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# TRANSACTIONS

THE CONGREGATIONAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EDITOR JOHN H. TAYLOR, B.D.

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## Editorial

On 9th May, 1933, a young student from Balliol presented the Society with his paper entitled 'Was Cromwell an Iconoclast?' This promising student has some twenty-five other contributions listed in our new Index; he became editor of this publication; and, we should add, was largely responsible for holding the Society together and setting it upon a new course when Dr. Peel, who almost embodied the Society in himself, very suddenly died. Who else more richly deserves the honour of becoming our President? On 18th May over eighty persons gathered to hear him deliver in his inimitable, semi-dramatic way, the lecture on Philip Doddridge which appears overleaf. Will readers forgive our indulging in parochialism in cataloguing Dr. Nuttall's services to the Society? His many books, his work at New College and in the University of London, and his services to Congregational churches hardly need mention.

Now may the Editor cast his penny in the well and have his wish? Please, patient readers who grub among archives, spare a thought for your poor Editor and help him by sending him short pieces, notes or queries, of a page or less in length. Never has it more truthfully been said that *every little counts*.

## PHILIP DODDRIDGE AND 'THE CARE OF ALL THE CHURCHES': A STUDY IN OVERSIGHT

That Philip Doddridge's part in the religious life of his time far outran the influence, which he exercised on, and through, his pupils has always been known. Doddridge's pupil, Job Orton, draws attention to the fact in the biography which he put out in 1766, only fifteen years after Doddridge's death; it is mentioned in the nineteenth-century lives of Doddridge by Charles Stanford and John Stoughton; and it is not omitted in the small bicentenary volume issued in 1951. Especially in his own county Doddridge would be among the first to welcome a new minister, to preach the sermon at a minister's funeral or to address a meeting of ministers or of several churches gathered for a day of prayer. But both his interest and his influence ranged much further afield than Northamptonshire. The single instance of his visit to East Anglia in 1741, an occasion noteworthy in the prehistory of modern missionary enterprise,<sup>1</sup> is sufficient evidence of this. Nor was his regard confined to those of the Congregational way. Wesley was welcome and willing to expound Scripture to Doddridge's pupils and had the benefit of Doddridge's advice in selecting books for his 'Christian Library'. Whitefield, equally, was a welcome and willing visitor to Doddridge's pulpit at Castle Hill. Doddridge's published correspondence shows him in friendly communication also with leading figures in the Established Church, including bishops and Heads of Houses at both the universities.

In a general way so much is known, and well known. Yet no one has set down more exactly examples of the manner and extent of Doddridge's care for all the churches. Many suppose that, before the office of moderator was instituted among us (and it has still not reached its jubilee), what we term 'the calling and settlement of ministers' was nobody's business but was left to chance or whim in higger-mugger disorder. No doubt there was then more variation in the methods of inquiry adopted than is our practice to-day, more of what to those enamoured of 'church order' might seem untidiness; but that there was more than a 'sweet disorder', or that the finding by churches of pastors and

<sup>1</sup>See E. A. Payne, 'Doddridge and the Missionary Enterprise', in *Philip Doddridge 1702-51: his contribution to English religion*, ed. G. F. Nuttall, 1951, ch. iv.

the settlement in churches of ministers was not regarded in the most serious light, is, in my judgment, not true. Ministers in general took their mutual fraternal responsibilities gravely. The London ministers corporately, through their Board and Fund Board (both of which still exist), exercised a sensible measure of guidance and support. Principals, or (as they were then called) Tutors, of Academies expected, and were expected, to take an initiative. Especially was this the case where a Principal was at once so indefatigable and so widely respected as Philip Doddridge. Anyone knowing something of his other multifarious activities might assume *a priori* that Doddridge *would* be exercised in this matter also. The best evidence that he *was* so lies in the mass of his correspondence. Before proceeding I should like to say something briefly about this.

Printed letters to or from Doddridge may be found in a number of extinct periodicals, such as the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the *Monthly Repository*, the *Evangelical Magazine* and the *Congregational Magazine*; and more at large, first in a single volume of correspondence edited by Thomas Stedman in 1790 and then in 1829-31 in five volumes edited by Doddridge's great-grandson, John Doddridge Humphreys. This last collection contains some 900 letters. Letters in manuscript to or from Doddridge may be found in a number of libraries, such as the Bodleian, the John Rylands, Northampton Public Library, Dr. Williams's and the (private) library of Sir James Fergusson of Kilkerran, Bt.; and more particularly in the library of New College, London, where some 600 letters are preserved, together with very many more from Doddridge's correspondents (and others) to Doddridge's widow. This collection at New College is in process of being calendared by the Historical Manuscripts Commission, with the intention of intercalating references to letters in other collections. When this work is completed, a study of Doddridge and his times, based on a chronological and thus intelligible survey of the whole corpus, will at last be possible. A study of so much unpublished material would certainly throw light on many corners of eighteenth-century religion now dark, and by no means only in the sphere of Dissent. Our subject to-day is of necessity limited; but in using as the main source-material for it the manuscript letters preserved at New College, my secondary purpose is to advertise the collection and perhaps to stir some young historian to come and work on it.

One might pick up the correspondence almost at random. We may begin with a letter written on 16th January, 1738/9 from

Warminster, Wiltshire, by one of my own predecessors as minister of the Congregational church worshipping in Common Close, Richard Pearsall.<sup>2</sup>

The Church at Wilton on whose behalf I wrote to you The Beginning of Last Spring is settled & I hope *well* settled In Mr Cotton<sup>3</sup> your Quondam Pupil ; I hope he will be an Instrument of good There ; they Like him much & a considerable Addition is made Both to the Auditory & Members upon their Being Constantly Supply'd by him. . . .

It is a Noble Satisfaction Peculiar To you Tutors, to see Young Ministers going from under your Care & settling in Churches of their own, Encreasing themselves in Gifts & Graces & Instruments of Good to many ; to see Young Plants of your own formation & Tendering, Thriving in such a Manner, as to Be Cedars in our Lebanon & Casting a fragrant Smell (Cant. 4.11) & refreshing Shade To many round about them.<sup>4</sup>

Seven years later, Pearsall was again seeking Doddridge's help towards a settlement. On 4th January, 1745/6 he wrote :

There is a Congregation in my Neighbourhood that I am Intimately Concern'd for, which wants a Minister ; could you Recommend one to them ? the Number to be preach'd to is considerable ; & they have & will have a Pretty Estate settled upon Them. The Minister that will be suiteable must be not only a serious man, but a Thoro' Calvinist & one that will preach upon the Plan that you have Laid down in your *Rise & Progress*. They don't Desire one that shall preach Controversies ; but one that holds the Truth & will upon proper Occasions defend(?) it.<sup>5</sup>

Later that month, on 29th January, Pearsall wrote again, to tell Doddridge that the church in question had  
thank'd me very affectionately for what I had done & told me that the Character that I had given of the Minister that would be suiteable to them was Exactly agreeable to their

<sup>2</sup>For Pearsall, see *D.N.B.*, s.v.

<sup>3</sup>On 8th February, 1741 Pearsall wrote : 'Mr Cotton formerly your Pupil Dy'd In this Town at his Father's, since I recd. your Letter ; . . . The Young Man's case was a Consumption' (MS. 8.95). For the father, Rowland Cotton, grandson of the famous John Cotton, see a letter of 8th November, 1932, repr. by A. E. Banton, *Horningsham Chapel* (Frome 1952), pp. 16-17, correcting the account in H. M. Gunn, *History of the Old Meeting House at Horningsham*. The son was also named Rowland.

<sup>4</sup>MS. 8.94.

<sup>5</sup>MS. 8.97 ; cf. Humphreys, iv. 450-1. The word queried is covered by the seal.

minds, as if they Dictated the words ; but that they were not able to give such a Direct answer as they Desired, because they had apply'd some time agoe to friends in London, & tho't it would not be so Respectful to them to Determine, till they had heard from them once more, As they had given them some Distant Prospect.

