



*The
Congregational Historical Circle Magazine*

Price:

Members 25p

Non-Members 35p

(including Postage)

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The Congregational Historical Circle

Magazine No.3

November 1979

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Editorial:

This is to confirm what you may have read elsewhere that I have been appointed to succeed for one year the first Editor Dr. Bill Ashley Smith to whom we owe the production of the first two issues of the Congregational Historical Circle Magazine. During the last few months he has through death lost his dear wife. All members will wish me to record our sympathy in this sore trial and at the same time thank him for what he has accomplished and will yet be given strength to do in the service of our Lord.

Our thanks is due also to Mr. R.J. Bray who as Secretary called our attention to the need for a society of those interested in Congregational History. We have already tasted of the good things he and Dr. Ashley Smith have provided by way of fare in our Magazine and we look forward to further contributions.

We have pleasure in publishing the first Address given at the May Assembly to the members gathered for the Congregational Historical Circle Meeting this year, by the Rev. Alan Argent B.Sc who is the Minister at Trinity Congregational Church, Brixton. We thank him for this fine and searching address.

No one can say that the Congregational Historical Circle meeting was uneventful. It was right that the matter of Memorial Hall Trust be brought to the notice of members. The story of Memorial Hall is a long one, built in 1875 to commemorate the Congregational Martyrs it has always been held in high

esteem by all of the Congregational persuasion. Built on the site of the old Fleet prison and opened on 19th January 1875, it was demolished by bombing and rebuilt some years ago. It is situated in Farringdon St, near Ludgate Circus. Its library will be of most interest to scholars and ranks with the best Puritan and Congregational Library in the Metropolis.

At the Annual Meeting of the Congregational Historical Circle held at Norwich fears were expressed that the Memorial Hall Library was to be dispersed, this however is not the case. The letter of our good secretary of the Congregational Federation Mr. John Wilcox explains the position up to date with regard to the trusteeship. It is good to hear something of the working of the Board who although not answerable to the several churches as such, look after the Hall and Library. They have many difficult decisions to make but we know they will not be made in haste.

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From the Secretary:-

I am very pleased to report that the History Circle continues to move steadily forward. At the May Assembly we were very pleased to elect a small Committee from both the E.F.C.C. and the Congregational Federation to serve the Circle. These are as follows:

Mr. R.J. Bray	- Secretary.	} Representing the Cong.
Mr. D. Morrell	- Treasurer.	
Rev. T. Watts	- Editor.	} Fed. Churches.
Rev. C. Moore	-	
Mr. P. Collins	-	} Representing the E.F.
Pastor A.S. Roberts	-	
		} C.C. Churches.

Secondly I am pleased to report that membership of the Circle is steadily growing and this issue of the magazine will be distributed to the following numbers of persons:- MEMBERS 79; EXCHANGES WITH OTHER HISTORY SOCIETIES ETC AND DENOMINATIONS 20; OVERSEAS CONTACTS AND MEMBERS 15; MINISTERIAL TRAINING COLLEGES 6 Giving a Total Distribution of 120. Members and friends are asked to continue their good work of making the work of the History Circle known.

The costs of producing our regular magazine even

since the last edition have increased considerably with the rise of VAT and Postage charges and although God has wonderfully provided for our History Circle by keeping our funds out of the red a continuing effort is still necessary if this is to continue.

Although we are only a small group we have taken a fairly active part in the issue of the possible moving of the Congregational Library from Memorial Hall, London to another site and it is hoped to possibly include a duplicated sheet giving details of developments in this respect with this magazine send out. Although we have possibly had some influence on the matter it is quite clear that many more voices will need to be heard if we are going to make any significant alteration to the situation.

Lastly may I say that the flow of material for possible inclusion in the Magazine is steadily increasing but we still need much more. Please put your pens to paper as quickly as possible and let Rev. Trevor Watts, our editor have your news items and articles of interest for inclusion in the next History Circle Magazine. All topics and items are welcome.

