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The Society has learned of the death of the Revd Dr Stephen H. Mayor, member of the Council from 1972, and Chairman, 1992-96. An appreciation will appear in the next issue.

EDITORIAL

Theological disputes are inextricably linked to differing perceptions of history. Christian faith is rooted in a scandalously particular revelation of God in Jesus Christ, who "suffered under Pontius Pilate". But what is known is seen "as through a mirror, dimly". Controversy follows when disagreement arises over how the gospel "once delivered to the Saints" is to be passed from one generation to the next. How fluid can interpretation be while also claiming to retain the "apostolic" faith? And, while rooted in historical events, is Christian faith not in any case orientated towards an eschatological consummation of the whole created order rather than a past golden age?

For a number of reasons, theological change in the nineteenth century appeared to some to be more critical than at almost any point since the "conversion" of Constantine. Even modified Calvinism seemed inadequate, as the forces of liberal thought pointed more to God's love of his creation, than to his judgement of its sin. Some of this was mere sentimentalism; some of it re-engaged with aspects of the biblical witness that had previously been obscured. The controversies raged at the denominational gatherings, but the tensions were palpable in local churches as well. Gerard Charmley's account of the "downgrade" at Square Chapel, Halifax, describes those tensions. The Halifax heterodoxy amounted to a denial of penal substitutionary atonement, a specific understanding of Christ and his cross which, historically, was one interpretation among many, but which became, by the end of the nineteenth century, the plumb line against which some believed orthodoxy should be measured. Oswald Dykes faced controversy revolving around the apparent loosening of the "Westminster Standards", a theological "disruption", Chris Statter explains, skilfully negotiated by one born from the 1843 Disruption in the Church of Scotland (a historically significant moment, but one driven by theological differences about the nature of the Church and its relationship to the State and, perhaps more crucially, to patronage and privilege). Dykes was a guiding force in moving the Presbyterian Church of England's College from London to Cambridge in 1899. By the time it moved there, Emmanuel Congregational Church was flourishing in serving both "town and gown". With its list of distinguished ministers, it was inevitable that theological controversy would erupt from time to time while it sought to fulfil its mission as a "representative church". Ian Randall deftly outlines how significant some Congregationalists felt it was to have a "University Church" in Cambridge so soon after the abolition of the religious tests.

While treating subjects that differ in detail, all three articles are in fact inevitably connected. I am grateful to each contributor for their assessment of the riches of our past. We welcome Christopher Herbert and Sheila Maxey as reviewers.

MANAGING THE DISRUPTIONS: THE MINISTRY OF J. OSWALD DYKES

J. Oswald Dykes (1835-1912) guided the Presbyterian Church of England through rising difficulties. In its critical early years, Dykes stood at the helm, responding to the currents of thought that characterised the age. It has been said, "No educated Christian could fail to feel the disruption, caused by new knowledge, to the faith of his childhood. Such men understood doubt because they experienced it within their own faith".[1] Dykes, a son of the 1843 Disruption in Scotland, directed the English Church through the disruption of new knowledge into uncharted waters. The initial progress of the Presbyterian Church of England, which eventually would pass into the United Reformed Church, reflects Dykes's journey from his childhood faith.

In 1843, over a third of the ministers of the Church of Scotland withdrew and founded the Free Church, claiming to be the heirs of historic, Scottish Presbyterianism, repudiating patronage and state interference in the spiritual life of the national Kirk. To train the next generation, they had instituted New College in Edinburgh. Dykes was the brightest student in a year of dazzling talent. He pursued further studies at Heidelberg and Erlangen. Ordained in 1859, he later came to Edinburgh, to assist Robert S. Candlish. Had it not been for health problems, it is probable that Dykes would have stayed in Scotland and served the Free Church with distinction.

Instead, Dykes sought recuperation overseas, and, on his return, was passing through London. While there he received medical advice that he could resume ministry, and was called to Regent Square, the congregation formerly served by Edward Irving and most recently by James Hamilton. Hamilton's premature death had left vacant the foremost Presbyterian pulpit in England. Dykes remained there from 1869 until 1888, when he accepted the call to become Barbour Professor of Divinity and Principal of the English Presbyterian College which in 1899 relocated from London to become Westminster College, Cambridge. He resigned in 1907, and retired to Edinburgh, where he died on New Year's Day, 1912.

I: His formative influence on the English Presbyterian Church

The body which Dykes joined was the Presbyterian Church in England, which dated from 1836. Congregations in the North East, a remnant surviving from the Great Ejectment, refreshed through evangelical awakenings and Scottish immigration to the North West and into Lancashire, formed a Synod, and were strengthened by London congregations of the Church of Scotland, such as Regent Square. In keeping with the Scottish Church, the Synod adopted

1 Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, Part II: 1860-1901* (2nd ed., London: A. and C. Black, 1972), p. 124.

unreservedly the Westminster Standards. Sympathetic to the Disruption, the English Church declared its spiritual independence in 1844, founded its own College and pursued missions abroad and at home, growing to 156 congregations by 1876. In 1876, the Presbyterian Church of England was established by the union of the Presbyterian Church in England with the English Synod of the United Presbyterian Church, which adhered to the same Standards, albeit less strictly. The minutes state:

> [The Synod] resolves to place on record its deep sense of the obligations under which this Church lies to Dr. Dykes, the Convenor of the Union Committee, for the Christian prudence and conspicuous ability with which he has, in conjunction with the other brethren, been instrumental under God in bringing this matter to a successful issue.[2]

Between 1883 and 1892, the Church relaxed its adherence to the Standards, restating its Reformed faith in Twenty-four Articles. Afterwards, the Church still required its office-bearers to subscribe to the teaching of the Westminster Confession, but the Articles compressed that teaching. Dykes chaired the relevant committee. The minutes, once more, highlight his role:

> [The Synod] feels it would fail in its duty if it did not express in the warmest terms it can command the sense of its obligation, in particular, to the honoured Convenor, Principal J. Oswald Dykes, D.D., whose assiduous, continuous, and most willing labours contributed in the highest degree to the result attained; whose intellectual acumen, whose large acquaintance with confessional literature, whose skill, tact, and patience in conducting the business, often delicate and difficult, left their impress on every meeting of Committee, and whose honoured name will henceforth be associated with the Articles of the Faith and Appendix.
>
> This vote of thanks was specially conveyed to Dr. Dykes by the Moderator, the entire Synod standing as an expression of its gratitude and affection towards the esteemed Principal.[3]

Confirmation of Dykes's significance is found in the tributes paid at his death. According to William Robertson Nicoll, "Dr. Dykes was much more than minister of Regent Square. He was a leader and we should probably say the leader of the Presbyterian Church of England".[4] Furthermore, Alex Ramsay

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2 Samuel William Carruthers (ed.), *Digest of the Proceedings of the Synods of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1876-1905* (London: Publishing House of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1907), p. 6.

3 Ibid., p. 26.

noted, "During the forty years of active service which he gave to our Church, he was, by common consent, our chief man ... There was no movement of any note in our Church in which he was not the chief figure".[5] Dykes's influence extended beyond the English Presbyterian Church. He made a lasting impression during his curtailed ministry in Scotland and in Australia while convalescing. He served as editor of the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. He drafted the Evangelical Free Church Catechism. His writings included books, such as *Abraham: The Friend of God* (1877), *The Law of the Ten Words* (1884), *The Christian Minister and His Duties* (1908), and *The Divine Worker in Creation and Providence* (1909), the latter based on his Cunningham lectures. He was prominent in the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System, and had the honour of acting as its President. The University of Edinburgh conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity, and he received further honorary degrees from Cambridge and Glasgow. However, Dykes's impact was most keenly felt at Regent Square and Westminster College, as well as in the Courts of the Church.

Dykes was probably the most influential figure in shaping the English Presbyterian Church, although there were several others of note. Some, such as Robert Barbour, Agnes Smith Lewis and Margaret Dunlop Gibson, made financial contributions. Others, like William Chalmers Burns and James Laidlaw Maxwell, contributed overseas. There were powerful lay elders, including Samuel Stitt and Hugh Matheson. Another minister, John Watson, gained popularity through his writings as "Ian Maclaren", for example, *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush* (1894). Watson became more loved, but Dykes's official work set the Church's course.

Dykes's active ministry consisted of two settled phases, each of nineteen years, at Regent Square and at the College, following an unsettled introduction.

II: Steadying himself, 1859-69

Dykes was ordained at East Kilbride, where he stayed for two years. His ministry was immediately appreciated. He was sought out by Candlish, who had succeeded Thomas Chalmers as the leading light of the Free Church, to assist him in his pulpit. Thus he was inducted in late 1861, and ministered at Candlish's side during an eventful period, since Candlish became Principal of New College in 1862, while continuing at Free St George's. In 1863, Candlish was appointed to the committee negotiating terms of union with the United Presbyterian Church, and delivered the inaugural Cunningham lectures on "The

4 W. Robertson Nicoll, "The Late Dr. Oswald Dykes", in *The British Weekly* (4 January 1912), p. 424.

5 "Appreciation by the Rev. Alex. Ramsay, DD", in *The British Weekly* (11 January 1912), p. 448.

Fatherhood of God" in the following year. Meanwhile, Dykes's preaching was acclaimed, but his health failed. He took a break, then resigned, and in early 1865 left for the Australian colony of Victoria.

In Victoria too, Dykes left his mark. Despite his physical weakness, Dykes wrote and preached, assisting Adam Cairns, the minister of Chalmers's Church, Melbourne. Alongside Cairns, Dykes was one of the first tutors at the theological hall, for which he raised funds. Dykes was also crucial in helping the John Knox Church into the united Presbyterian Church of Victoria.

When Dykes returned to Britain, his health remained fragile, and the door to future ministry was, possibly, closed. His prospects rested on a knife-edge. To test his strength, Dykes was advised to preach, and happened to be preaching at Regent Square the Sunday before a congregational meeting. Dykes received a favourable diagnosis and also gained the favour of the congregation.

It is worth noting his relationship to Candlish. He spoke more highly of Dykes than himself, describing his assistantship as "a sort of oasis in the desert of a doubtful pastorate",[6] and personally recommended him to Regent Square. On his deathbed, Candlish divided his "dominions" in Scotland, entrusting his congregation to Alexander Whyte, and the College and Assembly to Robert Rainy; Dykes belongs alongside, even above, such great men. He possessed Candlish's ability to dominate those realms, and where Candlish failed, and union negotiations in Scotland stalled, Dykes would succeed across England. The English Church had always received impetus from the Free Church. Now it had secured an heir apparent to the Disruption fathers.

III: Steering the Church, 1869-1888

Dykes quickly became prominent within his Church's Synod. He regained the initiative towards a union with the United Presbyterian Church, meeting privately in Liverpool with Samuel Stitt, the ship-owner and leading elder. Dykes was Convener of the Union Committee, the last Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in England, a Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of England, and heavily involved in committee work. He was Convener of the Instruction of Youth Committee from 1880 to 1899, of the College Committee from 1872 to 1888, and also of the Hymn Book Committee, of the Business Committee, and of the Committee on the Church's Relation to the Confession of Faith for its duration. He was given such responsibilities because of his gifts and character. "In Church Courts his calm judgment, his power of mastering complicated details, his restraint and patience, and his gift of apt and accurate expression, made him a tower of strength".[7] Dykes's most delicate work concerned the Confession of Faith. In 1886, the Committee's Declaratory Statement was issued by the Synod. In 1890, the Twenty-four Articles were

6 David Maclagan, *St George's, Edinburgh* (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1876), p. 156.

7 A Minute of the Presbytery of London South, January 1912, accessed in J. Oswald Dykes's Fasti File, Presbyterian Church of England Archive, Westminster College, Cambridge.

approved. In 1892, the Formula of Subscription was altered to affirm the Westminster Confession as "now more briefly expressed".[8] The Articles, while maintaining the Church's Reformed faith, stressed God's love, and reorganised the doctrines around the Trinity, which meant relegating the article on Scripture from I to XVIII. Such steps, controversial and potentially divisive, were eased by Dykes's skilful direction.

At Regent Square too, Dykes showed his competence. He was judicious and attentive in dealing with his people, particularly through their troubles, and in overseeing the Church's activities, as the Somers Town mission flourished into a distinct congregation. At a time of exceptional London preachers, his gifts were often rated as first-class. An elder, Thomas Bell, "spoke of his minister's tender, helpful, strengthening sympathy; of his sermons, so elevated and exquisite in diction, so artistic in their setting, with that slight tremor of emotion which touched a responsive chord in the hearts of all his hearers".[9] Dykes excelled in elements of the service which are often neglected. A former student gleaned this insight: "One morning a week (Thursday, I think) was rigidly set apart for the preparation of prayers. Sometimes, he would make as many as forty attempts to get the precise thought and rhythm which he wanted for the prayer of Invocation".[10]

When the College came calling, Regent Square was reluctant to lose him. He was approached in 1877 and again in 1878, and placed himself at the Synod's disposal, who were deterred from transferring him. It was only at the third time of asking in 1888 that he was released. With his departure confirmed, a Session minute was composed, recording the congregation's sorrow and vast appreciation of their minister.

IV: Standing aloof, 1888-1907

Dykes's appointment as Principal and Barbour Professor of Divinity was a mixed blessing. He had written previously:

> I have occasionally said in private conversation that a professor's life ... would offer me some advantages of leisure and quiet which a man of my temperament + habits would appreciate ... But that is a very long way indeed from desiring to abandon a post where I am useful and happy, to seek another post, my fitness for which, + my usefulness in which, are to my own mind quite problematical.[11]

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8 Carruthers (ed.), *Digest of the Proceedings of the Synods of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1876-1905*, p. 24.

9 "The Retirement of Principal Dykes", in *Sunday Review* (28 March 1907).

10 J. R. P. Sclater, *The Public Worship of God* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1927), p. 66.

Nevertheless, Dykes inevitably demonstrated his capabilities by the weight of his lecturing and the wisdom of his decision-making.

The major event of his Principalship was the College's move to Cambridge, only possible through the generosity of the Lewis and Gibson sisters, and narrowly determined by the Synod, 222 in favour and 209 against. Dykes had advocated removal, and joined forces with John Watson for the fundraising campaign. On a memorable inauguration day, various dignitaries congratulated the Church and welcomed the Westminster academic staff to the University. Yet, the change of scene tested Dykes, and weaknesses surfaced. While he devoted himself to the College community, his detached and severe demeanour alienated him from a new generation of students:

> Dykes used to stand by his lecture-room door watch in hand ready to enter at the precise moment, and woe-betide a student who arrived a second later.[12]

> [Students] were invited in turn to dine at the high table and thereafter to take coffee with him in his study. The only light in this comfortable book-lined room came from a standard lamp placed near the visitor. Dr. Dykes sank back in the shadows of a big grandfather chair where his features were only faintly illuminated from time to time by his glowing cigar. From this coign of vantage he would launch sudden probing questions, watching narrowly their effect on the student no less than his replies. The unfortunate young man, although seated in a comfortable armchair, had the uncomfortable feeling that he was really in the dock. Outwardly he had the appearance of an honoured guest, but inwardly he had the sad conviction that he was being weighed in the balance and found wanting.[13]

> There was a respectful chill in the relations between Dykes and the students and there were rumours that when Dykes's carriage was burned the students were not unconnected with the conflagration. The possession of a horse and carriage marked him out as the rearguard of a way of life which did not survive the First World War.[14]

At Westminster College, Dykes appeared out-dated. He was reserved in his leadership, and his moderately conservative theology was not perpetuated by his

11 J. Oswald Dykes, Letter to Thomas Bell (22 February 1878), accessed in J. Oswald Dykes's Fasti File, Presbyterian Church of England Archive, Westminster College, Cambridge.

12 W. A. L. Elmslie, *Times Past: Address on the 60th Commemoration Day* (Cambridge: Westminster College, 1959), p. 6.

13 D. Frazer-Hurst, *The Bridge of Life* (Belfast: William Mullan, 1962), p. 64.

14 R. Buick Knox, *Westminster College: Its Background and History* (Cambridge: Westminster College, 1978?/2007), p. 22.

successors.

V: Factors which affected his legacy

It is remarkable how quickly Dykes was forgotten. Unlike many contemporaries, no full-length biography was written of Dykes. He has no chapter in William Robertson Nicoll's *Princes of the Church*. This neglect can be explained, in part, by events in his life and his shortcomings.

His personality

Dykes did not endear himself to those outside his inner circle. Nicoll commented:

> It must be acknowledged that Dr. Dykes was respected rather than beloved by those who did not know him intimately. He could be exceedingly brusque and difficult in manner, and he had little control of his varying moods ... But there can be no doubt that a very warm and tender heart lay behind the somewhat repellent and estranging manner.[15]

Robert Whyte, his friend and fellow-elder at Regent Square, explained:

> His was a sensitive soul, almost shy; and the instinctive hiding of himself, even from eyes that were not unfriendly, became long ago a second nature to him, and was sometimes grievously misunderstood.[16]

His personal bereavements

One feature of his long life is that Dykes suffered heavy losses. His mother died during his childhood. His first wife, Helen, died childless after a few years of marriage. He was remarried, to his cousin Agnes, and she also predeceased him. They had seven children, two of whom died in infancy and two as young adults. He also lost several friends and colleagues unexpectedly. Even at the height of his powers, Dykes's strength lay in those whom he gathered around him. For example, his successful Convenorship of the Confession of Faith Committee owed much to its Secretary, William Dale. Helen's death in 1866 was, by all accounts, a severe knock. Yet, while it led him to be more withdrawn, it also left him sympathetic towards the suffering of others. Shortly afterwards, he preached the funeral sermon for Adam Cairns's only son, with a gentleness which remained apparent in his ministry.

In W. G. Elmslie's death in 1889, he lost a colleague whom he could have reasonably expected to serve alongside for many years. To fulfil his ministerial duties at Regent Square, Dykes had employed assistants, including a young

15 Nicoll, "The Late Dr. Oswald Dykes", p. 424.

16 Robert Whyte, "James Oswald Dykes: By One Who Knew Him", in *The Presbyterian* (11 January 1912), p. 22.

Elmslie, who later reminisced:

> Every Saturday afternoon he and I and Mrs. D., etc., go to some amusement (viz., Pictures, Conjuring, Pantomime [once a year], etc.); then have dinner: and spend the evening at Fun, Bézique, or Whist. This will seem godless, but he did it long ago to preach better on Sunday.[17]

Robert Whyte recalled:

> Elmslie got closest to his heart; his bright, joyous nature acted like a tonic on Dykes and charmed away the depression to which he was too prone to yield. I remember one Saturday evening, when I was pressing Elmslie to stay a little longer at our house, how he replied, "No; I can't; I must go down and give Dykes a laugh".[18]

Elmslie matured into an outstanding College Professor, and his passing grieved the whole Church. Dykes lost one whom he loved, and that tonic which could have eased relations within the College community.

