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**THE
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HISTORY
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MAGAZINE**

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EDITORIAL

In this issue, we welcome Robert Richard to our contributors. He traces the course of the atonement controversy in the Evangelical Union and the Congregational churches in Scotland. In addition we follow John Campbell in his exploration of a 19th century namesake from Perthshire to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and from Congregationalism to Unitarianism. South of the border, in Staffordshire, Meegan Griffin offers a fascinating account of the good works of a Congregational businessman and notable 19th century Evangelical lay preacher.

NEWS AND VIEWS

John Penry

James Ashdown has written to our CHS member, Chris Gillham:

Until last year my wife was the vicar of Llangammarch, Powys, and in August 2014, in response to a request from a local parishioner, I organized a celebration of John Penry, Llangammarch's most famous son. I found myself becoming very interested in the man and how his reputation has ebbed and flowed over the years which led to my doing further researches, particularly involving the work of Congregational historians like William Pierce (*John Penry, his life, times and writings* 1923). I thought that you and the Congregational churches might be interested in the studies I have done and now uploaded onto my website <http://www.storyman.org.uk/papers/johnpenry.html> and I have put together a booklet with the help of a local artist.

Those interested should contact Mr Ashdown directly through his website.

Hillsborough Tabernacle Congregational Church, Sheffield

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the destruction of the original premises and the 60th anniversary of the opening of the present building the church is running a year long festival, entitled "Hillsborough Hope Festival". Details are available on the hillsboroughtabernacle.blogspot.co.uk website. In conjunction with the festival, Paul Clarke has written a book, *Bombed but Unbowed*, recounting the church's history. This has been published with financial support from the CHS—see the *Reviews* section of this magazine.

CORRESPONDENCE

Charles Silvester Horne and Hampshire

I read Phillip Dunn's insightful article on Charles Silvester Horne in the Spring 2015 edition of the *CHS Magazine* with great interest. This is primarily because Horne was no stranger to Hampshire, the geographical focus of research undertaken for my PhD. Although he was based in London, he visited the county on numerous occasions, speaking at many church events. Given that, in Dunn's words, 'He preached in such a way as to make the truths of Scripture become clear to those who heard him', the great demand for his services was not surprising.

What though might account for his special affection for Hampshire? There are a number of possible explanations. First, Horne's father, who was initially also a minister, had charge of the Congregational church in the north Hampshire town of Odiham from 1859 to 1863. Although this was prior to Silvester's birth, it may have given him a familial affinity with the county.

Second, in 1903 Horne's assistant at Kensington Chapel, Willie Lawrence, was appointed to the pastorate of Lymington Congregational Church, the subject of my article in the last edition of the *CHS Magazine*. This led to him not only speaking at Lawrence's recognition service, but also returning in 1905 as guest preacher at the church's 205th anniversary celebrations.

Third and of particular significance, Horne was a close friend and colleague of John Daniel Jones, the well known minister of Richmond Hill Congregational Church in Bournemouth from 1898 to 1937. Indeed, in his autobiography, *Three Score Years and Ten*, Jones describes his relationship with Horne as 'the closest and most intimate friendship of ... [his] ministerial career' (p.49). Not surprisingly, Horne was a speaker at numerous Richmond Hill anniversaries, including those of 1901, 1903, 1906, 1908 and 1911.

Last, Horne, like Jones, felt a strong obligation to Congregational causes in rural areas of which there were many in Hampshire. As Arthur Porritt, Jones' biographer, explains, 'they entered into what they called a "solemn league and covenant" to devote one week each summer to a preaching and speaking campaign in one of the English counties.' However, it was not all work, since 'the daily programme' began with 'eighteen holes of golf in the morning'. This was followed by 'a sermon in the afternoon, a tea with speeches, and a public meeting in chapel, hall or tent at night' (*J D Jones of Bournemouth* pp. 54-5). In 1903, and in a similar spirit, they jointly attended the old Sunday school scholars' reunion morning and evening services at the hamlet of Ripley, a few miles north of Christchurch, which was then in Hampshire. The reunion

had been started a year earlier by the new minister, George Howarth. As Horne explained, as a city minister he was repaying a debt of gratitude owed to 'rural churches for such earnest recruits as he was almost weekly receiving' (*Christchurch Times* June 20, 1903).

It is amazing that Horne found the time to accept so many requests to speak and perhaps it was his willingness to do so that contributed to his premature death. However, as Jones points out, Horne was not simply a gifted speaker. He also had a 'pretty wit ... [and was] the life and soul of any social party he attended' (p.50).

Roger Ottewill

NOTES FROM THE CHS SECRETARY

A Centenary to Celebrate

It was good to meet with friends from the Congregational History Society, the United Reformed Church History Society and many others to mark the 98th anniversary of the ordination of Constance Coltman, the first woman to be ordained as a Congregational minister in the United Kingdom. The event was to watch the premiere of a short dramatization of her story that can now be seen on YouTube and will become part of a resource pack to mark the centenary in 2017.¹

In the course of celebrating my family history I stumbled across an earlier woman minister who was ordained in the USA in the late nineteenth century and is a very distant relative by marriage. 29 November 2015 will mark the centenary of her death, a centenary that I must not overlook.

My link with her goes back to the 1860s when the then Principal of the Theological College where I later trained for the ministry, Coleg Bala-Bangor, shared his vision of a Christian, Welsh, egalitarian society. 150 years ago this year, 1865, more than 160 people set sail from Liverpool docks on the *Mimosa* to set up 'a new Wales' in far off Patagonia. They arrived at what has since become Port Madryn only to discover the green valleys they had expected were not to be found. They lived in caves and then huts in the pampas, virtually a desert landscape. A few months into their settlement they trekked to the mouth of the Chubut River and with ingenuity from some women of the community set about an irrigation project. In the 1880s they moved to the west and discovered rich pasture lands in the foothills of the Andes, naming the area Cwm Hyfryd (lovely valley). The towns of Rawson, Trelew, Gaiman

¹ Constance Coltman Film—Latest News—Congregational Federation from <http://www.congregational.org.uk/news-and-events-latest-news/latest-news/post/331-constance-coltman-film> accessed 2/10/2015.

and Dolavon in the Chubut Valley and Esquel and Trevelin in the Andes, with their Welsh chapels and tea rooms, are testament to this day to their tenacity. The Welsh community numbers about 20,000, of whom about 5,000 speak Welsh in some measure. The satellite photography of Google Earth shows the continued impact of their irrigation schemes along the Chubut valley.²

While my great-great-grandfather made the short crossing from Ynys Môn (Anglesey) to Dinorwic and the slate quarries of north Wales, his brother with his wife emigrated to Patagonia. They set up their home in Tir Halen (Land of the Salt) and through the generations kept in touch with the family back home.

My great-great-grandfather's brother's great-great-grandson, Owen Tydur, is an award winning poet in both Welsh and Spanish. In 1997 he won the chair at the eisteddfod in Patagonia for a poem addressed to his 'modryb' (aunt). He asked why she had not visited the family in Patagonia as they had visited her in Wales. Following his triumph in the eisteddfod he wrote to her only to have his letter returned, 'not known at this address'. His 'aunt' was my Auntie Susie and that very week she had died.

He wrote to her sisters, including my mother, only to have his letters returned also as they too had died. I wrote to family members, whom my aunt had corresponded with, but had no reply. They too had died. About six years ago through a mutual acquaintance Owen wrote to me and ever since we have corresponded. He has no English. I have no Spanish. So the only language we can correspond in is Welsh.

This year we have joined in the celebrations, though sadly not in Patagonia! We went to, of all places, the Royal Opera House stores in Aberdare. On a disused colliery site all the opera sets from Covent Garden and every touring production for the last fifty years are stored in an enormous warehouse. It was the venue for Patagonia {150} a wonderful promenade production presented by the National Theatre of Wales, Theatr Cymru and S4C, the Welsh TV channel, telling the story of Patagonia.³ A month later we spent three days at the National Eisteddfod of Wales and attended book launches, lectures and another theatre production celebrating the voyage of the Mimosa which later toured Patagonia.

In a speech, from a cultural attaché at the Argentinian embassy, it was interesting to glimpse the warm relationships between the National Assembly of Wales and Argentina and contrast them with the frostier relationships with the Westminster government. After all the Welsh community was a flight from the English imperialism which only shortly before had established a presence in the Falkland Islands with a very different objective.

2 E Baskerville *Patagonia 150—Yma I Aros* (Talybont, Ceredigion 2015).

3 {150} S4C from http://www.s4c.cymru/150/e_index.shtml accessed 2/10/2015.

During a week's stay on Ynys Môn we visited the family graves around the parish church near Brynsiencyn. Not only did we find my great-great-grandfather's grave but we also found the graves of his brother's wife's parents and a couple of her sisters. Beside those simple, slate gravestones was a very much more elaborate grave, of the husband of another sister. We were intrigued that it was so much grander. Who was he? Who was his wife?

Edward Davies had died in 1888 at the age of 57 while visiting Anglesey from Watertown in Wisconsin. He was 'the beloved husband of Rahel o Fôn'.⁴ My great-great-grandfather's brother's wife's sister, Rahel Paynter, had travelled to America in the late 1860s at the invitation of the United Welsh Societies. At an early age she had been regarded as an inspiring preacher. She travelled to many parts of America visiting most Welsh settlements, preaching and lecturing in Welsh as an evangelist. At one such meeting Edward Davies, a blacksmith and wagon-maker from Tregaron in Wales, fell in love with her, followed her from chapel to chapel, and eventually married her. They settled in Watertown, Wisconsin and on a visit home to Brynsiencyn on Anglesey Edward Davies died. Returning to America Rahel o Fôn continued to preach and was ordained as minister of the Welsh Congregational church in Watertown, the first ordained woman minister in Wisconsin.

Her son, Joseph Davies, made his mark in Democratic party politics. He joined Woodrow Wilson's team at the Versailles Peace Conference and figured in Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 1932 presidential campaign. On the strength of that involvement with Roosevelt he went as American ambassador to Moscow in 1936. One of the few western diplomats to attend Stalin's purge trials, he controversially saw strengths in the USSR where others saw none. He became ambassador to Belgium prior to its fall and in 1941 published a book, *Mission to Moscow*, which in 1943 was made into a Hollywood film.⁵ Its purpose was to persuade the American people to join with Russia to overthrow Hitler. It presented Stalin so positively that its director was blacklisted in the post-war McCarthyite era. In 1945 Joseph Davies became Harry S Truman's special emissary to Winston Churchill and shortly after was among the inner circle of presidential advisors at the Potsdam conference.⁶

4 Rahel o Fôn is the Welsh bardic name for "Rachel of Anglesey". 'About: Rachel Davies (Rahel o Fôn)' from http://lod.openlinksw.com/describe/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fdbpedia.org%2Fresource%2FRahel_Davies_%28Rahel_o_F%25C3%25B4n%29 accessed 2/10/2015.

5 J E Davies *Mission to Moscow: A Record of Confidential Dispatches to the State Department, Official and Personal Correspondence, Current Diary and Journal Entries, Including Notes and Comment Up to October, 1941*. (1942). *Mission To Moscow* (1943)—YouTube from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5fDsdZu3Us> accessed 2/10/2015.

6 P McCombs 'Tregaron's Dynasty: The Davies Family' *The Washington Post* 24/1/1978 from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1978/01/24/tregarons-dynasty-the-davies-family/e08395ca-f23c-43bo-9062-caf40075522/> accessed 2/10/2015

A keen advocate of temperance, Rahel o Fôn played a small part in David Lloyd George's election campaigning when home in Anglesey to nurse one of her sisters through the final months of her illness. She died on 29 November 1915 while staying with her son in Washington and her body was brought back to Watertown, Wisconsin. The local paper, reporting her funeral, stated that "Mrs. Davies spent a busy life as an Evangelist and Missionary Worker and was greatly loved by her people". She was regarded "as one of the most powerful of women evangelists."⁷

Following her death, Joseph Davies presented a stained glass window to the National Cathedral in Washington; it commemorates the inspirational preaching of Rahel o Fôn who had been ordained a Congregational minister many years before. 29 November 2015 is very much a centenary to celebrate. It would be wonderful if someone who knows the story of Rahel o Fôn in greater detail would write an article for a future issue of *The Congregational History Society Magazine*.

Richard Cleaves

⁷ C Hannan *Wisconsin Biographical Dictionary* (2008); W F J III *Watertown, Wisconsin: 1836–1936* (2000). 'Rachel Davies' from http://www.watertownhistory.org/Articles/Davies_Rachel.htm accessed 2/10/2015. K Riedl. *Watertown Remembered: Hometown Series of Publications* (2005).

