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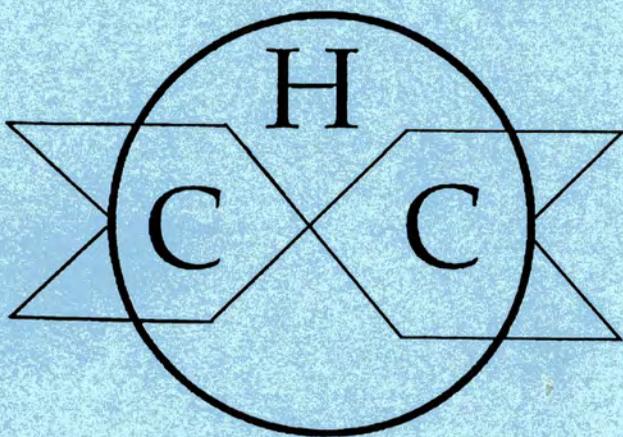
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The Congregational History Circle Magazine

Volume 4 No 3 Spring 2001

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EDITORIAL

We welcome to our pages Dr Barry Coward, of the School of History, Birkbeck College, University of London whose lecture to the Deputies of the Three Denominations, given in November 2000, we here reproduce. His discussion of Cromwell and his significance for Nonconformist history is to return to a subject close to the hearts of our Victorian forebears. One doubts whether Cromwell was a hero to Elsie Chamberlain while the psalm singing Oliver Cromwell would surely have found most of the hymns, commended to us by Derek Watson, not acceptable. Undoubtedly the Puritans of Shrewsbury would have shared many of Cromwell's misgivings on this score, although they may well have approved of Elsie's obstinate stand for principle, her tenacious grip on the freedom she felt Congregationalism gave her, and her resistance to those who seemed to threaten it. We note also that April 10th, 2001 marks the tenth anniversary of Elsie Chamberlain's death.

NEWS AND VIEWS

For Your Information

Friends of Professor Clyde Binfield, a CHC member and the editor of the Journal of the United Reformed History Society, have organised a conference in his honour to be held at Westminster College, Cambridge, from 12th to 15th July, 2001. The theme of the conference is Modern Christianity and Cultural Aspirations and speakers will include Prof Hugh McLeod, Prof Richard Carwardine, Prof David Bebbington, Prof W R Ward, Dr Tim Larsen, Dr David Thompson, Dr Elaine Kaye and others. Details may be obtained from Mrs Margaret Thompson, URCHS, Westminster College, Madingley Road, Cambridge, CB3 0AA.

The service in memory of the ejected ministers and their families will be held on 18th August, 2001 at Cole Abbey Presbyterian Church, Queen Victoria Street, London, at 3pm. Prior to the service a posy will be placed at the commemorative stone in Fleet Lane, off Farringdon Street at 2.15pm and prayers said.

Publications

Chipping Local History Society (of Chipping, near Preston, Lancashire) has published The Diary of the Reverend Peter Walkden for 1733-4. It contains over 500 pages, is handsomely printed and should be of especial interest to those interested in Lancashire Nonconformity and the history of

Independency. Peter Walkden (1684-1769) attended the Dissenting academy in Manchester 1706-9 and was ordained at Garsdale, near Sedbergh. In 1711 he became the minister of the Independent churches at Hesketh Lane and at Newton in Bowland. In 1738 he moved to the Tabernacle at Hillgate, Stockport where he remained until his death.

Walkden probably kept a diary for most of his life. In 1860 some volumes of his diary were found among rubbish in Slaidburn but others had been destroyed already. In 1866 some extracts from his diaries for 1725 and 1729-30 were published, although the originals have subsequently been lost. The diary for 1733-4 has been discovered in Chester Record Office and is thought to be the only survivor of his diaries. Peter Walkden recorded in this the events of every day for fifteen months.

Readers of the CHC Magazine may also wish to know of the publication of Geraint Tudur's Howell Harris From Conversion to Separation 1735-1750 (University of Wales 2000). This offers an appraisal of the Welsh revivalist and early Methodist, Howell Harris, based upon his notoriously difficult to read but voluminous diaries, of which 248 volumes remain extant. They provide fascinating insights into Harris's character. On friendly terms with Daniel Rowland, for a time, and George Whitefield, Harris was "a severe person with little humour". The book is dedicated to the author's family, especially to his mother, in memory of his father, the Welsh Congregational scholar, Tudur Jones.

Revd Ron White

It is with sadness that we note the death of one of our long-standing CHC members, Ronald White of Plymouth. After a career as a schoolmaster, Ron answered the call to the Congregational ministry and was ordained in 1987 at Tregony, near Truro in Cornwall where he remained until 1994. His infectious joy, quick wit and ready sense of humour seemed to underline Ron's endearing eccentricity but they were accompanied by a serious interest in theology and history. His presence at Congregational gatherings and his ancient but venerable Land Rover were regular fixtures for many years. The CHC and the Congregational churches are considerably the poorer for his death.

Charles Anthony Storr

Charles Anthony Storr, the psychiatrist and Oxford don, died on March 17th, 2001, aged 80 years. He was the youngest child of Rev Vernon Faithfull Storr, sub-dean of Westminster Abbey. His elder sister, Rachel, was a friend of Elsie Chamberlain and was encouraged by her to become a

Congregational minister. Rachel Storr went into the United Reformed Church in 1972 and we extend to her and to the Storr family our sympathy in their loss.

Lord Cocks of Hartcliffe

The death of Lord Cocks of Hartcliffe, formerly Michael Cocks, the Labour MP for Bristol South and Chief Whip 1976-85, is also of interest to Congregational historians. Michael Francis Lovell Cocks was the son of Harry Francis Lovell Cocks (1894-1983), a noted Congregational minister and scholar, who taught at the Yorkshire United College, Bradford before moving to the Scottish Congregational College, Edinburgh, where he was principal 1937-41. In that year he moved to Bristol to be principal of Western College which post he held until 1960. Among other subjects, H F Lovell Cocks wrote on The Nonconformist Conscience (1943) and he consistently maintained that his students should be shown the relevance of the gospel to contemporary life and society. The obituaries of his son seem to have omitted the influence of his father's Christianity upon him.

Our CHC secretary, Colin Price, has written of certain recent developments.

Archive Room, Nottingham

The main news this past year concerns the recently refurbished room in the basement of the Congregational Federation's offices at Castle Gate, Nottingham. This has been brought into use as an Archive Room by Terry Upton, the general secretary of Congregational Federation Ltd, and the Congregational History Circle and all interested in Congregational history owe him a debt. It is to house the records of many former churches and related organisations. Rev. Christopher Damp has been going to Nottingham to help sort through documents with Mrs Jean Young who has taken some responsibility for the archives, but much help is still needed and offers to assist would be appreciated. Amongst items in the archive held there are the minutes of Paton College and a number of county union minute books. A full list of such material will be published in a future CHC Magazine when all has been catalogued.

Congregational Connections - words and minds

Our Editor has often remarked on the Congregational influence either upon the children of the manse or upon those brought up in Congregational

churches. One wonders, for instance, what lasting influence Congregationalism laid upon the future Archbishop Michael Ramsey whose father was a deacon at Emmanuel Congregational Church, Cambridge, during the ministry of Henry Child “Polly” Carter? That this influence was formative is beyond doubt, as even a casual glance at Owen Chadwick’s biography of the former Archbishop of Canterbury proves. See Michael Ramsey A Life (Oxford 1991).

Words

Two recent examples came my way. The first links two very extreme eccentrics, born 5,000 miles apart, both in fact looking remarkably alike: thin, balding, myopic, with long-flowing Victorian patriarchal beards and handlebar moustaches. Both were amateur philologists, etymologists and lexicographers. They met for the first time in 1891 at Broadmoor Asylum, Crowthorne. One (the visitor) was the editor of the monumental Oxford English Dictionary (OED) and the other, for over seventeen years one of the editor’s most assiduous contributors, was insane and a murderer.

Sir James Murray (the visitor) when living in London attended Camberwell Congregational Church. His first Scriptorium (the “Scrippy”, as his family called it) was located as an annexe to the library of the Congregationally founded Mill Hill School where Murray had taught. Murray and his family moved to Oxford, but not before the first volume *A-Ant* had been completed at Mill Hill.

Dr William Chester Minor, the homicidal lunatic, was an (American) Union Army doctor who had inexplicably murdered one George Merrett in Lambeth in 1873. He was rich and could keep himself well supplied with rare books even in prison. He had been born in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) of Congregational parents, Eastman Strong Minor and his wife Lucy, who went there as missionaries in 1834. Dr. Minor, while detained, had supplied an abundant stream of dictionary material over nearly twenty years. In one period of only two years James Murray estimated that Minor had supplied some 12,000 quotations. The Surgeon of Crowthorne by Simon Winchester (Penguin 1999)

Minds

The second example I take from Cambridge Minds ed. Richard Mason (CUP 1998) in which the article, “James Stuart: engineering, philanthropy and radical politics” by Paul McHugh, illustrates eccentricity of a different kind, more like the ability to transcend barriers or at least to treat them as invisible.

“Professor James Stuart is possibly the least remembered of this collection of ‘Cambridge minds’. What, then, are his claims for inclusion in the company of say, the Darwins, Keynes or Wittgenstein? ... His was an unusually wide range of interests, and in Stuart we see the academic venturing into the public sphere, ultimately at the cost of his reputation in Cambridge....

“James Stuart was born on 2 January 1843 at Balgonie in Fife where his father was a flax mill-owner. His was a markedly radical background; his mother’s family had been intimates of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, his father was an active Congregationalist and a keen public speaker on topics such as ‘Democracy’. One of the young Stuart’s earliest memories was hearing his father deliver a speech of welcome to Kossuth when the great Hungarian patriot visited Fife.”

Stuart played a significant part in the movement for university reform in the mid-nineteenth century. He was anxious to extend the work of the university beyond Cambridge - to today’s adult education, to provide opportunities for women’s higher education, and to develop engineering as a proper subject for undergraduate study. But, for Stuart, reform went beyond the confines of the University. He was involved in the great moral reform movement to repeal the Contagious Diseases Act, Britain’s only foray into the controversial area of regulated prostitution. He was later a Liberal MP on the radical wing of the party, ran a major London newspaper, was a devoted member of the London County Council, and ended his career as an industrialist, managing the country’s most celebrated mustard works [Colman’s].

Even this summary glosses over aspects of a career which reveals a spread of commitment far wider than would be found today. He was a robust and energetic individual who thought nothing of having to preside over a temperance meeting (addressed by Cardinal Manning) which was broken up by the ‘publican faction’ with the room wrecked and not a word heard. He had a passion for reform and a determination to secure it whatever the cost to his reputation.

WAS OLIVER CROMWELL THE FATHER OF ENGLISH PROTESTANT NONCONFORMITY?

[This is the text of a lecture I gave on 9th November 2000 in Tavistock Square, London, at the joint annual meeting of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers and Deputies of the Three Denominations. I have made only slight modifications to it and have not added footnote references. However, the sources for all the quotations in the lecture and further elucidation of many of its arguments can be found in my Oliver Cromwell (Longman Profiles in Power, 1991)].

In 1876 a prominent Newcastle Nonconformist and radical MP, Joseph Cowen, made a speech to a packed audience, seeking to promote an alliance of Dissenters and Liberals in order to secure religious and civil liberties. As part of his argument he looked back to the mid seventeenth century when Britain and Ireland were ruled by Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector. In his speech, as reported in a local newspaper, Cowen said ‘this country was once ruled by Nonconformists and never in her history was her influence greater or her power more respected [cheers]. Cromwell’s authority at home was as potent and effective as it was abroad. Achievements in the past had won for it the renown of history and the gratitude of the nation and there was still a nobler future in reserve if its adherents walked in the way of their forefathers [loud cheers]’.

For late nineteenth-century Nonconformists, like Cowen, Oliver Cromwell was a great hero, and so he may well continue to be in Nonconformist circles today. After all, was he not the father of English Protestant Nonconformity? Well, that is the question I am going to address in this lecture. As we shall see, on the face of it there are very strong arguments to suggest that the answer to this question is ‘yes’. During Oliver Cromwell’s rule of Britain and Ireland in the 1650s there was the broadest measure of religious freedom there had ever been in the country to that date, and indeed larger than was seen at any other time in the seventeenth century after 1660. Moreover, the 1650s saw the emergence of many of the major religious groups that were to make up the map of English Protestant Nonconformity from that day to this: Baptists (General and Particular), Presbyterians, Independents and Congregationalists. With hindsight the 1650s can be seen as a kind of great primordial sea out of which emerged embryonic groups that later evolved into fully-fledged Nonconformist denominations of many different kinds.

But, although the 1650s did see the first flowering of groups who later became Protestant Nonconformists, the splintering of Protestantism into these different denominations was the last thing that Cromwell wanted to happen. He certainly did not intend to be the father of English Protestant Nonconformity. I think that Cromwell had a very different vision of Britain's future from that of a country divided by a deep gulf between Church and Chapel. What I want to explain in this talk is what I think that vision was.

* * * *

As you undoubtedly know, the main reason that Cromwell rose to power and influence as a figure of note in British history in the mid seventeenth century is that he had a remarkably successful career as a soldier in and after the English Civil War of the 1640s. What is remarkable about that career is that until 1642 he had had no military experience whatsoever. This is a phenomenon that many have tried very hard to explain. Cromwell's own explanation for it was simple. As far as he could see, his successes on the battlefield were to be explained because God favoured him and the cause for which he fought. 'Truly', he wrote exultantly after the allied Scottish and parliamentary victory at Marston Moor in July 1644, 'England and the Church of God hath had a great favour from the Lord...God made them [the enemy] as stubble to our swords'. In similar vein his battle report to the Speaker of the House of Commons ascribed the great parliamentary victory at Naseby in June 1654 to 'none other than the hand of God and to Him belongs the victory'. A month later after another victory of the New Model Army at Langport or Long Sutton in July 1645 his language reached heights of typical Cromwellian eloquence: 'Thus you see what the Lord has wrought for us. Can any creature ascribe anything to itself? Now can we give all the glory to God and desire all may do so, for it is all due to Him! Thus you have Long Sutton mercy added to Naseby mercy. And to see this, is it not to see the face of God?'. One could go on producing similar quotations from letters written by Cromwell after victories at minor skirmishes, as well as at major battles like Marston Moor, Naseby and Langport.

Cromwell was not alone by any means in having such a providential interpretation of the military successes of Cromwell and the parliamentary army. London newspapers, especially after Marston Moor, seized on the theme, referring, as did the *Perfect Diurnal* on 18 March 1645, to Cromwell as 'one of the Saviours (as God hath miraculously manifested him to be) of this Israel', portraying Cromwell as a latter day Moses, a man with a divine mission to save the English nation, as Moses had rescued the Old Testament

Israelites from Egyptian oppression. Cromwell's powerful civilian political allies also echoed this line. Viscount Saye and Sele's pamphlet, *Vindiciae Veritatis* (probably written in the mid 1640s) trumpeted that 'it hath pleased God to use, as instruments under Him, Cromwell... to give the turn, win the day, and to take the Victorie out of the enemie's hands. This was the Lord's doing'.

But these were views that were not shared by all of Cromwell's contemporaries; nor indeed by all those who have written about Cromwell since his time. To other contemporaries Cromwell's providential explanations for his victories were nothing but balderdash and hypocrisy; they were pious words that served to cloak his selfish and sinister designs, part of a Machiavellian scheme to hide the fact that Cromwell's real aims were not to achieve God's purposes but to further the selfish ambitions of Cromwell and the army. This anti-Cromwellian view has never been put better than by the Leveller, Richard Overton. 'You shall scarce speak to Cromwell about anything', sneered Overton in a tract published in 1649, 'but he will lay his hand on his breast, elevate his eyes and call God to record, even while he doth smite you under the first rib'. This is a jibe that has been taken up by many others who see Cromwell's religious rhetoric as having no substance, serving only to cloak his secular ambitions, which (it is sometimes alleged) varied from establishing a military dictatorship to establishing parliamentary liberties.

In this talk I want to explain why I think that not only was Cromwell's belief that he was acting out God's will and that he should always strive to do so sincere, but also that this belief is the crucial part of explaining Oliver Cromwell the man and politician. To me the main driving force of his life (certainly during the brief time that he is visible in the historical record from 1640 to 1658) was a thrusting zeal to bring about change according to his interpretation of God's purposes. What is more, I will argue, Cromwell's religious commitment to bring about a godly reformation in Britain increased in intensity with the passage of time.

In a talk like this one is inevitably forced to focus on one main theme like that one, running the danger of over-simplification. I have not got time to guard myself against that charge other than by saying that I am not going to argue that Cromwell was driven *only* by religious zeal. Historians too often create unnecessary difficulties for themselves by seeming to argue that individuals in the past were *either* head-in-the clouds idealists *or* selfish, ambitious, unprincipled people: saints or sinners. It is an obvious point to make but I will make it nevertheless: people are more complex than that. Like most people, Cromwell acted from a wide variety of motives. At times,

there is no doubt that he acted in a very selfish way. The efforts he put into getting his Civil War wage arrears paid in the months after the end of the war in 1646-47, a time when the majority of his comrades in the New Model Army went unpaid, is a good case in point. There is also no doubt that Cromwell was not above acting in very crafty ways, showing that he was a master of what a later age would call the politics of smoke-filled rooms. A good example of this is the tactics he and his allies used against the Earl of Manchester in November-December 1644. These amounted to a dirty political campaign that, *via* the Self-Denying Ordinance, succeeded in ejecting Manchester from the army and propelling Cromwell up the military hierarchy. Nor can it be claimed that Cromwell lacked political guile during that intriguing period between the Vote of No Addresses in January 1648 and Pride's Purge the following December, when he cleverly kept his head down and his thinking hidden, so that he was able to play an influential role in the exciting weeks in December 1648-January 1649 that culminated in the execution of King Charles I. Cromwell often liked to portray himself as a naïve, inexperienced politician, wet behind the ears. He often claimed in speeches as Protector that he had never sought political power. 'I would have been glad', he once said, 'to have been living under a wood-side, to have kept a flock of sheep, rather than to have undertaken such a place as this was'. That is not my view of Oliver Cromwell. He often showed that he was a shrewd political operator who actively sought power for himself. What is more, after the end of the Civil War he used those skills to try to restore the social and political order that had been so deeply disrupted by a bloodily-fought war and by regicide. Cromwell was not above using base political tactics to defeat his enemies and Cromwell was driven by a wide variety of motives.

