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A table of contents for *The Baptist Quarterly* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bq\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bq_01.php)

## An Association Letter, 1857

Below we reproduce, in abbreviated form, the Circular Letter of 1857 of the Monmouthshire Baptist Association, a rare copy of which was kindly made available to us by Mr. W. Nefydd Lewis (a descendant of its writer). The letter was written by the Moderator, Rev. William Roberts, LL.D. who, popularly known by his bardic name, "Nefydd," was in his day one of the best-known men in Wales. In addition to being a celebrated preacher and author he was for many years editor of the Welsh Baptist journal, *Seren Gomer*. In 1864 he set up at Blaina a printing press, printing and publishing a periodical *Y Bedyddiwr (The Baptist)* and the writings of young authors whom he wanted to encourage. It has been claimed that during his life time he did more for education in Wales than any other person, particularly during the eleven years when he was agent for the British and Foreign School Society. His activities as a book-seller afforded him both the means and the opportunity to become a collector of rare Welsh books, pamphlets and manuscripts and his library contained numerous treasures. A historian of some distinction, Roberts was one of the founders of the Hanserd Knollys Society and also of the Liberation Society. Born in 1813, he died in 1872 and a national monument marks his grave at the old Blaenau Gwent (Abertillery) burial ground.

### THE BAPTISTS

THEIR HISTORY AND CLAIMS AMONG THE RELIGIOUS  
DENOMINATIONS OF WALES IN PAST AGES

### A LETTER

from the

MINISTERS AND MESSENGERS

of the Churches in the

MONMOUTHSHIRE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

Assembled on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 26th and 27th, 1857  
AT SALEM, BLAENAU GWENT.

Believing the scriptural doctrines of three co-equal Persons in the Godhead; the proper Deity and real humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ; eternal and personal election; original sin; particular redemption; free justification through the imputed righteousness of Christ; effectual grace in regeneration; the law a rule of life to all believers; final perseverance; the resurrection of the dead; the last judgement; the everlasting happiness of the righteous; the endless punishment of the wicked; together with the whole system and discipline of the New Testament Church.

AND ADDRESSING THE ABOVE CHURCHES AND OTHERS.

Dear Brethren and Sisters in the Lord,

It is now a well-known fact that the denomination to which we belong has existed, and has worked well, in this kingdom, as well as abroad, for a great number of years.

Notwithstanding all this, the Baptist denomination has been partially hidden, and in some instances, ignored and treated with contempt even by good men among our dissenting historians. We might enumerate many instances of this,<sup>1</sup> but our letter must necessarily be limited. We shall only draw the attention of the churches to the subject, trusting that our young historians will enlarge upon it at some future time, so as to lead the ignorant to the knowledge of the truth. The subject we therefore propose to introduce to your notice is :

*The State and influence of Dissent in Wales, before the commencement of the Calvinistic Methodists.*

A number of authors, in writing the histories of the Reverends Griffith Jones, of Llanddowror, Howel Harris, of Trevecca, Daniel Rowlands, of Langeitho, and the History of the beginning of the Calvinistic Methodists, and the *Causes of Dissent* in Wales, or some such subjects, have stated that morals, education and religion were lower in Wales, at the period when Methodism commenced, than it had been in almost any previous age since the Protestant Reformation, and that true religion was scarcely to be found, either among Churchmen or Dissenters, at that time—that the religion which had existed at the time of Wroth, Erbury, Cradock, Powell, etc., had almost dwindled into nothing. Whether Dissent found itself under the garb of Puritan, Presbyterian, or Independent (the Baptists of the time are but seldom mentioned) in the seventeenth century; it was almost ready to die, from 1720 to 1730. We have noticed that the above opinion is spreading abroad rapidly, and we find historians following each other in reiterating the same thing over and over, and what seems to be more wonderful still is, that they are allowed to proceed without contradiction.

