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TRANSACTIONS

CONGREGATIONAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOL. XIX. No. 2. AUGUST 1961

PRICE TO NON-MEMBERS 6s.

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CONGREGATIONAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
EDITOR JOHN H. TAYLOR, B.D.
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Editorial

The Annual Meeting

Some sixty members and friends were present for the 62nd Annual Meeting of the Society at Westminster Chapel on 17 May, 1961. The President, Dr. W. Gordon Robinson, introduced the lecturer, the Rev. R. F. G. Calder, Chairman of our Committee, as an old fellow-student in Manchester. Mr. Calder, whose life-long interest has been in history and whose work in recent years has taken him to many parts of the world through the International Congregational Council, treated us to an examination of the fundamentals of Congregationalism. The theme was a contrast to most that we receive. Most of our lecturers lead us to a particular tree or group of trees in the forest of Nonconformity and conduct a careful study at that spot ; it is not often that we are taken for a flight across the whole forest and this is what our lecturer chose to do. With the kind of issues now being placed before Congregationalists in the Union of England and Wales, it is most appropriate that our Society should publish Mr. Calder's reasoned arguments concerning the essence of Congregationalism. Probably some readers will question whether his conclusions are adequate as a description of it whilst others may feel that here is a sound evangelical basis upon which the future may build.

Research Secretary

Mr. H. G. Tibbutt was presented to the Annual Meeting as the Society's new Research Secretary. No one more fitting to succeed the Rev. Charles Surman could possibly be found. A glance at Mr. Tibbutt's article on the *Sources for Congregational Church History* is enough to convince anyone of his deep acquaintance with the techniques of research ; his latest chapel history, that on Howard Congregational Church, Bedford, is a good example of the high qualities which he brings to his task. Deeply grateful as we are to Mr. Surman for his shouldering the burden of advising folk who are engaged in the study of things Congregational, we are glad that he can at last be given a little more freedom. The Research Secretary is ready to help anyone facing problems in unearthing historical facts. He is also very interested to know of people at work on subjects to do with our history as this often helps to prevent overlapping and to promote concerted endeavour.

Tercentenary Supplement

People who belong to our Society and others who do not, ask us what we are going to publish to commemorate 1662. We should very much like to do something but there are problems. The *Independent Press* and others have plans of their own covering the event ; the period has been very thoroughly examined by experts such as the Rev. A. G. Matthews and scholarly contributions on the subject do not seem to be forthcoming. There appears to be one opportunity left and this a service that we may be able to render to the denomination. It is to publish a supplement to *Transactions* designed to provide material on 1662 and the issues raised by the Act of Uniformity for those who will be asked and expected to speak of it but who have not studied the period in any detail. Preachers and speakers in our churches will need such material and such guidance. Therefore we hope in May of next year to have on sale (free to members) a book of about 32 pages with which we plan to meet this need.

Subscriptions

The Rev. W. W. Biggs gave notice at the Annual Meeting that next year it would be proposed that the subscription should be raised from 5s. to 7s. 6d. *per annum*. But members would receive, it was hoped, two issues of *Transactions* each year instead of one. The fact is that the subscription rate has remained the same since the Society began. Consequently publication has suffered badly. The bargain to be offered next year looks a good one.

Nonconformists, the B.R.A., and Records

Representatives of all the Nonconformist Historical Societies as well as some libraries were invited at one of the meetings of the British Records Association last December to say what sources they knew for Nonconformist history. Mr. Tibbutt spoke admirably for us and was highly complimented from the platform for his article on sources in our last issue of *Transactions*.

Once more we were brought to see the great need for churches to appreciate how they can help modern historical research by giving their old records into the custody of the local records office. There students can examine them with ease. Their nature and whereabouts will be public knowledge. They will be useful instead of lying unused and perhaps uncared for in a vestry cupboard, or worse still in a church member's house where they will probably get lost for ever. If the church should want its records for any reason at any time it can soon recover them from the record office because the essence of the scheme is that the record office is only the custodian, not the owner of the documents.

As it is, the student has to search everywhere for his material. The Rev. A. H. Jowett Murray of Ringwood, in working on the history of the church there, went to Winchester Castle to see two large boxes which the Diocesan Registrar had told him were labelled 'Meeting Houses'. He found in them a great number of letters and certificates asking for the registration of houses and meeting houses in the Diocese, only roughly sorted, including valuable information on Ringwood. This is the kind of experience, thrilling in its way, which the persistent seeker will find; and certainly diocesan records are not to be neglected. Obviously the collecting of records in central places such as record offices is a boon to the student and churches could help in this matter much more than they do.

Early Meeting Houses

We welcome the interest of the Ancient Monuments Society in early meeting houses. Their *Transactions* (New Series, No. 8) has an article by H. Goodwin Arnold on them. It is well illustrated, particularly with black and white measured drawings. The structures and materials are carefully examined and make a useful record. Mr. John Belderson, an architect and student of theology, said after looking at the article that, whilst he appreciated the contribution the article made, he was disappointed that little attempt had been made to assess the merits of the buildings from the worshipper's or the architect's point of view.

CONGREGATIONALISM: A LONG VIEW

Congregationalism may reasonably think itself fortunate to have neither a birthday nor any single person with an adequate claim to paternity. But, however we measure its self-conscious life, it certainly has existed in England for more than three hundred years. In America it is just as old as New England itself. At different times over the last two hundred years and in different ways it has spread from England to the British Colonies and Commonwealth and taken root, if it has not always flourished. In more recent years churches which trace no lineage from England have claimed themselves to be Congregational, and have been admitted within the international fellowship which bears the name. One thinks particularly of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden, which Dr. R. W. Dale in 1891 welcomed enthusiastically as Congregational, saying: 'They learnt their Congregational principles from the New Testament and from the instincts and impulses of their spiritual life'.[1] Closely parallel is the Free Church of Finland. Of a very different origin and history are the Evangelical Congregational Christian Churches of Brazil. Dr. W. R. M. Noordhoff, secretary of the Remonstrant Brotherhood of the Netherlands, has recently written in *Het Remonstrantse Weekblad* (October, 1960), 'Being a Remonstrant apparently corresponds with being a Congregationalist'.

Between all these churches there are not a few differences—differences of theological outlook, of local churchmanship, of national organization. Between the churches of the middle of the seventeenth century and those of the middle of the twentieth century in England there are also great differences.[2] But looking at the near and the far, the past and the present, is it possible to say in any exact or even approximate way what is this 'Congregationalism' which in some measure is shared by all? Is the nature of Congregationalism to be discovered by an examination of what Congregational churches have in fact been and believed, either at some historical point, or over the long stretch of their varied history? Or is there some essential Congregationalism which never has been perfectly expressed at any time, but by which all attempts at expression are to be examined?

This is not an academic enquiry. In no less than five major areas of Congregational life discussions with a possible end in church

[1] *International Cong. Council, London, 1891, Proceedings,* p. xxviii.
[2] Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *Visible Saints,* p. vii.

union are presently taking place. At the same time there is a growing concern on the part of many within the ecumenical fellowship of churches to understand exactly what our particular insights are. This little paper cannot be an answer, but it does represent the first thoughts of one anxious enquirer in this important matter.

I am sure that whatever conclusions may be reached about some perfect 'form' of Congregationalism, such an enquiry must be essentially an historical one, as Dr. Geoffrey Nuttall has pointed out in the Foreword to his *Visible Saints*. Congregationalism was at no point a planned and pre-devised system of church organization, as Presbyterianism could be described. It arose out of the religious experience and religious needs of ordinary people. If it has assumed somewhat different shapes at different times and in different places, this is because and to the extent that it has remained sensitive to those experiences and needs. When it has hardened, it has in some real way ceased to be alive and true to its better self.

What I propose to do is to look back long before the birth of the denomination, before the use of the word, or even any clear understanding that some new shape of churchmanship was involved, to the first germinal ideas in the womb, from which Congregationalism finally took its origin and which indicate its true nature, and then to trace them forward in history as far as time permits. I am tempted to elaborate here on two features of such an examination which sometimes make for difficulty. The first is the close relationship, often confusion, between religious and political ideas, as evidenced particularly in the coincidence of Independency and the Commonwealth. The second is the equally close relationship between this kind of faith and churchmanship and the social and cultural atmosphere in which it naturally exists and in which it alone flourishes. But these are matters for papers by themselves.

On the Continent of Europe it is possible to trace back at least five hundred years before the Reformation itself to stirrings within the Roman Church of a reformatory or revolutionary kind. Early in the ninth century, for example, Claudius, Bishop of Turin, made bold to express his scant regard for the Holy See, and attacked the worship of images and pilgrimages. Before the end of the twelfth century Joachim of Fiore was proclaiming 'the coming age of the Spirit', which, though not in itself a revolutionary conception, was taken up by some to revolutionary conclusions. As early as 1218 the Poor Men of Lyons, under the leadership of Peter Waldo, presented a document, which among other things urged that lay leadership should be more prominent in the Church, insisted that

the eucharist was symbolic, and protested that the Roman Church was not the exclusive Church of Christ.

About the same time the Béguines and Béghards took to their austere and philanthropic discipline in the Netherlands, and other orders took rise in other parts of Europe and often received official recognition, though their existence was an open criticism of the general order of the Church. By the middle of the fourteenth century the Brethren of the Common Life had been started by Geert de Groote, who outspokenly condemned the abuses of the Church of his day, and also incidentally inspired Thomas à Kempis to gather his sayings into *De Imitatione Christi*. Time would fail to tell of the Conciliarists, the Spiritualists and the Anabaptists, of John Hus, the great Erasmus, and the unknown author of the *Theologia Germanica*.

All these ranged widely in their concerns and aims. The left wing of the Reformation has been described by Rufus Jones in *Spiritual Reformers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, as 'a veritable banyan tree', if a wing can be described as a tree. Some sought institutional reforms so radical as to produce a basic transformation of the papacy. Others stressed the inner transformation and sanctification of one's life. Others again sought a biblical commonwealth in which a regenerated church and state were one (*cf.* Cromwell's *Rule of Saints*). But certain features were generally shared. There was a growing revolt against clericalism, and against many practices of the Church, such as the worship of images, pilgrimages, but notably the interpretation of the eucharist in the form of transubstantiation. There was a resistance to the way in which Church and State were related, though finally the Reformation espoused this principle again. There was a quickening turn to the Scriptures rather than to the Church as the source of authority. But above all, this was primarily a personal religious movement, in which the right of the individual to his own experience of faith was paramount. Time prevents an elaboration of this essential and the relationship at this point between the Reformation and the Renaissance.

When the Reformation actually came on the Continent it did not fulfil the highest hopes of those who had for centuries dreamed of its possibilities. Both Luther and Calvin, for political and other reasons, finally withdrew from the logic of some of their convictions. Luther had taught that the prayers of a shoemaker were as readily heard by God as those of a bishop, but he was not in the end able and willing to see this concept come alive in the Church.

He one time pressed for both *notpredigen* (lay preachers) and *hausgeminden* (gathered churches), but these never became part of Lutheranism. Calvin carried from Rome to Geneva the link of Church and State, though not the Roman conception of the Sacraments whereby the Church was always supreme in the issues of life. And it was as a result of his introduction from Geneva of the rigid *Protestantisme en masse* that finally what was essentially Congregational in France was suppressed. More important, neither Luther nor Calvin reached or maintained an adequate doctrine of the Holy Spirit or an adequate concept of the nature of human personality.

The story in England is different, but has many interesting parallels with that on the Continent. The element of reform can again be traced far back—perhaps to the somewhat independent attitude and free piety of the Celtic Church. In the twelfth century the Weavers or Publicans in Oxfordshire, led by one Gerhardt, taught salvation by grace and faith, and claimed for all Christian people, men and women alike, the liberty to preach. The element of reform is to be seen in the impatient criticisms of the author of *Piers Plowman* in the fourteenth century, and in the challenge to ecclesiastical power if not to orthodox teaching in the writings of William of Occam, Richard FitzRalph, and Thomas Bradwardine. It may be true that John Wycliffe was so catastrophically incompetent that he did nothing to inspire and in fact did everything possible to delay the reformation to come, as K. B. McFarlane has asserted.[3] But the same writer also says, 'English nonconformity owes its origins, humble though these be, to Master John Wycliffe'.[4] It was Wycliffe who claimed that the individual had the right of direct access to the fountain-head of doctrine. It was he who dared to say that a pauper if he be in grace has a better moral right to 'lordship' than a Pope or Emperor in a state of mortal sin. Indeed in his later works he even advocated the abolition of the papal office altogether. It was he who wrote, 'evangelisation (preaching the gospel) exceeds prayer and administration of the Sacraments to an infinite degree'.[5] For him Holy Scripture was the highest authority for every Christian, and the standard for faith and all human perfection, a conviction which led him to procure a Middle English translation of the Bible. It was he who brought the attack on the Roman Church to a climax by rejecting the

[3] *John Wycliffe and the Beginnings of English Non-conformity*, p. 186.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 10.
[5] *On the Pastoral Office*, tr. F. L. Battles, II, ch. 2.

dogma of transubstantiation, which he held to be a modern concept and alien to the early Church. It was Wycliffe who spent the last two years of his life building up a body of itinerant evangelists, the Lollards, who continued to touch the lives of the common people for a further 150 years. Here one thinks particularly of such as John Ball, who sent the Preaching Friars to public fair grounds, meat markets and cemeteries to proclaim the Gospel and a life in conformity with it, and also himself taught the equality of bondsmen and gentry.

