

NOTES

¹ *Baptist Quarterly*, XXVII (1978), pp. 248-58.

² London, SCM Press, 1967.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 330.

⁴ London, SCM Press, 1974.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

⁶ *Idem.*

⁷ London, SCM Press, 1977. It should, however, be noted that the sequence of the appearance of these three main works does not indicate a chronological progression of Moltmann's thought. As he points out, much of the material in *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* dates from lectures at least as early as the two previously published books (see pp. xvif).

⁸ London, SCM Press, 1978.

⁹ *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, p. xvi.

¹⁰ *The Crucified God*, pp. 246f.

¹¹ *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, p. 64.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 65.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 96f.

¹⁴ *The Open Church*, p. 117.

¹⁵ *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, p. 230.

¹⁶ *The Open Church*, p. 125.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

²⁰ London, SCM Press, 1976.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 79n.

²² This criticism is not intended to detract from Moltmann's very valuable writings on the relationship of Church and society in, for example, *Hope and Planning* (London, SCM Press, 1971), *Man* (London, SPCK, 1974), and *The Experiment Hope* (London, SCM, 1975).

²³ Jenkins, *Christian Maturity*, p. 76.

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John Rippon and Baptist Historiography

JOHN Rippon (1751-1836) has long been recognised as a significant figure among Particular Baptists. His *Baptist Annual Register* (1790-1802), his hymnody, his leadership among London Baptists as pastor at Carter Lane, Southwark, and his influence in the formation of the Baptist Union are well-known.¹ This article outlines another aspect of Rippon's importance: his contribution to early Baptist historiography. As early as 1773, Rippon claimed² in 1800, he had commenced collecting materials for histories of London Baptist churches. This youthful interest was maintained throughout all his days. Materials of a historical nature published in his *Register* will be discussed first, and then his other relevant works.

Baptist Register

The need for writing and preserving Baptist history was emphasized by Rippon in the preface to his *Register*. He began by reviewing the

little work that had been accomplished on both sides of the Atlantic. With understandable pride, Rippon first mentioned the names of Benjamin Stinton, John Gill's predecessor in the Carter Lane pastorate, and Thomas Crosby, for one period a deacon under Gill. Stinton was the first Baptist known to have collected Baptist historical materials, and his important manuscripts³ were the basis of Crosby's *History of the English Baptists* (4 vols., 1733-40), the only Baptist history published when Rippon began the *Register*. Rippon commented: ⁴ "It is a reflection which affords me pleasure, that I have the honor of belonging to the same Church in which these respectable men were officers."

Some of his British contemporaries, Rippon noted, had been active. First he referred to "the laborious investigations of that great man, the late Mr. Robinson of Cambridge". When Robert Robinson had been requested in 1781 to undertake research in Baptist history, Andrew Gifford, one of the librarians of the British Museum, offered him the use of that institution. Robinson's researches were embodied in *The History of Baptism* (1790) and *Ecclesiastical Researches* (1792). Robinson became unpopular with many because of his "liberal" views, yet Rippon called him "that great man" and published extracts from his works.⁵ Then Rippon noted "the numerous collections of Mr. Thompson of Clapham". Josiah Thompson (d. 1780) had compiled statistics for Dissenting churches which were used in preparing Dissenters' pleas for the repeal of discriminatory laws.⁶ Finally, Rippon referred to:⁷

" . . . the indefatigable pursuits of Mr. [Joshua] Thomas of Leominster, a minister this, probably not inferior to any of his contemporaries in an historical acquaintance with the English Baptists, and who is thought to be the best informed person on earth, concerning the origin and progress of the present baptized churches in Wales".

Rippon published materials by Thomas, and sought his advice on several issues.

Rippon also named four Americans as having undertaken research into Baptist history. The most important was Isaac Backus with his *History of New England, with particular reference to the denomination of Christians called Baptists* (3 vols., 1777-96). This was publicised by Rippon, especially the third volume (1796), and he acted as a London agent for its sale. Backus' work was detailed and accurate, with much valuable documentary matter. Morgan Edwards (1722-95) published *Materials towards a History of the Baptists in New Jersey* (1792), which Rippon also publicised and helped distribute.⁹ Also noted by Rippon were John Leland (1754-1841),¹⁰ and John Williams (1747-95),¹¹ both of whom collected information about Baptists in Virginia. By his knowledge of all these works Rippon demonstrated his own interest, yet he added with prophetic insight:¹²

"But commendable as these efforts of the few have been for the recovery of some of our memoirs, the preservation of others, and

for the promotion of knowledge and affection among the denomination at large; the many have been chargeable with such a neglect of their Church History as will be for a lamentation among the wisest and best men in our posterity, through all their generations to the very end of time”.

This historical awareness is to Rippon's credit, and by his *Register* considerable useful material was preserved. Rippon was aware that *all* the contents of his periodical would be of some value to posterity. This is revealed by his explanation of the tardy publication of the 1793 Midlands Association Letter: ¹³ “1. To show the state of the churches; and 2. To assist any historian who may in future write the history of the Baptists”.

The following analysis will demonstrate the several types of historical materials published in the *Register*.

(1) “*Supplements*”. As Rippon prepared for the first copy of his *Register*, he had received, quite unexpectedly, three manuscript volumes by Stinton, and other papers. With doubtful wisdom for the first issue of a new periodical, Rippon omitted a preface, added a slip explaining his plan, and published the following historical papers: (i) The Introduction to the 1644 London Confession; (ii) An account of Baptist work in Ireland, and letters between Irish, English, and Welsh churches, in 1653; (iii) The first section of the 1689 Baptist Confession; (iv) A narrative of the General Assembly of 1689; (v) An account of the Baptist churches in England and Wales for 1689 and 1692; (vi) The beginning of the General Epistle of the Particular Baptist Assembly for 1690 (the completion of which was never published by Rippon). Rippon's explanation was that these papers, reflecting a period of intense Baptist co-operation, “seem adapted to supply the place of other *prefatory pages*”.

