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Editorial and Notes

There is an early flavour to this issue. If Robert Browne, John Howe and Philip Doddridge, the Westminster Assembly and the Westminster Confession are too easily taken for granted by us, some of the present articles may suggest otherwise.

We welcome as contributors Diane Willen of Georgia State University and Robert Norris, who is Assistant Minister at the City Temple. A version of Professor Willen's article was first read at the Southern Conference on British Studies, New Orleans, 12 November 1977. That Tudur Jones, of Coleg Bala-Bangor, has not contributed more frequently is a reflection on us, which this issue in part remedies.

Of our reviewers, E. Gordon Rupp has previously been reviewed by us without having reviewed for us; John Derry teaches in the department of History at the University of Newcastle and Haddon Willmer in the department of Theology at the University of Leeds; Ann Phillips is Fellow Librarian at Newnham College, Cambridge.

Notes: A conference on Methodist History: Sources and Methods, is to be held at Southlands College, London, from Tuesday 21 April to Friday 24 April 1981. The cost

is £30 plus V.A.T.; there are reduced rates for family bookings. The emphasis on sources and methods makes this of particular interest, not least to non-Methodists. Further information can be obtained from John A. Vickers, 87 Marshall Avenue, Bognor Regis, West Sussex, PO21 2TW; correspondents are asked to enclose a stamped and addressed foolscap envelope.

Dr. Binfield would like information about three late Victorian girls' boarding schools, conducted by and largely for Dissenters: Laleham, Clapham Park; Tudor Hall, Sydenham; the Misses Haddon's, Dover.

ROBERT BROWNE AND THE DILEMMA OF RELIGIOUS DISSENT

The actions and writings of Robert Browne have long earned him fame — and notoriety — as one of the earliest and most influential of English separatists. As a young man, Browne rejected puritan arguments as too moderate. Instead of reform from within, he insisted upon complete withdrawal from the established church; by 1582 he had created a voluntary church in exile. Contemporaries had no doubt about his significance and even coined "Brownist" as a term of abuse to indicate his influence. Although subsequent separatists rejected the label, their disavowal counted for little. Others may have "laboured to be [separatist] leaders," but according to their critic Stephen Bredwell, "there is none among them that can iustly take the garland from Robert Browne . . . they . . . must acknowledge him the shop of their store, and the steel of their strength . . ." ¹ Until recently, historians have been of the same mind. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the distinguished historians of religious dissent — H. M. Dexter, Champlin Burrage, F. J. Powicke — all saw Browne in some sense as "the father of modern Congregationalism." Burrage even declared that "the history of New England may be said to begin with him . . ." ² In 1971, however, B. R. White challenged this traditional view, claiming it exaggerated Browne's influence. White argued convincingly that the separatist tradition predated Browne's writings and that his separatist successors — Henry Barrow, John Greenwood, Francis Johnson — did not borrow directly from his theology; the glamour of early separatism had magnified the nature of Browne's contribution. ³

But, concerned primarily with theology, White did not address all the issues raised by Browne's career. From his days at Cambridge in the 1570s until his death in 1633, Browne's actions were riddled with inconsistencies. Certainly he experienced a stormy relationship with civil and ecclesiastical authorities. He himself boasted of thirty-two arrests in his lifetime, ⁴ and his punishments would have been more severe had it not been for the repeated friendly intervention of his kinsman Lord Burghley. Nevertheless, his separatism, for all its notoriety, was a short-lived affair. In 1585, at the age of thirty-five, Browne returned to England and submitted to the ecclesiastical

¹ Stephen Bredwell, *The raising of the foundations of Brownisme*, 1588, p. ix or Sig. A₁ recto.

² Champlin Burrage, *The True Story of Robert Browne*, Oxford 1906, p. vi. See also Burrage, *The English Dissenters in the Light of Recent Research (1550-1641)*, New York 1912, I, 360, 94; H. M. Dexter, *The Congregationalism of the Last Three Hundred Years*, New York 1880, p. 114; F. J. Powicke, *Robert Browne, Pioneer of Modern Congregationalism*, 1910.

³ B. R. White, *The English Separatist Tradition from the Marian Martyrs to the Pilgrim Fathers*, 1971, esp. pp. 21, 32, 44, 160-61.

⁴ Thomas Fuller, *The Church History of Britain*, 1837 (orig. ed. 1665), III, 65.

authorities. Accused by former colleagues of betraying the separatist movement, he subsequently defended the church of England and in 1591 accepted appointment as rector of a parish. Yet his submission hardly resulted in total compliance or conformity. On the contrary, he continued on occasion to defy ecclesiastical authorities until he was finally excommunicated at the age of eighty-one. He died two years later while in prison for a civil disturbance.

This paper argues that it was less Browne's separatism than dissent in various forms that distinguished his career and marks his significance for the historian. (One might in this respect note Patrick Collinson's plea that the historiography of dissent avoid a sectarian perspective and acknowledge the broader, sociological implications of that dissent.)⁵ Browne's dilemma, his inconsistencies and vacillations, reflect the burden of dissent in his society; his attitudes toward civil authority illustrate the tenacious appeal of traditional premises and provide the key to his behaviour; his varying degrees of nonconformity illustrate anew the close relationship between puritanism and separatism; his attacks on presbyterianism underscore the diversity within puritan ranks.

Born about 1550, the third of seven children, Browne came from a respectable gentry family in Rutland. He was at Cambridge during the controversy surrounding Thomas Cartwright and graduated from Corpus Christi in 1572.⁶ The master of Corpus Christi, Thomas Aldrich, was himself a strong puritan, and Browne makes clear in his autobiographical work, *A True and Short Declaration*, that he already shared puritan concerns. While at Cambridge, he "debated in him selfe, & vvith others" about church matters, "hovv it vvas to be guided & ordered, & vvhat abuses there were in the ecclesiastical gouernment. . ."⁷

Browne's activities during the next few years are obscure, but by 1575 he was a school master, most likely at Oundle in Northamptonshire or at Stamford. There he remained for three years, a layman "hauing a special care to teach religion vvith other learning. . ." Again puritan concerns were on his mind and, after consultation with colleagues, Browne seems to have engaged in prophesyings and proselytising: "What so euer thinges he ffound belonging to the church, & to his calling as a meber off the church, he did put it in practis." Such activities earned him enemies and prompted his dismissal.⁸

By 1579 he was back at Cambridge, this time residing with Richard Greenham of Dry Drayton, who was said to be "moste forvvard" in matters of religion. Greenham allowed Browne to preach openly in his parish, a practice which led to Browne's first direct confrontation with ecclesiastical authorities. Browne now rejected and preached against ordination or licensing by the bishop's hand: "he thought it lavuefull first to be tried off the bishops, then also to suffer their pouer . . . iff in anie thing it did not hinder the trueth. But to be authorised of them, to be svvorne, too subscribe, to be ordained & to receaue their licensing, he vtterlie

⁵Patrick Collinson, "Towards a Broader Understanding of the Early Dissenting Tradition" in *The Dissenting Tradition*, ed. C. Robert Cole and Michael E. Moody, Athens, Ohio, 1975, pp. 22-23.

⁶For biographical narrative, see Dwight C. Smith, "Robert Browne, Independent," *Church History*, IV (December 1937), 289-349; F. Ives Cater, "Robert Browne's Ancestors and Descendants" and "New Facts relating to Robert Browne," *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, II (1905-1906), 151-59, 235-46.

⁷Robert Browne, *A True and Short Declaration* [1584], Sig. A, recto [hereafter *T&SD*] or *The Writings of Robert Harrison and Robert Browne*, ed. Albert Peel and Leland H. Carlson, 1953, p. 397.

⁸*Ibid.*

misliked & kept h1 self clear in those matters.”⁹ He continued to preach without official permission, indeed preached so vehemently that according to Thomas Fuller, he aroused either deep admiration or deep suspicion among his audiences.¹⁰ When his brother applied to Archbishop Grindal and obtained a license for him, Browne made a great show of losing and destroying the relevant documents. Illness disrupted his activities, however, and Richard Bancroft, acting as the bishop’s officer, warned him of the Privy Council’s position that only duly licensed preachers were permitted in any given parish. Browne did not remain long in Cambridge thereafter — not, he insisted, because of Bancroft’s warning but because of his own despair of achieving true reform there. If his own testimony be trusted, his separatist premises had fully evolved. He had chosen to reside with Greenham just as, in ancient times, prophets and their children had “liued to gether, because of corruptiōs among others . . .” Now he carried this principle of withdrawal further: “he savve the parishes in such spirituall bondage, that Whosoeuer Would take charge off them, must also come into that bondage With them. Therefore. . . he iudged that the kingdom off God Was not to be begun by vvhole parishes, but rather off the vvorthiest, Were thei neuer so feuve.”¹¹

Leaving Cambridge, Browne next resided in Norwich with an old friend, Robert Harrison. Harrison had earlier expressed his intention to enter the ministry, a proposition which Browne successfully discouraged. Now, although not as extreme a religious radical as Browne, Harrison was sympathetic and willing to shelter his friend.¹² Moreover, Norwich, inhabited by many Dutch religious refugees and strongly puritan in sentiment, proved receptive to Browne’s work.

It was in Norwich, during the spring or summer of 1581, that Browne and some like-minded colleagues, between forty and sixty persons, came together and signed a covenant to create a congregation of the “worthiest.” Browne tells us that the company pledged to forsake ungodly fellowship “becuase God vvil receaue none to communion & couenant Vvith him, Vvich as yet are at one vvith the Vvicked. . .”¹³ Here was the motivation for what shortly became full-fledged separatism, but at the moment Browne attempted to create a voluntary church that might coexist with the establishment. The covenant itself was the product of mutual consent and was accompanied by an order for meetings, prayers, reading of Scriptures, and discipline. Although the congregation was carefully organized, it is not clear which offices Browne and Harrison held.¹⁴

We know of Browne’s activities during this period in part because of his involvement in puritan agitation in Bury St Edmunds, in Suffolk. Edmund Freke, Bishop of Norwich, wrote to Lord Burghley after a visitation of Bury in April 1581 and reported the arrest of two puritan instigators. One of the trouble-makers, Robert Browne, apprehended upon complaint of godly preachers, taught “corrupt and contentious doctrine”; if left at liberty, he would seduce all those who frequently assembled in conventicles to hear him. Burghley, in reply, advocated lenient treatment, for Browne was his kinsman, and the lord treasurer reasoned “his

⁹ *Ibid.*, Sig. A₃ verso or p. 404.

¹⁰ Fuller, *Church History*, III, 61.

¹¹ Browne, *T&SD*, Sig. A, verso- A₄ recto or *Writings*, pp. 398-404.

¹² *Ibid.*, Sig. A₄ or pp. 405-7.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Sig. B₂ verso or p. 412.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Sig. C₂ or pp. 422-23; Burrage, *The English Dissenters*, I, 97-100.

error seemeth to proceed of zeal rather than of malice." But no sooner was Browne released than he resumed his former activities. By mid-August, Freke was again complaining, and even the independent-minded puritan magistrates at Bury were unwilling to protect Browne. He subsequently found himself a prisoner at London.¹⁵

Given such harassment and persecution by the authorities, Browne and others in the Norwich congregation decided upon emigration. Significantly, the decision did not originate with Browne. In fact, when some of the congregation suggested they emigrate to Scotland, Browne vetoed the proposal. Although in prison, he was not yet ready for a "covveardly fleeing" and looked negatively upon Scotland in particular "seeing it framed itself in those matters to please England toe much." Only when "diuers of them vvere againe imprisoned, & the rest in great trouble & bondage out of prison, thei all . . . vver fullie persvaded that the Lord did call the out of England."¹⁶ A year later, in Middelburg, justifying their departure and act of separation, Browne spoke of the danger "lest those which are wonne, should be partakers of their sinnes, among whom they tarye . . ." Comparing England to Egypt, he clearly felt that the establishment had left the congregation with little choice.¹⁷

The story of the Brownists in Middelburg is a well-known episode in separatist history. The congregation arrived in Zeeland around January 1582, and Browne himself remained for almost two years. Now came his period of greatest literary production. Three of his treatises were published in 1582, financed by his colleague Harrison; over a thousand copies of *A Treatise of reformation without tarying for anie* were available for distribution. These writings, proclaimed seditious by the Queen in 1583, greatly alarmed English authorities. They seemed also to create an unbridgeable split between the separatists and the puritans, for Browne bitterly and arrogantly condemned all who tolerated an impure church. Meanwhile, in Antwerp, Thomas Cartwright, minister to the Merchant Adventurers, examined Browne's treatise on reformation, found it erroneous, and worked with Dutch authorities to prevent its circulation.¹⁸

Yet the English authorities had little to fear from Browne's congregation itself, which at most numbered forty persons, met unobtrusively in Browne's chamber, and was soon torn by fatal dissension. Browne has written the fullest account of the trouble but does not clarify the source of the friction within the English community. Personality factors, especially Browne's own arrogant, imperial temperament, were involved. And according to Browne's own testimony, he was at this time more thoroughly committed to separation and exile than was Harrison. Whatever the cause, some in the congregation ultimately accused Browne of heresy and otherwise harassed him and his followers. Browne explains that under such circumstances,

¹⁵Freke is quoted and the story told by John Strype, *Annals of the Reformation*, Oxford 1824, III(i), 20-22, 30-31; Burghley is quoted (although chronology is confused) by Fuller, *Church History*, III, 62. The Bury incident has recently been analysed by Paul Seaver, "A Puritan Experiment in Ecclesiastical Control. The Case of Bury St. Edmunds," a paper delivered at Sir Thomas More College, Colloquium on Puritanism, Spring 1976. For puritan activity in Norwich and Bury, see also Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* 1967 and Albert Peel, *The Seconde Part of a Register*, 2 vols. Cambridge 1915.

¹⁶Browne, *T&SD*, Sig. C₂ verso- C₃ recto or *Writings*, pp. 423-24. Collinson argues that separatism resulted from the response of voluntary congregations to persecution or to the deprivation of their leadership. Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, p. 380.

