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TRANSACTIONS

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EDITOR JOHN H. TAYLOR, B.D.

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Editorial

Professor A. G. Dickens of King's College, University of London, gave the Society more illumination on the times which gave birth amongst other things to Brownism than anything we have had for very many years. The case he built up for Christian protagonists of toleration against the familiar argument that humanists must be given the credit of advocating toleration gave us a more balanced judgement upon the issue in the sixteenth century. We are glad that a considerable audience gathered for the occasion and now to having the lecture in print.

The Rev. Dr. Geoffrey F. Nuttall was elected President of the Society, and certainly no other member can aspire to his eminence amongst us as a scholar and writer, and none more deserves this honour. He is chosen too because of his continual friendship, encouraging and helping so many of us with historical and literary problems. We want at this stage to express our appreciation of the Rev. Dr. W. Gordon Robinson's ten years as President. Not only has he presided at our meetings with a cheerful grace, but he has undertaken several tasks for us and kept constantly in touch with us despite difficulties of distance.

RELIGIOUS TOLERATION AND LIBERALISM IN TUDOR ENGLAND

During recent years interest in our present subject has been revived by the learned and widely-ranging work of synthesis, *Toleration and the Reformation* by Joseph Lecler of the Society of Jesus.[1] Armed with this book of almost a thousand pages, one no longer finds it so hard to demolish the common notion that the sixteenth century was an age of universal religious intolerance. No simplification could in fact be more gross. Needless to add, few thinkers of that period demanded toleration, let alone freedom of worship, without any reserves. This we can hardly do today; to have done it then would have been a perilous act of blind trust amid a delicately balanced society which had perforce to value civil order as a most precious yet most vulnerable blessing. If religious tolerance could not arise from the monopolistic order of medieval Catholicism, it also found some infertile soils amid the multilateral brawling, the violent convictions, the pathetic belief in argument, and the readiness to use the ugly word 'blasphemy', which marked the age of Reformation and Counter Reformation. Under the circumstances it seems remarkable enough that even a few thinkers were at once so bold and so disinterested as Castellion, Acontius and John Foxe.

If we are willing also to investigate more conditional and partial theories, the subject does indeed become immense. And among the empirically-minded Tudor English its complexity seems especially marked. Here Father Lecler has added little to existing knowledge, even though he furthers our understanding by placing English thought in a broader European context. On our Tudor publicists he used in the main that early but valuable work of Professor W. K. Jordan, *The Development of Religious Toleration in England*, for which every student of the subject must record his gratitude. Since its publication in 1932 this book has worn well, though naturally we can now add a few more obscure Tudor writings and also place the English data against a more firmly-drawn background of liberal Lutherans, critical humanists, adiaphorists, sectarians, spiritualists and ecumenical aspirants in general.

During the last three decades of study, most of it conducted by American scholars, these elements of Reformation thought have

[1]Trans. T. L. Westow, 2 vols., London, 1960; French edn. by Editions Montaigne, Paris, 1955.

been progressively clarified.[2] While recognizing the many unique features of the English Reformation, modern scholarship is resisting the old tendency to depict Tudor England in terms of an insular culture. This once widely prevalent misconception sprang from several causes, perhaps most notably of all from the preoccupation of our fathers and grandfathers with the statute books, with the acts of the State-Reformation. I do not need to warn this particular learned society that the English Reformation was far more than an act of State. Even more significantly, it was also a religious and intellectual revolution at the grass-roots of society, a turmoil of ideas as complex and as fascinating as that which occurred in any of the great nations on the Continent. In this context, and duly suspicious of the old, facile labels, we may review the particular problem of toleration-theories.

Professor Jordan indicated in his introduction most of the broader factors likely to have advanced the theory and practice of religious toleration : the philosophic detachment of the Renaissance ; the growth of foreign travel ; the defeat of repressive mechanisms by the art of the printer ; the increasingly secular objectives of social and political life ; the disasters known to have sprung from the religious wars in France ; the attainment of influence by minority-groups ; the weakening of the plea for Catholic uniformity by the practical achievements of the major schismatic churches throughout Europe. It might be added that the dread of a relapse into political anarchy seems at least as characteristic of Henry VIII's subjects as of the Elizabethans. Such fears nevertheless often suggested a need for persecution rather than for toleration.[3] On the other hand, the Reformation did not burst upon a people mentally subservient to bishops and ecclesiastical courts. Neither Protestantism nor theories of toleration had to make headway among men who regarded a heretic with the horrified gaze of earlier centuries. The case of Richard Hunne demonstrated that the citizens of London hated their bishop and

[2]E.g., W. G. Zeeveld, *Foundations of Tudor Policy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1948) ; E. G. Rupp, *Studies in the Making of the English Protestant Tradition* (Cambridge, 1947) ; W. A. Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants* (New Haven and London, 1964) ; G. H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (London, 1962) ; the studies of Bucer by H. Eells (New Haven, 1931) and C. Hopf (Oxford, 1946) ; several works of R. H. Bainton, listed in his *Studies on the Reformation* (Boston, 1963), pp. 275-81.

[3]See, e.g., the sentiments attributed to Henry VIII by the Six Articles Act (H. Gee and W. J. Hardy, *Documents Illustrative of English Church History* (London, 1896), p. 303).

his henchmen infinitely more than they hated a heretical neighbour.[4] The growth of anticlericalism and of resentment against ecclesiastical jurisdiction can be massively documented during the two decades before 1532, when the House of Commons made its great onslaught upon the Church courts. The widespread absence of ardent concern for the maintenance of orthodoxy forms a curiously impressive aspect of our Reformation-crisis. This spirit sprang from a vast complex of secular and spiritual causes, which I have attempted to analyse elsewhere,[5] and it was profoundly inimical to the idea of clerical persecution. The more positive and creative forces we must now seek to depict.

Luther's magnificent outburst of 1520 concerning the liberty of a Christian could never be cancelled by his later and far less liberal qualifications. Meanwhile both Bucer and Melanchthon were enlarging the platform upon which future concepts of Christian freedom would be based. The last-named based his case upon *Matthew vi.* 31-33 ; *Romans xvi.* 17 ; *Colossians ii.* 16-20 ; *I Timothy iv.* 1-3 ; *Galatians ii.* 3 ; *v.* 13, and on Augustine's letter to Januarius. He distinguished between Christ's specific commands, which are the essential requirement for salvation, and the non-essential customs and observances in the church, called *adiaphora* or ' things indifferent '.[6] The former he associated with the divine law, the latter with man-made law.

This concept swiftly developed a tenacious hold upon English minds and Robert Barnes, who had presided over the earliest English Lutheran cell at Cambridge, afterwards clearly expressed it.

> To eat flesh or fish, this day or that day, is indifferent and free ; also to go in this raiment, of this colour or that colour ; to shave our heads or not ; a priest to wear a long gown or a short . . . a priest to marry or not to marry . . . . These with all other such outward works be things indifferent and may be used and also left.

The writer then advises compliance with episcopal policy in these *adiaphora,* yet only so long as the bishops refrain from making their demands under pain of deadly sin.[7] Loud in his protest

[4] A. Ogle, *The Tragedy of the Lollards' Tower* (Oxford, 1949), pp. 83-4, 137 ; *English Historical Review,* xxx (1915), p. 477.

[5] A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (London, 1964), ch.i-iii ; for a slightly fuller account of the rôle of Lollardy, see my paper in *Britain and the Netherlands,* ii (Groningen, 1964), pp. 47-66.

[6] Zeeveld, *op. cit.,* pp. 137-41 gives references.

[7] *Men's constitutions* in *The whole works of W. Tyndall, John Frith and Doctor Barnes* (London, 1573), p. 298.

against ecclesiastical persecutors, Barnes is also no blind Erastian. He is certain that princes may never be resisted by force of arms, yet he urges (echoing Luther) that they should be passively opposed if they give godless commands; for example, if they forbid Bible-reading.[8]

This impulsive Lutheran does not, however, seem to have understood the conciliatory spirit of Melanchthon and Bucer so well as Thomas Starkey, the humanist who migrated from the service of Reginald Pole to that of Thomas Cromwell. In *An exhortation* (1535) Starkey showed how adiaphorist principles could be used to unite Englishmen themselves in a *via media.* This would take its stand upon Scripture; it would hold as 'indifferent' such observances as fasting, holy-days, pilgrimages and prayers to saints. It would nevertheless resist the arrogance of Protestant bigots who proclaimed them positively sinful, and hence relegated their Catholic forefathers to damnation.[9] In his *Dialogue between Pole and Lupset* (before 1539) Starkey adopted another liberal position, making Lupset deny that man can be perfected by the power of law, by fear, pleasure or profit, 'but only of his free will and liberty.'[10]

If, however, one could apply adiaphorism to pilgrimage, to purgatory, even to clerical marriage, could one then extend it to the issue over which Protestants were most often burned—to eucharistic doctrine? At least one major figure of the first generation of English Reformers stood prepared to go thus far. He was that brave and brilliant young man John Frith, who after associating with Tyndale on the continent returned to England and in July 1533 went to the stake at Smithfield. Though he avoided the coarse vituperation exchanged between More and Tyndale, Frith cannot be claimed as a mediatory theologian. He nevertheless at his trial applied the adiaphorist principle with great boldness to the doctrine of transubstantiation:

> I would not that any should count that I make my saying (which is the negative) any article of faith: for even as I say that you ought not to make any necessary article of the faith of your part (which is the affirmative), so I say again, that we

[8]*Ibid.*, pp. 294-5, 300; Compare Jordan, pp. 64-7. References to these points in Luther appear in E. G. Rupp, *The Righteousness of God* (London, 1953), pp. 303-4.

