

THE
JOURNAL
of the
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HISTORY SOCIETY
(incorporating the Congregational Historical Society, founded 1899,
and the Presbyterian Historical Society of England, founded 1913)
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Vol. 1. No. 6. NOVEMBER 1975

CONTENTS

Editorial	157
Our Architectural Heritage									
	by <i>Christopher Stell, M.A., B.A.R.C.H., A.R.I.B.A., F.S.A.</i>								158
Linton United Reformed Church, Cambridgeshire									
	by <i>R. Buick Knox, M.A., B.D., Ph.D.</i>								174
Reviews	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	179
Our Contemporaries	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	184

Editorial

The Society was privileged to have as its lecturer Mr. Christopher Stell of the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments. His lecture is printed in this issue. It was illustrated by a fine selection of slides and was marked by wide knowledge, astringent judgement and deep concern for the preservation of a distinctive strand in the English architectural scene. In this strand there are many styles and sizes of churches and they are witnesses to the changing conditions of church and social life over the last three centuries. Many examples of this tradition have already disappeared. The preservation of what remains is a costly enterprise and few of Mr. Stell's hearers could fail to feel the tension between his message and the frequent references in the General Assembly to the burden of maintaining buildings which were unsuitably sited, infrequently used, and often large beyond all present needs. And some are listed buildings. The Church has continually to decide priorities but all should read and digest Mr. Stell's words before making decisions.

In our previous issue we inadvertently referred to the commemoration of the death of George Macdonald; the reference should have been to his birth, an error of no small magnitude. Incidentally, in a recent collection of hitherto unpublished essays of C. S. Lewis, *Undeceptions*, edited by Walter Hooper, there is an enigmatic reference to Macdonald, who, says Lewis, was the first person to give him a new understanding of the Lord's miracles.

OUR ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

A motorist driving along the M62 between Liverpool and Manchester will see on the south side of the road half-a-mile east of the junction with the M6 a cluster of tall trees above a gently sloping and generously wide grassy bank. He will see the end of a row of cottages and may even observe as he flashes past a few tombstones hiding behind the open wooden fence which bounds the motorway. Hardly enough to excite much interest, and yet the tall trees which have seen so many changes now stand in the guise of mourners around the grave of one, a building rather than a person, whose premature death was avoidable and whose loss must forever be deeply felt by all who have at heart the preservation of our architectural heritage. In October 1971 the trees looked down upon a great heap of bricks, silent witnesses to an orgy of destruction which had but lately taken place. The wind of change, merciless and unthinking, had blown and in an instant melted into thin air what two-and-a-half centuries of calm Lancashire breezes had failed to achieve; the solemn temple reared by the venerable Thomas Risley was no more, only the gravestones, the gate piers, and a noticeboard remained with a notice still belatedly inviting worshippers to a harvest festival service on the 26th of September.

To the untutored eye Risley Chapel, built in 1706, may not have appeared of overwhelming importance. It had walls of dark brown bricks and a stone slate roof, not in the best of repair; a cumbersome square wooden bellcote at the west end, probably a 19th-century alteration, concealed the bell dated 1718, the work of Ralph Ashton of Wigan, one of the few fragments which have been saved from the wreck; while the three windows in each side wall sported shiny surrounds of red Accrington brick which improved neither the appearance nor the usefulness of the building. The history of the chapel during the present century is one in which the legacy of two hundred years was allowed, often with the best of intentions, to suffer and wither away. Two centuries in which it passed through the hands of the English Presbyterians and their Unitarian successors, and after 1838 into the care of what the *Victoria County History* called 'the Scottish Presbyterians'.

The chief importance of Risley was not in its similarity to other nonconformist meeting-houses, but rather the reverse. Thomas Risley had been episcopally ordained and, although he was not able on grounds of conscience to continue with the establishment, he built for the congregation which he gathered a chapel more liturgically advanced than many within the Church of England. Not only was it orientated in the orthodox way, but it was divided into a nave and chancel and had a separate doorway for the minister. The chancel, for many years used as a vestry, had an east window properly aligned with the nave and was separated from it by a three-centred chancel

arch, clearly original to the building, although later, perhaps in 1838, closed off by matchboarding. The only external alteration by the end of the 19th century, apart from the bellcote, was the substitution of larger rectangular leaded panes in the south windows. The red brick surrounds to the side windows, which dealt a severe blow to the outward appearance of the building, seem to have been perpetrated in or about 1914 when one so-called 'restoration scheme' was planned, while the chancel arch was destroyed, strangely enough, sometime after 1954 when the vestry was restored to its original use, and a semi-circular arch substituted. All these may have seemed small matters at the time but with a simple building small changes can be very costly and minor meddling can be very mischievous indeed. For the ultimate loss of this unique building local church members are inclined to blame an indifferent presbytery, but whatever may be the reason I am in no doubt that the presence of the chapel in no way interfered with the path of the motorway, and that a less apathetic response to the problems of its preservation would have resulted in a different and happier story.

The case of Risley Chapel is important in emphasising the need for eternal vigilance, not only in the larger issues of ultimate survival, but over those small points on which active church members, and some ministers too, are inclined to pontificate frequently in inverse proportion to their actual knowledge and for the sum of whose un-wisdom later generations, who it is to be hoped will have developed a more advanced sense of values, will have cause to lament.

When we ask ourselves how it is that any of our older meeting-houses have survived the extremes of misplaced zeal for 'restoration' and a hankering after novelty the answer is to be found in such a place as the old Independent meeting-house at Walpole in Suffolk. Spared the oratory of great preachers for whose sycophants the pomp and splendour of a new building were so often demanded, spared the patronage of wealthy members whose temptation to paint the lily is seldom resisted, the congregation pursued its modest way, repairing but seldom altering, until in 1970 reduced to two members it passed peacefully away. The meeting-house at Walpole, so different from Risley in many ways, with its timber-framed walls, entirely domestic front and columned and galleried interior, is one of the best preserved buildings of its kind anywhere in the country. It began its existence as a private house, but was converted in the late 17th century by enlargement to the rear, the provision of galleries and seating, including box pews to the lower floor, and a pulpit with appropriately impressive sounding board between two typically round-arched chapel windows in the back wall. Not quite all the pews survived even here, for at the end of the last century an energetic minister seems to have been responsible for replacing the central pews by what were described as 'more comfortable modern forms', and the tall partitions between the rear pews narrowly escaped a wilful decision of the church for

their removal in 1906, when the only carpenter in the village resolutely refused to abet any such destruction. What the future may hold for Walpole unless it continues to be cared for and is brought back into occasional use is a problem from which the members of this Society ought not to remain aloof.

Another timber-framed Independent meeting-house stands at Box Lane, near Hemel Hempstead. It was built in 1690 and as such is amongst the first group to be erected after the passing of the Toleration Act. Unfortunately, as Martin Briggs comments in *Puritan Architecture*, it was 'dreadfully restored in 1876' and only the slightest vestige of timber framing remained visible behind the harsh rendering covering both sides of the walls. Almost hidden by surrounding trees and disfigured by pebble-dash only its proportions and a few round-arched windows left a suggestion of antiquity. In the interior the two massive oak posts supporting the roof, a feature common to many of the older chapels throughout England, and often referred to as 'Jachin and Boaz' after the pillars of Solomon's Temple, were surrounded by boarding and made to carry false plaster vaults. The galleries at each end disappeared, and the seating was replaced by pitchpine pews. Today, as No. 6 Box Lane, it is a gentleman's residence. The timber framing exposed during the alterations is again concealed. The burials inside hastily covered by a concrete floor, and Jachin and Boaz irreverently uprooted and ejected from their abode. The monuments in the burial-ground are thrown down, while the parliament clock and the communion table have, one suspects, quietly slipped into private hands. So much for salvation by conversion!

