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EDITORIAL AND NOTES

This issue’s articles, although not its reviews, focus on the long eighteenth century, from memories of Baxter and the onset of toleration to Doddridge and Whitefield. Old Dissent engages with the Evangelical Revival and the exhilaration and pressures of the encounter are experienced at several levels. So are the daily implications of serious living. How is a minister to live in a style appropriate to his station (most have found it hard going but Thomas James was not the first to do surprisingly well)? How are children to be regarded? How is the faith to be transmitted?

We welcome Lance Stone, of Westminster College, Cambridge, Jason Askew, who is URC minister at Wooler, and Colin Price, who is Congregational minister at Guilden Morden, as contributors. Professor Deconinck-Brossard teaches at the University of Paris X. Her paper was originally delivered in June 2002 in Northampton at the seminar marking the tercentenary of Doddridge’s birth. Dr. Wykes is Director of Dr. Williams’s Library; and this is the eighth decade in which Dr. Nuttall has contributed to this *Journal* and its predecessor, *Transactions*.

Friends of the Congregational Library aim to promote awareness, knowledge and greater use of the Library founded in 1831 by those interested in Congregational history and theology and now housed in Dr. Williams's Library, 14 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0AG. The Friends publish a newsletter twice yearly, hold a Summer Event, and help to arrange the annual Congregational Lecture, to be delivered on 18 November 2003 by Revd. Kirsty Thorpe, on Women's Ministry. Details of membership (£5 annually) and other information can be obtained from Ann Davies, 38 Lansdowne Road, Bedford, MK40 2BU.

“A MINISTER’S CASE IS DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER MEN”:¹ THOMAS JAMES’S EARLY MINISTRY

The important discovery of a group of nineteen letters at Petworth House from the Revd. Thomas James, Presbyterian minister at Ashford, Kent, to Thomas and Frances Brooker, his uncle and aunt provides evidence on religious dissent in the period immediately after formal toleration was granted.² Further evidence on James is provided by the discovery in Dr Williams's Library of his manuscript treatise on “the wonderfull workes of God in Creation”, which contains valuable autobiographical information on his childhood as well as evidence for his learning and scholarly interests.³ His book, *Spira's Despair Revived*, provides information on his work as a minister. The letters, together with James's own writings, both published and unpublished, as well as evidence from local sources, add significantly to the existing knowledge of James and his ministry at Ashford. They also allow a number of important corrections to existing accounts, not least that James was “teacher” (that is preacher) of a Presbyterian congregation at

- 1 Petworth House Archives [hereafter PHA], Sussex, MS 683, “Correspondence of John Bowen, William Ewart, Thomas James, Thomas Brooker and George Thornton on private and estate affairs, 1680 – 1699”: letter from Thomas James, Ashford, to his uncle, Thomas Brooker, Petworth, dated 16 March 1690/1.
- 2 The letters were discovered by Mrs Coward when researching her own Sussex family history. She transcribed the letters with the assistance of Mrs McCann, the Assistant County Archivist at the Sussex Record Office. Mrs Coward and Mr Ruderman have undertaken much of the detailed family and local research for this paper. Dr Wykes has been responsible for the rest of the research and for writing this article. It is intended that the letters will be published in a subsequent issue of the *Journal* of the Society. We are very grateful to Lord Egremont for permission to use and cite the James – Brooker correspondence from the Petworth House Archives.
- 3 Dr Williams's Library, London, MS 24.14, Thomas James, “An Essay In the wonderfull workes of God in Creation, Providence & Redemption: written by way of meditation & Reflection on the same; wherein Philosophy & History are mixed and interwoven with Theology. In three Parts”. We are very grateful to the Trustees of Dr Williams's Library for permission to use and cite manuscripts in their keeping.

Ashford in 1676, an error for 1696 made by Walter Wilson, which was repeated by Alexander Gordon and others.⁴ The letters and James's treatise also provide incidental details on Ashford in the 1690s, its wealth, population, growth and invasion scares, as well as accounts of natural events such as storms and earthquakes.

James's early life and education

James was one of the new generation of younger ministers who were active in the period before toleration was granted, and about whom there is comparatively little information compared with the accounts of the ejected ministers. He appears to have come to Ashford with toleration. The autobiographical details in his treatise provide some information about his early life, but the identities of his parents are unknown. He was born about 1660,⁵ and what little is known about his family origins is provided by his own account:

Being from my infancy left an Orphan, without father or mother, neither of which I ever knew, so as to have any the least remembrance of them, ... my dying mother committed & commended me, under God, to one of her Sisters, who, by a providence of God, had no child to the day of her death, though she had two husbands, so that I was brought up with her as her son, & had a very liberal education: I was indeed the care & delight of my dearest Aunt.

He told his aunt and uncle in July 1689 "you have been as my parents".⁶ His aunt's second husband was Thomas Brooker, auditor to the Percy family at Petworth in Sussex, whom she married in June 1666. They were both Dissenters. Brooker supported the local Presbyterian meeting at Petworth and was a close

⁴ Wilson misdated the publication of William Russell's *An Epistle concerning Baptism*, written in answer to "Mr Thomas James, Teacher of a Presbyterian Congregation at Ashford", giving 1676 in error for 1696. This is clearly the authority for Gordon stating that James was minister at Ashford in 1676: Walter Wilson, *The history and antiquities of dissenting churches and meeting houses, in London, Westminster, and Southwark* (London, 1808-14), III, p. 392; *Freedom After Ejection: A Review (1690-1692) of Presbyterian and Congregational Nonconformity in England and Wales*, ed., A. Gordon, (Manchester, 1917), p. 292. The same error was made by Ivimey in the appendix to his first volume, presumably taken from Wilson: J. Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists* (London, 1814), I, p. 601.

⁵ According to his marriage licence he was thirty in September 1691, and when he died on 18 Jan 1733/4 his age was given as seventy-five: *Canterbury Marriage Licences, 1677-1700*, ed. J. M. Cowper; Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone [hereafter CKS], P364/28/4, Dr Cliff's diary: "Old Mr James the Presbyterian Parson" died from palsy aged 75.

⁶ DWL, MS 24.14, II, p. 211; PHA, MS 683, Letter, 16 July 1689.

friend of Thomas Hallet, the minister, to whom James frequently sent greetings in his letters to his aunt and uncle.⁷

There is little on James's childhood. He records among his personal account of God's providential mercies one involving wasps:

Once when I was a child, a servant walking out with me in a Summer evening in our way we passed by a nest of Wasps, which some boyes had disturbed ... & perceived them not, but they soon came about us, in greate rage, & began to sting us, whereupon we turned back, & ran by the nest, out of which they poured out, & set on us so furiously, that the man for his own safety, ran away faster than I could follow, leaving me to shift for my selfe, so that I suffred very much, & was stung by multitudes of them, especially about the face & head, they sticking fast in my haire.

The incident occurred in about 1664, before his aunt's second marriage.⁸ He records another event involving "one of those running footmen" of Algernon, third earl of Northumberland, who went from Petworth to London and back in a day "upon extraordinary business", which took place sometime before the earl's death in October 1668.⁹ Another incident involving "an hot spirited, fiery horse", belonging to "one of my Relations" must have occurred later when he was a young man still living at Petworth. "One Henry Hayler a noted horse-rider in Sussex, who broke several horses for us", undertook to subdue the horse. "Accordingly on a day appointed he came, & we two only rode to the field where the horse was at grass".¹⁰

Other than the remark that his aunt provided him with a liberal education there is no record of how and where he was educated or prepared for the ministry. There is one allusion to a godly childhood. In his will he left 20s. for a sermon to be preached within six months of his death on 2 Tim. 3, v. 15: "And that from a Child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto

⁷ *Allegations for Marriage Licences issued by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, 1558 to 1699; also, for those issued by the Vicar-General of the Archbishop of Canterbury, 1660 to 1679*, ed. G. J. Armytage, Publications of the Harleian Society for the year 1886, XXIII (1886), p. 118; Public Record Office, Prob 11/450, Will of Thomas Brooker of Tillington, Sussex, gent: dated 22 Nov. 1698, Proved PCC April 1699; PHA, MS 683, Letters, 12 May, 10 Dec. 1694, 20 Aug [16]95, 2 Dec. [16]96. Brooker had begun his service under the 9th Earl, working as a boy in the garden, rising to be auditor to the Duchess of Somerset, the Percy heiress, v. Lord Leonfield, *Petworth Manor in the seventeenth century* (Oxford, 1954), pp. 116-7.

⁸ DWL, MS 24.14, I, pp. 153-4.

⁹ DWL, MS 24.14, II, p. 12n#. Algernon, 10th Earl of Northumberland, died 13 October 1668: *The Complete peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom*, ed. G. E. Cockayne (London, 1910-59), IX, p. 738.

¹⁰ DWL, MS 24.14, III, p. 66.

Salvation through Faith which is in Christ Jesus".¹¹ Surprisingly, there is nothing in the treatise amongst his personal account of God's providential mercies about his spiritual development, whether he was set aside for the ministry from childhood, or indeed about his decision to enter the ministry. Although the source of his education may be unknown, his learning and scholarship is evident both from his treatise and his decision when at Ashford to teach the sons of gentlemen university learning. He had clearly received a good education in philosophy and logic of the sort provided by the best Nonconformist academies of the period. He could read and write Hebrew as well as Latin and Greek and knew the classical authors. The many references in the treatise to books and their authors, together with the arguments themselves, show his reading and reveal an educated and scholarly mind. In the preface to his treatise he wrote of "the time in my youthful dayes, when [I was] in the search & pursuite of natural Philosophy". He later explained further that the first two parts of the treatise contained chiefly such matters, as I have observed, collected and improved by many yeers Study & experience; having been no Stranger to Natural Philosophy, Botanicks, & the theory of Anatomy & Physick strictly so called; having spent my vacant hours & leisure time, for about 40 yeers, in those studies, which were very delightfull to me so that the Authors both Antient & Modern were read & consulted by me, which treatd of the same.¹²

James was clearly a serious scholar who kept a journal, or at least a record of occurrences, from at least August 1681. He also refers to "a little Manual of praise", in which he recorded God's "greate mercy & goodnes" in preserving him through sickness and imminent danger, which had a more obviously spiritual purpose.¹³ He left an extensive and valuable library at his death valued at over £50, considerably more than most of his contemporaries in the ministry managed.¹⁴

By March 1685 James was living in "a Relations house in Princes streete"; undoubtedly the house his uncle, Thomas Brooker, had bought and out of which Brooker gave the rents and profits to his sister Margaret, the wife of Henry Townsend, esq.¹⁵ James may have been pursuing his studies as a minister at this time, but at the age of about twenty-five it would seem unlikely that he was attending a Nonconformist academy even taking into account the difficulties of

11 CKS, PRC17 89/22, Will of Thomas James of Tenterden, minister of the Gospel, dated 29 Sep. 1730, proved 12 Mar. 1733/4.

12 DWL, MS 24.14, I, p. 4, III, p. 200. For the reference to his Hebrew see p. 157.

13 DWL, MS 24.14, I, p. 71, II, p. 98.

14 CKS, PRC 11/80/120, inventory of the Rev. Thomas James, Tenterden, dated 6 March, exhibited 12 March 1733. His study contained a writing desk, parcel of plate, "the whole Library" and several other things valued at £58 5s.

15 DWL, MS 24.14, II, p. 162; PRO, Prob 11/450, Will of Thomas Brooker: Princes Street ran between Compton Street and New Coventry Street and now forms part of Wardour Street.

studying for the Nonconformist ministry in the period before toleration. It was not uncommon for ministerial students after they had completed their formal training at an academy to spend a few years in further study under a senior minister. By November 1688, at the time of the Glorious Revolution, he was living within a few miles of Reading in Berkshire. There is a further undated reference of a visit to the Hampshire parish of Heckfield, which adjoined Berkshire. "A friend of mine, a Dr of Physick, I my selfe, & a young scholar in our company rode to the place, being several miles from our abode".¹⁶

Family chaplain

It seems clear that James was serving as a chaplain to a gentry family living in a parish a few miles south of Reading. James subsequently dedicated his only publication, *Spira's Despair Revived* (1694), to Philip, Lord Wharton, the great patron of late seventeenth-century Dissent. "The very least is Gratitude, which obliges me to acknowledg your singular kindness and favour, being settled once in a Family having a branch sprung out of your Noble Stock".¹⁷ He also recorded a conversation with Sir Thomas Millington, Sedleian Professor at Oxford and a native of Newbury, Berkshire, from his "own mouth, concerning himself, as he told it to a Physitian & my selfe, at a family where he was sent for to an honourable Patient". It seems reasonable to link this conversation to the period when James was serving the family in Berkshire as chaplain, particularly as he described the physician as "my friend", who was presumably the same friend with whom he visited Heckfield.¹⁸ A great many ejected ministers found refuge in gentry households after 1662, but it is clear that younger ministers who entered the Nonconformist ministry after 1662 also found employment as chaplains.¹⁹

All the evidence suggests that James was chaplain to William Carr of Matthews Green near Wokingham, Berkshire, appointed fifth Cursitor Baron of the Exchequer in March 1688/9, the brother of Wharton's third wife, and who in turn married Wharton's eldest daughter, Anne, by his second wife. Carr was also

¹⁶ DWL, MS 24.14, II, p. 164, I, p. 70.

¹⁷ Thomas James, *Spira's Despair Revived. Being A Narration of The Horror and Despair of Some late Sinners under the Apprehensions of Death and Judgment. Wherein are such Unquestionable Examples produc'd, and such Matters laid down, and proved, as may stop the Mouths of the Atheistical Scoffers and Mockers* (London, 1694), Epistle Dedicatory.

¹⁸ DWL, MS 24.14, I, pp. 157-9, II, pp. 27-29.

¹⁹ D. L. Wykes, "'The Settling of Meetings and the Preaching of the Gospel': The Development of the Dissenting interest after toleration", *Journal of United Reformed Church History Society*, 5 (1993), p. 140.

related to the Popham family of Littlecote, Wiltshire.²⁰ In addition to the close family relationship with Wharton, Carr appointed his sister, Anne Lady Wharton, as his executor, and Carr, or his wife, was presumably the “honourable Patient” seen by Millington. They both died within a month of each other, Anne on 26 May and William on 17 June 1689, and were buried at Wooburn, Wharton’s family seat in Buckinghamshire. The death of his patron would have left James needing to find alternative employment, and the earliest letter from Ashford is dated 16 July 1689. James also recorded that “deaf Mr Popham ... was now & then in our family, where he had one or two Kinsmen”. Among a small number of personal bequests Carr left one to his cousin Alexander Popham.²¹

As a result of his chaplaincy James made a number of remarkable acquaintances during this period. Some of his accounts of national events were obtained as a result of personal contacts with those involved. Two anecdotes about the Old Pretender were obtained this way from the Montagu family. James was particularly eager to record any details which appeared to point to a conspiracy concerning the birth of the Prince of Wales in 1688. “I my selfe heard the Lady Mountague (who was formerly the Countess of Northumberland)” say that she had seen evidence for the Queen having given birth. Concerning another incident involving the young prince, “Also I remember the Lord Mountague (made a Marquiss by K. William) being asked at our table, where I then was, about his knowledge of this matter”. James in addition recorded “the answer a certain Parliament man gave to one at a table where I was with him & some other member of the House who asked the Question, why they did not search out, & lay open that matter, & give the nation satisfaction about it”.²² He also knew William Penn, the Quaker. “I could say many things of him from personal knowledge, ... He hath been oft at our Table of dinner, & once I dined at his seate of Worminghurst, wth 2 Baronets &c where every thing was ordered a-la-mode, & very genteel & handsome”.²³

- ²⁰ Carr’s sister was first married to Col. Edward Popham, their sister, Latitia, married Edward Popham’s eldest brother, Alexander Popham: *Complete Peerage*, ed. Cockayne, XII, p. 605; *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, Feb. 1689 – April 1690*, pp. 18, 36; T. Langley, *The History and Antiquities of the Hundred of Desborough and Deanery of Wycombe, in Buckinghamshire* (London, 1797), p. 461; E. Foss, *Biographia Juridica: A Biographical Dictionary of the Judges of England from the Conquest to the present time, 1066-1870* (London, 1870), p. 157.
- ²¹ DWL, MS 24.14, II, pp. 48-9; PRO, Prob 11/396, fo. 121, Will of William Carr of Mathew Green, Berkshire, esq., dated 29 May, proved PCC 24 Sep. 1689.
- ²² DWL, MS 24.14, II, pp. 159, 160, 161. James probably knew Elizabeth, Countess of Montagu, at Petworth when a child as her first husband had been Joceline, 11th Earl of Northumberland (d. 1670), but the conversation must have taken place between 1688 and her death on 19 September 1690, and so presumably when James was living in Berkshire: see *Complete Peerage*, ed. Cockayne, XI, pp. 739-40.
- ²³ DWL, MS 24.14, II, pp. 150-51n#.

James's ministry at Ashford, Kent

James was called to Ashford as minister to the Presbyterian meeting in the summer of 1689 following the passing of the Toleration Act. He made the necessary declarations at the Quarter Sessions in order to qualify under the Act probably at the July sessions in 1689.²⁴ There is no evidence for the existence of a settled Presbyterian meeting at Ashford before 1689, though it is likely meetings had been held in the town on a less formal basis. According to Calamy, Joseph Osborne (or Osborne), who had been ejected out of Benenden, Kent, in 1662, was preaching in Ashford sometime after 1681.²⁵ Before toleration most Presbyterian meetings were personal meetings that relied upon the willingness of a minister to preach and often also of a lay supporter to provide a meeting-place rather than on the existence of a congregation. Such meetings existed only as long as the minister or lay patron was willing and able to uphold the meeting. In the absence of a resident or neighbouring minister meetings were less regular or organised. By the time of toleration the situation facing the Presbyterian ministry after twenty-five years of persecution was critical as a result of the shortage of ministers. According to the Common Fund Survey (1690-92) under 400 (about a fifth) of the ministers silenced in 1662 were living, of whom only 330 were recorded in the Survey, and not all of those were still active in the ministry.²⁶ Without the addition of a generation of new ministers who had entered the ministry after 1662 it is clear the situation would have been even more serious. With the Toleration Act and the removal of the legal threat to Nonconformists worshipping in public came the permanent features of congregational organisation associated with modern Dissent: the establishment of regular services, the appointment of a minister and the securing of a building in which to worship.²⁷

²⁴ The earliest entry recording the declarations made by ministers under the Toleration Act, which James signed, is unfortunately undated, but it seems probable that in line with other counties the first declarations were made at the earliest session possible after the passing of the Act which was July 1689. Centre for Kentish Studies, Kent Quarter Session records, Q/RRo 13/1, see *Kent Dissenting Ministers' Declarations, 1689-1836*, ed. G. Rickard (1995), p. 2. I am grateful to Miss Rickard for her help in searching the Quarter Session for meeting-house registrations for Ashford.

²⁵ *Calamy Revised: Being a Revision of Edmund Calamy's Account of the Ministers and Others Ejected and Silenced, 1660-2*, ed. A. G. Matthews (Oxford, 1934), pp. 374-5. Dr Nuttall has described the early history of Dissent in Kent following the Restoration of Charles II, see G. F. Nuttall, "Dissenting Churches in Kent before 1700", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (1963) XIV, pp. 175-89. See also T. Timpson, *Church history of Kent: from the earliest period to the year MDCCLVIII* (1859), pp. 508-9; A. C. Watson, *A History of Religious Dissent & Non-conformity in Ashford Kent*, L. R. B. Historical Publications, No 2 [1979].

²⁶ *Calamy Revised*, ed., Matthews, p.xvi. In addition to 330 ejected ministers recorded in the Common Fund Survey, the names of a further sixty survivors are also known.

²⁷ Wykes, "Settling of Meetings", pp. 127, 143-45.

The speed with which the meeting at Ashford was settled under James is evidence of the demand for godly preaching and indeed probably of the existence of earlier meetings. By the time of the Common Fund Survey, it was reported that James had 300 hearers and received £36 a year in contributions. The congregation also quickly acquired its own meeting-place. In May 1691 the Common Fund offered James £5 "towards defraying the charge hee has beene at or shall be at in repairing his meeting house".²⁸ By 1705 the congregation was meeting in the house of Thomas Thorp, James's "best friend". Thorp was the son of Edmund Thorp, an ejected minister, and after studying at Cambridge he practised medicine at Ashford, until his death in 1705. In his will he gave "free liberty for such meeting to assemble in that part of my now dwelling house in Ashford where it is now used without any manner of allowance during the said term of 20 years". He also left £5 a year for twenty years to support the minister, though his friend James if he "thinks fit he may dwell with his family in my said dwellinghouse for 11 years after my decease in lieu of said £5 a year before mentioned". He also left James a number of books and £5 to preach his funeral sermon.²⁹ The two decades after 1689 witnessed the development of Dissent in England from a series of harassed often informal meetings into settled congregations with their own ministers, regular services and meeting-places. It also saw the setting up of trusts in which to vest the ownership of the building and to hold the charity funds on behalf of the members.

James's letters

The letters cover the first seven years of James's ministry at Ashford, from 1689 until December 1696, shortly before his uncle's death, when the correspondence ends. Only the correspondence from James to his aunt and uncle survives and that is incomplete. There is one letter from Wiston (probably in Sussex) where the year is not given, which it has not proved possible to date or place in James's life, but which was presumably before he came to Ashford and perhaps before he went to live in Berkshire.³⁰ The earliest letters from Ashford are concerned with James's anxiety over not being married and of the delicate relationship with his

²⁸ *Freedom after ejection*, ed. Gordon, p. 55; DWL, MS OD67, Presbyterian Fund Board minutes, 1 Jul. 1690 - 26 Jun. 1693, fo. 32.

²⁹ PHA, MS 683, Letter, 30 January 1689/90; CKS, Will of Thomas Thorp, dated 7 July 1704, proved Canterbury, 10 July 1705.

