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The BAPTIST QUARTERLY

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CHAPEL-GOERS, CHAPELS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Since record-keeping requires a good bureaucracy, all history tends to be biased towards those centralist bodies that keep good records. Church history is no exception, and this makes records that see history from the point of view of the individual in the local community looking outwards all the more valuable. Five such local studies are reviewed here.

Ann Kussmaul has put us all in her debt by preparing for the Buckinghamshire Record Society a critical edition of *The Autobiography of Joseph Mayett of Quainton, 1783-1839* (1986, xxii + 101 pp. £11.25 hardback, £5 softback, from The County Record Office, County Hall, Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 1UA). It is a fascinating record of a working-class Baptist in the years between the Napoleonic Wars and the Reform Era. It combines self-reflection on such a man's spiritual pilgrimage with down-to-earth details of the life of

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a militiaman and a farm labourer, in and out of work, often in the employment of the parish. The family, originally Methodist, came to Baptist views under the influence of the Revd John Davis, witnessing thereafter the impact on Baptist life of the tensions between High Calvinism and the newer missionary influences of the Evangelical Revival, in part through the influence of a Ranter-preacher-turned-Baptist, the Revd Walter Evans. Mayett is conspicuous for his literary skills in a world in which some of his peers could read but few could write: so valued is this skill that he initially opposes the establishment of a Baptist Sunday School on the grounds that the existing National Sunday School which he had attended provided better instruction. The family was so poor that, although they possessed the Bible, Mayett's mother had to borrow Watts' *Hymns* and *Pilgrim's Progress* for him to read. From aged thirteen for several years he moved from hiring to hiring in a variety of agricultural occupations at a variety of locations on the Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire border, until at the age of twenty he enlisted for twelve years in the Royal Bucks Militia, until the end of the Napoleonic Wars. He saw service in all four corners of England as well as in Ireland, spending a significant period in police duties in the East Midlands and South Lancashire during the Luddite and Radical disturbances of 1812-3.

The editor summarises the pattern of the journal well as a late example of Puritan confessional writing: 'a recital of youthful folly (swearing, drinking and stealing pears) followed by a life of trials, all seen in the light of his preparation for death, trusting to his salvation'. This confessional form is also seen in his reflections on numerous providential deliverances from great disasters, particularly falls and illnesses, which sometimes are taken as signs of election and sometimes bring moral reform, though in the earlier part of the narrative this is never sustained. Calvinist theology seems not to have aided this situation, for this young antinomian responded to parental correction with the inescapable logic, 'that I Should Repent when God's time was, for if I was Elected I should be saved, and if not it was of no use for me to try for I should be lost, live how I would' (p.6) [here and hereafter capitals as in the original but punctuation inserted]. The pressures on an agricultural labourer are made very clear; in the autumn of 1800 he writes 'this was the first time that the Cares of the world laid hold on me and now I began to wonder what I should do, for Bread was almost all that year untill near the next harvest at three shillings and eightpence the halfpeck loaf and I worked for four shillings per week but I had no eye to the goodness and mercy of God and so I began to be in trouble about my body but thought nothing about my soul' (p.10).

In 1801 John Davis, a Baptist minister, began preaching at Mayett's father's house in Quainton, and seems soon to have persuaded his mother to seek baptism: 'But they had not Come long before baptism was introduced to my mother and she Being a very illiterate woman [notwithstanding the fact that she taught Mayett to read] She was easely perswaded. . . that if She was baptized according to the Command of Christ and Joined to the people of God, She should be saved, and I do not wonder at it for this minister was a strenious advocate for Election and she poor woman, like many more as I have knowp since thought that Baptism was a proof of her Election and thereby she thought she should be saved but the Lord was pleased to open her eyes and show her better about 15 years afterwards' (p.13). Is it too fanciful to wonder whether beneath that argument lies the explanation why, whilst the mother church at Waddesdon Hill has remained Strict Baptist, the daughter church at Quainton of which Mayett was a deacon belongs to the Baptist Union? [cf. RCHME, *An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting Places in Central England*, 1986, p.45. *B.U.Directory 1987-8*, p.57].