To some it may appear presumptuous that we should doubt the correctness of the views of so many eminent historians, lecturers, prize-essayists, etc. But if this letter will only answer the purpose of instituting an enquiry into the subject, we shall consider it a step in the right direction towards obtaining a correct knowledge of the real state of religion in Wales, from the Reformation up to 1736. We would seriously and emphatically ask all the above authors, whether the dissenting efforts that had existed for six or seven scores of years, before the dawn of Methodism, were scarcely worth noticing? Was not the dragging before magistrates, the persecuting, the forfeiture of goods and chattels, the imprisonments, the narrow and dangerous escapes for lives; yea, the persecuting even unto death, in maintaining religion

<sup>1</sup> We have instances of this in the works of Neal, Calamy, Palmer, Brooks, Bogue and Bennet, &c.

and a clear conscience before God, which took place with many Independents and Baptists in the seventeenth century, not of importance to be recorded? Speaking of heroes, were not those heroes who prepared England and Wales, who preached the gospel, who met in the verdant groves, or in the dark caves of the rocks, hiding themselves from their enemies, and succeeded and multiplied under those disadvantages through the blessing of God, in spite of all the grievous and oppressive acts of Parliament passed in the times of the two Jameses and the two Charleses, up to the passing of the Toleration Act in 1689. We ask again, were not these religious heroes? Are they to be forgotten, and even the memory of them to be neglected or persecuted, as they were personally when alive? No! No! They will not be forgotten. God did not forsake them. His Spirit consoled them in caverns, prisons, and dirty cells. His holy angels ministered to their wants. They were multiplied in the midst of their struggles. Although some would fall under the oppression of the persecutors, others would rise up to fill the rank. Some scores were compelled to escape to America and other parts of the world, for their lives, and to enjoy their domestic comforts with religion, yet they were not all driven out of the land. Although obliged to meet on rainy and frosty weather, among the trees, or on the tops of mountains, or in the deserted nooks and creeks, to worship God, some of them acting at those times as watchmen for fear of being taken by their enemies and persecutors, who were following them like bloodhounds; yet they denied not the faith; they worked on so as to keep nearly the same in number during the reign of Charles II; yes, they were working, courageous and strong in the grace of God, scores of years before the worthy men, Griffith Jones, Howel Harris, and D. Rowlands appeared in the world.

Let it not be supposed that we would assert that knowledge, morality, and religion were, in the beginning of the last century in Wales, what they ought to have been, or what they came to be after that time. But our assertion, in opposition to the above and other such authors, is, that the state of knowledge, of morals, and of religion in Wales, was in 1736 far above what it ever had been before. We are ready to prove this at any time. And as to the causes of the deficiency that existed relative to these matters in Wales as well as in England (but which existed to a far greater extent a hundred years, or fifty years, previous to that time, under the two Charleses) they must be traced to the cursed laws respecting the "declaration of sports," read in the churches by order of the Kings, Archbishops, and Bishops of those times, which were like the fire of hell blazing over our country—and breeding all sorts of immoralities. Quarrels about baptism exhausting their strength, indeed! Had disputations on baptism and other subjects

such influence upon them, they would have been extinct more than eighty years before 1736; for they carried on their discussions and disputations on religious subjects with boldness and zeal, publicly and privately. Some of the reports of their disputations were published, and are to be seen this day. But these were no hindrances to their success. Howel Harris, Daniel Rowlands, and others could not have done half nor quarter the good that was effected in the last century, had it not been that the Independents, Baptists, Quakers, and Presbyterians prepared the way for the Gospel in Wales, because they were with the Government like the woman in the parable with that other unjust judge "which feared not God, neither regarded man"; they *troubled* and *wearied* the Government with their importunities and petitions, with great earnestness, and urged it to grant them their liberties. That, with the favour of God in his providence, caused the Toleration Act to be passed. What would Howel Harris do outside the Church, or Rowlands inside or outside of it, more than some other men, while the Conventicle and Five Mile Acts were in force, in addition to the Act of Uniformity under Charles II?

### Dissent in the 17th Century

Now we shall briefly glance over the success and prosperity of Dissent in the seventeenth century, and the beginning of the following one, so that it may not be supposed that we want to make assertions which we are not able to prove, and we invite any one or more of the authors above-mentioned to show us our mistakes; or if not, we earnestly hope that we shall not hear any more of the decline of religion in Wales, and the increase of immoralities and sins from 1680 to 1730.

One way adopted by many in taking the statistics of Dissent is to state the number of their chapels: perhaps that may answer some purpose in our days, but it would not have answered a hundred and fifty years ago, when large churches, containing some hundreds of members were formed in farm-houses, and some of them with several branches meeting in various directions, without any chapel.

