

The English Presbyterian Meeting, Fisher Street, Carlisle – 1736-1809

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The years between 1736 and 1809 turned out to be unstable, eventful and ultimately life-changing for Carlisle's Fisher Street Presbyterian meeting, one of three with Presbyterian ministers in Georgian Carlisle. The scene is set with a review of events leading up to the move from Blackfriars¹ to a new, larger meeting house in Fisher Street and of the early years in their new home. Following this, the article concentrates on the two major external influences on the congregation. The first was the flirtation with, but never submission to, the Arian and Unitarian opinions sweeping through English Presbyterianism. The second, and opposing one, was a relinquishing of allegiance to English Presbyterianism, with its drift away from Trinitarian orthodoxy, back to their Calvinist roots, finding them in the bosom of the Burgher (Associate Synod) of the Scottish Secession Church. Before examining events in Carlisle, national developments which had an impact on the Fisher Street congregation are briefly outlined.

The Spread of Arianism and Unitarianism in England

ARIANS were followers of the Alexandrian priest Arius (c.250-336), whilst the Unitarians, or Socinians, were followers of the Italian Fausto Paolo Sozzini (1539-1604). Watts explains:

Both schools of thought regarded Christ as subordinate to the Father, but whereas the Arians acknowledged the pre-existence of Christ, looked upon him as in some sense divine, and retained the concept of atonement, the more radical Socinians denied both the divinity and pre-existence of Christ and rejected the doctrine of vicarious atonement.²

Socinian views surfaced strongly in England during the 1650s and evidence of their continuing presence is signalled in the Act of Toleration of 1689 which, by requiring subscription to the doctrinal clauses of the Thirty-Nine Articles, excluded, not only Roman Catholics, but also Unitarians from its provisions.³ Arian views, meanwhile, did not take hold until the eighteenth century. The slow drift of Dissent through the eighteenth century, from strict Calvinism and its belief in predestination, by way of Arminianism and its denial of predestination, to Arianism and Unitarianism, is a complex issue and only a bare outline is possible in this article.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century a number of Dissenters, among them the leading Nonconformist minister Richard Baxter (1615-91), had advocated a moderate form of Calvinism, which some described as Arminianism.⁴ The impetus towards Arianism did not originate in Dissenting circles but in two books authored by priests of the Church of England, published in 1711 and 1712, the first by William Whiston (1667-1752) who had been expelled as professor of mathematics at Cambridge University in 1710 for his Arian views and the second by Samuel Clarke (1675-1729), rector of St James's, Westminster.⁵ These and other books which could be construed as espousing anti-Trinitarian opinions were readily available in the various Dissenting Academies, which were not only liberal in their outlook but in many cases encouraged

free and rational thinking. These books, demonstrating that there was little in the Bible to support the concept of the Trinity, influenced those who looked upon the Bible as the sole test of faith.

Among the first to be influenced by these books were the students of the Exeter Dissenting Academy run by Joseph Hallett (1656-1722) and Hallett's fellow minister in Exeter, James Peirce (1674-1726). Once the other local Presbyterian ministers became aware 'that Hallett's pupils were casting doubt on Christ's divinity',⁶ they wrote to the London ministers seeking advice on what action they should take. All the Dissenting ministers in London were subsequently called to a meeting at Salters' Hall on 24 February 1719 at which those present voted by a narrow margin that no advice should be given. On hearing this unhelpful news, the Exeter ministers took immediate action to exclude Hallett and Peirce, who responded by forming their own, well-attended, Unitarian congregation. The London ministers re-convened on 3 March, when the losers from the first meeting, known as the Subscribers, subscribed to a Trinitarian declaration of faith and narrowly won the day over their opponents, called the Non-subscribers. It was not that the Non-subscribers held anti-Trinitarian opinions. Indeed, they were at pains to point out that the way they voted was dictated solely 'by the belief that Scripture alone was the source of doctrine'.⁷ In the light of subsequent developments, it is worth noting that the majority of Non-subscribers at Salters' Hall were Presbyterians, and also General Baptists, who succumbed to anti-Trinitarian influences in due course.

The fears of Subscribers that Non-subscribers were sending out the wrong doctrinal signals proved to be justified, because from that time forward Arianism and Unitarianism gradually spread through English Presbyterianism to the extent that, by the end of the century, nearly all local churches had embraced Unitarianism. Those that did not were mostly in the far north of England, possibly protected from deviation from Calvinism by their proximity to Scotland. However, two of the several Dissenting Academies which produced Arian and Unitarian ministers were in present-day Cumbria. The first was the Academy of Thomas Dixon (1679-1729) at Whitehaven (1708-23). Dixon was a Baxterian, though his Academy produced, among others, the Arminian George Benson (1699-1762), a Cumbrian, born at Great Salkeld near Penrith, who later in his life embraced Arianism.⁸

The second of the two Dissenting Academies was that of Caleb Rotheram (1694-1752), another of Dixon's students, at Kendal, from 1735 to 1752; it was his institution 'which supplied Arian ministers to Lancashire pulpits',⁹ as well as a minister to Fisher Street, of which more below. In his Academy, Rotheram taught not only theology and related subjects but other disciplines including science and mathematics.¹⁰ This wide range of subjects continued to be taught at Warrington Academy, opened in 1757, where Joseph Priestley (1733-1804), the scientist and Unitarian minister, became a member of staff.¹¹

So why did so many Dissenting congregations drift away from Trinitarian orthodoxy into Arianism and ultimately Unitarianism? And why was it the Presbyterians (as well as General Baptists) rather than the Congregationalists who underwent this shift?

The answer is not altogether clear-cut but one possibility is that it was a consequence of the different way in which the two denominations were organised. The English Presbyterians, in their historic role of seeking to change the Church of England from within, never put in place the system of church councils which formed the backbone of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland. So following the Act of Toleration of 1689, which ended their hopes of being part of an inclusive national Church, they became in essence independent local meetings, much like the Congregationalists. There was, however, one important difference. The Congregational system was based largely on the autonomy of the individual local meeting, with responsibility for decision-making resting with the Church Meeting at which all members were entitled to vote. The Presbyterians, however, lacking the moderating influence of higher councils and without the equivalent of the Church Meeting, were open to decision-making, and consequently responsibility for the appointment of ministers, resting in the hands of the trustees and other leading members. Since such people were likely to be from the better-off and better educated levels of society, they were perhaps more receptive to the liberal views adopted by the newly trained ministers. That the crucial power of appointment lay in the hands of the few is demonstrated by the fact that, in many instances, where unorthodox ministers were appointed, the orthodox Calvinist-minded members of congregations frequently left to form their own meetings, usually along Congregational lines, although this did not happen in Carlisle, as will be seen later.¹²

The Scottish Scene

The Church (Kirk) of Scotland, with its conciliar system, was largely protected from Arianism and Unitarianism, although there were a few instances of members being brought before the higher courts of the Kirk for allegedly promoting anti-Trinitarian doctrine. There was, however, one party within the national Church which, like the Arians and Unitarians in England, espoused rational thought. These were the Moderates whose movement has been described as Moderatism. They gained the ascendancy in the General Assembly of the Kirk from the middle of the eighteenth century and retained it for many years, although the other major party, the orthodox Evangelicals, had greater popular support. The Moderates were more interested in the intellectual, ethical and cultural development of Scotland – a feature of the Scottish Enlightenment – than in its evangelisation. ‘In doctrine the Moderates were ostensibly if tepidly orthodox, but theology did not figure among their interests’,¹³ writes Burleigh, and in their sermons they ‘confined themselves to inculcating the moral virtues with illustrations drawn from secular literature even more than from Scripture’.¹⁴ The possibility that the Fisher Street meeting was influenced by Moderatism will be explored below.

