MOSLEY STREET CHAPEL, MANCHESTER.

The Birthplace of the Union.

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THE STORY

OF THE

Lancashire Congregational Union

1806-1906.

CENTENARY MEMORIAL VOLUME.

PREPARED AT THE REQUEST OF THE UNION BY

B. NIGHTINGALE,

Author of "Lancashire Nonconformity," "Independency in Tockholes," &c.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS.

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PREFACE.

THROUGHOUT this book, now issued to the public, the endeavour has been to keep true to its name. It aims rather at being a *story* than a *history*. The remembrance of this fact will explain the form in which it has been cast, the appearance in it of many things of lighter vein, and some omissions. The reader may, however, be assured, even in relation to its historic quality. It is, of course, "impossible but that offences will come," and, to such as have any experience in working in these fields, it will not be necessary to say how difficult it is to secure perfect accuracy in every historic detail; still the utmost care has been given to the work with that end in view. Whilst, therefore, primarily the idea has been to produce a readable book, it is hoped it will also serve all needful purposes as a work of reference. Labour and time have been devoted to it without stint; but the pleasure has been very great, and that largely because of the ready assistance which has been offered by quite a host of friends, to name all of whom would occupy many pages. I should not, however, do justice to my own feelings if mention were not made of one or two. First, I am obliged for many valuable suggestions to the Advisory Committee, consisting of the four District Secretaries, the Revs. J. Yonge, J. P. Wilson, A. J. Viner, F.T.S., and Mr. R. Mansergh, J.P., together with the General Secretary of the Union, the Rev. T. Willis, with whom it has been my pleasure to work. To Mr. Willis, in particular, I am indebted for the figures relating to the Union grants, which appear in the last chapter, and which make it one of the most valuable in the book, and surely not the least interesting. They are entirely his own; I have simply thrown them into their present tabular form, and added a few notes. Their compilation by him has saved me an enormous amount of labour, whilst his well known skill in these matters will secure confidence in their correctness. Mr. C. S. Davies, of the Woodward Trusts, and the Rev. F. Carter, of the Ministers' Provident Society, have readily furnished all necessary information in reference to the two important Societies of which they have charge. Mr. C. Goodyear, Librarian of the Lancashire Independent College, ungrudgingly placed at my disposal the rich treasures

of portraits, letters, etc., illustrating old time Nonconformist Church life, which he has been diligently collecting for many years; whilst the pastors and deacons of the Grosvenor Street and Cavendish Street Churches respectively afforded every facility for consulting the important documents in their possession. To Mr. Hewitson, of *The Bury Times*, I am under obligation for information respecting the Kay family; and a great company of others have vied with one another in their willing service. The book is the property of the Union, having been undertaken at its request and issued under its imprimatur. It has to be admitted that the task has not been easy, especially that part of it which deals with the second half of the century's work, which fails to yield the sort of incident needed for a book such as this set out to be. It is, however, hoped that it has so far succeeded in its aim that it will contribute, along with the other parts of the Centenary programme, towards exciting new interest in, and securing more loving and consecrated service for, that Congregationalism whose history is one of which we may be justly proud, and which, if true to its ideals, will ever be amongst the most needed of the religious forces of the day.

B. NIGHTINGALE.

PRESTON, *October, 1906.*

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THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH.

THE last decade of the eighteenth century and the first of the nineteenth combined make one of the most remarkable periods of English history. It is indeed quite safe to say that no period of similar duration at all approaches it in significance; it is distinctly unique. It was the seed plot of institutions and movements that have borne, and still bear, the richest fruit. Everywhere the student is confronted with signs of mighty change, the break up and retreat of old ideas; signs of emancipation, progress, life, the dawn of a new day, and the birth of a new, richer, and better people.

The recognition of American Independence in 1783 terminated a long and most exhausting war, in which England had suffered many distressing and humiliating defeats; and onlooking nations marvelled that it had come out of the struggle, not only not crushed and ruined by the loss of its greatest colonies, but in many respects even stronger than ever. Great need, too, there was that it should be stronger: for in a few years the war cloud reappeared upon the horizon much nearer home. France had fallen completely under the sinister influence of the Corsican adventurer. Under his brilliant leadership its armies had won a series of sweeping victories, which had placed nearly the whole of Europe cowed and helpless at

his feet. Between Napoleon and the establishment of an empire, which was intended to rival the world-wide empires of antiquity, lay only the little "nation of shopkeepers" across the Channel, a nation, which quite recently had had wrested from it its largest and richest possessions on the other side of the Atlantic, and which had only just concluded a most exciting chapter in the history of its conquest of India. The surprising fact, however, was that, gigantic as were the enterprises from which it had so recently emerged, England exhibited no signs of weariness, but braced itself for the new and more serious conflict which it saw to be impending, and almost single handed succeeded in shattering to pieces Napoleon's ambitious schemes. For the Battle of the Nile in the first of the two decades in question, and that of Trafalgar in the second were prophetic of Waterloo, when the man who had been the scourge of Europe for a quarter of a century was finally swept from the stage of active life. "The eagle was chained to a rock in the sea," and peoples terrorised and oppressed breathed freely again.

The throb of this new life made itself felt in other directions. The Revolution in France was largely the product of English ideas, borrowed by literary men like Voltaire, Rousseau, and Montesquieu. "That violent but wholesome clearing of the air," writes one, "that tremendous political and moral awakening, which ushered in the nineteenth century in Europe, had its sources in the spirit which animated the preaching of Latimer, the song of Milton, the solemn imagery of Bunyan, the political treatises of Locke and Sidney, the political measures of Hampden and Pym. The noblest type of modern European statesmanship, as represented by Mazzini and Stein, is the spiritual offspring of seventeenth century Puritanism. To speak of Naseby and Marston as merely English victories would be as absurd as to restrict the significance of Gettysburg to the State of Pennsylvania. If ever there were men who laid down their lives in the cause of all mankind, it was those grim old Ironsides, whose watchwords were texts from Holy Writ, whose battle cries were hymns of praise." Naturally, therefore, the French Revolution was watched with keen interest, and not a little sympathy, in

this country. Distinguished statesmen like Pitt and Fox, leading divines like Robert Hall, of Leicester, Joseph Priestley, of Birmingham, and David Bogue, of Gosport, even welcomed it for a time as a great liberalising and progressive movement. Robert Hall went so far as to say that it was "the most splendid event recorded in the annals of his history," an opinion which he shortly afterwards very considerably modified. Indeed, the subsequent developments of that movement filled many with alarm who at first looked favourably upon it, completely estranged from it Robert Hall and others, and led them to denounce it as vigorously as previously they had upheld it. The French Revolution, however, exercised a powerful influence upon the life of England, especially politically, with the result that in the nineties, or thereabouts, strenuous endeavours were made to secure political reform, the emancipation of Catholics, and the repeal of the odious Test and Corporation Acts; and, though success did not immediately follow, the way was prepared for the greater triumphs of later years.

Colonisation also proceeded on a scale hitherto unknown, and commerce began to seek new outlets abroad. "Industry," says one, "began that great career which was to make England the workshop of the world. During the first half of the century the cotton trade, of which Manchester was the principal seat, had only risen from the value of twenty to that of forty thousand pounds; and the hand-loom retained the primitive shape which is still found in the hand-looms of India. But three successive inventions in ten years, that of the spinning jenny in 1764 by the weaver Hargreaves, of the spinning machine in 1768 by the barber Arkwright, of the mule by the weaver Crompton in 1776, turned Lancashire into a hive of industry. At the accession of George the Third the whole linen trade of Scotland was of less value than the cloth trade of Yorkshire. Before the close of his reign Glasgow was fast rising into one of the trading capitals of the world."

This was the period also which witnessed the emancipation of literature, of poetry in particular, from the cold, nerveless artificialism which had characterised it for more

than a hundred years, during which time it was dominated by what was known as the "Classic" spirit. A competent critic, writing of the literature of the Classic Age, says: "The style is at the same time finished and artificial. Let us open the first that comes to hand, Parnell or Philips, Addison or Prior, Gay or Tickell, we find a certain turn of mind, versification, language. Let us pass to a second, the same form reappears; we might say that they were imitations of one another. Let us go on to a third; the same diction, the same apostrophes, the same fashion of arranging an epithet and rounding a sentence. Let us turn over the whole lot; with little individual differences, they seem to be all cast in the same mould; one is more epicurean, another more moral, another more biting; but a noble language, an oratorical pomp, a classical correctness reign throughout; the substantive is accompanied by its adjective, its knight of honour; antithesis balances its symmetrical architecture; the verb, as in Lucan or Statius, is displayed flanked on each side by a noun decorated by an epithet; we would say that it is of a uniform make, as if fabricated by a machine; we forget what it wishes to make known; we are tempted to count the measures on our fingers; we know beforehand what poetical ornaments are to embellish it. There is a theatrical dressing, contrasts, allusions, mythological elegance, Greek or Latin quotations. There is a scholastic solidity, sententious maxims, philosophic commonplaces, moral developments, oratorical exactness. A man who knows one knows all; a common organism and structure involve the uniformity of the rest." No one who has given attention to the subject will seriously question this judgment. This was the age which drove Shakespeare "as a barbarian from the stage," had little admiration for Milton, described Chaucer as "hopelessly rusted and obscured by time," and which regarded Spenser as only capable of amusing "a barbarous and uncultivated age." Before the close of the century, however, a new order of writers had appeared. Burns, Byron, Shelley, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, men who had communed much with nature and familiarised themselves with many-sided human life, baptised literature with a new spirit. In their hands it ceased to be rigid,

PERILS OF TRAVEL.

Crossing Ulverston Sands in the Thirties.

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cold, soulless, and became living and fresh. These and others of their time "broke the ice of literary conventions," introduced "a new romanticism"; with them a great literary Renaissance began.

This was, moreover, the period of "the awakening of the national conscience to its responsibility towards subject races," a marked illustration of which appears in Wilberforce's repeated and magnificent efforts to secure the abolition of slavery throughout the British dominions. Like many another reform, it had to wait long for its final triumph, the new century had ceased to be new; both Pitt and Fox, whose moving eloquence had more than once been heard on its behalf, had gone, but Wilberforce himself, "the father of the movement," lived just long enough to bless God that the object of his life had been reached. A few hours after the Emancipation Bill of 1833 had passed its second reading, with such promise as ensured its ultimate success, a Bill which once and for all liberated British rule from the hideous stain of slavery, Wilberforce was no more.

It is, however, in the religious sphere that evidence of this new pulsating life will be most distinctly found. George Whitefield and John Wesley had tramped England from end to end in their anxiety to reach the people, utterly benighted and heathen as they were, with the story of the Cross. These two good men, in many respects entirely unlike each other, but swayed by the same lofty and holy ambition, had many devoted helpers, one of whom is deserving of, at least, a passing notice. Captain Jonathan Scott, as his name suggests, for some time followed a soldier's profession, and as such won distinction in more than one of the great battles for which the eighteenth century is noted. Converted through the preaching of the Rev. W. Romaine, whilst still young he sold his commission, retired from the army, and betook himself to preaching. Five counties—Shropshire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Cheshire, and Lancashire—benefited by his itinerant ministrations; and in all of them Congregational Churches exist as memorials of his self-denying labours. Shropshire was his native county, but Lancashire may well claim special interest in this worthy man, because it was

at Lancaster that he was ordained "a preacher at large," on September 18th, 1776, the ministers assisting being the Revs. Abraham Allatt, of Forton, Timothy Priestley, of Manchester, and John Edwards, of Leeds. In addition to the town of Lancaster, where he was earnestly invited to settle, and to whose people he had a "strong attachment," considering them "a sincere, hearty, catholic people with good large hearts," Ulverston, Garstang, Elswick, and Preston were repeatedly visited by him, and, with the exception of Elswick, the Churches in these places owe much of their origin to his exertions. As already intimated, he was one of Whitefield's ablest lieutenants, and as such enjoyed his confidence and affection. Whitefield and Wesley, together with their numerous coadjutors, suffered much in the pursuit of their mission. Their motives were misunderstood; their teaching was caricatured; their lives were often seriously imperilled, their bitterest opponents not infrequently being the very supporters of that Church which claimed to have the "cure" of all the souls of the nation. Their work, however, told. The most remarkable scenes followed upon their visits to the most morally hopeless places. Great spiritual awakenings resulted from their preaching; hundreds and even thousands of men and women were converted, utterly abandoned and outcast characters being frequently amongst the number. The story of the Evangelical Revival, with which the names of those men are inseparably linked, has never yet been fully and worthily told, and yet there is no story to which Christian genius could consecrate itself with distincter advantage. There is a romance about the story which it would be extremely difficult to rival in any department of literature; the movement marks the re-birth of English Christianity, and of Free Churchism in particular; and the roots of much that is best in the religious thought and life of to-day will be found to be there.

The new religious spirit, which was the direct and immediate product of that Revival, manifested itself in two ways. In the first place, there was quite a passion for missionary enterprise; the burden of a lost world began to press upon the Christian conscience of the nation as it had never done before, and, during the two decades in

question, quite a number of missionary agencies sprang into being. In 1795, for example, the London Missionary Society was founded by a few men of large and courageous faith; and shortly afterwards the first batch of missionaries sailed in the good ship "Duff" for the South Sea Islands, whose inhabitants had nothing to recommend them to the sympathy of this new-born movement beyond the depth of their need and the utterness of the darkness which had enveloped them for countless centuries.

Four years later the Religious Tract Society followed; and in 1802 the British and Foreign Bible Society was established, institutions which have always been intimately associated with the great Missionary Societies of the country, which indeed live to give them a helping hand, which seek through the printed word to accomplish the same great spiritual purposes as the spoken word does. About the same time was born the Sunday School Union, which represented organised missionary effort amongst the young; whilst *The Evangelical Magazine*, first issued in 1793, was the professed organ of all these Societies, its pages from the very outset describing their various methods, chronicling their movements, difficulties, and achievements. It must not by any means be supposed that this list is exhaustive; it is quite otherwise. The Church of Christ had been enthused with missionary fervour to an extent such as had rarely happened in its history; the Revival had borne its appropriate fruit. Enlarged Christian outlooks, widened Christian sympathies with a consequent deepened sense of Christian responsibility, a passion for souls that was eager for any sacrifice and any toil had replaced the awful coldness, stagnation, sterility and death which for nearly a century had characterised English Christianity. Dr. Dale gives a vividly interesting picture of the results of the Evangelical Revival as they appeared during the period with which we are concerned. "Meeting-houses," says he, "which had been deserted were crowded. Meeting-houses which had been more than large enough for their congregations for two or three generations had to be made larger. New meeting-houses in great numbers were erected. Cottages were rented in villages; farm-house kitchens were lent, old barns were turned into chapels; and young men who

had been hard at work all through the week at the smithy, at the carpenter's bench, or behind the counter in drapers' shops, went out in companies from the towns on Sunday mornings to conduct the services. The Evangelical Churches were distinguished for their ardour, their hopefulness, and their courage; they were confident that the evil times had passed away, that the very glory of God had broken upon the darkness of many centuries, and that the day was not remote when all nations would rejoice in the blessedness of the Christian redemption."

Almost equally intense was the desire for union, for the realisation of Christian brotherhood. The numerous Societies just named are clear evidence of this, because the interesting fact is that they were organisations of Christian people, belonging not to one denomination in particular, but to several, Anglicans fraternising with Nonconformists to an extent such as we do not see even to-day. In most cases those "Unions" were "undenominational," Anglican clergymen not scrupling to appear in the pulpits of distinguished Nonconformists to plead for the great causes which were dear to both; the Reunion of Christendom seemed more likely of accomplishment even then than it is to-day. Side by side with an awakened sense of responsibility to an unregenerate and lost world appeared a deepened sense of responsibility to one another. Christian people came to see, what surely should always be very obvious, that separation always spells weakness and union strength; and, laying aside the things about which they differed, they combined in all sorts of ways for the furtherance of that Kingdom to which they all claimed to belong, and for whose coming in fulness and power they professed to "pray without ceasing." It would not be easy to say which was the more remarkable, this deep and passionate longing for union amongst all sections of Christian people, or this marvellous missionary enthusiasm which characterised the Church of that day; but both testify in the clearest possible manner to the triumph of that new and better spirit which the Evangelical Revival had infused into English Christianity.

Not a few distinguished writers take a somewhat different view from the one here given. The tendency has

frequently been to depreciate the denominational spirit of the time, and to seek in that the explanation of all movements in the direction of union which were then so common. Dr. Waddington, in his monumental work on *Congregational History*, says that early Manchester Congregationalism was "enveloped in a Scotch mist," with "a slight craze" for the ruling eldership; Dr. Halley's charming book on *Lancashire: Its Puritanism and Nonconformity*, is often seriously vitiated by the idea underlying the statement that many of the Fathers and Founders of Lancashire Congregationalism "cared much more for Evangelical doctrine than for ecclesiastical polity"; and even Dr. Dale, in *The Old Evangelicalism and the New*, says: "The Evangelical movement encouraged what is called the undenominational temper. It emphasised the vital importance of the Evangelical creed, and it regarded almost with indifference all forms of Church polity that were not in apparent and irreconcilable antagonism to that creed. It demanded as the basis of fellowship a common religious life and common religious beliefs, but was satisfied with fellowship of an accidental and precarious kind." The evidence scarcely permits of such conclusions. The denominational positions were very clearly and rigidly defined. It was not that Christian people had come to be indifferent about their respective polities and creeds, but that they had come to care supremely for those great Christian unities which Christ Himself had in mind when He prayed His Gethsemane prayer: "That they all may be one."

It is, of course, not to be inferred that the friends of Christian Missions and of Christian union met with no opposition. Then, as always since, there were "many adversaries," and these were principally within the Church itself. The promoters of these great causes were neither numerous nor influential, but what they lacked in those directions was more than counterbalanced by the boldness of their faith, the splendour of their courage, the magnificence of their enthusiasm, and the resoluteness of their purpose, qualities which always ensure victory in the end.

Nor can it be said that all the promise in those days has been fulfilled in either direction. Had the missionary

spirit of a century ago been properly cultivated, and received no checks to its growth, there had surely been less of the world in heathen darkness than is now the case; and had the spirit of Christian brotherhood, which was then so eager and strong, been helped to its full and appropriate development, the bitter controversies which still so sharply divide had surely been unknown. In both respects the Church of the present may well look back to those two decades and say: "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old," and pray that the work may be done over again, in even greater glory and power.

Such was the atmosphere in which the Lancashire Congregational Union was born. It was part of the new order to which the old was yielding, of that silent, bloodless Revolution which had made itself felt in every department of the nation's life, and most of all in the religious. It is of the utmost importance that the reader should clearly grasp this point, should in particular remember that the Union is the direct offspring of the Evangelical Revival, uniting in itself the two chief religious products of that Revival. It was intended by the founders to meet that passion for union that so pre-eminently characterised Christian people of all sects and creeds a hundred years ago, to be a Congregational brotherhood; and, on the other hand, it was designed as a great missionary agency for winning Lancashire for Christ. This ideal it will realise only in so far as its Churches are loyal to the supreme spiritual principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which led to the great religious awakening of more than a century ago.

CHAPTER II.

The Birth of the Union.

ON the 23rd of September, 1806, in the vestry of the Mosley Street Chapel, Manchester, the Lancashire Congregational Union was definitely called into existence. Small and antiquated as the town then was, the merest fraction of the mighty city of to-day whose name and fame are in all lands, it was fitting that Manchester, which had already become the chief centre of the cotton industry upon which Lancashire people so largely depend, should be its birthplace. Equal propriety also there was in the Union having as its first home Mosley Street Chapel. The Church was historic, directly descended from the old Hunter's Croft Church, sacred to the memory of the Rev. Caleb Warhurst, and through it from the Church which grew out of the labours of the saintly Henry Newcome, the mother Church of Manchester Nonconformity. The building had been erected in 1788, and as enlarged in 1819 it was one of the largest places of worship in the county. Its pastor was the Rev. Samuel Bradley, whilst Mr. John Hope and Mr. Robert Spear were deacons.

It must not be supposed that this was the first effort of the kind in the country. Lancashire did not in this "lead the way," though its Union is far from being the youngest. "Associations," as they were called, had already been formed in Kent, Warwickshire, Somerset, Salop, Hampshire, Bedfordshire, Berkshire, and Essex; and it is worth noting that all these institutions were established during the last decade of the eighteenth century. Moreover, it is not generally known that in the very year in which the Lancashire Congregational Union came into being a really serious attempt was made in the direction of a larger Union for English Congregationalism; and, inasmuch as this will be found to have considerably

influenced the birth of our County Union, it deserves some attention. In the May number of the *Evangelical Magazine* for 1806 is a statement to the effect that "the want of a General Union among the Congregational or Independent Churches in Great Britain had been long felt and lamented"; and that this "and other interesting objects connected with the spread and support of the Gospel might be fully considered and discussed" a meeting was announced for "Saturday morning in the Missionary Week, May 17th, 1806, at ten o'clock," in St. Paul's Coffee House.

It is worth a moment's pause over the name of the meeting-place here mentioned, because it is a vivid reminder of the difference between the religious sentiments which then prevailed and those of to-day. The Coffee House and the Tavern were the usual rendezvous for religious, as for other people. They had not the slightest scruple about holding their religious gatherings in either the one place or the other. The London Missionary Society was born in Baker's Coffee House, the British and Foreign Bible Society regularly met in the New London Tavern, and the Religious Tract Society as regularly held its meetings in St. Paul's Coffee House, where it was proposed to assemble for the discussion of this suggested Congregational Union of England and Wales. In the quaint diary of the Rev. Peter Walkden, for some years Nonconformist minister at Hesketh Lane, near Chipping, which gives such a realistic picture of a country minister's life in the early years of the eighteenth century, the good man tells us that he invariably went to a neighbouring public-house for a "refresher" before entering the pulpit to preach, and that after the service he as invariably went for another "penny pot of ale." As late even as the days of Dr. Raffles, whose bottle of champagne was quite a feature of the annual gatherings of the Union, when the time for the sermon came the unfinished business was usually delegated to the Committee, who would quietly slip away to the nearest and most convenient public-house for its despatch. All this strikes us now as exceedingly strange and highly incongruous, and shows that we have travelled very far in relation to these matters.

BARTON BRIDGE, NEAR MANCHESTER.

Travelling in 1795.

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The meeting thus announced was held; the Board of Congregational Ministers in London was requested to prepare a "plan for such a Union"; and this plan was laid before their brethren from the country on Monday, May 18th, 1807, at Mr. Gaffee's Meeting House, in New Broad Street." After "some improvements and enlargements" had been made, "a London Committee, with Treasurer and Secretaries, was appointed," and the "Committee was authorised to carry the plan into immediate effect." From a later statement it appears that the plan had given rise to some "misapprehension," that parts of it had raised "alarm" and procured the "disapprobation" of some of the Churches, and the Committee, in a "Circular Address," "affectionately invite" the sentiments of the brethren upon their plan, which they are far from claiming as "already perfect," and assure them that these will receive the "most respectful attention." This General Union was ultimately formed, and it continued a more or less feeble existence for about twenty years, when it was merged into the Home Missionary Society, a more serious effort in the thirties resulting in the present Congregational Union of England and Wales.

It is most interesting and instructive to read the story of the formation of this Union, because it so clearly illustrates the conservative character of our Churches, especially in relation to anything which in the least degree appears likely to imperil their individual liberty. Every departure from the position of isolation, which the older Independency occupied, has been viewed with grave suspicion, and every change in favour of corporate action and organised Congregationalism has been slowly made and after much opposition. This is the one fact which is written large in the history of every Congregational Union, great and small, old and new; whilst a hundred years ago any Association of Nonconformists drew upon itself suspicion, was regarded as a dangerous political organisation, a disloyal secret society. A distinguished barrister, writing of this larger Union early in the century, declares it to be "a most illegal, as well as insulting, violation of the British Constitution," "the clearest proof of a widespread and most dangerous conspiracy"; and even during its re-formation in

the thirties, a very respectable writer, in reply to the question if the projected Union may not "prove ultimately prejudicial to the independence of our churches," uttered the following significant warning: "It is for us to profit by the past. Episcopacy arose out of the presidency of the more influential men in the assemblies of presbyters holding equal rank; and the Churches lost their internal rights by appealing to the wisdom of such assemblies. Metropolitans next claimed priority of provincial Bishops. Patriarchates were at length created; and the pastoral chair of a single Church became, in the end, a throne lifted high in supremacy over all the Churches. Hierarchies have sprung from the most inconsiderable beginnings." The reader will meet with frequent illustrations of this cautious and conservative spirit as he proceeds with this story of our own County Union. Every change in the direction of a more highly organised Congregationalism has been adopted slowly, a fact which may well beget confidence in the changes actually made.

Nor was the Lancashire Congregational Union as formed in 1806 the product of a sudden impulse on the part of the few men who founded it; rather was it the resultant of a long series of efforts, all tending towards that end. As early as June 7th, 1786, "an Association of Congregational Churches in Lancashire and its vicinity existed." It is greatly to be regretted that the document giving information about this movement has been lost; but it was known to the Rev. Richard Slate, of Preston, a patient and careful gleaner in the obscure fields of historic Nonconformity, and is quoted at length in his *Brief History of the Rise and Progress of the Lancashire Congregational Union*, a valuable little work published in 1840. From it we gather that this early Congregational Association included "the different churches in the said counties, represented by their respective pastors, and a messenger from, and to be chosen annually by, every church"; that it was "founded on a general harmony of worship and order, together with a suitable agreement of our views of evangelical doctrine, as maintained by the reformed churches"; that there was to be an Annual Meeting in the month of June, "at any place within our boundaries,

to be previously appointed, when a minister shall be chosen by the majority as chairman, to regulate the conversation and receive proposals for the advancement of the common interest, and also to open the next Annual Meeting by preaching a sermon adapted to the occasion"; that there should be no attempt "to infringe in the least upon the liberties of Christian Churches, or to usurp any authority over them"; that when any "minister, messenger, or member" made application to the Association for "advice" in anything "concerning their peace and order" it would be given, but if sufficient information for an immediate pronouncement was not forthcoming a Committee was to be appointed "consisting of four or five ministers or members of different churches" by the "consulting party, and the members of the Association to get the necessary information and report at the next annual meeting"; and that any minister who was found "to have departed from the doctrines held forth by it into erroneous tenets," or to be "guilty of sinful practices," was to be suspended, but "future amendment and genuine repentance" brought reinstatement.

Some points about this ancient constitution will probably impress us as somewhat singular, especially that which deals with the appointment of a minister as chairman to *regulate* the conversation. Evidently loquacity is not an entirely modern vice. Mr. Slate says that the "object contemplated" by this Association was not "the propagation of the Gospel where its blessings had not been previously enjoyed, so much as the maintenance of the purity, in doctrine and discipline, of those churches and ministers which were associated." Such may have been the case, and we need not wonder. The memory of a corrupt and decadent faith, with its consequent spiritual apathy and even loose morals, was very fresh. The Evangelical Revival had only very recently broken the spell of religious indifference, which had so long been an incubus upon English Christianity, and under whose influence the "old Dissent" had wandered into the dreary by-paths of Arianism, Unitarianism, and Rationalism. With that example so vividly before them, it is not surprising that those pioneers of organised Congregationalism became

exceedingly sensitive in relation to all that affected the "purity" of their "doctrine." A pure faith, however, is certain to become a missionary faith; and the purer the faith the more fervent will be the desire to spread it amongst those who may be in ignorance of it, and such was the case here. How long this Society remained in existence we have no means of knowing. Mr. Slate identifies it with another Society to be mentioned presently, but that would appear to be an error. It would seem that the Association of 1786 eventually became extinct, but that its spirit was re-incarnated in the Association of Congregational "Ministers in Lancashire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire," which was formed at Tintwistle, in Cheshire, on Wednesday, August 22nd, 1798.

The objects of this new Association were considerably wider than those of the older one just named. It was founded "for the purpose of promoting a more friendly intercourse among ministers and Christian brethren, and of consulting together for the wider extension of the Gospel." With a view to securing these ends it was resolved: That the ministers who form this Association meet on the morning of the third Wednesday of every second month, at the chapels of the associate ministers successively; that two of the ministers associated shall be appointed to preach in rotation at each meeting; that after service the ministers shall enter into conversation on the state of religion in their respective congregations and neighbourhood, and on such subjects as may tend to accelerate their general design; that at all such meetings the minister of the place shall be chairman for the day; that the meetings shall be open to those of our brethren who may be inclined occasionally to attend; and that in case the Association extended so as to render it inconvenient for all the ministers to meet together, by consent of the majority it might be divided into districts, and a general meeting should then be annually held at the most central place. At the end of all this appears the usual provision that the Association was not "on any account, or in any respect, to interfere with the private concerns of any of the churches or congregations with which the ministers are individually connected." Twelve ministers were present at

REV. JOSEPH SMITH.

Treasurer of the Itinerant Society.

See page 19.

REV. GEORGE GREATBATCH.

The Father of Southport Congregationalism.

See page 35.

that meeting, five from Lancashire, four from Cheshire, two from Derbyshire, and one from Yorkshire. Twelve apostles truly, men of large and heroic faith, of earnest and consecrated purpose, and of clear spiritual vision.

The task to which they gave themselves was not easy. Those were not the days of the cycle, the motor, and the "Flying Dutchman," but of the slow, rumbling coach, execrable roads, the footpad, and the highwayman. The Rev. Edward Crane, a young minister at Norwich about the middle of the eighteenth century, who was in the habit of visiting his father at Preston, informs us that it was cheaper to buy a horse for the journey than to hire; the best way of reaching Manchester out of Cheshire was by means of a canal; and the blunderbuss was often called into requisition by those who travelled by coach. By way of illustrating the perils of the journey between Manchester and Oldham in the early years of last century, and the immense risks to life which these earnest and devoted men ran in going about the country preaching the Gospel, the late Rev. R. M. Davies once told the writer an interesting story. "Whilst one of the preachers who had come from Manchester," says he, "and who rode a horse which his brother had ridden at Waterloo, was returning home after Sunday Evening service, his horse took fright and galloped off at a high speed. At the end of two miles he saw a man crouching in the road, evidently prepared to grasp the reins and rob the rider, whilst two other men stood at a distance ready to give help, to whom the first one was heard to say: 'I can't, he gallops like the devil!' Shortly afterwards the horse broke into a trot, and the rider arrived at home in safety." To attempt, therefore, to cover such an immense area with monthly meetings, in such days and under such conditions, was a bold undertaking; bolder still that of attempting to propagate their faith in four counties and holding themselves responsible for their evangelisation with resources so slender as theirs must have been. It was, however, quite characteristic of the religious spirit of the time. It was pre-eminently an age of faith, of daring and almost reckless faith. The "marching orders" of the great Christ had an imperativeness for them seldom felt in the history of the Christian Church. They were under

the powerful influence of a divine and holy constraint. Necessity was laid upon them to preach the glad tidings of salvation to the benighted and lost of their own land. Seeing that these twelve men were the heralds, going before and preparing the way for the County Union that was to be, the reader will welcome their names, together with those of the Churches to which they ministered:—

LANCASHIRE.

WILLIAM ROBY.....	Cannon Street, Manchester.
JOSEPH SMITH.....	Mosley Street, Manchester.
CHARLES ELY.....	Bury.
WILLIAM COLES.....	Stand.
BENJAMIN HOLMES.....	Park, Ramsbottom.

CHESHIRE.

ROBERT ANLEZARK.....	Stockport.
JOSEPH BATLEY	Marple.
WILLIAM HUDSON	Tintwistle.
JOHN MELDRUM.....	Hatherlow.

DERBYSHIRE.

JOHN WHITEHEAD	Charlesworth.
WILLIAM SUTCLIFFE	Chinley.

YORKSHIRE.

NOAH BLACKBURN	Delph, near Oldham.

On July 1st, 1801, these Associated Ministers issued a "Circular Letter" from Manchester "to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," announcing the formation of an Itinerant Society and indicating its outlines. Such Societies were springing up all over England, their sphere being mainly the villages, which long neglect had brought into a sadly benighted condition. We read even of the formation of academies for the training of Itinerants for the villages, whilst the religious literature of the time abounds in references to "village sermons," or books likely to be helpful to village preachers. In connection with the Society in question it was ordained:—That the Itinerant devote himself entirely to the promulgation of the Gospel in the circuit where he may be appointed to labour, under

the direction of the Committee; that he communicate an account of his proceedings and prospects to the Secretary once a month at least; and that the Associated Ministers in rotation visit the Itinerant once in three months and preach round the circuit with him, or as much of it as is convenient, and transmit the state of the mission to the Secretary, the expenses of such visits to be paid, if required, from the general fund. It is impossible to read these provisions without feeling that the men behind the movement meant business. If close and careful supervision, if hearty co-operation and generous service could command success, they were clearly bent upon having it; whilst the Itinerant was never permitted to feel that he was "ploughing a lonely furrow," that the burden was for his shoulders only. The Secretary and Treasurer respectively were the two distinguished Manchester ministers already named—the Revs. William Roby and Joseph Smith.

The field in which the Society attempted its first work was the "western part of Lancashire," comprising "Leyland, Eccleston, Croston, Bretherton, Tarleton, Rufford, Ormskirk, and their neighbourhoods," a fact full of significance. As the founders of the London Missionary Society selected the South Sea Islands as their first sphere of labour, than which none was more distant, dark, unpromising and perilous, so acted the promoters of the Lancashire Itinerant Society. No part of the county could have been much more remote from the centre of operations, and certainly none was more hopelessly heathen and lost than Western Lancashire. Exactly a century before "Ye Dissenting Ministers of the County of Lancashire," at a meeting in Preston, drew up an appeal to their "worthy friends at London," in which it was stated that their Churches and congregations being situated in "ye northern parts of Lancashire, where Popery and prophanesse have obtained more than in other parts," they felt constrained to "cry for help." In the *Life of the Rev. William Alexander* is also a very graphic account of the "gross darkness" which a hundred years ago hung over North Meols, the Southport of to-day, and the very district in question. "At the beginning of this century," says he, "when Mr. Greatbatch began his

itinerant ministry among them, most of the people were unable to read, very few of them possessed a Bible, and multitudes devoted the Sabbath day to the practice of all iniquity. In North Meols stalls for the sale of cakes, toys, and other articles, and for the purposes of gambling, were erected every Sunday on the way to church. After the service the bellman stood on a gravestone and gave notice of the business to be transacted during the week; and the clergyman spent the evening of that holy day with his jovial companions in the alehouse. Mr. Greatbatch having urged the people to read the Bible, an effort was made to find one in some of the houses, but for some time unsuccessfully. The churchwarden, it was said, had one, but when his family were asked the question they stared with all the astonishment of ignorance, and said 'they had noan such a thing.' At length, however, a copy of the New Testament was found at the bottom of a chest in a farmer's house, and the man, who was able to read, opened it towards the middle of one of the Evangelists. After he had read aloud for some time of the treatment which Christ received from the Scribes and Pharisees, one of the party, who was listening, said within himself,' They'll kill that fellow before they have done with him,' and then asked the reader how long it would be before they would hear of 'th' mon being kilt.' He took hold of about half the leaves of the book and replied that 'he should have to read haply all that before they came to the part which told about his being kilt.' As the history was deemed to be too long to be continued then the book was closed." Girded as it is to-day with fashionable and popular watering-places, whither the vast Lancashire crowds rush away from spindle and loom at holiday times, when the Itinerant Society directed its attention towards it the whole of that part of the county was either a wilderness of sand-hills and a collection of rabbit warrens, or, where populated, wrapped in ignorance and lost in vice. "It is worthy of notice," writes a contemporary, "that from time immemorial this has been reckoned the most uncivilised and wicked part of the county."

Possibly in the choice of this part of the county we may see the influence of Mr. Roby, some of whose

FORTON CHAPEL, NEAR GARSTANG.

Erected about the middle of the Eighteenth Century, but considerably altered since.

See page 87.

WHARTON CHAPEL.

About the end of the Eighteenth Century.

See page 29.

earlier years had been spent at Bretherton, as Master of the ancient Grammar School there, and who, therefore, would have an intimate knowledge of the district and a kindly leaning towards it; but much more, as previously stated, is it a witness to the strong and magnificent faith of those who launched the Itinerant Society. Four years the Society did its work with much beneficent result in this most difficult sphere. Newburgh and Lathom were added to the preaching centres already named, and respecting those places it is said that the "prospect was great." The three Itinerants associated with these early efforts were the Rev. William Honeywood, who, after a brief period of service, left for Heckmondwike, where he died in 1820; the Rev. William Hacking, "a young man of promising abilities," who shortly afterwards entered Rotherham College to be trained for the ministry, and subsequently became pastor of "Ebenezer Chapel," now the Belgrave Meeting House, Darwen; and the Rev. George Greatbatch, of whose apostolic labours a full account will be given later.

The effort did not, however, command the measure of support from the Churches generally that had been anticipated. A fourth Itinerant was greatly needed, but, before incurring this additional responsibility, it was resolved to appeal for larger help, and a "Circular Letter" was issued for that purpose by the "Associated Ministers" at the end of 1805 or beginning of 1806. The appeal lacked nothing in the way of pointed and vigorous language. "How can you dispose of any part of your possessions," the writers ask, "better than by contributing to the support of His own cause? Recollect, that your season for exertion will soon terminate. Are you not ashamed to think of dying yet? What have you done for Him who bought you with His blood? Know, that He will take strict account of every sum with which He has entrusted you. Consider how delightful it will be to meet those in heaven to whom you have been the means of sending the Gospel of their salvation! 'They will receive you into everlasting habitations.' Oh! live with eternity in view." The letter contained a list of the Churches that contributed to the support of the Society during the four years of its existence,

together with the amounts raised, and they deserve to be permanently preserved. In most instances the figures are highly creditable; and, in view of the fact that the period was one of real hardship and commercial depression owing to the war with France then in progress, they represent considerable sacrifice. The list is as follows:—

1801.

	£	s.	d.
AUGUST.			
Tintwistle, Rev. Wm. Hudson	25	0	0
Manchester, Mosley Street	67	5	6
OCTOBER.			
Manchester, Cannon St., Rev. Wm. Roby	14	13	0
Bury, Rev. Charles Ely	5	5	0
NOVEMBER.			
Stand, Rev. Wm. Coles	7	7	0

1802.

MARCH.			
Bolton, Duke's Alley, Rev. Jos. Sowden	6	0	0
Blackburn, Chapel St., Rev. J. McQuhae	1	1	0
MAY.			
Stockport, Mr. Brown	1	1	0
JULY.			
Chapel-en-le-Frith, or Chinley, Rev. Wm. Sutcliffe	2	12	6
AUGUST.			
Delph, Rev. Noah Blackburn	7	7	0

1803.

FEBRUARY.			
Charlesworth, Rev. John Whitehead	21	0	0
MARCH.			
Blackburn, Chapel St., Rev. J. McQuhae	17	5	0
MARCH.			
Rochdale, Mr. Robert Kay	5	0	0
APRIL.			
Stand, Rev. Wm. Coles	6	0	0
Darwen, Rev. Henry Townsend	6	15	3
Preston, Fishergate, now Cannon Street, Rev. William Morgan	5	0	0
Manchester, Cannon St., Rev. W. Roby.	15	5	0

		£	s.	d.
JUNE.	*1803.*			
	St. Helens, Rev. Isaac Sharp.....	20	15	0
SEPTEMBER.				
	Bury, Rev. Charles Ely.....	5	5	0
	Horwich, Rev. Leonard Redmayne.....	1	0	0
	1804.			
AUGUST.				
	St. Helens, Rev. Isaac Sharp.....	18	11	6½
OCTOBER.				
	Newburgh, Rev. George Greatbatch.....	2	4	0
	Bretherton ,, ...	2	2	0
	North Meols ,, ...	0	16	0
NOVEMBER.				
	Warrington, Rev. Joseph Johnson.....	17	17	0
	1805.			
JANUARY.				
	Stockport, Old Chapel.....	5	8	6
JUNE.				
	Manchester, Cannon Street, Rev. W. Roby	15	0	0
	Stockport, New Chapel, Rev. W. Evans.	2	0	0
JULY.				
	Manchester, Mosley Street.....	50	0	0
	Hallfold, Whitworth, Rev. Thos. Robinson	8	15	0
		£363	12	3½

The total expenditure during that period amounted to £366 1s. 3d., leaving the balance of £2 8s. 11½d. due to the Treasurer. The accounts are said to have been examined by W. Roby and S. Bradley, the latter having succeeded Mr. Smith in the pastorate of Mosley Street Chapel.

It was, however, becoming increasingly clear that this work demanded the united strength of the denomination if it was to be adequately done, and "the want of a well-adjusted Union of our Churches" came to be growingly felt. There was also the example of other religious bodies. "Whilst the Methodists," write the Associated Ministers, "have raised respectable interests in the most unpromising

places, we, being isolated, and not acting properly in concert, have attempted, and, of course, effected but little in the enlargement of Christ's Empire." A visit to London on the part of some of the ministers "in the last Missionary Week," of May, 1806, for the purpose of considering the larger Union of Congregational Churches, to which reference has already been made, appears to have decided them as to their own county. "Some of us," they write, "were deeply impressed with the undoubted expedience of the object." Consequently, at the Annual Meeting of the Associated Ministers in Manchester, on June 18th, 1806, just one month after the visit to London, at which the number present exceeded that of any previous similar gathering, "the matter was impartially discussed, and so greatly did it interest all the ministers present" that the two following resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

I. That a General Union of the ministers and congregations of the Independent Denomination, in order to promote the spread of the Gospel, appears highly desirable.

II. That a Committee, composed of Messrs. Spear, Heron, Smith, Lees, W. Kay, Bradley, Blackburn, Evans, and Roby be appointed to prepare a plan of Union.

The plan prepared by these nine brethren contained the following thirteen proposals:—

1. That the Union be composed of the ministers and congregations of the Independent Denomination in the county of Lancaster and adjoining counties.

2. That it shall not interfere, directly or indirectly, with the independent rights and discipline of any particular Church.

3. That its object shall be the introduction and spread of the Gospel, according to the Congregational order, especially in the most populous parts of the county to which the Union extends.

4. That a Committee of thirteen, the majority to be laymen, including Treasurer and Secretary, be appointed annually, who shall "receive intelligence,

take into consideration general advice, form plans, authorise and direct all issues of money from the Treasurer," seven of the Committee being a quorum, and six to go out annually.

5. That an annual collection be made in each congregation, and that the minister be recommended to preach a sermon for the purpose.