The Baptists held their Associations nearly every year from 1650 until the passing of the Act of Uniformity in 1662. The old books of some of the churches, several of which were in existence when Joshua Thomas published his *History of Baptists in Wales*, contained some of the minutes of resolutions, and of the subjects discussed at these meetings, and other circumstances relating to them. The progress of the Baptists in Wales continued firmly though gradually during the above period, and even from that time to the passing of the Toleration Act in 1689, so far as to keep up nearly to the same number, notwithstanding the number

of natural deaths, emigrations and deaths by persecution, that took place during that time. In the year 1650, only three churches formed the Association which was held at Ilston in Gower, near Swansea. This was the first Baptist Association of which we have an account in Wales. In 1653, the number of the churches were five, meeting at the Association held at Abergavenny in May of that year. In the Association of 1656 at Brecon, eight churches were represented.

Soon after this came Charles II, who published the third edition of the Book of Sports. The Sunday Sports to be held in the churchyards after the services of the churches every Sunday, when a quantity of ale was to be distributed at the expense of the parishes, were first established by James I in 1618. The declaration was renewed and enlarged by his son Charles I in 1633, and it was for the third time established by his son, Charles II, immediately after his being enthroned, with strict orders to the bishops and clergy to carry them into effect. Thus were the bishops and clergymen in the hands of the King instrumental to spread all sorts of vanity, foolishness, and immoralities through the length and breadth of the land, on the Lord's Day.

Here we must notice that the Dissenters had not only to withstand the immoral effects of the Book of Sports, but also to suffer the violence and cruelties of various kinds by their persecutors, who had the Act of Uniformity to back them. Then, to make it still worse, we find that act after act came into existence, to increase their sufferings, and with a view to eradicate the Dissenters altogether from the land. The Conventicle Act in 1664, which made any five persons assembled anywhere to worship God liable to a penalty of £5 each, or three months' imprisonment; and for the second offence £10, or six months; and for the third offence, £100, or 7 years of transportation. This was to be settled without a trial by jury, only the oath of the accuser, who was to have one-third of the spoil as a reward for his accursed work. This was an inducement to unprincipled men to follow the children of God, and even to make false statements if the truth would not answer their purposes. Then was renewed an old Act made in the time of Queen Elizabeth, making a person liable to be transported for not attending Church. Then in 1665, the Five Mile Act. In 1670, some additions were made to the Conventicle Act, making it more strict—the Test Act in 1673—the new rigid order of the King in 1681, to carry out the Conventicle Act to the letter of the law, to imprison, and enforce the full penalties without mercy.

After the death of Charles, James the second began to persecute in 1685. O! hard times for Zion! The dear and innocent believers in Christ like lambs in the midst of wolves, who

committed all sorts of depredations upon them, and upon their families and possessions. Yes, they were hurled from prison to prison, and incarcerated in dark and damp cellars and cells, without the necessaries of life, and with only a bed of straw! and in such places often breathing their last. It was a wonder that such treatments and such enactments by such rapacious tigers were not effectual to extirpate the dissenters altogether. They often met in secret places to return their thanks to God for some providential escape, or to mingle their tears in weeping for some good brother that had fallen a prey to their cruel persecutors. We have to thank the Lord for keeping his dear ones from denying their principles, or sacrificing their religion for the sake of peace and quietness. Had they been inactive during these troublesome times, of course, their number would have been greatly diminished, to say the least, for 28 years bring forth a new generation of people, that is from 1661 to 1689.

The author of the Memoir of Daniel Rowland knew of but five preachers in Wales in 1660, according to his table. Of course he knew nothing of John Myles, of Ilston, who went soon after to America, with nearly all his church; nor of two good men of the same name, that being Morgan Jones, also of Ilston; or W. Thomas, who laboured at Carmarthen and Llantrisant, or Jenkin Jones, sometimes called Captain Jones, because he had been in the army. He was brought up at Oxford, and was an eminent preacher, and laboured in several counties of Wales, but as he was a Baptist, he was not known to the above authors; nor Henry Williams of Newtown; nor Hugh Evans of Radnorshire; nor Anthony Harry of Abergavenny; nor Thomas Proude, another of the ejected ministers; nor Thomas Joseph and Thomas Jones, of Llantrisant; nor Howel Thomas and David Davies of Gelligaer; nor Walter Prosser of Hay, nor of Howell Vaughn of Olchon, and Evan Bowen of Llanafan. Almost all the above, and those who will be named hereafter, as well as Vavasor Powell, are accounted for in the works of Drs. Calamy and Walker. The whole of the above 16, and some other Baptist ministers, and several assistant preachers, died during the time of the fierce persecution from 1661 to 1689.