It was a Scottish dispute over the issue of patronage that ultimately changed the course of the Fisher Street congregation. Whilst the majority of ministers were not in favour of patronage, which took away the right of local congregations to appoint ministers with approval of the Presbytery and handed it to the patron, they endured it because it was a legal requirement. The matter came to a head at the General Assembly in 1732 when Ebenezer Erskine (1680-1754), minister at Stirling, vigorously defended the

right of individual congregations to choose their own ministers, but was defeated.¹⁵ The following year, he and a small number of like-minded ministers seceded from the national Church. In succeeding years others joined with Erskine in what is known as the first secession. The secession proved to be somewhat unstable because in 1747 there was ‘violent disagreement as to whether it was lawful or sinful for a Seceder to take the oath required of burgesses of certain cities whereby they acknowledged the true religion publicly preached within the realm and authorized by the laws’.¹⁶ Those who accepted it as lawful, of whom Erskine was one, became known as the Burghers (Associate Synod) and those who did not as the Anti-Burghers (General Associate Synod). It was to the Burgher (Associate Synod) that the Fisher Street meeting was to transfer its allegiance in 1809.¹⁷

Fisher Street Presbyterian Meeting – The Early Years

At the Cumberland Quarter Sessions on 14 July 1736 the following petition was presented:

We whose names are underwritten; Protestant Dissenters in & about the City of Carlisle Do hereby Certifie that the new Building erected towards lower end of Fisher Street in the s^d City, upon a Parcel of Ground purchas^d sometime since for that purpose. Is assign^d for a Place of Religious Worship.

And therefore Pursuant to an Act of Will & Mary for exempting their majes: Protestant Dissenting subjects from the Penaltys of certain Laws; The said Act requiring such places of Worship to be recorded at the gen^l quart^r sessions, & a Certificate of the Record to be given; We attend the Hon^{ble} Bench.

For this end.¹⁸

The petition, which was duly granted, was signed ‘In name of the rest’ by Abraham Dobinson, Randall Losh, William Carlyle, John Banks, David Palmer, William Moorhead, Samuel Coleman, James Sampson and Thomas Pearson.

The first brief paragraph of the petition reveals much about the petitioners and their meeting house. With regard to the petitioners, they were still describing themselves as Protestant Dissenters, as they had in 1707, although, as will be seen, they were by the latter date Presbyterians. The Independents, who were almost certainly involved with the Presbyterians in the early days of the Blackfriars Meeting, appear to have been absorbed by the Presbyterians because there is no further evidence of Independent activity in Carlisle until their re-emergence at the Annetwell Street Meeting House in 1809.¹⁹ Further, the applicants were not only from Carlisle, but also from further afield. There are no surviving records to establish from how far the membership was drawn but, of those who signed the petition, Abraham Dobinson lived at Wheelbarrow Hall, near Scotby, about three miles east of Carlisle, Randall Losh lived at Rattenrow, in the parish of St Cuthbert’s Without, about four miles west of Carlisle and William Moorhead was a native of Dumfries, but probably living in or near Carlisle at that time.²⁰

With regard to the meeting house, in 1717 a conveyance was made of a house, located on the site of the former important fifteenth-century property Sands Great House, to a Mr Reay and a Mr Hodgson. At some point between that year and 1731 they divided

the property between them.²¹ On 31 January 1731, a conveyance in trust of land in Fisher Street, from John Hodgson to Abraham Dobinson and others was effected, stating that ‘the land and premises thereon [were] to be for the use of Protestant Dissenters of the Presbyterian denomination and the dwelling house for the use of the minister.’²² Finally, in 1737 a new set of trustees was appointed, including four of the July 1736 petitioners along with Thomas Forster, of whom more below.²³ It is possible that the dwelling referred to in the conveyance in trust was retained for immediate occupation by the minister, because Thomas Dickenson is included in an undated list of the inhabitants of Fisher Street which is described as having been found among court leet papers for 1732.²⁴ The congregation probably moved to Fisher Street in 1736, the year of the petition.²⁵

The meeting house was located on the east side of Fisher Street, on a site now occupied by the Spinners Yard apartments, immediately north of property once owned by Thomas Forster. According to Jollie, writing in 1811, the property comprised a chapel, minister’s house, ‘office’ and a good garden.²⁶ That there was also a small cemetery, referred to in many later directories, is corroborated by the registers of St Mary’s, which record the burial of Israel Bennet, one of the early ministers, ‘at the meeting house Fisher Street’.²⁷ Further information on the meeting house is contained in the report of a recent archaeological survey which describes it as being set back about 28 to 30 feet from the street front, with the street front being open, perhaps as a drive or garden enclosed by a wall with gates in the middle. The report also describes the burial ground as being either to the north at the rear or on the eastern side behind the manse.²⁸ A pictorial representation of the meeting house in an engraving of the city from the north-west by H. C. Cornillon was published in 1832,²⁹ but all it shows is that the building was rectangular, with a pitched roof and three full height windows on the north-east face.

It was probably lack of space at the Blackfriars meeting house which triggered the move to Fisher Street. The fact that the parcel of land had been purchased some years before suggests that the congregation had planned ahead for this eventuality. In terms of seating capacity, the Fisher Street meeting house contained seating for 450, compared with 100 at the Blackfriars.³⁰ The only source of information on how such a substantial building project was funded is Jollie, who wrote that ‘In the year 1736 a subscription was entered into to build and endow a Presbyterian chapel. The sum chiefly raised in Scotland, was very considerable ... Beside these erections there was a very considerable sum to spare, which the trustees let out on interest’.³¹

During those early years a number of donations and bequests were made to the congregation, including donations of £20 from Abraham Dobinson, £200 from Thomas Pearson and a gift of two silver communion cups from William Moorhead.³² Thomas Pearson’s liberal bequest was recognised by the placing of a monumental tablet in the chapel after it was enlarged in 1828. The tablet read, ‘In memory of Thomas Pearson late of this city who died 13 Feby 1752 bequeathing to this chapel the sum of £200’.³³ The two silver cups, donated to the congregation in 1740, still survive and are presently on display in the Carlisle cathedral treasury. Not hallmarked or dated, they are thought to have been made by the Edinburgh silversmith James

Sympson in the 1690s, probably as drinking cups originally. In his will, made on 29 June 1744, William Moorhead also bequeathed:

The sum of fifty pounds sterling towards the support of a minister of the Presbyterian Meeting House in Carlisle to be employed and secured upon interest by the heads of the families of the Congregation for the time being and the interest thereof to be paid to the Revd Thomas Dickinson Minister of the said Meeting House and to his successors in office for ever but the principal sum is never to be broke or incroached upon.³⁴

Apart from this one bequest, the rest of Moorhead's lengthy will dealt with his affairs in Scotland.

