



*The
Congregational History Circle Magazine*

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THE CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY CIRCLE

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EDITORIAL

A glance through this issue of C.H.C.Magazine should convince readers that we mean what we say when we invite members to send us contributions. It is part of our duty to encourage members work. We are grateful to all who write to us for guidance in any enquiry and those who write or send items whether or not we are able to print them. We are sorry that our restricted funds means restricted issues.

Readers will be pleased however to know that we have no evidence whatsoever of the death of history! We welcome contributions by Chris Damp, and Marion Beales. We wish well to the Rev. Stephen J.Taylor, our Membership Secretary who on resigning his Ministry at Tabernacle Congregational Church, Abertillery, Gwent, South Wales is to serve U.C.C.F. as travelling secretary. Mr. Taylor was our leader and driver of the mini - bus

on our excursion around some eight Congregational and other churches on the Friday before the May Assembly held at Oldham in May. He arranged our itinerary and breaks for coffee and a late tea on route before our evening C.H.C.'s Annual General Meeting as well as our overnight accommodation with church families.

Having devoted our last issue to the International Congregational Fellowship to be held at Endecott College, Boston, Mass., it is in order to remind our readers that we hope to have some impressions of the I.C.F. and in particular the Historical Lecture on John Robinson delivered by Dr.R.Tudor Jones, in our next issue.

From the Secretary

May I apologise for the late publication of this magazine but due to the very late publication of the last magazine it was decided that rather than publish two issues of the magazine one on top of the other, it was better to spread publication dates out over the remainder of 1985 so that members could be kept up to date with news and views as it came in. We are very much hoping to get the next issue of the magazine out in December/January 1985/86 on its routine schedule and this then should get everything back to normal. Apologies!

R.J.Bray.

From the Membership Secretary

I shall terminate my pastorate, at Tabernacle Congregational Church, Abertillery on July 28th, 1985, after serving this fellowship since May 1981.

On August 27th 1985, I shall commence my new work as the travelling Secretary for International Students in the North, a position with the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (U.C.C.F.). U.C.C.F. is a society which links together evangelical Christian Unions (C.U.) in the British Universities and Colleges. My new post will involve visiting such C.U.'s, encouraging them to befriend those students from abroad who come to study in the U.K.. The work will be pastoral - welcoming overseas Christians and linking them with British believers, and evangelistic - seeking to encourage witness to students from non-Christian backgrounds.

So far I am not sure of the exact geographical area I will be covering, but my predecessors in the work, covered all of the North of England, with occasional visits to Scotland and Wales.

For this reason I feel that I must resign from the post of Membership Secretary of the Congregational History Circle as I do not feel that I shall be able to do both jobs justice. I hope to keep up my membership of the Congregational History Circle and to take part in events as my other duties will allow from time to time.

Rev.S.J. Taylor.

FROM THE POSTBAG

1. A History of Newton Abbot, Devon, United Reformed Church (formerly Congregational) from it's beginning in 1662 to the sale of the old building last Autumn and it's new relationship with the local Methodists, has now been written by Rev.John Huxtable, the Churches Secretary and H.A.Snow and will be available in July from Dr.Huxtable, Manor Cottage, East Ogwell, Newton Abbot, Devon for £3.00 plus postage 30p.

2. Cawsand Congregational Church, Cornwall recently lost it's Church Secretary for 31 years, Mr.E.J.Vanstone. A Lay-Preacher, he was held in high esteem for his faithful service.

3. On May 25th Mrs.Ellis the wife of the Secretary of the Bodmin (Countess of Huntingdon) Congregational Church, died. She had been ill for some six months. She came originally from Hanwell in Middlesex and moved to Bodmin with her husband at the commencement of World War II. She became a member of Lady Huntingdons Chapel with her husband, served in the choir and also on the ladies Committee. A Founder Member of the local Womens Institute she served in the offices of Secretary and Treasurer as well as for a period as President. The funeral Service was held at St.Leonards Chapel and was conducted by Rev.Margaret Nuthall, U.R.C. Minister of Mevagissey. Condolences are expressed to the bereaved.

4. The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion Chapel at Bodmin, Cornwall, dates back to the late 1700's. They gathered for worship in those early days in a building in Pool Street, Bodmin, known as the "Old Tudor Porch House" which was demolished in the early years of this century. Parts of the 'Mullion windows' were used in the building erected on the same site and can still be seen.

In the early days of the 19th Century it was decided to build a new Church in Church Square, Bodmin, and this was opened in 1804. The building still stands and the date stone can be clearly seen, although the building is now a club.

When Lady Huntigdon's Connexion agreed to take over the cause owing to financial troubles, they built a new Church in Fore Street, Bodmin which lasted about 100 years. With depleted attendances and structural faults in the building, it was decided to close the church, and the last service was held on October 10th, 1965. Worship has been continued since in St.Leonards Chapel, a Church of England Building, which is also now showing structural problems. Services have been maintained regularly but the Church is not allowed to have a Sunday School.

Previous to the closing of the Chapel at Bodmin they had a standing arrangement with the Mevagissey Congregational Church in the matter of Ministry.Their minister took one Sunday at Bodmin each month when the Sacrement of Holy Communion was celebrated. The minister would also conduct Christenings, Weddings and Funeral Services and spent one day each week visiting in Bodmin. During the period the Church had the support of the Rev. Alex Mead, a former Congregational Minister who retired to Mevagissey with

his wife, who was also a daughter of the man her father, Rev. J.P. Southwell, being the Lady Huntingdon Minister at Bodmin 1904-1916.

Rev. R. Parmley was the next minister who came into the arrangement and when he retired the Moderator of the U.R.C. would not agree to a joint ministry. Rev. Parmley agreed to continue his monthly and weekly visits. When he became unwell, he moved to Leeds, Yorkshire. Now the Church has no visiting minister and the regular meeting at Bodmin is for worship on Sundays, when they are served by some retired ministers and Local Lay-Preachers.

The Church welcomes visitors to the area to come along and share in their services at St. Leonards Chapel which is situated on the old A30 road through the town (now numbered A389). Car Parking is allowed on the road by the Chapel.

5 On Whit Monday, May 27th, the representatives of the Presbyterian Church in Wales, gathered at Trevecca, near Talgarth, Wales, to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the Methodist revival.

It was at Trevecca that Howell Harris (1714-1773) lived and from where he exercised his ministry. His contemporaries included Daniel Rowland and William Williams with whom he often worked. These and others were mightily used by God in the awakening of Wales in the 18th Century. It was at least partly due to his presence in the area that Selina, Countess of Huntingdon chose Trevecca for the college which opened in August 1768 when George Whitfield preached on the text of Exodus 20 v.24.

The College moved to Cheshunt in 1792 and then to Cambridge in 1905. Training for the ministry did continue at Trevecca using the house that had been the home of Howell Harris from 1842 until 1964, when it became a Lay-Centre. This work was carried on by the Calvinistic Methodists.

The original building used by the Countess of Huntingdon as a college is now part of a farm and is in a dilapidated condition.

During the day of celebration the programme included services in the chapel, community singing, group drama and childrens activities and closed with a preaching service relayed from the marquee to the Chapel, the total combined congregation being over 850. The word was preached by Rev. J.E. Wynne Davies B.A., B.D., and who recalling the work of Howell Harris spoke on Worship - Word - Witness.

6 In the last edition of the Congregational History Circle Magazine it was reported that efforts were being made to preserve the former Congregational (later U.R.C.) Chapel at Stoke Fleming, near Dartmouth, Devon by the South Devon Group Committee of the Congregational Federation and others. Not long after this report appeared in the Magazine the U.R.C. received a higher offer from another bidder to purchase the Chapel and it looked as though plans to save the Chapel would be thwarted. However the purchase of the Chapel by the other persons was dependant on them obtaining a Home Office Licence to remove the bodies buried in the vault of the Chapel. It was known that there would be local opposition to this proposal.

Subsequently planned by the other purchaser to acquire the property fell through and within the last week or two the United Reformed Church have again offered the premises to the South Devon Committee of the Congregational Federation for the originally agreed price of £7,500 and are even prepared to accept a deposit on the premises, the remainder to be treated as a mortgage on which interest would be paid, the Committee paying the balance off over a period of 2 to 3 years.

The Committee urgently need to find ways of raising this money if at all possible to save the Chapel and if anyone can help in this respect or have any suggestions on how this money might be obtained then they are asked to contact the Secretary of the Congregational History Circle urgently.

7 The Churches of the South Devon Group Committee of the Congregational Federation are also planning to organise a trip down to Cornwall on Saturday 19th October 1985 to give support to the Cornish Congregationalists who will be holding a Rally of Congregationalists at Tregony Congregational Church, near Truro, Cornwall to show interest in Continuing Congregationalism in the County. The speaker at the 2.30 p.m. Service will be Mr. Ted Wilson the former President of the Congregational Federation nationally. If anyone finds themselves in the area on that date it is hoped that they will join Congregationalists in the County for this event.

8 The formation in Manchester of the Northern Federation for Training in Ministry has been reported elsewhere in in the History Circle publications. The next step in the Federation's life will be taken this summer, when the former Congregational/U.R.C. Northern College move to the Northern Baptist College site, shortly to be renamed Luther King House.

This has become possible because both the Unitarian College Building and the Congregational/U.R.C. Building at Whalley Range have now been sold. The Congregational/U.R.C. Building has been purchased by the General Municipal Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union, who plan to use it as a National Training Centre for their officials. The £500,000 paid for it will be invested to enable the Federation to develop new patterns of training, in particular to set up ecumenical centres outside of Manchester.