As on the Continent, so in England, it was these and their like who witnessed in life and sometimes in death to the true reformation. When Henry broke from Rome, the rending of the ecclesiastical structure made possible the loosing of an evangelical spirit which had existed in the country in one form or another for 300 years. 'The Reformation was above all else a revival of religion.'[6] It was what John Foxe called 'the secret multitude of true professors' and the curiously exultant mood of religious discovery made this so in England at the end of the sixteenth century.

It is somewhere here in this revival of true religion that what we know as Congregationalism really began. The Reformation in England was waged not on the royal divorce, the sovereignty of state, or the possession of monastic lands, but over the nature of the sacrament of the altar, the hatred of feudal clericalism, the right to and value of the reading of Scripture, and what the Puritans later called 'experimental religion'.

Many illustrations of this can be given. I quote three briefly from A. G. Dickens' *Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York*. In 1538 one Robert Plumpton wrote to his mother: 'God wil give knowledge to whom he will give knowledg of the Scriptures, as soon to a shepperd as to a priest, yf he ask knowledg of God faithfully . . . wherefore I desire you, moste deare mother, that ye will take heede to the teachinge of the Gospell, for it is the thinge that wee muste live by'. In 1542 the parish clerk in Topcliffe refused confession because 'there was a saying in the country that a man might lift up his heart and confess himself to God almighty and need not be confessed at a priest'. In 1548 there appears in the will of a Halifax yeoman these words: 'My beleve is that theire is but one God and mediator betwixt God and man, whiche is Jesus Christe, so that I accepte non in hevyn, neither in erthe, to be my mediatour betwixt God and me, but he onlie'.

[6] R. H. Bainton, *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p. 3.

It is not possible to know how widespread was this moving sense of the value of direct personal contact with God and of the Scriptures. But this was the essence of the true reformation, and out of this awareness Congregationalism sprang. Happily there was no mass movement and no early temptation to find a church form before the principles had taken root. Those who held these convictions did so within the Church as they knew it. Some few were fairly early compelled to the conclusion that these convictions demanded a reformation of the Church of such a kind that they were driven either to protest and find death as traitors, or to exile where we shall find them again.

Gradually here and there sufficient like-minded persons were found in one place to form worshipping fellowships. In the first decades of the seventeenth century two pressures now began to compel consideration of some churchly shape for these fellowships. One was the teaching of Calvin, brought by such as Thomas Cartwright, and widely accepted, which carried a clear and strong picture of what the Church, local and national, should be, and of its relationship with the State. The other pressure was the political one involved in the binding together of King and Bishop, on which James and others insisted, and which finally compelled men to take sides in the Civil War.

Three groupings now began to take shape. The Presbyterians, in a majority for some years, were strengthened by the parliamentary alliance with Scotland. They wanted to see a nationally established Presbyterian Church with local churches organised into synods. They wanted the Church to be controlled by Parliament. And they would have no toleration of others. In 1643 Parliament convened the Westminster Assembly, and in 1645 it could almost be said that Presbyterianism had been established in England.

At the other extreme were the varied sectarian groups : the Levellers, the Fifth Monarchy Men, the Millennarians, and the like. They wanted total separation of Church and State, complete liberty of conscience, and democracy.

In between, and growing rapidly in numbers and power, particularly in the New Model Army, were the Independents. Of the 151 members of the Westminster Assembly less than a dozen could be so-called. But they were sturdy enough for five of them to produce a successful appeal to Parliament for toleration, under the title of *An Apologeticall Narration*. Now for the first time the Independents found it necessary to give their religious concerns a churchly shape. They were reluctant to do so, in part because

their very concept of faith and of the local church gave little or no function for a denominational or national organization to serve. Then there existed a great variety of opinions among them, for which Cromwell in particular was firm that there should be toleration. But the Presbyterians complained that the Independents had no system of church government to present. It was not sufficient against such a complaint to put fear of presbyter as old priest writ large, or fear of parliament as old king writ large. If they wanted toleration, and if they wanted democracy, an idea they took from the Levellers, they had to present an alternative to Presbyterianism.

Events conspired to carry them quickly beyond the sketch outlined in the *Narration*. The falling away of the Scottish pressure, the growing power of the Army, the establishment of the Commonwealth under Cromwell, the conversion of such as John Owen from Presbyterianism, meant that the Independents were no longer suppliants. They grew rapidly in numbers, power and regard. It was now necessary that they should define their position doctrinally and ecclesiastically.

This was done by means of the *Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order* in 1658. Without previous consultation the members of the conference achieved astonishing unanimity. The author of the Preface, possibly John Owen, expressed it thus :

> We confess that from the first, every, or at least the generality of our Churches have been in a maner like so many Ships (though holding forth the same general colours) lancht singly, and sailing apart and alone in the vast Ocean of these tumultuating times, and they exposed to every wind of Doctrine, under no conduct then the Word and Spirit and their particular Elders and principal Brethren, without Associations among our selves, or so much holding out common lights to others, whereby to know where we were.
>
> But yet whilest we thus confess to our own shame this neglect, let all acknowledge, that God hath ordered it for his high and greater glory, in that his singular care and power should have so watcht over each of these, as that all should be found to have steered their course by the same chart, and to have been bound for one and the same Port, and that upon this general search now made, that the same holy and blessed Truths of all sorts, which are currant and warrantable amongst all Other Churches of Christ in the world, should be found to be our Lading.

The speed with which the members of the Savoy conference reached a common mind is not perhaps as surprising as might appear. The theological presentation of the Presbyterians in the Westminster Confession was acceptable almost as it stood. The groundwork in respect of polity had already been done in America ten years earlier in the *Cambridge Platform*.

The essentially personal and local fellowship emphases of Congregationalism had at last been compelled to take some ecclesiastical shape, and also at the very same time political force. It is idle to speculate what might have happened had Cromwell lived longer and had had an adequate successor. Even so the establishment of a Congregational Church of England would have been very difficult. It was premature ; it brought out the worst as well as the best in Puritanism (*cf.* the Congregational contribution to the re-writing of the Prayer Book in 1661) ; and there was something self-contradictory about it.

Quite suddenly, however, it was all over. National power was gone. Congregationalists had become non-conformists, those who stood outside the Church-State relationship, which became again the burden and responsibility of the Church of England. Congregationalism was once more a religious and not an ecclesiastical movement, standing for the best of the great insights of all the earlier years. In the hard times following 1662 the astonishing thing was that so many, as individuals and little isolated communities now, were so convinced of the rightness of the Congregational Way that they would go out into the wilderness for it. It was in this period that John Owen wrote his classic formulation of Congregational policy : *The True Nature of a Gospel Church* (1689).

It would be interesting to pursue the story through the next three centuries, and yet in a way they show only the gradual readjustment of the churches to the changing conditions in which they have witnessed : increasing co-operation and the breakdown of isolation, the emergence of the overseas mission, social emancipation, the relaxation of the Calvinist theology. Only in our own day have any changes occurred or even been suggested, except for the premature vision of Joseph Parker in 1901, which have caused men to say—' but is this really Congregationalism ? '.

Before making any comment or judgment from this part of the story of Congregationalism, let us look briefly at the way in which it expressed itself in the very different conditions of America. The first ' Congregational ' settlers there were those who landed at

Plymouth in 1620. They were Separatists who claimed that the Reformation was incomplete and saw no hope of better things in England. They had experimented in Scrooby and in the Netherlands in a new and free way of church life, which knew little of organization and consisted largely of worship in the New Testament pattern. They had been blessed in the leadership of John Robinson. Now in New England, in conditions which were far from encouraging in many ways, they were nevertheless free to establish a Church and State in accordance with their understanding of both. And this they did.

The second wave of settlers in New England came from 1628 onwards, and occupied the colonies of Massachusetts Bay, Hartford and New Haven. These were a much more numerous company. They were not refugees, but colonists. And they were not Separatists, but Puritans. They were of the middle class, and in a period of some ten years included no less than ninety graduates of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. They could in fact still be described as Anglicans, and their ministers, as for example, John Cotton, were Anglican priests. One of them, Francis Higginson, wrote : ' We do not go into New England as Separatists from the Church of England, though we cannot but separate ourselves from the corruptness of it : but we go to practise the positive part of church reformation and propagate the gospel in America '. Not a few others were Presbyterians, and indeed there was a time when it might have come about that the New England colonies became Presbyterian.

The later colonists distrusted the religious and economic radicalism of the Plymouth settlers, but events, including an epidemic, quickly threw them together. The astounding fact is that within a very short space of time, to quote F. L. Fagley, the Puritans ' became far more Separatists than they or anyone in England had expected '.[7] At the same time the extreme Separatism of Plymouth was modified by contact, particularly with Salem, into a simple Congregationalism.

The formulation of a pattern of churchmanship might not have taken place in America any earlier than in England had it not been for the threat that the Presbyterian Long Parliament might control the ways of the Colonies. This led the four Confederated New England Colonies in 1648 to the statement known as *The Cambridge Platform*. Williston Walker has said of it : '*The Cambridge Platform* is the most important monument of early

[7] *The Cambridge Platform of Church Discipline*, p. 8.

New England Congregationalism, because it is the clearest reflection of the system as it lay in the minds of the first generation on our soil, after nearly twenty years of practical experience'.[8]

Here in New England different pressures were at work from those exerted on the Independents in England. One was the fear of restraint by the State which had brought many of them to this place. The other was the necessity to form the body politic at the same time as they shaped the Church. The resultant pattern had four significant features :

First, the autonomy of the local church as a distinct ecclesiastical body.

Second, the representative character of the ministry, born of a strong dislike of any concept of a mystical and indelible character of the priesthood ; the minister thus having status only in his own parish.

Third, the covenant relationship of church membership—a covenant of common purposes and not necessarily of accord in belief, though there was pretty general agreement. ' We do covenant together to walk in His ways, made known or to be made known unto us, whatsoever the same shall cost us.'

Fourth, the obligation of fellowship between churches. There was a dislike of the word Independency and a strong preference for the word Congregational from the time when titles were used, though for a long period there was little recognisable distinction in common usage between the words Congregational and Presbyterian.

Though a few features of the document quickly became obsolete, the *Cambridge Platform* was in fact the effective constitution of Congregationalism in New England for as long as two hundred years. As in England, it sought under compulsion to give a churchly shape to the religious insights and needs of the people. It is only too easy to think of the shape as constituting what is distinctively Congregational. But this was not so in either place, as I shall want to say in conclusion. I want, however, to draw attention to some particularities of the American, as distinct from the British scene.

From the beginning in America there was a sense of unity in the Church. The separation and the need of it were behind them. Community and congregation were also of necessity closely identified. It was the members of the church who in a very large measure determined the pattern of the State. Political power was for some

[8] *Creeds and Platforms*, p. 185.

time restricted to those within the covenant of the church. This meant at one time that of the total population of 15,000 in Massachusetts there were only 1,708 voters. It was taken for granted that the State would uphold the Church by collecting taxes and by punishing religious sins as well as public misdemeanours. The magistrates were the 'nursing fathers' of the Church and the ministers guided the magistrates.

This close relationship between Church and State was short-lived. It was broken by the weight of the number of the incoming colonists who were not within the covenant, but reasonably demanded a say in government. A relationship of sorts continued, however, until broken finally by the Bill of Rights in 1775. In some States it continued as long as 1833. But Christian influence in public life continued and still continues to be felt. None of the first seven colleges in New England, Harvard, Yale, Williams, Bowdoin, Middlebury, and Amherst, ever did carry a denominational title, nor were they from the beginning controlled by any other body than their own self-perpetuating trustees. Both in theory and practice they were non-sectarian. But they were rooted in Congregational soil, drew upon the Congregational ministry for their leadership, served to train men for that ministry, and perpetuated the order which created them. As in education, so in business, in local politics, and ultimately into the American way of life. Consider, for example, Thomas Hooker, whose precepts framed the *Fundamental Orders of Connecticut* in 1638, and suggested the thesis of the *Declaration of Independence*.

A. D. Lindsay has said in *Essentials of Democracy* that the congregation was the school of democracy. It is certainly true that in America lasting significance attached to the close identification of church meeting and town meeting. Both emphasised the autonomy of the local group and the doctrine that government originates with the people, and that all agencies and instrumentalities of government have but delegated authority. Though Congregationalism by name has almost ceased to exist in the United States to-day, it is interesting to note that the majority of the Protestant churches are of a Congregational pattern, and churches with other forms of polity tend to conceive themselves Congregationally.

One other feature of early New England Congregationalism must be noted. For more than two generations such was the fear lest the hard-won liberty of the Church might be lost that all liberty was denied to secure it. Those who had fled from intolerance now imposed it. To quote the words of Nathaniel Ward : 'All

Familists, Anabaptists and other enthusiasts shall have free liberty to keep away from us '. So fiercely was freedom preserved by the denial of it, and all opposition or differences prevented to the point of persecution that the Congregationalists of New England became a byword in the very country from which they and their fathers had fled.

It was left to the Providence Plantation and Rhode Island to see that the logic of the free, gathered and congregationally governed church was the existence in the same community of other churches of the people's choice, none of which should control the civil government, except as the members formed part of the same citizenry. It has to be admitted, however, that if the other colonies erred in harshness, they did maintain high standards—at one time in the four colonies 96 out of 104 pastorates had Harvard graduates. Providence for a whole century never had a trained ministry at all, but only lay exhorters, such was their fear of being too much ordered. Even many years later Dr. James Manning of Brown University, in Providence commenting on the Congregationalists there, said : ' Thank God they don't govern the world ! '.