Thomas Dickinson retired in 1745 and was succeeded by Israel Bennet, formerly minister at Keswick and Brampton.³⁵ Bennet's ministry in Carlisle coincided with the city's occupation by Prince Charles Edward Stuart and it is through his involvement with that event that he is best known. He, together with Dr John Waugh, chancellor of the diocese of Carlisle and vicar of Stanwix, and Robert Wardale, Waugh's curate at Stanwix, attended the commanding officer, Colonel Durand, as 'Aid de Con's' – aides-de-camp – responsible for providing military intelligence.³⁶ However, both Bennet and Waugh were among 22 people who signed a paper on 15 November 1745, effectively surrendering the city to the rebels. This decision was made under pressure from the militia of Cumberland and Westmorland and the inhabitants of the city of Carlisle who both refused to defend the castle.³⁷ When, in September 1746, Colonel Durand was subjected to a court martial for surrendering the city, Bennet was one of the defence witnesses.³⁸ Israel Bennet died at Carlisle of a nervous fever on 12 December 1746, 'greatly lamented by his Hearers and Acquaintances',³⁹ and was buried at the meeting house in Fisher Street on 29 December 1746. The 17-day delay between death and burial is noted, but the reason for it is not known. He was succeeded by Isaac Robinson.

The Secessions

The substantial body of secondary evidence which establishes that there was a secession from the Fisher Street meeting during the 1770s will be explored below. However, two primary sources have recently come to light that point to earlier disharmony, the second of which places serious doubt on Robson's identification of Robert Henry as Isaac Robinson's colleague from 1748 and Robert Miln as his colleague from 1760 and successor from 1767.⁴⁰ The first source, indicating disagreement in a congregation, is a letter written from Carlisle on 22 June 1738 by Benson Highmore, a Carlisle attorney, to James Lowther at Whitehaven in which he apologised for being unable to be with him over the weekend because:

Lawyer Huddleston and I have been at a Commission for 11 days using our best endeavours to settle a mighty Difference Between a presbyterian Minister and his congregation, the Question is whether he preacheth or teacheth According to the Institution of Mr Calvin or otherwise.⁴¹

Whilst this commission may have met in Carlisle, the absence of any mention of the congregation involved or any evidence that Thomas Dickenson, the then minister, was other than an orthodox Calvinist mean it is not possible to make a positive link between this incident and the Fisher Street congregation. It is, however, indicative of the divisions apparent at that time.

The second source, which provides indisputable evidence of discord within the congregation, is the will of Thomas Forster, Carlisle merchant, made on 30 October 1764, in which he bequeathed:

To Rev^d Mr John Miln the free use of the Chaple or Meeting House which I built at the Back of my Dweling House in Fisher Street Carlisle and to those that shall succeed him by the consent of the people untill the Death or remove of the Rev^d Mr Robison from the other meeting House or Chaple in Fisher Street ...⁴²

This brief extract from the will raises a number of questions.

First, what was it about ‘Revd Mr Robi[n]son’, which impelled Forster to build a second meeting house in Fisher Street? The answer almost certainly lies in Robinson’s unorthodox views. Isaac Robinson trained for the ministry from 1742 to 1746, at Caleb Rotheram’s Academy in Kendal, which, as previously noted, produced a number of Arian ministers. It is likely that Robinson moved to Carlisle immediately on completion of his training, and possibly prior to the death of Israel Bennet, because he received his first grant from the Presbyterian Fund, in his capacity as minister at Carlisle, in December 1746.⁴³ He married Hannah, daughter of John Banks and granddaughter of Abraham Dobinson, both signatories to the 1736 petition, at St Cuthbert’s Church, Carlisle, on 27 January 1748.⁴⁴ Little else is known about his ministry in Carlisle, but if there were any doubt about his heterodoxy, it was confirmed when, in 1767, he left Carlisle to become minister of the Low Meeting at North Shields, which had become Unitarian in 1757.⁴⁵ There he remained until his death, on 24 August 1782, at the age of 57.⁴⁶ Not only did Robinson train for the ministry at Rotheram’s Academy but he was also a family friend. It was at the Newcastle home of Dr John Rotheram, the eldest son of Caleb Rotheram, that he died.⁴⁷

The second question is, who was ‘Revd John Miln’ and where did he fit into the picture? Linked to that, for how long was Forster’s meeting house in existence? The reference in the will to John Miln is the only known reference to a minister of that name in Carlisle. It is known, however, that Rev Robert Miln was already in Carlisle by 1761 because he and John Forster, the nephew of Thomas Forster, were trustees of the will of John Robinson, mercer and draper of Carlisle, made on 29 January 1761.⁴⁸ On the basis that it is most unlikely that two Presbyterian ministers with the surname Miln were active in Carlisle at the same time, it is concluded that the forename in Thomas Forster’s will was incorrect and that, therefore, ‘John’ and ‘Robert’ were one and the same person. In that case, Robert Miln must have come to Carlisle, probably in 1760 as previously noted, not as Isaac Robinson’s colleague, but as the minister of Thomas Forster’s meeting house.

It is clear from the wording of Forster’s will that his purpose-built meeting house had been in use for some time prior to 1764. This creates the possibility that Robert Henry preceded Miln at Forster’s meeting house rather than at the original meeting house. In that case the terms colleague and successor, noted earlier, and in common use in the Presbyterian Church at that time, may have been introduced to explain away the apparent overlap of ministers. Hutchinson, the earliest writer to refer to Henry’s ministry in Carlisle, records that he ‘... was called and ordained to preach to the Presbyterian Congregation in Fisher Street Carlisle, in November 1748 and

continued with them for 12 years and on 13th August 1760, he became pastor of the dissenting congregation in Berwick on Tweed'.⁴⁹ All subsequent writers, with one exception, have concurred with Hutchinson. The odd man out is Jollie, himself a Presbyterian, who, in writing about the Fisher Street meeting house, added that 'the late Dr Henry, author of the History of Britain, preached in a separate building in the year 1748 and exercised his pastoral functions here for twelve years'.⁵⁰ It is the use of the words 'separate building' that sets Jollie apart from everyone else. If the 'separate building' was Thomas Forster's meeting house – as appears likely – then the secession from the main meeting house, must have taken place soon after Robinson's arrival in Carlisle, with Robert Henry as its first minister, in 1748.