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In late 1801, under the influence of Rippon and Wesley's hymns, Joseph became very conscious of his sinfulness 'but alas I was too much like many others: I took the pruning hook instead of the grubbing hoe; I lopped off the outward branches but left the root' (p.17). On 4th October 1801, he witnessed his parents' baptism at the Waddesdon Hill Chapel, recording 'it seemed as though they were taken into heaven and I was shut out' (p.18). The impression was sufficient to evoke new religious resolution and in the face of contempt from his companions he confesses 'I was so much diverted with my new Reformation that I feared nothing for I had forgot all my troubles and amongst the rest of my forgettings I had forgot to pray or rather never knew it for in all this I was a stranger to prayer' (p.18). Such self-resolution to moral reformation was to be repeated on a number of occasions thereafter, always with only short-term improvement.

Taken by the music and clean, smart uniforms of the Militia, Joseph enlisted on 4 March 1803, to the chagrin of his parents who presumably rightly perceived the temptations to dissolute behaviour that lay ahead in such a way of life, temptations which the autobiography amply evidences, principally with regard to drunkenness, gambling and swearing, though later he confesses to covetousness controlling his every action. But in the midst of all this he managed to find soldiers of like mind who helped him with his reading and writing skills which later stood him in good stead in terms of being recommended for positions of responsibility involving simple record-keeping, or in giving clerical services to illiterate NCOs. Notwithstanding the abundant evidence of Mayett's backsliding, he keenly observed how the more devout amongst his fellow militiamen (known as 'the soapy set' - a mixture of Methodists and Baptists) gathered together for 'religious exercises', sometimes in a sympathetic local chapel, sometimes in the open-air (p.38).

It was clearly extremely difficult for Mayett even in the army to escape religious influences which his own active conscience seems constantly to have been pondering. Even drink did not necessarily provide a way of escape: 'instead of going to prayer to implor divine forgiveness I took the old rule to drive away sorrow. I mean I went to the publick house to drown it but this was in vain for the more I drank the Soberer I was and the Stronger my Conviction Came on' (p.39). He clearly never ceased reading the scriptures, which raised for him uncomfortable questions such as whether he had committed the unpardonable sin (p.40), though he fairly soon found relief from such self-accusation in his reading of Bunyan (p.41). Dreams, too, authorised by his reading of Job 33.15-16, played their part, but the form here seems to be of dreams deeply influenced by Biblical reading, for example, one in which the parable of the prodigal son becomes an autobiographical statement (p.41).

Confiding his problems to a Methodist soldier who was helping him with his reading in the whole of 1806-7, he was brought into the counselling context of 'the soapy set', sharing in their prayer meetings to great advantage, until in March 1807 the Royal Bucks moved on to Exeter where the availability of a diversity of churches led to divisions within their little ecumenical and evangelical group (four went to the Methodists and nine to the Baptists) with the unpleasantness of a 'paper war' being waged between them (p.44). In Exeter Mayett enjoys the acquaintance of Daniel Sprague (trained at the Bristol Academy and minister of South Street, Exeter 1800-1808) and much regretted the regiment moving to Horsham where the Baptist chapel was High Calvinist: 'they were never friendly with us . . . here we lost our privillidge of prayer meetings having no place to assemble in and it being winter we Could not meet in the feilds and here Religion began to grow Cold' (p.44). In March 1808 he renewed fellowship with a small Baptist church near the barracks at Eastbourne

but found the instability of other men professing Christian belief a sore test as to the validity of belief: 'Some after this one of our party Joined the Baptist Church and then bought his discharge and some turned gambler and drunkerd, Cheater and everything that was bad. Another was discharged unfit for duty and turned out as bad. Another deserted.... another disgraced his Character by getting in debt and defrauding others to pay it. In this case I began to think there was no reality in religion at all' (p.45).