The *Cambridge Platform* of 1648 formulated a pattern of church life for American Congregationalists which was to be effective with small modifications for two hundred years. It did not form a denomination. This kind of religious self-consciousness grew only as other and more clearly defined denominations presented their rival claims to Christians, and as the need of organization grew especially to meet the need of the expanding boundaries of western civilisation in America. Many changes came, of course, with the years, as Congregationalists adapted the life of their churches at different levels to meet conditions which from the very beginning had not been the same as in England. Its enormous size, its mixture of races and traditions, its expanding nature, its wealth, the absence of a dominant State Church and of State religious instruction in schools, these have greatly influenced the trend of Congregationalism in America. It is different, but it is the same.

I would like to have traced similarly the origins of Congregationalism in two very different areas, Scotland and Sweden. In both countries the movement was initially one of personal religion and emphasised the priesthood of all believers by a deep involvement of the laity. Both began as reformation movements but ended in separation. Both discovered the need of the local gathered church—in Sweden first as communion societies and then as covenant churches. In Scotland a national association was formed within

15 years ; in Sweden it was by law much longer delayed, and has only recently but very rapidly developed a churchly form. I must, however, be content to draw my conclusions from these outlines of its early history in the two lands where it found its greatest strength. I believe that wherever Congregationalism is to be found certain quite simple features can be discerned by an examination of its history. For the historical sequence has for us been the natural and right sequence, and what came first in time has held priority over what came after.

Congregationalism began not with the Church but with personal religion. It began not with the historic Reformation, but with those basic religious concerns and insights which sensitive men here and there and increasingly reached in different places in Western Europe even back through what are known as the ' Dark Ages '. There was a phrase in common use in the middle of the seventeenth century. Thomas Collier used it in preaching to the Army at Putney in 1647 when he said: ' I shall for your satisfaction confirm unto you from the scripture, although I trust I shall deliver nothing unto you but experimental truth '. It is this concept of religion as being experiential, as being essentially personal, as being of the nature of faith rather than of belief, as demanding some direct relationship with God himself. This was the true reformation which men sought for themselves and others, and properly described as a return to the faith of the New Testament. It was also a faith which involved a full openness to the Holy Spirit.

With this and related to it was an appreciation both of the worth and the responsibility of the individual man as such. To express this we might well use the phrase ' the priesthood of all believers ', because it emphasises both the standing and the responsibility of all without distinction. Hendrik Kraemer in his *A Theology of the Laity* maintains that the Churches of the Reformation have never really worked out the implications of the priesthood of all believers. ' To the present day it rather fulfils the rôle of a flag than of an energising, vital principle.'[9] Or as F. R. Barry has put it in *Asking the Right Questions*, ' Broadly speaking the Reformation movement left the Church still deeply clericalised '. Partly because of the strong Calvinist influences of the formative period, partly because of certain political experiences through which it passed, and also because of the particular church atmosphere in which it has had to assert itself, Congregationalism has never worked out fully and exactly its own convictions in this matter. Its attitude to ordination

[9] p. 63.

contains elements of compromise in them still unresolved. But this sense of the human and divine worth of the individual is vital, even where it takes the form it did in the nineteenth century. It carries with it the twin demands for liberty and consent.

In these two features, with which should perhaps be combined a deep regard for the Scriptures as a third, are to be found the priorities of Congregationalism. They are the 'interpretation of the Gospel' which precedes 'a doctrine of the Church' in Dr. Geoffrey F. Nuttall's definition of Congregationalism in *Visible Saints*. Here it might be remembered that Richard Baxter, who had leaning towards Arminianism, coveted to be 'a mere Christian', a concern still shared by many Congregationalists.

But Congregationalism could not remain without a doctrine of the Church. Its interpretation of the Gospel required churches, churches where men and women possessed of personal faith and a concern for experimental religion could worship together and find common Christian fellowship. In a real sense the Church is part of the Gospel. Because the churches they knew did not provide these things adequately they formed new ones. These new churches had three distinctive characteristics. First, they consisted only of believers gathered out of the community. Second, the fellowship of the church was a covenant one; that is, the members bound themselves together into a Christian community by a bond of common loyalty to the Lord of the Church. A study of these covenants is both interesting and profitable. Third, these churches were claimed to be in some real sense autonomous. That is to say, they did not need to be, and ought not to be, ordered from outside. Not that they claimed to be perfect. It was agreed that friendly advice and discipline at the hands of neighbours should be valued—but not control. The explanation of this concern for the autonomy of the local church lay partly in history and partly in geography. The early Congregationalists (to use the name) knew the effect on the local church of authority imposed either by the State or by ecclesiastical hierarchy. And they lived in times when the local community in any case had to be largely self-contained and self-supporting. But the explanation lay also in doctrine. To quote, 'It belongs to the very nature of the Church that it expresses itself in a concrete, local congregation of believers gathered to hear the Word of God, to receive the Sacrament, and to live in fellowship with one another . . . The Church can only be real if it is local'. These actually are the words of the Secretary of the World Council of Churches, Dr. Visser 't Hooft, but they represent the conviction

of Congregationalism. This is why we have always set confession of faith and church membership together. In this relationship is to be found the Great Church.

In all this Congregationalism has not yet taken denominational shape. Two pressures forced the Independents of the middle of the seventeenth century in England in this direction : one was the need to answer the Presbyterian criticism that they had no system of church government to offer when Independency might have become the national form of the Church ; the other was their Calvinism. In America the pressures came a little earlier. In neither place, if for different reasons, did a denomination arise. Only very much later to meet the needs of the local churches in isolation and in fellowship and to serve their growing common purposes did associations, consociations and unions arise. They came slowly and were often accepted with reluctance, necessary and inevitable as they were. For against the desire for the good purposes for which they were needed there always was and is the fear lest organization and control, even if freely surrendered, might destroy or limit the better purposes of the local church.

In the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and in other authoritative sources of knowledge and understanding Congregationalism is frequently defined as a form of church polity. This is a fact which conceals the truth. The shape of Congregationalism, even its essential shape, is not its essence. Congregationalism did not begin as a kind of church government. When it did take a churchly shape it was to find the way whereby believing Christians might in fellowship associate for the worship of God, the proclamation of the Gospel, and the Christian way of life. That individual Christians should find this way in a close-knit covenanted fellowship of believers seemed good in the seventeenth century, and still seems good to-day. That such fellowships should in our time need increasingly to devise the means of expression of a larger understanding of the Church's mission in the world is a reasonable development. We would fully admit the dangers inherent to the individual in emphasising that he shall find and judge the Gospel and the true nature of the Great Church in some little and perhaps spiritually imperfect local fellowship. We know from experience how easily this may lead to a selfish, introspective and ingrowing independence without mission or charity. John Owen was aware of this 300 years ago. Individuals and local churches need more than the individual and local. Happily the Congregational spirit

has often broken through the Congregational polity, and Congregationalists have played no mean part in missionary and ecumenical enterprise. If indeed there has been shown from time to time a fear of engagement and union with other Churches it has been a poor Congregationalism which has been concerned for its polity. For what is essential, what we rightly fear to lose, what we cherish to retain into a richer fellowship, is not our order or organization, but our first and last, the spirit of experimental religion, of personal faith, and Christian relationships.

R. F. G. CALDER

The James Forbes Library

Dr. G. F. Nuttall has told us of his recent visit to the City Library, Gloucester, to see the library of James Forbes, Preacher in Gloucester Cathedral, 1654-60, and one of the Congregationalists who attended the Savoy Conference in 1658. The library used to be lodged at the Southgate Chapel but there students found it difficult to visit and use. Now it has been deposited in public custody, another instance of the wisdom of this procedure.

The library contains some 1,250 volumes besides many tracts. The City Librarian, Mr. A. J. I. Parrott, is seeking ways and means of getting the books in poor condition repaired, but Dr. Nuttall, comparing what he saw with other similar collections, found the condition of the books fair on the whole. There is a catalogue compiled in the last century and this is being examined and improved upon.

Theological and nonconformist works predominate and Dr. Nuttall says, 'There are many books not located in London, or in Britain sometimes . . . and I found one not in Wing though I knew of its existence from a contemporary advertisement'.

NEEDY CONGREGATIONAL MINISTERS IN THE WEST, *c.* 1676-8.

The best known fund for the maintenance of the Dissenting ministry in the seventeenth century was the Common Fund which was opened in 1690 as a joint enterprise conducted by Congregational and Presbyterian ministers in London for the assistance of the Dissenting interest in other less-favoured parts of the country.[1] There are, however, scraps of evidence which indicate that there were other occasional collections for this purpose before 1690, but little exists in print to show the scope of such collections or the methods employed to get information on deserving cases. The document printed below throws some light on the way in which this problem was dealt with among some Congregational churches in the 1670's. The writer, Samuel Campion, ejected rector of Hodnet and minister of a Congregational Church in Shropshire, was well-fitted to speak for poor ministers in the west. He had been tersely described in another connection as a man with 'a wife and seven children and little to live on'. His report is not addressed, but there is little doubt (the form of the reference to Cokayne makes it almost certain) that his notes were intended for the information of Congregational ministers in London. There were certainly a number of influential ministers who were concerned with appeals of this type in the 1670's, for some of them, including men like Philip Nye, John Owen, Joseph Caryl and George Cokayne, were appealed to by the New England ministers on behalf of Harvard in 1671 and replied in February 1672 that their great financial burdens made it impossible for them to give any effective aid.[2] They explained that these great financial burdens were due to their having to help with the work of the Gospel throughout England and to support ministers 'whose daily relief depends, as to many counties, principally from this citty'. They also referred to 'many of God's servants here calling for daily relief, even of necessaries to them and their impoverished families'. These London Congregational ministers who replied to the Harvard appeal in 1672, or the survivors of them, were most likely those to whom Campion's report was addressed.

The report must have been written between December 1675, the date of Rowland Nevet's death, and December 1678 when Campion

[1] See A. Gordon, *Freedom After Ejection*, 1917, p. 163.
[2] Hutchinson Papers (Prince Society, Albany, 1865) II, pp. 158-161.

himself died. It is therefore roughly contemporary with Henry Maurice's catalogue of 'congregated churches' in Wales, printed in the *Broadmead Records*.[3] Compared with this, Campion's account is a slight affair, but within its limits it brings into sharp focus the problems of some of the scattered, struggling 'gathered churches' of the Welsh border region. And since some of these problems are perennial ones it may still be of interest, and afford some consolation, to churches which are still struggling with subscriptions to, or contributions from, our present-day funds for the maintenance of the ministry.

The document is reproduced here with modernized spelling and punctuation. Words underlined are notes added in the margin of the original, but are here, for convenience, incorporated in the text in what appear to be the relevant positions. Passages in square brackets are not in Campion's hand. The original (Bodl. Lib. MS. Rawl. D. 1481, f. 346) was used by Mr. A. G. Matthews for his *Calamy Revised*, but it does not appear to have been printed in full.

[Poor ministers in Wales, wrote by Mr. Campion]

Congregational men in Shropshire and the counties adjoyning.

In Salop. Mr. James Quarrel,[4] aged 50, pastor of Shrewsbury Church of about 60 persons. Disabled by the falling sickness. His charge consists of an infirm wife and six children. He hath in rents about ten pounds per annum, which his allowance from his people scarce exceeds. Whilst he enjoyed health and strength he was excelled but by a few. Mr. Price[5] a person after mentioned knows this. Mr. Titus Thomas[6] there lately chosen teaching elder, blessed with a good estate. The church hath great assistance from two officers who are elders who have been great sufferers, and are in a low condition and in a

[3] Ed. E. B. Underhill, 1847, p. 511.

[4] Licensed in 1672 as a Congregational preacher in a room at the King's Head, Shrewsbury.

[5] Presumably Christopher Price, of Abergavenny, apothecary, preacher and free-communion Baptist. In the 1680's and 1690's Price was in touch with Baptist leaders in London and was concerned in distributing gifts from London Independents and Baptists to needy ministers in Wales.

[6] A graduate of Magdalen Hall, Oxford, who combined his office as teaching elder with the practice of medicine. According to Philip Henry he was 'a worthy good man, and not so straight-laced as some others'.

manner want all things. [Mr. Campion there of Hodnett about 50 persons and a church in Oswestry of about 60 whereof Mr. Nevett[7] deceased was pastor, but now have no officer, these 3 are all the churches in Shropshire].

Cheshire. In Congleton. I know none but Mr. George Moxon[8] (whose praise is in the — ?) who returned to us from New England, is aged 74. He is assisted by William Marsh, a husbandman, who is designed to succeed Mr. Moxon, hath no estate, his charge of children and grand-children is about five or six. About 70 in Mr. Moxon's church. William Marsh conflicts as much as any man I know, with a great charge, debt and almost insuperable straits, though this good man be tired out with labours yet hath attained to good learning in the tongues.

In Wales. North Wales. Mr. Evans[9] of Wrexham who married Mr. Powell's widow. The congregation there is numerous, the members for the most part are low in the world, and though their pastor's condition be more comfortable than many others enjoy, yet, being forced to abscond, a kindness will be taken thankfull.

In a neighbouring county lives young Mr. Owen,[10] a worthy man well-known to Doctor Owen. There is no man to take care of the whole county but himself. He travels over very dangerous rocks and mountains, and it will be thought scarce credible if I should relate of what poor lodging and fare he accepts. He married the daughter of worthy Mr. John Brown (who lately died) and had little with her, chiefly allured by her virtues and her father's esteem.

