

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](https://paypal.me/robbradshaw)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for the *Transactions of Congregational Historical Society* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_congregational-historical-society-1.php

Editorial

AMONG the many disarrangements caused by the war was that of the Autumnal Meetings of the Congregational Union; which should have been held at Bristol last October, but were of necessity abandoned. The same necessity operated on our own society. It is therefore the more desirable that we should have a numerous attendance at our forthcoming Annual Meeting.

* *

Our Annual Meeting will be held in the Council Room of the Memorial Hall, on Wednesday, 12th May, at 3 o'clock. A paper has been promised by the Rev. Dr. Grieve on "Congregationalism in Pembrokeshire." Proposals will be brought up for consideration respecting more direct co-operation with the Baptist Historical Society; these are regarded by the executive as of great importance.

* *

We rejoice to hear that a collected edition of the entire works of John Smyth of Gainsborough is in active preparation. Smyth, commonly called "the Se-Baptist," was remarkably unstable in his opinions, but absolutely sincere and unvaryingly conscientious; so that whenever he was convinced that his judgement had been at fault, he was ready frankly to own that he had been mistaken. He is best remembered as the protagonist of the English Baptists; but is still more worthy of honour as being among the first to assert the principle of Liberty of Conscience without restriction. Most of his writings are very scarce, and it is believed that no public or private library possesses a complete set. It is hoped that within a few months the whole will be accessible at a price of about two guineas.

* *

Mr. Peel informs us that his Calendar of the Morice MSS. is through the press, except the indexes. He hopes the book will be published before midsummer; but there may be a little delay.

* *

We are eagerly waiting for the *Survey of the Dissenting Interest*,

1691, which was discovered a year or two ago, and which the Rev. A. Gordon has been editing for the Trustees of the Presbyterian Fund. Probably the war is responsible for the delay of publication.

* * *

A recent volume on *Dissenting Academies*, by Miss Irene Parker, M.A., supplies a real want. The author is especially insistent on the influence of the academies of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries on the general progress of education in England. The book is so good that we could wish it had been still better; which it might have been for some additional detail, and some account of the great public schools such as Mill Hill and Taunton. For it should be remembered that these, as well as the Nonconformist Divinity schools, are the legitimate descendants of academies like Rathmell and Sheriff Hales and Warrington.



REV. JAMES SCOTT.

Early Nonconformist Academies

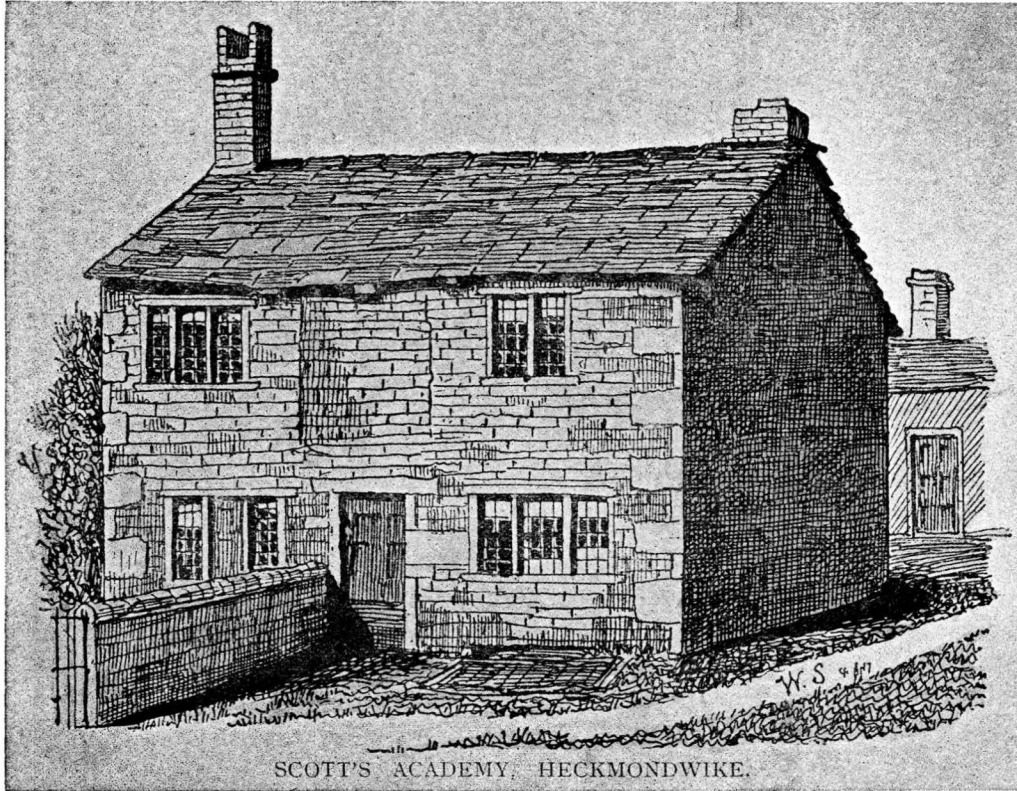
Heckmondwike and Northowram

BETWEEN 1720 and 1750 Arianism and Socinianism had made such progress in the north of England, that fully half the dissenting congregations in Yorkshire—including a majority of those in the larger towns—had departed from the faith of their fathers. Reflections on this state of affairs had long oppressed the mind of the Rev. James Scott, who had settled at Heckmondwike in 1754; and he had several conversations with the Rev. Edward Hitchin, B.D., of White's Row, London, who frequently visited his kinsfolk in the Yorkshire village. The result of these conversations was the forming in London, on 24th May, 1756, of "The Northern Education Society"; the aim of which is described as that of "dispelling the cloud of Socinian darkness then spreading over the northern counties of England . . . by which many congregations might be blessed with godly preachers, sound in the faith, and exemplary in their lives." It was resolved to set up and maintain an Academy in the north of England, to which they only should be admitted "who should give satisfactory evidence of personal piety, and who were ready to make a full declaration of evangelical sentiments." The word "evangelical" in this connection meant Calvinistic; as the Puritans of an earlier generation had dreaded Arminianism as "a half-way house to Popery," so their representatives of that day—notwithstanding the counter-evidence al-

ready afforded by the incipient Methodist Revival—dreaded it as a half-way house to Unitarianism.

The officers of the Northern Education Society were the Rev. John Guyse, D.D., chairman; E. Webbe, Esq., treasurer; the Rev. E. Hitchin, secretary. To these latter succeeded in due course W. Fuller, Esq., banker, as treasurer, and John Gibson, Esq., as secretary. Mr. Hitchin, who from the first had thought of his friend Scott as a suitable tutor, was soon authorized to invite him to that post. Scott, somewhat doubtful of his qualifications for the twofold office of pastor and tutor, consulted with the church, took time for consideration, and finally accepted. He also gave an explicit statement of his doctrinal position, which was "in general accordance with the Westminster and Savoy Confessions."

James Scott was a native of Berwickshire, born in 1710. He entered the university of Edinburgh in the session of 1728-9, but does not appear to have graduated. Piously disposed from his youth, at the age of 20 he committed to writing a solemn Act of Self-dedication, which an ardent admirer a hundred years later described as "too precise and puritanical in its views of Christian duty and of abstraction from the world." If this was an error, it was at least an error on the safer side. After spending some years as a private tutor he learned that many congregations in England were in urgent need of evangelical pastors. He therefore crossed the border, bearing with him satisfactory certificates of character and conduct. In 1739 he took charge of a village congregation at Stainton, near Kendall. Thence he removed to Horton-in-Craven, a small hamlet in the parish of Gisburn, where he was ordained on 20th May, 1741. In 1751 he removed to Tockholes, about three miles from Blackburn; and thence in 1754



SCOTT'S ACADEMY, HECKMONDWIKE.

to Heckmondwike, now a town of 10,000 population, but then a rural village.

The academy was commenced before the end of 1756. Its seat was a modest looking house, still (or lately) standing at Southfield, which was Mr. Scott's own residence. Here for more than 26 years he carried on, single-handed, the two-fold office of tutor and pastor; the latter including the building of a new chapel in 1761.

The following list of the Heckmondwike students is approximately complete :

- 1756 Thomas Waldegrave, Tockholes, Bury St. Edmunds.
Thomas Priestley, Jewin Street, London (brother of Dr. Jos. Priestley).
- 1757 Richard Plumbe, Nottingham.
Abram Allott, Forton (Lancashire).
Joseph Popplewell, Beverley.
- 1762 James Tetley, junr., Sowerby.
Thomas Gurnall, Delph.
— Tunstall.
- 1763 Luke Pratman, Hopton, Cotherstone, Barnard Castle.
- 1765 George Lambert, Hull.
Jonathan Toothill, Hopton.
William Armitage, Heaton, Delph, Chester.
- 1766 James Dawson, Cleckheaton.
— Offwood, London.
Robert Galland, Ilkeston, Holmfirth.
Thomas M. Linnett, Oakham.
- 1767 Thomas Brook, Stockport.
- 1769 John Clegg, Horton in Craven, Sunderland.
Robert Shufflebottom, Bungay.
John Carter, Mattishall, East Dereham.
Samuel Bottomley, Scarbro'.
- 1770 Charles Crow, North Walsham.
Joseph Scott, Hinckley.
Thomas Ashburn, Gloucester.
— Whitehead, Charlesworth.
— Pickersgill, "Near London."
- 1771 James Grimshaw, South Cave, Tockholes, Forton.
George Gill, Market Harborough.
Samuel Walker, Northowram (pastor and tutor).
— Hollingworth—declined the ministry.
William Northend, Haslingden, Bridlington, Brighouse.

- 1772 Thomas Grundie, Leicester.
 John Sykes, Guestwick.
 David Bruce, Liverpool.
 — Pickles, America.
 Isaac Sharp, St. Helens.
 — Spencer.
 Joseph Cockin, Kipping, Halifax.
- 1775 Richard Wearing, Lowestoft, Rendham, Walpole.
- 1776 William Sutcliff, Chapel-en-le-Frith.
 Noah Blackburn, South Cave, Tockholes, Delph.
 James Kenworthy, Kendal, Warrington, Horwich.
 James Unsworth, ?if Ulverstone.
- 1777 Josias Rhodes, New York.
 — Hogg, Thrapstone.
- 1779 James Stevenson, Trowbridge.
 Robert Simpson, D.D., Haslingden, Elswick, Bolton,
 Hoxton College.
 — Wilby, Durham.
 Samuel Bruce, Great Grimsby, Wakefield.
 Nathaniel Scholefield, Brighouse, Henley, Over.
 Robert Smith, Leek, Nantwich.
 Joshua Wilkinson, Howden.
 William Tapp, South Cave.
 — Bartlett, Malton (afterwards Unitarian).
 Henry Townsend, Cocker mouth, Darwen.
 William Hudson, Tintwistle.
 — Snell, Grimsby.
- *John Toothill, Booth, Rainford.
 — Houlton, Saffron Walden.
 Timothy Senior, Elswick.
 — Wood, declined the ministry.
 — Kirkby, Creek.
 John Dawson, Keyworth.
 Thomas Whiteley, Tockholes.
 Thomas Laird, Keighley, Pudsey.
 — Plumber, Whitby.
 William Peele, Workington.

Early in the course of Mr. Scott's pastorate a "double lecture" was instituted, probably in imitation of the "prophesyings" which were familiar to our Puritan forefathers. This was ostensibly associated with the anniversary of the academy; there is a tradition that Mr. Scott designed it as "an annual Visitors' Day, so that

the studies might not be interfered with." However this may have been, the "Heckmondwike Lecture" attained to such popularity—the sermons being usually preached by men of eminence—that at length "a minister was scarcely accredited until he had passed the ordeal of preaching the Heckmondwike Lecture." When other churches grew up in the rapidly increasing town, they also participated in the services; and matters affecting the general interest of the churches were discussed at the dinner that followed. In course of time the concourse developed into a fair, which continued for many years, railway passengers being conveyed thither at reduced rates.

Mr. Scott was not a man of extensive erudition; but had the reputation of "a profound divine and a masterly expositor." None of his students gained eminence for learning, but many were earnest pastors and zealous evangelists. Under his direction the academy was of incalculable service in promoting evangelical revival. "Through the agency of his students many new congregations arose in places where evangelical religion had become extinct: in other cases a fresh air of gospel truth was breathed over bodies which had become lifeless and corrupt." He died on 11th January, 1783.

Arrangements were at once made for the transference of the students whose course was not complete to the tuition of the Rev. Samuel Walker of Northowram—himself one of Scott's pupils. Accordingly the academy was translated thither, a distance of about seven miles, in 1783; the students affected being those from * downward on the foregoing list. Those who received the whole of their training from Mr. Walker were as follows:

- Samuel Lyndall, Bridlington, London.
 — Wass, died while a student.
 — Tomlinson, died while a student.
 — Brettel, Gainsborough.
 — Maurice, Fetter Lane (London).
 Samuel Crowther, Clare, Oulton.
 William Vint, Idle : pastor and tutor.
 — Hindle, Haslingden.
 Benjamin Sowden, Horton and Holden.
 — Hollingworth, declined the ministry.
 — Reyner, Bullhouse (Penistone).
 Benjamin Boothroyd, D.D., Pontefract, Huddersfield.
 James Smith, Gatley.
 William Stirrett, Keighley.
 — Crowther, Stockport.
 — Laycock, America.
 Jonas Hinchcliff, Booth, Haslingden, Allerton.
 David Dewhirst, Keighley.
 — Sugden, (occasional preacher at Whitby and York).
 — Brown, died while a student.

Mr. Walker was, during the earlier years of his ministry at Northowram, a popular preacher ; but his popularity seems to have declined, and he relinquished his pastorate in 1792. He retained his tutorship, however, till 1795, when, for some reason which has never been publicly explained, he lost the confidence of the Northern Education Society. The academy was therefore discontinued. There were at the time four students in residence ; of whom two were sent to complete their studies under the Rev. Wm. Vint at Idle, and two to the incipient academy at Rotherham. These students were :

- (To Idle.) Thomas Taylor, Osset and Bradford.
 " Charles Ely, Bury.
 (To Rotherham.) Joseph Batley, Marple Bridge.
 " Abraham Hudswell, Bingley, Morley.

Mr. Walker died about a year after the closing of the academy.

The Surrey Mission

IT is not easy to realize the moral and religious aspect of rural England in the closing years of the eighteenth century. The ignorance of the labouring class was such as in these days it is difficult to imagine, until we remember that Bell and Lancaster had not yet commenced their educational work; and though Sunday schools existed here and there, they were little favoured by the gentry, who feared that their subordinates might be less submissive if they were able to read. As late as 1845 an enquiry was made concerning educational provision in a rural area with a population of 160,000; where, out of 38,000 children of school age, less than 18,000 were receiving any kind of instruction, whether in superior, "British," "National," or Dame schools. Fifty years earlier, education for the children of rural labourers was simply non-existent.

Nor was the provision for religious instruction much better. Neither the Bible Society nor the Religious Tract Society had yet come into being. The old Dissent was respectably moribund; the dissenting churches for the most part had either drifted into Unitarianism, or—by way of protest—had fallen back on a rigid Calvinism which was unaggressive on principle. With a few noble exceptions, such as Berridge of Everton and Richmond of Turvey, the clergy of the Established Church were either "High and Dry" or "Low and Slow"; in either case unsympathetic towards any effort to stir those religious emotions which seem essential to a vigorous spiritual life. Where

the Methodist Revival had touched the hearts of the people a happier state of things prevailed. But throughout the whole south-east of England—the region marked off by the Thames and the New Forest—there were less than forty Methodist “preaching-houses,” though no doubt the itinerants and “local preachers” did much evangelistic work in barns and cottages and hired rooms. And the sect was “everywhere spoken against”: the Unitarians disapproved of them because they were Evangelical, the Calvinists because they were Arminian, and by far the greater part of the Episcopal clergy because they regarded them as a kind of spiritual poachers on the State Church manor.

