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EDITORIAL

THE 51st Annual Meeting of the Society was held at Westminster Chapel on 17 May, 1950, at 5.30 p.m. There were present 60 members and 29 non-members. In the vacancy of the Presidency and in the absence through ill health of Dr. A. J. Grieve, Dr. G. F. Nuttall took the Chair. The Rev. R. G. Martin read a warm tribute to Dr. Albert Peel, and the meeting stood in silence for a moment, in grateful remembrance of all that Dr. Peel had given to, and had accomplished for, the Society. Dr. Peel's death also leaves the Senior Editorship of these *Transactions* vacant. It was agreed that the time had come to undertake a careful consideration of the whole future of the Society, in relation to the nature of the *Transactions* and the Society's general purpose and policy, as well as its personnel, and to do so more fully than is possible in the brief time allowed for our annual meetings. To this end a committee was appointed for one year, to bring definite recommendations to the next Annual Meeting. The surviving officers, who were re-elected *pro tem.*, were asked to serve on this committee, together with the following: the Rev. T. P. Brooks, the Rev. A. G. Matthews, Dr. R. S. Paul, the Rev. J. H. Pearce, the Rev. J. H. Taylor and the Rev. L. T. Towers (in three cases subject to consent). The committee was asked to pay special attention to the rehabilitation of the Congregational Library, which in the past had been so closely connected with the Society, and the continued inaccessibility of which was not only a serious loss to our own members but a public disgrace. For the ensuing year the Presidency was therefore left vacant. The Rev. C. E. Surman was warmly thanked for his unwearying labours on the Society's behalf, which have included the answering during the year of more than 400 letters relating to our history, and the recruiting of over 100 new members, thus increasing our membership by nearly 50% and raising it to the record figure of 335. A message of greeting was sent to Dr. Grieve, whose absence for the first time for so many years was much regretted.

Dr. R. S. Paul then read a paper entitled "The Lord Protector: Personal Religion and Public Action." There was unfortunately no time for discussion, but much interest was aroused, and it was agreed that the paper should be printed in these *Transactions*.

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Several pieces of historical work on which Dr. Albert Peel was engaged have been left unfinished by his death. Of particular interest to the Society was the "corpus of the writings of the Fathers of

Independency," the seven projected volumes of which were listed in the editorial of our last number. His work on these was less complete than his words there may have led readers to suppose, and the Sir Halley Stewart Trust feared at first that it would not be possible to publish more than the first two volumes, *Cartwrightiana* and *The Works of Robert Harrison and Robert Browne.* Even these volumes have required much editing, in which members of the Society have helped valiantly, and were found to contain little but the texts, transcribed *verbatim et literatim*, with an almost complete absence, alas, of the annotation and exegesis which would have added so much to their value. The Trust has secured the assistance of Professor L. H. Carlson, of North Western University, Illinois, and hopes to publish the series under the joint editorship of Dr. Peel and Professor Carlson. We understand that Professor Norman Sykes has accepted the oversight of a further historical work of Dr. Peel's, which it is hoped may be published by the Cambridge University Press.

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It will be appropriate if *The Works of Robert Browne* can be published during the present year, for, though the evidence depends upon calculation, not upon explicit record, 1550 ? has been generally accepted as the year of Browne's birth, and the fourth centenary has not been overlooked. An excellent article, entitled " The ' Gathered Church ' : Robert Browne and the Tradition of Congregationalism " appeared in *The Times* of 9 May, 1950, together with a sympathetic leader. The Independent Press, with commendable promptitude, gained permission to reprint these, and they are obtainable for a penny. " The tradition of Robert Browne," the article ends, " was probably never more widespread and powerful than it is to-day." On 6 September there are to be local celebrations at Northampton, where, in the churchyard of St. Giles, Browne lies buried. At Achurch, the living he held after he conformed, and during his incumbency there, was born John Smith, the Cambridge Platonist. It is intriguing to wonder if the Rector had any influence over the growing boy.

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Next year Northampton prepares yet greater celebrations, for in 1951 falls the bicentenary of the death of Philip Doddridge. Fuller particulars of this will appear in a later number of these *Transactions*, which (it is planned) will have special reference to Doddridge; but it is already possible to say that a small book has been prepared, with chapters on Doddridge's several contributions to the religious life of his time by the Rev. A. T. S. James, Professor Victor Murray, Dr. G. F. Nuttall, the Rev. E. A. Payne, the Rev. Erik Routley and the Rev. Roger Thomas, Dr. Williams' Librarian.

Now that we have entered the 1950's the tercentenaries of our oldest churches will be arriving in increasing numbers. It is good to know that many churches are aware and proud of this fact and are desirous of observing the occasion fittingly. At the same time some of the dates of formation of our churches given in the *Congregational Year Book* are doubtful, to say the least. Churches will be well advised to consult Mr. Surman about the appropriate date, and should not be unduly cast down if this is put forward ten years or so, towards 1962. Many of our churches probably did continue, rather than originate, in 1662, but in the absence of written records it is unwise to *assume* an earlier foundation.

There can be no doubt, however, in the case of Bunyan Meeting, Bedford, which has a well-planned programme extending throughout the whole of 1950 ; nor in that of Castle Gate, Nottingham, which is already looking ahead to 1955. Castle Gate has had its history recorded twice already, once in 1855 and again in 1905. Both these works are of value, but the sources now available go far beyond the Church Book, upon which both books, largely, are based, primary though this must remain. *The Church Book of Bunyan Meeting, Bedford*, edited in facsimile by Professor G. B. Harrison, similarly remains a prime source for that church; but, though its history also has been written twice before, in 1788 and in 1849, we warmly welcome *Bunyan Meeting, Bedford, 1650-1950*, by Mr. H. G. Tibbutt, one of our members, which is published by the Trustees of Bunyan Meeting for five shillings. This is a careful piece of work, covering the whole 300 years, with attention to the village churches so long associated with Bunyan Meeting, with photographs of ministers and others and of the meeting-house as it was and is, and with a facsimile of a page in the Church Book written by Bunyan himself. The detailed index greatly adds to the usefulness of an excellent handbook.

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The latest volume of the *Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 50*s*.), edited by Mr. L. G. Wickham Legg, which includes lives of the eminent who died in the years 1931-1940, is fascinating reading, but it cannot be claimed that Nonconformists generally, or Congregationalists in particular, make any notable appearance. Of the 730 names the divines number 50. Of these only one was a Congregationalist : R. F. Horton. J. V. Bartlet appears as " a recognized leader in the Congregational churches," " although never ordained." The Anglican divines are naturally in the vast majority : of these, bishops and scholars supply a goodly number, but more popular priests are represented by Fr. Jellicoe and Fr. Waggett, Dick Sheppard and Pat McCormick. One man stands out as a saint : Alexander Nairne, in whose lectures, nor only there, " men felt that

they had seen a great light." The Roman Catholics provide Cardinal Bourne and Dom Cuthbert Butler, the Methodists Silas and Joseph Hocking and Sir Henry Lunn. Loyalty to English Presbyterianism is recorded in the lives of two eminent laymen, John Buchan and J. K. Fotheringham. There are no Quakers, but Quaker ancestry is mentioned in eleven cases, and Quaker schooling in a further three.

That only 39 of the 730 are women, and that these include a queen, three princesses, a duchess, a marchioness and a countess may be thought remarkable. It is, perhaps, a reminder, how recent is the movement towards equality of opportunity for men and women. The most striking fact of all is that 70 of the 730, *i.e.*, nearly 10%, were unmarried, and that a further 119 were married but had no issue. This proportion is no doubt higher than in the population at large; but that more than 25% of Britain's most eminent men and women in these years left no children to whom (whether through heredity or environment) their gifts might have been bequeathed is a sobering thought.

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We offer a modest welcome to our new and distinguished contemporary, the *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, edited from Manchester University by the Rev. C. W. Dugmore. The *Journal* is a praiseworthy venture in the field of oecumenical scholarship. The first number contains, in the field of special interest to our Society, an article surveying the correspondence of Richard Baxter, both as printed in his lifetime and as still in MS. at Dr. Williams' Library and elsewhere.

Albert Peel

THE following tribute to Dr. Albert Peel has been received from Dr. H. McLachlan, the Editor of the *Transactions* of the Unitarian Historical Society: "Acquainted with most of his work, knowing him personally and having heard him lecture and preach, I am greatly moved with a sense of the deep loss that Congregationalism, Nonconformity generally, Journalism and not least Scholarship have suffered by his untimely taking off in the midst of his many labours. His courage, independence, toleration and generosity were as conspicuous as his manifest Christian spirit and sturdy devotion to the faith of his fathers. Such a man can ill be spared and I must be but one amongst very many in England and America who mourn the loss of a great Englishman to whom his counsel and friendship were truly precious."

* * *

"We have all suffered a great loss," wrote Professor Norman Sykes of Cambridge, "both as friends and as students of church history; and his place will be hard to fill in our professional field and impossible to fill as a friend."

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What follows is taken from the tribute paid by the Rev. R. G. Martin at the Annual Meeting of the Society. Mr. Martin's association with Dr. Peel in the pastorate at Clapton Park as well as in the work of the Society adds weight to his words.

"First and last Peel was a Congregational minister with a cure of souls; he knew it and was more proud of it than of anything else, though he was never satisfied that he was tackling his work as a minister in the best and most effective way. He was possessed of an extraordinary love of people. People mattered and there was no trouble to which he would not go for people. He was never too busy to see people and to care for them.

Peel's love of people arose directly out of his love for God, and as pastor of the churches at Great Harwood and Clapton Park he derived his inspiration and power from the One who is Pastor Pastorum. He was not famous for his obvious piety, but it was there. I don't think I ever heard Peel begin a public prayer without the two words of address, 'Father and Friend.' It was as his Father and Friend that he knew, loved and served God."

THE LORD PROTECTOR: A study in Personal Religion and Public Action.

A factor within seventeenth century religion which historians have almost entirely neglected because it has almost entirely disappeared from our own religious consciousness is the conception of Eternal Judgment—Heaven and Hell. As Dr. G. M. Trevelyan has written, " In England before the Restoration it would have been difficult to find more than a handful of men who openly avowed a disbelief in the miraculous sanctions of the Christian faith, in one or other of its forms,"[1] and the fact of eternal judgment, with everlasting bliss for the Elect and everlasting torment for the rest, was an integral part of the Christian faith as it was accepted by Cromwell and his contemporaries. It was as effective for Anglican as for Separatist, and for Catholic as for Protestant, and if Arminians, Calvinists, and Catholics differed about the ' how ' and the ' who ' of salvation, they were all agreed upon the fact of Heaven and Hell, the absolute blessedness of the blessed and the utter misery of the damned.

Aldous Huxley has described what I mean. In his book *Grey Eminence* he has written an imaginative account of the life of the Capuchin friar, Père Joseph, who became Cardinal Richelieu's right-hand man in the diplomatic intrigues of France. He describes how on one occasion, Père Joseph, who was nicknamed Ezékiely for his likeness to the prophet, used the fear of hell fire to prevent Marie de Medicis from sacking the town of Angers, and the author has added this illuminating comment :—

> The doctrine of hell fire was not entirely mischievous in its effects. On an occasion like the present, for example, it could do excellent service. A stupid, obstinate, heartless creature like Marie de Medicis, would have been deaf to any appeal to the higher feelings that she did not possess . . . But the queen cared intensely for herself, and she believed without doubt in the physical reality of hell. Thunderously harping on that portentous theme Ezékiely was able to put the fear of God into her . . . If Marie de Medicis had enjoyed the advantages of a modern education, Father Joseph would have thundered in vain, and Angers would have been sacked.[2]

[1] *English Social History*, (1944), 232.

[2] *Op. cit.*, 122f.

Nothing illustrates better the difference between our own day and the time in which Cromwell lived than this universally held belief in eternal judgment, which dominated religious thought, and which therefore to some extent conditioned the conduct of our forefathers, for they believed that " it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." It must affect our interpretation of Cromwell, for if Cromwell was converted and shows evidence of acting in a manner consistent with his religious beliefs after his conversion, we have to ask ourselves whether he would have risked damnation for the sake of ambition ? Misguided he may have been, or even self-deluded, but the charge of fundamental hypocrisy is one which cannot be lightly thrown at the Puritans in view of their professed beliefs on Eternal Judgment.