[7] Rowland Nevet, Congregational minister at Oswestry, died on 8 December, 1675.

[8] Moxon, who returned to England in 1652 after about twenty years' residence in New England, held a Cheshire living until 1660 and from 1672 ministered to a Congregational church at Congleton.

[9] John Evans, who married Katherine, widow of Vavasor Powell, was ejected from the Free School of Oswestry in 1662 and settled at Wrexham. The revocation of the Declaration of Indulgence reduced him to poverty and he was forced to sell much of his library and to act as tutor to more well-to-do families in the Wrexham district.

[10] Hugh Owen, the Independent 'apostle of Merioneth', a distant relative of Dr. John Owen, married Martha Brown, daughter of a prominent member of the Independent church at Wrexham. His ministerial career was, as Campion suggests, a particularly rigorous one.

In south Wales. Monmouthshire. There lives Mr. Maurice,[11] famous for his return to us, after some little recidivation, and his wonderful zeal and indefatigable pains afterward. He is now forced to abscond. That great instrument Mr. Price (his intimate friend) now in the King's Bench, can give a full account of him. He can tell you how suddenly he threw off his burden, parted with a place of value when he was much in debt, some of his malicious creditors laid him in prison because he refused any longer to comply. I have joined with him at many meetings, and perceived his zeal, gravity and learning.

There are two of the Jollies[12] in Lancashire (one of them I am intimate with) both of them are great sufferers, courageous, learned and active. Of these I conceive Mr. Cockaine[13] can give a good account.

Yours S.C.

Mr. Abel Collier[14] a scholar and pious preacher living in this town needs encouragement.

I. G. PHILIP

[11] Henry Maurice, who had conformed at the Restoration and was subsequently promoted to the rectory of Church Stretton, resigned the living in 1671, and in 1672 became minister to the Congregational church of Acton Round and Much Wenlock. He then became pastor of the 'gathered church' of Independents of Brecknock.

[12] John Jollie of Norbury, Cheshire, and Thomas Jollie of Altham, Lancs.

[13] George Cokayne, 1619-91, minister of a Congregational church in Redcross Street, London, and later one of the Congregational members of the Fund Board.

[14] Collier, an Oxford graduate and formerly vicar of West Takeley, Essex, was licensed as a Congregationalist to preach at Coventry in 1672, and later, 1690, received a grant from the Common Fund in respect of his ministry at Halstead, Essex.

THE EVANS LIST: THE HIDDEN NEAL LIST

As part of an effort to bring pressure on the Government, at the beginning of the reign of George I, and convince it of the importance of the 'Dissenting Interest', the Committee of the General Body of Ministers of the Three Denominations (Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist) initiated a correspondence to collect information as to the numbers and voting strength of Dissenting congregations throughout the country. One consequence was the list of Dissenting congregations (now preserved in Dr. Williams's Library), which is known as the Evans list from the fact that it was drawn up by, and is in the handwriting of, John Evans who was assistant and successor to Daniel Williams as minister at Hand Alley and who acted as secretary of the Three Denominations Body and of the Body of Presbyterian Ministers. It is a veritable mine of information on churches and their ministers during the years 1715-1729, being compiled from the letters of numerous correspondents in various parts of the country who had been asked to supply information. Though the compilation was virtually complete by the end of 1717, Evans continued to record changes of ministry until shortly before his death in 1730.

The Evans List was not however the only list of this character drawn up at this date, for the Three Denominations Committee seems to have worked on the curious plan of leaving the several denominations to collect statistics independently. The result was at least two lists, one the Presbyterian or Three Denominations List, our Evans List, and another drawn up on behalf of the Independents, which would seem to have been the list later known as the Neal List, presumably drawn up by Daniel Neal, who, like Evans, was a member of the Three Denominations Committee, and perhaps the secretary of the Independents. Both lists covered the same ground, including both Presbyterian and Independent congregations, though drawing upon different sources of information. There may also have been a Baptist List. Neither the Baptist List (if there was one) nor the Neal List is known to be in existence.

Though the Neal List has not survived, much may be inferred as to its contents from the fact that Josiah Thompson, who, in 1772 and later, was engaged on a similar project of collecting statistics, copied out a list of 1715-1716 which he attributed to Daniel Neal.[1] Thompson's List is preserved in Dr. Williams's

[1] Thompson's own list in 1772, etc., was compiled in connection with the appeal to Parliament for the removal of the subscription required under the Toleration Act.

10)

1715

Dorsetshire

1716

1) ~~Broad Windsor~~
2) Blandford ✓
3) Bere Regis ✓ - - - B
4) Bridport ✓ - - - P
Ditto - - - - -
5) Burhackwood ✓ by several
6) Beminster ✓ - - - P
7) Cerne ✓ - - - - P
8) Chaldon near Wareham ?
9) Christ Church - ? -
10) Chelworth - ? Somersetsh
11) Chew - ? Somersetshire
12) Chermouth near Lyme ?

H

13) Dorchester ✓ - - - P
Ditto - - - - - B
14) ~~East Bowel~~ - -
15) Lyme Regis ✓ - - P 300
Ditto - - - - - B 217
16) Long Bredy ✓ - - -
Maiden Newton - P
17) Malcomb Regis ? - -
Nether Burpy - - ? P
18) Overcompton ✓ - - -
19) Pool ✓ - - - - -
20) Sandwich Isl of Purbeck ✓
21) Stockland Sup: by several ✓
22) Scardine ✓ - - - P
23) Sherburne ✓ - - - P
Stalbridge

24) Shaftsbury ✓ - -
25) Whitchurch near Lyme
26) Wrington ? - - - -
27) Weighmouth ✓ - P
Ditto - - - - - B
28) Wareham ✓ - - P
29) Winburne ✓ - - P

Milburn Port Somersetsh

Library, and, as the details differ considerably from those in the Evans List and as Thompson attributes the list to Neal, it is fair to assume that he used the list, now lost, drawn up on behalf of the Independents. But Thompson's List, as we now have it, is not just a simple copy of Neal's List. Thompson altered and added to his original copy from at least one other list much closer to our Evans List. It is nevertheless possible to disinter the details of what must have been the Neal List (insofar as he copied them) from Thompson's List.

The hypothesis that best fits the facts is this. Our Thompson 1716 List, as it stands, is composite, information from one MS having been corrected and supplemented from a second MS. Thus we have T(1), the MS. which Thompson originally copied, and T(2) Thompson's MS. as it stands and as he completed it. In arriving at T(2) Thompson used a second MS. list, which was almost certainly not our Evans List, though very closely related to it. We may call our existing Evans List E(1) and the closely related MS. used by Thompson E(2). The only hypothesis that fits the facts is that E(2) was copied from our Evans List (E(1)), before Evans made most of the additions that he continued to make from the beginning until 1729. Thompson seems to know nothing of information included by Evans dated 1718 or later and so we may conclude that the E(2) copy was made at latest in 1717 or early 1718.

The following data for a single county, Dorset, reproduced opposite from Thompson's List, will illustrate the situation.

It will be seen that the entries numbered 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17, 25, 26, are all underlined. None of these appears in the Evans List; most of them have a single shorthand sign after them that would seem to imply that in 1772 these causes were defunct. Two of them (10 and 11) have 'Somersetsh' written after them. One (5 Beerhackwood) has 'by several' added, apparently a later addition by Thompson incorporating information contained in Evans.

In three cases in Thompson (1 Broad Windsor, 14 East Nowel and the 'Ditto' after Bridport) the entry has been struck through; none of these entries appears in Evans. But presumably they had appeared in the list that Thompson first made use of.

Thompson has five interlineated entries, which are also without the serial numbers that he employs. They are a 'Do I' after Beer Regis, indicating an Independent as well as a Baptist cause there; 'Maiden Newton P', 'Netherbury P', 'Stalbridge', 'Milburn

Port—Somersetsh'. All these entries are contained in the Evans List.[2]

If on the basis of the hypotheses given above we work out the statistics for Dorset they are as follows :[3]

	E(1) Evans MS.	T(1) Neal ?	T(2) Thompson
Presbyterian	12	8	10
Independent	2	2	3
Baptist (or Anti-pedobaptist)	4	4	4
Not specified	10	19	18* (21)
Totals	28	33	35* (38)

* Plus 3 struck through, all without denominational letters, making the numbers inserted in brackets.

It will be seen that by the exercise of care and patience it would be possible to reconstruct the essentials of the Neal List with its numerous and often instructive differences from the Evans List.[4] A nearer complete picture of Dissent in 1716 would result, though as Neal either did not enter the names of ministers in his list or Thompson did not reproduce this information, some of the most interesting additional information would be lacking.

ROGER THOMAS

[2] Remarkable are two facts about these entries. Four of them are contained in the last five entries in the Evans List as we have it. The exception is Milburn Port, which Evans has much higher up in his list; Thompson marked it 'Somersetsh'. The other remarkable fact is that, though Thompson marks several of these 'P' or 'I', Evans does not add the denominational letters in these cases. This naturally raises the question of the exact relations between E(1) and E(2) which cannot be resolved here.

[3] Only in the case of Lyme Regis does Thompson give the number of 'H' (i.e. Hearers). They are the same numbers as given by Evans. But the only other number of hearers given by Evans (Sherburne—500) is not reproduced by Thompson.

[4] In the case of some counties where much fuller information is given as to the number of hearers, the discrepancies between the Neal and Evans Lists are revealing as to the amount of guesswork that went on and are sometimes amusing.

THE EVANS LIST: QUERIES ON SUSSEX

Lyon Turner and other Nonconformist historians have rightly criticized the accuracy of the Ecclesiastical Returns of 1669 and 1676 about the strength and standing of early Nonconformity. But has there not been a tendency to accept too readily the reliability of the Evans MS. ? One is indeed aware of the uncertainties and hazards in handling all these attempted censuses but recent work on a variety of original records has led the author to doubt whether the Sussex portion of the Evans List is either as comprehensive or as accurate as has generally been assumed.

Evans' Sussex correspondent was *Robert Bagster* of the Chichester Presbyterian Church and his account was prepared at the end of 1717. No doubt Bagster was better acquainted with the circumstances of the Presbyterians and Congregationalists than with those of the Baptists. The Friends were ignored by Bagster and Evans alike. The Evans MS., data about the number and geographical distribution of Presbyterian and Congregational churches and their pastoral successions seems generally accurate. An independent check on this part of the MS. is provided by the series of Toleration Act registrations for the Chichester and Lewes Archdeaconries and the Exempt Deanery of South Malling.[1] This check, however, is not absolute because some congregations failed to comply with the requirements of the Act, or if they did, the registrations have not survived.

The following notes about the congregations at Worth and at Arundel/Midhurst illustrate the close agreement between the Evans data and the other sources available.

Evans MS.	Toleration Act Registrations	Fund Boards[2]
Worth, near East Grinstead. *Benjamin Chandler.* Presbyterian Fund Board grant of £7.	In 1693 and 1698 for Presbyterians in East Grinstead parish. No minister named.	Common Fund grants to *Benjamin Chandler.*

[1] County Record Office, Chichester; and copies in the General Register Office. There are over 100 registrations for the period 1690-1725, of which 44 relate to 1710-20.

[2] Evans, of course, made full use of the records of the Presbyterian Fund Board. There are no surviving minutes of the Congregational Fund Board between 1705 and 1737 (inclusive) and there are grounds for doubting whether regular minutes were kept throughout this period; if this were so, it would help to explain why Evans did not refer to the Congregational Fund Board's interest in several Sussex churches.

Evans MS.	Toleration Act Registrations	Fund Boards
Joseph Chandler. Ordained January 19, 1727/8.[3]	1.11.1720. East Grinstead. Presbyterian. *Benjamin Chandler*, the Preacher.[4]	Presbyterian Fund Board grants to *Benjamin Chandler* from 1696 to 1728 (amounts varied from £5 to the Fund's maximum of £10). Presbyterian Fund Board grants to *Joseph Chandler* from 1729.
Arundel and Midhurst. *Benjamin Keene.* removed to Andover.	In 1707 for Midhurst for Presbyterians. *John Ericke* is Minister.[5]	No Presbyterian Fund Board grants in this period (Midhurst appeared in 1730).
John Boucher. 1719.	20.11.1708. Midhurst. Presbyterians. *Benjamin Keene* is Minister. 12.8.1712. Arundel. Presbyterians. *Benjamin Keene* is Minister. 15.1.1716. Arundel. *Protestant Dissenters. Keene* again. 25.3.1720. Arundel. *Protestant Dissenters. John Boucher* is Minister. Ditto. for 14.6.1720.	Congregational Fund Board references to Arundel's need of a minister in 1697 and £12 granted in 1700 to the 'Church at Arundel in Sussex when they shall have a Pastor'. Also grants to Midhurst after 1737.

But the data about the Baptist congregations in Sussex is definitely misleading. The MS., lists only 8 Baptist churches in 7 places; Chichester had both General and Particular Baptist churches. It appears that the Particular Baptists held little ground in the county until the latter part of the eighteenth century. It is just possible that Bagster intended that the branches of the General Baptist churches in the list should be covered by the inclusion of the parent churches, for example in the case of Horsham which had several branches in

[3] It looks as if in the Evans MS. the word 'junior' was deleted after *Joseph's* name.