In 1797 the county of Surrey, with its 141 parishes, had a population of about 265,000, including the metropolitan “borough” of Southwark. In the entire county there were only 33 Independent and Baptist chapels and 8 Methodist “preaching-houses”; to which may be added Surrey Chapel, the scene of the vigorous ministry of the Rev. Rowland Hill. In July of that year a circular letter was addressed to ministers and others in the county in the following terms :

“The subject of a County Mission having engaged the attention of a few ministers lately assembled at the house of Rev. Jas. Bowden, of Upper Tooting, it was thought advisable to circulate the following letter, with a view to obtain at a more general meeting the concurrence of other ministers and Christian friends in Surrey. At the same time it was agreed to hold such a meeting at Tooting on Tuesday, August 1st, 1797, when, after a public service at Rev. Jas. Bowden’s, the friends of the design will be requested to adjourn to the vestry for the further consideration of the subject. Divine Service to begin at 11 o’clock in the forenoon.”

It is not necessary to reproduce “the following letter” which accompanied the above, and which contained an outline of the scheme to be con-

sidered. It may suffice to set forth the "Fundamental Principle" on which the mission was constituted, and which was printed in every successive Annual Report :

"The Society knows no party ; it militates against nothing but sin and its powerful auxiliaries, ignorance and infidelity ; it seeks no interest but that of Christ and mankind ; it aims at uniting the talents, the zeal, the influence, and the labours of the friends of the gospel of every name."

The object for which this union was sought was "to promote the more extensive spread of the gospel in the county of Surrey"; and the methods proposed were : "Preaching, Establishing Schools, Distribution of Bibles, Tracts, etc."

The meeting was held according to announcement. Mr. Bowden preached from Luke xix, 10 ; and the Society was duly constituted. Funds were to be raised by subscriptions and annual collections. Donations of Bibles, "and of other books calculated to disseminate Evangelical truth," were invited. The ministers who subscribed, or otherwise gave their adhesion to the society, undertook to render personal service as far as other engagements might permit ; and "encouragement was to be given to such other approved ministers as may have it in their power to engage more expressly as missionaries under the direction of the society."

While the initiation of the movement was undoubtedly due to Mr. Bowden, he had the zealous co-operation of the Rev. Joseph Hughes, M.A., minister of a newly constituted Baptist church in Battersea. Mr. Hughes had been assistant tutor at the Baptist college at Bristol, and was in after years the indefatigable secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society. While himself a convinced Baptist, he firmly maintained the principle that no article of belief should be

deemed necessary for Church membership which is not necessary for salvation. This principle was consistently maintained from first to last by the Surrey Mission.

The first committee of the mission consisted of the Revs. Jas. Bowden (Tooting), Jos. Hughes (Battersea), Golding (Croydon), Ready, and Pewtress; together with Messrs. Banwell, Burberry, Davis, G. Evans, P. Evans, Furze, Humphrey, Nokes, and Whitwer. Mr. Davis was treasurer, and Mr. Bowden secretary. It was at first arranged that meetings should be held quarterly at approved places, where sermons should be preached by some of the associated ministers. The first meeting was to be at Brockham Green, near Dorking, where a Mr. Abel was minister, but of what denomination is not stated. Subsequently the meetings were held half yearly.

Of the operations of the mission during the first twenty years information is very scanty, no complete file of reports having been preserved. A few facts have been gleaned from notices in the *Evangelical Magazine*, and from other sources.

On 3rd January, 1798, an interesting service was held at Mr. Hughes's meeting-house, Battersea. Prayer was offered by the Rev. Messrs. Ready, Upton, and Hughes, and addresses were delivered by the Revs. J. Bowden and — Golding. Messrs. Pewtress and Exell were formally commissioned as itinerant preachers under the direction of the Society, a Bible being ceremonially presented to each of them. It is not clear whether this was regarded as an "ordination"; no mention is made of any Imposition of Hands, and the names do not appear in the list of Ordinations in the Index of the *Evangelical Magazine*.

At Godalming a dissenting church had existed with varying fortunes since the Indulgence of

1672; and a meeting-house had been built in 1729 or 30. But the interest had grievously declined; and the aged minister dying in 1799, the cause was taken charge of by the Surrey Mission. This arrangement continued for some time, after which it was supplied by students from Homerton.

During 1799 the celebrated essayist John Foster was on a visit to Mr. Hughes at Battersea. In a letter to a friend at Bristol he wrote:

“I have preached in several of the suburbs, and made a journey of perhaps 40 miles into the country, to preach to heathens at one place in a sort of coal-hole, and to good plain saints at another in a little shop. I stood behind the counter, and some of the candles hanging above touched my wig. I should extremely like to preach in this style every day in the week. This was not a casual adventure of my own; there has been for some time past a regular plan, which they call a mission, in which a considerable number of preachers are employed to go round the county to obscure places, where the gospel scarcely ever went before, to establish a kind of religious posts.”

We have no definite information as to the particular villages in which Messrs. Pewtress and Exell itinerated. Indeed, from 1800 to 1810 there are—so far as we can discover—no records of the Society's operations. Evangelistic efforts appear to have been made in the district around Oxted, but for a time without success, no regular meeting-place being available. At length a farmer granted the use of his kitchen, and his daughter was one of the first converts. The attendance now increased so that more space became necessary: and in 1811 a small chapel, accommodating 200 persons, was opened on 5th June. The following year the Rev. S. A. Dubourg was placed in charge of the station, and commenced a long and fruitful ministry. In 1813 a church was formed of 13 members, which eight years later had increased to 46.

Mr. Bowden, the originator of the mission, died suddenly on 5th April, 1812, and was succeeded as secretary by the Rev. Thos. Jackson of Stockwell.

In 1814 we find the Rev. C. Smith evangelizing at Charlwood and Capel, in the extreme south of the county; and a little later the Rev. J. R. Gayton has his headquarters now at Woking and now at Cobham: this indefatigable evangelist visited no less than 26 villages and hamlets, scattered over an area about 10 miles square.

From 1820 the records of the mission are fairly complete. At the 23rd Annual Meeting, held in that year, reports were received from Mr. Dubourg at Oxted, the Rev. Jas. Churchill at Esher, the Rev. C. Smith at Charlwood, and the Rev. J. R. Gayton at Woking. The committee this year consisted of 22 ministers and 18 lay brethren: among the former were the Revs. Rowland Hill, Jos. Hughes, Geo. Clayton, W. B. Collyer, J. Townsend, J. Hoby, and others whose names are less familiar. The Rev. T. Jackson was still secretary, and Thos. Hayter, Esq., of Brixton, treasurer. The income for the year was £193 6s. 7d.

During the year a schoolroom was built at Oxshott, the work there being superintended by the Rev. Jas. Churchill. As evidence of the esteem in which Mr. Churchill was held by persons of high rank, it is recorded that either at the laying of the foundation or at the opening of the room (accounts differ), the Duchess of Kent and Prince Leopold—afterwards King of Belgium—were present. After this date Esher no longer appears as a station in the mission reports; but Mr. Churchill continued to minister in the district with much success for 24 years longer.

In 1821 chapels were built at Ewhurst, Goms-hall, and Tilford. At this time, too, we first find

mention of a chapel at Bletchingley, though from the terms of the reference it must have existed some years earlier. The annual meeting, held at Kingston on 16th October, was signalized by the ordination of the Rev. J. V. Widgery, from the Hackney Academy, as County missionary. The Rev. John Whitehouse of Dorking received the confession, the Rev. M. Wilks of Tottenham Court Road offered the Ordination Prayer, the Rev. G. Collison of the Academy delivered the Charge: the Revs. S. Percy of Guildford, J. Jackson of Stockwell, J. Townsend of Bermondsey, and R. Davies of Walworth also took part in the service. The Society now had five agents, preaching more or less regularly in about 50 villages, in many of which "great readiness to hear" was reported.

In 1822 chapels were built at Pain's Hill in the parish of Limpsfield and at Worplesden. A schoolroom was also rented at Elstead. During this year the regular stations were as follows :

OXTED : Rev. S. A. Dubourg ; Bletchingley, Nutfield, Pain's Hill, Tandridge, Tilbister Hill, Tyler's Green, and Westerham (Kent).

COBHAM and WOKING : Rev. J. R. Gayton ; Chilworth, Claygate, Hook, Horsley, Oxshot, Shere, Shalford, Wooton.

SHERE : Rev. J. V. Widgery ; Broadmoor, Ewhurst, Goms-hall, Normandy, Peaslake, Pitland Street, and occasionally Hambledon and Wallis Wood.

CHARLWOOD : Rev. C. Smith ; Capel, Horley, Redhill, and Crawley (Sussex).

At this time the Revs. J. Whitehouse and S. Percy were associated with the Rev. T. Jackson in the secretariat ; and thenceforward there were usually two or more secretaries. As the succession is somewhat complicated, it will be convenient to give the complete list at a later stage of the narrative.

In 1823 a chapel was fitted up at Frensham, and preaching was arranged for in a circuit comprising Ash, Compton, Elstead, Frensham, Headley, Little London, Mousehill, Tilford, and Tongham. The report of the following year states that the Society had four itinerants wholly employed, and others partly supported. These agents preached regularly in 25 villages, having an aggregate population of 20,000.

In 1825 chapels were built at Normandy and Felday. The income of the mission this year was £438 15s. 3d.; but there was an accumulated deficit of about £300, which was cleared by a special effort before the end of the following year.

The minister at Godalming having been compelled by failing health to retire in 1826, that church came again under the care of the Mission. What arrangement was made is not clear; but there is a note to the effect that in 1827 the minister of Godalming preached at Hanscombe, Farncombe, Mousehill, and Newton. At the Annual Meeting of the society, held at Epsom on 14th October, 1827, the Rev. Benj. Haymes was ordained as pastor of Worplesden, with which the stations of Normandy and Flexford were associated. The Rev. T. Jackson received the confession of faith, the Rev. Matt. Wilks offered the Ordination Prayer, the Rev. G. Collison delivered the Charge (from 2 *Tim.* ii., 15); the Revs. S. Percy and J. Johnson also took part in the service, and the Rev. E. Steane preached in the evening.

Several notable changes are recorded in 1828. The Rev. S. A. Dubourg found it desirable to seek a less laborious pastorate than that which he had held for many years at Oxted, and removed to Marden in Kent. He was succeeded by the Rev. Edward Nicholls. From this station Bletchingley was now dissociated. The evangelist

in the Elstead district removed on account of ill-health; and his place was not immediately supplied. In this district Chert and Puttenham are named as preaching-places.

The report dated 31st March, 1829, gives a brief review of the spiritual condition of rural Surrey. It states that 22 villages were worked by agents of the Mission; that in 10 "the word of truth and salvation" is preached by evangelical clergymen of the Established Church; in 28 others there is evangelical preaching by itinerants or by neighbouring ministers; but there are 40 villages in the county practically destitute of effective religious instruction. In October of this year the Rev. W. Clarke was ordained as pastor at Godalming; and from that time onward the church there has—with but little interruption—continued to prosper. Mr. Clark preached in rotation at five villages: Farncombe, Crown Pitts, Mousehill, Eashing, and Brinscombe.

In 1830 Ewetre was added to the Oxted district, and the care of Bletchingley was resumed. The Broadmoor station in Shere district was discontinued. The income of the Society this year was £498 4s. 9d.

On 11th October, 1832, the Rev. E. Nicholls was ordained at Dorking as missionary in the county. Witley and Compton Common appear this year as new stations in the Godalming list. For about a year the Rev. T. Boaz ministered at Elstead and neighbouring villages as an agent of the Mission, and left in October, 1833, to engage in foreign service under the London Missionary Society. In after years he was widely and deservedly honoured as "Dr. Boaz of Calcutta." He was succeeded at Elstead by the Rev. S. Hillyard. It is worth noting that on the removal from this parish of the Rev. W. Jones, an evangelical

curate, the Mission congregation presented him with a Bible as a mark of esteem.

In this year the mission, in common with many other evangelical institutions, sustained a heavy loss in the death of the venerable Rowland Hill of Surrey Chapel, who died on 11th April in his 88th year. He was speedily followed by the Rev. Jos. Hughes, one of the founders of the Mission, and first Secretary of the Bible Society.

The report for 1834 seems to indicate some contraction of the field covered by the Mission; presumably because many villages were by this time evangelized by other agencies. The rural area now dealt with had a population of about 12,000; the Sunday congregations aggregated 2,000; the church members at the various stations were above 100, and the Sunday scholars above 500, with 52 teachers. In this year the Rev. C. Smith, who had laboured for many years at Charlwood and neighbouring villages, became pastor at Bletchingley, which then ceased to be a station of the Mission. The income of the Society for 1835 is given as £518 2s. 1d.

The report for 1836-7 mentions the adoption of a new station, comprising Sutton and Ewell. The chapel at Sutton had been erected in 1799, but had fallen on evil times: that at Ewell, opened in 1825, had been raised by the extraordinary zeal and self-denial of Mary Wallis (See *Trans.* iv. 27). The Mission agent was a Mr. White, who also preached in rooms at Ewell Marsh and Hook. A new chapel opened by the Home Missionary Society at Westerham rather depleted the congregation at Pain's Hill. Another new chapel was built at Wormley Hill, in the Godalming district; which on the removal to Canada of the Rev. W. Clark was transferred to the Elstead district. For some unexplained reason the Sunday services

were discontinued at Elstead and Frensham ; but weekday services were still maintained.

In April, 1838, it was reported that Mr. White of Ewell and Sutton had been succeeded by Mr. Barker. At Sutton there was a dilapidated and unsightly chapel, with a congregation of 30 or 40, and 10 church members. At Ewell there was no organized church, but a congregation of 60 or more, a Sunday school of 28, and an evening adult school of 26. The preaching at Hook had been discontinued, as an evangelical minister of the Established Church had settled there. In the Shere district there were services every Sunday and monthly communion at Ewhurst, Felday, and Gomshall, and new cottage meetings at Leith Hill Camp and Sutton. Three Sunday schools in the district aggregated above 100 scholars. In the Godalming district new preaching places had been opened at Farncombe and Thornton Street ; but the room at Eashing was no longer available. The church members at the several outstations together numbered 28. Mr. Clark had been succeeded by the Rev. Moses Caston.

Before the end of 1839 Mr. Caston had left Godalming, and been succeeded by the Rev. T. Porter. The station at Farncombe had been discontinued, and that at Eashing resumed. In the Shere district a new preaching-place had been secured at Ranmoor Common. In the general summary for the year it appears that four agents of the Mission preach in 21 villages, with an aggregate population of about 10,000 ; the congregations total about 1,300, of whom 130 are church members ; in the Sunday schools there were 254 scholars and 24 teachers.

The income for 1840 was £570 11s. 6d., the largest reported, except when special efforts had been made to meet deficits. Enquiry had been

made as to spiritual destitution in the county, with depressing results. In one village of 1,200 population there were 12 public-houses, and the attendance at church did not exceed 100. In eight villages, with a total population of 7,200, there was no evangelical teaching whatever. There had been co-operation with the London Christian Instruction Society in the matter of open air meetings, of which 13 had been held. A scheme of permanent co-operation with the Home Missionary Society had been arranged. The Home Missionary Society was to give aid, not to the mission at large, but to particular stations where the agents were Congregationalists; and any new churches that might be gathered were to be constituted "on the principle of admission of all believers to communion."