But in fact he remained searching and quickly despatched the missionary endeavours of a supporter of Johann Southcott. as later he countered the teachings of a group of radical deists. In Ireland he again came near to a conversion experience, though still with some holding back:

happened on the 54th Chap^r of Isaiah, a Chapt that I had never noticed before, and as I read it I had such a glorious insight of the promises therein Contained, and although I Could not apply one of them to myself, yet I saw that God was gracious and so mercyfull as to forgive the sins of the worst of sinners, and here I had some hope that he would forgive me for I believed that he was able and willing to forgive all that would make an application to him. This opperated on my mind but when I attempted to Come to a throne of grace, this thought struck my mind: what use is it for me to try to follow religion while I am a soldier, since I have made so many attempts and all proved useless? Then I thought it would be mocking of God and had better let it alone till I was discharged and had my liberty, so by degrees it wore off and I began to be as lighy as ever. But thanks be to God it never finaly left me, for though I did not openly profess religion, yet I had a Secrete desire for it and often wished the time to Come that I might enjoy the Company of the people of God. (p.58)

But his decision was not to come before he had been posted to Portsmouth where 'the independants sent their Itinerates to Preach in the barrack rooms. These were Cordially received, for most of the men were soberly disposed and took delight in hearing' (p.59), though opposed by the governor of the fort until an aristocratic lady made a personal plea on behalf of the dissenting preachers to the Duke of York (p.60).

On 10th May 1815 Mayett was formally discharged and returned to Quanton where his father's house had again become a Baptist preaching station. Despite employment problems, Mayett joined the church and entered on marriage. In September 1816 the Quanton congregation of seventeen sought an amicable dismissal from Waddesdon Hill to form a separate church with a Mr Daniel Walker, a deacon of the Swanburn church, called to the pastorate at the beginning of the following year. After initial happiness, Mayett was sorely tested because his sister-in-law was apparently embezzling chapel funds and applying pressure for increased collections on a congregation, including Mayett, living near the subsistence level in order to increase her opportunity. Because of this Joseph resigned his office as deacon and the chapel fell into decline. This was bad enough but there was also theological discussion over the issue of election. Mayett's reflections appear to stem from the practical outworking of such doctrine in terms of either antinomianism or despair:

About this time there arose a division among us. My brother and his wife had stood members at waddsdon hill under the ministry of one mr Davis a great advocate for eternal election and

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Reprobation; he had instilled the principle into many of the members of that Church that Christ died for the elect only, for if he did not, they said that his blood must be shed in vain if any soul was lost. This principle my Brother and his wife began to infuse into the minds of the members but I and my youngest brother opposed it. At this time I knew nothing or but very little about doctrinal points but I knew I had been perswaded to believe some thing of that kind myself and it had been the Cause of my living a very licentious life; and many others that I had known who had drank deep into that spirit, who before had lived a very sober and modest life and fled from sin as from the face of a serpent, but after they had drank into this spirit they Could drink down sin as the greedy ox drinketh down water. So as they Could but hide it from the eyes of the world, the eye of God they did not mind, because they believed they were elected. On the other hand I had known some who had believed the same principle and had fallen into disgrace, and had been driven into desperation because they thought they Could not be elected, for if they had, they should have been kept from falling. (pp.66-7)

Later on there were to be other divisions - over open communion on which issue the more liberal members secured a majority over the more traditionalists (p.75); rather later the issue was the appointment to the pastorate of Walter Evans, the revivalist preacher, who had been baptised at the Chesham General Baptist Church, to the displeasure of 'the high Predestinarians' (pp.86-7) but with evident effect in the growth of the church and its spiritual welfare: 'a great increase to the Church . . . we often met together for spiritual conversation in our private houses and at this time we never were so happy as when we were together and we Could say the candle of the Lord Shone round about us' (p.91).

The patron of the church was Mayett's employer so that when the former decided to provide a new building for the Quainton congregation, Joseph found himself involved as the carter of materials for the new chapel, opened on the 13th October 1819.

