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## EDITORIAL

THE Society's Jubilee was celebrated in March with considerable *éclat*. The Assembly of the Congregational Union passed a resolution of congratulation, and there was a large attendance at the Annual Meeting. The President made a survey of the work of the fifty years, but saddened the members by his inexorable resolve to demit the office. The Society has had no more loyal member than Dr. Grieve: he has continually kept the interests and aims of the Society before the churches and before his students, and he retires assured of the respect and affection of all of us. We are indeed greatly in his debt.

Dr. Albert Peel was appointed his successor and also as Editor, with Dr. G. F. Nuttall as colleague in the editorial office. Mr. R. H. Muddiman was reappointed Treasurer, and the Rev. C. E. Surman Secretary, with the Rev. Harry Sellers as colleague. Warm thanks were expressed on every side to Mr. Surman for his indefatigable work, and appreciation of his *Occasional Bulletins*. Some of the fruit of that work appeared in the announcement of many new members, and since May a further 65 new members have been enrolled, among them two Life and four Corporate Members. This increase is encouraging, but it must be maintained if the Society is to remain solvent. The grant of £50 from the Congregational Union will be more than exhausted by this Jubilee number, and until the cost of printing comes down, a subscription of 5/- is not only "uneconomic" but limits the issue of *Transactions* to one a year. Especially should we have more Corporate Members: 29 churches out of 3,000 isn't good enough!

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The Secretary is to be warmly congratulated on the receipt of the M.A. degree of the University of Manchester for his thesis, *Classical Presbyterianism in England, 1646-1660*. The Rev. W. C. Lazenby has received the same degree for his *History of Styal*, and the Rev. R. S. Paul the Oxford D.Phil. for his *Oliver Cromwell's View of his Political Mission in the Light of his Theological and Ecclesiastical Presuppositions*. These successes should stimulate students engaged in research, among whom many of our members are to be numbered.

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Work in progress—for University degrees and otherwise—includes: J. W. Ashley-Smith, "The Curricula of the Dissenting Academies."

Reginald Mansfield, "The Development of Independency in Derbyshire."

George Everson, "Isaac Watts and Education."

Pearce Jones, "The Idea of Union among the Independents."

J. A. Finch, "John Angell James."

H. D. Greenwood, "Early Nonconformity in Suffolk."

J. H. Bennett, "Later Nonconformity in Suffolk."

F. W. Peill-Harris, "Philip Doddridge."

J. J. Murphy, "John Bunyan."

W. Gordon Robinson, "Lancashire Nonconformity."

H. McLachlan, "MSS. of Isaac Newton."

George Walker, "Billericay Congregational Church."

All these are members of the Society, and the list does not claim to be exhaustive, many others are producing local histories of merit.

Other students are working on "William Jay" and "The Free Churches and Social Justice."

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The long-awaited corpus of the writings of the Fathers of Independency is now sufficiently advanced for a public announcement to be made, and a prospectus will shortly be issued. The publication of a *literatim* edition is a work of immense labour—we shall soon be in a position to claim that we are the only person who has copied by hand the works of Browne, Harrison, Barrowe, Greenwood, and Penry!—but also of great expense, and it is only the public spirit of the Sir Halley Stewart Trust which has made the publication possible.

The series consists of seven volumes:

- I *Cartwrightiana.*
- II *The Works of Robert Browne and Robert Harrison.*
- III and IV *The Works of Henry Barrowe and John Greenwood.*
- V *The Works of John Penry.*
- VI and VII *A parte of a register.*

The series will be published for the Sir Halley Stewart Trustees by Geo. Allen & Unwin. The volumes will be 21/- each; the seven can be obtained, if cheques are sent before the publication of Vol. III, for 126/-. Vol. I is ready for the binder, II is in the press, III and IV should go to press before the end of the year. It is the intention to issue Vol. I and II together, in the early spring if possible.

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Among recent losses to our membership are those of Miss Ethel M. Colman, a former Lord Mayor of Norwich; and Rev. Isaac Pugh, Secretary of the Devonshire Congregational Union.

Congregationalism has also lost a fine scholar and historian whose qualities it has, it is to be feared, failed fully to appreciate. Dr. H. W. Clark was in pastoral work for but a short time, and he did not fit easily into the ordinary life of the churches; but he had many gifts, and the list of books standing to his name is by no means short. It includes volumes of poems, of theology, and of secular history, including a *History of the British Empire*. But it is his *History of English Nonconformity from Wyclif to the end of the 19th Century* (1911-13) which will live: it will not content those who think that history is concerned only with facts and dates, but those who believe that ideas and trends are important will find it full of suggestion for many years to come.

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As we go to press, the sad news has been received of a still severer loss to our Society. Dr. Albert Peel, the Editor of these *Transactions* since 1924 and so recently elected our President, died unexpectedly in a Glasgow nursing home on the 3rd November, 1949. Earlier paragraphs in this Editorial, which comes from his pen, show how full of plans for continuing work he remained to the end. A tribute to his unstinting services to our Society will be printed in our next number.

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With this number of the *Transactions* appears the index to volume XV.

## The Church Covenant in Independency

[This address, given by Prof. J. Morgan Jones of Bangor to the Welsh Union of Independents in 1916, has been translated by Prof. W. A. Davies and shorn of its topical references. A useful book on the subject is C. Burrage, *The Church Covenant Idea*, 1904.]

**W**AR ought to impel every body of religious people to ask itself serious questions concerning the purpose of its own existence, its place and its message and its own responsibility in the work of furthering the Gospel and adapting it to the new situation. If it cannot justify its existence by showing that it has work to do which no other body of people whatsoever can do quite so well as itself, why cumbereth it the ground? Whatever else war does it drives *us* like almost every other religious body far from our original moorings in history. We have been driven for the most part into the far country of the Prodigal Son to eat the husks the swine did eat, and our first task is to come to ourselves, back to our right mind if we are to regain our proper place in society, and our self-respect as the medium of the revelation of the will of God "the calling to which we have been called." What right have we to live apart from other denominations but for the special service that we can give our nation which no other body of people in the world can give? Is there such a place for us as Independents in the plan of God, a place that will be vacant forever unless filled by us, or else by some body of chosen people like ourselves that God must create because of our negligence? If there be an answer anywhere to such a question it will be found in our history, and in the roots of our history. But one of the dangers of war is to persuade almost every association of people to cut the lifeline that holds them to the roots of its history and of its beginnings, and that peril is greater for our Independent Churches than for any other association. It will be well for us, therefore, above all others, to seek the company of the founders of our first Churches in order to recover something of their inspiration and their spirituality, and to follow their faith. May a double portion of their spirit descend upon us.

The chief aim of this paper is to show how a renewed contact with the tombs of the fathers can instil life into our dry bones and enable us to give an Independent answer to some of the most serious questions of the day, and restore again sense and balance to our life and our work. And it is no unpleasant task for me to seek

to achieve this end by calling your attention to one important element in the founding of the earliest Independent Churches, an element that has not hitherto received the attention it deserves from our historians. By today, enough incontestable proofs have been discovered of the fact that one of the characteristics distinguishing our earliest Independent and Congregational Churches from every other body of religious people, the special peculiarity of their life and character, was that, without exception, they were founded on and through a Church Covenant of an exceptional and remarkable nature. It is true that they were not the first to discover the idea of a religious covenant. This is as o'd at least as the earliest thinkers and prophets of the people of Israel. Neither did they discover the idea of a Church Covenant as a bond of union and communion; but in their origin and early history, the Church Covenant was raised to honour and influence. They made it the centre of the life of the Church. Above all, their Covenant bears upon it a sufficiently distinctive stamp to make it a new thing in the history of the world. Subsequently it had its own important place, not only in the history of the Independents but in the history of the development of democracy among the peoples; the Constitution of the U.S.A., for instance, is but the adaptation of the Church Covenant of the Independents. This indeed is the only authoritative and official document in all our history as a denomination, and it was not only by the founding of an Independent Church that the Covenant came to its place in our history. The first Independent Churches had also an interesting custom of "renewing the Covenant" formally and seriously after every important event or crisis in their history. I suggest to you that this is a time for us to do something similar, namely renew the old simple Covenant that formerly we made with one another and with our God.

While saying all this, I do not forget the laudable attempt that is made nowadays to unite the denominations, but the first condition of success in every such effort is the fidelity of each denomination to the Gospel, and the resolve of each denomination to do its own special work as the servant of the Gospel. Nor do I forget either that we as Christian Churches are face to face with the most serious crisis in our history, that the British Empire is also in imminent peril, not so much of being destroyed by external enemies as of losing the rich inheritance won in and for her by the Puritans.

I would suggest to you that one of the most effective ways of furthering union among the denominations and of facing the most important problems thrust upon our notice by war, and of calling us as a denomination back to our proper work, is to resurrect and renew in spirit our old Church Covenants, and seek to see in and

through them our message, our service, and our own special responsibility to the world.

To this end I will lay before you six of the oldest Covenants of the Independent Churches. They represent fairly, I think, the most important characteristics of the first sixty years of their history as well as the ideas and aims of the founders and leaders of the Churches in that period—the ideals of the most active promoters of the Congregational Movement in the time of Cromwell brought new, though not better, elements into the churches and the denomination of the Independents.

Here are descriptions of the contents of the first three Covenants that are on record. The other three are to be found on the lips of the Churches themselves.

1. *Covenant of the Church at Norwich* founded in 1581 by Robert Browne.

“A Covenant was made, and all agreed individually to cleave faithfully to one another. The first thing that was done was to agree voluntarily to cleave together to the Lord in one Covenant and Communion, and to keep and seek union with one another under His laws and His rule.”

In these words Robert Browne, himself the father of Independency, describes the formation of one of the first Independent Congregational Churches.

Also very similar to this is the description we have of the Covenant of the Church that came together first in London about 1587, but was formally constituted by Barrow and Greenwood in 1592. Of this Church John Penry became a member. Quite brief and simple was their vow to one another and to God.

2. *Covenant of the Churches of Gainsborough and Scrooby in 1602.*

“As the free people of the Lord they agree with one another as a Church in the fellowship of the Gospel and in Covenant with God to walk in all His ways as it had been revealed to them already or would be revealed to them in time to come; to the limit of their power, cost what it may to them.”

Here is the Covenant of the most famous church in the early history of the Independents—a church of the Pilgrims who wandered over the face of the earth seeking a place whereon to lay their head and an opportunity to keep their Covenant holy and to obey their conscience. This is the Covenant that cost houses and lands, homes and friends, country and life, to keep it—the Covenant that was carried as a precious treasure to Leyden and Plymouth in America—the Covenant of John Smyth, Henry Ainsworth and John Robinson,

the greatest heroes of faith, freedom, and conscience in the history of the world.

3. *Covenant of the Church of Southwark*, founded in 1616 by Henry Jacob.

“And they standing in a circle hand in hand made a serious Covenant with one another in the presence of Almighty God to walk together in all His ways so far as He has revealed them hitherto or will reveal them further.”

It was the minister of this Church and the successor of Henry Jacob who came to Llanfaches to help William Wroth to establish the first Independent Church in Wales in 1639, and although I have no incontestable proof of it, there is little doubt in my mind that it was on this Covenant that the Church of Llanfaches was founded. It is unfortunate that the early Covenants of Wales—those before 1700—have not yet been discovered. It was in the Church at Southwark for the most part that the fugitives from Wales became members at the time of the rebellion, and amongst them, Walter Cradock.

4. *Covenant of the Church at Yarmouth in 1642.*

“We make herewith a serious Covenant with one another.

(1) We will for ever acknowledge and confess God as our God in Jesus Christ. (2) We will endeavour to the limit of our strength always—God’s grace helping us—to walk in His ways and ordinances in accordance with His written Word, the only sufficient rule of the good life for every man. (3) We will not be soiled by any sinful ways public or secret, but we will keep ourselves from every appearance of evil without causing offence to either Jew or Gentile or to the Churches of Christ. (4) We will do our best, out of true love, to improve and strengthen our communion with one another as brethren by watching over each other, and according to need we will exhort, reprove, comfort, help and bear with one another in patience, subjecting ourselves to the rule of Christ in His Church. (5) All this we promise, not in our own strength but, in the power of Christ. Nor will we confine ourselves to the words of this Covenant but we will ever deem it an obligation upon us to receive all further light and truth that may be revealed to us in the Word of God.”

This Covenant is given here as an example of the more detailed form of the Covenants, and because the influence of this Church reached far. A number of other Churches were established by it and through it.



5. *Covenant of Bury St. Edmunds, 1646.*

"We whose names are below resolve and vow through the help of God's Spirit to walk in all the ways of God as they have already been revealed to us, or will be further revealed to us in His Word, while loving and watching over one another as becomes the Church of Christ."

6. *Covenant of Denton, 1676.*

"We covenant and pledge ourselves through the help of God's Spirit to commit ourselves wholly to the Lord, and to His people, to walk in all the ordinances of Christ according to the order of the Gospel, and to acknowledge Him as our Head, our Lord and our King."

These Covenants are representative.

Before commenting at all on the meaning and characteristics of these Covenants permit me to call your attention to one general feature of them. Note they are not separate Covenants unrelated to one another but different forms of the same Covenant. The impress of the same spirit and the same purpose is upon them all. In essence they are saying the same thing. That is the most effective proof of their unity, the sign of the strong bond that bound the Independent Churches with one another amidst and because of their independence and their freedom. They are all characterized by four special features, especially noteworthy in that age, and all the four are expressed in each Covenant in almost the same words. The four may be summed up each in a short sentence:

- (1) A voluntary Covenant as a foundation of the Church.
- (2) The Christian experience and the moral life as the aim of the Church.
- (3) Christ as the standard, as the authority and Head of the Church.
- (4) Freedom of thought and of conscience as the condition of the Church's continuance.

These are the chief things stated clearly and openly in and by these Covenants. These are the vows made for us and in our name by our fathers when we were baptized in their blood. Has their promise been wholly fulfilled by us? Has the Covenant been honestly kept? We know well enough it has not. In many a period, not to mention these latter days, we have run to do the work of every denomination but our own. Our special task is to keep the vows our fathers made and to turn our energies to keep the Covenant of our denomination, to explain it to the world, defend and justify it before the best minds in the world, and thereby commend the great Gospel to men. This

is the religious, moral and intellectual work entrusted to us, and there is greater need of it today than ever before. The work, God knows, is great enough and hard enough and honourable enough. Hidden within the simple and clear words of these Covenants are not only promises most difficult to keep in practice, but also a great many of the most stubborn problems in the realm of the intellect with reference to the nature of the Church, to the meaning and place and value of theology and of Christian Ethics—intricate problems which the world must unravel if we are to come out of this chaos and confusion without completely losing ourselves. Nor are they a number of detached, scattered and unrelated problems but *one* big complex problem to be unravelled altogether if at all. When the nature of the Church is determined, then at the same time is determined the value of the moral life and the meaning of Christ's authority and the rights of conscience. The explanation of the meaning of Jesus Christ's authority will at the same time give its place and meaning to the moral life and to the Church. We shall later on have an opportunity to emphasize this fact when noting the characteristics and message of the Covenants.