Robert Henry was born on 1 March 1718, at Muirton in the parish of St Ninians, Stirlingshire, the son of a local farmer. Following his studies at Edinburgh University, he became a master at Annan Grammar School and on 27 March 1746 was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Annan. Just over two years later, on 4 November 1748, he was ordained minister of a congregation of Presbyterian Dissenters in Carlisle. There is no contemporaneous record of his ministry in Carlisle other than two entries in the baptismal register of Brampton Presbyterian Church recording baptisms carried out by him, one of which took place on 12 October 1752.⁵¹ According to one historian, Henry corresponded regularly with Joseph Liddell of Moorhouse, which suggests that he and Liddell, who was also a friend of Miln, as we shall see below, were acquainted during his time in Carlisle.⁵² After leaving Berwick, Henry moved to New Greyfriars Church in Edinburgh and in 1774 he was elected Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. He died on 1 December 1790.⁵³

The third question raised by the extract from the will concerns the location of Thomas Forster's meeting house, described as, 'the chapel or meeting house which I built at the back of my dwelling house in Fisher Street'. Most likely, this was on the land behind the house in Fisher Street, where he was living in 1766.⁵⁴ The house was next door to the original meeting house, on its south side, and the land behind it ran back to West Tower Street. If the meeting house was on this site, it was replaced by a muslin and check manufactory, built sometime after Thomas Forster's death in 1770.⁵⁵ The hypothesis that the meeting house was located on the opposite side of Fisher Street and became the Methodist meeting house in Carlisle (c. 1785-1817), now occupied by the Richmond Hall, former parish rooms of St Mary's church, is worth exploring but there is not space for doing so in this article.⁵⁶

Thomas Forster, a member of a prominent business family in Carlisle, was first mentioned as a Protestant Dissenter in 1733 and as one of the trustees of the Blackfriars meeting house. In 1737 he was elected as one of the original trustees of the new meeting house in Fisher Street. Shortly after the move from the Blackfriars to Fisher Street, Forster leased the Blackfriars meeting house from the minister and trustees for a period of 40 years. He sub-let the house to the church-wardens and overseers of the poor and other inhabitants of the parish of St Cuthbert's Without.⁵⁷ Despite having seceded from the Fisher Street congregation during the ministry of Isaac Robinson, Forster appears to have remained as a trustee, because by 1768 he and John Milburn were the only surviving trustees.⁵⁸ He died in 1770 and was buried

at St Mary's, Carlisle, on 3 April.⁵⁹ James Sampson, one of the signatories to the 1736 petition, was a witness to his will.

There seems little doubt that the secession had taken place as a consequence of Robinson's unorthodox theology and that Forster's meeting house remained Presbyterian during its short life, under the ministry of Henry and Miln, who were both Presbyterians. With the departure of Robinson, the doctrinal obstacles were removed and the way was left open for the two congregations to re-unite, at the original meeting house, with Robert Miln as minister.

The two congregations had not been long re-united before there was further discord, this time revolving around Miln. Four forms of words have been used to describe the discord and eventual further secession, by a substantial number of members, to a new meeting house in Abbey Street. The first, dated 4 September 1775, refers to 'the profligate and immoral conduct of him who was our late teacher'.⁶⁰ The second, refers to 'a considerable part of Mr Milne's hearers differing with him as to sentiment'.⁶¹ The third, alludes to 'a departure from the primitive faith [which] was soon accompanied by evident declensions'.⁶² And finally, first reported in the *Carlisle Journal* 7 October 1865, '... a secession from the congregation during Mr Milne's ministry, in consequence of his falling into Arianism'. The first of these reasons seems to allude to unspecified personal failings in the conduct of the minister, whilst the other three concern his theological outlook. In order to seek to establish the cause of the secession, the known facts about Miln are examined. Whilst there is insufficient surviving evidence to prove or disprove the charge of profligate and immoral conduct, there is ample evidence to establish beyond reasonable doubt that the cause of the secession was doctrinal rather than moral.

Though the probable grounds of the schism concerned Milne's 'falling into Arianism', it seems strange that he who, only a few years earlier, had ministered to a meeting set up in opposition to the Arian views expressed by Isaac Robinson, should have embraced the unorthodox views of his predecessor. All that is known for certain about his life before coming to Carlisle is that he had a Master of Arts degree.⁶³ However, he has been described both as from Aberdeen and as English-trained.⁶⁴ As a Dissenter he must have taken his degree in Scotland, because Cambridge and Oxford would have been closed to him.⁶⁵ After, or even before, graduating he may, nevertheless, have trained for the ministry at an English Dissenting Academy, where he could have been exposed to the liberal and unorthodox ideas circulating in certain Academies at that time.

Miln, in company with his Presbyterian contemporaries George Bennet, at Annetwell Street, and George Thomson, at Abbey Street, was acknowledged in his day for his literary activities. He published occasional sermons examination of which shows them to be devoid of any obvious Arian or Unitarian sentiments,⁶⁶ and a well-received book entitled *A Course of Physico-Theological Lectures upon the State of the World, from the Creation to the Deluge*.⁶⁷ In its preface, Miln expressed the conviction 'that reason and revelation mutually support each other and that true philosophy is the best defence against scepticism and infidelity ...'.⁶⁸ In the *Lectures* themselves he compared biblical

evidence surrounding the creation and the great flood, with the most recent geological advances of his day, but, having done so, concluded that his arguments ‘drawn from nature, reason, and observation, prove that this earth is of no greater antiquity than what appears from the Mosaic account of it’.⁶⁹ By reaching this conclusion Miln was clearly seeking to prove the concept of biblical truth in the face of scientific advances.

The long list of subscribers to the *Lectures*, numbering over 1,000, included a wide variety of people, mainly from modern Cumbria and the north-east but with a significant number from London. It included many clergy, among them the liberal Edmund Law (1703-87), bishop of Carlisle (1768-87), whose *Considerations on the Theory of Religion* (1745) received special praise in the *Lectures* and William Paley (1743-1805), archdeacon of Carlisle, whose *The State of the World with regard to Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* had been published in the previous year.⁷⁰ Among the Scottish subscribers were Robert Henry and William Cullen (1710-90), the eminent surgeon.⁷¹ It is perhaps significant, but no more so in the light of the wide variety of Christian denominations and doctrinal variations represented, that among the subscribers were the Unitarian Joseph Priestley, and the Arian Richard Price (1723-91), ethical philosopher and political radical, who ordered seven copies: more than anyone else.⁷² There are numerous references in the *Lectures* to the works of the ‘great’ Dr Taylor of Norwich. John Taylor (1694-1761), an Arminian, had been a student at Thomas Dixon’s Academy in Whitehaven.⁷³

In 1789 Miln, Caleb Rotheram of Kendal and Robinson of Kirkland, near Wigton, officiated at the opening of a new Dissenting chapel in Wigton.⁷⁴ Since this is the only known reference to the chapel, the theological leanings of the hearers cannot be ascertained. However, as explained earlier, Rotheram was minister of the Kendal Presbyterian meeting house which, in 1791, became a founder member of the Unitarian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

