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CONTENTS

Editorial	1
The Congregational Ministry in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century: a Preliminary Survey by <i>Kenneth D. Brown, M.A., Ph.D.</i>	2
A Nestor of Nonconformist Heretics: A.J. Scott (1805–1866) by <i>J. Philip Newell, B.A., B.D., Ph.D.</i>	16
Erik R. Routley, 31 October 1917 – 8 October 1982 by <i>T. Caryl Micklem, M.A.</i>	25
Reviews by <i>John Derry, E.D. Mackerness, Clyde Binfield, R. Buick Knox, Anthony Fletcher, Geoffrey F. Nuttall, Stephen Mayor</i>	26

EDITORIAL

Since our last issue three men have died whom members of this society, especially from the Congregational tradition, will wish to remember.

Erik Routley, President of the Congregational Church in England and Wales in 1970–71, and a past lecturer to the Congregational Historical Society, ministered at Wednesbury and Dartford between 1943 and 1948, and in Edinburgh and Newcastle upon Tyne between 1959 and 1974. From 1948 to 1959 he was Mackennal Lecturer and the Chaplain at Mansfield College Oxford, and since 1975 he had held Professorships in Music at Princeton. We are glad to print Caryl Micklem's tribute to him. H.G. Tibbutt, member of Bunyan Meeting, Bedford, served Dissent by his devotion to Bunyan bibliography and to the church history of the Bunyan and Cromwell counties, and he served the Congregational Historical Society as its research secretary. H.F. Lovell Cocks ministered at Winchester, Hove and Leeds from 1917 to 1932, and taught at the Congregational colleges in Bradford, Edinburgh and Bristol (at the last two as Principal) from 1932 to 1960. His *The Nonconformist Conscience* (1943) and *The Religious Life of Oliver Cromwell* (1960) reached an appreciative Free Church readership and helped to make him a natural choice as preacher for the historic occasion.

We welcome as contributors Kenneth Brown, who is Reader in Economic and Social History at the Queen's University of Belfast; Philip Newell, who is

Chaplain at McMaster University, Toronto; and Caryl Micklem, who is Minister at St. Columba's United Reformed Church, Oxford. We welcome among our reviewers E.D. Mackerness, until lately Reader in English Literature at the University of Sheffield.

THE CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRY IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: A PRELIMINARY SURVEY¹

No-one would dispute that religion, and particularly nonconformity, was one of the major formative influences on nineteenth-century British society. "It was," Professor Harrison has remarked, "from the pulpit, whether in church or camp meeting, that public opinion was largely educated."² The religious census of 1851 revealed that approximately sixty per cent of those who were able, attended a place of worship on census Sunday, roughly half of them in a non-conformist chapel. Even those who did not participate directly in chapel worship were likely to have been exposed to nonconformist influence in other, less direct ways:— attendance perhaps at a denominational day school; readership of a nonconformist-controlled newspaper; membership of a Sunday school which, it has been argued, was so common by 1820 that virtually every working class child outside London must have attended at some time or another;³ or involvement in some of the varied social functions for which the chapel acted as focus in many communities. Even for non-believers the chapel "took by itself the place now hardly filled by theatre, concert hall, cinema, ball-room and circulating library put together."⁴

Within this highly pervasive nonconformist atmosphere which did so much to set the moral and cultural tone of Victorian life, no-one played a more central role than the minister, who held a position of high respectability, even in quite small towns. The minister, said one anonymous observer in 1903, "is destined from the earliest period of his studies to be a great man in a little world . . ."⁵ A few years before, the *Spectator* had claimed that "a dozen Nonconformist ministers will stir a whole city district besides directly influencing or controlling their own congregations."⁶ Earlier still, Thomas Hunter had reckoned that "by

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1. The research on which this paper is based was financed by the Social Sciences Research Council as part of a wider investigation of the nonconformist ministry in England and Wales between 1830 and 1930. Quotations from the New College Archives appear by permission of the Trustees of Dr Williams's Library. I have to thank Dr C. Field for permission to use his D.Phil thesis, and Elizabeth Brown and Dr L.A. Clarkson for helpful comments on earlier drafts.
 2. J.F.C. Harrison, *The Early Victorians, 1832–1851*, 1971, p. 133.
 3. T.W. Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability: Sunday schools and working class culture*, 1977, p. xi.
 4. E.E. Kellett, *As I remember* 1936, quoted in K. Young, *Chapel: the joyful days and prayerful nights of the nonconformists in their heyday, c. 1850–1950* 1972, p. 16.
 5. Anon., *The nonconformist conscience considered as a social evil*, 1903, p. 24.
 6. *Spectator*, 24 March 1894.

the culture and faithfulness of ministers more than any other cause has Non-conformity been perpetuated . . . where a Church is powerful, numerous and respected, the source of this may be traced not indirectly to the minister."⁷ Although the influence of ministers within their own connexional polities varied considerably from denomination to denomination, nonconformist chapels were, in the main, built round them. This was especially true of Congregationalism, since the Methodists generally moved their men much more frequently and were in any case — like the Baptists — heavily dependent on a great army of lay preachers.

Contemporaries and historians alike have paid due respect to the famous pulpit princes whose preaching could draw vast crowds in an age when nonconformity majored on the ministry of the word, and when public speaking was one of the chief means of intellectual communication. The great majority of ministers, however, remain unsung. History's ranks and files never do leave much behind in the way of systematised personal information but this is particularly regrettable in the case of so influential a group as nonconformist ministers. Obituaries, where they exist, tend to be pietistic, moral-drawing, and usually devoid of much hard information. As a result, very little is really known about the social origins, educational backgrounds and career patterns of those who entered the ministry, and generalisations based on the atypical few who left autobiographical reminiscences must remain suspect.⁸ Most of the 2338 Congregational ministers alive in 1866, for instance, would have been well enough described by the following obituary, prepared in 1914 for a United Methodist pastor.⁹

He never walked in Connexional high places, but plodded patiently on in lowly and somewhat sequestered paths. Not widely known, but where well known, beloved. He was one of the many who in undemonstrative yet faithful fulfillment of duty . . . contribute largely to progress.¹⁰

It is the purpose of this paper to begin remedying this deficiency by constructing a social profile of men who entered the Congregational ministry in the first half of the nineteenth century, using information contained in over 400 applications for admission to Hoxton Academy and Highbury College, made between 1790 and 1851. This material has been supplemented with the annual obituaries in the *Congregational Year Book*, and with Surman's Index of Ministers which, like the Hoxton-Highbury applications, is housed at Dr. Williams's Library.¹¹

7. *Inquirer*, 12 December 1874.

8. There is some interesting statistical analysis of ministerial personnel in C.D. Field, "Methodism in Metropolitan London, 1850-1920", Oxford D. Phil. 1974, and J.E.B. Munson, "A study of nonconformity in Edwardian England as revealed by the passive resistance movement against the 1902 Education Act", Oxford D. Phil. 1973.

9. This figure is from R. Currie, A. Gilbert and L. Horsley, *Churches and churchgoers: patterns of church growth in the British Isles since 1700* Oxford, 1977, p. 208.

10. *United Methodist*, 9 July 1914.

11. The archive also contains a number of applications relating to Homerton and Wymondley, but these are too few to yield statistically valid results. In any case Homerton

Hoxton Academy opened in 1778, moved to a new site in 1791 and thence to Highbury with the new title of Highbury College in 1826. A quarter of a century later Highbury merged with similar institutions, Homerton and Coward, to create New College. Although it is estimated that some 75 academies and seminaries prepared men for the Congregational ministry in the period after 1800 many of them were very small, frequently one man affairs, producing a mere handful of students and often disappearing when their originators died.¹² Hoxton, however, as Alexander Stewart recalled, was "one of the largest of the number," turning out about 300 men between 1791 and 1824.¹³ By the time it closed it had been extended to accommodate about forty students and Highbury, when it opened, had a similar capacity. Hoxton and Highbury men dominated the trained Congregational ministry. Of the 1447 ministers listed by the 1846 *Congregational Year Book* as being active in England, 544 had received no formal ministerial training, while those who had, between them had attended 50 different institutions.¹⁴ Together, Hoxton and Highbury accounted for 29.6 per cent of the trained men and 18.6 per cent of the total. Some measure of their dominance can be seen from the fact that the next most important institutions were the academies of Hackney, Rotherham and Homerton which produced respectively 10.7 per cent, 10.4 per cent, and 7.5 per cent of the trained men, 6.7 per cent, 6.5 per cent, and 4.7 per cent of the total.¹⁵

Altogether, 422 individuals appear in the archive as having expressed some interest in entering Hoxton or Highbury in the period 1790–1851.¹⁶ Of these a number have been discarded: some because the relevant documents consist only of letters of inquiry or referees' reports on candidates for whom no formal application can be traced, others because the men concerned never entered the ministry and their applications contain none of the social detail with which this paper is primarily concerned. Some of the information provided by a further 84 unsuccessful applicants has, however, been used in the analysis of occupations, education, and geographical origins, but since the study is concerned essentially with those who did become ministers it rests for the most part on the 304 successful candidates whose documentation is adequate for our purposes. The precise number of cases covered in each table varies because the quality of information provided by the students changed. Those in the first generations of

trained only 4.7 per cent of the total entering the ministry between c. 1800 and 1846, Wymondley, about 1.6 per cent. Even if those trained at Coward, which took over Wymondley in 1833, are included the figure is still only 2.1 per cent.

12. This estimate is made by Surman at the beginning of his Index.
13. A. Peel, "Life at Hoxton College, 1820–1823. Being part of the autobiography of Alexander Stewart", *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, XV, 1945–8, p. 76. The figure for Hoxton's output is calculated from lists in Hoxton Academy, *Report*, 1815, p. 4, and Highbury College, *Report*, 1835, pp. 14–23.
14. *Congregational Year Book*, 1846, pp. 142–67.
15. The actual figures are Hoxton 149, Highbury 127, Rotherham 100, Homerton 70, Hackney 97. Airedale and its predecessor, Idle, accounted for 72 men: Lancashire and Blackburn trained 37; Western at its various sites turned out 23; Cheshunt and its forerunner, Trevecca, trained 46.
16. This includes a small number who began at Highbury and then transferred to New or who applied to Highbury and began at New in 1851.

Hoxton applicants, for example, were required merely to submit a letter outlining their Christian experience and belief, and stating why they wished to enter the ministry. This had to be supported by letters of recommendation from their own ministers and churches. Either way, the inclusion of relevant social detail was purely haphazard. By the 1820s the institutions were asking for — though not always receiving — information under a dozen different heads, including birthplace, age, occupation, and educational background. Disappointingly for the social historian, no information was sought about parental occupation, though it is nearly always possible to deduce whether an applicant's father was himself in the ministry.

Finally, it should be noted that the figure of 304 represents only a proportion of those actually admitted to Hoxton and Highbury during the period. That some forms have been lost is clearly evidenced by the survival of detached letters of reference, although there is no way of knowing how or why such material has vanished. Thus in 1851 the Rev. W. Legge, who prepared men at his Fakenham seminary for admission to Highbury and then to New, wrote to the college committee informing it that "four of my pupils, Messrs. West, Goward, Mombert, and Miller are candidates for admission," but applications survive only from Miller and West.¹⁷ Again, the complete absence of any Hoxton material between 1801 and 1810 indicates that a whole batch of applications has for some now unknowable reason been lost or destroyed. Even so, the figure of 304 does represent a substantial proportion of those trained by Hoxton and Highbury. All told, Hoxton turned out roughly 300. Highbury's capacity was about the same, Newman Hall reckoning that its population in his day, 1837–1841, was about 40, 10 leaving and 10 joining each year.¹⁸ Thus it can be calculated that some 560 students came out of Hoxton-Highbury between 1791 and 1851. The applications on which the following analysis is based, therefore, represent rather more than half the total.