These pages were all numbered separately. In succeeding numbers the 1644 and 1689 confessions were completed. Rippon hoped to include an historical account of all the associations, hence his separate numbering was in order that they might form a separate volume. But the only history published was Joshua Thomas' *History of the Welsh Association* which appeared a sheet at a time, as an extra, and dragged from 1792 to 1796 (much to Thomas' annoyance).¹⁴ These complicated separate numberings necessitated special instruction sheets for binding the volumes of the *Register*.

(2) *Obituary and Memorials*. These were not “history” but have assumed importance for later historians. Rippon published obituaries or memorials for 125 of his contemporaries; these included thirty Americans and eight non-Baptists. Some memoirs extended over ten or more pages, others were only a few lines. The longest included those for Thomas Trinder (a Northampton deacon); Samuel Stennett; and Benjamin Beddome.¹⁵ After the monthly *Registers* began (January 1801) shorter obituaries, often in small type, were introduced. Much valuable detail was recorded in these memoirs, for men such as Robert Hall (Senior), Morgan Edwards, William Nash Clarke, Oliver

Hart, James Manning and John Thomas.¹⁶ However, leading Baptists who died during the *Register's* period but for whom no memoirs were published in its pages included¹⁷ Dr. Morgan Jones (d.1799), Dr. Thomas Llewellyn (d.1793), Samuel Medley (d.1799), Samuel Pearce (d. 1799), John Ryland (d. 1792), Joseph Swain (d. 1796), Daniel Turner (d. 1798) and Benjamin Francis, Rippon's poet-friend, who died in 1799. The reason was most probably that Rippon did not wish to detract from the effective sale of funeral sermons or memoirs which often benefited the surviving relatives. For example, Rippon had himself published separately his funeral sermon and memoir for Ryland. He had a long and bitter dispute¹⁸ with Dr. Joseph Jenkins to gain permission to publish an abbreviated version of his memoir for Stennett. In one case, with Joshua Thomas (d. 1797), the rival *Evangelical Magazine* published a memoir.¹⁹ Obviously Rippon was dependent on authoritative accounts being forwarded to him.

However, those accounts published by him are of great value, not least for the sidelights they frequently throw upon the ordinary people of the churches. Many correspondents (at least forty have been noted) forwarded accounts of local worthies. These frequently had a theological bias, as when John Fawcett commented of Joshua Wood, of Salendine Nook, Yorks., that his ministry had been more successful after he had become "convinced of the propriety and the necessity of a ministerial address to the unconverted". The evangelical attitude to death is clearly revealed, especially in the "instructive" accounts of the deaths of young people.²⁰

Some of the most detailed accounts were those prepared by Rippon himself, and these included: Henry Philips, Robert Day, Jabez Dunsford (of Tiverton), Benjamin Beddome, John Tommas, William Nash Clarke, John Reynolds (of London), and Thomas Davis (of Reading). Rippon obviously undertook detailed research, utilising churchbooks, personal letters, local newspapers, and the reminiscences of reliable witnesses. Clear indication of Rippon's long-range planning is found in the cases of John Tommas and Philip Gibbs, whom he interviewed some years before their deaths. Although his accounts are somewhat eulogistic, in the manner of the day, Rippon consistently demonstrated a commendable concern for accuracy and detail.²¹

(3) *Histories of Churches*. In addition to those actually published, Rippon collected several others which either he had prepared or which had been forwarded to him but which unfortunately were not published. When the *Register* began to appear monthly (1801) he announced that many "volumes" could have been published, but he had delayed in the hope of providing accounts of all the churches in each county, arranged in the order of the dates of commencement. He cited several as being "most ready" for publication, but from these the following were *not* published: Broadmead, Bristol; "Hanserd Knollis's" (then meeting at Red Cross Street); Carter Lane; Devonshire Square; Boston, Mass.; and "many more by the late Rev. Mr.

Thomas of Leominster and others". Those actually published, however, are important.

(a) "*A short Account of the Scots Baptists*". This was drawn up from "best sources of information" and dated November 1795,²² so was probably compiled by Archibald McLean (1733-1812), leader of the Scotch Baptists.²³ Baptists had met in Scotland during the Commonwealth period,²⁴ but the "Scotch Baptists" were a later movement and this was the first printed account of their origins. In 1763 Robert Carmichael was baptized by Gill in London, and returned to Scotland to baptize McLean and others. These Scotch Baptists differed from English Baptists in several points of doctrine and practice, and Andrew Fuller, in particular, engaged in controversies with them.²⁵

(b) A condensed version of Rippon's history of Bristol Academy, considered separately below.²⁶

(c) "*Origin of the Dissenting Churches at Cambridge &c*", compiled by Robert Robinson.²⁷ This was mainly an account of Francis Holcroft (?1629-1692),²⁸ from whose labours the Independents, Presbyterians, and Baptists traced their origins in Cambridge. Baptists dated from 1726, when they separated from the Independents. Rippon asked Robert Hall, Robinson's successor at Cambridge (1791-1806), for assistance in completing this history. Hall's reply revealed that not all Baptists shared Rippon's concern for Baptist history:²⁹

"I thank you for the baptist register you were so kind as to send me. With respect to my sending the church book I do not apprehend it would quite meet the wishes of our friends.

"With respect to the sketches of the History of Churches it does not strike me to be of any particular utility. The records of particular churches are made for the benefit of that church, nor do I perceive any benefit resulting from their being exposed to public inspection. You are pleased to request me to draw up the history of our church for your register, but such an undertaking would be utterly inconsistent with my other avocations and designs."

