



Holy Trinity Church, Chester: Records of Three Centuries

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WHEN, some months since, this Society, through my friend Mr. Taylor, honoured me with an invitation to read a Paper on the Records of Holy Trinity, I was in the midst of an index of some 50,000 references to personal names contained in our Registers, but had good hope that before the day arrived for me to fulfil the promise then made, the Register and its various indexes would all be in print. The Registers, 1532-1837, are indeed printed and so is that general index of surnames and christian names, but the book is still incomplete. At the present time I am tracing out some five hundred lives, covering four centuries, in order to prepare biographical indexes of Titled Persons, Clergy, Nonconformist Ministers, Officers of the Navy and Army, and Physicians and Surgeons. There are also indexes of professions and trades, diseases and causes of death, places, etc., to be printed. I mention this by way of apology for the Paper I am about to read.

I had hoped to get away from detail, and survey the Holy Trinity records as a whole, illustrating my

remarks by lantern slides. As it has turned out, however, I have neither had time to make the slides, nor even to get my subject into true perspective. In fact, when on Sunday night last my wife asked me what line I was going to take in my paper for to-night, I had to confess that I didn't know, as I could scarcely see the wood for the trees. "Tell us about the trees," was the quick response; and the advice struck me as excellent, and the best that could be given.

Being a parson, one naturally looks for a text; and first of all one refers to the calendar. "Shrove Tuesday!" That suggests certain cakes more quickly cooked than readily digested. That won't do. But Shrove Tuesday this year is also St. Matthias' Day. That is a better text; for it was on St. Matthias' Day, 1899, just fifteen years ago to-day, that the present chancel screen of Holy Trinity Church was dedicated. When the design of the screen came from the architect it was beautiful in many ways, but it had a number of empty niches. Now, niches without figures always remind one of frames without pictures. They may be very beautiful, but it is a purposeless sort of beauty. I turned the question over in my mind and slept on it, and resolved to try and fill those niches with figures which would illustrate the past history of the parish. So, now, St. Patrick faces the north aisle, which, in the old church, was St. Patrick's Chapel. The figure of the Blessed Virgin Mary turns southward towards the ancient Lady Chapel. St. Guthlac on the south side of the west front, and St. David on the north, commemorate respectively the large portion of the parish reclaimed from sea and marsh, and the fact that Holy Trinity is a boundary parish of the English Church,

and our next-door neighbour is the Church in Wales, St. Francis tells of the Grey Friars' House, where now the Linenhall stands; St. Dominic, of the Black Friars', where now is Watergate House; St. Martin and St. Nicholas tell of ancient Churches, still remembered in St. Martin's Fields and Church, and in Nicholas Street; St. Chad, of the old Church further west of Holy Trinity; St. Alban, of the Church which doubtless gave its name to the lane unhappily renamed in the 18th century after Dr. Weaver's stables. St. Luke, the beloved physician, commemorates the long connection between Holy Trinity Parish and Chester Infirmaries, past and present; while St. Matthew, called from the receipt of custom, keeps in remembrance the Custom House which so long nestled under the shadow of the Parish Church.

It was while thinking out these pictures for empty frames that I was first brought into close personal touch with the ancient records of Holy Trinity Parish. I found that many of the oldest records were now only to be seen elsewhere, and could not rest content until I had at least restored to the Parish copies of them, so a good many little holidays were spent in the British Museum and in other places where they had found a home.

I will divide the records into two classes, with sub-divisions:—

I. RECORDS IN STONE, BRASS, ETC.

(1) The earliest remaining stone "record" falls outside the period fixed at the heading of my paper, but with your permission I will just refer to it. It is the recumbent effigy of John de Whitmore, who was Mayor of Chester 1369-72, and died in 1374. The effigy originally rested on an altar tomb, which stood

in the Lady Chapel on the south side, but it fell on evil days, and for many years lay buried in the vault under Dr. W. M. Thackeray's pew in Church. Now it lies near the Font, waiting the time when it can be properly replaced as near as possible to its original site. I am hoping this year, or next, to ask the Citizens of Chester to help the Churchwardens and myself to place the figure of this old Mayor in a permanent resting place, together with other Holy Trinity monuments, which have been moved from their ancient positions.¹ Other records in stone include monuments to the Allen, Ball, Barnes, Bridges, Hesketh, Lloyd, Mainwaring, Pemberton, Ravenscroft, Skellern, Whaley, Wrench, and many other families.

