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(incorporating the Congregational Historical Society,  
founded in 1899, and the Presbyterian Historical Society  
of England, founded in 1913).

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**EDITORIAL**

Thomas Southcliffe Ashton (1889-1968), Professor of Economic History at the London School of Economics (1944-1954), dominated the discipline of Economic History in the decade of its greatest growth. His textbook, *The Industrial Revolution* (1948), was published in seven languages. His brother-in-law, Arthur Redford (1896-1961), Professor of Economic History at the University of Manchester (1945-1961), may not have invented the phrase "Industrial Archaeology", but he ensured that his pupil W.H. Chaloner (1914-1987) took up its challenge. Manchester was their intellectual crucible and Congregationalism formed them; indeed T.S. Ashton's brother, Philip (1895-1953), was a Congregational minister and their great-grandfather, Jonathan Sutcliffe (1794-1859, "Southcliffe" was a variant of Sutcliffe), ministered at Albion, Ashton-under-Lyne, from 1818 to 1850. The threads spin on: Watts, Buckley, Lees, Hindley, Kershaw, Mason, Summers, Cheetham, Knott, there were few millowners to whom the Sutcliffes, and therefore the Ashtons, could not somehow

trace a family (and chapel) connexion, although by no means all prospered as mightily as these names suggest. Albion was the Sunday, and often the week-night, home for many of them, and the essence of its high Victorian culture was captured by another of the connexion, the *Manchester Guardian* journalist, William Haslam Mills (1874-1930), in his collection of essays, *Grey Pastures* (London 1924; 2nd ed., The Chapels Society, 2003, to be reviewed in a future issue). Mills's Wycliffe, Ashton-on-the-Hill, was a barely disguised Albion, Ashton-under-Lyne, as he recalled it in his boyhood and teens, the 1880s and 1890s. T.S. Ashton's parents were then a young married couple. Their grandson, Anthony Ashton author of *Harmonograph: A Visual Guide to the Mathematics of Music* (New York: Walker & Co., 2003), who himself worked for the *Manchester Guardian* before becoming an oil executive, contributed signally to the introduction to the new edition of *Grey Pastures*, and in this issue he fills in an Ashton background.

We also welcome as contributors Michael Hopkins, Minister at Twyford United Reformed Church, and John Heywood Thomas, Emeritus Professor of Theology at the University of Nottingham. Professor Heywood Thomas reviews Alan P.F. Sell's *Philosophy, Dissent and Nonconformity, 1689-1920*, an invaluable survey of the place of Philosophy in Nonconformist academic circles. Roger Tomes's article provides a similarly valuable survey of the place and reception of Biblical Criticism.

The impact of the Second World War on our churches is more often assumed than analysed, Michael Hopkins's study of Presbyterian church extension in a wartime context is thus particularly welcome.

It is twenty years since the "parallel ordinations" described by Ronald Bocking took place in Bristol. Memories can be surprisingly short. Papers like Mr. Bocking's are written to jog them, for here, to change the metaphor, is a wheel waiting to be re-invented.

### **Note: A Richard Frankland Memorial at Rathmell**

Many years ago Jim Nelson, bootmaker in Settle, Yorkshire, and supporter of all things Congregational, proposed a plaque to commemorate Richard Frankland's Academy at Rathmell, the principal centre of his "Christ's College" which opened 8 March 1669/70. Although the Academy had, under persecution, to move across county borders to Natland, Kendal and Attercliffe, Sheffield, and elsewhere to survive, it returned to Rathmell in 1689.

Frankland was born in 1630 and educated at Giggleswick and Cambridge. He was ordained by elders in 1653, and later refused to be episcopally (re)ordained even with such (or particularly with such) mitigating words as "If thou hast not been ordained, I ordain thee," He obtained a licence for his house in 1672 for worship according to the Presbyterian persuasion. He was excommunicated in 1681 and again in 1691.

He educated some 304 students, probably the bulk of the next generation of Nonconformists in Lancashire and Cumbria as well as Yorkshire. The nearby farm of Pasture House was the scene of the first (illegal) non-episcopal ordination in Yorkshire, 8 July 1678.

One, Congregational, line of descent from Rathmell Academy (1670-1698) might go as follows: Attercliffe (1689); Heckmondwike (1756-1783); Northowram (1783-1794); Idle (1800-1826); Idle, Airedale (1826-34); Airedale, Undercliffe (1834-1876); Airedale, Emm Lane, Bradford (1876-1888); Yorkshire United Independent College, Emm Lane (1888-1958); Northern College, Whalley Range, Manchester (1958-1985) and Northern College, Luther King House, Brighton Grove, Manchester (1986 to the present).

Another line would lead to Harris-Manchester College, Oxford. This line would also preserve the Presbyterian tradition of the eighteenth century, when many Presbyterians turned to Unitarianism.

There is a range of buildings in Rathmell called College Fold. (Compare College Road in Cheshunt, Herts. and in Whalley Range and elsewhere). A simple plaque with the words suggested by Dr Geoffrey Nuttall suitably placed there would suffice.

**Richard Frankland M.A.**  
**1630-1698**  
**Nonconformist Tutor**  
**opened his Academy here**  
**1670**

If you would like to contribute to the cost, Jim Nelson would be very pleased, as the whole project lies heavily on his conscience. The latest estimated cost is about £600. Please make your cheques payable to *The Richard Frankland Memorial Plaque Account* sort code 77-56-13, acc no 05149460 or send the cheque to one of the three signatories to the account:

**Revd Colin Price BA MPhil**  
**The Congregational Church,**  
**Guilden Morden**  
**Royston SG8 0JZ**

### ROBERT BUICK KNOX (10 OCTOBER 1918-13 JULY 2004)

Robert Buick Knox (invariably “Buick” to his colleagues) was our Society’s fourth president and its *Journal’s* first editor. He looked what he was, the very model of the Presbyterian scholar-pastor, and the full obituary in *The Portadown Times* (“Presbyterian scholar a professor at Cambridge and Aberystwyth”, 23 July, 2004) accompanied a fine photograph of him seated in front of a window at Westminster College clearly ready to explain in great but memorable detail the Presbyterian connotations of its armorial glass. One suspects that the *Banbridge Chronicle’s* headline (21 July 2004) would have given him special pleasure: “Tributes to respected cleric and academic. A son of the Manse who will be missed”. There would surely have been that characteristic Knox smile at the doubtless unintended suggestion that not all sons of the manse might be missed.

The outline of his career can only hint at its reality. He was born in Banbridge, Co. Down and he died in Portadown, Co. Armagh. He was educated at Ballydown, Banbridge, and Queen’s, Belfast, although the doctorate which led to *James Usher, Archbishop of Armagh* (University of Wales Press, 1967) was from the University of London. From 1942 to 1958 he ministered at Ballydown and Katesbridge Presbyterian Churches, from 1958 to 1968 he professed Ecclesiastical History at Aberystwyth’s United Theological College, and from 1968 to 1985 he was Nivison Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Westminster College, Cambridge. In 1980 he was awarded an Hon. DD by the Presbyterian Faculty of Ireland. In 1985 he returned to Northern Ireland.

The striking symmetry of his life encompassed surprising variety. He was not just a son of the manse, for he also succeeded his father as minister at Ballydown and Katesbridge. His inherited knowledge of Irish Presbyterianism was enlarged by a satisfying engagement with Welsh Presbyterianism; he read, spoke, and preached in Welsh, even if with an Irish accent. Then came Cambridge. The Nivison Chair commemorated a generous English Presbyterian layman and, as a teacher of ordinands, Buick Knox played a significant part in the emerging United Reformed Church, to which his commitment was as firm as his pride in having ministered (as none now can do) in the Irish, Welsh, and English Presbyterian Churches. He liked to portray himself as a bigoted Ulster Protestant, proud never to have left the British Isles. As to the former, while none could doubt his appreciation of Presbyterianism’s Reformed strengths, anyone could see how the nature of that appreciation deprived him of all bigotry and made him a yet more effective champion of his tradition; after all, his undergraduate years at Queen’s saw him influenced by the Student Christian Movement. As to the latter, his Ulster retirement included appreciative holidays well away from the British Isles.

He was a fine teacher. His lectures were alive with knowledge and enthusiasm and they ranged well beyond even the capacious bounds of Reformed Christendom. The combination of breadth, scholarship, and enthusiasm coloured his writing. *James Usher* remains a standard work. In retirement he jointly edited (with Professor Finlay Holmes) and contributed to a commemorative volume: *The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland 1840-1990* (1990). In

between there flowed a stream of articles and papers ranging from Saints Patrick and Columba to John Calvin and John Henry Newman. He wrote much about Irish and Welsh bishops, whom he held in more respect than he did their ecclesiology.

Although he may have been most at ease in Aberystwyth, it was from Cambridge that he became known to this Society. Cambridge's effortless and often concealed assumptions can be hard for many incomers to accept. Thus, the undeviating teetotaler in Buick disliked the sea of sherry on which its academic social life seemed to float. Nonetheless he held the church history portfolio as the Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges began its evolution, and his chairmanship of the United Reformed Church District's Pastoral Oversight Committee, like his histories of St. Columba's, Cambridge (1979), and of Westminster College (1978), displayed an affectionate and effective command of the area, its churches, and their possibilities.

In May 1985 an issue of the *Journal* was devoted to six essays in honour of Buick Knox, together with a bibliography of his writings, and an appreciation by Stephen Mayor. Dr. Mayor ended with the reflection that while the privilege of Dr. Knox's active presence would in future be largely reserved for his friends and acquaintances in Ulster, "his former colleagues and innumerable friends in Wales and England will look forward to seeing more work from his pen, and count it as one of their occasions for gratitude that they can supplement the writings with recollections of the writer". (*JURCHS*, Vol 3, No. 6, May 1985, p. 194). The writings continued to flow; now the recollections remain an occasion for gratitude.

JCGB

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1. I am greatly indebted to Miss Eleanor Knox and the Revd. Dr. Stephen Mayor for help in preparing this appreciation.

## ‘LEARNING A NEW TECHNIQUE’: THE RECEPTION OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM IN THE NONCONFORMIST COLLEGES

After 1857, when Samuel Davidson was forced to resign from his post at Lancashire Independent College as a result of the publication of his book *The Text of the Old Testament Considered*, biblical criticism was banished from the college’s curriculum until the 1890s.<sup>1</sup> But what was the position elsewhere in Britain? Was Lancashire Independent College exceptional or was it typical?

While “indications of the main methods and conclusions of German critical scholarship were available to English readers prior to 1860,” these were “more often than not mentioned in order to be refuted.”<sup>2</sup> Among Dissenters John Pye Smith, Principal and Theological Tutor at Homerton College from 1806 to 1851, engaged with all the relevant German literature in his *Scripture Testimony to the Messiah*<sup>3</sup>, appreciating the scholars’ ability but deploring their unwillingness to admit the forecasting element in prophecy.<sup>4</sup> There was no attempt as yet to adopt critical method into the curriculum. The plan of studies which William Harris Murch drew up for Stepney Baptist College when he became its Principal in 1828 included “Jewish Antiquities” in the first year, “Lectures on the Evidences of Divine Revelation” in the second, and “Languages” and “The critical and exegetical reading of the Greek Scriptures”. There was no place for resolving contradictions in the Old Testament by postulating different sources. Interest in the Old Testament was still in the apparent evidential value of its prophecies. The Wesleyan John Hannah, writing on “The Evidences” in 1838, stressed that “miracles and the fulfilled prophecies of Scripture attest to Christian truth.”<sup>5</sup>

It is doubtful whether there were other pioneers in the Nonconformist colleges.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Roger Tomes, “‘We are hardly prepared for this style of teaching yet’: Samuel Davidson and Lancashire Independent College,” *Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society* 5:7 (October 1995), pp. 398-414 (especially p. 411).
  2. John Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century: England and Germany* (London: SPCK, 1984), pp. 179-80.
  3. London, 1821; 4th edn., 1847.
  4. Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism*, pp. 164-65.
  5. Dale Johnson, *The Changing Shape of English Nonconformity 1825-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 55.
  6. It is often stated that William Benton Clulow, classical tutor at Airedale College, Bradford (1835-43) resigned because “his mildly critical attitude towards the Scriptures had evoked the disapproval of the college committee.” (R. Tudur Jones, *Congregationalism in England 1661-1962* [London: Independent Press, 1962], p. 237; also K.W. Wadsworth, *Yorkshire United Independent College* [London: Independent Press, 1954], p. 113; A.P.F. Sell, “The Rise and Reception of Modern Biblical Criticism: A Retrospect,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 52 (1980), p. 136). But Elaine Kaye (*For the Work of Ministry: A History of Northern College and its Predecessors* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1999], p. 107) has shown that the precise point at issue appears to have been “the Christian sabbath”, which does not suggest that he was influenced specifically by biblical criticism. He did, however, leave on his death in 1882, a MS volume of notes on the Greek New Testament, which showed that he was “abreast of the most advanced criticism” (*C.Y.B.*, 1883, pp. 269-70).

The mere mention of Old or New Testament "criticism" in a curriculum does not tell us very much. In the early nineteenth century "criticism" in England meant study of the text and versions of the Bible. Thus, when "Old Testament Criticism, with Chaldee [Aramaic], Syriac and Arabic" figured in the proposed curriculum for the newly united New College, London, in 1850, that is certainly what was meant.<sup>7</sup> Herbert Marsh's *Lectures on the Criticism and Interpretation of the Bible* (1838) and Samuel Davidson's *Lectures on Biblical Criticism* (1839), which were both used at Stepney, confined themselves to textual criticism, and Davidson at this stage was cautious about recommending the German introductions to the New Testament by Michaelis, which Marsh had translated and supplemented<sup>8</sup> and to both testaments by Eichhorn.<sup>9</sup> The students at Stepney may have been introduced to critical methods during the brief period when Benjamin Davies was President (1843-47). In an article on the Psalms in Kitto's *Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature* he referred to the work of such German critics as de Wette and Ewald, questioned whether all the psalms attributed to David were composed by him, and mentioned that some had maintained that several psalms came from the Maccabean period.<sup>10</sup> But after his departure for Canada there was a period of greater caution.<sup>11</sup> The preferred textbook was Thomas Hartwell Horne's *Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures* (1818; 5th ed., 1825; 8th ed., 1838; 9th ed., 1846).<sup>12</sup> Many of the difficulties that critical scholars explained by postulating different sources were recognised, but met by the suggestion that the text was not always in the right order.<sup>13</sup> In 1853 Joseph

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7. M.J. Mercer, "New College, London: Its Origins and Opening," *JURCHS* 6:5 (November 1999), p. 334.
  8. D. Michaelis, *Introduction to the New Testament; translated from the fourth edition of the German, and considerably augmented with notes, explanatory and supplemental*, by Herbert Marsh (1793).
  9. J.G. Eichhorn, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (4th ed., 1823); *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (2nd edn., 1820). Davidson said: "The strictly critical parts of his introductions to the Old and New Testaments are very valuable, but the exegetical portions are very objectionable" (*Biblical Criticism*, p.387).
  10. Art. "Psalms", in John Kitto, ed., *Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature* (Edinburgh, 1845).
  11. E.A. Payne, "The development of nonconformist theological education." in Payne, ed., *Studies in History and Religion* (1942), pp.246-47. Davies returned to Stepney (then Regent's Park) as Classical and Oriental Tutor in 1857 and remained until his death in 1875. He did not make any major contribution to the critical study of the Old Testament.
  12. Davidson said that dissatisfaction with Horne was his reason for producing his *Lectures in Biblical Criticism*: Horne covered too many different topics to do them all full justice, and seemed to be insufficiently acquainted with the latest German investigations (*Biblical Criticism*, p. 383). It was of course Davidson's contribution to the tenth edition of Horne that led to his resignation from Lancashire Independent College.
  13. Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism*, pp. 182-84.

Angus, Davies's successor as President of Stepney, published his own *Bible Hand-book*. This was written from a rather conservative standpoint. Half of it was concerned with "The Bible as a book", dealing with text and canon, inspiration and revelation, and giving (very sensible) guidance on the interpretation of Scripture, though tending to claim that what it called "difficulties" i.e., contradictions, could in the end be reconciled. The second half dealt with "The Books of the Bible": Critical theories were not ignored, but not endorsed. Thus: "It is supposed by some writers that the author of the Pentateuch used various ancient documents in preparing this volume.... The errors and refinements of some modern writers have brought it into, perhaps, undeserved disrepute;" "The genuineness of Isaiah has been much discussed in modern times.... All these objections, however, have been met by facts, taken from the book itself, and the genuineness of the whole is attested by universal antiquity, and by the New Testament;" "The predictions of [Daniel] have much of the distinctness of history, and have long formed an important part of the evidence of Scripture.... The only recourse of infidelity has been to maintain that they were written after the events they describe; a subterfuge entirely unfounded in fact."<sup>14</sup> The *Hand-book* was widely used in the Nonconformist colleges, and a revised edition was produced as late as 1904<sup>15</sup>

Until 1871 of course religious tests hindered Nonconformists from attending the ancient universities, but Anglicans there were no more likely to encounter biblical criticism than Nonconformists in their theological colleges. E.B. Pusey had been Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford since 1828 and would remain so until 1882. He was "so obsessed by traditional views that any critical faculty was completely silenced."<sup>16</sup> Benjamin Jowett, a tutor at Balliol who became Regius Professor of Greek in 1855, in the same year published his commentary on *St Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians, Galatians and Romans*, but this raised doctrinal rather than critical questions, relating to his views on the atonement.

Some of those who taught at Cambridge had made German critical works available in translation. As we have seen, Herbert Marsh, Lady Margaret's Professor from 1807 to 1839 (although he was also Bishop of Llandaff 1816-19 and Bishop of Peterborough from 1819), translated J.D. Michaelis's *Introduction to the New Testament* (1793) Connop Thirlwall, later Bishop of St David's

14. Joseph Angus, *The Bible Hand-book* (R.T.S., 1863), pp. 382, 487, 500.

15. Revised by Samuel G. Green. The revised edition was still firmly resisting the documentary theory of the Pentateuch, though allowing that Isaiah might not be a unity and that Daniel might come from the Maccabean period, and hospitable to the priority of Mark and a second common source for Matthew and Luke. Payne, "The development of nonconformist theological education," p.242; A.L. Humphries, "Hartley Primitive Methodist College," in W. Bardsley Brash, ed., *The Story of our Colleges 1833-1935*, p. 135; T. Witton Davies, *Expository Times*, 3 (1891-92), p. 343.

