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EDITORIAL

THE 58th Annual Meeting of the Society was held at Westminster Chapel on 15th May, 1957, at 5.30 p.m. The Rev. R. F. G. Calder, Chairman of the Society's Committee, presided. Fifty-seven members and friends were present. An instructive and interesting paper was given by Dr. J. W. F. Hill, which appears in this issue of *Transactions* ; we are much indebted to him for both the lecture and its publication. Dr. Hill is a long-standing member of our Society and one of that great body of Englishmen who love the place where they live. The ancient city of Lincoln, rather off the track of the ordinary traveller, its history in all ages, its culture and characters : these are his studies and his pleasures. The fruit of much of his research has appeared in his two delightful volumes, *Medieval Lincoln* and *Tudor and Stuart Lincoln*. To have a lecture from a local point of view was refreshing. It is the sort of thing which was often done in the far-off days of Congregational Union Autumnal Assemblies in provincial towns when our Society also held a meeting.

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March 5th was a happy day for all interested in Congregationalism and its history. On that day the official reopening of the Congregational Library at the Memorial Hall, London, took place. For many years it had been a constant sorrow to us to see this fine collection of books no better than buried treasure. For too long the library had to suffer indignity as a civic restaurant. Indeed the scent of books, beloved of many of us, is only just returning. On 5th March Sir Maurice Powicke graced the occasion with an address in which he paid tribute to the memory of his father, Dr. F. J. Powicke, one of the founder-members of our Society and certainly one of the greatest historical scholars who have written much in these pages. He spoke of the problems and opportunities facing the young student of history today and emphasized the vital part that personal influence can have in encouraging interest and study by young people. The Chairman was Sir Thomas Kendrick, Director and Chief Librarian of the British Museum.

The Rev. Alan Green is now well installed as Librarian of the Congregational Library, and students who wish to use the Library will receive every attention from him. Our Research Secretary is a member of the Memorial Hall Trust's Library Committee.

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The Trustees of Dr. Williams' Library are to be congratulated on the conclusion of the catalogue of the books in their Library concerned with English Dissent between 1566 and 1800. This "Bibliography of Early Nonconformity", as it has come to be called, is far too large for publication to be possible, but valuable notes about it and a complete list of subject headings have appeared as the fifth of the Library's Occasional Papers. The catalogue does not include works by Continental Reformers or by Huguenot and Dutch theologians, the Library's impressive collection of which is suggested by its fourth Occasional Paper, which lists its holding of works by Amyraldus. Of special interest to our members is its sixth Occasional Paper (3s. 9d.), in which *The Heads of Agreement* between Presbyterian and Congregational ministers adopted in 1691 is reprinted in parallel columns with an "Essay of Agreement" of *c.* 1682. This "Essay" has been taken from the papers of Thomas Jollie which the Library has recently acquired, and from which the article in *Transactions*, vi. (Feb., 1914) 164 ff., on Jollie's Remains may now be supplemented.

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At the Annual Meeting the Rev. John H. Taylor, B.D., of Seven Kings, Ilford, was appointed as Associate Editor of these *Transactions* with Dr. Nuttall. Since that meeting the Society's Treasurer, Mr. Bernard Martin, has asked to be released, and the General Secretary, the Rev. E. W. Dawe, has been forced to resign through his departure for a term of service with the United Protestant Church of the Palatinate. It is inspiriting that anyone with Mr. Dawe's firm interest in our churches' history should also be ready for a venture of this kind, which the new relation between the Church of the Palatinate and the Congregational Union makes possible ; and our thanks to both officers for all their labour on our behalf are combined with good wishes to

Mr. Dawe for his ministry in Germany. The Committee is most grateful to the Rev. W. W. Biggs, M.Th., for intimating his willingness to serve the Society as both General Secretary and Treasurer. Members are asked to address subscriptions as well as correspondence to him, at 17 Junction Road, Romford, Essex.

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It is many years since the Society printed its aims. These have been revised by its Committee and were passed by the Annual Meeting this year. We hope all members will subscribe to the spirit of them. They are :—

1. To encourage interest in and research into the origins and history of Congregational churches and principles.

2. To issue *Transactions* containing the results of such research and articles furthering the aims of the Society.

3. To print and to encourage the printing of MSS. and documents and to publish rare books and tracts.

4. To provide an Annual Lecture and to encourage the giving of other lectures.

5. To bring together and to maintain a corpus of material bearing on the history of Congregational churches and their ministers.

The Beginnings of Puritanism in a Country Town[1]

THIS is a tale of ordinary people living in and around a country town with a population of perhaps two thousand people, situate some way off the Great North Road and four days' journey on horseback from London ; and of their reaction to the ideas and events of the wider world.

I have described the city of Lincoln as a country town because I think that phrase best calls up in these days a true picture of the community. But it is by no means the whole truth. Lincoln had once been a centre of the wool trade, and its great merchant citizens had had wide connections with the sheep farmers of the east midlands, the merchants of Hull and Boston, and the cloth towns of France and Flanders. The trade had departed, and with it the merchants, leaving behind them their chantries in minster or parish church, and their descendants, who had put their money into land and become gentry. Lincoln had to live on its markèts and fairs. Yet it was still the centre of the second largest county in England, and the cathedral city of a vast diocese. The sleepy little city was aroused into life on market days ; it occasionally filled up with sheep and cattle and their drovers at fairtime ; and it now and then assumed the air of a provincial capital, with all the hum of activity that accompanied the judges of assize, the bishop at his visitation, a view of the trained bands or an election of knights of the shire.

The religious changes of the Reformation were accepted very slowly. The dissolution of the monasteries provoked the rising of 1536 even earlier than the Yorkshire Pilgrimage of Grace ; when the northern earls rebelled in 1569 the government found the county largely apathetic about the danger ; and an address, signed by many knights and gentlemen of the county, to Philip II of Spain, greeted him as the prince with the chief right to the Crown.

The ecclesiastic who did most to impose the Elizabethan church settlement in Lincoln was John Aylmer. He had been tutor to Lady Jane Grey, fled from Mary Tudor, and while in exile helped John Foxe with his *Book of Martyrs*. He published from Strasburg in 1559 *An Harborough for Faithful and True Subjects* in reply to John Knox's *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*. He exhorted his fellow countrymen to play not the milksop, and to fear neither French nor Scots, summing up the argument neatly

in a marginal note that "God is English". In several less popular passages he advocated puritan principles, though Knox commented to William Cecil that Aylmer rather sought the favour of the world than the glory of God. He attacked bishops in terms so general that they applied equally to popish and protestant bishops, and presently to himself: it was too much to expect his enemies to refrain from quoting against the lord bishop of London, as he became, passages such as this:

> Come off, ye bishops; away with your superfluities: yield up your thousands, be content with hundreds, as they be in other reformed churches, where be as great learned men as you are . . . Let the queen have the rest of your temporalities . . . and . . . build and found schools throughout the realm; that every parish church may have his preacher, every city his superintendent, to live honestly and not pompously.

In 1562 Aylmer became archdeacon of Lincoln. There, says Strype, he dwelt much, living in good reputation, being a justice of the peace for the county and an ecclesiastical commissioner, and an active and bold man, as well as wise and learned. Strype adds: "He first purged the cathedral church of Lincoln, being at that time a nest of unclean birds: and next in the county, by preaching and executing the commission, he so prevailed that not one recusant was left at his coming away."

There is much exaggeration here, but he no doubt achieved a large measure of conformity.

At last in 1576, through the influence of Sir Christopher Hatton, he was appointed bishop of London. He acquired the name of a harsh and arbitrary prelate, dealing severely with catholics and puritans. By the puritans he was especially detested, because they regarded him as a renegade, and he was savagely attacked in the *Marprelate Tracts*. But there is no doubt that the reforms he introduced in Lincoln paved the way for the puritan movement.

The Act of Uniformity required church attendance, and the common council of Lincoln, no doubt under ecclesiastical guidance, threatened increasing fines for non-attendance. By 1571 the council appointed a city preacher, a step which must also have been due to pressure. The resolutions of appointment of successive preachers became less cold and formal as time went on, and by 1583 they were calling for a preacher who should be virtuous and learned, who should teach the inhabitants the word of God, and who should visit and give good counsel to the sick as need should arise.

Within a few years there raged a violent struggle in the Guildhall, the noise of which engaged the attention of the government in London. Our knowledge of it comes partly from the registers of the privy council,

partly from surviving state papers, and partly from the records of the common council. One party to the controversy showed zeal for Sabbath observance and the preaching of the Word. It stood for order and good government, and it acted under ecclesiastical patronage. The other party resisted the tightening-up process ; they preferred old easy-going ways, and so they were hostile to the church authorities. All who leaned to the old faith therefore sympathized with them, and some may very well have prompted them. Secular-minded laymen saw in the controversy nothing but a faction fight, but others saw a great deal more. They saw the hand of Rome—which had excommunicated the queen and sent the Jesuit mission into England ; and in days when the threat from the Catholic powers of France and Spain was ever present there were no disposition to take unnecessary risks.

The division of parties manifested itself in several issues of policy. There were two grammar schools in Lincoln, one in the city and under the joint supervision of the dean and chancellor of the cathedral and the common council ; the other, in the cathedral close, belonged to the chapter. An attempt was made to combine the schools, the stipends not being sufficient to maintain able and sufficient schoolmasters. Twice before the union of the schools was at last effected in 1584 the master of the school in the city was nominated by Aylmer, and it is clear from the evidence that he was using the common council to put pressure on his less energetic brethren in the chapter. To this end he was able to use the party which was then in the ascendant in the city.

