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## EDITORIAL

**T**HE Autumnal Meeting of the Society was held at Emmanuel Church, Bootle, on Wednesday, October 15th. The meeting had been well advertised, but some local official changed the venue at the last moment with disastrous effect on the attendance. Professor Veitch's paper, which is printed in this issue, deserved many more hearers.

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The Annual Meeting will be held at the Memorial Hall on Wednesday, May 13th, at 3 p.m. Officers will be elected, and the Rev. William Pierce, for many years Secretary of the Society, will read a paper on "The Contributions of Nonconformists to the Building of the Mansion House." For many months Mr. Pierce has been working on the Guildhall Records, and his researches throw much light on this episode in Nonconformist history. We trust that there will be a large attendance of members at the meeting, and that they will bring with them friends interested in the subject.

\* \* \* \*

Hymnology is a branch of its activity that our Society has not over-worked. Members will therefore welcome the first instalment of Mr. B. L. Manning's paper, which appears below—probably not less so because of the vigour with which the writer lays about him. Behind the contentions of the paper lies the question whether or not a committee is any more competent to edit a hymn-book than it is to run a campaign. Most members of the Society, we imagine, without endorsing all Mr. Manning's opinions, will rejoice in the tribute he pays to the work of Dr. Barrett.

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Our Society is very fortunate in its Treasurer, Mr. H. A. Muddiman, who not only keeps the accounts and despatches the *Transactions*, but also secures new members and does much of the routine secretarial work. His financial statement for the year ending March 31st, 1925, is on page 142.

## Ryland Adkins

**I**T is a rare thing for anyone to touch life at so many points as did the late Sir W. Ryland Dent Adkins, K.C., D.L.; rarely does one man's death leave so many lives the sadder, so many causes the poorer. His versatility, his varied range of interests, his wide field of study, joined with his unusual abilities, were the cause of his eminence in many walks of life, were perhaps the cause that he did not attain pre-eminence in any one. But if he did not attain the height in any one direction that some of his friends had hoped, most of us might be very well pleased to reach such a position in any one sphere that he attained in many.

This is not the place to enlarge on his personal religious life—which was deeper than would, perhaps, be known to many—on his political and judicial career, on his contribution to Local Government, on the charm of his conversation, the brilliance of his repartee, his eloquence as a speaker; but something may be said of his intellectual position in regard to Congregationalism. His steadfastness to the Congregational ideal rested probably on two bases. First of all it was an inheritance from a long line of Nonconformist ancestors, all of worth, some of eminence. It was securely rooted in him; bound up with local history and family tradition. And these appealed to him very deeply. Few men knew better than he the value of a great family tradition; nothing was dearer to him than the history of his native soil. Every side of it appealed to him—he was in a very true sense *adscriptus glebæ*—every field, every road, every flower, every tree, every landscape, every country house and noble mansion, had for him its spell and its story. His minute and detailed topographical knowledge of his own county came as a constant surprise. He saw all the charm, all the historical interest, of country-side and village, and he had the gift to make others see it.

All this helped to bring near to his heart the village life of Congregationalism, which few understood as he did, and in which, amidst all his varied pursuits and public duties, he never lost interest.

Combined with this was his profound historical sense.

History was his subject at Oxford, and history his great pursuit in reading. There is little doubt that if he had devoted his life to it, he might have been a great historian. His introduction to the Borough Records of Northampton has been spoken of as an almost unrivalled piece of writing. An important part of the Victoria History of Northamptonshire was from his hand. His address—sympathetic but discriminating—on Doddridge at the meeting of the Congregational Historical Society at Northampton summed up Doddridge's place in the history of his times in a masterly way. Bringing a philosophical mind to bear on this close study of history, he was able to form a very clear judgment as to the value of the Congregational conception, and of the part it had played not only in the narrower range of the religious life of England, but in its impact on the wider fields of social and political history ; and while far from blind to the extravagances and limitations which from time to time have marked its course, he never undervalued the essential soundness of its intellectual position, and was at all times true to the Congregational ideal, and a strong and able advocate of Independency.

*Nihil tetigit quod non ornavit* might be very truly said of Sir Ryland Adkins, and one illustration of its truth, though only one of many, would be his contribution to Congregational life and thought.

H. N. DIXON.

## Thomas Raffles of Liverpool

(Read before the Society at Emmanuel, Bootle, at the meeting held during the Autumn Assembly, Wednesday, 15th October, 1924.\*)

IT is good to "praise famous men and our fathers that begat us." Liverpool Nonconformity has been richly served by men worthy of praise—by John Kelly, among the Independents, by Charles Birrell, famous father of a more famous son, among the Baptists, and by James Martineau, among the Unitarians, to name only three of the giants long gone from us. With these may be fitly remembered Dr. Charles Beard, a friend of historical studies and one of the founders of University College.† But I have chosen to speak of Thomas Raffles since his work began in a period to which I am drawn by my own special studies, and since the Autumn Assembly of 1924 is meeting in Great George Street Chapel, which is his visible monument.

Thomas Raffles was born in Spitalfields on 17th May, 1788.<sup>1</sup> It was a time of expectation for Dissenters. Mr. Beaufoy was preparing, with good hope of success, to renew his efforts for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. In 1789 he came within sight of victory.<sup>2</sup> But across the Channel discontents were

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\*As delivered this paper was prefaced by a welcome to the Society in the name of the Heads of the Departments of Medieval and Modern History in the University. Prof. Veitch also expressed his pleasure at being enabled to address the Society when the Assembly was meeting in a City where his Father laboured for 10 years as minister of Crescent Chapel. [Ed.]

† Since 1903, the University of Liverpool.

<sup>1</sup> Baptised at Spitalfields Church, 13 June, 1788. Extract from the register in *Memoirs of the Life and Ministry of the Rev. Thomas Raffles, D.D., LL.D., etc., etc., etc.*, by Thomas Stamford Raffles, Esq., B.A., London, 1864. p. 3. There is an excellent short notice of Raffles by Dr. Alexander Gordon in the *D.N.B.*, and a sketch by Rev. J. Baldwin Brown, London, 1863. I am indebted to the Deacons of Great George Street for the use of their records, freely accorded to me, and especially to Mr. G. A. Redford, who guided me in my searches. I am further indebted to Mr. L. B. Phillips and Mr. W. Vincent Edwards for the loan of publications relating to the history of the Church.

<sup>2</sup> Beaufoy's motion was only lost by 20 votes (8 May, 1789) and the debate indicates that its opponents regarded themselves as fighting

fermenting which altered the course of politics in England, as well as in France. The fear of change engendered by the French Revolution postponed the emancipation of Dissenters until 1828 as it postponed political reform for some years longer. And it may be of help to recall that Raffles spent the years of his youth and early manhood beneath the dark shadow of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, and of that prolonged hostility to liberal ideas which issued from them, even though little evidence survives of the influence upon his mind of either the warfare or the politics of his early days.

Raffles owed a comprehensive debt to the Churches. His father, William, an attorney-at-law, was for seventeen years clerk to the vestry of Spitalfields Parish. His mother, Rachel, was a Wesleyan.<sup>3</sup> Thomas himself, a Wesleyan at the mature age of ten<sup>4</sup>, was schooled by a Baptist.<sup>5</sup> And the deciding influence in his career came from Dr. W. B. Collyer, himself an Independent, who ministered in Peckham to a Church of the old Presbyterian order which, before Collyer's pastorate, had been, like others of its kind, in effect what is now called Unitarian.<sup>6</sup> There was "no dull uniformity" of creed or experience in the sources from which Raffles drew his early impressions of religious thought and practice.

His serious schooling was brief—probably not more than

a rearguard action in a battle which had already gone against them. *Parl. Hist.* XXVIII., 15-41. On the renewal of the motion by Fox in 1790, when anti-revolutionary alarms had grown formidable, the opposition had manifestly hardened. The motion was rejected, 294-105. (*ib.* 387-452.) For political effects perhaps I may refer the reader to my *Genesis of Parliamentary Reform*, London, 1913, *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> *Mem.* p. 2. Before 1834 the office of Vestry Clerk had frequently, however, an administrative and legal, rather than an ecclesiastical significance. See S. and B. Webb, *History of English Local Government. The Parish and the County*, *passim*. Expecting to preach in a Methodist Chapel, Raffles writes on 22 December, 1807, "tell my Mother this." *ib.* 22.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.* p. 4. At his ordination Raffles spoke of a sermon heard "in the tenth year of my age," attributed to Rev. John Aikenhead, a Wesleyan, who calls himself "your affectionate father in the gospel," and to whom Raffles refers as his "spiritual father." *ib.* p. 46 and *n.* See also pp. 179 and 196.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. Martin Ready.

<sup>6</sup> Reminiscences of his schoolfellow, Rev. Richard Slate, of Grimshaw Street, Preston, quoted from his funeral sermon on Raffles, 30 August, 1863, *ib.* pp. 5-6. "You are my Timothy," Collyer writes to Raffles (10 August, 1803) *ib.* p. 8. And Raffles pays tribute to Collyer in his ordination statement *ib.* p. 47.

four years at most.<sup>7</sup> Even this was broken for a short time in 1803, when he was a clerk in Doctors Commons.<sup>8</sup> It is improbable that Doctors Commons was any more attractive in 1803 than it proved to be a little later in the experience of Mr. Tony Weller and Mr. David Copperfield. In any event it was disagreeable to Raffles.<sup>9</sup> His thoughts had already turned towards the ministry, and when he resumed his schooling in September, 1803, it was already with the definite object of preparing himself for his future calling.<sup>10</sup>

Early in 1805, when still a few months short of seventeen, Raffles entered Homerton, then a theological academy.<sup>11</sup> His training lasted scarcely more than four years.<sup>12</sup> It was much broken, for he early became a popular preacher, and yielded too soon to what he himself calls in his diary "the luxury of doing good."<sup>13</sup> It is, indeed, hard to reconcile his engagements during some terms of his collegiate life with any consistent or consecutive course of study.

Raffles had already refused at least two invitations<sup>14</sup> when he accepted a call to the Church at Hammersmith, first to be its temporary pastor, and then on the 24th May, 1809, to be its stated minister.<sup>15</sup> He had only passed his majority by a single week when he accepted the charge, and he had then already occupied the pulpit, with few breaks, since the end of the previous September. He took formal leave of Homer-ton on 30th May, six days after his acceptance of the call.<sup>16</sup>

All this seems like a perilous beginning. Brief and probably inadequate schooling, interrupted training, the exaltation of precocious and much lauded preaching before crowded congregations, the too early strain and responsibility of a stated charge,—this, as every college professor knows to his sorrow, is the sequence of dangers and temptations that has wrecked the career of many a man, whose early promise raised the greatest hopes. For most men, perhaps, it would have proved as dangerous as it seemed. But when Raffles

<sup>7</sup> *ib.* pp. 5, 9, 13.

<sup>8</sup> *ib.* pp. 8-9.

<sup>9</sup> See Collyer's letter of 8 August, 1803, which refers to some such statement by Raffles. *Mem.* p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> Definitely stated by Collyer *ib.* p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> His tutors were Rev. Thomas Hill and Dr. John Pye Smith.

<sup>12</sup> *ib.* 14 and 43.

<sup>13</sup> Diary, 20 Oct. 1807, quoted in *Mem.* p. 18.

<sup>14</sup> *ib.* 32-5. Probably more, including one to Liverpool. *ib.* p. 80.

<sup>15</sup> The correspondence is given in full in the *Memoir* pp. 37-43.

<sup>16</sup> *Mem.* p. 43.

settled at Hammersmith he was already a preacher of acknowledged power, and though he was never a scholar or a theologian in the strictest sense he had a mind of remarkable quickness and of unusual vigour. He absorbed knowledge, ideas and impressions with restless energy wherever he went and whatever his circumstances.<sup>17</sup> During his training, and in the earlier years of his ministry he pursued valuable, if informal, processes of self-education, and the result was not less serviceable because some of the processes were only half-conscious. As he travelled about he constantly turned aside, even at some inconvenience, to visit places of historic or antiquarian interest, or to satisfy some literary curiosity. During his ministry at Hammersmith he haunted the London book-stalls; acquired much curious learning of a bibliographical kind; and laid the foundations of a valuable library.<sup>18</sup>

On 22nd June, 1809, Raffles was ordained to the work of the ministry at Hammersmith, in Rev. John Leifchild's chapel at Kensington.<sup>19</sup> For two and a half years—for three, if one counts his preliminary pastorate—Raffles laboured with happiness and success at Hammersmith. Then a tragic accident at Liverpool interrupted his ministry and turned the current of his life.

