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TRANSACTIONS

THE CONGREGATIONAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EDITOR JOHN H. TAYLOR, B.D.

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CONTENTS

Editorial

Old contributors and new contributors, a pleasing mixture in this issue. With mixed feelings however, we print Mr. H. Gordon Tibbutt's article. After several years of energetic service as research secretary and committee member, he is resigning. He has to draw some irons out of the fire. We are most sorry to say goodbye and we publish his latest article now as a tribute to him. But we hope for future contributions. Dr. Clyde Binfield is new and needs introducing. He is at present on the history staff of Sheffield University and was before that Bachelor Scholar of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. He has done extensive original work on East Anglian churches in the last century and has fascinating patterns of social and theological materials to display. He is to be our lecturer in May 1968 taking this theme, but he provides us with a foretaste of his discoveries in this issue. We are glad to have something Welsh again, and from a new contributor ; and to have a short piece by Roger Kenrick, another new contributor.

Something to look forward to will be Mr. C. Edwin Welch's results from the examination of the Huntingdon papers among

QUEEN'S PARK

Congregational Church.

HARROW ROAD, W.

:o:

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:o:

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INSTITUTE SEATS 650.

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:o:

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:o:

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Mr. A. ROBERTSON, M.A.
Monsieur A. BRUIN, Doc. Lit. Hum.
Mr. W. PHILLIPS, Fellow of the Tonic Sol-fa College.
Mr. J. H. HOLLOWAY, Cert. Science Master.
Mr. W. S. HARDY, Cert. Science Master.

Mistresses:

Miss M. I. PARKINSON, C.M. (Queen's Scholar).
Miss L. CHAMP, A.A. (Oxon.)
Miss M. SAMUELS, A.C.T.C.
Miss A. LEACH.

Drill-Instructor - - Staff-Sergeant YOUNG.

FEE - ONE GUINEA PER QUARTER.

:o:

In June last the membership of the various auxiliaries amounted to 2,859. Over 200 persons fill 348 offices, 26 persons receive payment for service, the rest are voluntary helpers. Over 5,000 attendances are made each week in the Winter months.

Homestead,
Brondesbury Road,
London, N.W.

Jan 12 1891

Dear Mr Mears

Enclosed please find Brown's receipt for £965 closing up the account.
Shepherds sent me the Draft on Saturday eve. It is a very complicated document & they themselves apologise for its length. I am unwilling to increase the cost by a shilling, but as I can't grasp it, & as I failed to find any clause in it protecting the Church & trustees until 1894. I have

the Cheshunt College records. He has just taken up a new post as archivist at Churchill College. Black news comes from Gloucester where the James Forbes Library has been sold to Toronto University by Southgate Congregational Church. The brain drain affects ancient as well as living minds.

Queens Park Church Notepaper

This year we have as the first President of the new Congregational Church in England and Wales the Rev. Maxwell O. Janes. He was brought up at Queens Park Congregational Church in Harrow Road, London. Now it happens that in weeding files at the office of the London Congregational Union, of all the letter-headings we have seen and admired, the Queens Park one is the most startling. We thank the L.C.U., for allowing us to reproduce it, which we do as a memorial to the institutional church which flourished by the end of the last century and was found in every substantial town and suburb. How exceptional was Queens Park ? Mr. Janes says,

> Set as it was in a missionary situation its leaders sought to meet both the religious and the social and educational needs of the local population, many of whom were anxious to improve themselves.

Another old member, the Rev. W. A. Cowie of Worthing, says the church was built to serve a large working-class estate built by the Artisans Dwelling Company ; many of the people were employees of the Great Western Railway. Paddington Chapel, with the help of the London Union, was chiefly responsible for getting the work started, but Charles Leach, the first minister, himself inspired most of the building and organisation as well as the fund raising. This took him as far as America whence he returned not only with dollars but doctorate too ! What one reads of Leach reminds one of another local giant, Charles Vine of Ilford. The hour seems to have raised up a race of such men, of whom Sylvester Horne and John Clifford, both neighbours of Leach, stand pre-eminent. Everywhere you find men of this type. Many of their churches rose and fell in the course of two or three generations. That many of them were apparently successful with working-class people seems often overlooked in these days. Mr. Cowie says ' the congregation in Dr. Leach's time was almost entirely working-class.' In this day of social studies shall we hope that some young aspiring historian will see an opportunity here to look into the phenomenon of the institutional church ?

THE THREAD OF DISRUPTION

Some Nineteenth Century Churches in Eastern England

Towards the end of the nineteenth century two men recalled the Norwich of their youth. In the recollections of both there figured the memory of William Youngman, a deacon of Old Meeting. John Stoughton, whose ministerial career had been dignified and stately, recalled how Youngman 'tried the patience of orthodox religionists, and was the terror of neophytes.'[1] James Ewing Ritchie, a son of the manse, who had rejected the ministry for journalism, remembered that Youngman had a peacock, and how, in 'his square pew in the Old Meeting . . . with his gold-headed cane firmly grasped, the red-faced old man sat as solemn and passionless as a judge.'[2]

'The red-faced old man' died in 1836 and Old Meeting ceded its place as Norwich's leading Congregational chapel to Princes Street and the magnificent ministries of John Alexander and Barrett of the *Hymnal*; but his memory might still remind those interested in such things of the exhilarating years at the turn of the century when Youngman and the Enfields and Taylors and Martineaus and the Baptist Joseph Kinghorn met in the Norwich Speculative Society and discussed Sismondi and wandered beyond the borders of orthodoxy—some of them permanently.

* * *

Towards the middle of the nineteenth century two remarkable and aristocratic families reached a watershed in their religious views. In January 1857 Lord John Russell took a party including his wife and his eldest son 'to Vauxhall Gardens to hear Mr. Spurgeon, a very wonderful preacher. He is a dissenter of some kind . . . His sermon was very good, and very curious.'[3] In Cheshire another Baptist was speaking to the condition of an ailing grande dame, the dowager Lady Stanley of Alderley. As her granddaughter Kate Stanley noted with a certain detachment—'They had heard of Mr. Wright being at Alderley from Mrs. Shepherd a relation of his and a great friend of Aunt Lucy's he is a Baptist a very good and clever man and writes good books and prayers

[1] J Stoughton *Recollections of a Long Life*, 2nd ed. 1894 p. 16.
[2] ('Christopher Crayon') *Christopher Crayon's Recollections: the Life and Times of the late James Ewing Ritchie*, 1898, pp. 85-6.
[3] Bertrand and Pamela Russell (eds.): *The Amberley Papers*, 1937, Vol. 1. p. 155—Sunday, 8 January 1857.

which suit Grandmama exactly.' Mr. Wright's goodness and cleverness very properly extended to a dislike of the *Heir of Redclyffe*.[4]

In both families the influence of Baptists, even of the stricter sort, was a passing phase. Within six years Lord John Russell's son had put behind his religious views of adolescent intensity. He had plunged into *Essays and Reviews* and the reading of them greatly affected him. He felt enabled to write of Jesus ' . . . I should attribute his faults almost entirely to the absence of the moderating influence of intellectual education.'[5] Meanwhile Kate Stanley was also dabbling (a little more circumspectly) in *Essays and Reviews*; she ' tried In Memoriam in French how horridly difficult it is . . . '[6] and she was falling for the ministrations of Frederick Denison Maurice. Eventually she and young Russell would marry. In a short life together they became notorious as England's most advanced married couple.