Until his sudden death in 1892, Donald Fraser was a friend and ally. Dykes had accepted the call to Regent Square only on the understanding that his fellow Scotsman would go to Marylebone. The two laboured together for the Church, and when Dykes joined the College, he trusted Fraser to shoulder more of the burden. Fraser's death, like Elmslie's, hindered Dykes from enjoying his time at the College. Dykes later wrote: "To some extent I have gained quiet and leisure by my Chair; and would have slipped the collar of Church work still more had Donald Fraser lived".[19]

Late in life, Dykes lost several close family members. His second wife, Agnes, died in 1902, following a long illness and a loving and happy marriage. Agnes had made the College into a home, and her warm and kind personality had greatly aided her husband. Of their children, Oswald died in 1903, accidentally shooting himself while ferreting, and Campbell died in 1911 in India. Only three outlived their father, Mary, David, and Arthur, whose loneliness would draw Leonard Cheshire into philanthropy. Dykes had once described the patriarch Abraham's happy ending: "With his character grown ripe, and his work done, with his name filling the lands, his family spreading on every side ... Well may the page which records his end say, with touching and simple words, that he died in his hoary age, full and satisfied with life".[20] With each bereavement, Dykes was being deprived of that satisfaction - his longevity counted against him. The transfer from London had taken him from the public eye and from the place of his best years. Few were left to remember him fondly.

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17 Nicoll, "The Late Dr. Oswald Dykes", p. 424.

18 Whyte, "James Oswald Dykes: By One Who Knew Him", p. 21.

19 Arthur Gordon, *The Life of Archibald Hamilton Charteris* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912), p. 440.

His pastoral response to those doubting

Dykes readily responded to the prevailing atmosphere of doubt. He had a lifelong concern to help young men, and early on participated in College lectures which were incorporated into books: *Some Present Difficulties in Theology* (1873), *Disputed Questions of Belief* (1874), and *Problems of Faith* (1875). He spent his ministry attempting to retain within the Church those who were struggling. He concluded his advice to younger ministers with the reminder that without maintaining all the tenets of the faith, one could remain a sincere Christian: "There never was a time when it was more true than now that the value of a man's beliefs for his own religious life is in proportion, not to the number of orthodox statements which he is prepared to endorse, but to the strength of conviction with which he adheres to what he does believe".[21] Dykes wanted the Church to make greater allowances.

In his work regarding the Standards, Dykes's concern was to accommodate those office-bearers who were adapting their understanding of Scripture according to Higher Criticism, without alarming conservatives. In this, Dykes succeeded. "It was he who was able to mediate between those who feared for the ark of God in these times of theological unrest, and those whose consciences were troubled by the pressure of a confession that did not express the living faith of to-day".[22] Consequently, many teaching in the Church did not share his confessional commitments.

Dykes countenanced those who questioned the Confession, even if, in doing so, they were questioning Scripture. He wished to uphold Scripture's authority without asserting that every word was inspired and infallible, to advocate what the Bible says while accepting that it was legitimate to query it. Faced with doubts about its reliability at any point, Dykes would say, "The proper attitude of the Church on this subject appears to me to be one, not of dogmatism, but of defence".[23] Dykes's stance, even from his pulpit, was defensive. It could be argued that his preaching was hindered by not simply declaring Scripture as the truth:

> In his sermons he was almost always struggling with doubts and difficulties, rarely sounded the note of joy and triumph ... One could have wished that the spirit of trust and hope and love expressed in his prayers had prompted and inspired his sermons, which were always thoughtful, carefully constructed, and highly polished, but lacked the ring of assured confidence and happy experience that makes the preacher's witness effective.[24]

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20 J. Oswald Dykes, *Abraham: The Friend of God. A Study from Old Testament History* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1877), p. 317.

21 J. Oswald Dykes, *The Christian Minister and His Duties* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), p. 366.

22 "Appreciation by the Rev. Alex. Ramsay, DD", p. 448.

23 J. Oswald Dykes, *The Written Word and Other Essays* (Melbourne: S. Mullen, 1868), p. 48.

In his sensitivity to his culture, Dykes perhaps dwelt too long on doubts.

His perseverance against opposition

While Dykes's leadership of the Church was widely accepted, he was occasionally opposed. For example, some resisted his steps to relax subscription to the Westminster Standards.

One such opponent was Verner White, an Irishman involved in the 1859 Ulster Revival, who ministered in Liverpool and then South Kensington. When Dykes at the London Presbytery in 1883 queried the Confession at certain points, White rose to order, requested amid laughter from his hearers that Dykes's words be recorded, and refused to be calmed: "I decline to sit in a Presbytery where the standards of the Church are thus openly attacked".[25] Dykes at Synod the same year proposed the Committee regarding the Confession, at which White asked whether those in support had considered "where such a movement once set-a-foot would lead to, or how it could be stopped".[26] Fewer than 20 stood with him for the *status quo*, more than 300 with Dykes. White submitted his reasons for dissent: "1st. – Because it is a step towards the abandonment of all confessions and creeds in general, and especially of the Westminster Confession ... one of the most perfect summaries of Bible truth the world has ever seen. 2nd. – It is practically a surrender of that which every office-bearer of this church has publicly assented".[27] A decade later, in his retirement, when the Church determined to alter the trust deeds, to retain its property while departing from its Confession, White severed his connections with the Presbyterian Church of England, while remaining avowedly a Presbyterian.

There was anxiety within the Church about the proposed changes. Given his legal expertise, Professor Leone Levi, an elder, was asked as early as 1884 to consider the implications for the trust deeds. To Dykes, he wrote: "I am not competent to deal with the theological questions discussed in the Declaratory Statement, but it seems to me to embody not supplementary matters, not included in the Confession, but deliverances clearly at variance with the spirit, if not the letter, of some of the most important doctrines of that Confession, by which all our Church property is bound". [28] His caution was justified, as the House of Lords judgment in the Free Church case would demonstrate.[29] The

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24 George Hanson, "Twelve Years in a London Church", in *The Dalhousie Review*, Vol. 3, Issue 4 (1924), pp. 453-467 [p. 454].

25 *The Outlook* (16 March 1883), p. 163.

26 *The Outlook* (11 May 1883), p. 292.

27 Verner M. White (his son), *Memoir of the Rev. Dr. Verner M. White* (London: George Philip, 1894), pp. 48-49.

28 Leoni Levi, Letter to J. Oswald Dykes (15 December 15 1884), accessed in Committee on this Church's Relation to the Confession of Faith File, Presbyterian Church of England Archive, Westminster College, Cambridge.

Declaratory Statement, although approved, was wisely put aside.

Instead, the Twenty-four Articles were introduced. While satisfying those who wanted the substance of the faith defined, they lightened the burden for those subscribing who could bear no further definition. The Committee invited amendments. Hugh Matheson and James Laidlaw Maxwell were among those who raised concerns about the article on Scripture. One Mrs Robertson of Hampstead asked for the entire arrangement to be reviewed: this article ought to be in first place.

Nevertheless, many conservatives supported Dykes. The Revd Dr W. Kennedy Moore disagreed with White in the Synod: "To urge the acknowledged excellence of the Confession as a reason for refusing even to look at it for the purposes contemplated was to miss the mark. It was only a rickety building that would not abide thorough examination, or of which any one need be afraid that if he meddled with it at all it would tumble about his ears".[30] Hugh McIntosh opposed the Articles in 1889, representing those who wished to affirm more than that the Scriptures contained the Word of God. Dykes waited, when he could have pressed for a vote. The offending phrase was reworded, and McIntosh seconded Dykes's motion in 1890 when the Articles were approved unanimously.

Dykes kept reassuring those who feared change. He encouraged the publication of Donald Fraser's *Sound Doctrine* (1892), showing the Articles to be in substantial accord with the Bible as interpreted within previous creeds and confessions. In retrospect, conservatives may think that the adoption of the Articles, however sound, set a regrettable course. To some extent, Dykes knew what he was doing. In 1906, he seconded a motion, stating that "the Synod claims anew for this Presbyterian Church of England the sole and exclusive right from time to time to interpret, alter, add to, or modify her constitution, law, subordinate standards and formulas, as duty may require".[31] He meant to secure the Church's spiritual independence, even to revise its creed. However, as his opponents had warned, Dykes's measures would lead to the neglect and abandonment of the Confession, making some of his own beliefs obsolete within the Church.

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29 When the United Free Church of Scotland was established in 1900, following the union of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland and the majority of congregations of the Free Church of Scotland (emanating from the Disruption of 1843), the minority of congregations of the latter took legal action to retain the name. The House of Lords found in their favour in 1904, although Parliament intervened in order to secure finance and property for the majority.

30 *The Outlook* (11 May 1883), p. 293.

31 Samuel William Carruthers (ed.), *Digest of the Proceedings of the Synods of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1906-1920* (London: Publishing House of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1923), p. 2.

His particular gifts in management

Dykes's ability lay in getting things done proficiently.

> Dr. Dykes probably succeeded better as a minister of a congregation than either of his illustrious predecessors. He possesses, in addition to his eminent preaching gifts, those practical qualities by which the work of a church is well-organised and efficiently carried on.[32]

> His Session contained some of the ablest business men in London, but they all admitted that the minister, who sat quietly in the Moderator's chair, and listened to their discussions, winding up, as he always did, with marked ability and clear, sound judgement, was the best business man of them all.[33]

Dykes thrived without making many original contributions. He may have set the Church's agenda, but he took a course which would be followed. Regarding the Union of 1876, his predecessor at Regent Square, Hamilton, had chaired the Union committee, and that goal had been pursued since 1859. Regarding the changes related to the Standards, Dykes was simply keeping in step with other Reformed churches. He never lost sight of his native Free Church. "His Regent Square pulpit was St. George's over again".[34] His views evolved towards embracing Higher Criticism because he remained "to the core a New College man".[35]

Dykes did not alter the Church's direction, but he made the Church more responsive to change. Under Dykes, the Church's progress continued. Its membership grew strongly, and became more English as the College flourished. With such a Principal, the institution assumed a powerful role, and further gifted men bolstered the Senatus. Without the Standards occupying a central position, the Church would look increasingly to such Professors. Dykes would not have driven the Church away from the teaching of the Westminster Confession, but his work left those Professors, who did not necessarily share his commitments, at the tiller with a freer hand.

VI: Conclusion

At his Ministerial Jubilee in 1909, Dykes reflected on his journey:

> I think I went into her Ministry with the enthusiasm of those young days

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32 "Farewell at Regent Square", in *The Presbyterian Messenger* (1 June 1888).

33 Alexander Jeffrey, "Some Notes and Reminiscences", in *The British Weekly* (11 January 1912), p. 448.

34 Alexander Whyte, "Principal Whyte's Tribute", in *The British Weekly* (11 January 1912), p. 448.

35 Patrick Carnegie Simpson, *The Life of Principal Rainy*, II (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), p. 257.

> – the first generation of the Disruption. I am sure I had more than a little of the limitation of that generation. It seems as if I had travelled a long way from that, and there is no man who has been fifty years in the ministry but has passed through extraordinary changes and developments in that time. Our theological outlook is different; our social problems are different; everything but the essential thing is changed, and he who has not changed can be nothing but a theological fossil or a mere survival. It has been my earnest endeavour to educate myself in the lines of the new times. I would like to ask consideration at the hands of any of my younger brethren who think that I did not wholly enter into their views, and that I should have done better if I had been more modern.[36]

Dykes might have deviated further from his initial course. He retained doctrines which could no longer be justified, given his reception of Higher Criticism. Such double-mindedness exasperated the Scottish writer and social commentator Thomas Carlyle: "Have my countrymen's heads become turnips when they think they can hold the premises of German unbelief and draw the conclusions of Scottish orthodoxy?"[37]

His heirs were more consistent. The relief in subscription which Dykes had initiated was not felt to be enough: "These solutions, however, are still not satisfactory for any church honestly facing the modern situation and not content to cling to a petrified theology. It has become necessary for such a church to relate itself much less strictly to its 'subordinate' standard, and to rely relatively much more on the Bible as a criterion of sound doctrine".[38] Dykes had placed the Articles over the Confession as a less rigid guide, but later generations wanted even more room for manoeuvre.

When Dykes returned to Scotland, the English Church's direction of travel was less clearly defined. He had bequeathed a set of Articles which had functionally replaced the Confession. By 1912, when he died, it could be publicly admitted: "It is no secret that his was the master mind in the framing a quarter of a century ago of the Twenty-four Articles of Faith which form the real subordinate standard of our Church".[39] In 1934, even the Articles, the final

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36 "The Jubilee of Dr. Dykes", in *The Presbyterian Messenger* (July 1909), p. 240.

37 Donald Maclean, *Aspects of Scottish Church History* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1927), pp.170-171.

38 J. M. Ross, *Standards of the Faith* (London: Presbyterian Church of England 1944), p. 3.

vestiges of the Westminster Standards, would be dropped. During Dykes's lifetime and under his leadership, the Church had granted her office-bearers greater liberty. It was now prepared to revise its faith in response to new knowledge. Dykes's most enduring legacy was a Church moving with the times.

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39 "Farewell at Regent Square", in *The Presbyterian Messenger* (1 June 1888).These words, spoken by Mr. Roberton at the January Communion Service at Regent Square, were printed in *Regent Square Magazine* (February, 1912), p. 4.

EMMANUEL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, CAMBRIDGE, 1874-1924: A "REPRESENTATIVE CHURCH"?

This Latter House, by Bernard L. Manning, a Fellow and later Senior Tutor of Jesus College, Cambridge, was produced in 1924 by W. Heffer and Sons in Cambridge. Manning's topic was the first fifty years of Emmanuel Congregational Church, in Trumpington Street, Cambridge, a church of which he was a member and one that had a particular significance, as he explained: "The building of Emmanuel was not merely the provision of a new chapel; it was the development of a new type of church".[1] The idea of a new "representative Church", as it was also called, for Congregationalism in Cambridge, was floated in the 1860s. It was raised in 1861 and again discussed informally at the Congregational Union meetings in Manchester in 1867.[2] The whole denomination, Manning commented, "recognised the opportunity and duty of training the undergraduates who came from Congregational homes and Churches in increasing numbers after the Universities Tests Act of 1870 had abolished religious tests".[3] Emmanuel Church, from 1874, attracted members of the University in a way which had not happened before. The *Cambridge Independent Press*, in 1875, saw the Emmanuel congregation as a witness to "the zeal, activity, and earnestness which are the main characteristics of a body who have suffered indignities and persecutions" but who had now experienced "the religious equality for which they have ... striven".[4] This study examines, in conversation with Manning's *This Latter House*, how Emmanuel in its first fifty years fulfilled a role as a church with a particular concern for the University and how successive ministers implemented this idea.

I: "Old roots dug up and re-planted", Matthew Robertson and William Houghton

The opening services of Emmanuel Church were held on Tuesday, 19 May 1874. In the morning former ministers of the church (in its previous location in

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1 B. L. Manning, *This Latter House: The Life of Emmanuel Congregational Church, Cambridge, from 1874 to 1924* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons Ltd., 1924), p. 3. Manning (1892-1941) became a member of Emmanuel in 1919. See F. Brittain, *Bernard Lord Manning: A Memoir* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons Ltd., 1945), p. 17. He was a historian of the medieval period but ranged across hymnology and the Dissenting traditions. See, for example, his *Essays in Orthodox Dissent* (London: Independent Press, 1939).

2 David M. Thompson, *Cambridge Theology in the Nineteenth Century: Enquiry, Controversy and Truth* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 149.

3 Manning, *This Latter House*, p. 4. Manning makes this point, but "The University" is one brief chapter of his book.

4 *Cambridge Independent Press* (9 January 1875), p. 3. This newspaper covered Nonconformist developments.

Downing Place) took part and in the afternoon a public dinner was held in the Cambridge Guildhall "which was well filled with friends of the movement in Cambridge and from all quarters in England".[5] Samuel Morley, a Congregationalist, wealthy businessman and MP, took the chair at this event. His sons had been at Trinity College, Cambridge, and he took a personal interest – which included financial support – in the development of Emmanuel.[6] Locally the driving force was William Bond, a well-to-do grocer and long-term deacon of the church. Manning emphasised the significance of the move, namely a "national as well as a local determination that Congregationalism should be fittingly represented in Cambridge". Emmanuel "was to be what Downing Place had not been, a University as well as a Town Church". As an indication of the significance of this change to a wider role, on the first Sunday in the new building the preacher was J. Guinness Rogers, chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales.[7] The fine building, with a capacity of 700, was also designed to send a message. Clyde Binfield describes what he terms the "show of rhetoric" in stone and glass.[8] Designed by a leading chapel architect, James Cubitt, this "notable" building, Manning stated, could be seen as the "transition from the older semi-private dissenting conventicle to the modern Free Church", built as it was, he explained, with "aisles and an apse opening from the nave, a clerestory above, and a tower [which] ... is one of the landmarks of Cambridge most easily discerned from a distance".[9]

Matthew Robertson, minister when the move to the new building took place – he was minister from 1872 to 1877 – had studied at Glasgow University and had been awarded a DSc from Edinburgh University. As a mark of Robertson's concern for engagement with the wider currents of spiritual renewal of the 1870s, he had Asa Mahan, who was a leading figure in the American holiness revival movement, preaching at Emmanuel in November 1875.[10] Manning commented on Robertson's evident "deep spiritual insight and power" as minister.[11] An article by Courtney Kenny on the early history of the church offered a different perspective: that Robertson held "extreme views of

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5 Manning, *This Latter House*, p. 1.

6 *Cambridge Independent Press* (11 September 1886), p. 2.

7 Manning, *This Latter House*, pp. 4-5.

8 C. Binfield, "We Claim our Part in the Great Inheritance", in K. Robbins (ed.), *Protestant Evangelicalism: Britain, Ireland, Germany and America, c.1750-c.1950. Studies in Church History*, Subsidia 7 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 214.

9 Manning, *This Latter House*, pp. 6-7. For Cubitt, see C. Binfield, *The Contexting of a Chapel Architect: James Cubitt, 1836-1912* (London: The Chapels Society, 2001); and idem, "Towards an Appreciation of Baptist Architecture", in K. W. Clements (ed.), *Baptists in the Twentieth Century* (London: Baptist Historical Society, 1983), pp. 121-6.

10 *Cambridge Independent Press* (13 November 1875), p. 5.

11 Manning, *This Latter House*, p. 27.

Perfectionism".[12] There is no evidence that Robertson's views were extreme. What was unusual within British Congregationalism of the period was that Robertson sought to combine holiness spirituality and socio-political involvement. The issue of "politics" received a chapter in Manning, although spirituality did not. In connection with Emmanuel's political awareness, Manning noted that in 1876 "a collection was taken for the Bulgarian provinces suffering from Turkish atrocities".[13] This was at a time when particular attention was being given by Nonconformists in Britain to the "Eastern Question", as it was called, and particularly the mass killing of Bulgarian Christians in the Ottoman empire, an atrocity which many Nonconformists publicised, believing it was being ignored by the Conservative government.[14] At Emmanuel Robertson preached in March 1877 on the subject of the "Eastern Question" and spoke of "England's duty in connection therewith".[15]

Debates and controversy marked Robertson's ministry at Emmanuel. There were disagreements, for example, about the audible repetition of the Lord's Prayer in worship. This was brought to a conclusion with what Manning described as "a subtle and masterly resolution that a Conference of Ambassadors might envy". The church affirmed in October 1874 "the right of every member of the congregation to repeat the Lord's Prayer with the minister if he be so inclined". Although this received unanimous approval, in response to a question whether "the Church desired members to exercise this liberty" there was no consensus.[16] Much more serious division surfaced in 1877, with two church members bringing a proposal that Robertson should resign. There was inconclusive voting about this at a church meeting in August 1877 and at a meeting in September some members voiced "complete confidence" in Robertson. In October there was, the minutes recorded, a "long and rather acrimonious debate".[17] For Manning, this time of change for the church, "when old roots were dug up and re-planted", became "a time of bruises and

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12 Courtney S. Kenny, "Earlier History of Emmanuel Church, Cambridge", *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, Vol. 4 (1909-10), p. 202.