But the theme of this lecture cuts through those qualifications. My theme is that for Cromwell all other motives were a poor second to those that were shaped by his religious views. At every key moment of his life when it seemed as if pursuing his own interests and/or bringing about peace and stability in the post Civil War world posed a threat to achieving his hoped-for godly reformation he always abandoned the first course of action and chose the second. For Cromwell achieving a godly reformation in Britain, in which (as we will see) there would be no place for what we now call Protestant Nonconformity, was more important than anything else. Moreover, achieving that ambition came to consume more and more of his mental and physical energies. As he grew older, he became more, not less, committed to achieving it.

In the rest of this lecture I want to put that case around three related questions. What did Cromwell mean by ‘godly reformation’? Why did he become more committed to making that vision a reality when he ruled Britain and Ireland as Lord Protector between 1653 and 1658? Why was the eventual outcome of his efforts something that Cromwell had not wanted: the fracture of British social, political and religious life on Church *versus* Chapel lines that has lasted from that time until our own day, a fracture that is vividly illustrated by the existence of the body I am addressing, the Protestant Dissenting Deputies of the Three Denominations.

* * * *

The first of these questions looks simple, but is in fact very difficult. I do not claim to have got to the bottom of it. But what I find is the best starting-point for understanding Cromwell’s religious aspirations is the fact that he was a typical representative of a militant brand of Protestantism that emerged in post-Reformation England from the later sixteenth century onwards among people who thought of themselves as ‘the godly’ and whom others called ‘puritans’. At the heart of their militancy was a firm belief that what happened in England from the mid sixteenth century onwards could not be called a ‘Reformation’, since the liturgy and government of the English Church had been (at best) only ‘halfly reformed’ and (what was worse) the important process of inner spiritual reformation had not even begun. For there to be a true Reformation, the godly believed, there had to be a ‘reformation of manners’, as well as a reformation of church government and liturgy. From about the 1570s onwards godly men and women began a campaign to bring all this about. Cromwell was bang in the middle of that godly Puritan tradition.

That is reasonably straightforward. But what is not is what exactly godly Puritans like Cromwell mean by a ‘reformation of manners’. What did Cromwell mean by godly reformation? I am sure that a definitive answer to that question is not possible because, although Cromwell often talked and wrote about his hopes for reformation, he only rarely spelled out what he meant by them. Talking in ‘sound bites’, leaving the policy details vague is a not uncommon trait in politicians of all ages. ‘We will reap the fruits of all the blood and treasure that’s been spent in this cause’ is a typical Cromwellian headline-grabbing statement. But what were ‘the fruits of all the blood and treasure’ that had been spent? What was ‘the cause’?

My suggestion is that what Cromwell meant by godly reformation can be put into two main categories. The first is what we now call ‘social justice’ but

which was labelled by many at that time with the word 'commonwealth'. In early modern England 'the commonwealth' had many different meanings, but most commonly it meant a state in which, although power and wealth were distributed unequally, corruption was rooted out and the rich fulfilled duties to care for those less fortunate than themselves, duties that were implicit in their possession of great wealth. Cromwell shared that 'commonwealth' ideal and from it sprang his persistent calls throughout the later 1640s and 1650s for reform of the law, educational reform, more efficient administration of local government and so on. It is an ideal that is well-illustrated in one of Cromwell's greatest letters, that he wrote on the day after his army's victory over the Scots at Dunbar on 3 September 1650. In the letter, addressed to the Speaker of the House of Commons, Cromwell urged MPs to repay the victory God had given them by reformation. 'We pray you', he wrote. 'own His people more and more, for they are the chariots and horsemen of Israel. Disown ourselves, but own your own authority, and improve it to curb the proud and insolent, such as would disturb the tranquillity of England, though under what specious pretence soever; relieve the oppressed, hear the groans of poor prisoners in England; be pleased to reform the abuses of all professions; and if there be anyone that makes many poor to make a few rich, that suits not a Commonwealth'.

That is one strand of Cromwell's 'reformation', his godly-based, revolutionary vision of a reformed Britain. The second, even more explicitly rooted in his religious beliefs than the first, is his yearning for a reformation that amounted to a cultural revolution, a revolution in the way people thought and lived their lives. This is something that has often been misunderstood and misconstrued by those who assert that Cromwell wanted to purge Britain of things as diverse as high culture (especially the musical and visual arts) and fun. This is not so. Cromwell was not against high culture *per se* or against fun. I am not going to fall into the trap of portraying Cromwell as a 'cool Britannia fun-guy'. The book of Cromwellian jokes would be a slim volume. Yet, although the private Cromwell is often invisible in the available sources of the period, just occasionally you get glimpses of the private Cromwell surrounded by his wife and family, and sometimes by his key political advisers, in situations that are very different from those you would expect if you have an image of Cromwell an anti-culture, anti-fun philistine. These are situations in which there was music, dancing, poetry readings, even smoking and drinking, a private context which is quite compatible with Cromwell's public patronage of artists, writers and poets like Dryden, Milton and Marvell. It is clear that Cromwell's vision of a reformed Britain was not without fun, music and high culture.

But it was a reformed Britain that was to be without sin, without fornication, adultery, drunkenness, swearing and a list of other sins longer than your arm. It was also a Britain that was to be purged of all vestiges of Catholicism in the Church and society (hence his hostility to Christmas). In all this Cromwell was a proponent of a campaign that godly men and women had been pursuing since the reign of Elizabeth I. Society was to be purged of sin and popery by an alliance of godly magistracy and a reformed educated ministry (hence the commissions of Triers and Ejectors that were set up by ordinances issued by Protector and council in 1654, to vet suitable men for the ministry and to eject unsuitable men from it). In other words it was to be a reformation pursued within one national Church. This Church, though, would only have loose disciplinary reins. Cromwell's aim was not simply a negative one of *destroying* sin and popery; he also wanted to *create* the conditions in which individuals would be able to find God for themselves. The exact conditions might vary, Cromwell believed; forms of church government were not overly important. What was important was that individuals should be given the freedoms, as he once said, to 'set up Jesus's reign in their hearts'.

This theme of religious freedom recurs often in Cromwell's letters and speeches. As he wrote to the Speaker of the House of Commons after his army's victory at Naseby in June 1645: 'honest men served you faithfully in this action. He that ventures his life for the liberty of his country, I wish he trust God for the liberties of his conscience'. On another occasion in 1645 after the New Model Army's victory at Bristol, he wrote that 'we look for no compulsion [in religion] but that of light and reason'. Later during his military campaigns against the Scots in 1650, he argued for religious toleration in the face of Scottish Presbyterian intolerance: 'we do and are ready to embrace as much as doth, or shall be made appear to us to be according to the Word of God. Are we to be dealt with as enemies because we come not to your way? Is religion wrapped up in that or any one form?' On another occasion in 1650, he sent this message to the General Assembly of the Scottish Kirk: 'I beseech you, in the bowels of Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken'.

It is of the utmost importance to the central argument of this lecture that I make clear that the kind of religious freedom Cromwell was advocating in passages like these was very different from the kind of religious freedom that is nowadays advocated by proponents of 'religious toleration'. There are at least two major differences between Cromwell's and modern definitions of 'religious toleration'. The first difference is obvious. Not only did Cromwell exclude Catholics from his 'toleration' (as the Irish were to find on his Irish

campaigns in 1649-50), but he also excluded some Protestant groups from it, like Socinians (Unitarians who denied the concept of the Holy Trinity) and Quakers. The second difference is less obvious, but it is central to my argument that Cromwell was not the intentional father of English Protestant Nonconformity. In arguing for a kind of religious freedom Cromwell was not aiming to bring about what happened after 1660: the development of diverse Nonconformist Protestant denominations. Cromwell was not trying to pave the way towards the religious diversity of the future, but to recreate the Protestant unity of the past. The Cromwellian Church that he tried to establish was a national Church that would (he hoped) comprehend Protestants of most types, especially Baptists, Presbyterians, Independents and 'non-separating' Congregationalists. There would (in other words) be no Nonconformists.

So my answer to the first of the three questions is simply that Cromwell's religious zeal drove him to want to establish in England a sin-free holy Commonwealth on earth, with one national Church; it was a Commonwealth that would (given time) be exported to other benighted parts of the world, like Ireland and Scotland, later on. My view is that this was a visionary aspiration that became more, not less, important to him as time went by. Unlike many other godly Puritan gentlemen, Cromwell did not shy away from the pursuit of this ideal of godly reformation once it became associated with political and social revolution. Cromwell did not take the easier route of settlement (which is the strongest argument I know against the view of Cromwell as a self-seeking hypocrite). This points to the second of my three questions. Why did Cromwell become more, not less, committed to bringing about in Britain his vision of religious change. And (what makes this question even more intriguing) why did he do so in the face of the clear evidence that this was an unpopular course of action that held back many from giving the Protectorate their enthusiastic support?

I have two answers for you to consider. The first is Cromwell's military experiences, which had the effect of distancing him from people who had not fought and who had not shared in the feeling of comradeship-in-arms that developed (as it has done in other armies at other times) in the ranks of the New Model Army, especially as the Civil War developed into a terrible bloody affair. As this happened, and as the army kept together on campaigns in the second Civil War in 1648 and then in Ireland and Scotland between 1649 and 1651, a determination grew within the army that it should not disband until (as a later generation of twentieth-century soldiers were promised) there was created a post-war 'land fit for heroes to live in'. It is no coincidence that Cromwell's most strident appeals for reformation came (as

in the Dunbar letter I quoted earlier) in letters and speeches after his great military victories. One reason why Cromwell's zeal for reformation remained undimmed is that it was stamped on his consciousness by his military experiences.

The second explanation derives from another belief that Cromwell acquired: a belief that godly reformation was (literally) a matter of life and death for himself and for the nation. He came to believe that unless England underwent a moral and spiritual reformation God would spit in the faces of himself and his fellow countrymen. His most common way of explaining this belief was by using a biblical parallel: the story of the Old Testament Israelites who escaped from Egyptian bondage but were kept in the wilderness until they had purged themselves of sin. Only after they had done that did God allow the Israelites to overcome their enemies at the battle of Jericho and elsewhere and then inherit the Promised Land of Jerusalem. Cromwell believed that England and the English in his own day were in a similar situation. Only if they were to carry out a programme of moral reformation would the nation receive God's support, which was absolutely essential to the nation's future prosperity and well-being. This is a heady, fiery religious world-view to get to grips with near the end of a long lecture, but I think that it is one that is central to understanding Cromwell's motives. It led him to exclaim in a speech to the second Protectorate Parliament in 1656 that he did not intend to be 'a captain to lead us back into Egypt....I mean metaphorically and allegorically so - that is to say, returning to all those things that we think we have been fighting against...I am confident that the liberty and prosperity of this nation depends upon reformation....Make it a shame to see men to be bold in sin and profaneness and God will bless you'. My point simply is that Cromwell believed that it was absolutely essential that he succeed in making his vision of moral reformation a reality if the country was to be prosperous and stable. If it were not striven for, God would punish him and the nation for it, and the consequences of that were too awful to contemplate.

I think that that belief is a major clue to the puzzle of why Cromwell refused to become King Oliver I when parliament offered him the crown in 1657. Fear of God (not fear of the army as is often suggested) led him to reject the crown, since restoring the monarchy that God had destroyed in 1649 would inevitably lead to God's awful retribution on himself and the English. 'Truly', he said to a parliamentary committee when rejecting the offer of the crown, 'the providence of God has laid the title aside providentially. God has seemed providentially not only to strike at the family [i.e. the Stuarts] but at the name [i.e. monarchy itself]. God hath not only

dealt so with the person and the family but He hath blasted the title. I would not seek to set up that that providence hath destroyed and laid in the dust, and I would not build Jericho again’.

I have argued so far that Cromwell did not intend to promote the development of English Protestant Nonconformity. If that is so, why then were his hopes for the re-creation of a broad-based, ecumenical, national Protestant Church of England dashed? Why after the middle of the seventeenth century was there never again to be a comprehensive and truly national Church of England? Three possible answers suggest themselves to me. The first is obvious: this is the mammoth wave of episcopalian Anglican intolerance that swept across Britain when the Cromwellian Protectorate collapsed shortly after the death of Oliver Cromwell in 1658. The intolerance that was unleashed when the Stuart monarchy was restored in 1660 produced the so-called Clarendon Code. This penal legislation passed by parliament in the early 1660s, ensured (at best) that non-Anglican, non-card-carrying members of the established Church, became second-class citizens without major political and social rights; and (at worst) it subjected them, especially Baptists and Quakers, to long periods of imprisonment or transplantation to the sugar and tobacco plantations of the American colonies as slave labourers. The Clarendon Code erected a kind of religious apartheid in Britain; by excluding many Protestants from the Church of England, it went a long way towards the creation of English Protestant Nonconformity.

The second reason that this happened is less obvious. Ironically, this is the failure in the 1650s of those religious groups who later became Nonconformists to agree to unite. Their failure in this respect was not, of course, total. Some took up the call of divines like Richard Baxter in the 1650s to join regional congregations of different types. Baxter’s own Worcestershire Association was formed to bring together, in Baxter’s own words, ‘men of no faction, nor siding with any party, but owning that which was good in all as far as they could discuss it’. But tragically for the cause of Protestant ecumenicalism, that kind of comradeship among Protestants was not universal. Equally as evident was bickering among Protestants and calls from them that ‘toleration’ be limited to their own particular groups. It was an attitude that Cromwell found hard to understand. ‘Where shall we have men of Universal Spirit’, he is reported to have said when he heard of a Presbyterian petition from London in favour of a narrow religious uniformity. ‘Everyone desires to have liberty but none will give it’. When he angrily dissolved the first Protectorate Parliament in January 1655, he berated MPs for not giving ‘a just liberty to godly men of different judgements....Nothing will satisfy them, unless they put their fingers upon

their brethren's consciences to pinch them. What greater hypocrisy than for those who were oppressed by the Bishops to become the greatest oppressors themselves, so soon as their Yoke was removed'. This is a charge that is well-founded. Too many Protestant groups in the 1650s called for 'religious liberty' but what they meant by it was liberty only for themselves. This is a conception of 'religious liberty' that was much less extensive than Cromwell's. It has to be added to the list of reasons why Cromwell's hopes for building a fairly broad-based national Protestant Church were dashed.

But there is a third explanation that brings me back to end this lecture with Oliver Cromwell. As I have sought to show it is misleading to portray him as the intentional father of English Protestant Nonconformity. That was born despite his best efforts to prevent it. But undeniably his rule as Lord Protector did provide the conditions for the Protestant denominational boundaries of the future to begin to be erected. It seems to me very fitting that a man who was catapulted to the forefront of events as a political activist by his religious views, a man who was driven by religious zeal to rise from the humble origins of an East Anglian farmer to the dizzy heights of ruler of Britain, should have left as one of his major legacies an indelible religious imprint on the future shape of his country. This is the divide between Church and Chapel of which your organisation, the Protestant Dissenting Deputies of the Three Denominations, is an interesting example. My final point is that this was an imprint that he never intended to make.

Barry Coward

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ELSIE CHAMBERLAIN YEARS OF DECISION 1967-1973¹

On leaving the BBC in 1967 Elsie Chamberlain had made a stand for principle. She had proved herself to be a confident, resourceful, independent woman who would resist any attempt to force her compliance, especially with a policy about which she felt uneasy. Her resignation from the BBC, over changes in religious broadcasting, gained her much admiration, then and later, but, although brave, hers was a lone stand. Broadcasting and her constant willingness to speak up and down the country had enabled her “to symbolise for many the place that women were coming to have in the public ministry of the churches”.² But that season of her life was now over.

She was left with her principles intact, a national reputation and an impressive list of achievements but she had no job. What should she do? A number of options presented themselves. She might use her fame to continue in public life in some way. She might ally herself more closely to the emerging women’s movement. She might write books and journalism. Or she might return to the pastoral ministry. To an extent she took all these options.

Writing

Her fame as a broadcaster and as an advocate of women’s equality led her to become involved in a project to highlight the injustice and prejudice which women still suffered. In 1968 Elsie contributed a chapter, “The World in Which We Worship”, to a book produced by the Six Point Group, a non-political organization which worked for “equality between men and women in status, in opportunities, in rewards, in rights, and in responsibilities”. The book emerged from a conference which explored the “movement towards

¹Elsie Chamberlain was president of the London Women’s League of the London Congregational Union in 1945-46 when she had to resign on her appointment as the first woman chaplain in the RAF. Mrs Rider Smith filled the breach, thereby serving a third term in this position. A. Oldfield The Story of the London Women’s League of the London Congregational Union 1909-1959 (1959) 31, 33, 39. Thanks for help with this article go to Tony Benn PC MP, Eric Burton, Anthony Coates, Timothy Cornford, Elaine Kaye, Elaine Marsh, Millicent Slack, Annette Travell, John Travell, John Wilcox and Janet Wootton. The author apologises to those who had hoped to read of Elsie Chamberlain’s pastorates and wider ministry in the 1970s and 80s. They will be covered in our next issue.

²The Times 12 April 1991.

emancipation", especially dealing with those problems remaining for women, fifty years after they had first gained the franchise. Contributors included the writer Marghanita Laski, the Labour MP Lena Jeger, the journalist Jacky Gillott, the Conservative politician Dame Patricia Hornsby-Smith, and the lawyer and academic Olive M Stone, among others.

In her chapter Elsie lashed out at the Church, describing it as "one of the last bastions of male entrenchment", and pointing out that women have become successful missionaries, like Mildred Cable, Francesca French, Gladys Aylward, and outstanding social reformers, like Elizabeth Fry and Josephine Butler. She maintained that the chief reasons for the opposition to the ordination of women were "tradition, expediency and prejudice". Elsie recalled the response of a "High Church priest" to her preaching - "he told me he was so surprised that the sermon was like a man's!". She was amazed because she had "never considered sermons to be masculine or feminine". The chapter is mainly directed at those denominations which did not then ordain women, that is the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, and the Roman Catholic Church.

On a personal note Elsie stated that, in her twenty-eight years of ministry, all those problems envisaged by the churches which did not ordain women "have either not materialized or been of noticeable size". She found that after a short while, she was readily accepted. Women have said that they "could talk to another woman" and men, especially in the Forces, were glad to "talk over their home problems with a woman". She found also that her leading the daily service on the BBC each week, for over sixteen years, had accustomed many correspondents to the fact that a woman can lead them in the worship of God.³

In that book in 1968 Elsie characterised herself as "at present involved in religious education". The editor, Hazel Hunkins-Hallinan, saw Elsie as an "exceptional" woman who lived "a more emancipated role than most" and who had "fought her battles to give the Church the benefits of women's talents and in so doing has reaped her own".⁴ Elsie's reputation at this time, as a champion of women's rights, as a communicator, and as a woman of devotion, was riding high.

Between 1968 and 1970 Mowbrays published a series of Mini-Commentaries, based on the text of the recently published Jerusalem Bible. Elsie Chamberlain was the general editor of this series of twelve short

³H. Hunkins-Hallinan (ed) In Her Own Right (1968) 7, 121, 124, 125, 128, 131.