Mr. Widgery had been removed from the Shere district to a new district, consisting of villages about Dorking, where he died soon after. He had been succeeded by Mr. J. Hedgwick from Hayes. There had been trouble from mob violence at Ewhurst and Gomshall, but this had been followed by signs of spiritual awakening. Mr. Hillyard had removed from Elstead, and had been succeeded by the Rev. J. Moss, who was ordained at Kingston on 30th September, 1840.

It is worth noting that agents of the Mission were usually ordained at a general meeting of the Society, as was customary with the old English Presbyterians; the idea being the conferring of ministerial status, not, as with some modern Congregationalists, the mere recognition of pastorship in a particular congregation.

The Report for 1842 names the following places as constituting the Dorking district: Ockley, Capel, and Holmwood (Sunday services); Stonebridge, Cold Harbour, and Ranmoor Common (weekday meetings).

Domestic affliction put a speedy end to the ministry of Mr. Moss at Elstead, and in October, 1843, the Rev. E. Bromfield was ordained at Dorking as evangelist for that district. During this year Sutton was regularly supplied on Sundays; and a grant was made to Mr. Barker, who preached on Sundays and conducted a week-evening school at Ewell. Assistance was given to the church at Leatherhead, to maintain a preaching station at Bookham. Wormley was supplied by Mr. H. Baker; the congregation had been increased by persons from Chiddingfold, where a poor man had been compelled to close his cottage against the preacher.

A site having been obtained for a permanent chapel at Elstead, the foundation was laid on 3rd June, 1845; but the building was not opened till 10th April in the following year. The income of the Mission for 1845 was £500 6s. 7d.

Mr. Churchill, who had ministered at Esher for fully 30 years, retired in October, 1844, and was succeeded by the Rev. G. Evans, who was already an elderly man. In 1846 he was reported as preaching regularly at Esher, Thames Ditton, and East Molesey, and occasionally at Seething Wells and Cobham; but he died before the end of the year; and this station does not afterwards appear in the reports of the Mission.

In 1847 the chapel at Sutton, which had been private property, was inherited by the Rev. J. Hudson of West Bromwich. It was now put in trust, repaired, and re-opened. About the same time a room was obtained for regular preaching at Cobham, where spiritual destitution was great, and where the work of the Mission had been discontinued for above 20 years.

In 1848 a long-closed chapel at Bagshot was re-opened; and the following year another was

re-opened at Byfleet. In October, 1849, the Rev. B. Haynes, the devoted minister of Worplesdon, died of cholera, leaving a widow in straitened circumstances. The secretaries of the Mission initiated a subscription on her behalf, which raised the very respectable sum of £530. The report for 1850 gives a review of the work in that year, which may be thus summarized :

OXTED DISTRICT. Mr. Nichols : 6 villages, 67 church members, 140 Sunday scholars, 15 teachers.

SHERE DISTRICT. Mr. Turner : 6 villages, 63 church members.

CAPEL and HOLMWOOD. Mr. Moore : 2 villages, no church formed, 25 Sunday scholars, 2 teachers.

ELSTEAD DISTRICT. Mr. Broomfield : 54 church members, 128 Sunday scholars.

WORPLESDON DISTRICT. Mr. Hardiman : 5 villages, 33 church members, 104 Sunday scholars.

COBHAM. Mr. White : 3 villages, 30 Sunday scholars, 5 teachers.

There was also a group of villages connected with the church at Godalming, two villages connected with Haslemere, and the chapel at Sutton, all variously aided. The income for the year was £436 15s. 2d., but the total expenditure was nearly £586.

The report for 1853 tells of a new chapel at Cobham, built at a cost of £600. The following were the places supplied more or less regularly by the Society's agents :

OXTED : Pain's Hill, Broadham Green, Tandridge, Blindley Heath, Tilburston Hill.

SHERE : Gomshall, Felday, Ewhirst, Peaslake, Albany, Hanmer.

Elstead and Tilford.

Perry Hill (Worplesdon).

COBHAM : Downside and Byfleet.

Sutton, supplied.

Preaching-place at Wormley re-opened.

The minister at Haslemere preaches at Shotters Mill, Grey's Wood, and Roundhurst.

A grant was made to the minister of a new church at Surbiton.

There had been tent preaching at Chobham Military Camp, not very successful, but to be resumed next year.

The income for 1855 was £471 1s. 6d.

In 1858 the general committee of the Mission had become inconveniently numerous, consisting of 58 ministers and 18 lay brethren. It was therefore decided to appoint an executive committee of 13, together with the treasurer and secretaries. The following year both the cumbersome general committee and the select executive committee disappear from the record; and instead there is an elected committee of 12 ministers and 6 laymen.

By this time the dense ignorance and spiritual destitution against which the Mission was intended to deal had been appreciably mitigated. From 1797 to 1860 at least twenty Congregational churches or branches had been constituted in rural Surrey, besides several of the Baptist order, and numerous preaching-places where no church was organized. It might seem not unreasonable that altered conditions should invite some change of method. In 1860 the income of the Mission was £473 14s. 5d. Two years later reports were received from 13 chapels and 19 outstations; having a total attendance of 1,960, with 297 church members, and 687 Sunday scholars. A distinction now appears between missionaries, grantees, and lay assistants. In 1863 the Surrey Congregational Union was formed, which gradually absorbed much both of the work and the resources of the Mission, the income of which thenceforth began to decline. In 1865 it was £446 15s. 11d.

The stations reported in 1870 were as follows:

1. †Oxted, †Pain's Hill, and three out-stations.
2. †Gomshill and †Felday.
3. †Ewhurst and three out-stations.

4. † Elstead and Tilford.
5. Thursley (Bowhead Green) and High Combe Valley.
6. † Worplesdon, † Pirbright, and † Normandy.
7. † Wormley and † Milford.
8. Ash, with occasional open-air services at Aldershot.

At the places indicated by † Congregational churches or branches are flourishing at the present time.

A vigorous effort brought up the income for 1870 to £522 9s.; but it was already becoming evident that the work of the Mission was done. On 27th March, 1874, it was decided that the Society should be wound up; and a small committee consisting of the Revs. A. E. Lord, W. P. Tiddy, and W. K. Rowe was appointed to deal with any matters of business that might arise. The income for that year was £346 9s. 9d. In discontinuing the operations of the Mission the following arrangements were made:

Pirbright chapel, by the terms of the trust, came under the control of the Home Missionary Society. Normandy was taken in charge by the church at Guildford; Wormley and Milford by that at Godalming; Tilford was united with Elstead, and for a time was worked from Farnham, but subsequently became a branch of Godalming; Cobham was placed under the guardianship of Hersham; and Worplesdon became independent. Thursley, having been chiefly supported by the Baptist churches of Norwood, was left in their hands. The Ash and Oxted stations were relinquished; but the latter, as well as the branch at Pain's Hill, was resuscitated a few years later.

After the decision to wind up the affairs of the Mission, legal obstacles were discovered, arising out of the fact that legacies had been invested, and produced dividends which must of necessity be used for purposes agreeable to the wishes of the testators. The Mission therefore still exists, in the shape of a committee, who are charged with the administration of this income. A balance sheet, covering the $6\frac{1}{4}$ years, from 4th

awakening of individuals ; and their reports were largely occupied with hopeful conversions and happy deaths. This was in full accord with the sentiment, then general in evangelical circles, which regarded life chiefly as a preparation for death. The decline of Calvinism, and larger views of the Divine Fatherhood, have led us in later times rather to think of death as the consummation of life. Accordingly more attention has been given to moral and social improvement, and the removal of temptations. This is well ; but it is also well that in our devotion to these desirable aims we should beware lest we earn the reproof : "These things ought ye to have done, and not left the other undone."

AN
ANTIDOTE

AGAINST

The Contagious Air of Independency

SHEWING

- I. Six sufficient Grounds, why they ought to revoke their Schismaticall Principles.
- II. Six Parallells betwixt theirs and the Jesuiticall practices.

By *D.P.P.*

I Cor. I. 12, 13

For this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, And I of Apollo, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ.

Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were yee baptized in the Name of Paul? &c.

Imprimatur JA. CRANFORD

[Copy
torn]

ohn Field for *Ralph Smith*, at the sign of the
neer the Royal Exchange. 1644.

An Antidote against the Contagious [3]

Air of INDEPENDENCY.

[*Scripture Quotation as on Tittle-Page.*]

IT was not without cause that *Solomon* the wisest King that ever breathed upon earth, cryed out in the beginning of the book of his Recantation, (a) *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, &c.* For ^(a) *Eccles.* _{1. 2.} surely, if any that have seen the former happinesse of

this Kingdom, should behold the miseries of it at this present, they might with *Solomon*, bewail the vicic[i]tude of all temporall things; if they took into consideration the sudden change that is befallen to this Kingdom in so short a time; for it is fallen from the highest flood of prosperity, to the lowest ebbe of desolation; and not by the incursions of foraign Nations, but by its own children, that have (like young Vipers) ripp'd up the womb of their Mother, to imbrue their hands in their own blood, with less remorse and humanity then barbarous heathen; for (b) *Tacitus* records that one br[4]other having slain his Brother unawares in the Battell of *Bedriae* (that was fought between the Commanders of the Emperor *Otho*, and the Commanders of the Emperor *Vitellius*) killed himself upon his Brothers body, for grief that he had been so unfortunate, as to slay him, that he was bound by nature to love dearly. And *Guichardin* records, That *Robert Earl de la Marke* loved so dearly his two sons the Barons of *Floranges* and *Famets*, that having broken through the battell of (c) *Novare*, and made a worthy retreat with his own Regiment, in despite of the victorious Enemy, hearing (when he was past all danger) that his two sons lay among the dead in the midst of the field, returned, and in despite of all opposition, recovered their bodies, and brought them away upon his horse, and by this extraordinary valour saved both their lives, notwithstanding they were then speechlesse, and mortally wounded. But alas, we are so desperately wicked, and void of all humanity and natural affection, in this Intestine War of ours, that divers Gentlemen, of both parties, have looked upon their nearest Kinsmen that were wallowing in their own blood, in the Battell of *Keynton*, without offering them their ayd, nor casting a sigh of compassion for them: Nay, some have been so cruell, and deprived of all naturall affection, that they and their Abettors have ridden twenty miles in a dark night to surprise their Father, Uncle, or Brother, for to carry them away to their own Garrison, to wring out of their hands some considerable Ransom, which being refused, they have, like (d) *Caldeans*, deprived them (d) Job 1, 17. in another night of all their cattell and means, and reduced them (that were Knights fellows) into *Jobs* case, without any [5] compassiō or reluctance. Its no wonder therefore, if our miseries do rather increase, then draw neer to a period, since our cruelties, inhumanities, and oppressions, are not to be paraleld in any History. But that which doth most of all increase the wrath of God against us, is, that some of our Clergy-men, that (e) Exo. 32, 10, 11, 12. should, like (e) *Moses* stand in the gap to appease the Lords anger, are they, that inflame the same, by the Contentions and Schisms they foment in the Church of God, about the establishing of a new way of Church Government, which they have brought from *Holland* or *America*, (where they were constrained

to flye, by the over rigorous courses of the Prelacy;) having been infected with this contagious air, by sojourning in those parts among Sectaries; so that, thinking by flight to avoid a Rock, they have cast themselves upon a quick-sand, that may, if God in his mercy prevent it not, conduce their Souls to greater danger then their bodies were, during the persecution of the Archbishop *Laud*. It is therefore necessary that Christians should be very circumspect where they flie, because the contagious Air of a perverse generation is apt to be infused insensibly into their hearts; for the sojourning of the righteous *Lot* among the Sodomites, did in some sort taint his noble disposition, otherwise he had not proffered his two daughters to the desperate lust of the Sodomites, to preserve the two Angels from *(f)* violence, that the Rites of Hospitality might not be wronged; And the aboad of his two daughters amongst that impious Generation, taught them to drown the *(g)* Contineny of their Father in the Wine of Drunkenesse, that hee might not abhor their incestuous imbracements, which he had undoubtedly detested, if the light [6] of his reason had not been over-clouded with the vapours of the Vine. And the *(h)* long aboad of the most continent of men, chaste *Joseph*, amongst the Egyptians, bred in him that vicious habit, to swear by the life of *Pharaoh*, &c. Even so, they having been infected with this contagious Air of Independency, oppose as much as in them lyeth, the Presbyterian Government, notwithstanding it is approved of by the Word of God, the practice of the Apostles, and of all the Primitive Churches, And endeavour to bring in this new revealed way, that hath no president but the practice of some private Congregations of Separatists that are in Holland and America, which is as good as nothing at all; as it shall appear in the Reasons following. Now because I conceive these Schisms and Spirituall Divisions do as much, or rather more, retard the true Reformation in hand, then our Civil Divisions; I conceive myself obliged by the rule of Christian Charity, to exhort in the name of God, and for CHRIST JESUS sake, all such Independents, that have rent in pieces the Mystical body of our Saviour, by gathering to themselves private Congregations, and by a kinde of Mercenary way, robbed divers of their brethren of the Ministry, of some of the fattest sheep of their flocks; to give over this destructive way; for did they know the irreparable breaches, they make by it in the Church of God, I am perswaded they would suddenly forsake the same, for the advancement of Gods glory, and their own safety (which ought to be dearer to them then their lives, and all other respects whatsoever) which is much impaired and indangered, by this their separation from the Church; intreating all those [7] to whom this Antidote shall come to hand, to excuse; if I write freely what I conceive of their way, and relate what I heare other men say of

it, since the Lord is my witness, that it is not out of spleen or malice that I bear against any of them ; but meerly out of zeal to advance Gods glory, and for their own safety, that is much impaired by it, as I have said before ; that such gifts that the Lord hath bestowed upon divers of them (which their disciples would have men to esteem rare and extraordinary) may be employed to increase the Kingdom of Christ, and not Satans, nor to foment Divisions between them that should remember, that Unity is their duty, as saith I. P. very judiciously, of whose opinion I am in this first case, that in controversies men are to be milde in expressions ; but whether he be of my opinion in this second case I know not ; viz., that men are bound to speake ingeniously what they know, and conceive to be true and profitable for the advancement of Gods glory, and our brethrens good ; whether it be pleasant or distastful unto them : And as I say, so will I write in the following Reasons.

I

Their new way must by all ingenious spirits be acknowledged in this time of war, and civil dissentions, inconvenient to be pressed or required ; for these reasons, 1. Because an intestine war is a breeder of contention ; and their new way is rather a fomentor then a pacifier of divisions ; for none will deny that one body with an absolute head, will more easily be kept in unity and concord, then many [8] thousand bodies that have every one of them a head that is absolute, and hath neither reference nor Dependency with any other authority, but of his own body : 2. Because we should by it, be divided from that union that we have contracted, and have taken a Solemn Oath to maintain with our brethren the Scots ; which would divide us and them into so many small channels, that the River of our Forces would be fordable everywhere ; and these two Kingdoms exposed to the cruell mercy of our enemies : 3. Because we should as the French Proverb saith, Fall from a Quotidian to a burning Feaver ; and for our Hierarchy of Prelates, that hath with much ado been supported [*sic, see end*] ; we should establish 9324, that would like so many Caterpillars devour the substance of every green Exo. 10, 5. thing of the Land, and suck more blood of the Common people in one year, then the Star Chamber, the High Commission Court, the Arches, or all the Bishops Courts could do in six, although their hunger was insatiable.

II

Reas. 2. No man, except he be blinded or overswayed with partiality, will deny that this new way is altogether incompatible, and the greatest Antagonist that can be to the Royall, to the

Parliamentall, and their subordinate Authority ; But because this point hath been so clearly proved by Master *Pryn*, I will passe it over, for it would seem presumption in mee, to adde any thing to that he hath already delivered concerning the same.

