The Library of the Reverend Joseph Mendham

David J. Shaw

The Reverend Joseph Mendham (1769–1856) is described in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* as ‘Church of England clergyman and religious controversialist’.

Mendham was also a considerable book collector, particularly in support of his fervent opposition to the Roman Catholic Church and its renascence in England in the first half of the nineteenth century. The Church of England is the ‘established’ or national protestant church of England (but not of Great Britain) and it is perhaps appropriate that Mendham’s library has come to be deposited at its principal church, the metropolitical Cathedral of Christ Church, Canterbury. In fact the collection reached Canterbury by a rather complicated route. Mendham lived in the Midlands where he had held the office of ‘perpetual curate’ in the town of Sutton Coldfield. Following his death in 1856, his library of over 5,000 volumes passed to his son and subsequently to his nephew, John Mendham, whose widow bequeathed a selection from it to the Law Society of London in 1869.

Since the 1980s the collection has been on loan at Canterbury Cathedral Library. A modern printed catalogue was published in 1994, with introductory essays on Mendham and aspects of his library. The catalogue can also be consulted electronically together with the records for the other collections of Canterbury Cathedral on the OPAC of the University of Kent.

The nature of Joseph Mendham’s intellectual interests can be seen from the list of his publications in the Appendix. In part, these represent the normal publishing activities of an Anglican clergyman in the form of expository tracts and an occasional sermon. The catalogue of his library also has examples of his conventional protestant reading matter, such as bound issues of *The Protestant Guardian, conducted by clergymen of the Church of England* (Preston, 1828; Mendham Catalogue P274) or the annual report of the Loughborough and Ashby Protestant Tract Society (1843) whose library catalogue records books donated by Mendham (Mendham Catalogue L191). He also had editions of the works of standard seventeenth-century Church of England theologians such as Bishop Edward Stillingfleet (Mendham Catalogue S300–S325) and Lancelot Andrewes (Mendham Catalogue A96–A100), and a collection of early editions of the *Articles and Book of Common Prayer* of the Church of England and similar Anglican historical documents (Mendham Catalogue C202–C257). Professor Ditchfield suggests that Mendham’s study of these authors helped to strengthen his commitment to the principle of an established church and his conviction that Anglicanism as he understood it in the early nineteenth century was firmly Protestant in ethos, owing nothing to the Catholic tradition which the contemporary Oxford Movement venerated. His library also has a significant collection of the major continental
Reformers such as Luther, Melanchthon, Calvin and Zwingli, in both early and modern editions.

However, as early as 1811, Joseph Mendham had started to reveal the beginnings of one of his major anti-Catholic preoccupations, the so-called 'literary policy' of the Church of Rome, by which he meant the use of the *Index librorum prohibitorum* to govern the reading matter of the Catholic faithful and guide them away from erroneous doctrines. He published nine works on this topic between 1811 and 1848, including reprints of some of the early *Indexes* and three successively augmented editions of one of his major scholarly works, *The literary policy of the Church of Rome exhibited, in an account of her damnatory catalogues or indexes*. His other main anti-catholic preoccupations were with the money-raising aspects of Roman spirituality in the form of the *Taxae sacrae penitentiariae apostolicae* and *The venal indulgences and pardons of the Church of Rome*, with the growing activities of the newly emancipated Roman Catholic Church in England and especially in his own region; and with the history of the Council of Trent, which occupied him increasingly from the 1830s. The majority of his anti-Catholic writings were written after 1820, when Mendham was already over fifty years in age.

Mendham found it necessary to build up his own personal library of Catholic source materials to support this range of intellectual and polemical activity. He was able to do this in spite of his relatively lowly status in the church hierarchy because he had a private income. His library contained over 80 editions of the *Index librorum prohibitorum* ranging in date from 1546 to 1844. He had over 20 editions of the *Regulae* and *Taxae* of the Cancellaria Apostolica. His collection of the official Acts, Decrees, Bulls, etc. of the Council of Trent amounts to about 50 items published during the time of the Council, not counting all the other contemporary controversial works associated with it. And he owned over 100 Roman Catholic liturgical works (breviaries, ceremonials, hours, missals, offices, rituals, sacramentaries, etc.). Altogether, the entries under the heading ‘Roman Catholic Church’ in the 1994 printed catalogue amount to some thirty large 2-column folio pages or nearly 500 individual entries (without counting the many entries under the names of individual Popes, saints, and other Catholic writers).

