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CONTENTS

Editorial and Notes	247
“The Hateful Mystery”: Nonconformists and Hell by <i>Michael R. Watts, M.A., D.Phil.</i>	248
Methodism and the Older Dissent: Some Perspectives by <i>Geoffrey F. Nuttall, M.A., D.D.</i>	259
Peter Sterry and Morgan Llwyd by <i>Nabil I. Matar, M.A., Ph.D.</i>	275
On the appointment of a Pew-opener by <i>Andrew A. Smith</i>	279
Our Contemporaries	281
Reviews by R. Buick Knox and Clyde Binfield	282

EDITORIAL

In this issue we print the Lecture given at the Annual Meeting of the Society in Bournemouth by Dr. Michael Watts, Reader in History at the University of Nottingham. His magisterial work on *The Dissenters* has already been reviewed in our pages.

We are glad to publish the article by Dr. Nuttall; it is just fifty years since he made his first contribution to the *Transactions* of the Congregational Historical Society and this article maintains the clarity of presentation and the thoroughness of research which have marked all his writing.

Dr. Matar is preparing a select edition of Sterry's writings and he teaches at the American University of Beirut. Mr. Smith is guardian of the archives of Emmanuel Church, Cambridge.

The Annual Meeting made a well-merited recognition of the great service of Gordon Esslemont to our Society by making him the Vice-President of the Society.

In the interests of economy and convenience the Council of the Society has moved the production of the *Journal* out of London. We express our thanks to our previous printers, Albert Clarke and Co. Ltd., and we look forward to working with our new printers in Cambridgeshire.

NOTES:

Philip Doddridge, Nonconformity and Northampton: Five lectures, edited by R.L. Greenall, and available from the Dept. of Adult Education, University of Leicester, £1.50 incl. postage.

A Handlist of Parish and Nonconformist Registers in the Essex Record Office: Available from the Essex Record Office, County Hall, Chelmsford, 50p plus 20p postage.

What they said about Bunyan: A pamphlet based on a lecture by H.G. Tibbutt. Available from the Arts and Recreation Dept. of Bedfordshire County Council, County Hall, Bedford, 35p.

The Making of Modern English Religion: a reprint of a book by B.L. Manning, available from Marcham Books, Appleford, Abingdon, OX24 4PB, £5 plus postage.

Forthcoming: *Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting Houses in England*: in five volumes by C.F. Stell. Details from Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, Fortress House, 23 Saville Row, London, W1X 1MB.

“THE HATEFUL MYSTERY”: NONCONFORMISTS AND HELL

The title of this paper is taken from the recollections of Edward White, one of the best loved and best hated Congregational ministers of the nineteenth century. His friend Newman Hall, who had known him for the best part of forty years, claimed that no one excelled him for a combination of learning and reverence, godliness and humour, and Silvester Horne, who knew him in extreme old age, said that he had never taken to anyone so quickly, so impressed was he by his simplicity and kindliness.¹ But in the 1840s Edward White, minister of a Congregational church at Hereford, was the centre of a theological dispute which led him to the conclusion that any “prospect of further employment in the Congregational ministry was ended”, and which had far reaching implications for the whole of the Christian Church.² White’s offence was to reject the fashionable doctrine of the future endless punishment of those who could not accept – or were predestined not to accept – the Christian Gospel. White had been brought up under the ministry of George Clayton, minister of the Congregational church in York Street, Walworth, south London, the son of John Clayton of the King’s Weigh House. The children raised up in Congregational chapels in the early nineteenth century, wrote White, knew that, according to orthodox Calvinist teaching, “they were all born immortal beings, born with souls that must live for ever, in happiness or in torment; and born with souls so degenerate and prone to sin that there was no escape from the doom of fire in hell forever except by regeneration”. And since “only a certain number were predestined by God to be saved; all the rest born in sin, and not elected from eternity to salvation, must suffer torment in hell throughout the eternity to come”. Such teaching, wrote White, “nearly drove me mad with secret misery of mind, in thinking of such a God”. “What could we make of this Omnipotent Being, who ‘so loved the world’ as to determine on the birth of an immense multitude of non-elect children, who must suffer forever, while we ourselves might be amongst the fated number?” The doctrine almost destroyed his Christian belief. “From fourteen years old and upwards our faith depended very much on the art of not thinking on the hateful mystery”.³

When, in the second half of the nineteenth century, Edward White wrote those words the doctrine of eternal punishment was becoming an embarrassment to Christian ministers, but in earlier decades it had been regarded as one of the most compelling arguments advanced by Evangelical preachers as they sought to convert their congregations. Fear is one of the most important of human motivations – perhaps the most profoundly significant of all – and there can be little doubt that fear of hell was one of the chief factors in the success of the Evangelical revival of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. I suggested in *The Dissenters* that the convulsions which afflicted many of those who heard John Wesley preach were caused by terror at the prospect of spending

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1. Newman Hall, *An Autobiography*, 1901, p.305.
W.B. Selbie, *The Life of Charles Silvester Horne*, 1920, p.48.
 2. F.A. Freer, *Edward White*, 1902, pp.25-30.
 3. Freer, *Edward White*, pp.5-7.

eternity in hell, and over half the Wesleyan converts whose spiritual pilgrimages were published by Thomas Jackson in *The Lives of Early Methodist Preachers* mentioned fear of death and hell as part of their pre-conversion experiences.⁴ The central part it played in the preaching of many eighteenth-century Evangelicals was expressed starkly by Thomas Charles while still an Anglican curate in Somerset and before he joined the Calvinistic Methodists. "I ransack the livid flames of hell", he wrote in 1779, "and expose to view the glories of heaven, to terrify (if possible) soreless sinners by the one, and allure them by the other".⁵ And threats of hell-fire remained one of the most potent weapons in the armoury of the Evangelical movement until well into the nineteenth, and even into the twentieth century. Children in particular were terrorised with the threat that they were to suffer eternal torment if they died unregenerate, and James Baldwin Brown, writing in 1875, commented that his pages would be "read by many who can remember that in the days of their childhood their hands were held to scorch before the fire as a key to hell torments".⁶ The belief that the majority of the world's population would endure eternal punishment was a major incentive to missionary endeavour. John Love, the first secretary of the London Missionary Society, appealed to his fellow Evangelicals to heed the plight of the millions who were "perishing in the blood, gall, and wormwood of a Christless state, and ... hastening to eternity in guilt, pollution, and darkness".⁷

Fear of hell was an essential part of the message of many nineteenth-century evangelists, and of the man who was perhaps the most successful Victorian Nonconformist preacher — Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Spurgeon began his ministry in 1854 at the age of nineteen when he became pastor of the New Park Street Particular Baptist chapel and within two years became the most popular preacher in Britain. When the New Park Street chapel became too small for his rapidly expanding congregation he moved first to Exeter Hall and then to the Surrey Gardens Music Hall, and finally, in 1861, the vast Metropolitan Tabernacle was opened to enable five thousand people to hear him at a time.

There can be little doubt that Spurgeon's success owed much to the fear of everlasting torment which he implanted in his hearers. "You have seen", he told his congregation in 1856, "the asbestos lying in the fire red hot, but when you take it out it is unconsumed. So your body will be prepared by God in such a way that it will burn forever without being consumed; it will be, not as you consider, in metaphorical fire, but in actual flame". "When thou diest thy soul will be tormented alone — that will be a hell for it — but at the day of judgement thy body will join thy soul, and then thou will have twin hells; body and soul

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4. M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters*, 1978, i. 413-4. Cf. the spiritual experiences collected by the independent ministers, Henry Walker and John Rogers, in the mid-seventeenth century, *ibid.*, pp.175-6.
 5. D.E. Jenkins, *Life of Thomas Charles*, Denbigh, 1908, i. 132.
 6. J.B. Brown, *The Doctrine of Annihilation in the Light of the Gospel of Love* 1875, p.39. Wesley recorded that this was common practice in the eighteenth century. Watts, *The Dissenters*, i. 415.
 7. J. Morison, *Fathers and Founders of the London Missionary Society*, 1844, p.xv.

will be together, each brimful of pain, thy soul sweating in its inmost pores drops of blood; and thy body, from head to foot, suffused with agony; conscience, judgement, memory, all tortured; but more — thy head tormented with racking pains, thine eyes starting from their sockets with sights of blood and woe; thine ears tormented with

Sullen moans and hollow groans,
And shrieks of tortured ghosts.

Thine heart beating with high fever; thy pulse rattling at an enormous rate in agony; thy limbs cracking like the martyrs in the fire, and yet unburnt; thyself put in a vessel of hot oil, pained yet coming out undestroyed; all thy veins becoming a road for the feet of pain to travel on; every nerve a string on which the devil shall play his diabolical tune of hell's unutterable lament."⁸

Yet at the same time that Spurgeon was using such doctrines to pack in his audiences and to win his converts, a growing number of his contemporary Christians were becoming uncomfortable at what George Eliot described as Spurgeon's "superficial grocer's-back-parlour view of Calvinistic Christianity".⁹ Unease at the traditional doctrine of eternal punishment was certainly not new in the nineteenth century. Origen had suggested in the third century that everyone might ultimately find salvation, and in England in the mid-seventeenth century the explosion of free expression that followed the outbreak of the Civil War revealed that some men of a radical turn of mind either rejected the concept of hell or relegated it to the consciences of men.¹⁰ The Socinian John Biddle, the Ranter Lawrence Clarkson, the Digger Gerrard Winstanley, the Baptists Richard Overton and Samuel Richardson and, later in the century, the Arians John Locke, Isaac Newton, Samuel Clarke, and William Whiston, all denied the eternity of hell's torments.¹¹ But it was not until the nineteenth century that the misgivings of a few heretics and intellectuals were turned into something like a mass movement.

The reasons for the widespread rejection of hell in the nineteenth century are complex. D.O. Walker suggests that hell retained its sway so long because the leaders of society, though they may not have entirely believed it, regarded it as an essential element in social control. According to this view, elaborated by Christopher Hill in *The World Turned Upside Down*, hell was part of the process whereby the propertied classes kept the property-less classes in order, and when the property-less classes rebelled, as they did in the middle of the seventeenth and again, to greater purpose, in the nineteenth century, one of the casualties was the doctrine of hell. There is certainly a good deal of evidence to suggest that the churches' teaching on hell was bitterly resented by the poorer sections of the community. I have suggested in *The Dissenters* that one of the reasons for

8. C.H. Spurgeon, *New Park-Street Pulpit*, 1857, ii. 104-5.

9. E.A. Payne, "Gleanings from the Correspondence of George Eliot", *Baptist Quarterly*, xvii. 1957-8, p.180.

10. C. Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, 1979, pp.170-183. Watts, *The Dissenters*, i. 114, 183.

11. On seventeenth century figures who rejected eternal punishment see D.O. Walker, *The Decline of Hell*, 1964, *passim*.

the popular violence directed against the Methodists in the eighteenth century was that men were provoked by the Methodists' assurance that they were saved and other men were damned.¹² The diaries of city missionaries in London in the late nineteenth century reveal widespread disbelief in hell among the lower sections of society, and Hugh McLeod in his book on Victorian London records the opinion of a London shopkeeper who asked a city missionary:

Now do you think that God punishes all who don't believe in what you call the gospel and if there is a hell do you think they will all go to hell; well you tell me you are sure because your Bible tells you so but I tell you then that God must be very cruel and would act like a tyrant to send to hell more than half the human race. What did he send them in the world for if it were only for to damn them?¹³

And even some of those who sought to take the Gospel to the poor had misgivings about threatening them with hell-fire. Thomas Cooper, once a Wesleyan lay-preacher and later a Christian Evidence lecturer, found his religious views undergoing a change in the early 1840s when he took up the cause of the Leicester stockingers and threw himself in the Chartist movement. "I could not", he recalled in his autobiography, "preach eternal punishment to poor starving stockingers".¹⁴

The Chartist's rejection of hell in favour of trying to improve the temporal lot of the poor was symptomatic of a change that was sweeping over the whole of Christian civilization. Hitherto the Christian message, and especially the Evangelical message, had been essentially other-worldly. For most human beings at most periods of history life has been "nasty, brutish and short", and if in the political sphere this has meant that men have often sought, like Thomas Hobbes, the protection of authoritarian rulers, so in the religious field it has meant that men have sought consolation for the sufferings of this life in the thought that they would not endure forever. The Jews' earliest conception of God had been that of a tribal deity who had led them out of bondage, fought with them on the field of battle, and guided them to the promised land. But when their earthly success came to an end, when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem and carried its people into exile, when Antiochus IV put the faithful to the sword, then the purposes of God came to be seen in an eternal rather than in a temporal context. Job, unable to justify the ways of God in the light of his present misery, looked forward to the time

... after my skin has been destroyed,
then without my flesh I shall see God.¹⁵

And Isaiah proclaimed the resurrection of the righteous.

