book 1761-1851 + enclosures
- Kingsland Baptist Chapel, Southampton - management committee papers and minutes 1945-1962
- Penuel English Baptist Church, Trehafod, Mid-Glamorgan - minutes 1954-1971.
- North London Baptist Ministers Fraternal - minute book 1934-1947
- Rushbrooke, J. H. - miscellaneous papers, unsorted and unlisted, 2 trunks

## ENQUIRY

Mrs Margaret Crompton, a member of the society, writes enquiring about the location of the Register of Births, 1750-1800, for the Gildersome Church, Yorkshire. Anyone who can help Mrs Crompton, or has used this document in the past, should write to her at 44 Spring Lane, Sprotborough, Nr Doncaster, Yorks. The successor volume is safely housed at the Public Record Office in Chancery Lane.

## HIGHLAND BAPTISTS

Donald E. Meek has recently published two further papers: 'Dugald Sinclair: The Life and Work of a Highland Itinerant Missionary', in *Scottish Studies*, 30, 1991, pp.59-91, and 'The Independent and Baptist Churches of Highland Perthshire and Strathspey', in *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, 56, 1991, pp.269-343. The author would be happy to supply copies on request to readers of the *Baptist Quarterly*, if they write to him at the Department of Celtic, University of Edinburgh, David Hume Tower, George Square, Edinburgh EH8 9JX, enclosing £1-50 per article for copying and postage.