PERTHSHIRE TO PITTSBURGH—THE MINISTRY OF REV. JOHN CAMPBELL

Introduction

The American poet, Robert Frost, famously wrote of the choice to be made when, “Two roads diverged in a yellow wood”.¹ While researching the story of Robert Little² (Congregational minister in Perth, Scotland from 1801), I was intrigued by references to a John Campbell. Over 200 years ago, more than 600 people gathered for Campbell’s open-air ordination and a tabernacle was built. This happened somewhere in the 20 or so miles between Dundee (on the outskirts of which I live) and Perth (which I serve as the current Congregational minister). Yet I had never heard of the place where this Congregational church had existed.

I embarked on a journey. Having charted Little’s story, I retraced my steps and followed the other track. Where was Lochton and what happened there? How much could I discover about my fellow clansman from long ago?

A vision

Robert Haldane³ had a vision—and money to help bring that vision to reality. His plan was for:

the greater diffusion of religious knowledge, among the more remote parts of Scotland, and to accomplish it, he provided a suitable education for a select number of pious and zealous young men, to qualify them for the undertaking.⁴

Haldane had outlined his plan in a letter on 6 October 1798 to a John Campbell⁵ in Edinburgh. In that letter, Haldane expressed a desire to provide a year’s education:

to ten or twelve persons, of any age that may be fit for it ... with a view to the ministry.⁶

1 R Frost ‘The Road Not Taken’ in *Mountain Interval* (New York 1916) 9.

2 G A Campbell ‘Wanderings—Spiritual and Physical: The Ministry of Robert Little’ in *Congregational History Society Magazine* Vol 6 No 4 (2011) 192–203.

3 *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter ODNB).

4 ODNB.

5 ODNB.

6 H Escott *A History of Scottish Congregationalism* (Glasgow 1960) 76–77.

He went on to suggest that Campbell should (with Haldane's younger brother, James⁷) look out for suitable persons.

Three months later, the first class of Robert Haldane's Theological Seminary enrolled. Reality turned out to be rather more ambitious than Haldane's initial proposal. They had 24 students (not 10 to 12) who would study for two years (rather than one).⁸ Alas, no fewer than three students were called John Campbell!

The Campbells are coming—Robert Haldane's Theological Seminary

Aged 32, the eldest of the three Campbells was he to whom Haldane had addressed his letter. Born in Edinburgh in March 1766,⁹ Campbell was orphaned at an early age, and brought up by a maternal uncle. After studying at the Royal High School in Edinburgh,¹⁰ he:

had a large ironmonger's shop in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh ... He was a little man, active, with an intelligent, benevolent countenance, and ... a mind far superior to his position ... His warehouse was then the only repository in Edinburgh for religious tracts and periodicals, ... a sort of house of call ... for all who took an interest in the kingdom of Christ.¹¹

Aged just 19, Campbell became session clerk of an Edinburgh congregation of the Relief Church (or Presbytery of Relief).¹² A founding member in 1793 of the Religious Tract Society of Scotland, he helped create Magdalene Societies in both Edinburgh (1797) and Glasgow:¹³

for females, who gain a dishonourable and precarious subsistence by prostitution ... a refuge to such .. desirous of abandoning their vices, [and] a school for training them to industry, to virtue, and to religion.¹⁴

Campbell was also instrumental with James Haldane in setting up the Edinburgh Gratis Sabbath School Society.

7 ODNB.

8 The second intake of students, enrolled a year later, numbered between 50 and 60.

9 W D McNaughton *The Scottish Congregational Ministry 1794–1992* (Glasgow 1993) 23.

10 One of Campbell's classmates was the future Sir Walter Scott. The Haldane brothers also attended the same school.

11 A Haldane *Memoirs of the Lives of Robert Haldane of Airthrey, and of his brother, James Alexander Haldane* (Edinburgh 1852) 125.

12 Founded in 1761, the Relief Church united with the United Secession Church in 1847 to form the United Presbyterian Church.

13 J Speake *Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia* (Oxford 2003) 178.

14 *An Address to the Public in Favour of the Magdalene Asylum in Edinburgh instituted in the year 1797* (Edinburgh 1804).

Its operations ... were really those of a home-mission for all classes of the people', chiefly those ... outside the churches. A teacher was appointed for each school, and one of the members of the society was associated with him to aid in the ... devotional exercises, and in addressing children, parents, and others who might be induced to attend.¹⁵

Soon 60 schools existed throughout central Scotland.¹⁶ Campbell went on to serve as the distinguished minister of Kingsland Independent Chapel in London, combining his ministry there with preaching tours in Scotland (summer 1804–1812) and later missionary trips to Africa (1812–1814, 1819–1821).¹⁷

The other two Campbells were both 28 years old. One was born in Lochgilphead in Argyll on 10 June 1770. He was a Gaelic speaker, attending the University of Glasgow from 1794, with a view to entering the ministry of the Church of Scotland.¹⁸ In fact, he was ordained in 1801 a Congregational minister—and served in Dunkeld, Dundee¹⁹ and Glasgow—before joining the Secession Church in 1821.²⁰

The third Campbell is the true focus of this study. He was born in Edinburgh on 15 May 1770, and worked initially as a teacher—commencing “his career in life by opening a school for the instruction of youth”.²¹ Campbell also assembled the children on Sunday evenings:

made them repeat portions of scripture, and directed them to the obvious truths contained in those portions which they repeated.²²

Exactly who recruited whom is not clear. The elder John Campbell and James Haldane were friends with many shared interests and endeavours. The evening Sabbath School movement must have brought them both into contact with the younger Edinburgh John Campbell. Whether any of the three Campbells were related to each other is not clear. We know that, like their

15 J Ross *A History of Congregational Independency in Scotland* (Glasgow 1900) 48.

16 ‘Memoir of the Late Rev John Campbell of Kingsland’ in *The Evangelical Repository and Sunday School Instructor* Vol 1 (London 1840) 92.

17 H Ellis and J Meyer (eds) *Masculinity and the Other: Historical Perspectives* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne 2009) 233.

18 McNaughton *Scottish Congregational Ministry* 23.

19 C M Falconer and J C Low *A Hundred Years of Congregationalism: The Story of Ward Chapel* (Dundee 1934) 12.

20 J Macfarlane *Memoir of the Late Rev John Campbell, one of the ministers of the United Secession Church, Glasgow* (Glasgow 1844).

21 Obituary of Rev John Campbell in *The Unitarian Miscellany and Christian Monitor* Vol 6 (hereafter ORJC) Baltimore 1824) 219.

22 *The Monthly Repository of Theology and General Literature* Vol IX (hereafter MRTGL) (Hackney 1814) 194.

fellow students, they all began their studies with Presbyterian sentiments. Before the end of their course, however, the young men were “decided and intelligent Congregationalists”.²³

Studies for the first intake of students were overseen by Greville Ewing.²⁴ The curriculum covered English, grammar and rhetoric, Greek, Hebrew, systematic theology, and church music. Latin and French tuition were available on request. Haldane covered the entire endeavour—lodgings, tuition, books, the well-stocked library—and allowances to each student. During the summer vacations, students were often sent out (generally in pairs) to itinerate in different parts of the country.

Perthshire—Lochton and Balfour

Campbell’s studies finished in November 1800. By then, he was married with “several children”.²⁵ On 1 December, he was sent to Lochton by the Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home. Lochton lies in the upland parish of Abernyte, described as:

a real jumble of little hills, humps and hollows, all of various shapes and sizes, with small valleys and burns dividing them, ... it would be difficult to find a flat piece of ground anywhere ... It lies on the southern slopes of the Sidlaw Hills with the 1,200 ft. King’s Seat as a bastion on the north. From there it slopes gradually down til it meets its neighbours, the parishes of Inchture and Longforgan, in the rich Carse of Gowrie.²⁶

Abernyte parish, around this time, contained 41 houses and three hamlets—Abernyte, Balfour, and Kirkton. Lochton was too small even to be regarded as a hamlet. (Somewhat confusingly, the village of Balfour is now called Abernyte!) The parish was said to be self-sufficient in “almost every dainty except sugar and tea”.²⁷

Lochton does seem an unpromising location for a new church. The Church of Scotland parish minister would pen that:

few districts in Scotland ... have been less disturbed by religious dissensions than the Carse of Gowrie.²⁸

23 Escott *History* 77.

24 ODNB.

25 MRTGL 194.

26 K Vogelsanger *Olden Days in Abernyte—A Short History of a Small Perthshire Parish* (Longforgan 1967).

27 J Adamson ‘Parish of Abernyte’ in J Sinclair *First Statistical Account of Scotland Drawn Up From the Communications of the Ministers of the Different Parishes* Vol 9 (Edinburgh 1793) 138,148.

28 Ibid 152.

In the 100 or so square mile stretch between Perth and Dundee, there were just two “houses for separatists”, each with a small congregation. In Abernyste parish, with a total population of 345²⁹, just two families (one Episcopalian and one Baptist) and one individual (Unitarian) were not aligned to the Church of Scotland.³⁰

John Campbell’s posting to Lochton was:

not solicited by a single individual. The society deemed it a sufficient call in Providence that the place was destitute, and that they had an opportunity of sending relief to it.³¹

Whereas in England, clergymen were generally nominated by individuals, in Scotland:

Presbyterians expected to choose their own pastor democratically, but after 1711 most rural appointments were in the gift of the landowner.³²

For the parish of Abernyste, the power to appoint lay with the Crown³³, as it did for about a third of Scotland’s parishes.³⁴

Mr Adamson, the parish minister, was ordained in Abernyste in April 1760 and served there for 47 years, until his death in 1807. No doubt he bristled at hearing his parish described as “destitute”. The year before Campbell’s arrival at Lochton, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland had issued a “Pastoral Admonition ... to all the people under their charge” warning of:

a sect of men, whose proceedings threaten no small disorder to the country. We mean those, who, assuming the name of missionaries from what they call the Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home, as if they had some special commission from heaven, are at present going throughout the land.³⁵

Moderates were probably never a majority in the ministry of the Kirk, but they:

owed their ascendancy in the church ... (to) an army of Edinburgh lawyers who sat as representatives of distant presbyteries...

Technically the ministers of the group professed allegiance to the Westminster

29 As at 1 January 1792—including 69 children under the age of 8.

30 Adamson *Abernyste* 152.

31 *Missionary Magazine* Vol VII (hereafter *MM*) (Edinburgh 1802) 8.

32 R Houston *Scotland: A very short introduction* (Oxford 2008) 54.

33 J Gorton *A Topographical Dictionary of Great Britain and Ireland* Vol I (London 1833) 11.

34 Houston *Scotland* 54.

35 *Pastoral Admonition Addressed by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland met at Edinburgh, May 23, 1799, to all the people under their charge* (Edinburgh 1799).

Confession, but ... were strongly influenced by the new thinking of the eighteenth century. Many were scholarly men ... Their sermons tended to concentrate on points of moral teaching rather than the drama of salvation.³⁶

Adamson's successor, James Wilson, was appointed in 1808 and ministered in Abernethy for 42 years. Wilson was a:

very unique man, a sort of fossil specimen of the theologians who opposed Galileo ...the old gentleman stoutly denied the doctrine of gravitation.³⁷

Though very affectionate and fatherly, Mr Wilson holds firm by his own opinions, and defends them, even though they are of doubtful orthodoxy, with extraordinary pertinacity. At one time, he holds a spoonful of porridge in transit between the dish and his mouth for a full half hour, until he has finished a dispute on the doctrine of reprobation.³⁸

History records rather less about Adamson. The very fact that the Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home took an interest in the parish, however, indicates the members' view that Christianity there had become, at best, an obligation and a duty—rather than a life-changing power.

It is noteworthy that Robert Haldane himself lived here for a while—at Lochton House, the mansion of the Lochton estate. The estate had been bought for Haldane, out of his inheritance, by his uncle, Colonel Duncan:

In the management of ... property he showed peculiar judgement, and the (estate) of Lochton ... more than doubled in value.³⁹

Haldane's mother was born at Lundie (6 miles north east).⁴⁰ Just 6 days after Campbell arrived in Lochton, Haldane's other uncle, Admiral Adam Duncan, was ordained an elder in Lundie Kirk. Indeed Haldane funded the building of a manse here for Campbell and his family—in the hamlet of Balfour. The Church of Scotland manse was in the hamlet of Kirkton.