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ITEMS FROM THE POSTBAG

1. Mr. P. Collins, one of our Committee Members, urgently wishes to obtain on loan or to purchase a copy of "The Life of Thomas Wilson" by Joshua Wilson which was published about 1860. (Thomas Wilson was responsible for the founding of the original Memorial Hall in London and also for the founding of the Westminster Chapel) Anyone who has a copy or knows of ones whereabouts is asked to contact Mr. Collins at 4, Reddons Road, Beckenham, Kent. BR3 1LZ.
2. I have received a copy of a new book produced by Rev. Malcolm Coles of Belfast on the History of the Congregational Union of Ireland entitled "I will build my Church". The text is clear, concise and challenging and the book is presented in a very readable style. Building terms are used as chapter headings beginning with "Acquisition of Site" looking back to St. Patrick and Oliver Cromwell, then "Excavation, Foundation, Erection", there was a time of 'Dissolution' in 1848 but then 'Restoration' in 1859. Sadly

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the longest chapter is 'Dereliction' but happy to say the book ends with 'Reconstruction'.

This excellent book produced by one of our History Circle Members can be obtained from the History Circle Secretary or from Rev. Malcolm Coles, 38 Edgcombe Gardens, Belfast, N.Ireland, BT4.2EH. Price. 75 pence.

3. The Exeter University Library has a complete set of the Transactions of the Congregational History Society from Volume I. 1901 to Volume 21 1972 (the last) with the exception of Issues No.9. and 10 of Volume 20. Should anyone know where a copy of these can be obtained or even have a copy themselves that could be photostated, if they would contact Mr. David Morrell, our Treasurer, it would be very greatly appreciated.

4. In the last issue of the Congregational Historical Circle Magazine I mentioned the exhibition entitled "Change and Decay - The Future of our Churches" which was now touring the country. Details of the 1980 schedule have now reached me and they are as follows:-

Jan 1st - Feb. 15th Rotherham Museum.
Feb. 15th - March 15th Bury Museum.
March 15th - April 26th Dudley Museum.
April 26th - 31st May Newark Museum.
May 31st - June 30th Bradford Museum.

5. Some copies of the C.H.C. Magazine No.2. for May 1979 are still available and may be obtained from the secretary Price 35 pence per copy post paid.

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The Congregational Memorial Hall Library

The Secretary of the Memorial Hall Trust has passed on to me a photostat copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Congregational Historical Circle held in the St. Andrews Hall, Norwich on Sat. 12th May at 1.p.m. These minutes were apparently circulated with the last issue of the Historical Circle's magazine and in consequence got into the hands of various librarians. One of these contacted the Secretary of the Memorial Hall Trust to enquire about the report that the Memorial Hall Library was to be

disbanded. The Secretary of the Trust advised him that this was quite untrue. As a member of the governing body of the Memorial Hall Trust for several years, you can imagine my own embarrassment when the Secretary of the Trust enquired whether I knew where this report had originated. My reply was that even though I was at Norwich at the time of the meeting, I did not know the origins of the report, but I also added that the Congregational Historical Circle was not an official body within the Federation. Nevertheless, I had to admit that it was most unfortunate for a group concerned with preserving accurate historical records to publish a report without first enquiring whether this report was true. I did therefore promise to write this brief article to explain the position of the Memorial Hall Trust and also to point out the inaccuracies in the report.

Concerning the Trust, this was specifically excluded from the 1972 U.R.C. Act, and in consequence it was found necessary to have a high Court action in order to clarify who would be the future beneficiaries of the Trust and what would be the composition of its governing body. The High Court action took place in January 1976 and there have been written and sometimes verbal reports at each May Assembly of the Federation since that date. The 1979 report indicated that the High Court action was still not finally settled, whilst earlier reports described the agreed settlement between the parties. Briefly, this was that the future composition of the Trust will consist of half the members being nominated by the United Reformed Church, a quarter of the members being nominated by the Congregational Federation and a quarter of the members being nominated by the E.F.C.C. It will be of interest to members of the Historical Circle to hear that the High Court action has at last been concluded, and I received early in June a copy of the High Court order. This means that the Congregational Memorial Hall Trust (1978) can now arrange its first meeting and this will take place on the 25th July 1979. The main provision of the court order is to replace the former governing instrument of the Memorial Hall Trust by a new one, which