16. L.E. Elliott-Binns, *English Thought 1860-1900: The Theological Aspect* (London: Longmans, Green, 1956), p. 140.

(1840-55), translated Schleiermacher's critical study of Luke's Gospel in 1825, while a Fellow of Trinity College, at the instigation of J.C. Hare. Hare had lived for a year in Germany when he was a boy and had acquired an enthusiasm for all things German, including biblical criticism.<sup>17</sup> However, neither Hare nor Thirlwall confined their interests to biblical work, nor did they stay long at Cambridge.<sup>18</sup> Cambridge graduates in mid-century were rather more likely than their Oxford contemporaries to be writing commentaries, if of a conservative kind. Henry Alford had begun his massive commentary on the Greek New Testament in 1847, and Christopher Wordsworth his commentary on the whole Bible in 1856. In 1860 J.B. Lightfoot, B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort were planning a series of commentaries on the Greek New Testament.<sup>19</sup>

1860 was the year in which seven Broad Church Anglicans published *Essays and Reviews*. The essays were more a manifesto for the principle of criticism than a careful exposition of its methods and results. Most of the criticism of the book came from within the Church of England; such reaction as there was from Nonconformists concerned the threat to evangelical theology.<sup>20</sup> Peter Lorimer, the Professor of Hebrew and Exegetical Theology in the English Presbyterian College, in a lecture on "The Present Aspects of Theology on the Continent, and in our own Country", warned of "several dangers which at present threaten evangelical truth" and "ably criticised and severely condemned ... the semi-infidel views promulgated in *Essays and Reviews*."<sup>21</sup> The Wesleyan Thomas Jackson, Professor at Richmond College, described it in retrospect as "a volume of a sceptical character, directly adapted to bring the Bible into disrepute, and to destroy the faith of Christian people in some of its important verities.... [It was] a mischievous and revolting publication."<sup>22</sup> And W.B. Pope, Theological Tutor at the Wesleyan Didsbury College (1867-86), described as "the Methodist theologian of the nineteenth century", regarded it as "a negative abandonment of the faith of the Christian world."<sup>23</sup>

The publication of Part One of John William Colenso's *The Pentateuch and the*

17. N. Merrill Distad, *Guessing at Truth* (Shepherdstown: Patmos, 1979), pp. 15-16, 30-32, 85-92.
18. Hare was Rector of Herstmonceux 1832-40 and Archdeacon of Lewes 1840-55; Thirlwall was Bishop of St David's 1840-75. They collaborated on a translation of H.G. Niebuhr's *History of Rome* (1828-32) and Thirlwall wrote a *History of Greece* (1835-44).
19. A.F. Hort, *Life and Letters of Fenton Anthony John Hort* (London: Macmillan, 1896), vol. 1, p. 372.
20. Willis B. Glover, *Evangelical Nonconformity and Higher Criticism in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Independent Press, 1954), pp. 50-52.
21. *Presbyterian Messenger* 12 (1860), p. 358.
22. Thomas Jackson, *Recollections of my own Life and Times* (1878), pp. 322, 463-64; cited by Johnson, *Changing Shape*, p. 56.
23. W. Bardsley Brash and Charles J. Wright, eds., *Didsbury College Centenary 1842-1942* (London: Epworth Press, 1942), pp. 51, 56.

*Book of Joshua Critically Considered* in 1862<sup>24</sup> brought the issue of biblical criticism into prominence more directly. By ruthlessly exposing some of the mathematical absurdities and discrepancies in the account of the wilderness wanderings he argued for "the unhistorical character, the late origin and the compound authorship, of the five books usually attributed to Moses."<sup>25</sup> It was all the more significant that he had been stimulated to the investigation, not by sitting at the feet of German scholars - very little of their work was available to him in South Africa<sup>26</sup> - but by trying to answer the questions of ordinary Christians in Natal.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, his pastoral concern was not appreciated in Britain. It was the negative character of his argument which attracted attention. Few of the replies dealt directly with the critical issues, and none of these came from Nonconformists.<sup>28</sup>

Those who looked to Scotland for guidance in these matters would at this stage have received no encouragement to adopt critical views. The *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* had been founded in 1852 to make accessible to British readers articles in defence of the evangelical position which had appeared in American and Continental journals, but in 1853 began to include original material as well.<sup>29</sup> The contributors came mainly from the Free Church, and during the editorship of William Cunningham (1855-60) there was a devastating anonymous review of Samuel Davidson's contribution to the tenth edition of Horne's *Introduction to the Scriptures*.<sup>30</sup> The reviewer conceded that earlier editions had "not kept pace with progress or the varying demands of exegetical science," but judged that "the volume contributed by Dr Davidson, so far from enhancing, destroys the value of Horne's Introduction." In 1863 another anonymous contributor launched a further scathing, even sarcastic, attack on Davidson, but combined it with remarks on Colenso which, though critical, were tinged with admiration. Colenso believed "that a great part of the Old Testament, at least, is fable, even cunning forgery, written not because it was believed to be true, but in spite of being known to be false, and for interested ends; and that the apostles and

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24. It ran to seven parts (1862-79). There is a good summary and assessment of the whole work in Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism*, pp. 220-37.
  25. W. Colenso, *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Considered* (People's Edition, 1865), p. 5; cited in James R. Moore, ed., *Religion in Victorian Britain III: Sources* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 34.
  26. Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism*, pp. 8, 220-21.
  27. "His attention had been drawn to the subject by the childlike but searching questions of his native converts as to whether the marvellous things recorded therein had truly happened" (W.F. Adeney, *A Century's Progress in Religious Life and Thought* [London: James Clarke, 1901], p. 83.
  28. Glover, *Evangelical Nonconformity*, pp. 54-55.
  29. Nigel M. de S. Cameron, ed., *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), s.v. "British and Foreign Evangelical Review".
  30. "The New Edition of Horne's Introduction to the Scriptures," *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* 6 (1857), pp.385-414.

their Master were ignorant and fallible men." But, in contrast to Samuel Davidson, "Colenso is clear and orderly, a clever advocate, who never leaves anyone in doubt about his object or the means he judges most available to obtain it." Nevertheless the writer held that "the theory of diversity of authorship in the Pentateuch rests on the most barefaced begging of the question." He conceded that there was no satisfactory way to explain the distribution of the divine names in Genesis, but held that "the theory which explains the usage by different writers is beset with graver difficulties than those it came to relieve."<sup>31</sup> It is known that the reviewer was A.B. Davidson, Hebrew tutor at New College, Edinburgh, who, as we shall see, was later to become very influential in ensuring the acceptance of biblical criticism. He had already shown critical ability in a commentary on Job, published in 1862.<sup>32</sup> At this stage, however, he thought that the words of Christ committed him to believe that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. The article was published in April 1863, and later that year Davidson was appointed to the Chair of Hebrew at New College. If he had expressed doubts on this question it is doubtful whether he would have been appointed.<sup>33</sup>

It would not be true to say that there was no careful consideration of German criticism in Britain at this time. William Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*<sup>34</sup> - which is strangely overlooked in both Glover and Rogerson - contains articles by J.J.S. Perowne which present the arguments for different sources in Genesis and the later authorship of some of the material attributed to Moses in the rest of the Pentateuch with great fairness, even though he maintains that Moses wrote Genesis and most of the rest, including Deuteronomy.<sup>35</sup> Ernest Hawkins, similarly, conceded that the case for the later authorship of Isaiah 40-55 was very strong.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, it is interesting that B.F. Westcott, later to be such a distinguished New Testament scholar, came down decisively against the dating of the book of Daniel in the Maccabean period.<sup>37</sup> There was, however, no significant Nonconformist contribution to the dictionary. The only contributor from an English college was Frederick William Gotch, tutor, later principal, of

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31. "Recent Attacks on the Pentateuch," *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* 12 (1863), pp. 377-409.
  32. A.B. Davidson, *A Commentary, grammatical and exegetical, on the Book of Job*, Vol. 1 [chs. 1-14], (London, 1862).
  33. James Strahan, *Andrew Bruce Davidson* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1917), pp. 198-99.
  34. William Smith, ed., *Dictionary of the Bible*, 3 vols, (London, 1963).
  35. Articles s.v. "Deuteronomy", "Genesis", "Pentateuch". Perowne was at the time vice-principal of St David's College, Lampeter. He subsequently became Hulsean Professor of Divinity in Cambridge, Dean of Peterborough and Bishop of Worcester. He was the first general editor of the *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*.
  36. Article s.v. "Isaiah". Hawkins was secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.
  37. Article s.v. "Daniel". Westcott was at the time a master at Harrow School.

Bristol Baptist College.<sup>38</sup> He had earlier made substantial contributions to Kitto's *Cyclopaedia*, including the articles on Jeremiah and Ezekiel. His contributions to Smith's *Dictionary*, however, were limited to short articles on a miscellaneous selection of names, such as "Aholibamah", "Ashkenaz", "Bashemath", "Beeri", plus some terms which would later become significant in the light of archaeological discoveries, such as "Asherah" and "Ashtoreth".<sup>39</sup>

One of the reasons why Nonconformists were not keeping abreast of critical scholarship at this period was that most of the colleges had very small teaching staffs, and that they had to teach a wide variety of subjects. It was difficult enough to keep up with the traditional curriculum. Although from 1851 Lancashire Independent College was able to use the teaching resources of Owens College, in 1869 Alfred Newth was still teaching Mental and Moral Philosophy and Ecclesiastical History as well as Hebrew "and the cognate dialects" and Old Testament Criticism.<sup>40</sup> G.S. Barrett, who left Lancashire College in 1866, said at the College jubilee in 1893:

I wonder to this day how Mr Newth found time or energy or learning for the extraordinary and multifarious duties which were heaped upon him. In one short college day he did the work of three men. He would begin his work by lecturing on Church History in the morning, then he would go on to the Binomial Theorem, the next hour you would hear him discussing the quantification of the predicate with a logic class, then in the next he would be deep in the unutterable mysteries of Khateph Kamets, and Furtive Pathakh; and, last of all, by way of diversion, he would finish up the day by lecturing on "Berkeley's Idealism" or the "Nature and Manufacture of Hydrogen Gas".<sup>41</sup>

Samuel G. Green, Principal of Rawdon Baptist College, wrote in 1871:

The waste of power is enormous. The teachers have so to divide and break up their work that they can scarcely ever concentrate their powers

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38. There were also S.P. Tregelles (a Plymouth Brother, an authority on the text of the New Testament); J.L. Porter (Professor of Biblical Criticism in the Presbyterian College, Belfast, who had written a travel guide on Syria and Palestine); H.B. Hackett (Professor of Biblical Literature at Newton, Mass.); Calvin E. Stowe (Professor of Sacred Literature at Andover, Mass.); Horatius Bonar (Minister at Kelso, Free Church of Scotland).
39. On Smith and Kitto, see R.E. Clements, "Archaeology and Biblical Illustration: Visual Transformations of Biblical Interpretation in the Nineteenth Century," in A. Tångberg, ed., *Text and Theology: Studies in Honour of Prof. Dr Theol, Magne Sæbø* (Oslo: Verbum, 1994), pp. 95-111.
40. Joseph Thompson, *Lancashire Independent College 1843-93* (Manchester, 1893), p. 162.
41. *Lancashire Independent College Jubilee 1893. Addresses delivered and papers read* (Manchester, 1893), pp. 54-55.

on special topics which they might make their own, and on which they might contribute their share, not only to the tasks of the college, but to the literature of the age.<sup>42</sup>

Again, in 1878, when Archibald Duff came to Airedale College in Bradford, he found that "the tutors or professors were expected to teach all manner of subjects to men of wide degrees of education."<sup>43</sup> At Regent's Park College it was not until 1883 that it was recognised that Joseph Angus and Samuel Walter Green, despite help from New College and the facilities of University College, "had to be masters of too wide a field," and an appointment was made of a tutor in Hebrew and Old Testament (with responsibility for Church History as well).<sup>44</sup> Even where it was possible to appoint a full time tutor in the Old Testament field, it was not always easy to find someone who had specialised in it. Peter Lorimer taught Hebrew and Old Testament (under various titles) at the English Presbyterian College from 1845 to 1879, but his main interest remained the early history of Presbyterianism in England.<sup>45</sup>

Morna Hooker rightly says that it was the period between 1880 and 1890 which saw the most rapid change in the attitude to biblical criticism in Britain.<sup>46</sup> But the preceding decades saw foundations being laid. An increasing number of scholars studied in Germany. A.B. Davidson, during his student days at New College (1852-56), went one summer to Göttingen, when Heinrich Ewald was at the height of his fame.<sup>47</sup> Shortly afterwards, in 1858-59, T.K. Cheyne, later to become the Oriel Professor in Oxford, also studied under Ewald;<sup>48</sup> Archibald Duff studied under Eduard Riehm in Halle and Paul de Lagarde in Göttingen between 1872 and 1875<sup>49</sup>; and perhaps most significantly William Robertson Smith, during his course at New College, Edinburgh, spent the summer semesters at Bonn and Göttingen,

42. Samuel G. Green, *Education for Ministry* (London, 1971), p. 6; cited by Johnson, *Changing Shape*, p.26.
43. Kenneth W. Wadsworth, *Yorkshire United Independent College* (London: Independent Press, 1954), p. 128.
44. R.E. Cooper, *From Stepney to St Giles': The Story of Regent's Park College 1810-1960* (London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1960), pp.66-67.
45. R.S. Robson, *Our Professors: being brief notices of men who after occupying English Presbyterian pulpits have been appointed to Chairs* (ed. S.W. Carruthers; London: Presbyterian Historical Society of England, 1926), p. 2; R. Buick Knox, *Westminster College: its Background and History* (1979), p. 6.
46. Morna Hooker, "Ministerial Training: The Contribution of A.S. Peake," *Epworth Review* 12/3 (1985), pp. 64-76 [p. 66].
47. Strahan, *Davidson*, p. 66.
48. *DNB* 1912-21.
49. Archibald Duff, "A Theological Professor's Training in the Nineteenth Century," *Congregational Quarterly* 14 (1936), pp. 320-14.

and in 1872, on a visit to Göttingen, he met Julius Wellhausen.<sup>50</sup> W.G. Elmslie, a junior contemporary of Smith at New College, later to be Professor of Hebrew at the English Presbyterian College, also spent two summer semesters, in 1869 and 1870, in Berlin during his course.<sup>51</sup> These contacts began to have their effect.

The controversy over Robertson Smith's article "Bible" in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in 1875 of course attracted more notice in Scotland than in England, but it probably did more than anything else to revive discussion of the issues. It was recognised that Smith was "a clear-headed and acute thinker, who has struck out an independent and, as some think, a very daring line of speculation relative to some of the books of Holy Scripture."<sup>52</sup> In July 1881 the *Catholic Presbyterian* ran "A symposium on the Robertson Smith case," and one of the contributors was J. Oswald Dykes, then the minister of Regent Square Presbyterian Church in London, later to become Principal of the English Presbyterian College. He regretted the "maladroit appearance" of Smith's article on "Hebrew Language and Literature" in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and "the delivery and publication [as *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*] of lectures to laymen, in which the origin and growth of Hebrew literature were handled all along the line in an extreme and revolutionary fashion," but thought that the Free Church had deprived him of his chair at Aberdeen "in a way which would be illegal if applied to deprive a pastor of his cure." He felt that "the new school of Old Testament criticism was out of all measure stronger in assault than in reconstruction," but that there was no alternative to "liberty of investigation and opinion" in this field.<sup>53</sup>

Robertson Smith does not seem to have undergone any great crisis in coming to terms with biblical criticism. This may well have been due largely to being taught by A.B. Davidson. Elmslie had no doubt about Davidson's role:

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50. Rudolf Smend, "William Robertson Smith and Julius Wellhausen," in W. Johnstone, ed., *William Robertson Smith: Essays in Reassessment (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 189; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995)*, p. 227.
  51. W. Robertson Nicoll and A.N. MacNicoll, *Professor W.G. Elmslie, D.D; Memoir and Sermons* (3rd ed., 1890), p. 28; Andrew Harper, "Professor Elmslie," *Expositor* 4/2 (1890), pp. 167-68.
  52. J. Guinness Rogers, "Letters to a Sceptical Enquirer," *Congregationalist* 8 (1879), 584; cited by Glover, *Evangelical Nonconformity*, p. 127. Rogers had found Samuel Davidson anything but "clear-headed": a pamphlet he wrote with Enoch Mellor says of Davidson, "He starts questions which he cannot answer, suggests doubts which he cannot solve, and leaves the whole subject in the most painful uncertainty" (*Two Graduates, Dr Davidson: His Heresies, Contradictions and Plagiarisms* [London & Manchester, 1857], p. 3.).
  53. "A Symposium on the Robertson Smith Case", *Catholic Presbyterian* 6 (1881), pp. 51-53. The *Catholic Presbyterian* was edited by W.G. Blaikie, Professor of Apologetics and Pastoral Theology at New College.