I

There does not seem to be any doubt about the fact of Cromwell's conversion, although if we bear in mind the sober Puritanism of his home it is at least arguable that his religious experience developed gradually rather than by way of any sudden change. The story of a sudden ' conversion ' may be no more than the attempts of royalist detractors to explain the transition from the early debauchee they depict to the religious enthusiast Cromwell is known to have become. Sir William Dugdale, for example, says that Cromwell went to Cambridge, " but then and afterwards sorting himself with Drinking-Companions, and the ruder sort of people (being of a rough and blustering disposition) he had the name of a Royster amongst those that knew him . . . "[1] James Heath, not to be outdone, adds that while at Sidney Sussex College Cromwell " was more Famous for his Exercises in the Fields than in the Schools, (in which he never had the honour of, because no worth and merit to a degree)[2] being one of the chief Matchmakers and Players at Foot-ball, Cudgels, or any other boysterous sport or game."[3]

The fact that a young undergraduate, not yet seventeen years of age, preferred sport to books would hardly be regarded as remarkable in later times, but it appears that in the seventeenth century university " organised games and athletics did not exist, and sports were either discouraged or forbidden."[4] This meant that the natural energies of youth could find no proper outlet without contravening the rules and coming into conflict with the authorities.

[1] *A Short View of the Late Troubles in England* (Oxford, 1681), 459.

[2] Even Heath's prejudice excels itself here in suggesting that there was anything detrimental in the fact that Cromwell went down from Cambridge after only one year at the University. Although it was common practice for the gentry of that time to go down without taking a degree, Cromwell left Cambridge upon the sudden death of his father.

[3] *Flagellum : Or the Life and Death, Birth and Burial of Oliver Cromwell The Late Usurper* (3rd edn., 1663), 7f.

[4] Trevelyan, *English Social History*, 184.

After one year at Cambridge, Cromwell left the university upon the death of his father, and there is a strong tradition that he spent some time studying law at one of the Inns of Court, but about this period of Oliver's life not even the persistent traducer James Heath could discover anything which could be turned against his subject's character. The worst he can suggest is that the nature of the place and study so affected Cromwell that he—

> so spent his time in inward spite, which for that space superceded the enormous extravagency of his former vitiousnesse . . . So that few of his Feats were practisced here, and it is some kind of good luck for that honourable Society that he hath left so small and so Innocent a Memorial of his Membership therein.[1]

Perhaps Cromwell's good behaviour in London was partly to be explained by the fact that he was busy wooing Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir James Bourchier, and he married her at the early age of twenty-one. How he managed to persuade this young lady and her father to agree to the marriage if his early character was as black as James Heath and his colleagues have painted it, they have not attempted to explain. As for his married life, the Roman Catholic writer, Hilaire Belloc, has said, " there never was a vibrant man of eminent public activity so simply devoted to his home and so certainly satisfied with his marriage. He gave an example of what is meant, in any sane and just definition, by the word chastity."[2]

Upon examination, however, it will be found that the reasons for accepting the evidence of a more sudden conversion in Cromwell's life are too weighty to be ignored. James Heath is obviously puzzled by the change, and his attempts to explain it away as an extremely subtle piece of financial duplicity are not very convincing.[3] Sir Philip Warwick, whose account is somewhat coloured by the earlier writings of Heath and Dugdale, is a more reliable contemporary witness, and he said of Oliver :—

> The first years of his life were spent in a dissolute course of life, in good fellowship and gaming, which afterward he seemed very sensible of and sorrowful for; and as if it had bin a good spirit, that had guided him therein, he used a good method upon his conversion; for he declared, he was ready to make restitution unto any man, who could accuse him, or whom he could accuse himselfe to have wronged : (to his honour I speak this) . . .[4]

Oliver seems to have acted up to this principle, for even James Heath placed on record :—

> He has grown (that is pretended to be) so just, and of so

[1] *Flagellum*, 9.
[2] *Cromwell*, 55.
[3] *Flagellum*, 12f.
[4] *Memoires of the reigne of King Charles I*, (1701), 249f.

> scrupulous a Conscience, that having some years before won 30 pounds of one Mr. Calton at play, meeting him accidentally, desired him to come home with him and to receive his money, telling him that he had got it by indirect and unlawful means, and that it would be a sin to him to detain it any longer, and did really pay the Gentleman the said thirty pounds back again.[1]

We know that during these years Cromwell was considerably straightened financially, and I am predisposed to think that a change of heart demonstrated in such a practical manner gives some indication of being genuine.

But the evidence for a complete religious conversion in the life of Oliver Cromwell is supported by a comparison of two of his letters. His earliest letter extant was written from Huntingdon on 14 October 1626, to ask Mr. Henry Downhall of St. John's College, Cambridge, to be godfather at the baptism of Oliver's son, Richard.[2] The letter is courteous, but the style is straightforward and businesslike and utterly devoid of obvious piety or Scriptural quotation. Although it is far removed from the barbarity of style which the royalist accounts of Cromwell would lead us to expect, it is completely different from the style of letters he wrote later.[3] Compare, for example, the letter to Downhall[2] with the letter Cromwell wrote on 13 October 1638, to his cousin, the wife of Oliver St. John :—

> To honour my God by declaring what he hath done for my soul, in this I am confident, and will be so. Truly, then, this I find: That He giveth springs in a dry and barren wilderness where no water is. I live (you know where) in Meshek, which they say signifies Prolonging; in Kedar, which signifieth Blackness: yet the Lord forsaketh mę not. Though He do prolong, yet He will (I trust) bring me to His tabernacle, to His resting-place. My soul is with the congregation of the firstborn, my body rests in hope, and if here I may honour my God either by doing or by suffering, I shall be most glad.[4]

[1] *Flagellum*, 15f.; Cf. *The Perfect Politician* (1660), by Henry Fletcher. *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, ed. W. C. Abbott (4 vols., Camb., U.S.A., 1937-47), i. 50f.; Thos. Carlyle's *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, ed. S. C. Lomas (3 vols., 1904), iii. 221.

[2] "Loving Sir,

Make me so much your servant by being Godfather to my child. I would myself have come over to have made a more formal invitation, but my occasions would not permit me? and therefore hold me in that excused. The day of your trouble is Thursday next. Let me entreat your company on Wednesday.

By this time it appears, I am more apt to encroach upon you for new favours than to show my thankfulness for the love I have already found. But I know your patience and your goodness cannot be exhausted by,

Your friend and servant,

Oliver Cromwell."

[3] "It is impossible to believe that the man who on such an occasion could write to a valued friend without one word of gratitude for divine favours, or any reference to his growing responsibilities in life, could have been already so full of religious fervour as his later letters show him to have become." J. Allanson Picton, *Oliver Cromwell: the Man and his Mission* (1883), 47.

[4] *Writings and Speeches*, i.96f.; *Lomas-Carlyle*, i.89f. (Letter II).

This letter contains at least a dozen direct quotations or allusions to Scripture in either the Authorized or Genevan Versions, and it is clearly the letter of a man who has been through an unforgettable religious experience. Something had happened between the years 1626 and 1638 which had made Oliver Cromwell a changed man: "You know what my manner of life hath been. Oh, I had lived in and loved darkness, and hated the light. I was a chief, the chief of sinners." These self-recriminations, as John Morley pointed out,[1] are perhaps not to be taken too literally, for St. Paul had spoken of himself in similar terms,[2] but the letter shows that Cromwell was living his life in the spirit of St. Paul's Christianity, and that change could only be brought about by an experience similar to that of the Damascus road.

The fact that Cromwell was converted in this way, however, has an importance for us beyond the interest we have in his personal religion, for by his conversion Cromwell at once entered into the legacy left by John Calvin in the doctrines of Election and Predestination. Mr. Hilaire Belloc is undoubtedly right when he says, "No Calvin, No Cromwell. You shall not comprehend the mind of Cromwell, nor any of the innumerable minds who have known themselves from that day till yesterday, to be the Elect of God, until you have felt the fierce blast from that furnace which Jean Cauvin of Noyon in Picardy kindled."[3] Some such experience as St. Paul, St. Augustine, and Oliver Cromwell went through seems to be implicit in the religion of Calvin's *Institutes*, for in the face of the depravity of man occasioned by the sin of Adam it emphasized that it was only by the Grace of God alone that a man could be saved.[4] The choice by God of one man for another man for damnation might seem to be arbitrary, but it was not a matter for argument, for it had been predetermined by God Himself: the Elect were chosen not by reason of any natural merit, but solely by the Grace of God. It can be seen that once a man had grasped the full assurance of God's salvation for him, he would have a tremendous sense of gratitude and of his own irreparable debt to God. We might apply to Cromwell the words with which Lord Macaulay has described the typical Puritan of the period:—

> Events which short-sighted politicians ascribed to earthly causes, had been ordained on his account. For his sake empires had risen, and flourished, and decayed. For his sake the Almighty had proclaimed his will by the pen of the Evangelist, and the harp of the prophet. He had been wrested by no common

[1] *Oliver Cromwell*, 14f.
[2] *I Tim.* i. 15.
[3] *Cromwell*, 35f.
[4] II.iii. 6.

> deliverer from the grasp of no common foe. He had been ransomed by the sweat of no vulgar agony, by the blood of no earthly sacrifice. It was for him that the sun had been darkened, that the rocks had been rent, that the dead had risen, that all nature had shuddered at the sufferings of her expiring God.[1]

This was the kind of inheritance which Cromwell received by his conversion, and this Calvinism—or Paulinism—is for our purpose the most important factor in Cromwell's personal religion, for it leads directly from the assurance of the call to Election to the realization of a call to political vocation. God had chosen him, Oliver Cromwell, for salvation; henceforth, however unworthy, he was the 'chosen vessel' of the Lord: "and if here I may honour my God either by doing or by suffering, I shall be most glad."

II

This introduces another theological factor which we must put back into its seventeenth century setting—the interpretation of the doctrine of Providence which related material success to divine favour. Although this conception of Providence seems to follow naturally from the Calvinistic idea of Election, it was no more a distinctive belief for the Puritans than it was for Anglicans or Catholics. Richelieu regarded the supremacy of France as the evidence of God's favour, just as Catholics generally might rejoice in the victories of Wallenstein, or Anglicans in the success of Rupert's cavalry. There is an interesting correspondence in 1646 between Sir Thomas Fairfax and Sir Ralph Hopton, which shows that the Anglican Royalist shared an identical conception of Providence with that held by his Puritan counterpart. Hopton was holding out in the Cornish peninsula and his was the only royalist force of any size left in the field. Fairfax warned him that if he continued to resist, he would have to bring the full force of the New Model Army against him. He continued:—

> And having discharged (as I conceive) the duty of an honest man, a soldier and a Christian, if God shall see fit to let your hearts be hardened against your own peace, I shall (though with some regret for that ill which shall ensue to any, yet with cheerfulnesse and rejoicing in the righteous judgment of God) pursue my charge and trust for the publick in another way, not doubting of the same presence and blessing which God hath hitherto vouchsafed in the same cause to the weak endeavours of
>
> T.F.[2]

In his reply, although Hopton was not so ready to admit that the victories of the Roundheads were altogether a sign of God Almighty's

[1] *Essay on Milton* (Oxford Plain Texts), 49.

[2] Joshua Sprigge, *Anglia Rediviva* (1647), 165-7.

favour, it can be seen that his conception of Providence was essentially the same as that of Fairfax, and his letter reflects the anxiety of the pious Royalist at the direction taken by events :

> God hath indeed of late humbled us with many ill successes, which we acknowledge as a very certain evidence of his just judgements against us for our personall crimes : Yet give me leave to say, your present prosperity cannot be so certaine an evidence of his being altogether pleased with you. It is true, we are reduced to a lower condition than we have been in, yet we have a gallant body of Horse, that being preserved to a generall accord, may be for good use against our common Enemies; and being otherwise prest, I may say it without vanity, want not a resolution, at least, to sell ourselves at a deare rate against any oddes.[1]

It was difficult to reconcile the support of Providence for the rights of the one for whom they fought with the complete rout of the cavalier armies. Indeed, this may in part explain the rapid collapse of cavalier resistance after the battle of Langport, for the irreligion of the royalist troops was an obvious blot upon the righteousness of the King's cause, and many of Charles' followers may have given up the struggle lest haply they ' be found to fight against God.' Hopton himself, for all his brave words, capitulated upon terms without a fight.

One could show by extensive quotations from both royalist and parliamentary writers how universally the interpretation of Providence in terms of personal success or failure was accepted, but the importance of this doctrine can be seen when one realizes that it was part of the very atmosphere in which the victories of Cromwell and his troops were set, and it can be shown to have had a very significant influence upon the development within them of a sense of political vocation. Rightly or wrongly they came to see their part in the future government of the nation not as something from which they, as Separatists, must flee, but as something which Providence had put into their hands as a sacred trust—a mission to which they were ordained. Richard Baxter, who visited the New Model Army just after the decisive battle of Naseby in 1645, and who served for a time as a chaplain, observed :—

> I perceived that they took the king for a Tyrant and an Enemy, and really intended absolutely to master him, or to ruine him . . . They said, What are the Lords of England but William the Conquerors Colonels ? or the Barons but his Majors ? or the Knights but his Captains ? They plainly shewed me that they thought God's Providence would cast the trust of Religion and the Kingdom upon them as Conquerors.[2]

[1] *Ibid.*, 210.
[2] *Reliquiae Baxterianae* (ed. Matthew Sylvester, 1696), i. 51.