The Northern College Building has been in continuous use for ministerial training since 1842. There was a service at the College on Saturday 22nd June 3 p.m. to give thanks for all that has been accomplished during the residence at Whalley Range and to ask Gods Blessing on all that shall be in the future.

9 The U.R.C. Chapel (formerly Congregational) at Wrentham, near Beccles, Suffolk, reopens in July 1985 as a direct result of Mission England. A nurture group from the Mission based at nearby Kessingland visited Wrentham and realised the need for a Free Church Witness in the village. As a result of a meeting of Baptists, Methodists, and members of the U.R.C. held at Lowestoft it was decided to hold a service on Easter Sunday at which 12 Wrentham people expressed their support for this venture, which has now grown to include Anglicans.

There were 18 founder members at an inaugural Church Meeting in May and on July 7th the Chapel reopens for regular Sunday Worship at 3 p.m.. The new fellowship hopes to maintain a link with South Lowestoft Baptist Church and the Rev. Ted Smith of Kessingland has been invited to be its Minister.

10 Details are sought of a Joseph Dear whose father had been an elder of the Wells Chapel in Hackney, London which began in 1815. Anyone who can give information on the person or the Church is asked to contact the Secretary.

11 The suggestion has been made that the U.R.C. History Society, ourselves and various other learned Societies might consider joining together to celebrate the 300th Anniversary of the Act of Toleration in 1989. In a joint venture to see that full and fitting celebrations take place. Special Church Services, lectures, exhibitions and other events are suggested amongst other things and the views of readers of this Magazine are asked for so that the Secretary of the Congregational History Circle can get together as many ideas, views etc. as possible to forward to the U.R.C. History Society by the end of October, readers with ideas and views on the subject are asked to contact the Secretary as soon as possible.

12 The John Owen Society will be holding a meeting in the Council Room, Mansfield College, Oxford on November 9th 1985 commencing at 4.15 p.m. with tea and followed by the talk at 5 p.m.. The Guest Speaker will be Dr. Daniel Jenkins, Minister of Highgate United Reformed Church and sometime Professor at Princeton Seminary who will speak on the subject "Protestant Aesthetics: A Conversation with Donald Davie." The Meeting will be preceded by the AGM of the John Owen Society and all interested are welcome. The charge for tea and the Lecture is £1.00. For fuller details telephone 01-274-5541 or write to Trinity Chapel, St. Mathews Road, London, SW2 1NF.

The 1662 Society

Tuesday 1st. October 1985 'The Semantics of Agnosticism: Pascal Revisited' Speaker Ian Walker of Dulwich College.

Venue: City Temple, Holborn Viaduct, London EC1.

Tuesday 12th. November 1985 'Dr. Johnson and the Dissenters'

Speaker Dr. Grayson Ditchfield of University of Kent.

Venue: Dr. Williams Library, Gordon Square, London WC1.

Tuesday 3rd. December 1985 'The Lindisfarne Gospels' Speaker

Janet Backhouse, Assistant Keeper, Department of Manuscripts,

British Museum. Venue: Trinity Congregational Church, St. Matthews Road, Brixton, London SW2.

All meetings begin at 7.30 p.m.. Cold supper, Tea and Coffee will be served from 7.00 p.m. All welcome. Membership £4 per year. Non-members 50 pence per lecture. Phone 274 5541 for further details.

The Memorial Hall (St.Bartholomews Day) Celebrations.

The St.Bartholomew's Day celebrations on Saturday 24th August last went very well. We met for a brief act of worship at John Owen's grave in Bunhill Fields in the morning and then made our way to Christchurch, Spitalfields. We visited Spitalfields in memory of the Huguenots who settled in this area after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. After this we visited a nearby Huguenot house which had subsequently served as a synagogue. Spitalfields, of course, had also gained notoriety as the scene of Jack the Ripper's murders.

In the afternoon we gathered outside Memorial Hall for a short service and then moved to St.Andrew's by the Wardrobe, an historic Parish Church rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren (after the Great Fire of London). The choir sang a translation of Psalm 62 into the French by Beza and Dr.Alan Argent gave an informative address. The service was well attended and represented a broad cross-section of Christian denominations.

Alan Argent.

THE REVD. JOHN JOHNSON 1759 - 1804

John Johnson was born on the 27th September 1759 at Norwich. Before he knew the Lord as Saviour, he was exceedingly moral and self-righteous. He limited himself to a number of words each day, and noted in a book all that he said so as to guard against sin. William Roby said of Johnson "by the observance of this strictness he supposed that he was more than good - almost angelic!" [1].

Johnson suffered a dangerous illness and wondered why the Lord had allowed him to suffer so much. Some time after his recovery he was invited to go to Lady Huntingdon's Chapel in Norwich. Mr.Clayton (who became Minister of the Congregational Church assembling at the Kings Weigh House, London) was the Preacher: he preached from Matthew 7,v.24 - 27, the parable of the two builders, one who built his house upon the rock, the other on the sand. Johnson was so moved that he at once asked the Lord into his life. On leaving the Chapel, Johnson met a dog. He allowed the dog to walk along the path whilst he walked in the gutter, thinking the beast much better than him, because it was without sin.

Johnson grew very quickly in the faith. Many friends advised him to seek ordination into the Church of England but, because of the Anglican order and because of his warm feelings towards the people among whom he had been convicted of his faith, Johnson offered his services to the Countess of Huntingdon.

Johnson entered into the Countess's College at Trevecca, South Wales and was one of the first six students who were ordained on the plan of secession. After his ordination, he laboured in many places as an itinerant with considerable success.

In 1793, Johnson went to Wigan. It is said that a pious young woman went from Wigan to London for service. Her heart was grieved at the state of her native town. On one occasion especially, she prayed in an agony that God

would intervene for her. Her prayer was heard.[2] So the Countess sent Johnson to Wigan where he preached "evangelical truth". } Amongst his earliest converts at Wigan was none other than William Roby, who he eventually advised to enter the Ministry.

Johnson preached on many occasions in the surrounding districts. At Chorley, he preached in St.Thomas's Square. More than once his life was endangered. The first time he preached, a man in the crowd flung at him a bone, weighing upwards of two pounds, which narrowly missed his head. He announced his intention of preaching again and the same man planned a more violent disturbance. During the morning of the appointed day, the man paraded the streets of Chorley with an open sack thrown over his shoulders in the form of a clerical gown and with paper bands under his chin. He mocked Johnson and promised the villagers fine sport if they would but attend that evening.

At the appointed time, Mr.Johnson appeared and began the service. Just as a riot was commencing some miners came along. All expected that these miners would cause more disturbance but, after hearing a few of Johnson's words, they apprehended the unhappy man and confined him to a barn. They then returned and heard the remainder of the sermon.

The unhappy man was so irritated that he planned more effectual measures for the next opportunity. Some days later he was walking towards Chorley and was overtaken by an empty cart. He got in the cart and, full of his purpose, began to tell the driver of the cart of his preparations and what he would do to the preacher when he came to Chorley again. After talking with much indignation and profaness on the subject, he laid himself with his face downward in the cart and apparently fell asleep. Having driven into Chorley, the carter called unto him and shook him for the purpose of awakening him, turning him on his back, behold! - the persecutor was dead. [4]

Johnson also preached at Bretherton amid great opposition. (Roby and Johnson planted the seeds from which grew the present Congregational Church, founded in 1819). One evening the tumult was so great that Johnson was obliged to stop and dismiss the congregation. Johnson said he would have to take legal proceedings and, whilst returning to his lodgings, he was pelted with stones. He caught hold of one man by his collar and questioned him as to who the ringleader was. The next day Johnson applied to the Rector of the Parish of Croston, a Justice of the Peace, for a warrant to apprehend the ringleader but he refused as he saw Johnson as 'schismatic'. Johnson eventually got a warrant from a neighbouring Rector. The man was bound to appear at the next Quarter Sessions at Wigan. But in the meantime, Johnson had a warrant served on him for catching hold of one man to question him about the ringleader. Johnson was charged with assaulting the man on the King's highway. This warrant was issued by the Rector of Croston.

Eventually the day of the trial arrived. Many of the villagers from Bretherton attended the trial at Wigan. One of the jury refused to give his name and was dismissed. After being replaced, the trial began. Johnson had

to produce his licence for a dissenting Minister and his licence to preach at Bretherton. The court disputed the signature which authorised Johnson to preach. Some believed the signature of Hugh Speed, deputy registrar of Chester, was forged but a respectable gentleman came forward and confirmed that the signature was that of Speed. Once this was settled, the witnesses were called. The first witness took the oath and swore that there was no riot. But the second witness after taking the oath was convicted of his sin and admitted that a riot had taken place. The ringleader was found guilty and fined. The case against Johnson was dismissed. Johnson wrote a brief Jewish allegory entitled "The Levites Journal" about the trial.

From Wigan, Johnson moved to Tyldsley in 1789, where he erected a Chapel at great expense to himself. After residing there for a while, Johnson was urged to cross the Atlantic by the Countess of Huntingdon to be Superintendent of the orphanage which Mr. Whitfield had left to her care. Johnson was outspoken whilst in America about slavery and he made many enemies, but Johnson's principal suffering was caused by the death of the Countess of Huntingdon.

An American government body illegally took possession of the orphanage and changed the trust. Johnson refused to adhere to the new trust until it was seen to be legal. After much abuse, Johnson and his wife were flung into prison. Johnson was again asked to run the orphanage according to the government's trust rather than that of the Countess of Huntingdon. He refused and was released to return to England.