³⁰ Wiston, Sussex, was a centre of Dissent; Sir John Fagg (d. 1701) supported at least two ejected ministers in his household. He also sent his two of his sons to the school at Steyning, Sussex, conducted by William Corderoy, an ejected minister, see E. Calamy, *An Account of the Ministers ... who were Ejected or Silenced after the Restoration in 1660* (London, 1713), Vol. II, pp. 381, 685; Calamy, *A Continuation of the Account of the Ministers ... who were Ejected and Silenced* (London, 1727), II, pp. 818-19; D. R. Lacey, *Dissent and Parliamentary Politics in England, 1661-1689: A Study in the Perpetuation and Tempering of Parliamentarianism* (New Brunswick, NJ; 1969), pp. 391-92.

uncle and aunt. As a minister with an income of only £35 a year, his prospects of a good marriage depended very much upon persuading his uncle and aunt to make a settlement upon him in expectation of a future legacy. There was a further hurdle to acquiring a suitable spouse: being a minister's wife was an unattractive prospect for some at least. "Mrs A. B. ... once told me she should never love a Minister", though James was not without hope, for the town is "so genteele", and there were "some other considerations as might bring her to a better liking and consent".³¹ James's anxiety over not being married was prompted by professional as well as personal considerations, the difficulty of being an unmarried minister: "neither a boarders life, nor a single life is proper for us in our office".³² Writing eighteen months later he spelt out the problem.³³ "A Minister's case is different from all other men; much of their worke is obstructed while in a single life; and I am sure they are subject to many temptations, and the snare of the Devil". Nevertheless personal considerations appeared to have outweighed the professional. James clearly found being a boarder irksome, "allwaies under the rule and will of others in some measure. Truly this is uncomfortable for a man all his days to be a perfect sojourner, and not have the least thing he can call his own". "Do not wonder I write ... as though I were weary of boarding before I scarce had begun".³⁴ His anxiety to marry without any further delay was also prompted by the practical difficulties of raising a family and seeing them educated and settled if the parents married late: "shall they presume upon 60 or 70 years of age, to see their education? Or take the direct course to leave them in infancy?"³⁵

It is clear James had already considered the question of marriage before he came to Ashford, for he had "discoursed before I left Berkshire with a young gentlewoman's mother". Unfortunately, although she was most deserving, "bred up in such a manner as may fit her every way for a mistress of a family", her portion of £300 "is not such as I could wish".³⁶ Such considerations were clearly crucial to James's efforts to gain the approval of his aunt and uncle, but he feared that he would be unable to satisfy them. "Truly it is a thing I may look after all my days and never find a worthy person with a portion of 6 or 700 pounds and this without making her any settlement: But if you consent not to this must I try yet further?"³⁷ Without property of his own, James realised it would be almost impossible to find a wife with a substantial portion, yet his uncle and aunt would not consent to him marrying without one. If James had sought to avoid giving offence to his uncle then he failed. "I am exteamely sorry any thing I have writt should raise jealousy in you as though I had offered to dispose of my selfe without

31 PHA, MS 683, Letter, 25 Sept. [1689].

32 PHA, MS 683, Letter, 16 July 1689. James gave his income as £35 a year.

33 PHA, MS 683, Letter, 16 March 1690/1.

34 PHA, MS 683, Letter, 16 July 1689.

35 PHA, MS 683, Letter, 16 March 1690/1.

36 PHA, MS 683, Letter, 16 July 1689.

37 PHA, MS 683, Letter, 16 July 1689.

advizing with you and my Aunt, or seriously considering what will be the issue of a small fortune", and he was forced to declare that he would not accept a portion of less than £400.³⁸

James's efforts to find a wife continued to be obstructed by his lack of property. In January 1690/1 James wrote again to his aunt, asking her to intervene with his uncle to request the settlement of an estate called Coxland on him: "by all the affection you ever had for me, to make to my Unkle in my name; and I begg of him, by all the kindness he ever shewed me, to grant it".³⁹ In an extraordinary outburst he expressed all his frustrations:

I must tell you, what I suffer through lack of this is more than becomes me to write ... small fortunes I must not meddle with; greate ones I cannot; I am ashamed to tell you how I have been baffled upon that account, and lost up and down; and how my very ministeriall worke goes on the worse through this.⁴⁰

The only alternative was to leave Ashford for a larger congregation with a better allowance. A few months later in March he wrote to his uncle to ask "Shall I seeke out for more, and be forced at last to change my habitation again, and leave my people? Because my expectation may faile me at home?"⁴¹ James, because of his education and learning, like many ministers also considered teaching to supplement his income. He told his uncle that "I find some lads may possibly be engaged to learn University learning under me, as Pupils", though the financial rewards depended on him being married and having his own household. "This would bring in 14 li. for board, and 4 li. for teaching p annum, for each" lad. Four months later he reported "I have one Pupill entered with me, a gentleman's son neere us; he boards at present with a gentleman of my meeting, my best friend, in order to board with me, if I prove an house keeper".⁴²

In September 1691, presumably with the approval of his uncle and aunt, James married Priscilla the widow of Peter Marsh of Wye and the daughter of Thomas Fenner of Ashford, one of the leading supporters of the Presbyterian meeting in Ashford. Not surprisingly being married and having a family added to James's financial problems. By March 1693/4 James was expressing concern at the rapid and growing cost of his family. Just under three years later he wrote, "None know what an expence attends such a family as mine is, so full especially of small children".⁴³

³⁸ PHA, MS 683, Letter, 25 Sept. [1689].

³⁹ PHA, MS 683, Letter, 21 Jan. 1690/1. James's request to have Coxland settled on him was unsuccessful, his uncle instructed his executors to offer it to the Duke of Somerset on advantageous terms.

⁴⁰ PHA, MS 683, Letter, 21 Jan. 1690/1.

⁴¹ PHA, MS 683, Letter, 16 March 1690/1.

⁴² PHA, MS 683, Letters, 25 Sept. [1689]; 30 January 1689/90.

⁴³ PHA, MS 683, Letter, 2 Dec. 1696.

His aunt's illness and then the prospect of her death clearly made James uneasy concerning his hopes of an inheritance. In March 1693/4, after acknowledging his aunt's declining health, he reminded his uncle of "your promise to my Aunt and me about taking care of me", for "my family increasing so fast; our allowance in the Ministry so small; and my income by my Wife dying with her".⁴⁴ Following his aunt's death he hoped his uncle's "promises to my Aunt and to my selfe are so sacred as nothing will lessen your affections and good purposes towards me and mine". Nonetheless his uncertain relations with his uncle led him to continue "But, Sir, I hope Your Pray doe not take ill what I write it being out of no disaffection or undutifulnes to You, but only to stir up Your mind by way of remembrance".⁴⁵ Unfortunately, his uncle did take exception, and James was forced to state that "Truly I am far from being craving, and I hope you never found me so". After his aunt's death, James and his family continued to receive small gifts such as a side of bacon from his uncle. Yet James remained concerned about the future provision for his children. "I thanke God I have wherewith to live upon, but to provide or lay up for my children, as times are now, who can think it can be done?"⁴⁶ He continued

I need not mention any promises of yours (as you desired me to let you know in this) made to my Aunt or me, I rest on your generall promise to be kind and to remember my children; and I hope my expectations will not be failed, but that as God blessed you and my Aunt together, she being instrumentall at least in helping to increase an estate, and both being left without children, so I trust you will give a proportionable share to her Relation, which was her earnest desire and expectation both living and dying. Sir, I hope You will take nothing I write amiss, but excuse my plainness, it coming from a Father who is willing to use any lawfull means to provide for his children.

James however continued to be disappointed in his expectations. His father-in-law died shortly after his aunt. Although Thomas Fenner left his grandchildren a considerable sum, unfortunately there were "12 of them, which cuts it short, and it is not to be paid till they are every one of the age of 21 year", and the payment was left unsecured.⁴⁷ His hopes of a legacy from his Aunt Townsend, Brooker's sister, were not answered, and he only received a legacy of £250 under his uncle's will, generous, but not greatly so, although it is possible there was some other settlement of his aunt's property.⁴⁸ In February 1699/1700 he purchased a farm at Westwell, near Ashford, for £575 10s.⁴⁹

In addition to family and personal matters, the letters also provide some local details. Ashford was clearly a growing town: "houses here lett very deare, for the

⁴⁴ PHA, MS 683, Letter, 1 March 1693/4.

⁴⁵ PHA, MS 683, Letter, 3 November 1696.

⁴⁶ PHA, MS 683, Letter, 2 December 1696.

⁴⁷ PHA, MS 683, Letter, 23 October 1694.

⁴⁸ PHA, MS 683, Letter, 2 December 1696; PRO, Prob 11/450, Will of Thomas Brooker.

⁴⁹ CKS, U1047 T4, abstract of deeds and deeds, Bowles Farm, Westwell, Kent.

town is small, the inhabitants many, still increasing; ... [for] under six or 7 or 8 pounds p annum there is no tolerable house", nevertheless "all provisions very reasonable". The letters do touch upon other issues such as alarms and invasion scares during the war with France, and an earthquake which he described in some detail in his treatise. James also referred to the attempted suicide an account of which was published in *Spira's Despair Revived*. The account was published four-and-a-half years after the event, and it is clear James relied upon his memory which was faulty. From his correspondence it is evident that the incident took place in November 1689, not October, the date given in the book.⁵⁰

James's ministry

There is very little in the letters concerning James's ministry, only a remark as to his success as a minister, that he had "refused severall offers above this, my circumstances (I speake it to God's praise, without boasting) much better, as to parts, fame &c". In the dedication of *Spira's Despair Revived* he also disclosed that Lord Wharton had since made "much the same overtures ... towards such another appointment" as chaplain. Nevertheless, in his correspondence he also recorded one important reverse: "lately one of my Communion (the only one ever offered such a kindness to me) having ordered a considerable Legacy to one of my Children, is turned quite away from me for nothing but my dealing faithfully in my Ministry".⁵¹ Presumably James had spoken too sharply or openly of some moral breach or personal sin which had caused offence. There is, however, some evidence of his pastoral work as a minister in *Spira's Despair Revived*. The work stemmed from his fear of the growth of "Atheistical Scoffers and Mockers" and he provided examples of individual judgements against the profane which incidentally provide examples of his work as a minister. Shortly after settling at Ashford, he heard of an attempted suicide a few doors from his house.

I was desirous to come into the presence of the poor wretch, and inform my self of what had past, to learn the true grounds of such a piece of Wickedness, and to observe his Carriage and Behaviour, as well as to be ready to yield any Ministerial help, as there should be Opportunity.

James then conversed with him "to bring him to deep humiliation, and godly sorrow, and earnest supplication to the Lord for grace and mercy. ... We turned to the 51st *Psal.* and other Portions suitable to his condition. We read and searcht into them, and I still gave him all the light and help I could possible". James was then asked to pray with him, "which I did, there being a very mixt Company in

⁵⁰ PHA, MS 683, Letters, 16 July 1689; 7 July [1690], 26 March 1696; 12 September 1692; *Spira's Despair Revived*, pp. 1, 9; Letters, 3 December 1689, 20 August 1695. For the significance of Spira, see M. MacDonald, "'The Fearefull Estate of Francis Spira': Narrative, Identity, and Emotion in Early Modern England", *Journal of British Studies* (1992), 31, pp. 32-61.

⁵¹ PHA, MS 683, Letters, 16 Mar. 1690/1; 2 Dec. 1696; *Spira's Despair Revived*, epistle dedicatory.

the Room, some of them too well acquainted with him in the days of his Impiety".⁵²

Attempts to help "a poor woman in the neighbourhood", filled with terrors of hell as a result of youthful lusts, proved less successful. "I found that no Argument would move her, to express any hope in God's Mercy, but she turned all upon her self".

Then I set in with her answer, and shewed her how willing God was, how gracious, that nothing was wanting on his part; that if she could believe all things were possible, she should see the salvation of God. But now she return'd her Old Reply; It was indeed the truth; but her Time was past; she was even now suffering the Wrath of God, the Torments of the Damned, Hell Fire was already kindled upon her. I confess, she kept so close to this, it silenc'd me; and tho my heart was melted, and my Spirit much moved to reveal the Grace of God, and the unsearchable Riches thereof, yet I could not beat her out of that strong hold.

In the end, "I prayed by her, and then having spent a little time more in Discourse" he left. James's account reveals the realities of pastoral care for the poor. "There was little or not notice of her condition, all being done in a corner, among poor people, where Visitors were few, and they were all willing to conceal so sad a Case". In the example of a man suffering from melancholy, James was able to offer more practical support. He persuaded R.M. "to go to Town to Board, and make use of a Physician" and to attend his services at the Presbyterian meeting.⁵³

James appears to have been troubled in his ministry at Ashford, at least in the mid-1690s, by the Baptists. Although he claimed they were "some of them *my worthy good Friends*, Pious and Judicious persons", he attacked them in his account of R.M.'s case, thereby provoking a considerable controversy. They promised, he alleged, "dipping" (or believer's baptism) as "a salve for every Spiritual Sore", and he accused them of approaching the tormented and of taking "Advantage of their Bodily Weakness, and Infirmity, and confusion of their Minds" to proselytise and win converts. He was attacked first by John Wells in his *Brief Reply*, which James answered in *A vindication of that part of Spira's despair revived which is challenged by the Anabaptists, and shamefully callumniated by John Wells, a Baptist preacher* (1695). Both his works were

⁵² *Spira's Despair Revived*, pp. 1-2, 4, 6.

⁵³ *Spira's Despair Revived*, pp. 16, 18, 19-20, 21; [John Wells], *A Brief Reply to that part of Spira's Despair Reviv'd: in which the Baptists in General are concerned, but more especially those at Ashford in Kent. Wherein the unjust Charge of Mr Thomas James against them, is removed. Written by a Baptist Preacher, who is a Lover of Truth* (London, 1695), p. 15. Arthur Ruderman suggests that R.M. might have been Robert Mascall of Boughton Aluph, about three miles north of Ashford. James lent Mascall £118 secured by mortgage on some lands in south Ashford, see Ashford Court Roll, 1 Aug. 1693.

answered by William Russell, an elder amongst the General Baptists in London. Russell in his Epistle concerning Baptism charged James with a persecuting rancour and of being a "false teacher" and a hypocrite.⁵⁴

Retirement

James remained at Ashford until 1718, when after twenty-nine years as minister he appears to have retired and moved to Tenterden. By 1718 he no longer had financial responsibility for his sons, who were then over twenty-one and had completed their education. Moreover at the age of fifty-eight, James was by the standards of his contemporaries an old man, but his decision to retire may have been prompted by religious changes in his ministry. He was clearly disturbed by the doctrinal disputes that convulsed Dissent following the Exeter Controversy and which led to the Salters' Hall debate in 1718. James supported the orthodox side in the dispute, and the religious preamble to his will was strongly Calvinist in content.⁵⁵

By the time of his death James was clearly a man of property. He had already provided marriage portions for both his sons, and in addition he gave his younger son, William, several sums on different occasions amounting to £350 to enable him to buy stock for his land. James therefore gave his eldest son, Robert, £350 in his will to match what his younger brother had already received. In addition he gave Robert the farm at Westwell he had purchased in 1700, and William was left a house at Bethersden with three acres of land, and to his grandson, William's son, twelve acres of woodland, and his granddaughter £50. It is clear from the probate inventory of his personal estate that James lived in some comfort, with a great parlour and two well-furnished bed-chambers. His household goods and furniture were valued at over £160, and he had a further £300 in money out at loan and £60 in purse and apparel. To all appearances James was living like a gentleman rather than a retired Nonconformist minister. It is unfortunately not clear how he acquired his wealth, though presumably by inheritance from his aunt or uncle.

⁵⁴ *Spira's Despair Revived*, pp. 39, 42, 44; [John Wells], *A Brief Reply to that part of Spira's Despair Reviv'd: in which the Baptists in General are concerned, but more especially those at Ashford in Kent. Wherein the unjust Charge of Mr Thomas James against them, is removed. Written by a Baptist Preacher, who is a Lover of Truth* (London, 1695), pp. 14-15; William Russell, *An Epistle concerning baptism. Occasionally written upon the sight of two treatises published by Mr Thomas James, Teacher of a Presbyterian congregation at Ashford in Kent: Who hath reflected upon the Baptized Christians* (London, 1696), pp. 3-6, 31-32. According to Ivimey the Particular Baptist Church at Ashford had four pastors and many members in 1689: Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, II, p. 249, IV, pp. 514-15.

⁵⁵ B. A. Packer, "Nonconformity in Tenterden, 1640-1750", *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society*, XX (1992), pp. 93-94; B. A. Packer, *The Unitarian Heritage in Kent* (London, 1991), p. 28; DWL, MS 24.14, III, p. 20; CKS, PRC17 89/22, Will of Thomas James.

There is evidence from the Ashford manor roll that he was buying land and lending money on mortgage. In October 1694 he was admitted to a copyhold property in the market at Middle Row. A year earlier, in August 1693, he had been admitted conditionally as a tenant of the manor having lent Robert Mascall £118 on mortgage.⁵⁶

In about 1720, shortly after he had moved to Tenterden, James began to write his treatise. There are references in the first part to May 1720 and the present year 1720.⁵⁷ In noting "the Providence of God in general", he recorded a great hail-storm that occurred in Tenterden on 3 June "in the present year of writing, 1722". It provides the only reference to Tenterden in the treatise. "It took but one side of our town of Tenterden, & just drove by that side of my house, which was to the windward, though on the other side of the streete".⁵⁸ Although it was clearly a project he undertook when he had the leisure of retirement, it is not clear who he intended to be his audience. The manuscript is fair written with some interlinations (often additions) and a few tipped in pages. It is a substantial work nearly 600 pages long. It seems too long and personal to have been intended for publication, yet hardly a work of family interest. After James's death it was presented to Dr Williams's Library by the Revd. William Langford, minister of Gravesend (1727-34), although the benefaction book records that the manuscript volumes were the gift of the author. Unfortunately for the biographer, where James might have added more personal details and reflections, he deliberately did not. Writing about William Penn he noted "I could say many things of him from personal knowledge, were it proper in this place". Even more frustratingly when discussing the political events of the Glorious Revolution of 1688, he wrote:

Two or three things further I shall take notice of, to set the same in a clearer light (indeed I could enlarge, & relate many remarkable passages of my own knowledge & observation, of persons & things of this nature; but I should then exceed the bounds of a chapter, & make it a Volume of it self).⁵⁹

James's treatise also provides evidence of his antiquarian interests and his concern with natural history.

Once I saw a very large quantity of Fennel growing wild, which for the rarity of it I thinke not amiss to mention the place of its growth, which I found in the way from Sandwich to Richborough Castle, as I went to view the remains of that noble piece of Roman antiquity.

He also had a collection of medals and ancient and modern coins which he kept in a set of drawers.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ CKS, PRC17 89/22, Will of Thomas James.

⁵⁷ DWL, MS 24.14, I, pp. 116, 149. He was still at Ashford in April 1718, see *ibid*, I, p. 64.

⁵⁸ DWL, MS 24.14, II, p. 90.

⁵⁹ DWL, MS 24.14, II, pp. 150n#, 155.

⁶⁰ DWL, MS 24.14, I, p. 35. C.f. p. 39. CKS, PRC17 89/22, Will of Thomas James.

Conclusion

The importance of James's letters is in part their rarity. Personal correspondence from this period is uncommon, particularly for those below the gentry. The survival of the letters was due to chance, Thomas Brooker's lack of any immediate heirs and his position within the household at Petworth. As a consequence Brooker's personal correspondence was preserved amongst the Percy family household accounts and papers. The letters might seem initially disappointing for the information they contain on either Dissent in Ashford or on James and his family. James's family origins, and certainly his education, are still largely unknown, despite the additional information provided by his treatise. Nevertheless, the surviving letters contain valuable insights into the difficulties that unmarried ministers faced in carrying out their duties and the problems they experienced in making successful marriages. Using local sources it has also proved possible to provide additional details about the early years of his ministry in Ashford. Until James was called as minister it is probable there was no settled Presbyterian meeting at Ashford. His appointment led to the establishment of regular services, the securing of a building in which to worship and the receipt of endowments with which to maintain the ministry. Within a couple of years, by the time of the Common Fund Survey, it was reported that he had a substantial meeting of 300 hearers and was well supported with £36 a year in contributions. Historians still know remarkably little about the development of Dissenting ministry in the late seventeenth century. Edmund Calamy's *Account of the ejected ministers* remains the principal source for ministerial careers after 1662, from which the early histories of many congregations have been constructed. As a consequence the vital contribution of those who entered the ministry after 1662 has been overlooked. Without the recruitment of younger men to the ministry such as James the rapid expansion of Dissent after toleration, witnessed by the settling of the meeting at Ashford, would hardly have been possible. The historian might wish to know more of James's reasons for entering the ministry during the uncertain period before toleration, but his career highlights the significance of gentry patronage in supporting the Nonconformist ministry during the period before toleration. The career of Thomas Brooker as a trusted retainer of the Percy family reveals the willingness of even the most prominent families to employ, and no doubt protect from persecution, Dissenters.

DAVID WYKES

PHILIP DODDRIDGE AND CHILDREN

In writing on “Doddridge and Children”, I move on from my reflections to the Ecclesiastical History Society on the “Representations of Children in Doddridge’s Sermons.”¹ Indeed, whilst Philip Doddridge’s *Sermons on the Religious Education of Children*, first published in 1732,² and his *Sermons to Young Persons*³ remain invaluable sources of information about his attitude to children and teenagers, other material may be found in the rest of his works, notably the hymns, correspondence and diaries, as well as in *A Plain and Serious Address to the Master of a Family, On the Important Subject of Family-Religion*⁴ and *The Principles of the Christian Religion*.⁵ In this paper I examine what Philip Doddridge’s approach to children reveals about his personal outlook.