Fortunately not all our best buildings have yet been demolished, closed or converted and the elegant mid-18th-century chapel in Lyme Regis, Dorset, is amongst the finest which remain in use. It was built, so the historians of Dorset Congregationalism tell us, entirely under the direction of the minister, Mr. Whitty, who seems to have been a competent craftsman as he is said also to have made the pulpit and gallery fronts. The traditional pair of columns, here with fluted casings, again supported the roof, the usual gallery was carried around three sides, and Mr. Whitty's pulpit and canopy occupied their proper place between the back windows. But, alas for 'progress', over the last century part of the gallery had been demolished to accommodate an extra-large pipe organ and the staircases have been entirely destroyed, leaving what remains of the gallery as a repository for decaying pieces of lumber amongst which, as aspiring mountaineers will discover who make the direct and only possible ascent over the gallery front, is the canopy from Mr. Whitty's pulpit.

Although few of the earlier chapels can be regarded as outstanding architectural compositions an exception must be made for one in Somerset, at Rook Lane, Frome. In its general arrangement it is unexceptional, with two massive columns supporting the roof, although here they are of stone, one of very few chapels so constructed, another

being the Presbyterian Friargate Chapel in Derby which the Unitarians demolished in 1974. The expansive ashlar front of Rook Lane with its wide pediment proudly dated 1707, thirteen round-arched windows in two storeys, and elegantly detailed doorcase has no parallel in nonconformist architecture. Comparable in many respects with such an acknowledged masterpiece as the School at Winchester, built twenty years earlier, it was nevertheless regrettably closed some years ago when two churches united. Whether the Church sought any architectural advice in deciding which of its two buildings to retain is not recorded, but if it did we need have little hesitation in supposing that it was not acted upon. Had any thought been given to preserving this matchless gem of our nonconformist heritage it would not have been allowed to remain for several years completely uncared for, the gutters blocked, the windows broken, and even the most essential repairs entirely neglected. By 1974 the estate agent's boards were in place, offering for sale 'this outstanding freehold historic building' which it is to be hoped will soon find a more appreciative owner. But if it survives, as it most certainly should, it will stand as a monument to the cavalier manner with which the spiritual descendents of Cromwell's model army are still prepared to treat their birthright, and ours.

Whose heritage?

We may at this point usefully pause to consider what may be meant by the phrase 'our architectural heritage'. Whose heritage? Is it the private and exclusive heritage of the members of the United Reformed Church; or is it more narrowly the private and exclusive heritage of the Church of Christ meeting in and around Little-Sticking-in-the-Mud? An outsider might be excused on occasion for thinking this to be the case, for the tradition of independency amongst English dissenters remains strong and the right to do what we will with our own, oblivious of the trust implicit in this fleeting ownership, is treasured with as much jealousy as if it were a part of the Confession of Faith, or an integral portion of the Church Covenant. In denying any such exclusiveness to the architecture of dissent I must claim for the chapels and meeting-houses of England an equal place with those other categories of building which are already recognised as forming a part of our national heritage. The great cathedrals and parish churches, the castles, the manor houses, and the humble cottages are all accepted in their own way as national monuments, but without the village chapel or the obscure meeting-house the picture will never be complete. If we fail to appreciate their significance and allow this portion of our heritage to disappear on the pretext that 'it's nobody's business but our own' we will be doing a grave disservice to future generations and subscribing to a distorted view of nonconformist history.

Secular and religious, anglican and dissenting, are not watertight compartments and we will find in the field of architecture as elsewhere

a considerable degree of overlapping to which denominationalists of an exclusive kind might not care to admit. In fact the variety of uses to which a building may be put is infinite: everything from a manor house to a fried fish shop has been found suitable for conversion to religious use, while chapels have become garages, museums, bingo halls and breweries. Some have passed through the hands of a dozen widely differing denominations, but few so extreme as the former Congregational Chapel in Graham Street, Birmingham, which now serves as a Sikh Temple — and let us not forget that Westminster Abbey itself was once the meeting-house of an Independent Church.

Not all that has come down to us was built for the denomination which it now serves. Some Unitarians in the 19th century were sufficiently broadminded to assert that there was no such thing as a Unitarian chapel, and in October 1972 it could well have been said that there was no such thing as a meeting-house built for the use of the United Reformed Church — but for all that it did not lack places of worship. The Old Hall Chapel at Dukinfield in Cheshire is one such 'converted' building which deserves to be better known. Built in the 16th century as a private chapel and provided in the normal way with a nave and chancel it is of considerable importance to the religious history of Dukinfield and one of the few buildings of any merit which survive in that heavily industrialised town on the outskirts of Manchester. In 1872 Congregationalists bought the building and erected a large chapel alongside, turning the old one into a church hall. Apart from the removal of the west wall the place is little altered and was much improved in 1973 by the cleaning of the outer walls, but the church which meets here has long since ceased to exhibit a noticeboard with the times of services and grave concern must be expressed over the fate of the building.

At Winterburn, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, is a rather later chapel, more-or-less contemporary with Risley, in which history has taken an opposite course. James Miall, the historian of Yorkshire Congregationalism, tells us that the first Yorkshire nonconformist ordination was held at Winterburn in 1677 and that the chapel was built by a Mrs. Lambert, described as 'a zealous Presbyterian'. In fact Mrs. Lambert only provided house room and encouragement and it was left to Thomas Whalley in 1704 to build the meeting-house. After a very difficult period in the 19th century, during which an endowment had been lost and the church had become Congregational, the cause finally failed, and from 1882 the building has been used by the Church of England as a Chapel-of-ease: a change which horrified one old lady when she heard that the Vicar was to begin preaching in the dissenters' meeting-house — "What," she said to him, "ye're never a conventicler are ye?". Winterburn still serves as a Chapel-of-ease, and although much altered inside it retains the outward appearance of a meeting-house with its plain stone walls, two rows of mullioned windows and central doorway.

The idea of meeting-houses as chapels-of-ease, although outside the establishment, is one which seems to have been prevalent from an early date, particularly in the North of England. There dissenters had succeeded in keeping possession of several chapels claimed by the establishment for many years after the Act of Uniformity, and one in Liverpool, the Ancient Chapel of Toxteth, has never been reclaimed. The Commonwealth chapels at Bramhope and Great Horton in Yorkshire followed the rectangular pattern by then usual for the lesser chapels, and nonconformists continued to reproduce this form in isolated places such as Bullhouse Chapel near Penistone, of 1692. This stood in a similar relationship to Bullhouse as did the chapel at Dukinfield to the adjacent Hall or the two Commonwealth Chapels to the houses of their respective patrons. That Bullhouse Chapel was Independent is not heavily written all over it — for it would have served the Church of England at that time almost equally well, and in the position of the pulpit, which has always been at one end rather than centrally opposite the entrance it may even, in non-conformist terms, be said to be rather 'high church'. Bullhouse Chapel is comparatively little known and without a large scale map is somewhat difficult to find. It is, nevertheless, well worth looking for, and it would be a sorry day if it were to disappear; but like Dukinfield the church no longer advertises its existence and we may well ask whether they really appreciate their heritage.