In the meantime Doddridge had replied to Pearsall, recommending Timothy Laugher,<sup>6</sup> then minister at Stamford, Lincolnshire. 'If he is not Such a one as I Described in my Last,' Pearsall writes, 'he will not do there' ; and continues :

for as they broke off from a Set of persons who are Suppos'd to be quite in the Opposite Scheme, they are very Zealous for the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity & the various Doctrines of Grace in Opposition to what is commonly call'd Arianism & Arminianism. They are very great Admirers of the Catechisms & Confession of the Westminster Assembly, as agreeable to the Scriptures ; & will not Dispense with any Minister deviating from them ; Not that they consider them as the Rule of their faith but as Explanatory of that Sacred word that is So. . . . Such a one as Mr Olding of Gloucester, I suppose, would serve their Turn well.<sup>7</sup>

In June Pearsall writes that they 'still continue unsettled & are casting, I find, a Longing Eye to'rds Northampton, wishing & hoping that a kind Providence may send them by your hand a suiteable Minister'.<sup>8</sup> Pearsall does not name the congregation, which may, however, be safely identified with the Congregational church at Bradford-on-Avon, a recent orthodox secession there.<sup>9</sup> Nor does he finish that story. His next letter, dated 2nd December, 1747, is no longer from Warminster but from Taunton, where he had become the minister of Paul's Meeting, evidently after consulting Doddridge, for he writes :

Providence has bro't me hither agreeably to your Advice. I am Entred into a Large field ; . . . We are a Numerous Auditory it's true, made up chiefly of the Lower sort of People. In an Afternoon suppos'd to be 1000. . . . Thro'

<sup>6</sup>For Laugher, see funeral sermon by Andrew Kippis, *The Blessedness attending the Memory of the Just*, 1769.

<sup>7</sup>MS. 8.96. For John Olding, see funeral sermon by Stephen Addington, *The Dying Believer's Confidence, in his exalted Redeemer*, 1785.

<sup>8</sup>MS. 8.98 ; cf. Humphreys, iv. 480-2.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. my transcript of Daniel Fleming, 'Account of the Independent Church . . . Bradford Wilts 1820', in *Transactions*, xiv. 1, p. 42, where both date and quotation from Trust Deeds fit the case as presented by Pearsall.

Mercy too we are very peaceable ; there are no Squabbles either among ourselves or with the People of the other Meeting.<sup>10</sup>

With Paul's Meeting Doddridge had been in touch for some years. Pearsall's predecessor in the pastorate, Samuel Stoddon, was a subscriber to Doddridge's *Family Expositor* ; and of Stoddon's three successive assistants the second, Thomas Steffe, was one of Doddridge's favourite pupils, while the third, after Steffe's premature death, was another pupil, Benjamin Fawcett, who had now removed to Kidderminster. In Taunton the secession was in the opposite direction from the usual. 'The other Meeting' as Pearsall calls it, Tancred Street, was a secession from Paul's Meeting, which remained orthodox. With doctrinal division Pearsall was familiar, for the church to which he had ministered at Warminster was an orthodox secession. In 1737 he had written to Doddridge from Warminster : 'I apprehend my circumstances as agreeable as I can Expect in England. We all with one Accord Embrace The Truths of the Gospel & have Neither an Arminian Nor Antinomian In the Congregation'.<sup>11</sup>

Now it is noteworthy that Doddridge was in friendly correspondence not only with Pearsall but with the minister of the Old Meeting in Warminster, Samuel Bates ; and that the liberal Bates, equally with the orthodox Pearsall, sought Doddridge's help in the settlement of ministers. On 20th March, 1748/9, Bates wrote to Doddridge reminding him of 'the Request of a Vacant Congregation in a neighbouring Country Village that I would apply to you for a Minister, who may I beleive depend upon thirty pounds *per annum* at least. . . . A moderate Calvinist alias Baxterian will be most acceptable. If you can help them, I will write to you again . . .'<sup>12</sup>

Later that year Bates wrote :

There is a minister wanted at Dorchester. It is a Genteel Pleasant Place, the People I beleive may Raise about £50 *per annum*. They have been train'd up long in Principles of

<sup>10</sup>MS. 8.99 ; cf. Humphreys, iv. 572-6, with date altered from 2nd December to 2nd November.

<sup>11</sup>MS. 8.93 ; cf. Humphreys, iii. 281-4, with date altered from 21st September to 10th November. For Stoddon, cf. *Transactions*, vii. 40. For Steffe, see Doddridge's memoir prefixed to Steffe's *Sermons*, 1742. For Fawcett, see *D.N.B.*, s.v.

<sup>12</sup>MS. 4.78. For Bates, minister at Warminster 1706-61, who was charged by the seceders with Arianism but 'without professing any change of doctrines', see H. M. G[unn], *History of Nonconformity in Warminster*, (1853) pp. 30-1.

Moderation, & one of such a spirit will please. Some have offered their service. But — They have unanimously resolved by my means (tho' that's a secret) to apply to you. Some Principal persons have sent to me again & again. I act herein with a View not only to them but you. Well knowing that if a Proper person should come from you, 'twill have a good tendency to advance you Credit in Dorsetshire as Mr R. & J. Gardiner & Mr Watson have done in Hampshire Wiltshire & Somersetshire. I had some thoughts of Mr Hiron whom Mr Watson thinks is the person you spoke so well of in your last to me. But Mr John Gardiner says Mr Kippis will do very well for Dorchester & a younger man succeed him. May the Great Lord of the Harvest direct in all.<sup>13</sup>

In the event neither of the men named went to Dorchester, but another young man, Benjamin Spencer, who, like so many of his contemporaries, was dead before he was thirty. The pupil of Doddridge whom Thomas Watson of Bridgwater, Somerset, suggested, Jabez Hiron(s), settled at St. Albans, as assistant and successor to Doddridge's old friend and patron, Samuel Clark; the former pupil of Doddridge whom John Gardiner, of Trowbridge, Wiltshire, recommended, Andrew Kippis, was at this time minister at Boston, Lincolnshire, whence in the following year he removed, but to Dorking, Surrey, not to Dorchester. This does not alter the fact that Bates sought guidance from Doddridge, and had discussed the matter with two of Doddridge's recent pupils, the brothers Gardiner, who, he says, had been to his house 'on purpose to see & talk with me' and to meet each other.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup>MS. 4.80. For Dorchester as 'a pleasant agreeable town to live in', with 'the Church of England clergymen, and the Dissenting minister, or preacher drinking tea together, and conversing with civility and good neighbourhood, like catholick Christians, and men of a catholick, and extensive charity', see D. Defoe, *Tour through England & Wales* (1724-6), Everyman edn., i. 210.

<sup>14</sup>For Spencer, cf. W. Densham & J. Ogle, *Story of the Congregational Churches of Dorset*, (1899) p. 120. For Hiron, cf. W. Urwick, *Nonconformity in Herts.*, (1884) p. 202; in the copy of T. Coleman, *Memorials of the Independent Churches of Northamptonshire*, (1853) in the library of New College, London, Alfred Newth has written that the placing (p. 134) of Hiron at Market Harborough is an error copied from Humphreys, v. 551. For Kippis, see *D.N.B.*, s.v. For Watson, assistant and from 1755 successor to Matthew Toogood at Bridgwater, see Jerom Murch, *History of Presbyterian and General Baptist Churches in the West of England*, 1835, pp. 179-182 and 189-190. Bates writes (MS. 4.78): 'The Two Messrs Gardiners have made an exchange of Winchester for Trowbridge'; later Richard Gardiner is found at Hampstead (cf. G. E. Evans, *Vestiges of Protestant Dissent*, (1897) p. 146, and T. J. Barratt, *Annals of Hampstead*, (1912) iii, 97) and John Gardiner at Berwick-on-Tweed (cf. *Transactions*, v. 273).