Like many of his contemporaries, Philip Doddridge was well acquainted with the philosophy of John Locke. His correspondence reveals that he had been advised by Samuel Clark to read the English empiricist philosopher as early as 3 October 1721⁶. When he wrote back to Samuel Clark a few weeks later, he had been perusing the *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, which he had often referred to in his student days: “In the beginning of pneumatology, we had frequent occasion to consult him”.⁷ However, the study of the human mind was not the only field of investigation dominated by the new philosophy: “the greatest part of our logic is built upon it.”⁸ Naturally enough, Doddridge’s library contained several works by Locke, including the anonymously published *Reasonableness of Christianity*.⁹ Such acquaintance with Locke’s philosophy may

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1. “Representations of Children in Doddridge’s Sermons,” *The Church and Childhood: Studies in Church History* 31, ed. Diana Wood (Oxford, 1994), pp. 379-89.
 2. For convenience sake, I shall quote from the 3rd edition: *Sermons on the Religious Education of Children, Preached at Northampton* (London M. Fenner, 1743).
 3. Similarly, the 2nd and 3rd editions are more easily available: *Sermons to Young Persons, On the Following Subjects: Viz I. The Importance of the Rising Generation. II. Christ formed in the Soul the Foundation of Hope. III. A Dissuasive from Keeping Wicked Company. IV. The Young Christian invited to an early Attendance on the Lord’s Table. V. The Orphan’s Hope. VI. The reflections of a Pious Parent on the Death of a wicked Child. VII. Youth reminded of approaching Judgment* (1735; London R. Hett, 2nd ed. 1737; M. Fenner, 3rd edn. 1743).
 4. *A Plain and Serious Address to the Master of a Family, On the Important Subject of Family-Religion* (London J. Waugh, 3rd edn. 1750).
 5. *The Principles of the Christian Religion, Expressed in Plain and Easy Verse, And Divided into short Lessons For the Use of Children and Youth* (London J. Waugh, 1743; 2nd edn. 1748).
 6. Letter no. 2, *Calendar of the Correspondence of Philip Doddridge DD, (1702-1751)*, ed. Geoffrey F. Nuttall (London, 1979), p. 1.
 7. Letter no. 3, *Calendar* p. 1.
 8. *Ibid.*
 9. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, “Philip Doddridge’s Library,” *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society* XVII:1 (January 1952), p. 29.

be the reason why, in his *Sermons on the Religious Education of Children*, Doddridge used many metaphors suggesting that the human mind, in its original state, is devoid of any innate ideas, but rather like a blank slate, a sponge, or an empty vessel, ready to take in any notions produced by education. It was essential “to infuse into the tender unpractised Mind, the important Maxims of Wisdom and Goodness”¹⁰ for “*Infancy and Childhood is the most impressible Age and as Principles are then most easily admitted, so they are most firmly retained.*”¹¹ The latter quotation was followed by a number of similar metaphors borrowed from the classics and from the Presbyterian divine William Bates, highlighting the significance of education: “The *new Vessel* tastes a lasting Tincture from the Liquor which is first poured in [Horace’s Epistles 1, 2 v 69-70]. *The soft Clay* is easily fashioned into what Form you please [Perseus’ Satires III v 22-23 & Quintil Orat. I, 1]¹²: The *young Plant* may be bent with a gentle Hand; and the *Characters*, engraved on the *tender Bark*, grow deeper and larger with the advancing Tree [Bates’s, pag. 636]¹³.”¹⁴ The range of sources quoted by Doddridge only shows how widely read was a minister who had been trained, not only in classical literature as a matter of course, but also in what may be styled, for want of better words, as the Puritan tradition.¹⁵ What matters here, however, is the Lockean emphasis on education: “a very accurate *Writer* of our Age and Nation [Locke on education §1] has carried it so far as to say, ‘That of all the Men we meet with, *Nine Parts out of Ten* are what they are, good or bad, useful or not, *according to their Education*’.”¹⁶

Although Doddridge was primarily interested in religious instruction, he devoted much space to more general concerns about how parents should endeavour to raise their offspring. Thus, great care had to be taken to form the

10. *Sermons on the Religious Education of Children*, 18.
11. *Ibid.* 39.
12. Actually, the reference to Quintilian I, 1 5 (“*ut sapor quo noua inbuas <uasa> durat*”) echoes Horace (*Ep I, 2, 69-70*) “*Quo semel est imbuta, recens seruabit odorem/ Testa diu*”) rather than Persius III 23-4 (“*Vdum et molle lutum es, nunc nunc properandus et acril/Fingendus sine fine rota*”).
13. *On Spiritual Perfection, Unfolded and Enforced, From 2 Cor. VII. i. in The Works of the Late Reverend and Learned William Bates, D.D.* (London B. Aylmer, 1700) p. 636. “Childhood is as the Seed, in whose Virtue the Tree of Life is contain’d. The Characters that are cut in the Bark, when the Tree grows, deeply and visibly remain.”
14. *Sermons on the Religious Education of Children* 39.
15. On the concept of tradition, see Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *Richard Baxter and Philip Doddridge: A Study in a Tradition* (Oxford, 1951), especially n. 71, p. 19 & pp. 29-30. As for the vexed question of the definition of Puritanism, see *The Culture of Puritanism, 1560-1700*, eds. Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (Houndmills and London, 1996), especially chapter 8 by John Spurr, “From Puritanism to Dissent, 1660-1700”, pp. 234-65.
16. *Sermons on the Religious Education of Children* 42.

minds of children to the social and moral virtues of obedience,¹⁷ benevolence,¹⁸ diligence,¹⁹ integrity,²⁰ humility,²¹ and self-denial.²² In this respect, Doddridge's educational scheme mirrored the spirit of the age, dominated by the work ethic, the ideology of moderation and of the providential great chain of being, and an ethos of philanthropy. Children were to be trained to obey their parents, treat their superiors with respect, tell the truth, and learn the value of time. They had to be kept busy and were to be rewarded when they gave away some of their pocket money to charity. As for self-denial, Doddridge combined the standard moral condemnation of luxury with the puritanical emphasis on simplicity:

it is the Part of *Wisdom* and *Love*, not only to *deny* what would be *unwholesome*, but to *guard against* indulging them in too great a *Nicety*, either of *Food* or *Dress*. People of *Sense* cannot but see, if they would please to consider it, that to know how to *fare plainly*, and sometimes *a little hardly*, carries a Man with *Ease* and *Pleasure* through many *Circumstances* of *Life*, which to *Luxury* and *Delicacy* would be almost intolerable.²³

Doddridge then enlarged on "another Branch of *Self-Denial*," namely, "the *Government of the Passions*."²⁴ The phrase alludes to the ethic and aesthetics of affect that prevailed in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Children thus had to be taught to exercise self-restraint and control desire: "when they are eagerly and intemperately *desirous of a Trifle*, they ought, for that very Reason, sometimes to be *denied it*, to teach them *more Moderation* for the future."²⁵ The keyword is "moderation," one of Doddridge's favourite concepts. Not unsurprisingly, the argument is supported by a quotation from Locke on education: "I cannot express this better, than in the Words of *Mr. Locke* in his excellent Treatise on the Subject before us : He that has found out the Way to keep a *Child's Spirit* easy, active, and free, and yet at the same time to restrain him from many Things which he has a mind to, and draw him to Things uneasy to him, has got the *true Secret of Education*. [*Locke* on education, § 46]"²⁶ It was not only a matter of not giving in to every whim, but also a refusal to acknowledge pleasure as the rule of life.

Likewise, mothers were well advised not to smother their children with blameworthy overindulgence: "it seems justly observant by a very Wise Man,

17. *Ibid.* 25.

18. *Ibid.* 26.

19. *Ibid.* 27.

20. *Ibid.* 29.

21. *Ibid.* 31.

22. *Ibid.* 32.

23. *Ibid.* 52.

24. *Ibid.* 33.

25. *Ibid.* 33.

26. *Ibid.* 33.

(who was himself a melancholy Instance of it,) 'That the *Fondness of Mothers* for their *Children*, in letting them *eat and drink what they will*, lays a Foundation for most of the *Calamities* in Human Life, which proceed from *bodily Indisposition*.'"²⁷ The "wise man" in question was Doddridge's favourite Dissenting writer, Richard Baxter, who had indeed thus commented on motherly complacency:

Who have more tender Affections than Mothers to their Children? And yet a great Part of the Calamity of the world of Sickness, and the Misery of Man's Life, proceedeth from the ignorant and erroneous Indulgence of Mothers to their Children, who to please them, let them eat and drink what they will, and use them to Excess and Gluttony in their Childhood, till Nature be abused and mastered, and clogged with those Superfluities and Crudities, which are the Dunghill Matter of most of the following Diseases of their Lives.²⁸

Such remarks might seem mere commonsense to a twenty-first-century reader. What is noteworthy, however, is this rare observation on the part played by a mother in her child's development. Indeed, Doddridge's *Sermons on the Religious Education of Children*, like those of his Anglican counterparts, seldom distinguished between specifically gendered activities, categories or pronouns.²⁹ Yet Doddridge's direct address to parents and children, at the end of his text – a rare occurrence in eighteenth-century sermon literature³⁰ – though distinctly affectionate, did not differentiate between boys and girls: "I would *address myself to children*: To *you*, the dear *Lambs of the Flock*, whom I look upon as no contemptible Part of *my Charge*. I have been *speaking for you* a great while, and now give me leave to *speak to you*; and pray do you endeavour, for a few Minutes, to *mind every Word* that I say".³⁰

27. *Ibid.* 32-3.

28. *The Divine Life: In Three Treatises. First, Of the Knowledge of God. Second, Of Walking with God. Third, Of Conversing with God.* (1st edn. 1664), in *The Practical Works of the Late Reverend and Pious Mr. Richard Baxter* (London Thomas Parkhurst, 1707) vol. III, p. 746.

The "melancholy instance" in the previous quotation may refer to Baxter's claim that his "bodily weakness and indispositions," which had sometimes been diagnosed as "hypocondriack Melancholy," derived from excessive consumption of raw fruit in his childhood; see *Reliquiae Baxterianae: or, Mr Richard Baxter's Narrative of the most Memorable Passages of his Life and Times*, ed. Matthew Sylvester (London, T. Parkhurst, 1696), pp. 2, 9-10.

29. I have discussed this phenomenon at greater length in "The Computerisation of a Manuscript Corpus: Expressions of Compulsion in Eighteenth-Century Sermons," *ASp : anglais de spécialité* 4 (juillet 1994) pp. 63-73.

30. My research on this topic is summarised in "Eighteenth-Century Sermons and the Age," *Crown and Mitre: Religion and Society in Northern Europe since the Reformation*, eds. W.M. Jacob & Nigel Yates (Woodbridge, 1993), pp. 105-21.

Affection indeed pervaded Doddridge's attitude to children. The recurrence of the keyword "tender(ness)", referring both to the vulnerability of young minds and to parental affection, may have already been noticed in what I have quoted. The word is echoed in the baptismal hymn, "Christ's condescending Regard to little Children,"³¹

See *Israel's* gentle Shepherd stand
 With all-engaging Charms;
 Hark how he calls the tender Lambs,
 And folds them in his Arms!³²

Arguably, the preacher's emphasis on the affectionate method of teaching that was to be attempted with young children may bear the stamp of a specifically Dissenting outlook, as characterised by Isabel Rivers in her book on the language of religion and ethics in eighteenth-century England.³³ Although children are expected "to imbibe," from an early age, "*an Awe of GOD*, and an humble Veneration for his Perfections and Glories,"³⁴ great care was to be taken not to frighten them: "We should take Care to let them see, that we do not desire to *terrify* and *amaze* them, to lead them into unnecessary Severities, or to *deprive* them of any *innocent* Pleasures;... but that it all *proceeds* from a hearty *Love to them*, and an earnest *Desire of their Happiness*."³⁵ As a man of his time, Doddridge did not base his teaching on fear. His religion was not of the gloomy or repressive strain, and his taste for moderation made him wary of excessive austerity. On the contrary, there was still hope for harmless recreation. Indeed, his correspondence reveals that, when he came back from his preaching tours, the minister lovingly brought back presents for his family, for instance two fans carefully chosen for his daughters.³⁶

If there were time to play, there was also a time for religious instruction, as the opening lines of *The Principles of the Christian Religion* suggest:

31. *Sermons on the Religious Education of Young Persons* 85.

32. Philip Doddridge, *Hymns founded on Various Texts in the Holy Scriptures*, ed. Job Orton (Salop: J. Eddowes & J. Cotton, 1755), Hymn CXCVIII, p. 176.

33. On the notion of affectionate religion, see Isabel Rivers's seminal study, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England 1660-1780* Volume I *Whichcote to Wesley* (Cambridge, 1991) pp. 164-204.

34. *Sermons on the Religious Education of Children* 20.

35. *Ibid.* 57.

36. Letter no. 997, *Calendar* p. 202, quoted in Alan C. Clifford, *The Good Doctor: Philip Doddridge of Northampton – A Tercentenary Tribute* (Charenton Reformed Publishing, 2002), p. 72.

Now for a while aside I'll lay
 My childish Trifles, and my Play;
 And call my thoughts, which rove abroad,
 To view myself, and view my God. ...³⁷

Such instruction was to be given "in the *most endearing Language*",³⁸ with suitable "Simplicity and Ease."³⁸ In this respect, Doddridge was not only leaning, as a matter of course, on the initially Puritan taste for plain style that had become the prevailing fashion in the eighteenth century, but also suggesting that children's literature was a specific genre. Thus, he stated that he had attempted to use figurative and pragmatic language in order to appeal to his younger readers: "[I] have endeavoured here and there, where I conveniently could, to strike the Fancy with a little *Imagery*, and especially to affect the Heart of my dear *little Scholars*, by giving a serious and *practical Turn* to the several Truths which are delivered."⁴⁰ However, the book does not include any visual material. Only much later would an American version, with the altered title of *Poetical Lessons for Children*, be published in a diminutive volume with a frontispiece depicting the gospel scene of Jesus surrounded by little children, and a title-page illustrating the well-known prophecy of a child dwelling with a lion and other beasts.⁴¹ Doddridge's text includes relatively new figures of speech in these "short lessons for the use of children and youth." Commonplace metonymies and hackneyed metaphors illustrate a list of "Sins to be avoided, in Thought, Word, and Action":

This humble watchful Soul of mine
 Shall with Abhorrence then decline
 The Drunkard's Cup, the Glutton's Feast,
 That sink the Man down to the Beast;
 Th'injurious Blow, the wanton Eye,
 The Loss of Hours that quickly flie.⁴²

One scarce comparison exemplifies how the "sins of life" are to be "acknowledged":

But my vain Heart, and stubborn Will,
 In its own Ways could wander still;
 Like a wild Asses Colt would go

37. *The Principles of the Christian Religion, Expressed in Plain and Easy Verse, And Divided into Short Lessons For the Use of Children and Youth* (London J. Waugh, 1743, 2nd edn. 1748), p. 7.

38. *Sermons on the Religious Education of Children* 57.

39. *The Principles of the Christian Religion* iv.

40. *The Principles of the Christian Religion* iv-v.

41. Philip Doddridge, *Poetical Lessons for Children* (Philadelphia, 1827).

42. *The Principles of the Christian Religion* 16.

On to this Wilderness of Woe.
Vainly I seek to plead a Word
Silent in Guilt before the Lord.⁴³

That the emphasis should thus lie on “the corruption of nature” should come as no surprise from the pen of a Protestant minister who was deeply convinced of the essential depravity of human nature that is passed down, like an infectious disease, from one generation to another: “I am confident of this, that [children] have derived from you *a corrupt and degenerate Nature*. Through your veins *the Original Infection*, which tainted *the first Authors of our Race*, has flowed down to them. And is this not *an affecting Thought*? And ought it not to quicken you to attempt their Relief?”⁴⁴ Even though children may be born with no innate ideas, as Doddridge repeatedly told his students,⁴⁵ they are brought into the world in a universally sinful state. Hence, parental responsibility for adequate educational provision derives from the involuntary guilt of conceiving children tainted with wickedness. Neglecting their education is therefore to be equated with treason or unfair sacrifice. Thus, Doddridge’s hymn on “The Evil of a bad or neglected Education”, entitled “The Iniquity of sacrificing GOD’s children,” was meant to reflect on Ezekiel’s exposition of shameful children’s sacrifices (Ezek 16:20-21):

BEHOLD, O *Israel’s* God,
From thine exalted Throne,
And view the desolate Abode,
Thou once has call’d thine own.

The Children of thy Flock,
By early Cov’nant thine,
See how they pour their bleeding Souls
On ev’ry Idol’s Shrine!

To Indolence and Pride
What piteous Victims made!
Crush’d in their Parents fond Embrace,
And by their Care betray’d.⁴⁶

43. *Ibid.* 16.

44. *Sermons on the Religious Education of Children* 45.

45. “There are no innate ideas in the human mind,” proposition V, lecture VI, in *A Course of Lectures on the Principal Subjects in Pneumatology, Ethics, and Divinity: with References to the most Considerable Authors on each Subject*, [ed. Samuel Clark] (London J. Buckland *et al*, 1763) 12. Needless to say, the demonstration refers to Locke.

46. Hymn CXLI p. 126.

Besides the recurrent condemnation of excessive affection, the theme of treason is an interesting variation on an idea that Doddridge had borrowed from the Latitudinarian archbishop of Canterbury, John Tillotson, and from the seventeenth-century minister of the gospel in Devon, John Flavell:

Dr. *Tillotson* sets this in a very moving Light [*Tillotson*, vol. I, serm LIII, p. 544]⁴⁷: “When a Man has by *Treason* tainted his Blood and forfeited his Estate, with what Grief and Regret does he *look on his Children*, and think of the *Injury* he has done to them *by his Fault*; and how solicitous is he before he die to *petition the King* for Favour to *his Children*! How earnestly does he *charge his Friends* to be careful of them, and kind to them!” We are those *Traitors*. Our *Children* have derived from us a tainted Blood, a forfeited Inheritance. How tenderly should he *pity them*! How solicitously should we exert ourselves to prevent their Ruin! *Mr. Flavell* expresses the Thought still more pathetically. [*Flavell’s Husb. Spir.* Pag 260]⁴⁸ “Should I bring the *Plague into* my Family, and live to see all my poor *Children* lie dying by the Walls of my House; if I had not the Heart of a Tyger, such a Sight would melt my very Soul.”⁴⁹

Such a combined sense of guilt and responsibility enhanced the need for great care to be taken in children’s education, all the more so as young boys and girls were brought up in a world that was full of “Temptations, and in which, as they advance in Life, they must expect many more.”⁵⁰ In a race against time, it was therefore necessary to impress upon them a moral set of values, for fear that they might be subject to other, perhaps deleterious, influences: “remember, that these dear Children, whose tender Age, and perhaps amiable Forms and Dispositions, might attract the Affection and Solitude of Strangers, are committed to your especial and immediate Care by God their Creator.”⁵¹ The Lockean outlook, whereby young minds are essentially malleable, merged with a Nonconformist minister’s concern for the need to teach children the sound principles of the Christian religion from an early age: “[God] has made them thus dependent upon you, and others that have in their Infancy and Childhood the Care of them, that

47. *The Works of the Most Reverend Dr. John Tillotson, Late Lord Archbishop of Canterbury: Containing Fifty Four Sermons and Discourses. On Several Occasions. Together with The Rule of Faith. Being All that were Published by his GRACE Himself, And now Collected into One Volume* (London T. Goodwin et al., 8th edn. 1720) pp. 539 sqq Sermon LIII. Of the Education of Children, quoted verbatim by Doddridge.

48. John Flavell, *Husbandry Spiritualized: Or, The Heavenly Use of Earthly Things*. ... (London Robert Boulter, 1669), 203 (not 260), quoted almost verbatim by Doddridge.

49. *Sermons on the Religious Education of Children* 47.

50. Doddridge, P[hilip]. *A Plain and Serious Address to the Master of a Family. On the Important Subject of Family-Religion* (London J. Waugh, 3rd edn. 1750) p. 11.

51. *Ibid.*

there might be a better Opportunity of forming their Minds, and of influencing them to a right Temper and Conduct."⁵² For it was to be hoped that, once they had received proper training, they would remain good Christians all their lives.

Logically enough, the preacher's text for his *Sermons on the Religious Education of Children* was the standard proverb "Train up a Child in the Way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. XXII.6).⁵³ He commented on it with a travel metaphor that was relatively rare in eighteenth-century sermon literature: "the Wise Man assures us, that we may reasonably expect the most happy Consequence from it: That if the *young Traveller* be thus directed to *set out well* in the Journey of Life, there is a fair Prospect that he will *go on* to its most distant Stages, with increasing Honour and Happiness."⁵⁴ The idea that our life on earth is but a pilgrim's progress was recurrent in Doddridge's works.⁵⁵ Verses four and five of the hymn entitled "God the Dwelling-Place of his People through all Generations" epitomize the theme:

Thro' all the thorny Paths we trace
 In this uncertain Wilderness,
 When Friends desert, and Foes invade,
 Revive our Heart, and guard our Head.

So when this Pilgrimage is o'er,
 And we must dwell in Flesh no more,
 To thee our sep'rate Souls shall come,
 And find in thee a surer Home.⁵⁶

Although the idea is initially to be found in the Bible, one cannot help detecting an echo of the Puritan tradition encapsulated in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Besides, the theme of progress was so congenial to Doddridge that he himself published an influential book on *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*.⁵⁷ The word is to be understood in its twofold meaning of onward course and gradual improvement.

In this context it should come as no surprise that Doddridge insisted on the progressive development of a child's education, "by insensible Degrees; a little one Day, and a little another, for to them *Line must be upon Line, and Precept*

52. *Ibid.*

53. It was the standard text for sermons on education. See, for instance, Archbishop Tillotson's sermons LII and LIII.

54. *Sermons on the Religious Education of Children* 18.

55. On the pilgrimage of life in Doddridge's hymns, see J.R. Watson, *The English Hymn: A Critical and Historical Study* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 184-90.

56. Hymn LI, p. 45.

57. *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul, Illustrated in a Course of Serious and Practical Addresses, Suited to Persons of every Character and Circumstance. With a Devout Meditation or Prayer Added to Each Chapter* (Edinburgh; 11th edn. 1762).

upon Precept"⁵⁸ Curiously enough, Doddridge advocated the use of formal language that would command the respect of children. Indeed, in a very hierarchical society in which the ideology of the great chain of Being still prevailed, the young were regarded as socially inferior:

Whatever *Liberties* we may take with those who are *our Equals* in Age and Station, a more exact *Decorum* is to be preserved *before our Children*. Thus we are to *reverence them*, if we desire they should *reverence us* [Juven. *Sat.* xiv.47]; for, as *Dr. Tillotson* very justly observes, "there is a certain *Freedom of Conversation*, which is *only proper* among *Equals* in Age and Quality, which if we use *before our Superiors* we seem to *despise them*, and if we do it *before our Inferiors*, we teach them to *despise us*. [Tillotson's *Serm. Vol. I. pag. 541.*]⁵⁹

Should children disobey their parents, punishment would therefore be used, though only as a last resort: "...*Correction...*, in some Cases, may be *absolutely necessary* to the Support of *Parental Authority*, especially where Admonitions and Counsels are slighted..." Here again, moderation was to be the guideline: "Take heed, – that your *Corrections* be not *too frequent*, – or *too severe*, – and that they be not given in an *unbecoming Manner*, ...[i.e.] *in a Passion*."⁶⁰

As a child had to be given good instruction from a very early age, it was impossible that words should be the only medium of communication between adults and their offspring. Even infants would learn from example, long before they could speak, let alone conceptualise the nature and attributes of God: "By observing your reverent and solemn Department, ... they may get some Notion of an invisible Being, before they are of Age to understand the Definition of the term *GOD*; and may feel their Minds secretly impressed with an humble Awe and Veneration, before they can explain to you their Sense of it."⁶¹ Furthermore, the preacher underlined the silent oratory of tears: "And if *Tears* should rise while you are speaking, *do not suppress them*. There is a *language in them*, which may perhaps affect *beyond Words*. A *weeping Parent* is both an *awful*, and a *melting Sigh*"⁶² This statement mirrors not only an affectionate religious sensitivity, that may be regarded as a specific feature of the language of early eighteenth-century Dissent,⁶³ but also a more general shift towards sentimentalism, that became fashionable in the 1740s. Tears of emotion conveyed tenderness and delicacy of sentiment. In some respects, such language of feeling, the language of the heart, challenged the power of words and reason.

58. *A Plain and Serious Address to the Master of a Family* 13.

59. *Sermons on the Religious Education of Children* 61.

60. *Ibid.* 63-4.

61. *A Plain and Serious Address to the Master of a Family* 13-4.

62. *Sermons on the Religious Education of Children* 57.

63. Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment* pp. 164-204.

However, the first notions that children would be taught, “the knowledge of God,” and “our Duty to God and Man”,⁶⁴ were to be learnt from the words of the Bible, in the purest Protestant tradition of *sola scriptura*:

That sacred Book inspir'd by God
 In our own Tongue is spread abroad:
 That Book may little Children read,
 And learn the Knowledge which thy need.⁶⁵

There they would read about Adam's original sin and the universal corruption of human nature that ensues:

ADAM our common Head, alas,
 Brought Sin and Death on all his Race.
 From him my ruin'd Nature came,
 Heir to his Sorrow, and his Shame:

My Body weak, and dark my Mind,
 To Good averse, to Sin inclin'd:
 And Oh, too soon the deadly Fruit
 Ripen'd from that unhappy Root.⁶⁶

Children have to learn the harsh reality “of the misery which Sin hath brought us”:

Who can abide God's Wrath, or stand
 Before the Terrors of his Hand?⁶⁷

Severe though such words may sound to a child's ear, they are promptly contrasted in the following lesson on the “Good News of Salvation by Christ”:

What joyful Tidings do I hear?
 'Tis Gospel-Grace salutes my Ear:
 And by that gentle Sound I find,
 This righteous God is mild and kind. ...