At Elswick in Lancashire a few miles east of Blackpool is another cause where the interests of dissent and conformity seem irretrievably intermingled. There is only one place of worship and I was amused some years ago to hear one of the villagers referring to the Congregational minister as 'the Vicar' — and not without reason, for non-conformists here enjoyed the use of the old chapel-of-ease built about 1650 and only moved from it in 1753 because, as is all too often the case, they had so far neglected to repair it that it had become quite untenable. The new meeting-house put up on a fresh site near the centre of the village, with its bellcote unusually placed on the roof of the porch, survives as a Sunday School, to which it was converted in 1874 when the third chapel with its prominent octagonal spirelet was built alongside. A writer in the *Preston Chronicle* a few years before the old building went out of use describes how after morning service many of the congregation remained behind to eat their dinners there — the minister and his wife seating themselves comfortably near the pulpit, and others dotted around in the chapel, the vestry and the yard. The same writer also recounts an incident when the chapel singers, whose fame was considerable, indulged in the contemporary failing of jazzing-up some of the hymns — causing an elderly deacon to interrupt them with the pointed remark 'that tune is more fitted to be sung in a playhouse than in a place of worship', an action which I must admit to being tempted to emulate on more than one occasion.

Further examples of the way in which nonconformists have provided what amounts to a chapel-of-ease in the absence of any comparable provision by the establishment are not difficult to find. Tyldesley Chapel, also in Lancashire, is a case in which the erection of a place of worship was left to independent action but which stood at first very much in the guise of a parish church, a position still apparent from its situation in the centre of this small town. It dates from 1789 and although originally supplied by ministers in the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion it was not formally associated with that august sounding body, but remained entirely independent until 1919 when, under the influence of the then minister, the congregation was admitted to the Presbyterian Church of England. That this membership ceased about the time when Risley Chapel was destroyed must be laid at the door of the self-same Presbytery, that of Manchester, for it appears that after some fifty years of membership it was at last discovered that the congregation were indulging in a most diabolical practice, none other than the reading of the *Book of Common Prayer*, which doubtless was worthy of the most severe penalties! Of course this was quite consistent with its origins in the Countess's Connexion and was clearly referred to in an article on the chapel in the *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society* in 1920 — but blind prejudice dies hard, and Tyldesley is again Independent. The chapel itself is a comparatively plain brick building with a bellcote at the front, two doorways and two heights of Venetian windows, with wide round-arched windows at the sides. It has galleries around but in this as in the exterior it is quite consistent with much contemporary practice within the Church of England; that so many galleries were taken out of parish churches from the late 19th century onwards has left the false impression that galleries are rather a nonconformist peculiarity, which is far from correct.

At the more respectable and salubrious watering-place of Cheltenham we find much the same state of affairs in the early 19th century, although the town has a history of dissent going back many generations earlier. Here a chapel was built in the High Street and opened in 1809 by the Rev. Rowland Hill, who is said to have paid for the cost of the pulpit and reading desk out of his own pocket. Like Tyldesley it owed much to the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, but remained independent and was managed by a Board of Trustees who derived their income from pew rents and burial fees. As the prosperity of Cheltenham increased and chapels of stated denominations multiplied so did the congregation at the old chapel fall away until in 1851 it was thought best to drop into line by attaching a denominational name to the place, in this case Congregational. This was unfortunate as a Congregational Church was already in existence, so in 1858 a further move had to be made into the Presbyterian camp, a move which proved successful and resulted in the erection of St. Andrew's in 1886 on a new site in Fauconburg Road. The old chapel

of 1809 still exists behind a wine merchant's shop for which it serves as a wine store. The brick walls with their series of round-arched windows and the long hipped roof stand out prominently across an adjacent public garden, but the interior with its galleries and covered plaster ceiling has inevitably suffered from alteration. There is still a small grave-yard attached to it which now seems to belong to a nearby house.

As one final example of this kind of ecumenical 'free-house' let us consider the building which now goes under the name of the Parish Church of St. Andrew, at Stainland, a small village a few miles to the south-west of Halifax. According to the *Stainland Parish Church Year Book* the parish was formed in 1843 but the building 'had been in existence then for nearly a hundred years as a Church of England chapel-of-ease'. James Miall, in his *History of Congregationalism in Yorkshire* has a somewhat different and probably more accurate story. The chapel, he tells us, was erected about 1755, the congregation 'comprehending Christians of different denominations, principally Wesleyans and Independents', a statement which he substantiates by reference to the words of the Rev. J. Hanson (minister from 1804 to 1812), that, 'we have Wesleyans, Independents, and Church-people: an Independent parson in the pulpit, a Baxterian clerk, a Roman Catholic organ, and a drunken player, and so you may call us what you like'. Here it was the Independents who in 1813 were the first to leave, apparently because of an insistence by the Church party on the reading of the prayers of the Church of England — a provision in the original trust deed which, unlike Tyldesley, had long since been neglected. The Wesleyans remained until 1838 when, after recourse to law, the building passed into the possession of the Establishment.

The old chapel of Stainland has been enlarged and altered a great deal since 1838, with the addition of a tower, porch and chancel, but the original stone walled rectangular structure with a row of four windows facing the road and a sundial at the centre is still clearly distinguishable. The interior has been drastically changed and now possesses something of that dull uniformity for which neo-mediaevalists with their chancels, altars, and hatred of galleries are to blame — an odium from which nonconformist 'restorers' cannot be dissociated; it is sufficient to recall the comparatively mild alterations to Box Lane in the 1870's to recognise the damage of which all denominations are capable. Before these changes Stainland had galleries around three sides, north, east and west, the communion table below the east gallery, and the pulpit centrally on the south side; a fine upstanding three-decker, from the lower deck of which it used to be the privilege of the clerk to select the closing hymn, a choice which he was able to exercise with fearful effect if he took a dislike to the preacher, with a hymn commencing:—

Nothing but truth before His throne,
 With honour can appear,
 The painted hypocrites are known,
 Through the disguise they wear.

The use of hymns in this manner was not confined to Baxterian clerks in the remote north — a minister of an Independent chapel in Tunbridge Wells once put into a book of hymns of his own composition one in which appear the words:—

Strive, Christian strive to be within
 Before the service doth begin . . .

and the next verse commenced —

If you would grace and mercy find,
 Be not, we pray, so oft behind . . .

Sentiments with which ministers will, I am sure, concur, but a trifle embarrassing when forced upon a tardy congregation!

Country cousins

Enough, perhaps more than enough, has now been said to show how impossible it is to adopt any consistently exclusive or sectarian attitude towards nonconformist buildings. They readily pass from one denomination to another and although it would be wrong to suggest that there are no denominational differences to be found, the stronger influences of contemporary fashion and of the resources available in terms both of money and materials played the greater part. A village meeting-house, particularly one of the older sort, will reflect the abilities and attitudes of the local craftsmen whether it be intended for Quakers or Baptists, Independents or Presbyterians.

Let us therefore consider a few of these village meeting-houses. The first one to which reference is usually made is Horningsham in Wiltshire. That I do so with some considerable misgiving is due to the oft-repeated story of its origins — in which the claim is put forward that it was built in 1566 for the use of Presbyterian masons working on the erection of nearby Longleat House. It is a good story and many have attempted to find some reliable evidence for it, but reference to the relevant volume of the *Victoria County History* is sufficient to shew that no such evidence has come to light. It is a charming building for all the obscurity of its origins, and a thatched roof can always be relied upon to lend an air of antiquity even though from its very nature it cannot be much more than half a century old. The date tablet of 1566 in the gable seems to be an insertion of the early 19th century, probably at the time of one of two major enlargements which have left very little of the original building intact.

Wiltshire is a very good county in which to study nonconformist architecture and at Avebury, where most visitors go to see the pre-historic stone circle which encompasses the village, the little meeting-house almost at the centre of the circle is an antiquity which is also well worth a glance. In the birds-eye view of Avebury published by the antiquary William Stukeley in 1724 it appears as a small square

building with a double-gabled roof, set well back from the main street. Compared with Horningsham there is nothing picturesque about the Avebury meeting-house apart from its setting. The roof has been rebuilt in a single pitch, and at the end facing the best preserved section of the stone circle, a school-room was added in 1830. This has three lancet windows, a little chancel-like perhaps, and moveable shutters do allow it to be used as part of the chapel on those now rare occasions when the congregation is too large. The prospect at the opposite end may not be thought to be much better, but to the archaeologist, whether professional or amateur, who delights in unravelling the knots of history, it is far from uninteresting. The original masonry of large blocks of sarsen stone remains in the side walls to about two thirds of their length, with a window centrally in each side. This was the meeting-house which Stukeley saw. The front was extended in the 18th century, also in sarsen, although the difference in masonry is quite clear, in order to provide a gallery of which one side window remains visible below the eaves. Perhaps the old double-gabled roof was continued to the front, because the present brick gable and the Gothic windows are all work of the succeeding century.

