

THE  
JOURNAL  
of the  
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HISTORY SOCIETY

(incorporating the Congregational History Society founded 1899,  
and the Presbyterian Historical Society of England, founded 1913)

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VOL I No. 2 NOVEMBER 1973

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## Editorial

Our President, Dr. Geoffrey Nuttall, gave the first lecture of our new Society to our first annual meeting, a very crowded one, at the City Temple just before the first meeting of the General Assembly, 7 May 1973. Appropriately, he showed how there were in the eighteenth-century those who longed for a comprehension which would avoid the permanent fragmentation of the Church without violating the rights of conscience. This now appears as our first article in this issue of the *Journal*.

Dr. Dale Johnson's short piece is remarkable for its humour, yet it is a serious contribution, illuminating the spirit abroad in the 1840s when Evangelicalism was fast decaying. We are glad to have this contribution from the Assistant Professor of Church History in the Divinity School of Vanderbilt University.

Nigel Appleton's article is based on an essay for which he was awarded the Lundie medal and prize at Westminster and Cheshunt Colleges in 1973. It puts on record an instance of notable local social witness by Nonconformists, of which there must be many up and down the country.

# CHANDLER, DODDRIDGE AND THE ARCHBISHOP

## A Study in Eighteenth-century Ecumenism

Read over, with all the impartiality I could, the *Free and Candid Disquisitions*. It is, doubtless, an exceedingly well wrote book; yet something in it I cannot commend. The author (for the representing himself as *many*, and so speaking all along in the plural number, I take to be only a pious fraud, used to make himself appear more considerable) is far too great a flatterer for me, dealing in panegyric beyond all measure. But, in truth, he is not much guilty of this with regard to the Common Prayer. About one objection in ten appears to have weight, one in five has plausibility.<sup>1</sup>

So wrote John Wesley in his *Journal* on 15 August 1750. The sentences have all the scurry and decisiveness that, together, make Wesley's style as recognizable as his statuesque quality makes Milton's. But this is a meeting of the United Reformed Church History Society, not of the Wesley Historical Society. My purpose is to recall and elucidate the game played in the late 1740s to achieve Comprehension, as United Reform was then called — a game in which the book that was the subject of Wesley's shrewd criticisms was the last throw.

The *Free and Candid Disquisitions* is an intriguing piece on several counts: its form and contents, its anonymity, the excitement it aroused, all contribute to its interest. Its full title is *Free and Candid Disquisitions Relating to the Church of England, and the Means of Advancing Religion therein*. In the Preface its origin is given this explanation by 'the Editors of these papers', who were 'intrusted with care of them, by the Gentlemen, who were principally concerned in drawing them up':—

The design, it seems, has been under consideration, and carrying on leisurely, from time to time, for some years. When the observations that were brought together, were digested into some order, and the work in a competent degree finished . . . a copy of it was, in the winter 1746, lodged in the hands of a very eminent and worthy Prelate, with an humble request to his Lordship, that he would vouchsafe, if he so thought fit, to communicate the contents of it to the Synod at one of their meetings.

The Preface is followed by an Advertisement, dated January

<sup>1</sup> John Wesley, *Journal*, ed. N. Curnock, iii. 490.

1746/7, as from the authors, who in their Dedication to both 'Our illustrious, religious, and highly honored Governors' and 'The venerable and learned Convocation of both Provinces . . . of the . . . Church of England', describe themselves as 'dutiful Sons of the said Church'. This Advertisement includes the following disarming appeal: 'If, in this essay, we have offered any thing contrary to reason and Christianity (which always coincide); or any thing but what Christianity and reason plainly dictate; we desire no other favor . . . than to make it plain . . . that what we have offered, is inconsistent with the principles of either'. 'That the Authors did not think fit to set their names to this work', the Editors observe, 'is partly owing to their modesty, and especially to their prudence . . .'. 'Why do not we give ours?' they ask; and answer, tersely, 'For a like reason'.

A lengthy Introduction precedes the body of the work, which consists of thirteen sections. In a mild and rational tone the writers propose a series of alterations in 'the Frame and Design of the public Service' of worship according to the Book of Common Prayer. Two practices which they consider objectionable are: the requirement to recite the Athanasian Creed; and the necessity of doctrinal subscription as a condition of ordination. After a Postscript, there is a long Appendix providing quotations from others in support of the line of argument presupposed in the writers' proposals. Their primary motive is clearly to relieve themselves, and their fellow clergy, of unreasonable and intolerable burdens on their minds and consciences; not to relieve Dissenters of obstacles to conformity. Here and there, however, the position of Dissenters is glanced at. 'Subscription', the writers say, '. . . hath kept out many . . . Nor are any kept out of the ministry by such subscription, but men of conscience'. 'What', they ask, 'would be the inconvenience of repealing some parts of the Act of Uniformity, in favor of honest minds, and tender consciences?'. In the Appendix they go so far as to argue that 'absolute uniformity is not strictly necessary; . . . religion does not require it'; and that 'some ceremonies at least might very well be dispensed with, in order to a greater good'.<sup>2</sup>

The book was published in June 1749.<sup>3</sup> It aroused such interest that it was summarized in the September and October numbers of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, with correspondence about it in later issues. It was followed by other anonymous works, such as *The Expediency and Necessity of Revising and Improving the Public Liturgy* and *A Short History of the Common-Prayer*, in the latter of which the *Disquisitions* are commended as 'a treatise wrote with much temper, strength of argument, and good sense, and worthy the

<sup>2</sup> Pp. 168, 197, note g, 240.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Diary and Correspondence of Philip Doddridge*, ed. J. D. Humphreys, 1830, v.132, note\*.

perusal of every curious enquirer'.<sup>4</sup> Attacks also appeared; in one of which, the anonymous *Free and Impartial Considerations on the Free and Candid Disquisitions* (1751), the author, John White, objected that the book would be a means 'to confirm and encourage the dissenters in their present ways, perhaps also to increase the number of them'.<sup>5</sup> This did not prevent the reprinting of the *Disquisitions* or the publication in a second piece, *An Appeal to Common Reason and Candor*, of a number of letters in support of the *Disquisitions* stated to have been written earlier and to have been originally 'intended to introduce them'. In this tract the authors write: 'Some are also afraid (or seem to be so) that many of our Nonconformists will conform, and become members of our Church, if we make the requisite Amendments. To this we have nothing at all to say'.<sup>6</sup>

The stir caused by the *Disquisitions*, which were referred to in a number of sermons by the London clergy,<sup>7</sup> is also reflected in the correspondence of the eminent Dissenter, Philip Doddridge, who combined the pastoral care of the Congregational church worshipping on Castle Hill, Northampton, with the conduct of an academy in Sheep Street for the training of future ministers. On 7 June 1749 the minister of the Presbyterian congregation worshipping in Bartholomew Close, here in London, wrote to apprise Doddridge of the book's publication 'this week',<sup>8</sup> adding that it was the 'performance' of two friends who were also Doddridge's friends and correspondents (as well as minor literary figures), Gilbert West and George (later Lord) Lyttelton, loyal Anglicans both, although on one occasion Doddridge wrote to his wife, 'I assure you I have made Mr. West almost an Independent'.<sup>9</sup> In a letter of 4 July John Barker, the morning preacher of the Presbyterian congregation worshipping at Salters' Hall, described the book as 'a Masterly Performance'.<sup>10</sup> In September judicious comments came from the Presbyterian minister at Warminster, Wiltshire, and in the following February from the English Presbyterian minister in Rotterdam.<sup>11</sup> In June a correspondent of Doddridge's who was a clergyman, William Warburton

<sup>4</sup> P. 32.

<sup>5</sup> P. 59; cf. also [John Boswell], *Remarks upon the Free and Candid Disquisitions*, 1750; [Richard Moseley], *Letter to the Author of the Expediency*, 1750; [John White], *The Question . . . Considered, whether or not there be any Just Reason for a . . . Review of our Liturgy*, 1751; [Richard Moseley], *Cursory Animadversions upon the Free and Candid Disquisitions*, 1752.

<sup>6</sup> P. 71.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. E. F. Carpenter, *Thomas Sherlock 1678-1761*, 1936, p. 311.

