

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Baptist Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bq_01.php

leaders' limitations; between their tendency to schism and their fear of romanticizing rebellion.

What Peacock and Tyson call the 'bitter-sweet religion' of the Primitive Baptists, of those 'poised between anxiety and hope', is a far cry from the triumphalism of white Southern Baptists, from accommodation with the world, and from any partnership between church and state. Standing, like their seventeenth-century colonial forebears, on the margins of mainstream American culture, Primitives remind us that there has been more than one historical route for Baptists. They also remind us, perhaps as effectively as the cumulative force of the books noticed here, that the reciprocal relationship between Baptist culture and the wider culture of the nation is rich, complex and ambiguous.

NOTES

- 1 There were nearly 15 million Southern Baptists in the United States in 1988. For a brief discussion of the themes of this paragraph, see Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1992), 463-73, 486-8.
- 2 William G. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent 1630-1833: The Baptists and the Separation of Church and State* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Ma., 1971). The assault of Baptists in the southern colonies on the Anglican establishment is most profitably explored through the writings of Rhys Isaac, in particular his acclaimed study, *The Transformation of Virginia 1740-1790* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 1982).

RICHARD CARWARDINE *Senior Lecturer in American History, University of Sheffield*

REVIEW: *Islington Chapels*, Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, Newlands House, 37-40 Berners Street, London W1P 4BP, 168pp, 122 plates & plans, £9-95.

This little jewel of architectural and ecclesiastical documentation seeks to record the chapels and mission halls, that, once so much a feature of the urban scene, are now under threat of disappearance or of tragic and ill-conceived conversion into dreary workshops and warehouses. This too is a function of changing social class. Thus the evangelicals of Islington built big in its heyday as an opulent middle-class suburb, but handed on to successive less affluent residents of the borough not only the prestige buildings of an earlier generation, but a range of more modestly constructed missions. Baptist buildings in this borough seem to have been both fewer and less prestigious than those of their Congregational cousins, who here erected churches of cathedral-like proportions. However, at the beginning of this century, when the ministry of the established church in Finsbury was deemed 'a complete failure', three Baptist churches were able regularly to draw congregations in excess of a thousand. Surviving churches are few after war damage and other accidents have taken their toll (fire at Salters' Hall, and Camden Road, a collapsed ceiling at Upper Holloway Road). The attractive Strict Baptist Chapel at the Angel, completed in 1824 and elegantly filling its restricted site, was originally built for the Calvinistic Methodists, but has been in Baptist hands for 140 years. Also illustrated are Vernon and Cross Street, both altered after war damage, as well as Spurgeon Memorial at Tollington Park, Highbury Strict, and Hornsey Rise. There is also an interesting entry on St Giles' Christian Mission, which was originally associated with Bloomsbury but is now a lively baptistic enterprise not a church of the Baptist Union.

it was supervised by Boscombe Baptist Church ('These Sixty Years' in *Rosebery Park Baptist Church Year Book* 1952). The breach was not healed and Rosebery Park was formed in March 1891. A chapel was built in Morley Road, but in 1951 the church acquired a suite of buildings, Keswick Hall, on the site of the original Mission Chapel. The buildings in Morley Road were sold and the church moved to its new location. The church has been involved in the planting of Iford and Moortown churches. The membership, 332 in 1957, declined to 146 by 1991, so the church faces a considerable challenge as it enters its second century.

John Maggs, associated with New Malden Baptist Church all his life, has written a detailed history for the 125th anniversary celebrations in 1987. It was formed as a 'Particular Calvinistic [sic] Baptist Church'. In 1899 the church opened the communion table 'to all believers in the Lord Jesus' who had previously given their names to the pastor or one of the officers. Open membership was adopted in 1986 along with 'a Doctrinal Statement giving a summary of the fundamental scriptural beliefs of those in membership with the church'. Surprisingly, details of this Statement are not given, although he lists the beliefs which the church expected its pastor to hold. Membership reached 280 in 1962 but dropped steadily to 231 in 1971, then began to rise again. In 1979 the deacons presented proposals for growth, envisaging *inter alia* the appointment of a lay Eldership and an Assistant Minister. The first Elder was appointed in 1980 and the Revd Paul Merton was appointed as Assistant Minister in 1982. In 1987, after the publication of 'To God be the Glory', both he and the Senior Minister, the Revd Derek Hills, moved to other pastorates.

