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**THE
CONGREGATIONAL
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MAGAZINE**

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EDITORIAL

We welcome to our pages Kathleen Chater, Gerard Charmley and Neil Allison, all of whom are first time contributors to the *CHS Magazine*. Kathleen Chater writes of the life and career of James Cranbrook, in many ways a man of his time and yet quite remarkably, as a man of black ancestry in a white man's world, an extraordinary achiever. Gerard Charmley offers a consideration of the equally noteworthy witness of a pioneer Welsh woman preacher, Sarah Vyrnwy Morgan. Finally in this issue, Neil Allison shows his expertise in drawing to our attention the experience of the inmates at Changi Camp during World War Two and, in particular, the courage and devotion of John Foster Haigh—itsself a humbling story.

Readers have then articles from the 18th to the 20th centuries to stimulate and satisfy their appetites. We are grateful to these contributors. I hope their papers are read with appreciation, as they deserve to be.

NEWS AND VIEWS

Recollections and responses to 1972

Some friends and critics have commented that my recent book *The Transformation of Congregationalism 1900–2000* contains comparatively less material and analysis from the late 1970s onwards than it does on the earlier part of the 20th century. This could be explained by the proximity of the events to our own times and also to my desire not to re-open old wounds. My hope was that the book itself might help to foster reconciliation and greater understanding and friendship between those who found themselves in different denominations.

In order to address this apparent shortcoming, I have been persuaded that it may be advisable to publish further on the period from the 1970s onwards. Consequently I am seeking to compile a series of recollections from ministers and layfolk who remember the decisive events of 1972 and earlier, took part in them, and observed/participated in the changes that resulted. I intend to offer some few comments on the collected responses in due course.

I am grateful to those who have already responded to my appeal. However if readers of the *CHS Magazine* wish to assist me in this, please feel free to write expansively on these following questions which we may explore together. Your responses may be emailed or posted to Alan Argent using the details given on the back cover of this magazine.

- What was/is your denominational upbringing?
- How have you experienced and envisaged the balance/tension between the local and the wider church?
- In the 1960s and 1970s did you see ecumenism as a positive and obviously good development? For/against/suspicious.

- Who/what has been most influential in the framing of your attitudes on these matters?
- Have your views changed? If so, how? Please outline the process and factors.
- Have your views remained the same or even been reinforced? Again please elaborate on the factors involved.
- Have your views led into conflict or frustration with others in your churches or with other Christians?
- Have other Christians welcomed your views and changed their former views, influenced by yours?
- Have the denominational boundaries since the 1970s turned out as you expected?

- How do you anticipate change in the future? More ecumenism and in what form, more contraction or growth. Again please give reasons.
- If you believe we need a different kind of ecumenism in the 21st century, how do you see this developing?

- Why did your church make the decision it did in 1972?
- Looking back, do you think it was the correct decision or not? Why?

The Morning after the Night Before

Our CHS Secretary reflects on the aftermath of the Scottish Referendum, 19th September 2014

I am one of those who stays up late on the night of a general election to see the result. Today I arose early. Whichever way the result went, it felt as if history was in the making.

In the event, 86% of the Scottish people voted in the referendum. In answer to the question, Should Scotland be an independent country? 55% answered No. That is a clear decision. And yet it still feels as if history is in the making

not just for Scotland but for the United Kingdom and for Northern Ireland, for Wales and for England. That's because in the final days of the campaign the prime minister, the deputy prime minister and the leader of the opposition in the Westminster parliament of the United Kingdom went on the record (literally as they made their pledge on the front page of one of Scotland's leading newspapers, *The Daily Record*) to say definitely that a no vote was a vote for greater devolution of powers to the Scottish parliament.

As I write, David Cameron has pledged to bring extensive legislation to the House of Commons within four months. At the same time he pledged continuing support for greater devolution to Wales and significant support for Northern Ireland. He also pledged to adopt moves towards ending the right of non-English MPs to vote in the House of Commons on issues relating to England alone. On the surface of it a clear proposition. The problem, however, is the age-old one addressed by the Mid Lothian question that has been unanswered for 40 years. If the Labour Party forms a government after a general election to the United Kingdom, but there is a majority of Conservatives among the English MPs in the Commons, would there have to be effectively an alternative government having control of Health, Education, Social Welfare, Transport policies and the like? A question that has not been answered in 40 years is to be resolved in 4 months. This really does feel like history in the making.

There can now be no going back on devolution within the United Kingdom. That means that the four peoples who make up that United Kingdom have to work out what it means to be a nation. That task is well under way in the immense changes that have happened and are continuing to happen in Scotland, in Northern Ireland and in Wales. It is a question that has hardly been addressed in England and no start has been made on putting the appropriate institutions together to address devolved power in England. To underpin that process, thinking has to be done in all four nations, but especially in England around the very nature of 'the nation' and of 'nationalism'.

In the last couple of days I have revisited a significant book on the Nation and on Nationalism published forty years ago this year by one of the finest historians of English and of Welsh Congregationalism of the 20th century, R Tudur Jones. It is not without significance that this prolific writer in Welsh should choose to publish *The Desire of Nations*, his 1974 book on the nation and nationalism, in English.¹ One feels that he wrote for an English audience. 'Everyone knows what a nation is ... And yet, a large and brilliant company of philosophers, historians and sociologists over a period of several generations has failed to agree on an acceptable definition of the word.'

1 R Tudur Jones *The Desire of Nations* (Llandybie 1974).

Tudur offers his own survey of some of those historians and philosophers and draws his own conclusions. Nationalists are ‘dedicated to the welfare and glory of their nation’, have ‘certain basic convictions about its value and place in the world’, and encompass in their thinking ‘land, culture, customs, laws, traditions, sports, religion and economic life’.

He asks what such an understanding of nationalism would look like in his own Wales. That inevitably involves him in a critique of the English involvement in Wales through the power of the Westminster parliament. He cites a tendency among English people to equate Englishness with Britishness. He illustrates this by recounting how, in the wake of the great 1870 Education Reform Act, the school in Blaenau Ffestiniog satisfied the requirements of a curriculum fashioned in Westminster by using a book published in the Cassels Modern School Series called *The Citizen Reader* by H O Arnold-Forster. The architect of the 1870 Education Act, W E Forster “tells the little children of Blaenau Ffestinog (quite correctly!) that the system to which their school belongs is ‘the English Educational system’. And the author in his introduction tells them that the purpose of the book is ‘to instruct boys and girls in our Elementary Schools with regard to their rights, duties, and privileges as British Citizens’”.

Tudur makes the observation that ‘there are not many studies of nationalism in England’. He goes on to suggest that for Welsh, Scots and Irish ‘it is of the greatest moment to recognize English nationalism for what it is’. That comment made in 1974 is once again of crucial importance now in the wake of the Scottish referendum. I repeat that it is important for those in England to address the question of what it means to be a nation within the United Kingdom. Yet it is difficult. Tudur goes so far as to say ‘An Englishman never calls himself a nationalist. This is one of the characteristics of English Nationalism’.

What would English nationalism look like?

Tudur is the first to acknowledge that nationalism has an ugly side and that has to be said unequivocally today with the resurgence of extremism across Europe. His way forward for Welsh nationalism is equally applicable to English nationalism and indeed any nationalism. ‘It is no part of the desire of nationalists in Wales to make an absolute of the nation. A Nationalism which elevates the nation or the nation-State above all things human is an evil thing.’ Tudur goes on to draw on 1500 years of Welsh writing to suggest that in the kind of nationalism he advocates ‘the accent is on a community, rich in tradition and culture, warm in its respect for individual persons, refusing to make an idol of anything created and deferring to the absolute authority of God alone. And in consequence, it asks nothing for itself that it does not wish for others’.

Taking a leaf out of Tudur’s book, perhaps the English in a quest for their

JAMES CRANBROOK

Not much has yet been detailed about the role of black people in religious life in the United Kingdom in past centuries. Part of the problem is that in Britain colour and/or ethnicity are not always mentioned in official records but there is increasing evidence that black people played a role in many nonconformist congregations.¹

Historians of the Congregational churches may know something of the story of James Cranbrook, the deistic, liberal and controversial minister who split his Edinburgh congregation in 1867. What will not be so well known is that he was the grandson of a black servant, John Cranbrook. Nowhere in the newspaper reports or other sources that document his career is his ancestry mentioned. The situation, of course, would have been very different in the Americas where the one-drop rule applied: any black ancestry would condemn an individual to a lifetime of at best discrimination and at worst segregation. The lives of John Cranbrook and his descendants are an example of the differences in attitude and treatment of black people in the United Kingdom and in her overseas colonies and ex-colonies in the Americas.

Family background

John Cranbrook was baptised in Rochester, Kent in 1764 when he was described as a “black boy about 13 years”. He married Ann Wallis in the City of London in 1772. There is no indication of his colour or ethnicity in the marriage entry. A few years later, he and his family surface in Clapham, where several children and grandchildren were baptised. He died in 1797. The burial entry describes him as a greengrocer, a mulatto, aged 42.² Nothing else is known about his life. Although there is a parish in Kent and an area in Ilford, east London called Cranbrook, there seems to be no connection with Rochester for either. Nor is there any connection with the Earl of Cranbrook, a title which was created in

¹ D Killingray and J Edwards *Black Voices: the shaping of our Christian experience* (Nottingham 2007) is a useful starting point. Jeffrey Green’s website focusing on black people in Britain before World War II includes examples of black clergymen, ministers and preachers. www.jeffreygreen.co.uk

² Registers of St Nicholas, Rochester, Kent, 2 May 1764, unpublished transcript KE at Society of Genealogists Library; Registers of All Hallows Staining, 3 March 1772, London Metropolitan Archives (hereafter LMA) MS 17/827/1; Registers of Clapham, Surrey, baptisms—Ann 30 May 1784, Rebecca 1 Aug 1787, Richard 8 Feb 1789, Ann 12 Feb 1792; (burial) 13 July 1797, at LMA. I have not yet found the baptisms of their older children Elizabeth, Hannah, John and William who were all married and had children baptised in Clapham.

1892. However, there was a plantation called Cranbrook in the parish of St Ann in Jamaica, which may be where the lad originally came from.