It was not in fact necessary for Doddridge to settle a pupil at Dorchester in order to advance his credit. The minister at Blandford, Malachi Blake, had a nephew in the Academy at Northampton. In a letter dated 9th March, 1742/3, he mentions two other young men who he hopes will come under Doddridge's care : one his wife's nephew and his own ward, son to Edward Warren, late minister at Birdbush, Wiltshire ; the other ' a Young Man that is on the Independent Fund, and was under Mr Eams, but not having his Health in Town, I begg'd the Favour of Dr Guise that he may be removed to Northampton '—an unusual reason, perhaps, for changing academies. This young man, Blake writes, had earlier been under the tuition of his neighbour, Samuel Grinstead of Stalbridge, ' who is a very valuable Man, his Income but small, He has some schollars for Grammar Learning '. Blake invites Doddridge's interest in obtaining for Grinstead, as well as for himself, ' the gift of Mr Coward's Trustees for Catechizing. . . . Mr Jones of Shasston, and Mr Benson of Wimborne have, I know, had it '.<sup>15</sup> Grinstead, like Blake, we may observe, was a subscriber to Doddridge's *Family Expositor* ; as, for that matter, were Stoddon of Taunton, Pearsall of Warminster and Cotton of Wilton.

Blake's references to the Coward Trust, to the Congregational Fund Board, and to John Eames, a tutor (though a layman) at the Academy at Moorfields in this city then supported by those bodies, indicate that his own theological position, though his ministerial descendants were to become Arian, was what may be termed middle of the road, something like Doddridge's. Doddridge was open to consultation, however, by one as far to the right of centre as Samuel Bates was to the left. Let us turn to some letters written to Doddridge by a strict Baptist, Anne Dutton, about whose husband, Benjamin Dutton, the minister of the church at Great Gransden, Huntingdonshire, Mr. Tibbutt published an article last year. Benjamin Dutton had been drowned while returning home from a visit to America ; and his widow was seeking a successor to him in the pastorate. She had set her heart in obtaining a young man still in the Academy, Stephen Addington, whose father was a member of Castle Hill but whose mother was a member of the Baptist church in Northampton, College Lane. The first letter in the series, written in June 1749, is not extant. In about August of that year Mrs. Dutton expresses the hope

<sup>15</sup>MS. 4.108. For Blake, Eames and Guyse, see *D.N.B.*, s.vv. For Warren, cf. *Transactions*, iii. 394. For Grinstead, Jones and Benson, see Densham & Ogle, pp. 283, 232 and 392.

that the God of all Comfort will incline your dear Heart to be free that Mr Addington should serve us, if when he hath sought the Lord, he thinks it his duty to come to live here at Michaelmas. What if to you, Reverend Sir, to Mr Addington, & even to me, it seems to be a kind of Violence, to take him from his studies before the due Time : 'Is there not a Cause ?' . . . And if our Lord calls his Servant to minister to us, while in a Sort of Minority : Is not He able by pouring upon him the Gifts & Graces of his Spirit, to fit him for his Work, to supply what is lacking to him for his Service in regular Study ?

It is a familiar plea, if nowadays couched in less pious language ! In a postscript Mrs. Dutton adds :

If Mr Addington should come, as I hope he will be a studious Man, He shall have the Use of any of my dear Husband's Books, of which he had a pretty good Collection. Bodies of Divinity, &c. . . . From this, Sir, you will easily see, that the Case is vastly different, to permit Mr A[ddingto]n to serve us now, to what it would be to let him go to another Place where he would be naked as it were, & destitute of Helps.<sup>16</sup>

No doubt Doddridge did easily see it, and through it ; for in September Mrs. Dutton writes reluctantly accepting Doddridge's advice, though she describes it as 'trying, very trying to me', 'to seek a Minister, & if none was given us before Midsummer, to invite Mr A[ddingto]n'. 'I know not how, Sir,' she continues, 'we can get Supplies to keep up the Meeting, during the Winter. But the Lord can carry us thro', tho' we see not how'; and in a postscript she adds, 'Dear Sir, if no great Inconvenience would arise, we would humbly ask the Favour that Mr A[ddingto]n may come to serve us one Lord's Day in three Months, till he may come to reside among us'<sup>17</sup>—and in the ensuing three months the sooner the better because of the inclement season ! It is interesting to see that Doddridge could stonewall. Before the year was out, the minister of the Baptist church at Hook Norton, Oxfordshire, had come to Great Gransden. Addington, when midsummer came, left the Academy not for Gransden but for another Huntingdonshire church, that at Spaldwick. After two years he became a successor of Doddridge's at Market Harborough. Later he was a Tutor of the Academy at Mile End that eventually moved to

<sup>16</sup>MS. 5.65a. Cf. H. G. Tibbutt, 'Bedfordshire Biographies xxxviii ; Mrs Dutton's Husband' in *Bedfordshire Magazine*, x (1965) ; and G. F. Nuttall, *Howel Harris 1714-1773 : the last enthusiast*, (Cardiff 1965) index.

<sup>17</sup>MS. 5.65.

Hoxton. This might not have been the case, had Doddridge permitted him to leave Northampton before finishing his academic training. Nor, probably, would he ever have published his book in defence of infant baptism, had he come under Anne Dutton's powerful influence.<sup>18</sup>

In another matter, in which she sought earlier to engage his interest, Mrs. Dutton is more likely to have prevailed with Doddridge. On 30th January, 1743/4 she wrote to tell him of a letter written at Bethesda in Georgia on 5th July, 1743 which she had received on 9th November. It came 'from a Friend, Mr Grant, Mate of the Sloop belonging to Mr Whitefield' and told that

Mr Jona[than] & Mr Hugh Bryan (Planters in South-Carolina, lately converted to Christ) with some few other Friends, have built a Meeting-house for Divine Worship. That over the Negroes lately converted at Mr Jonathan Bryan's, there is a Godly young Minister ordain'd Pastor. That opposite to this Meeting-house, there is a Piece of Land to be built on for a Negroe-School; as but few of the Negroes can read, and as they thirst after inward, and outward knowledge. And that when Mr Grant was there, Mr Bryan ask'd him, if he thought Collections from some pious Friends in England, might not be rais'd in behalf of it. To which Mr Grant adds, 'Doubtless there are many, who would esteem it a Happiness to be Instrumental, in Ethiopia's bowing her Head to Jesus' &c. To this, with much more, Mrs. Dutton adds, as usual, a post-script:

Perhaps, Sir, you may think Mr Whitefield the most proper Person to apply to for Collections on Account of this Negroe-School. But as I suppose Mr Whitefield ha'n't finish'd his Collections for the intended Negroe-School near Philadelphia, and as the Orphan-House Affairs are continually upon his Hands, I humbly think, Sir, that these may prove Impediments, as to his engaging in the Affair.<sup>19</sup>

In such a case Doddridge needed no urging. He was as eager to encourage young churches as young ministers. A letter dated 8th February, 1742[?/3] from John Barker, then Morning Preacher at Salters' Hall, shows Doddridge acting as go-between in the desire of some Dissenters in Devon to raise money in London for

<sup>18</sup>For Addington, see *D.N.B.*, s.v. The minister from Hook Norton was David Evans (Meen MS., New College, London, fol. 377).