⁴ibid 17, 160.

commentaries. These inexpensive books were intended to be brief “guideposts” for Bible study and discussion and did not offer detailed, academic expositions. Elsie’s skill at pruning and simplifying over-wordy texts, acquired and honed in her years editing scripts every day for the BBC, served her well in this work. Number one in this series, on the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, was written by Kenneth Slack.⁵ Other volumes in the series were written, among others, by Ulrich Simon and Peter Ackroyd, both of King’s College, London, by Harold Moulton of the British and Foreign Bible Society, by the Baptist Edwin Robertson, her friend and former colleague at the BBC, by the Methodist William Simpson, general secretary of the Council of Christians and Jews, and by Ian Thomson, director of the Bible Reading Fellowship. This variety of authors shows the widespread contacts which Elsie Chamberlain had built up during her time as a broadcaster and suggests also a breadth of vision, on her part, and no narrow understanding of Christ’s Church.

A Possible Life Peerage

Viscountess Stansgate’s son, Tony Benn, the Labour MP, recalls in his diaries the possibility of Elsie Chamberlain receiving a peerage in 1968. At that time Benn was Minister of Technology, with a seat in the Cabinet, while Harold Wilson, the leader of the Labour party, was Prime Minister. One afternoon in late April 1968 Benn visited Wilson to discuss his proposals for the forthcoming honours list with him. Wilson told him that John Stonehouse would become a privy councillor, that Trevor Huddleston would be Bishop of Birmingham but that “he couldn’t give the Reverend Elsie Chamberlain a peerage because he wanted it for the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, who was a woman”.⁶

Benn’s approach to Harold Wilson on behalf of Elsie Chamberlain at this time suggests a friend, perhaps prompted by Lady Stansgate, recognising Elsie’s obvious talent, and the lack of women in parliament, who wanted to help her at a time in her life when, after her resignation from the BBC, she

⁵K Slack Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts (1968).

⁶Tony Benn Office Without Power: Diaries 1968-72 (1988) 63, 138. John Stonehouse (1925-88) was Minister of State for Technology in 1968 and rose to higher political office. He was made a Privy Councillor in 1968 but suffered disgrace after committing fraud and faking his own death in 1974. DNB 1986-1990. Trevor Huddleston (1913-98), a well known anti-apartheid campaigner, did not become Bishop of Birmingham. He was Bishop Suffragan of Stepney 1968-78, and Archbishop of the Indian Ocean 1978-83.

was seen as being at a loose end. Wilson's reply to Benn's enquiry indicates that he gave serious thought to the suggestion but that he felt compelled by political necessity to strengthen the Labour presence in the upper chamber.

Wilson's own Congregational allegiance may have reinforced his willingness to consider Elsie Chamberlain's becoming a peer. He had himself been brought up as a Congregationalist and, with his family, had attended Highfield Congregational Church, Rock Ferry in the Wirral. At Oxford he attended the Congregational Society meetings at Mansfield College and the Sunday morning services at Mansfield College Chapel where he was married in January 1940 by the college principal, Nathaniel Micklem, and by the Revd Daniel Baldwin, his bride's father. In London during the 1940s he attended Vineyard Congregational Church, Richmond-upon-Thames, when Daniel Jenkins was the minister there and, after moving home in 1948, he became a member of Hampstead Garden Suburb Free Church where Harold preached on a number of occasions. When Prime Minister he regarded himself as remaining a Congregationalist.⁷

The episode raises the intriguing thought that Elsie Chamberlain might have been the first ordained woman to sit in the House of Lords (indeed in either of the Houses of Parliament). It would have been a popular appointment because she then enjoyed a large public following. She would not have been overawed in that company but rather would have been a lively and colourful contributor to debates. Tony Benn believes that she would have made "a fine peer". One wonders what influence as a peer she might have had in the churches (especially in the debates about the United Reformed Church) and beyond them, but it was not to be and an opportunity was missed. Some thirty years later Rev Kathleen Richardson, a Methodist minister, was created Baroness Richardson of Calow in 1998.⁸

The City Temple

After some months of teaching and lecturing, Elsie returned to the pastoral ministry which was her original vocation and, in 1968, she accepted the call to be the associate minister of the City Temple. The City Temple, on Holborn Viaduct, in the City of London, which claimed its foundation to be as early as 1640, had an international fame as the most prominent Free Church in England. It had only recently appointed a minister to replace

⁷E Kay Pragmatic Premier An Intimate Portrait of Harold Wilson (1967) 18, 19. L Smith Harold Wilson The Authentic Portrait(1964) 128, E. Kaye Mansfield College, Oxford (Oxford 1996) 211.

⁸Private correspondence. Who's Who 2001. _

Leslie Weatherhead's successor, the Canadian Leonard Griffith, who had left in June 1966 after six years. On 31 May 1967 the City Temple Church Meeting had called Kenneth Slack, then minister of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Cheam, to become its minister. Slack had privately confided in Weatherhead, some two months earlier, that after two years, he was "unhappy at Cheam and would eagerly welcome a call to the City Temple".⁹ Kenneth Slack was well known to the City Temple faithful and to Weatherhead who retained the status of Minister Emeritus. After twenty-four years as minister there Weatherhead, who had drawn large congregations and enjoyed a personality cult, remained a powerful influence in the church.¹⁰

When Slack took up his ministry at the City Temple the church had a pastoral assistant, Colin Campbell, who had been there since 1961, and an assistant minister Anthony Coates, who had been appointed in 1964. Whereas Campbell was an experienced minister who had been ordained in 1921, Coates was in his first pastorate after leaving Mansfield College. Unlike Slack, both had trained to be Congregational ministers. They had both arrived during Leonard Griffith's ministry at the City Temple and both left soon after Slack's arrival. Campbell retired and Coates was to marry and then become Free Church chaplain at Keele University in 1968.¹¹

Campbell had officially retired in 1960 but after only five months had received "the irresistible call" to serve pro-tem at the City Temple. His services to this church were deemed "a remarkable personal ministry" in which he brought "comfort, cheer and guidance to countless people". Campbell was an able preacher and a fine pastor who "loved people". He enhanced his reputation at the City Temple and did much to ease the transition for the congregation from the long and celebrated ministry of Leslie Weatherhead to the less newsworthy pastorate of Leonard Griffith. As late as 1965 Leslie Weatherhead was still described as "Britain's most popular preacher". The City Temple congregation which he had gathered and held consisted of "a cabinet minister, and others of rank, position and authority, and also the lowliest and poorest - people who have been unemployed, people who have been in prison". Even in Kenneth Slack's, and Elsie's, time at the church the members ranged from the occupants of

⁹J Williams 80. J Travell Doctor of Souls (1999) 274-5.

¹⁰For Weatherhead (1893-1976) see Travell and also DNB 1971-1980, and H Davies 219-225.

¹¹CYB (1967-1968) 219, 339, 342. In fact Slack was admitted to the CUEW roll of ministers in May 1967 by transfer from the Presbyterian Church of England. *ibid* 420.

Regency style flats in Mayfair, and a High Court judge and his family from Gray's Inn to the very ordinary residents of the Golden Lane estate. The congregation gathered from all over London and the inner home counties. Sometimes fourteen different nationalities were represented at one service.¹²

By 1968 Coates and Campbell had left and Slack had two different ministers working with him at the City Temple. He had known Elsie Chamberlain from her days at the BBC for which he had made several broadcasts. She had helped enormously to put Slack at his ease when broadcasting and to prepare and present an effective script. The two had become friends and Elsie had even mentioned Kenneth Slack in her Chairman's address to the May assembly of CUEW in 1956. On that occasion she referred to the wonder that the British Council of Churches, with so many episcopalians involved in its work, had recently appointed an English Presbyterian, Kenneth Slack, as its general secretary.¹³ Some months after Elsie's arrival at the City Temple as the associate minister, a young man, Timothy Cornford, was ordained there and he served as the assistant minister from 1968 to 1973. The associate minister was an experienced colleague to the senior minister and had something approaching equal status, although serving only part-time, while the assistant minister lacked both experience and equal status but worked full-time.

Any suggestion that Kenneth Slack had cleared out his predecessor's team of ministers in order to start afresh with his own people does not accord with the facts. Colin Campbell, although well respected, had already retired once, was 72 years old in 1967, and had more than earned an easier life. Anthony Coates had spent four years at the City Temple and, it was felt, as a young minister would benefit from experience of a different kind than that the City Temple could offer. It was always understood that he would leave after Kenneth Slack had settled there. At a City Temple ministers' meeting, Slack expressed a pastoral concern for Elsie. He felt that she had been badly treated by the BBC and he wanted to help. He believed that she needed a community and a role and that a minister of Elsie's eminence would benefit the City Temple which, in return, would benefit Elsie. He was motivated by sympathy and compassion and the church members recall that these ministers

¹²CYB (1972) 352-3. Horton Davies Worship and Theology in England - The Ecumenical Century 1900-65 222, 225. L Weatherhead The Significance of Silence (1945) preface.

¹³E D Chamberlain White to Harvest (1956) 7.

worked well and happily together.¹⁴ Therefore in 1968 it was announced that, following the retirement of Colin Campbell at the City Temple, Elsie Chamberlain had been appointed associate minister. She was to begin work in April. She went to the City Temple for a fixed term only but, after the formal appointment ended she continued to be frequently heard there.¹⁵

Tim Cornford recalled his first meeting with Elsie. She arrived late one evening at the flat he rented in West Hampstead “bounding up the stairs to the second floor”. She impressed him as an “energetic woman, mentally and physically”. Like him, she was to travel “miles on the pastoral side of the job”. They divided Greater London into two. Elsie took London north of the Thames and Cornford took south of the river. The young man found his older colleague “an unworldly woman” who “wore her reputation very lightly and never flaunted her connections”. Yet she was also very down-to-earth and could easily converse with anyone and everyone.

Slack was a good-humoured conversationalist with a ready laugh. He had a confident and commanding air, as did Elsie herself. A superficial judgement might conclude that Kenneth Slack, with his striking, powerful personality, and Elsie Chamberlain, with her own strong will, were an ill matched pair. Indeed Slack has been likened to “a benevolent dictator” while at times that description might have fitted Elsie. Perhaps the post at the City Temple should have proved “a death job” for Elsie but she and Kenneth Slack helped to make their collaboration in the ministerial team there a success. Tim Cornford found Elsie “a lovely colleague: warm, friendly, outgoing, generous and kind”.

Women’s Ministry at the City Temple

At the City Temple Elsie joined a succession of women who served “that historic pulpit”, like her, all in supporting rôles. Maude Royden, although a lay Anglican, was assistant preacher at the City Temple 1917-20 and Dorothy Wilson, a Congregational minister, served there as Weatherhead’s “pulpit associate” from late 1937 to 1939. Other women also played key parts in the

¹⁴CYB (1968-69) 221, (1969-70) 342. Cornford resigned his ministry in the UR in 1975. The City Temple was an attractive church at which a young minister might serve his first pastorate but it was untypical and peculiarly demanding.

¹⁵Congregational Monthly (March 1968) 22, private correspondence. The manuscript records of the City Temple, including church meeting minutes, appear to have been lost. Repeated attempts to locate them have yielded no positive results.

City Temple ministry. Maude Royden (1876-1956) had worked for women's suffrage in the years before World War One but discovered her true métier preaching on Sunday evenings at the City Temple. She had preached two sermons at the City Temple early in 1917 and created such an impression that the invitation to her to become assistant preacher was unanimous. Although she later moved to an interdenominational pulpit, through the 'Fellowship Services' at the Guildhouse in Eccleston Square, Maude Royden remained a regular visitor to the City Temple pulpit for many years. She was appointed a Companion of Honour in 1930.¹⁶ She gained a following within wider Congregationalism too. In the the centenary year of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, in 1931, she was a speaker at the CUEW October assembly in Manchester taking as her subject "The Challenge of Christianity to Women".¹⁷

The City Temple was not the first church to call a woman to preach regularly from its pulpit but it was perhaps at that date the most important church to have done so. It was proud of its choice of this series of remarkable women who added lustre to its distinctive reputation. Dorothy Wilson was the daughter of Sir William Courthope Wilson (1865-1944), Vice-Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 1925-36. After serving as assistant minister at Carrs Lane, Birmingham 1928-29, and pastoring at Hest Bank, Lancaster 1929-31 she moved to the City Temple in 1937. Later she served briefly at Billericay, Essex and Hindhead, Surrey before moving to Muswell Hill, Middlesex 1941-43. She had been brought up as a Presbyterian but, after her application to train for the Presbyterian ministry was rejected, she studied at Mansfield College, Oxford for ministry within the Congregational churches.¹⁸

In addition Marjorie Inkster was assistant minister to Leslie Weatherhead at the City Temple for nearly two years 1959-61. She was herself a "former City Templar" and after studying at Cheshunt College, Cambridge had been a chaplain's assistant in the RAF 1952-57 and was later a psychiatric social worker in West Middlesex Hospital. She was ordained to the Congregational ministry at the City Temple in April 1959. In 1961 ill health prompted her resignation both from the City Temple and from the ministry. Marjorie Inkster herself replaced Winifred Barton who had been "Minister's Assistant"

¹⁶DNB 1951-1960. K Slack The City Temple - A Hundred Years (1974) 27. For M Royden see S Fletcher Maude Royden (Oxford 1989).

¹⁷CYB (1932) 74.

¹⁸CYB (1944) 367. E Kaye Mansfield College, Oxford (Oxford 1996) 182. Who Was Who 1941-1950. Travell op cit 133.

at the City Temple for twenty-three years. Winifred Barton was not ordained and did not preach but she visited the sick and needy and also interviewed those who hoped to marry, or have children baptised at the City Temple.¹⁹ Indeed after Elsie Chamberlain's time, Barbara Meachin was to be assistant minister there 1971-77, so continuing the tradition of ordained women's ministry in the church.²⁰

Kenneth Slack

Kenneth Slack (1917-87) was a Presbyterian minister, ordained in 1941, who had served a pastorate in Shrewsbury for one year before becoming an RAF chaplain. He served in the Far East 1943-6 with distinction and was awarded the MBE. From 1946 to 1955 he was minister of St James's Presbyterian Church, Edgware and then became the general secretary of the British Council of Churches. This latter position gave Slack unique access to the leaders of all the Protestant British denominations. As the BCC at this time gained in importance and influence, so his own star rose. In 1965 he accepted the call to St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Cheam, moving some two years later to the City Temple where he remained until 1975.²¹

Not only was he well known to Elsie Chamberlain but he was also well known to Leslie Weatherhead and the City Temple congregation which had worshipped for eleven years from 1947 at the Presbyterian Church, George Street, Marylebone until its new building emerged from the bomb-damaged shell on Holborn Viaduct. Slack had preached one Sunday a month at Marylebone during 1957 and 1958 and had often sat in the pew to hear Weatherhead. The rebuilt City Temple was officially opened on October 30, 1958, in the presence of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. Throughout his ministry Slack proved a steady and prolific author who wrote on a wide variety of subjects of Christian interest, including the World Council of Churches assemblies.²²

The appointment of a Presbyterian to the City Temple ministry is not in itself a matter to wonder at. R J Campbell who left the church in 1915 was the last Congregationalist appointed to the senior ministerial position. Leonard Griffith came from the United Church of Canada, Leslie Weatherhead was a Methodist and remained so throughout his ministry at the

¹⁹CYB (1960) 341. Travell op cit 234

²⁰CYB (1972) 298, 341, 343. URCYB (1978) 214

²¹DNB 1986-1990.

²²Slack op cit 38, 41, 43. DNB 1986-1990.

City Temple, and his two predecessors were an Australian Baptist and an American liberal Christian.²³

Associate Minister

The City Temple already had a regular mid-week lunchtime service of half an hour when Elsie Chamberlain arrived at the church. Its basic format was a cut-down version of the normal Sunday service. The ministers wanted to develop events which would make an impact on the working population of the area and so Elsie imported an idea from her BBC experience. She began an early weekday morning event, consisting of a reading and a prayer, with a brief introduction. In all this lasted five minutes, a mere turning aside for the City worker on the way from Holborn Viaduct Station to the office. The main church was opened and the 'presenter' just stood in the middle of the assembled group and read. Elsie persuaded some popular names to help and that proved an advantage. Obviously she was an attraction in her own right but she brought friends and contacts from the BBC to come in, including Joyce Grenfell, the comedienne, and Alvar Liddell, the former newsreader. This event was held on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week for some time but it did not last beyond Elsie's leaving.

She would tell of her first meeting with Alvar Liddell some years before. Her host had placed her at dinner next to Alvar and said he would not introduce him because Elsie would be sure to recognise his voice. Before he had a chance to speak a word, she turned to him and said, "And why should I recognise your voice?" She told the story against herself and it typifies her modesty.

The brief early morning reflection had a qualified success. Crowds did not come but it did draw between 40 and 50 people on some days while on others only 10 or 15 attended. However a regular group gathered who said that they appreciated the pause for thought and the peace just before they were overtaken by the busyness of their working day.

Elsie played relatively little part in the governance of the City Temple. Her part-time capacity meant that she did not always attend the business meetings so she was not placed in a position where she felt it necessary to declare her views on specific issues confronting the church.

²³Dr Fort Newton was minister at the City Temple 1917-19. He had formerly served Cedar Rapids Liberal Christian Church, Iowa from 1908. F W Norwood was City Temple minister 1919-36. A Clare The City Temple 1640-1940 (1940) 176, 182, 201, 222.

Other Activities

After leaving the BBC, Elsie was not idle. Her position at the City Temple left her time enough to accept engagements all over the country and she did so with gusto. Kenneth Slack was amazed at the distances she travelled but she considered his amazement as “daft”. Such travelling was neither a problem nor a trial to her. Notoriously she had little sense of geography and direction. During her time at the City Temple she had accepted an engagement in West Bromwich. On looking in her atlas the day before how to reach there, she was shocked to discover that it was in the Midlands. She explained that she knew a place called Bromley and had thought that it couldn’t be too far from there! Again Elsie was quite happy to tell this story against herself.