John Cranbrook's burial record is the last time that skin colour is mentioned in any record connected with the family. His widow Ann's will was proved in 1835 in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.³ This suggests that she had some assets to bequeath. She left everything to Rebecca, a daughter. Rebecca, born in 1791, had married William Gregory, who worked for the Bank of England, in 1812.⁴ Omitting her other children may be evidence of family discord, but it is more likely that Rebecca had cared for her mother after she became a widow, and Ann's other children were doing well enough. The eldest son, John, started out as a hairdresser but by the time of his death in 1821 had become a "gentleman". He married a woman named Jane Sprott, possibly a client, who appears to have been well-to-do.⁵ The next son, William, and his descendants remained in the London area.⁶

Unfortunately little is known about James's father, another James, the youngest of John and Ann's children, beyond his baptism in 1793 in Clapham; his marriage to Jemima Piper in 1817 and his death in Clapham in 1821 when he was 28. The couple had two children, James and Jemima, baptised in 1819 and 1820 respectively.⁷ His mother remarried in 1823 to John Bingham and moved to neighbouring Brixton, where she had three more children.⁸

Although Rebecca Cranbrook and her siblings had been baptised into the Church of England, her own children, born between 1813 and 1827, were registered at Dr Williams's Library in London. They are listed together, nos 3656–3660, which suggests the Gregory family had been part of a nonconformist congregation since their marriage, as none of their children seems to have been baptised in an Anglican church.⁹ At this time only Anglican parish registers were accepted in courts of law, and Dr Williams's register was intended to

3 The National Archives (hereafter TNA) PROB 11/1853/393, proved 23 Nov 1835.

4 Registers of St Katharine by the Tower, 11 Oct 1812, at LMA.

5 Marriage Registers of St Marylebone, 6 Sept 1807, at City of Westminster Archives Centre (hereafter CWAC); TNA, PROB 11/1647/412, proved 14 September 1821.

6 Information from a descendant.

7 Marriage register of St Katherine Coleman, 23 Nov 1817, at LMA; Registers of Clapham, baptisms 1 Nov 1819 and 15 Oct 1820, burial 23 Jan 1821.

8 Register of St Martin in the Fields, 26 Oct 1823, at CWAC; Registers of St Matthew, Brixton 24 April 1825, 2 July 1826, 21 September 1828, at LMA. James Cranbrook gave his birthplace as Brixton in censuses.

9 RG5 119 and RG4 4665 on www.bmdregisters.co.uk

provide evidence of birth for those who did not want an Anglican baptism for their offspring but might need to prove their age or parentage later.¹⁰

First steps

James Cranbrook never mentioned how he came to convert to Congregationalism but it may have been his aunt Rebecca who led the way. He trained for the ministry at Highbury College, London, from 1836 to 1840.¹¹ His first post as minister was in Wickham Market, Suffolk, where he stayed for two years from 1840–42. At the beginning of his ministry there he married Charlotte Frost. Their first son, James, born in 1841, was conventionally named after his father and grandfather. The second son, also born in Wickham Market, was given a fashionable name, Algernon Sydney, with no apparent family links. Then came a daughter named Charlotte after her mother. Cranbrook's career was also following a standard path. His next pastorate was in Soham in Cambridgeshire. He probably knew that this place had a link with another person with black ancestry. The anti-slave trade campaigner and autobiographer, Olaudah Equiano, "the African", married Susannah Cullen from a dissenting family who lived in Soham. Their only surviving daughter, Joanna, born in 1795, was the wife of a Congregational minister, Henry Bromley, the pastor of Clavering in Essex between 1829–45.¹²

Ireland—and a detour into Unitarianism

Cranbrook next relocated to Ireland, where the local Independent/Congregational churches had internal problems. The date of arrival is uncertain because he was not attached to any particular church. Here he seems to have made a great impact but it was where the first intimations of his less than orthodox beliefs surface. In 1847, two years after the beginning of the Irish potato famine, with another looming harvest failure, Cranbrook preached three discourses on the efficacy of prayer.¹³ He denied that God intervened directly

10 Although commonly known as the Dr Williams's Library Registers, they are correctly titled the General Register of Protestant Dissenters which were maintained by the Dissenting Deputies when they were located at Dr Williams's Library. As with most other pre-1937 nonconformist registers, they are now in The National Archives (RG4/4666–4673). The Gregorys and their five children later emigrated to Australia, where some descendants still live. Another of the Gregorys' descendants became a China tea merchant in Hong Kong and had children by a Chinese woman there. Information from descendants.

11 The Surman Index in Dr Williams's Library provides an outline.

12 Her story is related in *A Osborne Equiano's Daughter: The Life and Times of Joanna Vassa ...* (2007).

13 J Cranbrook *Divine Providence considered in its relation to the state of the country, and the efficacy of prayer ... Three discourses delivered in the Independent Meeting-House, Belfast* (Belfast 1847).

in events, contending that this meant blaming God for misfortunes. He believed that God was not acting directly but events were unfolding in accordance with a pre-determined plan, which he termed natural providence. He said that it was for men to try to understand the laws of nature which God has put in place, and to work with and act upon them, not just pray.

There is no indication of how his congregation reacted, but these discourses, or sermons, seem to have been his first in print. It is possible that, if the published version is what he said in the pulpit, most of his listeners did not immediately grasp what he was getting at. His arguments are finely detailed and quite difficult to follow on the page. However, he must have made a good impression because, when an offer from the newly established Newhall Hill Unitarian church in Birmingham to be their first minister came to him, “the friends of free Christianity” in Belfast actually got up a petition, asking him to stay. Uncertain what to do, Cranbrook asked the Birmingham congregation to decide. They held out for him, so he went there, but only remained for two years, at the end of which time he resigned to return to his own “orthodox faith”, that is to Congregationalism.¹⁴ This episode indicates that he was beginning to question his beliefs more radically.

It was not just his religious faith that was in flux. His time in Belfast may have made him more politically radical: his next three sons were called William Wallace (born c. 1846 in Cork), John Hampden (b. 1848), and Thomas Wentworth (b. 1852). The first William Wallace was a Scot who fought for Scottish independence against Edward I; John Hampden was a parliamentarian who challenged the authority of King Charles I, and Thomas Wentworth, a governor of Ireland, was an advisor to Charles I, attempting to strengthen the royal position against Parliament. Wentworth was impeached and condemned to death by Parliament and Charles I reluctantly signed his death warrant. This choice of names suggests Cranbrook was beginning to be impatient of authority which claimed divine authority but also that he was aware of there being at least two sides to most questions.¹⁵ He revealed very little about his early life but later told friends in Edinburgh that he had been educated by a tutor who took unusual pains to make his pupils examine both sides of every question on which they had to form an opinion.¹⁶

14 J Stych *History of the Newhall Hill Church and Schools Birmingham* (1892).

15 As well as five sons, the Cranbrooks had six daughters but none seems to have been given any politically or socially significant name. They can be found in the censuses for 1851 and 1861.

16 J Cranbrook *The Founders of Christianity or Discourses upon the origin of the Christian religion* (2nd edn 1902) 9.

Return to Congregationalism

James Cranbrook's return to Congregationalism ushered in a more settled period in his life. After a year in Stratford-upon-Avon 1850–1, where the relationship between minister and congregation had been tense for some time, he embarked on the longest ministry of his career in Liscard in Cheshire. This church was built in 1842 and in 1851 James Cranbrook became its second incumbent. He remained here until 1864 and it was perhaps the most successful time of his life. The printed history of this church praises him as “one of the most remarkable ministers in this Church's history” and a “keen, profound and fearless thinker of great power of expression and strong personal attractiveness.” He increased the congregation, which enabled him to renovate and improve the church itself and to install an organ. A school was also set up. Remarkably also, for part of that time, at least, he was Professor of English Literature, at Queens College, Liverpool.¹⁷

His interest in science was maintained. Whilst in Liscard he published a sermon in anticipation of a meeting of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science. This Association was a reform group, founded in 1857 with the objective that it should aim “to coordinate the efforts of the experts and the politicians”. In this sermon Cranbrook said that “human science ... is the faithful handmaid of religion” and looked forward to a time when “political government shall be founded upon Christian principles”.¹⁸

Edinburgh and loss of faith

No doubt impressed by his work in Liscard, the church of Albany Street in Edinburgh issued two urgent requests for Cranbrook to become their minister. He was reluctant to leave Liscard, where he was established and appreciated, but accepted the invitation because this church mainly served members of the university. He believed these people would be receptive to his independence of thought, his liberal views and mental discipline. He considered he was “peculiarly fitted ... for the task of meeting the doubts of scholars and students in this age of intellectual ferment”.¹⁹ He took up his pastorate in 1865.

At this time a lot of certainties were being doubted. Although *The Descent of Man* was not published until 1871, Charles Darwin's earlier observations in *The Origin of Species* (1859) called into question the Biblical account of the creation in seven days. Although close reading of the Bible to determine this historical context began in the 17th century, it was in the 19th that scholars, particularly

¹⁷ Census for 1861.

¹⁸ J Cranbrook *Christianity in Relation to Society: A sermon preached in anticipation of the Second Annual Meeting of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science* (Liverpool 1858) 19, 21.

¹⁹ G A Abbott *Liscard Congregational Church* (1942).

in Germany, were publishing important studies about the authorship of the Bible and the historical figure of Jesus. Cranbrook acknowledged his debt to Ferdinand Baur and the Tübingen School of theology, which Baur led.²⁰ He must also have been studying a wide range of writers and been giving careful consideration to his beliefs for some time. Lest it should be thought that he was a pioneer of pure science, Cranbrook seems to have accepted phrenology, which is now recognised as a pseudo-science. At the end of the 18th century, the theory that character could be read from the shape and formation of an individual's skull was developed by Franz Joseph Gall. This had a great fashion and even led to the establishment in 1820 of the Edinburgh Phrenological Society, which became the foremost British institution in the field. It was presumably one of their members who felt Cranbrook's bumps and published an account of his findings.²¹

The first intimation of potential problems in Edinburgh came in 1866. Cattle plague and cholera were both raging in Britain. The Scottish clergy were advocating public fasting and prayer. To his congregation in Liscard eighteen years before Cranbrook had said "What I want to pray for ... is, not that God would put forth His finger and miraculously stop the plague—for I am sure that such a prayer would be breath spent in vain,—but that he would give me His feeble and ignorant child, and give all his children, grace to strengthen our understandings and our will that we may more successfully study the process of nature ... and then more fully conform ourselves with those conditions." He was confident that "When physiology has made further progress we shall understand the progresses of nature which originate the cholera and every other kind of plague".²² He had previously expressed similar opinions to his Belfast congregation but when these sentiments were repeated in Edinburgh, the sermon was reported in newspapers and created a furore. It was not just his beliefs about prayer but a number of his other pronouncements that prompted Dr William Alexander to write to Cranbrook on 19 March 1866 asking him to attend a "friendly conference ... to ascertain [your] views on some points of revealed truth". He refused to appear, saying he was willing to meet people individually but he was an Independent minister and felt he would be sacrificing his independence and that of his people if he obeyed.²³ By now, it

20 Cranbrook *Founders* 31.

21 N Morgan *The phrenological analysis of the late Rev James Cranbrook*, Edinburgh (1869).

22 J Cranbrook *Divine Providence in Its Relations to Prayer and Plagues* (Edinburgh, 2nd edn, n.d.)

23 *The Christian Witness and Congregational Magazine* (January 1867) 180–185, on https://archive.org/stream/christianwitnessoounkngoog/christianwitnessoounkngoog_djvu.txt

appears Cranbrook held that the Sabbath laws were purely human and arbitrary. He noted that ministers would travel to deliver sermons, “That cannot be a deed of either necessity or mercy in any way ...”²⁴ This would not have gone down well in Scotland, which at this time was even stricter about observing the Sabbath than England.