Miln also associated with some of the wealthier members of Carlisle society. He was a witness to the will of John Forster, banker and manufacturer, nephew of Thomas Forster, who died in 1797,⁷⁵ and in 1786 he published a valedictory sermon to Thomas Benson of Wreay Hall, steward to the duke of Portland,⁷⁶ as well as being a witness to his will.⁷⁷ At the annual meeting of the mock corporation of Wreay, on 6 March 1789, he was elected as recorder for that year, with John Losh being elected chamberlain.⁷⁸ He also featured in the diaries of John’s brother James for 1797 and 1799.⁷⁹ James recorded his attendance at Miln’s meeting, on two occasions in each year, and visits by Miln for dinner at both Woodside, the Losh family residence near Wreay, south of Carlisle, and Moorhouse, west of Carlisle, the home of Joseph Liddell, the Loshs’ uncle. The visits Losh made to Miln’s meeting house may appear few but he had little opportunity because he was living away for most of the period between his earliest diary, written in 1796, and Miln’s death, in 1800. James Losh was a Unitarian, so it may be that Miln’s sermons met his theological needs. Miln’s visits to Moorhouse suggest that, like Robert Henry, he was a friend of Joseph Liddell, which makes it possible that Liddell attended the Fisher Street meeting house. Miln and both the Losh brothers became members of the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society, which had been founded in 1793 by the Unitarian William Turner (1761-1859),

minister of the Hanover Square meeting in Newcastle upon Tyne.⁸⁰ Because none of the records of the Fisher Street meeting at the time of Miln's ministry have survived, other than an incomplete baptismal register, it is impossible to know the extent of the involvement of these, or other wealthy local people, in the life of the meeting house.

There is some evidence to suggest that eighteenth-century Presbyterians were almost as at home in their parish churches as in their meeting houses.⁸¹ This seems to have been true of the Carlisle Presbyterians, since in 1779, soon after the opening of the new St Cuthbert's parish church, a pew in the church was rented by 'John Foster and Company, Robert Underwood, the occupiers of the Old Meeting House, Benjamin Railton and William Railton Equally'.⁸²

Miln has previously been recognised as having two assistants during his ministry: James Chambers from 1782 and Thomas Kennedy from 1790.⁸³ Dealing first with Kennedy, he did come to Carlisle in 1790 but as minister at Annetwell Street, not Fisher Street.⁸⁴ With regard to Chambers, the only contemporaneous reference to his ministry in Carlisle was an article in the *Carlisle Journal* 3 December 1803, noting that 'The Rev James Chambers, late of this city, has got a call to the Presbyterian meeting house at Longtown ...' in Cumberland. In the absence of evidence linking him with any other meeting house in Carlisle, it is assumed that Chambers was Miln's colleague at Fisher Street. According to the standard Scottish ecclesiastical register, Chambers was born in Glasgow in 1752, graduated M.A. from Glasgow University in 1777 and served as collegiate minister of Fisher Street, Carlisle from 1782 to 1790, when he moved to Enfield in Middlesex.⁸⁵ An obituary in the *Carlisle Journal*, recording his death on 17 November 1841 at the age of 89, added the slightly variant particulars that, after graduating at the age of 21, he took up pastoral duties at Carlisle before moving to Enfield in 1793.⁸⁶ Both sources agreed that he was born in 1752, so, if the newspaper obituary is preferred, he might have been in Carlisle from as early as 1773 to as late as 1793.

This résumé of Miln's activities does not provide conclusive evidence of the reason for the secession to Abbey Street, and most of it is subsequent to the secession. However, since the tenor of the 1786 *Lectures* suggests that Miln did have Arian leanings, that was the probable reason, although many in his congregation would not have been happy about the type of society, within which he moved. There is nothing, however, to suggest that Miln was influenced in anyway by the Moderates in Scotland. The extent to which those who remained at Fisher Street were at home with Miln's heterodoxy must be in doubt, because if they had been they would have been unlikely to engage the orthodox James Chambers⁸⁷ as Miln's colleague, nor would they have appointed the Evangelical James Kyle to succeed Miln.

With regard to the social mix of the two congregations, the orderly and comprehensive baptismal register of the Abbey Street meeting (c. 1773-1810) reveals that the majority of the men whose children were baptised worked in the textile industry or as artisans or labourers. There were exceptions, including George Robinson, mercer and draper, whose father's 1761 will named Robert Miln as a trustee, with the entrepreneur Samuel Coleman, brazier and member of the shoemakers' guild, whose father had

been one of the petitioners for a certificate in 1736.⁸⁸ Unfortunately, no comparison can be made with the surviving Fisher Street registers because occupations are not given. At least, the Abbey Street registers demonstrate that, by and large, it was the less well-off who seceded when faced with a minister who did not hold to Trinitarian theology. With regard to the denominational allegiance of the Abbey Street meeting, there is nothing to suggest that it was other than Presbyterian throughout under its Church of Scotland-trained minister, George Thomson.

Robert Miln died on 30 May 1800 at the age of 76 and was succeeded by the Revd James Kyle, following a unanimous call from the congregation.⁸⁹

The Associate Burgher Church in Carlisle

The earliest recorded contact between people in Carlisle with Burgher sympathies and the Associate Burgher Church was in 1778. In January of that year, the Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh received a number of petitions including one ‘... from a number of persons in Carlisle representing their mournful circumstances for want of the gospel, and begging this Pby would grant them supply’.⁹⁰ Later in the same meeting, it was decided that supply should be provided to Carlisle. This was followed, in 1779, by the formation of the Associate Burgher Meeting in Annetwell Street. Apparently, the cause was not successful because the meeting house was sold to Lady Glenorchy in July 1781. Willielma Campbell, Viscountess Glenorchy (1741-86) was an Evangelical activist who established a number of chapels in Scotland and England.⁹¹

It was not until 7 November 1797 that the Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh again received a petition from a society in Carlisle, for a guest sermon.⁹² This petition, which was signed by James Lowes in the name of the said society, was not dealt with until 14 November, when the meeting:

Ordered ye Clerk to write [to] Mr Cameron [minister at Moffatt who had presented the petition] informing him that they recommend it to him to give the Petitioners a days sermon, and that he should study while at Carlisle to collect information wt regard to ye circumstances and transmit to Presbytery that they may be able at some future meeting to judge whether their Petition should be fully ans^d or refused. And yt they deem it advisable for Mr Cameron to correspond wt Mr Henderson in Hawick upon the subject & request him to give them a day’s preaching and gather also what information he can respecting ym.⁹³

The care that the Presbytery took to establish the viability of the group suggests that it was not dealing with an existing Burgher society without a minister. So who were these people who were petitioning for supply of sermon? They might have been the remnant of those who had petitioned the Edinburgh Presbytery over 20 years earlier, or simply former members of the three meeting houses with Presbyterian ministers in Carlisle at that time, or alternatively people associated with the Burgher cause who had recently moved to Carlisle from Scotland to find work. There is no evidence of Associate Burgher activity in Carlisle between 1781 and 1797.