Services were held initially in a barn on the Lochton estate. In November 1801, Campbell wrote to the Society:

When I first came here, the people seemed very cold in their attachment

36 D W Bebbington 'Evangelicalism in Modern Scotland' in *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* Vol 9.1 (1991) 5.

37 H Scott *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticana: The Succession of Ministers in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation* Vol V (Edinburgh 1925) 308.

38 W Marshall *Historic Scenes in Perthshire* (Edinburgh 1880) 130.

39 Haldane *Memoirs* 141.

40 Curiously Lundie Castle is reputed to have been built by another John Campbell, around 1540. That Sir John was Lord High Treasurer to King James V of Scotland.

to the gospel. The students who came from Dundee had indeed given much satisfaction, yet they⁴¹ were unwilling to take any active hand in encouraging the preaching of the gospel ... I took occasion to recommend prayer-meetings ... I express my gratitude ... to the Society for the many visits from our English brethren; and I, and all of us, wish the continuance of these favours.⁴²

After ministering here for about a year and a half, Campbell was ordained on Wednesday, 26 May 1802. Over 600 people attended the open-air service. Walter Balfour of the Congregational church at Whitely commenced the service with prayer and the reading of scripture. The exact location of Whitely (or Whiteleigh) is not clear⁴³, but in the parish of Cargill⁴⁴ near Coupar Angus seems the most likely location⁴⁵ (about 8 miles north west of Lochton, and some 16 miles from Invergowrie). Rev Robert Little of Perth preached, taking as his text Acts 14: 23.

The church having publicly ratified their call to Mr Campbell, by one of their members, he was set apart to the pastoral work by prayer and imposition of hands.⁴⁶

For six or seven years, Campbell preached here three times each Sunday. During the week, he also preached in the surrounding villages.⁴⁷ Services in the Lochton barn moved to a new tabernacle, built by Haldane, also in Balfour. The chapel could accommodate 400 people.

For all its promising start, the Congregational presence here was fairly short-lived. Thomas McKinnon followed Campbell in 1808, staying until Whitsun 1811.⁴⁸ Exactly when the congregation dissolved is unknown but it was probably too small and precarious to survive the withdrawal of Haldane's patronage. Robert and James Haldane adopted Baptist convictions around 1808. Certainly, at the end of 1821, the tabernacle was purchased for a new Burgher

41 Campbell here uses "they" to refer to "the people" rather than "the students".

42 MM 8-11.

43 W D McNaughton *Early Congregational Independency in Lowland Scotland* Vol 1 (Glasgow 2005) quoting the *General Account of Congregationalism in Scotland from 1798 to 1848 and Particular Accounts Referring to Separate Counties* (c1848) Section 5 p 34 states, "Whitely was a village not far from Dundee". McNaughton *Scottish Congregational Ministry* 483 suggests Invergowrie.

44 J Leslie *A Plan of the Farm of Whitely in the Barony of Stobhall, in the Parish of Cargill and Shire of Perth part of the annexed Estate of Perth to be Possessed by Discharged Soldiers* (1763) (National Records of Scotland Site ID RHP 3410).

45 McNaughton *Early Congregational Independency* 557.

46 MM 350.

47 ORJC 219.

48 McNaughton *Scottish Congregational Ministry* 96.

congregation.⁴⁹ The parish minister may have been biased against dissent, but in the statistical account of 1833–45, Wilson claimed that the congregation amounted to “just a few Burghers”.⁵⁰ No trace now remains of the tabernacle. When a new Free Church was built in the parish in 1856, dissenting farmers aided the construction by ferrying stones from the former Congregational chapel by horse and cart to the new site.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne

At Haldane’s request, Campbell agreed to preach in Newcastle for three months—but his sojourn there made such an impact that the congregation:

sent an earnest request to their brethren near Dundee that they would consent that Mr Campbell should remain.⁵¹

This was agreed, and the Campbell family moved south. He ministered in Newcastle from 1807 until 1814. Campbell’s theological standpoint changed during his time there, as he adopted first Baptist and then Unitarian views. Firstly:

not finding any direct passages of scripture authoritatively establishing infant baptism, (he) relinquished it and was baptised⁵²

with around half of his congregation. This led to many of the “constant hearers” leaving but “all was done in peace and they went on comfortably”.⁵³

Further divisions were to follow. Visiting friends from Kendal brought news that Rev James Kay had “erred from the faith, by denying the divinity of Jesus Christ”.⁵⁴ Kay was a native of Heap near Bury. Educated at Rotherham Independent College, he was called to New Street Congregational Church, Kendal in July 1801. Around 1809, however, he set up a new congregation of Unitarian Baptists.⁵⁵ Kay’s new

flock was apparently small and his salary in proportion, for at this time he had an earthenware shop in the town.⁵⁶

49 R. Small *A History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church from 1733 to 1900* Vol 2 (Edinburgh 1904) 583.

50 J. Wilson ‘Parish of Abernyte’ in *New Statistical Account of Scotland 1834–45* Vol X Edinburgh/London) 225.

51 *ORJC* 219.

52 *MRTGL* 195.

53 *TMR* 195.

54 *MRTGL* 195.

55 Unitarianism was specifically proscribed by the Toleration Act of 1689 and did not become legal in England until 1813.

56 H. McLachlan *The Methodist Unitarian Movement 1806–1857* (Manchester 1919) 44.

A Mr Brown from Kendal, in Newcastle on business, called as usual, and Campbell and some of his members were:

surprised to find him still appearing serious—appealing to the Scriptures, and likewise manifesting much zeal for what he conceived to be truth.⁵⁷

Campbell invited Brown to dinner, and the principal members of the church gathered either for the meal, or immediately afterwards. In the event, Campbell took unwell and was confined to bed but urged them to stay in the room in order that he could hear their conversations, even though he was unable to participate. These discussions prompted Campbell to return to the scriptures. In so doing:

he soon saw that many passages which he had considered strong proofs of the deity of Christ were not so conclusive as he at first thought, and as he went on examining, the proofs became fewer and fewer.⁵⁸

Around 1811, Campbell became a Unitarian (some accounts say a Unitarian Baptist) and:

a considerable part of his hearers embracing the same opinions, he continued to worship with them

in the Surgeons' Hall.⁵⁹ Two surviving pamphlets by William Anthony Hailes, a Newcastle teacher and Wesleyan Methodist, illustrate the suspicion Campbell's new views engendered.⁶⁰ It would be interesting to know the respective print runs for Campbell's papers and Hailes' replies.

In the spring of 1812, about six months after the split in the congregation, James Haldane visited Newcastle and preached "with great power ... on the 'Person of Christ'" to those who had spurned Unitarian principles:

And the notes of his sermon were afterwards published in a very excellent little treatise, embodying the testimony of Scripture both to the Godhead and manhood of the Saviour.⁶¹

Pointedly, Haldane did not meet Campbell during his visit. By 1814,

⁵⁷ ORJ 220.

⁵⁸ MRTGL 196.

⁵⁹ E A Mackenzie *A Description and Historical Account of the Town and County of Newcastle-upon-Tyne* (Newcastle 1827) 378.

⁶⁰ W A Hailes *The Pre-existence and Deity of the Messiah Defended on the Indubitable Evidence of the Prophets and Apostles in answer to a Socinian Pamphlet Entitled a Short Statement of the Scriptural Doctrine of the Unity of God* (Newcastle 1813). W A Hailes *Socinianism Unscriptural Being an Examination of Mr Campbell's Attempt to Explode the Scriptural Doctrine of Human Depravity, the Atonement etc* (Newcastle 1813).

⁶¹ Haldane *Memoirs* 376.

Campbell appears to have been employed as a Unitarian Fund missionary which may have involved brief preaching trips to Scotland.

Kendal

Around 1817 Campbell moved again to Kendal in Westmorland. He became the minister of the English Presbyterian Market Place Chapel.⁶² A dissenting church in Kendal can be traced to 1687, with the chapel being built in Market Place in 1720. This congregation had been under the Provincial Presbyterian Synod—but by 1756 it was Unitarian in practice. The Market Place Chapel is now Kendal Unitarian Church—and Campbell is obviously missing from the lineage of ministries.⁶³ Kendal had a range of dissenting traditions—and schisms and changes in meeting places make unravelling the past more challenging.

Kay's movements are somewhat clearer. As stated, he had moved from the New Street Congregational Church to form a congregation of Unitarian Baptists. This new cause met initially in the Caledonian Rooms in Market Place—not the original Market Place Chapel!⁶⁴ In 1817, Kay left Kendal, and was preaching for the Methodist Unitarians in Lancashire. A brief pastorate followed at a Presbyterian (later Unitarian) church at Hindley (3 miles east of Wigan), before Kay emigrated to the United States in 1821.⁶⁵ Kay's former congregation ended up uniting with the Market Place Unitarians.⁶⁶

As Campbell was not ministering in the Market Place (Unitarian) Chapel, there seem to be three likely options. An "orthodox" Presbyterian church was established in 1763, though it is unclear whether this was a breakaway group from the Market Place Chapel.⁶⁷ This congregation fell under the auspices of the Associate Antiburgher Presbytery of Edinburgh. The first minister incurred the displeasure of the synod for attending the ordination of an Independent minister in 1771 and, even with the passage of time, it seems unlikely that this would have been the location of Campbell's sphere of service. The congregation had been unable to meet stipend costs by 1780, and had sold their building in 1812 (though they continued meeting).⁶⁸

The Presbyterian church was bought by the Inghamites (the group having

62 J D Bowers *Joseph Priestley and English Unitarianism in America* (Pennsylvania 2007) 229.

63 F Nicholson and E Axon *The Older Nonconformity in Kendal, A History of the Unitarian Chapel in the Market Place* (Kendal 1915).

64 Baptist Unitarians were nicknamed "dippers" and performed baptisms in the River Kent and in the Anchorite's Well.

65 A P F Sell *Church Planting: A Study of Westmorland Nonconformity* 1986 (Repr Eugene, Oregon 1998) 74.

66 John Burgess 'The Baptists and the Cumbrian Religious Censuses' in *Baptist Quarterly* Vol XXIX (1981) 170.

67 Nicholson and Axon *Older Nonconformity in Kendal* 344.

68 Sell *Church Planting* 42.

united a few years earlier with the Old Scots Independents).⁶⁹ Though this might have been a possible location, no record exists of Campbell being associated with the Inghamites before or after his time in Kendal, so it is also unlikely. The third and most plausible option seems to be New Street Congregational Church to which Kay had ministered—formed in 1772 when the Presbyterian minister, censored for attending an Independent ordination, opted to transfer his allegiance.

Pittsburgh

In 1817, the *Monthly Repository* of London carried an advertisement for a Unitarian minister to go to Pittsburgh. Three years later the post was still unfilled and Campbell was urged to apply. He was not only encouraged to do so by his son-in-law Joseph Armour and daughter Jean, who had already emigrated, but also by his wife who wished the family to be together. His doctor also seems to have thought that Pittsburgh might be a healthier environment for his asthma.

The journey took 5 weeks by ship (from Liverpool to Philadelphia) and 5 days (and 4 nights) by stagecoach on an unfinished turnpike road.⁷⁰ They arrived on 1 June 1820. The name Pittsburgh had first appeared in 1758.⁷¹ It is claimed that:

George Washington, the Father of his Country, is equally the Father of Pittsburgh, for he came thither in November, 1753, and established the location of a new, imperial city by choosing it as the best place for a fort.⁷²

The first settlers were nearly all young men from Virginia and the Cumberland valley. In fact, another John Campbell, a Virginian colonel, had in 1764 laid out a plan at the union of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers.⁷³ By the early 1790s Pittsburgh had more than 150 homes “including frame houses and some brick and stone structures”.⁷⁴ Western migrants used it as a “jumping off point” and it became a commercial emporium” for the mid-western frontier.⁷⁵ When the Campbells arrived, the population stood at 7,248.

Citizens of early Pittsburgh complained that:

69 J McGavin et al *Historical Sketch of the Scots Old Independents and the Inghamite Churches: with the correspondence which led to their union* (Colne 1814).

70 L W Mason *Early Unitarianism in Pittsburgh and the Story of the First Church* (Pittsburgh 1940) 3.

71 S H Killikelly *The Early History of Pittsburgh: Its Rise and Progress* (Pittsburgh 1906) vii.

72 S Harden Crouch *A Short History of Pittsburgh 1758–1908* (New York 1908) 13.

73 J Newton Boucher and J Woolf Jordan *A Century and a Half of Pittsburgh and her People* Vol 1 (New York 1908) 269.

74 D P Barr *A Colony Sprung From Hell: Pittsburgh and the struggle for authority on the Western Pennsylvania Frontier, 1744–1794* (Ohio 2014) 257.