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provides for a composition of the Trust as outlined above and also incorporates in the decision making process, a clause which prevents any motion from being carried either at the general meeting of the Trust or at its Council meeting unless at least two members of those nominated by the U.R.C. and two members of those nominated by the continuing Congregational bodies are in favour of the motion. The new instrument for the Trust does make it quite impossible for either of the 'U.R.C. element' or for that matter 'Congregational element' to decide unilaterally on any future policy of the Trust, and this of course includes the Library. The judge ruled in the High Court action that the beneficiaries of the Trust included both continuing Congregationalists and members of the United Reformed Church, irrespective of whether these members were formerly Congregational or Presbyterian.

Now referring to the report, there have certainly been many informal discussions concerning the future administration of the Memorial Hall Library. At no time however has there been a suggestion that the Library would be 'done away with'. In these informal discussions, representatives from both the United Reformed Church and from continuing Congregational bodies have expressed a strong desire to make the Library much more effective than it has been in the past. How this can best be achieved will of course be for the new governing body to decide. It is my personal hope that in these discussions and in all other discussions in the new Trust, the members of the Trust will act in the best interests of the Trust, and will not act as though they are representative members or were seeking a mandate from the body which has nominated them.

27th June 1979.

John B Wilcox

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THE IMPORTANCE OF HISTORY TO CONGREGATIONALISM

"There are so few people who want to have any intimate spiritual association with the

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries:...who bothers at all now about the work and achievement of our grandfathers, and how much of what they knew have we already forgotten?"

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters & Papers from Prison

In our own age when the British churches have been encouraged to turn to the future (and have apparently responded favourably to such encouragement), when our own small denomination has faced recently such great problems in terms of its own survival and so much is yet to be done, the study of the past to many must seem irrelevant. Surely the time is ripe not for intellectual meanderings into the deeds and misdeeds of our forefathers but for rebuilding, for creative planning for the here and now and for the future?

If such an eminent historian as A.J.P.Taylor refuses to see any didactic purpose in history, can we maintain there are lessons to be learned from history? If there are, do men in reality learn and so avoid repeating mistakes? Taylor suggests the only possible motive for studying history is enjoyment - if you enjoy it, then do it. And that motive, though less than satisfactory, is good enough to start with. After all most of us don't read or write history for its high, moral content.

Of course, nowadays also it would be generally agreed that history does not record inevitable, uninterrupted progress (look at the Old Testament), and that historical records are often fragmentary and one-sided making the search hazardous and the truth elusive. Yet the past is constantly being made and, its interpretation in history will and must therefore continue.

J.H.Plumb the historian of eighteenth century England, is determined to see history, as Edward Gibbon did - in human terms. Past events, he suggests, no longer give us proof of authority, nor of man's covenant with God.

"The purpose of historical investigation is to produce answers...to the fundamental problems of historical change in the social activities of men. These generalizations about society will, of course, not be immutable but always tentative. They must, however, be as accurate, as scientific, as detailed research and a profound sense of human reality can make them. The historian's purpose, therefore, is to deepen understanding about men and society, not merely for its own sake, but in the hope that a profounder awareness will help to mould human attitudes and human actions. Knowledge and understanding should not end in negation, but in action." (I)

Though we might question the truth of Plumb's underlying assumptions nevertheless the value of such historical study is clear. How then can we stand back and allow others to interpret our history without wanting to write it ourselves? Is a sociological or a marxist interpretation of history, especially church history, really acceptable to those committed to a Christian view of man, even though historians as diverse as Elie Halevy and Christopher Hill have said good things about Puritanism and Nonconformity? Again although we live in an ecumenical age and can expect Christians of other denominations to treat Congregational history with sympathy and respect, (and should encourage them to study our past) clearly we cannot necessarily expect them to see the depth of insight we find in our own tradition. Thus we would be foolish to abandon the study of martyrs who won for us the religious and civil liberties we take for granted and the Independent principles we sometimes cherish and sometimes ignore. Surely we would be absurd to neglect to cultivate the friendship of Christ's followers who no longer walk on earth.