The mixture of English religious and intellectual traditions could not be more clearly shown. Nor could one other fact. If it is seldom possible to distinguish precisely between the edges of different orthodoxies, it is also difficult to attribute differences and distinctions to reasons simply of social environment or geography. The Russells and the Stanleys moved with assurance in the flowing world of the country house and town mansion—and the deanery and bishop's palace. Likewise the principal pastorates of Maurice and Spurgeon and John Stoughton were spent in London. Ewing Ritchie passed his life in London—but Stoughton owed his formative impressions to Norwich and Ritchie could never escape the imprint of the manse at Wrentham. It is possible that the Mr. Wright who so comforted the Cheshire dowager was George Wright of Beccles in Suffolk, a Baptist minister whose positive and gritty leadership of strict Baptists made him known in religious circles beyond East Anglia, and who was certainly known and appreciated by ageing ladies as well-born as Lady Stanley. To draw the net tighter. Young Russell found his faith dissolving during his unhappy years at Trinity College Cambridge; in those years and later he found some help in the writings and personality of F. D. Maurice who nearly forty years earlier, as a son of the manse and with east country connections, had found himself an undergraduate there, and had founded the Apostles. One man who made it his business to cultivate the friendship of such as Maurice, and whose publications were read in intelligent homes including those

[4]*Ibid.* pp. 113; 129. [5]*Ibid.* p. 338. [6]*Ibid.* p. 123.

of Russell and Kate Stanley, was Alexander Macmillan, the publisher. A brother of his had been a candidate for the Baptist ministry; his own religious career included spells of membership at the Weigh House and at St. Andrew's Street Baptist Church in Cambridge; he continued to be on terms of some intimacy with dissenting leaders; and the story has it that in his Cambridge house the young Spurgeon, then just a boy wonder from Fenland, failed because of a muddled appointment to be accepted for training in a Baptist college. It was also Alexander Macmillan who on hearing Spurgeon in 1855 could comment 'He is a hyper-Calvinist, as he says, but in the preaching it was marvellous like Maurice.'[7] Such richness of texture needs little comment.

* * *

Fifty years later such texture had lost neither its richness nor its incongruity. In 1903 an ordination service was held in a Unitarian chapel. Three ministers took part. Two of them were Unitarian, but the third was a Congregationalist. He gave the charge to the congregation and to the minister and suitably he 'dwelt upon the importance of unity and brotherly love among Christians.' This service was not held in a suburban chapel where such daring might be applauded, nor was it a foretaste of any heady 'new theology.' It was held in a Norfolk village and the Congregationalist concerned was minister of a church in Norwich. Ostensibly the service had to be held in this way because the trust demanded the presence of three ministers of Congregational and Presbyterian persuasion, but if any similar service had been held in past years, none was alive to remember it.[8]

These three examples of rich, surprising and complicated texture do more than remind the observer that differences are seldom clear cut. They may also emphasise the fact that the countryside was as involved as the capital city or the university town in the changes and perplexities of nineteenth-century religion; that all denominations were affected; that not even a family sitting contentedly under George Wright of Beccles (provided of course that it possessed some means other than of Grace) need feel exempt. It so happens that these three examples reveal links with eastern England. The five counties of eastern England, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire, were pure countryside uncomplicated by the excesses of the Industrial Revolution. Discounting London, which from 1840 marched rapidly into south

[7]C. L. Graves; *The Life and Letters of Alexander Macmillan*, 1910, p. 83.
[8]From the *Hapton Church Book*, in the care of Octagon Chapel, Norwich.

Essex, only Norwich presented the image of something more than 'country a little thickened and congested,'[9] and the leading chapels of Cambridge, Colchester, Ipswich, as well as of Sudbury or St. Ives, included farmers among their deacons and trustees. Where industry did present itself in the shape of a foundry for implements or a factory for corsets, the operatives were brothers and sisters of farmhands in a neighbouring village and there was little sense of disruption and cruel parting. That was left for those large and increasing numbers who emigrated, to complicate their lives in distant places.

This meant that the respectable puritan traditions of the five counties, which none more uniformly and proudly cherished than the Congregationalists, could continue into the nineteenth century in a remarkable way. It was agricultural depression, not sudden or unforeseen growth, which would threaten them. At the beginning of that century all the orthodox dissenting bodies had undergone revival and expansion : but the course of the century would prove that for Congregationalists at least (and of all the bodies they were least divided and most uniformly spread) their strength continued where it had been since the seventeenth century. In 1873 the Autumnal Meetings of the Congregational Union were held in Ipswich. It was only the second time that they had been held in eastern England. Eustace Rogers Conder, the Chairman, came of a family still prominent in Ipswich, but he voiced the general attitude to east county Puritanism :

> Those of us who dwell in the crowded hives of industry, where the two great magicians, Coal and Cotton, weave their dusky spells . . . may well experience, in visiting this part of England (some of us for the first time) somewhat of the feeling which our brethren of the United States express in paying their first visit to the 'old country.'[10]

Any impression, however, that the 'old country' was immune from the intellectual pressures afflicting Congregationalists in more sophisticated areas was erroneous. A study of the records of a surprising number of churches demonstrates this. The crises which harassed and invigorated that façade of Nonconformity which faced the world during the May Meetings of the last century, are revealed in the sermons and the papers delivered to the assemblies of each denomination and published in their year books. The

[9]The phrase is 'Mark Rutherford's' : *Revolution in Tanners Lane*, 1893, p. 264. [10]*Congregational Year Book*, 1874, p. 64.

addresses reveal equally the undercurrents which pulled at dissent and which made impossible the attainment of its goal. They reveal the twin strands of success and failure which run through the century. They demonstrate the assurance of men who saw a new race of preachers gathering unparalleled congregations ; who knew that they and their like equalled the Anglicans in number ; who felt swelled by revival in 1859 and again in the 1870's under Moody and Sankey ; who saw their elegant chapels and their prospering pewholders ; who enjoyed the commemorative combat of 1862 and who felt the vigour which this gave them flow into growing membership and growing political power. They greeted the victory of Gladstone with suitably religious fervour and they knew without doubt that the imminent disestablishment of the 'episcopalian sect' would remove their remaining grievances. But the year books also demonstrate the perplexity of men harried by the twin devils of Ritualism and Rationalism, who were unable to keep the loyalty either of their educated sons or of masses too frightening to be contemplated ; who saw Methodists disrupted ; who saw Congregationalists threatened by the *Rivulet* controversy in 1856 and again by the Leicester Conference in 1877. They saw the gathering of the 'Down-grade' to frighten the Baptists ; they saw that few of those in doubt felt able to rest even among Unitarians or Quakers. *Origin of Species* ; Colenso : *Essays and Reviews* ; above all the spectres inspired by German theology, filled Nonconformists assembled in London with a horror which was the more felt because so many of their own succumbed.

