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The Dissidence of William Richards

1. *Richards's political views.*

On 5 March 1793 William Richards,¹ a Baptist minister at King's Lynn, wrote to Samuel Jones of Pennepek, Pennsylvania, from a London coffee house:²

"All is bustle now in this vast metropolis. Our court has joined the general confederacy of Despots and plunged the nation into a war with the newly emancipated people of France. It is evidently the war of Kings, Peers, Priests, civil & religious Corporations, and privileged orders, against Freedom and the Rights of Man. It seems as if the time which John in the Revelation ch. xi foretells, is now arrived, when the *nations* would be *angry*. Nothing at this time can be more evident than the alarm and anger of all the nations of Europe. Herod & Pontius Pilate are become friends. His Holiness the Pope has sent an ambassador to our most gracious K--g, to solicit his aid to protect the church, & preserve from ruin *that faith* of which he is the *Defender*—and it is said that that same Ambassador has met with a very kind reception. . . .

As at the commencement of the American War, so now we scarce hear anything talked about by the satellites of the court but the *dignity* of England, its exhaustless resources, its omnipotence, and how much it is beneath our court to treat or be at peace with such a vile set as the National Convention of France, or such a contemptible nation as the French. . . . Either tyranny is on the Eve of being destroyed in Europe, or Europe itself is on the Eve of being once more plunged into the Abyss of Gothic Barbarity and Bondage. This is surely a time to study the prophetic scriptures."

Here we see a situation wherein a highly literate Dissenter, ready with the words of Scripture, could believe that the national establishment was so infatuated as to be repeating on a free people an onslaught it had allegedly made on its own colonists, and, moreover, out of a simple hatred of liberty. One would never think, from reading this extract, that it was the French who had declared war, or that there had been a French invasion of the Low Countries which, on every political consideration, constituted a formidable danger to Great Britain's interests.

In 1787, in a piece which John Evans, his biographer, described as "much and deservedly admired by the friends of civil and religious liberty",³ Richards had censured Mark Noble's hostile and inaccurate account of Oliver Cromwell. A year after writing the letter to Jones already quoted, he published at Lynn a pamphlet called *Reflections on French Atheism and on English Christianity*. Atheism in France,

he contended, had been stimulated by the civil and ecclesiastical polity of the old regime: "the vilest and most detestable of their Monarchs pretended to rule by right divine";⁴ and the Gallican Church, being both an establishment and Popish, was doubly corrupt. The old order seemed readily to admit the force of the philosophers' arguments, in which they "did not always spare the god who could be the author of such a production".⁵ But New Testament Christianity had nothing to fear from the philosophers, whose foe was the religion of priestcraft and establishments. Christianity corrupted through incorporation with the state and accommodated "to the taste and spirit of the world"⁶ allows, Richards declared in the course of a measured tirade, "of our interfering in the internal concerns of France, and striving with all our might to perpetuate its convulsions and its anarchy", and instructs us to be unconcerned at the "shameful and cruel dismemberment of Poland";⁷ at the destructiveness of our Oriental policy, and at our participation in the slave trade.

The next year Richards returned to his attacks, publishing at Lynn his sermon *Food for a Fast-Day* (1795). He indicated what he believed were vital differences between New Testament Christianity and unholy modern departures from it. Fasts there were in New Testament times, but *public* fasting was forbidden by the rule in Matthew vi. 16f.; the fasts were not "*national*", for there had never been "a nation of christians, or of sincere disciples and followers of Jesus Christ"; they were not observed through the civil authority's proclamation, since "the primitive christians did not conceive that religion appertained to the province of the civil magistrate";⁸ and, moreover, there was no New Testament authority for political fasts, or fasts designed to advance wars. The modern fasts, indeed, distinctly resembled the many "hypocritical and diabolical"⁹ ones among those held in Old Testament times, the impenitent Jews being matched by "our modern advocates for the *slave trade*, and the execrable european war-system",¹⁰ and might thus prove, like the ancient ones, to be a curse. In this sermon Richards made great play with the story of the murder of Naboth in the setting of a public fast. The recipients of Jezebel's letters of instruction he called "certain placemen, or retainers of the Court, all of the right Reevesian stamp"; the pretext for the fast, he said, "seemed to be, that both *Church* and *Monarchy* were *in danger*; and the Deity, it is probable, was to be solemnly invoked to preserve both"; the public which was present was "a numerous high church mob";¹¹ and the charge on which Naboth was falsely found guilty was that "of being an enemy to Church and State (a downright atheist, republican, and leveller, no doubt)". There was even a living Jezebel in the North—"our great and good ally" and "supreme head of the Muscovite . . . church", the Empress Catherine.¹²