The following also survived that grievous time:—Dr. Christopher Price and William Prichard of Abergavenny, Thomas Watkins of Hay, Lewis Thomas of Swansea, Robert Morgan of Carmarthen, Griffith Howells and William Jones of Pembroke-shire, Thomas Quarrel of North Wales, Thomas Evans and Henry Gregory of Radnorshire, Francis Giles and John Edwards of Llanwenarth, Thomas David Rees of Cardiganshire, Thomas Parry and William Milman of Llangwm, etc. It is probable that the above 15 and two or three more had laboured as preachers

and ministers of the Gospel from before 1660 up to 1689, and several of them long after that time. We have also a list of about 12 ministers who commenced their ministry during the troublesome and fierce reign of Charles II, viz.. James James, George Jones, Samuel Jones, John Jenkins, Richard Williams and Morgan Griffiths, all of the Western part of South Wales; N. Morgan, A. Morgan, Evan David, Jos. Price, David Thomas, and Evan Llewelyn, of the Eastern Counties of South Wales.

In the year 1689, after the Toleration Act was passed, a large Assembly of Baptists was convened in London, to arrange matters relating to the body of Baptists throughout the Kingdom, and to congratulate the churches respecting the liberty obtained by the passing of the Toleration Act. In this meeting, seven<sup>2</sup> Welsh churches were represented. By this time, holding Associations in Wales was a strange thing, inasmuch as above thirty years had passed without such meetings. Only one church had emigrated to America. This was the most flourishing of the eight: that at Ilston. The minister and nearly the whole of the members went together, and established themselves at Boston, and that church is there still, and in a flourishing state. The other seven churches that were left in 1656, had not only lived, but thrived, during the time of persecution.

After this time we find the Welsh churches sending messengers to the English Associations, to Bristol, Taunton, etc. Up to 1695, the Baptists had no chapel in Wales, excepting some sort of building at Hay,<sup>3</sup> prepared in 1649. All the seven churches (some of which had several preaching stations), were fostered and edified in farm-houses. In this year (1695), Llanwenarth Chapel was built. In 1700, the first Association was held after the times of persecution. It was held at Llanwenarth, when eight churches were represented in it. After this, they were held every year regularly, from place to place. Although the Occasional Act, and the Schism Act were passed in the time of Queen Anne, that is, in 1711 and 1713, with a view to curtail religious liberty, yet he that is able to turn the wrath of man to his own praise, and to restrain the remainder, took Anne off, and liberty was more extensively enjoyed under George I.

During the following twenty years revivals of an extraordinary character took place in several of the churches—those which were strict communion Baptists, as well as those which were mixed; and that at various times. In the year 1736, when the Calvinistic Methodists date their commencement, the number of Strict Baptist

<sup>2</sup> The Rev. D. Peters says six, but in that he was mistaken.

<sup>3</sup> As Hay was a Market Town, surrounded by many of the Members, a meeting house was prepared there, probably the first in Wales, therefore it was called Hay Church, and not Olchon Church, at that time.—Josh. Thom., p. 68.



Churches were sixteen, with branches and stations, and those which were mixed, from five to eight congregations. Thus we find the number of Strict Baptist Churches in 1689, seven; in 1700, eight; and in 1736, sixteen, without taking into consideration the mixed churches. We ought also to observe that the increase of members in nearly all these was accordingly. We shall take, for instance, some particulars relating to one of these sixteen churches, and that a young church at that time, viz.—Blaenau Gwent. This is by no means the most successful church, nor the most unsuccessful, but it may be considered one of the best to give us an idea of the average success. This church was formed in the year 1696, when there were 64 members. In the year 1717, a circumstance happened which evidently shows that the dissenting churches and hearers of those days were not a handful of the lowest and most uninfluential in our country. The following memorandum was on the Blaenau Church book, and quoted by Joshua Thomas in his History (1778).