¹⁷Browne, *A Treatise upon the 23. of Matthewe* [1582], Sig. G₁ verso or *Writings*, p. 201.

¹⁸*Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth*, XVI, 271, 303.

after repeated attempts at reconciliation, he and four or five families departed for Scotland.¹⁹

Reaching Edinburgh by January 1584, Browne encountered new difficulties, many of his own doing. When invited to a session of the kirk, he brazenly criticized some presbyterian practices and finally declared that "the whole discipline of Scotland was amisse, that he and his companie wer not subject to it, and therefore he would appeale from the kirk to the Magistrat."²⁰ (This appeal to the magistrate introduces an important theme to which we will return.) After his outburst, Browne's writings were examined and declared unsound, and he was taken prisoner by the kirk. But King James VI, although having no fondness for Browne, was anxious to thwart the kirk and therefore secured the Englishman's release. The whole experience left Browne with a deep distaste for presbyterianism.²¹

Browne returned to England during the summer or autumn of 1584, and within a year contemporaries saw a radical, if unconvincing, transformation of his position. His wife, who had accompanied him to Middelburg, was already at Tolethorpe, the Browne estate in Rutland, where she had given birth to their first child. And whether due to community or familial pressure, that child had been baptized within the Church of England in February, 1584.²² Browne himself, still in hiding, took time early in 1585 to write *An Answer to Master Cartwright*, a response to correspondence between Cartwright and Harrison, whereby Browne seemingly affirmed the separatist position. This writing, which Browne claimed was published without his knowledge or consent, led to his arrest. But just before that arrest, he had suggested to some of his followers in London that "it was not vnlawful to heare the Word" within established congregations as long as they maintained a critical attitude; here was advice that contradicted separatist teachings.²³ Then, during his detention, when questioned by Archbishop Whitgift, Browne went even further in rejecting separatism; in October 1585, he signed a formal submission. Browne now recognized the authority of the Archbishop under the Queen. He acknowledged that wheresoever the word of God was duly preached, there was the church of God, thus directly contradicting the separatist premise that only the worthiest constituted the true church. Further, Browne acknowledged the Church of England in particular as the church of Christ. He pledged to keep its peace and accept administration of the sacraments.²⁴

Browne thus seemed to have reversed himself. Burghley, who had arranged the session between Browne and Whitgift, was satisfied and sent him back to Tolethorpe "not doubting but with time he will be fully recovered and withdrawn from the relics

¹⁹Browne, *T&SD*, Sig. C, recto- C₄ verso or *Writings*, pp. 424-29. Harrison wrote a short letter about the dissension; see *Writings*, p. 149.

²⁰David Calderwood, *History of the Kirk of Scotland*, Edinburgh 1843 quoted in Burrage, *The True Story*, pp. 28-29.

²¹For Browne's attitude on presbyterianism, see below, note 43. For King James's true sentiments on Browne, see his *Basilicon Doron*, 1603, Sig. A₄.

²²Cater, "Robert Browne's Ancestors and Descendants," p. 155. Browne's itinerary during these months is in doubt. Burrage thinks that he was again overseas. Cf. Burrage, *The English Dissenters*, I, note, 112-12 and Smith, "Robert Browne, Independent," pp. 312-13.

²³Bredwell, *The raising*, p. 135 or Sig. S₄ recto.

²⁴The terms of the submission have been preserved by Bredwell, pp. 134 ff. They are printed in Browne, *Writings*, p. 507.

of some fond opinions of his . . ."²⁵ And indeed in 1586 when Browne became schoolmaster of Saint Olave's in Southwark, he again subscribed to a set of articles, promising to refrain from questionable conventicles and unorthodox positions.²⁶

But how deep a change did the submission represent? Many historians have seen social pressures as responsible for Browne's action. His wife, expecting their second child, may have discouraged further resistance; his father had never supported his radicalism. His arrests were doubtless taking their toll, and Browne was well aware that even so he had escaped lightly. Had not two men been executed in 1583 for distributing his publications within England?²⁷ Finally, the dissensions at Middelburg had been a disillusioning experience while Scottish presbyterianism provided no alternative in his eyes.

Of course, mental and physical exhaustion or demoralization are not equivalent to philosophic or religious conversion. In 1588 Stephen Bredwell, a puritan physician engaged in pamphlet polemics with Browne, raised the charges of hypocrisy, cowardliness, and duplicity which still tarnish his reputation. Bredwell was angry because Browne continued to seduce converts for nonconformity despite his promises to the authorities. While teaching at Southwark, Browne had not only himself practised recusancy but had also won over a "poore" and "seelie" woman; his writings against Bredwell, if not published, had still been circulated as far as a hundred miles from London; he had disturbed the congregation at Dartford, challenging a puritan lecturer there; and he continued to preach in private houses.²⁸ As for Browne's attempt to explain or qualify the terms of his submission, this Bredwell dismissed as hypocrisy and inconsistency. According to Bredwell, other separatist leaders, namely Barrow and Greenwood, who were then in prison, saw Browne as "a coward, and one that shrinketh in the wetting."²⁹ For himself, Bredwell asked rhetorically, "where shall wee find a more perfect image of a pestilent schismaticke, and one more voide of all conscience, than is this Browne, though Rome it selfe be racked. . ."³⁰

At this point Browne's narrative is usually ended, and his subsequent career declared unimportant to separatist historiography. Bredwell's arguments or some variation are accepted; even Browne's biographers have cited no real intellectual grounds for what they understandably see as gross inconsistency. In fact, H. M. Dexter, who wished to claim Browne as a forerunner of congregationalism, could make sense out of his later career only by assuming that Browne must have been clinically insane.³¹ But another possibility deserves consideration, namely that Browne's submission was sincere, that his writings between 1582 and 1588 show a logical evolution and provide a plausible explanation for his behaviour.

Scholars have adequately analysed Browne's theology. His chief arguments can be easily summarised and are derived primarily from the publications of 1582: *A Booke which Sheweth the life and manners of all true Christians, A Treatise of reformation without taryng for anie, A Treatise upon the 23. of Matthewe*. Stridently anti-episcopal in tone, these writings condemn the Church of England and its tolerating preachers, its "dumme Dogges." Above all else, Browne saw the Church of England as fatally marred by its imperfect discipline, its refusal to purge

²⁵Burghley to Anthony Browne, October 8, 1585; quoted in Fuller, *Church History*, III, 65.

²⁶Burrage quotes the Minute Book of the school; *True Story*, p. 45.

²⁷Styrye, *Annals*, III(ii), 172.

²⁸Bredwell, *The raising*, pp. 136-39 or Sig. S, verso- T, recto.

²⁹*Ibid.*, Sig. A, recto.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 143 or Sig. T, recto.

³¹Dexter, *Congregationalism*, p. 120. Cf. Bredwell, *The raising*, p. 97 or Sig. O, recto.

the wicked and unworthy from its ranks.³² In contrast, he advocated a church of true believers, no matter how small the company: "For vvhether tvvoe or three are gathered in mie name saith Christ, there am I in the midst of them. . ."³³ Moreover, Browne's conception of the church was strikingly democratic: "the voice of the Vvhole people, guided bie the elders and forwardest, is saied to be the voice of God." And elsewhere he made clear that the elders were themselves selected by "the consent of the people" as were the pastor and other church officers.³⁴ But underlying Browne's whole theology was his concept of the covenant: "Christians are a companie or number of beleueurs, which by a willing couenaunt made with their God, are vnder the gouernment of God and Christ. . . ." The covenant was what B. R. White calls "mutualist" or conditional, that is, the company received God's blessing and protection only as long as it observed His laws.³⁵

Browne's attitude toward civil authority appears at first reading to coincide with the standard puritan/separatist argument: "though Magistrates are to keepe their ciuill power aboue all personnes, yet they come vnder the censure of the Church, if they be Christians. . ."³⁶ True, Browne condemned the moderate puritans like Cartwright, who wished to reform the church with the help of the establishment. The full title of his famous treatise referred to "reformation without tarying for anie, and of the wickednesse of those Preachers which will not reforme till the Magistrate commaunde or compell them." But like other English religious radicals of the sixteenth century, Browne was not ready to advocate revolution or even overt resistance to the secular government. On the contrary, he asserted his loyalty to the Queen by recognizing her civil authority, declaring "she may put to death all that deserve it by Lawe, either of the Church or common Wealth, and none may resiste Her or the Magistrates . . . when they execute the lawes."³⁷ Browne's respect for the law and for the traditional hierarchy in secular affairs created a dilemma for him and led him in these early treatises to attempt the separation of church-state affairs, an impossibility in the Elizabethan context.

By early 1585, when writing *An Answer to Master Cartwright*, so anxious had Browne become to proclaim his civil obedience that F. J. Powicke sees an "erastian tendency" in the work, a strange label to attach to a separatist treatise.³⁸ The work was written some eight to twelve months before Browne's formal submission and, as already described, was radical enough to provoke his arrest. Indeed on many crucial matters of doctrine, his position was consistent with his writings of 1582. He still condemned the rule of bishops, advocated a "mutualist" covenant, wanted rigorous exercise of discipline and, sharply refuting Cartwright, defined the true church in terms of the worthiest. But Browne was especially galled by Cartwright's attempt to "make vs enemies to the common and ordinarie good lawes of the Realme, to the Church of God in the Realme, and to the peace and welfare of the common wealth . . ."³⁹ To refute these charges, he developed a new line of reasoning.

³²Browne, 23. *Matthewe*, Sig. H₂ verso-H₁ recto or *Writings*, p. 212; *A Treatise of reformation without tarying for anie* [1582], Sig. C₁ verso-C₂ recto or *Writings*, pp. 168-70.

³³Browne, *T&SD*, Sig. B₂ recto or *Writings*, p. 411.

³⁴*Ibid.*, Sig. A₂ recto (sic) or p. 399; *A Booke which Sheweth the life and manners of all true Christians* (Middelburg, 1582), Sig. K₁ recto, K₂ recto or *Writings*, pp. 335, 340.

³⁵Browne, *A Booke which Sheweth*, Sig. A₂ recto or *Writings*, p. 227; White, *The English Separatist Tradition*, pp. 53-55.

³⁶Browne, *A Treatise of reformation*, Sig. B₄ verso or *Writings*, p. 166.

³⁷*Ibid.*, Sig. A₂ verso or p. 152.

³⁸Powicke, *Robert Browne*, p. 71. Cf. M. M. Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism*, Chicago 1939, pp. 309-10.

³⁹Robert Browne, *An Answer to Master Cartwright. His Letter for Ioyning with the English Churches* [London, 1585?], p. 1 or *Writings*, p. 433.

Basically, Browne now argued that it was the rule of the bishops, not English law, which defiled the Church of England:

As for the Maiestricie of Byshops there is no lawe to warrant it, but only her Maiesties permission: likewise for the common forme of seruice . . . there is exception by the lawe, and it is set downe also in the booke of Common prayer, that the prayers may be changed . . . and left off by occasions, as when the Minister is to preache. . . Further whereas the lawe doeth binde vs to come to the church, it doth well, for no man ought to refuse the Church of God, yet if when we come to the church, we finde there an vnlawfull minister . . . the fault is not nowe in the law but in the Byshoppes which place such minsters . . . the Lawe commaundeth that the Minister should be *Doctus* and *Clericus* . . . But the Bishops count him learned if he can but reade onely, and answeere to a catechisme as doe children. . .⁴⁰

Cartwright had justifiably accused Browne of giving "al the english assemblies, the blacke stone of condemnation," but Browne replied "we neuer said that all the English assemblyes doe want discipline."⁴¹ Here was a new note of toleration, implying that the church of God could, and in some parishes did, exist where English law was properly observed.

When Browne submitted to Archbishop Whitgift a few months later, he may have reasoned, with some justification, that the terms of the submission were consistent with the arguments advanced in his *Answer to Cartwright*. He later explained to Bredwell that in acknowledging the Archbishop's authority, he was recognizing civil authority only, authority which by no means allowed an idle ministry. And he continued to emphasize the rule of law. His recusancy after his submission he attributed to the parson in his father's parish, "a common drunkard . . . there was no lawe to force him to take such a parson for his lawful minister. . ."⁴² Thus, although acknowledging the Church of England to be the true church of Christ, he had no intention of conforming blindly where proper discipline and proper law were not enforced.

Further evidence of his attitude on hierarchy, authority, and magistracy comes from a letter of his written in 1588, a letter so orthodox that Bishop Bancroft quoted from it in a sermon at Saint Paul's Cross. Browne asserted again that he had never condemned all churches in England for wanting discipline, but now, anti-presbyterian as well as anti-episcopal, he turned to the magistrate as the means of providing discipline. Certainly he could put no faith in presbyters or elders whom he vehemently denounced: "if the Parliament should establish . . . officers . . . which seeke their own discipline . . . then in stead of one Pope we should haue a thousand & [instead] of some Lord byshops in name, a thousand Lordly Tyrants in deed. . ." Browne was obviously thinking of his own experiences, for he cited Scotland where "the king [is] in great daunger . . . the nobles & people at great discord . . . & yet all men made slaues to the preachers & their fellowe elders."⁴³ To restrain licentiousness, to remove unlawful ministers, to exercise all matters of discipline,

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 3-4 or pp. 434-35.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 32 or p. 460.

⁴²Browne, *Writings*, pp. 507-8. Browne was presented for recusancy by the churchwardens of Little Casterton. See Cater, "New Facts," p. 239.