A large number of these ancient monuments are now in the Tower Chamber, and I think the members of this Society will share my opinion that they ought to be replaced in the open Church, rather than remain in a locked-up and somewhat inaccessible chamber in the Tower.

(2) There are no remaining ancient records in glass, though some beautiful modern windows—notably that over the Altar to the memory of the late General Ball—recall the glories of the past; for in old days the Church was rich in stained glass. One of the earliest entries in the book now in the press tells of a memorial window in St. Patrick's Aisle left by Robert Sayer in 1532.

In 1574, Edward Doby, the glazier, was paid 10/- for defacing the images in the windows. We would willingly multiply that sum by hundreds if we could

¹ The outbreak of the great war a few months after this Paper was read necessarily deferred the hope here expressed, so far as the date is concerned. The ultimate purpose, however, remains.

restore what that and later acts of reckless vandalism have lost to the Church, for now not a vestige of the ancient glass remains, though some of it survived till the 19th century.

(3) Another entry in the Register—the gift of metal for a cross of silver by the same Robert Sayer—leads one to records in plate. The Church was formerly very rich in plate and other gifts of pious parishioners, but much was stolen by Edward VI.'s Commissioners; some sold into Spain and otherwise made away with by Churchwardens of Puritanical and suchlike tendencies. We have left, a chalice and paten of silver, made by Wm. Mutton in 1570 apparently from the metal of some of our more ancient vessels, and still branded with his sheep's head. We have also a large silver salver left to the Church by Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir John Booth, of Woodford, who was knighted in 1660; and two large silver flagons given anonymously, in 1728, about which there is an interesting entry in Christopher Sudell's note book. [Rector 1707-35]. There is also a silver chalice purchased a little later by the churchwardens.

(4) Our records in brass include the monument of Henry Gee, who died in 1545. He was churchwarden of Holy Trinity 1532-4, and Mayor of Chester in 1533, and again in 1539.

Henry Gee was one of the most courageous of the mayors of Chester, in that he gave stringent directions as to the headgear to be worn by the ladies of Chester, carefully distinguishing between the hats and caps which matrons and maids might respectively wear. He also strictly regulated the diet and society of all who were expecting to take the principal part in the Service for the Churching of Women. As to their

society, he permitted the ladies to entertain their mothers and sisters, and even their sisters-in-law, but no others, under pain of heavy fine.

But he did not thereby forfeit the respect of the ladies of Chester, as is evidenced to-day by the brass of his widow, now placed close to his in the south aisle of the Church. If she appears in the inscription to pass somewhat slightly over the memory of her second husband—Sir Wm. Calverley of Calverley—the memory of “Henry Gee, her mate, who ruled here a patron rare as citye well can shewe,” was evidently still green in her heart, though nearly thirty-five years had elapsed since he died.

Henry Gee did not confine his activities to the welfare of the ladies; he dealt very summarily with men who would not work for their living. Instead of standing idle round the Cross, he made them put their feet in the resting place of the stocks. He also directed that children over six years of age should regularly attend school, and that on Sundays and Holy Days they should first attend service at their Parish Church, and then resort to the Roodeye to practice archery. Perhaps the Education Authorities of Chester and elsewhere will one day follow his example (adopting rather more up-to-date weapons than bows and arrows), and so help to solve the problem as to how the British people can continue to dwell in safety beside other nations armed to the teeth.

While taking down these brasses a few years ago (they were then placed high in the vestry, and needed a ladder and candle to decipher them), I found that the brass of Henry Gee was a palimpsest, his inscription being engraved on the back of a portion

of a still older brass. The latter is beautifully engraved, and shews the garter leg of a Knight of the Garter of the 15th century. It is of considerable interest, as so few others are known to exist in England.

Amongst other records in brass are monuments of the Clive (16th century) and Drinkwater (17th century) families; also that of Matthew Henry, the famous commentator, who was buried in the chancel in 1714.

(5) The records in iron include a sword case, embellished with the Arms of Chester City and the Stanleys of Lathom (Earls of Derby and Patrons of Holy Trinity). This was the resting place of the sword of the City, when the Mayor and Corporation attended the Church in state.

(6) In and on wood we have the Royal Arms, many boards of charities given at various dates, and also two Mace cases for the Mayor's Mace. On the latter are inscribed the names of the mayors of Chester who were parishioners of Holy Trinity—from Henry Gee, in 1533, to the early 19th century, when the mayors seem to have abandoned the ancient custom of attending their parish church in state.