<sup>19</sup>MS. 5.64. For Jonathan Bryan and his plantation near Port Royal, and for Hugh Bryan, 'his brother, lately converted', see *George Whitefield's Journals*, Banner of Truth Trust edn., (1960) pp. 501-2, s.d. Jan. 1740/1.

a meeting-house and minister at Brixham. This, however, was only a project, not (as was the case in South Carolina) a building and pastor already existing but in need of financial support. Barker writes :

I had yours with the inclos'd Petition which was presented to our Fund yesterday & read. The 2 points of principal Consideration in it are building a place of Worship & contributing to the support of a Minister. The first is not considerable att our board being contrary to a standing Rule. The 2d is never promised by Us beforehand that I know off. And yet I doubt not but if there were a minister settled at Brixam who was well approved & recommended something might be Obtained for him from us att least for a few years. Nor is it Unlikely that something might be obtained towards building a Meeting place there, if any body here would undertake to solicit it & make a business of this (especially if the Exeter Ministers & Gentlemen had first set a good example) but not by our Fund. But as for offering *general* Petitions to our board for encouraging places, or *any* Petitions for building them, it is vain, & it is irregular. I knew how it would come out before I offered it & should not have done it if it had not come from you. The Petition remains in my hands till you order it out of them.<sup>20</sup>

'I should not have done it if it had not come from you'; there, once again, we hear the respect and regard felt for Doddridge by men of varying positions denominationally and theologically. Barker was a Presbyterian and the Fund Board he mentions was not the Congregational, to which Malachi Blake referred, but the Presbyterian. Doddridge was as ready to appeal to the Presbyterian Board for money to benefit Dissenters in Devon as he was, no doubt, to appeal to other sources for the help sought by Mrs. Dutton for the work of those converted by Whitefield in Carolina. His care of all the churches overran any limits of nation or denomination.

This was equally true of a third form of oversight in which from time to time he was concerned, namely the protection of Dissenters *anywhere* from prosecution and persecution, such as was sometimes his own lot at Northampton. In 1747 he was in correspondence with Benjamin Avery, then Chairman and Treasurer of the Dissenting Deputies, over a long-drawn-out case in North Wales. John Owen, the Chancellor of the diocese of Bangor

<sup>20</sup>MS. 4.68. For Barker, see *D.N.B.*, s.v.

from 1743 till his death in 1755, is still remembered, Professor R. T. Jenkins writes, 'as an unremitting foe of Methodism'. He 'gave Methodists no respite',<sup>21</sup> and along with the Methodists such stalwart Independents as William Prichard, 'the pioneer of Dissent in Anglesey',<sup>22</sup> and Jenkin Morgan, who after (like any seventeenth-century Quaker) being arrested as a vagabond and sent back to his native parish in the South returned and in 1746 became the minister of the first Dissenting church in the island, at Cerrig-Ceinwen. On 6th October, 1747 Avery wrote to Doddridge from Guy's Hospital, of which he was Treasurer :

As to the persecutions in N. Wales the Committee are willing to do every thing in their power to put a Stop to them. But our Difficulty is to get a Lawyer near at hand that will appear in behalf of our Friends. The getting an Information from the K[ing]'s bench against the Anglican Rioters cost us a great deal of Money & pains : & when the Court had granted an Information our own Lawyer advised us not to prosecute the Delinquents, they being all very indigent, & Evidence hard to be procured ; & must be brought at an enormous Expence to Salop. But without their being prosecuted the peace of the place was restored.

The Chan[cello]r of Bangor has put Mr Morgan & several others into the Spiritual Court, & proceeded against Several of the Dissenters on frivolous pretences, even to Excommunication. This is their present Grievance & Distress : and as there has been a Contempt of the Eccl[esiastical] Co[urt], in which those Sentences are founded, the Civil Court will take no Cognisance of those Cases till the Contempt is purged. We gave orders therefore for an Appeal to the Co[urt] of Arches from the Cha[n]cello[r] of Bangor : but when we came thither, we were assur'd that the Act of Grace had cancell'd every thing of that kind. Of this I have inform'd the Gentlemen who applied to me in the behalf of Mr Morgan & Others : but have not heard the Result.<sup>23</sup>

This was a happy issue, if not ending. In the following year Morgan built at Rhos-y-meirch the first meeting-house in Anglesey, one which still stands.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup>*Dictionary of Welsh Biography*, ed. Sir John Lloyd & R. T. Jenkins, (1959) s.v.

<sup>22</sup>*D.W.B.*, s.v.

<sup>23</sup>MS. 4.60. For Avery, see *D.N.B.*, s.v. ; B. L. Manning, *The Protestant Dissenting Deputies*, (Cambridge 1952) index.

<sup>24</sup>See *D.W.B.*, s.v. Jenkin Morgan.

Nearly four years later, not long before his death, Doddridge was again in correspondence with Avery in an endeavour to protect those in trouble from the law. On this occasion the subject of his concern was the beginning of Dissent in Virginia, a part of America which hitherto had prided itself on its freedom from such intruders into an Anglican preserve. Samuel Davies, of Hanover County, 'the mother-Presbytery of most of the church and Presbyteries south of the Potomac',<sup>25</sup> who was soon to visit England with the purpose of securing an endowment fund from English Dissenters for the College at Princeton, of which in 1759 he became President, was at this time being denied the licenses for Dissenting teachers and meeting-houses in Virginia which he claimed under the Act of Toleration. It was not difficult to argue, and in a letter to Doddridge the Bishop of London did argue,<sup>26</sup> that the Act of Toleration was limited in its application to this country and was without effect overseas. Avery advised Doddridge that he saw no way of evading this objection, which in law was technically correct. On 28th May, 1751 he wrote to Doddridge :

I am fully satisfied the generality of the Bench have learnt of Sir R[obert] Walp[ole], if they needed that Instruction, to regard & insist on the Act of Toleration as the Boundary between the Establish'd Ch[urch], & the Dissenters ; & that no Favor is to be expected either from the Government or their Lordships beyond what that Act by a fair Construction entitles us to. And it do's not seem easy to prove, & therefore I should not be forward to Say, that the Licenses Mr Davies has Solicited & obtain'd in Virginia are within either the Words or the Intention of that Act.<sup>27</sup>

With the protection of those persecuted and with the raising of funds for the necessitous, Doddridge was always ready to concern himself ; but his commonest form of oversight was that which we surveyed earlier, namely the settlement of ministers. This also reached beyond the shores of Great Britain. On 11th September, 1739, John Barker wrote from Hackney :

A Person I Much value inquiries of Me if I can recommend a Minister to the English Church at Amsterdam. He Must be a Calvinist & a presbyterian & be willing to subscribe some

<sup>25</sup>R. E. Thompson, *History of the Presbyterian Churches in the United States*, (New York 1895) p. 38.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1815, p. 483 ; Humphreys, v. 199-202.

<sup>27</sup>MS. 4.62. For a later visit by Davies (there not identified) to London to see the Deputies about licences in Virginia, cf. Manning, p. 409.

Articles of the Synod of Dort & preach without Notes. He is to be assistant to old Mr Fitz, a Man above eighty years of age. The Congregation is small, the allowance honorable, paid by the States, is during life, & a part of it to the Widow (if there be one) during her life. Can you recommend A suitable Person.<sup>28</sup>

Doddridge was in fact in frequent correspondence with ministers not only at Amsterdam but also at Rotterdam, where one of his former pupils, Benjamin Sowden, became the minister in 1748, and where the consistory sent Doddridge a copy of the works of Jacques Saurin as a token of gratitude for his advice and help.<sup>29</sup>

And so the story could be continued ! But I hope I have said enough to serve my purpose. We have seen how Doddridge exercised the care of all the churches in a manner reflecting his overflowing, generous spirit as his concern was aroused, or his aid requested, by Independent, Presbyterian, Baptist or Methodist in England, Wales, the Netherlands, Virginia or South Carolina ; and how his guidance and advice *were* sought on every hand. To us it may seem remarkable that all this was done not from London but from Northampton ; not by a committee but by an individual and by an individual who, except in the settlement of his own pupils, had no direct duty in the matter and no official or appointed status. Doddridge would remind us what he wrote once in the Castle Hill Church Book : ‘ Those Ministers who will rule by Love & Meekness need no Laws or Canons to rule by other than those of the Holy Scriptures ’.<sup>30</sup>

I hope I have also revealed by the way what a wealth of information, interest, inspiration and—may I say it?—delight is contained in the good man’s manuscript correspondence which we treasure at New College. May his eager and loving expectancy continue to inspire us there as we continue his work of training men to be good ministers of Jesus Christ !