It might be expected that two London institutions would draw a substantial proportion of their students from the immediate geographical area, especially in the period before railways revolutionised transport. This is largely borne out by Table 1 which reveals that almost one third of admitted students whose birthplace is known came from the counties most immediately adjacent to the capital. Equally significant, perhaps, is the high proportion coming from Wales and Scotland. For those Scots who could not make the eligible grade in Scottish parishes the English dissenting ministry offered a suitable alternative, and it is possible that the contemporary ferment within Presbyterianism obliged many to seek opportunities in the English academies which did not fully exist in Scotland outside the Presbyterian establishment. It is likely, too, that both Scots and Welsh came from those sections of society most open to the possibilities of migration. That so many of them chose Hoxton-Highbury, however, says something for the pull of the metropolis, the prestige of Hoxton-Highbury,

17. W. Legge to New College Committee, 25 September 1851. NCA 367/5/12.

18. Newman Hall, *An autobiography*, 1898, p. 38.

TABLE 1. Known birth counties of admitted Hoxton-Highbury students

County	Number of students	Percentage of total
London	22	} 32.9
Middlesex	15	
Surrey	19	
Kent	12	
Essex	14	
Herts	7	
Other English counties	137	50.7
Scotland	29	} 16.2
Wales	10	
Ireland	2	
Isle of Man	1	
Abroad	2	

or both, since Scotland and Wales both had their own training institutions for dissenting ministers. Equally, there were several English academies, notably Rotherham, Lancashire, and Western, which were geographically more convenient to the Celtic fringe than Hoxton and Highbury.

Congregationalism has generally been regarded as the most middle class of all the nonconformist groups, a point well made by the Secretary of the Congregational Union in 1848. "Our churches", he wrote, "everything about them — preaching, buildings, ministers, manners, notions and practices — all have on them the air and impress of English middle class life . . ." ¹⁹ Indeed, many felt that their denomination had a special mission to the middle classes rather like that thought to have been exercised by the Primitive Methodists towards the working classes. Table 2 indicates just how overwhelmingly middle class the Congregational ministry was. ²⁰ In the absence of any information concerning fathers' occupations, social mobility can only be hinted at by comparing the students' own status immediately before college entry with the status acquired by entry into the ministry. Since Independent ministers are classified by the Registrar General as social class I it is evident that for all but two per cent of individuals whose pre-ministerial occupation is known, becoming a minister represented an upward movement in the social scale, the majority moving up two classes. This certainly confirms George Eliot's rather sour comment that the nonconformist ministry was the means by which an individual "without the aid of birth or money . . . may most easily attain power and reputation . . ." ²¹ What is perhaps more revealing, however, is to compare the successful Hoxton-

19. *Congregational Year Book*, 1848, p. 88.

20. Occupations are grouped into social classes following A. Armstrong, "The use of information about occupations", in E.A. Wrigley ed., *Nineteenth century society. Essays in the use of quantitative methods for the study of social data*, Cambridge, 1972, pp. 191-310.

21. G. Eliot, *Essays and leaves from a notebook*, 1884, p. 145.

TABLE 2. Occupational and social status of Hoxton-Highbury applicants

Occupation	Hoxton	Highbury	Not admitted	RG Social class	Percentage
Accountant	—	2	—	I	2.1
Architect	—	1	—		
Carpet manufacturer	1	—	—		
Missionary	—	1	—		
Surgeon	1	2	—		
Artist	—	1	1	II	13.7
Civil servant	—	1	—		
Master builder	—	—	1		
Record keeper	—	1	—		
Teacher/tutor	6	25	16		
Tea dealer	—	—	1		
Actor	—	—	1	III	46.3
Baker	1	1	—		
Bookseller/printer	5	13	2		
Cabinet maker	—	2	—		
Chemist/druggist	1	9	3		
Clerk	6	28	9		
Confectioner	—	1	—		
Cooper	1	1	—		
Draper	8	23	11		
Engineer	—	2	—		
Engraver	—	1	1		
Farm steward	1	—	—		
Glasscutter	—	1	1		
Grocer	3	7	—		
Hairdresser	1	—	—		
Hardware maker	—	1	—		
Hosier	—	—	2		
Ironfounder	—	—	1		
Ironmonger	—	2	2		
Journalist	—	1	—		
Leather seller	—	1	—		
Manager	1	—	—		
Needlemaker	—	—	1		
Ribbon weaver	—	1	—		
Saddler	1	—	—		
Sailor	3	—	—		
Shoemaker	—	1	2		
Silversmith	—	1	—		
Slate maker	—	1	—		
Tailor	1	2	1		
Tallow chandler	1	—	—		
Warehouseman	—	4	—		
Woolcomber	—	—	1		
Unspecified apprentice	6	—	—		
Farm labourer	—	3	1	IV	1.8
Nurseryman	1	—	—		
Servant	—	—	1		
Student	9	25	5		10.1
Unemployed	—	2	—		0.5
Unknown	66	10	20		24.7

Highbury applicants with the general social composition of Congregationalism as established by Dr. Gilbert.²² This indicates quite clearly that while artisans (described by Gilbert as something of a "residual category") predominated in the denomination as a whole, the ministry tended to be drawn from the higher elements within the middle class.²³ In particular the proportion of "shopocrats" in the Congregational ministry was much higher than their proportion in the church generally, and the same is true for the white collar and professional element included in the "Other" category. Further support for this suggestion comes from an examination of ministerial ages at death. The average age at

TABLE 3. Occupational structure of Hoxton-Highbury students. Percentages

Occupations	Hoxton-Highbury ministers	The whole denomination
Merchants/manufacturers	2.7	5.4
Shopkeepers	22.5	8.2
Farmers	1.7	7.1
Artisans	21.2	63.0
Labourers	2.1	3.9
Colliers	—	2.1
Other	49.9	10.3

death of the Hoxton-Highbury men was 72.74 years for all those dying after the age of 51. This is very close to the average age at death among all professional (i.e. those in law, medicine and the Anglican priesthood) men, calculated by W.A. Guy at 73.62 among those dying after the age of 51.²⁴ This figure, Guy estimated, was the highest for any social class except the gentry. Strictly speaking, however, the two averages of age at death are not strictly comparable, as Guy's was based on the experience of men dying in the period between 1758 and 1843, whereas most of the Hoxton and Highbury men died after 1851. Yet even if a more valid comparison is made, the conclusion still seems to be that the Congregational ministers came from the highest social groups within the middle classes. Wesleyans were generally regarded as representing the highest strata among the Methodists, but the mean death age among their ministers in the period between 1851 and 1910 was about 65 years.²⁵ For the Hoxton-Highbury men in the same period it was slightly over 70.

It may well be, of course, that such figures merely reflect the fact that in the first half of the nineteenth century at least, only relatively well-off families could afford to let their sons go to Hoxton or Highbury, and some applications were certainly turned down because the candidates had inadequate financial resources. On the whole, however, the committee did its best to help poorer individuals, once they had established the credibility of their calling and ability. Indeed, the guiding spirit behind Hoxton and Highbury, Thomas Wilson, who

22. A.D. Gilbert, *Religion and society in industrial England*, 1976, p. 63.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

24. W.A. Guy, "On the duration of life in the members of the several professions", *Journal of the Statistical Society*, IX, 1846, p. 350.

25. Field, "Methodism in Metropolitan London", *op. cit.* p. 295.

was committee secretary for over fifty years, sometimes dipped into his own pocket on behalf of worthy candidates.²⁶ Rather more were turned down because they performed badly at the interview, part of which entailed preaching a short, prepared sermon before the assembled committee members. Thus Mr. Saville was rejected by Highbury in 1833 because his "exercise was very defective as a specimen of his ability; he did not appear in the judgement of the Committee to possess the requisite qualifications."²⁷ A Welshman, E.W. Lewis, was turned down in 1827 on the ground that he had "so bad an articulation that I consider him very unfit . . . it is very difficult to carry on a conversation with him."²⁸ Others failed to satisfy the committee on theological grounds, suspicion being directed equally at those reared in Anglican hierarchalism or Methodist enthusiasm. But even the Old Dissent was not entirely immune. Mr. Higgs was rejected because he believed in adult baptism, his Baptist referee confessing that he could not support his application "without doing violence to my conscience: nor would he ever have been a candidate for admission there, had he been left to the choice of his own unbiassed judgement . . ."²⁹ Mr. Higgs, it appears, had been nobbled by his parents. A number of other applicants were not admitted because they were deemed physically incapable of standing up to the rigours of a curriculum which involved intensive study of a wide range of disciplines. John Stoughton, one of the first Highbury students, recalled that Dr. Henderson

"drilled us in the languages of the Old Testament, initiated some small study in Syriac, and delivered elaborate lectures on the evidences and doctrines of Christianity. He suggested essays to be written during the vacation on subjects demanding research, and he regularly required the careful preparation of comments on the original Scriptures, to be

TABLE 4. Highest educational level attained before college application

Type	Hoxton		Highbury		Not admitted		All applicants	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Charity/ Elementary	2	1.6	—	—	3	3.5	55	1.2
Grammar/ Boarding	5	4.0	25	13.8	13	15.4	43	11.0
Private tutor	24	19.3	39	21.6	16	19.0	79	20.3
Preparatory Seminary	23	18.5	63	35.0	15	17.8	101	26.0
University	7	5.6	23	12.7	9	10.7	39	10.0
Unknown	63	50.8	30	16.6	28	33.3	121	31.1

26. For Wilson see J. Wilson, *Memoir of the life and character of Thomas Wilson Esq.*, 1849. *passim*.

27. Undated College memorandum, c. 1833. NCA 306/13/5.

28. Hoxton College, Reports on interviews with candidates, 1814–1832. NCA 128/1.

29. Mr. Irons to Hoxton College Committee, 30 April 1822. NCA 228/4/7.

delivered *viva voce* in class."³⁰

With Dr. Halley, Stoughton added, "we read . . . some Greek tragedians and he delivered lectures on history and antiquities."³¹ This in turn points up what appears to have been a main reason for non-admittance, the lack of an adequate educational background. Clearly, this might also have reflected the candidate's social status and its associated financial standing. It is true that some of the unsuccessful candidates had been educated to university level and their rejection was presumably on other grounds. For the rest, one of the most common levels of education attained was that provided by a private tutor, the quality of which must have varied enormously. About a fifth of those not admitted had been privately tutored and about the same proportion were accepted both by Hoxton and Highbury. Many of the candidates referred to the preparatory seminaries at Coventry, Fakenham, Rowell, Bedford and Yeovil had previously been privately educated by tutors, but not even the best efforts of the seminary proprietors could always compensate for lack of basic ability or poor education. As Table 4 shows, over seventeen per cent of those not admitted had attended one or other of the preparatory seminaries. Nor was the quality of those who were successful necessarily high. Newman Hall was disparaging about his contemporaries at Highbury, claiming that most of them "had scarcely any other qualification than piety and a natural fitness for preaching."³² It seems that candidates entering Highbury were, on the whole, better qualified than their predecessors at Hoxton and this is what one would expect, given the general interest apparent in all the nonconformist churches from the 1830s onwards in the question of improving ministerial quality. However, the contrast is perhaps less marked than Table 4 suggests, reflecting the tendency of earlier applicants either to omit entirely any reference to their education or to refer to it in general terms such as "poor", "classical", "commercial", "a sound English education", and so on.