Bunyan's life is as fascinating and edifying as his "Pilgrim's Progress" Isaac Watts, a largely unsung literary genius, we are reminded by the critic, Donald Davie, is as "authentic a voice of Augustan England as Alexander Pope" (2) were the English

Puritans the religious bigots, political time-servers and artistic philistines as they have often been portrayed? Were the Congregationalists of 1972 and after, the anti-ecumenical, denominational bigots which their nearest neighbours might allege? Both questions demand answers which are informed, cogently argued, and preferably well-publicised. The latter refers to our immediate past and our present, the former to that period of history which contributed to the formation of our present. Both are important and influence what others think of us now & what we believe of ourselves. Our history therefore is our business, not exclusively ours perhaps, but ours nevertheless.

The students of Congregationalism will continually seek out and refer to antecedents and naturally they begin with the New Testament. Christ's teaching points to a doctrine of man in which the freedom & equality of each individual before God are revealed and also in which each individual accepts full responsibility for his actions. The absence of hierarchy and the equality and duties of each covenanted member in a Congregational church accord well with this doctrine.

Though many Congregational scholars have suggested in the past that Congregationalism is the primitive form of Church government, this view is no longer widely held. Rather New Testament scholars now suggest the early church provides us with no clear, uniform pattern but that episcopal and/or presbyteral and congregational elements may each be discovered in the New Testament. I was taught at Westminster College, Cambridge, surprisingly perhaps, that Paul himself was a Congregationalist. Paul used the word ~~EKKLESIA~~ ~~MELOC~~ - church, in his letters in an overwhelming number of cases to mean the local church rather than the church throughout the world. Surely armed with such apostolic authority for our church order, Congregationalists may face the world with confidence and equanimity. (3)

Skipping across the centuries we may doff our hats

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at those freer spirits who from age to age have found the embrace and comfort of the increasingly institutionalized Church too wordly and too stifling. The Donatists in fourth and fifth century North Africa are one group who stood for purity of membership in the church, and resisted the concept that only those recognising the rule of the Bishop were part of the true Church. We should note that some forms of monasticism appeared almost as "independent congregations" (4) within the medieval Catholic church, and indeed, nearer home, Wycliffe's followers, the Lollards, left as their heirs, "not the Angelicans, but the Brownists and the Independents." (5)

Born in persecution and dissent, the origins of Congregationalism, inevitably perhaps, have been overlain with accusations of heresy, and social and political radicalism. Its defenders and chroniclers, therefore, have often battled against popular prejudice and superstition, as well as hostility from both the religious and political establishment, in their search to uncover the truth. Browne, Barrow, Penry, Smyth, and Robinson are familiar heroes to Congregationalists but less well-known, though important in the development of a congregational ecclesiology, are Conrad Grebel, George Blaurock and the Swiss separatists of the 1520's who (long before Calvin had laid the foundations of Reformed church structures at Geneva) broke away from the persecuting State-Church of Zurich. In 1526 the city council of Zurich ordered that all Anabaptists, as these separatists largely were, should be drowned. Perhaps Menno Simons, a sixteenth century Dutch priest, should also be seen as a forebear of later Congregationalism. He preached believers' baptism, stressed the responsibilities and rights of the local congregation, and rejected Christian participation in the magistracy. The Mennonites grew to be quite influential in Seventeenth and eighteenth century Holland.

Certainly Congregationalism in England had at last two sources - that deriving from the tradition of Geneva, a decentralized Calvinism - and that more native

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root which issued forth is awkward outbursts of religious independence. The emergence of a Congregational ecclesiology in the sixteenth and more properly, the seventeenth centuries is the product of both sources. Indeed Congregationalism dates back to the rebirth of Pauline ideas at the Reformation with its dual stress, as Geoffrey Nuttall put it on "both Word and Spirit; both the Scripture model and expectancy of more light; both the enlightened reason and divine inspiration; both order and freedom; both office and gift; both the godly prince and the gathered church."