[9]Quotations and references in Zeeveld, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-6; useful but incomplete list of adiaphorists in *ibid.*, pp. 152-3 n.

[10]Ed. J. W. Cooper, *Early Eng. Text Soc., extra series,* xii (1871), p. 206.

> make none necessary article of the faith of our part, but leave it indifferent for all men to judge therein. . . . The cause of my death is this ; because I cannot in conscience abjure and swear that our prelates' opinion of the sacrament . . . is an undoubted article of the faith necessary to be believed under pain of damnation.[11]

Frith had already written in similar terms during his eucharistic controversy with More.[12]

Frith's development of adiaphorism certainly attracted some followers, one of them being Henry Brinklow, the ex-Franciscan who became a citizen and merchant of London. In his *Lamentation of a Christian against the city of London* (1545) Brinklow bitterly attacked the priesthood and the mass, declaring that the blood of John Frith cried for vengeance against the bishops.

> He, I say, hath written invincibly in this matter ; whose work I exhort all those which favour the free passage of the Gospel unfeignedly to read and to study . . . And in this matter [transubstantiation] I say with the said John Frith, that it is no point of our damnation nor salvation. If I believe it not, it damneth me not.[13]

In his more famous pamphlet *The Complaynt of Roderyck Mors* (? 1542) Brinklow again alludes to the persecuting bishops with his usual violence, but here he broadens the attack to cover all capital punishment for religious causes. In many cities of Germany, he declares, banishment is the penalty for persistent heresy. 'Neither put they any man to death for their faith's sake ; for faith is the gift of God only . . . so that no man can give another faith.'[14]

George Joye, Tyndale's well-known lieutenant, was another fierce and dogmatic Protestant, but one whose narrowness did not exclude some frank views on the inevitability of dissension and the irrational nature of persecution. These occur chiefly in *A present consolation for the sufferers of persecution for righteousness* (1544), where he makes his adversaries say :

> We see it daily that where this new learning is preached, there followeth much trouble, unquietness, tumult, sundry sects, diverse opinions. Truth it is [replies Joye]. For never

[11] *The articles wherefore John Frith died* in *The whole works* (n. 7 supra), pp. 170, 172.
[12] *A book of the sacrament* in *ibid.*, p. 149.
[13] Ed. J. M. Cowper in *Early Eng. Text Soc., extra series,* xii (1874), pp. 103-4.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

> was the seed of God's word sown and began to arise, Satan being asleep . . . The Scripture teacheth plainly (Matthew xvi) that among men there was, and shall be ever, diverse and sundry opinions of Christ and his religion.

And Joye continues to argue that, as with the early Christian Church, persecution is worse than ineffective, since it merely strengthens the persecuted cause.[15]

A far clearer manifesto of Christian liberalism appears in *A compendious treatise of slander* (? 1545), which roundly condemns pilgrimages, pardons and the worship of images, but declares 'that traditions be outward things and indifferent and may be omitted and left without sin'. The anonymous author is chiefly concerned to check 'the untimely use of Christian liberty'.

> It is sin to break men's traditions, in case that the breaking of them should be occasion of slander or offence to any man . . . For not alonely hypocrites and the ungodly sort, but also godly men, and men of sober living . . . when they see ancient customs broken, they judge by that manner of doctrine men to be given to a wild liberty . . . and so be scared from the knowledge of the Gospel . . . But yet in this thing it is good to use soberness and discretion, for even among enemies there be some that rather should be reconciled than stirred and provoked.[16]

A Christian sentence and true judgement of the most honourable sacrament of Christ's body and blood (? 1545, also anonymous) maintains that the Presence in the sacrament should be treated as an open question, concerning which the opposed parties should bear with each other. The writer himself supposes Christ's words of institution to have been merely figurative, while as a Protestant he desires to receive communion in both kinds. He nevertheless will not blame people who consent to receive in one kind only.[17]

Meanwhile attacks on the Church had also come from the common lawyers, inspired by old rivalries with the canonists and by reading the now fashionable *Defensor Pacis* of Marsiglio.[18] They were headed by Christopher St. German, who made such exalted

[15]Brit. Mus., 3932 c. 9, sig. A iii^{v}-F. iiii^{v} *passim*. See A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, *Short Title Catalogue* (London, 1926, 1946, hereafter cited as *S.T.C.*), no. 14828.

[16]Lambeth Palace Library, 1553.09 (13), unpaginated; *S.T.C.*, no. 24216a.

[17]Bodleian Tanner 39 (5), summarised in *Church Quarterly Review*, xxxv (1892-3), p. 44; *S.T.C.*, no. 5190.

[18]The first English translation, by William Marshall, was financed by Thomas Cromwell (*Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, vii, no. 423).

Erastian claims in *Doctor and Student,* and in his subsequent controversies with More.[19] A few of these men (like Simon Fish) were ardent Protestants, and while it may be questioned whether any had much understanding of Christian liberty, they sought at least to draw the teeth of the Church. With a few exceptions, the secular politicians and officials of Tudor England—mostly common lawyers by training—showed little zeal and often a marked distaste for religious persecution.

The Edwardian years saw a hitherto unknown tolerance, the only two executions for heresy being those of the Anabaptist Joan of Kent and the Unitarian George van Parris. While Archbishop Cranmer displayed an immense forbearance toward Catholics,[20] he brought that prince of mediators Martin Bucer from Strassburg to Cambridge and he planned an international conference to reunite the Protestant churches of Europe. It was Cranmer again who allowed the numerous foreign refugees in England to organise congregations along Calvinist and Zwinglian lines, and so permitted a public spectacle of the Reformed religion at the Austin Friars in the heart of the capital.

Alongside these manifestations of Protestant liberalism ran a spate of coarse and scurrilous pamphlets against the Catholic doctrine of the mass. Amid this unattractive company, a few pleas for tolerance continued to be made. A short tract, *Of unwritten verities,* published anonymously in 1548,[21] commends the problem of unscriptural but traditional beliefs to the attention of kings and princes. The writer gives as examples the following beliefs : that the twelve Apostles compiled the Creed ; that it is good to pray facing eastward ; that Our Lady was not born in original sin, and was 'assumpted', body and soul. He is prepared to let these continue, 'as things that be more like to be true than otherwise'. If governments ordain that no one shall openly deny them, unity and peace will be preserved. 'For they be but things indifferent to be believed, or not believed, and are nothing like to Scripture, to the Articles of the Faith, the Ten Commandments, nor to such other moral learnings, as are merely [i.e. wholly] derived out of

[19]F. L. Van Baumer, 'Christopher St. German' in *American Historical Review,* xlii (1937), pp. 631 ff.

[20]J. Ridley, *Thomas Cranmer* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 156-7, 171, 320-1 ; for the points which follow see *ibid.,* pp. 327-30. On the somewhat obscure intentions of the *Reformatio Legum* see *ibid.,* pp. 333-4.

[21]*Remains of Thomas Cranmer,* ed. H. Jenkyns (Oxford, 1833), iv. 358-63. It had originally been reprinted by Strype, who arbitrarily attributed it to Cranmer ; perhaps Strype was misled by the fact that Cranmer wrote a (very different !) treatise on the same theme (*ibid.,* iv. 143-244).

Scripture.' But such unscriptural beliefs must not be enforced by canon law, since that would raise the clergy ' into a higher estimation of themselves than they ought to have '.

The Protestant pamphlets of these years display many gradations of radicalism to which one cannot apply the conventional party labels. Another of them, *A brief and faithful declaration of the true faith of Christ* (1547)[22] specifically disclaims any sympathy with Anabaptist teaching, of which the author (who signs himself J. B.) had been suspected. He subsequently denounces John of Leyden for attempting to establish a worldly kingdom. ' Christ's kingdom is spiritual and standeth not in any outward dominion.' The whole Gospel of Christ witnesses that the Christian must suffer but in no wise revenge evil. Those who seek to use ' the material sword ' in religious disputes are guilty of exalting the Old Testament above the New. The author then cites *Ephesians, vi.* 14-16 and *John, v.* 4 to show that ' victory standeth in an upright faith, and not in any carnal and outward weapon '.

Along with such obscure publicists one might mention that more august monument of early English Puritanism, William Turner, chaplain and physician to Protector Somerset, dean of Wells and the greatest English botanist of his age. This remarkable man tempered his hatred of ceremonial and transubstantiation with a complete rejection of physical duress, even against the Anabaptists. Writing against the latter in *A preservative . . . against the poison of Pelagius* (1551), Turner enumerates their many sub-divisions and continues,

> Some would think that it were the best way to use the same weapons against this manifold monster that the papists used against us : that is material fire and faggot. But me think, seeing it is no material thing that we must fight withall, but ghostly, that is a wood [mad] spirit, that it were most meet that we should fight with the sword of God's word and with a spiritual fire against it, or else we are like to profit but a little in our business . . . Then when as the enemy is a spirit, that is the ghost of Pelagius, that old heretic once well laid but now of late to the great jeopardy of many raised up again, the weapons and the warriors that must kill this enemy must be spiritual. As for spiritual weapons, we may have enough out of the storehouse or armoury of the Scripture to

[22]Brit. Mus., 1360 a. 2 ; sig. B. iii-B. iiii. This tract (*S.T.C.*, no. 1035) usually receives the title of its preamble, *A brief and plain declaration.*

confound and overthrow all the ghostly enemies, be they never so many.

