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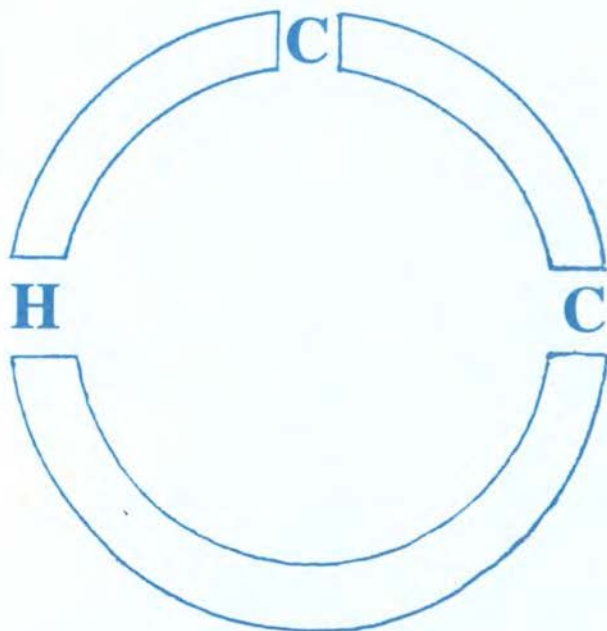
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The Congregational History Circle *Magazine*



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THE CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY CIRCLE MAGAZINE

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EDITORIAL

This issue of the magazine marks a development in the life of the Congregational History Circle. The sad death of John Bray, the founding secretary (reported in our last issue), necessitated the appointment of a new Secretary and Colin Price has been elected to this post. In addition, the magazine editor, Trevor Watts, felt the time was ripe for him to take a back seat and Alan Argent has assumed more responsibility for the editing. Trevor's wisdom remains a resource which doubtless will be needed in the years to come. We must, however, thank him for all his many efforts on the Circle's behalf. Your support for the Circle's officers is appreciated.

This magazine contains an article on the Independent ministers in London in the 1640's and specifically concentrates on their links with the parishes during that period of religious turmoil. It is salutary to recall that so many early Congregational ministers actively sought to maintain close links with the parishes and were forced by their opponents into positions of strict Independency. The article on Robert Gentleman is an attempt to put some flesh on a figure that has been prominent in Welsh Academics. We welcome the items by our new secretary, which augurs well for the future, and Miss Christine Denwood for her account of our Chapel Crawl. Please note too, our appeal for help in maintaining both the standard and the finances of C.H.C. Also in this issue we note the death of Elsie Chamberlain who has been an inspiring example for many, of Bill Meyer, the first Treasurer of the Congregational Federation, and Lady Stansgate, John Bray, Tom Hodgson, and W.C. Wake.

The book reviews remind us of the differing contributions made not only to the Congregational churches, but to the British churches in general, by Martyn Lloyd-Jones and John Huxtable. Their careers set out in stark contrast two paths our churches might have travelled in the twentieth century.

The editor would encourage contributions in the way of articles, reviews etc., for inclusion in future copies of the CHC Magazine. If you have any queries, please write to Dr. Alan Argent.

We should also congratulate our CHC member and major contributor to our last magazine, Dr. Clyde Binfield of Sheffield University, on the award to him of an OBE. Also we note with pleasure the election of Dr. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, the renowned Congregational historian, to a Senior Fellowship of the British Academy.

Sub-Editors Note

We welcome Alan Argent as editor, the third in thirteen years. Bill Ashley Smith served 1978-9, myself 1979-92, Alan Argent 1992-. Our C.H.C. Magazine has grown over these years to be a major publication within Congregationalism combining articles of original research with items of church news, developments, etc. Costs have risen from a humble £25 under John Bray and David Lovell to near £900. But thanks to the generosity of the Congregational Federation and U.C.C.C. under John Franks and others we are still solvent, with our funds carefully nursed by our treasurer Chris Damp while George Brassington is trying to get our membership lists organised.

In welcoming Alan we are assured it is in good and capable hands. In I hope readers will heed his request for articles, reviews, and suggestions for future issues of the C.H.C. Magazine.

THE INDEPENDENTS IN THE PARISHES OF THE CITY OF LONDON IN THE 1640's— “A SMALL INCONSIDERABLE COMPANIE”

The public emergence of the religious Independents in London as a separate and cohesive grouping has often been traced to the publication of *An Apologeticall Narration* (1644) by five of the delegates to the Westminster Assembly of Divines. These five—William Bridge, Jeremiah Burroughes, Sidrach Simpson, Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye—had all lived, with other like minded brethren for some years before the English civil war, in the Netherlands where they had enjoyed a degree of religious freedom and toleration unknown to them in England. Thus they had a clearly defined position on church matters and at Westminster they had an unique opportunity to set out that position.

The writers of *An Apologeticall Narration*, in openly declaring their own position, attempted to show how much they had in common with the Presbyterians. They were godly and orthodox in doctrine like the Presbyterians and acknowledged that “multitudes of the assemblies and parochial congregations” of the established church were true churches. However they claimed to follow a “middle way betwixt that which is falsely charged on us, Brownism, and that which is the contention of the times, the authoritative Presbyterian government”.¹

Although the authors had not separated themselves from the national church they could find no easy reconciliation with the Presbyterians. The ideal of Congregational church government appealed only to a small minority of Westminster delegates. “Blessed be God”, wrote Robert Baillie on the day after the Assembly had sent up the completed draft of church government to Parliament in July 1645, “all the ministers of London are for us. Burton and Goodwin, the only two that were Independent are by Parliament removed from their places. Seven or eight preachers that are against our way are only lecturers in the city but not ministers. We hope shortly to gett the Independents put to it to declare themselves either to be for the rest of the Sectaries or against them. If they declare against them they will be but a small inconsiderable companie; if for them all honest men will cry out upon them for separating from all the Reformed Churches to joyne with Anabaptists and Libertines.”²

Baillie saw little distinction between the sectaries and the Independents. The Congregational divines in the assembly had originally hoped the setting-up of gathered churches within the national church might be permitted. In December 1643 they had joined with the Presbyterians to condemn the gathering of separate congregations in and about the City, to underline their distinction from “Anabaptists and Libertines”.³

Thus the Congregationalists found themselves beset on all sides, being neither separatists nor supporters of the national church. Indeed the Congregational ministers among the Westminster delegates eschewed the name “Independent” describing it as a “proud and insolent title”.⁴ Yet their churches were autonomous, gathered churches where only the saints were admitted to full

membership and in this sense they shared a church polity with those more extreme Independents and Separatists. Clearly in the early 1640's the semi-separating Independency of Henry Burton was distinct from that of Philip Nye yet the distinction can be exaggerated.⁵ Thomas Edwards, the Presbyterian "muck-raker", reported Nye's opinion of Burton's work, *The Protestation Protested*. "It was this, that in that Book there was grosse Brownisme which he nor his Brethren no way agreed with him in and that for his part he would as soon subscribe to the Book of Common Prayer, as to divers things there . . ."⁶

Nye and his fellow signatories to *An Apologeticall Narration*, William Bridge, Jeremiah Burroughes, Thomas Goodwin and Sidrach Simpson, with other allies among the Westminster delegates, clearly sought to dissociate themselves from the Brownists and extreme Separatists whilst their own position remained remarkably ambivalent. Henry Burton in 1641 recognized his Independent church polity was the same as that of the Separatists.⁷ However in 1645 a conference between Burton and the Separatist David Brown concluded with Brown's objection to Burton's continued association with the parish churches – "they should have no spiritual fellowship at all with the unfruitful works of darkness".⁸

If then the terms Independent and Congregationalist were not precisely synonymous in the mid-seventeenth century (and the Separatists too pose problems of definition) at least their relationship was close and understood as such by contemporaries. Robert Baillie categorized the Congregationalists of the Assembly, who claimed to follow the example of John Cotton and the New England churches with Independents, Brownists and Separatists. If they disliked the term Independent he suggest the alternative titles of Brownist or Separatist. Baillie went further and suggested the Brownists' objections were more "reasonable" than that of the Independents for "the Brownists did build their separation on the tyranny of bishops, on the superstition of the ceremonies and service-book". The Independents, however, faced no such difficulties in the 1640's for both bishops and prayer-book had been abolished.⁹

This paper is concerned with the parish churches of the City of London and not specifically with the Independent gathered churches. Discussion must include those Congregationalists of the Westminster Assembly and their friends who disavowed the name, Independent, as well as semi-separating Independents like Henry Burton. Those preachers and congregations who remained free from all contact with the parish churches fall outside the limits of my discussion, although their presence in the City also influenced the parish clergy and their congregations (not least in increasing their fury against toleration), and affected the religious complexion of the City as a whole.

Not only did the Congregational clergy adopt and develop differences of emphasis with regard to their congregations' associations with the parish churches but also they adopted different attitudes with regard to their own contacts with the parishes. For instance Baillie's observation that in London more Independent ministers occupied parish lectureships than benefices reveals the dilemma the Congregationalists and Independents faced.¹⁰ The Congregationalists in the Westminster Assembly hoped for a church settlement which tolerated their churches so clearly in the early 1640's they might look more

kindly on parish links. Yet as the debates progressed and the inevitability of an intolerant Presbyterian structure loomed larger surely the external pressure from the wider church and the internal pressure from their own polity ought to have forced the Congregational and Independent clergy to have severed all parish connections. Indeed in some cases this occurred. Philip Nye was rector of Acton from 1643 to 1654 when he resigned.¹¹ Thomas Goodwin accepted no parochial living.¹² Yet even these men retained close links with the parishes – Nye's gathered church met at St. Bartholomew Exchange where it encountered much resistance during the 1650's and in the later 1640's Goodwin accepted parish lectureships.¹³

At the Restoration eight Congregationalists (thus described by A.G. Matthews in *Calamy Revised*) were ejected from City churches.¹⁴ Another two – Samuel Lee and Peter Sterry – resigned before they could be removed and a third, John Goodwin, though he ministered to an Independent gathered church and was ejected from St. Stephen Coleman Street, was not listed by Matthews as a Congregationalist.¹⁵ Another eleven Congregationalists were ejected from the wider London area (from the Savoy, Southwark, Charterhouse and Stepney).¹⁶ During the 1640s when religious Presbyterianism seemed dominant Congregational and Independent clergy continued to occupy parish lectureships and benefices, largely unperturbed by the apparent incompatibility of their principles and their practice.

Thomas Goodwin's acceptance of lectureships in the later 1640s suggests a distinction should be drawn between those Independents performing the function of lectures and those receiving tithes as parish incumbents. Clearly a conscientious Independent lecturer incurred no soul-searching about tithe acceptance although he might be subject still to criticism from Separatists like David Brown.

Thomas Edwards, the Presbyterian, reported that some Independents, returning from exile, were uncertain whether to accept parish livings and that some believed the gathered churches were temporary expedients until the national church was fully reformed.¹⁷ During the 1640s only one of the 'apologetical narrators', Sidrach Simpson, held a London benefice.¹⁸ Indeed the paucity of ministers in the later 1640s and the large number of City parishes without incumbents perhaps influenced vestrymen to invite Independent clergy to serve their cures.

Robert Baillie's observation in July 1645, that, apart from Henry Burton and John Goodwin, all the beneficed ministers of London supported his Presbyterian platform, was incorrect even then.¹⁹ Nathaniel Homes (or Holmes) became rector of St. Mary Staining in 1643 where he remained until ejected in 1662.²⁰ Homes had gathered an Independent church at St. Mary's in 1643 and this met in the parish church itself.²¹ In the early 1640s Homes and Burton appeared as resolute members of the Puritan coalition united against the Laudian church. Homes' sermon before Parliament in May 1641 argued for a "righteous reformed Church, according to God's promise" and Burton, from the same pulpit, preached only a month later for release from the bondage the English church imposed ("liturgy, ceremonies, discipline, hierarchy").²² As early as 1641 Homes offered no hope for a Presbyterian theocracy but rather he looked for the coming millenium.²³ He also served as

lecturer at St. Michael Bassishaw in 1642.²⁴

Also active in London by mid-1645 was Thomas Palmer, who served the cure of St. Lawrence Pountney from November 1644 until April 1646, when he left for Ashton-on-Trent in Derbyshire.²⁵ No evidence exists of Palmer's gathering a church in London but in Derbyshire his Congregationalism caused great consternation among his parishioners who prosecuted him at the assize court for refusing to share the elements with them at communion.²⁶ Palmer's radicalism in religion may have been formed whilst he was chaplain to Skippon's troops prior to his appointment at St. Lawrence. He also may have served as an active officer in the army.²⁷ Baillie's omission of Palmer among the City Independent incumbents in 1645 is probably explained by the fact that he was never officially settled there but first appeared to fill a vacancy and remained for a protracted period.

William Tutty became rector of St. Martin Orgar in June 1645 and left a year later.²⁸ Tutty is included by one modern scholar on a list of Independent clergy in the London area, and he declared himself as Congregational after the Restoration, but no evidence exists to suggest that Tutty was active as an Independent at St. Martin's.²⁹

Another Puritan cleric to associate himself with the Independents was Matthew Barker who by September 1643 was settled at St. James Garlickhithe as minister.³⁰ St. James' parishioners included the radical pamphleteer, William Walwyn, who described the work of "reformation" in the parish.³¹ Barker remained at St. James until June 1648 and attained considerable popularity within the vestry.³² No evidence exists to suggest that Barker gathered an Independent church at Garlickhithe but his influence extended to successfully recommending a lecturer to the parish in November 1645 – "not one person was against him".³³ The preacher chosen was Joshua Sprigge, another Independent, suggesting that Barker's views by 1645 had moved towards Independency.³⁴ In June 1646 the vestry attempted to settle the differences in existence between Barker and one of his parishioners but the vestrymen affirmed "publicly & unanimously" their former choice of Barker as "there pastor and teacher and will not by any meanes relinquish there right and Interest" in him.³⁵ This decision was reiterated in October 1646 when a large group of parishioners decided to give Barker a stipend of £100 per annum "for tithes and lecture money".³⁶ When Baillie made his observation in July 1645 Barker may not have publicly avowed Independent views but his thoughts were leading in that direction.

The appearance of Baptists as parish incumbents was even more rare than that of Congregationalists.³⁷ However John Tombes, a Baptist minister, officiated the cure of St. Gabriel Fenchurch in late 1644 and early 1645.³⁸ He moved in January 1645 to serve as master of the Temple church but by October had left there also.³⁹

Baillie's optimistic assertion that Presbyterianism had a claim on the sympathies of all London's incumbents in July 1645 was therefore inaccurate. However it was almost correct. Only Nathaniel Homes properly contradicts the truth of Baillie's claim although Palmer, Tutty, and Barker might also have merited his consideration.

The two Independent incumbents whom Baillie singled out for attention were

Henry Burton and John Goodwin. Burton was restored to the parsonage of St. Matthew's Friday Street on 16th June 1643 and enjoyed considerable popularity in the City because of the persecution he had suffered in the 1630s.⁴⁰ However in the same year Burton gathered his Independent church and thus in effect unchurched his parishioners.⁴¹ His parishioners responded by preferring a petition against him to the Committee for Plundered Ministers which ironically had ousted his Anglican predecessor, Robert Chestlin, to make room for him.⁴² Burton remained a Puritan hero, however, and retained enough support in his parish for the churchwarden to refuse to deliver the keys of the church to Colonel Venn in 1645, when Venn was appointed by the Committee for Plundered Ministers to provide for the cure.⁴³

Burton's curious position as an Independent minister of a parish church not only exposed him to criticism from those Separatists who opposed all contacts with such churches, especially the acceptance of tithes, but also to criticism from his own tithe-paying parishioners. Significantly the vestry minutes record on 1st December 1645 that the parishioners had not paid their tithes since 29th September 1642.⁴⁴ This may well have been the deliberate result of a policy decision by Burton and his supporters in the parish.

As a result of the parishioners' petition the Committee for Plundered Ministers on 26 April 1645 ordered Burton's attendance at their next meeting.⁴⁵ The situation in one month deteriorated to the point that Burton was himself discharged as the victim of sequestration.⁴⁶ The charges against Burton amounted to an indictment of his ecclesiogical views. Again and again he was asked "whether he would officiate according to the directory" and apparently only replied, "It is a large question".⁴⁷ Burton once more addressed the Committee on 12 June 1645 this time displaying a more co-operative mood. He stated his readiness to answer his accusers if he had offended against the "Ordinance for the Directory". He continued, "I do not understand by any passage of the Ordinance that the intendment of the Hoble Houses was, that a promise of observance of the directory should be required as a necessary qualificacon for every mans entrance or continuance in the ministry". The Committee predictably was not satisfied.⁴⁸

Again in July 1645 the Committee for Plundered Ministers were not satisfied with Burton's explanation of his attitude to the directory. Burton agreed that the directory contained the "Substance of the Service" and worship of God but that he found it only "in generall heads, the sense & scope of the prayers". Burton concluded that he would "act accordingly having allwaies the word of God for the supreme rule . . . of faith", but that he would "not Clash wth the Directory because it is an act of State to wch he oweth all conscience & where his conscience cannot conforme to it he will be silent".⁴⁹ On August 19th, 1645, several of the parish petitioners attended the Committee's meeting with Burton and declared "that the said differences are composed and settled by agreement betweene them . . ." The case was thus dismissed.⁵⁰ Eleven days later the Committee for Plundered Ministers appointed Daniel Dike to the rectory of St. Matthew Friday Street as Burton had now "left" the cure.⁵¹ A further note emphasised that all parties to this matter had composed their differences and that Burton, by consent of all, "had quit the said place".⁵² Obviously the parishioners agreed not to press the

Committee to act if Burton voluntarily left the parish. That his leaving was not in truth voluntary but the only option open, after a concerted campaign of exactly the same nature launched against his Anglican predecessor, and against the other ejected Anglican incumbents, is clear. Burton's continued occupancy of his benefice was an affront to his outraged Presbyterian parishioners and an offence to Baillie and the High Presbyterians of the City.

Edmund Calamy added to Burton's difficulties in 1645 by encouraging the churchwardens of his parish church, St. Mary Aldermanbury, to prevent Burton gaining admittance to preach his catechetical lecture there. Calamy accused Burton of persuading one of St. Mary's parishioners to join his gathered church.⁵³ If the Independents (as incumbents or lecturers) were using their parish appointments to undermine the parish churches then a committed Presbyterian like Calamy felt forced to act. In the general Presbyterian triumph following in the wake of the Anglican ejections, Burton was the victim of a Presbyterian design involving, if not planned by, Baillie and Calamy.

Burton's refusal to conduct worship according to the directory provided the excuse for his dismissal from St. Matthew's. Clearly his Independency would not accord with a uniform Presbyterian, national church. Yet for Burton his expulsion from St. Matthew Friday Street, and the obstruction he encountered at St. Mary Aldermanbury, at least resolved any lingering doubts he may have harboured about the possibility of his serving conscientiously both gathered and parish churches. Burton's sequestration from his parish pulpit was a clear indication that the Independents' hopes for a reformed church in which they might share would not be conceded willingly by the Presbyterians. However Burton was the living embodiment of one aspect of the Puritan spirit, heroic survival through suffering for the sake of principle. He could not so easily be dismissed as a sectary by Baillie and his Presbyterian colleagues.

