

Sermons as Prose: An Independent Tradition in Context

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*T*he relationship of Congregational ministers to their churches and Baptist pastors to their flocks can be a mystery to outsiders. The tensions of such ministry are easily understood. They issue from personality, the ebb and flow of ideology, the constraints of finance. In a British context they issue from the political and social implications of Dissent. Contractual terms might occasionally be involved but there is no parson's freehold for Congregational or Baptist ministers. The ideal of such ministry is easy to celebrate: the strengths and confidence encompassed by the call consequent upon the conviction of Matthew's two or three gathered stately in their Master's name and therefore in his presence; the mutuality of such a relationship.¹ What, however, about the reality of ministry, somewhere between tensions and ideal? Suppose that we take the golden age of such ministry to be in the second half of the nineteenth century – remembering always that golden ages are myths known only in retrospect: Where might we find the evidence for the reality of such a ministerial ideal?

One aspect is caught from the Great Lives approach of some church histories. These are portrayed – quite naturally and not at all improperly – as narratives of successive ministerial reigns interspersed by more or less brief periods of *interregnum*. That word is painful to well-trained sensibilities, although in a Congregational context its Cromwellian overtones ought to suggest a surprising richness of opportunity and satisfaction. To church histories might next be added ministerial biographies or autobiographies. These, again quite naturally and not at all improperly,

are hagiographies. Their evidence is, to a degree, confirmed by congregational records. Here, it is true, the determined egalitarian might mine a seam devoid of personality, lay or ministerial. The trend and the statistic, expertly graphed, can replace the name. Nonetheless, church records tend to suggest that the role of the minister, where there is a minister, called to serve, called to succeed, yet sometimes called to fail, is critical. This is further confirmed by a range of national denominational sources, *Baptist Handbooks* and *Congregational Year Books* chief among them. In these is displayed an intricate, confederated network of ministers. Their training, ordination, and movements are listed year following year. Their achievements are frequently encapsulated in architectural descriptions of their newly-built chapels. In the fullness of time they are eternalized in obituaries. There is more yet, enlarged now by the denominational weekly, monthly, and quarterly press, because the infrastructure that is thus opened to view clearly also accommodates a host of lay activists. This is demonstrated by details of charities and committees, lists of attenders, sequences of advertisements. Yet although this enlarges the picture, it does not alter it: it shows how ministers are naturally and fully integrated within a wider community, an attractive mutuality, of faith. They are its lightning conductors – ministers after all of Word and Sacrament – socially mobile, pressing onwards and upwards, geographically mobile, many of them pressing in from Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, some of them returning, a nationwide force connected to a succession of local centers by patronage, friendship, and marriage. The wise Victorian professional man would marry, preferably if not invariably in his twenties, but only after his training had been completed and his first settlement located, with a sound practice or partnership assured; and then he would marry carefully and, if possible, a little above him. The wise Victorian Baptist or Congregational minister was just such a professional man; time and again nature's deacons found themselves with ministerial sons-in-law or brothers-in-law. Thus does credibility grow and a social fabric consolidates along with a tradition; or, at least, they do so for a generation or three.

This search for the ministerial evidences has so far ignored, as much denominational history ignores, one vital primary source: the spoken word. That is to say, the message that is being delivered and the accent of its communication; the manner in which it is heard and the extent to which it is misheard (the wisest speakers have a sense of how they might most likely be misheard); and its adaptation across the years, yet still within the tradition. I have in mind the role (or roll) of rhetoric, the place of the sermon.

There may well be nothing more dead than a sermon once delivered to past saints. That said, the same sermon was – quite naturally and not at all improperly – frequently repeated; indeed, it often bore repetition, for each preaching occasion, like each reading occasion, is significantly different and the general run of preachers have only one sermon in them. But what exactly is the evidence and its weight? The same words differ when written or spoken, when read or heard. How characteristic is what survives? As with clothing, the special and occasional are more likely to survive than the mundane. How adequately do surviving manuscripts, often in note form, convey what was heard? Do printed volumes of sermons, shaped and honed, toned after the event, distort too much? Some that read powerfully in print failed notably when delivered.

In Sheffield the façade survives, on the edge of the city's centre, of Mount Zion, a severely handsome classical chapel, dated 1834.² Mount Zion closed eighty-seven years later, down to its last 133 members, most of whom united with Broompark, a very different Congregational church, thirty years younger and a stiff uphill walk, half-an-hour away. When it closed, and its congregation marched out of Mount Zion and up to the church which they were to join, as sturdily and self-consciously as eighty-three years earlier they had marched into Mount Zion from the church which they had left, the local Press had a field day. "Another Down-town Chapel to Disappear," announced one newspaper, seizing on the rhythm of change and tradition:

Sentiment is part and parcel of religion, and plain and prosaic as many of the chapels of Nonconformity are

they are holy ground. Generation follows generation, generally in the same pews; baptisms, marriages, deaths, all come in season and help to build up that profound sentiment which exists in a family church such as many of these Nonconformist places of worship become.³

The rival local daily complemented this:

But now the last sermon is preached, the last hymn is sung, and the last Benediction pronounced; the aisle is traversed for the last time, the door is closed, the lock is turned – and memory alone remains.⁴

On the last evening (with the galleries full as they had not been for years, and the choir large, “the singing – always a feature at Mount Zion – still a feature...”), the last sermon, from a minister who was already retired, proclaimed that Mount Zion had been “a great commonwealth of Christian comradeship.”⁵

Mount Zion was almost a caricature of an industrial northern chapel, its membership locked into the city’s multifarious metal trades, little masters or works managers, a few directors, many tradesmen, a scattering from the emerging new professions, all of them independent in mind, awkward in social grace, expert at grumbling, sometimes constructively, articulate in a gruffly elocuted way. The last living memories of the place snapped with the turn of the twenty-first century, but they are confirmed by surviving minute books and their evidence does not wholly contradict the last preacher’s generous valediction. His rhetoric, staunch, Cromwellian, and progressively collaborative against the odds, prompts questions about what those comrades, gathered in commonwealth, had heard over the years. What part had lengthening decades of rhetoric played in shaping their beliefs?

An answer is suggested by focussing on three ministers, two of them Congregationalists and the third a Baptist. They belonged to the same generation, with nine years between the oldest and the youngest. Their lifespan takes us from 1817 to 1912 and their preaching prime from the 1850s to the 1870s in two cases and to 1910 in the third. Two

had their main ministries in London; the third, although born in London, had his main ministry in Sheffield, at Mount Zion. They were socially on a par. One was a bookseller's son, with work experience in a hardware manufactory, one a commercial traveller's son, the third was a farmer's son – his formation combined farm work, tutorial work, and drapery. All three had the mental artman temperament. They were intelligently responsive to word and image and voracious in their reading, but they were not intellectually disciplined as scholars; they had not been educated for that. Each of them married sensibly. And their theology, given that each stayed the course in his chosen denomination? The Sheffield man was the most conventional. The Londoners breathe Idealism. Theirs, consciously or not, appears to be the mental world, translated into Chapel language and reality, of the Balliol philosopher T.H. Green. Was this Coleridge mediated through Maurice towards Green, or was it a pragmatically intelligent appreciation of the realities of active, contemporary congregational life?⁶

So who were our three ministers? They were David Loxton (1818-1876), Alexander Raleigh (1817-1880), and Samuel Augustus Tipple (1828-1912). They will be considered in that order. Their careers, their character and appearance, and their familial and congregational credibility will be outlined, before turning to their style and rhetoric.

II.

David Loxton's family were City Road (Wesley's Chapel) Methodists who moved up to Hoxton and became Maberly Chapel Congregationalists.⁷ He was trained at the Congregational Highbury College, after instruction in Latin and Greek from a minister in Yeovil, and had three contrasting pastorates from 1840: Gainsborough; Hanover, Liverpool; and Mount Zion, Sheffield. Between Gainsborough and Liverpool he turned down a call from Queen Street, Wolverhampton, which had not long before been greatly impressed by "a tall and handsome young man with a commanding voice and dramatic delivery," who had also been trained at Highbury, called Newman Hall.⁸ An overmighty deacon with

an eligible daughter stood, it was rumoured, in Newman Hall's way, as he did in Loxton's (neither young man was then married). This is relevant in part because of what it says about the pressures of generation, personality, and matrimony, and in part because Sheffield's Mount Zion also cast hopeful eyes on Newman Hall, who went on to provincial fame in Hull and to national fame at London's Surrey Chapel from 1854.⁹ When Loxton went to Mount Zion he was safely married. His wife died, but in Mount Zion he found a second helpmeet. He ministered at Mount Zion from 1850 to 1876, the year that Newman Hall opened his new cathedral, Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road: the Nonconformist church closest to Lambeth Palace.

Alexander Raleigh's family were of Covenanting, Cameronian stock.¹⁰ They were instinctive Scottish Dissenters who farmed at Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbright. Raleigh himself became a Congregationalist, trained at Lancashire Independent College, then still the Blackburn Academy, and went on to five pastorates, each happy but sufficiently varied: Greenock, Rotherham, West George Street Glasgow (about to move to Elgin Place, a celebrated name in its day), and then London from 1858. There he was first at Hare Court, a once famous seventeenth-century City cause that had migrated to Canonbury where Raleigh rebuilt it from nothing, and then Allen Street, Kensington, where he took over Kensington Chapel from the monumental John Stoughton and prepared the way for that shooting star, Silvester Horne.¹¹ He chaired the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1868 and the London Congregational Union in 1877-78.

Samuel Augustus Tipple was born in Suffolk and educated in Norwich.¹² Something of that education might be gleaned from one of his rare sermon illustrations, the more impressive for their rarity, used to explore "the open-eyed fastidiousness of St. Paul's charity":

I remember a schoolmaster of mine, years ago, a highly cultured, fastidious man, whom we boys took with us one day for the purpose of showing him a certain exquisitely executed inscription upon a building in the town,

the execution of which had excited general admiration, and I remember vividly how, when we were counting on the admiration which he would express, he astonished and disappointed us by turning away abruptly, after the first glance, with a gesture of disgust and contempt, saying irritably, in reply to our wonder, "No, gentleman, I can rejoice in nothing – I can admire nothing, however beautiful the workmanship, in which there is anything ungrammatical." He saw in a moment, the slight stain of bad grammar that had escaped our notice, and it spoiled for him the whole thing. We had been rejoicing inwardly in a violation of the rules of syntax, but *he* could not....¹³

He was nurtured at the notable St. Mary's Baptist Church, not least in the Sunday School class taken by a future mayor, but he was stirred and shaken in his later teens at a different sort of Norwich church.¹⁴ This was the Bazaar Chapel, which occupied part of an old bazaar; the School of Design occupied the other part. There Robert Govett had gathered an undenominational congregation.¹⁵ Govett was one of several evangelicals who seized the religious headlines in the 1830s and 1840s. He was an Anglican parson who found infant baptism unscriptural and therefore unacceptable. Hence his Bazaar Chapel, an undenominational cause with a Baptist accent and a Brethrenish atmosphere.¹⁶ This might explain something of young Tipple's evolving spirituality and the looseness of his denominational views. In 1851 Govett's Bazaar Chapel had a morning congregation of 420 in a building seating 550; but there were only thirty-nine Sunday School scholars, a suggestively small number for a town of thriving Sunday Schools.¹⁷ Morning congregations, however, suggested commitment and social solidity. That too has its bearing on Tipple's evolution.