<sup>8</sup> Humphreys, loc. cit.; the attribution to West and Lyttelton is also made in *Gentleman's Magazine*, xix.413.

<sup>9</sup> New College, London, MS. L1/1/102; Humphreys, v.75.

<sup>10</sup> United Reformed Church History Society Library MS.; Humphreys, v. 132.

<sup>11</sup> N.C.L. MSS. L1/4/79, L1/7/59.

(later to become Bishop of Gloucester), wrote approvingly of it. He added, however, that he was sure that 'not the least alteration will be made in the ecclesiastical system'.<sup>12</sup> That Doddridge himself thought well of the book may be deduced from the fact that he sent it as a gift for the Library of the infant academy in New Jersey (now Princeton University). That he also shared Warburton's doubts whether the proposals made would be implemented appears from the acknowledgement he received from the President of the institution, Aaron Burr, who considered the book 'wrote with An Excellent Spirit, but I'm fully of your Opinion as to the Success'.<sup>13</sup>

The authorship of the book has been known since at least 1800.<sup>14</sup> It was written, not by West and Lyttelton, nor, despite the misleading reference in the Postscript to 'the two learned friends, to whom we are indebted for the *Preface*', by any other couple, but by a single author — Wesley was right — who was another of Doddridge's friends and correspondents, the clergyman John Jones. As his name suggests, Jones was a Welshman — he was born at Llanilar,<sup>15</sup> near Aberystwyth, and, though educated at Oxford,<sup>16</sup> he bequeathed his library, when the Bishop of St. David's declined it, for the use of the Dissenting Academy at Carmarthen<sup>17</sup> — but he had come to England, and at this time was Vicar of Alconbury, Huntingdonshire. Whether Doddridge knew that the *Disquisitions* came from Jones' pen is not clear, but it is likely. The two men had certainly long been intimate. Doddridge says he had 'the most sincere and tender respect' for his 'pious and worthy friend';<sup>18</sup> Jones in turn addresses Doddridge as 'my much beloved friend and brother'.<sup>19</sup> Some years earlier Jones wrote to thank Doddridge for his 'candid remarks'<sup>20</sup> on another piece he published anonymously, *A Serious and Friendly Address* (1741), Doddridge's copy of which, with emendations by Jones and notes by himself, is in the library of New College, London. Within a month or two of the publication of the *Disquisitions* Doddridge says he had Jones in mind as a second string to propose to

<sup>12</sup>Humphreys, v.167.

<sup>13</sup>Princeton University Library MS.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. W. Paley, *Short Memoir of . . . Edmund Law*, 1800, p.6, note §.

<sup>15</sup>*Dict. Welsh Biog.*, s.v., correcting *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, s.v.

<sup>16</sup>His entry in *Alumni Oxonienses* as having graduated from St. Edmund Hall, not from Worcester College (as stated in *D.N.B.* and *D.W.B.*), to which he went on for a few months only, is confirmed by his Letters of Ordination, preserved among his MSS. at Dr. Williams' Library; for direction to these, as deciding the matter, I have to thank Mr. John Creasey.

<sup>17</sup>The statement that he had been a student of the Academy seems without foundation.

<sup>18</sup>P. Doddridge, *Diary* (the original of which, in shorthand, is New College London MS. L94), as printed in Humphreys, v.374; cf. iii.196.

<sup>19</sup>Humphreys, iv.60.

<sup>20</sup>*Ib.*, iv.19.

a Shropshire Evangelical for presentation to a living in that country.<sup>21</sup> Not everyone shared Doddridge's high opinion of Jones, however. A friend of Doddridge's at Jesus College, Cambridge, calls him 'a mere solemn coxcomb'; Warburton thought him 'too trifling where he proposes to be most serious'<sup>22</sup> He was certainly an elusive and ambiguous character. Some, if not all, of the other anonymous tracts in sympathy with, or supporting, the *Disquisitions* were, in fact, from Jones' own pen. Their attribution by contemporaries to one and the same writer finds confirmation in his manuscripts: in one letter he discusses the selection of different printers for different pamphlets in order to prevent the identity of his handwriting from being discovered.<sup>23</sup>

If Jones was responsible for the last throw in the game, he seems also to have been responsible for the first. On 28 February 1746/7 he wrote to Doddridge to commend a 'Scheme' he was propounding, 'that Some of the most eminent men in the Nation, Divines & Laymen, who are Friends to the Christian Cause, Should join' in publishing the evidences for Christianity, 'the principal men (you among the rest) of the Several more approved denominations of Christians in our country to have their respective Shares in the Undertaking'. If a 'Society be formed' he continued, 'the Several denominations would not only be induced to think the more favourably of each other, and be more united in love, but perhaps, through the divine blessing, be more and more inclined by degrees to a happy coalition'. He asked Doddridge 'to give the hint to some of the most eminent of your acquaintance', adding, as an example, 'I often thought of writing to Mr. Chandler, but have not the honour of his acquaintance'.<sup>24</sup>

Doddridge evidently did as Jones requested. Later that year Lyttelton wrote to Doddridge: 'In answer to the proposal of your good friend for a Society of Catholick Christians etc. I can only say that those sort of societies appear to me very liable to the charge of affectation. . . I think it best to go on as a quiet member of the Church of England without any new distinctions or names, which I have seldom known to produce any good'.<sup>25</sup> Another of Doddridge's correspondents, Sir John Thorold, was more sanguine. 'O! How desirable is Union!', he wrote, in a letter in which he commended 'the Circulating Welsh Charity Schools' — a current

<sup>21</sup>British Museum, Add. MSS. 35, 590, f.376.

<sup>22</sup>Humphreys, iv.31 and 50.

<sup>23</sup>Cf. J. Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, 1812-15, i.586, from manuscript correspondence in the British Museum.

<sup>24</sup>N.C.L. MS. L1/7/9; Humphreys, iv.475.

<sup>25</sup>Birmingham Reference Library, Lyttelton MSS. ii.42; R. Phillimore, *Memoirs and Correspondence of George, Lord Lyttelton*, 1845, i.382.

form of philanthropy in which Jones also was interested —,<sup>26</sup> and added some anti-popish ‘Considerations to prompt us to this Coalition’.<sup>27</sup>

Meanwhile, alongside the publication of anonymous tracts by country clergymen, events were taking place in London. On 6 October 1747 Nathaniel Neal, son of one eminent Presbyterian minister and nephew of another, and himself Doddridge’s London solicitor, wrote, ‘I am quite in your way of thinking as to a coalition or comprehension with the church. I believe nobody has, as yet, been talked with but Mr. Chandler’.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps by this time Jones had made Chandler’s acquaintance. He had good reason to do so. Samuel Chandler, minister of the Presbyterian congregation worshipping in the Old Jewry, and Fellow of the Royal Society, was one of the most respected and influential ministers of his time. When in 1733 Doddridge had been prosecuted for training ministers in Northampton without obtaining an episcopal licence, Chandler had readily sprung to his assistance.<sup>29</sup> He was equally clearly an ally of Jones in opposing doctrinal subscription. ‘Subscriptions’, Chandler had written in 1736 in a work called *The History of Persecution*, ‘have ever been a Grievance in the Church of God’; ‘as far as my own Judgment is concerned,’ he wrote a few pages later, ‘I think this Manner of Subscribing to Creeds and Articles of Faith, is infamous in its Nature, and vindicable upon no Principles of Conscience and Honour’.<sup>30</sup> For this a Fellow of St. John’s College, Cambridge, had trounced Chandler as a ‘Gentleman of great Name among the Dissenters, and who seems to have the most frightful Notions of Subscription of any Writer I have yet met with’;<sup>31</sup> but about Chandler there is nothing elusive or ambiguous. He stands four-square, determined, in the best traditions of eighteenth-century Presbyterianism; and he duly replied in *The Case of Subscription . . . calmly and impartially reviewed*, which in a letter to Doddridge of May 1748 Barker described as ‘a very good Defence of Us & a fine performance’.<sup>32</sup> But, whether prompted by Jones or not, Chandler did more than write. He also talked, and talked with bishops, two of whom, Butler of Bristol (and the *Analogy*) and Secker of

<sup>26</sup>Cf. *Correspondence and Minutes of the S.P.C.K. relating to Wales 1699-1740*, ed. M. Clement, Cardiff 1952, p.314, n.495.