The first thing to emphasize in regard to all these Churches is that they are free Churches gathered from out of the world, founded on a voluntary Covenant between brethren of the same faith, a definite Covenant with the Lord and with one another. They were not established by any prescribed law or any external authority, but by small companies of people in obedience to their consciences and in face of every civil law of their day—Independent Churches separated from all civil and secular authority and regulation, not only Independent in their constitution but in their life and spirit. They claimed an independent empire for themselves depending solely on the conscience enlightened by Christ. It was natural, it is natural, for the world to ask: What kind of a Church is this that acknowledges no authoritative theological creed nor priestly office nor prescribed law nor political arrangement as the basis and bond of union, but is a law to itself? It is a call to us to demonstrate the truth of such a conception of the nature of the Church in our everyday living, first of all as Churches, but also to the best minds of the world through a consistent and complete doctrine. On what terms can the law and the Gospel, the life of the world and such a Church co-exist? What evangelical connection can exist between the Church and the State? At what point does influence on public life become ecclesiastical interference with matters not belonging to the proper sphere of the life and thought of the Church as such? What moral claim has the State on the Church, and the Church on the State? What have the Independents to do with a Church

or Churches that stand not above and without but within and subject to political systems, a Church that becomes servile to the military and political authorities, a Church that has no message in a great crisis but to say Yes or No at the behest of the State?

Is it not indeed full time for us to seek to determine whether we really believe and are ready to defend, in peace and in war, to the limit of our power—in the words of the Gainsborough Church covenant—cost what it may—the conception of the nature of the Church which is at the root of the Covenants of our earliest churches? If our Churches have a right to their name and their history, it is high time for us to put more seriousness, and more moral and intellectual energy into the attempt to prove our claim in life as in word, in doctrine as in experience, instead of shouting for Disestablishment yesterday and tying our destiny to the apron-strings of the State today. Milton could direct his appeal to us as formerly to Cromwell. "Yet much remains to conquer still."

But as already seen, there is no full answer to our question regarding the nature of the Church, nor will there be respect for these Covenants' conceptions of the nature of the Church without a deeper consideration of the second principle that is thrust upon our attention, namely, the supremacy of the Christian moral life over everything, every system and every department of life in the world.

Every one of these Covenants acknowledges as its aim—and it is the only aim mentioned for their integration as Churches—the right and duty and endeavour of each member to live a personal moral Christian life in God's presence. Their definite promise and their only promise to one another and to God is "to walk in all the ways of the Lord."

Whatever matter is referred to in these Covenants it is touched upon only to emphasize the moral element in it. When the Yarmouth Covenant mentions God, what it says is, "We acknowledge and confess God as our God in Jesus Christ." The personal moral relationship fills the mind—obeying His will and submitting to His rule. When it mentions the Bible it mentions it as "the only sufficient rule of the good life for every man."

Even when speaking of Christ it is neither the doctrine of His Person, nor even His teaching that fills their mind, but inclining the soul and the will to His active rule.

There is no word in any of these Covenants about any theological creed or any formal doctrine as a condition of membership and Church fellowship. This is true in the letter and in the spirit of every Independent Church known to us for three-quarters of a century. Many of them definitely refused to base fellowship on

an agreement in theological doctrines. One of the signs of their decadence and of their weak compromise with the ways of the world in the days of Cromwell was the craving that beset them after the middle of the 17th Century to formulate Creeds. Neither is there mention in any of them of Church Government, despite the large place it took in our history. It is clear that it was not their special views on Church Government that impelled the earliest Independents to form Churches gathered out of the world and separated from the world and from the Church of England, but a much more important and deeper reason.

I am not going to say that the Independent Fathers had not a sufficiently definite theology with their special ideas of Church Government. Nearly every one of them was a rabid narrow Calvinist in his theological views and Congregational in his views as to Church Government, though they disagreed in their view of the meaning and place and number of the functions of the Church; but the important thing to note is that there is no mention of them in their Covenant. It was not to promote any special theological doctrine nor even any special form of Church Government that our first Churches were founded but rather to foster a religious experience, a purer moral life and a more Christian walk in active obedience to the will of God and to the ordinances of Christ. Every form of Church Government and theology was but a secondary matter to them. I wonder, is there not also need for us to perceive this vision much more clearly and to keep more faithfully to it? What Independent reason can there be for the talk now and again heard of some "fundamental doctrines" that would, it is said, make a splendid Creed whereon to found the union of the denominations? Seriously, is it not time for us to turn back to the simple positions of our wisest Fathers and to say clearly and definitely that, however important any doctrine may be in a body of theology, there is but one thing only that is fundamental in the Church, and that is the practical experience of the power of the love of God in Christ to save, and an earnest endeavour to live a life full of love, and a moral walk humble before God and serviceable to men?

If we are to remain Independents in spirit as in name, we must see the central and supreme value that the universe reveals in the moral life, and be prepared at need to sacrifice everything else for its sake, keeping nothing back, and we must moralize our idea of God, Christ and the Church, the State and all the relationships of the life of man. If we lack sufficient courage to do this, morality will in the end lose all important significance in the practice thereof; the State will become a tyranny, the Church a State-institution,

its form of Government a formalism, its theology a fetter, its conscience caprice, and its religion superstition. The supremacy of the moral life as obedience to the will of God and the ripest fruit of the Christian faith is at the root of our Independent Churches, but it calls for its realization and for a much more effective proof in practice and in doctrine than we have ever yet given. How far we are from any final system of Ethics that would give us an intellectual right to transfer the lordship of our personal and social life to the charge of the moral principles of Christianity! In face of the intricate problems of Christian Ethics war presses heavily upon us, we Independents above all others are called by our history to meet their demands. Is there such a thing as a Christian Ethic that arises naturally and inevitably out of the heart of our Christian faith? Is it possible in a world like this for individual persons, or even a body of people, a nation, a state, an empire to do their work and live their life in obedience to the laws and principles of that Ethic? Is there truth in the idea that sped so quickly through the country in these latter days, that Christian morality is something relating to the life of the individual man and not to the life of nations and to their relation with one another? Without any further comment on them, I will say again there is a straight and direct road from these Covenants to the heart of a host of similar questions, and they place a special responsibility upon our shoulders to seek a clear answer to them as questions of life and death for us. It is part of the Lord's vineyard, and an urgent call to us to cultivate and to enrich it.

Once again it is clear that every treatment of Christian Ethics must concentrate on the significance and the extent of the authority of the person of Jesus Christ in practical life, the claim of Jesus Christ to be acknowledged as the final revelation of the moral will of the God and Lord of our life and that of the nations. As we have seen, these Covenants all unite in saying that the meaning and the essence of the new moral and spiritual life consists in a limitless absolute and unconditional obedience to Him and to His word. Their vow is to "walk together in all the ordinances of Christ according to the order of the Gospel," and "to acknowledge Him as our Head, our Lord and our King to the limit of our power and by the help of the Lord cost what it may": so said the Church at Gainsborough. The submission of the soul and the life to His rule in everything gives meaning to the gospel for them, for said Robert Browne, "His message cannot exist apart from His rule." In other words, there is no such thing as a Gospel apart from the practical acknowledgment of His authority and a moral obedience to His rule.

An important part of our work as the children of these Covenants is to justify these serious words, and to seek to expound and defend their deepest meaning to the understanding, heart, and conscience of the world. What is the length and breadth, the height and depth of the moral authority of Christ over the life of man? What is the meaning of His kingly rule over the Church? What is the difference between acknowledging the authority of His words and acknowledging the dominance of His person? How can we justify a Covenant that demands a limitless obedience to Him? What theological doctrine of His Person will best answer to, or give the best explanation for, the full submission of the moral life to Jesus Christ? We all know that the theology that puts such questions as these at its centre and heart has not been discovered. Whence shall it come if not from the full experience, the strong faith and the responsible freedom of the children of the Covenants of the first Independent Churches?

Here again every treatment of the authority of Christ drives us one step further—faced with the principle which is not only a definite article in these Covenants, but also adorns every sentence in them. That principle is freedom of thought and of conscience—the claim of conscience to an unequivocal and instant obedience as the infallible guide of the personal life—the conscience of which Bishop Butler said “Had it strength as it has right, had it power as it has manifest authority, it would absolutely govern the world.”

“To walk in all His ways so far as they have already been revealed or as they shall be revealed to them in time to come” is the phrase used for the most part in these Covenants to keep alive the rights of conscience and freedom of opinion, if need be even against their own voluntary Covenant.

“We will not confine ourselves to the words of this Covenant,” said the Yarmouth Church, “but we will esteem it an obligation upon us always to receive all further light and truth as may be revealed to us.” The voice of the Spirit in the Word and in the heart is every day anew to be listened to and obeyed—whithersoever it may call—cost what it may—houses and lands, homes and friends, country and life if need be. They humbly acknowledged that more light and truth can yet break from the Word of God for their mind and life. They claimed freedom—not licence or caprice—but freedom to obey the definite call of the Spirit whencesoever it came and whithersoever it led. To the Independent Churches was definitely entrusted the work of securing and defending the worth and sacredness of the individual person in his conscience and his freedom—even against the whole power and authority of the State. Freedom of opinion and of speech and the rights of conscience

ought to be safe in the hands of the children of the Covenant (of all people) however difficult the work of protecting them and however complex the circumstances. We are a body of people with our history of a Covenant with our God and with one another to acknowledge the right and duty of the weakest of mankind to yield full and instant obedience to his conscience, but the Covenant will not be kept if we only remember it in fair weather. Nor will it be kept without our seeking to explain and expound much more effectively the meaning and origin of the rights of conscience, its relation to the authority of Christ, the relation of faith to freedom, the meaning and limits of the authority of the Churches and of the State and a host of similar problems—on the basis of our full experience of the truth of the Gospel in our own lives. Here I am now nearly at the end of my journey seeking to describe the most important features of the Covenant of our denomination—the call that comes from it to us its children, and the special duties and privileges that are implicit in its simple articles. To sum up:

We are Churches gathered out of the world and independent of the world. Our first Churches were founded on a voluntary and remarkable Covenant. They were created to foster a moral Christian life, personal and social. They saw the meaning and power and essence of that life in a limitless, sincere and unconditional obedience to God in Christ, as He would reveal Himself from day to day more fully and more clearly in the conscience of every man. If we are not to cut the connections with the roots of our history and our life, we must renew this Covenant by proving that a healthy and useful Church can live under such conditions as these—by an increasing active obedience to Christ, cost what it may, and by securing and defending the right of every man to do likewise in obedience to his conscience according to the measure of the light and truth he received from the Spirit. As a help to keep such a Covenant we are called upon to expound and defend it to the best minds of the world by expounding and defending unequivocally the sublime idea transmitted to us of the nature of the Church—by treating in more detail and more courageously the problems of Christian Ethics—by revealing the origin, expounding the meaning, and supporting the claim of the Lord Jesus Christ to an unconditional moral obedience, and by revealing the overwhelming need for freedom of opinion and of conscience as the constant and indispensable accompaniment of every pure holy Church, of every strong moral life and of all due allegiance to every honest and efficient State. This is our fine heritage from the Independent Fathers, and no one of the characteristics of the inheritance can live for long without the others. An Independent Church is

impossible without a strong moral and personal experience of the salvation and of the happiness that comes through a ready obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ; and the effective acknowledgment of the moral authority of Jesus Christ will be impossible except through a ready obedience to conscience. Today they are in greater danger than ever before, and from the same quarter; and that is the senseless supposition that the State is the highest and supreme value in the world, and that everything else must give way to the effort to keep alive the State. An Independent Church is in danger from the craving to justify the existence and works of the Church in the eyes of the State. The supremacy of the moral life is in danger from the militarism that takes more account of a cannon than of man as a moral being, and from politics that makes the existence of a particular Government an end more important than the Kingdom of Heaven. The authority of Jesus Christ is in danger from the opinion that the very mention of "military necessity" is enough to settle every question on earth and in heaven.

These dangers have been added to every other danger that always threatens the free Church, the incomparable worth of morality, the authority of Jesus Christ, and the rights of conscience and freedom. If there be any meaning at all in the Covenant and history of the Independents, it is we who ought to be in the front ranks of the defenders of these human-divine possessions, for in them is our sole inheritance and we were created to keep them alive. Our experience of their incomparable worth is poor because the mighty spirit of Jesus has not become the disposition of our soul. If there were ever need for prayer on the lip and in the heart of the Independents, behold, the day is come to knock at the door of heaven and to turn to unwearied labour which will make us worthy of our history and of our Lord.



## Some Seventeenth-Century Testimonies

[John Rogers (1627-1665?) is known mainly for his Fifth Monarchist opinions, but in 1653, when he was minister of the Congregational church worshipping in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, he still held "the normal Independent standpoint": cf. *D.N.B.*]

THE recounting of religious experiences plays no unimportant part in the heritage of Congregationalism. This essay draws attention to a collection of experiences incorporated in John Rogers' book on Church government, *A Tabernacle for the Sun*, 1653. There are nearly forty examples, covering sixty pages, and all but one were given in Dublin before the congregation of his Church.

There are two types of testifying. One is used as a condition of joining the Church and the other as a means of evangelism. In introducing the testimonies, Rogers tells us why he desires testifying. He has three main reasons: the preservation of the purity of the Church; the development of humility and tolerance in the congregation; and the teaching of others to believe.

Concerning joining the Church, Rogers says,

Every one to be admitted, gives out some experimental evidences of the work of grace upon his soul (for the Church to judge of) whereby he (or she) is convicted of God, . . .<sup>1</sup>

This was an attempt to distinguish the elect from the unelect, believers from mere assenters, to have a Church of visible saints, and shows Anabaptist rather than Calvinist influence. But there are many good Christians who cannot speak in public. Rogers tells the story of an inarticulate woman whose application had been set aside for a month because she was so dumb and the Church consequently doubtful. She burst into tears and reminded them of their pastor's words the previous Lord's day: that Christ called us freely, and that those who came to Him He would in no wise put by. Her claim upon this promise overcame the doubts of the Church. It is necessary to be most sympathetic to those whose answers to the easy questions which members put to them were faltering, as Rogers says, "merely savouring of grace".

His love for souls was too great to fail to recognize and meet this difficulty.

. . . if any is to be admitted that is very unable to speak in

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<sup>1</sup> The caption to Chapter VI, book II, *op. cit.*

publike (I mean) in the Church, as some Maids, and others that are bashful (or the like). Then the Church chooses out some whom she sees fit, against the next Assembly to take in private the account of Faith, the evidences of Gods worke of grace upon his or her heart, which they either take in writing, and bring in into the Church, or eise (which is most approved) when that person is to be admitted, they doe declare by word of mouth, whilst some easie questions are (notwithstanding) asked of him (or her) for the Churches satisfaction, and for the confirmation of what was before delivered in private to the brethren.<sup>2</sup>

At least two of the testimonies in the collection were written down before they were delivered to the congregation. John Cooper had a strange dream which he conveyed to the Church "writ down as I remembered it" and Humphrey Mills' experience is described as "given in".

Those who testify in public are "the ablest of the Brethren". The order in which they are to speak is arranged previous y and it seems that eight or ten on one occasion is normal. Those which we have in the collection were given in two public places in Dub in, *Brides* and *Michaels*, and served as preparation for the embodying of the Church on August 12th, 1651<sup>3</sup>, in which the same ordinance of prophesying was performed<sup>4</sup>. Rogers calls the practice plainly "useful" but one applicant for Church membership, Rebecca Rich, speaks movingly.

I was much comforted and confirmed even last night in Michaels publike place, by the Ordinance of prophesying one by one, which the Church kept so sweetly, and I was very much convinced of your walking together in love and unity of spirit<sup>5</sup>.

It is interesting to note in passing the part women played in testifying in the Dublin Church. Rebecca Rich is one of many who give their experiences. In most seventeenth-century congregations women only contributed by proxy but the Dublin Church was enlightened and they held all the privileges of members though never offices, preaching, teaching or ruling<sup>6</sup>. If women could not

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, 1.II.p.293.

<sup>3</sup> 1.II.p.368.