13 Manning, *This Latter House*, p. 18.

14 Simon Goldsworthy, "English Nonconformity and the Pioneering of the Modern Newspaper Campaign: Including the Strange Case of W. T. Stead and the Bulgarian Horrors", *Journalism Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (2006), pp. 387-402.

15 *Cambridge Independent Press* (24 March 1877), p. 5. For the combination of holiness spirituality and socio-political action in Free Church life see I. M. Randall, *Spirituality and Social Change: The Contribution of F. B. Meyer (1847-1929)* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2003).

16 Manning, *This Latter House*, pp. 10-11. Minutes of Church Meeting, 7 October 1874. The Emmanuel Church Meeting Minutes are held in the Cambridgeshire Archives, Shire Hall, Cambridge.

17 Minutes of Church Meetings, 6 June, 8 August, 29 August, 19 September and 31 October 1877.

bitterness". and although he did not explore the causes, he hinted that Robertson's political views might have been involved.[18] What appears to have brought tensions to a head was that Robertson made a minor administrative error in sending an item to the *Cambridge Independent Press* which referred (at least in its published form) to J. W. Lord, Senior Wrangler in the University, as a church member, when in fact he attended Emmanuel, but was not in membership. The error sparked off angry words and Robertson was called "a liar". The upshot was that he resigned. He subsequently became editor of the *Cambridge Independent Press*.[19]

Some members of Emmanuel who supported Robertson left over this controversy, and a number, particularly those with Scottish links, helped to establish a Presbyterian congregation in Cambridge in 1879. One of those who left, J. Rendel Harris, a Fellow of Clare College and later a leading biblical scholar, joined the Society of Friends.[20] It was important that Emmanuel should call a minister who could restore harmony to a divided church. Surprisingly, instead of looking to an experienced minister they invited William Smith Houghton, who was completing his ministerial studies at Cheshunt College, then located in Hertfordshire but later in Cambridge (1906-1967). Houghton accepted the call in 1879. Manning spoke of Houghton's ability to "repair breaches, to cultivate friendliness and fellowship in the Church, and to train it in richer devotion" and affirmed that he "laid many of the lines on which work at Emmanuel has moved ever since his ministry".[21] It was not that all the disagreements ceased. Debates about worship went on and it was only at the end of Houghton's time at Emmanuel that it was agreed he could "ask the Church and congregation to join him audibly when he uses the Lord's Prayer at public worship so that hearts and voices may rise in unison to our common Father".[22] There was also uncertainty about the role of Emmanuel as a "representative Church" for the denomination. In 1880, the Congregational Union asked Emmanuel about the possibility of having "Select Preachers" from

18 Manning, *This Latter House*, pp. 20, 27-8.

19 Minutes of Church Meeting, 8 November 1877; David M. Thompson, "Nonconformists at Cambridge before the First World War", in D. W. Bebbington and T. Larsen (eds), *Modern Christianity and Cultural Aspirations* (London: Continuum, 2003), p. 180.

20 Kenny, "Earlier History of Emmanuel Church, Cambridge", p. 202. This Presbyterian congregation became St Columba's Church. In the history of the church, by R. Buick Knox, *St Columba's Church, Cambridge, 1879-1979* (Cambridge: St Columba's Church, 1980), p. 5, reference is made to James Rae, a Scot who attended Emmanuel but was "restless therein" and helped to found St Columba's. For Harris see Thompson, *Cambridge Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 166-8.

21 Manning, *This Latter House*, p. 28.

22 Manning, *This Latter House*, p. 11.

time to time, with a view to raising the profile of Congregationalism in Cambridge. Houghton promised consultation and took the matter to the church meeting. Initially there was resistance but a few months later it was agreed to try the scheme.[23]

Despite what Manning called the "wary welcome" for denominational figures as occasional preachers and lecturers, the scheme proved fruitful. Among those who made an impact were A. M. Fairbairn, later the Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford; J. Baldwin Brown, one of the first graduates of the University of London and the minister of Brixton Independent Chapel, who spoke on the Established Church in relation to national life; and R. W. Dale, the influential minister of Carrs Lane Chapel, Birmingham, whose son Alfred (A. W. W. Dale), became a Fellow of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and joined Emmanuel in 1879.[24] Among other examples given by Manning to illustrate Emmanuel's relationship with the Congregational denomination were the founding of two other churches in Cambridge, first Victoria Road Congregational Church, a venture in which Emmanuel members were central, and later the establishment of Cherry Hinton Road Free Church. Emmanuel was also committed to the London Missionary Society, with Nelson Bitton and Marjorie Rainey going from the church to China and Mabel Few to North India. Yet at the same time Manning characterised Emmanuel as "always very independent" of the denomination and as responding with "an almost constitutional caution" to initiatives coming from the Congregational Union, which Manning denoted as "Memorial Hall".[25]

Congregationalism's vision for a significant church reaching into the University was, however, increasingly fulfilled in Houghton's time. He announced in 1884 that he was to commence studies in the University "believing that it would be no hindrance to the success of the church, while it might turn out a help". The church affirmed this step.[26] In the 1870s there had been only a sprinkling of students attending the church.[27] But under Houghton's ministry, Manning noted, undergraduates "appeared in considerable numbers".[28] Houghton instituted an annual breakfast for them. In February 1885, speakers at this event included R. F. Horton, Congregational minister at Hampstead and prior to that the first Nonconformist to hold a teaching position in Oxford University; Courtney Kenny, a Fellow of Downing College and (1885-1888) a

23 Minutes of Church Meetings, 6 April 1880, 28 April 1880 and 10 November 1880.

24 Minutes of Church Meeting, 30 July 1879; Minutes of Church Meeting, 2 March 1881. *Cambridge Independent Press* (25 February 1882), p. 4.

25 Manning, *This Latter House*, pp. 14-15. Cherry Hinton Road was initially established by the Cambridge District Free Church Council. It joined the Congregational Union in 1922: N. J. W. Appleton, *A History of Cherry Hinton Road Congregational Church* (Cambridge: Cherry Hinton Road United Reformed Church, 1972). Memorial Hall, built to remember the Great Ejectment of 1662, housed the offices of The Congregational Union of England and Wales.

26 Minutes of Church Meeting, 1 October 1884.

27 Thompson, *Cambridge Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 151.

28 Manning, *This Latter House*, p. 16.

Liberal MP, who attended Emmanuel despite being a Unitarian; Neville Keynes, a Fellow of Pembroke College and an Emmanuel trustee although not a member; and A. W. W. Dale.[29] One of the undergraduates attracted to Emmanuel was T. R. Glover, who would later be the Public Orator of the University. Glover was the son of a leading Baptist minister, Richard Glover of Bristol, and in Cambridge he anticipated settling at St Andrew's Street Baptist Church. However, he became involved with Castle End Mission in the town, which had links with Emmanuel.[30] He found a welcome at the home of Neville and Florence Keynes. He also wrote in his diary of the impact when he heard Houghton preach.[31] By 1890 Glover's regular place of worship was Emmanuel. He remarked in that year that Houghton was "distinctly good" preaching on Isaiah 40, and "very good" on Galatians 3:20.[32] But Houghton was now set to move on. This was not because of problems. In 1891 he was congratulated on receiving a DD, and the church was growing, with considerable numbers of new members.[33] In September 1891 he announced, however, that he was accepting a call to Edgbaston and was concluding a ministry which he had "loved so much".[34]

II: "A prince of the Holy Catholic Church", Peter Taylor Forsyth

It was reported in the *Cambridge Independent Press* that Houghton's announcement of his resignation threw the Emmanuel church and congregation "into some confusion". Between 300 and 400 people signed a letter hoping that he would reconsider his decision, but this was not to be. What was recognised, as A. W. W. Dale said at a farewell event, was that Houghton had come to a "divided Church" and had left it "a united one". Dale's words were met by "hear, hear" and applause.[35] It was now clear – as evidenced by Houghton's ministry – that Emmanuel could fulfil a strategic role within the University as well as in Cambridge as a whole. The new minister needed to be able to take advantage

29 Invitation to Breakfast Meeting on 25 February 1885, held in Emmanuel Deacons' Meeting Minute Book. Kenny was a stalwart of the Nonconformist Union in Cambridge. See Thompson, "Nonconformists at Cambridge before the First World War", pp. 176-200. In 1907 Kenny became Downing Professor of the Laws of England. In 1910 Keynes became University Registrar.

30 T. R. Glover Diary, 13 October 1888. T. R. Glover to his father, 28 October 1888: letter held in his diary. The Glover diaries are held at St John's College, Cambridge. I am grateful to Kathryn McKee, Special Collections, for her help.

31 For example, Glover Diary entries, 30 September 1888, 11 November 1888. Florence Keynes wrote her memoirs, *Gathering up the Threads* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons Ltd., 1950). She talked about people who were part of Emmanuel, but not about the church itself.

32 Glover Diary, 26 October 1890, 9 November 1890.

33 Minutes of Church Meeting, 3 June 1891.

34 Minutes of Church Meeting, 2 September 1891.

35 *Cambridge Independent Press* (24 October 1891), p. 7.

of what Binfield describes as "the university as a source of intellectual stimulus and evangelical mission" for Nonconformists.[36] In the early months of 1892, Emmanuel considered the possibility of calling as their minister J. D. Jones, a gifted preacher who was to combine a long ministry in Bournemouth with significant wider influence in Congregationalism. Jones, who was then in Lincoln, "favourably impressed" the Emmanuel congregation.[37] The view was expressed by some at the church meeting, however, that "he might not be so especially fitted to secure the interest of the University hearers".[38] A. W. W. Dale, one of the influential University members at Emmanuel, was supportive of Jones.[39] Consideration was still being given to the various perspectives, when Jones made it known that he did not want to take the possibility further.[40]

Attention then turned to Peter Taylor Forsyth, who was regarded as one of the most significant younger ministers in the denomination. Forsyth, who was from Aberdeen and had studied there and then in Germany and in London, was minister at Clarendon Park, Leicester.[41] In October 1893 the Emmanuel deacons agreed unanimously to take Forsyth's name to the church meeting, and with its support, a deputation from Emmanuel visited Forsyth. Although Forsyth's initial response was that he did not want to leave Leicester, he acknowledged he was "interested in serving our denomination in a University town, with the form of work particularly called for by such a situation". In February 1894 he agreed to come to Emmanuel.[42] In March the *British Weekly* emphasised the part played in Forsyth's decision of "a letter he had received signed by the leading men of the Congregational Union". They had highlighted to him the influence of Emmanuel "in Cambridge, but also in the University". Their approach was not to be seen, they had argued, as a "balancing of the church at Cambridge with the church at Leicester, but as a case where the field was measured rather by the University and the opportunities it supplied".[43] Emmanuel members were fully aware of this dimension.[44] The *Cambridge Independent Press* covered the developments at Emmanuel in some detail. It anticipated Forsyth being "a great

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36 J. C. G. Binfield, "Principal when Pastor: P.T. Forsyth, 1876-1901", in W. J. Sheils and D. Wood (eds), *The Ministry: Clerical and Lay: Studies in Church History*, no. 26 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), pp. 406, 410.

37 Minutes of Deacons' Meeting, 29 March 1892.

38 Minutes of Special Church Meeting, 30 March 1892.

39 Minutes of Deacons' Meeting, 25 April 1892, 6 May 1892.

40 Minutes of Church Meeting, 27 April 1892; 1 June 1892.

41 For Forsyth's life, see W. L. Bradley, *P. T. Forsyth: The Man and his Work* (London: Independent Press, 1952). For Clarendon Park, see Clyde Binfield, "An East Midland Call: Its Context and Some Consequences. The Genesis of Clarendon Park Congregational Church", *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, Vol. 79 (2005), pp. 107-127.

42 Minutes of Deacons' Meeting, 30 October 1893; letter from Forsyth to the Deacons, 8 February 1894; Minutes of Deacons' Meeting, 26 February 1894.

43 *British Weekly* (8 March 1894), p. 322.

acquisition to Cambridge" and spoke of him as a "deep thinker and powerful preacher".[45]

Forsyth's ministry at Emmanuel began in extremely difficult personal circumstances. He was already very weak from over-work and the health of his wife Mina was deteriorating. Following medical advice, Forsyth took three months of rest before moving to Cambridge in September 1894.[46] There was a feeling of "joy and confidence" in the church as Forsyth began.[47] Within a week, however, Forsyth suffered the crushing blow of the sudden death of Mina from paralysis. He now faced the task of caring on his own for his daughter Jessie, a young schoolgirl. Depression threatened to overwhelm him in his early period at Emmanuel, but nonetheless he was able to convey his vision for his ministry at a meeting of the church and congregation on 31 October 1894. Forsyth told those gathered that "as a faithful minister" his message would have at its heart "the offence of the cross" and that as a consequence he might sometimes "appear to break rather than help".[48] Brokenness was an experience he knew. Glover's diary entries for 21 October and 4 November describe Forsyth's first sermons at Emmanuel as "splendid", "full of many serious points", and "striking ... though I didn't follow it all".[49] One enthusiastic undergraduate, L. H. Gaunt of Clare College, said he envied freshers starting in 1894 because of the time they would spend under Forsyth's ministry.[50] For Manning, with his own "high" view of chapel life, Forsyth was "a prince of the Holy Catholic Church", exercising an influential ministry as "a doctor and teacher" which reached beyond Congregationalism. He was "a vigorous defender of evangelical truth".[51]

True to his word, Forsyth's preaching often had the cross of Christ as its focus. On 21 April 1895, Glover noted that Forsyth had preached that week from Hebrews 2:17 (Christ as high priest making atonement) on "the spirit and purpose and meaning" of Christ's death. A week later Glover recorded: "A most striking sermon on Christ's mental and spiritual suffering for us in his mediation".[52] Forsyth encouraged discussion of his sermons in meetings of church members, and at meetings in May 1895, for example, he received and answered questions both about what he had said and on other issues of spiritual experience.[53] He also gave addresses at church meetings, such as "a most helpful and interesting address on the Power of the Holy Ghost".[54] Binfield describes

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44 Minutes of Church Meeting, 7 March 1894.
45 *Cambridge Independent Press* (16 February 1894), p. 8; (2 March 1894), p. 5.
46 Jessie Forsyth Andrews, "Memoir", in P. T. Forsyth, *The Work of Christ* (London: Collins, 1965), p. xv.
47 Minutes of Deacons' Meeting, 10 September 1894.
48 Meeting of Church and Congregation, 31 October 1894.
49 Glover Diary, 21 October 1894, 4 November 1894. Glover had become an associate member of Emmanuel in 1892: Minutes of Church Meeting, 28 September 1892.
50 Meeting of Church and Congregation, 31 October 1894.
51 Manning, *This Latter House*, p. 28.
52 Glover Diary, 21 and 28 April 1895.

how under Forsyth "the rhythm flowed of conversation, education, self-questioning, encouragement".[55] There were ongoing debates about some aspects of worship. Forsyth suggested that "Amen" could be sung by the choir after prayers, but the deacons were cautious, and Forsyth's suggestion in January 1895 that the deacons should be served the Lord's Supper before the congregation was not accepted.[56] Manning applauded the caution about innovation, affirming the "austerity" of the worship at Emmanuel. Services, he stated, had "the dignity and simplicity inherited from our seventeenth century founders".[57] What Manning did not record was debate about the length of Forsyth's sermons. In September 1895, the deacons "unanimously resolved to ask the Pastor to kindly try and arrange for shorter sermons on the Sunday evenings than he usually preached, it being found that hearers would generally prefer such an arrangement".[58] This must have hurt Forsyth, but he gave a measured reply, promising that "as far as practicable he would endeavour to somewhat shorten the evening service but to shorten the sermon would compel him to refrain from preaching on texts which he would otherwise desire to preach upon".[59]

During his Emmanuel ministry, Forsyth became more widely known. The church expressed delight in April 1896 that a DD had been conferred on him by Aberdeen University.[60] In the following year he gave a powerful address on "God the Holy Father" at the Congregational Union meetings. His sermon, David Thompson observes, was "a critique of easy notions of the fatherhood of God". By that time he was clearly countering notions which he had at one time found acceptable, despite the fact that they had, by that stage, found more widespread acceptance in the churches. Another aspect of Forsyth's concern in this address was to challenge the elevation of Christ's teaching "over his redeeming love". Christ, he insisted, came to "*do* something".[61] In 1897, six lectures Forsyth gave on "the spiritual principle of Nonconformity" were published as *The Charter of the Church*. Here he argued against spiritual individualism and contended that in God's purpose a person was saved "as a member of a community". Without service in a church setting, faith would decay. He considered that no-one could believe in Christ "who refuses association with some Christian community".[62] Perhaps the way Forsyth

53 Minutes of Church Meeting, 1 May 1895, 29 May 1895.
54 Minutes of Church Meeting, 29 March 1899.
55 C. Binfield, "P. T. Forsyth as Congregational Minister", in T. Hart (ed.), *Justice the True and Only Mercy* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), p. 187.
56 Minutes of Deacons' Meeting, 30 July 1895.
57 Manning, *This Latter House*, p. 12.
58 Minutes of Deacons' Meeting, 22 Sept 1895.
59 Minutes of Deacons' Meeting, 28 October 1895.
60 Minutes of Church Meeting, 3 April 1895. He responded that he was "most glad for the sake of the Church".
61 Thompson, *Cambridge Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 159.

preached salvation-in-community was summed up at the end of *The Holy Father and the Living Christ* (1897) in which he stated: "We must have the historic Christ and more. We must have the living Christ ... He must be personal to us. He must be our Saviour, in our situation". God in Christ addressed "our needs, loves, shame, sins".[63] Forsyth spoke in 1899 at the International Council of the Congregational Churches, meeting in Boston, USA and before he left an "exceptionally large" meeting at Emmanuel expressed support.[64] His Boston lecture was so stirring that "the audience uncharacteristically rose to their feet and started singing". The hymn was one that echoed Forsyth's own commitment: "In the Cross of Christ I glory".[65]

The call he had received to influence the University world was one Forsyth always had in mind during his Emmanuel ministry. In October 1894, Forsyth asked the church meeting about holding an occasional Communion Service after the morning service. About thirty women students at Homerton College, who could not attend the normal evening communion services, had enquired about this possibility. An affirmative proposal was passed unanimously.[66] Manning's perspective seems well founded, that Forsyth "made dogmatic theology attractive even for undergraduates".[67] In the context of a University dominated by Anglican tradition, Forsyth wished to portray an alternative vision. In 1895, he gave four addresses on "The Religious Grounds of Nonconformity".[68] T. R. Glover, by then a Fellow of St John's College, who was one of those leading Emmanuel services – conducting the "preliminaries" – noted that Forsyth stressed the "spiritual independence" of the Church and saw that as having been lost in Anglicanism.[69] Forsyth's mature theological works, which established his position as the leading Congregational theologian of the period, were written after his Emmanuel ministry, but what he did while in Cambridge in the 1890s contained "the seeds of all his later thoughts".[70] Fresh enrichment came into Forsyth's life in 1898 when he remarried. His second wife, Bertha Ison, was

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62 P.T. Forsyth, *Charter of the Church* (London Alexander & Shepheard, 1896), p. 41.