John Goodwin, the second of the Independents singled out by Baillie was rector of St. Stephen's Coleman Street from 1633.⁵⁴ The patronage of the living was in the hands of the parishioners who had freely chosen Goodwin to succeed John Davenport on his departure for New England.⁵⁵ St. Stephen's enjoyed a deservedly radical reputation and among Goodwin's parishioners were the future regicides, Isaac Pennington and Owen Rowe.⁵⁶ The latest historian of the Independent gathered churches described St. Stephen's as the best qualified of all the London parishes "to undertake the experiment of an explicit parochial congregationalism".⁵⁷

Goodwin's gathered church certainly shared the parish church building with St. Stephen's parishioners. Before the establishment of the new Presbyterian order Goodwin, like other Puritan ministers in the City, took steps to institute an acceptable means of admitting parishioners to the sacrament of holy communion. At a general vestry held on 12th and 14th December 1643 it was agreed that "all those that shall desire and be found worthy by Mr. Goodwin, and such as so shall nomynat in the parish or the maior parts of them, . . . to ptake of the Sacrament in this parrish shall submit to have their names writt downe in a booke kept for that purpose".⁵⁸ Those whose names were so entered were considered "members of this church & congregacon". Other parishioners had the right to inform those persons entrusted to hear objections against anyone. Six men, including James Russell, a prominent Common

Councilman, and Alderman Samuel Avery, were appointed as assistants to Goodwin.⁵⁹

By December 1643 the Independent gathered church which Goodwin served as pastor had not long been formed by some of the godly parishioners of St. Stephen's and some from outside the parish. Goodwin had from that time ceased to officiate at holy communion in the parish church.⁶⁰ The vestry decision in December 1643 was evidently a deliberate attempt to separate the godly parishioners of St. Stephen's from the ungodly, those parishioners, in Goodwin's and his supporters' opinions, who needed Christian conversion. Goodwin as an Independent pastor could not conscientiously administer communion to all his parishioners but he could maintain a register of those fit to communicate who although they may not have been fully covenanted members of Goodwin's gathered church, were still deemed worthy enough to be members of the church and congregation now meeting at St. Stephen's. This congregation now consisted of both the saints of the gathered church and the parishioners. The decision of December 1643 was an attempt to bring the two together with a joint register of communicant members.

The distinction between the vestry's decision at St. Stephen Coleman Street and that of other parishes to institute a means of separating the godly from the ungodly parishioners is revealed in Goodwin's own writing.⁶¹ In *Innocencies Triumph* Goodwin claimed that his conduct in refusing to celebrate communion in the parish church, until some reformed church government was established, was exactly the same as that of "many godly ministers" in the City, including some Westminster Assembly delegates, although he knew the decision of December 1643 permitted members of his gathered church, from outside the parish, to request that their names too should be entered in the new register.⁶² Tolmie's account of Goodwin's church at St. Stephen's refers explicitly to an agreement "drawn in writing in a parish vestry" which was "the closest thing to a church covenant that the new church possessed".⁶³ Surely this vestry decision of December 1643 to which Goodwin was to appeal when in trouble in 1644 was the agreement referred to. The church was gathered in late 1643 and the vestry decision came in December. After this decision problems between Goodwin and some prominent parishioners arose.

In August 1644 certain differences between Goodwin and the parish surfaced at a general vestry and a committee of parishioners was appointed to settle the issues in dispute.⁶⁴ Goodwin was accused of failing to offer communion in the parish church although he continued to administer the sacrament to his gathered church.⁶⁵ Goodwin's response was to point to a petition of support from forty-five parishioners and to itemize vestry support for his conduct.⁶⁶

In May 1645 the Committee for Plundered Ministers considered the matters pending against Goodwin and another petition from several parishioners preferred against him.⁶⁷ Even at this late stage the parishioners, meeting in a general vestry, still hoped to resolve the outstanding issues and six men were appointed by Goodwin and six by the vestry to settle the matter.⁶⁸ Consequently Goodwin was ejected and became like Henry Burton, a victim of the parliamentary machinery established to oust the unwanted Anglicans.⁶⁹

Goodwin had failed to retain the support of those godly parishioners, like the religious Presbyterian Isaac Pennington, who chose not to join the gathered church but wanted rather an orderly celebration of communion in the parish church.⁷⁰ Goodwin, however, remained popular among the parishioners and in October 1647 the House of Lords received a petition from some parishioners asking that he might be approved as their lecturer.⁷¹

Goodwin's attempt to develop an Independent gathered church from the godly nucleus of his parish failed. Goodwin attempted always to include as many as possible of the parishioners in the gathered fellowship although some "saints" from the other parishes were members of the Independent church. So the peculiar situation developed where inhabitants of other parishes had the right to occupy St. Stephen's pews and receive communion whilst St. Stephen's own parishioners (even those godly who hesitated to become members of the Independent congregation) had no such unimpeded right to communicate. When the parishioners petitioned against John Goodwin in 1645 they merely underlined the increasingly obvious impossibility of bringing the gathered and parish godly into one harmonious whole. Goodwin, like Burton, was pushed therefore into accepting that his way of reforming the parish had failed.

Burton and Goodwin had been forced out of their parishes but had not, of course, left the city. Baillie allowed for "seven or eight" Independent parish lecturers in London also in July 1645.⁷² Again his estimate was very close to the truth, revealing the accuracy of his information.

Sidrach Simpson, returning from exile, lectured at St. Margaret New Fish Street and at St. Anne Blackfriars from 1641 onwards.⁷³ Jeremiah Burroughes, like Simpson, one of the writers of *An Apologetical Narration*, was a very active lecturer in the City during the 1640s. He lectured at St. Giles Cripplegate from 1641, at St. Mildred Bread Street, at Stepney and at St. Michael Cornhill up to his death in 1646.⁷⁴ John Simpson lectured at St. Botolph Aldgate and St. Dunstan in the East from 1642 onwards.⁷⁵ Although Simpson became a Baptist and an antinomian yet he was a signatory to the *Declaration of Divers Elders and Brethren of Congregational Societies* in 1651 and, like other Baptists, clearly saw himself at one with the Congregationalists.⁷⁶ Other signatories were Baptists like Henry Jessey and Hanserd Knollys and Independents like William Greenhill and Thomas Brooks.⁷⁷ The same group were responsible for an earlier declaration in 1647 which openly announced the association of the Baptists with the Congregationalists.⁷⁸ The gathered church which met in the parish of Allhallows the Great, to which both Simpson and Jessey ministered, had originally been formed as a Congregational church. Jessey had helped to establish it in Llanvaches in South Wales in 1639, whence it had fled to Bristol and finally to London.⁷⁹ Walter Cradock, pastor to this Welsh Independent church, had accepted a parish lectureship at Allhallows himself during the 1640s.⁸⁰ Simpson's gathered church and the parish of Allhallows the Great enjoyed an amicable relationship. In 1651 when the parishioners were repairing their church "Mr. Sympson's Congregation" voluntarily contributed £50.⁸¹

Many gathered churches pursued the policy of admitting both paedobaptist and antipaedobaptist members and this was followed by the Allhallows' gathered

congregation. Jessey himself took the step of believers' baptism in 1645 but never made believers' baptism a condition of membership.⁸² In May 1644 a conference of leading Independents including Jessey, Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Sidrach Simpson, Jeremiah Burroughes and William Erbury met to discuss the issue of Baptists either seceding from Congregational churches or walking together with them in church order.⁸³ The conference recommended a policy of toleration of such tender consciences but its very existence reflects the commonality of interest recognized by such Congregationalist and Baptist clergy.

George Cockayne, like John Simpson, became a Fifth Monarchist in the 1650s and in the 1640s and '50s Cockayne was pastor to an Independent gathered church.⁸⁴ He was chosen by the parishioners to be lecturer at Allhallows Barking by the Tower in December 1642 where the parishioners had been opposed in their choice of lecturer by the Laudian incumbent and his curates who all suffered ejection soon afterwards.⁸⁵ Nathaniel Homes overlooked by Robert Baillie as a City incumbent, may well have been included by the Scot in his list of lecturers. In addition to Homes' benefice at St. Mary Staining he also served as lecturer at St. Michael Bassishaw from March 1641/2.⁸⁶

On 3 April 1644 at a vestry meeting William Strong was elected to the parish lectureship at St. Dunstan in the West and he rapidly gained considerable popularity in the parish.⁸⁷ On 29 November 1644 St. Dunstan's parishioners at a general vestry chose their vestrymen and included among their number not only the incumbent, Andrew Perne, but also the lecturer, Strong—a very unusual occurrence.⁸⁸ Strong later was promoted to the living at St. Dunstan's on Perne's departure, in October 1647 and in the 1650s was minister to the Congregational church meeting at Westminster Abbey.⁸⁹ By 1646 Strong had clearly associated himself with religious Independency and wrote with Burroughes and Joshua Sprigge a commendatory preface to a theological work.⁹⁰ In the later 1640s Strong and other Independent ministers often preached before Parliament.⁹¹ His Independency was not so exclusive to prevent his being nominated as a trier of elders for the twelfth classis in August 1645 although later that year in October his name was omitted from the published list of triers.⁹² However in April 1647 Strong replaced Perne as a trier suggesting his disenchantment with organized Presbyterianism was far from complete.⁹³

Another Independent lecturer in the 1640s, perhaps included by Baillie in his estimate, was Nicholas Lockyer who was described by Edmund Calamy in 1645 as holding a regular parish lectureship. Calamy did not specify the parish but claimed that Lockyer had agreed with the parish incumbent not to preach on Independency.⁹⁴

In all the total of Independent lecturers identified as active in the early 1640s in the City parishes included in this study is eight. This total however could easily be increased if the geographical area under discussion is extended to incorporate the outlying districts (included in the Presbyterian province of London for instance). Jeremiah Burroughes' colleague at Stepney from 1641 onwards was William Greenhill, also an Independent.⁹⁵ Robert Baillie regarded Joseph Caryl, as early as November 1643, as part of the "ten or eleven" Independents in the Westminster Assembly and may have, therefore,

included Caryl in his estimate of Independent lecturers in London.⁹⁶ Caryl served as preacher at Lincoln's Inn from 1632 to 1647.⁹⁷ By 1645 Christopher Feake, like John Simpson and George Cockayne a Fifth Monarchist in the 1650s, was preaching in London though without parochial charge. Certainly he preached at both St. Peter Cornhill and St. Mary Woolchurch yet it seems unlikely that Baillie would have included him in his total of Independent lecturers.⁹⁸ Other Independent lecturers in the London area were Samuel Slater and Richard Kentish, "brothers" or lecturers at St. Katherine by the Tower. Slater had been there from 1628 and Kentish from 1639 and in the 1640s a gathered church met under their charge at St. Katherine's.⁹⁹ Given the presence in London of other Independent clergy who have left no records of parish appointments during this time (Peter Sterry, John Phillip, and William Carter among others) the total of Independent preachers might grow considerably.¹⁰⁰ Yet Baillie's figures for both parish incumbents and lecturers, on close examination, seem a very fair estimate although, after July 1645, other Independents did accept parish appointments and the "small inconsiderable companie" increased in size.

Independent preachers in London might be invited to preach on special occasions at parish churches, just as any minister might. At St. Pancras Soper Lane (later associated with religious Independency through its minister George Cockayne) in October 1642 William Greenhill was chosen by the vestry to preach at the service to be held on November 5th, gunpowder plot day. If Greenhill was unavailable then William Carter was to be approached.¹⁰¹ Interestingly the vestry minute was signed among others by George Ecope, the rector to be expelled a year later.¹⁰² Later in the 1640s the radicals at St. Pancras invited Christopher Feake to preach at the service celebrating Queen Elizabeth I's birthday on November 17th 1649.¹⁰³ Feake's invitation perhaps indicates Cockayne's influence and some sympathy among parishioners for millenarian ideas.

In July 1645 Baillie's optimism with regard to the strength of Presbyterianism in the City seemed justified. The Anglican incumbents, (Laudian and others) had been, for the most part, ejected from their livings, the attack on idolatry and superstition was in being, and the Independents in the Westminster Assembly had proved relatively co-operative in checking the church-gathering activities of their fellows. Yet with the certainty of a Presbyterian church settlement which excluded them, the restraints on the Independents were removed. Now in theory they should have been forced out of the parishes, as Henry Burton and John Goodwin had been. Yet in practice this did not occur and men like Kentish and Slater at St. Katherine by the Tower, and Caryl at St. Magnus the Martyr continued to serve in parish churches throughout the 1640s and in the Protectorate.¹⁰⁴

Indeed Caryl may well have been appointed to his living at St. Magnus, before Baillie's observation was made in July 1645, as the parishioners' petition for permission to choose a minister was approved in April by the Committee for Plundered Ministers.¹⁰⁵ However the first mention of Caryl as minister of St. Magnus occurred in August 1645 when he was listed as a trier in the fourth classis of the Presbyterian province of London.¹⁰⁶ Like William Strong, Caryl in 1645 clearly had not forsaken Presbyterianism.

John Maidwell also openly avowed a Congregational position after the Restoration and he is listed as a London Independent clergyman by one modern scholar.¹⁰⁷ He became rector of St. Katherine Coleman in 1645 but no evidence exists to suggest he declared his support for Independency whilst there.¹⁰⁸

George Cockayne became minister of St. Pancras Soper Lane in 1648 and remained there until his own ejection in 1660.¹⁰⁹ Cockayne had been commended by the Committee for Plundered Ministers to the second classis for the ministry of St. Mary Somerset in February 1646/7 but there is no record that he was accepted.¹¹⁰ He gathered an Independent church at St. Pancras which included such Commonwealth dignitaries as Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke, Cromwell's ambassador to Sweden and Sir John Ireton, a Lord Mayor of London, and brother of Cromwell's son-in-law, Henry.¹¹¹

Other Independent ministers as well as Cockayne and Caryl secured London benefices during the later 1640s. Joseph Symonds, whose lecture at St. Michael Cornhill in succession to Jeremiah Burroughes so concerned the Presbyterian fourth classis, became rector of St. Mary Abchurch in March 1646/7.¹¹² Symonds' successor as rector of St. Mary Abchurch in 1648 was another of the apologetical narrators, Sidrach Simpson, thus underlining the popularity of Independency in this parish.¹¹³ Simpson's gathered church which had been with him in exile in the Netherlands went with him to St. Mary's.¹¹⁴ Whilst in exile Simpson had forged links with the English separatist, John Canne, encouraging the lay preachers of his own church to preach to Canne's.¹¹⁵ On return to London these contacts were maintained and Canne preached to Simpson's parish congregation at St. Mary Abchurch three times in 1648.¹¹⁶ William Strong, also, was promoted to the living at St. Dunstan in the West and Job Tookey served as rector of St. Martin Vintry.¹¹⁷

The London Provincial Assembly identified the lack of an "able & faithful Ministry" in forty churches in 1648 as the principle cause of the "non-execution of church-government".¹¹⁸ Baillie's confident anticipation of a Presbyterian monopoly of London's parish churches was never realized and consequently Independent clergymen secured such vacant livings, especially after the army's assumption of power in 1647. Among those churches listed by the Provincial Assembly in 1648 were several which acquired Independent incumbents. St. Pancras Soper Lane, St. Thomas Apostle, St. Mary Abchurch, St. Katherine Coleman were all vacant in 1648 as was St. Margaret New Fish Street.¹¹⁹ In that year at St. Margaret's the Independent Thomas Brooks was so certain of his commanding position, and of the parishioners' desperation, that he dictated a set of five conditions before finally accepting the living in 1650.¹²⁰ Clearly this is in great contrast to Joseph Symonds' humiliation before the fourth classis only eighteen months before.¹²¹

Brooks, himself, had served as preacher at St. Thomas Apostle earlier in 1648 and had also been a chaplain in the parliamentary navy.¹²² Brooks' terms were such that he wanted from the outset to establish at St. Margaret's an Independent parish which excluded all but the "godly from the church and its sacraments".¹²³ The vestiges of Presbyterianism were to be ruthlessly removed as the ruling elders were to resign and the "godly partie" gathered

together owing one anothers' "graces". The parishioners were instructed by Brooks to "receive all strangers into you, though something differing in opinion, so as you find them fitt", and to admit them to the church building. Then the church might choose officers and Brooks agreed "then I will give you ye Sacament, & baptise children, & none else but ye body".¹²⁴

The refusal by Brooks to administer the sacraments to any but the godly believers of the "body" and their children was not so far removed from the position of those zealous Presbyterians, like Thomas Cawton and Edmund Calamy, who refused to entertain all the parishioners without hindrance at the communion table (yet one required communicants to be covenanted members of a gathered church, whilst the other expected communicants to be approved by the parish eldership). Brooks' second and third conditions—the godly party gathering together and the admission of strangers—in no way implies that all these people were convinced Independents. Rather he specifically stated that some might differ from the parishioners in their opinions indicating that the assembled congregation would include Presbyterians and others but would not be organized on the strict parish principle.

Brooks remained at St. Margaret's from 1650 to 1660 but incurred opposition from a group of the parishioners who petitioned the Committee for Plundered Ministers for his removal in 1653.¹²⁵ St. Margaret New Fish Street had been served by Sidrach Simpson, as curate and lecturer from 1629 to 1638, and he had returned from the Netherlands to a lectureship at St. Margaret's in 1641 thus establishing a tradition of Independency in this parish.¹²⁶ Before Brooks' appointment at St. Margaret's the vestry elected "Mr. Bridge" (William Bridge, Simpson's colleague in exile and fellow signatory of the *Apologetical Narration*) to a yearly lectureship in September 1646.¹²⁷ St. Margaret New Fish Street offers an example of a City parish during the Civil War and Interregnum served by a succession of Independent church-gathering clerics.¹²⁸ For a period embracing thirty years the parishioners must have become accustomed to a heady diet of radical Puritanism, and Brooks' admission to the parish becomes less shocking when set against this background of Independent preaching. Nevertheless Brooks' confident dictation of terms is unique for no other parish reveals a similar public statement of Independent intent. His demands exposed the impotence of Baillie and the Presbyterians. Religious Independency was no longer on the defensive instilling itself subtly into parish positions. The terms Brooks set out offer an absolute contrast with the dismissal of Henry Burton and John Goodwin only three years before.

The changing fortunes of Independency were clearly illustrated by the return of Goodwin and his gathered church to St. Stephen Coleman Street in November 1649.¹²⁹ They had met for a time at St. Mary Abchurch where Sidrach Simpson succeeded Joseph Symonds as minister.¹³⁰ Such co-operation reveals the support the "visible saints" were prepared to give each other. Goodwin's congregation was ejected from one parish but in time found hospitality in another, so frustrating the attempts of the High Presbyterians to crush them.

On 11 November 1649 all the vestry at St. Stephen Coleman Street agreed to the rules "in the behalf of Mr. Goodwin & his Church".¹³¹ Goodwin, himself, was described as God's "faithful servant", willing to work with that "Church of Christ, to whome hee is united and with whome hee hath walked

hitherto, in another place, & heretofore it is desired one the behalfe of that Church, that they may have the same libertie and accomodation in the publicke meeting place of Coleman Street as with readynes was granted them by the people in Abchurch lane parrish, And which they have quietly inioyed ever since".¹³² Clearly the terms the parishioners of St. Stephen's agreed to were designed to produce a similar quietness in their own parish.