(6) Congregationalists have therefore happily or precariously occupied the changing extent of the middle ground between the Presbyterian stress on order and the Baptist stress on freedom. In our day we can see that our churches are likely to resist any Presbyterian or United Reformed influences whilst perhaps moving towards the Baptists with far less caution and reserve.

In recent years we have often been reminded of our common heritage with other Reformation churches and we ought not easily to forget it. Yet a proper appreciation of the Congregational tradition would have to include dissimilar features. We know well that Presbyterianism with its stress on order proved attractive to many throughout Reformation Europe but Congregationalism, with a greater emphasis on freedom (or the Holy Spirit, and of the independent congregation) & equality under God, suffered from the early death of its proponents, and its being subject to persecution even in Reformed countries. Indeed Congregationalism has always, if not exclusively, spread by "ever renewed spontaneous generation from Bible-study in groups usually mutually unaware" of each other's existence. (7)

Like so many other branches of Christ's communion, Congregationalism has suffered many adversities in its past and may possibly face further setbacks in its future. Yet the story of our tradition is of necessity required reading for all seriously interested in English nonconformity. We neglect its study to our detriment. However as T.S. Eliot stated in his poem "Little"

Gidding" in "Four Quartets"(1944):

"We cannot revive old factions
We cannot restore old policies
Or follow an antique drum.

.....A people without history

Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern
Of timeless moments. So, while the light fails
On a winter's afternoon, in a secluded chapel
History is now and England."

Alan Argent

1. J.H.Plumb "The Death of the Past"(1973)p85.
2. D.Davie "A Gathered Church: The Literature of the Dissenting Interest, 1700-1930" (1978).
3. C.H.Dodd, "The Church in the New Testament" p7f. in "Essays Congregational and Catholic (1931) ed. A.Peel
4. H.M.Calvin, "The White Canons in England"(Oxford 1951). pp11f
5. K.B.McFarlane "Wycliffe and English Nonconformity" (1972) p170
6. G.F.Nuttall "Relations between Presbyterians and Congregationalists in England" in "Studies in Puritan Tradition"(1964) p1
7. G.F.Nuttall ibid. p2.

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Record preserved at Swan Hill Congregational Church, Shrewsbury.

The first Independents at Shrewsbury are on good authority known to have met at the King's Head Shut, off High St, during-and most certainly - after the Commonwealth. Apart from a brief period of 25 years 1741-1765-6, during the days of the 'Happy Union' of Independents and Presbyterians, under Job Orton, these Independents maintained throughout a separate existence with their own Ministers to the present day, although since 1972 they have shared the responsibility of the Joint Pastorate and care of the church with the Tabernacle Welsh Independent Church with the editor as Pastor.

Thanks to the care of ministers and others over the centuries the following valuable records have been preserved at the Church.

- I. List of members. Baptisms and Burials, (cause of death in Shorthand, dates etc. from the 17c, of both the Independents before and after the Happy Union and at Swan Hill. Also list of similar of the old Presbyterian Church now worshipping at High Street, (unitarian) Ends 1796. Being a copy of the original is at High Street.
2. Vellum bound register of members from 1779-96 earliest recorded admission to membership 1742. Kept by Rev. Samuel Lucas.
3. Burials, Baptism and members 1779-96 48 pp.
4. Rev. Samuel Lucas' Register "written for my private use", contains list of List of members, baptisms, deaths, names of deacons, monies collected copy of 'Confession of Faith', based on Acts 4:32, Romans 15:6, with nine Articles (written in shorthand), and list of members at the New Meeting, 'Walsal' 1773-1779, continues record of Shrewsbury Ministry 1779-1796. 43pp.
5. Collection Book No.27, on Lady Day 1779-1818 with half-yearly payments to Revs. Robert Gentleman, Samuel Lucas and Thomas Weaver. Members names with date of admission with their subscriptions.
6. Burial Book and plan of graves etc, 1789 1871.
7. Rule Book for Church Government and conduct of worship. Signed by Thomas Weaver and deacons.
8. Sunday School book, 1843-57. Sabbath School 1844-70 Act Book 1880-1937. Missionary Act Book 1803-66. Shrewsbury L.M.S. Auxiliary Act's 1875-96.
9. Pew rents 1873-1895 Min. of Comm of Management (8 members) 1865-96. Incidental Accts 1893-1953. Mins of Deacons mets, 1866-92, 1929-59, 1959-69; 1970 - ;
10. Deacons and management comm. 1941-47.
- II. Church Meeting Minute Books:-Meeting Book 1873-1913