63 P.T. Forsyth, *The Holy Father and the Living Christ* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1897), pp. 145-6.

64 Meeting of Church and Congregation, 2 August 1899.

65 Jason A. Goroncy (ed.), *Descending on Humanity and Intervening in History: Notes from the Pulpit Ministry of P. T. Forsyth* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013), p. 18.

66 Minutes of Church Meeting, 3 October 1894.

67 Manning, *This Latter House*, p. 28.

68 *Cambridge Independent Press* (18 October 1895), p. 8.

69 Glover Diary, 20 October 1895. Although Forsyth was robust in his criticism of Anglicanism, in December 1899 he was invited by William Sanday, the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity in Oxford, to speak at a conference in Oxford on Priesthood, Sacrifice and Apostolic Succession. Among those participating were leading Anglicans such as Charles Gore and Cosmo Gordon Lang. Goroncy (ed.), *Descending on Humanity and Intervening in History*, p. 18.

considerably younger than him. Jessie, his daughter, described Bertha as "possessing great charm, and even fascination, of looks and manner, incredible vitality, much wit, and a born gift as a hostess". She was an inspiration to Forsyth.[71] In 1901 Forsyth informed Emmanuel's members that he had decided to accept a call to become the Principal of Hackney College, London. The church expressed great regret but also gratitude for "the privileges they have enjoyed from Dr Forsyth".[72]

III: "A power in the whole town and university", William Boothby Selbie

Emmanuel's deacons and members were eager to find another minister who would continue to endeavour to do what Forsyth said, in 1901, at his last church meeting, had been his aim, namely to "strike a deeper note and expound the teaching of the Gospel". They recognised that Forsyth's ministry had, as members put it on that occasion, been a "unique and memorable one".[73] Emmanuel by the late 1890s was known within Cambridge for its very large congregations and for its position as an Evangelical Free Church witnessing – the *Cambridge Independent Press* noted in 1899 – to the New Testament teaching on "grace and faith".[74] The same newspaper, reporting in 1901 on the future following Forsyth's move, spoke of Emmanuel as "this important charge, which includes many University students", and viewed Forsyth, during his years in Cambridge, as having "accomplished a work of far-reaching influence".[75] The minister whose name came quite quickly to the Emmanuel deacons and members, as someone who could carry on this work, was W. B. Selbie, who had studied at Brasenose College, Oxford, before entering Mansfield College, where he trained for Congregational ministry. Emmanuel's hopes were not to be disappointed. Selbie became Emmanuel's minister in 1902 and Manning's comment was unequivocal: "Emmanuel in his ministry became a power in the whole town and university. Echoes from its pulpit went everywhere". Selbie, like Forsyth, gained national recognition.[76]

Highgate Congregational Church, where Selbie was then minister, was his first pastorate. It was there, from 1890, when he began his ministry, as Elaine Kaye put it, that "his great gifts of preaching were first developed". His style at Highgate was initially considered too academic, but he was able to adapt. In

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70 Thompson, *Cambridge Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 153. For further discussion, see ibid,, pp. 153-163. Forsyth's writings in this period, as well as *Holy Father* and *Charter of the Church*, were *Christian Perfection* (1899), *Rome, Reform and Reaction* (1899) and *The Taste of Death and the Life of Grace* (1901).

71 Andrews, "Memoir", in Forsyth, *Work of Christ*, pp. xvii-xviii.

72 Minutes of Church Meetings, 27 February 1901, 13 March 1901.

73 Minutes of Church Meeting, 3 July 1901.

74 *Cambridge Independent Press* (27 January 1899), p. 6.

75 *Cambridge Independent Press* (5 July 1901), p. 8.

76 Manning, *This Latter House*, p. 28.

Cambridge he came fully into his own.[77] During the period leading to the call by Emmanuel and Selbie's subsequent acceptance of it, the Emmanuel deacons were pleased to be able to report that soundings they had taken showed that there was support from graduates and undergraduates.[78] They also wrote to the Highgate deacons: "We have, as you know, latterly been called upon to surrender a minister whose influence on Christian teaching in the Congregational Church has been unique". The Emmanuel deacons, however, were now turning to Selbie, whom they saw as having knowledge of undergraduate life and who was generally recognised as "one of the few men qualified to fill a pastorate held in trust for the Church at large". The deacons' letter spoke of young people coming to Cambridge University and the Training College "at a time of life when character is being moulded". There was anticipation about the future "if Mr Selbie becomes their teacher".[79] Themes that had been prominent when Emmanuel was founded were being re-stated. A unanimous call was issued to Selbie. In accepting, he stated he did not want two sections in the church, University and Town. He also wanted to be a "visiting pastor".[80] In a follow-up letter to Emmanuel, which recognised the significance of the move, the Highgate deacons affirmed that Selbie's "scholarly attainments and deep spiritual insight will be of the greatest value to your Church and community".[81]

The early months of Selbie's ministry indicated the way in which Emmanuel epitomised and expressed the confidence of the Free Churches in that period. There were joint assemblies of the Baptist and Congregational Unions in 1901, and in 1902 the Free Churches began a nation-wide campaign against the government's Education Act, on the grounds that it discriminated against them: a mantra emerged, "The future rests with the Free Churches".[82] At the public recognition of Selbie's arrival in Cambridge, in October 1902, the chairman was G. Sims Woodhead, a deacon of Emmanuel, who three years earlier had become Professor of Pathology in the University. There was a large gathering representing Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian churches. Woodhead said those in Emmanuel, as well as others in Cambridge, were losing a friend in Forsyth, who "had influenced their lives and to whom they could look up for help and guidance", but with Selbie as the new minister, they could look forward to "a time of great refreshment and of great work". They had, Woodhead pronounced (to applause), "got a man in ten thousand". Charles Joseph, minister of the 400-member St Andrew's Street Baptist Church, spoke of the spirit of brotherhood

77 Elaine Kaye, "Cultural Aspiration and the Dissenting Colleges", in Bebbington and Larsen (eds), *Modern Christianity*, pp. 167, 171.

78 Minutes of Deacons' Meeting, 28 April 1902.

79 Emmanuel Deacons to Highgate Congregational Church Deacons, 30 April 1902.

80 Minutes of Deacons' Meeting, 26 May 1902.

81 Highgate Deacons to Emmanuel Deacons, 29 May 1902.

82 For these developments, especially in relation to Baptist life, see I. M. Randall, *The English Baptists of the Twentieth Century* (Didcot: Baptist Historical Society, 2005), ch. 2.

among the Cambridge Free Churches and Johnston Ross, minister of St Columba's Presbyterian Church (later a Professor at Union Theological Seminary, New York), who knew Selbie as a friend, stated his belief that Congregational and Presbyterian doctrines were the same. For Ross, the only difference was in church government. "The movement of Presbyterian machinery", he commented, "could be compared to that of a glacier".[83] Perhaps as an indication that Congregationalism could move more quickly, in December 1902 Selbie proposed to the deacons and then the church meeting, "a series of special Sunday evening services on the first Sunday of each month, as an effort to reach outsiders". This was "warmly approved".[84]

By 1904 a number of significant changes had been implemented. The monthly "People's Services" were taking place, with Selbie addressing such subjects as "Religion and the Home" and "The Bible and Modern Thought".[85] In an address on "Religion and Science" he argued that some people were "beginning to understand that the discoveries of science might possibly be part of the revelation of God, but these people were [as yet] few and far between". He wanted to promote progressive views by contrast with "crude conceptions".[86] Despite Emmanuel being "conservative in ritual", as Manning put it, another change was the move in 1903 to individual communion cups. There was also a plea from some deacons for "a better kind of non-alcoholic wine".[87] With his desire for outreach, Selbie encouraged Emmanuel members to take on responsibility for the Castle End Mission. Several members committed themselves, and it was hoped to "seek and welcome the aid of Christians of every denomination". A suggestion from Selbie, which arose partly from an evangelistic and partly from a pastoral concern, was that Cambridge be mapped out into districts, with each deacon given a district for "special care".[88] For well over a year little happened, but by May-June 1904 eight districts had been identified and deacons were given the responsibility of covering, in total, 332 people. There was also a determination to involve new members in "some definite church work".[89] A year later Selbie reiterated that he wanted Emmanuel to be "an instrument for reaching the people of Cambridge" and members were giving out printed invitations to special Sunday evenings.[90] By contrast with Forsyth, Selbie wanted to shorten these services.[91] In 1907 the deacons were

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83 *Cambridge Daily News* (17 October 1902), p. 3.
84 Minutes of Deacons' Meeting, 2 December 1902; Minutes of Church Meeting, 3 December 1902.
85 *Cambridge Independent Press* (1 May 1903); (11 March 1904).
86 *Cambridge Independent Press* (3 June 1904).
87 Manning, *This Latter House*, p. 22; Minutes of Deacons' Meetings, 27 January 1903, 28 April 1903 and 2 June 1903.
88 Minutes of Deacons' Meetings, 2 December 1902, 24 February 1903.
89 Minutes of Deacons' Meetings, 31 May 1904, 28 June 1904.
90 Minutes of Deacons' Meeting, 21 February 1905.

unanimous in seeing them as "eminently helpful".[92] The vision was to reach all sections of Cambridge life.

In other ways Selbie continued the patterns he inherited. Like Forsyth, he gave addresses at church meetings. In June 1904, an address by Selbie on "Obedience to Truth" (from I Peter 1:22) was "listened to with deep interest by one of the largest church meetings (77 present) which had been held for some time". At this point membership was about 220.[93] Selbie also continued the tradition of emphasising the Nonconformist tradition and its distinctive witness. In November 1904, it was decided to install stained glass windows as a memorial for the long-standing deacon of the church and Alderman of the Borough, William Bond, who had recently died.[94] The windows were a visual reminder of heroic Puritan and Nonconformist figures: Henry Barrow and John Greenwood (who were put to death for their beliefs), Oliver Cromwell, John Milton, Francis Holcroft and Joseph Hussey, the church's first minister. A speech by Selbie which inaugurated the windows was published as *Remember the Days of Old*. Selbie argued, quoting Milton, for a high view of the congregation as "a royal priesthood, a saintly communion, the household and city of God". More broadly, he saw the Puritan-Nonconformist tradition as one that promoted "the right of the free access of the soul to God", and along with that insisted on "the untrammelled liberty of the conscience". This tradition, through its view that "all alike were kings and priests unto God", gave, Selbie argued, "a new nobility and strength to human nature".[95] The windows have been described by Binfield as speaking volumes with "discreet abrasiveness", and one young member of the Emmanuel congregation, Michael Ramsey, a son of one of the deacons, found contemplating them more absorbing than the sermons.[96] Selbie was concerned not only about past glory but also current Free Church witness. He hoped for some united mid-week meetings with St Andrew's Street Baptist and St Columba's, but that did not materialise.[97]

Connection with the University continued to be an important aspect of Emmanuel's ministry. Again, Selbie was an innovator. Manning notes that a University Congregational Society was founded by Selbie and hosted by Emmanuel.[98] The 1903 church manual spoke of the circumstances of the church

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91 Minutes of Church Meeting, 29 March 1905.

92 Minutes of Deacons' Meeting, 25 November 1907.

93 Minutes of Church Meetings, 29 June 1904, 25 January 1905.

94 Minutes of Church Meeting, 2 November 1904. His son, Henry Bond, became Master of Trinity Hall.

95 W. B. Selbie, *Remember the Days of Old* (Cambridge, 1906), p. 8.

96 Binfield, "We Claim our Part in the Great Inheritance", p. 214; Owen Chadwick, *Michael Ramsey: A Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 6. Michael Ramsey, later Archbishop of Canterbury, became an Anglican while at boarding school.

97 Minutes of Deacons' Meetings, 30 April 1906; 27 May 1906.

as "unique, since a number of young men and women from all parts of the kingdom spend a large part of three or four years in this University town as students". The hope of the Church was that graduates and undergraduates would "find the warmth of a Christian home in our Church and that our common worship may be much enriched by mutual fellowship". At that point there were seventy students, from across the Colleges, who were associate members.[99] Total membership in this period varied between 220 and 250, with many more attending on Sundays. In 1906 Clifford Hall, senior student at Cheshunt College, which moved to Cambridge in that year, offered to help Emmanuel in outreach connected with Castle End Mission and also to work among undergraduates. He was reading for the History Tripos.[100] The Student Christian Movement (SCM) recognised in 1908 the role Emmanuel could play in the extension programme SCM was planning in Cambridge.[101] A year later, Selbie accepted an invitation to become the Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford. Emmanuel recognised his qualifications for this post: his scholarship, faith, example and teaching. Sims Woodhead, in a farewell speech, noted that "so far as Congregationalism is concerned" Emmanuel was a congregation which "takes the place of a University Church". In response Selbie emphasised, however, that for him the church's aims and interests had been "not those of either University or Town alone". He had sought to ensure that Emmanuel was "a single body of Christian workers".[102]

IV: "In Christ Jesus all are one", Henry Child Carter

Henry Child Carter, who followed Selbie, had studied at Oriel College, Oxford, and then at Mansfield. While Selbie was beginning his new work in Oxford, where he became the best-known preacher in the city, Emmanuel was looking for someone who, like him, would make connections in Cambridge with University and Town. The church's conviction about Carter, who was then at Queen Street, Wolverhampton, led to his receiving a unanimous call in December 1909.[103] He began his ministry in April 1910, preaching to large congregations.[104] Ebenezer Cunningham, who became one of Carter's closest friends, moved to Cambridge in 1911, by which time students were being

98 Manning, *This Latter House*, pp. 16-17; Michael Smyth (ed.), *The History of the Cambridge University Congregational Society*, an address by Malcolm Smith in June 1947 (Cambridge: Emmanuel Church, 2004).

99 *Emmanuel Congregational Church Manual* (1903), pp. 49-56. This is held in Emmanuel United Reformed Church. I am indebted to Margaret Thompson, the church archivist, for her invaluable help with this article.

100 Minutes of Deacons' Meeting, 26 February 1906.

101 Minutes of Deacons' Meeting, 1 June 1908

102 *Cambridge Independent Press* (2 April 1909), p. 6.

103 Minutes of Special Church Meeting, 15 December 1909.

104 *Cambridge Independent Press* (8 April 1910), p. 3.

attracted not only by Carter's preaching but also by the great gift he had for offering friendship, a gift which Manning experienced.[105] As part of Carter's desire to connect with people and not to create unnecessary barriers, Cunningham noted that Carter never wore a clerical collar or academic robes.[106] Carter involved himself fully in the University Congregational Society. In 1912 it became the first University Society to admit women members.[107] Emmanuel newsletters of 1913 and 1914 indicate various links made with the academic world. Cheshunt students who were part of Emmanuel were attending University lectures. Ralph Turner, Emmanuel's Sunday School superintendent, was appointed Teacher of Literature and Sanskrit, Government College, Benhares, India. An Emmanuel member, J. P. Griggs, of St John's College, was first in recent examinations for the Home and Indian Civil Service. There was a tribute to Joseph Reynolds Green, a distinguished botanist – he was a Fellow of Downing College – and an Emmanuel deacon.[108] Newsletters of this period carried a welcome to students and the hope that "our Church will be something of a spiritual home for them during their time in Cambridge". Contacts for students included Bernard Manning at Jesus College, Elsie Towers at Girton College and Dorothy Howard at Newnham College.[109]

The life of Emmanuel, as of British people generally, was profoundly affected by the outbreak of war in 1914. Carter wrote in the Emmanuel Newsletter in September 1914: "It has come to some of us as a great surprise to find ourselves among the supporters of war. We believed in peace, in the possibility of maintaining peace and in the duty of Christians to work for its maintenance by refusing to credit what the scaremongers, as we called them, were always telling us about Germany's hostile intentions. We have been obliged to admit that on the point of fact we were wrong". He asked: "But can the cause of God be advanced by fighting, – with all the awful slaughter and suffering that it means? Yes, if the heart with which we fight is pure".[110] The October Newsletter contained a list of Emmanuel members bearing arms and those engaged in medical and Red Cross work with troops.[111] The church premises began to be used by the Belgian relief committee and then as a recreational centre for soldiers stationed in the town. Refugees were welcomed into the homes of church members. Those from Emmanuel at the Front or

105 Ebenezer Cunningham, "Memoir" [unpublished, 1970], St John's College, Cambridge (W. 46), p. 128; Brittain, *Bernard Lord Manning: A Memoir*, p. 17.

106 Ebenezer Cunningham, "Henry Child Carter", *Congregational Quarterly*, Vol. 33 (October 1955), p. 322.

107 Smyth (ed.), *The History of the Cambridge University Congregational Society*, pp. 5, 13-14.

108 Emmanuel Congregational Church Newsletter, No. 34 (October 1913); No. 43 (July 1914).

109 Emmanuel Congregational Church Newsletter, No. 47 (November 1914); No 49 (January 1915).

110 Emmanuel Congregational Church Newsletter, No. 45 (September 1914).

111 Emmanuel Congregational Church Newsletter, No. 46 (October 1914).

enlisted were showing "the kind of patriotism England needs".[112] At a church meeting on 31 March 1915, Carter asked Cunningham to speak about "the spiritual needs of the Church in this time of the world's stress". Several members took part "in an interesting and helpful conference".[113]

By this time, however, Carter's own views about war had changed. In December 1914, 130 people had gathered in Cambridge and had formed an inter-denominational pacifist body, the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FoR). Local conference arrangements had been made by Cunningham and he would prove to be an influential pacifist advocate in Cambridge.[114] A talk in February 1915 at the Cambridge Nonconformist Union by Maude Royden, an early FoR member and an Anglican advocate of the ordination of women, on "The Christian and War", appears to have been a turning point for Carter in adopting a pacifist position.[115] The meeting was chaired by Manning, who was not a pacifist. Cunningham later recorded: "Throughout the greater part of a telling exposition of the Christian pacifist position he [Carter] sat with his head in his hands and elbows on his knees." On the next day, Carter told Cunningham: "I am off the fence".[116] Cunningham felt that from this point "the Cross of Jesus took on a new meaning" in Carter's preaching.[117] In the August 1915 Emmanuel Newsletter Carter spoke about FoR, explaining that he was a member, "as are others belonging to our Church". Cunningham wrote in the same Newsletter that for those in FoR part of being faithful to the nation and to those fighting was "witnessing even now to our trust in spiritual forces, and not in the force of arms". For him the essence of the Gospel was that "Christ refused an earthly kingdom".[118] Among those in Emmanuel who were conscientious objectors to military service was J. A. Crowther, a Fellow of St John's College and later a Professor of Physics.[119] In September 1915, Carter informed the Emmanuel deacons that he would read a statement to the church meeting about his pacifist views and this he duly did, explaining "his changed attitude towards War since

112 Newsletter of Castle End Mission (November 1914); Emmanuel Congregational Church Newsletters, No. 47 (November 1914), No 49 (January 1915).