III

[9] This new way hath no warrant out of the word of God ; for we are not to seperate our selves from the Church, but upon palpable errors, that are crept, or wilfully maintained (as they are in the Church of *Rome*) against the Analogie of Faith, and the true Orthodox Doctrine of the best Reformed Churches of Christendom : But for men to gather secret congregations, and rent in pieces, as some Independents do, the Mystically Body of Christ ; I say some, for they do not all seperate themselves from the Church, nor fall into that sin of offence, Matth. 18. 6. *But whoso shall offend one of these little ones, which beleeveth in me, it were better for him that a milstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the Sea.* Under colour, that their consciences are so tender, that they cannot receive the Communion in a mixt congregation without offence : But these men can stumble at a straw, and lep over a block ; for in this case their consciences are offended without cause ; and when they commit a great sin, and tear in pieces the Mystically body of our blessed Saviour, they are not offended at all, so this seems a Paradox to me, are (*sic*) one of the equivocations they have learned from the Roman Jesuits ; that is rather a signe of a seared conscience, then of a tender conscience : Because it is impossible for them to obtain (should they seperate every month) and change their private congregations ; one so pure as to be free from all Hypocrites, Profane, or ill prepared receivers ; for of four men that entered into the Ark, by the Commandment of God, ^{(i) See} one of them was an Atheist, and (*i*) wicked hypocrite ; ^{Gen. 1. 7 & 9. 21. Ham the Son of Noah.} And amongst our blessed Redee[10]mers twelve Apostles ;

^{(i) Mat. 18. 20, 26, 27, 28.} (*k*) *Judas*, the son of perdition was one of the twelve : what probability is there then that the private Congregations of the Independants can be free from all unworthy Communicants ; for if we grant they may be freed from notorious sinners ; yet they dare not affirme they are free of hypocrites, that are more odious to God and men then open sinners : Now if they conceive that the sin of an impenitent receiver is transferred to them, if they receive the Communion with him ; they are of necessity as much polluted by the company of Hypocrites, as by the company of known sinners : But it is certain that the guilt of an impenitent receiver is not transferred to the well prepared receiver, for if it were, Gods promises were in ^{(i) Esak. 18. 19, 20.} vaine, and to think so were blasphemy : Notwithstanding what-

soever I have said, or shall say concerning this point, it is not to excuse the carelessness of the Pastors or Elders that admit notorious sinners to so blessed a Sacrament, for they cannot be too precise to examine such as they suspect to be of scandalous life, or to refuse them admittance, until they give to the world clear evidence of their conversion, and amendment of life: But it is to shew that such are to blame, that doth separate themselves from their Parish Congregations, because some few known sinners are admitted to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper by the carelesnesse of the Pastors, Church Wardens, or Elders of their Parish, and specially now the honourable Houses have taken order that this abuse should be redressed, and diligently amended; for as I have said before, they have no warrant out of the word of God [*to sep*]erate themselves upon such sandy grounds; be[*11*]cause Christ the fountain of all wisdom and purity, had not admitted to his own table, that very night that he instituted that blessed Sacrament to his disciples, *Judas*, that he knew to be a thiefe, and was to be presently after the most perfidious Traitor that ever breathed upon earth, if separation had been so necessary to be observed. Moreover, although the Church of the *Corinthians* was polluted with such an incestuous person, as was not so much as named among the Gentiles, yet we do not read that the Saints of that Church did separate their selves, but only excommunicated him for a time, according to Saint *Pauls* direction; that the Spirit might be (*m*) saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, &c. (m) 1 Cor. 5. 1. 5. Neither do we read of any separation of the Saints in the seven primitive Churches of *Asia*, although there were divers among them infected with the erroneous opinions of the *Balaamites* and of the (*n*) *Nicholaitans* &c. I do not say but the true children of God are to separate themselves from the company, frequentation, and familiarity of all profane men, and notorious sinners, because they are as the Prophet *Jeremiah* saith, to take forth the precious from the vile (*o*) that they may be as the mouth of God, &c. (n) Rev. 2. 14. 15. (o) Jer. 15. 19. But this separation is a peculiar separation, and not a Publike or a generall separation of the Church; this confirms the first point that I have spoken of, that there is nothing more dangerous for a Christian to inhabit, or to be familiarly acquainted or conversant with Sectaries, profane, Licentious, or impious men; for as it is impossible for us to handle pitch, without our hands be stained and besmeared with it, even so it is impossible to converse with the wicked, without we be in time ac[*12*]cessary to some one or other of their wicked actions; and the like to converse familiarly, or to go constantly to hear the Independants Sermons, without one be tainted with the contagious air of their Positions.

IV

This New way, and the Separation of Independants from their Parish Churches, is an encouragement to all the Separatists, Brownists, Anabaptists, Antinomians, Socinians and Libertines, that are in and about the City; for they shelter themselves under their name; and when they are taken in their Conventicles, by some of the publique Officers, and inforced to answer for themselves, they affirm to be Independants, to cover their Heresies, it being an ordinary thing among the wicked, to disguise themselves under the name of such, that are reputed to be more sincere than themselves; for although the Independants gather congregations, and separate themselves from their Parish congregations, as the Sectaries do; yet they are for the greater part sound in Doctrine, and dissent from us onely in Discipline; but the Sectaries are Erroneous both in Doctrine and Discipline, and draw daily upon our heads, the just judgement of God, because we connive at their Errors, and suffer them to infect the simple people with their contagious Tenents (*sic*). Now these disguisements and fallacies of the Sectaries, should in my opinion induce the Independants to a holy indignation, and detest to be any longer the harbour of such Vermine, or the President or Patron of their Separation from the Church of God; for if they are demanded why they dismember themselves; their answer is, That [13] the greatest Precisians in the Kingdom have taught them the way. And surely, if it were unlawfull (say they) such Learned and Religious Men as they are, would not be example of offence and of evil to others; and by this means are a stumbling block to them, and the cause that the wicked are hardened in the wayes of Errour and Impiety.

V

This revealed Discipline is inferior to the Presbyteriall Government; in this point, That the effects of the Issue is uncertain; whereas the Presbyteriall is approved, by the happy successe it hath had for many yeers in *Switzerland, France, Holland and Scotland*. But this is a meer Novelty, that may be compared to the projects of some Yong Mathematician drawn upon paper, that promise much, but when they are to be put in practise, are ordinarily of no use at all. Or like to some of our Engineer Modells, that seem to promise in a small form, divers rare effects; As for the elevation of Water above her natural spring; which seems a thing impossible, according to humane reason; Or to raise a piece of Timber, or a great stone of a thousand weight from the ground to the top of a structure, with a small Engine that may be carryed in a mans hand. But when by the proots of these small Modells, they have with much ado induced an undertaker to have them made in great, with extraordinary charges,

there is not one among a hundred, when they are set up, that prove to be successfull, because some Spring, Wheel, or Counter-prise, is either too weake, too small, or too light to indure[14]the violent motion of it, whereby it is presently rent in pieces, and the charges of the credulous undertaker cast away: even so it would fall out with this new revealed way, if our supreme Magistrates were so credulous, as to trie the operation of it: (the which the Lord prevent,) for although it might be effectuell in some small congregations, in *Holland*, or some small Boroughs in *America*; yet it would certainly be destructive to this populous Kingdom, and would prove like *Platos* Common weale, beautifull in conceits and imaginations, but altogether unusefull, and as impossible to be put in practise amongst us, as that was among the Athenians.

VI

This new way would rather increase our divisions and miseries, then lessen them; for of all sorts of governments, whether they be civill or Ecclesiasticall, a Democraticall forme is most apt to foment and breed divisions and contentions, witness the Democraticall Common weales of the Athenians, Aetolians, and Achaians, that were of small continuance, and alwayes tossed up and down with Civill contentions, as the rowling billows of a tempestuous sea, and fell sundry times under the yoke of Tyrants. Now if this new way should take place, and every Pastor with his Elders to be absolute over their congregation, we should (as the French proverb saith) fall from a Quotidian to a burning Feaver, and for one Hierarchy of Prelates, raise 9324. of Independants (as I said before) for there are so many Parishes in this Kingdom; and they cannot conveniently be reduced in a lesser number of congregations. Now what Unity can be expected among so many Lawlesse men; whose actions and doctrine are not to be controuled by any civill or Ecclesiasticall Authority: I leave it to the consideration of the Reader; for if great Princes that are of a more noble education, and of a more ingenious inclination, are subject to become Tyrants, when they feare neither Lawes nor men, as *Tacitus* the great Politician Records of the Emperour *Tiberius*, and of the Emperour *Nero*; what may be expected of meaner men; * *Tiberius* saith he, kept himself in a kinde of moderation * *Tacitus*. as long as *Livia* his mother lived, and so did *Nero* all the life time of his mother *Agrippina*, but as soon as *Livia* died of her naturall death; and that *Agrippina* was made away by her impious son: they both give themselves over to commit before the sun all manner impiety; which they committed before secretly, for feare to displease, or grieve their mothers: It is therefore the Lawes, and the respect of Magistrates, that curbeth the pernicious inclination of men: But if this new way should take place, what Impiety would not be committed, or what Heresies would not be

invented, to please the palate of their Auditors, for to increase the number of their congregations, and the renew of their contributions, or out of ambition, to be reputed more precise and singular then their brethren or neighbor (9) Pastors, upō which would insue unheard of divisions, contentions, and confusions, as it fell out in the time of *Micah*, when there was no king in Israel. As long as *Jehojada* lived, *Joash* king of *Judah* feared the Lord, but as soon as he was dead, he gave himself over to Idolatry, and Impiety, for he caused [16] *Zacharias* (2) the son of *Jehoiada*, that had raised him to the Crown, most cruelly and ingratfully to be stoned to death, because he admonished him to returne unto the Lord. And shall we hope better of men of lower degree, that are risen from nothing to ride on (f) Horse-back, when their Master walkes a-foot; (t) *Eccles.* 10, 7. have we forgotten the Proverb, *Set a begger on horse-back and he will, &c.* No surely, but rather worse; for there never was two such insulting Prelates in the Christian World, as *Card: Woolsey*, and *William Laud* Arch Bishop of Canterbury; and yet the first was but a Butchers Son, and the second a poore Cloath-workers Son; the first durst presume to name himselfe before his King, and the second to controul his Prince, reforme the Royall Oath, and insult over the supream Court of this Kingdom. Even so, if this new way should take place, we should have many thousand petty Tyrants, domineering over their Congregations, as the last Arch-bishop did in the Star-chamber, and the High Commission Court, and as many Religions as Pastors; for every one of them would frame a Religion after their owne Idea. But the Presbyterian Discipline is a medium way between Hierarchy, and a Democraticall Government; much like to the Civill Government of the Venetians, that hath continued this twelve hundred yeare, and so may this continue to the last day, because it is free from all extreames, which in all Discipline are dangerous. But the Kingdome being divided into twelve *Classis*, and every *Classis* having six Reverend Divines, appointed to call twice a yeare all the Pastors that shall be under their Jurisdiction before them, and to examine and deter[17]mine of all Cases as well for Doctrine, Discipline, and misdemeanour in life and conversation; And these twelve *Classis* to be called once a yeare to a Nationall Synod, for to judge of the Appeals, and of the greater affaires of the Church. This medium way I say, is able to suppress all Schismes and Divisions, and to keepe the Clergy in that purity of Doctrine and Discipline, as is beseeing the true Ministers of God. These Reasons then should in my opinion induce the Independants to re-unite themselves with the Church of God, to abhorre all separation, and to disdaine to shelter any longer the Sectaries that live in and about this City; but rather to endeavour to convince them of their errors by the sword of the Spirit: But if they will de-

sperately remaine obstinate, then to lend their helping hand to their Brethren of the Ministry, to remove them from hence, that they may not draw any longer the Judgements of God upon this Nation, as they have done for conniving at them, which kind of halting between two opinions is most odious to God; for it is impossible to serve God and Mammon; And in so doing, they will vindicate themselves of these six imputations following, which are daily cast upon them, which otherwise will confirme this opinion in the common people, that there is seldome any smoake without fire.

I

THat they are as like the Roman Jesuits in their Principles, Method, Insinuations, Equivocations and Fallacies; as two Paralell lines are like one another. ¶ Paralells.

II

[18] As the Jesuits will not charge themselves with any parish cures, but desire rather to instruct Schollers in the liberall Arts; preach Funerall Sermons all the Lent long: even so our Independents shun all parish cures, and endeavour to obtain as many Legative Lectures as they can, for to avoid the extraordinary pains that parish cures require, and in lieu of Schollers, they gather to themselves as many Disciples as they can, and of them they frame privat congregations, of which they require a Covenant, for to contribute to the necessities of their Pastors; and an oath or promise to follow him wheresoever he is inforced to flee; whether it be in *Holland* or in *America*; and so by these Lectures, that are the most certain rents to men and punctually paid of any; and the contributions of their private congregations, their yeerly renew doth excell the yeerly coming in of the best parish Cures.

III

The Jesuits intice all the ingenious spirits of a County to their Schools, and allure thither the eldest sons of the richest Families living about them; whereby they insinuate them[19]selves in the affections of their Parents, which leave them great Legacies at their decease; so that in a few yeers, they get the greatest part of the free land, seated neer unto their Colleges; and if the Magistrates in Romyne and in the state of the Venetians had not by an Edict prevented their wiles, they had in a short time incroached the greater part of their demains. But they have now made an Edict, That if any leave any land by his last Will to the Jesuits, they are upon pain of forfeiture to sel the same within the yeer, to Lay-men, that they may no more incroach upon their Territories: But the Jesuits finding means notwithstanding this Edict, by supposed names to hold these Legacies: The state of Venice for this and another of their Wiles, viz. About the

Oricular confession, have been constrained to banish them out of their State: for as long as they remained in Venice; the most secret Councils and Resolutions of the Senate was revealed to the Pope and the King of Spain, by the insinuations used in the Oricular confession of the *Venetian Ladies*: Even so the Independants intice and allure to their side the most acute [20] spirits, and insinuate themselves cunningly with the richest and most eminent persons where they live, and allure the best and richest families to their private congregations, whereby they increase their Renew; and obtain the best Legative Lectures about the City; and had they the use of the Oricular confession as well as the Jesuits, that they might use their insinuatative faculty to dying men and women, they would undoubtedly excell the Jesuits in riches and demaines.

IV

Wheresoever the Jesuits set footing, they drive away, or impoverish all the rest of the Ecclesiastive Orders of the Roman Church; be they Priests, Monks, or Friars, and are generally hated of them all for their extream ambition, and griping Covetousness; Even so wheresoever the Independants are admitted, they impoverish all their Brethren, of the Ministry; for they draw from them, after a mercenary way, the fattest and best wooll'd sheep they have in their flock, to increase the contributions of their private congregations: Moreover, they are generally hated of their [21] neighbours for their vain ostentation and avarice; for although they would be accounted humble, yet they will not give way to the best, but will have their own opinion to be reputed a law; and their arguments, although they are sometime weak & ridiculous, to be infallible; and for their Avarice, it is apparent, for their renew exceeds the best Parish Cures.

V

The Jesuits, wheresoever they come, foment divisions, and contentions both in Church and Common-wealth, because they love to fish in muddy waters; even so the Independants wheresoever they come, they foment discord in Church and Common wealth; for proof of it, we need no other, then our own experience, for since they are come from *Holland* and *America*, they have increased our divisions, and retarded by the one moiety (*sic*) of the time, the establishing of the Directory of the Discipline of the Church, and of the true Reformation; And their separation, and their gathering of private congregations, hath encouraged the Sectaries in their erroneous wayes; that [22] for one Anabaptist or Antinomian, that was among us, when they came over, there is now ten.