75 D R Goldfield *Encyclopedia of American Urban History* (2007) 575.

in what should have been early daylight, the judges sometimes had to read their charges by candlelight, so thick was the atmosphere ... many streets were seas of polluted mud where hogs and dogs ran wild.⁷⁶

The Pittsburgh Campbell encountered had been chartered as a city for just 4 years. Already it had 17 churches and religious societies. Many early settlers were from Scotland or northern Ireland, and sought spiritual comfort in strongly Calvinist churches. Though there may have seemed to be no obvious religious home for the small group of British Unitarians who had emigrated, including Campbell's daughter, perhaps Pittsburgh was as good a place as any for the Unitarian cause to take root.

A key figure in the story of Pittsburgh Unitarianism is Benjamin Bakewell, sometimes called the father of the flint glass industry in America.⁷⁷ He:

felt it his duty to maintain his Unitarian convictions, whether men would hear or whether they would forbear ... It was his business to support the church not to make it succeed.⁷⁸

Campbell led worship initially in the court house, Pittsburgh not yet having a public hall. In 1838, the Evangelical Lutherans, worshipping in the court house, described it as an unsatisfactory location:

Forbidding and gloomy to the last degree. They occupied it only because they could find no other place,⁷⁹ having been refused the use of other churches.⁸⁰

On alternate Sundays, Campbell rode 12 miles up the Monongahela River to preach in a barn belonging to a member. Later, services were held in the upper room of a wagon-maker's shop before moving to the school room procured by the society. Campbell taught 30 pupils mathematics, languages and astronomy. Three years later, 4 members leased a plot of land on Smithfield in the heart of the city, where a neat, brick church was built (with "substantial financial assistance" from Bakewell⁸¹) and dedicated on 19 October 1823.

The services of the day were conducted by the Rev John Campbell, the minister of the church, and the Rev James Kay, of Northumberland; both these

76 L Baldwin *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City 1750-1865* (Pittsburgh 1937) 203.

77 J W Hawkins *Glasshouses and Glass Manufacturers of the Pittsburgh Region 1795-1910* (Indiana 2009) 48-64.

78 *Monthly Record of the American Unitarian Association* Vol 1 (hereafter *MRAUA*) (Boston 1860) 421.

79 Perhaps remembering worship in the court house, Bakewell later allowed the Evangelical Lutherans use of the Unitarian Church.

80 *History of Allegheny County Pennsylvania Vol 1 Part 1* 378.

81 Bowers op. cit. 229.

gentlemen are from England.⁸² The audiences were crowded, and many persons were unable to obtain admittance within the walls.⁸³

Campbell's successors were not all suited to the post. One writer stated that:

The Unitarian ministers who were sent to Pittsburgh seemed to be selected on no principle; except, perhaps that they were men who were willing to take a Western journey.⁸⁴

In 1836, Bakewell wrote to the President of the American Unitarian Association regretting that the new minister, Mr Miles (subsidised by the Association) had lasted just three Sundays.⁸⁵ In January 1843, Bakewell wrote with "feelings of mortification" that his cousin had resigned, leaving the congregation "scattered like sheep that have no shepherd".⁸⁶ Bakewell's cousin, Rev William J Bakewell:

At first an Episcopal minister ... became a Unitarian, then returned again to the Episcopal fold before becoming a Roman Catholic ... returned to the Episcopal ministry yet a third time, finally resigning his rectorship to become a teacher.⁸⁷

Campbell, on the other hand:

was heard by friends with great and increasing satisfaction; and although he made little pretension to oratory (a good thing in the West, his complete knowledge of Scripture, and the kind, affectionate and fervent manner in which he addressed them, arrested the attention and impressed the minds of all those who had the happiness to hear him.⁸⁸

Campbell is credited with converting Harm Jan Huidekoper, a Dutchman, to the Unitarian creed.⁸⁹ Huidekoper established a Unitarian church at Meadville (90 miles north of Pittsburgh) in the 1820s, and also served as vice-President of the American Unitarian Association.⁹⁰ In 1844 Huidekoper

82 For England read Britain!

83 *The Christian Reformer or New England Miscellany* Vol X (Hackney 1824) 212.

84 *MRUA* 421.

85 Letter from Benjamin Bakewell to Charles Briggs, President of the American Unitarian Association 23 July 1836, American Unitarian Association Letterbooks, bMS 571/23, Andover-Harvard Library, Harvard Divinity School.

86 Bakewell to Briggs 7 January 1843, bMS 571/49 Andover-Harvard Library.

87 J F Rishell *Founding Families of Pittsburgh: The Evolution of a Regional Elite 1760-1910* (Pittsburgh 1990) 109.

88 *ORJ* 222.

89 A Greenwood and M W Harris *An Introduction to the Unitarian and Universalist Traditions* (Cambridge 2011) 84.

90 M W Harris *The A to Z of Unitarian Universalism* (Plymouth 2003) 324.

founded Meadville Theological School, which moved in 1856 into an “imposing Italianate building” with funds donated by Unitarian churches in New York and Brooklyn.⁹¹ This school, with no doctrinal requirement for admission other than a “belief in the divine origin of Christianity”,⁹² continued operating until 1926.⁹³

Sadly, less than a year after the church was opened, Campbell died⁹⁴ on 20 July 1824. His daughter offered him something to drink and his last words were:

I want no more in this world—behold death! Oh the pleasing hope, and glorious immortality!⁹⁵

He kissed his daughter and sank to rest in her arms. His death resulted from asthma. Benjamin Bakewell recorded that Campbell had little expectation of recovery, and was:

frequently preparing the minds of his friends for what would be the inevitable result.⁹⁶

At Campbell’s funeral Bakewell declared:

But for him these walls would never have been built. May we be thankful that he was spared to come among us and to lay the foundations of this church.⁹⁷

Conclusion

Congregational Churches, by their very nature, will not be homogenous in their theological outlook. No central authority determines or enforces acceptable doctrine. In the USA some Congregationalists believing:

that all would be saved and none damned became known as Universalists ... Those rejecting the Trinity ... became Unitarians.⁹⁸

Yet Congregationalism is not a body of doctrine.

From the beginning it has been the idea that a Congregational Church is not

91 W B Moore and E H Rekas *Meadville: Postcard History Series* (South Carolina 2012) 88.

92 Harris *A to Z*.

93 Moore and Rekas *Meadville* 87.

94 Mason *Early Unitarianism in Pittsburgh* 5.

95 *ORJ* 223.

96 *Ibid*.

97 K R Parker *Here We Have Gathered: The Story of Unitarian Universalism in Western Pennsylvania, 1808–2008* (Ohio 2010) quoting Benjamin Bakewell *In Memoriam* (1824).

98 J Elton Smith Jr ‘Congregationalism’ in C G Bates *The Early Republic and Antebellum America: An Encyclopedia of Social, Political, Cultural, and Economic History* (Oxon/New York 2010) 248.

made up of Congregationalists as a Quaker congregation is made up of Quakers, but that a Congregational Church is a group of Christians associated together for a definite purpose, not because of peculiarities of belief.⁹⁹

Contrasting Congregationalism with creedal or confessional churches, another writer stated that:

the great fact for people of the Congregational Way is that Christ made a covenant with His people. He never said, 'Believe these items of Theology and you are in!' ... His word was, 'Follow me. Come walk with me. Trust me. Learn my way. Be my disciple'. It was not theological correctness He was interested in, but personal commitment.¹⁰⁰

What of Campbell's journey from Independency to Unitarianism? Is his story relevant to Congregationalism in the 21st century? In May 1802, when the Perthshire congregation of 600 gathered for the open-air ordination, none would have predicted that the two officiating ministers¹⁰¹ and the ordinand would drift so far in their theological positions. Balfour became a Universalist, and Little, like Campbell, a Unitarian. Campbell, of course, had been sponsored by the Haldanes, and:

was one of the comparatively few amongst all these students who actually denied the faith.¹⁰²

Campbell's story raises several points. Firstly, where are our Lochtons? Where do we start something new, constructing a church before a building? There are examples in the Congregational Federation but, even without wealthy patrons like the Haldane brothers, where are the next opportunities?

Secondly, are endings necessarily bad? Congregationalism in Lochton/Balfour was short-lived, lasting perhaps 15 years. Does that matter, especially if our Congregationalism is a means rather than an end?

Thirdly, at what point does theological diversity make separation inevitable in a Congregational church? The members of the Haldanite congregation in Newcastle did not all become Unitarian when Campbell's theological standpoint changed. In just the same way, Perth Congregational church did not become Unitarian as Little's views changed, nor Baptist with the Haldanes. A Congregational church, by its form, can hold together differing theological positions. Yet accommodation can only go so far and there comes a point at which a church will split. Though a Congregational minister is a teacher,

99 G G Atkins and F Fagley *History of American Congregationalism* (Boston/Chicago 1942) 342.

100 A A Rouner Jr *The Congregational Way of Life* (New Jersey 1972) 43.

101 Balfour, in fact, was not ordained.

102 Haldane *Memoirs* 361.

doctrinal purity (however defined) rests with the whole group gathered in the church meeting. One might assume that this would give Congregationalism an advantage over other forms of church government in terms of coping with doctrinal shifts. Yet this is less than clear. Whereas in England Unitarianism mostly evolved from Presbyterianism, in the USA it emerged from a reaction against the Calvinism of the Great Awakening of the 1740s, associated with the Congregational theologian, Jonathan Edwards.¹⁰³

Gordon A Campbell

¹⁰³ R E Richey 'Did the English Presbyterians Become Unitarian?' in *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* Vol 142 No 1 (1973) 58.

Books for Congregationalists

Manual of Congregational Principles by RW Dale,

The Atonement by RW Dale,

Visible Saints: The Congregational Way 1640–1660 by Geoffrey F. Nuttall

Studies in English Dissent by Geoffrey F. Nuttall

Christian Fellowship or the Church Member's Guide by John Angell James

Thomas Barnes of Farnworth and the Quinta: A Chronicle of a Life by Jennifer Barnes

Quinta Press, Meadow View, Weston Rhyn, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 7RN 01691 778659

E-mail info@quintapress.com; website: www.quintapress.com

PDF versions of many Congregational works (John Cotton, Richard Mather, William Jay, John Angell James, RW Dale and PT Forsyth) can be viewed by clicking on the PDF Books link on the website.

Also Calamy's 1702, 1713 and 1727 volumes of Richard Baxter's *Life and Times* detailing the ministers ejected in 1662.

Click on the Whitefield link for further links to his sermons and Journals.

There are many other titles too numerous to mention.

THE ATONEMENT CONTROVERSY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY EVANGELICAL UNION AND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF SCOTLAND

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Scottish ecclesiastical scene had already undergone significant change. Over the course of the 1700s the Church of Scotland had been consistently beset by division between the Moderate and Popular parties in the General Assembly. The Moderate group, astutely led by William Robertson (1721–93), enjoyed greater numerical support in the assembly, though not across the country. Here, the more Evangelical group held greater sway amongst ordinary members. In addition to differences in theological outlook within the Kirk, two further splits had occurred. The Secession Church was established in the 1730s, followed by the Relief Church some ten years later. Both naturally led to a loss of membership for the national church, with some people attracted to the more rigidly Confessional leanings of the Secession body in particular.

With regard to the nature and scope of the atonement, however, a largely traditionalist Calvinist view continued to prevail, with the belief that Christ had died only for a predestined ‘elect’, in order to satisfy a sovereign God. Indeed, Donald McLeod has described the Scottish view of the atonement as being traditionally Anselmic in nature.¹

Perhaps the most significant challenge to this orthodoxy (when ‘heresy’ trials were rare) arose in Ayrshire in the latter decades of the eighteenth century, with the publication by the Ayr minister, William McGill (1732–1807), of his *Practical Essay on the death of Jesus Christ* (1786). In this, McGill moved away from the accepted standards of his day, not only in his view of the Westminster Confession but also on the nature of the atonement. McGill held a Socinian² line on the work of Christ, whereby Jesus took on the role of obedient servant, rather than universal saviour.

Censured by the courts of assembly, McGill apologized for, and to some extent withdrew, his thesis in the 1790s. However the Secession Church took

1 *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology* ed N Cameron (Edinburgh 1993) 39. Anselm’s (1033–1109) view of the nature of the atonement was substitutionary and vicarious.