6. That the funds be used towards increasing the number of Itinerants, meeting the expenses of ministers itinerating away from their stated charges where there was a probability of raising new causes, giving temporary aid to weak interests, and distributing religious tracts by Itinerants or stated ministers.

7. That in every place where the Gospel had been introduced by Itinerants, or ministers itinerating, a small weekly subscription in aid of the funds be made as early as possible amongst those in attendance.

8. That petitions for assistance towards the erection of new meeting-houses be forwarded by the Committee to the ministers and congregations within the bounds of the Union, each petition to be recommended by three or more ministers in the Union, personally acquainted with all the circumstances of the case, and the proposed building to be settled in trust, or otherwise satisfactorily secured for the use of public worship.

9. That the Annual Meeting be held alternately in the most eligible towns in the Union, at which as many of the ministers and delegates from each congregation as can conveniently shall attend, when there shall be a general review of the proceedings of the past year, the adoption of any new laws and regulations that may be required, and the appointment of a new Committee. Ministers are to assemble on the previous evening, when a sermon shall be preached; the next morning they are to meet again at 6-30 until 8 o'clock for prayer; retire for breakfast, and at 9 o'clock meet to audit the Treasurer's accounts and elect new Committee; public worship at 11 o'clock, one sermon; meet again at 3 o'clock, and after prayer by the President for the day, information shall be given,

correspondence read, and questions discussed respecting the state of religion in the Union, the meeting closing with singing and prayer; another sermon in the evening to conclude "the whole business."

10. That ministers in the Union preach in rotation, the Committee giving each preacher notice four months previous to the Annual Meeting.

11. That congregations desiring a visit from the Union in its Annual Meetings shall submit their request to an Annual Assembly, the matter to be decided by a majority vote, or, at least, a vote of two-thirds of those present.

12. That no minister retire without leave from the chair, from any of the meetings, till the business is finished.

13. That an Annual Report be drawn up and a proper number of copies distributed among the Churches of the Union.

It is high testimony to the character and ability of the brethren entrusted with this work, and to the confidence reposed in their judgment and statesmanship, that this plan was adopted in its entirety, without any kind of modification; and the names of these early constitution makers deserve to be rescued from the obscurity into which they have fallen. Of Robert Spear and the Revs. William Roby and S. Bradley something will be said later. James Holt Heron, the father of Sir Joseph Heron, first Town Clerk of Manchester, was a cotton merchant, and a member for many years at Mosley Street Chapel. He was transferred to New Windsor in 1839, and subsequently connected himself with the Congregational Church at Patricroft. It was at his house in Swinton Park that his friend and pastor, the Rev. Dr. McAll, of Mosley Street Chapel, died suddenly, on July 27th, 1838. His own death took place on August 16th, 1847, at the age of seventy years. His name appears frequently in the Union Reports as a generous contributor to its funds, and more than once he presided over its Annual Meetings. Smith was doubtless the Rev. Joseph Smith previously named. He was the popular pastor of Mosley Street Chapel, and his name appears in honourable association with that of Mr. Roby

in the early itinerating schemes which preceded and led up to the formation of the Union. His brief ministry was terminated by "the rupture of several blood vessels, which repeatedly threatened his dissolution." He, however, continued for some time to reside in Manchester, as a cotton merchant, where he met with much success, and the Union found in him a warm friend until he left for Leamington. Lees was Jonathan Lees, one of the deacons who left Cannon Street Chapel for Grosvenor Street Chapel along with Mr. Roby, a prominent Congregationalist, whose name is associated with nearly every effort at Congregational extension in Manchester and neighbourhood during the first half of the century, and whose son was the late Rev. Jonathan Lees, a most devoted Chinese Missionary. William Kay was a Manchester manufacturer, living at Ardwick Green in 1813, and, along with his wife, Elizabeth Kay, was a member of Mr. Roby's Church at Cannon Street in 1805. He appears to have been at Southport for a short period, but was "dismissed" from Mr. Roby's Church to Liverpool in 1823. He was a generous contributor to the funds of the Union, and his gifts alternately stand to the credit of the Crescent and Great George Street Churches in that city. Subsequently he settled at Toxteth Park, towards whose erection in 1830 he contributed liberally, as a thank-offering for having been delivered out of the hands of highwaymen. He was for some years on the Committee of the Lancashire College, and Treasurer for the Liverpool District of the County Union. A tablet in the old chapel in South Hill Road, which now serves as a Sunday School for Toxteth Park, is thus inscribed:—

"This Tablet
Was erected by the Church and Congregation
Assembling in this place, as a grateful tribute
to the memory of
WILLIAM KAY, ESQUIRE,
through whose exertions and liberality this place of worship was erected, and who was one of the first Deacons of the Church. Relying on the Lord Jesus Christ alone, he peacefully fell asleep on the 18th of December, 1846, aged 71 years."

Blackburn was the Rev. Noah Blackburn, of Delph, formerly of Tockholes, near Blackburn. He was a most distinguished minister, with a strong blend of eccentricity in his character, and was in great request for all kinds of services. When the Rev. John Ely, afterwards of Leeds, was minister at Rochdale, he and his Church had some dispute, and Mr. Blackburn was called in to arbitrate. After hearing both sides, he said: "Ah, I see how it is; he is too great a man for you." His opponents, hearing this, made no further complaints, and at once *raised their pastor's salary*. It is also recorded how, when preaching once at Grosvenor Street Chapel from the words, "Freely ye have received, freely give," he remarked: "I dare say some of you are thinking that that bone has been picked many a time. Well, so it has; but let us break it and see if we cannot extract some of the marrow out of it." He was Dr. Raffles's warm friend, to whom he supplied much curious information about the Nonconformist ministers and Churches of the eighteenth century. Evans was the Rev. William Evans, of Hanover Chapel, Stockport, the first Secretary of the Cheshire Union, who was accustomed every half-year to "visit the Itinerants and their several stations of labour and usefulness." His spirit may be inferred from the following, which were amongst his last words to his friends on his death bed: "There is one thing more I have to mention, which lies near and is very dear to my heart—*the Cheshire Union*. Let it still continue, and remain long a UNION. Give up everything but truth and a good conscience for the sake of union and brotherly love! Give it your support, and let it have your prayers; for I know it is the Lord's work."

The constitution itself also offers several interesting points for reflection. All previous Associations had been largely or exclusively ministerial, but that defect was remedied in the "new Constitution," which ordained that a majority of the Committee should be laymen. Experience had evidently shown that even Congregationalism suffers when "Clericalism" is too dominant in it; that it is absolutely necessary to the success of our Churches that the sympathy and service of the lay element should be fully secured, whilst the provision was prophetic surely of the

THE DUKE'S FOLLY, SOUTHPORT.

At the beginning of the Nineteenth Century.

THE DUKE'S FOLLY, SOUTHPORT.

Another view.

See page 38.

most recent attempts at constitution making. To-day also we are apt to say that our Sessions are long and trying at the annual gatherings of the Union. What, however, of those which began at 6-30 in the morning and continued, with only brief intervals for meals, until far into the night? That early morning prayer meeting, in particular, may well give rise to serious self-scrutiny. Nor would our Annual Meetings lose in value if, at least, the spirit of the provision which required leave from the chair before anyone could retire were in force. Everywhere, indeed, the constitution bears the impress of earnest thought and serious purpose, and in not a few of its features it remains "even until this day."

Read at meetings of the Associated Ministers which were held at Wharton, near Bolton, and at Tintwistle, in Cheshire, it was at once adopted; and a circular dated August 11th, 1806, embodying it, and appealing for sympathy with its proposals, was sent from Manchester to the ministers and Churches of Lancashire and surrounding counties by "the appointed Committee," with a request for their "thoughts" on the letter and proposed Union to be forwarded to the Revs. William Roby and Samuel Bradley. It is worth pointing out that both the Churches where these first meetings were held were ancient seats of heroic Nonconformity. Wharton, one of only two or three old Nonconformist foundations now in the hands of Presbyterians, dates back to the seventeenth century, and orginated with the Morts, of Wharton Hall. Its minister at this time was the Rev. Thomas Jackson. Tintwistle was the fruit of the labours of William Bagshaw, "the Apostle of the Peak," and it had for its minister when the Union was formed the Rev. William Hudson, whose name has been previously given. A most devoted and saintly man he was, whose name is still a fragrant memory in the district. It is recorded that for fourteen long years he laboured without any appearance of fruit, and came to the conclusion that he would resign his charge. Dissuaded from taking this step by neighbouring ministers, a great religious awakening afterwards began, which continued to the end of his ministry. Asked on his death bed if some of his manuscripts might be made

public, he stated that he had given instructions for them to be burned or locked up, and said—

> "Thus let me live unseen, unknown,
> Thus unlamented let me die,
> Steal from the world, and not a stone
> Tell where I lie."

The result of the appeal thus sent forth was the meeting of September 23rd, 1806, in Mosley Street Chapel vestry, when the Lancashire Congregational Union was formed and started on its career. Thirty-two ministers intimated their own approval and that of their respective Churches of the plan of the Union. Six belonged to Cheshire, one to Yorkshire, one to Derbyshire, and the rest to Lancashire. The following are the names of these Fathers and Founders of the Union, together with those of the places in which they ministered:—

LANCASHIRE.

Alexander, William	Prescot.
Bowden, Richard	Darwen (Lower Chapel).
Bradley, Samuel	Manchester (Mosley Street).
Coles, William	Stand.
Ely, Charles	Bury (New Road).
Fletcher, Joseph	Blackburn (Chapel Street).
Galland, Joseph	Oldham (Greenacres).
Hinchliffe, Joseph, or Jonas	Haslingden.
Holmes, Benjamin	Park, Ramsbottom.
Jackson, Thomas	Wharton, near Bolton.
Johnson, Joseph	Warrington.
Mather, James	Salford (New Windsor).
Miller, R. M.	Chorley (Hollinshead Street).
Morgan, William	Preston (Fishergate, now Cannon Street).
Parkin, Joseph	Wigan (St. Paul's).
Parsons, J. T.	Bamford.
Ralph, John	Liverpool (Bethesda, now Crescent).
Redmayne, Leonard	Horwich (Lee Chapel).
Roby, William	Manchester (Cannon Street, now Grosvenor Street).

LANCASHIRE *(continued)*.

Robinson, Thomas.....	Whitworth, near Rochdale.
Sharp, Isaac.....	St. Helens.
Sowden, Joseph.....	Bolton (Duke's Alley).
Toothill, John.....	Rainford, near St. Helens.
Walker, William Manning.....	Preston (Percy Street, now Unitarian; afterwards Mr. Walker founded Grimshaw Street).

CHESHIRE.

Ashton, Solomon.....	Stockport (Tabernacle).
Batley, Joseph.....	Marple.
Evans, William.....	Stockport (Orchard Street).
Hudson, William.....	Tintwistle.
White, Ebenezer.....	Chester (Queen Street).
Wilson, Job.....	Northwich.

DERBYSHIRE.

Whitehead, John.....	Charlesworth.

YORKSHIRE.

Blackburn, Noah.....	Delph.

A Committee was appointed; Mr. Robert Spear became the first Treasurer of the Union, and the Rev. Samuel Bradley its first Secretary. On the 22nd of October following the Committee had its first meeting, and the Revs. P. S. Charrier, of Lancaster, John Adamson, of Patricroft, D. Edwards, of Elswick, and Peter Ramsay, of Holcombe, with their Churches, were admitted to membership. At the same meeting it was resolved that, "several ministers in the county of Chester having intimated that a separate Union in that county would tend more to the spread of the Gospel, it be recommended to them to form themselves into a distinct Union." The recommendation was at once adopted, and the Cheshire Union came into being almost simultaneously with our own.

The one thing about all this which may well impress the reader is the rapid march of events. From May, when the Lancashire ministers—probably the Revs. William Roby, Joseph Smith, and Samuel Bradley—met in London, along with others, to consider the question of a General

Union for England and Wales, until September, when the Lancashire Congregational Union was formed, were only four months; yet during that period three meetings of the Associated Ministers were held, one at Manchester, one at Wharton, and one at Tintwistle; two "Circular Letters" were composed and sent out to the ministers and Churches in the county; a Committee to prepare a constitution was appointed; this constitution, elaborate and statesmanlike, was prepared; and a general meeting of Churches and ministers was held, at which this constitution was adopted and the Union was born. Clear evidence it surely is of the earnestness and enthusiasm of the men who led that movement. It is frequently said that official machinery moves very slowly; it was quite otherwise with the Founders of the Lancashire Congregational Union. Persuaded of the value and supreme need of the instrument which they were fashioning, not a moment was lost in its preparation.

Concerning Mosley Street Chapel, the birthplace of the Union, one who knew it well says that it "stood on the right hand side of Mosley Street, going from Market Street, at the second corner of Charlotte Street, the first one being occupied by the Assembly Rooms, which, like the chapel, was a plain, brick building. The principal entrance to the chapel was by means of a colonnade situated in Charlotte Street, there being also a door in Mosley Street. The chapel itself was what it is the fashion with our æsthetic friends to call a barn. But, barn or no barn, it was a very comfortable place of worship; far more so than many places which make great pretensions, but in which you can neither see nor hear the preacher." The changed character of the neighbourhood led to the removal of the congregation in 1848 to the imposing building erected for its use in Cavendish Street, and Mosley Street Chapel was sold for the sum of £11,000. Upon the site to-day stands a warehouse used by the Calico Printers' Association, formerly for several years in the possession of Messrs. Tootal, Broadhurst, and Lee, and there is nothing to indicate that here was once the sacred edifice with which are linked so many great and inspiring memories, the chapel to which McAll's matchless eloquence drew immense crowds each Sunday; where Manchester's prin-

FLEETWOOD IN ITS INFANCY.

See page 37.

cipal citizens, scientists, politicians, and merchants were accustomed to worship; where Roby's College had its home and the Lancashire Congregational Union was born. Considerably nearer the Market Street end, and on the same side of Mosley Street, is another building, at present occupied by Messrs. H. J. Nicoll and Company, whose fine Corinthian columns and massive front proclaim its original use. This was formerly the Mosley Street Unitarian Chapel, erected about the same time as the Congregational Chapel higher up; but whilst this may still be seen, the other is quite lost to sight. Nothing whatever remains to arrest the eye of any individual amongst the thousands that daily sweep past; and yet it is anything but lost to sight; it has an abiding and a most glorious memorial in the Congregationalism of the county, which it started on a new career of achievement a hundred years ago.

CHAPTER III.

Heroic Itinerancy.

NO part of the story of the Lancashire Congregational Union is more delightful and inspiring than that which deals with the labours of its early Itinerants. It is the romance of Home Missions, and it needs to be emphasised that the romance of service for Christ is not to be sought only in distant fields. Called into existence, as we have seen, mainly to carry the Gospel into the benighted parts of the county, the men engaged by the Union were perfectly loyal to this high ideal. They were true Missionaries. They found their supreme joy in their work, denied themselves in every way, tramped long distances on foot, frequently were away from home for days and even weeks together, suffered ceaseless persecution, and often had their lives imperilled, whilst their salaries averaged about £50 per year. To the splendid heroism, self-sacrifice, and enthusiasm of these men, whose lot it was to serve in lowly places, the Congregationalism of to-day owes an incalculable debt. Not a few Churches are direct memorials of their labours, more indirectly so, whilst their spirit helped to give Congregationalism in the county an impetus which lasted for long years. It has already been stated that the first Itinerants, those engaged by the Itinerant Society from 1801-5, were sent to South-West Lancashire, in particular to North Meols and district; and in reference to that district those appointed to labour there appear to have been at a loss to find language sufficiently expressive in which to describe its lost and immoral condition. "The land of the shadow of death," writes one, "whose vices and miseries have been its powerful advocates in demanding our exertions."

The author of that sentence was the Rev. George Greatbatch, the first of the men sent to labour in these parts. This good man, the Father of Southport Congregationalism, and for more than fifty years a principal figure in the life of the town, whose rise and progress he witnessed, was born in October, 1779, at Shelton, in the Potteries. It is recorded that his father made considerable sacrifices for the Protestant faith, and that one of his ancestors was a noted preacher in Cromwell's army. Converted under the ministry of the Rev. James Boden, of Hanley, whose Church he joined in the seventeenth year of his age, his original intention was to offer himself for foreign service in connection with the London Missionary Society, and to this end it was proposed that he should enter Mr. Haldane's Academy at Edinburgh. Meeting, however, with Mr. Roby, of Manchester, who laid before him the needs of Western Lancashire, he was induced to abandon the idea and to succeed Mr. Hacking there as agent of the Itinerant Society. At the age of twenty-three years he gave himself to this work, taking up his abode in 1802 at Newburgh, near Ormskirk, a central place for his wide field.

Here he "occupied a part of the cottage tenanted by one of his hearers, expecting it would be only for a month or two; but prejudice would not allow him to rent a house in the village, and he, with his increasing family, remained 'in his own hired' lodgings upwards of four years." His life during this period is thus described: "His salary was fixed at £80 a year; but as it was necessary for him to keep a horse, and as wheat ranged from 21s. to 30s. per bushel, his worldly prospects were not very inviting. How, indeed, man and horse, wife and child could exist in such circumstances is truly wonderful. His residence was fixed at Newburgh, and from thence he made daily excursions to the surrounding villages. Every evening, however, he was obliged to return to Newburgh, as at no place except Ormskirk could he obtain a bed. On many a wild night he and his pony had to struggle with the tempest, and only reached home at midnight, drenched with rain and benumbed with cold." Those "daily excursions" took him long distances—to Southport, Blowick, and Crossens on the one hand, Ormskirk and Bickerstaffe on the other, and

Rufford, Bretherton, Leyland, and Eccleston on the other. It was an immense district which he endeavoured to cover, a part of the country little touched by outside influences of any sort. And he was "in perils oft." When he journeyed on foot he was frequently accompanied by a person named Hooton, a devoted friend, at whose cottage he was accustomed to preach. Mr. Hooton, being a tall, strong man, used to ford the rivers which stood in their way with Mr. Greatbatch on his shoulders; and in the Scarisbrick district he was often seen by the minister's side armed with a stout cudgel to protect him against assaults from the Roman Catholics.

Removing to Churchtown, in July, 1807, he found the same difficulty in securing a house in which to live. "The influential men of the village," writes one, "had resolved that he should not reside there"; but eventually "a friend, whose heart the Gospel had reached, converted his barn into a dwelling-house for the preacher. It was a very humble abode. The floor and walls were of clay and the roof of straw. There were only two rooms, one of which, serving both for parlour and study, was so low that the occupant could not stand upright in it; the other, serving for kitchen, etc., was so high that nothing could be hung up in it without a ladder."

Mr. Greatbatch's change of abode did not alter the sphere of his labours, for precisely the same places are mentioned as enjoying his ministrations. It enabled him, however, to give more attention to North Meols, now represented by Churchtown, where, on February 10th, 1807, a place was opened for public worship. The building had accommodation for 200 people, and was literally erected by himself and his hearers, its cost being £70. It was built of "wood and clay mingled with straw," and was "completed in one month." The style of architecture is said to have been "original and indescribable, neither primeval nor modern, the first and last of its class. Its grotesque form was so unlike any style of earth architecture, that no one ever ventured to describe it except a lady, who said it reminded her of Noah's Ark."

For twenty years or more Mr. Greatbatch laboured most devotedly here, building up a promising Church, and living

REV. WILLIAM ALEXANDER.

An early Itinerant and one of the Founders of the Union.

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to see a great change in the habits and morals of the people. Writing after eleven years' work, he says: "I sometimes endeavour to recall those impressions to my mind which I felt when I first saw North Meols, but I cannot. I had for some years previous to that time had a strong desire to be a Missionary to the heathen (a cause which still lies near my heart), but little thought there was a station for me at home which so much resembled the ideas I had formed of an uncivilised heathen land. I recollect the awkward gaze wherewith the people looked upon me, and the painful feelings of my heart when I retired to a little hovel from among them. The impressions I feel at this moment are so powerful that I can scarce believe I am in the same place now that I was then. Poor creatures! Such was their ignorance and general behaviour that for a long time my heart sank within me when I must leave my family at Newburgh to preach among them. The thought of living among them would at that time have overwhelmed me." Then he gratefully indicates some of the achievements of his ministry there.

These were days in which Mr. Greatbatch indulged in beautiful dreams and saw glorious visions. Having been on a preaching excursion to Formby, "one of the most benighted parts of the county," he reports that if "he can procure a place to preach in, he hopes it will become a beautiful link in connecting the coast between Liverpool and Poulton; and that the exertions in the Fylde may fill up the chasm between the latter place and Lancaster. Thus some progress will be made towards that desirable consummation when our island shall be girt about with salvation." The dream has not yet been fulfilled; but, with Congregationalism flourishing at Lytham, Fairhaven, St. Annes, Blackpool, Bispham, Cleveleys, Fleetwood, and Preesall, it is surely speeding towards that end.

It was stated, a little earlier, that amongst Mr. Greatbatch's preaching stations was Southport, and his visits to this place began about 1808, that is, some ten years after it had received its name. It was a "small village containing not more than thirty-eight inhabited houses," one of which was the "Duke's Folly," a small wooden hotel, erected in 1792 by one William

Sutton, a quaint character, resident at Churchtown, who was locally known as "the old Duke," because of his delight in reciting to his fellow villagers some story about the Duke of York having passed this way whilst journeying to Scotland. The building, which mostly consisted of wreckage gathered on the shore, was put up for the convenience of people in the bathing season; but William Sutton appears to have had some faint visions also of a future prosperous town there. He was, however, alone in these visions, and the building, which subsequently became the "Original Royal Hotel," was named by the people the "Duke's Folly." The site of the structure, one of the very earliest in Southport, at the Birkdale end of Lord Street, and close to the West End Congregational Church, is now occupied with a memorial lamp, into which a stone tablet has been let, containing an inscription to the memory of "the first Founder and Executor of South Port." The spot should always be sacred to Congregationalists, because it was in a room belonging to the Original Royal Hotel, kindly placed at his disposal by the proprietor free of charge, that Mr. Greatbatch was accustomed to hold religious services. It was when he was preaching here one day that a dispute arose amongst some men who were drinking in the taproom. Blows were deemed to be necessary to finish the argument, and it is a tribute to the respect in which Mr. Greatbatch was held that, "rather than disturb the preacher, the company adjourned to a piece of ground a short distance off, where the battle was duly fought out." Fitting, surely, it was that Southport Congregationalism should find an early home in the very house which was practically the birthplace of the new town. Prophetic it was of the fact that its spirit would preside over its future, largely fix its character, and help towards its development and progress. Out of these small and feeble beginnings the Church at East Bank Street, now Chapel Street, grew, and in 1824 Mr. Greatbatch left Churchtown to take charge of it. Here again he exercised his ministry for more than twenty years, contributing in all kinds of ways towards the upbuilding of the important town that was rapidly springing into existence. His resignation took place in 1847, but he continued

to reside in the town until his death, in 1864, at the age of eighty-four years.

To the worth of this remarkable man, men of all creeds and parties bear glad testimony. Archdeacon Clarke says: "I first became acquainted with him in the year 1849, when I became vicar of Christ Church in this town, where he had been residing from almost the beginning of the century. He used to dress in the old-fashioned clerical style, with knee-breeches, gaiters, and swallow-tail coat. He had a face beaming with benevolence, and endeared himself to all who knew him by his kindness of manner." The Convalescent Hospital, "the noble structure on the promenade fronting the sea," is largely a memorial of his self-denying labours, and still more are the many flourishing Churches in Southport and neighbourhood. His name is, and will be for many a day, one of the most sacred and fragrant memories associated with the moral and religious life of the town. The saintly old man rests in the beautiful cemetery belonging to the town, but "his works follow on."

The Rev. William Alexander, who succeeded Mr. Greatbatch in the pastorate at Churchtown in 1824, was his *fac-simile* in many respects, certainly in his wonderful enthusiasm for his work. A Scotchman, as his name suggests, he was born in the parish of Stoneykirk, Wigtonshire, February 21st, 1763, and, losing his father when he was only six years of age, the pressure of poverty was often upon his young life. At the age of twenty years he turned his face southward, as many of his countrymen have done, and arrived in Lancaster on August 17th, 1783, having travelled on foot from Glasgow, a distance of 170 miles. His brother John had preceded him to this town, and another brother, Hugh, eventually followed. Though he had been religiously inclined from his earlier days, his actual conversion took place after his settlement in Lancaster, being largely due to conversations with the Rev. Robert Housman, M.A., a native of Skerton, and a pious Evangelical clergyman in Lancaster. Joining the High Street Independent Church, he there enjoyed the ministry of the Rev. P. S. Charrier, and soon found an opening for his preaching gifts in the villages round about Lancaster. Caton, Hornby, Wray, Warton, Burton,

Milnthorpe, Lowgill, Bentham, and Arkholme are amongst the places visited by him; and it is stated that frequently he would preach four times on a Sunday and walk thirty-two miles.

Such a preparation pre-eminently fitted him for the work which awaited him, and in 1802 he accepted an invitation to the pastorate of the Church at Prescot, near Liverpool, a struggling cause in a most unpromising district. His ministrations were not restricted to his own little Church; rather was that his itinerating centre, and he travelled as far as Newton-le-Willows, Hindley, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Thatto Heath, Tarbuck, Haydock, and Leigh, carrying with him the good tidings of salvation, "for lack of which the people were perishing." "Sometimes," writes his son, "he would set out on a summer afternoon, taking one of his sons with him, and when he found a collection of cottages that were likely to yield a congregation, every one of them would be visited and notice would be given of preaching immediately, in some vacant place near at hand." Besides the dense ignorance of the people, he met with difficulties of another kind. Persecution was common, and sometimes his life was seriously endangered by the bitterness and malice of his opponents.

Invited by the Union to settle at Leigh, where he had frequently preached, he did so, and left Prescot in 1811, making Leigh, as he had previously done at Prescot, a centre for mission work. Edge Green, Westhoughton, Chowbent, Lowton, Hurst Mill, Twiss Green, Astley Green, were some of his preaching places, and to make the work more efficient and compass still wider areas he sought out "the most intelligent and instructed members of his church, and encouraged them to become, as far as they were able, his companions and coadjutors in his Evangelical journeys." Respecting this work he says: "Dark nights and bad roads make my journeys home unpleasant; but, while the people are willing to attend, I hope I shall find pleasure in spending my legs and my lungs in the service of their precious souls." In addition to this he had his "preaching rounds," when he went to some distant town for a Sunday or two. His round at Ashton-under-Lyne, for example, contained seven preaching places, and his Oldham one

eight, and it took several days to complete the circle. It was customary also in those days for ministers to go to London, where the wealth of the denomination was supposed to be gathered, and spend weeks, and even months, in collecting money for new interests or new buildings, and Mr. Alexander gives some curious information about his experiences there in that capacity. Writing to his son John, in September, 1812, he says: "I have been in London eight and have begged six weeks. My book contains subscriptions amounting to from £220 to £230. I follow it close; I attend no parties, nor even meetings of ministers, though I am often invited; but I travel from seven in the morning till eight and often nine in the evening, when I reach my lodgings. . . . Fresh beggars are arriving from the country every week. There are two or three from Scotland, chiefly from places in the Burgher interest, who monopolise the Scots among them." Fourteen years of such life were spent at Leigh, and when he left for Churchtown, in 1825, there were promising causes at Ashton-in-Makerfield, Leigh, Westhoughton, and Newton-le-Willows testifying to the value of his work.

In his new sphere, as at Leigh and Prescot, though he was now over sixty years of age, he was abundant in his labours. "He preached," says his biographer, "at his own place, Churchtown, morning and evening on the Sunday and once in the week. In the afternoon he generally preached at Crossens, a village about two miles distant. After his three services on the Sunday, he was in the habit of preaching a fourth sermon in the fields, on the sea shore, or in some neighbouring cottage. During his residence in Churchtown he preached in no less than forty or fifty cottages. These home efforts were connected with a wide itinerancy, and his text-book contains the names of about thirty places, at various distances, which he more or less frequently visited for the purpose of preaching." In a letter, dated November 24th, 1829, he refers to these itineraries in the following humorous terms: "Two years ago I took up the trade of a travelling Scotchman (you know there are many in this county). About once a month I take a tour of about thirty miles, and sometimes forty. I go from house to house, read, pray, and converse with

the families, and give, or rather lend, them tracts. This occupies three or four days. I preach in the evenings, and sometimes in the afternoons also." He frequently journeyed to Liverpool, a distance of about twenty miles, and generally on foot, usually halting on the way at two or three villages, where he would hire a cottage at a small charge for the purpose of preaching to the people. These services he called his "restings."

For twenty years Mr. Alexander continued this kind of life during his Churchtown ministry, resigning his charge there in 1845, at the age of eighty-two years. He continued to reside in Southport until his death, on January 23rd, 1855, when he was within one month of his ninety-third birthday. He, too, sleeps in the Southport Cemetery, like his friend, Mr. Greatbatch, whom he predeceased nearly ten years. His son, the Rev. John Alexander, was for many years a prominent minister at Norwich, and his *Memoirs* of his father, apart from the local interest which the book has, is one of the most interesting of the kind ever published. The reader will find no book which better illustrates the magnificent courage, the spiritual faith and heroism of those humble men, who in quiet places were content to live and die serving the Christ of their love.

Southport Congregationalism, with its half dozen or more influential and wealthy Churches, is the fruit of the labours of these two devoted men; but it is worth pointing out that whilst in Southport proper and along the coast in a southerly direction Congregationalism has made most gratifying advance, the large district upon which both Greatbatch and Alexander spent so much labour, stretching as far north as Bretherton, Leyland, and Preston, and as far east as Ormskirk and Newburgh, has yielded little result. Here there has been only very slight advance; Congregationally the district is much the same to-day that it was nearly a hundred years ago.

On the other side of the Ribble estuary lies the Fylde District, which, like North Meols and neighbourhood, was one of the first places to attract the attention of the Union, because of its deep need. It was described as "the most dark and miserable part of the county." At

Elswick, one of the oldest Congregational Churches in the county, whose minister, the Rev. David Edwards, joined the Union one month after its formation, "the lamp of sacred truth" is said to have "burnt purely and steadily for several years"; whilst the Rev. William Manning Walker, of Preston, one of the first thirty-two who assisted in the formation of the Union, had put forth many "disinterested labours of love," preaching at several places there. All this had, of course, contributed towards the spiritual illumination of a most extensive district, and one "awfully obscured with the mists of Popish ignorance, error, and superstition." It was necessary, however, that something further should be done, and about the beginning of 1807 the Rev. James Morrow was sent as the Itinerant of the Union. He was one of the men trained in the newly established Academy at Manchester by Mr. Roby, and was stationed at Poulton-le-Fylde as a centre. Some nine or ten different preaching places were at once opened by him, among which appear Kirkham, Clifton, Thornton, and Marton. If, again, the reader will consult a map, he will be impressed with the largeness of the area attempted, and it will not be difficult to imagine what that must have meant in those days of bad roads and clumsy modes of conveyance. The Reports here, as in the other cases, are full of both light and shade. We read of "strong prejudices subsiding" as the result of his ministrations, of many becoming "clear in their views of divine truth, humble in their dispositions, zealous for the cause of Christ, and circumspect in their walk and conversation"; and, on the other hand, of being unable to obtain a suitable preaching place, "through the fear of man and the enmity of the human heart against God." The cause at Poulton declining, and that at Kirkham growing, Mr. Morrow removed to the latter place in May, 1812, where a chapel had been opened some years previously. In the following year he left the county for Leek, in Staffordshire, where he continued to labour until his death, in 1836.

The Rev. Joseph Speakman, a comparatively unknown man, was sent to Poulton as an agent of the Union about 1816. The cause here was very low at the time; he found "little

else but dust and ruins." Amongst his preaching stations were Marton and Rawcliffe, Bispham and Blackpool. Writing in 1819, Mr. Speakman said that he had "one hearer from Blackpool" in his congregation, and in the following year it is stated that he "constantly preached" there, though no little evil influence was employed to "hinder the good work." Blackpool then was, of course, not the Blackpool of to-day. It was a mere village, with a few fishermen's huts. Even "at the flux of the season," ten years later, there were only some "eight hundred to a thousand visitors." The first preaching services were held in "Nickson's barn," and it is interesting to remember that Blackpool Congregationalism, which is now so respectable, aggressive, and strong, has grown out of the simple labours of this obscure agent of the County Union of more than eighty years ago. Mr. Speakman left Poulton for Tockholes, near Blackburn, at the beginning of 1822, and was subsequently minister at Garden Street, Sheffield, where he died in 1856.

The Rev. George Partington was another of Mr. Roby's students, and his sphere of labour was in quite a different part of the county. Appointed to Oldham in the early part of 1807, to break up new ground, after a few months he was removed. Considerable difficulty appears to have attended the efforts of the Union to plant Congregationalism in Oldham, and it took some thirty years after this date for the Union Street Church to become well established. The statistics which appear later show that very liberal grants were given to the cause here for a number of years; and by a curious accident the Church ceased to be a recipient from the Union funds. It is recorded that in 1836, "through the slow progress of the coach bearing the deputation to the County Union Meeting, and their consequent non-appearance when the case of Oldham came up, the Church lost the usual grant." This, however, proved to be a blessing in disguise; the Church made no further application, the deficiency being met from its own resources. From Oldham Mr. Partington went to Burnley, "a licentious place" with many "profligate characters," where a succession of ministers connected with the Union had been engaged for some months trying to introduce the Gospel. "Violent opposition from various and some unexpected quarters"

WYMONDHOUSES CHAPEL.

Erected in 1688, *now quite cleared away.*

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was his lot. Through "ignorance or malice, or both," the doctrines which he preached were "represented in a most horrid light," and to make the mischief more effective, "pamphlets" against him were "industriously circulated." Yet his work met with success, and in a short time a Church was formed. Thrice on the Lord's Day he preached at Burnley, on "the Tuesday Evening he met the friends for social prayer and religious conversation," giving a lecture on Thursday Evening, and preaching on other evenings "in the adjacent villages." Thus fully was his time occupied, and Colne, Whalley, and Harwood were amongst his preaching stations. The first named place prospered so rapidly that in 1810 he removed thither, though he continued to preach to his "little flock" at Burnley fortnightly for some time. At Colne Mr. Partington had a very wide district, in which he itinerated in addition to the special work of his own Church. Emmott Lane, Mosshouses, Barrowford, Fence, Rough Lee, Lower Colne, Twiston, Newby, and Gill enjoyed his ministrations, the latter district in particular being described as "most destitute and barren." In conjunction with some other ministers also, for a time he supplied Thorney Holme, Barley, Clitheroe, and Grindleton. Doubtless most of these are names only to the majority of readers, but they are at least a witness to the untiring zeal and indefatigable labours of the earnest men with whom they are associated.

Occasionally the Itinerants were visited by some brother minister, who would accompany them on their preaching rounds and take duty for them; and in one of the Annual Reports a suggestion is made that this would be "a pleasant and profitable mode of recreation to those gentlemen, who are accustomed to visit different parts of the country in the summer months for the purpose of temporary relaxation from business and change of air." Mr. Partington continued his labours at Colne until 1816, when he removed to Park Chapel, Ramsbottom. After a brief ministry in this place he became pastor of the Congregational Church at Glossop, where he continued until his death on February 20th, 1836. He earned for himself the high encomium of being "a laborious and useful minister of Christ's Gospel."

The Rev. Thomas Jackson was another of Mr. Roby's students, and for his first charge he had the historic little Church at Wharton, which he had supplied frequently during his student days. A native of Sowerby, in the parish of Halifax, where he was born on April 17th, 1770, he gave no promise of a religious life until he attained to manhood. "In his twenty-third year," says his biographer, "the Lord put a period to his wanderings and brought him to His feet of mercy." Circumstances led to his removal to Warrington in 1800, where he attended the ministry of the Rev. Joseph Sowden, and it was through the latter's recommendation that he became a student in Mr. Roby's Academy. At the time of his settlement at Wharton he would be well on for forty years of age, a fact which does not appear to have been any disqualification in the eyes of his new charge; for happily the "ministerial dead line" had not then come into existence. His salary did not average more than £32 per year, and, though he had many hardships in consequence, with his wife and three children, he was never known to complain. Visiting a friend one day, for whom he had engaged to preach in the evening, the friend remarked that his shoes were not fit for the four miles' journey which he had taken, to which the good man replied that he had no power "to purchase better." That same evening one of his hearers requested the friend in question to give Mr. Jackson "a one pound note," the name of the donor to be withheld. On receiving it Mr. Jackson "burst into tears, and said that he had seen the gentleman presenting the money in a dream the night before, and considered it a gift from the Lord." In connection with this matter his biographer adds: "Mr. Jackson was no enthusiast, but a man of sound judgment, yet a quick observer of the dispensations of Divine Providence in their varied and minutest forms." It was indeed the way of these devoted, simple-minded Christian men and women of a few generations ago to interpret their experiences thus; and who shall say that they were wrong? It was a vital part of their creed that God was closely related to all their life, and it was the conviction that their every interest was in His hands, and that all their steps were being directed by Him, which sustained them amidst the discouragements and difficulties of their lot.

In addition to his own Church, Mr. Jackson regularly preached at Westhoughton, Tyldesley, Chowbent, Astley, Stirrup Brook, Sale Lane, Mosley Common, and Walkden. "After preaching twice in his own chapel," says his biographer, "he frequently went from four to six miles to testify the Gospel in widely scattered villages and hamlets, and returned home the same evening in all varieties of weather with great exhaustion of strength, but not of zeal for Christ, or of love to the souls of men." A ministry of some fourteen years here terminated with his removal to Bamford, near Rochdale, which a short time previously had ceased to be a recipient from the Union funds. The itinerant spirit still remained with him, and he inspired others with it. Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, in a charmingly reminiscent letter, written in September, 1867, to his old friends at Bamford, with whose Sunday School and Church he and his father, Mr. Robert Kay, had been so closely associated, says: "I was fond of accompanying the deacons in their visits on Sundays to remote 'folds' and hamlets in the hills of Blackstone Edge and Todmorden, or along the range from Knowl Hill to Rowley Moor. I remember long walks with the deacon, John Crabtree — his pious conversation on the way — our arrival at a weaver's cottage in some far distant 'fold' on the edge of a wild moor—the simple breakfast of oatcake or oatmeal porridge and milk—the gathering of the neighbours, and the primitive Scriptural greetings sometimes uttered; the simple service and the quaint, rather dogmatic, discourse of my friend John; the mid-day meal of eggs, bacon, oatcake; then the walk home, and the arrival at Bamford in the twilight or night. In these walks John lent his whole influence with me to induce me to become a missionary; but I had an eager thirst for knowledge, and longed to go to the University to study science, history, and metaphysics. The mantle of John Crabtree fell on my friend Thomas Jackson, who, in after years, while he supported his family by working as a shoemaker, became a devoted missionary among the solitary hamlets and remote villages of our Lancashire and Yorkshire highlands. Thomas visited many outlying congregations of weavers, miners, and labourers on the borders of Derby-

shire and Cheshire and along the Blackstone Edge range of hills. He walked great distances to places remote from any public conveyance. He commonly lodged on the Saturday and Sunday nights in the cottage of the deacon or other prominent member of the little congregation, and conducted the worship on the Sunday either in some small chapel or in a cottage. There must be in many secluded places a lively remembrance of the earnest, unwearied man, who spent his life in such humble but faithful ministration of Christ. I have a heartfelt pleasure in holding up to you the example of this noble-hearted, good man, in pointing to his simple, cheerful, pure life; to his struggle with natural infirmity of body, and his triumph over it; and to his self-sacrificing labours under the influence of fervent religious zeal."

Mr. Jackson's ministry at Bamford, which was attended with very marked success, was continued until his death on May 16th, 1837. He is described as "above the middle size," "of a strong and healthy constitution," throughout the period of his long ministry being confined to his bed only one Sunday, and that just two days before his death, and as "a hard student and a searching preacher." That he was a man of "considerable attainments in learning" is clear from a curious story which appears in another place; whilst Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, in the letter previously cited, states that he was a "most skilful florist." Like many Congregationalists of the time, he had a strong objection to elaborate music in connection with the worship of the sanctuary, and especially instrumental music. Indeed, when the Bamford friends first approached him with a view to his becoming their minister, amongst other objections, he said: "I cannot approve of the manner in which some of the Sunday Schools conduct their anniversaries. Though I have no objection to some instruments, to aid children in singing upon those occasions, yet I think the children's voices should be the principal music, and nothing should be sung but plain hymns, and not those pieces which render a place of worship more like a playhouse than a house of God." One of his sons was Thomas Jackson, the devoted lay preacher referred to in Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth's

BLACKPOOL OVER SEVENTY YEARS AGO.

See page 44.

letter, who was "crippled in the foot and leg," and it is a little curious to find that he was the leader of the Bamford Chapel choir and quite an enthusiast for music of all kinds. "He taught in the Sunday School," says Sir James, "very regularly and with great energy. He was the leader of the choir in the chapel, where he played the violin. He was most enthusiastic in organising choral meetings, for which he obtained the scores of oratorios and anthems, and with an unwearied energy superintended the rehearsals, both instrumental and vocal, before the final display. At last, after great exertions at meetings for practice, held during most nights of every week for two or three months, the whole neighbourhood was assembled, all the performers were placed on a platform in the chapel, Thomas Jackson led with his violin, and there was a burst of instrumental and vocal music which astonished the audience." Both father and son sleep in the quiet graveyard of the beautiful little chapel towards whose upbuilding their varied but united ministries contributed so greatly, and their memory is still tenderly cherished in the district, which has benefited so richly from their devoted and noble lives.

It must not be imagined that these five men exhaust the list. They are introduced here as illustrations of the type of men that Lancashire Congregationalism was able to call to its service in those early days. John Capper, of Orrell and Kirkham; John Penkethman, of Wharton and Pendlebury; Benjamin Holmes, of Park, Ramsbottom; John Holgate, of Orrell; Thomas Rogers, of Prescot; Wm. Bowen, of Bretherton; Peter Ramsay, of Holcombe; and Jonas Hinchliffe, of Haslingden and Great Harwood, were men of a similar spirit; whilst David Edwards, of Elswick; Robert Morris Griffiths, of Kirkham; Joseph Dyson, of Farnworth; Samuel Haining, of Douglas, Isle of Man; Joseph Wadsworth, of Clitheroe, and a great company besides, in addition to their pastoral work amongst their own people, were "in labours more abundant" in the districts to which they belonged.