⁴³Browne, "Aunsweere to Mr. Flowers letter" in *Writings*, pp. 518-19. At the beginning of his career, Browne had been more favorably disposed toward presbyterianism; see-B. R. White, "A Puritan Work of Robert Browne," *Baptist Quarterly*, XVIII (1959-1960), 109-17.

even to consecrate ministers, Browne recommended the magistrate. By 1588, then, his erastianism had completely overcome his earlier desire to separate church and state.⁴⁴

We are now in a position to understand the paradoxes underlying Browne's later career. He saw himself as a religious radical, always seeking a congregation of the worthiest, a learned ministry, and strict exercise of discipline. But after the failure of his own congregational experiment and his distasteful experience with presbyterianism in Scotland, he found no alternative to an erastian approach to the church, not an unusual response within the English tradition. He retained his independence, however, and as Bredwell's charges indicate, did not passively submit where true discipline was lacking. What Bredwell saw as inconsistency, what separatists saw as cowardliness, we can best see as the dilemma of dissent in the sixteenth-century context.

In 1591, despite his recent history of recusancy, Browne was ordained and through Burghley's good offices appointed rector of Thorpe-cum-Achurch in Northamptonshire. There he remained for some forty years, exercising many of his duties through a curate. Although obscure and often dismissed as "insignificant,"⁴⁵ his experiences at Achurch indicate that he continued to grapple with the problem of dissent and, supported by some sympathetic parishoners, pursued an independent course as a virtual nonconformist. In 1617 he was suspended for reasons which are not clear and during the next decade probably led a voluntary congregation separated from that at Achurch. He inexplicably returned to conduct services at Achurch in 1626 but by 1627 was reluctantly presented by churchwardens. His offences included "not using of the crosse in baptism . . . not wearinge of the surplice, and . . . omittinge of some parte of the booke of comon prayer." The case dragged on with Browne showing his old disdain for ecclesiastical courts until William Piers, Bishop of Peterborough, excommunicated him in December, 1631.⁴⁶

His last public act involved still another confrontation with authority. In the summer of 1633, Browne became violent while arguing with a former parishioner. Thomas Fuller claims that the local justice of the peace was "prone to pity" and might well have dismissed the charges, but Browne behaved stubbornly, almost as if he were determined to provoke his own arrest. Then an old man of about eighty-three, he was carried off to prison on a featherbed and died there a few months later, independent to the end.⁴⁷

It has been argued by sociologists that "the deviant and his more conventional counterpart live in much the same world of symbol and meaning. . ."⁴⁸ The

⁴⁴Browne, *Writings*, p. 521. Another orthodox writing, "A reproofe of certeine schismatical persons and their doctrine. . ." is sometimes attributed to Browne. It was discovered and edited by Burrage and published as *The Retraction*, Oxford 1907. Albert Peel and Leland Carlson, however, attribute it to Thomas Cartwright. For their arguments, consult *Cartwrightiana*, 1951, pp. 199-200. By 1588 in his letter to Mr. Flower, Browne clearly criticized separatist practices; see *Writings*, p. 522. Nevertheless, his recent recusancy directly contradicted sentiments expressed in *The Retraction*, and authorship of the treatise remains very much in doubt.

⁴⁵White, *The English Separatist Tradition*, p.41.

⁴⁶For Browne's later career, see F. Ives Cater, "Robert Browne and the Achurch Parish Register," "The Later Years of Robert Browne," and "The Excommunication of Robert Browne and his Will," *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, 111 (1907-1908), 126-36, 303-36 and V (1912), 199-204. Also helpful are Cater, "New Facts," pp. 242-44 and Smith, "Robert Browne, Independent," pp. 335 ff. Smith quotes charges against Browne, p. 340. Earlier scholars incorrectly dated Browne's excommunication and sometimes attributed it to the 1580s.

⁴⁷Fuller, *Church History*, III, 65.

⁴⁸Kai T. Erickson, *Wayward Puritans. A Study in the Sociology of Deviance*, New York 1966, p. 20.

generalization rings true in Browne's case. He was not willing or able to accept the full implications of his dissent. Thus he rejected separatism for a milder form of dissent and at the same time sought to embrace the traditional premises of the secular, hierarchic society. It proved an untenable position. He came to hope that the civil magistrate would provide discipline for the true church. But such an expectation ignored the realities of his own society — the incompatibility of erastianism and reform, the links between the episcopate and the magistracy, and the implications of hierarchy in the Tudor world view. In the end, one is impressed not so much by his brief, dramatic attempt at separatism as by his frustrated attempt at dissent within legitimate channels.

DIANE WILLEN

SEPARATISTS IN PRISON: JOHN JOHNSON'S PETITION ON BEHALF OF HIS SONS TO LORD BURGHELEY, 1 JULY 1594¹

In the summer of 1594, Francis and George Johnson were in prison expecting the same martyrdom which their fellow separatist leaders Henry Barrow, John Greenwood, and John Penry had experienced in the spring of 1593.² Francis, the pastor of the London separatist congregation, had been in gaol since his capture on the evening of 5-6 December 1592 at the home of Edward Boys, a well-to-do separatist layman.³ George, an influential member of the church, had been incarcerated since 4 March 1592/3, when the authorities seized him while he was substituting for his brother at a conventicle in Islington Wood.⁴

During the first thirteen months of his imprisonment Francis wrote several petitions refuting accusations against himself and requesting toleration for his brethren. He also asked for mitigation of his close confinement or release on bail. These documents were addressed to anyone who might have the ability to intercede with the Queen for him, their tone ranging from the pleading and legalistic to the threatening and defiant.⁵ In contrast to Francis, George Johnson accepted his lot in stoic silence, for he believed that "in persecution may not a Christian (so far as I see), have his hand in seeking or choosing any sort [of action] before another, but leave it upon the adversaries, and submit himself with joy to whatsoever, till (by means He can use) the Lord ease, or fully release him."⁶

John Johnson did what he could to aid his sons. Arriving in London on 19 or 20 March 1592/3, he visited them, tended to their necessities, laid their case before royal officials,⁷ and, when Francis's writings failed to secure action,

¹I wish to thank Professor Leland H. Carlson for drawing this letter to my attention.

²The most recent accounts of the Johnson brothers are B. R. White, *The English Separatist Tradition from the Marian Martyrs to the Pilgrim Fathers*, Oxford 1971, pp. 91-115, 142-155; and Michael E. Moody, ed., "A Critical Edition of George Johnson's *A Discourse of Some Troubles and Excommunications in the Banished English Church at Amsterdam, 1603*", Ph.D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1979, pp. xii-cxxi, 259, 276, (hereafter cited as Moody, "Critical Edition.") See also Leland H. Carlson, ed., *The Writings of John Greenwood and Henry Barrow, 1591-1593*, Elizabethan Nonconformist Texts, vol. 6, London 1970, pp. 502-503, (hereafter cited as Carlson, *Greenwood and Barrow, 1591-1593*).

³Carlson, *Greenwood and Barrow, 1591-1593*, p. 299 note 5; and Moody, "Critical Edition," p. 263.

⁴Carlson, *Greenwood and Barrow, 1591-1593*, pp. 294, 299 note 1, 306, 319.

⁵For the texts of these petitions, see *Ibid.*, pp. 412-466.

⁶Moody, "Critical Edition," p. 296 note 111. Capitalization, punctuation, and spelling have been modernized in this passage.

⁷Public Record Office, STAC (Court of Star Chamber) 5/H/56/8, 23[?] November [1594]; Moody, "Critical Edition," pp. 278, 280-281. See also "[Francis Johnson to Lord Burghley], June 2, 1593" and "Francis Johnson to Lord Burghley, January 8, 1593/4," in Carlson, *Greenwood and Barrow, 1591-1593*, pp. 436, 453.

wrote the petition to Lord Burghley which appears *in extenso* below.⁸

John's appeal lacks Francis's logical, scholarly style; yet it is touching because of his great anxiety about his sons's health. Francis had been ill from August 1592 until the spring of 1593, and George, given the unhealthy circumstances of the Fleet, might easily have fallen ill, too.⁹

John's supplication was as unsuccessful as Francis's earlier ones. Burghley received it, but merely advised John to submit it to the "whole table" of the Privy Council,¹⁰ which apparently did nothing. Consequently, both brothers remained in prison until the spring of 1597 when Francis persuaded the Council to let them go into banishment and try to found a colony in the New World.¹¹

* * * * *

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE THE LORD
HIGH TREASURER OF ENGLAND¹²

Most humble suth to your Lordship your poore orator, John Johnson, to have in remembrance the peticion he preferred [proffered?] to your Honnor in behalfe of his two sonnes, Francis Johnson and George Johnson, whoe have ben kept close prisoners thone [the one] in the Clinkes a yere and an halfe, thother [the other] in the Fleete 16 monthes, onelie for that uppon conscience they refuse to have spirituall communion with the present ministrie of the land. Both of them have ben schollers and Maisters of Artes in the Universtie of Cambridge, and there brought up in lerning at the greate charges of your orator their father, whoe with all the suite he can make to Her Majestie's High Comysioners, fynding no release for his sonnes, is inforced to make his humble suite to your Honnor, beseeching your honorable and christian helpe (your said orator being shortlie to retourne in the north countrie where he dwelleth)¹³ that his sonnes may either be discharged altogether, or have the benefitt which the preachers had two yeres since, whoe being prisoners were suffered to be at some honest men's howses in the cittie upon sufficient assurance there to be forthcomyng uppon warning dulie given.¹⁴ And that (till this be effected) they may for their health and lessning of their charges have the libertie of the prisons where they are. And the yonger called George be removed from the Fleete where he hath ben most unchristianlie and unnaturallie intreated, so as he hath ben kept som tymes two dayes and two nights together without anie manner of sustenance, som tymes 20 nights together without anie bedding save a straw matt, and as longe

⁸British Library, Lansdowne MSS. 77, item 26, fol. 66. A portion of this document has been printed in John Waddington, *Congregational History*, 5 vols. Vol. 2: *Congregational History, 1567-1700, in Relation to Contemporaneous Events, and the Conflict for Freedom, Purity, and Independence* London 1874, pp. 105-106.

⁹"[Francis Johnson to Lord Burghley], June 2, 1593," in Carlson, *Greenwood and Barrow, 1591-1593*, p. 440.

¹⁰An undated copy of this petition is extant among the Cecil papers at Hatfield House. Unfortunately, it has been erroneously calendared under "Petitions to Sir Robert Cecil [1596-1603]." An endorsement on it contains Burghley's advice to John Johnson. See Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. The Marquis of Salisbury*, pt. 14 (Addenda), London 1923, p. 281.

¹¹The text of this petition appears in Carlson, *Barrow and Greenwood, 1591-1593*, p. 470. The story of the abortive colonization attempt is recounted in David B. Quinn, "The First Pilgrims," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, ser. 3, xxiii (July 1966), pp. 359-390.

¹²Punctuation, capitalisation, and abbreviations have been adjusted for clarity.

¹³I.e., in the town of Richmond, Yorkshire. See Public Record Office, STAC 5/H37/3, 7 December [1594].

¹⁴For the background of this allusion, see Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, Berkeley, 1967, pp. 404-431, especially p. 430.

without anie change of lynnyn, and all theis 16 monethes in the most dankish [darkish?] and unholosome roomes of the prison they co[u]ld thrust him into, not suffering anie of his frendes to come unto him, and now of late not permitting your orator his father so much as to see him. In all which respects your pore suppliant is forced even in the bowells of nature and of the Lord Jesus Christe to sue to your Honor for release of, that it wold please yow by your Honnor's good meanes to see that release may be had of the most unhealthfull, chargeable, and longe continewed close imprisonment of his two sonnes aforesaid.

And thus both he and they shalbe bound dailie to pray unto God for Her Majestie's and your Honnor's healthes and happines in this life and forever.

[Endorsement:] 1 July 1[5] 94. The humble petition of John Johnson for his two sonnes Frauncis and George Johnson, having ben close prisoners, thone in the Clink a yere and an half, and thother in the Fleete 16 monethes, onely for their conscience in religion.

MICHAEL E. MOODY

SOME DUTCH INFLUENCES UPON THE INDEPENDENTS AT THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY

The development of Independent ideas within the English Church has long been a point of contention among scholars, and various views as to the origin and spread of Independency have been put forward.¹ The thesis that Laudian exiles brought with them "independent, republican and enthusiastic ideas" which they had adopted from continental Anabaptism, has gained considerable support from modern scholars, though the evidence is slim and far from conclusive.² The question of Anabaptist influence on English Independency remains a matter for further debate and research. The Independency of the sort advocated by members of the Westminster Assembly was, however, thoroughly based upon theological conviction, allied with experience. Much of modern scholarship has not allowed for such a union, and these convictions and aims which were common to all the Westminster Independents cannot be explained without reference to their common experience of the Dutch Church.

The chief advocates of Independency within the predominantly Presbyterian Westminster Assembly were the five Independent Brethren, Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Sidrach Simpson, Jeremiah Burroughes and William Bridge. They were an astonishment to their contemporaries in that they offered an alternative form of Protestant church government, which they embraced while at the same time maintaining a Reformed theology. It was their publication in 1643 of *An Apologetical Narration* which first itemised the tenets of Independency and outlined the sort of political concessions that would be aimed at.³

¹C. Hill and E. Dell, *The Good Old Cause; the English revolution of 1640-1660 its causes, course and consequences*, 1950. D. W. Langridge, "Charles I — the Non-Conformist answer", in *The Congregational Quarterly*, 1941, pp. 151-5.

²J. F. Bense, *Anglo-Dutch relations to the death of William III*, 1925, pp. 96-112.

³The full title of the narration is; *An apologeticall narration Humbly submitted to the honourable Houses of Parliament by Tho; Goodwin, Philip Nye, Sidrach Simpson, Jeremiah Burroughes, William Bridge*, 1643.

Some scholars have asserted that some of the Brethren were Independents before they went into exile, and others have suggested that their independent views were the reason for their exile.⁴ No documentary evidence has been presented to support the view that they went into exile for any but the same reasons as other Puritans of this period: Laud's strengthening of episcopal power and his introduction of new forms of liturgy. There are strong indications that they were not Independents in that they had all been episcopally ordained and all served the established Church of England. When they went to Holland, there is no evidence to suggest that they were anything more than non-conformists to the Laudian ideas.