Now let us relate this doctrine more specifically to the career of Cromwell. In 1597 a Huntingdon schoolmaster, the Rev. Thomas Beard, compiled a book entitled *The Theatre of God's Judgements*. From its title page it purported to be a collection of histories from both secular and sacred authors " concerning the admirable judgements of God upon the transgressors of his commandments." In other words, it developed the thesis of God's immediate concern in the events of history by granting rewards and punishments to His servants and His enemies " euen in this life." This divine justice of Providence, wrote Dr. Beard, should demonstrate its power " chiefly towardes them which are in the highest places of account, who being more hardned and bold to sinne, do as boldly exempt themselues from all correction and punishments due vnto them."[1] Certain passages of this book had very pointed reference to the constitutional and religious struggle which was dragged out during the reigns of James I and his son, an example of which is to be found in Beard's comments upon the constitutional limitations set upon the power of the Pharaohs, " for," he said, " they had not so much authoritie as to iudge betwixt man and man or to levy subsidies and the such like by their owne power: neither to punish any man through choler, or any ouerpowering conceit, but were tied to obserue iustice and equitie in all causes."[2] In this very pertinent way Dr. Beard related the doctrine of Providence to evidence in this life of divine favour or retribution, and the popularity of his thesis may be judged by the fact that within the first half of the seventeenth century his book went into four editions.

This, however, is but one aspect of the doctrine of Providence, for the Puritan held that God was not only transcendent over the events of nations and history, but he was also active and immanent in the intimacies of individual experience. This aspect of the doctrine can be amply demonstrated by the introspection of Dr. Samuel Ward, third Master of Sidney Sussex College, and later (1623) Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity in Cambridge.[3] Ever since he had entered the University as a student at Christ's College Samuel Ward had kept a diary in which he set down all the ways in which he felt God had personally intervened in his daily life, and which also included a somewhat morbid catalogue of all the things in his singularly blameless existence which might be counted as sins. For example, on 16 September 1595, he confessed his greediness (' crapula ') " in eating peares in the morning, and other things which might have diminished my health. As also my much gluttony at dinner tyme. My unfitness to do anything after dinner . . . "[4] To Samuel Ward every single incident

[1] *Op. cit.*, 7.
[2] *Ibid.*, 10.
[3] He was a Calvinist representative at the Synod of Dort, 1619.
[4] Ward's *Diary* in *Two Elizabethan Puritan Diaries* (Chicago, 1933), edited by M. M. Knappen, p. 111.

of his life was evidence of God's immediate Providence, "nothing appeared too trivial to form an indictment against himself, nothing in the course of events so ordinary as not to furnish a theme for wonder, or to constitute a mystery."[1]

The extent of Dr. Beard's writings and the extent of Dr. Samuel Ward's influence would be important enough in themselves, but Beard and Ward have an altogether deeper significance when we realise that the author of *The Theatre of God's Judgements* was Oliver Cromwell's schoolmaster and an intimate friend of the family for about thirty years of Cromwell's life, while Samuel Ward was Master of the compact little college in which Cromwell spent a year at the impressionable age of sixteen. I suggest therefore that this conception of Providence is as much a fact to be taken into account in our interpretation of Cromwell as any of the social, military, or economic factors upon which the majority of historians base their conclusions regarding the seventeenth century, for here was a formative idea with which the future Lord Protector had grown up, and which at every point of his successful career must push him forward to a belief in his own divinely-appointed mission. The simple facts of Cromwell's life are the best illustration of this. He had his first taste of soldiering when war broke out in 1642 at the age of forty-three, and he became a simple captain in a cavalry regiment, but by March 1643 his single troop had grown to five troops, and in a relatively short time it was a double regiment. Early in 1643 he became a colonel, and in the early months of the following year he was appointed Lieutenant-General and Second-in-Command of the Army of the Eastern Association, under the Earl of Manchester; in 1645, despite the provisions of the Self-Denying Ordinance, he was appointed Second-in-Command of the New Model Army under Sir Thomas Fairfax, and thus of the land forces of the Commonwealth; in 1649 he was appointed Lord Lieutenant and Commander-in-Chief of the Army in Ireland, and in the following year he commanded the English Army in Scotland, succeeding Fairfax as Captain-General of the forces of the Commonwealth. This career is the more remarkable because it was that of a man who had had no military experience before the Civil War and who had entered the army in middle life, and also because it was characterized not only by some truly remarkable victories, but also by the fact that during nine years of active warfare he and his troops never suffered a single defeat in the field. These facts are recorded not, as some might suppose, simply in order to praise a chosen hero, but because seen in relationship to the seventeenth-century interpretation of the doctrine of Providence they must have been of very great *theological* importance to Cromwell, as indeed for others who

[1] J. Bass Mullinger, *History of Cambridge University* (3 vols., 1873-1911), ii. 491.

shared the doctrine. It is reflected in the words of John Milton, who, having recounted the dismal line of unsuccessful experiments which in 1653 seemed to be bringing the nation to anarchy, burst out, " Into this state of desolation, to which we were reduced, you, O Cromwell ! alone remained to conduct the government and save the country."[1]

There is no real evidence to show that Cromwell accepted any view of a divine right to govern until after the battle of Worcester, 3 September, 1651, but having once accepted the responsibility for government as a task set him by God, nothing could deflect him from carrying it through to the end. Hence, in 1654, having to meet obstructions from both republicans and reactionaries in one of his Parliaments, he declared :—

> I called not myself to this place. I say again, I called not myself to this place : of that God is witness. And I have many witnesses who, I do believe, could readily lay down their lives to bear witness to the truth of that, that is to say, that I called not myself to this place. And being in it, I bear not witness to myself; but God and the people of these nations have born testimony to it also.
>
> If my calling be from God, and my testimony from the people, God and the people shall take it from me, else I will not part with it. I should be false to the trust that God hath placed upon me, and to the interest of the people of these nations, if I should."[2]

If we see the facts of Cromwell's career in the light of this contemporary doctrine of Providence we begin to gain a new insight into the interpretation of such passages as this. They are certainly not to be dismissed as hypocritical piety used to cloak his personal ambition. In the view he took of his own political vocation Cromwell may have been self-deluded, he may on occasions have been guilty of faulty exegesis, but he was no hypocrite; the position which he and his associates took within the nation had far more in common with the Old Testament prophet, who went to the nation uttering the divine imperative " Thus saith the Lord . . . " than with the recent exponents of absolute government. Those who regard Cromwell as the forerunner of modern dictatorship forget that the Lord Protector constantly brought himself and his government under the judgment of the Word of God in Scripture, and under the discipline of listening to those who like himself professed to be guided by the same Spirit of Jesus Christ. Some of the highly critical words which men like John Lilburne, Edward Sexby, and George Fox addressed to Cromwell would not be tolerated by some of our present Cabinet, far less by any dictator. Cromwell not only listened to such criticism, but he also on occasion amended his policy to meet it.

[1] *Defensio Secunda*, in *Selected Prose of John Milton* (Oxford, World's Classics), 396.
[2] 12 September, 1654; *Writings and Speeches*, iii. 451-62; *Lomas-Carlyle*, ii. 366-90 (Speech III).

III

The fact that Cromwell did listen to criticism of his policy, often voiced by those who had served under him, is related in rather a curious way to the question of his churchmanship.

It appears from the writings of Robert Baillie and others that quite early in the Civil War Cromwell had become known as an Independent, and yet no historian has yet produced any evidence of his ever having belonged to a 'gathered' church. To anyone conversant with the forms of seventeenth Independency this must be a serious argument against the 'sincerity' of Cromwell's religion, since from its earliest days Independency has emphasized the high responsibility of membership of the Body of Christ: "The Church planted or gathered," wrote Robert Browne, "is a company or number of Christians or believers, which, by a willing covenant made with their God, are under the government of God and Christ and keep his laws in one holy communion."[1]

In the Spring of 1641 we find Cromwell enquiring about the reasons why the Scots wished to enforce Presbyterian uniformity as a condition of their alliance with Parliament,[2] but there is no evidence that he had formally severed his connection with the Established Church, although it appears that he had been for some time a radical in matters of religion. It is well known that with a view to strengthening the quality of the parliamentary cavalry he recruited his troopers from the Separatist congregations of the eastern counties after the battle of Edgehill in 1642. To those who had criticized his choice of men he had replied "I had rather have a plain russet-coated captain that knows what he fights for, and loves what he knows, than that which you call a gentleman and is nothing else. I honour the gentleman that is so indeed."[3] So as Puritanism was the centre of the Rebellion against the Stuarts' arbitrary power, the Army became the heart of Puritanism, and Independency became the pulse of the Army. But the fact that Cromwell was sympathetic to Independency, or that he chose Independents to be the fighting nucleus of his troops, or that he had a leaning towards certain Independent doctrines, does not justify our calling him an Independent: there is a considerable difference between patronage of Independency and actual membership of an Independent church.

It is at this point that we must mention Richard Baxter's description of a curious but important incident which occurred early in 1643 while Cromwell was gathering his original troops of 'Ironsides,' the significance of which appears to have been missed by Cromwell's

[1] *Booke which sheweth the life and manners of all true Christians* (Middelburg, 1582).
[2] February, 1640/1; *Writings and Speeches* i.125; *Lomas-Carlyle* i.96 (Letter III.).
[3] Letter to Suffolk Commissioners, 29 August, 1643; *Writings and Speeches*, i. 256; *Lomas-Carlyle*, i. 154 (Letter XVI).

biographers. Baxter in writing of the events which led up to the Self-Denying Ordinance in 1644, said that Cromwell "had gathered together as many of the Religious Party, especially of the Sectaries as he could get," and going on to comment upon this policy he continued:

> I reprehended my self also, who had before rejected an Invitation from Cromwell: When he lay at Cambridge long before with that famous Troop which he began his Army with, his officers purposed to make their Troop a gathered Church, and they all subscribed an Invitation to me to be their Pastor, and sent it to me to Coventry: I sent them a Denial, reproving their Attempt, and told them wherein my Judgment was against the Lawfulness and Convenience of their way, and so I heard no more from them: And afterward meeting Cromwell at Leicester he expostulated with me for denying them. These very men that then invited me to be their Pastor, were the Men that afterwards headed much of the Army, and some of them were the forwardest in all our Changes; which made me wish that I had gone among them, however it had been interpreted; for then all the fire was in one spark.[1]

This evidence from Richard Baxter, who was a Puritan with leanings probably towards a moderate form of episcopacy,[2] is obviously very important, since it indicates not only that Cromwell fully embraced the Independents' doctrine of the Church, but that he did so sufficiently for him and his associates to attempt the curious task of forming a Congregational church out of a troop of cavalry! Surely a militant congregation if ever there was one. This is explicitly stated by Matthew Sylvester, the editor of Baxter's autobiography, who in the index reference to this incident which appears under Cromwell's name, says, "he [i.e. Cromwell] invites Mr. Baxter to be Chaplain and Pastour to his Regiment when he was forming it into a Church."[3] In other words, I suggest that the formation of the Ironsides came to have a religious and ecclesiastical significance to Oliver Cromwell, since he and his troops were bound together not merely into an efficient fighting machine, but into a kind of church and by the one form of churchmanship which could embrace on grounds of equality all shades of Puritanism, *viz.*, Congregationalism.

If this was so then it throws new light on certain aspects of Cromwell's career. It explains why Cromwell's name is not to be found on the roll of any local church, and it explains the religious character of the meetings of the Council of Officers and of the General Council of the Army. There is no clear evidence to show whether the 'church'

[1] *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, i. 51.
[2] G. F. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (1946), 10; G. F. Nuttall, *The Personality of Richard Baxter* (reprint from *Friends Quarterly Examiner*, 1945), 1f., 13.
[3] *Op. cit. ad loc.*

character of Cromwell's troop was shared by both officers and men, but it does appear as if its form was extended in some measure to the General Council of the Army in which the 'Agitators' took part. The whole tenor of the debates recorded in the *Clarke Papers*,[1] starting with prayer and exposition of Scripture and then passing on to full discussion in which every member had free and equal right to express his opinion 'according to the mind of Christ,' has its nearest parallel in a Congregational church meeting. The debates themselves, while dealing in the main with the constitutional settlement of the country and the Army's policy, were conducted almost wholly upon the theological level, and far from the representatives of the troopers seeming to be in any way nonplussed by the presence of their superior officers, they appear to have assumed a freedom of expression which argues that the unity between officers and men went a good deal deeper than a simple military relationship.[2] Furthermore, although the anxiety of Cromwell and Ireton to secure unanimity of decision was obviously good practical politics, it is difficult to dismiss it as merely a matter of military expediency. Cromwell professed he would say nothing in debate but that which would tend to unite them in a common policy and in pursuit of that which " God will manifest to us to be the thing that he would have us prosecute,"[3] and he added that " he that meets not here with that heart and dares not say he will stand to that, I think he is a deceiver." It should be pointed out that on that particular occasion it was Cromwell and Ireton who eventually gave way.[4]

So we suggest that the *Clarke Papers*, no less than Richard Baxter, are witnesses to the fact that Cromwell owned Congregational churchmanship and accepted its discipline. The Independent Army debated,

[1] Edited by C. H. Firth, 1891-1901.