12. Watts, *The Dissenters*, i. 404-5.

13. H. McLeod, *Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City*, 1974, pp.51-3.

14. T. Cooper, *Life of Thomas Cooper, by Himself*, 1872, pp.259-60.

15. Job, xix. 26. R.S.V.

The birth of the Christian Church was accompanied by savage persecution and followed by the barbarian invasions, and in a world in which life on this earth was becoming ever more uncertain the Church took consolation in the Greek concept of the immortality of the soul. The sacramental life of the medieval Church was directed towards guaranteeing the faithful that their souls would enjoy the fruits of their fidelity in heaven while their oppressors would pay for their rejection of Christianity in the eternal fires of hell. The other-worldly spirit of medieval Catholicism was inherited by Luther in the sixteenth century: his revolt was against the prescription rather than the diagnosis of the Catholic Church, his complaint that it was endangering the eternal salvation of those who trusted in it.

Yet at the very moment that Luther was disrupting the unity of the Western Church for other-worldly ends, European man was becoming absorbed with the wonders of this life: with the delights to be had from the appreciation of art and the study of the literature of the ancient world, with the excitement of the discovery and exploitation of new continents, with the revelations and theories of the astronomers. To the men of the Renaissance and the scientific revolution life on earth was not merely a preparation for life eternal, it was an experience that was of value in its own right. And it was not only Renaissance humanists that were switching men's attention from the attainment of salvation after death to the achievement of paradise here on earth. English Calvinists of the mid-seventeenth century, convinced that they were predestined to salvation, saw the Thirty Years' War and the Civil War as heralding the second coming of Christ and the establishment of the millennium. But with the destruction of these hopes at the Restoration of Charles II and with the relegation of English Dissenters to second-class rank, English Nonconformists in the eighteenth century were all too ready to embrace the other worldliness of the Evangelical revival. The whole purpose of John Wesley's ministry, he said, was to proclaim "the way to heaven".

But just as the Methodists and Nonconformists were taking advantage of the social dislocation occasioned by the industrial and demographic revolutions to spread the Gospel, so were the other-worldly assumptions on which their faith rested being undermined by those same social changes. The conviction of a handful of Renaissance scholars that man was master of his own environment became in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the unspoken assumption of a majority of men in the Western world. Before the industrial revolution, writes Christopher Hill, when men "were at the mercy of nature and starved if the harvest failed" they were "prepared to accept their helplessness before a God who was as unpredictable as the weather".¹⁶ After the industrial revolution a growing proportion of mankind lived and worked in an environment which for better or worse was man-made and which was determined more obviously by the policies of central and local government than by the vagaries of the seasons. Men who had accepted the rule of authoritarian monarchs or

16. C. Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, p.151.

small groups of oligarchs as part of the scheme of things pre-ordained by an arbitrary God now demanded democratic rights in a society in which the God of Calvinism was either humanised or rejected. As bubonic plague, smallpox, and cholera were one by one conquered, as the constant danger of unexpected death receded, so men fixed their eyes on a better life on this earth rather than looked for consolation after death. The pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain, not the attainment of salvation, was the purpose of man in the eyes of the Utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham. Other-worldly concerns were pushed to the periphery of men's consciousness; men's minds were re-orientated towards the achievement of this-worldly goals. And one of the casualties of this fundamental shift in the way in which Western man conceived the purpose of life was the doctrine of the future punishment of the unregenerate.

This momentous shift in attitudes was typified by the career of Francis Newman, the brother of John Henry Newman, the future Roman Catholic cardinal. Basil Willey, in a graphic phrase, likened the careers of the two brothers to the divergent courses of two rivers, "taking their rise in the same dividing range", only to be "deflected by some minute original irregularity of level, so that one pours its waters into the Mediterranean, the other into the German Ocean".¹⁷ Francis Newman, like his brother, was brought up as an Evangelical Anglican, and in the 1830s carried his Evangelicalism to the point of joining an expedition of Plymouth Brethren to convert the Muslims of Baghdad, and, on his return, of being baptised in the Broadmead Baptist chapel in Bristol. But towards the end of that decade he began to doubt the doctrine of eternal punishment — the "moral tendency" of which, he wrote, was to promote "malignity and selfishness" — and his doubts about hell were accompanied by his rejection of what he regarded as the other-worldly religion fostered by the New Testament. "Those who stick closest to Scripture", he complained, "do not shrink from saying that 'it is not worth while trying to mend the world', and stigmatize as 'political and worldly' such as pursue an opposite course. Undoubtedly, if we are to expect our master at cock-crowing, we shall not study the permanent improvement of this transitory scene".¹⁸

By the middle of the nineteenth century a number of sensitive Christians were beginning to have qualms about the hell-fire preaching that still dominated much of the churches' message, and various ways were found of explaining away what had hitherto been regarded as clear Christian doctrine. Edward White's solution to the moral problem posed by hell was to postulate the theory of conditional immortality. In his *Life in Christ*, published in 1846, he argued that "none of the wicked are immortal, or shall live forever"; the wages of sin are death, the destruction of conscious existence.¹⁹ Another suggested solution was that death did not mark the end of a person's chances of salvation. George Macdonald, minister of the Congregational church at Arundel, propounded the view "that with the Heathen, the time of trial does not cease at their death".²⁰

17. B. Willey, *More Nineteenth Century Studies*, 1953, p.11.

18. F.N. Newman, *Phases of Faith*, 1853, pp.46-8, 136.

19. E. White, *Life in Christ*, 1846, p.238.

20. Greville Macdonald, *George Macdonald and his Wife*, 1924, p.180.

As a result he was forced to resign his pastorate, and turned to writing novels, and in his new role did more to undermine belief in everlasting punishment than ever he did as minister at Arundel.

More influential than either White or Macdonald was the Anglican F.D. Maurice, professor of divinity at King's College, London, who used the concept of the kingdom of Christ to give his theology a this-worldly orientation, and both supported the Christian Socialist movement of Charles Kingsley and J.M. Ludlow and rejected the contemporary definition of eternal punishment. In his *Theological Essays*, published in 1853, Maurice suggested that the words "eternal" and "everlasting" were not synonymous. Eternity could not be "a lengthening out or a continuation of time" since time and eternity were "generically different". Just as eternal life was the perception of God's love, so eternal punishment was "the loss of that power of perceiving His love".²¹ Maurice offended both the economic and the theological orthodoxies of his day, and was deprived of his chair. As his college principal, Dr. Jelf, put it: "It will be with sin, as it is with so many things in this day, a question of profit and loss".²²

The controversy continued with the publication, in 1860, of *Essays and Reviews* by seven liberal Anglicans, two of whom, H.B. Wilson and Rowland Williams, were first prosecuted for, and then acquitted of, violating the Thirty-nine articles. Wilson's offence was to suggest that the words of Jesus implied that "the conditions of men in another world will be determined by their moral characters in this, and not by their hereditary or traditional creeds".²³ But his article is significant for the way in which he shows how the expansion of men's horizons during the nineteenth century were compelling them to re-think their attitude to the eternal destiny of non-Christians. The modern missionary movement — the greatest triumph of the Anglo-Saxon Evangelical movement — itself contributed to the process. Originally inspired by a desire to save the heathen from hell, in the course of the nineteenth century many Evangelicals, impressed by the very enormity of the task that confronted them, began to question whether those who had never even heard of Christ would spend eternity in hell. Doubt about the teachings of orthodox Christianity, wrote Wilson in *Essays and Reviews*, did not arise from the influence of what Spurgeon liked to call the "German poison". It was rather "a spontaneous recoil, on the part of large numbers of the more acute of our population, from some of the doctrines which are to be heard at church or chapel". "Not any book learning — not any proud exaltation of reason — not any dreamy German metaphysics — not any minute and captious Biblical criticism — suggest questions to those who on Sundays hear the reading and exposition of the Scriptures as they were expounded to our forefathers, and on Monday peruse the news of a world of which our forefathers little dreamed — descriptions of great nations, in some senses barbarous compared with ourselves, but composed of men of flesh and blood like our own ... We are told, that to know and believe in Jesus Christ is in some sense nec-

21. F.D. Maurice, *Theological Essays*, Cambridge, 1853, pp.423, 437.

22. F. Maurice, *Life of F.D. Maurice*, 1884, ii. 163.

23. *Essays and Reviews*, 7th ed. 1861, p.157.

essary to salvation. It has not been given to these. Are they – will they be, hereafter – the worse off for their ignorance?”²⁴ To answer his own question Wilson took refuge in “post-mortem” salvation. We have no right, he suggested, “to say that the effects of what [Christ] does upon earth shall not extend and propagate themselves in worlds to come.”²⁵

It was in the late 1860s and early 1870s that the debate over future punishment reached its climax. In 1867 an Anglican, Andrew Jukes, expressed a hope in the ultimate salvation of all men in *The Second Death and Restitution of all Things*, and in the following year another Anglican, Samuel Minton, gave wider currency to Edward White’s views on conditional immortality in his book *The Glory of Christ*. Early in 1870 the *Christian World* newspaper turned the growing interest in the subject to its own advantage and opened its columns to representatives of the three main schools of thought.²⁶ Edward White put the case for conditional immortality; Andrew Jukes argued in favour of universal restitution; and Joseph Angus, the president of Regent’s Park Baptist College, expounded the traditional doctrine of eternal punishment, though mitigated by a long list of “alleviations” and ending with the suggestion that “there may be efficacy in Christ’s work even for those who have never heard his name.”²⁷ The *Christian World* was rewarded with an increase in circulation of more than 5,000 copies a week²⁸ and the incident is an indication of the way in which the controversy over future punishment was attracting far more interest in the religious press in the 1860s and 1870s than was the question of evolution. In 1874 the advocates of conditional immortality won over a powerful recruit in the person of R.W. Dale, and three years later Samuel Cox, the minister of the Mansfield Road Baptist Church, Nottingham, in his *Salvator Mundi*, toyed with a notion akin to that of purgatory in order to mitigate the traditional doctrine of hell.

It is worth pausing over Cox’s *Salvator Mundi*, both because of the light it sheds on the agonies of some nineteenth century Christians struggling with the concept of future punishment, and because it illustrates the lengths to which a minister of an Evangelical church would go in rejecting one of the fundamental tenets of Evangelicalism. In the summer of 1876, Cox recalled, a poor, elderly working man, a member of his congregation, came to him in great distress and described the mental agony he had suffered since the swift-flowing waters of the Trent had set him thinking about eternity. As he stood on the bridge over the river the old man had thought to himself, “Suppose every drop of water that ever ran through this bridge was to be brought back, and damned up, beyond yon bend, into a vast lake, and then let down again a drop a minute. When all the water had run through the bridge once more eternity would be no nearer an end than it is now”. And then, while trying to “get some notion of what the

24. *Ibid.*, pp.151-2.

25. *Ibid.*, p.158.

26. *Christian World*, 11 Feb. 1870, p.89.

27. *Ibid.*, 15 April 1870, p.230.

28. *Ibid.*, 11 March 1870, p.149.

eternity of God was like, *all of a sudden I bethought me of them poor souls down in the pit!* And my head reeled, and my heart stood still, and I cried out quite loud, 'O my God, can it be true that after all those dreadful years their torment would be no nearer an end than it is now?' The thought was too horrible ... but I couldn't shake it out of my head ... It has haunted me ever since, and it's well-nigh killing me. I can't hear a bell toll, or a clock tick, but what I go off calculating, and calculating, and calculating, just as I did on the bridge — so many ticks, so many years, and the end no nearer than before".²⁹

It was this interview that prompted Cox to deliver a course of lectures on the question of future punishment to his Bible class, lectures which were published in 1877 under the title *Salvator Mundi*. In his book Cox rejected totally the Evangelical division of mankind into saved sheep and lost goats. "No man is wholly good, no man wholly bad", he told his readers. "When we die, we shall all receive the due recompense for our sins ... If, by the grace of God, we have been good on the whole, we may hope to rise into a large and happy spiritual kingdom in which all that is pure and noble and kind in us will develop into new vigour ... If we have been bad on the whole, we may hope ... to pass into a powerful discipline so keen and searching that we shall become conscious of our sins and feel that we are only receiving the due reward of them; but, since there has been some good in us ... we may also hope, by the very discipline and torment of our spirits, to be led to repentance, and through repentance, unto life ... And as for the great mass of our fellowmen, we may hope and believe that those who have had no chance of salvation here will have one there".³⁰

The theological aspects of the nineteenth century debate of hell have been analysed by Geoffrey Rowell in *Hell and the Victorians*³¹ and I do not want to repeat what he has done. But Dr. Rowell seems to miss the wider religious and social significance of the controversy, for what was at stake was not an obscure theological problem but the very foundations of Evangelical Christianity. One Victorian who did not miss the significance of what was happening was Charles Haddon Spurgeon. A "listless spirit", he complained in his magazine the *Sword and Trowel* in 1870, "has fallen upon many of the churches". "If we loiter, death does not; our hearers are perishing before our eyes; and the millions are passing into eternal misery (yea, my brethren, we dare believe no less than *eternal* misery) as fast as time can bear them".³² For the next decade and a half, as evidence of an increasingly liberal attitude among Nonconformists towards the question of hell mounted, so Spurgeon became progressively more unhappy. In 1882 the Baptist newspaper, *The Freeman*, published a sermon by the Rev. J.G. Greenhough of the Victoria Road church, Leicester, in which he hinted at the possibility of universal restoration.³³ In 1883 Leicester was the venue for the autumnal meetings of the Baptist Union and Spurgeon was alarmed by the invitation extended to a

29. S. Cox, *Salvator Mundi*, preface to the eleventh edition, 1888, pp.xiv-xvi.

30. S. Cox, *Salvator Mundi*, 1877, pp.219-21.

31. Oxford, 1974.

32. *Sword and Trowel*, January 1870, p.3.