The autobiography shows clearly the pressure of raising church funds on members of limited means which Mayett resented, given his knowledge that all was not being well spent:

at this time there was a great many tracks [tracts] Came out and their Contents were Cheifly to perswade poor people to be satisfied in their situation and not to murmur at the dispensations of providence for we had not so much punishment as our sins deserved. And in fact there was but little else to be heard from the pulpit or the press, and those kind of books were often put into my hands in a dictatorial way in order to Convince me of my errors, for instance there was the Sheperd of Salsbury plain . . . the Farmers fireside and the discontented Pendulum and many others which drove me almost into despair for I Could see their design. (p..70)

All this led to conflict with his employer who was also the patron of the church but badly informed on its administration: 'I told him of his faults as well as he did me of mine', the outcome of which was that the employer said Mayett was not fit to be a church member which led to the minister closing

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the communion table to both him and his wife because 'it was the gentleman's wish that supported the cause' and they must not offend him. 'So I told him they did not mind offending God by punishing an Inocent person [i.e. his wife], So as they did not offend a gentleman' (p.74). This, thought Mayett, was not proper church discipline and he would have left the church completely but for the intercession of his aged father.

Joseph had opposed the establishment of a separate Baptist Sunday School but, when he saw how badly taught the children were, he took over the running of the school and soon had 50 well-disciplined children on the register. Mayett, now in declining health, was, however, only able to get intermittent work and seems in his later years to have moved from short-term employment to the parish, and support of the box (of the friendly society to which he belonged) which at 15 shillings a week seems to have provided benefit considerably higher than the wages he had previously earned. Physical adversity at this time seems to have been in direct contrast to spiritual contentment, though the account comes to a halt eight years before his death. What we have is an original account of Baptist life seen from the perspective of a rural labourer living on the edge of subsistence.

Buckinghamshire Baptists are also fortunate in having had several of their historic church books transcribed: in 1912 Dr Whitley edited a volume of *The Church Book of Ford, Cuddington and Amersham in the County of Buckinghamshire*, to which this Society now adds as volume one of its new *English Baptist Records* series the church book of *The General Baptist church of Berkhamsted, Chesham and Tring, 1712-81* (Baptist Historical Society, 1985, £8-00, 166 pp). The text, transcribed by our Vice-President, Dr Champion, is prefaced with an historical introduction by Dr Arnold Baines who argues that whilst the Hoffmannite Christology was influential in the General Baptist Churches of East Anglia, Kent and Sussex, generally under Mennonite influence, the Midland Churches, building on pre-Reformation Lollard traditions, maintained an orthodox faith: indeed, the title deeds of Broadway Church at Chesham require its ministers to anathematize Arian, Socinian and other errors. Here are the records of a people, Christologically orthodox, who insist on the availability of redemption to all, unlike the high predestinarians of Waddesdon Hill and Quainton. This is in fact that same congregation that later afforded baptism to Walter Evans, the ex-ranter pastor of Quainton.

These well-ordered minutes give the impression of an itinerant court moving from location to location dispensing justice, in its dissenting ecclesiastical form, in the ten or so square miles of this united church with its several different working centres: a very different manifestation of the local church from the two separate churches at Waddesdon Hill and Quainton. Here are the carefully detailed records of appointments of representatives, of preachers, of deacons and elders, together with the church's assent to assembly appointments to the episcopal office of messenger. Monies collected are recorded, as are their disbursement, including that given to support the poor, though never to discharge personally acquired debts which, on the contrary, provoked discipline. Sister Greenleaf, however, an 'ancient widow', is allowed six shillings a month because the parish was demanding her admission to the workhouse, so far distant from the chapel it would have denied her opportunity of worship (p.67). Only the slightest of references are made to places (e.g. for baptism, p.92) or fabric (paving of chapel yard, p.105; payment for extension, p.113). Above all, the record seems to be concerned with discipline: at first one wonders how so many black sheep could have entered Christ's flock. Certainly this is not the record of a people apart from the world with all its