Admission to Hoxton-Highbury, then, appears to have been something of a hit and miss affair with much depending on the candidate's ability to convince the committee of his calling, and on the committee's ability to weed out the theologically suspect, the physically weak, and the intellectually feeble. Since it

TABLE 5. College careers of Hoxton-Highbury students

	Hoxton	Highbury	Total	Hoxton Register
Admitted	124	180	304	203
Dismissed	2	1	3	5
Died	2	4	6	7
Withdrew	4	7	11	10
Completed	116	168	284	181
Percentage Completing	93.5	93.3	93.4	89.1

30. J. Stoughton, *Recollections of a long life*, 1894, pp. 17-18.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

could hardly be expected to foresee the sudden or hidden illnesses which caused most of the withdrawals mentioned in Table 5, the committee seems to have been fairly adept at selecting men who could be expected to complete the course and to enter the ministry. Some confirmation of this is provided by figures compiled from a register of interviews with Hoxton applicants compiled between 1814 and 1832.³³

But if most students successfully completed their courses the wastage thereafter was surprisingly high, though this must have been masked by the steady growth in the number of new ministerial candidates. Indeed, by the end of the nineteenth century almost one in ten of Congregational ministers had no church. Tables 6 and 7 plot the situations of all Hoxton and Highbury graduates at selected times after leaving college. Death took a regular if unspectacular toll while sickness forced a number of early retirements. The main feature of the tables, however, is the high loss in the first years of ministerial life. Within five years over fifteen per cent of the Hoxton men had gone, and a further five years saw this figure rise to almost a quarter. The Highbury record was worse with more than a third of graduates lost to the domestic pastoral ministry within ten years. One significant cause of this was migration abroad; Hoxton lost nearly eight per cent of its output in this way. Most, though not all, of these men went as missionaries and Highbury's larger contribution — over a tenth — doubtless reflects greater missionary concern and opportunity as the century wore on. Yet even if this type of loss is discounted, along with the involuntary leakage caused by death or retirement and the losses arising from transfers to denominational education and administration, it remains true that about one in ten of all Hoxton students had left the ministry altogether within ten years of entering it. Highbury suffered still more, about eighteen per cent having left within the first decade after leaving college. In a sense, perhaps, such losses were only to be expected. College life was very sheltered. As one Methodist recalled of his time at Didsbury, "We were sublimely unconscious of the movements of destruction and reconstruction which the historians can now see were already at work, we . . . lived in strange ignorance of what was transpiring in the world of thought."³⁴ Theological students also tended to live in ignorance of what really happened in the bread and butter world, particularly before efforts were made in the late nineteenth century to provide a curriculum which better prepared them for the realities of everyday pastoral and congregational life. Even then, many still found the experience a profound emotional shock, and would have readily recognised A.M. Fairbairn's reaction. During his first pastorate, he confessed, he passed through "a season of mental storm and doubt, when the very foundations of faith seemed to be shaken."³⁵ Not all survived as Fairbairn did. Faith was quite often shipwrecked as the high wastage rates in Tables 6 and

33. Hoxton College, Reports on interviews, *op. cit.*

34. J.E. Rattenbury, "Didsbury — fifty years ago", in W.B. Brash and C.J. Wright eds., *Didsbury College Centenary, 1842-1942*, 1942, p. 97.

35. *Congregational Year Book*, 1913, p. 165.

TABLE 6. Hoxton students: career pattern by cumulative percentages

Years since graduating	Dead	Retired	* Secular work	** Changed ministry	Changed denom.	Abroad	*** Denom. education	**** Lost	Total
0-5	0.86	0.86	1.72	—	1.72	6.03	—	4.31	15.50
6-10	3.44	2.58	2.58	—	2.58	7.75	—	5.17	24.10
11-15	5.17	4.31	2.58	2.58	2.58	8.62	1.72	5.17	32.73
16-20	6.03	5.17	3.44	2.58	4.31	8.62	1.72	7.03	37.90
21-25	7.75	6.89	4.31	3.44	5.17	9.48	1.72	7.75	46.51
26-30	10.34	9.48	4.31	6.89	5.17	9.48	1.72	8.62	56.01
31-35	14.65	13.79	4.31	8.62	5.17	9.48	1.72	8.62	66.36
36-40	17.24	17.24	4.31	8.62	5.17	9.48	1.72	8.62	72.40
41-45	24.13	24.13	4.31	8.62	5.17	9.48	1.72	8.62	86.18
46-50	27.58	27.58	4.31	8.62	5.17	9.48	1.72	8.62	93.08
51-55	31.89	27.58	4.31	8.62	5.17	9.48	1.72	8.62	97.39
56-60	33.62	28.44	4.31	8.62	5.17	9.48	1.72	8.62	99.98

TABLE 7. Highbury students: career pattern by cumulative percentages

Years since graduating	Dead	Retired	* Secular work	** Changed ministry	Changed denom.	Abroad	*** Denom. education	**** Lost	Total
0-5	2.38	—	2.38	—	2.38	8.92	0.59	5.95	22.60
6-10	3.57	1.19	4.76	1.78	4.16	10.11	1.19	8.33	35.09
11-15	5.35	1.78	5.95	2.38	4.76	11.30	1.78	10.71	44.01
16-20	8.33	2.97	5.95	3.57	7.73	11.30	1.78	10.71	52.34
21-25	8.92	4.16	6.54	5.35	7.73	11.30	1.78	11.30	57.08
26-30	10.11	5.95	7.73	5.35	8.33	11.30	1.78	11.90	62.45
31-35	11.90	11.30	8.92	5.95	8.92	11.30	1.78	12.50	72.57
36-40	13.09	21.42	8.92	5.95	8.92	11.30	1.78	12.50	83.88
41-45	14.88	25.59	9.52	5.95	8.92	11.30	1.78	12.50	90.44
46-50	15.47	29.16	9.52	5.95	8.92	11.30	1.78	12.50	94.60
51-55	15.47	29.76	9.52	5.95	8.92	11.30	1.78	12.50	95.20
56-60	16.07	33.35	9.52	5.95	8.92	11.30	1.78	12.50	99.39

* Those described as taking secular work all spent some time in the ministry and thus appear in Surman's index. Most became schoolmasters and presumably retention of the minister's title was of some use in this.

** i.e. cemetery chaplain, Home Missionary Society, etc.

*** i.e. tutoring at a Congregational college.

**** According to Surman's Index, and presumably left the ministry.

7 suggest. That Highbury seems to have suffered more than Hoxton in this respect was perhaps because its students were entering a world in which alternative opportunities of employment were becoming more readily available, but also a world fundamentally shaken by theological controversy. Congregationalism had always been suspicious of set creeds of belief, reluctant, in John Stoughton's words, "to reduce the expression of Christian belief to a series of legal propositions . . ."³⁶ This may have fostered a degree of theological vagueness which proved less than resilient in the face of Darwinism and the higher biblical criticism. It is perhaps significant that most of those who left the Congregational ministry for another church went either for the liturgical comforts of Anglicanism or for the intellectual liberalism of Unitarianism. Nor was this peculiar to Highbury students. The *Register of Students* of the Lancashire Independent College reveals the same tendency, though it has not been quantified.³⁷

The high rate of leakage among newly qualified ministers may well help to explain another significant, but often overlooked feature of the Congregational minister's career. It has been widely assumed that Congregational ministers tended to stay with their flocks for longer periods than ministers of other denominations, particularly Methodists whose normal permitted maximum was three years. This is broadly confirmed by the following table. But it is worth noting that about a third of the pastorates taken by Hoxton and Highbury men lasted for three years or less, and virtually two-thirds lasted for seven years and under. Thus the difference between the denominations was not as marked as is sometimes suggested by, for example, the case of Henry Bevis, who went to Highbury in 1833, left early to take up a pastorate in 1834, moved two years later to his second church and was still there when he died in 1893, having served it for fifty seven years.

Perhaps the frequency of short stays had something to do with a remark made in the *Congregational Magazine* for 1844 that young ministers were going

TABLE 8. *Length of pastorates. Hoxton-Highbury graduates by percentages*

<i>Length</i>	<i>Hoxton</i>	<i>Highbury</i>
Up to 3 years	31.4	35.4
4-7 years	30.3	31.3
8-11 years	11.0	14.7
12-15 years	5.9	6.6
16-19 years	5.5	3.6
20-23 years	3.3	2.4
24-27 years	2.2	2.7
28-31 years	2.2	0.9
32 years and over	7.5	3.1
Longest - 57 years		

36. Stoughton, *op. cit.*, p. 385.

37. Lancashire Independent College, Register of Students. Northern Congregational College Archive, Manchester.

forth "not so much as labourers in the vine-yard of Christ as inquirers for an easy place, a good salary, and respectability."³⁸ This did a grave injustice to the many for whom such considerations were of no account, but a denomination in which salaries varied so widely (as compared with the Methodists, for example, where the salary structure was centrally controlled) was also likely to be one which encouraged ministerial mobility. Certainly Thomas Wilson's correspondence reveals enough to suggest that there was some substance to the *Congregational Magazine's* complaint. Thus in 1828 J. Tippetts was writing to Wilson seeking a change of church, partly because the people did not like his preaching, but mainly because he wanted a place more congenial to his health and to study. In the same way, T. Lamb declined a church at Market Rasen because he doubted if it could afford to pay a salary of more than £50 a year. He went on:

Besides — the work to be done here is, I really fear, more than my constitution would allow me to undertake with comfort, or even with safety. There are in fact, two congregations to be regularly served. On Sabbath days, I have to preach 3 times, and travel 8 miles — to preach twice during the week, at the same places — and *besides* this, to conduct a week evening service, *once a fortnight* at another neighbouring village. The exertion, mental and corporeal, for which these services call, I really stand in doubt of my ability to undergo for a continuance. . . .³⁹

In any case, he added, there was a large debt outstanding on the church.

Alternatively, the frequency of short ministries may have been produced by the constant dynamic between minister and congregation which characterised the Independent churches. Congregational ministers expected to be given a great deal of authority within their churches, yet at the same time they were servants of independent congregations in whom notions of democracy were deeply engrained.⁴⁰ Ministerial life could be made very difficult at the merest congregational whim. One church member wrote to Thomas Wilson in great concern about his minister.

I fear he is not making much advance . . . his delivery & even reading of the Scriptures is so very schoolboyish that he gains no reception of hearers and meets with but little attention.⁴¹

The writer went on to urge that the minister should be encouraged to leave at the end of the year. Others had to reconcile warring factions within the church. Simon Binks found the church at Lutterworth divided between Antinomians, infant and adult baptisers, and another family group into which the previous minister had married and which had been accustomed, therefore, to exercising considerable influence.⁴² It must have been very tempting for ministers in such

38. *Congregational Magazine*, 1844, p. 127.

39. T. Lamb to T. Wilson, 6 December 1827. NCA 331/2.

40. For a good discussion of the position of the minister within Congregationalism see J.W. Grant, *Free churchmanship in England, 1870–1940*, 1955, pp. 77 ff.