[2] In opening the case for the Agitators during the debate on October 28th, 1647, Edward Sexby frankly told Cromwell and Ireton that in trying to come to terms with Charles and by upholding the authority of the discredited Parliament, " Your credits and reputations have been much blasted, upon these two considerations." He went on to say, " You are convinced that God would have you to act on. But only consider how you shall act, and [take] those [ways] that will secure you and the whole kingdom." (A. S. P. Woodhouse, *Puritanism and Liberty* (1938), 2.). This is no isolated example. The speeches of the Agitators and of men like Lt. Col. Goffe assume a freedom of utterance which appears to have been fully accepted by Cromwell and Ireton, and which pre-supposes the right of any member of the Council to 'prophesy,' *i.e.*, to bring the policy of the army and its leaders under the judgment of the Word of God in Scripture.

[3] *Puritanism and Liberty*, 8.

[4] With Charles' flight to Carisbrooke and the discovery of indisputable proof that he was intriguing with the Scots to renew civil war, the higher officers admitted that they had been wrong and agreed to break with the king. Sir John Berkeley, the king's extremely well-informed agent, gives an amusing but illuminating account of Cromwell's confession to the Council from a member of that Council who was secretly a royalist :
" He [Cromwell] acknowledg'd (as he formerly had done upon the like occasion) that the Glories of the World had so dazzled his eyes, that he could not discern clearly the great Works the Lord was doing; that he was resolved to humble himself, and to desire the Prayers of the Saints, that God would be pleased to forgive him his Self-seeking. These Arts . . . perfected his Reconcilation, and he was reinstated in the Fellowship of the Faithful." Sir John Berkeley, *Memoirs* (1699) 74f.

as Sir Ernest Barker has observed, " because it was a congregation as well as an army,"[1] and the evidence seems to show that as far as Cromwell's original regiment was concerned this was true in a far more concrete and literal sense than we have previously appreciated. The importance of this in future estimates of Cromwell must not be overlooked, for it helps to explain incidents in Cromwell's life which are otherwise unexplainable, more particularly the deference he paid throughout his career to the wishes of the Army, and notably in his refusal to assume the throne in 1657.

I have tried to give a few of the theological principles upon which Cromwell's public action was founded. These I believe to be of lasting importance, and in understanding them we shall better begin to understand ourselves; for Cromwell remains, in the words of Sir Ernest Barker, " the incarnation—perhaps the greatest we have ever had—of the genius of English Nonconformity."[2]

ROBERT S. PAUL.

[1] *Oliver Cromwell*, 64.
[2] *Ibid.*, 28.

ROBERT THOMAS
Independent Minister, Baglan
Glamorgan (d.1692)

ROBERT THOMAS, Baglan, ministered faithfully to the spiritual needs of Independents scattered over a large area in the County of Glamorgan, between 1662 and 1692. There were other prominent preachers but Robert Thomas contented himself with serving the Separatists in out-of-the-way places, His ministrations proved invaluable and where he planted secret meetings for worship strong churches to-day proclaim the fame of the pioneer who was content to sow the seed in seasons of distress. The written records of the period are few because of the readiness of the informer and prosecutor to use such information whenever they could to harass the Independents.

We regret that Robert Thomas has no biography, for his life-work and character deserve permanent remembrance. We offer this paper, the result of diligent research, hoping that sooner or later other important facts may be discovered to illustrate the dedicated life of the great and noble man. Two hundred and fifty-eight years have elapsed since his death and yet the principles he cherished are active and more important than ever.

Independence seemed racy of the soil, and the parish of Baglan despite the advent of the Norman preserved its ancient characteristics. The winning of Glamorgan by the Normans did not prevent their granting the sons of Prince Iestin ap Gwrgan the possession of the land between the rivers Afan and Neath. Therefore although a foreign tongue was introduced to the sea coast the native Welsh continued to be used in the parish of Baglan, and the neighbouring parishes. The name of the hundred to which Baglan belonged was Gor-fynydd and the name survives in a slightly corrupt ecclesiastical form as Gro-Neath. [Deanery of Gro-Nedd].

Significant features of the region where Robert Thomas lived may be observed, for he inherited much of the strength and beauty of his environment. Upon the hills close by are the remains of an older civilization and the names are suggestive: Buarth-y-Gaer, Mynydd-y-Gaer, Moel Fynydd, Cefn Morfudd and Mynydd-y-Ddinas. If we turn our back to the hills we behold a strip of marsh land and the lovely Swansea Bay. Baglan is sheltered from the north wind and

there was certain providence in the ordering that the planter of Independent churches should be raised there, where the infant causes could be nurtured in secret conventicles behind the hills. The parish contained 3,000 acres and its divisions are Baglan Higher and Lower.

Robert Thomas was the eldest son of William and Mary Thomas, Baglan. His mother was the daughter of George Williams, Esquire of Blaen Baglan, a near relative of Williams Aber Pergwm, Vale of Neath. Blaen Baglan and Aber Pergwm did their part to maintain the old Welsh life and customs. The motto of the family was " Whoso suffered conquered," (" A ddioddefodd a orfu," or " a ddioddefws a nillws ").

George Williams died in 1600 and according to the testimony of the bard and genealogist, Lewis Dwnn, he supported religion, education and his country. Williams was a representative steward of the Earl of Pembroke in the Vale of Neath. Robert Thomas, his grandson, visited regularly as Independent minister localities where his forefathers had once owned much land. (Blaengwrach and Vale of Neath). Robert Thomas had three brothers, Richard, William and Arnold, and three sisters, Cecil, Gladys and Mary. Robert was educated at Jesus College, Oxford, which he entered in 1658. Four years later when the Act of Uniformity came into operation he decided to cast his lot with the Separatists. Calamy entered his name as the Vicar of Baglan in 1662. He ministered without fee to the church he loved. After the ejection of the clergy who refused to comply with the Act of 1662 Robert Thomas and his friends Jacob Christopher of St. Maudlans, and Richard Cradock of Newton Nottage, continued to preach and teach and refused to be silenced. In April 1665, Sir John Aubrey of Llantrithyd, Justice, sent soldiers to seize Jacob Christopher and three others for holding a service in the house of Lewis Alward, of Kenfig. We know not how long they were kept prisoners but this we know that ten years later, in 1675, Jacob Christopher went about preaching the Gospel.

Robert Thomas received a call from the gathered church that met at the farmhouse of Cilfwnwr in Llangyfelach parish, Glam., on 28 March 1666. The record in the church book of Tirdoncyn now at the National Library of Wales reads (p. 289) :—

> That upon the 28th day of March 1666 four years after the ejection of many hundreds of Gospel ministers in England and Wales all the Church members scattered up and down in Llangev-lach and ye parishes adjacent, joyned and covenanted together to choose ye worthy and faithful servant of Christ, Mr. Robert Thomas, of the hall in Bagland for their pastor the day and year above said. And chose also at the same time Mr.

Richard Cradock for Teaching Elder and David Jenkin of the Fagwyr and John Morgan, Deacons, and met at Kilyfwnwr in the said parish.

In the year 1669 the Conventicle Act was renewed and by the request of the Archbishop of Canterbury a list of the conventicles throughout the kingdom was prepared. Of Baglan the report reads:

Meeting: House of Robert Thomas, Number 20, Teacher, Robert Thomas. Cata-Baptists, Baptists and Independents.

On 24 March 1672, Charles II granted an Indulgence to Separatists, to license houses for religious services. In the list of churches supplied by Henry Maurice in 1625, *Baglan* has Robert Thomas and the meeting held in his own house. *Kenfig*: meeting in the house of Lewis Alward and the preacher Robert Thomas. Llanfabon and Gelligaer are also given as places where Robert Thomas preached.

Richard Cradock received a licence for preaching at his own house, Newton Nottage. In 1672 Elizabeth Morgan's house at Neath was licensed for preaching in the name of Samuel Jones.

Henry Maurice in his list refers to a church named Cadogstone (Cadoxton), which now meets at Baglan. Robert Thomas is the minister and Jacob Christopher and Richard Cradock the elder-teachers. Independent in judgment: some Baptists. Furthermore some live in the district of Llangyfelach also in the neighbourhood of Kenfig in the same county.

The name "Church of Cadoxton" caused some difficulty, especially when we are informed that it met at Baglan in the house of Robert Thomas. The explanation is simple. In the days of Robert Powell, vicar of Cadoxton, Puritanism flourished under his ministry and after his death in 1649 the number of saints increased and met in various places for worship. In the end they found shelter in the house of Robert Thomas. Still they were called Cadoxton Church. At first they were Baptists, anti-Baptists and Independents, but ultimately they were separated.

Notable men met for worship in the house of Robert Thomas but for certain periods no mention is made of him or the company, though they were continually in communion and worship in isolated places. In the world but not of it.

Constant watch was kept by the custodians of the law upon the movements of the Separatists and once Robert Thomas and his followers in the hundred of Neath were summoned to appear in court for not attending the churches of their parishes. The persons named, 26 in number, lived at long distances from one another (Bishopston to Llantwit Major), but they are named because they frequented

services held at Baglan and Neath. The date of this warrant and the names was 4 Aug., 1684. In the following year on 25 July, 1685, attempt was made to penalize those men in the district who had an active part in the days of Oliver Cromwell and for their loyalty to the principles of religious and civil freedom. Religious services were held in the homes of several of these men. The Governor of the Castle at Chepstow is commanded to discharge the persons in his custody forthwith, Bussey Mansell, Esq., and others.

In the year 1687 (15 April), Robert Thomas informed Edward Mansel, J.P., of Margam, that he intended to hold religious services at his own residence in the parish of Baglan named Pen-y-Gisla and at the house of Mary Thomas, widow, in the parish of Llangyfelach. Thus we see that Baglan and Llangyfelach (Cilfwnwr) were churches specifically under his care. He lived for five years after this and was found faithful in his ministry unto the end.

Robert Thomas made religion homely and real. Duty was frequently upon his lips: by that we mean, "dyletswydd, y ddyletswydd deuluaidd." Family prayer was called Duty by him. Not content with knowing religious truth himself he seized every opportunity to pass on his experience and knowledge to his early Separatists. He set before them an example in suffering and taught them why and for what they were suffering. What a beautiful custom it was in those days for people to commit portions of Scripture to memory and then meet at an appointed place to repeat and expound the passages. This practice gave rise to a most useful band of workers called repeaters. Many of these were gifted reciters of Scripture and sermons. Several names occur to us but let one suffice. The Rev. Daniel Griffiths of Neath, as a young man, could take an afternoon and evening service to repeat in Welsh without faltering the Epistle to the Romans from start to finish.

Robert Thomas witnessed ferocious persecution, hatred and the exaction of heavy fines but he maintained his nobility of character.

"A godly old man: he hath an estate," is the last recorded testimony we have of him (1690).

Like an oak tree he had grown strong by resistance.

"Godly"—"But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is Godly for himself."

"Man"—How we qualify the term man: Englishman, Welshman rich man, poor man, working man. Here "A godly old man." A nobleman. The name invites our description. We must know before we can describe. "Hath an estate": what a prophetic declaration—That estate still flourishes and we are made partakers of it. The estate of human and divine love and goodness. Altars were erected

to the God of Israel on the hills of Baglan, Neath and Llangyfelach : and in the retreats of the hills and valleys the voice of prayer and praise arose like a fountain of living water. We have observed that Robert Thomas descended from the Lords of Avan and Neath—and the Christian religion preserves and dignifies the most ancient stock. Religion adorns not only the humblest but the highest. It adorned the members of his own family. Anthony Thomas, his son and heir, of Baglan Hall, supplied Edward Lhwyd with a vivid description of Baglan parish for his important work *Parochialia.* The literary tradition was ever prominent in the family, for the family bard had flourished there and the family chaplain. He helped to usher in the Kingdom without a frontier where man is more precious than pedigree and fine gold. Having done his work he entered into rest and his name is for ever blessed.

His successor, the Rev. Lewis Davies, wrote of him : " Mr. Robert Thomas, the late goodly pastor of the said congregation who served the Church of Christ in the work of the ministry upwards of forty years with all diligence and faithfulness until the last and finished his course upon the 2nd day of April, 1692."

T. MARDY REES.

CHURCH BRIEFS

" *Now concerning the collection . . .* " (*I Cor.xvi.*1)

" What, another special collection ? " How familiar to ministers, deacons and members in our churches are appeal circulars, prospectuses, calls for special services, retiring collections, subscriptions, *etc.*, in the interests of the thousand-and-one " Good Causes " commended to the generosity of the Christian community.