(d) *Plymouth Baptist Church*, an account largely based on a manuscript signed by "H. Davie".³⁰ This extant document, of over a hundred pages, contains numerous extracts from the churchbook and letters written to and from the church which dates from c. 1640. Among its outstanding leaders were Abraham Cheare³¹ in the seventeenth century, and Philip Gibbs in the eighteenth. The *Register* version was necessarily abbreviated from the original, which contained additional detail about early Baptist life in the West Country, and would repay careful study.³² Rippon added from his own resources the following: a letter from Cheare to William Punchard,³³ one of several originals Rippon had in his possession; extracts from *Words in Season* . . . (1668), a posthumous collection of Cheare's discourses and letters;³⁴ biographical detail of Gibbs, taken from his own lips "in a parlour conversation"; details of Gibbs' death and funeral. Rippon wisely omitted the introduction from the original entitled, "Containing

a general view of the Baptist interest in Britain from 305 to 1648".³⁵ (e) "*Records of the Transactions of the Church of Christ under the care of the Rev. Mr. Joseph Caryl, and since of the Rev. Dr. John Owen; Mr. David Clarkson; Mr. Isaac Loeffs; Dr. Isaac Chauncy; Dr. Isaac Watts; &c &c.*"³⁶ Rippon published four extracts. First, a list of members in 1673.³⁷ Although this included distinguished people like Lord Charles Fleetwood, Sir John Hartopp, Colonel Desborough and other Army officers, its significance was unexplained and must have confused the *Register* readers. Secondly, extracts from the churchbook, from April 1701 to February 1702, detailing Watts' call to the church and his letter of reply.³⁸ Thirdly, church records from 15th February 1702 to 5th June 1702, with particulars of Watts' ordination.³⁹ Fourthly, from the churchbook, "The Customs of this Church in the Celebration of Worship and the Exercise of Discipline as they are practised among us at present, 1723",⁴⁰ by Watts. This is especially valuable, including details of the Sunday order of services, and the manner of observing the Lord's Supper. As the original records of the Bury Street church for this period are not extant, Rippon's extract has assumed outstanding importance.⁴¹ Obviously Rippon's interest in this church stemmed from his deep love of Watts, but it is significant that he was granted access to the records and should devote so much space to an Independent church.

(f) "*Congregational Church at Yarmouth, Norfolk*".⁴² This historic church was founded in 1642 after enforced exiles had returned from Rotterdam.⁴³ There are few connections with Baptists,⁴⁴ and no known personal links between Rippon and the church. William Walford, the then pastor of the church,⁴⁵ added the concluding paragraphs. This is yet another example of Rippon's increasing interest in general Non-conformist history.

(g) *Northampton Baptist Church*⁴⁶ (College Street). The substance of this was compiled by John Ryland, in about 1793. Essentially it was a review of interesting items, year by year, from the churchbook. George Keeley brought the history up to date in a letter dated 17th February 1802.⁴⁷

(h) *Providence, Rhode Island, Church*.⁴⁸ This is generally regarded as the oldest Baptist church in the United States, having been founded by Roger Williams in 1639. The *Register* account was evidently prepared by John Stanford (1754-1834), but Manning may have added to it.⁴⁹ Rippon also published an engraving of the church-building—taken from the *Massachusetts Magazine* for August 1789—and commented to Manning that many English Baptists were "astonished" at the high steeple.⁵⁰

(i) "*Some Account of the Protestant Church at Dieppe, in France*",⁵¹ forwarded by Rippon's European correspondent, "B". This was an account of the church, especially during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, presumably based on local records and traditions.

(4) "*Protestant Dissenters' Register*". This was a feature commenced with the monthly *Registers*, probably in opposition to a pro-

jected new Dissenters' Magazine. However, this heading was only used in the three subsequent issues, and included the following materials: Addresses of the General Body of Dissenting Ministers to the Throne in 1800 and 1802;⁵² the "present State of the Laws respecting Non-conformity";⁵³ the origin of Robert Robinson's lectures on Non-conformity;⁵⁴ Irish Presbyterians and the *Regium Donum*;⁵⁵ and "A Prayer by Mr. R. P. [i.e. Robert Porter] on the Solemn Fast Day—19 June 1672";⁵⁶ which properly belonged to the next section.

(5) "*Ancient Manuscript Papers*", yet another feature begun with the monthly *Registers*. Rippon claimed to have in his possession "great numbers of original letters, many of them written in imprisonments, and preserved in the very handwriting of those who suffered and died for the truth; with MS Sermons of ejected Ministers, and multitudes of other papers."⁵⁷ This antiquarian matter was common in the religious periodicals of the day. Rippon published letters from Herbert Palmer (1601-1647),⁵⁸ from two ministers in Ilchester gaol to the churches at Chard and Wedmore (1663),⁵⁹ from the London Baptists to Andrew Gifford (1641-1721) in 1675,⁶⁰ and to the church at Lup-pitt (1689);⁶¹ and original sermons by Oliver Heywood (1630-1702)⁶² and Thomas Cole (1627?-1697).⁶³ He also published⁶⁴ an extract from Thomas Grantham, "Of the Manner of Marriages among the Baptized Believers" (1689) and from the Carter Lane churchbook about the marriages of Dissenters.⁶⁵

(6) *Extracts from larger Church History publications*. Almost 11 per cent of the fourth volume consisted of substantial reproduction from larger works. From T. Haweis, *An Impartial and Succinct History of the Rise, Declension, and Revival of the Church of Christ*, (3 vols., 1800) Rippon took studies⁶⁶ of John Wesley, George Whitefield, Lady Huntingdon, and the Moravians. From Robinson's *History of Baptism* (1790) Rippon selected⁶⁷ "A Review of the Apostolical Churches" (chapter XL). From Robinson's *Ecclesiastical Researches* (1792) he extracted⁶⁸ "History of the Baptists at Munster" (chapter XIV).

The foregoing analysis has demonstrated that a considerable body of historical material, although presented in an uncritical and haphazard manner, was included in the *Register*. There were, in addition, other publications which evidenced Rippon's historical interests and abilities.