41. R. Newland to T. Wilson, 2 January 1828. NCA 331/8.

42. S. Binks to T. Wilson, 1 January 1828. NCA 331/6.

uncongenial situations to seek less onerous, more cooperative congregations and, by the same token, having found one, the temptation to put down roots must have been very strong. Clearly, we should be careful not to exaggerate the problems unduly. Given Wilson's position at Hoxton-Highbury it is only to be expected that his correspondence should contain a high proportion of letters concerning internal church difficulties. Furthermore, the lay-ministerial relationship within Independency must in practice have been more harmonious than its theoretical basis might suggest. Ministers were, after all, regarded as possessing an independent power derived from Christ himself, a source not lightly disregarded among God-fearing people. Even so, on the evidence provided by the ministers considered here, they moved, whatever the reasons, much more frequently than is generally assumed.

It must be stressed that the findings of this paper are not based on evidence derived from a random sample in any technical sense, though there is no reason to believe that the letters of application used here differed from those which have not survived. The suggestion that Independent ministers tended to come from the highest social groups within the denomination may well require modification after non-college men have been investigated, since formal training may have represented a financial commitment too great for all but the most prosperous. It would be revealing, for example, to establish the typical social status of those who began their careers at the very end of the century, by which time the great majority underwent some formal training. As college attendance became more usual so one would expect ministers' social status to reflect more closely that of the denomination as a whole. In the same way one would also expect that ministers' geographical origins would more closely reflect those areas where the denomination was especially strong. For the present it appears that the geographical origins of the Hoxton-Highbury men bear little relation to those areas of particular Congregational strength as established by J.D. Gay, though the comparison is not strictly applicable as Gay's figures of density were for 1851, and the majority of Hoxton-Highbury men were born between 1770 and 1830.⁴³ Their distribution would thus represent the denominational pattern of an earlier period, though it seems more likely that it reflected the lure of London and relatively poor transport facilities. Finally, it may prove to be the case that college-trained men in the first half of the nineteenth century could afford to be more discriminating in their choice of settlement since they were in great demand, as Thomas Wilson's correspondence indicates. If they did, therefore, move more frequently, this would help to explain the surprisingly short average length of pastorates. Once again, one would expect some change of pattern as college training became more typical. In short, our conclusions must be regarded as tentative. Only further research will tell.

KENNETH D. BROWN

43. J.D. Gay, *The geography of religion in England*, 1971, p. 301.

A NESTOR OF NONCONFORMIST HERETICS: A.J. SCOTT (1805–1866)

Early in the summer of 1853, George MacDonald, now remembered primarily for his literary works of fantasy, was forced to resign his ministry at the Trinity Congregational Chapel in Arundel on a charge of heresy. His emphasis on the universal love of God, coupled with a hope in universal salvation, and his anti-sabbatarianism rendered his message heterodox and, therefore, unacceptable to the deacons of the Arundel chapel. Ejected from his own congregation the twenty-nine year old MacDonald headed north to Manchester to join a man who was becoming something of a Nestor of Nonconformist heretics, Alexander John Scott. Who was this “thin, black-complexioned, vehement man”,¹ and what characterised his teaching, attracting not only George MacDonald, but young Nonconformist thinkers from all over the country to this theological dissident in Halliwell Lane, Manchester?²

As a young minister in the National Kirk of Scotland, Scott had been the first to refuse to sign the church’s Westminster Confession of Faith because it taught a doctrine of limited atonement and thus denied the universal love of God. He also strongly opposed the Scottish Church’s reigning sabbatarianism. In 1831, in an attempt to defend his position, Scott stood alone before the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland only to be unanimously deposed from the ministry on a charge of heresy. The Assembly then forbade all its ministers from ever again “employing him to preach in their pulpits.”³ Young Scott’s conscientious stance before the General Assembly, however, was the first sign of a tidal wave of discontent that was to sink the Kirk’s confessionalism by the end of the century. The other young rebels involved in this Scottish reformation of the nineteenth century, such as John McLeod Campbell, now recognised as one of Scotland’s greatest theologians, Thomas Erskine, the mystic laird of Linlathen, and the romantic and apocalyptic Edward Irving, were among Scott’s intimates. His influence on these men was immense.

After his deposition from the Church of Scotland’s ministry, Scott moved south to England, where he developed close friendships with Carlyle, Maurice, Thackeray, Francis Newman, Kingsley, Ruskin and other literary and theological figures. In England Scott became the personal link between some of the leading theological reformers of Scotland and England. His house, just outside London, was a place of dialogue between the Kirk’s outcasts and English reformers, many of whom, including Maurice, Scott influenced. He preached independently throughout these years, attracting a following among those looking for a more comprehensive Christianity, and continued to do so as Professor of English Literature at University College London, the only place of higher education free

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1. J.A. Froude, *Thomas Carlyle (1795–1835)* vol. 2, 1882, p. 177.
 2. For a full biographical and theological study of Alexander John Scott (1805–66) see J.P. Newell’s unpublished Ph.D. thesis, *A.J. Scott and His Circle*, Edinburgh University, 1981.
 3. *Records of the General Assembly 1828–31*, Scottish Records Office, Edinburgh, CH1/1 81, pp. 527–28.

from religious tests.

In 1848, shortly after the February revolution in Paris, Scott, at one with Maurice, Kingsley, and J.M. Ludlow, in his concern to apply Christianity to the social and political needs of his day, became one of the founders of the Christian Socialist movement, a first attempt in Britain to hold together the tenets of Christianity and the cooperative elements of Socialism. The Christian Socialists were committed to breaking the monopoly of higher education in Britain and were the first to found Working Men's Colleges and Ladies' Colleges in London and Manchester. The high place given by Scott to freedom of conscience encouraged him in 1851 to become, when offered the post, the first principal of Owens College, Manchester, the only centre of university education in Britain, besides University College London, entirely committed to religious liberty, and thus to the higher education of Nonconformists.

Scott's theology was characterised by emphases which were sure to set the orthodox of his day against him. Central place, for instance, was given to the concept of "spiritual conscience", a doctrine closely resembling, but apparently not influenced by, Schleiermacher's idea of "God consciousness". Scott believed that there is a God-given faculty in every man which enables him to determine what is of God. "Man *may* know," he asserted, "when that is presented to him, from which he dare not be out of communion, under penalty of being out of communion with God."⁴ This is not an infallible guide, but we cannot do without it, insisted Scott. Any attempt to place the Church, its sacraments, the ecclesiastically ordained, or the Scriptures between God and the individual's spiritual conscience is, he said, idolatrous. Not one of these means of authority is to be read without this God-given faculty of discernment, which, in the end, has an absolute and boundless right over man. Not surprisingly, Scott's concept of spiritual conscience rankled not only with scriptural infallibilists and advocates of high church theology but with traditionalists of almost every denomination.

A second radical emphasis in Scott's theology was his concentrated focus on Christ's humanity as the sphere where God is truly revealed, an emphasis which stood in stark contrast to mid-nineteenth-century orthodoxy's sharp tendency to distinguish God the Father's nature from that revealed in Christ's humanity. "In the humanity of Christ, in human thoughts, human feelings, human joys and sorrows," said Scott, "God looks out and articulates Himself to us with a distinctness and a home impression beyond what any other form of manifestation can possess; and seeing Him we emphatically see the Father."⁵ And Christ's human nature, contended Scott, almost alone in the late 1820s, is that of all mankind. To say that Christ fully shared our fallen humanity was abhorrent to orthodoxy and even to the secular press.⁶ Against the prevalent

4. A.J. Scott, "On Schism" Lecture I, *The Pulpit*, vol. 41, 28 May 1842, p. 510.

5. A.J. Scott, "Introductory Discourse on Revelation", *Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans*, 1838, p. 15.

6. See "The Scots Presbytery, London", *The Times*, 8 May 1830.

Docetic tendency both within and outside the church Scott argued that Christ is "just as emphatically man as he is emphatically God."⁷ Scott's rediscovery of Christian orthodoxy on this point was considered by most to be heretical.

The most important theological implication of Scott's conviction that God was revealed in the humanity of Christ, and the one which resulted in his deposition from the Kirk's ministry, was his belief in the universal love of God. Against Westminster Calvinism's doctrine of limited atonement, which restricted the love of God to the elect, Scott, in his earliest preaching had contended that Christ's unlimited love for man is the very image of his Father's love for all humanity. "How is God disposed towards us?" asked Scott in 1831. "He that hath seen Jesus hath seen the Father."⁸ Any attempt to limit the love of God was for Scott a "negation of the Gospel."⁹ This emphasis, with its implied notion of universal equality and the brotherhood of man, had radical overtones which Scott saw and developed in his Christian Socialism and in his educational pursuits. Both the doctrine and its socio-political implications were firmly rejected by the orthodox, which gave its blessing to the divisions of society as being divinely ordained.

Another corollary of Scott's focus upon the Incarnation was his emphatic affirmation of God's immanence in humanity and in creation. "The Incarnation, if it mean anything at all," he said, "is a coming closer to man, a bringing the Divinity and humanity nearer to one another, a making the divine not to be present, *beside* the human merely, but *in* the human; a making the human to be divine by being entirely penetrated with the light of God."¹⁰ This, said Scott, is the value of the bodies of men, the looks of human countenances, the tones of human voices. God is immanent in the entire created order, and nature has an infinite depth. There is in it the divine Presence communicating itself to man. Scott's belief in the immanence of God in creation led him to speak prophetically against the materialist utilitarian philosophy of greater and faster production at all costs, including that exploitation of people and natural resources which accompanied the industrial revolution in such places as Manchester. Needless to say, Scott's message did not always please the manufacturing magnates of Lancashire.

Another characteristic emphasis was Scott's intense desire for the living and the dynamic, leading him to criticise, for instance, the legalistic observance of the Sabbath, prevalent both north and south of the border. Throughout his life he preached a theology of the Spirit. His message of spontaneity and unpredictability in the Spirit worried contemporary churchmen. Liturgical, ecclesiastical, and doctrinal form were to be open to change by the Spirit. The Church, he said, is to drop off "forms no longer useful, as the oak has done the leaves of last summer. The live oak abides the same by its vitality, while it changes form

7. Scott, *Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 76-77.

8. A.J. Scott, *Hints for Meditation on Acquaintance with God*, Greenock, 1831, p.10.

9. A.J. Scott, "A Letter to the Editor", *The Daily News*, 26 May 1862.

10. Scott, *Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans*, p. 27.

and dimensions by growth: the mass of squared timber has lost its power of assimilation, its command of resources; death enables it to remain unchanged in form till death brings decay that changes form and substance. What is dead is changed from without; what lives changes from within."¹¹ And the truly ordained individual, Scott insisted, was not the man who had received the church's laying on of hands in a type of apostolic succession, but rather the person who evidenced in his life and thought the Spirit of Christ. And the church, as the Body of Christ on earth, existed only where lives of men and women were inspired by Christ's Spirit, and not merely where there had been established a God-chosen external system of ordinances.

And finally, Scott was characterised by a Christian faith of unusual breadth and comprehensiveness. From theology to poetry to philosophy to science to socio-political thought, Scott moved back and forth again and again, without losing sight of the great whole. "I know not," he said, "with what religion has nothing to do."¹² At a time when science was threatening many religious minds Scott urged Christians to be open to scientific developments. The church must ally itself with all that is true. "Be assured," he said, "there is a harmony in all truth, a mutual dependence. All its lines converge. There is a point, in which meeting, they lean one upon another; and he who will try to do without any of them will find that the rest must suffer."¹³ At a time of social, political and scientific upheaval, the Church by and large lacked the confidence to open itself to contemporary developments, and felt threatened by Scott's plea for comprehensiveness. As well as calling for a unity with all that was true, Scott, at a very early stage, began to call for the unity of the Church, for the overcoming of the isolationism which characterised the Christian traditions of his day. He criticised the majority of Nonconformists for not even desiring unity. But, for Scott, much greater even than the unity of church or society was the unity of humanity. If others "will be *Roman* Catholics or *Anglo-Catholics*," he said, "be you *Human* Catholics."¹⁴ Scott consistently witnessed to the community and the brotherhood of men, proclaiming his vision of a catholic humanity.

