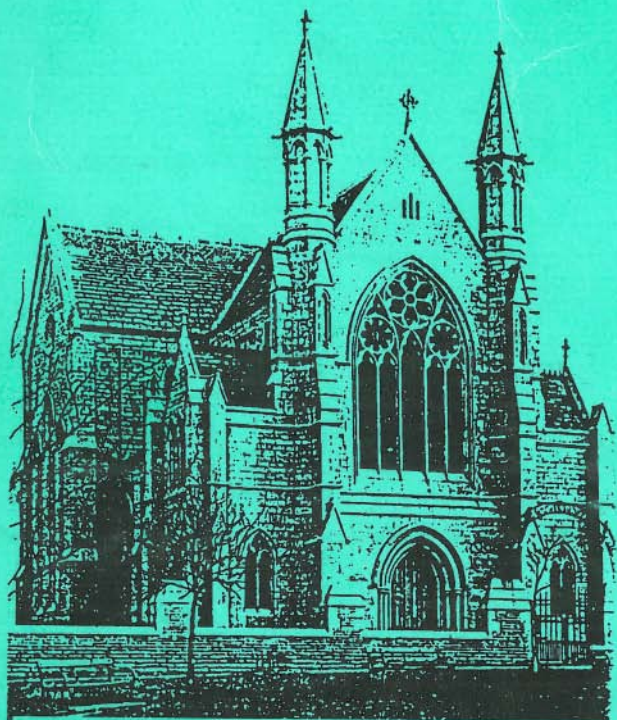


**OLD CHAPEL  
AND THE  
UNITARIAN  
STORY  
(Dukinfield)**

DAVID C. DOEL



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UNITARIAN  
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OLD CHAPEL, DUKINFIELD

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## PREFACE

OLD CHAPEL AND THE UNITARIAN STORY is an account of the life and history of Old Chapel, Dukinfield, set within the larger context of the story of the growth and development of Unitarianism, which we, the present congregation, inherit from the trials and tribulations, the courage, vision and the joy of our ancestors.

The book begins with a Heritage Trail, designed to take the reader on a tour of the Chapel and its environment, to give some physical sense of its presence on Chapel Hill, Dukinfield; some tangible, visible and tactile reality to our story. It continues with an account of the origins of the Unitarian Church in Britain and Europe and discusses the impact and implications of the Civil War of the seventeenth century on religion in general in the United Kingdom and in Dukinfield in particular. Century by century we follow the vicissitudes of Unitarian folk in Europe, Britain and North America and describe that history with continuous reference to the history also both of Old Chapel and of Dukinfield, so that local history and the religious history of the English speaking nations of the Northern hemisphere (as that history colours the development of Unitarian thinking and experience) intertwine as part of an organic whole.

A detailed discussion of the origin of Unitarian emphases amongst the early Christians called Gnostics and of the development and variety of Trinitarian theologies will be found in Appendices A and B, for those wishing to explore more deeply the emergence and significance of Unitarian theology.

The Glossary in Appendix E may help people unfamiliar with our religious history to find their way more easily as they work their way through the text of this book.

After the death of Jesus the early church struggled to understand the implications of his life and teaching. Was he man or god? Was he Very God of Very God? Did he exist before creation? Was he equal to or subservient to God? Did he have a real body? Was his will independent of the will of God or the same as the will of God? Was he another prophet, like the

Old Testament prophets, or was he a unique expression, once and once only, of God on earth in human form?

As I point out in the Appendix on The Trinity, there emerged from all this conflict not one doctrine of the Trinity, but many.

The Trinity is a theological model for expressing the Nature of God and the relationship of God to humanity. The First Person (God) represented the Ground of our Being; the Second Person (the Christ/a or Logos) represented God in creation as the Plan of God for Creation or the Potentiality God had invested in Creation; the Third Person (the Holy Spirit) represented the working out of this Potentiality, the creative power flowing into us from our own depths. Jesus was thought of as one who had realised this Potentiality in himself and thus become the Christ. The Second Person became identified with Jesus.

Out of all the controversy about the Trinity emerged, by majority vote at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, a version by Bishop Athanasius - known now as The Athanasian Creed. It became the official doctrine and anyone who held to other versions (known from now on as Anti-Trinitarians) would suffer persecution and probably either be killed or exiled. One of the alternatives to the Athanasian version of the Trinity was presented by another Bishop, Arius, whose followers, called Arians, eventually became the ancestors of the Unitarians. Arius believed that Jesus was very special, even that he enjoyed pre-existence and worked miracles, but did not believe he was equal in substance with God.

Theologians sometimes say the victory of Athanasius saved Jesus from becoming a god like the Greek and Roman gods, neither Man nor God; but the historical truth of the matter is that Arianism has consistently given place to a Unitarian position, where the humanity of Jesus is emphasised, his outstanding greatness as a religious poet and teacher recognised, and his incarnation (that is the indwelling of God - the Logos or the Christ) related not exclusively to him, but universally to all human beings in all times and places.

A form of Arianism, known as Socinianism (after two sixteenth century theologians - Laelius and Faustus Socinus), emerged in Eastern Europe and had a powerful influence on the

development of Anti-Trinitarian (i.e. Anti-Athanasian) thought on the rest of the continent. We begin our story in the second chapter with an account of John Biddle, often described as the Father of English Unitarianism, and of the impact of the Socinians on the religious life of Britain.

I would like to acknowledge a debt of gratitude to Dawn and Roy Buckle, Eleanor Priest, Harry Schofield, John Holland and Bill Pugh, who helped me in the preparation of this manuscript; and to the Rev Dr. Leonard Smith, Principal of the Unitarian College, Manchester, for his constructive criticisms of the text. I also thank the Unitarian Information Department for their readiness to allow the use of the Lindsey Press name and logo.

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1994

## CHAPTER ONE

### AN OLD CHAPEL HERITAGE TRAIL

Begin our Old Chapel Heritage Trail by standing outside the front gate of the Chapel. Look across the road at the lonely soldier on the Chapel Street war memorial and beyond him to the long industrial landscape that stretches all the way to the west coast. Let your eyes sweep northwards to the hills of Rivington on the edge of the Pennine Chain and imagine what the site would have been like in 1708, when we opened our first chapel building and how bold a landmark the chapel would have been for travellers many miles away.

The Peak Forest Canal runs at the bottom of Chapel Hill, on the far side of Astley Street, where it meets the Huddersfield Canal in the Dukinfield basin. A barge can find its way from Dukinfield, across Manchester to the Manchester Ship Canal - an astonishing, imaginative feat of engineering that linked Manchester and Liverpool and brought the sea to Manchester. It was the dream child of Daniel Adamson, the engineer whose company provided employment in Dukinfield for many years and whose name is perpetuated in the famous Adamson's Military Band.

Turn round and regard the Chapel's magnificent doors and the Celtic crosses on the pinnacles of the building, symbols older than Christianity - the cross (square) and the circle representing the unity of life, the amazing amalgam of matter and spirit, flesh and mind. The metal archway over the gates, bearing a lamp to light our feet in winter, was given to the Chapel about 1950 by Harry Schofield to replace the damaged lanterns that lodged there for many years. Walking over the old flat graves to the left of the Chapel we pass an iron grate yielding access to the crypt. In the crypt is a bottomless well of fresh water that has travelled underground from the peaks you can see beyond the graveyard to the East from the Pennines in the North. Perhaps Old Chapel is built on a dolmenic mound, one of the great spiritual lay lines of the past!

Over the vestry door is a block of stone from the original building with the date '1707' carved into it and the names of two

benefactors of the chapel, Elizabeth and James Heywood. Below their names is inscribed a reminder of the date of the present building - AD 1839. The first building was badly damaged in a storm on 7th January, 1839, and the corner stone of the new Chapel was laid on 26th June, 1839. Rev. William Gaskell, Unitarian minister at Cross Street, Manchester (spouse to the famous Mrs. Gaskell, author of Cranford), was present and had written a hymn specially for the occasion.

A large memorial to Francis Dukinfield Astley, a devout man of artistic temperament, who died on 23rd July, 1825, is built behind the vestry. It bears an early Masonic Lodge number - 562. Take a few paces towards the side gate and you will find the grave of a nine year old girl, Kathleen Esther Oliver, knocked down by a motor car in Stalybridge on 8th September, 1906. The grave reads: "Killed by a motor car". Her mother, it is said, wished it to read: "Murdered by a motor car." It was the first car to come through Stalybridge. People were expecting it and gathered on the sides of Mottram Road to cheer the driver down the hill. The girl ran from a shop and under its wheels. The grave also bears the words of Jesus: "It is not the will of your Father that one of these little ones should perish."

On your left as you take the path down the north side of the Chapel yard is an old stone arch with an iron gate. When the land was conveyed in April, 1826, by Francis Dukinfield Astley, to protect the chapel's interests against the Anglicans (our lease having expired), he reserved to his family the right of a pew free of charge, a burial place and a private entrance to the Chapel yard. Their 'private entrance' was assured through this fine gate, which leads onto Park Lane, where the Parsonage was built in 1865 at a cost of £1300, during the ministry of John Page Hopps, the famous Unitarian hymn writer.

At the East end of the Chapel yard savour the magnificent view to the peaks. Stalybridge lies in the hollow and Mottram beyond. You can see our sister church, Hob Hill, to the south east and Stalybridge railway station to the north east. In the Chapel yard stand several more splendid mandalic Celtic crosses and a few angels grace the eastern vaults, pointing with one hand to the earth and with the other to the heavens. Tameside Borough Council will not allow angels in the public cemetery

beyond the railings. Search as you may, you will not find one. Old Chapel, we are pleased to record, is on the side of the angels!

As you walk back along the East path of the Chapel Yard and turn West again along the South path notice the many well-known Old Chapel family names on the graves you pass - Leach, Sampson, Barber, Gaskell, Potter (relatives of Beatrix Potter), Harris, Bown and so on. On your left as you approach the new School is the Garden of Remembrance, where we have scattered the ashes of so many of our loved ones and behind it the large stone hewn from the Peak District rock reminds us of Peter Short, much loved and respected during his ministry (1965 - 1975). Between the Garden of Remembrance and the school are the newground graves, opened in this century. Old Chapel have decided there shall be no more new graves.

The corner stone on the front of the new school was laid by George R. Swindells on 28th September, 1986, and the school was opened on 11th April, 1987, by Annie Eastwood. George and Annie have given many fruitful and faithful years to the service of young people at Old Chapel and it is good they will be remembered through this stone and the plaque in the school hallway for many, many years to come.

Unitarians were amongst the first churches in Great Britain to establish Sunday Schools. Gee Cross was opened in 1780 and Stand in 1783. Dukinfield had a school in 1700 and, possibly some years before that. Although this school might, perhaps, have been a Charity Grammar School, our Sunday School was a development from it and might well have been the first of its kind. This original building was in the Chapel yard and was demolished in 1751 to improve the view of the Chapel. Its successor was built in 1800 in Town Lane and in this century we shared it with the local authority until the nineteen eighties. It was the first custom built Sunday School in Great Britain. Dukinfield Unitarians loved this building and justly earned a proud reputation for their imaginative pantomimes and well presented plays.

Beyond the school, on the South side of the Chapel, are some of our most interesting graves. One bears the challenging epitaph:

Stop here your foot and cast an eye  
As you are now so once was I.  
As I am now so must you be.  
Prepare yourself to follow me.

Amongst the raised box tombs is one over the grave of William Buckley, who was minister at Old Chapel for forty years and died at the age of 63 yrs., in 1752. Another recalls the ministry of the first minister of Old Chapel, Samuel Angier, who was born 1639 and died 1713. Richard Baxter, whose pulpit still graces our Unitarian church in Kidderminster, was the first priest to leave the Church of England after the Act of Uniformity in 1662 that led to the notorious Great Ejection of two thousand priests. But Samuel Angier was the first nonconformist minister to be ordained after the First Act of Indulgence in 1672. Angier held his inaugural service in Dukinfield in his own home in 1681. His original church in the area was a barn, where he began to conduct worship on 10th October, 1686. He had committed the letters of Saint Paul and the Psalms to memory. A true child of the Reformation, he believed in Justification by Faith through Grace freely available to everyone; a faith shared by the persecuted Huguenots, his spiritual ancestors.

Step into the porch through the fine doors and note the chancel chair for weary visitors donated by the Trustees of Richmond Hill congregation, Ashton under Lyne. When the building was erected in 1839, the congregation could not afford to pay for the porch and it was over fifty years before this part of the Chapel was completed. Either side are swing doors leading to the staircases. They give access to the balconies, where you will see the original box pews intact. The beautiful, hand-made chandeliers give excellent light to the whole building on dark evenings. The electric lighting succeeded the gas lights (installed in August, 1852), making it easier for the congregation to sing their favourite evening hymn: "The day Thou gavest, Lord, is ended".

The new porch was topped by the turrets and front buttresses and the present pews were installed in the ground floor of the Chapel in 1893. The stained glass panels by the Flemish firm, Carpronier, which form part of the glorious West window, were

donated by Sydney Hyde, John Hall Brooks and Mary Whitehead in 1899.

The Christo-centric, bible-centred faith of these Unitarians is clearly revealed in the stained glass. The West window contains five scenes from the Life of Christ: The recital of the Nunc Dimittis by Ananias; the rebuke of the disciples when they withheld children from him; the Crucifixion; the healing of blind Bartimaeus; and the precocious Child Jesus in the Temple, debating with the pharisees.

During 1872 the North and South end gallery lancets were presented by John Brooks, during the ministry of the great economist and historian, Philip Henry Wicksteed. The ones in the North gallery represent the Old Testament prophets, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Jeremiah, who proclaimed freedom and individual relationship to God without intermediary; a move towards a covenant written upon the heart rather than upon tablets of stone. Those in the South gallery, presented by John Woolley, are of three women who symbolise the virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity. They carry their respective emblems of a Cross, an Anchor and a Child - emblems found elsewhere in the carvings on the graves and monuments of Old Chapel.

Hector Potter left the North windows below the gallery in 1875 to remember Betty and Henry Johnson. These windows represent six parables of Jesus: the Ungrateful Steward; the Sower; the Wise Maidens with their lamps; the Good Samaritan; the Prodigal Son; and the Good and Faithful Servant who used his talents fruitfully.

Scenes from the life of Christ are depicted in the South gallery windows, presented in 1881 by William Marshall in memory of his wife, Sarah: Jacob's well; the Sermon on the Mount; the Garden of the Tomb on Easter morning.

Finally, the Upper North Window is a memorial to those who lost their lives in the first World War and was placed there in 1922. Its motif is the sword and the cross. Left and right are David and Jonathan and in the centre is St. George. The window is signed William Morris and Company. Though not, of course, by his own hand, it is possible it derives from an original Morris design.

Return to the porch, noting the handsome book-case made by Harold Critchlow to house our hymn books, and the fine wall cupboard donated by Dawn Buckle to hold our new Hymns For Living. Go through the door into the body of the Chapel. From the doorway you have one of the finest views of the interior. You can see the beautiful fan vaulting tracery in the ceilings - the finest in the area - and appreciate the great sense of space. But most wonderful of all the delightful features of the interior is the amazing sweep of the far wall from the chancel to the flying, decorative pipes of our superb organ. The pulpit enhances this extraordinary wall, with its unusual, perfectly proportioned design. In worship this astonishing amalgam of chancel, pulpit, organ and choir loft lifts the spirit so that it soars with one's vision to the misty, supernal heights both of the back ceilings of the Chapel and the mysterious horizons of the human soul, which it seems to represent.

Walk carefully down both aisles, reading the plaques in memory of Old Chapel folk and look in and above the glass-topped exhibition cases on the South wall to see some of our treasures and share a glimpse of our history, caringly preserved by our devoted archivist, Bill Pugh. Linger by the stone font, placed in front of the chancel in days long gone, and look back from the chancel with its carved oak table, to the bold banners carried proudly behind the silver band on Whitsuntide Walks. Passing the children's corner on the left of the chancel, go through the door into the vestry, where hang pictures of former ministers and of the first building.

Mount the stairs to one of the most amazing pulpits you will find in Christendom. The heavy, wooden door is superbly balanced so that it moves at the touch of a finger. The pulpit seat is set into the door. From the pulpit you have another astonishing view of the interior. You can see into every corner of the Chapel and gaze on the beautiful West window, so inspiring to the preacher, especially when it is pierced and fired by the rays of the setting sun.

An amusing story is told about a much-loved Unitarian minister, J. Harry Smith, who visited Old Chapel to take an anniversary service in the forties. The caretaker ushered him into the pulpit, but failed to secure the door by its sneck. J. Harry announced his text from the words of Jesus: "Lo! I am with you

but for a little while". He then stepped back, caught his knees against the seat edge, and stumbled onto its flat surface, swinging out, with the momentum of his fall, onto the vestry stairs, thus disappearing from the sight of the congregation. It sounds, of course, an apocryphal tale (though there are those who swear they witnessed the event); but if you had known J. Harry Smith, a great character if ever there was one, you could just believe that it was true.

Old Chapel is a Unitarian congregation affiliated to the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. We are a family church and take pride in our motto: "Here let no-one be a stranger." We hold no-one to any creed or doctrine, we value the insights of other great world religions as well as those of Christianity. We revere the Buddha as well as the Christ. We acknowledge the supremacy of no external authority, but only the authority of the Spirit within us, God in the soul, and the divine gift of reason. We ask of our congregation only that they share our worship in a spirit of Truth, seeking honestly, insofar as they may, to acknowledge themselves the temples of the living God and to assist each other to pursue our vocation as children of God within a tolerant, questioning and caring community.

If one wished to take a ramble and extend this heritage trail, then a visit to the Canal Basin and its Heritage Museum is well worth while. Passing Dukinfield's splendid Town Hall on the way down Chapel Street, you can join the canal by walking down the path on the far side of Astley Street, diagonally opposite the end of Chapel Street. In the hollow beyond the swing foot bridge, on the other side of the canal, is Plantation Farm, where Mary Smith was born. She married the celebrated Methodist missionary to South Africa, Robert Moffat

One of their daughters married the famous Dr. Livingstone. If, after your visit to the Basin, you walk back down the canal towards Hyde you will come to the delightful Nature Reserve at Dunkirk, where you may explore the lovely countryside between the canal and the River Tame.

From the river take Dunkirk Lane towards Newton, past Dunkirk Farm and over a canal bridge (which would surely have inspired Van Gogh to bring his paints and canvas). Another



hundred yards along this lane will lead you to Kenyon's factory and the small, authentic Elizabethan Hall which has been carefully preserved as a museum. Alternatively, you could drive down to Dunkirk car park, explore the Elizabethan Hall and the Nature Reserve and then walk along the canal to the Basin, returning to the car park either by bus or by walking back along the canal; or by taking the more difficult route along the Tame river walk. To follow the river route, however, you would need a map of the area.

If you walked along the canal from Dunkirk towards the Basin you would pass the oldest place of worship in Dukinfield - Old Hall. It was a Congregational Church until the roof was burned off in the early nineteen eighties. It is to become a Museum of the Civil War of the seventeenth century and will commemorate the subjugation of the Isle of Man by Colonel Robert Dukinfield, whose family were so intimately involved in the origins of Old Chapel.

Alas, the old Dukinfield library has now gone. It bore witness to a great enthusiasm for self-education in a Dukinfield cotton manufacturer and scholar, Samuel Robinson (1794 - 1884), who pioneered public libraries in Dukinfield. At the age of eighty Robinson published several volumes of translations of Persian poetry.

## CHAPTER TWO BIDDLE AND THE SOCINIANS

Although Unitarian thinkers influenced religious thought everywhere in Europe during the Reformation, Unitarianism became fully developed and established as a movement in only four countries - Poland, Transylvania, England and America. One might have expected a common heritage to these movements in different countries, but it is not so. They arose, it seems, and matured independently. Early British Unitarianism was not imported from Europe. A dozen or more martyrs had suffered for different aspects of Unitarianism in the ninety years before Socinianism had become well enough known in Britain to be recognised by the church authorities as a public danger.

John Biddle, the Father of English Unitarianism, had not read any Socinian writer before he came to his own settled judgment. The earliest anti-Trinitarian martyrs - Adam Duff O'Toole, William Sawtre and Reginald Pecock - were individual examples, according to the Unitarian historian Earl Morse Wilbur (1945 ed.), of what became a more integrated movement after John Wyclif, in the late fourteenth century, put the Bible into the hands of all who could read English. His Lollard followers began to stray beyond the close fold of traditional belief to make their own interpretations of what they read in the Bible. Whilst the desire for broader freedom of interpretation always marked the Unitarian spirit, it was certainly the possibility of independent study of the Bible that allowed Unitarianism to become a movement in the first place.

There followed one hundred and fifty years of heavy persecution. One of the gifts made by Henry VIII to Dissenters was the law he made after gaining independence from the Pope in 1534, establishing the need of the King's warrant before a heretic might be burned. This took the right to deal with heretics from the Church and lodged it with the Civil authorities. Many companies of European reformers then came to England, fleeing the Inquisition and its Protestant equivalents. Many of

these were Anabaptists and Arians - indeed, the two names tended to be used synonymously. (For a detailed discussion of Arianism and the origins of Unitarianism see Appendices A and B.)

The Anabaptists refused baptism to their children and insisted on believer's baptism' - a baptism involving the consenting commitment of the person being baptised. They also emphasised the authority of the Inner Light of the Spirit and many of them lived in communities where everyone had pooled their resources. The emphasis on the ultimate authority of the Inner Light reappeared here, of course, in George Fox's movement - the Quakers. Like the Quakers, the Anabaptists were also pacifists.

Under Henry's son, Edward VI, Archbishop Cranmer set up the Inquisition here in 1537. The first person to suffer under it for Anti-Trinitarianism was John Assheton, priest of Shiltentington - accused of holding that the doctrine of the Trinity was a product of the Council of Nicaea and that the Holy Spirit is not God. He recanted to save his life. A period of appalling persecution followed under Mary and then under her sister, Elizabeth - Cranmer (victim of his own creature), along with Latimer and Ridley were all burned at the stake:

Fear not, brother Ridley, for this day,  
by the Grace of God, we shall light such a candle as will  
never be put out.

One of the first influential writings pleading for tolerance and widely read in Europe by broad-minded Christians, was *Satanae Stratagemata* by an Italian, Jacobus Acontius. He was exiled to Britain and dedicated the work to the Queen. It was influential upon Milton, when writing his famous plea for toleration, *The Areopagitica*.

In Norfolk, where the Anabaptists were especially strong in numbers and where Anti-Trinitarianism was widely preached there was much persecution. The authorities cut the ears from the Rev. Francis Kett, a Cambridge graduate, and, in their Christian zeal and compassion, burned him alive near Norwich in 1589. Thirty people worshipping in a private house in Aldersgate Street, London, were surprised by soldiers and

imprisoned. Some recanted and returned home, some were flogged and banished and one died in prison. Two of them, including a poor old man called Jan Pieters, were burned alive at Smithfield.

Under James persecution continued, but eventually he saw that heresy would not be rooted out by the stake. The crude Calvinism he had brought with him from Scotland, was liberalised through the influence of the Arminians, who held a gentler position, denying predestination and teaching universal salvation through the irresistible love of God. The last person burned for heresy in England was Edward Wightman, in 1612, who denied the validity of the doctrine of the Trinity and believed himself to be the Holy Spirit. This was shortly after the martyrdom of Bartholomew Legate, the Anabaptist. Although people were no longer murdered for their beliefs, they were, however, still imprisoned for them.

In Europe a Spaniard named Michael Servetus, the first to discover the pulmonary circulation of the blood, was put to death in Geneva in 1553, under the authority of Calvin, for his belief in the supremacy of the Father and his fearless opposition to 'the Errors of the Trinity'. The only Unitarian King in history was John Sigismund, King of Hungary and Transylvania. The founder of the Unitarian Church in Transylvania was Francis David, who, in opposition to the Socinians, held that prayers should not be offered to Jesus. He died in prison in 1579, but his Church survived in spite of great persecution and won the assent of the King.

In Poland a group of 'heretics' formed themselves into a 'Minor Reformed Church' and received toleration in 1573 and were joined by Faustus Socinus (1539-1604), an Italian, in 1579. Socinianist writings, so-called after Faustus and his uncle Laelius Socinus (1525-1562), became increasingly available to clergy in Europe and in Great Britain. The name became associated with Tolerance and an emphasis on the use of reason. The Socinians differed from the Arians in denying the pre-existence of Jesus before his birth and from the Unitarians inasmuch as they, nonetheless, taught the birth of Jesus was miraculous and gave to him special, miraculous powers. Faustus went to Poland, where the famous Racovian Catechism was published in 1605 - out of a modification of the views of

Laelius and Faustus Socinus. This Catechism was not a formal creed, but a body of opinions contained in eight sections:

The scriptures are the only source of Truth 2. The Way of Salvation was through Knowledge of God 3. A rejection of the doctrine of the Athanasian Trinity 4. By his resurrection and the quality of his life Jesus was raised to divine power 5. Christ had a prophetic office 6. Christ was King of humanity 7. Christ was the eternal Priest, perpetually interceding for us with God 8. The Church was the company, visible or invisible, with Christ at its head, of those who upheld and professed the saving doctrines taught by Jesus.

God is one and not three, says the Catechism, and is the Father of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, in his real nature, is a man like other men; though not an ordinary man, since he was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

The influence of people like Wightman and Legate, within the established Church, began to provide an atmosphere where Unitarian ideas could be discussed not as a condemned heresy, but as a development of historical Christianity. Although to this point in Britain, Unitarianism was only a latent element of thought represented by some venturesome spirits, it was gathering in strength and during the reign of Charles I (1625 to 1649), as the Presbyterian party won ascendancy over the Episcopacy, the movement began to swell and to find public voice both in the pulpit and in the press. This movement, taking so long to prepare its public face, found a focal point in the life of John Biddle.

The Civil War in the 1640s concluded with the passing in 1648 of the Draconian Ordinance by the Presbyterians in Parliament. A long document, it declared:

all persons willingly, by preaching, teaching, printing or writing, maintain and publish that the Father is not God, the Son is not God or that Christ is not God equal with the Father, shall be adjudged guilty of felony; and in case the party upon his trial shall not adjure his said error he shall suffer pains of death without benefit of clergy.

Seven other heresies were named as worthy of the death penalty and sixteen less serious heresies were specified as deserving of imprisonment. The death penalty within this Ordinance, however, though passed, was never enforced. In fact the dissension created by the Ordinance broke the back of the Presbyterian Parliamentary Party and gave dominance to the Independents.

The change in power was indeed fortunate for John Biddle, a Gloucestershire man, born in 1615, the son of a tailor. He was educated at Oxford and became a teacher at Gloucester Grammar School, where he earned a fine reputation as scholar and original thinker. He drew up Twelve Arguments Drawn From Scripture, rejecting the Athanasian doctrine of the Trinity (accepted at Nicaea in 325 AD out of several possible alternatives and included eventually in the Book of Common Prayer as necessary to the Christian Faith) and claiming that in Scripture the Holy Spirit is an intelligent person distinct from God. Though ill of fever he was jailed for this work and then moved to close confinement in custody of the officers of the House of Commons for five years.

Threatened with the Draconian Ordinance Biddle did not falter, but on the contrary wrote more Unitarian tracts. Jesus, he held, was strictly human and the Holy Spirit was the Power flowing from God. Two further tracts by Biddle about the Trinity were published, where his thought has clearly matured (*A Confession of Faith touching the Holy Trinity according to the Scripture and The Testimonies concerning that one God, and the Persons of the Holy Trinity*).

Still closely following Scripture, he appeals to reason as well as the Bible texts. Now acquainted with the writings of Socinus he comments on the Racovian Catechism and describes the continued insistence upon the Athanasian Trinity by British ecclesiastical and political authorities as a stumbling-block to faith. He still believes in some sort of Trinity; though Jesus, Biddle maintains, is strictly a human being. In support of his views he cites at length the writings of Church Fathers, not as authorities, but in order to confute those who appealed to their writings. Here was an important theological and historical manoeuvre, since it met the so-called 'orthodox' theologians on their own ground and represented a move away from using the

Bible as sole source of theological debate. It contained, also, a clear recognition of the wide variety of opinion already present in the early Church.

In 1651 Cromwell secured passage of the Act of Oblivion, setting free (with a few exceptions) all who stood accused of any crime. Biddle was restored to liberty. He organised meetings for worship, study and debate - creating what is sometimes claimed as the first Unitarian Church in Britain, although it was not organised under that name and, indeed, the name Unitarian was not used of any church or movement until much later.

After brief exile on the Scilly Isles in response to the agitation created by his new writings, Biddle was eventually imprisoned again during the reign of Charles II, who had come to the throne in 1660. Biddle died in prison of disease contracted in the foul air of his cell, aged 46 years, on September 22nd, 1662, declaring, as he died:

The work was done.

There is an old saying: The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. Biddle's life and death are confirmation of this old tag. The insensitive, cruel abuse of this gentle, fearless man; the Parliamentary debates demanding he should be put to death and his books burned by the hangman; the endless delays in giving to him a fair trial; the persecution of his flock (arrested and fined heavily for meeting with him in worship and debate) actually stirred ever increasing interest in him and his predicament and, consequently, in the theology he taught. His influence gathered apace, not only in this country, but also into Europe.

## CHAPTER THREE THE CIVIL WAR

J. Edward Hickey, Headmaster at Old Chapel School, Dukinfield, in the nineteen twenties, wrote an excellent history of the town, *Dukinfield Past And Present*, dedicated to the children of Dukinfield: hoping they will be proud to say, like Saint Paul, they are citizens of no mean city.

The commonly accepted derivation of Doken-field - the field of the Doken or Raven - is a fierce battle associated in legend with Chapel Hill. A Saxon army met a mighty Danish force on the banks of the Tame and put the Danes to flight, taking from them their standard, the Raven (or Doken in Anglo-Saxon). It was planted, according to this legend "on the eminence now crowned by Old Chapel". But, writes Hickey, perhaps, after all, the name derives simply from the district having been a favourite haunt of the Raven. However, in folklore the Raven is associated with death and with battlefields strewn with corpses.

William the Conqueror gave the Earldom of Chester to Hugh Lupus and he and his successors governed the county as a Palatinate. Lupus had several barons to assist him, including Hamon Massey, Baron of Dunham. Dukinfield was part of the 'fee' of Dunham Massey and is specifically mentioned in the twelfth century as having been transferred to Matthew de Bromale as part of the land his father had once held. This conveyance was confirmed by the third baron during the reign of Richard I. Subsequently, writes Hickey, the estate fell to a mesne branche of the Bromale's or Bramhall's, who had already assumed the local name De Dokenfield.

The first recorded member of the family was Robert de Dokenfield, who had four sons - Hamo, Richard, Henry and James. Hamo is mentioned as a witness in the Bramhall deeds before 1300 AD. By the seventeenth century the family name and the name of the town had become Dukinfield. For centuries the government of the Parish Church at Stockport was vested in four chief landowners, the Arderns of Hardern, the

Davenportes of Bramhall, the Hydes of Norbury and the Duckenfields of Dukinfield. These four were called Principates Praeposite, and are mentioned under that title in 1464, during the reign of Edward IV.

Like most manorial lords the Dukinfields had a private chapel, attached to their Hall. In 1398 the Bishop of Lichfield granted a licence for it to John de Dokenfield. It was replaced by a small Gothic chapel in the time of Henry VII. Although the shell of this building still remains, the congregation no longer worship there. This chapel is most significant in the history of Nonconformity in Britain, since it was the first of the Independent Churches. It became a Congregational Church in 1640, due to the efforts of a remarkable man - Samuel Eaton (1597 - 1665).

Eaton, a Cheshire man, was educated at Magdalene College, Cambridge, took Anglican Orders and was beneficed as Rector at West Kirby. He was suspended in 1631 for 'nonconformity in the matter of ceremonies', as Alexander Gordon put it in his excellent history of Old Chapel and its School, published in 1896. I am almost entirely dependent for the history of Old Chapel to that date on this exceptional work. Gordon describes how Eaton went to Holland in the following year and became a Congregationalist. Returning to England he ministered to the Southwark Separatists and was imprisoned for a time at Newgate as "a schismatical and dangerous fellow". He was fined £1,550 against his estates on the Wirral. In 1641 he preached at Chester, Great Barrow and Knutsford, drawing attention to himself for his opposition to prelacy and the Book of Common Prayer.

Fortunately he found a patron in Colonel Robert Duckenfield (1619 - 1689), who made him his chaplain, placing at his disposal the chapel at Dukinfield Old Hall.

Robert Duckenfield - who married Martha, daughter of Sir Miles Fleetwood, of Hasketh, Lancashire, and later, on Martha's death, Judith, daughter of Nathaniel Bottomley, of Cawthorne, Yorkshire, was a most significant figure in the birth and early history of Old Chapel. During the conflict between Charles I and Parliament Robert Duckenfield, like most of the gentry of East Cheshire, was opposed to the King. He joined Sir

William Brereton's forces at the outbreak of the Civil War, and in 1643, at the age of twenty four, was appointed a commissioner for Cheshire to raise money for Parliament.