Johnson again settled in Tyldsley. He had borrowed much money for the erection of the Chapel at this place and was dependent on the mercy of his creditors, Johnson was unable to pay his debts and was thrown into Lancaster Castle. There he changed the prison to a temple by the preaching of the gospel. It was usual for three or four men to give their lives to the Lord after each sermon Johnson preached. Finally, Johnson's friends raised the money to pay off the debts and Johnson was released from prison.

Johnson removed to Manchester in 1798, where he acquired St. Georges Church. This church was built for Anglican purposes, but the builder became bankrupt and the church fell into the hands of his creditors. The church was opened on the 1st April 1798 and Johnson drew great crowds.

Occasionally he preached in Hebrew to the Jews of Manchester.

Johnson, during his life as a Minister, had adopted Congregational views. As a great friend of William Roby, he played a part in the life of the Congregational Churches of Manchester. On 11th November 1801, Johnson read the lesson and offered prayers at the induction of the Revd. Samuel Bradley to the pastorate of Mosley Street Congregational Church.

Mr. Johnson was a poet, a musician, a Hebraist - yea, an almost universal

genius. He published a volume of tunes adapted to the Psalms, dedicated with a very graceful introduction to his Patroness, the Countess of Huntingdon; so also a book, Mount Tabor, and the Levites Journal, which excited great attention. It gave, under Jewish allusions, a description of his efforts to spread the Gospel around Wigan, with the encounters he had to sustain, and the merciful deliverances with which he was favoured.

Johnson died on the 22nd September 1804 after an illness of many weeks. He was faithful to the last and just before he died, said Mr. Roby, he exclaimed "thanks be unto God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ". He was buried in St. George's Churchyard and his gravestone bears the following inscription, written by Johnson for that purpose:

"He knew but in part;
He prophesied but in part;
But now that which is perfect is come;
That which was to him in part, is done away".

The Church's burial register records his burial thus:

" Sept.27th. The Revd. John Johnson, 1st Minister of St.Georges Church and Rector of the same. Interred aged 44 years, 11 months and 26 days. Would have arrived to the 45th year if liv'd till 27th".

William Roby preached the funeral sermon from 2 Kings, 2, v.12 - "My Father, My Father".

St. Georges on the Croft, later known as St.George's, Oldham Road, was sold by auction in 1818 to the Anglicans and was consecrated on 17th January 1818. The Church was demolished in 1877 and the site was used for Miles Platting goods yard. Thus there is now no memorial to this great servant of Christ.

Ref.1 My Father, My Father - William Roby 1804.

2 Ebenexer - William Roaf 1847.

3 Lancashire, Its Puritanism and Nonconformity - R.Halley 1869.

4 Ebenezer - William Roaf 1847.

5 Lancashire Nonconformity Vol.5 - B.Nightingale 1898.

Chris. Damp

JOHNSON, JOHN

696

b.Nr.Norwich,Norfolk,27 Sept. 1759 at Norwich.

TREVECCA

Ord.at Spa fields,London,9 March,1783 for

Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion

Supply,Bootle,Cumberland

Wigan (C.H.), Lancs 1783-

also prg.Chorley,Bretherton,etc

Tyldesley, Lan) 1788/9?-
Master of Lady Huntingdon's Orphanage,
Georgia, America
Tyldesley, again
(imprisoned for debt on chapel)
St. George's Chapel, Rochdale-road
Manchester -1804
Died 22 September, 1804

D.N.B., xxx.19;

E.M., 1805, pp.145ff;

Life & Times, C.of H., ii.43,272,436,444 (as
JOHNSTON)

C.M., 1822, p.164;

CHST., xiii.40f;

Nightingale, iv.74; v.121

"THE GARDEN OF APPOLLOS"

Abridged from "Our Sons Far Away" published by the Independent Press, September 1936.

A Hundred years ago there were slaves in the West Indies and in British Guiana. Not until the 1st of August, 1838, was there to be deliverance for the captive; that was to be the day of Jubilee. Yet the actual fight had been won and the planters were fearfully facing the problems of the new time whilst the slaves were on tiptoe of a joyous hope.

The first missionaries sent to the West Indies were not sent to be advocates of emancipation, but to take with them a Gospel which made slavery impossible. They were not firebrands, it was the "thing preached" that was incendiary. In Demerara and Berbice the missionaries of L.M.S. were charged to confine themselves strictly to religious instruction, but Governor Smith, who warned John Smith "If you ever teach a negro to read and I hear of it, I will banish you from the Colony," knew the consequence of an evangelised and instructed community. Though the missionaries were very careful to refrain from direct attack upon the institution of slavery, their letters to friends at home, their exposure of the most flagrant oppressions, and their natural concern for those to whom they had been sent, made them spear-head in the attack upon slavery. It was their reports, their persecutions, and their sacrifice which roused the public conscience of Britain, whilst there was no single factor which so determined the final victory as the martyrdom of John Smith, the missionary of the L.M.S. sent to succeed John Wray at Le Resouvenir. Thus the L.M.S. was the natural guardian of the emancipated slaves when at last there came the year of Jubilee.

It was essential that the slaves set free should be shepherded, and so the London Missionary Society sent out its first six missionaries to share the labours of the dauntless Baptists in Jamaica who were doing there what the

L.M.S. did in Demerara. Thus in both the land where Raleigh had sought El Dorado, and the island where Columbus had found the unspoiled race of Arawaks with ever smiling faces, the London Missionary Society was ministering to the freed man awakened to a new responsibility, and that the emancipation was completed with so little disturbance was due to the devout men who had toiled to bring the slave to Christ and to make them fit for liberty.

Within twenty years of emancipation the West Indies Colonies were on the verge of bankruptcy. New economic policies at home spelt ruin to the sugar colonies, not yet alerted to the need for a radical change in colonial life. These changes pressed most hardly upon the coloured folk, many of whom were dreaming of becoming peasant proprietors, and made even more marvellous the rapid increase in the number of their schools and churches. The old missionaries and the emancipated slaves worked together in harmony, and reports reached the Board of Directors which led them to find abundant arguments in favour of the policy which was in tune with the spirit of the times, the age when Samuel Smiles was the prophet, and independent self help the ideal. In 1866 a committee had been appointed to consider the affairs of the L.M.S. then in the midst of one of its periodic crises; there was great pressure upon the income and drastic need for economy. A new policy was inaugurated which was to begin in the West Indies. The committee reported that there were in British Guiana eight missionaries, two native pastors, fifteen stations, 3,200 members, 16,000 adherents, and an income of three thousand pounds, whilst the Board contributed nearly four thousand pounds. In Jamaica there were five missionaries, two native pastors, nine stations, more than two thousand members and seven thousand adherents, whilst the cost

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to the Society was twelve hundred pounds. The Board resolved to make no additions to the European staff but to replace them by native pastors, whilst the expenses of the missions should be regarded as the obligation of the local churches.

The London Missionary Society felt that their particular charge was to preach the Gospel to the regions beyond, whilst there were few in British Guiana and Jamaica who were not in a position after years of missionary effort, to hear the Gospel if they would. "Paul" had planted, and the time had now come to leave the gardens to others. It was hoped that those for whom "Paul" had toiled might now be able to preserve what had been sown. The gradual relinquishment of the work continued for a number of years, until in 1881 death or retirement had reduced the missionaries to three- from the original thirteen. Also the majority of stations were either in the care of a visiting missionary supervising local effort, or of a native pastor. It was about this time that grave reports reached the L.M.S. of the depressed condition of the work, and it was urged that unless some help was forthcoming events would lead to scandal. In 1883 a conference was held between the L.M.S. and the Congregational Union which led to an offer to contribute to the two Unions of British Guiana and Jamaica a grant of £300 for three years, then two hundred pounds for three more, and then for a final three years a grant of £100. It was hoped that help for nine years would tide the churches in the West Indies over a difficult phase and that then the work would be really self supporting.

At the end of nine years the depressed state of the colonies, the cause of more than one commission of enquiry, was reflected in the story of the churches. Land was sinking back into primitive bush for lack of cultivation, estates which once had been the pride of their owners and the source of wealth to famous English families whose names had been household words in Liverpool, Glasgow and Bristol, were becoming derelict. The state of the Churches was equally parlous. The stations which bore the names of great men, missionaries or emancipators, or old fashioned Biblical names, Bethel and Zoar or Ebenezer, and their like, were in danger of becoming heaps of ruin. Tropical rains and heat made decay an ever present foe, and an enervating climate tended to sap energy when hope was receding. It was then that the call came to the Colonial Society to accept the task of Appollo's, and to tend the gardens left by "Paul" who had responded to the call to go a little further on. The task of him that planteth and him that watereth is one.

In the early days of mass migration, appeals for help on behalf of our sons beyond the seas had been sent to the L.M.S. and it was to them that Canada and Australia first turned. It was because their task was especially to the regions beyond that the Colonial Society was first founded, and now when Canada and Australia were anxious to carry the privilege of sons, and to maintain themselves as fully as may be, there came another opportunity. The

sons of the bondswomen were to take the place of the children of the free. The responsibility was shouldered gladly, and for some years the Colonial Society shared with the L.M.S. and the Congregational Union of England and Wales the privilege of making a contribution for the work in the West Indies, whilst taking special responsibility for the providing of ministers to supply the vacant stations. In 1908 the policy of joint contributions by the three conferring came to an end, and the L.M.S. transferred all their interests and their responsibilities to the Colonial Society, which then became charged with the care of British Guiana and Jamaica.