From 1795 until 1801 or 1802 Richards spent most of his time in Wales. He was trying to shake off ill-health. He suffered not only physical illnesses but apparently also depression.¹³ In 1797 the French

made a descent on the coast of Pembrokeshire. Their force was a poor one, composed partly of convicts, and it readily surrendered. But the weight of reaction and persecution was soon felt. Samuel Griffiths, a Congregationalist, and Thomas John, a Baptist, were indicted, on French evidence only, for conspiring with the invaders. Richards described the invasion in a letter of 19 March 1798 to Jones of Pennepek; he enclosed a pamphlet, which would be his *Cwyn y Cystuddiedig* . . . (Carmarthen, 1798),¹⁴ containing a detailed narrative of the affair. The letter explained:

"Mr. John, whose ruin was so much sought and desired by our Tory Gentry was a friend and relation of mine—I need not add that I was not quite inactive on the occasion, and that the narrative was drawn up by me—An account in English was proposed, and intended, but it is deferred for the present owing to the rage of the enemy, and the critical state of things in this country. I was seriously threatened on account of having drawn up the Welsh account, and it was hinted to my friends by one of the most moderate of the Clergy, that if I wrote and published in English, they would not answer for the consequence—I was therefore advised to defer it—and there the matter now rests."

Even the publication of Richards's *English-Welsh Dictionary* (1798) bore the imprint of his strong views. For example, "Buccaneers" were said to keep "*fast days* to seek God's blessing on their ventures, and thanksgiving days to praise him for their success . . .".¹⁵ In his letter to Jones of 19 March 1798 he explained that the dictionary "gave great umbrage to the Clergy and others", and brought him under a threat of prosecution.

In 1803, about a year after he relinquished his pastorate, Richards married, but in 1805 his young wife died. In his utter distraction he shut himself away from society for seven years and sought relief in writing his *History of Lynn* (2 vols. Lynn, 1812), the only work by which he is now remembered. Valuable as a history, it is also a considerable polemical treatise, over 1200 pages long, and, like all Richards's works, written with precision, lucidity and power. In it he continued his independent, radical commentary on the public events of the reign of George III, returning to such themes as the incompatibility of Christianity and war, and also introducing new topics. He noted the deplorable social and economic effects of the war, and thought the British war-aims unattainable. The trade of Lynn might revive, he sneered, "when we shall have driven the French out of Spain and Portugal, and obliged Napoleon to restore all his conquests, and allow us a free trade to every part of the continent".¹⁶ He also canvassed, and observed the reaction against, the idea of Parliamentary reform; and he sketched the history of borough corporations, asserted their uselessness, drew attention to their corruption, and proposed their abolition. He further recommended the relief of Roman Catholics and Dissenters, a general peace, and a liberal policy towards

Ireland, thinking it might be as successful as Chatham's had been towards Scotland.

The *History of Lynn* has a noticeable element of verbal violence. With heavy irony Richards implied that George III was "our own Solomon,"¹⁷ and all would consider the prospect of his reign's lasting as long as, or still longer than, that of Henry III "a consummation most devoutly to be wished".¹⁸ The Younger Pitt's policy in the years of peace was passed over in silence: to Richards, Pitt was a man who pursued a "reign of terror",¹⁹ one of "private revels, or midnight orgies", debts, and, in spite of the supposed financial ability of Prime Ministers, final personal insolvency.²⁰

Richards's latest writings (1812-18)²¹ contain passages as mordant as any he ever wrote. For instance, he imagined the "intended observers" of a thanksgiving day for peace being asked by their neighbours, "We hear of some mighty benefits and blessings which we are about to enjoy, as the glorious fruits of the War in which we have been so long engaged, and for which we are required to offer to God our public thanks. We wish, therefore, to know what these benefits and blessings really are, and those precious fruits which are become the subjects of so much exaltation. Are we to reckon among them—the *restoration* of THE POPE, the *re-establishment* of THE INQUISITION, and the *recall* of the JESUITS? These certainly are among the genuine fruits of our late mighty exertions. But if we mean to call them benefits and blessings, our national character must be greatly altered. Is the *restoration* of the BOURBONS, the most bigotted and persecuting, despotic and unprincipled royal family in Europe, to the ill-fated thrones of France, Spain, and Naples, to be esteemed among the said benefits and blessings? If so, the love of Freedom and Protestantism must have left us. . . ." ²²