VI

As the Jesuits have an extraordinary opinion of themselves;

even so have the Independants, a certain immovable self-conceitednesse* of their own sufficiency, and Sanctity; was it not a self-conceitednesse of them to disassent to the Presbyteriall Government, when all their Arguments, and Reasons to maintain their new way, have been confuted and sufficiently answered; Or is it not rather an unheard of obstinacy, that six of them should oppose and controul the Judgement and opinion of three-score and ten, as Learned and Religious Ministers as themselves? And is it not a dangerous conceit of their Sanctity, to separate themselves from their Parish congregations, because a few of unworthy receivers are admitted by the ignorance, or the carelesnesse of the Church officers; surely these proceedings of theirs do bear evidence against them, that they are as well conceited of themselves as the Pharisee, Luk. 18, 11. *The Pharisee stood and prayed [23] thus with him self, God I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publicane, &c.* Because they consider not that humility and self-deniall, are the two fairest flowers of the Christian Garland, and a most certain signe of a true hearted *Nathaniel*. These are the aspersions that are daily cast upon the Independants, that should induce them for the time to come, to be more circumspect of their wayes, then they have been heretofore (for men begin to take notice of their Carriage) and abstain from renting in pieces, as they have done formerly, the Mysticall Body of Christ; but rather to endeavour with all humility, and with the spirit of meeknesse, to be with one accord and assent, assistant and yoak-fellows with their brethren of the Ministry, to establish the Presbyteriall Discipline in the Church; that is, in all probability the way to advance Gods glory, the good of his Church, and the Peace and the Unity of these three Kingdoms, and to increase his sacred Majesties honor, and to lay a sure foundation for his gracious Posterity [as t]he Monarchs of Albion, as long as [the sun and m]oon shall endure; whereas if [24] they continue in their wilfulnesse and obstinacy; God, notwithstanding their traversing endeavors, will bring this great worke of Reformation to a blessed period in his due time, and they shall see it, but as the Prophet *Elisha* said to the lord on whose hand the King leaned, *Thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof*; so except they repent from their former wayes, and endeavour with their brethren of the ministry to root out of this Kingdom these numerous swarmes of Sectaries that infest the Aire of the Land with their erroneous and blasphemous opinion, they may see this Reformation effected in their dayes, but shall never reap or eat of the fruits of it, but shall be enforced to return in exile from whence they came, except they return, as I have said, unto the Lord, and prefer the advance of his glory, before their own ends.

* Witness
E.W. con-
cerning
his name.

Acts, all
Chap. 2.

2 Kings
7. 2.

FINIS.

Erratum: Page 8, line 13, for supported read suppressed.

Henry Roote and the Congregational Church of Sowerby, near Halifax, 1645

Communicated by Mr. T. W. Hanson, Halifax

HENRY ROOTE, who gathered the earliest Congregational church in the West Riding, was educated at Magdalen College, Oxford, and is said to have travelled abroad in his younger days. He was minister at Gorton chapel, near Manchester, before he came to Halifax.

Roote came into a district where the soil had been prepared for the planting of a Congregational church. There had been a succession of sound Puritan divines at Halifax church. Ashbourne had so painfully preached to turn the people of this corner of the North into loyal Protestant subjects, that he is specially mentioned in that famous reply of Archbishop Grindall to Queen Elizabeth which cost him his primacy. Then came thirty years of Dr. John Favour, who prided himself on a fancied resemblance that his face bore to the portrait of Christ. Favour was the Protestant champion in many a debate with Roman Catholic priests, such as Henry Walpole; and from his book we gather that he would as gladly have persecuted a Brownist. To Dr. Favour Halifax owes its grammar school, and he prompted many of his parishioners to endow charities. He certainly strengthened the Puritan trait of the parish, and the next generation

developed into supporters of the Parliament against King Charles.

The physical aspect of the parish was also a favourable element. The ancient parish of Halifax was one of the largest in the country, and, owing to its hills and moorlands, most difficult to travel. In pre-Reformation days, pious donors had preferred to build chapels of ease rather than plaster more chantry chapels on to their parish church. There were twelve chapels serving townships that were, in many cases, as rich and as thickly populated as the township of Halifax. The people also maintained two lecturers at Halifax parish church. So that it was a long-established custom in Halifax parish to pay for and to choose their own ministers.

During the Civil War Parliament disendowed Halifax church, and its tithes and funds were diverted to the upkeep of Fairfax's forces. The spiritual needs of the parish were amply supplied by the "hyred ministers" of the chapels and the lecturers.

There was a diversity of parsons, as one might expect, from this popular control. During the Commonwealth we find Presbyterians like Oliver Heywood of Coley chapel, Episcopalians like Allan of Ripponden chapel, and Congregationalists like Henry Roote.

Roote came to Halifax church some time in 1643, after the departure of the vicar Richard Marsh, a noted pluralist. Henry Roote preached the "Snydall Memorial Sermon" on June 29th. The next day, the battle of Adwalton was fought and part of the Parliamentary army fled to Halifax. Within the next few days Halifax folk were fleeing as refugees over the Lancashire border. Roote went back into Lancashire, for we

find him preaching in Manchester at Angier's wedding.

On next St. Peter's Day he preached again in accordance with the will of Mrs. Snydall, at Halifax church. Soon after this, he removed to Sowerby chapel. The township of Sowerby was quite as rich and as important a place as Halifax township. "By the labour and ministry of faithful preachers," says the Priestley Memoirs, "Sowerby was the most eminent place that was to be found in all the country, wherein were many persons of note, both for parts, estates and piety."

Here at Sowerby, Henry Roote was able to put his Congregational ideals of a church into practice. Among the members who have more than a local fame were the father of Archbishop Tillotson, and Captain John Hodgson of Preston and Dunbar fights.

In Edwards's *Gangraena, Part III*, is "A Copy of a Letter written out of Yorkshire concerning an Independent Church in that Country" (*sic*), dated February 9th, 1645-6, in which it is reported "and the last Sabbath they had the liberty of the Chappel, wherein they began their Election by [[?]of] the Deacons"; and then follows a report of the sermon preached in the forenoon.

This letter provoked a reply from Mr. Roote. Hearing that his friends, Samuel Eaton and Timothy Taylor, were publishing *A Just Apologie for the Church of Duckenfeild in Cheshire: Against certain slanderous Reports received by Mr. Edwards*, he asked that his letter might be printed as an appendix to their pamphlet.

The Rev. John Watson while preparing his *History of Halifax* discovered this pamphlet, but took a mere cursory glance at it. He noted the title and then looked at the last page, saw Henry Roote's signature, and hastily concluded that he

was the author of the whole work. His error has led succeeding writers astray, partly of course by their own fault in not examining the book for themselves. Hunter, Miall, Bryan Dale, and many others have spread the report that Roote defended the Duckinfield church instead of his own church at Sowerby.

The Copie of a Letter from Mr. *Henry Rootes*, Pastor of the Church of *Sowerbie* in *Yorkshire*, in Vindication of himselfe against a sinister and dangerous, yet false and groundlesse insinuation, contained in the Copie of a Letter out of *Yorkshire*, divulged by Mr. *Edwards* in the third part of *Gangrænna*, pag. 69.

To his loving Brethren, Mr. *Eaton* or Mr. *Taylor*, these be presented.

Dearely beloved Brethren ;

Having received Intelligence from my Brother *Taylor*, of your purpose of answering some slanders of Mr. *Edwards*, I desire to give you a true and faithfull accompt of what I delivered in that Sermon, which is toucht upon in that Letter of *James Robinsons*, which is Printed, and of the unchristian dealing in that particular.

First, I exhorted all godly men to joyne themselves to some visible Church, if they have opportunity. I explained my selfe, *I say to some visible Church ; not this or that, but some ; I say, if they have opportunitie ; for if God take away their opportunitie, they must wait Gods time :* These *Cautions* premised : these *Motives* were added : *First, whosoever joynes not to some, sinneth.* Heb. 10. 25. *Jude ver. 19.* *Secondly, God will punish such.* Zach. 14. 17, 18, 19.

Secondly, I exhorted all godly men, being joyned to some visible Church, to strive to walke in some neernesse of Communion with that Church : as. 1. In love ; 2. Peace ; 3. Watchfulness ; 4. Christian toleration of Infirmities ; 5. Seeking one anothers welfare ; 6. Defending one another from common enemies. Gen. 14. 14. Act. 7. 24. Act. 9. 24, 25. Where you may see a mistake in the *Relator* of this last *Quotation* ; this is the real truth, as I can produce mine own notes, and skores of *Witnesses* to attest the same.

First, Observe that this relation which now is printed, was carried on the Sabbath day to another Chappell, a mile distant, and there written downe in all hast, and the next morning posted away to Manchester, and that week to Yorke : spread fifty miles

distant in a few dayes: the next weeke I hearing of it, both from *Yorke* and *Manchester*, I took occasion to speake with Mr. *Hollingworth* about it, who said he had seene such a *Letter*, and I related unto him mine own Expressions, and sense, who said after he heard me, that I had a deale of wrong done unto me; I desired to know the party that did write the *Letter*, that I might vindicate my selfe; but he desired to be forborne in that; I intreated him then to doe mee that *Brotherly Office*, as to deale with the party himselfe; who promised he would, yet after all this, the *Letter* is sent to *London*, and printed.

Secondly, The next *Lords day* after I heard of this, I publickly before all the Congregation, related what I had heard was written to *Yorke* and *Manchester* (the writer being present) I then desired to repeate what I had delivered, and did so; and shewed before all, my sense, that I meant it of the Common enemy of the Kingdome, (we being at that time imbroyled in Civill warre,) and I added, *That I was so farre from judging it lawfull, for the Congregationall men to take up Armes against the Presbyterians, that I held it unlawful for any private man to take up Armes, except he was backed up by Publick Authoritie. Yea, I thought this warre, now in being, could not be justified, but that it hath the Authoritie of the State to mannage it.*

Thirdly, diverse weekes after this, (learning who was the *Writer* of this *Letter*) I dealt with him about it before one of his intimate friends, *Paul Greenwood*, shewing him how unchristianly he had dealt with mee in it: *Paul* answered, indeed he should have knowne my sense before he had divulged it; and for his part, he observed the passages of that Sermon as diligently as he could, and did not finde any thing of just exception against it: and I judge this *Paul*, as judicious a Christian as most about us, yet all this would *not cause the Letter* to be recalled, or *stayed from Printing*.

Fourthly, It may clearly be discerned by this Relation, and the *Circumstances* here set downe, that divers sinnes, divers wayes have been committed. First, by the first *Relator*, who upon the *Lords day* leaving his owne *Chappell*, in the midst of the day, to goe to carry a piece of a *Relation*, which proves the seed of *slander*; if wittingly he minced the *relation* in the limitation, there's *Doegs* sinne in it, yea if he related it in that sense which the *Scribe*, and *Publisher* in *Print* seeme to import, (as it is very probable, by his *hasty* telling of it, and the others *hasty* writing of it abroad) it was in that sense then the like sinne, to their's that were the false witnesses against our Saviour, Mat. 26. 60, 61. cum Joh. 2. 19, 21. But if it was *rashly* done, without any sinister intention, (which is much to be doubted,) yet there was evill in it, to relate a Passage, and to leave out principall circumstances for the understanding of it.

Secondly, Sinnes committed by the Writer, and divulger were.

First, *A receiving an accusation against an Elder upon one witness*, without enquiring of the Elder, whether it were so, though he might have done any day, and then divulging of it, behinde the backe, and never to the face, in a slanderous manner.

Secondly, *Impenitency, and hardnesse of heart*, for when he was shewed his sinne, and could not but see it, yet to this day, he *never gave any satisfaction*, or testimony of repentance to the party wronged; neither did he suppress the divulging and printing of it, which he might easily have done, had he timely improved his endeavours, which in godlinesse he ought to have done; but it appears in this particular act, *he loved evill more then good*, and slandering more then speaking righteousnesse. *Psal. 52. 3.*

Thirdly, The sinne of him that published in print these things was, his printing slanderous Relations upon so sleight Grounds, without enquiring into the certain truth; yea having been admonished before of such dealings by Mr. *Burroughs*, Mr. *Saltmarsh*, and Mr. *John Goodwin*, and found faulty in the same kinde, and yet goes on in the same trade; surely the Wise man layes a heavy doome on such, *Pro. 29. 1.*

All this shews by wofull experience, that there is a spirit of malice workes in the hearts of Brethren against some of their Brethren more virulent in this kinde, then the Spirit of Episcopacy, striking not only at our peace, libertie, and livelihood, but at our good names and reputations unjustly: which the Bishops never could so touch: But I hope, God will in his time cleare us; as in this particular by his goodnesse he hath done, and all the world may see it, if they will but view this.

Brethren, thus I have given you the truth, which I will avow; if you please to adde any thing within these bounds which is defective; to blot out any thing redundant or unnecessary, or alter any phrases which are harsh or unpolished, I give you free libertie, nay I intreate you as Brethren to doe it, and insert it with your owne, and I will acknowledge my selfe much obliged unto you. I salute you both in the Lord, and desire to be remembered to all the Brethren, and so remaine

Sowerbie March 2
1646.

Your truely loving,
Brother in Christ,

HENRY ROOTE.

From the Bury Street Church Records

THAT portion of the Bury Street Church Book which was rescued from destruction by Mr. Hanbury, and is now preserved in the Congregational Library, breaks off abruptly in 1708-9. Fortunately the unmutilated record had passed through the hands of the Rev. John Rippon, D.D., and portions were copied by him, and printed in the *Baptist Register*, 1800-1801. The extracts, so far as comparison is possible, were not reproduced with such minute accuracy as would now be thought desirable; but for ordinary purposes were fairly adequate. We may therefore regard the following long extract from the destroyed portion, which appeared in the *Baptist Register*, vol. IV, pp. 593 fig., as sufficiently correct to deserve reprinting.

The Customs of this Church in the Celebration of Worship and the exercise of Discipline, as they are practised amongst us at present, 1723.

Though the books of the New Testament contain divine directions in all the most important parts of worship and discipline, yet there are many lesser circumstances that relate to the particular practice of all church affairs, which cannot be at large described in the word of God; but 'tis left to the christian prudence of every church to methodize and order their concerns in such a manner as may keep nearest to the general rules which scripture has given, and may tend most to the honour of Christ, the decent administration of his ordinances, and the edification of the people.

LORD'S DAY WORSHIP.

Our usual celebration of worship on the Lord's day is performed in this manner :

In the morning we begin with singing a psalm, then a short prayer follows to desire the Divine Presence in all the following parts of worship; after that, about half an hour is spent in the exposition of some portion of scripture, which is succeeded by singing a psalm or an hymn. After this the minister prays more at large, for all the variety of blessings, spiritual and temporal, for the whole congregation, with confession of sins, and thanksgiving for mercies; petitions also are offered up for the whole world, for the churches of Christ, for the nation in which we dwell, for all our rulers and governors, together with any particular cases which are represented. Then a sermon is preached, and the morning worship concluded with a short prayer* and the benediction.

The worship of the afternoon is performed in the same manner with this difference, that we omit the first short prayer and the exposition, and sing the psalm, or hymn, just after the sermon which in the morning followed the exposition.

On the third Lord's day in every month there is a public collection made at the door for the necessities of the poor of the church, and for defraying some part of the incidental charges that attend the place of worship, &c. There is also, once a year, a collection made for the support of the poor ministers in the country, which is brought into a general collection which is called the *Fund*, and is here distributed by the ministers and messengers deputed from almost all the churches in the city, who are called Congregational; and on this day the collection for the poor of the church is omitted.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The first Lord's day in every month the Lord's Supper is administered just after sermon in the afternoon, though it has been sometimes the custom of this church, for the conveniency of the pastor or of particular members, to have the Lord's Supper now and then administered at noon, and particularly in the winter season, when the days are shortest.