113 Minutes of Church Meeting, 31 March 1915. Letter of Invitation, 23 December 1914, in Aaron Holliday (ed.), *FoR: 100 Years of Nonviolence* (Oxford: Fellowship of Reconciliation, 2014), pp. 12-15; Jill Wallis, *Valiant for Peace* (London: Fellowship of Reconciliation, 1991).

114 For a full account of developments in Cambridge, see Andrew Thompson, "Logical Nonconformity? Conscientious Objection in the Cambridge Free Churches after 1914", *Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society*, Vol. 5, No. 9 (1996), pp. 548-61.

115 Cunningham, "Memoir", p. 48.

116 Cunningham, "Henry Child Carter", p. 324.

117 Cunningham, "Memoir", p. 49.

118 Emmanuel Congregational Church Newsletter, No. 56 (August 1915). For pacifists in Congregationalism, see Alan Argent, *The Transformation of Congregationalism, 1900–2000* (Nottingham: Congregational Federation, 2013), pp. 93-103.

119 Cunningham, "Memoir", p. 52.

he wrote on the matter in Church Notes of September 1914". At his request, no discussion took place on that occasion.[120]

Several deacons, including A. G. Almond, the church secretary, were unhappy with the stance taken by Carter. They felt he was spending too much time with undergraduates opposed to the war.[121] The deacons met without Carter in April 1916, by which time compulsory military service had come into force in Britain, and some deacons wanted to institute discussion in the church meeting about Carter's pacifist stance. This was not the general view of the deacons, however, and the following was agreed:

> We feel that it would not serve any useful purpose to raise a discussion in the Church Meeting on the changed opinion of Mr Carter with regard to War, but we feel that it is only right to state that in our opinion there have been occasions on which his actions in regard to this matter have not been altogether in the best interests of the Church, yet we desire to recognise the honesty and sincerity of his convictions and at the same time to express our regret if any action of ours has contributed to the difficulties of the situation.[122]

Feeling a loss of support, Carter considered that his only option was to resign. At the church meeting on 30 May 1916 he stated: "With feelings of keen sorrow I now place in your hands my resignation of the office of minister among you ... I had hoped, with good reason I thought, that the difference of conviction on the subject of war which has divided me from the great majority of the Diaconate would not prove an insuperable obstacle [to] our working together". Carter insisted that his "concepts of the Christian Gospel and of the purposes of the Church" were unchanged. He regretted that he had previously adopted an opinion in justification of war. He had come to see that this was not in harmony with his deepest convictions. After this statement, Cunningham suggested that the meeting be adjourned for a week and this was accepted.[123] The deacons asked W.B. Selbie to chair the subsequent special church meeting, and this took place on 5 June. A resolution was moved by E. W. Johnson, a tutor at Cheshunt College and senior member of the University Congregational Society, asking Carter to withdraw his resignation. Manning related the events: "Though by far the greater part of the Church did not share Mr. Carter's conviction of the wrongness of all war, they were resolutely determined that neither that nor any

120 Minutes of Deacons' Meeting, 28 September 1915; Minutes of Church Meeting, 6 October 1915.

121 Cunningham, "Memoir", p. 51. The University Congregational Society members largely espoused Christian pacifism and were linked with various pacifist groups, including FoR: Smyth (ed.), *The History of the Cambridge University Congregational Society*, p. 15.

122 Minutes of Deacons' Meeting, 4 April 1916; Thompson, "Logical Nonconformity? Conscientious Objection in the Cambridge Free Churches after 1914", pp. 553-4.

123 Minutes of Church Meeting, 30 May 1916.

other matter should separate him from them". At what was a crowded church meeting, members decided "by an overwhelming vote" to decline to accept Carter's resignation.[124] The minutes of the meeting recorded further details. A large number of students attended the meeting. Members did not wish to speak only about differing views of war, but wished to emphasise the "inspiration and blessing" received through Carter. One significant aspect not mentioned by Manning was that – by a pre-arranged decision – all the deacons resigned, recognising that there needed to be new elections.[125] Manning's concern was to show that Emmanuel's experience proved that "in Jesus Christ all are one", the "pacifist and non-pacifist".[126] Certainly the church as a whole was decisively in favour of Carter, who consequently withdrew his resignation. It was agreed that there would be new elections for deacons. Those not willing to stand again, however, wanted to inform the church that their actions had not arisen "directly from the difference of opinion with regard to war".[127] More than half of the deacons agreed to stand again and the new church secretary was A. S. Ramsey.[128] To have Ramsey, a mathematician and President of Magdalene College, in this role was an indication of the church's links with University life.

University connections continued in different ways after the war. Cunningham remained central to this, although the fact that he had been a conscientious objector had an effect on his position at St John's College. He had been one of the leading British experts on Einstein's new approach in physics, but after the war he was no longer allowed to be a College tutor and was given an administrative role.[129] In 1920 Charles Raven, Dean of Emmanuel College, (later Regius Professor of Divinity in the University and a leading thinker in the area of theology and science), preached in Emmanuel Church, while Carter preached in the College. The exchange came as celebrations of the Mayflower tercentenary were about to take place. Raven addressed a large congregation and spoke of "the joy he felt" at Emmanuel Church and Emmanuel College being united in these celebrations. Raven was deeply involved in the same period in an ecumenical Mission to the University. In his report of this he estimated, half the University attended mission meetings.[130] In 1923 the

124 Manning, *This Latter House*, pp. 21-22.

125 Minutes of Church Meeting, 5 June 1916.

126 Manning, *This Latter House*, p. 21. The unity following this period of tension was sustained. Carter remained as minister until 1944.

127 Minutes of Church Meeting, 30 June 1916. (For reasons of economy, no Church Newsletters, and consequently no "editorial" letters by Carter, appeared in 1916).

128 Cunningham, "Memoir", p. 52.

129 Thompson, "Logical Nonconformity? Conscientious Objection in the Cambridge Free Churches after 1914", p. 557.

Emmanuel Newsletter covered another Mission in the University. As well as reporting that the Free Church missioner was the widely-known Methodist, W. R. Maltby, whom Carter warmly welcomed, this comment was made in the Newsletter about Emmanuel's role: "Our Church has a peculiar responsibility towards the students among whom it is placed, and we may be thankful to know that it has counted for a lot in the lives of many of them".[131] The commitment set out in the 1870s remained in the 1920s.

V: Conclusion

In his survey of the life of Emmanuel, Manning wished to emphasise the wide-ranging influence of the congregation. He wrote: "Take away the contribution of this Church from local politics, from business and professional life, and you would leave them poorer and meaner beyond all reckoning. This is true, not of Cambridge only; all over England and all over the world are men and women who remember Emmanuel and its heavenly vision".[132] Manning did not investigate in any detail the role of the ministers in this process. Nor did he give particular attention to Emmanuel's commitment to connecting with the University, although he did comment on efforts to "win the interest of undergraduates" which began in Houghton's period.[133] This article has had a particular focus on Emmanuel's ministers and on links with the University. When Manning wrote that in many places there "are men and women who remember Emmanuel", a major reason was that when studying in Cambridge they had been attracted by the ministry at Emmanuel. Binfield notes an Emmanuel book produced in 1895, *Past and Present, 1691-1895*, "a splendidly academic production", with contributors from several Colleges – Trinity Hall, King's, Caius and Peterhouse – and comments that this side of Emmanuel "had clinched Forsyth's acceptance of the call".[134] In the calls of Houghton, Forsyth, Selbie and Carter, Emmanuel was seeking to be a "representative church", conveying the Congregational vision in the Cambridge – and especially Cambridge University – setting. The challenges that belong to the twenty-first century are very different to those Emmanuel faced in its first fifty years. However, the words of Manning at the end of *This Latter House* remain apposite:

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130 *Cambridge Independent Press* (20 February 1920), p. 10; C. E. Raven (ed.), *The Mission to Cambridge University, 1919-20: A Report* (London: SCM, 1920). For more on Raven, see I. M. Randall, "Evangelical Spirituality, Science, and Mission: A Study of Charles Raven (1885-1964), Regius Professor of Divinity, Cambridge University", in *Anglican and Episcopal History*, Vol. 84, No. 1 (2015), pp. 20-48.

131 Emmanuel Congregational Church Newsletter, No. 127 (February 1923).

132 Manning, *This Latter House*, p. 30.

133 Manning, *This Latter House*, p. 16.

134 Binfield, "P.T. Forsyth as Congregational Minister", p. 191.

Christians everywhere are coming to feel themselves an unpopular minority in an indifferent or frankly hostile world. The change is unpleasant: we do not know what the end will be. The story of Emmanuel brings comfort and courage ... If the path of the Church is again to be in the wilderness these fifty years remind us that the wilderness has no strange or unfamiliar terrors for this flock of Christ.[135]

IAN M. RANDALL

135 Manning, *This Latter House*, p. 32.

THE DOWNGRADE AT HALIFAX: ERIC ADAMS LAWRENCE VERSUS EDWARD CROSSLEY AT SQUARE CHAPEL

The latter years of the nineteenth century saw wide-ranging change in the doctrines taught in many free churches, a development in part prompted by changes in cultural sensibility and the passing of a generation of ministers who had been heavily influenced by the evangelical revival.[1] Addressing the Congregational Union in 1873, Eustace Rogers Conder of Leeds detected "the decay of theology" in the changed cultural and emotional culture, and hoped to live to see a work of reconstruction. Against this background, a number of young men, influenced by German theology and Romantic thought, would attempt to accomplish that reconstruction. These changes did not pass without comment or challenge. Indeed, surveying the history of the church, and the likely future of Congregationalism, Conder observed "Controversies, like offences, must needs come".[2] National disputes, such as that which shook the Congregationalists in the wake of the 1877 Leicester Conference, or the Downgrade controversy, which saw leading Baptist minister, Charles Spurgeon, withdraw from the Baptist Union in 1887 over concerns about the degree of doctrinal lassitude permitted in some of its ministers, loom large, given the degree of publicity which they drew, and the numbers affected.

Behind these great controversies lie numerous local examples, in which individual congregations reacted to changes in the preaching and teaching of their ministers. The stereotypical episode, popularised by the novels of Mark Rutherford and the experience of George MacDonald, in which a freshly-trained, sensitive intellectual minister finds himself made the butt of unwarranted attacks by ignorant and suspicious deacons, is partially reflective of this. However, it is but one side of the argument; the deacons and members of congregations who raised objections to their ministers' teaching were surely at liberty to do so, especially within Congregational churches, given the role of the Church meeting? Not only that, they were not always as ignorant as ministerial authors (and Anglicans) liked to make out. It is to ignore, also, the extent to which ministers whose orthodoxy was challenged by their deacons were able to survive, even to flourish, in their charges. Simply to accept the common picture of the minister as being influenced by new or novel thought, while his challengers were influenced by a concern for either historic orthodoxy or an attachment to the way things have always been, (depending upon one's own preference), is to ignore the scale and scope of change affecting Nonconformity, especially the Congregational churches (whatever their opinions on the subject and mode of baptism) in the late nineteenth century.

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1 Mark Hopkins, *Nonconformity's Romantic Generation* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004), pp. 2-5.

2 Eustace Rogers Conder, "The Decay of Theology", *Congregational Year Book* (1874), p. 71.

This may be traced in the circumstances surrounding the resignation of Edward Crossley as a deacon of Square Church, Halifax, in 1889, on the grounds of his objection to the teaching of the minister, Eric Adams Lawrence. In his letter of resignation, Crossley presented himself as a doughty defender of the old paths against modern teaching. In fact, as will be seen, Crossley's views had undergone a change at least as radical as those of Lawrence. That change had, however, taken the men further from one another.

The decision of local newspapers to report Edward Crossley's resignation from the diaconate is an illustration of the importance of Square Church, and of the Crossley family. The church which met in the magnificent Gothic building opposite Halifax station was the oldest Congregational church in the town, and the most renowned. The soaring spire of the 1855 chapel building, constructed to the designs of London architect Joseph James, overshadowing the nearby parish church, testified to the confidence of the fellowship.[3] The church boasted a large Sunday school, and young people's meetings in which future social and religious leaders were nurtured, (among them J. H. Jowett), and a congregation drawn from across the social spectrum, in which merchant princes rubbed shoulders with humble shopkeepers. Numerous mission stations underlined the fact that this was not a church content to rest upon its laurels, but a fellowship eager to spread the Word throughout the district.[4] For many years the church had been dominated by the personality and reputation of Enoch Mellor (1823-81), minister of the church from 1848 until 1861, and from 1867 until his unexpected death on 26 October 1881.[5] So well-respected had Mellor been that the deacons' first choice for his successor, Charles Berry, then at Bolton, demurred the offer in favour of a call to Queen Street Church, Wolverhampton, observing that "If I come to you I shall be known as Dr Mellor's successor. If I go to Wolverhampton I shall be somebody's predecessor".[6] The man upon whom the choice of the congregation fell, Eric Adams Lawrence, minister at Ebenezer Chapel, Steelhouse Lane, Birmingham, showed an almost equal reluctance, refusing an invitation to preach a second time to the congregation, but relented when two deacons, Edward Crossley and J. Whitley, paid a visit to Birmingham, enlisting R. W. Dale of Carrs Lane in their cause and paying a visit to Lawrence's home.[7] Following this, a well-attended church meeting, presided

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3 J. G. Miall, *Congregationalism in Yorkshire: A Chapter of Modern Church History* (London: John Snow and Co., 1868), p. 268.

4 Henry Robert Reynold, "Biographical Sketch", in Enoch Mellor, *The Hem of Christ's Garment and Other Sermons* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1882), p. 13.

5 Arthur Porritt, *John Henry Jowett* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1924), pp. 12-20; Calderdale Archives, Square Church Records: SC/17: Notice in Church Book.

6 Quoted in Henry A. May, *Queen Street Congregational Church, Wolverhampton: The Story of a Hundred Years, 1809-1909* (Wolverhampton: Queen Street Congregational Church, 1909), p. 51.

7 Calderdale Archives: Square Church Records: SC/17: Deacons' Minutes, 31 July 1883.

over by Edward Crossley, extended an almost unanimous call to Lawrence.[8]

Eric Adams Lawrence was a native of Birmingham, having been born there on 8 December 1850. A descendant of the noted Puritan divine Philip Henry, Lawrence's father had broken the family's long connection with the Unitarian Old Meeting House congregation and joined the Church of England. The family's flirtation with conformity proved temporary, and from 1865 the Lawrence family were to be found worshipping at Carrs Lane Chapel, attracted by the ministry of R. W. Dale. Eric Adams Lawrence became deeply involved in the life of the church; possessing an academic turn of mind, he joined a Bible Class conducted by Dale, who discerned ministerial qualities in the young man. Dale became firm friends with Lawrence, who remained a regular correspondent to the end of Dale's life. Three years after his parents' accession to Carrs Lane, E. A. Lawrence was sent out to preach by the church. This trial period considered a success, Lawrence entered Spring Hill College in 1871.[9] There he proved an able student, not shy of speaking his mind when he disagreed with the principal, David Worthington Simon, a relative newcomer to Birmingham.[10] Simon, a radical who believed that his mission was to encourage students to think critically about their faith, was impressed by Lawrence, and used his connections to arrange for the young man to spend some time studying in Germany before the completion of his course at Spring Hill.[11] Lawrence's ability and contacts contributed to his receiving a call to the pastorate of the historic Ebenezer Chapel before he had graduated from Spring Hill.[12]

Lawrence's initial reluctance to consider a call to Halifax is understandable, given his roots in the city. Although he wrote of "having worked so happily" among the people at Steelhouse Lane during his seven-year ministry, this could not be described as an unqualified success. The heyday of the church had passed by the time Lawrence commenced his ministry there, and he had been unable to stem the loss of middle-class worshippers to the growing suburbs. In fact, Lawrence had been tempted to join them, discussing the erection of a new suburban chapel, but the resources necessary for the realisation of this project had not materialised. In the light of this, a call to Square, one of the strongest churches in the West Riding, appeared an honourable way out of what was becoming a trying situation.[13]

Lawrence's ministry at Square commenced in late 1883. His recognition

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8 Calderdale Archives: Square Church Records: SC/17: Minutes of Church Meeting, 15 August 1883. Of between two and three hundred members present, only fourteen abstained, and none voted against extending the call.

9 *Congregational Year Book* (1910), p. 177.

10 Frederick J. Powicke, *David Worthington Simon* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912), pp. 292-3.

11 *Congregational Year Book* (1910), p. 177.

12 *Birmingham Daily Post* (12 April 1877).

13 Calderdale Archives: Square Church Records: SC/17: letter from E. A. Lawrence to the Deacons, 17 August 1883.

service took place on 21 November, wide publicity being ensured by the presence of R. W. Dale. Addressing the church, Lawrence favourably alluded to the old practice of a minister being expected to deliver a short statement of his personal belief on such an occasion. Observing that lack of time would not permit him to do so, Lawrence expressed his belief in "the present need and the Divine provision of the teaching and pastoral office in the Church of Christ". Dale added a personal note to the proceedings, declaring of Lawrence's new sphere of ministry "his removal was to him a personal loss".[14] The people of Halifax were left in no doubt as to the sterling qualities of the new minister of Square Church.

Edward Crossley observed the proceedings with some satisfaction; although they had not secured the services of Charles Berry, the man whom they had chosen was well-connected, talented, and likely to add lustre to the reputation of Square Church. It was only natural that he, with the other members of his family present in the congregation on that day, should be so concerned. Square was almost as much a Crossley interest as the vast factory at Dean Clough where more than four thousand labourers produced carpets for sale throughout the British Empire. Crossley's grandparents lay in the chapel yard, and the vast building in which the services were conducted, with its soaring spire, had been paid for with Crossley money, ensuring a structure of unparalleled magnificence.[15] Born in 1841, Edward Crossley had enjoyed a good education, attending Owens College, Manchester; he developed an interest in astronomy, and in 1867 was elected a fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society. Inheriting the family business from his father, Joseph, in 1868, Edward Crossley had become active in the politics of the town, serving as mayor in 1874-6, appropriately, given that the town hall had been erected with Crossley money. Initially a member at Park Congregational Church, Edward Crossley had transferred his membership to Square in 1872, serving as chairman of the Sunday school and quickly rising to the diaconate.[16] Both his uncles had served as Members of Parliament, and Edward had ambitions to equal their achievements. Related by marriage to the Baines family of Leeds, (and thus to a number of other notable Leeds Dissenting families), and the Willans family of Huddersfield, Edward Crossley, with his wealth and political prospects, was a living illustration of how far West Riding Congregationalism had come from the days when its representatives were largely "an afflicted and poor people".[17]

14 *Leeds Mercury* (23 November 1883).