The Congregational Monthly announced in January 1968 that she was to open the annual garden party in June at Fen Place, Turner’s Hill, Crawley, Sussex. Fen Place had opened in 1952 as a home for retired ministers and their spouses and the garden party had come to rival the steps of Westminster Chapel, at the time of the May assembly of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, as a place of reunion for Congregationalists. An even larger gathering than the six hundred who attended the garden party in 1967 was expected and the organisers were not disappointed. Nine hundred attended!²⁴

In June 1968 the Bedfordshire Union of Churches ceased to exist. The explanation given was that “Changes in denominational life have made this inevitable”. The Bedfordshire Union, in the tradition of Bunyan Meeting, Bedford, had always consisted of both Baptist and Congregational churches but, with the probability of Presbyterian and Congregational union nationally, it was deemed necessary to sever these formal and long-standing links. The churches in Bedfordshire joined with those in neighbouring counties - Hertfordshire, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire - and the Bedfordshire Women’s Committee also came to an end. At its final rally in Bury Park Church, Luton, Elsie Chamberlain was the speaker. Her text, “The Grain of Wheat Dies”, was considered “most appropriate”. Recognising that this was a “funeral”, she nevertheless laid stress on hope for the future.²⁵

²⁴R T Jones Congregationalism in England 1662-1962 (1962). By 1968 this should refer to the Congregational Church in England and Wales, not the Congregational Union, but the reference in Congregational Monthly (January 1968) 18 is to CUEW. Congregational Monthly (December 1968) 18.

²⁵Congregational Monthly (July 1968) 20.

In December 1968 Elsie was the guest speaker at the district rally of the Congregational Women at Leiston, Suffolk. The minister there from 1954 was Miss Blanch Reita Searle (1900-93) who herself was to retire in 1970 to Fen Place. She was herself also a friend of Elsie's.²⁶ In December 1970 Elsie preached at the anniversary of Woodbridge Congregational Church, Suffolk.²⁷ In July 1972 she led a festival of praise at Ridgewell Congregational Church, Essex as part of the celebrations occasioned by the flower festival there.²⁸

Theological Questions

Elsie had trained for the ministry with Muriel Paulden 'on the job' in Liverpool and not at a ministerial college. She did have a degree in theology from King's College, London and, even when advanced in years, she bought and read works of theology but at times her own theological views raised questions. Whilst at the City Temple one of the major Christian festivals was being marked by a series of Bible studies, in which a set reading was Genesis 1:1-25, where the reading closed on day five, with God saying that it was good. When the question was asked why the reading had stopped there, Elsie pointed out that it was all good, up to the point where man came on the scene and messed things up. This seemed satisfactory until it was noted that, at the end of day six, God surveys everything and still calls it all very good - including man. What was Elsie trying to get at? The only aspect of the creation story that goes wrong is man - everything else stays good.

On another occasion the group meeting was discussing guilt and forgiveness and Elsie ventured that she thought people could only really understand and feel divine forgiveness, if they had experienced and understood forgiveness from another person. Was Elsie's religion anthropomorphic or not? Probably what she was doing, in her down to earth way, was insisting that the divine is not a rarefied 'something other' but someone who connects directly with us, in ways we can and should recognise.

The Coming of the United Reformed Church

During the 1960's Kenneth Slack made "a unique contribution" to the negotiations between the Presbyterian Church of England and the Congregational Church of England and Wales which led to the formation of

²⁶URCYB (1994) 277. Congregational Monthly (December 1968) 18.

²⁷Congregational Monthly (December 1970) 20.

²⁸ *ibid* (July 1972) 19.

the United Reformed Church in 1972. Recognition of this came in his nomination by the joint committee to be the first full term Moderator of the United Reformed Church, for 1973-4. In those years he encouraged the URC to engage in consultations about further ecclesiastical unions.²⁹

Although personal relations between Kenneth Slack and Elsie Chamberlain always remained friendly, the two were to differ on the matter of the union of the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists. Elsie had openly proclaimed herself in 1956, when Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, to be an “ecumaniac”. She had praised the World Council of Churches and had exhorted the Free Church Federal Council to work towards its becoming a more inter-denominational forum. Above all, she had berated the different church bodies for their divisions. “The divided church is not whole or holy but weakened and spiritually impoverished, and Christ’s purpose is delayed”, she had confidently stated. As she reminded her listeners and readers, she was herself the child of an Anglican father and a Congregational mother, and she was married to an Anglican parson of decidedly high views. She felt passionately and personally committed to ecumenism.

Contemporaries, therefore, saw her as at one with those Congregationalists who favoured union with the Presbyterians. Yet she herself came to change her views, as she herself often said, “very late in the day”. Although this change cannot precisely be dated it is probable that while at the BBC, her energy and thoughts were very largely taken up with broadcasting and latterly with the great struggles which led to her resignation. Therefore we must conclude that, during her two years’ ministry at the City Temple, in which she was brought much closer to the immediate implications of the proposed union of churches, and had the opportunity to discuss these with her ministerial colleagues, especially Kenneth Slack, one of the architects of the United Reformed Church, and to reflect upon them, she had occasion to rethink her position. Allowing for this, one must also state that tensions about the URC never intruded into Elsie’s relationship with Kenneth Slack when the two worked together at the City Temple, and none of the church members there recall this issue as causing any problem for her or others.

Yet in January 1972 Elsie admitted that she had been “sitting” on “the fence” for two years and that, when she was associate minister at the City Temple, she had come near to a decision against the URC. She claimed that while there she had been given the choice of “four formulae allowed in the

²⁹DNB 1986-1990; URCYB (1988-89) 202-3.

proposed URC constitution as invitation to our Lord's table. She did not like such formulae but preferred to invite "all who love our Lord and desire to serve and follow Him" to share in communion. In response to this, both Kenneth Slack and John Huxtable contended in print that these formulae were not part of the URC constitution. Slack wrote that he had asked Elsie to use any of four formulae of invitation which had been suggested by the Congregational committee set up to consider such issues. Nevertheless, if she laboured under a misconception, it was a misconception which she gained at the City Temple and which had not been dispelled during her time there. Elsie came to suspect that the "lengthy constitutions" of the proposed URC were "purposely expressed in phrases that can be turned two ways".³⁰

Elsie Chamberlain had spent sixteen years, simplifying scripts, cutting through needlessly long and tedious perorations. She had met cardinals, bishops and professors and had succeeded in tidying up their thoughts and writings, striving not to offend but befriend them. She knew her audience and understood that ordinary people needed complex ideas put simply and directly. After all, as John Marsh said of her, she was "an entirely normal person" and simplicity was her own need.³¹ Being straightforward and direct herself, she distrusted ideas and structures which rendered complex that which she believed should and could easily be simple. In time she came to distrust the proposed United Reformed Church and to question the motives of its chief promoters. Why did it seem to take that which was natural and unqualified, i.e. the Congregational gathered church, and hedge it round with restrictions, limitations and regulations? Was this the price of church unity required by Christ or by human beings? Elsie found herself unable to proceed from the simple form she trusted to the complex legalism she doubted.

In like fashion she became uncertain about much ecumenical jargon, just as at the BBC she had distrusted the experts' complicated and indigestible pre-breakfast scripts. Was this jargon a "characteristical masculine stumbling block to a simple spiritual unity ... based on love for the Church's Lord"?³² Given her public declaration that she was an "ecumaniac", reinforced by the truth that her father had been an Anglican, and her husband was an Anglican parson, and that she felt a wholehearted commitment to church unity, it cost

³⁰British Weekly January 21, February 4, 1972; The Guardian January 22, 1972.

³¹Reform (May 1991) 18.

³²The Times April 12, 1991.

her some heartache and anguish to change sides. To do so she ate huge portions of humble pie.

Perhaps Elsie found it difficult to be number two to Kenneth Slack at the City Temple. There the minister's word carried great authority. He could act unilaterally without consultation and, although her preaching, her prayers and her pastoral care were much appreciated, she would only ever remain the associate minister. On leaving in 1970 she was able to seek a church where she might be the sole minister. Yet her growing scepticism over the United Reformed Church may also have contributed to her desire to leave the City Temple. She began by thinking what the URC would be like if too much power was concentrated in the hands of a few. Any discomfort she may have felt at the City Temple may then have caused her to fear the growth of clericalism in the united church.

Her husband's deteriorating health was also a consideration in the 1970s and she preferred to spend more time with him. During the 1950s and '60s she had frequently been away from home but now she realised that she was increasingly needed there. Driving from Greensted, near Ongar in Essex, to the City Temple and back again, took more time than she wanted to give so, for all these reasons, Elsie decided to look for a pastorate nearer home.³³

Leaving the City Temple in 1970 she was again in the wilderness. Having defied convention and officialdom over her desire to marry John Garrington, in opposition to the Bishop of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury, having overcome Anglican prejudice, as she saw it, by becoming the first female chaplain to the RAF, and having left the BBC on a matter of principle, Elsie was not to be intimidated by the opprobrium she might meet in questioning the basis of the United Reformed Church. Where would she go now? She could hardly expect the Minister Secretary of the CCEW, John Huxtable, who was the chief deviser of and advocate for the United Reformed Church, to commend her to a prominent Congregational church. He would fear that her newly found doubts about his understanding of ecumenism might lead to that church's defiance of the officially approved union with the Presbyterians. Even worse, given Elsie's national reputation, obvious eloquence and charm, he might have feared her influence upon other ministers and churches, leading them also to doubt this scheme. She could expect no encouragement from that quarter. Her tender conscience had again left her exposed. However, by accepting a preaching engagement, she was to find a pastorate for herself nearer home.

³³J Williams First Lady of the Pulpit (Lewes 1993) 77, 80.

Off The Fence

On 12 May 1971 Elsie told the deacons of her church in Hutton, Essex, to which she had recently been inducted, that she had voted against the proposed United Reformed Church at the assembly of the Congregational Church in England and Wales which was meeting in London that very week. In fact the debate on the URC had occurred only the previous day and among the speakers for the motion were Kenneth Slack while R W Cleaves and others had opposed it. As a former CUEW chairman, Elsie sat with the dignitaries on the platform and later she stated that she had been moved to pity by witnessing the unfair and partisan treatment, meted out to Reg Cleaves, as he tried to deliver his brief speech in opposition to the views of many vociferous delegates who favoured the URC. She explained her vote, against the URC at this CCEW May assembly in 1971, to the deacons, stating that, in her view, “the cause of general church union was not ... helped by this move”.³⁴

Elsie Chamberlain first publicly aligned herself with those Congregationalists who objected to the expected United Reformed Church in January 1972. Her anxieties about the scheme of union led her to side with “the dissenters’ proposed Congregational Federation”. She stated that “she could not accept any restrictions on those permitted to receive Holy Communion” - a reference to the “limited invitation” to communion, deemed a “constitutional necessity” by the proponents of the United Reformed Church. Her decision was reported firstly in the British Weekly where she commented on her attendance at a recent meeting of continuing Congregationalists which she had found “exhilarating”. She was pleasantly surprised to discover that several of her friends were at this meeting and that she was not so isolated in having profound reservations about the future. She stated that what finally proved “the last straw on the camel’s back” was her being asked to give an assurance that if she preached from “a certain pulpit” there would be no obligation on her conscience to bear testimony against the United Reformed Church. She expressed doubt “about any organisation that tries to tidy up consciences”.

Having decided to remain a Congregationalist she felt free from “the institutionalism that is killing the Spirit and making ordinary people weary of the Church that binds on them burdens grievous to be borne”. She believed that about seven hundred Congregational churches would stand aside from

³⁴Hutton Free Church Deacons Minutes 1970-74 - 12 May 1971. CYB (1971-1972) 88. Others who spoke in the debate include G M Adams, Rev E S Guest, Rev Ivor Morris, and David Watson.

“the merger” and would resist pressures toward uniformity and conformity that are entirely contrary to the spirit of unity”. She believed that if people could be “bull-dozed into the Kingdom, it would certainly be visible on earth now” - clearly implying that, in her opinion, undue pressure was applied by the proponents of the United Reformed Church to gain support for their cause. Having made this decision Elsie felt a sense of great relief. “For myself”, she stated, “I’m glad to be free of the pressures of power politics which seem to be the order of the day in bringing a new denomination to birth.” She added to the judgement, “It does not savour of the Kingdom of God”. The next day The Guardian publicised her decision not to join the United Reformed Church and, one week later, published a letter from her on this subject. Thus Elsie committed herself wholeheartedly to the Congregational Association.

This group had come into being in 1964 and in the following year Reginald W Cleaves, minister of Clarendon Park Congregational Church, Leicester was its chairman and John Wilcox of Loughborough its secretary. The Congregational Association hoped to persuade Congregationalists to “be faithful to historic Independency”, as it understood that term. By 1965 Viscountess Stansgate, Elsie Chamberlain’s great friend, had become involved with the “Congregational Association for the Continuance and Extension of Congregationalism”. It is probable that Lady Stansgate persuaded Elsie to examine afresh the concessions Congregationalists would be required to make, in order to proceed with the United Reformed Church, concessions which Margaret Stansgate had decided were too costly as early as May 1965. From at least 1966 the committee of the Congregational Association often met in Lady Stansgate’s flat in Westminster. Clearly Lady Stansgate encouraged Elsie Chamberlain, as they considered the implications of the proposed Congregational-Presbyterian union in the late 1960s and early 1970s, to remain Congregational.³⁵

An Open Letter

Two weeks after Elsie had announced, in her terms, that she had come “off the fence”, and that decision had been given publicity in a leading, serious, national newspaper, her friend, Kenneth Slack, replied in an “open letter”, published on the front page of the British Weekly. He corrected her mistake that the URC’s “scheme of union” placed any restriction upon who

³⁵R W Cleaves Congregationalism 1960-1976 The Story of the Federation (Swansea 1977) 20, 29, 42, 67, 68. CYB (1992-93) 38-39. The Guardian 22 January, 29 January 1972. British Weekly 21 January 1972.

might be admitted to communion, and also dissociated himself from the suggestion that any pressure had been placed upon her in this regard, when she was at the City Temple. He stated that he had been brought up in a church which followed the same custom as Elsie, that is extending an open invitation to communion, and this was also practised at his last Presbyterian Church. However he allowed that John Huxtable, the minister-secretary of the Congregational Church of England and Wales (“surely a not unrepresentative figure”), had always invited “members of any church”, a more exclusive form of words.

Slack did not understand Elsie’s phrase “the pressures of power politics” but saw it as having “a rather more emotive flavour” than he would “readily welcome in a serious debate between Christians”. He felt sure that she would not impute “unworthy motives” to many who have long been friends to them both and, therefore, suggested her phrase might mean “order” in the Church. Slack conceded that the balance between order and freedom is difficult but he understood that Christian freedom must not be debased into “a dangerous individualism” nor an “individualistic licence”. He claimed that those “drawing up the scheme of union” between Presbyterians and Congregationalists had not engaged in “the pressures of power politics” but rather had been “ordering ... the church’s life to help us to serve Christ”.

He claimed that the scheme of union which had been approved by “assemblies, county unions, presbyteries, churches and congregations” was only “a starting point”. He continued, “It may be that we have not got the balance between freedom and order right, or (as I would prefer to put it) have not found quite the right way of ordering the church’s life to make it free from both a deadening rigidity and from a lawless individualism that destroys fellowship”. Then he appealed to her, and others like her, “who always refreshingly challenge what ‘the establishment’ proposes”, to be of the uniting “company”.

He asked rhetorically, “Surely you never believed that unity could come about by all of us becoming Independents?” for “that is what your statement reads like to me. Is there in your mind no place at all in the church of the future for any of the insights that have been given to other forms of churchmanship?” He saw that “coming together” in a united church would enable Christians to “learn from one another” rather than “caricature one another”.³⁶

Of course Slack’s letter was only ostensibly intended for Elsie Chamberlain. In reality, it was aimed at all those who may have been swayed

³⁶British Weekly 4 February 1972.

by her decision not to join the URC. Knowing her, as he did, he could have entertained few illusions that he would be able to change her mind but he hoped to minimise the damage which her defection might cause. The impact of her declaration to remain Congregational is witnessed to by the fact that the British Weekly devoted not only its front page on that day to Slack's letter but almost one page to a selection of letters, drawn from "the flood", received in response to Elsie's "Off the Fence" article.

A Reply

A fortnight later Elsie Chamberlain chose to reply to Kenneth Slack with her own "open letter". She stated that she had deliberately delayed making public her decision about the URC until "everyone had had a chance to vote" so as not to exercise undue influence. Then, having found that "pressure was ... brought to bear on the 'noes' ", she felt compelled to stand with the continuing Congregationalists. She challenged the authority of those who claimed that any particular decision was at one with "God's will" but did not doubt Christ's prayer for the church's unity. However she believed that he was not praying for "organic or constitutional unity" but for "a unity of spirit that would be of the same essential unity that he shared with the Father". Christ, she claimed, did not "aim at or expect" uniformity.

She denied that she had ever believed "unity would come about by us all becoming Independents", pointing out her Anglican father and husband, but stated that "there must be room for all the given insights of all forms of churchmanship". In contrast to this, the United Reformed Church seemed to her a "steamrolling together of two forms of churchmanship, each with very different insights", rather than "a step towards unity". She feared that "some things of value" would inevitably "go down the drain".

Yet Elsie held to "the judgement of Gamaliel" that, "if this thing is of God, it will stand - whether it is URC or Congregational Federation or both or neither". She pledged herself to go on "working and praying for the unity of Christ's Church" and concluded that "The Spirit, like the wind, still blows where it pleases. Ordinary people must be free to breathe it - freer, I think than the tight lacing of the constitutional corset of the URC allows".³⁷

This surprising analogy surely reveals much of Elsie's feeling, as she likens the URC to a woman, forced to wear tight undergarments so that she might appear conventionally attractive, but also to disguise her true shape and who she really is. Her becoming a minister had been a rejection of corsets and the image of womanhood they represented. This rejection almost

³⁷British Weekly 25 February 1972.

defined Elsie's life and work. As a young woman Elsie had been a dress designer and knew human and female vanity and the lengths to which it could go. The URC's "tight lacing" threatened Elsie as a woman, and as an "ordinary" person, disabling her freedom to be who she was born to be and who she felt that the spirit had called her to be. Kenneth Slack simply had not understood this. He did not realise the price which he and his URC colleagues were asking Elsie Chamberlain to pay - a price she simply could not pay and remain true to herself and to the God she had strived to serve, often in defiance of social conventions, all her life. Her mother had taught her to be an independent woman. Muriel Paulden had taught her how to be a minister in a male dominated society. She had long been a member of the Society for the Ministry of Women in the Church, as had also her friend, Viscountess Stansgate, and Maude Royden - both of whom were founder members.³⁸ The experience of successive struggles against entrenched authority in the past had merely added strength to Elsie Chamberlain's resolve.

The Consequences of her Decision

It has been suggested that the formation of the United Reformed Church in 1972 caused Elsie Chamberlain "more distress than anything else" in her ministry. Some of her friends found Elsie's decision not to join the URC bewildering. One woman minister knew that Elsie objected to the Basis of Union between Congregationalists and Presbyterians but did not know why. Another felt that Elsie simply had not studied that basis properly. Yet another believed that Elsie had stayed out of the URC because she felt that in it there would be people, trying "to order her about", although he conceded that she would have been a "presence" at assemblies and that the URC would have been "richer and more effective", had she joined it.³⁹ Kenneth Slack in February 1972 hoped that Elsie would change her mind and agree to join the URC. He stated that otherwise she would be missed for herself but "more seriously" she would be missed for "the challenge" she would bring, as URC members adjusted the scheme in the light of experience. Another minister wanted Elsie Chamberlain to think again simply because "we don't want to lose her from the family".⁴⁰ Her decision not to join the URC was a blow to its upholders and her support for the Congregational Federation was a major coup for its promoters.