The Church worshipping at Newington Chapel in Renshaw Street, Liverpool, had called to its ministry Thomas Spencer, a youth to whom even Raffles was senior by some years.<sup>20</sup> Spencer had left school at thirteen years of age, and for a time “*twisted worsted every day with a heavy heart.*”<sup>21</sup> Afterwards he was for some months with a firm of glovers in the Poultry. But in January, 1806, when he was scarcely fifteen

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<sup>17</sup> It is only fair to add that, according to his son and biographer, the note-books and manuscripts which survived from his College days at Homerton showed that “he must have made good use of his time.” But compare the recollections of the Rev. J. N. Gouly on the same pages. *Mem.* p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> *Mem.* p. 28 and pp. 52-4, based apparently on letters and on his diary on his antiquarian and bibliographical interests see *eg.* 94-5, 116-118, 124, 165, 172, 191-2, 232, 246, 326, 335.

<sup>19</sup> *Discourses delivered at the Ordination of The Rev. Thomas Raffles . . . on Thursday, June 22, 1809 . . .* London. 1809. Extracts in *Mem.* pp. 44-52.

<sup>20</sup> Spencer was born at Hertford, 21 Jan., 1791. *Memoirs of The Life and Ministry of the Late Reverend Thomas Spencer of Liverpool*, by Thomas Raffles, A.M., fourth edition, corrected and improved. 4to. Liverpool. 1817. p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Spencer's own words, quoted *ib.* p. 11.



years of age, he went to reside with the Rev. William Hordle, of Harwich, in order that he might be prepared for entrance to Hoxton Academy,<sup>22</sup> to which, not without some doubts on the score of his youth, he was admitted in January, 1807.<sup>23</sup> No sooner had he begun to preach than crowds flocked to hear him wherever he went. The same dangers beset Spencer at Hoxton as threatened the studies of Raffles at Homerton.<sup>24</sup> Though his tutors seem to have made some attempt to guard Spencer against importunity, the calls upon him were a strain upon his health. Had he been less earnest or less modest they might have ruined his character. Before he left the Academy six churches had been eager to welcome him to a settled ministry.<sup>25</sup> But in the summer of 1810 he was sent to Liverpool, sorely against his private wishes, to supply the pulpit at Newington.<sup>26</sup> Contact with the people overcame his misgivings without altering his wishes. He spent six weeks in Liverpool and soon after his return to Hoxton he was called to the pastorate. After seven weeks of doubt, he surrendered his desire for a southern pastorate, in part, it would seem, because he felt that it was good for him to make a sacrifice, and he accepted the call to Liverpool. Spencer was singularly gifted. It is impossible to doubt either his eloquence or his charm. Raffles—reflecting the impression which he left in Liverpool,—speaks of “his delicate sense of holiness.”<sup>28</sup> And his fine spirit is amply attested by his letters.<sup>29</sup>

Spencer's ministry, begun in February, 1811, had appealed so strongly to the people of Liverpool that the tiny chapel at Newington proved too small to hold the crowds gathered to hear him. It was decided to erect a new chapel, and on the 15th April, less than six weeks after his settlement, Spencer laid the foundation stone of a building designed to hold two thousand persons. He never ministered there. On 5th

<sup>22</sup> *ib.* pp. 18, 20 and 26; also Spencer's letters to his friend Thomas Heward pp. 30-31, 42-76, and to Mr. Hordle pp. 78-9.

<sup>23</sup> Spencer to Hordle, 21 Jan., 1807, *ib.* 84-5.

<sup>24</sup> See Part II., Chh. I. II. III. (pp. 86-148) of the *Memoirs of Spencer*. It is curious to note that Raffles, acutely conscious of the dangers in the case of Spencer, makes many pertinent observations on the subject, which he argues backwards and forwards as if realising that much of what he says has an application to his own career.

<sup>25</sup> *Memoirs of Spencer* p. 173.

<sup>26</sup> *ib.* pp. 59-165.

<sup>27</sup> *ib.* p. 166-172.

<sup>28</sup> Raffles to his father, 5 March, 1812. *Mem. of Raffles*, p. 83.

<sup>29</sup> *Memoirs of Spencer*, *passim*.

August, 1811, he was drowned while bathing in the Mersey, off the Dingle foreshore.<sup>30</sup>

His stricken people, who had held the young minister in warm and deserved affection, were almost overwhelmed with grief. But their leaders had to do more than indulge it. They had to carry on Spencer's work. Without delay some solution must be found of the very serious problem which Spencer's death created—that of providing for the work of the ministry in the large chapel already beginning to rise in Great George Street. None but a man of power could save this cause from disaster.

The thoughts of its leaders at once turned to Thomas Raffles, whose fame had spread through the denomination, and whom others had sought in vain to lure from Hammer-smith. Raffles was invited to visit Newington. In the conditions of travel that obtained in 1811 it was useless to expect a southern minister to make a series of flying visits to Liverpool. Such visits were impossible—nor did the people want them. They induced Raffles to stay with them for three successive Sundays and to dwell amongst them for the intervening weeks. In November he preached at Newington on three Sundays, as well as on several week-nights, and on two of the Sunday afternoons he preached in other chapels.<sup>31</sup>

Like Spencer before him, Raffles paid his first visit to Liverpool with reluctance and something like misgiving. He accepted the invitation to preach there almost in spite of himself and as if under the compulsion of some external power. In many ways he was a complete contrast to Spencer. Yet the people took him at once into their homes and hearts. Their friendliness impressed him deeply. It is plain that the ties formed in these few weeks had much to do with the ultimate decision of minister and people. And it may be that the procedure of those days deserves imitation in our own. By it the mutual distresses of some uneasy settlements might be avoided, while ties, at present too easily sundered, might be strengthened into happy pastorates.

Raffles was called to the pastorate in Liverpool at the end of November.<sup>32</sup> He struggled long with himself, torn between

<sup>30</sup> The accounts in Raffles' *Mem. of Spencer* and in the *Mem. of Raffles* should be read in conjunction. I have not found the Minute Books relating to the time prior to the opening of Great George Street Chapel.

<sup>31</sup> *Mem.*, 63-69, mainly from Raffles' own letters and diaries.

<sup>32</sup> *Mem.*, pp. 70-2, where the text of the "call" is given in full.

affection for old friends at Hammersmith and the strength of new attachments at Liverpool, between the conflicting claims of work successfully begun and of new opportunities which he seemed specially called upon to grasp and turn to profit. But at last, "amid the ruins of the old year," the struggle ended, and he decided that the new call was one which he could not, without unfaithfulness, resist.<sup>33</sup> His formal consent was given on 11th January, 1812.<sup>34</sup>

Raffles began his ministry in April, and on 27th May the new chapel was opened. The first meeting of the Church was held at Great George Street on 4th June, 1812, when Raffles, with his own hand, entered the names of seventy-nine members in the first folios of the minute-book.<sup>35</sup> There is reason to think, however, that the original members are to be reckoned not as seventy-nine, but as seventy-three. For there are some emendations of the record. These are due to the fact that the old cause at Newington was, after all, maintained. It persisted until 1870, when, according to a volume of its minutes preserved at Great George Street, the last meeting of the Church broke up after "an altercation," as to the compensation to be paid to the minister out of the money received from the purchasers of the chapel. Two—perhaps three—of those whose names are entered on the original roll at Great George Street ultimately stayed at Newington. Three others subsequently returned there. But these secessions did not affect the strength of the Church, as other members were quickly added to the roll. Indeed the entries in the minute-book were for some time mainly records of the proposal and admission of new members.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>33</sup>Letter from Raffles to Rankin (one of the officers of the Church), dated "midnight," 31 Dec., 1811, printed in *Mem.*, 74-5.

<sup>34</sup>Letters printed *ib.* 76-9.

<sup>35</sup>The first book is a thick folio volume, stoutly bound, and additionally protected by a strong leather case, or envelope, slipped over the binding. The volume is, unfortunately, neither paged nor foliated, and references to it must, therefore, be by dates only. This book served for almost the whole of the ministry of Raffles. The last entries, written on one of the end-papers, were made in 1859. This book is hereafter referred to as *I.M.B.*

<sup>36</sup>Last *Minute-Book of Newington* (also a stout folio volume) kept in the safe at Great George Street.

<sup>37</sup>There is some uncertainty as to the original roll. Raffles, who kept the minutes himself—they are written throughout in his own hand—seems to have made them serve the purpose of a Church Roll. Notes and corrections are frequently made in the text or on the margins, addresses are altered and removals recorded. But none of these emendations

It is only by a strong effort of the imagination that we can fix in the mind an accurate picture of the Liverpool to which Raffles came in 1812. The old town is now encompassed and overlaid by a new city. Much of the town as Raffles first saw it is now almost as far beneath the surface of memory as the buried cities of Troy. In particular it is hard for those who know Great George Street to-day to realise that the chapel first planned for Spencer in 1811,<sup>38</sup> and burnt to the ground eighty-five years ago, was built on the edge of the town.

In 1812 Liverpool had a population of close on one hundred thousand. But its topographical limits were still narrow. The stranger in Liverpool will most quickly realise them if he bears in mind that a penny ride on a tramcar, taken in any direction from the Pier Head, will carry him beyond their regular bounds. Even the district comprised within these narrow limits was not fully built upon. Not far beyond the chapel there were fields. If the cathedral had then stood where it stands to-day there would have been some houses on the lower side of it, a few at the North end, looking towards the great arch between the transepts, and a small group at the South end, facing the choir window. But the Institute was not yet built, and the houses, demolished fifteen years ago, which once stood upon its playground, looking northward over St. James's Cemetery, had not yet risen there. Above the cathedral, where the tall houses of Gambier Terrace now look down upon the cemetery, there was open ground. St. James's Cemetery itself was still a stone quarry.<sup>39</sup> It was still "the New Cemetery" in 1830, at the time of the public funeral of William Huskisson, after the first, tragic railway accident, which deprived the town of its most trusted representative in Parliament. Even then Gambier Terrace was only in course of erection, and people crowded the windows of the unfinished houses in order to witness the funeral.<sup>40</sup>

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is dated. I have, however, considered the record carefully, and I think that my interpretation of it is probably correct.

<sup>38</sup>Raffles (17 Feb. 1812) called the chapel "the most beautiful place I ever saw." In fact it was rather barn-like.

<sup>39</sup>See *The Stranger in Liverpool; or an historical and descriptive view of the town of Liverpool and its environs*, third edition, with corrections and revisions. Liverpool 1812. This contains a map of the town in 1812. It may be useful to explain that the Cathedral is not orientated in the usual way, but lies, roughly, North and South. The choir is, therefore, at the South, instead of the East, end of the building.

<sup>40</sup>See the extracts from the *Times* quoted in the biographical memoir of Huskisson which prefaces his *Speeches*. London. 1831. Vol. I., pp. 245-6.

The visitor to the cathedral who turns sharply down hill at the southern end of its site, passes Great George Street on his right a few hundred yards beyond the chapel. In 1812 he would have been passing down a street not fully completed. To his right he would have found fairly regular streets, interspersed with open sites; to his left streets already planned, but as yet occupied in the main only by scattered buildings. Pursuing his way to the river he would have reached it almost at the southern limit of the then existing docks. If, instead of turning down hill he had made his way from the upper side of the quarry, along the lower brow of the hillside up which the town climbed from the river, he would have found himself passing through its outskirts, with fields and scattered buildings on either hand; to his right the present site of the Philharmonic Hall was a field, and, further on, the site of the University buildings a quarry. Still further to the northward Everton and Kirkdale, like Wavertree to the eastward, were separate villages. Along the riverside the old system of docks is now either obscured by buildings or transformed by change. The Prince's Dock, at the north end of the present landing-stage, was still only a project. The modern visitor who makes his way uphill from the Prince's Dock, keeping at right-angles to the river, will have passed, roughly, along the whole northern extremity of the Liverpool of 1812 shortly before he reaches the now hopelessly "down-town" site of Crescent Chapel. Its site was then a field, though some of the streets which surrounded it were already planned.<sup>41</sup>

From this brief and very rough description it will be seen that Liverpool in 1812, although already one of the great towns of England, was still small by modern standards, and housed a compact community. It was a bold venture to erect a vast meeting-house on its outskirts. To draw a congregation of two thousand people within its walls was a great task for a young man of twenty-four. Yet from the first Raffles succeeded. And his success was not one of mere numbers but of deep and abiding influence.