15 Mark Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), pp. 205-7. Joseph James was by no means a cheap architect. His proposed chapel for the new congregation at Park (founded 1869), close to Francis Crossley's house at Belle Vue, had to be turned down for reasons of cost.

16 David W. Bebbington, *Congregational Members of Parliament in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: United Reformed Church History Society, 2007), p. 36.

17 Clyde Binfield, *So Down to Prayers* (London: Dent, 1977), pp. 159-60; Clyde Binfield, "Networking Through Sound Establishments: How Gladstone Could Make Dissenting Sense", in David Bebbington and Roger Swift (eds), *Gladstone Centenary Essays* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), p. 151.

Like Eric Adams Lawrence, Edward Crossley represented a confident, outward looking Nonconformity, unafraid to challenge the privileges of the Established Church. It should come as no surprise that the first special meeting which Lawrence addressed after his move to Halifax was a pro-disestablishment gathering, which Edward Crossley, soon to be elected to the committee of the Liberation Society, also graced with his presence.[18]

The excitement of his recognition services over, Lawrence settled into the routine of ministerial work. As he began his second year at the church, Lawrence demonstrated growing confidence, experimenting with a "free night" in the church, in which all seats, including those usually rented to members of the congregation, would be thrown open to all comers.[19] In the same year, Edward Crossley began his second term as mayor of Halifax, adding further lustre to the Crossley name, and to the reputation of Square as the premier Congregational church of the town. By January 1885 the church secretary was able to report growth in the church membership from 628 to 651. Attendance at the Lord's Supper had increased, and the church seemed set for further prosperity.[20] In part, this was no doubt the increase in church membership which often follows the end of an interregnum, but it was still a positive start to Lawrence's time at Square.

The year 1885 saw also the first stirrings of disquiet about elements of Lawrence's ministry. At the April deacons' meeting, the church secretary read out a letter from Joseph Bairstow, a coach proprietor of Shaw Hill, announcing that he meant to make a statement at the next church meeting about Lawrence's preaching, and:

> That it is my purpose at the church meeting following this of calling the attention of the church to the strange doctrines which are now being taught from the pulpit & to move this resolution: "That the doctrines to which I have called attention are not held by this church".[21]

Bairstow shared his concerns with the press, explaining that he and his supporters were unhappy at the "width and inconclusiveness of their pastor's applicability of the doctrines of Christianity".[22] The Deacons' minutes record that, when notice was given of the church meeting, it was announced that only members would be permitted to attend, a sign that confidential business was to

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18 *Leeds Mercury* (13 November 1883).

19 Calderdale Archives: Square Church Records: SC/17: Letter from E. A. Lawrence to all seat holders, 4 October 1884.

20 Calderdale Archives: Square Church Records: SC/17: Deacons' Minutes, 23 January 1885.

21 Calderdale Archives: Square Church Records: SC/17: letter from Joseph Bairstow to A. Oliver, 21 April 1885.

22 *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle* (15 May 1885).

be discussed.[23] The meeting, which took place on 29 April, was extremely well-attended, between four and five hundred members being present, the imprecision of the figures reflecting the fact that voting at these meetings was by show of hands, rather than ballot. There, Joseph Bairstow delivered "a carefully prepared paper in which he set forth what he conceived to be the doctrines held by this church", and highlighting where he believed E. A. Lawrence had departed from these doctrines.[24]

This was a potentially devastating accusation. In 1881, J. T. Stannard, a contemporary of Lawrence's at Spring Hill, had been prevented from taking ministerial charge at Ramsden Street Congregational Church, Huddersfield, on account of his preaching at the chapel, where he had ministered since 1874, being contrary to the terms of the trust deed.[25] If it could be proved that Lawrence's public teaching was contrary to the doctrinal articles contained in the chapel's trust deed, then the minister would have been placed in a legally vulnerable position.

The trust deed of Square Church contained eight doctrinal articles, setting out what the church's stated minister was required to "hold, teach, preach & maintain".[26] These brief articles were by no means onerous nor unusual, but rather expressed sentiments found in the 1833 Congregational "Declaration of Faith and Order". Although Bairstow's paper has not survived, the records of the church indicate that the key point of his criticism of Lawrence was that the minister's teaching was contrary to the fourth article, which declared the church's belief in "The incarnation of God the Son in the person of Jesus Christ and the sufficiency of His expiatory sacrifice and atonement for sin".[27] At issue was Lawrence's teaching on the atonement. While Bairstow held to particular redemption (that the Lord Jesus Christ died for the elect alone), Lawrence taught instead a form of general redemption; that in Christ "all were created, and in Him all are redeemed".[28] This was contrary to the historic teaching held at Square: the church had come into being when Titus Knight, one of John

23 Calderdale Archives: Square Church Records: SC/17: Deacons' Minutes, 24 April 1885. It would appear from this reference that the church meetings at Square allowed non-members to attend, as there would often be business of a spiritual as well as a practical nature. Typically, as in such cases today, voting would have been restricted to Church members.

24 Calderdale Archives: Square Church Records: SC/17: Deacons' Minutes: Records of Church Meeting, 29 April 1885.

25 *Huddersfield Examiner* (2 February 1881); John Hunter, "Biographical Sketch", in John Turner Stannard (ed. John Hunter), *The Divine Humanity and Other Sermons* (Glasgow: Maclehose and Sons, 1892), pp. xvi-ii, xxi-iii; Arthur W. Sykes, *Ramsden Street Independent Chapel, Huddersfield: Notes and Records of a Hundred Years 1825-1925* (Huddersfield: Advertiser Press Ltd., 1925), pp. 54-8.

26 Calderdale Archives: Square Church Additional Records: WYC: 1447/1/7: Copy of Schedule to the Trust Deed, 1855.

27 Ibid.

28 Eric Adams Lawrence, *Jesus Our Saviour: A Sermon Preached in Square Church Halifax, February 3rd, 1889* (Halifax: Deighton Brothers, 1889), p. 8.

Wesley's preachers, had rejected the Arminian views of the Wesleys for the Calvinistic doctrines of George Whitefield and the Countess of Huntingdon.[29]

However, particular redemption was not to be found in the church's trust deed. When the trust had been renewed in 1855, Enoch Mellor had led the church to adopt a simplified set of articles, in which no specific doctrine of redemption had been named, in place of articles based upon the strongly Calvinistic Westminster Confession of Faith.[30] The word "election", frequently used as a synonym for particular redemption, was conspicuously absent from Square's articles, surely a conscious decision, given the presence of the word in the articles adopted by Park Congregational Church in 1865.[31] Indeed, when the matter was discussed, it was not to the articles of the church which Bairstow appealed, but to a lecture on the atonement given by Enoch Mellor during his first ministry at Square, in reply to remarks made by Thomas Hincks, Unitarian minister at Leeds. In the course of his lectures on the subject, Mellor had clearly stated his belief that Jesus Christ died as the substitute for sinners; that he was a ransom, not only an example.[32] Bairstow argued that Mellor's successor ought to preach the same doctrine of the atonement as his predecessors, an action E. A. Lawrence would later characterise as binding "its members to hold, and its ministers to preach, the doctrines" set forth in Mellor's lecture.[33]

Edward Crossley spoke in defence of Lawrence at the meeting, speaking warmly of the minister, and proposing an amendment to Bairstow's resolution which expressed the church's "unabated confidence in Mr Lawrence as its minister and its high appreciation of his Christian character".[34] The motion was debated, with many leading men in the church rising to defend Lawrence. On being put to a vote, Edward Crossley's amendment "was carried by an overwhelming and enthusiastic majority", only six members supporting Bairstow.[35] Edward Crossley, pointing to the overwhelming support for Lawrence, counselled those who disapproved of the minister's preaching to

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29 "Memoirs of the Life of the late Rev. Titus Knight of Halifax", *Evangelical Magazine* (1793), pp. 93-4; Aaron C. H. Seymour, *The Life and Times of Selina Countess of Huntingdon* (Stoke on Trent: Tentmaker Publications, 2001 [1844]), I, pp. 364-5.

30 Calderdale Archives: Square Church Records: SC/50: letter from Samuel Hodgson to John Crossley, 21 April 1855.

31 Calderdale Archives: Park Congregational Church Records: WYC:1446/2/1: Schedule of Doctrinal Articles: Article 5. "The election unto holiness and Eternal Life according to the gracious purpose of God of a multitude that no man can number which in no way interferes with the moral freedom of man and his duty to seek his own salvation and that of others".

32 Enoch Mellor, *The Atonement: Its Relation to Pardon* (London: Hamilton Adams & Co., 1859), pp. 50-51.

33 Calderdale Archives: Square Church Records: SC/50: letter from E. A. Lawrence to the members of Square Church, January 18894

34 Calderdale Archives: Square Church Records: SC/17: Deacons' Minutes: Records of Church Meeting, 29 April 1885.

35 Ibid.

"quietly resign & not trouble [the] peace of [the] church".[36] In fact, Bairstow remained a member of the church. Lawrence's decision to face his critics at a church meeting won him praise for his "manly bearing", and skill at negotiating a situation which might have plunged another man "into the furnace of affliction", by splitting the church.[37]

The issue of Lawrence's teaching seemed to have been settled by this church meeting. For three and a half years the work of the church continued peacefully. Membership increased and the only issue raised was the fear that Lawrence was undermining his health through overwork.[38] Edward Crossley's star continued to rise. In late 1885, he was elected Member of Parliament for the newly-created Sowerby constituency, becoming the third Crossley and third member of Square Church to go to Westminster.

Edward Crossley's decision to announce to the first deacons' meeting of 1889 that he was resigning his office, in light of concerns about the orthodoxy of the minister he had defended in 1885, came as something of a surprise.[39] Communicating this decision to his fellow deacons, Crossley was careful to meet the accusations of inconsistency:

> You will recall that some three and a half years ago, the question of Mr Lawrence's preaching in reference to the Atonement was brought before the Church by Mr Bairstow. I supported Mr Lawrence on that occasion, because I was unable to believe it possible for anyone to teach the *Divinity of Christ*, and not to believe in the *Atoning Sacrifice of Christ*, as commonly understood by these words.[40]

Explaining that Lawrence had spent considerably more time in his sermons teaching what the atonement of Jesus Christ was not than making positive statements on the doctrine, Crossley negatively cited the minister's injunction "that what we want is the fact of the Atonement and not any theory about it", replying:

> But what is it that constitutes the fact or facts of the Atonement? I answer emphatically not simply the events recorded, Mr Lawrence tells us that he does not believe that Christ suffered the condemnation and penalty of our sins upon the Cross, so that we might be delivered from the righteous judgement of God, and be forgiven and justified in his sight. My appeal is to the Scriptures; and after receiving such decided expression of opinion

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36 Calderdale Archives: Square Church Records: SC/50: quoted in a letter from E. A. Lawrence to the members of Square Church, January 1889.

37 *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle* (15 May 1885).

38 Calderdale Archives: Square Church Records: SC/17: Deacons' Minutes: 30 May 1885.

39 *Birmingham Daily Post* (22 February 1889).

40 Edward Crossley to the members of Square Church, reproduced in Huddersfield Daily Chronicle (21 January 1889).

> from Mr Lawrence on these fundamental truths of the Gospel, I regret that I can have no expectations of hearing them taught from the pulpit of Square Church, of which they have been the glory in the past. Therefore, while I have great personal regard for Mr Lawrence, I deeply regret that I am unable to accept his ministry.[41]

Crossley appealed to the memory of Enoch Mellor in defence of his actions, which, he stressed, had come only after a direct approach to Lawrence. Not only had Crossley spoken on several occasions with his minister, but he had shared material by Charles Hodge, the conservative American theologian, hoping thereby to convince Lawrence.[42]

Upon their receipt of Edward Crossley's letter, which was also circulated to the press, the deacons took steps to head off a possible crisis. A number of deacons, including worsted manufacturer John Oakes, Enoch Mellor's son-in-law, and John Whitley, related by marriage to Crossley, visited the former deacon, urging him to reconsider his resignation. A lengthy letter prepared by E. A. Lawrence in which he sought to answer Edward Crossley's concerns was read and passed for publication and circulation to church members in advance of the next church meeting. All but one of the deacons expressed approval of Lawrence's letter.[43]

In his reply to Crossley, Lawrence criticised the carpet manufacturer for circulating his letter of resignation without first placing it before the diaconate. He drew attention also to the unqualified support which Edward Crossley had extended to him during the Bairstow episode in 1885. Lawrence accused Crossley of having changed his views, so that they were now in line with those of Joseph Bairstow, but lacking the courage to admit as much. Crossley had sought out Lawrence, and remonstrated with him on the subject, but only in the autumn of 1888. "Until then", Lawrence observed, "I had every reason to suppose that Mr Crossley accepted and approved my ministry".[44]

Lawrence dismissed Crossley's appeal to Mellor's lecture, and implied, by referring to the fact that the lecture had never been re-published, that Mellor's views had undergone modification in later life. Lawrence revealed that he leaned towards the idea of Christ's death as setting forth an example of divine love, declaring "that Christ suffered because of sin". He explicitly denied that Christ suffered the penalty due to the sins of his people, writing:

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41 Ibid.

42 Calderdale Archives: Square Church Records: SC/50: letter from Eric Adams Lawrence to the members of Square Church, 21 January 1889.

43 Calderdale Archives: Square Church Records: SC/17: Deacons' Minutes: 21 January 1889.

44 Calderdale Archives: Square Church Records: SC/50: letter from Eric Adams Lawrence to the members of Square Church, 21 January 1889.

> [T]he great purpose of our Lord in all His work is to deliver us from sin, & not from punishment: that there is no escape from condemnation, except by escape from sin; that salvation is positive & not negative – that it is spiritual health, or right relation of [the] soul to God wh[ich] Christ has rendered possible to all.[45]

Criticising Edward Crossley for accusing him of denying the atonement, Lawrence preferred to supply his own definition of the doctrine, while implying that Crossley's views led logically to a neglect of holy living, and were supported by a "slender" scriptural foundation. In conclusion, Square Church's minister appealed for charity amongst all who had surrendered themselves to the Lordship of Christ, arguing that the "closest fellowship in work & worship is possible for all who love [the] Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, notwithstanding divergence in their interpretation of some texts of scripture".[46]

The *Halifax Courier* published an abridged version of Lawrence's letter, together with Crossley's resignation, and the deacons' resolution commending Lawrence's letter to the church. In the same issue was a notice that the Square Young Men's Society had passed a resolution supportive of Lawrence.[47]

Lawrence employed the Sunday of 26 January, prior to the church meeting to good effect, preaching a special sermon in the evening on "The Letter and the Spirit", taking for his text "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. 3:6, KJV). The minister of Square declared that "idolatry of the letter ... hindered the discernment of the spirit". In such a person, he cautioned, a knowledge of the text of the Bible might keep someone from "that very knowledge of God which it was the purpose of the Bible to extend". "No book", he told the congregation, "had been so ill-treated as the Bible, and those who loved it best had often used it worst".[48] A literalist reading of the Scriptures was strongly criticised, Lawrence

> ... asked his hearers to search for the Spirit as they read the scriptures, and not to suppose that they were any better for the mere acquaintance with the letter of the scriptures, or that there was any mystical advantage arising from the mere reading or repetition of them. If they relied solely upon the letter it would bring about that blindness and insensibility which St. Paul detected so deeply and denounced so earnestly in those who were in similar bondage to the letter in his day. If those who read the scriptures grasped the eternal principle that lay in the temporal language; if they let the Spirit of Christ, which pervaded all enter ... into their hearts, dictate their actions,

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45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
47 *Halifax Courier* (26 January 1889).
48 *Halifax Courier* (2 February 1889).

> control their thoughts, and order all their ways, then indeed they would know that His Spirit giveth life, and that the life which he gave was life eternal.[49]

It did not take a keen biblical exegete to discern the identity of the literalists to whom Lawrence referred.

At the deacons' meeting on 30 January, held immediately prior to the church meeting, it was announced that Crossley had refused to reconsider his resignation, and had proposed that voting on his resolution at the forthcoming church meeting ought to be by ballot. This suggestion was dismissed by the deacons, who agreed that the church should be asked to signify its continuing confidence in Lawrence's ministry.[50] The church meeting which followed saw the matter of Crossley's resignation held until the normal business had been concluded. Lawrence's place in the chair was taken by John Oakes, and a resolution which thanked Crossley for his services and expressing regret at his decision to resign was proposed. An amendment was proposed calling for Crossley "to reconsider his decision with regard to his retirement until the church has considered the matter of deciding the question in dispute with reference to the doctrine of the atonement". This was lost by a very large majority. As the floor was opened, Joseph Bairstow rose, clutching what the minutes describe as "a voluminous manuscript", which was the cue for the meeting to pass "by acclamation" a motion to limit speakers to five minutes. The tone of the meeting was in favour of Lawrence, with only "twelve to twenty" members supporting Crossley in a vote on the resolution. A second resolution, expressing "high appreciation of the faithful service rendered ... by the Revd Eric A. Lawrence since his acceptance of the pastorate upwards of five years ago", and "the hope that he may be long spared to labour amongst us and divinely guided to expound to us in ever increasing fullness the word of life" passed by a still more emphatic majority, only four voting against.[51]

Eric Adams Lawrence rose to thank the church for its continued support, speaking at some length, assuring Crossley that their disagreement was doctrinal, rather than personal. Once the minister was seated, Edward Crossley followed, delivering a short speech in which he made kind references to Lawrence's spirit and brotherly words, before counselling those who disagreed with the ministry at Square to follow his example and withdraw from the church.[52]

On the Sunday which followed his triumph, Lawrence returned to the pulpit at Square, preaching a sermon later published under the title "Jesus our Saviour". Lawrence restated the position which he had laid out to Crossley, and

49 Ibid.

50 Calderdale Archives: Square Church Records: SC/17: Deacons' Minutes: 30 January 1889.

51 Calderdale Archives: Square Church Records: SC/17: Deacons' Minutes: minutes of church meeting 30 January 1889.

52 Ibid.

in his letter to the church, asserting the truth of the gospel record of Christ's life, before quoting from liberal Quaker Edward Worsdell's *The Gospel of Divine Help,* the second edition of which had appeared in 1888,[53] against "the commonly accepted theology". The salvation which Christ offers, Lawrence informed his congregation, is to make Christians better people, not pay the penalty due to their sins.[54] What is seen on the cross is how Christ makes forgiveness for sins known, (although Lawrence is vague on this point), and imparts "that new filial life which is our highest blessedness, which is indeed the life eternal: - for only He can give us power to become the children of God".[55] Just over a mile away, at Zion Strict Baptist Chapel, Siddal, David Smith, minister, industrialist and Halifax town councillor, preached on "the atonement of Jesus Christ". Smith spoke disparagingly of "a certain class of men (called learned men) ... who are denying the atonement of Jesus Christ".[56] Taking Crossley's side in describing the atonement as "putting Christ in the sinner's place to suffer for his sins, to deliver him from all penal wrath for ever",[57] Smith declared:

> Our eternal life depends upon the atonement of Christ, and, to my mind, to preach anything as a substitute for it, or in any way to apply it to mean anything less than a full acquittal from sin, and future punishment, is to rob God of His honour, and Jesus Christ of his crown, and to place it upon the head of a Socinian, who denies the Deity of Christ, and sets aside His atonement altogether. But if "this foundation be removed, what shall the righteous do?"[58]

Smith met Lawrence's characterisation of this position as likely to lead men to live loosely by pointing out that only those convinced of the awfulness of sin are found coming to Christ.[59]

In 1892, Crossley published a pamphlet setting forth his views on the atonement. In it, he distinguished sharply between the atonement of Christ and the reconciliation between God and the sinner which comes as a result of that atonement against those like Lawrence who, in Crossley's view, confused the two. Crossley was emphatic that "when we speak of the Atonement ... we mean the Atoning Sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross, when he offered Himself as a

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53 The second edition included an introduction by J. G. Whittier, which employed language similar to that of Lawrence's 25 January sermon (Edward Worsdell, *The Gospel of Divine Help* (London: Samuel Harris & Co., 1888), pp. iii-iv).