In July, 1642, Lord Strange, afterwards Earl of Derby, commanded the citizens of Manchester to surrender to the King all their war stores. Their refusal is said to mark the commencement of the Civil War.

Robert Duckenfield took Wythenshawe Hall, home of the Royalist, Tatton, in February, 1643, and placed a white flag on its tower, bringing its bell back to Dukinfield Old Hall as a souvenir. Later, in 1651, he sailed to the Isle of Man, laid siege and took the island, held by the gallant Countess of Derby. Her husband wrote to her, asking her to make terms and assuring her that Colonel Duckenfield, "being so much a gentleman born, will doubtless for his own honour deal fairly with you."

In the Little Parliament of 1653 Robert was MP for Chester and was appointed to the Council of State. Cromwell invited him to join the government, but he declined. At the Restoration he spent some time in prison for his anti-royalist activities. A staunch Puritan, he was a leader of Nonconformity in the area around Dukinfield and lived to rejoice in the accession of William and Mary and the passing of the Act of Toleration. He was buried at St. Lawrence's Church, Denton.

Charles I believed in the supremacy of the Throne and its power over Parliament and the people. He also believed in Protestantism as opposed to Catholicism; and Protestantism meant the Anglican Church. He desired religious uniformity throughout the kingdom, fearing division would lead to schism and civil unrest. The torch that lighted the great conflagration of the Civil War was touched in Scotland. Anglican bishops tried to discipline outspoken Presbyterian ministers and to enforce the new Prayer Book of 1636. The assertion of Royal Supremacy and the introduction of extra ritual into the sacraments offended the people, who feared a return to Popery under the influence of Charles' Catholic wife.

The ceremony of introducing the Prayer Book in Edinburgh created a riot. By May, 1639, English and Scottish soldiers faced one another at the boundaries of the two countries. The English were clearly outnumbered and sued for peace.

Charles decided on negotiation. He called Parliament, having gagged it for eleven years. It met easily enough, because local government had strengthened in these years and had set up effective networks of communication. The new Parliament was now even more formidable. Meeting in April it was dissolved again in May because of its revolutionary temper. A border incident in Scotland put the torch to the kindling wood and the Civil War was afoot, with Scottish soldiers advancing on Newcastle.

Although Charles was an intelligent, cultured and disciplined man and his court gave support to the arts and the sciences, his foreign policy was disastrous, leading the nation to a humiliating defeat from France and Spain. His arrogance and unreadiness to see the folly of his policies brought an irreparable breach with Parliament. His religious intolerance offended many and so did the affluence of the court - the greed and corruption through which he amassed great wealth. All these things alienated the people.

His wealth, however, was drained by the cost of the wars and the extravagances of his court. His solution was to increase taxes. At the same time Archbishop Laud was increasing Church levies - a tax to be a tithe, gradually increasing to a tenth of the nation's income. People bitterly resented these taxes, especially the poor on whom, as always, the taxes fell most heavily. Even so the taxes were resented less than Laud's religious measures - such as the enforcement of liturgical confirmity.

Laud was in his mid-sixties at the outbreak of the Civil War, a man who kept a record of his dreams in his diaries. Either in flight from Laud's laws and levies, the king's taxes, or religious persecution (which included horrific penalties such as dismemberment, branding by cutting off ears, imprisonment and confiscation of estates), some sixty five thousand people had emigrated to America in the 1630s. It is quite astonishing how little either Laud or Charles understood the resentment of the people and how they failed utterly to interpret the spirit of their times.

The merchant middle classes were rising in their communities and wanting to exercise more power. They could do this, of course, only through Parliament. The cry for another Parliament was so pressing Charles recalled it on November 3rd, 1640 - according to Winston Churchill the second longest and most memorable of all Parliaments. This Parliament, contradicting the courts, the King and the Lords, put Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, to death on the grounds he had used an Irish army to subdue the English people. He was used in this way as a scapegoat; as a show of power. The King was unable to save him.

A grand division now arose between Parliament and the Lords. The King entered the Chamber of Parliament - an intrusion quite without precedent - with his soldiers, to take five Members prominent in the execution of Strafford. But the House had been warned and the members were not present. The King's action was ill-timed. The people rose in indignation and stormed the Palace. He and his courtiers fled for their lives and never returned to London, until trial and execution. The five members he had sought were acclaimed throughout the city. Charles also lost control of the Navy, since the Earl of Northumberland, the Lord High Admiral, was opposed to the King.

The first death in the Civil War was on July 15th, 1642, at Manchester, in a clash between the Royalist Lord Strange and the Parliamentarian, Lord Wharton. Rapidly the violence spread throughout England. A battle was fought at Edgehill, Warwickshire, and judged a draw. The King occupied Banbury and entered Oxford, making the city his headquarters to the end of the dispute. Essex took his army to London, but the first confrontation on the outskirts led at once to the King's retreat. A war was afoot about religious and civil freedom, individual rights; but also about property rights. Votes were to men of property, everywhere and with or without title - the individual before God and the propertied individual before Parliament.

Oliver Cromwell raised an army of Ironsides and rode to Marston Moor, where he and his men turned defeat at the hands of Prince Rupert into victory. Four thousand men were killed in this battle. The decisive victory followed at Naseby, where Cromwell played the leading role. He was now not only the

greatest soldier in England, but also the head of the Independents, who in 1647 seized the King at Holmby House and brought him prisoner to London. Laud was beheaded, dying with great dignity.

The Independents were Bible-centred; believed in membership by declaration and the acceptance of the covenant to Christ, one another and just government. The congregation selected a minister and paid him. The church was maintained by the voluntary contributions of its members and governed by them democratically. The placing of the two chairs in a much diminished chancel area marked the move from priest-centred worship to the power now vested in the people. From these chairs the appointed deacons or presbyters would offer the bread and the wine in the sacrament of Holy Communion and not the priest or minister.

The King disputed the authority of Parliament to try him. He did this bravely and eloquently. Nonetheless, on Tuesday, January 30th, 1649, he was executed in front of the Banqueting House in Whitehall Palace. He resigned himself to death; arranged his hair under a small white satin cap, laid himself on the block and the executioner struck off his head with a single blow. His severed head was shown to the people. Someone cried: "This is the head of a traitor!" At sight of it, wrote a diarist of the time, "there was such a groan by the thousands then present as I never heard before and desire I may never hear again."

The fight for freedom, however, was by no means over.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### MILTON AND LOCKE

At the beginning of November, 1605, a group of men led by Robert Catesby brought gunpowder in thirty six barrels into the cellars of the House of Lords. James I was to open Parliament on November 5th. Since May of the previous year they had mined a tunnel from a house they rented, adjoining the House of Lords. Guy Fawkes, born at York, was brought from Spain especially to fire the powder - chosen for his courage and cool nerve. An anonymous letter was sent to Lord Monteaule on October 26th, probably by Tresham. The Houses were searched on November 4th and Fawkes was caught in hiding. The plot made a deep impression on the country - guys have been burned ever since on the fifth of November, to remind us on the one hand of the dangers of anarchy and, on the other, of the lengths people will go to when persecuted, deprived of their human rights and harrassed within their own communities.

Three years later John Milton was born in Bread Street, London, son of a scrivener. Educated at Christ's College, Cambridge, he followed a literary career and took a deep interest in theology. Milton married a seventeen year old girl, Mary Powell, who was so bored by this dour Puritan she went within a month of their marriage to visit her father and refused to return to her spouse.

The experience moved Milton to write a pamphlet sympathetic to divorce, *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, making him a notorious predecessor of modern Unitarian clergy, who have, similarly, been abused for their sympathetic consideration towards divorced people and their readiness to perform wedding ceremonies for them. Milton was attacked by the Stationers' Company for publishing pamphlets without licence and in reply wrote, in 1644, his *Areopagitica*, a spirited vindication of the liberty of the Press and a severe attack on the evils of censorship. The work brought him into prominence as a thinker and man of letters. In 1646 his wife returned to him and within six years bore four children; dying in labour to the last, a son, who died in infancy.

Milton sided in the Civil War with Parliament against the King and after the execution of Charles I became Latin secretary to the Council of State and continued with this work and his writings despite becoming blind. He was threatened with imprisonment after Charles returned in 1660, but the Act of Indemnity saved him this ordeal. He married a second time in 1658 and this second wife, alas, died two years later. In 1663 he married Elizabeth Minshull and settled with her in a cottage at Chalfont St. Giles, still in existence, and wrote there his greatest poetic works. *Paradise Lost* took five years to write and earned him £10. As a poet he is often ranked second only to Shakespeare, but it is not so readily recognised he was also a gifted theologian - perhaps because his position was one we would now recognise as somewhat 'Unitarian' (more accurately as 'Arian').

Like Luther, at the Diet of Worms, standing boldly before the Emperor, unwilling to change his theological stance except he is convinced by reason and by Scripture, so Milton found the Athanasian Trinity unacceptable to his reason and at odds with the New Testament text. Most Unitarians took their stance on these grounds and it became characteristic of our movement that we demanded theology should be both reasonable and in accord with our understanding of the Bible as we came to see more deeply into the texts through the development of Biblical criticism and exegesis.

The word 'Unitarian' first appeared in print in England in 1673, in a pamphlet by Henry Hedworth, *Controversie Ended*, to describe those 'otherwise called Socinians or Arians'. The first printed book with the name 'Unitarian' on its title page was published thirteen years after Milton's death, in 1687, *A Brief History of the Unitarians called also Socinians*, by a Hertfordshire clergyman, Stephen Nye, who remained in the Church of England. He maintained, like Milton, the Athanasian Trinity was not to be found in the New Testament, but that as 'Justin, Origen and other principal Fathers (as the Arians afterwards did) taught the Father is indeed before the Son and the Holy Spirit'.

I've heard it argued the name 'Unitarian' originated as a nickname, a term of derision (Unit-Arian), like the name

Quaker applied to members of the Society of Friends; a derisory title ennobled in time through the character and quality of life of those who took the title to themselves.

An examination of the theology of Milton will not recommend him highly to Unitarians at the end of the twentieth century. His Arianism will seem somewhat foreign and pedantic. But in its time it was a brave thrust towards freedom from a restricted interpretation of the Trinity holding sway and 'ultimate authority' for far too long. Milton argued in his book, *The Son of God and The Holy Spirit, that in the New Testament Jesus:*

acknowledges himself to possess whatever share of Deity is assigned to him by virtue of the peculiar gift and kindness of the Father; as the apostles also testify. And lastly, that the Son himself and his apostles acknowledge throughout the whole of their discourses and writings, that the Father is greater than the Son in all things ... With regard to his supreme goodness. Matt.xix. 17, "why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God." ... it is evident that he did not choose to be considered essentially the same with that one God ... Again ... John xiv. 28, "My Father is greater than I". It will be answered, that Christ is speaking of his human nature. But did his disciples understand him as speaking merely of his human nature? Was this the belief in himself which Christ required? Such an opinion will scarcely be maintained.

Milton's argument, though often thoroughly convincing and rational, loses through the failure to make distinctions between Jesus as a man, the Christ/a as Logos (or Child/Son/Daughter), God as Ground of Being (Father/Mother) and the Holy Spirit as the gift of Grace, the creative Power flowing from the first and second persons of the Trinity. Jesus/Christ/Logos/Word are all conflated by Milton into the one word 'Son' (See Appendix B and Glossary).

An old, classical way of expressing the relationships between these invisible/spiritual or archetypal qualities of the Trinity was to say the Son was generated by the Father and the Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son; and, in the doctrine of the hypostatical union (i.e. the union of the soul with God) in St. John of the Cross that the Christ/Logos was God/Son by



persecution; whereas human beings might become God through participation in the Christ/Logos. I think this is expressed, also, in the attempts by early theologians to distinguish in Jesus the divinity, which was like our humanity, and the Christ, present in us all, yet realised in the life of Jesus. Jesus thus became, it was considered, a prototype of the complete union of the human soul with God, a possibility evident in the reports of the experiences of the great mystics of all the religions of the world.

Milton's manuscript, left by him for publication on his death, disappeared mysteriously and was not found until 1823, in the State Paper Office, London, when it caused a tremendous literary and theological sensation. It was published in Boston in 1825 and reprinted in 1908 by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, with an introduction by Alexander Gordon.

Part of the grand movement, the great revolution of the seventeenth century, to bring an end to persecution, to establish tolerance and free speech, Milton wrote passionately for that civil and religious liberty, which became a traditional Unitarian toast. He was also a part of the movement to end church government through the hierarchies of prelacy and to place responsibility for the government of the church into the hands of the people. The two thousand clergy who left the Church of England after the Act of Uniformity in 1662 were of a similar spirit. They rejected clerical hierarchies, would not accept the necessity of using the *Book of Common Prayer* or adhering to the thirty nine articles; were against the proscription of the Geneva Bible with its marginal notes; and expressed their rejection not only in establishing nonconformist causes up and down the kingdom, but also in abandoning the white surplice and returning to the the use of the Geneva gown and bands.

The first priest to surrender his living was Richard Baxter, whose people still graces our Unitarian church in Kidderminster.

The Act of Toleration in 1689 laid the foundations for the rise of Nonconformist Protestantism and the Freedom of the Dissenter. Milton was by no means the only great figure of that century to give impetus to the establishing of liberty and tolerance. Another man, John Locke (1632-1704), made what is perhaps the

greatest single contribution to the subject in *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, published in the year of the Toleration Act (an Act still excluding Roman Catholics and Unitarians).

Locke lived as permanent house guest with the Earl of Shaftesbury, who plotted continuously against the crown - against absolute or feudal monarchy. Shaftesbury represented the interests of the rising merchants, the developing English middle classes. Along with several other influential opponents to the monarchy, he was bought off by Charles II in 1663 by being granted a share of the Carolinas. Locke, in fact, prepared the charter under which it was to be governed; a charter granting freedom of worship, establishing religious toleration as a basic American tenet. When Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence in 1776, he delivered Locke's thought to America for all time in phrases and ideas now commonplace, though treasonous in Great Britain when Locke wrote them.

In many ways Locke was a very worldly, middle class man, collecting accounts meticulously from his tenants, keeping careful accounts, benefiting financially from business ventures; even, hypocritically, from the slave trade. He outlined an economic policy of utilitarianism - commodities should be of value inasmuch as they are of use. Nonetheless he provided a philosophical system to underpin the rising concern with freedom and independence; the surging desire for a better world for more and more people.

The essay, *Concerning Human Understanding* is at the heart of his thought. Human beings, he wrote, are not born with innate ideas, but our minds are a *tabula rasa*, a blank board, on which experience writes. All experience is through our senses; and from our experiences, he claimed, moral principles are formed. Complex ideas develop out of the combination of simple ones. So, for example, the possibility of the endless addition of numbers gives us the concept of Infinity. The appearance of ideas one after another in our minds gives us the idea of movement, succession and of time. Knowledge was "nothing but the perception of the connection of and agreement or disagreement ... of any of our ideas."

Human beings are first and foremost conscious creatures. We exist, not simply because we think, but because we are conscious, aware, pre-reflective. Through our senses we gain knowledge and finally, through reflection, we develop our imagination, from which springs our ability to consider things may be other than they are, the necessary springboard for any set of moral principles.

When oppressed, he declared, human beings have the right to revolt. Human beings are born naturally equal. A primitive tribesman would be as good a mathematician as an English gentleman if he had the same cultural training. No one should be subject to another's will or political authority without consent. No-one and no government had "arbitrary power over the life, liberty or possessions of another."

Guy Fawkes, had he been successful in his plot, would have, it's said, brought about the end of democracy. At least it is true anarchy is incompatible with democracy. But Fawkes also represented the consequences of tyranny - the fruits of oppression, censorship and persecution, which also offend against democracy. True democracy is built on a respect and reverence for those values of tolerance, liberty, equality and humanity advocated by Milton and Locke in their day - always the measure of the liberal spirit in religion and the hallmark of our own Unitarian heritage to the present day.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SAMUEL ANGIER AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

Dukinfield was a hamlet in the parish of Stockport during the 17th Century. It had one church - the private oratory at Dukinfield Old Hall - known as Dukinfield Old Hall Chapel. A Chapel was a subsidiary place of worship - subsidiary to some established church in the same area. Subsidiary the Chapels might well have been, subservient many of them certainly were not. Manchester and East Cheshire were hot-beds of religious change in a century of extraordinary religious unrest.

George Fox, taking advantage of the new situation created by the Civil War, came to Dukinfield in 1647 and began his peripatetic preaching career at the Old Hall Chapel. Fox was in Lancashire to investigate the claims of a woman whom it was said had fasted twenty two days. He was attracted to Dukinfield, perhaps, because of Eaton's reputation. Alexander Gordon suggests he also came to investigate a mysterious incident reported to have taken place in the Chapel the previous summer, when (*Gangraena* iii, 164):

As Master Eaton was preaching, there was heard the perfect sound as of a man beating a march on a drum; and it was heard as coming into the chappel, and then going up all along the ile through the people, and so about the chappel, but nothing seen; which Master Eaton, preaching, and the people that sate in the several parts of the chappel, heard; insomuch that it terrified Master Eaton, and the people caused him to give over preaching and fall to praying; but, the march still beating, they broke up their exercise for that time, and were glad to be gone.

It is astonishing how people able to behave with much courage in dealings with the overt world, shrink fearfully in superstitious dread, nonetheless, in ghostly matters, as if the power of the Spirit were less formidable within its familiar domain!

Fox's visit bore fruit inasmuch as a group of Quakers worshipped for a time in Dukinfield. Their meeting house was still intact in Dukinfield in 1825, although, by then, there were no longer Friends resident in the village.

Old Hall Chapel was divided by the Trinitarian debates and Eaton, with his loyal followers, taking the position of Athanasius, moved to Stockport in 1653. In the same year Adam Martindale published *An Antidote against the Poyson of the Times*, a catechism defending the Athanasian Trinity. It was, apparently, in response to the so-called Antitrinitarian heresies among the Independents at Dukinfield, described by Glover in his *History of Ashton-Under-Lyne* as "the church of the gifted brethren."

This residuary 'church', Gordon suggests, if not actively bent on spreading heresy, must have been fully tolerant of the 'Anti-trinitarian' opinion harboured in its midst. Out of London, this is the earliest known instance of a constituted church, avowedly opposed to the Athanasian Trinitarian formula. Although this movement might have been suppressed, perhaps, at the Restoration in 1660, its existence at Dukinfield, writes Gordon, as an early leaven, is not without significance.

The Act of Uniformity in 1662 brought the simmering religious revolution to a head. Two thousand clergy left their livings and many set up independent churches. One of these minister was Samuel Angier, founder of the permanent Nonconformist cause at Dukinfield, who joined his uncle, John Angier, at Denton Chapel. John Angier was one of the few nonconformist clergy allowed to retain their livings.

#### SAMUEL ANGIER (1639 - 1713)

Samuel Angier was born at Dedham, son of Bezaleel Angier, a rich clothier. His tombstone erroneously gives 28th October as the date of his birth, but in his register he records his birthday as 28th August. Educated at Westminster School, he matriculated at Christ Church, Oxford, and was ordained with two others on 29th October, 1672, in the house of Rev. Robert Eaton, minister of Stand, in Deansgate, Manchester - the first ordination in the North of England since the Act of Uniformity and made legally possible by the Act of Indulgence in 1672.

We do not know at what date Samuel came to live in Dukinfield, but we learn from his diary that he lived in an old house in Dukinfield, where he conducted his services from 29th May, 1681. Later he acquired an estate, perhaps the same property, known eventually as 'Angier's Tenement'. From 10th October, 1686, he conducted services in a barn (on Yew Tree Lane, somewhere between the Moravian Church and the Golf House), keeping hay on the premises to disguise its use as a chapel.

Robert Dukinfield, son of Colonel Robert Duckenfield, was made a baronet in 1665. He became the mainstay of Angier's congregation. Sir Robert gave them a site for a Chapel and the greater part of the building materials. The land was granted, according to custom, on a lease for three lives (renewable) at an annual rent of "sixpence, if demanded." The trust was for a chapel or meeting house for the use of "a Protestant Presbyterian minister of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, dissenting from the Church of England." The minister was to be qualified according to the Toleration Act, and to be "called, elected and approved by the major part of the brethren who are communicants of that congregation that there do usually attend."

The building was begun in 1707 and completed in August 1708. This grey stone building, called in after years the "White Chapel" and "t'Owd Chapil" was oblong in shape and ran north and south, parallel with the road. The pulpit was in the centre of the east wall; on either side the rows of pews faced each other; as they do still in our chapels at Macclesfield, Hale and Knutsford. The first service in the Chapel was held on Thursday, 19th August, 1708, when a thanksgiving sermon was preached for the victory won on the 11th July by Marlborough and Prince Eugene over the French army at Oudenarde in East Flanders. Regular services began Sunday, 29th August, 1708. The first baptism in the chapel was 12th September, 1708 and the first burial in the chapel-yard was 3rd February, 1709.

Gordon notes that in 1708 Gee Cross Chapel was erected and its first minister, John Cooper, was married at Wilmslow in 1705, to Angier's second daughter, Anne.

For the latter years of Angier's ministry there are two sources of information, a memorial tribute in the *Minutes of the Cheshire Meeting*, and a short note in *Calamy*- both, says Gordon, apparently from the same hand. Samuel Angier's sight decayed many years before he died. The notes in his interleaved Bible cease in 1697:

As long as he was able, he diligently wrote sermons as if he had been a young man. When he could no longer read or write, he had those around him that read to him and wrote for him; and then he entertained himself with the frequent repeating of the greater part of David's Psalms and Paul's Epistles, which he had committed to memory.

He was an excellent scholar, a great valuer of Bible knowledge, an exact and lively preacher. Of his theology we are told he was "a zealous asserter of the doctrine of free grace" and of "justification by faith only." This, of course, was the watchword of the faith of the Reformation and the faith of the Huguenots (perhaps amongst his ancestors as well as mine?), who died at the St. Bartholomew massacre in 1572.

Of Samuel Angier's character we are assured he "lived as he spoke, and spoke as he "lived." He declined to draw up an autobiographical account of his ejection and sufferings, having no wish to leave on record anything that would "blacken the characters of some that were dead and gone", and of "some still living". He made his will on 4th July, 1712 and, in the year of his death, presented to the congregation a silver communion cup, bearing the inscription: "Donum Samuelis Angier V.D. Mi. Ecclesiae apud Dukinfield 1713". The cup is 'on show' for special occasions, otherwise it is kept in our Bank vault.

He continued to preach to the very close of his life, conducting services for the last time on Sunday, 1st November, 1713. On the following Saturday morning he was taken ill, and died on the evening of Sunday, 8th November, 1713, having completed his 74 years in August. He was buried in the Chapel-yard on 11th November, the funeral sermon preached by Jeremiah Aldred, minister at Monton, from the text II Cor.1, 12: "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience."

Angier married Anne, daughter of Oswald Mosley, of Ancoats. She died on 24th July, 1690, and was buried in Manchester. Their two sons, Bezaleel, a London physician, and John, a Bristol merchant, erected the tomb in the Chapel-yard. Their elder daughter, Margaret, married Ralph Lathropp, a minister in Manchester and Anne married John Cooper of Gee Cross. Samuel's portrait, painted at the very end of his life, now hangs restored in the new Chapel vestry. Unfortunately, we have no extant register for almost fifty years after his death.

#### THOMAS EMLYN (1663 - 1741)

Early in the eighteenth century the Trinitarian controversies became less virulent. But a new movement in the religious life of Britain was precipitated by a Presbyterian minister in Dublin, Thomas Emlyn, an Arian in theology, much loved for his preaching and pastoral work. After eleven years of ministry he was taken to task for omitting to preach on the Trinity and confessed he believed in the Godhead of the Father alone. He was forbidden to preach again and brought before the secular courts on a charge of blasphemy. Emlyn was not even allowed to speak. He barely escaped the pillory and was sentenced to a year in prison and an exorbitant fine of one thousand pounds. The chief justice remarked he was fortunate to have kept his life, since in Spain he would have been burned for declaring "that Jesus is not supreme God." Emlyn could not possibly pay the fine and languished in prison for two years until his congregation pleaded on his behalf and the fine was reduced to seventy pounds, which they paid for him.

The case was given wide publicity and aroused much sympathy in England, especially in London, where he retired. It gave rise to great controversy.

Emlyn was the last dissenter to suffer imprisonment in Britain for denial of the Athanasian Trinity. Just before his release the General Synod of Ulster, in June 1705, made subscription to the Westminster Confession compulsory for candidates for the ministry.

Emlyn called himself "a worshipper of Christ on Unitarian principles" and was the first minister to take openly the name Unitarian. His Dublin congregation invited in his place Rev. John Abernethy, already leader of those who would not

subscribe to the Westminster Confession - the Non-subscribing Presbyterians. The church eventually became Unitarian and a Unitarian minister, who served Old Chapel, Dukinfield, in the twentieth century, Kenneth Wright, left Old Chapel and went to Dublin and became their minister in 1964.

An Anti-Trinitarian church was formed by two ministers ejected from Presbyterian churches in Exeter - James Peirce and Joseph Hallett holding its first service on Sunday, 15th March, 1719. It was the first avowedly Antitrinitarian church whose worship has continued to the present day. Pierce had written to John Shute Barrington MP (later Lord Barrington), attempting to secure the repeal of legislation disabling Dissenters from holding office in central government. One unfortunate consequence of the Exeter controversy was to impede the Bill for repeals. The Opposition wished a clause inserting to require acceptance of the Athanasian Trinity. Barrington called a meeting of the General Body of London Ministers at Salters' Hall in February, 1719, proving a significant watershed in the history of dissent. At the close of a long debate, ending in near chaos, someone called out: "You that are against persecution, come upstairs!" People began to move up into the balcony of the hall. Someone else called out: "You that are for the doctrine of the Trinity stay below!" When order was restored it was found that those 'against persecution' carried by 57 votes to 53.

The debate had hinged on the interpretation of Scripture and was considered a momentous decision in favour of the Baxterian principle of Scripture sufficiency. Sir Joseph Jekyl, Master of the Rolls, as an interested onlooker, summed up the whole affair in one brief sentence: "The Bible carried it by four." The two really significant points decided at Salters' Hall were the right of a congregation to withdraw support from a preacher of doctrinal error and the right of a congregation to judge for itself what constitutes doctrinal error.

The days were still yet far off when Biblical authority would give way to the over-riding authority of either reason or the Spirit and it was obvious at this stage of dissenting history there was a desperate need to understand exactly what the Bible was saying. Out of this sense of need Biblical scholarship was given much encouragement. 1729 saw Daniel Mace's remarkable translation of the New Testament and in 1730 Nathaniel

Lardner's long series of volumes, entitled *The Credibility of the Gospel*, an invaluable pioneering source of Biblical criticism.

#### WILLIAM BUCKLEY THE ELDER (1690 - 1752)

William Buckley succeeded Samuel Angier in 1714 and was probably a native of Dukinfield. He possessed "a patrimonial estate in the township" adjoining the Dukinfield Hall estate. In his youth he formed an attachment to a daughter of Sir Robert Dukinfield, but for some reason the marriage was forbidden, and, sadly, the woman died of a broken heart. Later he married Sir Robert's half-sister, Judith, posthumous daughter of Colonel Duckenfield by his second marriage. Buckley, apparently, believed Jesus Christ was "very God, co-essential with God the Father".

Early in Buckley's ministry an endowment was created by one of the founders of the Chapel, James Heywood. His name and that of his wife, Elizabeth, are inscribed above the vestry door. Heywood conveyed about 33 acres of freehold land for the benefit of the minister of Dukinfield Chapel, who was to be "orthodox and sound in the faith" and qualified under the Toleration Act. Gordon comments that as this 'faith' is not specified the endowment was protected by the Dissenters Chapels Act of 1844. The estate yielded an income of £18 a year at the end of Buckley's ministry.

The congregation at Old Chapel was now the third largest in the county. Dean Row was the largest with 1309 members, including gentry. Chester was next with a thousand members, including 30 gentry and Dukinfield had 793 adherents, of whom 14 ranked as gentry, including a baronet and an esquire. Cross Street, Manchester, had 1515 members and Chowbent 1064. People came to Old Chapel from within a radius of ten miles and, in order to be sure of a seat, had to be an hour early.

Buckley was a popular preacher and of great influence in the area. The historian, Hampson, records a saying of one of his congregation: "If he shook his stick at Hall Green the boys trembled as far as the Town Lane End." He died on 26th May, 1752, leaving a son, William, and was buried in the Chapel-yard near to Samuel Angier.

## MORAVIANS AT DUKINFIELD

During Buckley's Ministry in 1738, a Moravian Society was formed in Dukinfield drawn largely from the Old Chapel congregation through the evangelism of Benjamin Ingham (1712-1772), a Yorkshireman. In July, 1742, the society formally linked with the Moravian cause and a Chapel was built by William Walker and opened on 26th November, 1751. Its first regular minister was Francis Okely, the biographer of the famous mystic, Jacob Boehme.

The Moravians considered building a settlement in Dukinfield, but chose instead to build in Fairfield in 1785, because of the uncertain tenure of their Dukinfield lease.

## CHAPTER SIX

JOSEPH PRIESTLEY  
(1733 - 1804)

The history of Non-subscribing churches from Salters' Hall to the end of the eighteenth century is difficult to trace, because they were a large, scattered group of mutually independent congregations, opposed to ecclesiastical domination and firmly committed to organisation. The congregations were composed largely of well-to-do people, middle class, including some wealthy merchants and country gentlemen, accustomed to acting and thinking for themselves and jealous of their independence. On the whole their ministers were able men of generous culture and ample education, interested in public affairs and active in liberal public service.

The most learned theologian amongst them was Nathaniel Lardner (1684-1768), whose great work, *The Credibility of the Gospel History*, published in 1727, I referred to in the last chapter. This work made him the founder of modern critical research into early Christian literature and won him international respect as a scholar. His studies led him to the view that "there is one God, even the Father; and that Jesus Christ is man with a reasonable soul and a human body." He had taken the natural step from Arianism to Unitarianism. This view of Jesus, expressed in his celebrated essay, *Letter on the Logos*, had considerable influence amongst Dissenting ministers and converted Joseph Priestley from Arianism to Unitarianism.

Priestley, born at Fieldhead, near Leeds, and educated at Daventry, was minister at Needham Market, where he was inducted in 1755, and then at Nantwich in 1758. In 1761 he accepted an invitation to Warrington Academy as Tutor in Classics. A chemistry course beginning at the Academy gave him his introduction to science. In 1767 he became minister of our church at Mill Hill Chapel, Leeds.

ROBERT ROBINSON, D.D. (1752 - 1755)

At Dukinfield Buckley was followed in 1752 by Robert Robinson, educated at the Independent Academy in London. Priestley refused to enter this academy because its students were compelled to subscribe to the famous "ten printed articles of the strictest Calvinistic faith." Robinson abandoned the Calvinism but retained its Athanasian theology. His congregation insisted on his resignation when he sent for a constable to whip a beggar at his gate.

From Dukinfield he went to Dob Lane, where his theology proved unacceptable to a congregation used to an Arian pastor. He had scholarship and some literary power and wrote an annotated Bible and published several sermons. He applied for a diploma of D.D. to Edinburgh University and was granted one - his enemies believed the university authorities thought he was the more famous Robert Robinson, a Cambridge Baptist.

Alexander Gordon provides a colourful description of his trials at Dob Lane, where he held both Trust Deeds and keys to the premises and kept doors and gates locked for three years; one consequence being that members of the congregation who died in this period had to be interred in private grounds. He died the same year as Mozart, 1791, aged 65 yrs., and was buried at Barrack Hill at seven o'clock in the morning. A pane of glass was inserted in the top of his coffin and over the grave a brick building with a door gave access to the coffin, so that a watchman might visit on occasion to ensure the body had not been stolen.

#### GLADSTON (1755-1757)

Gladston was a young Scotsman, who offended gravely against the congregation and left for we know not where. Even his first names are unrecorded.

#### JOHN HELME (1757 - 1761)

We know little of John Helme, but his ministry, too, appears to have been unpopular, since he was "paid £30 in consideration of his leaving."

#### WILLIAM BUCKLEY, THE YOUNGER (1762 - 1791)

William Buckley, son of the former minister, was a merchant for a time and then went to train at Daventry Academy, where he found sympathy with Arian theology. His first entry in the Old Chapel register is 5th September, 1762. The appointment appears to have been far from unanimous and there is some indication of serious divisions in the congregation at this time (for example a struggle before the appointment of Buckley over rival candidates for the pulpit). Gordon suggests it was the result of a more liberal theology making impact on the congregation. Buckley managed to avoid contentious theology and tided the congregation over a difficult period of transition.

It is said, however, that he lacked the charisma of his father and was described as a 'clerical dandy', having introduced into the Dukinfield pulpit a silk gown and powdered wig. There is a tale about Nathaniel Walker meeting Buckley as he was about to preach and, pointing with his walking stick to the minister's dress, exclaimed aloud: "Where silk gowns and powdered wigs come, there cometh no gospel." Perhaps the gown we see in Angier's portrait (and possibly wig?) was a stuff gown? At any rate we hear of no wig in the Dukinfield pulpit after Buckley, and no gown until 1832.