Perhaps the compactness of the community, as well as its rapid growth, helped Raffles to gather his people together. But also these were times when Liverpool was astir not only with religious but with varied political and intellectual activities. "Everything here," wrote Raffles to his sister, "is

<sup>41</sup>See *The Stranger in Liverpool*, already cited, with the attached map.

life and animation."<sup>42</sup> The year 1812, in which Raffles came to Liverpool, was the year in which George Canning attempted to create a new Tory Party "within the bosom of the old"; the year in which Mr. John Gladstone brought Canning to Liverpool to fight, indeed, as a Tory, yet on principles which commended themselves to commercial men who were little enamoured of Tory orthodoxy; the year in which Canning did battle, in the most famous of all Liverpool elections, against Henry Brougham, the future Lord Chancellor of the Reform Bill Cabinet, and against Thomas Creevey, since famous as the most scandalous, but most amusing of letter-writers. And in Liverpool a group of men who would have kept alive intellectual interests anywhere, gathered round William Roscoe, poet and historian, and William Rathbone, the philanthropist and politician. Moreover the Evangelical movement in the Church of England was deeply affecting the town, and was in some ways a stimulus to religious interests. Mrs. Gladstone came with her young son William to hear Raffles in the early days until Sir John built a church in Renshaw Street where a preacher might be heard whose teaching was congenial to Evangelical Churchmen.

The atmosphere was, then, bracing, though it was also testing. But the young minister was equal to the opportunity. He not only made himself beloved and respected by his own large flock. He became a man of mark in the town and district. And the position which he earned, he kept.

To follow the merely local career of Raffles in any detail would be tedious for those who live in other districts. It is my purpose rather to display the foundations of his strength, to trace the origins of the cause to which that strength was devoted, and to illustrate the life of a minister in the earlier years of the last century. Yet one episode deserves more than a passing word, for it evoked a very remarkable testimony to the influence of the minister and to the courage of his people.

In 1840 the chapel was "utterly consumed by fire. The flames were first seen about twenty minutes before nine, and in less than one hour the work of destruction was completed"—so thoroughly completed that the site required little clearing for a new building.<sup>43</sup> Raffles was attending a College Committee at Manchester when the news reached him. He returned by the first train to Liverpool and drove at once

<sup>42</sup>24 Feb., 1812. *Mem.* p. 82.

<sup>43</sup>*I.M.B.*, 19 Feb., 1840.

to the chapel. "The crowd was immense; and all seemed uproar and confusion. . . . When . . . I emerged from the carriage, and was recognised by the crowd, instantly the tumult was hushed; the silence of death prevailed; they made a clear gangway for me, and I walked to the melancholy scene of desolation and ruin, as if at my own funeral. . . . The same solemn and respectful silence was maintained till I had departed."<sup>44</sup>

With remarkable promptitude arrangements were made for the building of a new chapel. "Not a moment was lost," says Raffles.<sup>45</sup> The following night the deacons took counsel together. Next morning the trustees met "at Mr. Morecroft's office and appointed a Building Committee and a Finance Committee with a view to the rebuilding of the Chapel."<sup>46</sup> The task of raising the money required was begun next day.<sup>47</sup> "Several friends met this evening at the Pastor's House," runs Raffles' own entry in the minute book, "when subscriptions were entered into for the rebuilding of the Chapel to the amount of £3,672 5s." A debt of £2,000 still remained on the old chapel which was insured only for £4,000.<sup>48</sup> With the first subscriptions, therefore, the Church had altogether rather less than £6,000 in hand towards the cost of the new building.

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<sup>44</sup>Autobiographical Recollections, *Mem.*, p. 356. The fire was due to some defect in a newly installed heating apparatus. But for the promptitude of Raffles in insisting that the Insurance Company should be notified about it on the previous Saturday, no insurance would have been payable on the destroyed buildings. The apparatus was inspected, and the policies were endorsed on Tuesday, 18 Feb., the day before the fire. Raffles' account might be read as a little homily by Ministers and Deacons—especially Deacons. *Mem.*, pp. 354-5.

<sup>45</sup>*ib.*, 357.

<sup>46</sup>*I.M.B.*, Friday, 22 Feb., 1840. There is a discrepancy between the dates entered in the Minute Book and those given in Raffles' recollections, and neither series is quite reconcileable with the calendar, but the sequence is unaffected.

<sup>47</sup>Raffles says "the same day" in his recollections, but the date in the Minute Book is Saturday, 23 Feb., which I take to be an error for Saturday, 22 Feb.

<sup>48</sup>*Mem.*, p. 357. Apparently the debt was in course of gradual liquidation between 1812 and 1840 out of the surplus of ordinary income. This was possible owing to the low salary paid to Dr. Raffles. His stipend was as follows: 1812-1816, £300 per annum; 1816-1837, £400; 1837-1841, £500. Just before the opening of the new chapel in Oct. 1841 the stipend was raised to £700. See *Mem.*, p. 364.

Meantime the Church was not left altogether homeless. The Governors of the Mechanics' Institution placed their large hall at the disposal of the congregation on Sundays, and since it was only a few hundred yards from the site of the chapel, it was fortunate that so convenient a refuge enabled Raffles to prevent the dispersion of his flock. The new chapel, designed by Mr. Franklin, the town surveyor, is familiar to the Assembly. It was opened in October, 1841, just twenty months after the destruction of the old chapel. It cost, with the organ and some yards of additional land, £13,922,<sup>49</sup> and it has been well said that the building was a tribute to the workmanship of those times, for nearly seventy years later it was possible to affirm that the building still caused a minimum of expense for structural repairs.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps another word may be added. Spencer laid the foundation stone of the first building, Raffles of the second. Is there any significance in the fact that our ancestors preferred to entrust this duty, not to duchesses or politicians, but to their own chosen leaders and spiritual guides?

I have said that Raffles was not, in the strictest sense, a scholar. But he was a lover of books and a great collector of them. He gathered materials for the History of Lancashire, subsequently passed on to Baines, and for the History of Nonconformity in the county, afterwards entrusted to Dr. Halley.<sup>51</sup> And he was active in forms of literary composition other than sermons. Of his verse I can only say that such of it as I have seen has little music to my ears.<sup>52</sup> With two friends he published a small volume of juvenile verse, shortly after he settled in Liverpool. The preface apologizes for these

<sup>49</sup>b. 363. The Minute Book reveals one item of curious interest in the present day. There was, it would seem, no sex discrimination as to subscribers, but "the men members" of the Church alone decided how the subscriptions should be spent. How much times have changed is indicated by the fact that the present excellent secretary of the Church is a lady.

<sup>50</sup>This is the testimony of the late Mr. W. M. Kirkus, for many years Treasurer of the Church, in his brief history of Great George Street, prepared for the centenary in 1912. *Raffles Centenary Celebrations*. Liverpool, 1912.

<sup>51</sup>*Mem.*, 53 and note, 175, 180-1, 184, 235. I understand from Dr. Grieve that these materials are now at the Lancashire Independent College.

<sup>52</sup>A little 'album piece' of two stanzas is not, however, without charm, *i.e.*, *Cowper's RoseBushes*. Newcastle-on-Tyne. 1829. It is prefaced by an explanatory note, signed J. F.



verses on the ground that most of the poems were composed before the authors had completed their twenty-first year.<sup>53</sup> Perhaps we may leave the matter there. Raffles wrote a number of hymns, some of which were printed as a supplement to Watts' collection for use in the services of the chapel. Two of them were amongst the half dozen or so of his favourite hymns which Raffles repeated frequently to himself during the weary hours of his last illness. But they have disappeared from the usage of the Church, and they never, so far as I can learn, gained much acceptance outside his own congregation.<sup>54</sup>

The biography of Spencer, already mentioned, is still a readable book. Parts of it are written with great tenderness and sympathy, and it conveys a noble and charming impression of that "wonderful boy." But it is, of course, designed to "improve the occasion" in a fashion which may be distasteful to a later generation. The book went through many editions, here and in America, and there is evidence that not a few were influenced by it to prepare for the ministry. Raffles would have been satisfied with this as both justification and reward.<sup>55</sup>

But, amongst those of his writings which I have been able to examine, the book which would most appeal to the modern reader is a little, unpretentious account of his tour on the continent in 1817 with his cousin, Sir Stamford Raffles, who had recently been Governor of Java. It is not easy to illustrate its simple and natural charm without quoting passages too long for this paper. It must suffice to say that it is written in the form of familiar letters and that the style is easy and

<sup>53</sup>*Poems by Three Friends* [Thomas Raffles, J. B. Brown, and J. H. Wiffen] London. 1813. Preface, p. 5. The volume is a small octavo in pale grey paper boards. The authorship of the individual poems is not indicated. In a later edition they were assigned to their respective authors, but this edition I have not seen.

<sup>54</sup>A collection of his New Year hymns was made and printed by Mr. David Marples, one of the Deacons of the Church, after the death of Dr. Raffles. *Hymns written for the New Year's Morning Prayer Meetings in Great George Street Chapel . . . with a preface by the Rev. James Baldwin Brown, B.A.* Liverpool. 1868.

<sup>55</sup>The catalogue of the British Museum indicates at least six editions published in England by Raffles, as well as one including a selection of Spencer's papers and a poem on his death by James Montgomery. Exactly how many were published in America is not known, but see *Mem.*, p. 92. Other references to the book are on pp. 91, 93, 106-7, 140, 153. When this paper was read the Rev. W. Pierce, M.A., who was in the Chair, mentioned that the book was still read in his youth and that its special mission had not then ceased to be effective.

flowing, without the slightest pretence of fine writing. It gives a useful and candid account of France, Savoy, Switzerland and the Rhineland just as they appeared to Raffles in the early years of the Forty Years Peace, and it ends with a description of Liège and Brussels. It has almost a contemporary flavour, for the experiences of Raffles and his cousin after the Napoleonic Wars were in some ways not unlike those of many of us who visited France and Germany after the still more destructive contest which is yet fresh in memory. This little book is sometimes amusing, always interesting, and invariably based on honest observation. It now deserves to be reckoned as an historical document, which can rank without disgrace alongside the more fashionable "tours" of the period. Like the *Memoir of Spencer* it passed through several editions; it was often used as a guide-book; and it was even recommended for this purpose to Raffles himself by a stranger, unaware of his identity, with whom he fell into chance conversation in an inn. Seldom does so honest a book meet with so honest and spontaneous a testimonial.<sup>56</sup>

Literary work was only the bye-product of an intensely active life, though in the long run Raffles' publications were fairly extensive.<sup>57</sup> In his early days Raffles showed an energy

<sup>56</sup>*Letters during a Tour through some parts of France, Savoy, Switzerland, and the Netherlands in the Summer of 1817.* By Thomas Raffles, A.M., second edition Liverpool, 1819.

<sup>57</sup>They were, in addition to sermons and other works named elsewhere:—

(1) *The Messiah*, by Klopstock. A new translation from the German. The five last books prepared for the press by the Rev. Thomas Raffles. In three volumes. London. 1814. The book is dedicated to Queen Charlotte. The "Advertisement" says that Raffles' part was to "recompose" a too literal translation, "with the assistance of an accomplished foreigner." He hoped that it would be found to possess the double advantage "of a close adherence to the original of Klopstock, combined with the native ease of the language into which his Poem is translated." "The last, namely the twentieth book of the *Messiah*," he adds, "now for the first time makes its appearance in an English dress."

(2) *The Self-Interpreting Bible . . . by the late Rev. John Brown . . . A new edition revised and corrected, with many additional notes, by the Rev. Thomas Raffles, A.M.* London. 1815. 2 vols. 4to.

(3) *Hear the Church. A word for All. By a Doctor of Divinity, but not of Oxford.* London. 1839. This is a plain statement of the view that "the Church" entitled to a hearing is the band of disciples gathered together in an assembly of believers. Before this conclusion is reached there is, however, some pleasant though dignified fooling at the expense of those who hold a more monopolistic opinion.

almost feverish in its intensity. His life would seem too strenuous for belief, did not his own letters and diaries bear constant witness to his activity. He frequently preached thrice on Sundays. He engaged with tireless energy in preaching tours. It was by no means uncommon for him to preach, either on these occasions, or during his visits to London, as many as eight or nine times in one week.<sup>58</sup> He himself lamented his too yielding disposition.<sup>59</sup> He preached even during his honeymoon. His marriage to Mary Catherine, only daughter of James Hargreaves of Liverpool, took place on the 18th April, 1815,<sup>60</sup> two months before Waterloo. The date has some significance. Raffles had planned a honeymoon in France, but Napoleon's return from Elba forced him to change his intentions. He took his wife to London instead. The result was disastrous to the honeymoon, as honeymoons are commonly understood, and Mrs. Raffles must have been more or less than human if she was ever again able to hear Napoleon's name with patience. For Raffles set off with the best of good resolutions against preaching, only to be assailed by the importunate as soon as he got to town. He preached thrice

(4) *Form for the Solemnization of Matrimony by Protestant Dissenters Adapted to the Requirements of the Act of William IV.* [By T. R.] Second edition. London. 1842. This is a simple order of service. It omits all distasteful matter, and even now only the retention of the word "obey" would be likely to provoke objection.