Not all of the books in the collection belonged to Joseph Mendham. One group of English provenances is misleading: twenty-three mid-nineteenth-century books with the ownership stamp of the library of the College of Advocates, known as Doctors’ Commons. This was the college of civil lawyers practising Roman law in the Court of Arches, which was abolished in 1860. These books all have additionally the stamp of the Law Society, which evidently acquired part of the library of Doctors Commons and added some of them to the Mendham Collection. There are also thirteen items from the library of the Court of Arches itself including several early sixteenth-century editions of Canon Law and the Decretals; these too came into the collection via the Law Society. There are also items which were added by Mendham’s son Robert Riland Mendham and by his nephew John Mendham.

The analysis of the publication dates of Mendham’s books given in the Table below shows clearly that Mendham’s interests were especially focussed on the acquisition of original
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source materials from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries illustrating the controversies of the Reformation and its aftermath.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Century</th>
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<tr>
<td>1450-1500</td>
<td>77</td>
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<tr>
<td>1501-1600</td>
<td>775</td>
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<tr>
<td>1601-1700</td>
<td>1,620</td>
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<tr>
<td>1701-1800</td>
<td>995</td>
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<tr>
<td>1801-1856</td>
<td>1,321</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Where did Mendham acquire his early printed books, many of which were printed outside England? Some were acquired by purchase from earlier English collections. Mendham had copies of books disposed of in the British Museum duplicates sales of 1787, 1804, 1818 and 1831. He owned eight books stamped ‘British Museum Duplicate’ from the sale of 1831, mainly seventeenth and eighteenth-century bibliographical works and scholarly editions.

A significant number of Mendham’s books came from the library of Frederick North, 5th Earl of Guilford (1766–1827), the third and youngest son of Lord North, Prime Minister of Great Britain from 1770 to 1782. After North’s death, the library was broken up and sold in seven sales between 1828 and 1835. Mendham must have purchased at the sales or subsequently through booksellers. There are eighteen items with the bookplate or book stamp of the fifth Earl; two from the library of Francis North, 2nd Baron Guilford (1673–1729); and one each with the ownership marks of William North, 6th Baron North (1678–1734), and of Dudley North (either the 3rd Baron North, 1581–1666, or the 4th Baron North, 1602–1677) and George North (probably George Augustus North, 3rd Earl of Guilford, 1757–1802). Mendham had used manuscripts in the Guilford collection in preparation for his 1842 publication *Acta concilii Tridentini*, probably consulting them at the British Museum, which had purchased a large collection at the 1835 sale.

Mendham owned eight books which had previously belonged to the bibliomaniac Richard Heber (1773–1833) whose colossal library of over 150,000 books was sold on his death in 1833. One of these books, *A treatise of Christian renunciation* by the English Jesuit martyr Henry Garnet (London, 1593; STC 11617.8, Mendham G17) also has the armorial bookplate of the Hon. Frederick North. Mendham’s interest in its subject matter is clear, as it also contained *The declaration of the Fathers of the Councell of Trent* in Latin & English, but it is not certain whether it passed from North to Heber via one of the North sales or from Heber to North in the Heber sale of 1833 before arriving in Mendham’s library.

It is not surprising that many of Mendham’s Catholic books should have come from continental collections. There would have been little opportunity to acquire Catholic liturgical, administrative and devotional literature from solely English sources of the
seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Many of these continental books found their way to the London salerooms as a consequence of the dispersal of religious and aristocratic libraries following the French Revolution.

As with the items from English collections mentioned above, Mendham bought books which had previously been part of the libraries of earlier collectors who benefited from the dispersals brought about directly or indirectly by the French revolution and the secularisation of continental religious houses. As an example of acquisitions from continental aristocratic libraries, Mendham owned three books with the armorial binding of the De Thou family, two of which had probably belonged to Jacques-Auguste de Thou (1553-1617), a Catholic opponent of the Council of Trent and librarian to the French King Henri IV; one of these books is a copy of the *Actes du Concile de Trente, en l’an M.D. LXII & lxiiij. Pris sur les originaux*, 1607 (Mendham R205).