³⁸M Stansgate My Exit Visa (1992) 75.

³⁹Williams op cit 87. The Guardian 15 April 1991.

⁴⁰British Weekly 4 February 1972.

None except that Elsie Chamberlain opted to join the Congregational Federation, rather than the URC, because she preferred to be a big fish in a small pond. Rather the truth is that Elsie Chamberlain would have graced any fellowship she chose to join and that she would have made a significant contribution to its life. That this contribution was to be in the Congregational Federation was greatly to its advantage, although her decision, not to join the URC, arguably removed her from a position of wider influence in British church life as a whole. Admittedly she probably would not have agreed with that verdict. After all, the Congregational Federation chose her to represent it in ecumenical affairs and she continued to have an active and fulfilling ministry until her death in 1991 which she almost certainly would not have been able to do in the URC.

Elsie was, without doubt, a big fish in the Congregational Federation's small pond and it could be argued that Elsie was too big for the Congregational Federation. She had hoped that, after 1972, 700 churches would together continue to represent Congregationalism. However an Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches chose to remain apart from the Congregational Federation which, although it contained the majority of continuing Congregational churches with over 300 affiliated to it, never came close in its number of churches to Elsie's most optimistic hopes.

She did give the Congregational Federation a recognisable face. Broadcasting had made her a well known figure and, although such celebrity is necessarily short-lived, it rendered the Congregational Federation a higher public profile than it otherwise would have had. Conversely this had its negative aspect too. On more than one occasion, when explaining what the Congregational Federation was, the commonly accepted explanation was that it consisted of "Elsie Chamberlain and her crowd"! In the late 1970s at a Congregational Federation ministers' conference, Edwin Robertson, one of the speakers, stated that he had mistakenly believed the Congregational Federation was only Elsie and a few others. This misconception was repeated in Robertson's obituary of Elsie in April 1991, stating that in 1972 "she led her cohorts out in defence of the congregational nature of the local church and continued in the leadership of the Congregational Federation". More accurately, later in 1991, Robertson wrote of Lady Stansgate that she and Elsie "had led the 'rump' of churches which formed the Congregational Federation". In truth the Congregational Federation was never merely a platform for Elsie Chamberlain. Reg Cleaves, John Wilcox, Lady Stansgate and others had brought the Congregational Federation into being. As she herself admitted Elsie had come only very late to the continuing Congregational cause while others had rallied to it since the mid-1960s. Of

course she did not claim solely to lead the Congregational Federation but to many, these Congregationalists still remained “her cohorts”.⁴¹

The Congregational Federation

On May 13th, 1972 a conference of Congregationalists, called together by some of those opposed to the United Reformed Church, was held at Lyndhurst Road Congregational Church, Hampstead in north London. From this meeting the Congregational Federation came into being. Elsie Chamberlain conducted the devotions while Lady Stansgate was invited at the meeting to be the first president of the planned Congregational Federation. On 14 October 1972 the inaugural assembly of the Congregational Federation was held at Westminster Chapel where again Elsie Chamberlain led the worship. There the Congregational Federation was founded on a “distinctive principle”, that is “the scriptural right of every separate church to maintain perfect independence in the government and administration of its own affairs”. Therefore the Congregational Federation would not in any case “assume legislative authority or become a court of appeal”.

Lady Stansgate, in her presidential address, emphasised an alternative approach to ecumenism. “Federation excludes uniformity. Instead it brings ... the delight and refreshment of variety, of the many ways in which truth can be experienced and expressed. For us there will always be the ... validity of the Gathered Church”. But we do not ask “others to forsake their ways. There are many royal roads to the Throne of Grace”. She commended to the assembly the watchword “unity in diversity”. In May 1973, in Leicester, at its second assembly, Elsie Chamberlain was inducted to be Lady Stansgate’s successor as president for the coming year. With characteristic informality she kicked her shoes off as she spoke and made an immediate impression with her sense of humour and her down to earth openness and friendliness. She stated that “In the simplicity of our basic faith as Congregationalists lies the basis for the unity of all Christendom ... Let us stay a Church without power except the power of the Holy Spirit.”⁴²

Conclusion

Elsie had come to a parting of the ways. Although she maintained good personal relations with many in the URC - on one occasion Kenneth and Millicent Slack gave her a lift from the English Midlands to Taunton when

⁴¹The Independent 20 April 1991. The Guardian 23 October 1991.

⁴²Cleaves op cit 75-6, 81, 82, 85-6, 103.

Elsie's car was misbehaving - her choice to join the Congregational Federation led her to follow a different path from the then English ecumenical mainstream. Her views on ecumenism might in the long run be vindicated but in the early and mid-1970s her decision flew in the face of the prevailing popular theological winds. Yet she never doubted the wisdom of her choice in 1972. Certainly she regretted not being in the same denomination as many friends and former colleagues but she never regretted her decision not to join the URC. She pledged herself and repeatedly exhorted others "to disagree without being disagreeable".⁴³ Her commitment to the Congregational Federation was complete and binding. She expended her energies in acquainting herself with the churches of the Congregational Federation and with their members and friends. As ever, she was a great encourager of young people and especially women to enter the ministry.

In the Congregational Federation she had found a people to serve and invigorate and, in the revived Congregationalism it professed and expounded, she had rediscovered a cause to live for and, in large part, embody. The Congregational Federation released Elsie, as it did many others, from compliance to a policy then dominant, but restrictive. Now her candour and freshness would be employed, with its "tornado-like force", in attacking the "male-dominated ecclesiasticism" which she detected mainly in the ecumenical proposals from which she dissented.⁴⁴

For the last nineteen years of her life Elsie felt free of the threatening corsets of a form of ecumenism to witness to the Lord she served. The churches to which she was to minister, at Hutton, in Essex, at Chulmleigh, Devon, and Taunton, and Nottingham were not uncritical but they came to love her. She knew it but did not exploit it. She simply loved them in return.

Alan Argent

⁴³Ebenezer Griffith-Jones (1860-1942), principal of Yorkshire United College 1907-32, taught students his motto, "We must learn to disagree without being disagreeable". Congregational Year Book (1943) 428-9.

⁴⁴The Times loc cit.

EARLY CATHOLIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO FREE CHURCH HYMNODY

Hymns & Hymn Tunes

Gifts from Pre-Reformation Catholics to Free Church Congregations

THE HYMNS

Ancient hymns sung today in our churches are, of course, translations of prayers; they come from various sources, the earliest being the eastern Christians i.e. from Greece, and the area now known as Turkey and Syria. For example, the second century Syriac Church Fathers (Syrian Church) intoned the Didache (The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles). This contains the prayer *Father, we thank You now for planting Your holy name within our hearts...* with which users of Hymns and Psalms (1983) and Church Hymnary 3rd edn (1973) may be familiar, and which the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches, Grace Publications et al., have chosen to include in their Praise! (2000). From the Greek Orthodox Church in the 4th century we have, anon, Φως ἴλαρον ἁγίας δοξης translated by John Keble (1792-1866): *Hail gladdening light of His pure glory poured...* (BHB 695; 3CH 54; H&P 644; R&S 27).¹ Also Μνωεο Χριστε by Synesius of Cyrene (365-414), translated by Allen William Chatfield (1805-96) as *Lord Jesus, think on me, and purge away my sin...* (BHB 564; ChH 704; H&P 533; HTC 316; R&S 363).

The earliest Catholic contributions to our church hymnody come from St Ambrose (340-397). Born Aurelius Ambrosius in Treves, Gallia (now Germany), Ambrose was the youngest son of a Christian Roman nobleman. He was given the best education, studied law and theology and became Consular Prefect of Liguria, the province to which Milan belonged. At 34 years, he was made bishop of Milan by popular acclaim. He preached against Arianism and other heresies, vigorously defending the Trinitarian faith and writing hymns which reflected the theological controversies of his age. These hymns were in uniform stanzas, mostly without rhyming line-ends. We sing his hymn, *Splendor paterna gloriae*, roughly translated in long metre (LM) verses by John Chandler (1806-76), beginning:

¹A list of abbreviations of hymn book titles, used in this article, appears at the end of the article.

O splendour of God's glory bright
who bringeth forth the light from Light: (ChH 27; H&P 461)

Frost² tells us that monastic orders sang this hymn at Lauds, i.e. at dawn and usually on Mondays, which was 'prescribed as early as in The Rule of Aurelian of Arles (died 555)'.

Chandler also translated in LM another of Ambrose's Latin hymns, opening:

O Jesus, Lord of heavenly grace
Thou brightness of the Father's face
Thou fountain of eternal light
Whose beams disperse the shades of night (BHB 680; ChH 51)

Its closing verse:

O Christ, with each returning morn
Thine image to our hearts is borne;
O may we ever clearly see
Our Saviour and our God in Thee

is identical with verse 5 of the previous hymn, as given in H&P 461. Clearly either hymn may profitably be sung at morning worship. Ambrose heard both hymn singing and antiphonal psalm chanting for the first time when visiting Constantinople and other Eastern Churches. On his return to Milan he introduced these practises, and thus encouraged their use in the Western (Roman) Church. Unfortunately Ambrose's new zestful hymn singing degenerated towards entertainment. As a result, congregational singing was, in the 6th century suppressed and a return made to a more severe style, making church music a monopoly of the clergy. Not until the Reformation did the people again share more fully in the Church's praise.

Well known among Latin hymns is the first part of the *Te Deum laudamus* in its more or less modern rendering by Philip Gell.³ The hymn:

We praise, we worship Thee (You), O God
Thy (Your) sovereign power we sound abroad:

is in many of our denominational books (BPW 490; ChH 66; H&P 443; R&S 755), but with a doxology not in the original Latin, probably added by Gell.

It is not generally agreed who wrote parts 1 and 2 of the *Te Deum*. However, the oldest tradition concerning authorship has it that, on the occasion of the baptism of St Augustine by St Ambrose at Milan, the two men compiled the hymn antiphonally, probably incorporating antiphons

² M Frost (ed) Historical Companion to Hymns, Ancient & Modern (1962) 126.

³ P Gell Collection of Psalms & Hymns (Derby 1815).

already known to the Church. The writings of the learned Augustine (354-430) have recently inspired contemporary authors: Alan Gaunt (b1935), Timothy Dudley-Smith (b1926), Colin Thompson (b1945). Their beautiful hymns based on Augustine's Latin verses have yet to become familiar to our churches; see R&S 101, 529, 539; also HTC 477.

A major Catholic contribution to our hymnody comes from fifth, sixth and eighth centuries Ireland. Firstly, a prayer for protection from the enemy: *Atomring indui niurt tren togairm trinoit* which is found in documents in Trinity College, Dublin. These two manuscripts date from the eleventh century, when the hymn was almost certainly no longer sung by the assembled congregation, i.e. the laity. According to Julian, the writer of the hymn, Succetus Patricius (372-466) born in France, was of Roman descent and probably made a bishop before he dedicated his life to the founding of (several hundred) monasteries for the evangelisation of the Irish people.⁴ Two centuries later, after his canonisation, St Patrick's hymn, referred to in Tirechan's Collection (690 AD), was directed to be sung in 'all monasteries and churches through the whole of Ireland'. Still sung today are two versions, one a translation by Cecil Frances Alexander (1804-95) beginning:

'I bind unto myself today the strong name of the Trinity,
By invocation of the same, the Three in One, and One in Three...'
(3CH 402; H&P 695; R&S 36)

the other, a Jubilate Hymns version (HTC 5) beginning:

I bind myself to God today, the strong and holy Trinity
To know His name and make Him known, the Three-in-One and
One-in-Three

both are sung to an ancient Irish melody ST PATRICK'S BREASTPLATE.

Three further early Irish hymns are sung in nonconformist chapels today. A long poem, *In Te, Christe, credentium miserearis omnium*, apparently offered to Pope Gregory the Great, seems to have been penned by the Irishman, St Columba (521-597), a home missionary for the Catholic faith until he was forty. Ordained priest in 550, he left his homeland to settle in Iona, a tiny island off the Isle of Mull. From this base, he led the work of founding more monasteries and furthering the evangelisation of the Picts in northern Scotland, begun a century earlier by 'St Drostan and his three'. One part of *In Te, Christe* tells of what Jesus is to believers. Another speaks of what God has done for the human race, and we have two Free Church hymns both translations by Duncan MacGregor (1854-1923).

⁴ J Julian A Dictionary of Hymnology (revd ed. 1907) 884.

Christ is the world's Redeemer, the lover of the pure,
The fount of heavenly wisdom, our trust and hope secure;
(3CH 301; H&P 219; R&S 272)

and

O God, Thou art the Father of all that have believed:
From whom all hosts of angels have life and power received
(3CH 397; H&P 52; R&S 73)

Usually, the tunes set are adaptations of Irish folksongs.

The hymn:

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art;

has its source in an anonymous eighth century Christian poem which can be found on two manuscripts now in the Royal Irish Academy Library, Dublin. A 1905 translation by Mary Elizabeth Byrne (1880-1931), versified in 1913 by Eleanor Henrietta Hull (1860-1935), author and founder of the Irish Text Society, provides the usual text. Although in all Free Church hymnbooks (BHB 462; BPW 52; ChH 595; 3CH 87; HF 420; HTC 545; H&P 378; R&S 489), scarcely any two versions are identical, not counting the Jubilate Hymns version beginning:

Lord be my vision, supreme in my heart,
Bid every rival give way and depart:
You my best thought in the day or the night,
Waking or sleeping, Your presence my light.

The captivating tune, SLANE, is a traditional Irish one, and accompanied the first appearance of our hymn in the Irish Church Hymnal of 1919. Many have tried to harmonise it; also, like most folk tunes, there are several slightly altered versions. The name of the tune refers to the hill where Patrick lit the Paschal fire on the eve of Easter in defiance of the pagan King Leogaire. This act gave rise to the myth that Patrick established Christianity in Ireland.

Nonconformists at the start of the third millennium enjoy a number of medieval hymns, penned in France but written in Latin, the worship language of the (Catholic) clergy. Three hymns for special occasions are derived from those of Venantius Honorius Clementianus Fortunatus (530-609). His hymn *Salve fest dies* inspired an enduring paraphrase from John Ellerton (1826-93):

'Welcome happy morning', age to age shall say:
Hell today is vanquished, heaven is won today.
Lo! The dead is living... (BHB 165; CH 139; 3CH 272; HTC 166)

Another of his hymns starts:

Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle,
sing the ending of the fray

This, a relatively recent translation of the Latin hymn, *Pange, lingua, gloriosi proelium certaminis*, is one of our finest hymns on the glorious victory of Christ through the Cross. It is unfortunate this hymn has been tied by Sarum and Roman rites to Good Friday; not a good time for singing - for Free Church people. The tune PANGE LINGUA, fourteenth century plainsong, is still in our books (3CH 256; BHB 146; HP 177; HTC 142; R&S 228).

Vexilla regis prodeunt was written as a great song of triumph, to salute the arrival of the fragments of the Cross from emperor Justin II who had recently been converted to Christianity. Several manuscripts of the hymn, dating from eighth to twelfth centuries, are known. Dozens of translations have been made. The Latin hymn is set down in the Roman missal for the adoration of the Cross on Good Friday morning.

Our Free Churches use different translations, e.g.

The royal banners forward go:
the Cross shines forth in mystic glow.
where He in flesh, our flesh who made
our sentence bore, our ransom paid.

Tr. John Mason Neale (1818-66) (BHB 147; BPW 228)

The royal banners forward go,
The mystery of the cross to show,
When He in flesh, all flesh who made,
Is on the tree of death displayed.

Tr. Rupert E. Davies (H&P 179)

As royal banners are unfurled
the cross displays its mystery:
the maker of our flesh, in flesh,
impaled and hanging helplessly.

Tr. Alan Gaunt (R&S 216)

A Latin hymn beginning *Urbs beati Hierusalem* is considered at least as old as the seventh century. It is found in many medieval breviaries, whilst the earliest known text is in a tenth century Poitiers Pontifical. From the first part of the hymn, a translation by Neale gives us the well known 87.87.87 hymn:

Christ is made the sure foundation...

(BPW 474; HF 516; H&P 485; HTC 559; R&S 559)

Originally these words formed verse 2, while verse 1 followed the Latin opening:

Blessed city, heavenly Salem,/vision dear of peace and love,
as in CP 237. Only HTC (1982) and R&S (1991) chose to retain '*Blessed city*'. The second part of the old Latin hymn begins:

Angularis fundamentum,

from which John Chandler has given us four verses, beginning:

Christ is our corner stone

on Him alone we build;

with His true saints alone

the courts of heaven are filled

On His great love our hopes we place

of present grace and joys above. (ChH 4; BHB 267; HTC 564)

The Latin hymn *Gloria, laus, et honor tibi sunt, rex Christe redemptor*, is incorporated in a tenth century manuscript in Paris, and appears in many medieval missals. Its writer was Bishop Theodulph (750-821). Born of a noble Gothic family, probably in Spain, Theodulph was brought to France by Charlemagne in 781 and appointed bishop of Orleans. Unsubstantiated stories say his hymn was composed while in prison at Angers, for conspiracy against Louis I. Our hymn, translated by John Mason Neale, beginning:

All glory, laud/praise, and honour

to Thee/You, Redeemer, King,

to whom the lips of children

made sweet hosannas ring

is in most hymnals (BPW 216; ChH 118; HF 10; HTC 120; H&P 160; R&S 208). The Gospel (Mt 21:15) records that 'hosannas' (meaning 'save us, we pray') were intoned during Jesus' entry to Jerusalem before his death, and from the ninth century it became a custom for the clergy and congregation on Palm Sunday to sing the hymn as they processed through their towns in France.

Another hymn from northern France is by St Fulbert (c950-1028) who was made bishop of Chartres in 1007. His hymn, based on an eleventh century ms, is in the British Library. Ours is a translation by Robert Campbell (1814-68) which appears in only two books used by nonconformists, i.e. at H&P 823, and HTC 165. The first two of six verses follow:

Ye choirs of new Jerusalem your sweetest notes employ,
The Paschal victory to hymn in strains of holy joy.
For Judah's Lion has burst his chains crushing the serpent's head
and cries aloud through death's domains to wake the imprisoned
dead.