He then demands better measures for the education of the spiritual warriors who will use these biblical weapons.[23]

While the Anabaptists inspired fear and intolerance in others, they were almost the only thoroughgoing upholders of complete liberty of worship. During the early thirties Netherlandish Anabaptists were settling in England. Fourteen were burned in London and other towns early in June 1535, but more than a decade seems to have elapsed before they began to make any appreciable number of English converts. Already by 1530, it is true, there were circulating in England pamphlets expressing opinions well to the left of Luther's, yet it would seem precipitate to label all these as Anabaptist. Their teachings are summarised and condemned in Archbishop Warham's register under the date 24 May 1530.[24] *The revelation of Antichrist* had maintained that no man should be compelled to belief against his own will, and it had cited *Matthew, xviii* (? vv. 15-17) to show that ' a rebel should not be killed, but avoided . . . The New Testament of Christ will not suffer any law of compulsion, but only of counsel and exhortation '.

In the same register is denounced another tract, of which a good many copies have in fact survived : *The sum of holy Scripture and ordinary of Christian teaching.* This was probably translated from the Dutch *Summa der Godliker Scrifturen,* attributed to Hendrik van Bommel, the translator being Simon Fish, the notorious author of the *Supplication for beggars.* First published at Antwerp (? 1529), this version passed through eight editions by 1550 and must have become one of our most influential compendia of radicalism.[25] Its doctrinal affinities deserve a thorough examination, but the passages on Baptism do not seem characteristic of any Anabaptist sect. On the other hand, in true sectarian manner it divides the population into those who truly

[23] *A preservative,* sig. A. iii^{v}-A. iv. For similar views in Turner's *Neue dialogue* (1548, and later edns.) see Jordan, pp. 73-4. As early as 1528 More attributes similar views to his opponents (*A Dialogue concerning heresies* in *Works* (1557), p. 110.

[24] Printed in D. Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae* (London, 1737), iii, 727-33.

[25] *S.T.C.,* nos. 3036-41. Since writing the above sentences, I have noted the valuable discussion of the *Sum* by Clebsch, *op. cit.,* pp. 245-51. But the French-Swiss background of the original work remains uncertain. Some bibliographers think the imprint of the French edition (Basle 1523) fictitious, and suggest S. du Bois of Alençon, *c.*1534.

belong to the kingdom of God and those who are nominal Christians, and belong to the 'kingdom of the world'. Only the latter have been placed by God 'under the sword, that is to say under the secular power and civil right'. On the other hand, the true Christians obeying God's commandments 'have naught to do with the sword of justice nor of the secular power to make them righteous'. For the rest, its tone is anticlerical, with hints of socialism and pacifism.

Tracts by known English Anabaptists were being circulated in 1548-49. Two of these, devotional rather than overtly sectarian, were then openly printed as by Henry Hart, a leader of the Kentish sectaries.[26] Later on the equally notorious Robert Cooche may well have written the tract (circulated *c.*1557, apparently in manuscript) which we know only from the elaborate attack brought against it by John Knox.[27] It formed a rousing denunciation of Calvinist intolerance and it did not fail to draw a pointed contrast between the Old Testament ferocity of Geneva and the merciful, unaggressive attitude of men inspired by the New Testament.

Meanwhile the Marian reaction had come and gone. It struck a heavy blow against the whole concept of religious persecution, for it associated the latter with the detested overlordship of Spain. On the other hand, the experience often generated among Protestants more heat than light, and the famous controversies waged at Frankfurt between Anglicans and Calvinists scarcely prove that exile caused Englishmen to make rapid progress in the arts of practical toleration. Naturally, the anti-Marian pamphleteers on the continent had much to say concerning our theme. John Ponet, the deprived Bishop of Winchester, published abroad in 1556 his important *Short treatise of politic power*.[28] Here he extended the rights of the individual conscience to cover tyrannicide, and this long before the Huguenots began to argue along the same lines. While he also adopted Starkey's adiaphorism and gave the godly prince authority over 'things indifferent',

[26]*Dict. Nat. Biog.*, Hart, Henry. *A godly new short treatise* (*S.T.C.*, no. 12887) is in Brit. Mus., 1020 c. 3. It has passages which the Calvinists would have regarded as Pelagian. I have not yet read Hart's other tract *A godly exhortation* (*S.T.C.*, no. 10626), a copy of which is at Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

[27]Knox claims to have given it in full and it has been reconstituted from his text in *Baptist Historical Society Transactions*, iv (1914-15), pp. 88-123. Comment in Jordan, pp. 74-7.

[28]On Ponet see J. W. Allen, *History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1928), pp. 118-20; Jordan, pp. 54-5.

Ponet carefully refrained from giving him authority to define the immutable things. He had recognised an ungodly prince in Queen Mary and he deduced that states and monarchs have a limited authority, being ordained merely for the benefit of the people. Like Starkey, he called for a middle path between the unruly Anabaptists and the autocratic Romanists. Two years later, Christopher Goodman published at Geneva *How superior powers ought to be obeyed of their subjects*, exalting the rights of the individual conscience against wicked rulers in terms similar to those of Ponet.[29]

Despite the *avant-garde* atmosphere of these writings, their authors must nevertheless be regarded as outraged oppositionists whose thinking was shaped by political pressures. Liberation-fighters are not necessarily liberals, and these men were much more passionately concerned to overthrow Queen Mary than to promote freedom of conscience and worship. In particular, Goodman's close association with John Knox should make us regard his claims to liberalism with a profound caution. During the exile, Genevan principles became ever more prominent among English Protestants and everywhere the great contributions of Calvinism to national and civic freedom were to be made at a heavy cost in terms of spiritual freedom. Our Elizabethan Puritans provided few exceptions to this rule. They loudly asserted the rights of their own consciences, but felt no obligation to fight for the consciences of the non-elect. In general this seems true even of the separatists like Robert Browne, who wanted a voluntary Church wholly divorced from the State.[30]

Throughout the Tudor age there was no stauncher enemy of persecution than John Foxe, and it seems most ironical that his *Acts and Monuments* ended by contributing so much to the intolerance of several Protestant generations.[31] Nevertheless, Foxe himself stood firmly opposed to the use of force in religious disputes; he showed a notable sensitivity toward all physical suffering, even when the victims were animals. His pleas for the life of Joan of Kent and (in 1575) for the condemned Anabaptists can be paralleled by reference to other episodes in his life and writings. His view sprang not merely from his personal tempera-

[29]On Goodman see J. W. Allen, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-18; Jordan, pp. 55-7.
[30]M. M. Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism* (Chicago 1939), p. 352; Jordan, pp. 239-99.
[31]I am indebted for some of the following points to an unpublished (1965) article by V. N. Olsen, 'John Foxe the Martyrologist and Toleration', kindly lent me by the author.

ment but also from a vision of the divine clemency, of Christianity as a creed of mercy demanding spiritual instruction rather than juridical and penal coercion.

> The nearer each approaches to the sweet spirit of the Gospel, by so much farther he is from the hard decision of burning and torturing.[32] It is tyrannical to constrain by faggots. Consciences love to be tought, and religion wants to teach. The most effective master of teaching is love. Where this is absent there is never anyone who can teach aright nor can anyone learn properly.[33]

In Foxe's mind the concept of toleration stood rooted in the Gospel, and consequently the fact of persecution had become for him the mark of an apostate church. Few of his readers can have been aware that he also denounced persecution against Catholics, but his son Simeon relates how he interceded for the lives of Edmund Campion and of other Catholic victims.[34]

The Anglican Settlement of 1559 had its origins in a compromise between Queen Elizabeth's personal views and those of the returning exiles who had substantially preserved the Protestant Prayer Book of 1552. The restored Anglican Church claimed merely to be one among the many national churches of Christendom. It could not logically persecute on the same religious grounds as could a Church Universal, while the complex domestic and foreign situations encouraged the natural bent of the Queen and her great minister Cecil toward a cautious opportunism. Their avoidance of persecution for nearly two decades forms an impressive memorial to their cool good sense. This demonstrable fact that they did not persecute Catholics by choice, the very real latitudinarian elements in Anglicanism and early Nonconformity, the number of foreign liberals able to express themselves in England, the remarkably slack enforcement of the fines for recusancy, these and other features of the Elizabethan scene make it difficult to accept the severe view of Father Lecler that England was then an exceptionally intolerant country. After all, the menaces of Spanish conquest and of its allies among the militant English Catholics became very concrete. The abyss of anarchy loomed beneath the feet of government and people.

[32]Latin text in *The Church Historians of England,* ed. J. Pratt (1870), I (pt. I), App. xi, p. 28 ; *quanto quisque accedit,* etc.

[33]*Ad inclytos ac praepotentes Angliae proceres* (Basle, 1557), printed in *ibid.,* App. xvii, p. 50 : *Fustibus cogere tyrannorum est,* etc.

[34]Mr. Olsen cites Simeon Foxe's *Memoir,* printed in Latin and English in vol. ii of the 1641 edn. of the *Acts and Monuments,* p. B. 4.