This same orthodox party took the credit for providing the city preacher, who, they said, was obstructed and slandered by their opponents, some saying that they desired as much a tale of Robin Hood as to hear him preach, others that he and his sermons had made all the contentions in Lincoln, and yet others that he had done more harm than ever he would do good. Thirdly, there were the measures to enforce Sabbath observance, with church attendance and the closing of shops ; the opposition, when in power, refused to enforce the rules, and encouraged the setting up of maypoles and May games. Fourthly, steps were taken to bridle the able poor from begging and stealing, and to teach and keep them at such work as would get them a living. Fifthly, there was the better control of alehouses, and the putting down of unfit victuallers ; there had been some seven or eight score alehouses in Lincoln, and many vile abuses on both Sabbath and weekday. The opposition released control, and swearing, dicing, carding and drunkenness came back. Sixthly, the assize of bread, ale and beer for the control of prices was enforced for the protection of the poor.

It is evident that the conservatives preferred to have Lincoln free than Lincoln (relatively) sober and strictly regimented ; and they especially resented the interference of churchmen, with the choice

of the mayor (as they alleged) being made in the bishop's palace. The bishop on his part wrote to London that Rome was behind the opposition, and he prayed that the Lord should preserve and bless the Queen and defend her Church from the paw of the Lion.

In the course of the struggle, which lasted several years, the dean, Ralph Griffin, began in favour with the common council but changed sides. One citizen said, "it was shame for Mr. Dean to deal as he did, for at his first coming he was all on the other side, but now he is contrary ; and then he preached upon goodwill and for nothing, and now he selleth his sermons." For his lewdness the speaker was disfranchised, but the lewdness was recorded, no doubt with zest.

The canons complained to archbishop Whitgift of one of Griffin's sermons. Whitgift tried to damp down the controversy, writing that the dean renounced his errors in doctrine, though his words and manner of teaching came from Luther and Calvin. So ended this particular battle.

In the meantime the puritan party, who were mostly inside the Church, were gaining ground. They received encouragement from some of the bishops. Bullingham, who was bishop of Lincoln from 1560 to 1571, was a moderate man. He was followed by Thomas Cooper, whose attitude is illustrated by a letter he wrote soon after his accession to Lincoln, apparently to the dean and chapter, pointing out that although in almost all cathedral churches there was a divinity lecturer for the instruction of the people, there had not been one in their church for some years, that this had been a matter of reproach to him, and he asked them to look to it.

A much firmer stand was taken against Puritanism by John Whitgift, who became archbishop of Canterbury in 1583. He had been dean of Lincoln from 1571 to 1577. Soon after his accession to Canterbury, in 1584, John Barefoot, archdeacon of Lincoln, wrote to him that a number of puritan ministers had been suspended, had appealed to London, and been allowed to return to the diocese. Thereafter Barefoot had, as Whitgift directed, exhorted them to subscribe, and "to leave off their fantasies, conceived without any great ground of learning, and listen to your Grace and other fatherly and learned counsel" : telling them that though their suspension should continue, their benefices should not be sequestered for a season, so that they might get conformable men to serve in their cures. They replied that they had been promised restoration, citing Thomas Cooper, the former bishop of Lincoln, as saying that he wished it were so for a season. Barefoot had replied by fixing a day by which they must conform, failing which he would report to the archbishop. The ministers said that they would return to London to renew their suit. But they at

once began preaching and ministering in their charges, so upsetting some who had already conformed, and were beginning to wish that they had not. The recusants had been encouraged by a letter from John Field, secretary of the puritan classical movement. Copies of the letter had been circulated ; Barefoot could not get a copy, but he thought Mr. Huddleston of Saxilby near Lincoln, who was before the Court of High Commission, might be made to produce the original. The wiser and godlier, he said, were wondering where it would all end.

In the last years of the century there was a puritan party inside the common council of Lincoln, and it seems that they existed under the guidance and patronage of local gentry, contending with authority. For a time they were in control. They placed increasing emphasis on the duty of the city preacher "to preach the Word" every Sunday afternoon and Wednesday morning. They forbade him to hold a benefice outside the city, and so disqualified the then holder of the office, and they resolved to pay an increased stipend. They then appointed John Smith, a young Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, who was already known to be a puritan. When he left Lincoln he went to Gainsborough, where he renounced his Anglican orders and formed a separatist congregation of Baptists. From thence he sought refuge in Amsterdam.

His Lincoln ministry began inauspiciously when he was elected by a majority of eight votes to seven. His champions knew that they and he were insecure, and in 1602 he was given a life patent of office under the city seal. The next mayor, however, belonged to the opposite party, and he procured resolutions revoking various measures lately taken, and declaring that Smith had approved himself a factious man by preaching against men of good place in the city, that he was not licensed to preach and was even then inhibited by the bishop, and dismissing him from his office. The charge of personal preaching is proved by his published work. In a series of lectures on *Psalm* xxii he dilated upon the bulls, the lions and the dogs that encompassed the Christian, and complained that persecutors of the Church took it in dudgeon if they were so called, adding :

> Sometime it falleth out that the minister in his ministry is occasioned by the scripture to unfold the evil properties of wicked men in regard whereof they are compared to beasts, as the lion's properties are pride and cruelty, the fox's craft and subtlety, the hart's fearfulness, etc., and it may fall out that some wicked man called lion hath the lion's pride and cruelty . . . now if these men take themselves either named or aimed at in the ministry . . . without doubt either gross folly, or an accusing conscience, or mere malice or brutish ignorance bring men into these surmises . . .

> the minister by God's providence, which to him perhaps is chance medley, sometimes shall wound him whom he never aimed at, or harden him whom he never thought of ; for the word of God is both a savour of life and of death to several sorts of persons.

It was hardly to be expected that alderman Leon Hollingworth, one of his opponents, would regard such passages as impersonal, and the marvel is that Smith should pretend that they were. As a young man he must have been rash and hasty, though at the end of his life he retracted all his biting and bitter words.

Smith became involved in proceedings in the archdeacon's and the bishop's courts, and also before the judges of assize. Whitgift wrote to the bishop saying that he licensed Smith to preach on the usual subscription to the articles, but had revoked the licence, it not being his intention to maintain any man in his contentious courses, adding—remembering his Lincoln days—"especially in a place I wish so well as that". As the result of arbitration he was awarded £50 for the surrender of his life patent of office. Though he left Lincoln it may well have been the result of his ministry that in 1634 there were many anabaptists in Lincoln, as archbishop Laud was told by his vicar-general. The congregation was mentioned as one of five in the kingdom when the London congregation wrote to Amsterdam in 1626.

He had weighty friends among the gentry, among them Sir William Wray, son of the Elizabethan lord chief justice, to whom he dedicated his exposition of *Psalm* xxii, because, he said, "I have experienced yourself to be, under the King's Majesty, a principal professor and protector of religion in these quarters (for what a multitude of faithful ministers are debtors to you in the flesh), and for that I, among the rest, have rested under your shadow."

Wray's two sisters sent to Cambridge Richard Bernard, the famous puritan vicar of Worksop, who after moving towards separatism drew back to conformity ; he dedicated more than one book to members of the family. Wray's brother-in-law, Sir George St. Paul of Snarford, endowed a free school at Market Rasen and maintained a preacher at Welton, both near his home. Wray and St. Paul sat in several parliaments, playing an active part, especially in religious affairs. St. Paul promoted a bill against scandalous and unworthy ministers, and Wray joined him on the committee for the bill. In 1605 St. Paul was on the committee for the bill for a public thanksgiving on every fifth of November for the failure of the Gunpowder Plot, which was included in the Prayer Book, and was to be such mighty anti-Roman propaganda for so long.

Another of the gentry, Sir William Armyne of Osgodby, is seen upholding Hugh Tuke, the father of Lincolnshire puritans, who had been suspended from his living in 1584, and was frequently in trouble with the authorities. In 1612 Tuke told Armyne, in a letter in Dr. Williams' library, that the bishop was threatening to proceed against him, and that the vicar-general had cited him to appear at Grantham. When he was actually in the pulpit he was served with a summons from the bishop; and he enclosed a draft testimonial such as Armyne might send the bishop, certifying that Tuke was an honest, godly and peaceable man, and asking the bishop to forbear.

Sir Thomas Grantham, whose home was in Lincoln, was another of the same group. Mrs. Hutchinson (whose husband, Colonel Hutchinson, had lived in Grantham's house as a boy) described him as "a gentleman of great repute in his country, and kept up all his life the old hospitality of England, having a great retinue and a noble table, and a report for all the nobility and gentry in those parts." Sir John Eliot paid tribute to him as "a worthy gentleman of Lincolnshire who was never wanting to the service of his country", and adds that he disliked taxation in the form of fifteenths because it was likely to be burdensome to the poor.