GEOFFREY F. NUTTALL

<sup>28</sup>MS. 4.67. For Hugo (Hugh) Fitts (Fitz, Fitzhugh, Fitzhew) and his successor David Thomson, see A. C. Carter, *The English Reformed Church in Amsterdam in the Seventeenth Century*, (Amsterdam 1964) index.

<sup>29</sup>Cf. John Stoughton, *Philip Doddridge*, (2nd edn. 1852) p. 143, n.\*. For Sowden, from whom many letters to Doddridge’s widow are among the New College MSS., and books presented by whom to the Northampton Academy are in the New College Library, see W. Steven, *History of the Scottish Church, Rotterdam*, (Edinburgh 1832) index.

<sup>30</sup>Cf. B. S. Godfrey, *Castle Hill Meeting*, (Northampton 1947) p. 22.

## TAUNTON CHURCH COVENANT, 1654

In view of the currently stimulated interest in Church Covenants<sup>1</sup> *vis-a-vis* the ratification of the Constitution of The Congregational Church in England and Wales in May 1966, it may not be inappropriate to remind our readers of a number of early examples of such Covenants which are to be found quoted in our own pages and those of Congregational historians.

Apart from implicit references to the covenant of Robert Browne at Norwich, c.1580,<sup>2</sup> one of the earliest examples is that of the later church at Norwich and Yarmouth, 1643, cited by John Browne, *History of Congregationalism . . . in Norfolk and Suffolk*, p. 211. Others will be found, for instance :

- 1645 Canterbury, Kent (*Trans.*, C.H.S., vii. 185).
- 1646 Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk (*Trans.*, ii. 333 : Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 394. There is a briefer rescript of 1648. The original church book is extant).
- 1650 Wrentham, Suffolk (Browne, p. 426).
- 1651 Woodbridge, Suffolk (Browne, p. 452).  
Cockermouth, Cumb. (W. Lewis, *Hist. Congl. Church, Cockermouth*, 1870).
- 1654 Wattisfield (Market Weston), Suffolk (Browne, p. 466).
- 1655 Bassingbourne, Cambs. (*Congregational Magazine*, 1819, p. 437 ; Nuttall, *op. cit.*, p. 29n).  
Rothwell, Northants. (T. Coleman, *Northants.*, pp. 47 ff).
- 1658 Bideford, Devon (Tal H. James, *The Great Meeting . . . Bideford*, 1948—a renewed covenant).
- 1660 Axminster, Devon (*Axminster Ecclesiastica*, 1874).
- 1687 Angel-street, Worcester (W. Urwick, *Nonctfy in Worcester*, 1874, pp. 78 f., with a facsimile of the original MS., pp. 78 ff., which needs comparison with the transcript : the signatures in John Noake, *Worcester Sects*, 1861, pp. 111 ff., are even less reliable).
- 1694? Sweffing (Rendham), Suffolk (Browne, pp. 480 ff.).
- 1700 Horsleydown (Parish-street), Southwark (Joseph Jacob, *The Covenant and Catechism of the Church . . . at Horseley Down . . .*, Lond. 1700 : *D.N.B.*, s.v. : W. Wilson, *Dissenting Meeting Houses*, i. 139 f., iv. 274 : J. Waddington, *Surrey Congl History*, pp. 156 ff. as Jacobs).

In the following century there are examples at Poole, Dorset, 1704 (Densham & Ogle, *Dorset Congl Churches*, pp. 191, 194 f.) ; Royston, Herts., 1705 (*Cong. Mag.*, 1819, pp. 759 ff.) ; Bourton-on-the-Water, Glos., 1719/20 (*Trans.*, i. 270) ; Potterspurty, Northants., 1740? (Coleman, pp. 279 f.) ; Dedham, Essex, 1741 (*Trans.*, ix. 261) ; Deptford, Kent, 1746 (T. Timpson, *Church Hist. of Kent*, pp. 348 f.) ; Mill Brow (Marple Bridge), Derbs., 1769? (W. Urwick,

<sup>1</sup>On which, in general, see Champlin Burrage, *The Church Covenant Idea*, Philadelphia, 1904, and cf. G. F. Nuttall, *Visible Saints*, 1957, esp. pp. 75 ff. : *World Congregationalism*, iii. No. 9, pp. 10 ff. (Sept. 1961).

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *The Writings of Robert Harrison and Robert Browne*, ed. A. Peel and L. H. Carlson, 1953, pp. 255 ff., 422.

*Noncfty in Cheshire*, 1864, p. 334n); Blanket-row, Hull, Yorks., 1770 (*Trans.*, ix. 248); Wallingford, Berks., 1794 (*Trans.*, xiv. 25). Of a still later epoch there are numerous examples such as that at Pateley Bridge, Yorks., 1817 (T. Whitehead, *Guide to Nidderdale*, pp. 128 f.) or Upwey, Dorset (Densham & Ogle, *op. cit.*, p. 323).

An interesting early example, not otherwise found cited, came to our notice some years ago through a transcript printed in the (*American*) *Congregational Quarterly*, 1862, vol. iv. pp. 21 f.

Upon enquiry, it was learned that this was unknown to the church at Taunton, Somerset, to which it apparently refers. If this could be shown to be the Covenant of a 'Gathered' Church, and there was no intermission, it might suggest that Paul's Meeting, Taunton, goes back to 1654 or earlier instead of to its traditional 1662, as given in *Congregational Year Book*. It is but fair to note that Jerom Murch, *History of the Presbyterian and General Baptist Churches in the West . . .* (1835), claims the ancient Dissenting Church as Presbyterian up to 1732 when the Congregationalists seceded, and it probably belongs more correctly to the lineage of Mary-street Unitarian Chapel (1646?).

A very brief note of introduction is prefaced to the version of the Covenant which follows. This is unsigned, but the writer would hazard a guess that it was contributed by Dr. Henry Martyn Dexter (1821-90),<sup>3</sup> the great American Congregational historian, who had wide English contacts. His magnum opus, *The Congregationalism of the last three hundred years as seen in its Literature*, 1880, remains a standard authority in respect of our denominational bibliography.

The article is headed :

#### AN ENGLISH CHURCH COVENANT OF 1654

"The following is the ancient covenant of the Congregational Church at Taunton, Eng., 'begun to be subscribed the 9th day of February 1654'.<sup>4</sup> It has been transcribed from a manuscript record formerly in the possession of P. Walker, Esq., of Lyme, Eng. [*Lyme Regis, Dorset?*]. From its date it would appear to have been drawn up under the ministry of the Rev. George Newton,<sup>5</sup> who was, eight years after, enrolled among the noble confessors of Bartholomew day."

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *Dict. Amer. Biog.*, s.v. : A. Peel, *The Congregational Two Hundred*, 1948, pp. 194 f.

<sup>4</sup>1654/5?

<sup>5</sup>(See facing page)

## TAUNTON COVENANT

WEE whose names are underwritten, inhabitants of Taunton Magdalen, havinge beene solemnly and deeply humbled in the sence of all our sinns which we have been enabled to discover, particularly of our old pollucions and defilements, our carnall and corrupt compliances, and of our latter declinacions and neglects, doe now at length resolve to enter into neerer fellowship by a particular expresse renewinge of our covenant,<sup>6</sup> in order to a thorough and effectual reformation, and so to joyne ourselves to the Lord, and each to other, by a perpetuall covenant that shall never be forgotten.

1. Wee doe by a renewed act of faith receive and take the Lord Jehovah, father, sonne and holy spiritt, who was, and is, and is to come, for our God whome we acknowledge and believe is the only true God, and we doe faithfully engage and promise in the strength of Jesus Christ to owne him in our hearts and wayes, to love him for himselfe, and obey him, and cleave to him with full purpose of heart, to follow him fully, and to walk before him a [*illegible*] be upright, to serve him with holinesse and righteousnesse all the dayes of our lyves, and at all times, and in all places, and in all things, sencerely to endeavour and demeane ourselves as beseemeth such a people whoe have the Lord for their God.