Horror was equally felt when meeting at home. Church books, though innocent of the names 'Rivulet' or 'Leicester', reflect faithfully the façade of year books : and the story of Victorian dissent in the countryside of eastern England is no less sharp than that elsewhere. Church books reflect year books in another way as well. Victorian Congregationalists, gathered annually in London, were ever fond of complimenting each other on the unity of their free denomination. They plumed themselves on being so fine an advertisement for the voluntary principle. They knew as well as any of internal strife, bitterness and pettiness ; but they were largely successful in attaining a 'golden mediocrity'. Victorian Congregationalists, gathered regularly in their churches, reflect this. Schism and disruption visited them frequently, yet only, it seemed, to lend point to the virility of Independency. Issues and principles were blurred with genius. Time and again a church

book recounts disagreement with masterly understatement. It is always plainly inadequate to ascribe disruption simply to defects of character in members or ministers, yet wherever there is a hint of a doctrinal or intellectual basis to the trouble it proves impossible to isolate this and to set it apart from social issues. In the mid 1850's the *Rivulet* bruised the youthful Union ; in the late 1870's Leicester scarified a more mature Union. It is possible to see even in eastern England with its elderly rural causes, a series of chapel disruptions in the 1850's and again twenty years after. An examination of these reveals a texture largely unsuspected ; and leads only to the conclusion that Alexander Macmillan was not alone in his remarkable ability to mention Maurice and Spurgeon in the same breath and that membership of a church of Cromwellian vintage need not imply ' old-fashioned dissenting narrowness '.

The mixture of the early years of the century may be shown in three ways. First, Nonconformity, which had yet to learn the superior virtues of organisation, owed much to the ministrations of metropolitan grandees who purchased strategically placed country properties : Thomas Wilson at Stanford Rivers; Joseph Wilson and Joseph Hardcastle near Bury St. Edmunds; Remington Mills in Norfolk and the egregious Claytons at Upminster in Essex. Their orthodoxy was irreproachable and justice has yet to be done to their work in succouring ministers, resuscitating dying causes and planting schools and preaching stations in unlikely places. Nonetheless the impeccable John Clayton (père) had Benjamin Flower for a brother in law, radical, cantankerous and, with his family, prominently heterodox in London and the provinces. Joseph Hardcastle linked his family with the Haldanes and his son in law H. F. Burder (an Essex name) was Chairman of the Union in 1844 : but Burder had a brother George who became a Roman Catholic one year after Newman, who became Abbot of Mount St. Bernards in Leicestershire, and whose translation from the French in 1873 of *The Souls in Purgatory* may not have appealed to his Protestant kith and kin. At the same time newer generations of Hardcastles and Haldanes (some of them as Liberal M.Ps. relying on the votes of east country dissenters) were moving contentedly towards Broad Church and High Church : after all F. D. Maurice himself sat on the edge of their family circle. Thomas Wilson drew much of his income from the silk concerns run by the Wilsons, Remingtons and Mills. In their east country business contacts they were hard headed and hard mannered. Their capital made possible—and then nearly strangled—

the birth of the Courtauld silk industry in Braintree and Bocking. That the colourful and idealistic George Courtauld was Unitarian and actively so, was doubtless irrelevant in a business partnership.

Secondly, the skeletons can be extended to congregations within the five counties. The engineer of the Courtauld empire was George's son Samuel (1793-1881). Without the financial support of this childless patriarch political dissent in Essex would have suffered greatly. The Unitarianism of the Courtaulds was open and known. Yet it is not long since members of the Bocking Congregational Church could recall the Courtauld carriage stopping often on Sundays at their chapel, and in October 1852, speaking at the Jubilee celebration of Thomas Craig the minister, Samuel Courtauld spoke repeatedly of '*our* venerable and beloved pastor' and '*our* congregational testimonial.'[11] Doubtless the religious beliefs of a millionaire are in a particular way his own affair, but a parallel may be found elsewhere in Essex.

Like the church at Bocking, those at Witham and Little Baddow were of seventeenth century origin. Throughout their history they had attracted the pony traps of yeomen to their forecourts. Occasionally the traps had become carriages and the yeomanry had assumed gentility. They still tended to frequent the Meeting House. The Shaen family attended both chapels as members and as subscribers. Their Nonconformity was as old as the chapels they attended. Their property was attractive and extensive and their family connections were gratifying. In particular they were connected with the Sollys, a London Unitarian family of great enlightenment and fluctuating wealth, moving like many Unitarian families towards the Broad Church views of F. D. Maurice. For decades the Shaens, as country cousins, had nursed their heterodoxy in orthodox chapels. Yet the kindness of the family led the son of a Witham minister towards the light of liberal religion, and it was William Shaen (1822-1887), Bishop Colenso's legal adviser, who when the Free Christian Union was formed, objected to 'Christian' ' as being calculated to exclude many of the great thinkers and public instructors of the age.'[12] When rumours of *Rivulet* and 'Leicester' re-opened these pockets of heresy which had lived happily in east

[11]J. F. Shearcroft (ed.) : *Record of the Jubilee Services which were held in Commemoration of the fiftieth Anniversary of the Rev. Thomas Craig's Pastoral Connection with the Church and Congregation of Protestant Dissenters at Bocking, in the County of Essex. October 12-14th, 1852.* 1852, pp. 26-28.

[12]H. Solly : *These Eighty Years or the Story of an Unfinished Life.* 1893, Vol. II, p. 338.

country churches of unimpeachable orthodoxy, something of the terror and the bitterness revealed in sermons at annual meetings may more easily be understood.

The third point emphasizes certain implications of this. Some congregations were unable to countenance the doctrinal complacency which such situations suggested. They suffered disruption. In the three following instances it took at least one World War for unity to be restored to a straightened inheritance. At Royston, Sudbury and Halstead, a second church, a secession from the parent church, had appeared within the fifty years after the fall of the Bastille. In each instance the parent church and the secession remained Congregational, yet in two if not in all three, the parent body was at least tinged with heterodoxy. It is, therefore, inadequate to regard this as the end of the process whereby Unitarianism emerged as a separate religious body. By 1850 these three small country towns, which had always possessed three Congregational chapels, now possessed six, which apparently flourished. There is a further point : the carriages continued to frequent the parent chapel. It was the pony traps which favoured the secession.