The most exhaustive description of the stay of the Independents in Holland has been given by the Brethren themselves in the *Apologetical Narration*, which describes the exiled churches in Arnhem and Rotterdam. On their arrival in Holland, the Brethren found a number of English congregations which they recognised as "true churches of Christ" and with which they held communion. Some of the Brethren are said to have baptised their children in such parochial congregations, and visitors to these assemblies were admitted to the Lord's Supper on the condition that they belonged to a parish church in England.⁵ The Brethren were aware that Holland was regarded with suspicion as harbouring sectarians, and they were quick to show that they had no dealings with these bodies, nor did they want to be linked with the Remonstrant church in Holland; they were at pains to establish that those churches with which they had enjoyed fellowship and communion were orthodox. As a sign of the intimate nature of their dealings with the orthodox Dutch church, they cite the fact that they were allowed the use of church buildings for their services. In addition, the Dutch church is seen as approving the English congregation and as recognising them as true churches of Christ in that they allowed them to use bells to call their congregations, a practice that was restricted to the national church of Holland. Also the Brethren pointed out that the Dutch church often gave money to support some of the English congregations and permitted intercommunion.⁶ The same form of worship was used as was common to most Reformed churches, and in the service of the church, freedom in the use of particular skills was permitted within a reformed framework.⁷ The churches had been under the guidance of pastors, teachers, ruling elders and deacons, the elders being composed mainly of clergymen. This form of government would certainly accord with the best examples of Calvinistic church order, both in Scotland and Holland. With this detailed information about their activities in exile, the Independent Brethren hoped to convince the Westminster Divines that they were true members of the Church of England and could not be charged with deviation in any sectarian direction. Only in the question of church government had differences of opinion and practise arisen.

The *Apologetical Narration* is important as a primary source; nevertheless we cannot overlook the fact that it was written as a defence by the Brethren and should not be accepted uncritically. However, even with this reservation its accuracy has been substantially confirmed by examining the criticisms made by those men who were opponents of the whole Independent position. One of these, Thomas Edwards, in his thorough examination of the claims of the *Narration* goes a long way towards

⁴W. Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, 1938, p. 231.

⁵*An apologetical narration*, p. 7-8.

⁶*An apologetical narration*, p. 7.

⁷*An apologetical narration*, p. 12.

establishing the reliability of the material.⁸ For example, he confirmed that the English congregation were given church buildings and financial support,⁹ and at Arnhem and Rotterdam the local authorities supported the English congregations of Nye and Goodwin, though not of Sidrach Simpson. Edwards maintained that hymns, a mark of Sectarians, rather than psalms, were sung, and this was not contradicted, though the evidence that it was a mark of Brownist sympathies derives from Pagitt, an anti-Independent, who was not above bringing unsubstantiated accusations against them.¹⁰ Pagitt is also responsible for the identification of Independents with Brownists in matters of prayer; he claimed that they did not permit set prayer, a claim which the five Brethren specifically denied. They were also believed when they admitted that there had been free prayer when in Holland, but only in conjunction with public prayers. In the *Narration* the Brethren were concerned to show that there had been distinct differences in Holland between them and any Sectarians; it was to make clear that they were distinct from such sects that they stressed that while in Holland they had used bells and consecrated churches.¹¹

It was the matter of church government that the five Brethren wanted to impress upon the Assembly, and in this they wanted to stress that the principle of self-government be absolute in almost every instance. They were not prepared to accept hierarchical control of any sort.¹² This did not mean that one church or congregation acted without any regard for another. The Brethren cited an example of just the opposite, drawn from their experience in Holland, where one church dismissed its preacher without consulting other sister churches (which it had previously agreed to do).¹³ This church was censured both for its undue rigour and its inconsiderate behaviour; indeed, the other churches refused to give communion to this church until it had acknowledged its fault. The importance to the five Brethren of this example is that the liberty of the churches was maintained. For them it was more acceptable to tolerate and encourage the interference of the Christian magistrate and the neighbour churches, than to have to accept either episcopal or synodical authority. In fact the Brethren specifically allocated to the civil authority a place in effecting excommunication.¹⁴

English and Scottish preachers in Holland certainly enjoyed freedom of action in ecclesiastical affairs. In 1628 they refused to give way to foreign ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the person of Laud on the grounds that it would be disrespectful to the Dutch hosts. In the early part of the 1630s Laud attempted to exert some authority over the church in Holland, but by the later part of the decade he seems to have been reconciled to the fact that he was unable to exert any effective control at all.¹⁵ At the same time as enjoying freedom from episcopal control, the exiles

⁸Thomas Edwards, *Antapologia; or a full answer to the Apologetical Narration of Mr Goodwin, Mr Nye, Mr Symson, Mr Burroughes, Mr Bridge Members of the Assembly of Divines, 1644. Gangraena; or a catalogue and discovery of the errors, heresies and blasphemies and pernicious practices of the sectaries of the time vented and acted in England in these last four years, 1,2,3, 1646.*

⁹*Antapologia*, p. 56.

¹⁰E. Pagitt, *Heresiography; or a description of the heretickes and sectaries of these later times*, 1645 pp. 55-6.

¹¹R. Baillie, *A disuasive from the errors of the time: Wherein the tenets of the principal sects, especially of the Independents, are drawn together*, 1640, pp. 116-18. He says of the Independents "yet they make no scruple to use the churches builded in the times of the popery: nor of bells, though invented by a pope and baptized with the popish superstition".

¹²Cf. Nye in debate in the Westminster Assembly (Feb. 1644) in Ms *Minutes of the Westminster Assembly*.

¹³*An apologetical narration*, p. 18. See further Brook, *Lives of the Puritans*, 3, p. 312.

¹⁴*An apologetical narration*, p. 19.

¹⁵Letter from William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury to Sir William Boswell, Lambeth, 24 May 1638, B.M. Add MS. 6394:148 (Folio 298).

enjoyed freedom in their relations with the official Dutch church authorities, as represented by their church courts. At the South Dutch Synod in Rotterdam in 1621, it was recommended that good relations ought to be established between the Dutch church on the one hand, and the English preachers on the other.¹⁶ The refusal of a Scottish preacher, Alexander Clerus, to submit to the discipline of the Dutch Synod which called upon him to present himself for a doctrinal examination, led to the recognition of an independent relationship with the synod which resulted in the decision that the examination should take place with deputies from the Synod in joint consultation with the English preachers at Delft and at the Hague. The Dutch States General had in a number of instances given consent to the foreign preachers, specifically English and Scottish, to hold their own synodical and presbytery meetings,¹⁷ thus recognising the virtual independence of these churches, an independence that was eventually recognised by the various Dutch synods,¹⁸ and by the English Ambassador.¹⁹ It was not expected that the English churches in exile should accept the authority of the Dutch classes, although a few English preachers were members of Dutch classes, having joined them voluntarily. It is true that this accession to the Dutch classes meant a conformity to Dutch church order, but this was a conformity of the preachers and did not involve the churches they pastored.²⁰

All the time that the Independents were there, the English churches were for the most part outside the jurisdiction of the Dutch ecclesiastical authorities. The bulk of the evidence would suggest that the Dutch church courts could not interfere with the English churches, but that the magistrate could be called upon to do so. While they were in Holland, the five Brethren would have experienced a state of affairs where the ecclesiastical authorities had only a limited power in church matters and where instead the civil authorities, the States and the local magistrates, had the final decision in questions which did not concern the "interior" matters of the orthodox reformed Dutch church. This state of affairs was directly attributable to the Remonstrant church in Holland, which had obtained the protection of the civil authority against the church. Because of this, Remonstrantism belongs to the background that created the conviction in the five Brethren that the state should be the highest authority on ecclesiastical matters and that the church should not behave as an authority at all. The liberty that the Brethren enjoyed in Holland, from synods and classes, they owed in no small measure to the Remonstrants, who since the decade from 1610 had fought for tolerance in questions of belief by appealing to the state or local magistrate against the attacks of the ecclesiastical authorities.

This was the case with Arminius, when in 1604 the controversy which led to the forming of the Remonstrant Brotherhood broke out. On 14th October, 1604, Gomarus opposed the opinions of Arminius and claimed that as they were so liberal on the doctrine of predestination he should withdraw them.²¹ Arminius, however, refused to defend himself before the church and sought protection from the

¹⁶W. P. C. Knuttel, *Acta der particuliere synoden van Zuid-Holland 1621-1700. Eerste deel, 1621-1638*, Rijks Geschiedkundige publicatie, Klien serie, 3, 1908, p. 28.

¹⁷Knuttel, I, p. 48.

¹⁸Knuttel, I, p. 103.

¹⁹Letter from Goffe to Boswell 1633. B.M Add MS. 6394:69 (Folio 146).

²⁰B. Gustafsson, *The Five dissenting brethren*, Lundts Universitets Arsskrift 1955, p.34. Knuttel, 2, p. 326-327. Ordinance of Rotterdam, 1641, proposed certain restrictions upon the English churches. The control advocated shows that it had previously been lax, if indeed it had existed at all.

²¹L. Knappert, *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk gedurende de 16e en 17e eeuw*, 1911, p. 105.

Dutch government, the States of Holland, that had engaged him.²² Again and again, Arminius had to seek support from the States and when in 1609 the States called him and Gomarus to present their cases, it proved too much for him, and he died shortly afterwards. Early in 1610, the men who remained loyal to Arminius's teaching met at Gouda, some forty-three in number, and under the leadership of Oldenbarnevelt, a prominent politician, they drew up a petition to be presented to the States. It was an apology or "remonstrance". The author was for the main part Johannes Wtenbogaert, court and garrison preacher to Prince Maurits. In this document they acknowledged the States as having final ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and from them sought toleration.

The details of the doctrinal dispute that culminated in the Synod of Dort in 1618 are well known and need not concern us here; less well known are the Remonstrant views on questions of ecclesiastical tolerance and authority. Tideman has shown how, after their abolition of Papal power, the Dutch authorities were forced to assume responsibility for ecclesiastical affairs:²⁴

It took care of the order and tranquillity at the divine services and of the training and appointing of the teachers, further to the good order in the exterior life of the church. The civil authority was proprietor of the church buildings and could determine what it wanted to be preached there, with the exception of articles of faith with freedom for those of other opinion to gather together themselves.²⁵

Immediately after the Synod of Dort, the legislation of the States General became Anti-Arminian and Anti-Remonstrant²⁶ so much so that the Remonstrant literature reflecting their attitude to the States resembles much of the Puritan literature with its view of the Laudian church and Caroline state being "tyrannic and imperious".²⁷ Wtenbogaert in a letter to Remonstrant preachers outlined his plan that the Remonstrant Brotherhood should be founded upon a principle of tolerance, which he believed would unite the church rather than increase divisions.²⁸ This "de Onderlinge Christelyke Verdraamheid", mutual Christian tolerance, should, he argued, be the foundational principle and distinctive feature of the Brotherhood. Even here there is a striking resemblance between the ideal of fellowship preached by the Remonstrants and that proposed by the Independents at Westminster. Instead of written statutes and binding restrictions concerning church government, and the relations of one church to another, the churches should rather solve all their disputes and difficulties, dogmatic as well as moral, in forbearance and love.

²²B. Tideman, *Overzicht van der Geschiedenis der Remonstranten*, 1897, p. 19.

²³H. Y. Groenewegen, *Decremonstrantie op haren driehondersten gedenkdag 1610- xiv Januari - 1910 in der oorspronkelyken vorm uitgegeven, afgebeeld en toegelicht*, 1910.

²⁴Tideman, pp. 26-7.

²⁵Gustafsson, p. 54.

²⁶For a list of measures taken against them see J. Regenboog, *Historie der Remonstraten kortelyk vervattende de geschiedenissen der gerformeerde Christinen die men Remonstranten noemt*, 2, 1776, pp. 166-9.

²⁷*Corte Kerckelijcke ende Politijke Bedenckingen. Op de Acte Synodael Van Utrecht. Aengaende't Loopen van Ghebannen, of wytländische Arminiaensche predicanten*. 1625.

²⁸J. Wtenbogaert, *Tractaet van ende autoriteyt eener Hoogner Christelicker Overheydt in kercheliche saechen*. 1610.

The Remonstrants, while they were persecuted by the States General, found at a local level that in a number of areas there was a tacit support for them amongst the local magistrates. Examples of toleration could be cited from Gouda and Rotterdam. In Rotterdam, in 1620, there was a Remonstrant meeting held openly, and in defiance of a prohibition by the States, in which thousands of people took part with the connivance of the local magistrates. Generally the magistrates at other cities, Hoorn, Woerden and Briel, followed the examples of the larger centres and an unofficial tolerance was evidenced. With the succession of Frederick Henrik in 1625, the Remonstrant position was strengthened, as the Prince desired ecclesiastical peace. Remonstrant exiles returned, and there was a decline in the power exercised by the Dutch Orthodox branch of the church. By September 1631, the strength of the Remonstrants at Rotterdam was such that the magistrates there revoked the edicts against them. In October of the same year, a general meeting of the Remonstrants was held in Rotterdam, and they established an official society of forty congregations with some fifty preachers.

Thus the situation into which the English puritans came was one where the Remonstrant church was free from the authority of the Orthodox church, and their congregations were free and autonomous in matters of faith and order. At the same time, they were free in relation to the civil government, but their status was protected by the authority of the state and magistrates. The established church found itself impotent to interfere even with what it regarded as an heretical schismatic group. There can be little doubt that such a state of affairs had some sort of impact upon the five exiles, but the real question remains as to what extent the principles and ideals of the Remonstrants were subsumed within the system of Independency that was growing amongst the five, and that was to be advocated by them at the Assembly.