33. *The Freeman*, 28 April 1882, p.271.

Unitarian minister, John Page Hopps, to attend its opening gathering.³⁴ In 1885 another Leicester Baptist minister, James Thew, incurred Spurgeon's wrath when, in the course of a sermon at the Baptist Union's autumnal assembly at Swansea, he raised the question of whether there was any point in missionary activity, "if large hope may be entertained of the mercy of God for the heathen world".³⁵

The explosion came in March 1887 when Spurgeon used the *Sword and Trowel* to publish the first of a series of articles accusing his fellow Nonconformists of being on "The Down Grade". "A new religion has been initiated which is no more Christianity than chalk is cheese", thundered Spurgeon in his August number. "The Atonement is scouted, the inspiration of Scripture is derided, the Holy Spirit is degraded into an influence, the punishment of sin is turned into a fiction, and the resurrection into a myth, and yet these enemies of our faith expect us to call them brethren, and maintain a confederacy with them".³⁶ And when the Baptist Union refused to accede to Spurgeon's demand that it impose a credal test on its ministers and member churches, Spurgeon resigned from it.

Spurgeon overstated his case, but there can be little doubt that from his own standpoint he was right. Evangelical Christianity as he knew it was being undermined, the essential sanction of hell was being removed. The "main question" at issue in the "Down-Grade" controversy, he wrote in February 1888, was "Does the Baptist Union hold the doctrine of future probation?"³⁷ If ministers such as Samuel Cox held on to the hope of "post-mortem" salvation, then the urgency of the Gospel-message was, in Spurgeon's eyes, destroyed.

The whole thrust of the first of the "Down-Grade" articles had been to suggest that the Nonconformists of the late nineteenth century were following the experience of the Dissenters of the eighteenth century in liberalising their theology and thus losing their hold on fundamental Christian doctrines. There was much truth in the accusation, and the liberal Nonconformists of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries were soon to find themselves in the same predicament as earlier generations of Arians, Socinians, and Unitarians. In 1886 Charles Berry, the former minister of the Unitarian Great Meeting, Leicester, preached a sermon at the dedication of the renovated chapel, and discussed the reason for the Unitarians' lack of popular appeal. "The reason why our denomination does not increase much", he declared, is that "we cannot represent it as necessary to salvation to become converted to our views". "I believe honest men and women of all creeds are safe in the hands of a merciful Creator ... I cannot think that they will any of them be consigned to everlasting torments. But do you not see that we are thus deprived of a great power of moving the public mind?"³⁸

This was the crucial point. Alan Gilbert has argued that the great problem

34. *Sword and Trowel*, Nov. 1883, p.607.

35. *The Freeman*, 9 October 1885, p.671.

36. *Sword and Trowel*, Aug. 1887, pp.397-400.

37. *Sword and Trowel*, Feb. 1888, p.91.

38. C.G. Bolam, "The changes of, and development within, Presbyterianism in the counties of Derby, Leicester and Nottingham", University of Nottingham M.A. thesis, 1957, pp.560-1.

confronting the churches in late nineteenth and twentieth century England was not loss of members, it was failure of recruitment.³⁹ And why were the churches failing to recruit new members as they had done in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries? Many social and theological factors contributed to the situation, but a principal cause was the fact that what had hitherto been the churches' most effective recruiting sergeant – the doctrine of hell – was losing his effectiveness and was about to be cashiered. Christian preachers were in an impossible position: if they continued to preach hell, they alienated their more intelligent and their more sensitive audiences; but if they stopped preaching hell, they forfeited their most compelling argument. And if hell was abandoned, what became of the rest of the Christian scheme? Thomas Cooper could not bring himself to threaten the Leicester stockingers with hell. But, he asked, “when the belief in eternal punishment is given up, the eternal demerit of sin has faded from the preacher’s conscience; and then what consistency can he see in the doctrine of Christ’s atonement?”⁴⁰ A North Country preacher is reputed to have argued that Christianity without hell is not worth a damn.⁴¹ “The eternal hell has gone”, remarked a Baptist correspondent to *The Freeman* in 1888. “Is heaven to be dismissed also?”⁴² It is not a question to which the Nonconformist churches, as far as I am aware, have yet found a convincing reply.

MICHAEL R. WATTS

39. A.D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England*, 1976, p.179.

40. T. Cooper, *Life of Thomas Cooper*, pp.259-60.

41. W. Kent, *The Testament of a Victorian Youth*, 1938, p.28.

42. *The Freeman*, 19 Oct. 1888, p.708.

METHODISM AND THE OLDER DISSENT: SOME PERSPECTIVES

The plan of this paper is as follows: after a brief introductory survey, its main purpose is to throw light on the dark period in Dissenting history immediately before the Evangelical Revival, and to recover some sense of the positive and living religion to be found there; we shall look briefly at the practice of making a personal covenant with God, and also at the awakening among Dissenters in this part of the country; in conclusion, we will ask first why evangelical Dissent figures so little in the textbooks, and secondly what it was in Methodism to which many Dissenters took exception.

If till recently the Puritan divines have had a consistently hostile press, the leaders of the Great Awakening have had virtually no press at all. If we ask why this was, the first answer, paradoxically, is that there are so many of them. They were all known to one another — meeting one another, corresponding, reading one another's writings. Their concerns and purposes were held in common, and they shared not only the influence of the *Zeitgeist* but various sources of inspiration.¹ Under God, they brought about the Revival *together*. If their journals and letters were systematically collated, the progress of the Revival in its first years, both geographically and in the minds of men, could be plotted almost day by day. But they were leaders, and the blinding charisma of leadership lives on. The result is that books on them tend to be both narrowly individual and limited by personal and denominational *parti pris*.

In the second place, the leaders left so much behind them, in manuscript as well as in print, that the extent of the material is daunting and the subject as a whole is too vast to be encompassed by a single scholar, however devoted. Wesley's *Journal* and *Letters* fill sixteen volumes, and a fresh edition of his *Works* has begun to appear. Since 1960 Whitefield has been taken up by the Banner of Truth Trust, but at an unhurried pace: his *Life* has just been completed, but a new edition of his *Journals* and a reprint of his thousands of *Letters* remains in each case no more than a torso. Lady Huntingdon has defeated more than one recent would-be biographer, and any future attempt at writing her life is likely to be stifled by the sheer weight of the material made accessible by Dr. Welch's listing of the thousands of letters and other documents discovered at Cheshunt College. Howel Harris left 294 volumes of manuscript journal, from which three slim selections have appeared; from his three thousand letters, two. Harris wrote in English, as did another Welshman important in the course of events in England as well as in Wales, Griffith Jones; but the recent two-volume history of Calvinistic Methodism in Wales, like much written on its leaders and their work, is in Welsh, and is thus available only to those who read that language. Then for the pursuit of another key figure in the early years, Count Zinzendorf, whose works are being reproduced, a knowledge of

1. E.g. the inspiration of A.H. Francke and his orphanage at Halle: cf. G.F. Nuttall, "Continental Pietism and the Evangelical Movement in Britain", in *Pietismus und Réveil* (Kerkhistorische Bijdragen, vii, ed. J. van den Berg and J.P. van Dooren, Leiden 1978, pp.207-36: "the reputation of Halle, reverberating from one end of the century to the other, did much to weld Churchman and Dissenter into a single movement that transcended geographical and denominational distinctions" (p.233).

German is requisite. After initial *éclat de succès*, Zinzendorf was dropped by the leaders; but at the same time John Cennick, Francis Okely² and many others, in Wales as well as in England, joined the Moravians. Both these developments still require investigation and elucidation.

To come closer to our immediate subject: Zinzendorf was a Moravian bishop; Wesley and Whitefield were clergymen of the Established Church; so was Griffith Jones; Harris and Lady Huntingdon, also, were loyal and devoted members of the Church. Each had friends among the Dissenters; but they were indifferent to Dissent or else actively disapproved of it. "I am charged with being a Dissenter", Whitefield wrote in 1739; but "I profess myself a minister of the Church of England".³ In 1743 a London correspondent of Philip Doddridge wrote of Whitefield that "his practice is to go to St. Pauls himself & those under his immediate influence to receive the Sacrament tho of my own knowledge bred dissenters".⁴ In 1751 Harris complained that Whitefield was "sunk into the Dissenters";⁵ but five years later Whitefield assured the Dean of Westminster that he was entirely loyal to the Church and that in the services which he conducted in a Dissenting meeting-house in Long Acre he always used the Church's liturgy.⁶ If, in time, the leaders accepted Dissenting status for their institutions, they did so only with the greatest reluctance. To-day two of these institutions are, respectively, the largest of the Free Churches in England and the largest in Wales. This has encouraged the statement in the text-books that Dissent was arid and moribund till drawn into the Methodism led by Wesley, or in Wales by Howel Harris.

There is no question that Dissent, or much of it, was in need of revival — though no more so than was the Church of England, perhaps less. "The Holy Spirit", a Baptist minister complains, "... is despis'd and contemned".⁷ In most of the sermons preached during three years when the church was without a pastor, a dissenting layman laments, Christ was not even alluded to.⁸ But the date of this complaint and lament is 1743, well *after* the Revival had begun. "Heart-work is become the subject of Sneer",⁹ writes another Baptist minister — but in 1760. On the other hand, "I dont think its much on the decay", Philip Doddridge wrote of Dissent back in 1740, "except in ... the Western

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2. John Walsh, "The Cambridge Methodists", in *Christian Spirituality: essays in honour of Gordon Rupp*, ed. Peter Brooks, 1975, pp.252-78. The Bedford congregation of which Okely was set apart as a preacher (p.273, n.80) was a station of the Blunham Baptist church.
 3. *George Whitefield's Journals*, 1960, p.222; George Whitefield, *Works*, 1771, i. 140 (1740).
 4. *Calendar of the Correspondence of Philip Doddridge* [hereafter C.C.P.D.], ed. G.F. Nuttall, 1979, Letter 907.
 5. *Howell Harris's Visits to Pembrokeshire*, ed. T. Beynon, Aberystwyth 1966, p.196.
 6. A.A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield: the life and times of the great evangelist of the eighteenth-century revival*, 1970-80, ii. 384. For the charge advanced against him in 1740 at Charleston, S.C., of not doing this, *ib.*, i. 514-20.
 7. Benjamin Dutton, *The Superaboundings of the Riches of God's Free Grace* [hereafter Dutton], 1743, p.iv.
 8. Joseph Williams, *Enlarged series of Extracts from the Diary, Meditations and Letters* [hereafter Williams], ed. Benjamin Hanbury, 1815, p.231.
 9. John Brine, *Grace, Proved to be at the Sovereign Disposal of God*, 1760, p.25.

and Southern Counties"; and "even here", he adds, "there is a secret strength".¹⁰

The fact is that in every period devotion fluctuates; and when in the main it is low, in some places it will be climbing again. In the first thirty years of the eighteenth century the Dissenters were in a weakened condition through the persecution of their fathers and grandfathers; they were also inheritors of the moralism of the 1690s; but they were by no means all formalists. By 1700 Joseph Alleine's *Alarme to Unconverted Sinners* had run into six editions, Richard Alleine's *Vindiciae Pietatis* into seven, Baxter's *Saints Everlasting Rest* into thirteen, Matthew Mead's *The Almost Christian Discovered* into twelve. Some Dissenters began to allow the claims of reason to exceed all sensible limits, losing sight of faith and of a Redeemer in whom to have faith, or alternatively argued for both, but argued in a manner so drily logical as to lack all feeling. But there were always others whose faith was warm and expansive and the mainspring of their living. These were Evangelicals before the Revival, which, if they lived, they welcomed when it came.