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Church Minute Book I876-I9I8, I9I4-26; I947-55; I955 - 79. Comm. Book I928-4I; Communion Book I930-36.

- I2. Minutes of Trustees of Swan Hill and Sunday School etc including other properties I883-1925; Baptisms I890 - I978.
- I3. Joint Register of Burials, Marriages, and Burials I890-I935. Marriages Register I890 (intermittent) - I979. Two Books.
- I4. Church Roll I890 - I979, 2 Books.

The Church also treasures the following items of interest:-

- I5. Carved arm chair with padded seat and back, dated I6II, with initials (S.P.) Solidily built & extremely heavy, and designed as a seat of honour. It has been suggested that it was designed for the minister when he presided at a private house meeting perhaps in the King's Head Shut, before I74I. His Congregation would sit on hard benches!!
- I6. Rev. Samuel Lucas' leaving certificate from Homerton College dated I773.
- I7. Framed Plan of the first dissenting meeting House, Swan Hill, built in I767. Rebuilt in I868 - cost £2000.
- I8. Large Memorial of the History of Swan Hill dated I888, with photos of the present Church by Evan Jones.
- I9. Seven Portraits in Oils of the Revs. Francis Tallents, John Brian, Richard Heath, all three in Dict Nat Biog, James Owen, Samuel Lucas and two of Thomas Weaver in the Pulpit and in his Study, by James Pardon, artist of Shrewsbury. Also Print of Rev. Job Orton, see D.N.B.
- 20. Silver deposited at the Bank. Silver plated Flagon, Cylindrical with steeped base. Engraved 'Swan Hill' under base, height I3½ins.

Pair of George III Antique Silver goblets. Plain circular bowls in circular bases. Engraved 'Swan Hill'. London 1817 by T.V. Weight 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz Height 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins. Set of five, 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins in diameter, plain circular pewter logger heads PLATES. Touch mark N.M. on back Circa 1820.

The old Malthouse in which Job Orton gathered his congregation in 1765-6, is situated opposite the Chapel and let for business purposes.

ALAN H. MORRIS.

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Review.

A most interesting history of the ancient Presbyterian College in Carmarthen is entitled "Hoff Ddysgedig Nyth" - Nest of Learner Singing Birds, by Professor Dewi Eirug Davies and published by John Penry Press and sold by them at 11 St. Helen's Road, Swansea. Published in 1976. Price. £2.95.

The second title runs, 'the contribution of the College to Welsh life'. Dewi Eirug Davies has by the way been appointed head of the College which will shortly leave Swansea and take up residence at Aberystwyth, where it will co-operate with the University of Wales. Two or three students intending for the Congregational Ministry under the auspices of the Federation are trained there.

It will be of special interest to former students of the old College. English students will have to adopt Charles E. Surman's method and a small Welsh English dictionary. See C.H.C. Magazine No. 2. May 1979. p.12.

The name Presbyterian College dates from the day when the Presbyterian Fund was better known as Dr. Williams Trust which is closely associated with the Unitarian Church and generously supported it. It describes the early days of the Academy and its founder Samuel Jones of Brynllwarch, Glamorganshire 1626-97, one of the ejected ministers of 1662. Chapter two traces the struggles between Calvinism and Arminianism in the 18th century and the College's radical tradition. It describes also the scholastic tradition of the

College and its contribution to the educational and social reforms of the 19th and 20th Centuries.

The Volume contains 231 pages and includes copious notes conveniently placed after each of the 13 chapters, and a quite comprehensive index always a boon to students. The Cover and other illustrations give a glimpse of the Old College and a number of its Alumni. The Price £2.95.

