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## EDITORIAL

THE 56th Annual Meeting of the Society was held at Westminster Chapel on 18th May, 1955, at 5.30 p.m. Thirty-six members and friends signed the attendance book. The paper by Mr. F. R. Salter, Warden of Madingley Hall, Cambridge, which is printed within, excited keen attention and interest. The independence of mind which is no less characteristic of him than of Edward Miall and his contemporaries cannot be hid, and the amount of research undertaken by him into works as unlikely to be lively source-material as ancient *Year Books* is perhaps more apparent to the reader than to the listener; but the verve and pungency with which the address was delivered are inevitably less evident on the printed page. Many present were surprised, some were perhaps even a little shocked, by the revelation of what our so recent fathers in the faith were like: were they really so bigoted and offensive? It is easy to forget how much the ecclesiastical situation has changed for the better, not only in the relations between Nonconformity and the Established Church but in the Christian character of that Church's clergy, especially in country districts. How far the inflammatory declamations of *The Nonconformist* may, in the long run, have contributed to this improvement, how far they were only an exacerbation, is disputable; but, if there is a time to keep silence, there is also a time to speak; and in England the 1840's, like the 1540's and the 1640's, was one.

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When, after Dr. Peel's death, Mr. Matthews became the Society's President, he did so on the understanding that it should be for a term of five years only. This period has now elapsed, and at the Annual Meeting Mr. Matthews was therefore released, with sincere thanks for the honour he has done us. All our members, it is hoped, will have delighted themselves with his recent *Mr. Pepys and Nonconformity*. In his place, Dr. W. Gordon Robinson, the Principal of Lancashire College, Manchester, was elected President. This appointment, which Dr. Robinson's contributions to historical studies, in his *William Roby* as well as in our pages and elsewhere, make eminently suitable, would have given special pleasure to his predecessor both at Lancashire College and in his new office, Dr. Grieve. We were delighted to be in a position to make it during Dr. Robinson's year of office as Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, and were most grateful to him for finding time this May to be present at our meeting.

We also released Mr. Surman from his temporary position as Treasurer—few will know how much work has been needed in the special circumstances of the brief period during which he has held office—and in his room elected Mr. Bernard Martin, the author of *John Newton* and many other books. Since our meeting, we have heard of the appointment of the Chairman of our Committee, the Rev. R. F. G. Calder, to succeed Dr. S. M. Berry as Secretary to the International Congregational Council. That one whose responsibilities will be so wide geographically will also have the breadth of a historical outlook is a cause for keen satisfaction.

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We regret the lateness in the appearance of this number, which is due in part to circumstances beyond the control of editor and printers. We regret also that our meagre finances do not permit of a larger issue. Not much can be said in 32 pages, and it is not easy to balance articles of interest to the majority of our members with the records, the publication and consequent preservation of which is one of the purposes for which the Society exists and for which no other means is easily available. Records are needed by those who write what is of more general interest and are of value to such a recent and welcome addition to our membership as the University Library at Tübingen. In the present number an attempt is made to satisfy all tastes, so far as our limited space permits.

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One condition which this sets is an abbreviated editorial. We therefore add two sentences only in place of paragraphs. All our members will rejoice that the Memorial Hall Trustees have at last found it possible to appoint a Librarian for the Congregational Library: the Rev. Alan Green is to hold the position from 1st July, 1956. Those appointed to consider the production of a bibliography of Nonconformity in connexion with the tercentenary of 1662 have met three times; and initial lists of some hundreds of works published by both Conformists and Nonconformists between 1660 and 1665 have been circulated to a number of scholars and learned libraries.

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## Congregationalism and the “Hungry Forties”

**M**ANY things, of course, happened in this decade besides social and economic distress. To make an almost random catalogue : Christmas cards came into general use and Newman was received into the Catholic Church; the Y.M.C.A. was founded and the first operation was performed under chloroform; the Brownings made their romantic elopement and *Vanity Fair* was published. The decade also witnessed the most intelligent Conservative Government of the 19th century under the leadership of Peel who, disliked though he was by the Nonconformists, showed his intelligence by many valuable reforms, culminating in his own political suicide when he dared to do what the Whigs (for whom our forefathers were voting, if they had votes) had not dared to do, and repealed the Corn Laws in 1846. The following year there was a General Election which in advance aroused great hopes to, but in the result was a great disappointment for, the Nonconformists; the year after that saw the Chartist fiasco on Kennington Common, while two years later Peel was killed in a riding accident; finally, just outside our decade, came the Great Exhibition, an impressive demonstration, men thought, of national unity and prosperity. Besides this, there was mine and factory legislation, tremendous railway expansion, the overhaul of our banking and tariff systems, the re-introduction of the Income Tax (at the alarming figure of 7d in the £ !), the break-up of the Tory party, the practical death, through political anaemia, of the Whig party, a serious commercial crisis, a long industrial depression, and two international crises, one of which nearly brought us war with France and the other, still more nearly, war with the United States. However gloomy, however hungry, however dangerous, nobody could call the 1840s dull. What part, then, did the Congregationalists play in this decade?

Three events of denominational interest happened in 1841. First, a great Anti-Corn-Law meeting of ministers was held in Manchester which was attended, among others, by 276 Congregationalists and 182 Baptists. Second, the Annual Assembly at Nottingham passed a resolution declaring that Nonconformists were not political in their aims save inasmuch as the connection of the Established Church with the State was itself political; they declared further that they venerated the Anglican Church as a true branch of the Reformation and held that Disestablishment would increase rather than diminish its effectiveness.

But perhaps the most important event of the year from this angle was the appearance of the famous and fiery Edward Miall with his weekly paper, *The Nonconformist*, bearing the challenging title, taken from Burke, 'the Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant Religion'. Truly a new prophet had arisen in Israel and a new note of urgency was being sounded in his trumpet-calls. For the first time, the denomination was being summoned to real political Nonconformity; the Union might claim that it was not political, Miall most certainly *was*. His paper cost 6d a copy, and you got a lot for your money. It gave a full account of everything that was going on, from fatstock prices at Smithfield to the most recent examples of episcopal arrogance. There was much foreign news and even the advertisements are, to us, interesting as sources of social history. Its two main themes, which were developed at length in every issue, were the evils of an Established Church and the need for franchise extension along the lines of the Complete Suffrage Movement, of which it became the avowed and official organ. It was vigorous, it was well-written—and it was violently prejudiced. Miall's outbursts against Anglicanism were so extreme that to us, who are emancipated from the tyranny of church-rates, burial scandals and the like, they must appear almost unseemly. "Heartless formality, a blind, unreasoning, ignorant, superstitious obedience to the priesthood, payment of tithes and Easter offerings and church-rates, these are the great objects of our Establishment. The whole thing is a stupendous money scheme, carried on under false pretences"—and so on. Any misdemeanour of an Anglican clergyman was at once seized upon and pilloried. Thus (to take headings from the index): a drunken clergyman, assault and trespass committed by a clergyman, a clergyman committed as a rogue and vagrant and for having obtained money on false pretences, a rat-catching parson, gluttony parsons, an atrocious case of clerical depravity, a Buckinghamshire vicar convicted of habitual drunkenness and of assault and of stabbing a dog through its throat with a knife. In the one volume for 1844 there are seven such instances, and it would be charitable to Miall to suggest that he recorded them more in sorrow than in pleasure. But his readers evidently liked it and among his correspondents I am particularly intrigued by one, a follower of George Fox born out of his due time, who asked in what reign an Act had been passed making it obligatory for a man to take off his hat in a church; he himself had of set purpose kept his on both in Bath Abbey and in St. Paul's Cathedral and had defied the vergers who had demanded its removal!

If one was looking for a single word which would illuminate the general attitude of Congregationalists to the issues of the day, it would,

<sup>1</sup> 19 May, 1841.

I think, be their own word, Voluntaryism: Voluntaryism in religion (no State Church), in education (no State system), in economic matters (no State interference). After all, our forebears were by history and tradition Independents, and these were the forms Independency was likely to take in the 1840s.