Derrick Whybrew has written an excellent account of Frinton Free Church. The town is a modern development. In 1891 it had a population of only 75, but amongst them were a number of nonconformists who began meeting in a home, led by a missionary on an extended holiday in Frinton. When a Public Hall was opened the congregation moved there and a former minister of the Evangelical Union Church of Scotland, the Revd William Crombie, who was living in Frinton, was persuaded to give oversight. In 1896 the church purchased the present site in Connaught Avenue, Frinton's main thoroughfare. On the death of Mr Crombie, the Revd F. T. Passmore of Stratford was called to the pastorate. Trained under C. H. Spurgeon, he recognized the need for the still independent church to associate with an evangelical denomination. Approaches were made to the Methodist and Congregational denominations, but neither was prepared to adopt the cause. The Baptist Union did, however, and in 1899 the property was transferred to the trusteeship of the Baptist Union Corporation Ltd. The unique Trust Deed requires the minister to be nominated by the President and Secretary of the Baptist Union Corporation Ltd. In practice, this stipulation has not restricted the church, which has been served by those whose gifts have been suited to each stage of its development.

Homelands Christian Centre, now Homelands Baptist Church, Walton-on-Naze, was formed and this meant that money was not spent on the premises of Connaught Avenue. So the Free Church was faced with extensive repairs to its buildings. Growing congregations also required enlargements and alterations. So the cause which began in a tin tabernacle commenced its next century of witness with modern buildings designed to meet present and future challenges.

With the exception of the history of New Malden Baptist Church, these chapel histories are illustrated by photographs.

MICHAEL J. COLLIS *Minister, Stafford Baptist Church, The Green.*

Richard L. Greaves, *Enemies Under His Feet: Radicals and Nonconformists in Britain, 1664-1667* Stanford University Press, 1990, 324pp. \$39.50

The second volume in Professor Greaves' impressive trilogy on the radical tradition in Britain between 1660 and 1688 takes its title from one of the texts: 'He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet' (I Corinthians 15.25), preached upon by John Blackader and John Dickson at an unlawful assembly of up to 2,000 persons, some armed, on the Hill of Beath, near Dunfermline, on 19 June 1670. The apt title refers, through its ominous apocalyptic tone, to those determined groups who were set on delivering a revolutionary challenge to the Stuart regime, and also those groups indiscriminately associated with them: dissidents who had crossed a dividing line between passive and active disobedience. They proselytized their disobedience in various forms: violent resistance to law enforcement, the publication of seditious literature, individual acts of violence including attempts at kidnap and assassination, conspiracy and rebellion. Such people he calls 'radicals' in the context of late seventeenth-century Britain. Almost all had their being within the diverse milieu of Protestant nonconformity and since their militancy impinged upon, and was affected by, government policy towards their co-religionists, Professor Greaves necessarily widens his interest and perspective in this volume.

It covers the crowded, poignant period of persecution and indulgence for nonconformity, when through statute, and royal declaration and proclamation, the pendulum swung abruptly between the two. It spans the period from the Northern Uprising to the eve of renewed activity in the Exclusion Crisis. Encompassed within it are the two Anglo-Dutch Wars of 1665-7 and 1672-4, the exigencies of which sometimes bear crucially upon the nonconformists. Deploying great skill and patience, Professor Greaves has succeeded in unravelling the intricate skein of radical activity during these years. He is keenly aware of the intrinsic difficulty of much of the material - the likelihood of exaggeration or invention in individual depositions; the 'disinformation' of the dissidents themselves, as in the case of the false news spread in the autumn of 1666; or the cryptic of Secretary Williamson's cramped, conflated script for the early 1670s. Accommodating and mitigating these real constraints, he has developed his individual concerns: an investigation of the possible influences and links between the radicals of the three kingdoms - relatively few, especially between England and Scotland, where occurs in the shape of the 'open, manifest, and horrid rebellion' of Galloway in 1666 the only real insurrection of these years; a study of the radicals' response to the wars with the Dutch, revealing much confusion and lack of organization in face of mixed signals from the Dutch and from the exile community, and in face of many expressions of nonconformist loyalism; a detailed investigation of the nature and strength of the underground press, highlighting the ineffectual measures of L'Estrange and the perceptible growth in the effectiveness of this literature both in criticism and as a seminal contribution to the development of the theory of toleration; and a continuing analysis of the vital and resilient tradition of English radicalism, its identity, modes and allegiances - surprisingly, being evenly distributed across denominational boundaries, and the counterpoint to it of official policy and treatment of the nonconformists at large. In fulfilling these concerns, Professor Greaves has brought the radicals to the foreground of political life in the late seventeenth century, from the background or middleground where they have too often been consigned by historians. This is where he argues they rightly belong, since they were always at the forefront of contemporary consciousness.

C. PARRY *University of Keele*