A number of meetings of the Congregational Union of Scotland followed and also of others who supported Cranbrook. During all this time, there is no mention of his ancestry, nor that that might have had a bearing on the issues raised. It was not just respected scientists, like Darwin and Huxley, who were working at this period. There were a number of pseudo-sciences, like phrenology. One of these was what is now called scientific racism, the theory that there was a hierarchy of races with white Caucasians at the top and black Africans at the bottom. This was gaining ground from the 1840s but again nowhere is there any suggestion that Cranbrook’s ancestry might have any bearing on his deism, which was highly unorthodox for that time. All arguments, to the credit of the Congregational authorities and other members of the church, are on theological grounds. It is possible that no-one knew about his ancestry, but the family seems to have made no attempt to conceal it. Presumably when he began training for the ministry there was some enquiry into his antecedents. His aunt Rebecca Gregory included the names of her parents in the birth entries of her children. As there was no legal discrimination against black people in Britain there was no need to specify ancestry as there was in America, where Cranbrook would never have had the opportunity to minister to a white congregation.

Leaving the church

Rather than hanging on to a well-paid position which gave him a great deal of social standing and power, on 21 February 1867 Cranbrook finally resigned the pastorate of the Albany Street Church. A few days later he explained his theological position at a series of public meetings in the Hopetoun Rooms in nearby Queen Street. These appeared in print as *The Founders of Christianity* in 1868. This last publication gathers together several strands of his studies on religion and theology. The first lecture looks at the historical background of the gospels: who wrote them, when they were written and what they reveal about the historical figure of Jesus, which is discussed more extensively in a separate

This was such a controversial event that this article was reproduced as far away as, for example, New Zealand in the *Daily Southern Cross* of 10 July 1867. Accounts appeared in many other contemporary publications as well.

²⁴ J Cranbrook *The Sabbath question ... delivered in the Hopetoun Rooms on Sunday evening September 22nd 1867* (1867) 4. Although this was published after he left the church, the views are in accord with how his beliefs were developing.

chapter. The Gospel of John also gets a separate chapter. Others deal with miracles, for which he concludes there is no evidence, Christian mythology, other religions and the role of Paul the Apostle. His summary and conclusions show it is no wonder that fellow Congregationalists demanded his resignation. By now Cranbrook had come to reject organised churches and was almost questioning the existence of God, certainly the belief in a Christian god. He thought that Christianity was no different from other religions. He recognised there was some “Fate or Force or Mind or God” beyond this world and added, “my soul is filled with reverence, awe and adoration for that Unknown”. He concluded, “Although Christianity, with all other forms of religion, must die, Humanity lives on forever.”²⁵

Cranbrook continued to hold meetings for like-minded people in these Rooms, inviting such radical thinkers as Thomas Huxley to deliver “lay sermons”.²⁶ Despite his professed rejection of the outward forms of church worship, at the request of members of his new congregation he sometimes included Christian prayers and ceremonies.²⁷

He died two years later on 9 June 1869, aged, 51, and the group he had founded continued to meet until 1875. He has been suggested as a model for Robert Elsmere, the eponymous hero of a novel published in 1888 by Mrs Humphrey Ward, about a clergyman who loses his faith.

James Cranbrook’s family and his legacy

After being widowed, Charlotte Cranbrook moved in first with her son, John Hampden, and his family and finally with her youngest, unmarried daughter, Florence, who had previously lived with her brother James, the Anglican minister. She died in 1919 aged 96.²⁸

25 Cranbrook Founders 238, 242.

26 T Huxley ‘On the Physical Basis of Life. A Lay Sermon delivered in Edinburgh, on Sunday 8th November, 1868, at the request of the late Rev James Cranbrook’ was subsequently published in the *Fortnightly Review*, n.s. 5 (1868). It is on Project Gutenberg at www.gutenberg.org/files/16729/16729-h/16729-h.htm.

27 The development of James Cranbrook’s beliefs can be found in his publications: *Divine Providence considered in its relation to the state of the country* (1847); *The Theory of Human Progress* (1857); *On the Science of Literature* (1857); *Christianity in relation to Society* (1858); *Credibilia: or, discourses on questions of Christian faith* (1866); *The Old and New Testaments in relation to the Moral Life. A discourse, suggested by the case of the Rev. Walter C. Smith ... delivered ... June 2, 1867* (1867); *The Doctrine of the Correlation of Forces. Its development and evidence* (1867); *The Sabbath Question* (1867); *Divine Providence in its relations to Prayer and Plagues* (1868); *The Founders of Christianity* (1868) [This was reprinted in 1902 with a brief biographical note and with the references previously omitted restored]; and in J W Lake *Discourses in Memoriam of the Rev. James Cranbrook delivered at Edinburgh July 4 1869*.

28 Censuses for 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911.

Their eldest son, another James, like the children of so many radicals, pursued a more conventional path. He studied at Trinity College, Dublin, then became an Anglican priest. He served in the parishes of Donnington and Burnley where he was initially curate and then vicar for 35 years. After the turbulence of his father's career, he probably appreciated the peace. He died in 1895.²⁹

James and Charlotte's other children also had successful careers, but none followed him into the nonconformist ministry. Although their father's history is occasionally mentioned in connection with them, there is no mention of his black ancestry. This was never an issue for the authorities, not even for his enemies. Attacks on him were made on theological grounds, with no hint of racial and cultural stereotyping, which were then accepted as scientifically proved. It is a reminder of how different attitudes in Britain and the United States were. James Cranbrook's story should also, perhaps, prompt more research into the connections between black people in Britain and the ministers of the various denominations.

Kathleen Chater

²⁹ *Crockford's Clerical Directory* (1888) and *Burnley Express*, 18 May 1889 reported his funeral. There are numerous other newspaper articles reporting his parochial activities.

Books for Congregationalists

Manual of Congregational Principles by RW Dale,

The Atonement by RW Dale,

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

Studies in English Dissent by Geoffrey F. Nuttall

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

Thomas Barnes of Farnworth and the Quinta: A Chronicle of a Life by Jennifer Barnes

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

E-mail info@quintapress.com; website: www.quintapress.com

PDF versions of many Congregational works (John Cotton, Richard Mather, William Jay, John Angell James, RW Dale and PT Forsyth) can be viewed by clicking on the PDF Books link on the website.

Also Calamy's 1702, 1713 and 1727 volumes of Richard Baxter's *Life and Times* detailing the ministers ejected in 1662.

Click on the Whitefield link for further links to his sermons and Journals.

There are many other titles too numerous to mention.

SARAH VYRNWY MORGAN: ALMOST A MINISTER

The question of what part (if any) women should play in the Christian ministry remains controversial, as demonstrated by the Church of England's travails over women priests and bishops. At various points in the church's history, women have exercised leadership roles, but this has tended to be in times of revival or transition, male leadership being reasserted once 'normal' circumstances have been restored.¹ Only within the last hundred years or so has the ordination of women to the Christian ministry been widely practised. The Congregational Union of England and Wales declared its willingness to ordain women ministers as early as 1909, although the formal recognition of women's right to enter the Congregational ministry on equal terms with men came in 1917, with the ordination of Constance Coltman as an assistant to Dr W E Orchard of the King's Weigh House.² While Constance Coltman, who exercised a joint ministry with her husband, Claud, as superintendent of the Weigh House's Darby Street Mission, was the first to be so ordained, other ministerial wives had previously crossed from the supporting role expected of them to more active involvement in Christian ministry.³ Clyde Binfield has identified the 1890s as 'a decisive stage for Congregational women' in the movement towards greater equality in church leadership.⁴ A newspaper article of 1898 identified 'many women preachers' among the Nonconformists, including several Congregationalists.⁵ Among those mentioned was Sarah Vyrnwy Morgan (1862–1900), a minister's wife whose labours as a preacher and lecturer won her widespread recognition in Britain and America, but who is largely forgotten today, possessing neither the glamour of itinerant Welsh evangelist Rosina Davies, nor the formal status of Constance Coltman and the women who followed. Nevertheless, Sarah Morgan's short career sheds

1 C Coltman 'The Free Churches' in M Royden *The Church and Woman* (no date) 108–9; J Lees and K Thorpe, 'On Not Keeping Silent in the Churches: Women in the Pulpit' in E Kaye, J Lees and K Thorpe (eds) *Daughters of Dissent* (2004) 68.

2 R T Jones *Congregationalism in England 1662–1962* (1962) 408–9.

3 C Binfield 'True to Stereotype? Vivian and Dorothy Pomeroy and the Rebels in Lumb Lane' in S Mews (ed) *Modern Religious Rebels* (1993) 186; E Kaye, 'Daughters of Dissent 1840–1917' in *Daughters of Dissent* 20–1; A Argent, *Elsie Chamberlain: The Independent Life of a Woman Minister* (Sheffield, 2013) 21–3; A Argent, *The Transformation of Congregationalism 1900–2000* (Nottingham, 2013) 102–3, 120.

4 C Binfield, *So Down to Prayers: Studies in English Nonconformity 1780–1920* (1977) 222.

5 *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* 13 February 1898.

a valuable light on the early stages in the growing acceptance of women's ministry among Congregationalists.