That in the end they struck hard at the authors—real and supposed—of their peril must seem as inevitable as it was tragic. The Bull *Regnans in excelsis*, deposing Elizabeth and calling upon her subjects to execute the sentence, was soon given substance by a long series of murder-plots, rebellions and threats of invasion. The persecution of Catholics which followed was essentially a political action based upon well-founded fears. The Elizabethan government showed little enthusiasm for old concepts of punishable heresy, though with more justice it might be charged with using, on occasion, sadistic agents like Richard Topcliffe, and with a failure to discriminate humanely between murderous plotters and saintly missionaries. Yet even in this last regard, its position was less simple than some of its critics have supposed. Those who sent the seminarists to England regarded the English Mission as a preparatory stage to the forcible overthrow of the heretical *régime*. Willy-nilly, even the loyalest Catholic had been made a potential agent of Spanish hegemony and amid hazards so terrifying, the politicians could hardly take risks. Religious and political hatreds lay by now desperately intertwined. The story of the English Catholics is one of tragedy, of heroism, of muddled politico-religious hatred, but it scarcely belongs to the annals of religious persecution.

It must, of course, be clearly admitted that the Elizabethan Church was based upon a parliamentary Act of Uniformity, and that its authorities often employed legal coercion both against separatists and against non-conforming practices by its own members. In a famous letter to Whitgift Cecil himself likened the High Commission to the Inquisition of Spain ! Even so, certain liberal elements were also built into the structure. The Thirty-nine Articles themselves maintained the adiaphorist principle,[35] as did the successive champions of the Settlement, John Jewel and the remarkably liberal Richard Hooker.[36] Several parliamentary speeches of the period advocated religious toleration and the simplification of doctrine.[37]

As for the English Catholics, they stood bitterly divided between the Jesuit group and the vast majority of laymen and seculars, who desired at all costs (save repudiation of their faith) to avoid involvement in murder-plots, rebellions, or any species of disloyalty to the Queen. Like their Gallican equivalents across

[35]Articles xx, xxxiv.
[36]References in Zeeveld, *op. cit.*, p. 153 n.
[37]J. W. Allen, *op. cit.*, pp. 231, 237-8.

the Channel, they regarded the claim of the Pope to depose monarchs as a gross anachronism. From the 1580's the 'non-political' Catholic writers were demanding in return religious toleration, and supporting it by reference not merely to their own needs but also to broad philosophical and theological principles.[38] By 1601 Archbishop Bancroft was trying to arrange a compromise with the Catholics, whereby they would reject the papal claim to depose princes, in return for a considerable measure of toleration.[39] Outside ecclesiastical circles the climate was changing even more rapidly. Giordano Bruno enjoyed the intellectual companionship of Sidney and published his pantheist treatises during his stay in England. Three distinguished laymen, Jacobus Acontius, Alberico Gentili and Edwin Sandys, here set forth elaborate theories of toleration.[40] Acontius identified persecution with the sin of personal arrogance. He did not believe that absolute truth could be attained by any Church and, while accepting the Bible as the unique guide to faith, he rejected the wishful thought that free minds would come to interpret it along uniform lines. More strikingly still, he said all this while yet contriving to retain the personal favour of Queen Elizabeth ! In Shakespeare's age the broadening and laicizing of the whole great world of thought held a more prophetic significance than the narrowing and calvinizing of the lesser world of theology.

As on the Continent, so in England, sixteenth-century opinion shows every gradation from monolithic and persecuting authoritarianism down to the extremer forms of religious individualism. I have endeavoured to show that theories and sentiments making for religious toleration—and ultimately for something more positive—formed a modest yet integral part of the English Reformation : that archaic notions of punishable heresy were now rarely unmixed with secular considerations, that the coolness and disenchantment of the nation gave more liberal views an opportunity to develop. So far as creative theory is concerned I regard the adiaphorist concept as especially significant because it paved the way to genuine dialogue. It formed the root of a liberalism which could still remain Christian and it found receptive hearers in England. Again, it seems demonstrably true that Tudor

[38]Jordan, pp. 398 ff.
[39]*Ibid.*, pp. 207 ff ; Lecler, ii. 375 ff.
[40]On these three see *Jordan*, pp. 303-71 ; on Sandys, J. W. Allen, *op. cit.*, pp. 241-6 ; C. H. and K. George, *The Protestant Mind of the English Reformation, 1570-1640*, pp. 196-7. The last has useful references to other tolerant Protestants, pp. 379 ff.

tolerationist theory sprang far less from the Renaissance of pagan Greece and Rome, than from the New Testament. If my review of the evidence has any value, there can be no return to the crude analysis of J. B. Bury : the analysis which saw that age simply in terms of warfare between classical light and medieval darkness, between Athens and Zion, between Renaissance rationalism and the rival obscurantisms of contending Christians.[41] In actual fact, these early advocates of forbearance were almost all deeply engaged Christians, quite remote from humanist scepticism. Their charitable impulses owe much, it is true, to that Biblical humanism which turned men's gaze toward the literal sense and historical background of Scripture. But the Gospels and Epistles themselves remain the central inspiration ; if they provided some texts for the intolerant, they provided more for the gentler spirits.

Especially for those many Englishmen who refused to become worshippers at the shrine of Geneva, the triumph of the Gospel necessarily came to mean something more than the replacement of old priest by new presbyter, of one juridical and scholastic system by another. As so often in Christian history, the New Testament proved itself the living Word, not a passive tool in the hands of would-be lawgivers and middle-men. In England as elsewhere, a second tension swiftly followed the original clash between Protestant and Catholic. It was the tension between the Christian liberals and those Genevan disciplinarians who sought to re-order the confused Protestant ranks for battle against sectarian subjectivism on the one front and a reviving Catholicism on the other. Let us not be too hard on the Calvinists ; perhaps under God they saved the Reformation from a violent and early death ! Inevitably, amid the perils of the time, these militant champions enjoyed some temporary advantages. Yet it seems both certain and fortunate that their triumph was never total, that, both inside and outside the established Churches, Christian liberalism survived in strength to pervade and to modify the secular forces of a later age.

This revival of a Christianity for free and thoughtful adults seems to me every bit as significant as the more familiar themes of sixteenth-century religious history. And does not the future of Christianity still depend upon the continuing prevalence of a charitable and receptive humility, as against excessive philosophising, dogmatising, defining, as against the misuse of scholastic

[41] J. B. Bury, *A History of Freedom of Thought* (London, 2nd edn. 1920), ch. ii-v.

and doctrinaire hypotheses, as against the tidy-minded ecclesiasts and the revivalists who will admit only one stereotype of conversion and spiritual life? But for the advances in Christian freedom initiated in the era of the Reformation, we of the various churches, who glory alike in the name of Jesus, would not be here this afternoon discussing Christian history in fraternal concord. In itself mere toleration is a poor and timid thing, but in the hands of the Lord of History it is forever growing into a true brotherhood in Christ.

A. G. DICKENS

CONGREGATIONALISTS AND PRESBYTERIANS IN NINETEENTH CENTURY LIVERPOOL

The large number of books and articles which have appeared recently on the 17th century origins and early 18th century development of the older Dissent, whether written in commemoration of the Great Ejection of 1662 or as an aid to better inter-denominational understanding, serve to remind us that no quest for church unity can properly succeed without reference to the thought and practice of these seminal years. The Marian exile, Elizabethen Puritanism, the Laudian persecution, the Commonwealth and Protectorate, Restoration Nonconformity, the Happy Union and its unhappy demise—these are the matrix of events from which modern Nonconformity arose, and which must constitute the debating ground of ecumenical encounter. Yet what attracts the church historian and the academic theologian may not directly concern the ordinary church member : the patterns of denominational life to which he is accustomed, and which he is now being invited to relinquish, to modify, or to share with others in the interests of Christian unity depend very slightly on the happenings of this period, and almost wholly on the manner in which Nonconformity expanded in its most astonishingly vital phase, the Victorian era. The very architecture of Dissent bespeaks this fact—for every one of us who is privileged to worship in a tidy Georgian meeting-house, there are twenty or more who must make do with a nineteenth century 'auditorium'.

Victorian Nonconformity must therefore engage our attention, despite the uneasy feeling that it somehow fell short of the best in the dissenting tradition, or that it was then that things began to go all wrong—and if Victorian Liverpool be chosen to illustrate the varieties of denominational life among the Orthodox Dissenters, it is not because Liverpool was an average English city—then, as now, it was the most atypical of them all—but because here as hardly anywhere else, Congregationalists and Presbyterians achieved an approximate numerical equivalence, and could therefore treat with one another, on the rare occasions when they met, on fairly equal terms. In 1800 each denomination possessed in Liverpool one church, the Presbyterians Oldham Street, the Congregationalists Newington. By the time of the religious census of 1851, Congregationalists had ten churches and a total morning and evening attendance of 7,079, the corresponding Presbyterian figures being eight churches with 5,759 in attendance. By 1902

when a major census was undertaken by the *Liverpool Daily Post*, Presbyterians were recorded as having 26 churches and a total of 11,277 in attendance morning and evening, Congregationalists 8,993 persons present for worship in 22 churches.