2. Wee doe covenant with the Lord our God, whom we beleive to be the searcher of our hearts, and the severe avenger of all deceptfull dealings with him, that we will henceforth utterly abandon and forsake (as he shall give us grace and strength) all our iniquities and sinns, which we doe already know or shall hereafter be discovered to us by the light of God's Word, against which we will never shutt our eyes, and that we will endeavour universall reformation of ourselves and others, accordinge to our places, and especially of the Inhabitants of this Towne, as farr as we have lawfull meanes to doe it : and that we will as many of us as are Govournours of families, haveing first set upp Christ in our owne hearts, set him upp in our houses, that wee will teach our families, accordinge to the guifte bestowed upon us, and make them know

<sup>6</sup>Vicar of St. Mary Magdalene, Taunton, 1631-1660. cf. A. G. Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, p. 364.

The date might even suggest that the Covenant was drawn up at the time when Joseph Alleine was appointed assistant to George Newton at St. Mary Magdalene (1655) where he was apparently evicted with his vicar in 1662. He continued to preach in and near Taunton, despite fine and imprisonment, until his early death in November 1668, aged 34. 'A man of extraordinary evangelistic zeal.' cf. *Cal. Rev.*, p. 6 : Shaw, ii. 420 f.

<sup>6</sup>Original Covenant not known.

the way of the Lord, that we will dayly worshipp the Lord with them (unlesse there be necessary avocacions), that we will cause them as much as lyes with us strictly to observe and keepe the Christian Sabbath holy, and constantly to wayte on ordinances and the meanes of grace, concerning which we will call them to an accompt : we will allow of no prophaneness, neither shall they that are prophane dwell with us, unless necessity inforce us to it, soe that our houses may be little Churches, and Jesus Christ may walk in them, and be the light and joy of them.

3. Wee will in sincerity and constancy maintaine the communion of saints, endeavouring to joyne together in all the parts and duties of God's publique worshipp, particularly in the greate uniting ordinance of Communion of the body and blood of Christ, beinge very deeply humbled that wee have not hungred, thirsted, longed and laboured for it as wee should have done—that wee have hitherto prophaned it, and defiled it, and being sensible of the greate neede wee have of that holy Sacrament to confirm our weake faith, and to keep fresh within us the memoriall of our deare and precious Saviour, and of his bitter death and passion, whoe loved us, and gave himselfe for us, and wee are now resolved every one of us accordinge to our places, to doe what lyes in us that wee may regularly come to be partakers of that blessed ordinance, that wee may feede upon the body and blood of Christ by faith, and may tast and see how good and sweete Christ is.

4. Wee faithfully promise and engage to the Lord, and each to other, that by the helpe of Jesus Christ, we will perform all mutuall duties of justification, admonition, supplicacion, and consolation ; wee will watch over one another as there is occasion, accordinge to the method and rule of Christ ; we will consider one another to provoke to love and good workes ; we will not hate our brother in our hearts, but take care to give reproofe with all prudence, tendernesse, and compassion of our erringe brother, havinge first sought to God for his direction and blessinge upon this ordinance of his, and soe endeavouring to manage it in all respects, as an ordinance of God, and not as an effect of our credulity ; our pride, our passion, our corruption any way ; and we will take reproofe with all meeknesse, love, humilities and thankfulnessse, as precious balme that will not break our heads, without recrimination, and without retaininge any grudge against the person that reprooves us ; only if there be occasion we will make modest, just and meeke defence to cleare ourselves when we are faultlesse, and to convince and satisfie the brother that reproves us of his mistake and mis-

information, that soe noe root of bitternesse grow up amongst us, and thereby many be defiled.

5. We will as farr as God shall enable us, walke in wisdome towards them that are without, that is, we will demeene ourselves towards them, humbly, inoffensively, self-deniingly, beingg so far from givinge them any cause, that we will give them noe occasion, to speake reproachfully of us or our profession, that soe by this meanes, we may winne them and allure them to returne with us to God, and that the doctrine and worshipp of the disciples of Jesus Xt may be rendered beautyfull and aymeable in their eyes by this meanes, that while we goe to heaven ourselves, others may goe thither with us, at least may not goe to hell by our meanes.

6. Wee will converse together in spirituall and Church communion with all charity, purity, and humility—preferringe one another and thinking one another better than ourselves; whereto we have obtained we will walk together unanimously by the same rule, in other thinges of lesser concernment and inferiour allay<sup>7</sup> we will beare with one another and make our moderation known to all men; we will not make our brethren's difference from us, or concurrence with us, in such things as these, the grounds and measure of our love or dislike; that there may be noe chisme in the body we will love the truth and that our hearts may be comforted being firmly knit together, and the other churches may rejoyce whiles they behold our order and stedfastnesse of our faith in Christ, and we will soe behave ourselves in all respects, as far as human frailty and inferiority will suffer us, as becometh the gospel of Christ.

And this Covenant we make in the presence of a high and holy God, being deeply sensible of our own weaknesse and utter inability to keepe it, humbly and earnestly beseeching him from the bottom of our hearts to pardon and forgive us all our former breaches with him, and to heale our backslidings from him, and now to undertake for us, and to be surety for his poore servants that we shall be faithfull with him, and to bestow his grace upon us, that we may never add these to the rest of our sinns to deale treacherously with him, and to be covenant breakers with the Lord our God, least he avenge the quarrell of his Covenant on us; but that the covenant we have made in such a solleme and serious way our hearts may be steadfast in it, and we may keepe it to the very end.

[Unfortunately, no signatures are given]

<sup>7</sup>Obs. for *alloy*, standard, or quality. O.E.D.

## THE WELSH INDEPENDENTS

*Hanes Annibynwyr Cymru* by R. Tudur Jones (Union of Welsh Independents—John Penry Press, Swansea, 1966, 30s.).

I do not know of a standard history in English of the Welsh Independents. For that reason, and because *Hanes Annibynwyr Cymru* is such a fine piece of work, I could wish that Dr. Tudur Jones had written it in English. I hope he will do so. Meanwhile, I have been asked to give in English an impression of its matter and quality.

It has been greeted with uncommon enthusiasm by the Welsh reading public, academic and lay, of all denominations. Men of letters have praised it for its mastery of contemporary Welsh, its idiomatic vigour, descriptive power, and lucidity. It is strewn with crisp, sparkling sentences, sometimes as incisive as splinters of glass.

Comment on its literary quality can mean little to those unable to read it for themselves; they will want to know something of its factual matter. But at this point I am driven to speculate. Dr. Saunders Lewis, doyen of Welsh men-of-letters, recently declared that the very theme of any study of a human community (particularly one with a long history) is sure to be different according to the language in which it is pursued and written. *Hanes Annibynwyr Cymru* is the work of a scholar about his own people, and in their own language. Dr. Jones's *Congregationalism in England* was a work by a Welshman about an English movement. Though Dr. Jones linguistically is no less an Englishman, the difference of 'flavour' is palpable. Why is this? Does another native language set turning a different set of wheels in the psyche? This is not a non-factual question. History as told in *Hanes Annibynwyr Cymru* conveys the inner 'feel' of a community. It vibrates with a sensitive consciousness of 'Welshness', the sentiment of Welsh nationhood. A significant chapter-heading is 'Guiding a Nation'. The claims of Welsh nationhood constitute a criterion. Men and parties are judged (sometimes with love and admiration, at other times scathingly) according to whether they cherished and enhanced Welsh nationhood.