It would be impossible to recite, even in briefest outline, the story of these men and their work, and of the great unnamed company whom they represent. During the first

thirty years of the Union's history they overlaid the county with a network of village stations, where, in homely but telling phrase, the Gospel was preached in barns, private houses, and on village greens, anywhere, indeed, where the people could be induced to come and listen. There never has been a more serious attempt to win Lancashire for Christ. As already intimated, many of those faithful men—true heroes of the Cross—had often the most slender means of subsistence; their salaries never exceeded £80 per year, and often they had little more than half that sum, sometimes even considerably less than that; they had usually large families to maintain; they exposed themselves to all sorts of weather during their long preaching tours; they were persecuted, maligned, and not infrequently violence was done to their persons, yet they never faltered in their duty, and to that band of men, whose "hearts God had touched," and whom nothing could check or daunt in their mission, we owe the position of strength in which our County Congregationalism finds itself to-day. To feel the presence of these men, even at this distance of time and through the printed word, is like a breeze from the heavenly hills. The story of their life is the best possible antidote for pessimism. Simple minded and unlettered as many of them were, labouring in difficult and obscure places, yet were they signally honoured by that Christ whom they loved with all the passion of their souls, and to the preaching of whose Gospel they had consecrated their life.

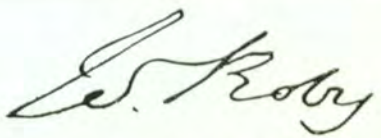
CHAPTER IV.

The Schools of the Prophets.

CONGREGATIONALISTS have never been blind to the advantages of an educated ministry. The men who were ejected in 1662, whom we are proud to reckon amongst our spiritual ancestors, were the most cultured, as well as the most saintly, ministers in the Church, of whose pulpits they were deprived because of their loyalty to conscience; and after their ejection not a few were received into the homes of distinguished families as chaplains and teachers. The great Universities of the nation being rigidly closed against all Nonconformists, an endeavour was made to supply the lack, by establishing various kinds of collegiate institutions where intending candidates could receive some sort of training for the work of the ministry. The point cannot be too strongly accentuated that the moment persecution abated, and it became safe for Nonconformity to show itself, these institutions began to appear. It has often been urged as a serious charge against us that our pulpits have all along been deficient in refinement and culture. The barrister previously named, who a century ago raved so furiously against the proposal to form a General Union of Congregational Churches, because he detected therein what he supposed to be a serious conspiracy against the State, declared that the "new order of ecclesiastics," who were to be employed as preachers, "consisted not of an enlightened, liberal, well-educated, moderate clergy, but of a bloated race of lay priests, upstarts, untaught mechanics, blockheads, tainted with the mania of preaching, without a single requisite that should fit them for that high and important destination." A few years previous to this, Bishop Horsley, one of the most eloquent prelates in the Anglican Church, had said that the pastor of these "new congregations of nondescripts

is often, in appearance at least, an illiterate peasant or mechanic." To-day even not a few of the Anglican clergy cling to the antiquated fiction of a social, academic, and intellectual superiority, and in all sorts of ways their Nonconformist brethren are made conscious of the fact. The taunt comes with ill grace from those whose policy throughout has been to make the great schools of learning their own close preserve; whilst examination tests are incessantly and emphatically showing how little ground for the taunt there is when Nonconformists are permitted a fair field and no favour.

As early even as the seventeenth century the Rev. Richard Frankland, M.A., a noted Nonconformist divine, had an Academy at Rathmell, near Settle, which was subsequently transferred to Natland and Kendal. In the latter place he was followed by Dr. Caleb Rotheram, and it was from this institution that the men were mainly drawn who filled the Nonconformist pulpits of the north during the first half of the eighteenth century. At Attercliffe, near Sheffield, the Rev. Timothy Jollie, son of the devoted Thomas Jollie, the ejected minister of Altham and Wymondhouses, in the neighbourhood of Padiham and Clitheroe, conducted a similar institution during the same period, whence issued many noted preachers for the Congregational ministry. Dr. Doddridge had an Academy at Daventry about the middle of that century, which eventually passed into the hands of Dr. Caleb Ashworth. In Manchester the Revs. John Chorlton and James Coningham, M.A., had a collegiate institution which was contemporaneous with those of Attercliffe and Kendal. The Heckmondwike Academy was founded about 1780 by the Rev. James Scott, formerly of Tockholes, near Blackburn, and its influence upon West Riding Congregationalism cannot possibly be measured. Mr. Scott's students, indeed, were in great demand, not only in Yorkshire, but in Lancashire and other counties. Filled with Evangelical fervour, they contributed greatly towards the breaking up of the apathy and indifference which dominated the religious world of the eighteenth century, and not a few came to be ministers than whom Congregationalism has had none more illustrious. The Academy at Warrington supplied that



REV. WILLIAM ROBY.
Founder of the Union.

MR. ROBERT SPEAR.
First Treasurer of the Union (1806-1807).

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section of Dissent which had adopted so called liberal views and had drifted into Unitarianism; and Rotherham College was built by Dr. Williams out of the wreckage of the Idle Academy, doing for that part of Yorkshire what the Heckmondwike Academy had done for the other, both represented to-day in the Yorkshire United Independent College. The Countess of Huntingdon's College at Trevecca, Wales, subsequently Cheshunt, gave to Congregationalism many earnest and cultured men in the early part of the nineteenth century. These very far from complete the list. The names, indeed, are legion of those who conducted small Theological Seminaries in their own houses, and who thus sought to equip men for the Congregational ministry in more or less adequate fashion. The multiplication of these small and inferior educational institutions may be regarded to-day as a very doubtful good; and yet it is difficult to see how otherwise the Churches could have been supplied with a trained ministry of any sort. At any rate it is clear testimony to the deep anxiety of the men of those days to give the ministry the best possible preparation for its high and sacred work.

It has been previously intimated that in many other parts of the country Seminaries were being established for the express purpose of training Itinerants for village preaching, and the need of some such institution for Lancashire pressed greatly upon Mr. Roby's heart. Fortunately, in Mr. Robert Spear he found one who entirely sympathised with his ideals, and who had also the ability to give substantial help. The two, therefore, called into existence what came to be known as Mr. Roby's Academy, because, whilst Mr. Spear financed it out of his own private resources, Mr. Roby served it as Principal. The vestry of Mosley Street Chapel (afterwards, as we have seen, to be the birthplace of the Union), was used as a lecture room, Mr. Spear furnishing it with a large and useful library of books. Work was begun in January, 1803; but the removal of Mr. Spear from Manchester in 1808 led to the Academy's dissolution. The curriculum, which was spread over two years, including Theological and Biblical Lectures, which are said to have been "of a superior order"; English Composition also, together with the rudiments of Latin, Greek, and

Hebrew. That the work was not indifferently done may be inferred from a story of the Rev. Thomas Jackson, of Wharton, near Bolton, who had received his ministerial training there. A young curate, fresh from Oxford, came to reside in the neighbourhood. Imbued with the ideas too common with his class, he looked upon the Nonconformist minister as an ignorant and illiterate man, and resolved to play a joke upon him which, whilst demonstrating his own superior scholastic attainments, would bring humiliation to the other. Accordingly he sent a note by a messenger, written in Latin, asking Mr. Jackson for the loan of *Cicero's Orations*, confident that he would neither be able to decipher the letter nor be in possession of such a work. Mr. Jackson, however, was sufficiently versed in Latin to understand the purport of the letter, and, asking the messenger to wait a few minutes, he wrote a polite note in *Greek*, which, along with the book, he sent, to the great surprise of the conceited academic, who ever afterwards treated him with the utmost respect. It is quite possible that there is a touch of exaggeration about the story, but the residuum of truth will be sufficient to show that Mr. Jackson was no mean scholar, that his training in Mr. Roby's Academy had been thorough, and that even in this respect he was quite competent to represent Congregationalism in days when it was difficult to do this.

The names of fourteen students trained in this institution have been preserved, and, as the greater part of them laboured for some time in Lancashire, they are worth inserting here:—

JAMES TURNER, who afterwards went to Rotherham College, and was for many years settled at Knutsford, Cheshire.

JOSEPH GILL, who also took a further training at Rotherham, and was for a lengthened period the pastor of the Congregational Church at Egerton, near Bolton.

THOMAS JACKSON, whose ministry was exercised at Wharton, near Bolton, and Bamford, near Rochdale.

JAMES MATHER, for some time at New Windsor, Salford, and afterwards at Sheffield and London.

ROBERT MATSELL MILLER, pastor of the Hollinshead Street Church, Chorley, and a considerable author.

ROBERT MACLEAN, for a time at Kendal, and subsequently at Liverpool.

PETER RAMSAY, an eccentric character, whose pastorates were at Dundee, near Ramsbottom, and Haslingden.

JAMES SHEPPARD, the excellent minister of the Congregational Church at Glossop.

GEORGE PARTINGTON, whose devoted labours were given to Oldham, Burnley, Colne, and Park, near Ramsbottom.

JOHN GRAY settled at Bamford, but died comparatively young.

SOLOMON ASHTON, for more than thirty years a Stockport minister.

GEORGE KILPATRICK, a native of Ireland, was pastor for a time of the Bethesda Chapel, Tockholes, near Blackburn.

ROBERT MORRIS GRIFFITHS, who supported himself in the Academy, and was for many years a respected minister at Kirkham.

JAMES PRIDIE, who also was able to dispense with Mr. Spear's help, was for a time at New Windsor, and afterwards at Halifax.

In nearly every case these are distinctly honoured names, written large in the religious history of the time, the men who bore them being enthused with Mr. Roby's spirit, especially his missionary spirit; and as a result of their unstinted labours many a languishing cause in the villages was awakened into vigorous life, and many a new centre of religious interest created.

As we have seen, however, Mr. Roby's Academy was only short lived. No private individual could reasonably be expected to carry the burden of such a work for any length of time, and the next attempt in this direction, made almost immediately, was definitely made by the Union itself. One of the things, indeed, which repeatedly impresses the reader in connection with these Founders of the Union is the decision with which they invariably acted. Once convinced as to the wisdom of a policy they never lost time in putting it into force. Under their influence and leadership events were always made to move swiftly; hence, even before Mr. Roby's Academy had become quite extinct, the Union was being urged to give its attention to this all important matter. "What mighty effort were it for

our united congregations," says the Union Report dated January, 1808, the very first issued, "to support, on an extensive and liberal scale, a County Seminary, in which godly and hopeful young men should be well instructed in Theology, and the original languages of the Holy Scriptures, with a special view to the evangelising of Lancashire? The object only wants to interest our feelings as it deserves, and it would easily be effected. Then a host of ABLE MEN, who could teach others also, would run to and fro, and knowledge would be increased." That expression, "would run to and fro," is highly significant; it indicates what was the real spirit of the time. The purpose of these early efforts in the direction of ministerial training was the creation of a ministry filled with a missionary fervour and zeal which nothing would be able to restrain until benighted Lancashire had been shot through and through with the light of the Cross.

The idea thus thrown out was immediately productive of fruit. "Several ministers and friends were led to a particular investigation of the subject," and at a meeting at Tintwistle, on the 21st of September following, it formed the "prominent topic" of discussion, with the result that on the 12th of October the Revs. Noah Blackburn, William Hudson, William Roby, William Evans, Samuel Bradley, and Joseph Fletcher, M.A., amongst others, met at Ashton-under-Lyne, and unanimously resolved:—

1. That it appears highly expedient that an academical institution for the education of young men for the ministry be established for the benefit of the Independent Churches in the counties of Lancashire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire.

2. That the strictest attention be paid to the character of the candidates for admission, both as to genuine piety and mental qualifications; that recommendations be procured from the ministers and Churches to which they respectively belong, and from two neighbouring ministers in the same connection.

3. That the term of education be not less than three years, to be extended to four years according to the discretion of the managers.

4. That the first year include English and Latin Grammar, the Principles of Composition and Elocution, Geography, and the commencement of a Theological course with the Evidences of the Jewish and Christian Revelations.

5. That the second year include Latin, Principles of Composition as applied to the formation of Sermon Plans, Greek, Principles of Logic and Moral Philosophy, Theology, with particular reference to a review of Doctrines and Controversies.

6. That the third year embrace Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Composition, Elocution, Natural Science, Systematic Theology, Critica Sacra, General and Ecclesiastical History.

7. That these resolutions be published and recommended to the attention of the Churches, in order that, at the General Meeting in April, the subject may receive a thorough investigation, and the measures necessary to its establishment may be immediately adopted.

The curriculum thus sketched was distinctly ambitious, but what is particularly noteworthy is the practical value of all the subjects included for the men who were giving themselves to the work of preaching the Gospel. The scheme was commended to the Churches on the following grounds: (1) The increasing population of the counties of Lancashire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire; (2) the distance of other Academic institutions of the kind; (3) the inconveniences attending the provision of occasional supplies; (4) and in particular the *immediate* advantages arising from the exertions of students in new and extending spheres of usefulness.

Matters eventually took definite shape, and the "Leaf Square Academy," in Pendleton, was formed in the summer of 1810. "It was designed," says Alderman Thompson, "to unite the advantages of a Grammar School for the education of young gentlemen with a theological institution for the ministry. The profits from the school were to go in support of the academy." The Rev. George Phillips, M.A., was Classical Tutor, having charge at the

same time of the New Windsor Congregational Church. Much was expected from this venture, both on its Academic and Theological sides. "Too long," it is said, "have Protestant Dissenters been destitute of those literary establishments for the education of youth which unite in an eminent degree the acquisition of classical and scientific knowledge with religious instruction. It is designed to supply this *desideratum* by the Manchester Seminary," and the patrons and supporters are "cheerfully" congratulated on the "arrangements already made." On the other hand, it is asked: "Who can tell how many future pastors of Christian Churches may arise from this institution, disposed by the grace of God to consecrate their talents to the service of the sanctuary, and eminently qualified by intellectual as well as moral habits to be 'burning and shining lights' in their day and generation?"

The death of Mr. Phillips after a few months' work was "a most afflictive stroke" for the institution, but the wound was "mercifully healed" by the appointment of a successor in the person of the Rev. John Reynolds, son of Dr. Reynolds, Physician-in-Ordinary to the King, and whose son, Dr. Reynolds, became also a distinguished physician in London. The Theological department was under the care of the Rev. Jenkin Lewis, a former Tutor of Wrexham Academy, and who had been instituted to his present position a little before the death of Mr. Phillips. "Provided with additional assistants," the Committee of the Union, writing in January, 1812, say, "we can now most confidently recommend the institution to such of our friends who wish for their children the advantages of a liberal education connected with a due regard to evangelical religion, and to those in our churches and congregations whose hearts dispose them to 'honour the Lord with their substance' by contributing to the important design of training up serious young men in the Christian ministry." At that time thirty-six pupils were in the School, but there years after this, on December 22nd, 1813, the Union Committee announced the dissolution of the Academy, which for twelve months is said to have been in a languishing condition.

It is easy to read in the statements relating to this matter a feeling of bitter disappointment on the part of those who had had to do with the founding of the institution. The Churches are reminded of the fact that it had been established under their "own auspices"; that they had not "faithfully fulfilled" the flattering promises of "liberal and constant support" which they had given; that "unreasonable expectations" had been entertained of the aid which it was supposed would be derived from its connection with the School"; and that in announcing the dissolution of the "Lancashire Independent Academy," which had promised the most "efficient aid to the Redeemer's cause in this populous and long neglected county," they were discharging a "most painful and distressing" duty. Those were days of plain speaking, and the Churches were not spared. It is this aspect of them that makes the Union Reports of that period often so spicy. "Your liberality," says the one just cited, "to objects of a second and inferior rate, whilst it forbids your *due* regard to those which ought to possess the first and highest place in your esteem, is an obvious departure from that rule of equity by which our charities should be measured"; and, in all this, as in all else that was said, the one aim was to rouse the attention and excite the sympathy of the Churches towards "the moral conversion of Lancashire, that part of Great Britain which the Providence of God is calling you to cultivate." The Leaf Square Academy was continued as a private venture school for many years by Dr. Clunie, a prominent Manchester Congregationalist.

Disappointment, however, did not lead to undue depression, nor was failure followed by an abandonment of the idea. On the contrary, it eventually issued in new and greater endeavours. The matter was not allowed to sleep long. In the Annual Report read at Blackburn, April 11th, 1816, reference is made to "active measures" for the "establishment of a Theological Academy in this county." In October of the previous year the Union had met in Preston, and decided upon the appointment of a Committee to inquire as to the most eligible place for carrying this out. This Committee also had met in Manchester on the 22nd of November following, and had even gone to the length

of fixing upon the Rev. Joseph Fletcher, M.A., the young and scholarly pastor of Chapel Street Chapel, Blackburn, as President and Theological Tutor. A sermon preached at the Annual Lecture in Darwen, in 1813, "in which was discussed, with great acuteness, discrimination, and power, the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God as displayed in the election of individuals, established his theological reputation"; and it was the publication of this afterwards which turned attention to him as a person most suited to preside over the projected institution, the weighty deputation appointed to interview him consisting of the Revs. William Roby, Thomas Raffles, M.A., and S. Bradley. Mr. Fletcher intimated his readiness to accept the position provided the necessary assistance were given in the Elementary and Classical departments. These proceedings were ratified by a general meeting in Mosley Street Chapel vestry on February 9th, 1816, when it was resolved that the new Academy "to educate young men of decided piety and competent talents for the Christian ministry, combining as much as possible with the permanent supply of the Churches, the furtherance of the Gospel by itinerating labours in this and other counties," be called into being and located at Blackburn.

As already intimated, its President and Theological Tutor was Mr. Fletcher; the Rev. William Hope was Classical Tutor and Secretary; and Mr. Roger Cunliffe, a prominent Blackburn Congregationalist, a rich banker and descendant of the Cunliffes that furnished Roger Cunliffe as a member of Parliament for Lancashire in Cromwell's days, and who was one of the Rev. Thomas Jollie's elders at Altham, was Treasurer. The first name in the list of students is that of David Thompson Carnson, for a quarter of a century the honoured pastor of the Cannon Street Church, Preston; the last that of Richard Meredith Davies, who left in 1843, and exercised a unique ministry in Oldham for more than fifty years. Mr. Davies more than once informed the writer that he should have been transferred to Manchester, but that he refused to go, and that his affection always centred in the old Blackburn Academy, where all his student days were spent.

Mr. Fletcher, who afterwards became Dr. Fletcher,

MR. GEORGE HADFIELD, M.P.

Secretary of the Union (1811–1817), *and princely donor to Chapel Building Schemes.*

See page 76.

MR. THOMAS HUNTER.

Treasurer of the Union (1844–1858).

See page 152.

removed to Stepney Chapel, London, in 1823, and until the time of his death, some twenty years later, was a leading figure in all the religious activities of that great city. There is pathos in the fact that the illness which he never survived was contracted during a visit to Lancashire, "his favourite county," to plead the cause of British Missions at the Autumnal Meeting of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, held at Liverpool, in October, 1842. "Travelling by the mail train, he was exposed to the night air, and took a severe cold," which left him extremely unwell. He continued to sink until the 8th of June following, when he died.

During the period of the Academy's residence in Blackburn it did an invaluable work. Not only did it produce quite a company of distinguished ministers, many of whom laboured mainly in the county in which it stood, but its students were sent to do pioneer missionary work in many villages in the neighbourhood of Blackburn. Referring to this district, the Report for 1819 says: "As we anticipated, this district is beginning to derive the happiest advantages from that respectable and promising institution, the BLACKBURN ACADEMY. Though only in its infancy, its blessing has already come upon several of the neighbouring villages, while more distant and regular congregations have occasionally obtained from it very acceptable supplies. The senior students preach in rotation at Billinge, Ribchester, Harwood, and Belthorn, and their labours have not been in vain." Martin Top, Balderstone, and Chipping are mentioned as other preaching places for the students. After a period of nearly thirty years' service here the Academy was transferred to the noble pile of buildings at Whalley Range, Manchester, and became the Lancashire Independent College. It does not fall within the scope of this work to give, even in briefest outline, the story of this illustrious institution since its commencement in Blackburn just ninety years ago. Nor is this necessary, for that has already been sufficiently done in the Jubilee memorial volume of Alderman Joseph Thompson. Any story, however, of the Lancashire Congregational Union would be seriously defective which made no reference to it. The College is the child of the Union; and whilst the Union

very properly looks to it for an unfailing supply of that rich, thoughtful, cultured, and sanctified ministry, which is more than ever a necessity for our Churches to-day, with equal justice may the College ask from the Union for that loving sympathy, earnest prayer, and generous support without which it will look in vain for success in its work.

CHAPTER V.

The Problem of the Towns.

DURING the greater part of the first half of the century the Union found its chief centre of interest in the villages. It came into existence at a time when theirs was the cry which, above all others, seemed to reach the ear and touch the heart of the Churches. It has already been shown that Itinerant Societies were springing up in every direction, their one aim being the evangelisation of the villages. George Burder issued his *Village Sermons*, to be read where preaching supplies could not be easily procured; Rowland Hill's *Village Dialogues* were intended for much the same purpose; indeed, the religious literature of the period was pre-eminently given up to the need of the villages. Seminaries also were established in various parts of the country to educate men for a ministry designed mainly for rural England, and the men trained in them were perfectly loyal to the ideals of the institutions which sent them forth. It is not, of course, suggested that the towns were rigidly excluded from the purview of the Union. Mention has already been made of the early introduction of Congregationalism to Burnley, Colne, Ashton-under-Lyne, and Oldham, rapidly growing centres of industry and life, where to-day flourish some of the strongest Churches in the county; and in later years towns like Clitheroe, Chorley, Stalybridge, and Heywood will be found to be in the list. There is no clear line of division between town and country in the work of the Union; no exact date when the Union said: "I must leave the villages, or partially leave them, for the larger and more serious responsibilities which the towns offer"; still, it is impossible to read the records of this period without feeling that the towns occupied a small place in the thoughts and activities of the Union compared with the villages. Mr. Slate, in his *Brief History of the Union*, published in 1840, gives a "summary of the places receiving aid from the

Union" at that date, which numbered forty-seven, exclusive of "out-stations," and nearly all of them were either villages or just small country towns. The following will suffice to illustrate the point, whilst it will serve as a striking object lesson as to the immensity of the area attempted by many of these itinerating ministers in their self-denying work.

In the LIVERPOOL DISTRICT we have—

Leigh, with a congregation of 120, and the following out-stations:—

	Congregation.
Bedford	30
Lowton	30
Barton's Factory	30
Jones's Buildings	30

Ashton-in-Makerfield, with a congregation of 40, Church members 26, scholars 70, and teachers 8; having as out-stations:—

	Congregation.
Brockstege	25
Long Lane	25
Seneley Green	25
Whitlege Green	25

In the PRESTON DISTRICT we have—

Blackpool with a congregation of 150, Church members 16, scholars 25, teachers 4; with the following out-stations:—

	Congregation.
Bispham	60
Marton, Moss Side	20
Great Marton, Moss Side	20
Hawes Side	20

Preesall, with a congregation of 100, Church members 17, scholars 40, and teachers 5; having as out-stations:—

	Congregation.
Rawcliffe	35
Ridge	20
Scrank Row	10

LIVERPOOL IN 1795.

See page 66.

In the BLACKBURN DISTRICT we have—

Belthorn, with a congregation of 130, Church members 14, scholars 140, and teachers 14. Out-stations:—

	Congregation.
Grange	—
Pickup Bank	45
Haslingden	45
Daisy Green	—

Holden, with a congregation of 200, Church members 50, scholars 60, and teachers 7. The following are given as out-stations, but no numbers are attached: Holden, Lane Ends, Foxgill, Champion, Baggate, Ruthwell, Dalehead, Brayshow, Woodhouse, Hollins, Ings, Whitendale, and Lowgill.

Marsden Height, with a congregation of 400, Church members 65, scholars 160, and teachers 36. The following are out-stations, without particulars: Haggate, Reedy Ford, Burnley, Lane Head, New Road, Lane Ends, Copp Row, Four Lane Ends, Nelson, Braidley, Great Marsden and Higher House.

In the MANCHESTER DISTRICT we have—

Pendlebury, with a congregation of 200, Church members 35, scholars 220, and teachers 24; with the following out-stations:—

	Congregation.
Irlams-o'-th'-Height	60
Wardley Lane	40
Folly Lane	30
Prestwich	50
Collier's Square	25

Springhead, with a congregation of 300, Church members 52, scholars 320, and teachers 40; with the following out-stations: Lees, Waterhead Mill, and Austerlands.

These names, which mainly represent small hamlets and villages, not a few of which find no place upon the ordinary map, are by no means exhaustive. The remaining areas, however, are of the same type, and when it is remembered that this was in 1840, when the Union had been at work

more than thirty years, it will be clear that rural Lancashire was then its supreme care.

Why was this? The question is an extremely interesting one, and permits of quite a number of answers; for it is beyond all doubt that many things contributed to fix the attention of the Union largely, almost exclusively indeed, upon the villages for so long a period of time. In the first place, there is surely real pathos in the fact itself. It is suggestive of much inspiring history. In the old persecuting days our fathers had been driven out of the towns. The Five Mile Act of 1665, not the least cruel of the brutal series which came to be known as the "Clarendon Code," made it highly criminal for the ministers who had been ejected to come within five miles of any town in which they had laboured. As a consequence they sought the solitary places, being followed by large numbers of their faithful flocks. In common with other forms of Nonconformity, Congregationalism being a proscribed faith in those dark days, the villages gave it asylum, and it was long years before it got into the way of taking to the towns. In the eighteenth century nearly all the Nonconformist interests of any note were in the villages; it was a sort of tradition, which lingered long even in the nineteenth century, that the village was Nonconformity's true home. The villages also appealed to the sympathy of Christian people because of their benighted condition. Cut off from the towns in a way such as appears almost inconceivable to-day, lying far from the main lines of communication, without railways, newspapers, and letters, they became the abodes of an ignorance, a superstition, and a godlessness which were truly appalling. An incident in the writer's own experience will illustrate the extent to which superstition lingered in rural districts even until recent years. In the village of Tockholes, which forty years ago had little communication with any town, there lived a family that had the highest veneration and reverence for the cricket. It was known that there was a considerable colony in the house, for the chirpings could be quite easily heard in the road some distance away. The writer, along with some of his schoolfellows, had been most anxious to get a sight of this mysterious little creature, as to whose

strange powers many stories were in circulation. One day, therefore, they went to the house, preferred their request, and were informed that they might see the crickets on solemnly promising not to injure one of them, the person adding that for some years ill luck had attended the family in the way of sickness and death because some time ago one of the crickets had been killed. The promise was, of course, given, and the party were admitted to the house. The hearthstone was carefully lifted, and under it must have been hundreds of them, which were as carefully protected as if they had been so many guardian angels.

But the villages were the abodes, not only of strange and comparatively harmless superstitions like the one just recited, but also of very much worse things. The term "heathen" is often applied to them in the Union Reports, and not undeservedly so. The Churches are repeatedly urged to remember the claims of their own country and county amidst their contributions towards Missionary enterprise in distant fields, and are plainly told that their generosity in the latter direction makes all the more blameworthy their indifference and neglect towards the needs of those who are perishing near their homes. Moreover, the towns had generally either one or more Congregational interests already that were supposed to be equal to their religious requirements. Most places could tell of an ejected minister of 1662, who had left behind him a Nonconformist interest; and where, as was almost invariably the case, this had declined into Unitarianism, during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, Congregationalism appeared in protest against it. This, in brief, is the story of Congregationalism in Manchester, Bury, Bolton, Liverpool, Lancaster, Preston, and most other towns of any size in the county. Previous to the birth of the Union these towns enjoyed the ministry of Congregational Churches of considerable strength which had so originated, and nothing further in the way of Congregational extension seemed to be required in them. The needs were supposed to be already met.

It requires also to be stated that the towns had not then assumed the significance in the national life which has come to them during the second half of the century.

Persons, whose memories reach back any distance, will easily recall pictures of the great towns which give to the Lancashire of to-day its influence and power, entirely different from those which they now see. Roughly speaking, from 1851 to 1871 five millions were added to the population of England and Wales, and the increase was mainly in the towns. "There has been," writes one, "a decided movement towards the towns. Though the rural population has not remained stationary, it has increased at a far less rapid rate than the population of urban districts. In 1851 the inhabitants of the town districts of England and Wales differed from those of the rural districts by less than half a million in number. In the year 1871 the former numbered nearly thirteen millions, while the latter had increased to but little more than nine and three quarter millions. Thus, while the town populations had in the course of the twenty years increased by more than 40 per cent, those of the country districts had added but 8½ per cent to their numbers." Taking the years 1851 to 1861, the Census Commissioners observe that "three fourths of the total increase of population had taken place in the towns." The writer who makes this statement continues: "The seventy-two largest towns in the country, which had an aggregate population of 2,221,753 in 1801 and 7,677,622 in 1861, had in the ten years preceding 1861 added to their numbers at 'double the rate at which the rest of the population increased.' The county and assize towns increased in the ten years since 1851 at the rate of 1.39 annually; the manufacturing towns where silk and woollen goods and gloves were made increasing most slowly, the towns famous for cotton, stockings, shoes, and straw plait increasing most rapidly. The increase of population was most rapid in the towns amidst mining districts where hardware is made." Were there nothing more definite, those sentences would be quite sufficient to show that Lancashire had fully shared in this great tidal wave of increasing population during the nineteenth century; but Baines, in his *History of Lancashire*, informs us that no other part of the country had at all approached it in this respect. Taking the four decennials, 1831-1861, the population of the county increased from

REV. ISAAC AMBROSE, GARSTANG AND PRESTON.

See page 75

REV. THOMAS JOLLIE, ALTHAM AND WYMONDHOUSES.

See page 75

Lancashire Ministers Ejected in 1662.

1,336,854 to 2,429,440, much the largest increase being during the years 1841 to 1861.

Now, the Reports are clear testimony to the fact that the significance of all this was being felt by the members of the Lancashire Congregational Union. Those great multitudes that were centring themselves in the towns, making them all-powerful forces in the political and social life of the nation, it was rightly felt ought not to be left without religious provision. In the Report for the year ending April, 1846, therefore, we meet with a pregnant sentence like this: "We deem it the duty of the Congregational body to break up fresh ground and to enter upon larger schemes of Evangelisation; and we rejoice at being relieved from old engagements only that we may be at liberty for new enterprises." Two years after we again read: "A new kind of effort has been felt to be wanting and has been partially begun, that, namely, of breaking up entirely new ground, carrying the Gospel where it is not asked for, but where, nevertheless, from the extent of the population and the paucity of religious instruction, it is most urgently needed." In the Report for the year ending April, 1852, we have these still more striking words: "Has not, then, the time come when a new spirit should be breathed into our exertions and new enterprises undertaken, upon a scale more commensurate with the wants and character of the age? Should not larger conceptions be cherished, larger plans be formed, and larger contributions furnished? Let the mighty growth of the population of this county, as shown by the decennial census of last year, deeply affect the hearts of all true Christians; let them ponder and see how insufficient their present labours are to keep pace with the increase of the people." A circular issued about this time in the interests of a new organisation whose ideal was the erection of "50 new chapels within a period of five years," refers to Lancashire as the "empire county of England, the densest hive of population, the seat of manufactures and commerce, the county whence issue so many of those mighty impulses which are changing the economical condition of the people, and the legislation of the country and of the world itself." This did not end in mere words. There was not the slightest thought of

attempting to impoverish the villages, but the Union began to address itself seriously to the problem of the towns, with their teeming populations, always a sufficiently serious burden for the united strength of all the Churches. Warrington, Radcliffe, Bacup, Fleetwood, Droylsden, Hollinwood, Middleton, Todmorden, Stretford, Accrington, Manchester, Mossley, Royton, Runcorn, Liverpool begin to make their appearance in the Reports as recipients of very considerable grants, and the names at once impress us as of an entirely different order from those hitherto under notice.

In the great towns and cities, with their rapidly growing populations, the Union found a new interest and a fresh incentive for service, and the years which followed were characterised by considerable religious activity and wonderful progress. Is it not almost invariably so? Increased responsibility discovers new resource, fresh demands create fresh power, the large and courageous policy is the policy of success, faith triumphs. The fifties make an exceedingly interesting study from that point of view alone. The times were not free from stress. The Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny produced untold suffering, not only on distant battlefields, but also amongst the toiling multitudes at home; yet were serious religious enterprises undertaken. Something will be said later about the Chapel Building Society, the institution referred to previously, which was first launched during this period. Its "50 new chapels" were intended mainly for the towns; new town districts were occupied, and the Reports frequently ring with a fine, clear note of magnificent optimism, due to conscious strength and manifest success. This was, of course, the period in which the Jubilee of the Union fell, concerning which the Report read at the Annual Meetings April, 1855, says: "The Jubilee of the Lancashire Congregational Union is at hand. Its trumpets must ere long be prepared." In the same month a meeting of the Executive of the Union met and agreed that "the General and District Treasurers and Secretaries, together with the Rev. R. Slate and the Secretary to the Executive Committee, be a Sub-Committee to prepare a plan for the commemoration of the Jubilee." It

is worth pointing out that this Committee was also requested to "revise the present mode of holding the annual meeting and publishing the annual report," and the fruit of their labours was the Presidential Address of later years, still a distinct feature of the Annual Assembly of the Union, and the present *Congregational Year Book*. The Secretary of the Jubilee movement was the Rev. J. G. Rogers, B.A., of Ashton-under-Lyne, and one of its objects appears to have been the inauguration of a fund for the purpose of opening up new districts, Lytham being one of the places particularly named. It is a matter for considerable regret that little has been gleaned respecting this movement and the Jubilee celebrations generally. In the *Memoir* of Dr. Raffles mention is made of the Jubilee sermon which he preached on October 9th, 1855, at the Grosvenor Street Chapel, Manchester; and, in so far as the Union Reports do speak, they show that the occasion was used to rejoice in the triumphs of the past and to make new consecration vows for future service.

Not one of the names of the thirty-six men who had founded the Union fifty years ago appears on the ministerial roll for 1856. The Rev. William Alexander, who in 1806 was at Prescot, had died the year preceding the Jubilee, and the Rev. J. Turner, who spoke at the Jubilee Meeting of Grosvenor Street Chapel, whose date almost coincides with the Jubilee of the Union, was one of Mr. Roby's students, but when the Union was born he was still at Rotherham College, whither he had proceeded for further ministerial training after leaving Mr. Roby's Academy. The Rev. George Greatbatch was still living in honourable retirement at Southport, and continued to do so for some years longer; but he was an Itinerant employed by the Union, and not one of the original thirty-six. Not one of the Founders remained to sound the "trumpet's" blast and make his voice heard in the Jubilee celebrations; death had claimed all. The new men, however, who took their place welcomed the old ideals, and so the godly succession was continued. Alas! that of these again few "remain until this day," and not one in the county which then had the benefit of their service. The Rev. J. A. Picton, M.A., who long ago retired from the ministry, and enjoyed

Parliamentary honours for some time, was then at Cheetham Hill; the Rev. John Brown, B.A., subsequently Dr. Brown, of Bedford, the greatest living authority on all that pertains to John Bunyan, "the immortal dreamer," and who is now spending his eventide in London, was pastor of Park Chapel, Cheetham; and the Rev. J. G. Rogers, B.A., now Dr. Rogers, of London, who, though an octogenarian of several years' standing, still wields a busy pen and preaches with remarkable vigour, was pastor of the Albion Chapel, Ashton-under-Lyne, Secretary of the Manchester District, and Secretary of the Jubilee movement. These three men alone survive of those who were labouring in the county when the Union celebrated its Jubilee and began seriously to face the new responsibilities which the rapidly increasing populations presented; the most interesting character of all, the man to whom the Union owes more than to any other single individual, the Rev. R. M. Davies, dying a little more than a year ago, to the great regret of all. Of brethren who began their ministerial career in the county within the next decade, there are the following: John Chater, of Southport; Peter Webster, of Forton; G. H. Brown, B.A., of Eccles; F. Carter, of Tottington; J. H. Gwyther, B.A., of Stalybridge; E. Heath, of Mill Hill, near Blackburn; W. G. Horder, of Peasley Cross; Fred Smith, of Springhead; R. J. Ward, of St. Helens; S. B. Driver, of Manchester; Joseph Shillito, of Liverpool; J. Williamson, M.A., of Douglas, Isle of Man; John Yonge, of Heywood and Warrington; William Nicholls, of Kendal; Edward Gough, B.A., of Barrowford; Andrew Hall, of Dalton and Hollinwood; George Lord, of Liverpool; James Allatt, of Newton-le-Willows; Thomas Cain, of Stubbins; William Hewgill, M.A., of Farnworth; and James McDougall, of Darwen and Manchester. These are all honoured names to us, and represent ministries which have contributed greatly to the success of the Union during the second half of the century. Not a few of these brethren have occupied the Presidential Chair, some have served as District Secretaries or as members of the Executive, several are still the respected pastors of important Churches, and the sincere prayer of all their younger brethren will be that their eventide may be prolonged and full of light.

This new ideal, the Evangelisation of the towns, which had been gradually taking shape for years, but which during the fifties appears to have been definitely adopted, has remained with the Union until now. The Union recognises that it has still a very sacred duty to the villages, these "outposts" of Congregationalism on which its main strength was expended during the first half century of its existence, which gave Congregationalism asylum in the days of its exile from the city, and which still supply many of our town Churches with much of their sturdiest character and most devoted life. In many of these villages the populations are either stationary or actually on the decrease, and the resources of the faithful few, upon whom the burden of the little causes chiefly rests, are limited; consequently the prospect of their being self-supporting is very remote, and the Union cheerfully undertakes to share this burden with them. The statistics in the closing chapter give ample evidence of this. From these it appears that the stations which have had far away the most expended upon them are village stations still in receipt of generous help from the funds of the Union. It is, however, these immense populations aggregated in our towns and cities that within the last half century have become such a feature of our national life, with their serious problems and difficulties, but enormous possibilities and magnificent opportunities that invite to supreme effort and self-sacrificing love.

CHAPTER VI.

COMMEMORATION OF 1662.

ON the 24th of August, 1662, "Black Bartholomew's Day," some two thousand ministers were ejected from their homes and Churches, their only crime being that they could not in conscience give their "unfeigned assent and consent to everything contained in the Book of Common Prayer." For long years these devoted men were victims of a most cruel persecution. Imprisoned, fined, exiled, tortured, worn out before their time by the anxieties and hardships of their life, their spirit remained unbroken, and some of them lived to see the triumph of the cause for which they had suffered so much, in the Revolution of 1688. Few events in the religious history of this country have had deeper significance and more far reaching results. The splendid heroism of the ejected ministers, against whose character not a suspicion could be breathed, and who, in refinement and scholarly attainments, were the flower of the Christian ministry of that day, was a most impressive object lesson of loyalty to religious principle to a nation whose profligacy, immorality, and irreligiousness were quite proverbial. It was a case of "Passive Resistance" for conscience on a scale such as had never before been witnessed; and, however men might affect to deride and treat it with contempt, it could not fail to have its effect. It was also in deep truth the inauguration of a new era for English Nonconformity—its resurrection, its new birthday. Driven from place to place by the bitterness of their enemies, the "outed" ministers were not inactive; to little groups of friends, who, like themselves, were prepared to risk much for their religious convictions, they preached the Gospel, and these "Conventicles" almost invariably grew into the Nonconformist Churches of the closing years of the seventeenth century, which were considerable both in numbers

and influence. As we have already seen, when these Churches in later years lapsed into Unitarianism, the Evangelical party in them almost invariably established a Congregational interest. Hence the Congregationalism of to-day is in many respects the direct offspring of that movement. Proper, therefore, in every way, was the feeling that the Bicentenary of 1662 should be celebrated and a memorial erected, in honour of the noble stand for civil and religious liberty, which these spiritual ancestors of ours had made two hundred years ago. A large crop of Bicentenary literature helped to excite interest and enthusiasm in the event; and the Congregational Union of England and Wales appointed an influential Committee to consider the matter, and amongst the objects agreed upon was the erection of the Memorial Hall, in London, and of a large number of Churches in various parts of the country. To accomplish these and other things it was resolved to raise £100,000, a sum which eventually grew to double that amount.

In no part of the country did the Bicentenary movement take on more readily than it did in Lancashire, and no wonder; for no county owes more to the ejected ministers than Lancashire does. Of the two thousand noble confessors, nearly one-third belonged to our own county, and some of these were amongst the most distinguished of the company. Isaac Ambrose, of Preston; Nathaniel Heywood, of Ormskirk; Thomas Crompton, of Toxteth Park; Thomas Jollie, of Altham and Wymondhouses; Richard Goodwin, of Bolton; Henry Pendlebury, of Holcombe; Robert Bath, of Rochdale; Henry Newcome, of Manchester; Robert Constantine, of Oldham; and Gabriel Camelford, of Cartmell, are only a few of the names of those religious worthies, the story of whose life is as fascinating as any romance. It is indeed much to be regretted that young Congregationalists are so little acquainted with their magnificent spiritual ancestry. What modern Nonconformity distinctly needs is a little more of the iron in its blood which made the brave, strong men of bygone times, and to get this it is only necessary to read back a little in the religious history of our own county, to sit at the feet of some of the men whose names have just been recited. In almost every case these were

the Founders of Nonconformity in the places with which their names are linked; pre-eminently, therefore, ought Lancashire Congregationalists to keep those names "in everlasting remembrance."

The leading spirit in the Bicentenary movement, in so far as it related to Lancashire and Cheshire (for the two counties worked together in the matter) was George Hadfield, Esq., M.P., a prominent Manchester Congregationalist, whose name appears associated with almost every important Congregational movement in the county during the period of his long and most striking career. A few friends met at his house, which resulted in the Executive Committee of the Union agreeing to arrange a conference upon the subject. "In such a work Lancashire must not be found wanting," says the first circular issued in connection with the matter, bearing date December 31st, 1861. "She has many glorious memories in connection with 1662; she must not fill a less distinguished place in 1862." The writer of that passage was the Rev. R. M. Davies, who acted as convener, and the conference was held on January 13th, 1862, at the Queen's Hotel, Manchester, Mr. Hadfield generously playing the part of host. Mr. Hugh Mason, of Ashton-under-Lyne, occupied the chair, and an excellent paper was read by the Rev. J. G. Rogers, B.A., on "The Ejected of 1662: Their Principles and Sufferings." Amongst other things, it was resolved to raise a sum sufficient to aid in the erection of some thirty Memorial Chapels and Schools in Lancashire and vicinity, and promises were at once made to the extent of £11,800, Mr. Hadfield himself offering £3,000. It was further agreed that each building so erected must be opened on or before St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24th, 1865, and that upon it should be placed in some "public situation" a "permanent inscription referring to the Bicentenary Commemoration of 1862." The Secretaries were the Revs. R. M. Davies, of Oldham, and Absalom Clark, of Stockport, and the Treasurer was Mr. Abraham Haworth, of Manchester.