(i) *Denominational Structure*

Presbyterian controversialists of the 17th century who criticised Congregationalism for its tendencies to theological laxity would have been surprised at what was to happen to the two denominations in the 18th and early 19th centuries. What is even more singular is that their other contention, that Independency was bound to fragment into a multiplicity of competing sects proved equally wide of the mark, for any historian of the 19th century must be as struck by the firm cohesion of the Congregational denomination as he is bewildered by the failure of a renewed Presbyterianism to attain to any degree of structural unity till as late as the 1870's. This is clearly borne out by the Liverpool evidence. The late 18th and early 19th century origins of Merseyside Congregationalism are complex and diverse : of the four churches established by 1830 (which directly or indirectly fathered all the rest), Newington had been founded in 1777 by a handful of local Dissenters who could no longer endure the Arian tendencies at Toxteth Park Presbyterian chapel, and had prospered with the advent to the town of a number of Scots immigrants who found the theological tone of Paradise and Renshaw Street Presbyterian chapels equally obnoxious ; Great George Street, built in 1811 and still extant, was a daughter church of Newington ; Bethesda was founded in 1803 by a group of Anglican malcontents as a result of a schism in All Saints, Grosvenor Street ; and Hanover Street, of which the present Berkley Street cause is the lineal descendant, had arisen out of the street preaching of the Tent Methodists in 1823. These four churches however worked together extremely well, making common cause in the meetings of the County Union (established in 1806) which the three leading Liverpool ministers, the Revs. Charrier, Raffles and Kelly supported enthusiastically and within which a separate Liverpool District was formed in 1817. The leading laymen and ministers of the town moreover met together regularly in the ' Associated Pastors and Deacons of the Independent Churches in Liverpool and its Vicinity ', a body founded in 1835 : from this arose quite spontaneously other organisations which gave an added sense of common purpose to the local churches—the ' Look-out Committee ' (for the acquisition

of suitable sites for new churches), the Church Aid Committee (1842), the Liverpool Lay Agency Association, a lay preachers' organization founded in 1850, bodies eventually brought under the aegis of the Liverpool (later Merseyside) Congregational Council. This inter-church fellowship is remarkable in a denomination which stressed the self-sufficiency of the local church. Even more noteworthy is the early date at which it became a feature of Liverpool Congregational life, and the extent to which it later relieved the Independents of the crushing financial burdens which impeded the progress of most other denominations. It may in fact have much to do with the singular distinction that attaches to the Congregational churches of Liverpool : that it was from this city that there first came the suggestion that the individual churches of a particular locality should regard themselves as mere branches of a single church (ecclesiolae in ecclesia) and should share what today we recognize as a ' group ministry ', an idea first adumbrated in the Rev. John Kelly's Church Principles (1863), but which most of us over a hundred years later would tend to regard as rather daring and revolutionary.

In contrast to all this, the crippling disunity of Liverpool's Presbyterian churches was a standing reproach to the Scots community which supported them. When a handful of merchants and surgeons at a St. Andrew's society dinner in 1792 decided to found a church in connection with Established Church of Scotland and dissociate themselves completely from Liverpool's three old Presbyterian churches, now rapidly on the way to Unitarianism, they could hardly have foreseen the train of events which would make orthodox Presbyterianism one of the strongest denominations in the city. Neither could they have known that the battles over church order and organization which were fought out in a broader context north of the border would reproduce themselves to a nicety in this far-flung outpost of the Presbyterian world.

By the time of the Disruption of 1843 there were three Liverpool Presbyterian chapels in the Lancashire Presbytery of the Church of Scotland, Oldham Street, and the two daughter churches, Rodney Street and St. Peter's, Scotland Road. The events of that year however saw in the first two of these churches a permanent division between the proprietary and the majority of lay adherents who seceded and founded two new causes, Myrtle Street and Canning Street, and who were joined, after an incredible series of adventures, by St. Peter's. These three became member congregations of this newly-formed Presbyterian Church In England,

and in the course of the next thirty years planted four new causes in various parts of the city. Oldham and Rodney Streets now became exclusively Scotch and completely isolated from the general religious life of Liverpool. Meanwhile a Burgher Church had begun to meet in Sylvester Street in 1808, and this congregation which, following a series of ecclesiastical changes in Scotland, took the title of United Secession church in 1827 and United Presbyterian church in 1847, had assembled from 1827 in Mount Pleasant chapel, an excellent central site, whence it became the parent church of six other United Presbyterian congregations, more democratic, more aggresively evangelistic and certainly more adaptable to English conditions than their rather exclusive cousins of the Presbyterian Church In England.

Fortunately the two ecclesiastical bodies, while of equal numerical strength in Liverpool, avoided rivalry in their church building programmes, which fact certainly aided the path to the final goal of complete union which was achieved and consummated by an impressive ceremony in this town in 1876. Only Princes Road (ex-English Presbyterian) and Belvedere Road (ex-United Presbyterian) presented a redundancy problem, which was not solved till the closure of the latter in 1926.

Meanwhile to add further complications to an already bewildering situation, a third body, the Reformed Presbyterians or Covenanters, had founded a Liverpool church in 1823, though this congregation which eventually settled in Shaw Street, and was the only one of its kind on English soil, also threw in its lot with the other churches in 1876. Even now however the tale is not fully told for, quite apart from odd schismatic groups like the Bereans and Morrisonians, the Islington church (established in 1843), though nominally in membership with the Presbyterian Church In England, was exclusively Irish in composition, very much a law unto itself, and generally a thorn in the flesh to the more staid and respectable Presbyterian churches. All of these congregations however, apart from Oldham Street and Rodney Street which held majestically aloof and a schismatic group from Shaw Street, worked harmoniously together in the new Presbytery of Liverpool from its inception in 1876 to the end of the century and beyond. Henceforth, though the Presbyterians' machinery of government appeared far too rigid and complex in Congregational eyes, and the Congregationalists' ordering of their affairs far too loose and decentralised to the Presbyterians, the strategy of both denominations, so far as

church extension, finance and home missionary work were concerned, was in most respects parallel.

(ii) *The Ministry and Theological Change*

The ministry of the two developing churches offers some interesting comparisons and contrasts. Similar features are to some extent observable in both denominations ; the general tendency of ministries to become shorter as the century progressed—the 40-year pastorate of the Rev. Stanley Rogers at Westminster Road Congregational Church was as singular in the later 19th century as Dr. Raffles' 52-year spell at Great George Street or Dr. Stewart's 31 years at Mount Pleasant were accepted as normative at an earlier period. The two churches likewise were insistent on a properly trained ministry—in neither is there any evidence that a call was extended to any man who had not received proper theological training, though an odd feature of the Congregationalists is that they recruited widely from nearly all of their academies in England and Wales and gave little preference to the Lancashire College in nearby Manchester whose *alumni* rarely made their way to the Liverpool churches. Presbyterians and Congregationalists however were both prepared to appoint evangelists of little training or none to the oversight of their numerous down-town mission halls, when these were established in large numbers from the 1850's onwards.

A marked feature of Presbyterianism, and one which often aroused adverse comment in the local press, was the advanced age of many of its ministers, even of those with very large churches. Liverpool seems however to have exercised a peculiar attraction for men who had already built up a firm reputation for themselves in the Scottish pulpit. For the Congregationalists, on the other hand, the city appears throughout the century to have been a jumping-off ground for young pastors of ambition seeking more rewarding appointments elsewhere. A very large number of pulpits in Liverpool went in fact to men straight out of college who subsequently made their way to other cities, to America or to the colonies.

Theologically Liverpool has always been renowned for its intense, not to say, militant, conservatism, and the transition to more critical attitudes which affected both denominations in the 19th century was not accomplished here without stubborn resistance from the right. In 1858, for example, the two most distinguished local Congregational ministers of the first half of Victoria's

reign, the Revs. Raffles and Kelly, took the lead in the proceedings against Professor Davidson who had reached a critical position which they both, from standpoints of Moderate and High Calvinism respectively, found obnoxious. The Davidson case provoked without doubt one of the most serious theological crises in 19th century Congregationalism, and it is not without significance that his two chief antagonists came from the same city. Even when thirty or forty years later critical attitudes had become widely prevalent within the denomination, Raffles and Kelly found a worthy successor in the Rev. Stanley Rogers, whose hostility to liberalising trends was scarcely less marked than his tenacious clinging to Genevan dress in an age which had set its face firmly against distinctive ministerial attire of most kinds. Even those of Rogers' younger colleagues who were considered 'advanced' earned their reputation rather by their outspoken criticism of social abuses or their fondness for the institutional church rather than for the heterodoxy of their sermons. It is indeed noteworthy how men of progressive social views like the Rev. Robert Veitch of Crescent chapel, E. R. Barratt of Norwood or J. K. Nuttall of Great George Street clung firmly to the essentials of evangelical belief in an age of general theological decline. (Here the contrast with the Baptists of Liverpool is pronounced, for their leading preachers rarely managed to embrace the Social Gospel without an accompanying Ritschlian theology, which attracted large crowds for a time but eventually withered up their churches altogether.)

The Presbyterians of the city also moved slowly to a more critical position and, like their Congregational brethren, did so without internal controversy. Controversies did occur, but they were not on points of doctrine—the introduction of the organ caused in the 1860's and 70's far more uproar than the slow erosion of their Calvinism. It was in the 1860's that Moderates, who were usually political Liberals also, began to appear in the Presbyterian pulpits of the city, most often in the new churches which were being built in the suburbs. The central churches on the contrary remained outposts of high and dry Calvinism, and one of them, Canning Street, had as its minister from 1880 to 1907 the Rev. Dr. S. R. McPhiall, an intensely conservative preacher, who not only welcomed the Torrey-Alexander mission to Liverpool (most ministers of the larger denominations abhorred their pre-Moodyite hell-fire preaching) but, as Horton Davis has recently pointed out, delayed by his own efforts liturgical renewal in the

denomination for a number of years. Perhaps it was only natural that Liverpool should have provided the sole heresy trial which disturbed the even progress of 19th century English Presbyterianism, that of the Rev. John Watson of Sefton Park Church, in 1897. But even in this case Watson's liberalism seems more like youthful exuberance than mature conviction, and 'Ian McLaren' lived to make amends for his early rashness by the orthodoxy of his later theological writings.