[4] *Benjamin Chandler* was also named in 1706 in a registration for Presbyterians at Hartfield, some miles from East Grinstead; perhaps this was the place meant in the Common Fund survey's reference to *Benjamin Chandler* at *Hapsfield.* He also appeared in registrations for Maresfield and Ardingly in 1709 and 1719 respectively, and for Ardingly in 1736 which suggests that he was still at work in Sussex.

[5] Perhaps the same man as the *Mr. Erick* who was given a grant by the Presbyterian Fund Board in 1706, only for Mayfield.

the surrounding district. But this would not account for all his omissions, above all that of the old-established and influential General Baptist church at Ditchling in mid-Sussex.

Care is needed in drawing on the evidence of the Toleration Act registrations because they give no real clues about the size of congregations or the permanence of the groups meeting for worship. The registrations can be supplemented, however, with the information contained in the Chichester Visitation of 1724 about the numbers of Baptists, and by the records of the General Assembly of the General Baptists and of the Kent and Sussex General Baptist Association.[6]

There are surviving registrations for General Baptists at 17 places between 1710 and 1730 which were not mentioned in the Evans MS.; 6 more places also omitted in Evans, were covered by registrations between 1700 and 1710 and some of these groups were still in existence in 1717. There is room here for only a very few illustrations of the wide discrepancy between the Evans List and the evidence from other original records.

Parish	Toleration Act Registrations	1724 Visitation : Number of Families of *Anabaptists*
Ditchling	1694 and 1716	25
Cuckfield	1714	20
Worth	1708 and 1720	10
Wivelsfield	1713	8

The Ditchling General Baptist church played a leading rôle in the work of the General Assembly of the General Baptists and in the Kent and Sussex General Baptist Association. It produced a long line of gifted Elders who served several branch churches in a wide area of mid-Sussex and even further afield. These branches included Cuckfield, Wivelsfield, Lewes and Maresfield. The strength of the cause at Ditchling itself may be gauged by the fact that the 1724 Visitation estimated that 25 out of the total population of 80 families were Baptists. The General Baptist church at Turner's Hill (in Worth parish) drew support from a wide area: from Horley across the Surrey border to Balcombe in the south. The

[6] Bishop Bower's Visitation; County Record Office, Chichester. The returns covered five-sixths of the Sussex parishes and included unusually detailed estimates of the numbers of Non-conformists by parishes and denominations in each parish. *Minutes* of the Kent and Sussex Association; Dr. Williams's Library.

1724 Visitation estimated the total number of Baptist families in the Sussex parishes connected with the Turner's Hill cause as 22, or about 70 adults.

The Evans MS., included estimates of the numbers of *Hearers*, but without any indication as to their basis, and it is possible that they were not intended to represent only the *adult* hearers. The 1724 Visitation based its estimates of Nonconformists on the *family* unit. It is not possible here to describe the means of arriving at a 'conversion factor' for the family unit but it seems reasonable to adopt the factor of 3 adults per family.[7] There are substantial grounds for questioning the validity of some of the arithmetic of the Evans MS.; in particular, it looks as if the numerical strength of the Presbyterians and Congregationalists was substantially over-estimated and that of the Baptists decidedly under-estimated.[8]

How strong were the Baptists? The total given for 6 of the 8 churches listed by Evans was 813; no estimates were given for Lewes and Lindfield but both were fairly small groups and an allowance of 60/70 for them is probably ample. This gives a total Baptist strength of about 870-880. The 1724 Visitation recorded some 280 families of Baptists, or about 840 adults. Allowance must be made, however, for those parishes for which returns were not made and several of them had substantial groups of Baptists, for example Chichester. Moreover, some of the estimates made by incumbents were almost certainly far too low, for example Horsham with only 60 adults. This appraisal suggests that a more accurate estimate of the numbers of Baptists in Sussex around 1724 would be some 1,200 adults, and it is unlikely that there would have been fewer in 1717—rather the reverse. This is a notable discrepancy with the Evans data for the Baptists.

The Evans MS., estimates of Sussex Presbyterians and Congregationalists qualified as County Voters look surprisingly high. The Baptists were estimated to have only 14 County Voters in a total of 283 Hearers in the three churches for which these estimates were made. But of some 3,100 Presbyterian and Congregational Hearers, no fewer than 298 were estimated to qualify. Bearing in

[7] For interesting background about eighteenth century estimates of population, see G. Chalmers: *An Historical View of the Domestic Economy of Great Britain and Ireland* (New edition, 1812).

[8] Few Sussex incumbents managed to grasp the distinction between Presbyterians and Congregationalists and no group of Nonconformists was described in the Visitation explicitly as Independent and only a few as 'Presbyterians or Independents'. Registrations at this time for Protestants or Protestant Dissenters generally point to Congregational causes.

mind that probably more than one-half of all Hearers were women, this implies that about one in five of the men were County Voters. Evans did not take into account the Friends, a good many of whom would have had the necessary qualifications for county votes.

In the Sussex County Poll of 1705, the total of voters was 2,914; this was a keen contest and the percentage poll would have been high. It seems doubtful whether something like 10% of the electorate were Nonconformists. This doubt is heightened if one examines a range of the figures for individual parishes.

Parish	Evans MS.		Electors voting in 1705
	Hearers (both sexes)	County Voters and percentage of total *Hearers*	
Framfield ...	200	21 : 10%	20
Battle	120	17 : 14%	32
Midhurst ...	100	16 : 16%	34

The case of Brighton is particularly interesting. The MS., data about the congregation was:

Hearers = 560; County Voters = 22; Gentlemen = 30; Yeomen = 2; Captains and Masters of Ships = 14; Tradesmen = 32.

Even if most of the ship's captains and masters were small men and unlikely to be freeholders, it is surprising that the gentlemen and tradesmen could muster only 22 county votes between them.

If these doubts about the reliability of the Evans data for Sussex are well-founded, it would be easier to account for the scale and pace of the decline in strength of Nonconformity in the county between 1725 and 1760. These queries are not meant to imply that the Evans MS. estimates were drawn up with any intention of giving a misleading picture of the influence of the Sussex Nonconformists; what is more likely is that they reflected a view taken through rose-tinted spectacles.

By the time that these notes appear in print, the MS. of the author's *An Outline of the Origins and Development of Early Nonconformity in Sussex* will be available at Dr. Williams's Library and Part II of this deals more fully with the Evans data for Sussex.

N. CAPLAN

Congregational Church Records

Held in Public Custody (List 2)

Bangor: University College of North Wales Library.

Bangor Eng. Cong. Ch.: misc. records, 1898-1957.

Benllech (Ang.) Welsh Cong. Ch.: minutes, 1917-44.

Bethesda (Caern.) Welsh Cong. Ch.: baptisms, 1818-39; cert. of registration, 1820.

Bwlchtocyn (Caern.) Welsh Cong. Ch.: baptisms, 1813-39.

Coedpoeth (Denb.) Welsh Cong. Ch.: burials, 1864-88.

Dinas Mawddwy (Mer.) Welsh Cong. Ch.: accounts, 1854-84.

Penmorfa (Caern.) Welsh Cong. Ch.: accounts, 1869-70.

Portmadoc (Caern.) Welsh Cong. Ch.: Building Committee minutes, 1877-85; accounts, 1869-1911.

Treflys (near Bethesda, Caern.) Welsh Cong. Ch.: accounts, 1865-9.

Wern (near Wrexham) Welsh Cong. Ch.: baptisms, 1808-92; burials, 1822-90; Sunday School reg., 1875-81; membership reg., 1849-1909; accounts, 1854-1907; pew rents, 1881-92.

Glamorgan Record Office, County Hall, Cardiff.

Groeswen Ch., Eglwysilan: baptisms, 1798-1849, 1942-52; membership reg., 1793-1838, 1908-16.

Manchester Public Library, Local History Collection.

Gatley Cong. Ch.: baptisms, 1779-1944; marriages, 1883-1945; burials, 1823-1950; minutes of Ch. meeting, 1872-1932; committee minutes, 1901-39; pew rents, 1882-1914; historical papers.

Plymouth Public Library, Archives Department.

Princes St. Ch., Devonport: Trustees' and Ch. minutes, 1797-1930; monthly Ch. meetings, 1809-1931; Deacons' minutes, 1886-1920; record books, 1763-1826; Building Committee minutes, 1879-83; accounts, 1797-1868; registers, 1817-1912; misc., 1838 and 1900; trust deed, 1804.

Mount St. Ch., Devonport: minutes, 1816-19; accounts, 1816-7.

Wycliffe Ch., Devonport: Deacons' and Ch. minutes, 1862-1937; register, 1922-48; misc. minutes, 1887-1940.

Sussex: East Sussex Record Office, County Hall, Lewes.

Lindfield Cong. Ch.: Historical account, 1810-42; minutes of Ch. meeting, 1843-1901.

(Received from C. E. Welch)

LETTERS INCIDENTAL TO SAMUEL SAY'S CALL TO WESTMINSTER, 1734.

Part I

Samuel Say was born 23 March 1675/6 in 'All Sts parish in a house agaainst ye well in ye Castle Green in Southamton and was baptized by Mr. Frances Mence, minister at ffaireham'. He was second son of Gyles Say, whose grandmother about 1572 'fled into England from Roan in Normandy upon occasion of the dreadfull massacre in France', where her relatives possessed, it is said, a very considerable estate. Gyles was the son of Francis Say, originally of Dorsetshire, who later settled at Southampton and became a flourishing merchant. This Gyles was presented to two Southampton livings under the Commonwealth and seems to have been ejected from them following the Restoration. He eventually accepted the pastorate of an Independent Church at Guestwick in Norfolk, where he died in 1692. He lies buried in the parish church there.

Samuel Say was a student with Isaac Watts at the Rev. Thomas Rowe's Academy in London. He married Miss Sarah Hamby, the daughter of a Great Yarmouth merchant, and his first pastorate—it was no more than a preachership—was nearby at Lowestoft. He was there when in 1712 he had a very insistent call to the assistant pastorate at what is now called the Old Meeting at Norwich. This he declined probably because that Church had been passing through a difficult period of divided loyalties. In 1726 he accepted a call to Ipswich and his actual ordination took place there. After eight years he was invited to Westminster to the 'Pastoral Charge of this religious society (late under the care of the Reverand Doctor Edmund Calamy deceaded)'. It is to this call that the following correspondence relates. He continued in this pastorate till his death, which took place in 1743 at his home in St. James Street, Westminster, whither he had removed from his first manse in New Street, Covent Garden.

His daughter, Sarah, became the wife of Isaac Toms of Hadleigh in Suffolk. Their son was the Rev. Samuel Say Toms of Framlingham in the same county.

A few of the letters were published in the *Monthly Depository* of 1810. The MSS., are now in my ownership and I intend them shortly to find a permanent home.

B. COZENS-HARDY

To Rev. Mr. Sam. Say,
Ipswich

Newington
Feb 28 1733/4

Dear Sir,

Two days ago I was addrest by Dr Calamys people with enquiries about your character; I said every thing I thought was due to Truth & ffriendship. Perhaps you may hear more of this in a little time. May ye God of Light & Grace be with your Spirit & direct all your affairs. My salutations attend your Spouse & Daughter.

Yours affectionately
I. WATTS.

We are entirely removed to Newington & I seldom spend a whole day in London.

To Rev. Sam. Say.

London
March 26 1734

Dear Sir,

I have delayd an answer to your letter till I can give a better account of every thing.

The Deputies of ye Dissenting Congregations in & near London are wretchedly divided into two parties, one acknowledging ye subsistence of ye Committee of Gentleman which were chosen 16 months ago upon the talk of repealing ye Test, who met at Salters Hall, & have almost all the Independents with them. The other part renounce the Committee, disclaiming their power to act or to call ye Deputies together, & some Presbyterians & some Baptists join with them.

As far as I can find, ye body which owns ye Committee are almost two thirds of ye whole, if not quite, some say more. Yet ye others have chosen one Capt: Winter their chairman, & thus they act in separate bodies, mutually ruinous. The business of chusing Deputies all over England, recommended by this lesser body in London will, I suppose, have very small effect. Their cry against ye Committee is yt they are too much influenced by ye Court. But I think we are by no means in a Case to sett up against ye Court, even if the majority shoud incline to it, which is far from ye truth. Your remarks in your letter are perfectly just. My salutations to Mr Baxter & tell him so.

This morning 5 or 6 of Dr Calamys people have been with me & talked over your fitness for their pulpit again. I told ym you

had heard yt Mr Savill was in their eye. They assure me that tho he did preach with them once or twice, they have no such view or design, nor ever had as a body, however one or 2 persons might have such a thought. But even that is entirely dropt now. They have I believe a full commission given them to give you a call to London. But they woud a little know, whether they are likely to succeed. Upon wch I told ym I had hinted it to you, & I read the words of your letter to ym, (viz) yt if they proceeded any further it would perplex your thoughts very much, & you would willingly be led by providence &c. They seemd much pleasd wth wt I read to them & will probably tell you their mind themselves.

We are now removed & dwell so entirely at Newington that if I were capable any way of serving your nephew by influence (which I am not) yet my distance of habitation cutts me from it. May ye Great Pastor of ye Church direct your course in feeding any part of his flock. With all due salutations to you & yours

I am

Your affete : friend & Bro :

I: WATTS

To Rev. S. Say

April 2 1734

Dear Bro :

We are desird by severall members of ye Congregation of ye late Revd Dr Calamy to inform you yt that Congregation have very unanimously given you a Call to the Pastoral office among them, & one or two of them intend the beginning of next week to wait on you at Ipswich to lay it before you, unless you think it proper to receive it in a more private way. Your notice of this matter is desired to be given to Dr Harris in Ayloft street in Goodmans fields next post if you utterly forbid it : otherwise you may expect their attendance on you. That our Common Ld wd direct your heart into ye way of usefullness & peace is ye hearty desire of your affecte : Breth :

I. WATTS

W. HARRIS

To the Reverend Mr Samuell Say Minister of the Gospell at Ipswich.