This group of squires had a powerful friend in Theophilus Clinton, fourth earl of Lincoln. His brother-in-law, Lord Saye and Sele, was a leading opponent of the court. Lincoln raised a troop of horse to aid the elector palatine in 1624. In the Lords he had brought in a bill against the haunting of alehouses, and was on the committee for the bill to prevent profane swearing and cursing. Cotton Mather speaks of his family as being the best of any nobleman in England, and Roger Williams recalls riding with John Cotton, the puritan vicar of Boston, to Lincoln's house at Sempringham; Cotton's successor at Boston had been Lincoln's chaplain. Lincoln's father was a prime mover in the settlement of Massachusetts Bay, and his sister Arabella emigrated with her husband to New England in 1629.

Between them these men held not fewer than 27 advowsons, and no doubt could influence presentations to many others. In their households were growing up the sons who would sit in the Long Parliament on the puritan side, and would rule the county through the parliamentary committee. The fathers and others appear as a group on the accession of James I. The ministers of the diocese inclining to protestant nonconformity presented to the king an apology for refusing the subscription and conformity that were required, and stated in the published *Abridgement* thereof that thirty-three ministers in Lincolnshire shared their views. Bishop Chaderton wrote to Robert Cecil that he understood that many of the knights

of Lincolnshire had set their hands to a petition on the behalf of some ministers not conformable ; he could not get the petition, but he understood that Mr. Atkinson of Glentworth was to deliver it. He urged strong measures.

Atkinson had held two livings, one of these Glentworth, both in Wray's gift. When it is found that he is appointed city lecturer in Lincoln there is no mistaking the significance of the appointment. He was joined by Edward Reyner, a protégé of St. Paul, who became Sunday lecturer, and rector of St. Peter at Arches, the central parish church in the city. According to Calamy, Reyner was even then a nonconformist to the ceremonies, which created him adversaries, who would frequently complain of him, and threaten him, and yet his liberty of preaching was continued ; and yet his moderation procured him favour with several that belonged to the minister, who would sometimes hear him in the afternoon. Sir Edward Lake himself, the chancellor of the diocese, was often his auditor, and declared that he received benefit by his preaching. till he was reproved from above. John Williams, bishop of Lincoln, appointed Reyner to preach at one of his visitations, but touched his tender conscience when he offered him a prebend : "the importunity of friends prevailed with him to accept the bishop's present of a prebend, but when he came next morning seriously to reflect upon the necessary attendants and consequences of this his new preferment, he was much dissatisfied ; for he found that he could not keep it with a safe and quiet conscience." He therefore prevailed on his kinswoman Lady Armyne to go to the bishop and get him released. The bishop told the lady, "I have had many countesses, ladies and others, that have been suitors to me to get preferements for their friends ; but you are the first that ever came to take away a preferment, and that from one that I bestowed it on with my own hands."

The puritan squires took their part in the earlier parliaments of Charles I, and when privy seals were sent out for forced loans in default of parliamentary supply Lord Lincoln was committed to the Tower for dissuading others from paying, and Armyne, Grantham, Sir John Wray and others were committed to prison.

Reyner's episcopal patron, John Williams, was a shrewd and supple Welshman seeking a career in the church, who by winning the favour of James I had become dean of Westminster in 1620, and in the following year lord keeper of the great seal and bishop of Lincoln. On the accession of Charles I he suffered a reversal of fortune, and was deprived of the great seal. His support of the Petition of Right in the House of Lords seemed to commit him to a party. He incurred the bitter hatred of William Laud, bishop of London, who became

archbishop of Canterbury in 1633 ; and he was charged with favouring puritans and nonconformists. It is clear that the puritan gentry were accustomed to approach him on questions of church patronage and order. In 1632 Sir William Armyne wrote to him commending a minister who wished to keep a lecture at Stamford, as being conformable and of a quiet and peaceable spirit ; and in 1635 Sir Anthony Irby had a suggestion of a successor to a resigning vicar of Boston to make to him. It was given in evidence against him in the Star Chamber that he discouraged certain diocesan officials, among them Sir John Lamb, from proceeding in ecclesiastical courts against puritans, and that

> he asked Lamb what kind of people these puritans were of whom he complained, and whether they did pay their loan money ? To which Lamb replied, They did conform upon that account and paid their money ; but nevertheless they were puritans, not conformable to the Church : to which the bishop replied, If they pay their monies so readily to the King, the puritans are the King's best subjects, and I am sure, said the bishop, the puritans will carry all at last.

There, if the testimony be true, spoke the realist politician. He was brought into the Star Chamber upon a trumped-up charge, and was fined and sent to the Tower, where he lay until he was sent for to resume his seat in the Lords in the Long Parliament.

During these years Reyner was, according to Calamy, very laborious in the duties of his place, "warning every one night and day with tears, teaching them publicly, and from house to house" ; being an example of a pious, diligent and conscientious pastor. In 1639 he was invited to take pastoral charge of the English Congregational church at Arnhem in Guelderland ; but hoping that better times were approaching in England he declined. But affairs in England were to be worse before they were better. He was summoned to appear before the commissary's court to certify his conformity to the rites and ceremonies prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer. The outbreak of further strife leading to civil war put an end to these proceedings.

When Lincoln was occupied by the royalists in 1643 Reyner had his goods plundered, and was in danger of being shot in his church. He fled and settled first in Yarmouth and then in Norwich. After two years he returned to Lincoln, and in the second civil war, during a royalist raid, he fled into the Minster library, where the royalists followed him with drawn swords, swearing they would have him dead or alive. He opened the door, and having been stripped of his coat and purse, was led off in triumph. Luckily for him one of the

royalist captains, who had been his pupil when he was a school master at Market Rasen, espied and released him.

He dedicated his *Precepts for Christian Practice, or, the Rule of the New Creature new model'd* to "The Right Worshipful the Mayor and Aldermen, with the rest of my Christian Friends in the City of Lincolne." He wrote:

> I feel my heart inclined hereunto, because I have lived and laboured long with you. Full twenty eight years are run out, since I was call'd to this City by the general Vote of all the godly in it. All which time (together with my spirits and strength) I have spent among you, and upon you ; but for about two years, in the heat of the late unhappy broiles ; when the good hand of providence removed me to a City of refuge, to wit, Norwich, where God was pleased to set me on work . . . I know not how soone I shall put off this my Tabernacle, I do not expect to live long . . .

He was still in Lincoln in 1658, but he escaped the troubles that might have come upon him after the Restoration, for he died in or about 1660. By then the parliamentary leaders among the gentry also were dead and a new and very different chapter was about to open.

J. W. F. HILL

1 References to documents in support of the argument of this paper will be found in my *Tudor and Stuart Lincoln* (C.U.P., 1956), and are not repeated here.

Isaac Watts' *Guide To Prayer*

'A PRAYER BOOK without Forms' is Isaac Watts' description of his little volume of 156 pages. It is one of his first works, having been published in 1715, the same year as his *Divine Songs*, and is the fruit of his partial retirement from the Mark Lane Church owing to ill-health in 1712 when he became the guest of Sir Thomas and Lady Abney. It is designed for young Christians and particularly the family man who finds it difficult to lead in prayer at home. It deals with many aspects of prayer : its nature and method, free prayer and set prayers, the cultivation of prayer, together with many practical problems which face the beginner. And incidentally, it allows us to eavesdrop upon the prayers of him whose praises often adorn our worship.

Watts speaks of the need of his book. He warmly commends Matthew Henry's *Method of Prayer*, published five years earlier, but examination shows this to be rather like an anthology of Biblical prayers. He owns his indebtedness to *Discourses Concerning the Gift of Prayer* by John Wilkins, Bishop of Chester, but this was over forty years old and, furthermore, we can suppose, might not commend itself to Dissenters who were not accustomed to seeking spiritual instruction in episcopal directions. Watts also acknowledges indebtedness to John Owen. He does not trouble even to name which of Owen's writings he had used, assuming that readers would need no telling.

The parts into which Watts divides prayer are in the main normal. They are Invocation, Adoration, Confession, Petition, Pleading, Profession (or Self-Dedication), Thanksgiving, and Blessing.

In the first two sections we are immediately reminded of the temper of the times. Great stress is placed upon the nature and attributes of God and the lowliness of man. This Calvinist theme is constantly reiterated in all the sections. Let us hear one of the prayers of Adoration :

> Thou art very great, O Lord, thou art cloathed with Honour and Majesty. Thou art the Blessed and only Potentate, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. All things are naked and open before thine Eyes. Thou searchest the Heart of Man, but how unsearchable is thine Understanding ? and thy Power is unknown. Thou art of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity. Thy Mercy

endures for ever. Thou art slow to Anger, abundant in Goodness, and thy Truth reaches to all Generations.'

Perhaps we should expect of the Calvinist at prayer a lengthy section on Confession but we should be wrong. Its length is about equal to that on Adoration. Watts does not fail to use that favourite epithet of his which occurs in some of his hymns now never sung: worm. Indeed he rather overdoes it: 'Man that is a Worm, and the Son of Man that is but a Worm! 'Tis in thee that we live, move and have our Being.' This is too suggestive of the graveyard.

The stamp of the age is upon every section of the book. Everything has to be neatly divided and subdivided. Petition, for example, is divided into Deprecation and Comprecation. The latter is 'a Request of Good things to be bestow'd' and these in turn are to be offered up for ourselves and then our fellows. Under Deprecation we must pray to be delivered from evils, temporal, spiritual and eternal. The good things we request are naturally also of these three kinds. Orderliness, then, existed in prayer as well as in sermon; garden and building displayed the same characteristic: we are indeed in the eighteenth century.