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The History of our Hymns in
"Congregational Praise".

This short article is intended to give readers of the Congregational History Circle Magazine an insight into the history of one of the hymns in Congregational Praise and will hopefully be the first of a series of occasional items on Hymnology. The details of the history come from the Congregational Praise Compendium. Companion to Congregational Praise edited by K.L.Parry and Eric Routley and published by Independent Press. 1953.

No. 714 Still the Night, Holy the Night.

Translated by Stopford Brooke, 1832-1916.

Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht.

The words of this famous hymn were written on Dec. 24th 1818, when Mohr was assistant priest at the Church of St. Nicholas on Obendorf, Upper Austria. He asked the acting organist, Franz Gruber, to set the words to music, and it was sung that evening. The earliest musical score of the composer dated 1833 is arranged for chorus, organ and orchestra. It was first published in the Leipziger Gesangbuch (1838). There have been many translations but the one in Congregational Praise is based on Stopford Brooke's version in his Christian Hymns (1881). The text has been altered to make it more faithful to the original and is as given in Church Hymnary (Revised 1930).

Stille Nacht

Franz Gruber, 1787-1863.

The tune is traditionally supposed to have been written on the same day as the words in 1818. It

has become extremely popular in this country in the last 60 years. It has a highly sentimental atmosphere which is not in keeping with the austere "open air" flavour of most of our English Folk Music but its popularity means that modern day editors cannot overlook it.

Stopford Augustus Brooke (Glendoen, Donegal 1832-1916, The Four Winds, Ewhurst, Surrey).

Took his degree at Trinity College, Dublin in 1856 after winning two prizes for English verse. He took Orders and accepted a curacy at St. Matthew's, Marylebone, London and then at St. Mary Abbot, Kensington, London. From 1862-1865 he was chaplain to the British Embassy in Berlin. He returned to London & took the lease of the proprietary Chapel of St. James at York Street. It soon became crowded, and he became one of the most popular preachers in London. Mrs. Humphrey Ward gives a vivid impression of his preaching in these days in *A Writer's Recollections* (1918). In 1867 he became Chaplain to the Queen and preached in Westminster Abbey. In 1875 the lease of St. James expired and his friends purchased for him the lease of Bedford Chapel where he continued to preach until his retirement in 1894.

In 1880 he resigned his Orders in the Church of England on doctrinal grounds but he joined no other denomination. He often preached in Unitarian Churches and once said that "The power the Unitarians wanted was a greater personal love of Christ" adding "not only they but all of us, all the world". His best known books are the life and letters of F.W. Robertson (1872) and his primer on English Literature (1876). He had also published *Theology in the English Poets* (1874); *Tennyson: His Art and relation to Modern Life* (1894); *The Poetry of Robert Browning* (1902); *Ten Plays of Shakespeare* (1905); *Studies in Poetry* (1907); *Four Poets* (1908) and many volumes of sermons. Many of his own hymns are included in *Christian Hymns* which he edited for his own congregation. There is an excellent biography by his son-in-law Dr. L.P. Jacks entitled "The Life and Letters of Stopford Brooke" (1917) DNB Supplement 1931-40)

Hymns written by Augustus Brooke which appear in Congregational Praise are:--

110 When the Lord of love was here.

111 It fell upon a summer day.

714 Still the night, Holy the night. (translated).

No. 245 Bless be the tie that Binds. J. Fawcett
1740-1817.

This hymn appeared in his Hymns adapted to the Circumstances of Public Worship and Private Devotion (1782) it is said to have been written in 1772 when Fawcett having accepted a call to Carters Lane Church, London from Wainsgate, a very small church in the West Riding of Yorkshire, decided at the last moment to remain in response to the tears and pleas of his people. The hymn is often sung in America at the close of Church Meetings the people joining hands as they sing. There have been a number of verbal alterations the largest of which is in verse 3, which originally read :-

"When we asunder part
It gives us inward pain
But we shall still be joined in heart
And those to meet again."