The story of the next thirty years is one of pathos and pride. There was need of advice in the care of property (it was found, for instance, that the church properties in Jamaica were uninsured), and there were needs for reinforcements of men and money. The West Indies are as fair as a poet's dream, yet tragedy is never far away. It is possible for three hurricanes to visit the islands in a single year, as was the case in 1926, whilst there are perils of earthquake, tidal wave and volcanic upheaval. In 1903 there was a notable hurricane which devastated Jamaica. Through the lead of the Society a sum of nearly two thousand pounds was quickly raised to meet the urgent needs, but what the cyclone spared the earthquake overwhelmed, and a few years later the capital was a wreck, and the whole countryside saw church and home brought to a heap of ruins. Here was a further opportunity for the fostering care of the Society. Another relief fund was started and two thousand pounds raised which although too little for the need did have the value of being raised promptly and sent to the stricken as a gesture of brotherly compassion in the name of the Master.

In Kingston there is a fine stone building and a church of three hundred members, but this city of a hundred and twenty thousand people had its problems of over-crowding and poverty which called for a new crusade. Slavery had left behind a trail of evils, and the congestion of fifty per cent of the inhabitants into a slum area, where they live in single wooden buildings is another cause of the high rate of infant mortality and the seventy per cent illegitimate birthrate. It is here where the missionary is most aware of the changing conditions of the island. Not so many years ago the church was the centre of both the educational and social life, now increased facilities for pleasure and easy transport, together with educational advantages which make the free discussion of economic and political questions general, add to the difficulty of the church's task whilst making its leadership more than ever necessary. The Kingston Church furnishes an example of the sacrifice which the people accept as a matter of course; whilst many of its members are too poor to contribute anything at all, many men receiving a daily wage reckoned in pence, the average annual contribution for the support of the work is one pound per member.

Most of the thirty five churches in the country areas are built upon the summits of hills. They look down upon the fertile valleys where today plantations of bananas and grapefruits are taking the place of once

universal sugar. As in the towns, there is the continual struggle with poverty, a poverty evidenced by the huts of wattle and daub. Here the belief in witchcraft persists and the obeah man preys upon the credulity and fear of the ignorant. Many strange religious sects flourish in tropical luxuriance; some of them inhabit a strange borderland where ultra modern cults and Ancient African witchcraft are coated with a Christian veneer. These are amongst the reasons which make educated leadership as urgent as ever, and for some time it will be necessary to send to the West Indies those who are able to lead the converts from the bondage of old traditions to a high standard of Christian practice. The people have a passion for education, many of them gladly choosing to live in their old mud huts that they may build school and church.

Though it takes more than a generation to get rid of evil, good is even more persistent. The heritage from the past is not only the evils of slavery, there is the devoted service of good men. One of the first six missionaries sent to Jamaica by the L.M.S. was William Slayter, a man in no way greatly distinguished from his fellows. He began to preach at Porus, which was about ten miles from Four Paths where was the first Congregational Church. On the hills nearby was a plantation to which the owner welcomed him as a friend. Here master and slave heard the word with gladness, and when the owner of the plantation was won for Christ, in loving gratitude, he gave a piece of ground upon which to build a church. This was named after the donor, Davyton. Today, the Davyton Church is a fine stone building from which one looks over a sweeping panorama of hill and valley. In the year when the centenary of emancipation was celebrated the great-grandson of the slave owner was inducted to the Service of Christ in the Church his ancestor had given, and which had become the channel of life to the fourth generation.

The story of British Guiana is one of the same pattern as that of Jamaica, though on the mainland its conditions are similar to those of the islands.

There is the like poverty, there is the evils of immorality and witchcraft and the additional complications which come from the presence of immigrants from the East. Here the missionaries have often longer journeys visiting the out stations up the mighty rivers, and caring for the souls of not only Africans but for those of the Aborigines. In the islands, the Aborigines have disappeared, largely owing to the evil deeds of Europeans of a by-gone day, and it is good to know that on the mainland some slight vicarious atonement is being made by those who today take the Good News to them. Since the Colonial Society took over the care of this old Missionary field there have been many good causes for delight. The old stations have taken a new lease of life, and the handful of missionaries from Home have been helped by many of the children of the slaves, some of whom have become highly honoured for their gifts and for their service.

Smith's Church, and Old Providence, and Mission Chapel, Bermice, have renewed their youth, whilst on the coast and up the rivers there are chains

of stations which are centres of life and liberty. The story of Smith's Church alone would be ample justification for the sacrifice made in taking over the old stations of the L.M.S.. In recent months there has been the story of hundreds of additions to the Church, new members throbbing with zeal and old members aglow with new life. Surely there is no better memorial to the missionary whose martyr death opened the doors to freedom than a living Church of those whom Christ has freed.

The hundred years pilgrimage of British Guiana and Jamaica has been a difficult journey. From the golden hour when the fetters were broken and slaves dreamed of joyous liberty, through the years of adverse circumstances, crippling economic conditions and physical catastrophe, to the present struggle with a world order that has little consideration for small peoples, they have travelled undaunted and hopeful. Their message to the white people is not only that of souls in travail but of faith in one who still works out His purposes in spite of all human failures. They have a spiritual gift to offer Europe and the world, and our return for all that the negro has been and suffered is to help them, often so much nearer to a sense of the reality of God than we, to a worthy imitation of the life of our Lord and to an experience of the power of His Spirit.

For further reading see:

Rev. George Musgrave Missionary Under the Colonial Missionary Society (CMS) 1951 -1954 in Guyana. Congregational History Circle Magazine Vol.1 No.9 Dec.82. p27-30.

also David Watson Cwm Advocacy Secretary; Account of his visit to Guyana for the 1883-1983 Celebration.

And the old but useful book by C. Silvester Horne "The Story of the L.M.S. 1795 - 1895." Chapter VI pp146-

John Bray.

Sir John Bickerton Williams. Knight.

Victorian author and Congregational Apologist. 1792 - 1855.

Letter and last Will

A portrait of a Prominent Victorian Congregational Scholar.

It could be said that as the Dissenters had suffered imprisonment and exile during the 16th and 17th Century, and gained liberty and influence in the 18th Century, it was in the 19th Century that they entered into their golden age. John Bickerton Williams is an example of a tradesman's son who rose in rank and influence locally and nationally, who added through his life's work, honour and lustre to the name Congregational Nonconformist. In addition to being the first to be knighted by the young Queen Victoria, he was the first Nonconformist to receive that honour for his services to the Town of his birth and his Country. John Bickerton Williams was an able

scholar and a leading apologist for the Congregational and Nonconformist cause in the hey-day of Tractarianism.

C. Silvester Horne wrote in his 'Popular History of the Free Churches' of the years during which John Bickerton Williams' literary works appeared.

"The nineteenth century was to be the century of Tractarianism in England - the century of a revival of mediaeval sacerdotal and sacramentarian theories. England was to hear the reassertion of the Church's claim to implicit belief and obedience over against the claims of the individual reason and conscience. A more elaborate and sensuous ritual was only the symbol of the revival of certain ecclesiastical theories which had found but little support.... since the days of Laud".[1]

In this connection the two volumes of John Bickerton Williams' letters on Puritanism and Nonconformity were especially important as he sought through them to stem the flow of sacerdotalism which tended to erode and denigrate the Independent and Nonconformist position. We will have opportunity to take a closer look at these two volumes in the course of this study.

Our subject John Bickerton Williams was the son of William and Hannah Williams, Shopkeeper at Broseley, and was born on the 4th March 1792 at Sandford Hall in the parish of West Felton, some few miles from Shrewsbury. Collaterally, he was related to the family of the great Puritan and ejected minister Philip Henry and his even more distinguished son Matthew Henry whose Bible Commentary has made his a family name throughout the christian world. The child was baptized at the dissenting meeting house at Oswestry some miles to the north-west by Dr. Edward Williams.[2] This indicated that his parents were dissenters who had attached themselves to the ancient congregation under its pastor who in turn had been influenced by the great Welsh methodist preacher and revivalist Daniel Rowlands (1713-90). Their pastor Dr. Edward Williams removed in the same year, 1792, to become pastor and minister of Carrs Lane, Birmingham.

"In very early infancy his home was transferred to Wem and he there received his education in the seminary of the Rev. Peter Edwards, and in the Free Grammar school of the town. From his childhood he delighted in books, and his schooldays were distinguished by much energy of character and earnestness, both in study and in sport".[3]

The writer of the memoir, Pidgeon, adds:

"Surrounded by religious privileges he grew up in familiarity with Divine truth. The first decidedly serious impressions that he could remember were made during a visit at Sandford Hall by a sermon of a working man, on the parable of the wise and foolish virgins; and though evanescent, they were the means of bringing him under the notice of several christian friends, and among them Mr. Henshaw... a distinguished solicitor, who had built and endowed the Chapel at Wem, in which the family worshipped."[4]

By the 17th February 1806 John was articled to Mr. Henshaw and his partner

in the practice, Mr. Lee. Young John is said to have buried himself in the treasures of Mr. Lee's library, which Pidgeon writes:

"was full of good authors...and as it is said of the excellent Mr. Perkins, he went 'Post through' its treasures whether octavos, quartos or folios. The writings of Oliver Heywood, Philip and Matthew Henry, Charnock, Watts and Doddridge, especially interested him, and originated the taste for Puritan and Nonconformist literature by which he was so eminently distinguished." [5]

Wem his home town was itself famous in Nonconformist history for in 1558 the Church of England curate of the town had refused burial to a William Glover who had opposed popish practices in the parish. Wem and Wrenbury as well as Whitchurch in north Salop were scenes of dissenting activity by Philip Henry, Francis Tallents, Richard Lathrop, Thomas Holland and later Harrold Harrop.