Slavery was wrong; denial of liberty in general was wrong; war was wrong. Such were the few, but easily grasped and emphatically stated, political principles which this biting and energetic writer dinned into the mind of his reading public. In these issues, politics and morality meet. Indeed, with Richards, as with Richard Price—though viewed less philosophically in Richards's case—politics was a branch of morality. Richards's rhetorical forcefulness may obscure the fact that he was not particularly interested in politics as such. He produced only one unusual idea about Parliamentary representation: that members should be paid—a notion he had found in the practice of Lynn in the seventeenth century.²³ He did not compose any systematic political treatise. Moreover, whereas Thomas Paine put forward proposals for positive social reforms, such as raising the status of women, and the provision of education, family allowances, and pensions, no such plans are found in Richards. Again, Richards's wish for peace appears to have included the dubious assumption that enemies would somehow leave him alone, since he never tells us what he would have done about the threat to liberty posed by Bonaparte.

Lastly, though he mentioned (in 1812), in contexts of approval, Wilkes, Cartwright, Wyvill, Thelwall, and Burdett,²⁴ these were apparently little more to him than potent and evocative names, suggesting reformist activism. At no time did he publicize the writings of (say) Wyvill, or sketch the reformers' careers. His real hero in his time was Thomas Clarkson, whose

"unparalleled exertions in behalf of the oppressed Africans, and for the abolition of the detestable *Slave-trade*, so long the disgrace and curse of this country, must place his name very high indeed, among the modern sons of Britain—even far above our *Burkes*, our *Pitts*, and our *Nelsons*, as the real friend of his country and his species, and the benefactor of the human race. Compared with such characters, he appears as an angel of light by the side of a group of demons . . ."²⁵

Richards seems to have thought of himself as a censor, or detached critic. Evidence of this attitude occurs in his remarks about the visible effect of the Reformation at Lynn, a town which had contained an impressive number of religious houses:

"Had two persons, a papist and a protestant, who remembered the town in its former state, now visited and jointly surveyed it, one would have been apt to take up his lamentation and pronounce *Ichabod!* its glory is departed! while the other would be no less apt exultingly to exclaim 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen!'—But a *third* person, accustomed to view things with the eyes of a christian philosopher, would have given way to neither lamentation nor exultation, but would have considered the whole as the natural effect of a mighty revolution, and an additional proof of the changing and perishing nature of all human productions and sublunary magnificence."²⁶

Who could this "christian philosopher" be but Richards himself?

2. *Richards's theology*

About 1783 Richards had become a convert to the theology of the McLeanists, or Scotch Baptists.²⁷ Archibald McLean, a moderate Calvinist, was an adherent of "Scripture sufficiency", a principle which prompted conscious attempts to retrieve Christian doctrine and Church order from the Bible, as opposed to receiving these things primarily from Church tradition. Like the Sandemanians (of whose system his own was a Baptist derivation), McLean tried to organize totally independent congregations on what was taken to be the model in the New Testament, as if the Church had no history of any significance, or as if the particular customs obtaining amongst Levantine Jewish and Gentile Christians of the first century were intended to be exactly reproduced in the meeting-houses of Hanoverian Britain. Further, McLean's *On the Divinity and Sonship of Christ* (1777)²⁸ is a clear example of how a professed Scripture sufficiency could work to the detriment of Catholic beliefs, and not even in a rationalizing direction; for his contention that, while Scripture teaches the Triunity of God, the Second Person was not

to be thought of as the *Son* before his Incarnation, led him to give teaching which he supposed was monotheistic but was in fact only nominally distinguishable from tritheism.