As to Voluntaryism in religion, the objection in principle to an Established Church is too obvious to need elaboration; it runs through all the Congregational thought of the time, although not all were agreed on actual policy; *e.g.* over the Anti-State-Church Association and the great Conference it held in 1844. For, as there was no chance of getting Disestablishment through Parliament, some of our more moderate leaders preferred to concentrate on such more immediate problems as Church Rates, Burials and Marriages, the Dissenters' Chapels Bill and, above all, Education. In particular, a vigorous campaign was carried on against Church Rates which, rather than Disestablishment, became the symbol of the survival of practical limitations to full religious liberty. Passive resisters had their goods distrained to a value out of all relationship to the rate they refused to pay and the most uncompromising stalwarts actually went to prison, in one instance for the non-payment of a rate of 5½d. An increasing number of Vestries refused to vote the rate, all such refusals being joyfully recorded in the *Nonconformist*, and it has been estimated that by the end of the decade, for one reason or another, less than half the people liable were in fact paying it; but for its abolition by Parliament we had to wait until 1868. The worst scandals, however, were in connection with Nonconformist burials, but as these have been fully dealt with by Bernard Manning I will not stop over them now.<sup>1</sup>

Voluntaryism in education centres round Graham's Factory Bill of 1843, the educational clauses of which were eventually withdrawn owing to the sustained opposition of the Nonconformists. The objections were that, if the education was purely secular, the State would be exceeding its proper function, while a State system with religion in it would merely play into the hands of the Anglicans; in any case there would be a serious increase of bureaucracy, standardization *etc.* The opposition, as recorded in the contemporary journals, strikes me as being at its best doctrinaire and at its worst narrowly sectarian and suspicious, and I am not sure how wise our forebears were over all this. But they certainly raised a lot of money for their own voluntary schemes; their target was £100,000 in 5 years, and in 1848 it was announced that £130,000 had in fact been raised, a noteworthy achievement for a denomination of our size and comparative poverty.

Voluntaryism in economic affairs meant a state of mind overwhelmingly favourable to *laissez-faire*; in particular, dislike of the

<sup>1</sup> cf. B. L. Manning, *The Protestant Dissenting Deputies*. pp. 299 seq.

Corn Laws. It was certainly no part of the creed of our forefathers deliberately to withdraw from civic interests, and Blackburn in the *Congregational Magazine*, Vaughan in the *British Quarterly* and Price in the *Eclectic Review* all fill their columns with current affairs. For instance, in the 1846 issue of the *Eclectic* there are articles dealing with taxation, the new Poor Law, the prospects of Free Trade in France, pauperism and crime in Glasgow, and Australia and its future. The next year we have a review of the Railway Stockholders' Manual (with full statistics of the interesting railway amalgamations); the "characteristics of crime", with the account of a French experiment "houses not prisons"; arising out of a pamphlet on the Salt Trade of India, what remained of the East India Company's monopoly was attacked; the economic crisis of 1847 was discussed with special reference to the relation of the Government with the Bank of England, while there was an appreciative notice of a pamphlet with the intriguing title "Lunacy relieved by musical exercises"; and the wide range of its interests is shown in "the beneficial influence of botany and gardening on the middle classes in general and Nonconformist ministers in particular"!

But these were topics of interest mainly to the middle classes, and Albert Peel has with justice reminded us that in these years (and he is speaking of the Annual Assemblies) "there is no indication of any resolutions dealing with the social questions that concerned the masses of the people". "First," he goes on, "the preaching of the Gospel; second, the securing of religious freedom—on these the aims of the Independents were concentrated, and they had not yet felt the call to the struggle for the remedying of social ills."<sup>3</sup> But is this an entirely fair indictment? I think not. Almost all the leaders of the denomination were aware of the social problems, but oversimplified them seriously by attributing the prevalent distress either to personal shortcomings (especially intemperance) or to the Corn Laws (with the resulting high cost of living), and monopolies and artificial restraints in general. They disliked governmental interference in economic matters, even if it were to remove undoubted evils, and, perhaps, they thought (and this was a serious error) those evils were not as great as was sometimes alleged. Vaughan, for instance, in the very first issue of the *British Quarterly* had the impression that things were not really too bad in the factories; a 12 hour day was excessive but an eleven hour day was reasonable, and even that reduction should be secured not by legislation but by peaceable and persuasive negotiations between the work-people and their employers. Even the radical Miall was against legislation; he mentioned, but did not comment on, the Act which forbade chimney-climbing by boys under 21; he disliked (in connection with the notorious Andover poor-law case) the evils which came from adminis-

<sup>3</sup> A. Peel, *These Hundred Years*, p.107.

trative centralization, and, in connection with the 10 Hours agitation, "we are convinced", he wrote, "that the factory hands are seeking a delusive remedy for the ills they endure".<sup>4</sup> What was needed was general Free Trade and constitutional reform. He, in common with all his brethren, deplored the more violent forms of Chartism but (as I have said) the *Nonconformist* became the avowed organ of that watered-down version known as the Complete Suffrage Movement, and it would be hard to say which figured more prominently in its columns, it or the doings of the Anti-State-Church Association.

Apart from a modified sympathy with the ideals (though not the methods) of Chartism and a very strong sympathy with the Free Trade movement, it seems to have been temperance and better housing that interested our forebears. "Who," said the *Congregational Magazine* in 1841, "that visits the old, dilapidated, miserable houses of the poor in the metropolis and our other large towns but must wish that building materials were so reduced in price as to permit the erection of cheap and comfortable dwellings for the labouring classes, so necessary for their health, contentment and good morals? The proposed alteration in the duties on timber is one step towards this most desirable and necessary change." Yet even after the great tariff reductions and the repeal of the Corn Laws much distress remained. This was pointed out at the Annual Meeting of the Union in 1848 by a layman, Mr. Edward Swaine, who asked "whence the squalid poverty, the nauseous alley, the crowded dwelling, with their typhus and indecency? Whence even, we may ask, the intemperance and animal excess? Are they all, and all in such terrible amount, the direct result of unregenerate hearts? Are they not, rather, to a great extent the festering sores which legislative yokes have brought on the body politic?"<sup>5</sup> I am not sure what he meant by "legislative yokes" unless it was the lingering effects of tariffs and restrictive taxation, not all of which had yet been abolished (*e.g.* the taxes on bricks, stone, slates and tiles did not go until 1850), but much of what he deplored was, surely, due to just the opposite, the absence of any parliamentary control of public health or of slum buildings. By reason, therefore, of this obsession with *laissez-faire* principles the Dissenters seem not to have concerned themselves much with the Mines and Factory legislation of the time. On the other hand (and this is perhaps a result of their essentially middle-class membership) they *were* concerned with the long hours worked by shop assistants; but here, too, it was hoped that change would come not through legislation but through the initiative of the employers. As early as 1842 Miall was reporting sympathetically that "the proprietors of the numerous silkmercery establishments in Chelsea, Knightsbridge and

<sup>4</sup> *Nonconformist* (1844), p.244.

<sup>5</sup> *Congregational Year Book* (1848), pp.91 seq.

Pimlico have come to the determination of early closing of their shops throughout the winter".<sup>6</sup> And what *was* early closing? 8 p.m. ! The blame, according to the *Christian Witness*, attached to Society (with a big S,—especially the preparations for the London Season), "and we would remind the public of the special claims of those shops that have adopted short hours. These have a prior claim, and in this matter a most weighty responsibility attaches to the ladies of London. We should like to be furnished with an accurate list of all the principal shops that have shortened their hours that we may publish it."<sup>7</sup>

Congregationalists were also interested in Provident and Friendly Societies. But it was noticed with regret that in general they held their meetings in public houses; this was true of 46 of the 58 Societies in the City and of 311 out of 346 in Middlesex. *Per contra*, the *Christian Witness* had a lyrical appreciation of Leigh Richmond's Friendly Society at Turvey, the meetings of which were held in the Church vestry. The annual meeting was in Whit-week, when the blue staves of the members were ranged along the walls like halberds in an armoury, while from the ceiling hung great triangles bearing such encouraging, though familiar, words as Faith, Hope and Charity, or, less scripturally, Unity, Patience and Mutual Support. The room was wreathed with flowers sent from the gardens of the neighbouring gentry and on one occasion the high-light of the proceedings was the handing round of a lock of Napoleon's hair ! (This was when the Senior Chaplain of St. Helena was present and gave an address.) This article gave rise to considerable correspondence in which, naturally enough, attention was drawn to the Rechabites as a Friendly Society based on temperance, and also to various Societies founded in connection with Dissenting Chapels. Of such was that at East Grinstead, where the annual meeting began at 4, passed from business to a tea (8d a head with plumcake) and ended with a sermon in chapel, after which, at 8 o'clock, "we separate and quietly return to our homes", an implied contrast no doubt with the roisterous homeward journey of those whose Societies had met in taverns!<sup>8</sup> So important did this topic appear to the denomination that a special sub-committee was set up and, as a result, a Society of our own, the Christian Mutual Provident Society, started operations (under the most hopeful auspices, we are told) in 1847.<sup>9</sup>

Provident Societies and shorter hours for shop assistants must seem "small beer" when set against the grave social evils revealed by the Royal Commissions of the period. I believe, however, that our forefathers tended on the one hand to underestimate those evils and on the

<sup>6</sup> *Nonconformist*, 19 October, 1842.