There the Independents did not acknowledge any higher ecclesiastical authority in church affairs, other than the local church; rather they elevated the state to the position of highest power. And on this point their ideas are exactly similar to the ideas of the Remonstrants, who saw the civil authority as superior to any ecclesiastical system. The Remonstrants' whole existence depended upon their being supported by the local magistrates, and this not as a matter of pragmatism, but of doctrine — because the Remonstrants acknowledged the authority of the Christian magistrate as having the ultimate authority under "the word of God". In the Remonstrance of 1610, they appeal for the right to be examined in a lawful and free synodical assembly, by which they meant an assembly that was subordinate to the authority, chairmanship and management of the States.

This position is outlined in a publication by Wtenbogaert where he investigates the powers of the civil ruler over the religious affairs of his dominion.²⁹ He maintained that the Christian magistrate under "the word of God" has the duty to superintend and protect the true faith within his territories. Such a responsibility, he argued, lay with the States General of Holland and West Vriesland. He further defined these ecclesiastical responsibilities within three distinct areas: the divine worship, which covered the preaching of the word, administration of the sacraments, discipline and care for the poor; the ecclesiastical, which involved the running of classical and synodical assemblies; the third being the ecclesiastical persons or servants. For Wtenbogaert, while the civil authority had theoretical jurisdiction of every aspect of church life, the authority should extend over only the

²⁹J. Wtenbogaert, *Briefe*, 1662, 2, pp. 98-101.

highest ecclesiastical officials. He never advocated the direct interference by the magistrate in the precise and detailed shaping of the public worship, of the defining of the confessions of the church. For him, the church becomes a branch of the civil authority. He rejects any notion of the church being superior to the civil government or indeed of the church even sharing its power. In the *Tractaet* he outlines specifically the areas of civil control, giving the magistrates the power to appoint and maintain ministers to congregations, arranging the services of the church, regulating church law and discipline, and even the sole right to call synods and assemblies.³⁰ The synods as well as individual preachers had to subordinate themselves to the civil powers in all matters of church government and discipline. The ministers were servants of the state, entrusted with the preaching of the word, and as long as the civil power did not try to dictate doctrine then they were the power-ordained by God, and as such they had to be obeyed.

The position adopted and defended by the Independents at the Westminster Assembly, on the nature of the church, its government and relationship with the state, shows a similarity to that prepared by the Remonstrant Church through the writings of its most prolific and powerful theologian, Wtenbogaert. In exile, the five Independents had experienced the over-all control of the Dutch States and the civil power; nevertheless, it would be false to assume that this contact was prolonged or intimate; in practice, they had little to do with the state authority. Therefore, when they refer to the state as the highest authority within the church, this cannot be as a result of their own experiences, but rather from what they had viewed of the state attitude towards the Remonstrants.

The Remonstrant ideal of church government appears to be the most probable model for the ideas proposed by the Independents at Westminster. Working from the basic idea of tolerance, the Remonstrant Brotherhood maintained that all problems within the church should be solved in love. This led to an almost structureless brotherhood of independent fellowships. It was, in its own terms, only a brotherhood of preachers with an aim to return to the national church and yet at the same time maintain their own doctrinal positions. To this end, the initial structure of their fellowship was a general assembly with deliberative powers only and a directorate of six men whose task it was to administer day-to-day affairs. The directorate had limited authority over the training of preachers, publication of tracts and the disposal of small finances. They were not superintendents nor had they any episcopal function; they existed purely on a pragmatic basis. At the same time there developed classes after the model of the Orthodox Dutch Church, the purpose of which was to provide a unifying bond. After 1631, however, when a church structure was proposed, these classes were dispensed with as they contained the seeds of a possible new authoritarianism and because they were too much based on the model of the church from which the Remonstrants had broken. When in 1633 the church government was definitely regulated through "Generale Kerken-ordre der Remonstrantische Societeit", and accepted at the General Assembly of the Remonstrant society of brethren in Amsterdam, the local congregations were given the ultimate authority, with the right to elect from their own number deacons and other church officers. These were to be responsible, together with the congregation, in matters of discipline and to oversee the church finances. As well as the local

³⁰ *Tractaet*, pp. 92-107.

church, there were to be annually elected "Generale Directeurs de Societeit" who were to act as inspectors over the churches.³¹ They did not have superior powers in the episcopal sense, but rather co-ordinated activities in practical affairs such as supervising the newly-founded theological seminary and arranging the publication of tracts. In no case could they be regarded as being possessed of any higher authority. In cases where the discipline of the local church was inadequate, cases were referred to the general assembly of the whole brotherhood. It was this assembly of all the brethren gathered, that was the highest church court, and it could call before it, or discipline, any of its members.

A fundamental similarity exists between the church structure and authority as practised by the Dutch Remonstrants and advocated by the English Independents. Nye, in providing a summary of points of conflict between his own party and the presbyterians accurately systematized the two conflicting church rules. The point was whether many congregations should be combined under one presbytery or whether each local congregation existed with its own presbytery or eldership as an independent church. Another issue was whether appeals could be made from local congregations to the presbytery and from there to provincial synods and general assemblies. Even were it allowed that appeals could be heard apart from the local congregation, the question remained whether such synods had any power other than an advisory one. Nye worked from the basic premise which invested inherent authority in the congregation itself, or the congregation together with their office bearers. In his espousal of such a position we see the developed Independent idea. The Minutes of the Assembly are full of debates where the two positions are contrasted. The Independents even refused to accept the proposition made on Friday, 6th March, "that Jesus Christ as king and head of His church, hath supported an ecclesiastical government of His Church distinct from the civil government" as allowing a "*Jus Divinum*" authority to any form of ecclesiastical hierarchy erected on such a basis.

While other points, more structural in nature, such as the actual function and positions of pastors, doctors, elders and deacons, were debated as controversial they all issued from the root refusal of the Independents to accept the jurisdiction of any higher court than that of the local congregation.

When it became clear that the vast majority of the Assembly did not support the Independent position and voted for a presbyterian system of government, the Independents sought not accommodation nor compromise, as Parliament suggested, but toleration. The form of toleration demanded was encapsulated in a proposal to a sub-committee on 4th December, when they asked that their congregations should have the power of ordination within themselves and that these Independent congregations should not be brought under presbyteral government, but should have the liberty to constitute their own elderships. They also asked that congregations so formed should not be forced to communicate as members in the parishes where they dwelt, but should be free to gather as churches of their own on a voluntary basis; such congregations would possess the power of all church censures and of administering all the ordinances.³² De Witt has documented the various

³¹For a full list of these see Tideman, 2, pp. 476-478.

³²Minutes Session 69 (36).

political manoeuvres which were undertaken to bring about this demand for toleration³³ The demands changed until the full blooded concept of toleration emerged. The only contemporary European example of a tolerated minority was the Dutch Remonstrant church. Its unique position within the framework of a national church, tolerated and protected by the State must surely have been the model followed by the Independents. Indeed, their seeking Parliamentary help in establishing their cause followed the example of the Remonstrants in Holland. Though the Assembly was little more than a religious advisory committee briefed to propose a method of settling the church, the fact remains that the Independents deliberately played for time while their political supporter — Cromwell — established his control and purged the presbyterians in Parliament. They accorded to magistrates the right of reform and expected their assistance in sustaining the independence of the local congregation.

The thesis that an Arminian body such as the Remonstrants could ever have influenced the Calvinist divines at Westminster has not been seriously considered because, in England, Arminianism has been traditionally linked theologically with Laudian high churchmanship and politically with the repressive personal rule of Charles I and his advisors. Nevertheless, there are direct references within the Minutes of the Assembly and in the *Apologeticall Narration* which indicate not only a knowledge of Remonstrantism, but also suggest that the Independents at least believed the Dutch Arminian Remonstrant church to be part of the Reformed Communion.

When Goodwin in a debate on Appeals in February 1645 said,

Take excommunication out of the government, that those assemblies shall not practise it, and then I am satisfied. . . . Said the elders only are in fault, and so to excommunicate. . . . It is not in their power alone to receive him, it must be the whole church. . . . In this way you contend for a power that was never practised, and you say there was no occasion. There were Arminian churches, and yet not excommunicated.³⁴

he is arguing that presbyterian assemblies or synods should not have any authoritative power, which is an echo of the Remonstrant position. But it is his final phrase which is most interesting, when he says "there were Arminian churches and yet not excommunicated." This may refer to some unrecorded English Independent Arminian churches in London. It is certainly applicable to the Dutch church scene, and is probably as he had witnessed it, for the Remonstrants themselves certainly believed that they were part of the Reformed church and held as one of their aims reunion with the Dutch Orthodox church. Certainly the Independents had imbibed some Remonstrant wine in their own flagons, as is shown by their conclusions on church government. But the influence may not have been as unlimited as this. It must be remembered that for some Puritans both doctrinal and governmental deviance were heretical.³⁵ However, Goodwin and other Independents in a later debate in October 1645 show both knowledge of and

³³De Witt, p. 161.

³⁴*Minutes of the sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines while engaged in preparing their directory for church government, confession of faith and catechisms*, Ed. by A. F. Mitchell and J. Struthers, 1874.

³⁵Examples of this can be found from the pens of some of the Scots delegates to the Assembly: Rutherford, *The Divine right of Church government and excommunication, Peaceable and temporate plea for Pauls Presbyterie in Scotland*, Gillespie, *Aarons rod blossoming*.

interest in Remonstrant theology.³⁶ The debate concerned the doctrine of the redemption of the elect only. Goodwin argued

universal redemption must be the foundation of the preaching of the gospel to every creature. True, it must be preached to every creature; but then the question is, What is the gospel then? The message is reconciliation, 'God was in Christ', and this contains a reconciling only of such a world to whom God doth not impute their trespasses. The decrees of God concerning the world of His elect kept up indefinite expressions, that is the world; and hence there is a universal obligation of ministers to preach it to every creature, and upon every creature to come unto Christ.

Here he is defending the Arminian position that those who believe shall be saved and therefore the death of Christ was efficacious for all. This was not the position of Dordrecht nor of the bulk of the Westminster Assembly; it was however the Remonstrant position.

It can be established that there existed more formal links between the English in Holland and the Remonstrants from a Gomarist tract printed in 1635 where the author reveals the support for Rotterdam Remonstrants both from civil magistrates and the English circles in the city.³⁷ In the light of this, perhaps Edwards's accusations of sectarianism levelled against five Independents are an indictment of their Remonstrantism rather than their Brownism. Edwards was certainly a representative of rigorous Puritanism and a supporter of the Contra-Remonstrants and we know that he had access to their sources.

That the Independents could be overtly influenced by Remonstrant thought and still remain within the Westminster Assembly has been challenged on the ground that the Calvinist majority would never tolerate within their ranks those whom they suspected of espousing Arminianism, a doctrinal system so closely linked with the tyranny of Laud. This difficulty is in some measure removed if it is recalled that for the Independents the Remonstrant church could still be regarded as Reformed. They did not regard differences of church government as sufficient to make a church a sect, and this was commonly argued. Nor would they necessarily have concluded that differences within the understanding of God's election were sufficient grounds for declaring a church heretical. A quotation from Goodwin has been cited which establishes this, and it could be shown that even in continental protestantism differences of understanding existed, without there being any need to have recourse to excommunication.³⁸ Indeed, the Minutes themselves show that the different predestinarian positions were reflected in the debates of the Westminster Assembly, without the advocates being accused of heresy or debarred from debate.

The Remonstrants, together with the Independents, reflect an interest in ecumenism where unity of faith, rather than of worship, was required, and where faith was defined as a "hope of salvation" rather than a system of doctrine. The Remonstrants followed the maxim that to have private meetings did not in principle

³⁶ *Minutes*, p. 58.

³⁷ *Copye van seker brieve van Justus Rijckewaert, Geschreven aen Anthony Nys Coopman int Engels Laken tot Rotterdam 1646.*

³⁸ The whole debate in France concerning Moïse Amyraut and his doctrine of "hypothetical election" was regarded as legitimate difference of interpretation. And though rigorists sought a condemnation it never came.

The Independents would not have been tied to a state definition of "Reformed" and would have been free to make their own judgements.

See further B. G. Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*, Wisconsin 1969.

break the fellowship, so long as there was unity in faith. Their worship included three of the elements regarded by the Independents as fundamental for a Reformed church — full freedom for prophesying, everything done publicly, and baptism in accordance with the best practises of the Reformed churches. This being the case, there would be no reason for the Independent Brethren to separate themselves from such a church. Indeed, as they had just been exiled by a tyrannical church authority, they would naturally sympathise with a group suffering in the same way, who had evolved a church government allowing maximum freedom and yet safeguarding those elements which the Puritans regarded as necessary.

Such resemblances between Independent and Remonstrant ideals and practices suggest the need for a fresh review of the sources of Independent thinking and the influence exerted by a continental church which has been regarded as non-Reformed and therefore as having no influence over a Reformed body within the Westminster Assembly.

ROBERT NORRIS

JOHN HOWE'S ECLECTIC THEISM

"Oh, what are dukes and princes when compared with such persons!"¹ So wrote Philip Doddridge to his wife on learning of the death in 1743 of John Howe's second wife. Doddridge's was but one of many "precious" memories of that "glorious spirit" John Howe, whose wide sympathies were widely nurtured. Born at Loughborough on 17th May 1630, he was raised in Ireland and Lancashire. He was educated at Christ's College, Cambridge, where the Platonist Henry More was among his special friends; and at Oxford, where he became a Fellow of Magdalen (1652), whose President, the Independent Thomas Goodwin, welcomed the presbyterian Howe to the church which met in his house.² Howe graduated in both universities, and settled at Torrington in 1654. Two years later he removed to Whitehall on becoming a chaplain to Cromwell. Because of his generosity of spirit no necessitous, worthy royalist or episcopalian looked to him in vain. He was not, for example, averse to responding to the request of the corpulent wit Dr. Thomas Fuller to give him "a shove" to help him through the Triers.³ The cause of Christian

¹Quoted by G. F. Nuttall, *Philip Doddridge*, 1951, p. 162.