<sup>27</sup>N.C.L. MS. L1/9/63; C. Stanford, *Philip Doddridge, D.D.*, 1880, p.152.

<sup>28</sup>*Letters to and from . . . Philip Doddridge*, ed. T. Stedman, Shrewsbury 1790, p.369.

<sup>29</sup>Cf. Humphreys, iii. 131.

<sup>30</sup>Pp. 428 and 436.

<sup>31</sup>John White, *Third and Last Letter*, 1746, Appendix, p. 78; repr. in *Three Letters*, 1748, ded. to the Bishop of Ely (i.e. Gooch, now translated from Norwich to Ely), Appendix, p.268.

<sup>32</sup>U.R.C. Hist. Soc. Library MS.

Oxford (and later of Canterbury), had been Chandler's fellow-students in the Dissenting Academy at Tewkesbury.

The account of his conversations, first with the Bishop of Norwich (Thomas Gooch), then with Gooch and the Bishop of Salisbury (Thomas Sherlock), and finally with Gooch and the Archbishop of Canterbury (Thomas Herring), has often appeared in print. But sometimes the version follows the text in Stedman's edition of Doddridge's correspondence, and sometimes that in the edition by Doddridge's great grandson, J. D. Humphreys; and the two texts are by no means identical. The story is usually told with omissions, and sometimes with further variations. The original document is to be found in a collection of manuscript letters to Doddridge from the London Presbyterian minister, John Barker, preserved in the Library formerly of the Presbyterian Historical Society and now of this Society.<sup>33</sup> Although he altered Barker's spelling and punctuation — and Barker's hand, one must admit, is exceptionally crabbed and trying to read —, Humphreys, who gives the longer text, refrained, for once, from the omissions, insertions and alterations which usually mar his published transcripts. He does, however, blur much of the immediacy, the dramatic quality, which the original still conveys.

Why should Gooch of Norwich be so prominent in these conversations? Though described by a contemporary as 'a man of as great art, craft, and cunning as any in the age he lived in',<sup>34</sup> he does not appear a specially notable member of the Bench, being 'known to be entirely dependent on' Sherlock, who was his brother-in-law, and 'by whom', it is said, 'his actions were largely directed'.<sup>35</sup> The reason is adventitious. Chandler, Barker tells us, was on a visit to friends at Norwich, where he heard the bishop deliver a Charge which much offended him. The bishop accused the leaders of the recent rebellion in support of the Young Pretender with being Presbyterians: 'as appeared', he said, 'by those Lords in the Tower sending for Presbyterian Confessors'. This touched Chandler on the raw. Not only was it impossible to deny that two of the three leaders condemned to death, Lord Kilmarnock and Lord Cromarty, were Presbyterians — they had in fact 'declared themselves' to be so, 'to my great Grief',<sup>36</sup> Doddridge wrote home at the time to his wife —, but Chandler himself was the 'confessor' chosen by Lord Cromarty (who in the event had been pardoned). Chandler wrote to the bishop to remonstrate. To his surprise perhaps, for this was

<sup>33</sup>Cf. L. W. Kelley, in *Presbyterian Hist. Soc. Journal*, iv, 164; for directing me to this article, and so to the original, I must again thank Mr. Creasey.

<sup>34</sup>*D.N.B.*, s.v. (where Thomas Sherlock is confused with his brother William), from Cole MSS. in British Museum.

<sup>35</sup>E. F. Carpenter, *op.cit.*, p. 47.

<sup>36</sup>N.C.L. MS. L1/1/88.



not the first time Gooch had shown hostility to Dissenters,<sup>37</sup> he received a conciliatory reply; and this it was which led to their first meeting. At Chandler's invitation the bishop visited him in London, and 'They had much discourse', with, in the course of it, 'talke of a comprehension'. We now take up the story in Barker's own words:—

This visit was follow'd att Gooch's desire with another where the B:[ishop] of Salisbury was present who soon discover'd his shrewdness, but said — Our Church Mr. Chandler consists of 3 Parts, Doctrine, Discipline, & Ceremonies. As to the last, They should be left indifferent as they are agreed on all hands to be. As to the 2d. — Our discipline said He is so bad that no one knows how or where to Mend it. & as to the first what is your Objection. He answerd — your Articles My Lord Must be expressed in Scripture words. And the Athanasian Creed be discarded &c. Both the Bishops answered they wishd They were rid of that Creed & had no Objection to altering the Articles into Scripture Words. But what should We do about Reordination. To this Mr. Chandler Made such a reply as He judgd proper, but I thinke granted more than He ought. He said none of us would renounce his presbyterian Ordination, but if their Lordships Meant only to impose their hands on us, & by that rite recommend us to publicke service in their society or constitution, that perhaps Might be submitted to — but when he told me this — I said perhaps not. no by no means — that being in My Opinion a virtual Renunciation of our Ordination which I apprehend not only as good but better than theirs. The 2 Bishops att the Conclusion of the Visit, requested Mr. Chandler to wait on the ArchBishop — which He did, & Met Gooch there by Accident. The ArchB: receiv'd him well & being told by Gooch what Ch. & He had been talking on (viz.) a Comprehension said a very good thing. He wished it with all his heart, & the rather because this was a time which called upon all good Men to Unite against Infidelity & Immorality which threatened Universal ruine. & added — He was encouraged to hope from the piety learning & Moderation of Many Dissenters that this was a proper time to Make the Attempt. But, May it please your Grace — said Gooch — Mr. Chandler says the Articles Must be altered into the words of Scripture. And Why not — replyd the A:B: It is the Impertinencies of Men thrusting their words into Articles instead of the words of God, that have occasioned Most of the divisions in the Christian Church from the beginning

<sup>37</sup>Cf. E. F. Carpenter, *op.cit.*, p.315, from Gooch MSS.

of it to this day. The A:B: added — that the Bench of Bishops seemed to be of his Mind — that he should be glad to see Mr. Chandler again — but was then Oblig'd to go to Court. And this is all. I have smil'd att some who seem mightily frighted att this affair — are very Angry with Mr. Chandler & cry out — We Wont be comprehended — We Wo'nt be comprehended — One would thinke they imagin'd It was like being Electrify'd or inoculated for the Smallpox. But most of these fault finders I apprehend are Angry with Mr. Ch[andle]r for an expression He used in the 2d. visit — when Urging the Expediency of expressing the Articles in Scripture words — He said — It was for others not himselve he suggested this, his Conscience not being diseas'd by them as they now stood, for He freely owned himself a *Moderate Calvinist*.<sup>38</sup>

Wind of these conversations quickly got round. On 26 January 1748, when in Bath with the Countess of Huntingdon, the Welsh Evangelical leader Howel Harris 'was informd', he records in his Journal, 'of a design to join Church and Meeting together on the terms throw off the Athanasian and Nicene Creeds, Kneeling at the Sacrament, and the Cross in Baptism, &c'.<sup>39</sup> This was a week earlier than the date of Barker's letter to Doddridge. Doddridge himself hastened to spread the good news. In March, for the benefit of Lyttelton, who had heard of the conversations and desired fuller particulars,<sup>40</sup> he transcribed much of Barker's letter, adding on his own account: "Tho I sincerely pray and honestly labour to promote peace, and tho I am a Dissenter on principle, and as the Terms of Conformity at present are dare not in conscience comply with them, yet I always avoid both in my sermons and writings and in private conversation what ever tends to irritate".<sup>41</sup> Lyttelton, who two months earlier had written to him 'no man can wish better than I do to *Uniting Schemes*, but I have observed that time, the great conciliator of unessential disputes, generally brings them about better than any projector, and that to precipitate is to spoil them',<sup>42</sup> now wrote that 'all good men must heartily wish'<sup>43</sup> Comprehension; but he was not hopeful. West wrote that Lyttelton had passed Doddridge's letter on to him, and that Jones, from whom he heard frequently, had promised a fuller account of his 'Scheme'.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>38</sup>U.R.C. Hist. Soc. Library MS.; Stedman, p. 112; Humphreys, v.41.