The split at Sudbury was the latest. From 1773 to 1837 the pastorate of John Mead Ray, pupil of Dr. Ryland and a father and founder of the London Missionary Society, had covered a multitude of change.[13] His death provided the occasion for some of his flock—among them Miss Gainsborough who rejoiced in her relationship with the celebrated portraitist—to secure a new cause pointedly to be called Trinity. Trinitarian suspicion nagged at relations between these two Congregational churches throughout their separate existence.[14]

The split at Royston was the earliest. Royston was the homeland of Benjamin Flower and his Fordham relations. Their culture and their pretensions—can there be a more vivid vignette than that of Mrs. William Beldam and ' her chariot with coachman and footmen when no other carriage was known in Royston '—are attractively glimpsed in Crabb Robinson's literary remains. From 1790 to 1794 their pastor was Robinson's uncle, Habakkuk Crabb, a pleasant and sociable man, a pillar of the celebrated Royston Book Club, steeped in east country dissent—and an Arianiser. It was this which caused an orthodox secession to form the cause in Kneesworth Street which still exists. But the parent

[13]J. Browne : *History of Congregationalism in Norfolk and Suffolk*. 1877, p. 449. [14]*Trinity Church Minute Book*, 1856-1884.

cause also survived, and somehow it remained Congregational, the families which had dominated it in 1780, still dominating it sixty years later.[15]

The issues at Halstead are less clear.[16] In 1829 the church at Halstead had a membership of 113 plus eight communicants. The membership was prosperous. The solicitor, physician, brewer, farmer, were well in evidence : so were certain families, notably the Vaizeys, whose style of life and large acres and drawing rooms gave them every right to the designation ' gentlemen.' The opulence of many Essex small-town chapels belied the belief that dissent in the country was a socially perilous thing—even so, Old Meeting Halstead must have been exceptional. In March 1829 James Bass, the well-loved minister since 1797, died. On 24 June 1832, John Carter, minister of the Braintree church, preached and was ' received with loud marks of disapprobation and the worship of God (*was*) prevented.' This was the signal for a secession of fifty members who within six months, aided by John Carter and from afar by Thomas Wilson (whose son in law, Stratten of Paddington, preached at the opening in October 1833) formed a new church, meeting in High Street. Meanwhile on 5 October 1832 the church at Old Meeting was dissolved, to be reformed under a new pastor in April 1833.

The causes for the disruption are lost. It is of course always hard to find a suitable successor to a loved and long-lived pastor, but clues might be found in the man who ministered at Old Meeting between 1829 and 1832.

John Savill (1780-1836) was rare in his wealth. When he moved to Halstead he was able to lease a house for ten years at £150—three times as much as many fellow ministers in Essex received as stipend. He owed his money partly to his own family, long established in the Essex textile industry, and partly to his wife, Frances Maitland, the heiress of one of that widespread mercantile family which has since provided England with M.Ps., generals, a field marshal and a great constitutional historian—and which

[15]The records of the John Street and Kneesworth Street Churches are fragmentary but varied : the *Kneesworth Street Minute Book 1794-1828*, various *Quarterage Books*, and a typescript, R. Cox *The Beldam Family of Royston* (1948) are suggestive. Among the Crabb Robinson correspondence in Dr. Williams's Library is a charmingly garrulous letter from Habakkuk Crabb to his sister Robinson, 27 August 1790—*H.C.R. 1790. 34.*

[16]I have drawn from the following sources :- *High Street Church Book* c. 1833-1880. *Old Meeting Book* c. 1758-1828. *Old Meeting Book* 1829-1865.

at that time dissented. He consolidated this good fortune by marrying a daughter to one of the Vaizey family.

From 1809 to 1828 he ministered at Lion Walk, Colchester,[17] His ministry was both successful and evangelical but it ended in difficulty. He was accused of blurring theological truths both in his preaching and in his admission of new members. He was also accused both of too much emphasis on personal religion and of too great a love for 'the world'. It was said that his visiting of the poor was inadequate and doubtless his fine house on East Hill underlined this. He attracted the jealous attentions of Joseph Herrick of Stockwell Chapel, a neighbouring and crotchety minister. Suitably enough the discontent came to a head in September 1827 while Savill was abroad.

Clearly Savill suffered the occupational hazards of any minister in nineteenth century England; but the fact that his next charge at Halstead should end rapidly in disaster might suggest that substance lies both in his doctrinal 'laxity'—which might indeed seem heterodoxy to hyper-Calvinists amongst his hearers—and in his good living. It was this second factor which underlined the first. In 1829 the Church at Halstead was dominated by the propertied, and above all by deacon John Vaizey, J.P., of Star Stile (d. 1831). Vaizey's son married Savill's daughter, an alliance possibly not relished by some in the congregation. Vaizey was an efficient and innovating agriculturalist. In 1816 his use of threshing machines and improved ploughs aroused unrest among his labourers in a year when unrest in eastern England reached frightening proportions.[18] The years 1829-1832—in an England now aroused for political reform—were not for countrymen so very long after.

But conclusions may never be drawn—save that variety exhilarated Congregationalists even when disruption issued; that by no means all Congregationalists, however subtle or woolly, could tolerate Spurgeon *and* Maurice with equanimity; and that the parent church at Halstead continued to attract respectable and able pastors, but their pastorates contrived to be laced with disruption, though the social complexion of their congregations was a little more varied after 1832.

CLYDE BINFIELD

[17] *Minute Books* and *Registers* of Lion Walk, (Books, 1-6); E. A. Blaxill *History of Lion Walk 1642-1937*. Colchester, 1938, esp. pp. 27. J. A. Tabor: *A Brief History of the Independent Church Assembling in the Lion Walk, Colchester*. Colchester, priv. 1861, pp. 45-46.
[18] A. J. Peacock: *Bread or Blood*. 1965, pp. 70; 73.

PATTERN OF CHANGE

The history of Nonconformity in England often presents a complicated pattern. Presbyterian churches have become Congregationalist or Unitarian ; old General Baptist churches have become New Connexion General Baptist, Particular Baptist or Unitarian ; Union churches of Baptists and Congregationalists have become Baptist or Congregationalist ; open-Communion Baptist churches have become Strict ; even more surprising some once Independent churches are now Strict Baptist.

Church Books often show traces of these changes in pattern. The first Church Book of the Congregational Church at Hopton, Yorkshire, contains in its early pages the entries of the Presbyterian church which it succeeded in the 1740's.[1] The first Church Book of Fuller Baptist Church, Kettering, contains in its early pages entries of an Independent church, and the later pages relate to the Baptist Church, an entry of 1723 having a note ' All Befor this We have nothing to dow with But what follows In the following Part of the Booke.'[2]

The early Church Books of a Bedfordshire church and of a church from the Cambridgeshire/Huntingdonshire border also survive and are worthy of study by both Baptist and Congregational historians. The Bedfordshire church was connected with the famous Independent, Richard Davis of Rothwell, Northants., and with John Warburton the Strict Baptist. The Cambridgeshire/Huntingdonshire one was connected with Francis Holcroft, early members of the well-known Conder family of Independents, and later with Ann Dutton, the correspondent of the Wesleys, Whitefield and Doddridge.[3]

SOUTHILL, BEDS.

From Rothwell Independent Church, Northants., sprang the Independent church at Guyhirn, Cambridgeshire ; the Independent churches at Ringstead, Thorpe Waterville and Wellingborough, Northamptonshire ; and the Huntingdonshire Independent churches at Kimbolton and Needingworth. One of the accusations laid

[1]Information from the present minister, the Rev. E. F. Hickling.

[2]Quoted in ' Nonconformity in Kettering ' in the *Kettering Leader and Observer* issue covering the Bi-centenary celebrations of Fuller Chapel, Kettering.