...By this blest Message brought from Heav'n
 Pardon, and Peace, and Grace is giv'n.

64. *Sermons on the Religious Education of Children* 12.

65. *The Principles of the Christian Religion* 9.

66. *Ibid.* 16-17.

67. *Ibid.* 17.

Oh may I know the Saviour dear,
Whom God has represented there
And that Eternal Life receive,
Which he was sent by God to give!⁶⁸

Interestingly enough, such a course of religious instruction bears much resemblance to the several stages of evangelical conversion, from the pangs of the awareness of sinful misery to the bliss of salvation by faith. The "Covenant-God"⁶⁹ dear to the Puritan tradition has appointed two sacraments as a means of grace. The child who has already been baptised in the names of the three persons of the Trinity will eventually enter into the full communion of the church by an attendance on the Lord's Supper.

O may the blessed Hour arrive,
When ripe in Knowledge, and in Grace,
I at that Board shall find a Place!
And now, what there his People do
I would at humble Distance view;
Would look at CHRIST with grateful Heart,
And in their Pleasure take my Part;
Resolv'd, while such a Sight I see,
To live to him who died for me.⁷⁰

While Doddridge did not seem to have any qualms about the issue of paedobaptism, the Lord's Supper was obviously reserved to a congregation of professing adults.

In an age when infant mortality was so high that, on average, fifty-four per cent of English children never reached their tenth birthday,⁷¹ the child who had undergone such an intensely spiritual experience had better be warned about, and prepared for, his impending death:

Soon will the awful Hour appear,
When I must quit my Dwelling here:
These active Limbs, to Worms a Prey,
In the Cold Grave must waste away;
Nor shall I share in all that's done,
In this wide World, beneath the Sun.

68. *Ibid.* 19.

69. *Ibid.* 27.

70. *Ibid.* 28.

71. Even though there was considerable regional variation: see the standard work on the question by E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871: A Reconstruction*, Cambridge, 2nd edn. 1989).

To distant Climes, and Seats unknown,
 My naked Spirit must be gone:
 To God its Maker must return
 And ever joy, or ever mourn.⁷²

In the long European tradition of *memento mori*, the child had to be spurred into vigilance:

Awake, my Soul, without Delay;
 That if God summons thee this Day,
 Thou chearful at his Call may'st rise,
 And spring to Life beyond the Skies.⁷³

The similarity with the opening words of the hymn on Christian watchfulness is striking:

AWAKE, my drowsy Soul, awake,
 And view the threat'ning Scene:
 Legions of Foes encamp around,
 And Treach'ry lurks within.

'Tis not this mortal Life alone
 These enemies assail;
 All thine eternal Hopes are lost,
 If their Attempts prevail.

Now to the work of GOD awake;
 Behold thy Master near;
 The various arduous Task persue
 With Vigour and with Fear.⁷⁴

Though traces of the prevailing ideology of diligence and work ethic may be identified in this text, what matters here is the Christian emphasis on the transitory character of life. As the haunting spectre of premature death could not be dismissed easily, Doddridge was trying to convey, not so much fear of fire and brimstone, as acknowledgement of the vanity of human pursuits.

He himself had dire experience of the loss of his five-year-old daughter, then of four other infants.⁷⁵ Of the nine children that his wife had borne, only four survived to adulthood. Although he seemed to have lost count, in a recently discovered letter sent to Ambrose Isted in 1749, in which he explained that he

72. *The Principles of the Christian Religion* 31.

73. *Ibid.* 32.

74. Hymn CXCIX p. 177.

75. Malcolm Deacon, *Philip Doddridge of Northampton 1702-51* (Northampton, 1980) pp. 69 & 176-7.

expressed “the sympathy of a Parent who has lost four children,”⁷⁶ we should not infer that the loss of one or several children led to indifference, for there is much evidence to the contrary.⁷⁷ Doddridge’s correspondence clearly shows that the fatal illness of his eldest daughter moved him beyond words: “I cannot easily express what I feel on her account. I hope you will plead with God for her recovery & that I may be prepared for all his will.”⁷⁸ The hymn that he wrote as a “Comfort for pious Parents, who have been bereaved of their Children” acknowledges the distress of mourning parents, suggests that they and their dead children will find a place in Paradise, and encapsulates Christian teaching on the paradoxical blessing of grief:

Ye mourning Saints, whose streaming Tears
Flow o’er your Children dead,
Say not in Transports of Despair,
That all your Hopes are fled.

While cleaving to that darling Dust,
In fond Distress ye lie,
Rise, and with Joy and Rev’reuce view
An heav’nly Parent nigh.

Tho’, your young Branches torn away,
Like wither’d Trunks ye stand,
With fairer Verdure shall ye bloom,
Touch’d by th’ Almighty’s Hand.

“I’ll give the Mourners”, sayth the LORD,
In mine own House a place;
No Names of Daughters and of Sons
Could yield so high a Grace.

“Transient and vain is ev’ry Hope,
A rising Race can give;
In endless Honour and Delight
My Children all shall live”.
We welcome, LORD, those rising Tears,
Thro’ which thy Face we see,

76. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *Philip Doddridge: Additional Letters: A Supplement to Calendar of the Correspondence of Philip Doddridge* (1977) (London Dr. Williams’s Trust, 2001) letter 1469A.

77. Although apparently infants were less deeply mourned than older children: see Linda A. Pollock, *Forgotten Children: Parent-child Relations from 1500 to 1900* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 137-140.

78. Ms copy of a letter from Philip Doddridge to Joseph Parker at Lady Abney’s in Stoke Newington, 26 November 1748 (Dr. Williams’s Library MS. 12.63[16]).

And bless those Wounds, which thro' our Hearts
Prepare a Way for Thee.⁷⁹

The assurance that virtue in distress will eventually find its providential reward may be more compassionate than “high” Calvinism, but the constraints of the common metre mean that this hymn is less elaborately sensitive than the long sermon on *Submission to Divine Providence in the Death of Children* published by Doddridge on the occasion of his daughter’s death.⁸⁰

His recurrent use of the phrase “a rising Race”⁸¹ suggests that Doddridge had a very strong sense of history. The hymn entitled “God the Dwelling-Place of his People through all Generations” emphasised the essential link between past, present and future:

THOU, LORD, thro' ev'ry changing Scene,
Hast to thy Saints a Refuge been;
Thro' ev'ry Age, Eternal GOD,
Their pleasing Home, their safe Abode. ...

Lo, we are ris'n, a feeble Race,
A while to fill our Fathers Place;
Our helpless State with Pity view,
And let us share their Refuge too. ...

To thee our Infant Race we leave;
Them may their Father's GOD receive;
That Voices yet unform'd may raise
Succeeding Hymns of humble Praise.⁸²

If a minority church were to survive and keep its identity, particularly in a context of toleration that, paradoxically, seemed to encourage more conformity than the heroic period of ejection and persecution, it was of paramount importance to transmit the tradition of that denomination to future generations, so that they might duly act as the repositories of their forefathers’ principles. Then the happy parents would rest secure in the knowledge that the continuity of the Dissenting tradition had not been broken:

79. Hymn CXII pp. 98-9.

80. I have already given a detailed discussion of this sermon in my paper on “Representations of Children in the Sermons of Philip Doddridge.”

81. Cf. *Sermons to Young Persons* sermon I “The Importance of the Rising Generation”, hymn II verse 3 p.2 “to thee may each united House/Morning, and Night, present its Vows:/Our Servants there, and rising Race/Be taught thy Precepts, and thy Grace,” and *The Principles of the Christian Religion* iv “as indeed I could wish, the *rising Age* might be instructed, in what is like to unite, rather than divide us.”

82. Hymn LI p.45.

O may each future Age proclaim
 The Honours of thy glorious Name;
 While pleas'd, and thankful, we remove
 To join the Family above.⁸³

In the first *Sermon to Young Persons*, the preacher even asked his young audience to contemplate the long line of unborn children who would be bought up in the legacy of the Dissenting spirit: "and so there may be thousands of your *remote Descendents*, who never saw you, or perhaps heard your Name, who yet, under GOD, may owe their Religion and their Happiness to *you*."⁸⁴

One may conclude that Doddridge stood at the crossroads of several intellectual traditions. He drew his inspiration both from Enlightenment values and from Reformation principles. Such amalgamation should not be interpreted as an "unnatural alliance,"⁸⁵ since arguably the Enlightenment found its roots in the Reformation. Moreover, limitations of space have made it impossible to quote the wide range of sources from which Doddridge borrowed extensively.⁸⁶ Besides the Bible and the classics, they include several English writers from the Puritan tradition like Owen, Flavell, Baxter and Watts, and also French Huguenot preachers like Superville, but also the Latitudinarian archbishop Tillotson, and the philosophical writings of John Locke. His virtual library contained many seventeenth-century works,⁸⁷ though sometimes in eighteenth-century editions, but he was not averse to quoting a contemporary poem by Thomson. It is also worth noticing that Doddridge's outlook merged the seventeenth-century ethic of the passions of the mind with the late eighteenth-century aesthetics of sentiment.⁸⁸ As a man of his time, the well-read eighteenth-century Independent minister thus provided an interesting synthesis of seventeenth-century culture and more modern ideas.

FRANÇOISE DECONINCK-BROSSARD

83. Hymn I p. 2.

84. *Sermons to Young Persons* 28.

85. This phrase is borrowed from a discussion of the plight of French Huguenots in David D. Bien, *The Calas Affair: Persecution, Toleration and Heresy in Eighteenth-Century Toulouse* (Princeton, 1960), p. 25 and has been challenged by John Dunning Woodbridge in "An 'Unnatural Alliance' for Religious Toleration: the Philosophes and the Outlawed Pastors of the 'Church of the Desert'," *Church History*, vol. XXXXII, no. 4, (December 1973), pp. 1-19.

86. The catalogue of authors mentioned in the *Lectures on ... Pneumatology* provides an impressive list of over two hundred works.

87. John Flavell's *Husbandry-Spiritualised* had been published in 1669 and William Bates had died in 1699, for instance.

88. For a good introduction to these two different aesthetics, see the catalogues of two recent exhibitions: *Figures de la passion: peinture et musique à l'âge baroque*, eds. Emmanuel Coquery & Anne Piéjus (Paris: Cité de la musique: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2001) and *L'Invention du sentiment: aux sources du romantisme* (Paris: Cité de la musique: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2002).

GEORGE WHITEFIELD AND HIS NONCONFORMIST FRIENDS

George Whitefield was never a Nonconformist. He was an ordained clergyman of the Church of England. But latterly under the patronage of the Countess of Huntingdon, by whom he was appointed a chaplain, he pursued a remarkable itinerant ministry which left him free also to pursue his many friendships. Many of these were naturally with other Anglicans, but many were with Nonconformists. Which they were he did not consider important. "Though you are not of the Church of England", he wrote in a characteristic letter, "yet if you are persuaded in your own minds of the truth of the way wherein you now walk, I leave it... Whether Conformists or Nonconformists, our main concern should be, to be assured that we are called and taught by GOD." Or again, "I long for professors of religion to leave off placing religion in saying, 'I am a Churchman', 'I am a Dissenter'; My language to each is, 'Are you of CHRIST? If so, I love you with all my heart.'"¹

On 11 May 1750 James Hervey wrote: "I have seen lately that most excellent minister of the ever-blessed Jesus, Mr. Whitefield. I dined, supper, and spent the evening with him at Northampton, in company with Dr. Doddridge and two pious and ingenious clergymen of the Church of England", Thomas Hartley and Sir James Stonhouse, and on the same day Whitefield wrote from Lady Huntingdon's to Stonhouse, "I have thought of, and prayed for you much, since we parted from Northampton; while about the same time Stonhouse wrote to Lady Huntingdon "what holy and excellent examples have I in the exalted piety and ministerial fidelity of Doddridge, Hervey, Hartley and the undaunted zeal of that great apostle, Mr. Whitefield." The names go round and round – and the language, like the piety, is exalted, perhaps we should say *exalté*. What is significant for our present consideration is that along with the clergymen they include the Nonconformist Doddridge, to whom Whitefield wrote a week later, "Your kind letter found me happy at our good Lady Huntingdon's".²

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1. George Whitefield, *Works* (hereafter *GWW*) (1771-2), ed. John Gillies (Banner of Truth, 1960), Letter 84, p. 81; Letter 120, p. 115. I have arabized Letter numbers. Cf. Two letters Whitefield wrote to R[alph E[rskine]: "I have but one objection against your proceedings: your insisting only on presbyterian government, exclusive of all other ways of worshipping GOD... As for my own part (though I profess myself a minister of the Church of England) I am of a catholic spirit, and if I see a man loves the LORD JESUS in sincerity, I am not very solicitous to what outward communion he belongs": and eighteen months later that he was "so far from not setting a hedge about our LORD'S garden that was I called to it, I should set a much closer hedge than that which the associate presbytery are planting. I should enquire into people's experiences, before I admitted them to the LORD's table. I would have church members meet in church fellowship, and tell one another what GOD has done for their souls". *GWW*, Letter 150, p. 140, and notes i. 530; 350, p. 317.
 2. *Calendar of the Correspondence of Philip Doddridge*, (hereafter *CCPD*) (1979), ed. G.F. Nuttall, Letter 1611, with n. 1.

The two letters from Whitefield quoted above were both of them written in 1739, the former (it is plausibly stated)³ to the students of Philip Doddridge at Northampton soon after he had visited them, the latter to an unidentified correspondent. Of Whitefield's Nonconformist friends none was closer than Doddridge. Whitefield's letters to him express both his passionate, if limited, theology, with an unwavering sense of his own vocation to preach the gospel at all times, and his open, affectionate nature, overflowing in enthusiasm (in the modern sense) and friendship; and Doddridge's own warm temperament and devotion to evangelism led him readily to reciprocate Whitefield's regard.

Other letters that Whitefield wrote at much the same time as the one probably addressed to the Northampton students contain the following characteristic passages: "I endeavour to resign myself wholly to GOD. I desire his will may be done in me, by me, and upon me." "What I have been chiefly concerned about is, lest any should rest in the bare speculative knowledge, and not experiencing the power... There is one in particular (whom I love, and for whom I most heartily pray) who approves of my doctrine, and hath heard it preached many years past but I could never hear him tell of his experiences, or of what GOD has done for his soul." "Hath not your heart often burnt within you when the Scriptures have been opening to you, though not under a church roof? GOD is not confined to places."⁴ "Opening" in its immediacy (not "opened") is as important here as is the open air; but he also writes, "It is not sudden flashes of joy, but having the humility of CHRIST JESUS, that must denominate us Christians".⁵

What Whitefield meant by "the power" he makes plain in a remarkable letter written a year later, in June 1740, to the London Moravian bookseller, J[ames] H[utton]:

"With great comfort I received your long wished-for letter. It warmed my heart, and knit my soul to you much more than ever. Whenever I see the child-like simplicity and love of JESUS, it quite melts me down... My dear brother, let the love of JESUS constrain you to love him with all your soul. A sense of his divine love now melts down my heart, and draws tears from my eyes. O what wonderful things is GOD doing in America! Savannah also, my dear Savannah, especially my little orphans, now begin to feel the love of JESUS CHRIST. I arrived here but about two days ago, in an hour quite unexpected by my friends. How did we weep over one another for joy!... The power seemed to be coming on all the day... The power of the LORD came as it were upon all. Most of the children, both boys and girls, cried bitterly, and most of the congregation were drowned in tears... Expenditure of spirits made my body weak... When I came home, I lay upon my bed; but seeing the children and people come home crying, I went to prayer again, and a greater power than ever still attached it. O how

3. GWW, i. p. 525.

4. GWW, Letter 114, p. 109; Letter 116, p. 111; Letter 126, p. 119.

5. GWW, Letter 112, p. 107.

was my soul carried out, and how did the Holy Ghost fill the room!... The same power continues to-day... I have brought with me a Latin master, and on Monday laid a foundation in the name of our dear JESUS for an university in Georgia. GOD blesses me (O free and sovereign grace) in everything I undertake".⁵

Much in these passages would be familiar to Doddridge and welcome: applicants for membership of a Congregational church such as that to which he ministered were required to give in their experiences – as we shall see when considering Robert Cruttenden. If what Whitefield called “the power” seemed hysterical and his understanding of it too simple, others might miss, but Doddridge would not, and would warm to, Whitefield’s constant stress on simplicity:

“JESUS CHRIST calls us to simplicity.”

“Study to shew the simplicity of JESUS CHRIST.”

“Throw off a false politeness, study the simplicity of JESUS CHRIST, and be despised for something. O pity, pity the Church of England.”

“By your prayers I trust to be sent to Wales once more. The simplicity of that people much delights me.”

“Study, oh study, day by day the simplicity of JESUS CHRIST”.

“I make no apology for this plainness of speech. Simplicity becomes ambassadors of Christ”.

“Simplicity much becomes the Israel of GOD”.

“I use this freedom because I love simplicity”.⁷

The relationship between the two men was of long standing. It began on 12/16 December 1738, when Doddridge wrote to introduce himself to Whitefield, and continued till Doddridge died at Lisbon in October 1751: “I wish Lisbon may be blessed to Dr. D.”, Whitefield wrote to the Vicar of Winwick in Northamptonshire, Thomas Hartley, from America on 1 February 1752, when in fact Doddridge’s death had already taken place.⁸

Although these are the earliest exchanges between them, Whitefield had entered in his Diary on 30 April 1735, “Hervey writes that Dr. Doddridge is praying for us”. James Hervey was then an undergraduate at Oxford, and a member of the Holy Club, as Whitefield was: “one of our first Methodists at Oxford”, as Whitefield describes Hervey in a letter of 1743 to the Nonconformist author Anne Dutton (to whom we shall return), with whom both men were in correspondence.⁹

6. GWW, Letter 94, pp. 184-5.

7. GWW, Letters 74, 88, 98, 99, 102, 141, 177, 144 (pp. 71, 85, 93, 95, 97, 131, 164, 134.)

8. Philip Doddridge, *Additional Letters* (2001), ed. G.F. Nuttall, Letter 527A; GWW, ii, Letter 911, p. 427.

9. A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield* (1970), i. 88; GWW, ii. Letter 541, p. 44.

Whitefield continued to write to Doddridge. In February 1739 Doddridge wrote to James Hutton (again a correspondent of both men). "I have receiv'd another very kind Letter from Mr. Whitefield... I long to see him at Northampton... our Friends at Olney expect to see him.". Nor were they disappointed. Not immediately, but on 22 May Whitefield entered in his Journal, "reached Olney about ten at night, where I had long since promised to come"; and on the following day "reached Northampton about five in the evening, and was most courteously received by Dr. Doddridge, Master of the Academy there". On this occasion Doddridge also kept his promise to support Whitefield's Orphanage in Georgia.¹⁰

Doddridge's welcoming Whitefield to Northampton in 1739 seems to have passed without being objected to, or perhaps noticed. But when in 1743 he had Whitefield preaching in his own pulpit, and the two north windows of the church had to be removed so that the crowd outside could hear him preach¹¹, it raised a storm. On 11 October the solicitor Nathaniel Neal (d. 1765) secretary to the Million Bank, wrote to express the concern of the Trustees of William Coward, who helped to finance the Academy, who were "particularly in pain for it, on account of your Academy", and adding his own: "wherever I have heard it mentioned that Dr. Doddridge countenanced the methodists... I have heard it constantly spoken of by his friends with concern"; a few days later in the month he wrote again, to express his relief at hearing, in Doddridge's reply [not extant], that Doddridge "took several steps" to prevent Whitefield from preaching in his pulpit: "if enthusiasts... are laying a foundation of Deism, ... it surely behoves us to see to it, that we give them no assistance in the work"¹²; and in December 1743 he wrote that a further letter from Doddridge [not extant] had confirmed his fears of Doddridge's attachment to Whitefield and the Methodists, and that ministers in the West of England were complaining of "the disorders occasioned by Whitefield and Wesley in these parts" and stating that "some ministers there, who were your pupils, have given them countenance".¹³

Doddridge replied defending his attitude, and his behaviour, towards Whitefield as proceeding from "a certain frankness of heart" and "a fear to offend God"; he was grieved at many unjustifiable occurrences among the Methodists and Moravians, but pleads for "moderation of sentiment towards Whitefield": "I am not so zealously attached to him as to be disposed to celebrate him as one of the

10. *CCPD*, Letter 536; *George Whitefield's Journals* (Banner of Truth, 1960), pp. 272-3; George Whitefield, *Account of Money received* (1741), p. 23.

Religion in Olney was in a low state at this time, particularly Dissent, which Doddridge was making efforts to recover – the kind of situation attractive to Whitefield: see G.F. Nuttall, "Baptists and Independents in Olney to the Time of John Newton", in *Baptist Quarterly*, xxxi. 1 (Jan. 1983), 26-37.

11. Malcolm Deacon, *Philip Doddridge of Northampton 1702-51* (Northampton, 1980), p. 88.

12. *CCPD*, Letters 922 and 923.

13. *Ibid.*, Letter 933.

greatest men of the age". He also defended Risdon Darracott of Wellington, Somerset, and Benjamin Fawcett, then minister of Paul's meeting, Taunton: "I am sure I see no danger that any of my pupils will prove methodists: I wish many of them may not run into the contrary extreme".¹⁴

Neal retained his uneasiness over Whitefield. Some years later he wrote to Doddridge of his anxiety when he sees Whitefield's converts "now amongst the most careless and stupid sinners". In 1743 his concern as a Coward Trustee had been borne out by David Jennings, who on 20 October wrote that "solicitous to have their Pupils trained up in the Words and Ways of Truth and Soberness" and for their "Friend and Tutors Credit" they desired Doddridge's "breaking off all Correspondence" with Whitefield. "Those who are for raising a Flame in your Church" are the same sort of people as those who have lately disturbed some churches in London. In November 1743 John Barker, Morning Preacher at Salters' Hall, also expressed distress at hearing of "intercourse" between Doddridge and Whitefield: "I have no expectation but that Methodism like any other enthusiasm will promote infidelity". A few days later, however, David Dickson, a medical doctor who abandoned his profession to become a pupil of Doddridge, now in Edinburgh, wrote "I am glad Mr. W[hitefiel]d vouchsafed you a visit".¹⁵ The association between the two men thus divided contemporary opinion.