The Lord's Supper is administered alternately by the two pastors† in the plainest manner, just according to the institution, (*viz*) first the history of the institution of this ordinance is read, either out of Matthew's gospel or the first ep. Corinthians, that it may ever be kept in mind to regulate every part of the practice; and the sermons of that day being equally suited to the design

* The hymn or psalm which is sung just after the exposition should have been sung just after the sermon; but Mr. Watts, our Pastor, being for several years so much indisposed with nervous disorders, desired the hymn to be sung rather before he went into the pulpit, only because his head was unable to bear the sound.

† Dr. Watts and the Rev. S. Price.

of the Lord's Supper, or a commemoration of the sufferings of Christ 'tis but seldom that any other speech or exhortation is made before the celebration.

The minister, taking hold of the plate in which the bread lies, calls upon the people to join with him in seeking for a blessing on it, which is done in a short prayer of eight or ten minutes. Then the minister says "Having blessed this bread, we break it in remembrance of our Saviour's body, &c." Then the loaves, which are before cut in squares, almost through, are broken by the minister into small pieces, as big as walnuts, or thereabout, and taking the plate of bread in his hand, he says, "This is the body of Christ, or the emblem or figure of the body of Christ, which was broken for you: take it and eat ye all of it, in remembrance of our Saviour who died for us," or such like words, which are a plain declaration that the bread represents the body of Christ, according to his own appointment: it is then distributed by the pastor to the deacons, and to one or two more of the members who are appointed to it, and it is carried by them to the various members of the church. Then, after a short space, an inquiry being made if all have received the bread, and that those who have not received it are desired to stand up and signify it, the pastor proceeds, in like manner, to pour out the wine, at least into one of the cups, then he asks a blessing on the cup; and then distributes it, as before, to the members or the deacons, and they to some other members of the church, by whom it is carried round to all the seats. In many churches, the pastor is frequently speaking proper sentences or texts of scripture, to awaken the faith, hope, and joy of Christians, and I cannot but approve of it in the main. But our former pastor, Dr. Chauncey, was so much against it, that it was not practised among us. But when most of the members, on some particular occasion, met together, the two pastors proposed it to them, whether we should keep up this practice or leave them to their own silent meditations. They seemed generally to approve our silence, and this is the reason we omit it.

After this there is a psalm or hymn sung, suited to the ordinance. Then the plate is sent round to collect for the necessities of the poor. After this, particular cases of the members are represented, who desire the public prayers of the church; and then, with a prayer offered on this occasion, together with thanksgiving and the final benediction, this service is concluded.

Note.—Just before the administration of the Lord's Supper, the pastor makes public mention of any person who is a member of another church, and desires occasional communion with us at that time; then, also, he declares the name and place of abode of any persons who desire to join themselves to us in fixed or constant communion, that the members may take notice of it, and make

due inquiry into their conversation, against the beginning of next month. And as it is at this time that new members are publicly declared to be received into the church, so if any are dead, it is generally declared to the church at this time, that the whole community may be acquainted with it.

FRIDAY BEFORE THE LORD'S SUPPER.

On the Friday, in the afternoon, before the Lord's Supper, there is generally a sermon preached on some evangelical subject; and if any church affairs require it, as the admission, the dismissal, or the seclusion of any member, or any other matter of importance, that relates to the spiritual or temporal concerns of the church, the members are desired to tarry a little for that purpose.

For many years, it has been the custom of the church to spend an hour or two, on the Fridays in the afternoon, together; wherein some of the brethren who are most capable are wont to exercise their gifts in prayer; but the attendance has been so little, and the persons so exceeding few, that for the present it is laid aside, though not without hope of revival.

DEACONS.

There are, at present, four deacons, who take care of all the secular affairs and keep their accounts; two of them collect what is subscribed for the support of the ministry of the church; and the other two concern themselves chiefly for the table of the Lord and the support of the poor: and whensoever it is thought necessary, their accounts are audited by them all.

OF ADMITTING A NEW MEMBER.

The method of receiving a member into our church, who has never yet been received into any communion, is this:—The person desirous of fellowship with us, makes it known to the pastor or pastors, privately; then one or both of them discourses with him, concerning his knowledge of the things of God and the gospel; his hearty profession of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, according to His various offices; and humble purpose and endeavour to walk with God in the world, and obey Christ in all his institutions, as well as in all moral duties. The minister also generally asks, if he can remember the way and means whereby he was first awakened to a sense of his sin and his danger, and first led to a willing acceptance of Christ and His Gospel. But, we do not make it necessary that he should remember or declare all these particulars, only so far as it may help to give the minister a fuller conviction of his inward serious religion; but this we do not impose on any who declare to us their evidences of true Christianity. If the minister receives satis-

faction from his discourse, he then privately informs one or two of the deacons, or aged and worthy members of the church, concerning it; and having learnt his name, character, business, and place of abode, if he be a stranger to them, they make what inquiry they can concerning the piety of his character, and his conversation in the world; and if it appear agreeable to the Gospel of Christ, they appoint some time when the pastor, and at least one of the brethren, may meet with the person proposing himself, to have some free conversation about the things of God; wherein there is nothing desired but a repetition of the same conference which the pastor before had with him.

Some one of the brethren is usually desired to be present, together with the pastor, at this second discourse with the person desirous of Communion, to witness to the care of the pastor in his examination of persons to be admitted, and to begin an acquaintance with them. It has been also thought proper, on another account, viz. lest some busy and conceited members of the church should be over officious in visiting and examining such a person themselves, under pretence that the pastor has been too remiss in his inquiries. It may be said, that very bashful young persons will speak more freely before the minister alone. This is granted. But inconveniences of this and other kinds will sometimes attend the management of this part of discipline, in all churches. And since these things are not expressly regulated by the Scripture, there is great latitude left for every church, and the officers thereof, to practise, and to alter according to present circumstances and their best discretion, both for the purity and welfare of the church, and for the ease and encouragement of the persons to be admitted.

If the pastor and those brethren, to whom he has communicated the affair, be satisfied with regard to the knowledge, piety, and conversation of the person, his name and place of abode is then mentioned to the whole congregation at the Lord's table, that they may have a month's time for more public inquiry into his behaviour in the world; whether his character be unblemished and honourable. If they hear of any blemishes in his conduct, unsuitable to the character of a Christian, they are desired to let the pastor, or the officers of the Church be speedily acquainted with it, and that privately, that the reputation of any person may not be publicly exposed; and that the matter may be dropt entirely, or delayed till his character be cleared from any such blemish or reproach. Then, on the Friday, in the afternoon, before the Lord's Supper, then the Church are met together, and desired to tarry after the public worship, the pastor declares, that he having heard a good character for seriousness and religion, and nothing blameable or offensive in the conversation of the person lately proposed to the Church, proceeds to acquaint them

with a short account of the profession of his faith, and the reasons of his hope, which the pastor has received from him ; and if there be anything peculiar and edifying in the methods of his conversion, the pastor declares it to the Church for their edification, so far as the person has communicated to the pastor with leave to declare it to the Church. Note, This profession is written by the person himself, or by the pastor from his mouth, as the person himself shall choose.

This being done, the pastor declares, that as himself and one or two of the brethren had been well satisfied with their conversation with the person, so he hoped that this account of things would also satisfy them, that the person was a credible professor of Christianity, and had a right to communion in all ordinances : and if they acquiesce in this account, and are willing to receive him to their communion, they are desired to signify their consent either by their silence, or the lifting up of their hands ; which being done a short prayer or thanksgiving is offered to God.

Note, though the person thus publicly approved, be hereby made a member of the church, yet he is not formally declared so till the Lord's day following, when a greater number of the members are present ; that so the whole congregation may see the face and know the person who is to be received a member amongst them.

Then on the following Lord's day, just before the Lord's Supper, the pastor speaks in this manner to the person, placed somewhere near him, and in the face of the whole church : "The account of your conversation, together with the profession of your faith has been repeated to the church, and they have declared their readiness to receive you into their fellowship : Are you now, therefore, willing to give up yourself to our Lord Jesus Christ, and to walk with Him in all his ordinances in this church, so far as Christ shall instruct and enable you ?" The person declaring his consent, the pastor replies to him in this manner : "I do therefore, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the consent of this church, receive you to fellowship with us, in all privileges and institutions of the Gospel, charging you so to walk as to adorn the profession which you have now made ; professing in my own name, and in the name of the church, to watch over you and discharge our several duties unto you by the assistance of divine grace."

RECEIVING A MEMBER FROM ANOTHER CHURCH TO FIXED COMMUNION.

From a Congregational Church.

If the person who desires communion with us has been or is a member of another Church of Christ, that walks according to the same faith and order which we observe, and the reasons of

his desire to change his Communion are just, we then desire a letter of dismission from that church to which he belongs, which is, or ought to be, attended with some good character of the person who is thus dismissed. This letter being read to the church, and no objection made against the person, or the reason of his dismission, the church declares their satisfaction and readiness to receive him into their communion, in silence or lifting up their hands; this is usually done on the Friday before the Lord's Supper. Then on the Lord's day, the person is received into the communion, by the pastor addressing himself to him, and declaring the Church's consent to receive him, and giving him a charge, to walk in this church with diligence and holy watchfulness, as through the grace of Christ he had been enabled to do in the church to which he was before related: using expressions near akin to those used in the foregoing case.

Note.—If the person come from a Baptist church, where their discipline is Congregational, we receive them in the same manner, when they will dismiss them to us; but this they seldom will do, as supposing us not to be baptized.

From a Presbyterian Church.

But if the person who desires our communion hath been a member of such a church as never requires any particular account of their Christian profession, and the reasons of their hope, to be given to them, but are contented with a general account of their knowledge and their blameless conversation given only to the pastor: then we use this method, viz., if the reasons of his desire of changing his place of communion be just and approved, we first desire an account and recommendation of this person from his pastor, either by letter or discourse; and such a recommendation, when given to us, is received and accepted by us, so far as concerns the knowledge and blameless conversation of the person, which is all that his former pastor required, so far as we know. But we then usually desire some account of the reasons of his hope, and relate them to the church on the Friday before the Sacrament, upon which he is received to our communion solemnly, the following Lord's Day.

Note.—In receiving a member to our church who hath been in communion with any other church, of any denomination whatsoever, we generally let the church know of it three or four weeks beforehand, that if there should be any blemish or scandal attending him, which was not known to the other church, we may have time and opportunity to inquire into it; and though several members of our church are ever so well acquainted with the person to be admitted, yet we usually give the same notice, that no offence may be taken in treating others so.

Note.—If any such objection be made against a person who is

proposed to the church, as gives reason to delay or forbid his admission, we drop the matter, as privately as may be, that no public disreputation may fall on the person on that account; though we generally make all the enquiries we can, before we bring matters into the church, that if possible there may be no stop to our proceedings afterwards.

OCCASIONAL COMMUNION.

When any person who is a member of another church among the three Denominations of Dissenters, viz. Presbyterian, Independent, or Baptist, desires occasional communion with us, for one or two months or more, for special and justifiable reasons; viz. their present distance from the place of worship, in sickness or death of the pastor, their desire of communicating sometimes with the rest of their family, etc. We then only give notice of it to the church just before the first time of their communion with us; provided always that we know the person, or that he be recommended to us by his own pastor, or by some persons whose testimony we can entirely rely upon.

It may be objected here, Why do you receive a member of a Presbyterian Church to occasional communion with you, and yet require a more particular account of him when he desires constant or fixed communion? To this we reply, That it is a matter of much more importance to receive a person into our congregation as a part and member of the Society, as one of our own body, and in order to worship always with us, and have a vote in all church affairs; than it is to receive one merely to sit down at the Lord's table occasionally, and eat and drink once or twice with us at this ordinance: so that we think the mere reason of things and Christian prudence gives us just ground to make a more particular inquiry into the character of the person in one case than in the other; just as any master of a family would be more solicitous whom he admitted to dwell in his house, than whom he admitted to dine there; and be more strict in inquiries about the one than the other.

Now if persons continue more than a twelvemonth in occasional communion with us, we think it proper to give them notice that they should either return and communicate with their own pastor and people, or that they should be dismissed entirely to us, in order to become members of the Society with which they constantly communicate; unless they give us some satisfactory reason for their continuance in this occasional communion.

In all these affairs that relate to the recommendation, dismissal, and occasional communion of the members of other churches joining with us, we endeavour to practice the same with regard to our own members, when they desire communion with other

churches, as is here declared; following herein the great rule of our Saviour, "Do to others as you would have others do to you."

If any of our members fall into sinful practices, which give public offence to the world or to the church; or if they professedly depart from the doctrines which we think necessary to Christianity; or if they wilfully separate and absent themselves utterly from our communion for a year or two, without any sufficient or justifiable cause, then, upon our notice of it, the pastor, or some one of the members that are best acquainted with him, is desired privately to inquire of them the reason of their conduct; if this does not reclaim them, two or three members of the church to repeat the same inquiry: if this has no effect, the church is acquainted with it on some week day of our church meeting, and messengers are sent from the church to expostulate the case with him: and if no methods are effectual for reclaiming them, after due delays, and having reported the whole matter to the church, and sentiments of the church are required about it; and upon the concurrent vote of the Church, according to the Rule of Scripture, we "withdraw from those that walk disorderly," and declare them to belong to our communion no more. And thus we free ourselves from any further care of them as fellow members, and secure the church from the scandal which such members would or might bring upon it, according to the rule of Christ. Note.—We practise the same thing, when any member departs and declares he will come no more.

Note.—If the crime be of a most gross, profligate, and notorious nature, and proved by sufficient evidence to the church, then the sinner is excluded from the society in a most solemn manner, and declared unfit for Christian fellowship, at least till there be evident and sufficient testimonials given of his repentance. But in cases of less scandal or offence, we make much longer delays, and deal with persons by repeated admonitions; and we use greater patience and tenderness, in hope to reclaim them to their duty, without proceeding to any public censure.

OF RESTORING MEMBERS.

When any person, after long and wilful separation from the church, that has given just offence, or especially after any censure past upon him, desires to return to the church again, there is a fresh inquiry made into his late conversation, as well as into his repentance and acknowledgment of his miscarriage; which being reported to the church, such a person is again received to the fellowship of the church, if there be no objection made against it by any of the members: but if any such objection be made, it is always desired that it may be done privately beforehand; and the matter is delayed until this objection be removed.

OF EXAMINATION OF MEMBERS TO BE ADMITTED
SOMETIMES BY THE PASTOR ALONE.

Let it be observed here, that these were the customs of the church, which for many years had been practised among us, with regard to the admission and exclusion of members. But about the year 1728, the deacons complained to the minister, that when they were present with them to hear the profession of faith and hope of persons who desired to enter into our communion; those persons did not speak so largely, nor so freely as the account which the ministers before gave them, concerning their profession; and that they saw so little advantage of any of the brethren being joined with the ministers in the examination of them, by reason of bashfulness and silence of the persons, that they thought it a needless thing to require this, their presence and attendance at the examination of the persons proposed; unless the persons themselves had so much courage, or such acquaintance with one or more of the deacons or church members as to declare their freedom to speak of their Christian experiences and hope in their presence; from which time the pastors, one or both of them, have conversed with the persons who desired church fellowship, and who were not free to converse with other members on this subject: and when the pastor has related to the church the substance of that conversation, it has been esteemed a sufficient satisfaction; always supposing the enquiry to be made by any member of the church concerning their pious conversation, and report of it made to the church.