(5) *The Norwegian Sailor: a sketch of the life of George Noscoe. Written by himself. With an introductory note by the Rev. Thomas Raffles, D.D., LL.D.* Fifth edition. With an account of his [Noscoe's] death. London. 1850. "The profits to be divided between the Widow of the Author and the Liverpool Seaman's Fund Society." The introduction to this record of humble piety is merely a prefatory letter of a page and a half from Raffles to John Cropper, Junr., Esq., dated Edge Hill, 14 Nov., 1849.

<sup>58</sup>During one short stay in London he preached nineteen times. *Mem.*, 97, cf., 131. In June 1816, he preached thirteen sermons in ten days. Letters cited *ib.*, 143-4. In June, 1822, he says, making a merit of his abstinence, "I have not averaged more than five or six times a week." *ib.*, 215. See also p. 166.

<sup>59</sup>Raffles to his father, 14 May, 1816. *Mem.*, p. 143.

<sup>60</sup>*ib.*, 132.

<sup>61</sup>*ib.*, p. 133. Subsequently Mrs. Raffles made at least one protest against excessive preaching and too numerous absences, as may be gathered from Raffles' reply *ib.*, p. 183. There is very little to be gleaned from the *Memoir* about the happy private life of Dr. and Mrs. Raffles, though brief mention is made of the birth of their children, pp. 159, 170, 236, 285. Mrs. Raffles died in 1843 on her husband's birthday, 17 May, *ib.*, 369.

on each of two successive Sundays, and five times during the intervening week for charities. But the charitable, as is well known, have no conscience.

Raffles' preaching tours involved, in the early days, as was then unavoidable, a great deal of uncomfortable travelling. Sometimes he rode on horseback, sometimes he travelled by coach. At other times he made use of strange vehicles when he preached in remote places. If other means failed he made no trouble of walking from place to place, or of taking the mail as far as it served and completing the journey on foot.<sup>62</sup> He gives a racy account of an unpleasant journey to Bolton. "Six fat people (saving and accepting only your humble servant, who cannot class himself with any of a bulk superior to Pharaoh's lean kine) were crammed in a small coach" he writes; "conceive how horribly I must have been squeezed."<sup>63</sup> Later I was amused to come across this entry, though the humour of it is unintentional; "Went by coach to Preston. In the evening delivered a lecture on Purgatory. . . ."<sup>64</sup>

That Raffles suffered at least one serious mishap we know from an entry in the minute-book. "The Pastor having been laid aside from his pastoral and Ministerial labours, for eight weeks, in consequence of an injury which he received in his head, by the overturning of the Mail-Coach, in which he was travelling to attend the Annual Meeting of the County Union at Manchester . . . there was no Church meeting for the dispatch of business until this evening. . . ."<sup>65</sup> This was of course a necessary journey and Raffles always insisted strongly on the importance of the Union to the life of the churches. But he found himself engaged, as we have seen, in many other journeys through his too yielding disposition.<sup>66</sup> Once

<sup>62</sup>In his youth he was fond of horse exercise, though there seems to be some doubt as to his skill as a rider. On his journeys see, for example, *Mem.*, pp. 68-9, 88-90, 124, 171, 175-6.

<sup>63</sup>*ib.*, 88. Mr. J. F. Robinson, the Senior Deacon of Great George Street, and such others as have any distinct recollection of Raffles, think of him as a man of ample girth: and he is so represented in the familiar portrait, which belongs to his later years. But in his youth he was a man of spare figure.

<sup>64</sup>*ib.*, 200.

<sup>65</sup>*I. M. B.*, 18 June, 1819.

<sup>66</sup>As late as 22 April, 1846, Raffles preached at the opening of a new chapel in Salford, and on the following day at the opening of a new chapel in Holloway. He returned to Liverpool that night "having gone 410 miles and preached two sermons in thirty-eight hours."

they stoned the prophets. Later generations have been content to insist that they should preach beyond their strength. There are ministers to-day who could bear witness that these attempts at legal assassination have not lost their popularity.

It is notable that Church business at Great George Street, in Raffles' time—and all the minutes are entered in his own hand—consisted mainly of admissions and transfers. Occasionally there is mention of disciplinary action such as that taken in regard to one who had “wrought folly in Israel,” and from whom the Church decided “to separate.” A watch was kept upon the commercial probity of members and once or twice sharp action was taken,<sup>67</sup> though in one case a member was found, after investigation, to have suffered misfortune and to be blameless for business failure. To the more material concerns of the Church there is scarcely any allusion, except during the special conditions which followed the burning of the chapel. What business indications there are, in the main minute book and in a fragmentary minute book of the deacons, seem to show that whilst the Minister was ready to take a share in business when it was required of him, there was nevertheless an attempt to relieve him of any needless burdens of a worldly kind.<sup>68</sup> In this matter we have not changed for the better.

One subject of interest does frequently recur in the minutes. There are numerous references to young men who addressed the Church so that it might judge of their suitability for the ministry and might recommend them for admission to an academy. Fourteen such entries have been noted from the minute book for the years 1812 to 1859, and another entry records the ordination of two members of the Church who were dedicated to the work of the mission field. Two who “made trial of their gifts” were recommended to Rotherham; four to Blackburn Academy, one of whom appears subsequently

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*Mem.*, 385. A resolution to give up his “galloping mode of living” made after an illness in 1834 was evidently kept only irregularly. See *Mem.*, 312.

<sup>67</sup>*I. M. B.*, 9 Dec., 1825; 30 July, 1830. In other disciplinary cases it is perhaps better not to give the references, but the commercial cases were matters of public knowledge at the time.

<sup>68</sup>It has been plausibly suggested by Mr. F. G. Thomas that autocratic management may have been another explanation. Probably both suggestions contain part of the truth. Since this was written it has occurred to me that the Minute Book reveals several refusals to serve on the diaconates by known admirers of Raffles. This may support the idea of autocracy on the part either of Raffles or of the older deacons.

to have gone to Hackney; seven to Lancashire Independent College. In the fourteenth case the matter was "referred to the Pastor and Deacons." There is some reason to think that the list is incomplete.<sup>69</sup>

Raffles took a deep interest in the recruitment of the ministry. He gave much of his time and thought and energy to the establishment, first of Blackburn Academy, and then of Lancashire Independent College. He was the first Chairman of the Lancashire College Committee, and he resigned only when advancing years and enfeebled health brought his active labours to an end.<sup>70</sup>

The great work of Raffles was, however, done in the pulpit.<sup>71</sup> It is difficult now to be sure that one has discovered the secret of his strength. Doubtless he owed something to his physical gifts, his "presence" and his voice. He had "a broad, rich, musical, powerful voice," a "voice of splendid quality both in compass and tone."<sup>72</sup> His manner was dramatic and arresting. When as a very young man he was called upon to preach the London Missionary Society's annual sermon, he was overawed by the importance of the occasion and wrote out his sermon in full. But soon after he began to preach he was overmastered by his subject, and rolling up the manuscript he wielded it like a truncheon, as if to beat home his words.<sup>73</sup> Then, too, he had a gift for appropriate texts. "Forward" was the text of his sermon (from Exodus xiv. 15) preached

<sup>69</sup>*I.M.B.*, 29 Nov., 1816; 4 April, 1823; 30 Jan., 1824; 5 Aug., 1825, 31 May, 1833; 1 Nov., 1833, cf. 2 May, 1834; 5 June, 1835; 1 Dec., 1843; 30 Aug., 1844; 4 Dec., 1851 (2 names); 2 Aug., 1855 (2 names); 29 July, 1858. The missionaries were ordained on 27 Aug., 1816. My doubt is due to a scrutiny of the list of students at Lancashire Independent College, which seems to include at least one Great George Street name not included in those mentioned.

<sup>70</sup>See J. Thompson. *Lancashire Independent College 1843-93. Jubilee Memorial Volume*. Manchester. 1893 passim; *Reports of the Lancashire Independent College*. Manchester. 1841, 1851, 1852; *Mem.*, pp. 135, 142, 156, 274, 285, 342-7, 489-493; *Lancashire Independent College. Jubilee, 1893. Addresses delivered and papers read, with an Introduction by the Principal* [Dr. Caleb Scott]. Manchester. 1893. Includes reminiscences by Dr. Bruce, who "went down" in 1854.

<sup>71</sup>This is not to minimise his pastoral work, to which he attached great importance. See *Mem.*, passim. Great George Street has never been a mere "preaching station."

<sup>72</sup>*Thomas Raffles . . . a sketch*. By the Rev. J. Baldwin Brown, B.A., London, 1863, pp. 21, 25.

<sup>73</sup>Baldwin Brown, p. 22, cf. *Mem.*, 203.

at the Jubilee of the L.M.S.<sup>74</sup> and, well worn though it be, it seemed somehow, as the printed sermon shows, to strike the note appropriate to the occasion. Raffles achieved this appropriateness with remarkable effect in his farewell at Hammersmith after a ministry of three years; "Therefore watch and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears . . ." One of his texts on the Sunday after the fire at Great George Street, was "Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is burned up with fire. . . ." And his last sermon, a known valediction, delivered when he could hardly stand, and was upheld only by his determination to keep his promise that he would take part in the opening services of Norwood Chapel, Liverpool, was preached from "And of his fulness have we all received and grace for grace." Raffles does not seem to have been a text-hunter. He had too practical a sense of his mission ever to deviate into the fanciful or strained use of the words of scripture. But he seems to have had a perfect readiness in suiting the text to the occasion.

His eloquence was strong and powerful; it was flowing rather than original or pointed;<sup>75</sup> and it was attuned perfectly to the language and needs of his day. That it had some compelling power is undoubted; and indeed it seems still, despite the lapse of time, to retain some of its ancient vigour. It may not be possible wholly to recapture the old magic from the lines of the printed page. For fashions of speech have changed and the spoken charm is not easily to be recovered. We must be content to know that Raffles spoke to his generation with prophetic power and that although the thunders of his elo-

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<sup>74</sup>*The Divine Command. A sermon, etc.*, by Thomas Raffles [L.M.S., Jubilee.] London, 1844. This Jubilee sermon was criticised by "Laicus," who argued in favour of a pre-Millennial Second Advent. See his *Second Advent introductory to the World's Jubilee* . . . London, 1845. Another printed missionary sermon is *The Gentiles Gathered to the Fold of Christ. A Sermon preached at the Poultry Chapel . . . to the Juvenile Societies in aid of the L.M.S.* London, 1827 [7 May.] A list of the printed sermons which I have examined but to which there is no direct reference in the text or notes will be found at the end of this paper.

<sup>75</sup>But he could on occasion strike out a memorable phrase, as in his Thanksgiving Sermon after the cholera epidemic in 1833. It "has executed its high commission, and wrought its work of death amongst us." p. 4.

quence are stilled, their effects in part remain even now—to the profit of Independency in Liverpool and elsewhere.

Raffles rose to all the honours of his state and calling. Two honorary doctorates were conferred upon him.<sup>76</sup> He was elected to the Chair of the Union. He was, I think, the only Liverpool man for whom a testimonial was ever raised in Manchester.<sup>77</sup> The occasion was his ministerial jubilee, and the bulk of the money was used to endow the scholarship at the Lancashire Independent College which bears his name, and to augment its then scanty library. Shortly after his retirement from the pastorate of Great George Street he was presented by his fellow citizens in Liverpool, in celebration of his Jubilee year as Minister of Great George Street Chapel, with an address enclosed in a silver casket.<sup>78</sup> Raffles was gratified by the silver casket, but he cherished still more the golden affections made manifest in the address.