<sup>39</sup>*Howell Harris's Visits to London*, ed. T. Benyon, Aberystwyth, 1960, p. 178.

<sup>40</sup>Cf. B.R.L., Lyttelton MSS. ii. 56; Phillimore, i.390.

<sup>41</sup>B.R.L., Lyttelton MSS. ii.58; Phillimore, i.400.

<sup>42</sup>B.R.L., Lyttelton MSS., ii.52; Phillimore, i.388.

<sup>43</sup>B.R.L., Lyttelton MSS., ii.60; Phillimore, i.405. Lyttelton was on Jones' list of those to receive presentation copies; cf. Nichols, i.589.

<sup>44</sup>Humphreys, v.50.

West was more optimistic than Lyttelton. In July he wrote again to say how glad he would be to 'contribute, tho' in ever so small a degree, to the glorious enterprise of promoting catholick christianity'.<sup>46</sup>

Doddridge was as critical of subscription as Chandler or any other Rational Dissenter. In his *Lectures*<sup>46</sup> to his students he commends Chandler's *History of Persecution*. He was on visiting terms with Chandler;<sup>47</sup> a sermon he heard Chandler preach he describes as 'one of the finest that was ever delivered'.<sup>48</sup> He now thought the time had come to follow Chandler's initiative. Like Chandler, he was in touch with a number of bishops, again including both Butler, though no letters between them are extant, and Secker, who some years earlier had written to say he thanked God for Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*.<sup>49</sup> 'Wonder not if you hear I am going to conform', Doddridge wrote to a friend later this year, by way of comment on his wide episcopal acquaintance; adding that it 'hath however as yet provided no Inclination of the sort tho I think it my Duty to keep up that Acquaintance'.<sup>50</sup> He decided to seek an interview with the Archbishop himself — perhaps through West's good offices, for the Archbishop desired his services to West when he responded with a choice of dates.<sup>51</sup> There was deferment and delay, twice;<sup>52</sup> but eventually, on 2 August, after a day or two spent with West and Lyttelton — 'the Christian Triumvirate',<sup>53</sup> as Barker called the party — Doddridge met the Archbishop at Lambeth. It was a full day, for earlier he was in Kensington with Sir John and Lady Thorold, and from Lambeth he went on to Chelsea to see Lady Huntingdon.

'After I had a little spruced myself up at a Barbers', he wrote to his wife two days later,

I went to the Arch Bishop & was received by his Grace in a very obliging Manner. I sat a full hour with him alone & had as free a Conversation with him as I could have desired. It turned on A[rch] B[ishop] Leighton, on the Rebellion, on the late Debates in the House of Lords about the Scots non-juring Clergy & especially on the Affair of a Comprehension; concerning which I very evidently perceive that tho his Grace has most candid Sentiments of his

<sup>46</sup>Stedman, p. 435.

<sup>46</sup>Cf. P. Doddridge, *Course of Lectures on ... Pneumatology, Ethics and Divinity*, 1763. p.182.

<sup>47</sup>Cf. N.C.L. MS. L1/1/81a; Humphreys, iv.508.

<sup>48</sup>N.C.L. MS. L1/1/117.

<sup>49</sup>Cf. N.C.L. MS. L1/10/72.

<sup>50</sup>Yale University Library MS.; Stedman, p. 283.

<sup>51</sup>Cf. Humphreys, v.137.

<sup>52</sup>Cf. N.C.L. MSS. L1/6/90 and L1/1/105.

<sup>53</sup>N.C.L. MS. L1/4/71; Stedman, p. 129.

Dissenting Brethren yet he has no great Zeal for Attempting any thing in order to introduce them into the Church wisely seeing the Difficulties with which it might be attended but when I mentioned to him in the Freedom of our Discourse a Sort of a Medium between the present State & that of a perfect Co-alition which was that of acknowledging our Churches as unshismatical by permitting the Clergy to officiate among us if desired, which he must see had a Counterpart of permitting Dissenting Ministers occasionally to officiate in Churches it struck him much, as a New & very important Thought & he told me more than once I had suggested what he should lay up in his Mind for farther Consideration.<sup>54</sup>

The Archbishop, Doddridge added, desired him to call on him whenever he was in town; and he did so at least twice, once in the following summer<sup>55</sup> and once in the summer of 1751<sup>56</sup> not long before his premature death. They also continued to correspond,<sup>57</sup> and in November 1750 West wrote that the Archbishop thought well of Doddridge's sermon on the recent earthquake, *The Guilt and Doom of Capernaum*, 'and says, "the Dissenters will beat us in preaching".<sup>58</sup> Of the interview, however, there was no visible consequence; and if, as has been customary, it is regarded in isolation, neither it nor Chandler's earlier conversations appear to have had any result or to be of much significance. Seen in the light of John Jones' contemporary 'Scheme' and publications both initiatives look differently and invite another assessment. We return to this larger context.

At the end of May, just a week before the *Free and Candid Disquisitions* saw the light, Doddridge received from Barker the unpleasant news that in his forthcoming *Memoirs* the aged and eccentric mathematician and Arian theologian William Whiston was threatening to print the letter Barker had sent to Doddridge recounting the conversations between Chandler and the bishops, a copy of which had come into Whiston's hands through 'one in Rutlandshire': 'He makes a Stir with the Letter & it May do Mischiefe'.<sup>59</sup> Barker does not say who had been guilty of the indiscretion, but half implies that Jones was involved in it; which is, indeed, likely. 'I am not fit for writing letters', Jones admitted

<sup>54</sup>N.C.L. MS. L1/1/102; Humphreys, v.75.

<sup>55</sup>Cf. N.C.L. MS. L1/1/119.

<sup>56</sup>Cf. Humphreys, v.205.

<sup>57</sup>Cf. Humphreys, v.176.

<sup>58</sup>Yale University Library MS.; Stedman, p. 447.

<sup>59</sup>N.C.L. MS. L1/4/70. Whiston did not carry out his threat; but he did print a letter which he had written to the Archbishop on 23 Jan. 1748/9 requesting correction of parts of the Athanasian Creed (*Memoirs*, 1749, p. 407).

earlier this year, 'because I mention every thing in them as I would in private conversation with the most intimate friends';<sup>60</sup> and if Doddridge had transcribed Barker's letter for Jones, as we know he did for Lyttelton, this is only what we might expect. Whether or not it was through Jones that Whiston learned of Chandler's conversations with the bishops, Jones had his own devious ways of ensuring that the bishops knew of his own design. In January he wrote to a friend: 'The Bishop of London [i.e. Sherlock, now translated from Salisbury to London] has made inquiry of Mr. West about the scheme, intimating that the Bishops would willingly see more of it, if not the whole'.<sup>61</sup>

Two months later Doddridge informed his life-long friend and mentor Samuel Clark, the Dissenting minister at St. Albans, of what he had just learned from Sir Thomas Birch, 'who is come hither to hold the Assizes':

He tells me several of the Bishops endeavoured to have suppressed White's *Third Letter* as unfriendly to the Scheme of a Comprehension which he thinks they desire but that Sherlock insists on having all the objections brought in at once. I think it would be much better to reform things certainly amiss in the Establishment, whether any Dissenters are brought in or not.<sup>62</sup>

Now the John White whose writing the bishops regarded as unfriendly to Comprehension was none other than the Fellow of St. John's who (in an Appendix in fact to this *Third . . . Letter*) had attacked Samuel Chandler, and who in his *Free and Impartial Considerations* went on to attack the *Disquisitions*. White's opposition to both Chandler and Jones, crossing Doddridge's support for both men, ties the package together. Jones' 'Scheme', Chandler's conversations, Doddridge's interview and the *Free and Candid Disquisitions* were all part of a single operation.

Nor, if we widen the context, can the operation be said to have been without significance. In 1764 perusal of the *Disquisitions* led an Irish clergyman, William Robertson, to resign his preferments; and, in the phrase of Theophilus Lindsey, Robertson was 'the father of unitarian nonconformity'.<sup>63</sup> It was, in fact, Robertson's example which so told on Lindsey that in 1773 he too resigned his living at Catterick, Yorkshire, and came South, where two hundred years ago next April he opened the first Unitarian chapel here in London. Lindsey's other chief inspirer was his neighbour in the North Riding, Francis Blackburne, Rector of Richmond, a leader both in the Feathers Tavern Petition of 1772 for the lifting of clerical subscrip-

<sup>60</sup>Nichols, i.588.