Nearly all of Scott's emphases touched the mid-nineteenth-century church at its most sensitive points. As a prophet he offered an antidote to the church of his age, which it by and large rejected as poisonous. It was to this heretic that MacDonald fled in the summer of 1853, looking for, and finding, sympathy and encouragement from a man who had faced a similar fate over twenty years earlier. MacDonald had, in fact, come under Scott's influence four years before this, when, as a student at Highbury College, he was preparing for the Congregational ministry. Against the principal's explicit disapproval, MacDonald and some fellow students had found their way each Sunday evening to rented rooms

11. A.J. Scott, *The First Principle of Church Government*, 1845, p. 50.

12. A.J. Scott, *Social Systems of the Present Day*, 1841, p. 336.

13. *Ibid*, p. 376.

14. *Ibid*, p. 375.

in Portman Square to hear Scott expound his radical theology. From this time forward MacDonald repeatedly and unhesitatingly spoke of himself as a disciple of Alexander Scott.¹⁵

Upon joining Scott in Manchester MacDonald received not only friendship and theological sympathy but immediate financial support and a warm invitation to him and his family to stay with the Scotts. Around the family table at Halliwell Lane, and especially in the study, Scott further influenced MacDonald's developing theology. He also nurtured his friend's literary gifts, especially encouraging the use of the imagination, and he provided him with helpful contacts, such as Lady Byron. MacDonald later acknowledged that his literary prosperity had come chiefly through Scott.¹⁶ Soon Scott's theology was being reproduced in MacDonald's prolific writings, the young poet-novelist having picked up his teacher's distinctive emphases of the universal Fatherhood of God, the sacredness of creation, and the humanity and Christlikeness of God. Much to the detriment of his literary style MacDonald had a tendency to preach in his novels, but nevertheless, he effectively communicated to thousands of readers, in story form, both in Britain and in North America, his essential theological convictions. "We hae no richt to say we ken God save in the face o' Christ Jesus," states MacDonald's character, Robert Falconer, in a novel dedicated to Scott. "Whatever's no like Christ is no like God."¹⁷ *Robert Falconer*, with its expressed hope in universal salvation, was considered, even by some of Scott's friends, too radical to publish, but, upon publication it had an immense influence upon the religious thinking of its day. Certainly no one did more in the nineteenth century to establish a belief in the humanity and universal Fatherhood of God than George MacDonald.¹⁸ Scott's theological emphases lived on and were widely propagated through the popular writings of his disciple, and are still being circulated through MacDonald's republished works.¹⁹ And the man who stood next, as it were, in the Scott-MacDonald line of descent, the Christian poet and apologist, C.S. Lewis, one of the most popular theologians of the present century, considered MacDonald to be his theological master.²⁰

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15. See, for instance, W.G. Horder, "George MacDonald: A Nineteenth Century Seer", *Review of Reviews*, October 1905, vol. 32, 1905, pp. 358-59; J. Hunter, "Alexander Scott", *The Expositor* (8th series), vol. 21, 1921, p. 391; J. Johnson, *George MacDonald*, 1906, pp. 22, 64; Greville MacDonald, *George MacDonald and His Wife*, 1924, p. 192; and W.R. Nicoll, "George MacDonald", *The British Weekly*, 21 September 1905, vol. 38, p. 550.
16. Greville MacDonald, *George MacDonald and His Wife*, p. 359.
17. G. MacDonald, *Robert Falconer*, n.d., p. 354.
18. Horder, *art. cit.*, p. 360.
19. Some of MacDonald's most recent republications are: *At the Back of the North Wind*, 1973; *The Gifts of the Child Christ*, 2 vols., Michigan, 1977; *The Golden Key*, New York, 1978; *The Light Princess*, New York, 1978; *Phantastes and Lilith*, Michigan, 1978; *The Portent*, New York, 1979; *The Princess and Curdie*, Harmondsworth, 1976; *The Princess and the Goblin*, Harmondsworth, 1978. Even *Robert Falconer* and some of the other Scottish novels, such as *David Elginbrod* and *Alec Forbes*, have recently been republished in America, primarily in limited editions.
20. C.S. Lewis, *George MacDonald, An Anthology*, 1946, pp. 20-21.

George MacDonald, while perhaps closest to Scott, was certainly not his only disciple in Manchester. It was natural that many of Scott's students from Owens College, were, through personal contact with the man, to feel the influence of his theology. Not the least of those to be affected was Frederic William MacDonald, later a theologian and leading Wesleyan Methodist, and the uncle of Rudyard Kipling. Fifty years after his student days, Frederic MacDonald spoke of the extraordinary spiritual and intellectual influence which Scott exercised over many Owens' College students. Scott, he said, was a "thinker whose genius was akin to that of Coleridge on the one side, and Sir William Hamilton on the other."²¹ For a number of years MacDonald edited the *London Quarterly Review*; in 1881 he became Professor of Theology at Handsworth College, and in 1899 President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference.

But perhaps more important, at least from the perspective of Scott's contribution to the development of Nonconformist theology, was his influence over the theological students of the nearby Lancashire Independent College in Manchester. "The students of the Lancashire College used to go down in a body every Thursday to hear him," wrote one of Scott's young devotees from the theological college. This apparently made return to the College for dinner impossible, and "poor old Dr. Vaughan continually found himself to his amazement, presiding over an empty dinner table."²² Robert Vaughan, as principal of the Lancashire Independent College, as well as founder and editor of the *British Quarterly*, was alarmed at the fact that so many of his students should be attending the public weekly lectures on theologically related topics of a man widely suspected of heterodoxy. The theological students, however, persevered in their attendance, primarily because of the freshness of Scott's radically broad and human theology, but also because of his fascinating personality and his almost bewitching powers of speech. There was an exuberance in Scott of "living, instant thought," said one of his listeners. "He thought, and felt, and was moved at the very moment he spoke, and his words partook somewhat of the fine confusion of immediate, formative life."²³ Scott, with "broad smooth brow, his black hair falling over it, and his pale massive features",²⁴ would enter the lecture room on a Thursday afternoon, without a manuscript, and often without a collar or tie, and sit down at the desk and begin to talk "as though we had been making a morning call, and a subject of conversation had just occurred to him. By and by he would take up a pen and twiddle it; then he would stop, and drop it as a point of some perplexity made him pause. Then he would flash out a profound suggestion. Then he would range through Dante, Homer, Plato, the Vedas, the Zend-a-vesta, the Koran, and so on for illustrations. Then some aberration of modern vulgarity would be remembered, and he would throw his

21. F.W. MacDonald, *As a Tale that is Told*, 1919, p. 94.

22. J.A. Picton in J. Hunter's "Alexander Scott", *The Expositor*, (8th Series), vol. 21, 1921, p. 458.

23. "Professor A.J. Scott", *The Scotsman*, 19 January 1866.

24. (J. Finlayson?), *Memoir of Rev. Alex. J. Scott*, 1886, p. 15.

grand head back and his eyes would burn, and his voice would rise as near to tones of thunder as is possible in conversation. When we went away 'our hearts burned within us'.²⁵

The author of that description was James Allanson Picton, later a Congregational minister-theologian, frequently suspected of heterodoxy, and later still a radical politician actively committed to promoting the education and rights of the working classes. Picton was particularly to manifest Scott's emphases on the humanity of Christ and the sacredness of creation, although, in his *Mystery of Matter* (1878), Picton's use of the term "Christian Pantheism" led him into extremes with which Scott would not have agreed.

Another dissident student from the Lancashire Independent College was David Worthington Simon, later a leading reformer of Congregational theology, who throughout his theological career claimed to be deeply indebted to Alexander Scott.²⁶ He evidenced Scott's theological influence, especially in his consistently Christocentric emphasis. Simon became, at different stages, the principal of three of the major Independent theological colleges in Scotland and England: Spring Hill College, Birmingham; the Congregational College, Edinburgh; and the Yorkshire United Independent College, Bradford. Although at first suspect for the openness of his theology and that of his students, who became known in Congregational circles as "Simon's men", he effected major changes in Nonconformist theology.²⁷

Part of Scott's broadening influence over these young men was the variety of contacts which he offered them in his own house. The constant stream of visitors to Halliwell Lane included some notable literary and theological figures. William and Elizabeth Gaskell could be found taking tea with the Scotts at Halliwell Lane. Aurelio Saffi, the Italian revolutionary, who, with Mazzini, had been one of the triumvirs of the short-lived Roman Republic in 1849, sometimes appeared, and so did Thomas Carlyle although the latter was always bored by the slightest hint of theologising. Thackeray finished the proofs of *Henry Esmond* in the guest bedroom at Halliwell Lane, and like Ruskin, Maurice, Erskine and McLeod Campbell occasionally visited Manchester to stay with the Scotts. Three future moderators of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and perhaps the three greatest nineteenth-century reforming leaders of the Kirk, MacLeod, Story and Tulloch, could also be found engaged in conversation with Scott, returning north to continue the reformation begun by him and his friends earlier in the century.

The young theological students met not only such luminaries as these at Halliwell Lane but also local Nonconformist ministers, who brought their doubts and theological difficulties to Scott, and invariably received from him sympathy

25. J.A. Picton in Hunter's "Alexander Scott", pp. 458-59.

26. See D.W. Simon, *The Making of a Preacher*, 1907, p. 12; and F.J. Powicke, *David Worthington Simon*, 1912, pp. 16-17.

27. A recent study by D.A. Johnson, "The End of 'Evidences': A Study in Nonconformist Theological Transition", *The Journal, U.R.C.H.S.*, vol. 2, no. 3, April 1979, indicates the important role played by Simon in the development of nineteenth-century Congregational theology.

and encouragement. One such minister was Henry Solly of Lancaster, who, in 1861, dedicated to Scott a book which was the outcome of conversations at Halliwell Lane. Solly's *Doctrine of Atonement* clearly reproduces many of Scott's early emphases, and develops some of the theological implications of a doctrine of universal atonement. Solly's emphasis throughout is that Christ "came to redeem us *to* God, not to protect us *from* Him."²⁸ Although he is now relatively unknown, something of Solly's significance in nineteenth-century theology is indicated by the fact that it was he who coined the phrase, "the Christlikeness of God."²⁹

Another Nonconformist minister who sought every opportunity of visiting Halliwell Lane was James Baldwin Brown, who had originally come under Scott's influence while a student at Highbury Theological College, London. Henceforth Brown considered Scott to be his theological master. His references to Scott, perhaps excessively eulogistic, always convey a depth of indebtedness. In 1862, for instance, Brown defended in the press his teacher, who, thirty years after his deposition, was still being accused of undermining the faith of orthodoxy. "I hope that I am seeking light wherever I can find it," wrote Brown, "but I freely confess that I find none so full of the light of truth as this teacher. My own testimony on this point is a small matter, but I know how many whose names would justly carry weight, would affirm the same."³⁰ And Brown on another occasion testified that within his own denomination he did not stand alone in his high regard for Scott, but that many Congregational ministers viewed him as "one of the greatest Teachers living."³¹ It is interesting to note that when Brown as a young Congregational minister had begun to doubt whether or not he could conscientiously continue to work within his denomination, it was Scott who encouraged him to stay and work within the structures of his church rather than outside them.³²

During a protracted stay at Halliwell Lane, Brown laid the groundwork for his first major theological publication, *The Divine Life of Man* (1859), a book dedicated to Scott. Brown developed in this work his teacher's early emphasis on the universal Fatherhood of God as shown in Christ's humanity, and attempted to treat God's justice in terms of His Fatherly love, to understand punishment in terms of a father's love for his child. The book raised a storm of controversy in Nonconformist circles,³³ one of Brown's fiercest assailants being Dr. Vaughan of Lancashire Independent College. Claiming to be speaking for orthodoxy Vaughan sharply criticised what he took to be Brown's inadequate representation of God's righteousness.