<sup>4</sup> 1.II.cap.III deals with embodying.

<sup>5</sup> 1.II.p.413.

<sup>6</sup> Rogers on women in the Church, see 1.II.pp.563ff., the chapter entitled *Pupilla*.

be preachers, they came close to it in prophesying. Ann Megson's testimony is a miniature sermon, three points and all! She quotes Nazianzus in Greek and Luther in Latin; she illustrates with three similes and makes an exposition of *Joel* iii.10. Moreover, her concluding words suggest that prophesying was a regular feature of her membership.

Naturally no two experiences in the collection are alike yet many common features may be discerned. Allowance must be made for a possible tendency to assimilation by the recorder, who acknowledges abbreviating what he heard. Some repetitiveness may be accounted for, if we visualize many testifiers following one another. The style of the unlettered person would tend to be modified and shaped by those who preceded him. The characteristics common to a great many of the testimonies are to be found in the experience of Jeremy Hayward, which explains why it has been so ruthlessly précised.

The Lord hath opened my eyes to see sin, and showne me my self, and I lay under his wrath half a year, and so long as I sought to make out my own righteousness, I lay thus; and yet this while, I followed the meanes, heard the Word, and I saw at length nothing but Christ would serve me, and till then I would have no comfort, wherefore one first day of the week, I fell to prayer, I prayed thrice, and at the third time I heard him say, Loe! my grace is sufficient for thee; whereby I was much satisfied ere since, rowling my self on Christ, and living in him alone; and I find so great a change, that I can say, whereas I was blinde, now I am sure I see.

Whilst so brief an account of so great a change is inadequate and it has but the lightest touches of enthusiasm, it mentions many of the salient points in the common experience of conversion recited by these people. These points are: (1) The realization of sin, and within oneself. (2) A period of struggle, God's wrath, suffering or hell causing unrest. Bondage to fear. (3) The attempt to earn salvation (formalism and self-righteousness). (4) The means are followed, especially hearing the Word. (5) Redemption comes through Christ at a moment of emotional tension. Prayer is often mentioned. (6) Extraordinary phenomena such as the voice in the above story. (7) The quotation of Scripture. (8) The feeling of satisfaction, sometimes expressed in language which tends to be extravagant, as "rowing my self on Christ". The person testifies to his changed, regenerate condition.

The evidence suggests that unless the applicant for Church membership showed signs of repentance there was no hope of his acceptance. Only two of the testifiers do not mention sin at all and these are converted from legalism and formalism to the Gospel of Grace<sup>7</sup>. Some have an intense horror of sin and others admit backsliding<sup>8</sup>. John Chamberlain, "a grievous wretch" as a lad and cast out of doors for disobedience, became member of a Church where discipline was lax, but he was much troubled by "Contract with a woman which I could not owne" and hence "brake out into sinne". Somehow he was restored but then he went soldiering and was "thereby brought under many Temptations to sin, especially that vile lust of Drunkenesse". This sin beset William Walker, another backslider.

. . . too much I was given to drinking, till Mr. Strong told me, Brother, I hear strange things of you, that you are given to drinking, &c. which so smit me, with the abuses I received abroad by the profane sort, who said, (O this is one of Fowlers followers<sup>9</sup>) that I was wounded in my spirit a long time, that I should bring such a scandal upon the Gospel, and a blemish : He goes on to tell how "the Lorde recovered" him and gave him "resolution and power against the sin".

Many of the testimonies reveal moral and spiritual sensitivity at an early age. Elizabeth Avery commenced to worry about sin through playing on the Sabbath as a small girl. Rogers himself as a boy, was stirred spiritually as well as physically when his minister caught him sleeping during the sermon. John Bywater, another preacher, says,

When I was a little one, going to School, God began with me; for once I swore one Oath (as I was playing with my Schoolfellows) but I were presently struck with horror for it, and sense of it, as if I were to go to Hell for it presently; . . . I went into the Church-Porch . . . and wept bitterly to my self . . .

But older people were also brought to repentance through troubled consciences. Mary Burrill's conviction came through her second marriage.

I have been infinitely troubled by my marriage to my second husband, and have been afflicted in Conscience about it much,

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<sup>7</sup> Tabitha Kelsal; and Edward Hoar.

<sup>8</sup> John Chamberlain, William Walker and John Osborne.

<sup>9</sup> Probably Christopher Fowler (*D.N.B.*).

till the Lord gave me comfort within that my sins were forgiven me.

The suggestion is that second marriage might be against the will of God, and from this doubt she was eventually delivered. One testimony is that of an old lady, Mary Tarrant.

. . . the Lord hath spared me in mine old age; and now I see why? That I may enjoy this great mercy, which I never looked for, to comfort me in my old age.

Many factors combined to lead up to and consummate conversion. In the first place there was home influence. Elizabeth Avery alludes to her father as a "godly man", but the longest story of home influence is of a Puritan father whose discipline drove his son, Raphael Swinfield, from home. (Lawrence Swinfield had a similar experience and may have been his brother).

. . . although I were well brought up (and instructed) yet I was very disobedient, . . . for I could not endure to be curbed or kept in; but at length, because of his continual (and yet justly) reprovng me for my ill courses, and ill company which I kept, I resolved I would stay at home no longer, but I would be gone into the Low-Countreys, and we were put out to Sea, but by contrary Winds and Seas were driven back again; But I could not see this, but still held on my purpose, and having an opportunity, I got away for all that into England;

To the example of parents we must add the example of friends. John Chamberlain, whom we have already quoted, compliments his fellow-apprentice thus:—

. . . the example of my Fellow-Prentice (who was well-given) wrought much upon mee; and hee seemed to mee to doe all for Heaven, and to minde Heaven altogether, which began to incline mee much that way too, and at one time I went to him, and desired him to own me, and to let me be with him, and partake, but hee told mee hee must not cast bread to Dogs, which troubled mee much; but then I remembered to say, But I may have the crummes, and thence forward was hee willing to help mee all hee could;

In the case of Hugh Leeson there is domestic and maybe romantic influence, for Christ's work in him was, as he puts it,

begun at first by my Wife, a Widow's daughter in this Town, a godly Christian, and whom God made the first Instrument of my good; by her often reading of the Scriptures to me, and giving me good counsels and admonitions . . .

But Mrs. Leeson's task was not easy for her husband yet did "hate

the Saints, and forbid many of them coming to my house". The pastoral work of Mr. Rogers, however, put this right. These references illustrate the importance of ordinary Christian witness in leading men to conversion in the seventeenth century.

Sometimes it was some terrible experience which precipitated conversion. Frances Curtis, during the Irish rebellion, was "stripped by the rebels", and having returned home "through sad tempests", heard a rumour that her husband was murdered. Then "Canon-bullets flew over my head; and in a few days I was turned out of doors with my childe in my arms". That God heard her prayers and delivered her and her family brought her to the Church. Andrew Manwaring had lost his father in the rebellion; his wife was injured, and he, after "Tredah-fight"<sup>10</sup> "laid in the field among the dead, with fifteen wounds". This made him "sensible of his sins" and later, grateful for God's mercy, and he sought the Word.

The Word is one of the "means" which are mentioned by more than half the testifiers. From the experiences of this Dublin Church, we gather that the means includes praying, preaching, reading, meditating, the Word and Ordinances, especially Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and it also may include private meetings or meetings of the members. It is significant that the object of the means of grace is the individual and not the Church.

A determination to follow the means is often accompanied, at least at first, by a pious legalism. Captain Hoar "frequented the means, and did too much depend upon his doings, and rely on works". Jeremy Hayward "sought to make out his own righteousness" while following the means. Humphry Mills says,

I was three years together wounded for sins, and under a sense of my corruptions, which were many; and I followed Sermons, pursuing the means, and was constant in duties, and doing; looking for Heaven that way: And then I was so precise for outward formalities, That I censured all to be reprobates, that wore their hair any thing long, and not short above the ears; or that wore great Ruffs, and Gorgets<sup>11</sup>, or Fashions, and Follies:

These found true Christian liberty, but we learn also of those who turned antinomian. Below is printed part of the testimony of Tabitha Kelsall, with the marginal comments alongside.

<sup>10</sup> A reference to the surrender of Drogheda in June, 1649.

<sup>11</sup> An ornamental collar.

experiences there is not one Scriptural citation. The importance of Scripture may be implicit but it is not explicit. A most remarkable feature of the *Rogers type* is the tendency to follow Rogers' special kind of devotion. It is voiced in terms of love and joy; it comes near to mysticism at times, and is extravagant. Rogers was only twenty-six when his book was published. Had he written it in later life he might have toned down some of his exuberance. But his extravagance, emotion, and boldness appears in his testimony, and especially towards the end:—

. . . I can comfortably drink after Christ out of his own cup; and in eating his meat and drinking his drink, take gall and vinegar, as well as wine and honey. I prefer Christ before Salvation, and had (if I know my heart), yet not I (but my spirituall self) had rather goe to Hell with Christ in my armes (if 'twere possible) then to heaven without him; accounting the enjoyment of him to be the enjoyment of all the excellencies and happinesse in heaven and earth, Super omnia Christum; I am very confident Christ can't be perfect without me, nor I without him, but that I shall appear perfect (for all Eternity) in Christ's righteousnesse. . .

This note is repeated by Rogers' converts. "O I love the Saints of God! His Word! and all his wayes! and I rest on Christ Jesus alone!"<sup>12</sup> God's Spirit encouraged another "with all greedinesse and love to God and all his ways".<sup>13</sup> "I now love, and long after Jesus Christ alone".<sup>14</sup> "I have received much sweet satisfaction by Mr. R. and have now the testimony within me of God's love to me, which makes me to unfainedly love him. . . ."<sup>15</sup> "I doe rest on Jesus Christ, for pardon and Salvation by his blood."<sup>16</sup> (cp. Rogers' ". . . pardoned by his death, purged by his blood"). Beyond these points the eight converts of Rogers add little; perhaps some vivid personal reminiscence is incorporated.

To sum up the factors which combine to lead up to and consummate conversion, we may say briefly that they are sufferings, plague, war, or events of personal significance like marriage, or settling down after travelling abroad: what might be called the 'raw material' of life. Then, there is the example and words of friends and partners, and the attempt to understand the means, especially prayer, the Scriptures, and above all preaching.

<sup>12</sup> Mary Burrill.

<sup>13</sup> Margaret Fanshaw.

<sup>14</sup> Manwaring.

<sup>15</sup> Frances Curtis.

<sup>16</sup> Mary Barker.

The precise moment of conversion is indicated in many of the experiences, but others attribute the moment to several causes and still others are vague, being, one supposes, what are often called 'gradual' conversions. Six people attribute their conversions to their being struck by some verse of Scripture applying to their peculiar need. Eleven attribute their change to sermons. Sermons play an important part in at least ten other testimonies.

Extraordinary phenomena such as dreams, visions, and voices enter into the experiences of ten persons. In the author's day they were treasured above ordinary experiences. To-day psychological study enables us to identify most of the symbolized experiences of the dreamer or visionary in a way which did not occur to the student in the seventeenth century. To us the mystery of what the Puritan treasured as extraordinary experience is neither more nor less wonderful than ordinary experience.

The first thing we note is that the people who recount extraordinary experiences, being 'highly strung' and with vivid imaginations, have more to tell us of Hell, Devils and Satan, than other testifiers, who, it may surprise us to find, display little interest in the details of either Hell or Heaven.

"My first call," says Edward Wayman, "was upon a dream, which I had of a great black terrible dog, which seized upon me, and took hold of my ear fast, which I thought was the Devil; at which I waked with shrieks and cries." John Osborne, of whom we shall speak more later, dreamed that a serpent came to torment him, and from this serpent came seven more, "so many serpents for so many sins," who "stung and gnawed" him, eating off his flesh below, and his thighs "to the very bone". The fact that he confessed to adultery confirms the symbolism of his dream. Probably some vivid experience of the dreamer in conscious life led to the symbolism in several cases. It is likely that Wayman had been attacked by a dog and was frightened by it, perhaps in childhood. Rogers was certainly affected by a dream occasioned by a sea-battle off the coast. Francis Bishop was under arrest and likely to be executed, "yet more troubled under the wrath of God, than under the wrath of man", when, having gone to sleep despairing and moaning, suddenly the room was "all alight" and as he kept looking, he saw the words, "Thy sinnes are pardoned, and thy life is hid with Christ in God". This dream illustrates not only the effect of circumstances upon the dreamer's mind, but also his wish-fulfilment: a wish that could not be gratified consciously is gratified when the unconscious has free-play. Dorothy Emett has already been mentioned. She was unsatisfied with the pastoral



advice which Owen gave her, protesting, "How shall I do to be saved?". The solution to her problem came in a dream.

I lay a long time in this trouble of minde, untill in my sleep one night came to me a voyce, (I thought) that said, I am the Fountain of living water: and when I awaked, I was much refreshed, for I had great thirstings after Christ.

In each case the step which other testifiers could make consciously, these seekers could not make but in sleep. John Cooper, who wrote his dream down, secured his desire in imagination. It appears that he did not want to be left outside the circle of Church leaders, namely, the Lord of Clogher, Colonel Hewson, who was Governor of Dublin, and Rogers, his pastor. In the dream all of them had to cross a pit by a pole. The others managed it but Cooper felt he could not, and it was only through the prayers and exhortations of the pastor that he did so. Finally, Cooper was admitted into the holy of holies, where none but the four of them were, and they held converse with God.

The desire to be one of the Church fellowship is commonly upon the lips of the testifiers. Loneliness impels many. Raphael Swinfield says,

and ever since I have been here, but walking alone, and very desolate for want of such a society as this; and I shall now much rejoyce, if I may be one with you in this oneness of love and spirit, which (I perceive) you are in.

This esteem of the congregation is supported by others. "In this society I see much of God, and have a great desire to be one with you",<sup>17</sup> and "I was very much convinced of your walking together in love and unity of spirit".<sup>18</sup> Some joining the Church were delighted with its tolerance and freedom. Captain Hoar said he had not previously joined a society because they were too dependent on "formes". Thomas Huggins, a minister but not of Independent convictions before reaching Ireland, desired to join the company because of their wish to be one in spirit, "if not all in one Form". It is not easy to judge the value of the statements of applicants for Church membership. We must always bear in mind that this extolled Church broke over the question of Baptism in 1652. Yet the earlier warm love of the people for one another is far from irreconcilable with its later disruption. There are others who welcome the oversight and discipline that membership in those days involved. Ruth Emerson, for example, sought membership

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<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth Avery.

<sup>18</sup> Rebecca Rich.

that she might be watched over by the others since she was one who was always being tempted and felt she was of inferior gifts and graces. Mary Burrill desired the prayers of the society that she might "grow in grace".

One of the most interesting fruits of studying this collection of testimonies is the picture given of ordinary Church life in the period. In particular, there is a fascinating story illustrating the parts that prayer and pastoral work by the Church played. The tale comes from Rogers' Essex pastorate (*i.e.* Purleigh) where it was recorded in the Church-book. It concerns "a poore labouring man" called John Osborne who was, we are told, of ill-life and ill-looks. When he was sick, the pastor visited him with a collection taken for him after the weekly lecture-sermon, and found that the man had thrown a fit that night when the Church was praying for him. All he could cry was "I'm damned, I'm damned!", "I'm rotten at the heart".

. . . the pastor wondred; began to say one thing and another; to apply one aile and another; but all in vain, for the more he sought to help, he seemed to hurt, and the more he sought to cure the more he seemed to kill, and the more to fret the disease. The Pastor retiring himselfe for a time into the next roome as desirous to seek to God and to bewail the mans woeful misery, was there told by one or two, that the same Osborne has formerly been suspected of adultery. . . .