If the Church of Christ within our borders should pass through the present trial of faith without panic, without reactionary antagonism to truth, and without loss of spiritual power, a very large part of the credit will belong to the quiet but commanding influence of the Hebrew chair in that college which rises so picturesquely on the ancient site of Mary of Guise's palace in Edinburgh.<sup>54</sup>

Davidson himself, however, had not found the critical approach so easy to accept. He wrote in 1865, in a letter to William Cormack:

This breaking up of the old forms of faith and the combinations of the old material into new shapes go on greatly in secret, unrecognised by the churches. And so everyone has an inner history which he will not yet venture to declare.... Is this spirit of the age really the tumultuous many-sided movement of God in history? or is it the spirit of antichrist?.... I dislike the old, I distrust the new.<sup>55</sup>

He would often say of the latest hypothesis: "It may be so; but then also it may not be so."<sup>56</sup> Much later, in a review of S.R. Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, he reflected that "even those who are now able to contemplate critical results with perfect composure can remember an earlier period in their history when their minds were assailed by serious perplexities."<sup>57</sup> Duff, coming to Germany from New England, had perhaps a briefer crisis. He was confronted in Halle with Riehm's critical discussion of the composition of Genesis, "what I had counted too sacred to be analysed like other literature," but he was soon convinced that the analysis of Genesis "was not heresy, to neglect it was heresy."<sup>58</sup> W.G. Elmslie, again, at first found the views of August Dillmann in Berlin too radical, but eventually had to admit the truth of what he had then denied.<sup>59</sup>

The first college to hear cautious acceptance of biblical criticism expressed was the English Presbyterian College. In 1877 John Gibb was appointed to teach New Testament Exegesis and Patristic Literature, and he devoted his inaugural lecture to *Biblical Studies and their Influence upon the Church*.<sup>60</sup> In it he said that "the present condition of biblical science is superior to that of thirty years ago in exactitude of method and thoroughness of research." While he recognised that "critical Bible study is sometimes credited with dangerous tendencies, to

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54. Nicoll and MacNicoll, *W.G. Elmslie*, p. 14, quoting an article on Davidson in the *Expositor*, January 1888.

55. Strahan, *Davidson*, pp. 103-104.

56. Strahan, *Davidson*, p. 112.

57. Strahan, *Davidson*, pp. 201-202. The review appeared in *The Bookman*, Nov. 1891.

58. Duff, "Theological Professor's Training," pp. 307-308.

59. Harper, "Elmslie," p. 168.

60. John Gibb, *Biblical Studies and their Influence upon the Church* (1877).

discourage or assail such a study is an error similar to what sometimes occurs amid the smoke and confusion of a battle, when soldiers fire by mistake into their own ranks." He pointed out that what was happening in biblical study was parallel to what was happening in classical scholarship: literary criticism had developed into historical science. He described allegorical interpretation and rationalism as "twin sisters": "both unscrupulously depart from the original meaning when it suits them." He maintained that modern biblical scholars were continuing the work which the Reformation had begun, and that most of them had been under evangelical influence when they set out. However, Gibb reassured his audience that he was not going to launch into critical matters at the beginning of a student's course. "Higher criticism is not work to which the beginner should first address himself." As a result he made no major contribution to the wholehearted acceptance of critical methods.<sup>61</sup>

A year later Archibald Duff gave his inaugural lecture as Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Theology (with the "adjunct Professorship of Mathematics") at Airedale College, Bradford. His topic was "The Use of the Old Testament in the Study of the Rise of our Doctrines."<sup>62</sup> He regarded his appointment as a sign that the college committee and the Principal (A.M. Fairbairn) wanted "thorough scholarship" and were expressing their confidence, not so much in him as a number of scholars in America and in Germany. His main theme was that to know Jesus we need to know the religious history of "the people whose product, whose son, in one sense, he was." This was a history of development, in which the prophets were pre-eminent. Duff was to teach at Airedale (later to unite with Rotherham to form Yorkshire United Independent College) until 1925, and there is good evidence that up to the First World War at least he was regarded as an enthusiastic and inspiring teacher. J.H. Jowett, who was to succeed R.W. Dale as minister of Carrs Lane, Birmingham, only studied the Old Testament with Duff for a year (1887-88), but regarded him as one of the deepest influences in his life.<sup>63</sup> He gave a graphic account of the insight Duff gave him into the history of Israel's religion, which echoes the way Duff himself outlined it in his inaugural lecture.

We sought together ... to see in the utterances of those wonderful Hebrew and Jewish preachers, narrators, philosophers and singers the marvellous story of how their faith and works resulted at last in the coming of Jesus. To do that we tried to grasp the genius of their language and then to understand their noble literature. Then we linked into one chain the whole upward progress from the men of lowest cruelty to the missionary ideals of Jeremiah and Isaiah. Then we watched how the poor

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61. He became best known for editing, with W. Montgomery, *The Confessions of St Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908).
  62. A. Duff, *The Use of the Old Testament in the Study of the Rise of our Doctrines* (1878).
  63. A. Porritt, *John Henry Jowett* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1924), p. 24.

little people left in Judah rose in generation by generation till there dawned upon them the "Christ" idea of the "Solomon" Psalms<sup>64</sup>

Of the manner of Duff's teaching Jowett said this:

Dr Duff made Hebrew literature as fascinating as a romance.... [He] did not show me any new things: they were, and are, there always in Hebrew and Jewish literature. He showed me how to study them, i.e. not to read in anything that does not belong there, and not to leave out anything that does belong there.<sup>65</sup>

Miles Hanson, who began his course at Rotherham but experienced Duff's teaching after the amalgamation with Airedale in 1889, and who later became minister of a Unitarian church in New England, contrasted the teaching of the Old Testament with that of the New:

Of the New Testament classes I have a pitiful memory. The lecturer lacked the power to vivify his subject, and what should have been the liveliest class of the whole series was the deadest. What I know of the New Testament relative to modern criticism has been learned since college days. Fortunately the Old Testament classes were as alive as the New Testament classes were dead. The old books became to me real, living narratives.<sup>66</sup>

Duff's views did not however meet with universal approval. Hanson said again:

[Dr Duff ] was, on occasion, fond of the startling. He would make a bald statement that not only arrested but sometimes shocked and repelled his students and his brother ministers. It was one of those startling sayings that set me out on what has proved a long and happy course of reading. I asked about that quotation in Genesis where God is made to say, "It repenteth me that I have made man." The answer flung back was, "It's all nonsense!" "But," I gasped, "God said it!" "All nonsense, just the same," came the staggering reply. My sense of propriety was outraged, and I certainly began to think. I know now that was what the Doctor wanted, but at the time it seemed as though the whole Bible was useless.<sup>67</sup>

64. Porritt, *Jowett*, p. 40.

65. Porritt, *Jowett*, p. 41.

66. Miles Hanson, *Out of Old Paths* (Boston, Mass: Beacon Press, 1919), pp. 20-21. Hanson also gives an affectionate description of Grove Congregational Church, Gomersal in Yorkshire, where he was brought up and where the writer of this article was in later times minister.

67. Hanson, *Old Paths*, pp. 21-22.

Matters came to a head with the publication of the first volume of Duff's *Old Testament Theology*.<sup>68</sup> In it he argued that study of the Old Testament should begin with the eighth-century prophets, because their date was not disputed, rather than with the Pentateuch, which had been compiled from different sources, whose dating was controversial. He pointed out that Deuteronomy does not claim to have been written by Moses and that it "gives a picture of the popular mind under Josiah, even if written earlier."<sup>69</sup> On the question of inspiration he was forthright:

When we have read [Amos's] words we recognise his inspiration, and then only. All argumentation *a priori* that he is inspired, i.e. argument that he is in the canon, and that, because the canon is all inspired, therefore he is inspired, and will therefore furnish spiritual food, and therefore is to be read - all this is superfluous, and waste of precious time.<sup>70</sup>

Supporters of the college charged Duff with heresy, and the Governors had to discuss the matter. They came to very different conclusions from those reached by the committee of Lancashire Independent College in Samuel Davidson's case. They very wisely recognised they were not "a body of scholars trained in discussion of such questions concerning the Old Testament," declared that they had "perfect confidence" in Duff's scholarship, competence and Christian character, and bade him "go forward, with the help of God, and teach our students what he sees to be right and proper."<sup>71</sup>

Duff's writings extended his influence beyond those he had taught in the Yorkshire college. We have it on the authority of W.H. Bennett that Hugh Price Hughes, the Wesleyan Methodist minister famous for his concern for social issues, and Ben Tillett, the trades union leader, found inspiration in his exposition of the Hebrew prophets.<sup>72</sup> However, it did not follow that Duff was regarded as an ideal guide by his fellow scholars. W.T. Davison, reviewing *Old Testament Theology*, called Duff "an amiable and earnest Christian teacher," whose exposition was "that of an eager, even enthusiastic teacher of religion," but added that he took for granted findings on critical questions (especially the composition of the Pentateuch) that needed "to be elucidated, if not debated," that "the colour and glow of Duff's style sometimes interferes with the expected accuracy and precision of form," and that "exception might well be taken to some of Duff's explanations and paraphrases."<sup>73</sup> Indeed, in that early book one finds him denying

68. A. Duff, *Old Testament Theology, or the History of Hebrew Religion from the Year 800 BC* (Edinburgh: A. & C. Black, 1891).

69. Duff, *Old Testament Theology*, pp. 23-28.

70. Duff, *Old Testament Theology*, pp. 42-43.

71. Duff, "Theological Professor's Training," p. 314.

72. *Review of Theology and Philosophy* 4 (1908-09), p. 356.

73. *Critical Review*, 2 (1892), pp. 149-51.

that *tôrât Moshe* means "Torah of Moses" and translating it "the Torah of the Deliverer"<sup>74</sup> and labelling the teaching of the prophets the "David revelation."<sup>75</sup> W.H. Bennett said of a later book, "The great charm of the book is the fine enthusiasm for its subject by which it is pervaded. The Old Testament, its ideas and its characters are real, living, fascinating to our author," but had to add that "those who are familiar with the subject will see that the author's method is controlled by a thoroughly legitimate principle; but he has not taken sufficient pains to make it clear to the ordinary reader."<sup>76</sup> Duff felt hurt that A.S. Peake had written an article on Bible study without making any mention of his *Old Testament Theology*,<sup>77</sup> and later expressed a sense of isolation: "One does feel lonely, and not seldom, and perhaps it has been peculiarly my lot to toil alone."<sup>78</sup> He was not invited to contribute to the *Century Bible*, the early twentieth-century series of commentaries largely written by Free Church scholars;<sup>79</sup> and although he contributed the commentaries on Lamentations and Esther to *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, at the end of the introduction to each Peake added a disclaimer: to Esther: "The reader should remember that the view here advocated that LXX represents the original work better than Heb., has found hitherto practically no acceptance among scholars..., and the general editor must express his decided dissent from it;" and to Lamentations: "A date in the first century B.C. seems incredibly late; nor is it favoured by the actual phenomena."<sup>80</sup> An erstwhile colleague of Duff's at Bradford, George Currie Martin, wrote to Peake: "I see poor old Duff is as wild as ever, and gets your kindly ruler over his fingers."<sup>81</sup>

Archibald Duff taught at a Free Church college for forty-seven years: William Gray Elmslie was Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis in the English Presbyterian College for only six, before his untimely death in 1889 at the age of forty-one. And yet he probably did as much to secure the acceptance of criticism among the Presbyterians as Duff and others did among the Congregationalists. He was not without his critics, but "it was painful to him to be denounced as a heretic, and he showed himself hurt on learning that he was excluded from a certain place because of his loose views."<sup>82</sup> In the Presbyterian Church as a whole, and beyond it, he was popular. Twice during his short spell at the college he turned down

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74. Duff, *Old Testament Theology*, p. 24.

75. Duff, *Old Testament Theology*, p. 60.

76. Review of *Hints on Old Testament Theology* (London: A. & C. Black, 1908), *Review of Theology and Philosophy* 4 (1908-09), pp. 355-56.

77. Letter from Duff to Peake, 6.2.1901 (John Rylands University Library of Manchester, Peake Papers [PP], VIII. D. 9).

78. Letter from Duff to Peake, 18.9.1908 (PP, VIII. D. 400).

79. Roger Tones, "A Century of the *Century Bible*", *Expository Times* 112 (2000-01), pp. 408-412.

80. *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (Edinburgh: T.C. & E.C. Jack, 1919), pp. 336, 496.

81. G. Currie Martin to Peake (PP, VIII. D. 298).

82. W. Robertson Nicoll, *Princes of the Church* (1921), p. 9.

pressing invitations from leading Congregational churches (Brixton and Westminster Chapel).<sup>83</sup>

The Presbyterian College was not entirely unprepared for Elmslie. During the Robertson Smith controversy, in 1878, Robert Rainy, the Principal of New College, Edinburgh, was invited to give a series of lectures on "The Bible and Criticism."<sup>84</sup> Although Rainy did not believe that Smith should be free to promulgate his views as the holder of a chair in the Free Church and was to be instrumental in his dismissal in 1881, he was not against criticism - historical investigation - in principle. He believed that the critic should "give the thing as it is, without regard to the consequences." The believing scholar must resist "the temptation to pursue criticism as long as it helps to the conclusions we want, then piece the argument out with orthodoxy."<sup>85</sup> It was not to be supposed that even the Tübingen school, which had seen opposition between Paul and the other apostles behind all the New Testament documents, had nothing to go on. The theory was "monstrously learned and ingenious," even if "an enormous fabric of fanciful rationalism" had been built upon it. Lightfoot had made use of some of its results in his "excellent commentaries." Such critical conclusions "may have good right, first, certainly to be heard, and, second, possibly to be accepted."<sup>86</sup> The critic, however, "must make good to the public ... the method of his researches, and the proof of his results; he must make them see it, and establish it by evidence.... Nothing can be taken on trust, even from the most expert critic."<sup>87</sup> While it was no use to plead "faith and authority point blank against alleged evidence," "opinions which cannot be received without putting a sharp strain on faith should be propounded, not dogmatically, but problematically."<sup>88</sup>

In the address given at Elmslie's induction to his chair Alex Hamilton encouraged him to keep his lectures up-to-date - "The manuscript yellowed with age and touch has a yellowing effect even upon the eye that rested not on it before" - and ventured to say that "those are not always the best defenders of the truth who denounce every or any advance in the domain of biblical investigation or criticism."<sup>89</sup> Elmslie certainly did keep up with the progress of research, though he made up his mind for himself, working more with dictionaries than with commentaries. At the same time, he was chary of expressing publicly the conclusions he had come to, and indeed did not think that he had to make up his mind on every debated question.<sup>90</sup> He held that every interpretation of, say, the

83. Nicoll and MacNicoll, *W.G. Elmslie*, pp. 50, 54. "He considered that the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians were destined to become one body" (Nicoll, *Princes of the Church*, p. 10).

84. R. Rainy, *The Bible and Criticism* (1878).

85. Rainy, *Bible and Criticism*, pp. 154, 156.

86. Rainy, *Bible and Criticism*, pp. 60-66.

87. Rainy, *Bible and Criticism*, pp. 104, 105.

88. Rainy, *Bible and Criticism*, p. 185.

89. *Presbyterian Messenger* 8 (1883), p. 202.

90. Nicoll and MacNicoll, *W.G. Elmslie*, pp. 45-46, 65.

creation story in Genesis, should be advanced "with modest diffidence, held tentatively, revised with alacrity, and adjusted to new facts without timidity and without shame."<sup>91</sup>

In the course of his teaching, Elmslie realised that students needed a grasp of the Bible as a whole. "Exegetic cannot be allowed to fool away a whole session in a wearisome analysis of a few chapters of an epistle or a prophecy, fumbling and mumbling over verbal trivialities, blind to the Divine grandeurs that are enshrined within, while the students are left without even a bird's-eye view of the content of the Bible as a whole, and destitute of any adequate conception of its vital majesty and meaning."<sup>92</sup> He intended to write a book which would make the content and message of the Old Testament intelligible to ordinary people, but this was never to be.<sup>93</sup> What remain are nine sermons which follow the memoir in the volume edited by W. Robertson Nicoll and A.N. Macnicoll, and a further collection of *Expository Lectures and Sermons*.<sup>94</sup> In these Elmslie shows that he was not afraid to deal with critical issues when they were relevant. For instance, he tells his audience or congregation that the First Book of Samuel is "a compilation of one, two, or three older masses of tradition," which "cannot be altogether reconciled to one another," and that "one at least of these old histories has been decidedly coloured by the religious bent of the man who wrote it."<sup>95</sup> Zechariah is not all the work of one man.<sup>96</sup> "John's Gospel mixes up the acts and words of Jesus with John's own thoughts and explanations, so that it is hardly possible to tell whether we are reading what Jesus said or what John thought about it."<sup>97</sup> But he is not willing to deny that the story of the conquest of Canaan is based on memory "accurate in the main," or to concede that the story of Samson is "simply a myth," or that there were no miracles in biblical times.<sup>98</sup> Like Robertson Smith and Duff, Elmslie never tired of pointing out that the prophet was "the conscience of the nation":

His supreme concern was with the present, and he cared for the past and the future only as they threw light on the problems of instant, pressing duty. The prophet was no dealer in futurities, no dreamer babbling of an

91. Nicoll and MacNicoll, *W.G. Elmslie*, p. 303.
92. *British Weekly*, 16.9.1887; quoted in Nicoll and MacNicoll, *W.G. Elmslie*, p. 47.
93. Nicoll and MacNicoll, *W.G. Elmslie*, p. 57; cf. the dedication in W.A.L. Elmslie, *How Came Our Faith* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948; London: Collins [Fontana Library], 1962): "To the memory of my father William Gray Elmslie ... who hoped to have written on this theme."
94. W.G. Elmslie, *Expository Lectures and Sermons*, ed. A.N. MacNicoll, 1892.
95. Elmslie, *Lectures and Sermons*, pp. 36-37.
96. Elmslie, *Lectures and Sermons*, p. 114.
97. Nicoll and MacNicoll, *W.G. Elmslie*, p. 271.
98. Elmslie, *Lectures and Sermons*, pp. 9-10, 24-25; Nicoll and MacNicoll, *W.G. Elmslie*, p. 99.

age unborn. He was a potent actor in history, living and working amid the actual sins and sorrows and struggles of his day and generation.<sup>99</sup>

Perhaps the most striking example of Elmslie's thought is a sermon on "The First Chapter of Genesis."<sup>100</sup> In it he set out to explain why the record of creation in the Bible, "which claims to be God's words," and that "stamped in the structure of the world, which is God's work," do not agree. He pointed out that none of the attempted reconciliations had gained general acceptance, and argued that the assumption that the biblical account should exhibit "magical anticipation of, and detailed correspondence with, the changeful theories of modern geology" had obscured "the essential design of the chapter." The symmetry of the account, produced by the regular use of rubrics and the distribution of eight distinct acts over six days, suggested that arrangement was literary or logical rather than chronological. The first three days "present us with three vast empty tenements or habitations," and the remaining set "furnishes them with occupants." The "days" are not to be taken literally nor to stand for geological epochs. "The great sections of Nature are to be made pass in a panorama of pictures, and to be presented, each for itself, as the distinct act of God. It is desirable to enclose each of these in a frame, clear-cut and complete. The natural unit and division of human toil is a day." If the intention had been to anticipate scientific truths, it would have been better that this should have been done in plain language. Elmslie also pointed out that the framework of Genesis 1 was not presupposed everywhere else in Scripture. "In the second chapter of Genesis, in Job, in the Psalms and in Proverbs there are manifold deviations and variations." In this sermon Elmslie offered insights which were not overtaken by anything written in the twentieth century and could still be profitably repeated today.