Among the petitions are several for the Church: 'Zion lies near to the heart of God, and her Name is written upon the Palms of the Hands of our Redeemer.' Indeed, we ought to plead more earnestly for the Church than for earthly kingdoms for 'His Church He values above Kingdoms and Nations.' We recall 'Jesus shall reign where'er the sun', inspired by *Ps.* lxxii, as we read another prayer that God 'would spread his Gospel among the Heathens, and make the Name of Christ known and glorious from the rising of the Sun to its going down.'

One of the curiosities of the book is the small place accorded to national affairs. There is only one sentence on them and this does not mention the Sovereign. The chief plea is for liberty and peace. If Watts' patriotism was somewhat uncertain at this time it is hardly surprising. Intolerance under Anne was at its peak until her death in 1714, and, as the book was published the next year, Watts' attitude is understandable.

Harder to understand is the equally small place given to friends and near relatives in petition. They too deserve more than the one sentence they get. Do men not need guidance at this point? Watts has nothing to say on this. Was it because he was not a family man himself?

There follows in Watts' method a section uncommon to liturgies, that of Pleading. It consists of seven ways in which a man may plead

or argue his case before God. Although at first sight this may not appeal to us to-day, traces of these ways of pleading will be found on most Christians' lips at some time in life. We may plead, for example, from the soreness of our trials. We quote a passage here because it seems to carry us into Isaac Watts' sick-room during the long illness he had recently borne :

> My Sorrows, O Lord, are such as overpress me, and endanger my dishonouring thy Name and thy Gospel. My Pains and my Weaknesses hinder me from thy Service, and I am rendred useless upon Earth, and a Cumberer of the Ground : They have been already of so long Continuance that I fear my flesh will not be able to hold out, nor my Spirit to bear up, if thine hand abide thus heavy upon me. If this Sin be not subdued in me, or that Temptation removed, I fear I shall be turned aside from the Paths of Religion, and let go my Hope.

Other ways of pleading with God are illustrated at length. We may plead on the basis of God's mercies, lovingkindness, wisdom, might and so forth. We have certain claims upon Him in so far as He is our Maker, King and Father. 'Are not the Bowels of a Father with thee and tender Compassions ?' Then again, we should dare to keep God to His promises :

> Remember thy Word is past in Heaven, 'Tis recorded among the Articles of thy sweet Covenant, that I must receive Light and Love and Strength and Joy and Happiness ; and art thou not a faithful God to fulfil every one of those Promises ?

With Ezekiel we should plead with God for His Name's sake and we should make use of the experience of others as does the Psalmist, 'Our Fathers cried unto thee . . .' Finally, our 'most powerful and prevailing Argument, is the Name and Mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Thus Watts commends Pleading to us. The saints of the Old Testament used it and God is graciously condescending and hears us, though 'we are not to suppose that our Arguments can have any real Influence on God's own Will.'

Self-Dedication or Profession, the next part of prayer, Watts himself says, is seldom mentioned by writers. It is divided, following the customary pattern, into various headings and several lengthy prayers are provided. We extract one long, typical and yet elegant sentence to illustrate the kind of prayer in this section :

> I give my Soul that has much Corruption in it by Nature, and much of the remaining Power of Sin, into the Hands of my

> Almighty Saviour, that by his Grace he may form all my Powers anew ; that he may subdue every disorderly Passion ; that he may frame me after his own Image, fill me with his own Grace, and fit me for his own Glory.

In the section on Thanksgiving, temporal benefits are merely touched upon whereas the spiritual blessings conferred upon mankind by the plan of salvation are elaborated. We are also to thank God that 'among the Works of thy Creation we should be placed in the Rank of rational Beings.'

The prayer system ends with our Blessing God and then the Amen. The Amen, incidentally, involves four sub-headings !

We must now spare a moment to record our impressions thus far. How good it is to see the high place given to Adoration in Watts' worship. This accords with his hymns and is what we should expect of a humble Calvinist. Our only regret is that he can only spend seven lines on Christ in this section. 'It will not be improper to make mention of the Name of Christ,' he says, and goes on to note His Incarnation and Atonement. In those days there was a larger emphasis upon natural religion than there is to-day, though the urban worshipper's effusions over mountains, streams, woodlands and their charming inhabitants, which are particularly manifest amongst us at Harvest Festivals and Sunday School Anniversaries, were unknown. However, in this book, nowhere can we escape from the presence of God's majesty. A. P. Davis is perhaps a little unkind to Watts when he says that he makes God a sort of divine Lord Mayor who must be addressed in correct terms[2] but we know what Watts felt and it is an essential element in worship. 'We that are but Dust and Ashes take upon us to speak to thy Majesty. We bow ourselves before thee in humble address.'

No doubt Watts is only like other Dissenters of his day, and indeed a good many ever since, whose religion is dominantly individualistic. His fellows, his friends, society and state, these are but barely dealt with. Even when he prays for the Church, its fellowship and its Sacraments are ignored and it is as a vehicle for individual salvation that he sees it. Some of his hymns are otherwise at times but that such is the case here is only another instance of the lack of corporate sense which was characteristic of the age. Indeed, we are still a long way from reaching the right balance between the individual and corporate elements in Christian worship and practice.

The Bible obviously guides Watts in his understanding of prayer. Though he is not for ever citing references, as do many of his contemporaries, he employs plenty of Biblical material. It seems that he

includes his new heading of Pleading because of the Scriptural precedents for it, and he feels obliged to incorporate Imprecation into his section on Petition for the same reason though he skilfully extracts its sting, pointing out that vengeance cannot be invoked against our enemies but only against Christ's.

The language of the prayers is more conversational than that of the Prayer Book, yet more dignified than that of the street. A. P. Davis declares that Watts was 'an ingrained compromiser'[3] and maybe here we have another example of it, though, as far as the language of prayer amongst Free Churchmen is concerned, if Watts is a compromiser, so are many of us, quite deliberately.

However, there is no doubt about the compromise, a sound compromise, which Watts makes between extempore prayer and set forms of prayer. He grants that forms have their uses. It is better to use them than not to pray at all. A set form may sometimes express our feelings better than we can. It may come to our aid in a time of spiritual dryness. We are well advised to borrow expressions and thoughts from such prayers. But to be confined to them is the danger. Then the natural outflowing of our thoughts is prevented and the gift of prayer cannot be developed. 'We damp our inward Devotion and prevent the Holy Fire from kindling within us.' 'Meer Lip-Service' is encouraged and ' 'tis very apt to make our Spirits cold and flat, formal and indifferent in our Devotion.' 'When we continually tread one constant Road of Sentences or Tract of Expressions, they become like an old beaten Path in which we daily travel, and we are ready to walk on without particular Notice of the several parts of the way.' Readers with psychiatric interests will be delighted to hear that Watts is on their side: 'The Duty of Prayer is very useful to discover to us the Frame of our own Spirits' and he adds, 'a constant use of Forms will much hinder our Knowledge of our selves.' Chief amongst Watts' arguments against set forms, and chief amongst Owen's, is that they are not fitted to all occasions and suited to all frames of spirit. A man at prayer, says Watts, should be like a doctor, not a chemist. The latter knows the prescriptions but the former is skilled in medicine and applies his knowledge to each particular case. Finally, to drive his point home, he quotes a long passage from Bishop Wilkins to show that even those who advocate the Prayer Book recognize its limitations and advise men to grow up in prayer and not rest satisfied with prescribed forms.

On the other hand, Watts is equally firm with those who depend on 'sudden Motions and Suggestions ; as though we were to expect the perpetual Impression of the holy Spirit upon our Minds as the Apostles and inspired Saints.' Extempore prayer, let us note, means

to Watts spontaneous prayer, completely unpremeditated, and such prayer he would encourage in private or in the case of gifted and experienced persons such as Ministers in public, but normally prayer ought to be well premeditated. Here then is the compromise between the set form and the unpremeditated utterance. Premeditation will help us to avoid long pauses and hesitations, ramblings and impertinent rhapsodies of words which offend both the pious and the profane. Nevertheless, in another part of the book, he warns us not to despise the humble Christian who 'falls into many thoughtless Indecencies of Gesture in Prayer, or delivers his Sentences with a most unhappy Tone of Voice.' Who knows? 'Perhaps he was never taught to practise Decency when he was young.'

Watts certainly believed in training people to pray. He distinguishes between the Gift and the Grace of prayer at some length, a distinction which has probably occurred to few of us. The former refers to the tongue, to facility of expression, the latter to the heart, to the spirit inspiring prayer. Christians can develop the Gift and attain further Grace.