Early Life

Sarah Vyrnwy Morgan was born Sarah Edwards, second daughter of Amelia and David Bowen Edwards (1822–1904), the latter minister of Watergate Baptist church, which had met in a simple chapel of 1806, below the ruins of Brecon Castle, since 1852.⁶ Apart from a brief venture into Monmouthshire in 1866, when the Edwards family travelled down by barge from Brecon to Tydu, Monmouthshire, then back again two years later, Sarah Edwards' early life was spent in Brecon.⁷ Her father, a native of Cardiganshire, was a well-respected minister and became a leading figure in the town, as its institutions were gradually opened to Nonconformists, winning the confidence of members of all denominations.⁸ With all the major nonconformist denominations possessing a presence in the town, co-operation between the churches was essential if the nonconformists were to challenge successfully the dominance of the Anglican Church and gentry. Brecon was a town where dissent and conformity were consciously in competition, the massive medieval priory and parish church jostling for place with the splendour of modern chapels and the Independents' Memorial College.

The presence of Memorial College brought students from all over Wales into Brecon to train for the Congregational ministry. One of these was John Morgan (1860–1925),⁹ the son of a tinplate worker from Cwmafan, near Port Talbot. Despite their denominational differences, John Morgan and Sarah Edwards became engaged, and in 1884, John decided to cut short his course at Brecon and seek a pastorate in order to facilitate their marriage. On 5 April 1884, John Morgan accepted the oversight of a Congregational chapel at Llanwddyn, in the Vyrnwy valley. No church then existed, the building having been a mission station, run in conjunction with a hall for the workmen employed by the Liverpool Corporation in constructing the dam which would soon flood the valley in order to provide water for the growing city. The mission had run into difficulties, the previous superintendent, D Lantrow, having resigned unexpectedly. John Morgan, by force of character and preaching, was able to gather a church of thirteen members, which was formally

6 J Vyrnwy Morgan (ed) *The Cambro-American Pulpit* (New York & London, 1898) 285; *Cardiff Times* 21 June 1902.

7 A Llewelyn, D M Bailey *Bethesda, Tydu* (Tydu, 1967) 20.

8 *Welsh Gazette & West Wales Advertiser* 11 February 1904.

9 For John Vyrnwy Morgan see G Charmley, 'Morgan, John Vyrnwy (1860–1925)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter *ODNB*) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/101233>, accessed 6 Sept 2014].

constituted in May 1884, and soon afterwards he adopted the middle name of Vyrnwy.¹⁰ On 3 September 1884, he and Sarah Edwards were married at Christ Church Congregational Chapel, Oswestry, James Charles of Hermon Welsh Congregational Chapel officiating.¹¹

Llanwddyn

Sarah Vyrnwy Morgan found herself facing the daunting task of aiding her husband in mission work to the natives of a remote locality and to Liverpool navvies. Fluent, like her husband, in Welsh and English, she made an immediate impact on the work, organising an efficient and flourishing Sunday school where previous efforts had failed, and a singing class, both of which ‘... became a power for good in this solitary sphere of labour’.¹² Sarah Morgan’s work was interrupted by the birth of her first son, David Stuart Parker Morgan, on 3 November 1885, leaving her seriously weakened.¹³ A further bout of sickness in January 1886 laid her aside from the work for some considerable time.¹⁴ Her husband was able to visit the United States when overwork caused his health to break down in early 1887. Sarah Morgan, pregnant with a second son, remained behind to continue the work.¹⁵ The employment of a female servant added to the family’s expenses, but went some way towards easing her burden.¹⁶

The Morgans’ ministry at Llanwddyn was limited to five years due to the building of the dam, which would, when completed, drown the village. During that time the church and mission flourished, two hundred and sixty persons being admitted to church fellowship.¹⁷ Nevertheless, when the end drew near, John Vyrnwy Morgan experienced difficulties finding another ministerial charge, adding to the young family’s anxieties.¹⁸ For a time the Morgans had to lodge with D B Edwards at Brecon.¹⁹

Liverpool

In March 1889 the family’s fears were relieved when John Vyrnwy Morgan received a call to the pastorate of Burlington Street Congregational Church,

10 *Pontypridd Chronicle* 1 July 1892.

11 Marriage certificate.

12 *Pontypridd Chronicle* 1 July 1892.

13 National Library of Wales (hereafter NLW): Acrefair Papers: 2694: J Vyrnwy Morgan to E J Williams, 5 November 1885.

14 Acrefair Papers: 2697: J Vyrnwy Morgan to E J Williams, 27 January 1886.

15 *Llangollen Advertiser & North Wales News* 9 September 1887.

16 Acrefair Papers: 2726: J Vyrnwy Morgan to E J Williams, 18 March 1889.

17 *Pontypridd Chronicle* 1 July 1892.

18 Acrefair Papers 2720: J Vyrnwy Morgan to E J Williams, 30 October 1888.

19 Acrefair Papers: 2726: J Vyrnwy Morgan to E J Williams, 18 March 1889.

Liverpool.²⁰ Initially a mission station of Crescent Congregational Church from 1859, a church had been formed in 1861 and, since its inception, had been under the charge of James Mahood.²¹ The area around the church was characterised as ‘one of the hardest places for Christian work that can be found’, including areas of extreme deprivation.²² Small in numbers and comparatively poor, the church had hesitated before choosing a replacement for their long-serving minister, and it was as a husband and wife team that the Morgans were thought to be equal to the work.²³

Husband and wife showed a will to work; the old chapel was cleaned and re-decorated, the side galleries, which had fallen out of use, being removed and the old pulpit replaced with a rostrum, giving the interior a light and welcoming aspect.²⁴ Innovations were made in worship, an orchestra being introduced to give variety to the services, following the pattern set by pioneers such as Richard Westrope of Leeds.²⁵

Sarah Morgan initially took charge of the Sunday school, Bible Class, Mothers’ Meeting and district visiting, but soon found other outlets for her energies. Her visiting convinced her that shop assistants, lodging away from home and forced to work long hours, needed the protection of a trade union, and she enlisted the aid of her husband in fighting for their right to organise.²⁶ By October 1890 Sarah Morgan was occasionally filling her husband’s pulpit.²⁷ This was a crucial time for the ministry of women among Congregationalists; in April 1891 Ella Sophia Armitage, wife of Professor Armitage of the Yorkshire United College, Bradford, delivered her first sermon.²⁸ In January 1892, on the close of her husband’s work in Liverpool, Sarah Morgan was honoured with a separate testimonial.²⁹

A daughter, Dora, was born to the Morgans towards the close of their time

20 Acrefair Papers 2677: Sarah Vyrnwy Morgan to E J Williams, 22 March 1889.

21 B Nightingale *Lancashire Nonconformity; or Sketches, Historical & Descriptive of the Congregational and Old Presbyterian Churches in the County* (Manchester 1893) vol 6, 184–5.

22 *Lancashire Congregational Calendar* 1889 (Manchester 1889) 46.

23 Acrefair Papers: 3743: A W Roberts to J E Williams, 9 November 1888.

24 *Liverpool Mercury* 27 May 1891.

25 *Lancashire Congregational Calendar 1890* (Lancashire 1890) 58–9); *Pontypridd Chronicle* 1 July 1892. For Westrope see Gerard Charmley, ‘Richard Westrope and Belgrave Chapel’, *Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society* vol 9 (2014) 207–26.

26 *Women’s Penny Paper* 13 December 1890.

27 *Liverpool Mercury* 11 October 1890, 25 July 1891.

28 Kaye ‘Daughters of Dissent 1840–1917’ 14. Born Ella Sophia Bulley, Mrs Armitage (1841–1931), a grand-daughter of Thomas Raffles of Liverpool, was one of the first students at Newnham College, Cambridge, and subsequently lectured at Owens College, Manchester.

29 *Pontypridd Chronicle* 1 July 1892.

in Liverpool.³⁰ Although a second daughter was born to the couple, she died young, whilst John was in the United States, and it has proved impossible to locate her name, date or place of birth.³¹

Pontypridd and London

After Liverpool, the Morgans returned to Wales. Initially, John Vyrnwy Morgan had accepted a call to the pastorate of Hannah Street Congregational Church, a struggling cause in Cardiff's dockland. The mission plans he had for the church, aided by the journalist and social reformer W T Stead, were stillborn, however; a serious illness led him to withdraw.³² A new call soon came, and John Vyrnwy Morgan commenced his ministry at the English Congregational Church, Pontypridd in April, 1892.³³ Sarah Morgan's first appearance on a public platform in Pontypridd took place in November, when she was the main speaker at a demonstration in favour of the early closing of shops in the town, in order to reduce the hours required of staff. Her speech, reported in full by the local paper, was able, humorous and eloquent, ending with a plea for the creation of 'a social system [which is] righteous—overflowing with a just and generous spirit'.³⁴

The following April Sarah Vyrnwy Morgan left Wales for a lecture and speaking tour of the United States. Her first preaching engagement was at Plymouth Congregational Church, Scranton, where she preached on 30 April and 7 May 1893, before visiting churches in New England, returning to Britain in October.³⁵ This was a solo tour, facilitated by her relatives in America; her husband remained in Britain with the children, finishing his ministry in Pontypridd on 30 June before moving to London, where he commenced his ministry at York Road Congregational Church, Lambeth in November 1893.³⁶ Pontypridd would not forget Sarah Morgan's example; in 1900 it was the only church in Wales to list a woman as 'lay evangelist'.³⁷

30 In the Edwardian period Dora Morgan served as assistant to her father, later marrying a Dr Rhys. The marriage ended in divorce (Cardiff Central Library: Letters from J Vyrnwy Morgan to Ifano Jones; Information supplied by Dr Prys Morgan).

31 J Vyrnwy Morgan, *The Welsh Religious Revival, 1904-5: A Retrospect and a Criticism* (1909) 138.

32 *Herald of Wales & Monmouthshire* Saturday, November 2 1890. For W T Stead see ODNB.

33 *Pontypridd Chronicle* 1 April 1892.

34 *Pontypridd Chronicle* 11 November 1892.

35 *Cardiff Times* 22 April 1893.

36 *South Wales Daily Post* 18 November 1892.