At its meeting on 10 April 1798, in response to a further petition from Carlisle, the Associate Presbytery of Kelso granted sermon supply.⁹⁴ Supply was renewed at each succeeding meeting, with a variety of ministers selected to preach. The Presbytery

of Kelso was replaced by the Presbytery of Selkirk in September 1798 but supply continued. A meeting held in Edinburgh on 6 September, 'Agreed to grant them [some unnamed people in Carlisle] £10 and enjoined the Pby of Selkirk to enquire into their situation and report; and to take care that they be not erected into a Congn if there be not a probability of their being able to support a gospel ministry'.⁹⁵ Supply was continued and James Kyle appears for the first time on the supply list for the second Sunday of October 1798.⁹⁶ He preached again on the first three Sundays of November and again in December. In January 1799 the Selkirk Presbytery received a further petition from Carlisle asking for supply of sermon, requesting that a member of Presbytery be appointed to preach and moderate in the election of elders, and supplicating that Kyle be appointed to preach to them for 12 months.⁹⁷ The first two requests were granted but the third was not. By the end of March of that year arrangements had been made for the ordination of elders.⁹⁸

The wariness shown by the Selkirk Presbytery may have been connected with an earlier incident in Kyle's life. James Kyle, the son of a Burgher minister, was born in 1770. After graduating from Glasgow University, he trained at the Burgher Secession academy at Selkirk, was licensed at Perth on 14 February 1792 and on 21 March 1793 was ordained to the Burgher Church at Kirkintilloch.⁹⁹ By early 1796 problems had arisen between Kyle and his congregation surrounding his 'private conduct and public ministrations'.¹⁰⁰ However, it was not until June 1797 that Kyle 'offered a demission of his charge' to the Associate Presbytery of Glasgow.¹⁰¹ His 'demission' was accepted at a meeting on 25 July 1797 attended by Kyle and commissioners from Kirkintilloch.¹⁰² Nowhere in the minutes is the nature of Kyle's conduct spelled out but, whatever the truth, it appears to have been a local issue because, soon after, he was added to the preaching list for churches in and around Glasgow.

Kyle returned to Carlisle, and at first all went well. He was on the city preaching plan for the first two Sundays in November 1799 and in February 1800 the community at Carlisle were petitioning the Selkirk Presbytery 'craving that Mr Kyle might be continued among them and intimating that they had made application to the Presby of Glasgow for that purpose'. The Selkirk Presbytery continued to be wary, allowing Kyle to preach only 'if no other preacher come to Carlisle' and further arranging for an exchange between William Gibson and Kyle for the months of March and April.¹⁰³ This decision may have riled Kyle, because at some time in March he notified the Selkirk Presbytery in writing that he declined 'the jurisdiction of the Court, founded on his disbelief of any authority or rule in the Christian Church and general matter of Association agt some members of whome he does not name both of Presby and Synod'.¹⁰⁴ Around the same time, the Selkirk Presbytery received a number of private letters from individuals of the congregation which led them to understand that 'Mr Kyle had poisoned their minds with his absurdities and alienated their hearts from their subjection to the Presby'. With the intention of resolving the situation, John Johnston of Ecclefechan was appointed to go to Carlisle to 'converse with any of the people there who may be willing to wait on him'. At the same meeting, Presbytery decided 'to summon him [Kyle] to their bar at the next meeting to ansr for the anarchical principles contained in his letter'.¹⁰⁵ At that meeting, held on 29 April, it was agreed to refer the whole matter to the Edinburgh Synod.¹⁰⁶ As events turned out, James Kyle

was never brought before Presbytery or Synod to answer for his ‘anarchical principles’ because, soon afterwards, he succeeded Robert Miln as minister of Fisher Street and, in doing so, moved out of the jurisdiction of the Associate Burgher Church. Since at the same time petitions for sermon provision ceased, it is probable that his congregation in Carlisle ignored the overtures from the Associate Presbytery and moved with their minister to Fisher Street.¹⁰⁷

No contemporaneous evidence of Kyle’s ministry at Fisher Street survives, suggesting that it was harmonious and uneventful. He must, however, have retained an urge to return to his Associate Burgher roots and, in so doing, influenced his congregation in that direction. In April 1809, he petitioned the Associate Synod requesting that he and his congregation be received into the Edinburgh Synod.¹⁰⁸ Despite their previous experience with Kyle, Synod committed the matter to the Presbytery of Selkirk, instructing it to ‘make the necessary enquiries and do in it as they judge proper’.¹⁰⁹ The petition came before the Presbytery of Selkirk in May 1809. The ministers of Ecclefechan and Penrith were instructed ‘to make enquires into Mr Kyle’s present character and conduct, and to lay the result before the next meeting of Presbytery’.¹¹⁰ Before this could happen, James Kyle died. On the Sunday morning of 19 June 1809 he failed to turn up at church. The alarm was raised and, following a search, his body was found in the River Eden near Grinsdale, about two miles down-river from Carlisle. In the evening of the same day an inquest was held and a verdict of ‘found drowned’ was given.¹¹¹ According to the record of his burial at St Cuthbert’s Church, Carlisle, he was 37 years old at the time of his death.¹¹²

The minutes of the meeting of the Associate Presbytery of Selkirk, held on 26 June 1809 at Annan, recorded that ‘As Providence has removed Mr Kyle by death, it was not necessary to take his case into consideration’.¹¹³ At the same meeting supply was granted to Carlisle. By the end of September elders had been ordained, and a meeting, held on 20 November 1809, agreed to moderation of a call.¹¹⁴

Conclusion

It may seem strange that following the death of the Arian Robert Miln in 1800, and after being under the pastoral charge of heterodox ministers for over 50 years, the Fisher Street congregation should have called as Miln’s successor James Kyle, a man with strong Calvinist credentials. To explain, by the end of the eighteenth century Unitarianism was on the rise, whilst Arianism was in decline leading a number of congregations, such as Fisher Street, which had never gravitated to Unitarianism, to revert to Calvinism on the death or resignation of their Arian ministers. In Cumberland, although some other Presbyterian meetings had come under the influence of Arian ministers, including those at Brampton and Whitehaven, it was ultimately the Associate Burgher church which made the greatest inroads. By the early nineteenth century, in addition to Fisher Street, it had taken over the Presbyterian churches at Great Salkeld, Penruddock and Penrith and as early as 1757 had started a new congregation in Whitehaven, in opposition to the existing church, possibly because of the Arian teaching of its then minister. It is only when set against this wider picture that a better understanding of developments in Carlisle can be reached.