During these years Doddridge's letters are full of the name of James Gardiner, colonel of dragoons with the 13th Hussars in East Lothian, of Bankton, near Prestonpans, who from a dissolute life had had a sudden conversion, and had won Doddridge's devoted friendship. "Would my duty permit", Doddridge wrote to the Colonel on 27 September 1739, "I should gladly take a journey to Edinburgh for the pleasure of spending a few days with you & Lady Frances for which I hope I should be the better Christian for years to come." This sets the tone of what is to follow. On 28 April 1740 he writes to Gardiner's son David, "You are descended from the most gracious pair that I think I ever knew." In February he had dedicated to Gardiner *The Necessity of a General Reformation*: "many of the Thoughts are as much yours as mine; having been talked over between us with a great deal of freedom". On 6 August Lady Frances wrote from Leicester that her husband and she long "to repay the kind visit you made us here", her husband would like to be at Northampton the next time Doddridge administers the sacrament, and on the 18th Mercy Doddridge puts her word in: she hopes Doddridge had a pleasant ride to Maidwell, "was you to meet the good Colonel

14. *Ibid.*, Letter 934.

15. *CCPD*, Letters 1452, 926, 928; *Additional Letters*, Letter 924A. Jennings had become a Coward Trustee in the previous May, and under the Trust Divinity Tutor at the Academy in Wellclose Square; *DNB*; see further J.H. Thompson, *History of the Coward Trust* (1998).

there... hope the good Colonel & his Lady will not Leave Leicester before I return".¹⁶

On 28 August 1740 Doddridge replies to Mercy that he has been to Maidwell, and that the Colonel and Lady Frances were coming on Saturday night (6 September); on 3 September that Sunday would be Sacrament Day and that the Colonel would be present; and the day after that the Colonel was with him. A year later, on 8 August 1741, David Dickson wrote from Edinburgh that Lady Frances left on the previous day for Northampton, and would see Doddridge; and on the 22nd David Fordyce wrote also from Edinburgh, where he was assistant at the Tron Church, 'Your old acquaintance, Whitefield is preaching here to immense crowds; and collecting large sums of money for his hospital'.¹⁷

Meanwhile Doddridge was corresponding with Count Zinzendorf and the Moravians. On 11 August 1741 he wrote to Zinzendorf, acknowledging a letter from him [not extant] and regretting that a previous letter to him had not reached him. When Zinzendorf comes to England, as he has heard from James Hutton he may expect, he longs to see and converse with him; and on 30 August he writes to Hutton, hoping to meet Zinzendorf, with Hutton, at St. Albans on 7 September. Zinzendorf "appears far more honorable in my eyes than the favour of a Prince or than the Lustre of a Crown". This is followed by a letter of 14 September to Zinzendorf, now returned home, whom he hopes Christ will bring to Britain again. He sends Zinzendorf salutations not only from his wife, his pupils and his church and from David Dickson, but from Gardiner, who often rises at four to commend Zinzendorf to God.¹⁸

In the following spring the poet Robert Blair wrote on 25 February 1742 from Athelstaneford, East Lothian, that he has often heard of Doddridge from Colonel Gardiner and Lady Frances, and was delighted with some manuscript hymns which Lady Frances transmitted to him; he has asked Watts to transmit to Doddridge the manuscript of his own poem *The Grave* (1743). On 12 June 1742 Mercy wrote to Doddridge, who was at Wellington, that the Colonel was in Northampton and had called;¹⁹ and a week later, on 18 June, Doddridge still at Wellington, replied, envying her the Colonel's company: he hopes to preach at home on 15 August, and "if my dear Colonel should leave us" after that day, will administer the Lord's Supper then, "for it is something very much like Heaven to me to meet that excellent Christian at the Lord's Table". Darracott, he wrote, "is absolutely the most successful Minister I have known amongst us for many years. He prayed last night in a manner which came as near Inspiration as any thing I

16. *CCPD*, Letters 564, 606, 589, 619, 628. Maidwell in Northamptonshire was the home of Elizabeth, Lady Russell, to whom Doddridge owed much "from my very infancy" (*CCPD*, Letter 196), and now married to Sir Harry Hoghton, Bt., but keeping her earlier married name. Mercy Doddridge was writing from London.

17. *CCPD*, Letter 635, 638, 639, 702.

18. *CCPD*, Letter 703; Philip Doddridge *Additional Letters*, Letters 701A, 703A, 705A.

19. *CCPD*, Letter 728 and 753. For Gardiner at Northampton in June-July 1742, see *Some Remarkable Passages*, p. 136.

have heard or expect to hear". On 23 June Mercy wrote that she was generally seeing the Colonel once or even twice a day, and on the 24th that he "drank tea with me this afternoon". On 3/[4] July Doddridge wrote that he hoped to see the Colonel in London, and we know that he did so from a letter of 29 July and another of 9 August, both written from London.²⁰

Doddridge was so much taken with the Colonel in this period that one might think that in the warmth of his new attachment he had forgotten Whitefield, but this was not so. Gardiner shared Doddridge's admiration for Whitefield and strengthened rather than weakened Doddridge's devotion to him. If Doddridge could write, "It is something very much like Heaven to me to meet that most excellent Christian at the Lord's Table", the Colonel could write, as he did in a letter of 16 November 1742, that the accounts of Whitefield he had received had "ravished my Soul", adding, "if my heart deceive me not, I would rather be the persecuted despised Whitefield, to be an instrument in the hand of the Spirit for converting so many Souls, and building others up in their most holy faith, than to be Emperour of the whole world".²¹ He had hoped to see Doddridge this winter, but was ordered to march towards Frankfurt; this is why the letter was written from Ghent. He regrets that his son David had been a disappointment and given Doddridge much pain. The Colonel and his wife, Lady Frances, daughter of David Erskine, 4th Earl of Buchan, who had thirteen children, were certainly a remarkable couple in the piety which they shared and with which they supported each other. Doddridge corresponded with Lady Frances as well as with the Colonel, and refers to her almost as often as to him; and her letters to Doddridge bespeak a strong character as well as a deeply religious woman.

To return to the Colonel: on 24 January 1742 he wrote from Ghent to Doddridge, who had been unwell, "we are all immortal till our work is done"²² and again linked Doddridge with Whitefield: "There is no man in the world I long so much to see and next to yourself Mr. Whitefield, to whom I beg my kind service when you write to him". On 19 March 1742/3 Doddridge wrote to Samuel Clark of St. Albans, "Colonel Gardiner is march'd for Aix la chappelle", and on [4] April 1743 the Colonel wrote from "Lichwick", thanking Doddridge for a letter [not extant] received at "Nortonick". In 1745 he was back in this country, but Mercy Doddridge reported [8 August 1745] that he had sent her word "he was oblige to Leave Scarrbourogh in hast with orders to be ready to March at an hours warning". But on 24 September 1745, as a kinsman, Thomas Gardiner, wrote to Doddridge from Edinburgh, he was killed in the "very bloody engagement" on 21 September close to his home at Prestonpans in the course of

20. *CCPD*, Letter 756, 757, 758, 763, 772, 781. Letter 772 was written from Barnaby Street, the home of Doddridge's friend and correspondent, the Nonconformist, William Roffey, of a well-heeled family painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds: see *Genealogists' Magazine*, 12 (1956), p. 221-7.

21. *CCPD*, Letters 756, 804.

22. *CCPD*, Letter 845. This phrase is also in Whitefield's *Journals*, p. 31, and again in a letter of 28 April 1750 to James Hervey (*GWW*, ii. 345).

the Young Pretender's Rebellion.²³ Earlier, as we saw, Doddridge had welcomed Gardiner to the Lord's Table and had even altered the date for the usual monthly observance for Gardiner's convenience. If Doddridge had learned of Whitefield's freedom over the administration and reception of the sacrament, which was normal practice for a clergyman of the Church of England,²⁴ it is not surprising that he in turn was not offended if others than members were sometimes present at the observance in his own church at Northampton. To stricter Nonconformists, however, this would be another count against Whitefield and his influence on Doddridge. John Barker did not know what to make of it. In 1749 he wrote to Doddridge that he had heard that Stonhouse had taken his place "with you & your church at the lord's Table": "An action somewhat singular", he continued, "& not quite orderly perhaps"; yet had Stonhouse "demanded a place at the table of our common Lord upon the foundation of our common Christianity", Barker fancied Doddridge would not have refused him, nor would he himself. "For that Table is not Mine or yours or any mans but Christs".²⁵ This is now a familiar line of argument, but in 1749 it was not. Scripture was followed: the observance was in remembrance of Christ, nothing is said of a host or his presence: one does not, indeed logically one cannot, remember someone present; but the divine presence is in all worship: "Lo, I am with you alway".

His death, Doddridge wrote, "has almost broke my heart".²⁶ "Never was my Heart more painfully wounded than by the Death of dear Colonel Gardiner".²⁷ He preached the Colonel's funeral sermon,²⁸ and, as a friend at once, even before the funeral, urged him to do,²⁹ wrote the memoir of Gardiner, which he published as *Some Remarkable Passages* (1747).

The direction of his faith and of his gift for friendship was meanwhile diverted by his new attachments to Count Zinzendorf and the Moravian Brethren and to Howel Harris and the Welsh evangelists; Whitefield also had other Nonconformist friends, such as Mrs. Dutton and Robert Cruttenden, to whom we shall turn later.

But first we must return to the Countess of Huntingdon who had appointed Whitefield as chaplain and who, like Whitefield, belonged to the Church of

23. *CCPD*, Letters 845, 873, 884, 1086, 1095.

24. In August 1749, for instance, Whitefield and Howel Harris twice received the sacrament in Bristol with Lady Huntingdon, Colonel John Gumley and Mrs. Edwin. Lady Gertrude Hotham and Countess Delitz, and sometimes Lady Fanny Shirley were receiving the sacrament from Whitefield. Harris was at the sacrament in Walter Chapman's chapel in Bath. In January 1750 Whitefield gave the sacrament to Harris, Countess Delitz, Lady Gertrude Hotham and Colonel Gumley; see G.F. Nuttall, "Howel Harris and 'The Grand Table': a note on religion and politics" *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (hereafter JEH) 39. 4 (Oct. 1988), pp. 539-44.

25. *CCPD*, Letter 1438.

26. *CCPD*, Letter 1102, of 2 November 1745, to Lord Kilkerran.

27. *CCPD*, Letter 1101, of 17 October 1745, to Isaac Watts.

28. *CCPD*, Letter 1100, of 13 October 1745 (the day of the funeral) to Lord Kilkerran.

29. *CCPD*, Letter 1097, of 12 October 1745, from William Roffey.

England. She had her own ideas. Temperamentally a dissenter *suo jure* and *pro propria persona*, she in time became a Dissenter in practice as well, *quand même*, for she did not approve of Dissenting congregations. She trained students and sent them out as itinerant preachers; when they settled as ministers of the groups to whom they had preached, these groups often became Congregational churches. Gradually, and almost by default, an institution came into being of a new kind, neither Church of England nor Nonconformist. It was in character that she was not daunted by this. She was prepared to imagine, and invent it, and then by joining it to treat it as existent: in effect, to create it.

Outside the parochial system, which in principle she accepted, she supported the congregations arising from her chaplain Whitefield's itinerancy, together with their buildings called Tabernacles – and she was not averse to building chapels herself – to form part of her own Connexion (a Methodist term). The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, now a Nonconformist denomination, with a place in the Free Churches Group, did not come into legal existence till after her death in 1791, but she had the “plan” of it (another Methodist term) already in mind in 1782, when she decided to secede from the Church of England, signing Fifteen Articles “S. Huntingdon, Seceder”. Her position had become more complex in 1769, when Whitefield died in America and bequeathed to her personally the Orphanage at Savannah in Georgia which he had founded and to which he was devoted, Bethesda.³⁰

Her greatness of character lies not in her claims, which could be regarded as a spiritualization of her claims as a peeress, but in her steadfast meeting difficulties head-on and overcoming them in the interests of what she believed to be God's will. To repeat what I wrote some years ago in a lecture on the significance of Trevecca College:

After 1789, when the first ordination of ministers in the Countess's Connexion 'on the plan of Secession' took place, it became plain that those trained at Trevecca would minister as, and to, Dissenters; but to the end of her life the Countess's deeper purpose remained unchanged. She would have it as at Reading, where one of those ordained in 1783 later became the minister of a congregation in her Connexion, the building was known as 'the Chapel' and was regarded as 'neutral ground' between Church and Dissent, and the congregation were designated 'Partial Dissenters'; but to her such issues were always of small importance. 'Leaving the controverted systems of churches, doctrines, and any less immediate usefulness', as she wrote, she responded solely to 'that voice "Go ye into the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" ' and to that end she would be hindered by no limitation or requirement, whether from university, bishop or dissenter, whether of learning or of church order. It was an astounding achievement.³¹

30. His Tabernacles in England he bequeathed to their managers, Robert Keene and Daniel West, whom he appointed his executors.

31. G.F. Nuttall, *The Significance of Trevecca College* (1969), pp. 8-9.

With all his faults, to which Edwin Welch has drawn attention,³² Seymour is the one biographer who sees that it was possible for the Countess, without being a hypocrite, at one and the same time to regard herself as a worm before God but among her fellow-men to stand on her rights as a peeress of the realm. Whether by openly insisting on it or by assuming it sub-consciously, she expected others to see what she saw, and to see it as she did as the only right course, as if God's will and her own were at one: much as a greater than she, St. Bernard, would refer *causae meae immo causae Christi*.

When in 1783 Thomas Wills, who had abandoned a curacy to itinerate for her and had married her niece (though he later quarrelled with her) wrote to her as if she were an archbishop, "I will allow every thing you say and wish about America, provided your Province there is to be held *in Commendam* with poor old England", it was more than joking. She described her call as "a general and universal one"; "a universal devotedness" to "universal usefulness". This was going beyond "General Superintendent", the title given to the Welsh Evangelist, Howel Harris, and "General Overseer", to which Benjamin Ingham, who had married her sister Lady Margaret, was ordained (after which the Countess used to refer to Ingham as a bishop).³³

Another of Whitefield's close friends who in effect was a Nonconformist was Howel Harris. He was also a friend of the Countess. In different ways he was like each of them. He was not ordained as Whitefield was, but this was not of his volition: he would have been ordained if he could have found a bishop to ordain him. Without ordination he was as indefatigable an evangelist as Whitefield was, and as widely accepted a leader as Whitefield. I have written elsewhere³⁴ of his meetings with Whitefield and the Countess and of the social and political tones and overtones of these meetings. They were also instinct with religious conviction and conversation. On 6 September 1743 Harris wrote of his second meeting with Lady Huntingdon, "In secret with the lady and Bro. Charles Wesley to near 2. Heavenly conversation I've had indeed. She is in glorious liberty"³⁵; and after a meeting with her in the following March he wrote to Whitefield "one more delivered from her own will & wisdom I have Hardly seen".³⁶

32. Edwin Welch, *Spiritual Pilgrim: a re-assessment of the life of the Countess of Huntingdon* (Cardiff, 1995) Appendix. For Seymour, cf. n. 38, below.

33. Edwin Welch, *Spiritual Pilgrim* (Cardiff, 1995), p. 170; *JEH*, 39. 4. (Oct. 1988) 535. For Ingham, see R. W. Thompson, *Benjamin Ingham and the Inghamites* (Kendal, 1958)

34. *JEH*, 39.4. (Oct. 1988), 532-44.

35. *Howel Harris, Reformer and Soldier* (Caernavon, 1958), ed. T. Beynon, p. 52.

36. *Selected Trevecca Letters (1742-1747)* (Caernarvon, 1962), ed. G.M. Roberts, p. 135. Later Harris reached a different assessment: "seeing all her friends bow to her and she can't bear contradiction": her maid told the Moravian James Hutton she had not been in a passion for more than twelve months; she herself wrote to her husband "I have been in the most violent spirits ever since I Came here"; see E. Welch, *Spiritual Pilgrim*, pp. 125, 41, 26.

Lady Huntingdon was at the heart of these meetings, and Whitefield was always near their heart. Some five years later, on 3 January 1748/9 she wrote to Doddridge, "Much seed is sown by Mr. Whitefield's preaching... I had the pleasure yesterday of Mr. [Thomas] Gibbon[s] and Mr. Cruttenden's company, with that of Mr. [Andrew] Gifford, to dine with me. Lord Lorthan [Lothian] and Lady Frances Gardiner gave them the meeting and we had truly a most primitive and heavenly day".³⁷ A month later, on 1 February 174[8/9] Whitefield wrote to her, applauding her approval of Gibbons; and about the same time Robert Cruttenden wrote to Whitefield, recounting a visit to her by Gibbons and himself.³⁸

Harris is known as the writer of a notable journal, so long and detailed that it is still in manuscript, and also of many hundreds of letters which are likewise still in manuscript. On 4 April 1749, after hearing of 'some work among the nobility, the word running with power by the ministry of the Marquis of Lothian, Mr. Sickengotn, Mrs. Edwin and several ladies coming to her", Harris called on Lady Huntingdon again. The Marquis of Lothian was William Kerr (c. 1690-1767), the 3rd Marquis, who in 1741 had welcomed Whitefield to Scotland and begun to correspond with him; "Sickengotn" is Harris's effort to write the name of Frederick Michael Ziegenhagen (d. 1776), minister of the German Chapel of St. James's 1722-76; "Mrs Edwin" was Miss Catherine Edwin (1703-76), an heiress who later became a member and benefactress of the Moravian congregation at Bedford. Two days later, after another visit to the Countess, Harris wrote in his Journal, "sure the Lord is going somewhat great: the Marquis discoursed home and clear of the work of God experimentally"; and following an invitation from "Mrs" Edwin, visited her and had "vast freedom of love and speech for above three hours". At a visit to Lady Huntingdon three days later "Lord Lothian spoke well" and "Mrs Edwin sang an hymn"; and next day he spent two hours with them, and both of them commended his discourse, when, as he puts it, he had enjoyed "freedom as if I had been in Wales... a flame of love was among us". Later, in 1747, Harris was often with the Countess and Catherine Edwin, in whom he "found much love, power and courage to stir up to be home and on the stretch", and whom he describes as "all a Live for God indeed". With him now were others: among them Whitefield and Doddridge, Lady Frances Gardiner and the Earl of Bath's father-in-law, Colonel John Gumley: Lady Frances attended the Scottish Presbyterian church in Swallow Street when in London, and came to hear Doddridge preach there: and Doddridge described Gumley as "such a monument of the power and sovereignty of divine grace as, truly, I have hardly ever met with". Lord Bath was much moved by a sermon by Whitefield, and gave him £5 5s 0d for his orphanage. Doddridge wrote of Lady Huntingdon and Catherine Edwin, "more cheerfulness I never saw intermingled

37. *CCPD*, Letter 1434.

38. *CCPD*, Letter 1434, n. 1; GWW ii, Letter 729, p. 225-6; *Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon* ed. A.C.H. Seymour (1839-40) i. 112.

with devotion”, they “tempt one... to suspect they are celestial Spirits dwelling in humane flesh”. So we go round and round. It reads like a mutual admiration society, but it includes too many others who remain on the fringe, such as (to name but one) Countess Delitz *suo jure* (1692-1773), who wrote to Whitefield after his return to America, “You are to me as st.paul vow’d to the thessalonien my glory & my joye”.³⁹

Harris is remembered as one of the greatest Welshmen of his age and as a founder of a denomination in existence. Mrs. Dutton is forgotten. Yet she was a friend and correspondent of Lady Huntingdon, Whitefield, Doddridge and Harris, writing letters to them in her multifarious publications⁴⁰ and through these and her contributions to the Evangelical periodical *The Weekly History*, edited by the Welsh Methodist John Lewis⁴¹, a woman of great influence. She was also a convinced and well-concerned Nonconformist. She knew everyone, from Wesley and Whitefield to Doddridge and Howel Harris, and brought their names into a stream of published pieces, which included twenty-five volumes of selected letters.⁴²

She was born in 1698 into a family named Williams worshipping at Castle Hill Congregational church, Northampton, and was baptized there by its pastor, John Hunt;⁴³ but she became a member of the Baptist church in Northampton which had John Moore as pastor.⁴⁴ When aged twenty-two she married a Mr. Coles, and for five years they lived in Northampton, Wellingborough, Whittlesey, and Wellingborough again, before settling at Great Gransden, Hunts., where in 1732 they built a house, and also a meeting-house at their own expense, where her husband ministered. In 1743 he went to America, and while returning in 1747 was drowned when the ship he was in was lost at sea. In 1743 he had published *The Superaboundings of God’s Grace*.⁴⁵

39. *JEH* 39.4, 533-7, 544. Countess Delitz was a natural daughter of George I.

40. E.g. [Anne Dutton], *Letters on Spiritual Subjects... to Mr. George Whitefield* (1745).

41. For John Lewis, see *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*. *The Weekly History* (1741-2) began as *The Christian’s Amusement* (1740-41) and continued till 1745 under various names. It consisted largely of letters from Whitefield and his correspondents. In October 1745 Lewis sent Harris “a Parcel from dear Sister Dutton”, franked by James Erskine of Grange as M.P. for Stirling Burghs, a cousin of Dr. John Erskine of Greyfriars, and in November Harris was reading “sweet letters from Mrs Dutton”.

42. See Arthur Wallington, “Wesley and Anne Dutton” *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, xi (1917-18), pp. 43-8.

43. See B.S. Godfrey, *Castle Hill Meeting* (Northampton, 1947).

44. See E.A. Payne, *College Street Church, Northampton 1697-1947* (1947), quoting Anne Dutton (as Ann Williams), p. 12.

45. For Benjamin Dutton, see H.G. Tibbutt, *Mrs. Dutton’s Husband* (Bedfordshire Biographies, XXXVIII, Luton 1965), with portrait of Mrs. Dutton. He was born in 1691 at Steppingley, Beds., to godly parents, his father, a native of Nantwich, Cheshire, being for 40 years “Preacher and Pastor to a Dissenting Congregation at Evershalt [Eversholt], two little Miles distant” from Steppingley, and dying aged 66, and his mother being the daughter of John Brown of Steppingley and sister of John Browne, who “also engaged in the Work of the Ministry” but died unmarried when aged about 29.