28. H. Solly, *The Doctrine of Atonement*, 1861, p. 226.

29. L.S. Hunter, *John Hunter*, 1922, p. 158.

30. J.B. Brown, "A Letter to the Editor", *The Daily News*, 12 June 1862.

31. *Testimonials to A.J. Scott*, Edinburgh, 1856, p. 22.

32. E.B. Brown, *In Memoriam: James Baldwin Brown*, 1884, pp. 16-17.

33. For a brief account of the controversy see the preface to the 2nd edition of J.B. Brown's *The Divine Life in Man*, 1860, pp. viii-xi.

Although suspected for many years as a "dangerous teacher", Brown attracted a wide following of younger ministers, both within and without Congregational circles; among his followers was P.T. Forsyth, who regarded him as the greatest Independent since the seventeenth century.³⁴ It was inevitable that some of Brown's followers should also be committed to Scott and his teachings.

Perhaps the most outstanding of these was a man of the next generation, John Hunter, "the Frederick William Robertson of the Dissenters".³⁵ Scott, said Hunter, who clearly reproduced Scott's thought in his own theology, was "the teacher of some of our best teachers, the inspirer of the men who did most to frame the best theology of their time."³⁶ James Baldwin Brown's election to the chair of the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1878 certainly indicated a growing acceptance within Nonconformity of the theology of Scott and his circle.

With the death of Scott in 1866, and then much later, with the death of his disciples, and of those who, like Hunter, caught an inspiring glimpse of the living man through his followers, the Scott succession may, in one sense, be said to have ended, for Scott, as Robertson Nicoll wrote in 1905, "lives upon the testimony of those who knew him."³⁷ Explicit reference to Scott may have ended with the death of his last disciple, but the succession of some of his deepest convictions continued in both Nonconformist and Established Churches until they found a permanent, and often central, place in the church of the twentieth century.

J. PHILIP NEWELL

Church histories are always to be welcomed. A.G. Bryer's *Chapel Next the Green: The Story of Twickenham Congregational Church (Twickenham United Reformed Church 1972-)*. Pp. 64, 1982 is a full account, a useful and enjoyable quarry, well illustrated and sensibly produced. Copies are available from B.L. Pearce, 72 Heathfield South, Twickenham, TW2 7SS, price £2.00 post free.

J.C.G.B.

34. For the Brown-Forsyth relationship, see E.B. Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-42.

35. "The Late Dr. John Hunter", *The British Weekly*, 20 September 1917.

36. J. Hunter, "Alexander Scott", pp. 388-89.

37. W. Robertson Nicoll, "George MacDonald", *The British Weekly*, 21 September 1905, vol. 38, p. 550.

ERIK R. ROUTLEY, 31 October 1917–8 October 1982

The sudden death of Erik Routley at the age of sixty four will be lamented by members of this society as well as by church musicians among whom his was a household name. It was as Mackennal Lecturer and Tutor in Ecclesiastical History that he returned to Mansfield in 1948 after his early pastorates. His B.D. thesis, which later formed the basis of the first part of *The Church and Music* (1950; revised 1967), had been a historical as well as a musical study. Augustine, the springboard of that work, was to reappear *inter alia* in *The Wisdom of the Fathers* (1957) which Routley wrote for the Religious Book Club, and in which his inimitable style and his gift for making scholarship accessible to the ordinary reader were already establishing themselves. In *Creeds and Confessions* (1962) he reached forward from the Patristic period to the Reformation: and it was here, and especially in the rise and progress of English Puritanism, that his historical interest had its other main footing. His sympathetic but not uncritical attitude to classical Independency is characteristically seen in *The Story of Congregationalism* (1961), written for the tercentenary of the Great Ejection and complementing F.G Healey's "official" account of the Three Denominations, *Rooted in Faith* (1961). More ambitious, and in some eyes less successful, had been *English Religious Dissent* (1960). One may feel here that the general editor of this "English Institutions" series wanted Routley to pack too much into too little. Perhaps only in a social history, which this largely is, could Methodism be subsumed under "Dissent".

This is not the place to catalogue, still less to try to assess, Routley's enormous output in the field of hymnology. What should be said here is that his historical knowledge and perspective enriched, indeed largely characterised, his literary and musical criticism. Whether writing on the English Carol or on Watts and Doddridge he brought to his subject a grasp of *context*: and it was surely this which gave such steadiness and substance to what he had to say about church music today and tomorrow.

Polymaths are often tedious or self-important or both. It was Routley's grace to be neither. To read him is not to be button-holed or hectored, pungent, even pugnacious, though his style often is: it is like going for a walk with a knowledgeable, entertaining, opinionated companion who will, if you encourage him, share his thoughts with you till the sun goes down, but who will also, disarmingly, stop talking and really listen if you venture a point yourself. Just as he never forgot in his preaching that *sermo* means "a conversation", so in his more extended work one has always the sense of someone taking pains to be audible without shouting and to be orderly without oversimplifying. These are virtues to which the best historians aspire. Many exhibit them. But how many besides Eric Routley could have written *Hymns and Human Life*, or *The Puritan Pleasures of the Detective Story* - let alone both?

CARYL MICKLEM

LONGER REVIEWS

The Christian Polity of John Calvin. By Harro Höpfl. Pp. x, 303. Cambridge University Press 1982. £27.50

This is a welcome and perceptive book. Throughout Dr. Höpfl relates Calvin's political theories to his preoccupation with formulating true Christian doctrine and building up the reformed church as a visible and viable institution, adequately equipped for the proclamation of the Gospel to mankind and provided with an educated and competent ministry for this task. The author emphasises the limited extent to which Calvin was concerned with political theory in the usual sense, and he demonstrates that far from having a consistent and thoroughly worked out view of civil society and of the origins and structure of government from the first edition of the *Institutio* (a title which Dr. Höpfl prefers to the more familiar *Institutes*) Calvin's approach was initially conventional and unoriginal, the more distinctive elements in his thought being developed over a period of years, partly in response to his experiences in Geneva, but more significantly because of the demands made by the turmoil of contemporary religious controversy and the needs of Christian apologetics. Calvin's early involvement in humanist scholarship is nicely dealt with, and his conversation and the meaning and development of the doctrine of predestination are well handled, though possibly Dr. Höpfl is so anxious to bring out the scriptural compulsions which motivated Calvin's own thoughts on predestination that he is rather unfair to others, such as Wendel, who have stressed the pastoral importance of the doctrine. Throughout the book a firm distinction is made between Calvin and his later disciples, not only over matters such as the celebration of holy communion and predestination, but also over reformed attitudes to political resistance. Whatever foundations Calvin may have laid for later doctrines of armed resistance Dr. Höpfl leaves us in no doubt that Calvin's abhorrence of disorder, revolution, violence, and the savagery of the mob made him believe that the faithful were better advised to endure sufferings patiently and penitently than to resort to arms. The ambivalence of Calvin's attitude to the role of the magistracy in organising resistance to the outrageous acts of a godless monarch is fully brought home, and it is interesting that while Calvin was always prepared to work with kings who seemed likely to favour the reformed religion he had a deep-rooted suspicion of rule by any single man, believing that it could easily degenerate into tyranny. Similarly his aversion to the mob made him convinced that in a fallen world aristocracy was the least objectionable form of government. It would be going too far to call Calvin a whig but while he defended civil authority along largely traditional lines as a necessary safeguard against sin, disorder and violence, he was constantly preoccupied with checks and balances, seeing power as essentially corrupting in its effects.

Dr. Höpfl has a keen eye for false legend. He disposes convincingly of the stereotyped image of a bloodthirsty Calvin, eager to use the death penalty, and equally cogently of the misleading notion that Calvin was some sort of political dictator, whose every whim was carried into effect by the Genevan authorities. He writes sympathetically of Calvin as a pastor and he draws attention to the

incapacity of the sixteenth-century mind to make anything like the modern distinction between sin and crime in social conduct, to the lack of anything like a twentieth-century view of the purposes of punishment, and, even more dramatically, to the meagre provision of prison houses in Geneva. He is justifiably severe on those who have exaggerated the legalistic element in Calvin's thought, rightly stressing Calvin's primary concern with the grace of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Predestination is correctly depicted as essentially a security against the dangers of Pelagianism, and while Calvin believed that society had to punish wrongdoers to avert God's wrath he was never under any illusions about making men good by edict: only God's grace could turn men from their sinful ways. Calvin was certainly not responsible for some of the more absurd attempts at controlling public behaviour in Geneva.

The final impression made by this valuable study is of a Calvin who was more sensitive in responding to changing needs than the familiar figure of an adamant controversialist whose ideas were fully formulated from his first entry into debate suggests. Dr. Höpfl makes it plain that Calvin's own temperament made him more attracted to a life of pure scholarship (here the Strasbourg period is admirably treated) than to a career in public life: it was his sense of Christian duty which made him return to Geneva and an active ministry. There is much more to Dr. Höpfl's book than a discussion of Calvin's political ideas. Because he has placed these so firmly in their historical context he has made a major contribution to our understanding of other areas of thought which were much closer to Calvin's heart. Dr. Höpfl's main case is incontrovertible: there was nothing surprising about the fact that later Calvinists could be either quietists or revolutionaries, since it was possible to draw different inferences from Calvin's political writings while remaining agreed on the essentials of doctrine and ecclesiastical discipline. No-one seriously interested in Calvin should neglect this book. It does not settle all questions, but because the author is wise enough to leave several issues open his work will stimulate reasoned debate, while giving us an interpretation of Calvin which is more balanced than many earlier accounts.

JOHN DERRY

Dissentient Voices. The Ward-Phillips Lectures for 1980 with some Related Pieces. By Donald Davie. Pp. ix, 154. University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame: London 1982. £12.75

At first glance this study of Enlightenment and Christian Dissent might appear to carry rather less weight than Professor Davie's Clark Lectures of 1976, published as *A Gathered Church* (1978). But it soon becomes apparent that the later volume is informed by those habits of judgment and critical appraisal which were resorted to in the previous book. Perhaps a useful starting-point for a consideration of it is a passage in the sixth Clark Lecture where a comment is made on D.H. Lawrence's distinction between his mother's Congregationalism and "the Wesleyan Chapel" as Lawrence conceived of it. Professor Davie adds:

"there is no evidence that Lawrence understood, as an experienced fact, the cultural and doctrinal differences which ground that distinction in something more substantial than mere taste. To get at the *ground* of such a matter the critic needs to examine the quality of thought and adequacy of literary style in the writings of those who have committed themselves to positions which involve "doctrinal" discriminations. *Dissentient Voice*, like its predecessor, is the work of a writer with little inclination to pass lightly over evidences of prejudice and misconception likely to cast unfair reflections on the "dissenting interest". What we are offered is an informative and sometimes fruitfully provocative series of discussions.