“The Government required (in 1717) that all ministers should take the number of all their hearers, and their political state in the country. It was done. The hearers in Aberystroth (Blaenau), in Rhassau,<sup>4</sup> and in the house of Isaac Daniel,<sup>5</sup> as follows:—County Voters 123, Burgesses 26, Farmers 98, Tradesmen 55, Labourers 246. All these, with their wives and daughters, etc., about one thousand.”<sup>6</sup> Be it observed, that two years previous to this time there was no chapel in either of those three places. The church had only been formed 21 years previous to 1717, when there were 64 members. In 1725, about 80 were baptized here and at Hengoed. In 1729 a branch of this church at Pontypool was formed into a church. Fifty of the members were dismissed for this purpose, nearly all from Blaenau, and yet we find the number of members soon after this in Blaenau, 210. We might follow the same course as we have taken with this church with many more of the sixteen Strict Baptist Churches, and also with the mixed churches, but we must draw to a conclusion.

### Independents and Presbyterians

We should also keep in view that we have not touched the state of the progress which attended the Independents and Presbyterians. This is left to be done by some of themselves; but we may state that they had to experience the same persecutions at the time of Charles II, and that they were put to death by being incarcerated in cells and damp cellars, the same as we described the Baptists. And we might also allude to remarkable revivals which took place in many of their churches from 1689 to 1720 or

<sup>4</sup> A branch of Blaenau Church between Beaufort and Sirhowi.

<sup>5</sup> Another branch at Lanhiddel.

<sup>6</sup> It seems the children are not reckoned.

1730.<sup>7</sup> When we consider that the number of churches of Independents (including Presbyterians) amounted at that time to several more than those of Baptists in Wales; a person must have a strong and strange sort of resolution, or a great want of information, to say that Dissent in 1736 was declining in Wales, and nearly finishing its course. It should also be remarked that the Baptists had an Academy established at Pontypool in 1730, where young men were educated for the ministry, which was continued until the Bristol Academy was established in 1770; and that the Independents had one at Brynlywarch, and another at Ystrad Wallter, and afterwards at Carmarthen and Abergavenny, besides those in Tewkesbury and Shrewsbury, where several Welshmen were educated. We are also of opinion that the "new printing press" which was at Pontypool about 1736, was in some way connected with the Baptists. The account of revivals at Capel Isaac, Carmarthenshire, and the following quotation, may be seen in that excellent publication, the *Adolygydd*. We quote from the diary of that eminent man Edmund Jones, of Transh, who lived at the period under consideration, and was an eye-witness of the "Times" of Griffith Jones, Rowlands, and Harris, and even before their times. The quotation shows that the idea of the decline of religion before the break-out of Methodism in Wales, originated with these great reformers themselves.

"Mr. William Williams, the Methodist Clergyman, says that there was no clergyman or any minister awaken (or alive to the work) when Howel Harris commenced his labours. This is a shameful untruth to be published, because there were some clergymen awakened before him, such as Mr. Griffith Jones, Mr. Thomas Jones, Cwm Iau, and several others, and many dissenting ministers, such as Mr. John Thomas, Carnarvonshire, Mr. Williams, Tredwstan, Mr. Morgan of Llanafan-fawr, Mr. Vavasor Griffiths of Radnorshire, Mr. Palmer of Henllan, Mr. William Maurice, and Mr. Phillip Pugh, of Cardiganshire. James Davies has been also very lively at Merthyr Tydfil, and I was myself the means of bringing Mr. Howel Harris first to Monmouthshire to preach at the time of the revival. It is very strange that this man should

<sup>7</sup> We have a similar instance of such groundless assertions in our own days. On the 18th of August, 1857, the Bishop of Llandaff, at the opening of Penmaen Church, in reply to the toast of Sir Thomas Phillips, says that: "He believed that the system of Dissent was well nigh worn out in the Welsh districts. Welsh dissent unquestionably originated in the pious feelings of the people, but had now become a wealthy, and he much feared, too much of a political organization . . . He believed the time had arrived when the people were prepared to receive the doctrines of the Church of England, and be again restored to her communion . . . He had little doubt but the delusion of the Welsh dissent would soon entirely disappear from amongst them." See *Star of Gwent*, Aug. 22.

make such statements, and he having been bred and born among dissenters."—Diary for 1773.

This old brother might have mentioned many more even of his own brethren, the Independents, and Presbyterians, that were alive at that time, and very successful; such as Simon Thomas of Cilgwyn, in Cardiganshire, the author of the *History of the World and the Times*, and other books. The above is one of the best books in our language. Thomas Williams, Mynydd-bach, author of *Oeslyfr*; Howel Powel of Maesglettwr, translator of E. Cole's work in 1711. Mathias Maurice, the author of *Social Religion Exemplified*, in ten dialogues on religion in Caerludd; and other ministers. But we scarcely could expect Mr. Jones to mention the Baptists, he would not have taken a reward of some importance for doing that, for he never was able to love them well after the great debate that took place between him and Miles Harry, in Blaenau Gwent, in 1727 or 1728, when both were young. It was on Baptism. The above quotation alludes to what the Rev. W. Williams of Pantycelyn had written and published concerning Howel Harris, at that time.