Richards, who must have been reasonably well-informed about Sandemanian Scripture sufficiency even before he became a formal student,²⁹ accepted McLean's version of it for several years. Indeed, he never subsequently relinquished that principle, and tried to propagate McLeanism among his congregation at Lynn.³⁰ A commitment to McLeanism is doubtless implicit in his treatise *The History of Antichrist* (Lynn, 1784). There he maintained that Christendom was in a state of apostasy; Antichrist had long been at work, "from the defection of the Judaizing Teachers".³¹ The Reformation, though a puissant event, had produced establishments of intolerant, oppressive hierarchies, acting as if they were infallible. "Nothing short of an agreement with the New Testament can give any man, or set of men a right to bear the name of Christ. Those who assume his name but reject his laws and institutions, are not his followers but those of *Antichrist*."³²

It seems that an *ecclesiola in ecclesia* situation developed at Lynn, the converts to McLeanism being "united together in a social connexion", as the Scot himself put it.³³ Probably the McLeanist cause survived in this state for a few years before flickering out. In the meantime Richards probably saw the tritheistical import of McLean's doctrine. However, he eschewed Athanasian Trinitarianism too, and he retreated into an undefined modalistic Monarchian belief.³⁴ He also became dissatisfied with the moderate Calvinistic viewpoint represented by McLean and the Bristol Academy. Probably he came to these conclusions about 1794.³⁵

About the beginning of the new century Richards, sojourning in Wales, was associated with an Arminian movement among the Welsh Baptists. Obloquy fell upon him, and pursued him back to King's Lynn, where, according to John Evans, he

"soon ceased preaching to his old flock. Not that he ever received from them a regular dismissal. He, however, upon the death of his worthy friend the *Rev. Mr. Warner*, the Presbyterian minister, officiated in the morning at his chapel; but this was of short duration. MR. RICHARDS soon found that there was a degree of coolness in some of his old friends: but alas! this was not the only circumstance which attended it. Rumour was busy to propagate the strangest reports".³⁶

Such reports, said Richards, asserted that he was a Sandemanian, a Fullerite, an Arminian, a Socinian, a catabaptist, a paedobaptist, a Deist, or an atheist.³⁷ There was a further bitter experience for him, even before the death of his wife in 1805. The Minutes of the old General Baptist General Assembly mention him on occasion from 1801 until 1809, and those of 1803³⁸ tell us that a Calvinistic congregation at Lincoln, occupying a meeting-house belonging to the old General Baptists, asked Richards to go and preach there. Perhaps

they thought he was still a Calvinist. On the Assembly's recommendation, he went. The 1804 Minutes, however, show the failure of his mission, and add, "We also most sincerely regret that his treatment at that place, with some honourable exceptions—was so extremely illiberal & utterly irreconcilable to the spirit of Christianity."³⁹

In the last phase of his theological thinking—i.e. from about 1804 until 1818—Richards was a McLeanist without the doctrines of election and the Trinity, and clamoured (often violently) for Christian forbearance all round. The *History of Lynn* (1812) contains bitter attacks on Calvinism. Richards illustrated, by quotations from Calvin, Beza, and others, the scandalous nature of the doctrine of double predestination; he cited evidence from Luther, Calvin, and Erasmus to show that the Reformation promoted the opposite of sanctity; and he specifically imputed to the modern evangelicals such doctrines as "justification by faith without works, predestination to perdition as well as to salvation, or election and reprobation representing all human characters and actions (even the most horrid crimes) as emanating or resulting from the decrees of Heaven . . . —doctrines which certainly cannot be said to be favourable to practical holiness or virtuous living".⁴⁰ He also lambasted Athanasian orthodoxy. Athanasius and the other Fathers were referred to as "old women";⁴¹ he wrote, in a context of approval, of the dropping of the Athanasian Trinity "by numbers of our most learned countrymen"⁴² through the work of Samuel Clarke and others; and he called the Athanasian Creed "a self-contradictory farrago".⁴³ His campaign on behalf of tolerance and charity mostly took the form of hostile reviews of individuals and groups he held to be conspicuously lacking in them. Luther, for instance, is depicted in detail as spiteful, habitually abusive when addressing his theological opponents, "assuming an extraordinary and apostolic dignity and authority, under the name or title of *Écclesiastes*",⁴⁴ and persecuting his own follower Carlstadt. Calvin, Richards argued, was worse.