Language, voice and gesture occupy a surprising proportion of the training scheme (29 pages). No doubt, this was what the respectable young man wanted to know. The advice in the first place is to model language upon Scripture and to learn verses from *Psalms* and *Job* day by day. To add authoritative weight to his advice he quotes a long passage from 'the most authentick Judge of fine Thoughts and Language that our Age has produced', from *The Spectator* for June 14th, 1712. It concludes, 'when Mortals converse with their Creator, they cannot do it in so proper a Style as that of the holy Scriptures.' We recall that *The Spectator* also thought well of Watts. Not every use of Scripture pleased Watts, however, and he particularly mentions his weariness at so often hearing about the 'Blessings of the upper and nether Springs.' He warns men of length, obscurity and parentheses. Archaisms sometimes cause difficulty: 'we do thee to wit' for 'we acquaint thee' for example. Watts blames the Prayer Book and Sternhold and Hopkins for some of this. He also admonishes the clever young fellow with his knowledge of French and Latin for airing it: 'Thou, O Lord, art our Dernier ressort' or 'The beatific Splèndors of thy Face irradiate the celestial Region, and felicitate the Saints'. Then there is philosophic jargon and mystical language: 'God is an Abyss of Light, a Circle whose Center is every where.' Both glittering and coarse expression should be shunned: 'let your Language be grave and decent, which is a Medium between Magnificence and Meanness.' Especially does Watts dislike the ignorance which betrayed men into talking of 'rolling upon Christ' and of 'swimming upon Christ to dry Land' and though to speak of the worm was just,

he deplores those who 'rake all the Sinks of Nastiness to fetch Metaphors for their Sins.' In the midst of this lecture Watts does not forget to press us with a home-truth: 'The Reason why we want Expressions in Prayer, is many times because we use our selves so little to speak about the things of Religion and another world. A Man that hath but a tolerable Share of natural Parts, and no great Volubility of Speech, learns to talk well upon the Affairs of his own Trade and Business in the World, and scarce ever wants Words to discourse with his Dealers, and the reason is, because his Heart and his Tongue are frequently engaged therein.'

Instructions concerning voice are ordinary enough: be natural, be distinct, not too slow or too fast and do not cant.

Gesture refers largely to posture in prayer. True, there are some grotesque instructions about not wringing the countenance 'as it were to squeeze out our Words or our tears' and not indulging in 'tossings and shakings of the Head'. It seems that closing the eyes for prayer was not usual in those days because he says that owing to distraction, 'some Persons have found it most agreeable to keep the Eyes always closed in Prayer.' Under this heading too, Watts finds occasion to criticise the common slackness and irreverence found in the conduct of family prayers. Indeed the section, in this and other respects, does not encourage us to believe that, in spite of their length in prayer, we should have found as much reverence in the average eighteenth-century Meeting House as in our Churches to-day. An interesting point to which Horton Davies has drawn attention[4] is that Watts disapproves of sitting for prayer. His campaign here was fought without much success. His main grounds are that it is not Scriptural; it is also a posture of 'Rest and Laziness'. Kneeling and standing are proper and so is prostration. Did not Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Daniel, Ezekiel and John prostrate themselves? But it should be done in private! The question of posture in prayer receives more attention from Watts than from us to-day and yet in many ways we are more aware of the interplay of physical and mental factors.

In another part of the book Watts labours to help the beginner to overcome his nervousness. Ten arguments are advanced. (i) 'Get above the Shame of appearing religious . . .' (ii) 'Make religious Conversation your Practice . . .' (iii) Work at prayer 'in secret for some considerable time before you begin in public.' (iv) Prepare your heart as well as your thoughts for prayer. (v) Say to yourself, 'Dare I speak to the great and dreadful God, and shall I be afraid of Man?' (vi) 'Be not too tender of your own Reputation in these externals of Religion . . . Bashfulness has often a great deal of fondness for Self mingled with it.' (vii) Make your first attempts in a small familiar

company 'that you may be under no fear nor concern about their Sentiments of your Performance.' (viii) '. . . Be short ; offer up a few more common and necessary Requests at first . . .' (ix) Do not be discouraged. 'Let not *Satan* prevail with you therefore to cast off this Practice . . .' (x) Pray earnestly for 'holy liberty of Speech.'

Watts also advises the beginner to use set forms of prayer as a help in devotion and to practise what he calls 'mixt prayer', that is, the use of a written prayer or Scriptural text as a foundation for one's prayer and then allowing one's own expressions to spring from it. Another method commended is, once a month, to write out one's own prayer along the several lines set out at the beginning of the book and to use it morning and evening. After doing this month by month, the language and content of prayer will become familiar and the practice may be discontinued. Watts believed that prayer from pulpits would have been much better if theological students had made such 'experiments', as he calls them. The theological student should practise this writing-out once a week.

Before concluding, Watts preaches us a sermon persuading us to pray. One wonders whether this should not have come at the beginning of the book. He calls it his 'Persuasive' and it occupies 16 pages. We do not propose to speak of this but it contains a sidelight on pastoral work which is of interest. A function of the pastor in all generations comes to the fore and is here used to incite the ordinary man to greater heights in prayer :

> How sweet a Refreshment have ye found under inward Burdens of Mind, or outward Afflictions, when in broken Language you have told them to your Minister, and he hath spread them before God, and that in such words as have spoke your whole Soul and your Sorrows ? And you have experienced a sweet Serenity and Calm of Spirit ; you have risen up from your Knees with your Countenance no more sad : and have ye not wished for the same Gift your selves . . .?

The content and theological outlook revealed in Watts' prayers have already been referred to. Lastly we must make a brief comment upon Watts' scheme of training in prayer, bearing in mind that the book had several editions and was in popular use for many decades.

Is there not a most serious omission ? The Lord's Prayer does not appear as our supreme model. This is a great loss.

That the book is very practical and was therefore popular has been made clear. One is left wondering at the end, however, whether Watts expected too much of his training scheme. He wants to convince Dissenters that the Gift and Graces of Prayer could be developed

with study and practice, but not without. This is something insufficiently realised to-day; we may learn even from Watts' suggestions. Whilst admitting the value of all this, we must question whether he emphasizes that personal faith and experience which is the mainspring of prayer. He believes this but that he succeeded in conveying its absolute necessity is far from clear. He laments the coldness and indifference of many Christians and wants to awaken them and yet he fails to mention in his arguments with them the necessity of their own spiritual regeneration before they can truly pray. Although the advent of Wesley was still a long way off, the need of revival had already been felt. In his way Watts tried to provoke it but was he sufficiently aware of the spiritual drought which reasoning alone could not break? As a man of the Bible he was, as his hymns show, evangelical; as a man of his time he was, as his books show, intellectual. Did he allow the intellectual man to dominate the evangelical too much so that technique was as important as faith?

We cannot doubt Watts' own faith and personal communion; to conclude, we quote a beautiful passage from his 'Persuasive':

> When a holy Soul comes before God, he hath much more to say than merely to beg. He tells his God what a Sense he hath of the divine Attributes, and what high Esteem he pays to his Majesty, his Wisdom, his Power, and his Mercy. He talks with him about the Works of Creation, and stands wrapt up in Wonder. He talks about the Grace and Mystery of Redemption, and is yet more fill'd with Admiration and Joy . . . . And shall we content our selves with Sighs and Groans and a few short Wishes, and deprive our Souls of so rich, so divine, so various a Pleasure, for want of knowing how to furnish our such Meditations, and to speak this blessed Language?

JOHN H. TAYLOR.

1 As *A Guide to Prayer* is a short work and quotations from it are easy to locate, page references are not given.
2 A. P. Davis, *Isaac Watts*, p. 91.
3 A. P. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 222.
4 *The Worship of the English Puritans*, p. 52.

JOHN REYNOLDS 1740-1803

AT the end of the Jubilee salute of the London Missionary Society to its *Fathers and Founders*—a book of brief and pious biographies under that title—it is written :

> There were so many devoted men aroused into action by the early movements of the London Missionary Society that the Editor is quite aware that some of the best friends of the cause may have been overlooked by him, while he has been compelled to omit others from want of such materials as would have justified an attempt at anything like a detail of their personal history.

A list of names follows which includes that of John Reynolds, and then it goes on : "He would willingly have chronicled all the wise and good who came forward to the help of the Lord against the mighty, but this would have been to write memoirs of the flower of the British Churches".

The Rev. John Reynolds may not have left behind the makings of a biography according to the ideas of Dr. John Morison, but he did leave personal diaries in the hands of his family. To his descendants, their ancestor and the L.M.S. were sufficiently closely linked for them to have offered both these diaries and his portrait as a gift to the Society. The rosy-cheeked, bewigged countenance of John Reynolds of Camomile Street Chapel looks down on all whose way brings them sufficiently high up in Livingstone House. This man who left nothing for a biographer of 1844 was minister, from 1774 until his death in 1803, of the London Church, worshipping in a street running between Bishopsgate and Leadenhall Street, whose fellowship is continued today in the City Temple.

The picture of himself that Reynolds gives, in the portion of his diary that is available, is that of a man who enjoyed life to the full. Of an April morning he wrote : "How sweet and pleasant the coming spring in Creation, alive and smiling. The fields how fragrant! The sower whistling behind the steady plow, whilst the cattle appear strong and willing to labour. Great and marvellous are thy works, O thou most high". When, however, it came to his enjoyment of music he confided to his diary :

> Went with Mrs. Reynolds and Sally and dined with Mrs. Bowden, drank tea and supped with Mr. and Mrs. Cook and a great deal of company, Was exceedingly entertained with musick, both vocal and instrumental. Got home safe at 12 o'clock.

> Visiting and company a great hindrance to the important duties of the family and the study. 'Tis in these I find most entertainment and improvement to my mind. The first time, and hope 'twill be the last time, that I have stayed out so late since I came to London.