temptations. The record is one of fair treatment: the collecting of information, the opportunity to give explanation, sometimes a warning and then the graded punishments of suspension from communion or complete separation, the church solemnly withdrawing from the recalcitrant individual. Happily it is also the record of sins forgiven and the restoration of the properly penitent. All is well-ordered, with nothing of indulgence or sentimentality about the account, though there is the occasional note of humour, as in the case of the querulous lady who was delivered over to her husband (better than to Satan) (p.21). The most common general failing was 'neglect of duty', followed by excessive drinking in a community which knew nothing of teetotalism. The sins of the tongue were all too frequent: swearing and singing vain songs, idle or vicious talk, deception and lying, together with the malice and envy that lay behind them. 'Disorderly walking', keeping loose company, gaming and gambling, violence and fighting, are seen alongside failure to discharge debts, petty pilfering, doctoring a tithe crop, and failure to care for one's own family.

The most common of all faults was that sin against fellowship inherent in marrying outside the communion of the General Baptists, a misdemeanour that overcame not only ordinary members but also elders (p.51) and trustees, but still construed as nothing less than 'covenant breaking'. Not all could be persuaded of the sinfulness of such alliances. Benjamin Ware in December 1733 offered no regret since his wife was 'a good woman though not of our denomination': indeed, he would do it again 'without scruple of conscience because he believes it is no sin against God' (p.90). For its part, the church was normally willing, after a decent interval and suitable signs of penitence, to receive such back into fellowship, though clearly some who appear in the minutes were not yet penitent enough. In February 1732-3 the matter was raised quite directly: 'some brethren expressing their dislike of the strictness of the churchs discipline in the case of marriage desire an abatement thereof'. The church declined to change the covenant required of new members in this respect but 'to proceed in this affair as the case shall require when such prohibited marriages shall fall out'. But still the cases continued, save that, on the one hand, there seems to have been more effort to frustrate such unions from coming to fruition in the first place, and on the other, the reinstatement of defaulting members seems to have become more mechanical, swift and automatic. Members against whom some complaint had been raised normally were 'summoned' to appear before the whole church meeting, but by the mid 1730s there was an increasing apprehension of such occasions with penitents asking rather to explain their circumstances to some smaller delegation of church officers (p.100, 101). Occasionally there were more serious cases of sexual misdemeanour, including pregnancy outside wedlock (pp.55-6, 60) and even a case of child abuse (pp.35-8), which seems to have been sensitively handled. Another exceptional case concerned a trustee 'who had taken a man's house over his head', quite clearly termed 'injustice', which caused him to be suspended from communion (pp.52, 57, 59). Sometimes in the minutes a more general question is dealt with, viz. 'whether it be lawful for ministering brethren to preach by notes', to which the answer is 'liberty to all in Christ' (p.7). On the other hand, members neglecting church services, favouring the preaching or service elsewhere, were heartily condemned. An elder about to be ordained to that office not only sought the unanimous support of the members but that they 'would trade with him that he may maintain his family', which they granted: 'such as lived convenient so to do in case his goods were as good and cheap as another man's' (p.46). A brother of the Amersham church, joining with churches which had adopted 'the dangerous errors and opinions of the late Mattheue Caffen' at the General Assembly of Whitsun

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1731, was informed that until he changed his opinions he was no longer an acceptable preacher at Berkhamsted (p.79). But in general the record is not over concerned with theological debate.

It does, however, provide insight into aspects of the church's worship. In February 1731 Brother Sexton was despatched 'to break bread to some friends at Aston Clinton who are not able to come to New mill and earnestly desire the enjoyment of that privilege' (p.81); on the other hand, there were the special occasions in which the whole Berkhamsted-Chesham-Tring Church came together for communion. Occasions of fasting were frequent, on one occasion, for example, 'to know how to act in these dark times, and that the Lord would raise up and thrust forth more labourers into his vineyard (p.54), or on another 'on the nature and the scarceness of provisions so that many are in want of bread' (p.73). On other occasions there were days of prayer, praise and thanksgiving, for example, for the recovery of a child (p.45), but quite how they expected God to answer their plea for him 'to extend his mercy to the ends of the earth in 1728' is not clear. When the question was raised whether 'the wine used at the Lord's table might be mixed to render it more pleasing to the taste', the answer was 'it was agreed that claret only may be used and that pleasing the palate at that service ought not to be sought' (p.81). Altogether a first-class documentary base for our knowledge of Baptist life at this time is here provided.