The gathered church was to be allowed to use the parish church building (or "meeting place" as the minutes describe it) after the sermon to celebrate the Lord's Supper and to make collections "for their own poor". During this celebration of communion the gathered church members were to be "intire of themselves" admitting none but by the church's consent. Again the gathered church members were allowed to use the time after the sermon to discuss their own affairs, also without the presence of outsiders. Public collections for the poor were to be divided equally between both the gathered and parish churches. Lastly the parishioners were asked to permit the members of Goodwin's congregation to occupy any "spare roome" they may have in their pews. This was a delicate matter containing a potential threat to the property rights of the pew-owners so the qualification was added that "the propriety of each one to his pew and freedom to accomodate whom he pleaseth is understood to be reserved to him".¹³³ The agreement was signed by twenty-seven parishioners headed by the religious Presbyterian, Alderman Isaac Pennington.¹³⁴

Formal arrangements for the sharing of parish premises and facilities served to minimize the disturbance to parish life the housing of two separate congregations in one church must have brought. The "quiet enjoyment" of these privileges was looked for in 1649 and the vestry minutes do not reveal any difficulties between the two churches. Goodwin himself remained at St. Stephen's until 1660.¹³⁵ W.A. Shaw described the St. Stephen's agreement as "an instance of confusion and conflict" though evidence for this opinion is lacking.¹³⁶ The ejection of Goodwin in 1645, though succeeding in removing an awkward Independent clergyman and his followers from outside the parish, had failed to remove his influence. Those parishioners who still preferred Goodwin and his Independency to the Presbyterianism of William Taylor were persistent enough to petition Parliament for a parish lectureship for Goodwin in 1647.¹³⁷ With the triumph of the army in that year religious toleration was ensured. Goodwin's eventual re-instatement at St. Stephen's and its inevitable concomitant, the return of his gathered church, was a means to reconcile conflicting factions within the parish, even if it was instituted "by the hand of the pSENT Supreame Authoritie of the Nation".¹³⁸ Goodwin and Taylor, Independent and Presbyterian, were forced by the vestry's decision to accept the rights of the other and in particular situations to co-operate for mutual benefit.¹³⁹

Other Independent ministers also were appointed to the livings of City parishes in 1649 and 1650. Christopher Feake became minister of Christ Church Newgate and lecturer at St. Anne's Blackfriars in 1649.¹⁴⁰ Matthew Barker, previously minister of St. James Garlickhithe, was appointed rector of St. Leonard's Eastcheap in March 1649/50.¹⁴¹ He became increasingly associated with the Congegational clergy in the City during the 1650s.¹⁴² At St. James

Garlickhithe Barker's former parishioners, even after his departure, still retained a preference for Independent preaching and on 10 September 1650 Laurence Wise, also an Independent minister, was elected to the living there.¹⁴³ Wise's appointment was made by the vestry because the parish, without a settled minister, "hath bine subject to many other inconveniences disturbances & no small danger of haveing some strang one & unknowne to us all, forced upon us".¹⁴⁴ Wise was not "a strong one & unknowne to us all" as previously on 30 August 1650 those attending the vestry had enquired of Wise if he would fill the minister's place if chosen.¹⁴⁵

In 1649 Allan Geare, son-in-law of the Separatist preacher, John Canne, became rector of St. Bennet Paul's Wharf, a small riverside parish.¹⁴⁶ Geare has himself been described as an Independent in religion yet he served as scribe to the first classis of the Presbyterian province of London in 1652, and in that year he was entrusted with a report to the London provincial assembly on the state of the parish elderships.¹⁴⁷ In November 1650 Geare served also as scribe to the London Provincial Assembly, suggesting his loyalty was to institutional Presbyterianism, not Independency.¹⁴⁸

Thus from 1649 to 1650, with the change of political authority and the shortage of ministers in the City, the number of Independent incumbents in London significantly increased. Homes, alone in mid-1645, was joined by eleven other settled Independent incumbents and two others (Maidwell and Geare) perhaps merit that description.

Of course the number of Independent ministers serving as parish lecturers also increased. The lectureships of Joshua Sprigge, Joseph Symonds, Sidrach Simpson, Christopher Feake, John Simpson, William Bridge and William Strong have already been discussed. Henry Jessey continued to lecture at St. George's in Southwark until his ejection at the Restoration.¹⁴⁹ Ralph Venning was chaplain of the Tower of London from February 1647/8 onwards and lecturer at St. Olave Southwark in the 1650s.¹⁵⁰ William Bridge lectured not only at St. Margaret New Fish Street but also at Allhallows Staining in 1647 and 1648.¹⁵¹

Of the five Independent apologists in the Westminster Assembly Thomas Goodwin has been identified as the "leader" of the group,¹⁵² and as the "intellectual and spiritual leader of the Independents in England",¹⁵³ Goodwin accepted no parish appointments until 1646 when he was appointed lecturer at St. Michael Crooked Lane where he remained in the post until 1648.¹⁵⁴ Goodwin's gathered church met in the parish of St. Dunstan in the East in the early 1640s and Goodwin's successor as pastor of this Independent congregation, Thomas Harrison, also served as rector of St. Dunstan's from 1651 to 1655.¹⁵⁵ John Simpson lectured at St. Dunstan also in 1642.¹⁵⁶

However St. Michael Crooked Lane had no such association with Independency although the minister and parishioners had successfully ignored all attempts to persuade them to erect Presbyterian discipline.¹⁵⁷ St. Michael's parishioners refused to elect elders "notwithstanding the several admonitions from ye Classis, desiring them thereunto" and Joseph Browne, the minister, who attended sixteen meetings of the fourth classis, persisted in administering communion, regardless of this irregularity.¹⁵⁸ In May 1648 Goodwin was reported as having sent a note to Browne asking "that he might have leave

to administer the Lords-Supper to his congregation, in his church".¹⁵⁹ Browne's refusal to comply with the classis' wishes may well have provided grounds for hope that such a wish might be favourably received.

Browne, however, proved unwilling to agree. Henry Roberough, the Presbyterian minister of St. Leonard's Eastcheap, stated that Browne has asked for "some direction" from the classis.¹⁶⁰ The delegates were eager to offer advice and predictably reminded Browne that "Parliament hath Comanded, the Presbyteriall government bee erected, in every parish church within the province of London". Therefore they could not advise Browne "to give way to yt wch authoritie of Parliament doth not allow of" and authorize "the administration of the L. Supper in any other way of government".¹⁶¹

Goodwin's desire to celebrate communion at St. Michael's continued unabated and in September 1648 the classis returned to discussion of the matter. The minutes record that Browne who had been "sent for" was "not to bee found" although the churchwardens of St. Michael's attended on September 18th. It would appear that Goodwin had appealed to the parishioners of Crooked Lane now (surely with the knowledge of Browne, if not his connivance) that he might preside at communion with his own gathered church on Sunday afternoons.¹⁶² At a vestry meeting the senior churchwarden had prevented a vote on the subject by referring to the classis' former decision. Goodwin's supporters in the vestry had threatened to move to a vote anyway but had not done so. The churchwardens, therefore, asked for a copy of the classis' order which they believed, once shown to the parishioners, would suffice to end the matter satisfactorily. The classis' delegates readily agreed to the request.¹⁶³

Goodwin evidently enjoyed a measure of support in the vestry at St. Michael Crooked Lane where the parishioners had paid little heed to the fourth classis. On this occasion the influence of the churchwardens, aided by the classis, proved sufficient to thwart Goodwin's hopes. His fortnightly lectures on Sunday afternoons at St. Michael's (attended by both parish and gathered congregations) could no longer continue and, one month later in October 1648, Goodwin "thankfully accepted" to preach at Allhallows Lombard Street "each other Lords day in the afternoon" and as a bonus, "to administer the Sacrament to his owne Congregation at such times as his so doeing may not prejudice us".¹⁶⁴ So Goodwin found at Allhallows the facility he sought throughout 1648.

Vestries at Allhallows were overwhelmingly in the 1640s of the "ancients" only yet a general vestry elected Goodwin and all twenty-seven signatories, including John Cardell, the minister, approved the decision. Another four men were listed as "absent but affirmed to give Consent".¹⁶⁵ Cardell associated himself increasingly with radical Puritanism during the 1640s and in the 1650s he was aligned with the London Fifth Monarchists.¹⁶⁶ His associations with Independent ministers at Allhallows include not only Goodwin but also William Greenhill, also appointed to a lectureship in November 1648.¹⁶⁷ The churchwardens' accounts reveal also that Cardell and Mr. Peter (Hugh Peter) in 1644/5, and Cardell and Mr. Brooks (Thomas Brooks) in 1650/1 appealed to the parish for small gifts for the widows of poor ministers.¹⁶⁸

Thus in the period 1645-9 the influence of the Independent clergy in the

parishes of London increased considerably. During the 1640s at least twenty-one Independent or Congregational ministers accepted office in the City parishes, serving either as lecturers or incumbents.¹⁶⁹ Other Independents served in the greater metropolitan area (like Greenhill and Jessey in Southwark, Kentish and Slater at St. Katherine by the Tower, and Venning at the Tower Chapel). Clearly also established City incumbents like John Cardell and John Maidwell increasingly found Independency attractive. Of the twenty-one Independent ministers, ten were active either as pastors or teachers of gathered churches whilst also serving parish congregations in the City.¹⁷⁰ Seven of the twenty-one served as lecturers in the City parishes,¹⁷¹ while another six were only incumbents.¹⁷² The remaining eight served both as incumbents and lecturers during the 1640s.¹⁷³

Out of the one hundred and eight parishes of the City (both within and without the walls, but not including Southwark) Independent ministers held formal appointments in twenty-eight at various times during the 1640s.¹⁷⁴ In other words one quarter of the parishes of London gave the freedom of their pulpits to the Independents for longer or shorter periods during this decade. Some of these parishes were closed to the Independents very rapidly, as was St. Mary Aldermanbury to Henry Burton in 1645. However some City parishes recruited a succession of Congregational or Independent ministers (for instance, St. Mary Abchurch and St. Margaret New Fish Street) and it seems likely that such parishes sought Independent ministers from preference.

Although evidence does not allow an unqualified assertion of an Independent tradition, merely carried through its clergy, for all twenty-seven parishes yet some few City parishes indicated a consistent support for Independency. At St. Michael Cornhill those parishioners who supported Jeremiah Burroughes' expository lecture, and on his death replaced him with Joseph Symonds, evidently favoured Independency, although the majority in the parish vestry were Presbyterians.¹⁷⁵ At St. James Garlickhithe Matthew Barker's ministry and Joshua Sprigge's lectureship surely influenced the parish in its later choice of Lawrence Wise as rector.¹⁷⁶ Obviously the ecclesiastical atmosphere of St. Mary Abchurch must have been very dominantly Independent in the 1640s, with Joseph Symonds' incumbency being succeeded by Sidrach Simpson, and John Goodwin and his gathered church finding hospitality there.¹⁷⁷ Even at St. Margaret New Fish Street, where Brooks' election in 1648 was marked by such a dramatic demonstration of a new development in the parish's history, the lectureships of Sidrach Simpson and William Bridge, earlier in the 1640s, had prepared the way for the way for the acceptance of Brooks.¹⁷⁸ Also the welcome given Thomas Goodwin by John Cardell at Allhallows Lombard Street and William Greenhill's lectureship there, suggest this parish contained powerful supporters of Independency in the 1640s.¹⁷⁹

The existence of a gathered church within the parochial framework may have exercised an attraction for the parishioners, as Brooks intended at St. Margaret New Fish Street. During the 1640s at least five parish church buildings in the City were used by Independent gathered churches for their worship.¹⁸⁰ Obviously this does not indicate a major attempt to take over the parish churches and, in no sense, rivals the Presbyterians' ambition. Yet it does

suggest that the Independents during the English Civil War held a variety of attitudes towards co-operation between the godly elect and the rest of the population. To attempt to apply the principles of Independency within a parochial framework in time came to be seen by many as inconsistent but not before experiments, some of lengthy duration, had occurred. Henry Burton's departure from St. Matthew Friday Street in 1645 led him into complete separation from the established church and contrasts with John Goodwin's return to St. Stephen Coleman Street in 1649. In the light of hindsight Thomas Goodwin's more detached attitude towards parishes seems most consistent with Congregational views yet in the religious turmoil of the 1640s it would be harsh judgement merely to dismiss those Independents who remained in their livings as "lesser men".¹⁸¹ Those ministers who professed Congregational or Independent views at this time opted for differing positions. Homes remained an incumbent and some, like Brooks and Cockayne, sought after and accepted benefices.¹⁸²

Others only accepted lectureships, like Thomas Goodwin and Jeremiah Burroughes,¹⁸³ while yet others remained totally outside the parish network, like William Carter.¹⁸⁴ Another group containing men like Joseph Caryl aligned themselves with the Independents but did not gather churches during the 1640s.¹⁸⁵

The advancement of Independency in the City parishes corresponds to the broader changes in religious and political fortunes. With the apparent triumph of Presbyterianism, in the Westminster Assembly and the country in 1645, Baillie's confident expectation of a total control of London's parish pulpits seemed well founded. But by 1649 the "small, inconsiderable companie" had grown both in size and influence. In truth the Independent clergy were still a relatively small, and by no means uniform group, yet they had proved themselves to be not "inconsiderable".

ALAN ARGENT

¹*An Apologeticall Narration* (1644) 31. BL—British Library, Add. Ms. Additional manuscript; BODL—Bodleian Library Oxford manuscript; CJ—Commons Journal; CR—A.G. Matthews *Calamy Revised: being a revision of Edmund Calamy's account of the ministers and others ejected and silenced 1660-2* (Oxford 1934); DNB—Dictionary of National Biography; GLMS—Guildhall Library manuscript; LJ—Lords Journal; WR—A.G. Matthews *Walker Revised: being a revision of John Walker's suffering of the clergy during the Grand Rebellion 1642-60* (Oxford 1948).

²D. Laing (ed.) *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie A.M.* (Edinburgh: 1842) II 296-9.

³*Certain Consideration to Dis-swade Men from Further Gathering of Churches* (1643), M.R. Watts *The Dissenters* (1978) I, 100-101.

⁴*An Apologeticall Narration* (1644) 15.

⁵In the first years of the war both Nye and Goodwin were parish ministers—Nye of Acton from 1643 to 1654 and Burton of St. Matthew Friday Street from late 1642 to 1645.

⁶G.F. Nuttall *Visible Saints: The Congregational Way 1640-1660* (Oxford 1957) 12-13. BL Add. Ms. 15669 f150. W.M. Lamont, in *Godly Rule: Politics and Religion 1603-60* (1969), 185, is in danger of exaggerating the distinction between Nye—a "non-separatist"—and Burton only a "semi-separatist".

⁷T. Edwards *Gangraena* (1646) III, 243. W.M. Lamont op.cit. 185.

⁸H. Burton *The Protestation Protested* (1641) sig. B3r.

⁹D. Brown *Two Conferences between some of those that are called Separatists and Independents* (1650) 1-4.

¹⁰R. Baillie *A Dissuasive from the Errors of the Times* (1645) 103. M.R. Watts op. cit. 94-5.

¹¹D. Laing (ed.) op. cit. 296-9.

- ¹¹G.F. Nuttall op. cit. 13.
- ¹²ibid.
- ¹³GLMS 4384/2 p. 252, 118/1 p.98, 4049/1 f.27.
- ¹⁴The eight were Matthew Barker, Robert Bragge, Thomas Brooks, Joseph Caryl, George Cockayne, Nathaniel Holmes, John Loder, Thomas Malory. CR 28, 70, 79, 103, 124, 273, 326, 335.
- ¹⁵ibid. 227, 321, 463.
- ¹⁶CR 132, 233, 236-7, 270, 274, 298, 305, 326, 444, 501, 542.
- ¹⁷T. Edwards *Reasons against the Independent Government of Particular Congregation* (1641) 39. M. Tolmie *The Triumph of the Saints: The Separate Churches of London 1616-1649* (Cambridge 1977) 93.
- ¹⁸G.F. Nuttall op.cit. 12-13.
- ¹⁹D. Laing op.cit. 296-9.
- ²⁰CR 273.
- ²¹M. Tolmie op.cit. 109-110. J. Vickers *The Schismatick Sifted* (1646) 26-7.
- ²²J.F. Wilson *Pulpit in Parliament* (Princeton 1969).
- ²³B.S. Capp *The Fifth Monarchy Men: A Study in Seventeenth-Century English Millenarianism* (1972) 104. W.M. Lamont *Godly Rule: Politics and Religion 1603-60* (1969) 96.
- ²⁴CJ II 485, CR 273.
- ²⁵GLMS 3908/1 f72, CJ V 138.
- ²⁶G.F. Nuttall op.cit. 34, 138.
- ²⁷CR 380.
- ²⁸GLMS 959/2 f4, 5. BL Add. Ms. 15669 ff98, 116.
- ²⁹CR 499, G. Yule *The Independents in the English Civil War* (Cambridge: 1958) 143.
- ³⁰GLMS 4813/1 f62.
- ³¹W. Walwyn *A Whisper in the eare of Mr. Thomas Edwards Minister* (1645).
- ³²GLMS 4813/1 f73.
- ³³ibid. f68.
- ³⁴ibid.
- ³⁵ibid. f69.
- ³⁶ibid. f70.
- ³⁷Only eight were ejected at the Restoration. CR xlii.
- ³⁸BL Add. Ms. 15669 ff64, 69.
- ³⁹ibid. f190.
- ⁴⁰BL Add. Ms. 15669 f72. In 1637 Burton had been sentenced by the Star Chamber to have his ears lopped and to imprisonment in Lancaster Castle. He had been moved to Guernsey but was released in November 1640.
- ⁴¹M. Tomlie op.cit. 94.
- ⁴²WR 44.
- ⁴³BL Add. Ms. 15669 f96. For John Venn see V. Pearl *London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford 1961) 187-9.
- ⁴⁴GLMS 3579 p77.
- ⁴⁵BL Add. Ms. 15669 f60.
- ⁴⁶BL Add. Ms. 15669 f72.
- ⁴⁷ibid. ff80, 87, 110.
- ⁴⁸ibid. f87. The *Directory for Worship* was the Presbyterian replacement for the *Book of Common Prayer*.
- ⁴⁹ibid. f110.
- ⁵⁰ibid. f142.
- ⁵¹ibid. f150.
- ⁵²ibid. f164.
- ⁵³DNB, E. Calamy *The Door of Truth Opened* (1645) 13.
- ⁵⁴CR 227.
- ⁵⁵Newcourt's Rep.
- ⁵⁶V. Pearl op.cit. 177, 324.
- ⁵⁷M. Tomlie op.cit. 111. Tomlie assembled an account of Goodwin's experiment at St.

- Stephen's Coleman Street during these years (ibid. 111-6) but he did not consult any manuscript sources—neither vestry minute books, nor Committee of Plundered Ministers' records. His account rests on Goodwin's own in *Innocencies Triumph* (1644) 14-19 and *Anapologesiates* (1646) 53-4, 227-8. The manuscript sources provide greater depth and corroboration.
- ⁵⁸GLMS 4458/1 p125.
- ⁵⁹ibid. V. Pearl op.cit. 324-5.
- ⁶⁰M. Tomlie op.cit. 112-2. J. Goodwin *Innocencies Triumph* (1644) 14-19.
- ⁶¹J. Goodwin ibid. 18.
- ⁶²ibid., M. Tomlie op. cit. 112.
- ⁶³M. Tomlie ibid. Goodwin, himself, rejected church covenants as unscriptural. G.F. Nuttall op.cit. 78.
- ⁶⁴GLMS 4458/1 p129.
- ⁶⁵J. Goodwin op.cit. 15-19.
- ⁶⁶ibid.
- ⁶⁷BL Add. Ms. 15669 f66.
- ⁶⁸GLMS 4458/1 p134.
- ⁶⁹BL Add. Ms. 15669 f75.
- ⁷⁰M. Tomlie op.cit. 113.
- ⁷¹LJ 488.
- ⁷²D. Laing op.cit. II 296.
- ⁷³B. Brook *The Lives of the Puritans* (1813) III 311-2.
- ⁷⁴D. Neal *The History of the Puritans: or Protestant Nonconformists* (1822) IV 117-8. GLMS 4072/1 f178. M. Tomlie op. cit. 107.
- ⁷⁵CJ II 492, 512, 549, CJ III 268.
- ⁷⁶*A Declaration of Divers Elders and Brethren Congregationall Societies, in and about the City of London* (1651) 8.
- ⁷⁷ibid.
- ⁷⁸ibid. 1, *A Declaration by Congregationall Societies in, and about Citie of London, as well of those commonly called Anabaptists, as others.* (1647).
- ⁷⁹G.F. Nuttall *Visible Saints: The Congregational Way 1640-1660* (1957) 119-20.
- ⁸⁰ibid. 34-5.
- ⁸¹GLMS 818/1—accounts for 1651 (no folio).
- ⁸²G.F. Nuttall op.cit. 119-20.
- ⁸³B.R. White *Hanserd Knollys and Radical Dissent in the 17th Century* (Friends of Dr. Williams's Library—Thirty First Lecture 1977) 7-8, 25. For Erbury see *DNB*.
- ⁸⁴B.S. Capp op.cit. 246, M. Tomlie op.cit. 103-4.
- ⁸⁵CJ II 872, WR 53.
- ⁸⁶CJ II 485, CR 273.
- ⁸⁷GLMS 3016/1 p238.
- ⁸⁸ibid. 248-9.
- ⁸⁹LJ IX 482, G.F. Nuttall op.cit. 25.
- ⁹⁰E.F. *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* (1646), G.F. Nuttall ibid. 12. C.H. Firth *DNB XVIII* 834-5.
- ⁹¹H.R. Trevor-Roper *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change and Other Essays* (1967) 323, 329.
- ⁹²*Ordinance regulating the election of elders and the membership of the classical, provincial and national assembly* (1645)
An Ordinance of the Lords and Commons Assembled in Parliament Together with Rules and Directions concerning suspension from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper (1645) 14.
- ⁹³W.A. Shaw *A History of the English Church During the Civil Wars and Under the Commonwealth 1640-1660* (1900) II 404.
- ⁹⁴E. Calamy *The Door of Truth Opened* (1645) 15, CR 326, M. Tomlie op. cit. 220.
- ⁹⁵CJ II 744.
- ⁹⁶D. Laing (ed.) *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie A.M.* (Edinburgh 1842) II 110.
- ⁹⁷CR 103.
- ⁹⁸*DNB* B.S. Capp op.cit. 248-9.