The lasting impression made upon the mind of our subject and the sermons during worship, as well as the example of his parents, led him to confide to his mother and his minister, the Rev. Peter Edwards his soul's conviction of its need of the grace and peace of God, which led to his being received into the congregation and in the words of his biographer in the memorial already quoted,

"In the autumn of 1809 he was instructed to the fellowship of the Church...In a letter...to the Rev. Peter Edwards he referred to the perusal of three sermons by the Rev. M. Henry, entitled, 'The Folly of Despising our own souls', 'The Folly of Despising our own ways', and 'Sobermindedness recommended to young people', and of other religious books, in connexion with the ministry of the word, as conscious part of the gradual process whereby the change which he trusted had taken place in him had been wrought".

At the age of 17 years he was received into Church fellowship and was soon teaching in the Sabbath School, visiting the sick and poor of the town. He took part in the devotion at house meetings and described his experience in his own words:

"Mr. Edwards called me early into that service after I was admitted into church fellowship. The first time was at his own house. He came to, and called upon me, and then walked away. I declined in great confusion; but after a long pause, was literally forced to break the silence. I thought it unkind and unhandsome, though he did not so mean it. With Divine help I got through, and the ice was broken. Would that I had more of the grace of prayer. In secret prayer I had long felt real delight, but a nervous timidity made public engagements peculiarly irksome to me."

It was this natural instinct of nervous timidity, which explains how he was able to resist the many calls from friends and admirers to consider the ministry as a vocation. His future contribution to that ministry was to be supportive of others, rather than participatory of ministry itself and there his major contribution can be seen to have lasting value. About that time something happened that was to direct his mind to the main purpose and usefulness of his life.

"Passing thro' his native town, Wem, his attention was drawn to some papers exposed in a hucksters or hawkers shop window. On closer examination he found them to be a collection of manuscript sermons, several having the words 'Uncle Henry' at their head. He purchased them for a small sum and ascertained the autograph to be that of Miss Katharine Tylston, the niece of the great commentator Matthew Henry. To his dismay he discovered that many such volumes had been handed over for destruction by some descendants of the family, who had renounced the orthodoxy of their illustrious ancestors, and all but this small remnant had been 'used up'. The rescue of this much was a source of great satisfaction, and the means not only of inspiring a new and powerful taste, but of imparting much benefit to his soul. And formed the commencement of a large collection of MSS." [6]

Later he was to publish Eighteen of these Sermons and much beside.

Among the many other works was the 'Memoirs of the Life and Character of the Rev. Matthew Henry' in 1828. This memoir was to follow that of Mr. Tong which had its excellences and imperfections. John Bickerton Williams improved the chronology and divided the whole into chapters, and by quoting Matthew Henry tried to make him into his own biographer. On the title page Williams quoted " I am to speak of a life passed without noise:of modesty at home and abroad:Charity: contempt of the world:thirst after heavenly things: of unwearied labours: and all actions so performed as might be exemplary and beneficial to others." The great gift of Williams was that of gleaning from the pages of puritan chronicles phrases and quotations with which to enliven his literary works.

Our young subject, having by now learned a little, while articled to Mr. Henshaw and Lee and having fulfilled the conditions set down, left the firm having completed two years in their establishment. Pidgeon records as follows:

" The settlement in Liverpool of a favourite cousin...was the means of leading him to that town at the end of his course with Mr.Lee. In Nov 1811 he entered upon his new sphere, and...a busy professional engagement of nearly two years duration. ...He took an active part in the Church and the Sabbath-school of his pastor and friend the Rev. Peter Charrier [6a], formed many valuable friendships, and persued an extensive course of private reading. In Liverpool... he was engaged in mercantile persuits, in partnership with a relative and friend, but continued his legal studies, looking vigilantly around for an advantageous opening in his profession." [7]

Our subject had been looking around in other directions for on the 8th Sept 1815 he was admitted to membership at Seven Hill with his wife for on the 27th December 1813 he had married Elizabeth, daughter of the late Mr.Josiah Robins of Birmingham, at Aston Church near Birmingham. The affection which

drew them together continued to hold them in the bond of married bliss for 42 years, until the bond was broken in 1855 by his death. They had three sons and two daughters.

In 1815, he was led by a variety of circumstances to settle with his family in Shrewsbury and on 21st April that year settled in the town. In the following January he was admitted as an attorney and solicitor, and commenced a practice which was to continue until his return to Wem in 1841. The tenets of the Protestant work ethic were closely followed by him, being marked by punctuality, attention to business, stewardship of his time to allow room for private devotion; prominence in the Church's activities, extensive acquaintance with the Puritans, and the works of Christian and literary men, and last but no means least, the preparation of a number of volumes for the press.

"His first leisure in Shrewsbury" writes his biographer, Pidgeon, "was devoted to the publication of the 'Eighteen Sermons of Matthew Henry' from original MSS. Then followed the 'Memoir of Mrs Savage', the eldest daughter of Philip Henry, with a preface by the Rev. W. Jay. 'The Life of the Rev. Philip Henry. V.D.W., corrected and enlarged'. - 'Memoirs of the Life Character and Writings of the Rev. Matthew Henry'. - 'A brief Memorial of his relative and friend William Henry Lacon with a sermon occasioned by his death'. - 'Memoirs of the Life Character and Writings of the Sir Matthew Hale, Lord Chief Justice of England'. - 'The life of the Rev. David Simpson', minister of Christ Church, Macclesfield, prefixed to a new edition of his 'Plea for Religion'. He was also a very frequent correspondent with and a contributor to the Evangelical and Congregational Magazines etc." [8]

It has been said that an author has little control over his literary works after they leave the press. This might be illustrated by the way four editions of the author's book on Mrs. Sarah Savage appeared in 1818 1st edition, 1819, 1821, 1848. This particular work which lies before me is the second edition 1819 printed by W. Clowes in the Strand in half leather bindings, and must have looked very attractive when it first appeared. It is the story of a woman's upbringing under a famous father and an equally wonderful mother and describes the real life situation of the ministers at the time. Williams' purpose in writing notes to assist the reader to trace the background of the Diary is remarked upon by him in an entry in his diary for August 1817;

"Began an outline for a life Mrs. Savage, Mr. P. Henry's eldest daughter. It is my prayer to serve the church herein. The time I can devote to it is little - before breakfast and sometimes after supper - but it will amply compensate the toil. God's work is its own wages."

The birth of Sarah Savage at Broad Oak, Near Whitchurch, Salop/Flint Border

on the 7th August 1664 and her upbringing by 'eminently pious parents - whose praise has been long in the churches,' is set out with admonitions to christian parents to so bring up their children that they too may by the grace of God become heirs of eternal life. The book abounds with sweet touches of home life, the role of servants the duties related to the 'divine exercises' through the private and corporate study of scriptures and private and family prayer, in addition to Sabbath worship. The events of birth and death are all made to speak the urgent need for the grace and mercy of God. The words and phrases of course are not those of John Bickerton Williams. They are culled from Sarah's diary. The art of Williams lies in the arrangement of the material and the result a volume that was read over again by many generations of men and women, and would profit all who turn to its pages today.

Life for those with reasonable means of support was comfortable and pleasant at Shrewsbury in the beginning of the last century. Williams recalls a tribute of Philip Henry to the beauty of the quarry still called by that name and known as the scene of one of Britains finest Flower Shows. Nearby was the New Chapel at Swan Hill that Williams attended. Its Minister was the Rev. Thomas Weaver whose story is one of a poor boy making good. Left as an orphan in Clerkenwell, London, he grew up to be a most influential minister at Swan Hill and was held in high esteem in the County. The Memoir continues:-

"His association with the late venerable Thomas Weaver and the church under his charge, were of the happiest and holiest character. From the year 1820 he fulfilled [10] the duty of the deaconship. As aCongregational Nonconformist.. he could concede to others the same freedom of judgement that he claimed for himself. The love of the brethren,..giving a tenth of his income to charity...he never felt at home in the committee room or on the platform..he was inclined..more to the....quiet paths of usefulness...and was privileged with the friendship and correspondence of men of christian and literary eminence...in his immediate neighbourhood and throughout the country and extensively in America. And his home was open to ministers of his own and other denominations."

On the passing of the Municipal Reform Bill in 1835(?) he was elected Alderman of Shrewsbury and in the next year was its Mayor, standing as the first liberal to hold that office. Shortly after coming to public notice in this way he was introduced to the Duke of Sussex, which was followed by his being awarded a knighthood at the Duke's request. A few quotations from his diary edited by his grandson, indicate the way he was raised to the honour of knighthood. [11]

"Feb 1836 Set off to London...to present the Corporation Address to the King...

Monday 23rd Set off with Mr. Clement in a glass coach in court apparel, for St. James..The attention to rank and station very interesting...I

was thinking of the Parable of the Wedding garment, with the nice particularity..illustrated. ...The Deputy chamberlain...asked me to take off my gloves, as no person is allowed to appear before the King with a glove on either hand...About a quarter-past 4 I reached the King. I presented the Address kneeling. The King saw my hesitation and said...'you must kiss my hand'-you must kiss my hand!

Nov 1836 As Mayor to present another Address. At Kinmel Park...presented to the Royal Duke...my edition of some of Matthew Henry's commentaries, and Life...and he showed me his collection of books.