Last year I was enabled to recover for the Church the beautifully carved oak monument of Edmund Gee, son of Henry. He was Mayor of Liverpool in 1548, and of Chester in 1551. Curiously enough, Liverpool was visited during his mayoralty by a plague of sweating sickness, of which he died when Mayor of Chester, in 1551.

The monument appears to have been taken from the Church in 1865, and to have lain in a stone-mason's yard or office until the autumn of last year.

My attention was called to it by Mr. Henry Taylor, when it was first displayed in the window of a newly opened show room. I was able to identify it at once from my notes, and had already printed its inscription from a MS. in the British Museum.

II. THE RECORDS ON PARCHMENT AND PAPER.

These may be divided into three classes: (1) Parish Registers; (2) Churchwardens' Books; (3) Deeds and miscellaneous papers.

When they first came under my care, they were kept partly in a small non-fireproof safe; partly in two wooden boxes in the vestry; loose in the tower chamber; and in a brown paper bundle handed down from one rector to another.

They are now all catalogued, and stored away, each in its own numbered place, in a large fireproof safe divided into compartments specially constructed for them, and having plenty of vacant space left for the storing of future records for some time to come. The safe is kept in the vestry.

(1) The Registers which remain date from 1654, and are contained in twenty thick volumes, complete as to burials to September 12th, 1854, and as to baptisms and marriages to the present day. The registers from 1598 to 1653 were copied by the second Randle Holme in the latter year, and his copy is now amongst the *Harl. MSS.* in the British Museum.

There are also certain contemporary transcripts from 1599 in the Diocesan Registry over the Abbey Gateway. The registers *prior* to 1598 were probably missing in 1653, otherwise we should expect them to have been copied by Randle Holme. It has, however, been possible to reconstruct to some extent the burial register from 1532 by means of the payments for "laystalls,"

monumental inscriptions yet extant or formerly in the Church, and other sources of information.

These registers, from 1532 to 1857, are now printed, together with a complete index of all surnames and christian names; and when certain other indexes, to which I have already referred, are in print, the book will be published, and will render it certain that these records of Holy Trinity will never be lost, whatever be the future fate of the original books.

(2) The churchwardens' account books are, I believe, the earliest in Chester. They date from the year when Henry Gee was warden, in 1532. The two earlier original books are indeed lost, but not before Randle Holme had made a copy of the first volume and extensive abstracts from the second. To mention a tithe of the valuable information in these churchwardens' books would be an impossible task to-night, but I will refer to one or two points: (*a*) They contain inventories of vestments, plate, books, and other church possessions from 1532 to the end of the 18th century; (*b*) lists of parishioners and their assessments from 1547, which, together with the later rate books, give us a directory of Holy Trinity parish from the reign of Edward VI. to Victoria; (*c*) they throw light upon the whole three centuries they cover, whether on the history of the times, the growth and decay of customs and observances, the status of families, or the characteristics of individuals.

I need hardly remind you that the interest of the registers, books, and papers is greatly enhanced by the fact that Holy Trinity was, during this period, both the port parish of the ancient seaport of Chester, and also perhaps the chief residential parish in the city, and numbered amongst its parishioners those

whose other houses were scattered over Cheshire and Lancashire and other neighbouring counties, besides many with homes much further afield.

(3) The third class of parchment and paper records is a large one, and I have no time to deal with it now, save in the briefest fashion. It includes deeds relating to various charities, etc., faculties, terriers, an interesting note book kept by Chris. Sudell (1707-35), and many other papers.

To return to the registers. Those from 1598 to 1624 were kept by Geo. Bellen, the parish clerk. He is not content with making the bare entry of a baptism; he also tells us who the gossips, *i.e.*, god-parents, were. He carefully describes the position of the grave when recording a burial, and often mentions the preacher. His successor, John Totty, goes one better by criticising the sermon! I wish I had time to say more about Geo. Bellen, but will now only add that a copy of the Chester Miracle Plays made by him, a collection of graces, etc., and of the Annals of Chester, are in the British Museum.

In later times, the registers were generally kept by the Rector or the Assistant Curate, who are usually much less interesting in their entries, though Thomas Maddock, who was Rector from 1786 to 1825, made a special point of always recording the particular illness or accident which had laid low those who were buried at Holy Trinity. He makes one exception to prove the rule—that of Mary Seaga, aged 105!