An admission to this effect was drawn from the sick man who began "naming her openly to all comers" and babbling "unsavoury speech so long and in so much despair that the Pastor was constrained to leave him so". The next day the Pastor, anxious both for the name of the Church and the salvation of the man, "in his private study strongly sets upon God, and by a holy violence beseecht, and begged of him hard that hee would scourge him here severely, by some visible sign". The pastor prayed and the man languished for two days. As he was "drawing on, in his last sweat", the pastor prayed that God would withdraw his anger if Osborne were repentant. So prayed the whole congregation and sent one of their number to visit the sick member. He was now found to be sleeping peacefully for the first time. When he awoke "he would needs be gone to the Pastor to tell him, what God had done for him"; he put on his clothes and commenced to cross the fields before he became faint and was constrained to return home. The remarkable thing is that his experiences in the coma corresponded with the prayers made for him. He thought he was in Hell being eaten of eight serpents. The vividness of it to Osborne

was borne out by evidence. His tongue "was bit quite through" and "a peece of his lip pulled off" which hindered his speech and when asked to account for these injuries "he said he knew not, unless the Serpents had bit it". Later Osborne heard the Pastor's pleading with God for him. The serpents went away; he heard the Church praying for him, and beheld the Lord smiling upon him. Eventually the Church received him back into its fellowship.

Rogers must have attached much importance to this story since he spends some eight pages upon it; his interest is not unlike that of those, in our own time, who have focussed attention upon spiritual healing. That mental and spiritual conditions are co-ordinate to an extent which was in previous days disputed, is now generally accepted. The power of one mind to influence another is being explored but already the number of cases tested are too great for there to be doubt about its reality; doubt only exists as to its nature.

In concluding his chapter on experiences, Rogers makes plain that he realizes the limitations as well as the value of testimonies. Often, your most ordinary experience is the most infallible and certain, he comments. His language has a touch of poetry in it as he describes his impressions of the experiences which he has recorded.

Some are deep but most shallow and all clear as Crystall streams, unlesse at such times, when Satan (by temptations) put in his cloven foot.

Though we may not judge the dream or trance to be an indication of a more spiritual and unworldly life, yet the depth of conviction and moderation in tone of the testimonies as a whole is something to make a secular world think.

These excerpts are intended to be a means whereby we may add colour to our picture of the Independent Church in the Commonwealth. The *Experiences* in Rogers' book are of more value than all the rest of it. His Church polity is not unlike others; his arguments against the Presbyterians are much like those of any other of the multitude of pamphlets which the time produced. But in these records of the words of Church members we feel our fingers upon the pulse of Church life; we come closer to understanding what the man in the pew thought.

Religion was essentially personal to him. It came of personal experience concerning his relationship with God. Its danger was that it was not social enough. That he cherished his membership of the elect and recognized his responsibilities to that society is

evident, but that he saw further responsibilities is less clear. His religion tended to be egocentric, the Spirit having changed him and made him His temple, rather than centred in the Church, Universal and Particular, with himself as one stone in it.

It is interesting to note how the ordinary person had revolted, like the leaders, against the kind of Church into which English Protestantism had settled in Elizabethan times. He sought good preaching and would not listen to the traditional sermonizing. He sought freedom instead of formalism and legalism. He showed his own qualifications for priesthood by his experience of God's using him. His religion was practical; it was adequate to the trials of war and sickness. By faith he did not mean assent to the Christian teaching and way of life, but the resolve to make Christ the basis for living. He was not a Christian because he feared Hell, nor was he unhealthily introspective; he was a realist in facing the eschatology of the Gospels and the fact of sin. Yet he had come to love his Judge and to enjoy His fellowship, and to the grace of which this spoke, he, in his humble fashion, testified.

JOHN H. TAYLOR.

## Letters by Philip Doddridge

[The following letters are of unusual interest for their evidence of the interest which Doddridge retained in the careers of his pupils, even when they did not enter the ministry. Letter 3 is not in Doddridge's hand, but the signature and postscript are his, and the other letters, as also Thomas Clark's leaving certificate, are autograph. They are printed here by the kindness of Mr. J. W. Clarke of Uffculme, in whose family they have been preserved, and who has now presented them to Dr. Williams's Library. Identifications have been added by Mr. Surman.]

1. To Richard Clarke Esqr / at Breedwell near Uffculm / in Devon

My very Dear & worthy Friend

Northampton Aug 28 1739

I am very sorry your Illness prevented your Writing a Feaver wh seized me a few Days ago just after my Return also did its part towards preventing mine but thro Mercy it is removed. I cannot sufficiently thank you for the kind mention you make of my poor Endeavours to do my Duty to you. Your constant kind & obliging Carriage wh nothing could exceed not to mention your several generous presents far more than I ever received from all ye rest of my pupils (2 or 3 excepted) taken together concurd to lay be (*for me*) under additional obligations where ye very nature of the Relation it self must have engaged any honest conscientious Man to do his best. Were it not that I know ye Necessity of it I should greatly regret ye Loss of so agreeable a Friend but you go to comfort one of the best of Mothers & to support & adorn the Interest of Religion wh is much better than that I should still enjoy you so go on & prosper abundantly & may the GOD of your Fathers be wth you & bless you

While I was at London I enquired into every thing wh I thought might be useful to you & the Result of all is that my wisest Friends advise you after learning the Law Hands to come & spend 2 or 3 years with an Attorney wh is the Method our greatest Councillors have taken. Perhaps 2 years may be enough here & keeping Terms about 3 more wth moderate Study & a prudt Care in taking opportunities of Improvement by reading & converse may be sufficient to fit you to appear wth Honour at ye Bar. A Friend of mine whose Name is Cotton & who is a Man of the first Character for Integrity & good Sense & in no small Business for his Age wh is about 33 wants a Clerk & on my mentioning your Case to him seemd to think it might suit. I am fully assured from his Character that he will do what he can for your Improvemt & I am ready to think you might learn more wth him by taking things gradually & by chusing ye Sorts of Business wh on a nearer View you shall judge most convenient & seeing them in their whole progress & to ye Bottom than by slightly running thro a greater Number of Affairs in an overly way of seeing only some Detatchd Parts of their Formalities, wch is all you could expect wth Paxton suppose or any Sollicitor crowded wth Business who will also be above giving you personal Instruction. But on this Sir advise wth your Friends & let me know ye Result & I will inform my self more particularly of the Terms wh I believe will be about 50£ a year if you chuse to board at ye Clerks wh Mr. Cotton do wth some proportionable

allowance of your board yourself. Your having ye Choice of your own Business under Friendly Direction & not sitting so much to writing as most Clerks do & your likewise having it in your Choice to spend one 2 or 3 Years this way as you please will make ye Terms considerably higher than they wd be in proportion if you articted for 4 or 5 years constant & common Service the last of wh wd be very beneficial to a Master yet wth such a Clark he insists on 100 Guineas how ye Article stands as to boarding I dont exactly know & must refer it to future Treaty. In ye mean time you dear Sir may write to Mr. Cotton in the Rolls Buildings near Chancery Lane. I am called away & must conclude wth telling you that we are all well & join in most affectionate Service to your self and good Mamma. I am glad your Brother is well settled for ye prest & shall do my best to finish his Education but you know our Course must be wretchedly hurried to despatch ye most essential & peculiarly useful Parts of it in much less than three years. Excuse my Hast in writing & assure your self that as I greatly desire & esteem your prayers you have a freqt Share in those of

Dear Sir Your most faithful Friend

& much obliged hum Servt P Doddridge

Hum. Ser to Messrs Chorley<sup>1</sup> & Ball<sup>2</sup>

2. To Richard Clark Esqr / at Breedwell / near Uffculm / in Devon / by London. To be left at Mr. Tozers<sup>3</sup> in Exon.

My very dear Friend

Northampton Sept. 25. 1739

I am both surprized & concerned to hear by Mr. Palk<sup>4</sup> that you did not receive a long Letter wh I sent you 6 or 8 weeks ago. In it I returned you my affectionate thanks for ye tender & respectful Friendship you there so warmly & agreeably express & acknowledged as I ought always very gratefully to do ye many Favours I have received both from you and yt good Lady your Mother. I also told you that I had consulted several Lawyers of Character & one who was an intimate Acquaintance & Friend of ye late excellt Chancellor Talbot<sup>5</sup> who unanimously advised your spending some time wth a diligent honest Attorney who will be solicitous not so much to make your Clarkship Serviceable to himself as improving to you shewing you ye full process of affairs from first to last & setting you to a due variety of them. Whereas Clarks are commonly imployd especially for ye first five years in ye Dull but to their Masters profitable work of transcribing. There is a very worth(y) Gentleman about 32 in good Business of an excellt Character & great Abilities who wanting a Clark wth whom he expected about 150 guineas he boarding wth him for 5 years but not breakfasting or Supping at his Table (only dining there) & doing common work I consulted him about you he said he wd bona Fide undertake ye Care of giving you wt Insight he could into Business at 50£ *p an* leaving it to you what Time you wd stay & wt Business you wd chuse (in wh I suppose Some Regard wd be had to his Advice but I added he cd not board you in such a Manr as he thinks wd be suitable. I apprehend one year thus spent wd be more than 2 or 3 of common Clarkship & had I a Son or Brother to send out wth your

<sup>1</sup> John Chorley, minister at Uffculme.

<sup>2</sup> John Ball, minister at Honiton: *D.N.B.*

<sup>3</sup> Abraham Tozer, formerly a student under Doddridge, later minister at Norwich and Exeter.

<sup>4</sup> William Palk, minister at South Molton.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Talbot, 1st Baron Talbot of Hensol: *D.N.B.*

Views I wd chuse to fix him wth so religious & able a Man in this Circumstance. But do you dear Sir advise wth more competent Judges. The Gentlemans Name is Mr. Tho Cotton he is Attorney at Law & lives in ye Rolles Buildings near Chancery Lane London. I bless GOD we are all well. We join in most humble Services to your self & good Mamma. My best wishes attend your Brother. May much Success crown his Studies. It grieves me to write so hastily to one I love so well but you know my multiplicity of Business. May GOD even your own GOD guide you & bless you & honr you wth extensive usefulness wth long Life may he satisfie you & crown you wth every desirable Temporal Blessing till at length he shows you his Salvation

I am / Dear Sir / wth inexpressible Affection / Your much obliged Friend / & faithful hum Service (*for* Servant) / P Doddridge

About 5 weeks ago I was very ill but am now thro Mercy perfectly recovered all things are thro Mercy well here Messrs. Tozer Orton<sup>6</sup> & Palk (not exclusive of the rest send their particular Services wth those of my wife. We often think of you. I know not any pupil I ever had who has carried away more of my Friendship as none had ever a juster Claim to my Gratitude. My hum Ser. attends Mr. Chorleigh & Mr. Ball &c

3. To Richard Clark Esqr / at Breedwell near Uffculm / to be left with Mr. Tozer Senr / in Exeter / Devon / By London

My very Dr Friend

I cannot but most affectionately thank you for your very kind Letter of 16. of October wth wch I receiv'd a Bill of 15 Guineas wch I doubt not is paid in London, I having pass'd it away in due time. I immediately according to your Desire paid to Mr Potter 6£ 5s of wch I suppose he has given you due Information. The remaining 9£ 10s I have charg'd to myself as receiv'd in full of all Accounts, & send you a Receipt at the bottom of ys: I thank you for yt & all ye other Instances of your friendly & obliging Care in every thing relating to me & my Interest. It is an unspeakable Pleasure to me to think yt I have a share not only in your Esteem & Love but likewise in your Prayers. I rejoyce to think you are keeping up yt Regard to Prayer wch in such an Age as ours is so uncommon amongst Gentlemen of your Rank, to ye shame of ye Age it must be spoken; & I assure you Sr yt I in return am often thinking of you, & when I do it I have Reason to join Thanksgivings wth my Prayers. May God ever preserve you faithfull in his Service, may you have Spirit & Strength to stem ye Torrent of Vice & Error & Folly, wch bears so strongly upon those who are in ye more distinguish'd Stations of Life, & may you dare to be singularly good yt you may have ye Honour to be own'd by Christ, when wicked Princes & Nobles are flying from him in Consternation & Despair. Considering ye many Temptations of ye Law & of ye Town I can not blame your Resolution of laying aside ye Thoughts you once entertain'd; you will I doubt not be endeavouring to serve your Country under some Capacity or other, & to support ye Interest of Religion, & I hope your Labours will not be in vain. I am well aware you can not want Opportunities of doing good, & I hope God will guide & strengthen you in ye Improvement of them. As for myself & Family, I bless God we are well excepting only a slight Cold wth wch my wife is confin'd. We send our united affectionate & respectfull Services to yourself & ye good Lady your Mother, whom we doubt not is very happy in your Company. The whole Family yt you know send their Services & especially your Parlour Friends. I bless God things go on in ye main very well amongst us, & we continue an united Society

<sup>6</sup> Job Orton, assistant tutor at Doddridge's academy: *D.N.B.*

notwithstanding ye attempts wch have been made to divide & distress us; but ye Congregations yt were vacant when you left us are not yet supplied. My time will not permit me to enlarge further, only I must beg, Dr Sr, yt you would sometimes let us know how you do, & yt you would please to set it down amongst ye few Indubitables of human Life yt you may at all times wth ye greatest Freedom command ye ready & even thankfull Services of good Sr

your most affectionate / & faithfull humble / Servant

P Doddridge Nov 17 1739

My humble Services attend all my Brethren & Friends in your Parts particularly Messrs Chudleigh & Ball  
Received of Richard Clarke Esqr the Sum of nine Pounds ten Shillings  
in full of all Accounts & Demands by me P Doddridge  
North. Nov. 17. 1739

4. To Madam Clark / at Breedwell / Devon

Hond & Dear Madam

Northampton July 3. 1743

After all ye laborious but delightful Services of a Sacrament Day I must in one Line or two thank you for ye Favour of your last very kind Letter. I have no Reason to unsay any Thing I said in Favour of my Pupil Mr. Tho Clark<sup>7</sup>. He is an excellent Youth & as I greatly esteem him so I doubt not but he loves me & he will witness for me that on all Occasions I have treated him like a Gentleman & a Friend. He will I hope Madam regard your Advice & may GOD whom he surely loves & serves avert ye Dangers I fear for him. My wife & I join our Thanks to you Madam for all ye Affectionate Regard for us wh your very obliging Letter expresses. It is my great Desire that my House may be filled with sound & serious pious & evangelical Youths & those of another Stamp seldom stay long in it but some have discovered a Temper I at first little suspected. May the best of Blessings rest on you & yr dear Children. We always remember our amiable Friend Mr. Richd Clark wth peculiar Affecion & unite our Services to him Mr. & Mrs Churley & all Friends I am

Dear Madam Your most faithful & obliged / humble Serv

P Doddridge

5.

Northampton May 4. 1744

This is to certify that Mr Thomas Clark the Bearer hereof, having spent three years under the Care of the Revd Mr. Moore<sup>8</sup> of Bridgewater in his Academical Studies, pursued them with me the two last year, during which Time he went thro a Course of Ethicks & Theology, as well as several other Branches of Literature preparatory to the Ministry, being also a Member of my Family, & in Communion wth the Church under my Pastoral Care. His Behaviour during this Period of Time hath been regular & exemplary, & as I hope he will on Examination be found to have made a laudable progress in Learning & to be well acquainted with the Principles of Christianity & capable of Instructing others in them, I do hereby recommend him to such of my Revd Brethren in the Ministry as he may think fit to apply him self to, in order to being regularly introduced to that Office, & to any Christian Societies in which after such Examination he may be called to Labour, or wth which he may at any Time desire Communion; cordially recommending him & them to the Presence & Blessing of ye great Head of the Church

P Doddridge DD

<sup>7</sup> Probably the Thomas Clark later minister at Ashburton and Lymptstone.