So the story begins (the New Testament 'origin' of Congregational Independency apart) with the calamity which befell Welsh nationhood through Union with England and with the immeasurable harm done to the church in Wales by the Henrician

expropriations—the breaking of the continuity of national institutions, the alienation of the now-Anglicised gentry from the common people, the peasantry left without native leadership. Almost wholly untouched at the time by the Reformation, the Welsh people as a whole long remained catholic (with a catholicism devitalized and of the crudest) and during the Civil Wars overwhelmingly royalist in sympathy. In a real sense a new nation had begun to emerge, composed of the descendants of the one-time serfs and those of the petty squierarchy, a nation which, despite a John Penry, had not had any Protestant preparation for the new spiritual age which was to come.

Whence were new creative impulses to come? Most vigorously from Puritanism, caught by some Welshmen from contacts in England or introduced deliberately by the policy of the Commonwealth. Dr. Jones is compelled to say that Puritanism had first to lose its ‘alien English flavour’, and the rule of Wales, during the Commonwealth, by ‘successful soldiers, land-owning farmers, and slippery lawyers’ vanish, before Puritanism could flourish in the ‘spiritual soil of Wales’. I am not clear what is meant by ‘the spiritual soil of Wales’ at this time. Could Puritanism ever have ‘become Welsh’ had it not itself first created that soil? The facts quoted by Dr. Jones make clear in any case its outpoured concern for Wales, despite any political motives also at work. It made the unique experiment of granting virtual religious home-rule for a time to Wales, while the London Welsh Puritans were abundant in generosity. Whether or not it be right to say that the harvest of this Puritan activity (being ‘English in flavour’) was scant, the fact remains that it struck roots deep enough for thousands of Welsh Puritans to share the exodus of their pastors in 1660.

One of the striking conclusions indeed to be drawn from this volume is that the dynamic impulses of the creative periods of modern Wales derived from the world outside. Dr. Jones shows this to have been the case again in respect of Welsh political radicalism in the 19th century. The transmutation of these influences in terms of Welshness and Welsh nationhood is in itself an exciting theme, yet one of the most affecting impressions made on me by this enthralling book is the ambivalent attitude of a sensitive sentiment of nationhood indebted for some of its formative principles to influences from without. Such indebtedness is however no cause at all for sensitiveness, least of all in relation to a universal Gospel, but I should like our English colleagues to get the ‘feel’ of this from Dr. Jones.

This story is therefore one of a religious movement inextricably involved by its own volition and vision in every aspect of a nation's life. So the range is immense, spreading far beyond the internal concerns of a religious denomination. Vividly contained within little more than 300 pages, all facets are here : spiritual intensity, zest for theology, ethical earnestness, ecclesiastical controversy often tragically acrid, passionate defence of the dignity of the human person, political apathy giving place to vehement reformism, educational hunger and literary prolificacy, aesthetic gropings and much vulgarity of taste. Old nonconformist soberness and honourable pride ('syberwyd' : L. superbia, is a favourite word with Dr. Jones) reacting to revivalist emotionalism, assumption of the task of guiding a nation, and, lately, all the misery of spiritual traditions bewildered by the harsh impact of industrialization and deeply wounded by 'betrayal of conscience' at the outset of the first world-war.

The core of the faith of the Independents is seen to be the importance of history and every man's confrontation by the necessity to make choices and decisions of destiny. The pre-supposition of the book is 'that the people of whom we have written were in objective contact with a living God working with his people to weave the pattern of their history'. The pattern is set forth in seven periods : 1630-1662 in two chapters : 'The earth grows green' and 'Gathering the Saints' ; 1660-1689 : 'Clinging to the Faith' and 'Continuing to meet' ; 1689-1760 : 'The Old Nonconformists' and 'A long summer day' ; 1735-1815 : the Evangelical Revival ; 1815-1850 : 'Crystallizing the Revival' ; 1850-1914 : 'Nonconformist Civilization' and 'Guiding a Nation' ; 1914-1962 : 'Cross Winds' and 'Waiting and Watching'.

With the 'Old Nonconformists' Dr. Jones's writing really takes wings. The period of persecution had been 'the golden age of the Puritan movement' ; it had eliminated the 'disciples of the loaves', and brought nonconformist churches of all denominations together, so that it was difficult to distinguish between them. It is emphasized that they co-operated without having any kind of 'central organization' to make a 'denomination of them'. The inventiveness and flexibility of the Independents in their inter-church relations are striking : Dr. Jones instances 'county churches', whereby small groups scattered over wide tracts of country could experience the same warmth in periodical common meetings and through the ministrations of their pastor and elders. Again help

from London was generous : founding schools for children and providing religious literature for adults. Hymns, as distinct from sung-Psalms, may be said to have arrived with Owen's hymnary (1705), though preference for the Psalms lasted into the following century ; the hymns of Williams, Pantycelyn, had not been kindly received. Notable, too, is the growing value set upon the Lord's Supper, the solemnity with which it was to be approached creating the preparatory meeting for prayer and self-examination.

During the 'long summer day' following the accession of William and Mary the reasoning element in their Puritanism expressed itself in elaborating (local) confessions of faith and the practice of catechizing. 'In their devotional traits the Independents now resembled the Anglicans more closely than in any other period.' Moral training was important, the intention being to create strong steadfast tranquil personalities—which was to be one reason for the unease felt by the Independents when the emotionalism of the methodist Revival broke upon the land. The rationalist strain also led to a modification of their Calvinism in the direction of universalism but also to strident theological controversy and schisms. The Independents resisted the passage into Arminianism and Arianism but when the dynamic of Calvinism combined with the emotion of the Revival it became 'an ideology with profound influence on the whole subsequent life of the nation'.

Dr. Jones's portrait of Howell Harris is less sympathetic than that given us recently by Dr. G. F. Nuttall in *The Last Enthusiast*. More and more Independents however became 'methodisticalized' and their old leisurely, doctrinal, practical preaching yielded place to 'the fiery shouting' type with its psychological pressure to enforce a 'decision'. The 'hwyl', by today supposed to be an essential feature of Welsh preaching, was in fact invented by a David Davies (1775-1838).

The old tradition did not wholly disappear. Methodism was initially and for long intractably Tory. Its political passivity penetrated Independency too, at the very time when industrialization was extending its dehumanizing sway. Evangelicalism was also ecclesiologically indifferent ; the Independents too caught the same temper. Only very slowly did they return to their old tradition of political involvement, and even more slowly take stock of economic realities. But when the old traditions reasserted themselves and combined with methodistical enthusiasm, the result was a political radicalism of a passionate kind. From 1815-1850 the Independents'

story is that of taking up the leadership of the nation, in teaching and morally training the common people who had now flocked into the churches under the power of revivalism. The most brilliant instrument used was the adult Sunday School, where the common man was made literate, taught theology, enabled to handle abstract ideas, and rendered articulate in matters of faith and aspiration. The Sunday School also enabled him to improve his social status and gave powerful impetus to the nonconformist ethic of 'getting on'. The churches took under their roof and care the people's recreational and cultural activities; all in all the impress of the Bible (*and of Judaism—G.J.*) was stamped upon the nation's life.

The tragedy of political radicalism was the taking captive of the ministers by the individualistic *laissez-faire* ideology of Liberalism. Dr. Jones's criticism is here extremely severe; he supplies evidence to justify his accusation that many prominent ministers were ready to sacrifice the people's humanity and nationhood ('both aspects of the same thing') on the altar of the money-market.

His 'Nonconformist Civilization' is not, I think, his most balanced chapter though it is never other than lively and interesting. He summarizes: 'there was a contradiction deep in the soul of that generation. No generation in our history concentrated so much on nurturing strong moral individuals; it did not see until it was almost too late that this individual needs also a strong, just, responsible society in which to flourish'. I believe I am right in thinking that this 'strong, just, responsible society' means a *Welsh* society. 'When the enemies of the nation began to pound the Welsh society to powder, the experience was torture for the Nonconformists. They were doubly punished for the sins of their fathers'.