Despite the foundation Elmslie had laid, the discussion in the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England over the appointment of his successor showed that there was still widespread suspicion of the higher criticism.<sup>101</sup> George Adam Smith, who had just published the first part of his commentary on Isaiah in the *Expositor's Bible*, was passed over, and John Skinner, who had a reputation for being evangelical and had not as yet published anything, was appointed. However, Skinner showed his adherence to the critical school in his inaugural lecture on "The Critical Reconstruction of Old Testament History."<sup>102</sup>

The 1880s saw momentous changes in the teaching of the Bible in Oxford and to a lesser extent in Cambridge. In Oxford in 1882 S.R. Driver succeeded Pusey as the Regius Professor of Hebrew and William Sanday succeeded H.P. Liddon as the Dean Ireland Professor of Exegesis; in Cambridge A.F. Kirkpatrick became Regius Professor of Hebrew. Driver was already well known for his work on the

99. Nicoll and MacNicoll, *W.G. Elmslie*, pp. 220-22; cf. pp. 209-216; Elmslie, *Lectures and Sermons*, pp. 54-56.

100. Nicoll and MacNicoll, *W.G. Elmslie*, pp. 302-27.

101. Glover, *Evangelical Nonconformity*, pp. 199-204.

102. *Presbyterian Messenger*, 17 October 1890, pp. 17-18.

Hebrew language,<sup>103</sup> but had not up to this point declared his position on critical issues. As a Fellow of New College he had been R.F. Horton's tutor in 1874, but Horton said that "my theological work at Oxford had not opened to me the new reaches of biblical criticism."<sup>104</sup> It was in 1885, with a sermon on the first chapter of Genesis preached at Christ Church, that Driver began to express publicly his adherence to the methods and results of historical criticism.<sup>105</sup> In the same year, T.K. Cheyne, who had accepted the documentary theory of the Pentateuch as early as 1871, became Oriel Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture and a rather more vigorous exponent of critical study.<sup>106</sup> Sanday's influence is probably best seen in the introduction of questions about the date and authorship of the various New Testament writings in the examinations for the Final Honours School in Divinity from 1882 onwards.<sup>107</sup>

These developments ensured that when Mansfield College was founded in 1886 its students had the opportunity to be introduced to critical study. In the early days this was not provided directly by the college staff. Although Fairbairn "accepted and advocated the Higher Criticism, ... one could not escape the impression that the new method had not yet exercised its full influence on his theology, at least in his lectures."<sup>108</sup> John Massie, who taught New Testament, was more interested in detailed exegesis than in critical questions.<sup>109</sup> However, students were free to pursue independent lines of study. A.E. Garvie supplemented Massie's lectures "by reading the whole of the Greek Testament with the best commentary on each book in English, or German. This was one of the most valuable bits of work I did at Oxford."<sup>110</sup> And G.B. Gray, who was in 1888 a student at New College, London, wrote to the college committee asking permission to withdraw from the course "to study at Oxford under Driver and Cheyne and to connect himself with Mansfield."<sup>111</sup> In the 1890s Mansfield began to contribute more directly to the

103. S.R. Driver, *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew* (1874).

104. R.F. Horton, *An Autobiography* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1917), pp. 56, 84.

105. S.R. Driver, "The First Chapter of Genesis," in *Sermons on Subjects connected with the Old Testament* (London, 1892), pp. 163-78. This was followed by an article on "The Cosmogony of Genesis" in the *Expositor* in January 1886 (pp. 23-45); another on "The Critical Study of the Old Testament" in the *Contemporary Review* 57 (1890), pp. 215-31; and his *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh, 1891).

106. A.S. Peake, in *DNB 1912-21*: "It is to Cheyne that the distinction belongs of initiating with adequate scholarship the critical movement in his native country."

107. M.G. Brock and M.C. Curtnays, eds., *The History of the University of Oxford 7: Nineteenth Century Oxford Part 2* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), pp. 99-101.

108. A.E. Garvie, *Memories and Meanings of my Life* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1938), p. 89.

109. Kaye, *Mansfield College*, p. 116. Garvie, *Memories and Meanings*, p. 87.

110. Garvie, *Memories and Meanings*, p. 87.

111. D.W.L., New College, London MSS, 155/1: Minutes of Committee, vol. 11, 22 June 1888; Kaye, *Mansfield College*, p. 122.

critical approach and its dissemination to a wider public. Critical scholars from Scotland and the United States lectured at its summer schools from 1892; A.S. Peake became a tutor in 1891, and Gray in 1892; and from 1894 to 1900 George Adam Smith, who had written a best-selling commentary on Isaiah in the *Expositor's Bible* series which took full account of the criticism of the book<sup>112</sup> and had become Professor of Old Testament Language, Literature and Theology at the Free Church College, Glasgow, paid frequent visits to Mansfield.<sup>113</sup> From 1894 also members of Mansfield shared in Sanday's fortnightly seminar on the Synoptic problem.<sup>114</sup> Not all students found it easy to adopt the critical outlook. H. Wheeler Robinson, who was at Mansfield from 1895 to 1900, wrote later:

In the nineties the student of theology was busy learning a new technique. The changeover to the critical outlook on the Bible was as great as that of the mechanisation of armies. He had to prove all things, and yet hold fast to that which was good. Fortunate was he if in those years he discovered that the authority of religious values is intrinsic, needing nobody's testimonial.<sup>115</sup>

The other Free Church colleges were slower to include biblical criticism in their curriculum. At New College, London, John Kennedy had been Professor of Apologetics from 1872 to 1876 as well as minister of Stepney Meeting, and from 1884 to 1895 he was chairman of the college council. He wrote a series of books defending traditional positions.<sup>116</sup> It was therefore not until W.F. Adeney was appointed Professor of New Testament and Church History in 1889 that the critical approach was introduced. Even then Adeney felt that he had to tread warily:

The subjects to be treated are in themselves of the greatest importance; and in the present day the demands that are made upon anyone who teaches them are exceptionally heavy.<sup>117</sup>

He recognised that "repudiation of the old" and "assimilation of the new" could be a painful process.<sup>118</sup>

112. George Adam Smith, *The Book of Isaiah* (London: 1889, 1890).

113. Kaye, *Mansfield College*, pp. 118-119.

114. Kaye, *Mansfield College*, p. 119.

115. *British Weekly*, 11 December 1941; quoted by E.A. Payne, *Henry Wheeler Robinson: Scholar, Teacher, Principal* (1946).

116. *The Gospels, their Age and Authorship* (1879); *The Pentateuch, its Age and Authorship* (1884); *The Unity of Isaiah* (1891); *The Book of Jonah* (1895); *Old Testament Criticism and the Rights of the Unlearned* (1897); *The Book of Daniel, from the Christian Standpoint* (1898). On Kennedy, see John Kennedy, *Old Highland Days, with a sketch of his later life by H.A.A. Kennedy* (London: RTS, 1901).

117. D.W.L., New College, London, MSS. 149/1, p. 52.

118. W.F. Adeney, "The New Testament," in *Faith and Criticism: Essays by Congregationalists* (London, 1893), p. 71.

At Hackney College, similarly, Alfred Cave had become Principal in 1881. He continued to hold and defend traditional views in what he called "The Battle of the Standpoints".<sup>119</sup> But in 1888 he was joined by W.H. Bennett as Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament. The students were well aware of the difference of approach. One of them wrote much later:

Professor Bennett was for those days an advanced modernist whilst Dr Cave was much more orthodox. We students used to try to draw Bennett but he was too wise to be drawn. On one occasion Dr Cave had been lecturing and stated his belief in a personal devil. On going from his class to that of Bennett we asked him if he believed in a personal devil. With a twinkle in his eye he replied, 'Some folks seem to find considerable satisfaction in such a belief.'<sup>120</sup>

Bennett was not always so cautious. In *Faith and Criticism*, a collection of essays by Congregationalist authors designed "to help those very numerous seekers after truth whose minds have been disturbed by the work of Criticism in Biblical and Theological questions,"<sup>121</sup> he gave a clear exposition of the benefits he felt that criticism had brought, but added: "Conservative criticism does not know when it is beaten.... Harmonising apologetics of the Old Testament have constantly tended to destroy intellectual candour, and to deaden moral susceptibility.... No apologetic argument is likely to satisfy anyone who is not already convinced."<sup>122</sup>

It was not long before Bennett and Adeney were each teaching at both colleges, relieving both from the necessity of covering the whole Bible. The hope was also that this move "would set the Professors free for those literary and public labours which our churches have a right to expect of their Professors, and which the Professors themselves, by their specialized studies, are so peculiarly adapted to render."<sup>123</sup> This hope was realised, not so much in original research as in explaining the methods and results of biblical criticism to a wider public. Their names were linked in a number of publications over the next twenty years: "Bennett and Adeney" must have sounded as familiar as "Oesterley and Robinson" in a later generation.<sup>124</sup> Their collaboration was no doubt helped by the

119. A. Cave, "The Latest Phase of the Pentateuch Question," and "Professor Robertson Smith and the Pentateuch," *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* 29 (1880), pp. 248-67, 593-621; *The Inspiration of the Old Testament Inductively Considered* (London, 1888); *The Battle of the Standpoints* (London, 1890). See Glover, *Evangelical Nonconformity*, pp.186-93.

120. D.W.L., New College, London, MSS. 182/3/13/2.

121. *Faith and Criticism* (1893), p. v.

122. W.H. Bennett, "The Old Testament," in *Faith and Criticism*, pp. 4, 24, 39.

123. D.W.L., New College, London, MSS. 149/1, p. 89.

124. *Faith and Criticism* (1893); *The Bible Story Retold for Young People* (1897); *A Biblical Introduction* (London, 1899); *The Bible and Criticism* (1912); and the Century Bible series, which Adeney edited and to which he contributed *St Luke* (1901) and *1 & 2 Thessalonians and Galatians* (1902) and Bennett contributed *The General Epistles* (1901), *Genesis* (1904) and *Exodus* (1908).

fact that both were members of R.F. Horton's church, Lyndhurst Road Congregational Church in Hampstead.<sup>125</sup> Horton himself had stirred up controversy in 1888 by publishing lectures he had given in his church on *Inspiration and the Bible*,<sup>126</sup> in which he argued that any doctrine of inspiration must be the result of an inductive process of discovering what the Bible says, not a presupposition from which we deduce how the Bible must be read, and summarised "the literary and historical criticism as it then stood - or rather a collection of ways in which the new views contradicted the old."<sup>127</sup>

O.C. Whitehouse had become Professor of Classics and tutor in Hebrew and German at Cheshunt College in 1877, and in 1879-83 he collaborated with the President of the college, H.R. Reynolds, on the commentaries on Hosea and Amos in Ellicott's commentary, contributing the introduction to each book. This required no major decisions on critical questions. Between 1885 and 1888 he translated Eberhard Schrader's *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament* (The Cuneiform Texts and the Old Testament), which did much to make British scholars aware of the significance of Assyrian and Babylonian discoveries for the study of the Old Testament. Whitehouse did not immediately accept the position Wellhausen expounded in the *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* - 1892 would seem to be the turning point<sup>128</sup> - but several of his students testified to the help he gave them in reconciling their evangelical faith with the revolutionary findings of criticism.<sup>129</sup>

Baptists were "less inclined to critical innovations than other Nonconformists,"<sup>130</sup> and more interest in the issues was shown by ministers in pastorates rather than by tutors in the colleges.<sup>131</sup> Although T. Witton Davies had written a doctoral thesis at Leipzig on "Magic and demonology among the Hebrews," from 1891 to 1899 he had to run the Midland College, Nottingham, virtually single-handed, and it was not until he moved to the college in Bangor in 1899 that he was able to contribute significantly again to Old Testament scholarship. John Clifford, the minister at Westbourne Park, on the other hand, wrote on *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*,<sup>132</sup> maintaining that

125. Albert Peel and J.A.R. Marriott, *Robert Forman Horton* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1937), p.145.

126. R.F. Horton, *Inspiration and the Bible* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1888). Robertson Nicoll had declined to publish the book on behalf of Hodder & Stoughton. See Glover, *Evangelical Nonconformity*, pp. 176-84.

127. Glover, *Evangelical Nonconformity*, p. 180.

128. T.K. Cheyne, *Founders of Old Testament Criticism* (London, 1893), p. 244; S.A. Cook, "OCW: An Appreciation of his Work," in Lilian M. Whitehouse, et al., *Owen Charles Whitehouse of Cheshunt College* (Cambridge: Heffer, 1916), pp. 173-74.

129. Whitehouse, *Owen Charles Whitehouse*, pp. 105-106.

130. David Bebbington, *Evangelicals in Modern Britain*, (1989), p. 186.

131. J.H.Y. Briggs, *The English Baptists of the Nineteenth Century* (Didcot: Baptist Historical Society, 1994), p. 192.

132. John Clifford, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (London, 1892),

“inspiration is not and cannot be external or mechanical” and that “imperfection and error are to be expected.”<sup>133</sup> Alexander Maclaren, at Union Chapel, Manchester, also mediated the results of criticism, though this was not his main interest.<sup>134</sup> When Regent’s Park decided in 1883 to appoint a tutor in Hebrew and Old Testament, Maclaren was approached, but declined, saying that the prospect was too daunting.<sup>135</sup> The person appointed was G.P. Gould, who taught at Regent’s Park for the next thirty-five years. He taught Hebrew with great success. Theodore Robinson said of him:

He was a *great* scholar and could have ranked with people like Gray if he had liked to..... [Gray] knew nothing of Gould’s scholarship, but he did know that men who came on from Regent’s were better equipped than anybody else he had to deal with.<sup>136</sup>

And although he published no original work another competent judge considered that his lecture notes were prepared to a degree of scholarship adequate for a volume of the *International Critical Commentary*.<sup>137</sup>

As late as 1887 a student could leave the Wesleyan Richmond College “without ever having so much as heard of ‘The Problem of the Old Testament’,”<sup>138</sup> while at Didsbury a succession of Theological Tutors ensured that the critics were soundly dealt with. John Hannah was Theological Tutor 1842-67. Horne’s *Introduction* was “a manual to Dr Hannah’s heart and mind.”

He followed its subsequent revisions with watchful care, indignant in company with all his Evangelical compeers, whether Anglican or Nonconformist, with Dr S. Davidson’s crude and reckless rationalising of the second volume, and glad when Ayre restored its original tone to the revised work.<sup>139</sup>

Hannah’s successor, W.B. Pope (Theological Tutor 1867-1886), regarded the Higher Criticism as

a steady, persistent and ruthless determination to bring the Christian

133. Clifford, *Inspiration and Authority* (2nd ed., 1895), pp. 196-97.

134. Glover, *Evangelical Nonconformity*, p. 139. Peake asked Maclaren for advice on purchases to bring the library of the Primitive Methodist College up to date: Peake Papers, IV.1056-65.

135. E.T. McLaren, *Dr McLaren of Manchester* (London, 1911), p. 128.

136. Theodore H. Robinson, “Reminiscences of George Pearce Gould,” *Baptist Quarterly* 9 (1939), pp. 311-313.

137. Cooper, *Stepney to St Giles*, p. 75.

138. Frank Cumbers, ed., *Richmond College 1843-1943* (1944), p. 72; cited by Johnson, *Changing Shape*, p. 59.

139. Joseph Howard, in Brash and Wright, *Didsbury College Centenary*, p. 80.

faith, and its holy documents, and its equally holy institutions, before the bar of a reason which will know nothing of faith.<sup>140</sup>

Then in the time of Marshall Randles (Theological Tutor 1886-1902),

All we knew was that Wellhausen, Ewald and Kuenen were slain three times a week by our Theological Tutor, though he was gentler with Ewald than with the others..... Symbols such as J and E and the Priestly code we regarded as German extravagances; neither John Wesley nor Adam Clarke mentioned them - therefore they were foolish.<sup>141</sup>

At the Primitive Methodist College in Manchester in the 1880s Angus's *Bible Handbook* was in use, but there was no instruction in Hebrew or Greek, and "the Bible was the one text-book we never required in class, and it was not used except as a book of reference."<sup>142</sup>

In 1890, however, the Methodist *London Quarterly Review* began to show a guarded welcome for biblical criticism. There were "considerable difficulties in the traditional theory of the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch, for which no quite satisfactory solution has been offered." Although English scholars had "shown themselves strangely shy of taking up the gauntlet thrown down, eight or nine years ago, by William Robertson Smith," the attitude to criticism had entered "a new phase in the last three to four years," with the emergence of "a general consensus in favour of the new school." Cheyne had accepted Wellhausen's conclusions "to the full"; Driver had written a series of Sunday School lessons on the basis of his theory; and "younger Nonconformist writers, like Horton, together with certain professors at Congregational colleges, are found favouring, if not accepting, these views."<sup>143</sup> In 1891 W.T. Davison, then Classical Tutor at Richmond, gave an address to London Methodist ministers on "Inspiration and Biblical Criticism" in which he affirmed the necessity for criticism, though expressing reservations about Wellhausen's understanding of the history of Israel's religion.<sup>144</sup> Then in 1892 A.S. Peake, Fellow of Merton and Tutor at Mansfield since 1890, took up the post of tutor at the Primitive Methodist College in Manchester. His experience at Mansfield had made him dissatisfied with what he heard about the one-year, antiquated and reactionary course there.<sup>145</sup> He transformed the curriculum, introducing six biblical courses, on introduction,

140. Graham Slater, "William Burt Pope," p. 61.

141. J. Ernest Rattenbury, in Brash and Wright, *Didsbury College Centenary*, p. 97.

142. A.L. Humphries, "Hartley Primitive Methodist College," in Brash, *Our Colleges*, p. 135.

143. "The Pentateuch Controversy," *London Quarterly Review* 73 (1890), pp. 261-88 [268-70].