<sup>7</sup> *Christian Witness* (1844), pp. 407, 449, 497.

<sup>8</sup> *Christian Witness* (1845), pp. 110 seq., 523.

<sup>9</sup> *Congregational Year Book* (1847), p. 7.

other (as was perhaps natural to Independents with their strong sense of personal responsibility) to exaggerate the opportunities which would exist for an energetic and temperate individual, were only artificial restraints (such as the Corn Laws) removed. What surprises me is that they seem to have shown so little interest in such obvious forms of self-help as Savings Banks and the Co-operative movement.

But if our forebears were chary about official intervention in social affairs they were not (I fancy) chary about opening their own purses in the cause of philanthropy. I say "I fancy" because evidence here is of necessity slight and tantalizingly hard to come by, but we know that in 1846/7 the Congregational Union, as a body, sent no less than £13,000 for the relief of Ireland "in this year of famine". And, of course, for the relief of distress nearer home charity was not lacking; for instance, the Philip Street Chapel in Dalston started as early as 1841 a Sick Visiting Society whose Annual Reports I have been allowed to see through the courtesy of the Rev. E. W. Dawe. These Reports leave us in no doubt about the prevalent distress. "When we cast our eyes around," says that of Michaelmas 1842, "and behold on every hand the footsteps of poverty and misery of the most appalling and distressing description, can it be wondered at that sickness and disease should be the result?" For this, various reasons are given but "by far the majority of cases unhappily arise through intemperance"; even when that is not the case an illness of the breadwinner is bound to bring distress, to say nothing of those who are brought to want through age and infirmity. The Workhouse of course existed, more unpopular at that time than ever before or since, but, needless to say, there was no system of Sickness or Employment Insurance, and even the experimental and ineffective Board of Health was as yet six years in the future. In later Reports, vivid instances are given of individual distress and of the value of the help and the spiritual comfort given, for, naturally enough, the visitors considered themselves also to be Evangelists. Some hundred or more visits were paid annually and the amount distributed in relief (after careful enquiry, to avoid imposture) was some £10 or £12 a year—not a great amount, but the value of money was of course far greater then than now and the Chapel was situated in a poor part of London where the members of the Congregation cannot themselves have been people of any considerable substance. Slight though our evidence is, I feel confident that the private philanthropy of our forefathers was of real importance during this most difficult decade.

For denominational history, the *Year Books*, which begin in 1845, are of course invaluable, especially for the Reports of the various Committees. From them, for instance, we learn with regret that the scholarly productions of the Wycliffe Society were far less successful

than the hymnbooks, which had a wide sale, or the periodicals which, not counting the *Nonconformist*, the *Eclectic* and the *Congregational Magazine*, had a total circulation of not less than 300,000 copies a year. The *Year Books* contain also interesting obituary notices (familiar of course to Mr. Surman but probably to nobody else!), some of which are almost naively candid; e.g. that of the Rev. W. Everett, for 35 years Minister at Whittlesea: "a very good man and by no means deficient in intellectual power but peculiar and so secluded in his manners as to be unattractive"; not much *de mortuis nil nisi bonum* about this! In 1847 there is an interesting paper on 'Ecclesiastical Architecture as applied to Nonconformist chapels'; "the improvement in public taste which has been seen in our national edifices and private habitations during the last 25 years has at length reached the Meeting Houses of Nonconformists". Can we today feel that this optimism was justified? It is interesting to note that these new chapels, of which there were some 600 in the 1840s, usually cost between £2,000 and £3,000, while more ambitious ones were £6,000 or more (that at Wolverhampton, put up in 1849, cost £6,500); on the other hand, the village chapel at Rainham, Kent, cost only £260. Westminster Chapel, the present scene of our Annual Assemblies, was during this period, in 1842, erected especially for that famous pastor, the Rev. Samuel Martin.

Two final points occur to me, more important perhaps than the social and economic issues I have been dealing with, but too big for me to do more than raise now. How, in general, stood it in the '40s with the Union as a Union, and with the Denomination as a Denomination? The Annual Meeting of 1845 found reason to deplore some degree of lack of unity of spirit, temper and outlook, and clearly, as Albert Peel has put it, "the ship had been over-loaded". This was not entirely surprising; after all, the Union was then barely twelve years old, and its stability was inevitably somewhat precarious. There were inside it differences of policy and temperament, centring largely round such controversial figures as Price, Miall, Vaughan and Campbell; even the admirable Dr. Pye Smith was frequently assailed because he was willing to take part in the distribution of the *Regium Donum*, the fund for whose abolition most Congregationalists were then pressing, as being alien to their strong views about the evil of *all* State endowments of religion. Clearly, things were not easy and were going to become more difficult, the Union, in the years after 1847, being, as Peel has said, "almost wrecked".

Was, then, the French historian Halévy right when he said that round about 1845 there came a check to the development of Non-conformity? How true was this of *our* Denomination? It was, I think, the Baptists who were most worried over this, but they thought that

*all* the denominations, including the Evangelical Anglicans, were affected. With us, the Rev. J. A. Jones read to the Annual Meeting in 1845 a paper on 'The State of Religion in the Congregational Churches', and this was considered so important that a special Committee was set up to consider it; this reported that, though there had been some welcome advances, there had also been some regrettable decline, the main reasons for which they thought to be migrations of population and, more seriously, a lack either of vocation or of education in many of our ministers. Migration of population clearly raised difficulties and it was to meet this that (as I have said) over 600 chapels were built in the course of the decade. The lack of a proper sense of vocation is something we cannot now hope to estimate, but educational deficiencies, though serious, were to some extent in the process of remedying themselves. Dr. Pye-Smith read to a Conference of Training Colleges a paper explaining the value of the examinations conducted by London University, which was just getting into its stride, and the *Year Book* of 1849 gave the figures of those of our ministers who had graduated there; there were, it appeared, 9 M.A.s, 2 LL.B.s, and 9 B.A.s; two were Fellows of University College and another had been a Gold Medallist; further, 62 students in our Theological Colleges had matriculated but had not yet taken their Degrees. Quite a few ministers had Scottish Degrees and at least three were from Trinity College, Dublin. There were also, very occasionally, "converts", if I may so call them, from Oxford and Cambridge, such as the Rev. J. Bridgman, a Cambridge man, who was in 1841 pastor at West Street Chapel, Walworth, and another Cambridge man, J. F. Poulter of Queens', who in 1846 began his 23 years' pastorate at Wellingborough, and lived on until 1910. But of the state of learning and education in the Ministry as a whole I am not competent to speak.

What, I think, worried our forebears more than numbers was the fact that we were so essentially middle-class. Binney, indeed, seemed almost to find it a matter of congratulation: "our mission", he said, "is neither to the very rich nor to the very poor . . . but to the influential classes who fill neither Courts nor cottages".<sup>10</sup> But the denomination as a whole was not so complacent and the Annual Meeting of 1848 had as its special theme the alienation of the working classes; "for why", said Wells, "do we build chapels to gather congregations of tradesmen, but never of artificers?" Yet it was not apathy or hostility to Dissent alone that was being deplored but towards *all* organized Christianity. And therefore Halévy's assertion of a check applies to all denominations and not only—perhaps not mainly—to ours.

But in the absence of proper statistics we cannot be sure about all this; indeed, they were not sure themselves and even the census of

<sup>10</sup> *Congregational Year Book* (1848), p.9.

church attendances in 1851 left the whole of religious England in a state of perplexity as to its real meaning. When the Baptists in 1845 raised the question of a slowing down of development they twitted us, amiably enough, with not knowing how we stood because we, unlike them, had no statistics<sup>11</sup>; and in the following year Blackburn compared us unfavourably in this respect with them, and indeed with our own North Buckinghamshire Association which had been keeping full records for the past twenty years. And it is on this note about the insufficiency of historical material that I will end. "Every church", Blackburn had said, "should look to itself and take heed that its spiritual, financial, educational and historical statistics are regularly preserved."<sup>12</sup> Has this in point of fact been done, and are the records easily available for those who would like to see them? And when in our own time Albert Peel regretted that "Congregationalism for some strange reason has never given its history a proper place,"<sup>13</sup> he was only repeating, a hundred years later, Blackburn's protest "we are a people who have a history, but we neglect our documents". Herein, therefore, lies the importance of such a Society as this.