2 A system, based on the views of Faustus Socinus (1539–1604), which took root in Poland in the 17th century, and which promoted an ‘example’ theory of the atonement rather than substitutionary. McGill, via the Ayr Library Society, was certainly knew the ideas of English Socinians, like Joseph Priestley (1733–1804) and Nathaniel Lardner (1653–1740).

a dim view indeed of the Kirk's failure to depose him. This then was the first instance of Secession ministers adopting a hard line on the atonement.

Different theories of the atonement would however emerge in the course of the nineteenth century, which would have a profound effect on the life and mission of the Congregational churches, and indeed led to the formation of the Evangelical Union in the 1840s, which would later merge with the Scottish Congregational Union.

The best known figure both in the Evangelical Union, and indeed arguably in the propagation of alternative views of the atonement in nineteenth century Scotland, was James Morison (1816–63). The machinations of the case made by the Secession Church against him have received extensive treatment elsewhere.³ Rather, I will focus upon the origins of his opinions; how he promoted them within the Evangelical Union; the effects of 'Universalism' upon Congregational churches in Scotland; and how a form of rapprochement was eventually reached between the EU and the Congregationalists, prior to the union of 1896. In addition, it will be necessary to consider wider social changes in the fields of politics and literature to assess how these might have impinged on views of the atonement, as well as the wider Scottish and English theological scenes over the nineteenth century.

Licensed to preach in 1839, Morison certainly gained numerous converts to his 'Universalist' opinion, that Christ's atonement redeemed both believer and nonbeliever. This position, which clearly contravened the Westminster Confession, inevitably led to a charge of heresy levelled against him. From Morison's early ministry in Cabrach, by 1840 he was called to Clerk's Lane, in Kilmarnock, Ayrshire. As a result of his views, expressed from the pulpit (in addition to his publication of *The Nature of the Atonement* (1841) which clarified his 'hypothetical' Universalism), it only took around a year before the synod of the United Secession Church removed his name from its ministerial roll as a consequence.⁴ Indeed his teaching on the atonement was considered by the United Secession body, to be contrary to the Bible as well as the Confession, and he was therefore charged with heresy on several counts. One section which concerned the atonement being worded: "that the object of saving faith to any person is the statement that Christ made atonement for that person, as he made atonement for the sins of the whole world; and that the seeing of this statement to be true is saving faith, and gives the assurance of salvation".⁵ Morison and his father Robert, with A C Rutherford and John Guthrie, following James' dismissal from the Secession Church, formed the Evangelical Union

3 For instance F Ferguson *A History of the Evangelical Union* (Glasgow 1876) and O Smeaton *Principal James Morison the man and his work* (London 1902).

4 http://universalium.academic.ru/279797/Morison,_James

5 <http://freestgeorges.blogspot.co.uk/2008/03/this-one-thing-i-do-john-brown-of.html>

at Kilmarnock in 1843. The new 'denomination'⁶ trained its ministers first at Kilmarnock and then in a theological academy in Glasgow, with Morison serving as president. By the end of the nineteenth century it made ecclesiastical sense for the Evangelical Union and the Scottish Congregationalists, with more than 90 congregations, to unite as the Congregational Union of Scotland.

Where did Morison's views come from?

It has recently been suggested that 'the atonement controversy in the United Secession Church was of a relatively mild character'.⁷ Arguably Morison at the beginning of his career accepted a form of 'moderate' Calvinism; indeed there is no hint of his following the example of John McLeod Campbell (1800–72) who had rejected the notion of penal substitution in the atonement for which he was censured by the Church of Scotland,⁸ a case with which Morison must have been familiar. In formulating his own path Morison accepted that it was not that anyone had generally denied that Christ had died for sinners, but rather it was over the extent (or rather *intent*) of the atonement on which disagreement turned. James Morison in his work had essentially accepted the Amyraldian⁹ view of the atonement with many adjudicating, in still Calvinist Scotland, that he was a fully-fledged Arminian.¹⁰ In the search for where Morison initially developed such opinions, we might turn to his student years in Glasgow where he was under the tutelage of John Brown (the two becoming close friends).

The Amyraldian position (also held by Brown) was essentially that unless Christ in effect died for all, there can be no justification of faith for any to approach the Father through Jesus. Additionally, if Christ has been sacrificed only for the elect, it follows that humankind would have limited assurance, which led to a questioning of whether or not they were indeed members of the said 'elect'.

6 The EU did not see itself as a separate denomination at its inception, as it aimed to attract a gathered church from a wide field of believers.

7 <http://freestgeorges.blogspot.co.uk/2008/03/this-one-thing-i-do-john-brown-of.html>

8 *Dictionary Scottish Church History* 129. McLeod Campbell was generally clear on Christ's substitutionary death, but expanded his ideas to add to what he perceived to be a pronounced weakness contained in previous theories.

9 Based on the teaching of Moses Amyraut (1596–1664) that, prior to election, Christ's atonement was upon to all, based on faith. Though none could manage this of their own accord some were then elected to faith, which maintained the Calvinist doctrine of unconditional election. The effect of the atonement remains restricted to those who believe. This view was considered to be a 'hypothetical' Universalism. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amyraldism>

10 <http://freestgeorges.blogspot.co.uk/2008/03/this-one-thing-i-do-john-brown-of.html> Arminianism was initiated by the Dutch theologian Jacob Arminius (1560–1609), the will of humans being freed by grace before regeneration, the Atonement is said to be adequate for all, yet the benefits of salvation are only attributed to those who of their own free volition choose faith, aided by the Holy Spirit. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arminianism>

Thus was Morison's argument grounded in a genuinely pastoral concern to reach out in his offer of the gospel for the salvation of all. Although in public at least, he was prepared to go further than his mentors, there was a natural concern within the United Secession Church, as to how far his 'hypothetical' Universalism had spread in the synod. Naturally, fingers of accusation were pointed at John Brown, who it was assumed had inculcated Morison at the United Secession Hall.

For a man in Brown's lofty position within the denomination, this was a serious charge, which led to his defending himself in an article in the *United Secession Magazine* of June 1841, which dealt with issues such as faith, human inability, the extent of the atonement and the sonship of Christ (as Morison had also been accused by the synod of disputing Christ's eternal sonship). However, the key difference regarding the nature of faith between the two men (enabling Brown to extricate himself from further controversy) was that Morison believed saving faith to be effected by the proposition 'Christ died for me', in contrast to Brown who considered it to be centrally contained in the love of God initiated by His sending His Son to die for reprobate sinners. Thus did Brown avoid the 'uncertainty' associated with Morison's views on the extent of the atonement, which sat so uncomfortably with traditional 'Scottish' understanding.¹¹

Furthermore Brown believed that Christ had not died for all 'equally', employing for the first time the two phrases, "general reference" and "peculiar or special reference" in relation to the death of Christ. Neither Brown, nor his fellow professor Robert Balmer¹² (who also accepted the Amyraldian view), saw this as a departure from strict Calvinism. Rather, Brown regarded the matter as an 'internal' dispute between Calvinists, in a theological area left open by the Synod of Dort, which failed to provide sufficient clarity. Brown also skilfully posited that Amyraut was discharged of heresy by the French Reformed Church, and indeed that his views were widely held by a majority of the Reformed churches of Europe. Perhaps crucially he tried to suggest that the Westminster Confession was not intended to eject Amyraldians from the body of the Reformed faith.¹³

In continuing the investigation of how Morison arrived at his hypothetical Universalism, having posited that he drew upon the teachings of John Brown, it may be possible to widen the scope of influences upon the EU minister. Fergus Ferguson, the EU's historian, claimed that Morison carried a copy of Charles Finney's (1792–1875) *Lecture on Revivals* in his pocket on his travels.¹⁴

Michael Horton has recently offered a survey of Finney's views on the

11 <http://freestgeorges.blogspot.co.uk/2008/03/this-one-thing-i-do-john-brown-of.html>

12 For Robert Balmer (1787–1844) see ODNB.

13 <http://freestgeorges.blogspot.co.uk/2008/03/this-one-thing-i-do-john-brown-of.html>

14 Ferguson *A History of the Evangelical Union* 7.

atonement, with his (Finney's) *Systematic Theology* offering an instructive flavour of opinion. He avers that the American evangelist believed that human beings were capable of choosing whether they would be corrupt by nature or redeemed, referring to original sin as an "anti-scriptural and nonsensical dogma".¹⁵ Finney did not accept that human beings held a sinful nature.¹⁶ Therefore, if Adam led humans into sin, not by their inheriting his guilt, this perhaps leads to the view of Christ, the Second Adam, as saving by example. This is precisely where Finney (in Horton's opinion) moves to, in his explanation of the atonement.¹⁷

The first point to consider about the atonement, Finney said, is that Christ could not have died for anyone else's sins than his own. His obedience to the law and his perfect righteousness were 'sufficient' to save him, but could not legally be accepted on behalf of others. Rather, Finney's theological system is driven by a search for moral improvement as seen on this point: "If he [Christ] had obeyed the Law as our substitute, then why should our own return to personal obedience be insisted upon as a *sine qua non* of our salvation".¹⁸ In other words, why would God insist that we save ourselves by our own obedience if Christ's work was sufficient?

Clearly, Finney expounded the example theory of the atonement, leaving the door ajar for a more universal understanding, while denying a substitutionary element which: "assumes that the atonement was a literal payment of a debt, which we have seen does not consist with the nature of the atonement ... It is true, that the atonement, of itself, does not secure the salvation of any one".¹⁹ From here, it was possible for Morison to take elements of Finney's theology (along with others, and 'expand' upon them).

At the same time, contemporary with Morison was Robert Murray McCheyne (1813-43), a highly regarded Church of Scotland minister, who held that Christ had offered himself a Saviour for *all* the human race. Morison must have been familiar with McCheyne's work. For example in his sermon on Hebrews 3:1 he outlined this more expansive gospel:

"It is nowhere said in the Bible that Christ died for this sinner or that sinner. If you are waiting till you find your own name in the Bible, you will wait for ever. But it is said a few verses before that: 'He tasted death for everyman:' and again: 'He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world'. Not that all men

15 C Finney *Systematic Theology* (1878 edition) 179.

16 Ibid.

17 <http://www.modernreformation.org/default.php?page=printfriendly&var1=Print&var2=625atonement>

18 Finney *Systematic Theology* 206.

19 Ibid 207.

are saved by Him. Ah, no! the most never come to Jesus, and are lost! but this shows that any sinner may come, even the chief of sinners, and take Christ as his own Saviour, Come you then, anxious soul; say you, He is my refuge and my fortress; and then, be anxious, if you can.”²⁰

It may be therefore that Morison drew upon a variety of sources, the Amyraldian position he received at college under Brown, the writings of Finney, and an awareness of the work of men like McCheyne, in addition to his own study of scripture. There seems little doubt that Morison arrived at his own version of Universalism, over time, moving from the safer ground held by Brown, to become convinced of the need to challenge the rigid, Calvinism of his day.

Although the EU held the door open to members of any denomination to join their nascent movement, times were not propitious. In 1843 around a third of ministers walked out of the General Assembly to form the Free Church of Scotland. Following the ‘Ten Year Conflict’ in the assembly over issues of patronage and the right of local congregations to choose their own minister, in addition to a general dissatisfaction with the moderate control of the assembly floor, the new denomination quickly gained widespread geographical support.

In addition to challenging the nascent EU, the Free Church indeed dealt a substantial blow to Congregationalism in Scotland, which, up to that point had attracted support from those who desired more evangelical preaching. There had in fact been an increase in membership around 1840 during a period of national revival. However, as many attending Congregational churches remained Presbyterian in sentiment, they were naturally attracted to the new Free Church, which maintained a Presbyterian polity, combined with the greater evangelical zeal they sought. As a result, the Congregational movement haemorrhaged numbers, which threatened the survival of several churches.

So too the EU, in taking up a Congregational model of being church (aside from retaining elders) was placed in direct competition with the Free Church in its burgeoning years. A key to the relative success and growth of the EU (following its beginnings in the midst of an atonement controversy) may be attributed to three factors.

The first of these was the early establishment of a theological academy, which enabled Morison and the other leaders to pursue the aim of an ‘educated’ ministry. Secondly the proliferation of published material offered them the opportunity to run an effective public relations machine. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, was the skill of EU ministers to tap into social concerns of the day, such as the temperance movement which enabled them to build

²⁰ As quoted at <http://gfinanchester.com/jesus-died-for-all-robert-murray-mcheyne-on-the-free-and-well-meant-offer-of-the-gospel>

a base of working class support in urban areas, allowing the EU to plant new churches with some success. Indeed Morison made an astute move in taking up a pastorate in Glasgow, at a time of urban expansion. Additionally, Morison himself, who was clearly held in high regard in Kilmarnock due to his commitment to pastoral duties,²¹ was able to take the vast majority of his congregation with him, into the new EU church.