<sup>8</sup> John Moore, junior (1673-1747): A Gordon, *Freedom after Ejection*, 314.



## William Roby's Missionary Candidates

There is not, perhaps, on the records of the London Missionary Society a name more sacred to the cause of Missions than that of William Roby. He was one of the first to respond to the appeal of the venerable Bogue, in 1794, and, for the space of thirty-six years, employed his vast influence in the county of Lancaster in extending (its) claims and consolidating (its) interest. No pastor in this land ever identified himself more closely or energetically with the labours and triumphs of the London Missionary Society<sup>1</sup>.

William Roby, who was born in 1766 and died at the beginning of 1830, entered Congregationalism from the Church of England through the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, and after a ministry of nearly seven years in Wigan, came to Manchester in 1795 to Cannon Street Chapel, then greatly diminished in numbers and influence. His ministry in Manchester lasted until his death, first at Cannon Street until 1807, and then at Grosvenor Street, to which the Cannon Street congregation moved. It was notable, not only for its pastoral zeal and its influence on Congregationalism in Lancashire and the North, but for the association of Roby with the beginnings of the Lancashire Congregational Union<sup>2</sup>, for his training of itinerants and ministers in his own academy in Manchester and his association with the continuance of the work at Leaf Square, Pendleton, and Blackburn Academy<sup>3</sup> and for his interest in the beginnings of the L.M.S. and his work in sending missionaries into the foreign field. His most distinguished missionary son, Robert Moffat, in describing how he first heard Roby while attending a conference in Manchester, and was then emboldened to approach him, said that "the lady of the house where we lodged remarked that he was a great missionary man, and sometimes sent out young men to the heathen."<sup>4</sup> That makes a good, brief "epitaph" for one who sent out twelve missionaries from his church during his ministry, who trained at least three others, and whose influence continued for long years after. This paper will deal with the missionaries whom Roby inspired and trained.

First, however, it is useful to trace Roby's connexion with the birth and growth of the L.M.S. Dr. Bogue's letter in September, 1794, in the *Evangelical Magazine* was followed by a meeting at

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<sup>1</sup> John Morison, *The Fathers and Founders of the L.M.S.*, 1844, 364.

<sup>2</sup> B. Nightingale, *The Story of the Lancs. Congl. Union*, 1906, caps i-iii.

<sup>3</sup> C. E. Surman in *Trans. C.H.S.*, XIII, 41 ff., 107 ff.; Joseph Thompson, *Lancashire Independent College Jubilee Memorial Volume*, 1893.

<sup>4</sup> John S. Moffat, *The Lives of Robert and Mary Moffat*, 1885, 17.

the Castle and Falcon, Aldersgate Street, on November 4, to carry out its suggestions for the founding of a society. From that meeting "An Address to Christian Ministers, and all other friends of Christianity, on the subject of missions to the heathen" was drawn up and printed in the *Evangelical Magazine* for January, 1795. A letter which accompanied the address called a further meeting at the Castle and Falcon for Thursday, January 15. Roby was present at this meeting and, with thirty-two others, ministers and laymen, signed a document, promising to unite to form an extensive and regularly organized society to promote "the great work of introducing the Gospel to heathen and other unenlightened countries"<sup>5</sup>. Although Roby does not seem to have been present at the September meetings in 1795 which formally constituted the Society (probably because he moved to Manchester from Wigan that same month to begin his new ministry) he is thus to be numbered among the founders, and is recognized as such in the minute passed by the Directors on his death<sup>6</sup>. He was certainly one of its most zealous supporters. At a time when stage-coaches took one or two days to make the journey to London, he missed the Society's May anniversary only twice; year by year he was to be found taking an increasingly honoured part in the various Communion services and sermons connected with the anniversary, and he was among the first to be invited in 1801 to preach one of the annual sermons<sup>7</sup>. It was Roby who formed the first auxiliary of the Society and it was he who was the mainspring of the anniversaries each summer for which Manchester became famous<sup>8</sup>.

Of about thirty books and pamphlets published by Roby, the last of any size was *Missionary Portraits* (1826) in which he told the stories of two of the young men, John Ince and Robert Hampson, who had gone abroad from his church for the L.M.S. In the preface, addressed to the members of the church, Roby counted and named twelve of their fellow-members who had served or were serving with the L.M.S. The biographies, in the order in which they are there given, can be filled out as follows:

Samuel Harper.—Born 1770. "Offered himself with the donation of one hundred pounds to the Society" (*Missionary Portraits*, iii). He was appointed to the South Seas and sailed on

<sup>5</sup> J. Morison, *op. cit.*, ix-xiv.

<sup>6</sup> *Ev. Mag.*, 1830, 84.

<sup>7</sup> *Four Sermons preached in London at the Seventh General Meeting of the Missionary Society*, 1801, 49-83, "An Apology for Christian Missions to the Heathen" by William Roby.

<sup>8</sup> e.g., *Ev. Mag.*, 1827, 361; 1828, 326; *Cong. Mag.*, 1830, 230.

August 10, 1796, on the *Duff*. He was landed at Tongatabu in the Tonga Group, together with Samuel Gaulton and Daniel Bowell. The natives were fierce and treacherous and "took umbrage at the prayers of the missionaries to which they attributed various misfortunes". Civil strife broke out on the island and all three missionaries were murdered on May 10, 1799, the first martyrs of the new Society. (*Ev. Mag.*, 1800, 427; R. Lovett, *The History of the L.M.S.* 1899, i, 171f; J. Sibree, *Register of Missionaries (of the L.M.S.)*, 1923, No. 18).

James Edmonds.—Born 1759 or 1760. "Having resided for some time in the East, offered his services, and was accepted for that quarter; but the Directors earnestly soliciting him to accompany Dr. Vanderkemp till securely settled in Africa, he acceded to their wishes." (*Missionary Portraits*, iiii.) He sailed on December 23, 1798, on the convict ship *Hillsborough*, bound for Botany Bay but due to call at the Cape, and accompanied Vanderkemp to Kaffirland. Vanderkemp's *Journal* tells of "the uneasiness of Brother Edmond (*sic*), who wished to prosecute his plan, and go to Bengal" and of their parting with prayers and tears on January 1, 1800. His connexion with the Society ceased in July, 1800, and on October 2 he left Cape Town for India, to work in Calcutta, "contributing materially to the Missionary cause, and supporting himself independently by a school" (*Missionary Portraits*, iv). He was still alive, in his sixty-seventh year in 1826 (*Ev. Mag.*, 1799, 39; Lovett, i, 484, 489, 491f; Sibree, No. 36, which wrongly gives his Christian name as John). (*E.M.*, 1858, 582; *C.Y.B.*, 1859, 195.)

Robert Moffat.—Born December 21, 1795, at Ormiston, East Lothian. He came as under-gardener to High Legh, Cheshire. One summer evening, probably in 1815, he walked into Warrington, about six miles away, and saw a placard announcing a missionary meeting at which William Roby would take the chair. The meeting had already been held (*D.N.B.* wrongly says otherwise), but Moffat resolved to seek out Roby in Manchester. Roby encouraged him, found him work with Mr. Smith, of Dukinfield, whose daughter Mary he married in 1819 in Africa. Roby helped him in his theological education (Moffat's own notes of Roby's letters on theology, a volume of 460 pages, are in the library of the L.M.S.) He was ordained at Surrey Chapel, London, on September 30, 1816, together with eight other missionaries. These eight others included James Kitchingman and George Platt (*vide infra*),

in whose training Roby also had a hand, and John Williams of the South Seas, with whom it was first planned that Moffat should go to Polynesia had not Dr. Waugh objected that "thae twa lads are ower young tae gang tegither." He sailed on October 31, 1816, and with only one furlough home, worked in Africa until 1870. His journeys and translation work are well summarized in *Sibree*, No. 168. Edinburgh conferred on him its D.D. in 1872. He died on August 9, 1883. (*Lives of Robert and Mary Moffat* by John S. Moffat, 1885; *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa*, 1842; *Sibree*, No. 168; *D.N.B.* xxxviii). Robert and Mary Moffat's daughter Mary married David Livingstone. Mary Moffat's brother, John Smith, was educated at Blackburn Academy, ministered at Jackson's Lane, Hulme, Manchester, 1823-28, and then went as missionary to India. He was lost at sea in 1843 (*Ev. Mag.*, 1843, 583; *Sibree*, No. 271).

**John Ince.**—Born August 20, 1795, in Manchester, became a member of the recently-erected Grosvenor Street Church after joining the Sunday School. He engaged in preliminary studies with Roby (which included English, Greek and Hebrew) and then went with Robert Hampson and Samuel Sheridan Wilson to David Bogue at Gosport Seminary<sup>9</sup>. He was appointed with his fellow-student and friend, Thomas Beighton of Derby, to Malacca and was ordained at Union Chapel, Islington, on January 22, 1818, after which he sailed on April 1. He arrived at Malacca and began work among the Chinese, removing to Penang the following year. His missionary career was short but full, and he died on April 24, 1825. (*Ev. Mag.*, 1825, 123; *Missionary Portraits*, 52 ff; Lovett, ii.438; *Sibree*, No. 187).

**Mrs. Ince.**—Miss Joanna Barr was a member of Grosvenor Street Church when she married John Ince shortly before his ordination. She accompanied him as a missionary. Two children died suddenly before her death on June 1, 1822; one daughter was left, aged about eight when John Ince died.

**Robert Hampson.**—Born in 1793, of Roman Catholic parentage and education, he began to attend Grosvenor Street Church, where his employer was a deacon. He became a member and felt a call to become a missionary. With John Ince and Samuel Sheridan Wilson, went to Gosport in 1815 to study. With his fellow-student, Samuel Trawin of Devon, he was appointed to

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<sup>9</sup> For an account of the three-years' course at Gosport see Morison, *op. cit.*, 177ff, and Bogue and Bennett, *Hist. of Dissenters*, iv.285; v, 142 for Bogue's own account.

Calcutta, ordained at Bristol, on July 1, 1818, and reached Calcutta on February 8, 1819. He had married Miss Harriet Orange before he sailed. She died on August 29, 1819, and Robert Hampson died at Calcutta on September 21, 1820. (*Ev. Mag.*, 1821, 169; *Missionary Portraits*, 5 ff; Lovett, ii.50; Sibree, No. 190).

Samuel Sheridan Wilson.—Born on November 14, 1797, in Manchester. Under the ministry of Roby at Grosvenor Street, had a desire to become a missionary and was helped (with Ince and Hampson) preparatory to training at Gosport. He was ordained on September 29, 1818, at Stockwell Chapel, London (*C.Y.B.*, 1867, 327-8, wrongly says with Moffat and Hampson). He was sent out to work with Isaac Lowndes (*vide infra*) in the Greek Islands and sailed on December 1, 1818, but remained at Malta because of the difficulty of beginning work in Greece. The Directors recalled him in 1822, but sent him back again in 1824, when they became convinced of the value of his services. With his headquarters at Malta, he visited Greece several times, did much translating (e.g. of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Burder's *Village Sermons*, and tracts into modern Greek) and preached in English, Greek and Italian. He returned to England in 1835, became minister of Shepton Mallet Cong. Church in July 1838 (so Sibree, but *C.Y.B.*, 1867, says 1840). He retired in 1847 and died at Shepton Mallet on February 23, 1866. (*Narrative of the Greek Mission* by S. S. Wilson, 1839; *C.Y.B.*, 1867, 327-8; Lovett, ii, 637; Sibree, No. 193).

Mrs. Wilson.—Her maiden name was Walden (so Sibree) or Walkden (so Henry Shaw, *Manchester Pioneers of the Cross*, 1906, 10) and she was a member of Grosvenor Street Church. She died on January 6, 1836.

Elijah Armitage.—Born in Manchester in 1780, son of Elkanah Armitage, and brother of Ziba Armitage (grandfather of Professor Elkanah Armitage, of Yorkshire United College) and of Sir Elkanah Armitage, mayor of Manchester in 1846-48. He was appointed together with Thomas Blossom (*vide infra*) as a cotton-spinner and sailed on May 19, 1821, to Tahiti with machinery for spinning and weaving. The cotton manufacture experiment does not seem to have been a success, but Armitage remained in the South Seas until 1835 when he sailed home. His connection with the L.M.S. was dissolved in 1836, and he returned to Manchester. Traces appear to have been lost of his branch of the Armitage family. (Lovett, i.219,228; Sibree, No. 212).

Mrs. Armitage.—Accompanied her husband to the South Seas in

1821. Nothing more seems to be known of her than that she was a member of Grosvenor Street Church.

John Cummins.—Born in 1802 in Manchester, was soon left an orphan. He taught in Roby's Sunday School and was in Roby's classes for preparing cottage preachers. Recommended to the Society as a cotton-spinner, he sailed to Madagascar on May 5, 1826, with David Johns and James Cameron (*vide infra*). Lovett says that he soon found that there was no scope on the island for his abilities and retired from both it and the mission in 1828. On the other hand, *C.Y.B.*, 1873, 321, says that he was driven out by the persecuting queen, Ranavalona, that he, his wife and children were all ill with fever, and that one child died on the voyage home. On his return to England, Roby wished him to study for the ministry, but being in feeble health, sent him to John Ely of Rochdale for training. He settled at Smallbridge, Rochdale, and was ordained on August 29, 1832, at Bethesda, Blackpool. He was successively minister at Holbeck, Kirkheaton and Stubbin—Elsecar until his retirement in 1865. He died on January 23, 1872 (Neill and *C.Y.B.*). (*Ev. Mag.*, 1832, 579; Lovett, i.681; *C.Y.B.*, 1873, 321; Nightingale, *Lancashire Nonconformity*, i.142; Sibree, No. 255).

James Mitchell.—“Oh! that I could pass over in silence the name of the twelfth, James Mitchell, who, on his way to Tahiti, stopped at Port Jackson, and there deserted his undertaking, and violated his vows” (*Missionary Portraits*, iv). Roby's only failure sailed on May 5, 1800, but deserted on November 20. (Sibree, No. 73).

In addition to these twelve, three others are known to have been trained by Roby for the mission field.

Isaac Lowndes.—Born 1791 (?) was a church member of Knutsford Cong. Church where James Turner, Roby's earliest ministerial student (*Trans. C.H.S.*, XIII, 46) was minister from 1808. After preliminary study under Roby and at Leaf Square Academy, he went to Gosport and was appointed to the Greek mission. He was ordained at Chester on August 8, 1815 (*Ev. Mag.*, 1815, 389), Roby taking part and proposing the questions “with an affectionate seriousness peculiar to himself”. He was later joined by Samuel Sheridan Wilson. He worked at Zante and Corfu and did notable translation work in modern Greek and work in establishing and inspecting schools. He continued with the L.M.S. until the closing down of the Greek mission in 1844, and then became an agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society in the Mediterranean until 1860. He died in 1873. (*Ev. Mag.*, 1821, 287; 1824, 215, etc.; W. Canton, *History of*

*the British and Foreign Bible Society*, 1910, iii, 215 f.; Sibree, No. 163; *Trans. C.H.S.*, XIII, 115.f.; his own chief books were *Lexicon of English and Modern Greek*, 1827; *Lexicon of Modern Greek and English*, 1837; *Gesenius's Hebrew Lexicon in Modern Greek*, 1842). His brother was Charles Lowndes, minister of Partington for ten years and then of Gatley, Cheshire, from 1828 to 1860, the year of his death.