Other Publications

(1) *A Brief Essay Towards an History of the Baptist Academy at Bristol: read before the Bristol Education Society, at their Anniversary Meeting in Broadmead, August 26th, 1795* (1796). This was Rippon's best historical writing. His *Essay* is an important source for knowledge of early Baptist ministerial education, and for the origins and early years of the Academy it is still our authoritative account. Rippon traced the first Baptist efforts at ministerial education to John Tombes (1603-1676), who in 1650 gave tuition to three ministerial students.⁶⁹ From a manuscript original Rippon knew⁷⁰ that in 1675 London Baptists had suggested some definite scheme of

ministerial training should be adopted, whilst in 1689 the London Assembly had established a Fund for the purpose.⁷¹ It had little positive result, however, and Rippon then turned to trace the origins of the Bristol Academy. Careful preparations were made for the *Essay*. Rippon quoted from several original letters, and had been given personal details by Hugh and Caleb Evans. Joshua Thomas of Leominster had supplied him with a complete list of all the students known to have been educated in the Academy.⁷² For the important period around 1770 when the Bristol Education Society was inaugurated Rippon of course had his own memories. His affectionate sketches of Hugh and Caleb Evans are of importance in understanding the appeal of their personalities. The importance of the Academy for the denomination is to be noted. By this careful account of its origins, and the implicit apology for an educated ministry, Rippon promoted the usefulness of the Academy. By publishing his *Essay* in the *Register*,⁷³ as well as separately, Rippon gave it the widest possible circulation among Baptists. Although inevitably somewhat effusive in tone, the *Essay* was the result of much careful and detailed research and a valuable contribution to Baptist historical writing.

(2) *A Discourse on the Origin and Progress of the Society for Promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor, from its Commencement in 1750, to the year 1802; including a Succinct Account of the separate publications in their catalogue with the benefit which has attended them; and of The different Modes which the Members and their Friends have adopted, in distributing the Books to Advantage: Delivered before the Society November 17, 1796, and November 17, 1802* (1802). The title of this *Discourse* amply summarises its contents. A second edition, "Much enlarged, with Letters and Notes", was sponsored by the Treasurer of the Society, Ebenezer Maitland: this clearly suggests that the principal value of the *Discourse* was an apology for the Society. The origin of the Society was traced to Benjamin Forfitt, an influential Independent layman in 1750. The bulk of the *Discourse* was devoted to a description of the various books distributed by the Society, and extracts from letters received by the Society illustrating the usefulness of their books. In effect this *Discourse* was more an illustrated sermon than history. However, as the work of the Society is comparatively unknown—the later Religious Tract Society (founded 1799) outweighed it in influence and importance—Rippon's outline of its activities is of value.

(3) *A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of the late John Gill, D.D.* This was published with the 1810 quarto edition of Gill's *Exposition of the Old Testament*,⁷⁴ and after Rippon's death was issued separately (1838). Rippon had helped distribute earlier editions of Gill's works,⁷⁵ and as he was able to announce discounts to ministers for the 1810 edition may well have shared in its publication.⁷⁶ An earlier and very scanty biography of Gill had been issued in 1773,⁷⁷ but the author of this is unknown. It did, however, include a fulsome tribute by A. M. Toplady,⁷⁸ from which Rippon also quoted.⁷⁹

Rippon worked on his *Memoir* of Gill over a long period, which included a serious illness. At one point in the *Memoir* Rippon noted, "Written in 1800"⁸⁰ but later noted that a section was written during 1809 in Devonshire,⁸¹

"... where Dr. *Rippon* had been recommended for the benefit of his native air; having been laid aside, almost entirely, from his pastoral work, through the four summer months; the leisure parts of which should have been employed in preparing this sketch of the life of his *honored* predecessor for the public eye. But having been so long afflicted, and one while brought near the gates of death, he was prevented from writing such a *Memoir* as he wished, which might have been worthy of the name of GILL, and not in every respect unworthy of the public notice. But his state of convalescence, at length, allowing him to write an hour or more in a day, he has paid *some* attention to the subject."

The *Memoir* is a useful biography. Rippon again used many sources, not least of which were the Carter Lane Churchbook, various manuscripts and letters of Gill's, and Gill's numerous publications. This is still the only full-scale biography of Gill, and the most recent thesis⁸² devoted to Gill's theology relied extensively on Rippon for biographical data. Rippon included many amusing and interesting anecdotes about Gill which lighten the more sombre details of his personal life and serious publications. Rippon estimated⁸³ that if all Gill's publications were uniformly printed in folio size they would occupy "above TEN THOUSAND" pages: yet some account of most of them was provided.

The general approach of the *Memoir* conforms to Rippon's view of Gill as⁸⁴ "certainly one of the greatest and best of men", and his importance as a theological controversialist and Baptist apologist was recognized. Yet Rippon was not above disagreeing with Gill's theology, especially when reviewing his role in the important controversies over the direct appeal to sinners. Rippon commented on this at length,⁸⁵ and carefully outlined both the "high" and "low" sides. His own view, not clearly elaborated, was that the matter turned on the definitions of "believing" and "believing in Christ". Rippon specifically accepted the distinction made by Jonathan Edwards, and influential in the demolition of the "high" position, between natural and moral inability of a sinner to do good. Indeed Rippon found a quotation⁸⁶ from Gill which supported the "low" position, and suggested⁸⁷ that Gill's rigid insistence on the "high" position was after the controversies between 1730 and 1740. It is of interest that writing in 1809 Rippon could hold such an objective view of the controversy, and was prepared to discuss it at length.

This *Memoir* was the fullest, and most important, of the many biographies prepared by Rippon. It reveals careful use of source materials,⁸⁸ and in its way, still makes interesting reading.