The Congregational Union Churches

Contemporary to the Morison case, and the establishment of the EU, Scottish Congregational churches were to experience their own disruption, created by differing views of the atonement. From the early 1800s the prevailing opinion, unquestionably under the influence of ‘appeasing’ Presbyterianism, in a Scottish context was a moderate Calvinism. This was expressed by Ralph Wardlaw (1779–1853) in his 1830 work the *Extent of the Atonement*. Here he suggested that the sacrifice of Christ was ‘a vindicatory manifestation of the righteousness of God in order to the free and honourable exercise of His mercy’, which vindicated the ‘unconditional freeness of the Gospel’. Although the atonement was universal in scope, it was yet limited by the special work of the Spirit in election, by which the elect alone would accept the offer of salvation. In contrast to the Calvinism of the Westminster Confession which held that the *extent* of the atonement was limited to the elect only, rather than being universal, Wardlaw’s view—widely shared by Congregationalists in Scotland—was certainly within an orthodox mould. However, with Congregationalism having taken root in an ecclesiastical scene so heavily in thrall to the Confession, it is understandable that most would not have wanted to diverge from the mainstream, despite their independent polity.²² Indeed, early Congregationalists were keen to attract members from the Church of Scotland.

This soteriological conformity would be challenged in 1842 with the publication, by John Kirk (1813–36) of Hamilton, of his 172 page article entitled: *A Way of Life Made Plain*. Here Kirk averred that:

‘not only did Jesus die for every man, but that God’s spirit strives with every man, and that they who yield are saved, and that they who resist are unsaved’.²³

From this we gather that Kirk regarded the scope of the Spirit as universal in nature, as was Christ’s atoning work. Significantly, as we have seen, this position had been rejected by Wardlaw, among others, who had maintained the more ‘traditional’ Congregational position of the time, which was of a moderate

21 Clerk’s Lane Congregational Church, Kilmarnock membership roll 1840–1850. 184 joined in November 1842, a very impressive figure for the time, attributable to Morison’s ministry.

22 J Ross *A History of Congregational Independency* (Glasgow 1900) 125

23 Ibid.

Calvinist hue. A pamphlet war followed the publication of Kirk's address.²⁴ Although not moving as far as Morison to full-blown Universalism, Kirk appeared an advocate at least of an Arminian understanding of the atonement.

However, such opposition placed the Congregational Union in an awkward position. Given that each church was autonomous, the union was not at liberty to intervene in local differences of opinion over doctrine. In addition, without any formal subscription to creeds, in variance from the Established church, Congregationalists were unable to pinpoint a list of agreed doctrines, which all should hold in common. Rather there was something of an unspoken assumption between churches that they held doctrinal positions in common, with regard to the atonement.

Despite the hindrance of the latter, it was felt that Kirk's views constituted a substantial point of dispute and divergence from the faith, and, as a result, threatened fraternal relations between churches. Into this atmosphere the Glasgow Theological Academy initiated a series of sermon exercises, designed to identify students suspected of sympathising with Kirk's beliefs. Three questions were set which served to attain the conclusion of this investigation. Some nine students were then deemed to have contravened acceptable doctrinal standards (essentially holding to Kirk's position) and were asked to leave the academy. Notably, Kirk himself, who had, under the inspiration of Charles Finney's example, set out on an itinerant preaching tour in order to spread more 'Universalist' ideas, found a home in the EU, taking up the pastorate of Brighton Street Chapel, Edinburgh, in 1845.²⁵

Shortly afterwards the four churches in the Glasgow area and the Congregational churches in Aberdeen pushed the issue of the atonement yet further. The Glasgow groups sent a letter to churches at Hamilton, Bridgeton, Ardrossan, Cambuslang, and Bellshill, asking for clarity on their views of the atonement, and to ascertain whether or not they maintained the position of special influence of the Holy Spirit upon regeneration and effectual calling, and viz unconditional election. Sadly, dissatisfied with the responses, the Glasgow churches felt, at this juncture, that they had to withdraw from further fellowship with those of a different opinion. So too, in Aberdeen, having petitioned other local congregations, they felt that their views of the atonement differed to such an extent that continuing union was rendered undesirable. In

24 For instance, in 1844 James MacLehose published a 23 page pamphlet entitled: *Strictures on "The Way of Life Made Plain," by John Kirk, Minister of the Gospel, Hamilton, Or, Observations on the Views Contained in that Publication Regarding the Atonement, and the Work of the Holy Spirit in Faith and Regeneration.*

25 *Dictionary Scottish Church History* 460

time the correspondence between churches was published, that others might be offered a full insight into the machinations of their decision making process.²⁶

Clearly, there had been a movement from early to mid-century in both EU and some Congregational churches on their approach to long held views of the atonement, with one side continuing to stress the sovereignty of God and the case for election, as opposed to the universal influence of the Spirit, which made the offer of the gospel open to all, with only those continuing in their unbelief falling outside the scope of God's love. In this, there was obviously a closer resemblance to the Arminianism and indeed Universalism of Morison. Although it would of course take the two bodies, the EU and the Congregational Union some fifty more years to merge, it appears that the theological building blocks were gradually being laid in this regard in the 1840s and 50s. Although there were naturally yet many in Congregational circles who wished to continue holding at least the moderate Calvinist view, in the light of schism, the door had been opened to consideration of those who differed. This paved the way for greater fellowship and understanding in a Scotland in which theological certainties were perhaps being slowly picked apart. Significantly, ministers were mostly concerned with points of doctrinal difference, which were not so important for the laity, as the century progressed.

There is however no denying that the influence of men such as Ralph Wardlaw and latterly William Lindsay Alexander (1808–84), who both maintained a traditional, Anselmic view of the atonement, still pervaded Congregational thinking until the 1870s and 80s. The emergence of John Hunter (1849–1917), not only within the union, but in wider Scottish church circles was significant, as he captured the mood of a more liberal democratic era, in his theological outlook.

Wider influence—Scotland

For those in the various Presbyterian, and indeed Independent churches, who wished to hold fast to the orthodoxy of scripture and confession (in the Presbyterian setting) as the century wore on, there were theological challenges on a broader front. In addition to Morison, and McLeod Campbell, the evangelical churches—those of the United Presbyterian (formed in 1847 from a union between the United Secession and Relief churches) and the Free—contained men who did not happily accept the old order. Thus it may be suggested, as Hector MacPherson has done, that 'expulsion (for heresy) was no remedy'.²⁷ Rather, the new spirit could not be extinguished by the decisions of

²⁶ H Escott *A History of Scottish Congregationalism* (Glasgow 1960) 112

²⁷ H MacPherson, *The Intellectual Development of Scotland* (1911) at www.electricscotland.com/history/intellectual/chapter3.htm

church courts. At a later period the spirit of revolt in the United Presbyterian Church found a representative in David Macrae (1837–1907) who, for his emphatic dissent against the severe Calvinism of the Confession of Faith, was also expelled. However, this time progress was made in the aftermath, with the composition of a Declaratory Act, the aim of which was to give due space to elements of the gospel message which had not been offered theological ‘room to breathe’ in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Clearly a shift in views of the atonement was prevalent as the nineteenth century progressed, with James Morison having played a significant role in this movement.

However to the mid-point of the century, the changes which occurred in Scottish theology concerned particular doctrines, in the case of hypothetical Universalism or Amyraldian course, regarding the atonement. Interestingly, although they diverged from the ultra-Calvinism of the Free and Secession Churches, and while petitioning for a broader conception of the religious life overall, prominent figures in the Establishment did not yet question the bedrock upon which Scottish theology relied: an understanding of the Bible as a Divine revelation. Although there was a greater stress upon a more ‘humane’ theology, which in some respects opened the door for different views of scripture, such views were put forward in dogmatic shape, and were repudiated by the Church.

Rather, armed with an inspired and infallible Bible, differences of theological interpretation were possible; but it was felt ‘that a blow at the authority of the Bible was a blow at the whole system of Protestantism’.²⁸ Whether in the EU, Congregational, or Church of Scotland whatever their view of the atonement, (and indeed allowing for the different positions outlined above), all the various denominations in Scotland were essentially united in the high position which they apportioned to scripture. Although no doubt familiar, at some level, with the movement towards Biblical Criticism which permeated Germany, in the case of the Kirk in particular, concerns over relation to state and recovering members lost to other branches were of greater priority than a reconsideration of the place of the Bible in public life. In the case of the United Presbyterians, once beset by the ‘Atonement Controversy’ in mid-late century, they had little time left to enter a new dispute on Biblical Criticism. However, this picture would alter with the publication of William Robertson Smith’s (1846–1894) views on Higher Criticism.

What enabled the acceptance of universalism? Changes in the Political and Literary Landscape.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century two significant events had entrenched an ‘establishment’ view among large swathes of the Scottish

28 Ibid.

population. The first was the American Revolution of 1776, followed by the French Revolution of 1789. In both cases loyalty to king and country played their part. However with the Reform Act of 1832 and Chartism a more liberal sentiment was in the air, with regard to politics.

Those who participated in Chartism in Scotland in the late 1830s were predominantly closely connected to the churches. Indeed the movement was regarded by many as part of a lengthy struggle not only for civil but also for religious freedoms. Thus the desire to set up Chartist churches derived in large part from the negative response of the existing dissenting ministries of the United Secession Church and the Relief Synod.²⁹

Throughout the period when it flourished, Chartism had a greater ethical and religious flavour in Scotland than in England. Indeed Temperance and Chartism were seen as going together to cleanse politics. This of course enabled the EU to be seen as representing the wider body of people, so that in tandem with their more liberal theology, they were able to participate in social movements (though not necessarily in accord with Chartist demands).

By March 1840, permanent congregations had been established in some places forming the initial 'Christian Chartist Churches'. The *True Scotsman* reported in January 1841 that "A Chartist place of worship is to be found on the Lord's Day in almost every town of note from Aberdeen to Ayr". Furthermore, some called for a Chartist synod to be established to oversee local bodies. Then, in January 1841, a delegate conference of all the Chartist churches in Scotland was held to consider how they could help each other and whether a centralised structure was required. Admittedly post 1841 there was a decline in Chartist churches, however political agitation, rooted in a demand for greater freedoms and rights, continued to permeate society.³⁰ Linked to the rise of trade unions, this increased sense of democracy was fertile ground for a more liberating theology, in the realm of salvation, with more being open to the view that the extent of the atonement was wider than the elect. Therefore the views of a James Morison or John Kirk had an increased audience in an era when questions of eternal destination could be linked with a move for greater social freedoms.

Social Factors-Literature

Jan-Melissa Schramm has recently studied the impact of theories of the

²⁹ R Brown at http://richardjohnbr.blogspot.co.uk/2007/09/aspects-of-chartism-divergent-chartisms_28.html

³⁰ Ibid. Brown cites the list from 1840-41, of the Chartist churches in Scotland in 'Alloa, Anderston, Arbroath, Bridgeton, Campsie, Cupar, Darvel, Dundee, Eaglesham, Glasgow (two), Greenock, Gorbals, Hamilton, Inverleven, Johnstone, Kilbarchan, Kilmarnock, Lanark, Leith, Linlithgow, Newburgh, Newmilns, Partick, Paisley, Pollockshaws, Shettleston and St Ninians, Vale of Leven'.

atonement in nineteenth century literature. Indeed she links Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* and several other novels to the atonement controversy of the 1850s. In particular, the dispute over the Judaeo-Christian economics of the suffering substitute casts new light on the narrative forms by which novelists charted social change in the period. Similar to *A Tale of Two Cities*, novels like *Hard Times*, Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth*, and George Eliot's *Scenes of Clerical Life* all "pondered...the nature of scapegoating ... and the complex patterns of inter-relatedness in which the work of substitutionary atonement could best be understood". In her work Schramm sketched the period of atonement controversies from the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth, when, crises in the Crimea led some clerics to demand National 'Days of Atonement'. Interestingly, writing on atonement blossomed in the 1850s: Schramm suggested that 20 titles published 1856–60 took it as their subject matter, indicating a wider concern with the issue in British society. Just as it had throughout the history of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, debate over atonement aimed to deal with scripture's consistent calls for mercy and social justice. In a period characterised by democracy, the rise of industrial capitalism, greater literacy, and the pursuit of empire, the novel was an influential tool in shaping public mood.³¹

The Wider Scene—England

In nineteenth century England the problem of hell and universal salvation (with other aspects of future life) was a matter of widespread concern. Three specific cases have been highlighted by Richard Bauckham as instrumental in this regard. The first concerned the dismissal of F D Maurice (1805–72) from King's College, London in 1853 which was initiated by Maurice's downgrading of the doctrine of hell. Although tentative in his promotion of universalism in 1862, H B Wilson *Essays and Reviews* (1860) was arraigned by the Court of Arches for contravening the tenets of the Athanasian Creed, despite this decision being overturned by the Lord Chancellor on appeal. Thirdly, by 1877 F W Farrar was able to deny the existence of eternal punishment, in a set of sermons delivered in Westminster Abbey (and later published as *Eternal Hope*). At the time, Farrar was certainly regarded as promoting universalism, with E B Pusey feeling the need to offer a traditional defence of the idea of hell as a result.³²

However, despite these English manifestations of a form of universalism,

³¹ <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/reviews/schramm.html> reviewing J-M Schramm *Atonement and Self-sacrifice in Nineteenth-Century Narrative* (Cambridge 2012) 140–8.