144. W.T. Davison, "Inspiration and Biblical Criticism," *Expository Times* 2 (1891), pp. 173-78; Glover, *Evangelical Nonconformity*, pp. 209-10.

145. Morna Hooker, "The contribution of A.S. Peake," pp. 66-68.

detailed study of particular texts, and biblical theology, i.e. the growth of the religion of Israel and of primitive Christianity.<sup>146</sup> Peake's arrival had an effect on all the theological colleges in Manchester. In 1893 he gave a paper on "The Higher Criticism and the Old Testament" at Lancashire Independent College Literary Society,<sup>147</sup> and in 1895, on the death of Alexander Thomson, he was appointed to teach Old Testament Introduction and Theology there as well. B.G. Theobald, a student at the time, wrote of their "amazing luck" that this "gentle unassuming Primitive Methodist layman", "a brilliant, learned, fearless, front rank higher critic" should come to lecture to them.<sup>148</sup> Peake also taught at the United Methodist College in Victoria Park. In 1904 Peake became the Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis at the Victoria University in the newly constituted Faculty of Theology, and in 1912 relinquished his teaching in the colleges apart from the Primitive Methodist (now Hartley) College. Students henceforward attended his lectures at the university. Even within his own denomination "for a time there was not a little uneasiness in some quarters at the kind of teaching Peake was giving to students,"<sup>149</sup> and therefore it is not surprising that he was not asked to teach at the Wesleyan College in Didsbury, which appointed the first of its own full time Old Testament tutors in 1903.<sup>150</sup> Wesleyan Methodism was more cautious. W.F. Moulton, who had taught at Richmond before becoming Headmaster of The Leys School in Cambridge in 1875, "was most anxious to defer as long as possible all open strife within the church upon [critical] questions." He wanted the problems of the Old Testament to be studied by evangelical scholars, and suggested that fewer and larger colleges might be able to appoint full time tutors in Old Testament. He wrote to George Milligan in 1892:

I have had many an anxious thought ... on the Old Testament critical theories. I am not anxious for myself; though often puzzled, I can wait in absolute confidence for more light and clearer vision. But I fear many will, to their own great loss, feel the unsettling influences of the period of suspense.

He "declined to express opinions as not having given the subject sufficient study to satisfy his exacting standards," and, while recognising the great gain that had been achieved by setting biblical writings in their historical context, advocated studying "the quiet places of scripture," where criticism had created least disturbance, such as the Old Testament prophets, Paul's letters and John's

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146. A.L. Humphries, "Hartley," pp. 136-38.

147. PP, XVIII.37.

148. B.G. Theobald, "Mainly Reminiscent," *Lancashire College Magazine*, November 1938.

149. A.S. Peake, *Life of Sir William Hartley* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1926), p. 141.

150. Brash and Wright, *Didsbury College Centenary*, p.19. The tutors were Arthur Moorhouse (1903-04), Frederic Platt (1905-09) and Charles L. Bedale (1910-15).

gospel.<sup>151</sup> Davison, in a review of the first volumes of Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible and the Encyclopaedia Biblica* was more willing to accept that "a veritable revolution in the mode of regarding the Old Testament" had taken place since the publication of Smith's *Dictionary* in 1863:

The principle of free enquiry, untrammelled by every preconceived doctrine of "inspiration" or any theories of what "revelation" ought to contain, or how far the records of the Scriptures must agree in detail, must be accepted as the necessary postulate of all Bible study today.<sup>152</sup>

Nevertheless, he recognised that he was more conservative than Peake. In a letter to Peake in 1904 he said:

As you say, I am conservative in questions of biblical criticism to a degree that you think old-fashioned and retrograde, but we "moderates" whom you "advanced" men gird at, have our humble uses.<sup>153</sup>

The *Methodist Recorder*, commenting on his election as President of the Wesleyan Conference, confirmed this judgment:

If our own church has been saved, to so great an extent, from theological and biblical unrest, we owe it much more largely than is generally known to the wise, far-seeing, and resolute handling of vexed questions by Professor Davison.<sup>154</sup>

The students at Headingley College learned about the critical approach to the Bible, not from their own tutors, but from public lectures of the young minister of Mill Hill Unitarian Chapel in Leeds from 1869 to 1875, J. Estlin Carpenter. The students did not like "the untraditional presentation of Jesus" at the first lecture, and the proceedings were "rather abruptly closed", but the questions of the Wesleyan tutors at later sessions led to "valuable discussions."<sup>155</sup> In 1875 Carpenter was appointed Professor of Ecclesiastical History, Comparative Religion and Hebrew at the Unitarian Manchester New College, then in London, and moved with it in 1889 to Oxford, remaining there for the rest of his life.<sup>156</sup> At

151. J.H. Moulton, "Biblical Work and Opinions," in W. Fiddian Moulton, *William F. Moulton: A Memoir* (London, 1899), pp. 218-20, 228.

152. W.T. Davison, "The Progress of Biblical Criticism," *London Quarterly Review* 93 (1900), pp. 14-15.

153. Peake Papers, IV.274.

154. *Methodist Recorder*, 25 July 1901.

155. C.H. Herford, ed, *Joseph Estlin Carpenter: A Memorial Volume* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), p. 25.

156. Arthur Long, "The Life and Work of J. Estlin Carpenter," in Barbara Smith, ed., *Essays Celebrating Two Hundred Years of Manchester College, Oxford* (Oxford: Manchester College, 1986), pp. 267-88.

Leeds he had begun translating the later volumes of Ewald's *History of Israel*,<sup>157</sup> but his teaching of the Old Testament at college was based on that of the Dutch scholar Abraham Kuenen, which had "for the first time rendered possible an intelligible development in the religion of Israel," anticipating the subsequent findings of Wellhausen.<sup>158</sup> In Oxford in 1891 Carpenter became a member of a small group of scholars (including W.B. Selbie and G. Buchanan Gray from Mansfield and W.H. Bennett from Hackney) which undertook to present "the results of modern enquiry" into the composition of the Hexateuch in a thorough justification for its analysis into different documents and for seeing them as evidence of a historical development. In the event Carpenter did the bulk of the work, showing a remarkable capacity for attention to detail.<sup>159</sup> He also paid close attention to the question of the relationship of the Synoptic Gospels to each other.<sup>160</sup> He was also an effective populariser: his *Life in Palestine when Jesus lived* is a very readable source of New Testament background, which remained in print in successive editions for sixty-five years;<sup>161</sup> *The Bible in the Nineteenth Century*<sup>162</sup> was based on a course of lectures given in various towns in England, Scotland and Wales in 1900-03, in which the methods as well as the results of criticism are described with exemplary clarity. The fact that he was a Unitarian no doubt limited his influence among the other Nonconformist bodies, but Peake heard the lectures when they were given in Manchester, invited Carpenter to write the Introduction to the Pentateuch in *Peake's Commentary*, and wrote an appreciative account of his work on both Testaments in the memorial volume.<sup>163</sup>

By the turn of the century there were enough tutors in the Nonconformist colleges teaching the Bible from the critical point of view to make significant contributions to the major publications of the day. They wrote for the *Expositor*, which had been founded in 1875 and under the editorship of William Robertson Nicoll from 1885 had become a major way of keeping abreast of developments in criticism.<sup>164</sup> Some twenty-five of them contributed to Hastings's *Dictionary of the*

157. H. Ewald, *History of Israel*, vols. 2-5 (London, 1878-80).

158. Herford, *Carpenter*, pp. 41-42. Kuenen's *De Godsdiens van Israel* was published in 1870 and translated into English (1874-75). Wellhausen published articles on the composition of the Hexateuch in 1876-67 and *Geschichte Israels* 1 in 1878. The English translation of the latter, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, appeared in 1885.

159. J. Estlin Carpenter and G. Harford-Battersby, eds., *The Hexateuch according to the Revised Version* (London: Longmans, Green, 1900).

160. J. Estlin Carpenter, *The First Three Gospels* (London, 1880).

161. J. Estlin Carpenter, *Life in Palestine when Jesus lived* (1884; 6th ed., London: Lindsey Press, 1949).

162. J. Estlin Carpenter, *The Bible in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Longmans, Green, 1903).

163. Herford, *Carpenter*, pp. 133-61.

164. W. Robertson Nicoll, "Twenty-one Years of the *Expositor*," *Expositor*, Seventh Series, Vol. 1 (1906), pp. 1-5. In 1891, however, Nicoll admitted that "the vast majority of our readers are Episcopalian;" T.H. Darlow, *William Robertson Nicoll* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1925), p. 100.

*Bible* and six of them to the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*. Then in 1901 the *Century Bible* was launched under the editorship of W.F. Adeney: while the contributors included scholars from the Scottish churches and two from the Church of England - S.R. Driver and R.H. Charles - the bulk of the series was written by seventeen people who were teaching or would teach in the Nonconformist colleges.<sup>165</sup> Their crowning contribution to the mediation of the fruits of criticism was *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (1919), where they could muster twenty-eight contributors. Since then biblical scholarship, though some distinguished practitioners have taught in the colleges, has become more and more the business of the universities, where the concern to convey its methods and findings to believing Christians is not always in mind.

ROGER TOMES

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165. Roger Tomes, "A Century of *The Century Bible*," *Expository Times* 112 (2000-01), pp. 408-412.

## AN ASHTON BACKGROUND

### The Ashtons

There is a legend in the family that the Ashtons are descended from the Asshetons, Lords of the Manor of Ashton-under-Lyne from Norman times until the seventeenth century. One of them was Sir Ralph de Assheton, Marshall of England under Edward IV and vice-constable under Richard III who was notorious in his home territory for the frequent exercise of his droit de seigneur. In itself this was hardly noteworthy, but he gave it an added twist: if he found a girl unsatisfactory he had her put in a barrel with spikes inside and rolled down a hill. This was regarded as going too far, and he became known as "Blake (black) Lad" and girls saying their prayers at night used to add a special one:

For thy gracious Father's sake  
 And for thy holy passion  
 Oh save us from the burning stake  
 And from Sir Ralph de Assheton.

However, my father was sceptical about this connection, tracing us back only as far as the mid-eighteenth century to James Ashton, a hatter. His son Samuel born in 1773 fought in the Peninsular War and according to another family legend brought back some apple seeds from Spain and planted them, so starting the kind of cooking apples known as Grenadiers, named after him. In his later years, presumably in recognition of his military service, he was appointed governor of the "House of Industry" (workhouse) in Ashton

His son William reverted to the making of hats. In those days when all men wore hats as a matter of course many people were involved in making them. In 1825 no fewer than nine hat "factories" were recorded in Ashton-under-Lyne, most of them probably centres for outworkers. The hats were made of felt, much of it from rabbit fur, and the trapping of rabbits in the surrounding countryside was a popular occupation, particularly for miners and others laid off in the periodic trade depressions.

William married a weaver's daughter, Rebecca Seel. (My maternal grandmother used to say disparagingly of him what sounded like "he married a seal" which greatly intrigued me as a boy). William and Rebecca had a son Samuel (my great-grandfather) born in 1817. My father reckoned he was a distant cousin of the important cotton manufacturers the Ashton Brothers of Hyde, ancestors of the present Lord Ashton. Samuel started work as a clerk in a colliery but became an accountant and part-time Actuary (manager) of the Ashton-under-Lyne Trustee Savings Bank. He was succeeded in this position by his son John, who defrauded the bank of a considerable sum of money. When this was discovered the trustees agreed not to prosecute on condition that he resigned and the money was repaid. Accordingly his brother Thomas (my grandfather) took over the bank and spent many years repaying the debt which, as he accumulated six children and had to support a disabled sister as well, he could ill afford to do. When Thomas retired

shortly before his death in 1927 he was succeeded by John's son Samuel. As my father remarked, it is no wonder the bank was known as "Ashton's Bank".

A story remembered from my childhood (though I have never seen it in print) told how Thomas Ashton (?) saved the day when there was a run on the bank. There were rumours that all was not well there (possibly a result of John's misdoings) and a crowd of people formed wanting to draw out their money. Thomas told a clerk to heat sovereigns in the kitchen oven and bring them to the counter in a shovel, explaining to the crowd that it took time to mint all the money they were demanding. The difficulty in handling the hot coins delayed the withdrawals and the sight of them reassured the crowd who drifted away.

Another better authenticated story told of a later run on the bank during a time of financial unrest in the early twentieth century. This time the day was saved by the town's then member of Parliament, none other than Max Aitken better known later as Lord Beaverbrook. Whether asked or volunteering to help he hastened to the bank and with a characteristic gesture flourished a handful of notes and ostentatiously deposited them. Again the anxious crowd were reassured.

These stories are a reminder that provincial banking in those days was far from being the sedate business it is today.

### The Sutcliffes

Thomas Ashton married Susan Sutcliffe, daughter of Nathaniel Buckley Sutcliffe and Martha Ann Sunderland. It was always made clear to me that the Sutcliffes were the most significant part of our family background, hence my father's middle name Southcliffe, the earlier form; mine too, and my grandson's. Here is my father's account of the family.

Just as on father's side, so on mother's, there were legends of aristocratic forebears. The family name was Sutcliffe, and the story was that we were descended from a Sir Thomas Southcliffe and his wife, one of whom – I think the lady – was said to have been a child of the Duke of Monmouth. My uncle Will – mother's brother – used to say we came of the bastard of a bastard. There was a fragment of evidence of patrician origin. In my grandfather's house were two large portraits (one, according to the art people, Agnews, certainly, the other possibly, painted by Kneller) which were said to be those of Sir Thomas and Dame Southcliffe – though, according to another version, the male figure (the Kneller) was of General Crofts, the female of Dame Southcliffe.<sup>1</sup>

My great-grandfather, the Rev. Jonathan Sutcliffe, came of a family of farmers at Rawtenstall, near Todmorden. He began as a clergyman in the Church of England, but (because he wanted more scope for preaching) turned Independent, and became the first pastor of Ebenezer Chapel,

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1. Crofts was one of the names of the Duke of Monmouth. If the painting were that of General Crofts, it looks as though he – and not the lady – was the child of the Duke.

afterwards known as Albion Congregational Church, Ashton-under-Lyne. He was poor and apparently absent-minded. He never knew that his wife buttered only alternate slices of the bread that went on the tea-table, and saw that he got the buttered ones. He was apparently revered by his children and his congregation, but the little book he wrote in 1836 *Emily Rowland: or the Young Christian Contemplated in Life and Death* (published by the Religious Tract Society) is revolting to at least one of his great grandchildren. His wife, Susan Collier Buckley, was the daughter of Nathaniel Buckley of Crows-i'-th'-Wood, near Mossley, a cotton spinner who had a small mill worked by water, but refused to install a steam-engine because 'the devil was in it'. (So I was told by Grandfather who once took me to see the site, near Millbrook.) His sons, James and Abel, were more enterprising and did well out of cotton in Ashton. According to the Chartist Methodist parson, Joseph Rayner Stephens, the Revd Jonathan Sutcliffe was unduly deferential to his well-to-do brothers-in-law; at a social function in the town, Rayner Stephens chalked or pinned a sheet of paper on his back with the words:

James and Abel are going to Hell  
And Jonathan knows it, but dar'na tell.

My grandfather, Nathaniel Buckley Sutcliffe (son of the Rev. Jonathan) was also a master cotton spinner, who, along with his brother Edward, and brother-in-law, Walker Sunderland, owned three factories at Ryecroft, an outlying part of Ashton. We were told that, unlike others, he managed to keep his workers employed throughout the Cotton Famine of the 1860s, and I was several times stopped in the street as a child by old people who said 'But for Nat Sutcliffe we'd a clemmed to death'. I'm not sure that the family story that it was his behaviour in the Cotton Famine that led to his business failure is correct. He certainly lost money then. But he continued to live in a large house at Reddish till he was obliged to give up the factory in 1886, after one of the mills had been burnt down. I imagine that he had few commercial instincts. He was a well-educated man who read widely. (Such journals as the *Nineteenth Century* used to be passed surreptitiously over the pew-back at Sunday morning service). His wife, Martha Anne, was the daughter of William Sunderland<sup>2</sup> who

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2. William Sunderland showed early promise as a teacher and as a young man was persuaded by his cousin Jonathan Sutcliffe to come to Ashton and open a school, particularly to prepare boys for business and professional life. "The Stamford Academy" as it was called grew and prospered and many who later became prominent citizens locally and in Manchester were educated there, including lawyers, JPs, bank managers, businessmen and politicians. It was claimed at one time there were more old boys from Stamford on the Manchester Exchange than from any other school except Manchester Grammar School. Hugh Mason and Abel Buckley, both Members of Parliament, went to the school. From its inception it was always closely linked to the Albion community.

came from Heptonstall in Yorkshire to be Headmaster of the Stamford Academy, a school for middle-class boys in Ashton. Grandfather was a Justice of the Peace, a great admirer of Bright and Gladstone. He saw that his children had excellent schooling. Susan, my mother, was sent to Edinburgh to 'finish' her education, and Will, my uncle, was sent to France to learn about cotton spinning there. Two of my aunts, Margaret and Florence, became teachers when the family income dwindled; Florence taught French and German – part-time -- at the Manchester High School for Girls.