We the undersigned Subscribers (Members of, or belonging to, the Religious Society or Congregation of Protestant Dissenters in Westminster whereof the Reverend Doctor Edmund Calamy deceased was late Minister or Pastor) having solemnly implored the

Divine Guidance in the choice of a fit person to succeed in the pastoral oversight and care of this Church, and being now assembled for that purpose, We have been providentially directed and influenced to make choice of you, Sir, (with unanimity) to succeed in the present vacant pastoral charge of this Church ; And we do earnestly invite and desire you to accept of this Choice accordingly : — In testimony whereof We have hereunto set our hands the second day of April in the year of our Lord One thousand Seven hundred thirty four.

JOHN BISCOE	THOMAS BROWNE	ALEXr CRIGHTON
CHA. CARLETON	SAMUEL GRAHAM	WILLIAM GIBSON
CASE BILLINGSTER	WM. HENDERSON	WILL. ROBERTSON
JNO. HIGHAM	JO: ffOX	JOHN BISCOE jun.
GEO. BARCLAY	JOSEPH KELHAM	JOHN BURTON
JNO: BECK	DAVID SUTTON	NATHL. SACHEVERELL
JOHN HERMAN	JOHN McGRIGOR	ANDREW SHIELDS
JNO: WILKINSON	RICHD BURLAND	JAMES BUCHAN
PH. HOLLINGWORTH jun.	ALEXr CUMMING	WILLIAM COCKBURN
ROBERT BOWMAN	JOHN WOODIN	JOHN SENING
SAML: BOLER	JOHN CHEESMAN	GODFREY NODDER
WM. JONES	JAMES SMITH	MOSES MABERLY
JOHN CLARK	THOMAS NORTON	JOHN READ
JAM. HALL	RICHD: JACKSON	THO: COLLINSON
ROB. TOD	SAML HORSLEY	JOHN WOOD
JOSEPH BISCOE	JNO. OLDFIELD	DAVID EVANS
JAMES RIGBY	JOHN WINBUSH	SAMUEL CREW
	JOS. SEDDON	

To Rev. S. Say

London Apll 6th 1734

Revd. Sir

I am desired by the gentlemen who are deputed to wait on you with the unanimous call of our Church at Westminster to acquaint you that God willing the'll mett you at Witham on Monday evening according to your desire, as we are informed by the Revnd Dr Harris, and at the same inn.

That the journey may be happy and prosperous to your good selfe and them that the issue may be the Glory of God the mutual joy and comfort of us all is Dear Sir the sincere wishes and earnest prayers of your unknown friend

and very humble servant

SAML. BOLER

To Rev. S. Say

Yarmouth 8th April 1734

Revnd. Sir

After receiving yrs of 22nd past wch informed me of Mr. Sa-u-ls preaching at Dr. C----ys place as a probationer I concluded my intelligence was not so true as I cou'd have wishd & began to think

if the above Gent: succeeded, the Dissenters were unanimously determined to give the best preferments to those who least deserved them. But a letter this day from my friend Mr Luson now at London gives me reason to alter my opinion, in which he acquaints me that last Saturday he was in company with one one of the Managers of Dr C----ys Congregation who told him they were shortly to send an unanimous invitation to yrself & says further as it will be a very advantagious place. He sincerely rejoyces at it & tells me the gent: showd him a great character Dr Watts, Mr Goodwin & Mr Northcutt had given of Mr S-y wch had much promoted his interest amongst the People. I did myself, says Mr L., the pleasure to confirm all they had said ; for I knew no greater satisfaction than to speak with truth to every ones advantage, the place being worth 200£ a year at least if sho'd preach 2ce a Day wch wou'd be left to yr choice . . .

My mother expresses a great deal of pleasure at this piece of news & woud be glad to have it confirmd from your self. But I've mentioned it only to her, nor do pretend to let any body else know of it till its past all doubt. Mrs Shephard was this week to visit my mother. Mrs Atwood tells me Miss is very fond of her & makes no question of their agreeing. Mr Frost courts Miss Martyn, Mrs Lusons niece a very deserving woman tho of small fortune & its lookd on as an odd determination on the gents part to fix at last here after so many long journeys & such expectations of advantage as he has I suppose raised within himself from the great good fortune of some gentlemen of the same profession.

Mr Milner is going to Norwich & I hear Mr Scott of Lowestoft preaches on Wednesday for him. My humble service to yrself Mrs Say & Miss concludes me.

Revd Sir,
Yr obliged friend
& humble servant
J. MORSE

To Rev. S. Say

Westm[r] 16th April 1734

Sir,

We the under-named Subscribers (on behalf of our selves and the rest of the members of the Protestant Dissenters Church here) take leave to return thanks to you for the favour of your kind letter of the 11th instant, directed to Mr Carleton, who communicated it to such of us as were present at our weekly meeting on the last fryday evening (being about 10 or 11 in number) to whom it was

universally acceptable, and the more so in that it brought such an expeditious confirmation of the very obliging answer, which you was pleasd to send us by Mr Wilkinson and Mr Carleton, when they attended you at Wickham with the unanimous invitation (under the hands of sundry persons) containing the choice of you to the Pastoral Charge of This Religious Society (late under the care of the Reverend Doctor Edmund Calamy deceased)

We hope, Sir, you will have no reason to repent of the encouragement your letter aforementioned gives this People to expect your coming to them; not with a design to deliberate any longer, but to accept their Call, and with a purpose to prepare your way to an actual settlement amongst them as soon as conveniently you can. And the sooner that can be accomplishd the better, and the more pleasing (we promise ourselves) it will be, not only to us, but also to the community in general, after so long a time of their being held in suspence already.

We are with great respect,

Reverend Sir,

Your most sincere and faithful humble servants,

CHA. CARLETON
JO. BISCOE
JNO. HIGHAM
SAML. BOLER
SAML. HORSLEY
JOSEPH BISCOE
PH. HOLLINGWORTH junr
ROB. TOD

To Rev. S. Say

Bury. April 17. 1734.

Revd & dear Sir,

I understand by a letter of yours to Mr Barker of Wattesfield that you have received an unanimous call from the Church to which the late Dr Calamy was pastor and do hereby heartily congratulate you thereupon (though I cannot but be concerned for the great loss Ipswich and your brethren in these parts will have of so useful & valuable a fellow labourer in the Vineyard of our common Lord) . . .

I presume you are not unacquainted with the sentiment of that honourable and learned gentleman[1] who is the principal member of that congregation you are called to, and who is (as I have heard) very strongly attached to that which is commonly called the Calvanistical scheme, and I doubt not that your prudence will direct you to be as much upon your guard in private conversation

[1] Sir Richard Ellis (or Ellys): theological writer: became a Greek and Hebrew Scholar in Holland. M.P. Boston 1719-1727; d. 1742.

as a good conscience will allow you to be, so that to you this hint may be in a great measure useless, however I hope such a brotherly intimation will not be judged altogether impertinent, and I shall say no more but verbum sapienti &.

If Providence should see fit to fix you in that place I shall think myself very happy in having two such good friends near London as your self at Westminster and dear G. Wightwick at Kingston . . .

I should be very thankful to you for a line from London, and must hastily conclude with my best wishes for the best blessings on you and yours and am, dear Sr, yr affect Br. and ready servt to my poor power.

T. STEWARD

To Rev. S. Say

Dear Sir,

I designed to have writ to you, but being out of Town on Tuesday had not the opportunity of seeing the gentlemen from Westminster, and hearing particularly what passed at Witham. As I have taken some pains in this Affair, and watched all opportunities by fitting methods to lead their thoughts this way, so I think you have a good right to any assistance I am able to give you, and I shall do it with the frankness of a Friend, who greatly loves you, and without any reserve.

As to your difficulties. Sir R[ichard Ellis] is a gentleman of Learning & Piety. His learning mostly in the classical and critical way. His notions in Religion are strict Calvanisms. He greatly affects the books of the old Puritans. Dr Calamy was bred in the Middle Way, and his whole preaching was in that strain. He never troubled them with Predestination. We are all of opinion you will be as like to please Sir R. as any man, who is fit for the place. However, it is able to support a Minister independent of him, as I am informed their own subscriptions are near 150 p. annum. Dr C. lived among them for 30 years, tho' with a large family, with honour and comfort, tho' not without some exercise of prudence upon particular occasions, for which there is need every where.

The reasons for acceptance are, That tis an Antient and Considerable Congregation, which has always been under the care of worthy men, Dr C., Mr Alsop, Mr Lawton up to the Ejection, and should not fall into the hands of the young and inexperienced. It raises about 100 [a] year for the Fund, upon which the Country so much depends. They have been long destitute, about a year, and difficulty brot to agree, and have unanimously centered in you,

with the approbation and the good will of all the Ministers in Town; and your refusal would hazard a breach, which might be uncomfortable to you as well as to them. You would be of great use among your brethren to the common interest, who want men of experience and temper; and Ipswich can be easily supplied by some younger man, who would not do here.

As to your health, who have long lived in the country, a house may be got near the Park or near the River which is open and airy.

Upon the whole I think the Call of Providence very clear and special, the Prospect of comfort and usefulness very considerable, the reasons for it very strong, the difficulties very little. We must indeed leave events to God, while we follow plain duty and trust in his care and mercy. I pray God direct your thoughts and guide your way in a matter of so much importance to your self and to the Publick Interest. I am,

Your affectionate Bro and Servant,
W. HARRIS.

Alift Street Goodmans Fields
April 20. 1734

To the Congregation of Protestant Dissenters in Westminster lately under the Pastoral Care of the Revd Dr Edmd Calamy deceasd[2]

Ipswch May 2d 1734

Brethren,

I should not have so long delayd my answer to the Call I recd from you of the same date with this in the preceding month, had I believed there was any Probability that I should have been obligd to decline it. I only thought it a respect that was due to a People that greatly loves me to wait a season that I might be able perhaps to reconcile their minds to the parting with me. I had urged what reasons I judgd proper to the principal Persons among them singly, & at their request I met them in a body by appointment the last Lords Day evening.

The event was such that I now do, & hope I may safely, declare my ACCEPTANCE of the CALL which you have given me, as the Brethren deputed from you assured me, with so much unanimity as to be without one negative voice against it. And as it is a matter that weighs very much with me, I persuade myself it will give equal satisfaction & pleasure to you (the Church of Christ to which I am invitd) that I do not rend my self from the Xian Society here & that there is not one as far as I know even of those who most love me who do not look upon their consent to my departure as an act

[2] This is a copy of the draft letter.

of the same affection which they have ever professed towards me [*Remainder in shorthand*].

SAM: SAY

To Rev. S. Say

Westminster, 7th May 1734

Sir,

Yours of the 2d instant has been communicated to us by Mr Carleton and we beg leave to assure you it is a peculiar satisfaction to everyone concerned in the late unanimous choice of you that it has pleasd God so to interpose in the affair, as to incline the good people of Ipswich to resign you to the congregation of Protestant Dissenters of Westminster, with as great unanimity as has appeared amongst the later in their invitation to you to the pastoral charge and care of this church; for which its hoped this people will have abundant cause of thankfulness, both to the Great Shepheard of the Sheep, and to your good friends at Ipswich, to whom your person and ministry are so dear; and who by their Christian and affectionate dismission have given such an eminent and evident proof of their catholic spirit and temper: And we do heartily and sincerly joyn with you, Sir, in your excellent prayer, that it may be equally terminated in the comfort and edification of both churches; And since this your last kind letter brings a renewed declaration of your acceptance of the call, we are in hopes it will not be long ere we shall have the pleasure of seeing you here; and if you would please to signifie by a line, when your affairs will admit of it, it may answer some valuable purposes, over and above the gratification of the desires of sundry persons amongst this Christian Society, more particularly of

Reverend Sir,

Your very affectionate friends and humble servants:

CASE BILLINGSTER
JN. WILKINSON
ALEX CUMMING
JN. HIGHAM
JAM. HALL
GEO. BARCLAY
THOMAS BROWNE
SAML. BOLER
SAML. HORSLEY
CHA. CARLETON
JO. BISCOE
PH. HOLLINGWORTH junr

To Mrs Sarah Say
Ipswich

London May 25th 1734

My Dearest,

Yesterday I spent my evening with the Gentlemen of the Vestry or Committee, who all recd me with a great deal of seeming affection & even joy. The person whom I am most afraid of, a

creature of Sir R. rather exceeded the rest, carried me to his house & gave me the hire of a coach into the City. I was told by those who met me the first evening, that Sir Rd. had appointed a journey before he knew of my coming, that I might not be concerned if I saw him not: but the gentleman had told him of my arrival and expects he will be with us to morrow, and intends to procure two other persons who he thinks have an interest in him, to wait upon him this evening with a friendly design towards me, nor do I find any reason as yet to believe he has taken any prejudice agst. me, tho I own I am afraid what may be the event should we come to have any long conversation together.

Before they had recd. my last letter to 'em they had securd a supplie for the morrow, so that I expect to preach only in the afternoon, for which reason and because I am willing to enjoy another good night I think to lie at my Sisters & take a coach to Mr. Carletons to morrow, where I shall pass all the next week, & if we can pitch upon a proper house, which was pretty much the conversation of the committee, I shall be able to write you word this day sennight when you may look for me down again.