Although his ministry appears peaceful and blameless, it covered a period of decline. In 1772 Buckley signed the Dissenting petition for a revision of the terms of the qualifying subscription under the Toleration Act. This shows he was a moderate man, since the strongly orthodox desired no change and the strongly heterodox wanted no subscription. The revised subscription, placing the Scriptures in stead of the Articles, became law in 1779. This date appears to coincide closely with the attempts of Nathaniel Walker's father, who left the congregation on Buckley's appointment, to organise Independent services at Ashton.

In Buckley's time a new hymn book, compiled by William Enfield, was brought into use in the chapel, probably superseding Watts. He died at Dukinfield on 29th April, 1797.

#### DAVID LEWELLIN DAVIES (1791 - 1794)

David Davies was educated for the ministry at Swansea. He introduced what Gordon describes as "the Humanitarian view of the person of Christ". Davies was a turbulent man, who created an intolerable situation in his congregation and we are told there was such dissension that for seventeen weeks no-one would lead the singing. The Chapel was closed for thirty five weeks and strenuous efforts were made to gain his resignation. Poor Davies, it is said, was wiser when drunk than when sober. He wrote a curious letter of resignation whilst drunk and tried to recall it when sober. He preached a farewell sermon on 16th November, 1794, but lingered in the village until, on 25th January, 1795, by order of a meeting of the trustees, a sum of five guineas was paid to him "as a gift to depart in peace from Dukinfield." He left the country and is said to have died abroad.

#### THOMAS SMITH (1795-1797)

Smith had a short ministry at Dukinfield (income for the incumbent was approximately £63 a year - see Gordon for a fascinating breakdown of ministerial income at that time) and moved on to Stand. He formed the Dukinfield Literary Society and published a *Prose Essay on Avarice* and two volumes of poems. His 'masterpiece' is considered to be the line:  
The strain'd eye, pacing o'er the dewy lawn.

The practice of the Literary Society called out a poetic faculty in William Hampson, the historian, who published "a very passable poem," *Dukinfield* in 1793 and contributed several hymns to the Dukinfield Collection of 1822.

#### WILLIAM TATE (1799)

A native of Newcastle-on-Tyne, William Tate had studied at the Baptist Academy at Hebden Bridge, but was converted to the Unitarian faith. He remained at Dukinfield only four months, when he received an offer he could not refuse from Chorley congregation. He resigned, he said, partly on account of the poor stipend and partly because "the people are more indifferent to public worship, and seem less concerned for the welfare of their minister than at any place I have ever known."

George III came to the throne in 1760 and the Seven Years' War ended in a victory in 1763, taking Canada and India from France. The removal of the French threat to the American colonies paved the way for the American War of Independence, which began in 1775. Joseph Priestley, who sympathised greatly with the North American cause, had met Benjamin Franklin in London and they became great friends. During his stay at Warrington Priestley also met Theophilus Lindsey, who was struggling with his conscience about leaving the Church of England. The two men felt the time had come for a new name in religion and the one they chose and vigorously championed was 'Unitarian'. The authority of Christ, they believed, lay not in the church, but with the individual reason and conscience. Lindsey resigned as Vicar of Catterick, and in 1774, opened a room in Essex Street, London, (where our headquarters are now found) as a Unitarian Chapel, the first avowedly Unitarian cause in England. The Unitarian Press, the Lindsey Press, was named after him.

These Unitarians believed the story of Christianity was one of progressive corruption of the original impulse in Jesus. Jesus, they claimed, was not the Second Person of the Trinity, nor (as the Arians taught, the pre-existent Logos), but a man, commissioned by God to proclaim those sacred truths of creation and conduct which the unaided reason might guess at, but never know with certainty unless illuminated by Divine revelation. They believed the unique authority of the revelation made through Jesus was guaranteed by his miracles and resurrection. His death at the hands of the priesthood, they declared, was not an atoning sacrifice for sin, but a grim example of the fate of so many great prophets and reformers.

There was a shortage of ministers and small congregations found it difficult to support a minister used to professional standards of living. Priestley recommended leadership by lay persons, using a provided liturgy and printed sermons. He also advocated experimental forms of worship. A voluminous writer in theology and in science, he is the only figure in the *Dictionary of National Biography* whose life had to be written in two instalments by two different experts - one for his theological life and one for his scientific career. For his continuous polemic against the government on every issue of civil and religious



liberty he was represented by the political cartoonists as 'Gunpowder Joe'. Priestley's vigorous campaigning stimulated a trend already begun amongst the staid Presbyterians. Newcomers, like Priestley himself, with no Presbyterian background, often poor men - not of the merchant and middle classes - began to find their way into dissenting Nonconformity. When the General Baptist Churches divided in 1770 and the evangelicals founded the New Connexion, a radical minority came over to the Unitarians. Similar splits amongst the Methodists and the Congregationalists provided new recruits for a rapidly growing Unitarian movement.

But the movement ran into a crisis. When the French Revolution broke out in 1789 it was at first welcomed by all friends of liberty; but the bloodshed reported from France accelerated a Tory reaction in England against the Revolution. War broke out between England and France, bringing the liberals into a very dangerous situation. It was feared there might be revolution in Britain. The government tried to prevent meetings of liberals and organised the so-called 'patriotic mobs', who broke up liberal assemblies. The Unitarians were amongst the first to suffer from this covert persecution and, indeed, one of the very first was Priestley himself. His Chapel and House in Birmingham, along with the homes of some other Unitarians, were burned by the mob in 1791, the second anniversary of the Fall of the Bastille.

Priestley was fortunate to escape with his life and travelled incognito to London. In 1794 he emigrated to Pennsylvania, America, where he became a chemist and earned an impressive reputation for his studies with carbon dioxide and his discovery of oxygen from mercuric oxide.

He continued to preach his Newtonian Unitarianism (The work of Sir Isaac Newton - 1642 to 1727 - another famous Arian, had considerable influence on Priestley), expressing the belief that the soul died with the body, but by miraculous intervention God raised it immediately. He took his beliefs from Scripture, though used his freedom to reject the birth stories. He confidently looked for the Second Coming of Christ and held Christianity was less a system of opinions and more a rule of life, whose end was the moral perfection of the soul. The welfare of the human race, he believed, depended upon its acceptance of

Christianity. A man of deep devotion he spent the last ten years of his life in America with his wife and children, practising family worship and observing the Sabbath. His profound faith in the eternal goodness of God enabled him to rise triumphant over great misfortune and bereavement.

## DUKINFIELD IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Sir William Dukinfield-Daniel, a great grandson of Colonel Duckenfield, died in 1758, leaving his estate to his daughter, Henrietta. She, however, was pronounced insane and died in 1771, leaving the estate to her mother's second husband, John Astley of Wem, a painter and friend of Sir Joshua Reynolds. He was known as Beau Astley for his love of the high life.

In 1760, returning from the sale of his portraits in Dublin, he met Lady Dukinfield-Daniel at Knutsford Fair. She asked him to paint her portrait and the two fell in love during the sittings and were married. Lady Dukinfield-Daniel died two years later and on the death of his stepdaughter Astley inherited the Dukinfield estates, at the time worth £5,000 a year. In the 1770s he built Dukinfield Lodge at the end of what is now Crescent Close, originally the drive to the Lodge.

John Astley died in 1787, at the age of 67, and was buried in Old Chapel yard. His son, Francis Dukinfield-Astley, born at the Lodge in 1781, assisted the industrialisation of Dukinfield village. He opened an iron works, which failed to prove an economic venture, whereupon he turned his interest to the coal mining industry of the area, which had been in existence since the seventeenth century. He won the silver medal of the Society for the Improvement of Agriculture in 1807 for planting over forty thousand trees, making Dukinfield famous for its trees.

At the end of the eighteenth century the Industrial Revolution came to Britain and with it an enormous increase in the population. Dukinfield's population, for example, grew from about a thousand to 14,681 between 1760 and 1830. Coaches from London to Manchester, plagued by highwaymen, took at least five and a half days to complete the journey. Most goods went by water because of the inadequate road networks and the demand for waterway travel led to the building of the canals.

The Duke of Bridgewater gave much impetus to the building of inter-connecting canal systems with his first venture in 1761 between Worsley and Stretford. By 1795 the canal stretched from Leigh to Runcorn and heralded what was to be called 'canal mania'. Dukinfield was fortunate not only in having access to the fast-flowing River Tame, but also to two canals - the Ashton and the Peak Forest.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING  
(1780 - 1842)

The famous theologian, Renan, called Channing "the saint of the Unitarians" and Wordsworth said of him: "Channing has the love of wisdom and the wisdom of love." He was born in Newport, Rhode Island, on 7th April, 1780. His father, a renowned lawyer, had the honour to receive Washington at his home when the general was on his Northern tour. Newport was a garrison town, quartering French and English troops, marching about in their bright uniforms. Their presence stirred a patriotism and an interest in politics in the young Channing that never left him.

Educated at Harvard College, he was tutor for two years to a Virginian planter's family, studying in his spare time for the ministry, observing with disgust and deep compassion the treatment of the black slaves. The memories of their awful predicament also lived with him into maturity, when, as a minister, he worked passionately for the abolition of slavery despite much opposition and persecution.

Channing returned to Boston in 1802, accepting an invitation to the Federal Street Church. His mother and sisters came to live with him. Europe was thrown into confusion by the military ambitions of Napoleon and one of Channing's first sermons was on "The Corruption of France and its Government." His congregation grew until they had to build a new, larger church and he became the most famous preacher in the city. Although physically delicate all his life, his voice we are told, was strong and 'absolutely thrilling'. He had tremendous powers as an orator. His sermons were printed and read all over the world.

Although Unitarian ideas were preached and published in America at this time, the word 'Unitarian' was not in use until 1812, when a controversy arose amongst the Congregationalists of Boston, where Anti-Athanasian doctrines were already plainly taught in their ten congregations. Various periodicals,

by printing articles attacking the 'Anti-trinitarians,' stimulated the production of the first Unitarian paper in America, *The Christian Disciple*, Belsham's biography of Theophilus Lindsey arrived in America, containing a chapter entitled 'American Unitarianism'. The presentation of the name itself started a furore.

At this point in time Channing was an Arian, believing in a universal moral and spiritual bond or kinship between humans and God - the Divine Image present and potent in human personality. Jesus Christ was the being who reflected most perfectly that Divine Nature or Image, present in fainter degrees in other souls. Channing believed in the pre-existence of the Christ. Although he did not lay stress on this concept there is no evidence he ever ceased to accept it. This controversy, occurring when Channing was thirty five years of age, called him out of the quiet, painstaking role of pastor and transformed him into one of the world's great leaders of religious thought.

The Unitarian Society in Baltimore built a church in 1819 and engaged Rev. Jared Sparks as minister. Channing preached the ordination sermon at an unprecedented service - the very first time an American minister was ordained in the name of Unitarianism. Channing felt it important to make a clear statement (taking one and a half hours) of Unitarian thought. The sermon was printed by the thousand in America and in Britain, stirring great controversy. Firstly Channing was at pains, in this sermon, to emphasise the unity of God, claiming the Athanasian Trinity presented God as three beings. Secondly he stressed the unity of Jesus Christ - "one mind, one soul, one being, as truly one as we are, and equally distinct from the one God." The Athanasian Trinity, he claimed, not satisfied with making God into three beings, also made Jesus Christ into two beings: "the one divine, the other human; the one weak, the other almighty; the one ignorant, the other omniscient." Like Milton, he pointed out how Jesus never refers to himself as God in the Gospels, but plainly distinguishes between himself and God. He denounced the doctrine of predestination as one that fills our minds "with a horror which we want words to express."

Jesus, Channing declared, was:

sent by the Father to effect a moral or spiritual deliverance of mankind; that is, to rescue men from sin and its consequences, and to bring them to a state of everlasting purity and happiness.

Jesus accomplishes this sublime purpose, said Channing: by his instructions respecting God's unity, parental character, and moral government by his promises of pardon to the penitent, and of divine assistance to those who labour for progress in moral excellence; by the light he has thrown on the path of moral duty; by his own spotless example by his glorious discoveries of immortality; by his sufferings and death; by that signal event, the resurrection, which powerfully bore witness to his divine mission by his continual intercession, which obtains for us spiritual aid and blessings; and by the power with which he is invested of raising the dead, judging the world, and conferring the everlasting rewards promised to the faithful ...

We regard him as a Saviour, chiefly as he is the light, physician, and guide of the dark, diseased, wandering mind ...

Among the virtues we give the first place to the love of God. We believe that this principle is the true end and happiness of our being, that we were made for union with our Creator ... and that without Him our noblest sentiments, admiration, veneration, hope, and love would wither and decay that conscience, without the sanction of God's authority and retributive justice, would be a weak director ... God, as He is essential goodness, holiness, justice, and virtue, so He is the life, motive, and sustainer of virtue in the human soul.

The whole religious world of America, it seemed, became involved in the controversies and took one side or the other. These Unitarians were not Unitarians as we would understand the term today, not even as Belsham (then minister of the Essex Street Church, London) understood it. For example, Belsham believed Jesus Christ was a man, sharing our human frailty, whereas, clearly, the American Unitarians believed he was greater than the rest of us, special in the function of his life and role, though not equal with God.

The North American Unitarians followed Channing in rejecting the strict Calvinism in much American theology of their time - the belief in predestination to hell or paradise - and linked notions of Atonement were also abhorrent to the American Unitarians; as, of course, they were to their British cousins. Churches were split down the middle by the controversies into liberal and conservative wings. The Liberals became Arians or Unitarians. Out of 544 churches in Massachusetts 135 became Unitarian. In Boston seven out of ten churches became Unitarian. The movement spread rapidly - some churches remaining Free Christian, some Presbyterian and some Unitarians. In 1834 the constitution of Massachusetts was amended to provide for the separation of church and state, requiring voluntary support only for the churches. This amendment paved the way for complete religious tolerance in social and academic life, despite opposition, public dispute and calumny.

Unitarians were accused of lacking piety; of being irreligious and even licentious. Channing published a sermon preached at the dedication of the Second Unitarian Church of New York in 1826 entitled *Unitarian Christianity most Favourable to Piety*. He deeply offended many Christians in this work, by likening the atonement to a gallows (Calvary) set up at the centre of the universe for the public execution of an innocent being. Never forgiven by conservative Christians for this analogy, the Unitarians greeted it with unbounded enthusiasm.

Channing, however, was not essentially a controversialist, but a man of deep religious sentiment, standing above all, for tolerance. Although his theology will now seem archaic to us, we may still identify with his liberal spirit. He stood for unity in variety, for community in terms of charity and tolerance, a true catholicity of Spirit:

Respect those who differ from you; respect yourselves. Honour men of different sects. Do not figure as if you had the exclusive privilege of truth and goodness.

He voiced the true inclusiveness and liberal toleration at the heart of the Unitarian story:

There is one grand, all-comprehending church; and if I am a Christian, I belong to it, and no man can shut me out of it.

Unitarianism, through Channing, became no longer merely a theological designation, but a "witness for spiritual freedom, for evangelical charity, for the religion of Jesus Christ undefiled." Its message was, above all, a challenge to love other human beings; hence his unflagging zeal for social realism and concern for suffering not only against slavery, but against squalor, poverty, persecution and war.

Channing would have been entirely dismayed at the condition of the modern world, one hundred and fifty years after his death, with its reactionary tide in full flow; so that a rampant, self-centred materialism prospers against a great divide between rich and poor, maintained by appalling weapons of mass-destruction; where nationalism and racism and sectarianism divide us in dreadful civil wars; and where the nations of the world still tolerate tyranny and injustice and dire offences against human rights. To Channing every problem was basically a spiritual problem; every social problem was capable of resolution by human minds more clearly illumined and healthily restored through a true knowledge of God; which would lead to an eager desire to bring peace and justice into our world.

The rise of the black middle classes and integrated school systems would have astonished and delighted him. But he would have been dismayed at the drop out rate in urban schools, the massive figures of youth unemployment, the unstemmed drift into racial segregation in the cities and the existence of prisons that were "savage warehouses of the unwanted". He would have seen these issues as the ingredients of a massive potential explosion, devastating in its destructive power, unless we put our hearts, minds and spirits to their resolution.

In Britain his books were read by the Workers Educational Association, especially amongst the Chartists. One day he received a letter of thanks for his lectures on 'Self-Culture' from the Mechanics Institute, Alaitwaite, near Huddersfield, and exclaimed: "This is honour, this is honour!"

Shortly before he died on 24th October, 1842, in Vermont, at the age of 62 years, after a fever, at sunset - the hour he always loved - Channing wrote some words that come like a breath of fresh air into the stale chambers of theological dispute:

Life appears to me a gift which acquires a greater value every day .. If I could see others as happy as I am myself, what a world ours would be! But this world is good in spite of the obscurity which surrounds it. The longer I live, the more I see the light pierce through the clouds - I am sure that the Sun is above.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

At the turn of the century Britain was at war with France. After prolonged seige Malta was taken by the British, giving us a secure naval base in the Mediterranean, and affording a significant turning point in the fortunes of the war. Pitt was Prime Minister, struggling to bring about union in an Ireland rent apart by the turmoil of civil war between the Catholic and Protestant populations. The Ulster Protestants had formed the Orange Society in 1795, named after William of Orange - a secret society bent on securing Protestant ascendancy. Pitt wanted freedom and toleration for the Catholics as a move towards securing unity, but George III, now much deteriorated in mind and body, refused to endorse this possibility and Pitt resigned in consequence.

It was a time of great division of living, enormous gaps between the very rich and the very poor. Beau Brummel and the Prince Regent insensitively revealed the extravagances of their class. Thousands of people left the countryside for the towns to work long hours for a pittance - women and children also - in the mills. Their conditions of work were appalling and they laboured unprotected from dangerous machinery, so that were maimed or killed.

William Blake, labouring at this time upon his great poem, *Jerusalem*, protested against the injustices of the age and his image of the 'dark Satanic mills', though apparently aimed at those minds in charge of state and church who saw nothing amiss with the order of things, surely gained its power from the alienating influence of the Industrial Revolution. Most of the people could not read or write. Books were very expensive and libraries unknown. Children ran wild throught the streets and fields. Although he had William baptised at St. James' Church, London, Blake's father was a dissenter, much influenced by Swedenborg. His nonconformity was inherited by a precocious and gifted son with revolutionary opinions on all manner of

subjects. Blake was happy to refer to God as Female and in his annotations on Thornton's translation of the Lord's Prayer he wrote: "Thus we see that the Real God is the Goddess Nature." He anticipated the pluralism of modern Unitarianism in an etching of 1788, entitled *All Religions Are One*, where he declared: "As all men are alike (though infinitely various), so all Religions and, as all similars, have one source. The true Man is the source, he being the Poetic Genius."

The Poetic Genius was the true Person, and the body or outward form of People derived from this Poetic Genius. Likewise the forms of all things derived from their Genius, which "by the ancients was called an Angel and Spirit and Demon." The religions of all nations derived from each nation's different reception of the Poetic Genius, "which is everywhere called the Spirit of Prophecy." He asserted to Henry Crabb Robinson that every human being is a more or less limited and imperfect expression of the Divine. He used the word Jesus (complement to Albion or the Poetic Genius or Potential Human Nature) exactly in the way the name Buddha, or Buddha-nature, is used in Mahayana Buddhism. In other words, he used terms like Jesus and Christ and Poetic Genius to represent the archetype of the indwelling Spirit of God, the totality of our Potentiality. Jesus and the Disciples, he declared, were all Artists; for Art is religion and religion is art: "In Eternity All is Visjon."

#### JOHN FIELDEN (1784 - 1849)

John Fielden worked in his father's mill in Todmorden, from the age of ten years and never forgot the misery of the children who worked alongside him - the weary, long hours, which aged people before they were fifty. After the death of his father he and his four brothers took over the family business and expanded Waterside Mill until it had 800 thundering looms. John, who was converted to Unitarianism by the Unitarian missionary, Richard Wright, started a policy of treating people fairly, earning him the title 'honest John'.

He took the children out of the mill and set up schools to educate them. He was determined to alter the harsh conditions of working life and the dreadful exploitation of the people. He became Tory MP for Oldham in 1832 and set about improving

the lot of workers all over the country, including fighting through the Ten-Hour Act.

Fielden hated the workhouses, which split families and followed grim regimes. He refused to have any in Todmorden and offered, instead, to set up cottage hospitals, but his intention was denied. Soldiers were sent to quell the rioters, rebelling against the workhouses and the Poor Law. When the people heard the soldiers were coming they turned their anger against those mill owners who supported the Poor Law and smashed their homes. The soldiers subdued the riot and took prisoners, although it was thought John Fielden was the real culprit.

In 1842 workers, living in desperate poverty, went on a rampage of protest all over the North West of England. When the 'plugdrawers' (so-called for unplugging and draining mill boilers) or Luddites came to Waterside mill they found Fielden paying his workers more than the rioters demanded, and providing good, safe working conditions, shorter hours and schools for the children.

When he died in 1849, aged 65 yrs., thousands of workers came to the funeral from all over Yorkshire and Lancashire. He is buried in a simple grave at Honeyhole, Todmorden, a short distance from his birthplace. A statue of him stands in Centre Vale Park, land given by his sons to the people for their recreation.

Industrial unrest, rioting and looting, were much in evidence in Dukinfield, too, during this period. Indeed, one of the greatest orators and working class representatives of the time, Joseph Rayner Stephens, was buried in Dukinfield. The small homes concentrated around Town Lane, Wharf Street and Cuckoo Square, were a ready breeding ground for discontent and there were many demands for better conditions, especially amongst the miners. Luddites recruited people by the thousand. The movement began in the Midlands amongst lace and hosiery trades and spread northwards. It took its name from Ned Ludd, who destroyed some machinery in anger against working conditions.

The troubles came to Dukinfield in 1812, when foodstuffs were seized from shops on account of their high prices. Mills were broken into and machinery destroyed.

The government reacted strongly, hanging and imprisoning people and sending in the soldiers to break up the riots. The situation came to a head at St. Peter's Field, Manchester, (roughly where St. Peter's Square now stands) on August 16th, 1819, when some 80,000 people, including some from Dukinfield, met for a peaceful demonstration. The authorities panicked and sent in the Yeomanry with drawn sabres. Eleven people were killed and four hundred wounded. The incident kindled even more bitterness and violence. The Chartists came to Dukinfield, demanding universal suffrage, vote by ballot, payment for MPs and annual Parliaments. Amongst the turmoil of these days firearms were openly on sale at market stalls in Dukinfield as the movement grew in momentum. The slogan: "fight to the knife for children and wife" was widely used.

1848 was known as the Year of Revolutions. Uprisings spread across Europe and governments were toppled in France and Prussia. Radicalism and liberal thought were in the ascendency. Continentals such as Karl Marx were living in the country and proved an inspiration to the movement here.

## EVANGELICAL REVOLUTION

As well as Political and Industrial Revolution, an Evangelical Revolution was also afoot, already changing British society, and would have transformed our social life within the first fifty years of the century.

The violent persecution of the Dissenters had passed away, although Unitarianism and Roman Catholicism remained illegal. Our Manchester College was still at York. Nonconformity, generally, was having a thin time of it. It was difficult to keep churches open; indeed, many closed. Morale amongst the Unitarians ran very low. Our Cross Street congregation, for example, dropped to six worshipping members and although at Old Chapel we fared better, nonetheless our numbers, too, had fallen steeply during a time of massive growth in population from 973 in the mid-eighteenth century to 87.

Unitarian congregations continued, also, in uncertainty over their buildings, whilst the Dissenters' Chapel Bill was prepared. Chancery had declared that property held on illegal trusts (like those of the Unitarians and the Quakers, for example) could not be held by Dissenters and should be taken over by legally acceptable churches.

In 1822 Father John Cooke celebrated mass in a narrow passage off Crickets Lane, Ashton, known as Harrops' Yard, and began the establishment of Roman Catholicism in the area. Formal Catholic emancipation was still seven years away, but Catholics were enjoying more freedom. The room could not hold the growing congregation, so another priest, Father James Fisher found a site in Dukinfield.

Land on Astley Street was bought from Francis Dukinfield Astley in 1825 and a small chapel and presbytery were built. The chapel was dedicated to the Virgin Mary and was in Grecian style. By the mid eighteenth thirties the Catholic population in Dukinfield had grown to four thousand.

## JAMES HAWKES (1800 - 1813)

The Rev. James Hawkes came to be minister at Old Chapel in 1800 and responded to the situation at once by re-forming the Sunday School. The Sunday School movement usually claims its origins in the work of Robert Raikes in Gloucester from 1780, attracting poor children and teaching them to read and write and giving them religious instruction. John Wesley gave the movement his wholehearted support, but many Nonconformists believed Sunday Schools broke the Sabbath laws and some believed it educated the poor 'beyond their station', sowing seeds of revolt. Early Sunday School teachers were paid for their labours.

However, long before the Sunday School movement was launched in Britain, we had a School at Old Chapel. The building was there from 1700 and it is possible religious education here pre-dated the building by several years. It was demolished around 1775 to improve the view to the Chapel. The first teacher of whom we have record was Jeremiah Barlow, who came here before 1700. He was followed by Nathaniel Gee, known throughout the area as Domine Gee. He died in 1767.

On 21st January, 1802 the Chapel suffered a "terrible great wind", which damaged all the windows - a premonition, perhaps, of what was to come!

Hawkes' ministry was very successful, benefiting from the general upsurge of religious interest throughout the country (which came also, of course, to the rescue of Cross Street). Between 1800 and 1812 the number of members had increased from 87 to 239. The Sunday School went from strength to strength. In the early years of this century it was customary for a Sunday dinner to be provided at the Packhorse Inn for those who did not return home between morning and afternoon services. A substantial meal of broth, beef and pudding was served at a cost of sixpence a head.

Gordon quotes a tract by Ann Parkinson, *Beneficial Effects of a Sunday School at Dukinfield*, written in 1816, describing Hawkes' ministry in glowing terms:

When he first came to Dukinfield, he found the village, in regard to regularity, almost a wilderness; the chapel was deserted, and the children of the village left to run wild about the lanes and fields, for want of proper care and instruction; but when he came amongst us the scene began to change, not instantaneously, but slowly and regularly; he took the only method that was best calculated to forward his work. He set about the education of the younger part of the parishioners, and instead of preaching to empty benches, devoted one half of the Sunday to raising a school, and the other half to preaching the Gospel.

However, what Gordon describes as "some slight cause of dissatisfaction" led to Hawkes' sudden removal from Dukinfield in 1813.

During the interval between Hawkes and his successor, Joseph Ashton, a most important event took place in the Unitarian Story, when Royal assent was given on 21st July, 1813, to the Act relieving persons "who impugn the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity from certain Penalties", making Unitarians free persons at last in their own land. Chief credit for steering the act through

Parliament went to William Smith, M.P. for Norwich, the grandfather of another famous Unitarian, Florence Nightingale.

JOSEPH ASHTON (1814 - 1817)

Joseph Ashton was born at Stockport, where his father, Samuel Ashton, was a cotton spinner. He entered Manchester College, York, in 1809 and first preached at Dukinfield on 24th April, 1814.

On 26th November, 1815, it was resolved no new graves be opened within the chapel walls and restrictions were placed upon interments in the existing ones. About the same time an organ was introduced and played, perhaps for the first time, at the funeral on 12th February, 1816, of Samuel Hague, the former sexton.

THOMAS OLIVER WARWICK, M.D. (1817 - 1819)

Thomas Warwick was not inducted as minister at Old Chapel, but he took services regularly until the appointment of John Gaskell in 1819.

JOHN GASKELL, M.A. (1819 - 1836)

John Gaskell was born in Warrington in 1795. His schoolmaster was Rev. John Dimock, who married Mrs. Gaskell, mother of William Gaskell, minister of Cross Street, Manchester, and Knutsford Chapel, whose spouse was the famous novelist, and friend and biographer of the Brontes, Elizabeth Gaskell.

On 21st April, 1826, Francis Dukinfield Astley conveyed the Chapel and its now extended burial ground to Old Chapel Trustees - despite pressures from his step-father to make over the building to the Church of England. The terms of the new trust were simply that:

the said chapel or building, with its pews, fixtures, pulpit and other appurtenances, shall and may henceforth and for ever be and remain and be used as a place of public worship.



This broad provision was in the true spirit of Unitarian freedom from doctrinal stipulations. Astley reserved to his family the right of a pew free of charge, a private entrance to the Chapel yard, and a burial place within it.

Few ministers have been more beloved than Gaskell and at his death every sitting was let. On 1st January, 1832, he first wore a pulpit gown presented by Mrs. Harrison. He kept a day school, though fulfilling all obligations of his ministry. He was an excellent lecturer on literary and scientific subjects and his favourite recreation was music, an accomplishment he shared with his talented partner, Ann (an expert at short-hand), daughter of Joseph Bayley. Her early and sudden death in 1832, aged 31 yrs., was a severe shock to his health, and his own life was cut short by painful illness on 15th May, 1836, aged 41 years. They had three children, two of whom died young.

ROBERT BROOK ASPLAND, M.A. (1837 - 1858)

Queen Victoria came to the throne in the first year of Aspland's eventful ministry. He was born at Newport, Isle of Wight, in 1805, and was at school with Benjamin Disraeli. He graduated at Glasgow University in 1822 and went for ministerial training to Manchester College, York. After ministries in Chester and Bristol he began his ministry at Dukinfield on 1st January, 1837.

The Chapel was showing signs of structural decay and it was decided in February, 1838, to erect a new building. But on 7th January, 1839, before plans were afoot, the chapel was dismantled by a terrible storm. Plans were sought for a new building from several architects, but choice fell on a design by Richard Tattersall of Manchester:

in the style of architecture that prevailed at the beginning of the fourteenth century. It was then that our architects began to add refinements in the details to the many beauties which characterise their works, and to introduce those changes in the early English style which immediately precede and ultimately form and distinguish the decorated style. The plan of the chapel is cruciform, with a lofty nave and transept, lighted by clerestory

windows, the nave having aisles lighted by lancet windows.

The building, constructed of the best Yorkshire stone, was to be 94 feet in length, the width across the nave and aisles fifty feet, that across the transepts 61 feet, giving sitting accommodation for 977 persons. The total estimated cost was £5,000. The stones of the original Chapel were used as the foundation of the new Chapel and can still be seen under the Chapel floor.

The Chapel was built on a hill over a crypt and in the crypt is a well of fresh water, constantly refreshed. Presumably the water comes underground from the Pennines or the Peaks. Wells provided the main water supply in the Tameside area, including Mottram, until the second quarter of the nineteenth century. But why was the Chapel and its crypt built around the well? Entering the dark depths of the crypt and gazing upon the miracle of the fresh water, one cannot but be moved as if in the presence of a great mystery. The site of Old Chapel provides a natural Dolmenic mound, the kind of sacred high place to which pilgrims were drawn long before the word Unitarian was on our lips and long, indeed, before there were Christians.

The Cathedral in Chartres was built on a Dolmenic mound. When the builders came to design the crypt they were amazed to find a wooden statue, blackened with age, of Mother and Child - the famous Black Virgin burned in the Revolution - pre-dating Christianity by centuries, an object of adoration (Demeter, perhaps) by Druidic pilgrims drawn to a sacred site. If only the well at Old Chapel could speak its tale!

When Joanna Southcott (1750 - 1840) built her Temple in Ashton, Tameside, she believed she had found there the spiritual centre of the Universe. The followers of the Maharishi, similarly, in the twentieth century, believed they had found the spiritual centre of the Universe in Glossop, when the numbers practising transcendental meditation in that lovely town grew beyond the significant one and a half per cent of the population. Perhaps, however, their calculations were a little wide of the mark and the centre they were looking for is to be found at the well on the hill in the field of the Raven!

On 26th June, 1839, the cornerstone was laid, in the presence of nearly 2,000 people, by Samuel Ashton of Pole Bank. Twelve visiting ministers, including William Gaskell, attended the ceremony, and the minister, Aspland, delivered an address. Charles Wallace of Altrincham offered prayer and a hymn composed specially for the occasion by William Gaskell, was sung:

O God! without whose fostering aid  
In vain man's fairest schemes are laid,  
With grace our humble work surround,  
And make this truly hallowed ground.

Here may Thy children grateful raise  
Through distant years their song of praise,  
And meet a blessing from above,  
In holier trust, and purer love.

Here may the truths which Jesus gave  
Beam forth in all their power to save,  
And kindle up that radiant faith  
Which brightens life, and shines in death.

Here in communion full and sweet,  
May rich and poor together meet,  
As brothers all, and equal heirs  
Of that bright world the Lord prepares.

Here may that love breathe unconfined,  
Which feels for all of human kind,  
Which yearns with deep desire to bless,  
And break each chain of wretchedness.