It is thus clear that at no time in the 19th century did Congregational and Presbyterian ministers of this city differ much in the essentials of their preaching, no matter how they may have disputed on questions of church order and discipline.

(iii) *The Laity*

No adequate history of Nonconformity can now be written which does not take into account the role of the laity upon whom in the last resort the churches' growth or retraction ultimately depend. Not a little of the spirit of denominational exclusiveness, we are now beginning to learn, was in Victorian times due to the differing social complexions of the various churches, and relative to our local theme, we are compelled to enquire just what sort of men assumed lay office within our two churches, promoted their various activities or financed their building projects. And here at once the principal difference between the two becomes apparent, for while Liverpool Congregationalism seems, as Charles Booth described its London counterpart, the religious expression of a particular social grouping (and that in the very middle of the social spectrum), Presbyterianism, while no less a middle class body, was far broader both above and below, embraced in other words, a larger number of extremely wealthy families, and a far bigger segment of the city's artizanry.

In Liverpool, the 'boom town' of the early 19th century, where fortunes were made and unmade overnight, and denominational allegiances were proverbially fluid, there was no positive indication in 1800 that this was the natural line of development for the two denominations to follow. Congregationalism here could easily have drawn to itself 'the cream of the middle classes': in the 1830's in fact with Isaac O. Jones, the town's leading conveyancer, Dr. Blackburn, the Liverpool Liberals' leading educationalist and one-time mayor, Bartin Haigh, a prosperous builder, and above all James Hope Simpson, 'the Napoleon of Liverpool finance', comprising among others a veritable galaxy of local notabilities, it

held out every promise of so doing ; yet, for a variety of reasons this did not happen, and the social prestige of the denomination declined as its leading supporters either died or betook themselves to other, more salubrious, areas to enjoy their hard-won fortunes. By the latter half of the century the most prominent Congregational laymen were of a far more modest social position. By this time G. B. Crowe, shipowner, Nathaniel Topp and Shorrock Eccles, cottonbrokers, J. C. Stitt, marine engineer, Samuel Job and Elisha Smith, merchants, were seven of the eight Congregationalists most active in denominational life, yet were far from leading figures in their respective professions—the eighth, William Crossfield, sugar refiner and wholesale grocer who was always looked up to in any financial appeal as the town's wealthiest Congregationalist, was likewise undistinguished in the commercial circles of Liverpool, and died in 1881 worth only £120,000, a sum trifling by Unitarian, Presbyterian or even Wesleyan standards !

Now though the average Presbyterian was probably no better and no worse off than the average Congregationalist, he knew that his denomination had at its head men who shared with the Unitarians virtual control of large sections of the city's economic life. No matter where we look, Presbyterians are to the fore in every kind of business enterprise connected with the port : the Cunards, Balfours, Guthries, Williamsons, Curries, McIvers, Burts, Jardines, Mathesons and Stitts among the shipowners and merchants, the Japps among the shipbrokers, the Binghams, Pattersons and Pauls (all these, interestingly enough from Ulster, not Scotland) in the corn trade, the Holders, Thorburns and Smiths on the Cotton Exchange, the McFies in sugar refining, the Nichols in building, the Rankins in railway promotion, the Petries in refrigeration. Most of these were very wealthy men, and many, having made their fortunes, returned to their native Scotland, often to the broad acres of a highland estate, while the others who elected to stay very soon established powerful local dynasties, the McIvers of Calderstones for example acquiring armorial bearings in 1884.

The differing class structure of the two denominations perhaps explains why the Congregationalists were almost to a man political Liberals and the Presbyterians equally divided between the two parties, though of course the latter may have been consciously trying to reproduce in an alien environment the political antagonisms of their native Scotland, as they reproduced everything else.

Through thick and thin the Liverpool Congregationalists remained loyal to their party, even though Liverpool was the most fervently Tory city in the kingdom, and the Liberals controlled the municipality for only nine years throughout the entire century. Their particular concern seems to have been educational reform, and two of them took the lead in the most keenly debated schools controversies of the 19th century, Dr. Blackburn in the Liverpool Corporation Schools issue of the 1830's, and J. J. Stitt in the early years of the enforcement of the 1870 (Forster) Education Act. Their loyalty even survived the Home Rule crisis of 1885 which decimated the liberal ranks : few Congregationalists are to be found among the Liberal Unionists, who first appeared in Liverpool, and where they grew into a powerful political force. William Crossfield junior indeed followed the staunch political tradition of his family by becoming Liberal M.P. for Lincoln in 1892.

It was far otherwise with the Presbyterians. In the early 19th century when they were still very Establishment-conscious they had formed a solid Tory block together with the Evangelical Anglicans and Wesleyans ; then, with the rise of Moderatism in the mid-century more liberal attitudes had appeared until by 1880 Presbyterians had become so powerful within the local Liberal organization that one of their number, John Patterson, was chosen by the Liverpool Association as its leader and another, Samuel Smith, was elected Liberal M.P. for Liverpool (as the third, or minority, member) in 1882. Almost overnight the impossible seemed to have occurred : the aristocratic Unitarian families had had their traditional control of Liverpool Liberalism wrenched out of their hands by a rival and upstart religious faction (who had even, so many of them argued, purloined their own denominational name). But the Unitarians were in eclipse for three years only, for the Liberalism of Liverpool's Presbyterian community could not survive the shock of the First Home Rule Bill. The Ulstermen, including John Patterson, deserted of course *en bloc*, the Scots for the most part followed suit. Prior to 1885 a number of Liverpool Presbyterians had represented parliamentary constituencies in the Liberal interest—Stephen Williamson, W. P. Sinclair and R. A. McFie. Afterwards they are eclipsed by those securing election as Tories and Liberal Unionists, John Bingham and Sinclair who had both changed their party allegiance, David McIver and W. W. Rutherford, and though it was the boast of Ian McLaren (himself a romantic Tory of a belated Young England variety) that his church at Sefton Park displayed its 'catholicity'

by numbering among its members six ex-Mayors or Lord Mayors, three Liberals and three Conservatives, it was without doubt the latter who by the turn of the century represented the predominant political feeling within the Presbyterian community.

(iv) *The Churches and The Masses*

Bishop Wickham in his 'Church and People In An Industrial City' and Professor Inglis in his 'Churches and the Working Classes In Victorian England' have underlined the gulf which separated the English churches in the 19th century from the proletarian life of the great urban communities. Yet before their conclusions are allowed to harden into historical dogma, it is necessary to enquire from the viewpoint of comparative local studies just how widespread the phenomenon really was. Quite apart from the more democratic sects, such as the Free and Primitive Methodists and the Baptists, the Presbyterian and Congregational denominations of Liverpool were certainly aware that a home missionary problem, as they called it, existed, and were no less energetic in taking steps to remedy the same. In general their response took two forms, firstly the establishment of self-supporting churches in working-class areas, and secondly the support of down-town missions, controlled and run by the parent church.

In the former activity the Presbyterians started off with a natural advantage in that they had a large body of immigrant Irish, and, to a lesser extent, Scotch artizans, among whom the church-going habit was fairly strong. Islington Church was composed of such families, while Union Church, Everton, built in 1875, was erected 'to restore to the faith of their fathers' a thousand Presbyterian families, 'all of the working class'. St. Peter's, Scotland Road, Earle Road Church (established 1862), and Vauxhall Road (1867) were similarly situated in wholly working-class areas. The Congregationalists on the other hand started from scratch as far as such enterprises were concerned. Their predominantly working-class churches were entirely the result of tireless missionary labours, Berkeley Street (founded originally, as we have seen, in the 1820's), Brownlow Hill and Burlington Street in the 1860's, and Garston in the 1870's. The most powerful of them all was of course Westminster Road, situated in Kirkdale, the home of aggressive working-class Conservatism, where the sympathies as well as the prejudices of the Rev. Stanley Rogers harmonized closely with the

real needs of his artizan supporters, and gave him one of the largest congregations in Liverpool.

The growth of the down-town missions for evangelistic and philanthropic work represents a more successful type of church extension within both denominations. From the 1850's onwards small mission stations were opened in various depressed parts of the town, though once again the Presbyterians were well to the fore in this activity, for their laymen were the financial backbone of the Town Mission (the majority of whose full-time workers were incidentally Scots), and most of their branch stations were worked in co-operation with this evangelistic agency. Thus it came about that while every Presbyterian church in Liverpool had at least one mission and several of the larger ones two, three or four, only the bigger Congregational churches were active in this field, and none of them, save Great George Street for a short period, ever supported more than one station.