It seems he had to apologize to himself for that kind of enjoyment. Perhaps the reason is contained in the following:

> Sept. 20, 1775—Rode to Peckham to engage Dr. Hunter to preach for me Sabbath afternoon. Had many humbling and adoring thoughts of Providence in looking twenty years back. Twenty years ago when I walked over the same ground, I was a vain, presumptuous, wicked youth. But now, a Preacher of the Glorious Gospel, and employed in directing sinners from their ruin, into which I was nearly plunged, to the salvation held forth in the Scriptures.

Or was this contrast just typical of the times? It is even more marked here: "June, 1792—A fine morning. Walked out with Mrs. Wade and Miss Holbert thro' Dulwich. Went into a Public house and had a snap. The ladies sat upon the style and charmed me with their singing"; adding almost fiercely: "Mr. Holbert made me a present of two guineas. He is a worthy man. The Mother and daughter wretched and miserable".

During the latter part of his first pastorate, as minister of the two Churches, Clavering and Wenden, Essex, (the diary available begins at this time) when he was living midway between the two places, at Newport, he writes at length of his love of study and meditation, of the wonder and help of the long hours spent alone. He confides to the page how unprofitable some people's company is, and how unedifying their conversation; and how few there are whose talk is worth while. During his busy London life he records, one feels with a sigh of relief, periods short or long spent in "meditation, a most desirable and delightful employ", or simply, "close in study".

John Reynolds was born at Winchester on 30 June, 1740, six years before Matthew Wilks of the Tabernacle, a friend of later years. Reynolds said he was wont to worship at Winchester Cathedral, but as he was brought to London when he was five years old, he could have remembered only enough to send him exploring when he revisited his birthplace in 1775. Of his mother there is no record, and his father, who had a situation in the Customs, was drowned in the Thames while his only son was still at school. An uncle then took charge of the boy. There was one sister who married a business man named Fonton. We are told that Mr. Fonton got into debt, embezzled money

and disappeared, causing a family scandal over "a black and shocking catalogue of fraudulence", at a time when the Fontons lived next door to the Reynolds'.

Looking back on his course, John Reynolds confided to his diary:

> O how thankful am I that the hand of Providence lead me out of the Church in which I was wrapt up in gross darkness and ignorance, and how indebted am I to the Grace which taught the danger of my state and the importance of salvation thro' the blood of Jesus. ONCE, my thoughts were wholly turned to the Church. Nothing afforded me the pleasure that the expectation and hopes of being a clergyman once did. I communicated my views to my schoolmaster, who had a son at Oxford, and a son-in-law in full Orders. The latter encouraged me greatly and proposed a plan for my admission to the University. But above all my wishes and designs, Providence interposed, blasted my hopes, put me under the care of an Uncle, from whom I expected great things. I went to Meeting to please him and secure his interest. He dyed, I was disappointed.

Reynolds was apprenticed to a goldsmith, possibly after his uncle's death ; and finally prepared to enter the Dissenting ministry through the influence of the Rev. Edward Hitchin. From the place Dr. Thomas Gibbons, one of the tutors, heldin his life, one might suppose that Reynolds went to Homerton Academy, then at Mile End. He entertained the Doctor in his own home, in 1772, with great pride, noting that he was a worthy, generous, pious, human, affectionate friend. It was Dr. Gibbons who made it financially possible for Reynolds' son, also John, to go to Bishops Stortford School at the age of eight years, where his own son had just settled as a master. When Dr. Gibbons, in 1785, had a stroke while speaking at the Hoxton Square Coffee House, it was John Reynolds who appeared from his home nearby, and took charge.

Preaching excursions, engaged in while still a very young man, took Reynolds into Kent, where he was a welcome pulpit supply at Sevenoaks. His first wife was a Miss Deals of Folkestone, whom he must have married not later than the time of his call to the double pastorate of Clavering and Wenden, in Essex, in 1765, as their son, John, was born towards the end of that year. On 23rd September, 1772, his second son, William, was baptized, but *his* mother was a local lady. When John's mother died, and William's mother married John Reynolds, is not recorded in the available diary. Reynolds lived at Clavering until 1771, and then moved to Newport, as being midway between his two Churches—or was it to be nearer his second wife's people at Pondcross, Newport ? The Wenden church was an old building,

which was pulled down in the latter part of 1778, after a hundred years' use, during the pastorate of Reynolds' successor, and a new church was then built at Newport. Reynolds received into membership of the Clavering Church, soon after his settlement, a young man named Jack Ray, who went into the ministry. Officially, John Mead Ray left Homerton College in 1773 and settled at Sudbury. John Reynolds, who watched his college course with interest, records of Ray, "expelled from Homerton Academy last Wednesday. The offence I am a stranger to. I hope nothing that materially affects his moral character". Two months later he had Ray preaching at Clavering, and found his gifts promising. Ray's lifelong pastorate at Sudbury and his place in the counsels of the London Missionary Society show that Reynolds' hope was realized.

Reynolds' Kentish mother-in-law died on 1st April, 1773, leaving him £20 instead of an expected £100. "I have more than once been kept out of my right, but God knows how to right me," was the end of his comment on this occasion. All through life he tried not to be rebellious over his poverty, though he "had great exercise of mind respecting outward providences" and was often down to his last shilling ; but he found it hard, often needing to remind himself of God's mercies. In his country days, on a stipend of £60 a year, he exclaimed with joy at the gift of a "new hatt", and it was an event when Mrs. Reynolds bought a silk dress in Bishops Stortford. He once noted that his friends had used him ill, in that he had been amongst them preaching and visiting, and they had let him go back to London about a guinea and a half out of pocket. Nevertheless, Reynolds made twelve visits to Essex, his wife's family being an added attraction, during the twenty years in London covered by the diary. He had many friends, for he took an active part in the life of the denomination, often exchanging pulpits within the area he could reach on foot, or occasionally by horse, coach or chaise. He went from Bishops Stortford in the south to Saffron Walden in the north, and often walked to the latter place for the weeknight lecture and social intercourse with intimate friends.

The Rev. William Porter, then of Camomile Street Chapel, arrived at Newport on 10th August, 1772, for the benefit of the air. He came to board with the Reynolds' and stayed, off and on, two and a half months. It is hard to believe that the business men who formed the diaconate and sent Porter to stay with John Reynolds did not know the nature of the complaint from which their minister was suffering. In all innocence Reynolds accepted the boarder, and, to his cost, very soon found out that a confirmed drunkard had been foisted on him. His pity for the man was strained to the utmost, and he felt keenly the humiliation involved, not so much for himself as for his calling. He

had to suffer his cellar to be raided at night rather than let his guest creep out of the house to seek drink from alehouse to alehouse, returning home in the early hours of the morning, and then being too ill to get up. Left with a friend in Walden for a few days, Mr. Porter had to be brought home in "Dr. Daye's chariot", being quite unfit to travel any other way.

Early in October 1772, John Reynolds received a letter from Mr. Keen, one of the Camomile Street deacons, and also a trustee of Whitefield's Tabernacle, asking him to preach at Camomile Street for two Sundays, with a view to a call, and also to interview some of the deacons, "a strange and astonishing providence". He replied that he was not free on the Sundays mentioned, but that he would come to town for one night to meet them. The day chosen for the journey, 27th October, was the day Mr. Porter chose to leave Newport, and we find John Reynolds travelling to town by coach, and William Porter, all unbeknown to him, riding off on his horse, leaving all his belongings behind. Mr. Keen was out at the chapel when Reynolds arrived, and did not get in until 9 p.m. In the meantime Mr. Porter called, very much the worse for liquor, and it was not until he was got away that conversation could begin. After a late night, several gentlemen of sense and character came to Mr. Keen's early in the morning, to propose that John Reynolds should become co-pastor with Mr. Porter. They tried to persuade him by "telling how acceptable my preaching had been to them, and how unanimous the whole Church and congregation were in giving me a Call". His refusal was courteous, but firm. It would not be for his honour nor their peace to be engaged with Mr. Porter in the pastoral office. When asked for his reason he declined to give it. "We parted with prayer and great affection, they telling me they hoped notwithstanding to see me again." During this visit to London, besides leaving a goose for his friend, Mr. Davis, he went with Mr. Keen to the Tabernacle House, where he met the Countess of Huntingdon. He described her as "a very amiable lady. Religion is most engagingly displayed in her whole conversation and deportment. A sweet mixture of dignity, affability, courtesy and piety".

His modest bill of eleven guineas for Mr. Porter's board was still unpaid by the latter's wife in February of the next year. There could have been much more unpleasantness than there was, had not John Reynolds, finally, stated his case, and told her to pay what she would to Mr. Glanville (probably a bookseller), accept his receipt, and let the matter drop. In February, 1773, Mr. Porter resigned, and on 26th August, 1773, Reynolds set off for London to preach for two Sundays at the request of Mr. Porter's former people. There was no mention of a Call in the invitation, and he turned the talk away every time the subject showed signs of coming up ; for, "I have no desire

of going to London except it may tend to the furtherance of the Gospel". How much, one wonders, was he baited with the prestige and honour of becoming a London minister? The Call, however, came nine days after his return home. He found it "hard to judge right, and difficult to determine. If I might move in a larger sphere of usefulness I would willingly go. If God will show me he has more work for me here, I am content to stay". His reply to the letter was followed by a deputation of two, one being Mr. Houston who, though it is nowhere so stated, appears to have been the leading deacon or Church secretary. John Reynolds' letter must have been non-committal, for they brought considerable pressure to bear. "They represented the prospect there was of comfort and usefulness". He later found plenty of the latter, but little of the former, on £120 a year, six children and no manse. He still made no decision, saying only that he should refer the matter to God, but went to London the next week for a few days, spending time in house hunting. It was not until 26th November that he told the Church Meeting at Wenden that he was leaving. "I then prayed, and continued to pray that if God's glory is not more advanced in my going than in my staying, that he would not suffer me to leave this part of his vineyard." That the news of what was afoot had not leaked out, and it was not until after this Church Meeting that any move was made to keep him, he took as the word he needed to reconcile him to the greater temptations involved in the greater opportunities of a London charge.