37 Kaye 'Daughters of Dissent 1840-1917' 19. Sadly, the disappearance of many of the church records means that only the surname of this evangelist, Miss Coombs, is known. The first woman to be ordained to the pastoral charge of a Congregational Church in Wales was Jean Wilkinson, who served the church at Providence, Mountain

York Road was a historic church which had seen better days and, like Burlington Street, required a great deal of hard work.³⁸ The chapel was re-decorated, informal services, concerts and lectures by leading religious, social and political figures being introduced, in an effort to reach out to the working-class population of the area surrounding the chapel.³⁹ Sarah Morgan took a prominent role in these efforts, one newspaper observing ‘Mrs Vyrnwy Morgan’s eloquent sermons have quite taken the hearts of the Lambeth people by storm’.⁴⁰ She did not confine her labours to her husband’s pulpit; on returning from a second tour of the United States, Sarah Vyrnwy Morgan supplied the pulpit of the English Congregational Church, Colwyn Bay.⁴¹

Sarah Morgan gave birth to a fourth son, Newman (named for Newman Hall, almost their neighbour in Lambeth, at Christchurch, Westminster Bridge Road from which ministry he had resigned in 1892), in 1894. He was born in the home of John Vyrnwy Morgan’s parents at Cwmafan.

Swansea

The Morgans’ time in London was destined to be brief. In late September 1895, John Vyrnwy Morgan announced his adoption of Baptist views, and travelled to Brecon in order to submit to the ordinance of believer’s baptism at the hands of his father-in-law. Although several pamphlets were credited with his change in views, it is inconceivable that his wife, as a Baptist minister’s daughter, would not have played a part.⁴² Soon after his change of denominational allegiance, Vyrnwy Morgan was called to the pastorate of Tabernacle English Baptist Church, Waun Wen, Swansea, to which he came, as one reporter observed ‘... not only with a great reputation as a preacher, a lecturer and an organiser, but also as the husband of a lady who is endowed with abilities of a high order’.⁴³ Like the Coltmans after them, husband and wife were being treated almost as joint pastors, anticipating the ministry of Smith and Wrigley of Leeds.⁴⁴

A newspaper report of 14 March 1896 in which Sarah Morgan is described in terms appropriate for a minister, provides the only known record of one of her sermons:

Mrs Morgan took her text from Heb[rews] XII, 2: ‘Looking Unto Jesus’.

Ash, from 1957 to 1964 (E Kaye, ‘Ministry and Theological Education’ in *Daughters of Dissent* 62).

38 E E Cleal *Congregationalism in Surrey* (1908) 285.

39 *Western Mail* Monday, 19 February 1894; *London Kelt* 22 June 1895.

40 *Bristol Mercury & Daily Post* 10 April 1894.

41 *Weekly News & Visitors’ Chronicle for Colwyn Bay* 24 August 1894.

42 *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent* 30 September 1895; *London Kelt* 5 October 1895. For Newman Hall see ODNB.

43 *Herald of Wales & Monmouthshire* 2 November 1895.

44 *Argent Transformation* 120.

She divided her discourse into three parts: (1) Look to Jesus—why? (2) Look to Jesus—when? (3) Look to Jesus—for what? (1) Look to Jesus—why? (a) For what He is, (b) for what He did. (2) Look to Jesus—when? (a) In the hour of temptation, (b) in the hour of death. (3) Look to Jesus—for what? (a) For a true idea of sin (b) for likeness to Him. Her treatment of the last thought was particularly striking and pathetic. She showed how likeness to Christ would create a social conscience in men, and bring Christians and ministers out of their shells to take an intelligent and effective part in putting down the evils of drink and gambling, and lying and unbelief which were so prevalent.⁴⁵

Later that month she is reported as having ‘preached an able sermon ... [on] the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham’.⁴⁶ Perhaps it was the novelty of seeing a woman in the pulpit, but Sarah Morgan’s preaching was more widely commented on by the Swansea papers than that of her husband, who won greater attention for his temperance and literary work than his preaching. In the case of the latter, Sarah Morgan encouraged her husband to complete a biography of the eccentric Welsh Congregationalist Kilsby Jones.⁴⁷

America

John Vyrnwy Morgan managed to fall out with a number of church members at Tabernacle, considering legal action against one group, and plans to construct a new chapel were frustrated.⁴⁸ By March 1897 he was undertaking another tour of the United States.⁴⁹ Sarah Morgan followed on a tour of her own, leaving their children in the care of John Vyrnwy Morgan’s parents in Cwmafán. However, in late 1898 Sarah Morgan was taken seriously ill with a respiratory complaint, forcing her to abandon her speaking engagements and spend the winter with her husband in the dry climate of New Mexico.⁵⁰ While the climate seemed to help Sarah Morgan’s health, she remained fragile.

Anticipating a long stay in the United States, J Vyrnwy Morgan accepted an invitation to the pastorate of First Baptist Church, Omaha, Nebraska, where he preached to growing congregations, leading to plans being made to rebuild the church.⁵¹ Sarah Morgan was unable to take part in her husband’s latest plans, however, as she could not shake off her illness. It was eventually diagnosed as tuberculosis, and in July 1899, Sarah Vyrnwy Morgan travelled to Hot Springs, South Dakota, for treatment.⁵² During the treatment it was discovered that

45 *Herald of Wales & Monmouthshire* 14 March 1896.

46 *London Kelt* 4 April 1896.

47 J Vyrnwy Morgan *The Life and Sayings of Kilsby Jones* (Swansea 1896) v–vi.

48 NLW: William George Papers: 395; David Lloyd George to William George, 21 November 1895; *South Wales Daily Post* 10 February 1896; *London Kelt* 4 April 1896.

49 *Visit of the Rev J Vyrnwy Morgan to America* (no place of publication 1897).

50 *South Wales Daily Post* 6 December 1898.

51 *Omaha Daily Bee* 13 May 1899.

52 *Omaha Daily Bee* 22 July 1899.

Sarah Morgan was suffering from heart trouble also, and her husband resigned his ministerial charge in order to care for her.⁵³

John and Sarah Vyrnwy Morgan moved to Denver, Colorado, in November 1899, hoping that the air quality would extend Sarah Morgan's life.⁵⁴ However, the disease was too advanced, and on 1 January 1900, Sarah Vyrnwy Morgan 'passed away from earth behind the veil into the unseen glory'.⁵⁵ She was thirty-eight years old.⁵⁶

Her husband's ministerial dreams died with her. J Vyrnwy Morgan accepted a ministerial charge at Baltimore, Maryland, shortly after his bereavement, but soon relinquished the post, and drifted around the United States, lecturing and preaching. The former temperance speaker sought solace in drink, and in August 1903 was arrested for shoplifting.⁵⁷ He returned to Wales in early 1904, and attempted to return to the ministry, but in 1909 joined the Anglican Church.⁵⁸ He re-married shortly afterwards, and devoted the rest of his life to writing.⁵⁹

Conclusion

In the course of her relatively short life Sarah Vyrnwy Morgan demonstrated ministerial gifts at least equal to those of her husband. In addition to fulfilling the roles expected of her, as wife and mother, she was able to use her talents to exercise a ministerial function which went beyond that of 'help-meet' to her minister husband, being viewed as almost his equal by the time of their removal to Swansea.

Unlike the better known pioneers of women's ministry, such as Ella Sophia Armitage, Dorothy Pomeroy or Constance Coltman, Sarah Morgan did not enjoy the privileges of higher education. However, as a daughter of the manse, Sarah Morgan possessed a general education at least as extensive as that of her husband. In view of her father's long association with Brecon, she may well have possessed a greater knowledge and experience of the practical side of ministerial work than the man she married.

This leads to another observation; although Constance Coltman made history by being the first woman ordained to the Congregational ministry,

53 *Omaha Daily Bee* 29 July 1899.

54 *Baner ac Amserau Cymru* 20 September 1899.

55 J Vyrnwy Morgan (ed) *Welsh Religious Leaders in the Victorian Era* (1905) v (dedication).

56 *Cardiff Times* 6 January 1900.

57 *Weekly Mail* 5 September 1903.

58 *Cambrian* 19 February 1904; *Welsh Gazette & West Wales Advertiser* 8 April 1909.

59 *Aberystwyth Observer* 28 October 1909. The ceremony was performed by his brother, David Morgan, formerly the Congregational minister at Goole, who had joined the Church of England in 1903 (Congregational Year Book (1903) 485).

her ministerial career was spent in joint charges with her husband, Claud.⁶⁰ Her ordination was in part a recognition of the role which a spiritually gifted woman could play as part of a husband and wife team; a vindication of the work done by activist ministerial wives such as Sarah Morgan.

Reviewing newspaper comment on Sarah Vyrnwy Morgan's career, the absence of adverse comment about her preaching and lecturing is striking. Whether in Wales or in London, her presence on the platform or in the pulpit seems to have been accepted by majority opinion. Her meetings were free from disturbance, the novelty of a woman in the pulpit acting as a draw for the curious, rather than something worthy of censure. Her sermons are reported as able productions, rather than one-off talks, and the most fully reported sermon shows Sarah Morgan to have been as skilled at organising her thoughts as her husband.

The Morgans' ministry was largely spent among the working classes, in challenging situations where a husband and wife team, capable of mutual support, was an asset, and where the likelihood of objection to the public ministry of a woman on grounds of propriety was less likely. The work of the Methodists' 'Sisters of the People' and the Salvation Army, with its female preachers, had prepared the public for the idea of women working among the working classes. Like many of the pioneer women in the ministry during the inter-war years, the Morgans spent their ministerial career among the working classes and in short pastorates, where innovation was seen as vital if the church was to survive.⁶¹

Sarah Morgan's status as a religious figure was initially dependent on her status as the wife of an ordained minister, although her character and talents led her beyond the traditional role of 'helpmeet'. Nevertheless, the extent to which Sarah Vyrnwy Morgan was able to exercise an independent ministry as a minister's wife, lecturing in the United States and acting as a supply preacher in pulpits other than her husband's, is striking. Sarah Vyrnwy Morgan's life should cause us to remember that the ordination of Constance Coltman in 1917 was a fresh step in a gradual process, rather than a wholly new departure.

Gerard Charmley, Leeds

60 Kaye 'Ministry and Theological Education' 56; *Argent Transformation* 120.

61 *Argent Transformation* 144; K Thorpe & J Lees 'Life Lines', in *Daughters of Dissent* 145-6.