- ⁹⁹CR 444, G. Yule *The Independents in the English Civil War* (1957) 142-3, G.F. Nuttall op.cit 119.
- ¹⁰⁰D. Laing (ed.) op.cit. II 110. For Sterry see CR 463, for Phillip see CR 389, and for Carter see M. Tolmie op.cit. 108.
- ¹⁰¹GLMS 5019/1 p81.
- ¹⁰²ibid. WR 46.
- ¹⁰³GLMS 5019/1 p135.
- ¹⁰⁴CR 103, G. Yule op.cit. 142-3.
- ¹⁰⁵BL Add Ms 15669 f55.
- ¹⁰⁶W.A. Shaw op.cit. II 401. M. Tolmie op.cit. 224, states that Caryl was appointed to St. Magnus in April, perhaps misinterpreting CR 103 where the Committee for Plundered Ministers' decision is cited.
- ¹⁰⁷G. Yule op.cit. 142.
- ¹⁰⁸LJ VII 558, BODL MS 324 f246, CR 332-3.
- ¹⁰⁹GLMS 509/1 p132. CR 124 states that Cockayne was appointed in 1646 to St. Pancras but he first appeared in the vestry in 1648, and the church was listed as vacant in 1648 by the London Provincial Assembly. C. Surman (ed.) "The Records of the Provincial Assembly of London 1647-1660" II 37.
- ¹¹⁰BODL MS 324 f150.
- ¹¹¹G.F. Nuttall op.cit. 82, 116.
- ¹¹²C.E. Surman (ed.) *The Register-Booke of the Fourth Classis in the Province of London 1646-59* (1953) 9, LJ IX 43.
- ¹¹³DNB.
- ¹¹⁴M. Tolmie op.cit. 104-5, G.F. Nuttall op.cit. 12.
- ¹¹⁵ibid. 12.
- ¹¹⁶GLMS 3891/1-1648 accounts (no folio).
- ¹¹⁷LJ IX 482, CR 489.
- ¹¹⁸C.E. Surman (ed.) op.cit.
- ¹¹⁹ibid. 37.
- ¹²⁰C.E. Surman (ed.) *The Register-Booke of the Fourth Classis in the Province of London 1646-59* (1953) 60-61. T. Brooks *Cases Considered and Resolved . . . or a Pill to Purge Malignants* (1653).
- ¹²¹ibid. 9, 11.
- ¹²²CR 79.
- ¹²³GLMS 1175/1-25 March 1648.
- ¹²⁴C.E. Surman (ed.) op.cit. 60-61.
- ¹²⁵T. Brooks op.cit.
- ¹²⁶B. Brook *The Lives of the Puritans* (1813) III 311-2.
- ¹²⁷GLMS 1175/1-1 September 1646, CR 74, G.F. Nuttall op.cit. 11-12.
- ¹²⁸From March 1642/3 to September 1647 the rector of St. Margaret's was the Presbyterian Thomas Froyssell. GLMS 1175/1, LJ V 662, CR 215.
- ¹²⁹GLMS 4458/1 p161.
- ¹³⁰ibid.
- ¹³¹ibid.
- ¹³²ibid.
- ¹³³ibid. M. Tolmie op.cit. 114.
- ¹³⁴ibid.
- ¹³⁵CR 227.
- ¹³⁶W.A. Shaw op.cit. II 136.
- ¹³⁷LJ IX 488.
- ¹³⁸GLMS 4458/1 p161.
- ¹³⁹In July 1655, for instance, Goodwin and Taylor co-operated in the raising of £155 from the two churches for the relief of the poor Protestants of Savoy. GLMS 4458/1 p200.
- ¹⁴⁰B.S. Capp op.cit. 248-9.
- ¹⁴¹CR 28-29 G. Yule op.cit. 141.
- ¹⁴²ibid.

- ¹⁴³GLMS 4813/1 f87.
- ¹⁴⁴*ibid.*
- ¹⁴⁵*ibid.* f86. Wise had been an active preacher in London in 1649, at St. Alphege London Wall. GLMS 1431/2 – 12 October 1649.
- ¹⁴⁶GLMS 877/1 p112, BODL Ms. 326 f190, CR 219.
- ¹⁴⁷G. Yule *op.cit.* 142, W.A. Shaw *op.cit.* II 109.
- ¹⁴⁸C.E. Surman (ed.) *op.cit.* 90.
- ¹⁴⁹CR 298.
- ¹⁵⁰*ibid.* 501.
- ¹⁵¹GLMS 4956/3 p122, 127.
- ¹⁵²G.F. Nuttall *op.cit.* 13.
- ¹⁵³M. Tolmie *op.cit.* 106.
- ¹⁵⁴*ibid.* C.E. Surman (ed.) *op.cit.* 72-80.
- ¹⁵⁵G.F. Nuttall *op.cit.* 32 CR 250-1.
- ¹⁵⁶C/ II 492, 512.
- ¹⁵⁷C.E. Surman (ed.) *op.cit.* 137.
- ¹⁵⁸*ibid.* 61.
- ¹⁵⁹GLMS 1188/1 pp98, 309.
- ¹⁶⁰C.E. Surman (ed.) *op.cit.* 54.
- ¹⁶¹*ibid.*
- ¹⁶²*ibid.* 59
- ¹⁶³*ibid.*
- ¹⁶⁴GLMS 4049/1 f27. M. Tolmie in *The Triumph of the Saints* (Cambridge 1977) makes no mention of Goodwin's appointment at Allhallows Lombard Street nor of that parish's granting Goodwin's desire to administer communion to his gathered church.
- ¹⁶⁵GLMS 4049/1 f27.
- ¹⁶⁶B.S. Capp *op.cit.* 224.
- ¹⁶⁷GLMS 4049/1 f27.
- ¹⁶⁸GLMS 4051/1 f115, 139.
- ¹⁶⁹Matthew Barker, William Bridge, Thomas Brooks, Jeremiah Burroughes, Henry Burton, Joseph Caryl, George Cockayne, Walter Cradock, Christopher Feake, John Goodwin, Thomas Goodwin, Nathaniel Homes, Nicholas Lockyer, Thomas Palmer, John Simpson, Sidrach Simpson, Joshua Sprigge, William Strong, Joshua Symonds, Job Tookey, William Tutty.
- ¹⁷⁰Thomas Brooks, Henry Burton, George Cockayne, Walter Cradock, John Goodwin, Thomas Goodwin, Nathaniel Homes, Nicholas Lockyer, John Simpson, Sidrach Simpson.
- ¹⁷¹Bridge, Burroughes, Thomas Goodwin, Lockyer, John Simpson and Sprigge.
- ¹⁷²Barker, Caryl, John Goodwin, Palmer, Tookey and Tutty.
- ¹⁷³Burton, Brooks, Cockayne, Feake, Homes, Sidrach Simpson, Strong, Symonds.
- ¹⁷⁴See Appendix.
- ¹⁷⁵GLMS 4072/1 f178.
- ¹⁷⁶GLMS 4813/1 f87.
- ¹⁷⁷L/ IX 43, G.F. Nuttall *op. cit.* 12, GLMS 4458/1 p161.
- ¹⁷⁸GLMS 1175/1 – 1 September 1646, 25 March 1648, B. Brook *The Lives of the Puritans* (1813) III 311-2.
- ¹⁷⁹GLMS 4049/1 f27.
- ¹⁸⁰The five were Allhallows Lombard Street, St. Margaret New Fish Street, St. Mary Abchurch, St. Mary Staining, and St. Stephen Coleman Street.
- ¹⁸¹G.F. Nuttall *op. cit.* 134.
- ¹⁸²CR 79, 124, 273.
- ¹⁸³*DNB*
- ¹⁸⁴B. Brook *op. cit.* 299,
- ¹⁸⁵M. Tolmie *op. cit.* 117.

Appendix

Parishes of the City where Independent Ministers held formal appointments at various times during the 1640s.

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Allhallows Barking by the Tower | St. Margaret New Fish Street |
| Allhallows Lombard Street | St. Martin Orgar |
| Allhallows Staining | St. Martin Vintry |
| Allhallows the Great | St. Mary Abchurch |
| Christchurch Newgate | St. Mary Aldermanbury |
| St. Anne Blackfriars | St. Mary Staining |
| St. Botolph Aldgate | St. Matthew Friday Street |
| St. Dunstan in the East | St. Michael Bassishaw |
| St. Dunstan in the West | St. Michael Cornhill |
| St. Gabriel Fenchurch | St. Michael Crooked Lane |
| St. Giles Cripplegate | St. Mildred Bread Street |
| St. James Garlickhithe | St. Pancras Soper Lane |
| St. Lawrence Pountney | St. Stephen Coleman Street |
| St. Magnus the Martyr | St. Thomas Apostle |

List of Abbreviations Used

| | |
|------|--|
| BL | British Library |
| | Add. Ms. Additional manuscript |
| BODL | Bodleian Library Oxford manuscript |
| CJ | Commons Journal |
| CR | A.G. Matthews <i>Calamy Revised: being a revision of Edmund Calamy's account of the ministers and others ejected and silenced 1660-2</i> (Oxford 1934) |
| DNB | Dictionary of National Biography |
| GLMS | Guildhall Library manuscript |
| LJ | Lords Journal |
| WR | A.G. Matthews <i>Walker Revised: being a revision of John Walker's sufferings of the clergy during the Grand Rebellion 1642-60</i> (Oxford 1948). |

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ROBERT GENTLEMAN 1745-1795

MINISTER, TUTOR AND YOUTH LEADER

What's in a name? A lot when it is distinguished by the name Gentleman. It is in fact rather uncommon, it does not appear in the Birmingham or local telephone directories. Yet when we find it we hope the person it distinguishes will be worth another look.

However, a staunch Independent of that name was Pastor of the New Meeting at Swan Hill, Shrewsbury 1765-1779. He was baptised Robert, being given his father's name, he a Scot who had settled, maybe under Philip Henry near Whitchurch on the North Salop and Flint border. The Gentlemen may have settled near Broad Oak farm if not employees of it, under Philip Henry's descendants, being members at the time referred to at Doddington Presbyterian Meeting.

Philip Henry (1631-1692) wrote in his Diaries, "This day 7 May 1672, received my licence, dated 30 April 1672, unsought and unexpected—permitting some room or rooms in the house of Philip Henry, in the Malpas Parish Flintshire for those called Presbyterians." By June 1689, the Toleration Act became law and the church meeting was the venue for preaching every Lord's Day and continued so until Philip Henry's death. Broad Oak was a large farm and estate, with a convenient out building, or a large barn in which a meeting could be conveniently held, around 1707. Rioters destroyed it in 1716, but it was rebuilt at government expense in 1717. Later a new meeting house was built some half mile from Broad Oak and continued until 1844. When it faded away the 23 brasses, being memorials were removed to the Church of the Saviour nearby. This has raised many a question in Anglican circles, asking why such staunch Nonconformists as Philip Henry and others should be given honourable mention in an established church? The patronage of the Henrys and the Lees is the answer. Six brasses recall the Benyon family including Samuel Benyon minister at Doddington 1696-1706 before he moved to Shrewsbury to assist Francis Tallents, of the High St. Meeting and care for the rump of the old Shrewsbury Academy. Another recalls the death of Robert Gentleman (senior) a Scotsman who died 19 June 1757 aged 55 years and his daughters Sarah and Martha. An entry in the Doddington Presbyterian Register by the Minister Ebenezer Keay records the 'baptism of Robert son of Robert Gentleman Scotsman of Whitchurch 7 October 1745.' So is settled the question that troubled Alexander Gordon that indefatigable contributor to the Dictionary of National Biography, who wrote of our subject, he was 'a Dissenting Divine and Tutor' born at Shrewsbury and brought up under Job Orton. Having amended the first part, we are aware of the rightness of the second part of his description.

The influences that form character have to be examined in this instance as in others to reveal the forces that have been at work, influencing a country lad, and making him a divine and tutor of repute. Like the great Apostle Paul (Acts 21:39) he too was a 'citizen of no mean city'. Within a few square miles of his native heath on the Flint-Salop border was a fragment of that 'delectable country' of the Welsh-English border 'of nascent Puritanism', to

quote Thomas Richards,² the author of many valuable works on the Puritan Movement in Wales from 1639-1675. A few miles either way lived Richard Steele of Hanmer, and Andrew Parsons of Wem, Zechariah Thomas of Tilstock 'whose assistance in that parish gave such sanctuary' to Philip Henry in darker days, before full liberty was allowed to all, and to the south at West or Welsh Felton Arthur Hildersham and Oliver Thomas author of *Carw'r y Cymry* (1630) and other works of Puritan devotion in Welsh.³ Twenty miles south at Shrewsbury, were John Bryan who with Francis Tallents who opened the High Street Meeting house in 1691, and who with Richard Heath, James Owen, academy tutor and author of books in defence of Nonconformity, as well as four in the Welsh language, formed a galaxy that was to enlighten the people of these parts. Tallents is usually associated with his defence of Puritanism and as an outstanding divine, but it appears that on one occasion he ventured into the field of poetry and *vers libre*. An example is printed in imitation of his own hand on the page opposite the Title page of his, 'Large and Sure Foundation' 1693.⁴

Perhaps the Ode deserves to appear in full and is introduced thus:

On occasion of ye death of Mr. Rowland Nevet, formerly Minister of Oswestrie in Shropshire, December 1675, and of other Nonconformist Ministers in that Countie before that time,

When dismal Edict fourteen years ago
Thousands of Pastors from their Flocks did throw;
In this small Countie many took that way,
And mourning, yet with Courage bore the day;
Like stars i'th night more glorious did appear,
and in their scorns, and sufferings brighter were.
Great HILDERSAM, and zealous NEVET go,
Kind RICHARDSON and Reverend PORTER too;
SMITH, PASTON, THOMAS, ADAMS, HUMPHREYS, BOTE,
With famous WRIGHT & FROYSEL, men of note:
(40 went out yt never conformed after.)

SADLER, and learned, holy, humble HEATH
Others survive & many; May their breath
Keep many precious souls from endless death!
(18 were put out, that did conform afterwards.)
These from their labours rest, nor can their Name,
Envy, or fierce ambitions justly blame.
Good men, from you these troubles never are;
Your actions and your mildness since declare;
Nor from these Peers & Patriots, who forbear
So press with vigorous force, the Laws severe;
Nor from those Clergymen that deeply groan,
For needless burthens on their Brethren thrown;
But from those Churchmen & their Friends, & Train
Whose blindness, Pride, & Interest made the Flame;
And from those men, whose bitter Spirit stands
Irreconcilable to Puritans.

ROME council'd, strove, rejoiced in this success.
As a good step to their hop'd happiness;
Blind SEERS they, who could not this descric,
And feel their downfall by these arts draw nigh
When LARGE & SURE FOUNDATIONS they laid by.
Blest KING of SAINTS of thy dear Church take care,

And faithful Pastors for Thy flocks prepare!
And haste those Righteous days, Thou seemst to say.
Shall be on Earth, before the last great Day;
And when the tares are burnt, the just shall shine
Forth, like the glorious Sun, in light divine.

That list of seventeenth century Divines, was not to exhaust the list of Dissenting genius, for in the eighteenth century Shrewsbury and Salop produced new stars to fill vacancies in the Dissenting firmament. Samuel Benyon, and later Job Orton and others were to join the galaxy in later days.³

To return to our subject after a rather long detour into 'that delectable country', we find a very different situation has arisen in Shrewsbury. We might mention the year 1741 when Job Orton began his ministry at High Street. His charge was the care of two Dissenting bodies; namely the Presbyterian Meeting, now Unitarian; and the old Independent body, now at Swan Hill Congregational. Both Congregations or Meetings had invited Orton, but the arrangement was such as to allow both Congregations to retain their respective ways of worship. Orton shared the duties of pulpit and pastorate with his assistant Joseph Founes from 1741-1765.⁴ But trouble arose on Orton's resignation on the grounds of failing health and Benjamin Stapp a student at the Warrington Academy was invited to be co-pastor or assistant to Founes. Seemingly an Arian, he displeased the Independent body which became the majority party and a split ensued in 1766, immediately after Orton's resignation. Stapp died however the following year (19 June 1767) but the harm was done and so ended the period of 'the Happy Union' in Shrewsbury and after a malthouse was used for worship for a time a new Meeting called the New Chappel was opened in 1767. Incidentally 1991 marks two anniversaries – the 250th year since Orton settled at the joint Meeting in 1741 and the 300th anniversary of the High St. Church building. The latter event was marked with a special service there on the 27 October 1991.

Robert Gentleman who as we saw was baptised 7 October 1745 and received a member at High St., January 1762 along with 3 others would have been under Orton's guidance for his education, at Shrewsbury. Although, he was not at the Shrewsbury School he might have attended some other establishment similar to the one he himself was to set up later. He was admitted member of the High Street Meeting during Orton's ministry, in the year 1762 and at the age of 16 years. Little reference is made to him until in the following year he is admitted to the Daventry Academy under Dr. Caleb Ashworth, this institution having been removed from Northampton after the early death of Dr. Philip Doddridge in 1751. Gentleman would be one of that group of students referred to and written to in Orton's considerable correspondence. He would by then have some experience of pulpit work and pastoral duties at such times as Orton's health dictated. Orton suffered from aphasia linked with bronchial trouble. This loss of voice and other complaints led Orton to seek the help of Founes and young men such as Gentleman. Yet he and they would not be called upon to assist an invalid, entirely dependent on others, for his pen was never idle. Once he wrote to his friend Thomas Stedman, later Vicar of St. Chads, that he had not been able to do much this year, yet during that year his book *Christian Zeal* had appeared, apart from his life of Doddridge etc.

Orton left his mark on many. Doddridge regretted his leaving his duties at Northampton where he had his eye on Orton as a possible successor, and spoke of him as a 'great major'. As a portion of the spirit of Doddridge's love and devotion to learning and Christian service descended upon Orton, so a similar succession followed as the devotion of Orton was seen to descend on young Robert Gentleman.⁸ We are not surprised therefore to see Gentleman in turn dedicate himself to being an example of Christian piety and practical learning to the youth of his day.

