

Wales under the Indulgence, 1672-5.

DR. THOMAS RICHARDS, librarian of the University College of Wales at Bangor, has published with the above title a fourth valuable instalment of his studies. The National Eisteddfod Association recognises the appropriateness of publishing it, so that within nine years the English reader has at length a series of well-documented works covering the Puritan movement from 1639 to 1687. Most praiseworthy are both author and publishers.

This volume is of even wider scope than its title suggests, for it has been necessary to study the activities of Welshmen in England, and also to evaluate the Indulgence generally. The speculation as to its motives is interesting, though perhaps sufficient weight is not given to the need of Charles to placate the militant Dissenters who did not hesitate at strikes, assassination, aiding foreign foes. The reader of Bate and Lyon Turner will find ample material to reconsider their conclusions. Especially noteworthy is a careful argument that when a teacher was given only a licence for a particular place, the addendum to it was intended, "With further licence and permission to him the said [person] to teach in any other place licenced and allowed [for that congregation] by Us according to Our said Declaration." For often a congregation had many places of meeting, even in different counties; and this was rather the rule than the exception among Baptists. Yet Dr. Richards recognises that both the licence-holders and the public at large soon confounded these particular licences with the general; so that Bunyan, licensed really for Bedford and other places of his congregation, exhibited that licence in October at Leicester and had it registered by the mayor without demur. The distinction was clear only to a few experts, and received scant attention even after the Declaration was cancelled. Of the teachers at large, licensed generally, Dr. Richards counts 236, leaving 1,371 licensed for particular congregations, in all England and Wales. He quite agrees with previous students that a map of all will show only those Dissenters who asked for licences and obtained them, and leaves out of account the large numbers who did not apply. He further criticises the value of the descriptions Presbyterian, Independent, Congregational, Baptist, Anabaptist, and in many cases proves how faulty they are.

These general appreciations may now be followed with an abstract of his information as to Baptists in Wales over the whole period of his studies, as presented in this volume. He begins with the principality "at the mercy of any hot gospeller that came to the border: Hanserd Knollys preaching adult baptism over the highlands of Brecknock and Radnor, Jeremiah Ives propagating Arminianism in the upper reaches of the Wye, William Rider advocating imposition of hands to the Baptists of the Hay, Henry Jessey putting Llanvaches in order and re-baptising Vavasor Powell sixteen years later, Anna Trapnell staggering the poor peasants with her prophecies of doom," and John Tombes entering "the ring at Abergavenny to defend baptism by immersion against two Anglican opponents." The result of this English propaganda was to produce several types. "One line of cleavage made Baptists either Calvinistic or Arminian, another angle of vision made them 'open' or 'close.' Both Baptists and Independents divided into two schools over the question of State maintenance; there were close upon seventy unpaid preachers in South Wales alone."

Of the open Baptists, followers of Tombes and Jessey, a good representative is William Thomas of Llantrisant, described in Commonwealth times as "the self-ordained pig, wallower in water," leader in all south Monmouth, in close touch with Broadmead in 1667, dying in 1671, whose people four years later were "in judgment for free communion with saints as saints," like the distant followers of John Bunyan. Dr. Richards proves and emphasises that Baptists of this type were often content to be called Congregational. Of the close Baptists, the champion at first was John Miles of Ilston, but when he and most of his members in 1663 took the church-book to a new Swanzey in Plymouth colony, his mantle fell on William Jones, who settled at Rhydwylym in the south-west. The Arminian Baptists under William Bound "were too fond of acting on the defensive, lacked breadth of outlook," and though energetic, so that a Radnor woman in 1672 was "sorely tempted by Satan to be rebaptised and to join the Arminians," yet they sought no licence.

In 1660 an open Baptist, John Davies, once a tailor, then a soldier at Worcester, now holding the living of Llangattock in Brecon, sought to fortify his title by obtaining Presbyterian orders at Hereford. But an act passed in September by the Convention Parliament displaced seven Baptists, including John Miles, and thus settled the controversy as to taking State pay. It is hard to sell one's birthright for a mess of pottage, and then be deprived of the pottage.