It has rained all this morning, so that we have heard nothing of Brother Carter, who lay yesterday exceeding weak, tho without any distemper that I could perceive, but old age. He revived a little at seeing & hearing of me. The rest were all well at Stepney & Mile-end & remember to you; as does also Brother & Sister Porter who thinks that Samme Cooks Company & affairs will confine her at London, where a strong interest is made on a sudden for his being organist at White-Chapel by Mr Denham, Mr Petty & the Churchwarden with many others, who think him vastly to excell his only present competitor. But this affair will not be determined before Midsummer by occasion of the sickness & absence of the other churchwarden.

I bless God I am in very good health & wish I may hear the same of you on Monday & of the my maiden. I have seen Dr Harris & desired him to think of a proper person for Ipswich, I mentioned Mr Daniel to him, but forgott the name of the other person that Dr Meadows had recommended

Give maiden a kiss for me & believe me

Yours affectionately

S[AM] S[AY]

JOSEPH PARKER'S UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

The issue which Commission I has placed before the Congregational Union of England and Wales, whether to be known as a Church and not a Union, is not new. In 1901 when Joseph Parker of the City Temple was for the second time Chairman of the Union he urged the Union to celebrate the birth of the new century by becoming The United Congregational Church. Looking back upon events we smile and say that Parker was naive. What is surprising, however, is the amount of support he received. Certainly Parker was in a prophetic rôle and already many of his ideas have been adopted.

Our generation cannot be satisfied with Parker's inadequate doctrinal foundation for his grand scheme. He said very little about the biblical concept of the Church; and as for the ways in which the Church has been and is understood by Christians of different traditions, he did not mention these. He was content to dip lightly into *The New Testament* and draw forth a few texts to show that the word Church might be used of both a local congregation and larger collections of congregations. Thus he had shown, he believed, that his title The United Congregational Church was justifiable, and he was content. So, it seems, were his many critics, for they did not attack him at this point.

The critics' main contention was that Parker failed to deal with the problem of authority in Congregationalism. In this they were undoubtedly right. Parker's only answer here was to resort to oratory on the one hand—'Is it really a glorious thing to be absolutely independent of each other? Is it something to boast of?'—and, on the other hand, to assure men that the new Church would preserve the central principle of Congregationalism: 'The individual Church is the primary and indestructible unit of Congregationalism'; its autonomy was not threatened. Most of his two Chairman's Addresses were concerned with the organization of the new Church but he dared not outline a policy to make the machinery of the local congregation, the County Union and the national body work smoothly. He probably knew his limitations but he was obviously open to attack at his weakest point. Parker could be prophetic but he had not the mantle of Isaiah, the prophet-statesman.

Instead Parker's tactics alarmed men. Whether it was a sense that the sands of time were running out, for he died the next year,

or whether it was just his impetuous character, which caused him to press the issue so urgently, is hard to tell. He found the Union machinery frustrating. One day he proposed at the Union Committee, the chief executive body, that there and then they should issue a declaration stating that the Congregational Union had become a Church. Throughout his year of office friends and opponents were constantly trying to get Parker to be more patient.

Parker's main concern was to make Congregationalism effective in the twentieth century. 'Instead of having a partially or loosely organized Congregationalism I wish to take part in the creation and full equipment of an institution to be known and developed as The United Congregational Church.' Reorganization was not in itself enough. A new concept altogether, that of a Church, would inspire the new machine.

He compiled a long list of projects for the new Church to attempt. The Assembly would have to go. It wearied him. It was 'more talkative than deliberative.' He would replace it by an executive of five hundred representatives chosen geographically. The germ of the present Council seems to be in this suggestion.

Discipline troubled Parker. He was dissatisfied with the licence which meant that 'for anything I know there may be a Congregational Church at the bottom of my garden within the next three months.' There ought to be an agreed standard of ministerial recognition, and this was essential to any system of sustentation. Parker mentioned the case of a pastor who 'did not recognize me as a brother until he sought to enrol me as a subscriber.' This part of his first address he concluded by saying, 'I protest against this jerry building being described as Congregationalism.'

Parker was full of ideas. A method of removals and settlements must be devised ; many old central city churches must be disposed of and in their place rise central missions ; a good denominational paper was much needel.

Nothing provoked opposition so much as Parker's grand sweep of the theological training colleges. He had the foresight to realize that as the twentieth century went on the amalgamation of colleges would be inevitable and the Union would have to bear more responsibility for financing training. So Parker advocated amalgamating the existing institutions and having three, one each at Oxford, Cambridge and Durham. The colleges defended their independence with greater zeal than the churches.

Finally, we must point out that Parker's vision took him far afield. The United Congregational Church was not to stop at the

present limits of the Union. One day it should embrace the Baptists and later on the Presbyterians. Moreover, might not the Scottish Congregationalists join in, and perhaps the colonial Unions ?

People have rightly pointed out how curious all this was in view of Parker's violent outburst against organized Congregationalism in 1876. Then, from the Union platform, he opposed the Union's being allowed to administer large funds. He poured scorn on the idea of ministerial sustentation, saying that men and churches ought to look after themselves. He wanted no Union help for theological students.

This is explained in part by acknowledging Parker's jealousy of the Union's Secretary, Alexander Hannay, a vigorous leader, who with the help of others such as Guinness Rogers and Dale, built the Union up to a position of consequence. Parker could sneer at Hannay in public as he did at this time, saying, 'I rejoice in the glittering speech of Mr. Dale, the valiant energy of Mr. Rogers, and the delightfully-ingenious reasoning by which the secretary persuades himself that he is always right.' He went on to remind him that the Union could not do without the churches but the churches could get on without the Union.

1901, then, does look like a *volte-face*. Parker's biographer, Adamson, attributes it to none other than Hannay himself though he does not give his grounds for this view. Parker himself said quite simply, 'For my own part I cannot too frequently or too strongly state I personally want no change whatsoever. Independency as I have known it is all I personally want... But... we have to deal with new conditions, indeed with a new England and a new world.' It is not of necessity sin for a man to change his mind. Despite his dislike of Hannay, no doubt Parker came to see what good he had done for Congregationalism as a whole. Although Independency had always suited Parker, in Manchester and in London, where he had reigned supreme in his churches, for he was essentially an Independent rather than a Congregationalist, he was fair enough to admit that churches as a whole stood in need of something more than Independency. Parker had, in mixing with men of many denominations and countries, lost the parochial outlook ; many of the delegates to the Assembly had never experienced anything like this and had no such vision.

Is it possible to penetrate Parker's mind and discover what was the motive of his proposals? Certain facts stand out amongst the many involved; we may turn each one into the form of a question and then see if an answer will lead us to the motive we are

seeking. First, why did Parker take so great a leap and propose to change the Union into a Church? Why would not a refurbished Union do? Why had it to be a Church? Second, why did he choose Oxford, Cambridge and, above all, Durham, as the places where he wanted to see ministers trained? Third, should any particular significance be attached to his hope that the Baptists and Presbyterians, the Scottish Congregationalists and maybe others, would join the new Church eventually? Was this aspiration stimulated by charity and a desire for reunion or was there more to it?

These questions placed against the background of the times and of Parker's life and words seem to call forth one answer. The United Congregational Church was Parker's next step forward for Congregationalists in competition with the Church of England. Moreover, he hoped that it might turn into an advance for Nonconformists as a whole, despite the unhappy fact that he was obliged to leave aside the Methodist denominations. Throughout Parker's lifetime disestablishment had been the object of Nonconformity. In the first decade of this century Nonconformists fully expected the Liberal government to destroy the Anglicans' privileges. In this they were disappointed save in Wales. So then, in 1901 this question was as prominent as the ecumenical one to-day. If we turn back to what Parker said in 1884 in his Address to the Assembly upon the first occasion that he was elected to the Chair we see what his feelings were on the question. Three short quotations will suffice. 'Ecclesiastical differences are accompanied by social distinctions'; there exists 'a royal church and a plebeian chapel'; 'Dissent is one of the costliest professions in England . . . All social prizes are to be found in the other direction.' What evidence to support Dr. C. H. Dodd's non-theological factors in reunion discussions!

Indeed, it does not appear far-fetched to compare Parker's experience with that of some Trade Unionists in our generation. Both he and they began life in humble surroundings. Their education was rudimentary. Parker never went to college; he was largely self-educated. So were many Trade Union leaders. Parker was brought up on the milk of Russell, reform and republicanism; they fed on radicalism though of a later date. Parker then came to London and began his apprenticeship to the pulpit under Campbell. This stage in his career compares with the Trade Unionists' initiation into secretarial and administrative work as full-time organizers. Parker went to Cavendish Chapel, Manchester, in 1858 and there began mixing with wealthy folk with strong Liberal

politics. From there he returned to London and after five years, in 1874, built the City Temple. Now he began fraternizing with people of social distinction and he felt that he was on equal terms with any canon or bishop. He invited prominent Anglicans to his pulpit to speak to his multitude and he felt at the time confident that the pulpit of Westminster Abbey would shortly be open to him. He was over-optimistic. This phase of Parker's life corresponds with that of the Trade Union official during the war and after it when he was invited to join the coalition government and then the Labour administration. The new world in which he had to live could not but affect him, his views and even his dress. And perhaps the greatest change in him was that he was far less inclined to want to pull down the social structure; instead he began to praise the new system which would give everyone equal opportunity to reach the highest levels. This new mode of thought was perhaps epitomized in the case of those who had once opposed royalty but who through contact with George VI during the war began to see the value of the monarchy. Parker passed through this kind of experience. Once before a large public, he too reappraised his republican position and became a royalist; his style of living was manifestly different from the stonemason's home where he had been born and bred. Parker, then, had mixed sufficiently with society and possessed sufficient power to feel his way out of the merely negative attitude of those who for most of the nineteenth century had been campaigning for disestablishment, towards a new approach, positive and at closer quarters with the Church of England. He wanted to feel equal to the Anglican. Just as the Socialist often began by trying to tear down his rival and ended by climbing up to his place, so Parker began as a young fellow, a conventional Nonconformist opposing the Establishment, but as he grew in power he took every step he could to place himself and his people on a level with the Church of England. The very name City Temple suggests the transition at work as early as 1874, for the conventional Nonconformist and the die-hard Congregationalist would hardly have chosen it.

Therefore Parker had to have a Church with which to compete with a Church. Its ministers would be trained on an equal footing with the Anglicans. And it would be of tremendous value if it did not remain a Congregational Church but a larger body embracing other Nonconformist denominations.

That his hearers appreciated the innuendos seems evident from the report of the Assembly in *The Christian World*, 5 April, 1901.

The reporter comments that although Parker was heard seriously obviously his proposals did not commend themselves to most of those present. Everyone realized, however, that 'for Free Churchmen to persist in maintaining the *status quo* is manifestly to stultify their essential position.' He goes on to suggest to Parker that he return to the old familiar drum of disestablishment in the autumn which his hearers long to hear beating. Parker refused.

The files of *The Christian World,* 1900-01, also reveal that Parker's proposals were not so fantastic as we might be led to suppose. It appears that correspondence on the theme continued throughout the winter preceding Parker's Address. Apart from Guinness Rogers who as a veteran warned the young men like J. D. Jones not to overload the Union with responsibilities, most of the correspondents favoured some forward move. Richard Lovett wrote a series of letters on the reformation of the Union and introduced the phrase 'the Congregational Church,' meaning the Union, into his material without appearing to notice that he had done it. The phrase was noted by readers but no one waxed wrathful about it; perhaps it was not taken seriously. It would be interesting to know whether Parker and Lovett were campaigning together. Certainly the editor was behind them in their efforts.

The response of the Counties and churches is also interesting. The Assembly sent Parker's proposals to them and what is remarkable is that six County Unions gave general approval to them whilst seventeen wanted something less, and 164 out of 642 churches which replied to the Union liked that title The United Congregational Church. 161 churches said that they preferred the present title. Most of the churches replying wanted something less than Parker's proposals but somthing more than the *status quo.* It is noted that the smaller churches were most in favour. Parker's proposals were naturally dropped but what surprises one looking back across sixty years, from a time when proposals with some affinity to Parker's are again being sent to the churches of the Union, is that the minority which supported Parker was as significant as it was.

JOHN H. TAYLOR

N.B. The figures here are taken from Dr. A. Peel's *These Hundred Years,* (1931) pp. 351-3, which also gives a fuller account of Parker's Addresses. Other sources used in the article include *The Congregational Year Books*; W. Adamson's *Life* (1902); and Parker's *A Preacher's Life* (1899).

Selections from the Fathers

1. Robert Browne (b)

In the last issue of Transactions *we printed some extracts from Robert Browne showing his understanding of the Church, its relationship to the State and to the people, its spiritual fellowship and structure. In this issue we are drawing attention to Browne's place for Synods and similar activities, a theme he was unable to develop owing to the circumstances of his time; to his strong Genevan views on the Lord's Supper; and briefly to his emphasis upon discipline in all spheres of life, including the Church. These are three aspects of Browne which distinguish him sharply from the severely independent, non-sacramental, and democratic type of Congregationalism the last century.*

Synods and other meetings between churches

A Synode is a Joining or partaking of the authoritie of manie Churches mette togither in peace, for redresse and deciding of matters, which can not well be otherwise taken up.

Prophecie is a joining or partaking of the office of manie Teachers in peaceable manner, both for judgement and triall, and also for the use of everie mannes gifte, in talke, reasoning, exhortation, or doctrine.