It was, in fact, an Independent minister who, in 1736, introduced Howel Harris to Griffith Jones.¹¹ In England, in the same year, Doddridge was praying for Whitefield, then at Oxford, and Whitefield knew it.¹² Or listen to this:—

Under the sermons I have heard to-day, being our sacrament day, Christ's love to souls was the subject of discourse. Never, did I experience such a flame of divine love as was kindled in me. The word came to me with life and power. ...

I have this day been made again to experience, what it is to enjoy communion with, and communications of love from, a kind and gracious God. Oh! the sweet rays of love, wherewith he was pleased to shine in and upon my soul. ...

Some earnestness I experienced, yea, pantings after God; ... I was impressed with a spiritual sight of the excellency and beauty of Christ.

'He hath shed abroad that love in my heart, which is better than wine'. ... oh! what serenity follows, when God speaks peace. How cheering are the smiles of his love!¹³

We might suppose that these passages demonstrate the effect of the Revival on a sympathetic subject and were written at some point in the twelve years between 1738 and 1750, when the movement was still fresh and united; but we should be wrong. They come from the journal, and from a letter, written much earlier at various times between 1717 and 1725, by Joseph Williams, a Kidderminster merchant and a Dissenter. Let me introduce you to him.

He was born in Kidderminster in 1692 and died there in 1755. His "first serious impressions" were brought about by the death of another boy when he was seven, and of two of his own younger sisters a few years later. A mystical experience while "walking in a summer evening in the meadows", when he had

10. *C.C.P.D.*, Letter 663.

11. M.H. Jones, *The Trevecka Letters*, ed. R.T. Jenkins, Caernarvon 1932, p.214.

12. A.A. Dallimore, *op.cit.*, i.88.

13. Williams, pp.34-5, 42, 49.

"a lively sense of invisible things", led him to compose a covenant of self-consecration in September 1710, and to be admitted to the Lord's Table in the following March.¹⁴ Thirty-seven years later he still vividly recalled how "one time under a rick, another time behind the buttress of the steeple," — he was always fond of a walk through the churchyard¹⁵ — "or under a bush, or in the corner of a hedge," he would "pour out" his "soul, with strong cries and floods of tears".¹⁶ By July 1753 he had renewed his covenant with God "near five hundred times" at the monthly sacrament service.¹⁷ Often it was at the Lord's Table, or during the "prefatory discourse", that he would find his soul "enlarged with ardent love and longing desire" and would feel his "heart throb" and "every bowel within" him "roll", while "streams of tears, even tears of joy, ... flowed from" his "gushing eyes".¹⁸ After one memorable occasion in 1744, he wrote that "had the tide of sacred joy swelled a few degrees higher, I could hardly have restrained myself from crying out in the congregation — *Oh, he is come, he is come!*" "He brought me to the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love". In the year of his death, still "Jesus was there, and made me to know it".¹⁹ It was while reflecting one evening in the twilight on a verse from Dr. Watts that "sudden almost as a flash of lightning", his "soul was ravished with a joyful assurance".²⁰ But his devotion ran through the whole of his life: he believed in praying "while walking, sitting, working, nursing, or conversing". "To be able to call him, *my Jesus ...*", he writes, "is more than to have all the birds of music serenade us at our window every morning. ... Jesus is a sea of love".²¹

So much for the inner life of this Kidderminster Dissenter. He was composing hymns as early as 1727,²² later, he edited an *Abridgment* of the Journal of the missionary to the Indians, David Brainerd, with a commendatory epistle by Doddridge.²³ The passages quoted are in the main from his own *Journal*; this was issued several times after his death in various editions and with varying titles, but the original manuscript in the Congregational Library includes passages not in any of them. In one of these Williams describes the powerful impression made on him by a sermon preached by Charles Wesley in 1739 in Bristol, after which the two men met over a meal;²⁴ in another an Association

14. *Ibid.*, pp.1-2, 5-7, 12.

15. *Ibid.*, pp.84, 91, 162, 363, 441, 460.

16. *Ibid.*, p.247.

17. *Ibid.*, p.409. On this occasion, not for the first time (cf. p.147), "Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadab" (Song of Songs, vi. 12; cf. Thomas James to Whitefield, 4 Dec. 1742, in *Account of the Most Remarkable Particulars relating to the Present Progress of the Gospel*, 1742-3, II. ii. 5: "our dear Lord seems ... to be anointing the Wheels of our Souls: and they are like the Wheels of Aminadab's Chariot"); the imagery of the Song permeates Williams's writing.

18. *Ibid.*, pp.147 (1739), 208 (1745; recalled in 1755, p.460); 203 (1744; recalled in 1745, p.209, and in 1755, p.460).

19. *Ibid.*, pp.204, 209, 460.

20. *Ibid.*, p.176 (1742; recalled in 1744, p.198).

21. *Ibid.*, pp.254, 241, in letters to a daughter.

22. *Ibid.*, p.60.

23. *C.C.P.D.*, Letter 1333.

24. A transcript "Charles Wesley in 1739", has been published in the *Proceedings* of the Wesley Historical Society, Vol.XLII, Part 6, December 1980, pp.181-5.

meeting at Trevecca which he attended in 1746.²⁵ Howel Harris corresponded with him, and visited him in Kidderminster. Lady Huntingdon esteemed him. He was on intimate terms with Whitefield, with whom he enjoyed "a great many hours" personal conversation".²⁶ Doddridge also met him, and was a frequent correspondent; Williams subscribed to Doddridge's *Family Expositor*, and contributed to the support of a student in the Academy at Northampton. Risdon Darracott, of Wellington, Somerset, one of Doddridge's favourite Evangelical pupils, visited Williams and introduced him to the Cornish Evangelical clergyman, Samuel Walker. "I am an old man", Williams wrote to Walker; "in man's account, a dissenter; in God's, I trust, a Christian".²⁷

In 1746 Williams wrote to a brother-in-law, "Oh! what is the hidden life of a Christian".²⁸ *The Hidden Life of a Christian* was, in fact, the title chosen for another journal, that of a young minister named Timothy Thomas, whose life was as hidden and brief as that of Williams was long and lived in public, but whose spirit was as intensely devout. Here are some quotations from his journal and from one or two letters. The date of one passage is 1714, and of the others 1719 — the very year of the fateful meeting at Salters' Hall, when, it is often said, Dissent was at its lowest ebb and Unitarianism began to set in.

Here I set sight of my Beloved, of whom I have been long in Search, and oh! how welcome is He to me. ...

Your Soul knows the Thing in Experience! Often have you said, 'my Beloved is mine, and I am his; me he loved, and gave himself for me'. Then your Heart burnt within you, it winged your Affections, and you felt that you loved. ...

Do you, my Friend, who have his Presence and his Heart, tell him that I love him. Tell him (for so does my Heart go out after him at this Time that I am writing) that I am sick of love. ...

Such a Night had I of God's Dealings with my Heart, and my Heart taking hold of him, and wrestling with him, as I do not remember before, as far as I can look back!

When I have seen the Forgiveness of God, and this plenteous Redemption ... my Heart would no longer hold ... 'Oh! the Love, the Grace!' I could not but cry out, and repeat it often in a Flood of Tears.

He communes with me often, and my Soul holds Communion with him. ... Oh! the Grace! ... in Prayer I meet with him, and in Meditation I hold him fast, and cannot let him go.²⁹

Joseph Williams had a goodly heritage simply by living in Kidderminster, where, strolling in "Mr. Baxter's Walk", he would feel "a desire after Mr.

25. A transcript "The Trevecca Association of June 1746, has been published in the *Cylchgrawn* of the Calvinistic Methodist Historical Society, no.4, 1980, pp.34-6.

26. Williams, p.350.

27. *Ibid.*, p.458.

28. *Ibid.*, p.214.

29. [Timothy Thomas], *The Hidden Life of a Christian exemplified in the diary, meditations, and letters of a young minister. Published from authentic manuscripts* [hereafter Thomas], ed. Thomas Gibbons, [1752], pp.68, 148, 167, 129-30, 122, 168-9.

Baxter's spirit"³⁰ stirred up within him. Timothy Thomas's inheritance lay in his descent from many generations of clergymen and ministers in Shropshire, Montgomeryshire and Denbighshire, whose convictions grew steadily more Dissenting and radical, and who often suffered for them: one of his more distant relatives, a beneficiary under the will from which the Bristol Baptist College dates its origin, actually bore the name Prisons. His father, after association with the notable Dissenting church at Rothwell in Northamptonshire, became minister of the church at Pershore, Worcestershire, where in 1716 he died, aged only forty.

Like Joseph Williams, Timothy Thomas would go "walking in the Field to meditate". A time came when he found that he had "had as much of God's Presence to-day, as ever at one Time in my Life. ... I would not forget this Day," he wrote in his Journal; "I date it June 2d. 1711". His admission to the Lord's Table followed, in 1713,³¹ and in 1717 he succeeded his father as the Pershore minister; but after only three years he was dead, from consumption, aged twenty-two. Thus, though in spirit heralding the Revival, he did not live to see it. Posthumously, however, he had a part in it; for his sister preserved his journal, and later, when the Revival was in full swing, it was published by the London minister Thomas Gibbons (of whom we shall hear again) and achieved a second edition within four years.

Timothy Thomas's papers at one time passed through Doddridge's hands.³² Also concerned in them was Gibbons's "pious and ingenious Friend",³³ Robert Cruttenden, who provided some letters printed with the Journal. As a product of the Revival who became a Dissenter, Cruttenden (1690-1763) serves to illustrate another perspective. He was a convert of Cennick and of Howel Harris, and "large offers were made him, if he would come over"³⁴ to the Church of England; but in 1743 he became a member of the Independent church meeting in Paved Alley, Lime Street, London (now the City Temple), of which his uncle had been pastor. He was a close friend of Philip Doddridge: the two men stayed in each other's homes,³⁵ and after Doddridge's death Cruttenden continued to correspond copiously with Doddridge's widow.³⁶ He also corresponded with Howel Harris,³⁷ and was acquainted with Lady Huntingdon,³⁸ When he joined

30. Williams, p.42.

31. Thomas, pp.37, 6, 24, with n.*; for the family history, see *Calamy Revised*, ed. A.G. Matthews, Oxford 1934, s.vv. his grandfather Timothy Thomas and his great-grandfather, John Evans, also s.v. Thomas Hardcastle; and for further details, G.F. Nuttall, "John Ash and the Pershore Church: additional notes", in *Baptist Quarterly*, xxii (1968). 271-6.

32. *C.C.P.D.*, Letters 1504, 1506, 1509.

33. Thomas, titlepage and p.xii. Gibbons's manuscript journal in the Congregational Library, London, records dinners with Cruttenden.

34. Robert Cruttenden, *Sovereign Efficacious Grace 1*, 2nd edn. 1790, preface by Whitefield, p.iv.

35. *C.C.P.D.*, Letters 1273, 1474, 1486 for Cruttenden with Doddridge; Letters 1383 (incorrectly indexed as 1349), 1527, 1638-9 for Doddridge with Cruttenden.

36. Dr. Williams's Library, New College, London, MSS., Ll/23/43-75.

37. M.H. Jones, op.cit., p.101.

38. *C.C.P.D.*, Letter 1434.

Paved Alley, his "Experience delivered ... in order to be admitted into their Society" was "published, prefaced and recommended" by Whitefield, who wrote: "Our Saviour has inclined many converted unto him thro' his grace by us, to join with the dissenting congregations".³⁹ The Revival encouraged such declarations of experience, which had long been common form in Independent and Baptist churches; which is not to say that all Dissenters approved of Cruttenden's declaration being published.⁴⁰

Other examples of movement in the same direction as Cruttenden, from Methodism into Dissent, are Herbert Jenkins, who, after a spell in the Bristol Baptist College, became "the ablest of the early Welsh Methodist exhorters"⁴¹ and had thoughts of episcopal ordination, but for the last twenty-three years of his life was pastor of the Independent church at Maidstone; and Richard Tibbott, who, under the influence of Howel Harris and Griffith Jones, ministered for twenty-five years among the Calvinistic Methodists, serving as superintendent in North Wales, but in 1762 - "his Bible", as he used to say, "having made him a Congregational Dissenter"⁴² - was ordained pastor of the church at Llanbrynmair, Montgomeryshire, where he continued till his death in 1798.