F. R. SALTER.

<sup>11</sup> *Baptist Record* (1846), p.1.

<sup>12</sup> *Congregational Year Book*, (1846), p.66.

<sup>13</sup> *These Hundred Years*, p.122.

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## Squire Baker of Wattisfield

READERS of John Browne's *History of Congregationalism . . . in Norfolk and Suffolk* (1877)—one of the most rewarding of our county histories—may remember his brief account (pp. 468-471) of Squire Baker of Wattisfield, Suffolk, to whom the Wattisfield church in its earliest days owed so much. Samuel Baker, Browne tells us, was born about 1644 at Wrentham and was educated at Beccles Grammar School and Cambridge University. He was at first a member of the Congregational church at Denton, Norfolk, but in 1678 transferred to the church at Wattisfield, where he was Lord of the Manor and lived at the Hall. Of his public life little is known, save that he narrowly escaped representing Bury St. Edmunds as Member of Parliament in 1688; but until his death in 1700 both he and his wife were 'the great support and ornament of the Congregational Church at Wattisfield'.

This church celebrated its tercentenary in 1954 and some account of its history was printed then, as well as a few years earlier. Its most notable minister was Thomas Harmer, who went there in 1734, aged 19, and long before his death there in 1788 had become the leading Congregational minister in Suffolk: throughout those fifty-four years he was a careful student and recorder of the life of the churches, and his writings, both published and manuscript, proved of the greatest service to John Browne. As a mark of respect to one of our oldest village churches, and as a salute across the years to Thomas Harmer, we are glad to fill out the story of the church's beginnings with some account of its debt to Squire Baker. The story is put together largely from the early pages of the Wattisfield church book, by the kindness of the present pastor, C. W. Clarke.

Although the church 'at first sat down' 'in the Fellowship of the Gospel after the Congregational Way' on 14 September 1654, its members were then 'few in number and without a Pastor', and it 'travelled (for above 23 years) through many Difficulties'. It 'Began to revive and flourish under the Ministry of Mr. Thomas Benton' in about 1671. In *Calamy Revised* Mr. Matthews identifies this Thomas Benton with the ejected Rector of Stratton St. Michael, Norfolk, who was buried at Stratton in 1690; but since, according to a note by Harmer in the Wattisfield church book, the Wattisfield parish register records the burial of a Thomas Benton on 22 August,

<sup>1</sup> 'seventh month' in the church book: I have modernized dating, filled out abbreviations and brought down superior letters throughout.

1675, he is perhaps more likely to have been the Stratton Rector's father, also a Thomas, who had been ejected from Pulham St. Mary, Norfolk, and who is known to have been Congregational. Whichever he was, father or son, Benton took out a licence for Congregational worship at Wattisfield in 1672; and at the same time a licence was issued for the house of Samuel Baker. Six years later the church had 'a Second Sitting down' and renewed its 'Foundation Covenant'; and on 2 May 1678, Edmund Whincop, the ejected Curate of Leiston, Suffolk, was 'solemnly set apart' as its pastor, the ministers of the churches at Woodbridge, Sudbury and Bury St. Edmunds and two messengers from the church at Denton being 'present consenting and assisting at the doing thereof'. Even then the membership consisted only of nine 'Bretheren', including the pastor, and twelve 'Sisters', including the pastor's wife: two of the men were all that remained 'of the Foundation'; nor were Squire Baker or any of his family members as yet.

In the following month, however, 'Mr. Thomas Elston was admitted a member of this Church'; and he, as Harmer notes, was 'Mr. Baker's Chaplain'. In October 1678, moreover, 'Mr. Samuel Baker having obtained a Letter of Dismission from the Church of Christ at Denton where he was a member now joyned with this Church and was thereupon admitted a member accordingly'. A copy of this letter is to be found at the back of the Wattisfield church book, and reads thus:

To the Church of Christ at Watesfield in Suff.  
The Church of Christ at Denton Sendeth Greeting  
Dear Brethren

Having lately received a Letter from our Honoured and dear Brother in Christ Mr. Samuel Baker in which He desires his Dismission from us in order to Church Communion with you with the Reasons thereof. After serious consideration of so weighty a Concerne, wee are agreed, and doe hereby declare our Compliance with our Worthy Brother therein. Wee need not to write any thing by way of Commendation, especially to you, his praise is in the Churches. Our great Loss will be (by Gods Blessing) wee doubt not your great gain, in which we shall rejoyce. His joyning with you shall be his discharge and Dismission from us. The God of peace be with you all Amen.

The 16th day  
of ye 8th moneth

Subscribed in the Name  
and by the appointment  
of the Church

William Bidbanck.

On 12 September 1679, 'Eliezer the son of Samuel Baker was baltized'; and on 9 December 1681, 'Mrs. Honoria Thompson and Mrs. Anna Baker the Wife of Mr. Baker by vertue of a Letter of Dis-

mission obtained from ye Church in London whereof they had been many years Members Joyned themselves Members with this Church of Christ for their better Edification and to serve ye Interest of Christ therein'. Mrs. Thompson, who, it appears from Browne's account, was Mrs. Baker's sister-in-law, had already, in October 1678, given 'to the Church as a token of her great affection and respect two large Silver Beakers with her Arms thereon to continue for the Use of the Church at the Lords Table': beakers which the church still treasures. The 'Letter of Dismission For Mrs. H T and Mrs. A: B Sent from London November ye 10th 1681 Signed in ye Name and by ye appointment of ye Whole Church by us Geo: Cokain' and thirteen other persons, all men, addressed not to the church at Wattisfield but to the two women concerned, has also been copied at the back of the Wattisfield church book.

The baptisms of Samuel Baker's younger children continue to be recorded: Robert, born on 27 October 1682, was 'baptized' on 1 December 1682 and John in October 1684. Meanwhile his elder children were being welcomed into membership. On 26 December 1682, 'Honorina the Daughter of Samuel Baker was admitted a Member of this Church of Christ, when she was not full 14 years old yet with great satisfaction of the whole Church'; on 17 December 1686, 'Mr. Samuel Baker jun. was admitted a Member of this Church of Christ being 19 years of age'; and on 22 July 1687, 'Elizabeth Baker one of the Daughters of Mr. Samuel Baker having been propounded to ye Church by the Pastor in his life time was now admitted a member of this Church of Christ'.

The form of this entry was occasioned by the death of Edmund Whincop earlier in the month: he had died on 10 July 1687, 'being Lord's day', and Harmer notes that his burial on 12 July is recorded in the Wattisfield parish register. In its bereavement the church was thankful to be able to look to Squire Baker for help. 'Yet is the Care and Kindnes of God to this Church remarkable', we read in the lament over Whincop's death, 'in providing one of ourselves Mr. Moor to succeed in Preaching work and thereby serve the large opportunity occasioned by the present liberty to general satisfaction and as may be hoped to great advantage'; and Moor, as Harmer notes, was 'Mr. Baker's Chaplain, and Tutor to his Children'. For Elston had left Wattisfield: in November 1684 'Mr. Thomas Elston had his Dismission to the Church at Toplif [Topcliffe] in Yorkshire in order to office work being thereunto Called by that Church after he had lived in the Communion of this Church about 7 years and was a great blessing thereunto as a member and assistant therein as also to the Family of Mr. Baker wherein he lived 8 years to his and their great satisfaction and mutual spiritual edification and comfort, all which rendered the

parting with him a loss much lamented, yet in obedience to a Call unto greater work was Complied withall'. In Elston's place at the Hall had come John Moor, who was 'admitted a Member of this Church of Christ' on 10 September 1686; and in January 1687 the following entry was made in the church book :

Forasmuch as Mr. Moor a Brother of this Church hath declared unto us how his Spirit hath been inclined unto the work of the Ministry and that he purposeth upon the Churches approbation to give up himself thereunto, Wee being also satisfied that he is already in a good measure fitted by ye Holy ghost with Gifts and Graces suiting such an Undertaking, His Conversation likewise being as becomes ye Gospel, We the Pastor and Bretheren of this Church of Christ at his request upon serious Consideration of the matter after seeking of God Do declare that we judg the said Mr. Moor to be called of God to improve his Talent in Preaching ye Gospell and do approve of his so doing as the Providence of God shal give him opportunity and Call thereto, Praying God the Father of lights to afford him assistance and success with a daily increase of Gifts and grace for his furtherance in the work to the glory of God and good of Soules.