<sup>61</sup>*Ib.*, i.592.

<sup>62</sup>N.C.L. MS. L1/10/85; Humphreys, v.108.

<sup>63</sup>Theophilus Lindsey, *Historical View*, 1783, p. 477.

tion and in incipient Unitarianism. Now Blackburne, when Chandler died in 1766, actually received an invitation (which he declined, preferring to remain a deviant Anglican) to succeed Chandler as minister at the Old Jewry. He was also a friend and correspondent of John Jones, for whom he had, in fact, read the *Disquisitions* in manuscript.<sup>64</sup> In 1750 Blackburne published an *Apology for the Authors* of the book; and in his anonymous work *The Confessional: or a Full and Free Inquiry into the Right, Utility and Success of Establishing Confessions of Faith and Doctrine in Protestant Churches* (1766), while allowing that Jones was 'an ingenious fencer', he wrote of the *Disquisitions*,

I believe, no book of equal importance ever sunk so suddenly into oblivion as the *Free and Candid Disquisitions*; nor was any other ever treated with more contempt and scorn by those who ought to have paid the greatest regard to the subject of it . . . But . . . the book has had no inconsiderable effects among particular persons.<sup>65</sup>

That its effect, and the outcome of the fight against subscription, in which Churchmen and Dissenters had happily joined, was Unitarianism, may not be palatable; though it would not be the only time that ecumenical effort has resulted in the adding of a fresh grouping to the denominational scene. But this is not the whole story; not only in the sense that, just as without becoming Methodists we are all more inclined to be universalists because of Wesley, so without becoming Unitarians we are all more inclined to be critical of subscription to dogmatic formulations because of Lindsey and his friends. There is a wider context still. Of this we may remind ourselves in conclusion by examining yet another pamphlet the *Disquisitions* provoked, namely the brief and (as usual) anonymous piece entitled *A Scheme for a General Comprehension of All Parties in Religion* (1750).

The burden of this tract is the proposal that a Committee be set up for the purpose of Comprehension. As members of the Committee the author suggests the following persons: the authors of the *Free and Candid Disquisitions* and of *The Expediency and Necessity of Revising and Improving the Public Liturgy* — 'if', he slyly observes, 'they shall appear not to be the same'; William Whiston; 'the Reverend Mr. Chandler'; 'Messieurs George Whitfield — John and Charles Westley — the virtuous and modest Mr. Ha[1] of Salisbury' (the Wesleys' brother-in-law, who had embarrassed them and their movement by his flagrant immoralities); 'Mrs. Drummond' (a Quakeress of some note at the time); 'Count Zinzendorf Bishop of the Moravians, the Presbyters of New-England, the Gifted

<sup>64</sup>Cf. *Dict. Nat. Biog.* s.vv. Blackburne and Lindsey.

<sup>65</sup>Pp. xxxvi and 334-5.

Brethren of Pensilvania'; and a number of others. The Committee should meet 'at the Jews Synagogue in London', with Mrs. Drummond in the Chair, 'she appearing to be the only Lady'; and should have as its coat of arms 'Gules, three Doves Argent, with three Serpents Heads sable appearing at their Tails; Motto, Foxes have Holes'.<sup>66</sup>

The thing was a skit, of course; but skits, like caricatures, are often revealing. The writer obviously set out to blacken Chandler's conversations and Jones' whole 'Scheme' with pitch from as many suspicious sources as he could think of, from the Arians to the Quakers, from Deism to Antinomianism. In one sense he was shooting wide: Wesley, for instance, we saw, was by no means in favour of the *Disquisitions*. Yet the pamphleteer has a point. The candid inquirers, with the critics of subscription, and the early Evangelicals, with the Moravians and the Methodists, were at one in this, that they were all disturbers of the ecclesiastical waters; and if in the event the Methodists, like the Rational Dissenters, came to organize themselves under a new and separate denomination, this was not so much of their own volition as because, to honest thinkers and revivalists alike, the Church replied with Sir Robert Walpole's motto, *Quieta non movere* ('Let sleeping dogs lie').

With the exception of Doddridge, who showed sympathy with Moravians and Methodists as well as with Rational Dissent, the main characters in the chapter of ecumenism unfolded this afternoon must be called pretty stiff intellectuals. What were the men of feeling, the first Evangelicals, doing? Was there no ecumenical spirit at work among them? There was indeed. Church people such as Wesley and Whitefield, Lady Huntingdon and Howel Harris, Moravians such as Zinzendorf and Cennick, Dissenters such as Doddridge and Pearsall, Gifford and Stennett, Joseph Williams and Anne Dutton — all were eager and active in a genuine drawing together for a common purpose. All collaborated in the interests of a revival of religion. They also believed in flying high, though politically their sights were not on the Archbishop but on the Prince of Wales.

But this is another story, one that needs telling anew but must be left over. To-day we must be content to recall that among the Evangelicals events of another colour, but from an ecumenical angle broadly similar to those that have been before us, were taking place at the same time. Nothing immediate came of the Evangelicals' initiative, either. The early 1750s were very different from the 1740s. Death had something to do with it. In 1751 the Prince of Wales died as well as Doddridge, Whitefield was away in America, Harris back in Wales. 'There is a tide in the affairs of men', and in the 1750s the tide of ecumenism 'ebbed' before it was 'taken'; till it came in again, over different rocks, in the 1770s and '80s.

<sup>66</sup>Pp. 8-14.

What the 1970s, and '80s will accomplish, or fail to accomplish, what their rocks will be, we do not know. But in the United Reformed Church we now have a platform; and if for the wider service of Truth the best of both head and heart is to be brought together, what better place to exercise them than in a History Society such as this, loyal to different elements in both our traditions and willing to learn the respect and patience which history teaches, yet bringing out of our treasure things both new and old, eager above all else, even as historians and students of history, to be disciples to Him who makes all things new.

GEOFFREY F. NUTTALL.

## ANTICIPATIONS OF THE FUTURE

### Some Early Letters of R. W. Dale

Robert William Dale contributed significantly to the Nonconformist impact on nineteenth century England. In this contribution he probably did more to alter the traditional ministerial life-style within Congregationalism than did anyone else. He was an Evangelical who was not hesitant to note difficulties in the heritage of Nonconformist orthodoxy or to discard aspects of doctrine or practice that were not essential to the Christian message and were obstacles to proclaiming the gospel in a new age. Conversely, but with the same method, he regularly attempted to recover out of the Protestant tradition those aspects of the Christian faith that had been lost or badly appropriated by the Nonconformist churches.

Dale's letters as a student (at Spring Hill College) reflect his critical assessment of the current state of the church and ministry and his desire to develop a model of ministry that would more adequately respond to the issues of the day. George Dawson, the Birmingham Independent minister, a critic of traditional Evangelicalism, provided an early model for him. Writing to Mr. Offord, an early benefactor and friend, in September, 1847, his first year as a divinity student, Dale says,

Last Sunday I heard Dawson, the great Birmingham heretic. He is a young man of considerable genius, though he borrows (judging from the sermon I heard) very much from Emerson. The reports circulated industriously by the "orthodox" party concerning his Unitarianism are altogether unfounded. The fact is, the evangelicals have been accustomed to hear Dwight's *Theology* and Henry's *Com-*



*mentary* — Butler's *Analogy* — and Paley's *Evidence* — so long that an earnest thinker and an honest preacher cannot according to their notions be among the "faithful". Dawson has, certainly, some peculiarities — but the great offence is, that he will think his own thoughts and tell them in a language purified from the "slang of theologians," to use a favourite phrase of a fellow student.

A few months later, in February, 1848, Dale expanded these comments on Dawson with a comparison with John Angell James, minister of Carr's Lane Chapel, Birmingham, and defender of Evangelicalism, and a commentary on the changes affecting congregations in the area. Again, his search for a model of ministry suitable for him and responsive to the needs of the time is evident.