Her correspondence with Whitefield finds its place in *George Whitefield's Letters*. In the first extant letter, of 10 November 1739, he writes, "I owe you several letters"; on 20 February 174[0/1], "Your book on *walking with GOD* has been blessed to one Mr.B- and others in South Carolina"; and on 17 July 1741, "I Bless GOD that I saw you at Gransden".⁴⁶

Her concern, common sense, precision and determination are all shown in letters still in manuscript which she wrote after her husband's death to Doddridge, urging Doddridge to allow Stephen Addington to succeed her husband, even though this meant leaving the Academy before finishing his training. "He shall have the Use of my dear Husband's Books, of which he had a pretty good Collection, Bodies of Divinity, &c.", which she designs to bequeath for the use of successive ministers; and, when for once she did not get her way, writing again to say she found Doddridge's refusal "trying, very trying", and to ask that Addington might come over "one Lord's Day in three months", and "the sooner he came, the better, as the Roads will be worse, & the Days shorter" - it was September.⁴⁷

She is also brought to life in a tribute to the devotional spirit underlying all she did in the remarkable account of her last days and death by Robert Robinson, minister of St. Andrew's Street Baptist church, Cambridge, recently discovered and published in the *Baptist Quarterly* and, with omissions, printed in what follows:

"You have (no doubt) heard of Dear Mrs. Dutton's departure - I saw her a few weeks before she died. She apprehended her death near then. She could not get into the meeting at the sermon but had prepared me a wine caudle against I had done, and over it - O how ravishingly she talked. She was up, and sat by the fire. Her countenance - I won't say serene and composed, but blithe gay, full of a Serenity, or rather full of *Immortality* - My mind was full of that Scripture which I thought I then saw exemplified in Mrs. Dutton. Psal. 92.12 etc. *The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree*, which it seems grows fastest under burden. So did Mrs. Dutton under sickness.- *He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon*. So did she overtopping all the company, for many were present, ministers and people, but none of us arrived at her height.- O how stately looks such a Christian. When death is at work at the root, like the feller of timber, what a majesty in the tree, the tremor of the branches whizzes its fame, and its fall tear up under-shrubs, as her's has affected me and others.- *They shall still bring forth fruits in old age*. - A woman of seventy four laden with the fruits of the spirit. *Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness,*

46. GWW, Letters 96, 267, 301, *Works* i, pp. 91, 250, 277.

47. Cf. CCPD, Letters 1517, 1539. Addington settled at Spaldwick, Hunts., and later became an Academy tutor and author (*DNB*). Mrs. Dutton had written to Doddridge earlier, while her husband was alive, appealing for a collection in aid of a negro school in South Carolina, following the building of a meeting-house by two converts, from information she had received two months earlier in a letter written by the "Mate of the Sloop belonging to Mr. Whitefield's Orphan House... sent from Bethesda in Georgia, July 5th 1743", cf. CCPD, Letter 949.

goodness, faith, meeknes, temperance, Gal.5.22. and these were fat and flourishing. Not shriveled, wrinkled, nor spotted with doubts, fears, deadness, &c., but like fine ripe fruits, at once charming the eye, refreshing the smell, & gratifying the tast[e]. The sight answered the end mentioned by the Psalmist. *It shew me. It shew us all that the Lord was upright, and that there was no unrighteousness in him.* That is it bodied forth, as it were the promises of God to his dying saints. I had heard, that precious in the sight of the Lord was the *Death* of his saints, and now I saw he was true to his word, for he was present by his spirit in the sickness and death of Mrs. Dutton. Her illness was a sore throat, and one of her Expressions was, 'My dear Sir, I am rejoiced to think that there is but a hair's breadth betwixt me and my father's house. 'Tis but for God to stop my breath and I am with him. And so shall I be ever with the Lord.' She then talked for half an hour on the last six verses of the fourth chapter of the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, which also she chose for her funeral sermon, and which was preached Last Thursday was sennight at her interment by Mr. Keymer, pastor of the church at Gransden, of which church she was a member. She died on the Monday before without either sickness, or pain, her breath being stopped she was at once at her father's house, and is now for ever with the Lord. The Lord give us grace to follow her who tho' she had always a pleasant countenance yet I never saw her look so pleasant before.- She had indeed an *abundant entrance*, for as she had neither sickness, nor pain of body, so neither had she a Doubt or cloud on her mind. Methinks I can't help praying, Let my dear friend, and me, die the death of Mrs. Dutton, let our last end be like hers. - To that end let us try to copy her holy exemplary life, ever redeeming the time. The evil day is at hand".⁴⁸

Another of Whitefield's Nonconformist friends, Robert Cruttenden, is now forgotten, but in his time was in his own way as much a personage as Mrs. Dutton, Robert Cruttenden, Esq., as he took care to describe himself on the titlepage of what he wrote, and as he was known. He was also a friend of Doddridge, Howel Harris, and the Moravian John Cennick, who shared with Harris in his conversion. A great-nephew of the ejected minister Robert Bragge, he had thoughts of entering the ministry himself, but on conscientious grounds abandoned them. A man of means, he lost what he had in the South Sea Bubble. His faith also suffered but he was recovered by Cennick. He did not become a Moravian, as Cennick did, but joined a Congregational church on confession of faith, which he printed in a piece appropriately, if rather grandiosely, entitled *Sovereign Grace Exemplified*. Congregational church books often record the reception of a member on confession of faith, but not the content of the confession, what was said, so Cruttenden's tract thus fills a gap. Its title page reads: *Sovereign Efficacious Grace:...exemplified in the experience of Robert Cruttenden Esq. as delivered*

48. *Baptist Quarterly*, XXXIX. 7 (July 2002), pp. 355-6, from a letter by Robert Robinson, found among the Crabb Robinson MSS at Dr. Williams's Library.

4 June 1743 by himself to the Congregational church then meeting in Lime-Street near Leadenhall-Market, 1743. In order to be admitted into their society. Published...by...George Whitefield (1744). In 1790 it was reissued, with a letter of 1 October 1742 from Cruttenden to Cennick, with greetings to Cennick from Howel Harris⁴⁹. Cruttenden remained faithful to his testimony for twenty years. He died on 23 June 1763, aged 73. "God be praised that he went off so comfortably", Whitefield wrote.⁵⁰

Doddridge and Cruttenden were close friends: Cruttenden stayed at Northampton, and Doddridge stayed with Cruttenden at "the Castle of Friendship", as he called Cruttenden's home in Moorfields – a big house presumably: "I am lodged in a fine Airy Chamber which looks out into a large Garden, & rested purely in my Crimson Damask Bed" after "a Supper of Gigantick Shrimps & many other good things", as he wrote home to Mercy, adding some days later that Cruttenden "crowds abundantly over his Stock of Bacon He never tasted any thing so good since he came from Northampton." On 8 June 1751 he wrote that he had breakfasted with Cruttenden, who "is charmingly well on Sp[!]ints tho so lame"; and on 18 September, after having heard that Doddridge was on his way to Lisbon with the consumption which proved terminal, Cruttenden wrote that he had sent the sad news to Lady Huntingdon, who had once sent Whitefield £300 through his hands. She duly sent £100, which, with "benefactions of dear Lady Chesterfield, Lady Fanny, Lord Lyttelton, and Lord Bath" made "a total of nearly three hundred", and expected Nathaniel Neal "and his friends amongst the Dissenters" to collect more.⁵¹ Cruttenden certainly had his place in the circle that has engaged our attention.

Norwich has a long and complex history of Nonconformity, and it is not surprising to find that in 1755 Whitefield opened a Tabernacle there, which had been erected by one James Wheatley as a preaching-place for himself. Wheatley was a strange character. Admitted a preacher in 1742 by John Wesley, after initial popularity he was expelled in 1751. Following repentance he came to Norwich and after attacks became popular again and erected the Tabernacle, in which he and others associated with Whitefield preached. Disturbances followed, and in 1758 he offered the Tabernacle to John Wesley, whose brother Charles had formed a society in Norwich some years earlier. Wesley accepted it, but finding the

49 John Richardson, minister of the church to which Cruttenden had delivered his experience, had resigned the charge in 1755, and Cruttenden's funeral sermon was preached by Richardson's successor, William Porter, *A Sermon occasioned by the Death of Robert Cruttenden Esq.* (1763). I have drawn on this sermon in the above account of Cruttenden. For a Cruttenden of Cranbrook, Kent, see M.A. Jennings, *A Kentish Country House* (Guildford, 1894), p. 30. Cruttenden's daughter married Percival Pott (1714-88) (*DNB*), ancestor of Alfred Pott (1822-1908) (*DNB*), the first Principal of Cuddesdon College.

50. *Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon*, I, 448, n.11.

51. *CCPD*, Letters 1636, 1638, 1740, 1792, 1796, n.1: *Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon*, i. 449.

society “the most ignorant, self-conceited...disorderly disjointed society in the three kingdoms” he abandoned it. Wheatley passed the society to John Hook,⁵² from whom it came to Lady Huntingdon. In 1776 she bought out Wheatley’s rights and appointed one of her students, Mark Wilks,⁵³ as preacher. Wilks was respectable, but he married, which she did not allow her students to do, and dismissed him. Some of the congregation remained loyal to him, and, buying a chapel built by a country vicar who on conscientious grounds had resigned his living and built the chapel “for evangelical ministrations”, made him their minister; but Wilks (like Mrs. Dutton) became a Baptist, in 1789 gathered a church, in 1814 built a chapel for it (which by 1874 was the home of a General Baptist church), and was still its pastor at his death in 1819, after writing his *Memoirs* (1821). Without Wesley’s support the Wesleyan society continued, and after renting a chapel from the General Baptists built a new chapel in Cherry Lane, which Wesley opened in 1769. Lady Huntingdon continued to supply preachers for the Tabernacle till her death, while in Cherry Lane the Wesleyan Methodists worshipped for forty-two years – later a United Methodist church developed. These details illustrate the tangle which could be the lot of a Tabernacle founded by Whitefield. If the name Tabernacle was in part intended to denote what was temporary, there is an irony in a Tabernacle’s long continuance under various denominations, but this would not have disturbed Whitefield, so long as the gospel was preached in it. Further secessions from the Norwich Tabernacle took place in 1819, when a Congregational church was formed in 1820 in Prince’s Street (now a United Reformed Church congregation) under John Alexander (d. 1868), who continued as pastor till 1866; and in 1836 under John Dryden in St. Andrew’s Chapel. In the U.R.C. *Year Book* two churches preserve the name Tabernacle from the Evangelical Revival, Dursley (1742) in Gloucestershire and Chippenham (1770); but none in Norwich.

Robert Robinson (1735-90) seems to belong to another age. In a sense he did. With due regard to the difference in the generations, he was more like a Whitefield *redivivus*. Yet he was closely associated with Whitefield, whose preaching led to his conversion on 10 December 1755, and to his assisting William Cudworth,⁵⁴ a *protégé* of Whitefield’s at the Norwich Tabernacle, though he soon left it to form a separated church in Norwich, which did not long continue, most of its members returning to the Tabernacle. He then became a Baptist, being baptized by John Dunthorn, the minister of the Baptist church at Great Ellingham, near Attleborough, and was sought by the Baptist church at Beccles, whose minister had died, after being previously Mrs. Dutton’s minister at Great Gransden, where

52. For Hook’s descendants, who included a Dean of Worcester, and a Dean of Chichester, see *DNB*.

53. For Mark Wilks (1748-1819), see G.F. Nuttall, “The Students of Trevecca College 1768-1791”, *Cymmrodorion Society Trans.*, Session 1967, Part II, p. 377.

54. For Cudworth, see J.C. Whitebrook, “William Cudworth and his Connexion (1717-1763)”, *CHST* vii (1916-18), 363-72.

he had been replaced by one Timothy Keymer. Mrs. Dutton urged, however, that Robinson should become the minister not of the Beccles church but of the Baptist church at Stone Yard (later St. Andrew's Street), Cambridge, where also the pastorate was vacant, and the church had far greater prospects. Here on 11 June 1761 Robinson was "set apart" by six ministers, three Baptists (one being Keymer), and three, notably, Congregational. This "openness" was both in line with Whitefield's absence of interest in denominational distinctions and characteristic of Robinson, who may well have learned it from Whitefield. And here, in a meeting-house built in 1764, "a damp, dark, cold, ruinous, contemptible hovel", as he described it, he remained for the rest of his life. He steadily built up not only the church but a reputation spreading far beyond Cambridge, till it eclipsed Mrs. Dutton's, though never Whitefield's. Doddridge was born in 1702 and was twelve years older than Whitefield. Robinson died in 1790, twenty years after Whitefield's death; yet on each them Whitefield was a major influence. In itself this is a remarkable achievement.⁵⁵

Robinson's biography is called *With Freedom Fired* (1955) by G.W. Hughes, a good title for a Nonconformist. "It is a great misfortune to be governed by authorities", Robinson wrote. "The people have a right to call and ordain ministers". When trustees for the property were appointed, he saw to it that they were "chosen by the CHURCH", and all members were given an opportunity to share in joining them in paying outstanding bills. The minister's stipend was not the trustees' responsibility but was raised by a quarterly voluntary subscription". Robinson wrote the church book himself, but took care to have it "authenticated" by the signatures of deacons, trustees and five members. Characteristically he entered in the church book an inventory of "the furniture belonging to the Church", which included not only every detail of the manner of the administration of the Lord's Supper on "the Lord's-day before every full moon" except that, when the full moon fell on the Lord's day, it was on that day "for the sake of country-members", but such things as "Mops, brooms, brushes, dustpans &c in the closets". When the church followed him in joining the Eastern Baptist Association, the church saw to it that "a messenger is always sent with the minister and always present when business is transacted".

In all this Robinson shows his practical common sense as well as attention to detail in secular matters. His deeply spiritual nature is also revealed in the church book. On his ordination he adds the comment, "The Church publicly recognized their call, which being accepted, they conferred the pastoral office, the highest

55. In these paragraphs on Norwich I draw on John Browne, *History of Congregationalism...in Norfolk and Suffolk* (1877), supplemented by "Nonconformity's Stronghold" in the *Methodist Recorder* for 18 June 1981, and G.F. Nuttall, in *St. Andrew's Street Baptist Church, Cambridge* (Cambridge 1971), ed. K.A.C. Parsons, pp. 1-18. For further Robinsonian-Whitefieldite-Dissenting ramifications see C. Binfield, "Six Letters of Robert Robinson. A suggested context and a noble footnote", *Baptist Quarterly* 40.1 (January 2003), pp. 50-60.

honor on earth, on that abandoned outcast boy (Great God! he records it with tears!); and on part of his confession of faith on that occasion he writes, "these appeared to him scriptural truths; where any of them surpassed his comprehension his reason did homage to revelation", and "in this, there was nothing done but what a naturalist did every time he studied a daisy". This reverence before the mystery of life is of a piece with his hymns:

Mighty God! while angels bless thee
May a mortal sing thy name?

How dare he? Yet he must. How can he? Only with God's help.

Come, thou Fount of ev'ry blessing!
Tune my heart to sing thy grace!

The enthusiasm that came to him from Whitefield never left him.

GEOFFREY F. NUTTALL

A WORCESTERSHIRE SERMON-BOOK OF 1751-1802

In Kidderminster Public Library is a small volume¹ which indicates on its spine that it contains a sermon by Benjamin Fawcett², the minister of the Nonconformist Meeting House at Kidderminster from 1745 to 1780, "occasioned by the Death of Mrs. Mary Skey, 1751". The reader, however, who opens this small volume expecting a printed funeral sermon of the sort which was very common in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is in for a surprise.

In fact the volume (which has a twentieth-century binding) contains eight manuscript funeral sermons written on vellum, ranging in date from 1751, the year in which two funeral sermons were preached on Mrs. Mary Skey, to 1802; and there is also an obituary notice copied from a Worcester newspaper of Mrs. Hannah Johnstone, who died in Worcester in March 1802, and is the subject of the eighth of the sermons. Each sermon has a title, and in each case a Biblical text provides a focus for the sermon.

The book is of interest in several ways. Five of the eight sermons were preached by Benjamin Fawcett (1715-80). Comparatively few of his sermons³ are known, and all of them are known from printed versions. The manuscript sermons show how skilful he was at drawing lessons from (or, as he puts it, "improving") the lives, and, particularly where they were sudden or premature, the deaths, of his subjects. There is much in Fawcett's funeral sermons which dwells on the dying speeches of his subjects, for example, Mrs. Rebekah Crane's, whose "concluding Language to her Children" showed her "inward Peace and Serenity". This was not to everyone's taste. The great Nonconformist pastor Job Orton⁴, who lived in Kidderminster from 1766 to 1783, wrote a letter, which is largely about his friend Fawcett, that some of those praised by Fawcett for their "transports [vehement feelings of joy?]" as they lay dying were "very indifferent people as to their morals", whereas he "would say nothing or very little of some excellent persons

¹ The volume is in the Local Studies section of Kidderminster Public Library, ref. L. 252. I am grateful to Sally Dickson, Nigel Gilbert and Miss L.K. Hart, the Reference Librarian at Kidderminster, for assistance of various kinds.

² For Benjamin Fawcett see *Dictionary of National Biography (DNB)* and George Hunsworth, *Baxter's Nonconformist Descendants; or Memories of the Old Meeting Congregational Church, Kidderminster* (1874), pp. 30-45. Hereafter "Hunsworth".

³ The best known of Fawcett's printed sermons is probably "Murther Lamented and Improved: A Sermon on the Occasion of the Death of Mr. Francis Best". Preached on 16 June 1771. Best was a Kidderminster miller and a Trustee of the Old Meeting, who was murdered on his way to Bewdley market. In this sermon Fawcett applies the lessons to be drawn from Best's unexpected death in much the same way as in the MS. Sermons.

⁴ For Job Orton (1717-83) see *DNB*. The quotation is from *Letters to Dissenting Ministers* ii, pp.18-19 (letter xxxiii).

who had no transports, and expressed no particular consolations and hopes..." In addition, one of Fawcett's characteristic strategies is to imagine what the deceased would say to the grieving friends and relations.

The three hands which have transcribed the eight sermons can be identified by comparison with other documents or from internal evidence. I shall call them hands A, B, and C. Hand A is almost certainly that of the Kidderminster cloth-merchant and "dealer" (his own description in his will) Joseph Williams (1692-1755)⁵, one of the leading members of the Meeting House congregation in Kidderminster, and a minor figure in the Evangelical Revival of the mid-eighteenth century. Hand A has transcribed the two sermons preached on Mrs. Mary Skey in 1751. Hand B, it is virtually certain, is that of Benjamin Fawcett himself, who has transcribed four out of five of the sermons which he preached. Hand C is, on internal evidence, that of George Osborn (1756-1812)⁶, minister of the Angel St. congregation in Worcester, who has transcribed the two sermons in the book which he himself preached, the seventh and the eighth. The first of these two was preached at the New Meeting in Kidderminster, whose congregation seceded from that of the Meeting House in 1781, in August 1783, while Osborn was officiating there on a temporary basis; the second was preached in March 1802 at the Angel St. Meeting in Worcester.

It will be useful to tabulate the contents of the sermon-book:

- f.1 Fawcett's 3 July 1751 sermon on the death of Mrs. Mary Skey, died aged 27.
- f.23 John Adams's 14 July 1751 sermon on Mary Skey (Adams was minister at Bewdley).
- f.47 Fawcett's January 1753 sermon on Thomas Crane of Kidderminster, died aged 27.
- f.83 Fawcett's September 1767 sermon on Miss Mary Skey, died aged 17.
- f.107 Fawcett's January 1769 sermon on Mrs. Rebekah Crane, died aged 75.
- f.137 Fawcett's December 1775 sermon on Henry Crane, died aged 85.
- f.175 George Osborn's August 1783 sermon on James Johnstone, junior, died aged 29.
- f.185 Osborn's March 1802 sermon on Mrs. Hannah Johnstone, died aged 69 in Worcester.

⁵ For Joseph Williams see *DNB* and Hunsworth, pp. 19-37. For his diary see Benjamin Hanbury, *An Enlarged Series of Extracts from the Diary...of Joseph Williams* (1815). Hereafter "Hanbury". The handwriting in the sermon-book is apparently the same as that of Williams's will in the Worcester Record Office. Fawcett's hand in the sermon-book seems identical to that in the Old Meeting Baptism Register (P.R.O.) in the years 1745-80. For Williams and the Evangelical Revival see G.F. Nuttall in *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* (Dec. 1980), pp.181-85.

⁶ For George Osborn see E.D.P. Evans, *A History of the New Meeting House, Kidderminster* (1900), pp.288-9.

At the front of the volume is a contents list in the hand of Benjamin Fawcett: "This book contains the sermons that were preached for each of the following persons..." He then sets forth the subjects and folio numbers of the sermons he himself preached. Below these is a similar entry, in the hand of George Osborn, for the two sermons preached by him.⁷

The individuals commemorated in these sermons belonged to some of the leading Nonconformist families in Kidderminster. Mary Skey was the first wife of Samuel Skey (died 1800)⁸. They married on 9 May 1749 in Kidderminster, and their daughter Mary was baptised in Bewdley on 11 July 1750 (she is the subject of Fawcett's 1767 funeral sermon). Samuel Skey built a large chemical works at Dowles, where he was lord of the manor. In 1751 he was living in Wribbenhall, now part of Bewdley but then in Kidderminster parish. This may account for the two funeral sermons for Mary Skey. The second sermon was preached by John Adams, who was installed as minister of the Bewdley Meeting on 18 July 1751, an event attended by Philip Doddridge, the teacher at the Dissenting Academy in Northampton of both Adams and Benjamin Fawcett⁹.

Henry Crane¹⁰ was a woolstapler, and a prominent member of the Dissenting congregation in Kidderminster. He was, as has been noted above, eighty-five years old at his death in 1775. Rebekah Crane (d.1769) was his wife, and Thomas Crane (d.1753) his son. In one of the most eloquent (and historically revealing) sections of the sermon-book Fawcett says of Henry Crane:

"The neighbourhood has lost the distinguished peace-maker. That was a province for which Mr. Crane was admirably formed, by his quick-discerning mind, his candid and generous disposition, his soft and easy address [manner], his great knowledge of the world, his lowly thoughts of himself, and his tender compassion for the manifold errors and infirmities of human nature - We of this church and congregation have lost a worthy and venerable member, an useful deacon, an eminent pillar, and a generous benefactor... when this place of worship was erected [in 1753], it is well known that he and his beloved friend, Mr. Joseph Williams, contributed between them no less a sum of three hundred pounds..."

⁷ There is a problem about the pagination used by Fawcett and Osborn; they list the sermons from the first page of the text of each sermon, not from the title-pages.

⁸ For Samuel Skey see J.R. Burton, *A History of Bewdley* (1883), pp. 61, 79-80.

⁹ For Philip Doddridge see *DNB* and G.F. Nuttall, *Richard Baxter and Philip Doddridge*, (Friends of Dr. Williams's Library, 5th Lecture, 1951). For his correspondence see J.D. Humphreys, *The Correspondence and Diary of Philip Doddridge, D.D.* (5 volumes, 1829-31) and G.F. Nuttall (ed.), *Calendar of the Correspondence of Philip Doddridge, D.D. (1702-1751)* (Northants. Record Soc., vol. xxix (1979)). For the installation of Adams see Nuttall (ed.), no. 1176 (24 July 1751)=Humphreys v, 206.

¹⁰ For Henry Crane see Hanbury, p.37, note. In his will, made in 1769 (the year of his wife's death), he makes bequests to his son Henry (d.1772), his son Sergeant, and his daughters Rebekah Penn and Hannah Johnstone. His son Sergeant Crane died in 1787. When he made his will in December 1782 his goods were worth £18,000.

Elsewhere (f.170) Fawcett refers to Crane's "long and numerous trading journeys", and it is clear that the "dealer" Joseph Williams and the woolstapler Henry Crane were a new phenomenon in the Kidderminster cloth trade: merchants who travelled widely to get orders and whose religious outlook was broadened as a result of their travels.