When I came to know Grandfather, other than as the august figure, not far below God, in my bedtime prayers, he was living in retirement, quite comfortably, finding his chief interests in the magistrates' court, work for the Chapel, and Liberal politics. He was a passive resister, and it nearly broke his heart when his son, Will, met the demand for the rates he had refused to pay in protest against the Education Act of 1902, and deprived him of the satisfaction of going to prison. Sometimes I went with him when he conducted evening service at the Infirmary, as the local hospital was called, and there was no doubt about the high respect and affection in which he was held by humble people. When I grew up and read works about the inhumanity of the cotton-masters of the nineteenth century, I used to wonder whether the writers had ever met any .... The great Ashton Brothers of Hyde were out of the same box as my grandfather.

I myself met two of the Sutcliffes mentioned in my father's account. As a boy I was taken to visit my great-aunts Margaret and Florence who lived together. Florence impressed me greatly because of the story I was told about her. When I saw her she had snow-white hair, and was almost totally deaf. The story was that she was travelling on the continent when the bridge her train was crossing collapsed and most of the carriages plunged into the ravine below, killing many people. But some of the carriages remained on the line and Florence was in one of them. From the shock her hair turned white and she became deaf. As soon as I got home I took pencil and crayons and made a drawing of her in the carriage on the edge of the drop and the rest of the train tumbling into the ravine.

### **Albion**

The Sutcliffes were actively engaged in the religious, intellectual and social life of Ashton, much of which was centred on the Albion Congregational chapel (later church). Much of the wealth generated by the prosperous mill-owners with low taxation and before there was a universal system of state education flowed into the building and running of chapels, churches and the schools associated with them. The new large Albion church opened in 1895 (bigger than the old parish church) cost £50,000 to build. There were Sunday schools and day schools for boys and girls and an "Organised Science School" (later Secondary) that took pupils up to

university entrance with well-endowed scholarships. There was much charitable work, and a lively social and intellectual life with literary and philosophical societies, classes and lectures on many varied subjects, *conversazioni*, fetes and bazaars, and considerable political activity. It was an astonishingly vigorous society.

Many of the people in the chart attached were involved in the Albion activities. Samuel Ashton taught in the Sunday schools and became a superintendent. His son Thomas, my grandfather, was a deacon and Secretary of Albion church, and both he and his father were active members of the literary society. William Sunderland was a deacon of the church and a Sunday school superintendent, and founded a working men's class, among its aims the reclamation of drunkards. His son Walter carried on this work. The mill-owner Abel Buckley, a son of the Abel referred to in my father's account above, provided no less than £23,000 for the building of the new church, nearly half the sum needed. Nathaniel Buckley Sutcliffe was a Sunday school superintendent. Florence Sutcliffe, trained as a teacher, taught in the Albion schools as well as at Manchester High School for Girls. My grandmother Susan despite bearing and rearing six children and with heavy household duties on a tight budget ran a mothers' class for the poor and did much sick visiting. She died at the age of fifty-eight in 1915, the year before I was born, though clinically of TB I suspect worn out, her resistance lowered by her exacting and conscientious life.

Such was the childhood background of the six children of the marriage of Thomas Ashton and Susan Sutcliffe, born in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. They all went to the Albion schools and despite the straitened family finances my father, Lucy, and Philip all went to Manchester University, my father helped by winning a generous competitive scholarship provided through Albion.

Helen, the eldest, married a banker, Tom Waterhouse. Kenneth was apprenticed to the engineering firm Mather and Platt and spent his working life with them first as a sales engineer and later as a manager. Lucy married Arthur Redford, Professor of Economic History at Manchester University. Thomas, my father, was intended by his parents to become a Congregational minister but at the age of fifteen with what must have needed considerable courage he told them he must go his own way. After taking two degrees he stayed on at Manchester University as Lecturer and Reader, later becoming Professor of Economic History at London University. Gaining an international reputation, he was made a Fellow of the British Academy, offered a knighthood which he gently declined and in the last year of his life was recommended for a Nobel Prize but died before the result was declared.

His parents' disappointment at my father's refusal to enter the ministry was amply redeemed by Philip. Although originally intended for a career in the family bank, he trained for the ministry at the Lancashire Independent College. There then followed highly successful pastorates in Newcastle-on-Tyne and Carlisle where he was much loved and displayed a considerable talent for administration, with the result that he was appointed Secretary of the Manchester Congregational

Board and finally Assistant Secretary of the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

Cyril, the youngest, ever shy and retiring, began with a few years in the bank but then joined Trevelyan's Ambulance Unit in Italy in the First World War and was awarded the Italian Military Cross. After this he joined and eventually took over a small but successful business making gold chain for the jewellery trade. Remaining a bachelor he selflessly assisted his siblings, particularly in contributing to their children's education, so compensating in some measure for the constraint imposed on the previous generation.

### *Grey Pastures*

There is more about the Albion community in the extended introduction to the second edition of the book *Grey Pastures* by William Haslam Mills published in 2003 by the Chapels Society. The book contains a series of sketches originally appearing from time to time in *The Manchester Guardian* describing life in the community, beautifully written with ironic but affectionate humour by the newspaper's senior reporter who himself grew up in the community, his father being the church organist. Once started the sketches were eagerly awaited by many in Ashton and in Manchester too for in them appeared many well-known people thinly disguised with pseudonyms. Thus the Sutcliffes were "the Surridges" referred to as follows.

The Surridge family was distraught with new-fangled ideas. One of the Miss Surridges went to Germany, and returned pronouncing Lancashire names like Mendelssohn and Mozart as they are pronounced in Prague, and while Mr Surridge himself was hollow only as to the chest and cheeks, his sons began almost to disappear in new places at the waist, gave an impression of being only accidentally caught in mufti, and cultivated moustaches which were distinctly visible even to those who followed directly behind them up the aisle.

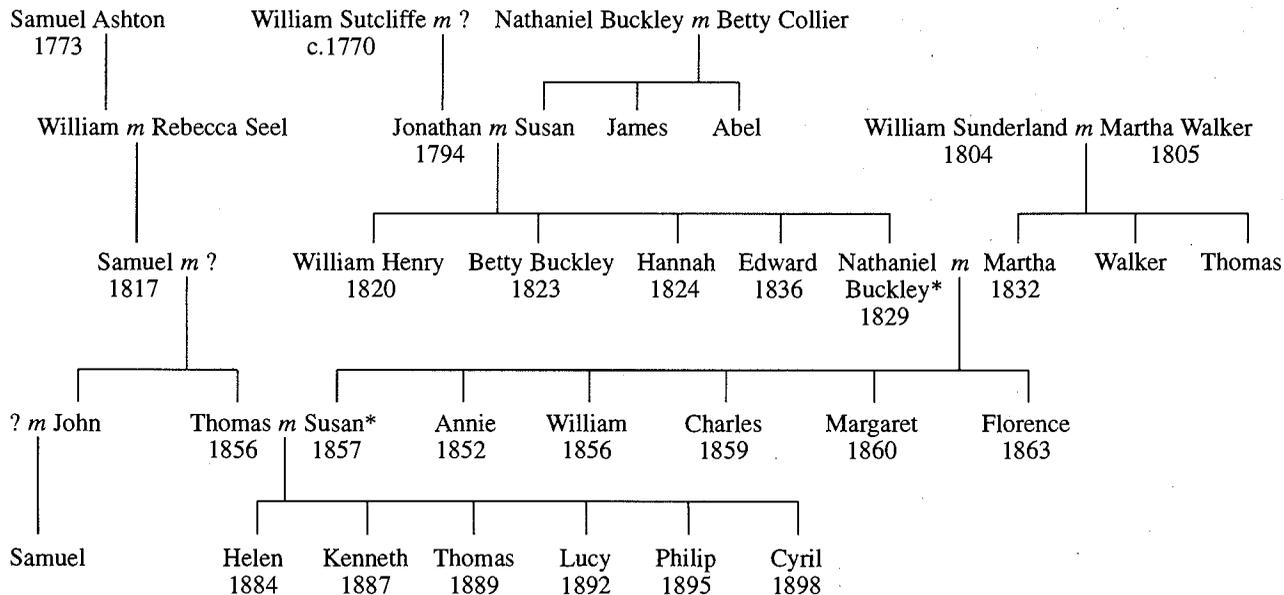
The Miss Surridge who travelled was Florence Sutcliffe, she of the railway accident, Mr Surridge was Nathaniel Buckley Sutcliffe referred to by my father as "the august figure, not far below God" and the fashionably dressed and moustachioed young men were his sons Will and Charlie.

My father was friendly with Mills and persuaded him to form the sketches into a book and seek a publisher. This he did and the book was duly published in 1924 by Chatto and Windus. This was the one book above all others that must never be allowed to leave my parents' house, such was its value to them. It was a vivid evocation of the world of their childhood during the closing years of the nineteenth century remembered by a perceptive contemporary skilled with words.

ANTHONY ASHTON

# ANCESTORS OF THE ASHTONS

(with dates of birth where known)



\* Shown out of order of birth for convenience in drawing chart

## THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND THE CHURCH EXTENSION POLICIES OF THE PRESBYTERY OF LONDON NORTH

### Introduction

As a child growing up in what had once been the Rugby congregation of the Presbyterian Church of England, I was told by older members that the origins of the church were something like this: "During the war, many Presbyterian churches in London were bombed out, and the Presbytery decided that it would be better not to rebuild them, but instead to build new churches in the growing commuter towns around London". The evidence available in the church to support this was two-fold. First, there were the memories of those who had attended the first service in July 1944, and who had been associated with the church ever since, including the building of the premises in the early 1950s. It should be pointed out, however, that none of these people were involved at Presbytery level in this or any other church extension scheme; they were simply participating at a local level. Secondly, there was the communion silver (which was actually EPNS). It bore the inscription of "Notting Hill Presbyterian Church", and the story told to me was that the silver had been rescued from bombed churches, and distributed to new churches in the commuter towns. Such oral evidence, whilst not necessarily untrue, is far from conclusive.

### Background to the Presbytery

The Presbytery of London North was formed in 1876, upon the union that created the Presbyterian Church of England. The vast majority of its congregations date from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, although there are a small number of notable exceptions to this. 1931 seems a good point to begin a study of the effect of the Second World War on the church extension policies of the Presbytery, if only because that is when the extant minute book of the Presbytery church extension committee begins. In that year the Presbytery consisted of sixty-two congregations in England<sup>1</sup>: forty-two in London, nine on the edges of London, and eleven in cities, towns or villages outside London<sup>2</sup>. One of the London congregations and one outside had been formed in the years before Toleration.<sup>3</sup> Another London church dated from 1737<sup>4</sup>, but the bulk of these were later Georgian or later nineteenth-century foundations; beginning in 1867 they had been supplemented by eight on the outskirts of London and another eight in

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1. There were also five overseas congregations: Penang, Perak, Rangoon, Selangor and Singapore. Although these were members of the Presbytery of London North, they are excluded from this study.
  2. Presbyterian Church of England, *Official Handbook*, 1932-33 (contains statistical figures for the year ending 1931).
  3. Aston Tirrold (1662) and Canonbury (1672), although the evidence of a continuous congregation at Canonbury since 1672, until more substantial records in the nineteenth century, is at best tenuous.
  4. Oxendon (1737).

the country<sup>5</sup>. The twentieth century had seen the Presbytery gain its full complement of congregations, with three more in the metropolis, another six on the edge and two in the towns and cities beyond London<sup>6</sup>. The church extension work of the mid to late nineteenth century was thus both great and formative, but the more substantial part of the work of twentieth-century church extension was still to come.

### **The church extension policies before 1939**

The minutes of the church extension committee give a clear picture of the *modus operandi* of the committee and, therefore, the policies under which it operated. The committee saw its role in both pro-active and re-active terms. Its members looked out for suitable areas for the planting of a Presbyterian Church, and it responded to suggestions of such, from members, elders, and ministers. However, the approach to seeking suitable sites appears to have been haphazard, with strategy not obviously appearing to be a primary factor.

Although consultation with other denominations was often strong, the desire of the committee not to poach Christians from other traditions seems, at best, ambivalent. Some might interpret the approach of the committee as to look for large numbers of Scots, and to found Presbyterian congregations for them, even if that meant poaching them from Congregational and other Churches<sup>7</sup>.

The committee's re-active approach may be seen in two quotations from the minutes:

Southall: a letter was read from Mr. W.D.G. Menzies as to forming a new cause in that district. It was resolved to reply asking about a possible nucleus, who might be conferred with.<sup>8</sup>

The matter never appeared again in the minutes.

The Convenor read a letter from Rev. P. Ogilvie, Norwich, giving

5. Decisions about the geographical designation of congregations will always have an element of the arbitrary, but in general those outside the area of the London County Council before 1965 are on the edge of London, and those within that area are in London.
6. Welwyn Garden City Free Church, founded in 1921, affiliating to the Presbyterian Church of England in 1927. St. Columba's Oxford (founded, jointly by the Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church of England, and the United Free Church of Scotland, as a "Presbyterian Chaplaincy" to Oxford University in 1908) became a preaching station, and shortly afterwards a fully sanctioned charge, of the Presbyterian Church of England, in the Presbytery of London North, in 1929.
7. It is rumoured that the Church Extension Committee would look in telephone directories for significant numbers of residents with surnames beginning "Mc..." or "Mac..." in order to select areas ripe for the founding of a Presbyterian Church.
8. Church Extension Committee Minutes 1931-1947, 31 May 1932.

particulars of a promising new development in a new district and soliciting the interest and support of the committee.<sup>9</sup>

Again, nothing came of this development.

An example of the pro-active approach is seen in lengthy investigations concerning a possible new Church in the Romford area:

Mr. Traill<sup>10</sup> reported that he had conducted a service in Romford Congregational Church in connection with the Scottish Association celebration of St. Andrew's Day, and was impressed by the number of Scots present.<sup>11</sup>

A sub-committee, under Traill's chairmanship, was formed to investigate the matter further, to consult in particular with the Scottish Society, and to advertise in the *Romford Recorder*.<sup>12</sup> The sub-committee soon reported<sup>13</sup>, with the conclusion that insufficient members of the Presbyterian congregations at Ilford and Goodmayes were likely to support a new Church in the Romford area<sup>14</sup>, and there had only been one response to the newspaper advertisement. This was echoed when the chairman of the Scottish Society was unable to muster significant support amongst his members.<sup>15</sup>

However, the matter did not end there. A few months later<sup>16</sup> Dr. Voelcker<sup>17</sup>, like Traill a member of the Church Extension Committee, persuaded the committee to examine the matter further. A sub-committee was again appointed, under Voelcker's chairmanship, which suggested that there was a possible nucleus, from the East Ham congregation, who would be prepared to support such a proposed new Church<sup>18</sup>. The sub-committee soon reported that a site in Gidea Park would be the most fruitful.<sup>19</sup> The final reference to the matter in the minutes ends by saying that: "It was agreed that Dr. Voelcker's report should be preserved by being pasted in the minute book."<sup>20</sup>

It was not, and no further mention was made of this matter. It is worth noting

9. *Ibid.*, 4 December 1934.

10. William MacIntosh Traill, Minister of Ilford Presbyterian Church and a member of the Church Extension committee.

11. *Ibid.*, 1 December 1931.

12. *Ibid.*, 29 December 1931.

13. *Ibid.*, 26 January 1932.

14. Although Ilford and Goodmayes had gathered congregations of loyal members, neither was particularly strong.

15. *Ibid.*, 5 April 1932.

16. *Ibid.*, 19 July 1932.

17. Elder and Session Clerk of St John's, Kensington.

18. *Ibid.*, 29 November 1932. This is surprising, as East Ham was a weaker Church than Ilford or Goodmayes.

19. *Ibid.*, 31 January 1933.

20. *Ibid.*, 7 March 1933.

that Dr. Voelcker made a personal donation of £5 in 1933, while the congregation of St. John's Kensington, of which he was the Session Clerk, donated only £9-5s-2d.

It can thus be seen that the church extension policy of the Presbytery was to leave the initiative for church extension proposals to its committee, which might act either on the motion of its own members or on an external approach. This policy was, at best, hit and miss. In many areas it relied upon someone submitting a suggestion that would otherwise have escaped the committee's attention. In areas known to the committee members it relied upon their choice and inclination of what they discovered as potential, rather than starting with a systematic approach of examining all areas of development and then looking at which of those might be suitable for church extension. In the later years there was an attempt at a more strategic approach, evidenced in 1936 by the setting up of sub-committees to look in detail at possibilities for church extension in North London, East London, West London and North-West London<sup>21</sup>. This change of policy followed the retirement of James Shaw as convener, and his replacement by Joseph Johnston, the Minister of St. Andrew's Frognal. Although the nature of the minutes makes anything other than speculation difficult, the change of policy coincides neatly with the change of convener. The powerful character of Dr. Johnston would support such a view.

### Policy during the Second World War

During the early part of the war, policy appeared to continue much as before. However, by 1940, once the realities of the war and all its implications had become clear, things were obviously not going to continue as before. In the early spring of 1940, the committee made its first policy decision relating to the war:

Policy: It was emphasised that the work of the committee should not be allowed to languish owing to the war; that investigations continue into possible sites at Potters Bar and other places; that endeavours should be made to find suitable buildings for preliminary services and for starting Sunday Schools and that people should be encouraged to continue their contributions and even to increase them.<sup>22</sup>

As the committee had considered a site at Norwich in 1934, and had begun to consider work at Potters Bar before the war reached any significant stage, it might be deduced that they were in fact considering development in towns outside London in any event, and certainly not just because of the war. In 1940, work also began in gathering congregations at Luton and Dunstable<sup>23</sup>. However, what is questionable is whether the extent to which such work was undertaken changed as

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21. *Ibid.*, 30 June 1936.

22. *Ibid.*, 26 March 1940.

23. *Ibid.*, 29 October 1940.

a result of the war. In 1940 there was a fraction of the bomb damage that there was by 1945.