The date 1862 was memorable in another way which considerably affected the Bicentenary movement in Lancashire. It was the first year of the Cotton Famine, caused

(1) REV. RICHARD MATHER, TOXTETH PARK CHAPEL.

(2) REV. THOMAS WALDEGRAVE, TOCKHOLES.

(3) REV. NOAH BLACKBURN, TOCKHOLES AND DELPH.

(4) REV. WILLIAM ROBY, MANCHESTER.

TYPES OF MINISTERIAL DRESS.

1. *Puritan of Seventeenth Century.* (2) *Middle of Eighteenth Century.* (3) *End of Eighteenth Century.*
(4) *Beginning of Nineteenth Century.*

by the American Civil War, which, whilst felt by the whole country, fell with crushing force upon Lancashire, then almost entirely dependent for its cotton trade upon American cotton. Few people who lived through that sorrowful time can recall it, even at this distance, without a shudder. The misery and distress were unparalleled. The careful savings of long years of arduous toil vanished, the poorhouses were crowded, and, though charity flowed freely, starvation and hunger were only very partially relieved. The "distress" in Lancashire was a subject that occupied the attention of the Annual Assemblies of the Congregational Union of England and Wales for several years. A Central Congregational Relief Committee was formed, whose generous services the Lancashire Union in its Reports most gratefully acknowledges. It is magnificent testimony to the character of the people that the trial, which lasted for quite three years, was so patiently borne. The Rev. James Griffin, formerly of Rusholme Road, Manchester, in his interesting *Memories of the Past*, says that "the saddest consequences to social order were feared from the hungry impatience of the distressed multitudes, and outbreaks and depredations were daily looked for. But, to the astonishment of anxious observers, little or nothing of the kind occurred in any part of the county. Patiently and almost uncomplainingly did these vast masses bear their protracted privation. No riots, no violence, scarcely an act of dishonesty, were heard of through all this dreary and weary time"; and he adds that the explanation of this marvellous self-restraint and patient forbearance was attributed by a local stipendiary magistrate to the influence of Sunday Schools and other religious agencies. Equally striking is the testimony to the self-sacrifice of the people as furnished by the Union Reports of this period. That the Churches suffered goes without saying, and many a rural pastor had very scanty fare whilst the pressure continued; but the work was maintained, and the note of cheerfulness and hope which the Reports give in even those dark, depressing days is distinctly refreshing. The following may be taken as a sample: "The several stations of this Association have been painfully affected by the long commercial depression; at some of them the population

has been suffering severely. Pastors and people in such places richly deserve the most generous and prayerful sympathy. Nor is it a small occasion for gratitude that their religion has wonderfully solaced and sustained them under their heavy trials; so that in many cases they have illustrated the worth of their Christian principles by their patience and faith, as well as by their deep interest in the work of God, unchecked and unchilled by the poverty and the difficulties with which they have been oppressed." It is an interesting and a most significant fact that the Union's greatest ventures, involving the largest demands upon its financial resources, have not been timed for days of material prosperity, but just the reverse. The Union was born when the nation was engaged in the Titanic struggle with Napoleon, who had in his favour all the prestige of unexampled victories on many a field of battle. The Ministers' Provident Society, of which more hereafter, was established in the forties, when the cruel Corn Laws were in full force and the miseries of Protectionism were felt throughout the land. The new awakening in the fifties, with its great Chapel Building schemes and vigorous attempts to deal with the town problem, synchronised with the anxieties of the Indian Mutiny and the hardships of the Crimean War, and the Bicentenary movement, which meant much real sacrifice, was inaugurated in one of the darkest periods of industrial depression through which Lancashire has ever passed. It is well to remember these things; they are unquestioned testimony, possibly, to the natural faith and courage of the people who inhabit this great county, certainly to the religious faith and spiritual endurance of which Congregationalism is such an illustrious example all through its history.

Doubtless, the adverse circumstances of the time somewhat starved the Bicentenary movement; for the gifts of the people were required to relieve immediate poverty and pressing need, but that is the most that can be said. The promoters held to their ideal, and about the specified time the thirty buildings were erected. They are spread over the two counties. Architecturally most of them will be found to have much in common; some of them were in entirely new districts, whilst others replaced old and incon-

venient structures; and they are indeed worthy memorials of those noble confessors through whose suffering and toil we have entered into such a rich heritage of freedom and opportunity. The reader will appreciate the names of these Memorial Buildings, with the amounts granted to them, and their insertion will serve as a friendly reminder to those Churches of the perpetual obligation under which they stand:—

	£	s.	d.
Ashton-in-Makerfield	500	0	0
Adlington	500	0	0
Bolton, St. George's Road	500	0	0
Barrow-in-Furness	600	0	0
Bollington (Cheshire)	500	0	0
Charlestown, near Salford	600	0	0
Charlestown, near Ashton-under-Lyne	200	0	0
Clitheroe	550	0	0
Dukinfield, Crescent	1,000	0	0
Hollinwood	500	0	0
Liverpool, West Derby	1,000	0	0
Lymm (Cheshire)	600	0	0
Lytham	900	0	0
Longridge	400	0	0
Manchester, Ancoats	1,000	0	0
Morecambe, Clark Street	500	0	0
Oldham, Hope	750	0	0
Preston, Lancaster Road	1,000	0	0
Peasley Cross, near St. Helens	500	0	0
Rusholme, Manchester	1,000	0	0
Royton	500	0	0
Stockport, Wellington Road (Cheshire)	1,000	0	0
Southport, West End	700	0	0
Stanley, Liverpool	700	0	0
Stubbins	500	0	0
Smallbridge	500	0	0
Tottington	500	0	0
Waterloo, Liverpool	600	0	0
Whitefield, or Prestwich, nr. Manchester	1,000	0	0
Woolton, Liverpool	400	0	0
	19,500	0	0

In the *Calendar* for 1870-71 is the following reference to the Bicentenary movement: "No undertaking of recent years has been more successful than this. It was carried out at a period memorable for the existence of unequalled distress, yet the work was nobly done; the grants voted aroused local effort, and called forth liberality which abounded in the midst of poverty. To the property of the denomination thirty well-situated and substantially-built places of worship were added, containing 20,320 sittings, costing about £116,000, beside well-adapted schoolrooms which were erected in connection with fourteen of the Chapels. Each of these places is now being vigorously worked, and many of them are proving centres of saving influence and evangelising power. The contributions are not quite equal to the demands; but when the balance is raised and last instalment paid, the entire cost will have been defrayed of thirty Memorial structures projected in 1862 in connection with the Bicentenary of the ejectment of 2,000 ministers in 1662, because they felt 'we ought to obey God rather than men.'" The "last instalment" was not paid for some years, and the reason is given in the following passage from the *Calendar* for 1879-80: "When the last Report of the Committee was issued, there were several grants unpaid, owing to the conditions upon which they were made not having been fulfilled; they have since been complied with. All the grants have been paid, and the accounts of the Committee closed." It was a worthy effort, and in these Bicentenary buildings, not a few of which occupy sites in the very places where lived and suffered the men whose names the movement was intended to perpetuate and honour, those grand old worthies, though "dead, yet speak."

(1) REV. JOHN KELLY, LIVERPOOL.

(2) REV. DR. SAMUEL BELL, LANCASTER.

(3) REV. DR. RAFFLES, LIVERPOOL.

TYPES OF MINISTERIAL DRESS.

(1) and (2) *First half of Nineteenth Century.*

(3) *Common until about thirty years ago.*

There is no modern type.—In this matter "Every man does that which is right in his own eyes."

See page 85.

CHAPTER VII.

Congregational Architecture.

THE Bicentenary movement, referred to in the previous chapter, gave a distinct impetus to the erection of buildings for public worship, an impetus which was caught up by the Chapel Building Society, which almost immediately succeeded it, and of which some account will be given later. It will, therefore, be convenient to pause at this point for a brief consideration of the various styles of structure in which Congregationalists have been in the habit of worshipping. To some it may appear not a little audacious to head the chapter as it is. "Congregational Architecture" may be said to suggest claims to which we have no real right; and it may be admitted that, whilst the Churches of later days quite justify the expression even when interpreted most literally, those earlier ones scarcely do. The lack, however, in these buildings, from an artistic point of view, is abundantly made up in sacred association and hallowed memory. It is, indeed, this which makes them worth such attention, the rudest and plainest the greatest attention of all. "When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land." So said Joshua to the people, in explanation of the cairn that was being erected at Gilgal with stones taken out of the Jordan; and it is because these simple "Bethels" and crude "Ebenezers," planted in all sorts of queer places, despised by those who associate the elaborate and ornate with the House of God, stand for so much in the way of noble self-sacrifice and sanctified service; because, indeed, the inner history of Congregationalism is clearly written in its buildings, that they are such an interesting and valuable study.

In order to give completeness to the subject, as well as add to its interest, it will be well to carry it beyond the century with which the Union is mainly concerned. Several well marked periods during which a certain type of building prevailed are easily discoverable. In 1672 Charles the Second published his "Declaration of Indulgence," which suspended for the time being the operation of the Uniformity Act, the Conventicle Act, and the Five Mile Act, and so brought relief to suffering Nonconformists. Preaching licenses were taken out in hundreds by the exiled ministers, both for themselves and for the buildings in which it was proposed to hold religious services. Private houses, barns, kitchens, cellars, malt-houses, unused kilns, and lofts were the meeting-houses which they licensed for worship. These buildings were, of course, often exceedingly primitive and rough, but there was no time for anything more elaborate, and from the few diaries of that period which have been preserved it is clear that the worshippers were very glad of such places, and that they were often consecrated by the presence and blessing of God. Those little religious centres, which were spread over the country, were the nuclei of the Nonconformist Churches of later times. Improvised structures, and often exceedingly poor at that; the men and women of that day were little in bondage to any place; evidently they had drunk deep in the spirit of Christ's sublime utterance to the Samaritan woman: "The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

The accession of William of Orange to the throne in 1688 put an end to the persecution which had so relentlessly pursued Nonconformists with little intermission for nearly thirty years, and they came forth from their hiding-places and began to erect for themselves sanctuaries in which to worship. Of the buildings thus erected during the closing years of the seventeenth century and the opening years of the eighteenth no good specimens have survived in the county. There are, both at Dukinfield, Hesketh Lane, near Chipping, and Stainton, near Kendal, such buildings, but they have been renovated and altered in course of time.

The best is the one at Risley, near Warrington, one of the three old Nonconformist foundations in the county, at present in the possession of the Presbyterian body. It, however, lacks the thatch, and in other ways has been somewhat modernised. The buildings of this period do not appear to have rigidly followed any particular type. They were treated very "freely"; were not modelled according to the plans of any architect; oftener than otherwise they were erected by the people who worshipped in them, with their own hands. Those in the country were frequently low, thatched structures, hidden away in quiet, lonely places, and the few that dared to appear in the towns were much like common houses, fixed in alleys and back streets. The very position of these buildings is eloquent testimony to the spirit of the age in which they were built. Nonconformity had so long been a proscribed religion that it did not venture even yet to seek publicity; whilst invariably in the Trust Deeds provision was made for the use of the property in case the Toleration Act should be repealed and Nonconformity should again become an illicit faith. The ruling idea in the minds of those who erected these sanctuaries is thus indicated by an American writer of fifty years ago; for, whilst primarily referring to the structures built for public worship by the early Congregationalists in that country, it is equally applicable to the Congregational meeting-houses of the same period in England. "The reaction of feeling," says he, "against the English Church and all its belongings appears to have been still too great to permit our fathers generally even to attempt to approximate towards the external style of church edifice which had been left behind in England; and they accordingly fell back upon the first principles of architecture, and seem to have sought merely to secure a building spacious enough to contain the people who desired to worship together; that should be plain enough within and without to guard against ecclesiastical pride; and that should externally suggest in no point the shrines of that Church which had driven them forth into this wilderness. Hence arose that style of edifice which, with unessential modifications, was regnant throughout New England for more than a century, and which, from its

external resemblance to the most obvious and useful adjunct to our farmhouses, used to be called—rather inevitably than irreverently—'the barn meeting-house.'"

The type of building which predominated during the eighteenth century, and which even lingered far into the nineteenth, is well known. It was still of a barn-like character, lying almost "four-square," laid no claim to architectural beauty, and was always remarkably well windowed. Referring to the buildings of an earlier date, another writer says: "We speak within bounds when we say that the number of windows in an old-fashioned meeting-house of seventy feet by fifty is never less than forty"; certainly the statement holds in relation to the meeting-house with which we are now dealing. Dr. Halley, in his fascinating style, gives a vivid description of the meeting-house of this period. "Its simplicity," he says, "was rather of a gloomy than of a cheerful character. The windows, though sometimes large on each side of the pulpit, were in the other three walls usually small, and often darkened by heavy galleries and other obstructions. The woodwork of the interior was dark and massive, and contributed to its venerable gloom. The most prominent object was the pulpit, which, with its broad staircase, occasionally doubled for the sake of uniformity, or its large book board, its great red cushion, its lofty back panelling, and cumbrous sounding board overhanging the whole, might be understood to intimate that, if for no other purpose, some art and device were allowed to designate the high place of the preacher. Although the sign of the Cross in any form was intolerable, occasionally on the sounding board of a 'brave pulpit' was carved a dove with an olive leaf in her bill. The furniture of the pulpit was frequently completed by a large peg or brass rail fastened in the panelling behind the preacher, on which peg was suspended with becoming gravity, on occasion of funeral sermons, the preacher's hat, with its silken tokens of mourning. Occasionally, not often, there was a reading desk in front of the pulpit, and apparently subordinate to it. It would seem in good taste to provide an appropriate place where the minister could pray with the people as one of them, and not as one above them, before he rose to his more exalted position as their

GROSVENOR STREET CHAPEL, MANCHESTER.
Erected in 1807.

See page 87.

teacher. A slightly elevated seat with a book board was thought sufficiently distinctive for the precentor, or 'clerk,' as he was usually called. The pulpit was generally placed against one of the longer walls of the meeting-house, while the gallery was affixed to the opposite wall, and if the congregation was large, to the two other sides. A huge-faced black clock, with gilt pointers and figures, was often placed against the front gallery, immediately opposite the pulpit. Its dark countenance and solemn articulation of seconds contributed to the appropriate gloom of the sanctuary. The exterior of the meeting-house (although being distinctive, for nobody ever mistook it for anything else) was as destitute as the interior of any sort of ornament, unless it were a great sun-dial affixed to its southern wall. On the dial was often a text of Scripture, or a moral admonition." The following may be given as a specimen of these admonitions:—

> "My change is sure, it may be soon,
> Each hastening minute leads me on;
> The awful summons draweth nigh,
> And every day I live, I die."

The reference to the pulpit in the foregoing is, of course, to "the three-decker," which was quite a feature in the larger and more costly buildings; and it is curious to note the careful conservation of this in structures otherwise so severely plain, and which, in every part of them, were intended to be an emphatic protest against the Ritualism of the Church which their supporters had left. In another respect this singular regard for the ritualistic appears. The minister was pre-eminently ministerial. The Geneva gown, bib, and black skull cap were the indispensables of ministerial dress, and Dr. Raffles has preserved a very curious story, which shows how extremely sensitive both ministers and people were in relation to matters of this kind. The minister in question was the Rev. Griffith Griffith, who laboured at Darwen until his death in 1722; and in his day, says Dr. Raffles, "the black cap of the Puritan minister was going out of fashion in genteel congregations. Some of the young people of Darwen had been to Liverpool, and had seen the graceful wigs which polite ministers

wore in that town. Esteeming their minister worthy of so honourable a decoration, they generously purchased one for him. The old gentleman, pleased with this mark of respect from his young friends, somewhat incautiously, without consulting the elders, appeared the next Sunday doing duty in his fashionable wig. It was a sad scandal to the elders. Was their minister conforming to the fashions of the world? Or was it a sort of conforming to the Church? Had he appeared in a surplice they could not have been more offended. They left the place, and in the afternoon their seats were vacant. The good minister was sorely distressed. He wished to conciliate both old and young, and succeeded by appearing the next Sunday with his black cap over his wig, the graceful curls of which hung beneath it. Endeavouring to 'please all men in all things,' he seems to have succeeded."

A common feature of these buildings was the bell turret, perched in a seemingly perilous manner upon one of the gable ends, which, besides containing the bell, was sometimes crowned with a weather cock. Perhaps there is nothing about these homely sanctuaries with which are linked so many humorous stories as the bell, unless it be the pulpit, and the reader will doubtless enjoy a sample. The language, it must be admitted, is not very classical, nor is the grammar faultless, but it is necessary to give it unaltered; and the story is worth relating as an illustration of the state of feeling which existed amongst the various religious parties in the village at the time. Until a few years ago there were three places of worship lying almost in a straight line in the Tockholes valley, which is some three miles from Blackburn. At one end of the line there was, and still is, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, a building which some seventy years ago superseded the ancient Chapel-of-Ease called St. Michael's. Some four hundred yards away is the Congregational Church, which has also replaced the quaint little chapel erected in 1710 by those whom the Uniformity Act had driven out of their mother Church; and eighty or a hundred yards distant, standing upon slightly elevated ground, was Bethesda Chapel. This building, whose site is now occupied by a mortuary chapel, was erected in 1803 by a number of secessionists from the

Congregational Chapel close by, and the relations between the two places were anything but happy. Each place of worship had its bell, but the three bells differed greatly in size, and consequently in the depth of their tones and the range and rate of their notes. The story is that some village wag, one day hearing the three bells strike up in succession, thus interpreted the notes with intent to hit off therein the feeling between the three places. The central bell, which was light in weight, and therefore quick in its movements and shrill in its tones, began to call the worshippers thus: "Fresh herrin', *fresh herrin'*, FRESH HERRIN'." This met with an immediate response from the bell at Bethesda, which was considerably heavier and more measured in its tones, and it was understood to say: "They stinken, *they stinken*, THEY STINKEN." The old bell at St. Stephen's followed in more slow and ponderous voice: "They do, *they do*, THEY DO." The writer has often heard the three bells, and not without feeling that their varieties of tone and movement easily lent themselves to some such amusing skit as the one just recorded.

In these sanctuaries of the second period the spirit underlying all was precisely the same as that which the first represented. In every respect they were intended to be a clear and an abiding protest against the Churches which the worshippers had left, which, with

> "High embower'd roof,
> With centre pillars massy proof,
> And storied windows, richly dight,
> Casting a dim, religious light,"

were to them the very incarnation of Popery. Grosvenor Street Chapel, Manchester, erected in 1807, and honoured as the place in which the saintly Mr. Roby so long ministered, is a good specimen of this type of building in the town; whilst for the country the one at Forton, near Garstang, may be instanced. Very distinct signs of change began to appear early in the nineteenth century, at least with regard to the exterior of these buildings. The straight-backed, square pews, which seem to have been constructed with the idea of furnishing the worshipper the smallest modicum of comfort, held their ground

for some time, but externally the buildings began to assume some architectural character. The stern, rigid Puritan ideas of what became the sanctuary were considerably modified. Dr. Halley attributes this change largely to the influence of Methodism, which he describes as the "younger and more popular rival" of the "old Dissent." Whether that be so or not, before the middle of the century two well-marked types had come into use. One was the Grecian, with its massive Doric pillars and imposing portico, of which Crescent Chapel, Liverpool, Cannon Street Chapel, Preston, and Rusholme Road Chapel, Manchester, are good illustrations. Great George Street, Liverpool, belongs to the same class, though the front has been varied by placing the pillars in semi-circular form and surmounting the entrance with a handsome dome. In the great majority of these buildings the chief ornamentation is given to the front; in most other respects they are comparatively plain. These buildings, however, are usually large and oblong, and have generally the advantage of being light and airy, with splendid acoustic properties.

The English or semi-Gothic style appears side by side with the Classic or Grecian. Belgrave Meeting House, Darwen, and Pendleton, Manchester, both of which were erected in the forties, are excellent specimens; whilst the Lancashire Independent College, built in 1843, "with its cloisters and dormitories, its Gothic tower, and oriel windows," is a still more highly developed form of the same type. Elaborated, varied, and treated with considerable freedom, this is the style that grew in popularity. Nearly all the Bicentenary Chapels referred to were after that pattern, though the architect was by no means the same, and Gothic has held the field until to-day. An exceedingly fine example of modern Gothic is the Albion Congregational Church, Ashton-under-Lyne, whose tower and spire alone cost enough to build two or three Churches. It is impossible to look at that noble edifice, the most beautiful of its type in the county, though there are other imposing structures of the same order in Manchester, Bolton, Blackburn, Southport, Oldham, Warrington, and elsewhere, without being at once impressed with the immense change which has come

over Congregationalism even since the Union was born. These buildings are evidence of the wealth which lies at its command, and of the magnificent possibilities and powers of voluntaryism. They show, too, that Congregationalism has adopted other ideas as to what is proper to the worship of God than those which had ruled it for quite two centuries. They indicate that it has ceased to be an ostracised faith, or, at least, that it is no longer compelled to hide in dark alleys and back streets, "in dens and caves of the earth"; that it has grown in appreciation of the beautiful and gained in social influence and power. What type of building is best adapted for Congregational worship is a question which lies beyond the scope of the present work, but a paragraph from Dr. Halley's pen may be appropriately inserted here. "These grave and venerable sanctuaries," says he, "hallowed by the prayers and praises of the founders of Nonconformity, and sacred with many precious remembrances, did good service to the cause of pure and undefiled religion; until after the rise of Methodism, Nonconformity, yielding to the spirit of the time, or imitating its younger and more popular rival, raised chapels of more agreeable forms and lighter colours, with open galleries, low pews, and greater conveniences for musical display. The questionable taste which substituted the gay Methodistical chapel for the grave Puritan meeting-house is now yielding to a love of ecclesiastical edifices with Gothic columns, arches, vaulted roofs, and lofty spires called 'Congregational Churches.' The meeting-house is gone, and I suppose another will never be erected; the chapel is going the way of the meeting-house; and let it go, for of the three forms of ecclesiastical buildings it seems the least appropriate to its purpose. The church is coming; with what result I cannot predict, but I hope it will not be allowed to corrupt the simplicity of Nonconformist worship. The style of architecture most suitable for dissenting services demands much more consideration than has been hitherto given to it." This was written nearly forty years ago, and Dr. Dale, who appears to have had no great affection for Gothic Churches, some ten years later says: "The passion for building Gothic Churches has crossed the Atlantic, and is still raging violently in the United

over Congregationalism even since the Union was born. These buildings are evidence of the wealth which lies at its command, and of the magnificent possibilities and powers of voluntaryism. They show, too, that Congregationalism has adopted other ideas as to what is proper to the worship of God than those which had ruled it for quite two centuries. They indicate that it has ceased to be an ostracised faith, or, at least, that it is no longer compelled to hide in dark alleys and back streets, "in dens and caves of the earth"; that it has grown in appreciation of the beautiful and gained in social influence and power. What type of building is best adapted for Congregational worship is a question which lies beyond the scope of the present work, but a paragraph from Dr. Halley's pen may be appropriately inserted here. "These grave and venerable sanctuaries," says he, "hallowed by the prayers and praises of the founders of Nonconformity, and sacred with many precious remembrances, did good service to the cause of pure and undefiled religion; until after the rise of Methodism, Nonconformity, yielding to the spirit of the time, or imitating its younger and more popular rival, raised chapels of more agreeable forms and lighter colours, with open galleries, low pews, and greater conveniences for musical display. The questionable taste which substituted the gay Methodistical chapel for the grave Puritan meeting-house is now yielding to a love of ecclesiastical edifices with Gothic columns, arches, vaulted roofs, and lofty spires called 'Congregational Churches.' The meeting-house is gone, and I suppose another will never be erected; the chapel is going the way of the meeting-house; and let it go, for of the three forms of ecclesiastical buildings it seems the least appropriate to its purpose. The church is coming; with what result I cannot predict, but I hope it will not be allowed to corrupt the simplicity of Nonconformist worship. The style of architecture most suitable for dissenting services demands much more consideration than has been hitherto given to it." This was written nearly forty years ago, and Dr. Dale, who appears to have had no great affection for Gothic Churches, some ten years later says: "The passion for building Gothic Churches has crossed the Atlantic, and is still raging violently in the United

States. The Congregationalists of New England have had an acute attack of the mania. It seems to me to have done so much mischief to the church buildings of our American cousins, that if the Colorado beetle makes its way across the ocean and devastates our potato fields, the question will remain doubtful whether America has received the greater injury from England, or England from America. In some cases American architects have treated the style with sufficient freedom to adapt it to Congregational worship; in others, where an enormous sum of money has been expended on the new 'Church,' the congregations would, I believe, be very thankful to have their old 'meeting-house' back again." How far the strictures of these two distinguished men were deserved, how far there was real ground for the fear underlying those two passages because of the new Gothic invasion, it is not necessary to inquire. All, however, will unite with Dr. Halley in the earnest wish that, whatever changes in service and in building time may bring, they may in no way impair the simplicity, earnestness, and spirituality which have always been the main characteristics of true Nonconformist worship.

CHAPTER VIII.

MANIFOLD MINISTRIES.

WHEN the Union was formed and started upon its career it was an extremely simple piece of machinery. It was merely a number of ministers and Churches in voluntary association for the purpose of evangelising England, mainly rural England, by means of Itinerant preachers whom it undertook to maintain. In course of time, however, that machinery has become very elaborate and complex; it has gained numerous accretions and called to its assistance all sorts of auxiliaries. Its ideal is still the same; it yet aims at planting centres of spiritual light in benighted England—city and village alike—and to this end it unhesitatingly avails itself of helps of which its Founders never dreamed. It has already been shown how the Lancashire College came into existence. It was the resultant of several earlier attempts at academic institutions for the training of ministers, all of which were the direct offspring of the Union. It will be well that both College and Union should remember this vital relationship which ought to exist between them, each was meant for the other, and each needs the other.

Efforts have been made from time to time to revive the Itinerant system, which was the main feature of the Union's work in its early years. During the forties we read of Itinerancies connected with Ashton-in-Makerfield, Formby, and Furness, the latter being under the guidance of the Rev. Francis Evans, of Ulverston, a man of truly apostolic spirit, whose name is still deeply revered in that district. Moreover, Lancashire at this time was largely occupied with the construction of railways, and the "wretched condition" of the labourers engaged in that work was brought to the attention of the Union. "For the most part," it is said, "they were rude and ignorant men, of low and vicious habits; that they were often located in numerous groups for a con-

siderable period in remote parts of the country, far away from church, chapel, or school, and from the restraints imposed by the presence of civilised society; and that the consequence too generally was that they sought relief from their laborious and dangerous employments in sensual enjoyments of the lowest and most degrading kinds." To employ an agent entirely amongst these men was found to be impracticable, but in 1846 two districts were selected, Darwen and Wigan, and to the Revs. S. T. Porter and Wm. Roaf, the respective ministers of those places, considerable sums were granted in aid of such efforts as they might feel disposed to undertake towards "furnishing them with the Gospel of Salvation." Orrell and Upholland, near Wigan; Turton, Chapeltown, Turton Bottoms, Entwistle Hall, Clough Bottoms, and Blacksnape, in the Darwen district, are mentioned as places visited, where services were held, tracts and Bibles distributed, and other forms of Christian effort were put forth. The work was not easy, nor was it free from peril. Respecting Blacksnape, a small hamlet a couple of miles on the hill-side above Darwen, one of the Missioners says: "I did not enter more than four houses where there was not drinking; and at one or two I found, from the fiendish yells and horrid imprecations proceeding from them, that it would be prudent not to enter at all. This is a wretched place. It has fallen to my lot when in London to visit some of the vicious purlieus and dens of the metropolis, but never did I behold such scenes of degradation, ignorance, and vice as I have witnessed at Blacksnape." Yet even this Mission to the Railway Labourers, difficult and unpromising as it was, yielded encouragements, and demonstrated the power of the Gospel to save the most ignorant, abandoned, and lost. In connection also with the construction of the Manchester Ship Canal, the Union approached Mr. Walker, contractor, respecting religious provision for the workers; this he undertook to see after himself.

In the seventies an equally interesting endeavour was made to hark back to the early days of the Union in this respect. A sub-committee, consisting of the Revs. G. S. Reaney, J. McDougall, Wm. Hewgill, M.A., J. McEwan

ALBION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE.
Erected in 1894.

See page 98.

Stott, M.A., and Thomas Willis, was formed to arrange for Itinerant Evangelistic work amongst a "very large section of the population in Lancashire, the most necessitous in the religious sense," which was "quite outside the range of our Congregational activity." The first meeting of this committee was held on June 8th, 1874, and amongst other things it agreed to issue a circular to the ministers of the Union within the county, appealing for assistance in "Itinerant Evangelistic work during the months of July and August." The circular suggested that brethren might "go out either singly or two by two for a week or a fortnight during the fine weather," in a district to be subsequently arranged, and that they "should travel and preach by the way in any suitable rooms obtainable, or in the open air, using their own judgment as to minor details of route and mode of conveyance." The response was quite encouraging, no less than sixty-eight offering their services, and the first journey was made on July 13th, fourteen districts being covered by the end of August. The itinerating brethren were supplied with travelling maps, parcels of tracts for distribution, together with handy hymn books. Space will not permit of details, but the districts appear to have been arranged with a view to compassing the entire county. Many of the names are old; they appear, indeed, in the very first of the Union Reports, as, for example, Burscough, Crossens, Newburgh, Chowbent; and nearly all were very out-of-the-way hamlets and villages. The experiences of these brethren make most interesting reading. At Burscough Bridge, for instance, it is recorded that an open air meeting was addressed consisting of about 200 persons, some fifty of whom were "women with children in their arms," many of whom "seldom entered a place of worship." At Chowbent, a service was held in "The Valley," a part of the village notable for its "heathenish ignorance and immorality," where a congregation of about 150 people assembled, who seldom made acquaintance with the inside of any place of worship. At Ditton Hall, Garston, "a mixed crowd of Irish, Welsh, etc.," assembled for a preaching service, to whom it appeared "a new thing," but who "heard the Word, and seemed to feel its power." At Farington, "a

large village about four miles from Preston," the Report says, "our visit caused quite a sensation, for as we went from house to house with tracts we were followed by a bodyguard of children to the number of 200 or 300. We pitched our tent in the evening at the corner of one of the streets, after honouring the police constable by paying him a visit and asking his permission, and we had a congregation of nearly 300, besides a number listening at their doors at a distance." The work was continued for some three years, and the Committee were able to report that "almost every part of the county which can require evangelistic effort has been visited." It was a pure experiment, and it would appear to have fallen through because the "majority of the brethren who were asked to itinerate found it inconvenient to do so." Doubtless the good seed sown was not lost, though there is no record of any Mission Station growing directly out of the labour, which was of too intermittent a character to yield any permanent results of that kind.

It is also worth pointing out that the Fylde Itinerancy was a vigorous institution from 1880 to 1885, Poulton, Hambleton, Bispham, Preesall, Stalmine, Staining, Singleton, Bethesda, and St. Annes-on-Sea being included in the area. The Rev. James Wayman, of Blackpool, whose name will long be lovingly associated with Congregationalism in the Fylde District, was largely responsible for its working, and in connection with it the Revs. John Shuker, Peter Webster, Henry Lings, Joseph Bliss, and J. T. Camm rendered invaluable service. The names of the stations are interesting, that of St. Annes in particular, where is now one of the strongest and most promising of our Churches, but which in that "day of small things" was a recipient of very considerable help from the Fylde Itinerancy.

Reference has been made to the Bicentenary movement and the impetus which it gave to chapel building, but that was only one of a series of efforts in that direction. Ten years previously, the rapid growth of the population and consequent rise of the towns had made the question of increased religious accommodation a most pressing one. The Union Report for 1852 states that the "chief impediment" in the way of pecuniary independence for

many of the Mission Stations was "the poor and limited accommodation in the chapels and Sunday Schools." "These buildings," it goes on to say, "often badly located, of mean appearance, comfortless and inconvenient, are generally so narrow in their dimensions that when filled with hearers they are insufficient to yield a revenue adequate to the maintenance of a minister. They almost seem as if they were purposely erected with a view to their being perpetually dependent, in part at least, upon foreign assistance." Here, again, the man who first moved was Mr. George Hadfield, who initiated the Bicentenary movement. A letter from him to the Annual Meetings of the Union in April, 1857, stated that the "greatly increasing population" of the county urged "increased effort in this direction," and particularly emphasised "the desirableness of endeavouring to erect 50 new chapels within a period of five years." The "creation of an organisation for accomplishing this object" was recommended, and a Committee was at once appointed "to take the matter into serious consideration." At a preliminary meeting of friends who were known to be sympathetic, held on October 15th, 1852, in Grosvenor Street Chapel, the most favourable reports were given, Mr. Hadfield pledging himself to give £5,000 for the first fifty buildings erected. Almost equally generous promises were given by Messrs. James Kershaw, M.P., Thomas Barnes, M.P., William Armitage, James Sidebottom, James Watts, George Wood, Thomas Hunter, and Christopher Lings. The Society was definitely formed on November 1st of the same year, with the Revs. Richard Fletcher and J. L. Poore as Secretaries, and a gratifying feature of this movement was the promise of the ministers to raise amongst themselves the sum of £1,000. This part of the work appears to have been delegated to the Rev. Richard Slate, of Preston, who sent the following touching and interesting letter to the two Secretaries seven days after the Society had been launched:—

Preston, November 8th, 1852.

Dear Brethren,—I have pleasure to state that on Saturday I received £5 from the venerable Rev. W.

Alexander, of Southport, being his subscription towards the Chapel Building Society, etc. Being the oldest minister in the county (in his 90th year), he wished to make the FIRST PAYMENT towards so glorious an object. The Rev. George Greatbatch, being desirous of following so good an example, at the same time enclosed his subscription of £5 also; he being 75 years of age, and probably the second oldest minister in the county, wished to make the SECOND PAYMENT. It is likely these two sums are the first actual payments made on behalf of the Society. Such a spirit by the patriarchs of our denomination must have a good influence when known, and is enough to make us proud of our cloth. There are a few of our brethren who have not yet sent me their promises of subscriptions, but as I suppose you will publish an account of the meeting last Monday, with the Rules, etc., I am waiting till I receive some copies before I make the intended application. Am not without hope that the Ministerial Subscription list may be increased to £1,200. I felt thankful for the unanimity and general spirit of the meeting last Monday—a happy omen, I trust, of the manner in which the Society will be conducted. Shall be glad to hear from you.

Yours truly,

R. SLATE.

Revs. R. Fletcher and J. L. Poore.

At the time of writing Mr. Slate had promises amounting to £850, representing little more than half of the ministers of the county.

Though Mr. Hadfield's ideal was not realised, much good work was done. Twenty new chapels were erected, at a cost of about £60,000, towards which aid was given to the extent of some £14,000. The Bicentenary movement appears to have replaced this Society, its last recorded meeting being on April 4th, 1859. At the end of the minutes is the following suggestive note from the pen of the Rev. R. M. Davies, who had succeeded Messrs. Fletcher and Poore in the Secretaryship, added barely two years before his death: "The General Committee was

HESKETH LANE CHAPEL, NEAR CHIPPING.

Erected in 1705.

See page 82.

appointed November, 1852. Eighteen ministers and 32 laymen were appointed. Of these, in October, 1903, only J. G. Rogers, D.D., and R. M. Davies survive!!"

Following the Bicentenary movement is the "Lancashire and Cheshire Chapel and School Building Society," which was formed in 1868. In the first report of its proceedings, by the Rev. R. M. Davies, who acted as Secretary from the first, appears the following interesting account of its origin: "For the formation of a new Society several meetings were held, which were made pleasant by the hospitality of Sir James Watts, Richard Johnson, Esq., Henry Lee, Esq., and others. On the 16th April, 1868, Sir E. Armitage asked a number of friends to 'chapel extension' to dine with him at the Queen's Hotel, Manchester. Thirty-five accepted his generous invitation. A paper was read by the Rev. R. M. Davies on the growth of Congregationalism in Lancashire during the past sixty years, and the need of renewed efforts to secure increased chapel and school accommodation. A stirring address, full of Christian feeling and wise discrimination, as to present and prospective demands upon the Churches, was delivered by G. Hadfield, Esq., M.P., who declared his readiness, if thirty chapels or school-chapels were built during the next five years, to give the princely sum of £3,000 towards their erection. The suggestion was at once accepted, a Committee was appointed, and subscriptions to the amount of £17,350 were promised in the room, which have been since increased to £21,755." The meetings were usually held in the office of Sir James Watts, and during the period of its active existence, which was some six or seven years, thirty-five chapels and ten schools were aided to the extent of about £21,800. The Society, which embraced Cheshire, and whose buildings were in part in that county, towards the end of 1877, after being for some time in a state of "suspended animation," was resuscitated for another effort, when some £20,000 was again subscribed, which assisted in the erection of twenty-five chapels, seventeen school-chapels, and sixteen schools; and in 1890 it was reorganised and placed on a more permanent basis by the bequest of £10,000 from the late Mr. John Rylands. Then for the

first time a Loan Fund was created, and during the fifteen years ending December 31st, 1905, grants to the amount of £32,010 and loans to the extent of £21,250 have been made towards the erection of forty-nine chapels, thirty-six school-chapels, and forty-one schools. Space will not permit any more detailed account of a form of service whose value it is impossible to represent in figures. For considerably more than fifty years these successive Chapel Building movements have given a helping hand to the Union in its various aggressive enterprises, and there are few buildings in use amongst us to-day, school or church, which have not benefited very considerably either from its Loan, or Grant Fund, or from both. From the inception of the first movement of that kind until the hour of his death the Rev. R. M. Davies was an active sympathiser, during nearly the whole time serving as Secretary, having as colleague in this capacity the Rev. Thomas Willis from 1890, and he fostered the various Societies with care. It was fortunate also that these movements had for many years in the late Mr. Abraham Haworth a Treasurer who gave unstintedly both of his time, substance and service. For a considerable time prior to his death the Committee met in his office, and there its meetings are still held.

The "Lancashire, Cheshire, and Westmorland Congregational Ministers' Provident Society," as its name suggests, aims at making suitable provision for men who have served in the Congregational ministry, and who at the time of joining were resident in one of the three counties specified. "It originated," says the first Report issued, "in a conviction, deeply and often painfully felt, both by ministers and members of Congregational Churches in the county, that some combined effort was necessary to secure a provision for Pastors when no longer able, through age, or infirmity, to labour among the people of their charge, and for the widows and orphans of deceased ministers." The first steps to this end were taken when the attention of the ministers and delegates of the Union was called to the matter at its Annual Meeting in Mosley Street Chapel, on April 8th, 1841. A provisional Committee was appointed, which met several times during the year to consider how to "attain an object unanimously admitted to be important,"

and the advice of John Finlaison, Esq., Actuary of the National Debt and Government Calculator, was sought "with reference to the principles necessary to secure the financial competency of the proposed Society." On April 6th of the following year a meeting was held in the Lecture Room of Great George Street Chapel, Liverpool, at which some seventy ministers and friends were present. Dr. Raffles presided, and, "after an investigation of considerable length with reference to the principles and Rules which had been recommended by the provisional Committee," on the motion of the Rev. J. Kelly, of Liverpool, seconded by Alderman James Kershaw, of Manchester, the formation of the Society was agreed upon. At the meeting of the County Union the day following, April 7th, 1842, it was directed "that the Ministerial Secretary should send as soon as possible, to every minister in the county, a circular to request each one desirous of becoming a Beneficiary Member, to forward to him his name and age next birthday." It is clear from these early proceedings that the Society was regarded as an ally of the Union in its work. The Secretaries were Mr. J. H. Hulme and the Rev. D. T. Carnson, of Preston; the Treasurer was Alderman James Kershaw, of Manchester, and the first Committee consisted of the Revs. Richard Fletcher, of Manchester; Richard Slate, of Preston; William Blackburn, of Bamford; and J. Tunstall, of Liverpool; the two Secretaries and Treasurer being *ex-officio*. The Society's aim was to secure for each Beneficiary Member an annuity for life of £40 on attaining the age of sixty-five years, or before, if permanently rendered incapable of ministerial duty. An entrance fee of £10 10s. was to be paid, together with an annual premium of £4 4s., of which the Church should pay £3 3s. and the minister £1 1s. Every person entering above the age of thirty-eight years would need to make an extra payment equal to the number of years' premiums above that age; whilst those below would be entitled at death to a bonus in proportion to the number of years below. In addition to the "Pension Fund," there was also a "Charitable Fund," made up of contributions from Churches and subscriptions from Honorary Members, its object being to give relief to widows and orphans of members,

besides providing the pensions for those who might be rendered incapable before they were entitled to claim from the Pension Fund. Within one month after its formation twenty-six ministers sent in their applications for admission, another being added later, and of these twenty-three were above the specified age, their ages ranging from thirty-nine to sixty-five years. No less a sum than £1,831 19s. 3d. was required to meet the premiums of these twenty-three, and appeals were made for subscriptions to this end, the Charitable Fund being used for the purpose during the first year. The response was not generous, but the reason is said to have been not "disapprobation expressed, or felt towards the Society," but "the unexampled commercial depression prevailing in our county." The year 1842 carries us back to the bitter days of the Corn Laws. In the middle of the previous year there had been the great conference in Manchester of ministers of all denominations, but mostly Nonconformists of one type or another, at which the death knell of the old *régime* of cruelty was sounded. Harrowing beyond expression are the stories of poverty and suffering which were told by representatives from all parts of the kingdom. Reports from Preston say that "many of the hand-loom weavers live almost entirely on water porridge and are distressingly destitute of clothes and bedding"; from Liverpool, that "a fair working carpenter is often induced to work for 1s. per diem"; from Ashton-in-Makerfield, that "several persons have perished for want of the common necessaries of life," and that many of the tradespeople "are on the borders of bankruptcy"; from Bury, that "the masters are carrying on at a profitless business, and the shopkeepers are being ruined"; from Denton, that "the shopkeepers and little hat manufacturers are badly off"; from Wigan, that "hand-loom weavers do not earn on an avearge, clear of expenses, more than 4s. 6d. per week, but in very many instances much less"; from Middleton, that "the unskilled labourer will not average more than six shillings, and in numerous cases not more than four shillings per week, that the condition of the labouring class has deteriorated, and that there is a general sinking among the middle class." Born in such days, no wonder that the Society encountered

TINTWISTLE CHAPEL.
Erected in 1811, *but since somewhat altered.*

CRESCENT CHAPEL, LIVERPOOL.
Erected in 1837.