Hannah Johnstone was the wife of Dr. James Johnstone (c. 1730-1802) of Galabank in Annandale, Scotland, who settled as a doctor in Kidderminster in 1751. Born in Kidderminster in 1733 (she was baptised at the Meeting House on 30 August), Hannah Crane married Dr. Johnstone on 10 October 1753. He got to know Hannah when he was ministering to her brother Thomas (who died 22 January 1753). Dr. James Johnstone, junior, who died in 1783, was their eldest son, but two of their other sons, John and Edward, became famous doctors. James caught typhus while ministering to the prisoners in Worcester Gaol, and died on 6 August 1783, aged twenty-nine. He was succeeded as physician to the Worcester Infirmary by his father. Both James Johnstones wrote on "the Kidderminster throat", an ulcerous sore throat which was a feature of the autumnal fevers in the town¹¹.

All seven deceased were either born Cranes or were related to the family. Mrs. Mary Skey was born Mary Crane, and Hannah Johnstone was born Hannah Crane. So the book probably belonged to a member of the Crane family. This was most plausibly Henry Crane (d.1775), and at his death it would have passed to his daughter Hannah Johnstone. In 1947 it was in the possession of Lt.-Col. James Johnstone, and may have been given to Kidderminster Library soon after that. It is indicative of the respect the Crane family enjoyed that Joseph Williams, Benjamin Fawcett and George Osborn were prepared to copy the eight sermons into the book. It also suggests how much each of these sermons must have been prized by the deceased person's relatives, almost as a "keepsake" of the loved one.

By his marriage to Rebekah Taylor Henry Crane acquired a connection with Richard Sergeant, the seventeenth-century ejected minister of Stone, near Kidderminster, who had been one of Richard Baxter's Assistants during his Kidderminster ministry¹². Of Mrs. Rebekah Crane Fawcett notes (ff. 117-9; It can hardly be part of the actual funeral sermon): "Mrs Crane was descended from pious and devout Progenitors", especially "her Mother's Father, the Revd. Mr. Richard Sarjeant". It was a connection in which Henry and Rebekah Crane clearly took pride: they called one of their sons Sergeant. Similarly, the press obituary

¹¹ For the two James Johnstones see *DNB* under James Johnstone, senior (?1730-1802), and W.H. McMenemey, *A History of the Royal Worcester Infirmary* (1947), pp.115-18, 127-44. McMenemey makes it clear that the sermon-book was in 1946-7 in the hands of Lt.-Col. Johnstone, a descendant of Dr. James Johnstone (d.1802). See the Preface and nos. 70, 195-6 of the Bibliography.

¹² For Richard Sergeant see T. Hornblower Gill, *Richard Serjeant: A Biographical Sketch* (1885), and E.D.P. Evans, *New Meeting House Records*, for January 1901 (unpaginated).

notice of 1802, which occupies the last pages of the sermon-book, says of Mrs. Hannah Johnstone, née Crane: "...this excellent woman was descended from Mr. Richard Serjeant..." The Cranes's descent from Richard Sergeant was through his daughter Mary (who married Thomas Taylor of Winterfold in Chaddesley and Whitlenge in Hartlebury), as was the descent of a Kidderminster family called Hornblower. In families descended from Richard Sergeant it was a custom to use Sergeant as a Christian name. Rebekah Crane, nee Taylor, had a brother Sergeant Taylor, who died aged twenty-one while training for the ministry. In a New Meeting record of December 1781 occur the names of Sergeant Crane and Sergeant Hornblower (Crane was a woolstapler, like his father, and Hornblower a mercer). Several of the families of the Old Meeting and the New Meeting could claim an ancestor among Baxter's flock, and we may well imagine that, for them, as for the Cranes and Hornblowers, with their descent from Richard Sergeant, this constituted a connection with what was in effect a local Nonconformist aristocracy.

None of the Kidderminster Nonconformists of the period 1740-80 was more conscious of the Baxter connection than their minister. Even before Fawcett was confirmed as their minister, Joseph Williams told Philip Doddridge¹³ that he hoped Fawcett would be "a second Baxter among us," and he pursued an irenic, Baxterian course (aided doubtless by Henry Crane and others) in preventing the credal differences in his congregation from erupting into schism, which was thus delayed until after his death in 1780. He abridged and published several of Baxter's works, and in 1779 he edited the diary of his friend Joseph Williams, a great admirer of Baxter, for publication.

Joseph Williams's copying of the sermons on Mrs. Mary Skey into the Crane sermon-book (if that is what it was) is explicable by his admiration for Benjamin Fawcett and his closeness to the Crane family (Henry Crane was his cousin¹⁴). But he had himself some part in Mrs. Mary Skey's funeral service. Like Doddridge, whom he so much admired, Williams was a hymn-writer. After his transcription of Fawcett's sermon comes "The Hymn" almost certainly composed for the occasion by himself. He also composed a hymn for the funeral of the minister John Spilsbury in 1727, which he tells us was distributed among the mourners just before the funeral sermon¹⁵.

At one point in his funeral sermon for Thomas Crane Fawcett remarked that his hearers might be surprised at the delay in delivering the sermon. There is then an explanation in a note that the sermon was delivered on 4 March 1753 though Thomas Crane had died on 22 January, six weeks before (this was because of the illness of his mother Rebekah). As with the excursus on Rebekah Crane's ancestry, and another on Sabbath travel (ff. 170-1), it seems that in this added note Fawcett was not transcribing the sermon he preached but adding explanatory detail to what

¹³ Nuttall (ed.), no. 1003 (29 August 1744) = Humphreys iv, 347.

¹⁴ Hanbury, p.37.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.60.

he had come to see as a permanent record. Though there was probably never any intention to publish these funeral sermons, for the Cranes the sermon-book was a document of great importance. It was a treasured memorial which would keep the virtues of the departed fresh in the memories of those who survived it; it also constituted an account of God's dealings with the family over some fifty years, and of his (sometimes) inscrutable dispensations whereby some members of the family died young and others survived.

This volume of manuscript funeral sermons is important in several ways: it is important because of people who transcribed sermons into it, because of the sermons themselves, because of their subjects and because of the ethos of Kidderminster and Worcester Nonconformity in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with which it brings us into touch.

DON GILBERT

LONGER REVIEWS

The Changing Shape of English Nonconformity 1825 -1925.

By Dale Johnson. Oxford University Press, 1999. £39.95. ISBN 0-19-512163-5

In 1900 Robert Mackintosh, of Lancashire Independent College, posed the question, "If our faith is not merely a part of our scientific knowledge, and if we cannot regard faith as blind assent to the teachings of a visible church, upon what shall we say that faith rests?" Johnson's book does not seek to answer Mackintosh but explores the attempts of Nonconformists to tackle the issues surrounding that question, over the century 1825-1925 in which the old Calvinist certainties were challenged and for the most part overthrown. He examines the situation of those Nonconformists, largely from the attempts of ministers and college teachers, who tried to avoid "the extremes of sterile orthodoxy and vague religiosity", arguing convincingly that they were "genuinely concerned about maintaining the content of evangelical witness in a culture that was less receptive to its message than it previously had been". He identifies the emergence of the colleges and their teaching staff as key factors, in changing the denominations' view of themselves and their interaction with society as a whole.

This is important and has been explored insufficiently well hitherto. Johnson's book is concerned, therefore, with piety and education and involves an "extensive reassessment of what it meant to be evangelical" throughout this period, a reassessment calling for "theological reconstruction", as he terms it, on the part of the Nonconformists. Johnson differs from many other interpreters of nineteenth-century Nonconformity in that, instead of regarding the attempts of Nonconformists to engage with contemporary culture as "occasions of decline from earlier evangelical vitality and appeal", he sees them more positively as "necessary and deeply serious efforts". He is to be commended for recognizing these efforts "to come to terms with modernity" as essential parts of the process by which "Nonconformity took a larger place in the broader culture". However, as he recognizes, by joining the mainstream, it became more difficult to define a clear Nonconformist identity.

His study divides into two parts, each consisting of four chapters. Part one is concerned with the Nonconformists and theological education, while part two, longer than its partner and providing the heart of the book, deals with theology and the Nonconformist engagement with its message and the prevailing culture. Johnson asks two questions. First, how did the colleges for Nonconformist ministers develop? And secondly, and more importantly, what were the results of this development for the Nonconformist ministry, for Nonconformist theology, and for Nonconformist identity? In answering the latter he deals with the demands of the age, issues of religious authority, theological reconstruction (including questions of Calvinism, the influence of F.D. Maurice, liberal German theology, and the Fatherhood/sovereignty of God), and, passing beyond controversy with

the Church of England, he moves to dialogue and co-operation. He finds that the colleges served well the denominations and the churches as a whole, by providing initiatives for change and that, in consequence, the Nonconformists, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, experienced a "remarkable shift" in self-perception.

We should applaud his recognition of men like Simon, Fairbairn and Forsyth among the Congregationalists, Pope, Beet and Peake among the Methodists, Elmslie and Oman among the Presbyterians, Tymms, Green and Robinson among the Baptists, who surely should be given credit for their considerable achievements both for their denominations and for theology as a whole. Yet, as Johnson demonstrates, the issues raised by the demand for reconstruction were debated as much outside the colleges, by John Campbell, C.H. Spurgeon, R.W. Dale, James Baldwin Brown, John Clifford and John Scott Lidgett as within them. Given Johnson's theme, one might expect that he would consider at length the popular, if extreme, accommodation to the spirit of the age of R.J. Campbell and the advocates of his new theology, but he resists going over this well trodden ground. By not considering Campbell, he sets himself at a distance from the colleges and their professors who did engage in the debate over the new theology, as did also many outside the colleges. Indeed, several who protested strongly against R.J. Campbell's new theology were ordinary serving ministers, like Charles Henry Vine of Ilford, even if the theological argument were carried on most vigorously by P.T. Forsyth, the principal of Hackney College.

We might also ask whether he is right to emphasise the "extremely modest beginnings" of the theological colleges. The ejected ministers who set up Dissenting academies after 1662 were not uneducated, nor were their products and successors like Watts and Doddridge, and these modest academies were largely responsible for the extension of the curriculum so as to include subjects not taught at the universities, from which they were excluded. Such ministers were neither the possessors of modest talents, nor of modest attainments. On the contrary, perhaps their Nonconformist successors overreached themselves by setting up the immodest colleges? By sending students to the universities when they became available to them, was the ministry itself changed and for the worse? Put differently, and using Johnson's own terms of reference, should the preachers have aspired to be prophets rather than professionals?

The book traces some themes across denominational lines. This method may be useful with Baptists and Congregationalists but it is more difficult to justify placing the Methodists and Presbyterians alongside these two bodies, an awkwardness he implicitly recognizes by almost exclusively referring to Baptists and Congregationalists in his chapters on the beginnings and the reform of the colleges, on piety, education, and ministry, and on the ministry required by the age. The academies and later the colleges serving the Baptists and Congregationalists were independent institutions, not answerable to any central bodies, whereas the Methodists and Presbyterians directly controlled and financed

their colleges. Johnson also tends to write of the Methodists as if they were a unified and coherent entity. This was not the case. The Wesleyan Methodists differed markedly in their attitudes to ministerial education from the Methodist New Connexion, the Primitive Methodists and the Free Methodists. The Wesleyan Methodists' first institution for ministerial training was only established in 1834. We should also recall that the General Baptists of the New Connexion and the Baptist Union (which had been formed among the Particular Baptists) finally united as late as 1891. Yet we must concede that the Congregationalists, Baptists and Methodists shared a tension, for much of the nineteenth century, between the desire for an educated ministry and the need for a zealous, spirit-led ministry. The English Presbyterians, who really did not see themselves as Nonconformists, were not reconstituted as a church, separate from the Church of Scotland, until 1836, and their theological college was not established until 1844.

The Methodists or New Dissent were, therefore, quite distinct from the Old Dissent of the Congregationalists and the Baptists, while the Presbyterians were a new creation altogether. Consequently many complexities may be blurred or overlooked by treating these evangelical Nonconformists (thus excluding the Unitarians) as if they have a single, common identity. The Methodists themselves, considered apart from the others, lack such a single identity throughout the period under discussion. Of course, Johnson might assert that these Christians constitute a unity as Nonconformists because they all stood apart from the Church of England but they also consistently and conscientiously stood apart from each other, not least in their understanding of the ministry and its relation to the church, and the church's relation to the world.

Johnson assumes "the centrality of the ministry in the Nonconformist understanding the church". Yet was the ministry as central to the Baptists and Congregationalists as, say, the concept of the church as the gathered saints? Certainly in the nineteenth century, the great preachers became symbolic of Nonconformist ministry but underlying them remained the gathered church. The Methodists also consistently placed great emphasis upon local preachers, rather than upon a professional ministry. And was there ever a single Nonconformist understanding of the church? He concedes that much of the discussion on ministry occurred among the Congregationalists and concentrates on the differing contributions of John Angell James, who earnestly worked to save the sinner, and his younger colleague at Birmingham, R.W. Dale, who favoured revivals but did not himself actively engage in evangelism. Dale argued that the Christian faith needed "careful articulation" or it "would lose its force".

The colleges regularly asserted that the ministry was a vocation and not a profession and were careful to stress piety as the ministry's foundation. The issues the colleges faced - lack of finances, the need to justify their existence to a sceptical base among the local churches, the possibility that shorter courses might provide a superficial education, and the fear that in some churches the minister might be among the least educated - are not so different from those of our own age. Yet by the end of the nineteenth century a college education was no longer

merely "an option for ministers..., but an expectation". Is that still the case?

As the title suggests, this book is about English Nonconformity even though several references are made to Scottish theologians, especially John McLeod Campbell, John Oman, P.T. Forsyth, A.M. Fairbairn, A.E. Garvie and W.G. Elmslie. Some readers may be disappointed to find no references to Wales, which throughout Johnson's century was the Nonconformist nation *par excellence*. Of course, there the ministry and the chapel had a different relation both to society and to culture and Welsh Nonconformity had a different identity (which nonetheless influenced its powerful neighbour to the east).

Readers may wonder about Johnson's conclusion. If the Nonconformists made courageous attempts to address questions of their relationship to society, did they make too many concessions? By rejoining the mainstream, did they compromise too much on principles? Johnson provides no guidance on these matters and readers must make their own judgement. Without such guidance, however, this carefully researched and scholarly book remains a descriptive survey of Nonconformist thought. It does not offer a wholly new interpretation of the subject, although it takes issue with those who concentrate on negative aspects alone. Yet this reader would have preferred more analysis of the various positions. This is a useful account of a demanding subject but it is neither an exciting nor polemical work, although Johnson has done his homework well. He has drawn little from Presbyterian sources, more from Methodist, more again from Baptist but most of all from Congregational.

ALAN ARGENT

Singing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land: A Missiological Interpretation of the Ely Pastorate Churches, Cardiff. By Peter Cruchley-Jones. Pp.249. 2001, £27.00. Peter Lang, Berlin, ISBN 0 8204 4831

Certainly since becoming the Welsh capital in 1958, Cardiff's story has been one of economic and cultural success. From the establishment of the National Assembly in the city in 1998 it has seen an increase in investment and demonstrated an adventurous spirit in all its developments. Yet there are also areas of deprivation which have caused concern over the years. One such place is Ely, and Peter Cruchley-Jones's book discusses the present and future of Christian witness there, a witness which has been formed by the particular historical and social concerns which are raised by life on the estate.

Ely is a council estate comprising 30,000 citizens, about ten per cent of the population of Cardiff. At one time it was a village in its own right, but inter-war expansion and the proliferation in council house provision have rendered it a suburb of the city. It is an area of high unemployment, social deprivation and all the accompanying problems. It is, of course, famous for the riots which occurred in 1991.

The particular pastorate which the study concerns is made up of three congregations: two United Reformed and one Methodist. They were grouped together in 1981. The concern which drives this study is how the experience of these people in this place with this history has affected Christian mission in such a place. The implications of the study are more wide-ranging, however, as the Church in Britain as a whole has witnessed substantial decline in the twentieth century and has found itself faced with "singing the Lord's song" in a land which is far-removed from that which was formative for much of its current practice. The book is to be welcomed, then, as demonstrating theological and missiological vitality in an age which has apparently disregarded much traditional religious practice.

One of the joys of Peter Cruchley-Jones's book is that it is Pastoral Theology in the fullest sense: theology shaped by life and ministry among the people of Ely. This is theology that is contextual both locationally and temporally: it emerges out of a social context of urban deprivation, and towards the end of a long process of secularization that has left the church insecure and uncertain. Both temporal and locational aspects of the context are explored at length, and in the process one hears the voices of the people of Ely through extensive questionnaires, quotations and anecdotes. It is also theology that draws on Old and New Testament themes, and explores doctrinal and missiological issues. The interaction of text, context, anecdote and theological reflection is stimulating, and throughout it all the big issues are confronted. What does it mean to be Church in this place and at this time? Where is God in relation to the Church and the world? Where is God in suffering and deprivation? And all the time, whispering behind Cruchley-Jones's analysis and theology is Bonhoeffer's insistent question: who is Jesus Christ for us today? Or, as Cruchley-Jones might rephrase it, where is Jesus Christ today?

Cruchley-Jones's thesis might be outlined as follows. The long journey of secularization has left us in a post-Christendom, post-Church society. The Old Testament experience of "exile" is one that corresponds to our present situation as the Church - hence the book's title drawn from Psalm 137 - and Cruchley-Jones explores in some depth the biblical trauma of exile and its effect on Israel. The big danger, according to Cruchley-Jones, is that we misinterpret exile and embrace an ethos of "restoration" that is sanctioned by a romantic, nostalgic and dishonest construal of the past. This represents a failure to grasp the place of the exile in the *Missio Dei*: a failure to interpret being exiled in terms of being "sent". In this context Cruchley-Jones explores the Hosean dialectic of "My People - Not My People", seeking to wean the Church away from the comfort and security of the "My People" side of the dialectic and on to the much more threatening side of the "Not My People". Evidently, if the data assembled from the people of Ely are anything to go by, this is a place to which we are reluctant to go. And yet it is precisely that refusal, and the clutching on to the hope of restoration associated with My People, that both evokes and is evoked by much of the malaise of the Church today. Such malaise is reflected in our theology of the church, our

understanding of mission, our practice of liturgy and worship, and in particular our theology and practice of the Eucharist. It is to the last that Cruchley-Jones devotes considerable space under the heading of "The Babylonian Captivity of the Eucharist" and for him the Eucharist is key for revealing both a right and a wrong response to this condition of exile. A right theology of the Eucharist takes us to where the whole thrust of the book is directing us, opening up horizons for a world-affirming, secular theology that refuses to imprison Christ in the Church and that discerns his presence incarnationally in the world as the Living-Dying-Rising One. In short, exile and "Not My People" is to be affirmed in the *Missio Dei*, and that means recognising God's activity in the world and the invitation to us to participate.

Before exploring further what that actually might mean in Cruchley-Jones's estimate for our ecclesiology, there is one hermeneutical key to his whole thesis, a thread running right through the book which needs to be explored, and that is what he calls "ecclesiocentrism". Ecclesiocentrism is a theology of the church that lies behind all that Cruchley-Jones sees as wrong in our understanding of and response to exile. It is a syndrome whose symptoms include a bloated sense of the church's priority and centrality in God's *Missio Dei*, a hope (or even presumption) of restoration out of exile, a dismissal of Western culture as inimical to the Gospel, and a negative assessment of the world that goes hand-in-hand with an identification of God with the Church, and the down-playing of the presence and activity of God in the world. And it is a syndrome that is exemplified in Lesslie Newbigin. In Cruchley-Jones's estimation, it is little exaggeration to say that ecclesiocentrism is the root of all that is wrong with the Church, and it is here that I struggle with the thesis. It seems to me that "ecclesiocentrism" is in danger of becoming a kind of hermeneutical lens through which everything is viewed in such a way that leads to distortion and a lack of clarification.

To begin with, we are not given an adequate definition of ecclesiocentrism and it therefore becomes a blank term covering a multitude of evils. And the list of evils that lie at the door of ecclesiocentrism is long. It is responsible for lack of vision and maintenance-centred ministry; for de-contextualising the faith and the people of the faith; for absolutising interpretation and buttressing the interests of privileged groups; for the territorial mythology which holds that the church is for those who are part of it; for a dangerously skewed theology of the Eucharist of which everyone from the Reformers to Wesley to Gregory Dix to the Lima Document is guilty - a point to which I shall return below.

Now if indeed there is a phenomenon of ecclesiocentrism that is guilty of such ruinous effects on the church then we need to be able to identify it clearly. But no such clarity is given. Thus at times it is used to describe the kind of inward-looking, past-preserving, past-preoccupied, world-retreating, ghetto-mentality that is impossible to justify biblically and of which many Christians would depair. Elsewhere it is described as "replacing the coming kingdom with the established church", and one has to ask which of the above list of Eucharistic defaulters would

really endorse the suggestion that the established church replaces the coming Kingdom. But it is in speaking of ecclesiocentrism that Cruchley-Jones's language is often cavalier and imprecise.

Let us take for example this quotation in which he refers to ecclesiocentrism's view that, "The church has a favoured, even pre-eminent role in the work and affection of God, a state into which the world has yet to arrive." This is a fairly representative statement from the book and it is worth pondering and analysing. Take the phrase "a favoured, even pre-eminent role". Words like "favoured" and "pre-eminent" clearly need to be challenged; but the problem is that at times in this book ecclesiocentrism seems to refer to any theology that gives the church any kind of special, distinct, strategic place at all in God's plans and purposes. Thus various versions of "two Kingdoms" theology would want to endorse a very special place for the Church in the economy of the *Missio Dei* while categorically rejecting suggestions of favouritism and pre-eminence, but these are not explored. Similarly, in this quotation it is unhelpful to link together "the work and affection of God", for these are two quite different things. Such linkage fails to distinguish a theology which would endorse the idea that the people of God have a higher place in God's affections and that God loves them more. Cruchley-Jones needs to recognise that there are much more nuanced and subtle versions of "ecclesiocentrism" than he allows for. And what after all, could be more ecclesiocentric than Ephesians 1? And are myriads of Old Testament ecclesiocentric texts, ranging from Genesis 12:2-3 to Isaiah 2:2-4, to be excised by the deft scissors of suspicion, or can they not be retrieved by a more subtle theology?

Or again, take the phrase in the above quotation, "a state into which the world has yet to arrive." It is presented as an arrogant claim, but is there not a theology of integrity that can affirm that the Church, for all its failings, is indeed in a state into which the world has yet to arrive, if only in its confession of Jesus Christ as Lord? Such a conviction would lie at the heart of the theology of a Barth or a Yoder, or the ecclesiology of a Hauerwas, but with them would never restrict God's presence or activity to the Church, or identify the Kingdom with the established church. Indeed in his whole discussion of the relationship between Church and world there is a lack of any theology of "confession of Christ" and the sense in which the Church is the place which confesses truth about the creation which is not yet recognised by creation, and the significance of such confession for the operation of the Spirit. Is this to be dismissed as "ecclesiocentric"?