The first sixty-four pages comprise, among other things, an attempt to explode a familiar fallacy: namely, that "The Enlightenment" was an almost entirely continental phenomenon largely dedicated to the encouragement of infidelity. That there was an *English* enlightenment is evident from the enlarged awareness of "vistas and horizons . . . in the mental as well as in the physical world" of which we become conscious when reading the poetry of Goldsmith, Gray and Thomson; yet the "philosophical" implications of this were also present to the minds of Protestant Dissenters, as is apparent from, say, the "sinewy intellectualism" we notice in Isaac Watt's poetry and prose. Professor Davie disallows E.P. Thompson's claim that "Wesleyanism . . . was self-consciously *anti*-Enlightenment" and supports this by reference to the "insistently and vehemently 'rational' " elements found in the hymns of Charles Wesley. In his section on "Enlightenment & Dissent" Davie is particularly effective when disposing of some other modern misunderstandings on this topic. He has made a special study of later eighteenth-century verse: and one would expect a poet of his calibre to tender illuminating observations on how particular poems "work". His chapter on "The Language of the Eighteenth-Century Hymn" is one of the most rewarding parts of the present book. Watts, Doddridge, Cowper and the Wesleys, we learn, "deliberately purged their language of everything that would make it accessible to men and women who were less sophisticated and less learned than they were". The assessment of John Newton makes the point that the very *naïveté* of this poet's idiom brought out poetic virtues that are "real and rare, and moral as much as literary. For it is honesty, the refusal to slip anything over on the reader or the congregation . . ." which commends Newton's mode of expression to us. One is reminded here of Donne's "In labourers' ballads oft more piety / God finds, than in *Te Deums*' melody".

Professor Davie shows an enviable familiarity with the cross-currents of dissenting opinion as revealed in literature; and few critics can have developed a keener interest in this aspect of the English enlightenment. When it comes to the later phases there are, it seems to me, some reasons for disquiet as we consider "the dissidence of dissent". The third Ward-Phillips Lecture on Robert Browning draws on the characterisation of Browning outlined by George Santayana in his famous "Poetry of Barbarism" essay (1920). "The more narrowly we look at Browning as a poet of religious Dissent," writes Professor Davie, "the worse he

is". I can well imagine that bold assertion being quoted on Eng. Lit. examination papers in due course. Fair enough: the proposition deserves to be taken note of. But I am far from convinced that the lecturer has brought before us enough evidence from within the poems themselves to clinch his argument completely. When dealing with *Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day* he permits himself some forceful language ("wretched performance", "better left unread"); but I would have thought that before we can accept whole-heartedly his generalization that "In the eighteenth century our Christian poetry requires of us strenuous thinking; in the nineteenth it demands only *fervor*" we need considerably more than the brief quotations given. And can we really say without qualification that Browning's Christian faith is "all fervent feeling, with no intellectual substance"? Are we meant to take such a questionable assumption at its face value? Davie's analysis of Thomas Binney's "Eternal Light" seems to do more justice to its author than is done to poor old R.B. Or is there, perhaps, some kind of "hang-up" in this case?

The "heirs" of Browning studied in the fourth lecture are Kipling and Jack Clemo. I hope that at a later stage Professor Davie will have more to say about the remarkable Cornish poet whose dissenting temper "had intellectual sinews, such as Browning's hadn't" — thus linking him with the antecedents from whom Browning's generation appears to have recoiled. What Kipling made of *his* dissenting heritage does not show up too creditably in Donald Davie's pages. In the case of "Recessional" he has, I think, hit the nail on the head. By means of a curious species of perversity, the poet has "coldbloodedly and expertly touched one after another of the stops that would move an audience of Christian Believers into sympathy with himself, who was a cynical Unbeliever". Such corrupt practice reduces confidence in Kipling's integrity when he is handling images drawn from traditional "Puritan" sources of reference — though, as Davie explains later (in "Thoughts on Kipling's 'Recessional'") there are ways in which a non-Christian poet (Hardy in "The Oxen", and Kipling himself in "Gethsemane") can legitimately traffic in Christian beliefs.

The second half of *Dissentient Voice* (the "Related Pieces") raises questions which relate to the dissenting view of political and historical processes at different periods, as in "Dissenters and 'Antiquity'" where for a fleeting moment we touch on tantalizing aspects of the "arcane marriage between Dissent and the Left". The chapter headed "An Episode in the History of Candor" traces out changes in meaning with special reference to "candid" and "candour" as used by writers such as Dr. Johnson, Jane Austen, George Canning and the authors of the *History of Dissenters from the Revolution in 1688* . . . , David Bogue and James Bennett. As an essay in semantic elucidation this piece is much more fruitful than some of the linguistic analysis that has come my way. Furthermore — and this is one good reason for commending the book as a whole, despite the reservations I have indicated — it exemplifies the virtues of the "literature, life and thought" approach to the subject-area Professor Davie has covered.

The English Churches in a Secular Society: Lambeth, 1870–1930. By Jeffrey Cox. Pp.xii, 322. Oxford University Press 1982. £22.50

This is a very good book. It is sensitive, suggestive, opinionated, depressing, and important. Its style is crisp. Its spelling, like its author, is American, testimony to the capitulation of Oxford English to financial pressures, even in quotations.

It begins with "The Problem of Decline" ("would any other voluntary institution which attracted several million people to an ordinary weekly meeting be judged a failure?"). It ends with "A New View of the Decline of Religion". As Dr. Cox puts it: "The empty church is the single most important piece of evidence brought forth by people who argue that religion has become unimportant. They are right, but not for the reasons they think". In Dr. Cox's view neither the intellectual revolution nor secularization may explain the undoubted collapse of English Protestantism in the present century; and he is, alas, sufficient of a sociologist to begin, as they all do, by putting those with whom he disagrees briskly in their place. He turns Bryan Wilson, David Martin, Alan Gilbert *et al.* into follies (or garden gnomes) to set off his own edifice, which is a pity, because his book is good enough to stand on its own account, however convincing his demolition work.

So what is his account? He describes, with special reference to Lambeth, the convergence of a particular group of problems and a particular series of changes in the climate of opinion: church and chapel alike "were hit all at once by the emergence of new philanthropic, administrative, and educational bureaucracies which destroyed their claims to social utility, by changing age structure, and by a generational revolt which struck Nonconformity with particular intensity because of the waning of a 'marginal' Nonconformist cultural tradition in the face of economic success and civil position" — and all this in the face of, because of, and despite, liberal theology. And the result? The church lacked the resources to respond and so turned inward "preoccupied with denominational structure and church union . . ." This is powerfully, indeed grippingly, argued and United Reformed readers, *semper reformanda* and pledged to ever better union, will feel cruelly belaboured.

Dr. Cox's strengths are his refusal to accept conventionally expert wisdom, his perception of the complexity of Edwardian chapel life, his readiness, therefore, to see significance, even success, where less patient intellects have seen neither. One warms to his description of church going as neither snobbery, nor submission to social control, but "a public ritual of positive assent to a system of communal controls". One warms even more to his perception of Nonconformity as a different way of being English, sprawling uncomfortably *across* significant class barriers, conforming, therefore, only obliquely to the class structure; Dr. Cox's Dissenters, bless them, can even be seen as gentle and mild-mannered souls whose greatest sin was to assume that they were as good as anybody else.

Thus far Cox's work will last, for it conforms to no party line, but its weakness lies in his perceptions once he has followed the Edwardian turn of

mind and crossed into the 1920s and their churchy world of scouts, whist drives, tennis parties, Sunday school jollies and, wettest of all, ecumenism, which is for him merely a complex form of ecclesiastical self-absorption. Yet this world is as likely to be as positively capable of sensitive re-interpretation as that of the Edwardians. His judgements are severe ("By their close association with the churches, the Scouts merely strengthened the growing conviction that religion is not a serious matter") but they are to be respected (not least his explanation of the lure of the State Church, the real beneficiary of the Nonconformist crisis – "Young Nonconformists were arguably more susceptible to the appeal of the National Church than any other Edwardian social group") – but the next stage of the scholarly debate will hinge upon these judgements, and it is this aspect of the book which is most likely to join the garden gnomes waiting to be gathered by the next bright new sociologist. For Cox's conclusion seems to be that in a society in which all religion is marginalised, but in which all religious forms now freely compete in a market whose rules are set by the state, the future lies with the most flexible church, with the greatest emphasis on internal growth. Very likely: but that is just what Henry Allon told Manchester's jubileeing Congregationalists a century ago, and what Bernard Snell was telling his Brixton Independents twenty years after.

This criticism is not entirely fair to the power of Cox's arguments, but perhaps the crux of the matter for the present reviewer lies in the one, inevitably, missing, component: for although Dr. Cox is a bold historian, a brave sociologist and a fine scholar, he is suddenly coy when faced with conversion, the transcendent, the supernatural. For where do they fit in? He pushes his historian's skill as far as it may go; perhaps he should next turn theologian. Meanwhile we are left with an argument which is capable of reduction to almost Edward Normanish simplicity – the church's response in the later nineteenth century was broadly right; its response since then has been broadly wrong. Dr. Cox is immensely suggestive in explaining those responses, but can, or should, convinced *churchmen* possibly agree?

So far I have described a book of great general importance. It is of equal value as a local study. Its concern is the borough of Lambeth, a socially diverse yet extraordinarily English urban corridor (a godsend, therefore, to an American social observer), six miles long by one mile wide, second only to Islington among London boroughs. At the turn of the century its population was 300,000. Perhaps 17 per cent of these were regular church attenders, more than voted at elections or joined trade unions. Only the public houses (430 of them) could rival the church premises (172 of them). Over half of the church attenders were in fact chapel, and 35 per cent of these were to be found in mission halls. It was, in short, a notable Nonconformist presence with undoubted political implications, for despite all the quixotic exceptions Lambeth's churches really were the Moderates at prayer and Lambeth's chapels really were the Progressives at prayer. In North Lambeth indeed the male chapel attenders perhaps accounted for 40 per cent of the electors and throughout Lambeth they provided the party

activists, setting the terms of political debate between 1890 and 1910. Cox is particularly interesting here, making a refreshingly strong case for the importance and the coherence of Nonconformist progressivism which he sees as far more than the dying vapourings of an obsolescent Gladstonianism. Rather this was the constructive social radicalism of men compelled by their faith to go beyond do-goodery to the regeneration of society through positive action. They were wilfully misunderstood by the modishly intellectual New Liberals who now command scholarly attention, but when C.S. Horne announced that "The Most High ruleth through the most low . . . the Will of God through the common people", or John Clifford that "the State stands for the whole people in their manifold collective life, and any church is but a fragment of that life", Cox reminds us of the *respectability* of their stance.