In 1851 young Tipple (he was not yet twenty-three, and already married) was minister at Holt, a new cause nurtured by Norfolk's Baptist Home Missionary Society.¹⁸ There his evening congregation of 170 occupied 250 sittings; that was twice the size of his morning congregation.

His Sunday School attendance was twenty-seven.¹⁹ Holt was a market town strong in Wesleyans, but in 1851 they were in the throes of disruption. Tipple's ministry was clearly having some effect in such circumstances, but least so among Holt's children. Tipple had no formal ministerial training, although his *Handbook* obituary refers to early studies in Greek and Hebrew "under the tuition of a Jewish Rabbi."²⁰ Holt was his first pastorate, followed by Wolverhampton (1852-1856) and Central Hill, Norwood (1856-1910), a cause opened in 1852 by William Brock, of Bloomsbury and formerly of St. Mary's, Norwich, and nurtured in its early years by the Baptist banker, Joseph Tritton, whose large house was nearby.²¹ Tipple's potential had attracted influential Baptist notice.

III.

What were these men like? Loxton's *Year Book* obituary draws attention to his "large frame," his "hearty aspect," and his "genial manner," noting how his "presence and society on more festive occasions were a source of great enjoyment to his numerous and delighted circle of friends: the conversational discussions, the racy and appropriate anecdote, the genial humour...."²² His is a recognizable ministerial type. He was a forceful, emphatic man who relished getting to the heart of a matter. He long suspected that he had a heart condition and in the last year of his life his doctors came to agree with him. He was in his late fifties when he died, with a son still at boarding school.

Raleigh comes across as the most complex of the three, perhaps because most evidence survives. He had a catholic capacity for friendship. Ministerial contemporaries, prototypical industrialists, politically sharp London lawyers, and an extended family circle attested to that. At college he led; he had the enviably unthreatening quality of combining questing intelligence with an absence of intellectual pretension.²³ He had charm; delicacy of perception contrasted with a rugged appearance, molded by constant ill health. His college days were marked by dyspepsia and nervous prostration; too much hunched reading and a dreadful diet were occupational hazards for students forced to survive on short

commons. His ministerial career included one long period of nervous breakdown. He slept badly. He was meticulously punctual. He was prematurely grey in his thirties, old and haggard before his time. Early greyness, as R.J. Campbell later found at the City Temple, can be of immense appeal in the pulpit, and Raleigh sounded far from grey when he preached. At Greenock his originality was patent but his voice was "somewhat harsh" and his gestures not very animated.²⁴ He found extempore preaching difficult "and it was only later that he acquired the art of reading with ease and freedom."²⁵ Indeed, "to the last he never entered a pulpit without overshadowing fear."²⁶ In Rotherham he mastered his trademark "simplicity of style," "the pathos in delivery, the beauty of illustration, and that true evangelical tone which characterised his ministry at its close."²⁷ He had yet, however, to master the different art of platform oratory.

That came in Glasgow, where he recaptured the crowded congregations of his celebrated predecessor, Dr. Wardlaw.²⁸ Now he was distinguished by "the impressive and dignified presence, the deep, resonant, often quite pathetic tones of his voice, to which the northern accent, which he never lost, gave a singularly great though not uncultured strength."²⁹

So to his Canonbury prime at Hare Court; this was a newly built, truly Congregational, grandly gathering, rather welcoming, octagonal space. Here a routine developed: the sermon prepared in full manuscript; the long Saturday afternoon walk; the Saturday evening reading of the script to his wife, and talking it over with her; the silent Sunday morning – to chapel alone or with one of the children, to be there an hour beforehand and then, in his pulpit, erect, immobile, manuscript clearly to hand, but looking his people in the face.³⁰ "Raleigh," Thomas Binney once chided him in his characteristic way, "you will ruin your health because you have not the moral courage to preach a poor sermon."³¹ All the same, he took over from Binney a course for London's New College students on how to preach, which was repeated for those at Lancashire Independent.³² His advice on such occasions was deceptively simple ("The art of

preaching is the art of winning souls”), deceptively practical (“Don’t catch at the cushion as if you were drowning”), and deceptively sharp:

No truths stand alone, and least of all the central truths.... Let us distinctly understand it – we may preach the very Cross until it is not the Cross any longer – the mysterious, all-related Cross on which the son of God reconciled earth and heaven – but just a wooden crucifix.³³

There is art there: content, word, image – and reproach at young evangelicals hammering home a Cross that had become as mechanical a relic as any saint’s bones. One can understand why his warmest admirers had to go out of their way to protest his evangelical credentials: “I hold tenaciously to the old faith – I desire to possess as much as possible of the new culture.”³⁴

It was not so different with Tipple. Published recollections of him tend to focus on his later Norwood years, but his most notable occasional hearer, John Ruskin, sat under him in his first decade at Central Hill. Ruskin’s attendance was long remembered and commented on, but his appreciation curdled with time. In the late 1850s Ruskin savoured the company, personality, and preaching of the age’s Dissenting phenomenon, Charles Haddon Spurgeon.³⁵ Ruskin’s fascination with Spurgeon faded in the 1860s, but it allowed for a parallel interest in a sharply contrasting Baptist preacher, S.A. Tipple. The Ruskin house on Denmark Hill was a decent carriage drive from Spurgeon’s New Park Street and Surrey Gardens Music Hall to the north and Tipple’s Central Hill to the south.³⁶

The contrasts were manifold. Norwood was bracingly elevated, as yet almost more rural than suburban although the mounting attractions of suburbia were compounded by the arrival of the Crystal Palace. It was already missionary country for the middle classes, with the Queen’s Hotel as encouragement for respectable visitors to the Palace. Ruskin loathed the Crystal Palace, but in 1861 his parents used the Queen’s Hotel while their home was spring-cleaned and his father went on Sunday

evenings to "hear a little creature in a little chapel of the name of Tipple – an extempore Baptist preacher – I like their hymns too – sung very sweetly without organ...."³⁷ J.J. Ruskin preferred Tipple's hymns and prayers to his sermons; his son's feelings were increasingly complicated, not least in retrospect, by his impossible relationship with Rose La Touche, an Anglo-Irish landowner's daughter whose family wintered in London and whose father became one of Spurgeon's converts.³⁸ In 1874 Rose, now close to death, stayed at the Queen's Hotel, where Ruskin visited her. His recent biographer, Tim Hilton, suggests that she worshipped at Central Hill and that, following her death, this precipitated the explosion in *Fors Clavigera* in which Ruskin pilloried Tipple as a hireling preacher, professor of a modern simony: "Of all the sects of ecclesiastics, for my own share, I most dislike and distrust the so-called Evangelical."³⁹

In fact, this was Ruskin's second assault on Tipple. Three years earlier, delighted by Apennine views of ruined "robber-castles on every mound" and "pretty monasteries and arcades of cloister beside them," Ruskin had ruminated on the compromising relationship of Baron and Clerk, Pillager and Pardoner.⁴⁰ The Chaucerian "Pardoner" struck him as the perfect word for "the clergy of the two great Evangelical and Papal sects":

Only a year or two ago, close to the Crystal Palace, I heard in the Rev. Mr. Tipple's chapel, another Pardoner announce from his pulpit that there was no thief, nor devourer of widow's homes, nor any manner of sinner in his congregation that day, who might not leave the church an entirely pardoned and entirely respectable person, if he would only believe – what the Rev. Pardoner was about to announce to him.⁴¹

Tipple reacted with dignity: "It is impossible that you should at any time have heard me say from my pulpit what you ascribe to me. Simply because I never said it, and *could* not – not at all believing it." Indeed, he had almost certainly been away from Norwood at the time suggested;

perhaps Ruskin had heard “some other person – doing duty in my stead.”⁴² Ruskin replied tetchily. He had most certainly heard the sermon. His father had been with him and the two of them had talked over what they had heard. That, of course, put the memory back some years, since the older Ruskin had died in 1864:

But I have ever since kept note of this, now so hastily abjured, utterance, as the most perfect and clear statement of the great Evangelical doctrine of salvation by faith only which I ever heard from any English divine. My abstract of it is more logical than eloquent, but I answer absolutely for the accuracy and for the specification of ‘thieves’ and ‘devourers of widows’ houses’ by the preacher.⁴³

And he added provocation to justification by wondering “how Mr. Tipple, disclaiming the statement even in this undecorated form, can reconcile it with his conscience to remain the instructor of a Protestant congregation.”⁴⁴

What had Ruskin heard? Readers of Tipple’s sermons, while fully recognizing the tone of what Ruskin described, will accept the force of Tipple’s dignified protest. It must have been irksome for Ruskin to find that an Evangelical Nonconformist parson should disapprove what Ruskin himself disapproved but what is more significant is that Tipple was so clearly a reader of *Fors Clavigera*.⁴⁵

Ruskin had achieved prophetic status by the mid-1870s. Tipple was too gentle for prophecy but he sustained his allure. Between 1886 and 1889 his hearers included a Presbyterian in his mid-thirties who, like Rose La Touche but more successfully, had come to Norwood in search of health and was set to transform religious journalism in general and Nonconformist journalism in particular, overnight.

William Robertson Nicoll (1851-1923) had ministered successfully in the Free Church of Scotland until his health collapsed. He was convinced of the power of the spoken word. D.L. Moody impressed him; so did Spurgeon: “We cannot overlook facts – and the fact is that the

Spurgeonian type of preaching is the only kind that moves the democracy."⁴⁶ He was no Gladstonian but recalled: "If I had not heard Gladstone in Midlothian I should have lived and died without the faintest conception of what human speech can do. At that time Gladstone simply maddened his audiences. He welded them into a unity, wild with passion, ready to follow him even to their deaths."⁴⁷ Already Nicoll edited *The Contemporary Pulpit* and controlled the *Expositor*, and by August 1886 he planned "a paper for Christian Radicals which shall be equal in literary merit to the best published."⁴⁸ The *British Weekly* first appeared on 5 November 1886; by Christmas 1887 Nicoll could claim that its circulation was "larger than has ever been reached by any religious paper in the same period and is steadily growing."⁴⁹

Norwood eased its birth: "it is so high, with so much open country and such splendid views, and the air is the purest and most bracing in London." The Crystal Palace was five minutes' walk away, so were "two railway stations which convey everywhere," and "We have a Baptist Chapel at the top of our road, of which the minister is the Rev. S.A. Tipple, who has published some books of sermons. He is a venerable old man [he was almost fifty-eight] and we like his preaching very much."⁵⁰ Better yet, Tipple provided invaluable copy for a voracious journalist: "Mr. Tipple is like a conjurer – the text, the hat; the sermon, eggs, birds and flowers"; and he began to appear as the Rev. Eli Julius in the letters which Nicoll contributed under the pseudonym, Claudius Clear.⁵¹

Nicoll's admiration was genuine. In 1912, the year of Tipple's death, he commented: "There have been two men in my life whose preaching I could have listened to twice every Sunday, and these two were Parker and Tipple. I did that with Tipple for years, and I never heard him preach a poor sermon."⁵²

The most appealing account of Tipple comes from a much younger journalist, the Congregational Arthur Porritt, who had been tipped off about Tipple by that connoisseur of liberal preachers, the Ealing hymnologist, William Garrett Horder.⁵³ Porritt was entranced. Here was "incomparably the greatest preacher I have ever heard."⁵⁴ When Porritt

heard him, Tipple preached only on Sunday mornings and the service began comfortably late, usually at 11.05 rather than on the hour. There was a reason for that:

The congregation came from all four quarters of London, and the train which brought the West End element from Victoria was often a few minutes late. Mr. Tipple would sit in the pulpit meditating without the slightest movement until the Victoria train contingent streamed in. Then he would begin the service.⁵⁵

The stillness was palpable. "Everyone knew that at the slightest noise Tipple would stop speaking, and admonish the offender with a fixed look from his bright bird-like eyes."⁵⁶ Like Raleigh, Tipple was an immobile preacher, no shouting, few gestures, no notes either, standing short and slight, with white hair and wispy beard (although years earlier, in a previous reminiscence, Porritt wrote of a "long white beard"), with an "exquisitely modulated voice":⁵⁷

His preaching was altogether out of the ordinary. He seemed to be thinking aloud, quietly beating out the music of his soul in public, as if his phrasing, as well as the profundity and subtlety of his thoughts, made it unthinkable that he was extemporizing.... His perfect pronunciation of words was delightful. John Ruskin said he was the greatest master of pulpit prose.⁵⁸

Porritt had got Ruskin wrong, but he had got Tipple right and the journalist in him was put on his mettle. If Tipple saw a note taker in front of him, he would stop "and quietly, but firmly, ask that the notebook should be laid aside – otherwise, he would add, he could not go on preaching."⁵⁹ Porritt was ready for that. Tipple was famous for his power of prayer, his prayers were sermons in themselves; surely, when praying, Tipple would not see the note taker? And Porritt recalled a Christmas sermon of Tipple's and its ending:

'God's in His heaven, all's right with the world,' says the poet. No, no, Mr. Poet, God is in His heaven but all

is not all right with the world: but because God is in His heaven I take it as an earnest and a surety that all will be right with the world: and in that assurance go cheerfully to dine.⁶⁰

IV.

Tipple, Raleigh, and Loxton were family men as well as pastors. What was their familial and congregational credibility?

Tipple's father was a commercial traveler. As a minister, Tipple never lived other than respectably. As a very young minister in Holt, newly-married, and as yet with no children, he had a servant. As a family man, in Norwood (four of his seven children survived), his household ran to two servants, living in a succession of quietly acceptable roads – Oak Villas, Cintra Park, Hamlet Road (Ashdown), Howden Road (Hillcroft) – with quietly acceptable neighbors: a prosperous West End draper in 1861, a barrister with a French wife, a retired physician, and the chaplain to the Dutch Legation in 1871, a retired stockbroker and an officer (also retired) from the Indian police in 1901. The Tipple children fitted into this gently cosmopolitan, if ageing, respectability. Horace Tipple went into the tea trade and by 1913 described himself as a planter; of the two unmarried daughters, Maude and Elsie, who remained at home, Maude was a history teacher, employed by the Girls' Public Day School Trust.⁶¹ From a secular point of view, this is a picture of professional consolidation, which Tipple's will confirms.⁶² From a religious point of view there is comparable credibility.

Tipple was never a strong denominationalist, but his sister Elizabeth married an Irishman, William Doherty, a Baptist minister from 1854, who from 1863 ministered for just over a decade to a small church in Kenilworth. Like Tipple, Doherty was not college trained. By 1875 his church in Albion Row, where he had ceased to minister although he still lived in Kenilworth, was described as a union church. A year later it had slipped from the *Baptist Handbook* and Doherty was no longer listed as a Baptist minister. Was there a Brethren background here? Had Tipple met

Doherty in Norwich, perhaps through Govett, or in Wolverhampton? This must remain conjectural, but by 1871 Elizabeth Doherty's elder sister, Sarah Tipple, had met Robert Collins, a retired Congregational minister who was also living in Kenilworth, whose fourth wife she became.⁶³

Robert Collins' chief claim to fame was that at his death, just before Christmas 1898, he was a remarkably hale ninety-six-year-old and "probably the oldest Congregational minister in the world."⁶⁴ The Collinses had moved to Upper Norwood to be close to the new Mrs. Collins' brother and indeed their house on Belvedere Road was the easiest walk from Tipple's chapel on Central Hill. Collins had a grandson, William Robert Bousfield, who was that unusual phenomenon for such circles, a prominent yet intellectual Tory.⁶⁵ Young Bousfield was of engineering stock and by profession he was a civil engineer. He was a Cambridge mathematician, and Wrangler, who went on to lecture in engineering at University College, Bristol, and to become a Fellow of the Royal Society. He was also a barrister, a QC, Bencher and Treasurer of the Inner Temple, and from 1892 to 1906 he was a Tory MP for Hackney. This unlikely combination was compounded by his publications, for he wrote on *Telepathy*, *The Mind and its Mechanisms*, and *Labour Ideals*. Religiously he was a Wesleyan turned Anglican, so not too much should be attributed to his Congregational grandfather Collins or his Baptist step-great-uncle Tipple, beyond noting the wide, even catholic, range of a preacher's contacts and the fact that the Collinses and the Bousfields remained close.⁶⁶ It was such a range as was attracted to Central Hill.

Arthur Porritt recalled a congregation of 200 in a chapel seating 250; the *Baptist Handbook* gave 480 sittings in 1894.⁶⁷ Whatever its size, Central Hill was impressively unimpressive. That too was a sign of its eclectic credibility. Porritt recalled "a quiet little chapel in a by-road on a level with the roof of the Crystal Palace".⁶⁸

The interior was plain to bareness, but few buildings I have been in conveyed such a strange sense of worshipfulness. The long stream of ivy that hung swaying in the

breeze outside the dim windows somehow contributed to the reverential spirit within....

....I never heard Mr. Tipple say a word that led one to think he was a Baptist. He had a strictly personal following, composed mainly of a professional and well-to-do class of people – and chiefly men – who went in all weathers and often at great personal inconvenience to hear him.... The Sunday after Mr. Tipple resigned his ministry, the Central Hill congregation had evaporated into thin air.⁶⁹

That Sunday was the only occasion when another frequent hearer, William Kent, a cadet from Nonconformity's awkward squad and at that time a member of the notoriously liberal Brixton Independent Church, saw Central Hill full.⁷⁰

Four of Tipple's children and six of Raleigh's survived to adulthood. The Raleighs were fearsomely high achieving. Alexander's father may have been a struggling farmer, and in his own youth Alexander worked on the farm and then as a draper's assistant, but his wife's family was moving into Edinburgh's legal establishment. Her brother, Adam Gifford, became a Lord of Session and has a secure posthumous fame as founder of the Gifford Lectureships.⁷¹ Her first cousin married that most attractive of Victorian Baptist preachers, Alexander McLaren.⁷² Raleigh's older brother, Samuel (d. 1882) became the Manager of the Scottish Widows Fund and the man who turned it into a major insurance company.⁷³ Samuel's son, Thomas, whose vacations were chiefly passed with the Alexander Raleighs in London, was Edinburgh, Tübingen, and Oxford (Balliol, presidency of the Union, and All Souls), accompanied by the Bar (Lincoln's Inn), with an Oxford Readership in Law, a spell on the Viceroy's Council in India, and a knighthood to follow.⁷⁴ Alexander's own son, Walter, was University College London, King's College Cambridge (where he was an Apostle and President of the Union), with Chairs of English Literature at Aligarh, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Oxford.⁷⁵ His knighthood, too, duly followed and he became the tame intel-

lectual of the Souls, for his was the Asquith generation; he was the don of choice for great Edwardian ladies. Of his sisters, Ada married an Anglo-Indian Strachey (he too was knighted) and Jessie married Theodore Beck, Principal of the Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh.⁷⁶ Katherine was educated in Germany and at Bedford College London, taught (like Maude Tipple) for the Girls' Public Day School Trust, and then went to Newnham College, Cambridge, where she became a Classicist. She focused on Greek Art and Mythology, worked for the Hellenic Society and in the British Schools at Athens and Rome, and is listed in her College Register as a "Worker for women's suffrage; a fighter for many causes."⁷⁷ This might seem far from the manse world, except that it was no such thing. The Raleighs were a warmly gregarious clan as well as a high achieving one and the huge congregation which Alexander built up at Hare Court (from thirty-four members to 840 in eight years)⁷⁸ and the solid congregation which he inherited and sustained in Kensington included families which were no less high achieving.

The Loxtons were closer to the Tipples than to the Raleighs. David Loxton's father was a London bookseller; two elder brothers became ministers, one of them a missionary to the South Seas where he died in his mid-twenties leaving a pregnant wife who married another missionary, outliving her first husband by fifty-five years, and her second by forty-one years.⁷⁹ That is how things were for pioneer missionary families. David Loxton's first wife, whom he had met during his first pastorate and married in his second pastorate, died after a few years of marriage. His second wife came from an entrenched Sheffield Congregational family. An uncle was a founder of Mount Zion; one brother was an "American Merchant" and a JP, another was a prominent local architect, responsible for three Sheffield Congregational churches and a large workhouse; he was a town councillor for twelve years and "an enthusiast for sanitation."⁸⁰ This was the sort of family whose sons emigrated to Australia, South Africa, or the United States and that also nurtured a clerical strand. A brother of the second Mrs. David Loxton was a Congregational minister, and a niece married a Congregational minister. If

one of Loxton's grandsons became an Anglican parson, another followed his grandfather into the Congregational ministry. Collectively they struck an authentic Congregational note. One, who concentrated on private tuition, was "definitely a modernist but none the less ... had a deep evangelical faith"; one learned German until he thought in it as naturally as in English; one combined settlement work with the writing of short stories and a passion for the League of Nations Union. Their pastorates extended from industrial centers to county towns, market towns, and seaside resorts. They were, in fact, quietly representative.⁸¹ This is the context for the sermons of David Loxton, Alexander Raleigh, and Samuel Augustus Tipple.

V.

Loxton's *Year Book* obituary treads carefully: in earlier years "he gave special and frequent prominence to certain aspects of theological truth denominated 'high,' perhaps 'extreme,'" but with time "and without changing a single fundamental principle which marked the teaching of his earlier ministry, his later gained in breadth, variety, truth, and profitableness."⁸² This is confirmed by the tone – and promise – of his letter of application to Highbury College and it can be seen in the twenty-one sermons published by his widow which internal evidence suggests cover his quarter-century of Sheffield ministry.⁸³ Further evidence can be adduced from a sermon and a lecture delivered at Mount Zion in 1855 and 1853 respectively and not included in the twenty-one sermons.

The national background of the two last moves from the Crystal Palace to the Crimean War; it is personalized in Russell, Palmerston, and Aberdeen, with Disraeli and Gladstone coming rapidly into focus. The local background is of a rapidly growing and notoriously and ebulliently radical industrial city in which the economic balance has shifted from the light metal cutlery trades and their world of independent artisans to the heavy metal big battalions of steel masters and their proletarian hands. Religiously, Sheffield is Low Church and Methodist, but its Methodism

is in disruption. As for Mount Zion, it is socially a cutlers' chapel and it sits on a fault line – to one side the little mesters' yards, to the other the first suburbs; Loxton lives in one of these.