Puritanism in the Peak

[The following account, partly gathered from the memoirs of Bagshaw and Ashe, partly from the *Protestant Dissenters Magazine*, 1798, and partly from notes communicated by Surgeon General Evatt, C.B., serves to illustrate the way in which the investigation of family tradition may contribute to the recovery of lost or forgotten history.]

A SHFORD is a Derbyshire village, about two miles north-west of Bakewell. It possesses a public hall or "village institute," on which may be seen a stone inscribed "Presbyterian Chapel, erected 1702, repaired 1841." This building, still in fair preservation, is a visible memorial of the ministry of the Rev. William Bagshaw, commonly called "The Apostle of the Peak." A somewhat copious narrative of his life and labours may be found in the *Nonconformists' Memorial*. It may therefore suffice to say he was born in 1628, at Litton in the parish of Tideswell, where "the Bagshaw family were local squires and well-to-do folk." He seems to have received his education in two country grammar schools; and early felt himself called to the work of the ministry. After preaching for about three months in the chapel of Wormhill in Tideswell parish, and afterwards at Attercliffe as assistant to the Rev. James Fisher, he was ordained at Chesterfield on 1st January, 1650, and soon after was called to the parochial charge of Glossop, where he ministered about 11 years. Being ejected by the Act of Uniformity, he took up his abode on his own estate at Ford Hall, Chapel-en-le-Frith,

where a representative of the family still resides. Thenceforth, in season and out of season, in spite of legal obstacles and the peril of informers, he did the work of an evangelist throughout the Hundred of High Peak. He gathered regular congregations in seven or eight places, amongst which he itinerated; his most frequent ministrations being at Malcoffe (apparently a farm near Ford Hall), and at Ashford. *The Presbyterian Survey*, 1691, says: "Mr. Bagshaw, aged 63, supplies Tideswell, Chinley, Ashford, Middleton, Chelmarton, Chawsworth [Charlesworth], and Hucklow: has a considerable estate." In this widely extended pastorate he seems to have been assisted from time to time by several young men who were preparing for the ministry, and who boarded near him for the benefit of his instruction and counsel. A Mr. Sidebottom, of whom we find mention as specially connected with Ashford, may have been one of these. For a long time Mr. Bagshaw regularly preached on alternate Sundays at Ashford; where the meeting-house was built in the last year of his life. His last sermon was preached at Ford Hall, to the Malcoffe congregation, only ten days before his death, which took place on 1st April, 1702. He published several volumes of practical divinity, mostly the substance of sermons, and a treatise of great interest entitled *De Spiritualibus Peccis: Notes or notices concerning the Work of God and some that have been workers together with Him in the High Peak*. In his will, dated 15th October, 1701, he declares himself "A member of the truly Catholic and Universal Church, and an honourer of that famous part thereof that is in Old and New England; and also holding inward communion with all the faithful, and outward with all the owners of the truth as far as I can without

sin; and longing for a more full and Scriptural Reformation." He bequeaths small sums to the poor of Litton, Glossop, and Wormhill; and 35 shillings yearly, secured by a rent charge on certain land at Wormhill, "to and for the encouraging of serious preaching and preachers, who may not, according to some late laws, officiate in the most public places."

Bagshaw was succeeded in his pastorate at Malcoffe by the Rev. Jas. Clegg, M.D.; and at Ashford by the Rev. John Ashe. Susannah Bagshaw, the sister of William, married first William Butler, and secondly Edward Ashe of Tideswell. John Ashe was their son, born in 1671. At the age of seventeen he entered Frankland's academy at Rathmell; on leaving which he engaged as chaplain to Lady Sarah Hoghton, of Hoghton Tower, Lancashire. On the death of Mr. Sidebottom, before mentioned, he was called to assist his uncle, and was ordained in Malcoffe meeting-house about midsummer, 1696. The ministers who assisted, in addition to Mr. Bagshaw, were the Revs. Samuel Angier, of Duckenfield; Gamaliel Jones, of Chadkirk; Eaton, of Macclesfield; and Byrom, of Stockport.* During Bagshaw's life he usually preached two Sundays in the month at Ashford, one at Chelmarton, and one either at Hucklow or Bradwell.

Mr. Ashe was a diligent and laborious pastor. "He always preached to one or other of his congregations on all the common festivals of the year; as well as at the adjacent villages at the time of their respective wakes or feasts; embracing the leisure the miners then had, as an opportunity for promoting their eternal welfare." He fre-

* With Mr. Ashe were ordained the Rev. William Bagshaw, junr., of Stannington, near Sheffield; the Rev. Joseph Foxlow, of Chesterfield and Stony Middleton; the Rev. — Hargroves, of Leek, afterwards of St. Ives; and the Rev. Geo. Lowe, of Norton, near Sheffield, afterwards assistant to Mr. Ashe.

quently preached occasional lectures at Litton, Tideswell, and other places; and was in frequent request for ordinations, ministers' meetings, etc. His uncompromising loyalty exposed him to some danger during the Jacobite rising in 1715, when the meeting-house at Bradwell was destroyed. About this time he found it necessary to procure assistance. His first assistant was Mr. Trout, a student from Attercliff; next the Rev. Geo. Lowe, already mentioned, who died in 1717. Then followed Mr. D. Clark (brother of Dr. Clark of St. Albans), who resided at Hucklow. Another assistant was a Mr. Thomas Bott, who afterwards conformed, and became rector of a parish in Norfolk. He was succeeded by Mr. Joseph Hankinson, of Altrincham, whose very helpful co-operation was ended by a call to the pastorate of Wirksworth in the summer of 1727.

Soon after this Mr. Ashe's strength began to decline. In 1731 it became unsafe for him to travel; and he relinquished the charge of Hucklow and Bradwell to the Rev. Robert Kelsall (from Pool Bank, near Altrincham), who maintained an exemplary pastorate for 41 years, dying on 23rd June, 1772, at the age of 73. He is described as a scholarly man, who subsisted on a stipend of £24 a year, yet "ne'er had changed or wished to change his place."

Mr. Ashe was a great collector of theological literature, sometimes spending more than the amount of his salary in the purchase of books. He was not a voluminous writer, his published works being: *An Account of the Life and Character of William Bagshaw*, 1704; and a few sermons. A volume of sermons was a posthumous publication. By his will he bequeathed the interest of £20 to the dissenting minister of Ashford and his successors, for preaching two sermons a year

—on New Year's Day and Whit Monday, that being the day of the annual wakes. This legacy was put out to interest and lost by failure of the security. Mr. Ashe also bequeathed a selection from his library for the use of his successors; but the list could not be found.

Mr. Ashe died somewhat suddenly. His epitaph, in Ashford churchyard, reads as follows:

In memory of John Ashe, minister of the gospel; whose mind was enriched with that learning and piety, that candour and humility, that simplicity and godly sincerity, that greatly adorned his inoffensive and useful life: which suddenly and happily ended his labours in his 64th year, Octr 2: 1735.

The next minister at Ashford of whom we have any knowledge is the Rev. Samuel Evatt; whether or not he was the immediate successor of Ashe is uncertain. He is *believed* to have descended from a rather notable family of Puritan clergymen, of whom these names are recorded:

- (1) Thomas Evatt; rector of South Stoke, Lincolnshire, 1566-1589.
- (2) Richard Evatt, son of Thomas; rector of Burton Pedwardine, Lincolnshire, 1589-1603; vicar of Stamford-Baron (the parish of Burleigh House) 1603-1622, to which he was appointed by Thomas Cecil, first Earl of Exeter; in addition to this he held the rectory of St. John, Stamford, from 1604, and that of St. Mary, Stamford, from 1615.
- (3) Anthony Evatt, son of Richard; rector of Whepstead, Suffolk, 1629-1642, to which he was appointed by Edward Cecil, viscount Wimbledon, son of the first Earl of Exeter.
- (4) Robert Evatt, brother of Thomas (No. 1); rector of Little Ellingham, Norfolk, 1586-1608. He had two sons:
- (5) John Evatt, dean of Elphin, 1612-1634; appointed through the Cecil influence: from him the Irish Evatts are descended.
- (6) William Evatt, brother of John (No. 5), of whom no particulars are available. We also meet with a second
- (7) Robert Evatt, parentage uncertain; rector of Sibley, Leicestershire, 1612-1618; rector of Horsley, Derbyshire,

1618-1642, to which he was appointed by Philip Stanhope, first Earl of Chesterfield.

It is *supposed* that the Rev. Samuel Evatt of Ashford was descended from either (5) or (6). His father, John Evatt, was in 1739 a trustee of Friargate chapel, Derby; and his brother was churchwarden in one of the parishes in the town of Derby; a couple of facts which may possibly furnish a clue to the actual descent. However, Samuel was for many years private secretary to William Bagshaw of Ford Hall (probably a grandson of the ejected minister). A number of his letters are still preserved there among the family archives. Mr. Bagshaw by his will made good the small endowment which Mr. Ashe had bequeathed to the minister of Ashford, and which had been lost by failure of security. He also bequeathed £400 to Mr. Evatt in appreciation of his services. This sum was duly paid by the heir, and Mr. Evatt's receipt is still extant. William Bagshaw died in 1756; his nephew and heir, Colonel Samuel Bagshaw, was then in India. Pending his return Mr. Evatt acted as agent for the estate.

By a deed dated 29th September, 1761, between the Rev. Samuel Evatt and Samuel Bagshaw of Ford, Esq., the sum of £180 deposited in the hands of Mr. Evatt by Thomas Roose and others, for charitable purposes, was declared to be on trust to pay forty shillings to the dissenting minister at Ashford, twenty shillings to the master of the grammar school, and forty-eight shillings to the said Samuel Evatt so long as he should continue minister of the Presbyterian chapel at Ashford, and after the ceasing of that ministry to be laid out in bread and distributed weekly to the poorest inhabitants. The following are named as trustees: Thomas Froggott of Bakewell, John

Wilkinson and Richard Slater of Chesterfield, Samuel White, George White, and George Hall of Ashford, Joseph Blackden of Sheldon, and John Smith of Great Roosley (?). By another deed between Samuel Evatt and Benjamin Mather and others, the £20 bequeathed by William Bagshaw to replace the lost endowment was transferred to the trustees.

Mr. Evatt ministered to the congregations at Ashford and Stony Middleton for many years; but at length conformed, and died in the communion of the Established Church. The dates of his resignation and death we have not been able to discover.

Mr. Kelsall having, somewhat late in life, ventured on a share in a mine, it turned out so profitable that he was in comfortable circumstances for the rest of his days. The chapel at Bradwell being in a ruinous condition, he by way of a thankoffering rebuilt it, chiefly at his own expense. Dying in 1772, he was succeeded by a Mr. Boulton from Macclesfield; who together with Hucklow and Bradwell took charge of Stony Middleton. By this time the congregation at Ashford was so reduced, and the chapel so much gone to decay, that worship there was almost discontinued. According to Josiah Thompson's list, 1773, it was then "occasionally supplied." Mr. Boulton's successor, Mr. Daniel Gronow, "preached now and then at Ashford." He was followed by a Mr. Evans; in whose time Samuel Shore, Esq., of Meersbrook, near Sheffield, and Robert Newton, Esq., of Norton, practically rebuilt the chapel, and invested £300 in 3 per cent. consols for the benefit of the minister. Mr. Evans added the charge of Ashford to his other pastorates; and from that time to 1798 the four congregations were united under one minister, Mr.

Evans having been followed by the Rev. Astley Meanley, and he by the Rev. Mr. Allard. The whole group appears by this time to have become Unitarian.

The Protestant Dissenters' Magazine for 1798 says that at that date "the congregation at Ashford is small, but regular and attentive. That at Hucklow is numerous, serious, and affectionate to their minister, though so poor they are not able to do much toward his support. Middleton is on the increase; the minds of the people seem lately awakened there to a concern about their eternal interest. At Bradwell the congregation has long been made up of casual attendants of all religious denominations."

In Lysons' *History of Derbyshire*, 1817, it is stated that the chapel at Ashford "was supplied by a minister from Hucklow; it is still in existence, and has of late been occupied by various sects." In 1830 it was in the hands of Unitarians. In 1870 it was acquired by the Congregational church at Bakewell. For some years it stood unoccupied; it was then rented by a Young Men's Christian Association for a meeting-room. "They, in time, liquidated; and it is now held by an Ashford man for the young men of Ashford."

Abraham Caley

IN our last issue we briefly noticed a short memoir, by Mrs. C. Skinner, of the Rev. Abraham Caley, of Rayleigh, an almost forgotten worthy of the Bartholomew evictions. The only published work of Mr. Caley, so far as is known, is a small volume entitled *A Glimpse of Eternity*; which the *Nonconformists' Memorial* calls "a book great in value, though small in bulk and price." But amongst the volumes given or bequeathed to the Congregational Library by the late Joshua Wilson is a MS. of 372 folio pages, entitled *The Pilgrim Saints, and somewhat of the Good and Evil they meet with*. It is quite anonymous; but on parchment slips at each end is the name "Benjamin Caley," with the date 1672, that being the year in which Abraham Caley died. Mr. Wilson reasonably conjectured that the treatise might be the work of Abraham Caley; and that conjecture is raised to something approaching certainty by the careful examination to which the MS. has been subjected by Mrs. Skinner. She writes as follows:

"I think the writer of this book was Abraham Caley of Rayleigh. No one who has dipped into its pages could think for a moment that Benjamin Caley, who wrote the doggerel on the parchment slip, was the author of such stately thoughts. I think these 23 sermons were written before the book was bound. The paper varies in quality, and the margins vary. May it not be that they were sent by Abraham Caley to be read at gatherings of his old flock during the years he was absent from them? In Sermon I he warns them of the dangers they are in, that might overtake them even during the night. Many such gatherings were held during the night. The general title is *The Pilgrim Saints, and*

some of the good and evil that they meet with. No topic better suited to the times could have been chosen.

"The sermons display the same wonderful knowledge of Scripture as the published *Glimpse of Eternity*, and the same march of thought; but not the same wealth of literary quotations, which could hardly be expected if written away from his books. The sermon "Leaning on her Beloved" has many beautiful passages, and well deserves publication. There is a tenderness of tone throughout the MS. which is not found in the *Glimpse*, and which suggests that the writer had been mellowed by trial.

"The preface is headed *The writer to his children*. He states his belief that *some of them* have their faces to the light; a phrase rather unlikely if his natural children were meant, seeing that they were only two. But it was quite natural that he should write thus if referring to his spiritual children, or the children of his parish. It is conceivable that the words *may* have been intended to disarm suspicion in case the papers should get into wrong hands: but if he had meant the children of his family he would surely have placed his name, or at least initials, at the foot.

"Benjamin Caley was Abraham's nephew, and brother to Mrs. Bull, the niece in whose house he died in July, 1672. Abraham's daughter Mildred administered his estate in October following, and no doubt gave the book to her cousin Benjamin. This would explain the name and date on the parchment slips at each end." C. S.

The Origin of Nonconformity in Sheffield

THE broad outlines of the origin of Nonconformity in Sheffield have often been sketched, but with a bare monotony of reiteration; for while surface facts, intermingled with inaccuracies, have been handed down from one writer to another, there has been a marked absence of illuminating touches calculated to give life and vigour to the picture. Calamy's accounts of the Yorkshire clergy ejected in 1662 are believed to have been largely based on information collected by Oliver Heywood. The Rev. Joseph Hunter, though hampered by what he called the almost criminal remissness of the old Dissenters in neglecting to record matters affecting their interests, was able, by his wide local knowledge, to enlarge Calamy's outlines. But Hunter's usual fairness was warped by ancestral and denominational prejudice against the Independents, whom he never appreciated; and his reverence was concentrated on the form of Nonconformity which, with misleading looseness, he persisted in calling Presbyterian. Later writers have had to content themselves with repetitions of the old conventional story. The late Rev. Bryan Dale spent years in ransacking all available sources, but he, with his editor, drew them almost blank.