1837 Jan 24th. Travelled to London. and Jan 27th At Kensington Palace...and breakfasted with H.R.H. I was placed next but one to the Duke. After seeing his library I presented him with Matthew Henry's MS sermon on 'The Works of God', and my life of Sir Matthew Hale.

April 12th To London. April 17th To Kensington Palace. The Duke is sick abed. I visited him.

April 28th. Went to Sandford Hall. - where I was born. They have begun to pull down the old house, my native spot. ...It is many years since I traversed the scenes of my boyhood...I was glad to see it...John took two drawings of it. Mr.Bickerton and I walked over the farm, which he has greatly improved... .

June 1837 Monday 5th Am journeying to London in reply to H.R.H's kind invitation. 8th June, dines at Lord Dinorben's...and called at Kensington Palace. Now the tories are coming to dine with me on saturday ...plenty to form one of their cabinet. I make no distinction as to politics..." He had been appointed Mayor as a liberal hence the sensitivity concerning the meeting with Tories. On that occasion the Duke informed Williams of the knighthood that was to be conferred upon him, the Duke added, "I have now one thing to tell you. You are to present your book (i.e. Sir Matthew Hale's life) to the King, and be knighted. If you knew all you would say it was a victory. I consider it a grand victory, and of considerable political importance."

A great victory it indeed was, and a very considerable departure from custom to nominate a dissenter for knighthood. The liberals were on the increase and supporters of the dissenting cause. The Duke was close to the King and added, "you shall be knighted for your book.". News came however on the 9th that the King was ill- and on the decline. The King died on the 20th June, and the young Princess Victoria proclaimed Queen. On 8th July he was at St.Chad's Church as Mayor of Shrewsbury, it being the day of His late Majesties funeral.

"Sunday, 9th, Mr.Weaver this morning preached an admirable sermon for the King. (At Swan Hill Chapel, Ed.)

Tuesday 11th Arrived in London with Philip Henry.

Wednesday 12th We went to Kensington Palace...received by the Duke...he talked fully of the King's funeral last saturday which he

attended as chief mourner, and was greatly annoyed at the careless and sorry way that fine service was read by the Dean. He is sure the Queen will read every word of 'Sir Hale's life'. On Friday...At Lord Dinorben's, Monday with the Earl of Albermarle...he said the Queen would dissolve Parliament today - so we went to the Horse Guards to see the procession, and a very grand sight it was.

Wednesday 19th, Early at St Jame's Palace. The throng prodigious-got into the prescence-chamber as doors were opened...The Queen was standing near the spot the late King occupied when I kissed hands last year. She was dressed perfectly plain and in black. Lord Templeton, the Lord-in-waiting took my card, and informed Her Majesty that I was to receive the honour of knighthood. I went upon my right knee, and the Queen smiled and said 'Upon my word, I don't know how to do it!-and turned to Lord Hill who was goldstick bearer, who gave her his sword, she said 'Over which shoulder am I to put it?! (I was the first Knight she made). His Lordship immediately carried the point over my right shoulder - and Her Majesty held the hilt. She then asked my name and I told her. She repeated it, and raising her hand, commanded me to rise up. After rising she gave me her right hand to kiss. Instantly I retreated the Duke seized me by the hand and congratulated me - Lord Russell did the same... and the Marquis of Landsowne...gave me his hand...and the Hon. Charles Gore, gave me his hearty salutation."

"In the evening Philip Henry and I went to Lord Dinorben's to dinner, pursuant to invitation. Mr. Cotes our late member for North Shropshire, met us. In honour of the event my Lord had out all his plate, silver dishes, etc. Burgundy, Champagne, Madeira, etc. The day closed, after strict moderation."

Thursday, 20th, went to K. Palace early. The Duke kept me a long time. My call was one of thanks and to take leave. The Duke was pleased with the way I was received at Court - he was very merry at Lord Hill's sword being used on the occasion - a Tory, and a Shropshire man...He talked of Charles I etc. and a little before six, Philip Henry and I set off in the 'Swallow'.

"January 16th 1838 at Shrewsbury. Two fires tonight at Beeches Lane and Chester Street. The Severn frozen over, people skating upon it and walking over it."

In February he was in London again.

"At the urgency of Josiah Robins...(his father-in-law)...and Robert Gillam...to prevent the Radical faction at Birmingham getting a charter of incorporation next Tuesday, at which time the Privy Council, meet to decide it etc."

Sir John Bickerton Williams though a Liberal was keen to curb the radical tendency of his day. He was the symbol of a great step forward in civil liberty, a Nonconformist who had received the high honour of Knighthood. Times had changed. The Duke and he had spoken of the death by execution of Charles the First, an act for which many Independents and others had

suffered. Toleration had arrived. Suffice it to say that /June 28th, Sir John was at Westminster Abbey for the Coronation with 'Sir John B Wms on a raised platform! Sir John too had arrived. And that mainly because of his book; "Memoirs of the Life, Character and Writings of Sir Matthew Hale" in 1835; beautifully bound in leather, and dedicated to the famous Rev. Thomas Chalmers, Professor of Theology, Edinburgh. A signed photo of Sir Matthew, in Judicial robes is included. Hale, born at Alderley, Glouc: 1. Nov, 1609 was educated at Lincoln College, was destined to be Lord Chief Justice of England, at the time of King Charles trial and death. He was one of the Counsel at the Assembly of Divines, he acted at Laud's arraignment. Though Hale opposed Parliament at this time he was called to its other services. It was protested 'that there was no treason in him'. In 1648 the King was brought to trial and Sir John writes...." but the services of Sir Hale were not required for the King refused to come to court to be tried". In these turbulent times Sir Matthew Hale steered clear of danger and survived to be an example of good legal practice in difficult times.

Sir John had learned his lessons well. He was described in Pidgeon's obituary in the Gentleman's Magazine, Dec 1856 p657, "To scholastic or critical learning Sir John made no pretension, his attention being chiefly directed to subjects of a more discursive and general character; in the investigation of these he exercised keenness and perception, added to a sound understanding, acquired by constant and attentive reading...and was firmly attached to the principles of Protestant Nonconformity which he upheld with moderation and decisiveness."

Sir John's fame spread quickly for on his return from the capital on Sept 30th he writes; "I was surprised by a letter today from the Directors of the London Missionary Society, requesting me to preside at the May Meeting in Exeter Hall." April 3rd - "wrote today declining to take the chair at Exeter Hall". In a note on the Coronation service, he adds, speaking of one of the lighter incidents; "Before Her Majesty came, the Bishops of Worcester and Exeter had a good fall in the area - not together but at intervals. Some lady behind me said, "this is ominous, as if the church were about to be upset." He had witnessed 'Royal homage' and had seen the great ones of the land, and as soon as the Queen left the throne..he left on foot for Cecil Street having witnessed the 'most splendid Coronation upon record.' On the next day 'We left London by Railway...for Birmingham to stay with (his proud father-in-law) Josiah Robins. When he arrived home flags and bunting was the order of the day. By May the 5th he writes - "Sat for the fourth time for Mr. Pardon, who is making progress." The works of James Pardon the portrait painter and miniaturist are highly praised and Sir John is being portrayed worthily in oils by another proud Salopian. [12]

Other honours were bestowed upon Sir John. In 1824 he had been elected Fellow of the Society of Antiquarians in London, and in 1831 he received the

Degree of LL.D by Diploma from Middleburg University, U.S.A. and in 1838 he was made a member of the American Antiquarian Society. His spare time was partly spent as a contributor to the Evangelical Magazine etc..[13] He added an article in the above on the death of his minister the Rev. Thomas Weaver after a ministry of 54 years at Swan Hill, who died on Feb. 14th 1852. The funeral sermon on that occasion was preached by John Angel James assisted by William Thorpe and J.Patterson. The sermon entitled 'The Character and Translation of Enoch' with a Memorial of Swan Hill was published. 1852.

Some ideas of the valuable collection of Books and Portraits is seen in the Sotherby Sale list of Sir John's possessions. Included is the sale of a collection of the original letters of Thomas Carte 1686-1754. [14] The list makes up a small volume with letters by Royalty etc. for sale with portraits of the great divines and nobles of the day. [14a] Sir John had been showered with blessing and he was a happy man with all his treasures around him in the fine 5 floor Georgian House in the Crescent. His first residence after his marriage was in Swan Hill Court but by 1832 he was settled in the Crescent, with its garden leading down to the Severn. [15]

His family consisted of four boys and two girls. One child Josiah died aged five years. The others were the first born John Bickerton bn 9.10.1814. Philip Henry M.D. bn. 29.7.1820. Ebenezer Robins bn. 15.6.1826. Elizabeth Hannah bn. 12.2.1817 and Mary Jane bn. 2.4.1823. John was according to C.E.Surman's cards at the Lancashire Academy. 1843-4, but resigned on account of ill health. His letter to John Blackburn (see next issue) shows Sir John's ability to weep with them that weep. He had met success and sorrow, but was sustained by his faith and devotion to His Lord and Master and his fellowship, in this case the Congregation of which he was a part and the wider circle of his friends in the other Congregations of whatever denomination. Men with a legal mind have always excelled in spheres of leadership, and Sir John used his gifts to further the christian and congregational cause he had espoused. But the legal aspects of faith were not allowed to predominate. The rich mercy and grace of God in Christ Jesus was his constant theme as it should be ours. His was the God 'all comfort'.