When one has a tool for research ready to hand, it comes as a shock to find that such a tool is not available for all counties. I refer to abstracts of Registrations of Dissenting Meeting Houses. So far I have traced the following:

Bedfordshire	ed. D. W. Bushby	1975
Hampshire	ed. A. J. Willis	1965
Lincolnshire	ed. R. A. Ambler	1979
Staffordshire	ed. B. Donaldson	1960
Warwickshire	ed. J. H. Hodson	1953
and now		
Wiltshire	ed. J. H. Chandler	1985

(obtainable from M. J. Lansdown, for the Wiltshire Record Society, 53 Clarendon Road, Trowbridge, BA14 7BS. £15). The editor of this journal would be pleased to be informed of other county lists of such registrations, the best introduction to which is to be found in Edwin Welsh's article, 'The Registration of Meeting Houses' (*Journal of the Society of Archivists*, vol.3, no.3, 1966, pp.116-120), although the excellent introduction to the Wiltshire volume also serves this purpose. In this meticulously prepared volume all the certificates and registrations are listed in one amalgamated list (whereas the Staffordshire volume lists county and borough quarter session registrations and diocesan registrations in separate lists) which is supplemented by a list of the 1,672 registrations for the county and an excellent series of indexes, quite crucial to the usefulness of such a volume. The list of 1,780 entries is of particular importance in including a large number of registrations missed in the Registrar General's return of 1852 notwithstanding the indications that a diligent search had then been undertaken. Dr Chandler puts us further in his debt by identifying denominations as far as he is able, using the bibliography of Wiltshire nonconformity which he details in the volume. Men's names predominate amongst the sponsors but there are also a good number of female signatories. Baptist registrations for Wiltshire are numerous and John Saffery's missionary activity, in particular, illustrated with ten certificates, though this was hardly a match for the forty-six certificates of his Independent colleague, J. E. Good. Other Baptist names to appear include Andrew Gifford (twice),

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Whittakers, Hintons, Marshmans, and Reeves. Analysis of the pattern of registrations testifies to Melksham, Shrewton and Downton as particular centres of Baptist church-planting, seen also in the activity of the Devizes Itinerant Society. Baptists are occasionally called Anabaptists and sometimes 'dissenters who scruple infant baptism'. Buildings registered include a room on the third floor of a clothing factory in Trowbridge, a warehouse, a schoolroom, a coachhouse and a cottage leased by Lord Holland, among the more normal houses and chapels. No registration was, of course, cancelled and some were clearly for occasional events only as, for example, Brown Street Vestry in Salisbury. A good number of Baptist signatories mark rather than sign and where their occupations are given they are more often craftsmen or less, and only relatively rarely is the status of gentleman declared, suggesting that these are chapels of the people, relatively free of gentlemanly patronage. Sometimes buildings are jointly registered by Baptists and Independents, but I have been unable to trace in Wiltshire what I have found in North Staffordshire, Baptists co-operating with Primitive Methodists and vice versa in securing chapel registrations, which I take to be an exemplification of that interdenominational evangelical co-operation Professor Ward has described for the early years of the nineteenth century. Mr Chandler has put historians of Wiltshire nonconformity in his debt with this excellent volume. I have only one complaint: the statement, 'the simple term "Baptist" applied to certificates before and after 1750 masks a serious doctrinal rift, the Baptists of the old dissent veering towards Arminian or General Baptist principles, and in some cases to Unitarianism, the new dissenting Baptists more Calvinist in outlook, often describing themselves as Particular Baptists' (p.xxx) hardly reflects the different and changing streams of Baptist life accurately.