See page 88.

serious financial difficulties in its initial stages. It ended the year, however, with twenty-seven Beneficiary Members and a good number of Honorary Members, whose generous contributions gave the assistance which was needed. After several years, owing to the fall in the value of money, the age limit of the Society was lowered to thirty-three years, and a few other changes have been made, but the fundamental principles remain. From a statement recently issued it appears that 285 members have been enrolled since its formation, whilst its members have benefited in one way or another to the extent of no less a sum than £17,412. The capital of the Pension Fund now stands at £24,077, and that of the Charitable Fund at £13,218.

The Society has been most fortunate in its officers. Alderman Kershaw continued to be Treasurer until 1859, when he was succeeded by Mr. W. Armitage, who held the office until 1887, the present Treasurer, Mr. E. B. Dawson, LL.B., having occupied the position since that date. The Rev. D. T. Carnson retained the Secretaryship until 1854, when he was followed by the Rev. William Roseman, of Bury. Mr. Hulme, the lay Secretary, continued in office from 1842 to 1870, his successor being Mr. J. C. Needham, the lay Secretary merely giving legal advice. The present Secretary is the Rev. F. Carter, who joined the Society in 1868, became a member of Committee in 1870, and Secretary in 1878. He has, therefore, had an official connection with it for thirty-six years—a quite unique record. The Society was never in so sound a condition, a fact due to the care with which its officers watch over its interests. How much it has done during the sixty-four years of its existence to brighten the eventide of men worn out in faithful service for Christ, to keep away the pressure of poverty amidst temporary disablement, and to relieve the need of the orphan and the anxiety of the widow, no tongue can say; but that it has been an angel of light to many a life which otherwise would have been deeply shadowed is beyond all doubt; and the Union will do well to extend to the Society a fostering mother's care.

The Woodward Trusts owe their existence to the generosity of the late Mr. Wm. Woodward, of Manchester, who died in the early part of 1870. Admitted to the

fellowship of the Church at Mosley Street in 1839, and afterwards a deacon at Cavendish Street Church, he was transferred to the Church at Chorlton Road in July, 1862. During his connection with the Cavendish Street Church he was for many years Superintendent of the Sunday School; and as many of the teachers and officers came long distances, it was his custom to provide for them a warm dinner each Sunday. The precise form which the Trusts assumed was due to suggestions from the Rev. R. M. Davies, which Dr. Macfadyen, Mr. Woodward's pastor, conveyed to him. Dr. Mackennal, in his *Memoir* of Dr. Macfadyen, tells about Mr. Woodward one day saying to the latter that he had about £20,000 which he wished to dispose of before he died, intimating that he was prepared to welcome counsel in relation to the matter. "He proposed," says Dr. Mackennal, "that this money should be used for the hard working ministers in small Churches in Lancashire." The suggestion was accepted, and the following gentlemen were appointed Trustees: Sir James Watts, Messrs. William Armitage, Benjamin Armitage, Abraham Haworth, Henry Lee, Edward Lewis, and the Rev. J. A. Macfadyen, M.A., the Treasurer being Mr. Wm. Armitage and the Secretary the Rev. R. M. Davies. Not one of these remains, but in most cases the sons worthily wear the mantles of their respected sires. Mr. Wm. Armitage has succeeded his father both as Trustee and Treasurer; Mr. Charles Suthers Davies replaces his father, the Rev. R. M. Davies, as Secretary and Trustee; Mr. A. A. Haworth, M.P., is Trustee in place of his father, Mr. Abraham Haworth; Mr. Harold Lee takes the place of his father, Mr. Henry Lee; the other Trustees being Messrs. G. Hadfield, son of Mr. G. Hadfield, whose name is so prominent in these pages, and Mr. T. H. Rymer, who succeeded his uncle, Mr. Thomas Rymer, in the Trusteeship, together with Messrs. Henry Higson and Edwyn Holt. The Trusts are administered under three heads. Mr. Woodward left £1,000 as an Insurance Fund, to assist pastors in effecting insurances; £3,000 to give occasional assistance to ministers in times of pressing neces-

sity, or to help those who have been rendered temporarily unfit for duty to obtain such rest as may result in their being able to resume pastoral work; and Mrs. Woodward left £10,000 "to enable the Trustees to offer any Congregational minister, who had laboured for a period of not less than ten years next preceding the date of such offer in a Congregational Church or Churches situated within the county of Lancaster, and who during that period had been in full connection with the Lancashire Congregational Union, a yearly grant upon his retiring from the pastoral office." Mrs. Woodward stipulated that an annuity of £250 should be a first charge upon this fund for the Rev. James Gwyther, of Zion Chapel, Stretford Road, during his lifetime. The benefits of the Insurance Fund extend to Cheshire as well as Lancashire. Since Mr. Woodward's death generous friends have added considerably to the value of these Trusts, and their usefulness is beyond all calculation. It has been already stated that the Secretary until the time of his decease was the Rev. R. M. Davies, and to no branch of County Union work did he give more kindly thought and tender sympathy. His venerable figure in the Annual Meetings of the Union will be readily recalled, and the pathos with which he read those parts of his report that told of burdens relieved, of sorrow banished, and of anxiety removed by the kindly ministries of the Woodward Trusts will not soon be forgotten. The extent of the operations of these Trusts may be inferred when it is stated that £339 10s. was given last year in connection with the Insurance Fund; that the sum of £392 10s. was distributed in connection with the Aid Fund; and that £819 was granted in annuities from the Retiring Fund. The service of those who manage these Trusts is purely voluntary, and the Institution is in consequence worked most economically.

A few sentences are necessary respecting *The Lancashire Congregational Year Book*, the official organ of the Union. The name is of quite recent origin, its former one since 1866 being *The Lancashire Congregational Calendar*. That again had superseded a still more prosaic and commonplace one which it had borne from the beginning—*The Annual Report of the Committee of the Independent Churches and Congre-*

gations in Lancashire, being changed into *The Annual Report of the Committee of the Lancashire Congregational Union* in 1838 when the constitution underwent considerable revision, the word "Committee" being dropped in 1844. This repeated change of name is exceedingly suggestive; there is a good deal of history behind it, it is a sign of the times. For many years it was a very modest production, containing only some twelve or fourteen pages of printed matter. Fortunately, the late Dr. Raffles, who gleaned so much in the byways of Lancashire Nonconformity, preserved a set of these Reports up to his own day, together with one or two other interesting documents relating to the formation of the Union. To these the Rev. James Gwyther added, and subsequently the Rev. R. M. Davies; so that now the Union possesses a complete set of these valuable documents. Unfortunately, however, the 1857 Report is defective, and should this meet the eye of any reader who can supply the omission, his help will be greatly valued. In 1866 the *Report* became the *Calendar*, and with the change of name came a greatly increased volume, more than 130 pages of printed matter appearing in it, including Reports of the Lancashire College, the London Missionary Society, the Irish Evangelical Society, the Colonial Missionary Society, and the Pastors' Retiring Fund, together with the Annual Address from the Chair of the Union and other papers given at the Annual Meetings. To-day the *Year Book* is an even bulkier volume still, and may claim to be one of the cheapest and best publications of the kind issued. It is quite a *vade mecum* on all matters relating to Lancashire Congregationalism. Its Editor is the Rev. James McDougall, one of the oldest and most honoured ministers in our midst, whose literary abilities are so well known. After useful pastorates at Darwen and Broughton, Manchester, extending to nearly forty years, Mr. McDougall retired from the active ministry a short time ago. But he is still unwearied in his labours, and finds joy in serving the Union in this way, a position which he has held for the last thirty-five years, and in his skilled hands the book yearly grows in interest and value. An incident is worth recording, which shows how easy it is to blunder in the matter of compliments. At

the Annual Meeting some years ago, a certain minister from East Lancashire, who has long been resident in the South, was appointed to move the usual resolution of thanks to the Editor. He began by eulogising his literary work, and, with intent to give point to what he was saying, added: "I have not had the pleasure of reading the *Calendar*"—a general cry of "Oh!" and "Shame!" interrupted the speaker, whilst two or three *Calendars* in the possession of members were thrown to him on the platform. When he was able to proceed, he continued: "But I am so confident of the Editor's abilities that whatever he does must be well done." It was intended as a compliment, but it was an unfortunate one, and the good brother had many an uncomfortable hour afterwards as the result.

Most of the institutions named enjoy a large measure of self-government. They are not organically connected with the Union, not an integral part of it, and how far it would be well to make them such is a question which need not be discussed here, but they work side by side with it in heartiest sympathy. The aim is one throughout. Whether it be the training of the ministry, the erection of Churches, the making of suitable provision for poor and aged pastors, the publication of information about the Union's work, the sending forth of Itinerant ministers to preach in town and city, hamlet and village, the object is to so equip Lancashire Congregationalism that it will be able to stand in the van of those religious activities whose mission is to bring our great county, with all its interests, possibilities, and powers, to the feet of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER IX.

New Times.

OFTEN is the student of history tempted to adopt as his own the dictum of an ancient sage: "There is no new thing under the sun." Men are found to be occupied with precisely the same problems and conducting the same controversies from generation to generation; and in nothing is this more true than in matters religious. It is quite a mistake to assume, as we often do, that we enjoy a monopoly of original suggestion, idea and thought. The conflict with Sacerdotalism is the perennial one in which the men of the Mayflower, the Commonwealth, and St. Bartholomew's Day fought and achieved so gloriously. The Education Controversy is older than the century; before Grindelwald was known there were serious endeavours after the Reunion of Christendom; there were higher critics before Strauss and Renan; long before the present generation was born the attention of Congregationalists was turned towards the necessity for a sort of ministerial Sustentation Fund; and even the question of Confidential Committees to effect peaceful separations between pastors and Churches, without doing injury to either, was often under serious consideration. In a way it may be disappointing to find that these problems persist in refusing to be solved generation after generation and age after age; and yet in a way it is encouraging. It shows that, after all, the religious problems, the problems whose solution the Church is invited to discover, are reducible to very few. Admitting, however, the force of all that, it is impossible not to feel that we have moved on considerably since the founding of the Lancashire Congregational Union a hundred years ago, and that in many respects it is a new Congregational world in which we to-day are privileged to live and invited to serve.

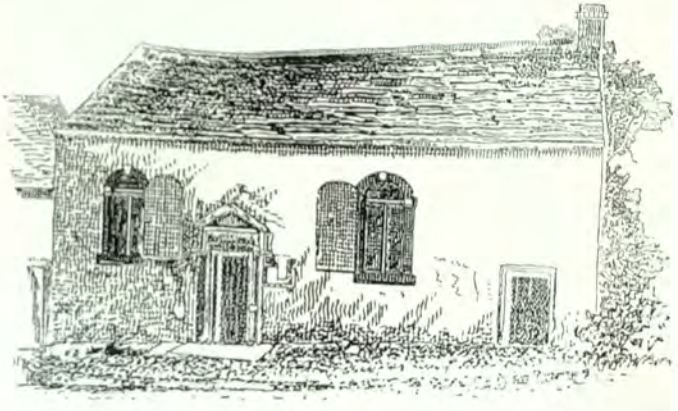
Take, for example, the Constitution of the Union, which has undergone many "revisions." Certain broad principles have remained intact; the foundation is much the same as it has ever been, but the superstructure is more elaborate and ornate than it was a hundred or even fifty years ago. Quite a bulky and not an uninteresting volume might easily be written on the evolution of the Constitution, witnessing, as it does, on the one hand, to the steady growth of a democratic spirit, to the passionate anxiety of the men who have had to do with its working to let "new occasions teach new duties"; and, on the other, to that healthy conservatism which has protested against sweeping changes, and, in particular, kept vigilant watch over the liberty of the individual Church, which has always been the strength and glory of Congregationalism. The success of the work and the deepened sense of the needs of the people very early made evident that some far more efficient machinery would be required, and at the Annual Meeting in March, 1814, which was held at Bolton, it was decided to recommend the division of the county into Districts, and these again into Branch Societies, each of which enjoyed a considerable measure of Home Rule under the supervision of the general body. The area of a Branch Society is not given, but it would probably include the Churches of a town, or those adjoining one another, and it had its own officers. The District was much like what it is to-day. The object was, of course, to raise funds, and these were in part to be for the County Union and in part for the London Missionary Society, the latter being then in close association with the County Union. Churches were to be urged to contribute one penny per week per member, and some interesting calculations are given as to what these small sums, regularly given, would realise annually. These recommendations, with others, were adopted at the half-yearly meeting of the Union in Bury, on the 9th November, 1814, and it was decided to circulate the paper containing them through the Churches. Ultimately there resulted the "Revised General Plan of the Union," which was adopted at the Annual Meeting in Burnley, on April 9th, 1817. Comparing it with the original Constitution, the chief changes will be found

to be the division of the county into the four Districts. Finance was an important factor in determining membership, weekly, quarterly, and annual Subscribers being entitled to the privilege; ministers whose Churches sent an annual contribution and congregations became members; but they were voted upon at a General Meeting, and only admitted when four-fifths of those present recorded a favourable vote. The management was vested in a Committee consisting of the minister and one delegate from each subscribing Church, one additional delegate being given for every fifty members in a Church, the delegates of a grantee Church being ineligible to vote on questions affecting their own case, or to move or second any resolution having relation to pecuniary matters. The bye-laws ordained that the meetings of the Assembly should be held twice a year; that ministers were to preach in alphabetical order, a senior on the first evening, a junior the following morning, the preacher for the evening of the second day to be provided by the entertaining Church; that the Committee should meet in the morning of the second day and arrange the plan of the ensuing year; and that the Public Meeting should be in the afternoon, when the Report for the past year should be read and the plan for the coming one proposed.

It is interesting to note how the sermon bulked in these early Assemblies. No changes were made here in the "revised plan." The devotional and worshipful element, indeed, was pre-eminent in these meetings, and the Rev. R. M. Davies, in one of his last conversations with the writer, referred to this fact as a pleasant memory of the Union's Meetings, as he knew them at the beginning of his career. Two years afterwards it was decided to dispense with the morning sermon, the business meeting to begin at eight o'clock, and the preacher to be chosen in alphabetical order, without regard to age. Appended to the Report for 1823 are several additional rules, which had been passed at various times, of which the principal are that a Church failing to send its annual contribution on or before the Annual Meeting in April was to be informed by the Treasurer that if the contribution was not forthcoming one month before the Public Meeting it would be considered

(1) BURY FOLD, DARWEN.

(2) ANONYMOUS.



(3) NEWTON-IN-BOWLAND CHAPEL.

TYPES OF CONGREGATIONAL ARCHITECTURE.

(1) *House licensed for Nonconformist preaching in* 1672. (2) and (3) *Seventeenth Century Village Chapels.*

See page 82.

to have withdrawn from the Union; that any place "under the wing of the Union failing to send an annual report of the success of the Gospel among them be considered as requiring no further pecuniary aid"; that at future Annual Meetings "the Public Meeting be held on the Wednesday Evening instead of the usual sermon"; and that the meeting for business on the Thursday be continued, "if necessary, from eight in the morning until four in the afternoon," the preacher for the Thursday Evening service to be chosen by the entertaining Church. In 1838 these rules were thrown more into shape, but not much altered, the General Committee consisting of representative members in the proportion of one to fifty members, and special members, such as Tutors of the College, etc., the Annual Meetings to take place on the Wednesday and Thursday after the first Sabbath in April.

Financial pressure led to a closer inspection of the administration of the funds of the Union in 1844, and the adoption of some further constitutional changes, the chief being the appointment of an Executive Committee, whose duty should be to superintend the affairs of the Union during the year. Agents employed by the Union were to be members of Congregational Churches, and to receive not less than £100 per annum, and no Church dependent upon the Union was to call a pastor without first giving information to the Executive. In 1847 it was decided to appoint a General Agent and Visiting Secretary, who was to be Secretary for the Executive also, and in the person of the Rev. D. T. Carnson, of Preston, a suitable person was found. In 1853 there was another revision of the Constitution, relating principally to the composition of the Executive Committee, the number being fixed thus: Manchester District, ten; Liverpool District, seven; Blackburn District, three; and Preston District, two; the numbers being determined by the relative strength of the Church membership of each District, amounts contributed to the Union, and amounts received in aid. The members were to be nominated at their respective District Meetings, and not, as hitherto, by the Secretaries.

The seventies were occupied almost entirely with discussions which led to very large changes. Leaders in this

movement were Mr. Henry Lee and Dr. Macfadyen, together with Dr. Hannay, of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. The anxiety of all who advocated the changes, as well as those who opposed them, was to provide a more efficient instrument to grapple with the growing populations of the country, and to make more worthy provision both for Churches and ministers. In 1874 Mr. Lee succeeded in carrying an alteration in the rules to the effect that Evangelists employed by the Union should receive not less than £100 a year, and ministers so employed should have a minimum salary of £150, he himself generously offering to give, "if needful, the sum of £500 for the then next year." The question of federating all the County Unions in the country, raised at the Autumnal Meeting of the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1873, occupied the attention of the Lancashire Union nearly the whole of that decade. Year after year the Annual Assembly was given up to it. The discussions were warm as well as prolonged; opinions were evenly divided, the spokesmen on both sides being men of great ability, shrewd judgment and large experience, whose devotion to Congregationalism was above suspicion. Few only who fought that battle are still with us, but all were amongst the most honoured brethren in the denomination. The ministerial list included the Revs. Dr. Macfadyen, of Manchester; Thomas Davies, of Darwen; J. McEwan Stott, M.A., of Blackburn; Thomas Green, M.A., of Ashton-under-Lyne; William Hewgill, M.A., of Farnworth; James McDougall, of Darwen; Samuel Pearson, M.A., of Liverpool; Dr. Thomson, of Manchester; James Wayman, of Blackpool; E. Armitage, M.A., of Oldham; Daniel James Hamer, of Salford; R. M. Davies, of Oldham; and Thomas Willis, of Manchester; amongst the laymen being Messrs. Henry Lee, Jesse Bryant, Edward Lewis, E. B. Dawson, I.L.B., Alfred Barnes, B.A., and William Crosfield. The proposal was that there should be a Central Finance Board; that the funds collected within each Union should be sent to this Central Board; and that the surplus, after the needs of a given county had been met, should be available for helping the weaker and poorer counties. It was a great centralising effort, the application of the principle

which had already created County Unions to the country at large. The resolution, however, ultimately adopted was that Lancashire should rather seek to gather around itself other and weaker counties in its immediate neighbourhood, and act as a helper to them. Already Westmorland and Cumberland were in association with it, and were recipients of very considerable assistance, and it was thought that Cheshire and Derbyshire might be linked to it in the same way. When the proposals of the various Unions came to be considered by the Congregational Union of England and Wales, Lancashire found itself outvoted, the original proposals were adopted, and on the 1st of January, 1879, the Lancashire Congregational Union became part of a great national Congregational Federation, and took the name of "The Lancashire Congregational Union in connection with the Church Aid and Home Missionary Society." Both schemes, however, proved to be unworkable. The Union still preserves the ideal of a minimum stipend of £150 per annum for the ministers of its grantee Churches, but the provision contains the clause, "or such specially modified amount as the Executive Committee may from time to time determine"; and in point of fact the Executive is frequently compelled to determine an "amount," "modified" much below £150. The Lancashire Union also stands again by itself; and whilst it has sent a generous grant each year to assist the Church Aid Society in its work among the poorer counties of Suffolk, Wilts, Somerset, Devon, etc., years ago it ceased to be an integral part of that Society. All these things were steadily working up to the last and most important change of all in 1899, when the Union became "Incorporated." This step again was not taken without long and anxious consideration, but it had become a necessity. By it the Union became empowered to legally hold property, and to initiate new movements, as it had never done before. One of the consequences of this step was a Secretary whose whole time should be devoted to the Union, the Rev. Thomas Willis being appointed to that position. With the new century came a "new Constitution," not only for the Lancashire Congregational Union, but also for the Congregational Union of England and

Wales, in which the Church Aid Society is now merged. The Council of this National Union, consisting of 300 persons, from which so much is expected, has upon it thirty-eight representatives from Lancashire, the largest number sent by any county, being eight more than those furnished by the London Union and three more than those sent by Yorkshire. In this respect, therefore, as in so many others, it is the premier county, "the Empire County," as our fathers in the fifties were fond of styling it.

What, again, is the feeling excited on looking at the stately structures in which Congregationalists worship to-day, and comparing them with the "barn meeting-house," the invariable type of meeting-house when the Union was born? What if when stepping inside one discovers, as he is sure to do, that the straight-backed, bare-seated pew has been replaced by cushioned chairs and seats made according to the latest ideas of comfort and luxury; that everywhere simplicity has given place to ornateness; and that the antiquated miniature windows, which, as Dr. Halley says, added to the gloom of the interior, have been ousted by those of stained glass, the "In Memoriam" love gifts of influence and wealth? What if, on going in to worship, he finds, as he will, that culture and refinement are no longer absent; that a new spirit has entered into the ministry of song; that the organ, king of musical instruments, has ceased to be proscribed; and that not even the liturgical is unknown? It will, at least, be evident that we have quite altered our idea as to what is permissible in, and proper to, Christian worship and the Christian sanctuary; that the old Puritan antipathy to ornateness, which survived far into the nineteenth century, and of which both sanctuary and worship were meant to be a distinct expression, is no longer felt to be necessary; and that here, as everywhere else, Congregationalism claims the right to appropriate any and every possible kind of "aid to Christian worship."

How different also is preaching, both in matter, in spirit, in style, and in length! It was not uncommon for some of the great pulpit orators of sixty or seventy years ago to continue their discourses for a couple of hours; and it is

(1) PARK CHAPEL, RAMSBOTTOM.

Erected in 1798.

(2) BETHESDA CHAPEL, TOCKHOLES.

Erected in 1803. *The Bell and Turret were removed before its demolition.*

TYPES OF CONGREGATIONAL ARCHITECTURE.

(1) and (2) *The Barn Meeting House of the Eighteenth Century and part of the Nineteenth.*

See page 84.

recorded how Dr. McAll, the eloquent pastor of Mosley Street Chapel, at the close of such an effort, publicly rebuked a gentleman who had risen to put on his coat when the sermon was finished so as to save a little time. Not less is the modern sermon distinguished from its predecessor in other respects. It is not near so methodical; the divisions and subdivisions, the particulars and generals, have disappeared, or, at least, they have ceased to be prominent; the doctrinal sermon is a *rara avis*, and more effort is made to excite interest by illustration and story, poetry and figure, than formerly. The bright, fascinating literature, which is being poured out in such quantities at the present time, has necessitated that the sermon shall not only be shorter, but also less ponderous than it was in the earlier decades of the Union, more nearly corresponding to the living speech, thought, and experience of everyday life.

The Reports, again, never weary in emphasising the fact that the Union had been founded to further the supreme spiritual purposes of the Kingdom of Christ. To carry the Gospel to the heathen at home, to plant Christian Churches of the Congregational order where none existed, and to encourage and assist those that were too weak to live alone, is the sort of thing with which the reader of these Reports is incessantly confronted; yet "Public Questions" were not entirely excluded from its programme, even in the earliest times. At the Annual Meeting in April, 1827, Dr. Raffles, of Liverpool, moved, and the Rev. George Payne, M.A., of Blackburn, seconded, the following resolution: "That in the opinion of this meeting it is desirable that the congregations in this county should stand prepared to support petitions to Parliament for the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts whenever the Societies in London shall think it a suitable time to express the sense of the Protestant Dissenters throughout the kingdom on that subject." In the following year another resolution was moved, tendering to Lord John Russell "an expression of the admiration and gratitude with which they contemplate the enlightened, eloquent, and successful advocacy of the great principles of religious liberty," in his introduction to the House of Commons of a Bill to repeal those Acts.

This resolution, forwarded to Lord John Russell, drew forth the following reply:—

Half Moon Street,

April 17th, 1828.

Sir,—I beg you will convey to the ministers and delegates of the Congregational Churches in Lancashire my deep felt thanks for the Resolution they have passed respecting the Bill for the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts. To have been of any service in promoting the sacred cause of Religious Liberty, will always be to me a source of unmixed gratification. Allow me likewise to express to you how much I feel the manner in which you have conveyed the Resolution.

I remain,

Your faithful servant,

J. RUSSELL.

Rev. Thomas Raffles, LL.D.

To many it will doubtless come as a surprise that those hateful relics of the barbarous legislation of Charles II., which heaped such cruel injustice upon so many respectable citizens and deprived the State of their services, should have survived until living memory; yet such was the case. Lord John Russell, however, succeeded in his endeavours, though he encountered many serious difficulties; in that, as in the case of so many useful reforms, the House of Lords being the chief obstructionists. The shameful Acts which had disgraced the Statute Books of the country for a century and a half, and whose abrogation had been several times attempted, were repealed on May 9th, 1828, to the great joy of those who had suffered so grievously from them.

About this time another matter was exciting great indignation amongst the people of this country, in particular amongst Congregationalists—viz., the permission which had been granted by the Indian Government to continue the cruel custom of the "burning of Hindoo widows on the funeral piles of their husbands"; and the patronage

"afforded to idolatry by the levying of a tax on pilgrimages to idol temples, the surplus produce of which tax goes into the public treasury." At the Annual Meeting previously named a resolution was passed unanimously "to promote Petitions to the Legislature for the adoption of such measures as may be necessary for the removal of this stain on our national character." The Education Question also, so acute at the present moment, and of which more will be said later, occupies a prominent place in the Reports belonging to this period.

Congregationalists however, have always been most conservative in relation to questions of this character. They have opened the door timidly and slowly for their incoming into their great religious gatherings. Even men of the last generation looked somewhat askance at the appearance of "Public Questions" on the agenda of the Union's Annual Meetings; but to-day they receive a cordial welcome. Congregationalism has distinctly widened its interpretation of its mission; it has come to feel that it is concerned with great human interests of any and every kind, and that it is not going beyond its sphere when it endeavours to provide guidance and leadership in relation to matters that contribute towards the making of good and worthy citizens.

What a mass of new machinery also the Churches have created for themselves. How differently the Reports from the various stations read to-day from those of fifty, eighty, or a hundred years ago. Quite a new language has had to be brought into being for the institutions that make up the machinery of a fully organised Church. We read, for example, of "The Young People's Society of Christian Endeavour," "The Young People's Guild," "The Social Hour," "The Girls' Club," "The Boys' Brigade," "The P.S.A. Brotherhood," "The Men's Own," etc. These are entirely new movements, and the principal feature about them is that they are largely Societies for young people, and so witness to an ever deepening anxiety on the part of the Union about the young life which is growing up in its midst.

Pointing also in this direction is the revived interest in the Sunday School. An old religious institution this, which has been greatly honoured, and which also has witnessed many

changes. Formerly the usual place of meeting was under the Church, where the conveniences were the fewest, the light was poorest, and means of access as bad as they could well be. Now, however, there are separate buildings, with large, airy classrooms, not a few of which are fitted up with pictures and furniture which give them a comfortable, and, in some cases, quite a luxurious, appearance. The teacher, too, was in keeping with the building in which he laboured. He lacked nothing in the way of high purpose, of earnest endeavour, of saintly character and consecrated life, which, after all, are the chief requisites for all true Christian work; and there are still living many who pronounce very tenderly and reverently the names of those Sunday School teachers of a past generation by whom they were first taught the way of salvation, and to whom they owe in large measure both their religious life and material prosperity. Those teachers, however, were very limited in knowledge, and oftener than otherwise quite illiterate. A curious story is told of a School in the neighbourhood of Oldham, where one such teacher laboured in the early years of last century. One Sunday as the scholars "read round" a boy stumbled over a word which was also a poser for the teacher. "Caw it summat, sharp, and go on," said the teacher, when the lad responded "razzur," and proceeded on his way. Readers may remember that in those days it was customary not to wrestle unduly long with "hard words," but to name them "Manchester," "London," or in some other such way, and pass on, though the little genius in question had a more felicitous way of settling the difficulty which had promised to be so formidable both for his teacher and himself. Until quite recently the Sunday School had also to serve the purpose of the Day School, and there are many still living who got all their secular education in these institutions. It will interest the reader to know that one of the very first Sunday Schools established in Lancashire, only some half a dozen years after Robert Raikes commenced in Gloucester, was begun in Lancaster, in connection with the High Street Chapel, by the Rev. William Alexander, to whom reference has so often been made, and who had been greatly impressed by

(1) GREAT GEORGE STREET CHAPEL, LIVERPOOL.

(2) STUBBINS CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

TYPES OF CONGREGATIONAL ARCHITECTURE.

(1) *Grecian or Classic.*

(2) *English or Gothic—One of the Bicentenary Buildings.*

what he had read of the success of Robert Raikes's effort. Mr. Alexander's well meant endeavours produced a most "excited and angry effect upon the town." "The walls of the town," says his biographer, "were placarded with bills, cautioning the inhabitants to beware lest the cunning people at High Street should kidnap their children, and advising them to wait until something better was provided!" Many as are the changes, however, which the Sunday School system has undergone, it still survives. There is, indeed, no more popular hymn than that which says, "Sabbath Schools are England's glory," the composition of a Lancashire man. No Church to-day would be deemed complete without this important adjunct; and the eyes of all who are interested in the future of our country turn towards it with new expectancy and hope.

There has also been a complete change of attitude in relation to the Day School. The charge so frequently brought against Nonconformists, and Congregationalists in particular, of indifference to the secular and religious education of the nation, and of having left the duty to other religious bodies, is absolutely baseless. Even in the earlier Union Reports, as just intimated, attention to the Day School is repeatedly invited. Those were the days of true and not spurious voluntaryism, when Congregationalists believed it to be a distinct contravention of their principles to take State money for the upkeep of either a Day School or a Sunday School. It was only when the State charged itself with the work of educating its young in secular knowledge that the Day School began to fall out of the machinery of our Churches. It is not that these Churches have ever been eager to spare themselves and escape their duty, but that they believe the State to be only discharging its proper function in relieving them of this work. Equally significant is the changed attitude of the Union towards the Temperance movement. Two or three decades ago more than one Church in the county was in peril of shipwreck over the question of unfermented wine at the Lord's Table; a Band of Hope was an impossible institution in the Churches, and Temperance was rigidly excluded from the programme of the Union's Meetings;

but to-day the Union has its delegate upon the Committee of the Congregational Total Abstinence Society, and seldom does an Annual gathering pass without a strong pronouncement upon the curse of intemperance, and suggested methods of effective Temperance propaganda. Woman, too, has received her emancipation in connection with Congregationalism. The "Women's Guild of Christian Service" is a product of the Union, and is directly connected with it. Its name indicates its purpose. It had long been felt that the service of woman had not been sufficiently recognised and encouraged in the corporate life of the Churches, and the Guild, which was called into existence some half a dozen years ago, is intended to remedy this defect. It is a growing body, and at the meetings in Preston, in March last, some 200 must have been present. Perhaps nothing has more contributed to weakness in Congregationalism than the non-development of its lay preaching power. In this respect many other religious bodies have shown greater wisdom than we, and have enjoyed an enormous advantage in being able to summon to their assistance a great army of lay preachers, who not only serve the Mission Stations and country Churches, but take occasional duty in the towns. Here also Congregationalism has opened its eyes to the need of the times. The Congregational Lay Preachers' Association has seen almost ten years of life, and is a very vigorous and promising institution. At least 130 persons have intimated their readiness to serve in this way, and it is in some such organisation that a solution will be found of that difficult problem, the small country Church, which is often too impoverished to support a minister of its own, and where the sphere is too contracted to occupy a man's energies even if there were no financial difficulties in the way. Like the Women's Guild of Christian Service, the Lay Preachers' Association is in direct connection with the Union. Much more might be added, but this will be sufficient to illustrate the point at issue. The Lancashire Congregational Union is not in 1906 what it was in 1806. The old ideals remain; still a brotherhood of Churches, existing that the strong may assist the weak with their burdens; still a great missionary agency, aiming at the moral and spiritual conquest of this

large and important county in which its work lies, it has sought to perfect its machinery and to adjust its methods to the ever changing conditions of human life. It has entered upon large and solemn responsibilities, is standing before "great and effectual doors" of opportunity, and the courage, faith, consecration and sacrifice which invest so much of the story of the past with such thrilling interest will win equally great achievements in the "New Times" into which it has already entered.

CHAPTER X.

MEN WHO HAVE SERVED.

CONGREGATIONALISM has no distincter witness to its value and power than the men and women reared in its communion whose service it wins. It is doubtful if, in proportion to its size, any other section of the Christian Church has supplied the nation with so much strong, healthy, and useful life. Its free and bracing atmosphere is peculiarly favourable to the production of the best type of life, which, within whatever sphere it moves, is sure to distinguish itself; and during the century of its existence the Lancashire Congregational Union has been singularly fortunate in having had associated with it large numbers of men pre-eminent in the Congregational world. Doubtless they were as much made by it as the Union has been made by them; for thus always does work, especially Christian work, react beneficially upon the worker. This, however, increases rather than otherwise our obligation to do honour to those who have so loyally and unselfishly served. Throughout its entire career the Union has been splendidly officered. It has succeeded in enlisting the sympathy and commanding the enthusiasm of the most gifted and eloquent preachers, and at its disposal have been placed the generous gifts of merchant princes, the time, labour, devotion, and statesmanship of the shrewdest men of business and the most cultured geniuses of every type. This chapter is restricted to the distinguished "men who have served" the Union as Secretaries and Treasurers.

REV. WILLIAM ROBY.

Though not actually the Secretary of the Union, he was much more than that, he was pre-eminently the one man who was its Founder and Father. During the six years of

its existence he was the Secretary and inspiring genius of the Itinerant Society, which immediately preceded the Union, and out of which the Union grew; was Founder and Tutor of the Academy which was called into being to serve the interests of that Society; and it was Mr. Roby's visit to the Missionary Meeting in London which so impressed him with the necessity for local federation that led to the first steps being taken towards the formation of the Union.

A native of Lancashire, belonging to the Robys of Haigh, near Wigan, where he was born on the 23rd of March, 1766, he was, "like his father, an orthodox Churchman," but was converted and led into Nonconformity by the Rev. Joseph Johnson, then stationed at Wigan, and afterwards at Manchester, whose funeral sermon Mr. Roby preached from the appropriate words, "My father, my father." His sense of unworthiness was so grea. that he rigidly set himself against the advice of his friends to seek some training for the ministry, and accepted the position of Classical Master in the endowed School at Bretherton, near Preston. "Finding that the Trust Deed of the School at Bretherton required the master to communicate religious instruction to the young people on the Lord's Day," writes his biographer, "and perceiving that both parents and children were in a state of the most pitiable ignorance, he commenced a series of catechetical exercises for the express benefit of the pupils; and, having invited their parents, ventured to address to them on the Sundays a word of exhortation upon the great concerns of eternity. The result was the clergyman of the parish was greatly alarmed on the discovery of such presumptuous irregularity in a layman; Mr. Roby was rebuked, and even threatened with the removal of the children; and, finding that coercive measures were likely to be resorted to should he persevere, he deemed it his duty to resign an office which he could no longer retain with a good conscience." Little did his persecutor know that he was sending into the Nonconformist ministry one of the greatest ornaments it has ever possessed; and still less that this conduct would afterwards be avenged by the appearance in these very parts of Itinerant preachers filled with Mr. Roby's spirit. Such, however, was the case. It has already been

intimated that Mr. Roby's connection with Bretherton was doubtless the chief factor, which led to that part of Lancashire being chosen as the first field in which the Itinerant Society, and afterwards the County Union, undertook work.

For about six weeks only Mr. Roby was a student in the Countess of Huntingdon's College at Trevecca; and on leaving college he laboured for a few years successively at Worcester, Reading, Wigan, and elsewhere, removing to Manchester in 1795, to take charge of the congregation that worshipped in Cannon Street Chapel. Recent troubles had greatly shattered and weakened the cause here, but under his earnest Evangelical ministry signs of life speedily appeared and prosperity returned.

It is not generally known that Mr. Roby assisted considerably in the introduction of Congregationalism into Scotland. His Church granted him a month's leave of absence in June, 1797, which he used not for a holiday in that country, but for real hard work. Assisted by his friend, the Rev. James Haldane, of Edinburgh, he covered a very large area with his preaching itineraries, which were full of incident. In five days he preached ten times, riding on an average some twenty miles a day, and exciting against himself the wrath of the clergy, who spoke contemptuously of him and his colleague as "vagrants."

A larger place for Mr. Roby's ministry than the old chapel at Cannon Street, the chapel of Caleb Warhurst's days, became a necessity, and on Thursday, December 3rd, 1807, the "new chapel situated in Grosvenor Street, looking up Gore Street, Piccadilly," was opened for public worship. The removal was not effected without some friction, a few deciding to remain behind and continue the cause at Cannon Street, which to-day is represented by the Church at Chorlton Road.

At Grosvenor Street Mr. Roby did his life work, exercising a ministry of great spiritual power until the time of his death, which took place on January 11th, 1830. His remains lie in the graveyard behind the chapel, as do those of Sarah Roby, his wife, overlooked and guarded by the Roby Schools, erected in memory of him in 1844. It is not easy to characterise such a man, and it certainly is

impossible to say how much Lancashire Congregationalism owes to him. His name was associated with every aggressive and progressive Congregational movement in the county during the long period of his residence in it. A few lectures and sermons, the sermons principally delivered at ordination or funeral services, are all that have come to us from his pen; and, indeed, whilst they indicate wide reading and real thinking power, it was not in the written so much as in the spoken word that Mr. Roby's power lay. The Rev. James Turner, one of his students, writing of his student days, says: "His ministry was remarkably blessed at this period, particularly to a number of young people. The deep sense of religious things, which then extensively prevailed amongst his people, was such as I have never been favoured to witness in any other instance."

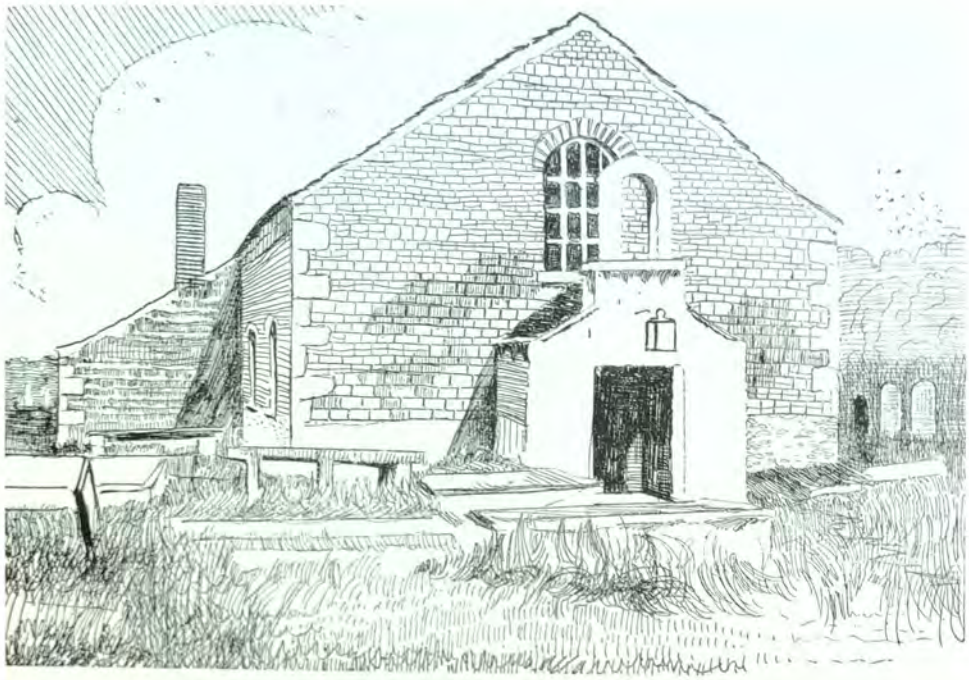
It would be quite easy to occupy many pages with "appreciations" of this good man, but a few sentences shall suffice. "Not distinguished by extraordinary talent," says a writer in *The Manchester Times* of January 16th, 1830, "he possessed a clear and strong mind, with an easy, unimpassioned flow of thought and language. Indefatigable industry, calm yet energetic perseverance, incessant watchfulness against all evil and all appearance of it, holy boldness in the statement of truth and the enforcement of duty, great kindness of disposition, and unbending moral rectitude—it is these qualities, sanctified by a most powerful feeling of religious obligation, and all directed heavenward during the course of a long life, that raised Mr. Roby to the elevation where it has been our delight to view him placed, and in which perhaps the existing race will never behold a successor as truly worthy or as highly honoured." "To him," says the Rev. James Griffin, who was for a short time contemporary with him in the ministry in Manchester, "the Congregational Nonconformity of Lancashire owes really more than to any other man. Mr. Roby may be said to have been the father of a race of ministers in that part of the country, not so conspicuous, it may be, as some others, but who occupied a highly useful and honourable department in the service of the Church; men distinguished rather as devoted pastors, 'faithful and wise

stewards,' than as eloquent preachers and public speakers, yet 'able ministers of the New Testament,' 'apt to teach,' well instructed, conscientious, diligent labourers in the work of the Lord; men who, by their scriptural, judicious, and earnest ministry, by their assiduous and loving attention to the spiritual interests of their congregations and the people around them, and by their consistent, dignified, and holy character, diffused the knowledge and spirit of the Gospel widely in their localities, and have left abundant spiritual fruitage behind them." To these may be added Dr. Halley's testimony, who says that "in promoting Evangelical Nonconformity in Lancashire," Mr. Roby was "more laborious, useful, and honoured than any of his contemporaries."

Rev. Samuel Bradley (1806-8).

Mr. Bradley was the first Secretary of the Union, being appointed with the Committee and Treasurer on September 23rd, 1806, at the meeting at which the Union was born. He had been minister of the Mosley Street Chapel, in whose vestry the Union found its birthplace, since 1801, and fully sympathised with Mr. Roby in his Evangelistic ideals. He had joined him in the Itinerant Society, visiting and preaching at various stations from time to time. He retained the Secretarial position for two years only, but his interest in the work of the Union did not wane. His Church was at the time the highest contributor to its funds, sending £51 11s. 6d. out of a total income of £365 3s. 6½d., Mr. Roby's coming next with £50. It is interesting to note how these two Manchester Churches, in the matter of contributions for the Union, appear to have been engaged for several years in a little friendly rivalry, and how nearly they approached one another, Mr. Roby's Church one year raising £44 1s. 2½d. and Mr. Bradley's £44 1s. 0¾d.! Subsequently, however, the Mosley Street Church contributions fell considerably, whilst those of Mr. Roby's Church kept their high level. Mr. Bradley's ministry at Mosley Street continued for more than a quarter of a century.