²The Congregationalist Peel regards Howe as a "convert" from Presbyterianism to Congregationalism; Drysdale the Presbyterian and Stoughton the Congregationalist find Howe inclining latterly towards the Presbyterians. To Horton Davies Howe is a "champion of the Presbyterians," while R. F. Horton avers that although Howe "never avowedly changed his [Presbyterian] denomination, he is indistinguishable from a modern Independent or Congregationalist." This latter judgement obscures more than it reveals. *Which* modern Independent or Congregationalist? By the time Horton wrote, to mention one point only, many of his fellow churchmen were rejoicing in "lay" celebration of the Lord's Supper — something that would have seemed very odd indeed to Howe. See A. Peel, *The Congregational Two Hundred*, 1948, p. 85; A. H. Drysdale, *History of the Presbyterians in England*, 1889, p. 492 n.; H. Davies, *The English Free Churches*, 1952, p. 107; R. F. Horton, *John Howe*, 1895, p. 56.

³See E. Calamy, *Memoirs of the Life of the Late Revd. Mr. John Howe, M.A.*, 1724, pp. 20-21; Henry Rogers, *The Life and Character of John Howe, M.A.*, 2nd edn. 1862, pp. 79-81. Howe is in *DNB*, and among other works on him see the Lives by William Urwick (the elder), 1853; William M. Scott, 1911; and sketch by C. A. Haig, 1961.

unity caught Howe's imagination too. From 1671 to 1675 he was a member of the Antrim Meeting, a successor to Baxter's Worcestershire Association, and in 1691 he drafted the *Heads of Agreement*, which closely resembled Baxter's 1652 *Agreement*.

Open-hearted as he was, Howe was nobody's "yes-man." He was among the ejected of 1662, and he is famed for his reply to Seth Ward, Bishop of Exeter (himself a recipient of Howe's aid during Cromwellian days) on the question of reordination:

Why, pray Sir, said the Bishop to him, what hurt is there in being twice Ordain'd? *Hurt*, my Lord, says Mr. *Howe* to him; the Thought is shocking; it hurts my Understanding; it is an absurdity: For nothing can have two Beginnings. I am sure, said he, I am a Minister of Christ . . . and I can't begin again to be a Minister.⁴

At the same time, the opposition of Defoe notwithstanding,⁵ Howe's moderation permitted him to approve of occasional conformity.⁶

Howe was hospitable in his thought as well as in his deeds. He drew from all quarters — his writings teem with references to ancient and modern authors; but he knew where to draw the line. Thus he was among the first to oppose both anti-Trinitarianism⁷ and deism.⁸ This latter subject is much to the fore in the first part of Howe's *The Living Temple of God* (1675), written in Ireland between 1671 and 1675. The *Temple* shows Howe the philosopher at his most eclectic; it is reflective of that post-Cartesian fluidity in philosophy to which so many elements, ancient and modern, contributed; and it is characteristic of the man (some jibes at the deists apart) in that Howe proceeds "not in the contentious way of brawling and captious disputation, (the noise whereof is as unsuitable to the temple as that of axes and hammers,) but of calm and sober discourse. . ."(27)⁹ A (near) tercentenary reappraisal of the *Temple, Part, One* may be of interest, summarising Howe's argument, indenting our numbered comments upon it; and capitalising the sources of his views by way of making plain his willingness to press many thinkers into service, including some commonly thought to be at odds with each other.

I

As the subtitle of the *Temple* makes clear, Howe offers "A designed improvement of that notion, that a good man is the temple of God." He opposes throughout those Epicurean atheists whose unwholesome way of life encourages them to argue God out of their thoughts under the hypocritical pretence that he is

⁴Calamy, *op. cit.* p. 39. We may not have heard the last of this unsectarian stance. Nowhere is latitude more in place than in connection with "new circumcisions" whencesoever they originate. In his reply to Bishop Stillingfleet's "Sermon of Schism" Howe declared that "Without all controversy the main inlet of all the distractions, confusions, and divisions of the Christian world hath been by adding other conditions of church communion than Christ hath done." *Works* V, p. 226.

⁵See D. Defoe, *An Enquiry into the Occasional Conformity of Dissenters in Cases of Preferment. With a Preface to Mr. Howe.* . . 1701. Sir Thomas Abney, Lord Mayor of London, was Defoe's target on this occasion; Howe was Abney's pastor. In 1697 the first edn. of Defoe's *Enquiry* (minus the Preface) had appeared anonymously on the occasion of Sir Humphrey Edwin's becoming Lord Mayor.

⁶See J. Howe, *Some Consideration of a Preface to an Inquiry concerning the Occasional Conformity of Dissenters, Works* V. It was said to be characteristic of Howe that the one occasion on which he lost his temper in a pamphlet was in connection with the defence of the church from which he had seceded.

⁷See J. Howe, *Calm Discourse of the Trinity in the Godhead, Works* IV.

⁸A. P. F. Sell, "Arminians, Deists and Reason," *Faith and Freedom*, xxxvi, Autumn 1979, pp. 19-31.

⁹Page references in brackets are to Henry Rogers's edn. of Howe's *Works* III, 1870.

too lofty to be known. This is "the atheism most in fashion" (16), and its advocates "take great pains with themselves, to discipline and chastise their minds and understandings to that tameness and patience, as contentedly to suffer the razing out of their most natural impressions and sentiments" (18-19). Such men have "abandoned their reason" (22). Accordingly, Howe's "principal intendment" is "not to assert the principles of religion against those with whom they have no place, but to propound what may some way tend to reinforce and strengthen them where they visibly languish. . ." (25). This is a genuinely rational undertaking. No doubt our best wisdom is to submit to God's revelation, but our "understanding" (i.e. reason) is what enables us to determine whether a particular revelation is, or is not, divine; and it acquaints us with the implications of divine revelation. Apart from such rational activity, "it were very unseasonable at least, to allege the written Divine revelation as the ground" of religion (27).

I. On this last point Howe is at one with LOCKE, who made reason the arbiter of revelation.¹⁰ On the more general point Howe's PLATONISM comes to the fore. Standing upon the idea of God-man continuity, he appeals to what he takes to be a universal sentiment — one which his atheists, who bear more than a passing resemblance to the Psalmist's "fool" (i.e. the *immoral* man, who says there is no God) — wantonly suppress. He invokes Greek and Latin authors, as well as Christian Fathers, in support of his declaration of the universality of the theistic sentiment. He applauds Maximus of Tyre, that "most ingenious pagan" (30), for seeing that even atheists unwittingly confess God; that is, presumably, they must know who it is whose existence they are denying. Contemporary atheists and agnostics would seem to be right in saying that from a universal sentiment (even granting the fact of such a sentiment) we may not with impunity conclude to a God; for one person, many people, and even all people considered together can be mistaken. Fifty million Frenchmen *can* be wrong.

Howe's next advice is to agree on what we mean by "God." Otherwise we shall not know for whom we seek, and we shall not know when we have found Him. Not, indeed, that we can fully comprehend God, but we can say enough about him to distinguish him from all else:

And such an account we shall have of what we are inquiring after, if we have the conception in our minds of an eternal, uncaused, independent, necessary Being, that hath active power, life, wisdom, goodness, and whatsoever other supposable excellency, in the highest perfection, originally, in and of itself (36).

He underlines the point that no idea of God is adequate which does not include the notion of God's necessary existence.

II. When Howe and his contemporaries speak of God's necessary existence they mean that God cannot be conceived as *not* existing. The reference is to his aseity, or independence; it is to his "from-everlasting-to-everlasting-ness." This ontological necessity is not to be confused with the logical necessity of contemporary philosophy, which is a matter of logical implication.

Howe explains that he could, like the Platonist Cudworth, proceed by direct inference from the idea of God to the existence of God, and it may be supposed that

¹⁰See J. Locke, *Works* (1801) III, p. 128; cf. J. D. Mabbott, *John Locke*, 1973, pp. 131-134; R. I. Aaron, "The Limits of Locke's Rationalism," reprinted in his *John Locke*, Oxford, 3rd edn. 1971, App. IV.

such a procedure would have accorded with his strongest sympathies. He engagingly realises, however, that some regard such as argument as no more than a sophism. He will therefore take the more circuitous route and argue from contingency to the necessary, self-existent Being, God, on whom all things depend.

III. That is to say, while making no exclusive claims for the approach, Howe opts for the *a posteriori* theistic method favoured (if not exclusively employed) by AQUINAS, for example, rather than for the *a priori* path pursued by Anselm and, with variations, by Descartes and the latter day Platonists. In this Henry Rogers thought him well advised, while R. F. Horton looked for a new dawn of Platonism.¹¹

"This sensible world," Howe argues, "took its being from a Being essentially vital and active, that had itself no beginning" (47). In viewing the created order we see an effect which cannot be accounted for by any cause our eyes can perceive. Hence, "our mind must step in and supply the defect of our feebler sense; so as to make a judgment there is a cause *we see not*, equal to this effect" (47). The point is illustrated from CICERO: when we see a magnificent fabric, but do not see its maker, but only mice and weasels, we do not conclude that the mice and weasels made it. Similarly, when we see the magnificent creation we do not conclude from the fact that we cannot see its maker, that it has none.

IV. A philosophical and a theological question occur at this point. First, on what grounds do we suppose that the cause of the universe as a whole is in any way similar to the causes of events within it? C.S. Peirce's aphorism, "Universes are not as plentiful as blackberries" comes to mind.¹² Secondly, are there not pitfalls in thinking of creation in terms of making? For makers utilise already existing materials; the Creator, according to orthodox Christianity, creates *ex nihilo*. More positively, Howe's recognition of the logical gap between the last piece of evidence and the religious man's verdict is very much to the point. Faith, it has been said, is the answer to a limiting question.¹³

Howe proceeds to specify God's characteristics. Following his PLATONIST friend More he argues that matter is inactive; that the world's cause differs from the stuff of which the world is made; and therefore that the cause of all, God, is active. He is powerful, wise and intelligent: "For what imagination can be more grossly absurd than to suppose this orderly frame of things to have been the result of so mighty power, not accompanied or guided by wisdom and counsel?" (50).

V. Bertrand Russell's, for one. In his celebrated debate with Fr. Copleston, Russell declared, "I should say that the universe is just there, and that's all;"¹⁴ and Copleston elsewhere sighed, "if one refuses even to sit down at the chess board and make a move, one cannot, of course, be checkmated."¹⁵

Pausing only to agree with DESCARTES that we must suppose an intelligent Being if we are to account for *regular* motion, Howe moves into an argument from design. Indeed he uses the current illustration of a watch — that very watch which

¹¹See their *Lives*, pp. 368 and 108 respectively.

¹²Quoted by A.G.N. Flew, *God and Philosophy*, 1966, p. 74; cf. D. M. Emmet, "The Choice of a World Outlook," *Philosophy* XXIII, 1948, p. 213.

¹³For the elucidation of this idea see S. E. Toulmin, *An Examination of the Place of Reason in Ethics*, Cambridge 1950, chap. XIV; cf. J. Heywood Thomas, *Subjectivity and Paradox*, Oxford 1957, pp. 151-158.

¹⁴A B.B.C. debate (1948) transcribed in ed. J. Hick, *The Existence of God*, New York 1964, p. 175.

¹⁵F. C. Copleston, *Aquinas*, 1955, p. 124.

Paley was to make famous one hundred and twenty-seven years later, and twenty-three years after Hume had smashed it.¹⁶ Anyone, Howe contends, who had never seen a watch before would conclude, from the arrangement of its parts, to a designer. No right-minded person would suggest that the parts of the "little engine" fell together by chance. If this is the case in respect of things mechanical, how much more with things vital? The testimony of GALEN is called in support. The leg of the flea is marvellous — how much more marvellous must its inward parts be! As for the human body, "how comes it to pass that the several parts, which we find to be double in our bodies, are not single only? is this altogether by chance? That there are two eyes, ears, nostrils, hands, feet, etc.? What a miserable shiftless creature had man been, if there had only been allowed him one foot? a seeing, hearing, talking, unmoving statue? That the hand is divided into fingers? those so conveniently situate, one in so fitly opposite a posture to the rest? And what if some one pair, or other, of these parts had been universally wanting? . . ." (64).

VI. It is worth noting that even Hume and Kant, who refuted the argument from design, spoke with respect of it. The latter went so far as to say that of all the arguments for God's existence "it is the oldest, the clearest, and that most in conformity with the common reason of humanity."¹⁷ In the present century, and in the wake of the critical devastation of this argument, A. E. Taylor, while conceding that "Nature is not exactly like a large establishment for the mass-production of Ingersoll watches," nevertheless asked, "is it not more like this than it is like an unending harlequinade with no point in particular?"¹⁸ It is in the nature of an act of faith to say so, especially having regard to those blemishes, inequalities and cruelties with which the problem of evil is concerned: a problem which Howe dismissed rather than dealt with (167-8), and to which J. S. Mill was later trenchantly to advert.¹⁹

There follows a lengthy argument to the effect that the soul is not, and does not originate from, mere matter, and that it owes its being to an "intelligent Efficient" (87).

VII. Philosophers otherwise as various as Locke and Samuel Clarke utilise this argument, whose fountain head is ARISTOTLE.

Howe opposes at length the Epicurean notion that a concatenation of atoms could issue in the production of a reasonable soul, and he then confesses that "I must, upon the whole, profess not to be well pleased with the strain of this discourse; not that I think it unsuitable to its subject — for I see not how it is fitly to be dealt with in a more serious way — but that I dislike the subject" (102). The upshot is that no *unintelligent* immaterial agent could be "the cause and fountain of all that wisdom that is or hath ever been in the whole race of mankind" (105).

God is good (and for Howe "goodness" includes holiness, justice and truth), and he wishes to communicate to men what is good for them. His goodness is demonstrated by "the visible instances and effects we have of it in the creation and conservation of this world; and particularly, in his large munificent bounty and

¹⁶Paley's watch illustration opens his *Natural Theology; or Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity Collected from the Appearances of Nature*, 1802. For Hume's criticisms see his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, published in 1779, two years after his death.