Also in Wiltshire, the little building near Corsham known as Monks Chapel has much to recommend it and is more readily appreciated than the two preceding examples although it is not without its problems. A grey stone building with a stone slate roof it is at its best when the sun shines. The materials are just those used throughout this part of Wiltshire for houses large or small, and the mullioned windows and square doorhead are in a style which went on for a very long time. This has been claimed to be a 17th-century building but whether that or early in the 18th century is one secret which the architecture does not reveal. The only major alteration outside is the addition of an arched window over the entrance; this looks like work of about 1900 to give more light to the gallery, and it has been very effectively and sympathetically done. The interior of Monks Chapel is one mass of woodwork — box pews downstairs and upright open-backed benches in the gallery — those in the back gallery with tall wooden stands for the books of the chapel singers — a reminder of those glorious days when the choir, and the musicians for that matter, were content to be heard and not seen, and the Sabbath day millinery parade was a spectacle as yet undreamt of. Hat pegs conveniently protrude from every available timber, not only of the gallery front but from the very purlins of the roof itself, while above the tall backboard of the pulpit, it too replete with a substantial hat peg, is a painted text; not the stencilled, Gothic, Victorian kind of thing, but in a real 17th-century scrolled frame such as our Puritan ancestors delighted to paint on the walls of their parish churches in place of the Saint Christophers and other relics of the despised and outmoded 'popery'. But where else, I wonder, can one find such a survival in a nonconformist meeting-house?

From Wiltshire it is only a short step to Dorset, and there in Ebenezer Chapel, at Cripplestyle, we find again early in the 19th century the use of the same locally available materials. Mud walls, or cob to give it its proper name, for the most part, and thatch for the roof, just like the cottages and farm buildings in this district, which lacks any good building stone. Brick was used for the front when the chapel was enlarged but that was the only extravagance in which the Church indulged before 1888, when they grew tired of the old chapel and built a new one nearby. The old Ebenezer Chapel was fortunately allowed to remain and has been kept in some sort of repair. It is by no means all of one date and the rising fortunes of the congregation can be seen inside and out, with the extension at the front for a deep gallery, the enlargement of the windows at one side, and a very uncomfortable extension of the gallery along the opposite side wall which left barely sufficient headroom even for the children for whom it was intended. The little pulpit with its two slender supports is an epitome of rural simplicity and all in all the chapel is a worthy monument to those many village preachers who laboured hard during the last century, but whose chapels are now in increasing number being forced to close and disappear, entirely disregarded by the mass of the population.

Not all village chapels even in the early 19th century were devoid of architectural pretensions and of these more elaborate but still rural buildings I would single out that at Roxton in Bedfordshire — a county much favoured by the researches of our member Mr. Tibbutt. Here we have the most remarkable of all thatched chapels, a T-shaped building in which the 'upright stroke' forms the body of the chapel while at the head, stretching out each side, are two round-ended wings for a vestry and schoolroom, the end of the former being designed as a rustic summer-house facing towards the mansion in Roxton Park where lived the squire, Mr. C. J. Metcalfe. In its present state this is no plain unadorned meeting-house, but in its origins it illustrates the story of many congregations who met first in a barn: the barn still exists at Roxton, opened by squire Metcalfe for Congregational worship in 1808, and it is still in use, but transformed in the second quarter of the 19th century to a most delightful Gothic folly, complete with a private pew for the squire and his family — an adjunct by no means exclusive to the establishment.

Although remarkable, Roxton cannot be said to be quite the most unusual of early 19th century meeting-houses; that distinction must be reserved for a little building near Exmouth in Devonshire. Point-in-View chapel is a tiny square structure set in the midst of a field and surrounded by almshouses. The chapel in the centre, with a steep pyramidal roof, was originally only eleven and a half feet square and entered through what was at first a tiny room occupied by the minister, but which was later incorporated into the chapel and a manse of more suitable size built nearby. This extraordinary miniature chapel and

almshouses were built in 1811 by the Misses Parminster, two maiden ladies who were particularly devoted to the conversion of the Jews. The almshouses were intended for occupation by four unmarried women, all over fifty, the minister, and a schoolmistress, preferably a converted Jewess, who was to teach six female children, again preferably of Jewish parentage. The children were to receive the usual religious books, and were to be provided annually with 'a stuff gown, a straw bonnet, a linen cap and a Vandyke tippet'.

Pomp and circumstance

The simple and the quaint and the ancient are attributes which attract interest towards buildings of all kinds. But our architectural heritage crosses all boundaries and includes all the colours of the architectural spectrum. Even when confined to buildings put up by Congregational or Presbyterian Churches no difficulty is found in producing appropriate examples. We noticed at Rook Lane, Frome, a chapel of 1707 eminently worthy to be compared with the best buildings of its age. At Great George Street in Liverpool is another, in almost equally sad condition, in which the classical architecture of a wealthy seaport, which in the mid 19th century could and did afford the very best, is put at the service of a nonconformist church. The great domed entrance porch does credit to the corporation surveyor, Joseph Franklin, who designed it. No expense was spared, and the tall Corinthian columns which surround the entrance are built not of separate drums but the shaft of each is turned from a single stone. Yet in 1967 the estate agent's board was up and the congregation dispersed.

Here the eminent Dr. Thomas Raffles exercised a notable ministry, in between opening new chapels for which he was in great demand, and a portrait bust used to stand in the entrance; whether it still does is another matter, for the place is now given over to the use of a Youth Centre with all the rough handling that that entails. The inside was ideally arranged for great preaching services, with a wide round-ended continuous gallery and even upper galleries at each end supported at a dizzy height by thin iron brackets protruding from the walls. Behind the pulpit — an elaborately massive affair partly concealed by a later platform — rose the organ, of which organists still speak very highly, but which was so far left unprotected that soon after the last service the organ pipes were stolen and this splendid instrument rendered useless.

If it is yet possible to impress upon the minds of those responsible for our heritage of fine buildings some sense of their architectural importance I would make a special plea for Saltaire, in Yorkshire. Here the manufacturer Sir Titus Salt built a carefully laid out new town for his workmen, and placed at its centre an imposing edifice, not unlike Great George Street in some ways, designed by Lockwood and Mawson, which as an Independent he placed in trust for Congre-

gational worship. Built in 1859, some eighteen years after Great George Street, it has a similar entrance portico with tall Corinthian columns but the lantern above rises higher to form a domed tower in which were hung a peal of six bells. Unfortunately the bells are no more, but the ringers' board remains in the tower to record the feat of the Yorkshire Association of Change Ringers and the Society of Copley Scholars in ringing a peal of 5,040 changes for the first time on 8th December, 1888. It is strange that no proper description of the building ever appeared in the architectural section of the *Congregational Year Book*, although the 1860 edition included a fine engraving as a frontispiece.

The interior of Saltaire has a character of its own, resembling if anything the more magnificent of Victorian town halls with its coffered and vaulted ceiling, elaborately coloured and gilded, and the enormous circular gasoliers suspended between heaven and earth like so many somnolent space-ships awaiting their next mission. Apart from the large organ filling what was intended to be a small apse the building is unchanged internally, with tall marbled pilasters dividing the side walls, comfortable pews with carved and scrolled ends, and a pulpit of suitably broad proportions. This building is to Saltaire every bit as important as a parish church and it would be little short of scandalous if the Church which has the good fortune to possess it is not somehow enabled to maintain it in a proper manner, not only for itself but for the nation as a whole.