(4) *Funeral sermons for Andrew Gifford (1784)*, John Ryland

(1792) and Abraham Booth (1806). Although these were sermons, they contained much useful biographical data. All three were important Baptist figures, and Rippon gave considerable attention to providing detailed and reliable biographical accounts. Possibly the most important was that for Gifford, since Rippon quoted from several manuscript sources not now extant. The most recent biography⁸⁹ of Gifford made considerable use of Rippon's account, although it is to be noted that Rippon made no mention of the dispute⁹⁰ between Gifford and his first pastorate at Little Wild Street—but then this omission was perhaps understandable in a funeral sermon. For both Ryland and Booth, Rippon made extensive use of churchbooks, manuscripts and personal reminiscences.⁹¹

Rippon's Influence on Baptist Historiography

One of the *Register's* stated aims was to promote the preservation of Baptist history, and clearly much valuable material was published. Moreover, many pastors and deacons were promoted to examine with care their own local records. Rippon, although untrained as an historian, certainly recognized the need for accuracy and detail—important factors in useful history.

But his influence on Baptist historiography is less easily described. Clearly the degree of accuracy he aspired towards in his own memoirs, often much more detailed than contemporary efforts, can only have improved standards. In particular his influence may be directly seen in two contemporary Baptist histories. (There is no evidence that Walter Wilson, or David Bogue and James Bennett, the contemporary Independent historians, made any use of Rippon's researches, or sought his advice.) Both David Benedict in America, and Joseph Ivimey absorbed much of Rippon's *Register* and his other works, and utilized them. The simplest way to demonstrate their indebtedness to Rippon is to show their direct use of him.

As Benedict prepared his history he learnt of Ivimey's project, so he largely (but not exclusively) confined himself to America.⁹² His work, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America, and other parts of the World* (2 vols., 1813), is still "an important early source on American Baptists".⁹³ Benedict referred to the *Register*, which⁹⁴ "contains many interesting accounts of the Baptists both in England and elsewhere", and either quoted *in extenso* or referred to the *Register* on twenty occasions. Some extracts duplicated from the *Register* filled several pages: the account of Bristol Academy; the Scotch Baptists; David George and the negro church at Savannah; George Liele in Jamaica; the biographies of Joseph Cook, Morgan Edwards, James Manning; the Civil State of Dissenters in England in 1793.⁹⁵ The other references are brief, citing the statistics of the lists of churches or references in letters.⁹⁶ Two additional items, although unacknowledged, were almost certainly taken from the *Register*:⁹⁷ the epitaph for Thomas Grantham, and the Irish Letter of 1653. Benedict also referred to Rippon's memoir of Gill, and made a brief quotation from it.⁹⁸

Ivimey's *History of the English Baptists* was published in four volumes, in 1811, 1814, 1823, and 1830. In the first volume Ivimey reprinted⁹⁹ letters given by Rippon in his *Register*, and incorporated detail¹⁰⁰ about Andrew (Senior) and Emanuel Gifford of Bristol which Rippon had published in his sermon for Andrew Gifford (Junior). Three references¹⁰¹ from the *Register* were given in Ivimey's second volume, and a further two¹⁰² in the third volume. In addition, Ivimey's long accounts¹⁰³ of both Gill and Gifford were largely derived, and acknowledged, from Rippon's memoirs. The main use of the *Register* was naturally in Ivimey's fourth volume which covered the period 1760 to 1820. Indeed in the long first chapter, which summarised the principal activities of Baptists during George III's reign, Ivimey noted the publication of the *Register*, and added:¹⁰⁴

"The author, who is still living, is entitled to the grateful acknowledgments of the denomination for his labours, and for the spirit of enterprize manifested in collecting his materials, and in his extensive correspondence with foreign Baptists, especially in America."³

Ivimey did not claim the personal assistance of Rippon, but made extensive use of the *Register*. In twelve instances is the *Register* quoted *verbatim*, often for several pages. The most obvious use was in the biographies, acknowledged source for the following: the Dunsfords of Tiverton, William Clarke, Thomas Davis, Benjamin Beddome, Robert Hall (Senior) and Philip Gibbs.¹⁰⁵ In addition the *Register* was the unacknowledged source for the accounts of John Tommas, Robert Day, Henry Phillips, and John Reynolds.¹⁰⁶ Other of Rippon's materials included those on Bristol Academy, the *Register's* statistics and survey of Baptist advance in 1798 (nearly two pages of quotation), the formation of churches, and the details of the Atkins Trust.¹⁰⁷ Not without reason did an astute reviewer of this volume of Ivimey comment:¹⁰⁸ "Let it be remembered that if our venerable friend Dr. Rippon had not printed his 'Register' many years ago, many things which now adorn this 'History of the English Baptists' would not have been seen." It must be emphasized that most of the quoted *Register* material, especially from the biographies, had been written by Rippon himself.

Ivimey remained the standard work on English Baptist history for over a century,¹⁰⁹ indeed until W. T. Whitley produced *A History of British Baptists* in 1923 (revised edition 1932). Whitley made extensive use of Rippon's works, but of course new critical standards of writing were employed and no actual influence by Rippon on Baptist historiography, as such, can be suggested. Nevertheless the *Register* remains, as A. C. Underwood described it in the bibliography of his history, "a mine of information".¹¹⁰ To those who trouble to quarry, its riches are immense.

One serious criticism must be levelled against Rippon: few of the many valuable original manuscripts he had collected have survived. His interests became increasingly exclusively antiquarian, but he did

not always take proper care of materials loaned to him. For example, the church at Upton has records from 1813 which commence:¹¹¹ "The old Church book belonging to New House Baptist Cause, Upton, is lost. Was lent to Rev. Mr. Rippon, D.D., for the purpose of getting its history, and was *consequently* never returned to the Church again." Another church complained that Rippon had put their books in a barrel, exposed to the damp; and yet another book was taken to pieces and put together in the wrong order.¹¹² Although some of the valuable manuscripts Rippon collected have survived, it is a sad commentary on his methods that so many known to have been entrusted to him have perished.