All these ventures were at their height in the 1870's and 80's, especially after the highly successful impact of the Moody-Sankey mission. It was afterwards that serious decline set in. Both denominations saw many of their mission stations close in the 1890's, though on the whole the Presbyterians were rather more successful in keeping theirs open, possibly because of the greater resources available to them. But while two great working-class churches, Islington under the leadership of the two Verner White brothers and Westminster Road under the beloved Rogers, remained as strong as ever, most of the others rapidly declined to the point of extinction, St. Peter's closing in 1912, Vauxhall Road in 1916, Brownlow Hill in 1892 and Burlington Street in 1894. Earle Road kept open its doors only by becoming branch mission of Sefton Park; Berkeley Street thanks only to the generous subventions of the County Congregational Union. By the end of the century it is clear that both denominations were on the retreat in the working class areas of the city (though it would be a travesty of the facts to suggest that they had never witnessed faithfully within them), and even in the middle-class suburbs were achieving far less than before. Here the rate of chapel-building was slowing down perceptibly in the 1890's, the Congregationalists even being compelled to abandon sites such as that at Aigburth which they had hopefully acquired in anticipation of repeating the success of the 60's and 70's, the great era of chapel building when in both denominations new Merseyside causes were being estab-

lished at the rate of one per year. The palmy days of church extension were manifestly over.

The present article has tried to outline the growth, structure and attitudes of two Protestant denominations in a nineteenth century city. Much has necessarily been abbreviated and much omitted, particularly any reference to their philanthropic activities or their contribution to popular culture (a sphere in which English Nonconformity is said to have been uninterested, and in which its role has been seriously undervalued). Sufficient has been said however to underline the basic similarities between the two, similarities which are far more striking than the differences over church polity which kept them apart. Their complete lack of contact at this time can be more adequately explained in a sociological frame of reference than in terms of the hardening of different theological traditions. Their relative prosperity, the easy availability of money to build new churches (and of talented pastors to minister in them), the confident unquestioning assumptions they could make about their own ecclesiastical principles and the bouyant self-confidence thus inspired—such are the factors which lured the two churches into a type of denominational isolationism which could subsist in total disregard of the work and witness of others.

IAN SELLERS

A NOTE ON SOURCES

In a wide-ranging, interpretative essay like the above, the usual critical apparatus can be more misleading than informative. The following sources have however proved of considerable value. For the Congregationalists, B. Nightingale's *Lancashire Nonconformity*, Vol. 6 (1893) carries the story of the individual churches up to 1890, while there are older surveys by I. O. Jones (1866) and J. A. Picton (1877). Jubilee articles in the *Merseyside Congregationalist* for March 1935 are particularly illuminating, as is the Centenary History (1906) of the Lancashire Congregational Union, also by Nightingale. For the Presbyterians historical materials are far less abundant, and apart from a brief survey in the Presbyterian Church of England Yearbook for 1906 no history of Liverpool Presbyterianism has ever been written. Fortunately numerous chapel histories to some extent supply this deficiency, that of Canning Street (1896) being particularly good. Two splendid full-length biographies are those of Dr. Raffles by T. S. Raffles (1864) and Dr. John Watson by W. Robertson Nicoll (1908) : no other Liverpool ministers received such copious treatment after their deaths. There are however abundant biographical references to the laymen of both denominations in the Liverpool Local History Library (the satirical journal, *The Porcupine*, was very interested in the Presbyterians), while the Congregational and Presbyterian Yearbooks contain useful ministerial obituaries.

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH RECORDS HELD IN PUBLIC CUSTODY (List 5)

(Previous list in Vol. xx. No. 1, p. 50)

Greater London Record Office, County Hall, S.E.1.—

(1) Church Records.

Arundel Sq. Cha., Barnsbury : marriages, 1899-1916 ; trust deeds, 1868-94.

Barnsbury Cong. Cha., Islington : Ch. minutes, 1885-1903.

Bedford Cha., Camden Town : Ch. minutes, 1892-1905 ; Deacons' minutes, 1888-1905.

Bedford Pk. Cong. Ch., Streatham : Ch. minutes, 1885-7.

Brentford Cong. Ch., including records 1693-1840 of Presbyterians from whom Building taken over : registers of members, 1693-1943 ; baptisms, 1694-1865 ; burials, 1786-1856 ; Ch. minutes, 1840-1943 ; Trustees' minutes, 1700-1840 ; Deacons' minutes, 1883-91 ; title deeds, 1709-1825.

Burdett Rd. Cong. Ch., Stepney : marriages, 1909-39 ; register of members, 1866-1932 ; Deacons' minutes, 1913-27 ; accounts, 1917-26 ; miscellanea, 1908-36.

Cannon St. Rd. Cong. Ch., Stepney : baptisms, 1792-1810 ; register of members, c.18-19.

Christ Ch./Wycliffe Cong. Ch., Ilford : registers of members, 1896-1939 ; Ch. minutes, 1896-1950 ; Deacons' minutes, 1896-1955 ; Sunday sch., 1903-36 ; accounts, 1907-52 ; annual reports, 1910-63. (*And see Wycliffe C. C., Stepney.*)

Christ Ch. (Cong.), Peckham : marriages, 1914-32.

City Rd. Cha., Finsbury : registers of members, 1850-64 ; baptisms, 1850-97 ; marriages, 1852-6 ; Ch. minutes, 1850-1900.

Claremont Cong. Ch., Finsbury : committee minutes, 1885-93.

Court Rd. Cong. Ch., Eltham : title deeds, 1898-99.

Craven Cha., Westminster : Ch. minutes, 1830-1, 1858-94 ; committee minutes, 1858-94 ; correspondence, 1889-95.

Deptford Cong. Ch. : deed, Wingrove's Charity, 1896.

Dr. Calamy's Meeting Ho./Princes St., Westminster ; later Stamford St., Southwark : book containing transcriptions concerning trustees, finance, deacons, 1735-1824.

East Dulwich Grove Cong. Ch., Dulwich : title deeds, 1878-1900.

Ebenezer Cha. and Albion Cong. Ch., Hammersmith : registers of members, 1784-1918 ; baptisms, 1875-1938 ; marriages, 1881-1938 ; burials, 1881-6 ; Ch. minutes, 1881-6, 1923-38.

Fetter Lane Cha., City of London ; later Union Rd., Leyton : baptisms, 1730-1896 ; Ch. minutes, 1707-1859 ; Deacons' minutes, 1838-67 ; title deeds, 1721-1839 ; miscellaneous records of chapel Provident Society, 1806-1912.

Finsbury/Fletcher's Cha., Finsbury : baptisms, 1824-89 ; marriages, 1838-64 ; Managers' minutes, 1835-90.

Girdlers' Hall, Cong. assembling at ; later Cha. New Broad St., City of London : register of members, 1727-1844 ; Ch. minutes, 1727-1856 ; baptisms, 1845 ; minutes of 'Brethren of the Church', 1821-51.

Greenwich Rd. Cong. Ch. : baptisms, 1857-1919.

Greville Pl. Cong. Ch., Kilburn : baptisms, 1871-1923 ; marriages, 1871-1923 ; registers of members, 1858-1915 ; Ch. minutes, 1870-1924 ; Deacons' minutes, 1860-1920 ; committee minutes, 1921-4 ; accounts, 1904-24.

Gunnersbury Cong. Ch., Chiswick : baptisms, 1888-94 ; marriages, 1894 ; roll of members, 1888-97 ; Ch. minutes, 1888-1957 ; committee and Deacons' minutes, 1887-1961 ; Sunday School minutes (Turnham Green), 1871-86 ; accounts 1891-4.

Harley St. Cha., Bow : baptisms, 1876-1926 ; marriages, 1876-1925 ; registers of members, 1878-1918 ; Lord's Supper Register 1878-1926 ; Ch. minutes, 1876-1922 ; committee minutes, 1908-15.

Herne Hill Cong. Ch., Camberwell : title deeds, 1902-04.

High St. Cong. Ch., Lewisham : title deeds, 1866-93.

Highbury Quadrant Cong. Ch., Islington : title deed, 1882.

Holywell Mount Cha., Shoreditch : certificates of baptism, 1837-54.

Horbury Cha., Notting Hill Gate : correspondence, 1850-1920.

Kentish Town Rd. Cong. Ch. : title deeds, 1849-51.

Linden Grove Ch., Peckham Rye : baptisms, 1909-49 ; marriages, 1908-44 ; Deacons' minutes, 1933-40 ; deeds, 1891-1954.

Lower St. Mg. Ho./Cha., Islington : title deeds, 1744-1833 ; miscellanea, 1744-1837.

Markham Sq. Cong. Ch., Chelsea : registers of members, 1856-1952 ; baptisms, 1868-1939 ; marriages, 1892-1939 ; Ch. minutes, 1856-1930.

Maze Hill Cong. Ch., Greenwich : title deeds, 1823-70.

Merton Hall Cong. Ch., Merton : committee and Deacons' minutes, 1919-28 ; trustees' minutes, 1923-41.

New Road Mg. Ho., Stepney : baptisms, 1811-17.

New Tabernacle and Hoxton Academy Cong. Ch., Shoreditch : marriages, 1899-1941 ; register of members, 1857-1930 ; Ch. minutes, 1911-46 ; committee minutes, 1834-52 ; Deacons' minutes, 1938-46 ; Hoxton Auxiliary Christian Instruction Society, minutes, 1827-35 ; Sick Man's and Friend in Need Society, cash book, 1883-1936 ; Sunday school cash book, 1901-45 ; trust deeds, 1842-98 ; Charity Commission orders, 1949-58.

Offord Rd. Cha., Islington : marriages, 1899-1917 ; accounts, 1900-34 ; reports, 1922-3.

Orange St. Cong. Cha., Leicester Square : accounts, 1896-1904 ; trustees' minutes, 1880-1908 ; transcript of Charity Commission enquiry, 1910 ; title deeds, 1849-68.