We trust that we have, by the above few remarks, succeeded to show that religious movements in Wales among dissenters were gradually and steadily on the increase from 1680 to 1730, or 1736. And we hope that our young brethren will not be misled on this important period in our history. We yield to none in loving and respecting and wishing every success to the body of Calvinistic Methodists, and in thankfulness for the great good effected by them through Rowlands, Harris, and their successors; and we readily acknowledge that the establishment of this active body of dissenters, and its wonderful prosperity greatly stimulated all the Dissenters of Wales, and accelerated their revivals. On this point we are not at variance. But let a woman forget her suckling child before we agree to neglect the memoirs of those that laboured and suffered during the persecutions of Charles II, some of whom sacrificed their lives in the cause of God, and others of them proceeded with renewed vigour after obtaining the Toleration Act, which their adherence to their principles wrung out of the hands of the Government; and, under the blessing of God, they succeeded wonderfully before 1736. No, they shall not be forgotten! They should be indelibly engraven on our memories, as examples of faithfulness, and kept on the pages of history for the edification of future ages.

The sixteen churches above-mentioned were Dolau and Pentref in Radnorshire; Olchon, on the border of Herefordshire; Swansea, Hengoed, and Penyfai, in Glamorganshire; Llanwenarth, Llangwm, Blaenau, and Penygarn, in Monmouthshire; Rhydwylym, Newcastle in Emlyn, and Llanelly, in Carmarthen-

shire; Moleston and Cilfowyr in Pembrokeshire; and Maesyberllan in Brecknockshire, besides several others, which were churches to all intents and purposes, excepting that they were not regularly formed, such as Llangloffan, Penycoed, Aberduar, Basseleg and Castleton, Ffynon Henry, Ffynon, etc., for the ordinances had been administered among them for many years.<sup>8</sup>

We might also give a list of ministers who were actively engaged in the work of the Lord among this denomination from 1700 to 1736. In the western part of Wales we have the following:—John Jenkins, Griffith Howells, David James, Samuel John, Thomas Mathias, Philip John, Griffith Williams, John James, Evan David, James James, Nathaniel Jenkins, Rees Jones, David Owen, Enoch Francis, John David Nicholas, Thomas David, Griffith Thomas, David Richard, Evan Thomas, Thomas David Evan, James Williams, John Richard, Daniel Garnon, David Evans, etc.

In the eastern part of South Wales, including the counties of Monmouth and Glamorgan, during the same period, we find William Meredith, Joshua James, Roger David, John Harray, Nathaniel Morgan, Griffith Jones, Morgan Jones, William Davies, Griffith Davies, Lewis Thomas, John Davies, Miles Harry, Caleb Evans, John Evans, Richard Williams, Thomas Lewis, Roger Walker, Nathan Davies, etc., making altogether from forty to fifty ministers, who have laboured among the unmixed Baptists from 1700 to 1736. It would be desirable, we think, to make the above names as household words to our children, to form a new table on the plan of those of Messrs. Johnes and Owen, containing all the dissenting ministers and good men within the Church in Wales from 1560 to 1736.

WILLIAM ROBERTS.

<sup>8</sup> The number of Baptist congregations, must be therefore considered, in 1736, from 20 to 30, in addition to from 40 to 50 preaching stations, they had, at that time, without the mixed congregations.

*Nantwich Baptist Church, 1653-1953* is an illustrated tercentenary brochure (price 2s.) by W. S. Shaw which briefly sketches the history of the cause, which was probably planted in the old Cheshire town by Col. Hy. Danvers. One of its members married John Milton, while an early pastor was Isaac Kimber. Obtainable from the church.

*Short History of Rowley Baptist Church.* This illustrated booklet by F. G. Twitchett describes the origin in 1652, and subsequent history of one of our oldest churches. Containing considerable information, it makes a useful contribution to the history of the Baptists in Co. Durham from Thomas Tillam's day onward. Obtainable from the church, price 3s.