Mendham owned over fifty items with the ownership inscription of Jean-François van de Velde (1743–1823) who is identified in the provenance index of the Bodleian incunable catalogue as professor of theology and librarian of the University of Louvain. Van de Velde’s library, which was sold in 1833, had many provenances from religious houses in the Low Countries, such as *The catechism for the curats, compso’d by the decree of the Council of Trent, and publish’d by command of Pope Pius the Fifth ... translated into English* (London printed by Henry Hills, for him and Matthew Turner, 1687; Mendham R213) which had belonged to the English College in Bruges (‘Bibl. Maj. Coll. S.S. Angl. Bruges’), or from religious houses further afield such as an Italian anti-Lutheran work of c. 1520 with the bookplate of the Dominican Priory in Bolzano (Bozen): ‘Bibliotheca Fratrum Ordinis Praedicatorum Conventus Bulsanensis’ (Mendham M140). Some of these books owned by van de Velde had previously belonged to other continental private collectors; for example, there were nine items from the library of Captain J.-G. Michiels (fl. 1775), who also figures in the provenance index of the Bodleian incunable catalogue.

Another substantial continental collector whose books passed into both the Bodleian Library and Mendham’s collection (and many other British collections) was the doctor and freemason from Frankfurt-am-Main, Georg Franz Burkhard Kloß (1787–1854). Part of Kloß’s library was sold in London in 1835. Mendham owned eleven of his books, including four of the 77 incunables in the Mendham Collection.

A particularly interesting segment of the provenances of Mendham’s books is represented by the items from continental institutional libraries, especially from religious houses. The Jesuits are particularly well represented with about forty items in all. There are books from the libraries of twelve Jesuit colleges, in the following towns: Antwerp, Augsburg, Baeza (Andalusia), Brussels, Caen, Ingolstadt, Louvain, Mons, Paris, Siena, Tournai, and Utrecht. There are additionally books from Jesuit houses in Ghent, Halle, Luxemburg, Mechelen, and Traunkirch. The number of Franciscan houses is smaller: Dillingen, Dorsten, Limburg, Louvain (college of St Anthony), Munich (Convent of S. Anna), and Sens. There are books from Benedictine houses in Afflighem, Lambspring, and from the English Benedictine
There are books from the Premonstratensian abbeys of Rot an der Rot and Steingaden in the collection. The Steingaden volume is a copy of Joannes de Burgo, *Pupilla oculi* ([Strassburg], 1516; colophon: ‘sumptibus Joannis Knoblouchi & Pauli Gœtz bibliopolae[rum] Argen. p[ræ]lo Joannis Schotti, 1517’. 4°. Mendham, B481) with the inscription ‘In vsum Fratrum Staingadensium’ dated 1649; the book later passed into the Royal Library in Munich from which it was discarded as a duplicate: ‘Duplum Bibliothecae regiae Monac.’

Mendham had five books from the library of the Kloster Roth or its Canonry. This Premonstratensian Imperial Monastery of S. Maria and S. Verena in Rot an der Rot in Upper Swabia was secularised in 1803. Mendham F143 has the inscription ‘Monasterij Roth B. V. Mariae assumpto, et S. V. Vereno’ (1727). Several of these volumes have blind-stamped pigskin bindings typical of early-modern German ecclesiastical books, with an armorial bookplate indicating the abbot at the time, in the form H.A.Z.R. (H. Abt Zu Roth, identified as Abbot Hermann Vogler, fl. 1711–1744), or M.A.Z.R. Another item from the collections of what is now the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek is Cardinal William Allen’s *De sacramentis in genere ... De sacramento Eucharistiae ... De sacrificio Eucharistiae* (Antverpiae apud Ioannem Foulerum 1576; colophon: ‘Duaci, excudebat Ludovicus de Winde’. 4o. Mendham A55) which has an armorial bookplate reading ‘Ex electorali bibliotheca sereniss. utriusq; Bavariae Ducum’. This was presumably another duplicate from the Royal Library in Munich.