Two further hymns from the eleventh century derive from the poems of the French priest-philosopher-theologian, Peter Abelard (1079-1142), founder of the monastery of the Paraclete, at Nogent on Seine. First is his: *O quanta, qualia sunt illa sabbata*, which in Neale's translation reads:

O what their joy and their glory must be,
Those endless sabbaths the blessed ones see...

last sung from CP 349 and 3CH 535, and now revived with a fine translation in 4 11s, by Alan Gaunt opening:

What of those sabbaths? What glory! What grandeur!
Kept by the saints in celestia splendour:
Rest for the weary, reward of endurance;
God all in all, their delight and assurance! (R&S 659)

The second of Abelard's poems gives us a passiontide hymn, found in Baptist books, and opening:

Alone now going forth, O Lord,
in sacrifice to die,
is all Thy/Your sorrow naught to us,
who pass unheading by?

The translation is by F. Bland Tucker (1895-1984) altd. (BHB 139; BPW 217)

A twelfth century Latin classic *Jesu, dulcis memoria*, was a personal devotional hymn that focussed on Jesus and the treasures of his love. It became the source of three hymns popular with nonconformists in the late nineteenth century. *Jesu dulcis memoria*, had 42 stanzas and was considered to be by St Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153) who wrote prose and poetry of great beauty. Certainly, the poem is marked by passionate out-pourings and mystic imagery characteristic of this great spiritual leader who founded the monastery at Clairvaux. The poem soon came into general use for Catholic devotions, even being supplemented with an additional 9 stanzas. An English translation was provided by Edward Caswall (1814-78) and, of his 50 verses, different centos have made up the hymns known to 21st century Free Church people:

O Jesus, King most wonderful
(BPW 353; ChH 141; H&P 269; R&S 356)

Jesus, the very thought of Thee/You

(ChH 132; HTC 478; H&P 265; R&S 356)

Another hymn is taken from a different selection of Bernard's stanzas. This is a paraphrase by Ray Palmer (1808-87) for singing at Holy Communion celebration. One modern version opens:

Jesus, the joy of loving hearts
the fount of life, the light of men,
from the best bliss that earth imparts
We turn unfilled to You again.

(BPW 439; ChH 134; HF 122; H&P 256; R&S 389)

It appears that confirmation of Bernard's authorship of the above hymns can neither be conclusively established nor seriously challenged today.

Mention must be made of the once celebrated *Jerusalem the golden, with milk and honey blest*. The source of this hymn is a very long and beautifully rhyming poem written in classical Latin around 1145 by another Bernard, about whom we know little. He is the monk Bernard of Cluny, sometimes referred to as Bernard of Morlaix - his place of birth in Brittany.

The bulk of this Bernard's poem, *De contemptu mundi* is a satire on the misery and widespread corruption he witnessed in France. In contrast, the poem's opening describes the joys of a sin-free heavenly home, where our sovereign God reigns supreme. We have to thank John Mason Neale for a fine translation of 218 lines that provided earlier nonconformists with at least three 76.76D texts (see R&S 662 for a current composite one). Only one of these survives in the Free Churches, namely *Jerusalem the golden* (BPW 312; ChH 810; HTC 573), associated for 150 years now with an impressive tune, EWING.

Outstanding today among our loud hymns of praise and devotion, is the thirteenth century metrical song beginning:

All creatures of our God and King
lift up your voice and with us sing
Alleluia, Alleluia

It comes from *Laudato sia Die mio Singore* written by Francesco Giovanni Bernadone, i.e. St Francis of Assisi (1182-1226), and is probably the oldest extant hymn text in Italian. Not until the early nineteenth century however, did our churches enjoy this '*Canticle of the Sun*', when William Henry Draper (1855-1933), a Somerset clergyman, paraphrased Francis' hymn, keeping to the broad line of its Italian text. Verse 1 continues:

Thou burning sun with golden beam
thou silver moon with softer gleam
O Praise Him, o praise Him...

In another six verses, the hymn impels all creation under the sun to praise its Maker; all humanity to do so, even during pain and suffering. Even 'thou...gentle death' is depicted as a praise-worthy ally of God's plan for creation. (BPW 28; 3CH 30; HF 28; HTC 13; H&P 329; R&S 39) We are indebted to an unknown German-speaking Roman Catholic for the hymn's seventeenth century partner tune named LASST UNS ERFREUEN (let us rejoice), originally associated with an Easter hymn beginning with these words.

A second thirteenth century hymn we sing today is said to have been written by an Englishman. Richard Wycke (1197-1253) left a prayer, a copy of which was found almost seven centuries later, printed on a card by Sheffington Publishers, and now in the British Museum. It was first sung by nonconformists a few years before World War 2 (SP 399) and is currently sung as a simple 'chorus' (H&P 671; R&S 491):

Day by day, dear Lord,
of Thee three things I pray:
To see Thee more clearly
To love Thee more dearly
To follow Thee more nearly, day by day.

Its author was elected and consecrated bishop of Chichester in 1237, against the wishes of Edward III. He was canonised St Richard of Chichester in 1262 by Pope Urban IV.

Yet another thirteenth century hymn by a saint, St Thomas, is heard today, sung perhaps during the Lord's Supper. The hymn: *Pange lingua, gloriosi corporis mysterium* was written at the request of Pope Urban IV for the office of Corpus Christi in 1263; it entered many breviaries,⁵ and subsequently had many translators (Julian, 878). Its opening and metre is patterned on Fortunatus' earlier poem (p 3). An anonymous translator writes for us in the New Congregational Hymn Book, 1859:

*Now my tongue, the mystery telling
of the glorious body sing* (3CH 578; R&S 457)

Another (revised) translation by Edward Caswall and others gives us:

⁵ ibid 878.

*Sing my tongue, the Saviour's glory
of His cross the mystery sing*

(BHB 326; BPW 449; H&P 624)

The penultimate and last verse of these hymns are identical, and together comprise yet another used by Congregationalists today:

Low in adoration bending

Now our hearts our God revere

(CP 314; PH 39)

The writer, Thomas of Aquino (1227-74), was born at Aquino, near Naples. He became an outstanding intellectual of great piety, was appointed professor at Dominican colleges, first in Cologne and then at Rome, and wrote his celebrated Summa Theologiae for the Roman Church. He was canonised St Thomas Aquinas in 1323.

The hymn:

Come down, o Love divine!

seek out this soul of mine

and visit it with your own ardour glowing;

was formulated in the 14th century. It is a fervent prayer to the Holy Spirit for Him to leave gifts of fire, light, love and humility. The original text is by Bianco da Siena (c1367-1434) from Anciolina, central Italy, who became a member of the Order of Jesuates, lay followers of the Augustinian Rule. His *Discendi, Amor santo* is to be found in a medieval Italian collection of poems of praise and devotion set to simple folk tunes. These were the *laudi spirituali*, sung outside the official auspices of the Catholic Church. They arose from the desire for hymns in the vernacular, and were eventually published in the Papal State of Lucca, (1851). Bianco's hymn had one 4-line and four 8-line stanzas, which was translated and reset by Richard Frederick Littledale (1833-90) in four 6-line stanzas of two equal (6.6.11) groups, and published in Littledale's The People's Hymnal (1867). Today, the hymn's attraction owes much to its music, by Ralph Vaughan Williams. His tune DOWN AMPNEY (1906) matches perfectly the rhyme scheme and contour of the words for which it was composed. Nonconformists have enjoyed this setting of the hymn for the best part of a century, including two generations (1933-83) when, because of copyright difficulties, it was not available to users of Hymns, Ancient & Modern. (BCH 189; BPW 283; ChH 295; HF 241; H&P 281; HTC 231; R&S 294)

Christians sing to several tunes:
To the Name of our salvation
praise and honour let us pay,
which for many a generation
hid in God's foreknowledge lay
but with holy exultation
We may sing aloud today.

This: *Gloriosi salvatoris nominis praeconia*, is the opening of a 6-verse Latin hymn from the fifteenth century. It was found in the breviary of Antwerp, printed in 1496. It has been translated by John Mason Neale and others, and altered many times. The above version is from Rejoice & Sing (1991) (BHB 221; ChH 153; HP 80; HTC 222; R&S 291)

Another fine Easter hymn conceived in the late fifteenth century, begins:
O sons and daughters, let us sing!
The King of Heaven, the glorious King
O'er death today rose triumphing.
Alleluia!

The hymn was originally in nine stanzas of Latin⁶ and tells the story of the Resurrection scene; the 'sons and daughters' being the men and women to whom the resurrected Jesus first appeared. The writer, Jean Tisserand (c1430-1494), was a Minorite friar, author, poet and founder of an Order for penitent women. His hymn was published posthumously in Paris between 1518 and 1536. Shortly afterwards, three more stanzas were added and the whole translated by John Mason Neale and printed in his Medieval Hymns and Sequences (1851). Several altered versions have subsequently been printed in Free Church hymn books. Neale unfortunately omitted to translate the three stanzas presenting the questioning of the risen Lord by Thomas Didymus. So, today we have two different hymns with the same first verse. One hymn recalls the encounter of the two Marys, and follows that of Congregational Praise (1951): Hymns of Faith (1964), 199 and Rejoice & Sing (1991), 244 part 1. The other tells of the doubting, courageous St Thomas, as in: Songs of Praise (1931), 143, Hymns & Psalms (1983), 205 and Rejoice & Sing (1991), 244 part 2

The words of a hymn we know beginning *God be in my head and in my understanding* appear on the title page of a Book of Hours of the Blessed Virgin, printed by Richard Pynson in 1515. The prayer is, however, of French origin:⁷ one manuscript, dated 1497, is in the British Museum (IA

⁶ Frost op cit 210-11.

⁷ M Frost "God be in my Head" Hymn Society Bulletin vol 2, 262 (1951).

40846), another French manuscript is said to be dated c1490. Each contains an invocatory prayer to Jesus almost identical to our hymn: *Jesus soit en ma teste et mon entendement...Jesus soit en ma vie et mon trespasement*. (BPW 592; ChH 891; H&P 694; R&S 498) This is the most recent of some 24 enduring hymns which the Free Churches have taken into common use from the pre-Reformation Catholic Church.

It can be seen (Table A) that few centuries anno Domini have failed to produce a least one piece of significant poetry or lyrical prose that Protestant congregations sing today. Often, as recalled here, long periods of time elapsed before an old hymn was resurrected, translated and an appropriate tune supplied. Messenger⁸ reckons that even before the second millennium started, a hundred hymns, mostly written anonymously, were regularly sung in the monasteries. Considering the number of pre-Reformation Latin hymns, their power, veneration and beauty, it is surprising how infrequently Roman Catholics rendered them into English verses. Happily, current Free Church denominational books now include a fair measure of hymnody derived from the pre-Reformation years, and particularly good sources of our most enduring hymns can be found in Church Hymnary 3rd ed (1973), Rejoice & Sing (1991) and Baptist Hymn Book (1962) with 56, 54 and 33 pre-Reformation hymns respectively.

THE MUSIC OF THE HYMNS

Recalling that the Roman Church had a dominating influence in most branches of learning, including music and drama, it is not surprising to find early hymn tunes derived from plainsong used in the liturgy, and also from ex-liturgical folk-like songs known in the fourteenth century or earlier (see Table B).

Plainsong or plainchant is part of an extensive body of Latin liturgical chant belonging to the Catholic tradition, to which the Western World is indebted for the start and early development of its choral art. Basically, it displays an apparent lack of measured rhythm, and the presence of a quaintly sounding modality due to a lack of the tonic-dominant relationship. Plainsong was written by nameless musicians living a monastic life within the period embracing the ninth and sixteenth centuries. In England, it developed principally at Salisbury or Sarum, as the town, diocese and area surrounding the Cathedral was known, written and spoken of, for over 700 years. Derived from this period we received a rich heritage of beautiful

⁸ R E Messenger "The Ninth Century Cycle of Hymns", in Historical Companion to Hymns A & M 8-9.

taken to make up our present short metre tune. The original hymn tune can be found in the first German hymnbook of the Bohemian Brethren, *Ein neu Gesangbuchlein* (1531), a compilation of 155 hymns by Michael Weiss, preacher and poet. Two centuries later, a posthumous chorale collection by J. S. Bach included a chorale closely resembling the tune in 66.676 metre, but the Bristol Tune Book (1863) seems to be the first to print GILDAS. There it is called AUGUSTINE and erroneously attributed to Bach; nor are Bach's harmonies given. GILDAS is most often used for Wesley's hymn *Jesus, we thus obey thy last and kindest word...* Its present harmonies are mostly by Eric Thiman (1900-75).

DIVINUM MYSTERIUM (CORDE NATUS)

BHB 85; BPW 145 H&P 79; HTC 56; R&S 181

A score or more of medieval manuscripts, tropes and chant collections from central Europe contain this plainsong. Many show differences in the length of the last two phrases. Our tune seems to have begun life near the end of the thirteenth century⁹ as a trope, i.e. a musical interpolation into an existing piece in the medieval liturgy, in this case to a Sanctus. It was sung to the words *Divinum mysterium modo declaratur...* in praise of of Holy Communion. A later version of the melody is recorded in the Prague Narodni Muzeum, and was collected by Theodoric Petri of Finland, in his classic Piae Cantiones Ecclesiasticae et Scholasticae of 1582.

The Latin text beginning *Corde natus ex Parentis ante mundi exordium, (Of the Father's love begotten ere the worlds began to be,...)* was written by the famous Spanish poet, Marcus Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (348-410). He wrote at a time when Christianity in Spain was threatened by paganism and heresy. Part of a poem, the ninth of twelve in his Liber Cathemerion (Christian Day) was sung as a Latin hymn in the eleventh century, when the refrain 'Seculorum seculae' was added. However, the Prudentius hymn and DIVINUM MYSTERIUM seem not to have come together until the fourteenth century. Neale made a translation, and Thomas Helmore in his The Hymnal Noted (1854) set Neale's words to DIVINUM MYSTERIUM, both slightly altered. Henry Williams Baker (1821-77) and others made addition and amendments. Verse two is a translation from the twelfth century Hereford Breviary:

⁹ M Frost Historical Companion to Hymns A & M 444.

By His word was all created;
He commanded and 'twas done;
Earth and sky and boundless ocean,
Universe of three in one,
All that sees the moon's soft radiance,
All that breathes beneath the sun,
 evermore and evermore.

Unfortunately, Helmore's transcription of the tune from Piae Cantiones for Neale's words was not sufficiently sensitive to the original and subsequently led to the appearance of incorrect versions of DIVINUM MYSTERIUM, including that in Congregational Hymnary (1916). Improved settings are sung today and, to a limited extent, they restore the plainsong character. Each takes its melody, but not its rhythm, from Piae Cantiones. One version in equal notes, an unbarred chant-like setting, is familiar to users of American hymnals. English Free Church people enjoy a barred triple rhythm generating a heavenly dance and ending in an outburst of praise for the miracles of our God.

VENI EMMANUEL

(BPW 144; ChH 464; H&P 85; HTC 66; R&S 126)

This familiar tune to *O come, o come Immanuel and ransom captive Israel*...appears in a fifteenth century folio in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, (ms 10581). The melody, again a trope, is here printed on a left-hand page while on the opposite right page is a counter-melody, mostly a mirror image of the melody line. Apparently, the two tunes were together sung by French Franciscans in a funeral processional hymn, a truly beautiful achievement in those early days of polyphony. The words of the hymn are based on five of the seven Latin texts known as the 'Great Antiphons'. Each heralds the coming of the Messiah with an Old Testament name (Rod of Jesse, Key of David, etc). Each of the 'Great O's' was said before or after the Song of Mary (Magnificat) from 17 to 23 December at vespers, and it was customary in the middle ages, for each chief officer in a monastery to 'keep his O', by saying it and then providing a gift for the monks. The close fit of the tune VENI EMMANUEL to its Latin words (translated by Neale as *Draw nigh, draw nigh Emmanuel*,) makes it likely the Latin hymn, versified in the twelfth century, was the original text set to our tune. This could make it western Christianity's longest hymn/hymn tune partnership. The refrain *Rejoice, rejoice*, momentarily interrupting the plainsong flow, was added in 1710 in an appendix to Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum. The inclusion of VENI EMMANUEL in New Congregational Hymn Book with

Supplement (1874) and in Wesley Hymns (1877), led to it becoming popular with nonconformists long before it gained acceptance among Anglicans.

It will be apparent from the foregoing how, in most cases, our hymn tunes do not relate to the origin of their words, and the origin of the music is concealed in ordinary use. Also, from time to time, melodic phrases and their rhythm have been intentionally altered to produce acceptable music for today's hymns, just as have hymn texts to hold the present age. Whilst the old plainsong was sung by the priest and his all-male choir on behalf of the people, ordinary men, women and children sang, danced and whistled religious folksong, including the carol.

Our last thank-you to the early Catholic Christians must then be for five folk-tunes sung today in our worship. Pride of place goes to PERSONENT HODIE, now called THEODORIC in honour of the young Finn, Theodoric Petri, who, in 1582, preserved for our use seventy-two school and church melodies then current in Germany and Scandinavia. In this collection Piae Cantiones, already referred to, we find IN DULCI JUBILO, PUER NOBIS, PERSONENT HODIE and RESONANT IN LAUDIBUS. The latter tune, last used by mid-twentieth century Baptists (BHB 134) and Presbyterians (3CH 221) is no longer in the Free Churches' hymn repertoire.

THEODORIC (PERSONENT HODIE)

BPW 45; H&P 220; HTC 348; R&S 274

This tune was well known in fifteenth century Europe. The words are considered a parody of a song written before 1360 AD, in honour of St Nicholas.¹⁰ It was originally named after the opening line to its four verses telling the story of Christ's birth, *Personent hodie voces puerulae*. Several early twentieth century hymn books carried a translation by J. M. Joseph (1894-1925): *On this day earth shall ring*, and took the tune from Piae Cantiones (1582). However, THEODORIC only became popular with nonconformists when Gustav Holst (1874-1934) supplied a vigorous independent accompaniment to the tune which carried words by Percy Dearmer (1867-1934):

¹⁰ T Petri Piae Cantiones, 1582, A School and Church Song Collection. rev-edn, by G.R. Woodward for the PMMS (1910) 209.

God is love, his this care
tending each everywhere...

with the chorus:

Sing aloud, loud, loud,...

THEODORIC is a pulsing, joyful melody which has enticed others to write to it, including Fred Pratt Green (1905-2000) with his:

Long ago, prophets knew
Christ would come, born a Jew...,

and chorus:

Ring bells, ring, ring, ring,...

Useful SATB settings can be found in University Carol Book (1961) by Erik Routley (1917-82), and in Irish Church Praise (1990).