The Daventry Academy to which Gentleman went was led by Caleb Ashworth of this period Priestley Evans writes:

"Robert Gentleman proceeded to the Daventry Academy in 1763 being supported there by an exhibition from the Presbyterian Fund . . . Benjamin Davies says 'Robert Gentleman told me that he and a fellow student agreed to mark each others imperfections and make them known to each other. The consequence was that Gentleman had no blemishes as a preacher.' Dr. Newth adding 'the College essays at Daventry extended from 1764-1767', when his studies ended and he commenced as Pastor of Swan Hill New Chapel, Shrewsbury."⁹

Gentleman came there being inducted 24 June 1767 with Orton's blessing and recommendation, at a time when the rift and the split which followed had saddened hearts in both Congregations in the town. At least one young lady's heart was broken, she having fallen for Stapp's liturgy and charm. Others such as Isaac Wood with a more practical turn of mind declared Orton "would have a lot to answer for, before the judgement seat of Christ".¹⁰ Unfortunately Orton's letters are few for this period, partly because of his habit of writing in shorthand and hence they are underestimated as compared with those in longhand. This system of Jeremy Rich had been revised and taught to students; and it is worth noting that shorthand had become an instrument in the service of theology before it became and still is a formidable acquisition to commerce.¹¹

When the dust had settled at Shrewsbury the High Street Presbyterians continued under Founes and Swan Hill settled under the ministry of Robert Gentleman, and he in turn 'found that which is a good thing'—he found a wife in Frances Hatton, possibly of the village of that name not far from his birthplace near Whitchurch. Robert and Frances were married on the 29 June 1767 at St. Alkmund, he being 21 years. His annual stipend would be a modest £70 a year, being the half yearly collections paid to him on Lady Day and Michaelmas Day and doled out by Philip Heath possibly a descendant of Richard Heath the ejected Minister of St. Alkmunds, Shrewsbury. This figure is based on those for 1779 the last year of his pastorate, so an estimate must be made assuming it to be less at the beginning than at the end. The number of members for 1779 was 84, total collections being "May 20th 1779 Rec'd of Mr. Philip Heath, deacon, the above sum of Forty three pounds and twelve shillings being the Half Years collection at Lady Day last, —signed Robert Gentleman Minister."¹²

Gentleman was set on an up-hill struggle with his people at Swan Hill but he proved himself equal to it. His marriage to Frances Hatton was a fruitful one, they had six children, 3 boys and 3 girls. Among the records of Swan Hill is a register "of children baptised (here) since I came to Shrewsbury".

This example of 18th Century Shorthand (system revised by Philip Doddridge) is in the Unitarian Church, High Street, Records at Shrewsbury. P.R.O. No. 4335/1/2. Written by Robert Gentleman. Translated by Mrs. Frayne, British Museum Library.

At our first meeting June 19th 1767 the following things were agreed upon

1) To alter the method of substituting public worship, and the order of morning and afternoon to be as follows: First beginning with hymn (1) Prayer paper to be read (2) Reading (Chapter) (3) Another prayer of a general kind about 10 minutes (4) A hymn to be sung (5) A blessing (6) to read the conference it was agreed to print about 20 hymn papers for this part of worship about 5 or 4 apiece that might be sold for a 1d and put the rest of what to put at the end of their books (7) Sermon (8) Hymn (9) After a prayer a little to seniors, and in the afternoon to juniors

II) It was judged that paper as things are now situated not to be at all the same. We have no place at all convenient to do it, we cannot

It was thought that I should be into the when I should be ready now, and to both then and then [pronounced] in my intentions

III) It was determined that I should say all the members and supporters belonging to the congregation [but] after that I should propose praying with all my but with this only when asked, I do not know the particular names or names of any and many of the colours made for handling of that subject, the motion paper I should translate them know in my sermon that I expect to be useful when convenient. As to [said] was to see them every day of and pray with them etc.

Sufficient is deciphered to indicate order of service dated 19 June 1707.
 1-(1) Hymn; (2) Prayer; (3) Chapter; (4) Another prayer of a general kind (10 verses);
 (5) A Hymn; (6) Sermon; (7) Hymn.
 2-....
 3-....
 Help is needed for further deciphering.

The form of the register follows closely that kept at High St. by Orton.

Those orthodox Independents who withdrew on Orton's retirement 15 October 1765 and Benjamin Stapp's appointment at the High St. Meeting rented Mr. Gounsell's malthouse, being under the impression that Job Orton would continue as their minister. Some uncertainty must have been caused by Orton's determination to retire, possibly because his health had worsened. He had however hoped that they would soon appoint a minister, and he put forward the name of Robert Gentleman as one who had shown fitness and willingness to serve in that capacity. Gentleman was still at Daventry when the division took place at High St. At this stage things were not too good between Wood and Orton. Wood replied to Orton's refusal to recommend Wood's sister for a post. He adds, "Can you wonder, Sir, that I dislike Mr. Gentleman, is he not the sole cause of the separation . . . and the dispute about the fund? Had he hearkened to the advice of Messrs. Keay, Boulton, Harrop and Chidlow our sad breach might have been healed. You are sadly mistaken if you think they would sit under Mr. Gentleman's ministry . . . and he appears in public with Wesley's missionaries, one of whom preached some time ago in the green market and was rudely insulted and pelted; and the day after with Mrs. Gentleman, went arm in arm through the street, with him, and Mr. Gentleman was hours in his company." The following dates and details taken from the records handed down to us give a sequence of events at the New Chapel, and tell their own story.

10 January 1762: R. Gentleman admitted member at High St. with James Mason, John Heath.

1763: R.G. enters Daventry Academy.

12 October 1765: R.G. preaches at Malthouse, a.m. Heb. 4:16. p.m. Eph. 3:18. Sunday on probation. Orton was present.

15 October 1765: Job Orton retires it being his 48th birthday.

31 October 1766: R.G. asked to 'assist' Job Orton but he was already removed to Kidderminster.

4 March 1767: High St. invites New Mtg. to rejoin them, accusing Gentleman of being culpable and an obstacle to reunion.

13 April 1767 (Mon.): The Foundation is laid of New Chapel in Mr. Joe Brown's garden with inscription

"This building was erected in the year 1767

For the public worship of God.

And to defend the rights of majorities

In Protestant Dissenting Congregations

To chose their own ministers." (13)

19 June 1767 (Fri.): First Church Meeting of New Chapel. Details in Shorthand account enclosed. Proposing new ordering of Church services. (14)

21 June 1767: R.G. preached his first sermon after becoming minister. Text Romans 5:29.

29 June 1767: Robert Gentleman marries Frances Hatton at St. Alkmund, witnesses Philip Heath and Joseph Gittings.¹⁵

10 September 1767: The New Chapel is opened.

6 April 1768 (Weds.): *Ordination and Induction Service*. Elliot writes: "Mr. Gentleman's Induction-Ordination service was longer than that of the Opening service. The solemnities lasting four hours and 20 minutes. The Revs Maurice, Bridgenorth, Horton, Nantwich; Cole, Wolverhampton; Robbins, Bromwich; Morgan, Oswestry. Mr. Gentleman read his Confession of Faith and kneeling all the ministers laid hands upon him. Mr. Fawcett of Kidderminster gave the Benediction and prayers, Mr. Noah Jones, Walsall gave the charge and Mr. Llewellyn of Walsall. Five hymns suitable to the occasion were sung."

The account of the opening service of the New Chapel on 10 September 1767 is interesting as an example of the ordering of such services. "Mr. Gentleman was in the desk, the Rev Maurice, Leominster, went up to the pulpit and began with prayer. He then read the Psalm and the eighth chapter of the first Book of Kings and came down. Mr. Gentleman read the 132 Psalm and sang it in metre. Then Mr. Cole of Wolverhampton prayed the long prayer. Mr. Gentleman gave out another psalm and Mr. Robbins of Wolverhampton preached from Luke 8:18, 'Take heed therefore how ye hear', much applauded. Mr. Gentleman then gave out another Psalm to be sung and Mr. Morgan of Oswestry concluded with prayer. All of which took up three hours time".¹⁶

So ended the period of the 'happy Union' locally, and the opening of a new chapter in the history of Salopian Independency. We must regret the absence of Mr. Joseph Founes, Orton's assistant at High Street. Founes who had to play second fiddle during Orton's reign at High Street, now assumes full pastoral duties and is well respected by Church and towns folk. Orton would certainly be at the Induction and opening services. It was he who had recommended Founes to Walsall and then to High Street and now Gentleman to Salop. Note an attempt was made on 14 March 1767 — "when proposals were made by High Street for the return of the Swan Hill dissidents".

In the meantime our subject and his wife had settled at the Folley, busying themselves with domestic and church duties, which included having a look at church records, an art in which Orton was expert. His bold almost copper plate writing of the minutes of the Salop Infirmary of which he was prime mover and first secretary, and his records of High Street, and Swan Hill all bear record. His records begin with "An Account of the Children Baptized since I came to Shrewsbury in 1767". He was to record five children of his own during his Shrewsbury ministry, the sixth was born at Carmarthen.

To this list he added another "An Account of persons who are admitted members of the New Chappel since I came in June 1767". To this he added "An Account of Deaths since I came to Salop in 1767".¹⁷

This *register of baptism* has four columns; and dated 1767-1779. Similarly "an account of deaths since I came to Salop in June 1767". Members deceased under name, date of death, state cause, disorder; and lastly remarks most of latter in shorthand. His register of baptisms show his children to have been five, in this order:

- (9) Robert bapt 2 June 1768 at the Folley
- (26) Mary bapt 8 August 1769 at Claremont Hill
- (46) Walter bapt 25 April 1771 Bapt Mr Morgan
- (72) Francis bapt 30 Sept 1774 at Bostock?
- (94) Thomas bapt 21 July 1776 Hill's Lane. Knucking St.
Sarah bapt 178? Probably at Carmarthen

More important perhaps than deaths etc. is the list of living members "who were admitted members of the new chapel since I came in June 1767 to 2 May 1779" First a number is shown, in first column then names, when proposed for membership, when admitted, occasional remarks the latter column all in shorthand. I repeat that these lists follow those registers kept by Orton during

his stay at the High St. Meeting and transmitted to Gentleman and he to his successor Samuel Lucas the third in the line of shorthand users, and careful keepers of Church registers. Among the records of new members is that of Frances Gentleman herself, being "received by Mr. Robbins 12 July 1767".

Orton could give sound advice on many subjects, he frequently advised his friends a gift of a dowry could help immensely. He was himself comfortably off, living with his aged mother in the shop at High St., and able to send Molly Doddridge a gift of a 'leg of ham', not to mention the Ming Vase he left in his will, with substantial gifts to others.¹⁸ Gentleman had considerable family responsibilities. With five children born at Shrewsbury, and a maid of all work, and wife to maintain, he had to look around for a supplement to his income. He turned to the scheme adopted by dissenting ministers after their ejection in 1662, following the path set by Tallents, and others here and in other places all over Britain.

The opportunity came along in 1775, when Thomas Adams, Vicar of St. Chads, who had married Sarah, daughter of Thomas Hunt, M.P.¹⁹ for Salop of Boreatton, left the town for another living, and vacated the property on Hill's Lane. Gentleman placed an advertisement in the Shrewsbury Chronicle 6th October 1775, which reads:

"The Rev Robert Gentleman begs leave to inform his friends and the public that he has taken, and is now entering upon that large, airy and convenient house situated in Hill's Lane, lately in the possession of Dr. Adams, where his boarding school for young Gentlemen will be continued on his former terms. Proper masters will be provided in the several branches of useful learning and nothing shall be wanting on his part to render the plan of education as complete as possible."

Again, on 3 February 1776 He places another advertisement in offering in the first instance his booklet entitled *A Master's Advice to his Scholars* on full admission to his (school) family, and adding "his house can take more young men, with resident masters for writing accounts, and a few day scholars can be taken. Fees Half Guinea a quarter and half guinea entrance". Job Orton having got news of the school, in a letter to Thomas Stedman, writes on 15 February of the following year, "Mr. Gentleman besides some schoolboys, has two young men intended for the ministry (who will be a kind of half-bred divines) under his care . . . I do not much approve of the scheme, but in the present state of our churches, such men may be very acceptable and fill some useful stations". We would give a lot to know who these two students were and did they and others follow Robert Gentleman when in 1779 he left for Carmarthen?²⁰

"The Catechisms used by him in his school were . . . Mr Orton for elder scholars and Watts for 1st and 2nd. refers to the school having Infants (mixed) 51; Boys 41; Girls 61, Elder scholars 40." (Evans).

However, in connection with that school in Hill's Lane our subject made his mark. He is best remembered for his contribution to the training of youth. The wheel has come complete circle as we see today the sad results of so much neglect of what are still the children of the labouring class. In his case a growing family was a spur to effort. This means of family support, produced one who—in spite of criticism that he was a poor disciplinarian at

Carmarthen—is best remembered for his work with young people. The children of the gentry were provided for locally. At the Shrewsbury school he was providing education for the children of lower middle and labouring classes. As early as 1772 his deacon Eddowes of Swan Hill had published his "Essay on Reading and Declamation", to assist his scholars, all boys, for girls were usually left at home and depended for their education on the chance mother like Susanah Wesley at Epworth.

The charge of indiscipline is made by Bennet and Bogue but is refuted by Gordon, showing it was unfortunately endemic at the Carmarthen academy, and not a blame to be laid at Gentleman's door. Perhaps we shall see for ourselves if we take a closer look at the Academy in 1779, where Gentleman was appointed Divinity tutor at the Presbyterian College situated on his entry at the mansion at Rhydygors.²¹ There he had succeeded the eminent Dr. Jenkyn Jenkyns of Llanfyllin, who had been at Carmarthen since 1759 as classical tutor and also minister of the Lamma Street Independent meeting. Believed to have been an Arian, but also a distinguished scholar, he moved to London in 1779. His was a difficult post to fill, the Carmarthen students had a reputation for indiscipline and a strong hand was needed. Dewi Eirug Davies²² has reminded us in his history that at this time the Presbyterian Fund felt it was duty bound to set things in order. Only one holiday was allowed annually. Admission was strictly on proof of progress in the classics. This period at Rhydygors was the period of the 'strict rule' The bell rang for prayers at six in summer and seven in winter. Fines were imposed for failure to comply with the rules. Doddridge had fines of a few pence which were used to replenish the library at Northampton. The fines at Carmarthen for missing prayers was two pence. The Lord's Day was strictly observed. Fourth year students were obliged to preach in turn and lead the prayers. Sermons were in Welsh and English and although Gentleman was from Welsh border country, he was at a disadvantage when it came to judge the quality of the Welsh sermon class. He got over the obstacle of his Welsh congregation by offering a small fee to Benjamin Davies his fellow tutor.

During this 'period of the rule' imposed by the Presbyterian Fund, Gentleman began, says Dr. Davies in his book "by being lenient, believing it would be productive and prudent in an infant seminary".²³ Three students who had been ring leaders in Dr. Jenkyns' time were brought before their betters for non attendance at prayer meetings and sermons but apologised and were excused. The Board took extreme measures and dismissed all six others for the same offence. In spite of this lack of discipline there were 23 students preparing for the ministry and some for the Welsh state church with others preparing for civilian occupations during Gentleman's principalship. With other subject Dr. Doddridge's lectures were closely studied. In addition to languages, Ethics and Divinity would have pride of place. When it became the Principal's turn to preach at his Welsh Congregation in the town he would have to be excused. The minutes of the Presbyterian Board 6 December 1779, record that 'Mr. Gentleman informed the committee that the congregation at Carmarthen had invited him to be their English Pastor'.²⁴ This period of his Principalship was not the happiest 1779-1784, with the Presbyterian Board complaining of the lack of discipline among the students, and the Arian

versus Calvinist tension, bi-lingualism in church and domestic issues, not to mention his family commitments with two children, Walter and Sarah, the latter born in 1780 making up a round half dozen. These were matters he would write about to Orton, his friend and mentor, who lived in Kidderminster and attended the Meeting of which Benjamin Fawcett was Minister and failing at this time, the name of Robert Gentleman was introduced to that circle of church leaders, who when occasion arose would seek another pastor. In Kidderminster as in Shrewsbury as elsewhere in those days there was a tension between the orthodox and Arianising groups. It has puzzled many that Gentleman who was Orton's choice for the Independents of the Shrewsbury New Meeting should be his choice for the Kidderminster new Meeting. Gordon in D.N.B. describes him as 'an Independent a professed Calvinist of the moderate sort, and a professed Trinitarian of the Arianising variety'. Orton in a letter dated 18 June 1778, supplies the information that while at Shrewsbury Gentleman was invited to succeed Dr. Wilton at (Kings) Weigh House, London, but he wisely declined, as he would not have drawn well with the stiff Independent brethren. During his Carmarthen days the students were avowedly Unitarian in the strict sense of the term, and his assistant Benjamin Davies was one himself and of a family notorious as strict adherents to it. Priestley Evans quotes an expression of Gentleman's in a letter pointing to his being a middle-of-the-road-Arian, the expression being, "God, Christ and the Holy Ghost", hence he was not an orthodox "Trinitarian". Gentleman had learnt under Orton and Doddridge, how to cultivate a serious yet evangelical and practical application of Christian truth in order to maximise the usefulness of his ministry. Perhaps he communicated with Orton, who had told John Hughes of Bury, that things were not as they should be at Rhydygors.

Eventually the sad news of Ben Fawcett's death leads us to the scene at Kidderminster and the troubled church after Fawcett's death (P. Evans, p.45, 46). Benjamin Fawcett 1715-80, a Northampton student under Philip Doddridge, was sent by him in 1737 to Whitchurch to seek an alibi for Brian Connell who was under sentence of death for murder, and executed in 1738. In the same year Fawcett was made minister of the Old Meeting at St. Paul's, Taunton, forty ministers and Philip Doddridge, being present. He removed to Kidderminster in 1747, and married a lady with a fortune in those days of £1,400. His was a most successful ministry, having 315 applications for membership in his hey day. Orton writes, "now he is failing, Fawcett is never likely to preach again . . . he is so weak and Mr. Parminter supplies and he a pupil of Mr. Rooker". Orton does not sound too well himself, as he recalls past events, I took several journeys to Kidderminster, wrote many letters to get Mr. Fawcett here; but now I am nothing . . . a generation is sprung up that knew not Joseph". Fawcett was 65 years and Orton wrote this to Mr. Jevans of Bloxham. 13 April 1780. Writing to John Hughes of Shrewsbury and Minister at Bury he adds, "I wish the Academy (Rhydygors) was back at Salop?". It had been there and Oswestry in James Owen's day, and "I fear Mr. Gentleman will not be long capable of the duties of his station". If reference is to the state of affairs at Rhydygors, then the time was ripe for change.

Some domestic as well as institutional problems may have inclined him to seek the greener pastures of the Worcester Severnside. His son Robert had

become a student at Rhydygors in mid-summer 1783, the trustees of the Read charity voted him five pounds, that year 'for his education in useful learning'. Robert however, resigned his exhibition that year having abandoned the intention of entering the ministry. His wife Frances was expecting her sixth child and could not carry on the burden of caring for a large student family with all the attendant responsibilities. Knowledge of such problems had led Orton to express the wish that the academy be back in Salop, adding: "It is important to have a good tutor at the Welsh Academy for . . . more divines are educated there than at any English seminary I heartily wish Providence direct a suitable person" (Orton ii. 579). Such was his comment in 1779 the year of Gentleman's taking up the Headship, and by 1784 his sentiments were much the same. And in the event it did move because in 1784 the Independents withdrew. It moved to Swansea to be under Solomon Harris, returning eventually to Carmarthen after a little wandering, until 1959-60 when it merged with the Memorial College, Brecon, at Swansea (now at Aberystwyth).

The toll exacted was too much and Robert Gentleman decided to enlist the aid of Orton, whose recommendation of him was accepted and he was inducted at the Kidderminster Meeting four years after the death of Benjamin Fawcett in 1780. He took up his duties with much courage, his faith supporting him, a faith he had ardently commended to others, was now a staff suited to his own support. He was not a strong man physically. In his last publication, the six volumes of Orton's exposition of the Old Testament, which he was given by Samuel Palmer to transcribe, for they were written in shorthand, when he found he could complete the work, he declares his "thanks to Providence for enabling him to finish the work with such little interruption, 'midst many bodily infirmities and various labours both in the ministry and in the education of youth'.