FOOTNOTES

1. C.Silvester-Horne. A Popular History for the Free Churchs pp 388-390.
2. For Edward Williams see D N B. The Oswestry meeting became Congregational during his ministry. Born Glan Clwyd Denbigh. Educated at Abergavenny. Ministered at Ross, Gloucester, 1775-7; Oswestry 1777-92; Carr's Lane and later Rotherham, died there 1813.
3. The Evangelical Magazine January 1856, Memoir of Sir J.B.Williams.
4. The preacher referred to was "Thomas Thomas who afterwards studied at Hoxton Academy and was ordained at Chelmsford, but fell into disgrace and died (there is reason to believe a penitent) in America". Footnote in the Evan Mag. see above.
5. See Evan Mag. and R.Tudur Jones Congregationalism in England 1662-1962. Independent Press. 1962, for Peter Edwards and the colourful Jonathan Scott. pp 156-8.

6. Evan Mag. 1856 p 2.
- 6a. See C.E.Surman's card for Peter Samuel Charrier.
7. Ditto, p. 3. 8. Ditto 9. Ditto p.3-4
10. Ditto p.4 also see C.E.Surman's card index on the Rev.Thomas Weaver etc. included at the close.
11. Robert Philip Williams "Reminiscences of the time of the Coronation". Extracts from the diary of Sir J.M.Williams Knt. edited by his grandson. pp 2.
12. James Pardon, Landscape and miniature artist, prized exhibitor; Born London, settled in Shrewsbury. His oils of Thomas Weaver etc. at Swan Hill. See Dictionnaire Des Peintres. E.Benezit. p.6. and Graves Royal Exhibitors Vol.VI. p.52.
13. For details of the origin and fortune of the much quoted Evangelical Magazine see R.Tudur Jones quoted above pages 233-234. And refs there to Albert Peel's, These Hundred years. pp 13 ff.
14. Rev. John Angel James funeral sermon for Thomas Weaver is entitled The Character and Translation of Enoch, delivered at Swan Hill, Shrewsbury, February 4th 1852.
- 14a. The Catalogue of Books, engravings, Portraits etc. took place on March 2nd 1853 at the London rooms of Sotherby and Wilkinson. Containing some 30 engravings including Philip Henry and Kathrine Henry. Sir Thomas More by Holbein, etc.. Autograph letters included a complete collection relating to America also 150 by distinguished Ministers and Missionaries in America. Letters by Richard Baxter, Napoleon Bonaparte. 50 by Thomas Carte, King Charles I. (four). Others by Philip and Matthew Henry. One set of 151 items went for £122.8.0d, and to draw water from the teeth of the most modest bidder, single letters by the greatest divines and nobles for 3/6.

SIR JOHN'S WILL

I Sir John Bickerton Williams of the Hall in Wem in the County of Salop Knight do make this my last will and testament in manner and form following that is to say, I direct all my just debts funeral expenses and testamentary expences to be fully paid and that my funeral may be as plain as possible ...My body to be placed in the vault which I have purchased and made in the burying ground belonging to Swan Hill meeting house at Shrewsbury.

I give and bequeath all the estates of which at the time of my decease shall be vested in me upon any trusts or by way of mortgage of which I have power to dispose by this my will with the rights and appurtenances unto my eldest son JOHN BICKERTON WILLIAMS his heirs executors administrators and assigns according to the nature and tenure thereof respectively upon the trusts And subject to the equity and redemption.....which at the time of my decease shall be subsisting and capable of taking effect respectively. I give devise and bequeath all my residue and personal estate

freehold copyhold and leasehold at Wem Foxley near Wem or elsewhere unto and for the use and benefit my wife the Lady Elizabeth Williams her heirs and assigns for ever being persuaded that she will do the best with the same for her own benefit absolutely and for our two youngest children MARY JANE WILLIAMS and EBENEZER ROBINS WILLIAMS and my esteemed brother in law EBENEZER ROBINS and without their having received from me their brothers and sister ELIZABETH HANNAH....any portion.....I devise and bequeath to my said sons JOHN BICKERTON WILLIAMS and PHILIP HENRY WILLIAMS and my esteemed brother in law Mr EBENEZER ROBINS their heirs executors administrator and assignees according to their....nature and tenure thereof respectively upon trust....I accordingly bequeath the same in the manner following that is to say.....to.....MARY JANE WILLIAMS and EBENEZER ROBINS WILLIAMS and the remaining.....between my dear children JOHN BICKERTON WILLIAMS ELIZABETH HANNAH...and PHILIP HENRY WILLIAMS for their own respective use and benefit provided always that in case any or other of my said children being a son or sons shall happen to depart this life before his or her portion become vested leaving issue of his or their body or respective bodies living.....

And do hereby declare..give or bequeath to any woman or women who shall at the time of my decease or at any time thereafter to be married shall be for her and for their sole and separate and peculiar use benefit and disposal respectively and not be subject to the debts or engagements of their....or any future husbands and I direct that the receipt or receipts of such shall be a sufficient discharge for their respective legacies shares or portions provided always and it is my will that my...sons named as trustees under this will or either of them notwithstanding their being trustees may purchase all or any part of my property real or personal shall in all respects be good and lawful notwithstanding such trusteeships as aforesaid And it is my will that the same power and right to purchase shall include my said brother in law MR.EBENEZER ROBINS. I thereby nominate constitute and appoint my said dear wife and my said sons JOHN BICKERTON WILLIAMS EXECUTORS of this will Provided always and my will is that my said TRUSTEES AND EXECUTORS shall not be answerable or accountable..of the others or other of them nor for any voluntary..losses and that it shall be lawful for them to reimburse themselves all losses charges and expenses which they or any of them may sustain expend or...unto by reason of this my will or the trust hereby in them reposed..and hereby revoke all former will codicils and testamentary dispositions by me made I declare this only to be my last will and testament in witness whereof I have hereunto to set my hand this eighteenth day of Novemeber ONE THOUSAND AND FORTY YEARS JOHN BICKERTON WILLIAMS Signed by the said testator SIR JOHN BICKERTON WILLIAMS as and for his last will and testament in the presence of us who in his presence and in the presence of each other have subscribed our names as witness thereto ANNE WALDY LEE -- HENRY LEE.

PROVED at London 6th September 1856 before the Judge by oath of Philip Henry

Williams Doctor of Medicine and Ebenezer Robins Williams the Sons (two) of the executors to whom Admin - was granted having been first sworn by Commission only to administer power reserved of making the like grant to Jane Elizabeth Williams Widow the relict and John Bickerton Williams the son also the other executors when they shall apply for the same.

DUE TO PRESSURE OF SPACE IN THIS ISSUE THE LETTERS OF JOHN BICKERTON WILLIAMS HAVE HAD TO BE HELD OVER FOR INCLUSION IN THE NEXT ISSUE.

REVIEW.

Wibberley, John: A History of the Congregational Church at Greenacres, Oldham, Lancashire. Published by the author, "Norwood", Greenacres, Oldham, Lancs. OL4 3EX. 1985. 104pp. £4.75 (plus 25p. postage and packing).

This History is both entertaining and scholarly. An unusual and effective scheme provides ample scope for human interest and significance. That scheme is to follow various strands in turn, from 1672 to 1983.

We begin with an account of the 23 ministers, then follow descriptions of their residences; of the five successive meeting houses or chapels; and of the extensive school and other buildings, now demolished or sold, and of the new 1983 extensions. The Sunday School from 1811 is followed to the present Family Church, and the day school from its foundation as a private grammar school belonging to the minister in 1855, a British (elementary) School 1867 (misprinted once as 1876) until the transfer to the School Board in 1900 and closure in 1908.

We then follow in turn numerous separate walks of Church Life ranging from Whit Walks and banners to the formation of the Congregational Federation.

The first minister, Robert Constantine, distinguished himself by being ejected twice: in 1650 for refusing the Ingagement (suggesting Presbyterian rather than Congregational sympathies) and in 1662, at Oldham, for refusing to conform to the Church of England. Our author records a comment that we do not know Mr. Constantine's views on Charles II's claim to dispense with Acts of Parliament; but he did take advantage of Charles' 1672 Declaration of Indulgence to register for worship a thatched cottage. This therefore is taken as the Church's foundation date; the author does not mention any possibility that here, as in some other places, the Church which came to the surface in 1672 may have already existed in secrecy.

We learn of the varied pastorates which followed. (Robert Harrop, p16, completed his ministerial training at Daventry Academy in 1765 not 1756). George Waddington, 1850-1865, whose arrival the author likens to a whirlwind, left improved premises, a history of the Church, and a membership whose liveliness he had stimulated to a height which, alas, put his departure under a cloud. Portraits of some of the ministers suggest the question - is the adoption of Dog Collars correlated with Congregationalist decline?

Throughout the History many small but interesting points emerge. The 1785 chapel was at first said to be "excessively light" an unusual complaint - had the complainant perhaps fallen under the influence of John Milton, in

his pre-Congregationalist youthful enthusiasm for the "dim religious light" of the College Cl am?

In 1894 it was specified that the temperature at 9 a.m. of the dayschool must be "at least 50 or 52 degrees" - did they wear gloves in school? The Church's strong musical tradition was built on sol-fa, whose (alas) final devotee was still singing in 1950.

But we must resist the temptation to select further nuggets to whet the readers appetite. The History is compiled almost entirely from local documents - the Church's formal records, the previous histories of 1854, 1886, 1922 and 1972), and a few others. The first named have been better preserved than, unfortunately, in many churches. Moreover, some items which are lost were used for the 1854 history.

In some cases such queries are resolved by references to more general sources, to give two examples, Robert Jackson (p.72) is shown in "Companion to Congregational Praise as an Anglican (not Congregational) organist and composer of several tunes.