IN DULCI JUBILO BPW 164; H&P 104; HTC 85; R&S 161

A manuscript found at Leipzig University, dated 1400, has words and music of this old German Christmas carol. Several books contain the story that Heinrich Suso, Dominican monk and mystic (c1280-1366), was induced to join in a dance with a choir of angels singing this tune! Bailey¹¹ gives us the original text, partly Swedish partly Latin together with a literal translation. Neale made a fairly free translation, of which an altered version is:

Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
Give you heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ is born today,

The music is found in various 16th century songbooks including Klug's Geistliche Lieder, Wittenberg, 1533. Thomas Helmore, Neale's associate, transcribed the melody from Piae Cantiones,¹² mistaking the note values at the end of the third phrase and substituting 2 dotted minims for 2 quavers. To accommodate the extended melody, Neale added the words: v.1.: *News! News!*, v.2: *Joy!, Joy!*, v.3: *Peace!, Peace!* as found in CH (1916) and in RCH (1927). Bach's several chorale preludes on IN DULCI JUBILO, and de Pearsall's setting for choirs (1834) have popularised this festive tune - 'in sweet jubilation'. Most hymnals include it. Like IN DULCI JUBILO, PUER NOBIS and QUEM PASTORES are carol tunes. Both have been found in a ms at Hohenfurth Abbey, Germany, each dated 1410.

PUER NOBIS BPW 181, H&P 127; HTC 83; R&S 169

Is recognisable from another fifteenth century manuscript in the Stadt bibliothek Trier, Germany. There it is set to five Latin verses which begin:

¹¹ A E Bailey The Gospel in Hymns, Background and Interpretation (1850).

¹² T Petri op cit 210.

Puer nobis nascitur Rector angelorum...

and end:

Cantemus in organo, Benedicamus Domino.

Written for use at Christmas, they replaced the normal *Benedicamus Domino*. The melody is in the mixo-lydian mode (Tone VII) but with a B natural, i.e. the modern major scale. PUER NOBIS is almost certainly an older folk tune, and many slightly differing versions are found in sixteenth and seventeenth century songbooks, also in each of three editions (1901, 1902, 1919) of the Cowley Carol Book. All testify to its wide use. *Musae Sionae* (1609) gives a triple time version, which was used by SP 33 and WOV 6. The commoner duple time version is edited by Geoffrey Shaw for:

Unto us a boy is born
King of all creation
Came He to a world forlorn,
the Lord of every nation...

with repetition of the last line. The tune has been given other names e.g. SPLENDOUR (SP 33) and PUER NATUS (HF 163).

The other carol tune found in manuscript form at Hohenfurth, unlike PUER NOBIS, has been set to several different hymns. This is:

QUEM PASTORES BPW 50; ChH 799; HF 162; H&P 732; R&S 156

And takes its name from the set Latin words: *Quem pastores laudavere*...translated for us in 1944 by George Bradford Caird (1917-84) as *Shepherds came, their praises bringing* (CP 708, R&S 156). Like PUER NOBIS, it was printed in sixteenth and seventeenth century German song and psalm books, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, and became very popular. Mutilated forms of the tune in duple time were sung in nineteenth century Britain under the name of BETHLEHEM, but many twentieth century nonconformists became familiar with this gentle dance tune through the words of Percy Dearmer, based on those of Neale:

Jesus, good above all other
gentle child of gentle mother;
In a stable born our brother
give us grace to persevere.

Twenty-first century Free Church people have hymns opening:

Father, who in Jesus found us
God, whose love is all around us
Who to freedom new unbound us
keep our hearts with joy aflame. (H&P 607)

and

God the Father throned in splendour,
righteous, merciful and tender;
thankful songs your people render -
sovereign Lord, we praise Your name! (BPW 50)

by Fred Kaan (b1929) and Betty Stanley (b1921) respectively, for the carol
tune QUEM PASTORES.

The last gift from the early Roman Catholics to be acknowledged here is
the tune ORIENTIS PARTIBUS. It is still in our repertoire, just; the various
set texts are from the eighteenth century. It has a curious history.

ORIENTIS PARTIBUS (CORTON, St MARTIN)

BHB 469; ChH 725; H&P 168; HTC 534

This tune was first sung during the Office of the Circumcision in Sens
cathedral, sometime in 1210. It was, of course, plainsong but of an atypical
kind termed conductus. Ex-liturgical, rhythmic with a folk-tune-like spirit,
yet set to sacred Latin words; the religious equivalent of the troubadour song
of the period. ORIENTIS PARTIBUS is ascribed to Pierre de Corbiel
(c1168-1222) who in 1200 was made archbishop to the royal province of
Sens, an area incorporating the towns, Paris, Orléans and Sens. The
conductus is in the mixo-lydian mode (Tone VII) i.e. the sounds of G-G',
white notes only, and it was sung solemnly during Mass while an ass stood at
the high altar! It opened with the words '*Orientis partibus adventavit asinus*'
(From the east, the ass has come), written to give thanks to God for the ass on
which Mary and the baby Jesus rode on their journey into Egypt. It was sung
in a macaronic language, part Latin, part French and German. [For scholarly
details of text and tune, see Routley¹³(11) and Frost¹⁴(12)]. In parts of France,
ORIENTIS PARTIBUS was originally used on January 14th as part of an
annual festival, the Feast of the Ass. In Germany, it appeared in a Catholic
Gesangbuch, Graz, 1602 and became popular with both Catholics and
Protestants there.

In Britain, Richard Redhead (1820-1901) harmonised the tune in
common time, for his Church HymnTunes, Ancient & Modern (1853). It
was taken into H.A.&M (1875) No. 440 where it is called REDHEAD 45.
Nonconformists, however, were largely responsible for its popularity, setting
it to other appropriate 7777 texts. Scottish Presbyterians - TCH (1898); RCH
(1927) - like users of today's HTC, sang it to: *Soldiers of the cross, arise...*
(William Walsham How). Early twentieth century Baptists and Primitive
Methodists sang the tune, under the name of ST MARTIN. Like users of

¹³ K L Parry & E Routley Companion to Congregational Praise (1953) 21-22.

¹⁴ M Frost op cit 407-08.

today's ChH, they sang it to: *When we cannot see our way/let us trust and still obey...*(T. Kelly) Congregationalists used the tune extensively, calling it CORTON or simply OLD FRENCH MELODY. Since CCH (1887) it supported:

All that's good and great and true, all that is and is to be,
Be it old or be it new, comes O Father, comes from Thee...

(Godfrey Thring (1823-1903)

also three different hymns in CH (1916) and CP (1951). ORIENTIS PARTIBUS has been dropped by the United Reformed Church, but continues in the current Methodist repertoire with *Jesus comes with all His grace/comes to save a fallen race...*(C. Wesley). Here, H&P users enjoy the triple rhythm, introduced by Ralph Vaughan Williams which possibly interprets the semi-pop style of the original better than that adopted by Redhead.

Derek Watson

ABBREVIATIONS

BHB	Baptist Hymn Book	Psalms & Hymns Trust 1962
BPW	Baptist Praise & Worship	OUP 1991
CCH	Congregational Church Hymnary	C.U.E.W. 1887
ChH	Christian Hymns	E.M.W., Bridgend 1977
CH	Congregational Hymnary	C.U.E.W. 1916
3CH	The Church Hymnary, 3rd edn.	OUP 1973
CP	Congregational Praise	Independent Press 1951
HA&M	Hymns, Ancient & Modern	W. Clowes, London 1875
HF	Hymns of Faith	Scripture Union 1964
H&P	Hymns & Psalms	Methodist Publ. Ho. 1983
HTC	Hymns for Today's Church	Hodder & Stoughton 1987
PH	Peculiar Honours	Stainer & Bell 1998
RCH	The Church Hymnary, revd. edn.	OUP 1927
R&S	Rejoice and Sing	OUP 1991
SP	Songs of Praise, enlarged edn.	OUP 1931
TCH	The Church Hymnary	Humphrey & Milford, Edinburgh 1898
WOV	With One Voice	Collins 1979

TABLE A
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM CHRISTIAN SAINTS (PRE-REFORMATION) TO FREE CHURCH HYMNODY (21ST CENTURY)

<u>Century</u>	<u>Writer</u>	<u>Hymn</u>
Four	Ambrose	<i>We praise Thee, O God (Te Deum)</i>
Five	Prudentius	<i>Of the Father's love begotten</i>
	Patrick	<i>I bind unto myself today</i>
Six	Columba	<i>Christ is the world's Redeemer</i>
	Fortunatus	<i>'Welcome happy morning', age to age</i>
	Fortunatus	<i>The royal banners forward go</i>
	Fortunatus	<i>Sing my tongue, the glorious battle</i>
Seven	Anon.	<i>Christ is made the sure foundation</i>
	Anon.	<i>Christ is our cornerstone</i>
Eight	Theodulph	<i>All glory, laud and honour</i>
	Anon.	<i>Be Thou my vision</i>
Nine	Anon.	<i>O come, o come, Immanuel</i>
Eleven	Fulbert	<i>Ye choirs of new Jerusalem</i>
Twelve	Abelard	<i>O what their joy and their glory</i>
	Bernard of Cluny	<i>Jerusalem the golden</i>
	St Bernard	<i>O Jesus, King most wonderful</i>
	St Bernard	<i>Jesus, the joy of loving hearts</i>
Thirteen	Francis	<i>All creatures of our God</i>
	St Richard	<i>Day by day, dear Lord</i>
	Thomas	<i>Now my tongue, the mystery telling</i>
Fourteen	Bianca	<i>Come down, O Love divine</i>
Fifteen	Anon.	<i>To the Name of our salvation</i>
	Tisserand	<i>O sons and daughters, let us sing</i>
	Anon.	<i>God be in my head, and in my understanding</i>

TABLE B
TUNES FROM ROMAN CATHOLICISM (PRE REFORMATION)
SUNG IN THE FREE CHURCHES (21ST CENTURY)

Century of Composition	Tune Name	Origin or Composer	Hymn Text Partnered	Century First Sung
5 or 6	VENI CREATOR	Plainsong attr. R.Maurus	<i>Come Holy Ghost</i>	9 Latin 17 Eng.
11	ST PATRICK'S BREASTPLATE	Folk trad.	<i>I bind unto myself</i>	20
12	GILDAS	Plainsong Remnant	<i>Jesus, we thus obey</i>	19
13	IN DULCI JUBILO	Anon.	<i>Good Christians all rejoice</i>	13 German 16 Eng.
14	DIVINUM MYSTERIUM	Plainsong	<i>Of the Father's love</i>	19
14	ORIENTIS PARTIBUS	Plainsong attr. Pierre de Corbeil	Many	19
14	PANGE LINGUA	Plainsong	<i>Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle</i>	14
14	QUEM PASTORES	Anon.	Several	19
14	PUER NOBIS	Anon.	<i>Unto us a boy is born</i>	14 or 15
14	THEODORIC	Anon.	Several	17 Swedish 20 Eng.
12 or 15	VENI EMMANUEL	Plainsong	<i>O come, o come Immanuel</i>	12 or 15 Latin 19 Eng.

SOME PURITAN ASSOCIATIONS WITH SHREWSBURY

The danger of making a close examination of the history of Dissent in any town or county and drawing general conclusions from the results is that we may mis-judge the significance of local developments. The evidence from one town or county may not be representative of the country in general. However on occasions one particular town may admirably illustrate the history of Dissent and may throw light upon Dissenting activity over a far wider area than its immediate environs.

The town of Shrewsbury and the county of Shropshire offer a fair example of sustained Puritan and Dissenting activity. Situated on the English and Welsh border, Shrewsbury is in an excellent position from which to view the ancient struggles of those nations, the Celts and the Saxons. In Celtic times the ancient township was called Pengwern. This may have become Shrewsbury although the identification of the two has been disputed.¹ The ancient Uriconium, or modern Wroxeter, bears witness to the Roman occupation, being 2 or 3 miles distant. With the removal of the Roman legions the British or Welsh sought to re-establish their claim to possession of all lands in and around Pengwern. During the struggles that followed, Pengwern became the seat of the princes of Powys. Old St Chad's church is said to be built on the site of their palace. The meeting of nations and cultures at Shrewsbury perhaps rendered it more likely to foster a dissenting spirit, less content to accept established authority and more questioning of those claiming power by virtue of office and physical might alone. This now ruined church building, St Chad's, brings to our attention three notable Shrewsbury Puritans who are buried there. The new St Chad's church was built by Thomas Telford, the engineer, upon the collapse of its predecessor in 1788. Among those buried at old St Chad's are John Bryan, James Owen and Job Orton who had expressed a wish to be buried near the grave of John Bryan.

Shrewsbury's associations with radical Christianity extend at least as far back as the fifteenth century. John Foxe, the Elizabethan martyrologist, in his celebrated Book of Martyrs, mentions William Thorpe, the vicar of St Chad's, Shrewsbury, who troubled Thomas Arundel, the Archbishop of Canterbury, by his preaching against popery, pilgrimages, transubstantiation and images about 1407. He was imprisoned for these Lollard views and for his sympathy with the teachings of John Wycliffe. Fox called Thorpe "a warrior valiant under the triumphant banner of Christ". Edward Burton of Longnor was a noted Protestant in Shrewsbury in Queen Mary's time and for

¹Victoria County History: A History of Shropshire (Oxford 1973) II 114.

his Protestantism was denied burial in St Chad's in 1555. His excitement at the death of Mary and pleasure at the consequent accession of Queen Elizabeth caused his own death! However the Catholic priests of St Chad's settled old scores by denying his burial in the church grounds. In 1620 Julian Herring, lecturer of St Alkmund's caused such offence by his Puritan sermons that he was suspended from preaching and retired to Amsterdam.²

According to Peter Studley, vicar of St Chad's, "a sect of men and women", clearly Separatists, perhaps Anabaptists, were active in Shropshire in 1622 and afterwards. Studley's The Looking-Glasse of Schism (1635) seeks to blame some Clun Separatists for an act of murder. Although Clun is some fifteen miles from Shrewsbury he had met the accused, Enoch ap Evan, a young farmer, while paying a visit as chaplain to the town gaol. The prisoner was charged with the murder of his mother and brother in 1633. Studley tried to show that the doctrines of these Nonconformists led naturally to such crimes as these murders. He also claimed that many have "affected not the ceremonies of our Church" ie the Church of England "with whom this Countie and this town have of late abounded". He went further by suggesting that these Separatists were well known to be "secret Whoremongers" and "drunkards", though he admitted that such were disowned by "the better sort of Nonconformist".³ The eventual removal of Studley from his living in Shrewsbury indicates the direction of national politics. By 1645 during the Civil War all the Shrewsbury churches had appointed Puritans to occupy their pulpits at the time when this was the pattern throughout England. Episcopacy was abolished, as was the Book of Common Prayer, while the Presbyterian Westminster Directory for Worship replaced it.

During the Puritan ascendancy, in the 1640s, exiled leaders returned from the Low Countries and elsewhere on the European continent, the former being called "the refuge", and vacant pulpits were filled by those sympathetic to the Parliamentary cause. The Presbyterians were then the dominant religious group and they urged the organising of parish churches into classes (local presbyteries) and provinces. The London Provincial Assembly, with its classes was the example held up to all although the system in many places existed only in theory and not in practice. Shropshire was divided into six presbyteries but most of these seem to have ceased to exist soon after 1648. However, the presbytery of Bradford North, the second Shropshire classis,

²J Barker Shrewsbury Free Churches their History and Romance (Shrewsbury 1916) 1-3. J Foxe Acts and Monuments (1877) ed J Pratt, III 249-285, VII 402.

³W J Farrow The Great Civil War in Shropshire (Shrewsbury 1926) 9-10.

survived throughout the inter-regnum. In 1657 Philip Henry and others were ordained by the moderator and presbyters at Prees and he attended a similar ordination in 1659 at Whitchurch. This classis of Bradford North had among its supporters Samuel Hildersham, son of the famous Puritan Arthur Hildersham of Ashby de la Zouch, Leicestershire. Samuel had settled as early as 1628 as rector of West Felton, a few miles from Shrewsbury and was appointed ministers' assistant in 1647. The Civil War and Commonwealth period enabled Puritanism to take deep root in Shropshire.⁴

In Shrewsbury three outstanding Puritans occupied the town's pulpits. John Bryan became vicar of Holy Cross (the abbey church) in 1652 and he removed to St Chad's in 1659. Francis Tallents of Derbyshire, 1619-1706, (who had been ordained by the third London classis in 1648) settled at St Mary's in 1652, at Richard Baxter's recommendation. Richard Heath came to St Alkmund's in 1650. All three should have been ejected at King Charles II's restoration in 1660 but remained at their posts due to public support until 1662. There was a notable fourth Nonconformist also, James Owen of Carmarthenshire, 1654-1706, who, though not holding a living, left his mark as co-pastor with Francis Tallents at Oliver Chapel, the High Street Meeting House, in the 1690s. Owen's funeral sermon was preached by Matthew Henry, the son of Philip Henry, and also the Bible commentator. Running in parallel with the High Street meeting was a small group of Independents who gathered for worship in a house, licenced in 1672. Both groups, sharing Puritan and Dissenting ancestry, have remained in the town, along with the Baptists and Quakers, to this day.⁵

In the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries many Presbyterians espoused Arianism and became Unitarians while Trinitarian Nonconformists in time tended to become Independents. Shrewsbury was not unaffected by these developments. At the time of controversy Job Orton, 1717-1783, was born in a house, with a shop, at the extreme end of the High Street, tradition has it on the site of the Birmingham Dudley Bank. His mother was descended from William Perkins, the Elizabethan Puritan. Orton was sent to Shrewsbury Free School in 1733, followed by a year at Owen's Academy, Warrington, and another year assisting the minister of the Presbyterian Meeting at Whitchurch and thence in 1734 he moved to study under Philip Doddridge at his academy in Northampton. Doddridge regarded Orton as his natural successor in charge of the academy but, in 1741, Orton

⁴M Henry Account of the Life of Mr Philip Henry (1825) 31-37. A G Matthews Calamy Revised (Oxford 1934) 263.

⁵ibid 83, 256, 474-5, and DNB.

accepted a call to the united Presbyterian and Independent meeting, in High Street, Shrewsbury.⁶

When Job Orton was ordained, preaching on that day was led by Philip Henry of Broad Oak, Whitchurch, himself an ejected minister. John Dobson, then pastor of the Independent church meeting at King's Head Chapel, Shrewsbury, was removing to Walsall and the death of Charles Berry, of the Presbyterian church, in 1741 left the charge free for Orton's settlement. Orton's own father was a member of the Independent church and his grandfather was a trustee of it.⁷ Orton settled in his duties as pastor in 1741 but was not ordained until 1745, the delay suggesting Orton's diffidence in accepting full Presbyterian ordination, as some members may have had scruples about the wisdom of the union, and indeed, when the union terminated, Orton associated himself with the Independents who moved to Swan Hill in 1766. His retirement occasioned a split. James Fownes, 1715-1789, was to succeed Orton but the Old Presbyterians imposed Benjamin Stapp, a Warrington student who died the following year. This local co-operation was at an end. Swan Hill chose Robert Gentleman as minister, Fownes remained in great respect at High Street and Orton soon removed to Kidderminster where he lived until 1783, leaving behind over a dozen books he had written, including the life of Philip Doddridge. As a footnote to the above and as testimony to the animosity which could then exist between different Christian bodies, we may recall the words of Isaac Wood that Orton "would have a lot to answer for before the judgement seat of Christ". Wood would be hard put to now to gain a guilty verdict to that charge against so skilled a pastor and advocate. The picture which emerges from his letters to young Thomas Stedman and other ministers is that of a pastor of pastors, a man of wise counsel who adorned the title of Christian pastor and of whom all Christians should be proud.