The last period of Gentleman's ministerial labour is to be spent in Kidderminster, Worcestershire, a town best known as the scene of the great Richard Baxter's ministry. In 1991 the tercentenary of Baxters death we recall his birth at Eaton-Constantine, some 4-5 miles from Shrewsbury. We reproduced in our 1986-7 number the late Dr. W.C. Wakes' sketch of Baxter's House. He was brought up by an uncle at High Ercall, eventually being prominent in County and Army, until he settled at Kidderminster. The Corporation is proud of its possession of an autographed copy of the first edition of Baxter's 'The Saints Everlasting Rest'. His pulpit is preserved at the Kidderminster Unitarian Church. This church is believed to have been founded by Thomas Baldwin, one of Baxter's assistants. By 1672 he and Thomas Ware had taken out licences to meet for worship in their houses. It was to this congregation Benjamin Fawcett came in 1747 to be succeeded by Gentleman in 1784.

"In 1781, 46 members of the Old Meeting refused on doctrinal grounds to sign the invitation to John Barrett to succeed Benjamin Fawcett as minister and withdrew to form a new meeting . . . They attempted to remain under the same roof, though at a different hour, but without success" see G.E. Evans, *Midland Churches* 1899, 143.

After Fawcett's death efforts were made to secure a minister. Their first choice was Fawcett's son Samuel of Beaminster who turned it down on 1 Jan. 1782, arguing the need of his Beaminster congregation. In November that year T.

Taylor of Carter Lane, London was approached and invited. He too turned down the invitation preferring a longer stay with his congregation. In the summer of 1783 (8 Sept) Robert Gentleman received the official invitation from the New Meeting, Kidderminster:

"Rev. & dear Sir,

We whose names are underwritten, the subscribers and members of the New Meeting beg leave . . . to invite you to become our Pastor.

After being disappointed in our application to two much respected ministers and friends we think ourselves happy that we can again so harmoniously write in our invitation of a third. You are so well acquainted with us as not to need any information and we have so much knowledge of you as to be satisfied in our present address to you.

Your services amongst us have been very acceptable, and we think we have observed in you that spirit and temper which we wish our pastor to possess, a spirit of candour and moderation . . . with seriousness and zeal in the essential articles of religion . . . We trust you will take this weighty business into your serious consideration . . . to lead you to such a conclusion as may most advance His course and honour, your usefulness and comfort, and the best interest of yourselves, our families and all connected with us.

We shall await your reply with impatience and earnestly wish and hope it may be in your favour.

We are with great esteem and respect,

Rev. and dear Sir,

Your obedient Servants,

(52 names are added)

Dated 8th Sept. 1783."

The New Meeting waited with considerable anxiety lest we should have been again disappointed till the beginning of January 1784 when we received the following favourable answer:

"To the Subscribers and members of the Congregation at the New Meeting House in Kidderminster.

My Christian Friends and Brethren,

I beg leave to repeat my thanks for your very unanimous and affectionate invitation to become your Pastor. I have . . . taken the matter into very serious consideration. I have sought the advice of several of my friends and brethren in the ministry . . . and sought direction from the Father of Light. The result is that I think Providence has opened a way for my settlement among you, and points it out to me as the path of duty to spend and be spent in your service. I therefore cheerfully accept your call to become pastor, and propose (D.V.) to take up my abode among you at Midsummer next. (Reference is then made to Mr. Osborn, a supply.) To whom we return prayers to God that my coming among you may be in the fulness of the blessing of Christ . . .

In hope of this I remain . . . your most obliged and affectionate Friend and Servant in the Gospel of Christ.

ROBERT GENTLEMAN

(From) Rhydygors, Nr. Carmarthen.

January 1st 1784."

In July following he came to settle with us and on the 25th of the month preached his first sermon in the morning from Acts 5:20, "Go and stand and speak to the people all the words of this life", and in the afternoon from 1 Cor.13:6, "Rejoice not in iniquity, but rejoice in the truth.

"On the whole we have great reason to look back with . . . thankfulness on all the ways God has helped us, and especially on the good temper and moderation with which this separation has been conducted . . . no private friendships have been broken, no bitterness or animosities remain between the two Societies . . . at present there is no contention but to provoke one another to good works . . . and that both societies may flourish and be happy here till they are again joined together in the general assembly of the Church of the first-born in Heaven. Amen."

To this congregation Gentleman came to preach in the summer of 1783 and for a few Sundays successively, and in September an invitation . . . was sent to him to become its first regular pastor. He accepted in January 1784, preaching his first sermon as minister on the 25 July following. A trust deed executed 6 August 1784 has a clause to the effect that the choice be made 'by the men communicants only' and a line that reads;

"Sit to sing and Stand to pray
Was the good old Presbyterian way".

Robert Gentleman received 131 members after his coming to Kidderminster. One hundred years had passed since Baxter's day and new movements had arisen, in particular Unitarianism as opposed to Trinitarianism linked with the disputes of Calvinism versus Arminianism that were current at the time. The introduction of an Arianising, liturgy represented by Priestley and Lindsey, was evident in Shrewsbury as we know from the Orton correspondence, and at Kidderminster causing this division, and of course it was something of a nationwide phenomena. It was as a result of this dispute, which was glossed over by Fawcett, who was tolerant to people of other views, that erupted during his long illness—leading to the division. The summer of 1784 was a bright spot on the calendar for the family of Robert and Frances Gentleman, for they have a new home and new duties in view. Frances could relinquish some of the household duties, at least, to concentrate a little more on her family and not so much on a large student family. The income here was modest enough as we read in the Orton letters, but the change of scene and other aspects of life were to be pleasant enough. After the solemnities of the induction at which Orton would take a prominent part, the family settled into their new home, less airy, than that at Rhydygors but nevertheless more comfortably set among the friendly folk of the congregation. As minister he would be busy receiving new members, and closer to home five of his children were enrolled as catechumens in 1785, being Frances aged 8 years, Thomas aged 7, Sarah aged 5, Walter aged 10 years, Mary 15 years, while Robert the eldest was casting around for a position. Perhaps he went in to the weaving trade for which Kidderminster is famous, and with that we draw a blank.

Robert Gentleman's target is in view. To fight the good fight of faith, and gain the crown, as a good servant of His Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The enclosed list of books by E.D.P. Evans indicate his gifts as a teacher and minister. He was left with his six children who had lost their mother, who was buried on the Boxing Day 1791 in St. Mary's Churchyard, Kidderminster. Evans: We knew nothing of them after their father's death. Their father had

delivered the 'Dudley Lectures' in 1770, 1785 and 1787 and once the 'Oldbury' Lecture in 1785.

He saw Orton through his last illness and had before this conveyed his sympathy to various persons who were sorrowing but now he comforts Orton, with the same consolation of the Christian Gospel. Orton died 19 July 1783 having made him his literary executor, this may have recommended him to the New Meeting. He came to lay Orton to rest in the same grave as John Bryan, erected at St. Chad's, and Gentleman, died Friday 10 June, 1795 in his fiftieth year.

Robert Gentleman published the following:

1. A Discourse upon the Nature and Design of the Lord's Supper (4 pence).
2. A Serious and Earnest Call to Repentance being discourse delivered at the New Meeting Kidderminster by J.W. Eddowes. (1s. or 10/6 a dozen).
3. The Young Scholars Complete Pocket Guide. *Part 1*: English Grammar; *Part 2*: History of the Kings of England; *Part 3*: (a) Geography, Natural division of the World, (b) a Tour through Europe, (c) The Counties of England, with their curiosities, (d) Table of Principal places; *Part 4*: Chronology etc. events, discovery, famous men; *Part 5*: Arithmetic, Weight and Measures; *Part 6*: List of foreign coins with English value 1788, 1797 (2/6 bound).
4. Extracts from the Author of the Dissenting Ministers letter to White (3d. a piece).
5. Hymns for Public worship on Charitable occasions and Sunday Schools (8d. or 7s. for dozen).
6. Plain and Affectionate Addresses to Youth or various important subjects.
7. A Short and Plain Exposition of the Old Testament by the Rev. Job Orton S.T.P. Published from the authors manuscript. (In shorthand after S. Palmer passed it on to Gentleman) Published by J. and W. Eddowes Salop as were all Orton's works.

In Six volumes 1788-1791 2nd Edition 1822.

N.B. Gentleman also published. 'Proposals' Jan. 1792 of a Exposition Philip Doddridge of the N. Testament. Do not think this materialised. There are copies of No. 6 and No. 7 at the Congregational Library. c/o D. Williams Library. The two are also at Shrewsbury public Library. The fact that No. 6 went to a 3rd Edition leads Dr. Nuttall to comment "that it must have been very popular".

TREVOR WATTS

¹The Old Barn is now at the entrance to the Erddig National Trust House, Wrexham.

²Shropshire Parish Registers (Non-conformists).

³Thomas Richards, Puritan Movement in Wales 1639-53. 1920. p. 25 Deeside borders can be added to Severn and Usk etc.

⁴Hildersheim in DNB and Oliver Thomas. see Byw = DWBiog. Thomas compiled the devotional book *Carwr y Cymry*, pub. 1630, reprint 1930 by John Ballinger.

⁵Francis Tallents in DNB and recent notes in the Congregational History Circle Magazine vol 2, no. 3, 25-28. Vol 2, no. 4, 36-41.

⁶Samuel Benyon and Job Orton see DNB.

⁷Joseph Founes 1715-89. Born Andover, Hants., Educated at the Findern Academy, ordained Cradley 1743. High St. 1748-89. Marr dau Thomas Mason of High and Swan Hill.

⁷Church Record at PRO Salop and Swan Hill., see Salop Shreds and Patches 57-58. and In print from 1767 to 1818 in Sal Par Records.

⁸Orton in G.F. Nuttall. Calender of Philip Doddridge Correspondence: Note 575 of Letter to David Jennings, praises his pupils especially Benjamin Francis, 'as for Mr. Orton he is *omni laude major* or darling of the Congregation.

⁹E.D.P. Evans History of the New Meeting, Kidderminster.

¹⁰History of High Street, by Orton, on microfilm Mic. no. 6. Some memoirs of High Street Shrewsbury.

¹¹For Shorthand see Manual prepared by Philip Doddridge later edition in 1799 25 pages. System invented by Jeremiah Rich. Brief and Easy System of Shorthand P. Doddridge and Orton's comments in prac. works ii. 430. L. viii. ii. 430. Copy at D.W. Library, 32p.

¹²This large book opens at No. 27 in 1767 year of the opening of Swan Hill. Last payments to Gentleman and first to Samuel Lucas. Read "No. 27, Half-yearly Collection Lady Day 1779-1818." The book is of the long ledger type about six" wide and 18" high, in the fine hand of Richard Heath. Gentleman signed for his part of the collection etc. S. Lucas did likewise on Lady Day and Michelmas. See list of Swan Hill Records by A.H. Morris in C.H.C. magazine, No. 3, Nov. 1979.

¹³The Stone with the inscription has been lost in rebuilding in 1862 and later additions.

¹⁴A quantity of Shorthand preserved of the 1767 events include one page which appears to be a minute of the first meeting of the fellowship established at Swan Hill, and supplying an order of service. See Illustration and transcription by Mrs. Frayne of the B.Mus. manuscript department, for which we are grateful. Days in brackets are supplied by our Secretary Mr. C. Price.

¹⁵The IGI microfilm record known as The Mormon Index. Supplied us with details drawn it would seem from the records we have quoted at length, and in the three last columns are dates which seem to state that Gentleman was posthumously converted to Mormonism!

¹⁶See Elliot 'History of Shropshire Congregationalism', chapter 1.

¹⁷Record at Swan Hill see note 7 and 10 and 12.

¹⁸Orton's will is at P.R.O. London.

¹⁹Thomas Adams Vicar of (Old) St. Chad's close friend of Orton. Gentleman's school followed him in the tenancy of the Hill's Lane school (boarding and day) for boys.

²⁰See Orton's Letters in Practical Works 1808 Vol. 1.172 This says, Evans, explains his choice as tutor for Carmarthen.

²¹I am grateful to the Drs. G.F. Nuttall, R. Tudur Jones, Mr. John Creasey, Librarian at Dr. Williams, Gordon Square, London and the Rev. J. Towyn Jones of Carmarthen for describing the situation and owners of the Rhydygors (Bridge over the bog) Academy scene of Gentleman's activity 1779-84. The estate with mansion was on the west side of Carmarthen near Johnstown and St. Clear, on the Llansteffan Road, and now part of the Trinity teachers training College, playing fields, marked by a clump of trees.

It was owned by the Edwardes family and under David Edwards 1630-1690 an antiquarian and herald royal whose pedigrees are included in the Golden Grove Golden Book. The house was tall and impressive with three storeys, each with five windows and an attic storey with three dormer windows in the roof, in appearance not unlike the former Warrington Academy. Both demolished, and Rhydygors made way for the Unigate Dairy Co after 1960. See McLachlan. Eng. Educ under the Test Acts. OUP 1931. p.55 For David Edwards and family see Dict. Welsh Biog. and the R.T. Jenkyns History of Carmarthenshire. 2 vols.

²²D.E. Davies. *Hoff Ddysgedig Nyth*, 73, 74, 80. The latest (1976) History of the Academy, John Penry Press.

²³see above.

²⁴see above 73 with note on page 78.

²⁵Evans, 15-24.

Acknowledgements to Dr. G.F. Nuttall, Mr. Carr of the Local Studies Library, Shrewsbury for help over the years; Miss Hart of the Kidderminster Library and the officers and members of Swan Hill for permission to browse among their documents and to quote from them.

THE SECRETARIES NOTES AND VIEWS etc.

Costing the Pilgrim Fathers

Freeman Dyson in his book *Disturbing the Universe* (1979) describes his consternation at the billions of dollars cost of the Apollo Missions and wonders whether such ventures have got to be this expensive. He projects the cost of an inter-galactic expedition and compares the unit costs to Brigham Young's determined venture to Utah and (this is the point) to costing the Pilgrim Fathers' venture. His conclusions are worth analysing.

Basically the task of the Pilgrim Fathers' *Mayflower* voyage was this. How can 103 people with no money, travel 2,000 miles and set up a colony that is not only self-supporting but able to raise the cash needed to finance the venture?

Suppose first that a man, with a little help from his friends, could save about three times his own yearly wage. In 1620 a wage would be between 8. 12d per day—let's say 10d. This would amount to $10 \times 365 \times 3 / 240$ (240 ds. in the £—remember?) = £46.

Now their own projected cost of fitting out and sailing the *Mayflower* is uncertain, but let's take Cushman's figure of £1500 (see below). The total contributed sum would then be $£46 \times 103 = £4700$. So dividing this figure by the estimated cost would yield $£4700/1500 = 3$.

It can now be seen that the 103 Shares among 103 working men can also be re-distributed as one share per 3 or per family; man, a wife and grown up teenager or a wife and two children or a wife, two toddlers and one babe in arms.

Finally, if instead of *saving* two or three times his annual wage suppose he now *mortgages* his *future* earning capacity, the cost of the venture could be immediately raised by normal commercial means.

And this seems to have been what did happen. So what started out as a vision and a dream by very ordinary and unwealthy people became a reality.

William Bradford the leader and the first Governor of the Plymouth colony (in *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647*, ed. Samuel E. Morrison (NY, Kopf, 1952) quotes a letter from Robert Cushman from which I took the figure of £1500. Dated June 10 1620, two months before the sailing, Cushman was in charge of provisioning and agreed to underwrite the entire estimated cost of £1500, though one is not sure whether this also included the hire of the *Mayflower* itself. In any event, three weeks later, on July 1 1620 another agreement was made. This was between the Planters and the Adventurers.

The Planters were the colonists, while the Adventurers were the shareholders, who supplied the money but who stayed at home. The agreement stipulated that at the "end of seven years, the capital and profits, viz. the houses, lands, goods and chattels, be divided equally betwixt the Adventurers and the Planters." Another clause stipulated that 1 share each be given, as a bonus, to every person over the age of 16 and rated at £10.

In fact, the 1620 agreement proved, in many ways and to both sides, unsatisfactory. In 1626, one year before the planned division of assets, a new agreement was carefully drawn up "by the best counsel of law they could get, to make it firm." This 1626 agreement stipulated that the Adventurers sell

to the Planters for £1800. The colonists, thus, bought out the Adventurers and were left with a debt of £1800 which they eventually paid off twenty-two years later.

Perhaps a long time, but they did finally establish themselves and they were at least prepared to back their visions with an economic structure which did eventually bring their dreams and hopes into reality, a technique which churches today could do well to follow.

Oh, and which expedition was the most economically efficient? Well, according to Dyson, adjusting for inflation and differing payloads, in terms of man-years per family: *Mayflower* 7.5; an intergalactic colony 6 and the Mormons 2.5 (well, for them it was just a *land trek!*)

Computer dating

I have a computer program which will produce a printed Georgian Calendar for any year after 1752. This may be of use to some readers in their researches, who want to know the days for given dates in a particular year, or of the ecclesiastical year, for Easter is also calculated.

It would be useful to extend the program back into the Julian Calendar and to take account of the change of year start to our present January, which gave strange dates like 174½, often seen on tombstones. Is there anyone who knows about calendar computation and is prepared to offer advice?

The Congregational Lecture 1991. Entitled "Rhetoric and Reality: Theological Reflections upon Congregationalism and its Heirs", was delivered by Professor Alan P.F. Sell on the 13th November at the Dr. Williams's Library.

A new Venture was held at Dr. Williams's Library on the 14th November. Dr. Sell writes: the *Meeting of Representatives of Historical Societies and Librarians convened* by Randolph Vigne and myself, was by general consent a considerable success. We shall hear more of the good work later.

C. PRICE

Some of you may have noticed in *The Times* (15 June 1991) the report of an interview with the historian, Alan Bullock, about his childhood. There you would have read of his father's liberalism, both in politics and religion and that his father, Frank Bullock, was a lay preacher in the nonconformist chapels around Bath. The article reported that Bullock senior went on to train for the Congregational ministry even though this meant long working days and study until well past midnight.

My invitation to Lord Bullock to write about his childhood for our magazine received a warm reply, but he felt he must correct the interviewer's confusion. He writes, "My father was brought up in a Congregational household, but broke away when he grew up and was ordained as a Unitarian minister." He feels this excludes him from our immediate field of interest.

Lord Bullock's career is further evidence of the rich fund of intellectual resources available in the nonconformist manse. His childhood home was a "small terraced house full of books" and "being an only child, he tended to accompany his father wherever he went, into a wider adult world where the talk was of books and of ideas." Alan Bullock is of course the founding

master of St. Catherine's College, Oxford (Master 1960-80). He was the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University 1969-73 and has written, among other works, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (1952, rev. edn. 1964) and the recently published *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives* (1991).

ALAN ARGENT

The *Bryn Welsh Congregational Church* Llanely, Dyfed from whence I was sent into the ministry, has celebrated its 150 Anniversary. 29-30 June '91 The Rev. Dewi Evans, minister presiding over services at which they were joined by sister churches and the Rev Noel Gibbard addressed them on the History of the Church.

Welsh Radio and S4C TV have been inundated with Lectures, Songs of Praise etc celebrating the life of William Williams, (Pantycelyn). Hymn writer and author of over 90 books and poems, etc. Pantycelyn being the name of the farm - family home near Llandoverly, Carm. William Williams (1717-1791) (Pantycelyn) was a combination of John and Charles Wesley. William Williams with oether founded the Calvinistic Methodist Church in Wales - the major Free Church of Wales to this day. He composed 800 Welsh Hymns and 100 English Hymns. "What Paul Gerhardt has been in Germany and Isaac Watts in England, that and more has Williams been to Wales" (The Companion to the Congregational Praise, p. 544). The Farm is still occupied by the Williams family direct descendants of the great Welsh hymn writer - a Welsh Charles Wesley. Readers may be amused when I add that the family of the present Mrs. Williams supplied us with Milk for our morning cuppa, when we were at Erwood near Builth. The name means Erw'r yd = The Corn Acre, set on the Silvan Wye. Hebron, Crugadarn nearby is part of C.Fed. *Other Anniversaries are Richard Baxter, George Fox, John Wesley.*

In connection with the former a major work has appeared entitled The Correspondence of Richard Baxter by G.F. Nuttall and N.H. Keeble.