Acknowledgements

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Notes and References

- ¹ For information on the Blackfriars meeting house, see Ian Moonie, 'Presbyterians and Independents or Congregationalists in Carlisle, 1648-1736', *CW3*, ix, 124-25
- ² Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters from the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford, 2002), 371. Explaining the doctrine of atonement would take up an article in itself, but it is concisely described, as follows, in F. L. Cross (ed) revised by F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1974), 104: 'In Christian theology, man's reconciliation with God through the sacrificial death of Christ'. Socinians, meanwhile, 'looked upon the death of Christ as primarily an example to his followers'
- ³ The Toleration Act gave permission to Trinitarian Protestant Dissenting congregations to meet openly, provided that each congregation obtained a certificate from a diocesan bishop, or a JP, and that all adult Dissenters swore the oath of allegiance
- ⁴ The doctrine of Arminianism was propounded by the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609). Contrary to the Calvinist belief that man is predestined either to salvation or damnation, the Arminians argued that divine sovereignty was compatible with the real free-will of man, and that Jesus Christ died for all men and women, although only believers would be saved. For Richard Baxter see N. H. Keeble, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), vol. 4, 418-33
- ⁵ For William Whiston see Stephen D. Snobelen, *ODNB*, vol. 58, 502-06 and for Samuel Clarke see, John Gascoigne, *ODNB*, vol. 11, 502-16
- ⁶ David Cornick, *Under God's Good Hand A History of the Traditions which have come together in the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom* (London, 1998), 91. For Hallett see David L. Wykes, *ODNB*, vol. 24, 686-87 and for Peirce see David L. Wykes, *ODNB*, vol. 43, 449-52
- ⁷ Cornick, *Under God's Good Hand*, 92
- ⁸ For Dixon see, Alexander Gordon Rev, Aidan C. J. Jones, B. Anne M. Dick, *ODNB*, vol. 16, 334-35 and for Benson see, R. K. Webb, *ODNB*, vol. 5, 181-83
- ⁹ Watts, *Dissenters*, 465. Watts is citing Robert Halley, *Lancashire and its Puritanism and Nonconformity* (Manchester, 1869), ii, 394-95
- ¹⁰ For Rotheram, see M. A. Stewart, *ODNB*, vol. 47, 898-99
- ¹¹ For Priestley, see Robert E. Schofield, *ODNB*, vol. 45, 351-59
- ¹² For a concise description of the Exeter crisis and an examination of the reasons why it was the Presbyterians who drifted into heterodoxy, see Cornick, *Under God's Good Hand*, 90-93. For a more detailed study, see Watts, *Dissenters*, 366-490. For further reading the following are also recommended: C. G. Bolam and others, *The English Presbyterians from Elizabethan Presbyterianism to Modern Unitarianism* (London, 1968), and Michael Mullett, *Sources for the History of English Nonconformity 1660-1830* (London, 1991), 77-92. For the Unitarian trend in English Presbyterianism, see also R. W. Richey, 'Did the English Presbyterians become Unitarian?' *Church History*, 46 (1973), 58-72
- ¹³ J. H. S. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland* (Oxford, 1960), 303
- ¹⁴ *Ibid*, 304
- ¹⁵ For Erskine, see David C. Lachman, *ODNB*, vol. 18, 527-30
- ¹⁶ Burleigh, *A Church History*, 323
- ¹⁷ In compiling this brief outline of the 'Scottish Scene' I have relied on Burleigh, *A Church History*, 261-324

18. CAS(C), QRP/1736, Midsummer Petitions 21
19. For information on the Annetwell Street meeting, see Ian Moonie, 'Annetwell Street Protestant Dissenting Meeting, Carlisle c.1778-1843,' *CW3*, iv, 201-20
20. CAS(C), wills of: Abraham Dobinson, proved 2 March 1739; Randall Losh, proved 17 February 1742; and William Moorhead, proved 19 February 1745
21. M. R. McCarthy, typescript interim report, 7-11 *Fisher Street an Archaeological Survey*, November 1990. Notebook/scrapbook (m.s.) headed *Fisher Street*, probably compiled by R. S. Robson, who wrote a history of the Church. See *Carlisle Journal* 31 May 1912. The text described as 'the Notebook' is a copy of Fisher Street church records last known to be in the possession of a former church secretary. A photocopy of key parts of this text, made by Denis Perriam, is to be offered for deposit in the CAS(C), following its opening in 2011. This information is included under an item headed 'Schedule of papers belonging to the Meeting House Fisher Street in possession of Thomas Fisher Well House farm Nov 1809'. The original schedule has since been lost
22. CAS(C), DFCP 8/45, Presbytery of Carlisle Abstract of Deeds of Church Property 1883. This item is also listed in the 'Schedule of papers' referred to in note 21, which lends some credence to the information in the Schedule
23. Notebook/scrapbook (m.s.) headed *Fisher Street*. See note 21 above
24. CAS(C), CA3/2/45
25. Jollie, *Cumberland Guide and Directory* 1811 (reprinted Whitehaven, 1995), 27
26. *Ibid.*, 27. For 'office' in this context, see OED, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1989), house, n.: 14. (b): 'house of office' i.e. privy
27. CAS(C), microfilm JAC 708, St Mary's Parish Registers, burials 1732-61
28. M. R. McCarthy, 7-11 *Fisher Street*
29. I am grateful to Denis Perriam for drawing this engraving to my attention
30. R. S. Robson, article in the *Carlisle Journal* 31 May 1912
31. Jollie, *Directory*, 27
32. Notebook/scrapbook (m.s.) headed *Fisher Street*
33. CAS(C), typescript headed 'Fisher Street United Reform[ed] Church Memorials'
34. CAS(C), will of William Moorhead
35. For details of Dickinson's ministry in Carlisle see, Ian Moonie, 'Presbyterians and Independents or Congregationalists in Carlisle, 1648-1736', *CW3*, ix, 125-26
36. George Gill Mounsey (ed), *Authentic Account of the Occupation of Carlisle in 1745*, by Prince Charles Edward Stuart (London and Carlisle, 1846), 62. This account is mainly based on the correspondence of, and narrative of events by, John Waugh. It includes Waugh's explanation of why it was the clergy who undertook the role of 'Aid de Cons'
37. *Ibid.*, 70
38. *Ibid.*, 86-90
39. *The Newcastle Courant*, Saturday 13 December-Saturday 20 December 1746
40. R. S. Robson, *Carlisle Journal* 31 May 1912
41. CAS(C), D/LONS/W2/3/37. I am grateful to Denis Perriam for directing my attention to this letter.
42. CAS(C), will of Thomas Forster, proved 15 April 1771. I am grateful to Denis Perriam for directing my attention to this will
43. Francis Nicholson and Ernest Axon, *The Older Nonconformity in Kendal* (Kendal, 1915), 629. The Presbyterian Fund was a fund contributed to by the London churches which provided financial support to poor ministers and struggling churches outside London, mainly in rural areas
44. CAS(C), microfilm JAC 712, St Cuthbert's Parish Registers
45. Tyne and Wear Archives, C.NS16/23, Rev Andrew Fallon, *The Story of the Howard Street Presbyterian Church, North Shields* (1912), 15-19
46. *The Newcastle Courant*, 31 August 1782
47. Nicholson and Axon, *The Older Nonconformity*, 629. Dr John Rotheram's younger brother Caleb was minister of the Kendal Unitarian Chapel.
48. CAS(C), will of John Robinson, proved 16 March 1761. The Surman card index, held at Dr William's Library, Gordon Square, London, gives, under Mylne Robert, the span of his ministry in Carlisle as 1755-1800 perhaps from c.1745. However, Surman does not identify the source. The Surman index is also online at <http://surman.english.qmul.ac.uk/index.html>
49. Hutchinson, 658
50. Jollie, *Directory*, 27. Jollie was a member of the Abbey Street congregation