‘IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH:’ JOHN FOSTER HAIGH (1901–1943) AND THE FREE CHURCH FACULTY AT CHANGI CAMP¹

A Japanese prisoner of war (POW) camp during the Second World War seems the most unlikely place to develop a faculty of education where the prisoners “were not deemed an official prisoner of war but only slave labour to be used at will and disposed of just so soon as the demand for our talents vanished.”² Life and living conditions in most Japanese camps were brutal. Christopher Ross, a Baptist chaplain and POW, explained that: “The policy in these camps was over-crowd, underfeed, overwork, beat.”³ The allied prisoners had only the clothes they were captured in and after frequent mending they were often discarded for a simple loin cloth and maybe a hat to keep the sun off their heads, if they were lucky. They were fed one small bowl of ‘sticky’ boiled rice a day and occasionally some meat that the Japanese guards deemed too rotten for them to eat, washed down with putrid water. This, along with a severe lack of medicine, led unsurprisingly to illness, starvation and vitamin deficiency which in turn led to a number of unpleasant and painful diseases such as ‘rice balls,’⁴ ‘happy feet,’⁵ ‘bore holes’⁶ and beri-beri,⁷ which was by far the main killer.⁸ On top of this the prisoners suffered constant bouts of diarrhoea, brutal treatment by the guards, lengthy and overworked work parties and steaming hot jungle conditions. Despite these difficulties and with their concentration severely tested, the prisoners still managed to provide for themselves opportunities for amusement and educational advancement.

Changi (sometimes spelt Changai) Camp, not to be confused with Changi

1 My thanks to Jonathan Woodhouse and Stephen Robbins who allowed me to access the Changi Archive material, HQ MOD (Army) Chaplains.

2 R Braddon *The Naked Island* (1952) 103.

3 J Clifford (ed) *Thank You Padre: Memories of World War 2* (1989) 68.

4 ‘Rice balls’ occurred when the prisoner’s scrotum became extremely itchy and, because of the affected person’s constant scratching, their skin split and reddening infected areas would develop extending to the thigh.

5 ‘Happy feet’ or ‘electric feet’ was when the prisoner suffered from constant stabs of burning pain in his feet making it difficult for him to stand still; thus those affected tended to dance around on their feet. The individuals displaying these symptoms would die soon after this death-dance.

6 ‘Bore holes’ were seriously infected areas of ulcerated flesh.

7 ‘Beri-beri’ was caused by an excess of fluid throughout the body resulting in large swellings which often would affect the heart often leading to a fatal heart attack.

8 Braddon *Naked Island* 108–112 & Kendall; see also P Gordon *Surviving Changi-A Memoir* (Cambridge 2007) 76–78.

jail in which allied civilians were incarcerated, was a *relatively* better camp than others run by the Japanese in Thailand. However because the camp also accommodated prisoners transiting through from other camps as well as returnees from the infamous work parties, the diseases fore-mentioned were still present to a high degree. One bowl of rice a day was still the diet though the water was cleaner. Braddon, an Australian POW, described the enclosure: “Changi Camp was made up by the Barrack Square of what had been the Selarang Garrison; plus all its outhouses, officers, WOs [Warrant Officer] and sergeants’ quarters; plus Roberts’ garrison, across the valley and its attendant quarters.”⁹ In this camp cruelty was kept to a minimum, and a little more humanity was evident, although the treatment experienced during the frequent work parties going out from the camp was just as cruel as ever. This more humane experience was partly due to the positive influence of a sympathetic guard, interpreter and committed Christian known as Terai.¹⁰ Before the war Terai, who as a child received his formative education at the Methodist Mission,¹¹ had been a university lecturer in English language and literature and he obviously liked the English speaking prisoners. The British were also allowed to run the inside of the camp on British military lines with little interference from the Japanese guards. Braddon explained that: “The [British] Command determined to maintain full military discipline and establishments, regardless of circumstances or psychology, waiting upon the day when Malaya would be invaded by a British force.”¹² The rest of Braddon’s description needs to be taken as his personal perspective yet it does give a glimpse of the continued organised military life within the camp. Braddon bitterly wrote “two principles seemed to guide every decision. One, to retain full divisional and regimental staffs pottering round achieving nothing useful at all in divisional and regimental offices; two, to preserve the Officers-Other Ranks distinction by as many tactless and unnecessary orders as could be devised.”¹³ This meant that “officers could not freely mix with their friends who were ORs [other ranks] nor ORs with officers” and saluting was obligatory.¹⁴ Officers ate separately and were allowed to keep poultry. Clothes were compulsorily stripped from the backs of ORs so that they “might be distributed to officers who—though [according to British army rules] they did not work—must, it was deemed, at all times be well

9 Ibid 153–154.

10 Ibid 154.

11 P Schofield ‘A Padre & a Man’ in Reform <http://www.urc.org.uk/reform-magazine> accessed 12/04/2007.

12 Braddon Naked Island 154.

13 Ibid 155.

14 Ibid 156.

dressed.”¹⁵ Although Braddon arrived at Changi dressed only in a loin cloth, he later admitted that he was issued with “a shirt and a pair of shorts and boots.”¹⁶ Officers may have been a little more privileged but were not exempt from the work parties that took the lives of so many, including John Foster Haigh.

Regardless of difficulties and resentments, the British application of military order within the camp kept the Japanese guards from being regularly needed inside the camp and gave the prisoners a limited liberty which helped keep them safe from barbaric cruelty, until they were needed for a work party. Braddon’s disdain can be explained by the fact that he was an Australian POW and had arrived at Changi from a terrible camp where beheadings, beatings and starvation were normal, but all ranks mucked in together. He also described more positively the benefits. He “revelled in the Changi life of wide stretches of grass and trees and buildings where taps ran and people who, though on short commons, still retained an outlook that knew nothing of gaols ... And each night after the day’s work, I would wander down to the Australian Concert Party’s quarters, where, sitting on the wood heap at its rear, talk would range freely on all subjects until all hours—with no fear of a guard shouting ‘Currah’ because you should be in your bed.”¹⁷ And “as well as the men and the lack of Japs, there were the miles of grass and the trees and the Hospital.”¹⁸

In this camp a Free Church Divinity Faculty was created and made a part of the Divisional University, created by the prisoners themselves at Changi. This Free Church Faculty was headed up by Revd John Foster Haigh, a Welsh Congregational and United Board army chaplain, who was captured during the ‘Fall of Singapore.’¹⁹ The Congregational and Baptist denominational interests were represented in the British military by the United Navy, Army and Air Force Board, founded in 14 January 1915 by John Howard Shakespeare²⁰ and Richard Joshua Wells, general secretaries of the Baptist and Congregational Unions respectively.²¹ Haigh was a popular man who demonstrated a warm and captivating faith in Christ, though often suffering from ill health. He built a church in the camp and enjoyed packed services.²² Haigh was also a man who had a real passion for music and literature. He had a lovely tenor voice and when

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid 165.

18 Ibid 155.

19 A Argent *The Transformation of Congregationalism 1900–2000* (Nottingham 2013) 344.

20 P Shepherd *The Making of a Modern Denomination: John Howard Shakespeare and the English Baptists 1898–1924* (Carlisle 2001) 96–103.

21 N E Allison *The Official History of the United Board, Volume One, Revised: The Clash of Empires 1914–1939* (Norfolk 2014) 21–40.

22 Argent Transformation 344.

he sang at the prison concerts he brought a great deal of pleasure and emotional escapism to the troops. Not only was he musically and academically gifted but he remained a faithful pastor to his flock. The British Camp Commandant spoke highly of him. He wrote that Haigh “was indefatigable, spending hours in the huts among the sick men and never sparing himself. In all my service I never met a padre I admired more—not only was he a padre but he was a man as well. He did wonders ... To the day of his death he was a tower of strength to every man in the camp.”²³ Regardless of his physical weakness he not only managed to be pastorally active but also managed to establish a teaching faculty of three: Christopher Ross,²⁴ D E Davidson, both army chaplains and Captain C V Lewis, Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC).²⁵ The key aim of Haigh and his team was to organise and run a theological faculty for prospective ordinands, who had been accepted into a Free Church College before the war to train and qualify them for civilian ministry once released from prison. However, occasionally the faculty did accept committed Christians who were not wishing to become ordained but wanted to understand their faith. Haigh demanded of his students not only academic commitment, ability and rigour but insisted that they should be of “unimpeachable character.”²⁶ The latter quality was harder to achieve, in the most trying of circumstances, where there was literally nowhere to hide and one’s character was on display for all to see twenty four hours a day, in some of the most stressful circumstances. He explained the logic for this demand: “It is not the business of the Christian teacher to apologise for Christianity, but to try and tell people what it is. Christianity offers the world what alone can save it; and far away the most convincing argument for its truth, in all ages, has been the appeal to the Christian way of life and the demonstration of Christian character.”²⁷ This aim fitted into the already defined educational role of military chaplains during the Second World War promoted by the creation of the ‘Padre’s Hours’ in 1942. Chaplains were seen to be at the forefront of an ideological war in defence of ‘Christian Civilisation’ against fascism and communism.²⁸

The camp was a difficult place to study and, even if a student passed all this academic and personal scrutiny, there was no guarantee that he would be alive or present for the graduation. In one university term report, 1942, it

23 Schofield ‘A Padre & a Man’.

24 For a short account of Christopher Ross’s ministry at Changai see Clifford *Thank You Padre* 68–69.

25 R.A.ChD. Archive Papers Changai POW Camp 1942.

26 *Ibid.*

27 *Ibid.*

28 See Neil E Allison *The Official History of the United Board*, Volume Two: *The Clash of Ideologies 1939–1945* (United Navy, Army and Air Force Board: Norfolk, 2012) 118.

was casually recorded that: “The Faculty has suffered the loss of eight students and one lecturer by the exodus of working parties to Singapore and the Mainland.”²⁹ However, in contrast to the ever present danger and difficulties, the faculty had its successes. During the term report of April to July 1942 Haigh recorded the following: “we have completed the Origin and Critical Introduction to the Books of the New Testament; the first three and a half centuries in Church History; the History and Canon of the Old Testament and the contents of the Hexateuch, Samuel 1 & 2, Kings 1 & 2, and the Book of Psalms; and in Systematic Theology we have completed the Christian Doctrines of God, Sin and Redemption and the Person and Work of Christ.”³⁰ It was also reported that the Greek class was doing well.³¹ In the Homiletic Class, “we have considered several aspects of the Minister’s work, and opportunities have been provided for the students to apply theory to practice. Capt. Mitchell, Driver House, and L/Bdr Matthews have preached at week-night services with great acceptance. 2/Lt. Durden has conducted a small study circle.”³² During this term the students were set two essays entitled ‘How we got the New Testament’ and the ‘Blood of the Martyrs is the seed of the Church’ or ‘Christian Worship up to 300 A.D.’³³ No small achievement in such difficult circumstances.