Loxton's brand of Evangelical Dissent marching with Political Dissent fitted in well. He comes across as a Complete Suffrage man. His opposition to foreign entanglements was pure Manchester School, notwithstanding the fact that Sheffield industry boomed in times of foreign entanglements. He was a Disestablishment man, an instinctive Miallite.⁸⁴ His Fast Day Sermon, Mount Zion, 21 March 1855, allowed for a masterly display of obedient dissatisfaction: obedience to the holding of a national day of fast and dissatisfaction at everything else about it.⁸⁵ It was a traditional sermon, from text: "And I will give children to be their princes and babes shall rule over them" (Isa. 3:4), through exposition, to call to turn and repent. It was also oratorically orthodox, clear, insistent, emphatic, pointed. It lacked rhythm, indeed it often lumbered, but that probably resonated well through Mount Zion's acoustics. It was unashamedly political, with a Cromwellian ring to it. Loxton's Mount Zion was a child of the Evangelical Revival, but Sheffield's Congregationalism was of 1662 descent, and Loxton had used his Gainsborough pastorate (1840-1846) to read up his Puritan divines.⁸⁶ Now he was appealing to a people who were politically articulate (Sheffield had been a parliamentary constituency since 1832 and a municipal borough since 1843) and sufficiently well-read to live up to their calling, to exercise responsibility and to refuse to condone sin, not least in high places as exercised by incompetent government. Here we see Political Dissent on its way to the Nonconformist Conscience, distrustful of authority – for authority too often meant jobs for the boys – yet socially alert, believing that a right moral and spiritual foundation alone could lead to right national action.

Loxton begins as he means to go on, almost relishing his task, ponderously gloomy at the distaste it arouses. He refuses to discuss the "rightfulness of that authority which has appointed this day as a day of national fasting and humiliation."⁸⁷

Suffice it to say, that it is an authority which we do not recognise: in religion, we call no man master: we recognise no human being, however great or however good, as having the right to command us to humble ourselves before God. We observe the day because it is a day of general leisure, and as religious people we feel bound to devote as much of our time as possible to the public worship of God: and we attend to the peculiar object of the day, because the consideration of it seems to us reasonable, and likely to be religiously profitable, and not because we are commanded to do so by authority.⁸⁸

There is another issue which he refuses to discuss: "Whether the recurrence of these fast days is more likely to draw down the wrath or to obtain the favour of heaven for our country."⁸⁹ He refuses to discuss it, but his way of not discussing it allows the Boanerges in him to rumble:

When we consider the enormous amount of ungodliness which exists in the kingdom, and how by the appointment of a day like this it is liberated from the restraints of labour, and allowed to pour itself forth in floods of wickedness, vice, and debauchery into our streets, it becomes a very nice question to decide whether the scenes of wickedness are more likely to draw down divine vengeance, or the prayers and penitence of the religious to move divine mercy towards us.⁹⁰

And he urges his hearers to remember Sodom, which would have been spared even for only ten righteous people ... such as might (he does not say this, he has no need) be gathered in Sheffield's Mount Zion?

What he does discuss are the religious principles that lead us to humble ourselves on account of national calamities. He looks at national calamities in general; at Britain's peculiar national calamity ("The incompetence of our rulers"),⁹¹ and at the national sins indicated by calamity. The first allows him to look to the Continent, to "bleeding down-trodden Hungary" and long divided Poland, and to reflect that "Repent or

perish, is as applicable to nations as to individuals.”⁹² The second allows him to vent his frustration as a citizen: the sheer administrative incompetence, “the labyrinth of incompetence in which we are involved,” as uncovered by the revelations of conditions in the Crimea.⁹³ What to do? Present circumstances could not be less favorable to the much needed “reform in our administrative system,” yet to act politically at this point “is like having to depose the officers of a ship in the midst of a storm,” and how can we depose the officers of a great nation when it is in life and death conflict with a “powerful enemy who wields all the energies of a well compacted and consolidated despotism”?⁹⁴

To answer that, with Russia as prominent in his sights as the British Government, and with his auditory caught in the conundrum, he turns to his hearers:

The fault is no doubt theirs, but ... It is yours, it is mine.... God always assumes that people share in the sins of their rulers.... The truth is that rulers ... are only what the people make them ... the great sin of our rulers has been the recognition of the absolute supremacy of human laws and regulation. A sin designated in the contemptuous language of the newspaper press as routine and red tapeism.⁹⁵

It disregards all who “come into collision with their departmental regulations and their official etiquette ... absurd, pompous, unfeeling officialism....”⁹⁶ This was Manchester School, Administrative Reform, Radicalism, Yorkshire style, and entirely consistent with conventional pulpit oratory, chapel style:

As a nation, we are under the dominion of a most degrading species of Mammon worship. We worship riches; we worship aristocracy: the consequence is that the rich and the aristocratic are exclusively placed at the head of our affairs ... choice is confined to a few wealthy and aristocratic families: and where there is so narrow a sphere for choice, incompetent rulers are sure to be elected....⁹⁷

Hence Loxton's text, for "thus it is that children are our princes and babes rule over us." Thus it was that once, in Palestine, a people chose Barabbas and on them "the curse of God has rested ever since."⁹⁸ Thus it was that we should remember that "on Calvary there was a fountain opened even for such uncleanness as ours. O come let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us, he hath smitten, and he will bind us up."⁹⁹

It is easy to see why Loxton was persuaded to publish that sermon, as two years earlier he had published ("gratuitously supplied") his *Lecture to the Working Classes*.¹⁰⁰ As a lecture it was twice the length of the sermon and one might wonder how many and what sort of working classes heard it, or indeed read it. It has all the mannerisms of his sermon. It has a text: "The poor heard the Gospel preached unto them" (Matt. 11: 5). It proceeds through exposition to call. It is in fact admirably geared to a constituency of little mesters and their men, of workshops not rolling mills. Loxton's emphasis on the importance of the working classes is neither forced nor condescending; nor is his insistence that Christianity originated among the working classes and will depend on them for its survival:

The working class is most properly represented as the basement and foundation of society: when the foundation gives way, the institutions which are built upon it must perish.... The idea of the equality of man and of constitutional government, which is now getting to pervade the mind of the whole world, was first conceived by the Jacquerie....¹⁰¹

It is a conventionally, doggedly, but cumulatively argued thesis ending with "children of the same God ... together in the bonds of a common brotherhood."¹⁰²

The importance of such public chapel discourse lies in the conventional packaging and the deceptively independent content. A man is engaging his faith and his intelligence with that of his hearers; and those who read it will hear his voice. It encompasses a host of contradictions.

Who knows what will emerge from such a crucible? The disciplined responsibility of this chapel world should not, however, be underestimated.

The conventional and the independent mark each of Loxton's sermons:

If any one were to ask me, what is the chief thing required in the church of Christ, in order to make her a mighty instrument in the salvation of the world? I should answer, that it was necessary that she should be what Jesus was, when He received sinners and ate with them. There is hardly another single sentence in the gospel which brings out so much of Christ as these simple words: so much of Him too, which it is necessary for the church in the present day to understand and to imitate. Let us try then to look at Christ this morning through the eyes of His enemies, and to understand what it really was that gave offence to them.¹⁰³

Loxton built his sermon, "Christ Receiving Sinners," on a sequence of contrasts: "Now the whole life of Jesus, from the beginning to the end, was one continual violation of certain great conventional principles, which are universally acted on as the law of this world."¹⁰⁴ This provided Loxton with his first contrast: "The principle which underlies the intercourse of the world is what we may call the principle of law and right, as opposed to the principle of grace and love."¹⁰⁵ The social law of right and justice issued in the principle of retaliation: "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth"; it had "changed the world into a hell of contention and a field of blood."¹⁰⁶ It was not so with Christ:

I say that the whole life of Jesus Christ, from the beginning to the end, was one continual violation of this law principle, which has got itself enthroned in the heart, and embodied in the life of the world.¹⁰⁷

And the consequence? "He was determined to be consistent with Himself throughout; to act upon the principle that man's deserts must be altogether overlooked; and therefore He descended to the lowest and most de-

praved classes of society."¹⁰⁸ There was a "great salvation of the lower classes":

The most enlightened man in the world at the time of Christ's death, the first human being who ever died with a certain hope of immortality, distinctly based upon the atonement and the grace of Christ, was one who had been a robber, and who died for his crimes by the hand of the public executioner.¹⁰⁹

That sublime fact allowed for two characteristic lines of thought. The first was that his great salvation had been accomplished "in spite of the opposing influence of the Jewish church."¹¹⁰

The lower class, though very irreligious, is nevertheless in all religious matters supremely influenced by the church of the country; that is to say, when they think about religion at all, they are guided by the dogmas and opinions of the national church.... Now the mighty influence of what was then the professing church opposed Christ at every step ... [But] by being the friend of publicans and sinners, He effected the great salvation.... And if, my brethren, Jesus did all this in spite of the opposition of the church, what would not the church itself be able to effect if it were truly baptized with the Spirit of Christ? This one thing is what Christ's church needs ... we should hear no more of the estranged and alienated classes and of the invincible evils of society....¹¹¹

The second line was to explore Christ's quality of pity: "In the most fallen and depraved He recognized a being who might become an angel of light"; He unveiled "a profound sense of the greatness of the human soul."¹¹²

Loxton's impact, plain speaking, progressively argumentative, strategically planned, depended on the conventional power of his words. He ended a sermon on "Jesus the King of Truth" as one would have expected him to end it:

And now, my brethren, let me ask you in conclusion, Is Christ a king to you? Does He reign over your heart? Have you seen His glory and beauty? Are there not many of you who have no sense of His glory at all? And unless God take pity upon you and remove your blindness, the day shall come when the Great King will come and say, "Bring those Mine enemies who would not that I should reign over them, and slay them before My face."¹¹³

He dwelt constantly on sin: "I cannot help feeling that there is nothing in which we are more deficient than in a deep sense of the inexplicable evil of sin.... I believe that there is a much feebler sense of the deep and awful guilt of sin among the masses in Protestant countries than is to be found in any other countries of the world."¹¹⁴ He explored this with a storyteller's vigor; this was the golden age of the Religious Tract Society:

All the sins which have since been committed in this world are the punishment of that *first sin*. That first act of disobedience has blasted the world; it has originated all the foul and abominable idolatries; it has caused all the wars ... it has sent forth disease and pestilence; it has filled our streets with beggars and thieves, our work-houses with paupers, our prisons with criminals, yea, hell itself with lost souls.... Who can question it with his eyes open? There is a man sitting in that room by himself, with the bottle on the table before him; he drinks to excess; this is the first time; he never was drunk before; he staggers off to bed and is sober and penitent the next morning, nobody knows of his sin; but does Divine justice sleep? I say No; that first guilty indulgence destroys his self-control; he beggars his family, his uneducated boys are turned out to pick up a living by thieving, his daughters to a life of shame; and a hundred years hence one of his posterity may die on the gallows, because of

the sin which he committed that night, when he sat alone in his room with the bottle before him. And all other sin is punished in the same dreadful manner.¹¹⁵

This was the world of Dickens seized by missionary social explorers and on track for the *Bitter Cry of Outcast London*.¹¹⁶ Loxton died before that tract hit the social nerve of religious people. Ten months before his death he addressed the Yorkshire Congregational Union on "The Permanent Basis of Religious Belief." His audience comprised fellow ministers and lay activists. He could, therefore, be breezy:

I view with the most perfect indifference all those supposed attacks upon Christianity by which in the present day our scientific men are disturbing the equanimity of the clergy of all denominations.