Here may the thoughts of worldly care  
Lie hushed beneath the power of prayer;  
And troubling grief grow calm and still,  
Submissive to Thy perfect will.

Two hundred people dined in the 'top-room' of the School at a gathering chaired by David Harrison.

The new Chapel was opened on Wednesday, 26th August, 1840, when the devotional service was conducted by James

Hawkes and John Gooch Robberds, and the sermon preached by Brook Aspland's father, Robert Aspland of Hackney. The Chapel was not, however, completed - a temporary West front was erected to keep the cost down at £4,000. The interior was completed in August, 1845.

Old Chapel was the first of our congregations to appoint a Chapel Committee; probably, therefore, the first Chapel Committee held in the British Isles. They were appointed at a congregational meeting after the morning service on July 24th, 1840, paving the way for the democratisation of our chapels and churches. Hitherto the Chapel was governed by the Trustees.

Aspland proved a fine minister and served the congregation well for twenty-one years. He not only conducted a fruitful ministry in Dukinfield, but was also heavily committed to denominational activities, including the unremunerated editorship of *The Christian Reformer*, a magazine devoted to the Unitarian cause, believing it to be "that form of Christianity which, by a combined appeal to reason and Scripture, can prove itself to be the true Gospel, and maintain its just place in the understanding and the affections". Aspland laboured for the passing of the Dissenters' Chapel Act of 1844, making the legalisation of Unitarianism retrospective, to secure more readily our buildings throughout the British Isles.

Between 1846 and 1857 he was a secretary at Manchester New College. His knowledge of Nonconformist and Unitarian biography, culled from laborious research, was broad and exact. He combined, writes Gordon, in a remarkable degree the cultured tastes of a bookish divine with the tact and experience of a man of affairs. Devout and impressive in the pulpit, he became renowned for his elocutionary eloquence.

In August, 1852, the Chapel was first lighted with gas and an evening service was introduced.

Brook Aspland was married on 21st October, 1833, to Jane Hibbert. Their younger son, Lindsey Middleton Aspland, LL.D., Q.C., who became a brilliant barrister, was born at Dukinfield on 9th April, 1843. Tragically, he died in London, in his forties.

In June, 1858, Brook Aspland left Dukinfield, amid the regrets of his flock, to take charge of the Hackney congregation, formerly his father's church. He was presented with a silver salver, timepiece, and purse of gold. In 1859 he became secretary to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. He died suddenly on 21st June, 1869.

During the first half of the nineteenth century Dukinfield became something of a railway centre. In 1825 there was only one railway line - from Stockton to Darlington. In 1830 George Stephenson built the Liverpool to Manchester Railway and by 1838 there were almost five hundred miles of railway in use and the network was rapidly expanding. Dukinfield was connected to Sheffield and Manchester by 1841 and at various times there were five different stations in the town.

#### EMERSON AND PARKER

In America similar religious vigour to that sweeping through Britain was also witnessed in the first half of the nineteenth century. Churches there, too, grew in number and in size of congregation. A new movement called Transcendentalism was emerging, deriving from German and French scholars and philosophers, and reaching America through the influence of Coleridge, Carlyle and Wordsworth. This movement challenged Bible based religion and theology and the idea that knowledge came only through the senses.

The Harvard Divinity School invited Ralph Waldo Emerson to give the 1838 graduation address. Emerson was a Unitarian minister with charge of the Second Boston Church, although, like Coleridge, he withdrew from the Unitarian ministry to pursue a literary and philosophical career. In his address he urged the young ministers to search for God (as the Gnostic, Monimus advised) within themselves, not in the past; in their present lives rather than in any dusty tomes of history. Seek the living God within your own souls, he cried.

Emerson's address anticipated a whole new movement of thought, to become dominant amongst the Unitarians, though it caused a generation gap in the denomination; largely, it seemed, a kind of theological split between the elderly and the young. It paved the way for the generous pluralism in religious

thought that was to be a significant element in twentieth century Unitarianism in America and in Britain.

One of those who heard Emerson's message with delight was a young Unitarian minister, Theodore Parker, who had charge of the church at West Roxbury. He thought "it was the noblest, most inspiring strain I ever listened to." Emerson was bitterly attacked both by Unitarians and people in other denominations. Was he a Christian at all, they asked, or a pantheist or even an atheist?

Excitement over Emerson's address had scarcely died down when a new one arose, prompted by Theodore Parker's address at the ordination of Charles Shackford. Parker was the son of a poor farmer, who had struggled to gain his education. He was already well known for his remarkable intellectual gifts. Choosing as his subject 'The Transient and Permanent in Christianity,' Parker declared the teaching of Jesus was self-evidently true and would have been so if Jesus had never lived. The Bible was not an ultimate authority - Jesus had certainly not treated the Old Testament in that way. Our conception of Christianity will always change as the years go by, he declared, as we may discover simply by examining the history of theology. The profundities and beauties of the Bible are more available to us, Parker says, when we approach the texts with our reason, faith and conscience fully active.

Like our Gnostic ancestors, Parker referred to God as "Our Father and Mother". In Jesus, he wrote, the Godlike and the human met and embraced, yet he was "our brother; the son of man as we are; the Child of God, like ourselves". Was not his excellence human excellence and his wisdom, love and piety are they not also what we may attain:

In him, as in a mirror, we may see the image of God, and go on from glory to glory, till we are changed into the same image, led by the spirit which enlightens the humble ... Mistaken sinner, see of what you are capable. Rise up, and be blessed.

If you make Jesus a God, the Son of God in a peculiar and exclusive sense, argued Parker, his virtue has no merit, his love no feeling, his cross no burden, his agony no pain. His death

becomes but an illusion and his resurrection but a show.  
Against dogmatism in religion, he asked:

Now who shall tell us that the change is to stop here; that this sect or that, or even all sects united, have exhausted the river of life, and received it all in their canonised urns, so that we need draw no more out of the eternal well, but get refreshment nearer at hand? Who shall tell us that another age will not smile at our doctrines, disputes and unChristian quarrels about Christianity, and make wide the mouth at men who walked brave in orthodox raiment, delighting to blacken the names of heretics, and repeat again the old charge, 'He hath blasphemed?' Who shall tell us they will not weep at the folly of all such as fancied truth shone only into the contracted nook of their school, or sect or coterie?

Parker's language was blunt and many in the congregation were offended. Ministers from other denominations pressed the Unitarians either to disown him and his views or make their position clear.

Clergy shunned him at meetings and in the street - even other Unitarians. He was called an unbeliever, and atheist. Parker was not expelled from the ministry, but, sadly, his name did not appear in the Year Book after 1846.

Happily, some other Unitarian ministers in Boston came to Parker's rescue. They hired a hall in Boston and invited him to speak there and make his position clear. He made such a positive, impressive impact on his hearers they founded a new church there and then. Parker became the most influential preacher in Boston, packing his Hall by the thousand week after week.

Parker threw himself into the reforms of the day - temperance, prison reform, the rights of women, against capital punishment, war and slavery. After twelve years of incessant labour - preaching, lecturing, writing - his health broke. The right wing clergy exulted in his predicament and actually prayed daily and in concert that his voice might be stopped.

A period of travel in Europe failed to give him relief and in 1860, aged 50 years, he died in Florence. His grave in the English cemetery is now a shrine for all Unitarians. His influence steadily increased, until at length he came to be admired and praised by Unitarians as second only to Channing amongst the prophets of North America.

#### METHODISM, CONGREGATIONALISM AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

The first Methodist Chapel was opened in Dukinfield in 1770, following the pioneering work of Benjamin Ingham and David Taylor and two visits in 1745 and 1747 from John Wesley himself. A Sunday School was opened in 1829.

Crescent Road Church was built in 1866, but congregational worship began on Crescent Road in 1805 when Providence Chapel, a Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, was established. The first minister was William Marsh. The congregation began, it is said, through dissension in the Old Chapel congregation during the ministry of William Buckley the Younger.

In 1815 there was a disagreement at Providence Chapel and thirteen members left to form Albion Methodists in Ashton. Amongst the thirteen was James Smith, the Scottish gardener father of Mary Moffat, who lived at Plantation Farm, then known as Dukinfield Nursery. Mary married Robert Moffat and went with him to Africa to share in his missionary work. One of their daughters married Dr. David Livingstone.

The first Anglican Church in Dukinfield was St. John's. It began with meetings in local cottages in the 1830s as part of the parish of St. Mary, Stockport, and the foundation stone was laid in 1838. The church of St. Mark was formed as a parish in 1846 and the parish of St. Luke in 1906.

## CHAPTER NINE

MARTINEAU,  
HOPPS  
AND  
WICKSTEED

The life of James Martineau spanned almost the entire century - from 1805 to 1900. At the age of eighty he published his best works, notably his excellent *Seat of Authority in Religion*, revealing how well he had kept abreast of current thought.

Martineau was born in Norwich on 21st April, 1805, second of eight children. His father, Thomas, a wine merchant, attended our Octagon Chapel and sent James first to Norwich Grammar School and then to a Unitarian boarding school in Bristol, under the headship of Dr. Lant Carpenter.

Catherine Rankin, a cousin of James, married the Rev. Henry Turner, assistant minister at our High Pavement church, who died as a young man in 1822. Standing by his grave at the funeral service James was deeply moved by the death of the young man and by the account of his spirituality and its effects on the lives of those who had known him. James was overcome by a strong impulse to join the ministry and went for training at Manchester and York. Amongst fellow students were John R. Beard, Edward Taggart and William Gaskell. His first charge was at Dublin.

Ministers were expected to expound on the function of the ministry at their induction. Martineau declared it was:

to be the servant of Revelation, appointed to expound its doctrine, to enforce its precepts and to proclaim its sanctions. As all religion begins, so it ends, with exhibiting the relation which man bears to his Creator ... to impart knowledge ... that they may read the volume of Holy Writ with increased interest and intelligence and that their minds may be opened to enlarged views of Christian truth ... His most valuable guides are his own mind and his own conscience; and his most valuable privilege in the use of these is his unquestionable right of private judgment.

Whether he study or whether he teach, let him stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made him free.

Martineau married Helen Higginson, daughter of a minister, took a few pupils into his house, since his duties were not onerous, and began a life of teaching and scholarship. When the senior minister, Philip Taylor died, Martineau would not accept the hundred pounds a year offered by the Crown to supplement the stipend, since he supported the Catholics in their struggles against injustice. He was asked to resign on account of his protest and came to Paradise Street Congregation, Liverpool, where he ministered for twenty five years.

Much influenced by the writings of Priestley and Channing, Martineau emphasised their belief in religious freedom. The ultimate authorities in the religious life were reason (i.e. the use of the Socratic method) and a conscience informed by the inward witness of the Holy Spirit. The human soul was called to direct and personal communion with God and the foundations of Christendom must be sought not in "the externals of testimony", but in the soul itself, in the direction of the Holy Spirit - in the inward development of "that filial relationship so perfectly revealed in Jesus Christ."

In 1836 Martineau had declared in *Rationale of Religious Enquiry* that anyone who did not believe the miracles of Christ was not a Christian; although clear that miracles did not prove religious truth. But he quickly moved well away from that position, to the shocked dismay of older Unitarians, who now held him to be a dangerous heretic! Indeed, long before Bultmann, Martineau in *Seat of Authority in Religion*, had recognised the need to demythologise. He declared how much easier it would be "to untwine the mythological attributes from the person of Jesus, were it not that the process of investing him with them had begun long before our New Testament books assumed their form."

One of the best-known statements from the writings of Martineau is the declaration in *Essays* that "the Incarnation is true not of Christ exclusively, but of Man universally, and God everlastingly". In the same passage he also commented on the irony of a Church that made the Incarnation "the most stupendous of miracles" - that Jesus was "at once human and

diyine" - whereas, to Jesus, it was "an every-day fact that all men are mingled of human and divine."

In a fascinating essay, *A Way Out of the Trinitarian Controversy*, Martineau argued that by 'God' Unitarians in his time actually meant the Second Person of the Trinity and not the First, as was usually assumed. The First Person referred to the abstract, unknowable, mysterious Ground of all Being, with which Unitarians did not concern themselves. By the 'Father' Unitarians meant the One Who "spread the heavens, guided Israel, dwelt in the Human Christ, rules the unsuspecting world, and abides with the conscious heart of the church" and these concepts belonged in the theology of their contemporaries in the other Christian churches, not to the First Person, but to the Second, that is to the Son!

Martineau believed the use of the same language in different contexts led to our being at cross purposes with other Christians when there was no need. For example, taking the word 'Father', and asking the question "Father of whom and what?" Martineau declares:

The Unitarian will say, "Of men, of us, of all creatures, the Man of Nazareth included." The Trinitarian will say, "Of the Son, the eternal Word, while as yet there was no man, and before all worlds". Of such Fatherhood as that, which has no reference to created being, no illustration in the phrase "for we are also his offspring", and which has always been as complete as it is now, the Unitarian has no idea and therefore no belief. This is not at all what he means, when he speaks of God's paternity. Did Trinitarians perceive this, they would be less disposed to charge us with believing in only a cold, distant, and awful God. The charge is founded on the supposition that we believe only in their first Person, and leave out the rest; in which case it would, indeed, be true. But tell them that the object of our belief is their second Person, not their first, and they will feel how false the accusation; for it is precisely him, as the very centre and solar glory of their faith, that all their trust and reverence move, and in him that their affections burn and glow. If it is in him that we also put our faith, though under another name, then we

are at one with all Christendom in the very focus and fervour of its religious life.

The word 'Son' also, on the lips of the two theologies has quite different meanings. Speak to the Unitarian of 'the Son', and he immediately thinks of Jesus of Nazareth, as the historical Christ of the Gospels ... With this prepossession he is shocked to find this human figure raised to equality with 'the Father'; he looks upon this as the deification of a man, and is tempted to denounce it as idolatry. And idolatry it would be if the Trinitarian, speaking of 'the Son', intended the historical Jesus of Palestine ... 'The Son' comes before his (the Trinitarian) mind, not as an historical personage at all, but as God's eternal expression of himself - the thought he puts forth in all his works and ways; manifested through all ages by nature and history; but concentrated with unique brilliance in the character and existence, the holy life and redeeming work of Jesus.

Martineau was well aware, of course, that many expositors of Christology within the other churches did fall into what Tertullian called the Monarchian error of deifying Jesus, and did in fact present Jesus of Nazareth as a God-Man, offering an elaboration of the Trinity which was a form of tritheism. Martineau had recognised the need to separate out, in theological thinking, the man Jesus from the title 'Christ' and see the term 'Christ' in its historical context as an elaboration or development of the Greek 'Logos' (Martineau provides a long discussion of Philo's understanding of the Logos) and the Hebrew 'Messiah'. These distinctions allowed Martineau to move beyond the clumsy Arian forms of the Trinity he had learned from Priestley to an understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity compatible with his own more developed and sophisticated Unitarian position.

The Unitarian college moved from York to Manchester in 1840 and Martineau was appointed Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy and Political Economy. He wrote *Five Types of Ethical Theory* as his thought continued to develop.

In the mid-century Paradise Street became Hope Street and Thackeray, the great novelist, called to hear Martineau preach

before sailing for America: I heard James Martineau, the Unitarian, last Sunday and was struck by his lofty devotional spirit.

Manchester College moved to Gordon Square, London, in 1853, and Martineau followed in 1857. There was much opposition to his appointment. Many people said he was unfit to teach young ministers, since he placed too much emphasis on freedom and inner authority and not enough on the outer authority of science. Martineau thought all these external forms of authority were secondary to the life of God in the soul.

Martineau was friend to and influenced the best minds of his day, including Tennyson, Newman, Huxley, Browning and Gladstone. Sometimes considered the greatest thinker of the nineteenth century, he had tremendous impact on religious thinkers in the British Isles. It is ironical that his sister, Harriet, overshadowed by him during their lives, should, deservedly, have found new readers for her gifted novels in the late twentieth century, when only the most zealous Unitarian students now read the writings of her distinguished brother.

In 1858 he became minister of Little Portland Street Chapel, London, and was there until his retirement in 1872. Honours poured upon him - a D.C.L. from Oxford, an LL.D. from Harvard, an S.T.D. from Leyden, a D.D. from Edinburgh and a Litt.D. from Dublin.

Martineau saw a strident anti-trinitarianism as a stumbling block to reconciliation with the other churches of Christendom. He tried in 1888 at the National Conference of Unitarians in Leeds to persuade the denomination to reject the name Unitarian, favouring the names 'English Presbyterian' or 'Free Christian'. Clearly he believed in Christian ecumenicism rather than in religious pluralism. His theology is Christian theology, his God is a Christian God. The lack of reference in his writings to the other world religions and their contribution to our theological understanding and religious awareness gives his work a certain narrow parochialism compared with the attempts of twentieth century Unitarian writers to uncover the Perennial Philosophy behind all the religions of the world.

Most Unitarians in the late twentieth century approach the other great religions, such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, Judaism and Islam, not merely with the kind of tolerance that is largely indifferent to their presence, whilst acknowledging their right to exist, but with a genuine searching of their scriptures, an authentic struggle with their greatest thinkers and a readiness to meet their representatives on equal footing, without condescension; and more than ready to discover what these other faiths have to teach us.

Nonetheless, we have to remember Martineau was also a child of his age and acknowledge it is largely since his death that the translations of the scriptures of the other world religions have become readily available. He defined religion in one of his essays as "belief in an Ever-living God, that is, a Divine Mind and Will ruling the Universe and holding Moral relations with mankind". This definition would surely include the other religions of the world?

And in Endeavours he wrote:

whoever can so look into my heart as to tell whether there is anything which I revere: and, if there be, what thing it is; he may read me through and through, and there is no darkness wherein I may hide myself. This is the master-key to the whole moral nature; what does a man secretly admire and worship? What haunts him with deepest wonder? What fills him with most earnest aspiration? What should we hear in the soliloquies of his unguarded mind? This it is which, in the truth of things, constitutes his religion ... Every man's highest, nameless though it be, is his 'living God'.

It is difficult to imagine that a hundred years later, with pluralism deeply entrenched in our movement and the evidence of God's witness in other faiths so readily available to us that he would not, in view of his statements above, have expanded his Christian Catholicity to embrace the other great religions of the world. "No audience in Palestine", he wrote in an essay on the Person of Jesus in his late work, *Seat of Authority in Religion*, would have listened for a moment to a carpenter's son "who gave himself out as 'the only-begotten son of God' just come down from heaven and charged with words that gave eternal

life. And they would be right." Martineau concluded this essay with a beautiful passage, summing up his own faith:

There is no longer need of despair at the seemingly hopeless task of climbing the heavens and finding the unapproachable God. For He himself comes unsought, and lifts the latch of our nature when we thought the door was shut, and makes his abode with us, seeking us with his love, finding us with his truth, and claiming us with his righteousness. Thus does the Paraclete perpetuate and universalize the impersonation of the Son of God in the Son of Man, and carry it through the spiritual history of the world, and convert the life of Humanity itself into a Theophany.

JOHN GORDON (1858 - 1862)

At Old Chapel, Aspland's ministry was succeeded by that of John Gordon, only son of Alexander and Maria Gordon, who was born at Dudley on 1st March, 1807. Shrinking from the subscriptions of the Established Church, he became a Wesleyan minister and was converted to Unitarianism through the influence of John Kentish, minister of New Meeting, Birmingham. His frequent contributions to the Christian Reformer brought him into a close relationship with Brook Aspland, whom he succeeded at Dukinfield in July, 1858.

In the latter half of 1858 a second silver communion cup was presented by Jane, wife of John Leech of Gorse Hall, bearing the inscription: "Jane Leech, Hunc Calicem Ecclesiae Apud Dukinfield Dono Dedit A.D. 1858" Two silver patens were also presented by Henry Bayley and Maria Aspland.

Gordon was one of the main founders of the East Cheshire Missionary Association (1859), in conjunction with Charles Beard of Hyde Chapel, Gee Cross. During his ministry an entrance porch was added (1860) to the front of the Chapel. He left in December, 1862, during the difficult struggles of the Cotton Famine, to become minister at Evesham.

THE KENYONS

The Kenyons came from the Hurst area of Ashton-under-Lyne, where the family may be traced back to the sixteenth century. William Kenyon, the founder of the Dukinfield company, was born there in 1822. He would have followed a career in cotton, but for witnessing the misery of mass unemployment caused by the Cotton Famine. In 1866, the year after Robert E. Lee surrendered to Grant, Kenyon set up in business as a rope maker, taking advantage of the innovations of the Industrial Revolution. He perfected ropes capable of transmitting power over long distances, from steam engines to water mills and so on. The Kenyons not only provided employment in the area, they also served its community on the Council and in patronising the arts, in particular the Halle Choir.

THE COTTON FAMINE

To meet the serious hardships produced by the Cotton Famine the Central Relief Committee set up in Manchester gave grants to local committees to run emergency schools; a kind of Victorian job creation scheme, encouraging the unemployed to enrol in order to occupy their time and teach them various practical and academic subjects. On attendance they were paid three shillings and four pence a week. The Executive Committee in Manchester became alarmed that cash reserves would soon be exhausted and insisted local committees economise by reducing the weekly payment.

Incensed by this treatment people rioted in Stalybridge and mobs gathered quickly, looting as they went from street to street. The police called in the Hussars and the Riot Act was read. However, the riots spread to Dukinfield and Ashton, moving up Wharf Street and Astley Street and on to Crescent Road and Chapel Hill. The rioters broke into several homes, looted the Industrial Co-operative Stores of all their goods, taking thirty shillings from the till and setting the building on fire. When the Hussars regrouped the troubles petered out and the rioters returned to the emergency schools. In April, 1865, the American Civil War came to an end and was followed by a post war boom. Five new mills were opened in Hyde alone between 1865 and 1872.

There were still occasional riots in Dukinfield after 1865, but the last serious disturbance was caused by the bigotry of the Orange



lecturer, William Murphy, who stirred up anti-Catholic feeling. Over Easter in 1868 a crowd of three hundred youths, who had travelled from places as far afield as Rochdale, gathered on Chapel Hill and launched an attack on St. Mary's Church to vent their anti-Irish Catholic anger. They shattered church windows and smashed a statue of Jesus before the police dispersed them.

In the same year Dukinfield and Stalybridge became a parliamentary constituency, electing John Sidebottom, a Conservative M.P. Gladstone was Prime Minister.

#### JOHN PAGE HOPPS (1863 - 1869)

On the walls of the Croydon Unitarian Church, where Hopps preached between 1892 and 1903 is a brass memorial tablet commemorating him as fearless in thought and speech, original, eloquent and one who stood for truth and progress. He was a well-loved man, with a keen mind and a warm heart.

Born in London on 6th November, 1834, he trained for the Baptist ministry and then for the Unitarian ministry. He came to Old Chapel from Sheffield in 1863. The East Cheshire Missionary Association was reorganised by him as the East Cheshire Union in 1864. The Parsonage was built during his ministry. He was a spiritualist, the son of a medium. Hopps was present at the public protest in Trafalgar Square against the Boer War.

Hopps wrote several books and made hymnals, including one for children, containing his own hymn: "Father lead me day by day." At his funeral the Rev. Henry Gow said:

This man meant what he said with all his heart and mind when he spoke of God and of the soul. His religion was absolutely real. He lived by it and trusted in it to the last. He looked forward with eager joy to what God had in store for us beyond the gates of death.

On the death of his seven year old daughter, buried in Old Chapel Yard, Hopps wrote his hymn: "God bless the little children."

He ministered through stirring and dangerous times, including the close of the American Civil War and the assassination of

Lincoln in 1865. Booth was shot and the other conspirators hanged, including the first woman to be executed in America, Mrs. Surratt. The Franco-Prussian war broke out in the 1860s, giving Krupps his chance to make a fortune in the armament industry.

Gladstone became Prime Minister in 1868. An earnest Liberal reformer, he spoke with the power of a great preacher, and became the most controversial figure of his day; demanding that conscience and the moral law must govern politics. His forthright honesty frequently led to clashes with members of his own party, but he was willing to break the party and divide it rather than betray his conscience. He said to Sir William Harcourt after his conversion to the principle of Home Rule for Ireland: "I am prepared to go forward without anybody". His spirit won him a place in the hearts of all his followers and Britain has never since seen the like. Great liberal reforms were afoot in every part of our lives - in education, in business and in electoral reform. His liberal authenticity appealed especially to Unitarians such as Hopps.

Hopps' numerous publications enjoyed remarkable popularity. In 1869, when he moved to Glasgow, he was subject to an important lawsuit over his *Life of Jesus for Young Disciples*, in which the liberty of the press in Scotland was finally vindicated. Hopps was widely known as editor of *The Truthseeker*. From Glasgow he moved to Leicester and then to Croydon in 1892.

A newspaper article about Hopps appeared in June, 1888, in *The Liverpool Daily Post*, describing his work at Leicester:

a preacher so popular in a great Midland town that he gathers together in a secular building on a Sunday afternoon to hear about good things, a congregation - quite independent of his regular flock - of 1,000 or 1,200 genuine workmen ... if that man is a seer who is thoroughly possessed by the greatest of themes - if the old meaning of a prophet still holds in spite of modern accretions - then there is something of prophetic afflatus in this earnest Midland preacher, with his pure diction, his strenuous zeal for all that is good, his indwelling faith in the great Source of

Light and Love, and his winning, pathetic way of making all experience a sound foothold for Christian grace.

And in a newspaper report of a service conducted by Hopps in a room in Croydon, lit by "thirty electric lamps of exquisite pattern" and served musically by an American organ, he was described as old in years, but young in heart and hope:

What was the true aim of religion? To emancipate the soul. To teach the thinking mind to know its true function, which was to rule the body. Here Mr. Page Hopps dealt with the Subliminal Self, the Spirit, the Soul, or, as a learned philosopher has lately named it, the Unconscious Self ... Thus, the body had a soul. We shall one day say the soul has a body. Then the world will be a different place to live in. A new world will come when the soul is placed first ...

You must be born again! It was all in that, he continued. Your corruptible tabernacle has been born: you need to be born again ... The priestly notions of resurrection were very sad, blind, crusted, pathetic nonsense. The priests knew nothing of the resurrection of Jesus ... There was a natural body, there was a spiritual body, said Paul. The priests did not know what that meant. To believe in the resurrection of the body was the very desperation of belief. Resurrection was the emerging of the soul. We shall emerge...

He was lucid, consecutive, master of his subject, and evidently believed what he preached, which last was a novelty. Moreover, he seemed inclined to credit each and every one of us with a soul, which was flattering.

PHILIP HENRY WICKSTEED, M.A. (1870 - 1874)

Wicksteed followed Hopps to Old Chapel in January, 1870. Born in 1844 at Leeds, he was educated at Manchester College and London University and was a Hibbert scholar. His first ministry was at Taunton and after his stay in Dukinfield he succeeded Martineau at Little Portland Street, London. Wicksteed had an international reputation for his works in economics, his translations of Dante and his translations of Dutch works on the

Bible. It is said he had a great influence on Bernard Shaw when the latter was writing his *Fabian Essays* and founding the Fabian Society.

During Wicksteed's second year at Old Chapel a Liberal candidate won the local seat. Liberal ideas were changing the face of the nation. The Liberal belief in the value of education, for example, led to W.E. Forster's Education Act in 1870, launching a national system of primary schools. Patronage was removed from the home Civil Service by the introduction of examinations. Ability, not wealth or position, would secure places in the future. Religious tests were abolished at Oxford and Cambridge. The Universities were opened to Catholics, Jews and Unitarians. Gladstone brought in the Ballot Act in 1872, before which members had been elected by show of hands. We know something of the appalling conditions in our cities which the Liberals inherited in Victorian England from another Unitarian writer, Charles Dickens.

Wicksteed possessed an exceptional, brilliant mind, sensitive and devout, with a rich appreciation of the mystical experience, where the delusions of time and separateness disappear. In his essay, *The Religion of Time and The Religion of Eternity* he expressed his fear that amongst Unitarians the idea of the eternal life was in danger of being banished from our conception of God:

God has become to us a being who lives the life of Time, who watches to see what Time shall bring forth, and how his creatures shall exercise the gifts he has given them ... but ... God is eternal ... He grasps all the plenitude of unmeasured life at once. He 'seeth the end from the beginning'. To him, in his timeless Eternity, the future hath naught to give; from him, the past hath taken nought away. To his 'now', all times are present; and as we lift our souls to him we taste something of the life wherein not the progress of Time but the fruition of Eternity makes us the sharers of his being.

DUKINFIELD LIBRARY

Dukinfield Library was founded in 1833 by Samuel Robinson, an enthusiastic pioneer of self-education, a mill owner and

renowned scholar of German and Persian. Tradition has it that the first books were supplied by Rachel Hague, daughter of the Furnace Hill School headmaster. She lent her own books to workmates at the mill and when Robinson saw this he was impressed and extended the number of volumes. A new library was built on land given by Francis Dukinfield Palmer Astley and built by public subscription. It was enlarged in 1875 by Francis Dukinfield Astley and renamed the Dukinfield Village Library and Astley Institute. A technical school was added later.

GEORGE HAMILTON VANCE, B.D.  
(1875 - 1884)

Vance came as minister in 1875. He was born in 1848 and educated at Harvard University, America. He was the son of a Unitarian minister, George Vance Smith (1816 - 1902), the great Biblical scholar, who was appointed against great protest onto the New Testament Revision Committee, which produced the Revised Version of 1881. Invited to participate in Holy Communion at an Anglican Cathedral, George Vance Smith survived the enormous furore aroused by the 'blasphemy' of permitting a heretical Unitarian to desecrate the Cathedral by taking part in the Communion.

Hamilton Vance threw himself into the new extension of the Sunday School. To pay for it the Chapel opened a Building Fund and raised £150, which William Marshall doubled. A five day Bazaar was held in the 'Mechanics' Institute, Stalybridge, where Hob Hill and Flowery Field each provided a stall. Money came in from the other Unitarian churches throughout Britain and from abroad, raising £1,760. A subscription list was opened so that when the extension was ready for use it was not only free from debt, but the Chapel was able to purchase two houses in Wyatt Street with the surplus.

Rule 27 of the new School read: "All fruits, sweetmeats and toys brought to the School are to be taken away at once, and not returned."

Evening classes for adults were continued and the Penny Readings on Saturdays proved most popular. A Debating Society and a Gymnasium Class were begun and a Band of Hope established in 1882, which lasted until 1917. There was also a

Band of Mercy, advocating Kindness to Animals, which met alternatively with the Band of Hope, encouraged no doubt by the work of Wicksteed on behalf of animal welfare. He became President of the Anti-vivisection Society in 1920.

HUGON SEAWARD TAYLER, M.A. (1885 - 1905)

Taylor, who was born in 1856, succeeded Hamilton Vance. He was for a time president of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, and was educated at Manchester College and Cambridge. It is to his efforts we owe the completion of the Old Chapel through the erection of the new front. An appeal was again made for donations to pay for the work. The appeal letter ended:

Mindful how strong and lasting is the attachment of former members of Old Chapel, and of the fact that this quest has been bequeathed to the present generation, the Committee venture to hope you will 'look unto the rock whence ye were hewn', and generously aid the strenuous efforts of the Congregation to finish that building which stands on the hill as a beacon-light to those far and near. 'He gives twice who gives quickly'.

A special service was held on Wednesday, 14th June, 1893, commemorated in June, 1993, to celebrate the re-opening of Old Chapel. The preacher was the Rev. Brooke Herford and the hymn "O God without Whose fostering aid" was sung to the tune 'Old Chapel' composed by the Chapel's talented organist, Enos Andrew. When Enos Andrew left his post as organist in an Anglican church in Stalybridge, to become Old Chapel's organist, he was asked for an explanation by an angry anglican priest. The priest was told: "For twenty shillings in the pound, one God and no Devil and an increase in stipend."

The Baptist Church in Town Lane, now at the corner of Oxford Road and Birch Lane, began meetings in November, 1881.

#### WHITSUNTIDE PROCESSIONS

From as early as 1841 the School held an Annual Treat at Whitsuntide, joining with scholars from all the Sunday Schools in Dukinfield. Sometimes they played games in Dukinfield Park

and some years they had trips to Marple, Buxton, Bakewell or Sowerby Bridge. On Friday, 20th May, 1845, the scholars and teachers met in School at 9.30 am, sang a hymn and walked over Chapel Hill, down the New Road, up the Old Road, down Lodge Lane to the Mill, met the Methodists and sang a hymn with them. The treat gave way to the Whitsuntide Procession or Walk, held on Whit Friday mornings. A banner and band were first provided in 1860 and a new banner in 1898 cost fifty pounds. Mary Kellett designed our two present banners, made by ladies of Chapel and School. In 1911 the Sunday school gave a performance of 'Jan of Windmill Land' towards the cost of the next banner, unfurled in 1915.

#### THE DRAMATIC SOCIETY

The Old Chapel Dramatic Society is the oldest Amateur Theatrical Association in the area, dating from 1893. It has always had an excellent reputation for the quality of its productions. Its first president was Henry Andrew. In March, 1898, the society staged 'The Merchant of Venice' produced by Leonard Bintliff, who served the society long and well. The orchestra included violin, viola, double bass, flute, clarionette and a pianist and conductor, Herbert Livesey.