But let us return to the years before the Revival. The intense devotion sometimes present is also to be found in testimony to the grace of God in the form of memoirs or an autobiography, such as *The Superaboundings of God's Free Grace*, published in 1743 by Benjamin Dutton. Dutton was born in 1691 at Eversholt in Bedfordshire, where his father was a Baptist minister. In 1705 he left home and was apprenticed to a clothier and draper in Newbury. Here he attended the Presbyterian meeting ministered to by James Peirce, who was later to be a leader in the movement for refusing subscription to the doctrine of the Trinity. Peirce's sermons were read, moralistic and of small help to the young apprentice; but by other means, only partly explained, "there was a wonderful Change wrought in me!": "my Soul was almost continually breathing forth itself into the Bosom of God".

While I lived in the Bosom of CHRIST, oh how I long'd to be conformed to him. I wanted to be like him in his Speech, his Gesture, his plain Apparel, and to Walk, even as HE walked. How precious was the whole Bible to me! And especially the Gospels, which par-

39. R. Cruttenden, op.cit., p.vii. This second edition reprints biblical paraphrases and hymns by Cruttenden from William Porter, *Sermon occasioned by the death of Robert Cruttenden, Esq.*, 1763; for a letter of 1 October 1742 from Cruttenden to Cennick ("You then was on Christ being a friend to sinners ... my heart was melted in me"), see pp.16-18. Robert Keen, who sometimes acted as a trustee in Whitefield's absence oversea, was received into membership at Paved Alley on the same occasion (4 June 1743) as Cruttenden (p.13); the two men were perhaps cousins (cf. *Calamy Revised*, s.v. Robert Bragge).

40. Henry Miles, D.D., F.R.S., did not: *C.C.P.D.*, Letter 957.

41. R.T. Jenkins, in *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*, 1959, s.v. Herbert Jenkins.

42. S[amuel] R[oberts], "A Brief Historical Sketch of the Congregational Church at Llanbrynmair, Montgomeryshire", in *London Christian Instructor or Congregational Magazine*, n.s., x (1834). 567; see further *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*, s.v. Tibbott family: and for a list of Welsh Methodists who became Independent ministers, R.T. Jenkins, *Yng Nghysgod Trefeca*, Caernarfon 1968, p.30.

ticularly treat of CHRIST! ... And how did I long to be with him!
Without him, Heaven would have been no Heaven to my Soul.

Very early in the morning Dutton would "go down into the Stable, which was most remote, and there pour out my Soul to the Lord ... At which some of the Work-People scoffingly said, "That I pray'd to the Horses'". "Ben: I think thou art in Love'", his mistress said; "I was in Love indeed," he writes; "but not in that way which she intended": an unspeakable joy "fill'd my Heart and transported my Mind".

He joined a society of about sixteen young men, which met in Peirce's vestry from six till eight on Sunday mornings, or in the winter on Sunday evenings, and with them studied the Shorter Catechism, Matthew Henry's expositions and Bishop Wilkins on prayer. "All that had Freedom, gave their Thoughts"; and they took it in turn to pray.

We opened our Hearts, and unbosom'd ourselves to each other. We acquainted each other with our Temptations and Distresses, and with our Successes and Consolations. And the Lord was graciously with us ... One or two of us would go Home with another; and his Heart so warmed, (Jesus Christ joining himself with us, while we were Discoursing of his Things) that he would go back with us; and even then, we found it hard to part.

In time Dutton was baptized by Peirce, "join'd to his Church" and admitted to the Lord's Supper. Before long he made up his mind to leave trade and become a minister. For training he went up North to Ravenstonedale. Here, in hearing the minister preach, "I was so wonderfully melted under a Sense of God's Love, and of my own Vileness and Sinfulness, that it caused me to cry out in the Auditory. Which then was a strange, and almost unheard-of Thing".⁴³ Eventually he settled as pastor of the Dissenting church at Great Gransden in Huntingdonshire; but after only a few years, in 1747, on his way home from a fund-raising visit to New England, he was drowned at sea. His widow, Anne Dutton, not only consolidated his work at Gransden, which she transformed into a Baptist church practising strict communion (as it still is), but, in enlargement of his contacts with the leaders of the Revival — Dutton had been to Trevecca in the hope of seeing Howel Harris⁴⁴ —, corresponded with Harris, Whitefield and Doddridge,⁴⁵ and under the sobriquet "One who hath tasted that the Lord is gracious", published *Letters on Spiritual Subjects ... to Mr. George Whitefield* (1745) and many other evangelical treatises.

Besides the Journals that were printed or are still in manuscript, extracts from journals are included in what was then still a popular genre, the funeral

43. Benjamin Dutton, op.cit., pp.58, 52, 64, 46, 50, 68-9, 70, 84. For Dutton, see further H.G. Tibbutt, "Mrs. Dutton's Husband", in *Bedfordshire Magazine*, autumn 1965; and for his father, Matthew Dutton, H.G. Tibbutt, *Some Early Nonconformist Church Books* (Beds. Hist. Rec. Soc.), 1972, p.43. The Evangelical minister at Ravenstonedale was John Magee, an Independent: B. Dale and T.G. Crippen, *History of the Ancient Meeting-house at Ravenstonedale*, 1907, pp.3-4.

44. John Thickers, *Howel Harris yn Llundain*, Caernarfon [1938], pp.345, 440.

45. C.C.P.D., Letters 949, 1517, 1539; see further G.F. Nuttall, *Howel Harris 1714-1773: the last enthusiast*, Cardiff 1965, pp.74-5, nn. 96 and 98.

sermon. Take that for Caleb Head, a young man who, like Dutton, was the son of a Baptist minister — Joshua Head, pastor at Slaughter and later at Bourton-on-the-Water, in Gloucestershire — who was influenced by *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and who before his early death in 1707 became a member of the Presbyterian congregation in Crosby Square, London. "Never shall I forget," he wrote, "how" after reading Isaiah liii, "I used to run up into a Garret", with "a fresh Flood of Tears". "O how did my Heart dissolve, and melt at the Reading of these Words! I read 'em over, and over again". "It's impossible for me to express or again to conceive of the Transports of my Soul!"⁴⁶

These funeral sermons leave no room for doubt that the drawing up of a personal covenant with God was common practice at this time. Joseph Williams, we saw, drew up a covenant in 1710. Theophilus Lobb (1678-1763), minister at Guildford, Shaftesbury and Yeovil, made one in 1713, and reviewed it in 1717, 1719 and 1722.⁴⁷ Joseph Longhurst (1700-69), a gardener whose journal, his funeral sermon records, revealed "the most animated and lively exercises of the heart in evangelical devotion", made a "solemn covenant with GOD" in 1719.⁴⁸ William Langford (1704-75), later minister at the Weigh-House in London, made his "covenant-transaction" in 1724, while a student at Glasgow.⁴⁹ Mrs. Delicia Iremonger (1721-45) drew up her covenant in 1737, ten days before being admitted to the Lord's Table.⁵⁰

The wording of these covenants, which is often closely similar, betrays that they have a common descent. The source can in fact be traced. The author of Theophilus Lobb's *Memoirs* observes of Lobb's covenant, "We have most part of this in Mr. Shower's Character of a real Christian."⁵¹ This refers to *Some Account of the Holy Life and Death of Mr. Henry Gearing* (1632-94), a London merchant, who "owned, that he enjoyed as much of God in his Thoughts, while walking in the Streets, as when he was upon his Knees"; and Gearing's covenant, dated 1667, and renewed in 1676 and 1678, was "taken", Shower tells us, "out of Mr. Allen's Book."⁵² Again, "There was found amongst her Papers", we read in a funeral sermon for Mrs. Rebekah Woolley (1653/4-

46. S[amuel] Wright, *Funeral sermon occasion'd by the death of Mr. Caleb Head*, 3rd edn., 1708, pp.42, 47; for his father, see *Freedom after Ejection*, ed.A. Gordon, Manchester 1917, p.281.

47. John Greene, *The Power of Faith and Godliness exemplified, in some Memoirs of Theophilus Lobb, M.D., F.R.S.*, 1767, pp.11-16. Greene, who was minister at Wimborne, Leicester and Chelmsford and who in 1747 took part in the setting apart of Doddridge's brother-in-law at Epping (C.C.P.D., Letter 1253), had married Lobb's sister. In a funeral sermon for William Shearer of Leicester, *Enoch's Holy and Happy End* (1714), Lobb's copy of which is preserved in the Congregational Library, Greene includes an account of Shearer's "experiences ... taken from his own manuscript".

48. Samuel Wilton, *The Faith and Patience of Departed Saints*, 1769, pp.35 and 29.

49. Thomas Gibbons, *The Blessedness of Dying in the Lord*, pp.18-21.

50. Ob[adiah] Hughes, *Comfort and Counsel*, 1745, pp.57-61.

51. John Greene, op. cit., p.14, n.*. Gearing was a cousin of Edmund Calamy; his "Real Christian" has its own literary ancestry in Giles Firmin's *Real Christian* (1670), as well as in Matthew Mead's *Almost Christian Discovered* (1662) and John Chishull's *Danger of Being Almost a Christian* (1657); cf. also the title of the funeral sermon in n.53, below.

52. [John Shower], op. cit., 1694, pp.xx, 61-6, 53, 4-5, 54. Gearing's account includes "meltings", "weeping" and a rhapsody on "the Sweetness of Christ", with reference to Song of Solomon 1.2. Shower's own copy of this piece is preserved in Dr. Williams's Library.

1716) of Derby, *The Real Christian's Character*, "a Form of Covenant, taken out of Mr. Jos. Alleyn's Works, and sign'd and seal'd by her, Jan. 6. 1691. And she took all the Opportunities that offer'd to repeat that Surrender, she had made of her self to God, at his Table".⁵³ "The better to confirm my Soul, I will subscribe Mr. Allen's Covenant",⁵⁴ wrote Thomas Beard, another layman, and renewed it in 1708 and 1709. Another recension of the same covenant, dated 1678, was found with the papers of the minister of the church in Silver Street, London, John Spademan. When he died in 1708, it was appended to his funeral sermon as "of great Use ... particularly in an Hour of Temptation, in a Day of Trouble; or when the Clouds begin to gather, and ... upon the return of the Seasons" for renewal of "Covenant-Dedication to God, at his Table"; it was "composed", we are told once again, "by admirable Mr. Joseph Alleine".⁵⁵ The original specimen covenant of this eminent ejected minister, which so many earnest Christians made their own, appeared without his name in 1664 in the *Vindiciae Pietatis* of Richard Alleine,⁵⁶ who two years later made its authorship known.⁵⁷ These personal covenants thus form a link between the church covenants commonly subscribed at the embodying of a Congregational church⁵⁸ and the covenanting encouraged by Wesley and observed liturgically in the New Year covenant service now traditional in English Methodism.

To sum up so far: what we have watched emerging from the mists is an intense personal devotion, anchored in Scripture and the Lord's Supper, but also open to impressions received when out of doors, fostered by sermons and Holy Clubs, finding outlet in ejaculatory prayer, tears and private covenants, keeping journals for both record and review, and taking delight in correspondence and encounter. All this is consonant with what was at hand in the Great Awakening. Those on whose testimony we have relied are more than a little flock; they included laymen and women as well as ministers; we have found them in several parts of the country as well as in London, but most often in the West country.

In Methodist history Bristol is celebrated as the place where, in April 1739, Wesley first preached in the open, in May laid the foundation-stone of

53. Joseph Rogerson, *The Real Christian's Character*, Nottingham 1716, p.24.

54. Joseph Porter, *The Holy Seed: or a funeral discourse occasioned by the death of Mr. Thomas Beard*, 1711, p.36.

55. Samuel Rosewell, *Sermon preach'd September 12, 1708 upon occasion of the death of the Reverend John Spademan*, 1708, pp.83, 87-8, 89-99 (the covenant). A gift copy from Rosewell is preserved in Dr. Williams's Library. For another example of a covenant, dated 17 June 1677, denominated a "Memorial", see Charles Owen, *Funeral-sermon for the Reverend Mr. Tho. Risley, A.M. ... with some short memoirs of his life*, 1716, pp.46-8.

56. Op. cit., pp.203-8.

57. Richard Alleine, *Heaven Opened*, 1666, To the Reader p.iii and p.215; the attribution was confirmed by Richard Baxter in Theodosia Alleine, *Life and Death of ... Joseph Alleine*, 1677, Preface, p.28. For Alleine's covenant and the adventures of *Vindiciae Pietatis*, see further C. Stanford, *Joseph Alleine: his companions and times*, 1861, pp.274-6.