When we turn to the use of Gothic elements in chapel architecture we embark on a topic which could occupy us for the rest of our discourse. And at the outset we should not forget that one of the principal exponents of the style, Thomas Rickman, was brought up as a Quaker, and that nonconformists played a considerable part in its development, though some, notably those of Mr. Rickman's persuasion, were rather slow to follow. In this I believe that Congregationalists were well to the fore; introducing pointed windows as early as 1777 at Skinner Street, Poole, while in the 1830's several chapels were built which tried very hard to enter into the spirit of the style as it was then understood.

The gabled, battlemented, and now rather dirty Bethesda Chapel near the centre of the older part of Runcorn, built in 1835, is one of these, which as Sir Nikolaus Pevsner says is 'reminiscent of Commissioners' churches'. If only it were cleaned it would be a definite asset to a town which is singularly lacking in good public buildings. It is certainly well constructed and the stone is of the very best quality for the builder and probably the principal benefactor was Mr. John Tomkinson, a quarry owner who supplied the stone for several important public buildings in Liverpool. The chapel still stands although it has been under threat of demolition for some time and it is worthy of attention as one of the rapidly dwindling number of Gothic revival chapels surviving from this period.

In the centre of Darwen, in Lancashire, is another which is as rewarding as it is unexpected, although it never stood in quite the park-like surroundings in which it appears in the engraving in the 1847 *Congregational Year Book*. The 'Independent Meeting-house' exhibited a board with this time-honoured title until a year or two ago when the enforcement officers of the 1972 Act took it away — a pity, for it was one of the last town meeting-houses to continue to bear what was, after all, its original legal title. The building at least survives, with its cavernous porch of quite overpowering dimensions, and in place of a tower a screen wall rises behind the porch with gables and openings giving a false grandeur from which purists such as A. W. Pugin would undoubtedly have recoiled in horror.

In much the same part of the country, at Liscard in Cheshire, stood another early Gothic chapel which has now perished — and all because the rainwater goods were neglected and dry rot was allowed to proceed unchecked. Here we had a plain rectangular building with lancet windows and a massive tower, enlarged later at the opposite end. It was built in 1842 by John Astley Marsden of Liscard Castle who was a great admirer of Dr. Watts, and who happened to come across some relics from Dr. Watts' chapel at St. Mary Axe in London when it was demolished; these he bought and built the Liscard chapel to accommodate them. They included a wall monument and Dr. Watts' pulpit, although the latter was rendered quite invisible by later well-meaning but misguided hands when it was entirely boxed in with more dainty panelling. The use of a tower was of especial interest as not only did it not contain any traces of bells but the great entrance door at its base led only to a staircase up a small rear gallery, the body of the chapel being reached through doors at the sides — a plan which it had been used earlier, though without a full tower, at Runcorn.

The adaptation of a tower to a small chapel can result in absurdly reduced proportions. But that it should be there at all particularly in the early 19th century seems to indicate a desire for prominence whatever the merits of the building. There is the desire of the squire to produce a chapel-of-ease for his own denomination, there is the desire of a denomination to appear respectable — a characteristic very notable of Unitarians after the passing of the Dissenters' Chapels Act — and there is the desire of a minister to act the Vicar with all the necessary props and paraphernalia. The Rev. James Sherman of Reading was one such pastor who just failed to achieve episcopal re-ordination and became a much respected minister at the Surrey Chapel. It is therefore not surprising that a group of small chapels around Reading built during his ministry there were all equipped with miniature towers — and one of them, at Woodley, of 1834, with a spire as well. It must of course be said that when the doorway in the tower rises to nearly half the height of the battlements the appearance

is distinctly odd; but the tower does contain a single bell, for that was an essential part of the paraphernalia.

How different is the building which Lord Lever put up near his house at Thornton Hough, in Cheshire, about seventy years later: better built, better sited and better looking than the parish church, it represents the last stage in the squires' chapel-of-ease, a Norman revival church complete outside and inside, and such as could only occur under the influence of a wealthy patron. No chapel building committee could have resisted the temptation to make some kind of cheeseparing economy, but not here.

Requiescat . . . or resurgam?

And so I have traced, as best I can, the story of an architectural heritage which stretches back if not to 1566 then at least to the 17th century, and includes worthy monuments even of our own age — though I will not presume to comment on some of the most recent additions. There are small country meeting-houses, large and elaborate town chapels, expensive structures and cheap temporary sheds — even the corrugated-iron chapels are sometimes worth a glance. Not all can survive even if we were willing that they should, but it is becoming a matter of the utmost urgency that nonconformists of all denominations should take a more serious view of the value of their buildings not only to themselves in terms of use, or what the site will fetch when it is placed on the market, but the value to the community as a whole.

If we take such a building as the former Congregational chapel at Witney in Oxfordshire and consider it in architectural terms, it is, or rather was, an interesting essay in the Gothic revival style of 1828 quite early in fact, and all the more remarkable for that, owing the precocity of style to the influence of William Townsend of Holborn who built it. About 1970 the chapel was closed and replaced by a dull and thoroughly unimaginative supermarket carrying on a line of rebuilding which had been started sometime before. By 1974 the old shop to the right of the chapel was closed and offered for sale as a development site. And so the developer succeeds slowly but surely in taking from us all shreds of interest in town and country, while building owners including chapel trustees make feeble excuses and tell us that there is a better one in the next town. And if we must have yet more supermarkets I would refer you to a Methodist chapel nearly opposite the Independent Meeting-house in the centre of Darwen where conversion has been singularly successful, shewing that development need not always mean destruction.

I would leave you, if I could, with a message of hope, in the comfortable knowledge that we have indeed a marvellous heritage which will be passed down to our children and to our children's children. But that heritage is being taken away with such rapidity that unless a stop is put to this rake's progress of destruction there will be little enough left of any architectural value by the end of the

century. Over the past thirty years hundreds of chapels, some of great visual merit, have been torn down, and the supply is now running out. In the ten years between 1960 and 1970 Methodists alone closed three hundred chapels each year — nearly one for every day of the week (Sundays, of course, excepted). Good and bad have gone to a common grave and the time has come to ask ourselves whether sufficient safeguards exist to ensure that the architectural and historical merits of a building are borne in mind whenever a closure is being considered, and whether sufficient protection can be given to a building while an alternative use is being sought.

Congregationalists in Halifax had in 'Square Church' what was by far the best Victorian Gothic building in their possession — and yet it was abandoned for one of much less merit and the caretaker was withdrawn, bringing on the inevitable result of vandalism, arson, and utter chaos. Now I know that closures and removals are not undertaken without the most careful consideration and I would not wish to suggest that any are entered into irresponsibly, but I would still question whether due care is taken to secure proper advice before the future of one of our older meeting-houses is finally sealed. Her Majesty's Government recently announced a modest grant of one million pounds towards the repair of churches and chapels of historic and architectural merit — a grant open to any denomination which can shew good cause for assistance. No doubt the Church of England will rightly qualify for the major portion, but are nonconformists sufficiently well organised and knowledgeable to apply for their share when the time comes?