The Shrewsbury Unitarian Church was opened for worship in 1691, by the Rev Francis Tallents, John Bryan. The Rev Peter Hewis, President of Assembly conducted the Commemorative Service on 27 October 1991. President Minister Revd Anne Wicker presided. The service was followed by a lunch, to mark the occasion. The Cromwell Association secretary is Miss Pat Barnes, Cosswell House, Northedge, Tupton, Chesterfield, Derbs. C42 6AY.

EFCC's Ministers Prayer Conference, is described in the November issue of Concern. (undated) attended by fifty and address by Alan Tovey on Richard Baxter, Alan Taylor surveying mission, George Hemming on Pastoralia and Derek Swann chaired a session on preaching as ambassadors for Christ. Philip Williams gave the closing address on Psalm 27. The course included a visit to All Nations College Easenye and chapels at Much Hadham and Braughing, Herts.

"Capel" was set up to safeguard our Chapel heritage. C.H.C. is affiliated but its bi-lingual pamphlet is available from Dr. Huw Owen, Y Llyfrgell Genedlaethol, Aberystwyth, Dyfed. Also The Congregational Year Book, 1991/1992, Editor Jean M. Young contains information of the Congregational Federation, p. 113. Price £4.50, The Bookshop 4 Castle Gate, Nottingham NG1 7AS.

The oldest living Congregational Lay Preacher, 101 years, and still preaching. Mr. Llewellyn Owen Jones preached a 25 minute sermon in a Welsh Service at Swan Hill on his 100th birthday, 24 February 1990. The S4C TV crew filmed the service and the tea which followed. Mr. Jones still takes a little service at his eventide home.

The greatest living Congregationalist must be President Bush, but he met his match during Sunday worship during the Gulf War. While worship was in progress in his First Congregational Church, a man got up during an interlude and called upon the President to stop the "Desert Storm". He was soon removed and the choir struck up "God Bless America". Even Congregationalists have their problems. What can we say and what can we pray but that old petition: "Lord have mercy upon us, Christ have mercy upon us."

The Countess of Huntingdon Connexional Conference was held April 2nd to 5th. Session speakers were Rev Gibert W. Kirby, Dr. Stephen Mayor, and Dr. Edwin Welsh who is working on the Countesses' Life and Correspondence and wrote on the 'Stroud Travel Diary' in our last issue of C.H.C. Magazine. It was held at High Leigh. Details from Mrs. M.V. Staplehurst, 8 Woodlands ave, Rayleigh, Essex. SS6 7RD. Tel: 0268 743017.

The Bilston Appeal looks for Congregational support for its social charitable efforts to identify with less fortunate people this Christmas. Gifts may be sent through Rev Graham Adams c/o The Bilston Appeal 4 Castle Gate, Nottingham NG1 7AS.

Restoration of the old Congregational Chapel at Newmarket, Klintshire is planned. It was made famous about 300 years ago by the visits of Matthew Henry. Its pulpit is over 200 years old from which Mathew Henry preached and his name is familiar throughout the English speaking world for his famous Bible Commentary - editions of which still come from the press, Methew Henry (1701-1712) was followed by Thomas Perrot (1713-1718). He left for the Presbyterian College, Carmarthen. And Thomas Jones of Oswestry College was recommended by Dr. Edward Williams in 1790. He too kept a school attached to the chapel. Evan Davies (Eta Delta) in 1841, Joshua Davies, 1863 of Froncysyllte, John Milto Jones of Landdeusant, were ministers. The latest being the Revd. W.J. Griffiths of Brecon College who supplied this note on the proposals for its restoration.

Marc Europe. This wide ranging free church directory is published by Peter Brierley at 4 Footscray Road, Eltham. London SE9 2TZ. It contains details, figures and aims of all churches, and societies, including Historical societies. *Prayer Meeting - a subject for research.* The Strict Baptist Historical Society seeks the help of readers in their study paper of the History and Practice of Prayer. They will look at the vast literature produced of a devotional character and have a questionnaire from Rev. Ken Dix. address 38 Frech's Ave., Dunstable, Bedfordshire LUC 1BH. A key verse must be the words of our Lord, 'this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting'.

The Congregational Year Book. Mrs. Jean Young and her helpers have done good work for many years in preparing this for the Press. I have asked her to include the venue of the coming Years Assembly and date if possible. But here I would like to say how disappointed I am on asking at a Reference Library in another town for the Congregational Year Book, to find they do not have one. 'A word to the wise'.

The Autumn Congregational Assembly was held at Nottingham and in the afternoon session Professor Otniel Bunaciu of the Baptist Seminary, in Bucharest spoke of the situation following the great changes in Eastern Europe, 'the velvet revolution' as it is called. Describing the situation in Roumania he spoke of its difficulties. Giving figures for the emigration of many to the West and the consequent loss to Roumania. People since Ceausescu fell have seen over a million people emigrate causing difficulties at home and problems for other countries as a result. The Marxist regime has given way to capitalist materialism and a self-centred economy, which in practice has undermined the value of society while a few reap rich rewards, (Quoted from the Tablet).

'The Times' and Undeb. The Welsh Undeb had special mention in the *Times* recently, but not because of the assembly as such, but for a rather bizarre funeral procession arranged by an American from the town to convey his ashes to the Porthmadoc cemetery, Some of the ministers got mixed up in the procession as spectators as it filed passed the Chapel where Undeb was held. Perhaps next time Undeb Assembly and similar events will have proper mention in the Press, Radio/TV.?

The Value of the Bible. A rare 15th century Bible was sold at Christie's for £1.1 Million November 27th. We might mention that Job Orton's chair was sold at Sotherby's last year from Shrewsbury for just over £150.

Closing Line. We are always interested in News of Church plate, records, etc in our churches. Brief notes describing such items could be used in our column.

I have some English and Welsh theological books I would like to pass on to anyone interested. Send enquiries and please send a S.A.E. for reply.

T. WATTS

DONALD P. RAINE

M.A. (Edin.)

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**NONCONFORMIST (and other) CHURCH HISTORY
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CHAPEL CRAWL

E.C. DENWOOD

The 1991 chapel crawl was inspiring on several counts: firstly, we saw a number of long-established chapels which are thriving, secondly, we were able to enjoy the charming Leicestershire and Warwickshire countryside and thirdly, we were given most excellent hospitality by the members of Southam Congregational Church and would like to thank Graham Adams for his part in the organization.

Southam Congregational Church occupies a red-brick Gothic building dating from 1839 in the town centre; it replaced a house on a nearby site where worship had been held from the time the church was gathered in 1832. The interior has been beautifully maintained and the premises have been enlarged by the addition of a two-storey rear extension providing a hall, well-equipped kitchen and toilets downstairs and a light and interesting hall with a pitched roof upstairs. The small plot of land on which the extension was built was formerly part of the garden of the treasurer of the local Roman Catholic church. He was only too willing to sell part of his land and the hall has been designed in such a way that he is not overlooked.

Narborough Congregational Church some distance away along the country lanes, is a 1662 foundation and the present red-brick chapel was erected in 1706. It was then a square preaching box. The front was extended in 1770 and further extensions were made, providing transepts in 1793. The chapel's present form is the result of a further extension in 1900.

Pastor Graham Adam actually came to this chapel in the seventies under an instruction to "close it in a seemly fashion." It is now thriving and strong. The site as a whole is very pretty with a large garden and quaint manse dating from 1779. The remains of the manse stable can still be discerned. The church also has historic connections and owns land and property in the village, this having been donated by members and their families in times past.

Ullesthorpe Congregational Church, (1806), a few miles away, has been revitalised by the work of the Turners, who formerly attended the church at Narborough. They sold their house and moved to Ullesthorpe to work for the church there. The chapel is Georgian style, fairly large, rectangular and brick-built and occupies a commanding position on a hillside overlooking what must have been and still is quite a small village. The interior is light and well-kept. Many hours of hard work have been spent in renovating the previously fairly derelict interior and the current decoration reflects the church's keen interest in the mission field and helping the starving. At the back is a hall with carefully preserved wood panelling and behind the building is a large lawn.

At the village of *Long Itchington* we saw a genuine village green and pond, and further along the road, the Congregational church (1827). This chapel was originally a very tiny box-shaped building with a gallery but during the late Victorian period an aisle was added to give a T-shaped appearance. The building has white-washed walls and at the side is an orchard. The organist who is also the gardener, explained that he is the third generation of his family to have played the organ at the chapel, covering a period of 120 years. We sang a

hymn there to his accompaniment. The chapel has two enormous oil stoves which make it the warmest place of worship in the neighbourhood.

We left the area having been profoundly encouraged by the genuine and lively Christian witness by our Congregational friends.

A.G.M. and Chapel Crawl.

These as in previous years have been held on the Friday before the Congregational Assembly. It was held on the 10th May when as Christine Denwood describes we were accompanied by Congregational Federation's general secretary. We are grateful to Christine for the very nice account of our Crawl and the generous hospitality arranged for us by Graham Adams and company.

At our AGM after prayer, we stood in silence to remember John Bray our founding secretary who as Mr. Neil Caplan says in this magazine worked so hard to get C.H.C. off the ground. Mr. Colin Price was appointed in his place and we wish him well.

Mr. Chris Damp is concerned that with our printing bill being in the region of £700 plus this year we need more support from our ministers and lay folk. Were it not from Congregational Federation, U.C.C. Charities, Liverpool Welsh Independents, Mr. Bond of Chelmsford and Dr. Harry Butman we would be hard put to pay our way. May this be a word to the wise. Producing the present issue of the Congregational History Circle Magazine in printed form will of necessity cost more, we hope our readers will feel that we deserve a better format. The-sub editor would like to suggest that next year we spend half the time on business at our A.G.M. and allot the other half to a short talk of quality which could be published in future Magazines as is the custom in other historical societies. Please note the Treasurer's new address within, note that the affiliation fee of £4 (or more) be sent to Mr. George Brassington our membership secretary, see address within, so forwarded in bulk-we hope, to our good treasurer or as convenient.

CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY CIRCLE

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C.J. DAMP, *Treasurer*

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter is edited by Geoffrey F. Nuttall and N.H. Keeble to mark the 300th Anniversary of Baxter's death. It is published in Two Volumes and will be like the Doddridge Correspondence by G.F. Nuttall, but with longer extracts. It will be eagerly received by scholars and the price problem can be overcome by borrowing from Public libraries, else what are libraries for? I shall be perusing it with interest, looking for fresh insights into the Baxterian contacts in this county of Salop. Published by Clarendon Press, Oxford Vol. 1, 480 pp, £55. No. 0-19-8185658-5; Vol 2, 400 pp. £50 No. 0-19-818583-9.

Diwinyddiaeth Yng Nghymru, 1927-77, *Theology in Wales 1927-77*, contains the result of careful gleaning in the fields of Welsh theology within the period mentioned. Following the aftermath of the New Theology epoch and earlier Biblical Criticism, the author has distilled the essence of the relevant religious forces. It's a valuable study for which the author gained a well deserved Doctorate. Published by the Gomer Press £10.50.

The Good Beasts is the substance of four lectures delivered at a conference of the American Association of Congregationalists, 1990. Dr. Butman is a veteran in both Biblical and Homiletic studies, and here he steps outside his pulpit to consider the place and value of 'The Good Beasts' finding all life part of the community of the Creator that 'groans for the appearance of the sons of God'. This is no unusual venture for Harry Butman is known in his retirement to have considerable expertise in dealing with vermin and rattle-snakes on his boating exploits on his local creek. He does a lot here in small compass to introduce his readers to the various attitudes of Christians and Non-Christians "One never opens a book by Harry Butman without being uplifted and challenged to grow in both intelligence and benevolence. His book *The Good Beasts* is no exception. Dr. Butman once more demonstrates that he can think globally and act locally. In five succinct and scintillating chapters he gives us the cosmic vision of the human-animal partnership as indicated in five major world religions and the two Testaments of our Scriptures", a reviewer compliment on the dust cover. Publisher: The National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, Box. No. 1620 OAK CREEK. WI. 53154-0620. U.S.A.

Edwin Morris, by S. Pearl-Binns tells the story of a former Archbishop of the Church in Wales. A faithful pastor of his people but one possessed of an unyielding attitude to Free Church folk and perhaps Non-Anglicans generally. The former he called 'intruders', and alternating this with his prolonged conflict with some bishops. His period saw the ascent of Welsh consciousness in church and state. And mark by his insistence on the primitive Church in Wales as compared with Canterbury and York. He was forthright on one occasion at our Newport Congregational Ministers Fraternal. However those who knew his cricketing exploits can say, he was never a man to give anyone an easy catch at the wicket.

T. WATTS

As it Seems to Me by John Huxtable 90pp. United Reformed Church 1990. John Huxtable, first General Secretary of the United Reformed Church, wrote these memoirs in retirement. He seems in this work to be attempting to make sense of his life. His father, a Congregational Minister, died in Leghorn, N. Italy—whilst a chaplain for the American and British Sailors Society and acting minister for the local Church of Scotland church. Huxtable's desire to be 'like Dad' led him to the Congregational Ministry.

John and his sister, Kathleen Huxtable were brought up in their maternal grandparents' home in North Devon. His mother returned to her old job in the confectionary trade and struggled to bring up and educate the children. He trained for the ministry first at Bristol University under Robert Sleightholme Franks and then at Mansfield College, Oxford during the time of Nathaniel Micklem as principal. After his ordination he became minister at Newton Abbot where he met and married his wife, Joan Snow. He then became minister at Palmers Green, where he remained until called to be Principal of New College, London in 1953 a year early because of the death of the then holder of the office, Dr. S. Cave. He remained at New College until 1964.

As with many Congregationalists of the period, he appears to have become more formal in his approach to worship. This book is interesting in that the development of the URC can be seen from the viewpoint of one of its propounders. The Rev'd. Howard Stanley was not considered a popular choice by many as Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales because of his "unecumenical" opinions. When Stanley changed them "we became very good friends".

Of course, much of the book is concerned with ecumenical matters, curiously seen (from a man who had edited John Owen's *True Nature of A Gospel Church*) from a personality stance. He writes, "I was anxious that the year which would commemorate the Great Ejection should not be a divisive one, but should be appropriate to the ecumenical spirit of the times. "Still," he modestly writes elsewhere concerning Tillich, "I don't think that I have ever been able to grasp his theology, but I shall always recall happily the impact of his gracious and humble personality." This appears the hallmark of his character in this book, enjoying relationships, especially those involving international or inter-denominational organisations. Huxtable writes, "With the formation of The British Council of Churches in 1942, it seemed that a new day had dawned. No doubt the genial presence of William Temple had much to do with all that led up to this event." At another group of meetings he became aware of "the kindness as well as the severity of Dr. Lloyd-Jones".

Later chapters are of interest as they are directly concerned with the formation of the United Reformed Church and John Huxtable's own theological beliefs. It ends on rather a sad note, "I still take occasional preaching, which I suppose I shall still do as long as I am asked and still able to do so. But for how long . . .?" It was not to be long. He died in 1990.

Y.A. EVANS

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, The first forty years 1889-1939 Volume I by Iain H. Murray. P.p. XV. 384. Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh 1982 £9.95.
Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, The Flight of Faith, 1939-1981, Volume II by Iain H. Murray. p.p. XXIV 831. Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh 1990 £15.95.

Iain Murray's biography of Martyn Lloyd-Jones is essential reading for those interested in and admirers of the erstwhile, eminent, medical specialist, who gave up a brilliant career to become a minister, first in Port Talbot, South Wales and then for twenty years until his retirement in 1968, at Westminster Chapel, London. There he preached every week forty-five minute sermons to congregations of between 1,500 and 2,000.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, although born in Cardiff in 1899, spent most of his early life in Llangeithio (Cardiganshire). His religious education amongst the Calvinistic Methodists, coupled with his medical education under Lord Horder at St. Bartholomew's Hospital produced a mind and spirit of "compelling logic". Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote later, "The most astute and clear thinker that I ever knew was my old teacher, Lord Horder". Dr. Lloyd-Jones' preaching showed these early influences in that he eschewed the rhetorical language and extravagant gestures of the Welsh pulpit. His vocabulary was clear and precise, his presentation unobtrusive and he used not passion but reasoned argument to present the gospel. This careful analysis seems to have started when he was young. In 1909 when the Sunday School class was asked why Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth," Martyn replied in Welsh, "In case they all came forth."

Lloyd-Jones had a profound effect on the Evangelical wing of the churches. Throughout his life he held many important positions, including the presidency of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship, and he was the founder and first Chairman of the Executive Committee of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students.

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones never wrote for publication. His books are largely transcripts of his sermons which he had preached from brief notes.

In 1927 he married, at a Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church in London, Capel Charing Cross (now a night club), Bethan Phillips, a fellow member of the chapel and also a doctor. They had two daughters, Ann and Elizabeth. The elder daughter, Elizabeth, later married Sir Fred Catherwood. Bethan was always a great support to her husband and until her death recently, wrote about Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones' life and work.

These two volumes are based on a thorough knowledge of sources and are written with clarity and illuminated with quotations. However, the first volume is the more interesting. The latter volume is marred by the intrusion of the author's personal opinions and comments and Murray does not allow Lloyd-Jones' views to stand by themselves. This comprehensive biography is to be recommended and is scholarly (with indices, footnotes etc.) and well researched, revealing a man dedicated to the preaching of the gospel.

From Heaven to Hell and Back Again, An Autobiography, by Robert Tayler. p.p. 98 1991. Privately published.

Robert Tayler, when he retired in 1986 from the pastorate of Brixton Unitarian Chapel at the age of eighty had been a minister for 62 eventful years. Tayler was born in Paddington, but spent his early life in Thornton Heath. His life-long interest in the Temperance movement came from his maternal grandfather, Billy Jenkins, a reformed drunkard and devout Primitive Methodist. His father, (a Labour supporter and friend of Sidney Webb) died

of diabetes when Robert was ten months old. His mother and the four children 'moved in' with her parents and therefore the Christian influence of his mother and grandparents were felt by him throughout his life. He writes of his mother, "All through the years her influence had been fragrant in my life. I thank God for every remembrance of her."

He attended Croydon Grammar School with the Muggeridge brothers, but, instead of proceeding to Theological College, he became a Methodist Missionary in Newfoundland. He was attacked by a henchman of 'Mr Big' of the illicit (liquor) trade. Tayler and his attacker (the steward of his church) went to cut wood for the church stove. 'He had an axe under his arm . . . suddenly I realised that he had stopped in his tracks. As I turned towards him he raised his axe . . . to cleave my skull. I jumped back . . .; but the axe caught my right leg.' For the rest of his life, Tayler felt the effects of the injury, but it did not prevent him living an active life.

In Newfoundland Tayler had accepted his grandfather's evangelical faith, but after his return from Newfoundland, he began to have doubts which would eventually lead him to Unitarianism.

After a short time in charge of a Methodist church, he began to train at New College, London for the Congregational Ministry. He found it an unhappy experience.

Each student had his own study (two students shared a bedroom), which was heated by a coal fire. The fuel was carried by a silent door porter nicknamed Caliban. Candlelight was the only means of illumination. Whilst there, he was baptized by Dr. Orchard of The King's Weigh House Chapel, dressed in full Roman Catholic regalia. Before the end of his studies he found his theological position was Unitarian which did not please the Principal, Dr. A.E. Garvie. Certain problems necessitated his leaving college before completing his course. However, he served as a Congregational Minister in Exmouth and Mitcham before becoming Pastor of Brixton Unitarian Church where he and his wife Ann worked happily for years.

Tayler had a vigorous and active life. He was a life-long Labour supporter.

After the war he became General Secretary of the United Kingdom Band of Hope Union, a post in which he was ably supported by his wife Ann, whose untimely death in 1983 was a source of great sadness to him. He enjoyed his life and this modest autobiography shows his pleasure in life and his service to God. He died in 1990, so this is a posthumous publication.

Y.A. EVANS

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

The Baptist Quarterly—Vol. XXXIV, No. 2, April 1991

Articles:

Baptism in the Pauline Epistles: with special reference to the Corinthian letters (L. Kreitzer).