Secondly, the early 18th Century minister Gladstone, about whom little is known to our author, is said in Nightingale's Lancashire Congregationalism (v.293) to be possibly the Scotsman whose immoral conduct caused his sudden departure from a previous pastorate.

If true, this may account for the reticence of contemporary comment! But as a local church history compiled from local sources, John Wibberley's work will stand as a model of what can be come. May it have many imitators!.

Bill Ashley Smith.

CONSTANTINE ROBERT

1276

Bapt.Taxal,Cheshire, 14 March,1618/9, s.of
Thomas,R.of Taxal,and perhaps bro.of HENRY,qv.
GLASGOW, mc.1638: prob.MA.1658/9 (see letters
penes me,from Prof.Richardson,Registrar)

Mim.Fairfield & Buxton,Derbs

Adm.mem.of Manchester Classis,Dec.1647/8, as
formerly minister there:

C.of Oldham,Lancs 1647-50 and 1654-1662;

Birstall,Yorks 1650-54?

1666 living Oldham: lic there (P.) 1672;

1690 still preaching there 'The ancientest that
is alive of the outed Minrs.'

Buried Oldham, 16 December,1699; prob.died 13th.

C.R.,131: W.R.,396;

Shaw,Manchester Classis;

Angier,Life,114:

V.C.H.,Lancs,v.117;

S.H.Stowell,ed.,Greenacres 1672-1922,1922,
p.12;

1984 was the 600th anniversary of the death of John Wycliffe (on 31st Dec. 1384), after whom a number of English Congregational churches have been named. The story of Wycliffe's brilliance at Oxford, of John of Gaunt's patronage, of his conversion, of his chaplaincy of Parliament, of his insistence upon the primacy of scripture over historical tradition, of his two trials for heresy, of his translation of the Bible into English from the Latin Vulgate, of his revival of preaching and of the doctrine of "the priesthood of all believers" (which went beyond that of Luther or Calvin) used to be much more familiar than it is today. To those who have an interest in Wycliffe, probably the two most well known books about him are K.B. McFarlane, Wycliffe and English Non-Conformity (Pelican/Penguin Press, 1972; this was first published in the "Teach Yourself History" series as Wycliffe and the Beginnings of English Nonconformity by English Universities Press, 1952) and G.H.W. Parker, The Morning Star: Wycliffe and the Dawn of the Reformation (Paternoster Press, 1965). Several commemorative biographies of Wycliffe were published in 1984, three of which I wish to review briefly.

David FOUNTAIN, John Wycliffe: the Dawn of the Reformation (Mayflower Christian Books, Southampton 1984), 133 pages, price £3.50

David Fountain is the minister of Spring Road Evangelical Church, Southampton and has written two previous commemorative books, The Mayflower Pilgrims and Their Pastor (1970: 350th anniversary) and Isaac Watts Remembered (1974: 300th anniversary of his birth). John Wycliffe has been published in an attractive "coffee table" format which commends itself to modern readers. Its scholarship, however, suffers greatly from the absence of an index and the presence of a scrappy bibliography.

Mr. Fountain claims to be a disciple of McFarlane, but unlike his predecessor, he makes an insufficiently clear distinction between Wycliffe's beliefs and those of the Lollards, which were much more Separatist. Also, the inclusion of 27 pages of sermons from The Poor Caitiff (a work no longer regarded as Wycliffe's or even Lollard) is not particularly edifying.

Douglas C. WOOD, The Evangelical Doctor: John Wycliffe and the Lollards (Evangelical Press, Welwyn 1984), 144 pages, price £3.95

Douglas Wood is the Chairman of the Guild of Christian Writers and has written a previous biography, Such a Candle: the Story of Hugh Latimer (Evangelical Press, 1980). The Evangelical Doctor (Wycliffe's Oxford epithet) contains photographs of appropriate memorabilia but has a more prosaic format. Mr. Wood follows Parker - not only in his "Morning Star" interpretation of Wycliffe but also in his clear distinction between Wycliffe's teaching and that of the Lollards. The last two chapters on early and later Lollard history are very informative. The researcher is enormously assisted by an index and a clear and concise bibliography.

Edwin ROBERTSON, Wycliffe: Morning Star of the Reformation (Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Basingstoke 1984), 127 pages, price £1.60.

Edwin Robertson the minister of Heath Street Baptist Church Hampstead and has been involved in Christian broadcasting. This "bargain Basement" volume provides a short introduction to Wycliffe's life, which at times seems hastily written. Research is hampered by the lack of an index and the absence of dates from the bibliography.

There are chapters on English Nonconformity's debt to Wycliffe and on his importance today. In these, Robertson draws heavily upon R.W.Dale, Horton Davies and Erik Routley. On page 115, The Congregational Federation is described as "a vigorous remnant" which "continues in the ways of Robert Browne", and there is an oblique reference to the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion and/or an Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches.

Marion Beales.

The Council for British Archaeology's Conference on Nonconformist Chapels in Manchester and its Region was held at St. Anselm Hall, Rusholme, Manchester from 21st to 23rd September 1984. Manchester's region was given a very elastic interpretation, extending beyond Greater Manchester County into West Yorkshire, Lancashire, Merseyside and Cheshire. The main speakers were: Alan Rose of the Wesley Historical Society, who gave an introduction to Nonconformity in Lancashire and Cheshire and who also spoke about specific chapels in and around Manchester; Christopher Stell, a member of the C.B.A. Working Party on Nonconformist Places of Worship, who spoke about chapels in Calderdale, West Yorkshire; Roderick O'Donnell, who spoke about Roman Catholic building in North West England; Keith Parkinson, the photographer for The Fall of Zion, who spoke about photographing chapels and David Brock of English Heritage, Peter Kerridge of the Methodist Division of Property and Ken Powell of Save Britain's Heritage Campaign, who held a forum on the listing of chapels and meeting houses.

On Saturday, 22nd September, a coach trip and "chapel crawl" visited Fairfield Moravian Settlement, Droylsden; Old (Unitarian) Chapel, Dukinfield; Albion U.R.C. (formerly Congregational), Ashton-under-Lyne; Hope Strict Baptist Chapel, Rochdale; Old Baptist Chapel, Goodshaw; Friends' Meeting House, Crawshawbooth and Unitarian Chapel, Todmorden.

The conference was attended by about 30 people from England and Wales. Amongst them were David Barton, author of Discovering Chapels and Meeting Houses; Clyde Binfield, author and historian; Laurie Gage of Gage Postal Books (who also brought a bookstall with him); Ms. V. Brandon of Cumbria and Lancashire Archaeology Unit (who had excavated Old Baptist Chapel, Goodshaw); Ms. Kerr of the H.B.M.C.E. Churches Division and Marion Beales from the Congregational History Circle.

THE CONGREGATIONAL QUARTERLY

Vol.3. No.1. March 1985

This is a new venture and a revival of the quite famous Congregational Quarterly which produced its last issue some 20 years ago. Mr. John Wilcox in his Editorial describes the function of the new Congregational Quarterly it

included Council (C.F.) Reports, the Chairman's Address and financial accounts of (C.F.). The March issue gives news - a fire at the Congregational Centre, Nottingham Feb.21.85, after the fire there is some arranging to be done in the renovation which will be of benefit to the Centre, its Library and other accommodation.

The July Issue of the Congregational Quarterly will go out to Churches etc accompanied by C.H.C. forms asking Churches and members to join C.H.C. For this and other kindnesses we are grateful. The Editor.

Reviews

Y COFIADUR CELEBRATES ITS FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

The Journal of the Union of Welsh Independents Historical Society published its fiftieth Issue of 'Y Cofiadur' this year.

The editor, the Rev.Dafydd Wyn Wiliam writes 'pride of place goes to the Welsh Baptists who founded their Trafodion-transactions 1901, and they were followed in 1914 by the Calvinistic Methodist, with 'Y Cofiadur' above in 1921, the Welsh Wesleyan 'Bathafarn' appeared in 1946.

The current issue of 'Y Cofiadur' for May 1985 is numbered 50. Wars and other evils leave their mark on even Historical Journals. This issue contains 'The Diary of Howell Harris' - the Welsh Wesley, describing his stay in the pleasant Isle of Anglesey.(Sir Fon) in 1747. Harris though preaching mainly Welsh followed the custom of the day and wrote his Diary in English. 'Cerdd Robert Humphrey i'r Schismaticiaid' is also by D.W.Wiliam. The issue includes a very full list of the contents of all 50 issues prepared by D.W.Wiliam and T.Watts.

PLEASE NOTE The address of the New Secretary of the Society- Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hanes Annibynwyr Cymru is Mrs.M.A.James, Y Garreg Wen, Penrhynoch. Aberystwyth. DYFED SY13 3EJ. The Editor

THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON'S CONNEXION AND SIERRA LEONE MISSION

'Voice' Issue No.286 January-March 1984 contains news of the Churches, An article by Roger Davies which compares Martin Luthers qualities with the qualities of the modern Christian;Some memories of the Countess of Huntingdon's Church in Brighton by Miss.E.Williams and news of Mr.R.A.Warlows induction to the pastorate of Ote hall Wivelsfield. Mr.Warlow is a member of our Circle.

'Voice' Issue No.287 April-June 1984 contains news of a visit to Sierra Leone by Members of the Connexion in November 1983; news of the President of the Connexion Dr.Brian C.Baldwin; impressions of the Mission England as well as a short history of the Rayleigh Countess of Huntingdon's Church, Essex.

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