This matter of " Appeals " has always exercised the churches, and our own Nonconformist history tells of many attempts to regulate the traffic in charity, to authenticate the *bona fides* of petitioners and the worthiness of cases of distress, to prevent abuses, and so forth. Recognizing the inevitability that the needy should turn to Christian fellowships as centres of sympathy and liberality, most churches have their list of " outside objects " at home and abroad to which they contribute. How many there are any church intimation book will reveal—or the wastepaper basket after a deacons' meeting—or the *Annual Charities Register and Digest.* The demand for increased support for alleviative, educational, evangelistic and similar organizations never ceases, and honest efforts are generally made to respond, despite the steadily rising costs of local maintenance—heating, lighting, repairs, equipment, occasionally stipends and other salaries—which have to be met week by week. In such circumstances some hesitation regarding the publication of appeals is understandable. Ministers, moreover, generally feel that it is not their prime duty to use the pulpit as a begging-stand, but rather to expound the truths of the Christian faith, among which charity has its place, as a fruit rather than as a root. Sunday worship ought not to be devoted to charming money out of the pockets of the worshippers, though many ' Special Sermons ' and not a few of the secretarial ' Notices for the week ' have some such end in view.

It is not without interest, therefore, to consider the ways of earlier generations in the matter of special collections.

The practice of issuing appeals to the churches was clearly established early in the first century, and Paul's collections for the saints, in Jerusalem and elsewhere, provide good Scriptural Christian precedent, as does the early community-life detailed in the *Acts.* The custom of gathering for the needy through the churches was sustained by the *Papal Briefs*, one of the earliest extant English examples of which is that issued, 22 May 1285, by Celestinus V, for the repair of the church at Ripon (*Surtees*, lxxiv, 116). There were also the Briefs issued by archbishops and bishops authorizing collections in the

churches of their dioceses and provinces, especially for the support of hospitals, as *e.g.*, those listed from 1259 onward in the *Episcopal Registers of Exeter* (ed. F. C. Hingston-Randolph). At a later date, as by the Act of 22 *Henry VIII*, *c.* 12, 1530, justices of peace were authorized to issue licences to approved poor, aged and infirm persons to beg within certain areas—a sanction repealed by Elizabeth, except in the cases of maimed soldiers and sailors.

The issue of Letters Patent under the Great Seal authorizing charitable collections was well established by the 17th century, however, and thereafter writs or *breves* issued out of Chancery, occasionally by direct order of the Privy Council or Parliament, but generally on petition to the Lord Chancellor or the Keeper of the Great Seal.

The prime ground for such appeals was to give assistance in cases of loss by fire, flood, frost, storm (especially hail), or damage arising from conditions of war or persecution. Although the necessity for such reliance upon charity was reduced by the establishment of mutual insurance, the issue of church briefs was legally sustained until 1828, when Peel introduced an Act for their abolition. The Great Fire of London had focussed attention upon the necessity for a system of underwriting losses, and some modest attempts were made by individuals and clubs to establish a system of insurance, but the first regular Fire Office was not opened at the Royal Exchange until 1681. The oldest surviving office of this type, the *Hand in Hand*, was established in 1696.

The custom of issuing *Briefs*, to be read in all churches as invitations to charitable gifts was generally followed, however, for several hundred years, and collections upon them became an established trade, almost monopolistic in the 18th century, although admittedly open to abuse and fraud, especially by the printing of unauthorized copies, and by the 'farming' of them. A full history of this business, with a list of the briefs authorized from 1642 to 1828 inclusive, is given in W. A. Bewes, *Church Briefs, or Royal Warrants for Collections for Charitable Objects*, 1896.

The matter of special interest to us is that these Briefs were issued under Letters Patent not alone to the clergy or churchwardens of every Anglican parish, but also to Dissenting congregations, including the Society of Friends. After the Toleration Act this practice was clearly established, although in the 18th and early 19th centuries a distinction was drawn between appeals for relief in cases of accidental damage (fire, flood, *etc.*) and the many which were issued on behalf of church building and restoration. Bewes shews that from 1805 onward the customary imprint of an official Brief was 10,800 copies of an appeal for church building, and 11,500 for relief of loss, the

additional copies being sent to the dissenting meeting-houses—evidently the more influential of them were selected for these additional 700 copies.

Many early Nonconformist church records contain notices of the receipt of Briefs and of the response elicited from their members. The circulation of the Briefs and collection upon them was undertaken by firms of specialists, notably by Byrd, Hall and Stevenson, of Stafford, by Robert Hodgson of the same town, and by Stevenson, Salt & Co., bankers, of Lombard-street. William Salt, the Staffordshire antiquarian, a partner in this last firm, accumulated with his historical papers a wide selection of the briefs for which his forebears had been agents. The *Undertakers* of the Briefs were authorized to appoint collectors to circulate and collect the Briefs throughout the country, carried the expenses of negotiating the appeal, including the legal costs for the Letters Patent, stamping, printing, circulating, together with an obligation to advance money to the sufferers on the credit of the Brief at 4% interest. The Undertaker's fee varied from 5*d.* to 1*s.* per Brief issued, irrespective of the sum collected upon it. As the Patent charges could total upwards of £70, plus 'commission,' the overall costs made the collection upon small appeals uneconomic, and sometimes two or three 'cases' were included in one composite Brief—which sometimes led to shameful over-estimate of the losses involved, as to disproportionately high costs relative to the final sum collected. The average number of approved Briefs issued from 1642 to 1828 seems to have been about twelve per annum.

In each parish or separate congregation a register was ordered to be kept by the minister, in which details of the Brief, date of reading and collection, and the amount subscribed, were to be entered, and a receipt was to be signed by the Undertaker or his agent on receiving the money. Among the records of the Denton Congregational Church, Norfolk, is a typical book of this kind, parchment-covered, 5¾in.×7¼in., commenced 31 May 1724, continued to 1 April 1804, containing details of over 200 Briefs read to the congregation at Denton Meeting and of the contributions received (or the lack of response) during the ministry of the Rev. Julius Saunders, minister 1725-49, his nephew, of the same names, 1750-57, and Thomas Bocking, 1757-1805.[1]

A comparison with the appendix to Bewes, *Church Briefs*, which lists the Briefs authorized by the Lord Chancellor's department from the time of the Commonwealth to the repeal of the Acts in 1828, shews the accuracy of the entries, and also supplies a good many dates and amounts not listed by Bewes. It also reveals that between the dates of the first and last briefs entered in the Denton book—for

[1] A similar book is in the archives of Eignbrook Congregational Church, Hereford.

Wetherby, Yorks., loss by fire, dated " ye tenth day of July in ye ninth Year of ye Reign of King George, £7,533 and upwards," and " The Brief from Egton Rise, in the County of York " (collection taken 1 April, 1804)—some 212 Briefs were read to the church of a total issued of 800 in that period. Were they selected by the ministers or by the Undertakers ? Most of those read were in respect of loss by fire, some by storm, but included were the appeals for " St. Andrews Harbour in Scotland, charge £8,734 "—for which Denton collected 5*s.* 9*d.* in February 1728/9, as also for Aberbrothock (Arbroath) Harbour in July, 1733, 9*s.* 5*d.*, and for Dunbar Harbour in 1738 and 1739; for damage to the Fisheries at Folkestone, Kent, £2,500, for which collected 1*s.* 11*d.*; for Oyster Dredgers in the Medway, loss by frost in 1741 (10*s.* 6*d.*); for Fishermen at Feversham, Kent, similar loss £9,000 in 1743 (collected 9*s.* 2*d.*). In 1757 a Brief was read for £2,250 for " Fortifications and Groynes " (against sea erosion ?) at Brightelmstone, Sussex.

Overseas interest was evidently strong : for " a Great Loss by Fire " of the Protestants at Copenhagen, brief dated 21 April 1729, they collected £3 8*s.* 0*d.* at Denton, and for the great fire at Montreal, Quebec in 1766, total loss over £87,580, they received £3 7*s.* 6*d.* For the Colleges at Philadelphia and New York in 1762, they subscribed £6 15*s.* 0*d.*; for the Vaudois ministers and schoolmasters, 1767, only 15*s.* 6*d.*, and for Inundations at Bobbio and Villaro, Luzerne valleys, Vaudois in 1739, 11*s.* 3½*d.*

Several entries occur from 1799 onwards of Briefs read but " nothing collected thereon " : these were mostly for small fires, where the need was perhaps felt to be less clamant—some of the ' total losses ' were as low as £350, others up to £600 in this class. On a fire at Openshaw, Lancs., in September 1803, loss £410 6*s.* 0*d.*, they received 6*d.*

Several local disasters received consideration on *Petitions*, however, where no legal Brief was secured : on a fire at Yarmouth, September 1742, loss totalling £500, they subscribed 2*s.*; for another at Wymondham in 1750, £1 15*s.* 8*d.*; for Eldon, Suffolk, value £360, in 1752, collected 13*s.* 10½*d.*; for Hapton, Suffolk, £251, in 1753, the relief was £1 7*s.* 9*d.*; and another at Fincham, Norfolk, in 1757, 8*s.* 6*d.*

On average, the collections at Denton Meeting seem to have been about 2*s.* 6*d.* There are a number of Briefs noted as " Collected at Denton " however, as distinct from " Collected at Denton Meeting," which appear from Bewes's list to have been *Walking Briefs—i.e.*, not merely read in church, but approved for house-to-house collection : these in almost every case produced much larger sums—six, eight, ten or more shillings. Collections upon Briefs seem to have taken place at Denton on an average twice a year, sometimes three in the twelvemonth, a not unreasonable figure.

It is possible from the Denton Book to supply the following missing dates and amounts to supplement Bewes' list of approved Briefs :

Date of Brief[1]		*Place*
1723/4	10 July ..	Wetherby
	1 Nov ..	Alrewas, Martham, etc.
	17 Dec. ..	Michaelchurch & Grimston
1724/5	31 July ..	Staverton
	10 July ..	Halifax
	20 Feb. ..	Knighton
	12 Dec. ..	Cricklade
	21 Nov. ..	Campsall & Downton
1725/6	22 May ..	East Morden
	26 Aug. ..	Crediton & Kirk Deighton
	28 Aug. ..	Market Lavington
	5 Nov. ..	Gt. Torrington
1726/7	12 Nov. ..	Alderford & Gt. Horwood
	24 June ..	Folkestone
	18 Dec. ..	Hambleton
	20 April ..	Dorchester
	23 Nov. ..	Buckingham
	21 July ..	Shipston-on-Stour
1727/8	5 Aug. ..	Littleport & Baddeley
	19 July ..	Gt. Wilbraham
	8 Dec. ..	Gravesend
1728/9	22 Aug. ..	Hinton-in-the-Hedges
	13 Dec. ..	Wapping
	6 June ..	St. Andrew's Harbour
	29 Nov. ..	Stilton
	4 Oct. ..	Fulbourne
1729/30	4 Sept. ..	Rickinghall & Botesdale

In Bewes, p.315, the Brief calendared 1732/3 as for Chesterfield, Yorks. (*sic*), should read *Auster*field, which is in that county and not in Derbyshire, as Chesterfield is : (loss £1,500, issued 23 June, according to the Denton entry).

[1] In some instances the precise year is in doubt : most of the Briefs are dated (day, month) of the —th year of the Reign and not by Calendar Years.

The following estimates of loss, not given by Bewes, are entered in the Denton register:

		£
1743/4	Melverley: Inundation	1,333
	Ebsworth (*sic* ? Elsworth): Fire ..	1,407
	Sutton, Ely: Fire	1,998
1744/5	St. Albans: Fire	1,384
	Healey	1,085
	Blacktoft	1,541
	Cobwall (*sic* ? Colwall, Heref.) ..	1,173
	Eynsford: Fire..	1,661
	Harthill & Woodhall: Storm ..	2,975
	Buckerell: Fire	1,240
1746/7	Wyke & Townhope (*sic* ? Fownhope)	1,107
	Weston Turville: Fire	1,214
1747/8	Heaton & Oxcliffe: Inundation ..	5,312
1749/50	Upham & Winslow	1,134
1751/52	Stamford Bridge, Yorks: Fire ..	2 884
1753	Aylesbury: Fire	1,630
	Brighton: Fire	2,820
	North Meols	1,218
1756	Newenden & Rolvenden: Hailstorm	2,212

It has not been possible to discover a case of a Brief for the rebuilding or repair of a Dissenting Chapel among the numerous issues on behalf of building appeals. It scarcely seems likely that such legal imprimatur would be given in a case of this kind, although it would be interesting to find a case showing that the traffic in charity was not all one way.

CHARLES E. SURMAN.

David Bogue to William Bull, 1813

Gosport, 7th Decr. 1813.