#### SCHOOL CENTENARY

Taylor was minister during one of the most outstanding events in the whole history of Old Chapel, the School Centenary, celebrated on Saturday, 22nd September, 1900. The school was redecorated and outside were hung evergreens and clusters of banners. A large flag curled in the wind. The members, friends and scholars paraded through streets richly decorated by townspeople to honour the event. They first gathered round a flag in front of the Chapel, led by the minister and Chapel Warden, Alderman J. Kerfoot, JP. Scholars and officials, numbering seven hundred in all, were given a free tea and entertainment. Speeches included one from the Rev. H.W. Hawkes, grandson of the founder of the school in 1800.

#### TURN OF THE CENTURY

In 1904 the first tram car ran down Victoria Street, Dukinfield, on its trial run. The corner stone of the new Town Hall was laid

in 1899 and opened before a vast crowd in 1901. Dukinfield was given its corporation charter in 1899, when it formed its first council with Alderman Henry Pratt as its mayor. The Alma Bridge Toll Bar was made free from 1902. Both gate and booth were burned publicly on Chapel Hill and entertainment included attempts by local lads to climb a greasy pole with a leg of lamb at the top of it, wrapped in a pair of bloomers.

These were unsettled years. The Irish problems remained grave; the Zulu and Sudanese Wars took place and we came into the twentieth century at war with the Boers in South Africa, where 50,000 of our soldiers lost their lives. The war ended in 1902. On January 22nd, 1901, the Victorian age came to a close with the death of the Queen. The monarchy had become the symbol of a vast Empire, which Lord Rosebery, as Prime Minister, wisely came to call a Commonwealth of Nations.

Germany was growing rapidly into a world power.

CHAPTER TEN  
FIRST HALF OF THE  
TWENTIETH CENTURY

EVAN GWILYM EVANS (1906 - 1933)

George Henry Kenyon was Mayor of Dukinfield when Evans left Elder Yard Chapel, Chesterfield, to become minister of Old Chapel in March, 1906; four years before the first cinema was opened in Dukinfield - the Electric Palace (which became the Palladium), on the corner of Crescent Road and Hopé Street. Like our first minister, Samuel Angier, Evans was a graduate from Oxford. He arrived just in time for Bi-Centenary Celebrations of the Chapel in 1907, including a Bazaar that raised £1,320. John Oliver Kerfoot presented the Chapel with hat and umbrella stands and the following year electric light replaced the gas lighting. It was installed for £165 and the Chapel re-decorated for £145.

When the Chapel was first lighted with gas in 1852 and an evening service was introduced, the innovations were disapproved by conservative members of the congregation; one of whom, Jonathan Cocks, a member of the choir, wrote a note in his tune book protesting that as the Chapel had done very well for 145 years without any artificial light, it was a great mistake to introduce it now: "no good will come of it!".

IMPRESSIONS OF OLD CHAPEL LIFE

Eleanor Priest much loved and respected by all of us at Old Chapel - a forthright old lady, who has given generously of her time and talent throughout her life - wrote the following account of her memories and impressions of Old Chapel in the first half of the twentieth century:

One hundred years ago Old Chapel was still a wealthy church. Some people still appear to have this opinion - but times have changed! On a Sunday morning Chapel Hill would be full of carriages, bringing families to Chapel - local mill owners, managers and so on. The ladies wore silk and satin dresses, which the poor children would touch

covertly as they passed by. No collections were taken, except at Special Services.

Each Sunday we had a paid choir of four - tenor, bass, soprano and contralto. Old Chapel was noted for its music. At the Choir Sermons we had a special guest, usually a concert singer, and later the Ryecroft Choir came and sang Oratorios such as Handel's 'Messiah'. Programmes were sold and a silver collection was requested. During Kenneth Wright's ministry some of our members were anxious to form a Voluntary Choir, as we could no longer afford the ten shillings a week we paid each member of the professional choir. Our organist, John Taylor, trained a Voluntary Choir, which did very well indeed.

We always had good congregations, morning and evening. The galleries and the downstairs pews were filled with people. In the evenings the younger ones sat upstairs and the older ones downstairs. Gradually, however, the congregation dwindled. We decided, one year, to form a committee and visit people who had once been regular members, to ask them if they would attend Chapel again. Each of us had a list of people to visit and, as a result, quite a few people did return, saying they were happy to do so, but had been embarrassed about their absences and were so pleased to be invited and welcomed back - one of these was Dora Garside, who told me many times how she had missed Chapel, but was too shy to return.

In the Old School, or Big School, as it was affectionately known, the Primary Scholars, boys and girls, were housed in the Large Room on the ground floor, known as the Infant Room, with class rooms and wash rooms on each side of the corridor. Upstairs in the Big Room, there were five or six classes of girls - the boys occupying the smaller classrooms on the ground floor and first and second floors. At the assembly at close of School, boys sat on the left side and girls on the right of the Big Room, facing the stage, where the Director took the close of school.

There were two teachers to every class, so that each teacher taught alternate Sundays. When the Men's Class had a special speaker they would invite the Ladies' Class, teachers and senior girls to join them. I remember Dr. Hans-Raj of the Hollies (now a Nursing Home) telling us about India and its customs; and Rev. Magnus Ratter talking to us about his work in the Khasi Hills.

Sunday School met morning and afternoon, the scholars attending morning Chapel, but leaving the service before the Sermon. Boys sat in the corner now known as the Children's Corner and the girls sat in the pews where the font now stands. Once a month, after opening School in the afternoon, the scholars and teachers processed across to Chapel for an afternoon service, where a Psalm was always sung.

No collections were taken at Sunday School, but a month before Whitsuntide we were given a card and we took a donation, marked on the card, towards Whitsun expenses. The teachers also collected donations towards the expense of the Old Folks' Party and for the cost of the Whit Band.

Most of our social life was spent at Sunday School. A Girls' Guild met every Wednesday evening, organised by Miss Kellett and Mrs. Grant. They taught us sewing, needlework and how to paint woodwork. We made the two banners still used at Whitsuntide and I remember helping with the sewing of them on Saturday afternoons, when we took sandwiches and had tea there. When Miss Kellett retired I took over the Guild until we were forced to finish, because we couldn't get the materials we needed during the Second World War.

We always had a 'fun and games' night on All Hallows Eve and had turnips, hollowed out, with a candle inside. There was a Boys' Brigade, Girls' Brigade and, later, scouts and cubs. Dances were organised free on Saturday nights until the Jubilee Hall opened.

Also we ran a Temperance Society, associated with the cause of Kindness to Animals, a Nature Study Class, a Rambling Club and a Girls' Gymnasium Class. We had a

Scholars' Library, open free every Sunday afternoon and morning; a Penny Savings Bank, Burial Society, established in 1851, with a subscription of a penny a month, entitling your relatives to four pounds and ten shillings in the event of your death.

The major events of the School year held in Chapel were the Prize Distribution, the School Sermons and the Flower Service. At the Sermons the children dressed in white and sat on a special gallery erected over the chancel. The Chapel was always packed and late-comers would have to sit on forms round the gallery.

Teachers took their classes on a picnic during the summer months and the whole school went to Belle Vue to see the fireworks display. For many years we went to Werneth Low and had picnic tea with Mr. and Mrs. R. Willocks. Mr. Willocks was Chapel Keeper before John Holland took over. In the Autumn the Parents' Party was held in School. All the parents were personally invited by the teachers. And at Christmas there was the Children's Party and the Old Folks' Party for the elderly people of Dukinfield, irrespective of their religion. They had tea in the Old Top Room (always tongue on the menu) and then the women would go to the Big Room for a chat and the men would go to the Infant Room, made into a Smoke Room for the occasion (tobacco was provided). Afterwards they saw the performance of the pantomime. These parties too came to an end with the outbreak of World War II since it was so difficult to get food due to rationing.

I remember my grandmother telling me, that at one time there were so many children wanting to join the Sunday School that, for a while, they had an overflow into a barn.

#### JOHN HOLLAND'S IMPRESSIONS

John Holland, a Sunday School Director for 27 years, caretaker of the Chapel for 37 years, a Trustee for 34 years and producer of our Pantomimes for forty two years, much loved senior citizen of the Old Chapel Family, wrote the following impressions of Chapel and School life:

The Primary Department of the Sunday School was formed in the early twenties, when all the children between the ages of three and six years were included in a Junior Section, instead of being in separate classes. The leaders were Miss A. Bradley and Mrs. Sampson. Miss Bradley was a great teacher and organiser, producing plays for the Primary Scholars. She also introduced the Primary Christmas Party, where tea was followed by games and a very special visitor came and gave presents.

At the age of six children moved into separate classes in the Upper School. As a scholar I remember some fine teachers during these years. In particular, I remember Mr. L. Ward, a most interesting man, who wrote Pantomimes, poetry and plays for boys. He started a hobbies class, helping us in stamp collecting, collecting cigarette cards, sea shells and butterflies. He also taught us to do fretwork and introduced us to the mysteries of Natural History, taking us on Nature Trails in the summer, explaining the habits of birds, animals and insects as we rambled in woods and on the moors.

Another fine leader was Alun Evans, son of our minister, who wrote plays and musicals. Joe Potter, too, was an excellent leader, a charming man who arranged Saturday outings for sixteen to eighteen year olds to Manchester Technical College, engineering firms in Huddersfield and Trafford Park, and the Palace Theatre, where we saw Noel Coward (never to be forgotten experience) in his own show, 'Cavalcade'.

My first part in a play was under the direction of Mr. L. Bintcliffe, in 1939 and, since then, I have appeared in sixty four of our plays. For twenty years the Pantomimes were arranged by the teachers, but in 1949 the Pantomime Society was formed and went from strength to strength. Happily, we are still producing Pantomimes to packed houses in our new school hall and performed 'Sleeping Beauty' this year, 1994.

A feature organised by the Men's Stall in the late forties and early fifties, which I remember well, was our Batchelor's Party. All the ladies of the congregation were

invited and were served tea in the Primary Room. On the walls was a list of rules to be followed, such as using your spoon with your right hand and talking to the person on your right side. Just before tea the chairman asked everyone to stand and, then, the 'police' arrived, led by 'Sergeant' Brough. With them were the waiters. The police booked the names of all the ladies in their notebooks and, later in the evening, a court was held, where the 'miscreants' were asked to plead guilty or not guilty, and were fined six pence. The evening's entertainment was an all male Pantomime.

Another vivid memory I have of these years is the splendid sight of the Old Chapel Second Dukinfield Company of the Boys' Brigade on parade in full uniform with flags flying and a band of trumpeters and drummers leading them as they marched. What happy memories we had: camping in Mottram, billeted in the Children's Home at Great Hucklow in August, Sports Days, Church Parades on Sunday mornings to the Old Chapel, Hucklow, and marches through Tideswell and Castleton. I could go on and on ...

#### BROOKE'S DUKINFIELD

James Brooke in *The Dukinfield I Knew: 1906 to 1930* describes the conditions here during Evans' ministry. He tells of the single houses with no back doors, where Brooke and his neighbours lived, with a privy twenty yards from the house on spare ground - an open seat with tub, emptied every week by the Corporation's 'muck misers'. The houses were lit with oil lamps. Children would play in the park, opened in 1902. He was at the Palladium when it caught fire one night. Fortunately the blaze was confined to the projection room, since the fire engine - a small, horse drawn cart - was not renowned for its speed and often arrived only just in time to spray the glowing embers of burnt-out ruins.

The sick and infirm were thrown on the mercy of their neighbours, for there was no DHSS or National Health Service. People depended upon charity and the pawn shops, of which there was no shortage. The tallyman came round the houses, supplying anything people might want for a shilling a week in

the pound. At seven every Sunday morning Brooke's father would send him to the butcher with a quart jug for sixpennyworth of beef stew. They would have the stew with bread or breakfast and again for lunch with vegetables. At eight in the evening they would hear the cry: "Hot peas, black or green!" They were twopence a basin. For a treat on Saturday nights the family went to Ashton Market. He remembered Jimmy Salthouse selling vegetables and Muck Father, an old man sporting a Double Albert, who sold horse manure to gardeners. "Have you sold all your muck?" the other stall holders asked him, as he passed by. "Ay," he would reply, "and I've come round to watch thee sell thine."

Brooke tells of the children's trips to Romiley in canal barges, whilst the men travelled in wagonettes stocked with beer crates to Buxton or Matlock. There was Chapel and Sunday School on Sunday and on Monday the working week, for those fortunate enough to be employed, began at 6 am. Breaks for breakfast and lunch were at 8 to 8.30 am and noon to one pm. People then worked through to 5.30 pm and by the time they'd had tea were more than ready for bed. The only real holiday was the Wakes Week - a week without pay - when the fairs would come to Ashton. Old Chapel still closes for the Wakes Week.

The Labour Party became an official party in 1906 with fifty three Members for Parliament. People were reading George Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells. Protests were made up and down the country against the heavy unemployment, against poverty in a land of plenty. Women, of course, still did not have the vote. Emily Davidson threw herself in front of the King's horse at the Derby in June, 1913, as a defiant gesture on behalf of the suffragettes. Two kings reigned during Evans' ministry - Edward VII from 1901 to 1910 and George V between 1910 and 1936. Women were given the vote in 1918, but not on equal terms with men until 1928. The Marriage Act of 1918 permitted marriages to be conducted in Nonconformist Churches without the presence of a Registrar and our official wedding registers go back to that date.

## WOMEN MINISTERS

Unitarians were the first denomination in Britain to accept women into their ministry. The first woman minister was

Gertrud von Petzold, who came from Germany. She was trained at Manchester College, Oxford, and was minister in Leicester from 1904 to 1908. Since then over thirty women have entered the Unitarian ministry in Britain.

Education was an important priority amongst Unitarians both for their daughters as well as their sons. In the mid-nineteenth century women from Unitarian families, certainly from middle class families, were, according to David Young in his account of F.D. Maurice and Unitarianism, "very probably the best educated females in the country."

One of our most outstanding women ministers was Margaret Barr, a legend in her own lifetime. Born in Yorkshire she trained at Manchester College, Oxford. Hearing that a minister was needed to serve the small group of Unitarian Churches in the Khasi Hills of Assam in north-east India, she applied for the post and, after initial rejection, was officially given charge in the Khasis in 1936. Apart from brief visits to Britain and America she remained there for thirty seven years, caring for the churches and founding two schools. Eventually she settled in a remote village, Kharang, where she established her Rural Centre with a residential school for the children in the surrounding countryside. She was, for them, by turn teacher, nurse, counsellor, midwife and friend. The Centre flourished and became famous throughout the region. She died there in 1973, at the age of 75 years.

The Unitarian Church still flourishes in Northern India and representatives sometimes attend our General Assembly Meetings. There are more Unitarians in Northern India than in Great Britain.

## FIRST WORLD WAR

The 1914-18 War made a great impact upon Dukinfield because of the heavy losses sustained by Dukinfield families. The heavy toll from Old Chapel alone may be gauged by the names on the Memorial Tablets and Rolls of Honour. In 1921 the William Morris window was put in place and the brass memorial tablet unveiled. Brookes records seeing the wounded and invalided soldiers on the streets dressed in hospital blue. He remembers being kept back in School on 13th June, 1917, to do lines when



the school windows blew in. The TNT factory on John Street had blown up. Fifty seven people were killed by the explosion. It took the mass cortege one and a half hours to pass the end of Wharf Street, where he stood.

The first wreath laid at the Dukinfield War Memorial, sited opposite the Chapel, was laid by two members of Old Chapel, Ernest Secker, DCM, and Sydney Clayton.

Evans played a prominent part in the public life of the town. His oratory was outstanding and his deep compassion for people found expression in his work for the Board of Guardians and the Public Assistance Committee. A keen educationalist, he gave valuable service to the Higher Education Committee of the Borough. The congregation, too, was much involved in the political life of the area. In 1926 we had the Mayors of Ashton and Stalybridge on our Chapel Committee and during one year Evans was Chaplain to three mayors at the same time!

Teachers and scholars made beautiful silk banners in 1924 and 1928, presenting them to the School for use in the Whitsuntide Processions. In 1926, due to the initiative of the Chapel Warden, Joshua Garside, the Chapel yard was extended through the acquisition of the adjoining corporation land and the old 'Fishpond', drained and levelled. The General Assembly of Unitarian, Free Christian, Non-subscribing Presbyterian and other kindred churches was formed in 1928 with Rev. Henry Gow as its president. Dr. Mortimer Rowe published his Golden Treasury of the Bible in 1934. In 1929 Old Chapel bought a new set of hymn books.

After the 1914-18 War unemployment and widespread poverty were evident again, leading to the General Strike in 1926, when food convoys were organised to feed starving and deprived areas of the British Isles. In the cotton mills working hours were reduced from 56 to 48 hours a week.

Dance Halls opened and people learned the fox trot, tango, quickstep and Paul Jones. Influenza epidemics took heavy toll of people's lives. The poverty and hardship led to a disastrous rise in the suicide rate. Once or twice a week the police in Dukinfield would be seen pushing a two-wheel stretcher along Wharf Street, bearing people who had drowned themselves in

the canal - 'there's always the canal' became a local saying. People, however, still found their pleasures and excitements. Brooke tells of the horse-drawn water cart that 'degged' the roadway with water to keep the dust down. Children would take off their shoes and stockings and follow it, enjoying the cool, fresh water. People would sit together in the street in the evenings, drinking hot tea from pint mugs.

A lot of exciting ideas were emerging - Darwin's Theory of Evolution was making wide impact; so also was the influence of Sigmund Freud's discoveries about the Unconscious mind; and the astonishing theories of Einstein in Physics. Textual criticism of the Bible was gathering apace. All the arts were in turmoil - painting, music, poetry, drama and the novel were undergoing experimentation and change, breaking with tradition and convention.

Evans ministered through a difficult time of struggle and hardship - a time of war and the grief that war brings. In 1933 he left Dukinfield for a pulpit in Cardiganshire, never to return. He broadcast sermons in Welsh. People here at Old Chapel were in awe of him. The minister was still a figure of considerable authority. When he walked onto a school platform with the directors, it was said "he was like a general with his officers." 'Parson Evans', as he was affectionately called behind his back, referred to people by their surnames. He was a marvellous preacher, who impressed everyone with the content and quality of his preaching and his wonderful voice: he was "to Unitarians what Lloyd George was to the Liberals in oratory." Evans was a member of the Liberal Club and supported liberal and humane causes throughout his ministry. His son, Alan, is still remembered affectionately. One member of the congregation recalls looking up to the pulpit as a child and seeing a halo of light about this minister's head and thinking he must be God.

Unitarians were still discriminated against by members of other denominations, despite our freedom within the law. Evans preached a fiery sermon one Sunday about a child he baptised, whose family moved south when his father changed occupation. The child died and there was no Unitarian church in their village. In their grief the family approached the anglican priest, who refused to bury the child, since he had been christened in a Unitarian Church.

Sadly, Evans' two eldest sons, Estlyn and Idwell died in their twenties, during his ministry here. Gwilym Evans died in Llandyssul, aged ninety years.

## THE BELIEFS OF A UNITARIAN

In 1932 Dr. Alfred Hall published his influential book, *The Beliefs of a Unitarian*, representing the general consensus of Unitarian thought in Britain at this period of our history. On the Trinity he wrote:

The more advanced thinkers in orthodox churches see that the old interpretations of the Trinity were mistaken, and yet they are held by many people today ... Canon Wilberforce said, in their deepest meaning, Father, Son and Holy Spirit signify Love in essential being; Love in manifestation; Love in eternal procession.'

He believed the Trinity, as formulated by Athanasius, was a drawing together of contradictions. Nonetheless, Hall declared, whilst Unitarians denied the Deity or Godhead of Jesus, they did believe in "the divineness or divinity of Jesus". The difference between Jesus and other holy people was one of degree and not of kind. He re-affirmed the universalism of Origen (especially well-marked amongst the General Baptists, many of whom found their way into our General Assembly of churches), declaring that Unitarians believe in "the Infinite Love of God":

They believe that to God the soul of every human being is of immeasurable worth, and that though every one must suffer the penalty for wrong-doing, no soul will be ultimately lost to God.

Hall wrote that Unitarians believed:

God has inspired the saints and prophets of religions other than Christianity, especially the great religious teachers of the East. The sacred writings of non-Christian religions in India and Egypt, Persia and Arabia, China and Japan, contain thoughts and sentiments which will enrich the universal religion of the future.

Few men, declared Hall, made a larger contribution to the study of Comparative Religion than the Unitarian scholar. J. Estlin Carpenter (died 1927), who recognised the nobility of the Buddha and "many another leader of non-Christian faiths". Carpenter had written:

Instead of a world of darkness, irradiated only by one spot of light, we see the whole progress of human thought slowly advancing along divers paths towards clearer truth, and the immense resources of the moral experiences of the race converging on a common testimony to the education of the children of man as the sons of God.

The comparative study of the religions of the world rested, argued Hall, on a broader basis than an occasional similarity of doctrine or of isolated sayings. It was founded on "the discovery that a deep underlying sympathy exists between all religions and that the inspiration of One God and Father of all is the source of all of them."

Unlike Article XIII of the Church of England, which states: "Works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of the Spirit are not pleasant to God ..." Hall identified with the position of Justin Martyr, one of the earliest Christian Fathers, martyred in 165 AD for his beliefs. Justin Martyr wrote:

We have previously shown that Christ is the Reason in which every race of men shared. So those who lived with reason are Christians, even though they were accounted godless, and I can give as instances among the Greeks Socrates and Heraclitus and persons like unto them.

This statement was, Hall declared, "in keeping with the gospel of Jesus".

## HERBERT CRABTREE (1934 - 1939)

Herbert Crabtree was born in Rochdale in 1901 and came to Old Chapel from Brixton, London. He trained at Unitarian College, Manchester, where he distinguished himself academically. He was a regular tutor with the Workers' Educational Association and his writings included *Some Modern Religious Cults*.

Crabtree was a staunch spiritualist and deeply interested in psychic phenomena.

A new stage was erected in the school during his ministry and many trees planted in the chapel grounds. He established a branch of the Young People's League before leaving for a ministry at Monton in 1939.

During Crabtree's ministry the Young Men's and The Young Ladies' Classes sported some hundred members between them. The Young Men's Class was led by the Headmaster of the Day School, the historian, J.E. Hickey. An Athletic Club provided football, cricket, billiards, badminton and table tennis. George Swindells, who became a Director of the Sunday School and a pillar of the congregation, remembered how at that time he, like many others, was Athletic Club-minded, as he put it, rather than Chapel-minded. He did not attend Crabtree's induction because he was playing cricket that Saturday for Old Chapel-School! George became both a Chapel and School man as the years went by and was chosen to lay the foundation stone of the new School Hall in the Chapel grounds in 1987.

Crabtree was an austere, rather puritannical man. He banned raffles in the School - one of the main sources of income - and refused to allow snooker to replace billiards in the School, since he considered snooker encouraged gambling and was, therefore, not a fit game for a Sunday School. Ironically, the game of snooker was invented by a Unitarian - Field Marshall Neville Chamberlain (1820 - 1902)! The new dance, The Palais Glide, also warranted Crabtree's disapproval and was banned from Saturday dances.

Soon after his arrival Herbert Crabtree introduced the practice of devotions at the opening of School, rescinding a resolution of 1870 that there should be no opening devotions in the Sunday School. In 1934 Crabtree encouraged the formation of a Choral Society, which in 1937 became the Operatic Society. One of the shows, *Wild Flower*, was well-remembered by George Swindells, who fell off the stage at the opening performance, just as he made his entrance from the wings. The 'leading lights', said George, were Ella Kelsall and Eleanor Priest.

In an attempt to bring Sunday School and Chapel folk closer together, across a division of interest, Crabtree encouraged the Sunday School to revise their rules, so that from 1936 the School closed on Sunday mornings and scholars attended the morning service, leaving just before the sermon. Crabtree was one of the managers who appointed Stanley Cheetham as Caretaker of the School; an excellent decision in view of the wonderful service he and his wife, Lena, gave to the old School. They were married in the Chapel by Herbert Crabtree. Also married by him were Annie and Eric Eastwood, Dorothy and Ernest Richardson, Christine and Harold Critchlow and Fred and Freda Charles. Annie Eastwood became head of the Primary Department, a School Director and opened the new School Hall. Dorothy Richardson became the first woman Chapel Warden of Old Chapel in the 1980s. She was the only teacher to receive a Certificate for fifty years of teaching in Old Chapel School.

Pew rents were still paid as membership subscriptions and collections were held only on the last Sunday of the month. The congregation easily afforded a professional quartet to grace the choir stall by the organ. At special services the side doors had to be opened to give freer access from the galleries. As many as six people would be chosen to take the collection at one such service.

The first organ was installed in 1816, replacing a small orchestra. The present, magnificent organ, was installed in 1876. The date is carved delicately in the wooden tracery over the organist's head. A story was often recounted by a well-known tenor of the district, William Wild, how one Sunday evening in the midst of his solo, "Thou shalt not leave his soul in Hell", the electricity failed - the lights went out and the organ stopped playing. John Moorhouse called from the body of the church, asking the organist, Eli Cope, to play. Back came the response, to the delight of the congregation, "I can't. I've got no wind." William Wild would remark: "It was the first time I have ever sung the lights out."

At the annual old folks' Christmas Party four hundred people would enjoy the 'slap-up tea' and a performance of the Pantomime. Between sittings a 'Smoking Concert' was held in the Primary Room. A high-light of the year's hectic social activity was the Sidesman's Whist Drive and Dance, held in

November. Soirees, Whist Drives, Dances, Potato Pie Suppers, a grand three day Bazaar, Oratorios, Organ Recitals, Anniversaries and the like filled the year with a rich feast of religious and social activity.

SYDNEY PAUL WHITEHOUSE, M.A., B.Litt. (1939 - 1960)

The misery of the Great Depression of the thirties came to an end, tragically, with the declaration of War with Germany in 1939. Sydney Whitehouse, who had been minister at All Souls Church, Belfast, conducted his first service at Old Chapel on 3rd September, 1939, and had to announce the dreadful news of the outbreak of the Second World War.

Whitehouse was born in Warrington, served in the 1914-1918 War, and was a businessman before he came to Manchester College, Oxford, as a ministerial candidate. Afterwards he studied at Queen's University, Belfast, where, as well as meeting his wife, he obtained a first class honours degree in philosophy. Awarded a Queen's research scholarship he spent a year at Harvard, studying under the great philosopher A.N. Whitehead, and then two years at Oxford.

He was widely acknowledged as an academic, but also brought his business acumen to bear, using the 1944 Education Act to obtain rent from Cheshire Education Authority for the use of the School buildings as a Day School. He revealed his practical concern for the congregation during the war, delivering coal in a pram to the homes of elderly members.

Whitehouse lectured in philosophy at the Unitarian College, Manchester, and for the Workers' Educational Association, during his ministry at Old Chapel. He and his wife had three children, a son, Brian, and two daughters born in Dukinfield, Brenda and Moira. After twenty years' service in Dukinfield he moved to a retirement ministry in Bournemouth in 1960 and died in 1978. He was well respected by his congregations both for his intellectual gifts and his relationships with Old Chapel folk.

Life at Old Chapel in the forties was, of course, as elsewhere in Britain, blighted by the War. Most of our men were either away from home in the services or serving in the Home Guard or ARP

or doing vital work. The social life of Old Chapel was left in the hands of the women. Plays and musicals were not easy to produce without male characters, but Eleanor Priest wrote some plays herself for the children to perform under the auspices of the Refreshment Stall.

The West Window was boarded up to protect it against any flying shrapnel and the Whitsuntide Walks were suspended, apart from a procession in 1943. Instead of coffee evenings there were collections for the Comforts Fund. Miss Bancroft and Miss Broadrick were responsible for this. The balance of this fund was used, eventually, to buy the christening bowl and jug still in use on the font.

After the war our social life blossomed again - the Bazaar was re-instated, the Dramatic Society reformed (under the direction of Nell Stephens) and the Men's Class (under the leadership of Sam Barber); and a Pantomime was performed in December, 1945. The Pantomimes were organised annually by the Teachers' Committee, until the Pantomime Society was formed in 1949. Several members of the congregation produced the pantomimes, including Nell Stephens, Jack Heelis, Bill Pugh, Sydney Clayton and Wimmera Marsden. John Holland produced his first pantomime in 1951 - Jack and Jill - and has produced them ever since. The Men's Class boasted two cricket teams as well as Snooker, Billiards and Whist teams.

Unlike so many congregations of different denomination within the British Isles, who were already suffering the general decline in attendance for worship - a decline that was to accelerate drastically in the following twenty years - Old Chapel still thrived. We had an energetic Young People's League, for example, who took part in a travelling Gang Show troupe. Arts and Crafts entries were numbered in hundreds and Dances were held regularly in the Big Hall.

During his last year at Old Chapel Sydney Whitehouse was asked to give the Essex Hall Lecture at the General Assembly of our churches and chapels. His theme was *Towards A New Theology*. "The Christian system with its picture-book theology," he wrote, "has had its day". He considered the whole system was now 'dead' and would never again command the allegiance of the majority of thinking men and women.

Judged by what is actually known about us and our universe he believed the traditional Christian theological scheme was 'woefully inadequate' and 'out of date'. We could still accept, however, our indebtedness to the great Christian theologians of the past, even though we could no longer accept "the whole system within which they worked, just as we do in the case of the great scientists and philosophers" of the past.

The remedy for a bad theology, Whitehouse declared in his lecture, was not "no theology at all, as the humanist asserts, or at least implies, but a better theology; one that does not run counter to modern knowledge." Where was such a theology to be found, he asked? Well, it might take generations, or even centuries, "to construct even a provisional theology that will not do violence to the known facts." Instead of the incredible idea:

of the whole truth being revealed to some particular individual at some particular time and place, we shall have the credible idea of degrees of the truth being continuously revealed in human experience at all times and in all places ...

The probability of this universe arising by accident, he said, "is comparable to the complete dictionary resulting from an explosion in a printing factory." He closed the lecture with a poem by R. McFie:

If Chance can dance the dust afar  
In myriad motions to a star,  
If Chance can mould with pollen gold  
The silken seeds where lilies are,  
If Chance one daisy can unfold,  
Then God the hand of Chance must hold.

#### A FREE RELIGIOUS FAITH

During the war years Herbert Crabtree served on a Commission set up by the General Assembly to provide a broad statement of undogmatic faith, representative of our liberal heritage and the general consensus of Unitarian thought at the time. Also serving on the Commission were Raymond Holt, H.J. McLachlan, Sidney Spencer, L.A.Garrard, E.G. Lee and Eric

Price. Their statement was published in 1945 by the Lindsey Press under the title, *A Free Religious Faith*.

In a world where religion has come to mean little in people's lives, they declared, the structure of civilization has broken down. With the decline of religion had gone a loss of vision. They quoted with enthusiasm the definition of religion by A.N. Whitehead:

Religion is the vision of something which stands beyond, behind, and within, the passing flux of immediate things: something which is real, and yet waiting to be realised: something which is a remote possibility, and yet the greatest of present facts; something that gives meaning to all that passes, and yet eludes apprehension; something whose possession is the final good, and yet is beyond all reach, something which is the ultimate ideal, and the hopeless quest.

In our judgment, reported the commission, the view that religion is not true has come to be widely accepted because "religion has been identified with particular forms of religion which have become inadequate and with certain beliefs that have been discredited." The commission believed our denomination had a contribution "of profound importance to make" in a crisis of cynicism:

We do not believe there is a complete and final revelation of God. We look upon religion as a spiritual adventure. We do not base our Church life on the acceptance of particular creeds. We do not profess to have a fixed and final answer to all the problems that beset us.

They believed that in the long run our search for truth would not lead us astray. Truth, goodness and beauty were meaningless words unless within and behind all life there was an order which was true, good and beautiful. The search for truth and its discovery would be impossible unless, behind all the changing appearances of life, there was Reason (Logos). Mind could discover nothing about a mindless universe. In their summary report the Commission quoted a mystical experience reported by J.Estlin Carpenter, renowned for his impressive work in

Christology and Comparative religion, as an example of the transformative break through of God into human experience:

Suddenly I became conscious of the presence of someone else. I cannot describe it, but I felt that I had as direct a perception of the being of God all round about me as I have of you when we are together. It was no longer apprehension. It came unsought, absolutely unexpectedly. I remember the wonderful transfiguration of the far-off woods and hills as they seemed to blend into the infinite being with which I was thus brought into relation. This experience did not last long. But it sufficed to change all my feeling. I had not found God because I had never looked for God. But God had found me. God had, I could not but believe, made Himself personally known to me. I had not gone in search of a satisfying emotion, I did not work myself up into this state by artificial means. But I felt that God had come to me. I could now not only believe in God with my mind, but love God with my heart.