Powell fared worse, and was promptly thrown into prison; only in 1667-8 was he able to renew his physical activity, though

his pen was frequently busy. And Jenkin Jones shared the same fate at once. The only authority for these imprisonments was the old Conventicle Act of 1593, long dormant, under which we have shown that Bunyan also was incarcerated—it is almost the only point not remembered by Dr. Richards. The whole legal position was so obscure, and so kaleidoscopic, that on 21 July, 1662, David Davies wrote from Penmain in Gower for a copy of the "Statutes at Large"; but as he wanted to know what laws were repealed and which were not, it was very poor economy to stipulate for a secondhand copy. After special legislation against Quakers, the Cavalier Parliament in 1664 passed a new Conventicle Act to hold for three years. One "bizarre development" was that "a fanatical Catabaptist of Abergavenny, a thatcher, one that carried a musquet to Worcester against his sacred Majesty," applied to the bishop of Llandaff for ordination, to the scandal of Baxter and others.

For the three years, life was indeed hard. "A young Baptist woman of Brecknock out of communion with the Church had her body exhumed from the churchyard of Bryn Pabuan, and buried at cross-roads like a common suicide; the corpse of an old help-mate of Vavasor Powell . . . was allowed to remain unburied for ten days in the churchyard of Llangollen; . . . a barbarous lack of humour was displayed in taking away the last cow of an Arminian Baptist at Llanddewi Ystradenni, thus depriving his children of the milk they craved." We should like to publish an English version of the poetic effusion of Richard Pugh, miller, of Tredwstan in Brecknock, preserved by Joshua Thomas, which shows with a wealth of vivid colouring the whole machinery of persecution as wielded by the sheriffs and the officials of the consistory, down to 1687.

One result of these troubles was to bring into temporary fellowship "saints as saints," whatever their exact type of doctrine or of church polity. But the fall of Clarendon in 1667 caused the persecution to slacken, and as Parliament was prorogued without extending the Conventicle Act, this expired by March 1668/9. There was prompt renewal of Baptist activity, and prompt renewal of minor differences.

Thus Powell not only emerged from prison and preached at London and Bristol, but came back to Llanfyllin and Merthyr Tydvil. He was a good lawyer, and defended himself vigorously at Cardiff and Cowbridge, he was astute enough to quote Coke that the oath of allegiance could be exacted only once.

But he was no longer the guiding spirit in the principality. From Carmarthen prison, William Jones an ejected rector came to Olchon, and was there baptised. In 1668 he and William Prichard and Thomas Watkins travelled to Rhydwylym in the

south-west, and on 12 July organised a church on the strict lines of Miles; though they utilised Powell's confession, they deleted from it the article as to open-membership. This church was destined to become the great focus of Baptist development, Jones alone baptising sixty-two members in four years. "Wherever in Wales Baptists of loose and invertebrate principles consorted with Independents, the former succumbed to the alchemy of assimilation." Not only in Wales, not only then. The staunch leaders revived a wide itineration, so that far-flung congregations had many habitual meeting-places. Some men were wise enough to attend to the rising generation, and open schools. William Milman at Llangwm was indeed a Sabbatarian, so he may have taught on Sunday while he preached on Saturday. Reginald Wilson was a man of good education, always designed for public ministry; he opened a large school at Aberhafesp, which later on attracted the sons of gentlemen of quality; and in 1669 he was abetting two conventicles in Cydwain.

In 1670 Sheldon persuaded Parliament to frame a new Conventicle Act, with no limitation of time. Charles insisted that it should explicitly recognise the royal supremacy in ecclesiastical affairs, thus continuing the tradition from Henry through Edward, Elizabeth, his grandfather, and his father. The first important use of this supremacy was to seal on 15 March, 1671/2 (when Parliament was not sitting) a Declaration of Indulgence to all sorts of nonconformists, offering to allow them a sufficient number of places for public worship, and to approve the teachers of their congregations. Applications were soon made, and many Baptists of Wales obtained licences between 15 June and 3 February 1672/3. Next day Parliament met, and furiously attacked the King's dispensing power, so that Charles broke the seal of the Declaration on 7 March, and within a month the grand jury of Montgomery was attempting to revive persecution. A picture of the Baptist licences may be sketched.