John Reynolds left Newport on 12th January, 1774, and was inducted to the pastorate of Camomile Street on 2nd March. Six different people offered prayer or preached, Dr. Gibbons concluding the proceedings. The first prayer was offered by the Rev. Thos. Towle, who "opened the work" from *I Timothy* 3.15 ; and singing separated each item on the programme. A dinner, followed at the White Hart, Bishopsgate, then tea quietly at Mr. Houston's, and home, thankful that all had gone off well. He records that there were eighty people present at his first Communion Service the following Sunday. Three weeks later he was formally introduced to his fellow London ministers, his name being put forward for election to the Congregational Board. The Rev. John Kello called next morning to say he had been elected at the evening meeting : "an honour I never sought. And I expected that the motion would have been strongly opposed, but it was carried nem. con." What, one wonders, gave rise to this expectation? Thereafter Reynolds became fully involved in the Dissenting life of London, and after about four years marvelled that he did not get tired either in, or of, the work.

The amount of preaching he engaged in seems to us excessive, for both prayer meeting and Church Meeting involved a sermon.

Of his own sermons, two and occasionally three a Sunday and several more during the week, he has told us nothing but the texts. He was always very concerned about the nearness of the presence of God during his preparation, and in the pulpit was very conscious of the atmosphere of his congregation. He felt shut up, or he had great freedom. The people might receive the Word with affection or be just attentive, or unresponsive. On one occasion he wrote that the people, in the morning, seemed to harden their hearts against reproof and conviction. In the afternoon he was enabled to speak close to the conscience, and to lift up his voice like a trumpet. But, he added, "could not escape without censure and a sneer, but I bless God that he made me faithful". It is fair to add that this was not his own congregation. To the many sermons Reynolds heard, at weekly lectures, prayer meetings, ordinations, and so on, he gave close attention. Occasionally he was so struck with the performance that he filled a whole page with the sermon headings and reasoning. More often his brief comments light up the abilities, or otherwise, of his contemporaries. "The subject most sensibly and movingly handled"—"Some plain and good things"—"a man of good abilities"—"delivered some useful things in a very awkward manner". Or it might be: "nothing in the sermon striking or saving"—"good composition, sound divinity, but neither life nor power". On one occasion when he had not been well and felt he could not manage the whole of the Sunday's duties, he asked his friend, the Rev. T. Curtis of Linton, Cambs., to preach for him at Camomile Street, and left this comment: "I was extremely hurt at hearing so miserable a performance, without method, without perspicuity, without consistency, a dogging, perplexing, unedifying piece of business. I was sensible he aimed at excelling himself and every other preacher and hereby he fell below himself and everyone besides". The congregation was obviously not used to this sort of thing, and he had to put up with a lot of fault-finding, while remaining loyal to his friend.

He had problems peculiar to the period in which he lived, more particularly the class distinctions of his time and the uneven distribution of wealth. When the vestry woman needed help, and he appealed for a collection on her behalf, it was the rich men who looked down their noses and passed the plate by. Mr. Keen, whom on first acquaintance he found a worthy, sincere and friendly man, was one of the offenders: "drank tea this afternoon with old Mrs. Moore; who found much fault with Mr. Keen on account of his unkindness and avariciousness." He found that the preachers in the Tabernacle connexion also gave him a bad name: "Methodism in the pulpit and Methodism in the vestry and the Tabernacle House are very different things. Mr. Keen has grown wealthy by his religion and oppresses the poor".

Mr. Houston was a trial all through the years from his fits of temper and rudeness, but Thomas Hodgson, one of the Chapel trustees, was also a thorn in the flesh. Looking at Reynolds' face, one feels sure he must have seen the funny side of the following episode:

> Monday, 18, August 1788. Went to Islington this morning to see Mr. Hodgson. Found him in bed with a bad leg, weighing of gold. I thought of the picture of the old miser. That is only a representation. This is real life. He had a religious book on the bed, which might inform his friends that he thought of heaven as well as his money. He complained heavily of the expense of a post chaise for himself and wife from Haverhill to London. Such cattle are only fit to ride in the basket of a coach. I left him as soon as possible. Called on Mr. James. There I found a Christian.

Several years later old Thomas Hodgson asked his minister to look over a section of his will relating to a bequest to help needy ministers. This man, who never helped his own minister, has his name to this day in the *Congregational Year Book*, in the entry Hodgson's Trust.

More to Reynolds' liking was the occasion when, having written to Mr. Clark, Master of the Bald Stag, Epping Forest, ordering dinner for the next Tuesday, 15th December, 1789, he rose that morning, which was an extremely wet one, and

> a little before eight we set off to Shoreditch Church. Went into the Clerk's house, thence into the Church. Old Cookson was ready. The parties were married and nothing discovered, and we returned to the house and breakfasted. Then dressed and away to the Forest, only Mr. and Mrs. Bury and Mrs. Reynolds and self. Got to the Bald Stag one o'clock. Exactly at two the dinner came in. I invited the landlord and his wife to dine with us.

Nothing lay beyond his interest, whether it was a hole in the Tower wall caused by lightning, seeing Magna Carta at the British Museum, or listening to the introduction of Bills in the House of Commons. He served the Denomination as a member of the King's Head Society, under whose auspices he had been trained, and attended the students' examinations at Homerton College. He seldom missed the Tuesday Coffee House meetings at Baker's, where discussion ranged from Methodists and politics to Dr. Addington's morals. One of these meetings of ministers, held on 4th November, 1794, has since been regarded as the beginning of the London Missionary Society. Reynolds was actively engaged on the Committee responsible for the publishing of the happenings leading up to the Society's formal founding, in September, 1795. He was a member of the Committee of Examination, and it is to him we owe the only record of its early proceedings. He

was also on the Committee for arranging transport to the South Seas, when a friendship must have sprung up between himself and Captain James Wilson who took the missionaries out in the *Duff*.

On 3rd August, 1796, when the ship *Duff* left Cox's Wharf, Limehouse, he had an appointment to dine on board with Captain Cox and William Wilson, which necessitated his walking to Wapping and hiring a boat to pursue the ship, only coming up with her below Greenwich, where she lay until her departure on 10th August. At the commissioning of the thirty missionaries on 28th July, when five ministers representing different denominations took part, John Reynolds was the Congregationalist who spoke the words, "Go, our beloved brother, and live agreeably to this Divine Book, and publish the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the heathen according to your calling, gifts and abilities in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost". Of the Communion Service prior to embarkation, on 9th August, with Dr. Haweis presiding, Reynolds wrote in his diary : "Mr. Brooksbank, Wilks and myself assisted in giving the bread and wine".

When the *Duff* returned and Captain Wilson was free to turn his thoughts to other matters, he took Reynolds into his confidence. On 4th December, 1798, Reynolds and Haweis accompanied Wilson to Denmark Hill, where the latter was to pay his suit to Miss Holbert. "The offer is a good one for that lady if she can see her own interest," wrote Reynolds, adding, after the visit, that the first interview, in his opinion, was extremely flattering to the Captain, The latter continued to confide in his friend until the business was happily concluded.

The Committee formed for the publishing of the Journal of the *Duff's* Voyage occupied Reynolds' attention. "My mind was made up respecting the sale of the copyright" suggests that he was a leading member of this Committee of Publications. When it was decided that it would be unwise to publish the sermon preached at the designation of the second company of missionaries to sail for the South Seas, it is surely a tribute to his tact and position in the counsels of the Missionary Society, that Reynolds undertook the distasteful duty of informing the preacher, "who found it a hard pill to swallow".

During May 1799, the Board and Committees of the Missionary Society were reorganized in the light of experience. The Committee of Examination, from being a chosen few, was opened to all London ministers, though in practice there were seldom more than ten, and frequently only two or three present at the monthly meetings. Reynolds only attended four times after this new arrangement started. A proportion of the directors, chosen by lot in the first place, now came off the Board annually and formed part of the Nominations Committee to select their successors. Reynolds was one of those on whom the

lot fell, and during his free year is recorded as attending a meeting of the Board as visitor. He was re-appointed in 1800, and the Board Minutes of 2nd June of that year record: "The Rev. John Reynolds then engaged in prayer, thanking God for the many instances of his goodness and mercy to our Brethren at Otaheite and New South Wales, lamenting the calamities that had befallen individuals, and intreating the favour and blessing of God on the missionaries sent out by the Society". He attended six more ordinary Board Meetings at one of which, on 14th March, 1803, the Rev. T. Ringeltaube's offer of service was accepted. He was also present at a specially meeting at Old Swan Lane, on 1st April, 1803, called "To testify respect for the Rev. John Eyre, Secretary, on the occasion of his funeral".