Whenever Tyndall or Huxley open their mouths the fiery cross is sent out among the churches, and every polemic betakes himself to his arms.¹¹⁷

Loxton was too intelligently doughty for that sort of response. "Man is so constituted that he must believe in that which supplies his conscious needs. This is the ground on which we believe all the axioms of mathematics and all the first truths of science.... Religion ... is a truth of the same nature; truth which man feels that he needs, and which therefore cannot but be."¹¹⁸ He ended on an optimistic and characteristic note. His had been an Independent's evolution, proper for a journeyman Gospel minister:

If we accept the conscious needs of the human soul as "the permanent basis of religious belief," we shall feel that all our fears respecting the discoveries of science and of historical criticism are utterly vain and groundless, and shall be able to treat with the derision and contempt which they deserve all the impudent claims of sacerdotal and ecclesiastical authority. Every man will feel that he is his own priest and his own pope; that so far as his salvation is concerned, he has a truer infallibil-

ity than that which is claimed by the Roman pontiff; that he has an unction from the Holy One, and knoweth all things. And when we then walk in the light of the Spirit we shall come to the unity of the Spirit and the liberty of the Spirit.¹¹⁹

VI.

The differences in pulpit style between David Loxton and Alexander Raleigh are as manifest as their similarities (and divergences) in content are suggestive. The two men were contemporaries and for just over four years they overlapped in South Yorkshire. Raleigh was at Rotherham from May 1850 and Loxton in Sheffield from November. Loxton's style was plain, punchy, direct, and convincingly argumentative. Raleigh's was artfully simple. It was largely devoid of quotation or reference. It was evocative, insistently persuasive, speaking to his audience, never patronizing, building through unexpected cadences to a climax

By 1868 and his Chairmanship of the Congregational Union, Raleigh was a pulpit force and his May Address in Binney's King's Weigh House, with Binney offering prayer, was a national occasion, denominationally speaking.¹²⁰ Its theme was "Christianity and Modern Progress." A future prime minister, on his day off from school, wrote about it to his mother: "It was a most magnificent address and was very much cheered."¹²¹

The address was long as well as magnificent. It was part lecture, part platform address, with the inescapable overtones of a sermon. Its platform ponderousness was redeemed by the arresting sentence and the unexpected metaphor: "...the first chapters of Genesis are full of art and science. Poetry, music, metal-working, husbandry, architecture – a whole city is built almost before Eden has had time to wither"; here, in short, were natural knowledge and natural religion "in their cradle, and they are twin sisters."¹²²

Raleigh's address, in fact, was an alluring forerunner of Loxton's address in Bradford seven years later. He was confronting a generation in which the man of science was "ready enough on his part to put his theo-

logical brother, with his terms, distinctions, doctrines, up among the fossils, as a man who really has nothing to say to the culture and progress, the hunger and thirst of a living age."¹²³ He saw it as his job to "try to strike some of the notes of harmony between what we call modern civilization, and our evangelical, historical, cultural Christianity."¹²⁴ So he dealt with facts, those of science and those of Christianity, for "they have in common the one substance of rational certainty.... The need is just this.... Religious men shall accept all received findings. The men of culture shall accept all historical Christian facts. How otherwise is conciliation possible?"¹²⁵

Raleigh's exploration of fact, contextual doctrine, and reasonable balance allowed for a sequence of carefully insistent climaxes. Here the preacher took over from the lecturer. "I suppose even the simplest and severest facts of science have some blossom of doctrine on them. They lean towards some inference. They suggest some generalisation. The heavens are full of dogma."¹²⁶ He turned to

the grand facts of evangelical history. Each is, like man, a microcosm. A man is a fact, measurable enough to the sense, but he is a fact which carries a thousand other – a whole universe of fact, relation, possibility, expansion, destiny. The birth of Christ is a fact, but it is a fact that touches in some way every child born of a woman along all the weary ages of time. His death is a fact, but a fact which in some way affects all Divine law and all human sin. His resurrection abolishes death, and brings life and immortality to light. His ascension anchors earth fast to heaven, and makes it possible for the poorest passenger in all this world-ship to have profitable merchandise with the better country, and in due time to go up as a happy settler upon the eternal shore. He who does not perceive the inner significance of the facts, who does not at least perceive that they do carry an inner meaning, and that that meaning *must* be great, and for the world all-

important, does not really see the facts at all. But if they *be* so seen – if they be held in seriousness, examined with diligence, allowed to develop and grow in the thought, into relations, duties, habits, hopes, and all under the formative influence of the teaching of the word of God, we need have little dread of heresy.¹²⁷

He moved from fact to law. He ranged through scripture to the atonement. There was a climax at the Cross:

Let everything old, and steady, and settled come to the cross! Let all the sciences, truly called, and the philosophers that are sincere and thoughtful; and the arts that have principles and health in them; and all taste, and culture, and refinement come to the cross – not to be rebuked and humiliated, but to stand there in the confraternity of universal truth, and to breathe, as they can do nowhere else, the spirit of everlasting law. The redemption of this world by Jesus Christ is a temporal act, that act is the fruit of an eternal thought.¹²⁸

The Cross led to “the whole realm of natural ethics,” for evangelical religion was “always on the side of the right,” in “all human conduct – trade, and speech, and behaviour – Parliamentary bills, English suffrages, Irish churches....”¹²⁹ The sun had yet to shine on Gladstone’s England, for Disraeli was Prime Minister, but the sense of a new dawn was inescapable as Raleigh reached “the region of social sympathy and practical benevolence.” What Loxton had urged in the early 1850s, Raleigh celebrated in the late 1860s. “Men everywhere are becoming more conscious of their fellow-men. The educated, the rich, the privileged, are beginning to be conscious of the ignorant, the poor, the unenfranchised, and even the vicious. The conviction is spreading fast and far, that a nation includes *all* its inhabitants, and that they ought all, in some way or other, to have share in the common liberty, and function and place, for the doing of the common work.”¹³⁰ This was the language of commonwealth and it introduced another climax, an image

of Humanity herself, "that fair, sweet, mother and mistress of the world," seeking for the lost, from the United States to Russia as well as much closer to home:¹³¹

The "lost" are being "found," not here alone, but the world over. Slaves are becoming citizens. Serfs are growing into men. The whole law of service is undergoing change in civilized communities, change which, in the end, we may hope will be much to the advantage of the servant, and scarce of less to the master and the mistress. Institutions with every charitable purpose are growing and multiplying. There are retreats for aged pilgrims; and homes for little boys; asylums for the fatherless, for the orphan, for the blind, for the incurable. The haunts of thieves are explored by adventurous little travellers through the dark realm of human crime and need – fragile women who are brave and trustful, and who believe in the possibility of "finding" whatever has been "lost." Midnight walks of sin and sorrow are trodden now, not only by the feet weary often well-nigh unto death, of the sinners themselves, but by the following feet of a pitying purity seeking to win them back to industry and home. The health of the community is the care of the community, as it has never been before. The ignorance of the people – of the uneducated perhaps ... stands out as it has never yet done in the public sight.... We recognise in all these things the begun answer of the world to the Gospel....¹³²

There was no triumphalism here but there was an assertion of confident Christian citizenship knowingly addressed to such leading laymen as worshipped at his own Hare Court and who that Saturday would entertain "a large number of members and delegates at a sumptuous breakfast."¹³³

At Leeds that October Raleigh confronted a hardly less influential congregation.¹³⁴ There was an urgency to his theme, "Questions and Duties of

the Times,” prompted by “the pressure and urgency of great problems waiting for settlement.”¹³⁵ Politics were to the forefront: the franchise, disestablishment, their social implications. There was thrust on the Churches “an immense increase of responsibility and duty – duty full of instancy, full of ‘Now.’ Now is the accepted time, now is the day of England’s social salvation.”¹³⁶ And in Leeds as in London Raleigh exhibited the Cross. In London: “The cross is at the centre of the world, and all the world is beginning to yield to its sway. The empty tomb is hard by the cross, and with the risen Saviour all things rise.”¹³⁷ In Leeds the Cross was “always at the centre of the world, moving all things, itself unmoved.”¹³⁸

If these were the utterances of a public man the good Congregational churchman is revealed by a Communion sermon. Raleigh’s reverence for Communion dated from his Cameronian boyhood – the open-air Communion Sabbath, the white-covered tables “waiting their occupants, who came to sit down at Communion after the sermon was over, and during the singing of a psalm,” two thousand of them, expectant and awestruck.¹³⁹ At Hare Court, a quarter of a century later, he encountered a different but complementary Communion tradition. In its Canonbury days Hare Court began with thirty-four members, barely twelve of them effective, but the church retained its communion plate from its City days when Bunyan had died at the house of a Hare Court deacon and its first minister had known him and Baxter and Milton, and its historian had written: “We know that hands have handled these plates that grasped swords in battles fought for the civil and religious liberty of England, and lips have kissed these cups that moved in prayer at the death of Cromwell, Milton and Bunyan.”¹⁴⁰

This Communion Sermon comes from the last five years of Raleigh’s ministry, preached to his attached, settled, and decidedly prosperous church in Kensington. It is one of thirty-two sermons, published by his widow, posthumously but at his dying request. As she noted, they “are short, and several are slightly unfinished,” and (as she noted elsewhere) they came from the last years when he tended to dash off his manuscripts.¹⁴¹

Its theme is "Tarry one for another" (1 Cor. 11:33). It is, in the best sense, an artful sermon, transparently affectionate. He swiftly sketches the context, keen to clarify that the church in Corinth finds no analogy at all with that in Kensington where now, in truth, "We all tarry one for another: each takes the elements at the appointed and orderly time, in silence, in seemliness, in fellowship."¹⁴² Even so, he finds value in the words of the text, and so he sets off, with a painterly illustration, which carries him through what he has to say, of the Church,

dressed in ideal beauty, shining in fair and costly array.... She is "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners" The great mystical host is in continual march.... Only the elect, when they are called by sovereign grace, may fall into the line and join the march of the grand, everlasting procession....