"Bunhill Fields History"

This project occupied much of Rippon's leisure time during the second half of his life, for he began preparations for it about 1790. Sadly, despite considerable labour and expense, his researches were never published as he intended, although much is extant in manuscript form. Hence despite the interest of the undertaking, and its importance to Rippon himself, it cannot be really considered as important in assessing his historical influences, nor can it be claimed that in any effective way it either influenced or enhanced the Baptist cause. Accordingly, although this task is obviously of relevance for Rippon's biography and is the clearest evidence of his antiquarian and historical interests, only the following brief account need here be given. There are three main sources for this outline: the extant manuscripts,¹¹³ the "prospectus" for the "History" issued in 1803;¹¹⁴ and the report¹¹⁵ of a memorial presented by Rippon to the Court of Common Council for the City of London in 1827, requesting that he might be permitted to dedicate the volumes to the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons of the City of London. This memorial outlined all that had been done since 1790.

Bunhill Fields is the most famous Nonconformist burial ground in Britain.¹¹⁶ The early history of the site is somewhat obscure, but since the seventeenth century, when it was known as "Tindal's burial ground" (one Henry Tindal had the lease), it had been used as a burial place for Dissenters. During the eighteenth century it was the most popular and convenient place of interment for London Dissenters. Southey called it the "*Campo Santo* of the Dissenters", and those buried there included John Bunyan, Daniel Defoe, Charles Fleetwood, Theophilus Gale, Thomas Goodwin, William Kiffin, William Jenkyn, Daniel Neal, John Owen, Vavasor Powell, Isaac Watts, Susannah Wesley and Daniel Williams. During Rippon's lifetime others buried there included William Blake, Thomas Bradbury, John Conder, John Gill, Andrew Gifford, Andrew Kippis, Richard Price, Abraham Rees, and Matthew Wilks.

Rippon's projected work was called "The History of Bunhill Fields Burial Ground" and was to include:¹¹⁷ "an account of whatever appears to have been interesting in the lives and deaths of the most eminent Ministers, private Christians, and other distinguished

Characters, among the Nobility and Gentry whose Remains have been deposited in this renowned and capacious spot through the last two Centuries, quite down to the end of the year 1802"; a copy of all legible inscriptions on "several thousand Tombs and gravestones"; one hundred engraved portraits and facsimiles of the handwriting of some worthies interred there. This was planned for "six large elegant Volumes in octavo", and it was intended to issue the "History", like the *Register*, in periodical numbers. In addition "an elegant map of the whole ground", thirty-six inches by twenty-nine inches, indicating the exact site of every tomb, could be had on canvas and rollers, as an extra.

This prospectus was dated 1st January 1803, although Rippon had advertised the project as early as February 1801.¹¹⁸ From the 1827 memorial it is learnt that Rippon had formed the plan many years before. Rippon had by his own hand and at the dictation of his son John, "then a lad", copied out from the official register of burials the names of all those interred there between 1713 (when the records were begun) and 1790, in all "nearly forty thousand names". Then he "devoted two half-days of time weekly during several summers, aided by his said son and several other persons" copying out all the visible inscriptions, "for the accomplishment of which, and in the brushing, washing, cleansing, and digging up of many hundreds of them which had either become nearly obsolete or had sunk below the surface of the earth, vast labour and expense were incurred". At the same time Rippon was busily engaged in preparing the map of the ground, collecting biographical materials, and arranging for the engravings. A contemporary description of Rippon at work is preserved in an undated extract from the diary of a lady, who, in the company of Rev. Matthew Wilks, one day walked through the Fields:¹¹⁹

"There we found a worthy man known to Mr. Wilks, Mr. Rippon by name, who was laid down upon his side between two graves, and writing out the epitaphs word for word. He had an ink-horn in his button-hole, and a pen and book. He tells us that he has taken most of the old inscriptions, and that he will, if God be pleased to spare his days, do all, notwithstanding it is a grievous labour, and the writing is hard to make out by reason of the oldness of the cutting in some, and defacings of other stones. It is a labour of love to him, and when he is gathered to his fathers, I hope some one will go on with the work."

Although Rippon received several subscriptions¹²⁰ after his advertisement of 1803 nothing was printed. In the memorial of 1827 Rippon explained that:

". . . it pleased Divine Providence sorely to afflict him in his bodily health, insomuch that he was for a long time in imminent danger, and his life was despaired of; and he was also assailed by other considerable family afflictions, which became the occasion of the said work then being laid aside and abandoned by him." Rippon was desperately ill in 1799 and 1809, presumably the latter

date was here intended: but this was still six years after the "prospectus". The "family afflictions" doubtless included the debts of his son John.¹²¹ However, it was his son who appears to have renewed the task, and by 1827 he had completed a further list of all buried there until the end of 1826 and had had six volumes of inscriptions bound. Rippon personally attended the presentation of the memorial, briefly addressed the meeting, and was described as "of very venerable appearance, apparently on the verge of eighty". He had been earlier introduced as "a scholar, and an antiquarian of vast research". Despite the evident renewed interest in 1827 nothing was ever published.

However, twelve manuscript volumes (six of registers of burials and six of inscriptions) are used for genealogical research at the College of Heralds, London. The plans for the biographies, and masses of relevant papers, are collected into fourteen volumes purchased from a "Mrs. Rippon" by the British Museum in 1870: but these are of little value. Another Baptist minister, J. A. Jones, published *Bunhill Memorials* (1849), in which he referred to Rippon's more ambitious project:¹²² ". . . the worthy brother grasped at too much, and went down to his grave without accomplishing anything . . . *I have done what I could*". There is no evidence that Jones was granted the use of any of Rippon's papers, but his smaller volume perhaps finally dissuaded Rippon's descendants from ever publishing his researches.

Rippon's genuine antiquarian interests, however, produced many valuable materials which warrant his being noted as an important influence in the development of Baptist historiography.

NOTES

¹ For Rippon, see *Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter *D.N.B.*); for a fuller study see my unpublished thesis, "John Rippon, DD (1751-1836) and the Particular Baptists" (Oxford DPhil, 1967).

² Advertisement on cover of *Register*, no. 17.

³ For the Stinton manuscripts, see *BHS Trans.*, I (1908-9), pp. 197-202; IV (1914-15), pp. 126f.

⁴ *Register*, I, p. ii.