Beyond Public and Private Spheres: another look at women in Baptist history and historiography (Karen F. Smith).

Anabaptist Studies: a review article (B.R. White).

Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society

Vol 4, No. 6, May 1991

Articles:

Philip, Lord Wharton—Revolutionary Aristocrat? (K.W. Wadsworth).

Castle Camps—a country church (Mabel Evans).

A Century of Presbyterian Activity in Crewe, 1844-1947 (P. Ollerhead).

Churches of Christ in Furness, Cumbria, 1842-1981 (M. & J.D. Clague).

Reviews:

Stating the Gospel: Formations and Declarations of Faith from the Heritage of the URC, ed. D.M. Thompson (1990) review by R. Buick Knox.

Transactions of the Unitarian History Society—Vol. XX, No. 1, April 1991

Articles:

Priestly Riots in Historical Perspective (G.M. Ditchfield).

The Spirit of Persecutors Exemplified: The Priestley Riots and the victims of the church and king mobs (D.L. Wykes).

Spanning Victoria and Edward: two urban ministries around 1900 (I. Sellers).

19th Century Women Pioneers:

Elizabeth Malleson (D. Stinchcombe).

Clementia Taylor (A. Rouston).

Journal of the Friends History Society—Vol. 55, No. 1, 1990

Tensions in the Religious Society of Friends in England in the 19th Century (Mollie Grubb).

The Quaker International Centre in Berlin 1920-1942 (J.R. Carter).

"Stands Scotland Where it did"—Some Thoughts on Quakers in Scotland during the last half century (W.R. Aitken).

ALAN ARGENT

Trafodion, is the *Transaction of the Welsh Baptists Historical Society*. The 1988 issue has the following—D. Densil Morgan on Christmas Evans the Welsh Spurgeon; Prof. Rice Rowlands, "The Down-grade Controversy". The 1989 has J. Gwynfor Jones, "The Bunyan Influence on Christmas Evans", also the "Lost book of Joshua Thomas". "The History of the Baptist Insurance Co. (1888-1988)" by S. Gwyn Griffiths. And "The Baptist contribution to Welsh Biblical studies" by Gareth O. Watts. **Footnote:** The Baptist Historical

Society, Trafodion and Undeb have lost an historian of the Thomas Richards and R.T. Jenkins mould, in the death of the Revd. Ieuan Jenkins. The Editor: The Revd. D. Hugh Matthews, The Baptist College, 54 Richmond Road, Cardiff CF2 3UR.

The Journal of the Church in Wales whose early Journals were edited by Conway Davies and E.T. Davies, after a period of silence is active again, with good articles relative to Wales, and can be obtained from the Revd. R.L. Brown, The Vicarage, Tongwynlais, Cardiff CF4 7LE.

Cofiadur is of course the Journal of the U.W.I. referred to in each copy of C.H.C. Magazine. The new editor is the Revd. Eifion Powell, Coleg yr Annibynwyr, Aberystwyth, Dyfed. It has the "Early Puritans in Wales and the Llanfaches foundation 1639", Dr. J. Gwynfor Jones. Dr. R. Tudur Jones writes on "Pulpud Llanfaches Pulpit—the Gospel according to Walter Cradock"—a close study of Cradock's doctrinal and social attitudes with an useful list of his many works sufficient to fill the large volume edited by Charles and Oliver in 1800.

The Congregational Quarterly, Vol. No. 4, 1992 has a recent photo of the Richard Dissenting Academy 1670—with news that its group of collages is up for sale. Colin Price, sec. of C.H.C. asks can anyone suggest how it can be preserved.

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IN MEMORIAM

The Revd. Elsie Chamberlain (1910-1991)

Elsie Dorothea Chamberlain was born on 3 March 1910 into a devout Islington family which was closely involved in the life of the local Congregational church and she was to retain an affection for the simple pleasures of chapel fellowship all her life. Her early training was in dress design and also in music.

She was herself an accomplished violinist and an Associate of the Royal College of Music and encouraged the musical life of all her churches, founding, where possible, little "orchestras" of talented church members to aid the worship. She studied theology at King's College, London, gaining a B.D. Here she met her future husband, John L. St. C. Garrington, who, as president of the male students would remove the women's notices from the board to make more room for his own. The women's president was Elsie Chamberlain. Elsie continued her training under the Revd. Muriel Poulden at St. Paul's House, Liverpool and served her first pastorate at Berkeley Street in that city from 1939 to 1941. Then she was called to Christ Church, Friern Barnet and she remained there until 1946. In 1945 Viscount Stansgate, then Secretary of State for Air, decided to appoint Elsie as R.A.F. chaplain (not a W.A.A.F. chaplain) but Archbishop Fisher of Canterbury, on learning of this intention, expressed forthrightly his strong disapproval to the Air Minister in person and in this was supported by Mrs. Fisher.

Lord Stansgate pressed ahead, despite such opposition in high places and appointed Elsie as the chaplain. However, when the Air Force List was about to be published, Elsie's name was omitted from the chaplains' section and was included rather as a "welfare officer". Lord Stansgate, even at this late hour, resolutely refused to approve the listing until Elsie's name had been placed correctly.

While serving as a Forces chaplain at Cranwell, Elsie again met John Garrington, then a High Church Anglican curate. Their engagement was very decidedly frowned upon by the Church of England authorities and Garrington was told by Bishop Wand of London that he must expect no promotion whilst he was engaged to "that welfare officer". Lord Stansgate again intervened and approached Lord Jowitt who as Lord Chancellor was able and proved willing to appoint Garrington to one of the parishes in his gift. Nevertheless he was to be denied higher preferment despite his clear abilities, because of his marriage to Elsie in 1947. This marriage between strong-minded equals proved both happy and long-lasting and his death in 1978 was a severe loss to Elsie.

From 1947 to 1954 she was minister of the Vineyard Congregational Church, Richmond-on-Thames, Surrey. During this time she joined the B.B.C. and became a very widely-known figure, especially for her work on the early morning radio programme, "Lift up your Hearts". Edwin Robertson described her appointment to the religious broadcasting department of the B.B.C. in these terms in *The Independent* (20 April 1991).

"None of us on the Selection Board that date in 1950 is likely to forget her entry. We had advertised for two members of staff for Religious Broadcasting

and had had many hundreds of applications, from defeated Labour M.P.s to clergy and ministers of all denominations. It was difficult to prepare a short-list from so many, but she was never in danger. Once she entered the room we knew that she was the person we wanted and the interview was memorable, as were the next seven years that I worked with her."

Elsie was later to join the B.B.C. on a full-time basis and remained on the staff until 1967. She used her exceptional talents to help broadcasters prepare and present effective scripts by cutting away academically complicated notions and discouraging the customary plummy diction of clerics so that clear understanding for all remained. Her own broadcasting included also the "Daily Service" and "Saturday Night Prayers" where her natural warmth was especially appreciated. Elsie taught all who admired her never to make the gospel dull and lifeless. She was served as Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1956-7.

From 1968 to 1970, Elsie was associate minister of the City Temple, preaching from a pulpit which had been occupied previously by other notable women including Maude Royden and Dorothy Wilson. She had been a keen advocate of church unity, "An ecumaniac" as she described herself, but she became belatedly an opponent of the proposed union of Presbyterian and Congregationalists which in 1972 resulted in the United Reformed Church (uniformity not unity to her).

Elsie continued to attend ecumenical gatherings but now on behalf of the Congregational Federation. With breathtaking energy she served pastorates at Hutton, near Brentwood 1971-80, Chulmleigh in Devon 1980-83, North Street, Taunton 1980-86 and the Congregational Church at Castle Gate, Nottingham, 1983-91. In addition she was President of the Congregational Federation 1973-75, its chairman of council 1978-85 and National President of the Free Church Women's Council, 1984-85.

Elsie was always impressive. She was not a theologian nor even a consistently accomplished preacher. Yet she had the common touch, the rare ability to feel and express what others felt, and she had a deep reverence and a compassionate, open heart. She was very impatient of humbug and fussiness, remaining uniquely independent but busy to the end. A fuller account of her life and career must surely come.

ALAN ARGENT

WILLIAM HENRY MEYER (1920-91)

Bill Meyer was the first treasurer of the Congregational Federation dealing in 1972 with modest sums and then later with many thousands. He had been treasurer, prior to 1972, of the Congregational Association, pledged as it was to the survival of independent Congregationalism in England at a time when ecumenism seemed to its supporters to demand increasing centralism. Bill was born in Fulham but at an early age moved with his parents to Wandsworth where he was to live and work for the rest of his life. Here he joined the Sunday School of East Hill Congregational Church and he attended this church until 1969. He met and married Heather at East Hill and at that church both

came under the formative and lasting influence of their minister, the Revd. F. Chalmers Rogers.

Bill became a member of the church at East Hill just before the Second World War and was elected a deacon at an early age. He trained to be a schoolteacher and taught religious education in various schools in the Wandsworth area. One of his fellow deacons at East Hill was Norman Pritchard (later Sir Norman) an active local politician and later leader of the London County Council. Pritchard, like Bill Meyer, held the principles of Congregationalism dear to his heart, and became the treasurer of the Congregational Association in the late 1960's. At his death Bill Meyer assumed the vacant post.

In 1969 local difficulties at East Hill occasioned the Meyers' transferring their loyalties to the then Congregational church at Streatham. When this fellowship joined the United Reformed Church, Bill refused to serve as an elder but did agree to become a church member. He and his family were fully involved in the life of Streatham U.R.C. but this did not lessen his ties with the Congregational Federation which he served also as Chairman of its Finance Committee and as Treasurer of the south-east area.

ALAN ARGENT

VISCOUNTESS STANSGATE

Lady Stansgate, who has died at the age of 94, was born as Margaret Holmes in Paisley an environment which she challenged from the beginning. Her father was an atheist, driven to that position by the rigid ways of his own father's devotion to the Irvingite sect. She soon found her way into the Episcopalian fold. He was a schoolmaster and yet he did not send her to school. She reacted by developing a passion for learning. She was one of the best-educated women of her time and the most theologically literate.

Politically, she followed her father, who became Liberal M.P. for Govan in 1911. A year before she had made her first visit to Parliament and, sitting in the secluded Ladies Gallery, sensed the atmosphere in which women were discriminated against. She was a suffragette at 12.

In 1920 she married Captain Wedgwood Benn, who was Liberal M.P. for Leith. Within seven years they had both seen the ascendancy of the Labour Party as the radical forces and joined it together. He became Labour M.P. for North Aberdeen and, in 1929, he was appointed Secretary of State for India. He went to the House of Lords as Viscount Stansgate in 1942 and was Secretary of State for Air in the 1945 Labour Government.

As such, and no doubt under his wife's influence, he approved the appointment of Elsie Chamberlain as the first woman chaplain to the R.A.F. over the protests of Geoffrey Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury. It was not her first clash with an Archbishop, for Mrs. Benn had already taken on the Archbishop Randall Davidson as early as 1922, over the ordination of women. Neither was it her last such brush.

In 1948, at the Inaugural Assembly of the World Council of Churches, which she attended as an Anglican delegate in Amsterdam, she protested against the limitation of the Anglican Communion Service and the refusal of Archbishop

Fisher to allow Anglicans to participate in the Communion of the Conference, which was celebrated according to the Reformed rite. This protest led her to the Congregationalists, whose Puritan principle of the autonomy of the local church she defended to her last breath.

She studied theology at King's College, London, after the birth of her three sons: Michael, who was killed in action during the war as an R.A.F. pilot; Tony, now inherited her passion for social justice nurtured in Christian radicalism; and David. As a mature theological student she met Elsie Chamberlain, with whom she formed a life-long friendship.

They were both pioneering women of principle who did not easily compromise. When they found the compromises too much at the foundation of the United Reformed Church (formed of Congregationalists and Presbyterians) the two of them, laywomen and minister, led the "rump" of churches which abided by the Faith and Order of the Congregational Union. Lady Stansgate was the Congregational Federation's first President.

She had three lives. First the girl of independent mind, seeking out the spirituality of Anglicanism, finding the Bible a wellspring for her compassion and her passion for justice, she was a child suffragette and a radical Liberal.

Then, she was the wife of a soldier and Labour politician, travelling the world and meeting statesmen from Ho Chi Minh to Eisenhower, attending the conferences of the Inter-Parliamentary Union yet developing her interests in religion and religious studies. A theological discussion with her was worth having: she read her Bible in Hebrew and Greek.

After the death of Viscount Stansgate in 1960 (precipitating their son Tony's successful constitutional campaign to disclaim his peerage), she entered upon a third life. Among the Congregationalists she was a religious leader, both in ecumenical affairs and in religious studies. She gave her full support to the Council of Christians and Jews and found in Hebrew studies the soil of her radical faith.

She was appreciated greatly by Hebrew scholars, both Christian and Jewish. In 1975, the Library in Mount Scopus was named after her. Martin Buber she admired and joined in the inter-faith dialogue he stimulated. She was an Honorary Fellow of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. She was a founder member of the inter-denominational Society for the Ordination of Women.

For the best part of a century, her growing and active mind followed the political and religious events of the world and she made her own notable contribution to both.

EDWIN ROBERTSON

(With The Revd, Edwin Robertson's permission to publish this tribute from the 'Guardian', 23 October 1991)

RICHARD JOHN BRAY

The sad loss of John was reported in Volume 2, number 6 and his founding contribution to the work was noted. This further tribute is not an account of John's work but rather a personal testimony to his zeal and determination in the cause of historical Congregationalism.

My own relationship with John Bray began in disagreement for I was an active member of the U.R.C. History Society formed by the merging of the Congregational Historical Society and the Presbyterian counterpart. I had doubts about John's ardent desire to form the Circle and I expressed these firmly. John did not waver in his campaign to establish the Circle, but he showed such friendly understanding of a different point of view. When the Circle was set up John was anxious that I too should share in the work particularly through the Magazine.

It demanded zeal and determination to launch the Circle and then to create for it the voice of the Magazine. John saw problems not as setbacks but as fresh challenges. By his enthusiasm and the force of his own example of service, he won many friends and a wide range of contributors in support of the C.H.C. and its Magazine. He placed such emphasis on bringing the written word in the visits to Churches and places with rich associations with Congregationalists.

Nor is the Circle the sole reflexion of John's effort in this field for he played a notable part in the effort to ensure that the Congregational Library should find a proper home. Though we have mourned his loss, we can all recognise that he was a man-of God called not only to found the Circle but he put his family first—to whom we also owe very much. It is our earnest hope and our faith—that the work he founded will continue if others come to its aid and support.

NEIL CAPLAN

RONALD WILFRED THOMAS HODGSON (1928-91)

One of the most colourful figures has been suddenly and tragically removed from the Congregational scene in the death of the Revd. Tom Hodgson as he was known to his friends. The Haymills Congregational Church was full to overflowing for the memorial service held on Saturday afternoon 23 November. The Revd. Peter Goodall friend and fellow student at New College spoke of Tom's commitment to Christian and social work for many years. The C.Y.B. gives 1959 for his leaving New College, and 1976 when he settled at Haymills until 1987 and latterly serving the Tipton Church. In the tribute, mention was made to the support of his wife Betty and their three sons, who were present. And some of his attempts at poetry were read, and Mrs. B. Franklyn (secretary) spoke of the church's debt to Tom and his care of them.

Tom was a larger than life figure, somewhat like the disciples commended by our Lord who when he saw a man in need gave him his coat. He will be remembered by many for his appearance as a sort of star-turn at the May Assembly in London, decked out in a new colourful suit and shoes purchased by kind friends to fit him for the occasion of his addressing the Congregation. If nothing else he brought a little colour to the rather sedate atmosphere of that great Congregational Cathedral. We commend his family and his church folk to the grace and comfort of the Lord. "In the midst of life we are in death."

(I am grateful to Mr. Dennis Price for some details of the service in which he was able to represent his friends and myself at Swan Hill, Shrewsbury.)

WILLIAM C. WAKE

The Unitarian Church in the High Street, Shrewsbury mourns the passing of a devoted member of its fellowship. Born in London he settled in Shrewsbury after the war serving in a rubber synthetic establishment, doing the research work in which he was a leading consultant. He gained three Doctorates for his researches and added to this a keen interest in Biblical studies and in particular his early application of the skills of computer science to the study of the Bible text.

He was a past President of the Unitarian Church Assembly, and prime mover in his home church, here. Readers of C.H.C. will have appreciated his Sketch of Baxter's house at Eaton Constantine nearby. His many sketches were made into Christmas cards and sold for charity. He was a well-travelled scholar, with interest in many fields. The service was conducted by the Revd. Anne Wicker. May the Good Lord comfort and sustain. "Blessed are the dead for they rest from their labours and their works do follow them."

JOHN EDWARD ROBINSON

John Edward Robinson was born in Bury, Lancs. and brought up at Bamford. His Christian parents and his Sunday School teacher influenced him to dedicate his life to the ministry. The loss of his father when John was 13 years made him seek employment. He entered the Presbyterian College, Carmarthen in 1951 and in 1959 served West End C. Ch., Southport. He was offered an invitation by an American Church he visited but chose to stay with his people to be near two aged relatives. From 1960-62 he served Old Colwyn English Congregational. He had applied to the United Free Church of Scotland and settled at Pilgrim, Airdrie. This was originally intended to be a six months appointment but he stayed 23 years, being held in high esteem by his people. During the 1970's the church was taken over by the Town and Country Planning Act. Thanks to his foresight the Church deeds were preserved and compensation paid enabled the church to be free to join the Congregational Federation. A new Pilgrim Church was raised.

After 30 years in the ministry ill health brought on his retirement to Cwmyglo, Carnarvonshire, where he renewed acquaintances with the fellowship at the Village Chapel. Many will remember his conduct of devotions at the Sheffield Assembly when Dr. Askley Smith was made President. He will be remembered for his strong and distinguished personality, his courage and fortitude and his great concern for people and their welfare (This tribute follows closely that which appeared in the C.Y.B. 1990-91).

REGINALD OWEN CAMBIDGE

Another stalwart has passed from us in the death of 'Reg' as he was known aged 95 years. His grandfather a real Puritan objected to the strain of the preaching at Kimmerley Parish Church, c. 1790. He and his family withdrew

to find the Dovaston Congregational Church, now U.R.C. Salop. A fine example of a Congregationalist. He served in the first World War and was wounded in the Somme 1917. His motto was "Service before Self". Parish councillor, church secretary, deacon and a fine servant of our blessed Lord. The funeral service was conducted by the Revd. B. Fisher, 14 March 1991.

T. WATTS

The Richard Frankland Academy—an appeal

Mr. Jim Nelson of Settle writes, "This celebrated academy was founded in 1669-70 and continued to train some of the most prominent of the Congregational divines until his death in 1698." And adds: "I am trying to promote some interest in placing a plaque somewhere near the Frankland cottages. I have a quote for £250 for this work and so far I have had a promise of £50 . . . I know that the Congregational History Circle is not blessed with vast sums of money, but perhaps would wish to support this project." Please heed this appeal and write to Mr. and Mrs. J. Nelson, Haywood House, Settle, N. Yorks BD24 9HL.

A Meeting of Representatives of Historical Societies and Libraries

Dr. Alan Sell, Jeremy Goring and Randolph Vigne organised a gathering of leaders of all these Societies at Dr. Williams Library on the 11th November 1991. The Report with recommendations, and minutes, etc., includes reports and suggestions over a score of Societies and Libraries.

The International Congregational Fellowship 1993

The California Polytechnic University Campus will be the venue of the 1993 meeting of the I.C.F. The dates being 30th July to 5th August 1993. Details will shortly be available of arrangement for travel, and extended stay and tours, etc., from Revd. J.C. Travell, 44 Cornwall Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1RY, or Revd. D. Gwynfa Evans, 64 Bonnerfield Lane, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2LE. Theme of I.C.F. — "Jesus is Lord-World-Wide".

The former editor mislaid his list of Overseas Members of C.H.C. at the 1989 I.C.F. at Leiden. As we have been greatly assisted by our American friends — will they please contact me/us if they wish to support and receive C.H.C. Magazine.

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