The first to profit were Thomas Joseph of Bridgend, who had been displaced from Llangeinor living in 1660, and Howell Thomas displaced from Glyncorrwg under similar circumstances. For their ministrations were made available Joseph's own house, the houses of widow Williams at St. Bride's, of Llewellyn Morgan at Llangewydd, and of William Andrews at Newton Nottage. All these were explicitly defined as Baptist, and they show the persistence of the Miles tradition in Glamorgan, even to the itinerant system. On the same day Joshua Miller, once-incumbent at St. Andrews and displaced in 1668, was licensed for the house of Morgan Thomas in Wenvoe; he had written against the Quakers, had sold books in London; the clerks-

entered him as a Presbyterian; what he really was cannot be verified, but the entries as to Wenvoe and John French raise some suspicion.

In July the open Baptists made appearance. It is true that the house of John Kynaston at Bryngwyn in Montgomery was licensed for "Congregational" worship; but Maurice three years later classified the people here as Baptists in judgement for the most part, and Henry Williams of Ysgafell, their leader, was certainly such. No licence seems to have been obtained for a teacher at this date.

A third group was the Seventh-day Baptists of Monmouth. Walter Williams was licensed for the house of Edward Waters at Llangibby, and William Milman for the house of William Richards at Llangwm. But the former was content to be styled "Congregational," the latter was not defined at all.

More important was a large group served by itinerants, on the borders of Glamorgan and Monmouth. Thomas Quarrell took out a licence for the house of John Maurice at Shirenewton. He had once been ready to fight for freedom, having won it, he settled as usher of the Puritan free school at the town of Montgomery, had come into family connection with Powell, had been working from Whitchurch in Glamorgan over a wide area. His congregation was destined to be represented at London in 1689, a welcome token that the Particular churches there were partly Open, partly Strict; and he himself was well reported of next year.

His lead was followed within three weeks by many coadjutors, and 10 August saw several new licences. Thomas (John or) Jones, a preacher since 1654 of the Strict order, now living at Gelligaer, was content to admit Independents, and so accepted the label Congregational, when licensed to preach at Eglwysilan. The place chosen was the house of William (John or) Jones, who at Craigyrallt had suffered severely under the Conventicle Act, and was destined to live to the days of parliamentary toleration in 1690. At Gelligaer itself, Thomas had the house of Lewis Rees, and at Llanfabon the house of William Rowlands. As the house of Margaret Jones at Henllys in Monmouthshire was for Independent worship, it probably belonged to Quarrell's group. It is less certain whether the house of James Lewis at Caldicot was another station; this had been at first described as Presbyterian, but on 10 August was corrected to Congregational. Aberystroth had two houses, of Llewellyn Rosser and John Jones, the latter being preacher. At Llanwenarth there was the house of John Watkins; at Magor in the house of Walter Jones, Thomas Barnes who had been ejected in 1662 and had since laboured in Bristol, ministered

again to his adherents. At Marshfield there was the house of Jane Reynolds, and at Newport the house of Barbara Williams. The centre of all this work was Mynyddislwyn, with three houses available, Evan Williams once farmer of a Monmouthshire living, Thomas James, and Watkin Jones. This last man was himself a preacher long linked with Quarrell, and it is not surprising that after his itinerant career he disclaimed the title Presbyterian, and this day took a licence as Congregational. All this group seem to have followed the lead of Tombes and Jessey, rather than that of Kyffin. And there is room to doubt if some were Baptist of any shade at all.

But at Abergavenny there were others of less compromising mould, who plainly avowed themselves Baptist. John Edwards the shoemaker, and Christopher Price the apothecary, who had supported Tombes in 1653, did not follow him now in calling himself Presbyterian, though Edwards had seen his way to accept the living of Llangorse till displaced in 1660. Price survived to sign a letter to the Assembly of 1690. With them is to be classed a second Thomas Jones, licensed for his own house at Bedwellty.