⁵ Rippon was described as the "esteemed friend" of Robinson. Cf. G. Dyer, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Robert Robinson* (1796), p. 253.

⁶ For Thompson, see J. Ivimey, *A History of English Baptists* (1811-30), IV, p. 560. His MSS. are now in Dr. Williams's Library, Cf. *BHS Trans.*, V (1911-12), pp. 205ff.

⁷ *Register*, I, p. ii.

⁸ *Ibid.*, III, p. 471.

⁹ For Edwards, see *Register*, II, pp. 308-14; *Dictionary of American Biography* (hereafter *D.A.B.*), VI, pp. 40f; for his other works in MS. see *Baptist Advance* (1964), pp. 416f.

¹⁰ See *D.A.B.*, XI, pp. 160f.

¹¹ See *Encyclopaedia of Southern Baptists* (1958), II, p. 1502.

¹² *Register*, I, p. ii.

¹³ *Ibid.*, II, p. 133.

¹⁴ For Thomas (1719-1797), see E. W. Hayden, "Joshua Thomas: Welsh Baptist Historian", *Baptist Quarterly*, XXIII (1969), pp. 126-37.

¹⁵ *Register*, II, pp. 286-303, 380-93, 314-26.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 226-41; II, pp. 308-14, 272-80, 507-14; I, p. 241-6; IV, pp. 1138-44.

¹⁷ All the following are listed in the "Index to Notable Baptists", in *BHS Trans.*, VII (1920-21), pp. 182-239.

¹⁸ Jenkins delayed his manuscript and tried to make Rippon advertise the rival *Gospel Magazine* with which Jenkins was concerned. Cf. correspondence between them, from 24th December 1795 to 2nd May 1796 (British Library Add. MS. 25387, f.322 *et seq.*).

¹⁹ *Evangelical Magazine*, VI (1798), pp. 89-90.

²⁰ *Register*, II, p. 226; III, p. 438. For the use made by Evangelicals of such accounts, see P. Sangster, *Pity My Simplicity* (1963), pp. 150-5.

²¹ *Register*, I, pp. 128-35, 222-6; II, pp. 303-8, 314-26; III, pp. 313-19; IV, pp. 272-80, 41-4, 514-23.

²² *Register*, II, pp. 361-80.

²³ So P. Waugh, "The New Dawn and Rise of 'Scotch' Baptists", in *History of the Baptists in Scotland from Pre-Reformation Times*, ed. G. Yuille (1926), p. 50.

²⁴ Cf. *History of the Baptists in Scotland*, pp. 24-35.

²⁵ For the Scotch Baptists, see also A. C. Underwood, *History of the English Baptists* (1947), pp. 188-96; and a concise outline in M. I. Smith, *A Short History of the First Baptist Church in Edinburgh 1765-1965* (1965).

²⁶ *Register*, II, pp. 413-55.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, III, pp. 233-9. cf. B. Nutter, *The Story of Cambridge Baptists* (1912).

²⁸ See *D.N.B.*, and A. G. Matthews, *Calamy Revised* (1934), pp. 271f.

²⁹ Hall to Rippon, Cambridge, 16th February 1801, in *BHS Trans.*, II (1910-11), p. 64.

³⁰ *Register*, III, pp. 273-90, 380-6. Original in Angus Library. Davie has not been further identified.

³¹ For Cheare (1626-1678), see *BHS Trans.*, III (1912-13), pp. 95-103.

³² H. M. Nicholson, *Authentic Records relating to the Christian Church now meeting in George Street and Mutley Chapels, Plymouth, 1640-1870* (n.d.), has utilised the *Register* account and other MS. sources, but not this MS. Material not in Nicholson includes: details about Caleb Jope, suggested as tutor for Bristol Academy; Benjamin Francis's preaching tour into Cornwall (1775); a letter (1774) from Joshua Toulmin of Taunton about Josiah Thompson's researches.

³³ *Register*, III, pp. 275.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, III, pp. 279-82.

³⁵ Rippon does not seem to have accepted the view that the Baptist cause could be traced in the early history of the church, a view increasingly advanced during the 19th century. See W. Morgan Patterson, *Baptist Successionism: A Critical View* (1969).

³⁶ For this church see W. Wilson, *The History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches . . . in London* (1808), I, pp. 251-328.

³⁷ *Register*, III, pp. 448-52. On 5th June, 1673, after Caryl's death, his congregation united with another under Dr. Owen.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, III, pp. 513-20.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 553-9.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 593-603.

⁴¹ The extract was reprinted from the *Register* in *Trans. Cong. Hist. Soc.*, VI (1913), pp. 333-42, and is the basis of the account in H. Davies, *Worship and Theology in England from Watts and Wesley to Maurice 1690-1850* (1961), pp. 101-4.

⁴² *Register*, IV, pp. 633-46.

⁴³ Cf. J. Browne, *History of Congregationalism in Norfolk and Suffolk* (1877), pp. 208-51.

⁴⁴ There are hints of Baptist sympathisers in the sister-church of Norwich, cf. C. B. Jewson, *Baptists in Norfolk* (1957), pp. 17f.

⁴⁵ J. Browne, pp. 248f.