In the printed book, I am giving an index of all the diseases and causes of death contained in the Registers, and will now only mention one or two. The "plague" entries are numerous; we also have, "a croup in the breast," "chincough," "flux," "lax," "the group,"

“influenza,” “nervous fever,” “spotted fever,” “purples,” “surfeit,” “visitation of God,” and so forth.

The index of professions, trades, and descriptions, is instructive and suggestive. The highest number of references is to esquires, then come merchants, gentlemen, aldermen, tailors, and sailors. The sailors, however, if we include malleners, mariners, and seamen, head the list; though they take a very low second place if we also add together esquires and gentlemen. Amongst occupations which recall the old seaport, we have anchorsmith, custom house officials of all grades, pilot, sailmaker, shipbuilder, and so forth.

Amongst other occupations of interest I may mention city beadle, chairman, comedian, costord-monger, fletcher, herald painter, mail guard, peckadilly maker, perriwig-maker, stringer, translator, etc.

Now let us look at a clump of trees during the Civil War period. Calamy tells us that in 1662 Wm. Cooke was ejected from St. Michael's, John Glendole from St. Peter's, Peter Leigh from St. John's, and Thos. Upton from Holy Trinity.

Again, in Urwick's *Nonconformity in Cheshire*, the following imaginary description of Sunday, August 17th, 1662, occurs:—

“Had we been in the venerable city on that memorable Sunday 17 Aug., the Sunday before the sadly famous Bartholomew Day, we might first have looked in at the Cathedral (St. Oswald's), and heard the eloquent Dr Harrison preaching his farewell sermon; we might have passed thence to St. John Baptist's to see the venerable Peter Leigh rising in his pulpit for the last time, to speak forth words of truth and soberness; we might have hurried thence to St. Michael's where that pious and painful minister W^m Cook was declaring his conscientious convictions . . . we might have heard the voice of M^r Glendall for the last time in St^r Peters, and

of Mr Thomas Upton in Trinity Church—no fewer than five faithful ministers might we have seen that day in Chester bidding farewell to their several flocks, and declaring their brave resolve to suffer the loss of all things—of spheres of usefulness, of livelihood, of house and home—rather than violate their conscience by submitting to the requirements of the Act of Uniformity.”

Now let us turn to our records and see whether this is a true picture or not.

The Rector of Holy Trinity from 1630 to his death in 1669 was Richard Wilson. He graduated at Balliol College, Oxford, in 1618, was Rector of Baddiley in 1622, acted as Curate of Holy Trinity from 1624, and was also Chaplain to the Earl of Derby when nominated to the Rectory in 1630. Seven years later he was engaged with the parishioners in an extensive restoration of the Parish Church. Then came the Civil War. After a long and gallant defence the City surrendered to the parliamentary forces, under pledges which were afterwards broken. Immediately afterwards we have the significant entry in our Register:—

“Now all the parsons were driven out of Chester and new lights came in so that other Churches came to this p'ish to be baptized.”

In the baptisms which follow we find parishioners of St. John's, St. Martin's, St. Bride's, St. Peter's, St. Mary's, and St. Oswald's, bringing their children to Holy Trinity for baptism. Evidently the “new lights” were not appreciated in Chester. Whether Richard Wilson soon returned to the post from which he had been driven, or the Curate was suffered to remain for a time, we do not know, but it is evident that Holy Trinity continued to be served by one in Holy Orders. In 1648, however, this condition of things was put down with a high hand, and Thomas Upton was intruded into the Rectory.

He was a graduate of Magdalen College, Oxford, and may possibly have been in Holy Orders, though now thrust in as a Presbyterian Minister. He had previously, in 1646, been intruded into the Rectory of Brereton, but had withdrawn on return of the true Rector, whom the parishioners strongly supported. It speaks well for Thomas Upton that this same Rector—John Robinson—who had again been forcibly ejected from Brereton and his property confiscated, appears to have had one of his children baptized in Holy Trinity Church in 1657, during Thomas Upton's time. The parishioners, though forced to submit, resented the intrusion, and shewed their resentment in various ways. For one thing, they rated Thomas Upton as an ordinary parishioner—which was not their custom with the Rector. He paid the assessment, but entered against the item in his own hand "given of free will." On subsequent occasions, however, he paid and said nothing, and in the last assessment in which his name appears, the word "gone" is entered.

It is doubtful whether he could get the tithe in, but the "Committee for Plundered Ministers" more than made up the deficiency by paying him a larger stipend than the actual Rectors of Holy Trinity ever received before or since. To do this they drew upon the tithes of Weaverham, Rochdale, Wallasey, Ashton (Lancashire), and Thornhill (Derbyshire).