It seems worthwhile to note the reasons for the heavy stress which Richards came to put on Christian forbearance: adumbrated as early as 1784, when he had deplored Reforming intolerance,⁴⁵ in the later writings it became an obsessive preoccupation. Forbearance was valued by Dissenters, with their history of suffering through intolerance and their feeling that they were a permanent minority. With Locke, they also knew that persecution was unchristian. "Enlightened" ideas about the universe, and the simultaneous vogue of Scripture sufficiency had made for doctrinal reassessment, and thus led to disputes. Scripture sufficiency failed to yield the clear and generally acceptable results expected from it, but such was its prestige that it was not effectively challenged until the Catholic revival; instead there was a call to tolerate different conclusions from it, a call sounded especially by Philip Doddridge. Again, Richards had before him the frightening example of the hostility shown by evangelicals to Griffiths and John when they were unjustly indicted on a capital charge: in *Cwyn y*

Cystuddiedig he claimed that before the trial a party was active in spreading reports that the charges were well-founded; "the foremost of these", he said, found allies among the clergy, including "the evangelicals", and he declared that the campaign was supported by the Tories, the ungodly, and "orthodox Methodists", the last-named slandering the imprisoned pair far and wide, even to North Wales. He himself had not long afterwards become an object of fury, harassed by wild accusations of heresy, and slandered as far afield as America.⁴⁶ Then there was the traumatic experience at Lincoln. More positively, Richards had become friendly, about 1800, with John Evans of Islington, his future biographer, a minister and writer of notably eirenic outlook, who remained on good terms with him until his death. By 1800 Evans had already published work advocating tolerance. He and Richards exchanged letters every month.⁴⁷

In his later years, and probably only partly from increasing ill-health, Richards "was not connected with any society of Christians whatsoever".⁴⁸ He reached a dead end where he virtually wrote off all denominations of the existing Church and, as regards the nature and office of Christ, attained to a doctrine which was neither Athanasian nor Socinian and is extremely difficult to categorize. If we ask why so agile a thinker ended thus, the ultimate answer would appear to be that having failed to transcend a potentially lethal inheritance (private judgment, sectarianism, Scripture sufficiency, and eighteenth-century "reason"), he was intellectually destroyed by it.

In the wide spectrum of Georgian discontent, Richards belongs leftwards of such establishment figures as Fox and Wyvill, but he cannot exactly be classed with Paine and Godwin, for these were "programme" revolutionaries whereas Richards had virtually no positive programme at all. His place is with people like the poet Shelley, that is, in a milieu of independent, alienated, radical critics, stinging in diatribe but without a programme. And looking over the span of time from the seventeenth century to the present, we can place him roughly in sequence—as an old Puritan who has been metamorphosed a little, but perceptibly, in the direction of a rootless and remorseless "Hampstead liberal" of selective sympathies.

NOTES

The present essay is based on my Nottingham M.Phil. thesis (1973) "The Reverend William Richards (1749-1818) and his friends: a study of ideas and relationships". Microfilm copies are in the Central Libraries at King's Lynn and Norwich, and in Brown University Library, Rhode Island. I wish to thank Professor W. R. Fryer and the Rev. Dr. B. R. White for their comments.

¹ William Richards (1749-1818): Baptist divine, historian, lexicographer, controversialist, extensive correspondent; born at Penrhydd, Haverfordwest, son of a Particular Baptist farmer; entered Bristol Academy, 1775; began his King's Lynn pastorate, 1776; accepted McLeanist teachings, c. 1783; became an Arminian, c. 1794; published his *History of Lynn*, 1812; buried at Wisbech, Cambs.

² All letters from Richards to Samuel Jones here cited are in the Mrs. Irving H. McKesson Collection (Jones section), Historical Society of Pennsylvania. I am grateful to Professor Gwyn A. Williams for lending me his wife's transcripts of the letters from which I have quoted.

³ John Evans, *Memoirs of . . . Richards* (Chiswick, 1819), p. 189: a reference to Richard's *Review of the Memoirs of the Protectoral-House of Cromwell* (Lynn, 1787).

⁴ *Reflections on French Atheism . . .*, p. 10.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁸ *Food for a Fast Day . . .*, p. 3.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹³ Richards to Jones, 14 Sept. 1795, and *Memoirs*, pp. 103-7.

¹⁴ Ms. translation by Mrs. F. Eileen Faithfull made for the author and in his possession. The pamphlet alleges that the arrested pair were victims of perjury by Siarl [i.e. Charles] Prudhome, who eventually confessed that the "five beasts" (presumably of the Tory gentry) had promised him sixty guineas, and the expectation of freedom, in return for his perjury. The case against both men was dropped.