We are sadly off for preaching here. James has given as of late only one sermon at all worthy of the name he commonly bears. Dawson preaches away better than ever; I wish he had more of the old Evangelical doctrine allied with his extraordinary talent and philosophical acuteness. He has, however, been preaching very nobly on Household Duties. When I hear him — I am tempted almost to shrink away from the ministry; How he manages to preach as he does is a perfect mystery to me. However, before it will be possible to have the pulpits of England filled as they ought to be — an intermediate race of ministers must come — somewhat better than the old lot, though not quite up to the future standard — on this I found my hope of success. That a change is passing over many of our Churches is sufficiently evident. We have two Independent Churches in Birmingham in confusion — a split at Dudley — another at Leamington — another at Wolverhampton. James is getting alarmed. Sunday-School teachers are in his opinion getting clannish, and begin to threaten Ministerial Supremacy. He invited me to dine with him alone a few weeks ago and we had a very serious chat on the matter. He is, however, bending somewhat before the spirit of the Age.

A third letter from his college year, also to Offord but without including the calendar year, dealt with three aspects of Dale's personal relationship with the Evangelical tradition: ministerial dress, preaching style and its attendant theology, and doctrine and practice.

My dear Sir,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of a very kind & welcome letter. It amounted to a "revelation" from that world which is rapidly becoming to me — "the great Unknown." I do indeed just get an occasional glimpse at the bustle and stir of real life — but alas! alas! the Mone-

tary question is far less of a thorn in the flesh to myself than Hebrew Roots & Latin Prosody & the preparations of the Athenians to resist Philip will soon be better known to me than the present condition of the "Anti-State-Church Association. An odd circumstance occurred in Carr's Lane Vestry the other Sunday between the Angell & one of our Juniors which may perhaps amuse you. It is James's custom to have one of the Students to open the Evening service for him — & none of the Seniors being at home on the Sunday referred to — one of the Senior Juniors or middle-men — was sent off to do duty. The fellow sent was a Mr. Perkins, a great admirer of Geo. Dawson — with a very metaphysical & withal independent cast of mind. It is his custom, moreover, to wear trousers not of ministerial black, but of a dark grey — with purple stripes! In this uniform he entered the Vestry of "the high & mighty prince James — defender of the true Faith, etc." After the usual "How d'ye do's?" were exchanged James gazed with a look of mingled astonishment & wrath upon the unmentionables of the youngster at last the following conversation ensued. (James) "Sir, you're not going into my pulpit with those trousers on" —

(Mr. P.) "I suppose, Sir, I shall not go up without."

(J) "But do you never wear black?"

(P) "Well, Sir, I have worn black trousers, but I find they wear out very soon & so I prefer these." Here James insinuated that the said stripes were not "respectable" — and accordingly Perkins went into an elaborate argument to demonstrate 1st the Respectability, 2nd the Warmth, 3rd the General Excellence of the said Trousers. But failing I suppose in a vigorous "application" of this discourse "to the conscience" (pardon the cant) of his hearers, no success resulted — but the conversation was resumed.

(J) "But — Sir — don't you intend to wear black trousers when you're a minister, Sir?"

(P) "I never gave the matter a thought — Sir — and regard it as not of the slightest importance."

(J) "I'm sorry that I can't render you assistance, Sir, but as the trousers form an insurmountable obstacle — it can't be helped — & therefore, I must bid you Good Evening." — Whereupon he turned on his heels. But before he had shut the Vestry door James called him back. At his return he again eyed him very earnestly — and the young fellow began to fear lest a temporary exchange was contemplated. You know that the garment in question belonging to James — must needs be of a very voluminous character & therefore

would not be very likely to fit a young man rather more than 19 & not more than the ordinary size of mortals at that age. However, the exchange was not proposed but James after a time began again. "Sir, do you think you'll be able to get in?"

(P) "I think I could manage, Sir — if it were not for the trousers."

(J) "Ah, Sir, never mind them just now — have you ever been into Mr. Roberts's pulpit?"

(P) "No, Sir".

(J) "Well, I'm really afraid you'll stick."

(P) "It appears to me, Sir, that it's of no use talking about that, Sir, since the trousers form an insurmountable obstacle. — but I don't think I should stick if it were not for them." —

After some more chat of this kind, James was fairly done over & accordingly pointed out the chapters he desired to have read, & Perkins acquitted himself manfully. Had you been at the Supper Table when this tale was related by the hero himself, you would have been in great danger of breaking a blood vessel.

I heard Dawson last Sunday Morning. He gave a splendid sermon on the text, "Their gods are gods of the hills. Let us fight them on the plains — then shall we overcome them." He pointed out some of the leading distinctions between the religion of heathendom & Judaism, Christianity & Mahometanism — which three he called "the three religions of the Book." It was a magnificent sermon — just such an one as Carlyle would have preached on the subject. There were three of our students there besides myself. Two of them were delighted — the third a decent admirer of James & orthodoxy was not so well pleased. This gentleman was not aware that any of his fellow students were present & accordingly began to expatiate upon the "vagueness" of the sermon — admitting moreover that it was throughout a declaration of mighty Truths — the "homeliness" of the illustrations did not please him — & he could not, he said, "remember" what the preacher said — which calamity another suggested might be owing to the inability of his own mind to comprehend or at any rate to retain what had been said. The absence of what he termed "application" was a matter of great lamentation — while in fact the sermon from beginning to end — was an appeal to the inward nature of man — on behalf of the "true faith" — i.e., the Christian Faith — in whatever form it may clothe itself. Dawson is, I think, doing a great work among the people here — counteracting the terribly low philosophy &

morality inculcated by the "Angell." Last night for instance, this choice divinity of Evangelical Dissenters tried out in the middle of his sermon with a short commentary upon "godliness hath promise of the life that now is." He told the people that many could testify that all their worldly success had resulted from their religion. "And perhaps," said he, "some of you will find that your worldly circumstances have declined with your spiritual condition. Oh! my friends seek the renewal of true spiritual religion in your heart & then — maybe even your worldly prospects will improve." — This is a queer way of promoting a "revival." . . .

Binney's heresies on the Sabbath Question are likely to become Orthodox ere long — if Orthodoxy is the "doxy" of the many & heterodoxy — the "doxy" of the few. We had a debate on the matter the other day in the Coll. — & it was carried against "the perpetual obligation & Divine Institution of the Christian Sabbath" — My opinions in the matter had been modifying for some months & on giving the subject that attention which was necessary in order to debate it, I came to the definite conclusion that the Sabbath is a thing of the past . . .

Over the years Dale's criticisms were tempered with greater perspective. He became James' colleague, then successor. He came to have a more complete, though not uncritical, view of James' contribution. Yet he shocked his congregation by discarding ministerial black, growing a beard and smoking a pipe. He challenged traditional expectations of the role of Nonconformity in society, particularly by his vigorous involvement in political life. As a theologian and historian he analysed the Nonconformist past. He noted the strengths of the Evangelical Revival but also its failures:— its individualism and consequent neglect of both a doctrine of the Church and a concern for building up the social order; its inability to respond to the new intellectual and social world. The attraction of the student to George Dawson was continued in the minister who saw that while the Calvinistic terminology had been largely retained in the Congregational churches, the categories about which it spoke had ceased to be living forces; of James he said that 'many of the old Calvinistic phrases were on his lips to the last, but the genuine Calvinistic meaning had gone out of them'. If the changes in ministerial style were more symbolic of change than substantive, the political engagement and the attempt to recover a viable doctrine of the Church were not.

Dale's efforts, despite the honours bestowed upon him in his lifetime, were not always well received. He was often ahead of his

constituency, as when his volume, *A Manual of Congregational Principles* (1884), which had a section on the sacraments, understood as divine institutions, was widely criticised; a second edition appeared shortly with the offending section omitted. At the end of his career he found himself criticised for being behind the thinking of many in the denomination; he held consistently throughout his life to a distinction between the Church's proper tasks of proclaiming the gospel and the individual Christian citizen's responsibilities in the political and social spheres, and thus resisted the efforts to involve the churches as churches in political activities. Still, the overall picture of Dale, from his student days to the end of his career, is one of a man who in his critical assessment of the tradition in terms of the needs of his age, represents the gradual and difficult changes that occurred within nineteenth century Nonconformity to make its presence more relevant and its Christian message more meaningful.