James Kitchingman.—Born in 1791. He was a member of Mosley Street Cong. Church, Manchester, and together with Robert Moffat and George Platt (*vide infra*) was trained by Roby in Manchester for the mission field. Ordained at Surrey Chapel on September 30, 1816, he sailed to South Africa on October 31, and arrived at Cape Town on January 13 of the following year. His best work was done among the Hottentots and at Bethelsdorp. He died on June 25, 1848. (Lovett, i.241, 537, 548, 571 f., etc.; Sibree, No. 167; *C.Y.B.* 1848, 232).

George Platt.—Born on March 15, 1789, near Tintwistle, Cheshire. Under the ministry of William Hudson, he and several other youths became candidates for the ministry. Platt expressed a preference for service abroad and was put by the Directors of the L.M.S. under William Roby. After two years he was ordained at Surrey Chapel on September 30, 1816, and sailed for the South Seas where he worked for forty years. He returned home in 1856, but three years later, in his seventieth year, he went back to the South Seas and laboured for another six years. He died on April 4, 1865. (*C.Y.B.*, 1866, 274-6; Lovett, i.214-224, 344 f., 375, etc.; Sibree, No. 172).

Three missionaries are claimed for Cannon Street/Grosvenor Street and for William Roby by Henry Shaw in *Manchester Pioneers of the Cross*, but it is doubtful whether that claim can be maintained, particularly as Roby himself does not claim these three in his *Missionary Portraits*.

William Edwards.—“The next great venture of the Society was in South Africa” says Shaw. “The mission left England on December 23, 1798, under the leadership of Dr. Vanderkemp, and included, among others, William Edwards, a member of the church at Cannon Street. Mr. Edwards' experience of missionary work was short-lived and not heroic. After accompanying Mr. Kitchener (*sic*) on his mission to the Bushmen, he returned in March, 1800, to Capetown, and a few months later, in September of that year, he ceased to be a missionary of the Society” (*op. cit.*, 6). Shaw is apparently confusing William Edwards and James Edmonds (whom he does not mention) who sailed at the same time on the convict ship

*Hillsborough* (*Ev. Mag.*, 1799, 39 and 338; Lovett, i.485 f), with perhaps a further confused memory of James Mitchell (whom also he does not mention).

**Thomas Blossom.**—A fellow-member of Grosvenor Street with Elijah Armitage, says Shaw, with whom he sailed on May 19, 1821, to Tahiti. He was a carpenter who went to the South Seas and later took the general superintendence of the external affairs of the South Sea Academy, which had been established in 1824 for the education of missionaries' children and where the child-king Pomare III was at school. Blossom retired on account of ill-health early in 1844. Only Shaw seems to have connected Blossom with Grosvenor Street. (Lovett, i.219, 228; Sibree, No. 213).

**Mrs. Blossom.**—Accompanied her husband to the South Seas in 1821, and was a member of Grosvenor Street Church, says Shaw. She died in Tahiti in May 1842.

We can thus be certain of fifteen men and women (twelve from Roby's own church and three others whom he helped to train) upon whom he had a direct influence as missionaries. In addition, we can also trace a limited or indirect influence on the following:

**James Cameron.**—Born January 6, 1800, in Perthshire, a member of Albion Congregational Church, Leeds, was appointed to Madagascar as carpenter, and spent some months in Manchester preparing cotton machinery. Here he identified himself with Grosvenor Street before he sailed in 1826. He died in 1875, after long service in Madagascar as builder, teacher of trades, and teacher of youth, broken by twenty-eight years in Cape Town as surveyor during the Malagasy persecutions. (*C.Y.B.*, 1877, 348; Sibree, No. 254).

**Henry Royle.**—Born in Manchester in 1805 or 1807 was "for several years connected with the church under the pastoral care of the venerable William Roby" (*C.Y.B.*, 1879, 344) and a teacher in the Sunday School. In the pastorate of Roby's successor, Richard Fletcher (who inherited Roby's missionary zeal), he was accepted for the South Seas and was ordained at Grosvenor Street in 1838. He died in 1878. (Sibree, No. 371). His wife was Sarah Griffiths, also a member of Grosvenor Street.

**William Howe.**—Born in Ireland in 1797 or 1798 (he himself never knew the date of his own birthday) but brought up in England and apprenticed in Manchester. He joined Roby's church and was sent out to village preaching. He was invited to become pastor of Hindley Cong. Church and was ordained on August 15, 1832. In 1838 he was accepted by the L.M.S. and sent to



the South Seas. He died on Raratonga on June 8, 1863. (*C.Y.B.*, 1864, 219, 221; Nightingale, iv, 16 f.; Sibree, No. 392).

Joseph Johnson.—Born March 1814 at Stamford but in youth a church member at Grosvenor Street. It seems impossible to determine the date of his coming to Manchester and to know whether he was there during Roby's life. He sailed for the South Seas in 1838 (thus making three from Grosvenor Street in the same year) and served there until 1849. Later he was pastor of the Cong. Church at Fremantle, Western Australia, where he died in 1892. He married Harriet Platt, daughter of George Platt (*vide supra*). (Sibree, No. 374).

The direct influence of Roby grows fainter but the stamp which he had left on Grosvenor Street still remained. It would not be fantastic to see the influence still working on Jonathan Lees, of China (Sibree, No. 578), grandson of an earlier Jonathan Lees who was Roby's greatest helper in evangelism and lay preaching<sup>10</sup>, and perhaps in Richard Griffiths Hartley of China (Sibree, No. 596), and Joseph Gill, of South Africa, son of the student of the same name who went from Roby's Academy to Hinckley and then Egerton (*Ev. Mag.*, 1843, 51; Sibree, No. 456; *Trans. C.H.S.*, XIII, 46).

W. GORDON ROBINSON.

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<sup>10</sup> There were three members of Roby's church named Jonathan Lees; the grandfather, who died in 1841, the son (1802-1872), and the missionary grandson (1835-1902). Nightingale, *Lancashire Nonconformity*, v.24, 133, etc., fails to distinguish the first two.

## Alexander Fletcher

1787-1860

THE Congregational Library has recently come into possession of a number of letters and other documents relating to Alexander Fletcher. The son of William Fletcher, minister, of Bridge of Teith, Alexander graduated at Glasgow and then became colleague to his father at the Secession Church at Bridge of Teith (1807-11). From 1811 to 1816 he was minister of the Scotch (Secession) Church at Miles Lane, London, removing with the congregation to Albion Chapel, Moorfields (1816-25). He was suspended from the ministry and the fellowship of the Secession Church when an action for breach of promise of marriage was brought against him, and in 1826 became minister of the undenominational Finsbury Circus Chapel, said to be the largest in London at the time. There he remained until his death in 1860.

In the main the letters are addressed to John Wallace, an Elder of the Church, generally for reading to the congregation. Fletcher believed strongly in maintaining the pastoral association by letter when he was away from home.

"It has been long a fixed opinion of mine", he wrote from Bristol in 1835, "that Ministers in their absence from home, should keep up an affectionate epistolary correspondence with their people. Many and great benefits would result from it both to people and minister. So much did God honour this practice, that a considerable number of these early apostolical epistles were literally written under the dictates of the Spirit by inspiration, and to the present day form a very rich portion of the New Testament records. O what a blank the bible would sustain, and what an immense loss the church would experience, if the epistles of the New Testament were lost! Blessed be God, this is impossible! Not one part of the sacred volume can be lost. Sooner shall the heavens and the earth pass away than *one word* of that divine collection fall to the ground, or be lost to the church. The whole word of God, is God's legacy to his beloved people, and God Himself is the Executor of his own testament, and will preserve the whole of the legacy pure, and entire, till the close of ages".

Fletcher, of course, did not mean to compare his letters with those of Paul: if he did the implied challenge was certainly unwise. The first letter, from Scotland in 1814, begins:

Two things fill the Universe, good and Evil. In some places Evil is only found. Look to hell's gloomy abode, filled with

Evil men. In one place good only is found, look up to heaven's lovely palace.

This letter is wholly doctrinal and hortatory. The next, from Plymouth in 1831, describes a visit to Stonehenge, and ruminates on the conversion of Britain from paganism, before expressing the hope that preachers who are supplying the pulpit in his absence will have no reason to complain of empty pews.

The Bristol letter states that 20,000 inhabitants of the city never enter the house of God. He appeals to his flock to realize

the great importance of private Christians uniting most heartily and zealously with ministers by endeavouring to extend the Kingdom of Christ in their different spheres and conversations. Immense benefit may be done, under God, by *prudently* and affectionately persuading the careless and thoughtless among our own relatives and acquaintances to attend the house of God. Several among you *have* acted on this plan, and I believe are still acting. Persevere, persevere!

In a letter from Devonport in 1836 he muses on the death of Rothschild and true riches, and asks that the letter be read to "the Seminary". Another hortatory epistle from the same place tells of a sermon of Thomas Boston, which, though it made him wish to run out of the pulpit with a sense of failure, brought 14 persons to a saving knowledge of the truth. From Dunblane in the same year he writes discussing the place of *hills, mountains, and snow* in the Scriptures. He reminds his hearers of Archbishop Leighton, and mentions that he is to attend the funeral of Ebenezer Brown of Inverkeithing, the son of John Brown, of Haddington.

There are few personal allusions in the letters, nothing more than a reference to the health of the family, and to one or two pastoral matters.

Here are the manuscript notes of a sermon, "Heaven the Crystal Palace of the Great King, Dec. 25th, 1851"<sup>1</sup>. *Psal.* xlv. 15. "The King's Palace".

Jesus preached and taught by Parable. Heaven may be considered under the Parable of a Crystal Palace:

I—*Heaven as a Palace*

    O happy hour when we shall rise  
    To the fair Palace of the Skies,  
    And all the Saints, a numerous Train,  
    Each like a Prince in glory reign.

<sup>1</sup> The title is in the middle of the page, surrounded by a circle.

<sup>2</sup> Watts, "The King of saints, how fair his face" in *The Psalms of David*.

1st. *The Builder*; God; *Psal.* viii. 3; xix. 1; cii. 25; *Heb.* xi. 10.

When I behold thy works on high,  
Thy Palace bright beyond the Skies [*sic*],  
Lord, what is Man, or all his Race,  
That thou should'st visit him with Grace.

2nd. *The Building*: Materials most precious. Crystal Palace. Temple.

*Rev.* xxi. 11, 19,—21, 18. (1) Jasper, (2) Sapphire, (3) Chalcidony, (4) Emerald, (5) Sardonyx, (6) Sardius, (7) Chrysolite, (8) Beryl, (9) Topaz, (10) Chryso, (11) Jacinth, (12) Amethyst.

3rd. *The Size of the Building*. Compared with it Earthly Palaces Mole-hills.

I to my Father's House return  
There num'rous mansions stand,  
And glory manifold abounds,  
Through all the happy Land.

4th. *The Beauty of the Building*. *Rev.* xxi. 2.

Behold its golden spires,  
In beauteous prospect rise,  
And brighter crowns than Mortals wear,  
Which sparkle thro' the skies.

5th. *The Duration of the Building*.

*II Cor.* v. 1.. For we know, that if our &c.  
There is a House not made with Hands  
Eternal, and on high:  
And here my spirit waiting stands,  
Till God shall bid it fly.

II—*Things in the Crystal Palace which remind us of Heaven*. And<sup>4</sup>

1st. *Its Light*. *Rev.* xxi. 23.

When shall we reach the Heavenly Place,  
Where this Bright Sun shall brightest shine,  
Leave far behind those shades of Night,  
And view a Glory so Divine?

2nd. *A Throne*. *Rev.* iv. 2, 3.

Behold the Glories of the Lamb,  
Amidst his Father's Throne,  
Prepare new honours for his Name  
And songs before unknown.

<sup>3</sup> Watts, *Hymns and Sacred Songs*.

<sup>4</sup> Verse quoted in shorthand.

<sup>5</sup> This, slightly altered, is Isaac Watts's first hymn.

3rd. *A Fountain. Zech. xiii. 1.*

<sup>6</sup>Is Christ a Fountain? There I bathe,  
And heal the Plague of Sin and Death,  
These Waters, all my soul renew  
And cleane my spotted Garments too.

<sup>7</sup>Open now the Crystal Fountain  
Whence the healing streams do flow;  
Let the fiery, cloudy Pillar,  
Lead me all my Journey through:  
Strong Deliverer!  
Be thou still my Strength and Shield!

4th. *Trees. Rev. xxii. 2.*

<sup>8</sup>Before the Throne, a Crystal River glides,  
Immortal Verdure decks its cheerful sides;  
Here the Fair Tree majestic rears  
Its blooming Head, and sovereign Virtue bears.

5th. *Beautiful Raiment. Psal. 45, 13.*

<sup>9</sup>Exalted high on God's right hand,  
Nearer the Throne than Angels stand,  
With glory crown'd in bright array,  
My wond'ring Soul says, Who are they?

These are the Saints beloved of God,  
Wash'd are their Robes in Jesus' Blood,  
More spotless than the purest white,  
They shine in uncreated light.

6th. *Costly Jewels. Mal. 3, 17. Heb. 1, 3.*

<sup>10</sup>Jesus, in Thee our Eyes behold,  
A thousand glories more,  
Than the rich Gems and polished Gold  
The sons of Aaron wore.

7th. *Gathering from Many Nations. Rev. 7, 9.*

From every Kindred, every Tongue,  
Thou brought'st thy chosen Race,  
And distant Lands and Isles have showed  
The riches of thy grace.

<sup>6</sup> Watts, "Go worship at Immanuel's feet" in *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*.

<sup>7</sup> From William Williams, "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah".

<sup>8</sup> From a hymn (in Fletcher's *Collection of Hymns*) sung at Wallace's memorial service, 29 Sept., 1839.

<sup>9</sup> In Rowland Hill's *Collection of Psalms and Hymns*, 1783.

<sup>10</sup> Watts, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*.

## CONCLUSION

1st—*A Company of Children on their way to the Crystal Palace of Heaven.* Their Description.

2nd—*A Large Company on the way to the City of Destruction.* Their Description!

3rd—*Stop, stop, stop in your mad career!*<sup>11</sup> Give yourselves to Jesus! Reasons. Hasten—hasten—hasten!

## QUESTIONS

*Do you wish to escape Hell?* Give yourselves, &c.

*Do &c. to reach Heaven?* Give, &c.

*Do &c. to dwell for ever in the Crystal Palace of Heaven?* Give yourselves to Jesus. Death and Eternity near. Make no delay!

<sup>12</sup>*Hasten O children to be wise,  
And stay not for tomorrow's Sun,  
The longer Wisdom you despise,  
The harder is she to be won.*

*O hasten Mercy to implore  
And stay not for tomorrow's Sun,  
For fear the Season should be o'er,  
Before the Evening's Stage is run!*

<sup>13</sup>*A guilty weak and helpless worm,  
On thy kind arms I fall  
Be thou my Lord and Righteousness  
My Jesus and my All!*

Christmas Day,  
Decr. 25th, 1851.

A. Fletcher.

Fletcher published a good many sermons, but it was as a speaker to children and young people that he was widely known. For many years at Christmas he preached an Annual Sermon to young people which attracted a great crowd. See his biography in the *D.N.B.*, and also R. Small, *Hist. of the U.P. Church* (1904), Vol. XI. Readers may be able to place the verses which have so far eluded identification.

<sup>11</sup> The urgency plays havoc with the spelling.