Carpenter's *The Historical Jesus and the Theological Christ*, incidentally, was published in 1911 (Philip Green:London), a year after Albert Schweitzer, for several years a member of our Berlin Unitarian congregation, published in English his parallel and seminal work, *The Quest Of The Historical Jesus*. Schweitzer concluded his review of nineteenth century Christology and Textual criticism with an astonishing statement:

The Jesus of Nazareth who came forward publicly as the Messiah, who preached the ethic of the Kingdom of God, who founded the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, and died to give His work its final consecration, never had any existence. He is a figure designed by rationalism, endowed with life by liberalism, and clothed by modern theology in an historical garb.

The consequence of a century of textual and historical criticism was, he said, that the Historical Jesus would now elude us forever. However:

Jesus means something to our world because a mighty spiritual force streams forth from Him and flows through

our time also. This fact can neither be shaken nor confirmed by any historical discovery. It is the solid foundation of Christianity.

Jesus, he wrote, now comes to us:

as One unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lake-side, He came to those men who knew Him not ... And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience Who He is.

The religious life of Christianity was so rich, the Free Religious Faith commission believed, because into it had been poured so much of the highest and best in the experience of the Jews, the Greeks and Barbarians. They hoped East and West would meet again in our time and that, through mutual interaction, a world religion would come into being - not a mere synthesis of the different religions, not as a uniform world church, but one embracing many forms; a new synthesis bringing together all the partial revelations we have received from God, not as bits of a jig saw puzzle, but as one living unity.

The Commission believed the concept of the Unconscious was essential to an understanding of human nature in general and of inspiration in particular. The mind's creativity "cannot be fully explained in terms of conscious intelligence exclusively." Spiritual immediacy, they felt, the prophet's word, arose not by some intrusive miracle, but through normal psychological processes having their source in our unconscious minds.

When Martineau came to the conclusion that Jesus did not regard himself as Messiah, the Commission pointed out, his views aroused considerable opposition amongst Unitarians. By the end of the century, however, it had become clear that a distinction must be drawn between Jesus of Nazareth as New Testament history reveals him - a human figure, however God-inspired - and 'the Christ', representing the subsequent thought and experience of Christians, making meaning of their experiences through concepts such as Logos, Sophia and the Christ or Christa handed down to them through Greek and

Hebrew philosophy. However, Jesus remained a sublime figure with a magnificent vision of life as it may be lived amongst us when we realise we are, indeed, the children of a loving God.

The stories of the Bible, the paradigm of the life of Christ could be understood, one member argued in a separate paper, as myth. Myth captured profound spiritual truth about human nature and the human predicament and our relation to our own depths. If we were no longer under pressure to see the events recorded in the Bible as literal, historical truth in the modern sense, we could approach them as we approach poetry, seeking the deep, hidden meanings behind the images of the text:

A belief based entirely upon reason can tend towards a certain factualism which ignores those vital experiences from which myth springs; a belief which tends to interpret in a factual way the story of the myth can tend towards an esotericism which sooner or later banishes reason.

#### LAWRENCE PEARSALL JACKS

One of the most influential Unitarian thinkers and writers of this period was Lawrence Pearsall Jacks (1860 - 1955), a Principal of Manchester College, Oxford, who received honorary university degrees for his work from Liverpool, Harvard, McGill, Rochester, Oxford and Glasgow. He encouraged the Free Catholic movement within Unitarianism and, according to Lloyd Thomas who knew him well, worshipped an older Trinity than any produced by Christianity, the Platonic Trinity of Beauty, Truth and Goodness.

In his 1924 Yale lectures on *Responsibility and Culture* Jacks elaborated on a popular misunderstanding of the Greek word *eudaimonia*, the condition Aristotle assured us would belong to those who live 'the good life' a word often mistranslated as 'happiness':

it is nothing of the kind. Eudaimonia means 'good demonship'. And the matter is just this: that if you live a good life you will have a good demon; you will be a well-demoned or eudaimon person. And what will your good demon do for you? Well, it will open your eyes. It will teach you to look into the heart of the fact. It will give

you those flashes of intuition which reveal the reality of things. It will guide you in hitting the mark. Your good demon will correct you; will correct the distortion of your vision ... Live the good life, then, and this eudaimonia, this good demonship, this constant correction by God, shall most assuredly be yours. The one blessed with a good demon, said the pagan; the one blessed with the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, said the Christian.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### SECOND HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

KENNETH WRIGHT, B.A., M.Th., A.Th.S. (1961-1964)

Kenneth Wright was a complete contrast to Sydney Whitehouse, being young and rather shy in manner. He was born on the 9th July, 1934. As a child he had been in frail health and was educated in a convent school. Wright was a student at the Unitarian College, Manchester, and minister in Bolton before he came to Old Chapel. His parents were members of our Knutsford congregation.

People remember his pleasant visiting manner, his kindness, his friendships with the young people and his 'anglican-like' way of conducting services. Members of the Dramatic Society still talk of his excellent interpretation of the village idiot in the play *Haul For The Shore*, and Pantomime Society enthusiasts remember his impressive representation of the Demon King. He had a powerful, attractive singing voice and loved to sing Irish songs.

The old Parsonage was not the best of places for a young man to live alone. He left Old Chapel after three years and went to minister in Dublin, where he met his wife. He retired in 1993. Kenneth Wright was deeply interested in depth psychology and its use in pastoral counselling and was an influential member of the Dublin Jungian Society.

PETER SHORT, B.A.Theol. (1965 - 1975)

Peter Short was born 7th September, 1939, at West Kirby, third son of Graham and Marjorie. His grandfather, Fisher Short, had been Unitarian minister at Mossley; his Uncle Harry Lismer was Principal at Manchester College, Oxford; Uncle Basil was also a Unitarian minister. The happiest days of his childhood were spent at Great Hucklow, where his father was minister and warden and Peter never lost his deep love of the Derbyshire countryside. He inaugurated the Family Weekends to Hucklow from Old Chapel so that the congregation might share its joys.

He was educated at the village school, Great Hucklow, Lady Manners School, Bakewell, Glossop Grammar School and Manchester University. Peter Short came to Old Chapel in 1965. He loved Sunday School work and was involved in the production of Pantomimes, especially in making 'props'.

His sermon at U.C.M. closing proceedings in 1965 was on a theme from the hymn: "So here has been dawning another blue day - think wilt thou let it slip useless away". It was important to him not to waste the day or the gifts he'd been given, but, nonetheless, to leave time to 'watch the grass grow'.

He was chairman of the G.A. Religious Education Committee, Secretary of U.C.M., and served on the E.C.U. and the N.C.U.S.S.U. during his ministry at Dukinfield.

Members of the congregation remember him with deep affection. He was widely loved and respected in the community. Kora Stephens wrote about him that his "friendly, cheerful personality falls like Spring sunlight across the dim pages of this history of which he is now a part".

Kora Stephens is one of Old Chapel's talented poets (many of her poems are published in *A Dukinfield Diary*) and author of a fascinating account of life in this part of the world during her childhood and at Chapel Hill after her marriage to Norman Stephens, in whose memory it was written (*The Memorial Window*).

During the ministries of Kenneth Wright and Peter Short the Congregational At Home, previously known as the Congregational Soiree, continued as an annual social event, with the choir and a one-act play providing the evening's entertainment. The choir gave way, eventually, to excerpts from the Pantomime. The annual Sunday School Picnic changed its venue to Lyme Park. The 'Strollers Concert Party' was formed, entertaining not only locally in the Tameside area, but as far afield as Liverpool. People would stand and stare at the convoy of cars assembling in Pickford Lane, filling up with penguin-like suited figures in black and white. The U.Y.P.L.,



chauffeured by their parents, travelled for weekend extravaganzas to Great Hucklow and Flagg in Derbyshire.

#### ONE FAMILY

In 1970 Roy Buckle inaugurated a pictorial record, *A Year In The Life Of Old Chapel*, captured in colour slides taken by Roy, Geoff Richardson and his father, Ernest Richardson. Roy now has a collection of 1,700 slides depicting events at Old Chapel over several years, and especially of the Whitsuntide Walks. Peter Short suggested the title, *One Family*; and the script to accompany the slides was written by Charles William (Bill) Pugh and read by him and Dawn Buckle, whose dramatic, dancing and production skills were highly valued by the Old Chapel folk. Bill and his wife, Hilda, delighted the congregation with their duets. Bill became Chairman of the Trustees. The readings were recorded, along with background music provided by David Bower, and patiently edited until howlers like 'stand stone pinnacles' and 'oil foiled boilers' were rare. The show was enjoyed not only in Old Chapel School, but was taken 'on the road' to Capel y Bryn in Wales, Brighton and Golders Green, London.

#### THE END OF DUKINFIELD HALL

After the war Dukinfield began to expand and building started on housing estates on Yew Tree Lane, in Boyds Walk, Cheetham Hill Road and Armadale Road. Tragically, and short-sightedly, instead of restoring Dukinfield Hall, the authorities bulldozed it out of existence in 1963. Rebuilding began on Combermere and Brunswick Streets, Astley Road and Crescent Road. Dukinfield became a part of Tameside in 1974; the town began to lose its amenities and its small town appearance, until almost all of old Dukinfield had disappeared, except for Chapel Hill. Old Chapel remains, despite our fine Town Hall, the most splendid building in Dukinfield - rich in history, a magnificent sentinel still, to our free religious faith.

Old Chapel congregation were active in social service in the Tameside area during this second half of the century. They worked for W.R.V.S., Meals-on-Wheels and Age Concern. The congregation raised money for various charitable concerns, including Christian Aid, Unicef, Send a Child to Hucklow

Appeal, the General Assembly's Lenten Appeals, the Mandy Turner Scanner at Tameside Hospital and the Tameside Hospice Appeal. Kora Stephens organised Animal Welfare services and raised funds for and was engaged with the Anti-vivisection movement.

We formed a Build Your Own Theology group and a Meditation Group and re-wrote our constitution.

Our blossoming Sunday School and Youth Group meant not only that we were able to resume our tradition of producing a pantomime each year, but able to form, once again, football and cricket teams and engage in a wide range of outdoor and indoor pursuits, which enriched the community life of the town.

#### PETER SHORT SPEAKING

After his tragic death at the age of thirty five, leaving behind his wife, Susan (daughter of the Unitarian minister, Rev. Kenneth Twinn), and two children, Judith and Daniel, the bereft congregation placed a rock in the Chapel Yard, brought from the Peaks, which Peter loved, to record his years of ministry. They also published a fine collection of his writings under the title, *Peter Short Speaking*. In the first of these articles, entitled 'To Belong To The Family', he wrote:

Many of our members re-affirm their allegiance to Old Chapel by making an annual donation to its funds or by contributing each week. This is a material way of showing their support of the faith and ideals for which our Chapel stands. But there are other ways of showing our allegiance, the main ones being our attendance at worship and our service of the Chapel Family.

These words express our faith and purpose:  
'Love is the doctrine of this church  
The quest for truth its sacrament,  
And service is its prayer.  
To dwell together in peace,  
To seek knowledge in freedom,  
To serve mankind in fellowship,

To the end that all souls shall grow into harmony with the Divine - Thus do we covenant with each other and with God.'

Belonging to Old Chapel has a number of aspects of which we should all be aware: Naturally of first importance is our unity in the worship of God, from which flows our strength. In our communion with the highest that we know of beauty, truth, goodness and love, we feel a oneness that cannot be equalled except by the relationship of loved ones in a family ...

This is the Old Chapel Family. A busy and diverse family and yet bound in a togetherness of activity. Sunday by Sunday the tranquillity of the Chapel, and the brief moments of quiet contemplation of God and his ways, act like a fountain of pure water, bringing needed refreshment to flurried spirits and sending them back to their duties and cares and exertions ready to apply themselves afresh to their various activities.

This is Chapel life. Live it, and raise it to even better things by your presence and your aspiration

Peter's funeral, when the Chapel was so packed people had to stand in the galleries, was deeply moving and impressive. Workmen came in their overalls to pay respect. People, far and wide, grieved his passing.

DAVID CHARLES DOEL, M.A.,Ph.D., (1976 - )

David Doel was born in Todmorden, Yorkshire, on 13th November, 1930. He was educated at Unitarian College, Manchester, and Manchester University, where he researched in the inter-face of ancient and modern forms of depth psychology. He and his wife, Joan, came to Dukinfield from Hindley in March, 1976.

During the ministry of David Doel the old school was demolished and the Parsonage was sold. The new school was opened in 1987 by Annie Eastwood, where, once again in the history of Old Chapel, a rich social life was organised, including the production of excellent revues, plays and pantomimes. Dorothy Richardson, who died in 1990, became the first woman

Chapel Warden in the eighties and several women were appointed to the hitherto all-male body of Trustees.

Two plaques were placed on the Chapel walls during Doel's ministry - one was to Norman Runciman Stephens, Chapel Warden when Doel was appointed minister, who died in 1987 after many years excellent service as Chapel Treasurer and the other was to John Taylor, our beloved and gifted organist since 1946, who died after forty years service to the congregation. John Taylor and David Doel met week by week for several years to play violin and piano duets.

Out of the application to pastoral work of his research in psychodynamics - and a training analysis in psychotherapy with Charles Hugh Bartlett (who was Unitarian minister at Stalybridge for several years) - David Doel wrote three books, published by the Lindsey Press: *The Perennial Psychology*, *Out of Clouds and Darkness* and *That Glorious Liberty*.

#### UNITARIAN THOUGHT IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

E.G. LEE (1896-1983)

E.G. Lee, known to his friends as 'George', was born in Exeter and began working life as an apprentice to a tailor. During the 1914-18 war he served in France and India. After the war he was educated at Exeter University and trained as a Unitarian minister at Manchester College, Oxford. In 1939 he became Editor of *The Inquirer*, exploiting his splendid gifts as a writer. Some of his editorials are considered amongst the most inspiring and visionary ever to have appeared in *The Inquirer*. Incidentally, *The Inquirer* is the oldest extant Nonconformist journal, first appearing in print on 9th July, 1842. Its name was the brain child of Robert Aspland.

Several fine novels and distinguished theological works were published from the pen of E.G. Lee. Notable amongst his novels were *Between the Gates* and *The Beginning* and his best known theological writings were *Mass Man and Religion*, *Christianity and the New Situation* and *Christianity In Chains*. Those of us privileged to have known this warm, passionate man, remember the high quality of his oratory - how he could hold a

ministers' conference rapt whilst he spoke extempore on some issue that had caught his powerful imagination. A glimpse of his vision may be conveyed in the closing lines of his essay on 'Christ and Culture' in *Christianity and the New Situation*:

The bond of union between the present and the past is the unchanging nature of Almighty God. The Christian will find his union with the past within that nature. The experience of the New Testament and that of today points to an abiding reality, it is the reality of God. If the Jesus of Nazareth is to be found he is to be found within that particular revelation. What he believed, lived and acted upon, within the nature of God, will reveal to the modern world the actual nature of his life. His life will have meaning for the modern world in so far as it revealed something of the nature of God. Men will be bound to that life in so far as the life is bound to the nature of God. The Jesus of history will be the Jesus of history just in the manner that, through him, history is lifted nearer to God; the test of all ultimate greatness in all men and women, past, present and future. Jesus Christ will be known through the religion of Jesus. It is necessary for those who wish to know the founder of the Christian religion to know his religion. That knowledge by no means is likely to destroy the means by which it has been handed down to the ages - the means of Christ mysticism. But it can make clear what Christ mysticism is, an imaginative truth created by the human mind to make clear to us - within a certain culture - the nature of God.

JOHN WILLIAM HAYES (1890 to 1959)

A native of Kendal, Will Hayes was a lover of mountains, whose experience of the natural beauty of the Lake District inspired a deep interest in the mystical element within all the great world religions. He had lay charge of Chatham and Maidstone from 1921. Believing strongly in the 'sisterhood of religions' he founded The Order Of The Great Companions, which published many of his books on comparative religion, a quarterly journal, *Calamus*, and, in 1954, an extraordinary universalist or pluralist liturgy, well ahead of its time, called *Every Nation Kneeling*. Unitarians are used now to hearing readings in their services from the scriptures of different faiths or

from the writings of great poets, but to have orders of service containing hymns, prayers and readings from all manner of religious sources - Ancient Egypt, Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, Christian, Jewish and Sikh, allowing plenty of blank pages for one's own choices - was startlingly revolutionary at that time. We should recall, however, that John Page Hopps, whilst minister of our Glasgow church, published in the 1870s a slim volume of Readings For Public Worship and the Home, containing passages from the Koran and the Stoic Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius.

Will Hayes was one of Sir Francis Younghusband's first associates in The World Congress Of Faiths. His tireless efforts on behalf of religious pluralism had considerable impact on the Unitarian movement at the time when that pluralism was still in the bud; a time when the major debate, or polarisation, within Unitarian theology was between theism and humanism.

RAYMOND V. HOLT

The chairman and editor of *A Free Religious Faith* was Raymond Holt, principal of The Unitarian College, Manchester, at the time of its publication. He retired in the mid-fifties and was succeeded by Fred Kenworthy, an excellent Biblical scholar. Unitarians are most grateful to Raymond Holt for his book *The Unitarian Contribution To Social Progress In England*, a masterly review of the important contribution, extraordinary considering the smallness of our numbers, of Unitarians to social, political and economic reforms. It is a fine work, encouraging us to take heart in our liberal ethos and to be proud of the humane, innovative and compassionate inheritance we have from our spiritual ancestors.

KENNETH TWINN (1910 - )

Educated at Cambridge University and Manchester College, Oxford, Kenneth Twinn was minister at Toxteth, Knutsford, Mansfield and Atherton and Secretary and Librarian of Dr. Williams' Trust between 1966 and 1976. A brilliant linguist and exponent of the international language of Esperanto, Twinn edited and contributed to a symposium of essays by eight Unitarian ministers, published by the Lindsey Press in 1959. The other contributors were A.J.Long, Leonard Mason, E.G.

Lee, H.Lismer Short, L.A.Garrard, Fred Kenworthy and C. Gordon Bolam.

Twinn hoped the work would stimulate further theological thinking amongst Unitarians. The essays revealed the influence of modern scientific theories on our theology, such as evolution, quantum theory and cosmological notions of continuous creation; the struggle with the philosophers of positivism, empiricism and linguistic analysis, such as Ayer and Braithwaite; and the influence of Bultmann's demythologising of New Testament texts. Bereft of a historical Jesus, many theologians were attracted once again to the old allegorical method of interpretation and were examining the mythological content of the New Testament - exploring the spiritual or psychological significance of myth through the intellectual frameworks of modern depth psychology, provided by Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung.

Twinn wished to hold onto the title 'Christian', which many Unitarians, feeling the name was too selective and exclusive of other religious faiths, now desired to abandon. Although quite unimpressed by miraculous events recorded in the New Testament, which were not only unbelievable, but also irrelevant, Twinn nonetheless felt :

Jesus speaks to my reason, my conscience, my heart, 'deep calling unto deep', and that is enough.

L.A. Garrard, a brilliant Biblical Scholar, wrestled to good effect with Braithwaite, Bultmann and Ayer, in his essay, *What is Christianity* and Leonard Mason, in an essay, *Images of God*, struggled valiantly with the new cosmology, presenting a stirring humanistic challenge and concluding:

Better to be challenged by the human situation, appalled by the uneven distribution of human opportunities, encouraged by human excellencies attained, prompted by the vision of what human communities might become, than look for guidance to theistic symbols which have become vague, unreal, and void of the very evocative content for which they were expressly devised ...

We live in an age of experimental and critical thinking, when, so to speak, the electron - microscope of analysis directs its beams on the most time-honoured ideas and symbols. The structure is laid bare. What is likely to emerge from the scrutiny is not just the propriety or adequacy or even the oddity of our religious symbols, but whether we have sufficient experience of and faith in the valour and significance of human life, and dare to assert, celebrate and prosper them in a time of great uncertainty.

ARTHUR J. LONG (1920)

Arthur Long's essays, *Faith and Understanding - Critical Essays in Christian Doctrine* - published by the Lindsey Press in 1963, were in strong contrast to the humanism of Leonard Mason. Long was educated at Oxford and trained at Manchester College, Oxford. He was a minister in London and at Bolton, with Horwich; and principal of the Unitarian College, Manchester, between 1975 and 1988.

Throughout my ministry Arthur Long has been nurturing the movement with solid, down-to-earth, well-informed theology; a reassuring link between our past and our present religious life. Long pointed out in the first essay of his book, 'Two Natures - One Person', the irony of the fact that the credal statement at the basis of the World Council of Churches, which excluded Unitarians from its inception, are actually heretical: "a fellowship of Churches which accept the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour." The statement reveals how popular misrepresentations of Christology have actually led to a dominant position being imposed generally and publicly which was a condemned heresy, since, as Long writes, so-called 'orthodox', Athanasian teaching is that:

Jesus may be God incarnate, God the Word, or the Second Person in Trinity, but he is not God.

Long believed a Unitarian interpretation of the Atonement was feasible. After all, he declared, it was a Unitarian, Sir John Bowring, who wrote 'In the Cross of Christ I glory.' There is, he argued, the subjectivist view, advocated by the Socinians and by Peter Abelard (1079 - 1142), summed in the words of Abelard's disciple, Peter the Lombard:

So great a pledge of love having been given to us, we are both moved and kindled to love God who did such great things for us; and by this, we are justified, that is, being loosed from our sins, we are made just. The death of Christ, therefore, justifies us in as much as through it, love is stirred in our hearts.

One should note, of course, that at the root of this word 'justify' is the meaning 'to restore'.

The death of Jesus, argued Long, only becomes an effective atonement - something which makes us at one with God - when it is seen as the completion and consummation of that revelation of the nature of God which was the entire object of the mission and message of Jesus.

The famous text from John - "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten son" - argued Long, is a meditation on the Incarnation and not on Calvary.

Long wished to hold onto the idea of a personal God, despite the difficulties involved linguistically and philosophically. It is, he wrote, through the exercise of that much neglected art - 'the practice of the presence of God' - that "what the famous Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber, has called the I-Thou relationship becomes the undeniable reality of confrontation."

Most Unitarians, he supposed, if they used the word 'salvation' at all, understood by it the attainment of moral and spiritual wholeness, the acquisition of what depth psychologists would call an integrated personality.

However, he believed the "process of salvation" must be a joint enterprise between ourselves and God, since so much clearly depended on "our own response to the Divine Initiative". Paul, "so often thought of as the arch-exponent of the orthodox evangelical view, put the matter in a nutshell: 'Work out your own salvation in fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.'" The reference to fear and trembling was significant, since the Unitarian view involved heavy responsibilities which most

Christians, he felt, were unwilling to accept, preferring to take refuge in the "comforting mythology of evangelical doctrine."

In his essay on 'The Holy Ghost - Lord and Giver of Life' Long declared the doctrine of the Holy Spirit "is one of the most exciting and significant of all the official Christian doctrines" and "especially dear to the hearts of Unitarians" as may readily be discovered by a glance through our hymn books.

#### SIR ALISTER HARDY

A significant contribution at the inter-face of Biology and Theology was made by the Unitarian, Sir Alister Hardy, who was Professor of Zoology at Oxford. His Gifford Lectures were revised and produced in a fascinating volume, *The Living Stream*, published in 1965, on the bio-chemistry of evolution and the role of consciousness; an approach which Hardy hoped would provide grounds for the formation of a new natural theology. He was largely responsible for the opening of a unit at Manchester College, Oxford, to study religious experience, using the research techniques of the zoologist.

In *The Living Stream* Hardy concluded we should "try to combine a scientific approach to theology with a burning spiritual faith":

just as knowledge of the biology of sex does not destroy the love of a lover, so a religion linked with science through a natural theology need not destroy the rapture of our communion with God.

Discussing the phenomena of telepathy in his chapter on 'Natural Theology in the Evolutionary Scheme', Hardy believed science would make a great contribution to natural theology "by showing the reality of part of the universe outside the world of the physical senses." It was in this "apparently non-material part of the world that the power we call God must lie." He believed the power we call God had a fundamental link with the process of evolution. Saint John had declared God is Love. "Perhaps all true love - animal, human or Divine - may be part of one tremendous 'force' animating the organic world":

As our natural theology must be based upon a scientific approach so I believe our religion itself should be a dynamic faith - an experimental faith - a faith in the receiving of Grace in answer to prayer. Let us experiment and see. I don't mean selfish prayer for one's own safety or betterment or prayers to alter physical events, like praying for rain, but prayers to have help in our actions. Somehow, in some extraordinary way, I do believe that there is a vast store of wisdom and spiritual strength that we can tap in this way - something which is of the utmost importance to mankind.

#### CHARLES HUGH BARTLETT

In 1967 we lost, through the death of Charles Hugh Bartlett, one of our outstanding creative minds. He was educated at Liverpool in classics and trained for the ministry at Manchester College, Oxford. He was a Unitarian minister in London and Rotherham, where he met his wife, Josephine, and then at Stalybridge and Cross Street, Manchester. He was an accomplished actor and a gifted musician.

During his ministry in London he attended the Institute of Psychoanalysis for training and did his training analysis with Ella Sharpe, who had received her personal analysis from Freud. Believing the Freudian ethos was too narrow at that time he went for a further training analysis to the Jungian, Hans Westman, who had received his personal analysis from Jung. This fusion of Classical, Liberal Theological, Freudian and Jungian training provided a rich background for his powerful, eclectic imagination.

During the forties and fifties, whilst Jung was still alive, Bartlett had responded to Jung's challenge to the clergy of the world. Jung had written, in his paper *Psychotherapists Or The Clergy* that amongst all his patients over thirty five years of age there had not been one whose problem, in the last resort, was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It was safe to say, wrote Jung, that every one of them fell ill because they had lost what the living religions of every age had given to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain this religious outlook. This, of course, had nothing to do with a particular creed or membership of a church.

The clergy, wrote Jung, stood before a vast horizon; but it seemed as if they had not noticed it; as if they were insufficiently equipped to cope with the urgent psychic needs of our age. It was, he wrote, high time for the clergy and the psychotherapists to join hands to meet this great spiritual task.

Bartlett took this challenge entirely seriously and based his pastoral work on psychotherapeutic models; a practice that would not become widespread until the eighties - and that in North America. It is a tribute to his pioneering courage and vision that only now, in the nineties, are British clergy beginning to follow the American lead and see the significance of psychodynamic theories and techniques in the practice of ministry.

Jung, of course, although lacking in formal theological training, had already recognised the parallels in theory and technique between those of modern psychotherapy and the great psychotherapeutic systems of contemplative (i.e. prayer-centred) theologians in all the great religions of the world - especially within yoga. Bartlett read widely in comparative religion, but especially within the mystical tradition of Christendom, making himself familiar with the psychological systems of great Christian mystics, such as Saint John of The Cross.

The present writer owes an enormous debt to Charles Hugh Bartlett for his own training in psychotherapy, which he received from Bartlett whilst the latter was minister at Stalybridge and Cross Street, but also for his introduction to these great psychologies of the past and of the present. My own book, *The Perennial Psychology*, (Lindsey Pres, 1990) would have been impossible without that intellectual and inter-personal training.

Alas, Bartlett did not write much about his theological position, but the year after his death, Eric Shirvell Price, (a founder and first Father of the Chapel of the Family Holiday Conference and honorary member of our General Assembly), who for many years had been editor of our Journal, *Faith and Freedom*, produced a collection of essays reprinted from the Journal by the

Lindsey Press, including one by Bartlett, entitled *The Psychological Background Of the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*.

Amongst Unitarians, Bartlett wrote, the term 'the Holy Spirit' is usually used as an alternative for 'the Indwelling God', as in Eliza Scudder's hymn:

Yet high above the limits of my seeing,  
And folded far within the inmost heart,  
And deep below the deeps of conscious being,  
Thy splendour shineth: there, O God, Thou art!

The theme of his paper was that parallels may be drawn between the religious theory known as the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and "certain theories developed by those schools in modern psychology which now are generally classified together as 'depth psychology'." The doctrine of the Holy Spirit represented human beings as an essential dualism in space and time, a dualism of God and the Soul. Modern depth psychologists spoke of an Ego-system, as an intelligent centre of consciousness, an 'I' affected also by all manner of motives and influences that were 'unconscious'. And there was a 'Thou', an independent centre of unconscious life (the world of the Id).

Any interpretation of the doctrine which evaded the objectivity of that Thou and converted it into some subjective element of the individual self, was a complete evasion, he wrote, of the familiar language not only of Christianity, but especially of the religions of the East. Christian pastoral teaching, in its most authoritative form, had always been concerned with the re-union, "or, as it has come to be called, the sacred marriage" between the Soul and God.

Freud, in 1923, had published *The Ego and the Id*, marking a significant turning point in his theoretical development. By 'Ego' Freud meant all that can be considered as "the functioning of the human will and human intelligence, together with all the individual's life experience, whether available to consciousness or completely repressed." Freud visualised this, however, as only part of the fundamental story of the human mind. There was also, he conceived, another part which was completely independent of the Ego-system - a reservoir of life-potentiality, struggling with intense activity for

expression through the life of the person. He called this Other aspect or pole of the psyche 'the Id':

Freud's attitude to the Id might, I think, at the risk of appearing to pervert a phrase, be best expressed, so far as he intellectually and emotionally thought of it, as 'The Fountain of Life for ever striving to flow free'. The writer of the hymn understood the fountain of life to contain, not only power and the whole range of normal life potentiality, but also the full force of the most perfect striving after truth, beauty and goodness.

At first Freud had thought the Id merely a disorganised area of chaos, but as time went by he came to parallel in his theory of Eros, the theories of Jung about the organising, creative integrative work of the deep centre of the Unconscious, the Self. The sad result of the conditioning influences of our societies was that the ideas imposed from childhood by our culture made it extremely difficult for us to adjust satisfactorily to the "mysterious depths of our own nature." The basic problem of psychotherapy was, Bartlett wrote, to break the hold these external influences had come to wield over the Ego, and to accustom the person to live by depending upon something which was not his or her own conscious will - an amazing parallel to the "whole traditional scheme of the cure of souls as it grew up in the contemplative tradition" - both the tradition of Christian contemplatives and contemplatives of the other world religions as expressed in great religious texts such as the *Bhagavadgita* of Hinduism and the *Dhamma* of the Buddhists.

"Know thyself", had become a fundamental principle of healing shared not only by Socrates and the contemplative teachers, but also the modern psychotherapist.

Psychiatrists and psychotherapists alike had come to the conclusion, argued Bartlett, that there was a very close relationship between the mental and physical experiences that belonged to neurotic and hysterical collapse and those which belonged to the religious life. Are we, Bartlett asks at the end of his essay, to:

interpret the characteristics of religious genius as merely the symptoms of morbid psychology due to general mental

degeneration, or are we to interpret mental disturbance in the light of religious experience as the mark of the surface waters being troubled by the Holy Spirit? This is the great debate in modern psychology as it was the great debate between Bunyan's Christian and his family at the beginning of Pilgrim's Progress.

## JOHN McLACHLAN

Dr. John McLachlan was educated at Willaston School, Nantwich, and at Manchester, Heidelberg and Oxford Universities. He was Hibbert Scholar and Graduate Research Scholar of Manchester University. For eight years he was Tutor and Librarian at Manchester College, Oxford, then minister of the First Presbyterian Church, Belfast, before returning to England to become Unitarian minister in Cambridge. He retired to Sheffield.

In Northern Ireland McLachlan was Regional Officer of the United Nations Association for three years and Chairman of both the Belfast branch of the U.N.A. and the Northern Ireland Group of Amnesty International. He has travelled widely in Europe, America and India, been engaged in refugee relief in Czechoslovakia and Austria. He is a keen mountaineer and, indeed, celebrated his eighty-fourth birthday by abseiling down a hundred foot cliff at Surprise View, Hathersage, in Derbyshire in July, 1992, the year after he published his colourful autobiography, *The Wine of Life* - a breath-taking account of a most energetic life.

The Lindsey Press published John McLachlan's book, *The Divine Image*, in 1972, in which he argued for a Christian Humanism that would heal the breach between Christians and Humanists. Christianity, he declared has "a strong humanist accent" and, historically, "humanism is a by-product of Christianity and has inherited some of its qualities." Certainly, they agreed in one important respect - both Christians and Humanists were concerned about human beings. Bonhoeffer, considered by McLachlan to be the outstanding theologian of our time to have "grasped unerringly the central issue and to have emphasised the importance of a Christian Humanism: 'It is not some religious act which makes a Christian what he is, but participation in the suffering of God in the life of the world.'"

True Christianity and true Humanism meant existing for humanity, living for others.

Channing, wrote McLachlan, held that human beings were creatures of divine origin, and that we may realise God only through our own nature. We discover God around us in nature and in ourselves, because, paradoxically, God is already within us. When we are most ourselves, we are most like God - "an echo, it would seem, of that basic utterance of Jesus: 'The pure in heart shall see God.'"

Evangelicals, Quakers and Unitarians, McLachlan pointed out: pioneered many, if not most, of the voluntary associations for social reform and philanthropy which, in the 19th century, made life in England more humane. Moreover, the ground for the legislation which followed the Beveridge Report of 1942 and set up the Welfare State, was prepared in the 19th century by religious-minded men and women, many of whom proceeded upon the maxim of Jeremy Bentham - 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number' - and regarded this principle almost as a restatement of the Golden Rule! Incidentally, some years ago, in conversation with Sir William Beveridge, I learned how deeply he had been influenced in his work for social betterment by Unitarian precept and example.