[3]I have completed transcripts of the minutes of both churches for their Independent periods and somewhat beyond into their Baptist periods. I am grateful to the officers of both churches for permitting me to borrow their first Church Books and make the transcripts. Copies of the transcripts have been given to the churches.

against Richard Davis, pastor at Rothwell from 1690-1714, was that he recruited members from territories which other ministers considered to be their own preserves. Among the aggrieved pastors was Ebenezer Chandler, Bunyan's successor in the Independent Church at Bedford, and the Rothwell Church Book records among its members a number coming from villages in north Bedfordshire and one from Bedford itself, three from Kempston, one from Stagsden and one from Wootton Pillinge, all just to the west of the county town.[4]

The Southill Independent Church was formed in June 1693 and appears to have been known initially as the 'church in and about Bedford'—it was thus a rival to the Bedford church of which Bunyan had been pastor until his death in 1688.[5] The Rothwell Church Book notes that in May 1694 'two brethren from Bedford requested Brother Killingworth's dismission to them; when, after a long unripping of former matters, the church judged our Brother had been falsely accused and consented to dismiss him.' In October 1694 the Rothwell Church Book records 'a letter from Stagsden, Bedfordshire to request our brethren to be at the ordination of Brother Killingworth.'

Entries in the Southill Church Book tell the story of these early days :

> This following request was sent from the persons subscribing inhabitants in and about Bedpford on the 24 day of May 1693 to 5 churches of Christ, viz., Harrford, Rothwell, Wellingborow, Kimbolton, Needingworth.
>
> Grace be to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
>
> Beloved. We a small remnant in and about Bedphord, whose names are underwritten, do joyntly consent in purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord, and having appointed a day, even the 23 of June next, to enter into covenant by giving up

[4]For Davis and the Rothwell church see N. Glass, *Early history of the Independent church at Rothwell* (1871); also the references quoted in G. F. Nuttall *Visible Saints. The Congregational Way 1640-1660* and his 'Northamptonshire and The Modern Question' *The Journal of Theological Studies.* N.S. vol. xvi. Pt. 1. 1965. pp. 101-123.

[5]I was unaware of the existence of the first Church Book of Southill Meeting when my *Bunyan Meeting, Bedford, 1650-1950* (1950) appeared It is noteworthy that the first Church Book of Carlton Meeting, Beds., under date 6 June 1695 refers to Thomas Killingworth and William Carter as being messengers to the Carlton church to settle a dispute; representatives of Bunyan's Bedford church and of the churches at Rothwell, Wellingborough, Newport Pagnell, Kimbolton, Stevington and Goldington were also present at Carlton on that occasion.

our sellves up to the Lord and to one another, by the will of God, We have this day, after fasting and prayer, agreed to request you in the bowells of our Lord Jesus, that you will give your consent for beloved pastours and elders, with any other bretheren amongst you, to come to Bedphord on the day apointed, to advise and direct us according to the rulle of the Gospell, and as wittnesses in our glorious an Ingagement and to this request, we have subscribed our hands one a day of fasting and prayer, being the 24 of May 1693.

Thomas Reynolds, Joseph Simonds, Thomas Green, Henry Drage, Walter Kemp, William Jackson, Edward Waite, Edward Reinolds, Mary Jackson, Jean Taylor, Elizabeth Jonson, Sarah Cunningham, Ellizabeth Conquest.

Accordingly one the day apointed these following messengers came from there respective churches : from Roell, Mr. Davis, Mr. Tibbut, Mr. Whells. From Wellingborough, Mr. Bettson, John Allsbourn. From Kimbolton, Edward Marling, Samuel Gurrey. From Needingworth messenger allso, besides others as from Harfot church was some members.

1693 one the 23 day of June, We whose names are under written, did solemnly enter into covenant on with another by giving up our sellves to the Lord and one another by the will of God to walk as a church of Christ in all his holly ordinances in maner and form as ffoloing.

We in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, Sion's crowned king and in the presence of his holy angells, his peopple and all here present do solemnly give up our selves to the Lord Jesus and to one another by the will of God, solemnly promising to wallke in the observation of all gospell ordinances and in the discharge of all rellative duties as the Lord shall enable us in this house of the living God.

[Here follow the names of the thirteen persons who signed the original request of 24 May 1693.]

Jully 2 folowing we received, Henory Clark, Christopher Muns[6] and William Carter, Thomas Fisher, Peter Sosbery, Mary Carter, with a dismision from the church at Roell.

August 20 at a church meeting we received Thomas Bunian.[7] Afterward we received Elizabeth Muns with a dismission.

[6]Muns later became a member of Bunyan Meeting, Bedford and there are a number of references to him in that church's first Church Book.
[7]Brother of the author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Thomas Bunyan lived at Northill, Beds., a village near Southill.

> September 22 at a church meeting, after somtime was spent in fasting and prayer, the church, with joint consent requested brother Killingworth to minister the word of God amongst us in order to be called as pastour to go in and out before us in the administration of all gospell ordinances, which after the renewin our call over and over, did consent at a church meeting November 4, 1693.

During the period January 1694—July 1698 new members are noted as coming from Astwood, Bedford, Biddenham, Bromham, Kempston, Stagsden, Turvey and Wootton Pillinge. Killingworth was ordained on 24th October, 1694 and a church meeting was held at Bedford on 28th March, 1697.

The first reference to Southill occurs in an entry dated 23 September 1696 and for some eight or nine years after this members were received not only from village and hamlets in the Southill/Biggleswade area but also from places over the border in Hertfordshire, *e.g.*, Ashwell, Baldock, Clothall, Cottered, Hadham, Sandon, Stevenage and Weston; recruitment of members from the Bedford area ceased after 1698, and members from Hertfordshire become fewer in number after the establishment first of a meeting at Weston in Hertfordshire and later at Clothall in the same county.

Killingworth's ministry continued until his death in January 1721/22 as the Church Book relates :

> After Mr. Killingworth apprehending his time of departure to be at hand, he having sett this house of God in the best order he could by providing officers and giving propper directions to them, he slept in the Lord January 24, 1721/22 having been pastor to this church which God gave him to see as the fruits of his labour, 28 years and a half and was decently entombed in the place where his pulpit first stood in his meeting house. Mr. Chandler preached his funeral sermon from *Matthew* 25, 21.[8]

The next pastor was Griffith Rudd from Willingham who was at Southill from 1725-57. An Independent like his predecessor, Rudd, in his last two years of his ministry was aided by William Wells, a member of the Southill church. Rudd died on 1 March 1757 and his funeral sermon was preached by Samuel Sanderson of the

[8]Ebenezer Chandler, minister of Bunyan's church at Bedford from 1690-1747.

Bedford church.[9] William Wells then became pastor and was ordained on 2 June 1757 when William Clayton the Baptist minister of Stevington, Beds., Samuel Sanderson the Independent minister from Bedford, the Independent ministers of Keysoe, Beds., and of Hitchin, Herts., and the Baptist minister of Gamlingay, Cambs., took part in the service.

By the time of Wells' ordination the area from which the Southill church drew its members had become limited to something like a radius of eight or nine miles. Unfortunately for the church Wells died after having being pastor at Southill for only four years and a few months: his funeral sermon was preached by Samuel Sanderson of Bedford.