58. G.F. Nuttall, *Visible Saints: the Congregational Way 1640-1660*, Oxford 1957, pp.77-81. Sociologically, there may also be a link with signing a pledge to abstain from spirituous liquors, a practice which has been traced back to 1800.

the first Methodist chapel, and in August had his notorious interview with Bishop Butler. In fact, as Alexander Gordon reminds us, Whitefield "preceded" Wesley "in making Bristol a centre of Methodist effort,"⁵⁹ as also in corresponding with the bishop and in preaching here in the open air. Bristol already had a long tradition of radicalism in religion. The Presbyterian, Independent, Baptist and Quaker communities had all been persecuted for righteousness' sake; but by 1739 they were well established, and from the Baptist College ministers received in about equal numbers from Wales and England were being sent out all over the country.⁶⁰ One of the Welshmen, David Evans, who, like Richard Tibbott, had come under Griffith Jones's influence, served for a time in Joshua Head's pulpit at Bourton-on-the-Water and was then ordained, on Doddridge's advice, as Benjamin Dutton's successor at Great Gransden.⁶¹ It is the Evangelical Dissenting churches that we really need to know; but this can be done only after establishing successions of ministers touched by the Revival, and for this the ministers must be identified first.

For Evangelical Dissenters in the West the capital was, however, Gloucester as much as Bristol. Whitefield was often here in Bristol, from which his mother came, and where relatives continued to live; but Gloucester was his own birth-place and his home, the place where, as he puts it, he was often "carried out beyond myself when secretly meditating in the fields."⁶² where, in 1736, he was ordained, and where he preached his first sermon. Gloucester, like Bristol, had a tradition of religious radicalism, from 1708 to 1712 a Dissenting Academy (later at Tewkesbury), and a strong Dissenting church, with powerful and well educated ministers. Its third minister, Thomas Cole, encouraged the young Whitefield when he first set out, later "took much Pains with several in" Gloucester, "who were first awakened under Mr. Whitefield's Preaching";⁶³ and eventually, Whitefield himself records, "used to subscribe himself my Curate, and went about preaching after me, from place to place."⁶⁴ Whitefield reciprocated the esteem of this "most venerable dissenting minister"⁶⁵ as he called him; Howel Harris often visited Cole when passing through Gloucester on his way from Trevecca to London and back; and when, in 1748, Cole died, Cennick published an Elogy to his memory. A broadsheet in Cole's honour, issued many years later in 1768, called *A Modern Pattern for Gospel Ministers*, carries the aged but faithful Whitefield's signature, together with those of a number of Dissenting ministers: among them the minister of the Newbury church where Benjamin Dutton's life was changed; a successor of Joshua Head at Bourton-on-the-Water; the minister of the church at Upton-on-Severn, from which Doddridge's wife came; and the second Principal of the Bristol Baptist

59. A Gordon, in *Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. Whitefield.

60. N.S. Moon, *Education for Ministry: Bristol Baptist College 1679-1979*, Bristol 1979.

61. G.F. Nuttall, "Welsh Students at Bristol Baptist College 1720-1797", in Hon. Soc. of Cymmrodorion *Transactions*, 1978, pp.180-1, 189-90.

62. *George Whitefield's Journals*, 1960, p.61.

63. Thomas Hall, *Sermon occasioned by the ... death ... of Thomas Cole*, 1742, p.44.

64. G. Whitefield, *Works*, 1771, ii. 28.

65. *Ibid.*, ii. 27.

College, Hugh Evans.⁶⁶ The printer of the broadsheet was none other than Robert Raikes, a Gloucester Dissenter who inherited an interest in Whitefield from his father and had himself opened his home to Howel Harris. The contribution of Evangelical Dissent to the Sunday School movement is a later part of the story. Suffice it to say to-day that it was a Dissenter at Dursley, a follower of Whitefield, who first influenced Raikes to undertake the project, and a Baptist from Bourton-on-the-Water who founded the first Sunday School Society in London.⁶⁷

By 1768 the leader of evangelism in this part of the country, who made "excursions monthly into the most uninstructed parts of Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Wiltshire" and "was the first means of introducing evangelical religion into many dark towns and villages in all the neighbourhood round",⁶⁸ was the minister of the Baptist church at Horsley (now Nailsworth), Benjamin Francis. A pupil of the Bristol College under Hugh Evans, and a poet (he was a Welshman) who wrote many Elegies, including one for Whitefield, and at least one hymn which is still sung, he was in close sympathy with the Revival. Asked by a friend, "When may one conclude that he enjoys God in the Performance of Duty?" he replied: "When his heart is so filled with sacred Joy, and overpower'd with heavenly Light ... that he can't forbear breaking out in such Language as this, 'O my GOD! My GOD indeed! now I can't question thy Love: Oh, I feel it! I feel it!'"⁶⁹

To us this note is by now familiar. Yet in the histories of Dissent it barely appears. Why?

The question may be answered something like this. By training, historians are warned to avoid being unduly biographical. By temperament they are also often shy of the deeper religious issues. The approach academics prefer is intellectual rather than devotional and institutional rather than personal. To chart and assess developments in devotion is not easy, especially when underlying sympathy is scant or even absent.

Where Dissenters are concerned, there is a further consideration. A writer familiar with the whole of their history — the only one besides Stoughton and, now, Dr. Michael Watts — was Alexander Gordon. For the serious student of English Church History in the eighteenth century there is no substitute for the perusal of Gordon's hundreds of articles in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, including the particularly fine ones on Wesley and Whitefield; but Gordon was a convinced Unitarian: his primary interest was in Presbyterianism, and in the increasing place in religion allowed to the claims of reason. This is a vital part of the story, and till the appearance of the second volume of Earl Morse Wilbur's

66. See further G.F. Nuttall, "George Whitefield's 'Curate': Gloucestershire Dissent and the Revival", in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 27 (1976), 369-86.

67. *Ibid.*, pp.385-6.

68. Thomas Flint, memoir of Benjamin Francis, in John Ryland, *The Presence of Christ the Source of Eternal Bliss*, Bristol [1800], pp.45-6.

69. G.F. Nuttall, "Questions and Answers: an eighteenth-century correspondence", in *Baptist Quarterly*, xxvii (1977), 86-7, from manuscript in Bristol Baptist College Library. For Francis, see *Dict. of Welsh Biography*, s.v.; G.F. Nuttall, "Welsh students", pp.182, 192.

History of Unitarianism (Cambridge, Mass., 1952) Gordon's articles were the best introduction to it; but, though the best educated part, Presbyterianism was never the whole of Dissent: Gordon had little feeling for the Awakening, and through his articles, unconsciously perhaps but unquestionably, the Evangelical Dissenters have been downgraded.

Pointers to many of the clues followed up in this paper may be found in the extensive correspondence of Philip Doddridge, who during his twenty-one years at Northampton was in touch with the leaders of the Revival and others whose names have been before us, and whose own Journal, printed with his *Correspondence* from a manuscript in shorthand that is still extant, has never been critically assessed. When in 1751 Doddridge died, his station in this regard was taken over by his friend Thomas Gibbons (1720-85), Gordon's article on whom in no way suggests his importance as a key-figure in Evangelical Dissent during the second half of the century. Gibbons, who was the minister chosen to preach for Doddridge at Northampton when Doddridge was on his last journey to Lisbon, was one of the three Dissenting ministers who assisted Whitefield when the foundation-stone was laid in Tottenham Court Road and often visited Whitefield for dinner or breakfast; he visited Lady Huntingdon at Ashby, Mrs. Dutton at Great Gransden, Cruttenden in London, and Hugh Evans in Bristol; he corresponded with Darracott, with Cole's successor in Gloucester, and with others already mentioned. He also published many funeral sermons, ordination sermons, elegies and hymns. His Journal, preserved, like that of Joseph Williams, in the Congregational Library, is an exceptionally large folio volume, providing a mass of information on the Dissenting interest throughout the whole of Southern England between 1749 and 1785. He examines his own spiritual progress or declension week by week, but rarely reveals any intense feeling of the kind it pleased him to publish in the Journal of Timothy Thomas, *A Hidden Life*.

Gibbons's own inner life was calmer, as befitted an Evangelical of the next generation. It finds admirable expression in verses addressed to the author of the memoirs of Theophilus Lobb (in which Gibbons also was concerned), entitled "A Religious, the only Reasonable Life; or Reason and Religion the same".

Reason and piety the same
 In nature, differ but in name;
 The Good alone are wise:
 Heav'n has their hope, their joy, their love;
 To Heav'n they look, to heav'n they move,
 The pilgrims to the skies.

Such, such was He, whose pious heart
 (Untainted, undisguis'd by art)
 Is here disclos'd to sight.
 He made his God his all in all,
 Liv'd on his grace, obey'd his call,
 And serv'd him with delight.

Only a life divinely pure
 The test of reason can endure;
 All else is gay deceit.
 Religion triumphs o'er the tomb,
 And opens in our soul the bloom
 Of happiness compleat.

One senses here what made Gibbons welcome for "a dish of tea in an afternoon" to Dr. Johnson, another in whom the appeal to reason and common-sense might conceal, but did not exclude, a devotion deep and passionate. From 1754 Gibbons was training Dissenting ministers in London; this shows how quickly the Revival had become respectable; for in 1739 a student in what was institutionally the same Academy who went out to hear Whitefield preach was the recipient of corporal punishment, while another student who repeated the offence was expelled.⁷⁰

Such violent treatment forces us, finally, to ask, what then in Methodism was found so objectionable? Several answers may be given.

To begin with, religion in general is conservative and suspicious of what is new. Revival, like the gospel, is divisive. It gives offence by sitting loose to existing institutions, organizations and forms. In addition, it is prone to sheep-stealing. Again, revivals, like forgiveness, observe no laws; to a Dissent that practised church discipline, Methodism seemed irregular, at best disorderly interference. In 1733 Isaac Watts wrote "I ever own myself a Protestant, and claim a right to think freely and to judge for myself". The grounds of his opinions are not always clear; but disapproval of going outside the accepted framework is probably what lay behind his observation in 1741, "the Wesleys do more and more grow into disesteem among the better sort of people in London."⁷¹

Next: Dissent had long contained not only some to whom religious experience and evangelism were the breath of life but others whose education and sense of propriety made them critical of ranting enthusiasm by the uninformed, unfit and unapproved. This division lay behind the break-down of the Happy Union attempted in 1691,⁷² and long persisted. Doddridge did his best to close it, but was not wholly successful. When in 1748 Doddridge published his sermon *Christ's Invitation to Thirsty Souls*, Whitefield wrote to him "I do not wonder that you are dubbed a Methodist on account of it".⁷³ Others regretted that Doddridge's memoir of the Evangelical Colonel Gardiner was disfigured by what they considered enthusiasm and cant.⁷⁴ At the end of the century the "rational Dissenters", as the Presbyterians liked to call themselves, were increasingly find-

70. Cf. G.F. Nuttall, *New College, London and its Library: two lectures*, Dr. Williams's Trust 1977, pp.21, 13-14.

71. Isaac Watts, letters to Benjamin Colman of 29 June 1733 and 18 May 1741, in Massachusetts Historical Society *Proceedings*, 2nd ser., ix. (1894-5), 346 and 383.

72. See Roger Thomas, "The Break-up of Nonconformity", in G.F. Nuttall and others, *The Beginnings of Nonconformity* (Hibbert Lectures), 1964, especially pp.43-4, for two phrases used above.

73. *C.C.P.D.*, Letter 1428; see further A.C. Clifford, "Philip Doddridge and the Oxford Methodists", in Wesley Hist. Soc. *Proceedings*, xlii (1979). 75-80.

74. *C.C.P.D.*, Letter 1286.

ing their destiny in Unitarianism. Among the Independents new Academies were founded with the emphasis on evangelism rather than culture (and with the student once chastised for following Whitefield now a Lecturer); but the old objections were still heard.⁷⁵

Then there were the mannerisms and exaggerations of the leaders. Those responsible for training ministers may hesitate about encouraging their pupils to go and listen to a Billy Graham. In 1739 John Barker, a London Presbyterian minister who had listened to Whitefield preaching on Kennington Common, reported to Doddridge, "he is but a weak man — much too positive, says rash things, and is bold and enthusiastic". Doddridge himself, despite his attachment to Whitefield, could still be critical: "who can wonder", he wrote in 1741, "if so much popularity has a little intoxicated him? He certainly does much good & I am afraid some harm".⁷⁶ Joseph Williams's judgment of Whitefield was similar. He regarded him as "second to none I know of all the human race"; "nevertheless," he writes, "I am far from approving all he has done, or all he has said. I apprehend there has been a considerable mixture of enthusiasm, and something of vain-glory".⁷⁷ Fears were also felt that the conversions effected would not last. Ten years after his first report, Barker expressed anxiety at the sight of some of Whitefield's converts as "now amongst the most careless and stupid sinners". This would be part only of what he had in mind when he voiced a deeper fear: "I have no expectation", he wrote, "but that Methodism like any other enthusiasm will promote infidelity".⁷⁸

This may sound exaggerated, but it points to a genuine danger. The excitement of Revival can tempt some natures and sensibilities into extravagance and fanaticism and, in the power of a freedom above the law, to shake off moral constriction; the inspiration claimed may come to be treated as independent of datum, medium or check in Scripture, history or the fellowship of the Church, in extreme cases even of Christ; personal assurance, impatient of reasoning's slower persuasions, can unfit for honest argument; and, taken together, this may drive an inquirer into deism or unbelief. It was to counter this last eventuality that Doddridge wrote a threefold *Answer* (1742-3) to an author happy with the position "Let Christianity have darkness and the Holy Ghost and leave us with Reason and the light".⁷⁹

To the Arminianism in the Wesleyan branch of the Revival there were, finally, theological objections: objections which might also be taken to preaching the love of God without conditions. When in 1793 the "Methodists of Mr. Wesley's connexion" were invading Northamptonshire, a county already well supplied by the Older Dissent, with their nineteen Independent churches and twenty-one Baptist, "There appear to be some truly religious people amongst

75. G.F. Nuttall, *The Significance of Trevecca College 1768-91*, 1969, pp.7-8; and *New College, London and its Library*, pp.13-14.