My dear Sir,

From time to time I have the pleasure of hearing of your health and welfare by one Friend and another. It was a grief to me that I could not enjoy more of your company when you was at Gosport. From the illness with which I was then afflicted, it pleased God mercifully to recover me, and I have enjoyed as good health as I ever did in my life; and I do not feel myself so much fatigued with the three sermons of the Lords day, as when I was thirty years of age: for this, great praise is due to the God of power and grace.[1]

You now, My dear Sir, are the Father of all the Tutors in the Dissenting Academies, and I have the honour to be next to you. This is the most important of all offices, and in the faithful discharge of it, the prosperity of the churches of Christ depends in no small degree. Though we have reason to be humbled in the dust on account of our imperfections and shortcomings, yet we have both cause to rejoice in seeing those who were under our tuition labouring with acceptance and success in the work of the Lord. It is cause of great gratitude to God, that your Son in able to carry on your plans, and fill your place. It gave me great pleasure to see that the Religious public took up your institution and was determined to patronise it, as it will render the benefits of the academy not only more lasting but more extensive.

I have twenty students in the Seminary here. Fourteen of these are for Missionary Service, four of whom are just leaving me, three for Java, foreigners who can preach in the Dutch Tongue[2] and one who is from Jersey and his native tongue French, is going to the Mauritius,[3] of the remaining six, four have English tongues in their heads and are for home service. Two from Jersey have French tongues and hope to labour in France.[4]

My third Son assists me in the languages.[5] He is between eighteen and nineteen, is a member of the Church, has gone through nearly all

[1] At the date of this letter Bogue was 63.

[2] Joseph Kam, Gottlob Bruckner, John Christopher Supper, sent out by the L.M.S. to Java in January 1814.

[3] John Le Brun, similarly designated to Mauritius.

[4] Probably Philip Bellot, who went to Italy and then to France. Philip Messervey, however, another native of Jersey left the academy in 1816 for St. Aubins (d.1864).

[5] David Bogue, junior, who graduated M.A. at Glasgow in 1817, returned to continue his assistance to his father, and then studied for the Bar at the Inner Temple, but died prematurely, 27 Sept., 1824, aged 29.

the courses of Lectures in the seminary; and if God gives him a public spirit may be a Minister, and I hope a useful Minister of the Gospel. Pray for him.

My French Students preach on the Lords day to the Prisoners here, and I am happy to say in various instances with success.[1] One of them yesterday put into my hands a letter giving an account of a remarkable conversion of one who had been a most notorious Sinner and an infidel; and what rendered it still more interesting to me, it was by reading the " Essay on the New Testament." The poor man's letter is very affecting in its description of his wickedness and misery. In one ship where there is another convert, twenty meet together, morning and evening, for reading the Scriptures and prayer.

We live in a remarkable time and every man that can should labour diligently in the work of the Lord. Ministers should not grow old or imagine they cannot preach; but should attempt to do it, and not believe they cannot do it, till they actually find they are unable. Some good men have been laid aside by their imagination before they were disabled by bodily or mental inability; may you and I, my dear Sir, be preserved from this evil.

I should be very happy to see you again at Gosport. Your services were not only seasonable but highly acceptable to the good people. I hope God is blessing his word among us. My younger Brethren in the Ministry are labouring diligently, and God is blessing their labours with an increase, both of hearers and members. My neighbour Mr. Griffin has now the largest Independent place of worship that ever was in England, and it is well filled.[2]

Mrs. Bogue, Dr. Dods, Mr. Minchin and many other Friends unite in kindest regards. I pray that God may spare and strengthen you yet for much service in his Church, and give you much comfort in your soul, and I am with great respect, Revd. and Dear Sir,

Your very affectionate Brother,

David Bogue.

I have been waiting for a Frank but cannot obtain one.

To: Revd. W. Bull,
Newport Pagnell,
Bucks.

*** Mr. F. W. Bull, F.S.A., of Newport Pagnell, one of the senior members of our Society, to whom we are indebted for this letter, is directly descended from the Rev. William Bull (1738-1814), for an account of whom and his Academy see *Transactions IV* 266 ff and 305 ff.

[1] On this work among prisoners of war, see R. Lovett, *History of the L.M.S.*, i. 93.

John Griffin, minister of Orange-street Chapel (*post* King-street) Portsea, 1792-1834, d.

Funeral Sermons on Thomas Spencer of Liverpool

NO one who is at all familiar with printed books and pamphlets of the early nineteenth century can fail to be aware of the vast output of funeral sermons designed to "improve" someone's death.[1] These found their way into print, often with an "advertisement" modestly disclaiming any lasting value and indicating that the author had only diffidently yielded to those who had urged and entreated its publication. Most of them are now perhaps deservedly forgotten and are never read except by denominational historians in search of biographical material (since nearly every funeral sermon included an excursus or an addendum on the life and the death of the subject of the sermon). There is something little to our modern taste in these usually laboured and perverse attempts to justify the ways of God to man; the sentiments are often mawkish; the construction ingenious but not necessarily convincing. But without wishing to propose that a detailed study of funeral sermons might be an attractive field for research, we might find it an interesting task to rescue some of them from oblivion. One such interesting exercise is suggested by the forthcoming one hundred and sixtieth anniversary on 21 January, 1951 of the birth of Thomas Spencer and by the sermons which were called forth by his death only a little more than twenty years later on 5 August, 1811.

THOMAS SPENCER'S brief career as a Congregational minister was remarkable.[2] Born at Hertford and encouraged in his early education by his minister, Ebenezer White (afterwards of Queen-street, Chester) he left school at thirteen and, after a brief spell in his father's worsted business went to London where he was apprenticed to glovers in the Poultry. Here he caught the attention of Thomas Wilson, the treasurer of Hoxton Academy and nursing-father to so many ministers and potential ministers. Wilson sent him to William Hordle of Harwich for a year's preliminary study in Latin (which he had already begun with White), in Hebrew, and in philosophical subjects. In November 1806, while still less than sixteen years of age, he applied to Hoxton and was admitted in January 1807, just before his sixteenth birthday. It was not until the summer vacation that

[1] There are very good bound collections of funeral sermons in Dr. Williams' Library and in the Library of New College, London.

[2] *Ev. Mag.*, 1811, 369f.; Thomas Raffles, *Memoirs of the Life and Ministry of the Late Rev. Thomas Spencer*, 6th edit., 1827; J. Waddington, *Congregational History 1800-1850*, 182,196ff; B. Nightingale, *Lancashire Nonconformity*, vi. 148ff; *D.N.B.*, liii. 378.

year that he preached his first sermon at Collier's End, six miles from Hertford, but immediately he was in popular demand in neighbouring churches until his return to Hoxton limited his engagements. At the end of the year, John Leifchild of Kensington, supplying the pulpit at Hoxton Chapel, asked the young student to read the Scripture and engage in prayer.

> When he appeared in the pulpit—after the first emotions of surprise were over, and after the mistakes of some, who supposed that he was a little boy belonging to the gallery, who from ignorance or thoughtlessness had gone up the pulpit stairs instead of those leading to his seat, had been corrected, so sweetly did he read the chapter, so earnestly, so Scripturally, so experimentally, did he engage in prayer that for the whole six Sabbaths afterwards he became the chief magnet of attraction to the place. The people now insisted upon it he should preach.[1]

In spite of the rules of the Academy, he was allowed to preach in Hoxton Chapel when he was just seventeen years of age. From then onwards he became a popular preacher, especially in London (where before his eighteenth birthday he preached to " an immense congregation " from Rowland Hill's pulpit in Surrey Chapel) and in Brighton at the Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel and at Union-street Meeting where John Styles was minister. " Wherever his name was announced the crowd that flocked to his ministry proved how extensive and deep the impression was which it had excited."[2] The committee of the Academy appointed Spencer to spend the summer vacation of 1810 at Newington Chapel, Liverpool, then vacant since the death of David Bruce two years earlier. Spencer went unwillingly and reluctantly; after a ministry of five Sundays had been extended to a sixth, he left Liverpool with equal reluctance. The day after his departure the church sent him a call. He accepted and began his ministry in Liverpool on Sunday 3 February, 1811. Immediately there was talk of enlarging the chapel to accommodate the crowds who flocked to hear him; in March it was decided to build a new chapel in Great George-street capable of seating two thousand people. In April, Spencer laid the foundation-stone of the new building in the presence of about six thousand people. On 27 June, he was ordained in Byrom-street Chapel, lent by the Baptists because Newington was too small. William Hordle, his old tutor at Harwich, delivered the charge to the ordinand[3] and spoke more prophetically than he knew.

> You, my dear young brother, must die and stand at the bar of God. Your ordination service may be only a prelude to your

[1] Letter from Leifchild, quoted by Raffles, 121.
[2] Raffles, 134.
[3] Ebenezer White might have been expected to do this but he had died earlier in the year.

> funeral service; for what is man? Man is but of yesterday, and his days are as a shadow. How often have we seen the sun go down while it is yet day! and while the church has been pleasing itself with the prospect of enjoying the pious, fervent labours of an endeared minister for years, has an unexpected stroke separated them for ever.[1]

On Monday 5 August, Spencer was drowned while bathing in the Mersey near the Herculaneum Potteries. The funeral took place eight days later and was watched by a concourse of spectators estimated at twenty thousand.[2] At the grave in the burial ground of Newington Chapel, the funeral sermon was delivered by Joseph Fletcher of Blackburn (minister of Chapel-street, then from 1816 first president of Blackburn Academy, and later of Stepney Meeting). William Roby of Grosvenor-street, Manchester, preached the funeral sermon in Newington the following Sunday, 18 August.[3] Other funeral sermons which were also printed were preached by Henry Foster Burder, of Hoxton Academy, at Hoxton Chapel on 15 August, John Styles at Union-street Meeting, Brighton, and Richard Slate, of Stand (the first historian of the Lancashire Congregational Union), at Tonbridge Chapel, Somers Town, both on Sunday, 18 August. These five sermons[4] together with Raffles's "Reflections" in the final chapter of his *Memoir* form an interesting study of funeral sermons, made even more striking by the youth and promise of the subject and the poignancy of his early death.

All the sermons show a firmness of outline and construction which make them easy to summarize and even their summaries make interesting reading.

Joseph Fletcher's sermon at the grave does not appear to have had a text but the preacher made use of four suitable texts in his introduction "How dreadful is this place," "Thy way, O God, is in the sea," "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath begotten us again to *this* lively hope," and "He shall not return to us." It was an affecting instance of the uncertainty of life—God was determined not only to make men know but to make them feel that they are in His hands and at His disposal, to compel them to acknowledge their dependence and to detach them from the crowd. It was a mysterious display of divine sovereignty which was never capricious, never arbitrary, never inconsistent with the perfections of His nature and never opposed to the declarations of His word. What solemn,

[1] Raffles, 260.

[2] *Ev. Mag.*, 1811, 370.

[3] In the entrance to the present Great George-street Church, Liverpool, is a tablet to the memory of Spencer. The text of the inscription is quoted in Nightingale, vi, 151f.

[4] Fletcher's sermon is printed as an appendix to Raffles's *Memoir*, 355ff.; the others were all published separately.

instructive admonitions does this dispensation of providence address to the children of men! It spoke to the thoughtless and unconcerned, bidding them prepare to meet their God; it spoke to mourners and the bereaved flock, giving them most powerful motives to perseverance and activity. They did not sorrow as those without hope but when heart and flesh failed, God was their strength and portion for ever.

William Roby's sermon to the bereaved congregation was from the text "Remember them that have the rule over you . . . whose faith follow . . . Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever" (*Hebr.*xiii.7,8) and was preached at their request. The pattern of the discourse is plainly marked:

I. The ideas which ought to be entertained respecting ministers.
   1. Their official character as subordinate rulers acting under the authority of Christ.
   2. Their principal employ, speaking or preaching the word of God.
   3. Their frail mortality with the duration of their service and the manner of their removal wisely determined by God.

II. The duties incumbent upon Christians and Churches, when deprived of their faithful pastors by death.
   1. To remember them, not with superstitious veneration (as heathen, idols, and Papists, saints) but with holy affection.
   2. To follow their faith.
   3. To consider the end of their conversation, or the termination of their earthly course.

III. The consolation divinely provided for those who are lamenting the painful bereavement.
   1. The immutability of Jesus as the great High Priest.
   2. The merciful purposes of Christ comprehending all that is necessary for men's comfort and independent on every occurrence.
   3. The personal excellencies of Christ whose bounty is inexhaustible.
   4. What Christ has already done for His Churches (*e.g.*, in sending faithful pastors) He can do again.

IV. Final words of counsel.
   Raise your minds above all second causes.
   Humbly enquire into the probable reasons of this dark dispensation. God may have taken away your pastor lest you idolize him, or He may intend to try your faith.
   Continue to be zealous.
   Indulge the exercise of lively hope; though your pastor is dead, the great Head of the Church still lives.