We are the heirs to a great architectural heritage. The monuments to the efforts and successes of our forebears stand all around us: are they not worthy of remembrance? A heap of broken bricks is no fitting memorial to Thomas Rislely, nor is a smoking blackened ruin a worthy reward to the labours of the Rev. Titus Knight or the generosity of Sir Francis Crossley. Much may yet be saved for future generations to enjoy if we do not leave all to chance and Church meetings, and I pray that all concerned will be guided by the wider implications of those words which you will so often hear this year: *Our Architectural Heritage.*

CHRISTOPHER STELL

LINTON UNITED REFORMED CHURCH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

At Linton, about ten miles from Cambridge, there is a United Reformed Church with a fascinating history and also with prospects of expansion in the village which is a rapidly growing residential satellite of Cambridge. The Church, prior to the recent union, was a Congregational Church. The present building was erected in 1878 and is set in idyllic surroundings; it is approached by a paved walk flanked by impressive tombs which reflect the standing and prosperity of not a few families in the nineteenth century and were intended, as one mouldering inscription states, to preserve their memory from oblivion.

The origins of the congregation can be traced back to the seventeenth century and there were local traditions about Independent groups meeting even before 1662; in the testing years thereafter they are said to have met in the neighbouring woods of Horseheath and Harewood. The first place of meeting was built about 1698 and the first pastor was probably a Mr. Rawlings who resided in the district but moved to be pastor at St. Neots in 1701. Firm ground is reached with the advent of Thomas Wight (Weight or Waite) as pastor in 1701; he remained until 1729 when he moved to Romford where it was reported that he was a 'preacher of no small boldness who has not any great share of learning but has a full congregation'; there were also reports that in later years he displayed antinomian tendencies and was not recognised as a minister by other Congregational Churches.

From the time of his settling in Linton there is extant an ancient account and record book covering the years from 1701 to 1781. It was rescued from a damp and decaying condition in 1938 and was rebound with great skill by a member of the Cambridge University Library staff. From the details provided in this book, belonging to Linton United Reformed Church it is possible to build up a picture of the Church's life in the eighteenth century. I am grateful to the church officers for allowing me to use it.

During the eighty years covered by the book there was a collection taken at the monthly communion service; amounts collected varied, ranging from between four to five shillings at the beginning of the period, then rising to six, eight, or even ten shillings but by times falling back to smaller amounts. Farthings were often recorded. A prime call upon these funds was the relief of distress among the members: there were few years when there were not two or three regular beneficiaries who received amounts of one or two shillings monthly, and, in a few cases, even weekly, the amount apparently varying according to need. Some beneficiaries received gifts for years, presumably until death. The widow Hooper received one shilling weekly

for at least five years. Sister Glascock received one shilling monthly from 1760 and was still receiving it when records ceased to be kept in this book in 1781. There were also regular payments for the bread and wine for communion, the amounts varying from 2/1½ to 3/6 each month. There was also a half-yearly payment to those who cleaned the meeting-house or, as it was sometimes put, opened the door. Richard Stibbing received 10/- each half-year from 1717 to 1725; he was followed by Thomas Taylor who held office from 1726 to 1744 when a man named Hills took over for four years; he was succeeded by Henry Hackley who was followed by his wife, Mary, who held office till 1768 by which time she had become a widow; she had probably continued to do the work from the time of her husband's death. It was also probably Henry's mother, the widow Hackley, who received regular gifts of 1/- from the charitable fund from 1737 to 1756.

The payments to the caretaker were supplemented with sums varying from 3/9 to 2/3 in the half-year in order to provide 'wine for Mr Wight', the minister. This seems to have been discontinued after Wight's departure, for the payments then reverted to the usual 10/- each half year, but in December 1750 there begins a series of entries recording the purchase of a glass of beer at threepence, and this expenditure rose steeply to sixpence, ninepence, one shilling, and sometimes to one shilling and three pence each month; in March 1754 the expenditure on beer rose to 1/10 and in 1756 there were two months when it cost 1/9. In 1757 and 1758 there is no mention of beer but an occasional bottle of wine was bought costing 1/3 or 1/6. In 1770 there began to appear regular monthly entries of expenditure for a bottle of rum costing 2/9: in 1772 the price went down to 2/6 and continued at that rate till 1781 when the last entry for such expenditure occurs in the month of April, shortly after which the records end. In view of the early precedent in providing wine for Wight, the minister, it is probable that later purchases of the various beverages were in fact at least for ministerial use. Since Wight was the resident minister it can hardly be pleaded that he needed what was imagined to be a source of warmth after the rigours of a chilly ride upon horseback. The building may have been very cold in winter as there is no record of the purchase of coal until 1740 when eleven bushels of coal were bought at 10 pence a bushel; in 1742 four bushels were bought; in succeeding years the amount increased somewhat to about six bushels; the price went down to 9½ pence in 1751 but by 1757 had risen to 11½ pence. Never were the purchases lavish, and with probably only an open fireplace the temperature could not have been high in winter. Sweeping the chimney was a recurring expenditure, costing three pence in 1742 but rising to six pence in 1750. In summer it was likely that the atmosphere in an ill-ventilated building was almost asphyxiating.

Occasional expenses provide a scale of comparison with present-day prices. In 1701, one lock cost 7 pence, and another 1/6; thirty tiles for the meeting-house cost 9 pence; a besom or broom cost 4 pence: one pound of candles cost 4 pence in 1705 but three pounds cost 1/7½ in 1732. The cleaning of the clock, sometimes called the timepiece, was an occasional necessity and cost 2/6. Men were occasionally employed for one day or for half a day and wages varied, presumably according to skill and scarcity. It is amusing to speculate why repairs were so often necessary in the pulpit; was it the vigour of the preacher which so shook the structure that a half-day's work on the pulpit was necessary in 1705 at the cost of 6 pence? The caretaker, Richard Stibbing, had to repair the board in the pulpit in 1725, and a carpenter, Will Willis, was paid 1/6 for further repairs to the board in 1728, the board being the ledge for the Bible and traditionally the recipient of not a little ministerial thumping. There were also frequent bills for reglazing broken windows; amounts such as 7 pence, 2/9, 3/- and 1/4 were involved.

In addition to the offerings at communion there were two other sources of revenue. One was the occasional special effort for a special object such as the erection of a gallery in the meeting-house which cost £15/17/6. The other source was the revenue from the renting of the pews. In 1703 seats were graded into five classes costing 6/-, 5/-, 4/--, 3/- and 2/- yearly, the most expensive being those nearest the pulpit and the cheapest being unenclosed seats in the passages. The number of lettings in each class were 22, 30, 27, 8 and 6 respectively which shows not only that there were fewer seats in the cheaper classes but also that the majority of the people were able to pay the higher scales of rent. In 1703 the rental revenue was £23/9/6 and this went in part to pay the minister.

This record book contains little about the quality of life in the Church. This may not be a matter for regret as it is the notorious which is likely to be recorded. Profuse church records are often made profuse because of reports of lengthy proceedings concerning scandals among the members. Unobtrusive lives without notoriety are not the stuff of records. However, there is in the book a covenant which was drawn up in 1729 and was signed by the then minister, James Kemp, and by three deacons, Thomas Huppup, Edmund Jackson and Daniel Allon. Ninety members signed, but there is no indication that they all signed at one time and so the ninety may have covered the membership over a number of years: twenty-six were unable to write and had to signify assent by making a mark. Among the signatories was a Hannah Glascock, a family name already mentioned; there was also a Glascock receiving assistance from the charitable funds as early as 1701 and in 1793 a John Glascock was received into membership thus continuing a long family link with the Church. Such a covenant was usual in Congregational Churches; the covenant affirmed many of the doctrinal positions shared by most

Protestants of the time but also made it clear that the congregation was a particular Congregational Church of Jesus Christ and the Elders and Deacons and a majority of members had power to compose differences and censure disorders 'without appeal to synods or classes or bodies of men not within ourselves'. There are a few instances of how discipline was administered within the Church.