Newland.

This first appeared in first edition (1858) of the Congregational Psalmist and in the last edition (1886). It appeared with six different hymns. It is associated with the present words however in Barrett.

John Fawcett (Lidgett Green, Bradford, Yorks 1740 - 1817) (Hebden Bridge).

He was deeply influenced at the age of 16 by the preaching of George Whitfield, but he joined the Baptist Church and was ordained in 1763 as minister of the Baptist Church at Wainsgate, Nr. Halifax. He was invited to Carters Lane Chapel in London but was persuaded to remain with his devoted people. In 1777 he removed to Hebden Bridge where he also kept a school. In 1793 he declined an invitation to be President of the Baptist Academy in Bristol. He

published several theological works, a devotional commentary and several works of poetry. His hymns were collected in H.A.J.C.P.W. and P.D. (Leeds 1782) and D.N.B. 18/257.

245 Bless be the tie that binds

282 Lord, dismiss us with thy blessing.

Henry John Gauntlett (Wellington, Salop 1805-76)

Born July 9th 1805. In 1814 he held his first organist's position at Olney, Bucks, but until 1844 his chief study was Law. He resumed his interest in music in 1844 when it again became his full time occupation, becoming organist of St. Olaves, Southwark; Christchurch Newgate Street; and Union Chapel, Islington (1859-1867) and St. Bartholomew, Smithfield. He received the Archbishop of Canterbury's D.Mus. Diplomas in 1842 whilst still technically an amateur musician this being the first awarding of that degree for some 200 years. He was an admirer of Gregorian Music and edited a Gregorian Hymnal and a Gregorian Psalter. He was also Music Editor of Mr. Henry Allons Congregational Psalmist. He is said to have written 10,000 Hymn Tunes of which a few remain which are ranked amongst Hymnologists as the finest in the world. Died February 21st 1876 at the age of 70. D.N.B. 21/74.

22, 600 St. Fulbert.

25 Laudate.

89 Irby.

147 St. Albinus.

165 Triumph.

196, 350 St. Alphege.

207 Ardwick.

245, 674 St. George.

246 Newland.

261 Dura.

452 Gauntlett's St. Magnus.

506 University College.

860 Single Chant in G. Minor.

R. J. Bray.

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Rise up, O men of God - a slight correction

'Companion to Congregational Praise' quote the altered version of verse 3:

Her strength shall make your spirit strong,
Her (or His) service make you great.

It states that this version appeared in the 'Student Hymnal' (University of Wales, 1923),.But in fact it had already appeared in the 'Congregational Hymnary' in 1916. 'The author', says the 'Companion', 'prefers the original version'. Many congregationalists will, however, prefer to believe that we become great in serving Christ rather than that the Church becomes great through the efforts of men., as the author's version too clearly states.

Bill Ashley Smith.

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We are always happy to receive letters, information, histories and Articles for our records, The following are some of those received to date :-

- I. The History of Marton Congregational Church, Nr. Welshpool, Powys. 8 Photostated Pages of Elliotts Shropshire Congregationalism.
2. Inglewhite Congregational Church. 150 years of Christian Witness 1826-1976 by A.O.Robinson.
3. High Street Congregational Church, Stourbridge. A Manual for 1895.
4. Sandford Congregational Church, Devon 1847-1947.
5. A Report of the Congregational Union of Jamaica 1950.
6. "Through the Fire". Handbook with the story of Memorial Hall & other Congregational Churches partly or totally destroyed by enemy action in the 2nd World War.
7. A History of the Market Harborough Congregational Church 1673-1894.
8. The Wavertree Congregational Church Messenger (6 copies)
9. Stambourne Congregational Church Mag.(2 copies)
10. The Westminster Record (May 1979) & (Sept. '79)
11. Ridgemount United Church, Jamaica & Grand Cayman
12. Northampton Non-conformity 250 yrs ago by F.Ives Cater.
13. Stambourne Congregational Church 1979. An address to celebrate the 316th Anniver. by Mr. Leslie R. Fitch. We welcome Church Histories & notes of historical interest.

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