- ⁴⁶ *Register*, IV, pp. 713-20, 769-72, 983-6.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, IV, p. 986.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 793-7, 833-40.
- ⁴⁹ Rippon to Manning (no date but written on an advertisement for the *Register* so probably January 1791; original at Brown Univ.) refers to the account by Stanford, but insists his name must not be mentioned in England, and asks Manning to take it beyond 1787. Stanford was pastor at Hammer-smith from 1781 (cf. G. W. Byrt, *Rise of the Stream* (1944), p. 16) but left for America in 1786, and for one year was pastor at Providence. See C. G. Sommers, *Memoir of the Rev. John Stanford, D.D.* (1835), pp. 39f.
- ⁵⁰ Rippon to Manning, as in previous note.
- ⁵¹ *Register*, IV, pp. 959-72, 1060-9, 1126-31.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, III, pp. 209-12; IV, pp. 943-5.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, III, pp. 255-7.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, III, p. 299.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, III, p. 300.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, III, pp. 331-6. For Porter (d. 1690), see *D.N.B.*
- ⁵⁷ Advertisement on cover of *Register*, no. 17.
- ⁵⁸ *Register*, III, pp. 258-60, 411-14, 503f. For Palmer see *D.N.B.* which refers to the letters in the *Register*.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 1023-9. The signatories S. Wade and T. Willes are not noted in A. G. Matthews, *Calamy Revised*.
- ⁶⁰ *Register*, IV, pp. 1004-7.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, III, p. 260f.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 559-67. For Heywood, see *D.N.B.*: Fawcett published his life in 1796.
- ⁶³ *Register*, IV, pp. 988-93. For Cole see *D.N.B.*
- ⁶⁴ *Register*, III, pp. 452f.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, III, pp. 453f.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 649-53, 684-6, 764-6, 798-805.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 871-94. Rippon omitted all the footnotes.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 1015-22, 1039-46, 1119-26, abbreviated by Rippon.
- ⁶⁹ *A Brief Essay*, pp. 8f. Rippon's authorities were W. Wall, *History of Infant Baptism* (1705) and Calamy. Tombes certainly held strong anti-paedobaptist views (cf. his famous disputation with Baxter) but cannot really be claimed as a Baptist. See *D.N.B.*
- ⁷⁰ *A Brief Essay*, p. 9.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- ⁷² J. Thomas to Rippon, 19th March and 20th May 1795 (MSS. in Angus Library).
- ⁷³ *Register*, II, pp. 413-56.
- ⁷⁴ *Exposition*, I, pp. ix-lxiv.
- ⁷⁵ Rippon to Manning, 1st May 1784 (MS. at Brown Univ.); and several other references in extant letters.
- ⁷⁶ *Baptist Magazine*, I (1809), p. 207.
- ⁷⁷ J. Gill, *A Collection of Sermons and Tracts*, I (1773), pp. ix-xxxv.
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. xxxiii-xxxv.
- ⁷⁹ *Memoir* (1838 edn.), pp. 136-139.
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3, note.*
- ⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 127, note.*
- ⁸² R. E. Seymour Jr., "John Gill, Baptist Theologian" (Edinburgh Univ. PhD thesis, 1954).
- ⁸³ *Memoir* (1838 edn.), p. 111.
- ⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1.
- ⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-8.
- ⁸⁶ From Gill's exposition of John 5.40: *ibid.*, p. 46.
- ⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 47f.
- ⁸⁸ Rippon, however, made no mention of the dispute surrounding Gill's call to the church.
- ⁸⁹ L. G. Champion, *Farthing Rushlight: the Story of Andrew Gifford 1700-*

1784 (1961).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-49.

⁹¹ For Booth, see E. A. Payne, "Abraham Booth 1734-1806", *Baptist Quarterly*, XXV (1975), pp. 28-42.

⁹² D. Benedict, I, p. 4.

⁹³ R. G. Torbet, *History of the Baptists* (1963), p. 525.

⁹⁴ Benedict, I, p. 189.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 220-3, 231f., 287-95; II, pp. 189f., 194-206, 280-8, 294-301, 346ff., 493f.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 148f., 199 note, 200, 224, 229; II, pp. 167ff., 188, 193, 278, 279 note.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 227, 230.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, I, p. 216.

⁹⁹ J. Ivimey, I, pp. 511, 478-80.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 412-14.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 70, 516, 540.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, III, pp. 581ff., 601ff.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, III, pp. 430-55, 595-605.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, IV, p. 62.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 300f., 394-8, 423-7, 462-9, 603-9, 298-300.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 286f., 295-7, 307-9, 322-4.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 270-80, 74-6, 405f., 408f., 412f.

¹⁰⁸ *Baptist Magazine*, XXII (1830), p. 473.

¹⁰⁹ J. C. Carlile, *The Story of the English Baptists* (1905) was a popular account, "intended to be a story rather than a detailed history" (Preface).

¹¹⁰ Underwood, p. 275.

¹¹¹ W. T. Andress, *The History of Newhouse Upottery* (1932) pp. 4f.

¹¹² Cf. BHS *Trans.*, IV, (1914-15), pp. 129f.

¹¹³ British Library Add. MSS. 28513 to 28523 (14 vols., numbered as 11); College of Heralds has 12 MS. vols. (Details in my thesis, pp. 449f.).

¹¹⁴ Bound with *Register*, IV.

¹¹⁵ *Congregational Magazine*, n.s., III (1827), pp. 619-21.

¹¹⁶ The most useful literature on Bunhill Fields includes: J. A. Jones, *Bunhill Memorials* (1849); *History of the Bunhill Fields Burial Ground* (1872); "The Tombs in Bunhill Fields", *Trans. Cong. Hist. Soc.*, IV (1910), pp. 347-63; A. W. Light, *Bunhill Fields* (2 vols., 1913-33).

¹¹⁷ Details from the "prospectus".

¹¹⁸ Advertisement on cover of *Register*, no. 19.

¹¹⁹ *History of the Bunhill Fields Burial Ground* (1872), pp. 22f.

¹²⁰ References in several letters to Rippon in the British Library (see no. 113 above).

¹²¹ See J. Rippon, *Most Rapacious Atrocities Unmasked; or a Narrative of Unparalleled Enormities committed by Beriah Drew Attorney at Law against John Rippon, of the same Profession* (1811), p. 11; my thesis, pp. 418f.

¹²² J. A. Jones, *Bunhill Memorials* (1849), p. iii.

K. R. MANLEY.

Baptist Records

HILL CLIFFE BAPTIST CHURCH (deposited in the Cheshire Record Office)

Register: subscribers to enlargement 1801; pew rents 1841-78; children dedicated 1793-1837; burials 1802-39 (1 vol.)

Registers of members 1834-1930 (2 vols.)

Notes of introductions to other churches 1757, 1924-28 (1 doc., 1 vol.)