Towards the end he appears to have had some trouble through the introduction of an organ into the chapel, which



(1) ELSWICK OLD CHAPEL.

(2) ELSWICK MEMORIAL CHURCH.

THE OLD AND THE NEW.

(1) *Erected in* 1753.

(2) *Erected in* 1873. *The site was given by a descendant of Cuthbert Harrison, the Ejected Minister of* 1662.

See page 112

had just been enlarged. One of his deacons sent the following letter to the Church, which makes curious reading to-day, and whose arguments are somewhat of a puzzle: "As you have, together with your preacher, Mr. Samuel Bradley, determined to intrude a costly organ upon the public worship of God, contrary to the usual custom of the place, an innovation not only unnecessary, but against the express commandment of the Lord in Coloss. ii. 21-23: 'Touch not, taste not, handle not,' etc., I henceforth shall no more, either as deacon or member, unite in your worship. I cannot conscientiously join with any worshipping assembly where instrumental music is used; should I do so, to me it would be sin."

This letter was dated January 2nd, 1823, and it is a singular coincidence that in that year the Rev. John Adamson, who had recently removed to Charlesworth from Patricroft, near Manchester, issued a pamphlet, in which he fulminated terribly against the use of musical instruments in public worship, employing the following arguments in support of his position:—

1. Instruments of music were *never used, even among the Jews, in the ordinary worship of the Sabbath Day.*

2. When instruments were used by the Jews in the *worship of God, they were accompanied with sacrifice and dancing.* Hence advocates for it in the New Testament Churches, to be consistent, ought to *dance* as well as *play.*

3. Instrumental music *was neither admitted into the Apostolic Churches, nor into those that succeeded them for more than seven hundred years.*

4. Instrumental music in the worship of God *is a custom derived from the idolatrous Church of Rome.*

5. The Churches which made the greatest progress in reformation *laid instruments of music entirely aside.*

6. Instruments of music should never be admitted into a place of worship, because wherever they are admitted they produce a train of the most lamentable evils.

It is scarcely necessary to say that these zealous and well-meaning friends fought a vain battle, and, though the last

sounds of it had scarcely died away before the present generation were born, the organ won. Whether this trouble had anything to do with Mr. Bradley's removal is not clear, but in 1826 he resigned and became pastor of Cannon Street Church, where he laboured for eighteen years, when he retired. He is described as "a most eloquent preacher." He did much to build up Manchester Congregationalism, and through it the Congregationalism of the county.

John Hope (1808-1817).

The Rev. Samuel Bradley was succeeded by Mr. John Hope, who had as colleague Mr. George Hadfield, these being the only laymen who have occupied the Secretarial position. Born about 1744, a member of an old Manchester Nonconformist family formerly connected with Cross Street Chapel, when the Rev. John Seddon, M.A., minister of that place of worship, began to preach in an "audacious manner" the "rankest Socinianism," Mr. Hope seceded, and "prevailed on his brothers and sisters to accompany him." They were consequently amongst those who assisted in the formation of the Congregational Church at Hunter's Croft, subsequently called Cannon Street. Mr. Hope was one of the number that left Cannon Street in the days of the Rev. David Bradberry to found the Mosley Street Church, of which, along with the Church at Cannon Street, he had been "an active and useful deacon more than fifty years" at the time of his death on August 29th, 1822.

An interesting memorial of Mr. Hope remains in the General Burial Ground at Rusholme, the first of its kind in the kingdom, where Dissenters had "a place of common right in which they might deposit their dead without submitting to an imposed ritual." Mr. Richard Roberts was Treasurer of this movement, and Mr. George Hadfield Secretary, names with which we shall meet later, but Mr. Hope appears to have been the prime mover. "For almost thirty years," it is said, "this had been with him a very favourite object, and the ground was opened on the 16th of May, 1821, by the interment of his daughter, Mrs. James Wood. So anxious was he that she should be interred there that her "funeral was delayed some time, and extraordinary

measures were adopted to complete the title." His eye is said to have long been fixed upon the spot, "which, perhaps, for dryness, convenience, beauty, and extent is one of the most delightful burial places ever seen." As already intimated, his own death occurred about fifteen months later.

The reader will appreciate the following character sketch of this devoted man, who is described as "a Congregational Dissenter of the old school, strictly adhering to his principles to the last." "He was a man," writes his biographer, "of the most sober, regular, and diligent habits. He rose in the morning during the summer months, throughout his long life, at four o'clock, and in winter at five. Being an ingenious man, an excellent mathematician, and fond of reading, he never lost a single moment of time. On six days in the week, during his waking hours (except at meal times, which were very short), whoever called upon him might be sure to find him occupied either in his professional or some mental pursuits. Hence he was always cheerful and happy. He was the same lively and pleasant companion in the last year of his life that he had been in his youth. His great temperance and regularity, no doubt, materially contributed to his uncommon share of bodily health. For thirty years he had conducted the Sabbath morning prayer meeting at seven o'clock in the vestry of Mosley Street Chapel, and he was always in his pew thrice on the Lord's day, as well as constant in his attendance on week-day services, until he lately removed to the suburbs of the town, when he declined coming out in the evening. He was very fond of singing and music. He had evidently been ripening for a better world for a considerable time past. His temper and conversation were more than usually heavenly. Although on the Sabbath, only four days before his death, he appeared in the house of God as firm as a venerable oak, yet he had been anticipating his departure; for he had prepared his own vault hard by that of his dear daughter's. He had no bitterness in his short sickness. His faith in his Redeemer was unshaken, his mind perfectly calm; the garment of mortality dropped off easily, and his end was peace." What a record! What "great search-

ings of heart" may well be excited in even the best of us. No wonder that the Congregationalism of seventy or eighty years ago was so sturdy when behind it were men of the type of John Hope.

George Hadfield (1811-1817).

It has already been intimated that Mr. Hope had as colleague during the greater part of the time that he held office Mr. George Hadfield, a man much his junior, but of like consecrated purpose and sturdy character. He was born at Sheffield in December, 1787, where his father, Mr. Robert Hadfield, a distinguished Hebrew scholar, had been in business for some time as a merchant. The family, however, belonged originally to Edale, near Castleton, in Derbyshire, where they owned land and farmed their own properties. In 1810 Mr. Hadfield commenced practice in Manchester as a solicitor. During the first two years of his professional career he was partner with Mr. Knight, and doubtless it was this fact which led to his connection with the new Congregational cause at Patricroft, of which Mr. and Mrs. Knight were warm supporters. It is testimony to the strength of his personality that so soon after his coming to Manchester he was appointed to such an important position as that of one of the Union Secretaries.

Mr. Hadfield lived until his ninety-second year, and during the whole of that period his name stands linked with almost every important movement in connection with the Congregationalism of the county, and, indeed, of the country. His princely gifts in connection with the Chapel Building Society of 1851 and the Bicentenary movement of 1862 have already been named. In quite an exultant strain he writes in 1866 to his friend and pastor, the Rev. James Griffin, of Rusholme Road, which Church he helped to originate: "Our fifty new chapels (twenty 1851, and thirty 1862) are nearly complete."

The foundation stone of the new College at Whalley Range, which owed its existence mainly to the untiring efforts and optimistic faith of himself and Dr. Raffles, of Liverpool, was to have been laid by him, as Treasurer of the Building Fund, but the proceedings were interrupted

REV. SAMUEL BRADLEY, MANCHESTER.
First Secretary of the Union (1806-1808).
See page 124.

REV. P. S. CHARRIER, LANCASTER AND LIVERPOOL.
Secretary of the Union (1817–1826).
See page 130

by a serious accident, which resulted in several being injured, though none fatally.

Perhaps his greatest work was the rescue of the Lady Hewley Trust from the Unitarians, into whose hands it had completely fallen, and its restoration to the Evangelical purposes for which it was intended by its pious founder. Long litigation took place before this was accomplished. It has been remarked that in this he spent a large fortune and risked a still larger one; but not "a few poor, godly ministers" in this and other counties have good reason to be grateful that in the darkest day he never lost hope and carried the matter to such a triumphant issue. In conjunction with the Rev. Richard Slate, of Preston, he issued in 1825 *The Manchester Socinian Controversy*, an invaluable little work for all who give themselves to research into the story of old Nonconformist foundations; and it was due to his inspiration that Mr. T. S. James, of Birmingham, son of the Rev. J. A. James, published his *History of the Litigation and Legislation respecting Presbyterian Chapels and Churches in England and Scotland*, a bulky volume, which is also packed with important and interesting facts.

In Parliament, also, as member for his native town of Sheffield, for more than twenty years he watched over Nonconformist interests with the utmost vigilance, and one of the bills he promoted effected "the release of mayors of boroughs from the last relic of ecclesiastical tests in behalf of the State Church." In recognition of his magnificent political services he was twice offered a Baronetcy; but this he refused. A man of strong "peculiarities," "of stern and unbending integrity," which gave to his "decisions and proceedings an appearance of self-will and ruggedness," he had often to part company with even his warmest friends; but these always felt that, however much they might differ from his judgment, his "simplicity and integrity of Christian principle" were above suspicion. Dr. Thomson, pastor of the Rusholme Road Church, in his address at the funeral service, described him as "a venerated friend, to whom they had looked with grateful respect as the oldest member of that Church, the founder of their sanctuary, an honoured leader in the cause of religious freedom and

progress; as a politician, an honest representative of the people, who cared not for party or for fame, but solely for the interests of the great toiling masses of his countrymen; a patriot who sought the good of other nations as well as his own, who served not for pleasure or place or power, but for the approval of his own conscience and his Lord; a Christian who loved the Gospel and the children of God above all shibboleths and sectarian distinctions; in short, a man who lived not for himself, but for his kind, and who claimed nothing as of merit, but ascribed all to grace." Nothing can be healthier than for the young life of our own time to come into the presence of men of the type of George Hadfield and John Hope, sit at their feet, and learn of them.

Rev. Peter Samuel Charrier (1817-1826).

The appointment of Mr. Charrier to the Secretaryship of the Union was coincident with the adoption of "The Revised Plan of the Union," and doubtless it was the result of it. The Rev. Thomas Smith, of Manchester, had read a paper on this subject at the Annual Assembly in Burnley, on April 9th and 10th, 1817, and after "ample discussion" it was agreed to adopt the "Plan" with some "amendments," the thanks of the assembly being accorded to Mr. Smith and Mr. Roby, who were mainly responsible for it. It was further agreed that Mr. Smith be appointed "Secretary *pro tempore*, and if removed from the county, that the Rev. P. S. Charrier be Secretary." Mr. Smith does not appear to have acted; consequently, according to the resolution, the duty fell to Mr. Charrier. Of Huguenot extraction, as his name suggests, his father having fled from France to escape the persecution to which the people of that persuasion were subjected, in this country he was brought under the helpful ministry of the Rev. John Griffin, of Portsea, whose son was the Rev. James Griffin, of Manchester. At the early age of seventeen years he became a student for the Christian ministry in the Mile End Academy, under the presidency of Dr. Addington. Accepting an invitation to succeed the Rev. George Burder, at High Street Chapel, Lancaster, in 1790,

when he was only about twenty years of age, he exercised a most useful ministry there for a period of nineteen years.

It was here that the Rev. William Alexander met him, being at the time a member of the High Street Church. Mr. Alexander's son, the Rev. John Alexander, the distinguished Norwich minister, in his father's *Memoir*, says: "My father met him at the coach on his arrival [at Lancaster], and soon formed a friendship with him, which continued unbroken till his death in 1826, and which is now renewed and perfected in heaven. He was a man of decidedly Calvinistic theology; of somewhat formal, but gentlemanly manner; of ready wit and repartee; rich in anecdotes; faithful and affectionate in his friendships; an exemplary Christian, and a good minister of Jesus Christ. He had a deep, double bass voice, which he could modulate to much variety of tone, and which often rendered his preaching powerful and impressive. I recollect to this day some of the texts and sermons which arrested my attention and affected me to tears when I was quite a child, and I cherish the remembrance of him with affectionate veneration." That reference to the arrival of Mr. Charrier at Lancaster in a "coach" is worth attention. It is so difficult for us to transport ourselves back in thought as we read of these doings of the men of bygone times, and to forget that we are not dealing with days of rapid and comfortable locomotion, but with modes of travel that were slow in the extreme, attended with all kinds of inconveniences and not a few perils.

His ministry at Bethesda Chapel, Liverpool, whither he removed from Lancaster, was, if possible, even more rich in fruit than the one at Lancaster. His intimate friend was Dr. Raffles, who settled in Liverpool about three years after himself, and who eventually succeeded him in the Secretariat of the Union. His death was startlingly sudden. Dr. Raffles says: "He died March 29th, 1826, between one and two in the morning, of a mortification in the bowels. He attended the District Meeting of the County Union at Warrington on the previous Thursday, and on the Friday he gave an address to the Teachers of the Liverpool Sunday School Union at the breakfast in Great George Street Schoolroom, and he prayed in the

afternoon of the same day after Dr. Raffles's sermon at the opening of the new Welsh Chapel, Rose Hill. He called on Saturday on two of his friends, complained of being poorly that night, and never rose from his bed again, but expired peacefully the following Wednesday morning." At the time of his death he was fifty-six years of age. His body was conveyed to Lancaster, to be laid in the graveyard adjoining the chapel of his "dear Lancaster friends," where he had spent the greater part of his ministerial life. Dr. Raffles followed the funeral *cortége* as far as Walton, near Liverpool, there being "thirty-five carriages and a vast concourse of people walking." The interment took place on Monday, April 3rd, when the "funeral oration" was delivered by the Rev. W. M. Walker, his friend and neighbour in Preston during his Lancaster ministry, whilst the Rev. William Roby preached the funeral sermon the following Sunday to the bereaved congregation at Liverpool. "A charming companion," endearing himself to his congregation as much by his "unbending integrity" as by the "suavity of his manners," "faithful and affectionate in his friendships," "one of the most amiable of men," an "unfailing repository of Dissenting anecdotes," "worthy of honourable remembrance" as having contributed, along with Messrs. Roby, Raffles, McAll, Ely, Fletcher, Burder, and others to "the revival and strength of Nonconformity in Lancashire." Such are a few of the flowers that men have laid upon the grave of this distinguished servant of Jesus Christ, whose name is still a fragrant memory.

REV. THOMAS RAFFLES, D.D., LL.D. (1826-1863).

"The hand that should have presented to you this nineteenth Report of the Lancashire County Union for the spread of the Gospel rests from its labours; and it becomes us, ere we proceed to the usual details, to pay a tribute of respect to the memory of that most excellent man who so lately filled the office of Secretary to this institution, while we offer our unfeigned acknowledgments to God that he has for so many years indulged us with his judicious counsel and efficient services." The reader of those words, probably also the author of them, was Dr. Raffles, at the

REV. DR. RAFFLES, LIVERPOOL.

Secretary of the Union (1826–1863).

See page 132.

Annual Meeting of the Union, April 5th, 1826, in the Bethesda Chapel, Liverpool, exactly two days after Mr. Charrier's interment; and it was perhaps fitting that they should have been uttered in the building which had been so long honoured by his rich and faithful ministry. At that meeting Dr. Raffles was appointed to the position which the death of his friend had rendered vacant. It is not easy to compress within the necessary space what ought to be said of a person of Dr. Raffles's type. "A man of aristocratic connection as well as of polished manners," intended originally for a secular calling, but early coming under religious impressions, and giving proof of fitness and a desire for the Christian ministry, at seventeen years of age he became a student of Hoxton Academy, his Tutors being the Revs. Thomas Hill and Dr. John Pye Smith.

A charming entry appears in his papers in reference to the completion of his college career which will touch a sympathetic chord in not a few who read it. "In this cell," says he, "I, Thomas Raffles, have passed four years of my life; many a delightful and many a dreary hour have I spent in its solitude; here I have brooded over sorrows with which a stranger could not intermeddle, and here in this retirement I have tasted the purest bliss. The memory of scenes, events, and characters with which this little cell is connected will be ever dear to my heart, and various are the emotions it will awaken. How can I, after having inhabited it so long, but leave it with regret?"

A brief pastorate at Hammersmith was followed by his removal to Liverpool in 1812 as successor to the Rev. Thomas Spencer, the young and gifted minister of Newington Chapel, who had been drowned whilst bathing in the Mersey. Great George Street Chapel succeeded Newington Chapel, Mr. Spencer having laid the foundation of the new building in April, 1811, four months previous to his untimely and distressing death. The new building, "an immense place," was opened for public worship on May 28th, 1812, a little more than one month after Dr. Raffles's Liverpool ministry began. This building, burnt down in 1840 and replaced by the present large and noble structure of the same name, was the scene of a ministry reaching almost to fifty years, which for power has rarely

been equalled. "Raffles of Liverpool" was an expression that found its way to the most isolated and obscure villages, and a generation ago the seniors of Congregationalism were accustomed to recite with honest pride the story of long journeys taken to hear the illustrious preacher, whose name was almost a household word, not in Lancashire only, but in many another county.

Dr. Raffles served the denomination not in the pulpit only, but in every other possible way. His diary is full of interesting entries relating to visits to village stations connected with the Union; and, great man though he was, "one of the most courtly and aristocratic men in the Congregational ministry, his brethren of humbler station" were never made to feel the "difference" between himself and them. Not a few, indeed, of his warmest ministerial friends were men of the type of Thomas Rogers, of Prescot; Noah Blackburn, of Delph; George Greatbatch, of Southport; and William Alexander, of Churchtown, who were "content to fill a little space." His affection for the latter was such that when the old man died it needed no serious pressure to induce Dr. Raffles, himself old and in very indifferent health, to journey to Southport to preach his funeral sermon. "With the name and labours of William Alexander," says he, "all my earliest associations in this county were connected, and I have known it now for more than forty years. During all that time it has been my happiness to enjoy his friendship, and to meet and mingle with him on various occasions and in different scenes of ministerial engagements and intercourse. Sunny spots they were in my existence, over which the shadow of a cloud never came. I remember them now with a mournful pleasure, and with feelings somewhat tinged with melancholy, from the consideration that they are past and can be realised no more; yet if, like him, I too shall find mercy of the Lord, and am faithful unto death, that intercourse will be renewed, ere long, under happier auspices and in a better world." At the Annual Meetings of the Union following Mr. Alexander's death, in April, 1855, he and his friend, the Rev. Richard Slate, of Preston, spoke to a resolution "unanimously" received which eulogised Mr. Alexander's "unblemished reputation," "apostolic

devotedness to his work," and "primitive simplicity of character"; and his attitude towards Mr. Alexander was typical of his attitude towards many others in the same ministerial walks of life.

His interest in the College when it was the Blackburn Academy, and afterwards on its removal to Whalley Range, was unbounded. From 1842 to 1863, the year of his death, he was Chairman of the Committee, and in the fine Raffles Library in the College and the useful Scholarship which bears his name we have permanent memorials of his care for its wellbeing. Dr. Raffles published exceedingly little, his "engagements" being so numerous that he never found the necessary time; but he accumulated a vast amount of most valuable material relating to the history of Lancashire Nonconformity, which, it would appear, it was some day his intention to use. These materials Dr. Halley afterwards worked up into his interesting book; though it is only proper to say that had Dr. Raffles himself used his MSS. he would have moved along lines entirely different from those adopted by his distinguished sucoessor, lines which would have rendered unnecessary a work somewhat recently published on *Lancashire Nonconformity*.

To the service of the Union he consecrated the full strength of his rich genius, and it was under his leadership that it made the most marked advance; whilst to his thoughtful care and diligent labour we are indebted for a complete set of the Union Reports up to the time of his death, without which the preparation of this volume would have been impossible. He preached his last sermon as pastor of the Great George Street Church on February 24th, 1862, the beginning of his Jubilee year, and died on August 18th, 1863, in the seventy-fifth year of his age. The resolution passed by the Committee of the Union shortly afterwards states that he "filled the office of Secretary to the Union with remarkable ability and tact, and with a devotedness to its interests rarely equalled and never surpassed. To the habits of punctuality and accuracy which he brought to the discharge of the duties of his office, to his sound judgment, his singular prudence, his unwearied patience, his abundant labours,

and, above all, to the conciliatory spirit which won the confidence and respect of all his brethren, they refer much of the unity, prosperity, and usefulness which the Union has enjoyed."

Dr. Rogers has recently given a very beautiful appreciation of this great man, who was a frequent visitor to his father's house when he lived at Prescot, and who afterwards was associated with him in much County Union work. "I can now see the eloquent divine," says he, "on what, I believe, was the first occasion I ever heard him. His fine, commanding figure, his graceful attitude, the rich tones of appeal, linger in my thoughts still. To those who knew him only on the surface he might seem lacking in depth of feeling; but there could be no greater mistake than to make an assumption of this kind. He had lived in the midst of devoted and admiring friends, and might easily have been spoiled by a popularity which, for those days at all events, was extraordinary. There was no minister of any church in the North of England who for many years wielded such an influence in religious circles. But in the midst of it all he preserved a sweetness of spirit, a graciousness of manner, and a friendliness of intercourse even with the humblest of his brethren, which endeared him to a very wide circle." His funeral was in every way a great one, "people of all grades and all ages and all denominations" being present "to pay a common homage to the virtues" of one, who had impressed himself upon his generation as few men ever succeed in doing.

Rev. Richard Fletcher (1844-1853).

The Rev. Richard Fletcher, who, after a useful ministry at "Ebenezer Chapel," Darwen, of about eight years, had followed Mr. Roby in the pastorate of Grosvenor Street Chapel, became Dr. Raffles's colleague in the Secretariat in 1844. Dr. Rogers skilfully sketches the character of this man, who in many respects stood in "marked contrast" to his colleague, though they were "as brothers, each knowing how to appreciate the special gifts of the other." "Richard Fletcher," says Dr. Rogers, "was a man whose great merit and service are in special danger of being overlooked, partly because so much of his

work was out of the public view, and partly because of his inherent modesty. He was an administrator rather than a speaker. His preaching was always wise, earnest, impressive; but he did not pretend to be an orator. Those who heard him, whether in the pulpit or on the platform, had no conception of his true power. He was, in truth, for many years the statesman of the denomination in Lancashire. There was no man who had more influence, or who understood so well how to use it. If there was to be any new scheme for extending the work of the Churches, the probability was that it originated with Richard Fletcher; and if it did not, it was pretty sure to owe to his great power of organisation the wise arrangements which secured its efficiency. If difficulties arose in Committee, as they are always sure to arise when men of independent judgment have to act together, Richard Fletcher was the kindly mediator who seldom failed to restore the broken harmony. There were some elements with which it was at times very hard to deal, but he seldom failed to reconcile the little differences which arose. The power which he thus wielded was that of gentleness, but it would not have been so great had it not been associated with extreme wisdom. It has not been my fortune to meet with many men in whom there was so much of that sanctified common sense which is the great essential for the management of Christian work. There could be no more absurd mistake than to suppose that Richard Fletcher's extreme gentleness indicated a weakness of character or an uncertainty in principle. His piety was as manly in tone and spirit as it was tender to a degree equalling the tenderness of woman. No man could be firmer in defence of the right, but there was so much of wisdom and kindliness in his advocacy that he never gave offence. No one ever (so far as I know) had an unkind word to say of him, and yet he would have been one of the last who would have stooped to an unworthy act, to the desertion of a friend, or the compromise of a principle in order to conciliate public favour. He was universally respected—more, he was universally loved."

Like Dr. Raffles, his interest in the College was abiding and deep, and he acted as its Secretary during precisely the period that he was Secretary of the Union. Alder-

man Thompson, referring to him as such, says: "It is a pleasure to any one who has had to wade through minute books and letters in search of facts to meet with such a neat hand, orderly arrangement, and business detail as shown by Mr. Fletcher."

At the urgent request of the Colonial Missionary Society he resigned his charge at Grosvenor Street in 1853, and, in conjunction with the Rev. J. L. Poore, of Hope Chapel, Salford, went to Australia to organise the work there. It was a real regret to their brethren in the county that two such distinguished ministers, who had already rendered invaluable service to Congregationalism, should leave the county, though none could do other than honour their fidelity to what they believed to be the sacred call of duty. After eight years' strenuous labour in the Antipodes Mr. Fletcher died suddenly, on December 15th, 1861, on the very eve of his return for a season to England; and in the land of his adoption, to enrich which with his life and ministry he had made the costliest sacrifices, his remains were laid to rest.

Rev. James Gwyther (1853-1874).

A suitable successor to Mr. Fletcher, as colleague to Dr. Raffles, was found in the person of the Rev. James Gwyther. He was an old Blackburn student, and his ministry at Jackson's Lane, Hulme, which subsequently became "Zion Chapel," Stretford Road, Manchester, had been a striking success. At his death, Dr. Raffles left him the Union Reports which he had "carefully collected and preserved from the commencement of the Association," with a request that at his own decease he would leave them to the Union. Writing in September, 1863, Mr. Gwyther says: "I have added to those collected by the dear Doctor the one read at the last meeting before his death, and now present them to the Union as an interesting memorial of Dr. Raffles, and of his love for the Union."

Some years previous to the death of Dr. Raffles the Secretarial position appears to have been somewhat eased of its burden, in a way to be noted presently, and Mr.

Gwyther held the office singly for a little while. He resigned his pastoral charge in 1870, after a ministry of over forty years, and "the serious illness" of some members of his family leading to his removal to Torquay, led to his retirement from the Secretaryship of the Union on March 6th, 1874. The resolution of the Union accepting the resignation referred to his "sound judgment" displayed in dealing "with cases of difficulty," to "firmness" when "great principles" had to be vindicated, and expressed "profound regret" that it had become necessary for his "official connection" with the Union to be severed. Mr. Gwyther did not live long to enjoy his well-earned rest; he died at Torquay on March 24th, 1878, at the age of seventy-two years. "Gentlest of spirits and most laborious of workers" is the testimony of a contemporary, who lived near him and knew him well.

Rev. Richard Meredith Davies (1874-1899).

Of all the men who have served the Lancashire Congregational Union none have brought to it deeper devotion and more consecrated purpose than the late Rev. R. M. Davies. The last of the old Blackburn students, settling in Oldham in 1843, where he exercised a unique and powerful ministry for considerably over fifty years, and, after the relinquishment of his pastoral charge, lingering on into the new century, his life and labours covered considerably more than half of the century during which the Union has been in existence. He joined on to men like Roby, Alexander, and Greatbatch, who were amongst the Founders of the movement, and caught their spirit. He loved the Union in all the various branches of its work with a love that was "wonderful, passing that of women." His name is written broadly across the social, political, educational, moral, and religious history of the town in which so much of his life was spent. His Church, one of the largest and most influential in the county, is an abiding memorial of a ministry whose richness it would be difficult to overstate, having grown, as he himself used to say, from a congregation which, when first he knew it, numbered not more than sixty, meeting in a building that was tumbling

down from "dry rot," with a school that was all but empty, and a Church membership of about thirteen. How the new minister, "a delicate looking young man, and so fragile in appearance that Dr. Raffles said to the people, 'You have got a very nice promising young man, but I fear you'll not keep him long,'" by his cheery optimism, tactful management, indomitable faith, genius for organisation, methodical habits, and faithful Evangelical preaching, changed all that, and succeeded in building up one of the strongest Churches in the county, to which he ministered with increasing usefulness for more than half a century, is a story which, written by some sympathetic and gifted pen, would be rich in inspiration and guidance for ministers and Churches of later times. The writer was privileged to begin his ministry under the shadow of his wonderful personality in Oldham, and he regards the four years which he spent there as amongst the most valuable part of his training.

Previous to his entrance into the Blackburn Academy Mr. Davies was a member of Dr. McAll's Church, Mosley Street, Manchester, the birthplace of the Union; and when he was quite young he became interested in both County Union and Missionary work. In connection with the School was "a Juvenile Society," to which members contributed one penny per week, a relic, possibly, of the "Branch Society" referred to in the early part of this work. For his pastor, to whose advice, in a letter from his sick room (one of the last he ever wrote), he owed his renunciation of a commercial life for the ministry, he always had the warmest affection, and doubtless his own ministry was largely coloured by the influence of that marvellous man. The writer recalls an incident in connection with his own ordination service, which, whilst somewhat illustrating this point, also serves to throw some light upon Mr. Davies's ideas in relation to such matters. At the service in question he had kindly undertaken to offer the "Ordination Prayer," a duty in which he always particularly excelled, and he asked the young minister if there should be any "laying on of hands." On the latter's expressing a preference for the omission of that part of the ceremony, "Then," said he, "we will gather round

REV. R. FLETCHER, MANCHESTER.
Secretary of the Union (1844–1853).

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REV. JAMES GWYTHER, MANCHESTER.
Secretary of the Union (1853–1874).

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and get as near as we possibly can." This he and the other brethren did, and that prayer is still a very tender and sacred memory to the writer. The Rev. James Griffin, in his *Memories*, writing of his ordination service in Rusholme Road Chapel, says: "When the 'Ordination Prayer' was to be offered by Mr. Roby, Mr. McAll got a large, stout handled umbrella for me to rest my head upon while he held it steadily as I knelt on the cushion during Mr. Roby's richly comprehensive and most paternally affectionate prayer." It is not for a moment suggested that the one incident is a copy of the other; it was quite the custom of the time; it was a kind of "High Churchism" in relation to the ministry that was common, upon which Mr. Davies, with his training, naturally set much value, and for which something may still be said.

Mr. Davies attended the Annual Meetings of the Union for the first time in 1844, when he was asked by Dr. Raffles to "return thanks" after dinner; and in the following year, to use his own humorous description, he "began to babble and talk a bit at the meetings." In some interesting reminiscences of those meetings, he says that those being the days of no trains, they were very small gatherings, a good sized vestry being quite sufficient to hold the numbers attending; that the sermon in particular occupied a large place; that at the meetings Dr. Raffles had always his bottle of sherry, and others their bottles of stout or beer; and that when any good brother mentioned Temperance in any way he was invariably hooted down. In relating these things, and comparing them with the present, he expressed his grateful astonishment at the wonderful growth he had witnessed.

In 1848 he appears as a member of the Executive; in 1864 he succeeded the Rev. J. G. Rogers, B.A., on his removal from Ashton-under-Lyne to London, as Secretary for the Manchester District; and the year following he was appointed Finance Secretary, which was a new office. For two or three years Mr. Davies received valuable help from the Rev. E. Armitage, M.A., then at Waterhead, Oldham, who acted as Secretary to the Executive. Appointed to the General Secretaryship in 1874, with the Rev. Thomas Willis as colleague, this position Mr. Davies

retained until the Incorporation of the Union in 1899. It has already been pointed out that in addition to these duties he was Secretary to the Woodward Trusts, a form of service which he very greatly enjoyed because of the opportunities it gave of rendering assistance in quiet and unobtrusive ways to his needy brethren in the ministry. Honours were offered him by his denomination, some of which his retiring disposition led him to refuse, much to the regret of his brethren. In 1880 he occupied the Chair of the Lancashire Congregational Union, and twice declined nomination for the Chair of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, a position which otherwise would easily have fallen to him. At the Annual Meetings of the Union in March, 1889, Mr. Davies received a richly embellished album address, together with a purse containing over £550, as an expression of "affectionate regard" for him and "high appreciation" of his services. The speech which he delivered in response was in every way worthy, and is full of interesting facts about the progress and work of the Union which he had loved from the day when, as a boy of ten years of age in Mosley Street Sunday School, he was accustomed to contribute to its funds through the Juvenile Society. On the occasion of his ministerial Jubilee the Ministerial Association of Oldham presented him with a beautifully illuminated address, whilst the new Schools in connection with the Hope Chapel are also a memorial of the event. In 1899 he was made Honorary Secretary of the Union under the new constitution, so that his official connection with it might be preserved.

It was the writer's privilege to meet him in the summer of 1904 at Aldcliffe Hall, where he was spending a few days with Mr. Dawson. On terms of closest intimacy with the Dawson family from the beginning of his ministerial career, he was a frequent visitor and always a welcome guest, and more than once had he conducted service in the kitchen of the hall in the old days. In view of this work the writer expressed a wish that he would favour him with some of his early "Reminiscences" of the Union. He readily fell in with the suggestion, recited a few on the spot, and invited him to visit him at Southport, assuring him, in his usual homely style, that he would "put

an extra potato in the dinner pot for him." Alas! that visit was never paid, and it is matter for deep regret that with him has been buried much that it was hoped when this work was projected would have appeared in these pages concerning the quaint sayings, doings, and appearances of the men of several generations ago. His vigorous little speech in connection with the Woodward Trusts at the Annual Meeting of the Union three months before his death will long be remembered by all who were privileged to hear him. In recognition of the venerable presence in their midst the whole Assembly stood up to welcome him. Few then thought that the voice which had so often delighted these Annual gatherings would soon be silent, and the life which had so unsparingly devoted itself to the service of Congregationalism in the county was so near its end. Such, however, was the case. After a very brief illness, on June 3rd, 1905, in his ninetieth year, he fell asleep, and he rests in the town where his life work was done, and towards the making of which he had contributed more than any other individual. He left instructions that nothing of his should be published, that no biography of him should be attempted; and therein was he true to himself. Though few men ever lived more before the public, he loved to remain unseen and work in quiet ways. There were features in his character that sometimes led to his being misunderstood; but he was generous to a fault, and was never happier than when he was giving help to some poor minister and his family; and many are the voices, both in and out of the county, that could testify to generous help most kindly and considerately given.

Rev. David Thompson Carnson (1847-1854).

An entirely new departure was taken in 1847 by the appointment of a salaried Visiting Agent, who also acted as Secretary to the Executive. The choice of the Committee fell upon the Rev. D. T. Carnson, of Cannon Street Church, Preston. He was the grandson of the Rev. Andrew Carnson, who died at Cotherstone, near Barnard Castle, in 1840, when he was nearing ninety years of age. Concerning Mr. Carnson, sen., whose ordination took place

in a *field* at Annan in 1794, the following information will be welcomed, partly because of its local interest and partly because it illustrates the kind of experiences which many of the Congregational ministers had in the early days of the Union. "There is something rather singular," says a certain writer, "in the circumstances of Mr. Carnson's settlement in the above place. Last summer, quitting his residence in Ireland, he was travelling, as a stranger, through Scotland on foot, and finding himself under the necessity of stopping all night at a farmhouse, gave his bundle to the mistress of the family. Curiosity led her to open it, and, finding a Bible among its contents (as she afterwards told), was led to conclude that he was a minister, and, upon inquiry, found that she was not mistaken. After some conversation she requested him to preach, and he, with little hesitation, complied. The few people to whom he ministered were much pleased with the discourse, and solicited him to continue and preach the following Sabbath. On that day the audience had considerably increased, and were so captivated with his sermon that they urged him to make a further stay, and at length to take up his abode among them and become their pastor. This is the only church in Scotland organised upon the Independent principles of government."

The Rev. D. T. Carnson was an old Blackburn student, the first, indeed, on the roll there; and for twenty-seven years he had exercised a most powerful ministry and built up a strong Church in Preston, a town which, owing to the overwhelming preponderance of Anglicans and Romanists, has never been an easy sphere for a Nonconformist minister, least of all for a Congregationalist. The kind of work which fell to Mr. Carnson in his new capacity may be gathered from the Report of the Committee after he had been engaged six months: "He has paid a visit," it says, "to the greater part of the stations aided by the Union, such visits being generally made on the Sabbath days. He has visited the schools, preached to the people, inquired into the progress of the cause, and tendered such advice as seemed suitable to the several occasions which occurred. These visits have been well and kindly received by the ministers and people, and have called forth many expres-

REV. J. G. ROGERS, B.A., D.D., LONDON.

First President of the Union.

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sions of gratitude for the refreshment they have afforded and the stimulus they have given to the different departments of labour in connection with the congregation. There is every reason to hope that, when the propriety of this important arrangement is fully understood and the Secretary himself acquires experience in his work, the most beneficial results will follow to the good cause this Union is labouring to promote." This last sentence is delightful, especially as applied to Mr. Carnson, even as it is distinctly illuminating as to the habits of speech which were common to those days.

Mr. Carnson was an excellent type of the older generation of ministers, which has entirely disappeared. His commanding figure and his strong and masculine face were a good index to the character of the man. He was a rigid disciplinarian, as his Church books testify, which were very carefully kept, many entries in which would both amuse and shock the free and easy going times in which we live. He was, as some of the old divines would put it, a "high notionist," a great theologian, and a stern and an unbending Calvinist, yet has he left a very sacred memory in the Church which he so long and faithfully served. Mr. Carnson was scarcely the man to work well with a Committee, and after holding the position about six years he resigned, and accepted an invitation to the Church at Halesworth, in Suffolk. He remained there for ten years, and then retired, spending his eventide at Knowle Green, near Preston, where his end came suddenly on May 28th, 1877, when he was in his eighty-first year.

Rev. William Roaf (1854-1870).

The vacancy was filled by the appointment of the Rev. William Roaf, of Wigan, whose ministry there dated from 1839. It is worth pointing out that these important positions in the Union were almost invariably filled by men who had given "full proof of their ministry"; also that the "long pastorate" was then the established order of things. Whatever disadvantage may have been associated with the latter custom, it certainly helped so to identify a man with a place that it is still difficult to think of the one without

the other. Raffles of Liverpool, Roby of Manchester, Carnson of Preston, Sutcliffe of Ashton, Ely of Rochdale, Roaf of Wigan, and Davies of Oldham are conjunctions of names and places which seem to us almost inseparable. A recent writer, himself a minister of this type, and so possibly a little biassed in his judgment, after referring to the honours which a lengthened pastorate in one place had secured for not a few whom he had known, says: "The men who go wandering about and shifting their places every few years can never obtain such a memorial as this." For better or for worse, however, the long pastorate is now the exception rather than the rule. Unlike Mr. Carnson, Mr. Roaf continued in his pastorate at Wigan whilst attending to the duties of his new office, his resignation of both taking place early in 1870.

In March of that year he died, at the age of sixty-seven years, after a ministry of over forty years, thirty of which had been spent in Wigan and in the service of Lancashire Congregationalism. He was a quaint and most interesting character, wielded a somewhat prolific pen, "was a zealous Independent," "of a most kindly, sympathetic disposition and generous even to a fault," and during his Secretariat "there was scarcely a station in the county which he did not visit and assist by his kindly counsels." Reviewing his ministerial work in 1869, in his own racy style, he said: "I have aimed at the instructive, the bracing, the deciding, rather than at what was sensational and exciting. I prefer bread to brandy, and a lamp to a sky rocket. Like Whitefield, I would be a spiritual physician, healing the wounds of sin, rather than a spiritual milliner, decorating a dead soul. I would be a star of the smallest magnitude and remotest orbit, rather than a comet of the most eccentric course and fiery tail. Gladly would I lay down my life to-night, if I could see such a rising of all hearts to Christ as, like a springtide filling all channels with life, should send revived energy into all closets, all families, all devotional services, and all benevolent operations." It was this passionate devotion to the supreme mission of the Christian ministry, coupled with a great enthusiasm for the Congregationalism which they had adopted as their own, pre-eminently characteristic of the men of Mr. Roaf's day, that made them

the power they were. The Rev. James Gwyther, who was also the General Secretary of the Union, filled the position rendered vacant by Mr. Roaf's death for a couple of years, and subsequently the Rev. E. Armitage, M.A., for a brief period, after which the office became merged in that of the General Secretaryship.

Rev. Joseph Smith.

Hitherto we have been occupied with "men who have served" in the Secretarial position, but the Union has also had the advantage of a most devoted band of Treasurers. Here, again, a sentence must be devoted to the Itinerant Society which preceded the Union, whose Secretary, as previously intimated, was the Rev. William Roby, and whose Treasurer for a brief time was the Rev. Joseph Smith. Mr. Smith was the popular pastor of Mosley Street Chapel, Manchester, where he settled in 1798. Between him and Mr. Roby were the closest bonds of friendship. It was this fact which greatly contributed to remove the bitterness which had existed between the two Churches since the secession of the Mosley Street congregation from Cannon Street some ten years previously. Unfortunately, serious illness necessitated Mr. Smith's resignation of the pastorate in 1801, though he continued to reside for some time in Manchester, his successor at Mosley Street Chapel being the Rev. Samuel Bradley, whose connection with the Union has already been given.

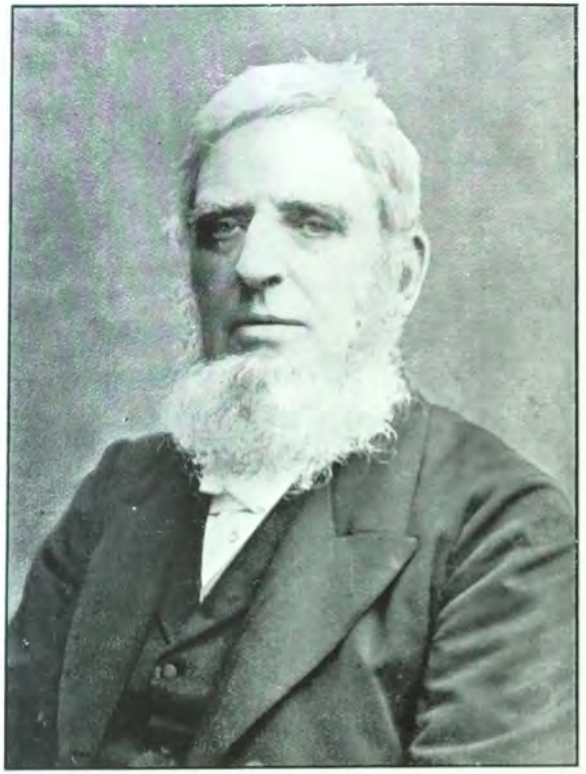
Robert Spear (1806-7).