The *Nonconformist Memorial* statement that the Rev. James Fisher was ejected from the vicarage of Sheffield "in 1662," has always been accepted as meaning that he was silenced through non-compliance with the Act of Uniformity. It is proposed here to adduce some reasons for thinking that he was put out by the earlier Act, of September, 1660, for the restoration of clergy to livings sequestered under the Commonwealth. A consideration of these may be helped by a brief retrospective glance at Sheffield's ecclesiastical experiences.

At the Reformation the living was held by Sir Robert Gawthorpe, the last of a long series of vicars inducted by the priory of Worksop. There were also several chantry priests. Significantly close to the passing of the Act of Supremacy, vicar Gawthorpe obtained a licence of non-residence for three years, "to enable him to study." This is dated 1st June, 1536. When the three years had expired Worksop Priory had been dissolved, and Gawthorpe's "study" had reconciled his conscience to submission

to the new ecclesiastical rule. He was equally compliant when Queen Mary restored the old religion.

Sheffield was a self-governing democracy: its affairs were regulated, and its revenues administered, by the freeholders in public meeting. Beyond this power in secular matters, the burgesses exercised some control over the church's temporal affairs: as maintenance of the fabric; and the churchwardens' accounts had to be annually submitted for approval. About the time of Gawthorpe's non-residence the burgesses further acquired a distinct voice in the appointment of the clergy, by deciding to set apart a portion of the town's funds for the support of chaplains to assist the Vicar in the conduct of divine service, the administration of the sacraments, and the visitation of the sick. This plan had been in operation for some thirteen years, when, by an unjust straining of the Chantry and Superstitious Uses Act of Edward VI, the property allocated to the support of the chaplains was seized by the Crown. Queen Mary, on her accession, rejected a petition for the restoration of this property, but vested it in trustees for the sustentation of three chaplains, by the title of Assistant Ministers, any residue to be employed for certain prescribed secular purposes. The trustees were incorporated by charter, under the title of "The Twelve Capital Burgesses and Commonalty." The tenure of the three chaplains then in office was perpetuated, although it was represented that they had taken advantage of the disturbed times wholly to neglect their duties. One of them had been reported by Edward the Sixth's Commissioners as "sixty years of age and impotent." Like their Vicar they complacently accepted the abandonment of Edward's Protestantism for the Popery of Mary; and some of them, at least, conformed to the next reversal from Mary to Elizabeth.¹

Vicar Gawthorpe lived just long enough once more to abjure Mariolatry, but from his death in the first year of Elizabeth the Protestant family which had acquired the advowson steadily presented Low Church Vicars, while the Capital Burgesses took every opportunity of appointing Assistant Ministers of like mind.

The normal harmony between clergy and people was broken for a short period during the commotions of the civil wars. The Royalists garrisoning Sheffield castle not only made themselves obnoxious by imposing heavy exactions on the town's folk, but affronted their religious feelings by installing Edward Browne,

¹ The Assistant Minister arrangement continued until recent times. The duties they discharged were much like those of curates, but their legal position was very different. They held their office by a freehold tenure; and, not being the servants of the vicar, harmonious working depended on considerateness and good feeling. Apart from minor frictions, and an occasional necessity for a minister to pay a substitute, the somewhat anomalous system worked fairly well in practice. Only once was there a real trial of strength as to the power of the Vicar to exclude an Assistant from the ministrations of the church, and it ended in a drawn battle.

a Vicar holding Laudian views, and by ejecting the minor clergy. An Assistant Minister of their choosing, Thomas Barney, busied himself aggressively on the King's side, and mocked the inhabitants by "knowing the great bell for Mr. Browne, his possession into the vicarage of Sheffield, being his proxit." It was Mr. Barney, too, who signed the formal record of the High Church Vicar's induction. Popular resentment expressed itself in doggrell satire :

"A man in black, whose name is Brown,
Woe and alack! is come to town,
And will in superstition drown
The Rabble."

The Royalist triumph was short-lived. In a few months (August 11th, 1644) a Parliamentary force captured the castle, swept the intruders from the church, and restored the rightful occupants. One of the returning ministers had been ejected also from the mastership of the grammar school. He claimed payment of the salary accruing during his absence from the desk, and, backed by a peremptory order from Fairfax, got it.

Another Assistant Minister was made Vicar, vice Browne deposed. This was the Rev. Thomas Birkbeck. When he left, in 1646, to enter on the rectory of Ackworth, the Rev. James Fisher became his successor.

The conditions under which Fisher discharged his spiritual functions here were doubtless the counterpart of those existing in other parts of the country during the Commonwealth. These are so familiar to students of ecclesiastical history, that learned writers would perhaps have drawn the picture more vividly had they remembered how hard it is for the ordinary man, influenced by long accumulated associations, to conceive of a venerable parish church in which the rubrics of the *Book of Common Prayer* are never observed, and where the stately arches echo, not to a stately ritual, but to the sounds of a service scarcely distinguishable from the extempore praying, the psalm-singing, and the lengthy preaching of any old style, bare-walled meeting-house. Still more difficult is it to realise that while the religious exercises open to every parishioner were of this kind, there was an inner sanctuary exclusively reserved for a select society, whose members were bound by the most solemn obligations; were self-governing, with executive leaders, and had a chosen pastor, often, as in Sheffield, the Vicar of the parish.

Professor Lyon Turner in an illuminating article² has recently cited the case of a church in Berkshire which may be accepted as typical of what occurred in Sheffield. There may be found in Dr. Stoughton's *Ecclesiastical History of England* other illustrations

² Cong. Hist. Soc. *Transactions* vi. 26, 27.

which, amid many variations adapted to the special circumstances of each locality, tell, broadly the same story.³ Some, like Thomas Jollie, held the dual position of parish priest and Congregational pastor to be incompatible, or at least undesirable; for when contemplating removal from Altham to Whalley, he insisted that he would not be presented "under any notion of a vicar, but simply" as the preacher or minister of the gospel.⁴ Yet it would appear that where there was accord between incumbent and parishioners, a little give-and-take sufficed to smoothe over any difficulties.

And it may be supposed that in this spirit questionings on the knotty problem of administration of the sacraments, and especially of the Communion, were met. In view of the strict Congregational conception of the sanctity of the Lord's Table, and the care taken to guard it against profanation by the unworthy, it would not have been surprising if the moderation which permitted joint devotional services had broken down here. Dr. Stoughton gives a dramatic report of a colloquy between a Judge of assize and a certain Thomas Palmer, prevented by his scruples (like some High Churchmen of to-day) from conceding the legal right of all non-sandalous parishioners to participation.⁵ But this was no doubt the exceptional attitude of an extreme man, and the compromise usually adopted is probably indicated by the Winchcombe case cited by the same writer,⁶ where the responsibility of partaking was, after solemn warning against the sin of unfitness, thrown upon the individual conscience.

That, before the great disruption, mixed Communion was ordinarily permissible may be inferred from the wording of one of the rules of the church subsequently (1676) founded near Sheffield by two of Fisher's colleagues :

"10. That *for the present* no person shall be admitted into communion with the said church in the Lord's Supper who doth communicate with the parochiall assemblies in that ordinance as it is now administered there . . . Yet it is not intended as any censure upon the present parochiall churches, nor on any that communicate with them, nor upon parochiall churches as such; but it is intended only to prevent such danger to persons' soules, and also such scandalls and prejudices to the said church as *might accrue in regard of some present circumstances* of the times and of this neighbourhood."⁷

Incidentally it is curious to note that not only did the services

³ Stoughton, vol. II, especially Chaps. viii and ix.

⁴ Cong. Hist. Soc. Transactions vi. 170.

⁵ Ecclesiastical History Vol. II. 212.

⁶ *Ib.* page 237.

⁷ Hunter's *Hallamshire*, p. 287.

in the parish churches of the Commonwealth approximate closely to our Nonconformist models, but that the methods of "calling" ministers shew an historic anticipation of the procedure familiar to us in the Congregational body today. Reading the minutes of the Sheffield Capital Burgesses at times when it became necessary to elect a new Assistant Minister, is, in substance, very much like perusing the records of a modern church meeting, or a church treasurer's accounts. Take the following as illustrations:

"7 Nov., 1655. To three ministers who came to preach at Sheffield upon tryall, £2 10 0.

"10 Nov., 1656. To Mr. Pryme, by order, for preaching a Sermon before he was hyred, £1."

And there are entries which shew that the practice of paying the new parson's removal expenses also obtained then. References to casual "supplies," too, have a very modern ring:

"6 Nov. 1656. To Mr. Fisher, of Rotherham for preaching at Ecclesall 2 dayes, £1 0 0.

Mr. Ogden, preaching at Sheffield, one day."

Evidence that there was in Sheffield a "Reformed Church" of the kind we have been describing, with James Fisher, as pastor, simultaneously discharging his parochial duties as vicar, is scanty but convincing. In *Yorkshire Puritanism and Early Nonconformity*⁸ the late Rev. Bryan Dale says that, "while still holding his office as Vicar, Fisher formed an independent society, or church, of which he acted as pastor, before the year 1652." Mr. Dale does not cite the authority for this statement, but possibly it is based on the words of Fisher himself, in his *Wise Virgin*. On the title page of that he calls himself not Vicar, but "A Minister of Christ and Preacher of the Gospel at Sheffield"; and, speaking of Anthony Hatfield's *Relation* of the *Wise Virgin's* recovery, he says: "The Copy of this Relation I received on the 9th of December (1652) when the officers and members of the church of Christ in Sheffield were met in private conference."⁹

When Charles II recovered the throne the Sheffield clergy, colleagues of Vicar Fisher, were Edward Prime, Matthew Bloom and William Stone. Of the sentiments of Stone there is no indication; Prime and Bloom were Puritans, like-minded with their chief.

The Act for the Restoration of Sequestered Clergy became law in September, 1660, and the Rev. Thomas Barney, removed in 1644, immediately put in a claim for re-entry, with payment of

358 The Origin of Nonconformity in Sheffield

“arrears” of salary accumulated throughout the years of his exclusion. The Capital Burgesses declined to entertain either demand, and, on Stone’s resignation a few months later,¹⁰ elected the Rev. Rowland Hancock, who had been supplanted at Ecclesfield by the reinstatement of his Royalist predecessor. But the law was too strong for the burgesses, and after struggling against it for nearly two years, they displaced Hancock, restored Barney, and compromised his financial claims by paying £20. It was on the 14th August, 1662, that Hancock thus suffered his second ejection before the Act of Uniformity came into operation. On Black Bartholomew Day Prime and Bloom, refusing to conform, went out; the one with £35 16 8 in his pocket, and the other with £25. These were their “wages” up to the 24th of August; and may be taken as equivalent to something like £200 and £150 in present values. Their places were taken by a certain Cuthbert Browne, who would not have come well out of an inquisition by Cromwell’s Triers¹¹; and William Gardiner, who, unless it be a case of mistaken identity, lived to be described as “a poor, drunken curate.”¹² His father, Rector of Eckington, near Sheffield, could trim his sails to the passing breeze. When publishing a sermon preached at the Derby assizes, in 1653, he called himself “Minister of the Gospel at Eckington.” Before 1662 he had bought the advowson: clearly a rather special inducement to adapt views “published not for contention but satisfaction,” on “the excellence, necessity, consistencie of magistracy and ministry under the gospel,” to the new order of things.

So far for the Assistant Ministers; what of the Vicar? It has been seen that in the neighbourhood of Sheffield, as elsewhere, the provisions of the Clergy Restoration Act of September, 1660, were promptly and drastically enforced. Before the Act of Uniformity became operative Rowland Hancock had been turned out from Ecclesfield, Barney had recovered his position at Sheffield, and Thomas Birkbeck, Fisher’s predecessor, had come back to the town, an exile from Ackworth. Is it likely that the Rev. Edward Browne, with the successful action of his old ally Barney before him, would abstain from asserting his claim to the vicarage until Fisher refused his “unfeigned assent and consent”? That he did obtain possession we know, but when? Before St. Bartholomew’s Day, or after?

Fisher’s name has not, apparently, been found in any of the

¹⁰ He remained in the neighbourhood until his death in 1717, but he is not found among those who, on either side, took part in religious duties. He had married into a well-to-do family, and owned property.

¹¹ Hunter’s *Hallamshire*, p. 413.

¹² Cox’s *Derbyshire Churches*, s.v. Eckington, p. 230.

lists of the 1660 displacement.¹³ But the Sheffield Burgery Records¹⁴ contain the following entry, which can only be interpreted as shewing that, a few months after the Restoration, Fisher had been driven from the vicarage, and compelled to seek a house for himself and rooms for his flock :

“ November the 26th, 1660. Memorandum : That the day and year above written it was agreed by us whose names are subscribed, and by several other persons then present, that Mr. James Fisher shall have and enjoy such roomes of the workhouse as were formerly in the occupation of Mr. Whittaker, under the yearly rent of three poundes at Pentecost and Martinmass therefor to be paid.”

The signatures appended are those of sixteen townsmen of influence, some doubtless members of Fisher's scattered fellowship, and many, certainly, attached to the Nonconformist church where it now rallied. Several shared with him persecution in the evil days that were to come.

Additional probability is given to the suggestion that 1660, not 1662, marks the date of Fisher's ejection and the founding of Sheffield's first Nonconformist church by what can be ascertained, slight though it be, as to the circumstances of Browne's return. The date of his re-induction is not found, but he had already resigned, to enter upon another preferment, *before* the 30th October, 1662.¹⁵ That is such quick work from the 24th August that, unless the re-entry was merely a formal assertion of right, 1660 seems a more likely date.

That the atmosphere of the place, charged with awkward memories and breathed by a hostile populace, was not healthy to Mr. Browne may be readily imagined. But at least the parishioners benefited by his final departure, since the patron brought in a moderate and tolerant conformist who was installed by the 5th of March, 1662-3.

Walker in his *Sufferings of the Clergy* makes no mention of the reinstatement of either Browne, or Barney. His references to

¹³ Although rightly described by Calamy as "Congregational" in his judgement, he is not mentioned in Professor Lyon Turner's particulars of Congregational ministers ejected in 1660 and 1663 (Cong. Hist. Soc. *Transactions* vi, 25). Matthew Bloom and Rowland Hancock are also omitted, though no one reading the ordinances of the Shirecliffe and Attercliffe church (*Hunter* p. 287) can doubt that they were Congregational, despite the P appended to their names in the 1672-3 licence lists.

¹⁴ *Records of the Burgery of Sheffield*, p. 172. This use of the workhouse is explained by the fact that the building being larger than the exigencies of poor relief required, it had become the custom to let off certain of its rooms to private tenants. It will be seen hereafter that Fisher's son, a surgeon, conducted his practice there.

¹⁵ *Hunter's Hallamshire*, p. 270. He was inducted to Crofton 6th November, 1662, vice Edward Hill ejected by the Uniformity Act. Dale's *Yorkshire Puritanism*, p. 77.

360 The Origin of Nonconformity in Sheffield

their removal suggest the absence of any effort to obtain accurate information. They are as follow (p. 212) :

“ Barney, Sheffield, V. He was the Assistant Minister here, which I take to be a settled office and equivalent to a Freehold. If not he must be struck out here, and placed in the Appendix among the Curates. Brown, Sheffield. Different I conjecture, from that Sheffield just now mentioned, unless there were two sufferers in it.”

R. E. LEADER.

To be continued.