DALE A. JOHNSON.

## BETHANY HOMESTEAD, NORTHAMPTON

### A case study in Christian social concern

Moved by the distress caused for some of the elderly and infirm members of their congregations by the social and economic conditions of the nineteen-twenties a number of leading laymen of the Baptist and Congregational Churches of Northampton set out to provide accommodation and care for them. From their initiative has grown the Bethany Homestead, 'to make provision for the welfare, comfort, treatment and relief in sickness and old age of poor persons belonging to, or connected with, the Baptist and Congregational Churches of Northampton.' The founding of the Homestead is owed principally to a small group of business men who were within the Baptist and Congregational Churches of Northampton at that time. Dr. Ernest Payne, at that time minister of a Baptist Chapel close to Northampton, speaks of them as having been 'a vintage generation'.

The Baptist and Congregational denominations have a long history within the town and county; there has existed for generations a very real sense of affinity and affection between them; new work in the town and the surrounding area was often co-ordinated. The strength of Nonconformity in Northampton and in particular the tradition of friendship and co-operation between Baptists and Congregationalists in the area form an important part of the background to the formation of Bethany Homestead.

The notion of a home for sick and elderly church members was first put forward in 1921 at a meeting of the Northampton Baptist Board by the Rev. Frank Dardis, minister of the Baptist chapel at Princes Street Northampton. 'Men and women who had outlived their generation, too frail to manage entirely on their own; others in fair health, with just enough means to live, but insufficient to afford house rent, frequently were forced to end their days in the Poor Law Institution. Immediately it was suggested that this problem was one which Baptists and Congregationalists could tackle together. Following a meeting between the Baptist Board and the Congregational Association a joint Special Committee was formed to make thorough investigations into the feasibility of founding a Nursing Home in Northampton.

A member of the Special Committee, Mr. A. E. Cleaver, offered to give a suitable site for the building of a Home and plans were prepared. However, while it was thought possible to raise the capital needed for the construction of the Home the cost of maintaining such an establishment was considered, at that time, to be prohibitive. A second member of the Committee, Mr. George Pettit, then offered a pair of houses in Western Terrace, close to the railway station, for conversion, but upon the advice of two builders on the Committee, Mr. A. P. Hawtin and Mr. H. A. Glenn, who said the houses were unsuitable, it was suggested that Mr. Pettit might give the houses to provide a capital asset. The generous Mr. Pettit agreed, upon the condition that his gift should be matched by the donation of £1,000 in cash. Four members of the Committee, Messrs. Cleaver, Rodhouse, E. Lewis, and Wiggins immediately offered to provide the money, and further substantial offers followed. The generous members of the Special Committee were to serve as the core of those who brought the Homestead into existence and during its development their generosity was repeated several times over as the needs of Bethany increased. The houses which provided the foundation of the Bethany Homestead's finances yielded an annual income of £100 for more than fifty years before they were sold to the Borough Council for £13,000 and demolished as part of a road improvement scheme. The capital released has now been earmarked for the next stage of development at the Homestead.

George Pettit, a leatherdresser and tanner was a member of the Commercial Street Congregational Church. The Cleaver brothers, Alfred and William were owners of a firm of builders' merchants and members of College Street Baptist Church. Also a member of College Street Chapel was A. P. Hawtin, a builder and self-made man who revealed a special concern for the elderly. There were the members of the Lewis family, factory owners in the boot and shoe industry and members of Doddridge Memorial Congregational Church. Robert Wiggins was a member of the Mount Pleasant

Baptist Church and a coal merchant. Mr. Rodhouse, a retired leathermerchant, treasurer of the Committee, with his wife managed the day to day running of the Homestead through the early years. It must of course be remembered that at this time the Baptist and Congregational Churches of Northampton were thriving and able to release these keys members whose energies and resources could be devoted to this joint venture.

Following the report from Messrs. Hawtin and Glenn that the houses in Western Terrace would not be suitable for use as a Home no further progress was made for three years, although the Special Committee continued to meet at intervals. At one such meeting in January, 1924 Mr. Hawtin offered, on behalf of himself and his sons, to present a site suitable for the building of a Homestead.

Later in the same year plans for the Homestead were announced to the public at a dinner given jointly by the Mayor of Northampton, Councillor T. D. Lewis, and Mr. George Pettit. It was reported that between £5,000 and £6,000 was already in hand and detailed planning was well advanced. The scheme provided for the buildings to be constructed in a quadrangle so that each stage could be built separately as funds permitted. Shortly before Christmas a meeting was held in the Sunday School rooms of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church when Mr. Glenn, assisted by Mr. Hawtin, drew on the floor an outline in chalk of the dimensions of one of the cottages which would form the first part of the development. It was decided that eight such cottages and four flats should be erected forthwith and that Messrs. Hawtin should be asked to undertake the work at a cost of £5,200; and on 16 July 1925 twelve foundation stones were laid. The work was completed in a little under twelve months and the first homes were officially opened on 24 June 1926. Although it was envisaged that the major part of the funds needed for the further stages of the work would be raised through large individual donations it was thought important to engage both the interest and support of as large a number of people in the Baptist and Congregational Churches of the town as possible. In 1927 collectors were appointed in each church to gather regular donations; in return they represented the individual churches upon the General Committee which was formed to share in the running of the Homestead. To spur the churches on Messrs. Hawtin, Pettit, Rodhouse, E. Lewis and T. D. Lewis offered, between them, to double all money raised by the congregations for Bethany in the following five years, up to a total of £5,000; and within a year more than a thousand subscribers had been gathered.

After opening the first set of cottages priority was given to a Nursing Home and plans for this were put in hand. This too was to be built with scope for further expansion but for the time being it would consist of five 'Rest Rooms' on the ground floor with a

common dining room. The Nursing Home proper would be on the first floor, containing two general wards with smaller wards for private patients, a duty room, with sleeping accommodation for the staff on the floor above. While this development was being planned Mr. A. P. Hawtin offered on behalf of his family, and as a memorial to his late wife, to provide a dual purpose hall which could be used by the residents both as a chapel, and for social gatherings. A further three cottages, slightly larger than the original units, were also proposed. On 6 October 1928 all the foundation stones were laid in one ceremony and the following year the new developments were completed. Wards of the Nursing Home were named after George Pettit and Edward Lewis, whilst the first row of cottages was named 'Doddridge Row' and others to follow were to be 'Carey Row' and 'Farningham Row' in memory of the Baptist hymn writer Marianne Hearn who had taught for a while in Northampton and whose *nom de plume* had been Marianne Farningham.

With the expansion of its buildings Bethany Homestead was beginning to take shape. From the Autumn of 1927 Mrs. E. Law had been appointed as resident sister 'to give oversight and care to all residents in case of sickness and temporary ailments'. Overall control of the Homestead lay with the House Committee, made up largely of those whose efforts had brought Bethany into existence. They dealt with admissions to the Nursing Home and fixed the contributions to be made by the residents, often arranging this directly with relatives or with the authorities; a Minute of 29 November, 1929, notes in respect of one applicant that 'the Poor Law Guardians had agreed to allow 15/- weekly'. Residents in the cottages paid only one shilling per week toward rates, electricity and so on; the minimum contribution for a Rest Room was set at 10s. per week, inclusive of meals and other services.

In 1930 new plans were announced: a further row of twelve cottages, an extension to the Nursing Home giving ten more Rest Rooms, and a fund to endow a number of beds in the Nursing Home. The greater part of the money needed was immediately promised, over £12,000 in all, and in the June 1932 both the Carey Row cottages and the extension to the Nursing Home were opened. Homes and care were provided for more than sixty people during a time of economic hardship and social disruption. The ground floor of the Nursing Home was extended in 1938 to provide eight more Rest Rooms in the 'Crescent Wing'.