In spite of Haigh’s achievements, he was not exempt from the infamous work parties that claimed so many allied lives. Peter Neild described the effect of being moved from Changi to Thailand to work on the infamous ‘Burma Road.’ He wrote that “total dead now 310 ... many due to dysentery and beriberi but chiefly due to malnutrition and the result of being forced out to work when unfit ... the IJA [Imperial Japanese Army] insists on 260 men for work; the best we can produce is only approximately 180, the remainder are marked ‘unfit’ or ‘bed-down’ by the MO owing to fever, ulcers, debility etc. These are set on one side, but the IJA still insist on taking them.”³⁴ Two former POWs described the last time they saw Haigh alive. They spoke of his fine singing voice, of his unrelenting and utterly devoted service. They had last seen him as they marched off on a working party. Though too weak to be with them, he raised his hand and began to sing ‘Onward, Christian Soldiers’. One soldier said: ‘I don’t know whether he was waving goodbye or giving us his blessing.’ The other said quietly, ‘I hope it was his blessing—we never saw him again.’³⁵

29 R.A.ChD. Archive Papers Changai POW Camp 1942.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 Cited in Schofield ‘A Padre & a Man’.

35 Ibid.

Haigh died at 6 am on the 23 September 1943 from cardiac arrest, one of the common effects of beri-beri. The 1948 *Congregational Year Book* incorrectly has his death being the 19 September 1943. M E Aubrey, the general secretary of the United Navy, Army and Air Force Board, commented in an understated way, after reading about Haigh's work, that "It is obvious that a very useful piece of work has been done and I hope its fruit will remain for a long time to come."³⁶

Neil E Allison

36 Letter M E Aubrey to Deputy Chaplain General, 12 November 1945.

REVIEWS

***Being Protestant in Reformation Britain.* By Alec Ryrie. Oxford University Press 2013. Pp xvi + 498. Hardback £45.99. ISBN 978-0-19956-572-6.**

Alec Ryrie is a distinguished and prolific church historian teaching at the University of Durham. His interests lie mainly in the early modern period in both England and Scotland, specifically in the culture and politics of religious reform, touching on the politically radical strand of English Protestantism, the character of puritanism, and the relation between thought and practice.

This book is a study of the practice of piety and prayer of the mainstream English and Scottish Protestants c 1530–1640. It emerged from research on early modern worship which in turn led to further enquiries into the Protestant spiritual experience. However in limiting himself to the mainstream, Ryrie has avoided consideration of the separatists and the Laudians, thereby implying that these groupings occupied extremist positions at opposite poles and do not offer incisive and revealing commentaries on the essential nature of English and Scottish Protestantism. Ryrie himself is a loyal Anglican, which in itself probably reinforces his tendency to concentrate on the middle way, that is the establishment.

Nevertheless we cannot fault his depth. This substantial work is divided into five parts dealing in turn with *The Protestant Emotions*, *The Protestant at Prayer*, *The Protestant and the Word*, *The Protestant in Company*, and *The Protestant Life*. Consequently there are chapters on the affections, despair and salvation, mourning, desire and joy. We learn that “the bane of the earnest Protestant’s spiritual life was a condition variously described as dullness, hardness, dryness, coldness, drowsiness, or deadness”. By this he does not mean the reception given to a preacher at Sunday worship but “the insidious malaise” which could creep into your heart unnoticed; its symptom was numbness, not pain. Alert Protestants watched out for it because “the problem grew more acute, not less, as you matured in your faith”. Ryrie uses the ceaseless fight against “this listless, chilling enemy” as his way into the Protestant spiritual experience.

The section on emotion is almost a unique departure for a Reformation historian. It shows that a Protestant in the early modern period was setting out on an emotional progress, on which he/she might encounter delight, dejection, desire, zeal and anguish. On that journey Peter Sterry explained that he could not find words to express the difference between natural feelings and divine inspiration. It is like “the difference between Salt and Sugar; to him, who hath never tasted sweet or sharp”. Ryrie reminds his readers that the Protestant hoped for the elusive quality of “assurance”, the certainty that he/she was numbered among the elect. However such assurance could be very comforting, especially

when a zealous Protestant fell foul of the powers that be, as that troublesome London independent, Henry Burton, did when he was imprisoned for sedition in the years before the Civil War. His prayer resulted in his being “filled with a mighty spirit of courage and resolution, wherewith I was carried up farre above my selfe, even as it were upon Eagles wings”. Burton asked God “to keep up my spirits at this level” for the duration of his trial and imprisonment.

The section on prayer not only covers the dutiful discipline and the need to address the Almighty but also recognises that, at times, prayer may be a struggle. Protestantism is rightly depicted as stressing the Word, rather than images and tradition, and Ryrie devotes a chapter each to reading and writing. All Christians expect to gather for worship which obligation is examined here, as is also that of the household at prayer. The final section tackles the unavoidable issues of life’s meaning and the various stages which life falls into.

In his examination of the impact of the Reformation on the lives of men and women, Ryrie has found his sources among the printed and manuscript works of libraries both in the UK and the USA. He has consulted diaries, commonplace books, journals, biographies, autobiographies and sermons to reveal the internal experience of Protestants. One of those cited on the subject of conversion to Christ is the leading Congregationalist, Thomas Goodwin, who ascribed his conversion to a promise which God “let fall into my heart”. It was “but a gentle sound, yet it made a noise over my whole heart, and filled and possessed all the faculties of my whole soul”. Goodwin tested this experience to see if it really was from God and decided that it was. He found that it was at one with the scriptures but more that “the works of the devil” are “dissolved in my heart ... my will melted and softened, and of a stone made flesh”.

Ryrie scrutinizes what Protestant devotional practices inherited from their Catholic antecedents, although he does not examine the breaks in tradition between pre- and post-Reformation experience which must have had a huge impact on the ordinary parishioner. In demonstrating how Protestants lived out their faith, Ryrie reveals their regard for candour and unaffectedness and their loathing of duplicity and meanness. Hand in hand with a suspicion of sloth and inactivity went their impatient, inspired energy. Ryrie argues that Reformation Protestantism was “a broad-based religion”: even allowing for the differences between Scotland and England, that this was one religious culture, with common experiences nullifying apparent divisions.

Without doubt, Ryrie is right to stress that the Reformation was not about erudite works of theology nor the worldly ambitions of powerful rulers. It was far more about ordinary believers struggling to work out their faith in everyday settings. In this seminal work Alec Ryrie has provided the first analysis of what was entailed in living a Protestant life in England and Scotland between c. 1530–1640. This book deserves to be read and studied seriously; yet we may ask whether the points of contact between the reception and outworkings of Protestantism in both England and Scotland justify this joint treatment. That is were the Reformations simply so different in these two countries that it would be better to acknowledge that and discuss them separately, as has been done

in the past? On the other hand, if Ryrie's approach is correct, has he gone far enough in considering only these two countries in Britain? Rather should we have one book which seeks out and analyses the similarities in personal conduct between the Reformations in the Netherlands, France, Germany, Scotland and England and other countries where Protestantism made deep inroads? We may also wonder, with many of our readers, why he has chosen only to offer "the occasional reference to Anglophone Wales". That is much of Welsh Protestantism is excluded from his book? Given his use of the term Britain in the title, are the Welsh not British? He is also reluctant to draw on other reaches of English-speaking Protestantism—Ireland, the New World and expatriates in mainland Europe.

Ryrie defines Protestantism as "the mainstream Protestant cultures of England and Scotland, and in all those who were earnest in the practice of that religion". He states that these were from the mid-1540s "Reformed Protestants", or a little later in time Calvinists, and he traces a tradition of such from the 1530s to the 1630s. This enables him to justify his omission of "separatists, radicals [and] sectarians", even though they and their underground churches also grew out of that same tradition, with their likely origins among those underground churches maintaining Protestant beliefs and practices in England during Mary's reign. That is they were earnest, but apparently too earnest for Ryrie (as were the Laudians also). Yet he does include, among other radicals, in his consideration the recorded experiences of Thomas Goodwin, Henry Burton, John Bradford, Vavasor Powell (a Welshman), and John Milton, none of whom were seen by contemporaries as unqualified defenders of the establishment, and even that earnest but hardly establishment figure, John Bunyan, makes a few appearances.

Yet I unhesitatingly welcome this book. Ryrie knows and admires these early modern Protestants. He does not patronise them, as some scholars seem to do. Rather he knows their failings but treats them and their convictions seriously. I recommend this book to all those who wish to understand how the astonishing dynamism of Protestantism influenced the day to day living of men, women and children in this island.

Alan Argent

***The Diary of Robert Woodford, 1637–1641.* Ed John Fielding. Royal Historical Society, Camden 5th series, volume 42. Cambridge University Press 2012. Pp 425. Hardback £45.00. ISBN 9781107036383.**

Robert Woodford (1606–1654) was the first in a line of diarists which included the better-known Samuel and James (Woodforde). Robert was in many ways a typical seventeenth-century Puritan. A provincial attorney, he secured in 1635 the stewardship of Northampton through the patronage of John Reading, an Inner Temple barrister, and ended his career in 1653 as under-sheriff of the county. He was never free of debts, which engendered bouts of melancholy

which he generally ascribed to the 'thorny cares of the world' (p. 136). Woodford constantly feared poverty for his wife and fourteen children, was forced to sell personal belongings, to borrow from servants and, on occasions, to go hungry when he had 'no vittayles in the house to eat to night nor money' (p. 275). Spiritually, his diary exemplifies his Calvinistic faith; sometimes he reveals a simplistic predestinarian view of elect and reprobates, but there are also some striking expositions of the spiritual turmoil of one who was evidently striving to find assurance of grace. Woodford translated theoretical writings on Puritan pastoral into practice, and his diary carefully records his private, as well as public, devotions: his regimen encompassed personal meditations and prayers supplemented by family instruction, sermon repetition, godly conferences and dinners among like-minded neighbours. Woodford typifies the Puritan ideals of the Christian lawyer, master, head of family, neighbour and parishioner. He was faithful to his central Northampton parish of All Saints where he kept the Sabbath, and refrained from sermon gadding, although his attendance at the Thursday lectures was less diligent.