All this is true; but it is not the whole truth....¹⁴³

That is characteristic Raleigh: the description, apt for hearers who know that Leighton, Millais, Watts, all live within walking distance of their chapel, and the unexpected qualification. And now he turns aside for the development, through his text, of what he needs to say about quite another aspect of the Church: the fact that "In her utmost speed she is ready, or ought to be ready, to wait for all who need, for all who will take, the instruction, the comfort, the stimulus, the hope, she is especially able to impart. This is the function and office of the true Church. *Tarry one for another.*"¹⁴⁴

His sermon does that. It tarries for the young; and here Raleigh recalls the sudden discovery of Joseph and Mary that Jesus was not with them:

I seem to see adult age travelling on, the Church of manhood and womanhood [was Katherine Raleigh now teaching at Notting Hill High School, and there in the congregation?] more than a day's journey ahead, with no yearning desire for, or searching look after the Church of adolescence [was Walter Raleigh still at the City of Lon-

don School, or had he gone on to Edinburgh Academy, lodging with the Giffords?]. When they found the young Jesus, He was in the Temple about His Father's business. When we find the children in God, the young Church is in some respects nearer heaven than we; in other respects it is following close upon us. They are in the procession.... Reverence the children. Reverence the Church of the future.... [For] if we believe in progress – progress in anything like continuous measure – then our children are greater than we.... Give them example, room, reverence, encouragement; help the struggling thought.... Say "well done" when it has been well done – even when the success has been in the endeavour only and not in the performance. And when ye come up upon the high days, to the chief festival of life, into the great Master's presence, do not seem as if you could comfortably come alone.... Say to them continually.... "Come with us," until you hear from them the answer, "We will go with you, for we perceive that God is with you...."¹⁴⁵

He tarries affectionately on. "I suppose there never was an army without sick and lame soldiers.... They will be strong some day.... It is one of the notes of the true Church.... It is her law which I now enforce, saying, Tarry for the weak"; and even if some of the weak will turn this to base advantage, for there are weak and weak, "are we then to forsake the weak?"¹⁴⁶

When it comes to those who doubt, Raleigh's imagery changes. We become travellers in a forest, arrived at a meeting of different ways:

But some are in doubt. Have they not a right to seek the honest resolution of their doubt? Have they not a right to choose – are they not bound to choose – the wrong path, if it seems the right path to them? ... There are honest doubts, only to be resolved by time and light.... A man may doubt while he loves the truth; but, in such a case, he is sure to be led into it in the end. Tarry for him.¹⁴⁷

The stricken follow the doubting. "They are perhaps out of sight; for they are yet to fall out of the company; and the worst of it is that they themselves feel as though they had finally parted company with the host."¹⁴⁸ And then he moves – past the striking phrase, "There is a sublime waiting yet, of the whole Church for the whole world"¹⁴⁹ – to his close:

With these thoughts, and in this spirit Tarrying in faith,
and affection, and desire, for the young, for the weak, for
the doubting, for the distressed, for the whole world, let us
now keep the Feast; and may the Lord and Giver thereof
tarry for us all, and lead us into His banqueting-house,
and make His banner over us to be Love. Amen.¹⁵⁰

Who, hearing that in Kensington's Allen Street in the late 1870s, could fail to respond?

VII.

In 1883, S.A. Tipple published *Sunday Mornings at Norwood. Prayers and Sermons*.¹⁵¹ There were twenty sermons, each preceded by a prayer. The prayers were long and generally intercessory. Like the sermons, they were distinguished by the diction, the rhythms, and cadences. Their language was simple, their argument flowed without complexity. They were not so much repetitive as characterized by their massing, an insistent building up as a respectful yet confident conversation with God was carefully developed. "Father of fathers, and God of our fathers; Thou who art of all fatherliness the reason and fountain, in whom are the springs of all the parental grace and tenderness and self-giving to be found among us...."¹⁵² There is sound and movement here; the repetition of "f...."; the association of fatherliness, grace, tenderness, with God; the transition of ideas from fountain to springs, and the stream of parental grace, tenderness, and self-giving, flowing from God to well up in His people: "We men and women are manifesting – are we not? – things of Thee, which forests and mountains, stars and firmaments, do not and cannot manifest." It is an elegiac thanksgiving "for all precious things, for the dear hearts that love us, for the teaching of sorrow, the uses of

pain, for the healing touch of time, and the wider thoughts it brings, for the helpfulness of Christ and the inspiration which He continues to be....”¹⁵³

The prayer preceding the volume’s opening sermon, “A Glorious Ascension” (Eph. 4:8, 11), comes across as true *extempore* prayer, wrestled beforehand, interwoven with the sermon, and with a particular congregation in mind, who need to be upheld in prayer:

But it may only be fancy – there is no certainty; and other things to which we turn – on which we look – whisper often that it is but fancy. Where art Thou? Art Thou most surely most manifestly here in our own impulses toward and aspirations after goodness; in the good that hides within us, and mixes with our evil, and rebels and fights against it; in the groans of prayer that break from us; in the higher desires that visit and disturb us; in the beautiful dispositions of a thousand human hearts; in the frequent grace of human lives; in the height of virtue and nobleness to which some men have risen; in the one surpassing radiance of the face of Jesus Christ? Yes; here is the very presence, here the sure sign and witness of a goodness which is above ours, which is more than all, which is the fountain and the source of all, of that Infinite Goodness unseen to which we pour out our souls. Man is weak and erring at his best, and stained with grievous stains, yet in man at his worst are motions and elements that bespeak the good God; and in the Man who is our head and crown, who is the amplest, richest flowering of our moral nation – in Him how does the good God declare Himself and shine?¹⁵⁴

That section of prayer, perhaps a quarter of the whole, conveys the essence of the sermon which is to follow. Ascension is not a Nonconformist feast of obligation, and Tipple began his sermon with matter-of-fact clarity: “...it is not of a miraculous rising through the air to higher and

happier place that I am accustomed to think as constituting what is called His glorious Ascension."¹⁵⁵ What, then, would have been Jesus' idea of "beatific promotion – beautiful exaltation"?¹⁵⁶ Surely it was "to be made of richer Divine effect in men. That was ... the height for which He sighed ... mounting ... to be a greater saving and subliming force than He had ever been before, to beget repentance and remission of sins beyond what He had ever done."¹⁵⁷

That last clause was the clue: "...so long as Jesus lived in the flesh," his disciples were "all the while in bondage to an idea of Christ, an idea of glory, to a hope, an ambition, that was earthy and low, and which, retaining its hold on them to the end, kept them to the end outside the understanding of much that fell from His lips...."¹⁵⁸ It was after His death that

Their horizon expanded ... a nobler passion seized them.... They were captured by the vision of a spiritual redemption ... for peoples of all nations.... A new conception of Messianic power ... awoke within them; a new enthusiasm was theirs.... What fascinated them now, was the thought of imitating Christ, and endeavouring, with the exhibition of Him, to reconcile the world to God. They who had been captive to a low earthy idea were brought into captivity to a higher....¹⁵⁹

This "flashing upon them of a higher ideal"¹⁶⁰ as the essence of the Ascension was characteristic of Tipple's preaching, as much when Robertson Nicoll heard him three years later as when Arthur Porritt or William Kent sat under him three decades later. This particular sermon retained its Nonconformist anchor. It was Christocentric, practical, directed at the individual soul yet breathing a distinctive concept of the Church. It was Dissenting but not dissident:

You see it is not said that He left behind Him certain great institutions ... a whole machinery of offices and functions for carrying on His work and promulgating His religion.... No hierarch was founded or planned by Him. What He *did* leave behind Him ... was ... *men* qualified

to labour in different capacities; *men*, out of whose several sanctified powers and faculties were gradually evolved the different offices and functions; *men*, some of whom had the gift of apostleship.... Here was the issue and fruit of Him. A number of living souls, whom He had been slowly training, on whom at last He had succeeded in impressing Himself.... Ah! how we think sometimes that much is going to be done by organizing committees, and appointing officials; or fondly hope to regenerate society with new franchises, new political arrangements, better legislation; when the real need is, that there should be some making and remaking of men ... That is always the divinest work – to get at a man ... helping him in some way to juster thought or loftier feeling ... with a breath of higher life in him....¹⁶¹

And his sermon's ending was in Ascension: "The noblest sculptures and pictures will perish; the noblest utterances, the noblest poems may be forgotten; but any purifying or elevating effect which they have had upon a human soul, – that remains and dies not until the heavens be removed."¹⁶²

Tipple had a similar way with "The Election of God" (Rom. 9:11-13). His thesis was consistently, constructively, subversive, and he was at pains to carry his hearers with him. "You all know, of course, what the doctrine of election was in the old evangelical theology.... Surely a horrible thing to have been attributed to Him by His creatures." In fact Paul, far from furnishing one of the doctrine's chief Scripture proofs in the text to be considered, "was quite innocent of any thought about what has been termed, unconditional election to everlasting life." Tipple set out to restate his case. "The mystery of unconditional election to good and sweet things runs through the Bible. And does it not run through human life? ... Is not the fact daily, hourly repeated, that some are chosen and some rejected[?] ... There are elections to wealth, genius, station and fine opportunities, and there are reprobations to idiocy [*sic*], penury, obscurity, and meagreness or privation of opportunity.... Some are made

to have, or gain, what some are made to be void of, or to miss. Well now what can we say about it? What does it mean, under the rule and government of an Almighty Father? The old Bible throws some light upon it....” For example, Abraham “was chosen ... to be specially instructed and enlightened.... Was his election a mere piece of favouritism [?] No, No, – say the ancient Scriptures; he was elected for *their* sakes.” In fact “the Biblical view of election to superior possession and privilege ... is the method by which the wisdom of God proceeds in purposing and working for the good of *all* ... it is made to serve by degrees the welfare of the excluded crowd.... Not always consciously, and intentionally, often, quite unconsciously, and without intention, the elect in endowment, are ministering beautifully to the multitude.... The election of some, signifies the divine purpose of advancing all, and is the divine method of fulfilling it.”¹⁶³

With his trickle-down concept of election, Tipple skimmed tantalizingly along the verge of orthodoxy. Is it wholly a coincidence that the copy of *Sunday Mornings at Norwood* in London’s Dr. Williams’ Library was presented by James Heywood, the Lancashire Unitarian whose parliamentary career had culminated in the passage of the Oxford and Cambridge University Bills of 1854 and 1856?¹⁶⁴

In 1911 a collection of eighteen sermons included what might have been an Advent sermon, a remarkable interweaving of two texts (John 1:9 and 1 Cor. 10:4), “The Christ Before and Beyond Christ.”¹⁶⁵ This was a sermon, edging toward theosophy and even the hinterland of psychical research, in which every word counted and contributed urgently to the stream of thought. Its theme was that “the Word of the Infinite that stole down into our midst eighteen centuries ago, to communicate freely of its fulness, must have been with us in some kind of presence and operation antecedently, must have been unable to avoid dealing with us from the first origin of things.”¹⁶⁶

The theme stated, the urgency began: “He came to us, not only from the great God above us, but from among us and within us. He came from hiding in the wilderness with the ancient Israelites, from hidings with Buddhists and Fire-worshippers, with idolaters and sacrificers to demons, and

from wherever human creatures had learnt to dream or kneel. He came from behind the formalisms and hypocrisies of the Pharisees who derided Him, and from the innermost hearts of publicans and harlots who crowded to hear Him. The Christ in the holy child of Bethlehem was no stranger here. He was coming to His own; He ... had arrived much earlier than His Advent ... there was neither speech nor language where, without observation, He was not.... He was a descent, and yet equally an unfolding and intervention, and yet as truly an eruption.” Tipple then introduced a striking aside before moving into missionary territory: “The anti-Christ, whom the Holy Apostle described, huge and ugly in the distance, and of whom he warned the Thessalonian Church, was to be the ultimate objectiveness of what, according to his vision, had begun even then to stir at the heart, and mix with the lifeblood, of Christendom.... Every diffused spirit finds sooner or later some embodiment, and presents itself embodied to those in whose breasts it has been floating; and in process of time the Christ ... finds and takes on a body.... He was the incarnation of the living word that had breathed among us, and whispered within us, from the beginning ... and in *all*, even the best, He was more or less limited, hindered and perverted.”¹⁶⁷

Tipple’s missionary excursion was designed to reassure hearers newly nurtured in anthropology. “This, I conceive, is what we want to understand and recognise – that you can carry Christ nowhere where He is not.... Were I a missionary to any people sunk in darkness outside Christendom, my first object and endeavour would be to make acquaintance reverently with their religion, to ascertain their moral and spiritual whereabouts; and then I would introduce Christ to them as the revelation of Him who had been in their hearts all along.... The Christ *in* us is the hope of glory, yet He is manifested to seek and save the lost – the lost Christ in profane souls – with His voice to recover and revive and summon it forth from its grave. Behind all the mistaken, wistful dreams and guessings and aspirings of Humanity, Christ hides.... Every theosophic error has something true at the root of it.”¹⁶⁸