¹⁷I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, "Transcendental Dialectic Bk. II", iii 6: Everyman edn. 1964, p. 363.

¹⁸A. E. Taylor, *Does God Exist?* 1961 edn., p. 89.

¹⁹See his *Nature and Utility of Religion*. 1874.

kindness towards man; whereof his designing him for his temple and residence will be a full and manifest proof" (113). This Being alone is in every way sufficient to supply all man's needs, and he alone is worthy of worship.

Howe then appears to back-track a little. "It must also be acknowledged," he says, "than an absolutely perfect Being cannot be immediately demonstrated from its effects. . . ." (116). The process must be one of mediate inference; and we have to weigh what kind of Being the already established necessary Being *needs* to be.

VIII. The way is thus open for anyone to read into Being what he wishes to find there. We join Rogers in thinking that Howe is at his weakest at this point;²⁰ and we recall Professor H. D. Aiken's comment: "Logically, there is no reason why an almighty and omniscient being might not be a perfect stinker."²¹

God is being itself; He is perfect, infinite, one. When He, as necessary being, causes all else, He suffers no diminution thereby; nor is He absorbed into the material — hence Howe's hostility to Spinoza's pantheism in Part Two of the *Temple*.²² Again, the idea of God's unity in no way threatens the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. We can have no knowledge of the latter "but by His telling us so" (144).

IX. This is the methodological crux. In the tradition of natural theology it is here affirmed that man *qua* man is able, by the use of his reason, to satisfy himself concerning God's existence. That God is triune, however, is a deliverance of revelation. The question which still haunts Christian philosophy is this: If we begin from anywhere other than God-in-Christ — from the world, from (undifferentiated) Being, or what not? — can we *subsequently* make room for what Christians wish to affirm concerning God? Howe rightly began by emphasizing the importance of the characteristics of the God we affirm, but his list of characteristics were not, at that point and overtly, distinctively Christian. Is it not the case that even if the arguments for God's existence worked as coercive demonstrations (which they do not) the "God" whose existence they demonstrated would not be the Christian's God at all? Further, what reply can Howe give to a deist who is quite content to remain with natural religion, and sees no need of revelation? He can only protest that the deist's God "is no God" (191). *But how does he know this?* He is on the threshold of a Christocentric starting-point for which the time was not ripe.

Because of His omniscience, His omnipotence and His omnipresence, God is able to converse (i.e. enter into relations) with man, and He does so.

X. Enter a *priorism* of the "surely such a God would not do other than" variety. Horton correctly pointed out that this argument might open too wide a door — to God's conversableness with animals and inanimate objects, for example.²³

The atheist, of course, will not agree; but this is only to be expected, for the atheist is "a prodigy, a monster amongst mankind. A dreadful spectacle! forsaken of the

²⁰See his *Life* of Howe, p. 378.

²¹H. D. Aiken, "God and Evil: A Study of some Relations between Faith and Morals," *Ethics* LXVIII 1958, p. 82.

²²At this point a further comparison of Howe's critics is interesting. Rogers who was very much an eighteenth-century theist in the Butler mould (Alan P. F. Sell, "Henry Rogers and *The Eclipse of Faith*", *J.U.R.C.H.S.*, Vol.2. No. 5. May 1980, pp. 128-143) approves of Howe's handling of Spinoza; Horton, under the influence of nineteenth-century immanentism, does not. See their *Lives* of Howe pp. 384-386 and 114-115 respectively.

²³See R. F. Horton's *Life*, p. 112.

common aids afforded to other men; hung up in chains to warn others, and let them see what a horrid creature man may *make himself*, by voluntary aversion from God *that made him!*" (176). Being unable to tolerate God as He is and as He reveals himself to be, the Epicureans, with a great show of reverence, ensure that "he be complimented out of this world, as a place too mean for his reception, and unworthy of such a presence. . . . It is judged too great a trouble to him . . . that he should have given himself any diversion or disturbance by making the world; from the care and labour whereof he is with all ceremony to be excused. . ." (180). Of such a remote deity we could have no proofs even if he existed, which he does not. Having no grounds for their own deity the Epicureans cashier all solid grounds for the proving of a deity. They have made a god to suit their own requirements: "There shall be a God, provided he be not meddlesome. . ." (189)

XI. Howe here attacks his contemporary deists *via* Epicurus. Part One of the *Temple* concludes with the reaffirmation of the One necessary, perfect Being who creates and sustains all things, and converses with His creature man. Part Two is concerned with the noetic effects of sin, and with the steps God has taken to remedy matters.

XII. Although the bulk of Howe's arguments are of the *a posteriori* kind, the God-man continuity of the Platonists is never far from his thoughts. Perhaps it is because he cashes "God" in such orthodox terms that he manages to skirt the wide sea of mysticism into which his friend Henry More all but fell.²⁴

II

Howe and his opponents shared a common belief in the supernatural. Following Hume's attack upon miracles the evidential worth of unusual occurrences had radically to be reappraised. Again, after the criticisms which Hume and Kant levelled against the traditional theistic arguments, apologetics could never be quite the same again. Into the reasons for this it is inappropriate to enter. Suffice it to say that whereas Howe's atheists regarded his position as "nauseous and unsavoury; not as being cross to their reason . . . but to their ill-humour and the disaffected temper of their mind," (17-18) *our* atheists are made of sterner stuff. *We* cannot prize the scales from their eyes however cogent our arguments; nor, in advocating our own position must we allow ourselves to be imprisoned within the narrowly empiricist territory which they so often mark out. Still less is there any cause for us to rush headlong into irrationalism. If we may not argue others into the faith, we may certainly provide reasons for believing, give as orderly a testimony as we can of what we believe, and seek to show that from the Christian starting-point a coherent view of the world may be developed.

Although Howe the theist cannot meet *our* needs, the fact remains that within his own (and his opponents') terms of reference he performed a valiant service. We may certainly applaud him for being "an avowed enemy to a blind implicit faith, as also to a blind devotion."²⁵ We may further feel that *religiously* his position is unassailable. Who can deny that "The temple of the living God, manifestly animated by his vital presence, would not only dismay opposition, but command veneration also; and be its own both ornament and defence" (20)? As a philosopher Howe was good natured and eclectic. Would that he had been pithier.

ALAN P. F. SELL

²⁴See e.g. H. More, *An Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness*, 1660, p. 361. See further A. P. F. Sell, "Platonists (Ancient and Modern) and the Gospel," *The Irish Theological Quarterly* XLIV, 1977, pp. 153-174, Calamy speaks of the "Platonick Tincture" which "so remarkably" runs through all Howe's writings. *op. cit.*, p. 7.

²⁵So John Spademan in his sermon on *II Tim.* iii 14, on the occasion of Howe's death. See Howe's *Works* VI, p. 404.

THE WORLD OF PHILIP DODDRIDGE

Review of: Calendar of the Correspondence of Philip Doddridge, DD. By Geoffrey F. Nuttall, Pp. li + 420, London, HMSO, 1979, £40.

This volume provides its readers with the kind of feast that would be found a century ago in a three-decker biography. All the facets of Doddridge's world are presented to us through his correspondence. He was an indefatigable letter-writer in an age when letters, even private ones, were considered to be a literary genre of a distinctive kind. And in presenting this material to us, Dr. Nuttall has proved himself an erudite and generous guide. He begins with, "Introduction: Doddridge and his Correspondence". This sets before us the main facts of Doddridge's life and draws a brilliant pen-portrait of the man, his character and achievements. Then follows the Calendar proper. All known letters by Doddridge, and to Doddridge, — some 1814 of them, — are listed. Each entry tells us whether the letter has been printed and if so, where; its manuscript source, if known, is mentioned; its precise date is given; elucidatory notes are appended to help identify people, places or books, and guidance to relevant bibliography is provided. The precis of each letter includes all factual material relating to individuals, places, churches and public events, as well as references to Doddridge's own feelings and convictions, and the editor has also spiced the calendar with judicious verbatim quotations where telling phrases or quaint expressions or telling sentences have aroused his interest. The Index of Persons, pp. 378-411, is comprehensive and detailed and enables the reader without difficulty to find and identify those referred to in the letters. All in all, this book, in its meticulous accuracy and mastery of detail, is a superb example of the calendarist's craft.

It is a book in which a wide variety of readers will find something to their taste. Northamptonshire people will find in it much to fascinate them about their county — as one would expect in a volume that is published under the joint auspices of the Historical Manuscript Commission and the Northamptonshire Record Society. All those interested in the social life of the eighteenth century will find something to arrest their attention on every page. Here we have Isaac Watts turning up at his favourite coffee-house after a long absence (Letter 1006). There you will read of the distemper that ravaged the cattle herds of Daventry in 1746, as well as of the ailment "among the Children which occasions a Swelling of the Throat in which they die in three Days" (1185). The tedium of travelling, the social round at Bath, the hearty meals at well-to-do houses, the subtle network of personal connections that held eighteenth-century English society together, the anxieties of the 1745 Rebellion — all these and much more punctuate the letters.

Some 1072 of Doddridge's letters had already appeared in print, most of them in the five volumes of *Correspondence* edited by John Doddridge Humphreys. But this compendious work often misleads the scholarly investigator through defective editing. In Dr. Nuttall's Calendar this has been corrected. In addition, the present volume gives us access to hundreds of letters that have hitherto been concealed in manuscript collections. This does not mean that they have not been used, of course, but by including them in his calendar, Dr. Nuttall has brought their contents within reach of the general public. And they are of great value, not only in the large number of details they provide about the period, but also because they tell us so much about Doddridge, and more especially about the private side of the man.

A close reading of the *Calendar* does give us a vivid picture of the man himself. His tolerance and good nature are revealed again and again. Perhaps this aspect of his character is best summed up in one of John Barker's letters, when he tells Doddridge, you "are so perfectly Made Up of Civility candour and good nature, that a pious Enthusiast, or a godly Dunce, or an upright Arian &c is Welcome to your table arms and heart. You are so good yourself that you thinke every Body ten times better than they are" (1633). This goodness of heart helps us to appreciate his relation with the Methodists. Nathaniel Neal confided to him that his readiness to grant Whitefield the freedom of his pulpit was "constantly spoken of by his friends with concern" (922), but Doddridge in reply defended himself by saying that his behaviour towards Whitefield proceeded from "a certain frankness of heart" and "a fear to offend God" (933). This mediating position was not an easy one to maintain. He could not endorse the high orthodoxy of many of his dissenting brethren for he leaned towards "good old Mr. Baxter's divinity" (265). On the other hand, he did not wish his students to be out and out Methodists (934). Yet, he loved good Christian company and fellowship with all sincere Christians. As he said of Colonel Gardiner, "it is something very much like Heaven to me to meet that excellent Christian at the Lords Table" (756).

This broad interest in people is shown in his international contacts. After all, his works were translated into German, Dutch and French and so it is no surprise to find how warmly he welcomed news from the Continent (e.g., 566, 1519).

Above all, we come in these letters very close to the private secrets of the man. John Barker observed, "I stand amazed to think, how you get time for half you do" (970). Doddridge was indeed a hard worker. And gradually the strain began to tell upon him. It was little wonder that he wrote to his wife in 1749, during a visit to London, that he "went into the Pulpit almost like a tired Turnspit Dog into the Wheel" (1510). But he carried on, sustained by a deep sense of calling, but also by a real joy in his labours (819). And he did draw pleasure from what he saw and experienced. He loved meeting people and he thoroughly appreciated a tasty meal (912). His enjoyment of nature is characteristic of the eighteenth century rather than of the later period when Romanticism sharpened people's eyes for the sublime and awesome. Norfolk, he considers to be "one of the most elegant Counties in England" (986) and Lymington, he avers, "is the politest and most agreeable little Town I ever saw in all my Travels" (767).

With a man like Doddridge whose work as teacher, minister, author, theologian and hymn-writer makes him a towering figure in the history of Dissent, it is easy to forget how much he owed to his home life. The *Calendar* restores the balance. The relationship between him and his wife, Mercy, is shown in all its passionate beauty in their letters to each other. Dissent had not yet hidden itself behind the veil of "respectability" and the consecrated sexuality of some of these intensely private letters reveals to the reader unfamiliar with the history of Dissent a forgotten dimension.

I noticed that the "r" is missing in the word "from" at the beginning of entries 89, 116, 223, 226, 231, 626, 673, 945 and 958. Otherwise the proof-reading, as one would expect, is impeccable..

In a word, this is a magnificent volume and an absolute necessity for the student of the religious history of eighteenth century England.

R. TUDUR JONES

REVIEWS

Patterns in History. By David Bebbington. Pp. xi, 211. Leicester, Inter-Varsity Press, 1979, £3.75.

This book is to be welcomed, and it deserves a circulation beyond the normal confines of those who habitually turn to IVP publications. Dr. Bebbington is concerned with the search for meaning in history, and he places his defence of Christian historical understanding in a broad context. He discusses Chinese and Indian theories of cyclical history, as well as those of western thinkers such as Vico or Toynbee. He is judicious in showing how ideas of progress grew out of one strain in Christian thought, and though he does not share the position of historians such as Pollard or Plumb who still defend secular theories of progress he never distorts their viewpoint. Dr. Bebbington is also acute in showing the similarities between Jewish and Christian approaches to history, though his emphasis on the centrality of the Cross highlights the inevitable point of contrast between them. He is perceptive in dealing with German historicist ideas, and while he carefully reminds us that these were different from the determinist approach to history pilloried by Sir Karl Popper in *The Poverty of Historicism* his treatment of Marx and Marxism demonstrates that he is aware of the pitfalls of resorting to pseudo-scientific laws of historical development. It is refreshing to read someone who, while eager to engage in contemporary debate, is conscious of the dangers of abandoning basic Christianity in the anxiety to be relevant or up to date: there is one just and telling reference to the attractions of liberation theology, for example. But Dr. Bebbington is by no means unfair to Marx. In some respects he rescues Marx from both Engels and later Marxists, and his comparison of the role of Marxist historical writing in France and in England is enlightening. The main conclusion of the book is that only Christian history can resolve the contradictions and confusions of the various other schools, whether these are positivist or idealist, Marxist or historicist. It is significant that the work of Sir Herbert Butterfield provides a starting point for much of what Dr. Bebbington says, and although he is unhappy with Butterfield's distinction between technical history and providential history Dr. Bebbington's subsequent caution in expounding how the individual should write as a Christian historian, rather than as an historian who is a Christian, reveals the difficulties of putting this commendable principle into effective practice. This book deserves to be read by anyone, whether Christian or agnostic, with a serious interest in history. It should prove invaluable to many students, seeking for an informed and comprehensive introduction to the study of history. Fair-minded and yet critical, written with conviction yet never condescending, Dr. Bebbington's work is a happy blend of historical scholarship and theological understanding, which combines clarity of expression with a real grasp of the deeper issues.