At the beginning of the period one of the Hackley family was chosen to be a deacon in 1706, but the Church was at the time unaware of great disorders within his family. Apparently his wife could not be described as 'grave, not slanderous, sober, faithful in all things' (1 Tim. 3,11); when this came to light, some members held that this disqualified Hackley from holding office. The minister, Mr. Wight, gave his opinion that since Hackley's wife was not known to be a slanderer at the time of the election he was not incapacitated from holding the office and the election could not be set aside, but, to lessen any risk of danger to the Church, an additional deacon could be elected to take his place alongside Hackley. The Church did so, but Hackley took this to be in effect a slur upon himself and to be a rejection of his election, and so he cut himself off from the communion of the Church. The record notes that his reason for doing so was frivolous and false but he persisted in his way 'though often admonished and made to see his error'. He was declared to be guilty of a 'breach of covenant and of solemn promises' to God and the Church; on December 10, 1706, the Church decided that he was wilfully ignorant. He then tried to join another Church and he asked the Church at Linton to recommend him to the Church he wished to join, but on December 2, 1707, the Linton Church said it could see no reformation in him and therefore could not recommend him since he persisted in the neglect of his duty without cause. Meanwhile, the offending Mrs. Hackley had been brought before the Church and reproved for being a slanderer and for other disorderly walking; she often seemed to show signs of repentance but then reverted to her former disorders. The Church patiently waited for proof of permanent repentance before breaking bread with her again, and even after many disappointments the members were ready to receive her to the great ordinance of the Supper but in the end they had to conclude that she was 'guilty of manifest hypocrisy'.

In 1711 Richard Stubbins the younger was convicted of scandalous and disorderly behaviour but it was only after his persistent rejection of all advice and admonition that he was expelled from membership and cut off from the 'fellowship and communion of the Church until he gave evidence of manifest repentance'. It is not impossible that he did return to the fellowship and that he was the Richard Stibbing who, as already noted, became the caretaker of the meeting-house.

In 1713 Robert Hunter laid several charges against the minister and some of the members of the Church, and though he could not

make good any of his charges he persisted in raising contention in contempt of all admonition.

Further examples of patient treatment of offenders are found in brief notes entered in the record book some years after it had ceased to be used as a regular record of the Church's work. In 1782, the disorderly walk of John Reynolds who had absented himself from Communion for a considerable time was judged sufficient reason to withdraw from him, but William Randal was judged to be showing signs of repentance and so no action was taken against him in the hope that he would manifest the sincerity of his repentance and sorrow. In 1793, Thomas Rule was under censure for continuing under the sin of drunkenness, but when John Smith was shown to have given no satisfactory reason for withdrawing himself from Communion two deacons, John Hancock and Richard Fitch, were sent to visit him. In 1794, a Church meeting considered the case of six women who had not attended Communion for upwards of eight years and still absented themselves in spite of repeated admonitions. The Church had held many meetings about the matter and at last decided to withdraw from all fellowship with the offenders and to do so as a witness to the honour and glory of God and to the Rules and Ordinances laid down in his Word.

These records thus reveal a Church which, like many others, endured hardships and adversities and manifested both heroic faithfulness and human frailty.

R. BUICK KNOX

REVIEWS

Puritanism in America by Larzer Ziff (Viking Press and Oxford University Press, London, 1974, £3.25).

"I am concerned centrally with showing how Puritanism came into being as the result of crucial changes in the conditions of European life, and was brought to New England by men who used it as an outlook in terms of which they attempted to shape their lives in America. . ." In pursuit of this theme, Professor Ziff describes the theological and cultural patterns of Puritanism in seventeenth century England, against the economic conditions which made emigration attractive — his key words here are 'landlessness' and 'masterlessness' and he points out how many settlers, writing home, stressed the economic advantages of emigration. The blend of theology and ideas, against their social and economic background forms the keynote of Ziff's work: he writes, "this is the first book that attempts to synthesize the special concerns of intellectual, social and economic history into a single account of the American Puritans".

The work seeks to identify the basic tenets of the settlement in New England, and the way in which these were modified or developed by various pressures. In a new land, the settlers had to establish their own forms of Church and State: Ziff illustrates the extent to which their efforts were influenced by pragmatic considerations, rather than theological theory. Once established, the community matured as it faced challenge. Theological assumptions were called into question — for example, by Anne Hutchinson, and later by the Quakers, with their stress on the centrality of inner experience. The Indians, their use to fur traders exhausted, came to be seen as a threat. Here, Ziff demonstrates how the very structures which the Puritans had established, militated against their declared aim of converting the Indians. All too soon they took to the sword, with a ferocious zeal for extermination, which contrasted sadly with the rather gentler habits of the Indians themselves. Ziff is careful, too, to keep his reader aware of the constant upheavals in England, and the widespread effects these were to have on the American situation, theological and ideological, legal and economic.

Through the interplay of all these varying forces, internal and external, Professor Ziff shows how the balance of authority, the economic structure, and the emphases of theology gradually changed, evolved and diversified, during the formative years of Puritan settlement in America.

MERIEL CHIPPINDALE

The Lives of Philip and Matthew Henry. (Pp. xiviii, 488, xxxii, 323. Banner of Truth Trust, 1974. £2.95).

Philip Henry (1631-96), of Westminster School and Christ Church, Oxford, was ordained in 1657 by the Bradford North classis in Shropshire to the charge of Worthenbury, in the detached portion of Flintshire and in the diocese of Chester. Only four years later he was 'outed' — he could not accept reordination — and the rest of his life was that of an ejected minister, with two short spells in prison. His influence, which was considerable, came neither through any position — he remained in Flintshire — nor through what he wrote — he published nothing — but was the issue of a devout spirit. A. G. Matthews, who was not given to eulogy, characterized him as 'of all ejected ministers the most generally honoured for holy living'. Henry was also the father of a famous son, Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Presbyterian minister in Chester from 1687 to 1712 and noted commentator on Scripture.

In 1698 Matthew Henry published a biographical *Account* of his father, which ran into several editions. Doddridge found 'much instruction and encouragement' in it: Edward Williams described it as 'a beautiful delineation of primitive christianity'. As *The Life of the Rev. Philip Henry* it appeared in a definitive form in 1825, when after collation with the original manuscript it was reissued by Sir John Bickerton Williams, supplemented with a great quantity of material from manuscript diaries, including those kept by Philip Henry himself as well as some kept by his children, and from other manuscript sources. These manuscripts were preserved by several branches of Henry's descendants, who revered his memory and preserved his name into the present century; in 1882 a volume entitled *Diaries and Letters of Philip Henry* was published by Matthew Henry Lee.

Sir John Bickerton Williams also became the biographer of Matthew Henry, *Memoirs* of whom he published in 1828. In this case the volume was not a new edition of the original biographical *Account* published by William Tong in 1716 but superseded it. Williams again made considerable use of manuscript diaries, including those kept by Matthew Henry himself; and again a large portion of these appeared later, in a volume published in 1901 by H. D. Roberts entitled *Matthew Henry and his Chapel*.

The Banner of Truth Trust has now put Williams' edition of Matthew Henry's *Account* of Philip Henry and Williams' *Memoirs* of Matthew Henry between covers, and has issued the two works just as they were, each with its preface, appendices and index. Photocopying has been employed, any misprints or errors being left uncorrected. There is no editing. No reference is made either to the volumes by Lee and Roberts, who sometimes print extracts from manuscripts more fully than Williams does or who differ from his

reading, or to the present whereabouts of the manuscripts used by Williams, some of which have now reached libraries, e.g. the British Library, John Rylands Library, Dr. Williams's Library, the Congregational Library and the Library of New College, London.¹ Bibliographically, therefore, the present volume leaves a good deal to be desired.