This allowed Tipple to look at the conventionally pious (“With its fierce onslaughts upon heresies, orthodox zeal has contributed to produce,

often, a dreary vacuum of infidelity. In smiting recklessly at ugly and baneful superstitions, one may run the risk of lacerating sweet faith").¹⁶⁹ It also allowed him to contemplate the doctrine of original sin and to assess baptism in the light of his contemplation. Christ is "first and fundamental in individual souls.... He is always, wherever else He may be waiting, in the fresh-born child.... Thus, you see, according to the explicit teaching of the Lord Jesus, we set out, not from ruin but from redemption, *not* from Adam's curse, but from the gift and grace of the Son of God, *not* undone, but restored. ... He is born with us and in us, at the back of all else, to the end that we may be born, and more and more deeply into Him. We begin, not with the devil, however we may *come* to him, nor with ourselves merely, but with Him, to the end that He may be perfected in us; and if you mean by your infant baptism, simply a declaratory rite, in which this is announced and borne witness to, I must e'en acknowledge its appropriateness and beauty. But oh, fathers and mothers, know and consider what it is that looks at you out of the eyes of your little ones...."¹⁷⁰ This gentle Niagara ended with his theme recaptured: "...and let this be our hope, for a future alike of individuals and of the race; that the Christ who has appeared to us in the midst of the ages, as the redeeming power from Heaven, is also underneath all, and within all, the fundamental inspiration of the universal religious soul, and the '*beginning of the creation of God.*'"¹⁷¹

"The Christ Before and Beyond Christ" catches, perhaps more than most, the style which so captivated Robertson Nicoll, Porritt, and Kent. It also brings to mind the wise warning that Tipple placed in his "Foreword": "...by those, indeed, who may have listened with profit, perhaps, to the spoken discourse, and may wish and think to find it again in a book, the edifying or stimulating discourse will not be found wholly in the book, however literally reproduced there."¹⁷² The sermon's movement, after all, was as *spoken* prose.

Tipple's sermons, like Raleigh's and Loxton's, were *sermons*. They were expositions of a text; that text was never used as an excuse for assorted, loosely-related ideas, nor was it used to display coincidental learning however much it displayed the preacher's individuality. "The Christ Before and

Beyond Christ” was Tipple intensified. “The Admiring Guest,” one of fifteen sermons published in 1896, was perhaps more representative.¹⁷³ This sermon is as artful as any of Raleigh’s; it is as prone to the sharp twist. Tipple is fonder of direct quotation, too seldom by name, though he is manifestly a Browning man. His text is Luke 14:15: “And when one of them that sat at meat with Him heard these things, he saith unto Him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.” There follows a thinking aloud of exemplary clarity, bringing the hearer steadily into the preacher’s persuasive rumination, as he weaves his thoughts around a pharisaic dinner table, as it might be at such a dinner table as his hearers were used to – step-great-nephew Bousfield, perhaps, the civil engineer turned barrister turned Tory MP or, had it been a dozen years earlier, Joseph Tritton, the Baptist banker of Quaker stock who had lived up the hill and round the corner at Bloomfield, the opulent essence of Upper Norwood life. Tipple announces his text and is briskly off: “What, I wonder, did he mean, exactly, who said that? What was the idea in his mind, the inner spirit of his word? To be sure of this, we should need to know the kind of man he was....”¹⁷⁴ And less briskly he ranges round differing types of dinner guest until he has to range himself in: “But, to return to the text” – this is not any pharisaic dinner party, it is one at which Jesus had been talking freely on unselfishness and “Then, – looking round on the assembled guests, who were mainly well-to-do friends of the host, capable of returning his hospitality” (such as might be found at Central Hill?), he imagines Jesus’ words: “In your social life your chief desire and aim should be to minister, to flow with service for the needy, with comfort for the heavy-laden, with help for the weak, displaying the unselfishness which cares less for gathering upon itself than for dispensing, which loves to pour itself out upon others, whose central, deepest aspiration is to serve.”¹⁷⁵ It was such words as these that drew forth the guest’s admiration.

At that, Tipple refocuses on the guest. Might he be a poor relation, as selfish in his ways as any rich man condemned by Jesus? Who might it be?

“So let us try again.” Tipple now imagines such a guest as can recognize a beautiful concept – only to dismiss it as “quite impracticable.

Quite impracticable! Right? Yes, it may be right enough, but...." And here Tipple moves to his point, in his carefully *involving* rumination: "What the world wants for its benediction, is not the men who reject an ideal because it is so high, but the men who, because it is so high, determine to make it their aim...." Here Tipple, the Idealist, takes flight. The fact that the guest at the feast, whatever his type, was admiring of what he heard suggests that there was in him "a germ of noble things ... a certain Divine element ... a hint of his capacity for salvation," an "enfolding within them of the germinal Son of God. It testifies that they are more than they are ... they are redeemable."¹⁷⁶

Tipple's idealism closes with a health warning: do not waste "the heavenly material within us for the construction of moral character," lest "the decree goes forth that by those for whom it was prepared, and who had been bidden, the supper of God shall never be tasted. Beware of admiring a standard of excellence without any effort to follow it; beware of allowing the heart to cry and cry again, 'Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God,' without any effort in the direction of the kingdom. That way lies the destruction, by degrees, of existing possibilities of attainment; that way lies the black doom of present capacity forfeited and lost."¹⁷⁷ That way was Tipple's hell.

He was not so far from David Loxton in that, let alone Alexander Raleigh, but an epilogue is necessary. Loxton at Mount Zion and Raleigh at Hare Court and Kensington Chapel preached to churches as well as to collections of sermon-tasters. Did Tipple? It was one of Tipple's younger latter-day hearers, William Kent, who noted how Central Hill's congregation melted away after Tipple's retirement. Yet Kent had also noticed one habitual gesture in this preacher of minimal gesture, and it was the mannerism of a man who knew his people and who could not have preached as he did to a gathering of strangers:

The gestures were few – the right arm thrown quickly upward, the keen eye following, as if surveying some vision of truth descending from above, and a strange movement of the hand as if the preacher were breaking

bread, as indeed he was breaking the invisible bread of life for his hungry hearers.¹⁷⁸

A sermon is an exposition of scripture. It is, therefore, a literary and an intellectual exercise; but its chief purpose is to convince and to convict, and when spoken it is an act. It combines, therefore, poetry and music as well as prose in the rhythm of its communication. The sermon, when written, has been resolved into prose. For some readers it recaptures the sound of the act but for most its impact springs from the page rather than the voice. It remains, however, a literary and intellectual exercise designed to convince and convict.

Loxton, Raleigh, and Tipple were ministers of the Gospel for whom the sermon had a central place. Loxton's call to ministry might stand for each of them. Stirred in his teens by a provincial pulpit prince, he had been "first excited by a sermon from the Revd. J. Parsons of York, who urged the importance of entering the ministry upon every one who professed to be a follower of Christ..." For Loxton, as for Raleigh, that meant a theological college, and he judiciously gave as his chief reason for applying to Highbury College the desire "to avail myself of the benefit of your institution because I think that every one who attempts to teach others should be able to go to the primary source of information himself, and read the scriptures in the languages in which they were originally written."¹⁷⁹ Tipple, it will be recalled, had had no such benefit, but one should not discount the impact of the "Jewish rabbi" who supervised his Hebrew as well as his Greek. For each of them the sermon was a literary and intellectual creation designed, by God's grace, to convince, convict, and transform. Such prose had power.

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Notes

¹ Matt. 18:20.

² H.H. Oakley, *The Beginnings of Congregationalism in Sheffield* (Sheffield: The Sheffield Independent Press, 1913), 94. Mount Zion's early years were complex; built as a Congregational chapel in 1834, it had trouble with its trustees, and swapped congregations in 1838, but remained Congregational.

³ Undated cutting [*Sheffield Independent*, 27 January 1922], in possession of Mrs Enid Mathias when consulted in 1989 and 2001.

⁴ *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 27 January 1922.

⁵ Undated cutting; the late Mrs. Mathias, who had preserved these cuttings, was the granddaughter of Mount Zion's penultimate minister, who had been locked out of his vestry during an Edwardian chapel dispute. As a toddler she had walked from Mount Zion to Broompark in the last procession (conversation 14 January 2001).

⁶ For Thomas Hill Green (1836-1882) see *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter, *ODNB*), and Melvin Richter, *The Politics of Conscience: T.H. Green and His Age* (London: Weidenfeld, 1964). I am indebted to Professor D.M.L. Thompson for further consideration of this question.

⁷ For Loxton see *Congregational Yearbook (CYB)*, 1877, 393-96; *Sermons by the Late Rev. David Loxton, Sheffield. With a Short Memoir by His Widow* [hereafter, Loxton, *Sermons with Memoir*] (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1876), 3-13.

⁸ Henry A. May, *Queen Street Congregational Church, Wolverhampton. The Story of a Hundred Years. 1809-1909* (Wolverhampton: n.p., 1909), 15-17.

⁹ For Hall and Sheffield – where his sermon on Election (1 Peter 1:2) satisfied all save a few old-fashioned conservatives, see Newman Hall, *An Autobiography* (London: Cassell and Company, 1898), 61-62. Hall makes no reference to Wolverhampton; he married in Hull. It was a disastrous first marriage which ended in divorce.

¹⁰ For Raleigh (the family pronounced it "Ralli") see *ODNB*; *CYB* 1881, 387-88; Mary Raleigh, ed., *Alexander Raleigh: Records of His Life* (hereafter, Raleigh, *Records*) (Edinburgh: 1881). For the Cameronians see "Societies, United," in Nigel M. de S. Cameron *et al.*, *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992), 785-86.

¹¹ For John Stoughton (1807-1897) and Charles Silvester Horne (1865-1914) see *ODNB*.

¹² *Baptist Handbook* (hereafter *BHB*), 1914, 494-95.

¹³ Sermon, "The Rejoicing of Charity" (1 Cor. 13:6), in S.A. Tipple,

Sunday Mornings at Norwood. Prayers and Sermons [hereafter, *Sunday Mornings*] (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1883), 132-33.

¹⁴ Charles Boardman Jewson, *The Baptists in Norfolk* (London: The Carey Kingsgate Press Limited, 1957), 105.

¹⁵ Arthur Porritt, *More and More of Memories* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1947), 187; For Govett (1813-1901) see D.M. Lewis, ed., *The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography, 1730-1860*, Vol. I (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 462.

¹⁶ J.H.Y. Briggs calls him a Plymouth Brother. J.H.Y. Briggs, *The English Baptists of the Nineteenth Century* (Didcot: Baptist Historical Society, 1994), 51. Govett is nonetheless listed as a Baptist minister in, e.g., *BHB*, 1894, 332, although his church (from 1854 in Surrey Road) is not.

¹⁷ Janet Ede and Norma Virgoe, eds. *Religious Worship in Norfolk. The 1851 Census of Accommodation and Attendance at Worship* (Norfolk Record Society, Vol. LXII, 1998), 138.

¹⁸ Jewson, 92.

¹⁹ Ede and Virgoe, 85.

²⁰ *BHB*, 1914, 494. The obituary also refers to “Christian work at a mission hall” in his early teens.