A final category is that of European universities (though there are also books from the two English universities’ colleges, for example Christ Church, Exeter, Magdalen, University, and Wadham Colleges in Oxford, as well as some Cambridge colleges). There are books from a number of German universities: Freiburg, Göttingen, Helmstedt, Ingolstadt, Landshut, and Würzburg. It is not clear whether these represent duplicates, or thefts, or the result of wars and other disruptions. An interesting item with the stamp of the University Library in Louvain (Mendham S91), which had passed through the library of Captain Michiels (and probably also that of Jean-François van de Velde), is a German university dissertation by Albertus Spicis of Nuremberg on the history of library furnishings: Christian Gottlieb Schwarz (praes.), *Exercitatio de varia supellectile rei librariae veterum*, Altorfii, typis Iod. Guil. Kohlesii, [1725]. Other academic libraries represented include the Collegium Evangelicum, Augsburg, the Collegium Germanicum et Hungaricum in Rome, and the Bibliothèque de la Sorbonne, Paris.

The Mendham Collection represents an important element of the early-printed books in the Library at Canterbury Cathedral, as its Catholic materials are a significant complement to the predominantly Anglican bias of the Dean and Chapter’s own collections. One wonders what Joseph Mendham would have thought about the irony of being remembered for the richness of his collection of Roman Catholic source materials enhancing an
Anglican cathedral, rather than for the ineffectiveness of his own publications in opposition to the emancipation of Catholicism.
APPENDIX

Chronological list of publications by Rev. Joseph Mendham

This list has been compiled from the copies of Mendham’s publications preserved in his Library, supplemented with records from the COPAC database (UK academic and research libraries).

Mendham, Joseph. *An exposition of the Lord’s Prayer: In which are comprehended an account of the origin of the prayer; an explanation of its several petitions; and a demonstration that, according to its natural interpretation, it contains a complete summary of Christian doctrine. With notes critical and illustrative.* London: printed for F. and C. Rivington by Bye and Law, 1803. xxxv, [1], 201, [7] p.; 8vo.


Mendham, Joseph. *The character, particularly as religion is concerned, of ... George the third, a sermon.* Birmingham: 1820. cm.21.


Mendham, Joseph. *Clavis apostolica, or, A key to the Apostolic writings: being an attempt to explain the scheme of the Gospel and the principal words and phrases used by the Apostles in describing it.* London: Hatchard & Sons, 1821. vii, 120 p.; 19cm. In response to J. Taylor's *A key to the Apostolic writings.*


[Mendham, Joseph]. *The Episcopal oath of allegiance to the Pope, in the Church of Rome: containing the oath both in its original and in its latest form; the latter translated into English: with some remarks in particular upon what is called the persecuting clause.* By Catholicus. London: Birmingham: F.C. & J. Rivington; Hatchard and Son; and Beilby and Knotts, [1822]. 38p. Written by Joseph Mendham under the pseudonym ‘Catholicus’. Date from British Library catalogue.

[Mendham, Joseph]. *Taxatio papalis, being an account of the tax-books of the United Church and Court of modern Rome, or, of the taxæ cancellariæ apostolicæ, and taxæ sacræ penitentiaria apostolicæ.* By Emancipatus. London: C. and J. Rivington, 1825. 63 p; 21 cm. Written by Joseph Mendham under the pseudonym ‘Emancipatus’.

Mendham, Joseph. *An account of the indexes both prohibitory and expurgatory, of the Church of Rome.* London: Hatchard, 1826. xii, 187 p.; 24 cm.

[Mendham, Joseph.] *An account of the discussion on infallibility, which took place ... on ... Sep. 30, and ... Oct. 1, 1830, by ... N. Armstrong & J. E. Gordon ... on the Protestant side, and by ... Dr. Waterhouse ... and Mr. Falyey on the Roman Catholic ... by a Plain Man.* Birmingham: C. Hammond, printer, 1830. 33p. Written by Joseph Mendham under the pseudonym ‘Plain Man’. Mendham’s copy with MS corrections and annotations.


Earlier edition has title: *Account of the indexes, both prohibitory and expurgatory, of the Church of Rome*, 1826. Mendham's copy with author's insertions & corrections for third edition.

Bluet, Thomas. "Important considerations," or *A vindication of Queen Elizabeth from the charge of unjust severity towards her Roman Catholic subjects, by Roman Catholics themselves: being important considerations in the name of certain secular priests, printed in 1601*. Edited, with a preface and notes, by ... Joseph Mendham. London : Whitaker, Treacher and Arnott; C. Hammond, Birmingham, 1831. li, 89, [1] p. ; 19 cm. Originally published under the title *Important considerations, which ought to move all true and sound Catholike*. With a prefatory epistle signed W.W., i.e. William Watson, who saw the book through the press, and to whom it has sometimes wrongly been attributed; in fact by Thomas Bluet (Allison & Rogers v.2, no 62). Mendham's copy with MS corrections & insertions.


identifies himself as author in his review of *Index librorum prohibitorum ... MDCCCXLI*, published in the *Birmingham Advertiser*, 1841. Mendham’s copy with MS annotations.