⁶R F Skinner Nonconformity in Shropshire 1662-1816 (Shrewsbury 1964) 43.

⁷ibid.

Shrewsbury's experience of Puritanism, its antecedents and its later Dissenting traditions, over some four centuries or more, is that of a sustained witness, through adversity and despite sporadic persecution. This witness does offer a microcosm of the national experience as a whole. Hostility and prejudice in the fifteenth century against the Lollards, in the early seventeenth century against Separatists, and in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries against the Dissenters, only served to strengthen the resolve of those who sought to follow the Holy Spirit in his freedom, as faithfully as they could.

Trevor Watts

REVIEWS

Recovering the Book of Revelation: The Congregational Lecture 2000. By R J McKelvey. Pp22. The Congregational Memorial Hall Trust (1978) Ltd, 2000. Available from Dr Williams's Library, 14 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0AG. £2.00.

Dr McKelvey, as the title of his lecture implies, wants mainstream Christians to recover the book of Revelation from "way-out fundamentalists and strange cults". This lecture is something of a departure since the Congregational Lecture was revived in 1987. It amounts to a Bible study, albeit one given by a former Northern College principal who has published a book on the subject, The Millennium and the Book of Revelation (Cambridge 1999). Hearers of the lecture were handed a booklet containing three to eleven verse extracts from eleven of the chapters of Revelation.

The lecture opens with a consideration of the circumstances in which the book was written and what its author, John, wants to say to his contemporaries. McKelvey rejects the traditional view that the book was written during a period of persecution. He cites a number of modern authors who agree that the balance of external and internal evidence is of a campaign by John against "accommodation and compromise with the prevailing culture" by Christians, particularly in Asia Minor where he lived. John wishes to shock them into realisation of the evil that is the essence of the Roman empire and in doing so prepares them for the persecution that is to come.

The story of the holy war in Revelation, we are reminded, uses imagery familiar from the Old Testament. It also uses a "combat myth" structure that was known in different forms in the classical world and the ancient near east.

Over again John tells us how the paradoxical figure of the “Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered” (Rev 5.6) defeats the forces of evil, namely the Roman Empire. We should remember that part of that evil was the cult, particularly in the east, of emperor worship. The visions of new Jerusalem, however, McKelvey tells us, are a reminder that God does not defeat his enemies by destroying them, but through salvation.

The lecture closes with a sketch of a message for today. We are reminded that modern society has many idolatries and there are many injustices, including the widening gap between rich and poor. New technologies open up the prospect of the rich being able to buy superior genes for their children. McKelvey says that Revelation challenges us today not to condone the injustices of the world but to side with the dispossessed and work for a better world because that is what we are accountable to God for. Following the lecture is a reading list of eight books on Revelation, including the lecturer’s own work, and a list of seven questions for consideration.

I would recommend this lecture to any Bible study group, asking each group member to purchase a copy. It will also serve as an introduction to McKelvey’s book on the subject for anyone who wants to pursue the topic further.

Some doubt has been expressed about the future of the Congregational Lecture in its present form. If the standard of the last two years can be maintained we should be able to have a regular supply of booklets that will grace any denominational book stall or shop. However it has to be said that the lecture in physical appearance looks distinctly dowdy which is a disservice to the lecturers. With a more attractive cover design and some more active promotion, church bookstalls would have no excuse for not stocking them.

Peter Young

The Life of John Newton. By Richard Cecil. Edited by Marylynn Rouse. Pp 420. Christian Focus Publications, Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire, IV20 1TW (01862 871011) 2000. £11.99. ISBN 1 85792 284 0

Richard Cecil’s Memoir of his friend, John Newton (1725-1807), the writer of the hymns “Amazing Grace”, “How sweet the name of Jesus sounds” and “Glorious things of thee are spoken”, was published in 1808, the year after Newton’s death. Yet when Bernard Martin wrote his life of John Newton in 1950 he stated that there had only been one previous biography,

by Josiah Bull, published in 1868, and long out of print. Martin knew that Cecil had written his Memoir but apparently dismissed it as of little significance. Certainly he believed that Cecil admired Newton “almost to the point of reverence”. There is an irony then in the re-appearance of Cecil’s text when Martin’s own biographical account has been long out of print. Cecil’s Memoir is presented to its readers, in an entirely up-dated form, edited by Marylynn Rouse.

Both Cecil and Newton were among the leaders of the evangelical revival of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Both claimed to have been recovered to Christian faith from lives of profligacy and sin, and both served churches in the City of London. Newton’s life was the more dramatic and colourful, thus explaining in part Cecil’s great admiration for his friend. Newton’s power to impress his contemporaries was felt, of course, by many more than Cecil. He was influential upon such diverse figures as William Wilberforce, the anti-slavery campaigner, William Cowper, the poet, William Carey, the Baptist missionary, William Jay of Bath, Charles Simeon, the Cambridge evangelical, and Hannah More, the popular writer, among others.

Marylynn Rouse has taken Cecil’s text and treated it to some minor surgery in order to make it more digestible for the modern reader. She has divided the first section of Cecil’s book into nine chapters, adding an appendix to each chapter in which she provides extra material, amplifying Cecil’s work with the fruits of her own research. Thus the first chapter, dealing with Newton’s birth and early life, consists of four printed pages while its appendix adds a further three and a half pages. She is able to draw upon information in Newton’s own An Authentic Narrative of some Remarkable and Interesting Particulars in the Life of [J N] (1764), an account of his life at sea and his religious experiences, and from his Letters to a Wife (1793) and other sources. Not only does she show how Newton inspired and helped Cowper but she is also able to demonstrate that Wordsworth quoted Newton’s Narrative verbatim in The Prelude.

Cecil’s text is given in full, with additional references, Rouse’s appendices at the end of each chapter, a lengthy Who’s Who of 85 pages of those mentioned in the text, and forty pages of further appendices, dealing with Newton’s family tree, two hymns, Newton’s prefaces to Seaman’s Preacher and to Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress, a tract by Newton on Matthew 11:28, his funeral sermon for Cowper, sermon notes for “Amazing Grace”, and for “How sweet the name of Jesus sounds”, and Cecil’s own funeral sermon for Newton. With a bibliography and index, a map of Wapping in 1746, and a list of the chief dates in Newton’s life, Cecil’s Memoir is

transformed from 122 pages into a much more sizeable work of 420 pages, very economically priced at £11.99 for a hardback. Marylynn Rouse is to be thanked for a serious work which is the product of long and thorough study in many libraries, record offices, and the archives of several missionary societies. She is now attempting to trace and collate Newton's voluminous correspondence.

However readers of the CHC Magazine will be puzzled and dismayed that in her Who's Who she fights shy of the term Congregational. The names Philip Doddridge, Sir Thomas Abney, Isaac Watts, Josiah Bull, John Owen, John Clayton and his sons, John, George, and William, among others, are not described as Congregationalists. Joseph Alleine is curiously noted as having been imprisoned "for his faith" rather than for his nonconformity, following his presumed ejection in 1662. On the other hand John Campbell is correctly called a Congregationalist and the term Independent is frequently used. The mis-spelling of the editor's name on the book's front cover is particularly unfortunate.

Alan Argent

George Whitefield's Works. Edited by Digby L. James. CD-ROM. Quinta Press, Meadow View, Quinta Crescent, Weston Rhyn, Oswestry, Shropshire, England, SY10 7RN, 2000. Web-site www.quintapress.com. £60.

Mountable on Apple Macintosh, Linux and Windows. Acrobat installers provided (may require uninstalling your particular version).

This CD-ROM is easily installed providing you possess one of the above systems. If you are interested in George Whitefield this would make a substantial addition to your library, including, as it does, facsimiles of the works themselves, several biographies, pictures and indexes to facilitate searches. The quality of the original material does to an extent determine its 'viewability' but computer technology makes it easier to examine this text as closely as you like. Select your most comfortable viewing size. Dr James prefers Apple Macintosh but I had no trouble installing this on my WINDOWS 95 PC, using his Adobe Acrobat. The Reset folder has reset versions of everything in the facsimile folder, except Tyerman's biography. Each volume and group of volumes has been indexed but may require manual selection of the indexes. Follow the instructions in the 'About the CD-ROM'. Once done they will always be available.

What's on this CD-ROM? A lot. Facsimile and reset volumes 1-6 of The Works of George Whitefield, edited by John Gillies and published in 1771. Reset edition of the additional sermons published after his death (taken in shorthand without his approval). Reset edition of Whitefield's Journals. Additional letters taken from the Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society, lost by Whitefield and rediscovered around 1950. Additional letters from the Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society, facsimile and reset editions of the following: Hymns for Social Worship for use at Whitefield's Tabernacle. John Gillies' Memoir of George Whitefield (1772), Robert Philip's Life of George Whitefield (1842), JR Andrews' Life of George Whitefield, JB Wakeley's Anecdotes of George Whitefield (1879), James Paterson Gledstone's George Whitefield M.A: Field Preacher (1900) and a facsimile of Luke Tyerman's Life of George Whitefield (1876/77). Also included is a folder of pictures from Gloucester, Bristol and Painswick, and a variety of pictorial memorabilia of Whitefield's life.

Digby James explains his reasons for compiling this CD, from his own conversion to Christianity in 1972, to his 'encounter' with George Whitefield in 1976. His friend, Iain Murray, informed him that at 1980 prices it would cost £100,000 to reset and reprint Whitefield's complete works. In 1980 Digby James purchased his first PC. Improvement in technology and OCR (optical character recognition) allowed him to progress with scanning originals, from the Evangelical Library, which formerly had required a great deal of correcting to make them readable. This laborious, time consuming chore had to be combined with his pastoral work in north-west Shropshire and a busy home life. Other problems included a hard disk crash with no back-up (Beware!). Yet, with his wife, Marianne, as proof reader, and his growing typesetting skills, he was able to complete this immense task before the end of the twentieth century.

For a serious student of George Whitefield this CD-ROM is well worth its price, putting at the disposal of the buyer a complete and unique accretion of research in a very space-saving and convenient form. This appears to be more a labour of love than a profit-making enterprise.

Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in 19th Century England. By Susan Thorne. Pp ix, 247. Stanford University Press/ Cambridge University Press, 1999. £30.00/\$49.50. ISBN 0 8047 3053 9.

This is no light read. Heavily referenced, researched and acknowledged, this sociological analysis is framed in terms of class formation, conceptions of gender and racial attitudes spanning the period from the inception of the

missionary enterprise in the eighteenth century to the death of 'missionary imperialism' in the early twentieth century. Special reference is made to the domestic impact of missionary outreach in these terms, offering an alternative view to the conventional one that "influence flows down the hills of power, that imperialism was a one-way street on which the traffic in people, practices, institutions, and ideas moved always out from all-determining European centres to appropriating if not supine peripheries". Susan Thorne seeks to show the reverse influence on our own culture.

This is a dynamic and detailed study. Thorne aims to chart the changes in attitude to religious nonconformity and its attendant growth in missionary activities, on both the domestic and foreign fronts, from the birth of modern missions in the late eighteenth century to their death as agents of an imperial culture.

Starting with the birth of modern missions and focusing especially on the London Missionary Society, with its powerful Congregational connections, Thorne highlights the change in orientation from a despised and suspect movement, with its potential for subversion of an emergent working class at the time of the French Revolution, to its 'buying into' an imperial culture in the latter half of the nineteenth century, for which it acted as an ideological spearhead. The mission field of domestic heathenry to the disenfranchised working classes is juxtaposed with the foreign mission to the unenlightened savages of empire, and its racial portrayal by missionary speakers across the country. The ground on which this portrayal fell, through its Congregational cohorts, helped feed a burgeoning women's movement. Indeed this missionary endeavour held particular appeal for women who were increasingly seen as ideal agents for the job, in contrast with the earlier emphasis on the role of men in this sphere. Women were given their role to play.

"Telescopic philanthropy", a term borrowed from Charles Dickens, played its part. "The lure of the exotic and the heroic was the foreign missionary sugar pill for the domestic missionary instruction in lessons of thrift, self-help, and, above all else, gratitude for the manifold benefits of being English." Does Thorne understand that by no means all these missionaries were English? Many were Scottish and many Welsh. By helping to establish a world racial order missionary propaganda helped to underpin the social fabric of the nation. "Missions were promoted as the foreign extension of the Brotherhoods' commitment to social reform, and they were a primary means whereby missionary progressives sought to make sure that working-class Christians' interest in the social question was articulated in terms of social uplift and not socialism". This matter was the

primary challenge they faced, according to a Congregational pamphlet of 1911. The upshot of all this was to preserve power in the hands of an emergent middle-class to the detriment of an overall class struggle, which in the last analysis (or in the words of Susan Thorne's final sentence) "helped keep the workers of the world divided."

Despite being couched in sociological and Marxist terms, which might be somewhat inaccessible to the ordinary reader, this book offers a thought-provoking critique of the whole modern missionary period, binding together a variety of perspectives in an attempt to visualise the feedback of missionary endeavour, with particular reference to the development of Congregationalism in imperial Britain. Of course, whether you 'buy into it' metaphorically or actually is up to you.

Michael G Mackintosh

International Congregational Journal. Issue 1, February 2001. Sheffield Academic Press, sales@sheffac.demon.co.uk. £20. ISSN 1472-2089

The International Congregational Fellowship have issued the first of what is planned to become a regular journal, with two issues a year. It is handsomely produced by Sheffield Academic Press and quite substantial at 125 pages. The journal seeks to provide its readers with thoughtful, well researched and learned articles, examining various aspects of Congregationalism but not confining their force and scope to a national dimension. This issue contains an overview of international Congregational relationships through, firstly, the International Congregational Council and, more recently, the International Congregational Fellowship. Articles include two views of theological education in Congregationalism, Densil Morgan's consideration of the work of two Welsh Congregational scholars, Pennar Davies and Tudur Jones, hymns and spirituality in Congregationalism, Steven Peay's discussion of sacramental worship in Congregationalism, an exposition of the thought of the American scholar, Gordon Clark, by Gwyndaf Jones of Garnant, Carmarthenshire, and a useful but not exhaustive bibliography of works, dealing with Congregational subjects, published 1990-2000. This bibliography, however, does omit a number of works published on this side of the Atlantic, including our own Congregational History Circle Magazine - clearly an oversight in a journal aimed at an international readership!

Unfortunately the Journal does contain many careless errors which could easily have been avoided. In the introduction one contributor's name is mis-

spelt. Spring Hill College, Birmingham is called Springfield and Daniel Jenkins is re-named William Jenkins. One article spells Congregational with a small c for about half the times the word is used, whilst for the other half a capital C appears. Sometimes both spellings occur in the same sentence, as well as in the same context. This is irritating and presumably not the fault of the author!

But this Journal is to be commended and those responsible for its conception are to be congratulated for a good idea, imperfectly realised. I trust that it will come to serve the cause of Congregationalism well both in Britain and overseas. The subtitle reads "A future with a past" which suggests an interest in history and in the present and future outworking of Congregational insights. For those of us who follow the Congregational way, this Journal is a step forward in promoting our ideals and understanding of the church. We do need such a journal as this may yet become.

Christopher J Damp

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(no 8 October 2000)

Anthony R Cross “Dispelling the Myth of English Baptist Baptismal Sacramentalism”. J H Y Briggs “F A Cox of Hackney: Nineteenth-Century Baptist Theologian, Historian, Controversialist, and Apologist”. Stephen Bunker “Amphill’s Aussie”.

(vol XXXIX no 1 January 2001)

Roger Hayden “Caleb Evans and the Anti-Slavery Question”. Frederick Hale “Captives of British Imperialism? Southern African Baptists and the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902”. Toivo Pilli “Baptists in Estonia 1884-1940”. Timothy Whelan “A Glance at the 1975 Catalogue of Books in the Library of the Bristol Baptist Academy and Museum”. Peter Egginton “The Story of ‘Hazelmere’: A case study in modern diaconal activity”.

Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society (vol XXII no 2 April 2000)

Gerald Parsons “Friendship and Theology: Unitarians and Bishop Colenso, 1862-1865”. Garth Turner “ ‘A Scandal in the face of Christendom’ Unitarian Preachers in Liverpool Cathedral 1933”. G M Ditchfield “Testaments of Faith: A Comment on some Unitarian Wills in the Age of Theophilus Lindsey”. Virginia Clark “Stamford Street Unitarian Chapel 6 April 1868 A Unitarian First for Women’s Suffrage”.

The Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society (vol 6 no 6 May 2000)

Clyde Binfield “Transacting our History: The Congregationalists’ Dimension”. John H Taylor “Monmouth’s Rebellion - The Skeleton in the Cupboard?” Brian Kirk “The Welmans of Poundisford Park”. Mary Hora “English Nonconformity and the Invention of Tradition: Robert Vaughan and the Bicentenary of 1662”. Douglas A Farnie “Money-Making and Charitable Endeavour: John and Enriqueta Rylands of Manchester”. Cyril H Grant “The Bristol Congregational Itinerant Society: Some Personal Reminiscences 1936-1941”. Michael W Casey “The Overlooked Pacifist Tradition of the Old Paths Churches of Christ: Part I - The Great War and the Old Paths

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Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society (vol 52 part 5 May 2000)

J Gordon Terry "The Wesleyan Reform Movement in Bradford". Clive D Field "Sidelights on the Victorian Wesleyan Ministry". Roger Thorne & C J Spittal "Local Branch Reports 2000". Peter B Nockles "Methodist Archives: Manuscript Accessions".

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David Carter "The Context and Content of Mid- Victorian Wesleyan Ecclesiology". Barry J Biggs "Methodist Excise Officers". "Obituary: J C Bowmer". Jennifer M Freeman "The HCT Acquires Penrose Chapel".

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Henry D Rack " 'But, Lord, let it be Betsy!': Love and Marriage in Early Methodism". J S English "The Brackenbury Memorial Lectures". "Obituary: Alfred A Taberer".

The Strict Baptist Historical Society Bulletin (no.27 2000)

Ian Randall " 'The Things Which Shall Be Heareafter' Strict Baptist Views of the Second Coming".