For some years the church seems to have been content to have the services of John Moor, and to have dispensed with any pastoral relationship. But in 1694 Moor 'removed from Watesfield,' as Harmer notes, 'becoming the Tutor of a Considerable Academy in the West of England' at Tiverton. His successor as tutor at the Hall was Thomas Wickes, who 'was admitted a Member of this Church of Christ' on 26 September 1694; and unlike Moor, Wickes accepted the pastoral oversight of the church. On 30 June 1696 he was 'set apart to office work', the ministers of the churches at Sudbury, Tunstead, Ipswich and Woodbridge 'being present and assisting as elders'. A new list of the church's members was now drawn up: the number of the men had increased to 20, of the women to 44; the men's names are headed by 'Sam. Baker' and the women's by 'Mrs. Baker', followed by 'Mrs. Wall'. This was their daughter Elizabeth, now married, as appears from Harmer's note on her 'Dismission to the Church of Christ at Hartford under the Pastorall care of Mr. William Haworth' on 18 March 1699/1700. In 1696 their daughter Honoria was already married and gone away: as Mrs. Caley, with 'her habitation fixed by Providence in Ipswich', she had received on 5 February 1689, 'a Letter of Dismission to joyn with the Church there, whereof Mr. Langston is Pastor, to walk in fellowship there, as that was judged most agreeable to rule and conducing to her edification though it were to our loss'. The name of Mrs. Honoria Thompson, the aunt after whom no doubt she was named, is also missing from among the members, for on 2 April 1685

she had died, 'one of the Honourable Women of this age . . . a Mother in Israel untill she died being aged 68 years'. More sadly, because so prematurely, death had also removed one on whom many hopes reposed :

1687. 10th Month 10th day died Mr. Samuel Baker the Eldest Son of Mr. Baker when he was 20 years and 4 Months of age and had been joynd a Member of this Church one year into a week, all which time, as before, he had shewed, in a good Conversation, Gravity and Humility beyond his years and given great Hopes of his being a blessing to his Family and the Church of God and eminent Instrument for good in his Generation, on which accounts his Death was much lamented and especially as a loss to this Church and Place, where it was hoped he should succeed in his Fathers room and stead.

It was not only Squire Baker's children, however, who became members of the church; his family in the larger sense, his servants, also supported it. There was Elizabeth Elsegood, who joined the church in September 1678, and on whose death on 13 June 1682 the church book records that she 'had been for some years a Member of this Church and had lived about 8 years a good and faithful Servant in Mr. Bakers family. In the latter part of which time she gained much Spiritual Improvement in Knowledge and Experience, especially by reading and Converse with her Mistris Thompson, so as her Faith did grow exceedingly, and she finished her Course with Joy when near 34 years of age'. Or there was Simon Fynn, 'a Servant in Mr. Bakers Family', who 'was admitted a Member of this Church' on the same day in 1682 as the Squire's daughter, Honoria; on 12 January 1714/15 he 'was set apart to the office of a Deacon', and he was still 'one of the Deacons of this Church' when he died on 9 November 1719. Again, on 29 June 1683 Abigail Thorisby, 'a Servant in Mr. Bakers Family, was admitted a Member of this Church'; and on 30 December 1685 'was baltized Abigail the Daughter of Simon Fyn and Abigail his wife both Members of this Church'. What could be more fitting than a wedding within so fine a family ?

Bare records ! Yet what a pleasing picture they present, with a little imagination, of the Squire and his wife and children, their tutors and the family servants, all united in worship and Christian fellowship. The Squire himself died on 11 April 1700. He was buried at his birthplace, Wrentham, and the Wattisfield church book carries only a simple entry of his death, though Harmer has added a note that the minister of the church at Sudbury, Samuel Petto, preached his funeral sermon on 30 April from *Job* xix.26. The Squire's widow survived him till 1714, when she died on 2 November, aged 72 ; she also was buried at

Wrentham. Their son Robert, whose baptism in 1682 we noted above, seems to have returned to the Church of England: 'dyed November 29. 713' stands bleakly against the entry of his baptism, and mural inscriptions to the memory of two of his married daughters, Elizabeth Moody and Anna Robina Tompson, are in the Wattisfield parish church.

Samuel Baker's influence on Wattisfield Congregationalism was not spent, however; for the minister, Thomas Wickes, married the Squire's eldest daughter; and, although, according to Browne, she 'lived only a twelvemonth after', Wickes remained at Wattisfield till his death on 1 July 1733, 'being Lord's day', aged 66. Even that is not really the end of the story; for a daughter of Edmund Whincop, the church's first pastor, during whose ministry Samuel Baker transferred his membership from Denton, married a John Hurrion, who in 1672 had his house at Sibton, near Yoxford, in Suffolk, licensed for Congregational worship; and their son, John Hurrion *secundus*, married yet another of the Squire's daughters, Jane, and in 1701, the year after the Squire's death, became the minister at Denton. He had two sons, John *tertius*, ordained at Gosport, Hampshire, in 1732, and Samuel, ordained at Guestwick, Norfolk, in 1733; and Samuel's son, John *quartus*, was ordained at Southwold in 1761. Only with his death in 1793, if then, does the story of Squire Baker of Wattisfield and his contribution to the Congregationalism of East Anglia come to a full stop.

GEOFFREY F. NUTTALL.

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## Congregationalism in Madagascar in the last hundred years

TO define accurately the ecclesiastical polity obtaining in the London Missionary Society churches in Madagascar is no easy task. French Calvinists who observed these churches at the beginning of this century were disturbed by the signs of Independency which they found there. They naturally judged the situation in terms of the prevailing political and social atmosphere, and were concerned lest the French colonial authorities should regard the L.M.S. churches as possible centres of sedition. A Congregational visitor of the period, on the other hand, could not have failed to note the existence and power of church courts which would remind him of the Presbyterian form of church government. At no time have these churches enjoyed the authority and independence still to be seen in present-day Congregational churches in England and Wales.

The contribution of Congregational principles to the organization of the L.M.S. churches in Madagascar will be most easily appreciated if we describe the different church courts to be found in the present ecclesiastical pattern, none of which is of recent origin.

The vital church court found throughout the L.M.S. districts is the *Isan-efa-bolana* (i.e. the four-monthly meeting). This has responsibility for all the churches within its boundaries, the number of which ranges from fourteen to more than sixty. The oversight of vacant churches by the appointment of a ministerial delegate, the conduct of the election of a pastor or deacons, the settlement of church disputes are all matters within the competence of the I.E.B. The churches are free to call their own pastors, but before the election in the church meeting can proceed a satisfactory certificate concerning previous pastoral charge must be furnished, and this is issued by the officers of the I.E.B. and is examined by them prior to an election. Serious issues such as the infringement of district rules concerning the practice of *famadihana* (corpse-turning) or the use of drama are open to investigation by the I.E.B., and the decision of the full committee is binding on the local church. Membership of this committee is usually based on the ratio of one minister to two deacons.

Within the I.E.B. there is a smaller grouping of churches termed the *Lohavolana* (i.e. "the head of the month," because its meetings are

held on the first Monday of each month). This has often been little more than an opportunity for developing a local fellowship ; but in some districts in Imerina it has dealt effectively with matters of organization affecting the churches and thus prevented local disputes from becoming the source of more serious trouble in the I.E.B. At a time when missionary oversight of the Imerina districts is decreasing, in fulfilment of the policy of devolution, the Lohavolana is likely to become very much more important. It is, in any case, apparent that, while the local church may not hold as independent a position in Madagascar as in this country, the local grouping of churches is felt to be more significant than the vast grouping encountered in the higher courts.