Mendham, Joseph. *The venal indulgences and pardons of the Church of Rome: exemplified in a summary of an indulgence of Sixtus IV for the repair of a cathedral; ... with an account of ... Confessionalia ... and observations confirmatory of the authenticity of the Taxæ pœnitentiæ ...* London : Rivingtons, Hatchard and Son, John M. Knott, Simpkin and Marshall, Whittaker and Co., Duncan Knott, Hawker and Coburn, 1839. xlv, 148p ; 12 cm. Mendham’s copies with insertions and corrections by the author.

Mendham, Joseph. *Detection of the sophistry by which Mr. Roscoe would represent a letter of Luther as the cause and justification of the papal bull by which he was condemned in 1520 ...* London printed by James Nichols [c.1840]. 4p. Text signed ‘Jo. Mendham’. Mendham’s copy with MS notes.

Mendham, Joseph. *An index of prohibited books by command of the present pope, Gregory XVI in 1835; being the latest specimen of the literary policy of the Church of Rome.* London : Duncan and Malcolm, 1840. xxxv, 72, [38], 73-130 p. 12 p.; 20 cm. Contains Vergerio’s reprint of the *Cathalogus librorum haereticorum*, Venetiis, MDLIIII. Mendham’s copy with MS notes.


Mendham, Joseph. *Index librorum prohibitorum ... Gregorii XVI ... MDCCCXLI.* [Birmingham?] : [18417]. 7p. A review, reprinted from the *Birmingham Advertiser*.


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of Shrewsbury to Ambrose Lisle Phillipps ... descriptive of the Estatica of Caldaro. Mendham’s copy with MS notes.


[Mendham, Joseph?] Assertions of a Roman Catholic priest examined and exposed; or the correspondence between ... John Venn ... and ... James Waterworth. [1845?]. [8]p. A book review, probably by Joseph Mendham. Date from title of book.


Mendham, Joseph. Additions to three minor works. I. The spiritual venality, or taxæ of the Church of Rome. II. The venal indulgences of the Church of Rome. III. The index of Prohibited Books of Gregory XVI. London : William Clowes & Sons, 1848. 8º. 54p.

The declaration of the Fathers of the Councell of Trent, concerning the going unto churches, at such time as ... heresy preached. Edited, with a preface, by Eupator. London : Charles Cox, 1850. 47, [1]p. Written by Joseph Mendham under the pseudonym ‘Eupator’.
NOTES


2 ‘Mrs. Mendham, widow of the Rev. John Mendham, having with much kindness and liberality placed this Library at the disposal of Mr. Charles Hastings Collette, of Lincoln’s Inn Fields, the selection of works contained in the following Catalogue was made by that gentleman, and, with the permission of Mrs. Mendham, presented by him to the Incorporated Law Society of the United Kingdom’ (Catalogue of the Mendham collection : being a selection of books and pamphlets from the library of the late Rev. Joseph Mendham, subsequently the property of the late Rev. John Mendham. London : Printed for the Incorporated Law Society of the United Kingdom, by Spottiswoode & Co., 1871, p. [3]. The Catalogue was prepared by Mr. John Nicholson, assistant librarian of Lincoln's Inn.


4 http://library.kent.ac.uk/library/. Lists of provenance names for both the Mendham Collection and the main Cathedral Library pre-1801 collections can be found on the CERL web site at http://www.cerl.org/web/en/resources/provenance/canterbury_cathedral.

5 http://www.cerl.org/.

6 Private communication, 7 August 2008.


8 For information about the British Library’s Guilford collections, see the Guilford Project web pages at http://www.bl.uk/collections/guilford.html.


10 The Bodleian incunable provenance index, p. 2893, lists four incunables from Michiels’s collection.


12 The Bodleian incunable provenance index (p. 2896) records a sale of Munich duplicates in London in 1841.
See references in the Bodleian incunable provenance index, p. 2911.

Bodleian incunable provenance index, p. 2929.