Raffles filled the pastorate of Great George Street for nearly fifty years; not quite fifty, for he was unable to retain his office for the full span. In December 1860,<sup>79</sup> after efforts to find him a colleague had failed,<sup>80</sup> he was compelled to retire from active work, and in February, 1861, he resigned his charge, which passed, later in the year, into the capable hands of that sturdy, if rather combative Yorkshireman, Enoch Mellor. Raffles died on 18th August, 1863, at the age of seventy-five, after a life of the most varied, toilsome and exhausting labour.

The funeral of Raffles, says Baldwin Brown, impressed him more than any sight that he had ever witnessed except another funeral, that of the Duke of Wellington. "The whole town was moved."<sup>81</sup> Raffles' brethren of the Congregational order were not less moved than his fellow townsmen. "For fifty years he has been a foremost man in our denomination, perhaps more widely known, more heartily loved, more largely

<sup>76</sup>LL.D., by Marishal College, Aberdeen, 22 Dec., 1820; D.D., from Union College, Connecticut, 1830. Mem., pp. 196, 288.

<sup>77</sup>Thompson *op. cit.* 151-3; *Mem.*, 487-493.

<sup>78</sup>*Mem.*, p. 502; Baldwin Brown *cf. cit.* p. 14.

<sup>79</sup>Not 1861 as stated in *Mem.*, p. 480. See 2 *M.B.*, 20 Dec., 1860 pp. 14-17.

<sup>80</sup>2 *M.B.*, pp. 11-13, gives particulars of the unavailing call to Rev. William Pulsford, of Edinburgh. An earlier invitation to Rev. J. Baldwin Brown, son of Dr. Raffles' sister and his old friend J. B. Brown, had also been declined.

<sup>81</sup>Baldwin Brown *op. cit.* pp. 15-16.



listened to, than any Nonconformist of his time."<sup>82</sup> The denomination paid honour to him in life and at his death. It still owes honour to his memory.

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## APPENDIX.

### LIST OF PRINTED SERMONS NOT SPECIALLY REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT OR NOTES.

*Lectures on some Important Branches of Practical Religion.* By Thomas Raffles, A.M. Liverpool. 1820.

[The preface, dated 20th January, 1820, states that these "lectures," which are really sermons, had been delivered at intervals during a period of four years when it came to Raffles' turn to give the Liverpool "Monthly Lecture in which the Pastors and Churches of Liverpool are associated." They are ten in number, and deal, as the title suggests, with various practical applications of religion. In them he uses, as he says himself, "great plainness of speech," (preface p. vi.) but he uses nothing else that has remained fashionable.

*Lectures on Some Important Doctrines of the Gospel.* By Thomas Raffles, LL.D. Liverpool. 1822.

[Eleven sermons preached to his own people on Sunday evenings during the Winter, 1821-2, and printed as a companion volume to "*Practical Religion.*" Preface dated 21st May, 1822.]

*Services at the Ordination of the Rev. James Parsons to the pastoral charge of . . . Lendal Chapel, York, October 24th, 1822 . . . The Sermon to the People.*—Rev. T. Raffles, LL.D. Second edition. York. 1824.

[Text; *Ezra*, x., 4. There was a long and close friendship between Raffles and Parsons. The sermon makes a strong but sensible plea for the rights and privileges of the Minister. "You are not to dictate to him *what* he is to preach, or *how* he is to preach," etc., etc.]

*Christ the End of the Law for Righteousness.* . . . By Thomas Raffles, LL.D. Liverpool. 1828.

[Funeral sermon on Sarah, wife of Mr. John Job, one of the leaders of the cause. Mrs. Job died on 23rd December, 1827. Sermon preached 30th December, 1827, but not completed for the press

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<sup>82</sup>ib. p. 21. See also the references to Raffles in the funeral sermons delivered by the Rev. John Kelly, of Crescent Chapel, Liverpool, and by the Rev. James Parsons of York. *Funeral Services occasioned by the death of the Rev. T. Raffles* . . . Liverpool. 1863.

until some months later, as is shown by the letter to Mr. Job, dated 1st April, 1828, which appears as a preface. Text; *Romans*, x., 4.]

*The Mingled Character of the Divine Dispensations Recognised and Acknowledged . . . delivered at the Scotch Secession Church, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool . . . January 1st., 1833, being a Day of Thanksgiving . . . on Account of the Removal of the Cholera.* By Thomas Raffles, D.D., LL.D. Liverpool. 1833.

[The sermon is not remarkable in form or matter except for the phrase quoted *supra*, note 75, but it gives an interesting sketch of the progress and path of the epidemic in Europe.]

Some of the printed sermons of Raffles I have not been able to see. Several ought undoubtedly to be added to this list and to those mentioned in the notes if the record were to be made complete. But it seems doubtful whether copies of all of them survive.

One criticism of Raffles by *Laicus* has already been noted. Another curious criticism may be recorded:—

*Christ's knowledge of All Things: A Discourse preached on Sunday, May 2nd, 1830, before the Congregation of Unitarian Christians, assembling in Bowlalley Lane, Hull, by Edward Higginson, Junior, Minister of the Chapel, containing Strictures upon part of a discourse preached in Fish Street Chapel, Hull, on Wednesday, 21st April, 1830, by the Rev. Dr. Raffles, of Liverpool, in aid of the Holder-ness Mission. . . . Hull, 1830.*

[Raffles had referred, quite incidentally it would seem, to Christ's knowledge of "all things." Mr. Higginson argues that this is an assumption inconsistent with Christ's own words. In fact he uses a few incidental words by Raffles as a text for a defence of the Unitarian position, to which this criticism is merely introductory. Raffles cared little for theological niceties and possibly ignored the attack. At any rate I cannot discover that he ever answered it, and indeed he seldom engaged in theological controversy.]

## Some Hymns and Hymnbooks<sup>1</sup>

**M**ISS ROSE MACAULAY has now attained that age, or that circulation, at which popular novelists become omniscient; and like others of her class in that condition she has tried her prentice hand on religion. Works on *The Outline of History* and *How to Reconstruct Europe* will follow, no doubt: but the attraction of a religious subject is such that only the very shrewd can resist attacking it first. In an article on *How to Choose a Religion*, as I expect you know, Miss Macaulay lately displayed all that ignorance of essential detail which Mr. Wells has taught us to associate with omniscience. In the course of some not unpleasing observations on the several sects of Christendom, Miss Macaulay speaks of the Greek Church as if it had not revised its calendar; she flounders in a vain effort to distinguish Presbyterianism and Calvinism; she says that the ugliest building in a village is sure to be the chapel, obviously forgetting that, true as this may have been in her youth, village halls have been built since; she adds that Unitarianism is a suitable religion for people who cannot believe much; when, as everyone knows, the precise opposite is true: Unitarianism asking people to believe all the most improbable part of Christian doctrine after removing all the reasons that begin to make it credible.

But if you shy long enough you are sure to hit something sooner or later, and Miss Macaulay has observed accurately one thing; she says that if ever you pass a Wesleyan or Baptist or Congregational Chapel you will hear hymn singing proceeding inside. She argues therefore that among us orthodox Dissenters, as distinct from the more fancy varieties, hymns take a great part in Divine Service. And here at least she is right; and that is why it is seemly that you should hear a paper on hymns, even if it be less certain that I can appropriately read it.

For let me confess at the beginning that I have no special qualification and several special disqualifications for speaking about hymns. I lay claim at once to every kind of musical ignorance, doubting sometimes if I can go even as far as Dr. Johnson in calling it the least unpleasant of noises. I do not study, nor even possess, that book without which no student

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<sup>1</sup> A Paper read before the Cambridge University Congregational Society in the Easter term, 1924.

of hymns can allow himself to be, Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology*. I have real knowledge of only two hymn books and, as you will discover, I have drawn up no statistical tables of authors, centuries, denominations, and subjects. I know about hymns only what anyone must know who for a quarter of a century has been so addicted to chapel-going as to hear Divine Service twice every Sunday. I think I never sing a hymn without discovering who wrote it, and after doing this some scores of times I usually end by remembering. No particular credit is due to me or to anyone else who does this, for most hymn books now have a list of authors and their dates somewhere. These details may have been supposed to interfere with the devotion of singers in times when denominational feeling ran high; they were suppressed, therefore, or relegated to decent obscurity in out-of-the-way indexes; it was doubtless by the use of this holy cunning that Methodists were induced to sing *Rock of Ages* with a clear and happy conscience, though its author, Toplady, had called John Wesley "a low and puny tadpole in divinity," "actuated by Satanic shamelessness and Satanic guilt."

To-day, when the orthodox will sing hymns by Unitarians and Theosophists without turning a hair, these precautions are, it may be supposed, unnecessary. The new *Methodist Hymn Book* goes farther than names and dates, and adds biographical notes, often useful, often irrelevant, always interesting, and sometimes wrong. On what principle the Wesleyan Conference selected its information I defy anyone to pronounce: when all else fails the birthplace appears—quite often alone: born at Brighton; born in London; born at Bath. Of Philip Bliss we learn only that he was an American killed on a railway; of Monsell that he was killed during the rebuilding of his church at Guildford; of Sears, the author of *It came upon the midnight clear*, it is a relief to learn that, though a Unitarian minister, he "held always to the absolute divinity of Christ"; but when I am told that of W. C. Dix, who wrote *As with gladness men of old*, that "from thirty to forty of his hymns are in common use," I can only decline to believe it: for I never knew anyone who has ever heard of half a dozen.

I am, nevertheless, very grateful for the Methodist Biographical Index and have spent many happy hours in research into it; and sometimes the researcher comes on a treasure. I always loved James Montgomery; but I felt as if I knew him when I read that he was the son of a Moravian minister, lived

in Sheffield for sixty-two years, edited *The Sheffield Iris*, and recited *Hail to the Lord's Anointed, Great David's greater Son*, at a Wesleyan Missionary Meeting in Liverpool in 1822. I can only be sorry for the people who do not know that; and be angry with the people who are not moved by the picture of the editor of *The Sheffield Iris* reciting that splendid hymn. And yet, despite the riches of this sort that it brings us, we remember with a pang that this same Biographical Index in the new Methodist Hymn Book replaces that splendid single telling sentence in the old one: "Where no name is given it may be assumed that the hymn is the work of Mr. Charles Wesley."

You will gather that the *Methodist Hymn Book* is one of the hymn books I claim to know tolerably: the other is Dr. Barrett's *Hymnal*. These I know from constant use: others from casual use. Misfortunes at holiday times have made me too familiar with *Worship Song*, which, in my judgment, is almost all that a hymn book should not be; and a kinder fate, in remote Lincolnshire, often showed me the old *Congregational Hymn Book*: with Presbyterian and Baptist books I have but a conventional acquaintance; with *Ancient and Modern* and the *English Hymnal* a better but not exhaustive one.

That, then, is my stock in trade. My method is this: to avoid wandering aimlessly in generalizations, I shall take the book I know best—Dr. Barrett's—and examine it in some detail, noticing the several elements of which it is composed, how far Dr. Barrett modified these, and what changes have come over popular feeling for hymns since Dr. Barrett made his selection. By taking a firm stand on Dr. Barrett's book we shall secure, at least, a point of vantage from which we can survey the wild scene that my title calls to mind.

But before I speak of Dr. Barrett's book I propose to lay down two canons which govern all my thought and treatment of the subject.

First, it is incorrect to criticize hymns as if they were ordinary verses: to say of any hymn it is "not poetry" or it is "poor poetry" is to say nothing. A hymn—a good hymn—is not necessarily poetry of any sort, good or bad: just as poetry, good or bad, is not necessarily a hymn. A hymn like *Jesu, Lover of my Soul*, may be poor religious poetry: but in face of the verdict of Christendom, only imbecility will declare it a poor hymn. George Herbert wrote much excellent religious poetry, but it may be doubted if he wrote a tolerable hymn. Hymns do not form a subdivision of poetry: they are

a distinct kind of composition, neither prose nor poetry : they are, in a word, hymns : and I refuse to be drawn any nearer than that to a definition. A hymn may be poetry as it may be theology. It is not, of necessity, either.

Second, reverence is due to hymns as to any sacred object. The hymn that revolts me, if it has been a means of grace to Christian men, I must respect as I should respect a communion cup, however scratched its surface, however vulgar its decoration. The bad jokes about hymns which newspapers publish in chatty columns by "Uncle Remus" or "The Man about Town" are, apart from their intrinsic feebleness, an offence against my second canon.