Cox is good on other things: as when he draws the rarely made distinction between low-and-dry and low-and-evangelical churchmen to balance the high-and-dry and high-and-Catholic. Readers of this journal will turn with particular interest to his accounts of the Wheatsheaf Hall, of Christ Church Westminster Bridge Road (where Charlie Chaplin's mother found something like spiritual rest), and of Bernard Snell's Brixton Independent Church. It is in dealing with the Brixton Independents and Snell (his stipend £870 in 1895, one third of the church's expenditure) that Cox is at his most perceptive — and his most severe. He is suggestive as to the level and range of that Church's activity: that district visiting whose social importance can "hardly be overestimated" as the major female spare time activity; the membership which included Lambeth's first Medical Officer of Health, its first borough librarian, the widow of a national businessman and philanthropist, a Liberal M.P. of doggedly idealistic social views, and a host of others gathered by a minister whose liberal theology is horribly vulnerable to contemporary fashions (although Snell's insistence that "Christianity is concerned with the survival of the unfit" is entirely at one with current convictions that Christians should first seek power for the powerless). Snell was not unique, though he was outstanding: he is today forgotten, although without him, for example, would Lambeth's churches and chapels together have borne at least a quarter of Lambeth's entire poor relief burden at the turn of the century, second only to the local guardians? It is not the least merit of Dr. Cox's work to have drawn attention to him.

Because this book will be a quarry as well as a stimulant, attention should be drawn to a variety of small points: it is (even in American English) James Guinness Rogers; Mansfield College is not Unitarian; W.S. Caine is better regarded as a Baptist than a Congregationalist; it is Central Hill (not Hills) Baptist Church; and the 1876 Conference for Conditional Immortality was held at the *Cannon* Street Hotel, not Connor Street. Morley College was not funded by Samuel Morley, who was dead, but in his memory; and Trinity Congregational Church, Brixton, was unlikely to have used John (not Thomas) Hunter's King's Weigh House liturgy in 1900 since Hunter only went to the Weigh House in 1901: I suspect they used his *Devotional Services for Public Worship* (1882)

prepared with Trinity Congregational Church, Glasgow, in mind, and perhaps his *Hymns of Faith and Hope*.

And three dogs hardly bark at all: the Archbishop of Canterbury seldom stirs from Lambeth Palace; the Salvation Army is curiously silent; and not once is the Y.M.C.A. mentioned, although its genesis was almost as much in the old Surrey Chapel as in the City, and its Stockwell Association is an active one still.

CLYDE BINFIELD

SHORTER REVIEWS

The Scottish Reformation. By Ian B. Cowan. Pp. 244. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London 1982. £11.95

In this volume Dr Cowan of Glasgow University provides a distinguished survey of his subject and includes a digest of earlier studies by himself and other scholars. The key to the work is found in its sub-title, "Church and Society in sixteenth-century Scotland". Almost half the work is taken up with a survey of the state of the church before 1560. Dr. Cowan thinks there were more signs of vitality in the church than has generally been recognised; its worship continued and its properties received considerable care and there were those who were aware of the need for reform. The church made "a continuing and not inconsiderable contribution to Scottish life and society". Nevertheless, Cowan has to conclude that it was "a decadent church which had ceased to minister to spiritual needs and had lost almost all semblance of discipline".

The events of the years from 1559 to the end of the century which form the bulk of most histories of the Scottish Reformation are here dealt with clearly and very succinctly in one chapter. Cowan follows in the steps of Cameron and Kirk in his assessment of the First and Second Books of Discipline. He is also indebted to Donaldson. Donaldson has been noted for his view that some of the pre-Reformation bishops supported the reform and have not been given due credit for their work, and he has held that the early reformers would not have been averse to an episcopal government in the reformed church; indeed, the superintendents could be seen as holders of an episcopal office. Cowan has no doubt that "the attempt to correlate superintendence with episcopacy in any meaningful sense of the word breaks down entirely in terms of spiritual authority". The presbyterian structure set forth in the Second Book of Discipline only restated what had become accepted in the years since 1560.

There follows a chapter on the reform of worship, and a specially enlightening chapter on the consolidation of the reform at the parochial level.

This book is to be commended to all who want an authoritative and comprehensive survey of a troubled and formative century in Scottish affairs.

R. BUICK KNOX

Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church. By Peter Lake. Pp. viii, 356. Cambridge University Press 1982. £27.50

This is the most important book on the Elizabethan church since Professor Collinson's seminal work *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* fifteen years ago. Peter Lake has chosen a group of leading clerical intellectuals around whom to base an exploration of the tensions involved in maintaining a dual allegiance to godly principle and the national church. In one sense this is a study of conflicting personal identities, but more importantly it sets out the central intentions of those Lake calls the moderate puritans. He finds the core of the puritan impulse in Laurence Chaderton's call for a close relationship between the pastor, their mediator with God's word, and his flock. The statutes of Emmanuel College, of which he was Master, express the hierarchy of Chaderton's values: "scripture above all, a zealous defence of right doctrine against popery and other heresy and loyalty to the prince". Lake's analysis of the anti-papal polemic of William Whitaker establishes the significance of this form of writing as an expression of the doctrinal consensus of the moderate puritans and of their attachment to the Elizabethan church. His central contention, adumbrated in an excellent chapter on Thomas Cartwright, is that the presbyterian movement was not so much a political campaign to overturn the church polity as a vehicle for further reformation. It was a strategy adopted by men who felt the necessity to find a bridge between the dictates of scripture and their enforced involvement in an alien ecclesiastical regime. The sheer irrelevance of episcopal jurisdiction in the heat of the evangelical moment is a constant theme of the book. In later chapters, Lake discusses puritan practical divinity, gives a sympathetic account of Whitaker's attempt as Master of St. John's to make his college a godly seminary on the same lines as Emmanuel, reassesses John Whitgift's approach to the Lambeth articles and returns to Laurence Chaderton in order to stress the continuity of moderate puritan thinking between the 1570s and the Hampton Court Conference.

It may appear from this account of the form and content of the book that it is rather disparate. But Lake is aware of the trap he has set himself and is careful to avoid it. He does so by the strength of his conceptualisation and the precision of his language. In a conclusion which should be required reading for all those interested in the problem of defining puritanism he concentrates his mind on the irony at the heart of the struggle between precisians and conformists. This struggle, he argues, involved "two distinct and opposed concepts of order": what divided men like Chaderton and Cartwright from Whitgift and Bancroft was that an internal spiritual dynamic, based on their sense of the implications of right doctrine, compelled them to seek to purge the social order of its popish elements. The clash, in short, was a clash over the role of religion in society. Lake challenges the view that the Elizabethan puritan movement moved from a political to a pietistic stage. He also points the way towards a deeper analysis of the continuity of religious experience through the period as a whole. His conclusion is crucial for an understanding of the origins of non-

conformity and the insights it offers into the relationship between fear of popery and puritan activism can be fruitfully applied to the period of the Civil War and after. The book as a whole is lucidly and cogently written and enormously able.

ANTHONY FLETCHER

The Diary of James Clegg of Chapel en le Frith 1708–1755. Edited by Vanessa S. Doe. Part 2 (Derbyshire Record Society, Volume III), 1979. Pp. 305–670. £8. Part 3 (Derbyshire Record Society, Volume V), 1981. Pp. 671–1026. £8

The years covered in these two volumes (1737–55) include 1745, and the '45 Rebellion provides exceptional excitement: "all about in a great consternation", "our Town is full of Refugees". Apart from this, and from the death of Clegg's first wife in 1742 and of his second in 1748, with the occasional accident to himself, on horseback or when "the candle fell on the bed when I was dead asleep", one week varies little from the next. Nor do the entries recording Clegg's activities as physician of both body and soul differ significantly from those in the earlier volume reviewed here at length. Age creeps on, Clegg goes less frequently to meetings of ministers; but as a day-to-day account of rural Dissent, what he writes remains unrivalled. "I was at home all day preparing sermons but was so indisposed that I could not do much". "Called up early to Captain Bagshaw who had a bad night". "Walked to Clough, calld at Slack Hall and returned much fatigued". Like the illness and death which are the presiding figures, the reiteration is true not merely to a minister's life but to life. Through these seemingly barren leaves comes, in time, perhaps before one is aware of it, a sense of the universal: *mortalia tangunt*: it is Margaret you grieve for.

There is one fresh feature: the rise of Methodism. Clegg read both Whitefield and Wesley — Wesley himself sent Clegg *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*. John Bennett, "the most outstanding of Wesley's young preachers",¹ had grown up in "our society" (as Clegg calls his congregation) and, after his marriage with the widow Grace Murray whom Wesley had designed for himself, returned with her to Chinley and brought her to supper. But by the incursions into his territory of Lady Huntingdon's preacher David Taylor, Clegg was deeply offended. He tried to look on the bright side: "God grant some good and lasting impressions may remain"; "if any good be done I shall rejoyce". But Taylor's emotional preaching and antinomian doctrine ran clean contrary to the dry reasonableness and steadfast moralism which were Clegg's strength and the strength of authors whom he read increasingly — Butler, Benson, Balguy, Abernethy, Whitby, John Taylor of Norwich (an old friend and correspondent) and, at the end of his life, Bayle's *Dictionary*. Clegg's description, on a rare excursion, of Beverley Minster describes himself: "most neat and compact and uniform, and much better kept" (than Lincoln Cathedral). One could not ask for a better portrait of an eighteenth-century minister living by habit rather than by power

1. A.A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, ii (1980), 338.

from on high, doing his duty faithfully but constantly "spent". Once only — when Christmas Day fell on a Sunday — does he write "Blessed for ever blessed be God for J. Christ". Socinianism is not far off.

A dozen appendices include Clegg's manuscript autobiography and will. Biographical notes are provided for some seventy of the ministers mentioned; in a good many cases these repeat information to be found in Gordon's *Cheshire Classis*. The indices in Part 3 of persons, places and subjects in the work as a whole, both text and notes, are magnificently full (pp. 963–1026), and correct a few earlier slips.

GEOFFREY F. NUTTALL

The Congregational Way. Apostolic Legacy, Ministry, Unity, Freedom. By Harold Hodgkins. Pp. 180. Congregational Federation, Nottingham 1982. £5.00

The Congregational Federation will not gain much credit for this work. For a start it contains over 100 misprints, which does not inspire confidence. Then it falls into the sin of promiscuous quotation. Pretty well every page contains two or three quotations, not generally as sources or authorities but as repetitions of what the author has said perfectly adequately himself. A high proportion consists of quotations out of context, in the sense that the original authors would deprecate the use to which their words are put. One would suppose from reading this book that men like John Oman and T.W. Manson were stout defenders of Congregational Independency.

More seriously, it is not at all about the Congregational way. It does nothing to define the particular Congregational interpretation of church order. It says a little in a rather cursory way about particular features of Congregationalism, such as the emphasis on a covenant relationship, and a little about the persistence of more-or-less Congregational principles throughout the history of the church. But the author is much more at home with a series of antitheses which are only peripherally related to this theme: freedom versus dogma, experience versus creeds; variety versus uniformity; denominationalism versus ecumenism.

But too often his antagonists are straw men created by himself. That the ecumenical movement seeks a monolithic power structure in which all variety is stamped out is simply not true. It is hardly credible that the policy of the ecumenical movement should be defined as: "Ignore those truths about which we differ, whatever they be; concentrate upon the lowest common denominator of doctrines and the widest multiple of numbers and interests; find a common site for a public facade and then let us all march together in a grand parade to Mount Zion." To say this is to bear false witness, not least to distinguished Congregational ecumenists.

The author is unwise enough to quote Reinhold Niebuhr. That clear-sighted observer of humanity would have conceded the element of sin and pride in the ecumenical movement; but he would also have identified the same qualities among its critics. Similarly when Bryan Wilson uncovers the self-interested motives of advocates of union he could usefully indicate equivalent motives among opponents. There is a bibliography of about 1500 books, which would have benefitted from reduction to about 150.

STEPHEN MAYOR