On September 3rd, 1658, Oliver Cromwell died, and the feeling of the parish was expressed in an entry made in the Church Book:—

"Pd for ringing when y^e Lord Protector died & scaped y^e gallows 2/6."

The parishioners at once dispatched a messenger to their own Rector, who was then living at Chirk,

helping the aged Rector of Selattyn, and overlooked by the ruling powers. Richard Wilson returned to the parish, and was received with open arms.

Thomas Upton retired and lived for a time in a property of his at Little Neston; later he retired to some property of his wife's at Overton, Flint, and was buried at Overton Church, March 13th, 1674-5, aged 55. The inventory of his effects shews him to have had a small library, a larger farm, and a considerable sum of money out at interest.

But to return to Holy Trinity. The parishioners met and resolved largely to increase Rector Wilson's income by voluntary annual subscriptions. The total, however, fell far below the stipend paid to the intruded minister. Richard Wilson remained Rector to his death in 1669, aged 72. He apparently made no will, and probably had little to leave behind him, save the love of his family and people, and his own good name.

The sermon on August 17th, 1662, was probably preached by the rightful Rector; it was certainly *not* preached by Thomas Upton, who had left the church and parish more than two years previously.

Now let us glance at some of the other churches in Chester during this time. I shall only refer to those clergy, or intruded ministers, who occur in Holy Trinity Registers.

First, the Cathedral. The sub-dean was John Ley, M.A. of Christ Church, Oxford, Vicar of Great Budworth, Prebendary of Chester and Lichfield. He made friends with the ruling powers, and instead of being ejected like the rest, added to his preferments. In 1646 he was intruded into the Rectory of Astbury, but the people would not pay the tithes to him, so

he returned to Great Budworth in 1649. He died in the Rectory of Sutton Coldfield, Staffordshire, May 6th, 1662, aged 79.

Amongst the Minor Canons ejected in 1646, who lived to be restored in 1660, were Henry Biddulph, Wm. Clarke (senr.), John Pilkington, and Peter Stringer. In 1657 the "Committee for Plundered Ministers" took pity on their impoverished state and allowed them each 28/7; two years later they appear to have spent this very liberal allowance, so they were given an additional 16/8 each, to last until the Restoration! Notwithstanding these munificent allowances, Henry Biddulph died a pauper shortly after the Restoration; probably he had contracted debts during the Usurpation.

John Pilkington was, perhaps, also Curate of Holy Trinity, as his father Francis, the Precentor, had been before him. Wm. Clarke was also Rector of St. Bridget's, and Peter Stringer had been made Parish Clerk, and after, Parish Register, of St. Oswald's. During the Usurpation he had also eked out his living in other ways, being paid 5/- on November 12th, 1659, "for his paines about the chimes" of St. Peter's. Dr. Bridge has told us of his subsequent career as Precentor, Organist, and Treasurer of the Cathedral.

Roger Gorst was made perpetual Curate of St. Michael's in 1617, and continued the rightful, tho' ejected Curate till his death in 1659. He was also Curate of St. Giles, Spital Boughton, which was destroyed in the siege.

John Glendole, M.A. of Christ Church, Oxford, was licensed Curate of Great Budworth in 1621, and married there to Elizabeth Jones of that parish in 1629. In the previous year he had been appointed Curate of

St. Peter's, and remained there until instituted to the Vicarage of St. Oswald's in November, 1642, whence he appears to have been ejected on the surrender of the city. In 1649 he was back again at St. Peter's, and paid by the "Committee for Plundered Ministers." In April, 1662, he was still there. He does not, however, appear to have ever been Rector of St. Peter's. From 1674-6 he was a parishioner of Holy Trinity, and was buried in the Chancel in 1676, aged 78. His second wife, who died in 1689, and was buried with her husband, left some money for the poor of Holy Trinity Parish. He is sometimes confused with his son of the same name, who graduated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in 1650, was ordained as a Presbyterian Minister, and whose preaching at Bangor in 1657 was severely criticised by Philip Henry.

John Pemberton, a Presbyterian Minister, was intruded into Aston-by-Frodsham in March, 1646, and in November of same year into Whitegate as assistant to "old Mr. (Miles) Pemberton," into Congleton 1647-50, and into St. John's, Chester, 1650-58, when he died.