JOHN DERRY

Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649. By R. T. Kendall. Pp. 238, Oxford University Press, 1979, £12.50.

This volume in the series of Oxford Theological Monographs prints a thesis for which the author was awarded the degree of D. Phil. It is concerned with the doctrine of faith in relation to predestination and assurance, mainly in the puritan

tradition from William Perkins to the Westminster Confession. The strength of the work is in the treatment of what the author calls "experimental Predestination" theories which, in the case of Perkins, were an exposition of 2 Peter 1, verse 10, in terms of the so-called "practical syllogism".

Although the writer has twice included the name of Calvin in his title, he eschews a long exposition of Calvin's teaching, and he also justifies his refusal to discuss the Biblical basis of crucial doctrines by reasons of space, but the lack of even two or three pages on the Biblical evidence, and of a satisfactory attempt to meet difficulties raised by many scholars to his own simplistic statement of Calvin's position, starts the book off on the wrong foot. He assumes, but never comes near to demonstrating, that there is a fundamentally different system of theology in Theodore Beza (a thesis which will not perhaps survive the most recent dissertations on the subject, notably that of I. McPhee), and that it is Beza whom William Perkins follows.

On the other hand, there is plenty of sound argument and many learned citations in this work, notably in the discussions of Perkins, Preston, Ames, the Americans, and the Antinomians in the period leading up to the Westminster Assembly. There is an interesting section on Arminius whom Dr. Kendall considers stood much closer to the experimental predestinarians than he or they realised. His conclusion is that the Westminster Confession, far from being Calvinist, belongs to the Perkins-Beza misunderstanding.

The author's definitions of faith and of assurance are rather rigidly confined: after all, a great many of those he cites were Anglicans, and Cranmer's Homily of Saving Faith is at least as relevant as the Calvin whom he thinks they all misunderstood. There are some infelicities of style and some very muddled phrases: "The spirit is secret, and therefore not an emotional feeling" (p.19) — as though there could be an unemotional feeling; or, when he tells us (p.38) that the difference between Beza and Calvin "is not quantitative but qualitative". The author tempts a reviewer into unfairness by the fact that he belongs to the "all out of step except our Jock" school of what Shakespeare might have called the "spleeny" younger Calvinists. All theologians and historians, save himself, we are told again and again, have missed this or that fundamental point, and he even tells us what Beza and Perkins really were trying to say though they had not quite realised it. But this is a useful work which will repay reading.

GORDON RUPP

Philip Doddridge of Northampton. By Malcolm Deacon. Pp. 242, Northamptonshire Libraries, 1980, £4.95.

"You need not fear living too long, doctor; and therefore, pray do not live quite so fast": readers of this splendid life of Doddridge will not wonder that such concerned advice was offered; but, like many another, he was no doubt puzzled, when told not to do too much, wherein the "too much" consisted. If contemporary ministers complain that they have too much to do, they might well consider this man whose activities were more manifold than most in his own day — or our own.

Malcolm Deacon has used his sources well, relying a good deal on Geoffrey Nuttall's recently published *Calendar of the Correspondence of Philip Doddridge, D.D.* (1979). The bibliographical sources provide a clear indication of the thoroughness of the work. In addition to many scholarly footnotes, there are nine appendices, one of the most interesting of which sets out *Constitutions Orders and*

Rules relating to the Academy at Northampton (what would the NUS say?) but another describes shopping for Mercy Doddridge, and there is as well a note on smallpox in Northampton. Fifty illustrations are provided.

The author's narrative is straightforward. As he describes the range of Doddridge's concerns and tasks, the reader is left almost breathless. To combine the responsibilities of pastor of a large congregation, the principalship of a theological academy, the care of many churches and ministers, and personal contacts which were by no means confined to those of a particular communion, must have been a calculated burden on his never very strong constitution; but while he lived, he would live. The amount of travelling and preaching he managed to fit into "vacations" is remarkable; and the story of his domestic happiness is proof that the busy need not be neglectful of their families. It is no wonder that this man died so relatively young: the wonder is that he accomplished so much.

In many ways he anticipated the now popular "social involvement" of the ministry; in others he foresaw some of our ecumenical concerns, since there was no fence between him and those of quite different persuasions. His refusal to toe any party line and his unwillingness to subscribe to any theological formula has some relevance to our present wrestling with church relations. Those who use Pitman's shorthand every day would be surprised perhaps to know that to some extent they are in debt to Doddridge for their basic skill. (While one properly hesitates to suggest any addition to the curriculum in a theological course, it could be that shorthand would be of more use to ministers than sociology.) If modern educationists would think that a lot of Doddridge's work in that field was hopelessly old-fashioned, they would at least recognize that he believed that education should be available and that he "did something about it".

There is so much about Philip Doddridge and his work that is attractive and profitable that it is especially fortunate that this book has been so handsomely produced.

JOHN HUXTABLE

Homerton College, 1695-1978. By T. H. Simms, Pp. 109 Cambridge, the Trustees of Homerton College, 1979. No price given.

Mr. Simms's book is sub-titled "From Dissenting Academy to Approved Society in the University of Cambridge": presumably the implication is that this is an upward ascent. No doubt; but the earlier days, when students at Homerton, in London, might be expelled for insolence and ingratitude, or for walking out with young ladies, makes livelier reading. Ironically, after splits and unions, and after removal to Cambridge, Homerton became for a long time a wholly female institution. No College of Education has a higher reputation to-day, but the traditional Congregational connection has gradually weakened, though the United Reformed Church is still strongly represented on the governing body.

Mr. Simms has written a scholarly account, culminating in the successful struggle against the conservatism of Cambridge University and Homerton's attainment of the status of Approved Society. Members of the History Society will notice however that he confuses the Congregational College, Manchester with Manchester College, Oxford.

S. H. MAYOR

Ministering Angels: A Study of Nineteenth-century Evangelical Writing for Children. By Margaret Nancy Cutt. Pp. XIII, 215 Wormley: Five Owls Press, 1979, £9.50.

When a nineteenth-century child left that incomparable literary scene in which people jump over candlesticks and wear bells on their toes, and little dogs laugh while cats visit the royal parlour, the next course in the feast of letters must have seemed rather like the arrival of Lent on Boxing Day.

There was writing for children; and as time went on there was what one might honestly call literature for children. But the adults writing for children, until at any rate the late nineteenth century, saw the child not as a person to be amused, delighted, entertained and taught a little on the way, but strictly as an object of instruction, edification and (it was devoutly hoped) redemption.

The history Mrs. Cutt traces begins with the moral tale which flourished in the eighteenth century. But the moral tale, a cool and rational production, did not satisfy the Evangelical insistence on fervour, urgency and sensibility; and early in the nineteenth century the tract, and its amplified fictional version the tract-tale, took over the work of improving the young. There was a double aim: to increase literacy and to awaken religious enthusiasm. Hence the tract-tale was a suitable reading-book for the children taught to read by charitable effort; a suitable "Sunday book" for the offspring of godly, fiction-distrusting homes; and a suitable idle-hands-occupier for the young servant — who was not often presumed to have a mind, but at least given credit for possessing a soul.

Mrs. Cutt traces the genre in its development through its main practitioners (Maria Charlesworth, A.L.O.E., Hesba Stretton, Mrs. Walton) to the point where in E. M. Sewell and C. M. Yonge it merges with the main stream of the literature of the day. She is candid about its effects: did it not so over-simplify life and lead to an expectation of the necessary triumph of virtue that it helped to condition the reading public to a point where they could not accept books like *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*? She suggests even that in its near-idolization of the Child (who changes as the tract-tale develops from the receiver of instruction to the "minister" who shows the simplicity of the Gospel to confused and corrupt seniors) this type of literature might have been the beginning of the youth cult of recent years in which childhood "is held to generate spontaneously all its own virtues while deriving its faults and follies from its elders": this may be true in a non-literary sense, but I can't believe that the literary child will ever be the tract-tale child again after *A High Wind in Jamaica*, *Lord of the Flies* and even *Lolita*.

She also looks shrewdly at the political and psychological validity of her subjects. The early tract-tales, preaching resignation to earthly evils and the survival of virtue and worth in unlikely circumstances, did their bit to preserve the wretched *status quo* of the mines, the factories, and the slum tenements; and their view of the inveterate poor sinking through their own drunkenness, idleness or vice was hardly a compassionate or hopeful one. Later a more humane and also more aggressive vein crept in: by the time of Hesba Stretton the tract-tale is aligning itself as firmly on the side of reform (against social evils such as the misery of the workhouse and the exploitation of children and lack of public care for them) as ever Dickens did himself; and although characters are still either unmixed Good or Bad, it is allowed that the troubles of the Bad, and their backsliding, may not be always and exclusively their own fault.

Mrs. Cutt has set out to inform her readers: this she does (it is a packed, thoughtful, and erudite book, very stimulating to discussion and to further reading). She has also entertained them. Many of the tract-tale authors she writes about must have known the same trick and conveyed to the hungry lives of otherwise bookless boys and girls the joy of a *story* (a delight in itself: but better still, a bit of the outside, a peg on which to hang a little fantasy). In what is for me the very heart of her book, Mrs. Cutt quotes a contemporary writer describing the effect of a Hesba Stretton story on a trouble-making child-servant: "How that poor little soul was interested! . . . heart, soul and mind absorbed in its contents." There is a description of a blessing if ever I heard one.

ANN PHILLIPS

Henry Ward Beecher: Spokesman for a Middle-Class America. By Clifford E. Clark, Jr. Pp. 288. London, University of Illinois Press, 1978.

This is the first full-scale biography of the American Congregationalist Henry Ward Beecher for over fifty years. Clark accords the highly popular nineteenth-century preacher, reformer, newspaper editor and political activist a more sympathetic treatment than did his previous biographer, Paxton Hibben, but it is still difficult for the reader to warm to him. Perhaps this is because we lack much of the material necessary for a rounded treatment of his private character and emotional life, but what evidence there is fails to conceal his selfishness and ambition, and the superficiality of his romantic Christianity. The strength of Clark's study lies in its explanation of Beecher's enormous public popularity. The book's theme, suggested in its subtitle, is that Beecher "articulated the attitudes and values of a new urban middle class that emerged at mid-century to supply the organizational and managerial skills for the expansion of industry and commerce." Readers of this journal may find the book especially valuable for demonstrating one of the ways in which the American churches of the Congregational-Presbyterian tradition responded to the challenge of biblical criticism, Darwin and the changing social conditions of an industrialising America.

RICHARD CARWARDINE

Theology, Sociology and Politics: The German Protestant Social Conscience 1890-1933. By W. R. Ward. Pp. 250. University of Durham Publications and Peter Lang, Berne, 1979, Swiss Fr. 49. (obtainable from Bowker Publishing Company Ltd., P.O. Box 5, Erasmus House, Epping, Essex, CM16 4BU).

This book is essential for anyone who wants to contribute well to Christian social thinking.

Professor Ward gives detailed accounts of the thinking of men like Stöcker and Naumann, Harnack and Tillich, Barth and Dibelius, giants of a period still of critical significance for us. Much of this material is either unavailable elsewhere in English or not so well discussed.

An even greater merit of the book lies in Ward's testing, with an historian's hard perception, the religious social theories against the political realities of the situation. In the process, we receive instruction about the proper methods and criteria of Christian social thinking. It should be measured as policy not just as idealism. Ward shows how religious utopianisms make no contact with the options of the practising politician. Yet realism is not enough: "The true realism is that which is capable of looking sufficiently beyond Tomorrow's survival to construct on an empirical basis a policy for that limited range of action in which political (and hence ethical) choices count."

HADDON WILLMER

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

Reformed World: Vol. 35, Nos. 5-8.

In addition to news about the member Churches in the W.A.R.C. and about their ecumenical encounters, these numbers contain articles on the doctrines of justification, of ministry and of covenant. An article by Dr. T. F. Torrance on Orthodox/Reformed relations is of special value.

Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society: Vol. XLII, Parts 1-3.

These issues contain many interesting articles on the internal history of Methodism, particularly the lecture by Henry Rack of Manchester University on "Wesleyanism and 'the world' in the nineteenth century". Alan C. Clifford writes on "Philip Doddridge and the Oxford Methodists".

The Baptist Quarterly: Vol. XXVIII, Nos. 1-4.

Among the wide range of articles of Baptist interest Dr. Nuttall has a miniature on family memorials in Carlton-le-Moorland Baptist Church and there is an article by the late Dr. Payne on "The Down-Grade Controversy: A Postscript": it has the characteristic marks of his learning and statesmanship.

Cylchgrawn Hanes (Journal of the Historical Society of the Presbyterian Church of Wales), No. 3, 1979.

This issue contains the annual lecture to the Society in 1979. It is by Principal Rheinallt Williams of the Theological College, Aberystwyth, on "The 1904 Revival and the Beginning of the Apostolic Church". Principal Williams is the Moderator-elect of the General Assembly.

R.B.K.

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