The next applications were granted on 30 September. At Llanigon and at Talgarth in Brecknock, houses belonging to William Watkins were licensed; a captain of this name living at Penyrwrlodd was a most influential Dissenter, with a most devout wife who would travel even to Llanwenarth in the days of persecution. Dr. Richards is uncertain whether they are to be classed as Open or Strict. The teacher contemplated was David Williams, who apparently lived at Cefn-y-gwaelod by Troedrhiwdalar, and was remembered as late as 1780; in 1675 Maurice knew him as ordained elder here.

Carmarthen had a group sustaining the traditions of Miles, and avowing themselves Baptist. They chose three places of meeting; at Llannon the house of John Morgan; at Llangennech (misspelt in the Entry Book) the houses of Edward Williams and Joshua Franklin; Joshua kept up the usage of Jenkin dating from 1657. The teacher was Robert Morgan. With them is to be taken the house of William Dykes in Swansea, where Lewis Thomas, formerly of a farm at the Mwr, cut free from his entangling alliance at Newton Nottage and ministered to out-and-out Baptists, on the lines of Llewellyn Morgan at Llangewyth.

The next batch of licences was issued for Radnorshire. It is to be noted that Henry Maurice, himself a pedobaptist, was most active all that summer. He held a meeting in Church Stretton at the house of widow Sankey on 2 July, though she only obtained her licence on the 25th: it is good to find her upholding the principles of her husband, colonel Sir Jerome

Sankey of the Irish Brigade. In August Maurice was at Llanigon, Talgarth and Glasgwm, in company with John Hanmer. On 18 November five licences were issued for houses; at Glasgwm, Richard Mills and Thomas Price; at Llanbister, Anne King; at Llanfihangel Nant Melan, Thomas Tonman; at Llangunllo, Richard Griffith. Four of these were described as Congregational, Tonman's has no definition. Tonman was an adherent of Powell from 1655 at least, in 1687 was reported as wealthy; and the Tonmans of 1725 were Baptist supporters. It would seem therefore that in 1672 the group was Open Baptist. Their teachers were Edward Owen at Glasgwm and John Hanmer at Llanbister; the latter had been one of the most faithful henchmen of Powell.

The group strengthened its position on 9 December, when Morris and Richard Griffith with Owen Morgan, all of Beguildy, took licences for themselves at their own houses. True that all were marked Presbyterian, but all had been supporters of Powell, and Dr. Richards utterly disallows the clerk's classification.

With these may possibly be taken the house of John Weaver at New Radnor, licensed on 30 September. He had been incumbent there till 1660, had moved to Bettws Diserth and kept school there, and was now content to be called Congregational.

Whatever pedobaptist strength there was in this group at 1672, John Evans in 1715 found that at Nant Melan, Glasgwm and New Radnor there was one Baptist church with 400 members; this amply warrants the critical scrutiny of the 1672 appellation.

The last licences issued at all were on 3 February 1672/3, and half of them attest Baptist progress. At Llanfeugian in Brecknock the house of David Williams was allowed; Lewis Prytherch was teacher, and in 1675 Maurice says he was elder-elect. This congregation was of the Open type, probably on friendly terms with the people of Llanigon and Talgarth. At Llanafanfawr, also in Brecknock, Thomas Evans, who had so far paltered as to take the living of Maesmynus till 1660, but was not afraid now to call himself Baptist, took out a licence, and probably thought that covered his own house. With him is to be reckoned William Greene of Llandrindod in Radnor, perhaps the man who in 1656 signed the "Humble Address" just before John Miles.

Such is a critical account of all the Baptists in Wales who in 1672 obtained the king's licence; and it must be repeated that there is ample contemporary evidence of others who did not apply for one. A few notes may be gleaned as to later growth.

Henry Maurice early in 1673 became "a teacher errant, who leads a body of 200 or 300 after him in the face of this country"

of Brecknock. "For the next ten years he was to be settled pastor of the gathered church of Bapto-Independents" which commonly met at Llanigon; and in 1675 Terrill of Bristol obtained from him a valuable letter as to the condition of all the gathered churches in Wales, printed with the Broadmead Records in 1847.