The next pastor, Henry Field, came from Saffron Walden and was another Independent. He was ordained at Southill on 17 November 1763 but the entries in the Church Book for his ministry of seven or eight years are very few in number and there appear to have been difficulties. Eventually Field was dismissed from his pastorate on the grounds of having stolen hay.

Joseph King from Tring was ordained at Southill on 11 July 1776 when a new Covenant was drawn up consisting of thirteen Heads of which the last reads 'and we do agree that the church shall be kept open for all those who appeare to have the grace of god in truth, both of the Baptist and Independent judgement.' From this time onwards references to immersions in 'Clifton River' occur regularly in the Church Book although Independents were accepted to membership without this rite. The Independent interest at Southill gradually died away until in October 1846 John Warburton, on becoming pastor, was able to persuade the Southill church to adopt both closed communion and closed membership, a position which the church has maintained ever since.[10]

GREAT GRANSDEN, HUNTS.

The contents of the earliest Church Book of Great Gransden fall naturally into three parts :

a. An account, apparently written by Richard Conder, senior, about 1690, of the life of 'God's servant' (i.e., Francis Holcroft, the ejected vicar of Bassingbourn to whose in-

[9]Samuel Sanderson, minister of Bunyan's church at Bedford from 1737-1766.

[10]S. F. Paul, *Further History of the Gospel Standard Baptists* vol. 3. (1958) pp. 53-92 gives a history of the Southill cause (with an illustration) but naturally concentrates on the Baptist part of its history.

fluence a number of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Dissenting churches owe their origin).[11]

b. The minutes of the Croydon-cum-Clopton, Cambs., Independent church during part of the pastorate of Richard Conder, junior, with some entries and lists of members added during the pastorate of Richard Dix and Jabez Conder (i.e., covering roughly the period from 1694-1732).[12]

c. The minutes of the Great Gransden church (Independent 1732-1733 and Baptist from 1733) until 1775.

It is not proposed to print here the fascinating document mentioned at a. above although it certainly deserves to be better known.[13]

On the death of Francis Holcroft in January 1691/92, the Croydon-cum-Clopton Independent church in south-west Cambridgeshire reorganised itself and Richard Conder, junior, became its pastor. The following entries from the Church Book are among those which tell of those early days :

> . . . wee was incoriged to follo the lord and renu our cofenant, and on July the 15 on the lord's day, being asembeled togither to seek the lord and exort on another to follo the lord, wee read over the cofenant that was last renwed by God's servant and the church, deploring and lamenting our casse that wee had not God's servant to goe beſoar us, but being refifed with the thoughts of this that the lord Jeasus was allwais readi

[11]For Holcroft see *D.N.B.;* also *Calamy Revised* ed. A. G. Matthews. (1934). Some extracts from Richard Conder's account of Holcroft are in the pamphlet *The Three Graves. A Narrative of the Proceedings at the Commemoration Festival at Oakington, Wednesday, July 24, 1867, with a Biography of the Rev. Messrs. Holcroft, Oddy and Oasland.* Cambridge 1867 (copy in Dr. Williams's Library, London).

[12]For the early Conders and the Croydon church see *Memoir of the late Rev. John Conder D.D.* (*Evangelical Magazine* 1795, pp. 393-405). Bodleian Library *Ms. Rawlinson* D.1480 folios 123r-126v is a list of several hundred names headed 'The number of the names of the disciples in the church of Jesus Christ in Cambridgeshire on the 26 of the second month 1675.' This is the church which Francis Holcroft and others ministered to and which had groups of members in many villages in the St. Ives, Hunts. area, the Cambridge area and the Royston, Herts. area. In the section of the list headed 'Barrington, Orway, Tripplo and Croydon' there are 99 names; included in these are six members of the Conder family and two members of the Evsden family—families represented in the surviving Croydon Church Book. A photostatic copy of this list is now in Dr. Williams's Library, London.

[13]I hope to publish this document in a future number of *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society.*

to goo befoar his peopell wee toock corig in our lord to proced and ingaiged to on another if their was anithing lay in the way that stombled ani of them or other of our bretheren wee wold as much as in us lay, indeafor to remoofe it, and so wee procedid to renu our cofenant in the form of words as foolleth :

wee do in the presence of the lord Jesus, the awefull crowned king of Sion, and in the presence of his holy angels and people, and all besides heare presant so lumly give up our selves to the lord and to one another by the will of God sollumly promising and ingaging in the aforesaid presence to walk with the lord and with one another in the obsarvation of all gospell ordinancis and the discharge of all relative dutys in this church of God and els where as the lord shall inliten and inable us.

In these early years members were received not only from Croydon but also from a number of villages and towns within an area of a dozen miles or so *e.g.*, Abington, Bassingbourn, Chishill, Eversden, Gamlingay, Meldreth, Melbourn, Tadlow and Whaddon. Differences between the Croydon church which owed its origin to Francis Holcroft, and the Guyhirn (Cambs.) and Needingworth (Hunts.) churches which owed their origin to Richard Davis of Rothwell, Northants., and became Independent in January 1693 and July 1693 respectively, are reflected in the Croydon Church Book which accuses those churches and Chishill of taking Croydon members without proper dismission or recommendation.

Richard Conder died and was succeeded as pastor by Richard Dix who in turn was followed by Jabez Conder but the entries in the Church Book after 1704 are very fragmentary. On the death of Jabez Conder relations between the Croydon church and its related group of members at Great Gransden became very strained. The Great Gransden members invited Benjamin Dutton, son of the Baptist pastor at Eversholt, Beds., to preach to them and then offered him the pastorate. The Croydon members objected but the Great Gransden group had the Church Book and entries from 1732 onwards relate to Great Gransden only—the Croydon church soon faded away.

At first the Great Gransden church based itself on the old Croydon Covenant and indeed the Covenant was repeated in the Church Book and re-subscribed in June 1732. By August 1733, however, Dutton had brought the church into the Particular Baptist fold.

A number of pages in the Church Book are filled with reasons why the church had become Baptist; there are also nine Articles of Faith with an Appendix concerning election, effectual calling, and the estate of a believer after death. With date 5 September 1733 the original Croydon Covenant was entered once more in the Church Book and subscribed but on this occasion with the significant addition of the following words 'Receiving none into our Communion, but such that have been enabled to Believe in Jesus, and upon Profession thereof, have been Baptized in his Name, by Immersion, or Dipping, according to Christ's Institution.'

Dutton's wife was the celebrated Ann Dutton, the correspondent of Doddridge, John Wesley and Whitefield. Ann lived to be buried at Great Gransden but her husband was lost at sea when his vessel sank on his return from a preaching mission in America.[14] The Great Gransden Church is today a strict Baptist one.