It would seem that a key decision was made in 1941<sup>24</sup>. The committee were aware that they had continued to collect considerable sums of money from individuals and churches for their work, which could not now be used for church building, so they decided to use the money to appoint a person instead. This was George M. Nichol, the Minister of Marylebone Presbyterian Church, who was seconded for two days each week to work at Luton, the church at Marylebone being re-imbursed for his time, from the committee's funds. A similar arrangement followed shortly afterwards for the new work at Slough, with A.D. Marcus, the Minister of St. Andrew's Ealing.

This was, however, to be a short term arrangement, for later that year<sup>25</sup> Nichol was appointed full-time Church Extension Agent of the General Assembly. It appears that the significant part of his work was concentrated in London North Presbytery. The proposal to appoint a full-time Church Extension agent was made to the Assembly on the initiative of its Church Extension Committee. This committee, it should be noted, was convened by A.D. Marcus, of St. Andrew's Ealing, who was a prominent member of the London North Presbytery church extension committee<sup>26</sup>.

During the war there was a considerable amount of church extension. By 1945, new work was going on in Aylesbury, Bedford, Bletchley<sup>27</sup>, Buckhurst Hill, Harpenden<sup>28</sup>, Northwood Hills, Oxhey, Peterborough, St. Albans, Rugby and Welwyn<sup>29</sup>, in addition to the work already mentioned<sup>30</sup>. Particular mention should be made of Peterborough, where worship began in a Congregational Church building, which soon led to joint worship. A separate Presbyterian congregation was never established there, as a joint Congregational-Presbyterian Church came directly into being. During the same period, churches were lost at Cricklewood, East India Road, Highbury, Silvertown, Stratford, and Victoria Docks, both through more routine closures and amalgamations, and through bombing and a decision not to rebuild.

The church extension policy was forced to change because of the war-time restriction upon building, which led the committee to expend its financial resources upon employing people, rather than erecting buildings. It also changed direction in planting churches in new towns, rather than in the London suburbs,

24. *Ibid.*, 27 January 1941.

25. *Ibid.*, 30 September 1941.

26. Minutes of the General Assembly, May 6 1941, p. 510.

27. As a branch of Bedford.

28. As a branch of St. Albans.

29. In a different area (Oaklands, Mardley Hill) of the city from the Free Church.

30. Not all of these came to fruition. Bletchley, Buckhurst Hill, Northwood Hills and Welwyn did not proceed beyond initial services. Harpenden was a branch of St. Albans, although the congregation gradually became part of Harpenden Congregational Church.

although this was beginning to happen in any case. It would seem that the impetus for these new movements came from G.M Nichol, who was a significant force for the work of the committee from 1941. The War Damage Act was not passed until 1943, after the general direction had already changed, but the commission created by the Act eventually brought significant sums of money which were used to build churches for the new congregations that had by then been planted.

### **Policy after the Second World War**

In 1947 G.M. Nichol became convenor of the Presbytery's Church Extension committee. The focus of the committee did not return to buildings after the war, but continued in much the same vein that had begun during the war under Nichol's leadership; congregations continued to be founded in the towns around London until about 1960. The emphasis remained upon the founding of a viable congregation; buildings generally came later. In Bedford, however, no building was erected as the Presbyterians met in the Moravian building; the two congregations eventually united in 1960. Thus, by the time of the union in 1972 (after which the London North Presbytery ceased to exist) there were twenty-four congregations in towns and villages outside London, nine in suburbs on the edge of London, and twenty-two in inner London<sup>31</sup>. Although no new congregations had been founded in inner London, fourteen of the twenty-four congregations outside London had been formed since the outbreak of war in 1939.

### **Conclusions**

It is reasonable to conclude that the church extension policies of the Presbytery of London North were changed by the Second World War. Whether the Presbytery would have founded any further congregations in inner London is doubtful, but whether they would have made the break from tending the growing suburbs around the edge of London to planting congregations in the towns further afield is also doubtful.

What is quite certain is that the decision to spend money upon people, not buildings, was a vital one for the growth and development of Presbyterianism within the bounds of this Presbytery. Furthermore, the zealous approach of G. M. Nichol, and the foresight of the General Assembly to appoint him to this role in a full-time capacity was invaluable in the growth of the church in this Presbytery. It seems to be due to him that the emphasis did not return to buildings after the end of the war.

Relationships with other churches, especially Congregational churches, merit further consideration. In the 1930s the Presbyterians were making no significant consultations with other Churches. They were not, for instance, comparing their plans with those of the London Congregational Union, as may be seen from the Romford negotiations. Similarly, Buckhurst Hill was a small place that had had a

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31. Figures from the *Official Handbook* of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1971-1972.

flourishing Congregational Church since 1866, but the Presbyterians still felt the need to consider planting a Church there. With such separate ways of doing things at local level, it is little surprise that the national Scheme of Union between Congregationalists and Presbyterians was rejected. However, this was followed by a national covenant between the two Churches in 1951. Thereafter it seems that there was more consultation and appropriate division of labour, as seen, for instance, in the founding of a Congregational Church at Northwood Hills, and a Presbyterian Church at South Oxhey.

In 1972, the Presbytery consisted of fifty-five congregations in England, compared with the sixty-two of 1928. Had the policy of church extension in the new towns not been conceived, then the Presbytery would more likely have consisted of forty-one churches. This would have resulted in a weaker Presbytery, a Presbyterian Church of England that was 5% smaller, and larger areas of the country without Presbyterians to join the Congregationalists in the 1972 union. So, returning to the story that sparked this paper<sup>32</sup> it would seem that there were significant policy changes as a result of Second World War, and that these were thanks to the hard work of G.M. Nichol. It was Nichol who changed the policies and led in new directions, but it was the War which put him into the role which changed the shape of the London North Presbytery.

MICHAEL HOPKINS

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32. The Communion silver is in fact mentioned in the Church Extension Committee Minutes of 10 October 1947, when they refer to the handover of Communion silver from the Historical Society to the Rugby Congregation. Transactions of this nature were seemingly common practice, and there may have been a large store as artefacts from Notting Hill were in the care of the committee for over twenty years.

## PARALLEL ORDINATIONS (CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH) : BRISTOL 1984 AND 1985

The failure of the Covenant in 1982 caused considerable anguish to many Anglicans, not least in the Diocese of Bristol which, under a succession of ecumenically minded Bishops, had taken an actively positive attitude to the development of inter-church relationships and consequent ecumenical action. As a result, the provision of church life and ministry on a joint basis in the new conurbation of West Swindon (roughly the size of Taunton or Salisbury, but without the basic infrastructure) became possible, although the Roman Catholics decided that the population of the area was what they needed for a Catholic parish. West Swindon grew as a series of urban villages, each with a church staffed by an Anglican priest and a Free Church Minister. The Revd Helen Drummond, United Reformed Church, was appointed to the second one, Shaw, in 1985.

Quite unconnected with this development, another pressure led to Services of Parallel Ordination in Bristol Cathedral in July 1984 and June 1985. But again they arose from an ecumenical attitude which enabled churches to seek ways both of working together in Christian harmony and of implementing them.

The Bristol School of Ministry (so named from 1981) had a quiet beginning in 1977 when a Diocesan Course was set up to train Non-Stipendiary Ministers for the Church of England, in association with the already existing course at Gloucester. The first Director, Canon Peter Coleman, left in 1981 to become Archdeacon of Worcester (and subsequently Bishop of Crediton) and was followed by Canon David Isitt, then a Residentiary Canon of Bristol Cathedral. At the same time the number of students greatly increased thanks to the new opportunities for women's ministry in the Church of England, students coming from other parts of the Diocese, and the decision of the South West Province of the United Reformed Church to use the Course to train Auxiliary (now Non-Stipendiary) Ministers in the Bristol area. Mary Piggott and Basil Rogers duly enrolled, followed by Sheila Scarr.

The effect of studying and worshipping together, with all the close friendships engendered thereby, led to the question: "Why should we not be ordained together?" It seems clear that Canon Isitt raised the possibility with the Bishop of Bristol (John Tinsley, formerly Professor of Theology at the University of Leeds), as a letter from Canon Martin Reardon of the Board of Mission and Unity of the General Synod of the Church of England to the bishop (dated 28 September 1983) makes the distinction between a parallel ordination, to which he could see no theological objection, and a joint ordination, to which he could see several. Martin Reardon offered to make discreet enquiries of various experts on the matter of a parallel ordination; and it seems that the Bishop also consulted some of his fellow bishops.

Initially the Bishop felt that he would not have the full support of the episcopal bench. The later reaction of at least one Anglo-Catholic parish in Swindon and of the Church Union (which was given prominence in the *Church Times*, 6 June 1984) reinforced this view. But, in true Bristol fashion in those days, the

matter did not rest there. On 17 January 1984 the Moderator of the SW Province (Michael Hubbard) and I (as Ecumenical Officer for the Province) met with Bishop John Tinsley and Canon David Isitt at the Bishop's House in Bristol. We went into that meeting feeling that the idea would not be possible; by the end of the morning we were convinced it ought to be. Such is the pressure of the Holy Spirit.

The principle behind a Parallel Ordination is the Lund Dictum of 1952 that churches should do together everything that they were not conscientiously only able to do apart. Therefore David Isitt and I were asked to look at both orders of service for ordination and draw up a service in accord with the Lund Dictum, recognising that the actual acts of ordination would be separate, but in the context of the united service: episcopal ordination of the Anglican ordinands, conciliar of the Reformed.

As the Anglican service always includes Holy Communion the question of presidency at that part would be another thorny question. We left that to the Bishop and Moderator and for 1984 the Bishop was officially president without prejudice to the future. Bishop Tinsley would have preferred a shared presidency, but it was a case of "not yet".

The main area of overlap lay in the questions to the ordinands. Some, such as giving due respect to those in authority, were clearly Anglican; while others, such as exercising one's ministry in accordance with the "Statement of the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church", which had been read in the Service, were clearly for the United Reformed Church only. But the majority of questions were applicable to all, and I was fortified in knowing from John Huxtable that, at the time of Union in 1972, Archbishop Michael Ramsey had seen the United Reformed Church questions to ordinands and had awarded them an A+.

After a wry observation that United Reformed Church ministers have to confess faith in the Trinity while Anglicans did not (ASB) we looked at the questions and decided to use the better formulation as we saw it: sometimes ASB sometimes URC. Sadly this proved to be the point at which we ran into trouble with the lawyers who decreed that in these circumstances answering a question was equivalent to taking a vow and that one could not have ministers of the Church of England taking different vows. The responsible United Reformed Church national committee<sup>1</sup> took the view that if the intention is clear the precise wording is not of prime importance. That solved our immediate problem, but it highlighted once again an as yet unresolved tension facing all ecumenical ventures: the tension between mandatory wording and that of a directory – verbal expression and the meaning it is to convey – and the assumption that the mandatory *must* prevail.

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1. Doctrine and Worship Committee. Letter from Bernard Thorogood (General Secretary of the United Reformed Church) to Michael Hubbard (Moderator of SW Province) of 20 March 1984 relating a conversation with Dr Colin Thompson, Chairman of that Committee.

Nevertheless, we added a question for all to answer by the words “I do”– “Do you promise as a Minister of the Church to seek its purity, peace and true prosperity, to cherish brotherly love towards all other churches and to endeavour always to build up the one holy catholic apostolic Church?” (The wording is primarily a United Reformed Church question; in 1985 the word “brotherly” was omitted. A move to inclusive language?) The lawyers did not object.

The understanding which characterised all these discussions cannot be overemphasised. At one point Bishop Tinsley observed that it is United Reformed Church practice for a minister to be ordained in the place where he or she is to serve. So, would our folk mind the service being in the Cathedral? Our reply was that the Church is the people, and if they were happy for the Cathedral to be the Meeting House there would be no problem. In the event they were, and came to the service in droves. Equally heartily were we to approve of the practice at Bristol of conducting ordinations in the nave (leaving the choir in the chancel), the officiating ministers being on a dais at right-angles to the norm so that the congregation could be around and see clearly: splendid Reformed practice.

Throughout the discussions and the subsequent Services the United Reformed Church was made to feel equally at home in the Cathedral. One recalled the words of Arnold Thomas (Minister of Highbury Congregational Church, Bristol, 1876-1923) at the end of his address on “The Witness of Congregationalism”, delivered in Bristol Cathedral on Christmas Eve 1922,<sup>2</sup> in which he said that if he had been a younger man he would have been able to look forward to worshipping there

No more stranger or a guest  
But as a child at home

and felt that we had had a glimpse of the fulfilment of his vision.

The Service did follow the Lund Dictum. We entered to music and, after a welcome from the Dean and the normal invitation by the Chairman of the United Reformed Church Bristol District Council to the Moderator to preside, opening Responses led to the Cathedral resounding to the singing by the vast congregation of “All people that on earth do dwell”. Philip Morgan, General Secretary of the British Council of Churches and that year Moderator of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church, preached. The “prayers of the people” were in the Reformed Tradition of free prayer.

Some who later saw the 1984 Order of Service remarked that there was no part for the Ordination of Priests. The answer to this was that the holders of the copyright of the ASB would only permit copy for a particular service, and that on this occasion there were no Deacons to be priested. In 1985 there were, and that

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2. *Arnold Thomas of Bristol – Collected Papers and Addresses, with a Memoir by Nathaniel Micklem* (1925) p 169. An address on “The Witness of Congregationalism” delivered in Bristol Cathedral, Christmas Eve 1922.

part of the service is included in the service order for that year, immediately after the ordination of Deacons.<sup>3</sup>

Because the decision to proceed with a Parallel Ordination was not settled until after Easter 1984 the Bishop and Canon felt it right to offer a solely Anglican service of ordination on Sunday 1 July to any who for conscientious reasons or other good cause could not take part in the service on Friday 6 July. All who expected to be ordained at that time were given the choice and some trained elsewhere for the stipendiary ministry chose the parallel option.

The fact that one of the United Reformed Church ordinands was a woman created a problem for her because, before 1993, women in the Church of England could only be ordained as Deacons. The Movement of the Ordination of Women was therefore in the habit of distributing leaflets to the assembling congregation and making a verbal protest during the service. Mary Piggott met their leaders and made it clear that if they insisted on the verbal protest she would not go forward. Agreement was reached that leaflets would be given out in silence, and all went well.

After the four of us had agreed on the Order of Service the Bishop said that he would have to consult the Archbishop of Canterbury (Robert Runcie); to which I observed that I would have to consult the Bristol District Council of the United Reformed Church. The Council were splendid in their discussion and in the consequent wholehearted approval and support.<sup>4</sup> The reported reply of the Archbishop was: "if you can't do that you can't do anything".<sup>5</sup>

From the Dean's welcome to the moment when the West Doors of the Cathedral were flung open for the newly ordained ministers to go out – followed by all of us – was a deeply moving and spiritually charged occasion. The parallel acts of ordination led us to learn much of what each tradition treasures, while the other parts brought home how much we are one in Christ Jesus.

Bishop John Tinsley retired in April 1985, so it was his Suffragan, Bishop Peter Firth, Bishop of Malmesbury, who presided with the Moderator at the service on 29 June 1985. Three United Reformed Church Ministers were ordained, including one who had trained for the stipendiary ministry at Mansfield College, Oxford. David Dale (Moderator of the United Reformed Church General Assembly 1985-6) preached the sermon.

Vision had been translated into action and hopes were high for the coming years. This was not to be. The new Bishop of Bristol (Barry Rogerson) decided to close the School of Ministry. The reasons given were both academic and financial, but this action was taken without any consultation with the United Reformed Church and we had five students ready to begin the course and expecting to do so.

3. Letter from Bernard Thorogood to Michael Hubbard 2 October 1984 and reply from Ronald Bocking 30 October 1984.

4. Bristol District Council Meeting of 29 March 1984. Minute 6(h). Item 6 was the Pastoral Committee Report.

5. i.e. the full Service, including the Ordination of Priests.

They moved to the United Reformed Church Course: I taught the part on Dissenting History, followed by that on the Old Testament. Will Minnis (Minister of Trinity United Reformed Church Bristol) followed with that on Calvin, while Kenneth Hibberd of Exeter continued his responsibility for sermon class and related matters. With responsibility for a church and more widely in the District, Province, and beyond, this was proving a strain for all of us. Therefore the appointment of David Cornick as Training Officer for the SW Province was warmly welcomed on many grounds, not least that he took as his first priority responsibility for these students.

The Parallel Ordinations of 1984 and 1985 were a sign of what is possible when people catch a vision and trust one another in seeking to discover where God is leading. In the event they proved to be part of our history that many today have never heard of, but they were a pointer – maybe ahead of their time. And it cannot have been accidental that they took place in a city where Christians of different denominations rejoiced in a history of ecumenical exploration and adventure.

RONALD BOCKING

## REVIEWS

*Burn Holy Fire: Religion in Lewes since the Reformation.* By Jeremy Goring, The Lutterworth Press, 2003. £17.50, pp. 184. ISBN 0 7188 3040 7

This is an excellent little book, a model for all such accounts of a town and its religious history. Jeremy Goring is not only knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the history of Dissent in Lewes, but able to relate it to the overall religious history of England for the benefit of the novice. Readers of this Journal will be particularly interested in the central role of Westgate Chapel, a place where Presbyterian and Independent Nonconformists shared a building, and even a minister, well into the eighteenth century. As if that were not enough, following the Evangelical Revival Lewes was a hotbed of Calvinistic Methodism: no fewer than five chapels were created, of which the Congregational Tabernacle came to be the largest. The Arminian Methodists always came a poor second and the Church of England was marginalised by 1851. The final touch for our own readers is Jeremy Goring's tribute to Dr Jessie Ridge, a member of the United Reformed Church History Society, and a diligent compiler of her own family history in the context of Lewes Dissent.