In chapters 13 and 14 we are amid events through which many of us have lived. Here the story is of deepening sadness. The abandonment by the ministry (almost total, we are told) of the pacifist tradition, the 'betrayal of conscience' at the outbreak of war in 1914, was a culmination of the 'spiritual poverty' which had lurked beneath the prosperous façade of the churches. Thousands discovered that they had not been 'spiritual fortresses' and left them by the thousands, 'grieving that they could no longer believe'. After the war came the Depression, with its terrible blood-letting of the churches through the migration of the generation which might today have become their leaders. The alienation of the Labour Movement, the contempt of the political parties for

the status of the Welsh nation, the resurgence within Independency of a sense of responsibility for guarding the nation, the ceaseless (and mostly fruitless) self-examination ; for the most part a doleful recital indeed.

This was the period too when liberal theology and modernism came to their 'prolific autumn' among the Independents. Dr. Jones's analysis of this theological position is a work of clarity ; his critique of its philosophical presuppositions is devastating ; his exposure of the case made out (in his own quotations) for the ultimacy of 'experience' as authority, is incisive to a degree. And all this has justification. And yet it comes dangerously near being logic-chopping in the sense that it shows me little evidence of an interior understanding, of a sympathetic apprehension, of the very 'crisis of faith' and the spiritual famine which were merely mocked by a stock-in-trade, ossified, orthodox.

The dire effects of the cult of the star preacher, the depreciation of the truly pastoral ministry, the frequent forfeiture of the old Independent evaluation of the local congregation as a spiritual society, the hardening of the isolationist notion of local sovereignty though the work of religion suffer enormously thereby, the opposition to the growth of organized co-operation between the churches, the now increasingly parlous state of the ordained ministry, the drying up of the stream of ministerial candidates (be it noted in places where the *Welsh society* survives)—all this, and much else, gives poignant meaning to Dr. Jones's descriptive final chapter-heading : 'Waiting, watching' ('Disgwyl').

While it is no business of ours to intervene even verbally in the current tensions over 'organized Congregationalism' in Welsh Independency, it seems tragically clear that many ministers are deliberately subjected to penury and that for numerous 'stronger' churches the principle of independency serves as an excuse for rejecting every measure of organized co-operation to save the weaker from going to the wall. Yet, with Dr. Jones, there are surely many in the churches who still believe 'that Christ honours his people with his presence and that they, as the chains of the past fall from them, will again respond more and more as free men', and that Congregational Independency, 'if it deny not its beginning, will have a future'.

Differ though one may in opinion here and there from Dr. Tudur Jones, I cannot imagine anyone at all interested in the subject failing to be gripped, enlightened, sometimes jolted, always very grateful.

GLYNMOR JOHN

## REVIEWS

*Richard Baxter* by Geoffrey F. Nuttall (Nelson, 1966, 35s.)

Dr. Nuttall's long-awaited life of Baxter is published in a new series of ecclesiastical biographies—*Leaders of Religion*—designed to provide 'a basic history of Christianity in Britain and among British people overseas'. It is a notable addition to the series, and displays the qualities which mark all the author's writing: meticulous scholarship, keen insight into character, an appreciation of the inwardness of faith, and rare literary grace.

Though Baxter never accepted the party label of Independent (nor that of Presbyterian or Anabaptist), his most notable modern biographers have been men of the Congregational way. Dr. Nuttall recounts how F. J. Powicke first urged him to study Baxter, and this life amply repays Powicke's concern: 'To have Baxter known, and read and loved is life to me'. Equally devoted to Baxter, Dr. Nuttall never masks his faults: his sharpness of tongue and pen; his tendency to repeated self-justification; his notable lack of tact (though Dr. Nuttall effectively disposes of the suggestion that it was through this defect of Baxter that the Savoy Conference proved abortive). His devotion to Baxter is shown rather in twenty years' study of the man and his writings, not only the 130-odd printed works, but the Baxter Papers at Dr. Williams' Library, containing over a thousand letters from his pen. The book is one which only a master of the sources could have written, and yet the life is told with such verve and discipline that the layman can read it with appreciative enjoyment. Such a life befits its subject, who, ripe scholar as he was, wrote so prolifically for the plain man.

Here is Baxter to the life: the young minister whose faith has been tempered by severe doubt; the Civil War chaplain; the indefatigable preacher and pastor of Kidderminster; the pioneer of corporate ministerial discipline in the Worcestershire Association; the champion of ministerial training and would-be sponsor of a University of Wales; the missionary enthusiast and correspondent of John Eliot, apostle to the American Indians; the leading puritan negotiator at the Restoration; and finally at his most impressive as 'the Reverend Richard Baxter under the Cross'—spending the last thirty years of his life in the wilderness of despised Nonconformity, having refused the Bishopric of Worcester. Baxter's real calibre emerges in his massive integrity and his unswerving ecumenical zeal, displayed in an age when to be

'for Catholicism against parties' was to invite the cross-fire of all the rival bigotries. A Methodist, and any lover of Baxter's hymns, may perhaps be forgiven for wishing that the author had allowed us more than the three lines he quotes from the *Poetical Fragments*; yet where so much is given, it seems churlish to ask for more. Dr. Nuttall's study will surely gain more readers for the works of the man who styled himself, and truly was, 'a Catholick Christian'.

One can only deplore the fact that the publishers have seen fit to charge so inflated a price as 35s., for a book whose text runs to a little over 130 pp.

J.A.N.

*Defoe and Spiritual Autobiography* by G. A. Starr (Princeton University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1965, pp. 203, 52s.)

*Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders* have long been recognized as forerunners of a new tradition, that of the true English novel. Mr. Starr here shows them to be equally heirs to a long tradition of spiritual autobiography. In form, where the autobiographers and diarists moralize over what happens to them, in addresses to their readers or themselves that are disparate from their story, Defoe skilfully contrives to integrate narrative and spiritual elements till these become the very fabric of the narrative. In purpose, *Crusoe* and *Moll* are both fundamentally 'spiritual' stories, the one being a study of the change wrought by conversion, the other of the hardness of heart which can long delay conversion. Conversion is the organizing principle, and a series of false or partial repentances provides a themodic link. While episodic so far as concerns outward events, both books are coherent in their gradual unfolding of inward states. Mr. Starr writes clearly, argues convincingly and does not claim too much. He begins with an able exposé of the spiritual autobiography common in seventeenth-century England, the ideas of which Defoe reflects. He has read widely in the relevant material. It is pleasing to see his reference to our Editor's article in the 1949 issue of these *Transactions*.

G.F.N.

*Cumulative Index of the Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society* (1966, 35s.)

As part of the celebrations of the diamond jubilee of the Baptist Historical Society, the Rev. Douglas Sparkes has produced a 209-page index containing all the references which a scholar is

likely to want to the volumes of *Transactions* which appeared from 1908 until the incorporation of the publication in *The Baptist Quarterly* in 1920. It is hoped to continue the index to include *The Quarterly* in due course. To draw up an index like this is an enormous, wearisome task, a sacrifice in time and trouble, to be gratefully received by research students. The index is divided as follows : 'Titles of Articles' (220 of them); 'Contributors' (39); 'Persons' (over 100 pages); 'Places'; 'Denominations'; 'Publications' (periodicals not books or pamphlets); and 'Miscellaneous'. Some of these must have presented many a headache to the compiler; perhaps it would have been simpler and more satisfactory to have run the last three in together. The user will have to look in the last, *and* the last but one, to be sure not to miss his reference. For example, he would find the American Board under 'Miscellaneous' but the L.M.S., under 'Denominations'. Thumbing through an index can make for surprises. Coffee houses are, of course, expected, though to have as many as twelve named is perhaps unexpected, but my breath was taken away to see no less than that number of castles listed.

J.H.T.

Also received :

*Clink! The story of a forgotten church* by Dennis Godfrey of Pilgrim Fathers' Memorial Church.