H. G. TIBBUTT

[14]For Benjamin Dutton see his *The Superaboundings of the Exceeding Riches of God's Free-Grace towards the Chief of the Chief of Sinners, shewn forth in the Lord's gracious Dealings with that Poor, Unworthy, Hell-Deserving Worm, Benjamin Dutton, Minister of the Gospel, and Pastor of a Church of Christ at Great Gransden, Huntingdonshire* (1743) of which there is a copy in Dr. Williams's Library; see also my article 'Mrs. Dutton's Husband' *Bedfordshire Magazine* Autumn 1965, which reproduces a portrait of Ann. For Ann Dutton see J. C. Whitebrook's account in *Baptist Historical Society Transactions* vii (1920-1921; also G. F. Nuttall *Northamptonshire and the Modern Question*, (see Note 4 above) p. 119 fn. 6. A brief recent account of the Great Gransden Church (with illustration) is in R. F. Chambers *The Strict Baptist Chapels of England* vol. 4 (1963) pp. 124-125.

HENRY WALTER

A Seventeenth Century Minister at Newport

Monmouthshire is rich in its historical associations and has produced men who have become famous as soldiers, scholars and church leaders. Among the last is Henry Walter, second son of John Walter of Piercefield Park, Chepstow, and minister of Newport 1653-1660.

The family seat dates back to the Conquest. His father John Walter, squire and owner of much property in the County, was patron of the Mounton Church nearby.[1]

Henry Walter was born in 1611 and was to inherit upon the death of his brother the tithes accruing from the estate. He was sent to Jesus College, Oxford, matriculating in 1633 at the age of 22. He gained a degree in Civil Law later in that year and settled in the Curacy at Mounton Church which was now in the gift of his brother. Here he came under the influence of the Rev. William Wroth (1576-1641).

Wroth is regarded as the founder of Welsh Nonconformity, and his Parish of Llanfaches became the nursery of Welsh Independents.[2] In that group of enthusiasts were William Erbery, son of a Roath merchant of Cardiff, and later Vicar of St. Mary's in that City, and Walter Cradock of Trevela, near Usk, who was called by Henry Maurice (1634-1682) 'the Apostle of Wales'; Richard Symmonds, and Morgan Llwyd may have been of that number.

The place he held in the esteem of the aged Vicar, Wm. Wroth, is indicated in his choice of Walter to be executor of his will and the note given along with it. The note is missing but the will is preserved and directs, 'that three acres of land in the Parish of Magor be divided between the poorest people in the Parish of Llanfaches . . . according to the discretion of Henry Walter.' When the Parish of Mynydd Islwyn lost its Vicar, Marmaduke Matthews, by the action of Laud's Court of High Commission in 1636, Henry

[1]J. A. Bradney, *History of Monmouthshire,* see under Chepstow and Mounton Church.

[2]Thomas Richards, *The Puritan Movement in Wales,* pp. 27, 221. I came across an Advowson in the Newport and Monmouthshire Record Office, the earliest yet : 'Edward Lewis (sir) of the Vann . . . in the County of Glamorgan . . . confirmed upon William Wroth of the vann the first and next advowson . . . of the ecclesiastical Parish of Llanfaches in the Co. of Mounmouth.' It is dated 3 January 1609. It raises the problem of the date of Wroth's entry to Llanfaches for this is pushed back a further two years from the accepted date, 1611.

Walter was appointed to succeed him. Was it the influence of his family in the County that made it possible for him to be appointed when Wroth, Erbery and Matthews were charged to appear before the High Commission and were later removed from their livings ? However, the ancient church of St. Tudor claimed the honour of being a branch of the Llanfaches Independents. These Independents were happy to worship in the parish church and under ministers such as Matthews and Walter they were well content. Situated eleven miles from Newport in the Sirhowy Valley they became the hub of Independency in the surrounding districts of Bedwas, Penmain and Bedwellty. The old prophet, Edmund Jones, in his *History of the Parish of Aberystruth* describes him as ' a popular and diligent preacher ' and says that ' the people flocked from distant parts to hear him preach '.[3]

In August 1642 the Civil War broke out and most of the leaders of the two churches fled to Bristol to be under the protection of the Parliamentary Army. Thence they moved to London. We find Henry Walter in 1646 among the number sent from All Hallows the Great, London, without certificate it would appear, to preach in Wales and with instructions to preach in Welsh. In 1650 he heads the list of 25 Puritans sent as approvers under the Act for the Better Propagation of the Gospel in Wales, who, in addition to their other duties, were to ' send suitable preachers into the remote parts of these Counties of Wales '.[4]

When the Act was not renewed in 1653 Henry Walter was made the minister of Newport, receiving £100 salary in the first year. He remained in this position until the Ejection, being a prophet who received honour in his own Country.[5] His name appears in many county wills, showing the respect paid him. As an approver under the Act and by his patronage a number of churches sprang up, of which Mill Street is the oldest.

After the Restoration, Walter and his fellow Independents could not expect to live in peace, as witness an attack made upon him in July 1660 at Llantarnam, where he had a house in the Park. Here he was most certainly a tenant of a Roman Catholic one of the Morgan's of Llantarnam.[6] His place at Mynydd Islwyn was

[3]Edmund Jones, (1702-1793), *History of the Parish of Aberystruth*, p. 96.
[4]T. Richards, *Op. cit.* pp. 81-90, for Text of *Propagation Act.*
[5]See article in *Y Bywgraffiadur Cymreig*, hyd 1940, on Henry Walter by T. Richards. English edition published by the Cymmrodorion Society. *Dict. of Welsh Biography.*
[6]His Will reads ' . . . of Park Pill of the Parish of Llanvihangel Llantarnam . . . Monmouthshire.'

filled by Watkin Jones in 1668, but in 1672 he was granted a licence to preach. Henry Maurice regards him in 1672 as the founder and supporter of the cause at Mynydd Islwyn, and as being the spiritual heir of the old Llanfaches Church, and the main support of at least 300 dissenters between Newport and Chepstow.[7] According to the Broadmead records he was paying visits to Bristol and preaching there in 1675.[8]

His will is dated 13 January 1675, and in it he followed Wroth's example and 'made provision for the needy nonconformists' of Mynydd Islwyn and Penmain Churches.[9] He left chattels to the value of £58. Three sons and two daughters are named, Enoch, Mordicai, Zacheus, Mary and Apphia. The youngest son is given '20 shillings to buy him a ring'. The will was proved 4 February 1678; he had died the previous year. It also refers to 'Three volumes of Canon Civil Law formerly lent unto Thomas Aubrey.'

His final resting place is not known. The Independent Church at Penmain, its ancient furniture and many branches, are an abiding memorial to Henry Walter, who with others was instrumental in founding Independency in the County of Monmouthshire.

TREVOR WATTS

[7]For note of Walter's Catholic neighbours, see, T. Richards, Article on Eglwys Llanfaches, in *Trans* of the Hon. Soc. of Cymmrodorion, 1941. pp. 175, 177.
[8]Broadmead Records, Appendix, p. 516.
[9]Will at Nat. Liby. of Wales, Aberystwyth.

HISTORIES OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

(The last list was in Vol. XX p. 119)

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Wilson, R. E. A history of the Independent Chapel now known as Sidmouth Congregational Church (1965)

H.G.T.

THE PROBLEM OF SMITH'S PEWS

The Rev. William Smith, M.A., of Edinburgh University and licensed by the Church of Scotland, became Minister of Silver Street Independent Chapel in the City of London in the year 1770 (probably his first pastorate), and continued there until 1789, when the congregation, being unable to sustain the building, moved to Monkwell Street Chapel and soon after ceased altogether.