54 Lawrence, *Jesus Our Saviour*, pp. 11-12.

55 Ibid., p. 14.

56 David Smith, *The Atonement of Jesus Christ* (London & Halifax: F. Kirby & F. King, 1889), p.1.

57 Ibid., p. 13.

58 Ibid., p. 3.

59 Ibid., pp. 9-11.

sacrifice for the sins of His people".[60] Reacting to those who argued, like Lawrence, that freedom from legal punishment meant that a person would be at liberty to sin more than ever, Crossley pointed out that this was to leave repentance and the hatred for sin which came with the new nature imparted to Christians at their conversion, out of the picture.[61] Like Smith, Crossley wrote of Jesus fulfilling the law in the sinner's place, and the change wrought in the heart of a repenting sinner, which caused them to hate their sin.[62]

It was not, however, to David Smith's meeting house that Crossley and his supporters migrated. Smith's "High" Calvinism looked back, not to Mellor's time at Square, but to the era of Titus Knight. Withdrawing from the church at Square, Edward Crossley financed the construction of a new chapel seating five hundred at Manor Heath, closer to his own residence at Bermerside House, laying the chapel's foundation stone in 1890.[63] A total of twelve members followed Crossley to form a new congregational church there.[64] The first minister was called in 1896, and by 1910 the church had 122 members, just over a quarter of the membership at Square.[65]

Crossley did not long remain at Heath, but lived increasingly at Ryde on the Isle of Wight, especially following his retirement from Parliament in 1892. There he founded an independent church, paying for the erection of a "commodious and comfortable" chapel on Newport Street in which it might meet. This was not a new Congregational venture on the lines of Heath, however. The *Isle of Wight Observer* noted that: "It seems that Mr Crossley shares Mr Benjamin Wills Newton's views on the approaching millennium, and that the new building is to be used as a centre from which to propagate the same".[66] Newton (1807-1899), a former Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, had been a leading figure among the early Plymouth Brethren, before disputes with J. N. Darby over the interpretation of prophecy and allegations of heresy had resulted in his separation (some said expulsion) from the movement in 1847. Following his departure from the Brethren, Newton founded an independent church in Bayswater, London, and gathered a few more small fellowships sympathetic to his views, before a breakdown forced him to restrict his activities. He is recorded as having ministered to a small circle of churches, many of them Strict Baptist, and in 1892 moved to Newport, on the Isle of

60 Edward Crossley, *What is the Atonement?* (Ryde: A. E. Dimmer, 1892), p. 4.
61 Ibid., p. 7.
62 Ibid.
63 Bebbington, *Congregational Members of Parliament*, p. 36.
64 Calderdale Archives: Square Church Additional Records: CUR3/10: Members' Roll.
65 *Congregational Year Book* (1910), p. 331.
66 *Isle of Wight Observer* (18 November 1893).

Wight.[67] The influence of Newton, a former Anglican, was manifest in the Ryde church, which adopted the doctrinal articles of the Church of England as its basis of faith. Edward Crossley undertook the lion's share of the preaching at Ryde.[68] In addition, he published tracts on the prophecies of Daniel and the identity of the Man of Sin of Paul's second Epistle to the Thessalonians. Crossley's tracts show that he taught a literal future millennium, which, in common with Newton's views, would be preceded by antichrist, a future ruler who would arise in Greece.[69] Crossley propagated Newton's teaching of a future ten-state confederacy arising from the lands once ruled by Rome, with its centre in a restored Babylon, scorning the older Protestant view which identifies Babylon with Rome, and Antichrist with the papacy.[70] Edward Crossley died suddenly during a visit to Halifax in 1905, and was buried alongside his father and uncles in Lister Lane cemetery.[71]

That same year, Eric Adams Lawrence resigned the pastorate of Square Church. Weekly congregations had begun to decline, a development which Lawrence was unable to arrest. Feeling that his usefulness at Halifax was at an end, Lawrence accepted a call to the Congregational Church at St Anne's on Sea, Lancashire.[72] As he bade farewell to Square, Lawrence wrote "I have earnestly longed & tried to distinguish the kernel of truth from the husk of dogma, and to preach the truth by which men live with the utmost plainness & fidelity".[73] Lawrence departed this life suddenly at St Anne's, dying of angina a few hours after the conclusion of the week night service on Thursday 11 March, 1909.[74]

Do the events of January 1889 possess any wider relevance than their effect on the religious life of a Yorkshire town? Are they anything more than the remembrance of "battles long ago"? The conflict at Square was representative of battles fought not only at Halifax, but in many other towns, villages and cities.

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67 F. Roy Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2001 [1968]), pp. 138-51; Jonathan D. Burnham, *A Story of Conflict: The Controversial Relationship Between Benjamin Wills Newton and John Nelson Darby* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2004), pp. 213-17.

68 *Isle of Wight Observer* (18 November 1893).

69 Edward Crossley, *Tract on the Prophecies of Daniel* (Ryde: A. E. Dimmer, 1892), pp. 8-9; Edward Crossley, *Who is the Man of Sin?* (Ryde: A. E. Dimmer, 1892), pp. 19-23; Burnham, *A Story of Conflict*, p. 216.

70 Crossley, *Tract on the Prophecies of Daniel*, pp. 8-9, 20-22; Burnham, *The Story of Conflict*, pp. 218-9.

71 John A. Hargreaves, "High Victorian Expansion and Edwardian Decline: Baptists and Congregationalists in Halifax and its Hinterland, 1852-1914", *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 10 (2002), p. 111.

72 Calderdale Archives: Square Church Records: SC/50: letter from E. A. Lawrence to the deacons of Square Church, 20 January 1905.

73 Calderdale Archives: Square Church Records: SC/50: letter from E. A. Lawrence to the members of Square Church, 20 January 1905.

74 *Congregational Year Book* (1910), pp. 177-8.

There would be other deacons and ministers who clashed over questions touching the person and work of Christ, in addition to battles between ministers at the denominational level, leading to resignations and splintered churches. The situation in which Square Church found itself at the dawn of 1889 is, therefore, by no means unique, although it is better documented than other, similar cases. In addition, through the decision of the combatants at Square to put pen to paper, it is possible to see the role played by developments in contemporary theology at Halifax.

The fact of Lawrence's survival is proof that the popular Anglican image of the dissenting minister as being at the mercy of their congregations or deacons was often wide of the mark. Although Lawrence was opposed by a wealthy and influential deacon, possessed of a wide network of influence, it was the deacon, rather than the minister, who lost when the two men crossed swords. This was by no means unusual; in 1873, John Hunter had ridden out charges of heresy by the deacons and former minister at Salem Chapel, York. A crowded church meeting had backed Hunter, rather than the senior deacon, George Leeman, who was, like Crossley, a Member of Parliament.[75] The advanced liberalism of Edward Lewis, successor to J. Guinness Rogers at Grafton Square Congregational Church, Clapham, caused similar offence to a number of the deacons, leading to a special church meeting in 1907 to consider the "strange doctrines" taught by Lewis. However, the church backed Lewis, and the deacons, along with the former pastor, resigned their church membership in protest.[76] Even Ramsden Street Church, Huddersfield, was largely favourable to Stannard; it was the trustees, rather than church membership, who secured his departure. Although a significant number of members disapproved of Stannard, almost two-thirds of the members, including Crossley's Willans cousins, were well-disposed towards him. While it would be unwise to over-generalise, it is surely significant that ministers often had greater success in winning over their congregations than deacons in getting their own way. As the public face of the church, a talented minister possessed greater advantages than even a prosperous deacon. Only in situations where a church was dependent upon a few wealthy members, or largely composed of members of the same extended family could a deacon be sure of prevailing.

The ability of ministers to attract a congregation helped insulate them from pressure over the doctrinal content of their preaching (so long as the trustees could be kept from challenging the minister's right to the pulpit). In 1889, Lawrence was at the height of his powers. Church membership was increasing, and the agencies of the church prospering. For those members less interested in theology, and attracted by the minister's preaching, to dispose of Lawrence for

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75 Leslie Stannard Hunter, *John Hunter, DD: A Life* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1922), pp. 35-7.

76 Ivor Thomas Rees, *Clapham Dissenters: From Persecuted Group to Prestigious Congregation* (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 2015), pp. 78-81.

supposed doctrinal deficiencies represented the height of folly. The same may be noted in relation to Hunter, whose supporters pointed out that he regularly filled the large Salem Chapel with his preaching.[77] The threat of a secession, which, as at Square, was fulfilled, represented less of a challenge to the survival of the church than would have been the case in a smaller fellowship. The risk of losing a minister who could attract a good congregation was, it seems, considered greater than the loss of a few disaffected members.

Lawrence had been minister of Square for some years prior to Crossley's challenge, just as Hunter had been two years at Salem, and Lewis five years at Clapham. These men had proved their mettle in the eyes of their congregations; a number of the men and, in the case of Square, women, who voted at the church meetings in which they were challenged had joined the church because of the preaching of the minister whose orthodoxy was under question. Here there is a clear distinction between Stannard and Lawrence; although Stannard had been preaching at Ramsden Street for some years following the departure of the previous minister, it had been as a stated supply. It was the decision to remove names from the membership roll in order to secure Stannard's election as stated minister which precipitated the court case that ended with Stannard's removal. In contrast to the cases at Grafton Square, Salem, and Square, Stannard had faced concerted opposition from the moment his name came before the church as a possible assistant to the incumbent minister.

Crossley's decision to precipitate the crisis by means of a written resignation suggests that, despite his long connection with the church and his family connections within wider Congregationalism, he found himself in an isolated position by January 1889. It is scarcely credible that, had he possessed the support to do so, Crossley would not have attempted to follow the example of Joseph Bairstow in 1885, and raise a formal complaint against Lawrence at a church meeting, rather than resigning from the diaconate and circulating a letter to the press, which was more likely to cause the church to close ranks in support of Lawrence than force the minister out.

The fact that Crossley had supported Lawrence at the church meeting in 1885, when the minister's orthodoxy had been challenged on almost identical grounds weakened Crossley's position considerably, leaving the deacon open to the accusation of inconsistency.[78] The deacon's warm words about Lawrence following Joseph Bairstow's challenge were brought up after Crossley's resignation, as was his suggestion that those opposed to Lawrence's ministry then ought to "resign quietly", rather than disrupting an otherwise contented church family. The fact that Lawrence's orthodoxy on the matter of the atonement had already been unsuccessfully challenged weakened Crossley's

77 *Leeds Evening Express* (17 February 1873).

78 And not only this, but Crossley had laid one of the foundation stones at the opening of Milton Congregational Church, Huddersfield, erected for the members who had left Ramsden Street after Stannard was deposed as minister by the Court of Chancery. See Binfield, *So Down to Prayers*, pp. 159-60.

position in another way. Why, given that Lawrence had survived one church meeting, was a second going to throw his position into doubt, unless Crossley assumed that his position was sufficient to tip the scales? That Crossley failed to do so is a reminder that we should not over-estimate the importance even of significant individuals in the history of a church or denomination.

The issue of doctrine should not be ignored. Lawrence's preaching differed from that of Mellor, but he was scrupulous in arguing that it did not depart from historic orthodoxy. Stannard had directly contradicted the teaching of the Ramsden Street trust deed from the pulpit, giving his critics ammunition for their argument that he could not legally minister there.[79] Lawrence, on the other hand, put forward a careful defence, in which he had attempted to reconcile his beliefs with the letter of a trust deed which was considerably more liberal than that of Ramsden Street. Indeed, the manner in which Crossley and Lawrence put forth their beliefs in writing before the meeting is an indication of the level of education prevalent among Nonconformists of this period. Far from Crossley operating a whispering campaign against Lawrence, the controversy at Square was conducted openly, with appeals to history and to scripture, revealing that both men expected the church members to consider the matter with care, and perhaps with an open Bible. The church members at Square were not obscurantists, but rather Crossley and Lawrence expected them to be amenable to reason. Crossley anticipated that the membership would rally to the doctrines which he believed to be set forth in the scriptures, and Lawrence expected them to be willing to embrace newer views of those same scriptures.

Crossley's accusations had a basis in fact. Lawrence did deny that Jesus Christ died in the sinner's place; the farthest he was prepared to go was to say that Christ died because of sin, a statement capable of several different interpretations, in contrast to Mellor who had emphatically described substitution as being "the *vital, distinctive, essential* element in the orthodox doctrine".[80] Nevertheless, Lawrence enjoyed the support of the members of Square Church, who seem to have been less interested in doctrinal controversies than Joseph Bairstow or Edward Crossley.

Eric Adams Lawrence, judging by his published utterances, was part of what Mark Hopkins has called "Nonconformity's Romantic Generation". Finding the modified Calvinism of their forebears uncongenial to the spirit of the age, these men fashioned a looser theology which emphasised Christian life over precise doctrinal expression. The Fatherhood and love of God were emphasised, and notions of divine wrath and substitutionary atonement discarded as unworthy of God. The death of Christ was presented as an example or a demonstration of divine love. It was the poetry of Tennyson and the writings of Carlyle, rather

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79 *The Christian World* (3 February 1881); Alan P. F. Sell, *Hinterland Theology: A Stimulus to Theological Construction*, (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008), pp. 237-8.

80 Mellor, *The Atonement*, p. 51.

than the teachings of Calvin and John Owen, which moved these preachers.[81] This tendency is evident in Lawrence, who preferred to speak of the fact of the atonement, rather than any particular doctrinal formulation. In his letter of resignation from Square, Lawrence makes special mention of attempting to reconcile devotion to the scriptures with recent scholarship, although it is clear that Lawrence was no arid intellectual.

The sermons which Lawrence preached immediately before and after the church meeting of 30 January 1889, in which the spirit is placed above the letter, border on the liberal Quaker idea of the inner light, promoted by York Quakers Edward Worsdell (1852-1909) and John Wilhelm Rowntee (1868-1905).[82] Worsdell's book first appeared in 1886, and represented an attempt to break with the evangelical views then dominant within the Society of Friends, which Worsdell felt could not be reconciled with modern thought. Lawrence's debt to this book, then, illustrates the extent to which the views which Lawrence brought to Square were shared across denominational lines, by men of Lawrence's generation.

There is to be found at the heart of Lawrence's remarks on the controversy a lack of sympathy with Crossley's view, and an impatience with those who held it. Dismissing the idea that the death of Christ removes the punishment due to the sins of God's people, he imposes upon believers in the doctrine of substitution the idea that those whose punishment Christ suffered may neglect holy living. Such an allegation most would have rejected with the same vehemence as the Apostle Paul rejected the idea of continuing in sin that grace may abound! It seems that having Edward Crossley lecture him on correct doctrine had not given the minister a fresh appreciation of his deacon's position. Given that Lawrence had studied theology under some of the most respected teachers of his day, while Crossley's beliefs drew on very different sources, it may even have widened the divide between the two men.

Another contributing factor to the dispute was that Crossley's views had undergone significant modification between the meetings of 1885 and 1889. Even if Crossley had misunderstood Lawrence's views on the former occasion, it is unlikely that, if he had held the same views as he later expressed, Crossley would have failed to discuss the question of the atonement with Lawrence. In light of Edward Crossley's subsequent embrace of millenarian teachings, and his bringing to Lawrence's attention the work of Charles Hodge, it seems that Crossley had become increasingly influenced by teachings similar to those of modern-day fundamentalism. Here, he was by no means alone. T. Rhondda Williams, minister at Greenfield Chapel, Bradford, between 1888 and 1909, lost one of his deacons after the man embraced the teachings of the Keswick

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81 Hopkins, *Nonconformity's Romantic Generation: Evangelical and Liberal Theologies in Victorian England*, pp. 249-50.

82 Stephen Allott, *John Wilhelm Rowntree: 1868-1905* (York: Sessions Book Trust, 1994), pp. 28-9.

Movement. Unable to see eye to eye with Williams, an advanced liberal, the deacon resigned.[83]

This is a reminder of the breadth of theological views which were found within the Congregational churches at this time. Not only did the late Victorian and Edwardian era see significant developments in liberal theology, conservative theology underwent development as well. Although theological liberals and conservatives found it tempting (for very different reasons) to present a contrast between "developing" views of scripture and static, conservative views of "the faith once delivered to the saints", this is far from the mark. Crossley's views were not those of Enoch Mellor, any more than those of Lawrence were. Benjamin Wills Newton's views on the Second Coming were no more to be found in the trust deed of Square Church than the views of Edward Wordsell, and *The Gospel of Divine Help* would have met with the approval of Enoch Mellor. Just as Lawrence's views drew on sources such as liberal Quakerism, Crossley's evangelicalism reflected developments within a broader, interdenominational scene, including Baptists and independent fellowships, as much as historic Congregationalism. In an illustration of the way in which this eroded denominational barriers, George Leeming of York worshipped at Priory Street Baptist Church during the ministry of F. B. Meyer, (who himself sat somewhat loose to denominational identity), while Rhondda Williams's deacon would have worshipped with Anglicans when at Keswick. This tendency remained a living part of the Congregational way, producing the Congregational Revival Fellowship, and its successor, An Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches. Like Crossley, these Congregational evangelicals are as likely to have been influenced by developments in the broader evangelical scene, in consequence being accused by some of departing from historic Congregationalism.[84] Simply to characterise Lawrence as an errant theological liberal, and Crossley as a man who had not departed from the historic doctrinal position of Square Church may be tempting for evangelicals. Similarly, to accuse Crossley of inflexibility and obscurantism, in the face of Lawrence's desire to render the Christian faith more accessible and acceptable to his sceptical age, may appeal to liberals - neither view does justice to the conflict between Crossley and Lawrence. It is more likely that Crossley's views changed during the first five years of Lawrence's ministry than the views of Lawrence underwent a change radical enough to alter Edward Crossley's previously favourable view of the minister, given his support for Lawrence in 1885. Crossley's views had moved so far from Lawrence's by late 1888 that a breach between the two men was unavoidable.