<sup>12</sup> From T. Scott, *Lyric Poems* (1773), with "children" for "sinner".

<sup>13</sup> Watts, "How sad our state by nature is", in *Hymns and Sacred Songs*, 1707: altered by Wesley and others.

## Tonica Congregational Church

1857-1948

**T**HROUGH the kindness of Mr. H. H. Burgess of Minneapolis, I have been able to examine the church book of a Congregational church which has just ceased its existence. Mr. Burgess is descended from one of the original members who was first Trustee, and he has been good enough to make extracts for me. The comparison between the church (in the State of Illinois) and similar churches in England is not without interest.

The church was organized in the small town of Tonica on the 7th January, 1857, ten of the thirteen foundation members bringing letters from the Vermillion church. The ministries throughout seem to have been of short duration. The most striking were those of William McConn (1859-65), under whose ministration a church was built and the membership rose to 118 before he was killed in a railway accident, and William Wilson.

Here is the minute of the church's origin:—  
27th November, 1856.

At a meeting of Christian brethren convened to take into consideration the expediency of organizing a church of Christ a chairman and clerk were appointed.

Rev. G. B. Hubbard being present was voted to open the meeting with a prayer.

Those present being called on gave an expression of their views and feelings concerning the organization of a church.

The following preamble and resolutions were then moved and adopted, viz.—

Whereas, there are in this vicinity a number of professed disciples of Christ now or formerly connected with Presbyterian or Congregational churches with which it is impossible or exceedingly inconvenient to worship—and

Whereas the church existing in this place adhering as it does to the principles and practices of the Baptist denominations fails to meet their wants, inasmuch as its rules preclude that free communion among all Christ's disciples which the law of Christ enjoins—

Therefore; Resolved that it is expedient for a church of Christ to be organized in which said disciples may be united in the fellowship of the Gospel and may carry out their conscientious convictions in the observance of Christian ordinances.

Opportunity was then given for a full expression on the part of

those present as to the church order or polity which would meet their preferences. A majority gave their voices in favour of a Congregational church.

It was then voted (a committee of three) to prepare articles of faith, a form of covenant, and standing rules, and report at a future meeting.

This report was made on the 31st December, 1856, and accepted. It was voted to ask Congregational churches in the vicinity to send representatives to advise on the propriety of their being "organized a Congregational church, if deemed advisable to assist in the exercises appropriate to the formal institution of such church." This council met with them and the church was constituted on the 7th January, 1857.

The "Profession of Faith" made by the members read:—

You believe in one Eternal, omnipresent God, the Father, the Son and Holy Ghost, the Creator and upholder of all things, infinitely and unchangeably powerful, wise and holy, whose purposes and providences extend to all events, and who exercises a righteous moral government over all his intelligent creatures, requiring them under pain of his eternal displeasure to love him supremely and to love each other as themselves.

You believe, that man was originally upright, that our first parents freely sinned and fell, and that all of their descendants are sinners, and, till renewed by the grace and Spirit of God are without holiness, and under the condemnation of God's laws.

You believe that God has had compassion on sinful men; that the Son of God, who is equal with the Father, having taken upon himself our nature, has by his sufferings and death, made atonement for sin; that he arose from the dead and ascended into heaven, where he ever lives to make intercessions for them that come unto God by him, that through him, God offers forgiveness to all men; and that every sinner, who turns to God by repentance, with faith in his Son, is freely pardoned and will be saved.

You believe that God has revealed all things necessary to salvation, in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which being given by the inspiration of his Spirit are an infallible rule of faith and practice; and that he sends the Holy Spirit to make the truth effectual, by whose influences, all who are chosen to eternal life are renewed and sanctified in believing and obeying the Gospel.

You believe that it is the duty of Christ's disciples to associate themselves for worship and communion, for mutual watchfulness and improvement, for the administration of Baptism and the Lord's



Supper, and for the perpetuation and extension of his kingdom among men; and that any association of holiness for these purposes is a Christian church.

You believe that there will be a resurrection of all the dead; and that God will call all men to an account for all their actions, judging them in righteousness according to the Gospel, condemning the disobedient and unbelieving to everlasting punishment, and admitting the righteous into life eternal.

These things in the presence of Almighty God, you solemnly profess to believe.

Covenant:—

Through Christ strengthening you, without whom you can do nothing, you here, in the presence of God, angels and this assembly now profess that you do, and promise that henceforward you will, deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, wherein in times past you have walked; and you do now give up yourself (or yourselves) soul and body and all you have, are, or shall be unto God through Jesus Christ, to serve him forever and to be his and at his disposal in all things. And you also give up yourself (or yourselves) unto the Lord Jesus Christ, to be his disciple (or disciples) to be taught and governed by him in all your relations, conditions, and conversations in this world, avouching him to be your supreme teacher, your only priest and propitiator, your king and lawgiver.

And you do further bind yourself (or yourselves) in the strength of Christ to walk with the church, in all his ordinances—that you will remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, and so far as in you lies will punctually attend all stated meetings of the church, as well as the exercises of Public worship, and faithfully perform the duties of family and secret prayer; and you likewise bind yourself (or yourselves) to walk with the members of this church in all memberlike love and submission.

Then doth this church likewise promise you, that through the help of Christ without whom we also can do nothing, we will walk towards you in all helpfulness, brotherly love and watchfulness.

Standing Rules were agreed on as follows:—

1. Persons who have not made a public profession of religion by becoming members in full communion with some Christian church are to give satisfactory evidence of Christian character before being received as members of the church; and upon such evidence being given, they may be received by their profession of faith and solemn public assent to the covenants of the church.
2. Any person bringing a dismissal and a recommendation from a Christian church, unless something is shown to invalidate his

testimonials, may be admitted to membership in this church without a public assent to the covenant, by a vote of the church.

(Abrogated by vote of church and amended, that persons hereafter bringing letters from sister churches are required publicly to assent to the covenant of the church. 5th January, 1867.)

3. This church holds it to be a solemn and important duty to attend watchfully to the discipline, which Christ has instituted in his church.
4. In all cases of private offences, the rule, as given in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, is to be strictly observed.
5. In case of public and notorious offences, against the laws of religion and morality, the church as a body, may proceed to call the offender to an account, by a committee appointed for that purpose.
6. Every member of this church, shall be considered as under the watch, care and discipline of this church until he shall have been regularly dismissed from his connection with it by vote of the church.
7. Baptism is to be administered to unbaptized adults on the profession of their faith in Christ; and it is the privilege of such parents as are in covenant with God and his church to dedicate their infant children to God in this ordinance.
8. All fellow disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ who are occasionally present in our assemblies for worship are to be invited to commune with us in Christian ordinance.
9. Any member of this church removing to another place, is expected to ask a dismissal and recommendation to some Christian church at the place of his or her residence within one year after the time of his or her removal. Any such person neglecting to ask for a dismissal and recommendation as aforesaid, may be called to account by the church in such manner as may be deemed expedient. And if any such person, having been thus admonished, shall persevere in that neglect for another period of six months without rendering satisfactory reason for so doing, then this church may at its discretion declare such member has broken his or her covenant with the church and that the obligations of the church to watch over that member have ceased. II Thess. 3, 6.

It is also expected and required that persons who may receive certificates of regular dismissal and recommendation to other Christian churches, shall present the same as soon as practicable. If they neglect to do so they may be called to account

- and proceeded with as in the case of those neglecting to ask for a dismission and recommendation.
10. On or about the first day of January each year there shall be an annual meeting of the church for the election of trustees and the transaction of any other business that may come properly before it. (Term of office, 3 years.)
  11. The election of deacons shall be by ballot. For the present two deacons shall be elected, who shall serve for the term of three years (amended the 4th January, 1873, so as to suspend the voting by ballot and increase the number to three).

**Declaration:**

In entering into covenant to walk together in the ordinances of the Gospel, we as a church believing that there exists a great defection from the principles of Christian morality on the part of many churches and multitudes of professed followers of the Redeemer desire solemnly to record our views on certain points.

1. We esteem the holding of our fellow men as property, to be an immorality in practice, and that the defence of it is a heresy in doctrine—either of which is to be regarded as a disqualification for church membership.
2. We have unconquerable and conscientious objection to the banding of men together in secret conclaves, united by mysterious symbols of affiliation, and as nearly as we can ascertain imposing upon those initiated, profane oaths and improper obligations. These things we deem inconsistent with simplicity and openness of the Gospel and the precepts of our Saviour. Let your communications be yea, yea and nay, nay for whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil.
3. We also think it important, to express our decided reprobation of all those practices, which partake of or are intimately blended with the social and personal dissipation of the times. Whatever may be claimed to be and whatever may be true respecting any of them, in themselves considered, we confidently affirm it to be impossible for the professed disciples of Christ, while addicted to them or any of them—"to avoid the appearance of evil" or "to keep themselves unspotted from the world."

We would have it understood, that, as we conceive these views to be dictated by the letter and Spirit of the Gospel—so we would commit ourselves as a church to the conduct of the discipline of Christ's house in accordance with them. [Written with dancing in mind.]

In 1877 a Dr. Black and his wife presented their letters from a church in Ohio. These were approved, but objection was taken

on the ground that Dr. Black was a Mason, and a resolution was passed that Rule 2 applied to Masonry. Dr. Black withdrew his letter, and five members asked for dismissal. There was considerable controversy, and a group which opposed the rule against Masonry was suspended. On the 6th October, 1877, it was resolved that the Creed, Covenant, Standing Rules, and Declaration should not be altered without notice being given at a quarterly business meeting.

\* \* \* \*

There are not many references to public affairs, though the budget for 1867 has significance.

American Board	\$20.00
,, Missionary Assoc. for Freedmen	200.00
,, Home Missions	20.00
N.W. Freedmen Committee	35.00
American Tract Society	7.80
Repairs	1300.00
Minister	400.00
Seamen's Course	5.00
American Tract Society	7.80
Bible Society	15.00

Tonica was in the line of the underground for escaped slaves on the way to Canada, and many people in the locality aided slaves on their way. Hence the interest in freedmen.

\* \* \* \*

Changing conditions caused the church to decay. There have been no regular services since 1931, and in 1948 the church was disbanded, and its assets divided among denominational charities.

ALBERT PEEL

## REVIEWS

THE WORSHIP OF THE ENGLISH PURITANS. By HORTON DAVIES.  
Dacre Press. 26s.

We give a warm welcome to this Oxford Ph.D. thesis, both for itself and as a promise of good things to come. It is indeed a matter of gratitude that yet another young student is giving himself to Church history. Nevertheless we have to confess that at first the book made us afraid: it was so patently a young man's book, with a grandiose Preface, an imposing but quite unsatisfactory bibliography, many works cited at second-hand, and a host of phrases like "offset the abuses which had encrusted the Sacrament", "caused many monks and nuns to leave their *solitary* lives" (italics ours). But as we read on, the book improved out of all recognition: another hand seemed to have taken up the pen, and the concluding chapters and the appendixes are in every way admirable.

Naturally we are disappointed that the volume is weakest in the period with which we are most familiar. Its failings there were obvious in the bibliography: if Dr. Davies had been familiar with the writings of Dixon and Drysdale, Pearson, Garrett, and Haller, and above all with Prof. M. M. Knappen's *Tudor Puritanism*, there would have been a different story to tell. The sort of thing that frightened us was the bibliography's "*A Parte of a Register*, MS. in Dr. Williams' Library (*circa* 1590)". Now *A parte of a register* is a printed Puritan *corpus*, some 50 copies of which escaped destruction, and all of which we have examined: the "MS. in Dr. Williams' Library" is *The Seconde Parte of a Register*, a Calendar of which we published as long ago as 1915. This is but one of the signs that Dr. Davies had never perused at first hand many of his texts: perhaps there is some excuse that Barrow, Greenwood, and Penry are quoted *via* Burrage, for copies are rare, but the forthcoming edition will put an end to all that.

In spite of this criticism we should be glad to know that the book was going to a second edition, for it provides a succinct and useful account of Puritan worship in the later period. In that happy event, we hope that Dr. Davies will give us more dates and evidence for some of his confident statements, and will tone down some of his dogmatic (and sometimes inconsistent) assertions; on p. 207, *e.g.*, with "complete unanimity" the Puritans have a weekly celebration of Holy Communion, on p. 213 it is "generally" weekly, and on p. 256 it is monthly! This may be a matter of dating, or it may arise from the fact that, despite attempts at rigid classification into Puritans, Separatists, Barrowists, Brownists, Independents, we are often not clear who Dr. Davies's "Puritans" are: those who remained within the Church of England and still desired purity of worship are almost ignored.

Had the volume begun with the 17th century, it would have deserved enthusiastic commendation as well as warm welcome. The weakness of the earlier chapters must lower the marking; it would have been avoided had Dr. Davies's supervisor been Dr. Scott Pearson or Prof. Knappen, or anybody steeped in Puritan literature.

We trust that Dr. Davies's work in South Africa will not divert his attention from this subject. If he can go on from volume to volume with the progress manifested in these covers he will indeed render great service to students of the period. But this immortal garland is to be won not without dust and heat.

ALBERT PEEL.

**WALKER REVISED**, being a Revision of John Walker's *Sufferings of the Clergy* during the Grand Rebellion, 1642-1660. By A. G. MATTHEWS. Oxford University Press. 40s.

This volume, as one would expect from the compiler of *Calamy Revised* (to which it adds many details *passim*), is a scholarly and painstaking work, of incalculable value to the student of the 17th century, as to the local historian or genealogical researcher.

It is primarily a source-book with a wealth of personal and parochial facts concerning the sequestered clergy, but it can be read as well as referred to, and it provides many fascinating sidelights upon the ecclesiastical and social life of its period.

Walker's *Sufferings* was an Anglican retort to Calamy's account of the rejected Nonconformists, and in his Introduction Mr. Matthews gives a reasoned estimate of Walker as historian as well as protagonist, and of his work, "A storehouse of historical facts", "an illustration of how history is seen and used in history". This revision, adding to Walker's catalogue nearly a thousand more names, justifies that writer's claim that the loyalist clergy suffered more extensively than the Nonconformists—a total number of sequestered and otherwise persecuted incumbents of about 2,425 is given—although a smaller number was actually deprived and many were only mildly harassed and not a few extruded on grounds which Walker himself makes little effort to challenge.

The absence of an *index locorum* such as that to *Calamy Revised*, which indeed gives that volume so much of its usefulness and makes it such a comprehensive guide to places as well as persons, becomes the more regrettable as one uses this book: it is a defect we trust the future may see remedied—dull though its preparation must be. It is true that Walker has an index (not impeccable or complete) to the parishes where sequestrations took place, but few have copies of that 1714 work, which has not been reprinted, to use with this *Revision*, and the absence of the fascinating links and cross-references which give *Calamy Revised* such vitality, makes it difficult to trace incumbents—especially the "Intruders", who are not indexed. The Index of "Sufferers" would also have been more helpful had it included more of the less obvious variants so common to 17th century spelling. It is not apparent, *e.g.*, that Brabant, R. (p. 404) = Brabourne. We have only discovered one omission, however (Craig, —, p. 2), and it would be inexcusable to quibble about minor imperfections in a work of such comprehensiveness.

On p. xviii, par. 3 (repeated on p. 12), Bishop Skinner's claim to have secretly conferred priest's orders during the Interregnum on between 4,000 and 5,000 candidates should read 400-500. The statement (same paragraph) that "The authorities of the day made no provision for non-episcopal ordination" seems to overlook the Parliamentary provision for Presbyterian ordinations which, however temporary, was "authoritarian" and extensively adopted: at least 700 Classical ordinations are definitely attested.