76. *C.C.P.D.*, Letters 549 and 705.

77. Williams, p.350.

78. *C.C.P.D.*, Letters 1452 and 926.

79. Roger Thomas, "Philip Doddridge and Liberalism in Religion", in *Philip Doddridge: his contribution to English religion*, ed. G.F. Nuttall, 1951, p.129.

them," Andrew Fuller wrote, "but it is apprehended by thinking people that their labours have too great a tendency to mislead mankind by encouraging them on slight and insufficient grounds to hope for eternal life".⁸⁰ It is sometimes said that since Wesley we have all become Arminians without knowing it; by many to-day universalism is regarded as the only possible form for Christianity in a pluralistic society (as it its world context had ever been anything else); and from the first half *only* of the parable of the sheep and the goats "grounds to hope for eternal life" (should any desire it) are offered indiscriminately to all men of good will. Over against all this, there is a seriousness and a balance in Fuller's words that deserve respect. In perceiving that the Revival had its weaknesses and dangers, the Dissenters were not mistaken. But the dangers and weaknesses of religion settled on its lees, and flavourless, are still greater. Ho, everyone that thirsteth! O taste and see that the Lord is good! Buy for yourselves!

GEOFFREY F. NUTTALL

80. Andrew Fuller, letter of 23 May 1793, manuscript in Congregational Library; a transcript has been accepted for publication in the *Baptist Quarterly*.

PETER STERRY AND MORGAN LLWYD

In the early 1650s, Peter Sterry became Cromwell's private chaplain, and remained theologically active at Whitehall until the Protector's death.¹ Throughout this period, opposition was growing against Cromwell for what some interpreted — especially after the establishment of the Protectorate — as his careful move towards kingship. One of these critics was Morgan Llwyd, whose attitude to Cromwell changed from open support in the early 1650s, to hostility in 1654-55, and, in 1656, to support again.

At the National Library of Wales, there are five autograph letters from Peter Sterry to Morgan Llwyd.² These letters are an important link between one of Cromwell's major critics and a chaplain close to the Protector's ear and heart. Moreover, they constitute a valuable source of information about both Sterry and Llwyd, since they were written in answer to queries that Llwyd had communicated to his friend in Whitehall. Written between 1651 and 1656, the letters reflect Llwyd's change in attitude towards Cromwell, and the role that Sterry played in influencing Llwyd's opinions, and in maintaining contact between Whitehall and Wales — an area of violent opposition to the Protector.³

The first two letters, dated June 1651 and 14 January 1651/2, provide a picture of a warm friendship between the two ministers. There are statements of heightened emotion, as well as apologies from Sterry for his constant illness, "the Crazines of this old Bottle, this Crackt Body", which prevents him from answering Llwyd's numerous letters (II).⁴ The letters show Sterry in the role of a religious mentor to his correspondent: Llwyd had addressed him as an authority on theological matters, and had sought his advice on various issues, including alchemy, the Rosicrucians and Jacob Boehme. Although there was little difference in age between them, Llwyd viewed Sterry as a learned preacher to turn to in moments of religious and political doubt.

In response to Llwyd's queries, Sterry wrote to condemn alchemists for confounding "the Philosophers stone for the true Pearle, and the Rosie-Crucians Castle in the Ayre for the Heavenly Hierusalem" (I).⁵ In passing, he made a brief reference to the microscope — one of the early statements about that

1. For a biography of Sterry, see Vivian De Sola Pinto, *Peter Sterry, Platonist and Puritan*, Cambridge, 1934.
2. MS 11439 D. I am grateful to Dr. R. Geraint Gruffydd for permission to use these letters. Reference to the five letters will be as follows:
I : June 1651
II : 14 January 1651/2/
III : 4 July 1652
IV : 23 July 1654
V : 27 September 1656
3. For a study of the Welsh Puritans, including Llwyd, see G.F. Nuttall, *The Welsh Saints 1640-1660*, Cardiff, 1957.
4. Cf. Sterry's use of "Crazines" with Cromwell's "I have been crazy in my health", in *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, ed. W.C. Abbott, Cambridge, Mass., 1939, vol. II, p. 160.
5. See the works of Thomas Vaughan, another Welshman, which were published between 1650 and 1652 on alchemy and the Rosicrucians. See also the study of the Rosicrucian movement in Britain after 1640 in Frances A. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, 1972, chapter XIII.

instrument in England.⁶ About "Beaumont" (Boehme), Sterry demonstrated a perceptive and critical faculty. He expressed his misgivings about Boehme's alchemical turn of mind, and warned against his "Mistaken . . . Discourses of the Trinity" (II). Nevertheless, Sterry would not condemn Boehme completely: he conceded his theological contribution, and praised his work as second only to the Scriptures. He lavishly employed the imagery of the "Rose, and Lilly", which was inspired from Boehme's *Epistles*, and which Llwyd also used in his writings. Indeed, the latter became one of the foremost Boehmenists of that decade.⁷

These two letters were written when Sterry and Llwyd were at the height of their expectation of Christ's kingdom.⁸ They include greetings to Major General Harrison, a mutual friend and one of the most active millenarians then.⁹ Evidently, Llwyd was in close contact with Harrison in Wales, and was an active link among that group of millenarians. Sterry reveals his millenarianism to Llwyd in his letter of 4 July 1652, written in answer to the latter's queries on the Joachimite dispensations in Christian history. Although Llwyd was steeped in Joachimism,¹⁰ he viewed Sterry as the superior theological authority whose insights — as in the case of Boehme — would be critical but impartial. Sterry explained that the first and the second dispensations — the Mosaic and the "Evangelicall Ministry" — had already passed; now all Christians are expecting the "Third" and final dispensation when Christ will inaugurate, at His "Last Appearance", the kingdom of the spirit. By using this Joachimite millenarianism, Sterry demonstrated his affinity not only with Llwyd, but also with another Welsh saint, strongly influenced by Joachime of Fiore, William Erberry. The latter, who was a correspondent of Llwyd, knew Sterry well and admired him for his millenarian theology and his preaching.¹¹

On 16 December 1653, Cromwell declared himself Lord Protector, alienating by this action the Fifth Monarchists and the republicans. Colonel John Jones, a one-time admirer and correspondent of Sterry,¹² and Llwyd became violent critics, while Vavasor Powell, whom Sterry had known since he certified him preacher in Wales in 1646,¹³ began active political opposition in Wales. In this turmoil, and a week after the opening of the first Protectorate Parliament,

6. See, for the early history of the microscope in Britain, Marjorie Nicolson, *The Microscope and English Imagination*, Smith College Studies in Modern Languages, vol. XVI, 1934-35, pp. 8-9.
7. See Jacob Boehme, *Epistles*, 1649, *passim*. See also E.L. Evans, "Morgan Llwyd and Jacob Boehme", *The Jacob Boehme Society Quarterly*, I (1953).
8. See Sterry's *The Commings Forth of Christ*, 1649, and *England's Delivery from the Northern Presbytery*, 1651, for his strong millenarian position; see *Gweithiau Morgan Llwyd*, ed. Thomas E. Ellis, Bangor, 1899, vol. I, pp. 19, 51 and vol. II, p. 252.
9. See the biography of Harrison by C.H. Simkinson, *Thomas Harrison*, 1905.
10. See Marjorie Reeves, *Joachime of Fiore and the Prophetic Future*, 1976, chapters VI, especially pp. 162-163.
11. *The Testimony of William Erberry*, 1658, pp. 186-87.
12. See the transcripts of a letter from Jones to Sterry on 29 September 1653 and the reply on 14 October 1653 at the National Library of Wales, MS 11440 D, pp. 150-160.
13. Sterry had known Powell since 11 September 1646; see *The Life and Death of Mr. Vavasor Powell*, 1671, p. 16.

Sterry was asked by Llwyd about Cromwell, "the present Power". His reply is understandably discreet, for Sterry was aware of his correspondent's connection with Powell and other Welsh anti-Cromwellians.¹⁴ He may have also learnt about Llwyd's declaration that God had chosen Harrison not Cromwell as His lieutenant on earth.¹⁵ In a conditional statement, Sterry recorded his assessment of the Protector:

As to the present Power, if wee bee yet ruled by man, after the Formes of Men, wee are of all nations the most wretched. But if by the Spirit, and Annoyntings of the most high, then is the Kingdome of God come downe into the midst of us. And as Flatterers have saide, that the Crowne covers all Defects, the Divine Annoyntings will much more, though they should be, as Davids, or Samsons (IV).

This is a carefully worded and perhaps deliberately ambiguous passage. But Sterry could not write otherwise; by mid 1654, Llwyd and other Welsh saints had vociferously attacked Cromwell. Sterry thus suggests that if Cromwell is governing after the spirit, then the divine guidance will compensate for all the Protector's defects, even if they are as numerous as David's. On the surface, Sterry's answer is non-committal, and serves merely to place Cromwell within the divine calling that he must fulfil. But indirectly, and by referring to David, Sterry was confirming the Davidic image of Cromwell that widely prevailed in the 1650s.¹⁶ Sterry was supporting Cromwell on the grounds that the kingdom of Christ was not carnal, as Powell and Llwyd expected, but spiritual, in "the midst of us". Sterry's political millenarianism of 1649-52 had given way, by 1654, to an internalized eschatology — a transformation similar to John Owen's and that of other Cromwellian opposers of fifth monarchism. Thus, for Sterry, any opposition to the Protector constituted a rejection of Christ's revelation in the spirit.

It is because of such political danger that Sterry expressed to Llwyd his disapproval of the "Shakers" (IV).¹⁷ By 1654, the Quakers had become familiar to Whitehall residents: in that year, George Fox had urged Cromwell to give way to Christ's rule.¹⁸ Moreover, the Quakers had "taken over where the Fifth Monarchists had abandoned the stage", and were causing much disruption to ministers and communities.¹⁹ Sterry condemned this practice — inspired by the Quakers' eschatological zeal — adding that "the Shakers who goe forth . . . after

14. Llwyd exchanged letters with Powell and Erberry; Powell with Jones, Harrison and Erberry. See pp. 381 ff. of R.T. Jones, "The Life, Works, and Thought of Vavasor Powell, 1617-1670", Unpublished D. Phil. dissertation, University of Oxford, 1947.

15. B.S. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 1972, p. 109.

16. See chapter IV of Frederick Plotkin, "Signs from Zion: A Study of Radical Puritan Eschatology in England, 1640-1660", Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1966.

17. The Quakers were sometimes known as "Shakers"; see Ephraim Pagit, *Heresiography*, 1654, p. 136. For Llwyd and the Quakers, see William C. Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, 1912, p. 123.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 156-161.

19. Antonia Fraser, *Cromwell Our Chief of Men*, 1973, p. 570.

the Cry in the Streets" were not properly preparing for Christ's coming (IV). The kingdom would not be heralded by political opposition and revolution, but by peaceful prayer.

Between 1654 and 1655, the gap between Sterry and Llwyd must have grown particularly wide. Nevertheless, Sterry maintained his friendship with Llwyd and was so able to moderate Llwyd's views that, by 1656, the Wrexham preacher had completely shifted his theological and political position from the zealous millenarianism of Powell and his own early career, to the moderate internalized eschatology of Sterry. It was a shift from hostility to Cromwell's Protectorate, to a quiet belief in Christ's internal kingdom.