51. CAS(C), DFCP/1, baptisms at Brampton Presbyterian meeting house
52. Henry Lonsdale, *Worthies of Cumberland* (London, 1873), The Loshes of Woodside, 145
53. Richard B. Sher, Robert Henry, *ODNB*, vol. 26, 591-93
54. CAS(C), QRP1/3, Land Tax Assessments, Cumberland ward, Fisher Street, Carlisle 1766
55. Jollie, *Directory*, Carlisle Directory, xiii. The owners are named as 'Forster John and Sons'
56. This hypothesis has been posited by Denis Perriam. I am grateful to him for bringing it to my attention
57. Notebook/scrapbook (m.s.) headed *Fisher Street*. See note 26 above
58. *Ibid*
59. CAS(C), microfilm JAC 709, St Mary's Parish Registers, burials
60. This is one of four entries, in a hand written note headed 'Carlisle Cong Board', in an envelope marked 'Fisher Street, Carlisle' in the U.R.C. archive at Westminster College, Cambridge. Although not authenticated, I have used it because the other three entries have been authenticated
61. Jollie, *Directory*, 27
62. T. Hamilton, *The London Christian Instructor Or Congregational Magazine for the year 1822* (reprinted Delhi, 2007), Part-I, 216
63. It is known from his published work that Miln held an MA degree. Miln's major published work was *A Course of Physico-Theological Lectures upon the State of the World, from the Creation to the Deluge* (Carlisle, 1786). He also published four sermons: *Social and Brotherly Love. A sermon preached before the Society of Free-masons in Carlisle; December 27th 1769* (Kendal, 1770), *The Blessedness of those who die in the Lord. A Sermon Occasioned by the Death of Thomas Benson Esq; of Carlisle* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1778), *The rise and fatal effects of war: a discourse delivered on March 28, 1794: being the day appointed for a general fast* (Carlisle, 1794), and *National sins the cause of national suffering: A fast sermon delivered on March 8, 1797* (Carlisle, 1797). For Benner's literary output see James Mew, Rev Philip Carter, *ODNB*, vol. 5, 100. For Thomson's literary output see, Ian Moonie, 'Abbey Street Dissenting Meeting Carlisle c.1773-c.1810,' 226
64. Jollie, *Directory*, 27. He may have been the Robert Milne, son of Robert Milne of Inch, near Aberdeen, who graduated MA from Marischal College, Aberdeen in 1743. I am grateful to June Ellner of the special libraries and archives, Aberdeen University, for this information. R. S. Robson, article in the *Carlisle Journal* 31 May 1912
65. It was a requirement of entry to Cambridge and Oxford under the 1662 Act of Uniformity for teachers and students to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England. Dissenters were not prepared to do this and, consequently, were not admitted
66. I am grateful to Margaret Thompson of Westminster College, Cambridge, for reading and assessing the doctrinal content of these sermons
67. Robert Miln, *A Course of Physico-Theological Lectures*
68. *Ibid*, iii
69. *Ibid*, 383
70. When Master of Peterhouse College, Cambridge, Law was among a group who sought the abolition of subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles as a requirement of entry to the university, without success: see C. G. Bolam and others, *The English Presbyterians*, 228. Miln made reference to Paley's work in the Lectures. For Law, see B. W. Young, *ODNB*, vol. 32, 740-41 and for Paley, see James E. Crimmins, *ODNB*, vol. 42, 445-51
71. For Cullen, see W. F. Bynum, *ODNB*, vol. 14, 581-86
72. For Price, see D. O. Thomas, *ODNB*, vol. 45, 304-11
73. For Taylor, see Alan P. F. Sell, *ODNB*, vol. 53, 936-38
74. *Cumberland Pacquet*, 4 March 1789
75. CAS(C), will of John Forster, proved 27 October 1797
76. Robert Miln, *The Blessedness of those who die in the Lord*
77. CAS(C), will of Thomas Benson, proved 16 January 1778
78. *Cumberland Pacquet*, 18 March 1789. For the Corporation of Wreay see Kenneth Smith, *Cumbrian Villages* (London, 1973), 43 and 44. Mock Corporations like that at Wreay often had a reputation for high jinks, which is perhaps not something that an upright Dissenting minister would normally have been so closely involved with
79. CCLC, B320, The Diaries of John Losh, items 7 and 9. I am grateful to Stephen White for drawing my attention to the diaries and to Celia Lemmon for identifying the entries
80. For Turner see R. K. Webb, *ODNB*, vol. 55, 679-81
81. Watts, *Dissenters*, 493

82. CAS(C), PR79/88, Pew rents St Cuthbert's church, Carlisle
83. Robson, *Carlisle Journal* 31 May 1912
84. For Kennedy see Ian Moonie, 'Annetwell Street Protestant Dissenting Meeting, Carlisle c.1778-1843,' 206
85. Hew Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae* (Edinburgh, 1928), vii, 475 and 519
86. *Carlisle Journal*, 27 November 1841
87. Robson, *Carlisle Journal* 31 May 1912
88. CAS(C), DFCP3/2
89. CAS(C), DFCP3/1
90. The National Archives of Scotland (NAS), CH3.111.10. Minutes of the Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh, 107
91. Edwin Welch, *ODNB*, vol. 9, 870-71
92. NAS, CH3.111.7, Minutes of the Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh, 359
93. *Ibid*, 361 and 362
94. NAS, CH 3.187.2, Minutes of the Associate Presbytery of Kelso 1782-98
95. NAS, CH3.28.4, Minutes of the Associate Synod, 2299
96. NAS, CH3.280.1, Minutes of the Associate Presbytery of Selkirk, 3
97. *Ibid*, 4
98. NAS, CH3.280.1, Minutes of the Associate Presbytery of Selkirk, 6
99. Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, vii, 475. For the location of the Secession academy see Kyle's obituary in the *Carlisle Journal*, 24 June 1809
100. Mitchell Library Glasgow, CH3/146/15, 19 January and 8 March 1796
101. *Ibid*, 13 June 1797
102. *Ibid*, 25 July 1797
103. NAS, CH3.280.1, Minutes of the Associate Presbytery of Selkirk, 15
104. *Ibid*, 16
105. *Ibid*, 16
106. *Ibid*, 17
107. Nothing is known about the Associate Burgher group active in Carlisle between 1797 and 1800, so it is impossible to ascertain their numbers or where they met
108. NAS, CH3.28.4, Minutes of the Associate Synod, 2,417
109. *Ibid*, 2,417
110. NAS, CH3.280.1 Minutes of the Associate Presbytery of Selkirk, 170
111. *Carlisle Journal*, 24 June 1809
112. CAS(C), microfilm JAC 714, St Cuthbert's parish registers, burials
113. NAS, CH3.280.1, Minutes of the Associate Presbytery of Selkirk, 171/2
114. *Ibid*, 186