Eldership is a Joining or partaking of the authoritie of Elders, or forwardest and wisest in a peaceable meeting, for redressing and deciding of matters in particular Churches, and for counsaile therein. *A Booke which sheweth,* D4 *recto.*

The Lord's Supper

The Lords Supper is a Sacrament or marke of the apparent Church, sealing to us by the breaking and eating of breade and drinking the Cuppe in one holie communion, and by the worde accordinglie preached, that we are happilie redeemed by the breaking of the bodie and shedding of the bloud of Christ Jesus, and we thereby growe into one bodie and the church, in one communion of graces, whereof Christ is the heade, to keepe and seeke agreement under one lawe and governement in all thankefulnes & holy obedience. *Ibid.* E3 *recto.*

What preparation must there be to receave the Lords supper ?

There must be a separation from those which are none of the church, or be unmeete to receave, that the worthie may be onely receaved.

All open offences and faultings must be redressed.

All must prove and examine them selves, that their conscience be cleare by faith and repentance, before they receave.

How is the supper rightlie ministred ?

The worde must be duelie preached.

And the signe or sacrament must be rightlie applied thereto.

Ibid. E2 *verso.*

How must the worde be duelie preached ?

The death and tormentes of Christ, by breaking his bodie and sheading his bloud for our sinnes, must be shewed by the lawfull preacher.

Also he must shewe the spirituall use of the bodie & bloud of Christ Jesus, by a spirituall feeding thereon, and growinge into it, by one holie communion.

Ibid. E2 *recto.*

How must the signe be applied thereto ?

The preacher must take breade and blesse and geve thankes, and then must he breake it and pronounce it to be the body of Christ, which was broken for them, that by faith they might feede thereon spirituallie & growe into one spiritual bodie of Christ, and so be eating thereof himselfe, must bidd them take and eate it among them, and feede on Christ in their consciences.

Likewise also must he take the cuppe and blesse and geve thankes, and so pronounce it to be the bloud of Christ in the newe Testament, which was shedd for remission of sinnes, that by faith we might drinke it spirituallie, and so be nourished in one spirituall bodie of Christ, all sinne being clensed away, and then he drinking thereof himselfe must bidd them drinke there of likewise and divide it among them, and feede on Christe in their consciences.

Then must they all geve thankes praying for their further profiting in godliness & vowing their obedience.

Ibid. E4 *verso.*

Authority in Church, State and Family

How must Superiors execute their callinge by ruling their inferiours ?

They must esteeme right and due.

They must uphould the same.

By appointing to others their dueties.
They must take accountes.[1]

Ibid. K3 *verso.*

What say you of the dueties of submission to Superiours ?
They consist in esteeming them.
In honouring them.
In serving them.

Ibid. L2 *verso.*

(*Concluded*)

J.H.T.

[1] *Browne's criticism of the clergy is that they are 'too homelie' with their people.*

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

The Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England, Vol. xii, No. 1 (May 1960) includes, in addition to some notes on the story of Westminster College, and a survey of 'Conventicals and Conventiclers : Surrey and Sussex' by Dr. S. W. Carruthers, an interesting paper by Christina Scott on 'Calvinism and the Witchcraft Persecution in England'. She seeks to show that this blot cannot be attributed primarily to Calvin and his disciples.

The Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society, Vol. xii, No. 2 (October 1960) has an account by Mortimer Rowe on the High Court case fought in connection with 'The Old Meeting Church, Birmingham'.

The Journal of the Friends' Historical Society :

Vol. xlix No. 2 includes a fascinating chapter in Quaker history : 'Authority or Experience' by Richenda C. Scott. It illustrates how modern Friends grew out of Nineteenth Century Evangelicalism with its Infallible Book.

Vol. xlix No. 3 has an account of the 'Friends' Reference Library' by Muriel A. Hicks—Congregationalists may be forgiven a twinge of envy !

The Baptist Quarterly :

Vol. xviii, Nos. 6, 7, 8 (April-October 1960). *Vol. xix, No. 1* (January 1961). *Vol. xviii, No. 7* has a useful survey by C. B. Jewson 'Norfolk Baptists up to 1700'. This is concluded in *No. 8,* which also carries the first half (completed in *xix, No. 1*) of an article by B. G. Cooper, 'The academic Re-discovery of Apocalyptic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century'.

Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society, Vol. xxxii, Parts 5, 6, 7, 8 (March 1960—December 1960). Brian J. N. Galliers writes on 'Baptism in the writings of John Wesley', in *Parts 6 and 7* ; and B. C. Drury on 'John Wesley, Hymnologist' in *Parts 5 and 6.*

W.W.B.

REVIEWS

A History of Scottish Congregationalism by Harry Escott. (Congregational Union of Scotland, 1960, 30s.).

It is now sixty years ago since the first and only previous history of Scottish Congregationalism was written. This volume represents all the gains of the intervening years, and must entirely replace its predecessor. To begin with it corrects the countless mistakes of fact and figure with which James Ross' history abounded. It has proved possible within the compass of this book to include a list of all the churches with their ministers ; here Ross was particularly defective.

More important since Ross's days have been the researches by J. T. Hornsby and others into the pre-history. Congregationalism in Scotland derived but little directly from England. Primary source was the independent searching of the Scriptures undertaken here and there in the eighteenth century by individuals who gathered churches round about them. Sometimes these little causes multiplied and grouped together to form Bereans, Glasites, Old Scots Independents and the like. After a while and one by one they died out, except that one congregation of the Independents continued right up to modern times in Glasgow. These eddies had little significance of themselves, but were signs of a moving of the waters.

The tide which began to flow at the end of the century was part of that great restless movement of the age which expressed itself in many ways in many lands, but notably in Scotland in the poetry of Robert Burns. It rose from a weary impatience with formalism, legalism and bigotry on the one hand, and a new appreciation of the opportunities newly opened overseas as at home to the Church. It was no accident that the spiritual revival which led to Scottish Congregationalism was led by two laymen, brothers incidentally, who were engaged in foreign trade. As in England two centuries earlier and in other lands also, the movement was intended to refresh and reform the Church, not to break from it. To quote Dr. Escott, 'Had the early Congregationalists found sympathetic support for their views regarding the membership of the church as a spiritual fellowship, and had church courts not interfered with their efforts by means of lay-preachers and others to carry on the work of evangelisation, Congregationalism would not have found a footing in Scotland at the time it did '. In less than twenty years, however, and twenty before the similar step was taken in England a Congregational Union had been formed.

The third gain in understanding which has come since Ross's writing has been the possibility of an evaluation of the joining of

Congregational churches with those of the Evangelical Union. The latter was a break away from the Secession Church and in part also from Congregationalism on doctrinal grounds. It was at this point that there broke into Scottish religious thinking the first serious criticism of the Calvinist views which had been its pattern since 1560. The Union of 1896 represented the fairly rapid move of all the churches of Scotland in this direction. It brought with it a Presbyterian flavour which is a continuing part of Scottish Congregationalism.

It is interesting to note that Scottish Congregationalism has not suffered the numerical losses known in the last fifty years in England where Congregational church membership has declined by fifty per cent. In Scotland the membership is little less than it ever was at its highest figure. The assessment of more recent times is always the most difficult task for the historian. It is not yet clear what the future is going to be and therefore the real significance of the present is uncertain. It is not surprising, therefore, that the latter part of this book seems to have less shape than the earlier. The fact is that Congregationalism in Scotland would seem to be approaching a decisive period. Its Congregationalism has had less strong contacts with that of England than seems right within an international fellowship. Perhaps the lesser has feared possible absorption in the greater, and the greater has been too busy. Now within the ecumenical movement, which so often takes national boundaries, Scottish Congregationalism may have to decide whether being Scottish is more important than being Congregational, or *vice versa*.

This is a thorough and adequate production and will surely be and remain for very long the standard history.

R. F. G. CALDER

A Church History of Scotland by J. H. S. Burleigh (Oxford University Press, 1960, 42s.).

For the contents, style and format of this book Principal Burleigh deserves praise and gratitude. As a Congregationalist, however, I offer two criticisms. There is much here about the rights of Congregations in the settlement of ministers, the spiritual independence of the Church, and the nineteenth century revolt from hyper-Calvinism. There is also a general reference to the Haldane mission. But there is nothing about the 96 Congregational Churches which united in 1812 ; nothing about Congregationalism's subsequent and spiritually important history. There is no single salute to the out-

standing preachers, scholars, and administrators of Scottish Congregationalism who surely deserve a place in any competent 'Church History of Scotland'. Edward Irving is here with his amazing, amusing, and tragic eccentricities. But not a word about Greville Ewing (1767-1841) who was 'the architect and builder of modern Scottish Congregationalism' (Escott. p. 86).

Again, in moving terms the author describes the dramatic birth of the Free Church of Scotland. But the excitement and glamour of the Disruption has muted almost to silence the quiet voice of small, pious, and scholarly James Morison (1816-1893)—wrongly spelt 'Morrison'—who is mentioned in 17 cool words. Nothing is here of the 90 Evangelical Union Churches founded on Morison's teaching, or of the Evangelical Union itself formed in 1843 and uniting with the Congregational Union in 1896. As late as 1863, the United Presbyterian and the Free Churches were jointly discussing the very doctrines, 'Atonement, Predestination, and the universality of the offer of the Gospel'—concerning which James Morison had pioneered 22 years earlier.

Dr. Burleigh had not the inestimable benefit of consulting Dr. Harry Escott's admirable volume *A History of Scottish Congregationalism* published in 1960. Yet the material on which Dr. Escott based his important book was surely available for research if any ecclesiastical historian had the mind to find and use it.

Frankly, I prefer the historian who has the energy, daring, and imagination to get busy behind the monumental figures to find the quiet saints and seers from whom the ecclesiastical giants gained their unacknowledged insights and wisdom.

And yet, Principal Burleigh has put us all in his debt by giving us this fruit of his ripe scholarship.

JAMES M. CALDER

English Religious Dissent by Erik Routley (Cambridge University Press, 1960, 18s. 6d.).

Dissent has become sufficiently respectable and successful for the orthodox to wonder what it is all about: and for dissenters to beware. Dr. Erik Routley has written a book which will satisfy the curiosity of intelligent Anglicans and be a stimulant and a warning to dissenters. It does not follow the development of any denomination but tells the story of Dissent as a whole, telling it vividly, with a skilful selection from the vast amount of revelant historical material, with humour and with an adequate degree of controversy. 'If the Dissenter imagines that Dissent begins at

1662 he will go astray', declares Dr. Routley and, certainly, those who are interested in tercentenary celebrations could not do better than sharpen their memories—for there are some inaccuracies—and quicken their imaginations by reading this book. More important still, it should assist us to grapple with that dangerous problem which arises inevitably with success 'where do we go from here?'. *English Religious Dissent* is in the Cambridge 'English Institutions' series which, perhaps, justifies the author's use of a political analogy—Dissent is to the established church what the Opposition in parliament is to the Government. 'Opposition' and 'alternative government' imply some difference in aim and, to that extent, this analogy might be misunderstood. But, anyway, in a crisis Government and Opposition are forced into coalition.

BERNARD MARTIN

The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism by Williston Walker (Pilgrim Press, 1960, $2.45).

This is a reprint 'without change by jot or tittle' of one of the monumental pieces of historical study. It has been issued to commemorate the birth of Williston Walker. There are 604 pages, including a copious index. There is no collection of documents concerning Separatism and Congregationalism on both sides of the Atlantic up to the last century to match *Creeds and Platforms* but copies of it have been hard to obtain apart from the libraries. The reprint of this source book is most welcome. The volume also contains an introduction by Douglas Horton.

A History of Howard Congregational Church, Bedford by H. G. Tibbutt (Howard Congregational Church, 1961, 4s.).

Mr. Tibbutt has done it again. This is his tenth 'chapel' or academy history. By this time he begins to know Bedfordshire inside out!

This history is far more useful than the average, not only because of Mr. Tibbutt's knowledge and skill, but because a wealth of documents relating to the early history of the cause has been brought to light. It is possible to trace in considerable detail and from more than one angle the split in Bunyan Meeting, Bedford, caused by the conversion of the minister to the Baptist point of view, which resulted in the formation of Howard. Some varying lights upon John Howard's character and interest in the church are seen; one notes that although Howard certainly exerted

influence over the churches and was generous to the new church, he was not a member. Anyone interested in the life of Thomas Binney ought to consult this book. Binney stayed only a few months in Bedford but his impact was sensational and his exit highly dramatic. If the story be correct, having been refused the hand of a certain young lady he 'strode out of the room and left Bedford the following day'. There were no Moderators to face in those days.

An Ecclesiastical Dispute at Woodhouse by C. E. Welch (Leicestershire Archeological and Historical Society, Guildhall, Leicester, 1959, 2s.).

Here we have in a brief compass the story of a church quarrel about the year 1627 which originated in the dislike of a Puritan minister's new practices. Members of the congregation took sides and the controversy was taken to the archdeaconry court where the contestants emptied their pockets for fees without gaining anything. For a picture of the corruption of the system this short account takes some beating.

JOHN H. TAYLOR

ALSO RECEIVED: *The Eighteenth-Century Forerunner of the London Library* by Paul Kaufman; *The Tiverton Congregational Church, 1660-1960* by W. P. Authers; *The Ancient Mariner* by Bernard Martin.

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Printed and Published for the Society by
J. H. Clarke & Co. Ltd., The Tindal Press, Chelmsford.