This change in temper has been explained by Llwyd's reading of Boehme and his correspondence with William Erberry.²⁰ It is possible, however, that Llwyd's admiration for Sterry and his dependence on him for theological advice, may have played a significant role in this transformation. By his perceptive answers to Llwyd, Sterry was able to impress upon him the same transformation from political millenarianism to internalized eschatology that he himself had undergone. Indeed, Llwyd had noticed this transformation on Sterry's part and had written to inquire about it. In his reply on 27 September 1656, Sterry confesses that his outlook and role have changed drastically: earlier, he writes to Llwyd, he was a preacher whose words were like "Silver Trumpets" sounding in the "Fielde of Battell" — a reference to his millenarian sermons of 1649-51. But now, he is a "Golden Harpe. . . fitted for the Chamber of the Bridegroom", and receiving God's revelation "in/his/heart". Llwyd's own transformation from violent millenarianism to internalized eschatology must have been similar to Sterry's since the latter concludes with an alliance between the two preachers. Sterry thanks Llwyd for his encouragement "in our Witnes", and asks him with all "the Saints" in Wrexham to support him lest he grow "Single in/his/Testimony" (V).

Sterry's letters to Morgan Llwyd, and his familiarity with Erberry, Powell and Jones, reveal the close link that persisted between Wales and Whitehall, even during the period of millenarian and political separation. Sterry was in the position of nurturing this link, especially with Llwyd, and of bringing to Cromwell's camp a prominent member of the Welsh movement. This transformation of Llwyd in 1656 constituted a major setback to the Welsh anti-Cromwellians, and deprived them of one of their major pillars.²¹ The five letters examined here suggest that Sterry was partly to blame for this defection.

N.I. MATAR

20. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, p. 112. Cf. Thomas Richards, *Religious Developments in Wales*, 1923, p. 224 for a different explanation: Richards maintains that Llwyd's hostility to Powell led to this change.

21. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, p. 112.

ON THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW PEW-OPENER

The person who had for some years been pew-opener &c to our place of worship having resigned, our brother and sister Overland were chosen to fill that situation.

So runs an entry in the Church-Meeting Minute Book of the Independent Chapel, Downing Place, Cambridge. It is dated 4th February 1808.

William Overland, a Church member since February 1786 was transferred from St. Andrews Street Baptist Church whilst his wife Judith had joined on Profession of Faith in December 1807. Their ages are not revealed, but after twenty years service, William Overland decided to resign.

On 18th March 1828, a Special Church Meeting was convened "to consider the circumstances of Brother Overland's resignation as pew-opener and the measures necessary in consequence". The salary had been unfixed and it was resolved that the pew-opener should be paid £16 per annum. At this meeting, the duties were clearly laid down in the job description:

1. Cleaning the place with its appurtenances, windows and yard and sweeping the Avenue. The annual cleansing of the Meeting-House.
2. Attendance at the weekday services, both on the Monday and Wednesday evening and whenever it may be necessary to have the place opened, will be looked for from one or both of them.
3. On the Sabbath, one of them is to be stationed at the head of the middle aisle to take charge of that and the right-hand aisle. The other to be stationed in the Vestry aisle. Both are to be particularly attentive to the accommodation of strangers.
4. In consequence of the salary being fixed, they are on no account to ask for perquisites and gratuities either from the Church or the Congregation or from occasional attendants.
5. In case of misconduct or impropriety, the Deacons will have power to dismission, to whom, of course, they will be responsible.

Edward Wright, one of the two Deacons, reported that two members of the Church had applied to him for the post, namely Matthew Lusher and George Tofts. Various remarks were made respecting the comparative fitness of these candidates. The Pastor¹ then proposed that in order to prevent any unpleasantness none should be called to vote against either but rather that the matter be decided according to Scriptural example — by lot. George Tofts drew and failed. Matthew Lusher was declared duly elected and George Tofts ultimately withdrew from the Church, mortified at not obtaining the position of pew-opener.

By 1840, Matthew Lusher was dead and his wife Eliza, who had been a servant to the Minister, Samuel Thoday, carried on single-handed. She, too, had been a Church Member.

1 Samuel Thoday (Minister 1820-1848) — Resigned due to the financial difficulties of the Church but took part in the proceedings connected with the closing of the Downing Place chapel and the opening of the new building in Trumpington Street in 1874. The excitement proved too much for him and on returning home he became ill and died 16 September 1874.

At a Church Meeting on 30th January 1840, it was considered that Mrs Lusher's salary was too much. It was resolved that after midsummer next it be reduced by one pound a quarter and that her salary thereafter be £12 a year instead of £16.

Thirty three years after the Lushers had taken over their duties and at a Church Meeting held on 29th August 1861, the Pastor² said that it was desirable that the Church should appoint someone as Chapel-keeper in the room of Mrs Lusher who was now too aged and infirm for her situation. He thought, however, that as Mrs Lusher had held the post for so many years the Church ought to allow her a retiring pension. Sadly, Eliza Lusher was unable to enjoy her pension for long for she died 20 November 1863, aged 73, in her home at Bradwell's Yard, Cambridge.

ANDREW A. SMITH

- 2 Thomas Campbell Finlayson (Minister 1859-1865). Removed from Cambridge due to ill-health. Became minister at Rusholme, Manchester and remained there till his death in 1893.

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OUR CONTEMPORARIES

Reformed World: Vol. 36, Nos. 1-4.

In addition to the usual reports from many of the member Churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, these issues contain reports of the Theological Consultation in Seoul (S. Korea) in 1979 when the theme was the Christian Hope, and of the European Area Council of the WARC in Romania in 1980. There are articles on the French Reformed Church, on the Augsburg Confession of 1530, on the work of the United Faculty of Theology in Melbourne, and on the need for a competent ministry, this last by E.G. Homrighausen.

The Baptist Quarterly: Vol. XXVIII, Nos. 5-8.

These issues contain articles on Calvinism by Dr L.G. Champion, on O.T. Interpretation by Dr R.A. Mason, on John Bunyan by Dr N.H. Keeble, and on Robert Raikes by President John Ferguson. There are also tributes to Dr E.A. Payne by Principals B.R. White and W.M.S. West.

Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society, Vol. XLII, Parts 4 & 5.

These issues are predominantly made up of articles of interest to Methodists. Frank Baker has an article on John Wesley's relations with Bishop Joseph Butler.

Cylchgrawn Hanes (Journal of the Historical Society of the Presbyterian Church of Wales). No. 4, New Series.

The major article is in Welsh; it is on Roger Edwards of Mold and is by Professor Caerwyn Williams, F.B.A., and there are articles on aspects of life in Trevecca by Dr Eifion Evans and Dr G.F. Nuttall. There is a short article by Dr Ben Rees on Sunday School work in Liverpool in the nineteenth century.

R.B.K.

REVIEWS

The Second Book of Discipline. Edited with Introduction and Commentary by James Kirk. Pp. x, 318. The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1980, £8.75

Dr Kirk of Glasgow University has produced a volume which is an admirable companion volume to Professor J.K. Cameron's edition of the First Book of Discipline. Dr Kirk is also the author of an article on "Scottish achievements and English aspirations in church government after the Reformation" in the *Scottish Historical Review* (April 1980). This volume and the article are an important contribution to the study of the Reformation in the Church of Scotland in the period from 1560 to 1600.

Dr Kirk traces the influences which shaped the policy of the Church of Scotland; he gives detailed evidence of the influence of continental Reformers and of leaders in the Church of England and he shows how the reform was also an indigenous movement shaped by both co-operation with and opposition to the civil powers and by practical factors of tradition and social structure. The reform of the Church of Scotland was in large measure an accomplished fact before English Puritans had got further than drafting plans in hope of a time when a more thorough reform of the Church of England would be possible. The shape of the reform in Scotland was not on parallel lines to the structure of the Church of England and Dr Kirk finds no basis for the frequently propounded view that there were attempts to weave together the new superintendents and the surviving bishops of the old order who were willing to work within the new order and to commit to them the government of the Church, nor does he find that there is much to be said for the view that superintendents, ministers and readers were even a rough parallel to the bishops, priests and deacons of the Church of England; as early as 1565 the General Assembly had declared that "every true preacher of Jesus Christ is a Christian bishop".

Even more important is his disproof of the view that Andrew Melville returned from the continent filled with presbyterian zeal and that he was the main author of the Second Book of Discipline which introduced into Scotland a presbyterianism which had not hitherto been envisaged. Dr Kirk maintains that the Book was the product of a general consensus among the leaders of the Church and did no more than spell out in detail what had already been set forth in the First Book and in the practice of the Church.

The account of the growth of kirk sessions and of presbyteries is original and illuminating, as is the evidence for the early re-introduction of the laying-on of hands at ordinations.

The volume is a fine example of the printer's art and amid the variety of types and notes the only mis-spellings observed are of novel (p. 51), parliament (p. 147) and Chalcedon (p. 200), and there is a misplacing of the textual apparatus on p. 203.

This is an excellent work of scholarship to which all students of the period will be much indebted and to which they will need to return again and again for the information and light which it sheds on many issues.

R.B.K.

The Fall of Zion: Northern Chapel Architecture and its Future. By Ken Powell. Unpaginated, SAVE Britain's Heritage, 3 Park Square West, London, N.W.1., 1980, £2.50.

"SAVE Britain's Heritage", to use its own words, "is a conservation pressure group formed at the beginning of 1975 – European Architectural Heritage Year – to arouse concern at the continuing destruction of historic buildings. A group of journalists, architects and planners, SAVE had campaigned through press releases, reports and exhibitions for the retention and rehabilitation of old buildings for social and economic as well as architectural reasons. Increasingly, SAVE has sought to challenge the assumptions and prejudices which underlie the waste of worthwhile fabric".

In five years SAVE has produced over twenty reports, ranging from *Off the Rails: Saving Railway Architecture* (1977) and *Satanic Mills* (industrial architecture in the Pennines, 1979) to *Elysian Gardens* (1979) and *Lost Homes of Scotland* (1980). They are varied, surprising and trenchant. *The Fall of Zion* is well up to the mark. Although its concern is northern (which appears to mean Yorkshire and Lancashire), it should be purchased, taken to heart, and broadcast abroad by every one of our members. Powerful advocacy seldom means total accuracy, and members of this *Journal* may feel, for example, that the account of Morley Congregationalism is misleading, while the United Reformed Church-people of Otley will bridle at being given to the Methodists; but such slips do not impair the argument, and, whether or not the reader remains sympathetic, some things are quite certain: that he will no longer confuse preservation with conservation, that he will boil with shame, anger and frustration (viz: Upper, Heckmondwyke), that he will only occasionally feel present satisfaction (viz: Headingley Hill, Leeds) even if the achievements of the past provoke unwilling pride.

And pride suggests a second reason for purchase: *Fall of Zion* is beautifully illustrated by Keith Parkinson. Regardless of the argument, the photographs provide the most accessible present record of the variety of chapel architecture; and the responsibility of our own churches is suggested by the fact that, of over one hundred photographs, if forty are Methodist and twenty-one are Unitarian, twenty-nine are of our own sort, and those among the most suggestive.

J.C.G.B.

Growing up in Attercliffe. By Alfred Green. Pp. 119, New City Paperbacks, Sheffield, 1981, £2.50. [Obtainable from Urban Theology Unit, 210 Abbeyfield Road, Sheffield, S4 7AZ.]

This unassuming volume of autobiography, the first New City Paperback to be published, concerns life fifty years past in a community that has now quite vanished. Those who know Alfred Green will read it with his voice. Those who know neither the author nor Attercliffe will be well advised to read it. Alfred Green's parents were Socialists and Spiritualists and their son followed their Socialism to become a city councillor and magistrate in England's most Labour city. But he also became a Congregational minister (one of sixty applicants to

Paton College in his year, of whom twenty were called for selection and eleven were accepted) and he served for some time in Madagascar. He recalls his first twenty years with an affectionate understanding which is never allowed to sentimentalise the poverty and hardship of even the securest lives in Attercliffe. Readers of the *Journal* will particularly value the recreation of Brightside Congregational Church as it was in the 1920s. It was never a large church and it had closed by 1940; it must now be almost forgotten. Alfred Green reminds us that it was far more than a *Year Book* statistic, for his own ministry has sprung from its nurture. The Brightside Church needs no other tribute.

J.C.G.B.

Prayers for Sunday Services. The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1980. Pp. 136, £2.50.

This is the promised companion volume to the *Scottish Book of Common Order* (1979). It comprises sixteen sets of prayers for services in the Church of Scotland as well as prayers for the Christian Year, for other special seasons, and for the dedication of a variety of church furnishings. The prayers are varied and of varying merit and are in both traditional and more modern literary form.

The main sixteen sets of prayers are intended for use on Sundays other than Communion Sundays, that is for the common order on the great majority of Sundays in the year in the Church of Scotland. A proper Book of Common Order would require the binding together of this and the earlier volume. However, as our review of the earlier volume pointed out, it was an entirely satisfactory reflection of what was customary or even desirable in the forms of service for which it provided a guide, and it is highly unlikely that the combined publication of these two books would attain the influence or classical status of the *Book of Common Order* (1940).

R.B.K.