By 1681 the Strict Baptists of Rhydwylyn had revived the old common-law marriage, disregarding the parish buildings and registers, but invoking the witness and the goodwill of their own church. Two years later, in the renewed persecution, the Arminian Baptists of Llanddewi Ystradenny, shepherded by the Gregorys, sent a small contingent via Milford to Philadelphia, and they established a flourishing cause at Pennepec. The remnant of this group in 1702 joined the Baptist Association of Wales, quietly adopting Calvinism.

While our excerpts deal simply with the four types of Baptist, Strict and Particular, Open and Particular, Seventh-day and Particular, General, we close our appreciation with the reminder that all Welsh Dissent is here studied, and with Dr. Richards' verdict:—"The short-lived Indulgence emphasised the Independent hegemony, crystallised the Baptist creed, dissolved the dream of Presbyterian comprehension, witnessed the efflorescence of Dissenting schools, and furnished a remarkable proof of the organic unity of Puritanism with its glories in the past."

STOGUMBER and HATCH BEAUCHAMP had their early history entwined. We may disregard a statement of 1770 that Bicknal was founded in 1630, and may put together all manner of contemporary gleanings. When the Western Association met in 1655 at Bridgwater, there was a messenger from Hatch, and next year George Parsons of Hatch signed the Somerset Confession. When Charles, in 1672, issued licences, they were taken at Ashbrittle by Francis Bryant, John Carnall, and Isaac Farman; at Pitminster by Edward Gatchell for his own house; at Minehead by Stephen Lanclark for his own house; at Broomfield by Robert Speare for the house of John Speare; and at South Perrott, just over the Dorset border, by Jeremiah Dry for the house of Robert Cartisse. In 1689 they registered two buildings for worship, one at Dunster, and for Stogumber the house of Christopher Hawkins at Higher Vexford. That year Jeremiah Dry attended the London Assembly as pastor

of Hatch, while Dunster and Stoke Gomer were grouped as one, without a minister; so also in 1692. But Thompson refers to the records at Bicknal, and says that from 1690 to 1700 Jeremiah Dry was pastor at "Coyland near Bicknall," which may be Leighland near Bicknoller. He was followed by William Tixe till 1722. In 1715 John Evans heard of the Dunster group; of Lancelot Spurrier tending forty-six people at Minehead; and of fifty-four more at Stokegomer. About 1750, Ryland at Warwick heard nothing about these churches. Thompson of London, in 1770, heard that Dunster was served in 1720 by Sampson, then by Spurrier, Bryant, Jackson, Jeffries, after which it was absorbed by the Presbyterians: this sounds quite credible, though documents are not published. The MS. records of the Western Association at Bristol, from 1697, might amplify this summary. The MS. records at (New College for) Regent's Park tell that in 1733 at the re-organization against Arianism, letters were sent from Dunster and Stogumber; and that in 1745 the Association met at Bicknell. Thompson knew of the church records there, dating from 1690, and knew of the minister in 1770. At Stogumber the Baptists obtained the present site in 1726, and soon built; they enlarged later with the materials of the old Presbyterian meeting at Bicknoller. The registers they started in 1726 are now at Somerset House. At Hatch they began local records in 1742, and Samuel Burford settled in 1750 for nine years; Thompson heard that he revived the cause at Bicknell. There was no meeting-house at Hatch till 1783, and Thompson overlooked this group. With 1790 Rippon, a west-country man, calendared James Adams at Hatch, and Augustus Crisp at Stogumber. After that the churches lived in the light of day.

THE ANNUAL MEETING of the Society will be held on Thursday, 2nd May, at the Baptist Church House. Reports and accounts will be submitted, officers and committee will be elected. A paper will then be read by Professor Frank Edward Robinson, M.A., B.D., on the 250th Anniversary of Bristol College. Visitors will be welcome: tea will be served first at four o'clock.