The first Treasurer of the Union was Mr. Robert Spear, who was appointed at the meeting at which the Union was formed. A remarkable man he was in every way, and it would be difficult to exaggerate his influence and the measure of indebtedness under which he has placed Lancashire Congregationalism. Born at Hyde's Cross, in Manchester, on November 27th, 1762, his parents being members of the Cannon Street Church, of which his father was a deacon, he received his education partly in the Manchester Grammar School and partly in a private

Academy near Liverpool. "At an early age" it is said that "he was distinguished for that general amiableness of spirit for which he was so conspicuous through life, and for that genuine piety which sanctified all his intercourse with his fellow men." A serious illness in his teens, "from which he was mercifully restored in answer to earnest prayer," appears to have been the turning point in his life, and to have led to his decision to join the Church and consecrate himself to Christian service. At first he thought of the ministry, but "not meeting with sufficient encouragement from his friends, he engaged in the cotton business, which at that time was in its infancy." The Spears were amongst those who withdrew from the Cannon Street Church to Mosley Street, the erection of the chapel in this place in 1788 being largely the result of their liberality.

Successful in business, Mr. Robert Spear gave most "princely" sums to all kinds of religious objects, particularly towards sending the Gospel to the heathen abroad and providing it for the benighted people at home. In Mr. Roby, pastor of the old Church which the Spears had left, and afterwards of the new one at Grosvenor Street, Mr. Spear found one who in many ways entered into his ideals, and the two men worked loyally and enthusiastically together. The Itinerant Society found in him a warm friend and generous supporter, the Academy instituted to train men for the work of that Society was entirely financed by him, "and nearly two-thirds of the expense occasioned by building an Independent Chapel," which is now represented by the flourishing congregation at Sale, was met by him. Another interesting form of service to which he gave himself is mentioned by the Rev. William Jay in his *Autobiography*. "He looked out," says he, "and employed in several parts of thickly peopled localities pious men and women, whose houses were to be day schools, to which any children might come at any time, as they could be spared from their home or their labour, while the owners were to be always present and ready to teach them."

Mr. Spear seems to have held the office of Treasurer for about a year only, his retirement from business and removal to Mill Bank, where he bought a house on the



REV. JOHN KELLY, LIVERPOOL.

A prominent supporter of the Union for many years.

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REV. WILLIAM ROAF, WIGAN.

Secretary to the Executive (1854–1870).

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Cheshire side of the Mersey, about twelve miles from Manchester, necessitating this. In his new home he established a Sunday School and fitted up a place for public worship. Reference has been made to the Rev. Thomas Smith reading a paper on a revised constitution for the Union, the joint work of himself and Mr. Roby, and his temporary appointment to the Secretaryship of the Union. Mr. Smith was supported at Mill Bank by Mr. Spear, and doubtless in his efforts to perfect the machinery of the Union one may see Mr. Spear's influence.

In 1816 he removed to Edinburgh, "partly for the benefit of his health and partly for the advantages it furnished for the education of his numerous family." His days here were few; he died on August 31st, 1817, in his fifty-fifth year. "It was no unusual thing," says his biographer, "for him to send considerable sums of money in letters to individuals whom he knew to be in difficulties, or for religious objects that needed support, as the gifts of 'a friend,' many of which were unknown even to his own family. Though his liberality was so extensive, his humility was perhaps the most remarkable feature of his Christian character; he spoke and acted as if he were 'the least of all saints.'" In the records of the Mosley Street Church appear the words: "Died at Edinburgh, Robert Spear, a deacon of this Church, a man in whom were united more excellent qualities than are scarcely in a character once in an age. To him, under God, it was owing that this people now worship in this place of worship."

Robert Kay (1808-1817).

Mr. Kay was the representative of a sturdy Nonconformist family for considerably over a century resident at Bass Lane, Walmersley, near Bury. The Kays were amongst the principal supporters of the Rev. Henry Pendlebury, M.A., the ejected minister of Holcombe Chapel, out of whose labours grew the Nonconformity of that district. Mr. James Kay, of Bass Lane, the father of Mr. Robert Kay, died on February 16th, 1802, at the age of seventy-one years, being interred, along with Mary, his wife, who died on September 3rd, 1809, aged seventy-two

years, under the "singing pew" of the Park Congregational Church, Ramsbottom, where a tablet appears to his memory.

Mr. Robert Kay, his son, married Hannah, daughter of Mr. James Phillips, of Birmingham, on September 22nd, 1803, soon after which time he appears to have removed to Manchester, and was in business as a "fustian manufacturer." Both he and his wife became members of Mr. Roby's Church. His residence was at Ardwick. Subsequently he removed to Ordsall Cottage, Ordsall Lane, where at least one of his sons was born, and possibly it was his removal to this place that led to his resignation of the Union Treasurership in 1817. About 1821 he left Manchester for Bamford, his place of residence being "Meadowcroft"; but subsequently he removed to Brookshaw, near Bury, where he died suddenly on April 25th, 1834, aged sixty-five years. He was interred, according to his own request, in Bamford Chapel, "in that pew where he used to sit and listen to the Gospel." In the records of that Church, which he and his sister, Mrs. Fenton, were mainly instrumental in raising, appears the following interesting passage: "Robert Kay, Esq., was brother to Mrs. Fenton, of Bamford Hall, and, in conjunction with her, was a principal instrument, under God, in causing the erection of Bamford Chapel. In addition to his own charity, he, residing then in Manchester, used his influence there amongst the wealthy friends of Independency, who assisted him in a very liberal manner. About 1821 he left Manchester and came to reside at Meadowcroft, and was dismissed from Mr. Roby's Church to the Church at Bamford. By his active piety and unwearied diligence in the work of the Lord the place prospered, the school was enlarged, and in 1828 a gallery was erected, and opened on Christmas Day by the first public Missionary meeting. A handsome collection was made, and an interest excited that has constantly increased. He went to reside at Bury, still anxious to favour any pious and benevolent object. His death was instantaneous, and no doubt his glory is such." Mrs. Fenton was the wife of Mr. Joseph Fenton, of Bamford Hall, and mother of the first member of Parliament for Rochdale, Mr. John Fenton. Concerning her the

Church records say: "She was a principal cause of the Independent Chapel at Bamford being erected, and, by her zealous efforts in furnishing the poor with Bibles and the means of instruction, conduced much to the spread of religion and piety. Her work will long praise her, and while her memory is blessed here her soul is blessed above."

It will interest the reader to know that at least three of Mr. Kay's sons rose to eminence. James Phillips Kay, afterwards Sir James Phillips Kay-Shuttleworth, for some time practised as a surgeon in Manchester; but, on marrying the only child and heiress of Robert Shuttleworth, Esq., of Gawthorpe Hall, he assumed his wife's name, and his son is the present Lord Shuttleworth. Joseph Kay became Sir Joseph Kay, Q.C., and wrote an interesting work on *The Trade in Land*. Edward Ebenezer Kay, afterwards Sir E. E. Kay, became Lord Justice of Appeal.

Richard Roberts (1817-1842).

The sister Church at Mosley Street furnished a successor to Mr. Robert Kay in the person of Mr. Richard Roberts. His connection with the Church was of long standing, and he held the office of deacon for many years. The Rev. James Griffin, in his *Memories*, tells about being present at a meeting at Mosley Street Chapel, early in his ministry, at which Mr. Roberts and Mr. Hadfield were the principal speakers. The two speeches, he says, strikingly illustrated the difference between the two men. Referring to Mr. Hadfield, Mr. Griffin says: "A friend of his, a deacon of that Church, Mr. Richard Roberts, a singularly deliberate and sturdy man, had expressed some doubts as to a proposal before the meeting. Mr. Hadfield followed him, and, referring to the objections urged by Mr. Roberts, said: 'All the difference, Mr. Chairman, between my friend and myself is that he usually can see all the difficulties, and I can never see any of them.'" Mr. Roberts resigned the Treasurership in 1842, after having held the position for nearly a quarter of a century, and about the same time ceased to be connected with Mosley Street Church.

THOMAS HUNTER (1844-1858).

Mr. Joseph Eccles, the Treasurer of the Blackburn District, acted as General Treasurer for one year, when a successor to Mr. Roberts was found in the person of Mr. Thomas Hunter, whose residence was for some time in Upper Brook Street. Born on November 9th, 1800, he too belonged to the Mosley Street Church, being a member there in 1839. Subsequently he attached himself to the Chorlton Road Church, to which he left at his death the sum of £500, the interest of which is used for the relief of its necessitous members. Like Mr. Hadfield and others, he was deeply interested in the Chapel Building Society, and appears as a very generous contributor to its funds. A very modest and retiring man, yet he had as visitors to his house Dr. Halley, Dr. Vaughan, Dr. Davidson, Dr. Raffles, and other equally distinguished ministers. He retired from the Treasurership after serving faithfully in that capacity for over fourteen years, and died on October 19th, 1872. To the Union he bequeathed a legacy of £500, and "in each of the last two years of his life he set apart £150 to be sent privately and anonymously to a number of Christian ministers, that they might be enabled, without any charge upon their own limited resources, to enjoy relaxation and renew their strength at the seaside."

WILLIAM ARMITAGE (1858-1888).

In Mr. Armitage we come well within living memory, and his genial presence, pleasant little asides, and humorous interjections when presiding over the Annual business meeting and reading his financial statements will still be recalled with interest by those who attended during his period of office. The name of Armitage has been honourably associated with Congregationalism in Manchester and the surrounding district for considerably over a century. Mr. William Armitage was the son of Mr. Ziba Armitage, whose brothers were Mr. Elijah Armitage and Sir Elkanah Armitage. He was born in Manchester, on June 29th, 1815, and connected with Grosvenor Street Chapel from his very earliest days. His interest in the old place never

waned, and even when he removed from Manchester to Altrincham he continued to hold the office of deacon, and came down every Communion Sunday to the service there. His official connection with the Union began in 1851, when he became Treasurer of the Manchester District, his appointment to the General Treasurership being seven years later. He acted as Treasurer for the Woodward Trusts, the Chapel Building Society, and the Provident Society, serving also in a similar capacity many other public institutions, and to all this work he brought that sagacious judgment, genial spirit, and consecrated purpose for which he was pre-eminently noted. Increasing years and infirmity brought about his resignation of the Union Treasurership in 1888, after having held the office for over thirty years, a considerably longer period than that which stands to the credit of any other name in the list.

He attended the Annual Meetings occasionally afterwards, and it was very touching to see and hear him speak at the presentation to his veteran colleague in County Union service, the Rev. R. M. Davies, of Oldham, in March, 1889. In handing to him a richly-embellished album, with great feeling, he said: "I have been associated with you for many years in the work of this Union, and have always found you ready to do that which your hand found to do. I never knew you refuse a thing because you did not like it. The worst and toughest things you have gone through with the greatest pleasure. I never knew you refuse work or shirk anything that appertained to the Congregational Union—the 'old' County Union we used to call it. We were both younger then than now. I don't think anyone has a greater right than I to give you this. I give it you with the greatest pleasure, on behalf of your friends, and approve of every word that is written in it. I hope you may live as long as you have served this Society, and that we may have to do this all over again."

Such a man, of course, found many openings for useful service in public life. He was a Cheshire magistrate for a large number of years, and the public positions which he filled were very numerous. He died at his residence,

Townfield House, Altrincham, on January 11th, 1893, full of years. "He made no pretensions to literary culture," says one, "but to any practical question or everyday subject he brought the quick insight and shrewd judgment that are so often seen in this part of the country in men who have sprung from the soil. The race of men who united their keenness with a temperament of boyish gaiety and warm-hearted simplicity is fast dying out, and Lancashire will not readily produce again so characteristic an example, and withal so lovable a man, as William Armitage."

William Shaw (1888-1891).

Hitherto the two Manchester Churches, Grosvenor Street and Mosley Street, had supplied almost alternately a person for the office of Treasurer; but, on the resignation of Mr. Armitage, Mr. William Shaw, of Rochdale, was induced to accept the vacant position. A native of Huddersfield, but migrating to Rochdale in 1863, "to be a partner in the flannel manufacturing business at Vale Mills," to the town of his adoption he gave his service without stint. As a philanthropist, a politician and an educationist he was ever to the fore, whilst with the Congregationalism of Rochdale and district his name was closely linked from the day of his advent into the town. The Union had the benefit of his wise counsel for many years as a member of the Executive Committee and Treasurer of the Manchester District. Unfortunately, the state of Mr. Shaw's health when he accepted the General Treasurership was too indifferent to permit of his retention of a position for which he was so manifestly fitted, and he resigned in 1891. The resolution accepting his resignation expressed the Assembly's "high appreciation" of the "promptitude and efficiency" with which he had "discharged his duties," and "of the Christian courtesy" which had "characterised his intercourse with those he had so faithfully and cheerfully served, and its sincere hope that he might be yet spared for many years to advance the cause of the Great Master." The hope was not fulfilled, for Mr. Shaw died on January 24th, 1897, at the age of seventy-six years.

MR. WILLIAM SHAW, J.P.
Treasurer of the Union (1888–1891).

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CHAPTER XI.

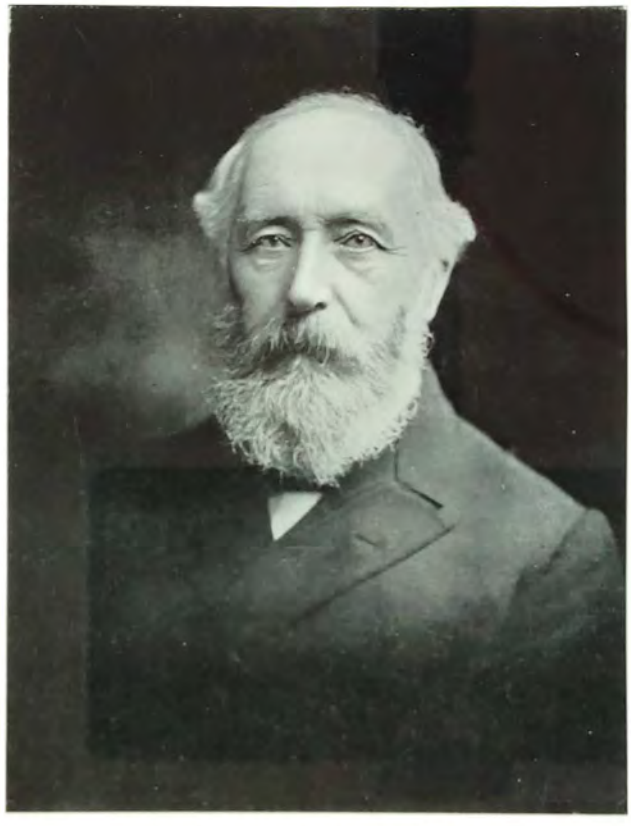
A Great Cloud of Witnesses.

THE previous chapter was restricted to men who served the Union in its higher offices, and who have passed over to the great majority. Their names are a very sacred memory, their example is a most precious heritage, and "their works do follow them." The succession, however, did not terminate with them, and to-day the Union is singularly fortunate in its responsible leaders and officers. In Mr. E. B. Dawson, LL.B., J.P., of Lancaster, the Union has in every way an appropriate President for its Centenary year. He was Secretary of the Preston District for many years, succeeded his father as Treasurer for the same District, and relinquished this position in 1891 to become the General Treasurer of the Union, in succession to Mr. Shaw, holding the office until 1899. As Treasurer of the Provident Society, the members of that important body know how faithfully he guards their interests, and on the Incorporation of the Union he received, along with the Rev. R. M. Davies, whose intimate friend he was, the dignity of an Honorary Secretaryship. He was the occupant of the Chair of the Union in 1877, when the Assembly devoted itself to the consideration of the financial proposals previously mentioned, and his call to the Presidential office during this Centenary year is intended as a compliment both to himself and the family which he worthily represents, and which has been honourably associated with the Union from the hour of its inception.

Mr. Henry Higson, J.P., of Blackburn and St. Annes, was the choice of the Union in 1899 for the vacancy

in the Treasurership created by Mr. Dawson's resignation. He had for some years done valuable service as Treasurer of the Blackburn District. Of all the men who have occupied the position none have brought to it greater business aptitude, geniality, tactfulness, and high purpose than the present Treasurer.

After a considerable apprenticeship as Secretary to the Manchester District, and subsequently as colleague to the Rev. R. M. Davies in the General Secretaryship, the Rev. Thomas Willis became sole Secretary in 1899. The growth of the Union had been such that it was impossible to depend longer upon voluntary effort in this respect; and in the same way it had come to be evident that the adequate protection of its interests required the services of one set free from the burden of a pastorate. At the invitation, therefore, of his brethren, Mr. Willis relinquished his charge of the Grosvenor Street Church, Manchester, where he had exercised a most useful ministry for over thirty years amidst the difficult and depressing conditions which gather round the mid-town Church, and assumed the responsible position to which he had been called. Previous to this, in March, 1896, at the Annual Meeting in Bury, he was the recipient of a cheque for £202 4s. 6d., in recognition of his valuable services as joint Secretary of the Union during a period of twenty-one years. In acknowledging the gift, he stated that it was twenty-seven years since he first attended the Union Meetings, and that the year after he was invited to take an active part in its work. "Having for a few years served in the lower house," he continued, "and officiated as Secretary of the Manchester District, I was summoned to the upper chamber and ranked as a General Secretary, that event taking place in 1875, and from that time to this I have occupied the honourable position, a fact which excites in my heart and mind to-day varied and mingled feelings." In his new position Mr. Willis is a creation of the "New Times" upon which the Union has entered. As years go, he is by no means young, but, like many of his predecessors in the office, he has the optimistic faith, business aptitude, tactfulness, and devotion which pre-eminently fit him for his important position; and his brethren, whom he so loyally serves in this way, will join



MR. E. B. DAWSON, LL.B., J.P.

President of the Union for the Centenary Year.

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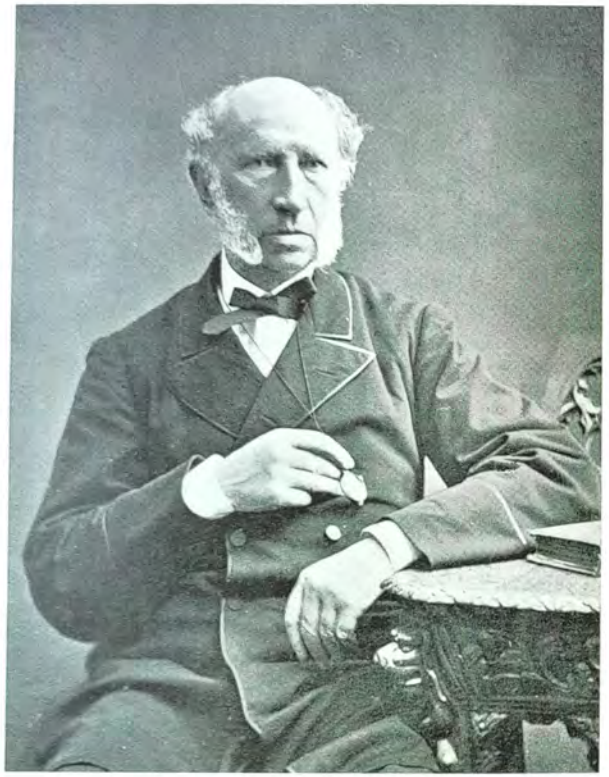
in the prayer that both he and the two colleagues just named may be spared for many years of useful service.

In addition to the chief officers previously named, the Union has from time to time been able to call to its assistance a great amount of brilliant gift, consecrated life, and noble self-sacrifice in others. "Great," indeed, is the "cloud of witnesses" by which we find ourselves "encompassed." To write the story of their life would require volumes, and all that can be done is to cite a few of the more prominent names, in the hope that those of us who are privileged to stand in this true and holy "apostolic succession" will catch inspiration from them. It has already been intimated that the principal officers of the Union have been mainly supplied by the two Manchester Churches which were largely responsible for the birth of the Union, Liverpool worthily seconding Manchester's efforts; but whilst no one would ever dream of attempting to depreciate the honour which thus belongs to those Churches, and to the two wonderful cities which have done so much for Lancashire Congregationalism, it would be quite a mistake to infer a dearth of generous friends and supporters elsewhere. The interesting and encouraging picture which faces the student, as he reads through the records of the century, is that of a great company of earnest friends and magnanimous supporters spread over all the county. In addition to those already named, Manchester has supplied the Rev. J. A. Macfadyen, M.A., D.D., the devoted pastor of the Chorlton Road Church, who was "ever working, never resting," and whose eloquent voice was so often heard in pulpit and on platform pleading the claims of the Union which he loved so much. He was always regarded as one of the statesmen of the denomination, was a principal mover in the discussions of the seventies, invaluable as a member of the Executive Committee, forward in every movement that contributed towards a more fully organised Congregationalism, and occupied with dignity and honour the Chair of the County Union, as well as that of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. His death, all too early, accelerated doubtless by the high pressure under which he lived, left a wide breach in the

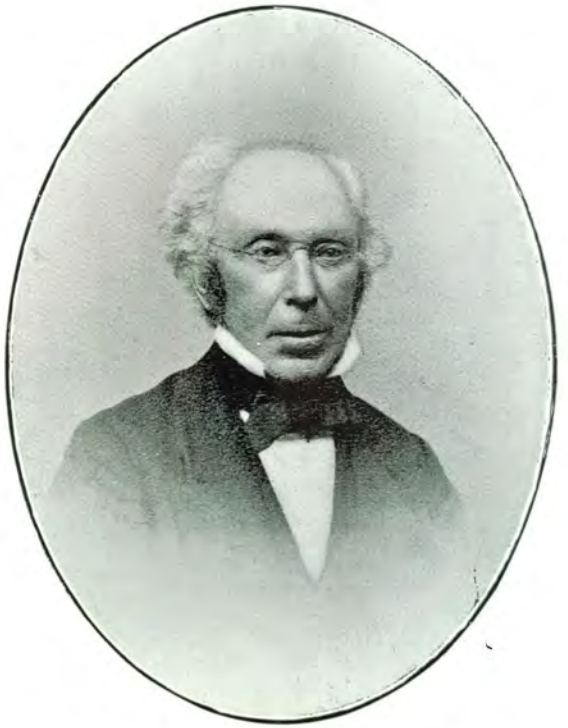
Congregational life of the county whose interests he had so long and unselfishly served. Linked with Manchester also are the names of Samuel Fletcher, "the well-known, excellent deacon of the Grosvenor Street Church," who was forward in every good work; Sir James Watts, one of the originators of the Chapel Building Society, memorials of whose munificence abound in the city and district; John Rylands, the Manchester millionaire, whose princely benefactions to the city testify to his interest in religious and philanthropic movements of various kinds, through whose generosity many Congregational institutions were greatly enriched, and whose widow, by her handsome gift to the latest Manchester Forward Movement, has given evidence of a spirit akin to that of her late husband; Abraham Haworth, for many years Treasurer of the Chapel Building Society, and who, though resident in Bowdon, along with his brother Jesse, always responded liberally to any appeal for help on behalf of Lancashire Congregationalism; and Henry Lee, whose name has already been prominently mentioned as the prime mover in the scheme for increasing the stipends of the Union's agents, are a few only of the men whom Manchester has given to the service of the Union. Connected with Ashton-under-Lyne we have the Rev. J. G. Rogers, B.A., who, as Dr. Rogers, is enjoying his eventide in London after a long and distinguished ministry there. His reminiscences of his Lancashire days, when he was a boy at Prescot, near Liverpool, and later a minister at Ashton, of which he has written so freely, are most delightful reading. During his Ashton pastorate he threw himself into the full tide of County Union work, for several years acted as Secretary to the Manchester District, was first President of the Union under the new conditions, and the lifelong friend of the Rev. R. M. Davies. These two men, indeed, along with the Revs. G. B. Bubier, of Salford, and H. W. Parkinson, of Rochdale, were bosom companions. In the best sense of the words they were "the smart set" of their day, and all consummate story tellers. Periodically they met together in each other's house, their "quips and cranks" being rare treats for any who were privileged to hear them. Dr. Rogers alone remains of that interesting quartette. He is rapidly approaching his eighty-

fourth birthday, and yet it may be said that "his eye is not dim nor his natural force abated," for he is still much occupied in service for the Churches. He has well earned the title of "the Grand Old Man of Congregationalism": far away is he the oldest living minister who has had any sort of connection with the Lancashire Union, and should he be able to share in the approaching Centenary celebrations, his Lancashire friends will extend to him the welcome which he deserves. To Ashton also belonged Nathaniel Buckley, one of the fathers of Congregationalism in the town, whose grandson, Abel Buckley, initiated the movement for the beautiful building in which the Albion Church now worships; Hugh Mason also, eloquent speaker, ardent Temperance worker and politician, and staunch Congregationalist, to whose generosity, along with that of Nathaniel Buckley, we owe it that the old Dukinfield Hall has been secured for Congregational worship. In addition to the Rev. R. M. Davies, Oldham furnished the Rev. John Hodgson, for many years the faithful pastor of the sister Church at Union Street, whose name is directly associated with Congregational extensions at Royton, Waterhead, and Ashton Road; whilst of laymen may be named the two brothers, Asa and Eli Lees, descendants of Samuel Lees, one of the founders of Hope Chapel, through whose munificent gifts Congregationalism in various ways has benefited. With Liverpool will be found to be associated the Rev. John Kelly, of Crescent Chapel, whose ministry was in part contemporaneous with that of Dr. Raffles. A truly remarkable man, in almost every particular a distinct contrast to his distinguished ministerial brother at Great George Street, yet his name was little less known in the county. "Mr. Kelly," says Dr. Rogers, "was a Scotchman, with the characteristic acuteness, philosophical keenness, and argumentative force of his nation. If he had not the graces of oratory, he certainly had a remarkable share of its force and fervour." He was for years one of the most useful members of the Executive Committee, and a leader in all aggressive Congregational movements in the county. Usually the first impression he produced was that he was cold and hard; but, says Dr. Rogers, "a man with tenderer soul than John Kelly never breathed," and "the

united force of these two men, Thomas Raffles and John Kelly, was an immense power for Congregationalism in the country." Prominent amongst Liverpool laymen may be mentioned William Crosfield, J.P., whose birth year coincided with that of the County Union. A member of a Quaker family, and native of Lancaster, he early removed to Liverpool, and connected himself with Dr. Raffles's Church. In the public life of the town of his adoption he filled a large place, and to Great George Street Church, of which he was a deacon for a quarter of a century, he gave without stint both of service and means. He became Treasurer of the Liverpool District in succession to William Kay in 1846, and retained the position until his death in February, 1881. In the letter of condolence to the bereaved family, agreed upon at the Annual Assembly of the Union in the following March, it was said that he "was one of the oldest and most attached friends of this institution; at its annual meetings he always attended, wisely influencing deliberations and kindly imparting encouragement to those who felt depressed." Some very beautiful "appreciations" appeared in the local press at the time of his death, and he is named as one of a very small band of "worthies who have upheld pre-eminently among us all the good causes which have most enlisted philanthropic and enlightened sympathies in recent times." Happily, in his son, William Crosfield, J.P., also of Liverpool, who for years was a member of the Executive Committee, the excellent family traditions are being worthily maintained. Amongst other distinguished Liverpool Congregational laymen may be named Thomas Blackburn, son of the Rev. Noah Blackburn, who became an eminent surgeon in Liverpool, and a pillar of Congregationalism there. From 1825 to 1855, the year of his death, Thomas Blackburn was a deacon of Crescent Chapel, of which the Rev. John Kelly was minister, and all his life took a deep interest in the work of the Union. In addition to this, it is recorded that he was for a while "virtually the leader of the Liberal party in Liverpool," sat in the Council for Lime Street Ward, and was Chairman of the Education Committee, during which time he "successfully withstood the efforts of



MR. WILLIAM CROSFIELD, J.P., LIVERPOOL.
Treasurer of the Liverpool District of the Union (1846–1881).
See page 100.



MR. EDWARD DAWSON, J.P., LANCASTER.
Treasurer of the Preston District of the Union (1831–1876).
See page 102.

Dr. McNeile to render the Corporation Schools Church of England institutions." Isaac Oliver Jones also, "with never a breath of illwill in or about him," whose "prayers, winsomeness, oldtime courtesy, and self repression will never fade from the recollection of those associated with him in Church fellowship"; whilst of living ministers deserving to be affectionately remembered is the Rev. George Lord, of Stanley, who, until laid aside by sickness, made peculiarly his own certain departments of Union work, which in season and out of season he warmly commended to the sympathy of others. Inseparably connected with Blackpool Congregationalism are the names of the Rev. James Wayman and Henry Fisher, J.P. In the former the Union had a most eloquent advocate of its claims and an unresting worker on its behalf; and in the latter an interesting link with its earliest efforts in that enterprising watering place. Contemporaneous for some while with the Rev. D. T. Carnson, of Preston, was the Rev. Richard Slate, repeatedly referred to in these pages, who was an intimate friend of Dr. Raffles, some part of his student life being spent with him. The whole of his ministry, which extended over fifty years, was exercised in Lancashire, first at Stand and then in Preston. His work on behalf of the first Chapel Building Society has already been instanced, even as have his literary efforts in connection with Lancashire Nonconformist history. In his day no man equalled him in this department of knowledge, and he was successful in collecting many valuable MSS. and other relics of old time Lancashire Nonconformity. A predecessor of his was the Rev. W. M. Walker. He was, indeed, the first pastor of the Grimshaw Street Church, the building being erected for him on his ejection from the Percy Street pulpit in 1807, when the congregation was swiftly drifting into Unitarianism. In his farewell sermon, which was preached on July 12th of that year, and afterwards published, he says: "And now I must bid farewell to this place; I must leave this pulpit to ascend it no more. I bless God that ever I was sent to preach the Gospel here. It has not been a fruitless errand. And I can sincerely say I bless God I am now to leave this place. I hope it will open the way to greater usefulness; and, if so, what-

ever trials and difficulties may have to be encountered, there will be infinite reason to rejoice." Mr. Walker contributed greatly to the introduction of the Gospel into the Fylde District, particularly Kirkham, and after a useful ministry in Preston he removed to Manchester, where he became the first chaplain of the new Burial Ground for Dissenters at Rusholme. The Dawson family, of Lancaster, have been friends and patrons of Congregationalism in that town and district for several generations. It is more than a tradition that the great-grandmother of the present Mr. Dawson, accompanied by her faithful dog, was on Sundays accustomed to go to Forton Chapel, some six miles distant from Lancaster, before the High Street Chapel was erected; and through this excellent woman, whose grandfather built the little chapel at Newton-in-Bowland in 1696, Mr. Dawson is directly associated with historic Nonconformity there also. Edward Dawson, J.P., father of the present Mr. Dawson, came to be associated with the Union very early in its history, and for more than forty years held the office of District Treasurer. In the Report for 1860 appear the following words, in which we may read the fruit of his careful, persevering, and methodical habits: "It is greatly to be desired that the Churches should make their collections as early as practicable in each financial year. Very great inconvenience is occasioned by the lateness of most of these collections. Honourable exception must be made in the case of the Churches in the Preston District, and of some others." His beautiful home, at Aldcliffe Hall, was a kind of open house for ministers, and during the visit of the Rev. George Greatbatch, of Southport, in May, 1836, a sensational incident occurred. Mr. Dawson had gone to Kendal, to the funeral of an aunt, Mrs. Wilson, and whilst he was absent the house was broken into and robbed. Mr. Greatbatch and Mrs. Dawson had had bread and milk for supper, and the basins and spoons were left on the dining room table; but, though the spoons were silver, the thieves left them untouched. They took all the other spoons and forks in the house, besides many another valuable. The thieves also left the silver candlesticks on the table,

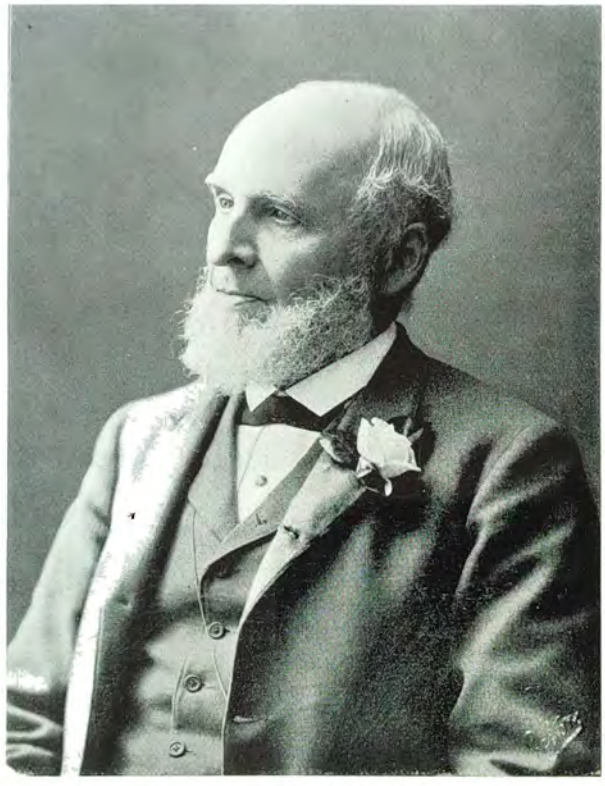
though they had taken out the candle and nozzle from one of them to light themselves about the room. "Mr. Greatbatch slept throughout the whole invasion," says the narrator, "as did everyone else in the house. The dog outside had been drugged by a ballad seller the day before, to make ready." At the advanced age of eighty-three years Edward Dawson died, in 1876, and the County Union, at its Annual Meetings in that year, referred to him as "one of its oldest friends and supporters," whose "long continued and faithful services are gratefully remembered." Closely associated with the Dawson family in County Union work have been the Mansergh family, whose representative, Robert Mansergh, J.P., has worthily held the position of District Secretary for thirty-one years. In connection with Bolton the names of the Revs. W. H. Davison, of St. George's Road, and Robert Best, of Mawdsley Street, together with those of Joseph Boyle, J.P., and W. H. Lever, M.P., readily suggest themselves as representing most generous friends and devoted helpers; in like manner those of the Rev. William Hewgill, M.A., with Thomas and Alfred Barnes, for Farnworth; the Rev. John Yonge, together with the Rigbys and Armitages, of Warrington; the Pilkingtons of St. Helens; the Evanses of Haydock; the Eccleses of Blackburn and Darwen; and the Shorrocks of Darwen, all stand for much in the Congregational history of Lancashire during the century now complete. These names, selected quite at random, will be sufficient to indicate how rich the story of the past is in this respect, how sacred is our inheritance, and how solemn our responsibility; and this chapter may be fittingly concluded with a list of those who have served as District Secretaries and Treasurers in so far as the names could be obtained. Unfortunately, the earlier Minute Books of all the Districts except that of the Preston District having been lost, the lists are incomplete.

MANCHESTER DISTRICT.

Secretaries.	Treasurers.
Rev. Richard Fletcher, —1845.	Thomas Gasquoine, —1846.
,, J. L. Poore, 1845-1853.	Thomas Hunter, 1846-1850.
,, J. G. Rogers, B.A., 1853-1862.	William Armitage, 1850-1865.
,, R. M. Davies, 1862-1865.	N. B. Sutcliffe, 1865-1867.
,, W. H. Davison, 1865-1871.	Samuel Dewhirst, 1867-1872.
,, Thomas Willis, 1871-1874.	T. Rymer, 1872-1877.
,, William Hewgill, M.A., 1874-1901.	William Shaw, 1877-1889.
	W. Murray Fraser, 1889-1894.
,, H. W. Turner, B.A., 1901-1904.	Gerard N. Ford, 1894-1898.
,, A. J. Viner, F.T.S., 1904—.	Palmer C. Ford, 1898—.

LIVERPOOL DISTRICT.

Secretaries.	Treasurers.
Rev. Dr. Raffles, Wm. Bevan —1847.	William Kay, —1846.
	Wm. Crosfield, sen., 1846-1881.
,, W. P. Appleford, 1847-1854.	Morton Sparke, 1881-1883.
,, James Mann, 1854-1867.	Wm. Crosfield, jun., 1883-1893.
,, J. Shillito, 1867-1870.	E. Shorrock Eccles, 1893—.
,, Jas. Wishart, M.A., 1870-1880.	
,, R. W. Thompson, 1880-1882.	
,, John Yonge, 1882—.	



MR. WILLIAM ARMITAGE, J.P.
Treasurer of the Union (1858-1888).

See page 152.

BLACKBURN DISTRICT.

Secretaries.	Treasurers.
Rev. Luke Forster, 1829-1832.	Joseph Eccles, 1830-1862.
„ S. Nichols, 1832-1838.	Ralph S. Ashton, 1862-1869.
Mr. Joseph Eccles, Secretary and Treasurer, 1838-1842.	J. Massey, 1869-1871.
Rev. A. Fraser, M.A., 1842-1862.	Richard Eccles, 1871-1879.
„ J. B. Lister, 1862-1869.	J. Kay, 1879-1880.
„ E. Heath, 1869-1875.	Eli Higham, 1880-1892.
„ John Byles, 1875-1876.	Henry Higson, 1892-1899.
„ J. McEwan Stott, M.A., 1876-1880.	Ephraim Hindle, 1899—.
„ A. Foster, M.A., 1880-1901.	
„ R. Nicholls, 1901-1905.	
„ J. P. Wilson, 1905—.	

PRESTON DISTRICT.

Secretaries.	Treasurers.
Rev. W. M. Walker, 1818-1822.	Richard Hamer, 1818-1821.
„ J. France, Assistant for Lonsdale Hundred, 1818-1819.	Richard Walton, 1821-1823.
Mr. E. Dawson, Assistant for Lonsdale Hundred, 1819-1822.	J. Hamer, 1823-1831.
Rev. D. T. Carnson, 1822-1831.	Edward Dawson, 1831-1876.
„ S. Bell, 1831-1845.	E. B. Dawson, 1876-1891.
„ R. Slate, 1845-1854.	F. Thorp, 1891-1899.
„ J. Sugden, B.A., 1854-1862.	George Garratt, 1899—.
„ Joshua Armitage, 1862-1866.	
„ G. W. Clapham, 1866-1868.	
Mr. E. B. Dawson, LL.B., 1868-1876.	
„ Robert Mansergh, 1876—.	

CHAPTER XII.

Facts and Figures.

THIS closing chapter is reserved for a few "Facts" which could not easily be interwoven in the body of the story, but which are much too interesting to be omitted, and which, along with some "Figures," will serve to bring home to the reader the magnificent work accomplished by the Union during the century of its existence. The marvellous triumphs of the Gospel, for example, as recited in the Union Reports, would make quite a volume, and a most fascinating one. Some illustrations have been given, and two or three others may be acceptable to the reader. Mr. Greatbatch, for instance, writing from North Meols, in 1810, tells about a fisherman, the first of his class, refusing henceforth, at great loss to himself, to go out fishing on the Lord's Day, which was a great victory for "principle over custom"; also of such a complete reformation in the character of the people that "old debts" had been paid off through "the preaching of the Gospel." Ten years later, referring to Crossens, one of his stations, he states that the room placed at his disposal for preaching purposes had been erected "to accommodate a public house at times of unusual riot and debauchery." At Milnthorpe, in 1824, we read that "two of the most notorious sinners in the county, who never attended a place of worship for the last thirty years, are not only regular attendants on the Sabbath days, but that in their families, instead of cursing and swearing and lying, they are reading and singing and praying." "Among those who are united with us in Church fellowship," runs the Report from Marsden in 1837, "are several who were formerly the most abandoned characters in the village; and it would do

you good, on the first Sabbath of the month, to behold them as penitents, with tears streaming down their cheeks, sitting around the table of the Lord and commemorating His dying love; and this is the more gratifying as, in the present state of things, many of them are exposed to peculiar temptations, being hardly able to get bread to eat, and having to endure the scorn of their old companions." From Preesall, near Fleetwood, the Report in 1842 states that "some very profligate characters have been converted, by the grace of God, from the error of their way, and have been admitted to Church fellowship. Some who were notorious for calling upon God with bitter oaths and curses are now humble suppliants in the house of God." It is well to be reminded of such facts; they serve to bring us face to face with those supreme spiritualities of the religious life which are so easily overlooked in these less sensational days in which it has fallen to us to live. Then it is interesting to note the great diversity of means employed in the raising of funds for the Union. It is clear that our fathers had considerable genius in this direction; that originality of method is not by any means an exclusive modern possession; and, much more, that the spirit of self-sacrifice was strongly present with them. Here is an item which will be appreciated by the women of our Churches. In the very early days of the Union it is stated that the labours of one of the Itinerants were on such an extensive scale "that he could no longer perform them without a horse. A lady, the wife of one of the deacons, hearing of this, and being unwilling that the expenses of the Church should be increased, actually gave £25 out of her own pin money for this purpose." The "Youth's Auxiliary Society" was quite an institution in many of the Churches, its object being to encourage the young to contribute to mission work both at home and abroad, and as early as 1813 we read of the one at Grosvenor Street Church, which has always been noted for its liberality in these directions, contributing the sum of £1 11s. 6d. to the Union Funds; also, in the same year, of £1 2s. 3¼d., "a free-will offering of the scholars belonging to the Sunday School at Mr. Slate's Chapel, in Stand." In 1814 Mr. Alexander recites the case of a

collier's subscription of £10 towards the erection of a school-chapel at Edge Green; about the same date we read of "a Penny a Week Society" at Great Harwood, which had "given to the Union in about a year and a half near £11"; of "servants and weavers" of Hindley contributing their half-guineas to the cause in 1821; of £2 at Grosvenor Street Church, "the product of Fancy Boxes, by two young ladies"; of "Mr. Haigh's workmen, of Liverpool, raising £2 6s.; of £10 14s., being "profits from a basket," by ladies of Mr. Fox's congregation at Bolton; of £20 subscription from Mr. Kay, of Liverpool, and £3 given by his family; of Mrs. Ormandy's "County Union Box" at Lancaster, which realised 2s. 6d.; of a "working man's grateful acknowledgment to the County Union," through Mr. Greatbatch, of Southport, to the extent of £11; and of £10 5s., "proceeds of needlework, from a few ladies at Burnley." Miss Hurry, of Liverpool, appears in the Reports for a long series of years as collector of sums varying from £8 to £10 "among Teachers and Friends at the Female Sunday School, Great George Street"; Miss Mary Brierley, "the domestic servant of Mr. and Mrs. Roby," is referred to as bequeathing a legacy of £100 in 1851; whilst the following specimen of what the two Manchester Churches, Mosley Street and Grosvenor Street—friendly rivals in this sort of thing for many years—were in the habit of doing is distinct testimony to the variety of organisation and the fine spirit of Christian willinghood which obtained amongst them:—

1826.

MOSLEY STREET CHAPEL.

	£	s.	d.
Collection	44	17	10
Sacramental Collection	6	15	6
Juvenile Society	25	0	0
Subscriptions	12	18	0
	£89	11	4

GROSVENOR STREET CHAPEL.