This we meet when we come to the *Isan-kerin-taona* (*i.e.* the twelve-monthly meeting), which is the authoritative court controlling many local I.E.B.s. The I.K.T. corresponds to a geographical division of the country : the L.M.S. thus has six I.K.T.s, *viz.* Imerina, Betsileo, Antsihanaka, Marofotsy, Tsimihety and Tanala. Considerable authority is vested in this superior court. All churches grouped within its boundaries are assessed financially and pay considerable sums of money to support institutions such as the theological colleges, mission schools and inter-missionary work. They may also support evangelists working in the weaker areas of the I.K.T. There are times when financial demands are presented in such a way as to differ little from taxation ; and when the burden is so heavy it is difficult to preserve the conception of voluntary giving. At the same time, any Congregationalist is bound to admire the spirit in which the Connexional system has coped with the problem of a vast financial undertaking in an underdeveloped territory. The Imerina I.K.T. budget this year amounts to some 4,000,000 francs (approximately £4,000), not counting a further 1,000,000 francs to help the L.M.S. in its present financial crisis.

The I.K.T., however, is not only involved in major financial concerns. It is the body which deals with the wider church issues such as the control and oversight of mission schools, the pensions of pastors and teachers with their widows and orphans, and the discussions concerning Church Union. All these matters are eagerly and noisily debated in the full meetings held twice a year which comprise five hundred members or more. Madagascar is not the only country in which it is difficult to see how synodal meetings can be effective and capable of dealing with a long agenda and yet remain representative. The I.K.T. does elect commissions to deal with various matters concerning the schools and colleges, but any major decision adopted by a commission must come back to the full committee. At the same time, there is ample evidence that the pastors and deacons of the L.M.S.

churches regard the authority of the I.K.T. as arising from the local church and not as something imposed by a higher court. The recent establishment of an L.M.S. General Synod, consisting of all six I.K.T.s, to be in theory the ultimate authoritative court, has been the object of considerable criticism ; and at present the constitution of the General Synod includes a clause to the effect that, where there is considerable difference of opinion over any major issue, it must be sent back to the several I.K.T.s for further discussion. However strange and even perverted the Malagasy adoption of certain Congregational principles may be, the writer is persuaded that here the Malagasy church leaders have discovered something of the Congregational understanding of the nature of spiritual authority.

Historically, the Congregational emphasis on the local church meeting and suspicion of hierarchical authority tended to fit in well with the social system of the former Malagasy kingdom, which was finally dissolved by the French in 1895 ; for in that kingdom there was always a real recognition of the value of the *Fokon'olona* (which we may conveniently term "the parish council"). However strong the tendency to centralization may have been as the power of the Merina kingdom grew, this local social and political authority was never obliterated ; indeed, the French government has recently re-established it under the title of *Collectivités Rurales Autochtones*. When, after the conversion of Queen Ranavalona II and the burning of the idols in 1868, the L.M.S. churches in Imerina found themselves state-established, it was the families of the Andriana or prince-caste, with their dependants, who became Christians ; these families exercised wide powers in the controlling of local affairs, and there can be little doubt that many Malagasy regarded the church meeting as an extension of the *Fokon'olona* and thus found the Congregational form of church government congenial. To-day we are bound to say that they found it too congenial. There was little, if any, recognition that Jesus is the only Lord and Master in a church meeting. Yet under the guidance of the district missionary the L.M.S. churches were able to cleanse the church meeting from what was unwholesome in the traditions of the earlier social pattern, while what was of value was strengthened for the edifying of Christ's Church. I do not think biblical exegesis is too strained if we suggest that this was done in conformity with the words of the Apostle Paul, "and through him to reconcile to himself all things" (*Col. i. 20*).

It is possible that this earlier emphasis on the local church and groups of churches may have caused difficulties when the L.M.S. churches in Imerina came to be grouped together in their vast I.K.T. of over four hundred churches. The disputes which have arisen from time to

time, and which have caused several churches to become *tsy miankina* (*i.e.* independent in the sense of dissident), do not seem on any occasion to have resulted from deep principles conscientiously held. They are, in the main, unpleasant, tragic and not seldom sordid stories of struggles for power among the princely families. It is nevertheless true that on some occasions the centralizing of authority in the I.E.B. and the I.K.T. has not helped in the settlement of such disputes.

The present writer has just completed his first period of service in Madagascar. That period is clearly far too short for him to be able to come to grips with all the complexities of the situation, let alone to pronounce judgement on the place of Congregationalism in the Malagasy church. He finds himself troubled, none the less, by certain passages in the correspondence from missionaries working in Madagascar to be found in Dr. Norman Goodall's *Congregationalism—Plus* (p. 25). "Whilst accepting for myself the high ideals of the 'gathered church,' which are still guarded in the present polity of the Malagasy Church," writes one, "I am convinced that the Congregational polity in its entirety is not suitable for any of the 'younger churches'; its high churchmanship is too ideal for present practice." "Pure Congregationalism," writes another, "would be foreign to Malagasy psychology." To this it is fair to reply that Congregationalism has not been applied and found wanting, it simply has not been applied. Naturally, no loyal servant of the L.M.S. will plan to plant "pure Congregationalism" in any "younger church." It may, however, be asked whether the Malagasy Christians may not reasonably discover those truths in the Congregational polity which are applicable to the local situation. May it not even be that the Malagasy may apply some of our cherished principles more wisely than has been done by the churches at home? The tone of implied superiority which one senses in the passages quoted above seems unwarranted to one who knows something of the struggles of ministers and discerning church members to bring the church meeting to life in this country.

The question of the Congregational contribution to the Malagasy church is, moreover, no mere academic question. At this very time the L.M.S., the Friends' Foreign Missionary Association (as in Madagascar the Friends' Service Council is still termed) and the Mission Protestante Française are engaged in discussions aiming at full organic union, and the Malagasy of the L.M.S. churches are called to decide what is to be the place of their tradition within the United Church of the future. The seeking of a full Christian unity in fellowship with the members of other missions is unquestionably a divine commission, and we must be glad that we have been called to this task. This does not mean, however, that we may lightly dismiss Congregational

principles which are relevant to the World Church. In the words of the Wellesley Statement : "It is our fundamental principle that in all the organisation of the church at every level, all authority is spiritual, or, as our fathers put it, ministerial, not legalistic, coercive and magisterial. We believe this to be the true principle of government and authority in the whole church catholic ; this we regard as our essential contribution to the Universal Church. We point out that this is a principle of unity and fellowship in the Spirit, not a principle of individualism, will-worship, sectarianism or anarchy. It is a principle of unity, of authority, and of obedience to Christ." Something of this has already been discovered in Madagascar and the writer's hope, not untinged with anxiety, is that it may not be overlaid and obscured by future decisions.

RAYMOND W. ARNOLD.

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## Our Contemporaries

*The Baptist Quarterly*, XVI, 2 (April 1955), contains, *inter alia*, "Warwick Baptist Church" by W. T. Goodwin, and "John Hooper & the Origins of Puritanism" by W. Morris West; XVI, 3 (July 1955), "Baptist Beginnings in Luton" by P. M. Burditt, and "Who may administer the Lord's Supper?" by E. P. Winter (one of our own members).

*Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England*, Vol. X, No. 4 (May 1955) has articles on "The Waldensian Church" by J. A. Gray; "History of the Presbyterian Church in Malaya" by Dr. A. D. Harcus, which details early association with the L.M.S.; "The Origin of Tunley Congregation" by F. Partington; and "The Presbyterian Plot of 1651" by H. J. Denton.

*Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, Vol. 30, No. 1, has accounts of Methodism in Scotland and, particularly, Glasgow; No. 2 (June 1955) is largely a bi-centenary commemoration of John Cennick.

*Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (October 1954) carries articles on "Lydgate Chapel" by E. Basil Short; "A Minister's Wife of the Eighteenth Century" (Elizabeth Lawrence, 1644-1720), by F. J. Hamblin; and "The Presbyterian Classical System, 1646-1660" by C. E. Surman.

*Journal of the Friends' Historical Society*, Vol. 46, No. 2, in its Editorial has some useful comments on the work of the historian and of Historical Societies.

C.E.S.

## Late Eighteenth-Century Dissent In Surrey

MR. HERBERT MARYON, F.S.A., of the Research Laboratory, the British Museum, recently forwarded a valuable and interesting list of dissenting meeting-houses in Surrey registered with the Bishop of Winchester between 1763 and 1790, of which details are given below. Mr. Maryon writes :

In the course of my work with Mr. H. V. Everard, B.Sc., at Southwark Central Library, we sorted and arranged a good bulk of Bishop's Transcripts of church registers and other ecclesiastical documents for Surrey, and I came across a bundle of the original applications for registration of Dissenting meeting-houses for that part of the old diocese of Winchester now covered by the diocese of Guildford. It includes all London south of the River, from Richmond to near Greenwich, and goes as far south as Guildford.