This matters little in comparison with the incalculable boon of having the two works, more especially the *Life* of Philip Henry, again in print and available at an amazingly low price. In 1804 John Pye Smith called one of his sons Philip Henry, and successive generations continued the name into living memory. In 1825 Williams wrote of 'the sweet fragranciness which is uniformly associated with Mr. Henry's name'. In 1891 Alexander Gordon could still write, in the present tense, of 'the veneration which hallows his memory'. In the twentieth century Philip Henry has been largely forgotten — to our loss. Perhaps some of the scholars who keep on asking what was Puritanism and who were the Puritans will now read in, and about, Henry: the impress of scriptural holiness can hardly fail to come through: 'his piety was guilelessly sincere' (Thomas Richards, 1923).

Readers of this *Journal* may be interested in the following comment:—

Three things I do not like in the Independent way. 1. That they unchurch the nation. 2. That they pluck up the hedge of Parish order. 3. That they throw the Ministry common & allow persons to preach who are unordained. In 2 things they are to be commended — 1. That they keep up discipline among them. 2. That they love & correspond with one another (in part only p. 128,n.; more fully in Lee, p. 277).

On the Declaration of Indulgence of 1672 Henry remarks:

We are put hereby into a trilemma, either to turn independents in practice, or to strike in with the conformists, or to sit down in former silence and sufferings (pp. 128-9; or, as Lee, p. 250, in a reading clearly to be preferred, 'either to turn flat Independents').

In the event he took out a license as a Presbyterian to preach in his own house.

GEOFFREY F. NUTTALL

¹ New College, London, Library also holds both Williams' own copy of his *Life* of Philip Henry (bought at the sale of his library by John Morley and presented to the College), enriched with manuscript documents and with pen and ink sketches of Shropshire parish churches which come into Henry's story, and a copy of Williams' *Memoirs* of Matthew Henry (presented by Williams himself).

Two Calvinistic Methodist Chapels, 1743-1811: The London Tabernacle and Spa Fields Chapel, ed. Edwin Welch (Pp. xix + 107. London Record Society, 1975, £4.50, to members £3.15).

We gave advance notice of this work in our previous issue. Prof. Welch, one of our members, has edited two documents, one dealing with Whitefield's Tabernacle in Moorfields and the other with the Countess of Huntingdon's Spa Fields Chapel in Clerkenwell.

The Tabernacle document relates the history of that Society and its links with the Calvinistic Methodist movement; it includes minutes of Associations held in Bristol and Gloucester as well as in London. Howel Harris, the Welsh pioneer, often preached in the Tabernacle during Whitefield's many missionary absences. The evangelical warmth, doctrinal stance, and the catholic outlook are all revealed in this document and it is well to be reminded that the movement still saw itself as a movement within the Church of England and dependent upon ordained clergy for the Sacrament, though there were many who were increasingly restive within this situation. It is also clear how the irenic idealism was often strained by quarrels due to personal tensions, doctrinal issues and ecclesiological clashes.

The Spa Fields document provides ample evidence of the firm control which the Countess exercised over her Chapel; she had to be consulted over a multitude of major and minor issues, but she was expected to rescue the Chapel from the many financial crises which arose in the management of its affairs. The record also provides much evidence of tension with the parish clergy who sought to interfere in the work of the Chapel.

Prof. Welch has provided a valuable introduction in which he shows the many affinities of the two chapels but also makes plain the variations in ecclesiology and ethos between the two chapels and between their congregations.

The volume is beautifully produced and can be obtained from the Secretary of the LRS at Leicester University Library, University Road, Leicester.

R. BUICK KNOX

The Church in Victorian Scotland, 1843-1874, by Andrew L. Drummond and James Bulloch (The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1975, £5.75)

This book is the second in the series on the Scottish Church since 1688 by the late Dr. Drummond and by Dr. Bulloch. Following the previous volume, *The Scottish Church, 1688-1843* (The Saint Andrew Press, 1973), it gives a comprehensive and contemporary study of the Church in Scotland in the mid-nineteenth century. It provides a welcome corrective to what has been the common view of the Victorian Church. The view of Victorian Scotland as a church-going and Bible-

reading nation, which supported foreign missions and was strict in morals, is shown to be true for only a section of the community. Victorian Scotland was a mixed community, and in the slums of the cities non church-going and commercialised vice were common. There was a large gap between the Church's teaching and the practice of many. The Church could no longer impress itself upon society as a whole.

The most welcome corrective which the authors provide is in emphasising the rapid recovery and revival of the Church of Scotland after the Disruption of 1843. The strength of the established Church lay in the continued parochial approach of its ministers who in their pastoral work sought to meet the needs of all sections of the community. It was not privilege which characterised the Church of Scotland as an established Church but wide contacts and broad sympathies. In this period, however, the national Church lost its hold on poor relief and education. The Free Church was noted for the evangelical zeal of its members, for its early theological emphasis on the Calvinism of the Westminster Confession, and for its identification with the growing middle class. The note of ecclesiastical rivalry was a prominent one, and controversy and prejudice, say the authors, were the great blots on the record of the Victorian Church in Scotland. It was a tragedy that the parochial approach of the Church of Scotland and the evangelicalism of the Free Church were thus separated. A full account is given of the other denominations. Attention is paid to the emergence of the United Presbyterian Church and to the striking growth of the Episcopal Church and of the Roman Catholic Church, which was the fastest growing church in this period. The Roman Catholic priests followed their people into the city slums.

The beginnings of many of the controversies of the Victorian Church are well described: the changes in worship in both the Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches; the controversy over the theory of evolution, which had a comparatively mild reception in Scotland; and the changes in the Church's attitude to biblical criticism. The period was characterised by the break-up of Calvinistic theology, which only retained a strong hold on a section of the Free Church. The discordant voices in the Church could now be heard by a larger public, due to the increased number of newspapers and of public libraries. By the end of the period, the churches had failed to come together, but, as with the increasing demand for greater freedom from Calvinistic orthodoxy and strict Sabbatarianism, so the movement for reunion was also to grow in the late nineteenth century. We look forward to the concluding volume in the series for an up-to-date and sympathetic account of the ways in which these controversies were developed. Dr. Bulloch can be assured that this book has none of the dullness of many of the biographies of ministers of the period which have been used to give this excellent treatment of the Church in Victorian Scotland.

DOUGLAS M. MURRAY

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

The Baptist Quarterly: Vol. XXV (cont.)

This journal continues to include valuable articles in fields beyond strictly historical confines. The issue of April 1974 has an article on 'Three Theologies of the Future', the three being the teachings of Moltmann, de Chardin, and Whitehead; the issue of October has an article on 'Some recent trends in New Testament Study'. There are also articles on the history of Baptist Churches and practices, notably in the counties of Nottingham and Leicester.

Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society: Vol. XXXIX (cont.)

During the year 1974, the Society's President, Rev. Dr. Maldwyn Edwards, passed away, and the *Proceedings* bear witness to the loss of this fine preacher and very competent historian. His interest in Methodist history was proved by his books and his many contributions to the *Proceedings*.

The 1974 *Proceedings* contain valuable articles by the Editor, Dr J. C. Bowmer, on 'The Ordination Service in Wesleyan Methodism, 1791-1850', and there is a further article on 'The Wesleyan Theological Institution, Hoxton', this one by Rev. Ralph Lowery.

The Bulletin of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland, No. 5

The main contribution to this issue is a lecture given by Dr Boyd Schlechter of the University of Wales on 'The Influence of Presbyterianism in the Development of the United States of America'.

Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hanes Eglwys Methodistiaid Calfinaidd Cymru: The Journal of the Historical Society of the Presbyterian Church of Wales: Vol. LIX

This Journal continues its very valuable work of providing hitherto unpublished material, mainly in this volume from the Trevecka Letters. There is also the text of the annual lecture, given in 1974 by Mr. O. E. Roberts, M.A., on 'Pedr Fardd yn Lerpwl'.