²¹ *Ibid.*; for Brock (1807-1870) minister in Norwich 1833-1848, see *ODNB*; Joseph Tritton (1819-87) headed the Baptist branch of an originally Quaker family. He was a leading Baptist layman in London and Essex, for long treasurer of the Baptist Missionary Society. The family bank, Barclay, Bevan, Tritton & Co, survives as Barclays.

²² *CYB*, 1877, 394, 395.

²³ [J. Guinness Rogers], “Chapters from the Life of a Congregational Minister. IV – College Friendships,” *The Congregationalist*, Vol. XI (April 1882), 295-99.

²⁴ Raleigh, *Records*, 33.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 56.

²⁸ For Ralph Wardlaw (1779-1853) see *ODNB*.

²⁹ Raleigh, *Records*, 82. This recollection is from 1857.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 216, 219.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 216.

³² *Ibid.*, 190.

³³ *Ibid.*, 199, 197.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 211.

³⁵ For Spurgeon (1836-1892) see *ODNB*.

³⁶ Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington Butts, replaced both New Park Street and the Music Hall in March 1861.

³⁷ 7-9 September 1861, quoted in Tim Hilton, *John Ruskin: The Later Years* (Yale UP, 2000), 25.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 22-23. The La Touche context is provided by Margaret Ferrier Young, ed., *The Letters of a Noble Woman (Mrs. La Touche of Harriestown)* (London: George Allen & Sons, 1908).

³⁹ Tim Hilton, "Great Issues in the South London Suburbs," *Times Literary Supplement*, 28 December 1990, 1401; Hilton, *John Ruskin*, 269; E.G. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, eds. *The Works of John Ruskin*, Library Edition (London: George Allen, 1907), Vol. XXVIII, 366. Tipple was in good company; the Anglican Stewart Headlam was also criticized.

⁴⁰ Cook and Wedderburn, XXVII, 311.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, 350.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Ruskin's ministerial admirers were numerous. Tipple's Congregational neighbor, Joseph Halsey (1842-1919), minister at Anerley from 1867, and a notorious liberal, was a Companion of Ruskin's newly founded Guild of St. George in 1875: Cook and Wedderburn, XXVIII, 468-69.

⁴⁶ T.H. Darlow, *William Robertson Nicoll. Life and Letters* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1925), 28, 73.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 73, 84.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 53-54.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 54, 78.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 378. But Nicoll did not include Tipple in his *Princes of the Church* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 4th ed. 1921).

⁵³ Arthur Porritt, *The Best I Remember* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1922), 4. For Porritt (1872-1947) see Clyde Binfield and John Taylor, eds., *Who They Were in the Reformed Churches of England and Wales 1901-2004* (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2007), 179-80; for William Garrett Horder (1841-1922) see Clyde Binfield, "W. Garrett Horder and Congregational Hymnody," Isabel Rivers and David L. Wykes, eds., *Dissenting Praise. Religious Dissent and the Hymn in England and Wales* (Oxford UP, 2011), 150-72.

⁵⁴ Porritt, 4.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁶ Arthur Porritt, *More and More of Memories* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1947), 188.

⁵⁷ Porritt, *The Best I Remember*, 4; *More and More of Memories*, 188.

⁵⁸ Porritt, *The Best I Remember*, 5.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁶⁰ Porritt, *More and More of Memories*, 189. Did Porritt in fact hear that, or did he copy the story from Kent, 211?

⁶¹ This information comes from decennial Census Returns for the households of Samuel Tipple (Norwich: 1841); Samuel Augustus Tipple (Holt: 1851; and Norwood: 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1911).

⁶² By his will, proved 25 January 1913, Tipple left £5168.16.9; *England and Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administration), 1861-1941*.

⁶³ This information comes from Census returns for Doherty and Collins, 1871, and from *BHB* 1871, 158; 1875, 185; 1876.

⁶⁴ For Collins (1802-1898) see *CYB*, 1900, 175-76.

⁶⁵ For Bousfield (1854-1943) see Michael Stenton and Stephen Lees, *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament*, Vol II, 1886-1918 (Hassocks: The Harvester Press Limited, 1978), 39-40.

⁶⁶ In 1871, at Census time, Charlotte Bousfield (1828-1933), who was Robert Collins' daughter and W.R. Bousfield's mother, was staying with the Collinses in Kenilworth (Census Returns). The links with Norwood, 1878-96, (though not with Tipple or Central Hill) can be followed in Richard Smart, ed., *The Bousfield Diaries. A Middle-Class Family in Late Victorian Bedford; The Publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society*, Vol. 86 (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007).

⁶⁷ Porritt, *More and More of Memories*, 187; *BHB* 1894, 228. The discrepancy – allowing for Porritt's receding memory – perhaps sheds an instructive light on the supposed and actual capacity of Victorian chapels. The attendance brings to mind Robertson Nicoll's comment in 1886: "...it is as well to know that Maurice's best sermons in St. Peter's, Vere Street, were delivered to an average of 100 listeners..." (Darlow, 53).

⁶⁸ Porritt, *The Best I Remember*, 4; it was where the minor Gatestone Road joined the major Central Hill.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

⁷⁰ *Kent*, 211. Kent's memories are interchangeable with Porritt's; who had first read whom? Kent knew both Porritt and Nicoll.

⁷¹ For Adam Gifford (1820-1887) see *ODNB*. The Giffords were Secession Church and United Presbyterians.

⁷² For McLaren (1826-1910) see *ODNB*

⁷³ Samuel Raleigh (d. 1882) joined the Free Church of Scotland: T. Raleigh, "Autobiographical Notes," *Annals of the Church in Scotland* (Oxford UP, 1921), vii.

⁷⁴ For Sir Thomas Raleigh (1850-1920), see *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ For Sir Walter Raleigh (1861-1922), see *ODNB*.

⁷⁶ Sir Charles Strachey (1862-1942), Assistant Under-Secretary of State at the Colonial Office, was a first cousin of Lytton Strachey. Theodore Beck (d. 1899) and Aligarh can be savored in Lady Raleigh, ed., *The Letters of Sir Walter Raleigh* (1879-1922), 2nd ed. 1928, *passim*.

⁷⁷ For Katherine Ann Raleigh (1852-1937) see *Newnham College Register 1871-1971*, Vol. I, 1871-1923 (Cambridge: Newnham College, 1979), 77.

⁷⁸ Raleigh, *Records*, 91.

⁷⁹ For James Loxton (1809-1834), missionary to Raiatea, his wife Emily (d. 1889) and her second husband, John Locke (1804-1848), missionary to South Africa, see James Sibree, *London Missionary Society, A Register of Missionaries, Deputations, etc. from 1796-1923* (London: London Missionary Society 1923), 33, 39.

⁸⁰ For James Hall (1832-1897) see *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 1 February 1897; *Sheffield Congregational Year Book*, 1919, 43; 1926, 69.

⁸¹ I am indebted to Mrs. Patricia Campin for much information about the Loxton family; see also for Revd. Robert Hall (1827-1903), *CYB*, 1904, 172-73; for Revd. Albert Henry Sayers (1867-1958), *CYB*, 1959, 429-30; for Revd. Ernest Reginald Loxton (1894-1949), *CYB*, 1950, 520.

⁸² *CYB*, 1877, 395.

⁸³ Loxton, *Sermons with Memoir*.

⁸⁴ For Edward Miall (1809-1881), Congregational minister, journalist, and MP, proponent of Disestablishment, see *ODNB*.

⁸⁵ David Loxton, *The Incompetence of Rulers: A National Judgment for National Sin. A Fast Day Sermon, Preached in Mount Zion Chapel, Sheffield, March 21st, 1855* (Sheffield: C. Crookes, 1855).

⁸⁶ *CYB*, 1877, 393.

⁸⁷ Loxton, *Incompetence*, 3.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*, 4.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 9, 10.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁰⁰ David Loxton, *A Lecture to the Working Classes Delivered by the Rev. David Loxton, in Mount Zion Chapel, Sheffield* (Sheffield: J. Pearce, 1853).

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 23, 24.

¹⁰³ "Christ Receiving Sinners" (Luke VX:2) in Loxton, *Memoir*, 19.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 32, 31.

¹¹³ "Jesus the King of Truth" (John 18:33-38), *Ibid.*, 77-78.

¹¹⁴ "The Inexplicable Nature of Human Guilt" (Jer. 11:22), *Ibid.*, 80, 81.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 92-93.

¹¹⁶ *The Bitter Cry*, attributed both to Andrew Mearns (1837-1925 see *ODNB*) and W.C. Preston (1837-1902) was published under the auspices of the *London Congregational Union* in 1883.

¹¹⁷ "The Permanent Basis of Religious Belief" (Bradford, 7 April 1875), Loxton, *Memoir*, 380-81.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 383-84.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 385-86.

¹²⁰ 755 attenders at the Assembly were listed, all male; 518 were ministers, seventy-six were theological students, 162 were laymen – their names are a roll call of Congregational clout. *CYB*, 1868, 2-8.

¹²¹ H.H. Asquith to his mother, 14 May 1868: J.A. Spender and Cyr-

il Asquith, *Life of Herbert Henry Asquith, Lord Oxford and Asquith*, 2 vols. (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1932), I.29. Asquith was not listed as an attender, but his uncle and guardian W.H. Willans, associated with Raleigh in several philanthropies, was. At Oxford Asquith became a close friend of Raleigh's nephew Thomas.

¹²² "Christianity and Modern Progress," *CYB*, 1889, 9.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 23, 24-25.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*, 25-26.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹³⁴ 636 men were listed, 394 of them were ministers and twenty-one were theological students. *Ibid.*, 51-56.

¹³⁵ "Questions and Duties of the Times," *Ibid.*, 58.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹³⁹ Raleigh, *Records*, 5, 6.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 89, 90, 91, 93.

¹⁴¹ Mary Raleigh, "Prefatory Note," Alexander Raleigh, *The Way to the City and Other Sermons* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1880), v; Raleigh, *Records*, 216.

¹⁴² "Tarry one for another," Raleigh, *The Way to the City*, 35.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 35-36.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 36-38.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 38, 40.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 41-42.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 42-43.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁵¹ S.A. Tipple, *Sunday Mornings at Norwood. Prayers and Sermons* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1883).

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 68, 70.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 6, 9.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 9, 10.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 14, 15, 16.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 93-103.

¹⁶⁴ The volume is inscribed "Presented to Dr. Williams's Library by James Heywood Esq., Trustee. December 1882." It was presumably a pre-publication copy. For Heywood (1810-1897) see Walter D. Jeremy, *The Presbyterian Fund and Dr. Daniel Williams's Trust* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1885), 222-25.

¹⁶⁵ A brief "Foreword" makes it clear that these sermons were not from Tipple's own manuscript notes but were "a few that happened from time to time to be taken down in shorthand and written out by a hearer, as they were preached." Tipple had consented "reluctantly" to their publication: "Foreword", S.A. Tipple, *Days of Old and Other Sermons* (London: James Clarke & Co., 1911).

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 242.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 243-46.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 247, 249.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 250.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 250-52.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 252.

¹⁷² “Foreword,” *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ S.A. Tipple, *The Admiring Guest, and Other Sermons* (London: Elijah Slack, 1896).

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 5-7.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 9-13.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 14

¹⁷⁸ Kent, 211.

¹⁷⁹ Undated letter of application [1836], in the New College, London, archives, Dr. Williams’ Library: NC/353/16. For James Parsons (1799-1877) see *ODNB*.