Despite his decision to withdraw from Square, and his involvement with Newton at Ryde, Crossley did not cut himself wholly adrift from

83 T. Rhondda Williams, *How I Found my Faith* (London: Cassell and Co., 1938), pp. 56-7.

84 Alan Argent, *The Transformation of Congregationalism*, p.509. One feels that Crossley would probably be more at home in the EFCC today.

Congregationalism. Although Crossley's decision to spend his retirement preaching in an independent fellowship of his own founding, and publishing tracts on unfulfilled prophecy seems more redolent of the world of *Father and Son* than the solidly respectable and civic-minded Victorian Dissent of Square Church, it was not unique. Samuel Morley, another Congregational Member of Parliament, financed the erection of several "undenominational" chapels in the neighbourhood of his country house at Leigh, Kent, attending one of these when he was in the village, and asked an evangelist associated with the Independent Brethren to conduct a mission there.[85] Crossley, like Morley, remained closely associated with Congregationalism in his home town, although he went beyond Morley in actually preaching.

If Crossley's resignation letter shows little sympathy for Lawrence's position, the same may be said of Lawrence's replies. Both men were dogmatic, finding the other man's beliefs seriously lacking. Although Lawrence argued for a breadth in the teaching of the church, that breadth had to have its limits. If evangelicals were quick to accuse liberals of heresy, the same may be said of the attitude of liberals towards evangelicals on occasion. The biblical injunction "can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3, KJV) applies to both parties. While the intransigence of evangelicals or fundamentalists is often brought up in discussions of reaction to theological developments in the churches, it is easy to forget that those holding theologically liberal views could be as doctrinaire as any biblical literalist. It is not uncommon, studying the records of churches during this period, to find theological liberals declaring that doctrines such as substitutionary atonement and eternal punishment are blasphemous, a view which, not unnaturally led evangelicals to suspect that liberal calls for diversity to be tolerated, might be one-sided.[86] After Crossley and Lawrence had expressed their views, the two men could not consistently worship in the same chapel. Crossley believed Lawrence effectively denied the atonement, while Lawrence held that Crossley's views tended to encourage men and women to sin. The two men were drifting apart in their views, and by 1889 a breach was inevitable.

The breach, when it came, proved the strength of Lawrence's position as the settled minister of a church, and the weakness of Crossley's, despite his long family connections with the town and church. Although Crossley was known by all the church members at Square, and had rendered long service to the congregation, he was unable to prevail against an able and successful preacher whose views, although they differed from those of his predecessor, did not alienate the congregation. It was Crossley whose behaviour and apparent change of views resulted in his departing from the church in which he and his family had long played a leading role. This is a reminder that the great churches of

85 Edwin Hodder, *The Life of Samuel Morley* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1888), pp. 282-4.

86 John Rylands University Library: Records of Ryan Street Congregational Church: Box 24: Press Cutting relating to sermon preached by William Rosling, 15 May 1904.

Congregationalism were rarely amenable to control by a single man, no matter how wealthy. The leading man in a country or small town church might be able to force a minister out by denying supplies, but where a church was not dependent upon a few people for its income, there was no way to short-circuit the process of the church meeting, which, more often than not, backed the minister. It is a reminder, too, that the changing theological scene in late nineteenth-century England was more varied than we sometimes imagine. Congregationalism was affected by developments within evangelicalism as well as liberalism, so that the roots of the division precipitated within Congregationalism by the creation of the Congregational Church in England and Wales, and later by the union of that denomination with the Presbyterian Church of England may be seen here. Where the possibility of separating from a church while remaining in Congregationalism existed, this was taken more frequently than outright separation.[87] Most of those who left Square became members of Heath church, and Halifax did not acquire an independent church on the same lines as that at Ryde. However, had Congregationalism possessed a stronger denominational identity, would this have been possible? Lastly, this episode points to the importance of the church meeting in the life of Congregational churches. For all his wealth and influence, Crossley was unable to prevent the church meeting rallying to the support of the minister, despite the serious nature of Crossley's accusations, and their partial basis in fact, a reminder that churches can surprise outside observers, whether contemporaries or historians, in moments of change and crisis.

GERARD CHARMLEY

87 This applied to those on the liberal side of the theological spectrum as well. The same step was taken by those who left Ramsden Street Church in Huddersfield after Stannard was prevented from ministering there by the Court of Chancer

***The 1662 Diary of Philip Henry.* Edited by Raymond Brown. London: Dr Williams's Trust, 2014. Pp. ix + 69. £18.00. ISBN 978-0-85217-082-3.**

The Nonconformist minister Philip Henry is best known from the detailed biography published by his eldest son, Matthew – *An Account of the Life and Death of Mr. Philip Henry* (1698) and from M. H. Lee's edited collection of his diaries and letters, published in 1882. The esteem in which Henry was held in contemporary ecclesiastical circles is evident from the fact that a second edition of the *Account* was published in 1698. This, and the repeated allusions to his life and works in numerous sermons preached by other ministers during the last decade of the seventeenth century, suggests that the first edition of the biography had sold well. These editions were but two of the myriad publications associated with Matthew Henry. By contrast, his father is only known to have published one short Latin poem during his lifetime. However, the catalogue of manuscript material detailed in Philip Henry's entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* suggests a truly prodigious literary output. The catalogue includes several collections of correspondence, commonplace books, sermon notes, and a number of his diaries. Henry is known to have been an assiduous diarist from at least 1657 until just before his death in 1696. As Raymond Brown notes, M. H. Lee was unable to locate all of Henry's diaries when he assembled his edited collection in 1882; even today, only 21 diaries have been accounted for, out of a possible 39 (p. v, *note 4*). Given the momentous events of 1662, it must have been a source of considerable frustration for Lee that he was obliged to go to print with only isolated extracts from the minister's diary of that fateful year. His reaction on receiving a full transcript of the 1662 diary only a few months later can only be imagined. However, he did not subsequently bring the diary out as an addendum, and so, remarkably, the edited volume under review here is the first publication of that transcript.

In his short introduction, Raymond Brown rightly describes Philip Henry as a "reluctant nonconformist". The future dissenter was the son of a royal official, born in Whitehall on Bartholomew's Day, 24 August 1631. Ironically, in his formative years he was a playmate for Charles I's eldest children, the future Charles II and James II. Although he remained a loyal monarchist throughout his life, as a student Henry's religious inclinations had followed a very different path from that of the Stuarts; rather like Charles I's doomed puritan standard bearer, Sir Edmund Verney, Henry had no reverence for bishops, and found the unscriptural elements of the Common Prayer Book unpalatable. He desired instead a reformed church run along Presbyterian lines. Despite his deep dismay at the regicide, and his misgivings regarding the subsequent republican experiments, Henry was initially able to pursue a comfortable ecclesiastical career after university, first as a tutor to the Puleston family, then as a preacher and incumbent of the living of Worthenbury in Flintshire. His blameless conduct and amiable nature – he actively sought to unite the different Protestant clergy of North Wales into a broad association – plus the fact that he was based an appreciable distance from the religious turbulence of London, appears

to have allowed for a relatively harmonious existence until the Restoration. In common with most Presbyterians he welcomed the return of the Stuart monarchy, but life thereafter quickly became one of hardship and tribulation. He was ejected from Worthenbury under the terms of the 1660 Act for Restoring Ministers, and by 1662 had become an itinerant preacher living from hand to mouth.

Although by no means as fulsome as the diaries of some other puritan ministers such as Ralph Josselin, the succinct entries in Philip Henry's diary nevertheless afford valuable insights into the experience of an ejected minister during the momentous months of 1662. Henry records here his worries about debt, growing tensions both with his father and father-in-law, and the antagonistic behaviour of the son of his deceased benefactors, the Pulestons. It should be remembered that whereas the nineteenth-century painting on the cover of this volume depicts Henry as an older man, he was at this time only just out of his twenties, and deeply concerned for the wellbeing of his young wife and firstborn child. Like Josselin, Henry comments frequently on the weather, and, like so many early modern observers, he is fascinated by tales of comets and meteors in Kent, fiery storms in Northamptonshire, monstrous births in Hampshire and Cornwall, and *maleficia* and witchcraft around the Welsh marches (pp. 58-9, 61). Despite his concerns, Henry dutifully celebrates Charles II's birthday on 29 May 1662, consoling himself with the thought that although the Restoration had brought problems for Presbyterians, it had at the same time curtailed the ambitions of religious radicals such as Anabaptists and Quakers (p. 28). There is often a sense of some bewilderment and uncertainty as to God's plans for the godly; Henry describes Black Bartholomew's Day, 24 August 1662 as "the saddest day to England" since the death of Edward VI (pp. 39-40). The most constant theme throughout the diary, however, is the depth of the minister's religious integrity, and his steadfast refusal to comply with the requirements of the Act of Uniformity, regardless of all earthly consequences (e.g. pp. 17, 21).

As indicated above, the editor's introduction is short, but it does provide a sufficient historical context to the diary, and there is plenty of guidance for any reader interested in finding out more about 1662 or Philip Henry himself. If the select bibliography (p. ix) appears rather short, it should be noted that there is further bibliographical information in the useful and illuminating footnotes. All in all, this publication is a welcome addition to the existing canon of Nonconformist diaries and memoirs.

DAVID J. APPLEBY

***From Icons to Idols: Documents on the Image Debate in Reformation England.* By David J. Davis. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016. Pp. 211. £25.00. ISBN 978-1-62564-685-9.**

I was once invited to preach at a Cathedral in Sweden. Knowing nothing (to my shame) about the history of the Reformation in that country I decided to play it

safe and thus on vesting before the service, I wore cassock, rochet and chimere; robes that looked suitably austere, Protestant and understated. I was soon corrected. "Why are you wearing those robes?" asked my episcopal host. Feeling a little wrong-footed, I explained that when an Anglican bishop was a guest in someone else's diocese these were the normal robes to wear, whereupon he unhooked from the vestry cupboards a sumptuous cope that shimmered with gold thread and a be-jewelled mitre and asked me to wear those instead. I did so. And when, with diplomatic gentleness, I asked him why it was so important to wear such ecclesiastical robes in a Lutheran Cathedral, his response was humorously terse: "We don't want the congregation to think you are Norwegian".

And there you have it; on my part, a mistaken, stereotypical understanding of the Reformation and on my host's part, a witty recognition not only of my ignorance of the Swedish historical context but an additional saucy bit of geo-politics as well. If I had had the opportunity to read David Davis's book before going to Sweden, my stereotypical mental picture of the Reformation would have been quietly replaced by an awareness of the complex, nuanced and localised aspects of that series of upheaving events, and I might not have committed such an apparent gaffe.

In fact, Davis's book concentrates its attention on England and in particular the debates which occurred during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries about the vexed question of the place of religious images in churches and in domestic settings. He provides a succinct summary of those debates in his brief introduction, outlining the four major themes which were explored across two centuries: firstly, the Biblical texts which influenced both iconoclasts and iconophobes; secondly, the linguistic disputes about the difference between *dulia* and *latria*; thirdly, arguments which derived from a study of history, including patristics; and fourthly, the distinctions that were made between images and image veneration.

In order to illustrate those themes he chooses contemporary texts from both Protestants and Catholics. And to emphasise the complexity of the debates he begins his collection of texts with a couple of chapters from a Franciscan who, as a devout Catholic, critiques the use of images on the grounds of their cost. It is not at all what one might, in ignorance, expect. Surely Catholics would have defended images and Protestants decried them? Not so. It really was a much more nuanced business than that. Tyndale, for example, in the text that Davis chooses from him, (*An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue*), states: "And so if I make an image of Christ or of anything that Christ has done for me in memory it is good and not evil until it be abused". Davis chooses his texts with care not only to ensure that the reader understands the complexity of Reformation debates about images, but also so that we might see the way those debates swung this way and that across almost one hundred years.

He breaks his book into three major sections: The Reformation from the 1530s to the 1560s; the Elizabethan years from 1558-1603; the reign of King James from 1603-25. He provides a brief introduction to each of those periods and then offers us extracts from contemporary books, and sermons to show how both Catholics and

Protestants were thinking about the importance or otherwise of images. He concludes the collection with a delightfully interesting personal letter written by a Catholic which was destined for his Protestant "cosen".

The book has a number of strengths: the Introduction which is both erudite and succinct; the brief introductions to each one of the chosen writers, and the texts themselves. Davis has done the hard work for us by isolating some of the relevant texts. However, that is also the inherent weakness of the book, because the individual chapters that Davis cites really need to be read in the context of the books from which they have been culled. Context matters. However, this publication makes clear that it does not set out to be comprehensive, it is illustrative and indicative. And if it encourages any student to break out of using stereotypical "tropes" (see my opening paragraphs above), it will have done its job. Further, if it encourages students of the Reformation to dig deeper into original source documents it will have done us all a sterling service.

CHRISTOPHER HERBERT

***Ecumenism in Retreat: How the United Reformed Church Failed to Break the Mould.* By Martin Camroux. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2016. Pp. 238. £21.00. ISBN 978-1-49823-400-9.**

Ecumenism in Retreat is a precious gift to the URC. Martin Camroux, having served the URC faithfully as a minister, mostly in ecumenical situations, then devoted several years of his retirement working towards a PhD which tells the story of the URC and the ecumenical movement. This book is based on that research – and the large bibliography and the list of more than thirty interviewees bear witness to the thoroughness of his approach. It is also a costly book for a committed ecumenist like Camroux to write, as it is to quite an extent a story of failure.

The author's canvas is large: it stretches from the ecumenical beginnings in the early twentieth century, to the 1972 union, the failed covenants, the formation of the UK ecumenical instruments, the growth and struggles of LEPs, and even includes the URC's failure to take the Zero Intolerance risk. Serious decline in all mainstream churches runs alongside this story and Camroux cautiously, using available surveys, explores the relationship between the search for church unity and that decline. Is there enough evidence to suggest that a union, whether national or local, hastened decline? Or whether the URC's policy of only planting new churches ecumenically hastened its decline in particular?

Although he does not come to clear conclusions on those questions, the author is hard-hitting on other matters: the way the URC in 1972, while trumpeting its conviction that it was only a temporary staging post on the way to further unions, nevertheless set up a solid bureaucratic institution; the way the Church of England repeatedly, but after long negotiations, withdrew from any kind of relationship which would have meant real change; but at the same time Martin is critical of the Free Churches for not seeing those withdrawals coming. And then there was the

way each URC union led to another fracture of the Body of Christ – in 1972, in 1981, and again in Scotland in 2000.

He pays tribute to the many extremely able URC people who gave and still give outstanding leadership in the UK ecumenical movement and in the WCC. At the local level too he recognises that ecumenical leadership was and is very often given by the URC. He quotes those who remember the period leading up to and just after the 1972 union as a time of euphoric hope, but he also quotes some of those same people ruefully recognising that their hopes and dreams were misplaced.

This was a painful book for me to read as I spent ten years of ministry in work that was apparently for nothing: fascinating, difficult Faith and Order meetings with the Church of England; hard struggle trying to smooth the path of the many URC/Methodist LEPs; observing the painful Church of England/Methodist meetings as they finally produced a toothless covenant; trying to articulate and promote the particular gifts the URC had to bring to the ecumenical table. It was only when I got to the end of the book and read the author's personal experience as a young man having his small Congregational world opened out through meetings and friendships with Catholics and Anglicans, Quakers and Baptist, that I recovered my nerve and began to rebel against the gloom of this honest and truthful book.

I want to quarrel with the title and with that word "ecumenism". It comes from the Greek *Oikumene* which means "the whole inhabited earth". My German cousin who worked for the WCC in the 1970s could never understand why the UK churches seemed to interpret this large dream in terms of talks between denominations and struggles to achieve what we call "organic" unity. But the word "organic" suggests something natural, nothing like the constitutional horse-trading which produced the URC. Better examples of (at least flashes) of truly organic unity might be the young Camroux's college experience of this wider ecumenical world, or my own "Aha!" moments in conversations about faith and life with friends from other traditions, or the common local experiences of Christians worshipping and working together. Camroux has faithfully told the story of the URC's search for and deep commitment to one kind of *Oikumene*. It is a story of broken dreams, disillusionment, mistakes – but it is only one kind of *Oikumene*.

It may be a sad story, but it is still a precious gift to the URC. The author has meticulously documented the URC's ecumenical story for the first forty years of its life. He has told the story vividly and carried the scholarship lightly. *Ecumenism in Retreat* should have an honoured place alongside the other histories of our denomination and of the UK ecumenical movement.

SHEILA MAXEY

***Heart Religion: Evangelical Piety in England and Ireland, 1690-1850.* Edited by John Coffey. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. 256. £75.00. ISBN 978-0-19872-415-5.**

We are becoming accustomed to volumes of informative essays arising from conferences held by the Dr Williams's Centre for Dissenting Studies and this one is no exception. An introduction and contributions from nine authoritative scholars ensure that many aspects of the subject are covered. There is inevitably some overlap, which might be avoided by a single author, but there is also some nuancing of particular points of interest. The introductory essay by John Coffey provides an excellent overview of the subject in its own right. Most of the writers settle for David Bebbington's definition of what constitutes Evangelicalism itself, especially the concepts of conversionism and crucicentrism. David Bebbington himself contributes a survey of death bed accounts drawn from obituaries published in the nineteenth century, drawing attention to the decline in the genre as the century progressed. Isabel Rivers, who was one of the prime movers of the original conference, sets out the contradictions within Evangelicalism, which allowed people who disagreed profoundly, on doctrine, to embrace a common piety. David Ceri Jones studies Whitefield's view of heart religion and finds that behind the doctrinal divisions lies a common view that an emphasis on the emotions connected with conversion is not a reason to fall into antinomianism. Whether Calvinist or Arminian, the evidence of genuine faith was to be found in a holy life, as much as in heightened religious feelings. This theme runs through some of the other contributions. The writings of Geoffrey Nuttall and W. R. Ward in the past have alerted us to the links between Evangelicalism and the piety of continental Europe. A paper on the pietist Boehm by Daniel L. Brunner takes us further into his thought and its context. This is complemented by Patricia A. Ward's contribution on Continental Spirituality, touching on the French mystics, such as Madame Guyon, in particular. Hymns were clearly a major component of the Revival and there are two studies of their significance. One, by John Coffey, concentrates on the earliest Dissenting communion hymns; the other, by Tom Schwanda, examines the blood and wounds imagery beloved of John Cennick, and featuring in many of his compositions. There is an interesting paper on dreams, and the significance that Evangelicals did or did not place on interpreting them, by Phyllis Mack. One paper concentrates on the end of the period covered and sets the study in Ulster. Andrew Holmes looks at Evangelicalism's impact in Presbyterianism there, particularly on ministerial selection. This is an important collection of essays. "Heart religion" remains elusive when it comes to definition, since it runs across a range of doctrinal stances. Its debt to mysticism will always make it suspect amongst those who set a high store by orthodox doctrine. This book throws light on the question but rather in the manner of a brilliant kaleidoscope. Turn a page and another way of looking at things becomes apparent.

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