Among the records now kept at the Southwark Central Library are some of the Exhibit Books of the Diocese, in which there should be an entry corresponding with each application, noting that it had been granted. On the back of each application there is generally a note to the effect that it had been granted, and a date, generally a few days after that of the application. Though I have put in the accompanying list every one of the applications in the bundle, there may be a few more strewn anywhere among the diocesan papers stored in that top room. There is a great variety of material there—excommunications, at least one will, and much else.

Protestant Dissenters from the Church of England were exempted from the penalties imposed by certain earlier laws by an Act of Parliament made during the first year of the reign of William and Mary (1689), subject to the condition that they applied to the bishop of the diocese in which they resided for the registration of their meeting-houses. These documents bear the signatures of many of the leaders of the Protestant Dissenting congregations in Surrey, throwing light upon the early history of these churches and on some of the personalities engaged in the work. Besides those persons whose names are printed here, each application bears from one to over thirty signatures of other members of the congregation supporting the claim.

Two attempts have been made at writing the history of Congregationalism in Surrey: John Waddington published *Surrey Congregational History* in 1866, and E. E. Cleal *The Story of Congregationalism in Surrey* in 1908. Waddington's work is good as far as it goes, although his earlier records can now be extensively supplemented by information in relation to the 17th and 18th centuries which has come to light in the succeeding ninety years. Cleal's book, leaning heavily on Waddington whom he frequently misquotes, was an unscholarly production, badly arranged, lacking an *index nominum*, and needing to be used with great care and reserve.

The calendar now provided by Mr. Maryon, and published with his approval and that of the Diocesan Registrar, Graham D. Heath Esq., M.A., opens a rewarding field for some local research student, and stimulates the hope that a long-needed and reliable revision of the above-mentioned county histories may be forthcoming. Many of the causes and ministers are hitherto unmentioned in denominational records, whilst others richly supplement 'hints' and fill *lacunae* in the received accounts of our older Surrey churches. Extensive notes and identifications have been prepared which limitation of space does not allow us to print here as would be desirable, but our Research Secretary would be happy to make the information available to any *bone fide* worker in this field. There are 98 entries in all.

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<i>Date</i>	<i>Parish</i>	<i>Description of building</i>	<i>Minister, etc.</i>	<i>Denomination</i>
6 Aug. 1781	Battersea	House of Francis Carter.	John Bowes signs first.	Independent
20 Sep. 1764	Bermondsey, St. Mary Magdalen.	Brick Building in New Road nr. Salisbury St.	John Knipe Minister of Gospel.	Independent
4 Oct. 1764	" "	House in possession of L. Coughlan.	Laurence Coughlan, Preacher of God's Word.	Independent
9 Jan. 1776	" "	Dwelling House of Captain Daniel Thomason.	Rich. Hutchings or Peter Wright sign first.	Baptist
22 July, 1786	" "	House of Mr. Rd. Trott in Long Lane.	Richard Trott signs first.	Independent
13 Sep. 1787	" "	Building in occupation of Jeremiah Garrett adjoining house of — Cook in Cherry Garden Street.	Jeremiah Garrett, Minister.	Independent
10 Dec. 1782	Betchworth	Pt. of House in possession of Chrstr. Abel.	W. Bugby, Minister.	Independent
14 Oct. 1788	Brockham in Betchworth	Meeting House possession of Christopher Abel.	W. Bugby, Minister.	Independent
19 Aug. 1774	Camberwell	Large Hall + 2 Parlours, property of John Windham Bowyer, now in possession of Wm. Smith, clerk.	William Smith, Minister.	Prot. Diss.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Parish</i>	<i>Description of building</i>	<i>Minister, etc.</i>	<i>Denomination</i>
7 Apr. 1779	Camberwell	New Building adjoining Dwelling House of Rev. W. Smith.	William Smith, Minister.	Prot. Diss.
26 June, 1786	Peckham in Camberwell.	Messuage or Tenement in possession of Thos. Cockett.	Rupt. Atkinson, Minister. (W. Bugby <i>et al.</i> sign).	Independent
29 Oct. 1786	" "	House in Rossey's Row in occupation of Samuel Wilks.	R. Trott signs first.	Independent
24 Mar. 1788	" "	House in Rossey's Row in occupation of Samuel Wilks.	John Hardwidge signs first.	Independent
14 Feb. 1789	" "	House + room facing end of Rye Lane, of Martin Ready.	N. Fisher signs first.	Independent
18 Sep. 1764	Christ Church (Southwark)	Room in house Wm. Griffin situated in Lady Clarks Yard, Parradice Court.	Olwich Witbook signs first.	Independent
30 Oct. 1780	" "	Meeting House occupation of Thos. Smith.	Corns. Cayley, Minister.	Independent
18 Sep. 1783	" "	Building (applicants living in and about St. George's Road).	Matthew Wilks Minister.	Prot. Diss.
13 June, 1776	Clapham	My dwelling house	John Langford, Dissenting Minister.	Baptist
9 Oct. 1777	"	New Building on North Side of Clapham Common.	John Langford, Minister.	Independent and Baptist
12 Aug. 1789	"	House of Watkin Bloore.	(who signs first).	Prot. Diss.
18 Aug. 1764	Cobham	Dwelling House and Court before the door of Samuel Phairs in Poulterers Lane near Downside Common.	Thos. Martin, Minnister.	Independent
24 Oct. 1768	"	New House at end of Plow Lane, Downside.	Thos. Martin, Minnister.	Independent
3 Apr. 1788	Dorking	Dwelling House of Thos. Rose in Holm Wood.	John Nettlefold signs first.	Prot. Diss.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Parish</i>	<i>Description of building</i>	<i>Minister, etc.</i>	<i>Denomination</i>
3 Nov. 1786	Effingham	Part of Building in possession of Wm. Woodbourne.	W. Bugby, Minister.	Independent
8 Mar. 1788	Egham	House in Tight Hill otherwise Egham Hill.	Thos. Sylvester, Pastor.	Independent
1 Mar. 1790	„	Dwelling House of T. Engleheart on the Midle Hill, Egham.	Thos. Engleheart, Minister.	Independent
30 May, 1777	Epsom	House in possession of W. Bugby in Epsom.	Wm. Bugby, Minister.	Independent
31 Mar. 1778	„	Part of Building in possession of William Bugby.	Wm. Bugby, Minister.	Independent
13 Jan. 1787	„	Part of House in possession of Wm. Bugby, situated on lands called Harris Hearn.	W. Bugby, Minister.	Independent
30 Mar. 1764	Esher	House of William Chandler.	Wm. Chandler signs first.	Quakers
13 Sep. 1785	Ewell	Part of House of Samuel Mugeridge.	Enoch Colvil, Minister.	Prot. Diss.
25 Mar. 1777	Farnham	Building in possession of Elizabeth Abney, spinster, situated at Tilford.	Thos. Taylor, Minister.	Independent
9 Sep. 1780	„	House belonging to Jno. Wells.	Nathan Oxborough signs first.	Independent
23 Aug. 1787	Godalming	Part of dwelling house in occup. of James Fleet, frame-work knitter.	Wm. Buchanan signs first.	Independent
14 Oct. 1789	„	House occupied by Henry Balchin, in Dowling Lane.	James Farley, Mr.	Independent
21 July, 1790	„	Building called Ockford Lane Meeting.	John Geal signs first.	Independent
26 Oct. 1787	Guildford, St. Mary	Messuage or tenement in occupation of James South.	James South, Minister.	Independent
5 Sep. 1785	Hedley	Part of house of Geo. Wilsheer.	W. Bugby, Minister.	Prot. Diss.
20 Apr. 1765	Horley	House in possession of Mr. Joseph Peters.	Wm. Bourn, Elder.	Baptist