Woodford may have been a conventional Puritan, but there was nothing conventional about the times in which he lived, and his diary gives a marvellous account of reactions to Laudianism on the cusp of the Civil War, both in London (where Woodford was frequently to be found) and the Midlands. He inveighed against 'Idolatry & sup[er]stition' (p. 145), Arminianism and the 'inundacon' of popery (p. 173); he attacks rails, communion tables placed altar-wise and 'wicked B[isho]ps, & their hierarchy' (p. 129). He went further than most in his condemnation of Charles I, for whose conversion he prayed. We are also able to follow Woodford as he hesitates between Congregationalism (if not separatism) and Presbyterianism. When in London, he frequented St Mary's Aldermanbury and St Stephen Coleman Street to hear the future congregational minister John Goodwin. He heaps praise on Edmund Calamy, Stephen Marshall, Simeon Ashe and the Sedgwick brothers, but has a deep distrust of 'sectaryes' (p. 129). Nonetheless, on a least one occasion he had to confess that he still needed to be 'enlighten[ed]' on the question of separation, of which he was 'not yet wholly convinced' (p. 313). At the very least, the meetings of zealous parishioners he frequently attended might have ended in the gathering of a congregational Church.

What makes the reading of the diary so compelling is the seamless weaving of these political, doctrinal, religious and ecclesiastical events with the minutiae of a life. Woodford worries for a sick child, celebrates his wedding anniversary, carves his initials on the bark of an ash tree, goes to interludes, drinks pints of sack, and is moved to tears by 'A Kennell of hounds in hot pursuite after a hare' whose cries he compares to that of a guilty conscience pursuing a sinner (p. 256).

The diary for the years 1637 to 1641 is probably the only survivor in a longer series that must have covered, each time, a period of four years. It is here edited in full for the first time, and in old spelling, from the manuscript at New College Oxford as part of the prestigious 5th Camden series published by

Cambridge University Press. In keeping with the series' traditions, John Fielding provides very thorough contextual notes, illuminating for the first time the extent of Woodford's networks, and adds a solid introduction to Woodford's life, times and Puritan background. The index could have included more *notions*, which would have better helped the reader search a document of such vital importance for the study of contemporary minds, but this a very minor drawback in a handsome and rigorous production, equally helpful to historians and specialists of autobiographical writings in the early-modern period.

Anne Dunan-Page (Aix Marseille University, LERMA)

Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology. <http://www.hymnology.co.uk/>
Ed J R Watson and E C Hornby. Canterbury Press, Norwich 2013.
Annual subscription—individual (UK) £59.00—small institution (UK)
£149.00 .

John Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology* contains an index listing over 20,000 hymns. Therefore it is a massive undertaking to attempt to replace or even update his 19th century work for readers in the 21st. Unlike the revisers of the *Dictionary of National Biography* the compilers of the *Canterbury Dictionary* have not attempted to include or revise all that Julian published. Rather they have opted for a new work with over 4,000 articles on all aspects of hymns, collections of them, their writers and composers and the uses they are put to in the various Christian traditions. Given its essential part in hymns, the omission of music and composers from Julian's work is surprising, explainable only by the mammoth nature of his study of the lyrics. The inclusion of music in the *Canterbury Dictionary* makes for a more rounded approach, even if it takes a lesser part to the words.

The greatest change in Christian worship during the later 20th century and into our own century has been the rise of the "worship song", a term used often in the *Dictionary* but never defined. In secular music, of course the same period has been marked by the advent of rock and pop bands, using drums, guitars etc. and the associated recording industry. In many churches this influence has led to the replacement or supplementation of the organ/piano with a "worship band", a feature which gains only a passing mention in an article on organ music in this volume. This all gives rise to the question of whether the *Dictionary* is looking down its nose at this genre, or simply is unsure whether it comes under the definition of hymnody. Perhaps it is all just too new for the compilers to be sure what its abiding influence will be.

This however creates a somewhat artificial dichotomy, highlighted in the article on Graham Kendrick whose songs are said to be "sometimes understood as occupying an area of intersection between traditional hymnody and modern worship songs". Those songs of his which have earned the tribute of individual articles are ones which "have been included in some traditional hymnals". Even for those of us who prefer traditional metrical hymns, the apparent downgrading

of what constitutes a large part (with possibly the majority of participants) of regular English-speaking Christian worship today is surprising. Perhaps the key to this can be seen in the lengthy article on *Mission Praise* (the only compilation majoring on worship songs that we could find in the *Dictionary*) where much of this kind of material is criticised for its reliance on feeling and lack of theological content.

The great advantage the *Dictionary's* compilers have over John Julian is of course the power of the computer. Their web site tells us that a print version is "under discussion", but it also points out that by being on line further articles may be added and existing ones revised. Currently, however, not enough use is made of the technical possibilities of a web based resource. The category lists are not comprehensive; that for hymn collections excludes *Congregational Praise* and *Rejoice and Sing* because they are included in the articles on the denominations which published them. It would be useful to have some index of the first lines of hymns which are mentioned but do not have articles in their own right. This is not to say that this is not a good work or that insufficient effort has been put in, but rather to suggest some enhancements that might be made. The perusal of this *Dictionary* definitely leads one wanting more.

Peter Young

***Roots and Wings.* By Sybil M Camsey. Available from the author sybil.m.camsey@hotmail.co.uk Pp [126].**

This privately printed memoir from the daughter of a Congregational minister makes for a good read. Sybil Camsey writes very freely about growing up in the at times straitened circumstances of the manse, that is within the modest confines of a minister's stipend. Her father, T F Camsey, always known as Fred, was utterly devoted to his calling and both he and his wife were prepared to make sacrifices in order that his vocation to the Christian ministry was fulfilled. A Mancunian, he had pastorates in Hastings and London. Whether such self-denial would be so readily made nowadays by individuals and their families is questionable. That such sacrifices (no car, no television, no refrigerator etc.) were demanded, expected and almost routinely made by ministers and their families in the mid-twentieth century is unarguable. Sybil and her sister, Mavis, therefore, were necessarily brought up in an atmosphere of enforced frugality which they simply accepted. Yet this was a happy childhood.

From an early age Sybil learned to mix with people of all types and backgrounds—the mayor, the doctor, the (almost) local tramp, the old lady who always smelt of mothballs. And she was taught to treat them with respect and understanding which served her well in her later career as a school teacher. Fred Camsey died early, still in harness, in 1965 at the age of 59 years. His widow was left with few resources and Sybil describes this period of anguish for her mother and herself movingly.

She also writes of her experiences candidly and without affectation. She

studied education in Dudley, learned how to teach in London comprehensives but later moved to the primary sector. She recounts some of the “funny things” that happened during her teaching, as well as the serious, with the deaths of parents, children and colleagues. A memoir can easily become a means of indulgence, of making excuses for oneself while blaming others for real or perceived failures. This does not fall into that pitfall. Like many children of the manse, she was to achieve a level of distinction, becoming a head-teacher in the outer London suburbs, and having, like her father, a positive influence on many young lives. Her affection for the ‘children’ of her school is obvious. Undoubtedly her father and mother would have been proud of her, as she is rightly of them.

Peter Gillespie

***Building Jerusalem. Nonconformity, Labour and the Social Question in Wales, 1906–1939.* By Robert Pope. Studies in Welsh History 13. University of Wales Press, Cardiff 2014. Pp xx + 269. Paperback £24.99. ISBN 978-1-7831-6060-0.**

In 1998 the *Congregational History Circle* magazine published a review of this book when it first appeared in hardback. It was then an impressive tome and it remains so, now that it has been issued for the first time in paperback. Certainly Robert Pope’s point that the liberal theologians of his period failed to bring in the Kingdom of God is borne out by the evidence. Their stress on the ‘brotherhood of man’ led to many bold initiatives but ultimately their failure was theological. His second main point, that the working class in Wales drifted away from the chapels in the first half of the 20th century, is incontestable. Full-scale social renewal was too ambitious an aim for the Welsh churches.

This book investigates the accusations traded between the Labour leaders and the working class on the one hand and the nonconformist ministers and leaders on the other. Were the latter “merely hypocritical”, with their focus on the world to come rather than the alleviation of earthly injustice, as some maintained? However we must allow that even if, as is true, many nonconformists sought to address social questions, they did not achieve the “major social reconfiguration” that was called for.

In reissuing this book, without any alteration, Robert Pope has not been able to address the points made in our review 16 years ago. As a result the book still has no maps—surely not an outrageous request for a publisher to accede to! Again he inelegantly refers to “Congregationalist ministers”, using the noun as an adjective, a habit which has come into the UK, one suspects, from America. This error jars the more because Pope correctly notes *The Congregational Quarterly* and *The Congregational Union of England and Wales*. In passing, we might note also that ours is the Congregational History Society—not Congregationalist!

Yet, as our first review stated, this book has a wealth of detail which

conspires somewhat to prevent the reader from grasping a clear overview. This is a good book but not one which sets the blood racing and engages one's natural human sympathy. The Welsh are a warm race and their faith has "the lyric note", as P T Forsyth wrote, commenting on the revival of 1904-6. Robert Pope would have been well advised to include some of the heart-breaking stories of his period to illustrate his theme—that is the relation of sincerely held religion (Welsh chapels really were at the heart of their communities) to passionate political belief at a time of unprecedented social upheaval.

In conclusion, I trust that this publication does well—in its sales and in the response of readers to its arguments.

Alan Argent

Secretary:

Rev. Dr Richard Cleaves
17 Carlton Street
Cheltenham
GL52 6AG
richard.cleaves@blueyonder.co.uk

Editor and Reviews Editor:

Dr A Argent
125 Sudbourne Road
London
SW2 5AF

Treasurer:

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

Librarian

Patricia Hurry
Bunyan Meeting
Mill Street
Bedford
MK40 3EU
pathurry@fsmail.net

Membership secretary:

Peter I Young
24 Daisy Dormer Court
Trinity Gardens
London
SW9 8DW
piy@live.co.uk

Contributions to the *Magazine* should be addressed to the Editor.
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