One good definition of religion, McLachlan believed, was that of William James: 'there is an unseen order and our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves thereto'. Christian Humanism, McLachlan believed, seeks to hold the transcendence and immanence of God in equilibrium:

It is a religion that posits a God who is not standing over against but together with man. It is a humane and humble faith, firmly convinced that man is the creature in and through whom God seeks to express His own nature, personality, and love ...

Thus the doctrine of the Incarnation, from this point of view, is significantly broadened and kept closely related to that of Divine Immanence. God is seen in all men, though in some to a higher degree than in others. Christ's revelation of God is no longer isolated, but regarded as part



of the world's spiritual order and not as an exceptional incursion into history. The Divine Word is still being spoken to our day and generation.

It has been said (by Seth Pringle Pattison) that 'there can be no true doctrine of God that is not based on a true doctrine of man'. The task of Christian Humanism today is to enunciate a true theory of man and to put it into everyday practice.

## THE UNITARIAN HERITAGE

John McLachlan also shared in the production of *The Unitarian Heritage*, an excellent and fascinating architectural survey of Chapels and Churches in the Unitarian tradition in the British Isles. The book was researched by Graham Hague, designed by Judy Hague and managed by Peter Godfrey in 1986.

D.G. Wigmore-Beddoes, lost to us tragically in a car accident, edited an interesting collection of articles on Jesus, entitled *Concerning Jesus*, published by The Lindsey Press in 1975. The contributors were Wigmore-Beddoes, Duncan McGuffie, David Doel, Tony Cross, John Hostler and John Midgley. John Midgley became our first Development Officer in 1989 and, in his own inimitable way, began to inspire us all with his developmental message and his enthusiastic concern with the growth, spiritual and numerical, of our congregations.

Graham Murphy produced in 1987, whilst he was minister at Ullett Road, Liverpool, a splendid book on the history and work of the National Trust, *Founders of the National Trust*, which is not only informative, but reads like a gripping novel. He also published an account of the life and times of the Liverpool philanthropist and abolitionist, William Roscoe.

Unitarians began to get into meditation in the second half of the twentieth century and a significant contribution was made to this movement by David Monk, our minister at Hindley, who organised meditational retreats and inspired us with wise articles on the spiritual life, appearing regularly in our journal, 'Faith and Freedom'.

Dr. Leonard Smith, Principal of the Unitarian College, Manchester, published in 1993 an erudite and moving account of the relationship between Nonconformity and the growth of the independent Labour movement in *Religion and the Rise of Labour*, published by Keele University.

## DIVORCE AND BEYOND

Unitarian ministers have, for many decades, been willing to marry divorced people, believing the tragedy and trauma of divorce is deserving of our understanding and compassion rather than our condemnation, and that people should be given the opportunity to remarry if they so desire; especially since people often are actually not only more serious about the act of marriage when a previous marriage has failed, but may have learned much from their painful experiences to help the new relationship survive. Many Unitarian ministers in the second half of the twentieth century have been willing to extend this compassionate concern for inter-personal relationships to gay people and have arranged services in their churches to bless gay relationships.

## FEMINISM AND THE NEW HYMN BOOKS

Feminism had a significant influence on Unitarian thought and practice during the second half of this century. At Old Chapel it found expression in the appointment of women to the role of Chapel Warden and onto the Trustees. Feminist principles, making us more sensitive to the ways in which our use of language perpetuates the marginalising of women, clearly guided the compilation of both our new hymn books, especially, of course, the adventurous volume entitled *Hymns For Living*, but also the more traditional volume, *Hymns of Faith and Freedom*; and the Unitarian Worship Sub-committee produced a delightful anthology of poetry and prose on women's spiritual insight and experience, *Crying Out Loud*. The Worship Sub-Committee also published three inspiring collections of poetry, meditations and prayers - *Echoes*, *Reflections*, and *Celebration*. In 1993 Andrew Hill edited a valuable new book of special services, *Celebrating Life* and in 1994 published his excellent *The Unitaria Path. Growing Together*, a feminist work pack in theology, was produced in 1983 by the Unitarian Working Party on Feminist Theology

Undoubtedly one of the great 'characters' of the second half of this century, making formidable impact on the Unitarian scene, is Trevor Jones, Co-ordinator of Religious Education for the denomination. He has produced several valuable volumes of teaching material (including *Growing Unitarians* and *Suffer The Children*) and discussion or developmental programmes (such as *Ignition*). Travelling widely on his motor bike, carrying his guitar and violin, Trevor Jones has entertained and inspired the whole denomination with his tireless devotion to our cause.

Another innovation of importance to us in the second half of the twentieth century has been the use of the developmental discussion programme, *Building Your Own Theology*, the brain-child of the American minister, Richard S. Gilbert, modified for use in Britain by members of the Unitarian Renewal Group, including Celia Midgley, Peter Galbraith, Joy Croft, John Roberts and the excellent and energetic new editor of *The Inquirer*, Keith Gilley.

## BEYOND THE HORIZON

That much-loved, and now, sadly, much-missed, Unitarian minister, Ben Downing, concluded his 1976 Essex Hall Lecture, *Beyond the Horizon*, with a poem by Rudyard Kipling, called 'The Return' (of a Cockney soldier from the War). Ben Downing's closing paragraph makes a fitting end to this survey of the Unitarian Story:

Its tale is not yet told. It still has a place in the pattern of things to come, even if our visions of it do not flit palpably before us. Our congregations and ministers must speak new words, find new partners, think new thoughts. The words must really communicate; the thoughts must be relevant to the needs and excitements of our time; the partners must be sympathetic. But they all can and will be found, if we have the will to search for them.

In the end we Unitarians are committed to the power of thought and the play of ideas. Ceasing to think, we shall cease to live. And we shall cease to think if we do not learn from:

... Time runnin' into years -  
A thousand Places left be'ind -  
An' Men from both two 'emispheres  
Discussin' things of every kind;  
So much more near than I 'ad known,  
So much more great than I 'ad guessed -  
An' me, like all the rest, alone -  
But reachin' out to all the rest

## APPENDIX: A

### WHERE THE STORY BEGINS

As we say good-humouredly about ourselves, where two or three Unitarians are gathered together there will be at least four versions of Unitarianism on offer. So the origins of the Unitarian Story will be discovered in different times and places by different Unitarians. Some will say it began in Europe with the Socinians; some will hold it began in post-Reformation England with the first use of the word to describe anti-Trinitarians.

In his erudite historical accounts of Unitarianism (1945 Ed.), Earl Morse Wilbur says we are a movement characterised by three leading principles: complete freedom in religion rather than bondage to creeds or confessions; the unrestricted use of reason in religion, rather than reliance upon external authority or past tradition; third, generous tolerance of differing religious views and practice "rather than insistence upon uniformity in doctrine, worship or 'polity'."

Freedom, reason and tolerance, he wrote, were the conditions above all others which our movement from the beginning has increasingly sought to promote - even though certain doctrinal elements, such as anti-Trinitarianism, have for long periods of our history been emphasised and even dictated our name. After all, Unitarianism is not to be identified exclusively with anti-Trinitarianism or the belief that Jesus was human like the rest of us (i.e. a great religious teacher, "filled with the Holy Spirit", but God incarnate only in the sense that every human being is God incarnate). Many Unitarians, in fact, find some interpretations of the Trinity quite acceptable. But more of that later.

Wilbur argues that from the mid-nineteenth century our denomination polarised between a conservative wing, who emphasised traditional Unitarian beliefs and adherence to the Unitarian name; and a liberal wing, who laid little stress on doctrine, but held "a spirit of generous breadth as to doctrines, provided a sincere religion of the heart were present". Both wings, he believed, traced their descent from "a common stock in the old Dissent".

Although he refers to three precursors of Unitarianism - Adam Duff O'Toole, burned in 1327 in Dublin for denial of the incarnation and the Trinity; William Sawtre of Lynn, burned at Smithfield for heresy in 1401; and Reginald Peacock, Bishop of St. Asaph, made to resign his office in 1458 for expressing in writing the view that the authority of scripture and reason was superior to that of ecclesiastical tradition - Wilbur believed they should be considered but isolated instances. They could not represent the beginnings of our movement, but merely the reaching out of individuals for freedom in place of blind obedience to traditional authority.

Unitarian historians appear to share this view down to our own time and it no doubt represents a certain historical and intellectual integrity. Nonetheless, Wilbur also declared that not only are the ultimate germs of Unitarianism to be found far back of the first clear emergence of the British movement in the second half of the seventeenth century, but that Unitarianism was a position latent in Protestantism itself and would be found in "certain types of mind in whatever national or religious environment."

Wilbur points out that John Biddle, "the Father of the English Unitarians" came to his view of the Trinity without having read any Socinian writer. A dozen or more British martyrs had suffered "for some form of the Unitarian heresy in the ninety years before Socinianism had become well enough known to be recognised by the authorities as a public danger."

It seems to me, therefore, to be quite reasonable and logical to trace the origins of our movement not from the rise and establishing of congregations and meetings of clergy, but exactly in such individuals and movements of the past which, whilst not bearing our name, shared our convictions. Our story might then well begin in any of the ancient religions of the world, wherever someone has relied upon reason and the movement of the Spirit within their own souls rather than on directions from scripture, tradition or any external authority; and who has taught and practised genuine tolerance.

If, however, we agree to limit our Story, for convenience sake, to the Story of Christianity, we share with all Christian

denominations, the same origins in the life and teachings of Jésus of Nazareth - a great iconoclastic poet if ever there was one. But if we acknowledge our historians' desire to trace a movement, a church, or group of worshippers who share our emphases - and not merely individual souls scattered here and there, then we don't have to move far from the first disciples to discover such a movement, possessing large numbers of adherents and persisting through time so as to be worthy of a claim to a 'history'. Such a movement is, surely, the Gnostics.

Our knowledge of the Gnostics has increased enormously since the discovery by Muhammed Ali al-Samman in 1945 of thirteen papyrus books, bound in leather, containing Gospels written by Gnostic poets around 120 to 150 AD. Some of the material, it has been argued, dates back before 60 AD; i.e. before Mark, the first of the synoptic Gospels. These documents were buried to protect them from the massive attempts by those having authority in the early Christian Church to persecute the Gnostics out of existence and to eliminate their texts. Some scholars are of the opinion that the Fourth Gospel is a Gnostic Gospel, included in the Canon because of the authority of the name of John and the misguided belief that the author was the Beloved Disciple.

The destruction of Gnostic texts was part of a struggle critical to the formation of early Christianity, and, until the discovery of these texts, we knew of the Gnostics only through references to their work in early Fathers such as Irenaeus and Hippolytus. The word 'Gnostic' derives from a Greek word for 'knowledge'. Greeks distinguished between 'didache', conveying knowledge by word of mouth or by reading; 'episteme', knowledge derived from observation; and 'gnosis' - knowledge gained through intuition and deep involvement or engagement with something. So in religious experience there was knowledge gained from reading books or hearing homilies about the life of the Spirit; and there was knowledge gained through actual attention to the life of the Spirit in the human soul. 'Gnosis' expressed transformation through loving relationship; the relationship between lovers, between musicians and their instruments, artists and their creative work, the gardener and the garden, the soul with its own depths.

The persuasive power of these extraordinary writings was much feared by the early Christian authorities. By the time of Emperor Constantine's conversion in 312 AD, when Christianity became the approved religion of the Roman Empire, the Gnostic texts were proscribed and it was a criminal offence to possess them. The Canon of the New Testament as we now know it had already been selected from the many gospels and letters claiming a right of inclusion.

Theodotus, a second century Gnostic teacher in Asia Minor, wrote a Gnostic was one who had come to understand:

who we were, and what we have become; where we were ... whither we are hastening; from what we are being released; what birth is and what is rebirth.

To know one's self, at the very deepest level of our inner being, was, simultaneously, to know God - this was the secret of Gnosis.

One of the greatest of the Gnostic poets, Monoimus, wrote:

Abandon search for God and the creation and other matters of a similar sort. Look for God by taking yourself as the starting point. Learn who it is within you who makes everything his own and says: 'My God, my mind, my thought, my soul, my body' Learn the sources of sorrow, joy, love, hate .. If you carefully investigate these matters you will find God in yourself.

According to the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas Jesus declared he was not the Master of his disciples, but that they could follow where he trod and know, in their own experience, the things he had discovered. In this Gospel Jesus ridicules those who thought of the Kingdom of God in literal terms:

Rather, the Kingdom is inside of you, and it is outside of you. When you come to know yourselves, then you will be known, and you will realise that you are the children of the living God. But if you will not know yourselves, then you dwell in poverty, and it is you who are that overtly.

Like teachers of prayer the world over, and like the modern depth psychologists, the Gnostic teachers saw the integration of

the personality, the transformation of the soul, as a process depending upon our co-operation with inner, or unconscious, healing powers, associated with the work of the Holy Spirit and known as 'the life of Grace' in Christian contemplative theology.

The Christians in authority within the early church believed Jesus was the Son of God in a unique way, quite distinct from any other human being; a specially selected God/Man, whose sacrifice on the Cross atoned for human sin - i.e. bought back our souls (redeemed us) from the Devil. The Gnostics, however, emphasised, like Unitarians today, the common humanity of Jesus. They believed, as Unitarians believe, that the Christ is incarnate in every human being. James Martineau, the great nineteenth century Unitarian theologian, considered the incarnation was not true of Jesus exclusively, but of all men and women universally. Jesus was one who became the Christ (realised the potentiality of the God image in the soul; "was filled with the Holy Spirit"), by discovering for himself the implications of the notion of the Christ as incarnate Logos - that inner Light which enlightens the souls of all folk everywhere.

The closing words of one of Martineau's best-loved prayers capture this theme of the renewal of the lost God or Christ image in the soul and is spiritually akin to the essential teachings of the Christian Gnostics, the later teachers of the life of prayer and, indeed, classical Christian theology unpolluted by the trivial world-view of much that went falsely under the grand name of 'orthodoxy':

In all things, draw us to the mind of Christ, that Thy lost image may be traced again, and Thou mayest own us as at one with him and Thee.

The Buddhist scholar, Edward Conze, believed the Gnostics were influenced by Buddhist teaching. Buddhists teach that the 'Diamond Body of the Buddha' indwells every human soul, just as classical Christian teachers, such as Saint Augustine, believed the God or Christ image - representing the totality of our human and divine potentiality - lay at the fundus of every human soul. Augustine called this indwelling 'image' an archetype (meaning imprinted from the beginning). It is a fascinating parallel in the History of Ideas that the modern depth psychologist, Carl.G. Jung, used this same term 'archetype' of

images appearing in dreams and visions, representing inherited human psychobiological potential. The image of the Christ (Feminine: Christa) or the Buddha, he believed, represented the inner Self, centre of unconsciousness, from which deep integrative or healing processes within the mind were derived. Many Unitarians have, in the twentieth century, found a particular affinity with Buddhist teachings.

Often in the history of the Christian Church there has been a clash between those who hold the authority of the church and its tradition is the ultimate authority in religious issues and those who have believed, along with the Gnostics and the Unitarians, the ultimate authority was the Holy Spirit of God, the inner Healing Power and Wisdom indwelling every human soul. For example, the great Welsh teacher of the spiritual life, a Benedictine, Father Augustine Baker, in the seventeenth century braved the censure of the Inquisition when he argued that in the internal ways of the spirit, God alone was our director. All teachers whatsoever, he argued in *Holy Wisdom*:

or external directors, or rules prescribed in books, etc., are no further nor otherwise to be followed or hearkened to, than as they are subordinate and conformable to the internal directions and inspirations of God's Holy Spirit ... so that it is God only that internally teaches both the teacher and disciple, and God's inspirations are the only lesson for both. All our light, therefore, is from divine illumination, and all our strength as to these things is from the divine operation of the Holy Spirit on our wills and affections.

Not surprisingly, Father Baker was summoned before the Inquisition. He died of the plague before the soldiers could take him.

The very early church appears to have enjoyed a rich variety of theological position, like the Unitarians of today, but by AD 200 Christianity had become a hierarchical institution of bishops, priests and deacons, who believed themselves guardians of the one and only true faith. What constituted the one and only true faith was, ironically, decided by majority vote and rejected viewpoints were then persecuted as heresies.

Gnosticism existed before Christianity, as a religion in its own right. Its roots were in the Mystery Religions of the Middle East and in Zoroastrianism. But it became much influenced by Christianity and had already fused with Judaism, so that there were, indeed, Gnostic Rabbis. With the rise of the influence of Christianity there was exchange and fusion between Christians and Gnostics until a form of Christian Gnosticism emerged producing its own gospels and richly symbolical poetic texts; it has been said of them, that they rationalised mythology. Freud and Jung, in the twentieth century, also taught us to rationalise mythology, restoring to us the wonderful psychological dramas of the human soul captured in mythology, by teaching us not to treat them literally, but as a form of universal dream, a rich dynamic representation of the inner world of the psyche and its struggles and vicissitudes. The interpretation of dreams, visions and myths requires a subtle interplay of reason and intuition.

There are other parallels between the Gnostics and modern Unitarians. Not only did the Gnostics believe Jesus was not God and emphasise the priority of the authority of experience, of the Spirit working in the human mind rather than external authorities of prelate or text or dogma, they also did not believe literally in the New Testament narrative. Rather, they followed the old pharisaic method of interpreting scripture allegorically (as, of course, did Saint Paul, Origen and Saint Augustine), recognising, for example, that the Birth or Christmas stories of the Virgin Birth, the Singing Angels, the Star and the Wise Men; and the Resurrection narrative, too, should be interpreted as myth or poetry. Resurrection, for example, meant restoration, personal renewal and transformation, rather than an event taking place out of space and time; the Kingdom of God symbolised a state of transformed consciousness.

Like the Unitarians the Gnostics had women priests and were concerned with sexual equality, celebrating God as both Mother and Father. Like the Unitarians they disliked fundamentalism. Like the Unitarians they were democratic in their church government. Like the Unitarians, they were denounced as 'unChristian heretics' by the orthodoxies of their time and bitterly persecuted.

It is true there were many Gnostic sects and differing teachings amongst them, as there were amongst the early Christians, and some teachings would certainly not appeal to most Unitarians, such as the sharp dualism claimed by many Gnostics between an evil world created by a Satanic demiurge and possible salvation through union with a good God; or the belief, maintained by some Gnostics, that Jesus did not have a real, fleshly body and, therefore, could not actually suffer at all.

When, however, one considers these and other marked differences between the Unitarians and the Gnostics, it is important to recognise that religious people in all times are also children of their own age. We could scarcely expect to discover in the second century AD a movement exactly paralleling our own in belief and custom. We have only to look back at the changes in Unitarian emphasis, spirit and milieu over the past century to see that most Unitarians today would be very uneasy with the Bible-centred, rather puritannical rationalism of our nineteenth century ancestors and far from happy with the fierce theist-humanist controversies of the mid-twentieth century. Our tolerant, liberalism, seeking affinities with people of other faiths and times has led to even more proliferation of emphasis amongst us - ranging between those deeply concerned to affirm and protect our Christian heritage and those who have formed the groups calling themselves Unitarian Buddhists and Unitarian Pagans.

Despite the differences between ourselves and the first and second century Gnostics, I believe the Gnostics are, nonetheless, genuine precursors of Unitarianism within Wilbur's terms inasmuch as they emphasised the universality of the incarnation and the humanity of Jesus, exercised tolerance, democracy and sexual equality and gave priority to the kind of knowledge which comes from our engagement with that Eternal Spirit indwelling every human soul.

Believing the incarnation is true of human souls universally and that Jesus is not uniquely the Child of God, but that we are all children of God, allows Unitarians to view other religious leaders without condescension. Unitarians recognise Jesus of Nazareth as a great religious poet and teacher, but they are also able to recognise the authority of other truly outstanding religious poets and teachers such as Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, and the

Taoist sage, Lao Tzu. Unitarians may read the scriptures of other faiths, their poetry and teaching stories, as readily as the Bible - not as somewhat secondary or inferior writings, but as valid and significant in their own right. This makes for a genuine tolerance and understanding of other religious traditions, providing a milieu in which we may meet and engage with people of different faiths as equals, as brothers and sisters in search of truth; and not as rivals.

## APPENDIX B:

### THE TRINITY

The life, death and teachings of Jesus presented the early church with enormous problems. Everyone believed something astonishing had happened, but how could they understand the significance of the ministry of Jesus and what were they to believe about Jesus? The doctrine of the Trinity was an attempt to answer these questions - to provide the church with a precise theological model through which to express and understand the mystery of the Christ and the relationship of the Christ to Jesus of Nazareth.

The word 'Christ' meant 'the anointed one' and is a Greek word used to translate the Hebrew 'Messiah', reflecting the belief that Jesus had fulfilled that role. He was the chosen one, elected to save all who turned to him, bringing in a new era; heralding new possibilities of relationship between God and humanity. Applied to Jesus it became a proper name - Jesus Christ.

The concept of the Christ had intertwined with another developing and highly significant concept deriving from Greek philosophy, that of the 'Logos' (translated literally as 'Word'). In the first Chapter of John's Gospel the concept of the Logos is applied to Jesus:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

The Logos was the 'breathed out thought' of God. Paul Tillich called it "the principle of the self-manifestation of God." This self-manifestation is God's manifestation not only within Creation, but God's self-manifestation, also, to God - i.e. God's self-consciousness. Pure consciousness remains pre-reflective, unconscious, without something to engage with and reflect upon. Greek thinkers, such as Plato and Parmenides, believed

the Logos indwelt every human soul and that the goal of the spiritual life was the discovery of the indwelling Logos and of one's essential, indestructible unity with it. Our consciousness and God's consciousness were essentially the same and in the mystical experience of God we became aware of the truth of this irrevocable unity with the Ground of our Being.

Origen's Christology absorbed the thought of these Greek philosophers in a powerful synthesis of philosophy and mysticism. Incidentally, Origen was a universalist, believing the Love of God was ultimately irresistible and would, therefore, eventually restore all souls to their natural destiny in union with God.

A baptismal creed, used by Christians at Caesarea, added a mystical formulae from Origen:

We believe in Jesus Christ, the Logos of God, God from God, Light from Light, Life from Life, first-born of all creatures, generated out of the Father before all generations.

Christian theologians struggled to make meaning of the life and death of Jesus in ways that would allow them to identify Jesus with the concepts of the Christ and the Logos. How could they reconcile the presence of the human and the divine in one person? Had God come down to earth to inhabit a human body? If so, did this happen at birth, as some Christians believed, before birth as others believed, or at the baptism by John at the River Jordan, as yet other Christians believed? Was his body even real? Did Jesus have two souls and two consciousnesses - one that of a human and the other of God? Was he really two persons? Did he have an independent will and intellect? Could he err? Was Jesus equal to God or subservient to God? Was he of the same nature or substance as God or was he different? What was his position on the celestial hierarchy of angels, archangels, seraphim and cherubim? How did Jesus relate to the Holy Spirit? Was he superior or inferior to the Holy Spirit? Had Jesus existed within God always or was he a creature, generated by God?

What emerged from this intellectual conflict was not one doctrine of the Trinity, but many - the doctrine of the Trinity

by the Monarchians and Modalists, the one by Origen, the one by Irenaeus, the one by Tertullian, the one by Nestorius and so on. It was Constantine who brought the whole debate into focus at the Council of Nicaea in Bythnia in the summer of 325 AD. Constantine had hoped that in Christianity he had found a religion to bind the empire together and cement over the deepening cracks of dissension. To his horror he found not a united Christendom, but one deeply divided in its Christology. He insisted the three hundred bishops attending at Nicaea should reach unanimity, or at least a majority concensus on the Trinity.

Eusebius at first won general assent with his Caesarean Creed, using the word 'homoousion' (one substance), a word possibly suggested by the Emperor, to describe the relationship between Jesus Christ and God:

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible (i.e. spiritual), and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father, that is of the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through Whom all things were made, those things that are in heaven and those things that are on earth, who for us and for our salvation came down and was made flesh, suffered, rose again on the third day, ascended into the heavens, and will come to judge the living and the dead.

All was going well, it seemed, until Arius of Alexandria offered an alternative statement using the word 'homoiousion' (like substance) in place of 'homoousion'. Sydney Herbert Mellone, a Unitarian historian, described Arius, in his *Leaders of Early Christian Thought*, as a great propagandist, who won much support for his point of view. The whole debate, cynics have been wont to say, hung on the use or abandonment of the smallest letter in the Greek alphabet - 'i' (iota). However, the voting went against Arius in favour of a creed by Athanasius, which appears still in the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England:

Whosoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith. Which faith except every



one do keep whole and undefiled: without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the Catholic faith is this: that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons: nor dividing the Substance ... So the Father is God, the Son is God: and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods: but one God ... Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation: that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right faith is, that we believe and confess: that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; God of the Substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds: and Man, of the Substance of his Mother, born in the world; Perfect God, and perfect Man: of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting; Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead: and inferior to the Father, as touching his Manhood. Who although he be God and Man: yet he is not two, but one Christ; One; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh: but by taking of the Manhood into God ... Who suffered for our salvation: descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty: from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

Most Unitarians would find no more affinity with this creed than they would with Gnostic concerns with emanations, phantom bodies and moral dualisms. But if we pick our way carefully amongst the words, remembering what these early theologians were trying to do and keeping firmly in mind the original significances of the concepts of the Christ and the Logos, there are issues here worthy of our serious attention and of great importance to Unitarians and to their history.

Four vital issues arose out of the decision at Nicaea. Firstly, from now on the unity of the church is identical with the majority of the bishops. Christianity is no longer a democratic movement. Secondly, Arius and his followers are banned and persecuted. The bishops now decide what is and what is not the one true faith and may pursue to the death anyone who speaks out against their consensus. Thirdly, the church has become a state church; religion and politics are now inextricably intertwined. Fourthly, Jesus emerges as God and Man - a man who became God; in some sense at one with God. Jesus

avoids the fate of becoming a half-god, a god like the gods of Olympus. His divinity belongs to his nature. At the same time, however, Jesus is identified with the Christ (i.e. with the Son/Child, the Logos), in a way that appears to make him totally, uniquely different from any other human being.

Unitarians have fought and taught against these four issues throughout our history. We believe in a democratic, non-hierarchical system of church government; we believe in extending tolerance and understanding to people who do not share our particular theological opinions and we are utterly opposed to religious persecution or intimidation of any kind; we believe religious teaching should have radical practical application in politics in concern for the poor and the underprivileged and in the creation of a fairer, juster, more equal world, but we do not believe in the marriage of any particular church and the state; we believe in the humanity of Jesus, in Jesus as a great religious teacher and poet; and most of us, I think, also believe in the incarnation, though not uniquely in the person of Jesus.

The Logos doctrine emerged out of the synthesis of Greek and Eastern philosophy. The *Vedanta* of India also engages a concept of incarnation, the theory of Avatara, within a doctrine of the Trinity - the Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Krishna, the human embodiment of Vishnu, the Second Person of the Trinity, who appears to Arjuna in the *Bhagavadgita*, is an Avatarana. Rhadakrishnan, discussing the Hindu Trinity in his commentary on the Gita, wrote that God "with His creative ideas" (Logoi) is Brahma. God Who pours out Love is Vishnu, perpetually at work saving the world. And, he wrote:

When the conceptual becomes the cosmic and when heaven is established on earth, we have the fulfilment represented by Shiva.

God, he says, is at the same time wisdom, love and perfection. The three functions cannot be torn apart. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva were fundamentally one, though conceived as three persons. Yoga was the technique through which the Jivatmen (surface self) came to a knowledge of its union with the Paramatmen (deep unconscious, potential Self) and with Brahman (the Ground and Root of their Being).

Many Unitarians would find the Hindu Trinity acceptable, though deeply offended by the Athanasian Creed. There are ways, however, of approaching the doctrine of the Trinity which are compatible with the Unitarian position. It is, indeed, important that we find an acceptable way of interpreting the theology of the Trinity since the existential issues raised by the doctrine are of central concern to all the great religions of the world. What is human nature, what is the nature of God, how God interacts with human beings and the stature of our greatest religious teachers are basic questions which tax the intellect and imagination of all earnest seekers after truth in whatever religious tradition they may find themselves.

At Zurich in 1948 Jung published his revised paper on *A Psychological Approach to the Doctrine of the Trinity*, pointing out how the Trinity appeared in various forms in all the great religions of the world and also in the ancient religions of Egypt and Greece. He quarrelled with the doctrine as a core model for the psyche as it did not include the Fourth, the principle of Evil. A quaternity, he believed, was a more satisfactory symbol of wholeness and the unity of life. Jung also found the classical Athanasian Trinity offensive because of its exclusion of the Feminine Principle, which he believed had found covert expression through the image of the Virgin Mary.

The members of the Trinity were, for Jung, archetypes of the Mother/Father (the Ground of Being), the Child (psychobiological potential - the Son/Christ/Logos) and the creative, integrative power in the psyche flowing from our potential (Eros/Holy Spirit). The Christ/a was an archetype of the Self. This archetype constellated around Jesus (as it did around the Buddha in the East), who thus realised the idea of the Self, described by Jung as "the psychic totality of the individual". The goal of the individuation process (by which we realise our unique individual potentiality) was the union of the Ego (self with a small 's') with this unconscious Self. The goal of psychological as well as biological development was Self-realisation. But since we knew our own self only as an Ego, he wrote, and the Self, as a totality, was indescribable and indistinguishable from a God-image, self-realisation in religious language amounted to God's incarnation.

This was expressed, Jung believed, in theology by the declaration of Christ as the Child of God. The ordinary, surface self or Ego, becomes burdened on the religious quest, with the fate of losing itself in the greater dimension of the Christ image in the soul and being robbed, thereby, of the delusion of freedom of will and separateness. This 'loss of self', this surrender to the God/Self within, was an heroic and often tragic task - the most difficult of all, involving a passion of the Ego (as the Gnostics had declared). The life of Jesus had become a paradigm for the spiritual journey everyone must take towards the realisation of that Christ-like potentiality innately present in us all. The Trinity thus becomes a psychological model of the basic structure and dynamics of the psyche, providing a conceptual base from which to elaborate our understanding of that journey; as well as a theological model of the Nature of God.

The Trinity embodies in a single model, extraordinarily profound and complex philosophical, psychological and theological ideas. There is God, the Ground of our Being, Pure Consciousness, becoming Self-reflective through the Logos or Christ/a in Creation; and there is the creative, restoring power generated by that Logos or Christ/a at work in Creation. We may co-operate with that restoring power as it operates in the depths of our minds, drawing us towards 'what we have it in us to become'; or we may stand divided, split against it; which is the condition theologians have understood as Evil or Sin. The doctrine of the Trinity attempts to express the mystery of the relationship between the Eternal and the Temporal, between God and humanity; it provides a theoretical base from which to approach the highly intuitive, positively mystical experience of human beings - the problems raised, for example, by ecstasy and possession.

There are parallels in other disciplines than theology, of course: in psychology there is the struggle to understand the relationship between conscious and unconscious elements of the mind; and in physics there is the attempt to understand how a universe conforming to the general theory of relativity can possibly relate to the astonishing universe emerging for us as we engage with relativity and quantum theory.

Hopefully, it will be clear from this discussion, that it is perfectly possible, indeed theologically necessary for us, to elaborate a doctrine of the Trinity acceptable to Unitarians; one that does not offend against our traditional principles as elaborated by Earl Morse Wilbur. Unitarians are not Anti-trinitarians per se, but 'anti' various unacceptable versions of the Trinity, which do offend against the spirit of our movement. A Unitarian doctrine of the Trinity would preserve the humanity of Jesus, affirm the reality of the indwelling God and the creative power of God's Spirit and recognise salvation not as the result of a bloody sacrifice made by Jesus on the Cross, but in consequence of our travelling the inward journey of the life of Grace and discovering for ourselves the mysterious and wondrous resources of the human soul. Jesus, as the Christ, would then represent, like the Buddha, the ideal of the truly enlightened person who has made this journey and, losing the self, discovered who they really were; thus becoming in our world, a light to enlighten all who will walk by it.

Unitarians first rejected the Athanasian Trinity on the grounds that it was not in accord with the text of the Bible. They believed, quite rightly I think, that many of the assertions in the Creed about Jesus, especially the claim that Jesus was God, were not consonant with the contents of the synoptic Gospels. This position, however, is now an anachronism amongst us since it gave an authority to the Bible, which Unitarians are no longer willing to allow. Perhaps the time has come to return to our spiritual origins and view the language of dogma and the creeds, even the creed of Athanasius, as poetic symbol, attempting to capture not literal or 'somatic' truth, as Origen would have put it, but spiritual or existential truth - to use the allegorical method in the interpretation, even, of dogma and creed

Unitarians do not at all wish to make Jesus a figure of insignificance. On the contrary, to most of us, including myself, his life and teachings are a continuous source of inspiration, astonishment and deep delight. His sayings and stories, the paradigm of his life, speak ever more richly to mind and heart as the years go by. The integrity of person, the incredible matching of life and language challenge to the core of our being. Who can but admire his example in speaking out for the poor and despised, the underprivileged and socially unacceptable people of his day; his liberal, open attitudes

towards women; his compassion; and his single-minded courage in risking his life for a new way of understanding our relationship with God and creation? He is, assuredly, amongst the greatest of the children of God; a beautiful poetic genius who lived out the wisdom he taught.