³² G Macdonald *All Shall be Well: Explorations in Universal Salvation and Christian Theology, from Origen to Moltmann* (Cambridge 2011) 212; Richard Bauckham 'Universalism: A Historical Survey' at <http://www.theologynetwork.org/historical-theology/getting-stuck-in/universalism--a-historical-survey.htm>

the doctrine appears to have been ‘much less common in nineteenth century England than a general uneasiness with the traditional doctrine of hell’. From this flowed hope for a more universal idea of salvation, in addition to there being further opportunities, post-death, to acquire salvation. Prominent amongst advocates of a dogmatic universalism in England were Andrew Jukes (1815–1901) (in his work, *The Second Death and the Restitution of all things* 1867) and Samuel Cox (1826–1893) in *Salvator Mundi* (1877).³³

Evolutionary progress, from the mid-nineteenth century, affected a wider acceptance of doctrine beyond traditional orthodox understanding.³⁴ With ideas of what happened after death, the ‘hypothetical’ universalism of men like Morison and Kirk took root gradually in the popular mind. As noted, this theological movement occurred not only in Scotland, but in England also. Key to this was social change in the form of political and economic agitation, coupled with scientific discovery and urban progress, all reflected in the literature of the day which addressed such soteriological concerns. The theological response was then understandably a move away from substitutionary atonement, with a search for a broader, more inclusive understanding of the Christian faith, with both Congregationalists and Evangelical Union members playing their part.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the nineteenth century was a period of considerable theological and social change, across not only Scotland, but the wider UK. It may be suggested that men like James Morison of the EU and John Kirk of the Congregational Union were at the forefront of changes which would shape a freer, more liberal gospel. By breaking away from the Calvinist Confession of the United Secession church, Morison was enabled, by the formation of the EU, to disseminate his views to a wider audience. That the EU came through the establishment of the Free Church in 1843 (which was the most significant event in Scottish church history of the century) is testament to the abilities of its founders. Capturing the wider mood of the desire for enhanced political and social rights, the EU with its seemingly fairer offer of the gospel, was able by way of an effective publishing arm, and temperance movement to tap into the concerns of urban Scotland. Initially classed as a heretic by the Secession church, it is testament to Morison’s work that *The Weekly Supplement and Advertiser* recorded that his funeral in Glasgow in 1893 was attended by some 3–4000, from across the ecclesiastical spectrum.³⁵

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 *The Weekly Supplement and Advertiser* (Galston) 23 November 1893.

Meanwhile the Congregational Union, which had been affected by its own divisions over the nature of the atonement in the 1840s, was set back to a greater extent by the formation of the Free Church. Losing members mid-century, it made sense to join forces with the EU in the 1890s. By that stage Scotland had changed, from the early centuries focus on a sovereign God, intent on saving an elect, blown by the winds of political advocacy, and scientific discovery, disputes over the atonement gradually, as the century wore on assumed less significance. With the widespread geographical reach of the EU it also ultimately made sense to pool resources. Hence, in discussions over union between the two bodies, issues of Calvinist, Universalist or Arminian views of the atonement were able to be set aside, enabling the groups to move forward together into the next century and beyond.

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THE EVANGELICAL MISSION OF AN INDEPENDENT LAY PREACHER, A J STANLEY 1833–1902

AJ Stanley was a Victorian evangelical, who as a Congregationalist belonged to the religious traditions of Old Dissent. The evangelical revival of the eighteenth century had touched all denominations, with its emphasis on personal conversion and faith in the death of Jesus Christ as a means of salvation. The historian Richard Helmstadter has stated that by the middle of the 1830s all the Dissenting denominations had felt its force.¹ Yet Stanley's experience of evangelicalism was very different from the Independent evangelicals contemporary with Wesley a century before. By the mid-nineteenth century the machinery of the evangelical movement was in place, with its voluntary associations fully operational.² The religious intensity of the early movement had changed to one that in Stanley's time incorporated a degree of social control.

Alfred John Stanley was born on 5 September 1833, and lived all his life in Walsall, then in Staffordshire.³ He was a member of Walsall's Bridge Street Independent Church, which in 1817 was acknowledged as the leading Congregational church in the county, and which by 1850 was averaging a Sunday morning congregation of around 500 people.⁴ The church register does not show any record of his baptism, but this may be owing to a disruption in church affairs due to the death of the minister in July 1833, who was not replaced until May 1834.⁵ He was one of eight children, from a modest nonconformist background. His father was employed as a bit maker in saddlery manufacture, for which Walsall was well known in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Bridge Street Church had been formed from a secession from Dudley Street in 1791.⁶ The individualism of evangelical congregations was the reason for frequent fragmentation within nonconformist denominations, and it was this

1 R Helmstadter 'The Nonconformist Conscience' in G Parsons ed *Religion in Victorian Britain Vol IV Interpretations* (Manchester 1988) 66.

2 D Englander 'The Word and the World, Evangelicalism in the Victorian City' in G Parsons. ed *Religion in Victorian Britain Vol II Controversies* (Manchester 1988) 16.

3 *Walsall Free Press* obituary 10 May 1902 (hereafter *WFP*).

4 C R J Currie, M W Greenslade and D A Johnson *A History of Walsall* (Stafford 1988) 243.

5 Walsall Record Office, Acc.361/1 Church Minute Book 1794 to 1872.

6 A G Matthews *The Congregational Churches of Staffordshire. With some account of the Puritans, Baptists and Quakers in the County during the 17th century* (1924) 142.

individualism which Helmstadter recognised as having wider social implications. He summarised that the freedom accorded to individuals in nonconformist life between the 1830s and mid-1880s fashioned the theology, church organisation, social attitudes and political tradition of nonconformity. He also suggested that paradoxically, this individualism characterized the distinctive culture of the evangelical movement as a whole. However David Bebbington declined to add individualism as a fifth defining characteristic to his quadrilateral of priorities (consisting of conversionism, activism, biblicism and crucicentrism) in his defining of evangelicalism, as he saw individuality as representing a strong corporate emphasis within the movement.⁷

In 1856 Bridge Street Church was itself suffering a disagreement which involved the figure of Jerome Clapp Jerome, the father of the writer Jerome K Jerome. The minute book reveals that 20 members left the church “in consequence of misunderstanding in connexion with the Rev Jerome Clapp Jerome formerly of Appledore, Devonshire”. It would appear that certain rumours, of an unspecified nature, were being circulated about Jerome, which the church minister, Dr Alexander Gordon, considered as not without foundation. Certain members therefore withdrew from fellowship “in fraternal sympathy and in defence of their Christian convictions and privileges”, and amongst the signatories was A J Stanley. 1856 proved to be a significant year in the life of Mr. Stanley. Not only did he leave Bridge Street Church, but he also married,⁸ and started his own business in the buckle-making trade.

The new congregation held its first meeting in the large room of the New Inn, Walsall on 1 January 1857, with Jerome Clapp Jerome in the chair. In 1858, it finally established itself in Wednesbury Road, Walsall. The new minute book reveals that the secession was not about a doctrinal issue, but concerned a personality clash with a new deacon who had arrived at Bridge Street in 1855.⁹ However, by 1861 the differences concerning Jerome were no longer relevant because failure in his business prompted his leaving Walsall for Stourbridge, Worcestershire. Yet at Wednesbury Road Stanley took his first steps into organised churchmanship by becoming a trustee, and this proved an enduring relationship as he remained a deacon of this church until his death in 1902.

Evangelicalism had brought to the changing world of early nineteenth century industrialisation and urbanisation a different attitude towards work. The puritan ethic of successful labour pleasing God was continued in the evangelical belief that work was seen as doing God’s duty in the world.¹⁰ This belief justified the

7 D W Bebbington *The Nonconformist conscience: chapel and politics, 1870–1914* (1982).

8 St.Catherine’s House , Index Marriages, 1849–1901, No.8.6.673.

9 Walsall Record Centre, Acc.790/1.

10 L Davidoff and C Hall *Family fortunes: men and women of the English middle class, 1780–1850* (2002) 65.

commercial activities of the growing middle class. Stanley believed religion was as much for a working day as for the Day of Rest. Every Monday morning for 40 years, his company held a half-hour meeting of his workforce when time was devoted to bible-reading, speaking, or singing a hymn.¹¹ Every September a harvest festival service was arranged at the works, and every Good Friday hot cross buns were distributed to all employees. The priority given to mark these events in the Christian calendar not only supports Stanley's reported favourite counsel of "Wherever you go, take the Lord with you",¹² but reveals his theological beliefs. Harvest-time particularly for Congregational evangelicals, not only referred to the physical harvest, but also the spiritual harvesting of souls, and the need for all to "be safely gathered in", as suggested in the hymn *Come ye thankful people, come*.

Stanley's grandson, A R J Stanley, gave an account in the centenary brochure of how the evangelical mission of his grandfather began. Mr. Stanley is quoted thus,

Walking one morning round Rushall, Daw End, Linley and the neighbourhood, I saw a house which I took for a few months, hoping that the change would be beneficial to my wife's health, which was not good at the time.

Upon enquiring I ascertained that there were no religious services held in the village either on Sundays or weekdays. Men and women of the village had no organised religion and no Church where they and their families could obtain suitable social life near at hand.

I therefore gathered a few friends together and walked to Rushall every Sunday evening to hold services in the centre of the village to preach the gospel to the people. In the winter months the service was held in one of the miner's cottages in Daw End Lane.

Rushall at this time was a village, approximately 2 miles from Walsall. It was a ribbon-like development at the crossroads of the routes from Walsall to Lichfield and Bloxwich towards Birmingham. The 1861 census return shows the village as having 191 houses and a total population of 823. The majority of dwellings backed on to limestone workings, and most villagers were employed as limestone workers, or miners at the nearby Pelsall and Walsall Wood collieries. The village centre was over a mile distance from the remote parish church, and this detachment of the established church from the village community effectively removed its influence. The villagers were therefore receptive to the revivalist style of preaching introduced by Stanley. His charismatic character is revealed by newspaper reports which state that he quickly accumulated a gathering around

¹¹ *WFP* Obituary 10 May 1902.

¹² *Ibid*.

him of 100. This was too many for the house rented for Sunday services, so along with others he decided to build a chapel.

A villager, Thomas Urmson, reported, “Mr. Stanley had a wonderful way of getting money. If he came to you, you would not deny him.”¹³ It is not surprising therefore that the necessary funds were soon collected. A statement of donations shows that contributions towards the estimated building costs of £250 also included gifts in kind, such as 5,000 bricks by John Brewer. At a fund-raising tea meeting on 21 May 1860, with proceeds of £3 recorded, an address was given by Stanley who mentioned that as well as bricks they had promises of several parties for use of their horses and carts, and some of the labouring poor who had no money to give had promised a day’s labour. A fund-raising lecture given by William Whitehouse on ‘The History of the English Bible’ aroused much interest and was fully covered by the local press, raising a total of £1.11.9d. Implicit in the talk was the evangelical belief in the complete infallibility of the Bible.¹⁴

The laying of the foundation stone of this Gothic style church in Station Street, Rushall, took place on Monday 23 July 1860 at 3 pm by E T Holden, a Walsall businessman and councillor (later Sir Edward Holden), and the church opened for worship on 11 March 1861. The success of the enterprise to build a Congregational church in Rushall can be measured by the fact that on 25 August 1862 Dr R W Dale of Carr’s Lane Congregational Church, Birmingham preached in the chapel to celebrate the liquidating of the debt.¹⁵ That sermon is stated to be the same discourse he had preached in his own church the day before, upon the celebration of its bicentenary. Afterwards 200 sat down to tea in the chapel, which was followed by several addresses. The chairman called upon Stanley who, to the astonishment of those not informed, immediately marched out of the chapel. He returned a few seconds later carrying a large tablet, which he raised and placed behind the pulpit, as the doxology “Praise God from whom all blessings flow” was sung. The tablet was inscribed “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name, be all the glory”, followed by foundation details, then “O Lord, let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.” What is significant is that his actions reveal a man with an understanding of theatrical presentation. Such drama was a feature of evangelical preaching, in which similes, metaphors and illustrations were existential in their intention of conversion.¹⁶

Unfortunately the whereabouts of any church minute books until 1952 are unknown. Without these records it is difficult to assess the church’s life, but it

13 WFP ‘Resurgam’ 24 May 1902.

14 WFP 5 May 1860.

15 WFP 30 August 1862.

16 R T Jones *Congregationalism in England* (1962) 146.

had a major impact on the people of Rushall. On 22 December 1866 donations were again asked for, this time to erect a building for day school, Sunday classes and week night meetings at a cost of £250. Enlarged facilities were necessary for carrying on the various movements associated with the church, a priority of evangelicals who regarded them as an important point of contact in getting their message to the working classes.