¹⁵ Translation supplied by Mrs. Faithfull.

¹⁶ *History of Lynn*, II, p. 1164.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, I, p. 480n.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, I, p. 407.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, II, p. 975.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, I, p. 164.

²¹ These were seven occasional pamphlets under the general title *The Seasonal Monitor, or Temperate Remonstrant*, and are apparently no longer extant as originally published. (See my thesis, pp. 147-50.) In *Memoirs*, p. 225, Evans gives a version of the titles in chronological order.

²² *Memoirs*, pp. 227-8, quoting what Evans called *The Ancient Query, What mean you by this Service?* (*Memoirs*, p. 225).

²³ *History of Lynn*, II, pp. 764-8.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, I, p. 600; II, pp. 953-4.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 106-7.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, II, p. 691.

²⁷ *New Evangelical Magazine*, X (1824) contains letters from McLean to Richards: 12 Feb. 1783 (pp. 71-3), 31 Oct. 1786 (pp. 101-2), 12 March 1787 (pp. 138-9), 12 Dec. 1789 (pp. 170-2), 27 May 1791 (pp. 210-11).

²⁸ McLean, *Works*, ed. Wm. Jones, 1823, I, pp. 419-65.

²⁹ T. Witton Davies demonstrated the great extent to which Sandemanianism was known in Wales: it was represented there in Richards's boyhood—"The McLeanist (Scotch) and Campbellite Baptists of Wales", *Trans. Baptist Historical Society*, VII, pp. 161-2.

³⁰ *New Evangelical Magazine*, X (1824); see n. 27 above.

³¹ *History of Antichrist*, p. 8; cf. pp. 57-9.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³³ McLean to Richards, 12 Dec. 1789, *New Evangelical Magazine*, X, p. 171.

³⁴ A *catena* of the primary evidence for Richards's Christology is set out in my thesis, pp. 58-60. For Evans's opinion that Richards's views perhaps resembled the Indwelling Scheme, see *Memoirs*, pp. vii, 116-17.

³⁵ Richards had become a General Baptist before Evans knew him (*Memoirs*, p. 125); and they met as a result of Evans's *Sketch of the Denominations . . .* (1795).

³⁶ *Memoirs*, p. 117.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 118-19.

³⁸ *Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches . . .*, 1909-19, II, p. 257.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, II, p. 264.

⁴⁰ *History of Lynn*, II, p. 664n.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, II, p. 665.

⁴² *Ibid.*, II, p. 906.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, II, p. 1118.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, II, p. 636. Against Luther, as elsewhere in his pages on the Reformation, Richards cited the Roman Catholic apologist Bishop John Milner (1752-1826), Vicar Apostolic for the Midland district. Milner's name appears over 20 times from II, p. 628n. to II, p. 663n.

⁴⁵ *History of Antichrist*, pp. 5-6.

⁴⁶ Richards to Samuel Jones, 13 March 1803.

⁴⁷ *Memoirs*, p. 245.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

J. A. ODDY.

BAPTIST QUARTERLY INDEX

A Cumulative Index to the Baptist Quarterly, volumes XI-XX (1942-64), compiled by Douglas C. Sparkes, has recently been published for the Baptist Historical Society by University Microfilms Ltd. The appearance of this work marks the completion of an immense task which Mr. Sparkes undertook in 1962, when he began the full indexing of the *Transactions* of the Baptist Historical Society and the *Baptist Quarterly*. The indexes to the *Transactions* (1908-21) and to the *Baptist Quarterly*, volumes I-X (1922-41), were published in 1966 and 1970 respectively. At the same time Mr. Sparkes has carried the indexing of current volumes of the *Quarterly* through to 1974. He has thus provided a consistent and accurate guide to sixty-seven years of historical and theological studies, chiefly by Baptists, and has greatly helped the present and future generations of scholars. One may now easily discover what subjects, persons and places have been dealt with in the Society's journal, what maps and illustrations have been printed, what books have been reviewed, and who have been the contributors and reviewers.

The *Cumulative Index* to volumes XI-XX (1942-64) costs £15.00 and should be ordered from University Microfilms International Ltd., 18 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4EJ.