John Reynolds himself died soon after this, on 7th December, 1803. It seems strange that the *Evangelical Magazine* made no mention of his death, or of his burial at Bunhill Fields when his friend and fellow director, Joseph Brooksbank, spoke at the grave side, or of the funeral sermon preached by the Rev. W. Thorpe, of Tollington Park Chapel.

The Editor of *Fathers and Founders* drew largely on such obituaries and memoirs, and the omission of John Reynolds from the *Evangelical Magazine* would in itself have been sufficient reason for including one who served both his denomination and the London Missionary Society so whole-heartedly.

IRENE M. FLETCHER

REVIEWS

Visible Saints: The Congregational Way, 1640-1660. By Geoffrey F. Nuttall. (Oxford: Blackwell, 25s.)

Eleven years ago in *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, Dr. Nuttall gave us a notable monograph on certain aspects of the theology of radical Puritanism, particularly those which found their full development in Quakerism. Much of the material there presented was drawn from works which appeared in the period of the Commonwealth and Protectorate. In his latest book he provides a detailed study of Churches of "the Congregational way" during the same crowded and exciting decades. Never before have the life of these communities and the doctrines they sought to exemplify been so vividly, authoritatively and readably presented. This is a book for which all students of the 17th century will be grateful. It should also be read by those who are sharing in the contemporary search for a doctrine of the Church true at once to the Gospel, the New Testament and the lessons of Christian history.

A historical introduction traces the rise of "Congregational" churches, linking them with certain features to be found in mediaeval monasticism. Dr. Nuttall points out the importance of the ecclesiastically independent congregations ministered to by John à Lasco and Valérand Poullain, and then deals by way of Brownism with the non-separating and the separating Congregationalists of the mid-seventeenth century. The importance of the Eastern counties in this development is emphasized, but Dr. Nuttall rightly points out that he is more concerned to draw attention to typical figures and communities than to present any exhaustive personal or geographical survey.

The four principles he desires to illustrate are those of separation, fellowship, freedom and fitness, and to each a chapter is devoted. The historic names, widely used in the 17th century—Separatists, Congregationals, Independents and Saints—link themselves with these principles and taken together describe and characterize what was aimed at by groups of men and women in all parts of the Kingdom. They separated themselves not only from what they regarded as false ways of worship but from a national church, whatever its character. They covenanted as individuals, at Axminster, for example, "to walk together in a due and faithful attendance upon the Lord Jesus Christ in all his Ordinances and Appointments and in the faithful discharge of all those duties relating to the members of a Church of Christ"; and at the same time, as separate church fellowships, regarded themselves as "in communion" with one another. Though vigorous in controversy and asserting the duty of the local church to discipline and excommunicate, they repudiated compulsion in religion and stood for freedom of conscience at a time when many Presbyterians, as well as Anglicans and Romans, were intolerant on principle. They believed that the church should consist of those that are "Saints visible to the eye of rational charity"—to borrow the words of the Altham covenant.

All these points Dr. Nuttall illustrates in detail from his unrivalled knowledge of the books, pamphlets and church records of the period, discussing incidentally the question of ordination and the ministry, the controversies over baptism and the beginnings of Quakerism, and the contemporary expectations—doomed to disappointment—of a coming Kingdom of the Saints.

It was perhaps William Kiffin who first referred to "a company of Saints in a Congregationall way" and, when he used this phrase in 1641, he had already become a Baptist. Dr. Nuttall draws most of his material from paedobaptist sources, but he makes clear that the type of churchmanship he is depicting is "larger than any denomination in the modern sense" and many of those he quotes were denounced as "Anabaptists". The records of the earliest "associations" of Baptist churches—those in Berkshire, the Midlands and the West, for example, all of which date from the 1650's—would have enabled him to strengthen what he says about the communion of churches with one another. Indeed, in 1644, seven London churches, all of them Calvinistic in theology, declared :

> Although the particular Congregations be distinct and severall Bodies, every one a compact and Knit Citie in itself ; yet are they all to walk by one and the same Rule, and by all means convenient to have the Counsell and help one of another in all needful affaires of the church, as members of one body in the common faith under Christ their only head.

This same Confession, to which Kiffin's name is attached, describes "the Church, as it is visible to us" as "a company of visible Saints". The records of the Berkshire Baptists also show that millenarian and Fifth-Monarchy hopes were prevalent there as well as in East Anglia and that at the funeral of John Pendarves in 1656 they nearly led to serious tumult. But the Baptists were probably in general a more turbulent and varied company than those on whom this book concentrates attention.

Dr. Nuttall is, in the main, content to let the churches and their leaders speak for themselves. His "critical conclusion" is brief, but characteristically discriminating. Much that those of "the Congregational way" contended for—sometimes over-excitedly and harshly, perhaps, though usually under great provocation—is now widely accepted. They made a vital contribution not only to their own time but to the whole course of Christian history. They were certainly not as blind to their missionary obligations as has sometimes been suggested. Roger Williams deserves mention in that connection as well as John Eliot, while the money voted by the Long Parliament in 1648 for missionary work abroad was not solely due to Presbyterian influence. On this and many other issues much additional evidence might be offered.

This is a rich and important book, which will stimulate readers to rewarding inquiries of their own, as well as making them eager for further 17th century studies from Dr. Nuttall's pen. One of the author's fellow-Congregationalists has recently declared that "anyone looking at the actual condition of Congregationalism today must acknowledge that its prospects are extremely uncertain" (see Daniel Jenkins, *Congregationalism : a Restatement*, p. 149). Dr. Nuttall and those who reflect on what he here sets forth, will probably be ready to echo words he quotes from Matthias Maurice, of Rothwell : "So long as the Root of it is in the Bible it will grow again". One important qualification has to be made regarding the general picture of Congregationalism here presented, however. It may best be put by drawing attention to some words of Professor T. J. Wertenbaker : "Massachusetts . . . affords the best opportunity for a study of the Puritan experiment . . . In England the Puritan experiment was never made, because the Puritans at no time had the necessary power, not even under Oliver Cromwell". In *The Puritan Oligarchy* (1947), Professor Wertenbaker provides a detailed account of the Congregationalism of New England. At many points this confirms Dr. Nuttall's description and analysis,

but in regard to the relation of the churches to the civil authorities and in regard to toleration it indicates that one must be careful not to advance too great claims for those of "the Congregational way".

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

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Mortlake in the 17th Century and the History of its Congregational Church 1662-1950. By C. Marshall Rose. (8s. 6d.)

Mr. Marshall Rose has produced a substantial history of this church and of the turbulent times from which it sprang. The early part of the book tells us about the Dutch colony at Mortlake and the influential Dissenters of the 17th century and is the fruit of exhaustive research. The story of the Church is full and frank, one of unending struggles, particularly with debts—a familiar theme with small congregations.

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Also received :

Colin R. Garwood, *By Grace . . . Through Faith.* (Staines Congregational Church).

Stanley Griffin, *History of Union Congregational Church* (Plymouth).

W. E. Wilson Older, *Huyton Congregational Church : a historical survey,* 1956. (Liverpool).

John R. Palmer, *The Holy Barter : Part of the Story of the People of God who exchanged Time for Eternity in Crediton Congregational Church 1757-1957.* 1957.

A. Frank Rock, *Intake Congregational Church (1935-1956) and the Churches of Doncaster,* 1956.

(D. H. Strange), *A History of Churchtown Congregational Church, 1807-1957,* 1957. (Southport).

(E.P.Wilson), *The Elmwood Story, 1946-1956,* 1957. (Birmingham).

H. G. Tibbutt continues his excellent research work : the Spring, Summer and Autumn numbers of the *Bedfordshire Magazine* carry three articles by him on "The Dissenting Academies of Bedfordshire" at Turvey, Bedford and Cotton End.

Our Contemporaries

PROCEEDINGS of the Wesley Historial Society (vol. xxx, part 6), June, 1956, contains "The Stratton Mission (1811-1818) and Bible Christian Origins" by Thomas Shaw; "John Wesley and Thomas Hanson, the 'Brown-Bread Preacher'" by Frank Baker; and "The Sunderland Theological Institution" by F. F. Bretherton. The first Principal was Dr. William Antliff, and the Rev. Charles Surman contributes a letter to the following number (part 7, Oct., 1956) acknowledging Congregationalism's debt to Dr. Antliff through his son who, after training in Lancashire Independent College, held Congregational pastorates for twenty-one years before launching in 1891 the Congregational Insurance Co. Ltd. The main article in this number is by Frank Baker on "James Bourne (1781-1860) and the Bemersley Book-Room".

Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society (vol. xi, No. 2), October, 1956, has two biographical sketches, one of Daniel Jones, a benefactor of Manchester College, by J. Islan Jones, and the other of Earl Morse Wilbur, by H. McLachlan, containing many personal reminiscences. The other article was delivered as a paper to the Annual Meeting of the Society in 1956 and is concerned with Moravians in Poland. It has the intriguingly modern-sounding title "Polish Brethren and the Problem of Communism in the XVIth Century" and was given by Professor Stanislaw Kot; it is of interest beyond the normal circle of readers of these *Transactions*.

Our opposite number in the U.S.A., The Congregational Christian Historical Society issues a most useful quarterly *News Letter*, of which the Summer, 1956, number is of particular value. It begins with an article, "Local Church History" by Prof. Charles J. Kennedy, and has suggestions as to how to set about writing such a history, and also about preserving contemporary material for the benefit of the historian of the future.

E. W. DAWE.