It is such subtleties that seem to me to be lost in this account. And there are others. For example, I cannot see how a doctrine of election can be anything but ecclesiocentric, but this is benign and appropriate and liberating ecclesiocentrism when election is coupled with right notions of representation (as Newbigin, for one, insisted). Of course notions of representation are dismissed by Cruchley-Jones, but again it seems to me that his is a clumsy and un-nuanced account. He quotes C.S. Song to support his contention that the Lima Document's language of

representation and of the Church speaking "on behalf of creation" is paternalistic and renders creation voiceless. But this point is stated rather than argued and fails to do justice to the distinction between the "vicarious" and the "representative", the interplay between them, and the careful wording of the Lima text. The latter seems to me to articulate a theology of representation entirely innocent of this kind of paternalistic silencing. And it is this kind of heavy-handedness that mars this work. Thus as one who is frustrated with the restrictive attitudes towards so-called "lay-presidency", even I was shocked to learn that in *Patterns of Ministry* the URC's reason for rejecting lay presidency except in situations of emergency is "primarily distrust of the laity", for "If lay people were allowed to preside instead of a minister it might create disunity." So are we to believe that there is no theological integrity at all in those who oppose lay presidency?

What is frustrating about this lack of care and precision is that there is a malignant form of ecclesiocentrism that needs to be exposed and rejected (though I do not believe that it is anything like so persuasive, or so central to the malaise of the church, as Cruchley-Jones suggests). But this kind of treatment actually lets the "false ecclesiocentrists" off the hook by failing to make important distinctions. And in the process something of the subversive and crazy foolishness of God that disarms the wisdom of the world, expressed in his election of the church in all its weakness and frailty, is lost. After all there is something hearteningly, subversively and splendidly ecclesiocentric about 1 Corinthians 1:27-28.

Too much of this book suggests the burden of someone who is bending evidence to suit a thesis. A striking example of this comes towards the end when having taken as foundational throughout the whole work the thesis that "restoration" is symptomatic of ecclesiocentrism and that we must face up to the reality of Not My People over against My People, Cruchley-Jones returns to Hosea. Amazingly, he writes, "Hosea does, it is true, go on to foretell restoration, and the re-adoption by God of God's people...but this thesis is concerned with exile, not restoration." This seems to me to blow something of a hole in the entire thesis and leaves us wondering why, after all, "restoration" should be such a no-go area.

Yet having said all that, much of value remains. Many of Cruchley-Jones's explorations of mission, and the Eucharist, and a theology of exile, and of a local and contextual theology are insightful and helpful, if only they were not presented as some great antidote to this all-pervasive yet ill-diagnosed disease of ecclesiocentrism. The place where he arrives, a vision of a sort of chastened, humble, distinctive, counter-cultural identity for the church in which it engages with society without moral superiority or superciliousness is one that many would share and needs expression. But many would also want to explore far more fully a vibrant and rigorous ecclesiology to give substance to that vision. One fears that such explorations would run the risk of being branded ecclesiocentric. Yet if Cruchley-Jones's book prompts such a debate it will have done us a service.

Returning to the negative I have to say that the book would have benefited from careful proof-reading, editing, and some re-writing. But while I have indicated my

own difficulties with it, this book is still to be commended as an exciting exercise in reflective theology. Read it, be provoked and irritated by it, and disagree with it. But we are in Preter Cruchley-Jones's debt for modelling the kind of reflective pastoral theology that we need much more of in the church in these critical days.

LANCE STONE

REVIEWS

The Starting Point of Calvin's Theology. By George H. Tavard, W.B. Eerdmans: 2000. £14.99. ISBN 0 8028 4718 8

Psychopannychia, an early pamphlet by John Calvin regarding the immortality of the soul, has been all but ignored by English-speaking theologians and historians, getting a passing mention here and there in other works. Consequently, George H. Tavard's exploration of this work is as important as any in recent years for those who want to study Calvin's theology and its development. Tavard sets out to determine how it was that Calvin moved from being a "good humanist" defending a moderate Catholic line against the divisive Anabaptists, to being a reformer with anti-papal, anti-Roman venom.

The book can be divided into two parts. The first six chapters explore the content of *Psychopannychia*, the final four chapters suggest how this links into Calvin's later thinking. Finally the author offers brief conclusions, including the relevance of this work for the present day.

In exploring *Psychopannychia* Tavard endeavours to place Calvin's early theology not only within the Reformed family tree but also within a wider field of scholars and philosophers past and present, in particular with Aristotle, Plato, Aquinas, Bonaventure, Augustine and other figures from the early church. In doing so, Tavard shows how Calvin was very much a scholar in line with others of his time rather than a radical upstart. Indeed the author is at pains to show the early Calvin not as a radical but as a moderating influence within the church. This is supported by observing Calvin's motivation in writing the pamphlet, namely that he did not want to be a "traitor to the truth" like those who espoused false doctrines of the soul. The "traitors", against whom he was writing, were the Anabaptists or Catabaptists who suggested that the soul at death entered a mode of sleep until the day of final resurrection. Calvin's careful study of both Old and New Testaments was instrumental to his theological understanding and his refutation of the "traitors". The crux of Calvin's argument in *Psychopannychia* is that radical Anabaptists, in their vanity, followed all kinds of philosophical fantasy rather than developing their thought through a careful scrutiny of Scripture. Tavard suggests that Calvin saw himself as conveying scriptural truth in order to bring his readers to acknowledge the supremacy of the Word of God. He also makes use of the analysis and plans of Jung-Uck Hwang and Wilhelm Schwendemann of *Psychopannychia* to gain further insight into the way that Calvin systematically worked through his argument.

In the later part of the book, Tavard seeks to relate the thinking of *Psychopannychia* to Calvin's great work *Institutio christianae religionis*, and tries to help the reader see how Calvin became more dissatisfied with Rome, and therefore moved from writing with some restraint against Anabaptists to contemptuous attacks on the Papacy and Rome.

Tavard's conclusions are brief but honest, in that he admits that one of his primary

motivations for this piece of research was his disappointment that recent Catholic/Reformed dialogue had not seen any breakthrough. Fr. Tavard is well known for his ecumenical interest, and this personal agenda is evident in his writing. Nevertheless, this personal element adds to the work rather than detracts from it and is probably as good a reason as any for reading and researching church history. Tavard's book is going to be of obvious and essential use to those studying Calvin. It should also be used by those with ecumenical concerns and it can be recommended to anyone in pastoral charge, particularly the first six chapters, for Calvin's work on the immortality of the soul is not merely a scholarly exercise regarding a side issue from the sixteenth-century church, but it has implications for pastoral theology today in the areas of creation, life, death and beyond.

JASON ASKEW

Churches, Chapels and the Parish Communities of Lincolnshire 1660-1900. By R.W. Ambler. *A History of Lincolnshire, Volume IX*, Lincoln, History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2000. Pp xii, 274, ISBN 0 902668 18 8. £12.95.

This is a volume in the substantial history of Lincolnshire produced for the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology. The previous twelve volumes, one would suppose, contain much of what might be said on the topic, ranging from Volume 1, *Prehistoric*, to Volume 12, *Twentieth-Century Lincolnshire*. They even include Volume 5, *Church and Society in Medieval Lincolnshire* and Volume 9, *The Church and Dissent in Lincolnshire*, by the distinguished historian of Nonconformity, M.R. Watts. But there is obviously more to add in this area of Church History: enough to fill this fairly substantial volume.

Mention of Lincolnshire inevitably calls to mind that it was the birthplace of Methodism, or at least of the Wesleys – Oxford would lay a stronger claim to the origin of their movement. The county is not a notable stronghold of Dissent, despite its vital contribution to radical Puritanism in the seventeenth century. Congregationalism did not occupy the place here which it did in East Anglia, and English Presbyterianism did not number this county among its few strongholds. There is indeed, a lot about Methodism here. Chapter V, *The Development of Methodism*, occupies forty-six of its 238 pages of text, and Chapter VII, *Nonconformity and the Local Community*, turns out to be largely about Methodism too, adding another fourteen pages. Two of the remaining five chapters are wholly concerned with the Established Church (Chapter III, *Stability and Change*, and Chapter VI, *Renewal and Reform*). That means that Dissent has only a minor place in the story. Readers of this journal no doubt have a vital interest in Anglicanism and Methodism, but cannot expect to find here a great deal on matters nearer home.

The material of primary concern to them shrinks further on a closer look. Chapter II is entitled *Restoration and Dissent*. Its sub-section on *The Development of Dissent* covers Baptists, Quakers, and Roman Catholics, with only a passing

reference to Presbyterians and Independents in relation to the events of 1660-1662. Chapter IV, *The Transformation of Dissent*, promises more; but in the main it covers Baptists and Quakers again. A sub-section called Presbyterians and Independents begins on page 90 and ends on page 92, though another called *Revival – Calvinist Itinerants and Church Growth*, gives a couple of pages to the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion and a little more to the impact of the Revival on Congregationalism.

None of this is a criticism of the book: its author rightly reckons the record of Anglicanism and Methodism the main topic worth covering, and picks out Baptists and Quakers as the most important contributors to the story of Nonconformity in the county.

Within what readers of this journal may reckon limitations the book is scholarly but unexciting. A great deal of the material is derived from census or official records, and something of their flavour survives. There are numerous maps showing various features of the record, but often their content demands very close attention and even sharp vision: for example one of Wesleyan Methodist Places of Worship in 1851 contains perhaps 400 dots in a rather small map.

Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, Quakers, will find much of special interest here; those primarily interested in the URC and its ancestry will glean some useful insights but not without some diligence.

STEPHEN MAYOR

The Axminster Ecclesiastica. The Axminster Independent Church 1660-1698. Edited by K.W.H. Howard. Mayflower Christian Books, 114 Spring Rd., Southampton, Hants SO19 2QB. £9.99

Please do not be put off by the title. The publishers obviously think you might be, as it is also sold under the more friendly paper-cover title, *After the Puritans*. This is a real gem, a gold nugget among chapel histories and minute books.

In 1687 this Devon Independent Church decided to make a Book of Remembrance recording the turbulent times in the church's life when it was first gathered in 1660. *The works of God are all worthy to be remembered, but especially His work in building and preserving His churches.* The first minister was Bartholomew Ashwood, the incumbent of Axminster Parish Church, later to be ejected and sent to the "common gaol" in Exeter. But *Forseeing clouds to gather blackness over these nations...endeavoured to incorporate themselves into one body before the storm did fall.* They numbered thirteen or so and met secretly, sometimes for the sacred ordinance of the Lord's Supper in a lonesome place near a great wood. Once in 1663 during a sermon on "Keep me as the apple of the eye: hide me under the shadow of Thy wings" (Psalm 17.8) the Lord kept them as soldiers scoured the woods.

By 1664 the persecution waxed hotter as new laws forbade the convening together above the number four to worship God contrary to the national way of

worship. In 1685 the church was caught up in the Monmouth's ill-fated Rising. Two church members died in the battle of Sedgemoor. After the rout and in the swift reprisals which followed John Ashwood, son of the pastor, was sentenced to die as a traitor by Judge Jeffreys, who also appointed a place of execution. He was eventually reprieved. Thomas Smith also of the church was likewise sentenced but he died later soon after escaping from jail: *so exchanging this troublesome life for those mansions of rest and peace...in glory*. John Spiring was sold as a slave in Barbados. *After a time the door was open for redemption by paying a sum of money* which the church raised. But on the return his ship was lost and he was drowned.

The fellowship worshipped near to Cloakham Wood, by magistrate's licence under the Declaration of Indulgence (1672), at nearby Weycroft Manor, in "a cave", then back to Weycroft Manor. At last, in 1698, a meeting house in Axminster was opened. These accounts read not as history but as contemporary recordings of events then taking place or still in living memory.

Bartholomew Ashwood died in 1678. Stephen Towgood was ordained pastor in 1679. His brother Matthew was appointed elder in 1693. John Ashwood was appointed pastor in Exeter, in 1689, and in 1698 removed to London. He died in 1706. Bartholomew Ashwood's widow survived to 1709.

The *Axminster Ecclesiastica* is by no means unknown. It was transcribed and published in 1874. This edition (1976, with reprints) contains notes on the Acts comprising the Clarendon Code: the Act of Uniformity (1662), the Conventicle Act (1664), the Five Mile Act (1665), all of which inhibited Axminster Dissenters as they maintained their worshipping tradition. There are also engravings of places mentioned and maps of the area and routes of the Duke of Monmouth's campaign and that of William Orange in 1688, both of whom went through Axminster.

COLIN PRICE

Dark Satanic Mills? Religion and Irreligion in Birmingham and the Black Country. Geoff Robson. Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 2002, £19.99. ISBN 1 8422 7102 4

This is a thorough-going study of the nature of the church life in the West Midlands in the middle of the nineteenth century, with a serious attempt to clarify and interpret the various statistics of church membership. It is more than that. Dr. Robson takes a fresh look at all the factors which different studies of the period have proposed as accounting for increases and decreases in church membership. This means he not only re-examines the 1851 census data but covers such other topics as the role of the cholera epidemics in bringing people into church membership and the nature of popular superstition. Dr. Robson's own familiarity with the area he surveys and his personal experience of Methodism are deployed to good account.

There are no simplistic answers in this book. The writer's interest was originally engaged by the apparent differences between church attendance in Birmingham, as against the Black Country, revealed by the 1851 census. This involves him in a thorough review of how the 1851 census data might be interpreted and raises the fundamental question of how much we are beguiled as historians by the existence of this substantial body of data. Dr. Robson is equally concerned to bring all kinds of other data into play. From the membership figures of Methodist circuits to the reports of District Visitors, he pays as much attention to enabling us to understand the nature of the data as to offer us interpretations. The result is that he has no firm conclusion to reach at the end of his fascinating survey, but we have learnt a great deal about the life of the churches in their society.

Before presenting his major consideration of the census the writer takes us through the social and political context of the churches in the mid-nineteenth century. A great deal of information is to be found in the reports of parliamentary commissions. Some church historians manage to take us into this territory but not too many also consult the records of government spies. Dr. Robson's sources are widely drawn. The result is a detailed and informative survey of the mining or nailing communities, to whom the churches ministered, as well as the tradesfolk and middle-class families, about whom we have more accessible personal information. Dr. Robson is then able to move between the complexities of, for instance, the splits among Wesleyan Methodists in his chosen period and their relationship to the social and economic circumstances of the communities involved.

Dr. Robson also raises the obvious question, so obvious that it is usually disregarded, of the nature of church membership. 1851 census studies are well aware of the difference between commitment to a parish church and commitment to a Dissenting chapel. There is a further significant difference, well explored by Dr. Robson, between the membership of a Methodist chapel and a Congregational one. Not only is the process of joining the church different but so is the understanding of salvation. There is also the vexed question of Sunday School attendance and its place in the statistics, which receives careful consideration.

Dr. Robson's final conclusion is cautionary. Christian evangelism evokes a varied response. Generalisations about nineteenth-century religion are to be treated with great caution. To add to the difficulties the interpreter of the data brings his or her own understanding of faith to the study. The final complication, as Dr. Robson the educator knows very well, is that our individual understandings change over the years. It is very difficult, therefore, to account for the differences in the proportion of the population attending worship in different places which the 1851 census throws up. Some of them may be illusory, some accounted for by purely local and temporary phenomena. While others of us might like to use the figures to buttress our pet theories about the success and failure of different styles of church life in the nineteenth century Dr. Robson urges us to take a deep breath first and assemble all the evidence we can find, as he patently has done.

STEPHEN ORCHARD

My Ancestors were Baptists. By Geoffrey R. Breed. London, Society of Genealogists, 4th edition 2002. Pp. vi, 135. ISBN 1 903462 52 5.

This very scholarly work is designed for Baptists who wish to trace their ancestors, and for those beyond their company for whom Baptist genealogy is a concern. Beyond those working on family trees it will appeal chiefly to devotees of lists.

It includes a general catalogue of sources for Baptist births, marriages and deaths and for records of ministers and (naturally on a very limited scale) of Church members. There does not appear to be any Baptist equivalent of the renowned Surman list of Congregational ministers. The bulk of the book is a complete list of relevant material in the Public Record Office, at the Society of Genealogists and in other locations, arranged by counties.

Those more familiar with the historical records of the United Reformed Church will be struck by the additional problem faced by Baptists: the multiplication of groups claiming the title Baptist. We encounter here the Baptist Unions of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, the Grace Baptist Assembly, the Association of Grace Baptist Churches (in three distinct geographical regions), the Strict Baptists, the Old Baptist Union and the General Baptist Assembly, with the added comment: "This list does not claim to be complete".

Those who have come to terms with looking at the records of Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Churches of Christ will be glad not to be Baptist historians.

STEPHEN MAYOR

No Cross Marks the Spot, by Stella Kilby. Southend on Sea: Galamena Press, 2001. Pp. v. 293. £12.95. ISBN 0 9541 0160.

This is the story of an ill-fated missionary journey in Central Africa in the middle of the nineteenth century. The author, herself brought up in South Africa, was entrusted with a cache of letters and documents relating to the expedition; reading them, she determined to discover the story which lay behind the records. This led her not only to libraries and archives in South Africa and London, but also to a retracing of the steps (though using modern methods of transport) of the journey itself.

Holloway Helmore (1815-59), the son of an Independent minister, decided while a student at Homerton College, Hackney, to apply to the London Missionary Society in the hope that he might serve in Africa. Eventually his wish was granted, and early in 1839 he and his new bride, Anne Garden, set sail from Southampton for Cape Town. From here they travelled north to settle in Griqualand, beyond the Orange river, where they continued the work first established by Robert Moffat, who was now settled in Kuruman. They spent the next seventeen years in this area, and here their eight children were born (two did not survive). Meanwhile David Livingstone arrived in 1841, and used Kuruman as the base for his pioneering expeditions.

When the Helmores returned to England on leave in 1856, they discovered that the Board of the London Missionary Society was considering a proposal supported by Livingstone that a new mission to the Makololo should be opened to the north of Kuruman. When Livingstone resigned from the Society in order to be freer to continue his exploration, Helmore was asked to lead the expedition north, on the understanding that his party could link up with Livingstone's next proposed expedition so that Livingstone could introduce Helmore's party to the Makololo chief personally. Reluctantly, and with many reservations, Helmore agreed.

The expedition left Kuruman on 8 July 1859. It consisted of the Helmores with four of their children, Roger and Isabella Price (fellow missionaries), several servants and assorted animals. Both Holloway Helmore and Isabella Price kept journals, which fortunately have survived, and these are quoted extensively in the central part of the work. The party arrived at Linyanti the following February without having encountered Livingstone's party as planned. Then tragedy struck. One by one members of the party, including Holloway and Anne Helmore and two of their children, as well as the baby daughter of the Prices, died. The survivors had no option but to make their way slowly and sadly back to Kuruman, witnessing the death of Isabella Price on the journey.

The last section of the book is an account of the author's own expedition to retrace the steps of this expedition. In making her own journey to what is still a very remote area, the author hoped to find out not only whether the victims died of fever or were poisoned (as had been rumoured), but also to find their graves. She concludes that fever is the most likely explanation for their deaths. "No cross marks the spot" where they were buried, though the general area can be identified. Though the story of this journey is little known outside Africa, it is still talked of today among the Makololo, as the author discovered. She concludes that Livingstone must bear much of the responsibility for the failure and tragedy of the expedition, in having promoted the idea but then having failed to give it sufficient priority in the making and carrying out of his own plans.

This work does not enter into the contemporary debate on the role and effect of the work of missionaries in nineteenth-century Southern Africa. Its aim is more modest. Rather it sheds light on a particular episode in the work of the London Missionary Society in Southern Africa, and on its effect on the missionary families involved. It was very hard to be a missionary, but possibly even harder to be a missionary's wife. It is a touching story of loyalty, devotion and perseverance. It also illustrates the rich resources available in the London Missionary Society/Council for World Mission Archive at London's School of Oriental and African Studies.

ELAINE KAYE

An Inglorious Affair. A Decade of Dissent among Suffolk Nonconformists. By David Holmes. The Salters Lane Press, Walpole, Halesworth, Suffolk IP19 9BA, 2002. Pp. 92. £8.00. ISBN 0-95422589-0-2

David Holmes descends from John Knox on his mother's side and Plymouth Brethren on his father's. Not surprisingly, therefore, he confesses to a liking for Anglican agnosticism. Nonetheless he lives next to Walpole Old Chapel and is active in its conservation. Hence his exploration of local Congregationalism and his discovery of a characteristic chapel dispute, which engulfed Halesworth, dragged in Walpole, and reverberated throughout Suffolk, or at least its County Union.

Joseph Benjamin Harvey, school proprietor, organist, and choirmaster, had introduced an organ to Halesworth's Congregationalists in 1859. Now, in 1866, he decided to introduce the *Gloria* to public worship. For ten years the church was split. David Holmes tells the story. Town, chapel, ministers, deacons, and members come to life. An articulate community whose interconnexions concealed significant differences – social, generational, and ecclesial – is deftly intimated and suggestively illustrated.

The story is characteristic in several ways. Has there ever been a chapel without a dispute? Here is small town England, petty, brittle, rushing to extremes for inessentials. Worldly-wise readers will enjoy it for its evocation of a long past age, glad to be emancipated from such concerns. Readers of this *Journal* will be less certain that they have been emancipated. They will recognise much from their own church life.

For this is life. The case of the Halesworth *Gloria* was not a matter of black and white. Indeed it may not have been about the *Gloria* at all; all manner of town-country tensions were at work in the 1860s, awaiting their opportunity. This reader believes that constitutionally Halesworth's old guard were right; they had the best arguments (today's URC District Council would surely have found for them). Yet the future lay with the *Gloria* brigade. One is struck by how articulate the lay protagonists were – the carpenter and the farmers, as well as the organist schoolmaster and the local newspaper proprietor. Whatever the incidentals here are men (the surviving evidence is male; it is inconceivable that the women would have been silent) working out their churchmanship. How one feels for Ipswich's Edward Grimwade, Suffolk Congregationalism's representative layman of the day, using the county's railways to full advantage in the cause of ecclesiastical peace. And how one is startled at the inability of the ministers to resolve the matter. Wrentham's John Browne, Bungay's C.S. Carey, John Flower of Beccles, were weighty men. Halesworth's Henry Coleman knew farming Suffolk through and through. Yet they were increasingly at sea, as one suspects their latter-day descendants would also be. That makes this book salutary to read, but most salutary of all is that we are looking at the people whose votes and arguments from precisely this point will form the backbone of Mr. Gladstone's Liberalism. Early on in the dispute Henry Coleman fluffed his ministerial lines and, to change the metaphor, never regained his footing. A generation later Gladstone would do

something very similar on a much larger stage when faced with Charles Bradlaugh and his refusal to take the oath. David Holmes is to be congratulated for telling a good story in such a way that its readers can draw much more from it than amusement at a petty dispute, but then he has been a distinguished BBC political journalist and broadcaster.

J.C.G.B.

The Uxbridge United Reformed Church Charity, 1753-2003. By K.R. Pearce (illustrated).

This four-page pamphlet outlining the history of Uxbridge from Saxon times, the emergence and witness of religious dissent and twentieth-century developments in the town, is available from the author on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope. Write to Mr. K.R. Pearce, 29 Norton Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8 2PT.