R. H. Stanger, in a *Stanger Family Memoir* (Darenth Valley Publications, 33 Tudor Drive, Otford, Kent TN 14 5QP. 39 pp. £2), collects together a diversity of information about his family for the late seventeenth century in a volume principally of genealogical interest. Certainly the records of the Stanger family reflect interestingly on the development of Baptist history: persecution in the seventeenth century, farmer-preachers in Northamptonshire, caught up in the changing policies of the General Baptists and the advent of moderate Calvinism, participation in the founding of the Baptist Union, theological controversy, village-preaching and church-planting. We are reminded again that until the arrival of Carey, the chapel at Moulton had been General Baptist albeit General Baptist, like the Chesham Church, that remained staunchly orthodox. In the life of John Stanger are seen the new urgent forces of Evangelicalism impinging on the General Baptist inheritance. For Stanger, the New Connexion, never very well organised in the south, did not suffice and in 1790 his chapel joined the Kent and Sussex Association, which was just facing the issue of William Vidler's universalism, denounced by Stanger in a pamphlet of 1790. R. H. Stanger's memoir adds some important information to Dr Payne's biographical article on 'The Venerable John Stanger of Bessels Green' in this journal for July 1978, of which study he seems to be unaware. Indeed, a perusal of the published indexes of this journal and its predecessor would yield a good number of additional Stanger references. It is to be regretted that the memoir lacks references, though clearly William Grosor's *Memoir of Mr John Stanger* (1824) lies behind the central section. I note that most of John Stanger's children continued an involvement in Baptist affairs, as also one of his grandsons, William Wright Stanger, active in William Newman's church at Bow and in the work of the Bible Society. The other grandchildren seem not to have maintained Baptist associations, though the choice of Mill Hill

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School for the education of later generations of male Stanger's presumably testifies both to greater financial ability and lingering Free Church sentiments. Mr Stanger refers to a large number of documents and books in his possession, mostly derived from the Venerable John of Bessels Green and from the Higgs family of Gloucester. It would be a pity if, having survived so long, these were either dispersed or lost, and thought ought usefully to be given to depositing them either in the Kent County Record Office or in the Angus Library of Regent's Park College, Oxford.

From the same publishers comes *A Farningham Childhood*, ed. S. B. Black (1988, x + 126pp, £7.50), which contains a part-edition of the first four chapters of *A Working Woman's Life*, the autobiography of the Baptist journalist, Marianne Farningham, preceded by 70 pages of contextual biography, an earnest of the larger study Ms Black has in preparation. Born Mary Ann Fearn, Marianne Farningham was nothing if not prolific in her writings which included frequent contributions to *The Christian World*, the editing of *The Sunday School Times*, a long list of popular biographies (published under the pseudonym of Eva Hope), children's stories, editions of the poets, and other writings, together with a quantity of verse which takes her into many a hymnbook as the author of 'Just as I am, Thine own to be'. Ms Black tells me that she has been unable to trace copies of her biographies of Queen Victoria, Livingstone, General Gordon and Queens of Literature (Harriet Martineau, Charlotte Bronte and Elizabeth Barrett Browning), all written under the Eva Hope pseudonym. From publishers' lists and copy on my own shelves I am able to add to the oeuvre further biographies of Stanley and Spurgeon. Readers who might have copies of these are invited to get in touch with the editor so that he can put them in touch with Ms Black. All these words, about the bulk of which Marianne Farningham, in her mature years a member of College Street, Northampton, was justifiably worried, proceeded from the pen of a girl whose cultural background was a deprived rural home in North West Kent where her only education was that associated with the rather Particular local Baptist church, of the life of which she gives a sympathetic but not uncritical youthful view.

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BOOKS RECEIVED

M. Luther King, *The Measure of Man*, Fount Paperbacks, 1989, 57pp. £1.95.

Two meditations and a parting piece by the great Civil Rights Baptist.



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