Park Cres. Cong. Ch., Clapham : Ch. minutes, 1819-97 ; Deacons' minutes, 1894-6 ; register of members, c.1894.

Pavement Cha., Hoxton and Southgate Rd. Cha., Hackney : baptisms, 1845-88 ; marriages, 1851-78 ; register of members, 1845-78 ; Ch. minutes, 1845-59 ; collections, 1845-59.

Sydney St. Cong. Cha., Bethnal Green : cash book, 1890-99.

Sion Cha., Whitechapel : Trustees' minutes, 1883-92 ; correspondence, 1899-1900.

Southwark Pk. Cong. Ch., Bermondsey : title deeds, 1859-84.

Swanscombe St. Cong. Ch., Plaistow : baptisms, 1860-82 ; roll of members, 1859-80 ; Ch. minutes, 1859-1903.

Tolmers Sq. Cong. Ch., St. Pancras : baptisms, 1863-1919 ; marriages, 1863-1918.

Tottenham Court Cong. Cha., St. Pancras : Young Men's Association, 1847-51.

Trinity Cong. Ch., Catford : deeds, 1863-1911.

Trinity Cong. Ch., Croydon : baptisms, 1871-1915 ; marriages and burials, 1887-1918 ; registers of members, 1864-1917 ; Ch. minutes, 1864-1918 ; Deacons' minutes, 1878-1918.

Turnham Green Cong. Ch. : *see* Gunnersbury C. C.

Upper Clapton Cong. Ch. : title and trust deeds, 1812-95.

Victoria Pk. Cong. Ch., Bethnal Green : baptisms, 1905-50.

West Dulwich Cong. Ch. : marriages, 1939-41 ; registers of members, 1853-1939 ; Lord's Supper, 1870-1938 ; Ch. minutes, 1868-1930 ; Deacons' minutes, 1868-1935 ; accounts, 1940-5 ; title deeds, 1855-6 ; miscellanea, 1855-1945.

West Hampstead Cong. Ch. : baptisms, 1907-39 ; marriages, 1908-28 ; registers of members, 1894-1933 ; Ch. minutes, 1894-1913 ; committee minutes, 1906-24 ; accounts, 1919-34 ; pew sittings, 1896-1922 ; collections, 1894-1926.

White's Row Cha., Spitalfields and City of London : baptisms, 1756-1908 ; Ch. minutes, 1794-1841.

Willesden Green Cong. Ch. : marriages, 1884-1916 ; roll of members, 1835-80 ; Ch. minutes, 1876-1914 ; cash book, 1882-1916.

Wood Green Cong. Ch. : baptisms, 1868-70 ; registers of members, 1866-70 ; Ch. minutes, 1862-1963 ; Committee minutes, 1861-1921 ; Deacons' minutes, 1921-63 ; marriage certificate counterfoils, 1924-40 ; trust deed, 1863.

Wycliffe Cong. Ch., Stepney : baptisms, 1850-1906 ; marriages, 1873 ; burials, 1831-1902 ; registers of members, 1827-91 ; Ch. minutes, 1862-1906 ; Deacons' minutes, 1849-1907 ; accounts, 1848-1900 ; Christian Association, 1893-1902 ; Sunday school, 1843-1906. (*And see Christ Ch. Wycliffe C. C., Ilford.*)

Zion Cha., Mitcham : burials, 1821-94 ; roll of members, c.1821.

(2) *Records of London Congregational Union.*

London Board of Congregational Ministers : registers of members, 1929-48 ; bank statements, 1928-49.

London Congregational Chapel Building Society : committee minutes, 1870-74 ; sub-committee minutes, 1849-80 ; financial, 1876-1942.

London Congregational Union : membership, 1903-37 ; General Committee and Council minutes, 1872-1937 ; committee minutes, 1893-1941 ; register of mortgages, 1880-1939 ; register of insurance policies, 1934-42 ; Twentieth Century Fund, 1899-1902.

Nathaniel Bromley's Charity : accounts, 1857-1939 ; deeds, 1628-1800.

North District, London Congregational Union : executive and assembly minutes, 1938-59.

EXCERPTS FROM DODDRIDGE'S CONFESSION OF FAITH

(Made at his Ordination, 1730, J. Waddington, *Congregational History 1700-1800,* pp. 280 ff.)

2. I believe that God is an infinite, eternal, and immutable spirit, the fountain of wisdom and of power, of holiness and justice, of truth and goodness ; and, in one word, that He is possessed of all perfections we can form any idea of, and of infinitely more than we can distinctly conceive.

6. But when I take survey of the state of mankind in all ages, so far as I have had an opportunity of learning it, I see an universal degeneracy prevailing in the heathen world. I find such errors in speculation and enormities in practice, as spread infamy and misery over the face of the earth, and threaten a more dreadful destruction in the invisible world.

7. I cannot, therefore, but think it well worthy of God to interpose by immediate revelation to regulate the notions and practices of His creatures. As this is evidently a possible and a desirable thing, so it is what the known goodness of the Divine nature may give us some encouragement to hope for.

18. I believe that the sacred SPIRIT, who is the grand agent in the Redeemer's kingdom, is a Divine person united with the Father and the Son in an adorable and incomprehensible manner ; and thus I learn and firmly believe the great doctrine of a TRINITY of persons in the unity of the Godhead, an aweful mystery which, being pure revelation, I apprehend I should only obscure by attempting fully to explain it.

24. I apprehend that the Scripture is to be in the main the rule of worship as well as of faith, and that it directs us here not by laying down any exact form of church government or ritual for publick service, but by prescribing most excellent general canons, and leaving it to particular societies to adjust lesser circumstances in a manner agreeable to their own relish and convenience.

26. . . . I am bound in duty affectionately to esteem and embrace all who practically comply with the design of the revelation and love of our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, how much soever they may differ from myself in their language or their conceptions about any speculative points.

REVIEWS

The Prayer Book Tradition in the Free Churches by A. Elliott Peaston (James Clarke, 1965, 18s.)

This is a scholarly and most comprehensive work by the minister of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, Dromore, County Down. Professor E. C. Ratcliff, in his Foreword, writes : ' It is no exaggeration to say that Mr. Peaston has completed the extra-Anglican history of the Prayer Book . . . he has made a notable contribution to the history of English religion . . . His book is the work of a master. It is a pleasure and an honour to commend it.'

The book is divided into four parts. In Part I Mr. Peaston deals with puritan revisions of the BCP and with the use made of it by the Methodists, the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion and the Free Church of England. Part II discusses the influence of the Prayer Book on the worship of Moravians, Congregationalists, Baptists and the Churches of Christ. Part III is devoted to the New Church (Swedenborgian) and Part IV to the use of the book by the Catholic Apostolic Church and the Free Catholics.

Two minor points call for comment in Chapter III. On p. 46 Mr. Peaston says that ' Extemporary prayer was a Methodist innovation, though the Presbyterian divines in 1661 had sought some latitude for free prayer in church services '. It may have been an innovation within the strictly Anglican tradition but had long been in use in the older dissenting churches. On the following page mention is made of ' what may be the first reference in any baptismal rite to the use of sprinkling as a valid mode of baptism '. The Westminster Directory had already provided for sprinkling as an alternative to pouring.

Congregationalists will look with particular interest to Chapter VII. By including Dr. Orchard's ' Divine Service ' in Part IV Mr. Peaston has, I think, done less than justice to the influence this book has had among Congregationalists. Orchard's Ten Orders of Morning and Evening Prayer have so often provided ministers with their opening sentences and prayers. The printing of the versicles and responses from Matins and Evensong in the BCP in *The Congregational Hymnary* and more recently in *Congregational Praise* has meant that over many years these have been a familiar feature of many Congregational services. It may also be of interest to add that the Ten Orders of Worship from *A Book of Congregational Worship* were set to music selected and composed by Sir Walford Davies.

Mr. Peaston has put us all very much in his debt. His book is a mine of information. Its value is enhanced by an excellent bibliography. JAMES M. TODD

Called unto Liberty : A Life of Jonathan Mayhew, 1720-1766 by Charles W. Akers (Harvard University Press and Oxford University Press, 1965, 52s.)

Jonathan Mayhew was pastor of the new and wealthy Boston West Congregational Church and the champion of colonial liberties in the years before the Stamp Act. In theology as well as politics he fought for liberal opinions : he paved the way for Unitarianism. He resisted the pressure of Anglicanism. Professor Akers writes a careful and impressive account of religion and politics in Massachusetts, a mixture of parochial events with impending international consequences, and he reveals the skilful infiltration which Thomas Hollis, the left-wing Whig, effected through Mayhew, for his strong liberal political principles. Perhaps lack of materials prevented the author portraying Mayhew as pastor and person as clearly as controversialist, though one notes that Harrison Gray says in his 'Memoir' that the sermons published as *Christian Sobriety* came to the press because young people pressed for it, an indication of his pastoral gifts, and one wonders whether there exist other slight clues to Mayhew's powers and character of which more might have been said.

A Bunyan Guide by H. G. Tibbutt (Elstow Moot Hall Leaflet 1, third edition, revised, 1965, 1s.)

John Bunyan is one of the few Protestants in England who has excited immense hagiological labours. Our Research Secretary's pamphlet tells us the whereabouts of various relics, first editions, stained glass windows, *etc.*, connected with the saint.

J.H.T.