It will be the work of years to go through the entries *seriatim*, but twelve months' constant reference has revealed its careful preparation: a number of errata, supplementary identifications and details are being noted, which we hope may be set out in due course, together with a more comprehensive evaluation of the significance of this work for the student of mid-17th century history.

Mr. Matthews has done us a further great service and his twin volume will always rank as outstanding and authoritative works of reference.

C. E. SURMAN

It may seem strange that a book with the title *John Fergusson, 1727-1750: An Ayrshire Family and the Forty-Five* (Cape, 10s. 6d.) should be noticed in these *Transactions*. The reason is that John Fergusson was sent by his father, Lord Kilkerran, a Judge of the Court of Session, to the Academy of Philip Doddridge at Northampton, and many of Doddridge's letters intersperse a well-written narrative by a scion of the family. The high esteem in which Doddridge is generally held is seen throughout, and the care he and Mrs. Doddridge took of the health as well as of the morals of their pupils. John seems to have had no taste for the classics, and for a time he was inclined to "slack", but the devotion of his parents—and there are some moving letters from his mother—and the training and solicitude of Doddridge seem to have made a man of him. Doddridge, active in opposition to the Jacobite Rebellion, appears to have been surprised when his protégé enlisted. Clearly John was physically ill-fitted for a military career, and he died at the age of 23, meeting death with bravery and composure. The whole picture is that of an affectionate family—there were 14 children. Politically the value of the book is its exposure of the folly of the English in regarding the rebellion as a national Scottish movement, and not the work of a comparative few.

Free Churchmen have never been excited about the long controversy concerning the date and the nature of Matthew Parker's consecration as Archbishop of Canterbury. Dr. F. G. Shirley's *Elizabeth's First Archbishop* (S.P.C.K., 2/-) is a reply to Mr. J. C. Whitebrook's *Consecration of the Most Reverend Matthew Parker*, which contended that the traditional date of 17 December, 1559, was incorrect, for Parker had been consecrated on the 29th October. Dr. Shirley's is an able and good-tempered essay, but the facsimile of the Preamble of the Probate Act Book beginning 9th December, shows how argument may long continue. In it Parker is described as "*electi et consecra*", but "*consecra*" is underlined (i.e., cancelled) and "*confirmati*" added. Mr. Whitebrook maintains that "*confirmati*" was added in the 17th century, and that "*consecra*" is for the expected "*consecrati*"; Dr. Shirley said the scribe was going to write "*consecrati*", remembered before the word was finished that Parker had not yet been consecrated, and made the correction. Dr. Shirley says the addition has a 16th century look; to us it looks as if it may have been written later! But Dr. Shirley has much stronger evidence than this, and all interested in the subject should read his booklet.

*Spade Work* (Hutchinson, 10s. 6d.) is Grace Carlton's biography of her father, Thomas Greenwood, the pioneer of the Public Library Movement. Greenwood's background was Congregational: not merely was he said to be descended from John Greenwood, the Elizabethan martyr, but he was brought up in Hatherlow Chapel, like Sir Ernest Barker. There he owed much to the minister, William Urwick, as he did in Sheffield to another Congregational minister, T. W. Holmes; his attachment to Congregationalism continued when he left for London, and he addressed the Assembly of the Union of England and Wales in 1892.

His story would have appealed to Samuel Smiles. Becoming as a boy aware of the value of a Library, he became a propagandist for libraries for the people. Not only did he write the standard work, *Free Public Libraries*, but he established a valuable Library for Libraries. Securing financial stability by the publication of trade journals which became prosperous, he gave his life to the causes which had so early enlisted his sympathy, and to the end was "in labours abundant".

Miss Carlton has told the story in a way that holds the reader's attention, though she has not been able to escape "Nonconformist" (why is this

word such a pitfall?) on p. 93, and the form and content alike of one sentence we found baffling: "The Captain of the side that was in until that side was caught out".

We should like to think that the Congregational churches were still producing men of the independent outlook and public spirit of Thomas Greenwood. And we should like to think also that, even in days when the State has taken over so much previously done by the individual, there are Congregational ministers giving a hand to promising young people as William Urwick and T. W. Holmes did to Thomas Greenwood.

The Friends' Historical Society has published as a Supplement *Letters to William Dewsbury and Others*, thirty-four letters transcribed and edited by Dr. H. J. Cadbury from the originals in the Record Room of the Friends' Meeting House in York. Dewsbury was one of the most attractive of the early Quakers, and these letters show how he had the affection and trust of those who, like himself were "publishers of truth". Dr. Nuttall has lent a hand in dating some of the letters and annotating some of the references.

ALBERT PEEL.



## Contemporaries and Local Histories

The *Transactions* of the Unitarian Historical Society (June 1948) continue the story of Walmsley Unitarian Chapel by the Rev. F. Kenworthy, commence Some Account of the Annual Meeting of Presbyterian Ministers of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire, from 1798, by the Rev. C. Gordon Bolam, give details of Joseph Hunter's MS, *Britannia Puritanica*, notes on Baxter's Works in Chapel Libraries, the Dudley-Newbury Academy, and a centenary review of *Yr Ymofynnwydd* (or Welsh "Inquirer", 1847-1947).

*The Baptist Quarterly*, April-July, 1948, contains an appreciation of Dr. W. T. Whitley, President of the Baptist Historical Society, by Mr. Seymour J. Price, and an article on his Books and Pamphlets by the Rev. Ernest A. Payne; the Rev. G. R. Beasley-Murray "Thinks again about Daniel," the Rev. B. G. Collins writes on The Church and Communism, and the Rev. R. B. Hannen on A Suggested Source of Some expressions in the Baptist Confession of Faith, London, 1644.

The Wesley Historical Society's *Proceedings* continue (March and June, 1948) Dr. H. Miles Brown's Early Days of Cornish Methodism, and various items of *Wesleyana*: the June number brings articles on The New Room, Bristol, and Hugh Bourne's Printing Press, and (in September) The First Quarterly Meeting, by the Rev. C. Deane Little, John Wesley and a Quaker Mystic (Richard Freeman of Yeovil), and further Wesley letters. The Rev. George Lawton writes in this and the following (December) number on Proverbs in Wesley's Letters, and this fourth issue concludes Dr. Miles Brown's study of Early Cornish Methodism.

Among local Church histories we note with appreciation: *The Story of Ebley Chapel* (Glos.), by the Rev. Levi Criddle; *Dodington Congregational Church, Whitchurch, Salop, 1798-1948*, by the Rev. R. W. Tomalin; *The Great Meeting, Bideford, 1648-1948*, by the Rev. Tal. H. James; *Charlesworth Independent Chapel, 1798-1948*, by the Rev. Reginald Mansfield; *Roydon Congregational Church, 1798-1948*, by Dr. Peter Ackroyd and others; *The Nonconformist Churches of Colchester*, by Alderman A. E. Blaxill; *The History of Sawston Congregational Church*, by the Rev. Richard Ball; *Little Lane & Greenfield* (Bradford), by Margaret Hindle and A. Donald Flather; *Pype Hayes Congregational Church*, by Mrs. W. Kendall Gale; *Heaton Moor Congregational Church, 1873-1948*, by G. E. Kiffin; *Pollokshields Cong. Church, 1899-1949*, by the

Rev. K. G. Ogilvie; *Southchurch Park, Southend-on-Sea*, by H. Margerison; *Sussex Congregational Union, 1849-1949*, by the Rev. F. G. Elson; *Hither Green Congl. Church, 1899-1949*, by R. Lemmy; *The Growth of a Church, 1899-1949* (Hale, Cheshire), by the Rev. T. J. Lander and J. A. Sugden; ten of these writers being members of the Society.

Mr. Seymour J. Price contributes to *The Genealogists' Magazine* (March, 1948) an article on "Possible Contributions of the English Free Churches towards Pedigrees" which our Secretary followed (June 1949) by "Congregationalism's Contribution".

The Isaac Watts Bicentenary Commemorations produced, *inter alia*, an interesting brochure, edited by the Rev. H. I. Frith, for the Southampton Commemoration (Southampton Congl. Council, 6d.), while the Catalogue of the Exhibition arranged by the Borough of Stoke Newington (Borough Library, 6d.) contains a useful bibliography and other local details.

## MS. Autobiographies at Dr. Williams's Library

(For access to the MSS. here described and for permission to publish this article our thanks are due to the Librarian of Dr. Williams's Library.—G.F.N.)

**I**N *The Inquirer* for the 12th December, 1874, and perhaps in other Nonconformist periodicals of about the same date, there appeared a letter from the Rev. Thomas Hunter, then Librarian of Dr. Williams's Library, from which the following sentences are taken:—

I propose making an effort towards a MS. collection of biographies of the existing Nonconformist ministry, in connection with Churches of Puritan lineage, by appealing to each individual for a sketch, long or short as it may please him, of the leading events of his life. These various sketches I propose to arrange alphabetically in sections, to page, index and bind them in volumes to be permanently deposited in Dr. Williams' Library for future reference by such as desire to consult them. . . .

An authentic record of the men now engaged in upholding the principles of Protestantism and liberty, so much identified for upwards of two eventful centuries with English Nonconformity, would be of special interest and facilitate the labour of the future biographer or historian.

I have only to add that by the sympathy and counsel of Dr. Martineau, Dr. Stoughton, Dr. Angus, Dr. Lorimer, Dr. Halley, the Rev. Professor Newth, and others, I now bring my plan before the ministers of London, and hold myself prepared to prosecute it according as the mode of their response to the individual appeal to be made to them may be encouraging.

If in the following year, as he intended, Mr. Hunter applied to upwards of 4,000 ministers for the proposed autobiographical sketches, the response was certainly far from encouraging. Only 74 ministers appear to have returned the sketches requested.

Each appeal sent out by Mr. Hunter was accompanied by a printed sheet containing "Suggestions for Outline of Minister's Autobiographical Sketch."

These ran as follows:—

Christian name and Surname in full round hand at top of first page, with academical distinction, if any, as—D.D.: LL.D.: B.A.: M.A.: &c.; then denominational connexion in brackets thus—(Presbyterian) (Congregational) (Baptist) &c.; date and place of birth—lineage—place of school and college education—place of first, second, or third settlement as minister—in succession to whom—and any particulars of the congregation then as compared with the present condition—any details or remarks bearing on the thought and work of Nonconformity in the district—name and date of book, sermon, or other literary work published by the writer.

N.B.—The foregoing are but heads. The writer of course has full discretion as to his sketch.

The 74 sketches returned, though not paged, indexed and bound, as had been intended, were preserved in Dr. Williams's Library, and there they remain, arranged in alphabetical order. So far as is known, no use has been made of them in biographies, or biographical descriptions, of their subjects. With the exception of one brief printed article, the sketches were written on the folio sheets provided, the length varying from a few lines to 80 sheets. Some of the ministers submitted a photograph, as requested in the "Directions" which were issued with the "Suggestions" copied above.

In the alphabetical lists subjoined, the names are followed by an initial indicating the "denominational connexion" as claimed (B.(aptist), C.(ongregational), I.(ndependent), L.(iberal) C.(hristian), Pr.(esbyterian), U.(nitarian)). Ph. indicates that a photograph is preserved with the sketch. The number given is the number of sheets covered. An asterisk has been placed against the names of those writers who are the subjects of articles in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

*Angus, Joseph	B.	pr.	
Ashton, Robert	C.	Ph.	2
Aubrey, W. H. S.	C.	Ph.	4
*Aveling, T. W. B.	C.		8
Barfield, A. F.	C.		2½
*Beard, J. R.	U.	Ph.	6½
Bensley, William	B.		1½

Bergin, J. M.	B.	Ph.	6½
Bewlay, Edward	C.		10
Bowring, Thomas	Pr.	Ph.	7
Brandon, Alfred	B.	Ph.	3½
*Brock, William	B.		8
Bromley, Henry	C.	Ph.	6
Bull, Josiah	C.	Ph.	2¼
Burchell, W. F.	B.		8
*Burns, Dawson	B.	Ph.	2
Carey, C. S.	C.		4
Corbin, John	C.		8
Cowdy, Samuel	B.	Ph.	2
Eldridge, Samuel	C.	Ph.	3
Gill, William	C.	Ph.	8
Godwin, J. H.	C.		7
Gordon, John	U.		2¼
Harrison, J. C.	C.	Ph.	8
Hastings, Frederick	C.		1¼
Hicks, Jonathan	C.	Ph.	¾
*Higginson, Edward	U.	Ph.	30
Hill, Thomas	C.		3
Hitchens, J. H.	C.		3¾
Hurry, Nicholas	C.		3½
Jennings, Nathaniel	C.		2½
Jones, Eliezer	C.	Ph.	4¼
*Kenrick, John	Pr.		1¼
Kirtland, Charles	B.		3¼
Le Bloud, James	C.		3
Lockwood, John	C.		4
McAll, Samuel	C.		4
McKee, J. R.	U.		2½
Martin, Samuel	U.		2
*Miller, Josiah	C.		2
Mummery, I. V.	C.	Ph.	1½

Murphy, G. M.	C.	Ph.	8
Muscutt, Edward	C.		7
*Newth, Samuel	C.		8
Nicholson, George	C.		6
Odgers, W. J.	U.	Ph.	7½
*Parker, Joseph	C.		½
Pike, J. B.	C.	Ph.	4
Pulling, John	C.	Ph.	8
*Reynolds, H. R.	C.		13
Robberds, C. W.	Pr.-U.	Ph.	3½
Robberds, John	Pr. or U.		3½
Ross, John	C.		5
Sears, James	B.	Ph.	4
Shaen, Richard	U.		3½
Short, J. L.	L.C.		80
Simpson, Robert	C.		8
*Smith, G. V.	Pr.		3¼
Smith, Matthew	C.	Ph.	5¼
Spence, James	C.		5½
Spong, James	C.		15½
Stallybrass, Edward	C.	Ph.	6
Stallybrass, T. E.	C.		2¼
*Stoughton, John	C.		3¼
*Suffield, R. R.	U.	Ph.	3½
Sugden, John	C.	Ph.	3
Tiddy, W. P.	C.	Ph.	11
Tozer, T. W.	C.		2¼
Unwin, W. J.	C.		¾
Wearmouth, Robert	C.		3
Whitehead, J. T.	U.		3
Wicksteed, Charles	U.		3
Wilkins, George	I.		2½
Wright, John	U.		2¼

It is disappointing that Joseph Parker's account of himself, which might have been expected to be racy, is so brief: Parker was evidently in a terse mood on the day he wrote it. It runs as follows:—

*Joseph Parker* D.D. (Congregationalist). Born at Hexham, Northumberland, on April 9th, 1830. Was assistant to Rev. Dr. Campbell, Tabernacle, London, for nine months. Was ordained at Banbury, Oxfordshire, on November 8th, 1853. Remained there until 1858 & built a new chapel in the town. Removed to Manchester (Cavendish Street Chapel) in succession to the Rev. Robert Halley D.D. Accepted an invitation to Poultry Chapel, London, in June 1869. Sold that chapel for £50,200, & with the proceeds built the City Temple, Holborn Viaduct, London, which chapel was opened for public worship on May 19th, 1874. Dr. Parker is the author of the following works:

Ecce Deus.	}	Hodder & Stoughton publishers.
The Paraclete.		
Springdale Abbey.		

Church Questions. (Snow).  
The City Temple 4 vols. (Partridge).

and many smaller books.

One or two of the sketches, *e.g.* those by H. R. Reynolds and John Stoughton, may perhaps be found suitable for publication in these pages at a later date.