Dr. Barrett's *Hymnal*, the Preface tells us, took its origin from a resolution of the Congregational Union, passed forty years ago. It was published in 1887 and it held the field till 1916 when, so far as I can make out, the *Congregational Hymnary* appeared, though characteristically the Congregational Union Committee responsible neglected to date their work. The epitaph which the Committee wrote for Dr. Barrett's book, was : "It is not possible to form any adequate estimate of the great influence of this book." It is perhaps rash to go farther than that, but I suggest that Dr. Barrett's book is eminent as an exposition of what is best in Congregationalism : it reflects purely and clearly that mind which we should like to think is the Congregational mind : in taste, catholic ; in feeling, evangelical ; in expression, scholarly ; in doctrine, orthodox. It is a book free from fads, fancies, prejudices, party slogans ; taking the best from whatever source ; most Congregational in lacking the denominationally Congregational note ; a simply Christian book. Sweet reasonableness, sweetness and light—these are its characteristics : and, if we must criticize, these are its weaknesses. You feel at times, when you are hypercritical (but only then), that it is too sweetly reasonable ; that all the corners have been too carefully removed ; that you wish its evangelicalism had not been quite so purely refined. The atmosphere is so undisturbed that you crave for almost any impurity, any smell of human kind, any passion, any flaring, roaring enthusiasm. The crooked has been made too straight, the rough places too plain. It is just a little too well behaved, but the fault is hardly there ; for if you look again you see that this same book, for all its good behaviour, contains the most passionate pleading of the evangelical revival, *Stay, thou insulted Spirit, stay*, and the

agonized prayer of the Chartist, *When wilt Thou save the people : O God of mercy, when ?*

Dr. Barrett achieved this result because he allowed no variety of religious experience known in 1887 to escape his notice. He laid under contribution every age, every nation, every communion.

It is worth while to disentangle the threads which Dr. Barrett wove together ; or, if we change the figure, to trace back to their sources separated in time and space the several streams that met in 1887. There were, to begin with, those two great movements of English religion, the Oxford and the Evangelical. Both Dr. Barrett boldly claimed for us ; and he was so happily placed that he could draw from each its maximum contribution.

For consider first the Oxford Movement. In 1887 the Oxford Movement had made almost all the valuable, original contributions it was to make. It was still a virile and scholarly movement ; it had not yet sunk to sentimentality and fanaticism. How much of the Oxford Movement there is in the *Hymnal*, I doubt if any of you have noticed. The influence is twofold. There are, first, the hymns of the Oxford Movement men themselves. Keble gave us some of our best : *O timely happy, timely wise : Sun of my Soul : When God of old came down from heaven* (of which more later) ; and *There is a book who runs may read* ; Newman two, to praise which is impertinence : *Lead, kindly Light*, and *Praise to the Holiest* ; Faber has more room than either, and has too much : he passed from the sublime to the ridiculous too easily. *Sweet Saviour, bless us ere we go* ; and *O come and mourn with me awhile* and *Was there ever kindest Shepherd* show us Faber at his best ; though even in them there is a strain of weakness that develops in other hymns until it can hardly be borne : the pruning knife could be used nowhere with better effect than among the Faber hymns. To the same school belongs W. C. Dix, with his *As with gladness men of old* for Epiphany, *To Thee, O Lord, our hearts we raise* for Harvest, and *Come unto Me, ye weary*, for all times. *As with gladness men of old* is a model of straight, clear, clean verse.

But, beside these and other hymns written by the men of the Movement, we owe to it an even greater debt for its inspiration of translation. No part of Barrett's book is better than its translations. They fall into two main classes : the pietist hymns of Germany and the Greek and Latin hymns

recovered by the Oxford Movement. Greatest among translators is John Mason Neale, though his rugged verse gave much opportunity and some excuse for the art of the amender, and the editors of *Ancient and Modern* scattered his remains pitilessly over their pages. *O come, O come, Emmanuel ; All glory, laud, and honour ; O happy band of pilgrims ; Art thou weary ; The day is past and over ; The day of resurrection ;* and the magnificent poem of Bernard of Cluny on the heavenly Jerusalem which we know as *Brief life is here our portion and Jerusalem the golden* ; these and many others Barrett used ; and we are left gasping at his omission of one of Neale's best, glorious with the fresh triumph of Easter morning, *The foe behind, the deep before* ; we should have been only more surprised if the new *Hymnary* had repaired Barrett's mistake. Caswall, though a smaller man than Neale, did first rate translations which Barrett used : *Jesus, the very thought of Thee*, and that moving Christmas hymn, adorable in its austere and primitive piety, *Hark, an awful voice is sounding* :—these stand as types of many.

Much as English hymn singers in general, and Dr. Barrett in particular, owe to the Oxford Movement, they owe more to the Evangelical Revival, for the Evangelical Revival was a religious movement not less deep, and almost the whole of its artistic expression is to be found in hymns : hymns were but one of the interests of the Oxford Movement, and not its greatest. Liturgy, church furniture, and architecture drew off a part of its artistic energy : but hymns had no competitors among the Evangelicals. To take out of Barrett's book the hymns of the five men : John and Charles Wesley, Newton, Cowper, and Montgomery—though it would not fully represent the contribution of the Evangelical Revival—would at least show how huge and how valuable the contribution was. No selection of Wesley's hymns can satisfy—to say nothing of pleasing—anyone who knows Wesley's own book, that “little body of experimental and practical divinity,” of which John Wesley might well enquire : “In what other publication of the kind have you so distinct and full an account of scriptural Christianity ? such a declaration of the heights and depths of religion, speculative and practical ? so strong cautions against the most plausible errors, particularly those that are now most prevalent ?” To find a parallel we must go to the *Book of Common Prayer* : Wesley's book, like the Prayer Book, is a unity ; and though extracts may be useful and must



be made, they are only fragments and we want the whole. For a selection, Barrett's is good, and we leave it at that.

Of Cowper and Newton, I have been told and am willing to believe that Barrett chose all that was valuable and most that was tolerable. He did not overdo either, as he overdid Faber. But it is when we come to Montgomery that we see our debt most plainly. The more Montgomery is read the more his solid merit appears; a merit that is easily missed, for it has no showiness to recommend it. Barrett has nowhere shown his genius more; he made no mistakes in selecting from Montgomery, and anyone who compares his selection with that made by the Methodists will see at once Barrett's superiority. They score only in one place; they add, what Barrett omitted, the exquisite Communion hymn, *Be known to us in breaking bread*.

The Evangelical Revival gave more than the hymns of the Wesleys, Cowper, Newton, and Montgomery, but we proceed to the third great stream that came out of the past: this is the school of the elder Dissent, drawing its origin from the metrical psalms and versions of Scripture that arose in Reformation times. One of the best known is one of the earliest: *All people that on earth do dwell*, the 100th psalm in an Elizabethan version. In the times when every gentleman wrote verses, most divines wrote Scriptural paraphrases and the energetic versified the whole Psalter. Here was the foundation of Doddridge's and Watts' hymns—a metrical psalter with other paraphrases first, and then hymns for several occasions. The peculiar genius of Watts and Doddridge displayed itself in allegorizing the Psalms and Old Testament generally in a Christian fashion: as when Doddridge turned Malachi's account of the profaning of the Lord's Table into a Communion Hymn, *My God, and is Thy table spread?* or Watts made "David speak like a Christian." Barrett broke away from the old Dissenting tradition of prefacing hymns proper by a metrical Psalter and in his reaction from the tradition he used, perhaps, less of the paraphrases than will satisfy posterity. It is easy to forget that the Scotch Metrical Version is only one among many; the one approved by the Church of Scotland had many parallels in English Dissent until the Evangelical Revival by suddenly enriching and enlarging the small section of hymns made them overshadow and finally eject the metrical psalms.

To come back to Watts and Doddridge: the hymns preserved by Barrett are but a fragment of the immense number

written by both ; but it is not possible to regret so acutely what is omitted here as we regret the Wesley omissions. Though Watts, at times, probably excels Charles Wesley's best, the general mass of his verse falls well below Wesley's average ; and Doddridge, in the mass, is rather worse than Watts. Doddridge and Watts were more normal men of the eighteenth century than was Charles Wesley : they stick less closely to Scriptural ideas and language, and more often deserve the censure of John Wesley's adjective, "turgid." But, when all is said, they are the crowning glory of Independent hymnology, and the suppression of the hymn *I'll praise my Maker with my breath* by the new *Hymnary* is not only a vice, but an unnatural vice. Congregationalists so disloyal to their spiritual progenitors deserve to be admitted at once to some Reunion of Churches.

These, then, were the three main contributions which history made to Dr. Barrett's book—the Oxford Movement, the Evangelical Revival, and the elder Dissent. The fourth contribution came from the contemporary or almost contemporary mass of writers, whose work was not specially or obviously stamped by any of these schools. By his contemporaries Dr. Barrett, like the rest of us, was over-impressed : he took them too seriously and ranked them too highly as we all do. And if the Congregational Union had to busy itself about hymns the really useful revision of Barrett's book that it might have done was the elimination of the unfit of the nineteenth century, not the bowdlerization and decimation of the classics and the handing round of doles to doubtful contemporaries of our own.

But, although there is decidedly too much of it, contemporary hymnology provided Dr. Barrett with some good things. First we notice the honourable place taken by three of our own communion—Josiah Conder, Thomas Hornblower Gill, and George Rawson. Conder was a true poet, himself an editor of hymnbooks—who really did amend when he altered : *Bread of heaven, on Thee I feed* would alone place him in the first rank, as another Communion hymn *By Christ redeemed, in Christ restored* would place Rawson. Gill did nothing quite so good : and both his fame and Rawson's would benefit by the suppression of not less than 50% of their *Hymnal* hymns.

Less good than these, as he is even more voluble, is Horatius Bonar, a useful pedestrian sort of man who is never very

good and not often very bad ; the pruning knife again needed ; but we may be reasonably grateful for *I heard the voice of Jesus say* and *O Love of God, how strong and true* and *Fill Thou my life, O Lord my God*. Of Lynch and Lyte (except for *Abide with me*) not much good is to be said : Bickersteth, Monsell, Ellerton are a sort of Anglican Horatius Bonars. Heber provides better things, Grant and Thring worse. Mrs. Alexander is to be spoken of with affection as one of the simplest and purest of writers, but most of all because she wrote *There is a green hill* and *Once in royal David's City* (if only it had stopped earlier !). Charlotte Elliott has had her day, and as the pestilence spread by Miss Havergal is happily abating I am spared the need of being rude to an invalid and a woman. One great and typical Anglican hymn writer in the last century there was : Bishop Walsham How. It might be respectably if not successfully maintained that he was, "taking quantity and quality into consideration" (as the Methodist Index says of Chas. Wesley), the greatest hymn writer of the 19th century. Barrett used him much, but hardly too much ; in Barrett's hands he is never bad, yet the Methodists contrived to find and print much rubbish by him. In *O Word of God Incarnate, We give Thee but Thine own, O Jesus Thou art standing, It is a thing most wonderful*, he is almost great. That other voluminous episcopal composer, Bishop Wordsworth, Barrett sifted and winnowed many times, we may be sure, before he was able to present such good grain and so little chaff as his book contains.

Barrett, I said, had no fads : he did not, therefore, in the manner of modern compilers, scour the ends of the earth for heretical and pagan productions : but when a Quaker like Whittier, Unitarians like Oliver Wendell Holmes and Bowring, and heroes like Carlyle offered hymns, he took them.

Though I am sure it has been tedious, I am not sure that this part of my paper has been irrelevant, because it at least reminds you of the vastness and variety of the *corpus* of hymns with which modern Christendom has endowed itself ; and it brings before us the material on which we may exercise our critical, appreciative, and discriminating faculties. Having made this outline survey of the result of Dr. Barrett's work, I want next to notice the principles on which the hymns were selected, rejected, and altered in 1887, and the change in principles which forty years have brought. Dr. Barrett gave out as one of his principles that his book "should include some

hymns which, though defective when tried by modern standards of taste and literary form, are yet closely connected with the history of the Evangelical faith in England, and with the spiritual experience of a large number of the members of Congregational Churches; that it should give, wherever practicable, the original text of the hymns introduced. Some alterations have been admitted on the ground that they have been sanctioned by long and general use, and form part of the compositions in which they occur as generally known; and others (very few in number) in correction of minor irregularities of metre, offences against taste, or suggestions of questionable doctrine in the original text."