Jesus the Christ becomes so much more significant as a real, human person; more inspiring and convincing as another human being, struggling with God and humanity as we do, rather than as a god whose humanity is consequently a facade, quite different from ours. The way to Salvation, wholeness of person, is revealed in the paradigm of the life and teachings of Jesus. Its flower is the experience of union or nirvana, where we shed the delusions of time and separateness.

The doctrine of the Trinity is so much more meaningful and challenging when applied not exclusively to Jesus of Nazareth, but, as Augustine taught in *The Trinity*, used as a dynamic model descriptive both of the Nature of God and of the psyche of every human being. The incarnation is true then, as Martineau declared for us, not of Jesus exclusively, but of all humanity universally. That same Christ/a, made manifest in Jesus, indwells us all, offering each one of us the same possibility of union with God, described by Scholastics, such as Saint John of the Cross, as the hypostatical union of the soul with God.

Clearly, all human beings, whilst essentially one person, possess many personae. I adopt a different persona in different relationships with my intimates, with my colleagues, with my children, with my parents, with my dentist; in phantasy and reality, unconsciously and wittingly - but remain one person. So God, whilst also able to adopt not merely three, but, as it seems to the student of comparative religious experience, many personae, remains essentially One.

A fascinating account of the relationships between the Persons of the Trinity - the Trinity as a psychodynamic model for the Nature of God - is given by the brilliant nineteenth century Unitarian thinker, Philip Henry Wicksteed, in *The Reactions Between Dogma and Philosophy*, where Wicksteed elaborates the thought of Aquinas. Wicksteed, incidentally, was minister

at Old Chapel, Dukinfield, between 1870 and 1874. Wicksteed wrote:

The 'Word' then proceeds from the 'intellective power' in the being of God, and its content is God himself. We distinguish between the powers of our minds and our minds themselves, but this is only because we cannot grasp the essential being and nature of our minds. In God we must suppose the 'intellective power', that begets the 'Word', to be no other than his very self or essence. But if I think of myself, my thought is distinguishable from the intellective power which begets it, and the distinction asserts itself to me as something 'real', that actually is, however completely identical the thought and the thinker (who is also the object of the thought) may be. Our minds cannot choose but carry up this sense of a real distinction into our conception of intelligence as such, and it in no way qualifies our sense of unity. Thus both a distinction and a relation, between the source of thought and the thought, a kind of paternity and sonship, necessarily enters into our conception of deity ...

The 'Word' proceeds from its Divine Source, says Wicksteed, and a real intrinsic relation distinguishes them from each other. Yet they are like, not with the imperfect likeness of an earthly parent and child, but with the perfect and essential unity of identity and substance.

## APPENDIX: C

### THE ALLEGORICAL METHOD

One important consequence of the long history of Biblical criticism was that theologians were no longer able to treat the narrative of the Bible Stories as 'historical fact' in the modern sense of that expression. We came to recognise that a large proportion of the Old and New Testament text was myth. To say it was myth was not to devalue it, but, on the contrary, to recognise its spiritual poetic power. Examining the myths of different religions and cultures has helped us to see that myths are ways of giving meaning to human experience, of making sense of ourselves and the world we live in. Some myths, like the Oedipal myth which Freud elaborated, speak profoundly about our universal human fate and experience.

The myth of the Birth Stories in the New Testament are especially rich in symbolism and content, much of which is clearly borrowed from other sources - like the coming of the Great Star, a motif used amongst the Romans for heralding the birth of someone who will be especially significant for our world. The Birth Stories lend themselves to many different allegorical interpretations, but here, in this appendix, I offer just one to illustrate this ancient method of approaching Biblical material.

The Christmas story presents a polarisation - on the one hand is the Baby Jesus, representing the Christ Child, symbol of our human potentiality, supported by shepherds, angels, wise kings and, above all, by loving parents ("he saw a newborn infant," said Hippolytus of the Gnostic, Valentinus, "and when he asked who he might be, the child answered, 'I am the Logos'"); on the other hand is Herod and his minions, soldiers who are willing to murder children in their beds (symbols of the powers-that-be; of the Ego/Super Ego alliance; of the tyranny of the surface 'self' within the soul). Herod initiates the Massacre of Innocents. Yet Herod, too, was once a baby; the Christ Child (the Logos), is present also in him, as it is in everyone - and the Christ Child is present (incarnate) also, in the soldiers, who are willing to commit murder.

Why does Jesus grow into the stature of a beautiful adult, so that the glorious potentiality of the Christ Child is recognisable,

whereas Herod grows into a murderer, tyrant and sadist? Out of the same human potential something very different has arisen.

We say, well, Jesus was Good and Herod was Evil. But what does evil mean? It means, as the myth informs us, to be divided against the Christ Child, i.e. split off from my potentiality as a human being. Evil is the dangerous sourness of life split against itself. Jesus becomes Whole (holy) and beautiful; Herod becomes split, divided, evil and ugly. Why?

To answer that question we have to see evil is something I am, not something I do. Evil deeds are the signs, the outward evidence, obvious evidence of inward disorder. Evil, of course, is not always obvious. Jesus, indeed, said we were all evil and that no-one, including himself, was good - except God. We are all somewhat split or separated from our potentiality, the glory we have it in us to become: "Your righteousnesses are as filthy rags!" How that must have hurt people who liked to count themselves good, even something special - "not like this tax-collector!?" People enjoy living on high moral ground, from which they may condemn others, play the blaming game, because they are under inward pressure to dissociate themselves from their own error (sinfulness). It is this splitting under the education of social conditioning that produces evil. Jesus has managed to become free from this conditioning; whereas, Herod, alas, like most of us, has not. Becoming free from that conditioning and discovering the power, the Spirit, that flows from the inner Christ Child, is the universal religious quest to which we are all called by the Christmas message.

Recently two boys in puberty were convicted of the abduction and murder in Liverpool of a small child, James Bulger. A friend of mine lives in the area where these children lived. Her son, in his late twenties, also brought up in that area, said: "They should be tortured and strung up. I wouldn't have done that when I was eleven years old." Do you recognise the distancing taking place here and the identification of James with his own small child? I am good and they are evil, he is saying, along with many other people, of course.

"Bring back the stocks and the birch," said one Member of Parliament - I am good, they are evil. "They knew right from

wrong." Of course they did. "The church is not teaching right from wrong," he accused in the very next breath. But the children knew right from wrong. Not that the church gets much chance to teach anything - and what it does teach is not popular. People do not want to hear we are all sinners - there but for the grace of God go any of us. People want to hear plenty of blame thrown about; plenty of aggressive expression of sadism. Whose side are they really on - that of the Christ Child or that of Herod? Forgive, says Jesus, forgive seventy times seven. Love your enemies - throw a stone only if you are without sin yourself. That would be even more dangerous now than it was then - since clearly a lot of people are absolutely sure they are without sin!. "Father forgive them for they know not what they do?" But they knew right from wrong, didn't they? They knew it was wrong to crucify people, didn't they?

They believed, of course, that their horrific, sadistic cruelty was justified because the Christ Child grown up was evil - because the Christ Child grown up was teaching things they didn't want to hear - like helping your enemies, the Samaritans; being compassionate towards the occupying army; saying God loved everyone and that we should do likewise. Herod (symbol of the Ego-Super Ego liaison) desires to murder the Christ Child because that Christ Child (Id figure) will be his undoing. Herod is controlling master of his world (the surface, conscious world of the Ego system) and the birth of the Christ Child threatens his dominion. So it is in all of us. We have to give up our vaunted autonomy to the movement of the Spirit if we are to become free - and the Spirit blows where it will. Who knows where it comes from or where it may go?

My friend says 3-4 year olds, in Liverpool, where she lives, throw stones at people's ankles and then run away. She and some colleagues maintain a half-way house for children in the area - children who regularly spend nights sleeping in telephone booths, kicked out by parents. She hears people say: "They should kick the parents out as well, so they can have a taste of it." These children, of course, will grow up to be the kind of parents who kick out their children in turn. "Aren't we all responsible for what we do?" Who can deny it? "Do we not all know right from wrong, unless insane or badly brain damaged?" Yes, we do. "Then we should 'crucify' or 'massacre' people who

offend against us - against what we see as right and wrong? They should suffer." The logic is inexorable.

One in seven children in the city run away from home. One in seven teenagers in the area commit suicide. The Samaritans tell us that every three and a half hours 150 people in Britain think of suicide and two actually do it. They receive one call every 12 seconds. Over Christmas, as we celebrate the birth of the Christ Child - that is between Christmas Eve and Holy Innocents Day (the festival commemorating the massacre) - they will receive eight thousand calls a day.

A big clue to whether we become whole or whether we become evil, or of the extent to which we become evil, is given in the myth - the ability of parents to care and be aware of their children and to express their love for them: the resources they have for doing that. And, clearly, it has not to do ultimately with wealth or poverty; but with the resources within themselves - which deprivation, of course, may undermine and demolish.

We are a very unhappy society. We just don't like to face it; we especially don't like to face what we do with our children; we especially don't like to face at Christmas - Happy Family Time - what we do with our children. So we concentrate on the plum pudding, the tinsel and the presents and don't strain our imagination wondering what might be the spiritual significance of the Christmas myth. It is so much easier to place the story in the past, and literalise it as a historical event in the life of Jesus, rather than as part of a myth as relevant to our modern situation as it was two thousand years ago.

What is the explanation of evil? Our Member for Parliament, intent on distancing himself from the problems, played the blaming game again - it is caused by Video nasties, by lack of discipline at home. We should introduce, he said, harsher legislation to deter - the birch, harsher prisons, stocks, hanging. Now, who is speaking here? "Kill the little bastards! Give them some pain!" Who is speaking here? Is it the Christ Child or is it Herod?

We're all in the same boat, is what Jesus says. We should have compassion for those trapped in an evil net and recognise where

the sadism comes from and how much we all share of it. Instead of distancing ourselves from the ills of the world, the Christ Child tells us how much we are all a part of it, and yet also part of the good of the world; the world's hope lies in our essential nature, corrupted though it may become; hope lies in the promise of its restoration into the glory we have it in us to become - Christ-like. Out of the greatest darkness, light may shine; in the midst of death we are in life; out of winter will rise the spring; from the tomb emerges the life of resurrection (transformed consciousness).

Herod cannot destroy that child, though he may inhibit it. The Christ Child is forced into Exile in Egypt, the traditional 'land of Bondage'. But every year, the hope of its return, its home-coming, is reaffirmed at Christmas, when the recurring presence of the myth asks us to choose whose side we are on - that of Herod or that of the Christ? Herod demands blood, the Christ Child demands forgiveness. If we listen to the Christ/a we promote the things the Christ/a stands for; if we do not listen to the Christ/a we promote the things Herod stands for: "Those who are not with me are against me."

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## APPENDIX E:

### GLOSSARY

**ALLEGORICAL** There are four classical ways of approaching Biblical material. In the case, for example, of the story of the Gathering in of Fish (Lk 6 and John 21), when the disciples fished without success, but gathered a full net when they lowered their nets at the direction of Christ, one may: a) take it literally and believe there was a miracle - that Jesus somehow produced the fish b) discount it entirely, as totally incredible c) rationalise the text by suggesting, perhaps, that from his vantage point Jesus could see a shoal of fish beneath the boat, which the fishermen could not see and d) treat the story as allegory, symbolising the ability of the Christ to draw all kinds and conditions of souls into the net of the Church, which will not break under the strain (153 fish (Jn 21) was the number of known species of fish at that time). The Allegorical Method was a method of interpreting scripture as if it were myth or poetry, much in the way we interpret dreams.

**ALTER EGO** is our other self, our complementary inner Twin, the unconscious counterpart to the Ego.

**ANABAPTISTS** were Christians who did not believe in baptising children, but in adult or 'believer's' baptism. Servetus and Faustus Socinus both believed in adult baptism. The Anabaptists were bitterly persecuted and tens of thousands of them were put to death.

**ANIMA** is the name given by Jung to the feminine principle, to the active image of femininity in the mind, represented by female figures in our dreams and containing lost, complementary, potential aspects of the self.

**ANIMUS** is the name given by Jung to the masculine principle, to the active image of masculinity in the mind, represented by male figures in our dreams and also containing lost, complementary and potential aspects of the self. Like Yin and Yang in ancient Chinese texts, the anima and animus represent complementary opposites within human nature. These complementary aspects have to do with our sense of gender,

with the complements of passivity and activity, of intuition and reason, of nurturing and pressing for individual expression, of instinctual and socialised sides of our nature and so on.

**ARCHETYPE** is a term used in the writings of Augustine, later taken over by Jung, meaning something imprinted in the mind from the beginning. Archetypes make their presence felt in our dreaming world in powerful natural images such as the sea, symbol of life and the unconscious; the eagle as symbol of the flight of reason and imagination; the Mother or Father as symbols of motherhood and fatherhood and so on. The Anima and Animus are also archetypes. The God or Christ image is also an archetype. Archetypes represent psychobiological potential inherited universally by all human beings and appearing in common images in the myths of all cultures.

**ARIAN** was the name given to followers of Arius, a fourth century theologian, who contended with Athanasius at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. Arius maintained that Jesus Christ was not of the same substance as God, and was not co-eternal with God; but was created by God as an instrument for the creation and salvation of the world.

After Nicaea it became a condemned heresy.

**ARMINIANS** were named after Jacobus Arminius, a sixteenth century Dutch Reformer, who was offended at the teachings of predestination by the followers of Calvin. They affirmed that human beings had authentic free will and that Christ died for everyone and not merely for a selected group of people, who had been elected by God.

**ATHANASIUS** was a fourth century bishop, whose credal statement was accepted by majority vote at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. It is now found in the Book of Common Prayer and known as The Athanasian Creed. The Athanasian statement about the Trinity became the official line of the Christian Church and Trinitarianism became identified with holding to this creed. Anti-Trinitarianism became synonymous with the non-acceptance of the Athanasian Creed - although, of course, there were, in fact several varieties of the Trinitarian formula.



ATONEMENT (i.e. 'at-one-ment') refers to the reconciliation of human beings with God through the sacrificial death of Jesus. There are different variations on the doctrine of the atonement. In its crudest form it taught that God offered the perfect, sinless soul of Christ in exchange for the sinful souls of human beings. The Devil accepted the bargain, only to find he had been tricked, since he could not hold the soul of Christ. The sacrifice of Christ was like the ancient sacrifice of goats on the altar of the Temple - a blood-offering to God in exchange for pardon and favour.

AUTISM is the name given to a mental condition in which a person is caught up completely in their own phantasy world, in their own image-making. By AUTISTIC POCKET is meant the general habit amongst us, of living in our thought processes, especially in the use of words in the mind, which tends to rob us of direct perception of our world.

CALVINISM is the name given to a theological system deriving mainly from *The Institutes* of John Calvin, the 16th Century Protestant theologian, claiming Scripture as the ultimate authority directing our faith. Human beings no longer had free will, since the Fall. Faith was the assurance of personal salvation, entirely the gift of God, and already predestined by God - so that some humans are predestined to eternal damnation and some to eternal salvation.

CHRISTOLOGY is the study or 'science' of the Christ. It is an aspect of theology which deals specifically with the nature of the Christ (Feminine: Christa) and the relationship of the Christ to Jesus, God and humanity. The word 'Christ' meant the anointed or promised one. It was often associated with the Jewish notion of a Messiah and with the Greek idea of the Logos or Word.

CONTEMPLATIVE Prayer is an attempt to still the mind and rid it of the imagery of language. Unlike meditation, which is usually a thinking about something or other, contemplative prayer is designed to contemplate only one thing - a part of the body, or a flower, or a word or phrase until the person can move from this stage to one that requires no point of recollection. Contemplative writers describe the journey of prayer and the spiritual development of the personality -

requiring attention to motive and to the interior direction of one's own Spirit - often in ways that are paralleled in modern psychotherapy.

DARK NIGHTS are the periods of intense struggle with despair and anxiety, with meaninglessness and hopelessness, with the loss of identity, with growing inability to take joy in the world of the senses, which people may go through in contemplative prayer and in psychotherapy and counselling.

DEMYTHOLOGISING means recognising the myths in the Biblical, especially New Testament, texts and treating them as symbolical of the life of the Spirit and our relationship with Christ, rather than as accounts of historical events. The term is especially linked with the name of a modern theologian, Rudolf Bultmann.

DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY is the name given to that area of psychological research which examines the human mind 'at depth', concerning itself with the life of the Unconscious, with motivation, dream interpretation, psychological development from infancy to old age, the problems of identity and of mental disorder. The various schools of Depth Psychology - Jungian, Freudian, Gestalt, Transactional, etc. - are often referred to as 'psychodynamic psychologies'.

DEVIL is the archetypal spirit of division in the psyche.

DOLMENIC MOUNDS were places where ancient people buried their dead in a special chamber marked by a stone or an arrangement of stones. The Druids liked to build them where there was a well or spring and frequently they became places associated with healing and pilgrimage. Sometimes they were believed to mark ley lines, where telluric currents of energy passed. Often the water was used by Druids for services of baptism.

EGO, meaning 'I'. A word used to denote the centre of consciousness or to represent my sense of 'self', my identity. Sometimes meaning consciousness pure and simple, a pre-reflective consciousness.

EROS is one of the Greek words for love. It was creative, sensual, passionate love; the force behind the attraction of lovers, but also behind the creative power of artists, of gardeners say, or the feelings of a mother for her child. Freud chose it to name the life-giving, creative and healing agent in the psyche - the self-regulative or integrative factors within the psyche - which the contemplatives called the Holy Spirit.

EVIL is life divided against itself; the sour corruptness arising out of the splitting off of areas of the psyche - the repression of unacceptable parts of the mind, such as anger or sexuality. The working out of the effects of alienation in the world.

EXEGESIS is the exposition and interpretation of scripture using the methods of linguistic scholarship and historical research.

EXISTENTIALISM is a kind of philosophy which gives priority to consciousness and the experience of consciousness; whereas some philosophical systems give priority to the material world we know through our senses. To materialistic philosophies a gate post is real, but the imagination is not; nor is our love, our dreams or our experience of God. According to existentialist philosophies, ancient and modern, we may exist in different categories of existence at the same time - as father, lover, bus conductor, dreamer, thinker, etc. Any one kind of existence may be referred to as an EXISTENZ. Sometimes I may be unaware, unconscious, of particular existenz - my repressed grief or rage, for example; my early infancy; the way I exist to others and so on.

FEMINIST THEOLOGY is an aspect of theological thinking deeply concerned with the ways in which religious language has reflected and perpetuated the subjugation of women - such as referring always to God as Father, King or Lord; creating hierarchies in which women always play menial roles; and so on.

GNOSTICS deriving from one of the Greek words for knowledge - the kind of knowledge which comes from intimate engagement with something. Christian Gnosticism was a religious movement coming into strong prominence in the second century AD. Gnosis represented the revealed knowledge of God.

They were bitterly persecuted and their writings proscribed. Read Appendix A for detailed information.

GRACE is the process of healing. It is the gift of the Spirit or the product of co-operation between the Ego and its depths, arising spontaneously within the psyche and giving the person a sense of growing or changing.

HOLY SPIRIT - the active agent of the healing power of God, indwelling the soul. See EROS above.

HUMANISM was a form of religious thinking which put human beings at its centre. Sometimes it was non-theistic, but not always. Humanists made positive, affirmative statements about human nature, believing, often, that we could create a harmonious world if we were true to the best we have known and heard.

HYPOSTATICAL UNION is the union of the soul with God; the integration of surface and depth; the spiritual marriage of the Ego and the Id.

HYSTERIA is from the Greek word for womb and was first used by Hippocrates to define the symptoms he recognised commonly in unfulfilled women. It has come to be used of symptoms which express, often symbolically, unconscious problems - such as anorexia, amnesia, vertigo or paralysis; conditions where people are overwhelmed to the point of dramatically acting out feelings which cannot find direct forms of expression, because of a tyrannical super ego. The symptoms of hysteria occur, still, where unfulfilled aspects of men & women are struggling, against our defences, for freedom and truth.

ICONOCLAST is a word meaning to break images. It is used sometimes of people who were hostile to icons or any use of images in church or chapel and sometimes it is used of unconventional, revolutionary figures, who smashed the conventional images by which people lived their lives.

ID is the name given by Freud to the Unconscious, especially to the organising centre of the unconscious. Das Id - meaning 'the It'.

INDEPENDENT was another name for Congregationalist - an upholder of the independent autonomy of each local congregation.

INDIVIDUATION is the name given by Jung to the process of psychological maturation, of 'becoming a complete individual' in one's own right. INTEGRATION has a similar meaning and refers to the coming together, the integrating of previously dissociated, split off parts of the mind.

JIVATMEN is the Hindu term for the surface self or Ego.

JUSTIFICATION - its root meaning is 'to restore'. Some theologians have believed we are restored through the things we do, i.e. 'by Works' (a position known as Pelagianism, after an English monk called Pelagius); others, like Paul and Luther, believed we were restored through Faith (i.e. trust in the Grace, the interior healing Power of God's Spirit - Eros).

KYRYGMA or KERYGMA (preaching or proclamation) is the name given to the proclamation of the standard, classical teaching of the early church.

LOGOS means literally 'Word'. It had a long use in philosophy before the time of Jesus and was used to refer to the 'Word' as the 'breathed out plan of God' - Spirit in action; the incarnation of Wisdom; the deepest intention of the psyche's Core. In John's Gospel the term was applied to Jesus as the Christ. The Christ was the Logos incarnate. The Logos is our psychobiological potentiality, indwelling us as the oak indwells the acorn.

LOLLARD was the name given originally to a follower of Wycliffe, but later the name was applied vaguely to anyone seriously critical of the Church. It originally meant a 'chanter'.

MANDALA is a symbol of wholeness or completeness. The most common, universal and simplest form was a circle with a cross through it, like the Celtic Cross. The circle stood for eternity and the cross for the four corners of the earth; the circle for spirit and eternity (hence the use of the ring in marriage) and the cross (or square) for matter and flesh. The squaring of the circle, representing the bringing together of spirit and

matter, produced the hexagon shape, used for baptistries and fonts.

MEDITATION originally meant a kind of meditative prayer, a half way house between discursive, spoken prayer and contemplative prayer. But often it is used now to mean contemplative prayer as well.

MARTHA AND MARY were names used by the contemplatives to distinguish the active and contemplative sides of human nature.

METANOIA is a Greek word, used in the New Testament, where it is usually translated 'repentance'. It meant to change the mind or even to turn the mind upside down - a radical shift in the balance of the mind, in its values and intentions, its perception of itself and the world.

MODALISM - a form of the Trinity maintaining the distinctions of the Persons was only transient and not permanent.

MONARCHIANISM - a form of the Trinity maintaining Jesus was divine only inasmuch as the Power of God was with his human person.

MYSTERY RELIGIONS were religions with followers in the Mediterranean area existing before Christianity, who believed their rites would assist people to experience the mystery of rebirth and the transformation of the soul understood as a prelude to a sharing in a resurrection.

MYSTICISM refers to the theology and psychology of MYSTICS; people who experienced union with God; for whom the twin delusions of Time and Separateness have disappeared.

MYTH is a kind of universal dream; a narrative handed down generation by generation which contains spiritual or allegorical truth, psychological truth, about human nature.

NESTORIANISM - a form of the Trinity maintaining Jesus was two Persons - one human and one divine.

NIRVANA - the cessation of desire; reaching union with our own depths; losing the delusions of Time and Separateness; literally to snuff out, as with a candle's flame. To be completely still.

OEDIPAL derives from Oedipus the hero of the Greek myth, which Sophocles made into a play. It represents the universal experience of abandonment and the tragic inter-relations of the parent-child triangle of mother, father and child. The name was given to the OEDIPAL POSITION, the stage between about two and a half and five years old, when this triangle is being shaped and the Ego Ideal (the notion of who I should be and how I should behave) being established. OEDIPAL EXPECTATIONS refers to the hope of affirmation, of winning over the parent of the opposite sex if I adhere to the Ego Ideal and the OEDIPAL SANCTIONS refers to the fears (perhaps of castration, but primarily of abandonment) if I do not live up to that Ideal - it is one root basis of the super ego and of conscience.

ORTHODOX, meaning literally 'correct' and referring to the 'official line'.

OTHER may refer to God as the Other, or everything that is Other than me in the outside world or in the interior world of the mind.

PARACLETE - the Comforter; a name for the Holy Spirit.

PARADIGM - a model, an example or a pattern.

PARAMATMEN is the name given in Hinduism to the deep centre of the psyche, the indwelling God, the deep Self.

PARANOID SCHIZOID POSITION was the name given by Melanie Klein to the developmental phase of our lives between four and eighteen months of age. She believed that bad handling at this stage was most important in the development of later pathology. Our sense of self was 'split' at this stage and we developed paranoid feelings of persecution, which remained with us unmodified unless future experience corrected them.

PATRIPASSIANISM - the teaching that God, as Jesus, suffered.

PERSONA comes from the Greek for an acting mask. It is the surface self I have cultivated and present to the world.

PLURALISM - a recognition that the essential religious truths are found in all the great religions of the world, a respect for these different faiths, and a serious attempt to use the insight of their poets in our own thinking and worship.

PREDESTINATION - the belief that our future is already laid down from the beginning of Time. The Calvinist's believed God knew from the beginning of Time which of us would suffer eternal damnation and which of us would find our way into heaven.

PRESBYTERIAN - a form of church organisation where the local church was governed by elders or presbyters, much in the way we have a Chapel Council at Old Chapel. The two chairs in the chancel would be occupied by two presbyters, who would distribute the wine and bread at The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper (Communion)- a gesture indicating how authority had been taken out of the hands of the priest and placed in those of the people. Each church belonged to a Presbytery - equivalent to our District Associations - and several Presbyteries made a Synod and the final court of appeal was the General Assembly. Presbyterians accepted the Westminster Confession, a revision of the Thirty Nine Articles, approved by Parliament in 1648. Non-subscribing Presbyterians refused to give assent and many of them, especially in Northern Ireland, eventually joined the General Assembly of Unitarian, Free Christian, Non-subscribing Presbyterian and other Kindred Churches.

PRIMAL SCREAM is a term used by Janov to refer to the deep, primary pain of our first separation in weaning; the point where I split into acceptable and unacceptable parts. The movement from primary to secondary narcissism; from the sense of being an undivided whole, containing everything within myself, to a sense of being a separate individual in the world, learned, it is sometimes said, by seeing myself reflected in the eyes of my mother.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY THOUGHT PROCESSES: primary thought processes are those of the unconscious, expressing

themselves, for example, in the symbolic, allegorical language of our dreams. The secondary thought processes are those of consciousness, using the language we learn from our culture.

**PSYCHODYNAMIC** - theories about the inter-relationships of different areas and aspects of the mind, usually considered to derive from the work of Sigmund Freud; although the theoretical models are, actually, very old indeed.

**RATIONALISE** - to give rational explanation for. See the Appendix on the Allegorical Method.

**REGRESSION** is the process of returning to infantile or childhood ways of being; reliving early dramas, returning to lost feelings; feeling as we did when we were children.

**SCHIZOIDAL POSITION** is the name given to the stage of human mental development prior to the OEDIPAL position and includes the period of weaning. Regression to this stage of our development introduces us to the most intense feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, of not being able to cope, of abandonment. It is the stage in which the basic split between thoughts and feelings begins.

**SCREEN MEMORIES** are memories we remember from childhood as being especially significant in our development. Sometimes we remember them clearly and sometimes we have an amnesia for them. They may be recalled during session in therapy, or in a dream or some kind of abreactive experience, when they come vividly and directly into consciousness.

**SELF AND self** - a distinction between Self and self is made to indicate the relationship between the 'self' as centre of consciousness and the 'Self' as centre of the Unconscious, or centre of the total psyche. Systems of contemplative Prayer, such as yoga, were designed to bring about a union between these two centres of the mind.

**SIN** means a condition of error, a state of estrangement or separation from the Ground of Being, a disordered condition of the psyche; the experience of Exile.

**SOCINIAN** - a form of Arianism originating in the work of Faustus and Laelius Socinus, who lived in the 16th Century.

**SOCRATIC METHOD** - the practise of the method taught by Socrates of always asking questions and believing that any answer which does not allow another question to be asked, must be a false solution.

**SUPER-EGO** is the name given to the conditioning influences of parents, extended family, peers and media as they are internalised and, as it were, superimposed on the Ego.

**THEISM** - the opposite of atheism; though nowadays also distinguished from Pantheism (that God is in and through all things and somehow to be identified with all that is) and Deism (sometimes meaning a God who is quite distinct from Creation) and Pānentheism (that God is in and through and beyond all things).

**THEOPHANY** - an appearance or vision or dream of God in visible or auditory form.

**TRANSACTIONAL PARADIGM** is the psychodynamic model of Parent, Child and Adult, taken out of the context of a form of psychotherapy known as Transactional Analysis.

**TRANSFERENCE AND COUNTER-TRANSFERENCE:** transference is the transferring or projecting onto the therapist or other significant people in one's life feelings and expectations that derive from our handling as children. We transfer what we felt towards our parents and siblings. Counter-transference is what the therapist or other significant person feels in response to our transference - usually referring to what the therapist feels in response to the client's transference. It is what the therapist, in turn, brings into the session from her childhood relationships.

**TRINITY** - used by some theologians, Augustine e.g., as a psychodynamic model, representing God as the Ground of Being, from which we emerge; the Christ as the potentiality archetypally present in the Christ or God-image at the base of the soul; and the Holy Spirit as the active, creative, healing agent in the psyche, flowing from that archetypal image.

UNCONSCIOUS - the 'Unknown' part of the mind; the depths within us. Jung said the mind was like an iceberg - a small portion was above the surface, called the Conscious (known) mind and the larger portion, the Unconscious, was beneath the surface.

UNIVERSALISM - the belief that the Love of God is so irresistible that all souls will be drawn to God and saved by God. Universal salvation.

VEDANTA - the philosophy of the Hindu faith; their most famous philosopher is Sankara. The philosophy grew over several centuries and is inspired in particular by the *Upanishads*.

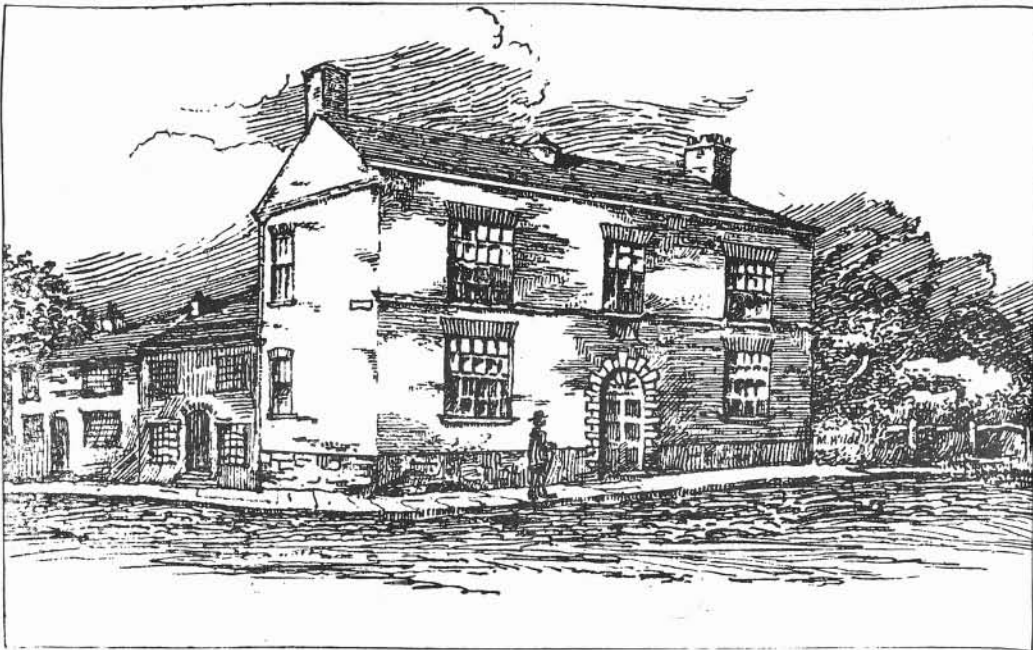
WESTMINSTER CONFSSION - a revision of the 39 articles made in the 17th Century and adopted by the Presbyterians. See note on Presbyterians in glossary.

YOGA - meaning to unite. A bringing together of the two poles of the psyche - the jivatmen and the paramatmen, rooted in Brahma, the Ground of Existence.



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