Henry Foster Burder's sermon in Hoxton Chapel was a tribute not only from one of the tutors of the Academy but from the church where Spencer had first preached little more than three years earlier and where he had preached a farewell sermon on 28 January, the week before he began his ministry in Liverpool. The text was, " So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom " (*Ps.*xc.12). After showing that the attainment of true wisdom should be the object of men's pursuit, the preacher went on to show that the shortness and uncertainty of life should be a powerful incentive to the immediate pursuit of wisdom. After a long excursus on the life of Spencer, Burder examined the mysteriousness of providence. But the sudden death was a mercy to the deceased (who was exposed to dangers of a very formidable kind because of the eminence of his station and the lustre which his talents diffused) and might be a gracious design of God to awaken many to a concern for " the things which belong to their peace." The sermon closed with a final address to the students present, warning them that their present engagements had not a tendency to promote spirituality of mind, and urging them, among other things, to reflect much on the uncertainty of life and uniformly to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Richard Slate's sermon at Tonbridge Chapel was entitled " Christ's Testimony of Ministerial Zeal " (it was from the text, " He was a burning and shining light, and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light "—*Jn.*v.35). The chapel had been opened in November 1810 and in the same month Spencer had preached there and might have become its minister but for his acceptance of the Liverpool call. Slate was a fellow-student at Hoxton (he settled at Stand in April, 1810) and he was supplying the pulpit at Tonbridge Chapel in the autumn of 1811 about the time of the death of Spencer. The sharply marked outline is thus :

Introduction : The glory of being a preacher of the Gospel.

I. That some of the servants of Christ are distinguished with peculiar gifts. They are burning and shining lights.

   1. All ministers of Christ possess some gifts.

   2. The gifts of the ministers of Christ differ in degree. (Throughout this section of the sermon there is a consistent comparison between John the Baptist and Spencer, both considered as shining lights. Spencer's gifts in prayer and preaching are assessed).

   3. The gifts of Christ's ministers should be employed in His service, as they catch their light from Him.

II. That when God raises up eminent ministers and crowns their labours with success, there is great joy manifested.

1. This joy is sometimes spurious.
2. It is sometimes real.
3. It is always transient—" for a season."

(Then follows an excursus on the life and death of Spencer.)

The Improvement of the event.

1. The ways of God are often very mysterious. But why dare you murmur ?
2. Learn the uncertainty of all human prospects.
3. Learn the danger of neglecting the important concerns of the soul and the necessity of immediate preparation for death.
4. Learn to prize the merciful opportunities you now enjoy.

John Styles' sermon (" Be still, and know that I am God "—*Ps.*xlvi.10) was appropriate not merely because Spencer had preached many times in Brighton since his first visit at the end of 1808, but because he was to have spent a holiday in Brighton and to have preached from that pulpit on the day that the funeral sermon was delivered there. The sermon is almost ruthless in its exploration of Calvinist theology. The Divine Being presents Himself to our view as :

1. The Mysterious Governor of the world. " My wisdom is unerring," He says, " My plans embrace an infinite sphere; you are an insect wandering in a bye corner of nature, and do you complain that you cannot walk that mysterious circle in which I move ? Go, and be satisfied that I am God, and thou art man."
2. The Efficient Governor. " I sometimes prepare the fittest instruments, qualify them eminently for my service, and permit the hopes of thousands to be suspended on them. Then I take them away in the dawn of their usefulness on purpose that I may more signally display my own efficiency, that I may astonish you with the abundance and variety of my resources."
3. The Independent Governor. " Know that I am God." This is all the explanation He deigns to give when His conduct is impiously arraigned at the bar of His creatures. The Almighty is jealous of His independence and desires not be to justified by our reason.
4. The Righteous Governor. It becomes a fundamental principle that the infinite God must do right. We are ready to tremble for the rectitude of the Supreme Governor because we forget

that this is an apostate world. When eminent ministers of religion are summoned to their reward, it is an ill omen for the world. The recall of an ambassador usually precedes a declaration of war!

5. The Merciful Governor. Mercy can be discovered in the death of a minister in the bloom of youth for the cause of religion does not hang on the slender thread of the most valuable life, the event is calculated to awaken the unsurrendered, and the world will derive the benefit of the whole undiminished effect of a religious example in its most alluring and attractive form. Death had preserved the bloom of Spencer's character.

After an estimate of Spencer's life and the quotation of extracts from his recent letters, the preacher showed that his early departure was a solemn lesson to ministers (We must soon preach our last sermon), to Christians in general (Esteem ministers highly and break not their hearts), and to this congregation (Why was our dear friend arrested in his purpose to visit us? Surely we ought to examine ourselves). Let us receive the doctrine he preached, adore the Saviour he loved, and submit to the guidance of the Spirit by whom he was influenced.

Thomas Raffles himself did not have the opportunity of preaching a funeral sermon[1] but his "improvement" of the subject is to be found at the end of his *Memoir* and he follows the usual lines of treatment, under six headings. The first three draw lessons from Spencer's life (*e.g.*, obscurity of birth or station presents no insurmountable barrier to the progress of real excellence—Raffles himself was always conscious of his birth and breeding). One heading marked the mysterious conduct of Jehovah's providence and asked, Was his death untimely? was his death severe? And one heading says, "From the early and sudden removal of Spencer, let churches learn to prize the labours of holy and devoted men, while they enjoy them . . . I believe that some have even bedewed the ashes of their pastors with affected tears, who accelerated and imbittered their passage to the grave, by unkindness and neglect."

An examination of these funeral sermons shows that while they are concerned to pay tribute to the dead and to comfort those who mourn, they are chiefly concerned with two problems—that of wrestling with the mysteries of providence, and that of drawing lessons or "improving the occasion."

Look at the latter first for that was a prime aim of the preacher. Indeed, Raffles unbares this aim as he comes to his final chapter of "Reflections" in the *Memoir*.

[1] He was at Hammersmith after leaving Homerton Academy in 1809 and only came to Liverpool to succeed Spencer in 1812 and does not seem to have known him personally.

> I am unwilling further to detain the attention of the reader . . . by any additional reflections. For the preceding pages abound with observations of a practical nature, as the narrative suggested them—and almost every topic of improvement which might now be introduced, has been fully anticipated and forcibly expressed, by the interesting publications which appeared immediately upon the death of Spencer. And yet, were I to dismiss this volume without any effort at a final improvement of the subject, I might be charged with neglecting the great object of biography—***utility***.[1]

In these funeral sermons which we are studying, and in many other such sermons, the "improvement" seems to follow three lines. We might have expected the preacher to declare that death has taken the deceased from the miseries and uncertainties of earthly life. Instead the first emphasis seems to be upon his escape from the dangers of living. "You were in danger of idolizing him" says Roby; "He was exposed to dangers and temptations of a very formidable kind because of the eminence of his station, the lustre which his talents diffused, and the extraordinary power of attraction which those talents possessed," says Burder; "Death has preserved the bloom of his character," says Styles; and Slate is even more emphatic, "If he had lived longer might he not have been overcome by the snare of popularity and in one unguarded moment have brought as great a scandal upon the cause of Christ as he has now brought glory?" It is true that Raffles, in a footnote, protests against "liberal expositors of God's providence" and "bold infringers of the prerogative of God" who think that Spencer's death was a judgment on his people for what they have termed their idolatrous attachment to him, but the emphasis still remained upon the danger to Spencer. The second line of "improvement" summoned the hearers to watch and be ready. Ministers must soon preach and worshippers must soon hear their last sermon; here is a solemn admonition of the uncertainty of life. The third line is somewhat similar. It challenges hearers to perseverance. "Most powerful motives to perseverance and activity are connected with this bereavement," says Fletcher; and Roby reminded the congregation at the memorial service that at Spencer's ordination, only seven weeks earlier, he (Roby) had addressed the congregation on being zealously affected always in a good thing, and he now renewed the advice.

Apart from these attempts to "improve," the preachers were necessarily and sharply confronted with the mystery of God's ways, especially when death had come unexpectedly to one so young and so promising. First they had to face the seeming arbitrariness of events. The thorough-going Calvinist could, like Styles, batter down the

[1] Raffles, 322.

objector by asserting that God is the Supreme Governor responsible to no man and that it is impiety to ask His reasons. Others, more humbly, confessed that the ways of God were indeed mysterious and sought to find reasons why men should not murmur against them. While asserting that divine sovereignty was never arbitrary or capricious, they explained, or explained away, the death in terms of God's design to remove Spencer from dangers, or to awaken congregations and to " lead them to the silent and impressive contemplation of things unseen and eternal " (Fletcher). Next, they were bound to face the untimeliness of Spencer's death. " Was his death untimely ? " asks Raffles; " Can you presume to say he had not finished his course ? " asks Slate. " That life is long, that answers life's great end " quotes Raffles and adds, " he had seen a good old age in usefulness, though not in years." Yet however certain the preachers might be about the felicity of Spencer in finding eternal life and about the rounded completeness of his earthly course (short though it had been) they still had to face the problem of what seemed to be irreparable loss to the whole Church. Here their answer is strong and reassuring. " Do you suppose the work of God will fall to the ground because an active servant is removed ? " (Slate). " You may smile through your tears that the cause of religion does not hang on the slender thread of even the most valuable life " (Styles). " Though your pastor is dead, the gread Head of the Church still lives . . . and He is infinitely more concerned for the success of His cause among you, than you can possibly be " (Roby). The final word lies in the way in which sorrow is transmuted by Christian faith. Fletcher has caught this best of all, and the end of his address at the grave-side must have been very moving and comforting. " Blessed be God, we ' sorrow not as those who have not hope.' What a scene of unmingled gloom and horror would a grave present to our view, were it not for ' Jesus and the resurrection.' But the Gospel has brought life and immortality to light; it has shed its bright irradiations all along the valley of the shadow of death; and it enables us to contemplate the opening heavens of bliss beyond it—' Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift '."

W. GORDON ROBINSON.

Some Bibliographical Notes And Identifications

Among the books published in 1640 was a work in verse entitled *A Buckler against the feare of Death, or Pyous and Profitable Observations, Medytations and Consolations on Man's Mortality*. The author describes himself on the title page as ' E.B., minister in G.B.'. In the *Dictionary of National Biography* this is taken to be the poet, Edward Benlowes (1603-1676); but Benlowes, though he published religious works, was never a minister. In the old *British Museum Catalogue* the work is attributed, with a query, to Edward Barker, Vicar of Eye, Suffolk from 1650 till his ejection in 1660. This attribution, which appears to be accepted in *Calamy Revised*, presumably depends on Calamy's statement that Barker ' had a peculiar fancy for Divine Poetry; and compleated a Book of it, in imitation of Mr. Herbert '; but in 1640 Barker was still an undergratuate at Caius College, Cambridge. In the new *B.M.C.* the work is attributed to Edward Buckler, Rector of Calbourne, Isle of Wight, from 1653 till his ejection in 1662. In 1642 Buckler was ministering at Bradford Abbas, Dorset, where he returned after his ejection from Calbourne and where he died : the ' G.B.' of the title page may thus be conjectured to stand for ' Glasen Bradford,' then an alternative name for Bradford Abbas (see, *e.g.*, John Hutchins, *Hist. and Antiq. of . . . Dorset*, iv. 121). Buckler did also publish other works on the subject of death. Moreover, to put his surname in the title, as he did if he wrote this piece, was a conceit of a kind popular in the middle years of the seventeenth century.

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The tract which appeared in 1651 with the title *Fur Praedestinatus* was at one time attributed to William Sancroft, later Archbishop of Canterbury, but is now known to be a translation of a piece by the Dutch theologian, Slatius. Together with the 1651 edition of the *Articuli Lambethani*, with which the copy in Dr. Williams' Library is bound, it was published by ' G.D.' at the expense of ' F.G. de ecclesia sti Nicolai apud Trinobantes.' ' G.D.' has been identified with the loyalist schoolmaster and private printer, William Dugard (see *D.N.B.*), but ' F.G.' would appear to have escaped detection. There can be little doubt that he was Francis Gouldman, who from 1634 till his sequestration in 1644 was Rector of South Ockendon, a church dedicated to St. Nicholas, in Essex, which may correctly be described as ' apud Trinobantes.' The identification is confirmed by the fact

that Gouldman's name is found in connexion with the examination of Dugard in 1652, following the latter's publication of the *Racovian Catechism*. It is interesting that in 1651 Gouldman should dare to associate himself, though so cryptically, with the living from which he had been sequestered seven years earlier. In 1660 he was restored to it, and he was still there when he died in 1690. (See *Walker Revised*).