Peter Leigh, M.A. of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in 1653, was intruded into St. Oswald's the same year, and married there, where also Henry Newcome preached for him; he got into trouble, however, with the powers in London, and was summoned before their Council to give account of a sermon he had preached in Chester. Apparently his fault was overlooked, for he seems to have remained at St. Oswald's until 1655, when he was intruded into Stoak, remaining there until the death of John Pemberton, whom he succeeded at St. John's in 1658. In 1662, however, he had to retire from St. John's, as he was not prepared

to accept Holy Orders in the Church, nor conform to the Book of Common Prayer. He was licensed as a Presbyterian teacher at Knutsford in 1672, and died there in 1693, aged about 65, so that when he left St. John's his age must have been about 34, an age which scarcely entitles him to the epithet "venerable"!

The first marriage in Holy Trinity after Mr. Wilson's restoration was taken by John Lightfoot. He was nominated to the Rectory of Bury in 1654 by the Countess of Derby, and was probably the eldest son of Brian Walton's old friend of the same name who assisted the future Bishop in preparing his Polyglot Bible. Bishop Brian Walton appointed John Lightfoot, junr., his Chaplain in 1660, and also King's Preacher in Lancashire, but both Bishop and Chaplain died in November the following year, the Chaplain being buried at St. Oswald's three days before the Bishop's death.

I am afraid I have asked you to look at too many clerical trees in this clump.

Here is the tragedy of a gallant soldier, and his family, as told in our Holy Trinity records:—

Sir Philip Byron was son of Sir John Byron of Newstead Abbey, and brother of the first Lord Byron, Governor of Chester. He left his wife in Chester while fighting for his King in York. In July, 1644, he fell at the head of his regiment at the storming of York by the parliamentary troops. The next month Lady Byron's brother, Henry Hesketh, was buried at Holy Trinity. On November 9th her new-born babe was baptized Anne, and on the 16th the mother was laid to rest in Holy Trinity Church, soon reunited in death with her gallant husband and brother.

Here is a soldier on the other side. "Coll. Ffoulkes Esq. of Tredath in Ireland died August 20th, 1657," is an entry in our Register which baffled me for a long time. After searching fruitlessly for Tredath, I appealed to the Ordnance Survey Authorities of Ireland, who courteously endeavoured to identify the place for me, but without success. However, I eventually traced both the Colonel and his place of abode in a somewhat roundabout manner.

John Foulkes (Fowke, Foulk, etc.) is apparently identical with an alderman of London of that name, who paid £600 for land in the county of Tipperary wrested from its rightful owners by the parliamentary troops. He became one of Cromwell's soldiers, and was appointed Governor of Drogheda (otherwise Tredagh, Tredath, etc.)

The place is one which, as long as it stands, will remain a monument of the callous brutality of Oliver Cromwell. He stormed it in September, 1649, and then began a five days' butchery in cold blood, not only massacring the garrison of some 3,000 troops, but also the defenceless civil population, sparing neither rank, age, nor sex. Some thirty escaped for a while, but were later recaptured and sold as slaves to the Barbadoes. Cromwell writing after the event to the Council in London speaks of his brutal butchery as "a righteous judgement of God."

My paper has already been too long, otherwise I should like to have told of other worthies who appear in our Registers. Of statesmen and civil servants, such as Viscount Sherborne and Sir Thomas Herbert Maddock. Of poets, as Thomas Parnell and Bishop Heber. Of commentators, such as Matthew Henry and Nicholas Byfield. Of doctors, as Haygarth, Pigot,

Foot Gower, and Thackeray. Of antiquaries, as Sir Peter Leicester, the learned author of *Historical Antiquities*, dedicated to Charles II.; Hugh Cholmondeley, Thomas Crane, Joseph Eaton, or William Henry Massie, the founder of this Society.

I venture to conclude with an appeal to Cheshire folk—whether by birth, residence, descent, or association—to remove the reproach which, unhappily, now rests upon this county of being far behind her neighbours in taking steps to safeguard the contents of her ancient Registers by printing such as still remain. Throughout the country, the number of these ancient records steadily decreases, and, in many cases, their condition grows worse. While editing the Holy Trinity Registers, I have heard again and again from Incumbents of parishes saying they could not supply the information I sought, for either an unfortunate fire had destroyed their Registers, or a volume was missing.

It surely ought to be possible to form a Cheshire Parish Register Society, and to keep it at work until all the Registers, and perhaps, too, the Churchwardens' Accounts, for the whole county are safely printed and accessible to all.