What is surprising is that for all its success the church never had a resident minister but relied on local lay preachers. This may have been because Stanley himself loved to preach, being a lay preacher for 40 years, and was secretary of the Staffordshire Lay Preachers' Association.¹⁷ Also his experience of discord within Bridge Street Church between minister, deacons and members, may have decided him against this. He did take considerable part in official Congregationalism and was appointed a delegate to various church conferences. Sadly it was such participation that led to events culminating in his death. His colleague, Rev W T Tutton, commented in a newspaper article that Stanley had untiring zeal and unflagging energy. He related episodes of his kindness to children, and also how he braved the storm to take the Watch Night Service at Rushall Congregational church, a service he traditionally took himself from its foundation. He also conducted the senior Bible Class until pressure of work in other spheres made this no longer possible. Obviously from his achievements he became completely bound up with the public life of Rushall, and the villagers held him in high regard. Urmson recalls the "dark" days before Stanley's arrival in the village, when "The people were like the people of Nineveh", and now many of them "are converted men and preachers".¹⁸ A J Stanley's rewards were such that they reputedly gave him the loving title of "Bishop of Rushall".¹⁹

Alfred John Stanley died on 8 May 1902 at Haywood Hospital, Burslem. Allegedly his last words were of his dying vision in which the shadows of the ward assumed the form of a cross, and a voice filled the air with "no cross, no crown".²⁰ From the beginning of his encounter with God in his conversion, to his devotion to the Bible, his actions and belief in the Atonement, Stanley's life showed all the characteristics of evangelicalism, as defined by Bebbington. His individualism was revealed in what he achieved, but his life is just one example of an evangelical in a diverse movement. Stanley adopted wholeheartedly the entire package. He worked unceasingly to achieve his Congregational evangelical aim, that all should be "safely gathered in".

Meegan Griffin

17 *WFP* 10 May 1902.

18 *WFP* 24 May 1902.

19 *WFP* 10 May 1902.

20 *WFP* 24 May 1902.

REVIEWS

***The 1662 Diary of Philip Henry (1631–1696)*. Edited by Raymond Brown. Dr Williams’s Trust 2014. Pp ix + 68. Paperback £15. £18 for postal sales. Available from Dr Williams’s Library, 14 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0AR. ISBN 978–0–85217–082–3.**

The diaries of Philip Henry have been in print since Matthew Henry Lee edited them in 1882 but the diaries for several years were not then available and remain untraceable. Subsequently the single year covered in this slim volume, that is 1662, a momentous year for conscientious nonconformists, came to light. Until now that 1662 diary has never been published. We must then be grateful to Raymond Brown for his careful editing, with his introduction, full and helpful notes and identifications.

The importance of Philip Henry has long been recognised. The son of a royal employee who maintained the king’s orchard, he played in the Whitehall gardens as a child with the boy princes who would later become Charles II and James II. He was taken as a child to visit the imprisoned Archbishop Laud in the Tower of London before his execution in 1645 and also was a grief stricken witness to the beheading of King Charles I, just outside the magnificent Banqueting House, in Whitehall. He attended Westminster School and Christ Church Oxford before going as a tutor to Flintshire in north Wales where he became a Presbyterian minister. After ejection in 1661, he settled in Broad Oak, in Malpas, Cheshire, and attended the parish church. However he was imprisoned for preaching in 1663, was reported for preaching again at Whitchurch in Shropshire in 1669, fined in 1681, and again imprisoned in 1685. In 1672 he was licensed a Presbyterian at his house and was still conducting a ministry there in 1690. He died in 1696, leaving behind the record of an honourable life of faith. He was, of course, the father of the noted biblical commentator, Matthew Henry.

The entries mix personal family and financial matters with wider comment on local and national issues. On St Bartholomew’s day, 24 August, he opens his entry: ‘This is the day which our sins have made, the saddest day to England since July 6, 1553 the day of death of King Edward 6 but etiam hoc in bonum. this day compleats the 31 year of my agen...’

I should have liked an index and a bibliography would have enhanced this worthwhile publication, although the footnotes suggest further reading.

Alan Argent

The Spirit of Dissent A commemoration of the Great Ejection of 1662. Edited by Janet Wootton. Institute for Theological Partnerships (ITPP) 2015. Pp v + 210. Paperback £10. ISBN 978-1-908532-04-6. Available from the Congregational Federation, 8 Castle Gate, Nottingham NG1 7AS.

This collection of 13 disparate papers offers a mixed bag to the reader. There is something here for the scholar in, among others, the late Barry Coward's questioning paper on whether Oliver Cromwell might be considered the "father of English Protestant Nonconformity", in Alan Argent's "Dissent and the Spirit of Expectancy", exploring dissent as a theme and the particular emphasis it found in Witney and its environs, and in Andy Vail's investigation of evangelism in the west midlands, concentrating on the Brotherhood movement, and also in his work on women's ministry in Birmingham in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Janet Wootton's paper on the influence of nonconformist hymnody "Singing a Revolution" is lively and stimulating. David Cornick offers a helpful consideration of the ejections of 1662.

However these and other more erudite papers are intermingled with those intended for the non-specialist which may themselves be worthy but are lightweight and speculative. Arguably they do not belong here. One fears for the better papers that they will be lost from serious view amid the less thoughtful.

The papers, mostly, emerge from two separate events which, one suspects, attempted to attract both general and specialist participants. This accounts for the varied quality of the essays in this work. Yet this is a handsome volume and is inexpensive. My conclusion is that it is worth a read.

Marian Davies

Religion and Women in Britain, c.1660–1760. Edited by Sarah Apetrei and Hannah Smith. Ashgate 2014. Pp x + 217. Hardback £75. ISBN 978-1-4094-2919-7.

This volume of essays originated in a conference on women and religion in late 17th and early to mid-18th century Britain held at St Hilda's College, Oxford in 2009. The book's aim is to provide a reassessment of the history of the century 1660–1760 as a period in which women were pivotal to the development of new religious practices and insights, and that even in some settings such female piety represented a response to the Enlightenment. The book's focus therefore concentrates on the religious world of women in Britain at an age when Enlightenment values appeared to threaten Christian culture. The essays

examine contemporary perceptions of female piety and the experiences of women in shaping religious identities.

The contributors, seven women and two men, range in their papers from Melinda Zook's discussion of Mary II and her churchmen, through Alasdair Raffé's female authority and lay activism in Scottish Presbyterianism, to Alison Searle's analysis of women, marriage and agency in Restoration Dissent. In addition, studies are made of individual women like Damaris Masham (1658–1708) and her correspondence by Sarah Hutton, of Mary Astell and her writings by William Kolbrenner, of the life and works of Catherine Talbot (1721–70) by Emma Major, and also of Susanna Centlivre. Hannah Smith, in the last of these essays, informs her readers how popular the High Church, Tory and Jacobite causes were among women of all ranks in the early 18th century. On a related theme Claire Walker in her paper examines the links between the Stuarts in exile, nuns and the English Catholic identity. The question of celibacy is considered in a paper by Sarah Apetrei on "masculine virgins" in late Stuart London.

The editors correctly point out that the century 1660 to 1760 was "a remarkably vibrant and formative era in British religious history" and also that, unlike men, women then maintained their godly devotions. The age was characterized by a powerful Church of England, the Stuart family's royal Catholicism, the survival of Dissent despite persecution, the emergence of Deist and Arian heretics, and the beginnings of the evangelical revival.

The failure of historians to give due weight to the significance of women in the history of the churches is indisputable. Such studies as these go some way to redress that omission. The book is to be welcomed for this fact alone but it is to be hoped that it will also serve to encourage further researches into the role and value of women's faith, especially in this age of religious ferment. A comprehensive bibliography of 31 pages and an index help to make this book useful both for the scholar and the interested general reader alike.

Mary Rowe

***Clapham Dissenters: From Persecuted Group to Prestigious Congregation.* By Ivor Thomas Rees. Y Lolfa 2015. Pp 173. Paperback £9.95. ISBN 978-1-78461-076-0.**

This is an easily handled, pocket-sized, modestly priced book. It concentrates on an elegant, south London suburb, now popular again, having suffered a dip in its fortunes after the Second World War, and it deals in particular with Clapham's Congregationalists. So far, so good but in that it deals with Congregationalists it is disappointing by not touching on local Baptists, Methodists, Quakers, in

spite of the promise in its inclusive title. Nonetheless Ivor Rees should be on safe ground for he is himself a former minister of the historic Grafton Square Congregational church in Clapham with its strong links to the puritans of the mid-17th century. And he modestly concedes the hope that his work may lead “a genuine church historian to give this story the attention it deserves”.

William Bridge, Jeremiah Burroughes and John Arthur were significant players in English dissent and in the gathered church which began life in Clapham probably between 1640 and 1645. In the next generation, Clapham also was among those places where nonconformists were registered under the declaration of indulgence in 1672.

Unlike many chapel histories this is not merely a history of its ministers. Several notable lay folk are described, although it is unfortunate that, among the nineteenth and twentieth century families and worthies in chapter 12, the name Marten Smith is spelt wrongly (as Martin Smith). Including the latter, a number of these lay figures were prominent in both the Surrey and London Congregational Unions (between which there was an increasing overlap in the late nineteenth century) as well as in Clapham.

The absence of an index does not help the reader who wishes to check on a name or an event. The book does have a further reading section but this is not as up to date as it should be. The newest book cited is (almost) that of Tudur Jones’ *Congregationalism in England* which was published in 1962. That explains why Alan Argent’s *Transformation of Congregationalism* (Nottingham 2013) is missing from the list.

Curiously for a book about what has become an inner London suburb this is something of a Welsh production, with the author, the publisher, and the foreword from Robert Pope all coming from west of the Severn. Now we have another reason to thank the Welsh.

Michael Heathcote

***Bombed but Unbowed: The history of Hillsborough Tabernacle with stories from the Sheffield Blitz.* By Paul Clarke. 2015. Available from Hillsborough Tabernacle Church, c/o Paul Clarke, 402 Wood Lane, Sheffield S6 6AQ, p.clarke151@btinternet.com Pp 72. Paperback £6 + £1.20 postage. ISBN 978-1-90527-870-1.**

This booklet, divided into ten chapters with, in addition, a prologue and an epilogue, is a well produced and exceptionally well illustrated account of the church’s life in Proctor Place, Hillsborough, Sheffield. Among its other qualities, this work shows the value of good illustrations, with some 45 or so included here. Indeed Hillsborough Tabernacle is to be congratulated on the

enthusiasm of its photographers over the years whose work tells much of the story, filled out by Paul Clarke. Other local churches might learn from this not to discard such a wealth of insights in photographs of bomb damaged buildings, banners, mission halls and their supporters, certificates, Sunday School children and teachers, the war memorial, football teams, May Queens, posters, programmes and orders of service.

Indeed amid these images is that which decorates the front cover—of the church building destroyed by enemy action in December 1940. One wall left standing then bore the words from Psalm 96 ‘O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness’. The challenge of that injunction was clearly not lost on the Hillsborough faithful whose devotion was tested or “bombed but not unbowed”. The new building opened in 1955. It was modernised in 2004 and extended in 2011. This is a church characterised by vivacity and courage,

I enjoyed this history which, like the best of such studies, has much to teach. Thanks are due to Paul Clarke and all concerned.

Nicholas Weir

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