The Homestead and its inhabitants settled into a regular pattern of life with the House Committee providing benign oversight. At each fortnightly meeting the wife of the caretaker, who was responsible for visiting all the cottage residents regularly, and the matron, who was responsible for those in the wards and Rest Rooms, sent in reports upon the health and happiness of their charges. The



tranquil pattern was disrupted for a while by the outbreak of war which brought difficulties to the Homestead. Although restrictions after the war made any immediate expansion of the Homestead impossible a further extension providing bed-sitting-room accommodation was envisaged and a possible budget of £12,000 was mentioned. It was not until 1955 that a new block was built providing eight more cottages. This was opened in July 1957 and named in honour of Mr. & Mrs. Rodhouse who had died shortly before its completion. The new row had cost £19,000 of which £16,550 has been received at the time of opening; practically all the balance was met by a legacy from the estate of Mrs. Rodhouse. Since the completion of Rodhouse Row two further extensions have been built. In 1962 a bequest from Mr. H. Lewis financed the building of 'Lewis Row' which provided a cottage for the Matron's use, two flats and two small bed-sitting rooms, which were converted five years later to provide one additional flat. The most recent extension has been provided in 'Dardis Close' which was opened in 1969. Individuals were invited to build bungalows within Bethany for their own occupation, on the understanding that possession of the properties will pass to the Homestead upon the death of the present residents. That this should have been possible illustrates the changing circumstances of at least some of Bethany's residents. Throughout the past ten years various programmes have been initiated to make improvements to the older parts of the Homestead. Plans are now being prepared which will bring into use, through the provision of a new lift, rooms on the top floor of the Nursing Home originally provided as staff accommodation; and this, with additional improvements to Nursing Home facilities, is estimated to cost £45,000.

The circumstances to which Bethany hopes to minister have changed in the past fifty years. In a very perceptive Secretarial Report for 1970 the late Mr. F. Irons wrote:—

The years are witnessing many radical changes . . . the people to whom we hope to minister, their circumstances too are changing. But those who are left alone, those who find the problems of life too much with increasing years, those whose means are too slender . . . all of these will find Bethany a home, a refuge, a place where they feel that they can let their problems fall away and be at peace.

The structure of authority and decision within the Homestead reflects very clearly the process by which it came into being. While ultimate authority rests with a body of trustees most of the business which arises from the running of Bethany is dealt with by the House Committee. It is principally concerned with the Nursing Home and decides upon all admissions to the wards. Although members of the Committee are elected by the Annual Meeting of subscribers the election is generally *en bloc*. From the beginning

the House Committee has been composed principally of those closely involved in the work of the Homestead and membership has often tended to pass from one generation to the next within some families. In practice, if not within the theoretical framework of the Constitution, the House Committee tends to work as a benign oligarchy which 'manages' the affairs of the Homestead. The local churches are represented on the General Committee where broad matters of policy are discussed and the selection is made of candidates for admission to vacant Rest Rooms and cottages. The residents have no direct representation upon this or any other committee. Within this structure most of the power lies with the House Committee who are, without doubt, dedicated to working for the wellbeing of the residents. Having said this it might be admitted that there is still a considerable air of paternalism about the whole enterprise.

The Bethany Homestead was first planned when the ideal of building a new society after the horrors of the Great War had not been altogether destroyed. The 'after-glow' of Nonconformist influence in social and civic affairs was still strong. The men who came together to investigate the possibility of providing a home for the sick and elderly members of their respective churches who could not provide for themselves saw this work as a natural expression of their Christian convictions. They represent a brand of Free Churchmanship now almost extinct, men who were not only deeply committed to their church but were also prominent in civic affairs. Amongst the founders of the Homestead there were many who also found time to serve as Councillors and as Justices of the Peace. Today Bethany provides forty-three cottages and flats grouped in two quadrangles around the Nursing Home which provides forty beds in its wards and Rest Rooms; accommodating over ninety residents in all. It stands as a memorial to all those who have contributed to its development in many different ways, but especially to the group of men drawn from the Baptist and Congregational Churches of Northampton by whose efforts Bethany Homestead became a reality: indeed 'a vintage generation'.

NIGEL J. W. APPLETON.

## REVIEWS

*The Missionaries* by Geoffrey Moorhouse (Eyre Methuen, London, 1973, £3.95).

This story is of Africa in the raw and the romantic. Much of it will be familiar to those who know the L.M.S. story but in the hands of Mr. Moorhouse you become astonished that it all really happened. Pitted against the harshness of Africa these men and women wrote their names across the continent, and left their graves behind them. They literally did what the New Testament ordered with grim dedication, and anyone who finds the word 'missionary' a bit blown upon nowadays had better have a dose of Moorhouse.

Mr. Moorhouse is inclined to equate the achievements of missionaries with the abolition of slavery and the founding of schools, hospitals, with a kind of ecclesiastical colonialism. No doubt this is true. Missionaries did carry the flag. But they also carried another one, the flag of the Church, and an on-going one too, for which British churchmen still dip deeply into their pockets. Princely giving did not end with the millionaire Robert Arthington in 1900 as Mr. Moorhouse seems to suppose.

CECIL NORTHCOTT.

*Some Early Nonconformist Church Books*, ed. by H. G. Tibbutt (vol. 51, Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 1972, £2)

Mr. Tibbutt's many contributions to the study of the history of Nonconformity are so widely known and so well regarded that it would be a work of supererogation to comment on the meticulous presentation of these fascinating extracts from early Church Books. Though there are the minimum necessary notes of clarification, the editor has not stood between the text and the reader. Mr. Tibbutt has provided a helpful Index of Subjects and a full Index of Names.

The ninety pages are full of the stuff of early Nonconformity at the 'grass roots' — the real participation in church life of many who were then socially and economically disadvantaged, the active sense of Christian responsibility for fellow members and the quick consciousness of their own failings. There are many gems in this book and not a few which remind us that 'permissiveness' is not altogether new. There is the admonition of the woman member of the Carlton church accused of 'ungodly and unchristian living with her husband and in her family . . . She would have forced him out to work when he, having been very far amis was unable, and asked him if he was not ashamed to lie lobbing at home.'

NIEL CAPLAN.

*St. Enoch's Congregation, Belfast, 1872-1972* by John M. Barkley (The Presbyterian Bookshop, Fisherwick Place, Belfast, 1972. £1.75).

This book is sub-titled, 'An account of Presbyterianism in Belfast through the Life of a Congregation', and it can be commended to readers who wish to get a clearer grasp of the opportunities and harassments which face congregations trying to maintain their witness in that troubled city. There are historical, social, economic and political factors in the city's tensions but the religious differences between Protestants and Roman Catholics have also added to the division of the community.

For one hundred years St. Enoch's Church has had a vigorous life in a turbulent neighbourhood. Its members have had much influence in the civic, commercial, evangelistic and charitable life of the city. It has had a series of ministers who have included leaders in the philanthropic, evangelistic, missionary and ecumenical work of the Presbyterian Church. One of its ministers was the Rev. Andrew Prentice who later became a Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England.

Professor Barkley of the Presbyterian College, Belfast, has given a splendid account based on the records of the congregation and of the Presbyterian Church and on the columns of Irish newspapers. The book is well produced at a very modest price.

*Non-conformist Churches in Enfield*, by G. W. Knight. (Occasional Paper of Edmonton Hundred Historical Society, 1973. 30p.)

This paper deals with churches which were founded in Enfield from about 1680 up to 1900. These included Presbyterians, Quakers, Baptists and Congregationalists. Several churches have long ceased to exist but many others have maintained an active life up to the present. This account shows something of the life of these churches in an area which has increasingly become part of the London suburban area and which has had many economic and social changes. This paper is a very useful record of how churches have tried to meet the challenge of their day and of their area.

There are a few obscurities of style, particularly in the second paragraph, and the absence of Christian names in most of the references to ministers does not make for felicitous expression.

R. BUICK KNOX

*Piety in Queen Victoria's Reign*: By Elizabeth Longford (Dr. Williams's Trust, 14 Gordon Square, 1973, 30p.)

The 27th lecture published by the Friends of Dr. Williams's Library is, as will be expected, both entertaining and informative. The author disclaims any 'deep learning' and says her thoughts on the subject 'Have been mainly gleaned by the wayside, so to speak, while researching on the lives of Queen Victoria and the Duke of Wellington.' So then, she is concerned to describe what people said and did; she does not ask why they did it or what they sought.

JOHN H. TAYLOR