	£	s.	d.
Collection	115	19	4
Youth's Society	35	0	0
Subscriptions	43	13	9
	£194	13	1

It is impossible to read of these varied gifts, which often bespeak real sacrifice, without feeling that the interests of the Union lay very near to the heart of the Churches in the days to which they refer.

In 1865 there was a new departure in reference to the Annual Meetings of the Union. Hitherto some person of note, principally a layman, presided over the gatherings as business meetings pure and simple; but since then the custom has been for an Annual President to be chosen, whose Presidential Address is always awaited with considerable expectancy. The first to occupy this position under the new conditions was the Rev. Dr. Rogers, who sends the following interesting note in reference to the matter:—

"My brethren did me the honour of electing me the first Chairman of the County Union under the new constitution. It was a tribute of their affection which I greatly appreciated. I had spent many of my early days between the age of four and that of twenty in a parsonage of the county, and my attachment to the Union had really become almost a part of myself. I was the first student admitted to the new College at Manchester, but after leaving College spent six years of my life at Newcastle-on-Tyne. In 1851 I returned to the county and held the pastorate at Ashton-under-Lyne until the time of my removal to London in 1865. The County Union always afforded to me one of my principal fields of labour, and my brethren paid me what I always regarded as the very high honour of electing me as the first Chairman. I well remember the meeting at which my Presidential Address was given. Between my election and the time of the meeting I had accepted an invitation to the pastorate of the Church at Clapham, and

my Presidential Address, therefore, was my last official act in connection with the Union. I cannot recall an incident in connection with it without being reminded of the remarkable change in sentiment which has passed over Dissent since those days. There was nothing strongly progressive and still less defiant in my utterance, although it did insist on the duty of Dissenters to loyally maintain their distinctive principles. Unfortunately, it fluttered some of our dovecotes. I well remember one of my honoured seniors saying to me as we came out of the meeting: 'You will not venture to talk in that way to the people of Clapham.' 'What!' I said, 'do you suppose I have sold my soul to the people of Clapham?' I was thirty-five years pastor of the Church at Clapham, and certainly I did not shrink from utterances at Clapham much stronger than those addressed to my brethren. But this little story marks the difference between those times and the present."

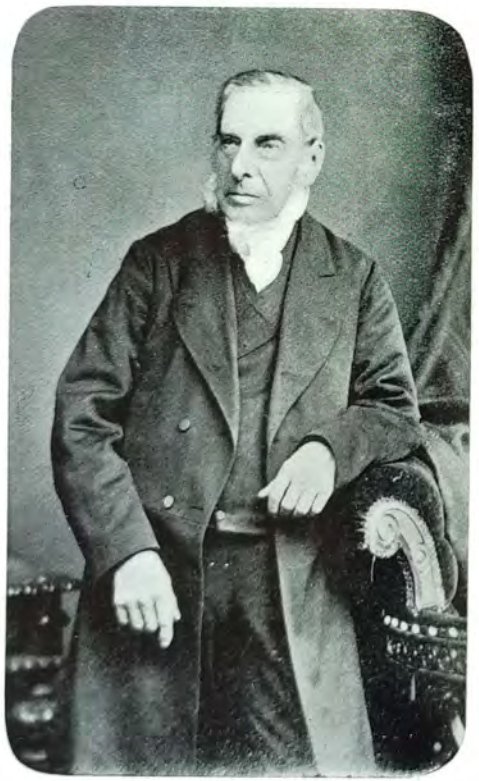
The position is regarded as a distinct honour, and the Addresses from the Chair of the Lancashire Congregational Union rank amongst the finest and most important utterances of English Congregationalism. The list of the brethren who have served the Union in this capacity, including the President for the Centenary year, is given on the following page. The asterisk indicates that the person is deceased, and the name of the place after that of the person where he was resident at the time.

Until thirty-five years ago the Annual Assemblies were mainly held alternately in Manchester and Liverpool, the vestries of the meeting places being usually large enough for the purpose. Since that time, however, some fifteen Lancashire towns do themselves the honour of entertaining the Union in turn, their names being Manchester, Liverpool, Lancaster, Wigan, Bury, Southport, Blackpool, St. Helens, Preston, Blackburn, Oldham, Ashton-under-Lyne, Burnley, Bolton, and Rochdale. The work entailed is not light, but it is an unquestioned advantage to the entertaining town, whose Churches frequently find it to be one of their richest experiences.

PRESIDENTS OF THE UNION, 1865—1907.

Name of Person.	Date of Meeting.	Place.
Rev. J. G. Rogers, B.A., D.D., Ashton-under-Lyne..	1865 ...	Manchester.
*Rev. J. Kelly, Liverpool	1866 ...	Preston.
*Rev. J. Gwyther, Manchester	1867 ...	Liverpool.
*Rev. J. Parker, D.D., Manchester	1868 ...	Manchester.
*Rev. G. W. Conder, Manchester.....	1869 ...	Liverpool.
*Rev. H. W. Parkinson, Rochdale	1870 ...	Manchester.
*Rev. T. Davies, Darwen	1871 ...	Liverpool.
*Rev. A. Thomson, M.A., D.D., Manchester.....	1872 ...	Manchester.
Rev. Caleb Scott, LL.B., D.D., Manchester.....	1873 ...	Ashton-u-Lyne.
Rev. S. Pearson, M.A., Liverpool	1874 ...	Liverpool.
*Mr. W. Armitage, J.P., Manchester	1875 ...	Blackburn.
*Rev. T. Green, M.A., Ashton-under-Lyne.....	1876 ...	Warrington.
Mr. Edward B. Dawson, LL.B., J.P., Lancaster ...	1877 ...	Manchester.
*Mr. Alfred Barnes, B.A., Farnworth	1878 ...	Preston.
*Rev. J. A. Macfadyen, M.A., D.D., Manchester ...	1879 ...	Bolton.
*Rev. R. M. Davies, Oldham.....	1880 ...	Liverpool.
*Rev. J. McEwan Stott, M.A., Blackburn	1881 ...	St. Helens.
*Rev. J. Hutchison, Ashton-under-Lyne.....	1882 ...	Burnley.
Rev. Thomas Willis, Manchester	1883 ...	Southport.
Rev. John Chater, Southport	1884 ...	Bury.
*Rev. Robert Best, Bolton	1885 ...	Ashton-u-Lyne.
Rev. William Hewgill, M.A., Farnworth	1886 ...	Lancaster.
*Rev. James Wayman, Blackburn.....	1887 ...	Rochdale.
Rev. James McDougall, Manchester	1888 ...	Blackpool.
*Rev. T. C. Finlayson, D.D., Manchester	1889 ...	Manchester.
Rev. John Yonge, Warrington	1890 ...	Blackburn.
*Rev. A. Foster, M.A., Blackburn.....	1891 ...	Liverpool.
*Prof. A. S. Wilkins, M.A., LL.D., Litt.D., Manchester	1892 ...	Preston.
Rev. George Lord, Liverpool	1893 ...	Bolton.
Mr. Robert Mansergh, J.P., Lancaster	1894 ...	Burnley.
Rev. W. C. Russell, M.A., Darwen.....	1895 ...	Southport.
Rev. Thomas Cain, Stubbins	1896 ...	Bury.
Rev. Thomas Dunlop, Liverpool.....	1897 ...	Ashton-u-Lyne.
Rev. A. Goodrich, D.D., Manchester.....	1898 ...	Manchester.
Rev. Richard Nicholls, Darwen	1899 ...	Rochdale.
Rev. E. R. Barrett, B.A., Liverpool	1900 ...	St. Helens.
Mr. Gerard N. Ford, Manchester	1901 ...	Blackpool.
Rev. H. W. Smith, Lancaster	1902 ...	Wigan.
Mr. W. W. Pilkington, J.P., St. Helens	1903 ...	Oldham.
Mr. Henry Higson, J.P., Blackburn	1904 ...	Blackburn.
Rev. Henry Hutton Brayshaw, Manchester	1905 ...	Liverpool.
Rev. Edward Gough, B.A., Barrowford.....	1906 ...	Preston.
Mr. E. B. Dawson, LL.B., J.P., Lancaster.....	1907 ...	Manchester.

When the Union was formed Congregationalism in Lancashire, as elsewhere, was feeble and small. "Lancashire," says the Report for 1856, "had not then assumed the proud position she now occupies as the Empire County of England. Her vast industrial resources were as yet undeveloped, her manufactures were only in their infancy, many of her towns which are now thronged with a teeming population were mere villages, and her largest towns gave but little promise of the extent, the wealth, and the commercial importance to which they have since attained. The Congregational Churches in the county were few, and for the most part feeble." That statement is not in the least degree exaggerated. It will be remembered that of the original thirty-two Churches constituting the Union in 1806 eight belonged to other counties. If these be regarded as an equivalent for the few Churches in the county which did not immediately associate themselves with it, and if to these be added the four that joined the following month, in those thirty-six Churches Lancashire Congregationalism may be said to be fully represented. We have no means of ascertaining the precise strength of those Churches; probably, however, if we give to each building an average sitting capacity for 400 persons, bringing the total for the county to 14,400 sittings, the estimate will be exceedingly liberal. The same may be said for an average Church membership of 100 for each church, giving an aggregate of 3,600 members. The contributions of those Churches from December 31st, 1806, to December 31st, 1807, amounted to £177 9s. 5d., which, with a balance in hand upon the working from September to December, 1806, of £60 17s. 6d., gave a total income of £238 6s. 11d.; whilst the expenditure was £270 0s. 5d., leaving a deficit of £31 13s. 6d. Comparing these with present day figures, it will be evident that whilst the population, according to the last census taken, has, roughly speaking, multiplied itself during the century a little over six times, from nearly every point of view Congregationalism shows an increment in the proportion of more than one to ten. The following table will enable the reader to test this for himself:—



REV. D. T. CARNSON, PRESTON.
First Secretary to the Executive (1847–1854).

REV. R. SLATE, PRESTON.
First Historian of the Union.

TABLE I.—STATISTICS FOR 1806, 1866, 1906.

Date.	No. of Buildings.	Sittings.	Church Members.	Sunday Scholars.	Income.	Expenditure.	Population.
					£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
1806	36	14,400	3,600		238 6 11	270 0 5	1801 : 673,486
1866	226	114,720			2,054 13 4½	2,115 15 2¾	1861 : 2,429,440
1906	343	170,097	44,630	90,551	2,792 13 11	2,807 5 5	1901 : 4,406.787

The figures which follow are inserted because they serve as a striking demonstration of the fact that all along the Union has been faithful to its true mission. It was meant to be a Christian brotherhood, to give the "strong" the opportunity of bearing the burdens of the "weak," and so of "fulfilling the law of Christ"; and the generous grants it has made show how steadily it has kept its ideal before it. They are also additional testimony of a most magnificent kind to the power of voluntaryism, and should give confidence and courage to the friends of Congregationalism, not in the county only, but everywhere else. Nor need even those Churches be discouraged that have long been recipients from the Union Funds, and still are. Their position is frequently one of great and peculiar difficulty. The reader will doubtless pardon another reference to the little village of Tockholes by way of illustration. Forty years ago two cotton mills found employment for some three hundred people, but these have been closed and completely cleared away. A generation or two farther back still the mining, silk weaving, and dyeing industries flourished, but the only memorials of them now will be found in a number of interesting place-names; and at the present moment some half a dozen farms are being razed to the ground in the interests of the water supply of a neighbouring town. Fortunately, the little Congregational Church there, which dates back almost to Commonwealth times, and has borne most faithful witness for the truth, through the generosity of its many friends has been saved the necessity of appealing to the funds of the Union for assistance. Doubtless this is an extreme case, but in one way or another this impoverishment of the villages is ever proceeding, and it is not always that the Congregational Church can command the number of benefactors that the one at Tockholes has done. Here, therefore, is the opportunity for the Union to lend assistance, and the opportunity is welcomed by it. If the figures in question stimulate these Churches and lead them to new endeavour, well; but the difficulties of their position command the sympathy of their brethren, who find joy in ministering to their need.

TABLE II.—CHURCHES FORMERLY AIDED, NOW SELF SUPPORTING.

MANCHESTER DISTRICT.

Name of Church.	Number of Years.	Total Amount. £	s.	d.	Notes.
(1) Ashton-u-Lyne and Oldham...	1816-1817 : 2 years	92	18	4	(1) Ashton and Oldham were the two chief stations in an Itinerant area of which the Rev. Wm. Roby had charge. Ashton made such rapid progress that it was able to dispense with aid in 1818.
Dukinfield Crescent	1880-1900 : 21 years	698	1	4	
Dukinfield Hall	1868-1901 : 28 years	970	0	0	
Bacup	1847-1898 : 49 years	1775	7	4	
Bamford	1811-1815 : 5 years	45	0	0	
(2) Belmont	1835-1867 : 33 years	537	6	8	(2) A praiseworthy act by this Church in 1905, due doubtless to the generosity of the Deakin family who have been long associated with it, deserves to be recorded. Supplied at its own request with a statement of the difference between the amounts contributed to, and received from, the Union Funds which stood at £275 8s. 8d. a cheque for this sum was at once sent to the Union Treasurer.
Bolton—					
Blackburn Road	1877-1884 : 8 years	497	13	0	
Derby Street	1867-1888 : 22 years	1519	12	0	
Rose Hill	1865-1884 : 18 years	660	3	0	
Bury—					
Blackford Bridge	1870-1902 : 33 years	1487	6	0	
Castleton (formerly Blue Pits) ...	1867-1905 : 38 years	1411	7	0	
Clough Foot	1845-1863 : 7 years	114	3	4	
Denton	1836-1866 : 30 years	1289	10	0	

CHURCHES FORMERLY AIDED, NOW SELF SUPPORTING.

MANCHESTER DISTRICT—*Continued.*

Name of Church.	Number of Years.	Total Amount. £ s. d.	Notes.
Droylsden	1839-1867 : 38 years	762 19 8	
(1) Egerton	1820-1836, 1846-1853 } 24 years	478 2 6	(1) Previously Walmsley.
(2) Farnworth—			
Market Street	1819-1822 : 4 years	60 0 0	(2) Formerly called Halshaw Moor.
Heaton Mersey	1827-1842 : 16 years	298 0 0	
Heywood	1823-1845 : 20 years	737 15 0	
Horwich—			
Lee Lane	1845-1859, 1867-1870 } 18 years	403 12 0	
New Chapel	1834-1846 : 13 years	270 0 0	
Little Lever	1850-1870 : 21 years	795 6 7	
Manchester—			
Chorlton-cum-Hardy	1880-1886 : 7 years	137 10 0	
(3) Eccles	1810-1814 : 5 years	20 0 0	(3) Grant here for hire of room, and, of course, long before the present Church came into existence, which originated in 1857.

REV. THOMAS WILLIS, MANCHESTER.

Present Secretary of the Union.

See page 156.

CHURCHES FORMERLY AIDED, NOW SELF SUPPORTING.

MANCHESTER DISTRICT—*Continued.*

Name of Church.	Number of Years.	Total Amount.	Notes.
Manchester—*Continued.*		£ s. d.	
(1) Heaton Park	1837-1838 } 16 years 1867-1880 }	300 0 0	(1) The Heaton Park Church, formerly Rooden Lane, originated in 1862. The earlier dates refer to an effort in this district under the name of the Hollins Vale Mission. The grants to it amounted to £30, and the Report for 1839 states that the "home missionary in connection with the friends at Stand has undertaken gratuitously to supply the pulpit so that this work will henceforth be independent of the funds of the Union."
Levenshulme (Stockport Road)	1871-1887 : 17 years	770 8 8	
Openshaw (Lees Street)	1867-1892 : 26 years	1468 8 0	
Patricroft	1811-1867 : 39 years	1055 8 4	
(2) Prestwich	1867-1868 : 2 years	105 0 0	(2) Known also as Whitefield and Besses-o'-th'-Barn.
Stretford	1840-1858 : 19 years	778 15 0	
Stockport Road (Octagon)	1872-1903 : 21 years	862 10 0	
Swinton Trinity (formerly Pendlebury)	1820-1890 : 53 years	1572 0 0	
Worsley Road (formerly Moorside)	1861-1891 : 21 years	868 6 8	
Zion (formerly Hulme)	1828-1836 : 11 years	266 5 0	
Urmston and Flixton	1879-1887 : 9 years	437 18 0	

CHURCHES FORMERLY AIDED, NOW SELF SUPPORTING.

MANCHESTER DISTRICT—*Continued.*

Name of Church.	Number of Years.	Total Amount. £ s. d.	Notes.
Middleton—			
Providence	1822-1853 : 28 years	712 18 4	
Mossley	1854-1857 : 4 years	85 0 0	
Oldham—			
Ashton Road	1880-1904 . 25 years	743 2 0	
Hollinwood	1850-1893 : 37 years	1441 8 0	
Pastures	1891-1900 : 10 years	345 0 0	
Union Street	1818-1834 : 16 years	694 0 0	
Waterhead	1864-1871 : 8 years	165 0 0	
Radcliffe	1848-1874 : 17 years	733 12 0	
Ramsbottom—			
Park	1837-1844 : 8 years	137 10 0	
Rochdale—			
(1) Providence			(1) The first Report, dated January, 1808, states that the Committee of the Union at considerable expense, had rented a room at Rochdale for preaching the Gospel, but that the cause was not very promising. Neither the precise amounts expended nor the number of years during which assistance was given is forthcoming.
Smallbridge	1825-1866 : 41 years	1209 9 7	
Royton	1846-1876 : 23 years	709 1 7	
Springhead	1836-1845 : 10 years	362 10 0	
Stalybridge	1831-1844 : 14 years	425 0 0	
Todmorden	1839-1875 : 32 years	1019 11 8	
Tottington	1850-1868 : 16 years	525 16 8	
Tyldesley	1866-1905 : 34 years	1813 15 0	
Walkden	1883-1889 : 7 years	177 12 0	
Westhoughton	1824-1880 : 53 years	1281 4 8	

CHURCHES FORMERLY AIDED, NOW SELF SUPPORTING.

LIVERPOOL DISTRICT.

Name of Church.	Number of Years.	Total Amount. £ s. d.	Notes.
Ashton-in-Makerfield	1822-1855: 33 years	1268 4 4	
Garston	1875-1885: 11 years	664 16 8	
(1) Golborne	1827-1843, 1863-1884 } 29 years	576 15 10	(1) An early preaching station for the Rev. William Alexander, without Union aid from 1843 to 1863.
Haydock	1896-1898: 3 years	130 0 0	
Hindley—			
St Paul	1811-1836: 26 years	524 4 0	
(2) Huyton	1836-1842: 7 years	65 0 0	(2) Present church formed in 1856.
Douglas—			
Finch Hill	1817-1825: 8 years	170 0 0	
Union Mills	1891-1898: 8 years	167 6 8	
Leigh	1811-1859: 44 years	1717 6 0	
Liverpool—			
Bootle	1872-1876: 5 years	413 10 0	
Crosby	1886: 1 year	60 0 0	
(3) Edge Hill	1830, 1869-1902: 28 years	1757 14 0	(3) In all probability the grant of £20 in 1830 for Edge Hill was for Kirkdale. The Edge Hill cause is of much later origin.
Hartington Road	1886-1891: 6 years	312 10 0	
Seaforth	1882-1897: 17 years	494 2 0	
Stanley	1857-1866: 10 years	396 13 4	

CHURCHES FORMERLY AIDED, NOW SELF SUPPORTING.

LIVERPOOL DISTRICT—*Continued.*

Name of Church.	Number of Years.	Total Amount.	Notes.
		£ s. d.	
Liverpool—*Continued.*			
(1) Knotty Ash	1824-1827 : 3 years	22 10 0	(1) An early effort in no way connected with the present cause.
Walton	1871-1882 : 12 years	771 5 0	
Waterloo	1859-1865 : 7 years	256 13 4	
(2) Woolton	1820-1827, 1895-1906 } 20 years	530 10 0	(2) The present Church originated in the sixties, and cannot in any way be said to be the outcome of the effort made forty years previously, which appears to have died out after considerable promise.
Newton-le-Willows	1841-1860 : 19 years	1017 10 0	
Ormskirk	1826-1901 : 44 years	2249 0 0	
Prescot	1815-1890 : 69 years	2269 14 2	
Rainhill	1876-1898 : 9 years	533 15 0	
Southport—			
Birkdale	1879-1901 : 23 years	1312 17 0	
(3) Chapel Street (formerly North Meols, etc.)	1811-1825 : 15 years	747 17 3½	(3) This included Halsall, Scarisbrick, and several other village stations.
Churchtown	1826-1893 : 69 years	2345 10 8	
(4) Formby	1833-1844, 1884-1892 } 21 years	1131 14 0	(4) The first period represents an early effort made in the name of the Formby and Kirby Itinerancy upon which was expended the sum of £751 13s. 8d. The present cause at Formby originated about 1881.
Hawkshead Street	1882-1885 : 4 years	136 10 0	
Warrington—			
Wycliffe	1847-1858 : 10 years	520 0 0	

REV. JAMES McDOUGALL.

Editor of the Lancashire Congregational Year Book.

See page 104.

CHURCHES FORMERLY AIDED, NOW SELF SUPPORTING.

BLACKBURN DISTRICT.

Name of Church.	Number of Years.	Total Amount.			Notes.
		£	s.	d.	
Accrington—					
Oak Street	1839-1859: 21 years	1086	13	4	
Whalley Road	1878-1893: 15 years	555	0	0	
Adlington	1849, 1862-1898: 38 years	1246	12	4	
Barrowford	1847-1891: 44 years	1514	9	6	
Belthorn and the Guide	1819-1841: 23 years	637	8	0	
Blackburn—					
Furthergate	1873-1885: 13 years	641	6	8	
Brierfield (formerly Marsden Height)	1836-1862: 26 years	826	5	0	
Burnley—					
Bethesda	1811-1829: 8 years	212	1	0	
Chorley—					
Hollinshead Street	1814-1817: 5 years	75	0	0	
St. George's Street	1862-1868: 6 years	205	0	0	
Clitheroe	1816-1874: 56 years	1490	13	4	

CHURCHES FORMERLY AIDED, NOW SELF SUPPORTING.

BLACKBURN DISTRICT—*Continued.*

Name of Church.	Number of Years.	Total Amount. £ s. d.	Notes.
Colne	1811-1814: 4 years	60 0 0	
Darwen— Bolton Road	1885-1899: 12 years	527 10 0	
(1) Hoddlesden (formerly Pickup Bank)	1833-1837 1866, 1900-1905: 12 years	372 10 0	(1) Grant not continuous, but the same cause.
Hollins Grove	1882-1885: 4 years	151 18 0	
Lower Darwen	1887-1891: 5 years	120 0 0	
Great Harwood with Enfield	1813-1860: 40 years	1202 5 8	
Haslingden	1815: 1 year	19 15 0	
Leyland	1835-1903: 66 years	2390 17 0	
Longridge	1831-1832 } 1866-1897 } 31 years	1148 6 6	
Nelson— Manchester Road	1868-1875: 8 years	182 10 0	

CHURCHES FORMERLY AIDED, NOW SELF SUPPORTING.

PRESTON DISTRICT.

Name of Church.	Number of Years.	Total Amount. £ s. d.	Notes.
(1) Barrow-in-Furness— Hindpool Road	1839-1866: 18 years	1142 12 8	(1) The Church at Hindpool Road does not date farther back than the fifties, and the earlier years refer to the labours of the Rev. Francis Evans, of Ulverston, who itinerated in Barrow and other places, receiving the grant for that purpose.
Abbey Road	1875-1905: 23 years	1494 4 0	
South Shore	1886-1904: 19 years	617 10 0	
Fleetwood	1843-1859: 17 years	527 10 0	
Inglewhite	1831-1837: 7 years	135 0 0	
Kirkham	1812-1831: 20 years	568 0 0	
Wesham and Cornah Row	1891-1901: 10 years	260 0 0	
(2) Caton and Galgate, near Lancaster	1846-1849: 4 years	80 0 0	(2) Caton is associated with the High Street Church, at Lancaster; Galgate was abandoned in 1872.
Lytham	1862-1873: 12 years	645 0 0	
St. Annes-on-Sea	1880-1882: 2 years	10 0 0	
Ulverston	1833-1845: 13 years	431 0 0	

TABLE III.—CHURCHES STILL IN RECEIPT OF AID.

MANCHESTER DISTRICT.

Name of Church.	Number of Years.	Total Amount.						Notes.
		£	s.	d.				
Affetside	1837-1906: 53 years	526	3	4				
Bolton—								
Deane Mission	1897-1906: 10 years	134	0	0				
Tonge Moor	1901-1906: 6 years	280	0	0				
Bury—								
Four Lane Ends	1837-1906: 52 years	427	3	4				
Cadishead	1880-1906: 27 years	1260	4	0				
(1) Edgworth	1811-1823, 1850-1906: 51 years	1299	15	0				(1) The grants for the first period amounted to £75 5s., and simply represent the rent paid for a preaching place.
Littleborough	1874-1906: 33 years	1200	0	0				
Summit (formerly Calderbrook)	1825-1906: 67 years	2004	17	6				
Manchester—								
Ancoats	1856-1906: 37 years	2819	13	0				
Gorton	1861, 1875, 1881-1906: 28 years	1357	16	0				
Newton Heath	1873-1906: 24 years	828	5	0				
Openshaw—								
Central	1890-1906: 17 years	905	0	0				
(2) Gresham Street	1864-1870, 1893-1906: 20 years	511	13	4	956	13	4	(2) Central Openshaw and Gresham Street are united under the pastorate of the Rev. J. W. Dickson. The total amount of grants put down to Gresham Street includes those given to an earlier effort at Ashton Road.
		445	0	0				

CHURCHES STILL IN RECEIPT OF AID.

MANCHESTER DISTRICT—*Continued.*

Name of Church.	Number of Years.	Total Amount.	Notes.
Manchester—*Continued.*		£ s. d.	
Salford Central Congregational Mission Church (formerly Trafford Road)	1878-1906: 22 years	906 13 4	
Seedley	1892-1906: 15 years	571 5 0	
Irlams-o'-th'-Height	1905-1906: 2 years	40 0 0	
Wilbraham Road	1900-1906: 7 years	370 0 0	
Middleton—			
Salem	1899-1906: 8 years	285 0 0	
Milnrow	1866-1906: 41 years	1573 11 8	
Norden	1888-1906: 19 years	869 3 4	
Oldham—			
Heyside	1893-1906: 14 years	490 0 0	
Shaw	1846-1906: 34 years	1695 5 3	
Ramsbottom—			
Dundee	1893-1906: 10 years	290 0 0	

CHURCHES STILL IN RECEIPT OF AID.

LIVERPOOL DISTRICT.

Name of Church.	Number of Years.	Total Amount.	Notes.
		£ s. d.	
Leigh—			
Howe Bridge	Nov., 1905-1906: 1 year and 8 months	54 0 0	
Liverpool—			
Berkley Street	1898-1906: 9 years	417 10 0	
Rice Lane	1892-1906: 15 years	562 10 0	
Orrell	1811-1906: 60 years	2288 10 0	
Skelmersdale	1878-1906: 29 years	1923 2 8	
Southport—			
Ainsdale	1880-1906: 27 years	1267 14 0	
Canning Road	1899-1906: 8 years	390 0 0	
(1) Hampton Road	1890-1906: 17 years	935 0 0	(1) Formerly Upper Aughton Street and then Boundary Street.
Cockhedge (near Warrington)	1903-1906: 4 years	200 0 0	
Widnes	1864-1906: 37 years	2033 10 0	
Wigan—			
Abram	1897-1906: 10 years	460 0 0	
Gidlow	1899-1906: 8 years	349 10 0	
Pemberton	1904-1906: 3 years	70 0 0	

CHURCHES STILL IN RECEIPT OF AID.

BLACKBURN DISTRICT.

Name of Church.	Number of Years.	Total Amount.	Notes.
		£ s. d.	
Accrington—			
Park (formerly Blackburn Road)	1891-1906: 16 years	547 18 4	
(1) Barrow (formerly Wiswell and Wymondhouses)	1838-1906: 67 years	1276 11 8	(1) Barrow is the direct representative of Wiswell and Wymondhouses. Wiswell Chapel has been converted into cottages and Wymondhouses has been quite cleared away.
Blackburn—			
Four Lane Ends	1897-1906: 10 years	246 1 0	
Bretherton	1819-1906: 88 years	3166 15 0	
Burnley—			
Hollingreave	1889-1906: 17 years	784 11 0	
Rose Grove	1902-1906: 5 years	245 0 0	
Chipping, in association with Walkerfold and Hesketh Lane during earlier years	1820-1844 1878-1884 1901-1906 } 37 years	828 16 8	
Knowle Green	1827-1906: 78 years	1939 12 0	
Nelson—			
Brunswick Street	1902-1906: 5 years	222 10 0	
Oswaldtwistle (formerly Church).	1874-1906: 30 years	1211 11 0	
Padiham	1904-1906: 3 years	90 0 0	
Read	1886-1906: 21 years	320 15 0	
Rishton	1876-1906: 31 years	1079 15 0	

CHURCHES STILL IN RECEIPT OF AID.

PRESTON DISTRICT.

Name of Church.	Number of Years.	Total Amount. £	s.	d.	Notes.
Bispham	1892-1906 : 15 years	171	0	0	
Blackpool --					
(1) Bethesda	1827-1851, 1876-1880, 1902-1906 : 33 years	805	0	0	(1) Victoria Street Church took the place of Bethesda Chapel in 1849, and the grant during the first period really stands to the account of the Church worshipping there. Shortly after that date the Church became self-sustaining. The present Bethesda Church, built in 1901, is upon the old site.
Carnforth	1866, 1880-1906 : 28 years	941	8	4	
Nether Kellet	1893-1906 : 14 years	189	0	0	
Cleveleys	1898-1906 : 9 years	167	10	0	
(2) Dalton-in-Furness with Stainton and Gleaston	1868-1906 : 39 years	2255	13	0	
Dolphinholme	1886-1906 : 21 years	397	10	0	
Garstang	1828-1906 : 62 years	1890	1	0	
Grange-over-Sands	1890-1906 : 17 years	980	0	0	
Morecambe—					
Clark Street	1861-1887, 1894-1906 : 28 years	1183	8	0	(2) The out-stations Stainton and Gleaston, especially Gleaston, are of late date.
West End	1903-1906 : 4 years	200	0	0	
Poulton-le-Fylde	1811-1838, 1850-1851, 1878-1906 : 39 years	1219	12	2	
Preesall	1834-1906 : 63 years	1607	2	3	
Hambleton	1878-1906 : 23 years	535	5	10	
Preston—Garstang Road	1899-1906 : 8 years	575	0	0	
Penwortham	1899-1906 : 8 years	75	0	0	

MR. HENRY HIGSON, J.P.
Present Treasurer of the Union.

See page 155.

TABLE IV.

CHURCHES AND STATIONS FORMERLY AIDED BUT WHICH HAVE BEEN ABANDONED, ETC.

MANCHESTER DISTRICT.

Name of Church.	Number of Years.	Total Amount. £	s.	d.	Notes.
Manchester—					
Collyhurst Street	1862-1882: 21 years	715	18	4	Sold: Proceeds given to assist Newton Heath.
Tipping Street	1874-1883: 10 years	428	0	0	Sold to City Mission for £800 which was given to the fund for the Octagon Church.
Knot Mill	1854-1855: 2 years	120	0	0	Became the Knot Mill Congregational Hall some years ago.
Russell Street	1878-1881: 4 years	276	5	0	Now a Mission Church belonging to Chorlton Road Church.
Hewitt Street (afterwards Hightown)	1881-1902: 22 years	580	0	0	Abandoned.
Harpurhey...	1840: 1 year	26	13	4	Became a "Union Church."
Salford, Adelphi	1871-1872: 2 years	83	6	8	Abandoned.
Newton Wood, near Hyde.....	1864-1898: 17 years	726	2	8	During that period associated with Albion Church, Ashton-u-Lyne.
Hilton Lane (formerly Edge Fold, Worsley)	1826, 1836-1838: 4 years	174	0	0	Became extinct.
Chowbent	1813-1814: 2 years	4	9	4	Hire of Room only. Effort afterwards abandoned.
Wharton and District	1813-1828: 14 years	235	0	0	Wharton passed into the hands of Presbyterians by whom it is still used.
Holcombe Brook and Summerseat	1813-1814: 2 years	20	0	0	Dissolved.
Hollins Green and Glazebrook ...	1827: 1 year	10	0	0	Work not continued.

CHURCHES AND STATIONS FORMERLY AIDED BUT WHICH HAVE BEEN ABANDONED, ETC.

LIVERPOOL DISTRICT.

Name of Church.	Number of Years.	Total Amount. £	s.	d.	Notes.
Liverpool—					
Salem or Brownlow Hill	1870-1893 : 15 years	940	0	0	Chapel left by Welsh, then used by Crescent Church, and afterwards appears as Brownlow Hill. This Church was disbanded in 1892, and building sold.
Bevington Hill	1834-1835 : 2 years	50	0	0	In Bootle and Kirkdale district, and probably merged into the Kirkdale cause.
Burlington Street	1859-1894 : 22 years	1384	3	4	Sold.
Kirkdale	1831-1834 : 4 years	125	0	0	Removed in 1872 to Westminster [Road.
Newburgh	1836-1841 : 6 years	287	10	0	Abandoned.
The Holt	1882-1892 : 9 years	127	9	2	Abandoned.
Holland Moor, near Orrell	1838-1841 : 4 years	85	0	0	Abandoned.
Douglas—Circular Road	1878-1883 : 6 years	200	0	0	Sold to the Unitarians.
Castletown, Isle of Man	1836-1839 : 4 years	87	10	0	Abandoned.
Whiston, near Rainhill	1899-1901 : 3 years	29	0	0	Abandoned.
Standish	1812-1817 : 3 years	14	0	0	Abandoned.
Wigan—Silverwell	1885-1888 : 3 years	16	5	0	Sold to the Railway Company. Money devoted to the erection of Gidlow School-Chapel.
Croft, near Warrington	1830-1834 : 5 years	75	0	0	Abandoned.
Warrington—					
Salem	1825 : 1 year	20	0	0	Church dissolved in 1855, and became the Golborne Street Baptist Church.
Stepney	1825 : 1 year	20	0	0	Building closed in 1848. Proceeds devoted to new cause, now Wycliffe Church.

CHURCHES AND STATIONS FORMERLY AIDED BUT WHICH HAVE BEEN ABANDONED, ETC.

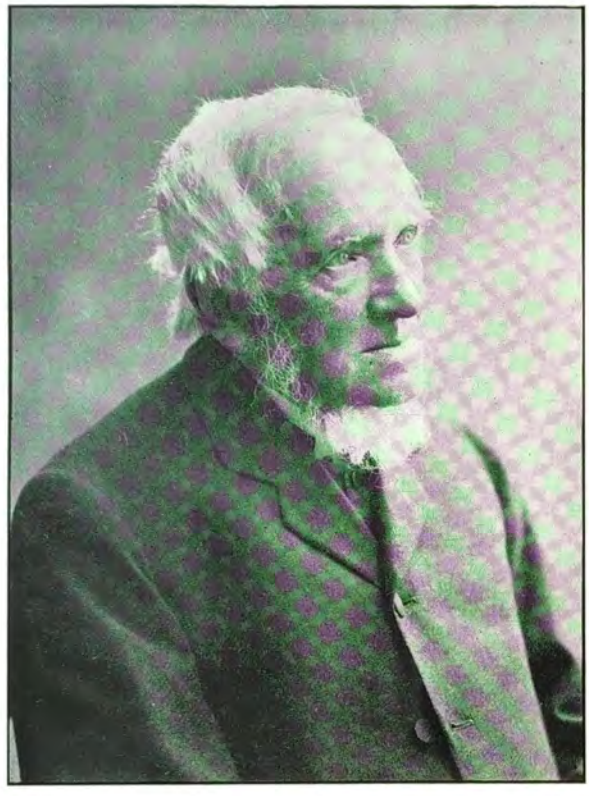
BLACKBURN DISTRICT.

Name of Church.	Number of Years.	Total Amount.	Notes.
		£ s. d.	
Enfield, near Great Harwood.....	1849-1850: 2 years	30 0 0	Abandoned.
Hesketh Bank, near Preston	1824: 1 year	10 0 0	Abandoned.
Croston, near Preston.....	1821-1824 } 8 years 1890-1895 }	67 10 0	Abandoned.
Walmer Bridge, near Preston ...	1895: 1 year	7 10 0	Abandoned.
Hesketh Lane, associated with Chipping	1833-1844: 9 years	130 10 0	Hesketh Lane Chapel sold about fifteen years ago. Proceeds in part to Longridge and Knowle Green.
Ribchester, near Longridge	1818-1830: 13 years	223 3 0	Abandoned.
Balderstone, near Blackburn	1820-1830: 11 years	227 5 0	Abandoned.
Ramsgreave, near Blackburn	1833-1842: 10 years	100 0 0	Given up.
Whittle-le-Woods, near Chorley..	1815, 1817: 2 years	6 6 0	Abandoned.

CHURCHES AND STATIONS FORMERLY AIDED BUT WHICH HAVE BEEN ABANDONED, ETC.

PRESTON DISTRICT.

Name of Church.	Number of Years.	Total Amount.	Notes.
		£ s. d.	
Barrow-in-Furness—			
Vickerstown	1904-1905 : 2 years	80 0 0	Abandoned.
Galgate	1860-1872 : 11 years	132 1 8	Abandoned.
Thornton, near Fleetwood	1899-1903 : 5 years	42 10 0	Abandoned.
The Fylde, including Hambleton, Bispham, Garstang, Poulton, and Singleton	1867-1885 : 16 years	1556 10 0	Most of these places are still in existence. They had been previously aided, either separately, or in conjunction with some other Station. This is a new grouping of them, and the amount is additional to that which appears under their names elsewhere.



REV. RICHARD MEREDITH DAVIES, OLDHAM.

Secretary of the Union (1874-1899).

See page 139.

TABLE V.—CHURCHES IN OTHER UNIONS, ETC., WHICH HAVE BEEN, OR STILL ARE, AIDED.

Name of Church.	Number of Years.	Total Amount.	Notes.
		£ s. d.	
Cheshire—			
Hyde Lane	1821-1827 : 6 years	110 0 0	Now Union Street Church, Hyde.
Cross Street	1821-1824 : 4 years	141 0 0	This became the Sale Congregational Church.
Sale	1848 : 1 year	15 0 0	Do. do. [1885.
Hoylake	1871-1885 : 15 years	971 2 0	Transferred to Cheshire Union in
Runcorn	1834, 1855-1861 : 8 years	152 10 0	Do. do.
Derbyshire—Buxton	1839-1842 : 4 years	65 0 0	Derbyshire Union.
Yorkshire—			
Newton-in-Bowland	1820-1825 : 3 years	8 15 0	Transferred to Yorkshire Union.
Martin Top	1815-1886 : 46 years	1108 6 8	Do. do. do. in 1886.
Holden	1833-1872 : 40 years	803 6 8	Not in the Union.
Westmorland—			
Milnthorpe and Burton	1818-1845 : 26 years	1065 0 0	Church dissolved ; building being private property, sold in 1866.
Wray, Bentham, Ingleton, etc.	1818-1819 : 2 years	59 4 0	Abandoned.
Little Asby	1892-1906 : 15 years	400 0 0	Still aided.
Kirkby Lonsdale	1815-1906 : 83 years	3052 0 0	Still aided.
Kendal	1861-1866 / 1892-1906 } 21 years	754 0 0	Still aided.
Manchester and Salford—Welsh Independents, Gartside Street	1819-1840 : 22 years	330 0 0	Now in Chorlton Road.
Cumberland Union	1866-1879 : 14 years	2500 0 0	
Church Aid Society	1879-1906 : 27 years	14,809 0 0	

Total amount contributed by the Union in grants to various stations, etc., from 1806-1906, about £199,000.

These figures make it clear that "Progress" is the word which may be most fittingly written across the century's work. Not always phenomenal, not entirely without checks, and even set-backs. The number of places where work has been attempted and afterwards abandoned, and the amount of money expended, will impress the reader as very considerable, and for the moment keen disappointment may be felt that there should seemingly have been so much failure. It has, however, to be borne in mind that much of the Union's work is bound to be experimental, and that consequently a certain percentage of wastage is inevitable. Districts change in their character, villages become depopulated, towns decay, and retirement from positions which have ceased to offer any prospect of success is no proof of failure, but rather of wise policy and sound statesmanship. The figures, however, are most eloquent and conclusive; on the whole there has been steady and most gratifying advance, and the chief note in the forthcoming Centenary celebrations may with reason be one of thankfulness and praise. The old prophecy has been fulfilled—"the little one" has "become a thousand," and "the small one a strong nation." Perhaps even more gratifying than any actual numerical advance such as has been chronicled is the magnificent spirit in Congregationalism to which the century so distinctly testifies. This spirit, whether as exhibited in the heroic faith and marvellous endurance of the old Itinerant preachers, who, in very truth, "counted not their lives dear unto themselves" in their eagerness to serve Christ; in the persistent launching of large and exacting schemes in times of supreme commercial depression; in the stupendous Chapel Building undertakings, which drew the most princely gifts from their promoters; in the gradual adjustment of methods to the ever-changing conditions of the times; in its loyalty to Evangelical truth, coupled with a wider interpretation of its mission; in the consecration of culture, gift, and genius to its service; or in the magnificent statesmanship which has produced a constitution faithful to the root principle of Congregationalism, and yet making for a more real and effective Union—this spirit, faithfully conserved through

FACSIMILE OF MEDAL STRUCK BY THE UNITED COMMITTEE TO COMMEMORATE THE REPEAL OF THE TEST AND CORPORATION ACTS IN 1828.

See page 114.

all the century, is the chief fact calling for grateful song, because it means so much for the future. What the future will be it is not permitted even the most gifted to forecast; but there are clear indications that it will lack nothing in the way of difficulty. The "New Times" will be much like the old in this respect; and it is to the young people, in particular of our Sunday Schools, Churches, and Christian homes, that Congregationalism turns with considerable anxiety, with large expectancy, and hope. Rich indeed is the heritage which the faith, the courage, the consecrated purpose, the saintly life, and patient suffering of the Fathers have created for us; and the responsibility is great that in our hands this heritage shall in no way be impoverished. If the new century will bring its own difficulties, it will also provide its opportunities for service; and fidelity to those principles which were so real and living to the Fathers, of whose devoted labours our County Congregationalism is a worthy and an enduring memorial, will bring to the children achievements equally distinguished and great.

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