As a general statement that seems to me to contain correct doctrine. You must be preserved from the antiquarian peril. Hymns are for Christians, not poets nor antiquarians: and the trouble is that, having shut the door against the poet you find the antiquarian flying in at the window—the antiquarian who demands the original text whatever the cost in taste or style (which are small matters) or in power to express real religious faith (which is a great matter). A hymn's business is to express the faith of to-day, not to present an historical record of the faith of the day before yesterday. That is not to say that hymns should express only the sentiment and aspirations of the moment; they should educate and purify faith, as well as express it: they should be better than the singer. It is not, therefore, a sufficient reason for scrapping a hymn that it is not written in the language which the butcher, the baker, the candlestick-maker, or the undergraduate would use to-day: its object is to make them speak and think differently. But to do this, though removed from their vocabulary, it must be not too far removed. It must not be out of reach, and mere antiquarianism must not preserve what puts a hymn out of reach. Charles Wesley's amazing verse may be criticized, for instance, as near the boundary of pedantry and usefulness:

Those amaranthine bowers  
 (Unalienably ours)  
 Bloom, our infinite reward,  
 Rise, our permanent abode;  
 From the founded world prepared;  
 Purchased by the blood of God.

"the founded world" is indeed a pleasing Latinism: and

congregations bred on such stuff should not suffer from flabbiness of thought.

We now approach the problem of alterations. Let it be said at once that Barrett was of all alterers the most honest: he tells us the very line in which an alteration occurs, but even his example did not suffice to maintain this honesty in his successors. The editors of the *Hymnary* say "Altered" at the foot of the hymn, and try to hide their footprints.

High doctrine has been set out by John Wesley in a paragraph of his immortal preface. I shall not deny myself the pleasure of quoting it:

"Many gentlemen have done my brother and me (though without naming us) the honour to reprint many of our hymns. Now they are perfectly welcome so to do, provided they print them just as they are. But I desire they would not attempt to mend them; for they really are not able. None of them is able to mend either the sense or the verse. Therefore, I must beg of them one of these two favours: either to let them stand just as they are, to take them for better for worse; or to add the true reading in the margin, or at the bottom of the page; that we may no longer be accountable either for the nonsense or for the doggerel of other men."

Wesley's is high doctrine, and it is a pity that we cannot all attain to it; but we cannot. Barrett, you will notice, does almost all that Wesley asks. The advantage of some modification appears in one classical place: *Rock of Ages*. Toplady, I think, wrote *While I draw this fleeting breath, When my eye-strings crack in death*, and although we should not have complained, I imagine, if we had been brought up on that, it is difficult to believe that the now familiar *When my eyes shall close in death* is not an improvement. Between this and Wesley's preface the great mass of alterations falls. Besides this change in *Rock of Ages*, Barrett could justify his version of *When I survey the wondrous Cross* by his doctrine that the hymn is the composition "as generally known." *On which the Prince of glory died* has so long displaced *Where the young Prince of glory died* that the change cannot be called Barrett's. Yet we may doubt if it was a change originally worth making.

It is when we come to alterations, or what is almost as bad, omissions because of "offences against taste" that we begin to breath an electric atmosphere. The real objection to alterations in the interest of taste—taste of the 80's or any time else—is this; alterations of that sort are all on the

principle of the Lowest Common Denominator : they resemble the process of attrition ; corners are rubbed off ; peculiarities disappear ; piquancy fails ; one dead level is more and more approached. The good hymn as originally written could have been written by no one but its author. No one but Carlyle. could write

With force of arms we nothing can,  
Full soon were we down-ridden.  
But for us fights the Proper Man,  
Whom God Himself hath bidden.

no one but Watts

What though we go the world around  
And search from Britain to Japan,  
There shall be no religion found  
So just to God, so safe for man.

no one but Charles Wesley

Adam, descended from above !  
Federal Head of all mankind,  
The covenant of redeeming love  
In Thee let every sinner find.  
Me, me, who still in darkness sit,  
Shut up in sin and unbelief,  
Bring forth out of this hellish pit,  
This dungeon of despairing grief.

and no one but a scholastic Doctor

True God of true God  
Light of Light Eternal, Lo He abhors not the Virgin's womb,  
Son of the Father, Begotten not created.

These are the words that contain and convey character : they make the hymn itself. They are peculiar, piquant, characteristic. They are the enemies of taste. Taste omits, if it cannot prune them. Carlyle is too German : Watts too grotesque : Wesley too violent : Bonaventura too dogmatic. Let us have Mr. Symonds rather ; not German nor grotesque nor violent nor dogmatic, not anything in fact.

These things shall be ! a loftier race  
Than e'er the world hath known shall rise  
With flame of freedom in their souls  
And light of knowledge in their eyes.  
They shall be gentle, brave and strong  
To spill no drop of blood, but dare  
All that may plant man's lordship firm  
On earth and fire and sea and air.

Or Lord Houghton :

Our lives enriched with gentle thoughts  
 And loving deeds may be,  
 A stream that still the nobler grows  
 The nearer to the sea.

Nothing to offend taste there because there is nothing that can be tasted ; salt almost without savour ; the L.C.D. of all good men ; the religion of all sensible men ; the very Gospel of the Men of Goodwill.

This, then, being the pitfall of all who consider taste, let us see how well Dr. Barrett escaped it ; and let us compare his performance with that of his successors. Barrett said no more than the truth when he said that he had been moderate in altering hymns in the cause of taste. Like Warren Hastings he had cause to be astonished at his own moderation. He omitted a great many hymns, no doubt because he thought them in bad taste (many of Wesley's) but if he thought a hymn good, he let it stand as a rule. Taste, I am sure, made him omit that noble hymn on the Name of Jesus which should stand everywhere beside Newton's *How sweet the name of Jesus sounds* : I mean :

Jesus, the Name high over all  
 In hell, or earth, or sky,  
 Angels and men before it fall,  
 And devils fear and fly.

Jesus, the Name to sinners dear,  
 The name to sinners given ;  
 It scatters all their guilty fear,  
 It turns their hell to heaven.

"Devils fearing and flying," I make no doubt, struck Dr. Barrett as bad taste. Even the mention of devils he seems generally to have disliked and the state of taste in the 80's certainly would not have allowed him to put baldly over a section of his book, as the Methodists a century before had done, "Describing Hell." Before you smile ponder this : Dr. Barrett's successors have carried his prejudices farther and, unless extremely pressed, consider the mention of angels and heaven in almost as bad taste as the mention of devils and hell. I must pause here to deplore our subservience to a fashion that has banished those splendidly truculent hymns which heartened our predecessors in hard times. As a change from this constant wail about the failure of the Church I turn at times with satisfaction to the brave words of the men of old.

Into a world of ruffians sent  
 I walk on hostile ground ;  
 While human bears on slaughter bent  
 And ravening wolves surround.

\* \* \* \* \*  
 Watch'd by the world's malignant eye,  
 Who load us with reproach and shame ;  
 As servants of the Lord Most high,  
 As zealous for His glorious Name,  
 We ought in all His paths to move  
 With holy fear and humble love.

\* \* \* \* \*  
 Only have faith in God ;  
 In faith your foes assail ;  
 Not wrestling against flesh and blood  
 But all the powers of hell ;  
 From thrones of glory driven,  
 By flaming vengeance hurl'd,  
 They throng the air and darken heaven  
 And rule the lower world.

On earth th' usurpers reign,  
 Exert their baneful power ;  
 O'er the poor fallen souls of men  
 They tyrannize their hour.  
 But shall believers fear ?  
 But shall believers fly ?  
 Or see the bloody cross appear  
 And all their powers defy ?

Jesu's tremendous name  
 Puts all our foes to flight ;  
 Jesus, the meek, the angry Lamb,  
 A Lion is in fight.  
 By all hell's host withstood,  
 We all hell's host o'erthrow,  
 And conquering them, through Jesu's blood,  
 We still to conquer go.

One good example of the working of taste Dr. Barrett provided. He confesses that he altered Neale's version of Andrew of Crete's hymn *Christian! dost thou see them.*

Christian! dost thou see them on the holy ground,  
 How the troops of Midian prowl and prowl around ?

so wrote Neale. Barrett found the reference to Midian, and (we may suspect) the word "prowl" rather grotesque. "The troops of Midian" become the less unfamiliar "powers of darkness," who "compass thee around" instead of "prowling."

"How the powers of darkness compass thee around," a



respectable couplet of which no one need be ashamed ; but it lacks the grip, I think, of the ruder original.

The alteration of the second verse illustrates a change due to the doctrine, not taste. Neale wrote :

Christian ! dost thou feel them,  
How they work within,  
Striving, tempting, luring,  
Goading into sin ?  
Christian ! never tremble ;  
Never be downcast ;  
Smite them by the virtue  
Of the Lenten fast.

Clearly this would never do ; “ the virtue of the Lenten fast ” must be generalised for Dr. Barrett’s constituency :

“ Gird thee for the conflict ; Watch and pray and fast ”

does the trick. So used, the word *fast* gives the rhyme and is doctrinally innocuous.

With this compare the treatment by Dr. Barrett and by the Methodists of Mrs. Alexander’s hymn which was written for St. Andrew’s day, and is inspired by the narrative of his call.

“ Jesus calls us ; o’er the tumult Of our life’s wild, restless sea.”

Day by day His sweet voice soundeth, Saying, Christian follow me.”

“ As of old St. Andrew heard it, By the Galilean Lake,

Turned from home and friends and kindred, Leaving all for His dear sake.”

Whether Dr. Barrett thought that the mention of St. Andrew might lead to invocation of saints among modern Congregationalists, or that a hymn naming him could not be conveniently sung on any day but St. Andrew’s day, I do not know ; but he cut the verse out, and left the hymn perhaps better balanced without it, with its four verses now all built on one pattern, yet poorer (I think) by the loss of a personal allusion. The Methodists, ever diplomatic, have found a formula to appease all parties : “ As of old apostles heard it, by the Galilean Lake.”

Since Dr. Barrett’s day we have grown only too familiar with attempts to present Christian doctrine in words which would not be out of place in any lady’s drawing-room. We have had, I know, our bluff hearty young men, like George MacDonald, trying, as they would say, to bring a blast of incense-breathing morn into our stuffy sanctuaries ; but their language, though uneclesiastical, was above reproach.

Dr. Barrett had warned people in advance that they would

find in his book some hymns which were defective when tried by modern standards of taste, because they were closely connected with the experience of evangelical religion. He was as good as his word. He gave them unaltered, what his successors have been too squeamish to give, Cowper's noble and historical hymn, *There is a fountain filled with blood, Drawn from Immanuel's veins*. He did more: it might have been hard in 1883, though it was too easy in 1916, to suppress a well-loved hymn, but there was no need to add another hymn open to most of the objections that assail Cowper's, even to the use of the word *veins*: yet Barrett added Caswall's version of an Italian hymn:

Glory be to Jesus, Who in bitter pains  
 Poured for me His life blood From His sacred veins.  
 Grace and life eternal In that blood I find;  
 Blest be His compassion Infinitely kind.  
 Blest though endless ages Be the precious stream,  
 Which from endless torments Doth the world redeem.

It proves Barrett's courage. He went against the taste of his time and added to the Rock of Offence because he knew the hymn, charged with a simple childlike piety, was too good to be unknown among Congregationalists.

Why, then, if we grant his courage—as we must—why did he suppress that verse of *When I survey the wondrous cross*, which has now almost passed from memory?

His dying crimson like a robe spreads o'er His body on the tree;  
 Then am I dead to all the globe; and all the globe is dead to me.

It is strange and inexcusable, the worst blot on Barrett's fame.

In Barrett, then, in 1883 we can see the beginnings of that painful bowdlerisation of hymns that still continues. Barrett is struggling with the tendency new in his times, now giving way unexpectedly, now carrying reprisals into the enemy's camp. His successors have not usually altered this sort of expression: they simply drop the hymn. Even the Methodists, we note in passing, are guilty; they who had enriched hymnology beyond all others by hymns on the death of Christ, their glory is become their shame. I do not speak of hymns which were perhaps needlessly and unscripturally trying to modern taste:

“ My Jesus to know and to feel His Blood flow  
 ’Tis life everlasting ’Tis heaven below ”

and so on ; but of the fanatical prejudice against solemn words.

O Thou eternal Victim, slain  
A sacrifice for guilty man,  
By the eternal Spirit made  
An offering in the sinner's stead ;  
Our everlasting Priest art Thou  
And plead'st Thy death for sinners now.

Thy offering still continues new ;  
Thy vesture keeps its bloody hue ;  
Thou stand'st the ever slaughtered Lamb  
Thy priesthood still remains the same ;  
Thy years, O God, can never fail ;  
Thy goodness is unchangeable.