Lewes enjoys a reputation as one of the finest small towns in England, rising from the Priory ruins through streets of medieval and Regency houses, boasting patterned flints and mathematical tiles, to the Castle. It was last in the national news when it was severely flooded, the waters of the Ouse swelling to engulf shops, houses and the newly restored Jireh chapel. The same Jireh chapel holds a key role in the famous Lewes Bonfire Nights. Grasping the life-line offered to it by Ian Paisley's Free Presbyterian Church, Jireh keeps up its traditional role as the focus of opposition to the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church. Jeremy Goring shows how the "no popery" aspects of Bonfire Night in Lewes only emerged as the nineteenth-century Ritualist controversy arrived in Lewes. We read how John Mason Neale was besieged by a hostile mob and, having failed to learn his lesson, returned the next day to be stoned. Lewes in East Sussex was the Evangelical Protestant counterbalance to High Church Chichester away in West Sussex.

We are reminded of parish churches whose chancels fell down in the eighteenth century and were only rebuilt and re-pewed by Victorian enthusiasts. Regardless of denominational label it is the long-staying ministers who earn the town's respect and support. Chapel buildings are re-opened under new auspices. The Methodists find themselves sharing with the Unitarians. The Congregationalists pull down their building in the town centre in the 1950s and rebuild in the suburbs, a move which under current conservation policies would be quite impossible. Despite the title there is an introductory chapter on religion in Lewes before the Reformation. Scholarly notes and an index of persons in addition to the general index make this a particularly useful book in comparison with so many local histories.

STEPHEN ORCHARD

*Philosophy, Dissent and Nonconformity, 1689-1920.* By Alan P.F. Sell, Cambridge, James Clarke & Co., 2003. £50.00. pp.296. ISBN 0227 679 77 6

Well-known for his work in Dissenting history besides his distinguished work in the fields of the history of philosophy and the borderlands of philosophy and theology, Professor Sell has here added to his huge list of publications an aperçu of those inter-relations he has found in these studies. It will be a work read with as much interest by those who are mindful of the great contribution made to theological education by the Dissenting Academies and their successors as by those who are interested simply in the history of philosophy over the three and half centuries concerned. Beginning with an account of the place which the Academies gave to philosophy in the eighteenth century, he devotes a special chapter to the contribution made by the eighteenth-century Dissenters to Moral Philosophy before once more giving us a review of the place accorded philosophy by the nineteenth-century colleges (the academies that remained in existence having become theological colleges) and once again devoting a special chapter to the consideration afforded Philosophy (and Apologetics). The nicely brief "Epilogue" rounds off the book with a tribute to the "many useful contributions", noting intriguingly a contrast between the eighteenth-century Dissenters and the nineteenth-century Nonconformists and also the significant contribution of Scottish education.

Turning to the substance of the book, we can begin at the beginning, the second chapter. This study of "Philosophy and Philosophers" opens with a very brief account of the theological background to the work of the eighteenth-century philosophers in the Academies which, though interesting and informative, does not cast any real light on their work. In view of the fact that the account of their philosophical resources or background is brief and dense one would have readily foregone that introductory section to have had a fuller discussion of the complex history of philosophy here concerned. Indeed it takes the author a little while to get into his stride, because he painstakingly itemizes the various academies and tutors before coming to the significant figures. Of these the first is Isaac Watts and we are treated to a neat description of his *Logick*, a book probably unknown to the greater part of the theological public. An equally welcome appearance is the figure of Philip Doddridge whose philosophical acumen is recognized as significant even if it does not compare with the distinction of his hymn-writing. It is because Richard Price's name has not so far been mentioned that a separate chapter is devoted to the "Eighteenth Century Dissenters' Contribution to Moral Philosophy". While we have had the magisterial treatment of Price given by D.O. Thomas (reviewing which is a pleasure recalled over the years), Professor Sell's is the first account of Price's work in the context of his fellow-Dissenters who also applied themselves to problems of moral philosophy, a story he describes as the "transition from what we *might* call Puritan ethics to modern ethics". This again is one of the nuggets of gold in the book which one would have

been glad to have given more space to allow its brilliance to shine properly. In Wales especially, there is a need to have Price's remarkable genius properly recognized, the tercentenary of his death having passed without note. Together with Price, Watts, Belsham, and Taylor are given consideration; but what makes the chapter really significant is the final section on the theme of freedom where I was particularly glad to see Price's contribution being noted since this, to my mind, remains a classical analysis of the problem.

The progress of the nineteenth century into the twentieth is a scene that might be thought more familiar to us and yet only a few pages make it clear that most of the characters in the drama are strangers to us. Even names such as A.M. Fairbairn and G. Dawes Hicks, so well-known fifty years ago, are barely recognizable by contemporary theologians, let alone philosophers. Here once again I sound a patriotic note as I regret very much that D. Miall Edwards is given such perfunctory notice. It is true that the generation that learned Philosophy of Religion from his masterpiece of a little book is probably long gone – but the memory of that should not be interred with their bones. Professor Sell ranges over the whole field of the theological colleges' history, providing a summary account of the work done in all of them. Consequently there was inevitably a danger that one would not see the wood for the trees. To use a cartographic analogy, the early maps of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries often give us a better picture of landscape than the more detailed maps produced after 1850. So, tentative though Professor Sell's conclusion is, the claim that philosophy "enjoyed its greatest degree of stability in the Unitarian institutions" seems to me debatable. I have mentioned Miall Edwards: another author who receives only slight notice here (and no notice later) is John Oman, H.H. Farmer's predecessor at Westminster College, who was greatly revered by that saintly philosopher of religion. Not much read, his work has nevertheless received some significant study in fairly recent years. In the substantial treatment that follows in chapter 5 one again finds oneself on something of a conducted tour, admiring the guide's comfortable progress and his erudition but wishing that one could stay the fleeting moment. I would single out James Martineau as someone deserving more and closer attention, especially as he too – like Oman – was carefully studied towards the end of the last century.

As an account of the place of philosophy in the curriculum of Nonconformist education, this will disappoint the historian of education who would expect to find much more careful and detailed documentary evidence. Yet such a reader will find much to set him on his way in that kind of study. This is clearly a pioneering work as an investigation of the contribution of Dissent and Nonconformity to Philosophy. It is only sons of Dissent who have for so long been lovers of Athens who will register disappointments like those mentioned. All will agree that what Professor Sell calls "a modest memorial" is a welcome and fitting tribute to the notable contribution of Dissenting tradition to theological education and the history of philosophy.

JOHN HEYWOOD THOMAS

*Where Reason Fails.* By Donald Hilton, published by Free to Believe, available from Martin Camroux, 24 Parklands Road, Swindon, SN3 1NG. £1.50, pp.20.

This pamphlet is based on a sermon delivered by Donald Hilton on the two-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of Isaac Watts's death. The author praises Watts the poet for rephrasing the psalms in such a way as to go beyond biblical words to the ideas which lie behind them. This, he maintains, is the mission of the church in all ages, to "express ancient truth in words and thought-forms that a new generation can understand". Underlying this analysis is Donald Hilton's belief that faith has elliptical foci, and that to be creative and constructive it must be based on the recognition of paradox rather than on emphasising one focus over any other - be it revelation, reason or emotion. For him, Isaac Watts encapsulated this in his hymns and is thus both worthy of remembrance and a fine example to us of how to engage in the work of mission.

It is easy to raise critical questions from such a brief work. Nevertheless, several points occurred to me which I found myself questioning and wondering whether they needed fuller explanation. I was uncomfortable with associating love so exclusively with emotion (pp.5-6ff). In an age which understands love romantically and gains much of its imagery for that love from Hollywood films, love as emotion may be understandable. But is not *agape* something more? Is it not also a commitment and therefore an act of will? As such it suggests that not only do we need to recognise the place of both reason *and* emotion, but that the differentiation between cold reason and naked emotion may be a dualism which is unsustainable.

Furthermore, it is something of a commonplace now to say that words are in themselves not to be trusted and certainly not to be credited with the kind of inerrant authority given them by biblical literalists. However, words are also one of the few means of communication that we have: it is, after all (and paradoxically) a wordy document which has informed me that words are intended to develop and change according to necessity and understanding. That is a superficial point. More substantially, the pamphlet suggests that a wedge can be driven between ideas and the expression of ideas. It seems incredible to me that we could really suggest a kind of Platonic realm where ideas exist in their fullness as if awaiting the day when they can receive a full description. This is not to say that we do not discover new things which encroach on any perceived inherited wisdom, but instead to suggest that the inherited wisdom does not take the form of a disembodied idea, but the form of ideas expressed in language. This relates to one of Donald Hilton's substantive points which is that God is beyond description and imagination. There can be no argument against this, apart from the gospel paradox which is that in Christ the elusive God is "made known" (Jn. 1:18). God remains a mystery, but a knowable mystery. As knowable mystery, we have to be open to meet with him in many different ways, through reason, revelation, emotion and so on. But if that mystery is knowable at all, it will have to be expressed in language. Such language might change as the years pass and understanding matures, but words have to be more trustworthy than is suggested

here or else we will find that there is nothing that can be said. After all, the appeal of the pamphlet is to the words of Isaac Watts. Are we to conclude that his ideas have been accurately interpreted and his words accurately understood? (It must be said that the impression is gained that Watts was a proto-liberal).

This pamphlet hints at many of the issues which are important for theological debate not simply for the academy but for the local church and for all people of faith. It does not seek to offer answers, and I am not sure that it suggests a sustainable way forward. It certainly points us to the fact that the United Reformed Church, like other denominations, must continue to engage in theological discussion if it is to have a vibrant mission in the twenty-first century.

ROBERT POPE

*The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion: A Sect in Action in Eighteenth-Century England.* By Alan Harding, Oxford University Press, 2003. £65.00, pp.430. ISBN 019 926 369 4.

It will soon be forty years since a tin box was opened in the Cheshunt College office and fingers began to undo the tape around bundles of letters which had been packed like this since they left Trevecca in March 1792. In 1965 the only published source for the history of the Countess of Huntingdon and her Connexion was A. Seymour's biography and its derivatives. Victor Murray had in hand a biography which was never published. Edwin Welch was soon introduced to the papers and through his efforts the Cheshunt archive was handsomely preserved, listed and copied to microfilm. Welch pursued the Countess's correspondence around the globe and wrote his own biography of her before his death. Others benefited from his labours and there have been two further substantial lives of Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon. Another researcher who has been working at the Cheshunt archive for most of this time is Alan Harding, the author of the latest book, who acknowledges his debt to Edwin Welch and to the man who delivered the definitive account of the Countess's college in 1968, the year of its bi-centenary, Geoffrey Nuttall.

Harding has used his time well to read and reflect on the large amount of material. He deals confidently with the disputes between the Countess and the Wesleys with as good an account of their differences as anyone has written. He has diligently considered all the college correspondence, resulting in the fullest continuous account of life at Trevecca and the identification of further students. The history of the Connexion is more difficult to follow because it is complex, like the Countess herself. There was no one plan, no Wesleyan control of quality and quantity around the country. Harding takes no final view on whether the Countess was arbitrary or pragmatic - the evidence can be read either way. The long chapter on the life of the Connexion threatens to lose its way at one or two points because the story is complex. However, it incorporates much of the first-hand evidence from the archive in a form which makes it more readily accessible.

Faithfulness to the archive is both the strength and the weakness of Harding's

account. Because it came from Trevecca the Cheshunt archive provides, with the supplementary material Harding has noted, a good account of college life. The material is handled confidently and related to the complementary chapter on the doctrinal disputes within Methodism. Fletcher's role as college President is well-understood and described. The tutor, Benson, is sympathetically evoked. Relations with Howell Harris and other leaders of the Welsh revival are described. More than that, Harding shows how reluctantly Fletcher was driven to separate himself from the college when the Countess made her friends choose between herself and John Wesley and the impact of these controversies in the Trevecca community. Most histories of Trevecca go blank at this point in 1772 and have little to tell us about the next twenty years. Harding has a good account of the tutorial arrangements which followed and the role the Countess herself played at Trevecca. That she stayed there often and regarded it as one of her bases is evident from the archive collection itself.

The weakness of being faithful to the archive comes out in the account of the Connexion. It is difficult to synthesise what is random. The nature of the Connexion is that it was personal, held together in the mind of the Countess herself. There are no minute books before that of the Apostolic Society, late in her life, and only sketchy evidence of any systematic handling of its affairs. Harding's solution is to categorise the activities of the Connexion as best he can and then illustrate his points from the correspondence. This makes a great deal of useful information and mature insights available to the reader. However, it would be better if the writer stood back from this material more often, to give us the broad picture of what the Connexion was like and how it related to the contemporary religious scene.

This leads us to the dog which does not bark. Researches in Derbyshire material and Geoffrey Nuttall's work on Lincolnshire suggest a much more co-operative approach to evangelism between the Countess and Thomas Wilson than Harding is able to find in the archive material. What is often mentioned here, the conflict between itineracy and settled ministry of the kind found in registered Dissenting chapels, is at the heart of the Huntingdon-Wilson axis. Ashbourne, for which part of the necessary material is to be found in the Cheshunt archive, was a case in point. Edwin Welch brought together other material from the county archives to show, amongst other things, how that struggle persisted after the Countess's death. We know that Thomas Wilson's brother, Stephen, married Ann Collet West, daughter of Daniel West, a city merchant who acted for both Whitefield and the Countess. Apart from his association with Whitefield himself Thomas Wilson cared for his brother's widow and children after Stephen's early death. The absence of much detailed archive material should not blind us to the significance of what we have.

Research into the links between Thomas Wilson and the Connexion would have strengthened a further admirable section of Harding's book. He contrasts the Wesleyan Connexion, though it was not called that at the time, which was built out of the Evangelical Awakening with the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion. He points out that many of "her" churches, like those of Whitefield's and Rowland

Hill's connexions, found their way via Independency to the Congregational Union in due course. This was not what she wanted, though she trained at Trevecca some of the architects of nineteenth-century Congregationalism, such as John Clayton. These Evangelical Independents mirrored the Methodists to some extent by setting up county associations for mutual support and encouragement. These were not itinerant circuits, but nor were they Presbyterian classes. It was from these ministerial meetings that county unions and national unions eventually sprang and took the name "Congregational".

While Edwin Welch has given a good concise account of the legal issues which vexed the Countess of Huntingdon in her relationship with the Church of England, a knowledgeable Anglican like Alan Harding is able to draw out more of the doctrinal nuances. He is particularly good at describing the characteristic indecision of the Countess as she reached the point of "the Secession", when ministers were ordained effectively as Dissenters, although she clung like Wesley to the notion that the Church of England would eventually come round to an accommodation with the Methodists. "Eventually" was sooner than the two hundred and thirty years which have now elapsed before even the Anglican-Methodist Covenant agreement has come about, not in itself a resolution of the ordination issue.

If the Welch biography brought us a more human Selina Hastings, the loving wife and solicitous mother, Harding has brought us the less dogmatic woman. Her ability to be trenchant and to impose her will in an arbitrary fashion has disguised some of the subtlety of her thoughts and her moments of indecisiveness. She was not always so sure of herself as her followers wanted her to be. She fell out with people because sometimes they stayed constant while she changed and adapted. More particularly, Harding has separated the early religious enthusiast, co-operating with all kinds of kindred spirits, from the conscientious leader of a Connexion, trying to keep those she saw as trouble-makers out of the plans for succession. The strengths that Harding has brought to this account of the Countess and her life's work will ensure this book will join the authoritative works of reference to which all future writers on Selina Hastings will turn.

STEPHEN ORCHARD

*The Revd. Dr. Robert Wilde* By David R. Viles. Huntingdon, Westmeare Publications, 2003. pp. 151, £6.99. ISBN 09533940626. Obtainable from the Norris Museum, St. Ives, Cambridgeshire, PE27 5BX (+£1 p&p).

David Viles not only managed to exceed my worst fears, but surpassed my best expectations. It can be difficult for a biography of someone relatively unknown to command widespread interest, but this book is well worth reading. I had not heard of Robert Wilde and now feel that I know him well. This is an exceptionally well researched and written biography that deserves to be widely read. It is long enough to cover all of Robert Wilde's life and work in some detail but short enough for the reader not to lose interest.

It should certainly be read by anyone connected with St. Ives, if only to understand the man behind what has become the quaint local custom of children rolling dice for Bibles. The bequest and conditions seem entirely in keeping with Wilde's character.

However, the book deserves a circulation beyond St. Ives. Of the many shades of ejected ministers of the Restoration, Robert Wilde was one of the more unusual. He was Presbyterian, of a moderate nature, but a firm Royalist, and a man of independent means, a poet and mystic. Wilde was clearly wealthy, to judge by the (in today's terms) tens of thousands of pounds that he freely lent his offspring, earned from his poetry.

David Viles has done us a great service in such a thorough and well written history.

MICHAEL HOPKINS

*Christ Church United Reformed Church Port Sunlight: The First One Hundred Years 1904-2004: A Celebration of the Centenary* By Kenneth J. Howell. Pp. 37. Wirral: Creativo Ltd. 2004. £5 inc. p&p. ISDN 0-9545379-1-2 (obtainable from Christ Church URC Port Sunlight, P O Box 207, Wirral, CH62 5WJ)

Two of the most surprising of our twentieth-century churches – Christ Church, Port Sunlight (William and Segar Owen) and St. George's, Thornton Hough (James Lomax Simpson) – were built within a few miles and a few years of each other in the century's first decade. Their quality is undeniable yet, although they work remarkably well for Free Church worship, neither makes the slightest concession to what outsiders (and most insiders) might consider to be a Dissenting style. St. George's is Norman; Christ Church is Free Gothic. They are bound to fascinate historians because they say a great deal about their builder, the 1st Viscount Leverhulme of the Western Isles, and his son and grandson (the title became extinct in 2000). Nonconformists will gaze in perplexed admiration: they are beautiful to look at and to be in; they are beautifully maintained – but can they in any sense be *Congregational*, or indeed *Reformed*? This reviewer believes that they can be seen as such; a reading of their minute books and even a sympathetic viewing of their fabric can suggest that that is what, against all the odds, they really have become. Kenneth Howell, elder and treasurer at Christ Church, presents facts and chronology; sensibly he leaves analysis and conjecture for another occasion. What makes this a memorable centenary celebration is the quality of production and illustration worthy of a superb and too little-known Arts and Crafts church. Now that Christ Church has been served so well, I hope that a similar celebration will be made of St. George's.

JCGB