<i>Date</i>	<i>Parish</i>	<i>Description of building</i>	<i>Minister, etc.</i>	<i>Denomination</i>
13 Nov. 1787	Horley	Part of House in possession of Elizth. Young.	Chris. Abel, Minister.	Independent
14 July, 1773	Kingston-upon-Thames	Old Meeting House for many years past made use of as place of Divine Worship by the people called Quakers. This application on behalf of Independents.	J. West, Minister.	Independent
24 Mar. 1780	„ „	House in Apple Market, occupied by Mr. Jno. Finch.	Thos. Mabbott, Minister.	Baptist
26 Nov. 1790	„ „	New Meeting House in Back Lane.	Thos. Mabbott, Minister.	Baptist
3 Aug. 1765	Lambeth	House in three coney Walk near Lambeth Wells now in possession of Rich. Nicholas.	Thos. Eade Pastor of a church at Ratclif.	Independent
15 Nov. 1777	„	Room in dwelling house of Edward Loader, shopkeeper.	Edward Papp, Minister.	Independent
31 May, 1785	Lambeth, St. Mary	Chaise-house in Kennington Lane of Rev. J. Cartwright.	Joseph Cartwright.	Independent
17 Apr. 1786	„ „	Messuage or tenement in occupation of Joseph Chalk.	Thos. Williams, Minister.	Independent
29 June, 1786	„ „	The Welch Meeting House at 5 Fore St.	Wm. Owen, Minister.	Baptist
21 Nov. 1786	„ „	Chapel or Meeting House in Kennington Lane.	Wm. Huckwell, Minister.	Prot. Diss.
2 Apr. 1787	„ „	Messuage or tenement in Church Street, in occupation of John Kitson and Wm. Pilcher.	Thos. Williams, Minister.	Independent
21 Nov. 1790	„ „	House in High St. of Wm. Ambler.	James Langford, signs first.	Prot. Diss.
3 Jan. 1785	Leigh	House of Peter Hoar.	W. Bugby, Minister.	Independent
13 Dec. 1775	Lingfield	House in possession of Joseph Osborn.	Thos. Humphreys, Pastour.	Independent

<i>Date</i>	<i>Parish</i>	<i>Description of building</i>	<i>Minister, etc.</i>	<i>Denomination</i>
17 Feb. 1789	Lingfield	Building in parish of Lingfield.	Thos. Humphrey, Pastor.	Baptist
27 June, 1763	Mitcham	House in occupation of Mr. Rich. Hillyer.	John Barsley, ( <i>sic</i> ) Pastor.	Prot. Diss.
22 Nov. 1763	,,	House in occupation of Mr. Wm. Phillips.	John Beasley, Pastor.	Prot. Diss.
4 Aug. 1776	,,	New and compleat Building near Turnpike Road leading to Sutton.	Abr. Fenton, signs first.	Independent
1 Nov. 1785	,,	In house of Joseph Cave.	Darby Short, Joseph Witton, <i>et al.</i> (last And. Colvin).	Independent
30 x. 1770	Nutfield	House in possession of Thos. Dann.	Thos. Hayllar signs first.	Quakers
22 Feb. 1786	Ockham	Room in occupation of John Baxter.	John Baxter signs first	Independent
16 Oct. 1773	Richmond	House, property of Daniel Bullin.	Thos. Finch or John Griffith sign first.	Independent
17 Nov. 1773	,,	The Old Play-house, the Property and in possession of Isaac Manwaring and Mary Watkins, widow.	Solo <sup>n</sup> Emmons, Minister of ye Gospel.	Independent
11 Mar. 1779	,,	Dwelling-house in possession of John Crouchor.	Wm. Huntingdon, Minister of the Gospel.	Independent
19 Jan. 1764	Rotherhithe, St. Mary	House in Lavender Street.	Thos. Cook, Minister.	Independent
24 June, 1768	Rotherhithe	House in Trinity Street in possession of Robert May.	Thos. Mitchell, Preacher of God's Word.	Independent
15 Dec. 1787	Rotherhithe, St. Mary	Room and occas. as a school, adjoining dwelling house of Mr. Jas. Newman.	Sami. Batt signs first.	Independent
4 Aug. 1777	Shackleford	House adjoining that of Wm. Crawford, gentleman.	Edw. Tapp and Wm. Crawford, Ministers.	Independent
24 Sep. 1764	Southwark, St. George	Room in dwelling-house in possession of John Parker, in Peters Street, in the Mint.	Wm. Joseph signs first.	Independent

<i>Date</i>	<i>Parish</i>	<i>Description of building</i>	<i>Minister, etc.</i>	<i>Denomination</i>
15 Aug. 1771	Southwark, St. George	House of John Bellamy in Falcon Court.	John Bellamy, Minister.	Prot. Diss.
9 Apr. 1776	" "	New Building in Fair Maid Alley.	Wm. Wheeler, Thos. Hastings signs first.	Independent
2 Jan. 1783	" "	Building in Lant Street, formerly used as an Assembly House.	Jos. Cartwright, Minister.	Independent
27 Aug. 1785	" "	Dwelling house in occup. of Mr. Walter Bridges in Gravel Lane nr. St. George's Fields.	John Gill signs first.	Independent
1 Apr. 1778	Southwark, St. John	Dwelling house in Gainford Street, Horsleydown.	Jno. Langford, Minister.	Baptist and Independent
16 Oct. 1776	Southwark, St. Olave	Building in Dean St.	Wm. Button, Minister.	Baptist
6 Jan. 1790	" "	Room adjacent dwelling house of J. W. Morren situated in the Maze.	John Wainwright Morren, Pastor.	Independent
15 Oct. 1763	Southwark, St. Saviour	Meeting House.	John Neatby signs first.	Quakers
10 Feb. 1764	" "	Place originally a Quakers Meeting in Ewers Street.	Chas. Bradbury signs first.	Independent
13 Jan. 1766	" "	Meeting House in Zoar Street.	Chas. Bradbury Minister.	Independent
26 Jan. 1784	" "	Dwelling house and School of Aaron West in the Grove near Bandyleg Walk.	Wm. Whiffen signs first.	Baptist
14 Nov. 1786	" "	Schoolroom, part of dwelling-house occupied by Mary Lawler, in Gt. Bandyleg Walk.	John Townson, Minister.	Independent
7 Apr. 1787	" "	Dwelling house in Pump Court, in occupation of John Cliff.	James Ried signs first.	Independent
18 Nov. 1788	" "	House in possession of Mr. J. S. Skill at 12 New St.	Edward Dudley Jackson signs first.	Independent
30 Oct. 1787	Streatham	House in occupation of Jonathan Brown.	Jno. Ovington	Independent

<i>Date</i>	<i>Parish</i>	<i>Description of building</i>	<i>Minister, etc.</i>	<i>Denomination</i>
25 Oct. 1788	Streatham	Room in dwelling house of Mr. R. Nesham.	Robert Nesham signs first.	Independent
30 Jan. 1789	„	Meeting House lately erected in possession of Jonathan Brown.	John Williams signs first.	Independent
4 Mar. 1789	„	Room in dwelling house of Mr. Thos. Frankling.	Thos. Frankling signs first.	Independent
4 June, 1790	„	Newly erected Meeting House.	John Clark signs first.	Independent
1 Apr. 1778	Thames Ditton	Room in possession of Thos. Butler.	Peter Moor signs first.	Independent
31 Mar. 1765	Tooting Graveney	House in possession of James Graham.	Wm. Kingsbury, Teacher of God's Word.	Independent
11 Feb. 1766	„ „	Building lately erected in Tooting Graveney.	Samuel Wilton Minister.	Prot. Diss.
13 Oct. 1778	„ „	House in possession of James Bowden.	James Bowden, Minister.	Independent
3 Feb. 1788*	Wandsworth	House in possession of John Marsh in Garret Lane nr. the high Road leading through Wandsworth.	Joseph Swain, Teacher of God's Word.	Independent
2 Aug. 1784	„	House of Mr. Rich. Lewis, at Garrett.	Thos. Engleheart and Enoch Colwell, Jt. Ministers.	Independent
26 Mar. 1788	„	Building in High St. for the French Refugees, Protestants.	Daniel MacKenzie, of Twickenham, Minister.	Independent
1 July, 1790	„	Building in Jews Row leading to the river Thames.	Daniel Mackenzie, Minister.	Independent
11 Nov. 1776	Shakelford, nr. Woking	Room in dwelling house of James Hodd, shopkeeper.	James South signs first.	Independent
2 June, 1785	Shackleford in Wokeing.	Building recently erected in the Tything of Shackleford.	James South, Minister.	Prot. Diss.
16 Jan. 1778	Worplesdon	House and room in possession of John Hackman.	Wm. Huntington, Minister.	Independent

\* Might be 1758, but this date seems more probable.

**RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF MEMBERS**

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