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In 1645 there was published a work entitled *A moderate answer to those two questions: viz., whether Parents may bring their children to baptism* ; 2. *whether it be sinful to receive the Sacrament in a mixt Assembly*. In the bibliography appended to H. M. Dexter's *Congregationalism of the Last Three Hundred Years* and in W. T. Whitley's *Baptist Bibliography* this piece is left without attribution. In the *D.N.B.*, followed by Halkett and Laing's *Dictionary of Anonymous and Pseudonymous English Literature* and the *B.M.C.* (new as well as old), it is attributed to Thomas Blake, minister at Tamworth for some years preceding his death in 1657. The real author was Thomas Bedford, Rector of St. Martin Outwich, London, from 1647 to 1652 (see *D.N.B.*; *Walker Revised*). This appears from a letter from Bedford to Richard Baxter dated 8 March 1650/1 and printed in the third edition (1653) of Baxter's *Plain Scripture Proof of Infants Church-Membership and Baptism*, pp. 347-353. Here Bedford states that it was a revision, with omissions, of his *Treatise of the Sacrament* (1638), on which Baxter had animadverted in the appendix to the first edition of his *Plain Scripture Proof*. In that appendix Baxter also refers to Bedford's *Way to Freedom*. This was a sermon on *Rom.* vi.7, entitled " The Ready Way to True Freedom," which was appended to the *Treatise*. In a later work, *Vindiciae Gratiae Sacramentalis* (1650), Bedford included a letter to Samuel Ward (d.1643), Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, from John Davenant (1576-1641), a predecessor of Ward as Lady Margaret Professor. Bedford may thus be presumed to be the ' T.B.' who in the same year edited, with a preface, a posthumous work by Davenant, entitled *Dissertationes Duae*.

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Among the Baxter MSS. (59 . 6 . 90) at Dr. Williams' Library[1] is a letter of 7 May 1652 from Baxter to John Durie, the apostle of unity (see *D.N.B.*). In this letter Baxter names representatives of the Episcopal, Presbyterian and Independent parties, who as moderate men might suitably be chosen to confer together with a view to settling

[1] For access to these MSS. and for permission to refer to them I have to thank the Librarian of Dr. Williams' Library. I wish also to thank Miss G. Woodward for help in some of the identifications made.

their differences. The names he suggests for the Independents' representatives are 'Jos. Simonds' and 'Greenhill.' William Greenhill, the Morning Star of Stepney, is well known as a Congregational leader of the time (see *D.N.B.*; *C.R.*), but Joseph Symonds has received less attention. There seems no biographical article on him other than the scanty notice in Benjamin Brook's *Lives of the Puritans*, iii.39f. There it is stated that Symonds at one time assisted Thomas Gataker, Rector of Rotherhithe, Surrey (see *D.N.B.*), was Rector of St. Martin's, Ironmonger (or Iremonger) Lane, London, became an Independent, went to Holland, and there succeeded Sidrach Simpson (see *D.N.B.*) as minister of the Independent Church at Rotterdam. This notice may now be considerably supplemented.

From Venn's *Alumni Cantabrigienses* it appears that Symonds was of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, where he matriculated in 1620 and whence he took his M.A. in 1627, and that he was ordained by the Bishop of Peterborough in 1624. White Kennett's *Register and Chronicle Ecclesiastical and Civil* gives the years when he was Rector of St. Martin's as 1632 to 1639, when he was deprived. In this year he published *The Case and Cure of a Deserted Soule*. On the title-page of a *Sermon lately preached at Westminster* (1641) he refers back to his London living but describes himself as 'now pastor of a church in Roterdam.' (His name finds no place, however, in the lists of pastors of British churches in the Netherlands appended by W. Stevens to his *History of the Scottish Church, Rotterdam* (1832) and should be added.) By 1647 he was back in England. It appears from the 4th London Classis Minutes (Dr. Williams' Library MS., *per* C. E. Surman) that the Classis recommended his appointment as Lecturer at St. Michael's, Cornhill, *vice* the Independent leader, Jeremiah Burroughes, who had died. The matter was evidently controversial, for on 4 Feb. 1646(/7) the Classis published *A Full and Faithfull Accompt* of it. Nor was Symonds appointed Lecturer, for on 1 March 1646/7 he obtained the rectory of St. Mary Abchurch, London (W. A. Shaw, *History of the English Church, 1640-1660*, ii.338); but in the following year the living was again vacant (*Walker Revised*, p. 59). In 1647 he also became a Fellow of Eton, and later Vice-Provost (T. Harwood, *Alumni Etonenses*, pp. 72 foll.). On the titlepage of his *Sight and Faith* (1651) he prints after his name the initials 'C.E.S.', *i.e.* 'Collegii Etonensis Socius'; and on the titlepage of his posthumous *Three Treatises* (1653), edited, with a preface, by Nathaniel Ingelo (see below), he is called 'late Vice-Provost of Eton.' The exact date of his death seems not known; but only a few months after Baxter's commendation of him as a moderate Independent, a commendation to be found earlier in Thomas Edwards' *Gangraena*, iii.243, he is mentioned in a letter of 12 November 1652 (Baxter MSS., 59 . 6 . 128),

from Thomas Doolittle (see *D.N.B.*; *C.R.*) to Baxter, as one of 24 ministers who had died during the year. He was succeeded in his Fellowship at Eton by John Oxenbridge (see *D.N.B.*; *C.R.*), who was admitted on 25 Oct. 1652 (Harwood, *loc.cit.*). In *Gray Hayres crowned with grace* (1655), the funeral sermon for Gataker preached by Simeon Ashe (see *D.N.B.*; *C.R.*), p.59, it is stated that ' M. Gataker hath been observed to say ' of Symonds, ' It was pity that our Church lost him, intimating his turning aside to ways of separation '.

Symonds is to be distinguished from the ' Jo. Symmonds, M.A.' who in 1650 published *Saints like Christ: or Somewhat of truth delivered to the Congregation at Headley in Hampshire.* This was John Simmonds, who, as Rector of Singleton, Sussex, from 1659 till his ejection in 1661, finds a place in *Calamy Revised,* though his publication is not noted there. As directed in Appendix III of that work, the entry ' C(urate) of Beaulieu, Hants.' should be corrected to ' R(ector) of Headley, Hants.'.

Symonds is also to be distinguished from the ' Mr. Simmonds,' with whom, together with ' Mr. [Walter] Cradock, and other very zealous godly Nonconformists in Shrewsbury,' Baxter became acquainted ' at about 20 years of Age,' and ' whose fervent Prayers and savoury Conference and holy Lives did profit me much ' (*Reliquiae Baxterianae*, i.13). This was Richard Symonds (see *D.N.B.*). The article on Baxter in the *D.N.B.* confuses Richard Symonds with Joseph Symonds; and in the article on Oxenbridge Joseph Symonds is called John.

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The Nathaniel Ingelo who edited Joseph Symonds' *Three Treatises* is noticed in the *D.N.B.* When Bulstrode Whitelocke was in Sweden from 1653 to 1658 as ambassador to Queen Christina, Ingelo accompanied him, it is stated, as chaplain and *rector chori.* The *D.N.B.* article further states that prior to this Ingelo lived in Bristol, where he ' administered the sacrament to a small body of Dissenters who met in Christmas Street '; and quotes the description of Ingelo in John Evans' *History of Bristol* (1824) as ' giving offence to the rigid communicants by his careful attention to dress, and especially by his love of music. To a remonstrance upon which species of indulgence Mr. Ingelo replied : " Take away Music, take away my life." '

This ' small body of Dissenters ' in Bristol appears to have been none other than the Separatist church which eventually became Broadmead Baptist Church. In the MS. history of that church, as edited for the Hanserd Knollys Society in 1847, it is stated *s.a.* 1645

that :

> Lord's dayes in ye mornings they usually heard Mr. Ingelo, att ye Parish (or Publique) meeting house called Allsaints near ye Towlzy;

that :

> Haveing noe Pastor they Chose Mr. Ingello aforesaid (otherwise called Doctor Angello), to be their teacher, and sate under his Ministry about four or five years. They also desired him to break bread unto them, which accordingly he did during ye said time;

and that :

> at last divers of ye Members of ye Congregation began to be offended with Mr. Ingello's Conversation; as first, with his Flaunting apparell . . . together with his being given so much to Musick . . . For he tould them,—take away his Musick, take away his Life;[1] which offended and Stumbled them more, that is, ye Lively and most serious, watchful members in those times; that their affections began to Alienate from him, and to hearken after another.

Ingelo's ' Flaunting apparell ' would appeal to Whitelocke as well as his devotion to music; for Whitelocke not only ' recreated himself with music ' from his undergraduate days onwards, but when in Sweden ' plumed himself on proving to the Swedish court that a puritan could possess all the graces of a cavalier ' (C. H. Firth, in *D.N.B.*, *s.v.*). Whitelocke's choice of a clergyman who was willing to break bread with a Separatist church to be his chaplain is also in line with his known sympathies, for he attended St. Pancras, Soper Lane, London, under the ministry of George Cokayn (see *D.N.B.*; *C.R.*). To Cokayn and Congregational principles, moreover, Whitelocke remained faithful. Among the licences for Nonconformist worship granted in 1672 one was granted to Cokayn; and the very next entry reads " The howse of Sr Bulstrod Whitelock at Chilton Lodge, Wilts., Congr. Meeting Place " (*Original Records*, ed. G. Lyon Turner, i.482; *cf.* J. B. Marsh, *The Story of Harecourt*, 1871, p. 139). Ingelo, on the other hand, conformed. He was reinstated in his Eton Fellowship, and in 1677 was Rector of Piddlehinton, Dorset (Hutchins, i.580).

GEOFFREY F. NUTTALL.

[1] Note the *oratio obliqua*, not *oratio recta*, as in *D.N.B.*

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

The *Journal* of the Friends' Historical Society (1949, No. 2) contains articles on " The Staffing of Friends' Schools in England during the Nineteenth Century " by W. A. Crawford Stewart, " Three Letters of William Penn " edited by Felix Hull, and a continuation of " The First Century of Quaker Printers," by Russell S. Mortimer.

The *Proceedings* of the Wesley Historical Society (Sept. and Dec., 1949) have three letters from John Wesley to his wife, one to Walter Churchey, and some of the correspondence which passed between John Wesley and Sarah Crosby, " the first authorized woman preacher of Methodism." There are also two articles on " Early Methodism in Furness."

A useful article on Roger Williams (1603-1683), founder of Rhode Island, appears in the *Baptist Quarterly* for April 1950. Williams is described as " the greatest contribution of England to the American Colonies," and prophet-statesman of democracy and religious liberty. The Rev. E. A. Payne writes on the diaries of John Dyer, first full-time Secretary of the B.M.S. (1817-1841). Dr. E. J. Tongue continues the account of Dr. John Ward's Trust.

The *Transactions* of the Unitarian Historical Society (Oct., 1949) prints articles on " Some Account of the Annual Meeting of Presbyterian Ministers," " The Evolution of Unitarian Church Building," " Robert Mortimer Montgomery," " Thomas Newman, 1655-1742," " A Short Account of the Free Christian Church, Billingshurst," and " Presbyterian (Unitarian) Chapel, Stourbridge, 1698-1948 ".

H. SELLERS.

Reviews

The second volume of *The First Minute Book of the Gainsborough Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends*, 1669-1719 (Lincoln Record Society, vol. 40) contains Mr. H. W. Brace's transcripts for the years 1689 to 1709, and includes some of the earliest material in print for the establishment of the (still continuing) office of Overseers. There is only a page of preface, but there is a full index of persons and places, as well as an index of subjects, which includes such entries as disciplinary proceedings (*e.g.*, for debt, drunkenness and " marrying out "), fencing of burial grounds, provisions of relief (*e.g.*, bedding, clothing and fuel), and subscriptions for various purposes. These activities might usefully be compared with those of a contemporary Congregational church, *e.g.*, those printed in Prof. G. B. Harrison's edition of *The Church Book of Bunyan Meeting, Bedford.*

G.F.N.

Sons of Freemen, by the Rev. R. G. Martin (R.E.P., 4*s.* 6*d.*), is a book commissioned by and published for the Free Church Federal Council Youth Department. It is a vividly presented account of the witness of famous and lesser known Christians to the freedom with which Christ has set us free and in which we stand. The story begins in the N.T. and is carried down to the present day. This book should be in the hands of all ministers, teachers and youth leaders.

The Rev. Ivan E. Moore, a member of the Society, has published a pamphlet, reprinted from the Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archæology and Natural History, on *Roman Suffolk.* This careful and scholarly little work is illustrated by a map, photographs and line drawings.

We have received brief ' histories ' of Bollington Congregational Church and of Cliff Town Congregational Church, Southend.

H. SELLERS

Mr. Bernard S. Godfrey adds to his histories of Doddridge (Castle Hill) and Primrose Hill Churches, another useful Northamptonshire record in *The Congregational Church at Welford*, (Northampton : Billingham & Son, 1*s.* 6*d.*), carefully and interestingly written, while the Rev. George H. Peters amplifies his biographical sketch of *Humphrey Gainsborough* by a well produced and copiously illustrated history of the town and churches in *This Glorious Henley* (Independent Press, 2*s.* 6*d.*).

C.E.S.