That, one of the greatest communion hymns written by Wesley, cannot be made other than it is ; a hymn about life by death and healing by blood. If the idea is repugnant to modern taste, there is a case for allowing modern taste to starve itself still further by banishing the hymn entirely ; there is no case for doing what the modern Methodists do—rewrite one line. *Thy vesture keeps its bloody hue* becomes *Thy vesture keeps its crimson hue*. You cannot tinker with the stupendous things : you must take them or leave them.

If the catholic and evangelical doctrine of atonement by the blood of Christ be true, no expression of it can be too strong ; all, on the contrary, must be too weak. And if it is not true, you want not dilution of it, but abandonment. This is what our modern editors will not see.

Their blindness does not depart when they pass from the Atonement. An example, peculiarly flagrant, occurs in the new *Hymnary* among the Pentecost hymns. For this festival Keble wrote his classical *When God of old came down from heaven* ; not even our modernists could ignore this ; they had, anyhow, a feeling for Pentecost as one of the vaguer feasts. Nor could they claim that the hymn was too long to be printed—at least as Barrett had printed it ; they had themselves printed far worse hymns at infinitely greater length. And yet—and yet, they could not keep their bungling hands off Keble. That second verse,

Around the trembling mountain's base  
The prostrate people lay,  
A day of wrath and not of grace,  
A dim and dreadful day.

It gave a horrid notion of God ; that was indeed very

unpleasant. To be sure it is exactly what the Bible say happened at Sinai, and, after all, it is about Sinai that Keble writes. But it is not the modernist's notion of God; and since he cannot by his nature be honest and say, "Scrap Sinai; scrap Moses; scrap this O.T. revelation; it is not true"; he says, "I will keep just enough of Keble to flatter myself that there is no break with the tradition (that is bad form—like the old Dissenters) but not enough to convey any particular meaning. Keble's aim, it is true, was to contrast Sinai and Pentecost and yet connect them; I will keep both, cutting out both contrast and connexion; and so make the best of both worlds." Encouraged, he proceeds and reads next:

The fires that rushed on Sinai down In sudden torrents dread  
 Now gently light, a glorious crown, On every sainted head.  
 And as on Israel's awe struck ear The voice exceeding loud,  
 The trump that angels quake to hear, Thrilled from the deep, dark cloud;  
 So when the Spirit of our God Came down His flock to find,  
 A voice from heaven was heard abroad, A rushing mighty wind.

Here we have two signs of Pentecost, the fire and winds with their types at Sinai. The editors of the *Hymnary* leave us the wind, but cut out the flames of fire. To the plain man they stand or fall together; either something unusual happened at Pentecost or nothing unusual happened. If nothing, well why waste a breezy Whitsunday morning by singing about it at all? You had better be at golf. If something worth singing about happened, why strain out the flame and swallow the wind, as the editors of the *Hymnary* do? Well, for this reason. If you are ingenious you can believe that that first Whitsunday was a very windy day and that the early Christians, not being ingenious but simple, thought the wind had some connexion with a spiritual experience that they agreed to call the Holy Ghost. You can so preserve the tradition of Keble's verses and your self-respecting intellect, if you sing them with your tongue in your cheek; but the verse about the flame is more difficult. To retain it commits one (if pressed) to more than a windy day at Pentecost. A thunderstorm with lightning seems the obvious way out, but to ask for a combination of both wind and fire on the same day as the Christians had their Holy Ghost experience is asking perhaps a little too much of historical coincidence, generous though that goddess of the shrewd critic may be. It reduces the risks to cut out the flame; and anyhow tradition and our

face are saved without it. I do not suggest that this form of argument was openly followed on the editorial board which produced the *Hymnary* : but though unexpressed, that state of mind underlay the choice of certain verses and the omission of others. And it is of all states of mind in which hymns can be selected and altered the most dangerous, dishonest, and damnable. It is ludicrous, too ; but that is nothing.

This same unwillingness to face certain simple facts and make up one's mind one way or the other about them has in the last forty years wrought another set of weakening changes in what were sturdy hymns. Barrett sometimes shrank from calling a spade a spade ; but his successors shrink more often. If you open a book like *Worship Song*, that perfect product of the Hampstead mind, the faint odour of a literary Keating's powder assails you : a sort of spiritual insect killer fatal to worms. The elder hymn writers delighted in worms : Doddridge even wrote of our Lord that

"Sinful worms to Him are given  
A colony to people heaven."

They overdid it ; we weary of the metaphor, exact as it is. But our delicate-souled editors pursue the worm with a cruelty and diligence altogether beyond its deserts. You would suppose, would you not, that among decent men the writer of such princely stuff as this might be allowed one metaphor of his own choosing ?

Angels and men, resign your claim  
To pity, mercy, love, and grace ;  
These glories crown Jehovah's name  
With an incomparable blaze.  
Who is a pardoning God like Thee  
Or who has grace so rich and free ?

But he also wrote :

Crimes of such horror to forgive  
Such guilty daring worms to spare.

Where is the Keating's powder ? The Congregational Union's Committee did not fail.

Such dire offences to forgive  
Such guilty daring *souls* to spare

That is less offensive ; *dire offences*, if you come to think of it, is quite a non-committal phrase. *Dire*—no one in ordinary life uses that word so no one minds it being attached to his *offences*. Yet the people to whom much is forgiven love

much. It was the forgiveness of "crimes of such horror" (not of these "dire offences") that provoked the ecstatic cry :

In wonder lost, with trembling joy  
We take our pardon from our God,  
Pardon for crimes of deepest dye,  
A pardon bought with Jesus' blood.

No one is going to be lost in wonder about "dire offences" ! make no mistake about that. It is the same pettifogging spirit that is at work in Prayer Book revision. The modern Anglican does not wish to call himself a miserable sinner, a miserable offender, to say that the burden of his sins is intolerable. He is not a miserable sinner, but an honest seeker after truth ; the burden of his sins is not intolerable, imperceptible rather. Very well, but don't expect to be able to pass on to what the Methodists used to call "The Pleasantness and Excellence of Religion" unless you have known the section "For Mourners convinced of Sin." Our editors are in the same state of mind as Mr. Chesterton's mob which shouted not "No Popery," but "Not quite so much Popery." Well, the Pope cares little for such mobs ; and Satan who

Trembles when he sees  
The weakest saint upon his knees

trembles little before congregations that are too discreet to call themselves saints and too genteel to call themselves sinners.

One example of a change for doctrinal reasons, and I end this part of my paper. Doddridge, as good a Dissenter as most of us need wish to be, wrote a Communion hymn. He wrote it in the 18th century before people had begun to suppose that the only proper doctrine for Dissenters is the so-called Zwinglian doctrine that the Communion is a memorial feast only. He wrote, therefore,

Hail sacred feast which Jesus makes,  
Rich banquet of His flesh and blood.  
Thrice happy he who here partakes  
That sacred stream, that heavenly food.

Barrett, since he printed Keble's communion hymn,

Fresh from the atoning sacrifice  
The world's Redeemer bleeding lies,  
That man His foe for whom He bled  
May take Him as his daily bread.

could hardly complain of Doddridge's ; and let it stand. But

it offends some ; and you will find elsewhere the meaning weakened and watered down.

Rich banquet of His flesh and blood—

that is too much and becomes

Sweet emblems of His flesh and blood.

Even poor Doddridge is suspected of Popery by our lovers of the feeble ! One change Barrett did make lower down.

Why are these dainties still in vain  
Before unwilling hearts displayed ?

wrote the unblushing Doddridge. But *dainties*, we must agree, is too much ; especially if your memory of the Methodist hymn reinforces the objection :

O bid the wretched sons of need  
On soul-reviving dainties feed.

For *dainties* read *emblems*, says Barrett. Since *emblems* is distinctly out of harmony with the thought of the hymn it would probably be better simply to respect Doddridge's own word *banquet*.—*Why is the banquet still in vain ?*

(To be Concluded.)

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH, 1925.

<i>Receipts.</i>	£	s.	d.	<i>Expenditure.</i>	£	s.	d.
Balance forward from last account ...	68	9	9	Printing <i>Transactions</i> , Vol. ix., No. 1 ...	22	10	0
Subscriptions, Arrears	12	11	0	Ditto, ditto, No. 2 ...	20	15	0
Ditto, 1924 ...	26	13	0	Postage of same to Members ...	2	2	6
Ditto, in advance ...	6	19	9	Subscription to Friends' Historical Society	5	0	
One Life Subscriber ...	10	10	0	Advert. in Congrega- tional Quarterly ...	3	3	0
Sale of <i>Transactions</i> ...	2	3	10	Hire of Room for Annual Meeting ...	1	1	0
				Secretary's Postages ..	1	0	0
				Cash at Bankers ...	76	10	10
	127 7 4				127 7 4		
	127 7 4				127 7 4		

## **The Congregational Churches of Staffordshire.**

By A. G. MATTHEWS, M.A. (Cong. Union of England and Wales. 5s.)

**T**HIS is the somewhat misleading title of an otherwise admirable book, written at the request of the Staffordshire Congregational Union. It fills up what has hitherto been a serious blank in our historical and ecclesiastical literature, and places within reach, at a moderate cost, documents and statistics else not easily accessible. The author supplements his title "With some account of the Puritans, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Quakers in the county during the seventeenth century," but as a matter of fact he has given us a concise History of Puritanism and Nonconformity in Staffordshire from their earliest appearance to the end of the eighteenth century, with that of the Congregational Churches continued to the present time. Lists are given of the Staffordshire ministers ejected in 1660 and 1662, the conventicles reported in the county in 1669, the Licences granted under the Indulgence in 1672, the meetings registered under the Toleration Act in 1689, and (so far as they relate to Staffordshire) the Surveys of the Dissenting interest in 1716 and 1773 from the Evans and Thompson MSS. in Dr. Williams's Library. Copious details are given as to the origin of particular Churches, the work of the Northern and Southern Associations, and the legal proceedings rendered necessary by doctrinal disagreements between ministers and trustees, or between different parties in the same congregations. Very instructive, too, is the contrast between the narrow Calvinistic pietism displayed in trust-deeds and Church covenants of the eighteenth century and the Modernism of recent times—not easily distinguishable from philosophic Deism. An almost complete list is given of the Congregational ministers of Staffordshire from 1662 to the present time, their antecedents and after-life or death being indicated by a somewhat elaborate system of notes. The book is simply crammed with information, almost every item being verified by reference to authorities; it deserves a much wider circulation than is possible within the limits of a single county.

T. G. CRIPPEN.

## **A Life of the Reverend Richard Baxter, 1615-1691.**

By F. J. POWICKE, M.A., PH.D. (Jonathan Cape, 15s.)

**D**R. POWICKE has for many years been engaged on a life of Richard Baxter, and monographs dealing with various incidents in his career have already seen the light in the *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*. We are glad that now, however, this volume, which takes Baxter's story as far as 1663,



has been published, and we trust that ere long its successor will follow.

Dr. Powicke has steeped himself in Baxter literature. He has, too, the double good fortune of knowing the Kidderminster area at first hand, and of having had leisure to work on the volumes of Baxter MSS. in the Dr. Williams's Library. The result is a volume that will become the standard work on Baxter's life for its period. With it and *The Reformed Pastor* the reader can get a correct and sufficient idea of Baxter's marvellous work in Kidderminster without toiling through Sylvester's monumental *Reliquiae Baxterianæ*. An outline of Baxter's life and writings is followed by a description of his controversies with Anabaptists (John Tombes), Antinomians, Quakers, Romanists, Prelatists and Separatists. The appendices contain transcripts of letters from the Baxter MSS., and there is a note dealing with portraits.

Dr. Powicke well brings out the greatness of Baxter's work and witness, but he is not blind to his failings, and it is not difficult to see on which side the historian's sympathy is when Baxter's views of Cromwell are under discussion. One or two points only call for mention. Would "the first Sunday in the New Year" (1641) be "the first Sunday in April" (pp. 30, 95)? Is not this impossible when the year began on the 25th March? On p. 246 "Penny" should be "Penney." We have pleasure in commending to our readers an excellent piece of work. The publishers have placed Dr. Powicke and his readers under an obligation by giving the biography such a pleasing appearance—indeed, the "get-up" of the book is all that can be desired.

ALBERT PEEL.

## Reprints.

Both the articles in this issue—Dr. Veitch's "Thomas Raffles of Liverpool" and Mr. Manning's "Some Hymns and Hymnbooks"—are to be reprinted, the second after the concluding part has appeared in September. Copies of Dr. Veitch's article can be obtained from the Publication Department of the Congregational Union at the Memorial Hall, price one shilling.