Smith became interested in the Mansion House Academy for young gentlemen at Camberwell, then a village some four miles from the City and largely inhabited by prosperous merchants and well-known people, such as the famous Dr. Lettsom. The owner of the Academy, a Mr. Gerrard, was anxious to retire, and in 1772 Smith made a trial of teaching six young boarders. This trial proved successful and in 1774 he took over the Academy. During his first year the number of boarders rapidly increased to about a hundred.

The Mansion House was an imposing building built originally for the Bowyer family, who were the Lords of the Manor of Camberwell, and was said to have been one of the works of Inigo Jones (1573-1652). A copy of the notice of the auction of the materials of the building prior to its demolition in the 1860s to make way for the London, Brighton and Chatham railway shows that it then contained some fine oak staircases, panelled rooms, and beautifully carved mouldings, doorways and chimney pieces.

Smith took over the house on lease from the Bowyer estate and included in the lease was the right to use three pews in the parish church of St. Giles. (It may be noted that Dr. Lettsom, a Quaker, had at this time a right to a pew in the church, but he surrendered it at the turn of the century). Each Sunday Mr. Gow, the usher, went to church with the young gentlemen who occupied the pews.

During 1774 Smith was approached by some of the local residents to open a place of worship for dissenters in Camberwell, and in the August of that year an application was made to the Bishop of Winchester, under an Act of William and Mary, for permission to use ' the large hall and two parlours of the Mansion House as a place of Worship for dissenters from the Church of England under the denomination of independents.' The original application, which was granted automatically, is now held in the Record Office of the

Greater London Council at County Hall and bears the signatures of William Smith, David Bogue, Alexander Gow, Henry Ferguson, Alexander Gray and Caleb White.

David Bogue, who trained many missionaries, was usher at the Academy from about 1772, having been licensed by the church of Scotland the previous year. He became assistant to Smith at Silver Street in 1774, but moved to Gosport in 1777 and three years later became tutor at Gosport Academy.

With the opening of the dissenters' place of worship, the young gentlemen of the Academy attended there. Smith therefore sub-let the pews, two of them for a time to a Mrs. Pullen, who kept a nearby boarding school for young ladies. A few years later Smith went to considerable expense in converting the three pews into five, and in 1784 he secured a renewal of his lease of the Mansion House and the pews for another 74 years. He let each pew at £5 per annum, and, at the request of the Vicar, he let one of the pews to a relative of the latter.

A chapel was built in the grounds of the Mansion House and opened in 1779. A fresh application to the Bishop of Winchester was signed by Maynard Torin, Thomas Rutledge, William Hinshall and George Smith in addition to the minister. Two well-known Presbyterian preachers of the day, James Fordyce and Henry Hunter, were the preachers at the opening. The chapel, later extended, was transferred to different denominational ownership when the Congregational church moved to a new building in 1853 ; it survived until destroyed by bombing in the second world war.

Smith ceased to be minister of the Mansion House Chapel in 1799, but stayed on in the Academy. He continued to enjoy the profits of the pew rents without trouble until December, 1816, when certain of his tenants complained that they had been refused access to their pews and had had their cushions thrown out. He took the matter to the Bowyer estate steward, who said the churchwardens had no power to do this. His own solicitor advised him to challenge the churchwardens by sending someone to occupy the pews after giving due notice of the intention, but Smith refused to take such action. The position continued unresolved until a Saturday in February, 1818, when Smith received a hint that the pews were being taken down. He went to the church the same day and found that the pews had already been removed and the pulpit brought forward into their place.

A legal tussle ensued, but Smith found that the appropriate legal action to effect the alteration in the church had been taken—a notice had been exhibited in the church porch for the required period, no objections had been received, the Vestry had considered and agreed, and the Bishop had signified his approval.

By this time Smith had given up the Academy, though he had had a house built in the grounds, but his successor was anxious to take his boys to the parish church instead of to the nearby Baptist Chapel, to which he was paying £65 per annum. Smith, therefore, entered a claim that either pews should be provided in lieu of those removed or compensation for the loss he had sustained should be paid.

It proved impossible to reach an agreed settlement and finally the documents and statements concerning the history of the case since 1774 were referred for the opinion of Counsel. In his judgment he ruled that Smith was not entitled to compensation, on the grounds that he was not in possession, and this closed the matter. The documents are preserved in the Public Record Office.

Apart from the disclosure of the interesting situation in which a dissenting minister was enabled to draw a steady income for more than forty years from the letting of pews in the parish church, the documents mentioned have established the beginning of Camberwell Green Congregational Church in 1774 and continuity thereafter. During the past year the church has moved again, the site of the building opened in 1853 being required for a large development scheme.

ROGER KENRICK

Note: The two applications to the Bishop of Winchester mentioned above are included in the entries on pages 128 ff. of *C. H. S. Transactions,* Vol. XVII. All the items mentioned on those pages are now in the Record Office, County Hall, not Southwark Library as then stated.

REVIEWS

Mr. H. G. Tibbutt has an article in the 1966 issue of *Northamptonshire Past and Present* (Vol. IV. no. 1. N. Rec. Soc. Delapre Abbey, Northampton) entitled, *New Light on Northamptonshire Nonconformist History*. This deals with the relationship of Kimbolton church and its neighbours, showing its gravitation towards Northamptonshire rather than Huntingdonshire or Bedfordshire. The author goes on to describe how a number of churches were associated with Rothwell church in the late seventeenth century; and speaks of the foundation of the Northants Baptist Association in 1764. Lastly he quotes from the diary of Joshua Symonds of Bunyan Meeting, Bedford, 1766-1788, illustrating his interests in the other county and there is one particularly interesting reference to his going to hear John Newton 'preach in his own Church'.

The Writings of Henry Barrow, 1590-91, edited by Leland H. Carlson, (Allen and Unwin, London, 1966, £4 4s. 0d.) This is volume V in the series on 'Elizabethan Nonconformist Texts.' Twenty-one pages are Introduction; there follow the long work 'A Plaine Refutation of Mr. George Giffarde's Reprochful Booke, Intituled, *A Short Treatise against the Donatists of England*,' the short piece 'A Refutation of Mr. Giffard's Reasons concerning our Purposes in the Practise of the Truth of the Gospel of Christ,' and a number of Appendices. Barrow's aggressive style and extreme position appear at every turn but his positive principles are clearly set down. By the church he means 'everie particular congregation subsisting of all members'; 'Neither hath Christ given anie one church more power or prerogative than unto al other'; Pastors and elders have office only in their own churches and 'not unto all churches'; excommunication is not tied to anyone's office but is 'a publick dutie of the whole congregation to be donne of al with one consent'. It is interesting to find him describing overseers as 'bishops, episcopai'; 'Arch and lord bishops' belong to 'an other head, an other bodie, even antichrist, and that whoore, the false church his spouse'. But you must read for yourself.

Mr. O. O. Williams of Lewes has sent us his booklet, *Some Important Dates relating to Nonconformity in Lewes*.

J.H.T.